

Mission Sonlight, 2nd Qtr 08-Inter-American Division Overview Script-Traditional

Long version

Narrator: Welcome to Mission Sonlight. During the second quarter of 2008, we will be reporting from the Inter-American Division. Although this territory includes portions of the Caribbean, Central America and South America, the Inter-American headquarters are located in Miami, Florida. This Division is comprised of over 40 countries which include Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, French Guiana, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Martinique, Mexico, Montserrat, Netherlands Antilles, Nicaragua, Panama, Puerto Rico, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks, and Caicos Islands, United States Virgin Islands and Venezuela.

You can probably imagine white sandy beaches with sun and tropical breezes blowing as you take a dip in the sun-warmed waters. Perhaps you envision trekking the jungles or exploring the Mayan Ruins.

Life for Adventist Christians in these countries is much more than the tourist ads seen in magazines and on television. The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Inter-America is seeking to tell a population of over 263 million inhabitants the story of Jesus. Church members, numbering over 2.7 million, meet in 8, 883 churches each week to share the word of God. They reach out to their friends and neighbors through 108 schools, which range from elementary through graduate level programs. Some may hear of the love of Jesus through the 35 medical clinics and hospitals, which seek to bring

healing to those who are suffering. Perhaps others will learn of Christ and the Seventh-day Adventist church through one of the 19 radio stations which broadcast programming throughout the region in Spanish, French and English.

Written materials and Sabbath School Bible Study Lessons are also produced at two publishing houses that are headquartered in this Division.

In recent years countries in this Division have been affected by natural disasters of astounding proportions. Hurricane Mitch wreaked havoc in 1998 as it lumbered across 11 of the countries within the Division. Members living on the island of Guanaja, just off the coast of Honduras tell of how they spent three days lying on the ground, holding on to each other to keep from being swept away, as the hurricane stalled over their island. After Mitch moved on, these members faced rebuilding their island along with struggling without electricity for months until power could be restored.

Although the Adventist church and its members have faced difficulties, there is much to celebrate in the Inter-American Division. This quarter Mission Sonlight will highlight the work that is occurring in the countries of Trinidad and Mexico.

The University of the Southern Caribbean is a long-time institution in this Division. Established in 1927, the University recently celebrated being upgraded to university status in 2006.

Shirley McGarrell: For a very long time, many of us were praying. We wanted to develop in such a way that would put us on par with the two other universities that have been here. One old-the University of the West Indies-it has its history in the past and the newest of them, the University of Trinidad and Tobago.

Now we're in a better position than we ever were before. We're able to attract more qualified professionals-both at the faculty level and at the staff level. Now that we have gotten the accreditation from the government and GEFT approval, which is government financial assistance for students, we are now in a position to attract national students as well as international students.

Narrator: The University serves a diverse population from across the Division. They are challenged to meet the needs of many language and cultural groups.

Trevor Gardner: we provide services for a number of countries within in the Inter-American Division. We have English as a Second Language program. A number of our Spanish-speaking brethren, Portuguese-speaking brethren. Dutch speaking brethren, French-speaking brethren come here for instruction.

Narrator: During this quarter you'll learn how the University is facing the unique challenge of meeting an influx of a large non-Adventist student population. Find out how the government of Trinidad is looking to the Adventist University to create a model for the nation to help its citizens maintain values and make productive contributions to society.

You'll also learn of the needs to create appropriate worship atmospheres on the University campus where the current facilities are overcrowded and are in need of repairs.

Rapid church growth has stretched members to be creative with existing facilities. As early Adventist missionaries began their work in the countries within the Inter-American Division, they worked among the English and French speaking populations.

From there, they branched out to include the national populations of the Division's diverse territory.

As the early pioneers endeavored to tell the story of Jesus, they knew that living the gospel they preached was the best way to show others that they served a God who loved even those who were oppressed and in need. Early Adventist missionaries established hospitals, agricultural projects and schools to better the daily lives of those they served.

As the Adventist church in the Inter-American region began to grow rapidly, it was necessary adjust pastoral staffing within the area that would incorporate lay leadership which is supported by local pastors. This has aided continued church growth with the area and provided members with the impetus to share their love for Jesus on a daily basis, as well as participate in giving Bible studies and participating in evangelism and church planting. They do not have to wait for a pastor to be placed on payroll to plant a church. They don't have to wait for a church building to be built in order to form a new congregation. They meet in homes, rented rooms or even open fields.

From the island of Trinidad, Mission Sonlight will travel to Mexico where you will experience the hopes and dreams of members who are looking forward to building churches and updating their Campmeeting grounds, which they will use for further evangelism outreach projects.

Mexico is home to the second largest urban area in the world—Mexico City. With a population of over 8 million people, the idea of telling them about Christ can be an overwhelming thought. This is only one of several cities in the Division that have a

population of over 1 million people. It will take prayer, persistence, new methods and funds to continue to tell this part of the world that Jesus is coming again.

As you contemplate your 13th Sabbath Offering, think about being a student sitting or standing in an overcrowded chapel. Imagine being part of a church family who is growing so rapidly that there aren't enough church buildings to house the congregations which are being formed and the adults and children who are need a place to worship. As a worldwide Adventist church family, you are a part of those congregations. It's not too early to begin planning what you will give on Sabbath, June 28.

Reporting from the Inter-American Division for the 2nd Quarter of 2008, this is Mission Sonlight.

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