Inter-America: Church business meetings highlight leaders commitment for spiritual revival throughout territory

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Inter-American Division  >  Communication Department

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*May 16, 2012 - Miami, Florida, United States...Libna Stevens/IAD*

Seventh-day Adventist leaders vowed to keep the momentum of spiritual revival and reformation alive throughout the 22 major church regions in Inter-America. The affirmation came about as executive members concluded their third day of business meetings held at the Inter-American Division (IAD) Headquarters in Miami, Florida, on May 10, 2012.

"As leaders, we want to continue fostering a culture that will encourage our members to study the Bible," said Pastor Israel Leito, president of the church in Inter-America, as he spoke to the more than 100 IAD leaders in attendance. Pastor Leito encouraged them to embrace the Adventist world church's recent Bible reading initiative called "Revived By His Word". The program prescribes one chapter of Bible reading per day. A daily blog of the program can be found at www.revivedbyhisword.org

"We are not limited by this initiative but it's about endeavoring to encourage our leaders and members to read the Bible every day no matter which Bible reading program they follow," said Pastor Leito.

Church leaders read portions of the Bible following the "Revived By His Word" initiative in English, Spanish and French.

Leaders also publicly thanked God for His leading in the church in Inter-America, for God's protection, for the soul-winning success, material blessings, and financial blessings, and paused for seasons of prayer during the closing ceremony.

Video-conferencing system set-up

Executive committee members witnessed a video-conferencing system presentation in the works for the IAD Headquarters office as well as for the 22 church regions.

"This new system incorporated with its telephone system will allow church regions to connect and meet regularly while saving thousands of dollars every year," said Pastor Leito.

IAD administrators spoke to Adventist leaders in the South American Division (SAD), headquartered in Brazil, to witness the features of the system and the connectivity possible among regional offices and cellular phones. The new system will facilitate video conferences at any time.

"This technology we want to incorporate will make it possible for us to communicate faster and easier among our church union and conference leaders just like face-to-face when we travel," explained Pastor Leito.

It's like a ‘face-to-face’ meeting without the travel expenses, said Pastor Leito.

"In just one meeting, the South American Division told us that they were able to save some $45,000 of travel expenses," he added.
According to SAD leaders, the church in South America has saved on average over one million dollars every month over three-and-a-half years of using a similar system.

All unions are expected to have their video-conferencing systems in place by the end of the year.

**Financial stability in the IAD**

Filiberto Verduzco, treasurer for the church in Inter-America, praised the commitment of the church members throughout the territory as seen through the tithes and offering contributions coming into the church every year.

During his financial presentation, Verduzco highlighted the tithe income behavior during the last 32 years in the IAD.

"In the 80s there was an increase of 56 percent of tithing funds; in the '90s an increase of 89 percent; in early 2000s an increase of 90 percent; and in 2010 an increase of 104 percent," stated Verduzco. "This shows that from 1979 to 2011, tithe increased 10 times, with an average increase of 7.96 percent each year."

With a membership of 608,567 in 1979 to 3.5 million in 2012, says Verduzco, "the membership increased five times, showing that tithing has grown twice as fast as the membership."

"This is a story of blessings from God and how He blesses church members," said Verduzco. "More and more we have church members who are more conscious, more giving, more sacrificing for God and the task of finishing the work of His church."

"It's an incredible blessing as 53 percent of the operating income of the church in Inter-America comes from not so strong currencies," he explained. "The church membership is also outstandingly generous when it comes to mission offering," he added.

With steady incoming funds, the church leadership in the IAD is committed to ensuring a solid financial foundation, continuing care of its properties and interests, and the management and assignment of resources, said Verduzco as he laid out the financial strategies and reviewed the audited financial statement for 2010.

During the week's business meetings, leaders voted on a number of initiatives including:

**Spiritual Revival and Reformation Summit**

A Spiritual Revival and Reformation Summit is scheduled to gather top church leaders from unions, local fields and institutions throughout Inter-America to continue promoting spiritual revival among members, evaluate the revival and reformation initiative and strategize for spiritual activities on the subject for the next four years. The event, coined as "Holy Convocation", will take place in Miami, Florida, January 21-23, 2013.

**Member Conservation and Recovery**

A new initiative was voted to strengthen the Adventist churches throughout the territory by helping pastors and their members understand the importance of seeking out those who have left the church. The initiative will involve pastors and active members in a number of activities and programs called "Reunite". Reunite events will be designed to recover and nurture former members of church and small groups.

The initiative will also promote and distribute a movie entitled "The Return", a film that will highlight the importance of seeking God instead any other alternative.

**Church Planting Movement**

Church leaders voted an initiative by the Office of Adventist Mission in the IAD to give greater emphasis to planting new Adventist churches in un-entered communities among unreached people groups.

The initiative will include enlistling, recruiting, and equipping a cadre of university students to participate in church planting projects. It also includes proposed ways of funding projects and character development ministries among students toward mission.
Leaders also voted to approve a new youth ministries uniform manual. They amended policies and approved a number of meetings and events for the coming year.

Upcoming events include the Children's Ministries Congress from July 10-15, 2012, the Chaplaincy Ministries Certification program from Aug. 7-14, 2012, the Communication Summit from Nov. 26-28, 2012, and more.

For information on Inter-America's initiative and programs, visit us at www.interamerica.org