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Sixteen Baptized at First-ever LE Kids Convention

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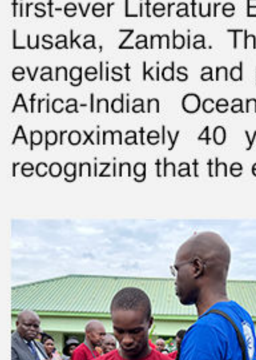
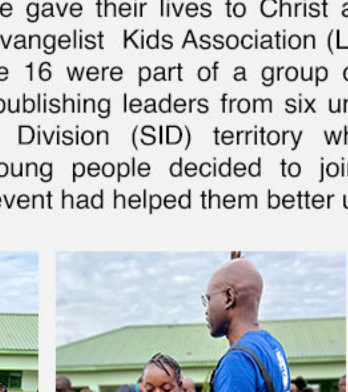
Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division

Literature Evangelist children at the Convention.

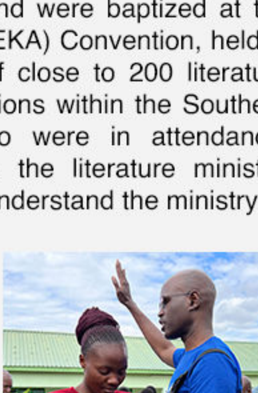
Sixteen young people gave their lives to Christ and were baptized at the first-ever Literature Evangelist Kids Association (LEKA) Convention, held in Lusaka, Zambia. The 16 were part of a group of close to 200 literature evangelist kids and publishing leaders from six unions within the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division (SID) territory who were in attendance. Approximately 40 young people decided to join the literature ministry, recognizing that the event had helped them better understand the ministry.



A participant being baptized as Union Directors look on.



Part of the 16 Participants who got baptized.



Participant being baptized.

The five-day event organized by the SID was themed "Unwavering Faith." SID publishing director Nelson Simweemba highlighted the objectives as an opportunity for spiritual and social refreshment, to create a sense of belonging and identity, to awaken a sense of mission, and to build networks among the LE kids. He also envisioned this as an opportunity for the continuity of the ministry.

At the event General Conference associate publishing director, Stephen Apola, spoke on the importance of being part of legacy families. He shared stories of missionary families that had dedicated their lives to the mission for generations. He called on the LE kids to value the legacy of mission and dedication to evangelism laid by their parents.

A section of the Participants listening to the presentations.

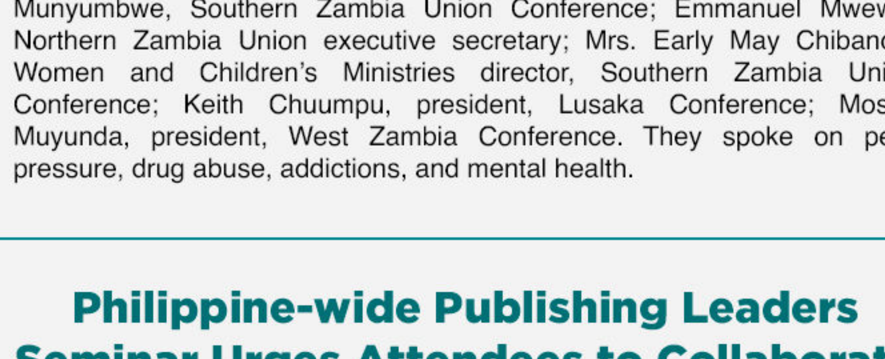
There was excitement among the kids who attended the convention. Delight Mabele, one of the delegates and a LE child, said it was exciting to be part of the first-ever LEKA convention, for it helped her to make new friends locally and internationally. She stated that the lessons were on point, speaking to the real issues young people go through daily. She appealed to other LE kids who did not attend to take advantage of these meetings, for they help attendees to grow spiritually. Faith Sikayamba, another LE child and delegate of LEKA, said that the convention has helped her to understand the work her mother has been doing. "I never took it seriously and was wondering why Mum would trouble herself going on streets doing the literature business, but after this meeting, I'm planning to join the ministry as a student LE," she said.

As the meeting came to its climax, a call was made for those who would like to join as literature evangelists, and 27 LE children registered.

The guest preacher, Oetla Simankane, director of Sabbath School and Personal Ministries, Trans-Orange Conference, South Africa, spoke to the hearts of the young people, appealing for them to have a personal relationship with Christ. Other guests included the keynote address by Vanny Munyumbwe, Southern Zambia Union Conference; Emmanuel Mwewa, Northern Zambia Union executive secretary; Mrs. Early May Chibanda, Women and Children's Ministries director, Southern Zambia Union Conference; Keith Chuumpu, president, Lusaka Conference; Moses Muyunda, president, West Zambia Conference. They spoke on peer pressure, drug abuse, addictions, and mental health.

Philippine-wide Publishing Leaders Seminar Urges Attendees to Collaborate and Innovate in Spreading Gospel

Julieto D. Gonzales
Communication and media director, West Visayan Conference



Publishing Leaders seminar attendees. [Photo: Southern Asia-Pacific Division]

The Philippine-wide Publishing Leaders Seminar was held at the Bohol Plaza Resort in Dauis, Bohol, Philippines, April 5-8, 2023, with more than 380 publishing leaders, mission, union, and world leaders in attendance. With the theme "It's Our Time: I Will Go as the Messenger's Leader," the seminar aimed to emphasize the importance of spreading the gospel message through printed pages, reflecting the realization that Jesus is coming soon.

Rey P. Cabañero, publishing director for the Adventist Church in the Southern Asia-Pacific Division, expressed gratitude for the meeting's convening. He appreciates the idea that "this seminar aims to foster camaraderie among God's workers, provide a platform for sharing ideas and messages based on exhortations in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy books, and renew every co-commitment worker to continue publishing ministries until Jesus comes."

The seminar covered a variety of topics, including leadership principles, best practices for presenting health books, effective literature evangelist recruitment and mentoring, and strategies for proclaiming the gospel message through Adventist literature.

Attendees participated in lectures and panel discussions, and listened to inspiring testimonies from successful publishing leaders and area publishing leaders. Some of the delegates voiced their appreciation to be a part of this gathering. "I am excited to attend this leadership seminar because it provides a unique opportunity to learn innovative leadership strategies and ideas." "I'm especially interested in discovering techniques to inspire my group members to be passionate about literature ministry and to remain faithful in serving the Lord," said Edwin Gajete, area publishing ministry leader from the central Philippines.

Notably, Stephen Apola, associate publishing leader of the Adventist Church, delivered impactful messages on letting God be the leader in fulfilling the gospel commission through the printed pages, as well as engaging youth and students in sharing the gospel message.

In addition to the educational and inspirational content, the seminar provided a valuable platform for attendees to network, collaborate on ministry projects, and build relationships with other publishing leaders across the Philippines.

In his appeal Leonardo Heyasa, Jr., Philippine Publishing House president, shared his positive response to the call of sharing Adventist literature with more individuals this year.
"Our goal is to scatter 1 million copies of Health & Home bookbound by 2030. It's not impossible. It is very feasible, because what we are asking is only 1 percent of our total population," Heyasa said.

"There is still a lot of work ahead of us. Our pioneers and former leaders have done their part. Now is our time, and many of those who long to know God depend on our willingness to go," Heyasa added.

Moses' Leadership Example Highlighted in Literature Ministry Seminar

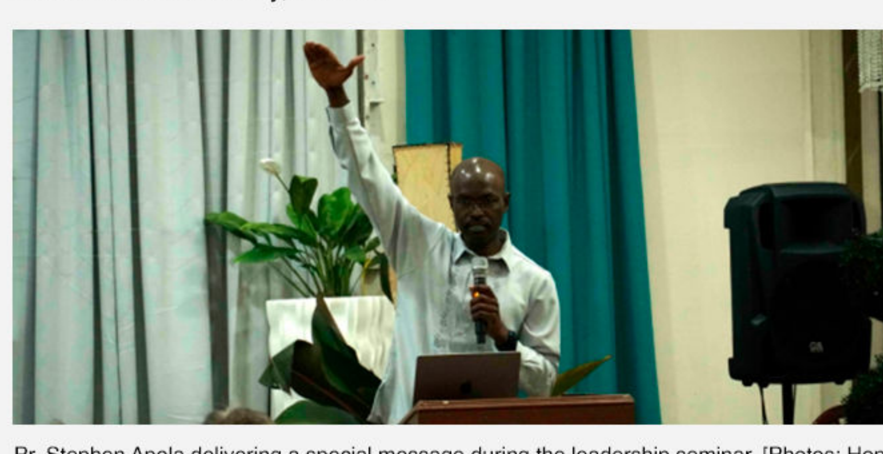
Edward Rodriguez
Southern Asia-Pacific Division

Publishing leaders gather for a photo during the Tri-Union Leadership Congress.

While most Christian denominations around the world observed Holy Week, the Tri-Union of the Adventist Church in the Philippines held its annual Publishing Ministries Leadership Seminar in Bohol, Philippines, from April 4 to 9, 2023, with the theme "It's Our Time: I Will Go as the Messenger's Leader."

The seminar was co-hosted by the Central Philippine Union Conference and the Southern Asia-Pacific Division. The program's goal was to give leaders in the Philippine Seventh-day Adventist Church's publishing ministries department the skills and knowledge they needed to do their jobs well. This seminar also reminded attendees of the importance of ministry by example and the Jesus method.

On the first day of the conference, Stephen Apola delivered a stirring message about the importance of humility and obedience in leadership. The biblical story of Moses and his exceptional leadership qualities inspired Apola who works as the world church's associate director of Publishing Ministries. Despite being one of history's greatest leaders, Moses was known for his meekness and humility, he said.



Pr. Stephen Apola delivering a special message during the leadership seminar. [Photos: Hope Channel Philippines Luzon]

Apola urged the audience to follow in the footsteps of Moses by cultivating a spirit of humility and obedience. He emphasized the significance of these traits for effective leadership in any situation. The pastor's speech elicited an enthusiastic response from the audience, who were moved by his words.

Literature evangelists were reminded that God initiates and directs effective ministry, and that God seeks to carry out His plan. This encourages believers to trust God's abilities rather than their own. "Even when Moses saw an Israelite being killed, he was mistaken in thinking he could save Israel with his strategies, because God had a different plan." When God approached Moses after 40 years, he still had curiosity and leadership qualities, but he was humbler.

Apola emphasized that the publishing ministry is holy ground, as is every step a believer takes in God's presence, explaining that allowing God to initiate ministry rather than attempting to initiate it on one's own is the key to success. Believers must pray for God to reveal the needs of the people they serve, as well as the strategy for meeting those needs.

"God is aware of the people's needs in your territory. God is aware of the people's suffering in your territory. God knows what the best way is to meet those needs. And it is God who dispatches you and the literature evangelists to meet those needs," Apola highlighted. He concluded by sharing his own decision to prioritize family over ministry, trusting God to take care of what he is unable to do.

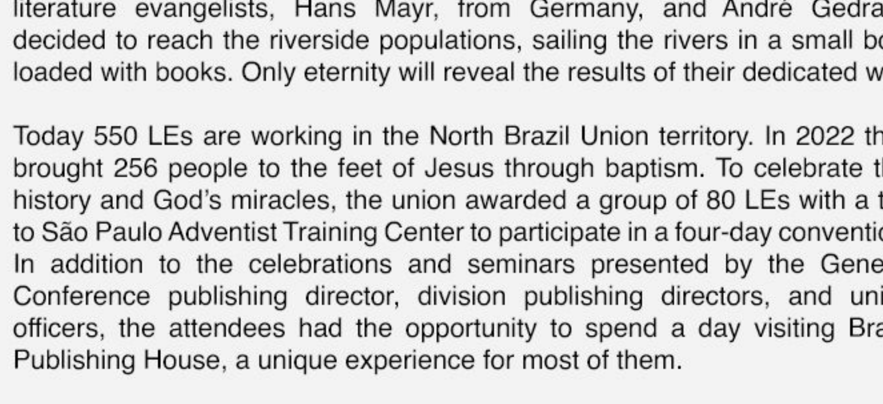
Throughout the weeklong event, attendees participated in a variety of workshops, plenary sessions, and group discussions on such topics as effective leadership, communication strategies, and the use of technology in the publishing ministry. They also had the opportunity to network with other leaders of publishing ministries, share ideas, and learn from one another's experiences.

The Philippine Tri-Union Publishing Ministries Leadership Seminar is a significant event for the Philippine Seventh-day Adventist Church's publishing ministry department. It provides a forum for leaders to gain new insights, skills, and relationships that will enable them to better serve their respective communities.

North Brazil Union LE Convention

Almir Marroni
Publishing Department Director, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

From April 16 to 19, 2023, the North Brazil Union (NBU) LE Convention took place in the Adventist Training Center, close to Tatuí, the city where the Brazil Publishing House is located.



Delegates who participated in the North Brazil Union LE Convention. [Photo: Almir Marroni]

The North Brazil Union covers three Brazilian states, where the church administers seven conferences. There are almost 350,000 Adventists and 3,600 congregations under the leadership of 377 pastors. The Adventist work began in northern Brazil at the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1927 two literature evangelists, Hans Mayr, from Germany, and André Gedrath, decided to reach the riverside populations, sailing the rivers in a small boat loaded with books. Only eternity will reveal the results of their dedicated work.

Today 550 LEs are working in the North Brazil Union territory. In 2022 they brought 256 people to the feet of Jesus through baptism. To celebrate this history and God's miracles, the union awarded a group of 80 LEs with a trip to São Paulo Adventist Training Center to participate in a four-day convention. In addition to the celebrations and seminars presented by the General Conference publishing director, division publishing directors, and union officers, the attendees had the opportunity to spend a day visiting Brazil Publishing House, a unique experience for most of them.

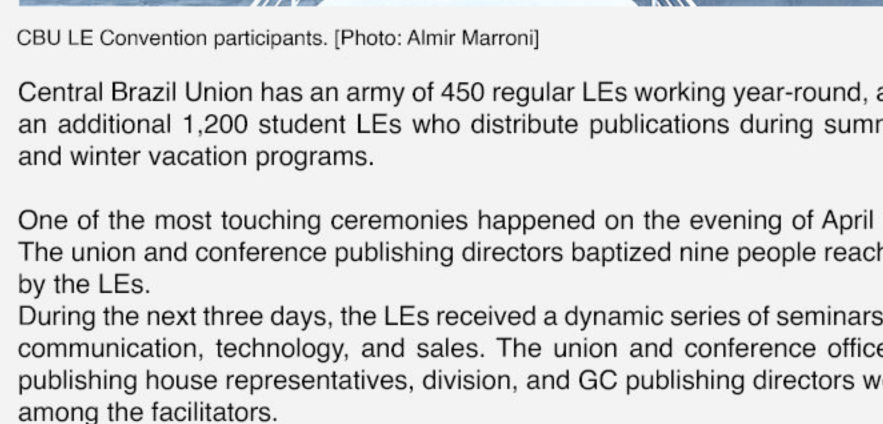
Ivan Nascimento, NBU publishing director and coordinator of the event, did an extraordinary job providing the LEs with an inspiring and encouraging convention.

Central Brazil Union LE Convention

Almir Marroni
Publishing Department Director, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

To celebrate God's miracles in the canvassing work and to encourage and inspire Literature Evangelists to carry out their ministry, the Central Brazil Union held its annual LE Convention on April 12 - 15, 2023.

The Central Brazil Union (CBU) coordinates the work of the Adventist Church in eight conferences located in São Paulo state, the most populated and economically developed region in Brazil. In the metropolitan area of São Paulo alone (one of the world's largest cities) there are four conferences. The union has 280,000 church members pastored by 700 ministers. In these large urban centers literature evangelists also play a crucial role in mission accomplishment.



CBU LE Convention participants. [Photo: Almir Marroni]

Central Brazil Union has an army of 450 regular LEs working year-round, and an additional 1,200 student LEs who distribute publications during summer and winter vacation programs.

One of the most touching ceremonies happened on the evening of April 12. The union and conference publishing directors baptized nine people reached by the LEs.
During the next three days, the LEs received a dynamic series of seminars on communication, technology, and sales. The union and conference officers, publishing house representatives, division, and GC publishing directors were among the facilitators.

The convention ended on the Sabbath evening of April 15, with LE testimonies and a special tribute to colporteurs who died during the pandemic. Leaders and LEs also received plaques and medals of recognition for their work.

El Salvador Union Holds a Publishing Ministries Congress

Almir Marroni
Publishing Department Director, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

The El Salvador Union held the first Publishing Ministries Congress from April 28 – 30, 2023, with the main purpose of highlighting the role of Adventist literature in missionary work, and as a tool for strengthening the faith of the church members.

Delegates who participated in the seminar for church pastors in El Salvador.

The program started with a seminar for church pastors from all over the country. The facilitators were Abel Pacheco, El Salvador Union president, Isaias Espinoza, and Almir Marroni, publishing directors at the Inter-American Division and the General Conference, respectively.

The SDA Church membership in El Salvador is approximately 200,000, in more than 1,000 churches and companies. In this area, four bookstores, 50 full-time LEs, and 800-plus church publishing coordinators serve as the primary agents of SDA literature distribution.

Evila Lazo Union publishing director and regional Inter-American Division Publishing Association manager envisioned the idea of dedicating May as the 'Month of the Book'. An initiative to promote a wide circulation of books among church members and the public in general in which discounts and vigorous promotions will take place to increase book sales. LEs will also benefit from an impressive list of prices in May.

On Sabbath, April 29, the congress continued with an inspiring program for the LEs including an award ceremony of recognition and encouragement.

The following day, more than 800 local church publishing coordinators joined the event for a seminar about the role of Adventist literature at the end-time, presented by Almir Marroni, General Conference Publishing director.

800-plus local church publishing coordinators attended the seminar on April 30th. [Photos: Almir Marroni]