Guatemala: Church grows through Pentecost and More initiative

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The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Guatemala joined efforts with the rest of the Inter-American Division (IAD) region through its evangelism program Pentecost and More when 1,805 people were baptized during special ceremonies throughout the Central American country March 19-20, 2011.

Church leaders in Guatemala reported that more than 5,200 new believers joined the church in the first quarter of 2011 as a result of 7,643 Bible studies and hundreds of evangelistic campaigns and small group meetings conducted throughout the country.

"We are so happy for our brothers and sisters in Guatemala who have been able to reach thousands of people through Bible studies and witnessing through this Pentecost and More initiative," said Pastor Guenther Garcia, president of the church in Guatemala, as he spoke to thousands of church members.

The Vuelta del Mango Adventist Church in southern Guatemala was the spot where more than 1,200 gathered for a special ceremony where dozens of baptisms took place on Mar. 19, as Pastor Gustavo Menendez, personal ministries director for the church in Guatemala pronounced the baptismal prayer via satellite from Venezuela, the IAD host site for the division-wide event.

More than 3,000 gathered by Lake Atitlan on Panajachel Beach on Sunday to witness 288 baptisms. The new members represented the central and northwest church regions in Guatemala.

Both ceremonies were streamed live over the internet and coverage of the programs were transmitted through the church's radio stations.

Inter-America's Pentecost and More was inspired by the Biblical Pentecost of Acts 2 and seeks to mobilize pastors and laypeople alike to strengthen their unified efforts for effectiveness in evangelistic mission outreach initiatives. Since the Pentecost initiative began in 2007, there have been more than 304,000 baptisms attributed to the first quarter evangelistic efforts in the Inter-American Division territory.

For more information on the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Guatemala, visit www.uniondeguatemala.org
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Inter-American Division   >   Communication Department

Libna Stevens
Mar 29, 2011

One of the greatest questions facing the Seventh-day Adventist Church today is: Are we willing to climb out of our comfort zones to let God do what is necessary to prepare each of us for a true revival personally and corporately, for a change or reformation in our lives as we become more and more like Jesus, and for the reception of the Latter Rain?

29 Mar 2011, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States...Ted N. C. Wilson

One of the greatest questions facing the Seventh-day Adventist Church today is: Are we willing to climb out of our comfort zones to let God do what is necessary to prepare each of us for a true revival personally and corporately, for a change or reformation in our lives as we become more and more like Jesus, and for the reception of the Latter Rain?

All of this is only through the power of the Holy Spirit. The answer to this question is your choice and my choice. As we all know, God will not force us to comply with His will. He invites, encourages, and, yes, pleads with us to respond to His counsel and wishes. Over the last several months the call to revival and reformation has gone out to the world church through our church leaders. What has been your reaction?

Over 100 years ago, Ellen White, the servant of the Lord, said, "A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work" (RH, March 22, 1887).

It is still the greatest of our needs, and is still to be our first work, for Jesus has not returned. How, then, are we to approach our first work and realize our greatest need? The model of the apostolic church as it prepared for Pentecost is a help to us today.

Before Jesus ascended, He told His disciples that they were to receive power to accomplish the mission He had given to them. In Luke 24:49 He said, "Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you, but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

These words are reinforced in Acts 1:5, 8, "John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Jesus told the disciples to go back to Jerusalem and wait for the power that was to come upon them from the Father. The period of waiting was about 10 days, but they did not put their feet up on the desk and wait in idleness. It was, rather, a time of intense preparation. Luke gives us a quick glimpse into what was done: "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers" (Acts 1:14). He makes this further observation, "When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place" (Acts 2:1).

Ellen White further explains this whole experience: "It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God, that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. The same work, only in greater degree, must be done now" (TM, p. 507).

We have our orders. God is waiting to pour out His Spirit upon His remnant people Who will empower them to complete the work of preaching the Three Angels' Messages. The work done by the disciples must be done by us, only in a greater degree. We cannot receive this power unless we are willing to move out of our comfort zones and allow the Spirit to do the work