Millions worldwide continue to receive hope through literature campaign
Great Hope distribution project in full swing

South America’s public relations training gets ultra-local
Division-wide advisory broadcast reaches congregations – highlights integration, young professionals

#Brazil, Adventist Bible reading initiative tops Twitter Monday
Revived by His Word was launched in April, now journalists weigh in

Oakwood’s Aeolians win awards in world choir competition
Adventist group takes top honor in spiritual category, three gold metals total

Millions worldwide continue to receive hope through literature campaign
Seventh-day Adventist world church leaders embarked upon a literature sharing campaign two years ago that surpassed in scale any literature project to date. The goal was to share more than 100 million copies of The Great Hope around the world.

Written by Adventist Church co-founder Ellen G. White, the abridged version of the book would be updated in its language and include 11 chapters of the original Great Controversy which was originally written in 1888 and revised in 1911.

Already, tens of millions of copies of the paperback book in more than 80 languages have already been distributed in several parts of the world and nearly as many electronic copies of the book have been downloaded. Most of the church’s world regions are still in the early phases of their distribution.

Rumors in some world regions claim that there is litigation involved with The Great Hope project. Those rumors are untrue. "We are seeing that tools like email, social media and SMS text messages can be tools for good as well as tools for mischief," said world church Public Relations Director Garrett Caldwell.

"If the church encountered legal action against such an important initiative it would be widely reported through official church news channels, such as the Adventist News Network," Caldwell said.

The distribution project will continue through 2013 with more than 170 million copies marked for sharing. See the project's website at greatcontroversyproject.adventist.org.

South America’s public relations training gets ultra-local
Edson Rosa, Communication director for the South America Division, speaks about social media outreach last month during the division-wide Communication advisory, broadcast from Novo Tempo media center near São Paulo, Brazil. [photos by Ansel Oliver]

Rogério Ferraz, Web manager for the South American Division, leads a panel discussion during a Web forum, a regional meeting of the Global Adventist Internet Network.

The newly-built production offices of the Novo Tempo media center in Jacareí, near São Paulo. The complex is four stories high and includes an auditorium and a small museum of Adventist media in the division. Several studios are located nearby.
Corporate communication training usually pulls together directors from the upper echelons of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Last month, a broadcasted advisory for the Communication department here in South America got down to the grassroots.

The continent-wide program – including a weekend Communication training seminar and a several-day Web forum – still included directors at unions and conferences, but for the first time reached thousands of Communication secretaries at local Adventist congregations.

Church leaders here estimate that tens of thousands of television and online viewers watched the series, which was broadcast from the church’s Novo Tempo media center here in Jacarei. The series highlighted the division’s goals of Web integration and social media outreach. It also included specialists offering tips on public relations, photography and video, Web platforms, and marketing, as well as an overview of the church’s operations and mission challenges worldwide.

Adventist Communication leaders are now examining whether this new method of holding a division-wide advisory can be replicated elsewhere. Up next for consideration is the denomination’s Euro-Africa Division, based in Berne, Switzerland.

“We’re hoping to have Communication advisories with everybody connected live, or by satellite, Skype, video conference or any other way,” said world church Communication Director Williams Costa Jr. “We need to break the walls that still separate us.”

Church leaders say there are few regions of the world church that hold communication advisories, let alone on such a mass scale. The media series again underscores this division’s continuing commitment to corporate communication. For many years, administrators here in South America have expected cutting edge outreach techniques from their spokespeople and have provided the staff and resources to help them do it.

The division is one of few that hires experienced journalists for many of its Communication department positions. They regularly land mentions of the church in local and national news agencies. The Novo Tempo media center itself is a testament to how serious church officials are about using media and young professionals to push the church’s mission.

The center – located on a rural hillside campus about an hour’s drive northeast of the mammoth metro area of São Paulo – has four stories of production offices and several multi-set studios. It employs more than 330 people, including producers, graphic artists and production assistants. More than 20 of the media center’s employees are journalists.

Most writers and producers have several years of experience in the news media, production studios...
or design agencies, while some are hired fresh out of college.

The average age of media center employees is about 27, a spokesman said.

TV programming is broadcast on Novo Tempo TV in Brazil and Nuevo Tiempo TV in Spanish-speaking countries.

The media center and Web platform designers are closely integrated with the Communication department at the division’s headquarters in Brasília – Brazil’s federal capital. Church officials say this integration more effectively gets their message out to the public, helping to gain new church members and connect membership across the continent.

“The work with Communication officers and advisors is increasingly aligned with church programs and focused in the same direction,” said Edson Rosa, Communication director for the South American Division. “Our aim is to increasingly grow the technical and professional expertise in our area.”

Other church departments here in the division also integrate much of their operations with other institutions. In Brazil, the Education department sets the curriculum for Adventist schools throughout the country, and the Brazil Publishing House builds and hosts websites for local schools. That structure alleviates some demands of local school administrators and also offers parents more options and transparency. For example, parents can access their children’s classes and current grades on mobile devices.

Costa, the world church Communication director, is originally from Brazil and previously served as Communication director of the South American Division. Since his appointment two years ago, he has expressed his goal of bringing more integration to the world church. In September, a world communication summit at the denomination’s headquarters, near Washington, D.C., will explore ways the denomination can better integrate its communication and media operations.

#Brazil, Adventist Bible reading initiative tops Twitter Monday

The Twitter hashtag #RPSP is a Spanish and Portuguese acronym for the Revived by His Word
The Seventh-day Adventist Church’s worldwide initiative to encourage daily Bible study was a top trending topic on Twitter for a couple hours yesterday.

The Twitter hashtag #RPSP – the acronym for “Revived by His Word” in Portuguese and Spanish – topped Trend Topic Brazil, the official index of the most widely-discussed topics among Twitter’s Brazilian users.

The Revived By His Word project launched in April with the objective of motivating people to read a chapter of the Bible every day until 2015, when Adventists will hold their international church business session. The plan is for session delegates, representing more than 17 million members worldwide, to read the final chapters together in a grand finale.

The idea of registering the suggested chapters for reading through Twitter every day arose spontaneously among Internet/Web users.

According to Monday’s records, online users accessed the micro blogging site to discuss what struck them most about the day’s selected chapter – Exodus 34. Twitterer @silvaton wrote, "Exodus 34, our lives and our testimonies should reflect that Christ is our Lord and the center of our lives. Worship and fellowship! #RPSP". User @christianesst quoted verbatim one of the verses: "I will put my laws into their minds and write it in their hearts, and be their God and they shall be my people" Heb. 8:10 #RPSP.

There are daily messages written in Portuguese, and some in Spanish, offering evidence of the international character of the project.

Journalist Michelson Borges (@criacionismo) created a virtual version of the "Bible Tweets" with various comments on a chapter. "I want the world to know how good it is to read the Word of God every day. It's good for me and I want the same good for others," he wrote.

Pastor Jael Aeneas (@jaelenenax), left his thoughts on Exodus 34, too. "Twitter interacts and strengthens our sense of belonging. God revealed distinctive truths when our pioneers came to the Bible. I believe in this," he tweeted.

With a certain membership of 1.3 million, Brazil likely has the most Seventh-day Adventists of any country.

For more details about the project visit www.reavivamentoereforma or follow the Twitter hashtag #RPSP. As of July 10, hashtag #RPSP was still trending in Brazil.
Student singers from the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s Oakwood University, located in Huntsville, Alabama, took home three awards from the world’s largest choir completion last week.

At the 7th World Choir Games, the Oakwood Aeolians won the Championship Trophy in the “Spiritual” category, besting 15 other choirs for the honor.

The 42-member Aeolians also won one of several gold medals in two other categories: “Music of Religions” and “Musica Contemporanea.”

The international event was held in Cincinnati, Ohio, United States, from July 4 to 14. The Aeolians were the only Adventist representatives at the event.

“The Aeolians rose to the challenge and on their debut at the World Choir Games … and made a great impact,” said Aeolians Director Jason Max Ferdinand.

Oakwood University is an institution that is directly affiliated with the Adventist Church’s world headquarters.

Earlier in the summer break from school, the group practiced new songs for the competition individually. They later held group rehearsals remotely using Google Plus. All 42 members met for a final rehearsal at the university campus the weekend before the competition.

The World Choir Games, sponsored by the Interkultur Foundation in Germany, is the world’s largest choral competition and is held every two years. Interkultur’s website says the goal of the event is to “[bring] people of all nations, cultures and ideologies together in peaceful competitions and songs.”

More than 15,000 Choristers in 362 choirs competed in 23 musical categories.

The City of Cincinnati (@CityofCincy) tweeted following an Aeolians’ performance during the week: “The Aeolians of Oakwood University from Huntsville, AL, lifted our souls and the roof at the Cincinnati Masonic Center!”
The next World Choir Games will be held in Riga, Latvia, in 2014.

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