Superstorm Sandy and the Church in New York
Pastor Neptali Acevedo, Bronx, NY

On Monday, October 29, grim forecasts announced the imminent arrival of a powerful storm. The mega storm, or super storm Sandy as it was called, was headed straight toward New York with devastating power. The collision of a cold front from the north and a massive warm current from the south were predicted to produce unprecedented rain, and even snow, on an area more than eight hundred miles wide. These conditions were to be worsened by the fact that a full moon would cause high tide. The coastal areas of the eastern United States were expected to be hit the hardest.

The church prayed, because we knew that our members could be affected by this threat. In the evening, the winds were very strong. The sky darkened because of the thick mantle of clouds overhead, but there was no rain, only a cold drizzle. At about 7 p.m., the winds gusted at over 70 miles per hour—still without heavy rainfall.

My wife and I had made all the preparations necessary to face this danger. We had bought extra food, and the previous Friday I had done a full maintenance of the drainage pumps. The church’s back yard is about 6 feet below street level. When there is a heavy rain, the excess water has to be pumped out by drainage pumps; otherwise the entire house is flooded. The pumps are electrically operated, so without power we would be flooded for sure.

At about 8 p.m., the winds were about 80 miles per hour, and what we feared happened. The power went off. I told my wife, “Now we are going to swim in this place, because there is no way to stop the flooding.” We hurried to put our things as high as possible and went up to the church to spend the night there, expecting the worst. All night we listened to the roaring winds and the crash of falling objects being carried by the wind. The roof of the train station in front of the church was almost completely torn off.

But God can perform miracles. Amazingly, there was no rain to flood our place. In the morning, I expected to see a deep pool of water in our backyard, but God had protected us with His hand. There was no water in our yard at all! Praise the Lord, Who is always willing to protect His children in time of trouble! There was still a threat of rain, so we continued praying for God’s protection. Because of the power outage, we did not have phone service. Our cell phones did not even receive a signal inside the house. When the winds had lessened in strength, I went out and made some calls to find out about the church members nearby. Thanks to God, all of them were fine. In New Jersey our members were also without power but experienced no damage or loss of any kind.

On Wednesday evening, we went to visit the family of one of our members. We watched TV reports of the terrible devastation caused by the storm. That night we thanked the Lord with deep gratitude for His mercies and His miraculous protection during this mega storm. The city of New York is still flooded in some areas; the trains are working only partially, but the people of God have once again received clear proof of His loving care. Amen!
Missionary Minute: Defending the Fatherless
God’s Tenderest Mission Field
Margie Seely, Cedartown, GA

Four children squirmed in their chairs as the visitor asked them question after question. Ten-year-old Samanta twirled one blonde braid around her fingertip while trying to imagine what life would be like in a family once again. Well, technically, she still did have a family, she thought as her blue eyes scanned the only faces she could call her own—two sisters and her little brother. Her mother and three different fathers had failed the children. Now the only home they knew was within the walls of a Latvian orphanage—and they were being interviewed to see if they could be part of an international hosting program in the United States. Samanta almost dared not hope she and her siblings would be chosen. After all, who would take in four children?

Currently, Latvia is one of the poorest and most disadvantaged countries in Europe. Since the fall of Communism in 1991, drug use in Latvia has risen by 600%. Communism stripped Latvia of its religious heritage and replaced it with a spiritual vacuum. After Latvia’s liberation, the country became a ship adrift with no moral compass in a fast-changing world. High unemployment, low wages, and cheap drugs have wreaked untold havoc on Latvia’s families and society. As expected, the children suffer the most.

Because of the unrest at home, many Latvian children end up as “social orphans” and are placed in orphanages. For those who are not adopted before their sixteenth birthday, the statistics are grim. A staggering 50% of girls who age out of orphanages in Latvia will become a prostitute within two years. Of boys who age out of orphanages, 40% will commit suicide within their first two years out. Few life skills and a weak or nonexistent support system offer Latvia’s orphans very little hope.

But New Horizons for Children, a non-profit organization based in Acworth, Georgia, is trying to change that. Twice each year, a team of volunteers travels to orphanages throughout Latvia, the Ukraine, and now China, seeking out and interviewing eligible orphans to participate in a month-long hosting program. During the winter and summer seasons, approximately 200 orphans stay with Christian families throughout the United States. These families volunteer to provide clothing, shelter, medical care, and, most importantly, God’s free gift of love. Not surprisingly, about 80% of the children who participate in this program are later adopted, either by their host family or by another family who met the children while they were here.

Samanta is in for a surprise. In about three weeks, she and her siblings—12-year-old Valerija, 7-year-old Liga, and 6-year-old Eltons—will be told that there is a family eagerly waiting to host them in Cedartown, Georgia. That family is my family. Please join us in prayer that we will be able to share God’s love for the fatherless with these four precious children from Latvia.

November is National Adoption Awareness Month. If you have any questions about adoption or foster care, please email me at margieseely@yahoo.com. If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about hosting an orphan from Latvia, the Ukraine, or China, please visit www.newhorizonsforchildren.org. The life that is changed just might be your own!

* * * *

“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.”
James 1:27
News from the World of Education:
Children’s Music Camp
Lisbeth Hunger and Linda Suárez, Southeastern Field Education Leaders, Cedartown, GA

God has provided us a wonderful place to close the year 2012 with praises to our Saviour! Two events will take place at the comfortable Christian Retreat Center in Bradenton, Florida—the Children’s Music Camp and the Southeastern Field Conference. The music camp consists of two days of intensive choir and instrument training. Not only children, but also young people and adults, may participate! All those who have taken instrumental classes for at least one year may take part in the musical ensemble. Group and individual instrumental classes will be given during the practice days. The children will also enjoy many Biblical and recreational activities, while adults and parents have the opportunity to attend a family workshop and seminar. With God’s help, we plan to sing at a nearby hospital on Friday afternoon.

Plan to escape from the distractions of the world while overlooking a tropical lagoon on the peaceful Manatee River. Make your reservation as soon as possible to spend a lovely time consecrating your heart to the Lord. Comfortable, economical, motel-style, air-conditioned rooms await you! Worship, Christian music, activities in nature, time to play, outdoor recreation, delicious vegan meals, and a joyful spirit are all included in the program!

Below you will find detailed information about accommodations, costs, and reservations for the camp as well for the Field conference. We pray for a blessed time, good weather, and the Lord’s presence during these gatherings.

Children’s Music Camp and Southeastern Field Conference Reservation Form

Christian Retreat Center in Bradenton, Florida
1200 Glory Way Blvd., Bradenton, Florida 34212-3006
December 26-30, 2012

Make checks payable to: IMS SDA Church, Reform Movement
Deadline for Registration and Payments: December 14, 2012

Return this completed form and payment to: Ciro Arevalo, P.O. Box 677066, Orlando, FL 32867-7066; Phone: (407) 678-3165; Email: IMS_SEField@yahoo.com

Personal Information: Submit one reservation form per family or room:

Last Name ______________________________ First Name _________________________ Phone # (___) ___________________

Family Attendance: How many people are in your family or group?
Adults (ages 9+) #_______ Children (ages 3-8) #_______ Infants (ages up to 2) #_______

LODGING and Fees: Please check the nights you will be staying:

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<tr>
<th>Children’s Music Camp</th>
<th>Southeastern Field Conference</th>
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<tr>
<td>___ Wednesday, December 26</td>
<td>___ Friday, December 28</td>
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<td>___ Thursday, December 27</td>
<td>___ Saturday, December 29</td>
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MOTEL ROOMS: (All rooms include linens. Pricing is per room with quad capacity or per family)

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<td>___ Standard (two queen beds) $55.00/night</td>
<td>___ Deluxe (two queen beds/kitchenette) $80.00/night</td>
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MEALS:

Children’s Music Camp: You may give a donation for meals. Show your gratitude by a thank offering on Sabbath.

Southeastern Field Conference: (Friday’s dinner, Sabbath’s breakfast and dinner, and Sunday’s breakfast are free for all attendees.) Sabbath lunch will be prepared by the camp personnel, and the fees are as follows:
Sabbath Lunch: $9.00 for ages 9 and up: # of Meals: ______ 
Sabbath Lunch: $6.00 for ages 3-8:  # of Meals: ______

CONFERENCE FEE: This fee covers conference expenses, including taxes. It will be charged per stay, not per night. Mark one of the following three options:

A: Children’s Music Camp + Southeastern Field Conference $15 per person ______
B: Southeastern Field Conference $10 per person ______
C: Conference Fee for those attending only Sabbath $ 5 per person ______

Information of persons attending the Children’s Music Camp:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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Questions about the Children’s Music Camp? Call 770-715-0419

Total Conference Cost:

Lodging $________________
Meals $________________
Total Conference Fee ($15 or $10 per person) $___________
TOTAL DUE $________________

Please make sure checks are made out to: IMS SDA Church, Reform Movement.

Payment needs to be received no later than December 14, 2012, in order to reserve a room. Those who pay after that date cannot be assured a room at the campground. Meals need to be paid for and reserved for Sabbath lunch in order for the camp to make enough food for those attending. Please send your reservation forms as soon as possible so we can tell the camp how many people will be attending. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding. We hope all make plans to attend this very important conference where we will be able to be together at the end of another year to thank the Lord for His many blessings.

Check-in time for the Children’s Music Camp: Wednesday, December 26, at 2:00 p.m.
Check-in time for the Southeastern Field Conference: Friday, December 28, at 2:00 p.m.
Check-out time: Sunday, December 30, at 11:00 a.m.

2012 Calendar

- December 26-27: Children’s Music Camp, Bradenton, FL
- December 28-30: Southeastern Field Conference, Bradenton, FL