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In New York, Adventist church hosts hope, healing service for police, citizens
A Seventh-day Adventist Church in New York hosted a service of hope and healing in an effort to quell tensions brought on by weeks of unrest between police and civil rights groups stemming from the deaths of a citizen and two police officers.

Tying in with celebrations to commemorate the legacy of civil rights icon Martin Luther King Jr., the Hope and Healing for Better Police and Community Relations program featured Church leaders, city leaders, police officials and congressional representatives.

The program, held January 18 at the Flatbush Adventist Church in Brooklyn, included prayers for city officials, protection for the more than 35,000 city police officers patrolling the streets, and God’s healing to ease the hurt and suspicion rampant in the community.

Tensions have flared in New York and nationwide resulting from police incidents late last year. In New York, citizen Eric Garner died in July as the result of a chokehold from a police officer. A county grand jury on December 3 decided not to indict the officer. On December 20, two police officers were assassinated by a man claiming retaliation. Both events sparked protests, rallies and extensive national media coverage.

At Sunday’s program, co-sponsored by the Adventist Church’s Greater New York and Northeastern conferences, Adventist Church leaders appealed to all groups for calm, understanding and healing.

“Over the past few weeks, the city has been roiled by tension,” said Northeastern Conference President Daniel Honoré. "We still mourn the loss of Eric Garner. We still mourn the loss of [officers Wenjian] Liu and [Rafael] Ramos. Society however has presented us with a false choice. It has told us, ‘Either you support community rights, or you support the police.’ Today I want to categorically reject that choice.”

Greater New York President G. Earl Knight said that in light of the recent events dividing the city, “as a faith community, we cannot sit in idleness, twiddling our thumbs in despair. We are a people of hope, not despair . . . We believe that God can heal the brokenhearted; He can heal our broken relationships.”

U.S. Representative Yvette Clarke, of New York’s 9th Congressional District, commended the denomination for coordinating the “timely gathering for dialogue and discussion.” She added, “You have decided that church takes place seven days a week. From that understanding of the gospel, we can transform life in real-time. Not only in the spiritual realm, but indeed we can make a change in the secular realm.”

Remarks also came from other official guests, including New York City Public Advocate Letitia James; U.S. Congressional Representative Hakeem Jeffries of the 8th Congressional District;
Harold Miller of the Community Affairs Unit representing Mayor Bill de Blasio; and New York Police Department First Deputy Commissioner Benjamin Tucker.

Many in attendance were youth and young adults. In another cooperative effort, Youth Ministries directors from both conferences, Andres Peralta (Greater New York) and Roger Wade (Northeastern), presented the audience with cards containing information about how one should respond when stopped by the police, as well as information about citizens’ rights and responsibilities.

“Prayer is not the only thing we can do,” Wade said.

Greater New York Conference Communication Director Rohann Wellington moderated a panel discussion. Invited elected officials and NYPD 1st Deputy Commissioner were joined by the president of the 67th Precinct Clergy Council, Gilford Monrose; and Greater New York and Northeastern conference pastors, Shane Vidal and Allen Martin to field questions from Wellington and the audience.

When asked what steps need to be taken to bridge the divide as a result of recent events, Monrose cited examples of clergy activism during the Civil Rights era in the 1960s and 70s. “Members of the clergy have a specific role to pray, but we also have to put our feet to our faith. . . We have to do work and be that liaison between the police and our communities." Monrose added that while anger and frustration are inevitable, clergy can be that “voice in the middle" to maintain the flow of communication on both sides.

Martin pointed out the more reactive approach that communities have had and shared his experience while visiting Ferguson, Missouri, after the shooting of Michael Brown. Emphasizing the need for public engagement before tragedies happen in the community, Martin said, “We have elected officials on the podium, but elected officials represent us. . . Our responsibility is to hold our officials accountable.

Martin added, “We can’t sit back and let things just go and not raise our voice of concern. And we can’t wait for there to be a shooting, or there to be some tragedy, to be engaged.”

Pastor Shane Vidal called for a new paradigm of policing that would enable police officers to focus not on how many arrests are made, but on how many lives they can transform by their daily encounters.

Recommendations from the panel discussion will be prepared and presented to the office of the Mayor of New York City.

Sunday’s program also included worship and a press conference. One poignant moment during the service came when the audience—comprised of a variety of races and ethnicities—collectively rose to their feet and enthusiastically applauded eight-year-old Nathanel McKenzie after his recitation of King’s "I Have a Dream" speech.

Closing remarks were presented by Abraham Jules, pastor of the Community Worship Center Adventist Church. Using Christ’s parable of the Good Samaritan, Jules reminded the audience that those who have been wounded often have a greater capacity to become healers.

Future plans are being made to build upon relations formed from this event and to provide a continued proactive presence in the neighborhoods affected by these tragedies.
Remembrance: Leonard Barnard was first Adventist mission pilot

Barnard pioneered aviation medical work on Papua New Guinea

January 21, 2015 | Wahroonga, New South Wales, Australia | Vania Chew/South Pacific Adventist Record and Andrew McChesney/Adventist Review

Leonard Barnard, the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s first missionary pilot and co-founder of the aviation company used by the South Pacific Division, died this week at the age of 95.

Barnard, an Australian national who began working for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1933, was best known for three decades of pioneering missionary work on the South Pacific island that includes Papua New Guinea.

“A most remarkable life has ended,” said John Hammond, who flew with Barnard many times in the mission plane Andrew Stewart. “We have lost one of our finest.”

Barnard, known to many as simply “Len,” decided to become a missionary on his first visit to Papua New Guinea during World War II when he served as a medic in the Australian Infantry Forces.

One day, he was ordered to examine 50 local men who worked as carriers for the Australian military and had barely survived an arduous trek through the jungle. The men were malnourished and suffering from various tropical diseases, Barnard recalled in his book “Banish the Night,” rereleased by Pacific Press in 2013.

But the last six men, while weak, were noticeably healthier and happier than the rest of the group. After quizzing the six men, Barnard learned that they were fellow Adventists who had learned about Jesus from foreign missionaries. During the trek, they had declined to eat unclean wild animals caught by the party and had worshiped together daily.

“The striking contrast between the mission lads and the other carriers left an indelible impression upon my mind and awoke in me a desire to be a missionary,” Barnard wrote.

He returned to Papua New Guinea 16 years later as a medical missionary, building and operating a leper colony at Mt. Hagen in the island’s Western Highlands. He spent 30 years serving as a pioneer missionary on the island but said his greatest joy as a pioneer was to fly the first Adventist mission plane to go into service anywhere in the world. In the 1960s, he co-founded Adventist Aviation, a company that operates a fleet of mission planes in the church’s South Pacific Division.

Barry Oliver, president of the South Pacific Division, expressed gratitude to God for Barnard’s life and ministry on Thursday.
We wish to pay a very special tribute to him for the vision and courage that enabled him to pioneer the ministry of Adventist Aviation in the South Pacific," he said. “To see the sparkle in his eye as he recently spoke to the assembled thousands at the [50th anniversary] of Adventist Aviation in Goroka, was to catch a glimpse of the joy of service and determination which enabled him to do what he has done under the blessing of God.”

Last year, Barnard and Colin Winch, the other co-founder of Adventist Aviation, were honored by the South Pacific Division at an event at the aviation company’s headquarters in Goroka, Papua New Guinea.

“Len was a great pioneer. I had the privilege of starting the flying program in New Guinea with him,” Winch said this week. “Working together, Len and I became very close friends and our friendship has lasted more than 50 years.

“I pray our heavenly Father will surround his family with love and comfort. He has made a tremendous contribution to the winning of souls in PNG and left a legacy which we all admire.”

Information about survivors and funeral arrangements was not immediately available.


“Pastor Len Barnard must be remembered as a missionary in the fullest sense of the word,” said Ken Vogel, a former missionary pilot who works as general secretary for the Australian Union Conference. “Whether it was in service for God in a foreign country or in his home country of Australia, Pastor Barnard was always at the vanguard of missionary action.”

Adventist communication, technology conference set for Feb 11-15

Annual GAIN forum will be held online

January 23, 2015 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States | ANN staff

Seventh-day Adventists participating in this year’s Global Adventist Internet Network will meet in a new location—online.

The annual conference in which participants examine emerging trends of ministry and technology will be held February 11 to 15 at gain.adventist.org. Each presentation, followed by live discussions, will be broadcast three times a day in order to accommodate participants in time zones worldwide.
Organizers said the move to the online format—which is expected to draw the conference’s highest-ever attendance—came about because of the denomination’s General Conference Session, a 10-day global spiritual gathering and business meeting scheduled for July.

“Many people will use their resources to travel to San Antonio in the U.S. state of Texas for General Conference Session, so it was reasonable for us to think of other options for the GAiN meeting,” said Williams Costa Jr., Communication director for the Adventist world church. “This is a new way to engage people in the conversation about technology, ministry and evangelism.”

This year’s conference will be offered in English and live translated into French, Portuguese and Spanish.

Costa said participants are encouraged to participate in groups hosted at churches, offices or homes.

Scheduled presentation topics include cyber security, cryptocurrency, app development, distance education, branding, using games to spread the gospel, and operating an information technology department on a budget.

Several Church Communication and Information Technology leaders said the annual GAIN conference is a key meeting for collaborating on projects and sharing tips for ministry.

“The sharing of ideas, projects and news has always galvanized those working in the field of communication and tech, a field in continuous development,” said Corrado Cozzi, Communication director for the Adventist Church’s Inter-European Division, based in Berne, Switzerland. “I personally have benefited from each annual conference I attended, especially in terms of innovations shared with the intent to create synergy and networking.”

Tech specialist Kirk Nugent said, “GAIIN is one of the highlights of my year because in order for IT to be truly relevant we must find a way to directly tie into the overall mission of the Church. Nugent, who serves as Information Technology director for the denomination’s Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division, based in Pretoria, South Africa, said, “Our goals are the same, and it’s only by getting everyone involved can we truly be effective for the cause of Christ.”

To register for free and see the conference schedule, visit gain.adventist.org.

The event hashtag is #GAiN15.

**Teenie Finley to Run First Marathon at 70**
Ernestine Finley, wife of evangelist Mark Finley and author of the popular Natural Lifestyle Cooking cookbook, may have turned 70 last month, but she is preparing to run her first marathon in a few days.

Finley, known to many as “Teenie,” will run the full 26-mile (42-kilometer) marathon in the town of Celebration, Florida, next Sunday in a bid to raise $100,000 toward what she calls one of the most exciting projects she has ever tackled with her husband: a church and evangelistic training center in their hometown of Haymarket, Virginia.

“We have spent 47 years in ministry—preaching, teaching, and deeply involved in health ministry,” Finley said. “Therefore I am doing this to inspire others to be trained and equipped for involvement in the ministry of Christ. It is for God’s glory, not mine.”

The Finleys are on the last lap of a fundraising drive for the $4 million Life Hope Seventh-day Adventist Community Church and have already secured $3.5 million, mostly from private donors.

Construction is scheduled to begin in March, and the first group of 25-40 pastors and laypeople will start classes next year. The four- to eight-day intensive classes will be offered at no cost. Attendees will only be asked to pay for optional class materials, meals, and lodging.

Teenie Finley, who raised nearly half of her $100,000 goal from 32 donors on the GivingZone.com website by Thursday morning, said she decided to run after reading an Adventist Review article about an 82-year-old practicing physician from Loma Linda, California, who has run in 237 marathons since the age of 62.

“I thought if Moses Christian improved his health and ran 237 full marathons in the past 21 years, then I can certainly start running my first marathon at the age of 70,” said Finley, who turned 70 on Dec. 4. “I want to glorify God in my body.”

The article by Wilona Karimabadi is titled “Running on Faith” and was published on July 10, 2014. Mark Finley is editor-at-large for Adventist Review and Adventist World.

Inspiring People to Take Charge

In addition to improving her health, Teenie Finley said she hoped that the race would inspire others to take charge of their lives. She said she often hears people say at health classes that she teaches that it is difficult to muster enough self discipline to make healthy choices.

“I want to inspire them that they can do it,” she said. “Yes, it takes discipline. It takes discipline for me to walk and run every day to train for this marathon as well. However, we will all feel better and live longer, healthier, and happier lives.”
Finley conducts wellness seminars during her husband’s evangelistic meetings, most recently speaking to nightly crowds that topped 15,000 people in a stadium in the Dominican Republic this month, and she has used her cookbook to teach nutrition classes to thousands more.

The marathon is already inspiring some people.

“We applaud Teenie as she undertakes this marathon for this cause,” wrote an anonymous donor who pledged $25,000 on the fundraising website. “May God bless both as you continue to participate in so many ministries for Him.”

“For His glory, go Teenie!” wrote another donor. “You are an inspiration. I need to start running again!”

Robert Banks, pastor of the Finleys’ home church in Warrenton, Virginia, said he also was encouraged by the initiative.

“It’s an inspiration to me that our age doesn’t have to slow us down,” Banks said by phone.

Banks, 60, will serve as pastor of the new church in Haymarket and join the Finleys as a regular speaker at its evangelism center. The Warrenton church, which has 60 members and around 95 regular attendees, will be sold in the coming months and its proceeds used to finance the new church, Banks said.

Mark Finley to Cheer From Sidelines

Mark Finley said he was excited about his wife’s participation in the marathon and planned to cheer her on from the sidelines.

“Her discipline to exercise vigorously each day really inspires me,” he said. “She has been interested in and teaching health for years, and we believe this will be a powerful testimony for the Adventist health message.”

Finley, 69, does not run on the recommendation of doctors after undergoing two sports-related knee operations. But he said he walks and bikes extensively, and he and his wife go for at least an hourlong walk every day.

“Even in our international travel we have disciplined ourselves to exercise each day,” he said. “Exercise is an integral part of both of our lives.”

Turning to the planned evangelism center, Finley said he hoped it would enable people to use Christ’s methods of multi-faceted outreach to reach their communities.

“My wife and I realize that the most significant contribution we can make for Christ and His church at this age of our lives is to share the practical lessons God has taught us,” he said. “Our goal is to spend our lives equipping others to effectively share the Adventist message with a world in desperate need.”

He called the entire project “an adventure in faith” that began about two years ago with nothing but an idea.
“During this time we have been amazed as God has worked some incredible miracles,” he said. “He has miraculously provided funding from many different sources. We are confident that He will enable us to see the project through to completion.”

Teenie Finley, meanwhile, said she was praying that God would give her the strength each step of the way throughout the race. She said she intended to reach the finish line through a combination of running and walking. To qualify for a medal, she needs to finish in seven hours. She is aiming for six and a half.

Supporters are invited to guess exactly how long it will take her to finish. The Finleys are offering to visit the winner’s home church and present a health-focused spiritual weekend.

“I pray most of all that God will be glorified by me running the race,” Teenie Finley said. “I have a lot of people who are cheering me on. Therefore, by the grace of God, I will glorify Him and finish the race.”