Mission to Cities, Revived by His Word initiatives highlight Spring Meeting opening

Posted: 16 Apr 2012 09:00 PM PDT

Top regional Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders today identified 24 cities that will receive targeted outreach efforts, the next step of a plan voted by church officials last year to focus on urban area ministry worldwide.
Mission to Cities, Revived by His Word initiatives highlight Spring Meeting opening

Libna Stevens > Communication Department

Apr 17, 2012

Top regional Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders today identified 24 cities that will receive targeted outreach efforts, the next step of a plan voted by church officials last year to focus on urban area ministry worldwide.

Apr. 17, 2012 Silver Spring, Maryland, United States...Ansel Oliver/ANN

Top regional Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders today identified 24 cities that will receive targeted outreach efforts, the next step of a plan voted by church officials last year to focus on urban area ministry worldwide.

During today’s opening of Spring Meeting - one of two annual meetings of the global Executive Committee - leaders stated plans for renewed outreach in a mega city in each of the denomination’s 13 world divisions. Some divisions identified several cities.

In Moscow, Russia, and Kiev, Ukraine, the church will hold a total of more than 30 simultaneous outreach campaigns, each following previous work building and training small groups of those interested in joining the church. Church leaders will plant churches in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and in Lagos, Nigeria. And alumni of Hiroshima Adventist Academy will be recruited to take part in outreach to Tokyo, Japan.

The worldwide urban ministry focus will start next year in New York City, with a representative from each division attending part of the four-week initial outreach.

"It's not just an event, it's God's comprehensive plan for reaching big cities," said Adventist Church President Ted N. C. Wilson. "New York will be a symbolic launch."

A full list of the selected cities appears below.

Meeting at the church’s world headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, leaders reminded Spring Meeting delegates of the world's changing demographics, which led to the voted plan last year. "For the first time in history, more than 50 percent of the world's population live in cities," said Mark Finley, an assistant to the president. "About 70,000 people every day move from rural areas into cities."

Many divisions are prioritizing the initiative by starting a unique fund. Leaders in South America have built a several-million-dollar fund for reaching Buenos Aires.

"Our priorities need to be [reflected] in our budgets," said Erton Kohler, president of the South American Division. "We are planting seeds and preparing our people for something big."

World church officials today also unveiled the Revived by His Word initiative, a plan urging members to read through the Bible between now and General Conference Session in 2015. The initiative includes a website, www.revivedbyhisword.org, which features daily blogs and other resources to promote Bible study.

Leaders said research suggests that 47 percent of world membership regularly reads the Bible.

"Our goal is to have at least half of the church membership involved in some aspect of Revived by His Word in systematic daily Bible study," Finley told delegates.

Leaders kicked off the program with each division president reading a portion of Genesis 1.
Backed by top world leaders on the platform, Wilson held up a small Bible and urged members worldwide to join the program.

"Unfortunately ... thousands of Seventh-day Adventists are not reading His Word and even some of our own schedules are demanding. I'm going to commit myself today to spending more time in the word of God," Wilson said.

Delegates also received a report on the newly formed Greater Middle East Union, where church leaders are establishing community centers to serve local neighborhoods.

Homer Trecartin, the union's president, said the "centers of influence" would offer numerous services: everything from job, language and computer training to libraries, Internet cafes and counseling services. Five are in initial stages of being established and plans call for 25 set up by the end of the year, with 100 by the end of 2013, Trecartin said.

"This has created excitement among both local and expat workers," Trecartin said. "It's part of our goal to mingle with people and meet needs."

The Greater Middle East Union was created last October and leaders classified the territory as a "world priority."

-Cities identified for urban ministry emphasis by division:

East-Central Africa Division: Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo.

Euro-Asia Division: Kiev, Ukraine; and Moscow, Russia.

Euro-Africa Division: Prague, Czech Republic; Geneva, Switzerland; Hamburg and Munich, Germany; and Vienna, Austria.

Inter-American Division: Mexico City; Caracas, Venezuela; and Bogotá, Colombia.

North American Division: New York City.

Northern Asia-Pacific Division: Tokyo, Japan.

South American Division: Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division: Luanda, Angola.

South Pacific Division: Sydney, Australia; Christchurch, New Zealand.

Southern Asia-Pacific Division: Manila, Philippines.

Southern Asia Division: Mumbai, India.

Trans-European Division: London, United Kingdom.

West-Central Africa Division: Lagos, Nigeria.
saying he would also commit to more reading of the Bible. The initiative features a website – revivedbyhisword.org – with daily blogging and oth