In Serbia, European Adventist youth impact community, strengthen faith

‘Power of One’ congress, 3,000 strong, focuses on practical Christianity, real struggles

Study of publishing house restructuring ends without merger recommendation
Pacific Press, Review and Herald continue as separate institutions under G.C. control

In Brazil, Adventists demonstrate Christian hospitality
Acts of kindness connect with Catholic youth in town for World Youth Day

In Serbia, European Adventist youth impact community, strengthen faith

Aug 06, 2013
Silver Spring, Maryland, United States
tedMEDIA/ANN staff

Seventh-day Adventist young people helped clear the air this week in Novi Sad’s Liberty Square, where they asked passers-by to trade their cigarettes for watermelon and other fresh fruit on a warm summer day.

Benjamin Zihlman and Reimo Butscher from Switzerland expressed surprise when most of the residents were willing to swap not just their lit cigarettes, but their entire pack of cigarettes. Others
went further, indicating a desire to quit smoking altogether and exchanging contact information with the young volunteers.

Zihlman and Butscher plan to keep in touch with one couple through Facebook, where they’ll offer ongoing support in their efforts to quit.

The outreach event was one of six community-wide activities undertaken by young people in Serbia this week for the “Power of One” Pan-European Youth Congress. Adventist youth also cleared rubbish along the banks of the Danube River, repainted playgrounds at local elementary schools and donated blood. Other young people handed out gift bags full of books such as “Gifted Hands,” by renowned Adventist neurosurgeon Dr. Ben Carson.

“It is a privilege to watch our young people take the ‘Power of One’ to the people through practical Christianity and sharing the gospel,” said Janos Kovacs-Biro, director for Evangelism for the Adventist Church’s Trans-European Division.

Back at the SPENS Sports Center, after helping passers-by confront addiction, young people heard a message on facing their own struggles during a devotional by Adventist evangelist David Asscherick.

Asscherick reminded an audience of some 3,000 Adventist youth that growing in Christ is “a walk, not a leap. It takes time.”

“So many of us have been told that struggle is wrong, but if you struggle in your Christian experience, if you’re finding it hard to learn how to walk with Christ, that means you’re swimming against … the inclinations of the world,” Asscherick said, adding that the key to Christian growth is “to keep getting up.”

Matthew Gamble, pastor of the Elmshaven Seventh-day Adventist Church in St. Helena, California, United States, built on Asscherick’s message of spiritual growth.
Some people believe they need to get over sin to be accepted by Christ. This is not the gospel. The gospel of Jesus Christ is this: You’re going to heaven because of what Christ has done, what he is still doing and what he will continue to do.”

Asscherick and Gamble were both on hand to lead some of 17 workshops during the congress. In “The Mission Lifestyle,” Asscherick outlined the importance of guarding both spiritual and physical health while leading a Christ-centered, mission-focused life.

“This was a life-changing message for me,” said Elycia Martins from Australia.

Martins wasn’t the only young person to travel to the continent for the congress. Two visitors from Papua New Guinea logged 87 travel hours and passed through seven countries on their way. Forty-five European countries were also represented at the congress.

For Adventist youth ministry leaders in Europe, the congress marked a breakthrough. In the 1990s, church leaders first tried to organize a youth congress in Serbia, but political instability in the region thwarted their efforts.

This time around, young people were reminded how a relationship with God can bring lasting stability to their lives.

“If this congress has been the motivation for [young people] to either find Christ or to continue in this mission, I think it has achieved its main goal,” said Stefan Sigg, director of Youth Ministries for the church’s Inter-European Division.

Study of publishing house restructuring ends without merger recommendation

A commission announced June 19 to consider a merger of the Pacific Press Publishing Association in Nampa, Idaho, and the Review and Herald Publishing Association in Hagerstown, Maryland, will cease its work, officials of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and North American Division said today. The General Conference owns the two organizations.

Mark Thomas, president of the Review and Herald Publishing Association, addresses employees July 31 at the Review’s campus in Hagerstown, Maryland,
Citing “differing perspectives as to the interpretation” of Spirit of Prophecy writings about the independences of the two units, a statement issued by church leaders said: “It is felt in the best interest of the publishing work of the church at this time for there to be no change to the governance of the two institutions.”

However, the statement noted that leaders of the General Conference and its North American Division have “requested that the two publishing houses continue to operate under their current structures but that they try to find ways to realize economies through closer cooperation and possible shared services.”

Additionally, “The publishing houses are also encouraged to work very closely with and respond to the North American Division’s mission-driven publishing needs and cooperate in developing more division-oriented and efficient delivery and distribution systems,” the statement indicated.

As noted in an earlier report, “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.”

In the July 31 announcement, church leaders asked Seventh-day Adventists to “please pray for the public sharing and personal use of printed and electronic materials as we lift up Christ, proclaim His three angels messages of Revelation 14 and announce His soon second coming.”

The full text of the statement can be found here.

In Brazil, Adventists demonstrate Christian hospitality

Aug 01, 2013
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
ASN staff/ANN staff

Seventh-day Adventist young people in Rio de Janeiro demonstrated Christian hospitality this week when they offered 170 Catholic youth in town for World Youth Day a place to stay.

The Italian Catholics were part of the World Youth Day Pilgrimage, which saw thousands of young Catholics worldwide travel to Rio de Janeiro for a week to celebrate the diversity of
the Catholic Church and deepen their personal spirituality.

Members of the Adventist Central Church in Rio de Janeiro welcomed the group at the airport and provided transportation and accommodation at the church during their week of pilgrimage.

“We have our doctrinal differences, but we serve a God who gave us an example of loving our neighbors. We are helping these young people not because of their faith, but because they are in need and we would assist members of any denomination,” said Romulo Silver, a local church leader.

During the week of World Youth Day, local Adventist churches also took the opportunity to pray for the young Catholics and invite them to local church functions.

“Several of the [young people] wanted to join in our worship every night and said they liked what they heard,” Silva said, adding that he believes kindness and generosity can send a stronger message than preaching.

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Spam
Not spam
Forget previous vote
On 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. A taskforce was formed to study the matter and prepare recommendations to go to the two boards and to their constituencies.

The taskforce has been diligently meeting, earnestly praying and carefully studying the matter. While there are differing perspectives as to the interpretation of the specific Spirit of Prophecy statements regarding the Review and Herald Publishing Association and Pacific Press Publishing Association in this current setting, all support the importance of the Spirit of Prophecy and the need for a strong publishing ministries involvement in evangelistic outreach. However, the differing perspectives on Spirit of Prophecy statements merits further reflection and the nature of a restructured relationship in whatever future format that may develop requires deeper analysis and modeling. It is felt in the best interest of the publishing work of the church at this time for there to be no change to the governance of the two institutions. Because of this the General Conference and North American Division administrations have requested that the two publishing houses continue to operate under their current structures but that they try to find ways to realize economies through closer cooperation and possible shared services. The taskforce will not continue but the General Conference and North American Division administrations will work closely in conjunction with the publishing house boards and administrations in a cooperative way to facilitate the closest working relationship possible for the accomplishment of the evangelistic, witnessing and nurturing objectives of local churches and members in the North American Division and the world field. The publishing houses are also encouraged to work very closely with and respond to the North American Division’s mission-driven publishing needs and cooperate in developing more division-oriented and efficient delivery and distribution systems.

The Church cherishes the Spirit of Prophecy counsel indicating that the publishing ministries are a vital part of the fourth angel’s message of Revelation 18 until the end of time. Let us work together for a continually expanding emphasis and use of the Church’s print and digital evangelistic and witnessing materials by church members, local churches, church organizations and all of us. Please pray for the public sharing and personal use of printed and electronic materials as we lift up Christ, proclaim His three angels messages of Revelation 14 and announce His soon second coming.