



Today: meetings, news and a resolution

Women's Ministries Advisory in Florence, Italy



The Euro-Africa Division (EUD) Women's Ministries (WM) Advisory in Florence, Italy, May 15-19, 2011 leaders of all Unions gathered for an advisory at Villa Aurora, Florence, for presenting their reports from the past quinquennium as well as to make plans for the next five years.

Raquel Arrais, General Conference WM department, and Denise Hochstrasser from EUD created an inspiring atmosphere for the attending women who were impressed by what has been done in the various fields. A lot of material prepared by the WM Department GC was distributed and the local leaders will have to decide what and how to use this material to enhance the work in their respective countries.

The areas – nurture, empower and outreach – will be the focus of our service during this period, with a special emphasis on empowering for this year. The leaders also voted a resolution to be presented to the EUD midyear meeting.

At the end of the advisory many of the women expressed their appreciation for the good meetings and the encouragement and inspiration received which will help them continue their efforts in leading the women of the church in their respective countries. HO

Euro-Africa Division Midyear Meeting



At the Euro-Africa Division (EUD) midyear meeting May 22-23 Denise Hochstrasser presented the report of the WM department. She compared the work of the WM in the EU to a peony bud which she held in her hand and then showed a peony in full bloom, symbolizing what WM could look like with full support.

Handing over the resolution the EUD WM Advisory had voted in Florence to the President of the EUD, Bruno Vertallier, in form of a scroll, she stressed the importance of women's participation in committees and on boards on all levels of the church and also pleaded for them to consider the employment of Union and Conference WM Directors.

Pastor Vertallier put emphasis on what this proposal would mean, including funding and openness for change. The President took the matter up and put the recommendation to the vote. It was carried unanimously. DH - read more on page 3



Second Women's Congress, Bulgaria



The second women's congress in Bulgaria was held in Gabrovo from April 8-10, 2011.

The guest speakers were Heather-Dawn Small, Women's Ministries director General Conference, and Denise Hochstrasser, Women's Ministries director Euro-Africa Division.

While Heather-Dawn related to 'Joy' her favourite subject, with lectures such as *Yes We Can*, *With God - God Knows My Name* and *Joy in the Journey*, Denise Hochstrasser put emphasis on selfconfidence and spoke about *Why I am who I am*.

Sabbath evening was celebrated with an Agape meal. Each lady received a wonderful red flower to be pinned on her dress, and a bottle of perfume as a symbol of the odor of women ministering to women as well as a beautiful soap rose for her next relaxing bath. It was truly a very blessed weekend, attended by over 200 men and women.

Emilia Stoykova, Women's Ministries director for the Bulgarian Union with her team organized this meeting with much love, competence and devotion.

WM GC and EUD Leaders in the Czechoslovakian Union.



Pavla Sustkova, Women's Ministries director for the Czechoslovakian Union accompanied the speakers Heather Dawn Small (WM GC) and Denise Hochstrasser (WM EUD) to the three conferences Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia from April 11-17, 2011.

They spoke in Prague, Frydeck and Banska Bistrica, where they mostly had full houses, met with many women and young ladies who are ready to go out and start a ministry in their churches.

A lot of emphasis was put on meeting with church leaders and contacting young ladies in order to encourage them to become active in Women's Ministries, especially a ministry among young women.

A television Interview with Hope Channel was only one of the highlights of this journey.

Calendar

2011, September 23-25
WM Congress in Romania
2011, September 30-October 03
WM Congress DACH-Countries, Germany
2011, October
WM Visit to Morocco, joint venture with ADRA
2011, November 23-25
WM Meeting with WM Leaders of DACH Countries, Kassel, Germany

WM Retreat, Poppy, Italy Ambassadors of Christ



From May 13-15, a WM meeting was held in Casuccia Visani. More than 120 women from various European countries met in the splendid setting of Poppi's green hills. The message of Christ who sees women as ambassadors, was woven into every presentation of this retreat organized by Franca Zucca. What is the role of ambassadors today? What is their mission? Walking with Jesus we learn to build a personal "Jerusalem". Raquel Arrais, Associate Director of WM at GC, illustrated her message with the picture of an arid desert that is covered with colorful flowers when water comes. Denise Hochstrasser, WM Director at the EUD asked two questions: Do you believe in God? Do you live what you believe? Don't let your life slip through your fingers by living in the past or the future, but participate actively in the implementation plan that God wrote for you. Annekatriin Blum, WM Director in the North German Union, discussed the issue of violence within Adventist families. This phenomenon is rarely addressed although it is more widespread than we think. Women's Ministries of the Adventist church are working to secure the cooperation of Professionals,

For her spiritual message Abigail chose the metaphor of a perfumed candle that lights and diffuses its odor around us; Luciana organized a prayer garden and a fountain of cleansing, a time of meditation among the trees of Casuccia. The women walked across a water fountain that symbolized the cleansing bath. Stella.

Resolution



Voted May 18, 2011

The Department of Women's Ministries exists to uphold, encourage, and challenge Adventist women in their pilgrimage as disciples of Jesus Christ and members of his world church.

Considering the time in which we live, the Women's Ministries Euro-Africa Division (EUD) Advisory voted the following:

To thank the General Conference and EUD for pursuing, nurturing (reach up), empowering (reach across) and outreach (reach out) to all women of the world. To thank the General Conference for their awareness of the importance of Women's Ministries in our World Church in which over 70% of the members are women.

In order to fully meet the women's needs we suggest that the Euro-Africa Division strongly encourage the Unions and Conferences to establish and implement Women's Ministries departments and to request that Women's Ministries Directors (regardless of whether they are full or part-time, salaried or volunteer, voted or appointed, paid or unpaid) be invited or voted, to be a member of the Conference or Union executive committees and local church boards with voice, and where possible, with voice and vote.

To thank the Church Leadership for including some women in leadership positions. The EUD-Advisory 2011 requests that Church leaders at all levels include more women in all areas of Church leadership and that all allocations for women on committees and delegations be filled.

Women's Ministries Advisory
May 15 – 18, 2011

Picture: Church leaders at the Euro-Africa Midyear Meeting (not official vote).

15 Years Women's Bible breakfast meetings



The SDA church in Penzberg had the privilege of celebrating 15 years of their Women's Bible Breakfast meetings on Sabbath, May 21, 2011. Theme: 'small deeds - great effect'. Tuesday the birthday celebration took place with the theme: 'did you say thanks today?' with Vera Syring, Pastor in Hof. 43 women were attending, of whom 20 were no church members.

The team felt particularly honored by the presence of the conference president Rainer Wanitschek and the local pastor, Tilmann Krautschik, and many guests from far and near.

Some had been involved in the project from the beginning. Both occasions were wonderful days of celebration.

Angelika Pfaller who initiated the breakfast meetings in Penzberg is now leader of WM in the Bavarian Conference. As a result of this effort in Penzberg eight persons have already been baptized.

Praise the Lord!

Lutheran Church Congress

with ADRA Germany



In a few days' time the 33. German Lutheran Church Congress will congregate in Dresden. From June 01 to 05 this congress will cause a state of emergency in this city.

About 100 000 people will gather in order to celebrate faith and to share different relevant questions. This year again ADRA Germany will be present with a 90m² exhibit and an exceptional program.

The „ADRA Africa Lounge“ invites attendees not only to have a break and drink a cup of tea but also to hear the moving life story of Naomi, a Massai girl from Kenya.



Naomi is 12 years old. Her family wants to perform the rite of female circumcision on her and marry her off to an older man. In desperation she flees from home.

The visitor is informed in an exciting exhibition of the rest of Naomi's story and what happens to her and other girls in a similar plight and how they were rescued, as well as what can be done to prevent such things happening in the future. The Kenyan Evelyn Brenda presents a concrete list of possibilities how people can help.

Foto: Naomi, a Massai girl from Kenya. Photo source: ADRA rasani

Further information:
www.kirchentag.de

Hope Channel:
Wednesday, June 1, 21h,
Auserlesen spezial
Ole Ronkei and Renoï, girls from a Massai family in an interview with Titus Müller on Hope Channel D.

European Convention to protect women



Violence against women is a topic of interest even in the European council: On May 15, 2011 the committee of ministers of the international Council of Europe presented in Istanbul the new "Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence" to be signed. 13 of the 47 member states – among them Germany and Austria – have already signed. In the document the states bind themselves to concrete mechanisms of procedure against domestic violence. Human rights activists called the convention "groundbreaking". According to Human Rights Watch "It is the first legally binding international document providing a legally binding frame for combating violence against women through prevention, protection measures, punishment and protection of victims."

The first Adventist woman elder ordained in Bermuda



Church leadership in Bermuda made history for the Adventists on the group of islands when they ordained

Julie Richardson (photo) as the first Adventist woman elder, according to the communication department of the North American Division of Seventh-Day-Adventists.

Adventist church elders are leaders of local churches on a volunteer basis. In agreement with the pastors in full-time employment, who are usually in charge of several churches they can lead out in the communion services or officiate in baptisms. The ordination of women elders has been practiced in Adventist churches in North America and Europe already for a number of decades. In Latin America this practice is relatively new.

Hamilton/Bermuda, Silver Spring, Maryland/USA, 27.5.2011/APD

ADRA awarded for women's empowerment project in Bangladesh



The Adventist Development and Relief Agency International received a Best Practices & Innovations Award last week for its Bangladesh women's empowerment initiative.

ADRA Bangladesh Country Director Elidon Bardhi accepts an InterAction Best Practices & Innovations Award for the aid agency's women's empowerment initiative in Bangladesh. The program has taught literacy and income generation skills to some 5,400 women in the country's Mymensingh district. InterAction, the largest United States-based alliance of international nongovernmental organizations, honored ADRA with the award for its Improving Livelihoods through Women Empowerment, which over the last three years has taught literacy and income generation to some 5,400 women in the Mymensingh district of Bangladesh. ADRA officials estimated more than 100,000 women have benefited from the project since it began in the 1990s. "This isn't

just a women's issue but affects the entire community," said ADRA Bangladesh Country Director Elidon Bardhi. May 10, 2011, Washington, D.C. ANN. For more information, visit adra.org.