An unlikely alliance of global lawmakers call to end religious persecution

Representatives from nearly 50 countries explore ways to raise awareness of religious freedom challenges.

An extraordinarily diverse group of lawmakers from around the world met in New York City last week to call for greater global efforts to end religious persecution and repression. The “International Panel of Parliamentarians for Freedom of Religious or Belief” produced an unlikely alliance of political leaders. Among the more than 100 legislators from some 50 countries was an ayatollah from Iran, Anglican lawmakers from the United Kingdom, a Christian member of parliament from Pakistan, Jewish politicians from Israel, Hindu lawmakers from India, and Buddhist legislators from Myanmar.

This organization is new to the international scene. It was launched last year in Oslo, Norway, with just 30 legislators, who committed themselves to building an informal worldwide network in support of religious freedom. Since then, the network has expanded rapidly; space at this year’s
Rome officially commemorates Martin Luther Square

Before unveiling the plaque, Ignazio Marino, Mayor of Rome, quoted the last words written by Luther: "We are all beggars, this is true."

The square “Piazza Martin Lutero: Teologo tedesco della Riforma (1483-1546)”, or “Piazza Martin Luther: German Theologian of the Reformation,” was inaugurated on Wednesday, September 16, in the Park of Colle Oppio, close to the Colosseum. The event was eagerly awaited by the Evangelical and Protestant people in Rome.

"It is an important moment for Adventist, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Salvation Army, Waldensian Churches who have promoted and worked for this day, and for the Protestant world,” said Dora Bognandi, spokeswoman of the Committee of Evangelical Churches of Rome and associate director of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty department for the Seventh-day Adventist Italian Union (UICCA), in his opening address. "It is an important moment for European citizens, because the Reformation of Martin Luther strongly influenced the Western culture, and for the Italian institutions, too. It is also important for the Catholic Church, because the "minorities often play a role of critical conscience that brings things to change," she added.

Church demolished, Adventists threatened with exile

A new Adventist church building in Solomon Islands has been demolished by angry locals and the small congregation ordered to leave their island by the end of the month.

Anuta Island is an Anglican stronghold in Solomon Islands’ far eastern Temotu province. Local Adventist Selwyn Faramarama has been working on the island since last year as a Bible worker funded by Volunteers in Action (VIA) and supported by the Solomon Islands Mission (SIM) of the Seventh-day Adventist
and Mr Faramarama has been studying the Bible with five more people in preparation for baptism.

Read more at news.adventist.org.

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**Adventist health leaders dedicate site of Zambian health clinic**

A new Adventist outpatient multi-disciplinary health centre will be built in Chalala, eight kilometers from the city centre of Lusaka, Zambia's capital. The centre will operate using innovative methods of staff retention and remuneration that will help to attract more Adventist health professionals into denominational work.

The demand for Adventist health care is growing in Lusaka due to growing demand fueled by an increased population and the exceptional reputation earned by the Lusaka Eye Hospital, Lusaka Dental Clinic and the Lusaka Adventist Clinic.

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When five year old Jason Blanchard first entered Malamulo Hospital, in the South of Malawi, Southern Africa, it was to have his tonsils out. As he walked down the hallway to his bed in the paediatric ward, close by was nursing midwife Lisnett Chipyoza in the maternity ward.

Thirty-five years later, Jason Blanchard walked up the steps of Malamulo a second time, but this time as Chief Executive Office, charged with leading the Hospital through its 100th Anniversary and into it's second century of caring for the medical and surgical needs of the surrounding rural community. On his first day as CEO, he walked down a familiar corridor to his executive office, the exact room in which he was operated on many years before. Shortly afterwards, he met up with Lisnett Chipyoza, then 107 years old,
and still supporting and praying for the hospital.

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**Adventist publishing house in India spreads message of health and wellness**

Nearly 1,000 copies of the Church’s world missionary book are distributed in Maharashtra.

Volunteers of all ages rallied on August 27 to distribute health materials and nearly 1000 copies of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s world missionary book in the Indian state of Maharashtra. The rally to distribute the book, “Health and Wellness—Secrets That Will Change Your Life,” by Mark Finley and Peter Landless, was organized by the Oriental Watch Publishing House, which prints Adventist publications in English, Tamil, Marathi, Hindi, Kannada, and several other Indian Languages.

Before the 110 volunteers including employees of the publishing house, students of Spicer Adventist University and youth of Salisbury Park marched through a local community to distribute the book, leaders emphasized the importance of adopting a comprehensive healthy lifestyle. The publishing house's editor-in-chief, Vara Prasad Deepati, highlighted how chronic diseases can be avoided by following methods described in the book.

Read more at news.adventist.org.
An unlikely alliance of global lawmakers call to end religious persecution

A group of lawmakers from around the world gather in New York City to call for greater efforts to end religious persecution and repression [photo credit: Rohann Wellington]

Representatives from nearly 50 countries explore ways to raise awareness of religious freedom challenges.

September 22, 2015 | Bettina Krause

An extraordinarily diverse group of lawmakers from around the world met in New York City last week to call for greater global efforts to end religious persecution and repression. The “International Panel of Parliamentarians for Freedom of Religious or Belief” produced an unlikely alliance of political leaders. Among the more than 100 legislators from some 50 countries was an ayatollah from Iran, Anglican lawmakers from the United Kingdom, a Christian member of parliament from Pakistan, Jewish politicians from Israel, Hindu lawmakers from India, and Buddhist legislators from Myanmar.

This organization is new to the international scene. It was launched last year in Oslo, Norway, with just 30 legislators, who committed themselves to building an informal worldwide network in support of religious freedom. Since then, the network has expanded rapidly; space at this year’s meeting filled quickly and soon exceeded its 100-seat limit.

Participants at the conference discussed current religious freedom challenges, heard from victims of religious persecution, and explored ways in which lawmakers could raise awareness about the issue within their own national legislatures. The conference concluded with attendees issuing letters to the governments of three countries — Myanmar, Iran, and Vietnam. These letters highlighted specific religious liberty abuses, and called on each government to honor its obligations under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international instruments.

Dwayne Leslie, Deputy Secretary General of the International Religious Liberty Association, says this network of political leaders is fundamentally different to many other religious liberty organizations. “First, these are all very influential individuals within their own nations; they have access to other lawmakers and thought leaders, and they have the ability to make their voices heard,” he says.

According to Leslie, the group is also remarkable for the sheer scope of its diversity. Europe and other western nations were represented, but participants also came from Iran, Malaysia, Sudan, Pakistan, Egypt, Senegal, Chile, Brazil, Turkey, Nigeria, Tunisia, and many other countries where freedom to practice one’s faith is compromised.

“In spite of the immense cultural and religious differences between participants,” says Leslie, “there was a clear consensus around one idea: that in our fight to protect religious freedom we can’t achieve much by working alone, as just one country or one organization. Rather, we need a multinational approach to really begin to address the steady increase in religious intolerance and repression around the world.”
Leslie, who also serves as director of legislative affairs for the Seventh-day Adventist World Church, says the group plans to continue expanding its network of legislators, and has made tentative plans to meet again next year in Berlin. The International Religious Liberty Association, which is headquartered at the Seventh-day Adventist world church building, was one of the supporting organizations for the event.
Rome officially commemorates Martin Luther Square

The official opening ceremony of the Martin Luther Square. [Photo by A. Mazza]

Before unveiling the plaque, Ignazio Marino, Mayor of Rome, quoted the last words written by Luther: "We are all beggars, this is true."

September 21, 2015 | Rome, Italy | L. Ferrara/Notizie Avventiste

The square “Piazza Martin Lutero: Teologo tedesco della Riforma (1483-1546)”, or “Piazza Martin Luther: German Theologian of the Reformation,” was inaugurated on Wednesday, September 16, in the Park of Colle Oppio, close to the Colosseum. The event was eagerly awaited by the Evangelical and Protestant people in Rome.

"It is an important moment for Adventist, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Salvation Army, Waldensian Churches who have promoted and worked for this day, and for the Protestant world," said Dora Bognandi, spokeswoman of the Committee of Evangelical Churches of Rome and associate director of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty department for the Seventh-day Adventist Italian Union (UICCA), in his opening address. "It is an important moment for European citizens, because the Reformation of Martin Luther strongly influenced the Western culture, and for the Italian institutions, too. It is also important for the Catholic Church, because the "minorities often play a role of critical conscience that brings things to change," she added.

Rome could not choose a better place to honor Martin Luther. It is a beautiful square that follows the perimeter of a large circular fountain that looks "cosy", because you can also sit and relax in it. A dry fountain now, but many hope fresh and alive water will soon gurgle out, an image of the gospel that recall Christ the living water, the Savior and free gift of God. Martin Luther rediscovered in Scripture the Salvation by Grace and gave back hope to every man and woman.

Many representatives of the institutions, representatives of Christian churches and other religious confessions attended the historic event: the ambassador of Germany in Italy, Susanne Wasum-Rainer; the Ambassador of Germany to the Holy See, Annette Schavan; a delegation from the parliament of Berlin; Jutta Fischer, mayor of Eisleben, the hometown of Martin Luther; the mayor of Rome, Ignazio Marino, several Seventh-day Adventist pastors and leaders.

"We are really pleased to have contributed to this recognition as [the] Adventist Church," said President Stefano Paris to Notizie Avventiste, "We contribute to bring in Rome the name of Martin Luther, the father of the Protestant Reformation. We can say that through this square we too are represented as Evangelical minority in this important capital city that recognizes a man who loved the Bible and gave his all to it. This great event is also recognition to the protestant world. It is an historical moment".

In his address, Jens-Martin Kruse, pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Rome, recalled the most important steps in Martin Luther life.

Michael Kretschmer, representative of the Bundestag, remembered the sensitivity of the father of the Reformation
for the last (of the world). "If he were here today, he would tell us to take care of the poor," he said.

Jutta Ficher expressed great joy and invited the mayor of Rome to return the visit, participating to the celebrations for the fifth centenary of the Protestant Reformation, in 2017.

Ignazio Marino has welcomed the invitation to Germany. In his speech said he was moved, and thanked the authorities, the churches, the people present. He also mentioned the meeting he had in the morning with the delegation from the Parliament of Berlin on the migrant crisis.

"The German delegation is in Italy because they want to discuss with us on what we are doing to welcome migrants in Europe, in particular about the unaccompanied minors," said Marino, stressing the importance of collaboration between countries, cities and people - beyond the different faiths and ideologies - "to solve the problems in our complex society."
Before discovering the plaque, the Mayor Marino recalled the last words written by Luther before he died: "We are all beggars, this is true."

A prolonged applause accompanied the red-yellow cloth that fell down revealing the white marble engraved with the name of the square. It was a touching moment that resulted in a spontaneous singing of the hymn "Praise to the Lord, praise to the Lord of glory."

"Today gesture means that Rome has to respect every religion and faith. It is easier to smash an atom than a prejudice, Einstein said. And here we have broken some prejudices," said Marino.
Anuta Adventist church building being demolished. [photo courtesy of the South Pacific Division]

September 17, 2015 | Anuta, Solomon Islands | Kent Kingston and Solomon Star

A new Adventist church building in Solomon Islands has been demolished by angry locals and the small congregation ordered to leave their island by the end of the month.

Anuta Island is an Anglican stronghold in Solomon Islands’ far eastern Temotu province. Local Adventist Selwyn Faramarama has been working on the island since last year as a Bible worker funded by Volunteers in Action (VIA) and supported by the Solomon Islands Mission (SIM) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Three people have been baptised and Mr Faramarama has been studying the Bible with five more people in preparation for baptism.

The new church building was erected with the agreement of the Adventist landowner but not, according to the Solomon Star newspaper, with the permission of local authorities.

“I’m the son of the first chief,” said Putanakipenu Arikifaka to the Solomon Star. “Although worship is a freedom on the island, what the Adventists are doing is not acceptable to our chiefly system... We told them that they can go ahead with their worship in their own homes but not to build a church on the island.”

According to Pastor Irving Vagha, who holds the portfolios of Adventist Volunteer Services and Global Mission for SIM, Anuta’s Anglican priest together with a large group of supporters demolished the church. Selwyn Faramarama is now in the capital, Honiara, where he is seeking advice and support from SIM. Church leaders have been disappointed at media reports that Anuta Adventists have now been ordered into exile from their island.

“We are chasing them out from the island,” Mr Arikifaka said to the Solomon Star. “They should listen to us while living on the island. We have our own laws. We only listen to our chiefs. We [do] not even recognise the government... we are asking all Adventist members living on the Island to... leave on any available transport that reaches the island this month.”

SIM president Pastor George Fafale is attending regional Church meetings in Fiji this week but will seek urgent meetings with Solomon Islands’ Council of Churches and Anglican national leaders upon his return.

Mr Faramarama is keen to return to Anuta to seek reconciliation. He plans to collect donations of rice and other food from Adventists in Honiara and distribute it to the Anuta chief and other islanders who are suffering food shortages after their crops were damaged by Cyclone Pam in March.

“We have sent a message to all our pastors about this and we are praying,” said Pastor Vagha. “Please ask for everyone to pray.”
Adventist health leaders dedicate site of Zambian health clinic

Ten acres of prime land in Chalala near inner city Lusaka dedicated on September 5. [Photo courtesy of Joanne Ratsara]

The Chalala Adventists Medical Centre will meet growing demand for Adventist health care in nation’s capital.

September 22, 2015 | Lusaka, Zambia | Joanne Ratsara/SID

A new Adventist outpatient multi-disciplinary health centre will be built in Chalala, eight kilometers from the city centre of Lusaka, Zambia’s capital. The centre will operate using innovative methods of staff retention and remuneration that will help to attract more Adventist health professionals into denominational work.

The demand for Adventist health care is growing in Lusaka due to growing demand fueled by an increased population and the exceptional reputation earned by the Lusaka Eye Hospital, Lusaka Dental Clinic and the Lusaka Adventist Clinic.

“One of the challenges of opening new healthcare institutions is attracting sufficient Adventist doctors into denominational work,” said Harrington Akombwa, president of the Zambian Union Conference. “Many of our church members who are health professionals have expressed a desire to contribute towards the mission of the church but working full time for us is not always desired or possible. This has encouraged us to consider new and innovative ways to attract new professionals into health ministry without requiring doctors to resign from their current employers,” Akombwa said.

The project began ten years ago with a donation of land from the city, originally for the purpose of constructing accommodation for the new Lusaka Eye Hospital. The costs of environmental connections were paid for by AHI.

“Later, AHI brought the idea of establishing a multi-specialty medical centre that would broaden the range of medical services we are offering in Lusaka. We praise God that we were able to secure such prime residential land so close to the nation’s capital where demand for our services will be high,” said Akombwa, “Our team has worked very hard with Dr. Richard Hart to enable us to reach this point. We are grateful for the efforts of Adventist Health International and General Conference Health Ministries for supporting us throughout this process.”

The Chalala Adventist Medical Centre will initially offer services in general medicine, pediatrics, ophthalmology, dental, laboratory and pharmacy.

The 10 acre parcel of land is debt free and half of the US$1,000,000 budget to build stage one was bequeathed by an alumnus of Loma Linda University.

It is planned that the centre’s operating profits will be used to fund future stages of the hospital’s development and support a number of highly utilised but less profitable regional hospitals located in rural areas.

In time the centre will be developed to offer a medical and surgical hospital and multi-specialist centre.
Dr. Richard Hart, president of Adventist Health International and Dr. Peter Landless, health ministries director of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church offered words of encouragement at an on-site dedication ceremony, witnessed by around 100 health care leaders and professionals from Southern Africa and the USA. Paul Ratsara, president of the Southern Africa - Indian Ocean Division offered the prayer of dedication.

The dedication ceremony took place at the conclusion of the first regional Global Health Conference in Southern and East Central Africa and has given birth to major plans to explore the creation of a division-wide healthcare system in the Southern Africa - Indian Ocean Division.

“The time is right for Southern Africa to benefit from integration,” said Hart at the conclusion of the regional Global Health Conference in Lusaka, Zambia.

“Integration will create greater economy and efficiency in purchasing, financial accounting, IT and human resources management. It will also give staff greater career prospects among our 15 hospitals and health centres, 24 clinics and 22 dispensaries. It will give an enhanced sense of belonging to our valued staff,” said Ratsara.

“Words cannot express our gratitude for the financial support and professional development offered by the team at Adventist Health International, Loma Linda University and the Health Ministries Department of the General Conference.”

Adventist Health International (AHI) is a multinational, nonprofit corporation with headquarters in Loma Linda, California. AHI was established to provide coordination, consultation, management, and technical assistance to hospitals and health care services operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, primarily in developing countries. AHI is not a funding agency and depends on various organizations, foundations, governments, and individuals to provide financial assistance.

AHI currently works together with 30 hospitals in 25 countries.

“We thank AHI and the General Conference Health Ministries for hosting this conference. This is the first time in the history of our Division that all leaders of our healthcare institutions have met together in one venue and this has afforded us all the opportunity to network, share ideas and burdens and pray for the growth of our health care work in Southern Africa. Partners are key to this growth and we praise God for the sacrifice of many donors who have made additional development of health care in our division possible. We are deeply grateful,” said Ratsara.

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Malamulo Hospital celebrates 100 years of caring

Jason Blanchard, CEO of Malamulo Hospital, The Honorable Dr Peter Kumpalume MP, Dr Paul Ratsara, President Southern Africa - Indian Ocean Division and The Honorable Mary Navicha - MP Thyolo Thava unveiling a plaque to commemorate 100 years of healing in Malawi. [Photo credit Courtney Haas, Communication Specialist, Global Health Institute]

The Adventist hospital in Malawi is celebrated for its comprehensive care to thousands.

September 22, 2015 | Malawi | Joanne Ratsara/SID

When five year old Jason Blanchard first entered Malamulo Hospital, in the South of Malawi, Southern Africa, it was to have his tonsils out. As he walked down the hallway to his bed in the paediatric ward, close by was nursing midwife Lisnett Chipyoza in the maternity ward.

Thirty-five years later, Jason Blanchard walked up the steps of Malamulo a second time, but this time as Chief Executive Office, charged with leading the Hospital through its 100th Anniversary and into it's second century of caring for the medical and surgical needs of the surrounding rural community. On his first day as CEO, he walked down a familiar corridor to his executive office, the exact room in which he was operated on many years before. Shortly afterwards, he met up with Lisnett Chipyoza, then 107 years old, and still supporting and praying for the hospital.

Blanchard and now 109-year-old Mrs Chipyoza featured in the official celebration of Malamulo Hospital's 100th Anniversary on Tuesday 8 September.

Blanchard reflected on the journey that first brought him to Malamulo. "I was born in the USA and moved to Matandani Mission, the second oldest mission in Malawi, Southern Africa, when I was four. My missionary father was responsible for the agricultural program at Matandani. My mother was our homeschool teacher and a midwife."

Little Jason's parents became concerned about his health and he was driven three and a half hours to Blantyre where his parents were referred to the nearest Adventist medical clinic. He was taken on another 90 minute drive on a winding but picturesque road through verdant tea gardens, to the Malamulo Mission Station, home of Malamulo Hospital, School and Publishing Press.

"I was told I needed to have my tonsils out. I have a vivid memory of the operating room and an anaesthetist smiling down at me, asking me to breathe normally as he put a mask over my mouth and nose. My last memory was replying that I wouldn't breath! The surgery went well and two days later I went home to Matandani. Two years after that, our family returned to the USA," Blanchard said.

In spite of the discomfort of the surgery, the experience had a positive impact on his life that would entwine the future of the grand institution of Malamulo Hospital with his own.

The vibrant 100th years of caring celebration was filled with an array of festivities, performances and recognition honoring those who have played a vital role in reaching this milestone.
Chipyoza cut the anniversary cake and gave a short sermon concluding with, "Jesus is really coming again! If you were doubting it, don't doubt now!!"

Other guests of honor at the Anniversary celebration included Dr Peter Kumpalume MP, The Hon. Minister of Health, Mrs Mary Navicha, MP Thyolo Thava and other civic leaders, a team from Loma Linda University led by Dr Richard Hart, President, and Dr Lowell Cooper, Chairman of the Board and senior leaders of the church in the General Conference, Southern Africa - Indian Ocean Division and Malawi Union Conference.

Dr. Peter Landless, director of the General Conference Health Ministries, conveyed the congratulations and best wishes of the General Conference on this memorable occasion. "We are grateful for the dedication and passion for mission demonstrated by Malamulo, its staff and administrators. Our prayer is that soon, the work will be finished and Jesus will return. Until then we will work, plan and minister especially in comprehensive health ministry of every kind."

A recurring theme of the celebration was the positive impact that the Christian institution had had on its patients and community.

Dr. Peter Kumpalume MP, The Hon. Minister of Health, representing the President of Malawi said, "In spite of economic challenges, Malamulo has been an excellent source of support to the surrounding community. I have only just discovered that Malamulo charges only 250 kwachas (US50c) per night for inpatient care to local villagers who live near the hospital. They have very little money and the hospital is generously helping in a significant way. But this is obviously not enough to run a hospital! We are really grateful for what the hospital is doing for the community and ... for the support of donors from abroad."

"This institution has come from humble beginnings but it is built on the solid rock of Jesus. It takes courage, faith and belief to run our institutions," said Dr. Bangwato Sikwa, Health Ministries Director of the Southern Africa - Indian Ocean Division.

"What will we take from the past into the future?" asked Lowell Cooper, chairman of Loma Linda University board. "It is the realization that this place was established to honor God and serve people."

"I first visited Malamulo in 1972," said Dr. Richard Hart, president of Loma Linda University. I remember my windscreen being broken by a flying chicken! I've been back many times since then ... I give special thanks to the 36 medical alumni from Loma Linda Hospital who have worked at Malamulo long term. Some have been buried in the Malamulo Mission Cemetery. I also remember the thousands of students who have studied at Malamulo and some have gone on to study at Loma Linda University."

In 1915, Malamulo Mission opened its first clinic, which later became Malamulo Adventist Hospital. Today it stands as one of the region's best health care facilities providing quality, caring and Christ-centred health care to Malawi's underserved rural population. The 200 bed facility provides preventative health care services and specialized services in women's and child's health, infectious diseases, chronic disease and general surgery. Typical cases include pneumonia, malaria, TB, HIV complications, dehydration and meningitis.

Malamulo Hospital is managed by Adventist Health International and hosts the Loma Linda University Field Station, which gives residents of Loma Linda and elsewhere the opportunity to rotate outside the United States of America and still get accreditation for the rotation. It is the first of only two such sites (Malawi and Haiti). It is the only place in the world where surgeons from the USA are accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education.

Malamulo Hospital is shifting from a care facility to a teaching hospital. "Through our 5 year surgical training program, which is accredited through the Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons (PAACS) and our sister institution Malamulo College of Health Sciences, also on the campus, we train nurses, clinical officers, bio technologists and others to be Christ-centered practitioners to give first quality care to the people of Malawi,"
Blanchard said.

Malamulo is able to reach a wide range of people serving a catchment area of approximately 500,000 people through outreach health services in 16 mobile clinics and 3 health centers.

"We have big plans for the future," Blanchard said. "In 2016 we will be building a new health centre in the southern Blantyre area of Limbe to provide additional Christ-centred services in the region. We will continue on with our surgeon training program and ultimately aim to have most of the services of the hospital and clinics provided by Malawian or African nationals. This is something we are passionately encouraging. We are forever grateful for our partners in mission, Loma Linda University and the many donors who have given through Adventist Health International as well as directly to the hospital," Blanchard said.

President of Southern Africa - Indian Ocean Division, Paul Ratsara, moved by the sacrifice of so many staff over the last century commented, "I pay tribute to the many missionaries and local staff who have offered their services to Malamulo, including our present talented team. Whilst our needs are vast due to our aging equipment and limited financial resources, we pay tribute to our loving heavenly Father who has continued to provide for us through the care of donors, talented local and international missionaries and key leaders who have paved the way for a brighter future for medicine in Malawi."

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Adventist publishing house in India spreads message of health and wellness

Spicer Adventist University Professor Dr Roy Jemison Injety and OWPH Treasurer Mr Samuel Chacko holding the ‘Health and Wellness’ flags as they lead the rally out of the Mission campus. [Photo courtesy of Prema Marshall]

Nearly 1,000 copies of the Church’s world missionary book are distributed in Maharashtra.

September 17, 2015 | Maharashtra, India | Prema Marshall/ANN Staff

Volunteers of all ages rallied on August 27 to distribute health materials and nearly 1000 copies of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s world missionary book in the Indian state of Maharashtra. The rally to distribute the book, “Health and Wellness—Secrets That Will Change Your Life,” by Mark Finley and Peter Landless, was organized by the Oriental Watch Publishing House, which prints Adventist publications in English, Tamil, Marathi, Hindi, Kannada, and several other Indian Languages.

Before the 110 volunteers including employees of the publishing house, students of Spicer Adventist University and youth of Salisbury Park marched through a local community to distribute the book, leaders emphasized the importance of adopting a comprehensive healthy lifestyle. The publishing house’s editor-in-chief, Vara Prasad Deepati, highlighted how chronic diseases can be avoided by following methods described in the book.

Deepati underscored “making wise choices about the riches entrusted to each of us - a body that has the potential to heal itself, a mind capable of the extraordinary, and a spirit that longs to be reunited with the Creator.”

The Maharashtra state’s minister for social justice, Shri Dilip Kamble, attended the rally, applauding the publishing house’s ongoing dissemination of health knowledge throughout the nation. Pierson David, secretary of Adventist Health International, presented the minister with a copy of the English edition of “Health and Wellness,” and Dr. Vivek Gaikwad, chief medical officer of Pune Adventist Hospital, presented the minister with the Marathi edition.

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