Inter-America: Church focuses on the Bible and prophetic writings during territory-wide conference

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Strengthening the management of finances throughout the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Inter-America has been a priority for administrators responsible for the funds that come in from the many local churches and institutions in the fast-growing territory
The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Inter-America held its second territory-wide Bible Conference during a special event in San Salvador, El Salvador, July 22-23, 2011. The conference was part of the church's efforts to implement the second phase of a revival and reformation initiative called "Heeding the Word" with emphasis on the study of the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy books by Adventist co-founder Ellen G. White.

More than 700 top church leaders from throughout the Inter-American Division's (IAD) 21 regions and ministers from across El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala participated in the two-day Bible conference.

"Our main objective for this conference was to establish among our pastors and local leaders a solid theological foundation regarding the Adventist position on the Word of God and the Spirit of Prophecy to achieve a greater impact on the implementation of this next phase of our spiritual revival initiative," said Pastor Roberto Herrera, coordinator for revival and reformation for the church in Inter-America.

The activity also provides a model for the program to be repeated in each local church and congregation, added Herrera.

"We want you as ministers to fall in love more with the Word of God, your church expects that," said Pastor Israel Leito, president of the church in Inter-America during the meetings. "We want our members to be fed by the Word of God, and you bear that responsibility as ministers, we must intently study and trust in the Bible and share its truth from the pulpit every week."

Theologians from the Biblical Research Institute (BRI), Dr. Artur Stele, Adventist World Church vice president and BRI director, as well Dr. Angel Manuel Rodriguez, former BRI director, emphasized the importance of the Bible as the foundation for the Adventist Church and the prophetic ministry of Ellen G. White as it leads to the Scriptures.

"If there is a church that has all the rights to speak biblically with all freedom regarding the Spirit of Prophecy it's the Seventh-day Adventist," said Dr. Rodriguez.

"You must not forget that God has granted the church a unique gift through the prophetic ministry of Ellen G. White," added Dr. Rodriguez. "A gift that we as a church have not been able to fully understand its significance."

Dr. Rodriguez reviewed the role of Ellen G. White as a chosen prophet of God, her writings about history and the Christian church, the function of the Spirit of Prophecy and its permanence as a global ministry, what the Bible says about prophets, among others.

Dr. Stele shared five principles for ministers to remember from the conference. "As a church we believe 'Sola Scriptura' which means the Bible and Bible alone is our foundation," he said. Dr. Stele went on to state that the Spirit of Prophecy writings are very important because they lead to the Scriptures.
Inter-America: Church finance staff undergoes further SunPlus software training

Inter-American Division > Communication Department

Libna Stevens
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Strengthening the management of finances throughout the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Inter-America has been a priority for administrators responsible for the funds that come in from the many local churches and institutions in the fast-growing territory of 3.4 million members.

In order to better manage these funds, more than a dozen account managers and staff at the Inter-American Division (IAD) headquarter office in Miami, Florida, took part in two days of training last week on the church's SunPlus software. SunPlus is a financial management and accounting application that features analytical tools.

"We are committed to strengthening the financial system in the territory of the Inter-American Division," said Filiberto Verduzco, treasurer for the church in Inter-America, who took part in the training. "This seminar is crucial to better prepare our SunPlus team in assisting our treasury personnel so that we can optimize the use of the financial system."

"This new training gives us as administrators the opportunity to expand our vision and better understand the financial information that we produce," added Verduzco.

Mack Tennyson, CPA, PhD, director of the accounting software for the Adventist world church led the training session. He said that in the past, function of the SunPlus program was to retrieve financial data for preparing statements.

"This IAD training represents for administrators who need to get customized information out to assist them in their administrative roles," said Dr. Tennyson.

The IAD is the first division to receive this kind of SunPlus training with its finance team, according to Dr. Tennyson.

Administrators throughout the 21 unions or church regions in the IAD territory have been trained on SunPlus since 2008. The software was first launched in 2002 and is among the top church divisions in the world church to successfully implement the software throughout the territory, said Tony De La Mota, associate treasurer for the church in Inter-America and top implementer of the software in the territory.

"This software is more versatile and facilitates the analysis of financial information," said De La Mota.

De La Mota travels with a team of three IAD SunPlus specialists to train administrators and account managers to ensure the financial system is analyzed and reported accurately. Other software programs are in place to manage the internal financial information between unions and the IAD, said De La Mota.

Further SunPlus training will be implemented throughout the region in the coming months, said De La Mota.