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United States: Annual ASI convention sees $2 million donated for mission

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Libna Stevens  |  SHARE  |  9 Aug, 2011

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9 Aug 2011, London...ANN/BUC/SEC staff

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Youth leaders will hold the rally in Tottenham at the Seven Sisters Station today, Tuesday, August 9, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., and again tomorrow, Wednesday, August 10, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

The event, sponsored by the church’s South England Conference, will be used to promote peace. Participants will distribute Peace pledge cards, which ask people to sign the cards to promote peace in their neighborhood.

Looting across numerous neighborhoods of London, and even in cities as far away Birmingham and Liverpool, continued to flare into Monday night.

The violence began Saturday night following a community protest of a police shooting last week in Tottenham. Local resident Mark Duggan was killed, and a police officer was shot, but not killed, in the incident, news agencies reported.

Tottenham, as well as other neighborhoods where violence first erupted, has often been associated with high unemployment and tensions with police. Copycat crimes soon swept across multiple neighborhoods and cities, the BBC reported.

The BBC reported that Prime Minister David Cameron returned from a vacation in Italy to address the situation and asked that Parliament be recalled, a move that last occurred in 2002.

"We are saddend by the events that have occurred in Tottenham," said Sam Davis, president of the Adventist Church in South England. "The loss of Mark Duggan's life has mobilized many in the community to rightly ask for answers to what took place that led to this young man's loss of life. However, this can never justify the wanton violence and destruction of property, looting and vandalism that followed the protest."
The annual international gathering of Adventist-laymen's Services & Industries last week drew a large attendance of generous participants who reached deep into their pockets to surpass the organization's fundraising goal.

More than 3,100 people packed into the Sacramento Convention Center on Sabbath morning, August 6, the final day of the 2011 ASI International Convention. They worshiped with sacred orchestral music, listened to member and ministry testimonies, and shouted amens during a sermon by Seventh-day Adventist world church President Ted N.C. Wilson, who lauded the program's theme, "Inspired to Finish Strong!"

The audience was clearly inspired to give: More than $2 million was collected in the special offering to fund 47 mission projects -- surpassing the goal of $1.5 million.

"The crowd and the offering exceeded our expectations," said ASI General Vice President Donna McNeilus, beaming at the conclusion of the four-day convention. "I think people realize the times we're living in, and even though the economic situation is extremely volatile, people really are serious about wanting to give their all for Jesus, and it showed here."

ASI, which traces its roots back to 1947, is an organization of lay ministries, professionals, business leaders and other laypeople committed to actively participating in the worldwide mission of the Adventist Church.

The convention featured general sessions led by numerous speakers, including Ivor Myers, David Kulakov, Doug Batchelor, Lyndi Schwartz and Matt Parra.

Myers, director of Power of the Lamb Ministries and church pastor in the Central California Conference, kept the Friday evening audience gripped by moving through all major Adventist doctrines and Biblical prophecies in a rapid-fire 40 minutes.

Upwards of 2,000 people registered for the convention, and many attended some of the 20 seminars in five tracks: evangelism, spiritual growth, health, nonprofit and business, and "Finishing Strong."

At a Friday health seminar, Diana Fleming, co-author of The Full Plate Diet, explained the top reason why people fail to lose weight. "They don't know how," said Fleming, whose book promotes weight loss by eating more natural fiber-rich foods.

Children and youth participated in daylong, age-appropriate programming that included community service and evangelism in the local region.

At the exhibit hall, some 340 organizations from around the world -- a wide variety of independent and church-sponsored ministries ranging from 1000 Missionary Movement North America to Your Story Hour -- showed their wares, promoted their programs and offered their services.

Jewish-Adventist Ministries shared information on how to reach Jewish friends and neighbors.