

Government and Religious Leaders Gather in Kyrgyzstan

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Religious leaders and government officials gathered January 24 and 25 in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, to discuss religious freedom concerns.

Organized by leaders of Parliament and religious organizations, including affiliate organizations of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the conference was labeled "Freedom of Conscience and Providing an Interreligious Mutual Understanding." Kyrgyzstan, formerly part of the Soviet Union, is a small country in which minority groups have not always been supported. The two largest religions are Muslim and Russian Orthodox.

Although article 15 of the country's constitution forbids discrimination against any person on the basis of religious belief, and Article 16 guarantees

each person's right to freedom of creed, spirit, and worship, the government forbids teaching of both religion and atheism in public schools and has disallowed public meetings in some locations.

The 1996 United States State Department report on human rights asserts that Kyrgyzstan does not fully protect the rights of religious freedom. A recent report from the International Coalition for Religious Freedom states that the government appears to be preparing to assume a more active and intrusive role in religious affairs.

Speakers at the conference highlighted the necessity for Kyrgyzstan to improve religious freedom conditions in the country, and concerns were also expressed about a new draft law on

religious freedom. Alisher Sabirov, head of the Kyrgyzstan Parliament's Religious Association Committee, promised to organize a roundtable discussion with leaders of the various religious groups. Representing the International Religious Freedom Association (IRLA) were Lee Boothby, a Seventh-day Adventist attorney from the U.S., and Victor Krushenitsky, Euro-Asia Division public affairs and religious liberty director and a member of IRLA's Russian chapter.

At the conclusion of the conference, participants approved a document that calls for peaceful coexistence and the formation of a Kyrgyzstan Chapter of the IRLA. Alisher Sabirov will serve as chapter president.

NEWS BREAK

Ugandan Government Responds to Pleas of Sabbathkeepers

Election officials in Uganda have rescheduled a national election following a public protest by local leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Originally set for Saturday, February 16, the election was brought forward to Thursday, February 14. The change of date halted plans by Adventists in Uganda to hold a peaceful street demonstration to draw public attention to their plight.

People of faith should not be excluded from public life simply because government agencies fail to accommodate religious practices, such as Sabbathkeeping, said Adventist leaders at a press conference January 22. "A peaceful protest would tell the world that we are being marginalized as a church and as a people," said John Wani, president of the Uganda Union.

Wani explained that Adventists encounter problems not only at the polls, but in other aspects of public life as well. "As far back as 1997 our students in government institutions of higher learning have had the same problem, with examinations and lectures scheduled on Sabbath. We have repeatedly appealed to the govern-

ment and to heads of those institutions to accommodate our students, but to no avail."

Following media coverage of the Adventist protest, "many people, including Catholics, Anglicans, and even Muslims, rang our office [and said] they would march with us if we announced the day and time for them to assemble," Wani added. One caller suggested that marches be held in cities across Uganda to "march in support of the brave Adventist spirit, for the benefit of all faiths."

Although thankful for the change in election date, Wani says that there is still a long way to go before Uganda's approximately 120,000 Adventist Sabbathkeepers receive adequate public accommodation. "We appeal to the community of faith to pray for us in Uganda," he says, "especially for our students who are being persecuted in universities and colleges."—*Adventist News Network*

C. D. Henri, Former Church Leader, Rests in Jesus

Coleridge Dunbar (C. D.) Henri, 89, died in Atlanta, Georgia, on January 30, 2002. A respected leader of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Henri served as a pastor

Religion in the News

Anglicans, Methodists Take Small Step to Reunion

A cautious step toward the reunion of the Church of England and the British Methodist Church, which split in the latter part of the eighteenth century, has been put before the two churches for their consideration over the next year, with ratification hoped for in the summer of 2003.

The proposal calls for the churches to enter a covenant in which each would recognize the other as a true church—part of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church affirmed in the Nicene Creed—and would recognize each other's baptism, Eucharist, and ministry.

If accepted, the two churches could then consider moving forward to full communion, with the interchangeability of ministers, and ultimately to full visible unity.

The caution comes from the painful failure of earlier attempts to achieve

Anglican-Methodist unity.—*Religion News Service.*

NEWS BREAK

and administrator in various parts of the United States and Africa.

Born in Clarendon, Arkansas, Henri moved with his family to St. Louis, Missouri, where he spent his early years. He attended Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama, for two years and completed his education at Atlantic Union College, earning a bachelor's degree in theology.

Following graduation Henri was employed as a pastor by the Lake Union Conference. In 1945 he was invited to go to West Africa, where he served with his wife, Lorraine, for 19 years.

Upon returning from Africa, he obtained his Master of Arts degree from Andrews University and later pastored churches in Florida and Georgia. Henri returned to Africa, this time as president of the East African Union, in 1970.



C. D. Henri

In 1973 Henri was elected a general vice president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and relocated to Washington, D.C. He served in this capacity until his retirement in 1980.

He and his wife lived in Atlanta, Georgia, where, although officially retired, he continued to work in the South Atlantic Conference wherever he was needed. This often found him in administration, pastoring, counseling, or speaking.

He is survived by his wife, Lorraine; daughters Burdetta Henri and Patricia Henri-Simmons; a son, C. Dunbar Henri, Jr.; his sister, Florence Henri Murray; and three grandchildren.

San Diego "Revelation of Hope" Attracts Record Crowds

A record number of visitors attended the first weekend of Mark Finley and Ron Halvorsen's "Revelation of Hope" series in San Diego, California.

Although Finley had expected about 1,400 people attending, more than 2,600 crowded in on the first night. The response was so great that an auditorium next to the main hall was set up with video projectors and screens to accommodate all who came to hear the message.