Headlines

U.S. Supreme Court rules Abercrombie discriminated against applicant in workplace religious discrimination case
The highest court in the U.S. ruled in favor of applicant in an 8-1 decision

GC Session 101: Discovering the Delegates
Understanding how representatives are selected for the denomination's largest business meeting

Andorra's first Seventh-day Adventist Church is inaugurated
Efforts to establish an Adventist congregation in the small European country have been ongoing for 40 years

Parliament member from one of the world's most remote islands promotes Sabbath observance
Erity Teave, Honoui and Rapa Nui's Council of Chiefs President on Easter Island, acknowledges the Church on the day of her baptism

Free clinic 'sends message to world' after treating 34,000 in Zimbabwe
The Adventist Church considers the lessons of the milestone event

Thousands baptized in major outreach effort in Zimbabwe
ADRA, ASI, Light Bearers, and other groups join forces to make a big impact

Warren Judd, visionary Adventist media leader, dies
The former CEO of the Adventist Media Center succumbs to cancer

Adventist Community Services responds to Texas Flooding
GC Session not impacted by recent flooding
Exhibit on forgiveness sparks genuine conversation in the United Kingdom
Adventist churches in Scotland and England open their doors to help church and community members discuss healing through forgiveness

Dublin welcomes CREATION Health
Over 500 gather for a special Day of Fellowship to highlight health

In the Amazon, thousands celebrate religious freedom
Advocates emphasize the importance of expressing gratitude for the right to worship freely

Free Adventist healthcare wins hearts in volatile Mexican community
An Adventist university provides treatment to members of a community that once appropriated its land

ADRA opens 12 wells during Zimbabwe evangelistic series
The boreholes add another component to an Adventist effort to meet the physical and spiritual needs of communities

Evangelistic meetings take Zimbabwe by storm
Zimbabweans and visiting North American presenters alike express astonishment at the impact of the Adventist events

U.S. Supreme Court rules Abercrombie discriminated against applicant in workplace religious discrimination case

The highest court in the U.S. ruled in favor of applicant in an 8-1 decision

June 01, 2015 | ANN Staff

The U.S. Supreme Court voted 8-1 this week, in favor of a case that examined whether an employer could refuse to hire an applicant based on their religious practices and observances. The Seventh-day Adventist Church filed an amicus brief, or friend of the court brief with other faith groups, in the case of Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v. Abercrombie and Fitch Stores, Inc.

“We are extremely pleased with today’s opinion. It was a good decision for religious liberty, not just Samantha Elauf, but people of all faiths,” said Todd McFarland, associate general counsel for the Adventist world church. “We are also pleased that the Court, in its opinion, relied upon arguments the Adventist Church raised in our amicus brief.”

Church leaders are encouraged the Supreme Court reinforced the importance of religious liberty and hope the decision will lead to additional protections for employees and job applicants.
“As this is the first religious accommodation case to be heard by the Supreme Court in nearly three decades, we were hopeful that this ruling would protect the rights of people of faith in the workplace,” said Dwayne Leslie, director of legislative affairs for the Adventist world church. “Therefore, we were pleased to see the Court strongly state in the issued opinion that “An employer may not make an applicant’s religious practice, confirmed or otherwise, a factor in employment decisions.”

The case involved seventeen-year-old Samantha Elauf, who was denied a job because her hijab, a head covering, violated corporate policy. Adventist feared that a ruling against Elauf could erode workplace religious freedom rights, including those of Adventists who choose not to work on Saturday, the biblical Sabbath.

Church legal counselors were also concerned with a violation of the Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, which obligates employers to take steps to “reasonably accommodate” a prospective employee’s “religious observance or practice.”

The case stems from a 2008 incident in which Elauf wore a hijab when applying for a sales position at an Abercrombie & Fitch store in Tulsa, Oklahoma. After a manager confirmed with a supervisor that Elauf’s headwear violated store policy, she was deemed ineligible for hire without discussion of religious accommodation.

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which filed a lawsuit on Elauf’s behalf, said the move defied Title VII. While a federal judge sided with the EEOC in 2011, the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver upended that decision last year, claiming Elauf never told Abercrombie she needed a religious accommodation, even though she was wearing a hijab in the interview.

And that, Adventist legal counselors said, places undue responsibility on the applicant to determine whether her religious beliefs or practices conflict with company policy.

The Church’s amicus brief pointed out that “Frequently, an applicant will be unaware of a work-religion conflict simply because of her inferior knowledge of the employer’s work requirements.”

Also, a hiring process can be technologically structured so that an employee can’t raise the issue of potential conflict, such as online applications asking applicants which days of the week they are available to work, McFarland said in a previous statement to Adventist News Network.

Religious clothing and the observance of Sabbath and other holy days are the most common areas of conflict in the workplace, McFarland said. Hijabs, turbans, yarmulkes and other head coverings frequently conflict with a company’s “look” policy, while Sabbath observance can clash with scheduling.

**GC Session 101: Discovering the Delegates**
Understanding how representatives are selected for the denomination's largest business meeting

May 28, 2015 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States | ANN staff

The world headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is abuzz with preparations for the upcoming General Conference Session. The 60th meeting of its kind in the 152-year history of the denomination will take place in San Antonio, Texas and will see as many as 60,000 people from more than 170 countries gather in the Alamodome.

Although sometimes thought of as a kind of global camp-meeting for those who come to hear music and preaching from around the world while connecting with old friends and meeting new ones, the heart of this event is a business meeting in which world church leadership is elected, critical issues are discussed and decisions are made governing how the church will move forward in fulfilling its mission.

The Business of Session

The very first official World Session of the Seventh-day Adventist Church was a one-day meeting held on May 20, 1863 in Battle Creek, Michigan with 20 delegates present. At the time the organizational structure of the Church was small and membership was only a few thousand, mostly from the United States of America. However, as the Seventh-day Adventist Church has developed in countries around the world, its membership has grown.

The delegates, who are sent as official representatives of the church as it is constituted in their locale, conduct the business of General Conference Session. But just who are these delegates? How are they chosen? What are their responsibilities at a General Conference Session as they function in their role?

The rules governing the selection of delegates are spelled out in the Constitution and Bylaws of the General Conference that define the purposes and operations of the global church and those that govern a General Conference Session.

In an attempt to divest the definition of a delegate and the description of their duties from the technical language found in what could be a rather complex narrative, this article will attempt to describe in broad strokes and approachable language what forms this functional body.

In broad terms the structure of the Church can be understood by knowing that members belong to congregations. Congregations within a specific geographic territory are organized into a local conference/mission or in some cases, a union of churches. Defined groups of local conferences or local missions comprise a union conference or union mission. Unions are the building blocks of the General Conference.

Terminologies like ‘mission’ when attached to conferences and unions usually indicate that they are in a stage of development that has not reached full financial viability and self-sustenance.
Unions and divisions of the General Conference select delegates in harmony with regular delegate quotas and selection processes outlined in the Bylaws. Members of the General Conference Executive Committee are also delegates at a General Conference Session.

The total number of delegates from each division must include at least 50% of the group being lay members, pastors or other front line workers. A majority of that 50% must be laypersons.

There are two kinds of delegates: regular delegates and delegates-at-large. Regular delegates represent the General Conference member units as outlined in the bylaws.

Delegates-at-large represent the General Conference and its institutions as well as divisions and their institutions.

The entire delegation for a General Conference Session is comprised of:
1. Delegate quotas based on units of organizational structure
2. Delegate quotas based on division membership as a percentage of total world membership, and
3. Delegates representing the General Conference, its institutions plus divisions and their institutions.

Who are these delegates?

Here are some interesting facts about the delegates at this GC Session:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular Delegates</td>
<td>1559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delegates-at-large</td>
<td>1007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total delegates</td>
<td>2566</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Age data
- Under 30: 6%
- 30-39: 10%
- 40-49: 26%
- 50-59: 35%
- 60-69: 19%
- Over 70: 3%

Gender Data
- Female: 17%
- Male: 83%

How Delegates are selected

A question that is certain to be asked when reading statistics on gender representation is why is the percentage of female delegates so small when it is perceived that women are in the majority as pertains to Church membership? The answer is simple. While efforts are continually made to ensure that the entire delegation shall be comprised of both genders, currently the positions from which these delegates are named and that generate the majority of delegates for the Session are held by males. This will change over time as more women are elected to leadership positions and Conference or Union executive committee membership.

It is important to note that regular delegates to the General Conference Session are not selected by the General Conference itself, but are selected by Unions and Divisions around the world.
field. The individuals selected are the representatives of their various organizations to the General Conference Session.

The executive committees of the unit that they represent select regular delegates. If the delegate represents a mission, the committee of the larger unit to which it is attached selects the delegate. They are a mix of lay people, pastors and teachers and church administrators.

Their job is to report to the Session and be present during the business meetings to debate, discuss and vote on items that appear on the agenda. They must be members in regular standing of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and they are often chosen because of their demonstrated interest and involvement in the church.

In recent years the church has made special efforts to include young adults, women and frontline workers in the delegate mix.

Each delegate has voice - meaning that they can come to the microphone and speak to the business that is under discussion. They also have vote - meaning they are able to vote on the item that is under discussion.

One-third of the total number of delegates must be present for the Session to be able to declare a quorum and to conduct business.

Shortly after the Session has officially begun, delegates will meet in groups or a “caucus,” one group for each division and attached union and one group for the General Conference and those delegates-at-large that it specifically names according to Bylaws and Executive Committee provisions. The purpose of these groups is to choose members from each group who will serve on the Nominating Committee. The number of Nominating Committee members from each group is specifically defined in the Bylaws.

Delegates, both regular and at-large, approve the agenda of the Session and they elect church leadership after receiving reports from the Nominating Committee.

In upcoming installments of the GC Session 101 Series we will discuss the policies that outline the formation of the nominating committee as well as their responsibilities. Future articles will also look inside the experience of being nominated by talking to a former nominee.

There are 2566 people as delegates designated to conduct the business of determining the leadership for the General Conference and its divisions, the fundamental beliefs of the Church, amendments to the Church Manual, and other matters that may be referred to the Session by the General Conference Executive Committee. However, their most important business, and that of the church in general, will be focus on the plans and presentations sharing about the mission of the church in lifting up Christ, His righteousness, His three angels' messages, His evangelistic mission to the world and His soon second coming. The spiritual focus of the General Conference Session is the most important aspect of its work – unifying God’s people to accomplish the final mission entrusted into their hands.

General Conference leadership has invited members around the world to participate in the 100 Days of Prayer campaign leading up to GC Session. We are to pray for the falling of the latter rain of the Holy Spirit on the 2015 General Conference Session. This is the greatest work of the Session – to humble ourselves before God and receive His unifying power to accomplish God’s mission for His church.
Please pray for the delegates as they gather to conduct this most important work. It is our hope that church business conducted faithfully, hearts that are open to the Holy Spirit earnestly, prayers that are ascending on behalf of God’s people ceaselessly, minds that search God’s word diligently and hands that act in God’s love endlessly will allow us to soon see His face.

The 2015 General Conference Session theme says, "Arise! Shine! Jesus Is Coming!" May this be the theme of Seventh-day Adventists meeting in San Antonio and around the world.

**Andorra's first Seventh-day Adventist Church is inaugurated**

**Efforts to establish an Adventist congregation in the small European country have been ongoing for 40 years**

*June 01, 2015 | Madrid, Spain | P. Torres, CD EUD NEWS/ANN Staff*

The first official Seventh-day Adventist Church in Andorra was inaugurated on May 9, 2015.

For more than 40 years, several efforts were made to establish the first Seventh-day Adventist Church in Principat d’Andorra, a very small country in the middle of the Pyrenean mountains, gapped between Spain and France. The prayer and work of a few dedicated families living in Andorra and Spain have produced the establishment of Associació Cristiana Adventista d’Andorra.

The government of Andorra has existed with a peculiar arrangement since 1269 A.D., as decreed in the Pareatge Agreements. The country has two heads of state or co-princes; one prince is the president of France, and the other is the bishop of Urgell (Catalonia, Spain). Although both princes reign and develop external relations for the nation, neither of the princes actually govern.

The Andorran Constitution warrants non-discrimination for religious reasons, and freedom of cult and religion, but there is a specific mention that grants protection and preeminence to the traditional church of the nation. These laws explain why the nation's first Adventist Church has had to be registered as an "association."

The “Associació Cristiana Adventista d’Andorra” (A.C.A.D.A.), was officially registered and recognized by local authorities who helped the association meet the requirements of the Andorran legislation.

After the recognition of A.C.A.D.A. was granted, members were allowed to open a facility that could be used for worship.

Pr. Jesús Calvo, president of the Spanish Union of Churches officiated the inauguration. Andorra is part of the Spanish Union of Churches (UAE) in the Inter-European Division. The church’s pastors, Pr. Daniel Posse, and his spouse Sandra Patrone, were also present. The couple also pastors nearby churches in Lleida and Aitona, Spain.

Nearly 25 Sabbath keepers are worshiping every week in the new church.
Parliament member from one of the world's most remote islands promotes Sabbath observance

Erity Teave, Honoui and Rapa Nui’s Council of Chiefs President on Easter Island, acknowledges the Church on the day of her baptism

June 01, 2015 | Santiago, Chile | ASN Team, Alfred Müller and Cárolyn Azo/ANN Staff

“Father kept the Sabbath and I do likewise, so that that day we will devote our time to read the Word of God, which to me is very important. And the president of the parliament promotes Sabbath-keeping. We even spent several months studying the Bible on Saturdays in the Parliament and we invited many people over”, shared Erity Teave, Honoui and Rapa Nui’s Council of Chiefs president in Easter Island, one of the most far-off locations in the world. Erity is the daughter of Juan Teave, first native of the island baptized in 2006 by the Seventh-day Adventist pastor Eleodoro Castillo.

Providentially, Erity met José Luis Cabrera, a pastor of the island, after a mishap while preparing to film with Elder Ted Wilson, President of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. A man prevented the recording that day because he demanded a permit of the Parliament to record in the zone.

Cabrera explained they had the permit and the signature of the mayor, however, the stranger was not satisfied with those signatures and demanded that of the president of the Parliament, which meant the loss of a day of work for the multimedia team. However, God had a plan. The local Adventist leader went back to the Parliament, did not find the president but found Erity, who was surprised with what the pastor told her. Without hesitation, she agreed to sign the authorization.

The president of Honoui showed much interest in knowing about the work of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church and requested 100 missionary books “Health & Wellness” in Rapa Nui and Spanish language to give to all members of Parliament and employees of the city hall. Also, she accepted the invitation of Elder Cabrera to attend the meetings on health and food that the Adventist Church was offering on the island.

GRATITUDE FOR THE CHURCH’S MISSION

During the meeting, Erity received the missionary books and told how her father accepted God and the Sabbath message in his heart, and expressed her desire to follow his steps asking to be baptized. Thus, on May 7 Erity was baptized in the local Tahai Beach Adventist Church. Seeing this testimony of faith and love, Leviante Araki Tepano, president of the Parliament, agreed to study the Bible and mentioned he was also keeping the Sabbath.
“In my capacity as President of Honoui, of the Council of Rapa Nui Chiefs of Clans, I want to express my gratitude to the Adventist Church for being in Rapa Nui and I want to ask it to have a part in the Rapa Nui society, because there are many needs. This is the most far-off island in the world and there is a very urgent spiritual need. There are many social problems, like alcoholism, drug abuse, broken families, and because of these there are lack of jobs, resentment and health problems,” said Erity. “We will be very grateful for any help the church may provide, and especially for the book ‘Health & Wellness.’… I am asking for sermons for television and other media, to reach more people. Thank you very much. If there is any work to be done in that day [the Sabbath] is just caring for the ill, we promote other types of work not to be done because God blessed and sanctified the Sabbath”, she concluded.

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH ON THE ISLAND

The Seventh-Day Adventist Church arrived in Rapa Nui in 1978 through Eugenia Villarroel, an Adventist who moved to the island from the city of Santiago de Chile.

She met a policeman named Sergio Zelada that did not profess the Adventist faith, but he was responsible for bringing “The Voice of Hope” tapes to the radio in the island. This material was provided by Adventist Juan Álvarez, a church member that was on the continent.

Later on, Sergio was transferred to Chile. He then gave Eugenia the responsibility of keeping the radio program on the air. Years later, Sergio was baptized as a result of the message of hope of the program.

The work continued in the island with the help of Elder Castillo, who was the first Adventist pastor to perform a baptism with the Catechumens: Cecilia, Jonathan and Rosa —islander natives of continental Chile.

Gabriel Montoya, who worked for the South American Printing House of Chile (ACES), and his wife, Luz, who was a Bible instructor, also moved to the island. The couple worked for the church in the island for six months with the goal of making small groups.

Free clinic 'sends message to world' after treating 34,000 in Zimbabwe

The Adventist Church considers the lessons of the milestone event

June 01, 2015 | Andrew McChesney, Adventist Review

An Adventist-organized clinic that provided free healthcare to 34,000 patients in two weeks in Zimbabwe has not only astonished organizers and the country but also promises to shape the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s work going forward.
The mega clinic ended Friday after 550 volunteers provided about $2.5 million in basic health services to long lines of people in a shopping center in Chitungwiza, a city of about 365,000 people located a 30-minute drive south of Zimbabwe’s capital, Harare.

“The Chitungwiza Health Expo has sent a message to the world that God’s plan to help people be balanced … physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually is a powerful plan,” Adventist Church president Ted N.C. Wilson said late Friday as he thanked the volunteers during an evangelistic meeting in a field directly beside the shopping center.

Peter N. Landless, the Adventist world church’s top health officer and a board-certified nuclear cardiologist, said this was the first time that he had seen a free clinic care for so many people on a sustained, daily basis, and he suggested that it offered a model for the church to replicate elsewhere.

“This has been a most amazing experience because it has shown you don’t have to have extravagant expos but you must have thorough expos,” Landless said in an interview only steps away from the entrance of the shopping center. “That’s what meets the needs of the people right at the grassroots level and particularly here, where there has been a need for screening and basic healthcare. The needs have been met, and people have just rejoiced.”

Innocent Gwizo, the main organizer of the free clinic and director of health ministries for the Zimbabwe Union Conference, said he was having trouble fathoming the enormous impact that the free clinic has had on Zimbabwe.

“I have no doubt that the Lord did this expo,” Gwizo said. “This was not a human program. This was God in action because, as director of the expo, am surprised by the results, too. Nothing is impossible with God. We need to think outside the box.”

The Adventist Church has sought to care for people’s physical and spiritual needs since its origins in 1863, but its has placed an increasing emphasis on blending the two in a “comprehensive health ministry” during Wilson’s five years in office.

“Comprehensive health ministry has been part of the church since 1863. It is in our DNA,” Landless said earlier this week during a health presentation to 20,000 people attending the nightly evangelistic meetings led by Wilson in Chitungwiza. “But there has been some genetic engineering since 2010,” he said, thanking Wilson for the new emphasis.

The first major free clinic treated about 3,000 people over three days two California cities last year, and it was followed by a three-day event that provided $20 million in free healthcare to some 6,100 people in San Antonio, Texas, last month.

The core medical team behind the Chitungwiza free clinic has organized a couple small, one-week free clinics in the country’s second-largest city, Bulawayo. But the potential of its work really captured the attention of local church leaders last September when it staged a three-week free clinic in Marange, a remote area in east Zimbabwe with no public health services nearby. While only five doctors, four nurses, and 36 other volunteers participated in the free clinic, it resulted in 220 baptisms and the establishment of 10 new churches in the area.

Similar results could emerge from Chitungwiza’s free clinic, where scores of patients have attended the evangelistic meetings next door. Several are already preparing for baptism, including
a former drug user who was forced by his wife to enter an intensive 10-day addictions recovery program.

The wife marched her husband to the addictions recovery booth near the start of the free clinic on May 13 and ordered him to stay there, Gwizo said.

The free clinic operated the addictions recovery program in a building near the free clinic, and people who sought assistance to overcome addictions to cocaine, marijuana, alcohol, and tobacco lived and ate with medical volunteers for 10 days. To enroll, patients were required to surrender their cash and cell phones.

“The man says he is grateful that he is now free from addictions to drugs, beer, and tobacco, and will be baptized and become an Adventist,” Gwizo said.

Twenty-four people finished the program and received certificates during a graduation ceremony attended by Dorcas Sithole, deputy director of the Zimbabwean government’s Mental Health And Dangerous Drugs Services. Four graduates gave speeches thanking the church, and one of them, a college student, asked the church to bring the program to colleges.

Sithole was so impressed with the program that she asked the church to showcase it at a nationally televised event to mark No Tobacco Day on May 31. Zimbabwe’s vice president will attend the event.

“She also requested that some of the graduates come and give their testimonies of what the Adventist Church had done for them,” Gwizo said.

Many other patients have also expressed gratitude for their treatment, but perhaps among the most thankful are those who left cured of diabetes. Dr. Masima Mwazha, one of the members of the core medical team behind the free clinic, said he would long remember the joy of seeing people complete a program in which they were fed a diet that reversed their conditions.

Patients aren’t the only people delighted with the free clinic, which leased vacant retail space in a half-deserted shopping center. The shopping center’s other tenants, which include food stores and a pharmacy, have seen their sales soar over the past two weeks, Gwizo said.

The only disappointed tenant was a dentist whose office couldn’t compete with the 30 dentists offering free services, he said. But, he added, the Adventist Church found a way to make peace with him — and leave him beaming. The 30 free dentists referred all their patients to his office for follow-up work. Gwizo estimated that 200 to 300 of the several thousand dental patients would end up paying for his services.

The free clinic was not without its challenges. The biggest issue was the unexpectedly large turnout, which left organizers scrambling at times to find the finances to meet the demand. Even now, after the free clinic has closed, major surgeries are continuing to be performed by volunteer doctors at the Chitungwiza Central Hospital. About $25,000 is still needed to cover surgeries for the last several dozen patients who were signed up receive treatment, Gwizo said.

This financial complication offers a lesson for future free clinics.
Landless, in speaking about the milestone of treating 34,000 patients in two weeks, said: “It is a first in my experience and it’s something that we can look to emulate down the road, but realizing that we need to count the cost before we try to do the building.”

The Zimbabwe Union Conference intends to hold more free clinics but will take a one-year break before holding another major one as it assesses the lessons learned from the past two weeks.

In the meantime, church members are going to be busy doing follow-up work with the 34,000 patients. Every person who came to the expo will be visited at least three times by church members, and smaller health expos will be conducted in Chitungwiza churches to nurture them, Gwizo said.

In addition, the Adventist Church will make use of its freshly burnished image to strengthen its collaborative relationship with government agencies and nongovernmental organizations, he said. Various organizations and the government have already extended invitations to the church to partner with them on health issues.

But the free clinic is only the beginning, Gwizo said.

“We have not done much considering that Zimbabwe has about 14 million people whom we need to reach with the faith of the Seventh-day Adventist Church through comprehensive health ministry,” he said.

“We should never rest, entertaining the thought that we have done something big,” he said. “Big is only when everyone in our territory knows beyond doubt the holistic message proclaimed by the Adventist Church: Jesus is coming again.”

Thousands baptized in major outreach effort in Zimbabwe

ADRA, ASI, Light Bearers, and other groups join forces to make a big impact

June 01, 2015 | Andrew McChesney, Adventist Review

Thousands of people were baptized across Zimbabwe on Sabbath as one of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s biggest initiatives to share Jesus resulted in the unified efforts of many groups, including ADRA, ASI, Light Bearers, and scores of church members who gave Bible studies.

Baptismal numbers were trickling into the Zimbabwe Union Conference’s headquarters on Sunday, but preliminary estimates indicated that church leaders had met their goal of baptizing 30,000 people during a two-week evangelistic meeting that ended Sabbath, May 30.
Adventist Church president Ted N.C. Wilson, speaking in a large field in Chitungwiza, one of 914 sites that conducted meetings, declared that the church members who went door to door offering Bible studies were the real heroes.

“What you have done in Chitungwiza is unbelievable,” Wilson told a group of more than 1,000 people standing before him in the field during church services on Sabbath.

“You have done it through the power of the Holy Spirit,” Wilson said as about 35,000 worshipers listened, many sitting under umbrellas or the shade of trees as they sought refuge from the scorching morning sun. “Thank you for what you have done. Thank you for being used by heaven. I have preached the Word, but what you have done is more important.”

More than 1,000 church members descended on Chitungwiza, a city near Zimbabwe’s capital, Harare, from around the country about a month ago to go door to door offering Voice of Prophecy Bible lessons. About 9,000 lessons were circulated in Chitungwiza, and 5,043 people graduated from the course, church leaders said.

It was not immediately clear how many of those graduates have been baptized. But about three-fourths of the 1,085 people baptized in Chitungwiza as of Thursday, May 28, had completed the program, said a representative of Light Bearers, a U.S.-based supporting Adventist ministry that shipped the lessons to Zimbabwe.

The Voice of Prophecy work carried out in Chitungwiza was replicated in many other towns and cities. In addition, church members led some 5,000 small-group Bible studies in the months ahead of the two-week evangelistic series, known as the “reaping time” when the Bible students are invited to commit their lives to Jesus.

The two-week evangelistic series has captured national attention in Zimbabwe, in part because of related events that have grabbed the headlines. Most significantly, an Adventist-organized free clinic ended up providing basic healthcare to 34,100 patients at a Chitungwiza shopping center during the two weeks that Wilson spoke in a nearby field. Patients came from hundreds of miles away, and some arrived in wheelbarrows and trolleys, desperate to be made well, organizers said. A number of patients were among the 20,000 people who attended Wilson’s nightly meetings.

The free clinic was among several examples of how the Adventist Church sought to follow Jesus’ lead and care for people’s physical and spiritual needs during the evangelistic meetings. Last Thursday, a groundbreaking ceremony for an Adventist school was held in a district of Chitungwiza that lacks any schools. Grateful local government officials and community leaders attended the ceremony for the $100,000 school, financed by the church’s Iowa-Missouri Conference.

The school is near one of 12 boreholes with clean water that the Adventist Development and Relief Agency opened in Chitungwiza a week earlier.

On Friday, the Adventist Church handed over to the state the refurbished B6 ward of the Harare Central Hospital. Members of ASI, the umbrella organization for hundreds of Adventist supporting ministries in North America and around the world, funded the badly needed renovation to the men’s ward, working nearly around the clock for more than a month to lay a new floor, paint walls, repair bathrooms, install new beds, and hang rows of blue curtains emblazoned with “ASI” between the beds.
The ward had not been refurbished since the hospital opened in 1958, and a hospital worker told the Adventist Review that the renovation made it nicer than many of the other wards. She was particularly impressed with the thick, glossy curtains, which she said would not fade like the curtains in the other wards when she washed them.

Hospital leaders thanked ASI and noted that Adventist volunteers, including from Dorcas, the community help organization operated by hundreds of Adventist congregations, have assisted the hospital for some time.

Local church leaders promised that the church would continue to help, and a choir from the hospital’s nursing school performed a song whose chorus included the line, “SDA, don’t break your promise.”

“By God’s grace, we won’t break our promise,” Wilson said at the handover ceremony.

The two-week evangelistic meetings changed more than the lives of people in Zimbabwe. A record 30 young adults from the church’s Arkansas-Louisiana Conference were among the 77 non-Zimbabwean speakers who presented ShareHim sermon series.

ShareHim is an evangelism-training supporting ministry that operates in each of the world church’s 13 divisions and trains thousands of persons annually to conduct small-scale evangelistic meetings.

Wilson wrapped up the evangelistic series with a lightning trip between three cities, preaching to a crowd of about 35,000 people in Chitungwiza before hopping on a plane to speak to 20,000 in Gweru and 50,000 in Bulawayo. He spoke about why he is an Adventist, saying he wanted to belong to a church that fully followed the Bible. He also urged listeners to follow a healthy lifestyle and avoid stimulants such as coffee and caffeinated soft drinks.

People expressed delight that the church president had visited their city, and many recorded his remarks on their iPhones, iPads, or other electronic devices.

Zimbabwe’s vice president, Phelekezela Mphoko, attended the sermon in a Bulawayo stadium and met with Wilson privately. Wilson told Mphoko, a Seventh-day Adventist, about the free clinic and the church’s other recent evangelistic activities in Zimbabwe.

While the evangelistic initiative represents a milestone in many ways, it was just the beginning for the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division, which includes Zimbabwe, said division president Paul Ratsara.

“This is not the end. This needs to be the beginning of the big effort,” Ratsara said.

“Evangelism is not an event. It is a process and a way of life,” he added. “Once you are an Adventist, you are not only a disciple, you are a disciple-maker.

Warren Judd, visionary Adventist media leader, dies
The former CEO of the Adventist Media Center succumbs to cancer

May 28, 2015 | Adventist Review and Adventist Record staff

Warren Judd, former CEO of the Adventist Media Center in California, died after a struggle with cancer on May 26.

Daniel R. Jackson, president of the North American Division, offered condolences on behalf of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

"Warren was an accomplished media authority and talented musician. But most importantly, he was a devoted husband, father and a committed Christian," Jackson said. "Warren helped significantly advance the use of audiovisual technology in the Adventist Church. He will be missed."

Warren’s daughter-in-law, Andrea, expressed her gratitude to all those who have shown love and support for their family. She praised God for allowing her father to pass away peacefully, even though it was on her mother’s 70th birthday.

"Mum has been a rock through all of this. Certainly not without tears and great heartache, but with a greater faith!" Andrea said. "On top of it all, today is her 70th birthday. And she said, ‘I know many might feel differently and not understand, but I’m actually glad he died on my birthday. It makes it a very special and sacred day.’"

In addition to running the denominationally owned media center, Judd was responsible for the audiovisual operations of the last five General Conference Sessions, including San Antonio 2015, for which planning has been several years in the making, the North American Division said in a statement.

Judd was a native of Australia.

John Bradshaw, speaker and director of It Is Written, which was located for many years at the Adventist Media Center, praised Judd as a creative thinker who "was always kind in his dealings with others—even if they were not kind in their dealings with him."

"We’re reminded yet again that life is precious, that life is fragile, that nothing in this world is guaranteed, that every day is a gift and that family and friends and faith in God are the truly important things in this world," Bradshaw said on his blog.

"WE THANKED GOD FOR HIS MERCY"

The North American Division shared the following post written by Warren Judd’s daughter-in-law, Andrea:
Dad went so peacefully at about 9:45 a.m. this morning, at home, family by his side. He must have been waiting for a clean shave, which precious Yonni was in the midst of doing when she noticed a sudden color change and a change in breathing.

Mum and Marc were each holding a hand of his as he breathed his last breath. We cried and we thanked God for His mercy in allowing Dad to breathe his last so peacefully. We praised God that Dad's breath is with Him. Only Dad's earthly body has died, and with that, the cancer is defeated and forever destroyed! Praise God!!

Mum has been a rock through all of this. Certainly not without tears and great heartache, but with a greater faith! On top of it all, today is her 70th birthday. And she said, 'I know many might feel differently and not understand, but I'm actually glad he died on my birthday. It makes it a very special and sacred day.' God is good.

Marc read God's Word to us all — the beautiful promises we cling to. I'll simply close by sharing just a few of those. Our love and thanks to all of you for such wonderful love and support!! We truly do not even have the words to express what it has meant and continues to mean to us.

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will awarded to me on that day — and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing” (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand” (John 10:27-28).

“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die” (John 11:25-26).

“For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).

‘Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: ‘For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’ No, in all these things we are more then conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:35-39).

Amen!

Adventist Community Services responds to Texas Flooding
GC Session not impacted by recent flooding

May 28, 2015 | NAD Communication staff

Adventist Community Services (ACS) served more than 750 people in San Marcos with clothing from the Texas ACS mobile distribution truck this week. They also gave out 252 flood buckets. As a joint project between ADRA and ACS, 3,000 buckets were filled with cleaning supplies by Pathfinders at last year’s International Pathfinder Camporee in Oshkosh, Wis. The buckets were then distributed across the country for use in major events such as this one. More than 500 homes have been flooded in the Houston area where ACS is coordinating with area leaders as to how best to respond.

In addition to flood response, ACS volunteers have been operating a donations center in Delmont, S.D., in response to needs following the tornado that ripped through the town on Mother’s Day, May 10.

Contrary to a post on a satirical website which has given some people the impression that the flooding in Texas is creating a need to cancel GC Session, the 2015 General Conference Session will take place as planned, July 2-11, in San Antonio, Texas.

Exhibit on forgiveness sparks genuine conversation in the United Kingdom

Adventist churches in Scotland and England open their doors to help church and community members discuss healing through forgiveness

May 28, 2015 | United Kingdom | Njabulo King Ndlovu / BUC News

What, exactly, does it take to move past a lifetime of hurts? That is a question church members ask – but also the general public. Three Adventist churches in Scotland, Devon and Cornwall have recently taken on the challenge to share an answer.

This past week The F Word exhibition has been on display first in the Plymouth church and then transferred to Bodmin. In both venues the church became an exhibition area where the public could engage in the stories of people who have discovered forgiveness in unexpected places. These included stories of people whose lives have been shattered by violence, tragedy and injustice and who are learning to forgive, reconcile and move on. It has been displayed in over 300
venues worldwide and draws together voices from South Africa, America, Israel, Palestine, Northern Ireland and England to examine forgiveness as a healing process, a journey out of victimhood and ultimately, a journey of hope.

The West Country exhibits followed on from a more extensive exhibition by the Aberdeen church in partnership with Aberdeen University, the Dunecht and Albyn Schools and the Aberdeen Inter-Faith Group. They transformed the church hall into an exhibition area where over one hundred people, including students and parents from the schools joined members of the public during morning, afternoon and evening sessions.

After reading the powerful stories on forgiveness, each person or group was welcomed by Pastor Ndlovu into the sanctuary to debrief and reflect on their engagement with the exhibition and to participate in a group exercise such as writing and erasing a name or situation from which they wanted to move on. This moving and emotional process marked the beginning of various journeys to forgiveness with teachers, parents and church members working together to make the journey easier and relevant to the various age groups. Inevitably, the reflective exercise happening in the sanctuary, on many occasions, led to questions on Aberdeen church's beliefs. Students from Albyn Upper School described their experience to their Higher Business Management class as "one of the best out-of-school activities" they had done.

In addition, on Wednesday 11 March, the Aberdeen University's Chaplaincy invited Revd Sam Ferguson, their scheduled preacher for their mid-week service, to preach on Forgiveness while Pastor Ndlovu had the opportunity to explain The Forgiveness Project as a community service undertaken by Aberdeen Adventists. Part of the exhibition was set up at the King's College campus and seen by numerous university students, staff, worshippers and members of the public.

The following Friday, Carl Wilkens, founder of World Outside My Shoes and former head of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) in Rwanda presented a talk entitled, 'Restorative Justice: Lessons from Rwanda in Healing and Building Peace'. Carl spoke passionately about his experience as the only American who remained in Rwanda when the 1994 genocide began.

His thought-provoking talk attracted additional university students, staff, and members of the public.

The Aberdeen Inter-Faith Group that includes Christians, Jews and members of the Baha'i faith were amongst other faith groups who dared to reflect on forgiveness on the evening of Thursday, 12 March in the Aberdeen church. Carl quizzed the group on the common and diverse outcomes from reading similar stories from the exhibition as well as general thoughts and experiences with forgiveness.

Church members also took time to grapple with issues of forgiveness during Sabbath worship services. Carl's gripping storytelling coupled by Teresa, his wife, with her musical ability, graced the morning services before a meaningful heart to heart afternoon discussion on the reality of forgiveness for individuals and church groups struck a chord with Aberdeen members. As Carl unpacked more stories from Rwanda, he challenged members to consider spiritual health as a leading benefit to resist the urge of personal, doctrinal, tribal and racial forces belittling the process of forgiveness.

Aberdeen church has made deeper inroads into the community with future partnerships already being considered. One such initiative actually happened the following week as Albyn School, one of the leading independent, co-educational schools in Scotland with over 700 pupils requested to
further host the exhibition the following week, 16-20 March. With that, they requested Pastor Ndlovu to assist in leading the reflective exercises for some of the Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies classes. Subsequently, Pastor Ndlovu has been invited to be a judge at Albyn School's Youth Philanthropy Initiative 2015, an innovative framework for targeted and meaningful local giving.

Dublin welcomes CREATION Health

Over 500 gather for a special Day of Fellowship to highlight health

May 28, 2015 | Dublin, Ireland | Stephen Wilson, British Union Conference

Nothing attracts the public attention more than matters of health. No church has a stronger message to share on the subject than that of the Seventh-day Adventists – and so, on Sabbath, 23 May, the Dublin Adventist churches joined together for a special Day of Fellowship that would highlight this important part of our message.

Over 500 people were present at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Blanchardstown to hear Pastor Lynell LaMountain, Robyn Egerton and Sheryl Chernault of the CREATION Health team from Florida Adventist Hospital present the principles of CREATION Health. CREATION Health is a lifestyle and wellness programme developed by the team at Florida Hospital and repackages the Adventist Health message in a bright, colourful way utilising the latest scientific research and focussing on the whole person God created on day six of creation week. One aspect of the programme that was particularly highlighted in the Dublin presentations was the aspects of relationships and outlook.

Pastor David Neal, Irish Mission President, introduced the programme on Sabbath morning by reminding the Dublin members that the principles of CREATION Health have been part of the evangelistic plan for Dublin and are a continuing part of the City of Hope project that has seen so much activity in Dublin over the past two years. Irish Mission Health sponsor, Edith Samambwa, has been working for the past few months to establish a Centre of Influence in the newly renovated Ranelagh Adventist church. This centre will provide a series of health and social programmes for both members and the wider community in Ranelagh. The partnership between CREATION Health and the Adventist Church in Ireland will make a greater impact in Dublin.

Pastor LaMountain, Director of Health Ministries for the Southern Union Conference in the US and one of the key authors of the CREATION Health curriculum, was the main speaker for the day. His focus, both morning and afternoon, was on a healthy outlook. He encouraged people to determine the meaning of what happens in their lives, a meaning that supports life, faith and honours God.

In the afternoon Pastor LaMountain told those who are leaders in the church to be careful how we speak about our relationship with God. He noted that in salvation terms there is nothing we can do to merit God's favour stating, "what are we in comparison to the majesty of God?" but he then
emphasised, “this does not mean we are worthless. Too many people have an unhealthily low value of self and this leads to pessimism and feelings of loneliness, isolation and failure. The good news of the gospel is that we are worth Jesus’ death on the cross.” He noted, “Christians are not victims of life’s circumstances and ruled by the situations we face, we have a God-given purpose.”

Following the Day of Fellowship the CREATION Health team headed west to Kilnasoolagh, the Adventist campsite in the west of Ireland, for a 3 day residential training with pastors and Health Ministries leaders. This will equip these leaders to make the principles of CREATION Health part of the DNA of the Adventist Church in Ireland.

In the Amazon, thousands celebrate religious freedom

Advocates emphasize the importance of expressing gratitude for the right to worship freely

May 27, 2015 | Bettina Krause, Felipe Lemos, SNA

More than 7,000 people gathered in Manaus, Brazil—the largest city in the Amazon—to express thanks to the government for protecting religious liberty. The event, held Saturday, May 23, was the third religious liberty festival to be held in Brazil, and was organized by the South American chapter of the International Religious Liberty Association (IRLA).

Dr. John Graz, Secretary General of the IRLA, was one of the international speakers featured at the festival. He said that religious liberty is often taken for granted, and asked his listeners to imagine life without the right to freely practice one’s faith. “Without religious freedom, parents would not even have the right to raise their child in their own faith or beliefs,” said Graz.

Graz emphasized that mass events such as these, which are organized by the IRLA in many different countries, have one purpose: to express gratitude for the basic human right to worship according to one’s conscience. Since 2009, when the first Religious Freedom Festival was held in Lima, Peru, there have some 25 rallies in support of religious liberty in many countries, including Dominican Republic, Brazil, Indonesia and Mexico. The largest festival to date took place in the southern African country of Angola, and attracted some 45,000 people.

One speaker at the Manaus festival highlighted the importance of respecting religious beliefs. Designer Diego Arlinson, who works for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the states of Amazonas, Rondônia, Roraima, and Acre, has won state prizes for his work, but for a number of years was unable to collect his prizes. The award ceremony was held on Friday evening—the beginning of Sabbath for Arlinson. “I decided, in previous years, that I would not go and so I sent a letter for the organizers explaining that I was not going for religious principles,” said Arlinson. “I was surprised that in the last edition, they had changed the date for giving the prize to Thursday. I won once again and, this time, I was able to go and receive the prize without any problems with my beliefs.”
The festival, held at Canãã Auditorium in Manaus, also featured musical tributes, from three well-known Brazilian groups, Solanza and Art Trio, along with singer Marquinhos Maral. Several regional, national, and world leaders of IRLA were honored with medals and certificates in recognition of their efforts to promote religious liberty in the country.

**Free Adventist healthcare wins hearts in volatile Mexican community**

An Adventist university provides treatment to members of a community that once appropriated its land

May 27, 2015 | Pueblo Nuevo
Solistahuacán, Chiapas, Mexico | Inter-American Division Staff, Adventist Review Staff

An Adventist university in Mexico’s poorest state is finding that free root canals and eyeglasses are softening the hearts of a neighboring community that was once so hostile toward the school that it seized a chunk of its land.

Some 135 teachers and students from Linda Vista Adventist University treated hundreds of people in Rincón Chamula, a community of 1,500 people located 1.5 miles (3 kilometers) from the campus.

The university and community are located in Chiapas, a southern Mexican state bordering Guatemala that has faced volatility linked to drug trafficking and related violence.

“We wanted to build cordial relationships by finding a practical way to show our Christian beliefs and to draw closer to this unapproachable neighbor,” said Raul Lozano, president of Linda Vista University.

Tensions between the university and Rincón Chamula go back more than 25 years. A group of locals snatched about 123 acres (50 hectares) of university land in 1990, a not uncommon practice in Chiapas, where some people assume landowners are rich with plenty of acreage to spare. The mountainous region has a climate that impoverished farmers have found favorable for growing marijuana and poppies.
“In our case, the government had to intervene in court, and it paid the university for that particular section of the property,” said Benjamin Cruz, vice president of student affairs and a professor at the university for decades.

The local government has a policy of paying for seized land to secure peace in communities like Rincón Chamula.

The university now owns 1,037 acres (420 hectares) of land.

“Right now things are relatively calm, but the relationship has not been easy,” Cruz said.

University leaders said the only previous contact with Rincón Chamula had been through the court ruling and nothing had been done to relieve tensions.

“We had not taken intentional actions to connect with them and develop good relations in the past, but when we saw their schools, houses, and streets, it became clear that they have many needs,” said Lozano, the president.

Days before the free clinic, university leaders invited community and district council leaders from five of the small communities that comprise Rincón Chamula to discuss the healthcare services.

The top local government health official, Celin Clemente Vargas, was happy to join the effort and collaborated by sending medicine and six physicians to assist the university volunteers.

More than 800 people received health services such as medical checkups, dental work, eye tests, lab services, gynecology, and pediatric care. In addition, many received counseling, nutrition consultations, medication, haircuts, and more.

The Southeast Adventist Hospital, located 80 miles (130 kilometers) away in Villahermosa, Tabasco, supported the free clinic with medical doctors, optometrists and dentists.

Students from the university’s school of nutrition held health and nutrition talks, shared healthy food, and also gave away hundreds of articles of clothing. The school’s Master Guide club also helped out.

The response from the community was so positive that the university is considering returning next semester.

“Thank you so much for remembering us,” said Hermelindo Hernandez, district council leader of Rincón Chamula. “There is a great need here, and what you have done has benefited us so much.”

The university has proposed cleaning up streets, painting buildings, and helping with construction projects next semester, but the community leaders have asked for more healthcare services.

The university president said the students’ work with the community has only just begun.

“We have been surveying the community and talking to community leaders,” Lozano said. “We have come to the conclusion that a continuous program is needed in Rincón Chamula, and we will work to address it needs.”
ADRA opens 12 wells during Zimbabwe evangelistic series

The boreholes add another component to an Adventist effort to meet the physical and spiritual needs of communities

May 27, 2015 | Andrew McChesney, Adventist Review

First came free healthcare. Then an evangelistic series. Now it is water.

A two-week initiative to share Jesus in the Zimbabwean city of Chitungwiza expanded Thursday with the inauguration of one of 12 ADRA-dug wells, providing drinking water to the community.

“We are practicing comprehensive health ministry,” said Seventh-day Adventist Church president Ted N.C. Wilson, who cut a ceremonial ribbon at the opening of the well, a thigh-high faucet standing on a pipe on gravel-strewn ground and festively decorated with a couple green-and-white balloons and ribbons.

Comprehensive health ministry describes an effort by the Adventist world church to meet both the physical and spiritual needs of communities.

Chitungwiza, a city of about 365,000 people located a 30-minute drive south of the capital, Harare, has become a center of Adventist activity in recent days.

A mega free clinic manned by about 180 volunteers opened to crowds of patients in a local shopping center on May 13, offering tests for diabetes and heart disease, cancer screening, eye exams, psychological evaluations, dental services, nutrition classes, a stop-smoking program, primary health care, minor surgeries including circumcision, and major surgeries at a nearby government hospital.

More than 13,000 patients had been treated by Thursday, five days before the event ends May 29.

“The number of patients is unbelievable!” Wilson said. “It is far more than what they had anticipated. It is a huge success to God’s glory!”

Nancy Wilson, wife of Adventist Church president Ted N.C. Wilson, trying to balance a bucket of water on her head. Giving her a hand on the right is Joanne Ratsara, wife of Paul Ratsara, president of the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division, which includes Zimbabwe.

The clinic, which is open six days a week, celebrated its official opening Thursday with a visit by Minister of Lands and acting Health and Child Welfare Minister Douglas Mombeshora.

People who have been treated at the clinic have been invited to attend a nightly evangelistic series that began in a large, adjacent field on May 17. Many appear to be responding. The crowd
of 12,000 people who came to hear Wilson speak about biblical prophecy on opening night has swelled to more than 20,000.

Other evangelistic meetings are being held simultaneously at 86 other sites in 17 towns and cities across Zimbabwe, the culmination of months of preparatory work that included about 5,000 Bible study groups in those areas. The evangelistic meetings will end with an anticipated 30,000 baptisms on Sabbath, May 30.

Minister Mombeshora also attended the opening of the well, where he thanked ADRA and the Adventist Church for working to improve people's lives.

The 11 other wells are located at various locations around the country.

“Building new wells can completely transform a village by bringing safe, clean water close to home,” Jason Brooks, senior technical adviser for water, hygiene, and sanitation at the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, told the Adventist Review. “Women and children don’t have to walk for miles to get water, so they can spend their days in meaningful work or stay in school.”

He also said wells drastically reduce chronic disease from unsafe drinking water because villagers no longer have to share their drinking source with bathers, livestock, and other contaminants.

With the opening of the wells, ADRA will now provide hygiene and sanitation trainings for the community, he said.

**Evangelistic meetings take Zimbabwe by storm**

Zimbabweans and visiting North American presenters alike express astonishment at the impact of the Adventist events

*May 27, 2015* | *Andrew McChesney, Adventist Review*

Zimbabwe is abuzz about Jesus as the Seventh-day Adventist Church enters its final week of evangelistic meetings and the health minister, overwhelmed at the sight of thousands of people receiving free healthcare at an Adventist-organized clinic, asked the church to consider building a hospital.

Tens of thousands of people are gathering nightly for a two-week evangelistic series in several hundred churches and other venues. Most of the speakers at the sites are from Zimbabwe, but 76 are from North America, including 30 young adults, and one is from Malawi.

Scores of people are being baptized nightly, and the number is expected to swell to 30,000 by the close of the series on Sabbath, May 30.
The Adventist Church’s implementation of its “comprehensive health ministry” initiative — which seeks to follow Jesus’ example by meeting people’s physical and spiritual needs at the same time — has captured nationwide attention through reports on national television and radio and in major newspapers.

Word has spread quickly about an Adventist-organized free clinic operating beside a field in Chitungwiza, near the capital, Harare, where more than 20,000 people are attending nightly meetings, many after receiving medical treatment.

“The whole country is talking about what is happening in the meetings,” a Zimbabwean woman told Duane McKey, coordinator of the two-week series, at one of the meetings on Monday night.

Zimbabwe’s vice president has praised the Adventist Church’s work publicly, and acting Health and Child Welfare Minister Douglas Mombeshora has asked for an Adventist hospital, said Innocent Gwizo, coordinator of the free clinic and the Adventist Church’s director of AIDS and health ministries in Zimbabwe.

“Overwhelmed by the success and impact of the health expo, the minister called on the global church leadership … to establish a mission hospital in Zimbabwe,” Gwizo said.

The Adventist Church in Zimbabwe was exploring the possibilities. Leaders said that the local church, as evidenced by the free clinic, was committed to improving people’s health and would do all it could to provide healthcare through similar events, clinics, health education, members sharing simple health tips with neighbors and, if possible, some type of new medical facility.

**Adventists Influence Communities**

Zimbabweans are not the only ones talking about the impact of the Adventist events, said McKey, vice president for evangelism at the Adventist Church’s Southwestern Union in Texas.

“Our speakers from North America are having incredible experiences. Many say their lives are changed forever,” he told the Adventist Review.

One young woman told him after making her first call for baptism, “I was a basket case.” A man said, “I have preached at home many times, but nothing I have done has changed me like this!”

“Thirty of our speakers are young adults, and many have committed to preach evangelistic series when they return home,” McKey said.

Also among the speakers is Adventist Review associate editor Lael Caesar, a native of Guyana who is preaching in Zimbabwe’s second-largest city, Bulawayo. Caesar is “tag-teaming” the second half of an evangelistic series begun by Anthony Kent, associate ministerial secretary of the General Conference.

Paul Ratsara, president of the church’s Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division, which includes Zimbabwe, said he was thrilled to see members, pastors, and church leaders working together to influence their communities in significant ways.

“Praise God our division is working together to share our means, our lives, and the love of God to make a visible difference in our communities both now and for eternity,” Ratsara said.
As an example of this work, he pointed to church members in the town of Darby who raised a church in six days last week, building during the day and holding evangelistic meetings at night.

“The achievement of the Darby team is refreshing and inspiring,” he said. “They have built a church from the dry ground up in only six days using their own local resources.”

The church members held Bible studies in the community for weeks before the evangelistic meetings, and 101 people were baptized after the church building’s dedication last Sabbath.

Ratsara said the Darby outreach represented an integration of a number of strategic initiatives in his division. “Prayer and revival, training, comprehensive evangelism, a wise use of resources, and sacrificial giving have all combined to create this wonderful result,” he said.

**Biggest Community Health Outreach Ever**

The integration can also be seen at the free clinic, called a Health Expo, that is operating in a shopping center in Chitungwiza. The clinic, staffed by more than 550 volunteers, has treated 24,167 patients since opening on May 13 and plans to see thousands more this week, Gwizo said.

“The Zimbabwe Union Conference’s health ministries department had planned to reach about 15,000 persons with this expo,” he said. “However, this goal is now history. God has stepped in to accomplish His mission in the lives of the needy communities of Chitungwiza and now Zimbabwe at large.”

He noted that the clinic has drawn strong national interest among Zimbabwe’s leadership, with government ministers, members of parliament, the deputy attorney general, and many others attending the official opening, and more expected this week.

A health ministry official, Dorcas Sithole, has remarked that the clinic is the biggest community health outreach that the country has ever witnessed.

The clinic’s dental-care department is booked through the end of the event, while about 100 people are waiting for free surgeries from a team of volunteer surgeons led by David Chumuka at the government’s Chitungwiza Central Hospital.

“It is very clear that the surgeries will continue after” the evangelistic series ends, Gwizo said.

Surgeons are performing about 18 operations daily and have been forced to stop taking more cases because people are coming from all over the country.

Gwizo said the church was looking for funds to cover the surgeries of all those who had already shown up.

“We know the Lord will provide,” he said.

Meanwhile, church members are contacting all 24,167 patients who have received treatment with offers of Bible studies.

“Already more than 1,000 members from our witnessing teams are visiting homes and giving Bible studies during the day,” Gwizo said.
Several patients who previously received Bible studies have been baptized, including four former drug addicts.

The Voice of Prophecy Bible school is also enrolling thousands of patients from the expo.

“This will continue for months after the preaching ends,” Gwizo said. “In the process, the people will be connected with local churches, and we expect that each person will receive at least four visits in six months.”