

**6th Quadrennial Session
Seventh-day Adventist Church
Surinamese Mission**

13-14 March 2024

President's Report

Presented by
Pastor Guno. B. Emanuelson

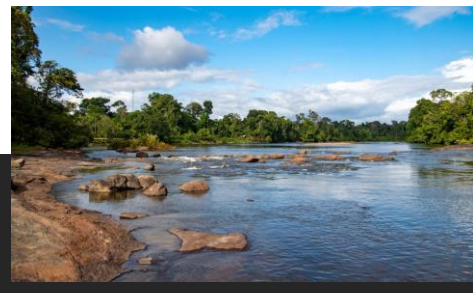


Dr. Leonard Johnson, Executive Secretary of the Inter American Division of Seventh-day Adventists (IAD), Dr. Kern Tobias, President Caribbean Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (CARU), Other Administrators of CARU, Directors of CARU, Directors of the Suriname Mission, Pastors and other workers of the Suriname Mission, Delegates representing the churches of the Suriname Mission, Brothers and Sisters, fellow believers,

It is with great joy and gratitude that I stand before you on this momentous occasion—the 6th Quadrennial Session of the Surinamese Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. As we gather to reflect on the journey of the past quadrennium and look ahead to the path God has set before us, I am inspired by the powerful message found in the Scriptures:

In the book of Zechariah 4:6, we find a profound reminder of the significance of walking with God, even when we may feel small and insignificant in comparison to those around us. The verse reads, "So he said to me, 'This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty."

In this scripture, Zerubbabel faced the daunting task of rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem. The enormity of the challenge before him could have easily overwhelmed him, considering the limited resources and the apparent insignificance of his efforts compared to the grandeur of the task. Yet, God's message to him echoes through the ages—to walk not by might, not by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord.



This profound truth resonates with us today as we reflect on the journey of the Surinamese Mission. We may, at times, feel small in comparison to the challenges we encounter or the expectations placed upon us. We might be surrounded by giants in our endeavors, but the Word of God encourages us to press forward, placing our trust not in our own strength but in the guidance and power of the Almighty.

As we delve into the President's Report and witness the tapestry of our collective efforts, let us remember that the success we've achieved is not solely the result of our might or power but a manifestation of God's Spirit working through us. Just like Zerubbabel, we are called to move forward with confidence, trusting that our efforts, no matter how small they may seem, are significant when aligned with God's purpose.

As of March 13, 2024 we stand united in declaring that despite the Covid-19 pandemic, and the economic setbacks it is the Lord who has preserved and sustained us. Over the next two days, our departments will unfold the positive outcomes resulting from their dedicated efforts. I will provide a summary and overview, offering a taste of what awaits in the form of comprehensive reports and recommendations. Together, let us concentrate our efforts on expanding the work in Suriname to honor and glorify God.

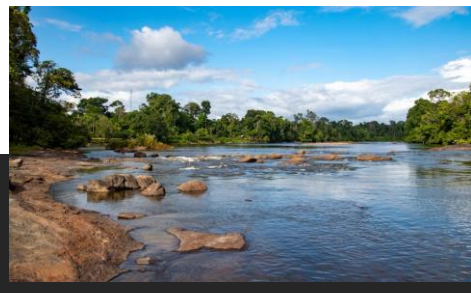
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Evangelism

Evangelism remains the main thrust of us as Seventh-day Adventists. It is our reason for being. Thus, evangelism is woven into everything that we do. The period under review has been guided by the Strategic plan of the church namely “I will go.” While we ended our session all geared up “to go!,” we were confronted with a counteroffensive from the enemy which almost shut down all operations. The Covid-19 pandemic forced us to look for different means of being true to the gospel commission.

As we moved to the virtual platforms, the Suriname mission participated in the Impact CARU Good news gospel Explosion with Pastor Claudius Morgan. In October of the same year we would have the Christ for the crisis online crusade with our Suriname born Pastor Lloyd Jacott which was also broadcasted on ATV public channel. Other major evangelistic initiatives were the Footprints of Hope crusade with Pastor Glenn Samuels in 2022 broadcasted on WBTV and the Truth for Today, Hope for Tomorrow crusade with Surinamese Pastor Roel Blackman. A different approach to evangelism was employed by John and Clair Sanches who presented a seminar entitled the Love Story. All these evangelistic programs coupled with efforts from the laity have resulted in 253 baptisms for the quadrennium under review.



Secretariat

The Secretariat has experienced growth in the area of record keeping and accuracy. The move to the ACMS platform was entered successfully. Great efforts have been made to attain a level of accuracy in the figures that honestly reflects the state of affairs of our mission. As such, the numbers that stood at 5422 at the beginning of this period now stand at 3500 at the end of the quadrennium

ACMS							
Jaar	Begin leden	ACMS		Member Transactions		Growth_all	
		Groei	Verlies	Netto groei	Eind leden	Groei %	
2020	5422	37	2108	-2071	3351	-38.20%	
2021	3351	68	43	25	3376	0.75%	
2022	3376	103	26	77	3453	2.28%	
2023	3453	88	41	47	3500	1.36%	

* Increase = Baptism, Rebaptism, POF, Transfer, Adjustment
 * Decrease = Removal/Dropped, Missing, Death, Transfer, Adjustments

We want to thank sister Onessa Hughes for her guidance and sister Tamanisha van Engel for her assistance during the initial stage of this process.

An area of concern remains the attrition rate of our members. The list of missing members appears to be longer than that of active members. There is still much to do in that sense. The statistics also point out that our ratio from non- Adventist to-Adventist in the country is very high. Coupled with the statistics that point out the various ethnicities, we must conclude that there is still much land to be covered.



HRM

The past quadrennium has seen two pastors retire while another pastor choose to end his employment with the organization. One administrative assistant left to pursue higher education, while the accountant also left to pursue another career.

The Union sessions in July 2022 welcomed a new administration into office with Pastor David Daniel as Executive Secretary and Pastor Steven Tulp as Treasurer.

Sister Vanessa Draaisma came into the employ of the organization in October of that year, while sister Brigette Elshot assumed her position as Personal Ministry and Sabbath school director in December 2022.

Sister Esmerelda Hok a Hin also became a worker in the employ of the organization in October of the same year.

We mourn the passing to her rest of Sister Anita Maatstaf, who in earlier years has been a long standing principal of our main primary school. She has also served as the speaker of the radio broadcast “Wan njun dei broko.”



Finance

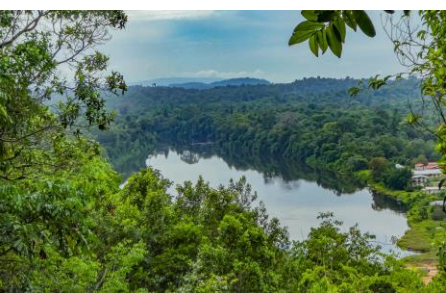
The financial figures clearly demonstrate God's guidance in the context of economic challenges during the past quadrennium, including the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, Suriname's declining economy, and government economic reforms. Despite these challenges, members, Surinamese in the diaspora, and supporters have consistently supported the mission, driven by a divine calling.

	2020	2021	2022	2023
Omschrijving	Bedrag	Bedrag	Bedrag	Bedrag
Tienden van kerken	1,347,642.75	1,974,951.26	3,241,570.33	4,434,153.05
Tienden van werkers	99,853.40	96,442.60	130,110.80	196,283.50
Tienden van Individuen	769,851.11	2,273,423.88	1,606,938.17	3,430,442.15
Totaal	2,217,347.26	4,344,817.74	4,978,619.30	8,060,878.70

Tabel 1: Overzicht van tienden inkomsten over de jaren 2020-2023

In this period of global restructuring within the church organization, we have welcomed seven new employees to the Surinamese mission, but at the same time, five have departed. The shortage of workers persists, particularly for roles such as auditor, internal controller, pastors, and project coordinator.

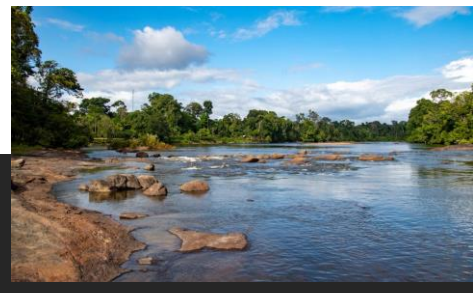
While income has increased, expenditures have also risen, partly due to financial reforms and inflation. It is necessary to follow a prudent policy, where cuts in overhead costs are essential. The realization that salaries are not market-competitive has led the executive board to decide to provide financial assistance to workers and retirees from donor funds.



Finance (continued)

To make salaries market-competitive and simultaneously achieve savings, increasing income is crucial. This can be achieved by recruiting more members for tithes and offering plans, establishing new churches, and reaching untapped areas for church growth. Financial health is seen as an indication of spiritual well-being and members' commitment to God's mission.

We thank our members both in Suriname as in the diaspora for their consistent support of the mission of God in this field.

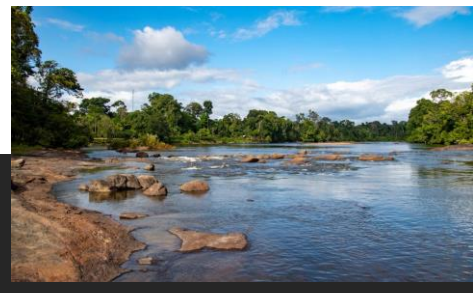


Communication Department

The Communication Department has undergone a rapid transformation in the past years. From a department that has heretofore mainly gathered and disseminated news, it has grown into a major player for spreading the advent message. This positive outcome of the covid-19 pandemic forced our organization to make some major investments in technology and ICT infrastructure. This process which was started by brother Ronald Newland, and continued by Pastor Steven Tulp, resulted in setting up our own recording studio, The Jan Brinkman studio as well as getting into an alliance with Wan Bun Boskupu TV. In 2022 Sister Vanessa Draaisma assumed the position of director and brought an extra impetus to the department. The department dedicated itself to the mission of "Building Bridges of Hope." The focus was on disseminating a positive image of the church and its mission through effective communication channels.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the department adapted by transforming the traditional "newsflash" into social media updates, with Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube as crucial platforms for news and announcements.

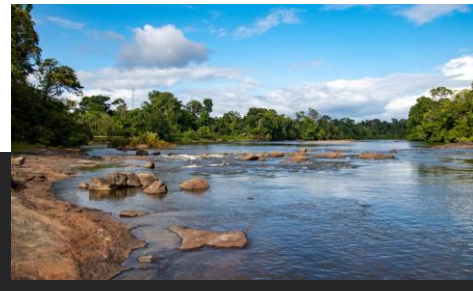
Livestreaming proved crucial during lockdowns and retained relevance after the reopening of churches. Social media, especially YouTube and WBtv, played a central role in reaching church members.



Community services

The Community services department is quickly gaining in importance as the church embraces the mission of Jesus to minister to the needs of people before we bid them to follow Him. As such one of the 3 strategic pillars of the Inter- American Division namely community engagement has been fully embraced by the Suriname Mission.

There were many new initiatives undertaken by the department in the period under review such as the outreach to senior citizens once a month, serving senior citizens' and children's homes as well as ministry to schools. Cleaning up the neighborhood and feeding programs in schools. The department has been very active in reaching out to the community and thus alleviating needs, while providing a positive image of what the church of Christ is like.



Education

The Adventist Philosophy of Education aims for the holistic development of individuals, emphasizing spiritual, intellectual, physical, and social growth. It seeks to lead individuals back to their divine purpose, promote character development, and encourage a life of faith and service.

During this period, Adventist schools in Suriname experienced growth in the number of students and teachers, with an increasing focus on spiritual and character development.

Efforts were made to integrate faith and learning sessions and spiritual activities into the annual program to enhance teachers' competency and deepen their understanding of the goals of Adventist education.

The COVID-19 pandemic led to school closures and a shift to distance education. Despite challenges, various stakeholders supported efforts to ensure continuous education.

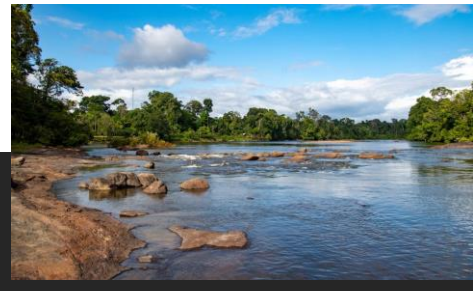
Notable activities include Education Sabbath, the ENDITNOW program addressing abuse, Literacy Promotion Reading Day, and the Day of Prayer with a focus on 'Heroes of Faith.'

However, 2023 brought challenges, including the departure of teachers, difficulties in filling vacancies, and negative reports affecting the reputation of Adventist education.



Education (continued)

Efforts were made to address these challenges through training sessions. The department received training from Dr. Bowman and after his retirement from Dr. Daphne Magloire who became the new Education Director of the Caribbean Union. The Education department remains the area with the greatest potential for evangelism and therefore deserves all our efforts for optimal results.



Health

During the absence of a health director for the department, Dr. Anjo Draaisma and Dr. Wendy Emanuelson-Telgt coordinated the department's work as volunteers, especially towards the end of 2020 and in 2021.

The main goal was to increase knowledge about a healthy lifestyle and informed choices. Together with church health workers, they developed monthly videos and social media posts focusing on the eight principles based on the eight doctors and the New Start principle. These programs encouraged healthier choices.

The health department collaborated with health workers in the local church to highlight key World Health Days, addressing topics such as Breastfeeding Awareness, Mental Health, Suicide Prevention, Teen Pregnancy Prevention, Breast Cancer Awareness, and HIV/AIDS prevention and management.

Active collaboration with local church health workers provided members and the community with relevant information during the COVID-19 pandemic, with a notable initiative being the LIVE TV program on WBTV channel 10.2 and YouTube. This program emphasized the importance of a healthy lifestyle as a preventive measure against COVID-19, providing practical tips and scientifically backed information.

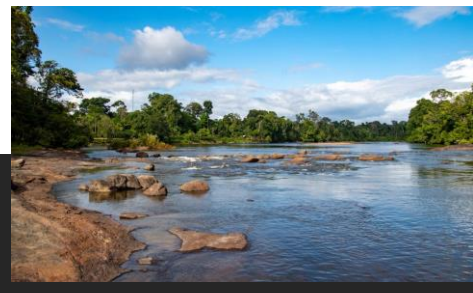


Health (continued)

In February 2023, Sister Gilma Daniel assumed the role of the new health director. The Adventist Health Department in Suriname aims primarily to promote a healthy lifestyle as a form of preventive healthcare and to integrate health messages as a precursor to the gospel of salvation. The year began with a special meeting of all health secretaries of local churches, focusing on sharing goals and getting to know each other.

In April 2023, the Health Department, in collaboration with the Publicity Department, organized an evangelization program in the Zorg en Hoop community, offering free health checks. The department also launched the first fitness program, aimed at raising awareness about the importance of exercise for physical and mental health.

Despite facing challenges related to misinformation about Covid-19, financial constraints, and staffing issues, the Health Department remains committed to promoting a comprehensive approach to health, combining physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.



Publishing ministries

The Suriname Mission welcomed a new Publishing Director in February 2023 in the person of Sister Gilma Emile-Daniel.

The vision of the Publishing Department is that every Seventh-day Adventist member would experience an intense desire to read Adventist Publication and thus experience an increase in the number of Literature Evangelists who are passionately involved in distributing and selling Adventist Publication.

In an effort to raise awareness among members of the role and importance of this department, visits were conducted to the following churches:

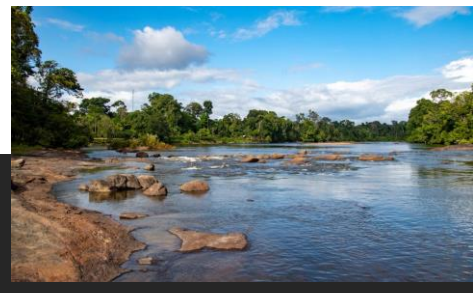
Zion SDA Church – Dutch speaking

Smyrna SDA Church – English Speaking

Galilee SDA Church – French Speaking

Esperenca Vivia – Portuguese/ Spanish Speaking

Important initiatives that were started by the Publishing department include the Great Controversy reading plan, the Study guide and the movie night, as well as the push for the distribution of the book. Our hope is that many will join the bandwagon and sign up to be Literature Evangelist to spread the word in printed form.



Ministerial

Vision of the department for the quadrennium under review was to groom lay and clerical leaders into Spirit-led, competent and Empowering servants of God. To realize this vision the department planned and executed a number of initiatives under the following broad areas: Spiritual growth, proclamation, personal development, and church growth.

Meeting the objective of Spiritual Growth was sought through partnership with the Family Ministries and Prayer Ministries department. The Pastors, Elders, Deacons, Deaconesses and Family units of the constituency were led into a 40 Days of Prayer and fasting experience.

In the area of professional growth Pastors were motivated to engage in formal professional development programs. Pastors also completed “Continuing Education” requirements in the area of Personal Spirituality, Christian Stewardship and Church growth leadership, (Discipleship and Cross- Cultural Evangelism).

Consistent with the church growth and leadership development thrust of the Inter- American Division, Elders, Deacons and Deaconesses were trained and equipped to support the pastor in nurture and retention of the membership.

Healthy Family and Collegial Relationships-were nurtured by activities such as Ministerial family week of prayer. In this way ministerial families (wives, husband, and children) were able to bond together spiritually and socially.



Personal Ministries

The Personal Ministries Department of the Surinamese Adventist Mission aims to involve every church member in active soul-winning service. Regular training sessions, workshops, and distribution of resources aimed to equip members for effective personal and public evangelism are provided.

Despite challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the department adapted by using online platforms for training and communication. Zoom, WhatsApp, and social media played crucial roles in maintaining connections and facilitating training sessions.

The year 2022 marked a renewed emphasis on small group ministry. The department actively encouraged the formation of small groups within local churches, fostering a sense of community and providing opportunities for spiritual growth. The slogan for that year was 2 by 2 for more than 2 in 2022.

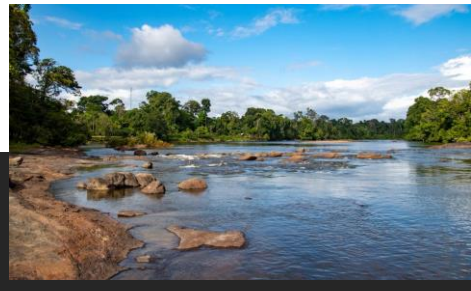
The department has sought to integrate Personal ministries with Sabbath school and Prayer ministries. As such many inreach activities were engaged in surrounding prayer and spiritual enrichment. Back to the altar and CARU prayer meetings, war room became the undergirding element for witnessing. The result of these ministries was 119 baptisms to the honor and glory of God.



ESDA

The Bible Correspondence school (ESDA) is playing an important role in helping people get a better understanding of the Bible and its meaning for their lives. In a unique merger between the Community services and ESDA department an initiative which introduced the Health and Happiness Bible lessons to a senior citizens' home. 24 certificates were handed out to seniors, and 43 lessons to young people.

More than 440 sets of Healthy and happy Bible lessons were shared and 113 certificates were awarded.



Youth

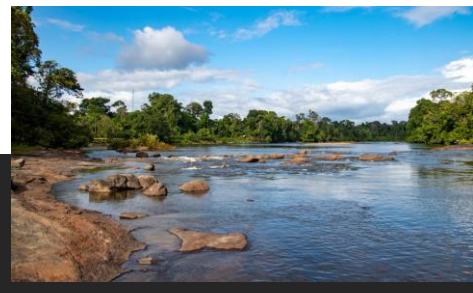
While the Covid-19 pandemic has greatly affected the energetic young people of the church, these youth were quickly able to adapt and move their activities to the virtual space. While there was even a virtual camporee, there is nothing that can take the place of “in person” contacts.

The youth has participated in Global Youth day, Youth week of prayers, training of youth and pathfinder leaders, World Adventurer day and other youth related activities.

In the year 2023 a youth rally was held with Master Guides from Guyana in attendance, as well as the youth leader from the conference and the Caribbean Union. We want to thank Pastor Chester Hinds for his ministry in that department during the period 2020-june 2023.

The youth were able to participate in the Bible Connection at the local and national level, and one of young people, Traska Dundas, was able to represent the mission at the CARU finals in Sint-Vincent.

The first senior youth camp after Covid took place from September 5-10, 2023 at Jaw Jaw. Around 105 campers attended among which many inactive or non SDA youth. We thank God for a baptism of 3 teenagers and a rebaptism of a youth. May God bless our youth.

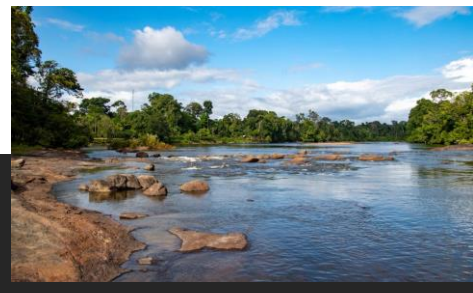


Children's ministries

The Children's ministries department has as its mission to lead children into a loving relationship with Jesus Christ. This the department has aimed to do through different programs and initiatives such as the creation of special lesson series for children and teens, the translation and printing of the Gracelink series in collaboration with the Sabbathschool ministry. Other resources were also provided to empower children and teenagers to make healthy choices.

Children and early teens were trained in public speaking and thus prepared for Child crusades to begin on May 16- 22. Vacation Bible Schools were also promoted and supported.

Various programs were held in which children were given tools to be courageous and stand for what they believe. These and many other programs were offered during the past 4 years. Commendations to the director for the effort made in "training up the child in the way they should go."

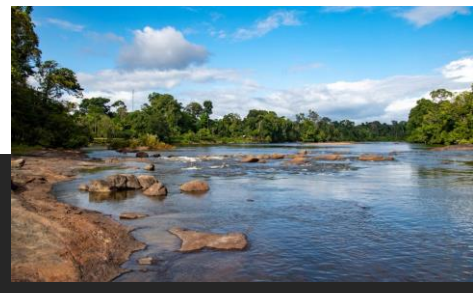


Stewardship

The Stewardship Department of the Suriname Mission of Seventh-day Adventists focused on promoting principles of faithful stewardship, including financial management, time, talents, and health.

The department sought to empower the pastors and leaders by providing resources and through participation in virtual seminars on various topics related to stewardship. The CARU director held a workshop and training session in October 2023 emphasizing the concept of returning tithes and offerings as an expression of gratitude and trust in God's provision.

Resources are provided for the churches to facilitate the giving process. New tithe envelopes were developed for the children as well as the adults. The offertory readings are translated into Dutch to be read before the collection. Pastors, Treasurers and Stewardship directors are encouraged to promote the offertory service and see it as an act of worship.



Global Mission

The Global Mission department, now part of Adventist Mission, led by Pastor Steven Tulp, focuses on the most unreached population groups worldwide. From the 10/40 Window to secular and postmodern societies, we deploy frontline workers and support innovative projects. We have established six study centers globally to build bridges to other religions and communities.

Suriname provides a unique opportunity to proclaim the first angel's message due to its diverse ethnic groups, languages, and religions. Suriname's profile underscores the need for a transcultural approach in evangelism to effectively reach the different cultures.

Diversity in Suriname is evident in the Hindustanis, Maroons, Creoles, Javanese, Chinese, and others. However, the Adventist community does not fully reflect this diversity, making a transcultural approach to evangelism crucial.

Suriname has a predominantly Christian population, but Hinduism and Islamism are also prominently present. Adventists have only 17 churches and 5 groups, indicating significant growth and outreach are still needed.

The presence of a large Brazilian community in Suriname, especially in connection with mining, requires specific efforts. There is a need for a center of influence to overcome language barriers and offer services such as language courses, immigration assistance, cultural integration, food courses, and Adventist education.



Global Mission (continued)

The focus on the Javanese, a group with growth potential, is a sustainable project. Funding from the General Conference to establish a church among the Javanese has been approved, with the goal of establishing three churches in the next five years.

Participation in the CSAR conference and Living the Mission 2023 in Guyana has provided us with valuable insights and international connections. We have undertaken specific activities, including health fairs and training, to reach diverse population groups.



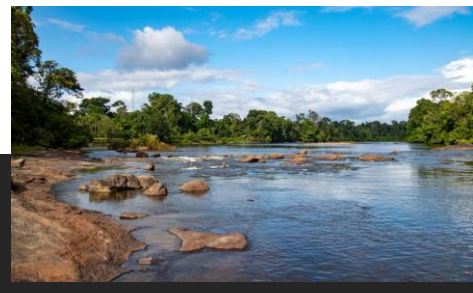
Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department (PARL)

The Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department (PARL) emphasizes its role as the official liaison between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and public authorities. The department focuses on building relationships with various individuals, including government officials, to promote religious freedom and present the Adventist identity, message, and mission.

The department's mission in the Surinamese mission is to position the Seventh-day Adventist Church in a way that enhances credibility, trust, and relevance in the community while defending and promoting the right to religious freedom for all. Efforts have been made to increase the church's visibility in the public arena without compromising its distinctiveness.

Activities such as responding to COVID-19 challenges, providing guidelines for church members during elections, organizing virtual seminars, participating in the CARLA Congress, and addressing issues related to COVID-19 vaccinations were carried out. Additionally, the department has been involved in meetings with government officials, including the president and ministers, participating in national events, and intervening in cases where members faced challenges in observing the Sabbath.

Challenges faced by the PARL department include a lack of understanding of its objectives, limited resources, and the pressure on individuals to work or attend school on the Sabbath due to financial difficulties.



Women's ministries

The women's ministries department has used made ample use of the special days on the mission calendar allotted to them to have enrichment programs or do ministry for women in the church as well as in the community.

Online seminars were engaged in especially during the Covid period. Bible studies were given to the leaders at the local level, with the expectation that they in return should share those with others as well. Programs such as: The amazing love of God makes me, Hurt at home, The wounds of abuse, how can we do more; Come and see the Savior and others, were presented.

The women also visited several churches in the interior of Suriname, the Amerindian church on the border of French-Guyana, and the El-Shaddai church on the border with Guyana. Through these programs women were encouraged, equipped, and empowered and given the assurance that they are not alone.



Family ministries

The role of the Family Ministries Department is to minister to the needs of family units, couples, parents, men and the various existing classes of singles within the constituency and to empower them to nurture healthy relationships with God, and their fellowmen.

Some of the sessions and topics covered to reach out to these groups within the family included:

Effective Parenting by Pr. Ammaran Williams, the Family Ministries Director of the Caribbean Union Conference

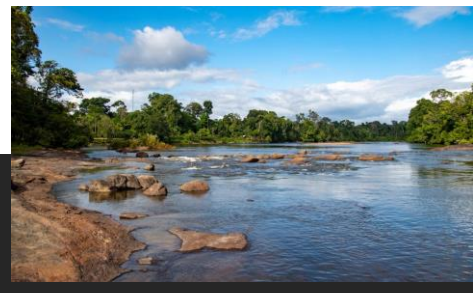
Preserving Unity Through Marriage for A lifetime by Dr. Kern Tobias, the President of the Caribbean Union Conference

What Should I Know before I say I Do by Pr. Steven Tulp with guest panelists Pr. And Sis. Kirk from the Tobago Mission.

Living with a Spouse with a Mental Illness by Br. Desir Dameri

Healthy, Holy, Happy- Men's Conference- Presenters: Pr. David Daniel, Br. Desir Dameri, Dr. Rechenel Ellecom, Br. Patrick Krieger and Br. Deas Burgzorg.

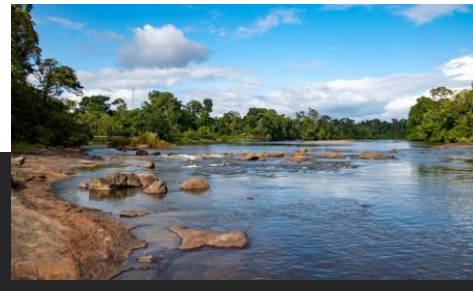
The Family Life department also engaged in evangelistic model using the Grow method with the reaping campaign in October 2023 entitled: The hope for my Family in which 15 souls were added to the kingdom.



Creative Ministries

The music and creative ministries department has become gained even more importance with the move to virtual services. With many programs going online, and the improvement of the quality of our services, more demands are being placed on our musicians and singers in the post-covid era.

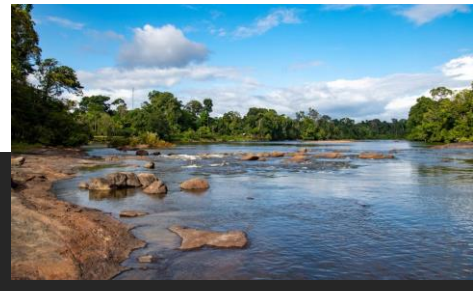
We are thankful for the many praise teams and musicians who provide their services on a weekly basis. The ministry of the group Advent Praise, as well as Redeemed among others have been invaluable to the music ministry and outreach of the church.



ADRA

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency started this term with great enthusiasm. A bus was purchased to facilitate the ministry of this arm of the work. An active volunteer team was recruited and projects were undertaken such as the cleaning up and feeding of residents of a senior citizen's home and packing a container to be shipped as a relief effort to St. Vincent.

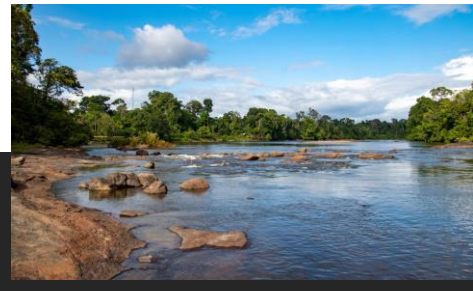
In 2023 efforts were made to register our ADRA office and to become certified in order to be able to stay operational. While the local ADRA board did all in its power to get the required documentation in order for submission to the higher organization, we were surprised by the message that we not of the countries could be certified anymore. This was very disappointing to us, since we were eager to use this arm of the work in our outreach to the community.



Conclusion

The past quadrennium has been quite challenging as the whole world has had to adjust to the new normal. Ministry is not the same as it used to be. It seems to take more effort to get the less results or a few people involved.

Through it all we can be thankful that our God has been faithful and has led us all the way. As we forge the path before us, we have nothing to fear for the future, unless we forget. I am encouraged to move forward, because **I still believe!**



Tributes

I want to give thanks to:

- The God who has given me the strength, health and wisdom and His Spirit to be able to fulfill this task to which He has called me
- The leaders of the wider organization; IAD and CARU for their unwavering support
- Pastor Edward Blackman, my immediate predecessor for giving unselfishly of himself over the past 11 years for the advancement of the Suriname mission
- To my fellow administrators, Pastor Daniel and Pastor Tulp
- To all pastoral colleagues, and staff
- To all members for their support
- To the members in diaspora
- To my wife, children and wider family circle

God bless you all!

