The ANN news bulletin is a weekly recap of stories published since the previous week's bulletin. To see news, commentaries, photos and reader comments as they are published, visit news.adventist.org.

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Obama visit supports Adventist Community Services volunteers in wake of Hurricane Irene

Church operating distribution hub for food, supplies in affected New Jersey community

12 Sep 2011, Paterson, New Jersey
LaFayette Trawick/ANN staff

United States President Barack Obama met with Seventh-day Adventist Church community service volunteers in Paterson, New Jersey last week while on a tour of communities flooded by Hurricane Irene.
In the wake of flooding in New Jersey caused by Hurricane Irene, United States President Barack Obama visited briefly with David L. King, who pastors the First Paterson Adventist Church and directed the community’s faith-based response. Obama applauded volunteers for their relief efforts, which saw food and supplies distributed to more than 3,300 affected residents. [photo: LaFayette Trawick]

Obama joined New Jersey Governor Chris Christie on September 4 in the parking lot of an area Lowes Home Improvement store, where he spoke with more than 3,000 affected residents and applauded volunteers for "doing what Americans do in times of crisis: pull together."

"President Obama thanked us for giving back to the community and being there to help others in their time of need," said David L. King, who pastors the First Paterson Adventist Church and directed the community faith-based response in the wake of the storm.

New Jersey was declared a federal disaster area after homes and businesses were flooded following the hurricane. More than 2,000 residents evacuated ahead of the storm, hundreds spent the week in area shelters and area businesses were shuttered, said Ora Jane Bell, director for Adventist Community Services in the region.

With more than 300 volunteers from the church's Allegheny East Conference, First Paterson's Adventist Community Services served as a distribution hub for nearly $200,000 worth of food, personal care items and cleaning supplies donated by the nonprofit Feed the Children for more than 3,300 affected residents.

The nonprofit Meals for Kids also partnered with First Paterson to provide more than 800 hot meals to the community residents and volunteers.

"I'm so pleased with the outpouring of support and [the] efforts of all our volunteers," King said. "Our community came together to lift spirits by living our faith and providing people with help and hope," he said.

Paterson residents Kathy and Greg were among those who stood in line for food and supplies. The couple moved to an area shelter after knee-high water flooded their house. "Our apartment was condemned this week and ... we need all the help we can get," they said.

Employees and volunteers with Lowes "Heroes" program launched the initial response, offering their parking lot as a relief effort hub and partnering with Feed The Children, which in turn sought the assistance of Adventist Community Services.

"ACS remains very well connected, relevant and committed to local communities nationwide," said Minnie McNeil, who directs the program for the church's Columbia Union Conference.

As a founding member of the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster forum, ACS is among nonprofits that share knowledge and resources in disaster response and recovery. The forum is the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency's primary point of contact for voluntary disaster response coordination.

When asked why First Paterson members spent Saturday distributing food and supplies rather than worshipping
in church, King said service is a form of worship.

"This is an opportunity to share the love of Jesus with victims of this disaster. We strengthened our footprint in this community with new partnerships, and we plan to continue our efforts to heal this community long after the flooding is gone," King said.

South American Division sends first missionaries to 10/40 Window

Region is 'tremendous energizing force for evangelism,' church missiologist says

9 Sep 2011, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States
ANN staff

Three South American couples dedicated for service at a mission conference last week will be the first Seventh-day Adventist missionaries the division sends to the 10/40 Window.

Spanning northern Africa, the Middle East and central Asia between 10 and 40 degrees latitude, the region is home to two-thirds of the world's population, less than 1 percent of which is Christian, church leaders estimate.

Two of the couples are expected to serve in Lebanon and the Pacific island of Palau, respectively. The third couple is waiting for an assignment.

Organized by students and supported by faculty, the "I Will Go" missionary conference was a first for church-run River Plate Adventist University in northeastern Argentina.

The September 1 to 3 conference, which drew about 700 people from 17 universities -- most of them located in South America -- sought to inspire students to commit their lives to mission service.

Marly Lopes Timm, the division's volunteer coordinator, and Magdiel Perez Schulz, secretary of the division, spoke at the conference and were key supporters from the division.

"The South America Division has been a tremendous energizing force for evangelism," said Rick McEdward, a church missiologist who attended the conference. "In recent years, we've seen a growing awareness there that the world is our mission field. It's great to see the division fanning that flame," said McEdward, who heads up the church's Global Mission Religious Study Centers.
McEdwards said the students at the conference and in South America exhibited an "incredible commitment" to mission. Their division is among church regions sending a lately increasing number of missionaries overseas, a role historically played by the North American Division.

While service opportunities in the 10/40 Window are often specialized, there is potential for students to find mission posts after graduation, particularly for the many university medical students who attended the conference.

"There's a lot of passion for mission service, and as the church changes how it does mission in the 10/40 Window, more and more mission opportunities will become available for these students," he said.

Currently, some 160 Adventist missionary couples serve in the 10/40 Window.

"As mission offerings increase, so does our ability to send and support missionaries in many of these least reached countries of the world," McEdward said.

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**Wilson Skypes Malaysian youth congress, encourages members**

*Christians in Southeast Asian nation encounter religious freedom challenges*

13 Sep 2011, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States

ANN staff

In his first Skype conversation, Seventh-day Adventist world church President Ted N. C. Wilson addressed young church members in Malaysia last month.

![Adventist world church President Ted N. C. Wilson uses his iPhone to read Bible texts and passages from Ellen G. White books during a recent Skype conversation with young people in Malaysia.](image)

From a family home in Loma Linda, California, Wilson offered Malaysian young people a message of encouragement.

"If you're facing challenges and you're tempted to become discouraged, the Lord is saying, 'Don't be discouraged, for in your weakness you can become strong if you depend on me,'" Wilson said, referencing 2 Corinthians 12, in which Paul finds strength through God to deal with a personal difficulty.

"Remember that next time you face challenges," Wilson told the audience in Taiping on August 29 for the Adventist Church's first youth congress in Peninsular Malaysia.

The religious liberty situation in Malaysia is among challenges Adventists there face. While the majority Muslim country in Southeast Asia promotes a tolerant, progressive form of Islam, minority religions can still face anti-proselytizing laws, censorship and property damage.
"I know that God is guiding you in Malaysia. You have challenging times, but I thank God for the freedom of religion that the government of Malaysia does provide its citizens," Wilson said.

Political problems, natural disasters and the global economic downturn are all indicators of Jesus' soon return, Wilson said, urging young Adventist Malaysians to embrace the world church's Revival and Reformation initiative, which includes regular prayer for God's spirit.

Before Jesus returns, "the spirit and power of God will be poured out upon his children," Wilson said, reading from church co-founder Ellen G. White's book The Great Controversy.

"I'm actually reading from my iPhone," Wilson said, holding up the mobile device. "I have the bible, the Spirit of Prophecy and the Sabbath School lessons on my iPhone. You folks are a lot further ahead than I am, so I'm preaching to the choir," Wilson said amid laughter from the audience.

The idea of Skyping the world church president was a young member's suggestion, said Allan Yap, who was among organizers of the event.

Wilson encouraged young Adventist Malaysians to spend time in prayer during their youth congress. "You're going to find that God is going to fill your lives with so much power that you're going to be used in a most miraculous way," he said.

"There's nothing more powerful than a group of young Seventh-day Adventists who are committed to Jesus, humbling themselves and allowing God to work through them," Wilson said. Don't let anything "distract you from the real purpose God has for you," he added.

"Even though you might not be a huge group of people, God can use you like he did Gideon's band. If he can use 300 people to completely put in disarray the enemy, God can use you in a dramatic and powerful way at the very end of time," he said.

"We believe in you, and I know that God will bless you," Wilson said.

More than 5,000 Adventists worship in 25 churches in Peninsular Malaysia.

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Seek a 'life aligned with God's will,' church president for South America says

In commentary, Kohler also offers words of caution as church embraces revival

8 Sep 2011, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States
ANN staff

True spiritual revival generates a "life aligned with God's will," the president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South America said in a commentary published on the division's website this week.
Erton Kohler's editorial announced that the world church's Revival and Reformation website is now available in Spanish and Portuguese, but the leader also took the opportunity to share some advice as the division continues to embrace the initiative.

Already, the division has pledged to distribute 42 million copies of The Great Hope, a missionary sharing version of church co-founder Ellen G. White's book The Great Controversy, which traces God's leading throughout history. The South America Division is known for wide scale distributions, but this is "unheard of," Kohler said.

The distribution is part of a world church effort to share The Great Hope with millions of homes beginning in 2012. Church leaders anticipate that members will share more than 100 million copies of the book with their friends and neighbors.

Kohler said he hopes each church member makes Revival and Reformation an individual priority.

"This is not an initiative reserved for special programs or preachers. It is a moment of personal encounter with God and search for daily baptism by the Holy Spirit," Kohler said, defining such a relationship as the foundation of revival.

Kohler urged members not to expect an "emotional or religious awakening," and that revival is not based on "what we feel" but "how we react" to God's word. God is looking for a "serious and thorough search for truth," he said.

Cautioning against fanaticism, Kohler urged a balanced approach to Revival and Reformation. The result of revival is not criticism of another member's level of involvement, but "deep love for God, his Word and others," he said.

Kohler also reminded membership in South America that revival is ultimately illustrated by change in members' lives, including a renewed interest and focus on the church's mission.

"It is exciting to see members renew their commitment to God," Kohler said.