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Posted: 21 May 2012 09:00 PM PDT

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Posted: 26 Apr 2012 09:00 PM PDT

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A "new time" for South America's Novo Tempo Adventist Network

Libna Stevens
May 22, 2012

In one of the world's most densely populated and diverse continents, the Seventh-day Adventist message of hope and healing is going forth in an integrated media fashion.

May 17 marked the opening of new offices and a new auditorium and museum for Rede Novo Tempo de Comunicação, the South American Division's radio and television networks. New studios are also under construction and will be ready in about six months, division leaders noted.

After an introductory program in which Brazil's pioneer Adventist broadcasters, Robert Rebello of the "Voice of Prophecy" radio program and Alcides Campologo, who with his wife Neide, hosted "Faith for Today" television 50 years ago, Antonio Tostes, Novo Tempo president, noted the buildings may be new, but the work is not.

"We are only continuing a work that has begun in the past," Tostes told a gathering of friends and supporters in the new auditorium, which was named after the late Milton C. Souza, former Novo Tempo president, who passed away in 2007 at age 51. Souza implemented the move of Novo Tempo from a remote location in the state of Rio de Janeiro to the current location near the city of São Paulo.

"Today we are going to dedicate this building, but last week we gathered the employees here with the South American Division leadership to dedicate our lives," Tostes said.

"Today we honored many people, so they may continue to inspire us," he continued. "This auditorium will carry the name of Pastor Milton Souza, and the museum will have name of Pastor Roberto Rebello, so that the people who come to visit us may witness the power of God is being realized through the preaching of the Gospel and communications."

Among those attending the dedication were the Campologos, the Souza family, and retired general vice president of the world church Leo Ranzolin and his wife, who is Roberto Rebello's daughter.

Erton Köhler, South American Division president, lauded the new surroundings, but reminded his hearers that the real work lay ahead.

Köhler quoted the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:6, "I planted, Apollo watered, but it was God who gave the increase," and said: "This place, my brothers, is a place of blessings. No one can explain how God has provided these blessings. Today, Novo Tempo is recognized as the best religious network in the country. God gave the growth."

He then urged his hearers to "complete the work," saying "it's not building, people, equipment -- the work is salvation. ... Progress, grow, keep the focus through the radio and the Internet; they're not here to entertain, they're here to save."

Adventist world church President Ted N.C. Wilson, who was joined by his wife Nancy for the dedication events, expressed appreciation for the spacious office and studio space, with areas dedicated for the online Bible School, a journalist's newsroom, Novo Tempo store, and studios for
Spanish and Portuguese radio networks, as well as administrative offices.

"Today as we arrived, we saw the results of the last number of months of intensive activity, [of the] 336 people working here, including 43 bible school workers, and 12,000 bible studies monthly," Wilson said.

He also lauded the dedication of a small area to the life and work of Ellen G. White, a pioneering co-founder of the movement. "The Seventh-day Adventist Church would be nothing without the writings of this special lady," Wilson said.

He also told the congregation about another inspirational moment while touring the offices. "As we walked by a picture of Jesus soon coming, Pastor Tostes said 'I walk by this every day, and here I get my inspiration: the reason for this media center, to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and His soon second coming,'" Wilson said.

He praised the unity of television, radio and Internet evangelism at Novo Tempo, "This is an example of integrated media evangelism. The world church is interested in that; in fact, the world church is interested in what South America does. We see something very important: a focus, a concentration, on involving everyone in evangelism."

He added, "All of these areas (at the media center) represent opportunities of being sent by God. The 336 employees of this media center are being sent by God for a great purpose, for the same purpose we all have, to realize the Seventh-day Adventist Church is sent by God to bring the last warning message to all the world, so that people can believe, so that people can hear, so that they can see someone who is sent. And as those programs from radio reach into the ears of people in South America, as the transmissions of television programming reach the homes of millions, as the Internet activity is spread not only in South America but all around the world, people will hear the precious message: Jesus is coming again!

During the ceremonies, tribute was also paid to Dr. Milton Afonso, a noted Brazilian executive and a Seventh-day Adventist who has generously donated for many church projects, including the soon-coming television studios, which will be named in his honor. Afonso received special recognition from Tostes and Wilson, as well as Adventist World Radio, whose president, Dowell Chow, gave Afonso a memento in recognition of his support for AWR.

Also in attendance were Brad and Kandus Thorp from Hope Channel, Warren Judd from the Adventist Media Center, and Williams Costa Jr., Communication director for the world church.
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Apr 27, 2012

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April 27, 2012 - Punta Cana, Dominican Republic...Bettina Krause/IRLA

"Freedom of religion in its Islamic context implies that non-Muslims are not compelled to convert to Islam, nor are they hindered from practicing their own religious rights," said Shammout. "Many of the Qur'anic verses make clear that all people are free to choose the faith they want."

He also addressed the issue of apostasy in Islam—a concept he says has been often misunderstood and mis-applied. He concluded that the death penalty for apostasy was not prescribed by the Qur'an.

"I emphasize freedom of religion in the general sense—namely the right to choose one's faith prior to becoming a Muslim," he said.

He also warned that "Islamic respect for freedom and Muslims' awareness of its value cannot be established by force and coercion, for the enforcement of any democratic ideal would be no different from the 'just tyrannical' leadership."

Shammout, a lawyer and former judge in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, left that work to establish and direct the Arab Bridge Center for Development and Human Rights. This non-profit organization aims to foster moderation, with the avoidance of violence, to bring about change. It promotes respect and understanding among people of all religions.