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# Maranatha Haitian Congregation's Prayers are Answered for a Church Building

**After being displaced from a church building they were renting and struggling to effectively minister to its membership in a temporary worship space, the rapidly growing Maranatha Haitian Seventh-day Adventist Church in Indianapolis was in dire need of its own worship space.**

However, like many churches with a significant number of members who are immigrants, Maranatha faced the stark challenge of raising the funds necessary to purchase a building.

Maranatha Haitian Church Pastor Michelet William calls the necessity for worship facilities "need number one for our community." Like many churches, Maranatha rented worship spaces for many years and as the church

continued to grow the "people get discouraged because either the place is too small and cannot accommodate the people that are coming, or we cannot meet the rent requirement—the amount sometimes is too expensive for us," William said. "So, this is a big, big, big issue right now, and that prevents us from doing God's mission," he added.

Pastor Andre Trofort, coordinator for Indiana Conference Franco-Haitian ministries

and the former pastor of Maranatha Church, says the Indiana Conference and Lake Union ultimately got involved in Maranatha Church's search for a permanent worship space because, "They saw that we were struggling. We're growing, we're growing like crazy, and we have nowhere to go like the children of Israel," said William.

The church members' fervent prayers for a solution were answered in a miraculous way.

The church was outbid on a property, which used to be a library, worth approximately \$1 million. It was sold to a new owner who intended to convert it to a funeral home. However, after the unfortunate tragic death of the new owner, the building was put up for sale again. Maranatha's \$560,000 bid on the property was eventually accepted. The accepted bid was nearly half the approximate value of the property.

God worked many miracles on behalf of the Maranatha Church, including allowing the church's Lake Union Conference Revolving Fund loan application to be approved even though the church did not meet the standard lending criteria. Policy set by the Lake Union Conference Revolving Fund—which grants loans to help finance the acquisition and renovation of churches and schools in the Lake Union territory—dictates that entities seeking Revolving Fund loans have 50% of the total cost raised for any purchase or building project.

However, William said that numerous Maranatha church members are immigrants who do not have working papers, therefore tithe and offering dollars are limited. "So the requirement to have 50% of the price of the building, it seemed almost impossible," he said.

Believing in a God who makes possible the seemingly impossible, Pastor William and his congregation experienced the answer to their prayers when they held their first worship service in their newly acquired worship

space on Sabbath, Jan. 6—a praise-filled Communion service.

“We believe that God wanted that place for us,” William said. “God is in control, and He always has a plan for His people.... Everything is coordinated by Him in His time.”

Trofort said that the new building Maranatha has “is an answer to prayer” from an on-time God. “Look at God. All that praying that we were doing, really was not in vain.”

Jermaine Jackson, who serves as an associate treasurer for the Lake Union and director of the Lake Union Conference Revolving Fund, said he could see the hand of God moving on behalf of the Maranatha congregation through the entire process of the purchase of Maranatha’s new church building. Since Maranatha did not meet the standard Revolving Fund loan requirements, the church’s loan application “really came in as a hope, a special request, so to speak.

“What has come from that, which is truly a blessing, is we have gotten other requests ... because we’ve seen these types of churches, these different groups coming in, that need the same kind of help,” Jackson said. And in conversations with revolving fund directors in other unions, Jackson said he has discovered that there are many congregations faced with the same predicament as Maranatha—growing fast and struggling to purchase a building of their own.

Jackson says the Lake Union has adopted a new policy designed to address the financial challenges faced by churches like Maranatha. This new policy is specifically for “our refugee, immigrant, multilingual churches that are trying to establish a facility of worship.” Under the new policy, Revolving Fund applications from churches like Maranatha are reviewed on a case-by-case basis and Revolving Fund assistance can be provided for such churches “much quicker without having to go through a special vote.



▲ The church celebrated its graduates of all education levels during a service in May.

“That’s the blessing beyond what has already blessed the church, it’s actually a blessing that’s going to continue to be of a benefit to others that will fall into that same category,” said Jackson.

Pastor William encourages other congregations facing the same challenge his congregation faced to keep trusting God in all circumstances.

“Let’s remain faithful, let’s be patient, because God is in control,” William said. “It’s not our church, [it’s] God’s church, so even if the church is suffering, God is suffering with us, and He knows why. And in His time, everything will be alright.” ■

*David Pluviose has worked as a journalist and served as a volunteer lay pastor. He is now enrolled in the Master of Divinity program at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University.*



**“LET’S REMAIN FAITHFUL, LET’S BE PATIENT, BECAUSE GOD IS IN CONTROL.”**