2013 Adventist world budget: mission, administrative support

Highlights of headquarters budget of $174 million; full budget upon request

Ruguri says he's against proposed Ugandan legislation regarding gays, lesbians
News report suggested he was supportive of bill that could include imprisoning homosexuals

Remembrance: Torkelsen, 86, was a world church vice president
American Northwest administrator promoted young talent
The Adventist Church’s nearly US$174 million world budget this year allocates nearly $42.4 million in appropriations to the fields outside of North America. An additional $28.5 million appropriations funds missionaries and employees serving in other divisions.

Operating costs for the denomination’s headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States, is limited to 2 percent of world tithe, which for 2013 is set for roughly $44 million. Church finance officers said they again expect headquarters to operate substantially below that cap.

For decades, the headquarters has operated significantly under the operating cap, making more resources available for world fields, said Juan R. Prestol, undertreasurer for the Adventist world church.

Prestol underscored that the world budget only includes items relating to the denomination’s world headquarters and does not include the reported incomes or budgets for its 13 divisions or respective local administrative units and congregations. The world budget includes headquarters operations, Inter-Divisional Employees, and appropriations to world divisions and General Conference institutions and programs.

Prestol highlighted the steady planning of church officials and finance officers. “Some organizations fluctuate more in the way they budget things. The church is not like that. We attempt to forge ahead. Once we enter an area we want to continue until the work is established and self-sufficient. It takes years to do that, though.”

This year’s world budget includes the newly-created Middle East North Africa Union, which is attached directly to the Adventist Church headquarters.

Receiving divisions other than North America are allocated appropriations between $1.3 million and $4.8 million. The 2013 world budget also includes a 2 percent increase over 2012 appropriations levels.

Prestol said world budgets since the 2008 economic downturn have “been planned to provide stability and strategic support for growth in needed areas.”

“The church is very purposeful, very deliberate, very persistent, and we’re continuing to move towards the objectives and the goals to enter every country and people group possible,” he said.

Prestol said about 65 percent of the denomination’s funding is received in the U.S. dollar, Brazilian real, euro, Canadian dollar, Australian dollar, Mexican peso, Korean won and the Philippine peso.

The United States remains the largest giver of mission offerings of any country. In 2011, the
denomination’s North American Division gave $23.4 million in mission offerings, or about 30 percent of the total of about $80 million in mission offerings.

Prestol also highlighted the change in modern times of the denomination’s missionaries funded by the world budget. The $28.5 million for missionaries (Inter-Divisional Employees) in decades past often funded frontline workers. Now, he said, they more commonly fund missionaries who provide steady administrative support and mentor frontline workers from the local people group.

Other major appropriations identified in the 2013 General Conference world budget include:

- $8.3 million for Loma Linda University
- $5.5 million for Adventist World magazine
- $4.9 million for Andrews University
- $4.7 million for Hope Channel
- $2.4 million for Ellen G. White Estate
- $2.3 million for Adventist World Radio
- $1.4 million for the 2015 General Conference Session
- $1.2 million for Oakwood University
- $1.1 million for Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies
- $1.1 million for the Geoscience Research Institute
- $1 million for the Adventist University of Africa

To see a complete copy of the 2013 General Conference world budget as an Excel spreadsheet, please send a request to the ANN editor at adventistnews@gc.adventist.org.

Ruguri says he’s against proposed Ugandan legislation regarding gays, lesbians

Blasius Ruguri, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s East-Central Africa Division, today clarified his position on proposed legislation in Uganda. Here, he addresses the denomination’s Executive Committee last year. Church President Ted
Recent comments in the Ugandan newspaper New Vision attributed to the head of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in East-Central Africa do not convey an accurate representation of his intentions or the voted position of the church regarding homosexuality, church officials said.

The newspaper article suggests that Pastor Blasius Ruguri fully supports proposed legislation before the Ugandan Parliament that may include incarcerating and even executing people for same sex intimate contact.

In response to those reports, pastor Ruguri today said, "It is unfortunate that the media took the liberty to extend my statements to suggest what I did not say or imply. I have never seen that bill. Mine was a general statement to disapprove of homosexual practice and behavior. Our church is a ministry of mercy, and as a minister in the Seventh-day Adventist Church I cannot condemn homosexuals to death or to hell."

The Seventh-day Adventist Church subscribes to the biblical teaching that the practice of homosexuality is condemned by God and is forbidden, church officials said. At the same time, the church is strongly opposed to acts of violence, hatred or discrimination against a person because of his or her sexual orientation.

An official church statement on homosexuality, which was revised on October 17, 2012, says the Seventh-day Adventist Church "recognizes that every human being is valuable in the sight of God" and acknowledges "Jesus affirmed the dignity of all human beings" and that members should "endeavor to follow the Lord’s instruction and example, living a life of Christ-like compassion and faithfulness."

Remembrance: Torkelsen, 86, was a world church vice president
Max C. Torkelsen, a longtime church administrator and educator, who also served as vice president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, died at his home in Portland, Oregon, United States, on December 8. He was 86.

Torkelsen, who served in the 1970s as president of the North Pacific Union Conference, based in Ridgefield, Washington, was known to promote successful young pastors to leadership positions, often while still younger than typical church administrators.

“Most satisfying for him was giving people opportunity to expand their abilities, hiring young pastors, or bringing people in,” said his son Max C. Torkelsen II, who now serves as president of the North Pacific Union Conference.

Born in Nebraska to farmers, the elder Torkelsen was drafted into the Army and served as a medic in Germany during World War II. Following the war, he began his ministry career in North Dakota as a pastor. He later moved into educational work as a principal and superintendent. He continued into conference administrative posts throughout the Western United States.

In retirement he helped raise money for scholarships in the Northwest and worked as a visitation pastor for the College Place Village Church, near the denomination’s Walla Walla University in Washington.

He is survived by his wife Ardis, three children, seven grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

The ANN news bulletin is a weekly recap of news and information from the Communication department of the Seventh-day Adventist world church headquarters and is distributed by Adventist News Network.

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Seventh-day Adventist Position Statement on Homosexuality

Seventh-day Adventists believe that sexual intimacy belongs only within the marital relationship of a man and a woman. This was the design established by God at creation. The Scriptures declare: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh" (Gen 2:24, NIV). Throughout Scripture this heterosexual pattern is affirmed. The Bible makes no accommodation for homosexual activity or relationships. Sexual acts outside the circle of a heterosexual marriage are forbidden (Lev 18:5-23, 26; Lev 20:21, 22; Rom 1:24-27; 1 Cor 6:9-11). Jesus Christ reaffirmed the divine creation intent: "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator "made them male and female," and said, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh?" So they are no longer two, but one" (Matt 19:4-6, NIV). For these reasons Seventh-day Adventists are opposed to homosexual practices and relationships.

Jesus affirmed the dignity of all human beings and reached out compassionately to persons and families suffering the consequences of sin. He offered caring ministry and words of solace to struggling people, while differentiating His love for sinners from His clear teaching about sinful practices. As His disciples, Seventh-day Adventists endeavor to follow the Lord's instruction and example, living a life of Christ-like compassion and faithfulness.

This statement was voted during the Annual Council of the General Conference Executive Committee on Sunday, October 3, 1999 in Silver Spring, Maryland. Revised by the General Conference Executive Committee, October 17, 2012.