Inter-America: Newly appointed church administrators inspired by special training

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Just three months ago, Vanston Archbold was appointed as president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Colombian Islands region. Overseeing a church of more than 1,400 members spread out in 10 churches within three districts in two languages is something he is excited about yet humbled to take on.

Archbold, who is just 32 years old, gained a bit of confidence thanks to a leadership training session, which gathered more than 200 newly appointed church administrators throughout Inter-America earlier this month in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

Born and raised in San Andres Island, Colombia, Archbold, had been serving as a district pastor for seven years at the Lake Union Conference in Michigan, United States. He is in the process of moving back on the island with his young family, and tackling the challenges ahead.

"We as new leaders are hit with so many responsibilities right away that it can be overwhelming, to have the right skills to lead the church where we are," said Archbold as he completed the intense three-days of training. Archbold, who found the training to be so important and beneficial, said a key message resonated in his mind.

"As president, I bear ultimate responsible for everything good or bad that happens in the field and in the office, so it is such an awesome responsibility," he said. Challenged by some slight cultural bilingual divisions in the three islands he is overseeing in San Andres, Providencia, and Santa Catalina, he is optimistic to serve the church and work towards bettering the church schools there.

Archbold was joined by Alvaro Linero, a minister who is working alongside him as executive secretary for the mission. Appointed three months ago to the new position, Linero, had been serving as district pastor in Medellin, Colombia, for nine years. The leadership training has opened his eyes to the vast organization of the church structure.

"I have been so impressed with the leadership of our [division] church organization, the humility they transmit their charisma and their excitement for the mission of the church and this concern for a new young generation like us who carry the church in our hearts" said Linero, who recently turned 30.

Newly elected or appointed administrators like Archbold and Linero from throughout the 21 church regions in Inter-America were briefed on leadership theories and practices, essentials of effective leadership, ethics, administrative functions, effective communication, managing different leadership styles, human resources and more.

"I want you to be the best Seventh-day Adventist leaders in the world," said Pastor Israel Leito, president of the church in Inter-America, as he spoke to the more than 200 leaders. "This is why the Inter-American Division invests so much in bringing you here, so you can learn effective functions as leaders, become better leaders where you are, share that knowledge with your local church leaders and avoid leadership mistakes that can have serious effects in