

southern asia-pacific division

# outlook

FIRST  
QUARTER  
2009



## NPUM *becomes* CONFERENCE

# outlook

FIRST QUARTER 2009

## Southern Asia-Pacific Division

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## GOD IS FAITHFUL TO FULFILL HIS PROMISE

**F**ear gripped a lot of people as 2009 slipped in with the reality of economic meltdown creeping through the New Year. The United States government was quick to pump in trillions of dollars to save the fledgling economy, hoping that it would arrest the sliding trend sooner. Other governments followed suit.

The church employed measures to keep liquidity of church funds at normal levels despite the crunch. The first quarter of 2009 is about to end and the governments and church institutions are optimistic that the financial threats would not plunge their operations to abnormal bottoms.

Within the region of the southern Asia-Pacific, thus far the church is glad to find insignificant dents caused by the recession. Church members prove that faithful returning



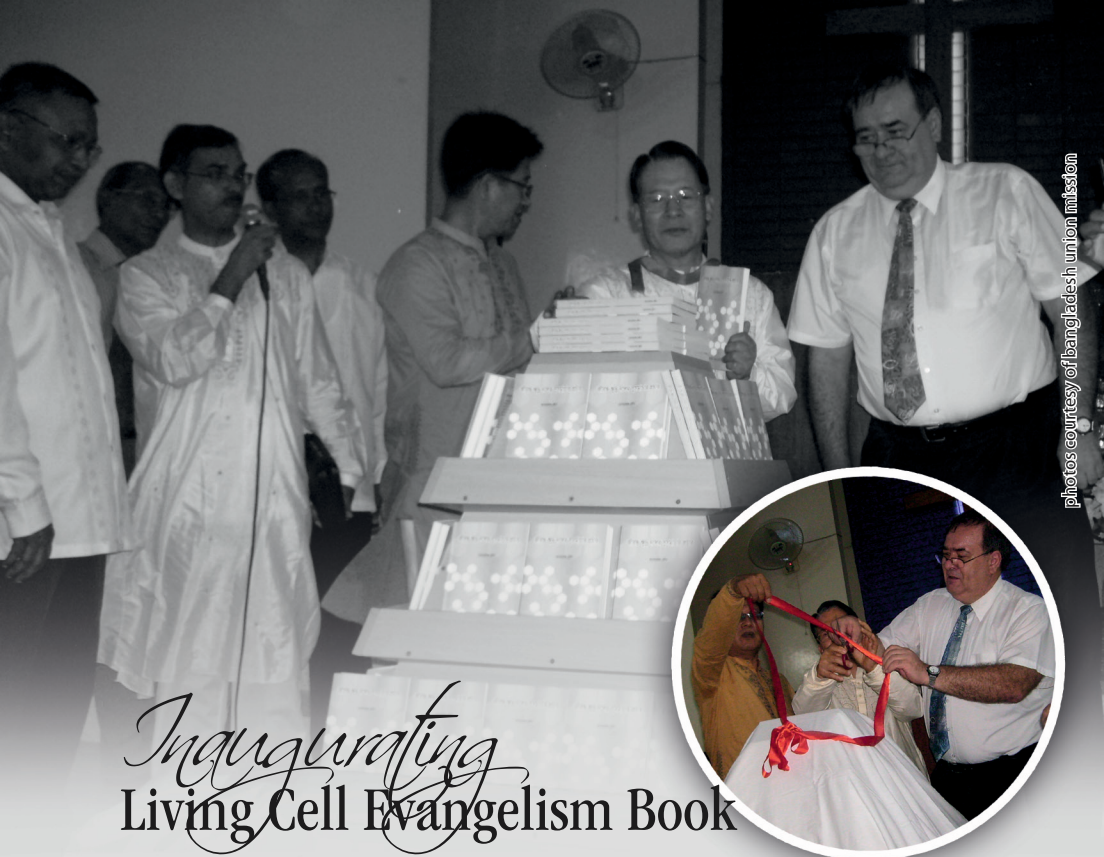
of the tenth of whatever increase in wealth—financial or material—the good Lord keeps His promises to open the “windows of heaven” where no room can contain them. Indeed, what a sight to see church people providing liberally for the Lord’s work all over the world.

Faithfulness is at work in any situations, and church members cling to God’s faithfulness to fulfill His promises as His children partner with Him in their endeavors.

“Ask and you will receive, seek and you will find, knock and the doors will be opened...” (Luke 11: 9-10), is never an idle talk. It is not conditional. It is God’s character at work! But you will ask, “Why did the petitioner in the story need to ‘pester’ her neighbor, leaving him no choice but give what she asked for?” Would God similarly need prodding before He grants our requests?

To me, the transition between asking and receiving was a period of self-examination whether or not we trust in a Provider-God; a moment of proving the faith that knows no doubt that God answers our prayer. In other words, we confirm our belief that He provides our needs. It was to our faith-building advantage that such space existed.

One theologian said, “God is always at work but that work is not always visible.” Yes, it is in the invisible that our faith is confirmed and established, erasing any doubt!



photos courtesy of bangladesh union mission

## Inaugurating Living Cell Evangelism Book

**P**astor Manbok Kwon, a retired Adventist pastor from Korea, came to Bangladesh to answer a “Macedonian call,” as he personally termed it. Obviously, his burden to share the gospel to the world runs supreme in spite of his advanced age. And he came to Bangladesh armed with a book he himself wrote based on his personal experience in winning people to Christ. Pastor Kwon recently conducted a seminar for elders and deacons.

“Being an author of missionary books laced with biblical principles, his coming to Bangladesh was timely and significant,” said participants in one of his seminars.

The book, *The Living Cell Evangelism*, which has been translated into Bangla was launched to enlist the involvement of church members and leaders in small-group evangelism. More than 100 participants who attended the seminar were introduced to the methods of evangelism as spelled out in the book. They were given each a copy of the book.

“At present, public evangelism is not advisable as this poses safety problems but if we follow the strategies on cell or small group evangelism, with God’s grace, new results will come to Bangladesh,” said participants. [Milton Das]

# Faith integration adapts well with child-centered approach to teaching

Central to teaching and learning in the classroom is the child. He deserves to benefit from methodologies that makes him better citizen of his country and of his church and as a child of God.

On this premise, the Yangon Adventist Seminary in partnership with Yin-Thway Foundation, conducted a seminar, April 7-23, designed to enrich the primary school teachers of church-operated schools in Myanmar with newer techniques in dealing with the children under their care. These techniques which employ the Child-Centered Approach (CCA) to teaching were presented by three resource persons who have ample experience in this field for many years. Twenty-seven teachers participated in this 17-day training program.

“Our knowledge of the goals of Adventist education in the four-fold development of the mental, physical, social and spiritual powers of the child enhances our application of the CCA, especially as we integrate our faith with learning and life,” said the organizers.

One participant expressed his beliefs that “CCA integrates well with our program of integration of faith and learning in and outside of our classrooms.”

“We have been blessed by the participation of the teachers thus making the training easier to handle,” said Ms April, one of the facilitators.

Inspired by the outcome of the seminar, Claudius Brown, YAS principal, said “that similar training programs will be held to upgrade our Adventist teachers using this approach.” [Myo Chan]





# 256 new members added to Adventist churches

**T**he first quarter of 2009 is a picture of what the New Year shall be in the face of evangelistic outreach. This pattern of vitality in soul-winning is evident in Central Pampanga, where three evangelistic meetings were held that resulted to 256 new members added to the church roll.

At the San Fernando Seventh-day Adventist Church, a 'Balikbayan' from the United States came not to spend vacation but to hold an evangelistic meeting, January 5-17. Ruby Canlas gave the nightly biblical presentations to several people who were brought in by the surrounding churches.

A week after the San Fernando event, January 23-31, Rob, a medical doctor from the United States, also held an evangelistic series at the Seventh-day Adventist Church in San Nicolas, Florida, Pampanga. At the same time he led out in the health lecture besides joining the Gospel Outreach workers to conduct medical mission and feeding program to the underprivileged in the community.

These two successive programs paved the way for 114 new members to the Adventist Church.

On another location, Pastor Ben Casimiro, executive secretary of the church in Central Luzon (CLC), enjoined church members in Guagua, Pampanga, to get involved with evangelism.

This invitation brought in to the church enough funds to start another series of evangelistic presentations, March 1-14. Themed "Tell the World, Jesus Loves You," the series had as its guest Mayor Ric Rivera, of the town of Guagua, Pampanga, welcoming his town people to these meetings. Others present were the members of the municipal council, police officers, the barangay captain and Pastor Ron Genebago, CLC communication director.

Pastor Casimiro's meetings had an average attendance of 800. The Covenant Singers and the Visionaries provided music that enhanced the nightly presentations. This event had 142 new members baptized bringing the over-all increase in church roll to 256. [Rene Montoya]

photo courtesy of CLC News Network



# Church certifies family ministry leaders

**F**amily leadership is both a skill and an art. A person who has been oriented in its intricacies cannot be intimidated by threats from within and without the unit. Safeguards that maintain unity and safety within the family were part of the certification curriculum designed for leaders of the Family Ministries (FM).

On March 6-8, 31 FM leaders convened at Raven Resort, Abucay Bataan, in order for them to be updated of the strategies on safeguarding family unity and safety. This session focused its discussion on “Creating Relationship that Tell[s] the World.”

“Our families are in trouble,” said Mrs. Miriam Andres, FM director for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the southern-Asia Pacific region (SSD). “And we need to devise a ministry that highlights the Adventist Church as a caring church through our response to the needs of the family.”

The weekend retreat, led by Pastor Jose Zabat, FM director for the church in central Luzon (CLC), provided training on how to strengthen families in the Adventist churches. “We are to go back to the Bible and learn from its perspective on how to take care of our families,” Zabat said. “Centering on Christ, our families will become a reservoir of blessings and the gospel.”

Norlin Cadapan, FM director for northern Philippines (NPUM), in discussing the department’s philosophy and objectives, guided the delegates through the history of family ministries in the church, preparing them for the broader scope of duties and responsibilities as leaders.

After the Saturday morning rest, Mrs. Andres discussed the importance of understanding the family as a system. “Family is a

primary group or system that helps individuals to live, grow and mature and through God’s grace and Spirit, we can overcome difficulties, frailties and conflicts of life,” she said.

Andres added that leaders of family ministries must see individuals in the context of the family and in the broader context of neighborhood, school, church, city, state, nation, the world and ultimately the universal family of God.

During the break, Pastor Sherman Fiedacan, chair of the Bulacan and Valenzuela areas, conducted a team-building activity by asking the participants to draw on a piece of paper their ideal image of a happy family.

Pastor Carmelito U. Galang, Jr., CLC president, stressed how helping the family grow plays an important role in life. “When the family is healthy, the church is healthy and we become a shining light to our community,” said Galang.

In the afternoon, Andres talked about human growth and development. “Families should focus on establishing a strong spiritual

**Church certifies...** to page 10



# Health initiatives introduce church to the community

A good way to reach the heart of the community is through initiatives that support lifestyle. “And your group exemplify what our community needs,” said Y.B. Dr Xavier, head councilor of Taman Sentosa, a local government unit in Peninsular Malaysia, at the opening ceremonies of the health expo, March 15, held at the Adventist Community Health Center (ACC), Klang branch, Malaysia.

Leading out was Mrs Florence Devany, Klang Indian Adventist Health leader, and supported by the members for Taman Sentosa. The event was attended by 130 people from all walks of life.

Serving in the ACC team were four volunteer nurses from the Institute Jantung Negara (IJN). The free services included health screening and one-on-one health counseling. A demonstration on healthy cooking, hydrotherapy and Charobics was also done.

“The event was also supported by non-church members who were happy for the conduct of the said mini-expo,” said leaders. [Jane Yap/  
AND]

**Church certifies...** from page 09

base at early childhood of their children as this will set to order the children’s personal faith as they grow and mature.”

She further said that children should be encouraged to read the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy books and to make these as primary manuals for parenting their children.

With regard to finance being crucial to family management, Jessie Calera, CLC treasurer, invoked the role of parents in maintaining financial stability in the family. “We are God’s stewards and were entrusted with talents, money, blessing and life,” Calera said. His presentation was followed by a lecture on the need to maintain moral stability of each family. Mrs Cadapan discussed the importance of conducting sex education in the family. “We are to educate our children about sex [in its right context],” she told the participants.

This discussion conceptualized that good sex education begins with attitudes and accuracy of information and is learned in an atmosphere of responsibility. Thus, parents should take the responsibility of introducing their children to the original intention of God in regards to their sexual orientation.

“Growth in human beings generally proceeds in a predictable fashion according to an internal script designed by the Creator and that mutual affection between a husband and a wife will be to the family a heating system that maintains good relationship among members in a pleasant and comfortable atmosphere,” concluded Andres. [CLC News Network]

# AUP gets five years autonomous status

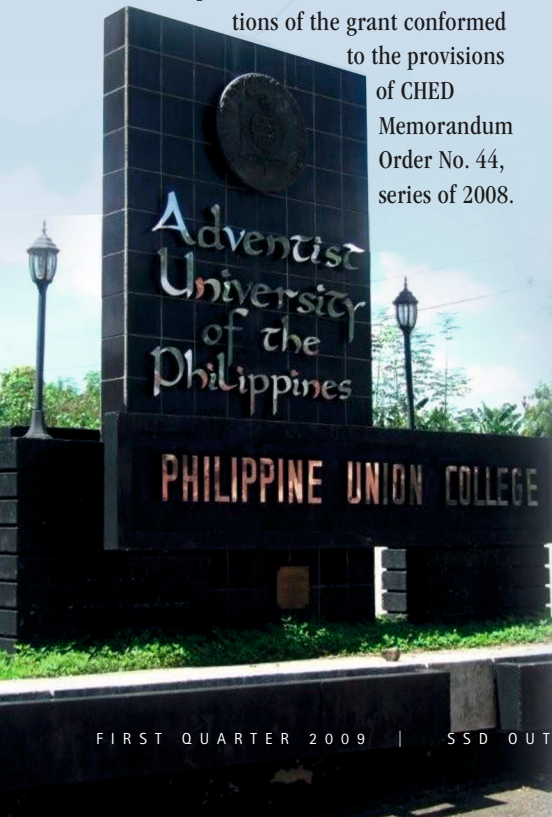
The Adventist University of the Philippines (AUP) was granted an autonomous status for another five years starting on March 11, 2009 through March 30, 2014.

In a letter dated March 17, 2009, from Dr. Emmanuel Y. Angeles, chairman of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), pursuant to Commission en banc (CEB) Resolution No. 076 – 2009, AUP was granted AUTONOMOUS STATUS for five years. This was in recognition of the “continuing accomplishments, adherence to quality assurance, and commitment to public responsibility and accountability as a higher education provider.” The benefits and conditions of the grant conformed to the provisions of CHED Memorandum Order No. 44, series of 2008.

AUP was first granted the autonomous status in 2003, which expired in October 2008 but extended up to April 2009 while it was undergoing evaluation by the Commission.

As a background, the grant of autonomous status by the CHED to deserving private colleges and universities was aimed at recognizing the Private Higher Education Institutions’ (PHEI) consistent show of exemplary performance in the provision of education, research and extension services. Otherwise, PHEIs were generally covered by the policies, standards and guidelines (PSGs) set by the Commission on Higher Education in terms of program offerings, curriculum, administration, and faculty academic qualifications, among others. The heads of PHEIs usually manage their internal organization and implement the PSGs formulated by the CHED.

Based on recent information obtained from the CHED website, <http://www.ched.gov.ph>, there are 2,060 higher education institutions in the Philippines. Of these institutions, 35 PHEIs were granted autonomous or deregulated status by the CHED, 12 of which were granted autonomous status for five years, 11 for one year, while one was granted deregulated status for five years and 10 for one year [Johnny G Guyo/AND]



# City evangelism reaps 128 in southern Philippines

City evangelism is taking many strides as church members proclaim the good news of salvation in cities and urban places. The city evangelism program conducted in Dipolog City in southern Philippines proves these feats as church members, lay pastors and church leaders work together to share Jesus' love to the city populace.

The public meetings, which were held on March 8-14, culminated the two-month ground work of house visitations and Bible studies, at the Zamboanga del Norte Convention Center in Dipolog City. The nightly meetings which had an

average attendance of 400 people ended on March 14, Saturday, with 121 people and another seven a week later accepting Jesus Christ as their Savior through baptism.

Dr Jonathan C Catolico, communication and public affairs director of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the southern Asia-Pacific region (SSD), led out in the 7-day reaping series. He was assisted by

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# Hope Channel loses faithful staff member

One of the pioneers in the broadcast ministry in southern Philippines (SPUC), died on March 8, six days short of his 58th birthday on March

14.

Joel Acub had been an active member of the church. He would always be there when no singer showed up for a "special song" or did the part of a song leader. He is specially remembered for his active lifestyle and spirit of volunteerism, be it his transportation services, help in engine trouble and repairs, cargo needing to be moved, guest accommodations, and many others. At the Hope Channel studio at SPUC, he kept track of the program schedules, signing on early in the morning and signing off almost at midnight. He was a man with a wealth of wisdom and experience in and

outside of the studio. He never lived to witness the soon inauguration of the Hope Channel Philippines which he had been helping to realize.

He had a bout with viral meningitis at a local hospital's Intensive Care Unit. All his life he was never admitted to the hospital: his first turned out to be his last. But what consoles the Hope Channel staff and the SPUC family was that he had seen Hope Channel, the TV ministry for that matter, came to its present height.

The SPUC family and the Hope Channel International condole with the bereaved family—his wife and daughter—with the hope that this beloved and faithful worker rests in his grave "until the resurrection morning" when the dead in Christ will be awakened from their resting place. [Jade Y Soreno]

**City...** from page 12

Pastor Nelson D Paulo, communication and public affairs director for southern Philippines. Coordinating this ground preparation for the said public meetings was Pastor Adellano Casiong with his team of nine dedicated and committed lay workers and pastors.

"I have seen the result of a united church that works for the salvation of people to Jesus Christ. The dedication of the lay leaders and church members were potent ways to bring people to Jesus who desires that everyone must find hope amid the challenges that the financial and moral breakdown bring to his doorsteps," said Catolico, when asked of his comment after the evangelistic series.

"People everywhere are wary of the meltdown in the financial markets but the impact of a message of hope from the word of God overwhelms this uneasiness and hopelessness," rejoined Pastor Paulo. "Our church members are happy that the nightly messages of hope cushion the impact of financial recession that is happening worldwide. 'There is hope after all, they say,'" said Pastor Casiong, Dipolog Church pastor and seminar coordinator. [AND Staff]

## Cambodia Church welcomes new president

A new president has come to take the cudgel of leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (CAM) in this former war-torn country of Cambodia. Pastor Deane Jackson and his wife, Ruth, arrived on February 16 to the joys of the church members.

Pastor Jackson has been in the ministry for over 30 years as church pastor, evangelist, ministerial association secretary and president of the Northern Australian Conference of the Adventist Church.

Ruth was a teacher and education director, and has worked faithfully alongside her husband in evangelistic programs across Australia and overseas.

"It is a great privilege for us to come to Cambodia and work for the Lord," said

Pastor Jackson. "We believe Jesus is coming soon and, together with our pastors, teachers, church workers and members here, we want to share His love with the people of this wonderful country."

During their welcome ceremony, Pastor Jackson said, "To tell others about our friend Jesus is not just about what we say, it is about what we do and how we live. And in order to live for Jesus, we need special strength as spelled out in the Gospel of John, chapter 1:12 and that power and strength to live for Him is promised to every believer."

He also challenged his Cambodian brothers and sisters to receive God's power and strength to share His grace and forgiveness with others. "I ask of you to pray earnestly for the gift of the Holy Spirit in order to make our witness effective," he concluded. [CAMera Newsletter, Vol 7, No 2]



photo courtesy of CAMera

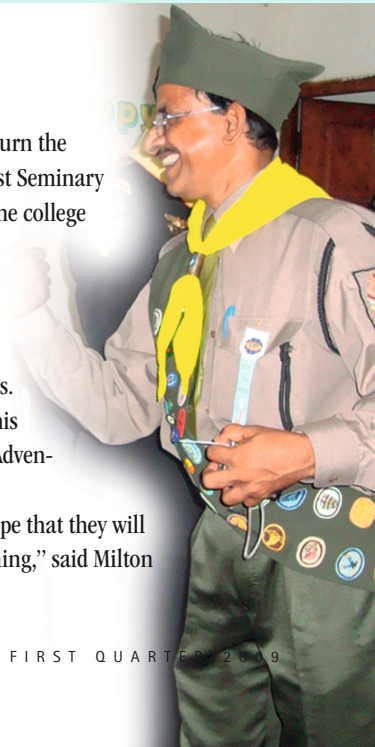
## Teacher dies at road mishap

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Bangladesh (BAUM) mourn the passing away of Peter Ojha, a teacher at Bangladesh Adventist Seminary and College, March 3, of road accident that happened near the college perimeters. No detailed information about the circumstances of his death was given, because the report was just relayed as a way of soliciting prayers for the bereaved members of his family.

Peter Ojha, 48, who was also a Master Guide, will be missed by his family, students, fellow teachers, church members and friends.

He is survived by his wife, Rose, also a teacher at the college, his son Pinak and his wife; and daughter Pialy, who is studying at the Adventist University of the Philippines.

"We are praying for comfort to the family of Peter with the hope that they will soon see their beloved husband and father at the resurrection morning," said Milton Das, communication director for BAUM. [AND Staff]





# Regeneration Training kicks off in Peninsular Malaysia

**F**irst to happen in Peninsular Malaysia, the regeneration training of the church's health department made impact on the 45 participants from Penang and Johor Bahru. The meetings were held at the Adventist Community Health Center, March 8-9.

Its theme, "Building Support for the Weak" guided the 3-day event and created an impact in the life of the participants who travelled hundreds of kilometers to attend the training.

Pastors Abraham Carpena and Gratian Perera, health directors for the Adventist church in the southern Asia-Pacific region (SSD) and southeast Asia (SAUM), respectively, helped the participants understand the complexities that attend to the processes of coping with drug addiction and recovery from this debilitating practice. These participants also discovered how the church can be a support group to wayward youth as they take their journey back to life without drugs.

Videos and a skit highlighted the event. The skit on "Burdened Family," spelled out the

effects of drug addiction not only on the user but on everyone in the family.

Carpena and Perera led out also in the commitment service. The church elder, who prayed for those who stood to commit themselves to start a support group in their community, invoked God's blessing upon everyone to become a part of a unified effort to save people for God's kingdom.

"This indeed will make impact to the community as our church gets involved with this initiative," said participants." [Jane Yap/AND]

photo courtesy of peninsular malaysia mission





## Church in Myanmar sees 77 graduates

**H**umble spirits but heads high with extreme joy were evident at the 43rd graduation exercises in Myanmar Union Adventist Seminary (MUAS), March 15, in Myaungmya, Ayeyarwady, Myanmar. A total of 77 graduates received their diplomas and certificates.

The need for more gospel workers was high and the completion of 22 ministerial students out of 77 graduates caused joy to church leaders. This new group of gospel missionaries will help in the proclamation of the soon coming of Jesus.

On Sabbath, March 14, Pastor Muller Kyaw, chairman of the MUAS board of trustees and president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Myanmar, gave the Baccalaureate message while Pastor Tember Chit, a church leader, delivered the consecration message on Friday, March 13. The former president of MUAS, Pastor Yan Aye, delivered the graduation message. Pastor Aye spent 29 years in MUAS before assuming a leadership position in the field.

"I see graduations as more beautiful than any scenery in the world and the graduates as great and dignified human beings," said Pastor Yan Aye.

Also present during the graduation

ceremony was U Aye Han, district commissioner of Myaungmya district. He holds the highest government rank in this district. Mg Mg Myo Chan, MYUM communication director; representatives of the Adventist Churches in Ayeyarwaddy; Upper Myanmar; and from the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) in Myanmar, were among the more than 1,000 attendees at this graduation rites.

"During graduations, we solidify our resolve to become part of a great experience in helping mold characters for future leadership. Thus, our pride to be part of MUAS" concluded Morris Chit, vice president for public relations and development. [Myo Chan]

photo courtesy of myanmar adventist union mission

# CHURCH LEADERS HOLD PRAYER WEEK, START YEAR OF EVANGELISM

The forecast for 2009 is one characterized by economic depression. In the United States and throughout the world the financial meltdown has thrown everyone to expect harder days ahead. But to the members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, this has no phenomenal impact except when the members' lives have not been solidified by a faith in God who provides His people through thick and thin.

This is a year of evangelism. This means that the soon establishment of God's kingdom must be announced to the world with greater fervor and zeal as in the time of Noah before the flood.

The leadership of the Adventist Church in the southern Asia-Pacific region (SSD) has envisioned that everyone at the church headquarters meet 2009 with greater enthusiasm by holding a Week of Prayer. This was done at the first working week of the year, January 5-10, when the church workers were feted to morning and afternoon sessions of prayer and messages.

Dr Priscilo P Santiago, a full-time professor at the graduate school, college of education of the Adventist University of the Philippines, provided the spiritual messages that delved on the theme, "A Culture of Faith, Hope and Love in times of Crisis."

The presentations that moved through the cognitive, affective and reflective domains of imbibing knowledge and experiences indeed worked very well in each participant. Each message was followed by experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit through prayer time, where each sought God's intervention in every undertaking whether personal or for

others.

"The vespers time was truly soul-searching moment," said one office secretary. "The communion service gave me time to contemplate on Jesus sacrifice that I may find joy in the promise of eternal salvation that He enacted on the cross," she continued.

"With hope: lay on eternal life," preached Dr Santiago at the last of his week's series of talks and ended with the song of hope "When we all get to heaven."

At noontime of the Sabbath, a physical feast of delightful menus prepared by every family was superb. "Adventists are best vegetarian cooks," said Mrs Santiago, who came with her husband for the vespers and Sabbath programs.

The last activity for the week, on Sabbath afternoon, was the distribution of literature by the SSD family headed by Pastor Alberto C Gulfan, Jr, president, to the town folk of Silang. Carrying Signs of the Times magazine, they invaded the market and other areas of the town. "We wish we had more of these materials to give to everyone. It's a joy to hand to someone such materials that tell the good news of Jesus' soon coming!" participants were heard saying. [AND Staff]

## AWR sees listeners in baptism

**R**adio is one of the best ways of reaching people to learn of the soon-coming of Jesus. Indeed, this medium proved effective again when 70-year-old A-Po-Pu, who lived in a very remote area of Ywa-thar-gyi, 26 miles from the City of Yangon, in Myanmar learned of Jesus his Savior through the Adventist World Radio (AWR) some three years ago.

As he learned of this good news, he invited the AWR staff to visit his home to conduct personal Bible studies. Hla Hla Myint, program director of AWR Myanmar, answered the invitation and Bible studies started.

On February 28, at the Yangon Central Church, 10 of A-Po-Pu's village mates were baptized to the extreme joy of AWR officers and staff and church members who witnessed their baptisms.

"It was so exciting to hear these village folk sing songs, read the Bible, and even participate in Bible quizzes when we started holding branch Sabbath school programs in their place," said Hla Hla and her team.

"A-Po-Pu narrated to us that his life changed from one that the people in the community can never admire. As he listened to the messages in the radio, he began assimilating a lifestyle that surprised his neighbors and they began inquiring from him. This led to the holding of small group meetings and eventually ended up in baptism last February 28," continued Hla Hla.

"The AWR team regularly visited the village to conduct small group meetings. I am glad to see the Holy Spirit working through AWR programs and so we endeavor to give more of our time to producing programs that will spell out changes in the people's lives until they accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior," concluded Maung Maung Myo Chan, MYUM communication and AWR director.

## New Accountant joins church headquarters

**V**icmar Gandeza, born in Sinit, Ilocos Sur to Solomon and Elisa, a minister and literature evangelist, became a new member at the treasury department of Southern Asia-Pacific Division. Being the oldest of four children, he has three younger sisters.

Vicmar finished the Bachelor of Arts in Accounting course at Northern Luzon Adventist College (NLAC) and passed the board examination for Certified Public Accountant in 2005. Before coming to SSD, he worked with Land Bank of the Philippines, July-August 2005; Manila Adventist Medical Center while teaching on weekends for a semester at his alma mater. His employment at the SSD headquarters started in February this year.

He enjoys playing badminton and doing other outdoor activities; and finds pleasure playing the guitar and singing.

Welcome Vicmar to the joys and challenges at SSD! [AND Staff]





## Adventist Mission director *returns to homeland*



**N**o one likes farewells despite knowing that a missionary can be called anytime anywhere.

Rick McEdward, his wife Marcia and their two children, Julia and Joshua, left early morning of March 2 to respond to a call of planting a church in Houston, Texas; and for the much-needed attention due his family which has been so many times interrupted by his constant travels to the wide territory that spans 18 countries of the southern Asia-Pacific region.

Rick came to the southern Asia-Pacific region in 2001 to serve as Global Mission director and church growth consultant at the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Sri Lanka (SLM). After working for about five years at SLM he was elected Adventist Mission director for the Adventist regional headquarters (SSD) in 2005 at the world session of the church in St Louis, Missouri.

“In his travels mostly to the remote parts of the region where global mission

pioneers work many of which were unentered areas for the church, Rick was identified for his kindly manner as he immersed with the people just like being one of them regardless of race, culture, beliefs and practices, and religious background,” said his fellow church workers.

His wife taught and started at the same year in Sri Lanka as a Home School teacher, among many other responsibilities. At SSD, she was Community Outreach coordinator. Julia and Joshua who help their parents in community outreach and activities have already formed lasting friendships with the SSD folks, especially children of their age.

The SSD family will surely miss the McEdwards--Rick for his kindly manner; Marcia for her warmth, leadership and positive attitude.

Through tears, laughter and reminisced memories, at the farewell party, the McEdwards expressed how much they will miss their home and family members at SSD. [AND staff]





# NPUM *becomes* CONFERENCE

photo courtesy of north philippine union conference



**S**eventh-day Adventist world church leaders recognized spiritual maturity and financial stability last month when they voted a change of administrative status for the North Philippine region of the church.

As a "union conference," the region is fully self-sufficient and responsible for electing its three main administrative officers: president, secretary and treasurer. Under their former "union mission" status, the North Philippines received appropriation for operation from the Southern Asia-Pacific Division, one of the world church's 13 administrative regions.

Home to the nation's capital, Manila, the North Philippine region is the second largest and wealthiest of the church's three union conferences in the Philippines, said Claude Sabot, world church secretary for the church's Southern Asia-Pacific region.

"We are grateful to God for enabling us to realize spiritual maturity, stability and the sustainability of [our] financial circumstances ... [to] attain this milestone," said regional church President Abner S. Roque.

With its new status, the region anticipates "greater autonomy" and "responsibility for self management," Roque said, adding that the North Philippine church administration would focus on stewardship, membership growth and the development of the region's medical and

educational institutions.

The North Philippine Union Conference oversees the Adventist University of the Philippines, several church-run colleges, academies and the Manila Adventist Medical Center. One of the world church's biannual business meetings was held in Manila last year.

Unity, strong leadership, financial independence and active outreach programs are among the criteria church officials consider when granting "union conference" status to "union missions," Sabot said.

More than 230,000 Adventists worship in 1,306 churches in the North Philippine Union Conference. The Adventist Church was established in the Philippines in 1917. [Elizabeth Lechleitner/ANN]

# Adventist Church adopts two communities

Looking for ways to alleviate the needs of the members of the community within their territory, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Central Luzon (CLC) through its Area IV leadership signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) between an Adventist Agency and the leaders of the two villages (barangays). This adoption agreement will enable the church to give free services that are needed by the two communities from time to time.

The two barangays were the Matimbubong in San Ildefonso and Diliman in San Rafael, all in the province of Bulacan. The MOA were signed February 25, by the church leaders and the Barangay Captains of the two barangays.

At two separate venues, Barangay Captains Rosalinda Manzon of Matimbubong, and Dalmacio Ramos of Diliman, signed for their constituents the said MOA. They were witnessed by their constituents and church leaders.

"I am thankful to the Seventh-day Adventist Church for choosing our place their venue for free services to the community," said Captain Manzon, while Captain Ramos offered his constituents' response, saying, "Our barangay is so grateful for your help. Our constituents are extremely happy for this spirit of care you show them."

After the signing of MOA stipulating that Matimbubong becomes an adopted barangay under Adventist Development and Relief Agency-Adventist Community Services (ADRA-ACS), 42 impoverished children received gifts for their basic and school needs. This was also done in Barangay Dalmacio where 30 children were beneficiaries. Two beneficiaries were thankful for the wheelchairs they received that day.

"We are happy that the Seventh-day Adventists walk their talk by extending help to our people," said Enrique Viudez, a board member of the Third District of Bulacan, when he spoke at the ceremony.

One of the children who received a gift

cannot contain his joys. "God is really good and kind that even if Christmas was over I still received gifts!"

exclaimed Jerome G Lianza, a



12-year-old boy who received a 100-dollar bill.

"The Seventh-day Adventists are not unfamiliar to me. Besides being a people with no vices, I know them to be helpful and kind. This is why we thank God that they adopted our place," said Town Councilor Rosemarie Aquino.

Yolanda Sta. Maria, one of the wheelchair

**Church adopts...** to page 25



# Church extends help submerged northern city in southern Philippines

**T**orrential rains visited Cagayan de Oro city, a city where the headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in southern Philippines (SPUC) is located, a few days after 2009 stepped in. The downpour had become catastrophic, instead of a blessing to farmers from the dry spell. It caused heavy floods displacing 13,000 families in the city as reported by Jaime and Fabe in the January 14 issue of the *Philippine Star*.

Employees at the SPUC headquarters took time off to feed hundreds of people affected by the floods, while the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), the community service arm of the church, distributed relief goods in two other areas heavily affected. Earlier, on January 4, the SPUC Hope Channel team along with its TV host, Dr. Jean Loreche, sponsored and distributed food supplies to the victims in the Macasandig area.

Among the heavily affected areas were the Tibasa, Camaman-an, Opol, Iponan, Balulang, and Baungon barangays or villages.

Observing from the third floor of the SPUC building, the floods overflowing from the

Cagayan de Oro River had reached up to



half of 20-foot trees,

submerging many homes within the affected areas. "It's the first time that I see this happening here! Roads left impassable through downtown malls and commercial centers," said Loida Aggabao, one of the SPUC staff. "We're fortunate that we stay on areas high enough to be washed out too!" added Aggabao.

Local government units and the National Disaster Coordinating Council coordinated the evacuation and relief efforts to help the victims of these floods. [AND staff]

photo courtesy of kim oblimar



# Participants: *Web & Video production a better way to reach people*



The church in West Indonesia (WIUM) aims to cope with the modern trend of communicating the gospel to its constituents. It wants to employ a better way to reach this land of diverse people that makes Indonesia a predominant Moslem land.

Video messages, complemented by electronic media can fulfill this mandate. And on February 24-26, the communication leaders together with lay enthusiasts within WIUM organized a workshop to learn the specifics of video production and electronic publication.

Held at the WIUM headquarters, 40 participants learned 'videography' and web-making under Welsie





dela Cruz, media center director for the church headquarters in the southern Asia-Pacific region (SSD); Rhoen P Catolico, assistant program director for Adventist World Radio-Asia/Pacific; and Dr Jonathan Catolico, SSD communication director.

During the video production workshop, the participants went into actual production: scriptwriting, set designing, shooting, and other activities to complete three four-minute episodes. Web programs, news and feature writing, were also introduced to the participants.

“We are glad for these enriched skills of video production and electronic publications. These will help us produce good videos in order to reach our neighbors who will not get interested receiving the gospel message other than this method,” said participants. [AND Staff]

## Skills training benefits 21 church members

For four months, sewing classes were held for church members in Bangladesh who wanted to learn the trade. Eight men and 13 women took advantage of this training that was sponsored by the Women's Ministries (WM) Department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Bangladesh (BAUM).

The distribution of certificates of completion was done during the Women's Ministries Training Seminar, March 12-14, at the headquarters of the church in West Bangladesh (WBM).

The seminar was started with a message on stewardship by Pastor Edward P. Chambugong, BAUM executive secretary; and on early morning of March 13, Pastor Bibek Halder, WBM president, gave the morning devotional message.

“We are glad that many of our church members took advantage of this program and now they have the means to improve their lives with these skills,” said women leaders.

The WM members in Bangladesh find themselves a part of the life of the church by getting involved with the gospel proclamation, including the holding of Bible studies to everyone who wants to learn of Jesus. This activity starts with giving a Bible to every interested individual.

On Saturday, 21 men and women accepted Jesus through baptism.

“We are soliciting our church members worldwide to pray for our church women in Bangladesh who accepted the challenge of taking the good news of salvation to a country that is extraordinarily difficult to penetrate,” requested the women leaders in Bangladesh. [Lucena Chambugong/AND]

### Church adopts, from page 22

recipients said: “I have not been walking four years, at last I can stroll! Thank you so much.”

The Barangay Adoption Program was realized through the leadership of Rolly Cimafranca, Area 4 ACS president, and his wife, Marilyn. Area 4 Chairman Sherman Fiedacan; Pastor Jose Zabat, CLC ACS director; and Ely Latuga, Area 4 secretary, showed full support to the program. [Geronimo Viernes, Jr]

## Ministerial retreat *strengthens relationships*

**T**he church benefits greatly from good relationships that exist between administrators and area chairmen as they roll up their sleeves together to advance the Lord work within their territory. And one way to enhance this environment in the workplace is to spend some time for fellowship in a place away from the noise and influences of the city.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Central Luzon (CLC) sought nature's assistance to experience such closeness and establish an ideal working spirit among their leaders. This was held at Wilma's Garden Resort in Floridablanca, Pampanga, February 10-11.

The retreat started with Pastor Diosdado Fofue, CLC ministerial secretary, welcoming the participants and was followed by the message of Pastor Carmelito Galang, Jr, CLC president.

Quoting Exodus 17:12 to drive his point, Pastor Galang said, "When Moses' hands grew



tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side and another one on the other side—so that his hands remained steady until sunset."

Meanwhile, Pastor Israel Bacdayan, stewardship director, led the program for the bonding activities where the basic rule was: "Don't be shy, tell everything" to develop closer relations between the area chairmen and the conference administrators.

Area 7 Chairman Danilo Anillo commented, "I was really blessed by the openness and straightforward answers of our administrators to our concerns, most especially for the cause of God's work."

Pastor Winnie Ellazar of Area 5 said, "It's quite rewarding to learn more about the plans of the administration for the spreading of the gospel in a very orderly and collective manner." [Rene Montoya]

# Administrators wives attend retreat

Pressure cookers cook tough food faster. The life of an administrator's wife is like that of pressure cookers—high expectations but lack of appreciation, affirmation, and acceptance. This life puts her at risks. Christ's commendations to a wife, however, open an aura of hope for her to cope with the grinds she contends with daily.

What a treat, indeed, to the 89 first-halves of administrators of church offices, hospitals, and colleges in the Philippines, who came for the Administrators' Wives Retreat, January 28-31, at Central Philippine Adventist College (CPAC), in Murcia, Negros Occidental.

Representing the 13 regions of the country, and of various professions and dialects, these women knew the highs and lows of being 'unofficial' staff to their administrator-husbands on missionary paychecks!

The retreat was an initiative of Mrs Helen B Gulfan, Shepherdess International coordinator for the church in the southern Asia-Pacific region (SSD). Twenty-two years to being wife of an administrator, Gulfan knew who to invite as speakers who could address issues that women

**Administrators' wives...** to page 28



photo courtesy of ssd shepherdess international



**Administrators' wives...**, from page 27

face while focusing on the theme, "Renewed by God's Love."

The keynote address that spelled out the "Attributes of the virtuous wife in Proverbs 31" delivered by Dr Jemima Amada, wife of CPAC president, introduced the women to the ideals of partnership with their husbands.

Dr Armand Fabella spoke of the reality that "Administrator-husbands may be highly honored, but most wives are often unappreciated." He encouraged the wives to self-affirm and to vicariously accept by faith Jesus' commendation as expressed to the seven churches (as symbolized by a woman) in Revelation and his female disciples (Dorcas, Priscilla, and others).

"Pray and study God's Word as an emotional survival kit," said Dr Eleanor Roque, wife of the president of the church in the north Philippines, who saw and experienced the ever-present stress in administrators' families.

Mrs Eve Sumicad, a retired nurse and wife of an experienced former church treasurer, discussed financially related issues. She emphasized these salient points: Simplify your life but be committed to your dreams and don't be financially ignorant.

Mrs Sharon Cress, Shepherdess International coordinator for the World Church (GC), who was eager to attend but illness caught her while in India, sent in materials for Ms Gulfan to present. It was about "Leaders Living Together."

The materials' main thought was that 'Headship' is an assignment while 'Leadership' is a gift. Both husband and wife may be gifted with leadership but respect and love find their proper place as husband is the head of the wife. Wives are to submit to their husbands and husbands to love their wives, the Bible says.

Touch Ministry was introduced by the experts, CoceI Frivaldo and Ajie Jordan from Bacolod Adventist Medical Center Physiotherapy Department, on Friday afternoon. The ladies enjoyed watching closely the demonstration and listening to the instructions with eager desire to try it on their husbands after they get back to their homes. "It was fun learning," participants were heard to say.

Tears flowed freely during the sharing and testimony sessions, and so did laughter abound as the ladies spent early mornings at the swimming pool (a stone's throw from the guestrooms), at meal times, and especially during the eight-hour city tour. In two CPAC busses the ladies visited the Bacolod Adventist Medical Center, Negros museum, a handicraft shop, and a local delicacy shop where they enjoyed a 10% discount (ladies love this!). The evening was capped by an SM City mall visit where their arrival and departure were announced!

On Friday, the ladies dressed with Bible attire to welcome the Sabbath before sunset, for the Kiddush, a Jewish Sabbath evening meal, with the braided chalal bread at the center of the table. Serving as patriarch was Dr Agripino C Segovia, the first Filipino director in the General Conference Education department. "May you be like Ruth and like Esther," said the 84-year-old retired pastor, pronouncing blessing on all the ladies, according to Kiddush tradition.

For the Hour of Worship service the ladies joined the CPAC congregation in the college church. Pastor Gary Rustad, SSD associate secretary, spoke on the theme, "To understand Calvary, is to love Christ."

Before the commitment service that Sabbath afternoon, some presidential wives shared their testimonies on such topics as coping, joys, challenges, and many others. Regarding their first reactions to their husbands' election, one wife expressed "shock and denial" for days. One



mentioned how her family “mourned” the good news because the institution was then facing lawsuits and financial bankruptcy. “I stopped my negative attitude when my husband’s prayerful determination and God’s hand miraculously increased hospital patient count and we were able to pay all our financial obligations ever since.” Mrs Theresa Mahinay, a biology professor at the University of the Philippines, said that her greatest joy was being a “prayer warrior” for her husband whose face would lighten up when I say, “Don’t worry. I’ll pray for you. What time is that crucial meeting?”

Before the commitment prayer, a young wife of four expressed how she enjoyed every moment of the retreat and regretted that “tomorrow, I will be going back to reality.” Pained by criticisms from fellow ministerial spouses in the past, she proposed, “Let us embrace one another in prayer and rally together in helping one another.”

At the third day “Opening of Heart and Prayer” workshop, the ladies were asked to stand by the “posts” which best describe their feelings being better halves of pastor/administrators. Only eight queued at the “Joy/Blessing,” more than 20 stood behind the Hardship/Difficulty post; the rest on the Honor/Privilege sign.

If a survey were taken at the end of the retreat, the JOY post will probably have the longest line as the evaluation sheets of the survey showed excellent scores in most aspects except for the guestrooms and facilities which “suffered” a “Very Good” and “Good” feedback. In her gratitude of the affair, a shepherdess from West Visayan Conference wrote of the retreat: “It was timely, profitable and enhancing for the wives. We were made more aware of our solemn responsibility and that we need constant connection with the source of joy, Jesus, in these difficult and challenging times. Nice venue, warm accommodation, closer fellowship of wives.” [Virgie Baloyo, CPAC]

## Ministerial department enhances church stewardship roles

In years past church members thought stewardship was all about tithes and offerings. It never dawned on them that it could be something else, too. “What we learned in this seminar was that stewardship is a personal commitment to the Lord—entrusting self to Him,” said Ms Khin Le Win, a Bible worker for central Myanmar, who expressed the participants’ appreciation of the Stewardship seminar conducted in their place.

Pastor Wendell Mandolang, director for the Stewardship Department of the Seventh-day Adventist church in the southern Asia-Pacific region (SSD), led out in the seminars in two places in Myanmar: Pyin Oo Lwin in the upper region and Taungu in the central region. At both venues, 98 delegates were registered. The seminars were held during the last week of February through the first week of March.

Pastor Muller Kyaw, president for the church in Myanmar (MYUM) and Pastor Caleb Paw, MYUM ministerial secretary, were part of the presenters who traveled 400 miles on bus with Pastor Mandolang to reach the seminar venues.

The participants at both places were delighted to welcome the training team. There were 50 delegates in Pyin Oo Lwin, and 48 in Taungu.

“My stay in Myanmar was extraordinarily rewarding as I saw the enthusiasm of the participants in applying the principles of stewardship,” said Mandolang. [Myo Chan/AND]

## *Evangelistic meeting in Cadiz City reaps 134*

**A**n evangelistic meeting held in Cadiz City, Negros Occidental in central Philippines, brought changes to the lives of 134 people as they accepted the Lord through baptism. The February 12-21 meetings were conducted by Dr Mike Lekic, education director of Seventh-day Adventist Church in the southern Asia Pacific region (SSD).

Pastor Josue Subang, leader of the EB Magalona-Cadiz district, coordinated the said meetings. He was assisted by Christopher Arcallana, Dulrich Gilbuena, and Gilmer Galanza who were working under the Adopt-a-Minister Program, and seven other laymen. The district association of churches gave full support to the meetings under the leadership of Randy Linao, association president.

As forerunner to the evangelistic meetings, Pastor Charles Nogra, health director for the Adventist Church in central Philippines (CPUC), conducted a one-day Healthy Lifestyle Seminar a month earlier. More than 130 Barangay Health Workers (BHW) of Cadiz City attended the said seminar with the participation of the office of the City Health Department, and city local government spearheaded by councilor Abiezer Bacomo, himself an Adventist church member and chairman of the committee on health and social welfare.

Before the start of the series on February 15, a motorcade with the participation of church members was escorted by the members of the city police. The nightly meetings were attended by some government workers, city educators, barangay officials and some religious leaders. At the end of the campaign, 102 people accepted Jesus as their personal Savior. A

month later, on March 31, Dr. Lekic went back to baptize the second batch of candidates numbering 32 that brought the total baptism to 134.

Of the 134 persons baptized, 52 lived at a formerly unentered area, Purok Supermen, in Barangay Magsaysay, 24 kilometers from Cadiz City. While Arturo Francisco and Jerry Casindac, the two lay workers who were assigned to this village, were visiting houses, two prominent village leaders who belonged to the Arroz and Ducay families asked them how to find the truth as contained in the Bible. The two laymen were glad to study with them and their families. At baptism day, almost all the members of these two families were baptized.

After baptism, Vicente Arroz, the father of one of the families donated a 200-square meter lot for the construction of a temporary



photo courtesy of mike lekic

**Evangelistic meeting...** to page 31

# Health Screening Program attracts 100 participants

Driven by a passion to inspire the community to aspire for a healthy lifestyle and diet habits, the Klang Indian Church organized a one-day health screening program on January 18. The 3-part program consisted of: Part 1—body fat analysis, body muscle analysis, blood pressure and pulse rate measurements. therapy

Part 2—cooking and hydro-demonstration, and Part 3—a 40-minute charobix exercise demonstration and training.

The day started on a busy note with residents queuing up to check their health status. The results were received with mixed feelings of disappointment and excitement.

Despite the results, everyone was happy and grateful for the free op-

portunity to assess his or her health. It was the

first time that such a program was brought to the doorstep of this community.

Some people reiterated the need to have similar programs on a regular basis to appraise the public on wellness. With this type of program, people from across religious and racial divide come together with one motive of attaining a healthy and happy life.

“Such programs are very crucial because they help us to be healthier, for healthy individuals mean healthy community,” remarked one participant as he sat during results interpretation. At the conclusion of the program, more than 100 participants had checked their health, 33 attended the cooking demo and hydrotherapy demo. [Jane Yap]



photo courtesy of peninsular malaysia mission

## Evangelistic meeting... from page 30

church building, while Francisco Ducay, the other father, shared his woods and bamboos. Other funds were received to complete the construction of this humble church in the local community.

The sowing of seeds in this community has not ended as interests grow to make ready for another baptism in May. “We praise God for the success of this first gospel preaching in the City of Cadiz. We thank our church members, especially the Maypa family who generously extended their financial support to beef up funds for the expenses of the campaign and for the follow up and nurturing of the newly baptized members,” said the church leaders and campaign coordinators. [Chris Arcallana and Josue Subang]



# Medical outreach touches lives

“Mission” connotes service. It goes along with the word “outreach.” Collaborating with medical services, the mission outreach of health professionals makes the activity even more rewarding. The effort does not only address the physical health needs of people but their spiritual needs as well.

The medical mission that was conducted by HOPE International and the Manila Adventist Medical Center (MAMC), January 5-12, in the province of Siquijor, fulfilled what a mission outreach envisions. It saved the physical body and revived the spiritual life of many individuals.

In coordination with Negros Oriental-Siquijor Field of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (NSM), the Siquijor Provincial Government and Jaylan Shipping Company, this weeklong medical mission brought in 20 medical doctors, a dentist, eight nurses, six paramedical personnel and one pastor from the United States and MAMC. The team was a good mix of Adventists, Catholics and Protestant practitioners.

“HOPE International,” is a nonprofit organization that gives opportunities for everyone to share his



photo courtesy of negros oriental - siquijor mission





or her resources, time and life in service to humanity. The acronym for 'Helping People for Eternity,' HOPE spells out its objectives as 'preaching, teaching, and healing,'" said Drs Michael and Chequi dela Cruz, a Filipino couple from the United States who heads the team.

Pressed for more enlightenment of the HOPE's mission, the dela Cruzes said they do this program "as a way of developing Christ-like character while fulfilling Christ's commission."

The week's activity catered to 60 people undergoing major surgical operation, 170 minor operations, and offering more than 1300 medical and dental services. One participant assessed the total services as not falling below the three million-peso level.

"Doing medical ministry, Christ becomes real to you and happier when seeing people relieved from pain. The integration of spiritual activity is part of the package of the activity," Michael and Chequi added.

"My life was empty, and I wanted something beyond what I ordinarily do. What I did was to cancel my earlier-laid itinerary and joined the medical mission. I am now fulfilled!" said a non-Seventh-day Adventist member of the team.

An employee of the Siquijor Provincial Hospital observed: "The team members were kind and loving. They go the extra mile and you hear no foul words from them."

Some of the highlights of the medical mission were a nightly revival meeting that the team conducted. They also had room-to-room serenading at the government hospital where the mission event was held. This special activity led to the baptism of eight people toward the end of the program. [Jimmy S. Guma]

## Children and youth carry on Follow the Bible activities

After the launching of the Follow the Bible program in December of 2008, in Myanmar, small groups have geared up their activities. The children and youth's small groups were not left out while several mega city evangelism seminars were conducted in Myaungmya, Myawadi and other places. A monk, who is head of the famous Wa-kyaung monastery in Myaungmya, regularly attended one of these meetings.

In Pathein, Ayeyarwady, young people were leading out in Branch Sabbath schools (BSS) in several places, where only a few Christians reside. "We make significant contribution through the small group to keep it alive as we perpetuate the spirit of Follow the Bible initiatives," said youth leaders.

"Incorporated in the BSS activities were the teaching and learning of new songs, listening to stories and taking to heart memory verses through recitation and Bible quizzes," participants exclaimed.

Some Buddhists and youth from the Baptist church were also learning from these activities.

[Myo Chan]



## Secretaries from church's regional office hold Jakarta seminar



A four-hour plane ride bridged thousands of miles between the Philippines and Indonesia, bringing five office secretaries from Manila to the city of Jakarta, January 23-31. They were responding to the invitation of their fellow secretaries at the Adventist Church in west Indonesia (WIUM).

The five from the church headquarters of the southern Asia-Pacific region (SSD) were Mercy Ferrer, secretary to the Associate Secretary; Laila Nacario, secretary to the Personnel Director; Jane Fajut, secretary to the Adventist Mission Director; Dulce Mabituin, secretary to the Children's Ministries/Family Ministries Director and the Women's Ministries and Shepherdess Int'l Director; and Gay Tuballes, secretary to the Communication Director.

The lecturers who produced their seminar materials dealt on basic secretarial skills to include Work Ethic and Time Management, Basic Grammar and Business Correspondence with Email Etiquette, Electronic Filing, Telephone Manners, Receiving Visitors, demonstration of File Maker Run Time version used for Global pioneers for Adventist Mission, Men and Women in the Workplace, Dress Code and

photo courtesy of mercy ferrer

Social Responsibility. An introduction to Microsoft Publisher software and integration of video and audio to Microsoft PowerPoint were also presented.

“Each topic catered to our individual needs,” said the participants. “We learned, too,” responded the presenters.

Other highlights of the event were the stress-reduction activities. Believing that stress has become the number one factor that hinders excellent performance and work efficiency, the secretaries were given practical tips to do away with stressful work by taking short stretching breaks for good blood and oxygen circulation, a demonstration of simple and quick chair massage ideal for an office setting.

“There is no better way to understand the work of a secretary more than a fellow secretary can impart,” said the participants. “We saw no gap between participants and presenters as we feel we belong to each other,” said Esther Manuring, a WIUM office secretary.

The participants also voiced out that a seminar on understanding personality in the workplace will make the secretaries more effective as they deal with their bosses and colleagues. “We need those important tips,” added Corry Sagala, another WIUM secretary.

Ian Christie who said she was trained as an accountant and landed on a secretarial job, considered the seminar “enlightening and worth the time spent.”

The presenters’ response to the care and amiability of the participants including their assessment of the conduct of the seminar was summed up by Laila Nacario: “The accommodation was superb. We covered so much important details in the profession and these make us glad and fulfilled.” [AND Staff]

## Young participants quick at learning skills

Youth, teachers, pastors, administrators and lay leaders took their time off for two and half days, January 27-29, to attend a writing seminar on what they termed as ‘first to happen’ in this marble-rich island of Romblon in central Philippines.

A total of 113 participants faithfully spent their time at the headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Romblon (RAM) located in Dapawan, Odiongan, Romblon, imbibing lessons believed to enhance their skills to communicate through writing for print, for web, and for personal consumption.

“Of all seminars we have conducted, this has the biggest attendance,” said Dr Jona-



photo courtesy of jonathan catolico

than C Catolico, communication director for the Adventist Church in the southern Asia-Pacific region (SSD). The Romblon participants, most

**Young participants...** to page 36



**Young participants...**, from page 35

of whom were students at the Adventist Mission Academy of Romblon (AMAR) and the Romblon National High School (RNHS), a nearby government secondary school who took advantage of the seminar upon the invitation of Pastor Donald E Zabala, president and communication director for RAM.

The youth who had edge on newer technology over their older counterparts learned the techniques of writing, layout and design, and e-publication much easier. They asked the questions the most. "When you ask, you learn better," remarked Reuben A Pagaduan, design presenter and chair of the Fine Arts Department of the Adventist University of the Philippines (AUP).

Besides Catolico and Pagaduan, Winelfred G Pasamba, AUP information technology specialist and web master, presented a half-day skills development on web and electronic publications. He also presented the curricular offerings at AUP that cater to every need of the Adventist youth.

Among the several write-ups submitted by the participants, four were chosen as best contributions that represented feature, news feature, and news writing. "Venturing into the devil's lair," was a 400-word feature story submitted by a high school student from RNHS. She cautioned young people from making light the power of the devil as the latter may take advantage of their weaknesses. A young mother also summed up her birthing experience in a 200-word news feature article entitled "Laughter beyond cries!"

"I have learned a lot," said one young participant, "me, too," said a young pastor. "Indeed, such an intellectual exercise sharpens rusted skills that are inherent in us," concluded an experienced professor and news writer and one of the seminar attendees. [Seminar Participants/AND Staff]

## Myanmar Mega City meetings yield 74

The "Happy Family Forever" series of presentations proved to have worked very well for city dwellers of Myaungmya, Ayeyarwaddy, in the country of the golden pagodas, as meetings held on February 8-21 resulted in big attendance and reaped 74 new believers.

The meetings were conducted at the Joon Hyun Yoo chapel of the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary in Myanmar (MUAS) by four church leaders.

Pastor Muller Kyaw, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Myanmar (MYUM); Pastor Caleb Paw, MYUM ministerial secretary; and Dr. Connally Hla, MUAS chaplain, took turns in presenting the series. Alvin Po Po Hla, MUAS president, gave the nightly health lectures. "The presentations were down-to-earth, clear and family-edifying messages that those who attended the first night meetings kept coming up until the end of the series," observers were heard to say.

On Sabbath (Saturday), 74 participants accepted the call to be part of God's family through baptism by Pastor Kyaw, which brought joy and excitement to church members. These new believers were baptized by Pastors Kin Mg Yin, Paul Tanbaunaw, and Connally Hla.

"We know that heaven rejoiced with us as we saw the triumph of truth in the hearts of many here in our country," said faculty and staff and church members attending the ceremony. [Morris Chit]



# Myanmar Camp Meeting Nurtures Youth Evangelism

In an environment where outdoor activities are seldom permitted and where public meetings banned, having one of these activities creates extreme joy and excitement to the young people. And these 437 youth were bird-like free as they held their youth camp, March 25-29, at the Ngwe Saung Beach, Nyaung Maw, in Myanmar.

Coming from the vast fields of Myanmar, these young people committed themselves to doing full-swing evangelism as they pledged to get actively involved with the mission of the church: to reach out to their communities for Christ.

Along with field officers, youth directors, and church members, the campers showed no signs of tiredness or fatigue as they participated in physical, mental, social and spiritual exercises throughout the period.

On Sabbath afternoon, they organized themselves into small groups and chose places surrounding the camp for evangelism activities. At these exercises, about 500 people were reached by the gospel.

"Thus far, this has been the most-longed for activities by the Adventist youth, and as leaders we are encouraged to provide avenues like this to release their energies for the advancement of God's work," said Victor Than, one of the camp leaders.

When asked of his assessment of the camp, Shine Tha, MYUM youth director, exclaimed, "The blessings are tremendous for the young people of the church as they unleashed their talents and skills to become effective witness for the Lord in their respective communities." [Myo Chan/AND]



## A MODEL OF HOSPITALITY

I was walking to my hotel one evening when I noticed someone following me not too far behind. The street was poorly lit so I couldn't clearly recognize the person. I paced faster. The one trailing me did as well. I could see the gate of my hotel from a far distance but it was quite awkward to run.

That day, I had befriended the locals. From the boys on the streets to the motorcycle drivers, to the street vendors and just about anyone I met. This somehow jaded me on my first day while making acquaintances in that foreign country.

As I walked faster, I tried to comfort myself that it just could be one of the locals I met earlier. I decided to shake my fear off. I was too soaked in my thoughts that when I looked back, I was surprised to see the person gaining speed and was pacing along.

Brushing off my fear I blurted, "Hi, good evening!"

The lady replied, "Good evening, too."

In her early 20s she was obviously uneasy in the dark. This time I was relaxed and started talking to her.

"Where have you been?" I inquired.

"From the salon to have my hair cut," was her kind reply.

I asked her name and told her mine. "Where are you from," she asked. I told her I came from the Philippines.

"Surely?" she exclaimed, "You know what, I'm going to the Philippines tomorrow. And I'll be there to represent my country for the Miss Earth 2008 beauty pageant in Manila," she proudly added.

I never expected to meet and talk to a beauty queen that night, more particularly in a dark street.

Sometimes, on unexpected circumstances and unholy hours we meet special people.

While Abraham was sitting by his tent door on the plains of Mamre (Genesis 18) he noticed three strangers at a distance. He ran to meet them and with utmost respect invited them to drop by his place. They accepted his sincere invitation. He gave them water that they might wash the dust of travel from their feet.

While the visitors were resting under the shade of the tree, Abraham ran to the flock and took a good and tender calf. When the bread and the meat were ready he took the steamy food to his visitors and they ate under a cool shade and Abraham stood respectfully beside them while they partook of his food.

Ellen G White related: “Abraham had seen in his guests only three tired wayfarers, thinking little that among them was the One he might worship without sin and this act of courtesy God regarded of sufficient importance to record in His word” (Patriarchs and Prophets, 138).

We usually give value to a person based on how we know him. And that value is usually associated with how we treat him or her. A person who is unknown to us is always of less value even though we know that he needs help. In my case, my reactions could have been different had I already known that the person walking behind me was a beauty queen.

Usually, we change our treatment toward someone if we already know something about him or her. That lady was not comfortable to be walking alone in the dark but I misunderstood her predicament and attempted to flee from her.

Abraham executed that utmost hospitality no matter how unknown those men were to him, notwithstanding the fact that entertaining strangers is not always safe to do. He cared for them though it was not evident that these strangers in any way could repay him.

Thousand years later this incident became a reference to this text: “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.” Hebrews 13:2

Can't this be our model in helping, accommodating, and entertaining people including those unknown to us?

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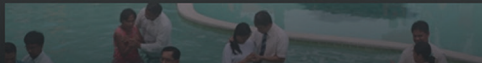
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