Inter-America: Restructuring of the canvassing system continues to be studied

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The future course of the decades-long canvassing system in Inter-America lies in the hands of a special committee comprised of top Seventh-day Adventist leaders and church members. The committee met earlier this week at the Inter-American Division (IAD) headquarters in Miami, Florida, to continue studying how to formulate and design a new system that will fulfill the mission of the church and benefit literature evangelists throughout the IAD territory.

It is the third of several more meetings to take place in the coming weeks.

Utmost on the leaders' minds is the welfare of some 5,000 literature evangelists who knock on the doors of homes and companies to offer printed materials on religious and self-help topics.

“Our main objective is to reconfirm that literature evangelists are ministers of the printed page, and not mere book sellers,” said Pastor Mirto Presentacion. “Their work is so important because they are missionary and evangelists as they present books and publications to non-believers.”

According to Presentacion, the study commission is beginning a completely new policy, and not even referencing the existing system in effect now.

"During this meeting, we studied the publishing ministry's system of distribution, its financing from when a book is produced to when it gets to the hands of the public," said Pastor Presentación, publishing ministries director for the church in Inter-America. "Our challenge is to unify the system among union territories across the line so colporteurs across the board can benefit in the same way."

Currently, union territories offer various different benefits to their literature evangelist teams.

"We value our literature evangelist and understand the role they play in sharing the gospel, so we want them to be taken care of equally across the territory," said Presentacion.

Leaders will also look for possible avenues to provide retirement benefits to literature evangelists, he said.

Already studied by the 16-member special commission includes the philosophy, organization and administration of the publishing ministry, the role of the colporteur and its various classifications.

"Our literature evangelists will play a key role in urban evangelism efforts," said Pastor Israel Leito, president of the church in Inter-America.

"We need to come up with a system in which selling a book is secondary to the main objective to get our volunteer workers knocking on doors to penetrate homes and reach people's needs with the gospel," said Pastor Leito.

The special commission is scheduled to meet again in the next few months and then provide a
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Once executive committee members agree on the voted study, top administrators will visit each of the 21 church territories to meet with regional administrators and publishing ministry directors to further study the particular needs of literature evangelists and understand their challenges while continuing to focus on the mission of the publishing ministry-to share the Gospel through publications.

Leaders are expected to have the new canvassing system in place to be effective in 2013.

To updated news on the restructuring of the canvassing system, visit us at www.interamerica.org

image by Libna Stevens/IAD

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