Jamaica: Sabbath speaker challenges communicators to witness through social networking

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Inter-American Division > Communication Department

Libna Stevens

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June 4, 2011 - Montego Bay, Jamaica...Libna Stevens/IAD

As internet technologists and communicators met on day four of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's Global Internet Evangelism Network (GIEN) Conference in Montego Bay, they were challenged to share the gospel through social networking.

"In social networking today we need to do what Jesus did to attract people around the theme of preparing for the Kingdom of God," said Pastor Leon B. Wellington, vice president and communication director for the church in Inter-America.

"We are called to be kingdom builders, to be His witnesses," said Pastor Wellington as he addressed more than 100 during the worship service today.

"This is the context in which we, disciples in a postmodern age, are called upon to witness," he continued. "We are called to educate the peoples of the world concerning the importance and necessity of getting ready for the Kingdom."

It was the resounding theme of this year's conference which has focused on using online social networks as effective media for spreading the gospel.

Pastor Wellington reflected on Jesus' method of networking as he called disciples, touched children, healed the sick and preached about peace and hope.

It's about "being witnesses in our homes, on the street, in our communities, at the workplace, on the internet, wherever people gather," explained Wellington. "There is no witnessing template, prototype or mould; just tell the story as you understand it. Tell how this Galilean named Jesus changed your life and destiny."

Taking advantage of the internet and social network platforms is the kind of unique opportunity to witness like Jesus did, went on Pastor Wellington. "We can touch more people at the same time, in more places than was dreamed possible by the disciples. People are searching for answers to their daily challenges and we must be there online with solutions to life's stresses and strains."

"To be relevant we must change and broaden the content of our websites from stories that pat us on the back and tell the world how good we are, to content that answers the need of those who contemplate giving up on life and are suicidal, those with dysfunctional marriages and are clueless hot to fix it, those whose children have become rebellious, drug pushers, purveyors of crime and violence, those who are not feeling loved by anyone, the sad, discouraged, seeking for help in the middle of night, those who just learnt they are terminally ill, those concerned about their self-image, low self-esteem," explained Pastor Wellington.

"We must build relationships, impact the communities where we are, give the people hope, tell them of the peace, and freedom to be found in Jesus, so they too can be ready for the coming Kingdom," he challenged.

The GIEN conference will continue until June 5, 2011.
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The Seventh-day Adventist Church's Global Internet Evangelism Network (GIEN) awarded Jose Romero, Information Technology director for the church in Inter-America, a Net Award for 2011 for his contribution to fostering the use of technology and internet in the Inter-American Division. The award was given out today during GIEN's 8th annual conference being held in Montego Bay, Jamaica, June 1-5, 2011.

Pastor Leon B. Wellington, vice president for the church in Inter-America, presented the award on behalf of GIEN as Romero joined via the internet during the presentation.

Other awardees included Andrew Daryl Gungadoo, Global Resource Engineer for Adventist World Radio, for leveraging technology to empower AWR's global operations, and Kenneth Htang Suanzanang, former communication director in Myanmar, for using technology to address spiritual needs in Myanmar.

GIEN is an organization that aims to foster the mission of the Adventist Church through the creative use of internet technology. This week's conference is the first to be held in the Inter-American Division (IAD) territory since GIEN was organized in 2004.

For more information on GIEN 2011, visit http://gien.adventist.org/