Former Adventist world church President Jan Paulsen receives civilian honor
Norwegian ‘Order of Merit’ recognizes ‘service for the good of humanity’

Church Chat: Mission volunteers needed
North American Division’s numbers are down, but Thomas says NAD can get its groove back; growth of missions in other divisions

Remembrance: Monnier, 59, leaves legacy of mission service
Stints in Brazil, Bolivia, Bangladesh; Colleagues remember his generosity, strong faith
Former world church President Jan Paulsen’s home country of Norway is recognizing the veteran church administrator for his “service for the good of humanity.”

Paulsen was recently appointed Commander of the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit, one of the country’s highest civilian honors. In an announcement, Norway’s Royal Palace stated that King Harald V appointed Paulsen for “meritorious” humanitarian work.

Paulsen said the recognition came as a surprise. “It warms my heart that the accolade came with the recognition, ‘service for the good of humanity,’ for that is what the life of Christian service is all about,” he said.

Paulsen will receive the insignia of the order at a presentation ceremony expected later this year, officials said.

The Royal Norwegian Order of Merit was established by King Olav V in 1985 and is conferred on foreign and Norwegian nationals as a reward for “outstanding service in the interest of Norway.”

“It is a great honor for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Norway that the global service of Dr. Paulsen has been recognized in this way,” said Reidar Kvinge, president of the Adventist Church in Norway.

Paulsen served as Adventist world church president from 1999 until 2010. He began his ministerial service in 1953 in Norway and later held educational and leadership positions in Ghana and Nigeria. From 1976 to 1980, Paulsen served as principal of church-run Newbold College in England, which houses the main theological faculty of the church’s Trans-European Division. For twelve years, Paulsen helmed the church’s Trans-European Division, headquartered in St. Albans, England.

Throughout his career, Paulsen prioritized the furthering of higher education in Africa and was instrumental in shaping the humanitarian response of the Adventist Church to the AIDS pandemic.

Church Chat: Mission volunteers needed
The Seventh-day Adventist Church’s North American Division still sends more overseas volunteers than any of the denomination’s 12 other world divisions. But its numbers are in retreat.

Last year was the first time that overseas volunteers coming from North America were fewer than all the other divisions combined. In 2008, North America sent 443 volunteers, which was then about 59 percent of the denomination’s world total. Last year that number had dropped to 341, or 48 percent of world total.

The trend highlights both the gradual decline of numbers of North American volunteers and the growth of mission programs in other divisions, such as South America and South Pacific.

There are currently 1,323 Adventist volunteers serving in 84 countries. Volunteers typically spend a year or two serving in Adventist schools, clinics and mission outposts worldwide.

Adventist Volunteer Service Director John Thomas says there is still a huge need for volunteers.

Thomas, 59, who also serves as an associate secretary of the Adventist Church world headquarters, is also trying to let more locations know they can arrange to get volunteers. Doing so would draw more volunteers overall.

Just back from a 26-day trip to Africa to check on mission projects and promote volunteer programs, Thomas met with ANN in his office. The long-time academy principal and missionary discussed trends and challenges, as well as how North America can get its numbers back up to its peak. Edited excerpts:

**Adventist News Network: What kinds of trends are you seeing?**

**John Thomas:** There’s a big interest in volunteers coming out of Central South America who don’t have conversational English. So it’s a matter of finding locations where they can go, especially Portuguese-speaking, because there are a limited number of Portuguese-speaking areas around the world. Unfortunately Brazil is predominantly Portuguese. Argentina is very bilingual, even many of their schools systems use both Spanish and English. Brazil is locked into Portuguese, which is limiting their younger generation’s ability to integrate into the world.

**ANN:** Why do you feel the numbers from North America are so significant?

**Thomas:** Its volunteers are very valuable because they’re useful, by which I mean they come from an educational system that is so diverse. They’re taught a variety of subjects and skills, which can make them more adaptable. And right now the number of volunteers from [North America] are actually half...
of what they were not long ago. In 2004, North America had 471 volunteers processed that year. In 2011 they had 215. That’s actually less than half. So North America’s numbers seem to be going down while the rest of the world is on its way up.

ANN: So what can the church do?

Thomas: More promotion. When you look at the recent figures and see that North America’s numbers have gone from the 400s to the 200s, it indicates that there needs to be a vigorous promotion of the volunteer program within the division. When I see and hear what’s being done in other divisions, particularly South America and South Pacific where the volunteer programs receive a very high profile within the Adventist network, there is work to be done in North America.

ANN: Full disclosure, I was a student missionary in Micronesia. At orientation in Hawaii it seemed that Walla Walla [University in Washington] had sent more volunteers than any other college or university. Why do you think that was?

Thomas: Some campuses have developed their own network of support for generating interest in the Guam-Micronesia Mission. Not just Walla Walla but also Union [College in Nebraska] and Southern [Adventist University in Tennessee]. They have active personnel within their chaplains office who develop and promote volunteering. And their numbers show it.

ANN: What types of volunteers are you talking about?

Thomas: Many are college students. Others are adults and even many retirees. Overall these are volunteers going abroad for a year or two. Some even extend their term of service. But we’re not talking about week-long short-term mission trips or a long-term [inter-division employee] for five years.

ANN: Where are the big needs now?

Thomas: Guam-Micronesia Mission is about 40 people short of what they would like right now for their network of schools. There have been a few bad experiences, and even some tragedies, including the well-publicized death of Kirsten. Volunteers who go there or anywhere should stay within the established guidelines at the mission or institution and that will reduce the likelihood of something bad happening to them. There’s a big need for nursing instructor volunteers, educators, accountants, doctors and information technology people. We also need new locations that can accommodate non-English-speaking volunteers. Every place I go in the world I encourage church leaders to set up more locations for volunteers. That doesn’t mean they’ll all get filled, but the more location options we have will be better. The interesting thing is that the easiest places to fill are places with the most difficult living conditions. Take Bere Adventist Hospital in Chad in Northern Africa – it’s hot, there’s no Internet, there’s nothing.

ANN: Why do people want to go those difficult locations?

Thomas: I don’t think I’ve put my hand on it. Maybe they see it as the ultimate service opportunity. And there’s a high percentage of those who serve who come back and finish college or professional school and then head back out into the mission field.

ANN: The other day you mentioned there are particularly a lot of young women on the waiting list to serve. Why is that?
**Thomas**: We haven’t examined it, per se, so I’m only guessing here, but I think a lot of young adult females in developed countries recognize that the lifestyle they are wrapped in right now can be detrimental to them and they feel an urge to go someplace where they can break away from all those things and, as it were, start again. I think the girls are a little more ready to be of service for the needy and get more meaning out of life. The guys tend to want to go to a place that’s adventuresome.

**ANN**: What type of person does it take to be a student missionary or an overseas volunteer?

**Thomas**: Really, it’s any person who’s willing to go and be adaptable. That’s key. The types of people who go are so different. It’s simply a person who’s willing to make a decision to do it. Everyone who goes comes back changed. Go online to our website Adventistvolunteers.org and fill out an application.

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**Remembrance: Monnier, 59, leaves legacy of mission service**

Feb. 01, 2012
Silver Spring, Maryland, United States
Corrado Cozzi/Teresa Costello/ANN staff

Eric Monnier, 59, a Seventh-day Adventist missionary whose work spurred church growth in South America in the 1970s and 80s, died January 22 in Collonges-sous-Salève, France, following a battle with cancer.

Monnier’s mission career spanned 35 years and two continents. He held several church leadership positions in South America before accepting a call to oversee church operations in Bangladesh.

In 1976, Monnier and his wife, Françoise, accepted a call to work along the Amazon River. The couple spent three years helming the Luzeiro XIV (“light” in Portuguese), a mission boat on which Eric served as pilot and mechanic. Monnier preached sermons, built churches and conducted training. Françoise, a nurse, helped attend to medical needs. One figure stands out in the couple’s travel log -- they extracted 32,000 teeth.

A pastor, educator and administrator, Monnier followed in the footsteps of his father, Samuel, who after decades of service in the mission field was appointed to several church leadership positions.

Born in Paris, France in 1952, Monnier was raised in a missionary family. He spent grade school in Martinique and Haiti and high school in Brazil and France.

Monnier graduated from Adventist University of France (Campus Adventiste du Salève) with degrees
in theology, education and business administration. Later, during a furlough from missionary service, he earned a master of divinity degree from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University.

After nineteen years of work in Brazil, Monnier was elected president of the church’s Bolivia Union. In 2007, Monnier accepted a call to serve as president of the church’s Bangladesh Union Mission. Colleagues there remember his humor, enthusiasm and generosity.

“If you want to know who Pastor Monnier was, you’ll find it explained in Matthew 5:39-42. Both he and his wife always tried to give, give, give,” said Sweetie Ritchil, treasurer for the Bangladesh Union Mission. “Much of the furniture in the office and even the computers came from their generosity. I have never seen such an attitude of ‘What can I do for others?’ rather than ‘What can I receive?’”

Southern Asia-Pacific Division President Alberto Gulfan remembers Monnier’s conviction. “He died in the strongest faith and assurance of Christ’s second coming -- a message which he so boldly and courageously shared in the countries where he served as a missionary,” Gulfan said.

Monnier is survived by his wife, Françoise; the couple’s children, Valerie and Gabriel; a grandchild, Emily; his mother, Yvonne; a brother, Yves; and a sister: Elisabeth Van Bignoot.

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