It was a veritable beehive of activity on December 16, 2009, when nearly 1,000 happy literature evangelists (LEs) assembled at the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton, for their four-day division-wide LE Congress. This was a first for the East-Central Africa Division (ECD). This division was established seven years ago in the organizational realignment of administrative territories.

The keynote address was presented by the honorable Professor Sam Ongeri, Minister of Education for the government of Kenya. A prominent government leader, Ongeri is also a fellow church member. As he spoke, the audience of delegates before him represented seven of the 10 countries that comprise the ECD.

This congress was graced with several guest speakers. Pastor Mario Martinelli, from the Review and Herald Publishing Association, stimulated renewed commitment to the publishing ministry through his inspirational messages every evening.
John Kakembo, Uganda Union Mission President, earnestly appealed to the LEs to exert a positive influence as God’s messengers of light—regardless of the circumstances in which they might find themselves. His messages drew power from the colorful examples of faithful Bible characters whose exemplary lives appeal to our own hearts today.

Pastor Howard F. Faigao, world Publishing Ministries director, presented heart-touching messages drawn from the history of God’s leading in the development of the publishing ministry—and amplified from the experiences of current literature evangelists of the world field. He also emphasized the “Share a Book and Tell the World!” theme that motivates our global church today.

Elder Philip Philipsen, division treasurer, instructed the LEs in clear and practical ways toward their personal financial management. Our Health Ministries director presented highly useful guidance for safeguarding our own health in doing literature evangelism. The president of the East African Union Mission, Pastor Paul Muasya, presented a fine devotional challenging each LE, as a gospel worker for Christ, to hold fast to the vision of service and avoid temptations to become sidetracked.

Exciting activities included the colorful parade of nations, where each country’s delegates marched into the auditorium in their national attire bearing their state flags. A powerful song service reflected the variety of cultures and languages of the countries represented. Heartfelt testimonies of literature evangelists were heard as personal experiences were related from the fields of ECD. This was followed by a special project of local literature distribution on Sabbath afternoon at Kapsabet Town.

The closing ceremony featured special recognition awards to various unions leaders and literature evangelists for outstanding performance. A pinning ceremony was held in honor of workers whose service records reflected years of faithful work for the Lord.

The commitment message was presented by Mary Angawa, a magistrate of the high court of Kenya. Angawa is a committed Adventist and literature evangelist. Her timely message ignited fires of enthusiasm within the hearts of the LEs to go forth and serve with conviction and determination.

Other guests included representatives of Stanborough Press and Safeliz Publishing House, skilled publishers who have consistently supplied books for our broadening program of sales and distribution to the public throughout the ECD territory.

The theme of the congress was “Keeping the Vision Alive.” The motto was “Keep the Fire Burning Onward to Victory.”

“Share a Book and Tell the World!” the theme that motivates our global church today.
Three of the four unions in Mexico held their LE congresses in February 2010. It was a series of publishing meetings designed to both inspire the workers and to celebrate God’s blessings derived in 2009. It was also an opportunity to recognition leaders and literature evangelists (LEs) who have excelled in their commitment, dedication, and service performance. They also provided a sanctuary of time for the publishing family’s fellowship, motivation, and recommitment to ministry in 2010.

The first congress was held February 8 to 10 at the Oaxtepec Campsite. It was a combined LE congress of Central and Inter-Oceanic Mexican Union Missions. Approximately 400 delegates attended the three-day Congress.

The South Mexican Union Conference LE Congress followed on February 11 to 13, with about 400 delegates were in attendance. These were comprised of literature evangelists, their administrators, and publishing leaders. The congress was held at the new campsite of the North Chiapas Conference, whose headquarters is in Pichucalco. This conference is known as one of the most developed mission fields in Mexico with around 10 percent of its population being Seventh-day Adventists. The South Mexican Union Conference has the strongest publishing program in Mexico. The union invited all of its LEs to the congress—credentialed, licensed and interns—for fellowship and training in order to help strengthen their ministries.

Participating in the LE congress were the union and local conference officers, which signaled their united support of literature ministries. There, during a meeting with the administrators, they approved the launching of a program called “Hope Impact” in December 2010. This plan will involve the membership of the entire church: a plan to disseminate outreach literature throughout Campeche, Chiapas, Quintana Roo, Tabasco, and Yucatan—the territories of the South Mexican Union Conference.

In both congresses, leaders from the Mexican Adventist Editorial Group, the division, and GC publishing directors were present to lend support and participate. With such total support from union and local administrators, with vision from the publishing leaders, and a firm commitment of their literature evangelists, we see the Mexican fields as prepared to move on to ever greater achievements for the Master.
Herald of Health, India’s oldest existing health magazine, completed 100 years of health education to India’s citizens. To mark this occasion, a special centenary issue of the magazine was released by Shri Mohansingh Rajpal, Mayor of Pune, at his office recently.

The magazine is published by the Oriental Watchman Publishing House (OWPH) at Salisbury Park, Pune, Maharashtra, India.

OWPH, now 108-years old, is well known for publishing various books and magazines in the field of health, education, and spirituality, and it is a unit of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

OWPH general manager Edwin B. Mathews, editor-in-chief; T. I. Varghese, editor of the magazine; Joy Kuttappan, treasurer; Ravi Sighamoney, book editor; Lamm B. Fanwar; and the foremen of various units of OWPH were also present.

Started in January 1910, in Lucknow, by Adventist missionaries, Herald of Health has been serving the nation with a sense of dedication and commitment.

“Health is not to be found in bottles and pills, but in obedience to the laws of the Creator,” wrote Dr. H. C. Menkel, the first editor of Herald of Health, in his first editorial. Moreover, in the same editorial, he requested “the enthusiastic cooperation of readers in the effort of bringing better health and longer life to India’s people.”

During World War I, the publication of the magazine was temporarily suspended. In 1924, OWPH was shifted to Pune, and thus the Herald of Health also found a new address. During this time, the magazine was combined with The Oriental Watchman—a general and spiritual magazine published by OWPH, and thus acquired the name The Oriental Watchman and Herald of Health.

In October 1965, the combined name was dropped and the magazine took its original name, Herald of Health, once more. The magazine received critical acclaim when it was mentioned in the Park’s Textbook of Preventive and Social Medicine as a good health magazine published in India.

Until 1970, the editors of the magazine were missionaries from abroad. In the middle of that same year Dr. John M. Fowler became the first Indian editor. So far the magazine has been edited by 25 editors, including: T. R Torkelson, Thomas David, E. A. Hetke, R. S. Lowry, S. Hutton, C. B. Hammond, Edwin Charles, Edison Samraj, M. Wilson, and T. I. Varghese.
Boracay, a tiny island resort known for its world-famous white beaches, is situated north of the island of Panay in the central Philippines. It became the venue for a National Publishing Ministries Council. Attended by union and conference/mission officers, the publishing leaders, and publishing house officers, this gathering was held in the Boracay Holiday Hotel, January 20 to 21, 2010.

Pastor Howard F. Faigao, GC Publishing Ministries director, and Keith Heinrich and Vivencio R. Bermudez, treasurer and Publishing Ministries director of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division, respectively, were also in attendance.

Central to this gathering was a discussion of recommendations coming from the Philippine Publishing House (PPH) Commission, which had been created by the House Board of Directors, to look into the financial situation of PPH, with emphasis on the proposal to transfer of ABC/HHES management and supervision from PPH to the local conferences/missions.

Designated as chair of the two-day gathering was Keith Heinrich with Pastor Bermudez assisting as secretary. The two leaders steered the participants into discussions that one administrator called “open, frank, and productive.”

Before proceeding to the main agenda, Pastor Faigao made a presentation on “The Challenges of the Publishing Ministries in the Philippines.” He focused upon the trends and issues confronting the Philippine Publishing House operations and field sales performance.

Among others issues, the major items discussed and voted for implementation throughout the nation were:

1. To transfer ABC/HHES management from the Philippine Publishing House to the local conferences/missions effective February 1, 2010.

2. To grant the assistant Publishing Ministries directors (APMDs) a living assistance financial package equivalent to 50 percent of that of a pastor.

3. To launch a nationwide “Hope Impact” initiative in the Philippines on September 4, 2010, when all members are encouraged to go to the public to distribute missionary literature.

4. To reiterate the criteria for choosing mission/conference publishing directors.

5. To recommend to the SSD Ministerial Department that ordination eligibility be granted to Publishing Ministries directors who are ministerial graduates—whether with or without pastoral experience—based on the following reasons:
   a. That the Publishing Ministries Department is a ministry
   b. That a Publishing director is a pastor of hundreds of literature evangelists
   c. That the distribution of literature is an avenue for soul-winning.

The program of each day opened with a devotional led Howard F. Faigao and Keith Heinrich. The closing program was led by Vivencio Bermudez.
Student Program Expanding
In West-Central Africa Division

During the three-day period of March 19 to 21, 2010, I had the opportunity, along with Elder Oyeleke A. Owolabi, West-Central Africa Division (WAD) Publishing director, to visit Babcock University in Nigeria. March is typically the month when all the publishing directors from Nigeria and the surrounding countries recruit students to spend their summer vacation working as literature evangelists (LEs).

Pastor Owolabi informed me that 600 students from Babcock University currently work as student LEs. Since the program has a very good reputation, it is expected to continue growing rapidly.

My favorite moment was when students from the previous summer’s LE team were given the opportunity to share their testimonies. It was wonderful to hear how God guided them to the right places at the right moments to say just the right things and pour out His blessings upon their efforts.

From Babcock University we traveled to Ghana, where we also have a very strong student LE program. Last summer (2009) more than 500 students worked in the cities of Ghana. This year they expect to surpass that number significantly.

I asked Thomas K. Anane-Afari, the Ghana Union Conference Publishing director, about his secret in attracting so many students from Ghana, and even from Nigeria, to work in his student program. He simply told me: “I take time for them; and I love to work with them.”

On Sabbath, March 27, we met with the students at Valley View University located in Accra, the capital city. I found a beautiful and spiritual group there that is planning to canvass this summer. Many of them are planning to sell books in other countries. These young people do love adventure, and in literature evangelism they find an additional blessing. Not only do they serve the Lord and earn funding for their education, they also find opportunities to broaden their horizons by the education that derives from traveling to new places afar.

Last year the West-Central Africa Division had 1,055 students working, according to Pastor Owolabi, an even a larger group is planned for 2010.
“Hope Impact” and “Homes of Hope”  
South America’s Exciting Outreach Programs

We thank the Lord that the publishing program in our South American Division continues strongly. Our report for the first quarter of 2010 is most encouraging, and now we are focusing upon our “Hope Impact” project for 2010. On May 15, the church will go to the streets to distribute 30 million missionary magazines, as well as 20 million handouts that illuminate the Sabbath truth.

Along with the general membership, our literature evangelists (LEs) are also deeply involved in this great “Hope Impact” plan. Each literature evangelist will share 100 Hope Impact magazines with their customers at that time. This means that nearly all the clients visited during their entire work week of canvassing will be recipients of Adventist literature.

May 22 will be the day of our “Homes of Hope” promotion, when many hundreds of our church families will receive non-Adventist friends into their homes to provide a fellowship meal, get better acquainted, and bless their guests with a gift of the 2010 Missionary Book of the Year Tempo de Esperança (“Time of Hope”). This day will climax the over-all distribution of 11 million missionary books.

In various unions, literature evangelists are donating the book to their customers. The cost of the book is 50 cents (US) each, and this pricing facilitates mass distribution. Over their summer vacation, in Chile alone, student literature evangelists distributed 100,000 missionary books free of charge.

It is a matter of great satisfaction to see that the distribution of gospel publications is a mainline missionary strategy of the Adventist church in South America.

The church highly values mass communication methods afforded by the use of television and radio. These means touch the lives of multitudes. Now comes the “Missionary Book-of-the-Year Program,” a ministry that reaches beyond electronic wavelengths to evoke a personal face-to-face encounter with people in their homes.

In our division, we have a highly motivated drive to distribute books territorially; a drive to completely blanket villages, cities, and large regions with God’s literature.

In this last quarter, two large cities were the target of mass distribution. One was Curitiba, the capital of the state of Paraná, where 400,000 books were distributed in March. The other was Goiânia, the capital of the state of Goiás, Brazil, where another 300,000 books were personally distributed by our members.

Our goal now is to place a missionary book into each and every home of the South American Division over the next five years. I am very grateful to God to see this church so involved, so motivated, and so on fire for evangelism through the personal ministry of literature distribution!

Almir Marroni, Publishing Director  
South American Division
The General Conference & East-Central Africa Division (ECD) Publishing Ministries Departments responded to the request of Bugema Adventist University in Uganda to conduct three meetings within two weeks:

1) An evangelistic series
2) A week of prayer
3) A student LE rally

Howard F. Faigao, GC Publishing Ministries director, led out in the evangelistic series in the evenings and the school’s week of prayer program in the mornings.

Philip Gai, East-Central Africa Division’s Publishing Ministries director and Balam Kirya, Uganda Union Mission’s Publishing director, teamed up to lead out in the student LE campaign. The training seminar portion for the students was cared for as a joint effort on the part of Faigao, Gai, and Kirya.

More than 120 students responded to the call to work for God in the Literature Ministry during the upcoming school vacation, the largest group thus far for this university. With fine support from school administrators, a Student Literature Evangelist (LE) Club was organized on campus, and it is forecasted to grow with succeeding years. This was all accomplished between February 23 - March 5, 2010.

This university is very evangelistically motivated. Mars Sigue, a missionary to Bugema University, coordinated the main evangelistic series for inside the campus, plus six satellite meetings in different schools around Bugema university.

The Lord has greatly blessed the recent evangelistic efforts of the University leadership. Two-hundred and fifty-seven souls have recently been baptized, many of them coming from Muslim families.