A Congress Like Never Before
by Mamerto M. Guingguing II | Editorial Services, Philippine Publishing House, SSD

The first Bi-division Literature Evangelist (LE) Congress was held March 4-8, 2014, in Baguio City, Philippines. Empowered with the theme Bringing Hope Into Every Home, the congress bonded the kindred spirit of LEs from the Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD) and the Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD) in the summer capital of the Philippines.

The General Conference (GC) encourages each division to conduct a division-wide LE congress once every five years. This year, the SSD and the NSD decided to forge a collaborative effort that gave birth to the first bi-division congress of LEs. Vivencio R. Bermudez, SSD Publishing director, and Teru Fukui, NSD Publishing director, organized the event.

Howard F. Faigao, GC Publishing director, delivered a powerful homily to more than 1,200 LEs, publishing leaders, and church administrators. Faigao emphasized that our goal is to circulate the printed page to the entire world like leaves of autumn, as never before. The delegates enthusiastically chanted ‘like never before’ over and over following the speaker’s lead, each time with more emphasis.

Also in attendance were Delbert W. Baker, a GC vice president and advisor to the GC Publishing Ministries Department; Erwin Gonzalez, Inter-American Division Publishing director; Abraham D. Obaya, West-Central Africa Division Publishing director; and João Vicente Pereyra, Brazil Publishing House vice president for marketing. Alberto C. Gulfan Jr., SSD president, delivered the keynote address to welcome the delegates.

Thursday night featured a special report from the Brazil Publishing House, the largest Adventist publishing house in the world.

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Pereyra showed slides featuring its brand new facilities and equipment. He also shared statistics of the progress of the publishing work in Brazil. The audience praised the Lord for such an accomplishment.

The Philippine Publishing House (PPH) reported on its centennial anniversary on Thursday night. A video presentation highlighted the 100-year history of the publishing house, and showcased its humble beginnings until it grew to become the largest Adventist publishing house in Asia. Health and Home, the national journal for better living and the flagship magazine of the PPH, was given special recognition for being the oldest health magazine in the Philippines. The PPH choir, comprising all the workers of the PPH, serenaded the audience with the song “Reaching for Excellence” to close the program. The evening was capped by Faigao’s compelling appeal and prayer.

Baker attended the entire convention. He delivered a powerful sermon on the first night of the convention and followed up with another homily about restoration during the worship service on Sabbath. He directed the LEs’ attention to the Holy Spirit as the powerhouse for their success. Baker’s presence from the start of the convention until Saturday’s worship service provided inspiration and encouragement.

On Sabbath afternoon, LEs were recognized for excelling in missionary outreach and sales performance. Certificates and pins were given to LEs according to their years of service. Sachiko Nakahara, from Japan, was given special recognition and a standing ovation from the audience for her 52 years of excellent service as an LE. In the midst of cheers and applause, she remained humble and thankful for the work she finds so rewarding.

The first bi-division congress of literature evangelists culminated with everyone joining in a solemn commitment service and prayer. The program ended at 6:00 p.m., signaling the end of the Sabbath and heralding a new day. A new challenge awaits the 1,200 delegates who went home empowered and revived, ready to bring hope to every home.
On March 15, 2014, the South American Spanish Publishing House (SASPH) celebrated its 110 years anniversary with a special thanksgiving service.

A choir formed by the staff of the SASPH sang with joy a song composed specifically for the occasion:

“A vision from the past
Told of preaching and saving lives,
Proclaiming the message of hope
With literature faithful to God’s Word.
Like the leaves of autumn God’s Word spread,
And the Holy Spirit worked with power,
Transforming hearts and blessing everyone.”

The words go on, thanking God for His guidance over 110 years.

The facilities of the Florida Adventist Academy in Buenos Aires, Argentina, were packed with members, the staff of SASPH and their families, and a number of invited guests. Among them was Wilmar Hirle, General Conference Publishing associate director; Erton C. Köhler, South American Division (SAD) president; Bruno A. Raso, SAD vice president; Tercio Marques, SAD Publishing director; George Knight, Adventist writer, theologian, and educator; Carlos Gill, Argentina Union president; the leaders of five publishing houses: Brazil Publishing House; Mexican Adventist Editorial Group; Inter-American Division Publishing Association, United States; Safeliz Publishing House, Spain; and Pacific Press Publishing Association, United States; and the Publishing leaders of all SAD Hispanic unions.

The world mission report given by Hirle told of the victories that resulted in the massive distribution of The Great Controversy. “About 140 million books were distributed,” he said. In many places they are still being distributed, having a strong impact on all the churches involved.

“I have been an Adventist since birth, and I’ve never seen anything like this. It was a project that involved more Adventists than ever,” Hirle said.

“We do not have publishing houses; we have churches in the form of publishing houses,” Köhler said in his sermon. “In the SAD we have two publishing houses. Without them, the work of our church would be weak. In seven of the eight countries of our territory, Adventist work started with literature. In Peru, where the work started thanks to education, [Adventist pioneer] Fernando Stahl was converted by reading The Great Controversy.”

The expressions of gratitude continued during the afternoon with a concert given by Arautos do Rei (Heralds of the King) quartet at the Florida Church. Afterward, Raso made a call for consecration and urged those present to “look to the past with gratitude and toward the future with hope.”

“We thank you, Lord.
Thank you for your guidance.
In 110 years we saw your hand Guiding this ship.
Thank you! Thank you, God, our Creator!”

This message in song still echoes among those who experienced this spiritual feast on Sabbath, March 15.

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Public Event
On Sunday, March 16, the SASPH celebrated its 110 years anniversary with a grand book fair and sale.

“Ahhhh,” sighed Elena Gutiérrez, with a mix of emotion and commitment, nostalgia and hope. Her sigh was the result of my question: “What significance do books from the SASPH have in your life?”

Elena sighed again and answered: “Hope, joy, peace, that is what I feel after reading these books. I love the church’s books. They bring us closer to God, who is our only hope.”

We were a half hour away from initiating the 2014 Open House at the Florida Adventist Academy in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

In the bright sunshine, before the event had even begun, Elena was already there. Despite her 71 years of age and the 1,200 km that separated her home from Buenos Aires, Elena still attended the event.

“We came from General José de San Martín, in the province of Chaco,” she said. “We left yesterday, Sabbath, at 6:00 p.m. and arrived today at 6:00 a.m. We plan to stay here all day, buying books and enjoying the musical program.”

Elena was not the only one who attended from a distance. A group came from Chile. Several contingents of people from different cities of the interior of Argentina, such as Santa Rosa, Mar del Plata, Neuquén, Río Gallegos, Jujuy, Tucumán, Mendoza, and Posadas attended the book expo, designed to celebrate the 110th anniversary of the SASPH.

An estimated 3,000 people visited the book fair. People also enjoyed other activities, such as music concerts given by Arautos do Rei (Heralds of the King) and Adoración (Adoration) quartets, the Córdoba family and Santiago Monte, the Mis Amigos (My Friends) program for the younger audience, and the signing of books on behalf of renown Adventist writers, such as Enrique Chaij and George Knight, who also presented seminars.

Perhaps the greatest attraction was the guided tours of the SASPH facilities. According to the tour guides, about 1,200 people visited the publishing house.

The March 16 celebration centered on books—books that not only provoke sighs, but lead to eternal life.

Philippine Publishing House Celebrates 100 Years
by Nathanlie Baldoza | Editorial Staff, Philippine Publishing House, SSD
Who could have imagined that what started as a small press in a dilapidated horse stable in 1914 would, 100 years later, become Asia’s largest Adventist publishing house?

From February 28 through March 2, 2014, the Philippine Publishing House (PPH) celebrated a century of publishing books and periodicals that address the physical, mental, social, moral, and spiritual well-being of Seventh-day Adventists, their communities, and people groups within the territory of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD).

Regarded as the premier printer and publisher of the Adventist Church in the SSD, the PPH commenced the event with a consecration service on the evening of February 28 with Howard F. Faigao, General Conference Publishing director, as guest speaker.

“Through the years, the PPH has stood by our thousands of literature evangelists in a joint venture to circulate the gospel of Jesus through the pages of our ‘silent messengers,’” Faigao said.

He further challenged Publishing leaders from missions and conferences, former administrators, retired workers, church members, and literature evangelists (LEs) in attendance to resolve to continue that partnership toward an ever-greater circulation of literature “like never before.”

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Through the years, the PPH stands as a tangible testament of Ellen G. White’s vision of “streams of light that went clear round the world” (*Life Sketches*, p. 125), as it continues to stretch its influence through its reading and teaching resources in its 38 branches and nearly 5,000 LEs throughout the Philippines.

It is a far cry from its 12 regular workers and 30 LEs in 1916, two years after it was established. What began as a struggling print shop behind a rundown house has come to serve a significant role in denominational programs, thus serving as the lifeblood of local churches. The PPH is now one of 63 publishing houses operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church worldwide.

Florante P. Ty, PPH president, said: “All praise be to the Lord for His never-failing and ever-sustaining grace. One hundred years is no mean feat. In this generation of unprecedented technological innovations and economic uncertainty, publishing companies struggle for stability and longevity. However, the PPH is still here and always will be. People come and go; times change. But the PPH remains true and committed to keeping the mandate of its founding.”

Mamerto Guingguing, PPH’s vice president for editorial services and chair of the 100 Year Program Committee, sought to have everyone take part in the celebration. “One hundred years don’t come twice in a lifetime. We wanted everyone to experience God’s abiding presence and immeasurable goodness for 100 years. It’s an opportune time to give back,” he said.

The event was also attended by Alberto C. Gulfan Jr., SSD president and Sabbath morning speaker, Vicencio R. Bermudez, SSD Publishing director, and all administrators and Publishing leaders from the three Philippine unions and conferences.

The PPH centennial celebration concluded with a sale, at which loyal customers and church members received an “anniversary discount” of up to 70 percent off their favorite books and magazines.

The Philippine Publishing House has come a long way. Moreover, it still has a long way to go, for “as long as probation continues, there will be opportunity for the canvasser to work” (*Colporteur Ministry*, p. 11).
The 2014 student summer canvassing program in Bangkok is making history for the Thailand Adventist Mission Publishing Ministries Department.

In 2008 only four student literature evangelists (LEs), working under the leadership of Janhom Fungnuan, served the city. This year 37 students joined the canvassing program. The student LEs were divided into three groups, designated Ruth, Abraham, and Noah. Each group represents the faith of the corresponding Bible character who each, in their lifetimes, proved to be messengers of hope wherever they went.

On March 17 of 2014, Howard F. Faigao, General Conference Publishing director, delivered a powerful message of encouragement to the student LEs and Thailand Adventist Mission employees who attended a joint morning worship service. That afternoon, one of the student leaders, Sawang Suwiboonsup, testified that he was amazed and inspired by Faigao’s message. He said nothing similar had ever happened to him. Suwiboonsup said he had power and confidence to speak and pray for every customer, and that people purchased books without hesitation. The rest of the students shared similar experiences.

“Jesus is the Chief Worker,” said Faigao. “Our job is to just carry Jesus’ bag. Jesus will work on our behalf.” The phrase “Just carry the bag of Jesus” inspired the student LEs’ throughout the day.

God used Faigao to empower the student LEs to see the potential of the program in Thailand. We believe that in this part of the world the student summer program will provide a new generation leaders who are committed to the Lord’s work.

By God’s grace we accept Faigao’s challenge to have 100 student LEs working in Bangkok next year. Thailand is now ready for the harvest. Join us in praying that God may send more laborers, especially student LEs, each summer. ★