Prime minister of Bahamas praises Adventist contributions to society

At dedication of new regional church headquarters, leaders emphasize 'service to God and community'

2 Nov 2011, Nassau, Bahamas
Cheryl Rolle/ANN staff

The national leader of the Bahamas applauded the Seventh-day Adventist church this week for its contributions to society and ongoing work in the community.

Bahamas Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham commends the Adventist Church during the October 30 dedication of new headquarters for the denomination's Atlantic Caribbean Union Mission. [photo: Abel Márquez]
Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham called the church a "beacon of faithful service and Christian stewardship in our country," citing Adventist work among young people and in support of strong families and healthy lifestyles.

"You've also made an important contribution to education in the Bahamas, molding the lives of young men and women who have, in turn, contributed to the community and national development," Ingraham said.

The prime minister's comments came during the October 30 dedication ceremony for the new headquarters of the church's Atlantic Caribbean Union Mission. The administrative region oversees Adventist Church work in the Bahamas, Cayman Islands and the Turks and Caicos. Previously, the union mission served a constituency of nearly 30,000 Adventists from temporary headquarters in the Summer Winds Plaza, also in Nassau.

Ingraham previously commended the Adventist Church when the Bahamas parliament voted in May to recognize the church's then newly-established Atlantic Caribbean Union Mission as the legal entity of the church in the Bahamas. Church leaders first created the union mission when they split the former West Indies Union Conference into two administrative regions to recognize church growth and financial autonomy in the Caribbean.

Israel Leito, president for the Adventist Church in Inter-America, told Ingraham that Adventists in the Bahamas appreciate the high level of religious freedom the country's government grants.

In his keynote address, Leito also reminded the audience why they had gathered -- to dedicate not the building itself, but the people who work there "to serve God's people and the community."

"Any person should be able to walk in here ... and find solace and comfort because there is somebody here to pray with them and to help them," Leito said.

Leonard Johnson, president of the Atlantic Caribbean Union Mission, thanked Ingraham and other government officials present for leasing the land on which the new headquarters is located.

Ingraham also addressed growing crime in the Bahamas.

A recent Nassau Guardian newspaper article quoted Ingraham as saying that the government, churches and other faith- and community-based groups have a "mission" to "promote a culture of peace and nonviolence, a culture of mutual well-being and fellowship, a culture of life and respect for the gift of life."

A group of Adventist pastors in the Cayman Islands is currently mentoring young people in the community who are vulnerable to drug abuse and gang involvement. Church leaders and members in the Caribbean have
previously held public prayer events and marches to raise awareness of the climbing murder rates and widespread poverty present in many neighborhoods in the region.

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**Jamaican Adventists march in support of Enditnow**

*Global campaign against domestic abuse gaining signatures for UN petition*

3 Nov 2011, Ocho Rios, St. Ann, Jamaica
Nigel Coke/ANN staff

Hundreds of Jamaican Seventh-day Adventists marched last week against violence toward women and children in Ocho Rios.

A young Jamaican holds a sign against violence at a recent Enditnow march attended by hundreds of Adventists from across the Caribbean nation. Statistics indicate that 1 million such children enter the sex trade worldwide each year. [photos: Nigel Coke]

They came out in support of Enditnow, a global campaign to raise awareness of domestic abuse and advocate on behalf of woman and girls vulnerable to violence worldwide.

Human rights organizations estimate that one out of every three women globally will be beaten, raped or otherwise abused during her lifetime. The United Nations Children's Fund estimates that 1 million children, mostly girls, enter the sex trade each year.

"I am happy that we are here today and we are joining hands with all the other groups -- the government and other faith-based members -- and we are saying we are tired of it," said Lorraine Vernal, Women's and Children's Ministries director for the Adventist Church in Jamaica.

The Caribbean nation's government has pledged to organize events from November 25 to December 10 to help end violence against women and girls.

"You may say, 'What can I do?' You came out today, you are standing, you are listening, you may be watching via the Internet. When you hear violence perpetrating next door ... say something. You can do it anonymously," Vernal told supporters October 29.

The Adventist Church has released several statements affirming the dignity and worth of every human being and denouncing all forms of physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Most recently, directors from numerous departments at Adventist world church headquarters published a [joint commentary](#) in support of the church's 10th Annual Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day.
Adventists march through the streets of Ocho Rios in Jamaica on October 29. Their efforts supported the world church's global campaign against violence toward women and girls.

Adventist world church Women's Ministries Director Heather-Dawn Small represented Adventists worldwide at the event in Jamaica.

"We cannot consider ourselves to be children of God and stand by quietly. We have done that for too long; and while we do that, women and children are dying. By our silence we only help the problem to grow," Small told supporters.

The Adventist world church is collecting 1 million signatures to send to the United Nations in a public stand against abuse. So far, some 600,000 Adventists have signed the petition. Jamaicans added hundreds of new signatures during the event.

Enditnow is a joint initiative of the world church's Women's Ministries department and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency. For more information, visit enditnow.org.

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In South America, leaders offer preview of 'The Great Hope' distribution

Copies of classic Adventist book distributed ahead of 2012 push

7 Nov 2011, Brasilia, Brazil
Felipe Lemos/ANN staff

Hundreds of South America Seventh-day Adventist leaders and their spouses spent a recent Saturday morning distributing copies of The Great Hope.

An Adventist pastor hands a copy of The Great Hope to a convenience store employee in Brazil. Adventist leaders in South America distributed thousands of copies of the missionary sharing book on October 29. [photo: Neuber de Oliveira]
The missionary sharing book is a modern-language version of Adventist Church co-founder Ellen G. White's The Great Controversy, which church leaders say traces God's leading throughout history and provides answers for today's unsettled world.

Adventists worldwide have pledged to share millions of copies of the book with friends and neighbors in 2012 as part of the world church's Revival and Reformation initiative. In the church's South American Division alone, leaders plan to distribute 42 million copies of the book. The region is known for wide-scale distributions.

The October 29 distribution was a preview of the main distribution, which is set to begin next year in March, church leaders there said. In one region of Brazil alone, more than 120 pastors and their spouses handed out five thousand copies of The Great Hope. Similar distributions were conducted in Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Uruguay and Mexico.

One recipient, restaurant owner Rosa Maria Dantas Ferreira, welcomed the copy of The Great Hope she received. She told church leaders that the book was the motivation she needed to seek God.

Erton Kohler, Adventist Church president for South America, said the distribution comes at a time when people worldwide are looking for answers. The Great Hope offers a balanced, Biblical perspective on the world's final events, he said.