London Adventist youth leaders to hold two peace vigils amidst widespread looting

Youth to meet at Seven Sisters Station today, tomorrow

7 Aug 2011, London
ANN/BUC/SEC staff

Seventh-day Adventist Youth leaders in London will hold two peace rallies this week in response to ongoing rampant looting, which began Saturday night following a community protest of a police shooting.

Youth leaders will hold the rally in Tottenham at the Seven Sisters Station today, Tuesday, August 9, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., and again tomorrow, Wednesday, August 10, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.
The event, sponsored by the church's South England Conference, will be used to promote peace. Participants will distribute Peace pledge cards, which ask people to sign the cards to promote peace in their neighborhood.

Since this morning's announcement, conference officials downgraded the size of the event for safety reasons. A mid-day statement said, "any outreach or community service should only be within members own areas, they should not travel across town, and only venture out under direct instruction from local church leadership who directly understand the situation."

Looting across numerous neighborhoods of London, and even in cities as far away Birmingham and Liverpool, continued to flare into Monday night.

The violence began Saturday night following a community protest of a police shooting last week in Tottenham. Local resident Mark Duggan was killed, and a police officer was shot, but not killed, in the incident, news agencies reported.

Tottenham, as well as other neighborhoods where violence first erupted, has often been associated with high unemployment and tensions with police. Copycat crimes soon swept across multiple neighborhoods and cities, the BBC reported.

The BBC reported that Prime Minister David Cameron returned from a vacation in Italy to address the situation and asked that Parliament be recalled, a move that last occurred in 2002.

"We are saddened by the events that have occurred in Tottenham," Sam Davis, president of the Adventist Church in South England, said this morning. "The loss of Mark Duggan's life has mobilized many in the community to rightly ask for answers to what took place that led to this young man's loss of life. However, this can never justify the wanton violence and destruction of property, looting and vandalism that followed the protest."

In the mid-day statement, Davis said the conference's Youth and Community Ministries departments were willing to join the community in the clean-up operation and are already working in one affected area to assist displaced families.

Adventist Church in Hungary loses legal status, must reapply under
new legislation

Legislation was different from earlier bill shown to faith, religious liberty groups

4 Aug 2011, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States
Bettina Krause/IRLA/ANN

Under controversial legislation passed last month, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Hungary is one of 344 Christian churches and other faith groups that have lost their legal status and must apply to the Hungarian Parliament for registration.

Ócsai Tamás is president of the Adventist Church in Hungary. [TED file photo]

Only 14 religious organizations have retained their previous status under the new law, which human rights advocates around the world have decried as "draconian" and "oppressive."

Ócsai Tamás, president of the Adventist Church in Hungary, has expressed his dismay that, in spite of previous assurances by government leaders, the church must now undertake the considerable task of applying to parliament for renewal of its registration.

"We're currently reviewing this matter with our church members, legal experts, the Trans-European Division, and the General Conference, and we intend to make a decision in September regarding the best way to move forward," Tamás said.

"The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Hungary meets all the criteria for re-registration under the new law," he said. "We ask for the prayers of our brothers and sisters around the world as we face this challenge."

According to Raafat Kamal, director of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty for the Adventist Church's Trans-European Division, the legislation that was passed by the Hungarian Parliament during the early morning hours of July 11 was very different to the version shown to faith groups during consultations in May and June this
"The process of applying for registration has now become politicized," Kamal said. "The outcome will be dependent on the political climate at any given time, and could expose religious minorities to unchecked discrimination."

John Graz, PARL director for the Adventist world church, says the new law has seriously compromised Hungary's standing as a country that respects and protects basic human rights.

"This law is inconsistent with both European values and with international covenants protecting religious freedom," Graz said. "We respectfully urge Hungary's lawmakers to consider the message this law sends to the international community, and to take steps to protect its religious minorities."

The legislation, called the "Law on the Right to Freedom of Conscience and Religion, and on Churches, Religions and Religious Communities," requires religious groups that are not one of the 14 "approved" religious groups to undergo a process of applying for legal status. The new law also narrows the legal definition of "religious activities" and imposes a number of stringent conditions that must be met before an organization is granted the right to refer to itself as a "church." The law comes into force on January 1, 2012.

The Adventist Church in this central European country has more than 100 congregations and some 5,000 members. Since Communist rule in Hungary ended in 1989, interest in religion has grown with some 55 percent of the population now identifying themselves as Roman Catholic.

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**ADRA continues famine relief in Somalia despite instability in region**

*New emergency coordinator to oversee water, sanitation, food security efforts in region*

3 Aug 2011, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States

ANN staff

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency is continuing famine relief efforts in Somalia despite attempts by an insurgent group to ban Western aid organizations from the country and block starving Somalis from fleeing the country to neighboring Kenya and Ethiopia.

East Africans face critical food and water shortages after the region's worst drought in 60 years. With the appointment of a new emergency coordinator based in Nairobi, the Adventist Church's humanitarian arm is expanding its relief efforts in the region. [photo: Peter Okumu]

The agency's work in Somalia was first hampered last year when the group issued a declaration forbidding ADRA and two other international non-governmental organizations from operating within the country. The statement accused the organizations of "acting as missionaries under the guise of humanitarian work," ADRA
ADRA, which has pledged that its relief efforts "will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint," has since 1992 focused "solely" on emergency relief and development in Somalia, including water, sanitation and food security.

"ADRA remains committed to serving the people of Somalia, with the assistance and trust of the local communities, providing long-term, sustainable change," a July 29 press release from the agency stated.

The humanitarian agency has scaled up its initial response in the region in recent weeks. A newly appointed emergency coordinator based in Nairobi, Kenya is expected to oversee continued relief efforts alongside ADRA's Africa Regional Office, agency officials said.

The agency continues to administer a $4 million project in Somalia, maximizing access to clean drinking water, constructing latrines in refugee camps and distributing shelter supplies, ADRA said.

Low rainfall across much of the Horn of Africa, which includes Somalia, has contributed to the region's worst drought in 60 years.

Last week, the United Nations declared a famine in two locally-controlled parts of southern Somalia. The group's anti-Western policies are widely blamed for enabling the famine and frustrating relief efforts, the New York Times reported.

According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 11.5 million people in East Africa are currently in need of humanitarian assistance. One quarter of Somalia's population is now displaced, as they flee to neighboring countries in search of food and water, OCHA reported.

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**Adventist Health Study-2 awarded $5.5 million from National Institutes of Health**

*Grant will fund ongoing cancer research in landmark study*

5 Aug 2011, Loma Linda, California, United States
Jennifer Frehn

The United States' National Institutes of Health (NIH) has awarded Loma Linda University's Adventist Health Study-2 a $5.5 million grant over the next five years, which will allow the study to continue its analysis on cancer and other lifestyle diseases. The award was announced July 27.
"This will not only allow us to conduct our ongoing functions, but to conduct them more efficiently, and to begin analysis on projects we have had to shelve," said Dr. Gary Fraser, principal investigator of the study.

Adventist Health Study-2 is a long-term health study of more than 96,000 Seventh-day Adventists from the United States and Canada. The study began in 2002 with the purpose of examining the links between lifestyle, diet, and disease.

The study has operated without NIH funds for the past three years, but it has received other funds and grants, as well as significant support from Loma Linda University. The new funds come from the National Cancer Institute, a division within NIH, and will be used for analysis of cancer. This means funds the university had previously lined up for cancer can now be diverted to other areas the study is examining, as well as in support of new researchers.

Though the study is in the beginning stages of analysis, it has had several key findings so far, which include: linking a vegetarian diet to a lower risk of heart disease and diabetes; linking a high consumption of brown rice, cooked green vegetables, dried fruit, and legumes to a lower risk of colon polyps, a precursor to colon cancer; and revealing that black and non-black Adventists report a higher mental and physical quality of life than the average American.

For more information, visit adventisthealthstudy.org.

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**Annual ASI convention sees $2 million donated for mission**

'*Good News' TV, boat for Brazilian villages among 47 projects*

8 Aug 2011, Sacramento, California, United States
Edwin Manuel García/ANN

The annual international gathering of Adventist-laymen's Services & Industries last week drew a large attendance of generous participants who reached deep into their pockets to surpass the organization's
fundraising goal.

More than 3,100 people packed into the Sacramento Convention Center on Sabbath morning, August 6, the final day of the 2011 ASI International Convention. They worshiped with sacred orchestral music, listened to member and ministry testimonies, and shouted amens during a sermon by Seventh-day Adventist world church President Ted N.C. Wilson, who lauded the program's theme, "Inspired to Finish Strong!"

The audience was clearly inspired to give: More than $2 million was collected in the special offering to fund 47 mission projects -- surpassing the goal of $1.5 million.

"The crowd and the offering exceeded our expectations," said ASI General Vice President Donna McNeilus, beaming at the conclusion of the four-day convention. "I think people realize the times we're living in, and even though the economic situation is extremely volatile, people really are serious about wanting to give their all for Jesus, and it showed here."

ASI, which traces its roots back to 1947, is an organization of lay ministries, professionals, business leaders and other laypeople committed to actively participating in the worldwide mission of the Adventist Church.

The convention featured general sessions led by numerous speakers, including Ivor Myers, David Kulakov, Doug Batchelor, Lyndi Schwartz and Matt Parra.

Myers, director of Power of the Lamb Ministries and church pastor in the Central California Conference, kept the Friday evening audience gripped by moving through all major Adventist doctrines and Biblical prophecies in a rapid-fire 40 minutes.

Upwards of 2,000 people registered for the convention, and many attended some of the 20 seminars in five tracks: evangelism, spiritual growth, health, nonprofit and business, and "Finishing Strong."

At a Friday health seminar, Diana Fleming, co-author of The Full Plate Diet, explained the top reason why people fail to lose weight. "They don't know how," said Fleming, whose book promotes weight loss by eating more natural fiber-rich foods.

Children and youth participated in daylong, age-appropriate programming that included community service and evangelism in the local region.

At the exhibit hall, some 340 organizations from around the world -- a wide variety of independent and church-sponsored ministries ranging from 1000 Missionary Movement North America to Your Story Hour -- showed
their wares, promoted their programs and offered their services.

Jewish-Adventist Ministries shared information on how to reach Jewish friends and neighbors. Orphans International Helpline sought $25 monthly sponsors to support children in Haiti. Kids in Discipleship offered training on ministering to children.

Hope for Bangkok encouraged convention goers to "invest in eternity." Fountainview Academy of British Columbia, Canada, sold recordings of its student musicians who performed at the convention. Changing People's Lives International Ministry invited Adventists to take mission trips to communist countries.

The exhibit hall at ASI conventions is well known for connecting laypeople with ministries, which provides opportunities for unique and otherwise unlikely collaborations.

That's what Paul Karmy of suburban Dallas, Texas, experienced.

Karmy, president of Liquid-Stone Concrete, attended his first ASI convention in 2004, when he visited the Adventist World Aviation booth. A pilot himself, he joined the group and helped raise money for a mission plane, and eventually served on the organization's board of directors.

At another ASI convention, while staffing the Adventist World Aviation booth, Karmy became interested in learning more about a television ministry being promoted from a nearby exhibit. That interest led to his next venture: Karmy and his church in Crowley, Texas, now run two Good News TV stations for the Dallas-Forth Worth area, one in English, one in Spanish.

"Paul Karmy's story is a great example of the ministry-minded networking that goes on at every ASI gathering," said Conna Bond, communication director for ASI, which is based at the church's North American Division headquarters and has a handful of employees and hundreds of volunteers.

"Some people come with money, some people come with ideas or expertise. Everyone comes with vision. ASI conventions are great places for people to pool their resources together and really make big things happen," Bond said. "God's hand is in all of it."

A major highlight of the convention was the Sabbath offering designated for 47 projects from around the world
that were vetted by ASI and promoted in the convention magazine and from the stage.

About half the projects are in the United States, and one is in South America, a medical mission called Amazon Lifesavers Ministry, which needs a faster boat to travel to remote fishing villages in Brazil.

The ministry was started by Tennessee nurse practitioner Brad Mills and his wife, Lina, a registered nurse, and Brazilian locals. Mills had dreamed of becoming a missionary and doctor since age 3. He was further inspired by three mission trips with Maranatha Volunteers International while attending Madison Academy near Nashville.

In 2007, the couple felt called by God to provide health services, lectures, evangelism and church construction in remote areas along the Amazon River.

ASI is helping to expand their mission field.

The $20,000 ASI offering will allow the ministry to build an aluminum boat with outboard motor that can transport volunteer doctors to faraway destinations in one day, as opposed to the three days it now takes on slower boats.

"I am very excited by the donation," Mills said. "We truly are thankful to everyone who made this possible, and to God, who is still working in miraculous ways to financially provide for His work to advance."

Because convention donors met the $1.5 million offering goal, every project was fully funded, and then some. As was previously arranged, three ministries will divide the "overflow" offering, which is more than $400,000. The beneficiaries are: The Ellen G. White Estate; New Beginnings, a DVD evangelism training project; and The One-Day Structure Project, a joint effort between Maranatha and ASI.

In a separate gift, Adventist Development and Relief Agency President Rudi Maier presented Maranatha President Don Noble with a $1 million check for One-Day Schools.

Next year's ASI international convention will be August 8-11 in Dallas, Texas.

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**Wilson offers condolences to people of Norway following attacks**

*Will meet with local church members next month*

4 Aug 2011, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States
ANN staff
The president of the Seventh-day Adventist world church expressed condolences to the people of Norway, who continue to grieve the loss of friends and loved ones as a result of the July 22 attacks.

In an August 3 letter to Adventist Church leaders in Europe, Pastor Ted N. C. Wilson wrote, "The heartbreak and pain being experienced by so many families is beyond what words can express. I have prayed for the country of Norway, for its leaders, for the families who have been so tragically touched by the loss of their children and others."

Wilson will have the opportunity to meet with Adventist Church members in Norway during a scheduled visit next month.