Starting in New York, ‘Mission to Cities’ focuses outreach on large metro areas
Ministries range from Bible studies to health centers; London’s ‘Sabbath sofa’

In Kyrgyzstan, Adventist Church ordains its first native pastor
Former police officer has already served church as missionary, treasurer

North American Adventist publishing house boards asked to consider merger
Review & Herald, Pacific Press to consider proposals

In India, Adventist humanitarians poised to assist flood victims
Early monsoon season strands thousands at Hindu religious sites
As a New York City evangelism initiative is in full force, other plans for the Seventh-day Adventist Church to reach major metropolitan areas are in place. Some have begun, while others are waiting for the conclusion of the NY13 outreach initiative.

“The writings of our church co-founder Ellen White tell us very clearly what we need to do for the large cities,” said Adventist world church president Ted N. C. Wilson. “We need Christians who can manifest the love of Jesus as they work in the cities.”

Here is what each of the Adventist Church’s 13 world divisions say they are planning for the denomination’s “Mission to the Cities” initiative:

**East-Central Africa Division**, based in Nairobi, Kenya. This division has selected Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The metro area is home to some 12 million people and 12 Adventist churches. A key strategy is involving women and youth. In February, Division Women’s Ministries Director Debbie Maloba held a training session “Outreach is for Everyone,” in which she prepared participants for community service, prison ministry and giving Bible studies. Women have gained approval to minister to sick and abandoned prisoners at the Makala Prison, which holds 6,000 prisoners in a compound that was designed for 1,500 inmates. Women have also started a program to clean marketplaces – the initiative’s theme is “Garbage Kills but Cleanness Heals.”

**Euro-Asia Division**, based in Moscow, Russia. Includes Russia, Northwest Asia and Eastern Europe. The division has identified Moscow for focused outreach, including evangelistic and health initiatives.

**Inter-European Division**, based in Berne, Switzerland. This division has selected Geneva in Switzerland, home to some 1.2 million residents and several United Nations agencies. The division has two missionaries currently working in the city, and evangelistic campaigns were held in February at a French-speaking church and a Spanish-speaking church. This year the church will hold health expos and more evangelistic campaigns in October and November. Other
cities of focus include Prague, Czech Republic; Hamburg, Germany; Munich, Germany; and Vienna, Austria.

**Inter-America Division**, based in Miami, Florida, United States. The division in the past six months has focused on evangelism efforts in 49 cities. The surge is aided by mission funds designated for church planting in cities and urban ministry training for pastors and church leaders. Over the next two months, more than 200 university students from throughout the region will assist church planting initiatives in 15 cities. Next month, division officials will plant a Chinese church in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. That congregation will be the first Chinese Adventist church in the division.

**North American Division**, based in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States. This division has supported NY13 and its more than 160 evangelism venues throughout the tri-state area surrounding New York City. Adventist world church officers selected New York City as a model for evangelistic outreach in other major metro areas worldwide. The “Mission to the Cities” campaign is part of the division’s core building block of Transformational Evangelism. The goal is to inspire members to get out and make an impact in their community. Division leaders say churches and conferences will sponsor health expos, and dialogues are currently taking place with Adventist healthcare systems about how to partner in impacting big cities. Future cities of focus include Indianapolis, St. Louis, Seattle, San Francisco, Oakland, Memphis, Tampa and Oklahoma City.

**Northern Asia-Pacific Division**, based in South Korea. The division has chosen Tokyo, Japan, as the city of focus, and named the initiative TOKYO 13. The “13” means that every pastor and church member is to become the 13th disciple of Christ. The Adventist Church in Japan has experienced very low growth in recent years. Because evangelistic meetings have met with little success, the church will employ Christ’s method of mingling with people. Hence, the strategy for TOKYO 13 will be relational evangelism. Later this year, the church will organize small groups and engage in team ministry while inviting new people to church. The goal is 100 new believers, which may seem a small number compared to other regions of the world church, but would be three times the number of new members in a typical year. A team has already started praying for the TOKYO 13 initiative.

**South American Division**, based in Brasilia, Brazil. Includes South America except for the five northern-most countries. Division leaders have designated Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina, for focused outreach. The church opened a center of influence in Villa del Parque, one of the busiest districts of the city. The center partners with the Belgrano Adventist Sanitarium to offer guidance about health and family issues. The center is visited by nearly 40 people each day. The church also operates the Granix Restaurant, which sells healthy food and offers health information. The division is purchasing two pieces of property to construct new congregations. Other major outreach is also
planned in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia; Santiago, Chile; Guayaquil, Ecuador; and Sao Paulo, Brazil, home to 19 million people.

**Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division**, based in Pretoria, South Africa. This division plans to hold a school of evangelism, similar to one held in New York City to launch NY13, which was the starting point of the “Mission to the Cities” initiative. Luanda, Angola, is the designated city of outreach for this year. It is home to some 7 million people. The Adventist Church is now holding 10,000 small group meetings, and 100 larger campaigns will be held in neighborhoods throughout the city in September. Every church department is involved and the initiative is widely supported by lay members. Follow-up will include the “Fishers of Men” discipleship program. Next year, 70 cities will be identified throughout the division, with each union, conference, district and church offering support.

**South Pacific Division**, based in Wahroonga, New South Wales, Australia. Sydney was the site of an Adventist evangelism series, “The Last Empire,” the largest of its kind in more than three decades. The series was promoted with four billboards, 1.25 million brochures and 100 TV ads. The series was held in partnership with 45 churches and was held in 29 venues. More than 1,500 community members attended and nearly 1,000 were still attending the final program. Most of the meetings were held in English, but several venues offered Portuguese, Tongan, Samoan, Fijian, Mandarin and Arabic. Churches prepared for the series for 18 months, and members were encouraged to pray for five people in their circle of influence.

**Southern Asia-Pacific Division**, based in Manila, Philippines. Includes Southeast Asia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Adventist Mission representatives are planning for a major evangelism campaign in Manila next year, with church President Wilson as the featured speaker. The denomination will also offer health outreach from a shopping mall in Indonesia and a vegetarian restaurant in Laos.

**Southern Asia Division**, based in Hosur, Tamil Nadu, India. Includes India, Bhutan, the Maldives and Nepal. The division has selected Mumbai, India, a city of more than 18 million people. Church leaders will offer ministry in the northern suburb of Malad, among the fishing community in Vasai, and at the Paschael village in Madh Island. Local members and pastors are offering Bible studies in these communities. In February, Adventists held evangelistic outreach in West Andheri in India among the Telugu-speaking community. Programs offered preaching, children’s programming and lectures on health.

**Trans-European Division**, based in London, England. The division will host more than 100 evangelism initiatives and Bible academies in London. Members are encouraged to reach out to their circle of influence. In addition to traditional billboard and Underground posters, a clever advertising campaign includes the “Sabbath couch.” Adventist young people place a couch on a city sidewalk and offer to let passers-by sit and rest. It’s an opportunity to ask what they would do with a 24-hour break each week, introduce the concept of Sabbath, and invite them to an upcoming meeting nearby. The goal is to have 50,000 people sit on the couch over time leading up to meetings. The division is also planning meetings next year in other cities, including Belgrade, Serbia; Budapest, Hungary; Dublin, Ireland; Split, Croatia; and Copenhagen, Denmark.

**West-Central Africa Division**, based in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. This division has selected Lagos, Nigeria, for focused outreach. Lagos state has more than 8 million people according to census records from 2006. The division has also designated 50 other cities throughout the division for ministerial outreach.
A former police officer in the Central Asian nation of Kyrgyzstan was ordained earlier this month as the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s first pastor from the native population.

Talgat S. Kubegenov was ordained during a mission conference at the Tokmok Adventist Church in Tokmok in Chuy Province on June 14.

Kubegenov, 39, has already been serving as a pastor of two churches and has worked as secretary-treasurer of the denomination’s Kyrgyzstan Mission since 2010.

Kubegenov is a graduate of the Academy of Home Affairs Ministry and joined the church in 2002. He was ordained a local church elder in 2005, and in 2008 the Adventist Church hired him as a Global Mission Pioneer.

“It was heartwarming to see this small but successful step,” said Ben Schoun, an Adventist world church vice president, who attended the ceremony. “I’m aware that several countries in the region can be difficult for our church to work in, but God is helping us accomplish some very wonderful things.”

Kyrgyzstan, which shares a border with China, is a former Soviet republic. It became an independent country when the Soviet Union disbanded in 1991. Many citizens work in mining and agriculture. Its current population is roughly 5.5 million. A large majority of the population is Muslim, and many are also Russian Orthodox.

The Adventist message came to Central Asia through German missionary Philipp Trippel in 1906, said Denis Sand, director of Adventist Mission for the Euro-Asia Division. In 1915, the construction of the Orlovka Adventist Church became the denomination’s first church in the region, then known as Turkestan. It had 50 members.

Adventists and other Christians faced heavy persecution during the reign of the Soviet Union, Sand said. Many members buried their Bibles each time after reading them.
Today, the Adventist Church in Kyrgyzstan has nearly 800 members and operates the only elementary school in the denomination’s Southern Union Mission.

The church in Kyrgyzstan employs Global Mission pioneers who work in the country. At this month’s mission conference, about a dozen GM pioneers graduated from a training program, Schoun said. Earlier this month, the church also opened a new Adventist World Radio studio in Bishkek, home to the Adventist Church’s Kyrgyzstan Mission.

North American Adventist publishing house boards asked to consider merger

On Wednesday, June 19, 2013, the General Conference and North American Division administrations forwarded to the boards of Pacific Press Publishing Association and Review and Herald Publishing Association a request for the two organizations to consider a merger in the near future.

The proposal comes in response to church administrators’ analysis of the current publishing mission setting along with related distribution systems. It builds upon the work of several commissions and groups that over the past several years have studied the challenges and opportunities arising from rapid technology changes in publishing as well as changes in how society accesses information.

The boards of both institutions met separately Wednesday evening, and each, by overwhelming majority votes, expressed agreement to consider a yet-to-be-developed merger proposal. In addition, each board authorized its chair and president to represent the institution on a taskforce whose assignment will be to develop a detailed merger proposal for future consideration by the boards and constituents.

Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, affirmed that “publishing and distributing materials to advance the proclamation of the gospel remains a vital and integral part of the church’s worldwide evangelistic and witnessing program. We believe that restructuring the two General Conference institutions could serve even more effectively the future needs of the church especially, in North America as well as for more general assistance to the world for print and digital content that correlates with information in other media platforms.”
Review and Herald Publishing Association, located in Hagerstown, Maryland, and the Pacific Press Publishing Association, located in Nampa, Idaho, have been operating as General Conference institutions. The two publishing houses serve the General Conference, the global Seventh-day Adventist Church, and, more specifically the North American Division, as they derive the large majority of their operating resources from services to church members and denominational organizations in North America.

The proposal forwarded to the respective boards, through the board chairs, requests not only consideration of a merger of the two institutions but also a transfer of identity for these entities from being General Conference-sponsored institutions to that of being North American Division-sponsored.

The combination of restructuring envisaged in the request placed before the boards therefore involve two principal concepts with the expectation that both would be considered as a package and implemented together. The proposal envisions:

- Placing both Pacific Press Publishing Association and Review and Herald Publishing Association on the pathway to merger as one publishing house to serve the North American Division territory as well as the needs of the General Conference office.

- Restructuring the publishing house governance model from a General Conference-based constituency and board of directors to a North American Division-based constituency and board of directors.

Over the past two years, the North American Division has been developing a comprehensive approach to all forms of media ministry. “The preparation and use of literature by church members, by local church-sponsored witnessing initiatives, and as an adjunct to programs in other media platforms is a prominent component of this strategy,” said Dan Jackson, president of the North American Division. “A publishing house closely linked to church infrastructure and intimately involved with planning, implementation and coordination of witnessing and nurture programs is a key component in accomplishing our mission objectives.”

Neither publishing house receives financial appropriations from the General Conference or from the North American Division. Both publishing houses currently enjoy operating gains. Historically, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has operated several publishing houses in North America. Each must make important decisions regarding its vision for the future and the investment of capital to maintain efficiencies in publishing and printing processes. Such decisions will have far-reaching impact. In light of present surplus manufacturing capacity it is believed advantageous for the two organizations to
plan for the future as one unit rather than separately and to be directly connected to a North American Division mission-driven distribution system.

A case statement presented to the two boards outlines a design for a positive, mission-oriented future for the church’s publishing ministry in North America. “It is a strategy in response to 21st century realities,” said Dale Galusha, president of Pacific Press Publishing Association. Mark Thomas, president of the Review and Herald Publishing Association, added, “Commercial and private publishing houses today are finding it necessary to redesign their business plans. We need to be proactive in addressing a rapidly changing publishing environment.”

The next step will be for a taskforce with representation from the General Conference, the North American Division and each publishing house to prepare a blueprint for merger. It is expected that a report from the taskforce would be presented to the boards by late September of this year. Each board will then have the opportunity to determine its response to the merger proposal.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church operates 63 publishing houses worldwide, each operating under its own board of governance. Review and Herald Publishing Association is the successor to the first publishing house, The Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, incorporated in 1861. The Pacific Adventist Publishing Association, established in California, was organized in 1875. It was renamed as the Pacific Press Publishing Association in 1904. A third General Conference-sponsored publishing house, Southern Publishing Association, merged with the Review and Herald Publishing Association in 1980.

General Conference administration asks that church members pray for God’s guidance upon church leaders and publishing house boards so that what is done in this matter will result in the most effective evangelistic print and digital publishing program to proclaim the three angels’ messages, advance God’s work through His power and hasten the second coming of Jesus Christ.

In India, Adventist humanitarians poised to assist flood victims

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ANN staff

Seventh-day Adventist humanitarians in northern India are monitoring needs and preparing emergency relief in the wake of an unprecedented monsoon season in the region.

The torrential rains arrived a month early this year, triggering flash floods and landslides that swept through mountain communities and religious sites. The monsoons destroyed homes and business, killed more than 1,000 people, and stranded tens of thousands of pilgrims and

*Flash floods and landslides triggered by 60 hours of nonstop monsoon rains swept through communities in northern India last week. Government officials and*
tourists visiting Hindu shrines in the Himalayan state of Uttarakhand, according to news reports.

While government and relief agency efforts so far are centered in the town of Uttarkashi, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency in India is preparing emergency assistance for Rudraprayag district, where 20 riverside villages were severely affected, said Gladwin Bol, emergency response coordinator for ADRA India.

“These local communities have lost everything – their homes, land, livelihood and belongings,” Bol said. Other nearby villages remain inaccessible due to ongoing inclement weather and blocked roads, he said.

“We will be able to move to the area as soon as we get clearance,” he said.

ADRA India is prepared to provide utensils, blankets, clothes, mosquito nets, hygiene items, tarps, buckets and other relief items, Bol said.

Meanwhile, local officials have set up 40 relief camps to provide food, water and other emergency aid to tourists and locals, according to an ADRA Situation Report. News reports indicate that military helicopters have also rescued an estimated 30,000 stranded people, but bad weather continues to thwart efforts.

Bol said ADRA India will implement its initial emergency response based on the findings of an assessment team currently at work. The team is backed up by local non-governmental agencies with more ground presence in the affected region than ADRA, which is headquartered further south in Delhi.

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Humanitarians, among them Adventists, are battling ongoing bad weather and blocked roads to assess needs. [photo: ADRA India]