IAD News

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Posted: 06 May 2011 09:00 PM PDT
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4 May 2011, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States....Ansel Oliver/ANN

Even more, she's hoping for a renewed focus on Jesus and better integration of his life and teachings in every class subject.

Raised a Baptist, Simmons became an Adventist at age 16 following several years of personal Bible study and later attending a public evangelism series that came to her neighborhood.

She went on to earn a bachelor's degree in Education from Indiana University, a master's degree in Education from church-owned Andrews University in Michigan, and a doctorate of Education from the University of Louisville in Kentucky.

Much of her research and development projects focused on underrepresented groups, mostly defined by race, socio-economic status and gender.

Simmons has served as provost of the church's La Sierra University in California, vice president of the church's Oakwood University in Alabama and associate dean of the University of Louisville's School of Education.

Simmons was elected a vice president of the Adventist Church in 2005 and serves as the advisor to the Education and Women's Ministries departments.

In a 40-minute interview, Simmons discussed her vision for a worldwide series of formal conversations on Adventist Education, how they should proceed and where they might lead. She also proffered what she thinks might be a more sustainable model for Adventist education in some regions.

Excerpts:

**Adventist News Network**: What do you hope happens as a result of these conversations on Adventist education?

**Dr. Ella Simmons**: I would like for us to come out recognizing that we must be committed to education as internal evangelism as we are to external evangelism. The Lord holds us accountable for both. My ideal would be to engender a new excitement that plays itself out in terms of support and involvement in Adventist education worldwide. There would emerge a renewed understanding of true education as redemption as the future of our church through the
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May 6, 2011

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May 6, 2011 - Miami, Florida, United States...Libna Stevens/IAD

More than 200 church leaders from throughout the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Inter-America have arrived in Miami for days of advisory and committee meetings which begins tomorrow. But they paused today during a special worship service for spiritual nourishment and to focus on Constant In Prayer, a revival and reformation initiative that was launched earlier this year.

"We are delighted that you are here and want you to know that in Inter-America we are serious about revival and reformation," said Pastor Israel Leito, president of the church in Inter-America as he introduced the top leadership of the Inter-American Division headquarter office.

Revival and reformation is one of three major strategic objectives that will be part of the life of the church for the next five years and beyond.

Constant in Prayer seeks to motivate each church member to be in a closer connection with God through constant prayer and study of the bible.

Already, dozens of territory-wide Constant in Prayer programs have taken place.

Pastor Abner De Los Santos, vice president overseer of the spiritual revival initiative in Inter-America, said the initiative is the answer to the challenge set forth by the Adventist World Church to not only motivate all church members to pursue a personal spiritual revival but also to reach the more than 270 million people in the 33 countries which comprise Inter-America.

"This will only be possible through our efforts with revival and reformation and the power of the Holy Spirit working in the hearts of people," said De Los Santos.

"Reformation needs to begin with us, within our offices, the Division, within the unions, the local fields, and down to the church," he added.

"Our main objective with these meetings is to see how we can improve on being able to impact our churches in a positive way with spiritual revival through programs within your department," explained Herrera.

"The church did not create departments to make the programs for the local church but to help the local church fulfill its mission," he added.

"Everything that your department promotes and the materials it puts out should support the spirituality of the church through prayer, the study of the Word and testifying. That's what strengthens the church," said Herrera.

During the program, several prayer sessions took place as leaders consecrated and committed to embracing revival and reformation in functions of their departments and ministries.

Dr. Elie Henry, executive secretary of the church in Inter-America, challenged the leaders to look inwardly, surrender and recommit to a stronger communion with God as they get more involved
Inter-America’s Constant in Prayer initiative taking roots

Inter-American Division  >  Communication Department

Libna Stevens  SHARE  May 6, 2011

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Constant in Prayer, a spiritual revival initiative launched by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Inter-America earlier this year, are three words that have been buzzing throughout its vast territory. Constant in Prayer seeks to motivate each church member to be in a closer connection with God through constant prayer and study of the bible.

Church leaders from the Inter-American Division (IAD) territory's 21 regions met yesterday and today at the IAD headquarters in Miami to discuss the progress of the initiative and further strategize on how to tailor its message to their local congregations.

"It is important that you are here representing thousands of people in this our first meeting with revival and reformation coordinators in our Division," said Pastor Roberto Herrera, coordinator of the Constant in Prayer revival initiative for the IAD.

The church has already executed special programs across the territory promoting prayer revival for children and young people, students and teachers, and the church's pastoral workforce. However, many local churches have not heard of Constant In Prayer, according to Herrera. "The first job is to organize the structure of the prayer revival in your union with your local fields and churches," he explained.

"Our main focus and responsibility as pastors and leaders is to care for the spiritual life of our church members, that is what we have been called to do," said Herrera. "It's about creating an environment that leads members to seek a closer relationship with God through a personal revival experience."

"With the kind of strength and growth of our churches, this division cannot afford to neglect the spirituality of our members," he continued. "That is why the IAD is making a call to all its leaders and ministers to care for the church. We want to unite with you in prayer and in effort as we push for this Constant in Prayer revival initiative."

It's not about pushing for a spiritual revival because our church may be dead," said Pastor Israel Leito, president of the church in Inter-America, as he addressed revival coordinators. "On the contrary, if there is one place the Lord is pouring out blessing upon blessing, it is the IAD."

Pastor Leito cited as evidence the fact that the church in the IAD has grown from one million to 3.4 million members in 10 years. In the same time, the 12 church regions have grown to 21, and the 60 local fields have swelled to 106. He added that, in spite of the fact that most of the countries in the IAD have weak currencies, the membership has remained strong and loyal in stewardship, making the IAD the second highest in giving in the world. He said the growth is also due to a dedicated pastoral force and a consecrated laity. However, he said the call for revival and reformation is keeping church leaders on their toes.

"A call to revival is a call to make God the center of your life, to depend on the Holy Spirit re-evaluating your life thoroughly as leaders and preparing the church for that [revival]," he said, adding that the church has invested resources and funds to ensure the church is mobilized into spiritual revival.