Seventh-day Adventist Church world headquarters
January 25, 2011

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

Adventist Church Undertreasurer Juan R. Prestol says the 2011 world budget highlights mission, while making small adjustments regarding appropriations to certain world regions based on need. [ANN file photo]

Continuing tradition, the two largest components of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's world budget this year
will fund appropriations for administrative and mission work outside of North America and fund operation of the world headquarters building.

The denomination's US$159.4 million budget for 2011 continues support of mission work -- about $37.5 million in appropriations to world fields, with an additional $26 million in funding for missionaries and employees to other world regions.

Operating costs for the denomination's headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States is limited to 2 percent of world tithe, about $38 million this year. Finance officers say the church typically comes in below that mark by $1 million or $2 million.

"We are budgeting for 2011 in an economy that's giving us less money than we need, but it's a balanced budget," said church Undertreasurer Juan R. Prestol.

While appropriations to the world field increased slightly, two of the 12 receiving world divisions will draw less in appropriations from tithe compared to last year. The Inter-American and South American divisions will receive 13 percent and 7 percent less respectively in tithe appropriations. Most receiving divisions are allocated appropriations from both tithe and non-tithe funds totaling between $1 million and $4 million annually.

Prestol said the trend in Latin America acknowledges the church's "maturity" there, as well as "financial strength and growth."

"This also acknowledges the needs in other places and that a different distribution rate is needed at this time," he said.

Reduced appropriations from those regions will instead be sent to the 10/40 Window, an area of the world from 10 degrees latitude north to 40 degrees latitude north from North Africa to East Asia, where only about 1 percent of the population is Christian.

Other major appropriations from the 2011 world budget include:

- $9.8 million for Loma Linda University
- $5.5 million for Adventist World magazine
- $4.3 million for Andrews University
- $3.5 million for Hope Channel operations
- $2.2 million for the White Estate
- $2.1 million for Adventist World Radio
- $1.4 million for the 2015 General Conference Session (the same amount is saved each year during the five years leading up to Session)

To see a complete copy of the 2011 world budget as an Excel spreadsheet, please send a request to the ANN editor at AdventistNews@gc.adventist.org.

In Azerbaijan, Adventists questioned, accused of illegal worship,
Loopholes frustrate registration process for minority religions

Tensions between Seventh-day Adventists and government authorities in Azerbaijan increased last month when officials interrupted a church worship service in Sumgait to question members.

State authorities reportedly searched the meeting place, confiscating church property -- including hundreds of books and DVDs -- and accusing members of meeting illegally. Officials have conducted similar seizures of church property in recent years.

Religious liberty advocates said the incident stems from a recent parliamentary vote, which sharply increases fines for unauthorized worship and evangelism in the country. State officials told Forum 18 News that the congregation did not have the required permission to meet.

Azerbaijan's constitution allows for religious freedom, but only for registered faith groups whose churches have official permission to meet. While Adventists have sought registration for the Sumgait congregation since 2003, the process is fraught with delays and denials, local religious liberty advocates said.

Despite repeated meetings with authorities, registration applications are always returned or met with silence, they said.

Next, local church leaders plan to meet with Azerbaijan's Secretary of Religious Affairs, hoping to find a solution.

"We hope that the authorities will recognize the right of a community of believers -- which is not a threat to the security of the state -- to exist and worship according to its traditions," said John Graz, director of the Adventist world church's department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty.

Loma Linda's longtime spokesman Weismeyer dies at 67

Traveled world to tell of denomination's health outreach

25 Jan 2011, Loma Linda, California, United States
LLU, ANN, Adventist Review staff
Richard W. Weismeyer, 67, the longtime Loma Linda University Adventist Health Sciences Center spokesman, who met U.S. presidents, foreign heads of state and traveled the world to report on the denomination's health outreach, died January 12 following a long battle with cancer.

During more than 50 years of association with Loma Linda University, an institution of Seventh-day Adventist Church world headquarters, Weismeyer wrote, edited, and guided others in chronicling stories of LLUAHSC for church members and the community.

Director of University Relations, Weismeyer traveled to more than 50 countries, filing stories by telephone or mail in the early days from Africa, Asia and Europe.

His trips weren't always safe: in 1974 and 1975, he reported the university's Overseas Heart Surgery Team's work in Saigon, Vietnam, after the pullout of U.S. troops; the team left eight weeks before the fall of the South Vietnamese government.

In 2003, Weismeyer accompanied Dr. Richard Hart, then-chancellor of Loma Linda University, to war-torn Afghanistan, two years after the U.S.-led coalition drove the Taliban from power. In 2008, Weismeyer was an embedded reporter with the U.S. Army 307th Medical Division, which offered dental services in Iraq.

He returned to Afghanistan last year amid intense fighting to follow up the story of a war victim who had been a long-term patient at the university hospital.


"Dick Weismeyer spent his entire career telling Loma Linda's stories," said Dr. Richard Hart, president of Loma Linda University. "He was a tireless and faithful photographer, traveler, editor, and manager.... We have lost a friend and colleague who will leave a huge void at this place."

In all, Weismeyer served the organization for more than 50 years, beginning with his employment in at the Loma Linda Market in 1960.
The establishment of Loma Linda was encouraged by Ellen G. White, a pioneering co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Weismeyer was born in the old Loma Linda Sanitarium on October 15, 1943 and earned his bachelor's degree from La Sierra College (now La Sierra University). After graduation and completion of an internship in the Public Information Office (forerunner of the office he led for so many years), Weismeyer was hired as a full-time employee at Loma Linda University in 1966.

He later returned to the campus of La Sierra University as a student, and in 2004, earned a master's degree in English. In recent years, Weismeyer had studied for a doctorate at La Sierra's School of Education.

"Dick Weismeyer was one of those individuals who quietly and without fanfare fulfilled his responsibilities with reliability, professional quality, dignity and class," said Lowell C. Cooper, a general vice president of the Adventist Church who serves as the chairman of the LLUAHSC board of trustees.

Weismeyer won many awards from the university and the community, both for the communication work that he produced, and also for the man he was. On Wednesday, January 12, the day he died, Mr. Weismeyer was named Citizen of the Year by the Loma Linda Chamber of Commerce.

His wife, Carol, two children and a sister, survive.

A memorial service is scheduled for 10 a.m., Sunday, February 6 at the Loma Linda University Church.