Inter-America: Church gathers regional evangelists for Guatemala City impact

Posted: 09 Apr 2012 09:00 PM PDT

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Seventh-day Adventist evangelists from throughout the church in Inter-America recently met in Guatemala City, Guatemala, to sharpen their public evangelism skills, unite in massive coordinated efforts to share the gospel nationwide and take part in the territory-wide discipleship program called **Vision One Million**.

The Inter-American Division Pastoral Evangelism Summit was organized to "strengthen the spirit of public evangelism among district pastors within the Division territory," said Pastor Balvin Braham, associate ministerial director and organizer of the summit.

"We wanted to energize a select group of district pastors and evangelists to serve as catalysts in motivating their colleagues to be engaged in more aggressive initiatives of soul-winning and member retention," explained Braham.

Some 50 visiting and local pastors were briefed on preparing and delivering evangelistic messages and making effective appeal. They also learned about the role of psychology in evangelism, the principles of evangelistic preaching, and more.

"This was about reinforcing public evangelism among our Seventh-day Adventist pastors," said Braham, "because this method has been instrumental in reaching people with the gospel in Inter-America."

Evangelist Robert Costa of the Adventist world church challenged the 19 evangelists from throughout Inter-America and the more than 30 pastors from Guatemala City to preach the biblical truths the Adventist church holds high, and offer solutions to the daily life of the post-modern mind.

"Make sure every sermon you preach from the pulpit every Sabbath is addressed not only to the members but especially those visiting," said Costa. "Preach an evangelistic message offering an opportunity for someone to give their life to Jesus."

The evangelists were guest speakers during 25 district city-wide evangelistic campaigns held in auditoriums and community centers every evening from Mar. 25-30 in Guatemala City. The 25 district efforts in Guatemala City were part of some 150 Adventist churches uniting their congregations and visitors for the evening meetings.

Elsewhere in the country, some 1,000 evangelistic campaigns were also being held thanks to the tireless efforts of some 22,000 lay preachers, bible instructors, and lay evangelists, according to Pastor Gustavo Menendez, personal ministries director for the church in Guatemala, who coordinated the nationwide evangelistic efforts.

"The evangelism summit not only brought theory, but also enriched the event with the vast and different experiences of the speakers, their methods and techniques, and allowed for a culturally-rich city-wide efforts with guest evangelists," said Menendez.
The comprehensive nationwide coordinated evangelism efforts were part of church's commitment to Inter-America's Vision One Million discipleship program in Guatemala called Vision 60,000.

Menendez reported that as a result of the efforts in Guatemala City, 470 new members joined the church there and more than 3,300 throughout the country.

For Evangelist Alton Williams from Jamaica, preaching in Guatemala City for the week was an eye-opening experience. At 37 years of age, with 14 years of service in the church, stepping out into a new culture and preaching at the Covihode Guajitos Community Center broadened his perspective as an evangelist.

"It was an important lesson of being flexible and adaptive in the presentation of the gospel in order to reach people in their cultural context," said Williams, who preached with an interpreter to some 300 people every night in Guatemala City.

"As evangelists we need to understand that we need to be sensitive to adapt message to reach the human heart, appeal to the intellectual mind and the secular mind in multicultural awareness with changing technology," added Williams.

Williams said he will return to the 2,500-member Spanish Town Adventist Church he pastors with a drive to implement his new learning and share with the 24 districts he coordinates in Central Jamaica.

Pastor Braham, who also preached at the Central Adventist Church in Guatemala City, said the summit gave an opportunity to enlist the group of evangelists to the newly formed Inter-America's Evangelism Association.

Summit speakers included Pastors Balvin Braham of the IAD, Fazadudin Hosein of the Southern Caribbean University, Errol McLean associate director for the North American Division, Claudius Morgan, evangelist from the Caribbean Union, Robert Costa of the Adventist world church, Jose A. Moscoso from Mexico, Nelson Gamboa of South Colombia, and Mario Rondon of the Dominican Union.

For more information on Inter-America's Ministerial Association programs and Vision One Million initiative, visit http://visiononemillion.org/

View our photo gallery of the evangelism summit here

Evangelists from throughout the Inter-America gathered for the evangelism summit and evangelistic campaign impact throughout Guatemala City, Mar. 26-30, 2012. The event was part of Inter-America's Vision One Million celebration launched last week.