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THURSDAY, MARCH 10, 2011

MARANATHA REACHES OUT

MARANATHA REACHES OUT TO UNITED STATES HISPANIC POPULATION

Maranatha Volunteers International hosted their first-ever Hispanic convention at the Calvary Assembly Orlando Church in Winter Park, Fla. Feb 26. The event, which drew nearly 5,000 people from across the state, was an effort to involve more of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s Spanish-speaking population in outreach.

Maranatha has sent some 70,000 volunteers around the world to build churches, schools and hold outreach programs since 1969. It has operated in 17 Hispanic countries over the years, including Argentina, Chile, Columbia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico and Venezuela.

"Attendees were energetic and responsive to learn how they can personally get involved in mission work, both here at home and abroad,” said Kyle Fiess, Maranatha vice president for marketing and projects.

"As a result of Maranatha’s churches and schools, our baptisms have gone up, our tithe has gone up, and the life of the church has improved," Leonel Lozano, president of the Adventist Church in Ecuador, told the congregation.

Other speakers included Alejandro Bullón, a well-known Adventist evangelist, Israel Leito, president of the Adventist Church in Inter-America, Melchor Ferreyra, field secretary for the church in Inter-America, Gilberto Araujo, vice president for the church in the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean region, Ron Watts, assistant to the church president in Southern Asia, and church evangelist Mark Finley. Popular Christian singer Steve Green provided the music.

Bullón challenged the crowd to get involved. "It doesn’t matter how much money you have. All of you have time. You need to give Maranatha your time, your money, your talents," he said.

The event was a collaborative effort with Adventist church leadership in Florida. Abel Paulin, vice president for the church’s Spanish-language ministries in Florida, made it possible for members of nearly 90 local congregations to attend. "It was a tremendous weekend and a real blessing. It wasn’t only about Maranatha, but the mission of the church in many countries. It was about church planting, growth and baptisms,” he said. "Many people were telling me, ‘Man, we’ve got to do this, we’ve got to go with Maranatha and do this work with them.’ It was a real mission enthusiasm that came out of the convention.”

“The event marked a new commitment to the Hispanic community to involve them more in missions, outreach, volunteering and donating,” Fiess said. "Since Maranatha began, we’ve worked in Spanish-speaking countries. People walked away from this convention with a wider vision of mission work around the world and an awareness of how they can get involved in helping others.”

Maranatha also recorded material for a new Spanish language television program featuring Dick
Maranatha also recorded material for a new Spanish language television program featuring Dick Duerksen and Alejandro Bullón.
VOLUNTEERS BUILD LARGE SCHOOL

The first of seven Maranatha volunteer groups began building the Choluteca Seventh-day Adventist School in Honduras at the end of 2010. Participants were part of Maranatha’s annual Christmas Family Project.

The old, one-building school has become too small for the number of children who want attend. Faculty began holding several classes in rooms at the local Adventist church. When they reached a capacity of 700 students, the school had to start turning children away.

“We have been praying that this project end in the same wonderful way that it began. It’s nothing but a miracle from God that we’re experiencing,” says Norma Gloria de Corrales, school principal.

“For many years, we have been praying for it. We work in a very difficult place. It’s small. At the end of the day, as teachers, we’re stressed. But we’re so happy now. We have been praying and we’re seeing this dream come true.”

The new school will be made up of a large Education and Evangelism Center as well as 34 One-Day School buildings. This campus will accommodate 1,200 students from elementary through high school.

The goal is to complete the school by July when volunteers with the Summer Family Project will visit the region, bringing the total number of participants to more than 600.
Plan to join Maranatha volunteers from around the country for the annual Maranatha convention near Portland, Ore. Sept. 23 and 24. This inspiring weekend provides a look into the heart of Maranatha's outreach around the globe with stories, videos and guest speakers.

Christian Edition, a men's singing group from Glendale, Calif., will provide the music for the weekend.

The convention will be held at the Rolling Hills Community Church in Tualatin. Stay tuned to maranatha.org for more information as the event draws closer.
“On behalf of the Lesotho Conference Constituency/churches, I wish to express our heartfelt gratitude to Maranatha for a generous gift of 12 structures, which are a gift of love from Maranatha to Lesotho. So far, four of the structures are up by the help of volunteers who came from all over South Africa in December.

You don't know what the structures mean to us as a conference and as churches that received this wonderful gift.

We pray for God's blessings on all who have contributed and saw that the structures came to us, and many other countries that have benefited all over the world, who like us are struggling economically.”

—Tsebang J. Khoeli, executive secretary, Lesotho Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
NOW PLAYING ON MARANATHA MISSION STORIES

Maranatha Volunteers International is a construction company, a personal development company that builds buildings, and an evangelism support network. Watch this week’s episode of Maranatha Mission Stories to see how the organization is performing these services around the globe.

Maranatha Mission Stories airs on Hope Channel Sunday at 9 p.m. PST and Thursday at 5 p.m. PST, and on Three Angels Broadcasting Network (3ABN) Friday at 6:30 p.m. PST.