

African Saints Mobilize in Day of Service

Bearing shovels and wheelbarrows and wearing yellow vests, Church members in more than 30 countries in Africa took part in the third All-Africa Service Project on August 22, 2009.

In one city in Ivory Coast, they repaired roads. In a town in Liberia, they fixed up old homes. In Sierra Leone, they cleared drainage. In Nigeria, they removed the extensive overgrowth from a local government building. In Ghana, they swept through a market and removed loads of trash. In Kenya, South Africa, Cameroon, and beyond, members scrubbed jail cells and restrooms, planted trees, fixed roads, and worked in orphanages. They cleaned



PHOTOGRAPH BY SOLA IDOVU

hospitals and homes; they pulled weeds and painted signs.

Elder Eric Jackson, public affairs director for the Africa Southeast Area, said, “What the members have proven to themselves is that if enough people come, there’s no project too big for us.”

Where the members labored,



PHOTOGRAPH BY KAYE JACKSON

reporters gathered to observe and take note.

Many others aside from Church members participated in the project. The Church partnered with local service groups, other religious denominations, and government agencies that donated freely of their tools and

materials and even joined in the effort.

“Many, upon hearing that we were doing [the service] because we emulate Christ’s good deeds, praised the Lord and said they would like to join us,” said Elder Adesina Olukanni, Area Seventy and area director of public affairs in West Africa. ■

Conference a First for Ethiopian Youth

During July 2009 more than 160 youth and young adults gathered for a day of friendship, workshops, dancing, and testimonies at the first youth conference ever held in Ethiopia.

Because the four branches are not organized into a district, many members were not aware that there were other branches and Church members in Ethiopia. Part of the conference’s purpose was to allow them to interact with their peers while being spiritually uplifted.

Wondwossen Amanuel, 23, who was submitting his missionary papers to become the first missionary from the Awasa Branch, said, “It gives you encouragement when you gather together and do such activities. Our branch is small, but there we felt like we were in the herd—and it’s like family.”

Participants proudly wore CTR rings and T-shirts emblazoned with the words “Steady and Sure,” the conference theme.

Two months of concerted efforts by missionaries, branch presidents, and the charitable organization Hope Arising brought together pioneering Saints from the four widespread branches to the chapel complex in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The participants traveled

Members in South Africa plant a garden for orphans where there is no running water.

Members in Nigeria worked with state officials to clear roadside debris.

by bus up to five hours to attend the conference, and more than half of them were nonmembers and investigators. Two were baptized in the following weeks.

“When [the youth] realize that there are other young people with their hopes, dreams, problems, and concerns, they have more confidence. They know they are not alone, and this gives them strength,” said Elder Brad Wilkes, a full-time missionary who, with his wife, Sister Karen Wilkes, helped organize the conference. ■

Romanian Young Women Hold First Camp

Five young women and their leaders from the Bucharest Romania District, along with a nonmember friend, took part in the Church’s first Young Women camp in Romania from August 24 to 26, 2009. District Young Women president Dina Cojocaru led the camp with the help of senior missionaries Elder Don and Sister Edie Van Noy.

The girls and leaders held morning and evening devotionals, studying the scriptures together every day. Elder and Sister Van Noy taught workshops on topics such as virtue and how to give effective talks in church. In another workshop, the girls learned about modesty

and dressing fashionably while still maintaining integrity.

Alina Mateescu, one of the young women, said she had wondered what it takes to be a virtuous young woman, but through the workshop on

virtue she felt assured she could become the exemplary woman of integrity God wants her to become.

Romania, a country in south-east Europe, has about 2,736 members in 17 branches. ■

WORLD BRIEFS

Canadian Census Collection Expands

FamilySearch has added the 1851, 1861, and 1871 Canadian census indexes to its online collection, which already included the 1881 and 1916 Canadian censuses. There are plans to add the 1891 Canadian census shortly. The searchable online databases, found at FamilySearch.org, contain some 17 million records. Free public access to these indexed censuses will make it easier for people to extend their knowledge of their family history.

Service Helps Detroit Children

Inner-city Detroit, Michigan, USA, has a reputation for crime, gang activity, and drug use. Because of high unemployment and low graduation rates in the area, the Bloomfield Hills Michigan Stake teamed up with the Unity Church to help school-children as part of Detroit’s citywide Neighborhoods Day. The two groups assembled and gave away more than 250 school backpacks complete with



PHOTOGRAPH BY BETSY ANDERSON

Members in Detroit, Michigan, USA, worked with others to give school supplies to children.

notebooks, pencils, crayons, erasers, and other school supplies.

Members Escape Wildfires

More than 70 Church members evacuated their homes, many of them staying with other member families, because of wildfires in Utah and California, USA, in September 2009. Fires burned more than 123,000 acres (50,000 ha) in the Sacramento and Los Angeles, California, areas, killing two firefighters and destroying more than 100 buildings. In the area of New Harmony, Utah, fires consumed more than 10,000 acres (4,000 ha) and several buildings. In both states, local priesthood leaders assisted affected members. ■