Global Youth Day was church’s largest social media event
Adventist young people skipped sermon to ‘be the sermon’ March 16

Health, Ministerial departments summit explores comprehensive ministry
Blended approach would re-emphasize church’s original focus, leaders say

In Hungary, Wilson visits during centenary of church’s formal organization
Meets with minister of religion one year after Adventist Church regains official status in country

Adventist president continues European visit with stops in Poland, Croatia, Serbia
Denomination values region’s strong commitment to religious freedom, Wilson says

In the Middle East, Wilson affirms church members’ community service
Adventist Church committed to strengthening sense of community in region

Hope Channel Ukraine is church’s fourth satellite channel in Europe
Now 14 full-time channels in the network; Philippines next

Global Youth Day was church’s largest social media event
Last Saturday’s Global Youth Day was the single largest international mobilization of Seventh-day Adventists through social media, said Gilbert Cangy, the world church’s Youth Ministries director.

As hundreds of thousands of Adventist youth participated in community outreach, the church’s Youth departments worldwide reported their service activities live on Hope Channel in Australia, Germany and the United States.

More than 80,000 youth were connected through the social media – including Facebook and Twitter – and over 4 million people were talking about the initiative on the Internet.

Adventist youth skipped hearing a sermon and mobilized for service to demonstrate practical Christianity.

"It was a historically unifying moment for global Adventist youth," Cangy said. "At the heart of it all, this was not any of our doing; we simply made ourselves available to God as his hands and feet to get His work done. It was so inspiring to see the results."

Hundreds of young people in Spain participated in a flash mob in one of Madrid’s biggest shopping centers.

In England, young people served as missionaries for the day at local nursing homes and hospitals. Another group transformed their church into a shelter for abused women.

Young Adventists in Tanzania responded to an urgent call for blood donations.

In Puerto Rico, young people prayed for motorists on a busy street.

In South Africa, young people made breakfast for law enforcement officers.

And a headline in the Guyana Times read: "Adventist youths inspire hope through community service."

"It was so wonderful to see the Youth Ministries department taking leadership in mobilizing the whole church this way," said Daryl Gungadoo, distribution and network engineer for Adventist World Radio Europe and an organizer of the event.
Megan Brauner, social media specialist in the world church’s Communication department who assisted with the event, called for more social media integration with church activities and initiatives. “Social media is the perfect vehicle for spreading awareness and showing the results of a global movement in one place,” she said. "The more we integrate social media into our projects, the more we'll reap the benefits of quickly communicating with millions of people and receiving immediate feedback."

The next Global Youth Day is scheduled for March 15, 2014.

**Health, Ministerial departments summit explores comprehensive ministry**

Mar. 22, 2013
Silver Spring, Maryland, United States
Ansel Oliver/ANN

Top leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s Health Ministries and Ministerial Association are examining how the two entities can encourage a comprehensive approach to mission and evangelism.

With a nudge from the church’s president, Ted N. C. Wilson, regional world leaders from both departments met earlier this month at the denomination’s headquarters to discuss and identify potential integrated models for ministry.

Over the next few months, leaders plan to define a core philosophy of health and prepare for implementation of comprehensive ministry at local congregations for the coming years. For now, it’s a first step in a process of what many summit attendees said was the first top-level meeting of its kind in their church career. Many said it harkens back to what the denomination was first founded on.

“This is all counsel we’ve had from the beginning,” said Jerry Page, secretary of the Ministerial Association. “We just want to have it re-emphasized,” he said, referring to the Adventist Church’s historical emphasis on healthful living.

Health Ministries Director Dr. Allan Handysides concurred. “Our church co-founder Ellen White gave advice that the church’s work could be more effective when the health professionals and ministers are working hand-in-hand,” he said.

A comprehensive approach, Handysides said, would also help ensure that the church’s teachings on
healthful living are more consistent throughout the world.

“We need administrators, pastors and lay people all on the same page of what health ministry is – based on the Bible, the writings of Ellen White, and evidence-based practices,” Handysides said.

Leaders also said they would address support from independent ministries. “Some people are very zealous about health ministry, but if they’re going to be an Adventist supporting ministry, they need to be in the Adventist Church and truly supporting it,” Handysides said.

What comes out of this month’s summit will depend on support from local administrations, leaders said.

In the coming years, leaders said possible methods of supporting the health emphasis could include bringing back a combined master’s of divinity and master’s of public health degree at the church’s Loma Linda University in California, releasing a modern and abbreviated adaptation of White’s 1905 book “Ministry of Healing,” and developing training resources for Adventist schools. Leaders emphasized, however, that the future direction wouldn’t be limited to a few resources or events, but a whole renewed approach.

“We want to use Christ’s methods of developing relationships and meeting people’s needs before we try to share the gospel with someone,” said Mark Finley, assistant to President Wilson for evangelism, and organizer of the summit.

Finley said the highlight of the summit was public outreach during the meetings. For two evenings, the group modeled health evangelism, inviting the public to attend health lectures and cooking demonstrations in the world church headquarters auditorium. The first night drew more than 400 people; the second night – even despite most businesses and government agencies being closed due to inclement weather – drew 250 people.

“We were blessed to be able to model comprehensive, total health evangelism,” Finley said. “I think this is a real model for the future.”

In Hungary, Wilson visits during centenary of church’s formal organization
Thousands of Seventh-day Adventist members and friends in Hungary welcomed Adventist world church President Ted N. C. Wilson on the last stop of his ten-day pastoral visit to Europe this month.

Wilson’s visit came during a week when Adventists were celebrating the centenary of the church’s former Duna Union, later renamed the Hungarian Union Conference.

Adventism first came to Hungary in the mid-1860s, when M. B. Czechowski, a Polish Catholic priest turned Adventist, expanded his Sabbath-keeping group from Switzerland to Hungary and other parts of Europe.

Last Sunday’s anniversary celebration also marked the launch of The Great Hope Project in Hungary. The world church initiative aims to bring “hope to every home,” by encouraging Adventists to share copies of “The Great Hope” with their friends and neighbors.

“This is not about what the church can do, but [about] what the church members can do to bring ‘hope to every home’ in Hungary,” said Tamás Ocsai, president of the church’s Hungarian Union Conference.

“The Great Hope” is a modern adaptation of church co-founder Ellen G. White’s book, “The Great Controversy,” which highlights people faithful to God throughout history, including the Waldensians and other small groups who preserved an authentic form of Christianity during the Middle Ages.

“The Seventh-day Adventist Church is God’s last remnant church,” Wilson said. “God is preparing His people for something very unusual and we are to share with people the love of Jesus in a pleasant way. May you leave this place full of Hope for the future.”

In the afternoon, Wilson and a delegation of top Adventist officials from Hungary and the church’s Trans-European Division met with György Hölvényi, the country’s minister of state for Religion, National Minority and Civil Society Affairs.
Wilson outlined the scope of the 17 million-member global Protestant denomination, and talked with Hungarian officials about religious freedom in the country.

The meeting came a year after Hungarian lawmakers voted to restore the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s official status in the country. The move followed months of uncertainty after the controversial “Law on Churches,” passed in 2011, de-registered some 300 minority faith groups, including the Adventist Church. Churches were invited to reapply for official status under more stringent parameters. The government said the law was part of a wider effort to prevent sham religious groups from claiming the rights and privileges extended to legitimate churches.

During the meeting, Minister Hölvényi took the opportunity to reiterate Hungary’s commitment to protecting the rights of minority faiths. "The intention of the government is not to exclude any group from religious activities in the country," Hölvényi said, later stressing the key role of the International Religious Liberty Association in protecting freedom of belief worldwide.

Before leaving Hungary, Wilson told local church leaders that his visit to Europe had been an "enormous privilege," noting especially the involvement of young people in the region and the enthusiasm demonstrated by local leaders to promote the mission of the church.

"It has been exciting to see the vibrant church in so many places as God uses His church and every member to proclaim the three angels’ messages," Wilson said.

The world church leader is now headed to the church’s Middle-East Northern Africa Union, with stops planned in Turkey, Lebanon and Egypt, where Wilson spent part of his childhood.

**Adventist president continues European visit with stops in Poland, Croatia, Serbia**

*Adventist world church President Ted Wilson speaks at the Warsaw Central Adventist Church on March 10 during the first leg of his pastoral visit of Central Europe. The world church leader told an audience of hundreds to share their faith with enthusiasm.* [photo:}
Silver Spring, Maryland, United States

ANN staff, with reporting by Jóhann E. Jóhannsson

Seventh-day Adventist world church President Ted N. C. Wilson brought a message of hope and encouragement to government and church representatives in Central Europe last week, stopping first in Poland.

“One of the greatest challenges we face is to accept that we are a unique group of people, with a special calling,” Wilson told members of the Warsaw Central Adventist Church. He added that Adventists should demonstrate joy and enthusiasm, sharing the gospel “with smiles on our faces.”

After a tour of the Polish Union School and Theological Seminary at Podkowa Lesna, Wilson said he was encouraged to see the mission of the church moving forward in Poland. Later, in a meeting with local church leaders, he emphasized solidarity between church leaders and members.

“I am your brother; we are fellow citizens on our way to heaven. We are no different from any other. As pastors and lay members we are all in need of Jesus,” Wilson said. “God is calling on you to keep the mission and the vision that Jesus is coming soon alive.”

Local church leaders said they were heartened by Wilson’s comments. “We do not come to church for people, yet it is encouraging to see and hear leaders like Elder Wilson and his wife, Nancy, drawing the attention of their fellow believers to the unsurpassed example of our Savior,” said Piotr Lazar, editor of the Polish Union Media Center.

With a membership of 5,800 Adventists in Poland – a country where some 38 million claim affiliation with the Roman Catholic Church – the Seventh-day Adventist Church faces evangelism challenges. But local church leaders say a recent emphasis on media outreach is making inroads, especially among young people. The Adventist Church recently launched the online Hope Channel Poland, gaining new opportunities to reach a wider audience.

In nearby Croatia, too, Adventist leaders have found success with online evangelism among both
church members and the public. The Croatian Conference is now streaming outreach programs on the Internet, including a worship program with President Wilson last week. Hundreds of Croatian Adventists gathered at the First Adventist Church in Zagreb on March 13 to hear Wilson speak on religious liberty.

Earlier, the world church leader had met with Croatian President Ivo Josipović and Anrica Marinović, presidential advisor for Religious Affairs. Wilson expressed appreciation for the positive relationship between the church and government in Croatia, and outlined the work of the global Protestant denomination.

“The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Croatia has regular meetings and a positive relationship with the president and his office, as well as with government and state institutions,” said Branko Bistrovic, president of the church’s Adriatic Union Conference, which includes Albania, Croatia and Serbia.

“Pastor Wilson’s visit has deepened this relationship with the president, and has given him a broader picture of the worldwide work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church,” said Bistrovic, who accompanied Wilson on the courtesy visit.

During the meeting, President Josipović accepted an invitation from the Adriatic Union Conference to visit the local Adventist college and seminary in April.

In Serbia, Wilson toured the Serbia Publishing House and new facilities for the church’s media center donated by an Adventist member. The church’s publishing house is currently operating 24 hours per day, printing magazines and books for the Great Hope Project in most of the languages spoken in the church’s Trans-European Division. The project aims to share a modern adaptation of church co-founder Ellen G. White’s book, “The Great Controversy,” worldwide.

At the Novi Sad Adventist Church in Northern Serbia, Wilson focused on the Reformation, noting that early church reformers in Europe stood for truth, regardless the cost.

“We, too, are called to be reformers for God,” Wilson said, urging members never to act against their conscience. “Are you willing to stand by Jesus and be true to His word, even in difficult times?”

Later, Wilson met with pastors and church administrators at a leadership-training seminar opened by Bertil Wiklander, president of the church’s Trans-European Division. Wilson stressed the importance of maintaining a strong spiritual life.

“A connection with Christ in all that you do will have a powerful effect on your influence,” he said.

During a question-and-answer period following the seminar, Wilson fielded questions on creation, giving the world church leader a chance to offer an alternative to the “gap theory,” which assumes there was a gap between the “beginning” mentioned in Genesis 1:1 and God’s actual creation of the Earth. Wilson took the opportunity to reiterate the church’s belief in a literal, six-day creation week. His emphasis comes during a year in which Adventists worldwide are celebrating the Biblical account of creation.
In the Middle East, Wilson affirms church members’ community service

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Silver Spring, Maryland, United States
ANN staff

For Seventh-day Adventist Church President Ted N. C. Wilson, last week’s pastoral visit to the Middle East was an opportunity to affirm members and see the increasing opportunities they have to serve and help support their communities.

The leader of the world church met with Adventist members in homes and churches in countries that are part of the denomination’s Middle East North Africa Union.

Wilson reported an increase in activities of what Seventh-day Adventists are doing to impact communities in the region.

“The Seventh-day Adventist Church is committed to making a difference and enhancing quality of life in local communities, just as it does in all areas of the world it operates,” Wilson said. “It was inspiring to see the growing number of ways Seventh-day Adventists are serving their neighborhoods and cities in that region.”

The union’s territory is home to approximately 500 million people. It also includes some 220 cities with more than 1 million inhabitants.

Wilson also said local leaders and members continue to find ways of sharing the message of the Bible and helping people learn more about God. “Our brothers and sisters there are doing what they can to let people know that God loves them, and why strengthening their relationship with Him is so important.”

His visit to the region also included a meeting with students and staff at the church’s Middle East University in Beirut, Lebanon. The university last month unveiled a community center to serve its neighbors.

Wilson requested for the world church pray for the Middle East, “a region with significant challenges but home to people who desire peace,” he said.

Hope Channel Ukraine is church’s fourth satellite channel in Europe
This month’s launch of Hope Channel Ukraine gives the Seventh-day Adventist Church its fourth fulltime satellite channel in Europe, along with growing Internet channels potentially laying the ground for future satellite transmissions.

The March 1 opening caps a nearly five-year application process for a license to operate. In August, Hope Channel Ukraine became the first Protestant TV channel officially granted broadcast distribution rights across the Eastern European country and former Soviet Republic.

The network can now broadcast on some 600 cable networks, potentially reaching up to 60 percent of the country’s population. There are roughly 45 million people in Ukraine.

Daniel Reband, who oversees TV production for the denomination’s Euro-Asia Division, based in Moscow, said, “Having lived under communism and experienced for many years countless obstacles to sharing our message, I can hardly believe what I am seeing.”

Hope Channel Ukraine currently operates a Ukrainian- and a Russian-language studio in the capital, Kiev, and in eight other cities.

Church members in Ukraine for years financially supported the development of the media ministry outreach, said Kandus Thorpe, Hope Channel vice president for international development. There are roughly 60,000 Adventist Church members in Ukraine.

The channel joins its three other sister satellite channels on the continent – Hope Channel Europe, based in England, Speranța TV in Romania, and Hope Channel Germany.

The Adventist Church also operates six Internet Hope Channel broadcast channels in Europe – Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Norway and Poland.

Hope Channel Ukraine is the 14th fulltime satellite channel in the global Hope Channel network.

Hope Channel Philippines is set to launch as the network’s next satellite channel in August. The channel already operates online. Similarly, the Internet-based Hope Channel Indonesia is scheduled to also make the transition to a satellite channel later this year. Also upcoming is the launch of Hope Channel Africa.
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