Adventist Church President expresses sympathy during Nepal devastation
Wilson ensures assistance and collaboration in response to the earthquake

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No Adventists were injured in the earthquake, but at least four churches were damaged

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April 26, 2015 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States | ANN Staff

Seventh-day Adventist Church President Ted N. C. Wilson issued the following statement today in regarding the 7.8 magnitude quake which struck in Nepal on April 25, 2015:
"On the day that the world is remembering Chernobyl, the nuclear accident that occurred 29 years ago, Nepal is facing its worst earthquake in the last 80 years. The human suffering breaks our hearts and moves us with deep sympathy for the thousands of families who have experienced loss. What a tragic unfolding of death and destruction in Nepal after the anticipated earthquake took place. Even though experts predicted it would happen, they did not know when. We are grateful that Seventh-day Adventist members in the Nepal Field, our Scheer Memorial Hospital near Kathmandu and ADRA can be of assistance to the many who are in great need at this time. Certainly, the Southern Asia Division, in close collaboration with the Nepal Field, will be considering how the world church can further help in this very challenging situation. I have prayed for Nepal and our church members’ special ministry and assistance for the people of that fascinating country. May this be an opportunity to show Christ’s ministry of love and compassion in all that we do as we see more of these disasters happening signaling the nearness of Christ’s return. What an opportunity for us as Seventh-day Adventists to do everything possible to bring stability back into the lives of people by comforting those who have lost loved ones and providing material encouragement to those in dire need. Truly, the Rock of our Salvation, Jesus Christ, the One who will never be moved by even an earthquake is to be the solid foundation for rebuilding lives and hope in Nepal. What a blessing to count on the promises of Revelation 21:4 for the new earth where ‘...there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.’ May the assurance of this promise give us hope that very soon, with the second coming of Jesus, these things will be banished from earth forever. Let us pray for the people of Nepal and all efforts, including those of Seventh-day Adventists, to assist in this very difficult tragedy."

Ted Wilson
Seventh-day Adventist World President

Adventist leader in Nepal tells of panic and pain

No Adventists were injured in the earthquake, but at least four churches were damaged

April 26, 2015 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States | Andrew McChesney / Adventist Review

The president of the Adventist Church in Nepal described scenes of suffering and panic after a powerful weekend earthquake and multiple aftershocks killed more than 2,200 people and damaged scores of buildings, including at least four Adventist churches.

Umesh Pokharel, president of the Nepal Section, an attached field of the Southern Asia Division, said no Adventist believers are known to have been injured in the 7.8 magnitude quake, which struck around midday Sabbath, April 25, as Christians of all faiths worshiped across the country.
“So far no Adventist has been killed,” Pokharel told the Adventist Review on Sunday. “However, many Christians were buried while they were worshiping on Sabbath and died.”

In Nepal, all Christians worship on Saturday because it is a nonworking day unlike Sunday, when the country works.

Pokharel said four Adventists churches were partly destroyed. “But there may be more,” he said.

Emergency workers were still gauging the full impact of Saturday’s earthquake and some 100 aftershocks, including a 6.7-magnitude tremor on Sunday afternoon. The epicenter was about 50 miles (80 kilometers) from the capital, Kathmandu, and the death toll in the city alone has topped 700 people, local authorities said.

“The human suffering breaks our hearts and moves us with deep sympathy for the thousand of families who have experienced loss,” said Ted N.C. Wilson, president of the Adventist world church.

“May this be an opportunity to show Christ’s ministry of love and compassion in all that we do as we see more of these disaster happening signaling the nearness of Christ’s return,” he said in a statement.

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency’s local office has deployed workers to assist people with food and shelter, and its international headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, decided on Sunday to dispatch an emergency response team.

ADRA also was mobilizing 2,000 tarpaulins and tools, and 2,000 jerry cans from Dubai, said Natalia López-Thismón, spokeswoman for ADRA International.

“We will be focusing on shelter for those who’ve lost their homes,” she said. “We will likely be partnering with GlobalMedic on water, hygiene and sanitation projects.”

The 150-bed Adventist hospital just outside Kathmandu, the Scheer Memorial Hospital, has been inundated with hundreds of people seeking medical treatment.

“Great Pain and Panic”

More than 5,000 people were injured in the quake.

“People are in great pain and panic,” Pokharel said.

He said many areas have no electricity and no water, while telephone and other communication networks have been disrupted and roads are badly damaged.

Pokharel was worshiping in a church in Newari, a village in the Kathmandu Valley about 12 miles (20 kilometers) from the capital, when the earthquake hit.

“We saw houses collapsing with our own eyes,” he said in a report to the Southern Asia Division. “All people came out of their homes, crying and asking God to forgive them for their mistakes and to save them.”
He said geologists had warned local residents and the Nepalese government for years to prepare for a possible earthquake in the Kathmandu Valley so the disaster hadn’t come as a complete surprise. But countrywide rescue operations were complicated by a lack of prior preparations, funds and coordination between the government and other agencies, he said.

The 12-mile trip from the village back to Kathmandu took four hours.

“By the time we arrived home it was almost 5 p.m. and all the neighbors were outside their homes,” Pokharel said, “We all stayed outside under the open sky and felt many” aftershocks.

People across Nepal slept outdoors or in cars as a precaution despite cold and rainy weather on Saturday night.

The Adventist Church has 8,859 members worshiping in 106 congregations in Nepal, according to the latest figures from the General Conference’s Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research. The Hindu-dominated country has a population of about 28 million.

**What’s Needed Next**

Pokharel said he was seeking to restore contact with all church workers in Nepal and to make sure they have food, clothing, tents, blankets, and medicine.

“The Nepal Section needs immediate help to meet these needs,” he said.

He said he also was seeking details about church buildings affected by the quake and taking steps to repair them.

At the same time, church members in Kathmandu were preparing to reach out to neighbors with assistance and information about quake preparedness.

“Kathmandu is in an earthquake zone, and the church feels that we need to initiate an awareness program,” Pokharel said.

He asked for church members worldwide to pray for Nepal.

His call was echoed by T.P. Kurian, communication director for the Southern European Division, who has been in close contact with the Nepalese church.

“We request all to pray for the people of Nepal,” Kurian said. “Also they need aid and support to recover from the effects of the earthquake.”

He said the division was considering asking the Adventist world church and ADRA for relief assistance.

ADRA has launched an urgent fundraising drive for Nepal, asking people to click on the “Donate” tab on its website, ADRA.org.

[Click here to donate](https://www.adra.org/donate)
Among the first to contribute was Roger Hernandez, director of the ministerial and evangelism department for the Adventist Church’s Southern Union Conference, which encompasses eight states in the southern United States.

“Praying for Nepal is good. But not enough,” he said on Twitter. “Please consider supporting @ADRAIntl cause they need more than prayer.”

In a second tweet, he added: “How about we inundate Twitter and Facebook, saying: I donated to Nepal.”

Young adults gather for Festival of Worship

Over 1,100 attendees assembled in the U.S. state of Texas

April 23, 2015 | Arlington, Texas, United States | A. Allan Martin

Hundreds of young adults from across the Southwestern Union convened in Arlington, Texas, for the fourth annual Young Adult Festival of Worship. Union Young Adult Director, Elder Helvis Moody, and Southwest Region Youth Director, Elder Tyrone Douglas, inspired the gathered Millennials with messages giving emphasis to Christ Jesus being greater than all. In addition to the over 1100 attending in person, hundreds from around the world tuned in online for the worship service broadcasts, specifically contoured to spiritually encourage next generations.

“Our Arizona young adult community jumped online joining the young adult festival,” shared Benjamin Lundquist, Director for Arizona Conference Young Adult Ministries and NAD Young Adult Life. "We were incredibly blessed as a generation was celebrated, Jesus was uplifted, and leaders were challenged. It's time these festivals begin happening all across the country.”

Inspired by HE>i, a Hawaiian apparel company's "lifestyle brand," the Sabbath’s theme centered around Christ being greater than sin, satan, and self. Poignant messages by Moody and Douglas were further endorsed as young worshippers were inspired by moving music performances and engaged in authentic praise.

As part of the day's worship, festival registrants spent time in the afternoon at Mission Arlington, a Christian-based agency that serves the neighborhoods of the DFW Metroplex with compassion, community-building, and caring assistance. Engaging community children with songs and smiles and popsicles, young adults were immersed in the joy that comes from sharing joy.

“I've got to say, there was something special about seeing young adults gather to serve the community,” expressed Debora Obeng, a 21-year-old software engineering major at University of Texas Arlington. “The interactions with the communities we visited were the most inspiring aspect of festival.”
In an interesting turn of events, during the final worship session, tornado sirens went off signaling severe weather approaching. Evacuating downstairs to a standing-room-only venue, festival young adults continued to worship undaunted; The worship leaders adapted seamlessly to an impromptu acoustic set. While the storm raged outside, Elder Moody challenged and called all to live 24/7 lives of worship to which the young adults eagerly responded.

"It was refreshing and encouraging to see so many young adults with a passion for worship and a willingness to serve their community for Christ," lauded Elder Douglas.

Sabbath concluded, the evening offered ample time for fellowship as Encounters Café provided young adults with a chance to enjoy table games, refreshments, and loads of laughter. Finally, the group headed out to enjoy broomball at ICE at the Parks, a nearby ice skating centre. Needless to say, the laughs continued as dozens of young adults took epic falls in their efforts to score goals.

From Arizona, Lundquist quipped, "Our only disappointment with the festival was the inability to play broomball online..."

The Young Adult Festival of Worship aims for next generations to honor Christ Jesus as Lord by expressing grace, embracing fellowship, and pursuing intimacy with Him. This invitational Sabbath gathering intends to inspire the young adults of the Southwestern Union and beyond to live 24/7 lives of worship for the fame of Jesus Christ.

“I had the privilege of witnessing young adults from across the Southwestern Union come together to worship God,” shared Elder Moody. “It’s my sincere hope the young adult festival of worship inspired them to go back to their churches and live boldly for Him.”

To enjoy captured worship sessions and follow up resources from the Young Adult Festival of Worship, go to festival.ygchurch.com.