Adventist Church president supports community, spiritual development during Africa tour
Later, in France, Wilson facilitates open dialogue with members

In Peru, 20,000 youth outreach event delivers community service, evangelism support
Mission Caleb is held in summer throughout South America

Adventist leaders offer condolences on death of Coptic Pope Shenouda III
Egypt's Christian leader served four decades as patriarch

Adventist Church president supports community, spiritual development during Africa tour
Adventist Church President Ted Wilson lays a name plaque for a proposed 14-story multipurpose building expected to house new headquarters for the church in Ethiopia. The expansion of church infrastructure in the region reflects membership growth and a commitment to community development, local leaders said. [photos courtesy East Central Africa Division]

Burundi President Pierre Nkurunziza's chief of staff welcomes Wilson and an Adventist Church delegation to the president's office.
Seventh-day Adventists are committed to supporting community development in southern and central Africa, world church President Ted N. C. Wilson said during a recent tour spanning several of the region’s countries and numerous church building projects.

While in Africa, Wilson met with local church officials and members in Burundi, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and Zambia. He urged local membership to unite with their world church family in embracing the church’s Revival and Reformation initiative.

Afterward, the world church leader flew to France, where he spoke for worship service at the Adventist Church on the campus of Adventiste du Saleve.

Rebuilding infrastructure

In Burundi, Wilson visited the future site of an Adventist hospital planned for the country’s capital city, Bujumbura. Later, in a meeting with President Pierre Nkurunziza, the national leader urged the Adventist Church to hasten construction, explaining that the country has a great need for hospitals and clinics.

Wilson told President Nkurunziza that the church is keen to support the country’s physical, mental and spiritual development. He also thanked the government of Burundi for protecting religious liberty and allowing Adventists to complete their national community service on Sunday instead of Saturday.

Wilson called the leader of the largely Christian nation a “man of God” and offered a brief devotional and prayer for Nkurunziza, commending his efforts toward achieving peace and reconciliation in Burundi.

A call for unity

Later, in Ethiopia, Wilson laid the foundation stone for a 14-story multipurpose building expected to
house new headquarters for the Adventist Church in the country. The church in the region is adhering to new building codes, said Alemu Haile, president of the church in Ethiopia.

Flanked by government officials from the country’s capital city, Addis Ababa, Wilson and East Central Africa Division President Blasious Ruguri donned safety helmets to lay a name plaque for the forthcoming building.

At a later meeting with local church leaders and members, Wilson encouraged unity among membership, urging Adventists not to let race or ethnicity wedge between them or hamper the work of the church.

Sharing the Adventist hope

In Zimbabwe, tens of thousands of people came out to hear Wilson—36,000 at a stadium in Harare and 20,000 more in Bulawayo. He urged the crowd gathered at Barbourfields Stadium to join in the world church’s project to distribute church co-founder Ellen G. White’s touchstone book The Great Controversy. Local members can help by donating toward the purchase of books and sharing copies with their friends, family and neighbors, he said.

Later, Wilson addressed a graduating class of hundreds of students at the church’s Solusi University, also in Bulawayo.

Growth and development

In neighboring Zambia, Wilson visited the site of the proposed new Zambia Union Conference office facilities near Ndola. The new headquarters will accommodate burgeoning church growth in the country, church officials there said. In 2007, the North Zambia Field was divided into two new church territories with a combined membership of nearly 120,000. Zambia is the fastest growing region in the church’s South Africa-Indian Ocean Division.

The church’s education system is also flourishing in the region. Zambia’s minister of education praised the church’s education system at a plaque unveiling ceremony to mark the opening of a new administrative building for Rusangu University. He added that education is the only means to overcome poverty and ignorance.

In comments to Adventist leaders and church members in Zambia, Wilson underscored the importance of Scripture. “Seventh-day Adventists must hold fast to the Bible as our foundation for belief and practice in this world,” he said. “The Reformation did not end with Luther. It must continue with us.”

Changing opinions

The final leg of Wilson’s official tour took him to France, where Euro-Africa Division President Bruno Vertallier and Franco-Belgian Union President Jean-Claude Nocandy welcome the world church leader and offered insights into the life, activities and strategies of the church in the region.

During a question-and-answer period, local church leaders asked Wilson about his focus on Revival and Reformation, the church’s relationship with other faith groups and how to handle lay initiatives.
Observers say the exchange was open, fair, relaxed and, at times, even humorous.

Wilson, who previously served in the French-speaking Western African country of Cote d’Ivoire, is fluent in the language. Local church leaders say the shared language helped create a deep connection with French and Swiss Adventists.

“It was very helpful for me to meet President Wilson personally,” one local church leader said. “I have heard many rumors about him since [General Conference Session in] Atlanta, but … I find he is a very approachable person, humble, with plenty of administrative experience, wise and a real leader. And I have realized he is authentic.”

During March 17 Sabbath worship services, many French and Swiss Adventists were able to meet Wilson and listen as he preached on the campus of Adventiste du Saleve in Collonges-sous-Salève, France. He urged members there to humble themselves before God so that He can make them witnesses across Europe.

In Peru, 20,000 youth outreach event delivers community service, evangelism support

Mission Caleb participants plant trees on a highway in Lima. Adventist youth helped plant a total of 12,000 trees during last month’s program, which included various community outreach projects across the city.
Some 20,000 Seventh-day Adventist Peruvian youth committed a week or more of their summer vacation for service projects and evangelism outreach in Lima last month in one of the largest mass-scale projects of the South American Division’s summer service program.

The Mission Caleb program, held in Lima February 16 to 26, was followed by more than 5,000 people joining the church through baptism and the formation of several small congregations, called “companies.”

Dressed in matching red polo shirts, Adventist young people throughout Lima planted a total of 12,000 trees along highways, constructed 60 housing modules for low-income residents, cleaned parks and donated 1,500 units of blood to five hospitals. They also distributed more than 400,000 copies of The Great Hope, an adapted version of the book The Great Controversy, which was written by the denomination’s co-founder Ellen G. White.

In the evenings, youth helped with some 3,000 evangelism meetings, held in churches, auditoriums, parks and garages throughout Lima, a metropolitan area of more than 8 million people.

“It was an eye opener,” said Hiskia Missah, associate Youth Ministries director for the Adventist world church, who attended the event. “The youth paid their own way to come from all around Peru and sacrificed their vacation time for the Lord.”

Church members in Lima opened their homes for participants to stay during the event, Missah said. Event materials were provided by church administration.

Government officials offered their support to the initiative, from local mayors appearing at service projects to a federal minister and six congressman attending a Mission Caleb rally outside the convention center.

Mission Caleb, originally launched in Brazil, holds projects throughout South America each summer in an effort to reach places that have no Adventist presence.

Though the combination of evangelism and community service aren’t new, the denomination is promoting the initiative as an officially suggested option for youth outreach worldwide, according to Gilbert Cangy, Youth Ministries director for the Adventist world church. Mission Caleb was adopted by the Youth Ministries department at last year’s world advisory of the denomination’s top Youth directors.

“This is a model for young people conducting evangelism,” Cangy said. “It’s not just direct proclamation, but combining it with service projects is a biblical model.”

Future Mission Caleb mass-scale events in South America are scheduled for June and January in Brazil and September in Paraguay.

More information on the Adventist world church’s Youth Ministries is available at www.gcyouthministries.org.
Adventist leaders offer condolences on death of Coptic Pope Shenouda III

Mar. 19, 2012
Silver Spring, Maryland, United States
ANN staff

Leaders from the Seventh-day Adventist world church’s department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty offered condolences to the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria on the passing of Pope Shenouda III, Pope of Alexandria and the Patriarch of All Africa on the Holy Apostolic See of Saint Mark the Evangelist of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria.

Shenouda died on Saturday at age 88 after serving four decades as patriarch.

"The Public Affairs and Religious Liberty department offers its condolences to the Coptic Christians of Egypt, and to the people of Egypt for the passing away of Pope Shenouda III," said John Graz, the Adventist Church’s PARL director.

“Seventh-day Adventists hope the new leader of the Coptic Christian Church, the recognized Christian Church in Egypt, will favor good relations with the entire Christian family in Egypt in its diversity and be an instrument for peace and religious freedom," Graz said.

Graz called Shenouda a “strong leader,” recognizing his love of Egypt and devotion to national unity. Graz also noted Shenouda’s courage. He fell out of favor with Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, who in 1981 banished Shenouda to a desert monastery. He was reinstated four years later by Egypt’s then new President Hosni Mubarak.

Relations between Shenouda and the Adventist Church were sometimes tense. In 2003 he publically attacked Seventh-day Adventists for “disrupting unity.”

Still, Graz commended Shenouda for maintaining positive relations with Muslims. Christians and other religious minorities have increasingly suffered attacks since the overthrow of the Mubarak administration.
The **ANN news bulletin** is a weekly recap of news and information from the Communication department of the Seventh-day Adventist world church headquarters and is distributed by Adventist News Network.

**Reproduction requirements:** ANN encourages the republication of its news stories and accompanying editorial photos. Stories may be reproduced in full, in shortened form, or as one of several sources used to construct a news story. Please note that ANN's material is copyrighted. When reproducing ANN stories, the words "Adventist News Network" must appear either under the headline or immediately following the article. When reproducing photos that appear on ANN, please credit the photographer and ANN.

**ANN staff:** Williams Costa Jr., director; Ansel Oliver, assistant director; Elizabeth Lechleitner, editorial coordinator. Portuguese translations by Azenilto Brito, Spanish translations by Marcos Paseggi and French translations by Wenda Ozone-Mourandee.