Jamaica: NCU Lecturer, among hundreds gaptized in Pentecost and More program

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Inter-America: Pentecost and More initiative continues strong in its fifth year

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March 22, 2011 - Mandeville, Jamaica...Sherrefa Burchell and Nigel Coke/IAD

Lecturer in the department of Nursing at Northern Caribbean University (NCU), Kate Asmond, was among hundreds who were baptized on the "Day of Pentecost", Mar. 19, 2011.

Under the theme "Come Holy Spirit" more than seven hundred and fifty persons responded to the wonderful message of God's grace and were added to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Jamaica. It was broadcast live to thousands via the internet, NCU Radio and NCU TV from the church's main site at the NCU Gymnatorium.

"It is a good feeling" said Kate Asmond, who is also a registered nurse and mid-wife. "I am happy because this is something I wanted for a while and so I am overjoyed that it is now a reality." Kate was the first person to be baptized at the JAMU main site and hers was also the baptism that was carried live in Venezuela during the Inter-American Division's (IAD) broadcast from the various Unions. "I look forward to serving God in His church" Kate added.

Also, among the more than twenty persons baptized at NCU was a couple, Carl and Kadeon Siddon, who were married just a few days before. They are both returning to the church after months of absence.

"I never intended to stay out of the church forever," said Carl. "I wanted to get married and return to the fold, so today I am happy that I have given my life back to God."

Like her husband, Kadeon was also a member of the church for many years, left, but had no desire to remain outside of Christ because she believes that "one cannot know what is right and insist on doing the wrong." They are now very happy to have recommitted their lives and look forward to a beautiful life and marriage with Christ as the center.

Pastor Everett Brown, president of JAMU, delivered the main message for the program. In it he reminded the church that though we may have "Unfulfilled dreams and expectations, with God nothing is impossible".

Referencing Matthew 16: 24-26, Pastor Brown said "I sense, my brothers and sisters that there is an air of complacency, a lack of urgency, that exist in our church and the wider society to respond to the call of Jesus Christ for sinners to surrender their life to Him before it is eternally too late. The call, therefore, is for us to surrender our lives to Jesus so that we can receive the power and salvation that is available to all; to the murderer, to the person who believes God has turned His back on him, to those who are on the verge of giving up and to all who exercise faith in Jesus Christ."

Earlier in the service, music was provided by the Inspaye Praise Mass Choir from NCU, the group Seeds of Love, and a group of young people from Pennsylvania, "The La Sonnette Ensemble", playing the bells. Prayer concerts were conducted in which supplication was made for the infilling of the Holy Spirit, the outpouring of the Latter Rain, the financing of the Mission, for family and friends to return to the fold, among other things.
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**March 22, 2011 - Maracaibo, Zulia, Venezuela...Libna Stevens/IAD**

For the fifth consecutive year, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Inter-America engaged in unified evangelistic efforts to baptize thousands of people through its Pentecost and More initiative, which began in the first quarter of each year. The efforts were celebrated through baptismal ceremonies held throughout the region and through a special satellite program broadcast from Maracaibo, Venezuela, on Mar. 19, 2011.

So far this year, more than 62,546 new believers have joined the church as a result of the aggressive work of church leaders, pastors and laypeople who have been sharing the good news of the salvation in their surrounding communities.

"This is a glorious day in the Inter-American Division," said Pastor Balvin Braham, ministerial associate director for the church Inter-America and organizer of the event.

"We are rejoicing that God continues to lead men and women to the foot of the cross, that the gospel is being preached and those who accept the gospel are being engrafted into the body of Jesus Christ," he added as he reported that over 15,300 baptisms took place in 16 of the 21 church regions in the territory during the live program. Final figures are still pending.

The program was seen live on the Hope Channel, Esperanza TV, and 3ABN Latino.

It's a unified workforce throughout thousands of small groups, congregations and churches which have made the initiative successful said Braham.

"The Seventh-day Adventist Church is advancing with the message we have to tell the world so we are excited to see that our pastors and members are working together today in this union," Braham said.

More than 1,200 people were baptized on-site as church leaders from throughout the territory pronounced baptismal prayers during the live program held at the 5,000-packed Palacio de Eventos, in Maracaibo.

Thousands more baptisms took place throughout the region as live feeds showed new members being submerged in water in other parts of Inter-America during the broadcast which featured musical presentations and spiritual messages welcoming new believers into the church.

Pastor Steve Riley from Trinidad, a minister of the Stanmore Adventist Church in Trinidad, delivered the keynote message. Riley challenged church leaders, baptismal candidates and members to continue surrendering to God every day and to continue fulfilling the mission of the church by reaching out to people.

"Give Jesus what you have and He will give you everything He has," emphasized Riley. "Our job is to make the world thirsty, thirsty for Jesus," he continued. "When people are thirsty for Jesus just like you and I, they will taste and see that Jesus is good and He satisfies."

It was that thirst that prompted Kate Asmond in Jamaica to make her decision to accept Jesus