Mexico: Government official praises Adventist Church’s humanitarian work, registration follow-through

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Jamaica: Adventist Church in west commended for community work

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Meeting with top church leaders last month, Tort highlighted ADRA programs like distributing drinking water to communities in need, family farming projects, and more, and said there is a need for a joint venture in rebuilding the social fabric the government has sought to rebuild.

Tort's February 21 visit was at the invitation Pastor Tomas Torres, president of the church in Central Mexico and spokesperson for the church in Mexico. Pastor Torres thanked Tort for his professionalism, valuable support, and attention as the church engaged in a thorough survey and registration process of its temples nationwide three months ago.

The registration process carries out a 1993 mandate that all religious temples must register with the Mexican federal government.

Only 250 of 3,818 Adventist churches throughout Mexico were properly registered with, according to Pastor Cesar Hernandez, who is in charge of legal affairs for the church in Mexico and is overseeing the registration process.

"In the past, the process of registering temples was long, complicated and costly," said Hernandez, "But we recently began working with the government to update our records and register each church properly throughout each district and corner in Mexico."

Church leaders throughout Mexico's four major church regions have been arduously working on surveying every district church since early December to ensure an accurate account of its churches and places of worship, explained Pastor Hernandez.

This process could have easily cost the church more than 2.3 million dollars, said Pastor Hernandez. Thanks to the thorough cooperation with the government and the church's aggressive registration process undertaking it will mean a savings for the church, he added.

"This is a true blessing that we have saved so much financially," said Pastor Torres, who has met with Tort several times. "All temples which were not registered with the government before 1993 will belong to the government and fall under its jurisdiction, so taxes will not have to be paid on these," he added. "It will also prevent dissident members from taking over a church, something which has happened numerous times throughout Mexico before," he added.

Adventist churches that were registered after 1993 will belong to the church in Mexico, he explained. Tort and church leaders took the opportunity to review the registration process, as church leaders asked the Mexico official questions about proper and accurate registration.
The church plans to complete the registration of all of its churches by the end of March.

Pastor Torres reassured Tort that the church's commitment to working and collaborating with the government towards benefitting society will continue throughout the nation's four major church regions in Mexico.

Hernandez also gave a special plaque of recognition to Tort on behalf of the church for his courtesies toward the church during the last three months in the process.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has nearly 700,000 church members spread out in the North, Central, Inter-Oceanic and South regions in Mexico. The church operates several universities, hospitals, a publishing house, and dozens of primary and secondary schools.
Jamaica: Adventist Church in west commended for community work

Member of Parliament for Central St. James, Lloyd B. Smith commends the Church for it work in the community.

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March 5, 2012 - St. James, Jamaica.... Nigel Coke/IAD

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In declaring that he too is celebrating 50 years of residence in Montego Bay, Custos of St James Ewen Corrodus commended the Adventist Church for its involvement in changing the lives of many in the western part of the Island.

"Fifty years of service is a great achievement," said Custos Corrodus. "You have preached the gospel, you have educated and trained, you have ministered to the poor and the needy, the sick and the discouraged and I thank you whole-heartedly on behalf of all who have benefited. As you move forward I wish for you God's continued leading and His rich blessings."

The thanksgiving service was held at the Adventist Conference center in Mount Salem, Montego Bay, Feb. 5, 2012.

In bring greetings on behalf of the Government of Jamaica, Lloyd B. Smith, Member of Parliament for Central St. James congratulated the Conference on it's achievement and highlighted the fact that the Adventist Church in Jamaica was the largest single religious group.

"I urged you" he said, "not to be overwhelmed by numbers in terms of quantity but today be inspired by quality because it is by doing the work of the Lord that you are rewarded."

"I am impressed by the fact that the Adventist Church has spent a great deal of time focusing on education, youth development, community development and the holistic development of all your members."

The West Jamaica Conference has been serving the communities in the western Parishes of St. Elizabeth, Westmoreland, St. James and Hanover. Through its two high schools - Harrison Memorial and Savanna la Mar - and six preparatory schools, thousands have been educated and trained and are now serving the society in various capacities.

"We will continue to serve the community and further the cause of humanity," said Pastor Astor Bowers, president for the church in West Jamaica. As part of the celebration on July 15, 2012, the members in all our 225 congregations will be embarking on projects to uplift the communities. These include: building and repairing of homes for those in need, beautification public buildings such as police stations, along with our regular feeding programs."

In his address to the gathering, Pastor Ted N.C. Wilson, president of the Adventist world church challenged the members to be faithful as they go forward.

"God is calling you today to be faithful witnesses as you launch into your 51st year," said Pastor Wilson. "Is your faithfulness after 50 years known to all who come in contact with you?"

"We are very grateful for the kind and appreciative words from business leaders and Government leaders, but what about those on your street, in your neighborhood and in your own family? Are...
you faithful in presenting God to them? Are you convinced that God has a plan for you in West Jamaica Conference and God's remnant Church?"

He further charged, "Be a faithful witness in this secular, materialistic, and post-modern world. God has called us to give the trumpet a certain sound and to warn persons of His soon coming."

The West Jamaica Conference, which in 1962 had 12,000 members in 105 congregations covering St. Elizabeth, Westmoreland, St. James, Trelawny and Hanover, now has membership of 77,000 worshiping in 225 congregations with four parishes.

For more on the church in West Jamaica Conference, visit http://www.westjamaica.org/