Seventh-day Adventist Church world headquarters
January 11, 2011

The ANN news bulletin is a weekly recap of stories published since the previous week’s bulletin. To see news, commentaries and photos as they are published, visit news.adventist.org.

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Systems approach needed for ministry, mission leader says

Measurement, accountability approach in initial stages in Southeast Asia

11 Jan 2011, Silang, Cavite, Philippines
Ansel Oliver/ANN

Jim Brauer pulls up a page of statistics on his computer screen that he says is the key indicator of a congregation's health -- community involvement with no hook.

"We Adventists are great at hooks," he laments. "Oh, you had a smoking cessation program, how many..."
baptisms did you get?" he says, demonstrating what he says should be an antiquated management mentality.

A healthy congregation, Brauer says, sends about half of its volunteering members into the community to serve because it's the right thing to do, not just to get people to come to church. Eventually, the sincere service of members will slowly lower the resistance level of the community and may lead a community member to ask questions about faith.

Brauer, Adventist Mission director for the Seventh-day Adventist Church's Southern Asia-Pacific Division, is helping to launch an initiative that would continually measure congregational behaviors in order to strengthen their effectiveness. The program measures 15 factors, including visitor retention, new decisions for Christ, tithe, and population growth in relation to membership growth.

Such a plan would offer a systems approach to ministry management, revealing factors that would better allow ministers to analyze why their congregations are growing or stagnating.

Still, the program's key factor is community involvement. About 50 percent of church volunteers working off church property in the community is a good ratio, Brauer says.

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<th>The 15 measurements of a Systematic Approach to ministry in Southeast Asia</th>
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"Your community begins to become aware that you exist," he says. "If you're not involved in the community, that means few people are showing up and people aren't coming to check you out. Word of mouth is your best advertising."

The program is set for implementation this summer. Local leaders say they're still getting used to the idea, but will continue to follow up on implementation in local areas.

"I think with this approach we will be able to reach our target," said Alberto Gufán, president of the church's Southern Asia-Pacific Division. "I think it will mean a lot."

The initiative quantifies effective methods of ministry that are being urged in other areas of the world. Gary Krause, Adventist Mission director at the denomination's world headquarters, called last year for similar community involvement in big cities during a day-long presentation to leaders in the denomination's Northern
Asia-Pacific Division, headquartered in Ilsan, South Korea.

Krause said the goal of a church community should be to help newcomers first feel like they belong in the congregation, then ask them to make a decision for Christ.

"Church itself is not just a destination, but a place to help get people to where they need to be spiritually," Krause said. "Often though, our focus is how to attract people to church instead of going out into the community to meet people where they are."

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**Adventist resources increasingly on smartphone technology**

*White Estate, Sabbath School release new apps, upgrades; felts to go digital*

7 Jan 2011, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States
Ansel Oliver/ANN

Two organizations at the Seventh-day Adventist Church headquarters are putting more of their resources on smartphone technology.

Both the Sabbath School/Personal Ministries department and the estate of church co-founder Ellen G. White have recently released upgrades to their apps. The newly upgraded app from The White Estate now makes available all of White's published writings. The Sabbath School department puts in an app all its study guides, from Beginner through the Adult Bible Study Guide.

Both apps are free; the iPhone/iPad versions are available in Apple, Inc.'s online iTunes store.

The Sabbath School app is available for the iPhone, iPad and Android platforms in English, French and Spanish, said Falvo Fowler, the department's editor and executive producer. The app also features media produced by the department, including Sabbath School University videos, Daily Collegiate Quarterly readings, multi-language podcasts and Kindergarten lesson animations. Cool Tools, a resource for Sabbath School and small group leaders, is built into the app.

The department also posts its Kindergarten animations on YouTube and Vimeo, Fowler said. The YouTube channel now includes closed captioning in both English and Mandarin. Resources in more languages are in development.

In addition, an iPad app set for release next month for the GraceLink study series will feature a digital felt board, Fowler said. Parents, teachers and kids will be able to tell stories by manipulating and moving characters
and backgrounds specific to that week's story.

Fowler said apps can also connect to a projector or monitor for presenting to audiences.

The new app from the White Estate includes all 412 books written by White or later compiled from her writings, said Darryl Thompson, assistant director of the Ellen G. White Estate. The app also features search ability of the entire White library, a King James Version of the Bible and Webster's contemporary 1828 dictionary. It also allows users to create notes to share via e-mail, Facebook or Twitter. Additionally, every Bible verse reference is hyperlinked.

The Estate has also released EGW Lite, with content based on 10 of White's most popular books, Thompson said. The lite app was created for users with limited storage devices or 3G coverage.

The White Estate is developing an Android version for release later this year, Thompson said.

For more information on the White Estate app, visit whiteestate.org.

For more information on the Sabbath School app, click here.

Adventist religious liberty advocate recognized with First Freedom Award

Church's public affairs director Graz is first Adventist recipient

10 Jan 2011, Richmond, Virginia, United States
ANN staff

A Seventh-day Adventist religious liberty advocate is among this year's recipients of the First Freedom Award for contributions in advancing freedom of belief in the United States and worldwide.

John Graz, who directs the Adventist world church's department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL), will receive the National First Freedom Award at a January 13 gala sponsored by the Virginia-based First Freedom Center.

Graz, who since 1995 has helmed the International Religious Liberty Association, was noted for his non-sectarian work, extensive writings and a series of world festivals of religious freedom. In 2009, more than 40,000 Peruvians gathered to celebrate burgeoning freedom of belief in their country. A year later, Peru's congress voted to guarantee protection of religious liberties.
"I'm very honored by this recognition," Graz said, citing the center's "long history" of "defending the heritage of Jefferson, Madison" and other early American champions of freedom of conscience.

Graz also said it was a privilege to be recognized alongside Asma Jahangir, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, and J. Brent Walker, director of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty. Jahangir and Walker will receive the International First Freedom Award and Virginia First Freedom Award, respectively.

The awards help bolster a commitment to religious liberty that "is at the core of our shared aspirations for stability, peace and the protection of human dignity," said First Freedom Center President Randolph M. Bell.

Graz is the first Adventist to receive a First Freedom Award.

Graz said the award is a testament to the work of the IRLA and the support of the Adventist Church. "I share this honor with the PARL team, and with the worldwide church," Graz said.

Religiously and politically neutral, the First Freedom Center has since 1984 championed the fundamental human rights of freedom of religion and conscience.