In Rwanda, first lady opens Adventist Church’s International Women’s Congress
Women should inspire positive change and ‘live a legacy,’ Kagame says

Annual ASI convention sees $1.3 million donated for mission projects
Personal revival fuels outreach, Finley says; ASI Evangelism app now available

Ingram-Hudgins to lead Adventist Church Membership Software Office
IT project manager is former business owner, corporate programmer

In Rwanda, first lady opens Adventist Church’s International Women’s Congress

Aug 08, 2013
Kigali, Rwanda
Jean Pierre Bucyensenge/The New Times, with ANN staff

Seventh-day Adventist women hold “untapped potential” to impact their communities, Rwanda’s first lady said at the church’s International Women’s Congress near Butare this week.

“It is one thing to have [potential], and another to maximize it,” First Lady Jeannette Kagame said. “I want you to think about what you are going to leave behind for the next generation.”

Kagame was in Huye District to open the congress and a nearby exhibition showcasing women’s achievements, according to The New Times. The five-day congress, held for the first time in Rwanda, drew 1,500 women delegates from 11 countries in the Adventist Church’s East-Central Africa Division.

The congress has previously been held in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania, among other countries.

The congresses are meant to encourage women to bring positive change to their communities, organizers said. Delegates discuss challenges...
Participants at the Adventist women’s congress in Huye District. [photo: The New Times/Jean Pierre Bucyensenge]

facing women, including gender-based violence and obstacles to socio-economic development. Speakers address emotional intelligence and offer tips on living a purposeful life.

In Rwandan culture, women are considered the heart of the home, Kagame said. “We nurture, inspire and encourage those around us and, whether we realize it or not, we set the foundation for character building. Society expects a lot from us as wives, mothers, sisters, professionals and individuals,” she said.

Kagame also acknowledged the increasingly complex role that women play in Rwandan society. “We have to compete with men out there in the workforce, and at the same time assume our roles in the home,” she said.

An exhibition running alongside the congress displays homemade food, new technology, clothing and interior design items.

Esron Byiringiro, president of the Adventist Church’s Rwandan Union Mission, said Rwanda was chosen to host the congress because the country is a strong advocate of women’s empowerment and gender equality.

“We expect that by the time these women leave, there will be a difference. They will leave with a lot of valuable lessons,” Byiringiro told The New Times.

The principle of gender equity and equality is enshrined in the Constitution, which guarantees a minimum of 30 percent of leadership positions to women. In some cases, the threshold has been significantly surpassed.

At 56 percent of Members of Parliament, women occupy a majority of seats in the House. And the country’s laws protect women’s rights to equal opportunity for employment, inheritance and land tenure.

Esperence Ngagi Murerabana, the Rwanda Union Adventist Women Ministries director, said because Rwanda understands the notion of gender equity and equality, it has allowed women to be actively involved in the efforts toward socio-economic transformation.

“That has allowed us to be self-confident,” Murerabana said. "Last time I attended a meeting in a certain country and everyone was surprised because I was the sole woman among the 11 leaders in attendance. They asked me how, as a woman, I could lead. But I told them my country has put in place policies that allowed me to discover my strengths and abilities.”

There are nearly 550,000 Adventist in Rwanda, which has a population of some 12 million.
Adventist world church President Ted N. C. Wilson, center, is interviewed at last week’s Adventist-laymen’s Services & Industries convention in Orlando, Florida. Behind him is a “One Day School,” an initiative of Maranatha International that provides educational infrastructure in disadvantaged communities worldwide. [photos: ASI Ministries]

Adventist evangelist C. D. Brooks, founder of the Breath of Life television ministry, speaks August 10 at the ASI International Convention. Brooks reminded ASI members that God has called his followers to share in every aspect of His work, including the financial side of ministry.

More than 200 exhibitors displayed their ministries at the ASI International Convention.

Annual ASI convention sees $1.3 million donated for mission projects

Aug 12, 2013
Silver Spring, Maryland, United States
Mark A. Kellner, Adventist Review

Seventh-day Adventist lay members donated and pledged nearly $1.3 million to missionary projects sponsored by Adventist-laymen’s Services & Industries (ASI) during the organization’s annual international convention held last week in Orlando, Florida.

The offering, which surpassed expressed needs by more than $100,000, is an annual highlight of the ASI International Convention, whose stated purpose is to energize and equip those “sharing Christ in the marketplace.”

But the money raised is only one indication of members’ commitment to the work of the church. Participants also experienced a day of preaching and teaching centered on the theme of “Revival and Reformation,” which is also the topic of the current “Adult Bible Study Guide,” or Sabbath School lesson quarterly. Adventist evangelist Mark Finley, the author of those lessons, led the August 10 lesson study.

Defining personal reformation, Finley said it “always” follows personal revival, and “has to do with a change in habits, attitudes, and thoughts that leads me to a new lifestyle.”

A trio of ASI leaders – Terry Anderson, evangelism vice president; Dan Houghton, a board member and past ASI president; and Denzil McNeilus, another past ASI president who is on the board of ASI Missions, Inc. – joined together Sabbath morning to launch the “ASI Evangelism” application, available now for Apple Inc. IOS devices, including the iPod, iPhone and iPad, as well as smartphones and tablets running Google Inc.’s Android operating system.

The free software includes slides and notes for the “New Beginnings” evangelism series formerly available on DVD, plus a raft of evangelism training tools and helps. Also included are the famed “Discover” Bible studies from the Voice of
Prophecy, a pioneer Seventh-day Adventist radio ministry, and resources from several Adventist Church speakers aimed at helping lay members share the church’s message.

“You'll have all of those tools right at your fingertips. You can go over a health presentation over lunch on your phone or iPad,” Anderson said.

In the afternoon, seven Seventh-day Adventist thought leaders, including Adventist world church President Ted N. C. Wilson, participated in a panel discussion on the role of Bible prophecy in the life of the church.

Weimar College Chaplain Don Mackintosh led the discussion, which, along with Wilson, included evangelist Finley; Dr. Andetta Hunsaker, an assistant professor at Harvard Medical School and ASI Atlantic Union chapter president; Adventist evangelist C.D. Brooks; Ed Reid, assistant to the president of Adventist World Radio for development; and author and attorney Lewis Walton.

“The Second Coming has to be rooted in your own relationship with Christ,” Wilson said in answer to a question. “As I travel, I try to emphasize strongly the Second Coming. Every sermon we preach should somehow, some way, have a sense of urgency about Jesus' Second Coming.”

The ASI International Convention included more than 200 exhibitors and five tracks of seminars on various outreach topics.

During the opening night, ASI President Frank Fournier reminded members to follow the highest example in their ministries and outreach efforts.

“By beholding Jesus, we become changed. And we need to do a lot more beholding than we do,” Fournier said.

**Ingram-Hudgins to lead Adventist Church Membership Software Office**

Sherri Ingram-Hudgins, an information technology project manager, was appointed yesterday to serve as director of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s Office of Adventist Membership Software.

In her new post, Ingram-Hudgins will oversee the software program chosen by the world church to help local churches keep track of members and offer non-personal data on trends to church statisticians.

Her appointment by the Adventist world church’s Administrative Committee replaces the vacancy left by Andrew Kuntaraf, who passed away in April.
The office is a function of the Adventist Church’s Secretariat.

“She has a passion for mission and is experienced in membership software and implementation,” said Myron Iseminger, Adventist Church undersecretary. “She has the knowledge of both the technical skills and also the needs of church organizations.”

Ingram-Hudgins, a former business owner and corporate programmer, currently serves as a project manager for the Information Technology Services of the denomination’s North American Division.

In her 12 years working in the department, she has overseen the implementation, training and support for the eAdventist Internet-based records program used by 59 conferences in the division. She holds a bachelor’s degree in computer science from what is now known as Washington Adventist University. Last year she also launched a mission project – a non-profit organization that provides micro grants to homeless individuals.

“I’m humbled by this opportunity and look forward to continuing the work that Andrew started,” Ingram-Hudgins said of her appointment yesterday.

“The long-range goal is to enable the worldwide church to have even more accurate and reliable statistics regarding the church body as a whole and to help enable better decision-making on retaining members, allocating resources and to aid in the decision-making of administrators,” she said.

The office was created last year to oversee standardized membership accounting software for church use worldwide. The software, now in its pilot implementation stage, is streamlining how the church maintains its membership database.

The software was developed by the denomination’s South American Division and offers multilingual use. Ultimately, church officials want to eliminate duplications and avoid counting inactive or deceased members.

“We’re hoping to provide more divisions and unions the opportunity to benefit from the system,” Iseminger said. “Currently the only option for some administrative units in different parts of the world is to keep membership records on paper.”

—additional reporting by Elizabeth Lechleitner

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