IAD News

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Posted: 09 May 2012 09:00 PM PDT

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Inter-America's top church leadership voted to reorganize the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Mexico into two union regions. The decision came during day two of the church's executive committee meetings in Miami, Florida, on May 9, 2012.

"This is an important configuration for the church in South Mexico," stated Pastor Israel Leito, president of the church in Inter-America, as he spoke to church leaders. "We now have 22 unions in Inter-America and we praise God for that," said Pastor Leito.

The South Mexican Union has had a membership of over 306,000, some 1,070 churches, and its 11 conferences and missions, and the split will distribute the region into two union mission offices.

The South Mexican Union will cover the State of Chiapas with five conferences/missions. The Southeast Mexican Union will include the church in the States of Campeche, Quintana Roo, Yucatan and parts of Tabasco, with six conferences/missions.

Approved to head the two organized union mission offices as of August 2012, were:

**South Mexican Union Mission**
- Ignacio Navarro, president
- Dimas Lopez, executive secretary
- Jairo Zavala, treasurer

**Southeast Mexican Union Mission**
- Isaias Espinoza, president
- David Celis Aguilar, executive secretary
- Pedro Leon, treasurer

Committee members also voted the operating policy for both newly reorganized unions.

The new reorganization brings a total of five unions or regions for the church in Mexico.

Inter-America's Executive Committee meetings will continue through today.

For more information on decisions taken during IAD's 2012 Mid-year Executive Committee meetings, visit us at [www.interamerica.org](http://www.interamerica.org)
Dr. Erwin Gonzalez, who has served as president of GEMA Editorial House, was appointed associate publishing director for the church in Inter-America earlier today during the executive committee meetings, which began yesterday in Miami, Florida, United States. GEMA, located in Mexico, is one of two publishing houses in the Inter-American Division (IAD) territory.

Dr. Gonzalez's new position is effective immediately, said Pastor Israel Leito, president of the church in Inter-America, while making the announcement to IAD Executive Committee members.

"Gonzalez is a career colporteur and knows publishing very well," said Pastor Leito.

A native of Mexico, Gonzalez, age 50, has served as university president, church pastor and literature evangelist prior to working at GEMA for 27 years. He will assume his associate director position alongside Pastor Mirto Presentacion, publishing ministries director for the church in Inter-America. Pastor Presentacion recently announced that he will retire in December 2012.

As Gonzalez leaves a gap in GEMA, IAD leaders took an action to approve the appointment of Dr. David Javier Perez as GEMA's president, also effective immediately. At the time the action was taken, Dr. Javier was serving as president of the South Mexico Union, a position he held for the last 16 years. New administrators were voted for the South Mexico Union.

Dr. Javier, age 63, brings vast administrative experience to GEMA, having served for 33 years in the church organization. Born in South Mexico, Dr. Javier served as conference president, secretary, departmental director, and district pastor, previous to his tenure as president of the union.

As he was presented to the executive members, Dr. Javier briefly thanked IAD administrators and the rest of the union colleagues for the opportunity to continue serving the church.

In addition, Pablo Partida was appointed as editor for GEMA, as Alejandro Medina took a position in Spain.

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Dozens of Seventh-day Adventist leaders from throughout the 21 regions of the Inter-American Division (IAD) gathered yesterday to begin their mid-year executive committee meetings.

"In Inter-America, we are very clear and defined about revival and reformation and that is why 'Constant in Prayer', 'Heeding the Word' and 'That the World May Know' are a complete theme that we will be continue for years to come," said Pastor Israel Leito, president of the church in Inter-America.

After roll call was done and conflict of interest agreements were signed, IAD directors of departments and ministries presented their initiatives and activities in support of revival and reformation. They also outlined their plans, events and strategies for the rest of this year and for 2013.

Special guest speaker Christopher J. Drasbek, Pan American Health Organization's Senior Advisor of Integrated Child Health, praised the work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church around the world for its work in improving the community through health programs and activities.

Since the memorandum of agreement signed by the World Health Organization and the Adventist world church, partnerships have been formed to benefit communities in Nicaragua, Guyana, Barbados, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Mexico, noted Drasbek.

Drasbek encouraged and challenged IAD church leaders to partner with PAHO.

"We have to work together so that we can develop plans and strategies, so we can empower people to create positive change through ministry of health, emphasis of lifestyle and provide preventive primary health care to everyone who needs it," said Drasbek. It's about bridging the gaps between the wealthy and the poor so everyone has the same ability to live well and in health, he explained.

Drasbek challenged leaders to commit to getting involved in at least 10 community health projects by the end of this year.

"We want to ensure that each church becomes a center of health, a center of influence," echoed Belkis Archbold, health ministries director for the church in Inter-America. "We must work together with PAHO to implement combined activities, share information and develop projects in each of our countries."

In other business, executive committee members approved several survey territorial reports as follows: the South Bogota Mission was formed, East Los Llanos, Boyaca Mission and the Central Colombia Mission were upgraded to conference status in South Colombia. In addition, the St. Vincent and Grenadines missions were created, and the Isthmus and West Chiapas missions were
upgraded to conference status.

In addition, the operating policies for the South Mexican Union Mission and the newly formed Southeast Mexican Union were approved.

Inter-America's Executive Committee meetings will continue through May 10.

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