Pray for Sri Lanka in Their Major Step of Faith

Major step of faith...

Be strong, and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed.

1 Chronicles 22:13

Then hear Thou in heaven their prayer and their
Please pray for the church in Sri Lanka. They are taking a major step of faith, going together into unfamiliar territory, and an outpouring of the Spirit of God is needed to sustain and guide them.

In Sri Lanka there are 37 churches and 22 companies, with maybe 1,500 members in church on a given Sabbath morning. These groups are under the care of eighteen ministers, plus several workers on special projects. For as long as they can remember, most of these ministers have been assigned to serve as the pastor of a church or a district, just like other ministers in many countries. Most cannot remember a time when local members held primary responsibility to provide leadership in their churches without the regular presence of an assigned pastor. Again, this is just like many churches in many other countries of the world. In practice, it is sometimes simply the pastor who makes the important decisions for the church.

For the church in Sri Lanka, that all changes in just a few weeks. Seventh-day Adventists in Sri Lanka have decided to place the responsibility for leadership in their churches in the hands of the appointed church officers and the members of the church boards. They have divided the country up into three regions, and formed three regional ministry teams. Each minister is removed from his pastoral position, and instead assigned to one of those ministry teams. Each team is responsible to provide oversight, training and support to the leaders of each of the churches in its region of the country. This major transition will take formal effect January 1, 2012, but there is already a lot of activity going on. Ministry teams have been named and assigned to regions. A basic survival training program for church leaders has been developed. It has been placed in the hands of training teams, and sent out to as many locations as possible around the country. Many local leaders are eager participants.

Sri Lankans traditionally place much reliance on the positions and actions of a strong authority figure. Many of the ordinary Seventh-day Adventists in Sri Lanka have seen themselves with little capacity for personal impact on the community for a variety of reasons. It is an unsettling experience, maybe even frightening for some, to deal with greater responsibility. Equally difficult is the concept of more authority spread around among a larger number of common people. But our members recognize that we need to make this change if we are to finish the work that has been assigned to us.

Please support this faith initiative. Please pray for courage and discernment and wisdom for members and leaders alike as they learn a new way to work together in the common goal of hastening the day of Jesus’ glorious appearing.