Adventist Heritage Center

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Headlines

With Wilson’s pledge, flood-hit Indian school is fully restored
Adventist Church president visits remote corner of India during seven-country trip

Adventist Health Ministries honors longtime health expo promoters
Couple receives Medal of Distinction at Wildwood

In Thailand, Adventist university hosts mobile eye surgery clinic
Red Cross volunteers perform hundreds of operations for local elderly in need

With Wilson’s pledge, flood-hit Indian school is fully restored

Adventist Church president visits remote corner of India during seven-country trip

February 10, 2015 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States | Andrew McChesney/Adventist Review

An Adventist boarding school ravaged by a deadly flashflood in northeast India in September will be fully back on its feet after Adventist Church leader Ted N. C. Wilson and local church administrators pledged funds for the last renovations: new tables and chairs for the dining hall.
Wilson promised the funds to the principal of Riverside Adventist Academy during a trip this week to the remote Indian state of Meghalaya, which is connected to the rest of India by a thin slice of territory and is bordered by China, Myanmar, and Bangladesh.

Wilson, who is on a two-week tour of seven countries, visited the area with his wife, Nancy, after attending 100th-anniversary celebrations last weekend at Spicer Adventist University in Pune, India.

Riverside Adventist Academy closed its doors to 900 elementary and high school students after heavy torrential rain unexpectedly caused the banks of the nearby Didram River to overflow and swamp the campus in the early morning hours of September 22.

One teacher, Rituraj Phukan, 27, drowned when he was swept away by surging floodwaters. But he first managed to rescue many of the 430 students who lived on campus, and he received a hero’s burial at a funeral attended by his wife of six months at Northeast Adventist College, the church’s flagship college in northeastern India.

With the assistance of donations and volunteer labor, Riverside Adventist Academy has reopened and is fully functional except for the lack of furnishings in the dining hall, principal Malaki Rimsu told Wilson during a meeting at Northeast Adventist College.

Wilson and leaders from the Adventist Church’s Southern Asia Division, which includes India, promised to find the needed funds.

“Things are in good order but they need tables and chairs for the dining room since they lost them in the flood,” Wilson said by e-mail. “I indicated that the General Conference would be sending some funds from a special fund to assist, and the division is doing the same, so the dining room will again be a blessing to the students.”

T.P. Kurian, Communication director for the division, expressed gratitude to the many people who have helped reopen the school, which was founded in 2007 and provides free education to Adventist orphans and poor students.

“Members of the church volunteered to clean up each building, one after another,” said Kurian, who visited the stricken academy after the flood. “The students came back to school, and now classes are going on as usual.”

Kurian especially thanked Adventist Review readers who responded to an article and appeal for help. Among those readers were three students—Elizabeth Rodgers and Lydia Tupper, of Adventist-operated Walla Walla Valley Academy, and Campbell Davis, of Walla Walla High School, in the U.S. state of Washington—who raised hundreds of dollars with an acoustic benefit concert staged under the banner “Students Helping Students.”

“Thank you for the report that helped the school to get help from different sources and many individuals,” Kurian said.

**School Baptizes 65 Yearly**

Northeast Adventist College welcomed Wilson with culture fanfare and costumes and showed off a new library built with the assistance of a Thirteenth Sabbath Offering. Wilson praised the
library’s layout, with a central domed reading room and classrooms around the periphery on the second level.

Northeast Adventist College, founded by U.S. missionary O.W. Lange in 1941, is located in an area known as the Scotland of the East, nestled among subtropical forests on rolling hills and mountains. The college has about 200 students, and another 1,000 students attend a local elementary school and high school. More than half of the students are not Adventist Church members, but about 65 are baptized every year, Wilson said.

Wilson, speaking to an assembled group from across the church’s Northeast India Union, preached on Christ’s righteousness and the need for Adventists to be strong witnesses in proclaiming the changing power of Christ in their lives.

Wilson later visited the first Adventist church and school in Kolkata, at a site where U.S. missionary William A. Spicer helped start church work in 1898, before arriving in Tanzania on Thursday for an African trip that will span six countries, including Tanzania, Kenya, South Sudan, Rwanda and two North African countries.

**Division’s Most Faithful Tithe Givers**

But before the tour of Northeast Adventist College, Wilson visited the Northeast India Union headquarters and an adjacent school in Shillong, the capital of the state of Meghalaya and a 90-minute drive from the college.

The Shillong school, which has an enrollment of 1,400 students and growing, will soon tear down an old original building on campus for additional facilities that will allow it to accommodate more students, Wilson said. A new, large church with seating for 1,000 people is under construction across the road from the school, and the smaller current church will be used for worship by various language groups.

The Northeast India Union is comprised of seven Indian states with 42 million people and about 100 languages. A majority of the population, about 30 million people, practice Hinduism, while the rest are mostly Christian or animist.

The Adventist Church has 48,594 members worshiping in 519 churches and companies in the union, according to the 2014 Annual Statistical Report from the General Conference’s Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research.

While those members may represent a relatively small percentage of the population, they are among the most faithful in the world when it comes to tithe and offerings. The Northeast India Union has the highest per capita giving of all of the Southern Asia Division, Wilson said.

“God’s work is alive and well in northeast India as our members faithfully witness and proclaim the three angels’ messages pointing people to Christ and the true worship of God,” Wilson said.

**Adventist Health Ministries honors longtime health expo promoters**
Couple receives Medal of Distinction at Wildwood

February 05, 2015 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States | Ansel Oliver/ANN

The Seventh-day Adventist Church’s Health Ministries department recently presented its Medal of Distinction to a couple who for decades have promoted a model of health expos that Adventist churches have used in communities worldwide.

Charles and Phoebe Cleveland received the award December 19 during a graduation ceremony at a lifestyle education center in the U.S. state of Georgia.

Health Ministries director Dr. Peter Landless said the ceremony, held at the Wildwood Lifestyle Center, “was a wonderful opportunity to honor Charles and Phoebe Cleveland for their lifetime of service to health ministries throughout the world.”

Landless said the co-award was presented in recognition of the role both have played in the ministry and producing health promotional materials.

Charles Cleveland is president of Health Education Resources, a non-profit organization that produces health education materials in 40 languages. He is known for taking a health expo model first used by California’s Weimar Institute in the 1980s and making it more mobile, complete with health banners and activities.

Cleveland has helped pioneer lifestyle-centers and medical missionary training programs worldwide. He was a key founder of Wildwood’s Lay Institute for Global Health Training. He is also a member of Wildwood’s board of trustees.

In an interview, he said the medal “underscores that there is a close working relationship between self-supporting ministries and the Church.”

Cleveland said he felt “privileged” to accept the medal.

“We each have a passion, and the Lord uses us,” he said. “To me that’s a ministry and work that reaches out to different parts of the world and helping people understand how to prevent disease…. Little did I ever think that there would be a medal.”

Cleveland, who holds a Master of Divinity and a Master of Public Health, served as an Adventist pastor. After being ordained in 1975, he shifted his focus to work in self-supporting ministries, serving as an administrator of the Uchee Pines Health Institute and later Vice President of Wildwood Lifestyle Center and Hospital in Georgia. He served as vice president of the supporting ministry Outpost Centers International from 2003 to 2006.

Dr. Viriato Ferreira, associate Health Ministries director, said the award “is a small token of acknowledgment of God’s wonderful work through their dedicated lives of service and care.”

At last weekend’s graduation ceremony, Landless delivered the commencement address and said the Adventist Church must continue embracing a health ministry that focuses on grace, is based
on the Bible and the writings of Adventist Church co-founder Ellen G. White, and is backed by peer-reviewed, evidence-based research.

"I found this to be the direction in which Wildwood is working and making a difference in the world," Landless said.

In Thailand, Adventist university hosts mobile eye surgery clinic

**Red Cross volunteers perform hundreds of operations for local elderly in need**

*February 10, 2015 | Muak Lek, Saraburi, Thailand | Kannika Seesookphu and Patthita Chotwittayagan*

A Seventh-day Adventist university in Thailand recently hosted a group of volunteer ophthalmologists who offered free eye care for more than 250 nearby elderly residents in need.

The Church’s Asia-Pacific International University in the Saraburi province hosted the Mobile Eye Surgery Eye Clinic, sponsored by the province’s Red Cross Society February 2 to 6.

Patients were diagnosed with cases of cataract, pterygium, and other eye-related conditions. The surgeries for most cases took five to 10 minutes to complete, while more challenging cases took up to an hour.

The mobile clinic was set up in various spots around campus, including a multi-use room, the dining room and the church parking lot.

The clinic served underprivileged elderly from five districts—Muak Lek, Nhong Kae, Khaeng Koi, Wihan Dang and Wang Muang.

The program was also supported by Dr. Varangkna Tongkamsai, an ophthalmologist for Nations Relief and Community Health Protection Society, who conducted the eye operations.

Organizers said the highlight of the five-day event was a February 4 appearance by Phan Wannamethee, secretary general of the Thai Red Cross Society and a representative of Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, Executive Vice-President of the Thai Red Cross Society.

University President Loren Agrey accompanied Wannamethee as he observed the different functions of the mobile clinic.

Saraburi Governor Wichian Puttiwinyu also attended the event, delivering remarks at the opening ceremony on February 2.
"We praise God for an opportunity to take part in this project," said Diana Riesenberger, a university spokeswoman.

The Princess Sirindhorn Mobile Eye Surgery Clinic was established in 1995 to commemorate Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn’s 40th Birthday. The project has advanced to be a surgical mobile unit to provide free eye treatment for people with cataracts, glaucoma and disease of eyelids. So far the project has provided treatment for more than 158,000 people and performed operations for 40,000 patients.