

## ANNUAL COUNCIL - 2007

# SECRETARY'S REPORT

by Matthew A Bediako

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### WELCOME!

Let me take this privilege to welcome all the Executive Committee members, your spouses, and the special invitees to the 2007 Annual Council of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. It is indeed good to see you.

To those of you who have been members for the past three years, you are welcome.

As a result of union sessions that have taken place in some divisions and retirements, I see new faces. You are especially welcome!!

I would like to remind you that, as members of the Executive Committee, you are here not only as a representative of your union or division, but you represent the 15.5 million Adventists around the world. You are charged with the responsibility to come and do the business of the Church on their behalf. It is, therefore, expected of you to faithfully attend all the meetings and participate in the discussions.

I am sure some of you were disappointed in the change of venue for the 2007 Annual Council from Kiev, Ukraine back to Silver Spring. The change was due to some challenges that we were facing. But the good news is that the 2008 Council will be held in Manila, Philippines.

I am told that the Southern Asia-Pacific Division is ready to roll out the red carpet for the delegates and to accord us with the typical Filipino hospitality. We are anticipating tens of thousands of our fellow believers joining us on the Sabbath to celebrate God's faithfulness. The Philippines has over one million Seventh-day Adventists.

## **WORLD MEMBERSHIP**

The good news is—for the past five consecutive years, over one million individuals have joined the Remnant Church every year!

During the period under review, July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007, 1,044,315 souls were added to the Church through baptism and profession of faith. Although this is a 48,774 decrease from last year, we praise God for these precious souls.

During the last four quarters, we recorded 2,859 daily accessions (baptism and profession of faith). With a net membership increase of 681,448, the world membership stands at 15,433,470 as of June 30, 2007. This means that there is one Seventh-day Adventist to every 429 of the world population.

## **MEMBERSHIP RETENTION**

For the past five years we have reported to the Executive Committee the very low retention rate of our membership. I am happy to report that there has been a remarkable change in this area. While we were reporting a ratio of accessions to losses around 45.03%, our records this year show a healthy figure of 24.21%. This means, for every one hundred members added through baptism and profession of faith, 24 left the church. I must hasten to indicate that those who leave are not only the newly-baptized members. We are happy to see a new trend, but we cannot sing the doxology until we eliminate from our chart the loss and missing column.

To achieve this goal, we need to exhibit in every church, institution, and on all levels of Church administration, an unconditional love for one another. Let every individual who enters our church and institution feel welcome. We need to respect and accept one another.

I take this opportunity to thank all the divisions that have finished their church membership audits. I know this is not an easy and happy work to do, but it is expected of us to be honest in reporting our membership. For those that have not yet done it, we encourage you to conduct it this coming year.

## **INTERDIVISION PERSONNEL**

In your agenda book you will find the details of missionary movements.

In 2007, 96 new missionaries were sent out on regular full-term appointments to all the divisions. Six hundred and twenty-four others returned to their fields of assignment after well-deserved furloughs and annual leaves and 112 asked for permanent return. Our active interdivision workforce stands at 979.

The North American Division provides about 39% of the interdivision employees, and the rest from all of the other divisions.

In addition, 1,604 Adventist Volunteers went out to the mission fields for one or two years.

We wish to express our appreciation to these front-line soldiers of Christ.

## **DIVISION REPORTS**

### **EAST-CENTRAL AFRICA DIVISION (ECD)**

During the last twelve months, more than 1,605 prison inmates in various prisons of our territory have been baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This is the result of combined efforts of Chaplaincy Ministries and other ministries of the Church.

The government of Kenya has opened her prison doors to Hope Channel. Initially, 100 television sets would be installed in these prisons. ASI Kenya Chapter has covered the cost. There are plans to do the same in Rwanda and Uganda prisons.

On June 5, 2007, Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo, welcomed Hope Channel to the city. Adventists and non-Adventists consider Hope Channel as their darling television channel.

Already we have seen many backsliders coming back to the Church. Hope Channel is providing the comfort, hope, and healing which is much needed as a result of war in the country.

Between October 2006 and June 2007, 22,500 souls have been baptized as a result of evangelistic teams from North America, Europe, and Australia. They have also assisted in church buildings.

**Safari Africa** – Safari Africa is the first NET event in the Swahili language. Hope TV, in cooperation with the East-Central Africa Division, East Africa Union, Central Kenya Conference, and the Nairobi Central Church in Nairobi worked together for the success of these meetings. Pastors and church members around the Division territory participated very actively in pre-campaign preparations, buying and setting up dishes in churches, schools, homes and prisons. The public radio stations in Butembo and our own radio station in Rwese, Congo aired the series. Television stations in Kinshasa, Rwanda and Kenya allowed the messages to be viewed in thousands of homes. More than 1,600 churches served as downlink centers. It is our estimate that more than 10,000 homes became evangelistic centers.

Safari Africa featured programs on health, family life, children and music. Evangelistic messages were presented by Pastor Mbwana. The partial report received so far has indicated baptisms of over 20,200. We hope by mid-October we will have received all the reports.

**Voice of Hope Radio-Kigali** - The Voice of Hope Radio in Kigali has become an instrument of healing in Rwanda Union. Many broken pieces left behind by the horrors of the 1994 genocide are being picked up by the soothing Voice of Hope Radio aired from the city of Kigali in Rwanda. Many souls are being drawn to Christ through baptism. Backsliders who had hated the Church because of some church members who participated in genocide activities are being healed and are coming back to the fellowship.

**Baptisms in ECD Universities** – On top of the academic activities run by our institutions of higher learning, evangelism and winning souls for Christ occupy a very central place. Between October 2006 and June 2007, the following institutions have realized the following baptisms:

Bugema University	281
University of Eastern Africa Baraton	727
Adventist University of Central Africa	85
University of Lukanga, Congo	91

#### EURO-AFRICA DIVISION (EUD)

At the end of the second quarter 2007, the membership of the Division totaled 174,840. During the period under review 4,953 new members were added to the Church. In the same period, we lost 4,248 through death, apostasy, and missing members. This is a serious concern and a challenge to find a quick way to substantially reduce the loss.

At a glance of the last ten years, we are happy to report a steady growth in the Division. Even though it is a very modest 1.1% per annum, it is a trend in the right direction.

***Adventist Youth Department Centenary Celebration*** – A structured Adventist youth work started with the establishment of a Youth Department 100 years ago. It took place at the General Conference Annual Council of 1907, held at the Lake Geneva Sanatorium in Switzerland. Since then, the Adventist youth ministry has spread around the world and has become a tremendous means of identification, mission, and growth. The commemoration of this event in Switzerland gave focus to the youth work in Europe.

Related to the total population of 575,000,000 in the Euro-Africa Division territory there is one Adventist for each 3,289 citizens. Motivating each Seventh-day Adventist member to win a soul for Christ could determine a geometric growth that would help to overcome the gap between population growth and real church growth.

Mission is progressing in Europe by a growing participation of lay members and lay associations cooperating with the Church structure. This year numerous projects were implemented abroad as well as at home. The Go Conference in Germany, the Church Planters' Exchange organized by the Trans-European Division in Friedensau, outreach projects implemented in Portugal, Spain, and Italy, ASI initiatives strongly supporting and impacting the Church in the Czech Republic and in Slovakia are only a few examples of focused evangelistic outreach.

A special event pointing out the importance of mission in the Division has also been the inauguration of the new Adventist Media Center, "Voice of Hope," in Germany. Hosting the Bible Correspondence School, TV and radio production, internet ministry and the ministry for the blind, it represents a united effort to reach people with the gospel. We were pleased to host Elder Jan Paulsen, President of the General Conference, as the main speaker for this event.

***Challenges the Division is Facing*** – While investing our forces to spread the Gospel in Europe, there are some serious challenges we are facing:

- *The aging membership in the European Adventist churches.* This is a real challenging development since we need more young people to take over responsibilities and to ensure the future of the Church.

- *Volunteer service* has a very good reputation and an increasing number of young and older people who have the desire to serve in missions. The challenge is the limited possibilities to assist the young people in the process of finding their place and preparing for this important missionary adventure of life. On the other hand, we need many more open positions for which young people can apply. We try to face this challenge, since attractive offers will automatically increase the demand and interest.
- *The 10/40 Window Work* is slowly progressing but not enough for the fast growing populations in this area. The challenge is to make a significant impact in these countries. This will only be possible by a concerted action of denominational and supporting entities.

### EURO-ASIA DIVISION (ESD)

A Satellite Evangelistic Program, an event of paramount importance, was conducted by Elder Peter Kulakov in Kiev in March 2007. All efforts of our Church organizations were focused on that program. We not only looked forward to it, but also prayed strenuously and continually for its progress.



On January 19, fifty days before commencement of the program, a prayer marathon started. In all congregations our church members were fasting and praying for the success of and God's blessing on the program. Three thousand individuals were baptized. The coverage surpassed all expectations. A satellite signal was received at 12,000 locations. While transmitting the program via Christian TV channel CNL, we could also bring the Good News to other Protestant denominations.



We are glad to say that the prayer spirit was maintained up to the end of the program. We received thousands of prayer requests, mostly from children, for spiritual renewal and for the power of the Holy Spirit.

During the program there were more than six million visitors at our web site. This fact is indicative of the necessity of developing advanced technologies that would enable us to reach out to all the peoples of the world during this generation.

Among other big events of the year, we can also mention the evangelistic program conducted by Elder Vadim Butov (West Russian Union) in City Ufa, Republic of Tatarstan. The evangelistic meetings were held in two rented

premises—Palace of Arts and Railroaders' Cultural Center—located in different districts of the city in January and February, 2007.

The program was prepared by the combined efforts of the local Seventh-day Adventist congregation (the Adventists have their own chapel in Ufa), 50 lay members and ten pastors from adjacent cities.

The program served as a “field school” for the second-year students of the Theological Department of Zaoksky Adventist University. The young people had a golden opportunity for practical missionary work.

In Ufa, some 200,000 invitation cards were distributed for this program. The activity of our church members put religious traditionalists on their guard. Some articles were published in local newspapers to warn citizens against any contacts with “sectarians.” However, the people didn't surrender to intimidation. The first lecture was attended by 900 individuals in the Palace of Arts and 100 in the Railroaders' Cultural Center.

The entire program in Ufa was filmed by the Voice of Hope Media Center. As a result, they produced a video film that became not only an excellent study guide for ministers but also an illustration of God's love for the Church and the world.

“Nations will come to your light.” (Isaiah 60:3). That was the motto of the Pastors' Congress of the Southern Union Conference held June 5-9, 2007. The pastors from five countries of Central Asia were afforded a golden opportunity to get together and jointly pray, glorify and worship the Lord, study the profound truths of the Holy Scripture and search for the most efficient methods of evangelism for their region. Five ministers were ordained at the end of the Congress.

#### INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION (IAD)

With the final quarter still to come, 2007 has already proven to be a remarkable year for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Inter-American Division. This year has so far seen the baptism of over 120,000 souls.

During the last months of 2006, church leaders and members alike began aggressive and large-scale evangelistic campaigns in an effort to reach the three million member mark in 2007. The fruits of their labor were harvested during a one-day, history-making baptismal program on Sabbath, March 24, called

“Pentecost and More.” The territory-wide event saw the baptism of 48,602 new believers—the largest number of baptisms in a single day since the Inter-American Division was established in 1922. This brings the Division’s membership to over 3,000,000.

Not only is numerical growth an achievable objective, but also the establishing of the members in their new faith, in order to strengthen the Church. The Inter-American Division has given a copy of the new *Church Manual* to every local first elder of all organized churches in its territory.

In order to strengthen the faith of the Church, for the very first time the nine volumes of *Testimonies for the Church* have been translated into Spanish and are being offered in both Spanish and English for less than US\$20.00 to the members.

As the large numbers of baptisms have taken place, it became imperative to give attention to the infrastructure of the Church. An aggressive plan was launched to organize at least 1,000 new churches every year, and this objective is being reached with great enthusiasm. Due to this phenomenal growth, the Church has been forced to expand its local regional offices in an effort to service the fast-growing membership.

The Inter-American Division Executive Committee took an action in its mid-year meetings to begin the process of upgrading all of its 56 mission fields to conference level, thus leaving room for additional territories to be organized.

**Education** – No less important than significant growth in the Church was a new initiative to introduce an improved and expanded Adventist educational system throughout the territory. Providing quality Adventist education to the more than 91,000 students enrolled across primary, secondary and university institutions was a major goal this year.

To help realize this, the IAD launched the Inter-American Educational Center (IEC) this summer, an online educational program offering an undergraduate and graduate curriculum. The IEC, in conjunction with Griggs University, began offering courses in Spanish to an initial 300 elementary and secondary level teachers to help them complete their bachelor’s degrees. Agreements have also been secured with other prestigious institutions and the Consortium of Inter-American Adventist Universities in order to offer graduate degrees in various areas.

In continuing the education initiative, the Inter-American Theological Seminary (IATS) reached a milestone when it graduated the first generation of

pastors to complete a doctoral degree in Ministry. Nineteen ministers from Mexico, Central American and Cuba were among those who received their graduate diplomas during a special ceremony held at Montemorelos University in Mexico on August 11.

**Youth** – The Inter-American Division not only supports its youth in education, but it also provides a means to prepare them for their current and future roles in the Church. This year, over 5,000 youth leaders from across the territory participated in the first ever youth leadership and prayer convention held in Medellin, Colombia. The late July convention, designed to enrich and equip young people for soul-winning and responsible church leadership, featured over 30 seminars, a Bible marathon, community service projects and a 100-hour long prayer session.

As the year draws to an end, Inter-America continues to see fast growth as evidence of the committed efforts by its leaders, ministers, and laity working together to share the gospel in their communities.

#### NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION (NAD)

The North American Division's total membership reached 1,050,210 as of June 30, 2007. This is the result of various evangelistic meetings.

The Spanish NET evangelism series held by the Florida Conference reported 500 baptisms.

Over 600 people attended the Arizona Conference Spanish NET series, "Revelation Speaks Peace," held in Phoenix.

Approximately 2,300 churches and homes participated via satellite and internet during "The Most Amazing Prophecies" series held September 14-23.

At the Mid-America Union Session, history was made when a female was elected as the Vice-President for Finance. Elaine Hagele became the first woman union treasurer in the history of the Division.

The NAD Ministries Prayer Summit, held January 5-7, attracted over 900 participants from across the Division.

Over 14,000 youth and young adults attended the first division-wide Youth Prayer Conference.

Christian Record Services has developed a unique program for people with disabilities. "The Missionaries of the Blind" (MOB) connects sighted people with blind individuals in their community to develop friendships, minister to their needs and pray with them.

Of the 58 North American Division local conferences, 36 are currently on-line, using e-Adventist, the Division's internet program for maintaining church membership records.

The Office of Volunteer Ministries deployed over 2,300 volunteer missionaries throughout the Division and the world Church in service to others.

In 2006, the NAD officers returned an additional amount of \$175,000 to \$190,000 to each union for evangelism.

#### NORTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION (NSD)

The Northern Asia-Pacific Division has been greatly blessed by God with a plentiful harvest of souls and many successful evangelistic events. Churches are growing fast and steadily in many parts of the NSD territory, in spite of many mission challenges that are prevalent all throughout the region.

***Hope Channel in Chinese Language*** – With the great support from Adventist Television Network (ATN), in the near future, the Hope Channel television program will be available in the Chinese language. The Chinese Union Mission has approved the recommendation of the Taiwan Conference to establish the Hope Channel in the Chinese language in order to approach hundreds of millions of Chinese-speaking people with the Three Angel's messages.

***Mission Day in Japan*** – The Japan Union Conference designated June 21, 2007 as Mission Day of all church organizations and institutions in Japan with the purpose to remind the church workers of their mission of carrying the gospel to other people.

More than 700 church institution workers participated in the Mission Day activities. They conducted a seminar on mission and discussed the priority of mission in their lives. In the afternoon, after the group prayer session, they went out with tracts and magazines to distribute by hand to the people in the streets and homes.

***The K-Project in DPRK*** – The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been in spiritual darkness for more than a half century. The NSD has been

unable to reach the people in this closed country with the Christian messages, but God has never given up on the people in North Korea. It is evident that the Lord is opening the door of this country slowly, yet in remarkable ways.

During the year, Dr. Jaiyong Lee, the Northern Asia-Pacific Division president, with a few other church representatives, visited North Korea several times to discuss with the North Korean government authorities the possibility of establishing a humanitarian project in the country. The meetings resulted in the NSD starting the K-Project.



The K-Project is to help and support the K Hospital in Pyongyang, the capital city of North Korea. The NSD maintains a good working relationship with the North Korean government. It has shipped two containers filled with medical equipment and supplies and has sent an ambulance to this project. We believe that the Lord will open the door of this country, more widely, as we do our best in the given situation.

***Internet and Satellite Evangelism in Korea*** – The Korean Union Conference has emphasized the importance of evangelism and has launched many evangelism projects. As a result of these projects, churches are growing rapidly and strong and soul-winning work has been very successful.

On April 13, 2007, the Korean Union Conference purchased a Relay Mobile vehicle for regular satellite broadcasting TV programs. The satellite time is being used for evangelism for 80 days every year until 2012.

The Korean Union Conference conducted a series of evangelistic meetings for children through the internet from December 18-21, 2006. Thousands of children participated in the internet evangelism. They also started small group evangelism through internet programs.



The Korean Union Conference reached the 200,000 membership mark by July 2007.

**Golden Angels Ministry** – The Golden Angels ministry is unique to the NSD. They are singing ambassadors to 1.5 billion people in the NSD territories. They are dedicating one year as full-time singing evangelists. They travel the Division's territories and support evangelistic meetings. In the last one year they supported 22 series of evangelistic meetings in Japan, Taiwan, Korea, and Mongolia. Through their music ministry, hundreds of people have surrendered their lives to Christ.

**NSD Mission Projects** – Since it is extremely difficult to plant new churches in many parts of the NSD territory, the Division has launched the Pioneer Mission Movement (PMM). The Pioneer Mission Movement is to send pastors, with their families, to other countries for six years to plant new churches.

Currently, 41 pastors are working as church planting pastors in Japan, Taiwan, Korea, China, Macao and Mongolia. Through their efforts, hundreds of people are baptized every year and many new churches are established in the NSD territories.



***HisHands Mission Movement*** – The NSD has recently launched another mission project—the HisHands Mission Movement. While the Pioneer Mission



Movement, the Golden Angels and the 1000 Missionary Movement are more focused on foreign missions, the HisHands Mission Movement emphasizes domestic evangelism. Young people will go out by pairs with the gospel message in their hands to reach the unreached people.

Mission is priority in the NSD. We will continue planting seeds in tears and surely we will come back with a plentiful harvest of souls.

## SOUTH AMERICAN DIVISION (SAD)

***Spiritual Journey Program*** - The South American Division has developed the Spiritual Journey Program to help strengthen each member's spiritual life which, in turn, leads to effective engagement in mission work. Around 80% of the Division's membership participates in this program which requires each person to get up early in the morning for 41 consecutive days to read the book prepared for this purpose, study the Sabbath School lesson, read Ellen G White's writings and have intercessory prayer. During the intercessory prayer, each person prays for five non-Seventh-day Adventists to be reached by the gospel.

***Division Outreach*** - The outreach program of the Division includes the Discipleship Training program which aims for every member to be involved in mission work. Another is the small group program, which is still the basis of the Division's outreach and has been proven to be the best way to integrate, mobilize and to preserve the membership of the church. Missionary pairs come out of these small groups and are the individuals who are giving Bible studies, leading people to baptism. Public evangelism is very much alive with many evangelist campaigns being conducted, such as the union-wide satellite campaign in Bolivia. The broadcasting stations of the Church, located in the capital cities of each state, transmitted the event reaching a larger number of people. The churches were equipped with more than 450 satellite dishes throughout the country.

***New Bible Course and Missionary Bible*** – A new Bible course with 27 lessons was created to better prepare candidates for baptism and is being used throughout the Division. The Missionary Bible integrates this Bible course at the end of the Bible with full-color illustrations and graphics to be used as a tool for members to conduct Bible studies.

***Hope Impact*** – On September 6, 2008 the SAD will launch the Hope Impact program. In one day 20,000,000 magazines, focusing on the second

coming of the Lord, will be distributed. Car stickers will be handed out and the Home Impact program will be advertised on 10,000 billboards throughout the Division.

Recognizing the importance of the internet in evangelism, a website was created by the Division. Out of the 33,000 current Voice of Prophecy Bible correspondence students, 10,000 students requested the course online, just in Brazil. Many are accessing the website daily.

The Division has selected *Steps to Christ*, with the new title *Hope to Live*, as the missionary book for 2008 and plans a wide distribution of over two million.

**Baptisms** – In 2006, 222,585 new souls were baptized in the South American Division. So far, in 2007, 106,794 have been baptized—a 9.6% increase compared to the first half of 2006.

**Network-Theology Education** – The South American Division integrated the theological education in the Division under “SALT” (The Theological Seminary of the South American Division) with the president located at the Division office to coordinate the entire theological education program in the Division. An education magazine in Brazil, which is equivalent to *Time* magazine, has a circulation of 1.5 million copies per month. In a recent issue a three-page article appeared regarding the Seventh-day Adventist Church education program stating that the Seventh-day Adventist education program in Brazil “is one of the best educational networks in the country.”

**Reconstruction of Churches Affected by the Earthquake in Peru** – Five members of the Church were among the many people who perished in the earthquake in Peru. Some church buildings were destroyed as well. Those churches now need to be reconstructed. The plan is to rebuild 12 churches in the area of Inca, Chinca and Canete each in the record time of seventeen weeks.

## SOUTH PACIFIC DIVISION (SPD)

A new 10-seater aircraft has arrived in the Papua New Guinea Union Mission. The aircraft, purchased with the help of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2006 13<sup>th</sup> Sabbath Offering Overflow and other offering and donations, will enable the Church to reach otherwise inaccessible areas with greater efficiency and effectiveness. Adventist Aviation in Papua New Guinea has one other aircraft—an aging Cessna 206. The addition of the new PAC 750 has rejuvenated our flying program and engendered a great deal of excitement and renewed mission focus.



Pastor Mark Finley has just concluded an extended evangelistic program in the city of Melbourne. Melbourne, a city of over 3.5 million people hosted the program in three primary venues. A field school of evangelism for pastors and evangelists who are members of the South Pacific Division's Institute of Public Evangelism was conducted in association with the campaign. At the present time, Revelation Seminars are being conducted as follow-up to the evangelistic campaign, and over 200 people are studying the Bible with a view to baptism.

The South Pacific Division continues to support the mission of the Church by providing volunteers around the globe. One hundred nine long-term volunteers are presently deployed in countries outside the Division including Lesotho, Korea, Thailand, England, Micronesia, South Africa, United States, Malawi, Denmark, Norway, Japan, and Poland. Bob Bolst, Director of Volunteer Ministries for the Division has reported that in the last two months, 496 young people were involved in volunteer service teams under the Storm (**S**ervice to **O**thers **R**eally **M**atters) Co banner. Stormco has been an initiative of the South Pacific Division which has seen thousands of young people being involved in community service programs and outreach.

Three years ago the South Pacific Division established a HIV and AIDS Commission to address the Church's response to this growing crisis. This Commission utilizes the services of highly skilled and experienced persons who are committed to providing a broad-based response. Professor John Quinn, a Seventh-day Adventist immunologist, and Dr Mike Negeri, currently under appointment to ADRA headquarters, were guest presenters at a HIV and AIDS mainstreaming exercise that was recently held in Suva, capital of the Fiji Islands.



An earlier mainstreaming program had been conducted in Lae, Papua New Guinea. Mainstreaming brings together government, church, community and ADRA leaders in order to provide awareness and education and to provide a forum in which strategic directions can be discussed and decided.

As a direct result of the General Conference initiative to reach the big cities of the world, a church has been planted in the center of Sydney, Australia. Named *Fountain in the City*, this Seventh-day Adventist congregation has been established under the leadership of Neil Schofield, a layman who is committed to reaching the secular inner city with our message of hope. The congregation is presently meeting on the campus of the Sydney University of Technology with an average attendance of over 100. Global Mission pioneers have been instrumental in contacting and preparing 24 people who have already been baptized.

Recently, a team of surgeons, nurses and support staff from Sydney Adventist Hospital travelled to Suva, the capital of the Fiji Islands, where they voluntarily conducted heart surgery on a number of critically ill patients. This was the 80th occasion since 1986 when personnel from the hospital have embarked on such missions of mercy, with 2,242 major surgical operations having been conducted. Countries which have been visited include China, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Vietnam, Rwanda, Fiji, Cambodia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

## SOUTHERN AFRICA-INDIAN OCEAN DIVISION (SID)

We thank the Lord for a successful move of the Division's headquarters from Harare, Zimbabwe to Pretoria, South Africa. This historic move took place in December of 2006. We want to express our appreciation to the world Church for a beautiful headquarters building. We are happy to report that the initial problems we encountered with the telephone and email services have been resolved. The Division now has a full-operational communication system.

***Training for Church Elders*** – The Division has embarked on a vigorous training program for church elders and church clerks. There is, therefore, a widespread distribution of both the *Church Manual* and the *Elder's Manual* in both English and Portuguese.

***Church Buildings*** – The Division has a big vision of building 1,001 churches in Mozambique, where church buildings were destroyed during the long-protracted civil war. To help realize this vision, the Division has sought the assistance of Maranatha Volunteers International. Maranatha has since established itself in Mozambique and the first church has already been built around Maputo, the capital of the country.

The Division has launched its own volunteer program within its territory to support the effort of Maranatha International. The response from the unions is very encouraging.

To strengthen its evangelism program, the Division has requested Remnant Publications to sponsor 4,000,000 special Bibles and other literature for evangelism.

In addition to the support of the above-mentioned entity, Light Bearers has committed itself to shipping 100 containers of Bible lessons and other evangelistic literature to the Division during the next five years. These Bible lessons will be most welcome, especially in a number of unions where local resources cannot keep pace with the enormous interest in the Church.

The Division's membership as of June, 2007 stands at 2,114,291. We thank God for each and every one of these precious people.

## SOUTHERN ASIA DIVISION (SUD)

As of June 2007, our membership is 1,295,002. There has been a sweeping increase in membership compared to last year's of 1,246,848.

Varanasi, a predominantly Hindu center, is full of temples and also a nerve center of Hinduism. Our work in this place was started by Gospel Outreach volunteers three years ago. We began our work starting with week-end meetings and these meetings continued for three years without any break and as a result of these, over 7,000 new souls have joined the Church. Among them are 7 priests who yielded to the message and now are working for God in bringing others to Christ. Twenty-five new stations have been opened now.

Bangalore is one of the growing cities in India with all IT companies getting established and developed. Various multinational companies have their outsourcing centers here in Bangalore where many young people are working. Hope for Mega City Project of the Global Mission is operative in Bangalore in full swing. The Mega City program resulted in the establishment of four more new city churches and twenty new Bible Study Centers in Bangalore.

Eleven new centers have been established among the followers of the prophets in West Bengal by Gospel Outreach volunteers. This is another area where our work is growing and membership is increasing. A lot of reforms are taking place among the people group in Arambagh.

Two new boarding schools have been added to the educational institutions in the SUD to cater to the needs of the youth of our church especially economically-challenged ones.

Two nursing colleges have been opened recently—one in Nuzvid in Andhra Pradesh and another in Bangalore, Karnataka where we have obtained permission to operate two nursing schools recognized by the government. These schools will cater to the needs of our hospitals.

Dr Johnson and his team members are doing great work in the city of Chennai. Ten new churches and thirteen companies have been established in the second quarter of 2007.

## SOUTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION (SSD)

The Southern Asia-Pacific Division is moving forward to fulfilling the vision and goals of the “Tell the World” program. This year recorded activities and programs which focused on proclaiming the end-time mission of the Church to proclaim the gospel to all.

**Media Ministry** – Viewers are blessed by *Dynamic Living*—a much viewed health program aired on Hope Channel from the television station owned and operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Southern Philippines.

**Evangelism** – In January, Jakarta Conference celebrated the success of the Lord's work with the report of organizing 274 small groups and conducting 45 evangelistic meetings and 53 satellite meetings which resulted in the baptism of 1,050 precious souls.

In Jakarta, the church members responded with joy to help meet the needs of victims of flooding in the city in February as they also embarked in the preparation of the Big City Evangelism Project. Amidst the calamity, the Women's Ministries Department of the Church in Indonesia sponsored an evangelistic meeting conducted by Heather Dawn-Small, Women's Ministries director for the world Church, and Helen Gulfan, director for the Southern Asia-Pacific region. This public meeting, held at the Jakarta Adventist Center February 18-24, culminated the satellite meetings held in 60 other locations resulting in the baptism of 84 new members.

#### TRANS-EUROPEAN DIVISION (TED)

**Evangelistic Strategy Energizes Church Members in the Swedish Union** – In January 2006 the Swedish Union launched a campaign called "100/500". The plan was to unite the church members to dedicate 500 days to sharing their faith with the goal of bringing in 100 new members. Prayer, witness, and invitations are nothing new, but when combined and implemented by a complete union it gave considerable results. For the first time in over 20 years, the Swedish Union experienced a real numerical growth at the end of 2006. The result of the campaign was 103 members baptized in 510 days. This encouraging trend has continued during 2007.

**Summer Festival on Mission** – July 4 to 7 this year the Swedish Union organized a summer festival under the theme "Dare to Live With God!" The focus was on mission as it was 100 years since the first Swedish missionary, Julius Persson, was sent overseas. To celebrate this, old and new missionaries participated in the program, sharing some of their experiences.

**First Permanent Church Building for Ghanaian Adventists in Europe** – June 30 this year the Ghanaian Adventist Church in London experienced the fulfillment of a longstanding dream. For more than forty years the Ghanaian Adventist community had wandered about in the city of London worshipping in members' living rooms, dining rooms, terraces, classrooms, school halls and eventually in a school gymnasium. More than 1,000 members and well wishers were gathered for the consecration service of the \$6 million church building. There are six other Ghanaian Adventist congregations in the United Kingdom.

***Israel Reaches Out to Palestine*** – At a sports club east of Jerusalem, the health message created the opportunity for the Israel Mission to reach out to Palestinians. Each afternoon and evening the program included three components: a health exhibition including extensive health checks and consultation with a doctor; two lady lecturers educating women on health topics, and for the men, an anti-smoking program. At the close of the meeting, local Palestinian community leaders and the club officials presented each participant with a gift to mark their appreciation. The organizers and support group promised to keep a weekly meeting going in the area; and plans are already being laid to hold similar programs for Palestinian citizens in other cities.

***Historic Ordination in Israel*** – On Sabbath, June 16, at the end of its constituency session of the Israel Field, more than 600 members from all over Israel gathered for worship and praise. For the first time since the Israel Field was organized, Israeli pastors were ordained. Oleg Ilkine and Valentine Novgorodsky were set apart for the ministry in a solemn and memorable ceremony.

***Israel Dedicates New Church Building for a New Congregation*** – Sabbath, July 7, was a very special Sabbath for the Seventh-day Adventists in Israel, as a new church in Tel Aviv was dedicated. The Church in Israel is constantly growing and they are using every possible avenue to do outreach. Church membership in Israel at the end of 2006 was 851 and the retention rate for that year was 96%.

***The Middle East Union Moves Back to Beirut*** – More than twenty years ago the Middle East Union temporarily moved its headquarters from Beirut to Cyprus to avoid the violence of the Civil War. It has now decided to move back to Beirut and the office move took place the last week of July and early August. It has moved into beautifully renovated buildings on the campus of the Middle East University.

***Youth Evangelism Initiative in Norway*** – Throughout the Trans-European Division we are happy to see more and more young people getting involved in Church life and in outreach. In Norway a team of more than twenty young people between the ages of 18-22 dedicated one week of their summer holiday this summer to organize and run a youth evangelism outreach program in Oslo with the theme “The Truth Offers a Purpose.” Most of the young people came from the Seventh-day Adventist churches.

***First Adventist Student Conference in Norway*** – The first student conference organized by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Norway in November 2006 was a success. This conference was the first step in becoming visible in the university environment.

***The Netherlands Sees Church Plant Organized into a Regular Church***

– On May 5, 2007 the two-year-old church-plant “Bon Notisia” (“Good News” in Papiamento) was organized into a regular church. Bon Notisia is the first Seventh-day Adventist congregation in the Amsterdam area where Papiamento, the language of the Dutch Antilles, is spoken. The congregation in this new church would like to attract Antillians living in the area of Amsterdam Southeast. Two years ago, they began with 42 members and 10 visitors. The membership now stands at 100.

In recent years in the Amsterdam area, there have been some interesting church planting developments. In 1992, Stennet Ross, a layman, was instrumental in planting the Amsterdam Southeast Church, where both Dutch and English is spoken. After finishing his theological studies at Newbold College, he became the pastor of this congregation from which, in 1999, the Ghanaian Church, and in 2001, the Almere churches were planted. Bon Notisia is the third church planted out of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Amsterdam Southeast.

***Global Village Trends Result in Polish Immigration to the United Kingdom*** – Statistics say that there are as many Poles living outside Poland as there are inside. In the United Kingdom alone there are 2 million Poles. The British Union and the Polish Union have developed plans of how to start reaching these people, as well as finding ways to give spiritual nourishment to Adventists recently moved from Poland to the United Kingdom. The next fellowship program is planned for October 27 in Southampton. There are already four groups of Polish Adventists meeting in different areas on a weekly basis. The Church Growth Department of the South England Conference will be keeping in touch with the leaders of these groups, and believe that through the power of God they will multiply and form several congregations

***Baghdad Church Members Distribute Food and Clothing*** – Despite living in the middle of the atrocities of war and facing a constant risk to their own lives, the members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Iraq are true to their mission—sharing their faith and extending a helping hand to others. Earlier this year church members put together food parcels and distributed them to needy members and other people in the community. Parcels of second-hand clothing were also distributed. These kind acts of care and compassion are clear reminders that there are still warm-hearted people refusing to let the terror and gloom of war overcome them as they extend a helping hand to their neighbors in a time of need.

***First Campmeeting in the Northern Gulf Region*** – The very first campmeeting of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Northern Gulf Region

was held in Mahrain. Adventists from Kuwait, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia joined the members in Bahrain from February 22-24 for a time of spiritual reflection and fellowship.

***Church in Serbia Registers with the Government*** – On January 29, 2007 the government in Serbia signed a document officially accepting the registration of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Serbia. In December 1922 the Church received the consent of the government for members to meet together and under Communism it had to ask for permission for all church assemblies. Now, being recognized, it will be able to continue its work of promoting Biblical values and helping people through the work of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA).

Despite government recognition, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Serbia continues to experience vandalism on Church property. On January 8, unidentified people broke into the church property in Sombor, Serbia and set it on fire.

***European Pastors Council*** – About 1,000 pastors from all over the Trans-European Division territory in Europe met in DeBron, the Netherlands, September 11-15 for training, inspiration, and re-commitment to the ministry.

***Quinquennial Emphasis*** – At the beginning of this quinquennium, the Trans-European Division decided that it would especially focus on the work for children, youth, and education. Part of this emphasis is illustrated in the promotion and implementation of the KID (Kids in Discipleship) ministry. Ten out of the 16 administrative entities of the Division have already started this ministry in their field, and training of leaders continues as the goal is to get all entities on board. This ministry is designed for the whole family but focuses on the spiritual development of children, preparing them to be active disciples of Christ. “We believe that the Church will become stronger when the families are strengthened, and children learn to live their faith and share it with others”, says Anne-May Wollan, TED’s Children’s Ministries Director.

#### WEST-CENTRAL AFRICA DIVISION (WAD)

***Evangelistic Events*** - Two outstanding evangelistic events took place in the two Portuguese-speaking countries of the Division – Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau.

From July 6 to 21, 2007, there was an evangelist effort in the tiny country of Cape Verde Islands. The country has a population of 485,000 inhabitants and

a strong hold of the Roman Catholic Church. In spite of the attempt to prevent people from coming to the meetings, 326 souls were baptized.

Another series of meetings was conducted in Guinea Bissau in June, 2007. At the end of these meetings 151 souls joined the Adventist Church.

***Apart from Reaching*** – In addition to many outreach programs aimed at increasing membership, there have been some in-reach programs for nurture and fellowship. Women's Ministries organized two outstanding congresses for the Sahel and Central Africa Unions. The one held in Gabon from July 24 to August 5, 2007 was attended by women from Chad, Congo Brazzaville, Cameroon and, of course, Gabon. This gathering of Adventist ladies made a great impact on the people. Seventh-day Adventists are now well known and accepted in Gabon.

The other congress took place in Lome, Togo from August 12-19, 2007. Over 2,000 ladies coming from ten predominately Muslim countries of West Africa gathered for Bible studies, prayer, and fellowship. The fact that there was no representative from Mauritania high-lighted the task before us as a Church.

Nigeria is championing Adventist Men's Organization (AMO) in the Division. East Nigeria Union Mission organized its own at Port Harcourt in July with 3,000 men. The Northwestern Nigeria Union followed immediately with 4,000 men who gathered at Joss for the inaugural meeting. The goal is to mobilize the men for mission.

In Ghana, Adventist young people attending public universities had a successful congress.

We continue to rejoice over the good news reaching us from North Nigeria where Muslims are being baptized into the Adventist Church. Thank God for miracles still happening even in such an environment.

## **CONCLUSION**

I fully believe that the greatest days of accomplishment are still before us. Soon we shall see an increasing acceleration of the work on all fronts in the days to come. As a people, we have never been in such a favorable position to witness for the truth.

Our Church has gained a larger measure of respect than ever before. The publicity that has been given to the Church's worldwide activities has led many to ask what Adventists stand for.

Many organizations, other religious denominations, and people in both high and low places of responsibility are ready to listen to our teachings and to follow the truth. It is, for all of us, a day of opportunity. The seed sowing of many years is bearing fruit. But this should not lead us into an attitude of self-complacency and contentment. This is the time to be more alert and active than ever.

We stand near the borders of the Promised Land. World conditions clearly indicate that Christ's coming is near. "When ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the door" (Matthew 24:33).

The longing and prayer of every Seventh-day Adventist today should be..."Thy kingdom come."