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ADVENTIST REVIEW

JULY 3-12, 2025

GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION BULLETINS GC 25



I WILL GO

62nd General Conference Session

Collecting Communion and Conviction



JUSTIN KIM, EDITOR

Maybe it's because of Pathfinder and Adventurer pins, honors, and patches. Maybe it's because of all the Spirit of Prophecy books. Or maybe it's because of our love of Sabbath nature walks with rocks, shells, and leaves. We love collecting.

Some graduate from Pathfinder pins to filling out their libraries. For others, it's program bulletins stuffed in their Bibles. Adventists have pastimes unlike others and have long appreciated the art of collection.

The *Adventist Review* has functioned as the paper of record for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, especially at its paramount convention, the General Conference Session. The *Review* not only shares the proceedings, actions, testimonies, and stories from each day, but also relays the spiritual and ecclesiological narrative of what God is doing among the leadership of His remnant all around the world.

Each bulletin captures one day in the life of the session, giving readers front-pew access to sermons, worship experiences, mission reports, and the discussions that shape the direction of the church. Add personal blogs, photographs, and editorials, and the bulletins reflect the unity and diversity of our global Adventist movement from multiple angles.

But whether you are a delegate, an attendee, or a distant subscriber, all seem to enjoy the collection aspect of these bulletins. Many stopped by our session editorial offices or the *Review* booth to collect the daily issues they are missing. Many are shocked to hear of the 12-hour cycle of production during the 10-days of GC Session. Many enjoyed reading and seeing the daily coverage of this international assembly of Adventist leadership and members. Forgive us, but we have saved you the search of collecting each bulletin and provided all of them in this bound edition.

As you read through these articles and view these photos, may you find encouragement, clarity, and a renewed sense of mission. May they remind you that we are a global movement with a Bible-based message, a people with a prophetic identity, united in the blessed hope to serve until Christ returns.

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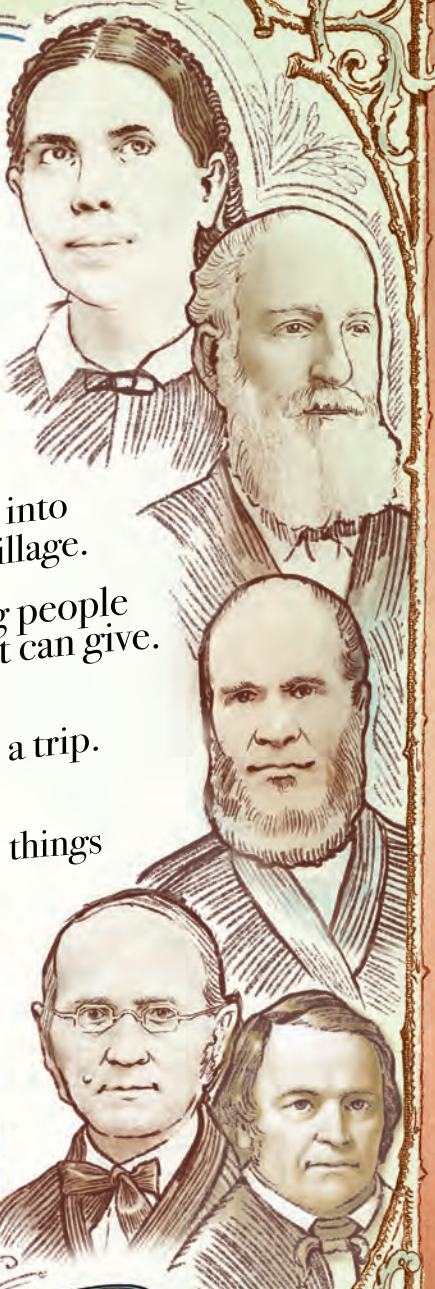
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ADVENTIST HERITAGE MINISTRIES



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Ever wonder about their passions and personal lives?

Relive their adventures with God and people of their times.

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ADVENTIST HERITAGE MINISTRIES

PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

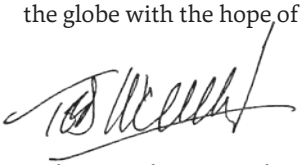
Greetings and welcome to the sixty-second General Conference (GC) Session, in St. Louis, Missouri!

As a worldwide family we come together during the session not only to conduct business but to be blessed by the wonderful fellowship of our brothers and sisters from around the globe. In addition to the regular business meetings, numerous ancillary meetings will be held, allowing all to enjoy a type of "camp meeting" experience with inspiring worship services during the week and on the weekends, training sessions, emphasis on our mission, musical performances, and special programs hosted by numerous ministries. In addition, there will be a live exhibit hall where visitors will enjoy learning more about their favorite ministries and organizations while discovering new resources and information from around the world.

The theme for this session, "Jesus Is Coming. I Will Go!" reminds us of our wonderful hope in our soon-coming Savior and the importance of answering God's call to go wherever He may lead to reach the world for Him. God has given Seventh-day Adventists a special message to share with the world, found in the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12 and the fourth angel of Revelation 18:1-4. These messages are surely more relevant now than ever before in the history of the earth, and God invites each one of us to be a part of His last-day proclamation.

While there are many aspects of a General Conference Session, it is primarily a spiritual and business meeting of the world church. During the meetings world leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church are elected, and worldwide items are decided, such as the Fundamental Beliefs and constitutional and *Church Manual* items.

Let us pray together for God's leading in a marvelous way as we plead for the outpouring of the latter rain of the Holy Spirit in anticipation of the soon second coming of Jesus Christ. Let us continue moving forward together, focusing on God's Holy Word, on the Holy Spirit's wonderful work of personal and corporate revival and reformation, and on Global Total Member Involvement, saying, "Yes, Lord, I Will Go," helping to reach millions of people around the globe with the hope of Christ's soon return!



Ted N. C. Wilson, president
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

The theme for this session, "Jesus Is Coming. I Will Go!" reminds us of our wonderful hope in our soon-coming Savior and the importance of answering God's call to go wherever He may lead to reach the world for Him.



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THREE CHURCH SKELETONS

Revelation uncovers two global entities at the end of time: Chapter 13 points to a system of global *deception*, while chapter 14 describes a movement that *warns* the world by pointing to the Lamb of God. How is this global movement supposed to function, reflecting the organization of heaven, while also reaching the ends of the earth? Systems of organization do not just simply happen. Skeletal structures allow for the accomplishing of the mission that God has laid before us. Simply speaking, there are three types of skeletons for any form of ecclesial direction.

THE HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURE

Also known as the episcopal structure (not to be confused with the Episcopal denomination), this form of governance takes its name from the Greek *episcopos*, meaning overseer or superintendent, and builds on a particular (but controversial) understanding of how such overseers or superintendents are to function. This structure has leaders at the top with the most power and a decrease in authority down the hierarchy. Some denominations have bishops at the top, clergy next, then deacons, and last, laity. Other denominations may not be strict hierarchies, but their overall structures of authority are similar.

There are advantages to this kind of system. Financial resources are clearly marked and unilaterally decided. There are clear flows of vision, execution, and efficiency, with quick decision-making. However, some disadvantages lie in the potential for power and financial abuses. Doctrine and policies are easily determined by the few.

The role of the member in these hierarchical systems is to support the church through attendance and remittance of tithe and offerings. The role of the clergy is to provide doctrinal clarity and authority. Because of its efficiency and adeptness, there are Adventists who advocate for this system, whether in theory or by passive practice.

THE CONGREGATIONAL STRUCTURE

Not to be confused with the Congregational denomination, this structure is the inverse of the previous. Local congregations have the authority to interview and choose their own pastors, decide on how their finances are utilized, and determine their own doctrines.

Congregational advantages lie in tithe and offerings being used for the setting of that local church. Vision and leadership are provided by the local church board, seemingly unhindered by other entities. Some disadvantages include the potential for politicking within the small group, financial myopia, and vacillating policies that waffle from meeting to meeting. Doctrinal and fiscal decisions are fickle and unstable. Financial gain can be motives for evangelism, mission, and ministry. Because the impact is only local, this system fails to meet the descriptions, found in Revelation, of the universal church.

Local congregational members decide on their own church doctrines, financial resources, and pastoral employment. The role of the clergy is to serve the congregation, to preach according to congregational limitations, and to be the sole recipient of tithe resources. Because of its autonomy and immediate return, there are Adventists who advocate for this system, whether in theory or by active practice.

THE REPRESENTATIVE STRUCTURE

Seeded during the Reformation by John Calvin and John Knox, the representative structure places authority on church membership through assemblies. The local church is governed by one assembly, and this assembly by another. Though there are various forms of representative structure, the Seventh-day Adventist Church falls under this broad category but utilizes the term *conferences* instead of *assemblies* and has other differences from the presbyterian system rooted in the ideas of Calvin and Knox.



JUSTIN KIM

The Seventh-day Adventist Church pays a premium on unity because it believes in the power of the Holy Spirit working through the global movement.

In Adventism there are three conferences: local, union, and general. The local conference is a sisterhood of local churches, the storehouse of tithe, and responsible for dispensing these finances primarily for the employment and deployment of gospel personnel, such as pastors and evangelists. The union conference is a sisterhood of local conferences responsible for institutions and services to benefit its constituent areas for the gospel. The General Conference is a sisterhood of union conferences responsible for overall mission of the church, directing and administering global resources to assist areas that need missional and ministerial support. (Divisions are indeed *divisions* of the General Conference to localize these mission efforts in their respective territories.)

The advantages to this system are accountability, integrity, and open dialogue. Everything is discussed in public in committees, boards, and constituency meetings. Tithe and offerings are discussed in financial reports. Policies are discussed in secretarial reports. Evangelistic activities are discussed in leadership reports. This system is stable and repels against conspiratorial takeovers and hijackings. On the other hand, some disadvantages are potential inefficiencies with the length of dialogue and long meetings.

The role of those in representative systems is to be active evangelistically at the local church, to remit tithe and offerings to help support evangelism on the conference level, and to choose representatives to lead the church on the union and global levels.

Unfortunately, there is no perfect system this side of heaven. But all systems should be tested by our Lord's Great Commission of Matthew 28 and the global mission of the three angels of Revelation 14.

This brings us to the General Conference Session. The Seventh-day Adventist Church pays a premium on unity because it believes in the power of the Holy Spirit working through the global movement. Efforts, prayers, intentions, and meetings such as the General Conference Session must be continually initiated to renew, repair, and support its structure to accomplish the mission as a church together. Like skin on the body, these elements are to protect against external threats, keep the vital organs running smoothly and efficiently, and help differing parts of the system coordinate with each together.

The church is united in its theology through our Fundamental Beliefs. The church is united in its governance through our *Church Manual*. The church is united in its sustenance through the Lord's tithe. The church is united in study through the Sabbath School *Adult Bible Study Guide*. The church is united in movement through mission and evangelism. And last, the church is united in communication through the *Adventist Review*.

Yes, some expenses might be high to bring the world church together. Yes, some meetings might be longer than they need to be. But they foster a global movement that espouses diversity, integrity, faithfulness to the Word, the character of Jesus, and mission to the ends of the earth. May He revive our dry bones again to bless His global work.

Justin Kim is editor of the *Adventist Review*.

IF WE DON'T LOSE HEART

The estimate and honor of the world is worth about as much as real estate will be worth on the last day.

It is all too easy, in the times we live, to lose heart.

There are distractions and backbiting from various sides, inside and outside our beloved church. There are real, serious, horrendous evils and suffering taking place in the world, seemingly continually. Alongside these there are often relatively inconsequential disputes and gripes that are scintillating and controversial and tend to suck up all the oxygen in our public (and all too often in our private) discourse.

At times it seems like the clarion call to proclaim the message of God's truth, and the painstaking work required to do so, is a fool's errand unlikely to make a dent among the cacophony of voices and influencers and everything under the sun that distracts so many from what is most important.

In the midst of so many possible discouragements, I want to encourage you to remember the exhortation in Galatians 6:9: "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."



THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

In a world driven by algorithms that favor controversy and spectacle (among many other unsavory things), many are tempted to seek attention and notoriety. And it is not too difficult to achieve that goal, particularly if one is willing to compromise biblical values and truth. Be controversial, snarky, condescending, self-righteous, and many other things—basically exhibit exactly the opposite of the fruit of the Spirit.

For "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal. 5:22, 23). Let us then be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves" (Matt. 10:16).

If we value our "work" by honor in the eyes of the world, we will sell ourselves and our message very short. I say this not to excuse us from doing what we can and must to meet people where they are and reach as many as possible. But we must at the same time resist doing so by shortcuts, half measures, and "sugar high" approaches that might spike in the short term but cost dearly in the long term when it comes to our message and mission.

Let us neither, however, fall into the trap of self-righteousness—we are all fallible sinners. And, of course, self-righteousness is not righteousness at all.

Let us do everything in love.

DOING A *GREAT* WORK

Long ago Nehemiah found himself with a very difficult task, with impediments on all sides. The walls of Jerusalem had been destroyed by the Babylonians. Those who returned from exile to rebuild were extremely vulnerable to attack. Nehemiah was called



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to lead the effort to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem against stark opposition from surrounding enemies who repeatedly sought to stop him by any means possible.

In one example of those attempts, a number of enemies invited Nehemiah to leave what he was doing, go to them, and gather with them, secretly seeking to do him harm. He replied by messengers, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?" (Neh. 6:3).

He said, "I cannot come down." Why? "I am doing a *great* work." What about us? Should we "come down" when antagonists or others call us away? Or should we follow Nehemiah's example?

If you are called by God to do a work, then that work is great by virtue of the divine calling on your life. Of course, we must not take or apply this in an elitist, self-aggrandizing sense. The head needs the hand and the foot (see 1 Cor. 12:15-26)—all parts of the body are essential.

The work God has called you to do may or may not be viewed as "great" in the eyes of the world, but the estimate and honor of the world is worth about as much as real estate will be worth on the last day. The truly valuable "real estate" is in the new earth; hence why Jesus advises—no, commands—us to store up our treasures, not on earth, but in heaven (Matt. 6:19-21).

Again, whatever work God has called you to do—that is indeed a *great* work. And if you do "not lose heart" and do "not grow weary while doing good," "in due season [you] shall reap" a *great* harvest (Gal. 6:9).

KEEP ABOUT YOUR WORK

Even as distractions and discouragements might surround us, do not "come down" from the work, but continue doing the work to which God has called you.

"Keep about your work. Do not flinch because the lion roars; do not stop to stone the devil's dogs; do not fool away your time chasing the devil's rabbits. Do your work. Let liars lie, let sectarians quarrel, let corporations resolve, let editors publish, let the devil do his worst; but see to it that nothing hinders you from fulfilling the work that God has given you."[1]

If you turn to the right or to the left, you will be in danger of turning away from God's calling. You might find yourself, even if unwittingly or unintentionally, having "come down" from the great work to which God has called you. You might then be in danger of these words applying to you, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" (1 Kings 19:9, 13, KJV). Of course, those are the words of God to Elijah shortly after the great triumph at Mount Carmel, after which he had run away scared, wallowing in fear, fatigue, and self-pity.

In 1856 Ellen White also spoke these words to J. N. Loughborough, who had become discouraged and abandoned his call to ministry. Finding him working as a carpenter, she successfully called him back to the work with these words, repeating three times to him, "What doest thou here, Elijah?"[2]

Whatever God has called you to do, do not turn to the right or to the left. Stay on the path with your eyes on Christ. Keep doing what He has called you to do. Be careful, of course, that you are not fooling yourself and calling yourself, but follow God's call and continually seek to discern it in and on your life.

Again, the work you and I are called to do by God may or may not be viewed as "great" in the eyes of the world. But if you are doing the work God has called you to do, what you are doing is a great work regardless of how the world views it. So be encouraged. If you are following God's calling in your life and walking in His will, your work may not be appreciated or valued in this life and in this world, but is valued in the courts of heaven, where all true treasure is.

But if you are not doing what God has called you to do, "what doest thou here, Elijah?"

STAY ON THE PATH

If we don't lose heart . . . if we don't lose heart, in due season we will reap a great harvest (Gal. 6:9).

Friends, let us not lose heart. In the dark days, in the sunny days, let us remember this world is not our home (see Heb. 13:14). We are on a path—a narrow path—that leads to the heavenly Zion.

And our mission as Seventh-day Adventists is to be servants of God to call and help others along that path. And there is one, and only one, ultimate way for us to stay on that path: to keep our eyes on Christ.

May this not be a burden to you, but an encouragement. You cannot stay on the path in your own power—you cannot even keep your eyes on Christ by yourself. He is the vine; we are merely the branches. Apart from Christ we can do nothing (John 15:5). You cannot do the impossible. No one is asking you to, least of all Christ. His "yoke is easy" and His "burden is light" (Matt. 11:30). You cannot walk on water. Neither could Peter. But, by God's power, Peter did walk on water. As long as he did what? As long as he kept his eyes on Christ. But when he looked around in fear, he sunk (see Matt. 14:28-30).

Keep your eyes on Christ and stay on the path to which He has called you. Press on toward the goal and keep your eyes forward, on Christ (see Phil. 3:12-14). Do not lose heart. In due season you will reap a great harvest (Gal. 6:9).

ONLY WHAT'S DONE FOR CHRIST WILL LAST

Consider these stirring words from a poem by Charles Thomas Studd (1860-1931):

"Two little lines I heard one day,
Traveling along life's busy way;
Bringing conviction to my heart,
And from my mind would not depart;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

"Only one life, yes, only one,
Soon will its fleeting hours be done;
Then, in 'that day' my Lord to meet,
And stand before His Judgement seat;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last. . . .

"Only one life, a few brief years,
Each with its burdens, hopes, and fears;
Each with its days I must fulfill,
Living for self or in His will;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

"When this bright world would tempt me sore,
When Satan would a victory score;
When self would seek to have its way,
Then help me, Lord, with joy to say:
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last. . . .

"Only one life, yes, only one,
Now let me say, 'Thy will be done';
And when at last I'll hear the call,
I know I'll say, "Twas worth it all';
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last."[3]

If we don't lose heart. If we don't lose heart.

Keep your eyes on Christ. From whatever great work God has called and equipped you, do not turn aside. Whatever this world throws at you, do not become weary of well-doing. Do not lose heart.

For if we do "not grow weary while doing good" and "if we do not lose heart," then "in due season we shall reap" a great harvest (Gal. 6:9).

[1] Author unknown, "Keep at Your Work," *Review and Herald*, Apr. 2, 1925, p. 15.

[2] Loughborough himself describes this in John Norton Loughborough, *Miracles in My Life* (Payson, Ariz.: Leaves-of-Autumn Books, 1987), p. 47.

[3] Quoted in Henry M. Morris III, "Eternal Perspective," *Acts & Facts*, September 2017, p. 7.

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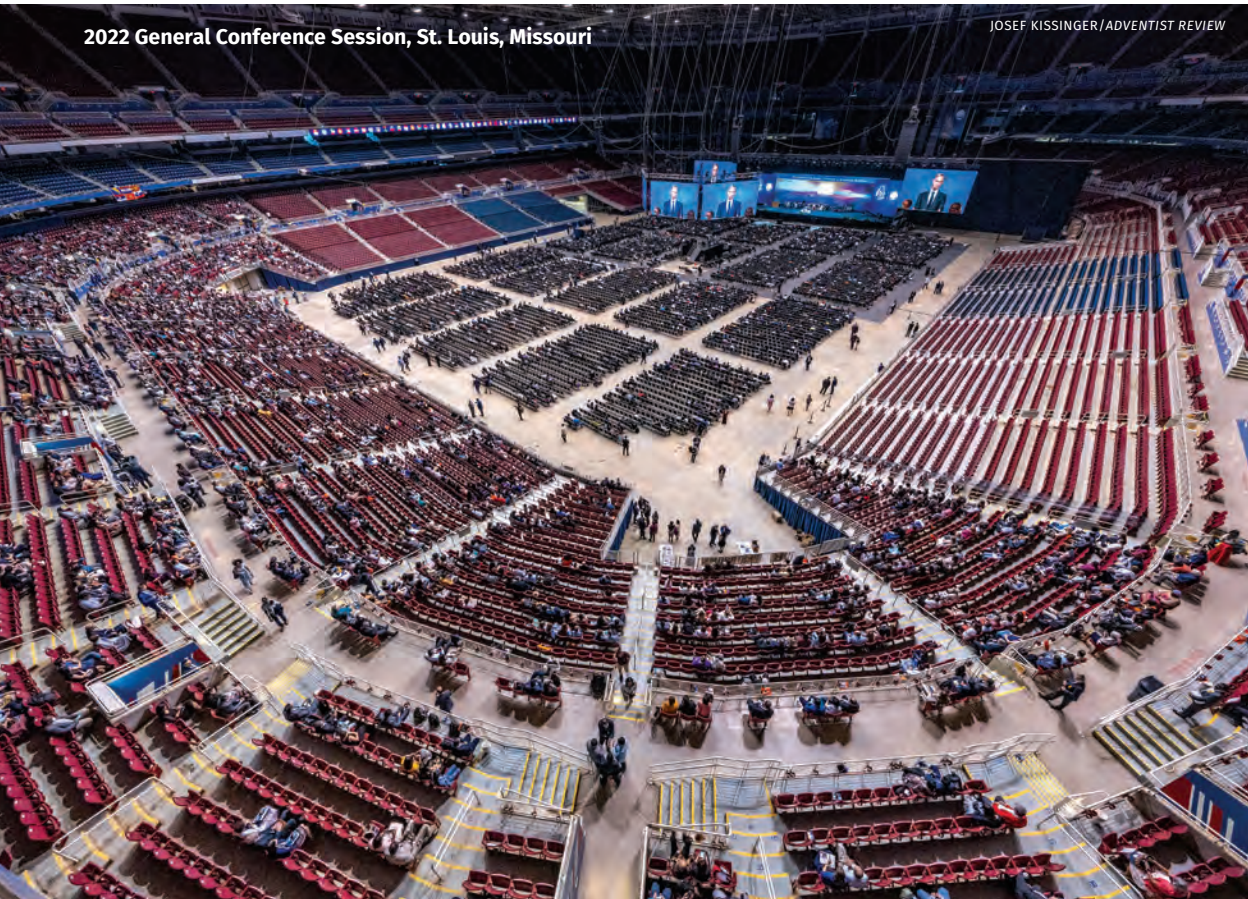


2010 General Conference Session, Atlanta, Georgia

JOEL D. SPRINGER/*ADVENTIST REVIEW*

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

Two perspectives about General Conference Sessions



2022 General Conference Session, St. Louis, Missouri

JOSEF KISSINGER/*ADVENTIST REVIEW*

James White was not happy.

The 1868 General Conference (GC) Session in Battle Creek, Michigan, had just wrapped up. According to delegate J. H. Waggoner, things had gone swimmingly. "The business sessions throughout were largely attended, and characterized by a spirit of union and an earnest desire to advance the cause," he reported. "Perhaps we have never held a conference where more perfect harmony prevailed."[1]

But it's all about perspective, because James White wrote two months later about the same meeting with a very different viewpoint. "This is not a good time for a general gathering of our brethren and sisters to enjoy a spiritual feast. Not understanding this, many have come to our annual conferences, spent a week's time, and gone home disappointed. They had no special interest in the business sessions, thought they occupied too much time, and concluded that their brethren were becoming formal and backslidden. In this they were mistaken. Meetings for transaction of business are necessary and right. Let those attend our annual meeting who have a part to act in them; and let those who have no special part to act in our general assemblies for the transaction of business remain at home, instead of bringing their wives and children to such assemblies to burden the church that entertains them, for nearly or quite a week, they, meanwhile looking on, and getting tempted because there are no more religious exercises."[2]

Strong language from one of the denomination's founders and a *Review* editor! But these two very different perspectives from more than 150 years ago still exist today. The question of just how large the GC Session should be and just how much money should be spent is raised every time the next session rolls around. There are those who say with James White, "Business only!" And there are an equal number of voices (maybe even more) who say enthusiastically, "Bring it on!" So who's right?

Let me go out on a limb and say both, not to be neutral, but to be honest. There's a bit of "right" in both sides. Let's examine some of the arguments.

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE AGENDA

We'll start first with James White. He was the consummate church worker. No one in the history of Adventism wore more hats at the same time. No one pushed themselves for the cause more than James. No one argued for it more passionately or preached the message more fervently. James loved a good church service just like the next member. But it is exactly this characteristic that caused him to be irritated with the observers. When one realizes that the GC actually took on the housing and feeding of those who attended, it becomes even more understandable. They had to have enough tents, feed for horses, food for people, wood for fires, straw for mattresses, and more. Every extra person who came required more supplies. Since the church had limited financial resources, it was difficult. But even more important to James, all of the gawkers, observers, and well-wishers were a distraction from business. He wanted to concentrate on the agenda and get things done. The church was growing, and there was much to decide. For him, running a new denomination was work from sunup to sundown, giving the Lord His due in hours of business.

Interestingly, James White would probably have liked the 2022 GC Session. Because of COVID, the session was completely streamlined. Only delegates and their families attended. It was reduced to six days. There were business sessions not only in the morning and afternoon, but evenings too. In fact, the days were so long and so full, the delegates in the evening meetings were challenged to remain awake and focused on business. The old adage "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" could apply to session delegates struggling with jet lag sitting for hours and hours in meetings. No concerts. No premieres. No crowds. No exhibit hall. Few costumes and colors.

My past several sessions have been spent in the *Adventist Review* office, where we work long days producing a magazine in about 12 hours. Now that I think about it, James White would like our office too. We arrive early in the morn-

ing and leave late at night, only to repeat it the next day. My view of GC Session is the four walls of our workroom and the occasional walk down a hallway to retrieve information. So, to be honest, the 2022 session wasn't all that different to me, but I have to admit the atmosphere was different—and not necessarily in a good way. The lets-get-down-to-business perspective got a bit wearing, and there were some important elements missing. Thus proving that those with the other perspective might be on to something.



JAMES BOKOVOY

AGENDA PLUS

So what does a full session offer? Some fairly important benefits, when one is honest. First and foremost is a true introduction to the worldwide family of Adventists. There is no comparison to standing in the midst of a large sports stadium and seeing every seat on the floor as well as from the bottom of the stadium seats to the very top row filled with like-minded believers. Want to take it up a notch? Listen to those same 50,000 to 70,000 Adventists sing "We Have This Hope." It's enough to give your heart a surge and bring a tear to your eye.

In that same crowd is amazing diversity. On Sabbath the colorful costumes speak of faraway lands demonstrating the reach of Adventism—truly a worldwide denomination. The abundance of mission stories from around the world about conversions, sharing the gospel, baptisms, and more helps one to confirm that the Lord is leading even if one personally might be discouraged in their part of the vineyard.

The fellowship is real, as people everywhere greet those they have not seen for years. Hallways are full of reunions. The 10-seat tables in the dining hall almost guarantee you will eat with someone not yet known, but you leave the meal as new friends. One never really grasps the idea of 70,000 friends and family until they all gather together in one place with one mission and one focus.

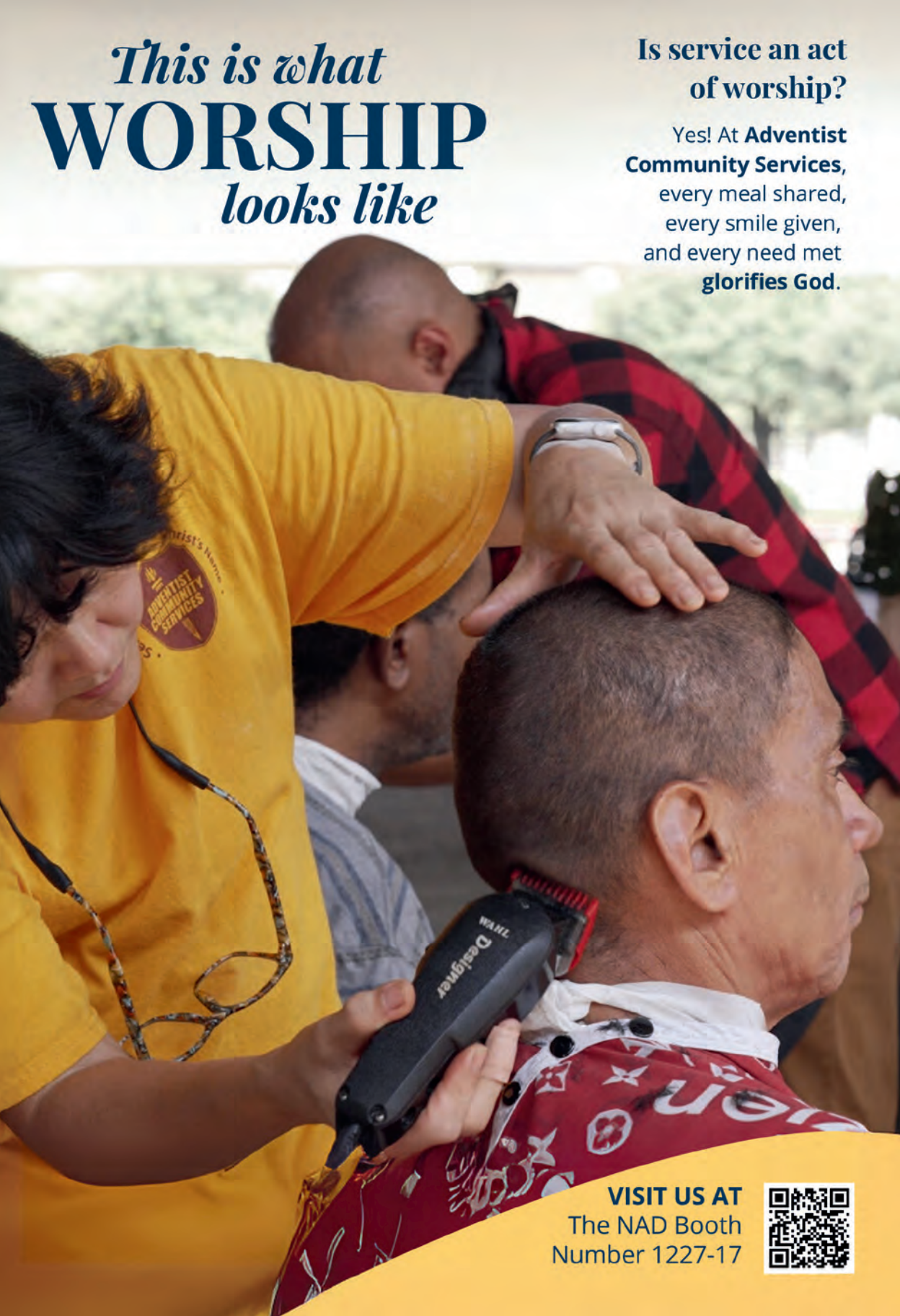
Truth be told, these two perspectives belong together. James White was right—to do business is necessary and right. Each session the church grows bigger. It expands into more and more nations, cultures, and languages. Imagine if no one organized anything or had policies to unite and keep us together. But equally important is that a policy, plan, or crisis requires a vote—not just a vote from people who work in the world headquarters, but delegates from Africa, Inter-America, South America, North America, Europe, Asia, and the South Pacific. And each delegate has a voice. If something doesn't work in Australia, they have the right to say so. And their brothers and sisters from around the world need to look for compromise, sometimes hard to do when almost 3,000 people are trying to figure it out.

WHERE WE CAN ALL AGREE

But each session also allows for God to shine through. Not that He can't be seen in a business session—just ask those in the prayer room about that. But diversity, growth, languages, flags, colors, fellowship, friends, singing, and more all demonstrate that we're serious about who we are, who we represent, and where we're going. We're heaven-bound, mission-minded, enthusiastic Adventists as we meet, debate, sing, rejoice, and disagree. Business and fellowship—we shouldn't have a session without both.

[1] J. H. Waggoner, in *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, May 26, 1868.
[2] James White, in *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, July 14, 1868.

Merle Poirier is the operations manager for *Adventist Review*.


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DIGITAL TOOLS AT GC SESSION

Making the work of delegates more effective and inclusive

At this sixty-second General Conference Session, the fifth session of the twenty-first century, the complete integration of digital technology into the session experience is an undeniable reality and necessity. Thanks to the excellent work and collaboration of various entities, not only are sessions digitally enhanced for general broadcasting purposes, but digital tools also serve as an integral part of business meetings, voting, and the overall in-person experience.

As in previous years, delegates and general attendees can access **gcsession.org**, the official session website, and the official General Conference Session app (search for "GC Session 2025" in your app store). These two portals provide all the information needed to navigate the business meetings, programs, booth area, and more. Through gcsession.org, delegates also gain access to any documents and information pertinent to their business session responsibilities.

gcsession.org

During the pandemic the 2022 General Conference Session was held through a complex yet excellent hybrid setup. This setup enabled delegates who couldn't attend in person because of COVID-related travel restrictions to participate with both voice and vote. This experience has provided a valuable foundation for the current and future sessions.

ELECTRONIC VOTING—ELECTIONBUDDY

For electronic voting, delegates will use a third-party system called ElectionBuddy, a service that has facilitated more than 265,000 elections for 39 million voters worldwide. It was effectively employed during the 2022 session, with 99 percent of the delegates indicating they understood how to use ElectionBuddy and 92 percent stating that they felt it was secure and confidential. Furthermore, General Conference Executive Committee members have been utilizing ElectionBuddy at their Spring Meeting and Annual Council since 2021. Prior to the session all delegates will have received an orientation on how to use this system. During the session they will receive a voting credential containing a unique QR code, allowing them to cast their votes through ElectionBuddy. This system enables the representative from the General Conference Auditing Service to oversee the process in the background, ensuring the most secure, confidential, and reliable voting option. It allows for the conduct of safe, certifiable, and fully auditable elections with integrity and anonymity.



JAMES BOKOVOY

It is a blessing to utilize cutting-edge technology to advance the church's mission and business.

In the unlikely event that the electronic system fails, printed voting cards will be distributed to delegates upon registration as a backup to ensure the meetings and votes proceed smoothly.

Whether in St. Louis, Missouri, or anywhere else in the world, it is a blessing to use cutting-edge technology to further the church's mission, operations, and business, making the work more efficient and inclusive.

Jonathan Walter is an assistant editor of the *Adventist Review*.

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WHAT'S EXPECTED OF A GC SESSION DELEGATE

MARK FROELICH

If you are among those chosen to be a delegate to the sixty-second General Conference (GC) Session, congratulations. Only one out of every 8,126 Adventist members share this privilege.[1]

REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNANCE

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is unique among Christian denominations in how we conduct the business of the church. Most of the more traditional churches, such as the Roman Catholic Church and Orthodox churches, have a hierarchical or top-down governance structure. Many of the Protestant and Evangelical churches make decisions at the local congregation level or may operate under a more loosely structured denominational organization.

Adventists follow a representative form of governance at each level of the organization. Local churches unite in a geographical region and choose representatives to conduct business and elect leaders at a conference or mission constituency session. Likewise, representatives from the conferences form the constituency for a union, and union representatives comprise the delegates at the General Conference Session.[2]

Through this representative structure, God has preserved our church from being led astray by individuals or small groups, and blessed us through the collective wisdom of representatives from many cultures and backgrounds. Ellen White stated early in the development of our church: "I have often been instructed by the Lord that no man's judgment should be surrendered to the judgment of any other one man. Never should the mind of one man or the minds of a few men be regarded as sufficient in wisdom and power to control the work and to say what plans shall be followed."[3]

If you look at the delegates chosen, you will see a very diverse group. That's because the General Conference Constitution states that at least half of the delegates chosen "shall be laypersons, pastors, teachers, and nonadministrative employees, of both genders, and representing a range of age groups and nationalities."[4]

SERVING FAITHFULLY

So delegates have been specially chosen! Considering the unique responsibility, delegates should prayerfully prepare for each day's session. And delegates should spend time becoming familiar with the agenda and reading the background materials given to them prior to the sessions.

It is also crucial that delegates arrive on time for each meeting so they can make a meaningful contribution and cast informed votes. By ensuring they attend all the meetings, delegates won't run the risk of being embarrassed by repeating a point

already made by another delegate at a prior meeting or asking a question that was previously explained by the chair or stated in the background material.

Delegates also should understand and follow the Rules of Order (included in the delegate packet), which will help keep the discussion and voting process flowing smoothly. Delegates are to exhibit appropriate behavior and make respectful comments when given an opportunity to speak to a particular item. I recommend that delegates write out the key points of their comment prior to speaking so they can be brief and to the point. We do not want to distract with side discussions on the session floor but focus on the presentation of the agenda items and comments made by others.

When it's time to vote on an item, votes are to be cast according to one's Holy Spirit-guided conviction. There should be no campaigning or pressure for people to vote in a certain way. Although each delegate was chosen as a representative of a particular country, gender, age group, or background, each delegate is first and foremost part of the body of Christ. Each one's vote should be based on what they have learned from the background information, discussion, and prayerful guidance from the Holy Spirit according to what is best for the mission of the church. If the majority of the delegates vote differently, participants are to accept the decision gracefully.

Ellen White instructs, "When the judgment of the General Conference, which is the highest authority that God has upon the earth, is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be maintained, but be surrendered."[5]

ENJOYING FELLOWSHIP

Finally, I want to encourage delegates and others to be sure not to miss the inspiring division and attached union and field reports each evening. Attendees should not miss the blessing of mingling with brothers and sisters from around the world at mealtimes and in the exhibit hall during the breaks. Those present may enjoy a taste of heaven by singing and worshipping with 60,000 fellow believers from more than 200 countries during the morning devotionals and Sabbath programs.

General Conference sessions are a unique blend of business, worship, and fellowship. All are encouraged to make the most of the time with fellow believers from around the world as they faithfully fulfill the privilege and responsibility given them as a GC Session delegate to advance the mission to make disciples of all people in preparation for Christ's soon return.



JOSEF KISSINGER

[1] The total number of delegates, according to the GC Session website https://www.gcsession.org/delegates/, is 2,804 (when article was submitted). World membership, as of December 31, 2023, was 22,785,195 in the 2024 *Annual Statistical Report*.

[2] See the 2023-2024 General Conference *Working Policy*, B 05 no. 2. "The primary building blocks of global Seventh-day Adventist Church organization are the local church, the local conference or local mission/field/section, the union conference or union mission/section, and the General Conference. (Further definition of these units is found in B 10, Outline and Definitions of Denominational Organizations.) . . . Additional units of denominational structure, known as divisions, have been established as regional offices of the General Conference serving a defined geographical area. Therefore, divisions are not considered as constituency-based organizations. Various institutions, authorized and established in harmony with General Conference and/or division policies, also have defined constituencies. Institutions fulfill vital and specialized functions but are not considered as primary building blocks of denominational structure."

[3] Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 9, p. 260.

[4] *Working Policy of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 2024-2025), pp. 17, 18.

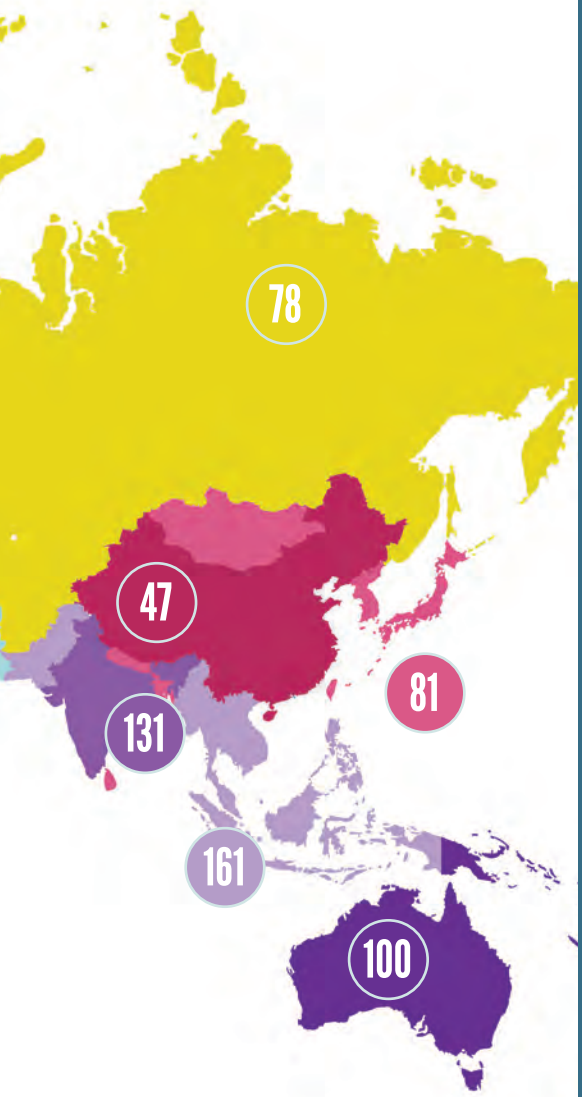
[5] E. G. White, *Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 3, p. 492.

Myron Iseminger is executive secretary of the Middle East and North Africa Union Mission of Seventh-day Adventists.



GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION DELEGATES

- GENERAL CONFERENCE–228
- EAST-CENTRAL AFRICA–251
- EURO-ASIA–78
- INTER-AMERICAN–452
- INTER-EUROPEAN–107
- NORTH AMERICAN–207
- NORTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC–81
- SOUTH AMERICAN–281
- SOUTH PACIFIC–100



- SOUTHERN AFRICA-INDIAN OCEAN—254
- SOUTHERN ASIA—131
- SOUTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC—161
- TRANS-EUROPEAN—104
- WEST-CENTRAL AFRICA—215
- CHINESE UNION MISSION—47
- ISRAEL FIELD—3
- MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA UNION—11
- UKRANIAN UNION CONFERENCE—24

GENERAL CONFERENCE
World

EAST-CENTRAL AFRICA
Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, and the United Republic of Tanzania

EURO-ASIA
Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, a portion of Ukraine, and Uzbekistan

INTER-AMERICAN
Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Curacao, Dominica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, French Guiana, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Martinique, Mexico, Montserrat, Nicaragua, Panama, Puerto Rico, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sint Maarten, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, United States Virgin Islands, and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

INTER-EUROPEAN
Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, France, Germany, Gibraltar, Holy See, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Spain, and Switzerland

NORTH AMERICAN
Bermuda, Canada, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Johnston Island, Marshall Islands, Midway Islands, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, United States of America, Wake Island, and the French possession of Saint Pierre and Miquelon

NORTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC
Bangladesh, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, and Taiwan

SOUTH AMERICAN
Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Falkland Islands (Malvinas), Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay, with adjacent islands in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans

SOUTH PACIFIC
American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Wallis and Futuna Islands

SOUTHERN AFRICA-INDIAN OCEAN
Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Eswatini (new name for Swaziland-2018), Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mayotte, Mozambique, Namibia, Reunion, Saint Helena (including Ascension and Tristan da Cunha), Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe

SOUTHERN ASIA
Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Bhutan, India, and Maldives

SOUTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC
Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam

TRANS-EUROPEAN
Aland Islands, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Faroe Islands, Finland, Greece, Greenland, Guernsey, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Isle of Man, Jersey, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the southern portion of Cyprus

WEST-CENTRAL AFRICA
Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo

CHINESE UNION MISSION
China (including Hong Kong, and Macao Special Administrative Regions)

ISRAEL FIELD
Israel

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA UNION
Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkiye (formerly Turkey), United Arab Emirates, Western Sahara,* Yemen, and the northern half of Cyprus
*(*Western Sahara is a contested Non-Self-Governing territory not universally recognized as a separate country or region, governed by the laws of Morocco).*

UKRANIAN UNION CONFERENCE
Ukraine (except the Donetsk and Luhansk regions)

These numbers are supplied and maintained by General Conference Secretariat, and are current as of April 10, 2025, at the time this issue went to press. The numbers may have subsequently changed because of visa or travel complications.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Ted and Nancy Wilson at the baptism in Minj, Jiwaka Province, Papua New Guinea, on May 6, 2024.
TICO BANASI/AME

In a world filled with chaos and confusion, disasters, disease, and death, God has called His people to be His voice of hope in a world quickly spinning out of control. The clarion call of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14 given to God's last-day remnant movement to reach "every nation, tribe, tongue, and people" with the "everlasting gospel" is more relevant today than ever, and God's people are answering the call in marvelous ways through Global Total Member Involvement (TMI).

Nowhere was this more apparent than in the South Pacific Division, where the Global TMI strategy of combining personal and public evangelism was on full display in the island nation of Papua New Guinea (PNG).

Although originally scheduled for 2020, "PNG for Christ" was delayed until 2024, because of the COVID pandemic. Undeterred, Seventh-day Adventists invited friends and neighbors into their homes for fellowship, Bible study, and prayer. More than 10,000 of these small groups met regularly across the country. After COVID restrictions were lifted, more than 2,300 evangelistic sites attracted approximately one quarter of the country's population, concluding with more than 300,000 commitments for baptisms.

This represents just one of the many Global TMI efforts taking place around the world. Here we will mention them only briefly. For a full report, see page 26.

In the Inter-American Division, church members have distributed 6.5 million paperback and 10 million digital copies of *The Great Controversy*. Because of this and other outreach efforts, more than 115,000 souls have been baptized.

In the North American Division, Pentecost 2025 is currently taking place, with more than 5,300 proclamation events across the division.

Church members in the South American Division are embracing Global TMI through more than 100,000 evangelistic Sabbath School classes, followed by more than 120,000 public evangelistic reaping events.

In the Trans-European Division, several unions are using the *Global TMI Church Planner*, developed by the GC Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department, to train members in reaching those within their circle of influence. The Middle East and North Africa Union Mission is also training members to use the Global TMI planner in a field where personal labor is vital.

In the Inter-European Division, members are finding unique ways to reach communities, such as the Bible Expo—a traveling exhibit displaying precious historical specimens related to the Bible, scale models, and more.



Sidewalk evangelism is a very effective Global TMI activity as thousands of members reach people on the streets with literature inviting them to study the Bible, attend evangelistic meetings, and more. More than 5,437 churches from 10 divisions and an attached field have embraced this simple yet powerful approach, leading to the distribution of more than 19,658,078 invitations by 41,572 members worldwide. As a result, 2,378 small group meetings were held, 14,136 men and women joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church through baptism, and 32 new churches planted.

In the Israel Field, members are involved in Global TMI through health and compassion ministries, media, education, and centers of influence where they can interact with interests one-on-one.

Lay members and pastors in each union within the Southern Asia Division received training in Global TMI and disciple-making evangelism in preparation for SID's Impact '25, a division-wide outreach with 3,000 evangelistic sites.

In the Chinese Union Mission, TMI personal outreach followed by evangelistic meetings resulted in 1,800 baptisms just in one year.

Personal ministry is a strong Global TMI focus in the Southern Asia-Pacific Division, with 98,000 Sabbath School care groups, followed by evangelistic meetings in more than 12,000 sites. In the Northern Asia-Pacific Division, members in every church and company are encouraged to participate in Loud Voice 2025, with a harvest goal of 2,025 Global TMI evangelistic meetings and 20,250 baptisms.

Global TMI continues amid war as Adventists in Ukraine distributed 250,000 copies of *The Great Controversy* and 350,000 *Steps to Christ* and are moving ahead with plans to hold 500 harvest meetings in 500 churches. In addition, the Angelia Clinic in Kyiv continues offering medical and mental health care, and in other parts of Ukraine through their mobile van service.

On the continent of Africa, the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division poured resources into different regions each year for a special Global TMI emphasis. Most recently, Impact Zambia has resulted in more than 80,000 baptisms.

The West-Central Africa Division is growing through lay member involvement and in 2024 surpassed the 1-million-member milestone. In addition, WAD Impact 2025 features meetings at 13,000 evangelistic sites, with a goal of 200,000 baptisms.

In the East-Central Africa Division, Impact 2025 began in 2024, with more than 50,000 evangelistic sites and 900,000 baptisms. In fact, Global TMI has been so successful there that one couple from Burundi named their little girl "TMI," as they desired her life to be an inspiration and witness for Jesus!

A HEALING MINISTRY

Seventh-day Adventists are committed to whole person ministry, and the GC Health Ministries Department is engaged in training medical missionary workers, most recently in Malawi, the South Pacific, Romania, the Netherlands, and the Philippines. In addition, they are advancing exciting twenty-first-century sanitarium initiatives in Europe, Asia, and Africa, and are developing, in association with GC Personal Ministries, a social media platform for health evangelism.

Established to "make man whole," Loma Linda University continues to follow this mandate through training medical and allied health professionals to serve the world with a wholistic approach. Mission is emphasized through its partnership with organizations such as the Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons, a rural-based surgery training program in African Christian hospitals, including Malamulo Adventist Hospital, where Loma Linda-affiliated physicians provide valuable service and training.

Caring for people's needs is a priority for the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA). The agency continues to dynamically serve, as evidenced by assistance provided in the aftermath of the Los Angeles fires and the earthquake that recently devastated Myanmar and Thailand.

EDUCATING FOR ETERNITY

Andrews University continues its tradition of mission service and focus on mission-driven Adventist education in partnership with the Inter-European Division, as Jonathan Contero (a doctoral student at Andrews), along with his family, moved to Switzerland in 2023 to establish a center of influence and plant a church, honoring the 150th anniversary of sending the first official Seventh-day Adventist missionary, J. N. Andrews, to Switzerland.

At the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIIAS) in the Philippines, students provide 100 hours of volunteer service as part of their academic programs, and at the Adventist University of Africa, students and faculty minister to surrounding churches by providing spiritual nurture, and to the community through their annual Reach Out programs.

These higher education institutions are part of the worldwide network of Seventh-day Adventist educational institutions under the umbrella of the GC Education Department. More than 120,000 teachers and professors contribute to the ministry of Adventist education worldwide and have reported 40,204 baptisms in 2022 and 46,003 baptisms in 2023.

Another vital avenue for education within the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the more than 140,000 Sabbath schools worldwide.[1] Bringing a fresh approach to children's Sabbath school, the GC Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department developed a new curriculum, Alive in Jesus. The beautifully illustrated lessons incorporate a clear Seventh-day Adventist worldview and support the 28 Fundamental Beliefs. The new curriculum includes Baby Steps lessons for birth to 12 months, which include a spiritual parenting small group resource to nurture parents. The Baby Steps and Beginners curriculum was released in January 2025, with Kindergarten and Primary set for 2026 and Junior and Earliteen lessons for 2027.

SCHOLARLY RESEARCH

The church's Biblical Research Institute (BRI), founded to pursue rigorous biblical scholarship, promote theological unity, and provide theological resources for the world church, has conducted biblical theological retreats in most of the world divisions and GC institutions, reaching approximately 500 theology and religion professors during this quinquennium. They have also completed several book projects promoting Adventist identity and mission, including two volumes on the Trinity, one volume on the ethics of technology, a volume on the theology of the human body, and a volume on the authority of Scripture, written for a lay audience.

The Geoscience Research Institute (GRI) serves the world church by studying the relationships between current science and the biblical record of creation, and provides various resources and educational field opportunities. In 2023 GRI launched a new Certificate in Faith and Science in collaboration with AIIAS, the Southern Asia-Pacific Division, and the GC Department of Education. Also in 2023 GRI led field conferences in Arizona for Adventist academy science teachers of the North American Division, and in Tanzania for educators of the East-Central Africa Division. The GRI website saw the launch of a digital museum, and in 2025 two new GRI branch offices were opened in the Euro-Asia and West-Central Africa divisions.

DEDICATED TO SERVICE

Dedicated to strengthening relationships and empowering ministry leaders and churches in their work with families, the GC Family Ministries Department, led by Willie and Elaine Oliver, participated in Hope for Today's Families, a Global TMI event. The series, held in Paris, France, in June 2024, resulted in many baptisms and strengthened marriage and family relationships. The department also developed the Leadership Certification Program 2.0—an updated 10-module leadership development curriculum implemented in divisions worldwide. The department produces

As we review how God has led His Church during these past three years, we praise Him for all He has done! And yet, as Earth's prophetic closing scenes draw near, we know there is more to be done.

the annual Adventist Family Ministries resource book and its supplement, available online.

GC Women's Ministries helps Adventist women grow in their relationship with Jesus as His disciples and witnesses. During the past quinquennium hundreds of thousands of training seminars and other meetings were held worldwide, including retreats and congresses attended by 4,771,198 Adventist women and 982,743 of their non-Adventist friends. In 2022-2023, as a direct result of Adventist women's outreach activities, friendship and public evangelism, Bible studies, and social work, 309,565 people were baptized, and 156,589 former members were reclaimed.

The GC Children's Ministries (CM) Department has created numerous resources to assist children in growing in their spiritual walk, including *Bible Adventures for Young Learners* and a related video, "Kids' Faith Trek." Other Bible study resources include *God Sent Jesus to Be My Friend*, *The 3AM Message and Me*, *The Great I Am Loves Me*, and *The Armor of God Bible Study Lessons*, which comes with an interactive app. The *Bible Sticker App* helps children learn Bible stories and encourages them to become active witnesses. The department also produced books and Bible study guides teaching biblical sexuality to children, ranging from ages 3 to 12. *Nick's Gift* is a translated video resource created by the South American Division, teaching the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its pioneers. The department also offers the video *200 Songs*, commissioned by the 3AM Committee and created by Safeliz. In partnership with Adventist Possibility Ministries and with permission from the South American Division, translated inclusion-model training materials to support children with special needs is also available through Children's Ministries.

The GC Youth Ministries Department focuses on Total Youth Involvement (TYI) through promoting the Adventurer and Pathfinder ministries as evangelism initiatives, encouraging Global Youth Day as a lifestyle, highlighting it as a mission-focused initiative, and declaring public campuses as unreached territories to spur Adventist youth on public campuses to engage in mission. The department equips and educates young people through media, especially webinars on Adventist identity, biblical interpretation and theology, and making right choices.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

The GC Communication Department provides tools for church institutions and members to share the hope we have in Jesus. Phone apps, websites, social media channels, and video programming and gaming fuse with news reporting and press releases to reach audiences inside and outside the Adventist Church. Recently ANN (Adventist News Network) expanded, offering content in English, French, Hindi, Portuguese, Spanish, and Swahili. In addition, the department continues offering GAiN (Global Adventist internet Network) conferences, seeking to foster the use of communication, technology, media, and the internet to help the Adventist Church carry out its mission.

The church's oldest media channel, the *Adventist Review*, celebrated its 175th anniversary in 2024 and continues its role in unifying and strengthening faith among believers. In August 2025 *Adventist World* and *Adventist Review* merge into one, opening the way from print to expanded digital distribution around the world.

The Publishing Ministries Department spearheaded several mission-focused programs, including *The Great Controversy* Project 2.0, leading to the distribution of 55 million printed copies of the book worldwide and 1.35 million digital copies downloaded. The department also produced the SCORE (supplying contextualized, open-access resources for evangelism) project—featuring literature specifically created for non-Christians.

The Review and Herald Publishing Association continues to serve the world church through publishing various books produced by GC entities and republishing volumes that have blessed readers in the past.

With its theme "From Broadcast to Baptism," Adventist World Radio (AWR) is actively involved in numerous evangelistic programs and has expanded its broadcasting stations worldwide. Since 2022, 187 new radio and internet stations have been established in numerous countries. In addition, more than 73,000 "Godpods" were distributed, resulting in thousands of baptisms, including a Buddhist monk and his family. In 2025 AWR opened a station in Bogotá, Colombia. So far, the station has received more than 80,000 Bible study requests.

Hope Channel International (HCI) is rapidly expanding the effectiveness of media evangelism through cutting-edge technology across 84 channels. HCI launched the first Adventist-owned Content Delivery Network (CDN) and developed AI dubbing technology that translates videos into more than 30 languages while preserving the original video. In 2023 HCI's Hope for Africa evangelistic campaign resulted in 194,000 baptisms. In addition, Hope.Study is empowering hundreds of thousands of students worldwide with 40-plus interactive Bible courses in multiple languages.

PUTTING GOD FIRST

The GC Stewardship Department trains Adventist leaders and members around the world in biblical stewardship principles. Two recent highlights include the weekly God First offertory devotionals, provided in reading and video formats in multiple languages. The department also presented Mobilizing Partners for Mission workshops across several division territories. These workshops are now available online.

The Planned Giving and Trust Services (PGTS) Department actively promotes legacies of generosity that represent the enduring impact of an individual's financial and spiritual gifts that continue to support God's mission beyond their lifetime. During 2020-2023 realized bequests totaled US$487.5 million. Since 1968 PGTS has facilitated an extraordinary US$2.64 billion in gifts from our generous members worldwide. PGTS is committed to training leaders in every region of the world as they offer workshops, seminars, and more.

Helping to preserve, protect, and restore the assets of God's church is the ministry of Adventist Risk Management (ARM). Considering ARM's ongoing commitment to assist the ministries of the church in providing a safe environment, ARM has made significant improvements in employment screening processes and training aimed at preventing the rehiring of individuals who may pose a risk of abuse or molestation. Additionally, ARM offers a free online training program (Risk Training Center) designed to enhance risk management practices within Adventist churches.

MINISTRY AT THE HEART

Ministry is at the heart of what we do as Seventh-day Adventists. Since the last GC Session, more than $25 million in Global Mission funding from all levels of the church has supported more than 2,000 frontline church-planting projects. Furthermore, 2023 was a record year for church planting, with a new church being organized every 2.97 hours.

Helping to equip and support pastors, their families, and local church leaders, the GC Ministerial Association provides hands-on training and practical resources in addition to spearheading global initiatives that support the world church, such as the Ten Days of Prayer and United in Prayer. Believe His Prophets includes thousands of participants and provides continued engagement through a website. The association also supports Back to the Altar, an initiative launched in 2022, aiming to spark spiritual revival by reducing digital distractions and promoting personal and family worship. GC Ministerial organizes and participates in global ministerial training and evangelistic meetings, leading to thousands of new church members.

Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries (ACM) is dedicated to equipping the church with competent, committed, and compassionate professional chaplains through education and training, endorsements and board certification, world congresses,

and more. Since 2022 ACM has expanded training efforts and established Clinical Pastoral Education centers in 11 of the 13 world divisions.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a staunch defender of religious liberty, not just for its own members around the world but for people of every faith. The Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL) Department advocates for this freedom around the world. It also does diplomatic work to promote religious liberty and build strong relationships.

The GC Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research (ASTR) provides a wealth of information for all. A few highlights include: 1. The *ESDA (Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists)* website has expanded, with more than 1,000 new articles and 4,000 additional photographs. The number of *ESDA* visitors has grown from an average of 19,000 unique visitors per month in 2022 to nearly 40,000 visitors per month in 2024. 2. Three major surveys were completed and used in the GC strategic planning process. 3. The world church's strategic planning process was undertaken, facilitated by ASTR, and the new world church 2025-2030 strategic plan, "I Will Go," was voted by the 2024 Annual Council.

SHARING THE GIFT

The Ellen G. White (EGW) Estate supports the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in uplifting Jesus Christ and His Word by sharing Ellen White's prophetic ministry and writings. Sharing the Gift of Light was the "I Will Go" strategic Spirit of Prophecy translation initiative of the White Estate for the current quinquennium. This was a continuation and expansion of the previous Growing Together project of translating 16 EGW books into 63 languages. This initiative added four new priority books for translation and prioritized three core books to be translated into mission languages: *Steps to Christ, The Great Controversy,* and *The Desire of Ages.* At the 2024 Annual Council the White Estate announced Sharing the Gift of Light 2.0, providing access to Ellen White's writings in many more major and mission languages.



Nancy Wilson and friends doing sidewalk evangelism on the streets of New York City.

Looking to the past with a future, Adventist Heritage Ministries seeks to point people to the "monumental pillars . . . of what God has done for us in our experience."[2] It continues to do this through its historical properties and educational programs. Looking forward, the ministry hopes to add a special visitors' center on the grounds of the William Miller farm, providing interactive experiences to enhance commitment to the Adventist message and encourage positive responses of young and old to the call of "I Will Go."

THE ULTIMATE CALL

As we review how God has led His church during these past three years, we praise Him for all He has done! And yet, as earth's prophetic closing scenes draw near, we know there is more to be done. God is calling each of us to surrender fully to Him as He invites us to carry His final message of love to a dying world, lifting up Christ, His Word, His righteousness, His sanctuary service, His saving power in the great controversy, His three angels' messages, His health message, and His last-day mission to the world of sharing the good news of salvation, including the need to plead for the latter rain of the Holy Spirit and Christ's soon second coming. May we respond positively to His call. "Jesus Is Coming Soon—I Will Go!"

[1] 2024 *Annual Statistical Report,* New Series, vol. 6. Figure is from 2010, the last year this statistic was collected. Page 10, table 14, https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Statistics/ASR/ASR2024.pdf.

[2] Ellen G. White manuscript 22, 1889.

JIM HOWARD
RAMON CANALS
DUANE MCKEY



GLOBAL TOTAL MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

Total Member Involvement is a worldwide initiative that has mobilized church members for mission since its inception in 2015.

Major events have been conducted in Rwanda, Zambia, Japan, the Philippines, India, the United States, and many European countries, showcasing the powerful combination of personal and public evangelism. Rather than hosting a single large meeting, these events feature thousands of individual evangelistic sites led by laypeople and pastors. With gratitude we celebrate all that God has accomplished through His people.

PNG FOR CHRIST

In 2024, under the leadership of the South Pacific Division and the Papua New Guinea Union Mission (PNGUM), in partnership with Adventist World Radio (AWR) and the General Conference (GC), something remarkable happened. Plans to hold evangelistic meetings in Papua New Guinea (PNG) in 2020 were canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. For four years the pastors and members of the PNGUM continued to work, forming 30,000 small groups before the 2024 event.

PNG for Christ began with a large medical clinic coordinated by AWR in partnership with the South Pacific Division, PNGUM, government agencies, and 500-plus volunteers. More than 26,000 services were provided, including more than 3,000 cataract surgeries. Evangelistic meetings were then conducted at more than 2,300 sites simultaneously. Attendance was high everywhere, whether the speaker was the GC president or a local pastor or member. Meanwhile, AWR broadcast the meetings in many locations across the island.

The results were astounding. More than 300,000 people were baptized, with another 300,000-plus currently attending baptismal classes. By the time the meetings ended, at least 16 Evangelical churches had chosen to become Seventh-day Adventist. Through much prayer, planning, and personal labor, combined with public evangelism, the country of PNG experienced a transformation in 2024.



GLOBAL TMI IN 2024-2025

In 2023 a new emphasis was introduced. "Global" Total Member Involvement is TMI 2.0, a call for *every church* and *every member* around the globe to become actively involved in making disciples using Christ's method.

There are two key emphases of Global TMI. One emphasis, expressed by the word "Global," is on every division *working together* to get every church involved in a coordinated disciple-making evangelism strategy. In 2024 and 2025 most divisions conducted a coordinated evangelistic effort under their own themes. At Annual Council 2024 the GC Executive Committee voted to repeat this united approach in 2027 and 2029.

Another key emphasis of Global TMI is getting church members involved in *personal labor*, which was Christ's method. This includes such disciple-making activities as mingling with people, making friends, sharing literature and spiritual invitations, giving Bible studies, and mentoring new members.

A *Global TMI Church Planner*, newly updated in 2025, outlines the Global TMI strategy and assists local church pastors and leaders in creating disciple-making evangelism plans with their churches. *My Disciple-Making Journal: A Global TMI Personal Planner* is a companion resource for all church members. Access these and more resources at globaltmi.org or on the GC Sabbath School and Personal Ministries app.

Jim Howard is an assistant to the president and GC Sabbath School and Personal Ministries director. **Duane McKey** is an assistant to the president and AWR president. **Ramon J. Canals** is an assistant to the president and GC Ministerial secretary.

COME FOR A *Visit*

There is more than one way to check out Southern Adventist University:

- **Virtual visits** allow you to see our campus and gather information from the comfort of home.
- **In-person visits** give you the immersive experience of walking around on our tree-lined sidewalks, enjoying blooming flowers and shrubs, meeting people face-to-face, and soaking up the culture of campus.

Either way, you'll get a guided tour, faculty visit, and admissions consultation while having the chance to ask any questions you want.
We can't wait to meet you!

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SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY
Power for Mind & Soul

ERNESTO DOUGLAS VENN
ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT



ADVENTIST POSSIBILITY MINISTRIES

Christ's call to care

In Matthew 25:40 Jesus says, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these . . . you did for me" (NIV). With these words He calls us to care for those who are often overlooked or forgotten. As Seventh-day Adventists, we answer this call by reaching out with compassion and hope—especially to the Deaf community and people with disabilities.

One way our church does this is through the Adventist Possibility Ministries Initiative (APM) and Adventist Deaf Ministries International (ADMI). These ministries are led by the Holy Spirit to help the church see people from God's perspective—not by their limitations, but by their possibilities.

APM focuses on seven special groups of people:

1. The global Deaf community, those who are hard of hearing, or who have hearing loss.
2. People who are blind or have low vision.
3. Individuals with mobility challenges.
4. The neurodiverse, and those who face mental health challenges and stigma.
5. Orphans and vulnerable children—including refugees, immigrants, and street children.
6. Widows and widowers.
7. Caregivers who support these groups day after day.

Here are three ways Adventists around the world are answering Christ's call to care:

JESUS AND THE INCLUSION MODEL: MINISTRY TO THE NEURODIVERSE

The South American Division created a four-part training course to help Children's Ministries leaders include all children and teens in church life. With support from the General Conference Children's Ministries Department and APM, this course gives simple, helpful ideas for working with neurodiverse children. It's available in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese. Learn more: children.adventist.org/inclusion-model.



POSSIBILITY MINISTRIES SABBATH: A GLOBAL CELEBRATION OF INCLUSION

Every year during the third week of April, churches around the world celebrate Possibility Ministries Sabbath! This special Sabbath reminds us that "all are gifted, needed, treasured, and chosen for mission!" Churches receive free resources in multiple languages to help them include people who are Deaf or disabled in their mission and church service. Learn more: possibilityministries.org/apms.

MINISTRY TO ORPHANS AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN

In February 2024, leaders from around the world gathered in Siem Reap, Cambodia, for the Orphans and Vulnerable Children's Ministries Global Congress. With the theme "Learn, Seek, Defend, and Disciple," they shared ideas and best practices from such ministries as ADRA, Children's Ministries, and APM. This gathering showed the power of working together to care for God's most precious children. Learn more: possibilityministries.org/ovcmc24.

Christ invites us to care for "the least of these"! Through APM and ADMI we can make a difference—by including, loving, and serving with those who are marginalized and forgotten. This is how we truly follow Christ's call to care.

Ernesto Douglas Venn is assistant to the president for Adventist Possibility Ministries Initiative (APM), and coordinator for Adventist Deaf Ministries International (ADMI).

ZENO CHARLES-MARCEL
DIRECTOR



COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH MINISTRIES

Sharing God's view of health

Throughout history the people of God have been called to a ministry of healing and restoration. The mission of Christ, as seen in Matthew 9:35, was to teach, preach, and heal, embodying a wholistic approach to human well-being. The Seventh-day Adventist movement, rooted in the biblical health message, has long championed a vision of comprehensive health ministry (CHM)—one that integrates physical, mental, social, and spiritual care. As we have traversed the pandemic and post-pandemic eras, we have embraced in more tangible ways the need for hope, wholeness, health, and harmony in all aspects of life.

Medical missionaries and lay health enthusiasts have carried the health message to communities worldwide, offering both simple medical treatment and spiritual encouragement. Adventist sanitariums, pioneered in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, served as centers of total health, combining ever-advancing medical-surgical care based on true science, the Bible, and the inspired writings of Ellen White.

Secular health-care systems often pay lip service to whole-person care in practice. Societal shifts have led to growing rates of chronic diseases, mental health struggles, and social disconnection. While Adventist health-care institutions and health professionals continue to provide excellent medical-surgical and auxiliary health-care services, complete integration of shalomic principles into their care is needed.

The biblical concept of shalom calls us to a higher vision of health—one that moves beyond the absence of disease to the presence of wholeness. It emphasizes mental stability, physical well-being, and social harmony, without neglecting spiritual renewal and environmental care. Jesus' healing ministry was not just about curing illnesses; it was about restoring individuals to their families, communities, and God. The good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) exemplifies this wholistic approach, providing immediate medical care while also ensuring long-term support.



In the twenty-first century we are realigning our human thinking with God's view of health. First, we have started and will continue to foster **health-centered faith communities,** where churches serve as hubs for wellness education, preventive health care, environmental sustainability, and spiritual encouragement. We continue to call pastors, health professionals, and lay leaders to collaborate to integrate health principles into discipleship and outreach efforts.

Second, we continue to **expand lifestyle interventions** within hospitals and clinics. This includes integrating natural remedies, nutrition programs, and mental health services to address root causes as well as symptoms. More wellness retreats and lifestyle centers have been established and should be established, offering people a place to experience true healing through evidence-based health practices and faith-based restoration.

Third, **medical missionary training** is discipleship training and is a priority. Health-care professionals and lay church members alike are being and should be equipped to meet the physical and spiritual needs of their communities, following Christ's example of compassion.

Finally, **sustainability and environmental stewardship** should be integrated into our approach. Health is deeply connected to the environment, and careful, responsible use of resources ensures long-term well-being for individuals and communities.

As we move forward, the call for shalom through comprehensive health ministry is clear and part of the revelation of God's character.

Maranatha!

Zeno L. Charles-Marcel, a board-certified internist, is the director of Adventist Health Ministries at the General Conference.

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OFFICE OF ADVENTIST MISSION

Church planting. Christ's method. All the world.



The Office of Adventist Mission's mandate is the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:18-20). Its methodology is Christ's method of ministry—mingling, showing sympathy, ministering to needs, winning confidence, and bidding people to follow Jesus.[1]

Adventist Mission cares for:

- Global Mission—the church's official initiative to start new groups of believers in unentered geographical areas and among unreached people groups.
- Mission Awareness—promoting mission offerings to empower mission around the world.

GLOBAL MISSION AND MISSION REFOCUS

"I don't think we have ever sat down to discuss a subject of greater importance than Global Mission," said former General Conference president Neal C. Wilson at the 1990 General Conference Session in Indianapolis. Thirty-five years later Global Mission is more important than ever.

Any organization, even churches, face the danger of "mission drift"—focusing more on maintenance than mission. A new initiative called Mission Refocus is calling the world church back to its Global Mission priorities. Mission Refocus highlights three high-priority mission windows where we face the greatest mission challenges:

- The 10/40 window
- The secular and post-Christian window
- The urban window

Adventist Mission is committed to directing most Global Mission funds and resources into these three Mission Refocus windows.

THE 10/40 WINDOW

The 10/40 window embraces more than 60 percent of the world's population and the fewest Christians. Most Adventist members, ministries, funding, and institutions are located outside this challenging window.

GARY KRAUSE
ASSOCIATE SECRETARY





THE 10/40 WINDOW[2]

	Inside	Outside
Church membership	2,806,930	19,975,373
Adventist-to-population ratio	1 to 1,905	1 to 133
Churches and companies	23,631	151,465
Hospitals	33	180
Schools	85	806
Ordained ministers	2,708	14,657

URBAN WINDOW

The Seventh-day Adventist Church began as a church-planting movement in rural New England. During the past 162 years since its establishment, the church has continued to place most of its ministry efforts outside the large cities. More than 100 years ago Ellen White wrote, "The Lord has been calling our attention to the neglected multitudes in the large cities, yet little regard has been given to the matter."[3] Today cities loom even larger on our mission horizon.

CITIES WITH 1 MILLION OR MORE PEOPLE

In these 543 cities there is a ratio of one Adventist to every 89,000 people. The global average is one Adventist for every 358 people.

Forty-nine of these cities have fewer than 10 Adventists, and 43 have no Adventist presence. No churches. No companies. No institutions.

Urban Centers of Influence, such as the Battambang Essential Life Center in Cambodia (pictured on p. 30 and below), serve as platforms to practice Christ's method of ministry and establish new groups of believers. The Essential Life Center operates a vegetarian café and offers a wide range of activities and programs to connect with the community.

Global Mission has helped fund Urban Centers of Influence across the globe, such as the Urban





Life Center in Baltimore, United States (pictured above). This juice bar/café provides a launching pad for many classes, programs, and activities that connect with the community. A church is being planted in the center.

SECULAR AND POST-CHRISTIAN WINDOW

The 2021 England and Wales Census revealed that for the first time in history less than half the population identified themselves as Christian. The 2021 Australian Census revealed the same thing for Australians.

These countries are a warning for what's coming to the rest of the world. In the United States, for example, it's expected that by 2050, if not before, the "nones"—people who profess no religious belief—will outnumber Christians. This is a challenge for a church that has traditionally reached out mainly to other Christians and animists.

Global Mission is committed to supporting more pioneers and urban centers of influence to connect with secular and post-Christian people with the goal of starting new groups of believers.

To learn more about Mission Refocus, visit gm.adventistmission.org/refocus or scan the QR code.

GLOBAL MISSION IS FUNDED BY:

- The interest off an endowment set up from the sale of Loma Linda Foods
- The Annual Sacrifice Offering
- Church member donations

To donate to Global Mission, visit adventistmission.org/donate or scan the QR code.

If we're serious about finishing the work, we need to know the needs to make informed decisions for mission investment.

MAPPING MISSION

Just as a traveler needs a map, we need a way to see where the church hasn't yet reached and where church planting is most needed.

That's why the Office of Adventist Mission is developing an Adventist Mission Dashboard—a web-based tool designed for both leaders and church members to plan pioneer mission work strategically. As a mission map, it allows users to explore needs by country, major urban areas, and people groups. This dashboard will continue to expand and improve, offering an even clearer picture of where mission efforts are most needed.

If we're serious about finishing the work, we need to know the needs to make informed decisions for mission investment. The Adventist Mission Dashboard helps us do just that—so that in every corner of the world, an Adventist congregation is sharing Jesus' love and news of His soon return.

—Greg Whitsett, planning director, Adventist Mission.

GLOBAL MISSION CENTERS—BUILDING BRIDGES OF MISSION

The Global Mission Centers help the church reach out more effectively to people from the major world religions and other challenging people groups. Today six Global Mission Centers are helping us establish new groups of believers among these communities. Their goal is to identify and develop methods, models, and resources to help us reach these people more effectively.

GLOBAL MISSION TOTAL EMPLOYMENT

Total Employment is the Global Mission tentmaker program. Tentmakers are church members who strategically find jobs in parts of the world where missionaries can't go or where Christian witness is severely restricted. They find their own employment. Their larger goal, however, is to be a witness in some of the most challenging mission fields on earth, where church employees often can't go. To learn more, visit TotalEmployment.org.

SIX GLOBAL MISSION CENTERS

- Global Mission Centers director, ChanMin Chung
- Global Mission Center for Adventist-Muslim Relations director, Petras Bahadur. Associate director, Samuel Lumwe.
- Global Mission Center for Adventist-Jewish Relations director, Reinaldo Siqueira
- Global Mission Center for Adventist-Buddhist Relations director, Khamsay Phetchareun
- Global Mission Center for Urban Mission director, Bledi Leno
- Global Mission Center for South Asian Religions director, Clifmond Shameerudeen. Associate director, Umesh Nag.
- Global Mission Center for Secular and Post-Christian Mission director, Brendan Pratt. Associate director, Jonathan Contero.

To learn more about Global Mission Centers, visit GlobalMissionCenters.org or scan the QR code.



Thirteenth Sabbath Offerings have funded hundreds of mission projects worldwide, including the Come 'n See Café, an Urban Center of Influence in Taiwan.

OFFICE OF ADVENTIST MISSION CONTINUED



PIONEERING THE GOSPEL

Today 2,500 Global Mission pioneers, supported by a basic living stipend, are starting new groups of believers among unentered people groups. As Indigenous workers, they typically speak the language and understand the culture of the communities they're reaching. Global Mission pioneers Jamal (pictured above) and Iwan are serving in a community in western Indonesia. They successfully negotiated for electricity, built toilets, and are educating the children. "We aim for Jesus' mission to resonate within the hearts of every individual we serve in this place," Jamal says.

MISSION AWARENESS

Today the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its supporting ministries operate dozens of wonderful mission initiatives. All these activities rely on mission offerings, which are like the roots of a tree, providing nourishment for a variety of mission fruit to grow. These mission offering roots support church planting, schools, hospitals, publishing houses, media outreach, publishing, missionaries, and so much more. They support mission work in parts of the world we may never have even heard of.

The Mission Awareness work of Adventist Mission inspires church members with stories of what their mission offerings are doing through:

MISSION Spotlight from Adventist Mission

Mission Spotlight: video stories shown in Sabbath schools and churches around the world.

mission 360° Produced by Adventist Mission



Mission 360° magazine: stories of mission offerings at work. To read, visit adventistmission.org/mission360-home or scan the QR code.

Mission 360° TV: broadcast on Hope Channel, 3ABN, and online. To view Mission 360° TV programs, visit www.m360.tv or scan the QR code.

Mission magazine: shared every Sabbath around the world.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Inside Stories in the *Adult Bible Study Guide*

To learn more about Adventist Mission, visit AdventistMission.org or scan the QR code.

—Rick Kajiura, communication director, Adventist Mission



[1] Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1905), p. 143.

[2] *2023 Annual Statistical Report*, p. 111.

[3] In *Review and Herald*, Nov. 11, 1909.

IGNITE EVANGELISM IN YOUR CHURCH IN 2025

LET AMAZING FACTS HELP!

Is your church participating in the North American Division's Pentecost 2025 initiative? If so, Amazing Facts International has the solution to help you succeed in your evangelistic campaign this year!

Turnkey, 15-Part Outreach Series!

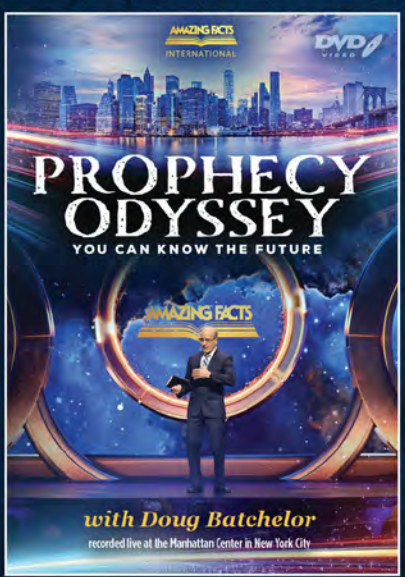


TURNKEY EVANGELISM

Prophecy Odyssey is a powerful, 15-part outreach series designed to engage and inspire today's audiences—it's a ready-to-go, complete evangelistic campaign that will help your congregation reach your community for Jesus!

PROVEN EVANGELISM

Featuring cutting-edge visuals and high-definition technology, *Prophecy Odyssey* is presented in Pastor Doug Batchelor's signature style, offering captivating insights into God's Word that will prepare seekers for baptism—making it a powerful tool to grow your church!



TOTAL EVANGELISM

From DVDs to Bible lessons, outreach guides, and customizable marketing resources, Amazing Facts has everything you need to host your 2025 series and invite souls into God's eternal kingdom!

No need to worry! Whether you're just hearing the news or are already praying about what to do, Amazing Facts has you covered.

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Amazing Facts is not affiliated with Pentecost 2025, and this ad has not been endorsed by the NAD.

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HOPE CHANNEL

Hope Channel is reaching more people in more languages.



With more than 7,000 languages in the world, millions of people have never heard the message of eternal hope in their own tongue. Hope Channel is committed to changing that.

Since the last General Conference Session in 2022, Hope Channel has expanded into more languages than ever before. The rapid growth of our network, fueled by technological advancements and a deep commitment to fulfilling the three angels' messages, is laying the foundation for an even greater mission. As we move toward 2030, our vision is to reach 1 billion people by ensuring the message of eternal hope is available in more languages worldwide.

EXPANDING THE NETWORK OF HOPE

From 69 media entities in 2022 to 84 media entities today, Hope Channel is sharing God's love in more than 100 languages worldwide. God has blessed this expansion, opening doors and creating opportunities for us to meet people where they are in their own language. Each new language represents a community that can now experience biblical truth in their native tongue.

This expansion is a direct response to the prophetic call in Revelation 14:6 to proclaim the gospel to every nation, tribe, language, and people. With each new Hope Channel media entity, we are reaching new audiences and making the message of hope accessible to more people than ever before.

ADVANCING TECHNOLOGY TO BREAK LANGUAGE BARRIERS

At Hope Channel we believe that no one should be excluded from hearing the gospel because of a language barrier. Our Hope.Cloud media platform now provides AI-powered dubbing in more than 30 languages, seamlessly matching new audio to the original video while preserving authenticity. Subtitles in more than 100 languages extend our reach even further, ensuring that more people have access to truth in their own tongue.

HANNAH DREWIECK
COMMUNICATION COORDINATOR





In addition, we launched the first Adventist-owned Content Delivery Network (CDN) to ensure that biblical content reaches audiences worldwide without disruption. Every innovation is another opportunity to bring the gospel to those who have never heard it in their own language.

DEVELOPING BIBLE STUDY RESOURCES IN MORE LANGUAGES

Hope.Study media entities now offers more than 40 interactive Bible study courses in 25 languages across 24 Hope Channel media entities. These studies guide seekers from their first spiritual questions to the waters of baptism. But there is still a vast need for translations into more languages, as people around the world long to understand the Bible in their own words.

The work is ongoing, and as demand continues to grow, so does our commitment to providing Bible study resources in even more languages.

STRENGTHENING DIGITAL EVANGELISM TO REACH MORE PEOPLE

Where traditional outreach is restricted, digital evangelism is breaking barriers. Hope Channel now operates 253 YouTube channels, reaching 21 million subscribers. We now have 45 channels that have surpassed 100,000 subscribers, and five have exceeded 1 million.

Most important, we now operate in 52 languages, allowing more people than ever to hear the message of eternal hope in their own language, some for the first time ever. Digital media is proving to be a powerful means of fulfilling God's mission.

GROWING TO 300 HOPE CHANNELS BY 2030

As we look back, it is clear that God has been preparing Hope Channel for something even greater. By 2030 we aim to grow to 300 media entities worldwide, ensuring that no language group is left behind. The mission set forth in the three angels' messages calls us to proclaim the gospel to every nation, tribe, language, and people.

The vision to reach 1 billion people by 2030 is bold, but with God's guidance it is possible. Each language added means that thousands and even millions more people can hear the message of eternal hope in their own tongue, drawing them closer to Christ. As we press forward, we invite you to actively participate in this mission through prayer, sharing the message, and supporting the work of Hope Channel. Together we can ensure that every person, in every language, has the opportunity to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Hannah Drewieck is the communication coordinator for Hope Channel International.





HopeChannel

Bringing
Hope
to **Every**
Corner of the
World

Help us reach one billion people with the message of eternal hope.





Hopechannelinternational.org

DELEGATE LIST

This list is supplied and maintained by General Conference Secretariat, and is current as of April 10, 2025, at the time this issue went to press. The list may have subsequently changed because of visa or travel complications. The delegates will officially be seated and voted at the first business session. Only delegates speak to issues and vote.

GENERAL CONFERENCE

Abner De los Santos
Adrian Schmidt
Alberto Timm
Alfred Soare
Alistair Huong
Almir M Marroni
Amireh Al-Haddad
Andi Hunsaker
Andrea Ashman
Andres Saenz
Andrew Moll
Angela M Lalas
Aniel Barbe
Anna Galeniece
Anne Berit Petersen
Anthony Bosman
Anthony R Kent
Antonio Vargas
Artur A Stele
Audrey E Andersson
Aurora M Canals
Bangwato Sikwa-Ramabu
Benjamin Clausen
Brent B Burdick
Bruce Bauer
C Randolph Robinson
Cami Oetman
Carlos Cardoso Pinheiro
Carlos Eduardo Gonçalves Prado
Chanmin Chung
Charne Renou
Chip Jr Meekma
Claude J Richli
Clifford R Goldstein
Clinton L Wahlen
Daisy J Orion
Dan Houghton
Daniel K Bediako
Daniel W Giang
Darron Boyd
Darryl Thompson
David J Fournier
David Trim
Delbert B Pearman
Denis Sand
Dennis R Carlson
Denzil McNeilus
Derek J Morris
Derris Krause
Doug Batchelor
Doyle R Nick
Duane McKey
Dwain Esmond
Dwight Evans
E Albert Reece
E Selvin Moorthy
Elaine Oliver
Elbert Kuhn
Elias Brasil de Souza
Elie Weick
Ella S Simmons
Emmanuel S D Manu
Ernesto Doug Venn
Erton C Kohler
Eugene A Korff
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Gonzalo L Pita
Greg Morikone
Greg Scott
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Guillermo E Biaggi
Harold E Butler
Harriet Clark
Hensley M Moorooven
Herbert Norman Giebel
Hudson E Kibuuka
Imad Madanat
Ivan H Omana
J Daniel Sundararaj
J Raymond Wahlen II
Jacob Prabhakar Chindrupu
James M Howard
James S Winegardner
Jan Paulsen
Jeffrey Jordan
Jeffrey O Brown
Jennifer Burrill
Jerry N Page
Jiri Moskala
John R Beckett
John Shin
John Wesley Taylor V
Jorge Alberto Montero Guerrero
Jorge Molina
Jose Carlos Lima
Joseph Reeves
Joseph Somers
Josue Pierre
Juan R Prestol-Puesan
Julian Melgosa
Justin Kim
Karen J Porter
Karnik Doukmetzian
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The 1962 GC Session was held at the Cow Palace in San Francisco, California. On Sabbath, July 28, A. L. Tucker (left) and O. A. Blake, undertreasurer of the General Conference, added the offering totals on an adding machine. The cash offering that day totaled $1,000,000 (equivalent to $10.6 million today). An armored truck stood by waiting to carry the offering to a bank safe.

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Luis Arturo King Garcia
Luis Daniel Polanco
Luis Edward Trundle Nufio
Luis Ernesto Rodriguez Bermudez
Luis Jesse
Manuel David Rivero
Manuel Luna
Marcial Escobar
Marco A Ortega Jara
Maria del Mar Jaraba
Maria Eloisa Madero
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Maricela Rasgado Toledo
Marie Augustin Joseph Jasmin
Marie-Andree Pluval Dady
Marinella Glasgow
Mario Jose Castellanos Rosado
Marlon Pacheco
Marvin Corrales Mora
Marvin David Guzman Alvarez
Mauriel Lindsay Bush Cooper
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Meric Walker
Migdalia Muniz Saltares
Mirna Castro Insunza
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Misael Rivera
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Moises Reyna
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Nairim Montenegro
Natasha Brown-Alleyne
Nelson Raul Hernandez Gomez
Nery Martinez Guerrero
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Nevail Barrett
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Obed Adorno Arias
Ogle Jairo Lopez Galvez
Olger Villalobos Jimenez
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Orlando Ramirez
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Oscar Noe Martinez Jacobo
Osmar Gonzalez
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Osvaldo Arrieta Falcon
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Otto Franco
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Ruben Emilio Carballo
Ruben Gustavo Maltez Segura
Ruben Padilla
Ruben Rodriguez
Salvatore Lo Nardo
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Sandra Yanira Lazo de Garcia
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Saul Ortiz
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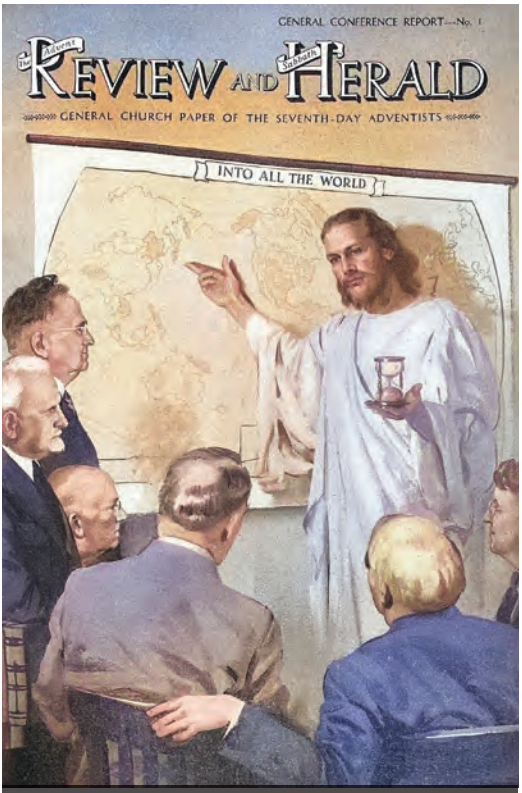
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This painting by Harry Anderson was commissioned for the first *GC Bulletin* cover of the 1946 session. Jesus points to the world field with one hand while holding an hourglass in the other. Listening are (standing, left) J. L. McElhany, GC president; W. A. Spicer, former GC president and *Review* associate editor; and W. E. Nelson, GC treasurer (seated). On the right is the profile of E. D. Dick, GC secretary.

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Kata Rangoso was a delegate from the Solomon Islands to the 1936 GC Session. He reportedly was the first from his country to come to the United States. Overwhelmed by the San Francisco skyline and busy streets, as well as being continually mistaken for a woman because of his dress and hair, he walked the city streets and session halls barefoot because shoes were uncomfortable. His was a powerful testimony representing the power of the gospel in one man's life.

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Walking Into the Next Quinquennium

Erton C. Köhler elected General Conference president

NEWS



MARK FROELICH

KÖHLER ELECTED GC PRESIDENT

FIRST SOUTH AMERICAN PRESIDENT ACCEPTS WITH GRATITUDE AND CONFIDENCE IN GOD

JARROD STACKELROTH

Erton Köhler has been elected the twenty-first president of the General Conference (GC) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The Nominating Committee of the sixty-second General Conference Session, held in St. Louis, Missouri, United States, recommended the name, which was passed by delegates with a vote of 1,721 to 188 on July 4 during the afternoon session.

Köhler is the first South American president, as well as the second president to be born in the Southern Hemisphere. He replaces Ted N. C. Wilson, who has served as GC president since his election at the

COVER PHOTO BY DAVID B. SHERWIN

We cannot focus only on our local needs; we need to look at our global challenges to finally preach the gospel of the kingdom to all the world.

General Conference Session in Atlanta, Georgia, in 2010. Wilson has had a strong focus on mission, including initiatives such as Global Total Member Involvement, Revival and Reformation, I Will Go, Mission to the Cities, and comprehensive health evangelism.

Köhler made a short speech when accepting the nomination. "You can imagine how challenging this moment is. No one is prepared for [this]. I'm speechless now. But before any other work, I'd like to tell you that I'll move forward, renewing my confidence in the Lord and in His church."

He highlighted a verse his family often uses for Friday evening family worship: Isaiah 41:10, "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."

Köhler used his acceptance speech to express his gratitude to the church, including those who "express different opinions."

"You are part of the family, and we appreciate you, as well," he said.

Köhler thanked Wilson for his leadership. "Deep gratitude to Pastor Ted and Nancy Wilson, who together led this church for the past 15 years. He's someone that I learned how to appreciate, how to recognize the integrity of a leader—someone that gives the best of his life to the church. Thank you very much for your leadership, and may God guide your next steps."

Köhler has served as secretary of the GC since 2021, when his predecessor, G. T. Ng, retired. When originally elected to the secretary role, he vowed to be available, serving with a heart "completely focused" on the mission of the church. "I will be open to [listen] and to learn," he said. "My job is to build bridges, not walls."

At the time of his election to the GC, Köhler was serving as president of the South American Division (SAD), a role he had held since 2007. During his time at SAD, Köhler was the driving force behind much of the media growth and the success of Novo Tempo, a 24-hour broadcast on satellite and cable networks in South America. He was the youngest division president to head the SAD at the age of 38.

"We are a global church with a global mission," GC secretary Köhler said during the GC Secretary's Report at the 2022 Annual Council. "We cannot focus only on our local needs; we need to look at our global challenges to finally preach the gospel of the kingdom to all the world." And he added, "At Secretariat we are working focused on that commitment."

Köhler spearheaded the Mission Refocus initiative, a strategic plan for the GC Secretariat between 2022 and 2025. Included was a focus on reclaiming missing members, disciple-making, and streamlining the international call process.

Köhler was born in southern Brazil and grew up with a desire to follow in the footsteps of his father, who served as an Adventist pastor. He completed a bachelor's degree in theology at the Adventist Teaching Institute (now Brazil Adventist University) in 1989 and graduated from the same school in 2008 with a master's degree in pastoral theology. Currently he is pursuing a Doctor of Ministry degree from Andrews University.

From 1990 to 1994 Köhler served as a local church pastor in São Paulo. He was then elected Youth Ministries director of the Rio Grande do Sul Conference in 1995, and in 1998 became the Youth Ministries director of the Northeast Brazil Union. In July 2002 Köhler returned to the Rio Grande do Sul Conference to serve as secretary. The following year he was elected Youth Ministries director for the eight countries comprising the South American Division. After serving for four years as Youth Ministries director, he became the South American Division president in 2007.

Köhler is married to Adriene Marques, a nurse, and they have two adult children.



MARCOS PASEGGI

"GOD WILL DO EVERYTHING THAT'S NEEDED FOR US TO MOVE FORWARD"

IN FIRST INTERVIEW, ERTON KÖHLER PLEDGES HIS FULL COMMITMENT TO MISSION

Justin Kim: We are at the 62nd General Conference Session here in St. Louis, Missouri, where Pastor Erton Köhler has just accepted the presidency of the [General Conference of the] worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Congratulations; we cannot imagine the mind space you're in. I just want to ask you, on a personal level, how are you feeling right now?

Erton Köhler: I'm feeling speechless. But I'm feeling confident in the Lord. Because we know that He is guiding this church. And I'm very confident God will do everything that's needed for us to move forward as a church family, for me and our other leaders, and especially for the life of the church.

Confidence is the first word, because we felt confident in the leading of the Lord—therefore I can accept it, and I can move forward.

Because we know that He is guiding this church, I'm very confident God will do everything that's needed for us to move forward.

And the second one, I'm dependent on the Lord. We don't know what will happen tomorrow. I know that during a session like this, we have a lot of meetings, different decisions, and I need to be part of many of them. And it is hard to deal with that. But again, the only way to move forward is to trust in the Lord in confidence.

JK: Walk us through. Where were you? Did you get a phone call, a text, did someone come to you? Can you describe that story for us just a little bit?

EK: Yes. I was sitting in the first row of the main floor of the dome, watching the treasurer's report. Because Paul Douglas is my colleague, I was there to support him; then my cell phone rang. And when I recognized the name of the caller, I understood what it meant. The Nominating Committee invited me to go to a special place to give me the news that my name was being recommended to the delegates for General Conference president. And that was a huge surprise. I have been working with the leadership to familiarize myself with all the situations. But still you don't expect it, so when it comes, it's a shock. And that happened with me and with my wife, and with my daughter (because we were sitting together), and my daughter started to cry. And she said, please say no. Because she knows the cost of this position. I served [as president] in a division before. It's not easy.

JK: The church has not had a secretary become president since 1922. How do you think your experience as a secretary will inform your leadership as the General Conference president?

EK: First of all, my experience in leadership helped me to prepare for this moment. And all the years—when I worked as a youth director, as division president, and now as GC secretary for the past four years—strengthened and prepared me to carry the load of this leadership position.

Two words guide me: ministry and mission. My concept is that wherever I am, I am a pastor. I'm not an administrator. I'm not an officer. Instead, I am a pastor, and I need to deal with people. And as a pastor, I need to resolve problems and chair committees.

My second word is mission. In my leadership position as division president or GC secretary I have focused on mission.

I understand a little bit more the challenge of our worldwide mission. And I want to focus much more on the needs that we have around the world to preach the gospel and to see Jesus come in the clouds of heaven.

JK: Are there some specific initiatives you would like to tackle?

EK: I've had less than one hour in this position. I don't have any project in mind. The only thing that I can say is that I'm totally committed to the mission. And in Secretariat I defended, I preached, I promoted missionary focus and the need to be a flagship movement for the church. But I believe that the mission to the world is not the only aspect of our mission.

We need to emphasize the local mission with the members of the church. We have a lot of projects, and we can be much more strategic and specific in what we are doing.

But you can expect from me a strong emphasis in the mission of the church.

JK: From your perspective, what are the most difficult theological challenges that the world church experiences?

EK: I can't discuss now all the theological challenges that we are facing.



CHRISTINA COLLARD

The presence of the Holy Spirit can help us to resolve many of the challenges that we face.


MARK FROELICH

I know some of them, but not all of them, but I'd like to highlight just one topic. It's the unity of the church. It's theological, of course. And for some people it could not be theological as well. I think that as a church, all our doctrines or our challenges with theology or all our challenges with the mission are related to our unity.

If we strengthen our unity, if you can deal with the challenge that we are facing on the authority of the church and the Spirit of prophecy and the Bible, and many things, if we can work together, we can overcome many of our theological challenges because when we are united, the Holy Spirit can work among us.

And the presence of the Holy Spirit can help us to resolve many of these challenges that we are facing. Unity is the main one that we need to touch, emphasize, and deal with.

JK: You have difficult challenges that come to your desk as president.

If you could give counsel to all the leaders around the world, what is a personal way that you address challenges? Do you go through Scripture? Is it prayer? Is it the love of family? What is the thing that you cling to most?

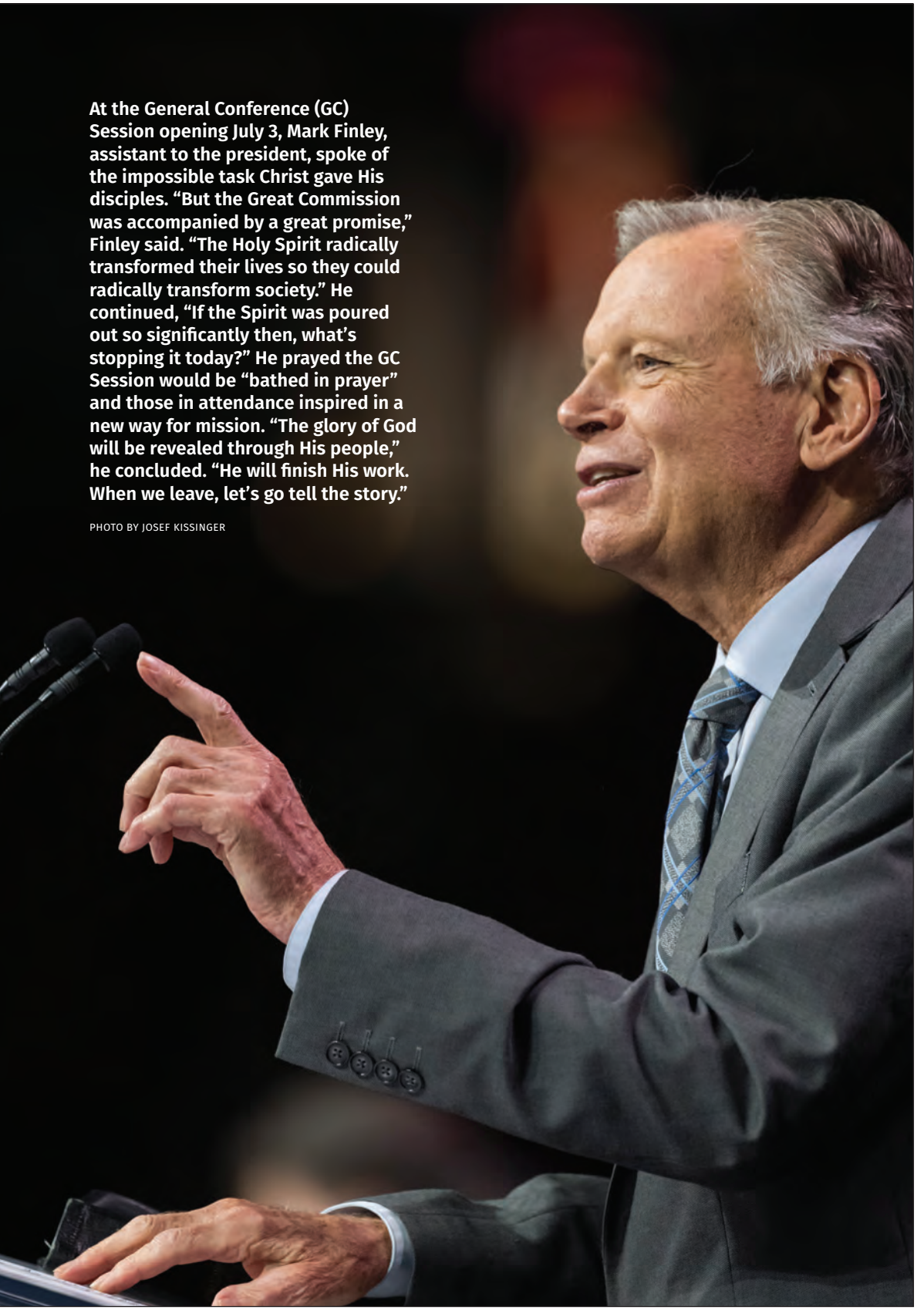
EK: A little bit of all of them. But you know, when I have challenges to face, number one is prayer. Many times before someone comes to my office, I spend some time praying, asking wisdom from the Lord to face a situation that often I don't know how to deal with or resolve.

Prayer is the first one. The second one for me is to look for advice from those who are working around me and from my wife as well.

The third one, I like to read the Bible, trying to pay attention to what God could say to me.

[Often as I have read, He has] told me many things that are important for me. Right now, many of those messages are coming to my mind. For me, this is precious, because I'm not leading or dealing with a business corporation, I'm dealing with God's church. It means the first step is to ask His guidance. After that, the guidance of those He selected to be close to me, and after that we can move forward, confident that He will be guiding everything.

JK: Thank you so much for your time. And I want to encourage you, our readers, that our leadership at the General Conference are people that need our support, our prayers, and encouragement.



At the General Conference (GC) Session opening July 3, Mark Finley, assistant to the president, spoke of the impossible task Christ gave His disciples. "But the Great Commission was accompanied by a great promise," Finley said. "The Holy Spirit radically transformed their lives so they could radically transform society." He continued, "If the Spirit was poured out so significantly then, what's stopping it today?" He prayed the GC Session would be "bathed in prayer" and those in attendance inspired in a new way for mission. "The glory of God will be revealed through His people," he concluded. "He will finish His work. When we leave, let's go tell the story."

PHOTO BY JOSEF KISSINGER


CHRISTINA COLLARD

DELEGATES VOTE ON FIRST BUSINESS ITEMS, PASS THE SESSION AGENDA

THE SIXTY-SECOND GC SESSION OFFICIALLY STARTS IN ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, ON JULY 3.

MARCOS PASEGGI, *ADVENTIST REVIEW*

Thousands of Seventh-day Adventist delegates, special guests, and visitors met at the America's Center Convention Complex on July 3 in the afternoon for the first business session of the sixty-second General Conference Session in St. Louis, Missouri, United States. Delegates arrived from every region of the church for the major business session gathering of the worldwide Adventist Church.

In his welcoming remarks General Conference (GC) president Ted N. C. Wilson prayed for "a sweet spirit, a mission-focused spirit, a spirit that will lead us in urgency to proclaim [God's] three angels' messages."

GC secretary Erton Köhler emphasized the mission focus of the event. "We are a church that was designed for mission, a mission that can reach hearts across the street and across the world," Köhler said.

VOTE ON MOTIONS

After Finley it was time to start the first business session. Delegates swiftly voted to approve several new and reorganized church territories from around the world, to accept GC deputy general counsel Todd McFarland as the parliamentarian of the session, and to limit speeches to two minutes in English and three minutes with translation. Delegates also voted to accept the membership of three committees serving during the session.

A motion to adopt the daily program of the GC Session also passed.

The motion to adopt the GC Session agenda, however, demanded more extensive discussion, as several delegates went to the microphones to make amendments or comment on the agenda, which delegates had received in advance. Yuliyan Filipov, from the Ohio Conference in the North American Division, made a motion to add to the agenda a review and discussion of the 2015 GC Administrative Committee statement on immunization, specifically its claim about peer-reviewed scientific literature in addition to the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White.

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

Before the vote, GC president Ted N. C. Wilson explained that some of the issues raised are the result of the misinformation shared about the standing of the GC regarding vaccination and the role of science. The original statement on "responsible immunization," approved in 2015 well before COVID became a household name, stated that the Adventist health message is based on the Bible and the writings of Adventist Church cofounder Ellen G. White. It is also "informed by peer-reviewed scientific literature," Wilson read.

In the 2021 reaffirmation of the 2015 statement, the document makes clear that vaccination is not a mandate but a personal choice, Wilson emphasized. "The world church never mandated anything," he said.

MOTIONS DEFEATED, OTHER MOTIONS PASSED

After a vote to cease all debate passed, delegates voted on the amendment to include a review of the 2015 Statement on Vaccination on the agenda. The motion on the amendment was defeated, with 310 voting for and 1,662 against it.

Delegates then used their voting cards to vote on the motion to accept the agenda. The motion passed.

In a final vote, delegates approved the 277 members of the Nominating Committee who will serve, sending their suggestions for leadership positions to the floor so the delegates can vote. The list of names is the result of 17 regional caucuses who met and chose their representatives on the committee. The motion passed.



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THE BOOK

The primacy of Scripture



JOHN BRADSHAW

DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE PRESENTED FRIDAY MORNING

JULY 4, 2025

It takes little in the way of genius or insight to recognize the Bible as inspired by God. And I would say it takes some determination to declare it is not. Consider this evidence: Daniel 2, with Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and the return of Jesus. Daniel 7, with the rise and fall of the same kingdoms, and then Rome dividing and the little horn appearing. Daniel 9 and the remarkable 70 weeks prophecy, accurately pinpointing the baptism of Jesus, the crucifixion of Jesus, and the gospel going to the world. Isaiah 7, the Messiah would be born of a virgin. Isaiah 53, He would be despised and rejected of men; He opened not His mouth; He would die with the wicked and be buried

We need to believe the truth, even if it isn't popular.

the rich. Zechariah foretells Jesus being sold for 30 pieces of silver, and the money spent on a potter's field. Jesus would ride into Jerusalem on a donkey. The Bible says Jesus would be born in Bethlehem; He would be the son of David; a forerunner would go before Him. He would work miracles and teach in parables. He would be beaten and spat upon; He would cry out to His Father, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46). We have the 1260-day prophecy. Fulfilled. The 2300 days. Fulfilled. They were to be 70 years in Babylonian captivity, and there was. Cyrus and Josiah were called by name before they were conceived!

We know all this. The Bible is verifiable, anchored in history and geography, interconnected with kingdoms great and small. We're convinced the Bible is the Word of God.

He was a Baptist, a Bible student, and his Bible study led him to believe Jesus would return in 1843. When Jesus did not, it was suggested faulty mathematics caused an obvious error—Jesus would return not in 1843, but in 1844! Again, when He did not, others searched their Bibles and found the error not in the Bible but in the reckoning of the Bible. Instead of returning, Jesus had entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary. Then truth after truth was added, until a systematic, life-changing collection of Bible teachings coalesced to become the central tenets of the remnant church.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

So here we are—the people of the Book. We believe the first verse of the Bible. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). We don't believe in evolutionary theory. We have respect for those who do, but we don't join them in their fantasy. Think with me. There was nothing. Then, for no explicable reason, the nothing exploded, and everything came out of the nothing. The Gobi Desert, the Nullarbor Plain, the Caspian Sea, the Himalayas, the Andes Mountains, the Amazon, Orinoco, Nile, Yangtze, and Waikato rivers, the Florida Everglades, the Iguazu Falls, Victoria Falls, the Steppes, and Lake Baikal. All out of nothing. It's easier to believe Genesis 1:1! We believe because we are Seventh-day Adventists, and creation is central to who we are.

We believe the seventh day is the Sabbath and should be kept holy out of love and respect for the God who made us, in the beginning. We believe the dead sleep. Because it's in the Bible. We believe hell reduces the lost to ashes for the same reason. We're not trying to win a popularity contest. We're endeavoring, by the grace of God, to exist with integrity, to honor God, and to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

We believe Jesus is in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary. We believe He entered it in 1844 because the Bible teaches it. We believe in the investigative judgment because it's biblical, and because it works. We live, we die, we rest until the return of Jesus. There *has* to be an investigative judgment, which, and apologies to those who were traumatized by harsh or unbalanced teachers, is nothing to fear and everything to celebrate. The Bible says Jesus is in heaven "for us." The investigative judgment is not God looking through the minutiae of our lives, desperately seeking something we haven't acknowledged, ready to pounce on a sin that was somehow unconfessed. The investigative judgment is simply an audit, the God of heaven reviewing the choices we have made and honoring them.

We believe the plan of salvation as expressed in God's Word. After sin and death were invited into our world, there was a way of escape. Jesus would die for the sins of all. In doing so, His heel would be bruised, but the head of the serpent would be crushed. Christ would die, while Satan and sin would be destroyed. And we, through simple faith in what Jesus has done, may pass from death to life. "Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation; even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life" (Rom. 5:18). This is the most important message we have—the most important arrow in our quiver. Jesus died that we might live.

WHY WE'RE HERE

So our mission is threefold. First, believe the Bible. Trust the Bible. Yield to the Word of God.

Second, live the message of the Bible. We have enough people already who are so right they're wrong. People who are theologically orthodox, but meaner than sin. "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). None of it means anything if we're unkind and disagreeable. Some this week will be tempted to campaign and politic and maybe "go to war" to promote their allegiances and affiliations, forgetting this is God's business. Our profession ought to lead people to say, "Those Adventists. Nicest people."

I was on a flight between Lusaka and Johannesburg years ago. The man sitting beside me was a coffee farmer. He told me he employed only Jehovah's Witnesses, although he admitted he was not a Jehovah's Witness himself. He said he employed them exclusively because, in his experience, they were honest; they didn't drink, steal, or cheat on their spouses; and they worked hard. Let someone say that about you."She's an Adventist. I might not believe the same as she does, but she's a saint if ever there was one." Do you think we'll get anywhere convincing people of our truth if it hasn't transformed us? "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:32).

We need to believe the truth, even if it isn't popular. There's a temptation to water down our beliefs because of the surrounding culture. May I appeal to you? Don't give in to that pressure. Simply believe the Bible. You don't want to be obnoxious, but you don't want to compromise. There are times we can bend almost to the breaking point to satisfy the people around us. We don't want to do that. We don't *need* to do that.

We need not backpedal. We go forward with the Word of God. Forward with the light of the gospel. Forward with the cross. Forward with the truth. Forward with the three angels' messages. Forward!

Which leads me to my third point. We *have* to share the Bible. At an It Is Written evangelistic series in the Philippines a Sunday pastor attended a series held by Miguel Crespo, president of the Greater New York Conference. After the pastor was baptized, his denomination fired him. But he shared what he had learned with several dozen pastors in his former denomination, and several followed his example and were baptized also. A Sunday church pastor with a double Ph.D. attended an It Is Written series in Puerto Rico, along with his Ph.D. wife, his Ph.D. daughter, and their medical student daughter. Impressed by God's Word, the entire family was baptized, along with his in-laws. The Holy Spirit drew them, and the power of God's Word brought them into the remnant church.

We don't need to go backwards. Asked to shepherd a Sunday congregation in need of a pastor, an Adventist pastor told them he conducted Bible prophecy seminars. They invited him to present a series to them and their community. He said, "I'll have to share my entire series." They said, "We'd like that." He said, "You know I'll preach about the Sabbath." They said, "Oh, we want you to preach about the Sabbath." He said, "I'll need volunteers." They said, "We'll do it." He said, "It'll take some money." They said, "We'll cover the expenses." I texted him shortly after the series ended, and he texted me a photo of a brand-new Sabbath-keeping congregation!

Friends, this Book has changed the world, and God is wanting His people to go forward, Bible in hand, and change the world again. We can believe what it says and take this message to the uttermost parts of the world. We stand on the brink of a great ingathering of souls. The final moments of earth's history are surely not far away. Let the Bible be our guide. Let the Bible be our strength. And let the Bible be the message we proclaim to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

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SECRETARY'S REPORT

Integrated for Mission

The General Conference (GC) Office of the Secretariat is all about integrating its resources for the fulfillment of the church's mission. It comprises seven entities, all integrated with each other: the Office of Adventist Mission (AM); Adventist Volunteer Service (AVS); the Institute of World Mission (IWM); International Personnel Resources and Services (IPRS); VividFaith (VF); the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research (ASTR); and the Adventist Church Management System (ACMS).

In close cooperation with the divisions and our attached fields, GC Secretariat oversees the recruitment, training, and deployment of international service employees (ISEs) and volunteers, and the proper administration of policies and processes to keep our denomination organized, protected, and strong. We also collect the church's statistics to track the challenges to and opportunities for our growth. But our main goal is to integrate all areas and initiatives to strengthen the mission of proclaiming the three angels' messages worldwide (Rev. 14:6-12).

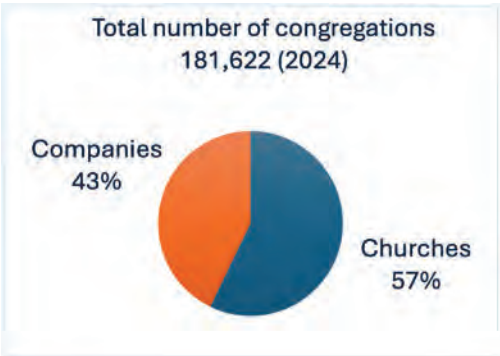
TRACKING PROGRESS AND GROWTH

Inspired by the account of the book of Acts, the church has been keeping records since its founding in Battle Creek, Michigan, in 1863 (see Acts 2:41). The function of Secretariat was initially that of maintaining correspondence between the General Conference and the conferences. In 1867 added functions included keeping baptismal and membership statistics. Since then, GC Secretariat has kept meticulous records, knowing that the Lord keeps an accurate count of His sheep for fear that any one of them should be lost (see Luke 15).

STATISTICAL REPORT

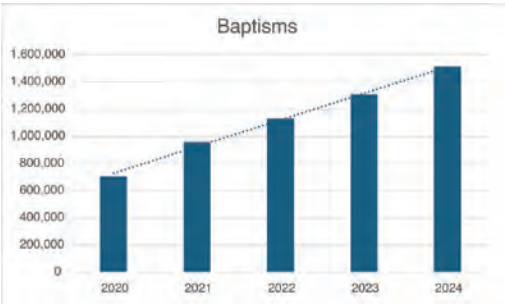
As custodians of church statistics we have witnessed tremendous growth: from 3,500 members in 125 churches in 1863 to 23,685,110 members[1] in 103,869 churches and 77,753 companies—an 8 percent increase in the past three years. The work of the church is formally established in 212 countries and territories. More than 349,479 people are employed to serve in our churches and institutions worldwide, including in 970 administrative units that form the backbone of the church (divisions, unions, conferences, and missions). All of them are represented by the 2,809 delegates to this General Conference Session.[2]

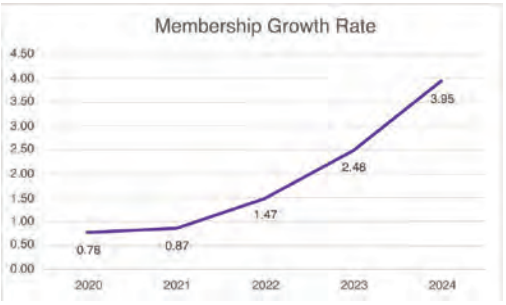




But how did our numbers evolve since our session in 2022? And what about the past five years? As the graphs show, the church's growth rate improved considerably since the COVID-19 pandemic. From 803,430 accessions in 2020,[3] membership climbed to 1,887,387 in 2024, the highest on record. Out of this number, there were 1,514,121 baptisms, reflecting a 3.95 percent net membership growth rate in 2024, up from 0.78 percent in 2020.

ERTON C. KÖHLER
SECRETARY





MISSION REFOCUS

It has been three years since we refocused our energies and attention specifically on the three mission windows of the underreached world, namely, the 10/40 window, the urban window, and the post-Christian window.

To achieve this, we have redefined the criteria for sending our missionaries, giving priority to frontline positions located among the world's most challenging areas and people groups. Funding has been allocated for the next five years to support frontline workers and church planters. We have also challenged all institutions, divisions, and organizations to send missionaries from everywhere to everywhere. Most of our divisions have responded by fully funding missionaries themselves, and sending from their own territories to countries and people groups with little church presence. Some divisions have set up their own international mission outreach initiatives and are sending dozens of missionary families abroad.

From 2020 to 2025 the General Conference sponsored 126 missionaries who left their countries for service. A total of 628 are currently in the field. They represent 66 countries, and they work in 88 countries.

MISSIONARY CARE

When scaling up to send more missionaries to isolated or frontline areas, we need to also increase our pastoral and psychological support to them. Our missionary care team is expanding to assist the divisions in structuring and delivering these resources in the form of personal and confidential counseling. Sometimes missionaries even need trauma counseling, especially when experiencing traumatic loss or violence. Between 2022 and 2024 five missionaries passed away while in full-time service.

ADVENTIST MISSION

The Office of Adventist Mission (AM) is marking its twentieth anniversary this year (2005-2025). It brings under one umbrella two separate offices.

Global Mission, which was voted into existence at the 1990 GC Session, focuses on starting groups of believers in new areas and people groups, while Mission Awareness has shared stories since 2004 of the global impact of mission offerings. Since 2022, $11,867,914 went toward helping church planting projects around the world. On average, one new team of Global Mission (GM) pioneers was launched every other day. There are currently 2,500 GM pioneers working diligently on the front lines. In addition, thanks to Adventist Mission's investment of $4,405,490, one new urban center of influence (UCI) was started every five to six weeks.

In a time of increasing competition for financial resources, Adventist Mission promotes mission awareness through hundreds of articles, videos, and social media posts, to show the impact of mission offerings and provide inspiration for mission giving. Anyone can access more than 2,400 Adventist Mission videos and TV programs at www.youtube.com/adventistmission. Its pub-



Thousands attended the 2023 church clerk training event in Peru where the theme was "Excellence to Accomplish the Mission."

lication and TV program (*Mission 360* magazine and *Mission 360* TV) provide up-to-date content for the promotion of mission offerings during the Sabbath School hour. These resources supported the significant rebound that has taken place in mission offering since COVID-19 (+53 percent), surpassing pre-COVID giving by 15 percent.

ADVENTIST VOLUNTEER SERVICE AND VIVIDFAITH

Adventist Volunteer Service (AVS) has been recruiting and assisting in sending volunteers since 1968. The VividFaith (VF) internet platform was launched in 2023 to facilitate the recruitment of full-time and part-time personnel for our institutions and churches. During the past two years AVS and VF have merged their efforts to create greater synergies.

Through VividFaith, AVS has been able to expand volunteer recruitment by offering more than 5,000 mission opportunities and connecting them with 21,000 registered volunteers. This is redefining mission service beyond traditional short- and long-term overseas assignments. It offers remote work opportunities, local community projects, employment of all kinds, and even partnerships with non-Adventists—expanding the ways to serve and share our faith. Working with 180 recruiting entities, VividFaith has processed 1,427 people for mission service as of March 2025. A training event in the Inter-American Division increased volunteer openings in that division from 6 in 2024 to 158 by March 2025. VividFaith enhances mission strategy by serving as a catalyst for innovative approaches and partnerships, aligning with Mission Refocus and the I Will Go strategic plan.

INSTITUTE OF WORLD MISSION

In obedience to the Great Commission, the General Conference Institute of World Mission (IWM) trains missionaries in growing spiritually, thinking biblically, reasoning missiologically, living wholistically, and serving incarnationally.

Since 1966 the Institute of World Mission has trained thousands of missionaries to serve in diverse cultures and religions. Between July 2022 and March 2025, 352 adults, 75 teenagers, and 90

children from 51 countries were trained to serve in 64 nations.

After mission service, returning families have participated in a reentry seminar. Since 2022 these seminars helped 109 missionaries, 30 teenagers, and 27 children process their missionary experience and renew their commitment to continue God's mission in their home country.

The Institute of World Mission also offers cross-cultural mission training to church institutions and organizations corresponding to their specific mission needs.

As the world returned to normalcy after the COVID-19 pandemic, the IWM team prioritized foundational preparation alongside Mission Refocus strategies. This ensures that missionaries are fully equipped to continue reaching the unreached and ready for the great mission challenges of today.

This forces us to revise past methods and ask the critical question: "Lord, what will You have me do?" As we move forward, IWM remains committed to cultivating mission vision, preparing cross-cultural workers, and nurturing missionary witnesses for effective service in God's harvest.

OUR MISSION IN THE HOME FIELD

At GC Secretariat we provide the necessary support and framework for fostering robust growth through disciple-making and reclamation. The significant improvement in the implementation of the Adventist Church Management System (ACMS), an electronic membership, provides the first step for redemptive membership review. It helps in identifying real people and not just numbers. With this tool we track our progress and also our losses. Sadly, during the past three years, 2,587,829 of our brothers and sisters died, disappeared, or lost their connection with the church. These figures are concerning and should draw our attention to the need for more attention on the part of pastors, leaders, and members to the state of our local churches and the spiritual condition of our members. The membership management system (ACMS) can be very helpful in this process.

RECLAIMING THE LOST

We recognize that we have a responsibility to keep statistics that are accurate and provide a relevant basis for active reclaiming efforts. To that end, we have introduced a framework, through ACMS, to encourage local church clerks and their pastoral teams to classify how their members are doing. This helps to prioritize their efforts and outreach to those who have drifted away by providing appropriate spiritual care.

We acknowledge, of course, that membership loss often stems from weak disciple-making. Being integrated for mission serves as a guiding principle to help churches stay focused on their mission and impact. The church is therefore active in promoting practical strategies for implementation in every congregation.

To enhance effectiveness, several updates have been introduced to the world church Secretariat practice. They emphasize the need for local churches to establish robust disciple-making processes. This includes not only reaching people with the gospel but also actively integrating them as new members and equipping them as disciple-makers to invite others to follow Jesus. Pastors, members, and leaders must be unified in mission to address today's challenges, offering meaningful pastoral care.

As a result of this emphasis, some unions reported more than 4,000 souls who were reclaimed in 2024 alone. The Inter-American Division reported 15,866, and the South American Division 34,056 in that same year.

SECRETARIAT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The contribution of our executive secretaries is vital to the stability and protection of the church in an increasingly litigious environment. This is why GC Secretariat is very intentional in upgrad-

The commitment of GC Secretariat is to keep the spirit of mission alive.

ing the skills of all our executive secretaries. This is even more important since there is no college program to prepare them. The lack of formal training is a significant weakness. In 2023 GC Secretariat made an important investment in their professional development through a systematic assessment of their skills and an evaluation of the functions and archives of their office. Thanks to new cloud-based tools, 57 conference/mission secretaries and 38 union secretaries went through this rigorous program. The foundation for an online Secretariat Academy program offering two levels of certification has also been laid.

ONE HUNDRED FIFTY YEARS OF MISSION

The mission of the church would not be possible without a global vision engaging the energies and commitment of thousands of missionaries (ISEs) and volunteers. In 2024 we celebrated the 150th anniversary of the sending of the first missionary overseas. It was in 1874 that J. N. Andrews left America to sail to England and eventually settle in Switzerland to lay the cornerstone of the work in Europe. This came at a great sacrifice. By sending Andrews, who had already served two years as General Conference president, the church sent the best and finest individual in its midst. For him, it meant leaving the homeland as a widower, having laid his wife, Angeline, to her rest just two years prior. He departed the United States with his son, Charles, and daughter, Mary.

The work in Switzerland was not easy. This affected his health and that of his family, to the extent that Mary died of tuberculosis during a visit to Michigan (1878). Not to be deterred, Andrews returned to Switzerland, only to be overcome by exhaustion and the same health issue that had claimed his daughter's life. He died in Switzerland in 1883 at the age of 54. The missionary enterprise went on with great success, but time and again, it claimed the lives of those who went. Many died—in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Gary and Bob Roberts are recent examples of such sacrifice. In July 2024 we received the sad news of the passing of Gary Roberts, a missionary pilot in Papua (East Indonesia), after a brief illness. He was 47 years old. He had replaced his father, Bob, himself a missionary pilot, who had died in a plane accident in 2014, also in Papua. Gary and his wife, Wendy, had already lost a child while serving abroad: their 4-year-old son Kaleb had died of malaria in Chad in 2009. These losses prompted Gary's brother Eric to volunteer to take his place in the mission field.

A few months ago GC Secretariat mourned the passing of our own Kleyton Feitosa, director of the Global Mission Centers until his death at the end of 2024. He bravely fought cancer for more than 10 years, even while on duty as president of the Egypt-Sudan Field (2014-2017). He was a resolute witness for God until the end.

Many of us stand here today because of the faithfulness of dedicated missionaries who left their home for the sake of the gospel. The commitment of GC Secretariat is to keep the spirit of mission alive, using all our organizations, projects, initiatives, and workers in an integrated way. Our clear purpose is to be focused on the mission of preparing a people to soon meet our Savior in the clouds. For we know that when "this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, then the end will come" (Matt. 24:14, NIV).

[1] As of March 17, 2025.

[2] The delegate number fluctuates dependent upon delegate travel, visas, and more. This is the number as of publication.

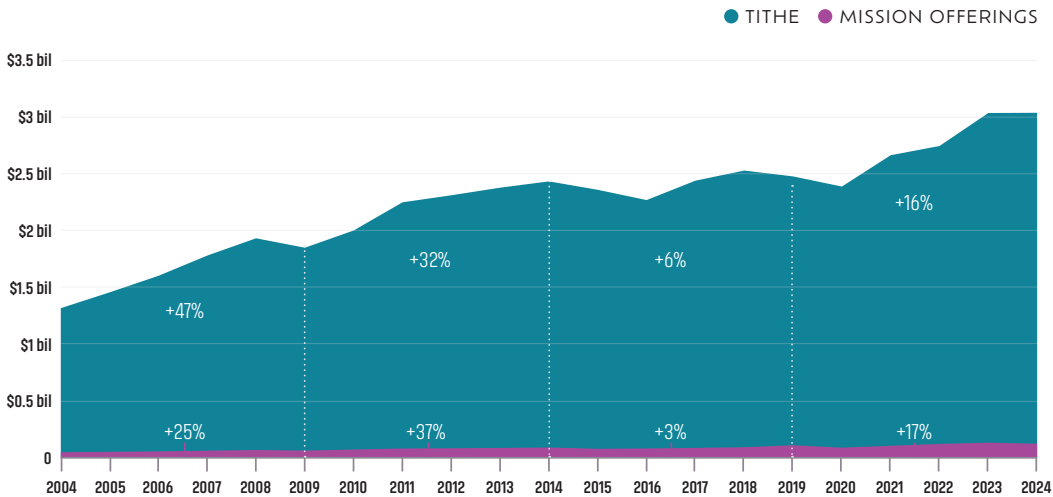
[3] Accessions consist of baptisms, former members' baptisms, professions of faith, and adjustments.



SCAN HERE FOR **ADRA's SCHEDULE** OF **EVENTS!**

TREASURY REPORT

Mobilizing Resources for Mission



The Seventh-day Adventist Church was organized during the time of the American Civil War, a period of great economic, social, and political turmoil. A small band of believers, a hopeful band of believers, a Holy Spirt-led band of believers, accepted that they were chosen for mission, and committed themselves to establishing an Advent movement with a mission and a message from God.

Today the world is again in a state of economic, social, and political turmoil. As members of God's Advent movement, however, we are not troubled by the turmoil but see it as a sign of the times. We are not even concerned about the coming final crisis—ratåher, we are compelled to do more for the kingdom of our mighty God! We have been blessed with counsel from Ellen White to guide our work during the times in which we now live and for the times that lie ahead. "As we near the final crisis," she wrote, "instead of feeling there is less need of order and harmony of action, we should be more systematic than heretofore. All our work should be conducted according to well-defined plans. I am receiving light from the Lord that there should be wise generalship at this time more than at any former period of our history."[1]

The global treasury team has embraced this counsel and adopted the theme "Mobilizing Resources for Mission" to represent our singular and systematic focus on mission. "Mobilizing Resources for Mission" is not a slogan for us, but rather it serves as our signature commitment to be faithful stewards of the resources—financial, human, and technological—that God has provided the church to advance His kingdom. We boldly declare that *if it is not about mission, then it should not matter*. There must be a collective resolve among church leaders to *put the money where the mission is!*

GLOBAL TRENDS IN GIVING

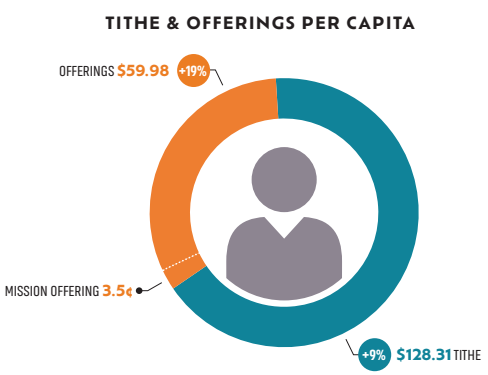
The quinquennium saw modest increases in terms of total world tithe and mission offerings for the period. For world tithe, a total of approximately US$14 billion was faithfully returned by church members, representing a 16 percent increase from the previous quinquennium ending in 2019. By way of comparison, the previous quinquennial total world tithe had increased by 6 percent. For world mission offerings, a total of approximately $501 million was remitted by church members who understand our worldwide mission and support it by their giving. The total world mission offerings represented an increase

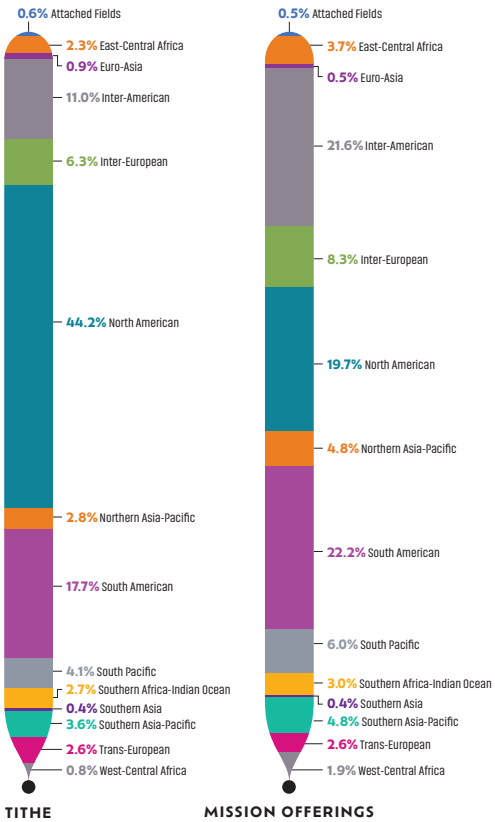


of 17 percent from the previous quinquennium ending in 2019. By comparison, however, the previous quinquennium had an increase in total world mission offerings of 3 percent.

In looking at world tithe and offerings over the quinquennium from a per capita perspective, tithe per capita increased by 9 percent to $128.31, while the total of all offerings per capita increased by 19 percent to $59.98. The world mission component of total offerings per capita remained unchanged, though, being 3.5 cents at the end of 2024.

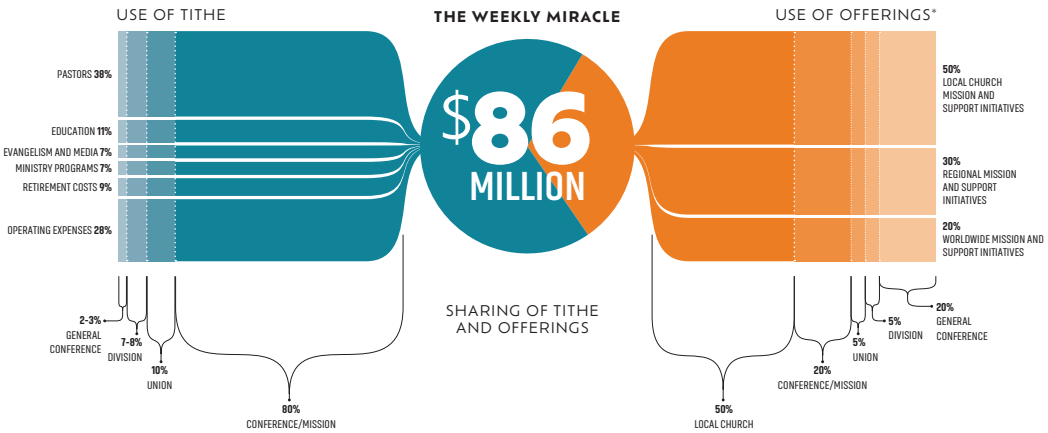
Giving for world missions continues to represent an average of 3.5 cents to every tithe dollar. In the 1930s, the peak of giving for world missions, the average was 60 cents. Certainly there needs to be a revival of giving toward world mission and a renewal of commitment toward being part of supporting our mission to take the saving gospel of Jesus Christ to places both near and far. There is a work for us to do beyond the borders of our local vineyard, and here we are guided by the counsel of God's inspired messenger: "To show a liberal self-denying spirit for the success of foreign missions is a sure way to advance home missionary work; for the prosperity of the home work depends largely, under God, upon the reflex influence of the evangelical work done in countries afar off."[2] This counsel clearly indicates that the more we support mission outside of our local area, the more prosperous will be our mission inside our local area.





World tithe and mission offerings are accounted for by each division and attached field. It has been the practice to compare giving in the North American Division with the composite of other divisions and attached fields. Throughout the quinquennium the average tithe from the North American Division represented 44.2 percent of the total, while for the composite of other divisions and attached fields it represented 55.8 percent. For mission offerings, those percentages were 19.7 percent and 80.3 percent, respectively.

There is a weekly miracle for which we must give God the praise. This weekly miracle is the faithfulness of church members that amounts to approximately US$86 million on average in tithe and offerings received through the local church. These



*Averages for 2020-2024 based on the Combined Offering Plan

resources are shared and used around the world to advance the kingdom of God. Regarding tithe for the quinquennium, 38 percent was used for pastors, 11 percent for education, 7 percent for evangelism and media, 7 percent for a variety of ministry programs, 9 percent for retirement costs, and 28 percent for operating expenses. Regarding offerings, with specific reference to the Combined Offering Plan, 50 percent was used for mission and support initiatives at the local church, while the remaining 50 percent was shared between the General Conference (GC) and regional administrative territories (divisions, unions, and conferences) for their respective mission and support initiatives.

FINANCIAL POSITION AND PERFORMANCE

It is a privilege to report that the financial position of the General Conference at the end of the quinquennium is strong. Nevertheless, we are quick to recognize that the financial strength of the General Conference is not because of our own accomplishments—it is rather because of God's divine purpose to provide us what we need to do His work. We are strong because our God is strong! We have been faithful stewards of the resources God has provided to advance the cause of His kingdom and praise Him for the strong financial position considering the prevailing global economic conditions.

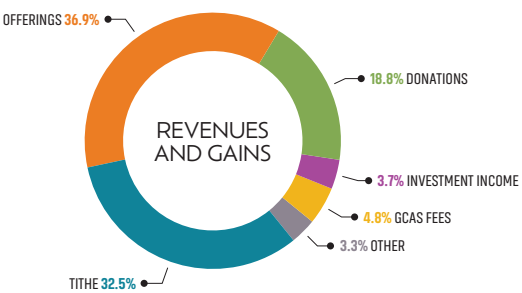
The financing model for mission adopted by our church involves sharing resources between various levels such as the local church, mission/conference, union, and the General Conference, along with its divisions. From the resources shared with the General Conference, mission is supported throughout the world field. At the end of the quinquennium the balance of cash and investments was $463 million, representing a 34.5 percent increase from the start of the period in 2020. Total assets increased by 27.9 percent to $656 million, total liabilities increased by 17.9 percent to $60 million, and total net assets increased by 29.0 percent to $596 million for the same period. At the end of the quinquennium 70.5 percent and 77.6 percent of total assets and net assets, respectively, were held in the form of cash and investments.

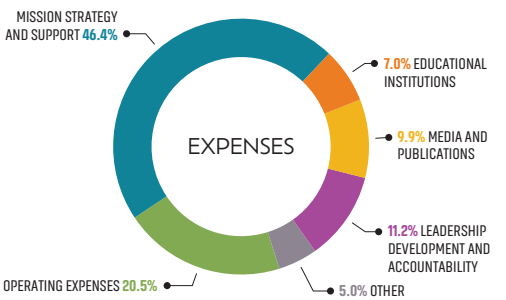
The total revenues and gains for the quinquennium was an annual average of $271 million, of which 32.5 percent was from tithe; 36.9 percent from offerings; 18.8 percent from donations; 3.7 percent from investment income; 4.8 percent from engagement fees charged by General Con-

ference Auditing Service (GCAS); and 3.3 percent from other sources.

The total expenses for the quinquennium was an annual average of $242 million, of which 46.4 percent was for mission strategy and support; 7 percent for educational institutions; 9.9 percent for media and publications; 11.2 percent for leadership development and accountability; 5 percent for other expenses; and 20.5 percent for operating expenses.

The General Conference is mindful of being prepared to respond to an emergency and how long it can continue operations and mission support of the world church when sources of income may be disrupted because of world events. At the close of the quinquennium the General Conference reported 12.6 months of available working capital and 9.7 months of available liquid assets that were both more than the policy and Executive Committee recommended minimums.





INVESTMENT IN MISSION

Funding for Divisions and Institutions

Each year the General Conference provides regular and special appropriations to support the work of its institutions, its divisions and attached fields in their respective territories, and for activities taking place in the 10/40 window. The amount provided in appropriations has remained relatively stable throughout the quinquennium. The distributions of appropriations made in 2024 are consistent with those made throughout each year of the quinquennium. Of the $63.5 million provided in appropriations for 2024, 54.5 percent went to divisions and attached fields; 41.2 percent was for General Conference institutions; and 4.3 percent supported activities taking place in the 10/40 window.

Funding for ISE Program

The Adventist Church has several kinds of missionaries, including volunteers, Global Mission pioneers, Waldensian students, tentmakers, and fully funded international workers called international service employees (ISEs). The General Conference International Personnel Resources and Services (IPRS) is the human resources department for ISEs around the world from the time they are appointed until the time they return to their home country. It acts as the liaison between the world church headquarters and the divisions when employing ISEs. IPRS fills missionary position requests by linking those willing and seeking to serve with divisions needing support, especially positions that meet an agreed upon criteria.

As of December 31, 2024, 324 ISE families (totaling 628 employees) coming from 69 countries were serving in 78 countries. The three divisions sending the greatest number of ISEs are the South American Division, the North American Division, and the Southern Asia-Pacific Division.

The largest allocation of the General Conference budget—at 16.5 percent—is given to support the mission program administered by IPRS and amounted to $125 million for the quinquennium. Of these resources, 82 percent represented the GC portion of expenses for

ISEs; 5 percent was used to administer the Institute of World Mission; and 13 percent was used to support the administrative activities of IPRS.

Funding Our Global Mission Program

The Global Mission Program administered by the Office of Adventist Mission is our official initiative to engage all church entities in starting new groups of believers in unentered geographical areas and among unreached people groups. Mission offerings and restricted donations are the key sources of funding for this program. For the quinquennium 4,322 projects were funded with a total of $73.5 million, utilizing an average of 1,745 pioneers each year who accepted the challenge to enter new territories and reach new groups of people. The funding was a participation between the GC (40.4 percent), divisions (10.9 percent), unions (9.8 percent), local fields (16.2 percent), and other sources (22.7 percent).

INNOVATION IN MISSION

In a digital age in which mobile devices seem to light up across the globe, the General Conference has launched its visionary Digital Strategy for Mission to advance and accelerate proclaiming the eternal gospel of Jesus Christ. This Digital Strategy for Mission adapts to our modern world and is a careful blend of the digital infrastructure needed to be in place so that digital initiatives can be explored and implemented, with digital innovation that keeps our efforts on the cutting edge of what is possible through technology and making redundant prior digital initiatives that are no longer relevant.

We rejoice for the real people who have been contacted through this strategy, and the real stories that have been shared as a result. These real people and real stories illustrate the power of using technology to advance our mission to reach the world for Jesus Christ. From urban centers to remote villages, stories of redemption abound—new believers stepping into the waters of baptism, their hearts won by the seamless blend of digital outreach and personal witness. This is more than a method; it is a movement, propelled by the Holy Spirit, showing that when we embrace every avenue to share the everlasting gospel, the kingdom grows, and heaven rejoices with us.

INTEGRATION IN MISSION

Media Synergy

The General Conference spends on average 9.9 percent of its budget on media and publications. To ensure resources are being maximized for mission, a media synergy summit was convened with church and media brand leaders to discuss how the traditional and new media brands owned by the church could work better together.

An early benefit from the Media Synergy Summit was the creation of a Global Brand Positioning Architecture to focus media brands on their core role as part of mission and their respective target audience. As our media brands appropriately understand and emphasize ministry to their target audiences, the church can be more effective and efficient in making persons interested in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and thereafter leading them to become baptized members who are totally involved in mission.

Stewardship and Treasury Partnership

During the past General Conference Session, after the Treasurer's report a delegate highlighted the importance of Treasury and Stewardship working together to enhance the faithfulness and engagement of members in supporting God's mission. In response, the GC Stewardship Ministries and GC Treasury Office began an ongoing collaboration to address this vital need.

After several rounds of discussions, Treasury and Stewardship jointly developed a partnership document based on the conviction that all are created and redeemed as stewards of God, and that stewardship must be expressed through a God-first lifestyle.

The partnership document outlines five key points:

1. We believe stewardship is about faith-raising, not fund-raising.
2. We value the trust and confidence of church members.
3. Principles guide every We believe stewardship aspect of daily living.

4. We expect church members to grow in a trusting relationship with God.
5. We believe stewardship is for everyone, everywhere.

INVOLVEMENT IN MISSION

The Treasury team wholeheartedly embraces the commitment of Mobilizing Resources for Mission. Equal to that commitment is mobilizing *ourselves* for mission.

In 2024 the General Conference Treasury team traveled to St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, to join with treasury teams from the Inter-American Division, Caribbean Union, and North Caribbean Conference for a mission trip. As part of the mission trip, a two-week evangelistic campaign was conducted under the theme "Impact 2024: Your Journey to Joy," and each night visitors flocked to the four locations where dynamic speakers proclaimed the gospel of Jesus Christ. These visitors were contacted through the traditional and digital means as the General Conference Hybrid Evangelism approach was utilized with great success. At the end of the campaign, more than 100 precious souls were baptized, and they are now actively engaged in the work of the Lord.

The gospel of the kingdom is spoken through the proclaimed and printed Word of God. The gospel of the kingdom is also seen in how suffering people are served and in how hurting people are healed. As a Treasury team, we count it a privilege to carry out the necessary technical functions of mobilizing resources for mission. We also feel compelled to engage ourselves in evangelistic campaigns during which people can hear the gospel in words and on mission trips, where people can see the gospel in action. We join with all those who have been called to this great work, for we are not ashamed to preach "this gospel of the kingdom . . . in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matt. 24:14).

LOOKING AHEAD

We are heading into a new quinquennium, with global economic, social, and political turmoil expected to be more the usual than the unusual. The world is in a state of crisis, a sure sign of being in the closing chapters of time on this earth. We are warned by counsel received from the Spirit of Prophecy that greater sacrifices will be required by all church members as we seek to fulfill our mission to spread the gospel to all the earth, but by God's grace we will find the way through. We will not fail, because He who has promised is faithful (Heb. 10:23).

It will be important for church leaders to be engaged in thinking and acting differently to ensure we are fit for the times that are ahead. The General Conference has begun to ask and answer certain questions with the hope of setting an example that will inspire church leaders at all levels to do the same. While many more questions remain for us to ask and answer, our commitment to prepare for the times ahead is captured by how we will become more intentional with strategy, benefit from integration of effort, and believe in making investments in mission that have an impact.

"The secret of our success in the work of God will be found in the harmonious working of our people. There must be concentrated action. Every member of the body of Christ must act his part in the cause of God, according to the ability that God has given him. We must press together against obstructions and difficulties, shoulder to shoulder, heart to heart."[3]

"If [Seventh-day Adventists] were to act in concert, moving forward as one, under the direction of one Power, for the accomplishment of one purpose, [we] would move the world."[4]

[1] Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958, 1980), book 3, p. 26.

[2] Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1915), p. 465.

[3] Ellen G. White, in *Review and Herald*, Dec. 2, 1890.

[4] Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 9, p. 221.

And So It Begins

First day at the 2025 General Conference Session

AUDREY ANDERSSON

This week, as the activity in the convention center and dome has increased, so has my need to talk over the day with God. With the start of the General Conference Session, there was so much to talk over that our conversation continued as I headed to my first meeting with the Communication Department's Global Newsroom team. I had the room number, but after wandering around on the second floor of the convention center for 10 minutes, I found a center employee who told me that I should be on the second floor of the dome. I made it for 7:30, albeit slightly out of breath. I walked in to be enveloped by the anticipation and buzz that mark the start of a major event, and within the church it doesn't get more significant than the General Conference Session.

People can tell you the name of the General Conference (GC) officers but could probably name only three or four of the people in this room. Yet these are some of the most important people at the session. They are key communicators who will tell the stories of the next 13 days. It was a privilege to speak with and pray for these amazingly gifted people, asking God to bless their skills as they shared with the world what was happening at the session.

At session there is never a problem getting my steps. I headed back to the convention center to join the Inter-European Division (EUD) caucus meeting. (Caucus is the term for a meeting of all the delegates from a division.) This was important, time-sensitive presession business—choosing representatives for the main Nominating Committee, and the EUD Nominating Committee. The names needed to be sent to GC Secretariat by 12:30 at the latest, so they could be voted on in the first business session. The EUD headquarters are based in Switzerland, so it was no surprise that the meeting ran like clockwork thanks to the efficiency of Mario Brito and Barna Magyarosi, the current president and secretary. Later I will chair the EUD Nominating Committee when they come up with names to recommend to the main Nominating Committee, for the division officers. After that, the division president takes over.

Back to the dome, this time to talk with Debbie Michel, the Communication director from Lake Union, who is working with the Global Newsroom. As we walked into the empty dome, she stopped and said, "It seems so much bigger when you are down here. It is big when you look down on the dome, but even larger when you are there." We sat at the table on stage, where in a matter of hours we would open the sixty-second General Conference Session, and Debbie asked me to explain who sat at the table and why. Each person plays their part in ensuring that the session's business runs smoothly. When you are chairing, the parliamentarian sits on the chair's right and the secretary on the chair's left. They are rather like Aaron and Hur, holding up Moses' hands. I know from experience how their quiet professional work in the background makes my job as chair so much easier.

I learned a long time ago that the world is divided into people who hug and those who don't. For the record, I am a hugger! So, as I walk through the halls, exclamations of delight punctuate every few steps as I see or am seen by friends from far and near, and I stop for a hug! It's funny how you don't see some people for years, but those years, together with the few extra pounds, gray hairs, and wrinkles, all vanish in an instant. It took me so long to get back to the hotel that I didn't have time for lunch.

As I sat in my seat, waiting for the session to begin, I looked at the stage, and it felt a little unreal. For months everything has been focused on the GC Session, and now the officers were welcoming the delegates. Their message was



Audrey Andersson, right, greets a member of the Inter-European Division caucus.
DAVID B. SHERWIN

simple, focusing on the mission, which led into Mark Finley's devotional. There were so many good thoughts that I tucked away for another time, but some stood out. When we pray for the Holy Spirit, we are not praying for something we don't have; instead, we are praying for more of what we have. This is the one time we can ask for more, much more, and not be counted as greedy. When we fall on our knees, God will change us, to enable us to go out and change the world!

The afternoon business session was fascinating. For those expecting my views on the proceedings or an analysis of the amendments to the agenda, I must disappoint you. I listened to the proceedings on multiple levels. First, we are a global family. Even in the most harmonious families, tension occasionally arises. There are always different viewpoints. It is the same in our church family. So I listened to what was being proposed. Second, I attempted to determine whether there were underlying issues. With my policy brain, I wondered if there were alternative ways to resolve the tension. Last, as I am chairing next week, I watched and tried to learn from Artur Stele, the vice president chairing the business session. Afterward, as I talked with my fellow vice presidents, we all agreed he set the gold standard.

Within the church it doesn't get more significant than the General Conference Session.

The president's report is always a highlight of the session. It did not disappoint. Mission-focused and full of stories reflecting the goodness of God. In a world that is full of challenges, the message was clear: God is alive. His goodness never fails. He is working in the lives of individuals and in the church.

As I headed back to my hotel, with the kaleidoscope of impressions from the first day, I found myself once again talking with God, my heart overflowing with gratitude for my global church family and the opportunity to be part of His mission in telling the world about Him.

SESSION

GALLERY



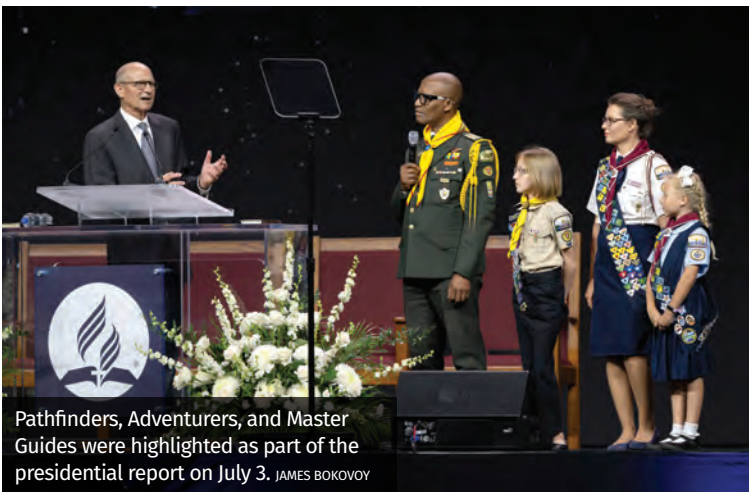
Deaf interpretation is provided at the GC Session. JAMES BOKOVOY



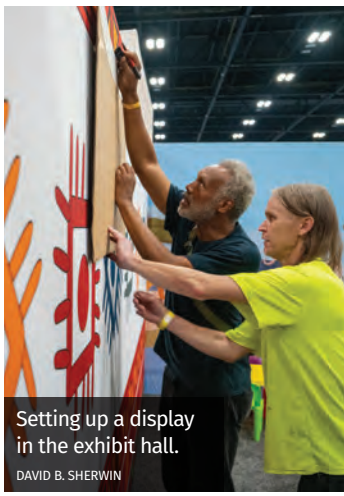
Helpful information desks are located throughout the convention center. CHRISTINA COLLARD



"I Will Go" riders arrive in St. Louis. MARK FROELICH



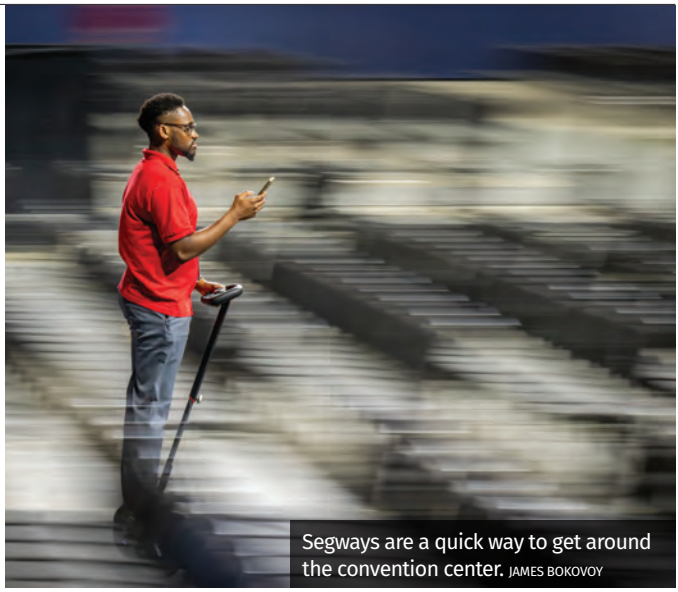
Pathfinders, Adventurers, and Master Guides were highlighted as part of the presidential report on July 3. JAMES BOKOVOY



Setting up a display in the exhibit hall. DAVID B. SHERWIN



One of the younger attendees at GC Session. DAVID B. SHERWIN



Segways are a quick way to get around the convention center. JAMES BOKOVOY



Members of a divison caucus gather to choose their Nominating Committee representatives. JOSEF KISSINGER

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Where Adventist History Meets Tomorrow

A look at the mission and impact of the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research

DAVID TRIM

The Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research (ASTR) is located at the world headquarters of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, just outside Washington, D.C., in Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A. ASTR serves as the official records center and archives of the world headquarters. Situated on the lower level of the headquarters complex, ASTR includes a fireproof, climate-controlled vault, a research center and library, a document scanning center, and staff offices. ASTR brings together the Adventist past and present to inspire for the future.

MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

ASTR is responsible for the church's archives and records management program at its world headquarters. It also conducts research projects for the General Conference officers, evaluates General Conference departments and agencies, and produces three key publications for the church: the *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, the *Annual Statistical Report*, and the online *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*. ASTR also provides a range of other information on a suite of websites accessible from www.AdventistArchives.org (see "Resources and Tools").

In ASTR, we:

- Foster a strong understanding of Adventist identity, both historically and in the present, by historical, statistical, and empirical research.
- Educate church members about, and advocate for, the unique qualities of Adventist identity.
- Utilize research to assist the world church in charting the course for the future.
- Use technology to effectively collect, conserve, and circulate information that is important for the church.

RESOURCES AND TOOLS

Directory: AdventistDirectory.org allows visitors to locate Seventh-day Adventist organizations and entities—including churches, hospitals, and schools—worldwide with easy-to-use search options.

Encyclopedia: The *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists (ESDA)*, freely available at encyclopedia.adventist.org, currently contains more than 4,000 articles and 12,000 photographs, with more articles being added regularly. *ESDA* provides reliable and authoritative information on Adventist history, crucial events and themes, organizations, entities, institutions, and people. There are many exciting and inspiring stories of God's leading!

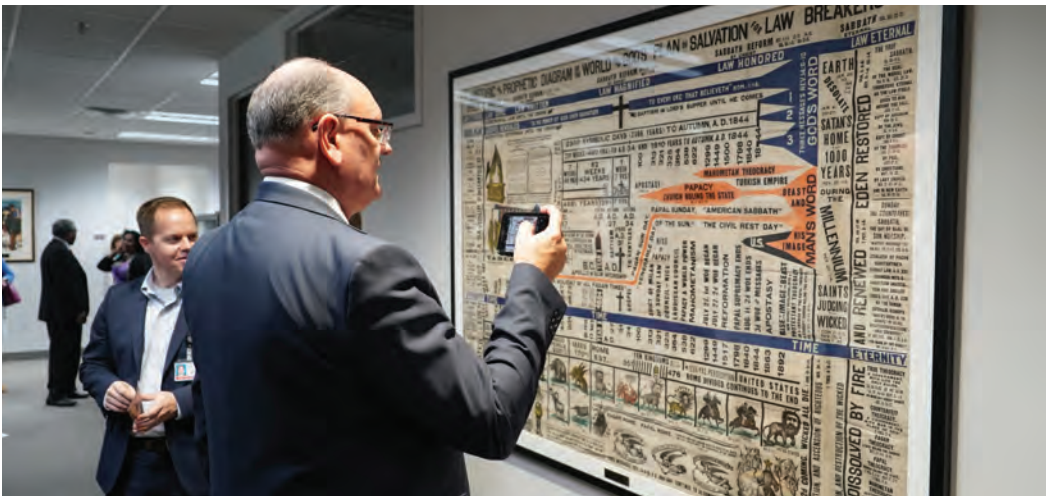
Online Archives: documents.AdventistArchives.org contains approximately 2 million pages of free, searchable, downloadable materials on Adventism, including periodicals, books, committee minutes, and research documents. Extensive photographic and audiovisual databases, as well as portals to assist visitors in locating other helpful websites and online resources on Adventism, are also available.

Research: AdventistResearch.info exists to inform church leaders, pastors, church members, and scholars about important research regarding the ministry, mission, and administration of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The web team publishes a biweekly blog, which shares key research findings, perfect for the busy church administrator or interested church member.

Statistics: AdventistStatistics.org contains the latest statistics on the Seventh-day Adventist Church in friendly graphs, charts, and maps. Also featured is the current *Annual Statistical Report* and each of its predecessors since 1899. Documents and official church minutes and reports analyzing statistical data and trends are also available here.



Yearbook: AdventistYearbook.org is an online version of the annually printed *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*. It contains information on the General Conference,



world divisions, union and local conferences and missions, institutions, and denominational employees. There is an option to search and download complimentary PDF files of *Yearbooks* dating back to 1883. An option to purchase *Yearbooks* in hardback, paperback, or PDF is also available.

Journal of Adventist Archives: Published annually, the *Journal of Adventist Archives* is a peer-reviewed periodical dedicated to publishing articles on Adventist history as well as highlighting Adventist archives and manuscript collections.

Newsletter: *Telling the Story* is published quarterly and contains articles on Adventist history, statistical features, and news of recent achievements of the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research and its staff.

Social Media: ASTR is on Facebook (AdventistArchives), X/Twitter (AdventArchives), and Instagram (AdventistArchives). It regularly posts about Adventist history, statistics, and research.

OTHER SERVICES PROVIDED

ASTR has an accreditation scheme that has accredited eight divisions and 11 union archives/records centers, and four archival collections at Adventist universities/colleges. ASTR's staff conducts training worldwide for church administrators in archiving, records management, statistical reporting, and information management.

From the Adventist past, we can take inspiration for the Adventist future!

It partners with the Adventist Human-Subject Researchers' Association (AHSRA) to hold an annual conference. Since 2023, African and Southeast Asian chapters of AHSRA have been established, which hold their own annual conferences. The human-subject research overseen by ASTR involves researchers from a variety of Adventist universities globally, and the results are processed and systematized for ASTR as part of the church's global strategic planning process—ASTR has been instrumental in the creation of the I Will Go world church strategic plan (www.iwillgo.org).

In addition, ASTR partners with the Association of Seventh-day Adventist Librarians (ASDAL) and supports its annual conference, and with the Association of Seventh-day Adventist Historians (ASDAH), supporting its triennial conference. Every month scholars visit ASTR to research its archival and library collections, utilizing its research center. And ASTR welcomes visitors to its area of the world headquarters to look at rare photos, documents, and artifacts on display. From the Adventist past, we can take inspiration for the Adventist future!

David Trim is director of the General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research.

The Gift of Light

How the Ellen G. White Estate is shaping faith, mission, and education

MERLIN D. BURT

In 1912, through her will, Ellen G. White created the organization now called the Ellen G. White Estate. The goal was to make her writings available for the benefit and blessing of the church and the world.[1] She wrote: "Abundant light has been given to our people in these last days. Whether or not my life is spared, my writings will constantly speak, and their work will go forward as long as time shall last. My writings are kept on file in the office, and even though I should not live, these words that have been given to me by the Lord will still have life and will speak to the people."[2] More people are reading Ellen White's writings and connecting to Jesus and the Bible through them than at any other time in history. This brief overview of activities at the White Estate during the three years since the past General Conference Session highlights God's gracious blessing on the work of the White Estate.

The White Estate makes Ellen G. White's books and other written materials available through the worldwide network of Seventh-day Adventist publishing houses. During the past year three new Ellen White resources have been published: Volume 2 of the *Ellen G. White Letters and Manuscripts With Annotations* (1860-1863); *Living in the Light,* a new daily devotional; and a new Conflict of the Ages series for youth titled *The Conflict.* These are all available at the July 2025 General Conference Session.

The translation plan "Sharing the Gift of Light" has resulted in more than 500 newly translated books into 45 languages, including 24 languages for the very first time. *The Great Controversy* alone, which was the special sharing book for the world church during 2023 and 2024, grew from 90 to 132 languages. Millions of copies were published and circulated. At the April 2025 Spring Meeting of the General Conference Executive Committee, an expansion of the previous plan dubbed "Sharing the Gift of Light 2.0" was voted for the new quinquennium. A special emphasis will be given to translating *Steps to Christ*, *The Desire of Ages*, and *The Great Controversy* into mission languages to support the worldwide mission of the church. Divisions and unions will determine which languages are most needed. The new special sharing book for this quinquennium is *The Desire of Ages.*

GROWTH AND PROMOTION

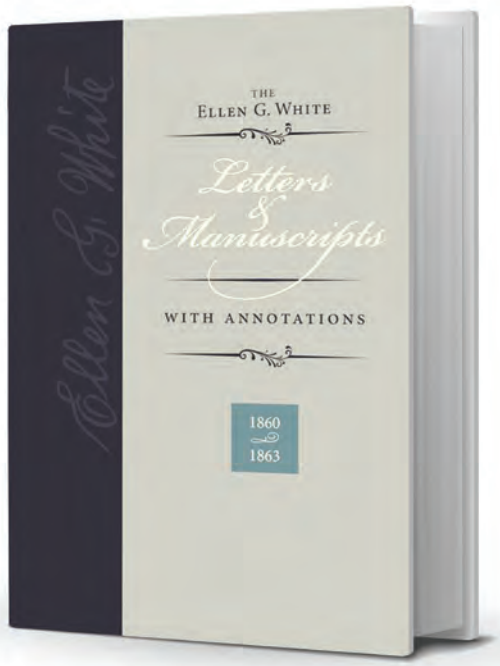
The online use of Ellen White's writings and White Estate resources continues to grow exponentially. Today the White Estate features three major websites: egwwritings.org; ellenwhite.org; and whiteestate.org. It makes available various apps, including the much-used EGW Writings 2.0, and the soon-coming EGW Writings 3.0. The White Estate also provides several eBook websites for major Ellen White book titles, including: Stepstochrist.pub, Desireofages.pub, and Greatcontroversy.pub. We continue to release new audiobooks in several languages every year. In addition to English resources, the White Estate provides materials in 157 languages with 2,033 non-English titles, enabling millions of people around the world to regularly read and study Ellen G. White's writings online in their own language.

The White Estate also supports the study and promotion of Ellen G. White's writings and Adventist heritage through a network of 25 centers of influence and research, in addition to the main office and visitor center at the General Conference in Silver Spring, Maryland, USA. Four branch offices are operated at General Conference-sponsored universities. These include Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies in the Philippines, Adventist University of Africa in Kenya, and Andrews University and Loma Linda University in the United States. Besides these directly operated centers, a network of 21 division and union research centers are located at colleges and universities around the world. All 13 world divisions have at least one Ellen G. White (EGW) Research Center. Beyond this, numerous limited study centers are located at colleges, universities, publishing houses, and church administrative centers.

Some divisions have a network of mini centers that are operated at local churches.

In addition, division Spirit of Prophecy coordinators encourage the reading and study of Ellen White's writings by organizing conferences, conducting seminars, and training leaders.

Another important White Estate initiative is a landmark collaboration with the General Conference Department of Education to facilitate the further training of teachers in the area of Ellen White and Adventist history. A three-year, 18-credit EGW and Adventist Studies Academic Certificate has been offered through Andrews University's Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary for individuals holding a master's degree. The purpose of the certificate is to prepare active teachers at Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities who do not have a doctoral emphasis, doctoral cognate, or master's degree in Adventist Studies to competently provide education in Ellen G. White. This academic program has greatly raised the educational qualifications of Adventist educators in this vital area of study.



The second annotated volume was released in 2024 and is available at AdventistBookCenter.com.

HERITAGE AND HISTORY

A significant development during the past five years has been an expansion of historical resources held by the White Estate. The acquisition of the James R. Nix Adventist Heritage Collection and the opening of the Ellen G. White Estate Vault Annex has provided an opportunity to make more resources available for research through digital distribution through White Estate websites and the Adventist Digital Library.

Finally, it has been remarkable to see the expansion of interest in the story of Adventist faith around the world. Various historical sites have been restored or preserved in several divisions. Sites such as the first Adventist churches in Tramelan, Switzerland, and Kimberley, South Africa, are now open to visitors from church groups and other interested individuals.

Adventist Heritage Ministries continues to operate four sites in the United States, with thousands of visitors each year. The William Miller home and chapel in New York point people to faith in the soon coming of Jesus. The Hiram Edson farm, also in New York, tells the story of the heavenly sanctuary ministry of Jesus. Joseph Bates's home in Massachusetts chronicles the beginning of Sabbathkeeping Adventists. Finally, the Historic Adventist Village in Battle Creek, Michigan shows the organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, its publishing, health, and education ministries, and the importance of Ellen White's prophetic ministry.

Our prayer is that the blessing of God through the many ministries of the White Estate and connected organizations will continue to touch the lives of millions of people and advance the evangelistic mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Our prayer is that all people be connected to Jesus and the Bible message through the writings of Ellen White and the influence of the Spirit of Prophecy.

[1] *Working Policy of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists*, 2024-2025 edition (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 2024), GE 04 05, p. 439.

[2] Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958, 1980), book 1, p. 55.

Merlin Burt is a field secretary for the General Conference and director of the Ellen G. White Estate.

BOLDNESS IN MISSION



ERTON KÖHLER
GC SECRETARY

SERMON PRESENTED
SABBATH MORNING
JULY 5, 2025

Each time I visit the world field I remind our members that more than a denomination, we are a family. We have the same Father, the same homeland, and were purchased by the same blood. We have the same message, same hope, and the same mission. We are a family!

Like all families, we have differences and problems, but we are still a family. We come from different races, speak various languages, represent diverse cultures, and carry different flags, but we are still a family.

PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

We are also the people of the Book. We preach the Book, teach the Book, and, by God's grace, live according to the Book. I appreciate how Jacques Doukhan once explained the commitment of Seventh-day Adventists to the entire Bible, from the first page to the last. We keep the seventh day because it is mentioned in more than 200 verses in the Bible, but especially because the Sabbath day is in Genesis 2, at the very beginning of the Bible. We are also Adventists because of the more than 1,500 verses in the Bible that mention Jesus' second advent, but especially because the second coming of Jesus is presented three times in Revelation 22, the last chapter of the Bible.

When we study the Bible, one of its most impressive themes is how powerfully God calls, empowers, and uses His children. There are multiple examples from the beginning to the end of the Bible. Think of Noah, Abraham, Moses, and other rich stories of ordinary people accomplishing extraordinary things. But the most relevant story is that of Jesus Christ and the way His life impacted this world.

After Jesus' powerful ministry, God's work was entrusted to the primitive Christian church formed by a small group of believers. "Christ clearly told His disciples that the time between His two appearings was to be filled with the mission of the church."[1] He didn't call them to sit and watch what He would do or to wait until conditions were perfect or until structures were fully formed. It was not to be delayed until the Roman Empire opened its doors. Jesus called them to prompt action. He simply said: "Go, and I will be with you."

GOING FORWARD IN BOLDNESS

They started a work that is now in our hands to be completed. As we press forward toward our blessed hope, we must keep our eyes focused on the future, or "on the windshield." To drive forward in a car, we look through the windshield to the road ahead, all while we continue to glance in the rearview mirror to learn from the past.

The primitive Christian church is in that rearview mirror. They had no formal training, administrative structures, or financial support. They were rejected and

They were united in prayer, and God granted what they asked for.

persecuted. All they had was a word of instruction and a promise. They were instructed to "stay in Jerusalem," with the promise that "the Holy Spirit will come upon you." They obeyed the counsel, trusted the promise, and remained united in prayer, and the Holy Spirit came upon them.

What was the result? Boldness! Just as the Lord granted power to others in the Bible, allowing them to accomplish incredible things for His cause, He also empowered the early church. From 120 members in the upper room on the day of Pentecost, the church grew 25 times in size after Peter's sermon.

After this first explosion of mission, boldness became the hallmark of the early church. In Acts 4 Peter and John's boldness confirmed that they had been with Jesus. In Acts 5 the high priest publicly acknowledged that the apostles had filled Jerusalem with their doctrine. They were bold! In Acts 17, when a group of people looked for Paul and Silas at Jason's house, they accused the Christians of turning the world upside down. This is the way God empowers His servants.

Despite all their challenges, they preached boldly. When they were commanded not to preach or teach in the name of Jesus, they continued to lift their voices to God in one accord. They prayed, "Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word" (Acts 4:29). They didn't ask for peace, money, wisdom, buildings, power, or positions. They asked for boldness in mission.

This is the kind of request the Lord likes to grant. He is looking for leaders, pastors, and members who will pray for more boldness in talking about mission, in plans for mission, and in investments in mission.

They were united in prayer, and God granted what they asked for. "And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness" (verse 31). The Holy Spirit transformed their fear into fearless witness.

This was a time of wonder by the name of Jesus and through the power of the Holy Spirit. A time of unity and focus on mission. A time of rapid expansion of the church. A time of deep love and service for others. A time of simple organization and powerful results. It was a time to be remembered and repeated.

BOLDNESS BRINGS RESULTS

Their boldness was not without result. In the 30 years of history written of in the book of Acts, 120 believers multiplied into many thousands. Some historians claim the number may be as high as 1 million in a time when the Roman Empire had a population of 70 million.

This didn't happen because the first believers decided to wait comfortably for something supernatural. They cried out for the power of the Holy Spirit, acted boldly, and witnessed miracles. They lived with the expectation of Christ's imminent return, and this sense of urgency drove them to be bold.

The word "bold" appears at least 20 times in the New Testament. Other variations of this word reveal a church alive and active in mission. But the boldest character is Paul. Again and again Paul is described as "bold," including in the last verse of Acts: "Proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance" (Acts 28:31, ESV).[2]

In writing about this same period of mission boldness, Ellen White challenged the remnant church: "Shall we be less earnest than were the apostles?"[3] This is our call, to continue the story as they did. The final chapter of God's church in this world. "The more closely the New Testament plan is followed in missionary labor, the more successful will be the efforts put forth."[4] While the book of Acts celebrates the blessings of the early rain, this is the time of the latter rain. Our focus needs to be the final preparation of this world for the second coming of Jesus, following Paul's advice in 2 Corinthians 3:12: "Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech."

The blessed hope expressed in Revelation 10, at the heart of the birth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, is a clear call to be bold in mission. It is a call to " 'prophesy

again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings' " (Rev. 10:11). We will not reach the world without a sense of urgency that compels us to attempt great things for God and expect great things from God. As Ellen White said: "The end of all things is at hand; and what is done for the salvation of souls must be done quickly."[5] It's time for urgency and boldness by the power of the Holy Spirit!

Our God is a God of boldness. He showed boldness by sending His Son to this earth. Jesus showed boldness through His sacrifice on the cross. The Holy Spirit shows boldness through His great accomplishments in the latter rain, to prepare this world for the return of Jesus.

END-TIME BOLDNESS

Picture the final scenes of our history. "Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven."[6] It will be a time of great boldness in mission.

The three angels' messages are our final invitation to boldness in mission. The first angel (Rev. 14:7) proclaims the message with a "loud voice." "Loud voice" declares boldness! The pioneers fulfilled their mission with boldness. They boldly sent the first official missionary to the world more than 150 years ago in times of severe crisis. They boldly reorganized the structure of the church to be more mission-oriented. They preached with a loud voice and in a bold way.

In the third message (verse 9) we are called to finish the work and prepare the remnant for the second coming of Jesus, again with a "loud voice." With boldness! How can we reach the 5.4 billion people, 66 percent of the world's population, who live in the 10/40 window? How can we build bridges to the hearts of the 1.2 billion people living in the post-Christian and secular window? How can we impact the 4.7 billion people, 58 percent of the world's population, living in the urban window? The only way to face these mission challenges is with boldness—preaching in a "loud voice" by the power of the Holy Spirit.

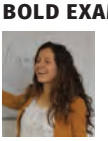
The end of everything is before us, and we can see it clearly through our windshield. At the same time, we can be inspired by the boldness of the Christian church by looking in the rearview mirror. The past and the present have strong connections.

The same unity, the same outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the same boldness of the early Christian church should also be seen in the remnant church. As the work began powerfully with the early rain, it will powerfully be completed through the latter rain. Ellen White looked forward to this "time when the events of the day of Pentecost shall be repeated with even greater power than on that occasion."[7] The boldness will be stronger in our days.

God is not talking about less. He is talking about more. We must ask ourselves if our commitment to the mission is becoming bigger and more aligned with God's prophecies of the latter rain or if it is shrinking by prioritizing buildings, meetings, bureaucracy, money, or other kinds of distractions.

The last call to this world demands bold action, without hesitation, without fear, and without distraction. It is a call not only to speak loudly but also to speak faithfully. It is not a time to merely share public statements, but especially to show personal commitment to the mission. Let's consider the personal commitments of these individuals who are bold in mission.

BOLD EXAMPLES



Miracle[8] is a volunteer in a veiled country, one of the most challenging areas of the Middle East and North Africa Union. There she leads a center of influence with more than 175 non-Christian people attending every week.



Marek Micyk is a pastor in Poland. Together with a group of church members he set up a wooden coffin on the streets of Warsaw and invited young people to lie inside it with the lid on to contemplate their future death. It is impacting people's lives.

The same unity, the same outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the same boldness of the early Christian church should also be seen in the remnant church.



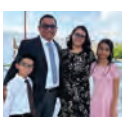
Daniel Kakana lost his entire family in the devastating 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami. He decided to return to Nicobar Islands, his homeland, one of the most restricted and challenging mission fields in India, to share the everlasting gospel.



Glad and Joy,[9] both retired, decided to go to a very closed country in Southeast Asia. They were bold and bought one-way tickets to be missionaries. They are impacting dozens of young people's lives, bringing them into their home and teaching them about Jesus.



Alice Dihm is a local church youth director in Papua New Guinea. In 2024 she invited young people to reach out to the Boroko Police Cell. They installed TV screens in the cells, the reception area, and the chief's office to broadcast an evangelistic campaign. I preached in her church during the Papua New Guinea for Christ evangelism campaign, where 84 of those prisoners accepted Bible studies and later several of them were released and joined the church.



Gerson Jimenez, a pastor from Mexico, boldly decided to leave his homeland and administrative position as a local field executive secretary and go to Jordan, along with his wife and two small children, to serve as a frontline worker for five years.



Arthur and his father, **Vladyslav,** were in the war zones of Mykolaiv and Kherson in Ukraine sharing the biblical message of hope on November 25 last year, when they were attacked by an explosive drone. Both were injured, and Arthur died in the hospital the next day. After many surgeries his father, Vladyslav, is now recovered and boldly serving in the same challenging territory.

Edgard Cortés, from Argentina, bought a bus and transformed it into a traveling church, which he



called *Esperanza Móvil* (Hope Mobile). Each Sabbath 35 people travel on this bus to cities without an Adventist presence to plant new churches.



Jean and Rouane Sambou, who live in Senegal, West Africa, boldly left their comfort zone. They felt called by God to bring the gospel to unreached areas where they are combining health education with the gospel. This has led to more than 40 baptisms thus far.



Sister Fu is a bold Chinese missionary in Upon, a remote area in Thailand, where thousands of Chinese people live. She drives her motorcycle for several hours to reach the most remote villages. Once she arrives, she prays for God to bring a "person of peace" with whom the Holy Spirit is already working. On all occasions God provided someone, and many of them have already given their lives to Jesus.



Marvin Brand is a young church planter from Switzerland who decided to start a project to reach young people reluctant to try religion. They meet every week amid nature, the place they like to be during the weekends, and there he shares God's Word with them.



Elena is a literature evangelist in Moscow, Russia. Her ministry is to share Adventist literature with Russian millionaires. She shares the books *The Desire of Ages* and *The Great Controversy* and leaves her contact details. They often call her, thanking her and asking for clarification, and she takes the opportunity to offer them online Bible studies. More than 400 people from the social elite have received her books.



Bat-Orshikh Orgil from Mongolia was born with hearing difficulties and is quite shy. In March 2023 he moved with his family, including his father, who has paralysis, to a very challenging place without an Adventist presence. There he faced strong resistance, preached boldly in the market square,

and planted the first Seventh-day Adventist church in the province, with 22 people baptized.



Loubeth Vaughn, a young American woman, left her home and faced all kinds of challenges as a volunteer. She was assigned to serve on the island of Pohnpei in Micronesia, but flights were canceled, borders closed, and she ended up stuck in Hawaii, where she found the opportunity to serve in a missionary school, impacting many lives.



Peter Chege from Nairobi, Kenya, accepted the call to evangelize the northern part of South Sudan, in places with temperatures reaching 100 to 118 degrees Fahrenheit (38 to 48 degrees Celsius). He faced huge challenges with religious radicals, but working with boldness, love, and respect, he has already baptized almost 1,000 people in that area.



Lindovaldo Antonio Jose is a bold missionary who isn't a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Known as Genio das Ruas, he is a social media influencer in Angola. One day he saw a copy of *The Great Controversy* and became interested in its message. He looked for the book in various Christian bookshops until he found one, and read the entire book. He was very impressed with the message and began sharing his findings with some friends, who also became excited about the book. "It was so much light to be held only within Adventists," he said. So on May 1 this year, through his social media channel, he organized a mass distribution of the book, sharing more than 3,000 copies and using his social media platforms to discuss its contents.

CALLED TO BOLDNESS

God really has an army of bold missionaries around the world. But the call is not only for them. It is for each of us. A call to move forward together because Adventist boldness in mission is always strengthened when the church stands together.

For this reason I invite you to first renew your commitment to be bold in mission. You can move forward trusting that nothing is impossible for God. He can prepare the way for His messengers, give the right words for His preachers, and reach hearts that will be strategic to support the growth of the mission worldwide. He is just waiting for us to move forward with boldness.

Second, move forward believing that mission is a miracle. It is not what we can do for the Lord, but what the Lord can do through us. We can move forward trusting in the owner of the mission. The Holy Spirit can open closed hearts, closed countries, closed churches, and closed minds. And He can provide the necessary resources, because money should follow the mission, not mission following the money.

Third, move forward with an eschatological sense of urgency in your heart. Adventist mission is strongly eschatological. Our boldness is strengthened by our hope. The blessed hope impels us to speak boldly, knowing that the time is short. Ellen White alerts us that "we have no time, no words to spend in controversy."[10] And she declares: "The armies of heaven are on the move, and where is the human agent to cooperate with God?"[11]

We can respond with a deep conviction—Jesus is really coming, and I will go! Be assured that if God gives you this vision, He will certainly give you the provision. Just say, "I will go," and trust in the Lord.

[1] Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, "How Long?" *Adventist World*, August 2020, p. 26.

[2] Scripture quotations marked ESV are from *The Holy Bible*, English Standard Version, © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. ESV Text Edition: 2016. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

[3] Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 7, p. 32.

[4] Ellen G. White, *Welfare Ministry* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1952), p. 65.

[5] Ellen G. White, in *Review and Herald*, May 16, 1882.

[6] Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 612.

[7] Ellen G. White, *Last Day Events* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1992), p. 202.

[8] Not real name; protected for security reasons.

[9] Not real names; protected for security reasons.

[10] Ellen G. White, *To Be Like Jesus* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 2004), p. 283.

[11] *Ibid*., p. 283.

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ALAN IS HOPE

HANNAH DREWIECK

HOPE CHANNEL
EVENING DEVOTIONAL
MESSAGE PRESENTED
SABBATH, JULY 5, 2025

Alan's story started in the streets of the Dominican Republic with a soccer ball and a dream. Raised by a single mother alongside three siblings, he found purpose early in sports and studies. By 13 he was trying out for the national team. By 17 he was competing in World Cup qualifiers and signing with professional clubs. Football became his life, his identity, his escape, and his future.

He was raised Catholic and even studied in seminaries to become a priest, but the calling never fit. Still, he respected God and gave Him what he thought was enough.



Everything he had worked for was on the table. But Alan didn't flinch. He wasn't defiant. He was steady. His peace came from knowing whom he belonged to now.



Then came the invitation that changed everything. Through an Adventist teammate Alan was invited to a Sabbath service. He went. Something clicked. The warmth, the truth, the way Scripture came alive. It all settled in his heart like something he hadn't known he was missing.

Then came the dream. A quiet instruction: "*Get baptized.*" Alan obeyed. He didn't tell his teammates. He didn't tell his family. He just showed up one night at the church, ready. There was no baptism planned. Not even water in the baptistry. But God had gone before him. The church members filled the tank that night, and Alan was baptized.

That moment of surrender didn't fix everything, but it changed everything. Suddenly the Sabbath became a line in the sand. His team couldn't understand. His family pushed back. Contracts were offered, then withdrawn. Everything he had worked for was on the table. But Alan didn't flinch. He wasn't defiant. He was steady. His peace came from knowing whom he belonged to now.

Eventually he walked away from professional football. Not in defeat, but in faith. The dream wasn't stolen. It was surrendered. And that's when God gave it back, transformed.

Today Alan coaches at one of the top youth football schools in his country. His team doesn't compete on Sabbath. They pray together. They study the Bible. Nearly half are Adventist. And through sport, they share a message that echoes louder than any stadium: hope lives here.

Alan didn't plan to be a leader or a preacher. But that's what surrender does. It opens your life to something bigger. He used to run onto the field for his own glory. Now he walks onto it for God's. Every whistle, every practice, every prayer—each one is a testimony. Because Alan didn't just find hope—he also gave God permission to rewrite his story.



Alan became hope. And through him, so many others have too. We are all hope.

Hannah Drewieck is the communication coordinator for Hope Channel International.

NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION REPORT

Moving Forward in Mission



Potomac Conference Pathfinder director Sherilyn O'Ffill baptizes one of the more than 1,200 Pathfinders at the 2024 Believe the Promise International Pathfinder Camporee in Gillette, Wyoming. KELLY COE

The North American Division (NAD) has been focused during this quinquennium on spreading the distinctive, Christ-centered Seventh-day Adventist message of hope and wholeness in its territory. We praise God as we have seen significant growth since our report in 2022, as we welcomed 204,357 people into membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America into 6,704 churches and companies. We rejoice as more than 1,200 were baptized at the 2024 International Pathfinder Camporee.

With our theme "Together in Mission" firmly before us, we have prayerfully challenged our division to lean into three transformative, strategic focuses: multiply, media, and mentorship. These pillars are reshaping the landscape of ministry across North America.

MULTIPLYING MISSION

The strategic focus of multiply has centered on expanding disciple-making efforts across urban and rural contexts alike. With church membership close to 1.3 million in a territory of 390 million, intense prayer, courageous faith, and bold thinking were in order. We asked ourselves, "What if all our media ministries, educational institutions, and leaders aligned under one purpose, at one time, to make a kingdom impact?"

The Antioch initiative, introduced in 2022, aims to bring division, union, and conference resources together in key metropolitan centers. And in 2024, Pentecost 2025 was born. It started with the recognition that in order to reach others for Christ, we need the power of the Holy Spirit. Humble hearts and petitioning minds asking for the outpouring of the Spirit. With more than 5,200 churches and schools committing to Pentecost 2025, the goal is to encourage a continuous, comprehensive outreach approach that includes four phases—spiritual preparation, community engagement, proclamation of God's Word, and discipleship.

G. ALEXANDER BRYANT
PRESIDENT



We were thrilled and humbled by the response of our churches and schools to join the Pentecost 2025 initiative. The initial goal of at least 3,000 schools and churches was quickly eclipsed, and the division offered up to $3,000 for each church or school that signed up and met the program's criteria. Many unions and conferences also bestowed funds.

As we called all members to participate in Pentecost 2025, we received an unexpected blessing. In 2024 and through the first quarter of 2025, members with a heart for mission opened their wallets and gave offerings for Pentecost 2025, primarily via the NAD's online platform AdventistGiving, in the amount of US$543,667. Praise the Lord for His earnest and faithful followers!

At the Moberly Seventh-day Adventist Church in Missouri, church pastor Fainer Benjamin tells the story of how his church has embraced the community through a major building project for a new home for at-risk youth aging out of the foster-care system. Through this Pentecost 2025 initiative they have seen firsthand how community engagement and evangelism transform not only communities but also congregations. "The best remedy for any kind of problem the church has is evangelism and service," he said, explaining that putting our eyes on other people instead of self places the emphasis where it needs to be.

Benjamin continued: "When we serve, we are being made back into the image of God. When we serve, we are actually being transformed into the character and footsteps of Jesus Christ. It's very rewarding—a double blessing."

URBAN OUTREACH

An inspiring example of multiplication through mission innovation is a center of influence nestled in Baltimore, Maryland. The result of a strategic partnership between two local Adventist churches, the Urban Life Center aims to serve as a bridge between community needs and the gospel message. The center features a vibrant juice bar where patrons can enjoy healthy refreshments while exploring wellness topics in a relaxed, welcoming environment. Its storefront location also offers health classes, leadership workshops, and service projects targeting the wider Baltimore community.

Following Christ's method that Ellen G. White outlines on page 143 of *The Ministry of Healing*, two area churches stepped out in prayer and faith to open this center with the goal of transforming lives and growing church community. The outcome? Friends and colleagues choosing Christ, stepping into the waters of baptism, and walking a new path of faith. Then, as the saying goes, "paying it forward" with the help of the Holy Spirit.



At the North American Division headquarters in Columbia, Maryland, leaders pray together during the 2022 Multilingual Ministries Annual Council. ART BRONDO



A prayer is offered as Asante Mzuthi Khamula, a Washington Adventist University student, prepares for her baptism on April 23, 2025, after attending the university's Pentecost 2025 tent meeting. PHOTO PROVIDED BY WASHINGTON ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY



Adventist Community Services employees Wynelle Stevens and Colette Newer hand out bags at a food giveaway held at the North American Division headquarters in November 2022. ART BRONDO



A Pathfinder experiences pure joy at receiving a first place finish at the 2024 Pathfinder Bible Experience finals in Greeley, Colorado. RONALD POLLARD

DISCIPLES IN THE DIGITAL SPACE

As society becomes more immersed in the digital world, the NAD has intensified its commitment to media ministry. This vision has fueled the in-process redesign of NADAdventist.org into a hub for resources, news, information, and inspiration; and the development of Adventist Connect's Frame, a website platform aimed at enhancing the digital presence of local churches and schools. The goal is to provide even the smallest congregation or school with a customizable, user-friendly, up-to-date website that integrates seamlessly with church systems to enhance online presence and member engagement.

The transformation of Adventist Information Ministry into Adventist Connect redefines this ministry as a digital contact hub. In addition to Frame, Adventist Connect's Engage connection center and Thrive interest management system help churches, conferences, and organizations connect or reconnect with their communities through prayer ads, local volunteer training, and interest tracking systems.

One such impact emerged during a two-day pilot of live chat via a collaboration with Adventist.org over Easter weekend. Of 34 inquiries, four individuals requested connections with local churches. One of them, a woman in North Carolina whose daughter died in a high-profile prison case, was searching for peace. She drove to a local Adventist church several times, but stayed in her car. She kept returning, however, because she felt a sense of calm just being there. She visited Adventist.org, found the chat feature, and linked up with Adventist Connect staff. The woman began Bible studies and is now preparing for baptism. She credits the online chat as the turning point. We praise God for how digital ministry is drawing others to Christ and our church!

This extends to social media. Training efforts for church members on social media have surged. More than 10,000 individuals have been equipped through digital discipleship curricula such as Faith Made Social and *Discipulos Digitales*. These resources train members to share their faith effectively online, especially targeting youth, young adults, and Spanish-speaking communities.

EMPOWERING NEW LEADERS

Leadership turnover in the NAD has been unprecedented. Since 2021 more than half of the division's executive committee members are new. Dozens of conferences and unions have experienced significant leadership changes. This challenge was (and is) an opportunity to mentor a new generation, which will impact both leaders and church members.

We have prayerfully challenged our division to lean into three transformative, strategic focuses. These pillars are reshaping the landscape of ministry across North America.

Through targeted leadership development, the NAD launched mentorship programs that now engage more than two thirds of our conference presidents and thousands of church leaders. These programs include peer-to-peer cohorts, online certification through the Adventist Learning Community, and a library of 130 leadership videos designed for social media.

Alberta Conference president Jeff Potts is one of many to express gratitude for the program: "We prayed together, encouraged each other, laughed and wept together. It gave me the courage to face challenges and access to wisdom from more experienced colleagues."

FAITHFUL IN PURPOSE

We give thanks to God for His continued blessings in the financial life of our division, recognizing His miraculous provision through the consistent faithfulness of members who return tithe. Their commitment is a powerful testimony to God's work in their hearts and His sustaining hand over our shared mission. As a division, we've continued to exceed the $1 billion annual tithe threshold. During 2022-2024 the tithe in North America totaled more than $3.85 billion.

EXTRAORDINARY, EVERYDAY MINISTRY—IN THE NAD AND BEYOND

We must not forget that our educational and health-care institutions are dedicated to the mission of the church. The North American Division supports 855 schools, offering a range of early childhood through grade 12 in schools and/or centers. From 2022 to 2025 these schools/centers served an average of 55,631 students annually. In addition, the NAD operates 13 colleges and universities, enrolling an average of 20,784 students each year. We are grateful to God for such faithful and dedicated men and women who teach in our schools, leading Adventist education throughout the division. And we give Him extra praise for the 328 schools that have joined the Pentecost 2025 initiative.

Five health-care systems collectively lead more than 1,700 clinics and hospitals throughout our territory. Thousands are touched by their compassionate ministry, which goes beyond the doctor's office and the hospital into the community. Compelled by the mission to live God's love by inspiring health, wholeness, and hope as they extend the healing ministry of Christ, they are striving to improve their community's physical, mental, and spiritual health. This church is truly blessed to have Adventist health care as a part of its system.

We are making a difference through our missionaries who serve right here in our home territory and beyond. While we are boldly moving forward



During the March 2023 spring break, a group of students and faculty from Pacific Union College traveled to Mana Island, Fiji, for a 10-day mission trip primarily providing medical and dental care. Here, one of the group checks a patient's breathing. PROVIDED BY PACIFIC UNION COLLEGE



More than 60,000 gathered at the CAM-PLEX multievent facilities for the Believe the Promise International Pathfinder Camporee evening program on August 8, 2024. PIETER DAMSTEEGT

in mission in the NAD, we also remain one of the global church's strongest missionary-sending divisions. Each year since 2022, the division has sent 50,000 to 60,000 short-term missionaries and approximately 250 long-term missionaries—not including additional deployments from NAD colleges and universities. When these are added, the total rises to nearly 500 long-term sacrificial servants of God deploying annually.

MOVING FORWARD IN MISSION

The convergence of multiply, media, and mentorship is more than strategic planning; it's spiritual renewal. The world has changed, and we need extra strength, courage, compassion, restoration, and transformation.



Dion Henry, Anselm Paul, and Roger Wade sit down for the pastor's roundtable discussion in the tech lab at the 2022 CALLED Pastors' Family Convention in Lexington, Kentucky. PIETER DAMSTEEGT

Friends, we need to embrace Pentecost power. We need the Holy Spirit. That's what will transform our churches and communities.

Again, we must heed the words of Ellen White when she explains that Christ's method alone of engaging in the community as Jesus did—bidding them to follow Him once He cared for their needs—will mean we will have success in reaching others for God and His church. We can change the world as the early Christians did at Pentecost (see Acts 2).

In 2025, as the North American Division celebrates 40 years of its reestablishment as a world division, this story of faith is still being written. All our members are needed as we engage in multiply, media, and mentorship; as we follow the Pentecost 2025 cycle of prayer, community engagement, evangelistic proclamation, and discipleship.

It's people. It's me. It's you. It's the power of God, the power of the Holy Spirit. It's the everlasting gospel, the three angels' messages, and the promise of Christ's soon return. We will not relent. With a laser-like focus we will continue to pray and to find more ways to reach people. And together we will move forward in mission.

From the smallest church plant to the largest camporee, from the digital evangelist to the local community servant, from the weekly prayer meeting to the soup kitchen—we are together in mission. The call is yours and mine: *I will go!*

Please scan the QR code to learn more about the North American Division.

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MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA UNION REPORT

Step Into the Impossible

The challenges are constant in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, where daily life is shaped by war, conflict, and resistance to our work. Currently six of our countries are involved in ongoing warfare, and last year violence reached the doorstep of our union office.

By God's providence our mission remained intact, and in the midst of ongoing war we provided assistance to almost 6,000 people through our schools, urban centers of influence, and, most important, through the human touch of members who "step into the impossible" to participate in meeting the great need.

The same voice that spoke light into the chaos of an empty void to create a perfect world is the same voice speaking to hearts and lighting the way to eternal restoration. Eden was very likely situated in ancient Mesopotamia, known to us as modern-day Iraq, a fitting place to remember our origins, to acknowledge the power of God to "step into the impossible," and to respond to God's timeless call: "Let there be light!"

THE SCOPE OF OUR MISSION

Our response to this call is urgent. In many parts of the MENA region the light of God through our presence flickers so dimly as to be nearly invisible to the naked eye. While we rejoice in God's visible work and the growing number of new believers, we are deeply aware of the immense need that still remains.

Current statistics indicate that there is approximately one Adventist for every 353 people on the planet. Applying this ratio, let's imagine we are walking along a bustling city street in a major city such as St. Louis, looking for another Adventist. How long would it take before we passed a fellow member? It would take approximately six minutes.

Now let's shift this frame of reference from the global Adventist community to the MENA region, where the ratio drops dramatically to one Adventist for every 99,100 people. At this ratio it would take you 65 days of walking before you passed one of our 6,036 members.

To better grasp how limited our witness is in areas sparsely populated by Adventists, we can use the estimate that a highly sociable, extroverted urban dweller, someone who talks to at least three new people every day, would interact with 80,000 individuals over the course of their entire lifetime. In the MENA region, where Adventists represent one out of every 99,100 people, it would be very unlikely for such a person to meet a single Adventist in their entire life.

This contrast amplifies the impossibility of our challenge—reaching the almost 600 million people in our region—and intensifies our challenge to "step into the impossible" and have full dependence on God to meet this urgent need.

DIGITAL OUTREACH: BREAKING BARRIERS

Only 4 percent of households in the MENA region have access to the Bible, and sharing the gospel is largely illegal or punishable by death. For this reason, digital outreach has proved critical to our mission. Digital outreach emits a light that slips around barriers, offering a lifeline for spiritually hungry people who regularly respond to us. Among the 12,741 messages received just in 2024, one read, "Please delete this message the moment you read it. I pray that one day I'll be brave enough to declare my faith publicly." These secret whispers of hope remind us that we must "step into the impossible," doing our part while trusting fully in God's timing.

God's mission involves us. We are conduits of His light to all the world. It is His mission, and He is showing the way, lighting up hearts and illuminating paths for us to "step into the impossible."

The light of God shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot put it out. As God's children, we are compelled by His love to respond to the call echoing down from the prophet Isaiah: "Arise, shine, for your light has come! and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you" (Isa. 60:1).

RICK MCEDWARD
PRESIDENT





ARISE BEIRUT: A BEACON OF HOPE

Response to this call drives the mission of Arise Beirut, the newest of MENA's 15 urban centers of influence. Located in Beirut's affluent downtown Achrafieh district, the center is housed in a three-story building significant to church history. The building was inaugurated in 1959 and served as a thriving center of Adventist evangelism until the beginning of the Lebanese civil war in 1975. The structure ended up in ruins, gutted by bombings and vandalism, but was restored in 2024, through generous financial support and the teamwork of those who joined the massive remodeling project.

Arise houses multiple groups under one roof and provides various community services targeting secular young professionals and university students in the area. When bombs fell just two kilometers (1.24 miles) away in late 2024, the building may have shuddered, but it remained a beacon of hope, continuously sheltering and supporting the community throughout the crisis. Though its walls trembled, they held firm, and in those harrowing months Arise Beirut stood unwaveringly as a safe haven for all who sought refuge.

Ladisa* represents many who have come to the light through Arise Beirut. Caught between two religions—the Christian faith of her mother's upbringing and the sharply contrasting religion of her father—Ladisa experienced a sense of deep darkness that caused her to attempt ending her own life multiple times. She found light in a psychiatric unit with the unexpected visit from an Arise Beirut pastor who had been studying the Bible with her mother. She clearly sensed God's affirmation in the pastor's words: there is a purpose for your life.

Ladisa joined her mother's Bible study, and together they decided to be baptized after attending an Easter play and the Hope Arising series by John Bradshaw with It is Written, events held at Arise Beirut. Ladisa's father, although reserved, was moved by his daughter's transformation and began attending group meetings himself. "You did a miracle with my daughter," he exclaimed. He has now begun Bible studies himself. When we "step into the impossible," we step into God's light and bring others along with us.

A STORY OF TRANSFORMATION: YOUSSIF

God's mission, however, is not dependent on specially designated buildings. It reaches into the most unlikely places—such places as a mechanic shop in one of MENA's more challenging locations. When one of MENA's 88 Global Mission pioneers took their car in to get it fixed, a casual conversation with Youssif, one of the workers, sparked an interest in spiritual matters. Small talk and shared work gave way to deeply spiritual conversations, and Youssif found himself irresistibly drawn to the message of grace that permeated the life, words, and quiet conviction of the customer.

Under the cover of night, Youssif experienced an inextinguishable light through hours of study in the whispered gatherings of curious hearts. Flickers of spiritual interest grew into a steady flame, a passion for truth that couldn't be set aside. Small groups began to form around Youssif. What began with a handful of friends transformed into regular meetings, spiritual discovery, and eventually a pursuit of deeper knowledge.

During the past three years communities like this, in places like Youssif's hometown, have sprung up and are flourishing, with a 12 percent increase in membership, as local and national believers find strength in their newfound faith and light.

REFUGEE TO MISSIONARY: SAMIR'S JOURNEY

Light shines in different ways, as evidenced in the experience of Samir,* a Syrian refugee of war whose early life was scarred by the sounds of bombing and the trauma of war that shattered his

hopes of a good future. Forced to flee his homeland, Samir found himself in a world where he didn't belong and where language presented constant challenges. Yet even in the midst of chaos, a quiet invitation to continue his education at the Adventist Learning Center offered him a glimpse of hope. The message of God's love began reaching him, penetrating the darkness surrounding him.

With cautious determination Samir stepped into that uncertain light. There, he encountered a caring mentor—a Global Mission pioneer in charge of one of the 76 projects in the region—whose gentle words and steadfast encouragement led Samir to a community engaged in prayer and study. His personal transformation became a beacon for many. Samir himself made the decision to "step into the impossible" and now works sharing God's light in his community.

Since 2022, membership in our local small groups has doubled, and regular worship attendance has risen by 121 percent, a clear sign that even in hardship the seeds of hope are strongly sprouting, even in hard-to-reach places such as the privacy of a bedroom in a country shut tight.

DIGITAL DISCIPLESHIP: LAYLA'S SECRET FAITH

The story of Layla* began in a dark room. Cloaked in secrecy and fear, Layla found herself scrolling through her phone on a restless night. While surfing secret social media channels, Bible verses in her own language began to glow on her screen, stirring a mysterious longing in her heart that sparked belief. Despite the dangers of expressing her newfound faith, Layla dared to reach out and send a message to the online channel she had discovered—Hope Channel MENA.

What seemed like a small, solitary act quickly unfolded into what has become a lifelong transformation. An empathetic representative of the channel joined Layla on her journey, gently guiding her down a hidden path of discovery, until she was ready to meet with an Adventist small group in person, where she continued growing in her newfound faith. With each secret conversation Layla's hidden light grew stronger, a light that has inspired other seekers to quietly proclaim a faith that will not be silenced.

THE GOSPEL LIKE YEAST: QUIET GROWTH, LASTING CHANGE

None of this work would have been possible without the global church's commitment to utilizing media for evangelism—reaching into hard-to-access territories with wisdom and compassion. In places where traditional mission work is nearly impossible, media and internet connectivity have opened doors we could never have imagined. The gospel is growing like yeast in our region (Matt. 13:31-33)—slowly but powerfully transforming lives and communities.

We have seen this work firsthand. We see it in exponential growth. We see it through the limitless opportunities opening up through such initiatives as the first all-Arabic theology program. We see it in the faithful North African pastor who consistently baptizes 15 local nationals each year. We see it in Libya, where doors have opened to the gospel for the first time in 65 years, and in the Gulf States, with their first-ever national members. We see it in the 1,978 people who have accepted Christ through baptism during the past five years.

We are grateful for the way in which the Holy Spirit is working on hearts and for the commitment of the world church to God's mission for MENA. Along with the General Conference, nine of the world divisions have sent workers, and more than 220 volunteers have come and participated in the work here.

AMIRA'S JOURNEY: FROM STUDENT TO MISSIONARY

Among the many stories that reveal how God is working in this region, Amira's* journey stands out as a testament to what happens when seeds of faith are sown in the right season. Despite coming from a close-knit community, Amira hadn't experienced the unconditional love of God until she sat in the classrooms of an Adventist school, where a volunteer Bible teacher taught and lived out this love in practice. When the teacher offered to study the



Bible with Amira during recess, she readily agreed. These simple meetings planted seeds of faith that would take root and flourish later in life. A Sabbath invitation led not only Amira but also her mother and brother into a warm, faith-filled community. It was the beginning of a family transformation.

But just as the light was dawning, darkness came. Her parents divorced, her grandfather died, and she was forced to transfer schools, leaving behind the spiritual environment that had nurtured her. For a time, her family stopped attending church. Yet, even in the silence, God's call remained steady in her heart.

Then came a divine appointment: a billboard near her grandmother's house advertised Bible meetings by the same ministry, at the same school she had studied at years before. Amira and her family attended every night, and quietly each of them decided to be baptized, without knowing the others had made the same decision. Together they gave their lives to Christ.

That bold step of faith was just the beginning. Amira faced more trials: Sabbath conflicts at school, bullying, a devastating health crisis that clouded her mind, and finally, the heartbreak of financial obstacles. Yet at every impossible turn, God opened another door.

When medicine failed to help her, prayer brought healing. When there was no money, strangers, touched by her story, offered support. And when she longed to serve, God led her to an earthquake-stricken Turkey, where her language skills made her uniquely positioned to help Syrian refugees with ADRA. What was supposed to be a short mission trip became a powerful affirmation of her calling.

Today Amira is a theology student at Middle East University. She continues to "step into the impossible" with faith, trusting that the God who brought her this far will lead her all the way. Her mother now serves in full-time ministry, and their entire family continues to be transformed by the grace of God.

From personal Bible studies to public service, from family struggles to divine breakthroughs, Amira's life is a living illustration that when we surrender our fears and "step into the impossible," God does the miraculous. Her journey, marked by persistence and grace, stands as a vivid reminder that even in our darkest hours, the light of faith prevails.

A CALL TO FAITH AND COURAGE

Today I want to encourage you to pray for Middle East and North Africa, for more stories and people of faith brave enough to "step into the impossible"—people like Amira, Layla, Samir, Youssif, and Ladisa. Their journeys remind us that even the smallest light can conquer the deepest darkness. Each lamp we ignite is a faithful response to God's command: "Let there be light!"

The call and the challenge is for each and every one of us to "step into the impossible." When we think about the size of the task at hand, it certainly seems impossible, but when we remember that it is the God of these stories who is calling us, we can confidently obey His Great Commission. Let us illuminate every dark corner of this world with Jesus, the Light of the world. Looking to Him, in the light of His glory and grace, this earth and its challenges will grow strangely dim.

Step into the impossible. Be the light.

*A pseudonym used to protect privacy.

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62nd GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION

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First Business Meeting

SESSION ACTIONS

62nd General Conference Session, St Louis, Missouri, July 3, 2025, 2:00 p.m.

SOUTH SUDAN UNION MISSION—NEW UNION MISSION

VOTED, 1. To recognize and record union mission status for the South Sudan Union Mission, effective October 10, 2023.

2. To accept the South Sudan Union Mission (ECD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

NORTHERN LUZON PHILIPPINE UNION MISSION AND SOUTHERN LUZON PHILIPPINE UNION MISSION—NEW UNION MISSIONS

VOTED, 1. To recognize and record the reorganization of the former Northern Philippine Union Conference into two union missions, effective January 1, 2025.

2. To accept the Northern Luzon Philippine Union Mission (SSD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

3. To accept the Southern Luzon Philippine Union Mission (SSD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

SOUTHWESTERN PHILIPPINE UNION CONFERENCE AND SOUTHEASTERN PHILIPPINE UNION MISSION—NEW UNION CONFERENCE AND NEW UNION MISSION

VOTED, 1. To recognize and record the reorganization of the former South Philippine Union Conference into a union conference and a union mission known as the Southwestern Philippine Union Conference and the Southeastern Union Mission, effective December 31, 2023.

2. To accept the Southwestern Philippine Union Conference (SSD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

3. To accept the Southeastern Philippine Union Mission (SSD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

MID-GHANA UNION CONFERENCE AND NORTH-CENTRAL GHANA UNION MISSION—NEW UNION CONFERENCE AND NEW UNION MISSION

VOTED, 1. To recognize and record the reorganization of the former Northern Ghana Union Conference into a union conference and a union mission known as the Mid-Ghana Union Conference and the North-Central Ghana Union Mission, effective January 1, 2025.

2. To accept the Mid-Ghana Union Conference (WAD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

3. To accept the North-Central Ghana Union Mission (WAD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

NORTH-EAST CAMEROON UNION MISSION AND WEST-CENTRAL CAMEROON UNION MISSION—NEW UNION MISSIONS

VOTED, 1. To recognize and record the reorganization of the former Cameroon Union Mission into two union missions known as the North-East Cameroon Union Mission and the West-Central Cameroon Union Mission, effective January 1, 2025.

2. To accept the North-East Cameroon Union Mission (WAD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

3. To accept the West-Central Cameroon Union Mission (WAD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.



Uzoma Nwosi, a West African Division delegate, enjoys lunch in the dining hall. JAMES BOKOVOY

COSTA RICA UNION MISSION AND NICARAGUA UNION MISSION—NEW UNION MISSIONS

VOTED, 1. To recognize and record the reorganization of the former South Central American Union Mission into two union missions known as the Costa Rica Union Mission and the Nicaragua Union Mission, effective January 1, 2025.

2. To accept the Costa Rica Union Mission (IAD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

3. To accept the Nicaragua Union Mission (IAD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

MCFARLAND, TODD R, PARLIAMENTARIAN—GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION - 2025

VOTED, To appoint Todd R McFarland, Deputy General Counsel of the General Conference Office of General Counsel, as parliamentarian for the business meetings of the 2025 General Conference Session.

MOTION TO LIMIT SPEECHES

VOTED, To limit speeches to two minutes, or three minutes if the speaker needs interpretation.

STEERING COMMITTEE—GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION - 2025

VOTED, To approve the 2025 General Conference Session Steering Committee, as follows:

STEERING

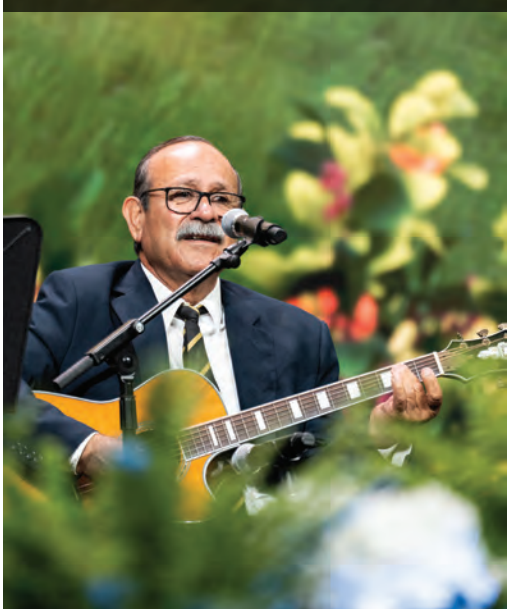
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Invitees: Tamara K Boward, Williams S Costa Jr, Justin Kim

Concerts are provided three times a day in the Dome at America's Center. CHRISTINA COLLARD



STANDING COMMITTEES—GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION - 2025

VOTED, To approve standing committees for the 2025 General Conference Session, as follows:

CHURCH MANUAL

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Abner De los Santos, Vice-chair

Gerson P Santos, Secretary

Tamara K Boward, Recording Secretary

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Frank M Hasel, Edward Heidinger, Daniel Wang Xin Jiao, Leonard A Johnson, Anthony R Kent, Erton C Kohler, Lalnghak Liana, Barna Magyarosi, Wendell W Mandolang, Geoffrey G Mbwana, Richard E McEdward, Musa G Mitekaro, Hensley M Moorooven, David Kayombo Ndonji, Stanislav V Nosov, Niklas M Rantanen,

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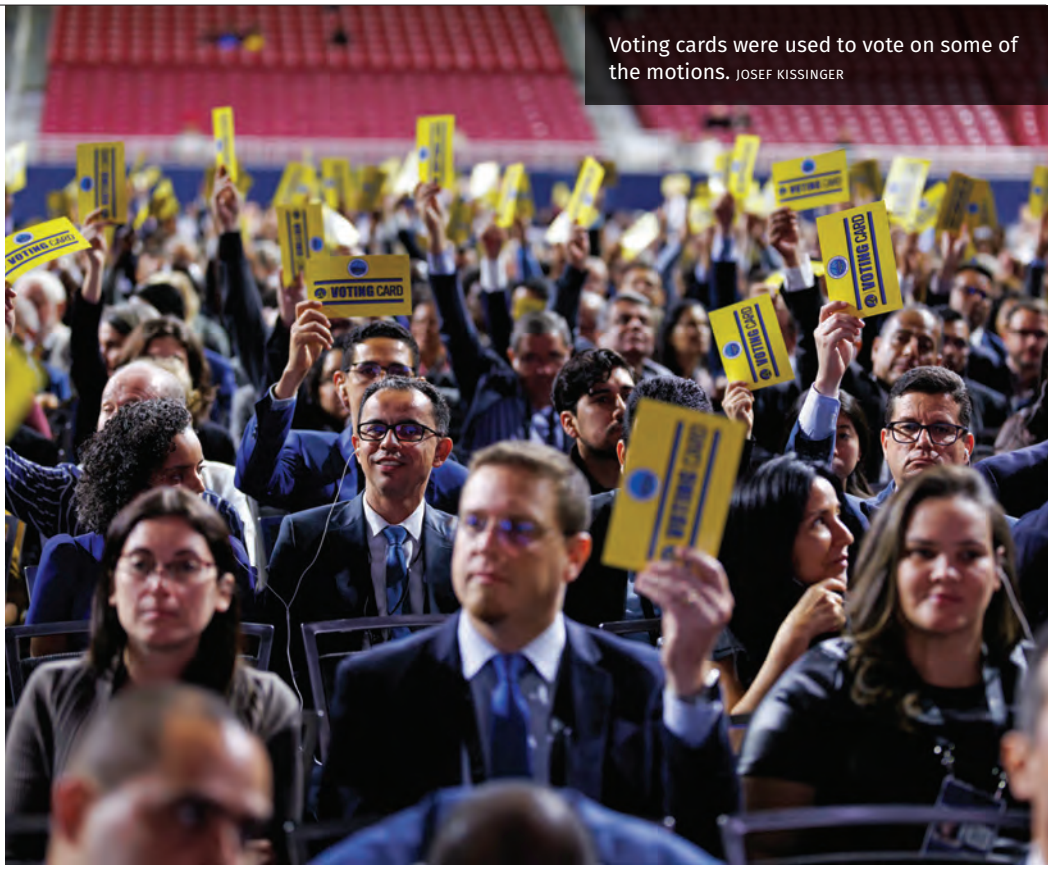
Invitee: Tamara K Boward

ADOPTION OF THE DAILY PROGRAM

VOTED, To adopt the daily program of the 2025 General Conference Session, as follows:

Thursday, July 3

12:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m.	Lunch
2:00 p.m.-2:10 p.m.	Opening Remarks
2:10 p.m.-3:10 p.m.	Session Opening Worship
3:10 p.m.-3:50 p.m.	Official Session Opening
3:50 p.m.-5:00 p.m.	Business Session



Voting cards were used to vote on some of the motions. JOSEF KISSINGER

Friday, July 4
8:00 a.m.-8:50 a.m. Worship
8:50 a.m.-9:15 a.m. Prayer Session
9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Business Session
12:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m. Lunch
2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. Business Session

Sabbath, July 5
9:00 a.m.-10:15 a.m. Sabbath School
10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Divine Service
12:30 p.m.-2:00 p.m. Lunch
2:30 p.m.-3:00 p.m. "I Will Go" Strategic Plan
3:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. Church in Mission

Sunday, July 6 - Wednesday, July 9
8:00 a.m.-8:50 a.m. Worship
8:50 a.m.-9:15 a.m. Prayer Session
9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Business Session
12:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m. Lunch
2:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. Business Session

Thursday, July 10
8:00 a.m.-8:50 a.m. Worship
8:50 a.m.-9:15 a.m. Prayer Session
9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Business Session
12:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m. Lunch
2:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. Caucus Meetings

Friday, July 11
8:00 a.m.-8:50 a.m. Worship
8:50 a.m.-9:15 a.m. Prayer Session
9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Business Session
12:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m. Lunch
2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. Business Session (*if needed*)

Sabbath, July 12
9:00 a.m.-10:15 a.m. Sabbath School
10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Divine Service
12:30 p.m.-2:00 p.m. Lunch
2:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m. Afternoon Program

ADOPTION OF SESSION AGENDAS

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the motion to amend the item, Adoption of Session Agendas.

ADOPTION OF SESSION AGENDA

VOTED, To not add to the agenda a review and discussion of the 2015 General Conference Administrative Committee statement on immunization, specifically its claim about peer reviewed scientific literature in addition to the Bible and writings of Ellen G White.

ADOPTION OF SESSION AGENDAS

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the motion to amend the item, Adoption of Session Agendas.

ADOPTION OF SESSION AGENDA

VOTED, To not amend the agenda to include a report from the department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty about its activities during the past five years.

ADOPTION OF SESSION AGENDAS

VOTED, To adopt the agenda for the 2025 General Conference Session as distributed.

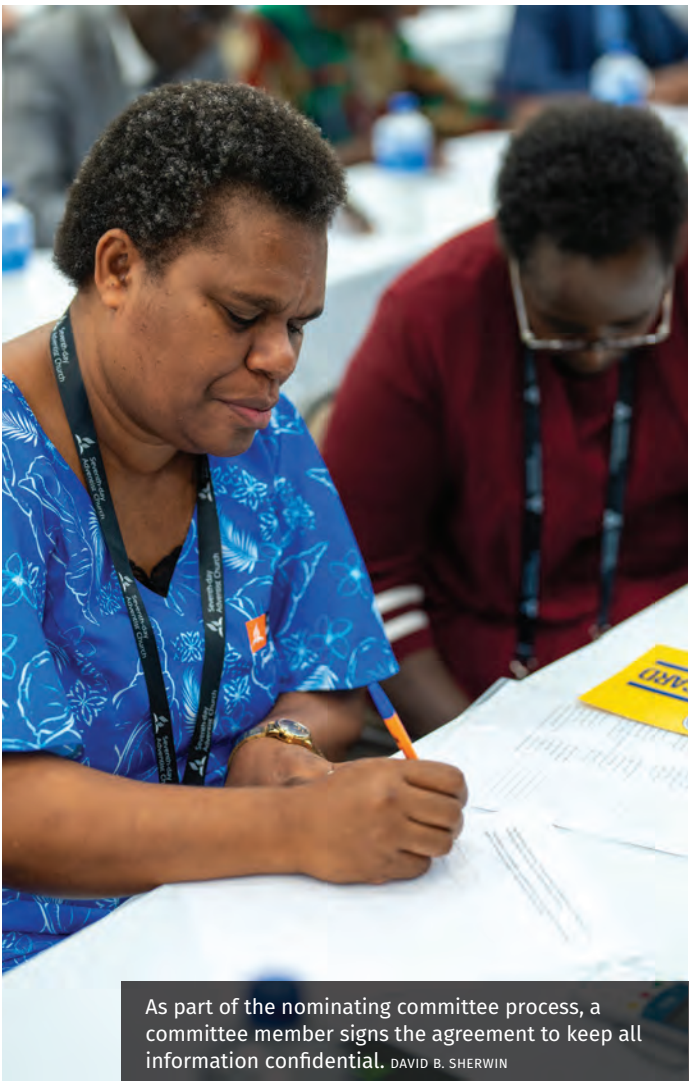


Session attendees enjoy the large exhibit hall.
DARREN HESLOP

NOMINATING COMMITTEE—GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION - 2025

VOTED, To appoint the following as members of the standing Nominating Committee for the 2025 General Conference Session:

1. Adams, Monique
2. Adeleye, Ezekiel
3. Adu-Manu, Kofi
4. Aguilar, David
5. Allen, Robin
6. Alves Caxeta, Sergio
7. Amo Mensah, Osei
8. Annor-Boahen, Kwame
9. Arrais, Jonas
10. Asekun-Olarinmoye, Esther
11. Ashir, Ruth
12. Ashley, Grace Ann
13. Assienin, Salomon
14. Atencio Marquez, Elmer
15. Badu, James
16. Bae, Young Hee
17. Barishinga, Lamec
18. Barlizo, Eliezer Jr.
19. Barlow, Annette
20. Bauer, Celinda
21. Baysah, Glory I.
22. Beaubrun-Fleury, Mae-Lyna
23. Belmonte, Benjamin
24. Ben, Strike
25. Bendah, Nelson G
26. Bernard, Roger
27. Bindosano, Yotam
28. Biraro, Irene
29. Birgen, Regina
30. Biru, Daka
31. Bondarciuc, Lev
32. Britis, Charlles
33. Brooks, Eglan
34. Brown, Everett
35. Brown-Domiguez, Arlene
36. Bwanale, Chifundo
37. Byilingiro, Hesron
38. Byrd, Carlton
39. C, Tawkthanga
40. Cabance, Nyrh
41. Cajobe, Gerardo
42. Camara, Roger
43. Caporal, Pierre
44. Carcamo Morales, Rodrigo Alberto
45. Carillo, Michelle
46. Carpin, Eddy-Michel
47. Carvalho Ferreira, Wilian
48. Castillo, Ismael
49. Castro Insunza, Mirna
50. Caviglione, Dario
51. Cesano, Mario Gabriel
52. Chalasani, Karunakar
53. Chilundo, Alfredo
54. Chishimba, Joseph
55. Choi, Ho Young
56. Christopher Sekar, Jai Kumar
57. Chuenjit, Somchai
58. Cik, Peter
59. Craig, Carlos
60. Cretu, Andrei
61. Dalu, Abraham
62. Daniel, Frisco
63. de Abreu, Ruben
64. De Gracia Gonzalez, Jose
65. De Raad, Robert
66. de Souza Dantas, Andre
67. de Souza Ferreira, Tiago
68. Devadhas, Daniel
69. Devis Arias, Ney
70. Djossou, Adjeoda
71. Djuma, Dalila
72. Doukmetzian, Karnik
73. Dube, Thandolwethu
74. Dullinger, Werner
75. Dziarkach, Vadzim
76. Dziegielewski, Jaroslaw
77. Edmond, Seneque
78. Felix, Charo
79. Finley, Mark
80. Freedman, John
81. Garcia, Narcedalia
82. Garcia, Uilson Leandro
83. Garcia Arroyo, Ever
84. Garcia Perez, Jorge
85. Georgiev, Milen
86. Gonzalez, Osmar
87. Hachalinga, Passmore
88. Halemane, Peter
89. Hansuwanchai, Thana
90. Helminen, Aimo
91. Hernandez Ramirez, Eddy
92. Hla, Po Po
93. Inada, Yutaka
94. Injety, Vincent
95. Ishaya, Istifanus
96. Jadhav, Brijesh
97. Jara Zegarra, Samuel



As part of the nominating committee process, a committee member signs the agreement to keep all information confidential. DAVID B. SHERWIN

98. Jiao, Wang Xin
99. Johnson, A
100. Jose, Miguel
101. Julca Asenjo, Delmer Eloy
102. Jules, Abraham
103. Kabunga, Vennety
104. Kahl, Raúl Elio
105. Kakonde, Erasme
106. Kandane, Ujwal
107. Kang, Joshua Soongi
108. Karangwa, Naphtal
109. Kaufononga, Maveni
110. Kerr, Peter
111. Kim, Won Sang
112. King Garcia, Luis
113. Koltuk, Fedor
114. Kook, Shurman
115. Kuhn, Ronald
116. Kumbatira, Andrew Timothy Martin
117. Lagoa, Jose
118. Lalas, Angela
119. Lall, Parvez
120. Lamera, Laurence de Asis
121. Lamorin, Jonathan
122. Lan, Khong Poh
123. Landless, Peter
124. Leahu, Ilie
125. Lee, Hyung Jin
126. Leite Tavares, Matheus
127. Lekundayo, Godwin
128. Levterov, Theodore
129. Lima Brandao, Alijofran
130. Llewellyn, Paul
131. Lopez Teule, Oscar
132. Lovska, Daniil
133. Lunana, Francesca
134. Machaca Vargas, Helmer Rolando
135. Maiyo, Phillip
136. Makori, Samuel
137. Malekana, Mark
138. Maloba, Debbie
139. Mamac, Nildo Sambulot
140. Mandong, Barnabas
141. Marin, Ricardo
142. Marley, Victor
143. Marquez, Erna
144. Martin, Ben
145. Martinez Guerrero, Nery
146. Mathunya, Tsholofelo
147. Maximo dos Santos, Carlos H
148. Mbwambo, Julius
149. McEdward, Richard
150. McNeilus, Denzil
151. Mhishi, Kudakwashe
152. Misiani, Samuel
153. Moacir da Silva, Moises
154. Montalvan Ruiz, Daniel
155. Mooba, Milner
156. Morris, Derek
157. Muller, Anne-May
158. Mumbo, Duncan
159. Munoz Perrin, Aldo
160. Munyumbwe, Vanny
161. Musara, Godfrey
162. Musija, Zlatko
163. Mutagoma, Mwumvaneza
164. Mutanga, Douglas
165. Mutero, Gideon
166. Mwangachuchu, Rudatinya
167. Naether, Johannes
168. Najera Ponce, Claudia
169. Namitondo, Tommy
170. Navarro Perez, Ignacio
171. Ncube, Dumisani
172. Ndimukika, Moses
173. Ndjimbo, Tyindongo
174. Ndlovu, Sikumbuzo
175. Neatu, Aurel
176. Nelson, Dwight
177. Newton, Bradford
178. Ng, G T
179. Nino Escobar, Alvaro
180. Njock, David
181. Nlo Nlo, Jean
182. Nolasco Nava, Abel
183. Nommik, David
184. Nosov, Stanislav
185. Ntunzwenimana, Enock
186. Nyagah, Steve
187. Nyirandabaruta, Marie
188. Nyirenda, Tony
189. Ocran, Thomas
190. Ocsai, Tamas
191. Oetman, Cami
192. Ogal, Tom
193. Ojum, Beniah
194. Okike, Chukudi
195. Oliveira Tostes, Antonio
196. Oliveira Trevia, Linda Arielle
197. Ondo, Lucienne
198. Ortiz, Saul
199. Osindo, Oscar
200. Ostrovskii, Moisei
201. Otewa, Florence
202. Pacheco, Manuel
203. Pacheco Lopez, Abel
204. Papu, Deppington Jongimpi
205. Paredes Martinez, Luis
206. Paroschi, Keldie
207. Patalinghug, Jerry
208. Patterson, Faye
209. Perez Reyes, Aldo
210. Perez Schulz, Magdiel
211. Pieridis, Laurette Gladwys A Ines
212. Pinto Lima, Mauricio
213. Plamkoottathil Abraham, Varghese
214. Polanco, Luis
215. Proffitt, Kathryn
216. Quintero, Dubiel
217. Rameswarapu Narayana, Prabhu Das
218. Ramirez, Elden
219. Ramirez, Orlando
220. Ramos Lagos, Adan
221. Rampanelli, Charles Edson
222. Rana, Milon
223. Randriamarijaona, Solonirina
224. Redondo R, Edgar
225. Reyna, Moises
226. Rigaud, Olivier
227. Rivera, Luis
228. Robinson, Marcellus
229. Ruiz, Wilfredo
230. Same, Vincent
231. Sandoval Jimenez, Abraham
232. Schuabb Couto, Max
233. Schwab, Reinhard
234. Sebahire, Joseph
235. Serb, Dan
236. Shevchuk, Andrii
237. Shongwe, Dingindawo
238. Shylla, Neitham Marina
239. Silveira Kalbermatter, Hiram
240. Silvestre, Teofilo
241. Simba, Ruth
242. Simmons, Ella
243. Singh, Attar
244. Sitorus, Sugih
245. Slusher, Dennis
246. Smith, Ronald
247. Smith Romero, Jose
248. Solofo, Georges
249. Souza Lopes, Marlinton
250. Stanic, Zelimir
251. Tadi, Johnson
252. Tanon, Simeon
253. Tanui, Benjamin
254. Taylor, John
255. Tayo, Ademola



256. Tegegn, Tadesse
257. Tham, James Chun Yu
258. Thurber, Gary
259. Tobias, Kern
260. Tupai, Edward
261. Udoh, Bassey
262. Vaihola, Mere
263. Valda Sardina, Hugo
264. Velazquez, Efrain
265. Vickery, Duane
266. Vidal Pavon, Felix
267. Vinte, Teixeira
268. Waukave, Kelvin
269. Waworuntu, Harry Whyn
270. Williams, Ivan
271. Worwor, Loleth
272. Yani, Malachai
273. Zabat, Jose Jr.
274. Zhang, Xiaoming
275. Zhao, Enming
276. Zhukov, Aleksandr
277. Zubkov, Dmytro

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Saw Samuel, Secretary
Hensley M Moorooven, Actions Editor
Nichole N Miles, Recording Secretary



The 2025 General Conference Session Nominating Committee DAVID B. SHERWIN

ADVENTIST REVIEW VOLUME 202 | NUMBER 09

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ADVENTIST REVIEW

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BULLETIN 3
GC 25

JULY 7, 2025

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Driven by Mission

NEWS



MARK FROELICH

EXPERIENCED MISSIONARY RICK McEDWARD ELECTED SECRETARY OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

HE HAS SERVED IN MISSION-RELATED POSITIONS AND AS A CHURCH PLANTER FOR DECADES.

MARCOS PASEGGI, *ADVENTIST REVIEW*

Rick McEdward, president of the Middle East and North Africa Union Mission (MENAUM) since 2016, was elected secretary of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists on July 6. Delegates to the sixty-second General Conference Session in St. Louis, Missouri, United States, voted to accept the Nominating Committee nomination of McEdward.

"As you can imagine, the last few hours have been challenging for me and my wife," said McEdward after the delegates voted 1,630 to 153 to accept his nomination. "Please pray for us as we do our best for the Lord and His church."

LIFELONG MISSION EXPERIENCE

McEdward, 59, grew up in an Adventist family in Seattle, Washington, United States. But at the age of 12 he moved with his family to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, where his father landed a job as an X-ray technician at a large military hospital. As far as the family knew,

COVER PHOTO BY DAVID B. SHERWIN

"Let us illuminate every dark corner of this world with Jesus."

they were the only Adventists in the city.

"I remember stepping off the airplane as a 12-year-old boy and feeling the blasting heat of the Saudi air," McEdward shared during an interview years ago.

McEdward recalled his time in Saudi Arabia as one of his greatest experiences and said it "set the tone for cross-cultural living for my whole life." McEdward later lived on the Pacific island of Palau as a student missionary and, after his marriage, coordinated church planting in Sri Lanka and for the Adventist Church's Southern Asia-Pacific Division from its headquarters in the Philippines.

He has also served as a pastor and, before joining the General Conference in 2011, as associate director of the Institute of World Mission at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Before being elected as president of the MENAUM, McEdward served as director of the Adventist world church's Global Mission Centers for World Religions and associate director of the Office of Adventist Mission at the General Conference.

McEdward received his undergraduate degree from Walla Walla College (now Walla Walla University) in 1990 and his Master of Divinity degree from Andrews University in 1992. He completed a doctorate in missiology from Fuller Graduate School in 2013.

He is married to Marcia McEdward and they have two adult children, Julia and Joshua.

HIS TENURE AS MENAUM PRESIDENT

As president of MENAUM, a church region based in Beirut, Lebanon, McEdward served in a region that is considered one of the most difficult places in the world to share the gospel. "The challenges are constant in the . . . region, where daily life is shaped by war, conflict, and resistance to our work," he said in his report presented to the delegates of the GC Session on July 5. "Currently six of our countries are involved in ongoing warfare, and last year violence reached the doorstep of our union office."

In 2018 McEdward oversaw the development of a media center for effective outreach to people of other faiths. This included developing a new strategy for reaching a discipling people who live in that restricted context.

During the past few months McEdward has been sharing a newsletter with an increasing number of stories and reports about "some of the most exciting of my time in the Middle East and North Africa Union Mission." Despite the challenges related to religious freedom in some countries of a region, an increasing number of people are studying the Bible and accepting Christ and the Adventist message, he reported.

Among the good news he shared, McEdward reported that recently he was able to meet the first Seventh-day Adventists in "two of our hardest-to-reach nations." He added, "The way God works is so amazing! I was able to see the work of the Holy Spirit bring new witnesses into the kingdom."

McEdward also celebrated that he witnessed the launch of the first Seventh-day Adventist seminary in Arabic. "I was able to teach the first class of our brand-new Arabic Theological Seminary with 20 native Arabic speakers who are working for the Lord or who would like to be trained to be pastors," he shared.

Another highlight has been meeting important national and international leaders. He recently reported on a meeting with government, religious, and business leaders from around the world. "During this meeting we were able to interact with leaders and gatekeepers in the Gulf Region," McEdward wrote. "While these contacts do not create immediate impact, over time they will provide opportunities for our church."

In his July 5 call McEdward invited Adventist members to "step into the impossible." "When we think about the size of the task at hand, it certainly feels impossible, but when we remember that . . . God . . . is calling us, we can confidently obey His Great Commission," he said. "Let us illuminate every dark corner of this world with Jesus."

Douglas has been a passionate supporter of the church's global mission by implementing a strategic framework to mobilize and allocate resources to advance its cause.

GC SESSION DELEGATES REELECT PAUL DOUGLAS TREASURER

VETERAN CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR PLEDGES CONTINUED FOCUS ON "MOBILIZING RESOURCES FOR MISSION"

BETH THOMAS

On Sunday, July 6, delegates at the sixty-second General Conference (GC) Session in St. Louis, Missouri, United States, reelected Paul Douglas as treasurer of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The motion passed with 1,851 votes in favor and 47 votes against.

Douglas has held this position since April 2021, when he was elected to replace outgoing treasurer Juan Prestol-Puesán at Spring Meeting, one of two annual business meetings held at the world church headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland.

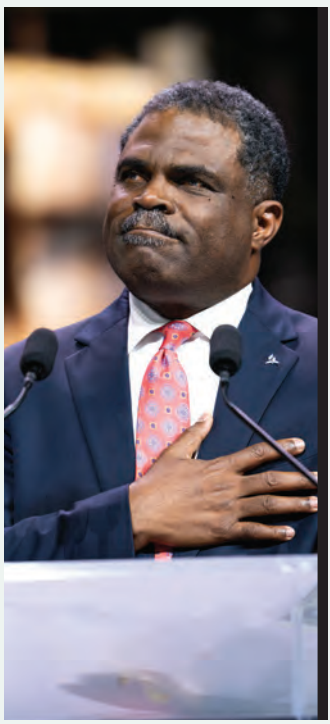
A native of Jamaica, Douglas began his service to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1986 with the General Conference Auditing Services (GCAS), advancing from audit manager to regional manager, assistant director, and finally GCAS director in 2015, a position he held for 14 years.

During his tenure as treasurer, Douglas has been a passionate supporter of the church's global mission, implementing a strategic framework to mobilize and allocate resources that advance its cause. Douglas says he "is committed to motivating church leaders to think and act differently as the second coming of Jesus Christ nears by being more intentional with a mission strategy; benefiting from integrated efforts among and between all levels of church organization; and believing that investing for impact is the most effective and efficient way to mobilize resources for mission."

He emphasized this in his Treasurer's report during the Friday afternoon business session. "The global treasury team has adopted the theme 'Mobilizing Resources for Mission' to represent our singular and systematic focus on mission. This is not a slogan for us, but rather serves as our signature commitment to be faithful stewards of the resources, financial, human, and technological, that God has provided the church to advance His kingdom."

Addressing delegates after his election, Douglas said, "I want to thank God for the continued privilege to serve in this capacity. I don't believe I'm worthy, but I'm willing, knowing that the same God who has called me is the same God who will empower me to do His work."

Douglas holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Loma Linda University, a master's degree in business administration from California State University, and a certificate from the Leadership and Strategic Management program at Cornell University, and has successfully defended his dissertation toward a Ph.D. degree from the Bayes Business School in London, England.



MARK FROELICH

Douglas has been married to Rochelle since 1991, and they have three adult children.



Kids In Tune, a nonauditioned children and teen choir from Madison, Tennessee, presented "I Am Alive," the theme song for the new Alive in Jesus Sabbath School curriculum, accompanied by piano, guitar, ukulele, saxophone, and shaker—all played by young musicians. Quoting Isaiah 37:31, Nina Atcheson, manager of the Alive in Jesus curriculum for the Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department of the General Conference, said, "Everything in Alive in Jesus is bathed in prayer, given careful thought, and done with intention, so that by God's grace, children around the world will . . . grow in Him to 'take root downward and bear fruit upward.' "

PHOTO BY CHRISTINA COLLARD



Pictured are the elected General Conference vice presidents (from left to right): Saw Samuel, Artur Stele, Robert Osei-Bonsu, Audrey Andersson, Pierre E. Omeler, Leonard A. Johnson, and Thomas Lemon. DAVID B. SHERWIN

ONE TEAM, ONE MISSION

DELEGATES ELECT SEVEN GENERAL VICE PRESIDENTS

***ADVENTIST REVIEW* STAFF**

On Sunday, July 6, the Nominating Committee recommended names for the election of seven General Conference (GC) vice presidents. The names were voted on and passed by delegates, 1,798 to 92.

Chairman of the Nominating Committee John Wesley Taylor V said, "The Nominating Committee decided that as [the general vice presidents] function as a team, together—the Nominating Committee would like to recommend these names to you as a team." Once the vote had been passed, chair for the afternoon session and outgoing vice president Geoffrey Mbwana said, "Congratulations. At one time I sat where they sat, so I'm so happy. God bless you."

Audrey Andersson remains in her role as a general vice president, a position she has held since the 2022 GC Session. Prior to her election she was the executive secretary of the Trans-European Division (TED). Andersson holds a master's degree in pastoral ministry and, during her tenure, has emphasized the importance of maintaining a distinctly Adventist

"The Nominating Committee decided that as [the general vice presidents] function as a team, together—the Nominating Committee would like to recommend these names to you as a team."

identity while embracing a balanced, culturally relevant approach to mission work. She is the second female general vice president and the first European woman.

Leonard A. Johnson comes into his role as general vice president for the GC from the position of executive secretary of the church in the Inter-American Division (IAD), a position he has held since 2018. Johnson has more than 40 years of denominational service in the IAD territory, and has served as pastor, conference department director, conference executive secretary, conference president, and union president, a role he held concurrently with associate ministerial director for the IAD.

Thomas L. Lemon will continue in his role as general vice president for the GC, a position he has held since 2015. Prior to his election as vice president, Lemon served as president of the Mid-America Union Conference (2009-2015). He has served as a member of boards of directors for several higher education and health-care institutions, as well as media and outreach ministries.

Pierre E. Omeler (incumbent since 2024). Before serving at the GC, Omeler had been Atlantic Union Conference president from November 2021. He had been secretary of that union prior to that. Omeler, born in Haiti, moved to the United States in 1981 to pursue his education at Oakwood University in Huntsville, Alabama. Omeler went on to pursue a Master of Divinity degree from Andrews University (1991) and a Doctor of Ministry degree from United Theological Seminary (2015).

Robert Osei-Bonsu was West-Central Africa Division president. Originally from Ghana, he has served as an academic at institutions, including Valley View University, Adventist University of Africa (Kenya), and Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (Philippines), writing and co-authoring 35 peer-reviewed journal articles, seven book chapters, and 34 academic conference presentations. He also served as a pastor in Ghana and the South England Conference (UK). His career in ministry started as a literature evangelist in Ghana and Sweden.

Saw Samuel was elected as associate secretary of the General Conference in June 2022. Originally from Myanmar, Saw was president of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division when he baptized his own father. He had previously served as secretary of that division, where he had a passion to work with the unreached Chinese, Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, and secular urban people. Samuel has worked in administration and pastoral ministry in Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines. He studied at Spicer Memorial College and the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (Philippines).

Artur Stele has been reelected as a general vice president, a role he has held since the 2010 General Conference Session. A native of Kazakhstan, Stele earned a bachelor's degree in theology from Friedensau University in Germany, and a master's degree and doctorate in theology from Andrews University. During his tenure Stele has emphasized the authority of Scripture and biblical leadership, conducted Bible and mission conferences worldwide, and established the GC Leadership Development program.



John Wesley Taylor V, chair of the Nominating Committee, congratulates newly elected General Conference vice president Leonard A. Johnson.
MARK FROELICH


JAMES BOKOVOY

A STEADFAST SHEPHERD

REFLECTING ON THE LEGACY OF TED N. C. WILSON

JUSTIN KIM

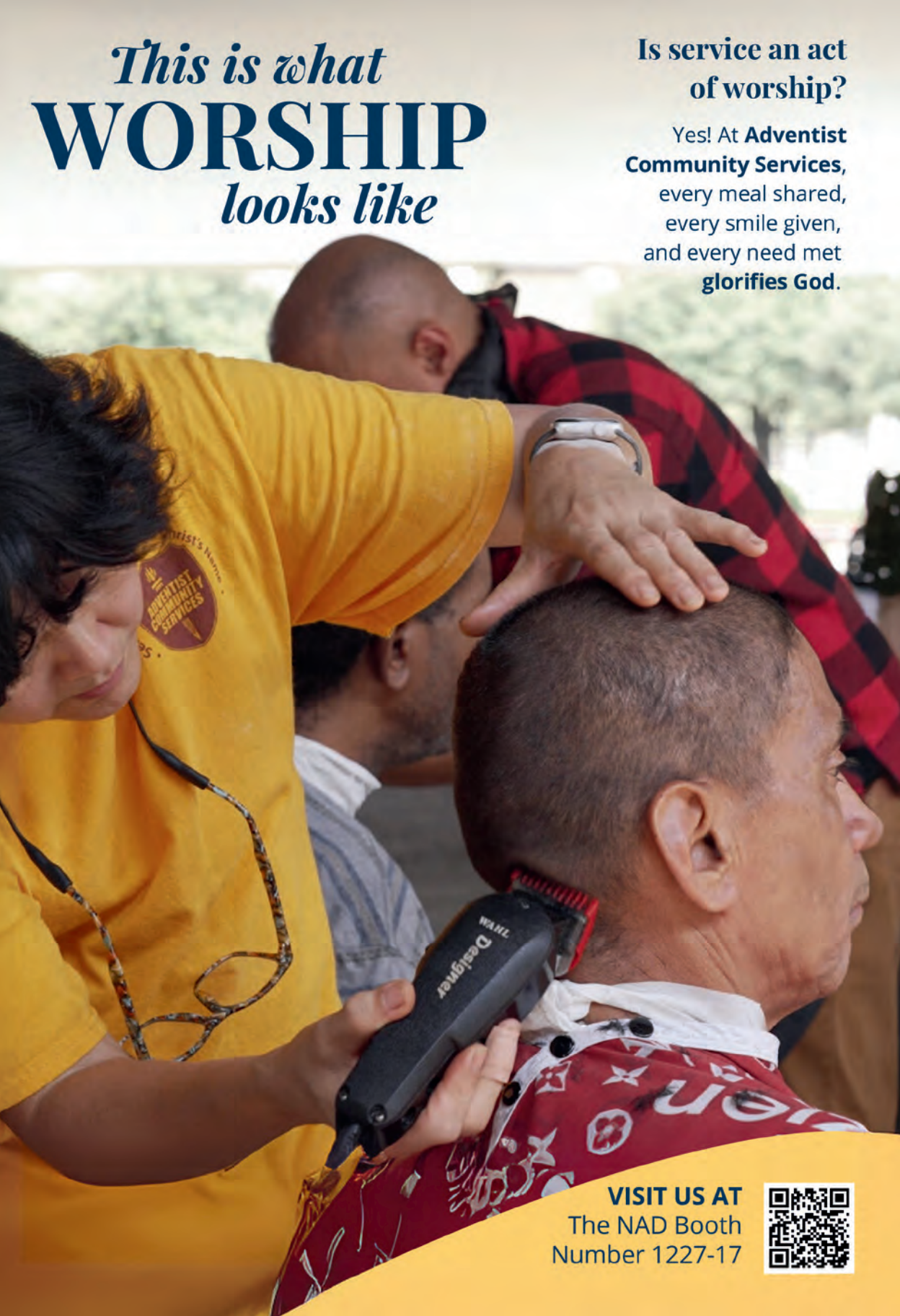
As Ted N. C. Wilson steps down after 15 years as president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, the global Adventist community pauses to reflect on his leadership which was marked by conviction, faithfulness, and a resolute focus on mission. Wilson's 27-year tenure in the General Conference building (two years as an associate secretary and 10 years as general vice president) spanned various cultural shifts, waxing global complexity, a worldwide pandemic, and internal theological discussion. Through it all, he remained a steadfast shepherd, grounded in Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy, as well as maintaining an unwavering commitment to the three angels' messages.

Elected in 2010, Wilson inherited a rapidly expanding global church, especially in the Global South/Majority World. Wilson emphasized the historical-grammatical method of hermeneutics, encouraging the church to rely on the power of Scripture to speak for itself. In addition to the primacy of Scripture, he championed the principles of spiritual revival and personal evangelism, the authority of the prophetic voice of Ellen G. White, fidelity to a literal, six-day creation model, and a priesthood of all believers—all positions that have earned him both admiration and critique. His passions were manifested in initiatives such as Revival and Reformation, Total Member Involvement, Comprehensive Health Ministry, The Great Controversy Project, and Mission to the Cities. These efforts inspired millions of lay members to engage in personal ministry, particularly in unreached urban areas. He has consistently emphasized the centrality of the Bible, the justifying and sanctifying righteousness of Jesus Christ, and the role of the Second Coming in Adventist life and witness.

Wilson was deeply concerned with preventing fragmentation and dilution of the Advent movement. To his critics, he represented a missed opportunity for the church to embrace liberalism and relativism. Regardless of perspective, few question the depth of his integrity, the strength of his convictions, or the sincerity of his faith that he was acting in the best interest of the church.

Ted N. C. Wilson leaves office having shaped a whole generation of Adventist leadership and identity, both young and old. His impact will be measured not only in baptisms, initiatives, or countries visited, but in the countless totally involved members worldwide who felt called, equipped, and emboldened by his call to proclaim the everlasting gospel "to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people."

As a new period begins for our church, Wilson's legacy remains indelibly woven into its fabric—a legacy of conscience, fidelity, and urgency. Wilson has without question left the church more focused, more global, and more rooted in its founding vision. His term's close marks the end of an era—but clearly not the end of his influence.


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THE PROMISE

Assurance of sanctifying salvation



JOHN BRADSHAW

DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE PRESENTED SUNDAY MORNING

JULY 6, 2025

Of all Christians, Seventh-day Adventists should be known for the preaching of the gospel, and we should be secure in our salvation. Unfortunately, for many that is not so. Ask any collection of church members if they are confident of their salvation, and you'll get a tepid response. I know, because I've done it.

Our mandate is to take the "everlasting gospel" to the world. It is not just about beasts and Babylon. As important as those things are (and they are), Revelation 14 reminds us that our

task, our responsibility, our privilege, is to proclaim to the world—boldly, enthusiastically, unabashedly, unashamedly, unambiguously—the gospel. We have a comprehensive message calling people back to true worship, alerting people to the judgment, inviting people out of darkness and into His marvelous light, and helping people to stand on God's side during this earth's last great crisis. All this remembering Jesus' words "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself" (John 12:32).

We believe, as Paul did, that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23), and we say with him, as we recognize our hopeless case, "I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Rom. 7:25). We don't offer people a theory, a doctrine, or an idea about Christ. We present Christ Jesus Himself, the Savior, Redeemer, and merciful, faithful High Priest, who said, "The one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out" (John 6:37); "Come to me, *all* you . . . " (Matt. 11:28). These are more than statements. They are promises. And God has promised to save all who are willing to surrender their lives to Him. It's a promise.

TWO POLES

But we have a happy knack for confusing the clear, obfuscating the obvious, and undermining the unmistakable. That might also have something to do with loving sin too much to let it go, or being so self-righteous that we can't see our own faults. So many people find themselves lurching between two poles.

For some, the cross is the sum total of the Christian experience: "Jesus paid it all. I believe that, and so I'm content." For others: "Yes, Jesus died for me, but I can't have assurance until I have put every last sin out of my life."

I had two young men approach me within the space of a year. "Pastor, I don't think I can go to heaven," one said.

"What makes you so special?" I asked him. "The Bible says that anyone who believes in Jesus may have everlasting life. Don't you believe in Jesus?"

"Oh, yes, sure," he stammered.

"So what's the problem?" I continued.

He was ready with an answer. "I've been told that I can't go to heaven until I've stopped sinning. And there are still sins that trip me up."

I looked him in the eye and said, "Welcome to Christianity." Then I shared with him the following:

We come in faith to Jesus, and we receive everlasting life (see 1 John 5:12). This is what we call justification, and there's no need to complicate that term. A woman with *some* insight once wrote that "pardon and justification are one and the same thing."[1] Forgiven of your sins, you receive a new heart and the gift of eternal life: Justified. And to put a finer point on it, "justification by faith . . . is the third angel's message in verity."[2]

THE SANCTIFICATION CONTINUUM

Looking at the sanctuary service, you'd equate justification with the altar of burnt offering. The sacrifice bore the penalty for the sinner's sins: justification. But the sanctuary service did not end in the outer court. The sinner progressed from the outer court to the holy place and, ultimately, to the most holy place and the presence of God Himself. This advance is what we refer to as sanctification—it's a process, "the work of a lifetime"[3] it has been said. It's a continuum of becoming more like Jesus, of more fully reflecting His character.

Here's how Jesus described this process in Mark 4:26-30. He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

The scattered seed is the Word of God. In a person's life, at first nothing happens. That is, nothing visible to the human eye. But God is working. Aren't you glad God says, "My word . . . shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it" (Isa. 55:11). There is power in the Word of God. Saving power. Power to

defeat temptation. Power to free you from vices and destructive habits. Power to make a new person out of you, and out of those you're praying for—your family members, your wayward children, your loved ones who left the church years ago. God is able! Jesus says that the seed is scattered on the ground. Something is happening!

And then somehow, mysteriously, by a power completely foreign to human beings, the seed begins to sprout. And how does it do that? First, the blade. That's the little sliver of green that pops its head up above the surface of the earth. Even though it's not as tall as the yellow meranti tree in Borneo, which can reach up to 100.8 meters (330.7 feet) tall;[4] even though it's not like the mighty muyovu tree of Tanzania, 81.5 meters (almost 270 feet) tall;[5] even though it's not the coastal redwood of California, stretching 116 meters (380 feet) into the sky, Jesus tells us this tiny shoot of green is growing! The process is underway!

And what's that little thing good for? You can't eat it. What it's good for is *growing*. You want to protect it, and give it the best chance possible to continue to grow. You don't dig up your beans, because the plant isn't fully mature. You tend to your beans. You keep the pests away. You water them. You encourage them to grow!

YOU WILL GROW

My wife and I are new grandparents. Our granddaughter is wonderful! She can't tie her shoelaces, can't feed herself, and can't drive a car. But we don't expect her to do any of those things, because she is growing. She'll get there! Christian friend, before you think you can't go to heaven because you're not the finished product, keep your eyes on Jesus and *grow*!

Notice the wording of Philippians 1:6: "He who has begun a good work in you will *complete* it until the day of Jesus Christ." Your Christian experience is an ongoing journey. After you accept Jesus you have the gift of eternal life, but you don't want to live like a lost person. You want to live increasingly in a way that honors God. "First the blade."

We are "born again." New Christians are babies. Babies grow. Friend, grow in the direction of Jesus. Feed on His Word, take time to pray, share your faith. You'll grow.

"Then the head." The plant is developing. It isn't ready to eat, but it's right where you want it to be. It isn't ready for harvest. But it's growing into precisely what it was created to be. It's growing.

Now, don't think I'm going light on sin. I'm not. Sin causes death. It caused the death of Jesus. We don't want it. God doesn't want it. The sanctuary service is ultimately about the putting away of sin, but today sin is still a monster we have to reckon with. Even Ellen White wrote that a noble character is "formed by hard, stern battles with self."[6]

You don't stumble into heaven. You're not going to trip into sanctification. "The warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought. The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God, requires a struggle."[7] But here's the key: "The soul must submit to God," White writes, "before it can be renewed in holiness."[8]

When we receive Jesus, we receive everlasting life. And then we grow. How much do we grow? All we can. Just keep on growing. When Jesus comes back, those who have beheld Him will be changed. "And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:17).

[1] Ellen G. White, *Faith and Works* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1979), p. 103.

[2] Ellen G. White, in *Review and Herald*, Apr. 1, 1890.

[3] Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1900, 1941), p. 65.

[4] Mary Gagen, "The World's Tallest Known Tropical Tree Has Been Found—and Climbed," *National Geographic*, https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/worlds-tallest-tropical-tree-discovered-climbed-borneo, accessed July 2, 2025.

[5] "Entandrophragma excelsum," *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entandrophragma_excelsum, accessed July 2, 2025.

[6] E. G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 331.

[7] Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1956), p. 43.

[8] *Ibid.*

John Bradshaw is president of *It Is Written*.

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Behind the Scenes

What most didn't see

CHAD STUART

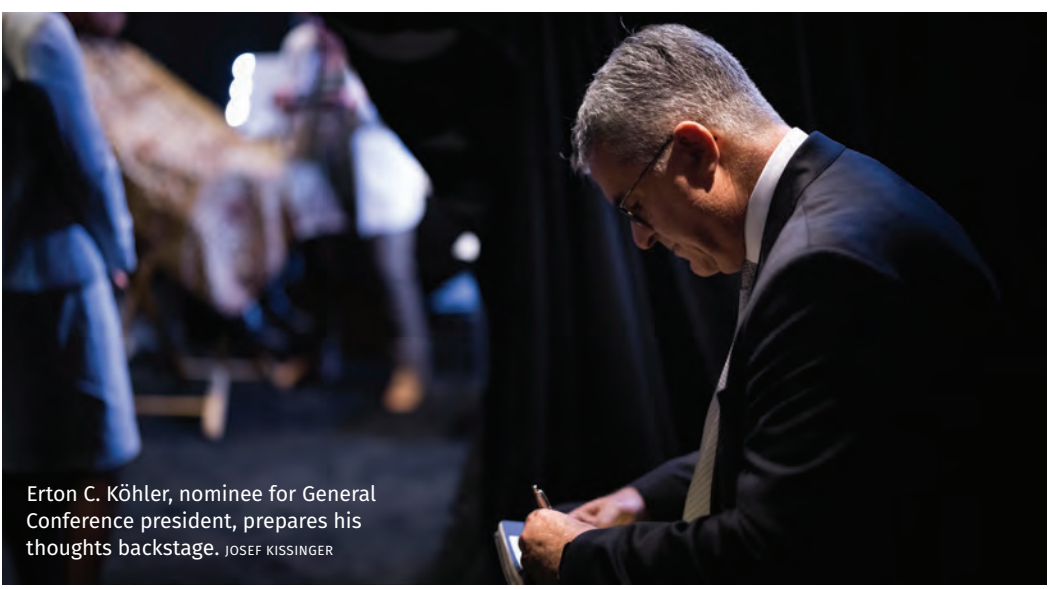
Based on the timing of the Nominating Committee announcement, everyone backstage assumed that the incumbent had been reelected to a fourth term—in fact, this is what we were preparing for and discussing when I noticed that Elder Köhler had walked through the curtain behind the stage and stood as a solitary figure in the shadows. From where I sat, it seemed he was carrying an obvious weight upon his shoulders that had not been there just hours before as he gave his Secretary's report.

I had earlier received a text from the business desk with the words, "NomCom soon." Those were the words to prepare the team in the back that we would soon be receiving the Nominating Committee officers and the Nominating Committee's recommended candidate. When I saw Elder Köhler, I texted the desk, "Erton?" and the reply came back "yes." So, as a friend, a pastor, and in my role backstage, I approached him.

Elder Köhler's first words after accepting the nomination were "You can imagine how challenging this moment is. No one is prepared for that." I have already read and heard some doubting his expressed sentiment of surprise. Don't doubt! I was there, and while I will not share the details of our conversation, I can testify by his words to me when I approached him, by his countenance, by his body language, he was in shock and feeling the weight of the decision.

The plan was that Elder Köhler would then be introduced a few minutes after he and the committee arrived backstage. This did not happen, however; in fact, Elder Köhler had not yet accepted the call. So, he and his wife, Adriene, along with the Nominating Committee leadership, went to another location to pray, talk, and decide. And nearly an hour passed before the vote took place. I am grateful for a leader who must consider at least once more before saying yes to a calling that is beyond human capability.

When they returned from their time of prayer and discussion and decision, the burden of the moment was evident on the faces of Elder Köhler and in the tears of Mrs. Köhler and their children. Still, they also had a faithful resolve to serve the Lord in His calling. Years ago this family had set



Erton C. Köhler, nominee for General Conference president, prepares his thoughts backstage. JOSEF KISSINGER

their hand to the plow—the Lord was telling them the field needed more plowing, so they would not look back, but persevere in the strength of Jesus.

Personally I was deeply moved by the moment of unity among the delegates. Thus far in this session almost every motion of any substance that has come to the floor has been questioned and debated, and sometimes even after the vote has been cast, it is once again questioned and debated. Attempts have even been made to bring motions back for a vote again. So as the nominee was placed before the deliberative body, we thought there was still time for the family to emotionally prepare to go stand before them. Elder Köhler said, "We have time, Chad. People may want to express their opinion, or my name could be referred back." The body didn't want to do that; they were ready to move forward, and two minutes later we had a new General Conference president. The body was united—even the 188 votes against the nominee did not say, "We are not united or not supportive." In such a setting this is not disunity; it is the blessed gift of freedom.

Two others who were united in the church's decision were Elder Ted Wilson and his wife, Nancy. They shared with me that night, as Elder Wilson prepared to participate in the evening worship service, that they have great trust in the Lord's working through the decision of the Nominating Committee and the delegates. In fact, just as I had observed an understandable pressure placed upon the Köhlers, I saw a new relief and ease in the Wilsons. When I asked Mrs. Wilson about how they were, she said, "We're fine, and our grandkids are thrilled because they will get to spend more time with us!"

My heart rejoiced when Elder Köhler thanked Elder Wilson and Nancy for their service to the church as our president during the past 15 years, and the delegates and all those in the dome rightly and vigorously applauded. It does not matter if we agreed or disagreed with every decision Elder Wilson made during the 15 years; we should all acknowledge that Elder Wilson (and Nancy), to quote Elder Köhler, "gave the best of his life to this church." And by the way, when Jim Howard asked



Chad Stuart, left, greets Ted N. C. Wilson and his wife, Nancy, backstage. CHAD STUART

I can testify by his words to me when I approached him, by his countenance, by his body language, he was in shock and feeling the weight of the decision.

how many people will commit to sowing seeds broadly with the plan to reach at least one person for Jesus this year, the hands of Elder Wilson and Nancy, who were sitting in chairs behind the stage watching his talk on a screen, shot high in the air—so the role ends, but their work for Jesus and His church will not end. I continue to pray prayers of gratitude for the Wilsons.

Today, after Elder Köhler had finished his acceptance speech and he and his family had departed the platform, he gathered his family and some close friends in a circle, and, with arms around each other, Elder Köhler prayed for his family and for Jesus' church, our Seventh-day Adventist family. I invite all of us to join Elder Köhler in praying for his family and praying for Jesus' church, this imperfect but wonderful family of Seventh-day Adventists.

Chad Stuart is the senior pastor of the Spencerville Seventh-day Adventist Church in Silver Spring, Maryland. He is working behind the scenes as a stage manager while at the General Conference Session.

GENERAL CONFERENCE AUDITING SERVICE REPORT

Where Trust, Quality, and Professionalism Meet



GCAS Connect2023 Attendees in Copenhagen LUDI LEITO

As the audit service of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the General Conference Auditing Service (GCAS) is dedicated to financial transparency and accountability to help build and maintain the confidence of church members and administrators worldwide. During the past three years GCAS has made significant progress despite facing numerous challenges. These challenges included adapting to changes in audit standards, managing resource constraints, and navigating the complexities of auditing in diverse and evolving environments. GCAS has achieved significant success through strategic initiatives and continues to strive to meet the needs of the church.

QUALITY INITIATIVES

GCAS has focused on enhancing the quality of its audit services. To achieve this goal, GCAS completed a significant update to its Quality Management program, including the implementation of the International Standard on Quality Management (ISQM) 1 and 2. This update demonstrates GCAS's commitment to quality and compliance with updated professional standards. Additionally, GCAS conducted a global internal quality review. Auditor training and workshops were then developed to follow up on identified areas for improvement, to address the new quality requirements, and to enhance the risk assessment and planning process. Through rigorous training programs and continuous professional development, GCAS auditors are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to perform their duties with excellence.

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMATION

Recognizing the rapid evolution of technology in the industry, along with its benefits and challenges, GCAS embarked on a comprehensive tech-

ROBYN KAJIURA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



GCAS HISTORY:

Transparency and accountability have been an integral part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's organizational culture since the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists was organized in 1863. On the same day it was organized, the church founders established an audit committee. J. J. Ireland, the first GC auditor, was appointed in 1913. According to the 1913 *Statistical Report*, the church had a membership of more than 120,000, divided into 25 union conferences, 126 local conferences, and 101 organized mission fields.

In the 162 years since it was organized in 1863, the church has grown to a membership of more than 23.2 million, made up of 140 union conferences/missions, 433 local conferences, and 321 local missions. The church operates education institutions, food industries, health-care ministries, media centers, publishing organizations, and a development and relief agency. With that growth and a continued commitment to transparency and accountability, the General Conference Auditing Service (GCAS) was formally established in 1977 as a service of the General Conference for North America. In 1993 GCAS was charged with the auditing function for the church worldwide.

GCAS currently employs approximately 350 professionals globally who are committed to continuing our church founders' legacy of transparency and accountability. The GCAS board, comprised mainly of laypersons with professional accounting and business expertise, reviews the summary of GCAS reports and provides a report to the GC Executive Committee each year.



nology transformation. This initiative involved researching and testing advanced data analytic and AI audit tools to assist auditors in conducting enhanced risk assessments, thereby improving audit quality, effectiveness, and efficiency. GCAS adopted new security procedures to address data protection requirements and cyber insurance requirements, ultimately safeguarding client data. GCAS continues to utilize suitable tools to improve remote and partially remote audit processes. These technological advancements not only elevate the quality of audits but may also reduce the time required to complete them.

PERSONNEL INITIATIVES

Our greatest resource is our people. During the past three years GCAS has recruited qualified personnel to ensure more comprehensive coverage of audits for church organizations worldwide, including staff needed to address requests for fraud investigations. GCAS also established a highly qualified global service team from our base in the Philippines, enabling further expansion of audit capacity at a reduced cost. GCAS invests in the ongoing education of our personnel to ensure they are equipped to deliver excellent services to

the church. Our Connect2023 seminar included more than 800 participants, encompassing our professional staff, their families, and invited guests from key denominational stakeholders. In 2024 GCAS introduced a new approach for delivering professional education through the GCAS Learning Calendar, a year-round program offering online classes each month, allowing employees to select sessions that align with their interests and skills. This approach enables continuous learning throughout the year without incurring travel time and costs. It can also facilitate targeted required learning to address specific needs.

OPERATIONAL ENHANCEMENT

To support its globally deployed team, GCAS implemented several operational enhancements. These improvements included expanding our human resources and information technology support teams, which are strategically located to provide assistance "around the clock" while minimizing costs. GCAS adopted and continues to enhance our use of a workflow system to improve transparency and accountability in the management of our annual work plans and to enhance audit and quality management tracking. This system enabled us to streamline global activities for human resource management and recruiting, as well as improve the budget process. These

By highlighting risks and recommending improvements, auditors function as advisors, helping clients strengthen their risk management processes.

"WHY DON'T THE AUDITORS FIX THE PROBLEM?"

As issues were identified during audits and further investigations were conducted, some observers asked, "Why don't the auditors just fix the problem?" The auditor's responsibility is to provide an independent opinion on the organization's financial statements, along with a report on deficiencies in internal controls and policy compliance to the organization's governing committee.

Professional ethical standards require auditors to maintain independence from their clients. Although GCAS is internal to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, *GC Working Policy* requires GCAS auditors to operate with professional independence in accordance with the highest professional and ethical standards. The policy states, "The professional relationship between GCAS and denominational organizations shall be the same as if it were in public practice."

The audit is part of the system of checks and balances that involves management, the audit committee, and governance. The organization's management and governance are responsible for addressing and resolving identified issues. Auditors can advise management, but must remain detached from the decision-making process, and do not have the authority to fix problems.

The GCAS auditors, like auditors in public practice, provide their findings and reports to management, audit and governing committees, and, in compliance with church working policy, to officers of the higher organizations. They have an ethical responsibility to maintain confidentiality in all matters related to the audit.

enhancements have facilitated better communication and collaboration among team members, leading to more effective and efficient work.

ONGOING EFFORTS

GCAS does not "rest on its laurels." We continually strive to align our work with leaders in the auditing profession. This involves staying updated on the latest developments in auditing and accounting standards, implementing best practices in our operations, and continuing to improve audit quality and efficiency. GCAS also actively engages with church leaders to ensure that our work meets the needs of Seventh-day Adventist Church organizations.

ENHANCING CONFIDENCE THROUGH RIGOROUS ASSURANCE

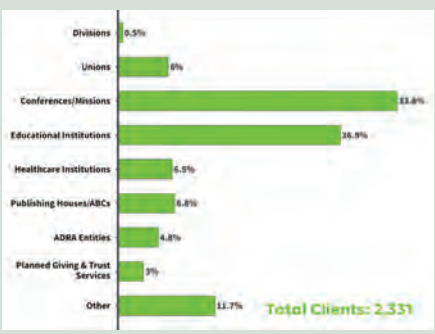
GCAS auditors need to be more than "financial and compliance checkers." As part of our ongoing efforts, we need to function as trusted advisors, helping Adventist organizations navigate complex financial landscapes, identify risks, and optimize internal controls. The auditors' objectivity enables them to provide insights into the organization's financial health, operational efficiency, and future opportunities to achieve its mission. The core of an auditor's role is the rigorous audit process, which culminates in a report that is essential for maintaining stakeholder confidence. In the Seventh-day Adventist Church context, stakeholders include the management of client organizations, their audit committees and governance, and officers of higher organizations. These stakeholders represent the constituent members who elected them. The audit process benefits the organization by providing:

Assurance: The auditor's independent examination provides assurance that financial statements present a materially true and fair view of an organization's financial performance and that management's assertions are free from material misstatements, whether because of error or fraud. This confidence is vital to administrators, governing committee members, creditors, and other stakeholders who rely on the reports to make informed decisions.

Compliance and Governance: Auditors assess organizations' compliance with regulatory requirements and internal policies. Seventh-day Adventist organizations are also required to comply with General Conference (GC) and division *Working Policy,* and GCAS has the necessary expertise to review these requirements. This evaluation of governance practices encourages organizational integrity, upholds ethical standards, and mitigates risk.

CLIENT BASE

The General Conference Auditing Service serves as the preferred provider of assurance and related services for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The client base includes all denominational organizations, such as General Conference institutions, world divisions and their institutions, unions or union of churches and their institutions, local conferences, missions, regions, field stations, and their educational institutions at the secondary level or higher, as well as Adventist Development and Relief Agency country offices and projects not audited by external auditors (General Conference *Working Policy* SA 05 25). Some organizations receive external audits because of regulatory requirements or other specific needs.



The trust between auditors and their clients is foundational, built on a relationship of independence, objectivity, and integrity.

Risk Identification and Mitigation: Auditors are critical in identifying potential risks that could impact an organization's financial position or operational resilience. By highlighting risks and recommending improvements, auditors function as advisors, helping clients strengthen their risk management processes. This proactive approach informs the organization so that it can take appropriate actions.

Enhanced Decision-Making: With the insights gained from the audit, management teams are better equipped to make data-driven decisions that align with their strategic and mission objectives. Whether it is refining processes, reallocating resources, or enhancing governance structures, the recommendations provided by auditors can directly influence an organization's performance and stability, which in turn enhances stakeholder trust.

The trust between auditors and their clients is foundational, built on a relationship of independence, objectivity, and integrity. Clients turn to auditors not only for compliance but also their ability to offer perspectives on emerging trends, potential risks, and areas for growth. The auditors' role as advisors stems from their ability to blend technical acumen with a deep understanding of their client's business and mission, delivering value beyond the audit report itself.

ADVISORY SERVICES

GCAS recognizes that audit services may not meet the needs of all church organizations. Some organizations are required to have an external, independent audit, but may need specialized services from GCAS. GCAS has provided specialized consulting, internal audit consulting, and client training seminars, as well as various types of fraud investigations. Currently, in response to requests from GC and division IT directors, GCAS is consulting with an external firm that specializes in IT audits to advise GCAS on developing a proposed GCAS IT assessment program for church leadership's consideration.

ONGOING OPERATIONAL ENHANCEMENTS

GCAS continues to focus on improving operational procedures. Ongoing efforts include the development of a centralized knowledge base to enable more timely responses to resolve audit and accounting questions raised by auditors and clients, a comprehensive review and improvement of our cost recovery and billing system, and development of a GCAS master database for improving operational reporting and internal analysis.

GCAS'S VISION

GCAS's vision is "to be a valued and indispensable partner to Seventh-day Adventist leaders and organizations around the world." What does that mean? It means that we aim for our work to be recognized as the equivalent of the best in the auditing profession. We aspire to the highest levels of integrity, professionalism, respect, efficiency, and service. The achievements of GCAS in the past three years are a testament to our commitment. Through quality initiatives, technology transformation, personnel initiatives, and operational enhancements, GCAS has positioned itself to continue supporting the financial integrity and transparency of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the confidence of its members.

Our website provides access to GCAS information, including: About Us, Client Services, Careers, and Annual Reports. https://gcasconnect.org/

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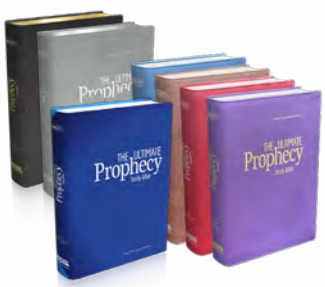
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STACY IS HOPE

HANNAH DREWIECK

HOPE CHANNEL EVENING DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE PRESENTED SUNDAY, JULY 6, 2025

Stacy's mother died by suicide when Stacy was just 9 months old. Her father disappeared. Her stepfather was kind when sober, but sobriety rarely lasted. Raised by a great-aunt, Stacy grew up in silence and confusion, surrounded by emotional pain. Church was present, but so was fear.

"I used to think God was up in heaven with a giant flyswatter, just waiting to clobber me if I did something wrong," she said. She believed in God, but not in grace. "I've always been a believer," Stacy admitted. "But I don't know if I was a receiver." She kept trying to earn God's love, always coming up short.

Her life became a series of losses: domestic violence, chronic illness, abandonment. She gave up safety, home, and even health, sacrificing



"I just needed someone to pray for me."

stability just to survive. A housemate became threatening. Alone and in temporary housing, she reached out to *Let's Pray* on Hope Channel. "I just needed someone to pray for me."

The next day a call came from Vanessa at Hope Channel International. Assuming it was a telemarketer, Stacy didn't answer right away. But when she finally picked up, everything changed. "She just wanted to pray with me. She gave me back my identity. My 'somebody-ness.' "

That moment led Stacy to *Hope Sabbath School,* a program on Hope Channel. She started watching with skepticism, trying to find flaws. But the more she listened, the more she realized the truth was clear and consistent. And when she learned about the Sabbath, it hit her: "Lord, You didn't give us 10 commandments and say pick nine." She was baptized in 2020—not because someone pressured her, but because she finally understood the love of God.

Then in 2023 Stacy collapsed from a medical emergency. She lay unconscious on her apartment floor for four days before she was found. She had suffered two cardiac arrests, a stroke, and brain trauma. She woke up in the hospital on a ventilator, unable to speak.

But she could still pray. "I couldn't speak," she said, "but I could still talk to my Father." When she recovered, she said something few would expect: "It was good that I was afflicted, because I got to see the power of God."

Her life since then has been defined by sacrifice—this time not forced, but chosen. Stacy gives herself to others. She studies with people, prays with them, and shares her story wherever she's invited. She remains close to Vanessa as well as Derek Morris, host of *Hope Sabbath School,* both of whom continue to guide her spiritually.

To Stacy, Hope Channel is more than a network. "This channel is different," she says. "It doesn't try to commercialize following Jesus. It's not something I have to do. It's something I get to do."

Stacy became hope by offering the same grace she received. She sacrifices her comfort to speak for those who are hurting. She gives of her time to pray with strangers. She opens her story to remind others that Jesus still saves.

"Jesus wants to save you," she says. "He doesn't complicate salvation. We do."

Stacy became hope.

By living to tell her story.

By refusing to give up.

By becoming the kind of person who prays with strangers, believes for the broken, and knows what it means to be found.

When we choose to live like that, we are all hope.

Hannah Drewieck is the communication coordinator for Hope Channel International.

The Ministry of Adventist Risk Management, Inc.

How asset protection is key to mission

DAVID FOURNIER

At Adventist Risk Management, Inc. (ARM), we think of our role as the official risk management and insurance company of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as protecting the church's ministries in multiple ways. That's why we love to say, "Our ministry is to protect your ministry." We accomplish this through providing risk management consulting, education, training, and insurance solutions. This is achieved through the church's captive insurance company (a form of self-insurance) and by placing risks in the insurance marketplace through our brokerage.

But ARM's greatest focus in asset protection is its people.

IT'S ABOUT OUR PEOPLE

John was hospitalized in Manila, Philippines, when ARM got a call. He was in the Philippines as a retired volunteer working on an evangelistic mission project for several weeks. Unfortunately, John contracted a flesh-eating bacterial infection while assisting with a baptism and, unbeknownst to the trip organizers, removed himself from the event and flew back to Manila. There he collapsed in his hotel and was rushed to the hospital. In the hospital he received excellent care, but his condition was serious and required more than what could be offered in Manila.

Being so far from family while experiencing such a serious and painful medical condition was extremely difficult, and John just wanted to go home.

Fortunately, the mission trip organizers had purchased short-term travel insurance coverage through ARM. They had already been in contact with the emergency support services available with that product. Transporting someone in a situation as serious as John's is not as simple as buying a plane ticket, getting on the airplane, and going home. Arranging for medical evacuation requires providing an in-flight medical care certification and the approval of the airline to fly someone in a serious medical condition. It also requires the approval of the releasing hospital, with special arrangements made on the other end of the journey for immediate ambulance transportation to a hospital standing ready to accept the patient.

After a very long trip home, John was finally reunited with his family and able to receive the care he needed to recover fully. ARM is privileged to provide insurance products that help cover the cost of these complex operations and partners that can help arrange services that protect the lives of our volunteers and the church's mission.

PROTECTING THE STRUCTURES

While it is most gratifying when ARM's ministry is seen in a personal way, there is also a key component of our work that involves protecting the structures of our church organizations. After all, it is often within these structures that mission and ministry are accomplished on a larger scale.



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Several years ago a conference faced a series of large lawsuits. The lawsuits came against the church in waves with multiple plaintiffs. Over time these waves of lawsuits amounted to a great deal of money, far more than anything the conference had in cash reserves or even physical assets. The church's insurance program has now paid out on this case more than any other single claim or group of claims in our church's history. This has greatly depleted the reserves of the church's captive insurance company, but serves as an example of why we work together as an organization and have a captive insurance company. Without this type of protection, this conference would cease to exist, greatly damaging the work in that entire union territory. We are happy to report today that the conference has seen revitalization and refocus on its mission to spread the gospel.

Another example of the work ARM is involved in is consulting our church's organizations. We do not want to see vulnerable people harmed. This includes employees, volunteers, members, guests, and especially children. To that end, ARM instituted a program for church organizations to background-check potential hires for cases of inappropriate behavior up to abuse before extending an offer. We hope this initiative will allow conferences to avoid employing individuals who have proved untrustworthy with the vulnerable populations we are charged with protecting.

Adventist Risk Management's greatest focus in asset protection is its people.

HIGHLIGHTS

Since our last General Conference Session in 2022, Adventist Risk Management, Inc., has:

- Insured $14 billion in property.
- Paid $250 million in claims.
- Engaged in 500+ risk training presentations.

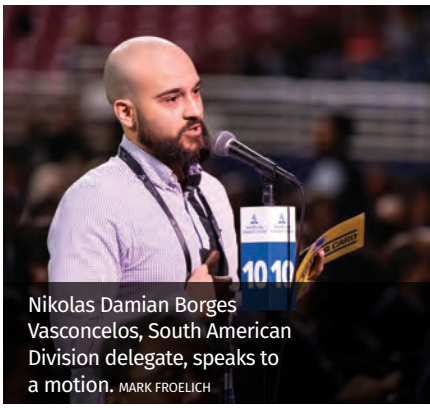
In 2025 we look forward to further addressing topics related to risk mitigation as we partner with our various ministries in our collective work of spreading the gospel. We expect increasingly difficult times as the Lord's return approaches, but we thank God for the blessing of His mercy and Spirit in our lives and work. May all our ministries be guided by wisdom and discernment to do the utmost for the Lord's people in the upcoming quinquennium.

David Fournier is vice president and chief general insurance officer for Adventist Risk Management, Inc.

SESSION GALLERY



Galina Stele, director, GC Women's Ministries, surrounded by Women's Ministries directors from around the world. CHRISTINA COLLARD



Nikolas Damian Borges Vasconcelos, South American Division delegate, speaks to a motion. MARK FROELICH



Pathfinders served as deacons to collect the Sabbath offering. CHRISTINA COLLARD



The Adriel Male Voice group were one of the featured musical guests on Friday afternoon. CHRISTINA COLLARD



Tens of thousands worshipped together on the first Sabbath of the 2025 GC Session. JAMES BOKOVOY



A soloist performs during a powerful musical rendition of "One Voice, One Mission." MARK FROELICH



Many took advantage of photo opportunities with friends on Sabbath, July 5. DAVID B. SHERWIN



An array of technology and skilled individuals support the GC Session behind the scenes. DAVID B. SHERWIN

ALL PHOTOS © AR

Not Just for Grown-ups

Sabbath School shows GC Session has a place—and a purpose—for kids of all ages

BETH THOMAS

Sabbath is a happy day, happy day, happy day. . . . I love every Sabbath!" The words of a familiar old Sabbath School song drifted through my head as I ambled past classes filled with beautiful, bright-eyed children from every nation, kindred, tribe, and tongue on the first Sabbath of the General Conference (GC) Session. I wished my own two children were still young enough to enjoy the lively music, craft stations, and colorful little chairs.

GC Session is considered the most significant decision-making gathering of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but it's not just for adults. Many delegates, guests, and exhibitors bring their families with them to session for a variety of reasons: vacation, family time, or to discover something even more significant.

Boaz Papendick, a ministry leader living in Senegal, West Africa, brought his family to GC Session to gain a vision of what the church is and to hear the reports from different divisions. "We're coming from Senegal, where there are only 300 to 400 Adventists [which is like one congregation in other places], and this helps them to see that the church is much, much bigger," Papendick explained.

There is no regular programming for children during the week, but Sabbath School at GC Session gives children something to look forward to. Delegate Daniel Kancel, a native of Guadeloupe, West Indies, is an international service employee



Teachers make Sabbath School fun with props to illustrate stories. MARK FROELICH

(ISE) serving as president of Université Adventiste Zurcher in Madagascar. His wife and twin 9-year-olds accompanied him. "During the week," Kancel said, "I am very busy with the business meetings, and Sabbath is a time we can be together as a family. The regular programs are not usually made for children, so the children get bored, because it's more for adults. It's a good thing they provide the program Alive in Jesus, so at least there is something for them. They don't understand much English, but there is music, activities, and other kids playing. As the day will be long, it's good that they have time they can enjoy the Sabbath; otherwise, it will be a burden for them."

Children from around the world gathered in age-specific rooms, from birth to 15, filled with music, Bible stories, crafts, and interactive learning stations. Youth ages 16-plus had separate programming. Each group studied the story of Noah's ark from the new Alive in Jesus curriculum, produced by the General Conference Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department.

From colorful decorations (including pretty lifelike stuffed animals) to a volunteer staff trained in children's ministries, every detail was designed to create a safe, Christ-centered experience. Nilde Itin, associate director of Children's Ministries for the General Conference, said this program has been a collaborative effort between Children's Ministries and Sabbath School leaders from several divisions, along with a team of more than 60 volunteers.

Kenneth Diaz, 19, from Collinsville, Illinois, United States, was part of the registration team. He and his entire family signed up to help with the Sabbath School program after learning at their local church about the need for volunteers. "At a big conference like this, most people just see it as something for adults and something formal, and they overlook the kids. But this is a great event to have kids come and involve them too!"

For many children, Sabbath School programs at session offer a chance to connect with others their age from different parts of the world, promoting a sense of belonging in the wider Adventist family.

Exhibitor Armando Miranda, associate Youth director for the North American Division, has been coming to GC Session since he was a child, and now brings his three children with him. His older sons are volunteering in the exhibit hall this year, while his daughter is spending time with his wife, Karen. They are enjoying time visiting with friends they haven't seen in a long time, and the social environment GC Session provides. At the same time, his children are being introduced to something greater, he says. "When you come here, you see a worldwide movement—you see a worldwide church, and you start to feel a part of something bigger. The children don't get it until they start seeing that there are children who don't speak the same language, but they come to Sabbath School together. They're in the same boat, but from a different country! That gives them a broader perspective of Adventism and Christianity, and everything that we do."

The GC Session Sabbath School program provides children with a front-row seat to the global Adventist family. Through music, stories, crafts, and interaction with others, they catch a glimpse of a church that spans continents and cultures, yet comes together each Sabbath to worship the same God.



Children enjoy Sabbath School activities.
MARK FROELICH

The GC Session Sabbath School program provides children with a front-row seat to the global Adventist family.

A New Job at Session

Not all jobs are determined by the Nominating Committee.

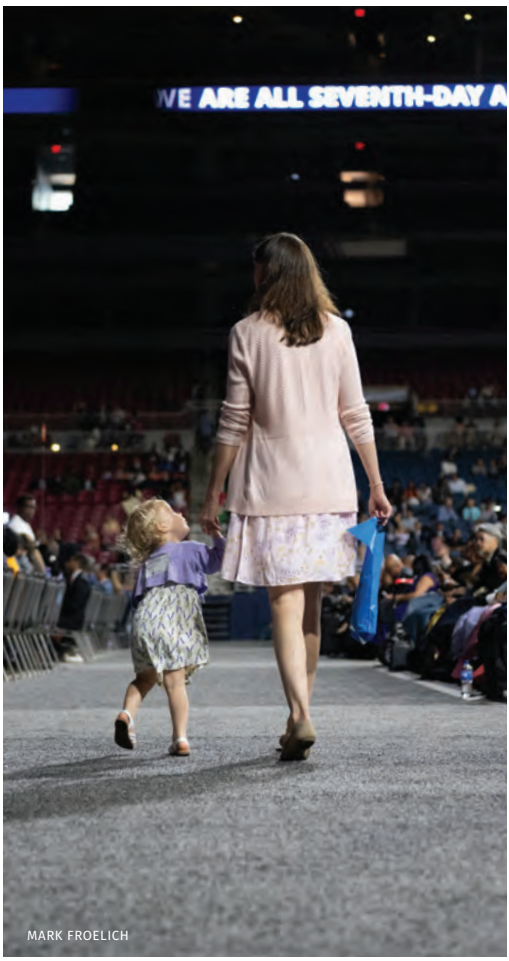
LISA FROELICH

I've had the privilege of attending General Conference (GC) Session for the past 25 years. Each year my role has changed and, in many ways, deepened. My first session was in 2000. I went along with my family as a delegate's kid and got to participate in fun events, such as the day camp they offered. The next four sessions I worked. I started off as a NewsKid for the *Adventist Review*, then "graduated" to becoming an exhibitor for the next two sessions, then at the previous session in 2022 I assisted platform management and worked behind the scenes among our greatest leaders, which I loved.

Along with these rising job opportunities came the growth of my perspective of what GC Session is. I've been able to see it from a kid's point of view, which didn't quite grasp the importance of what goes on over the course of these 10 days. I've been able to see it from a worker's point of view, which helped open my eyes to what goes on in our world church, and helped me gain more interest in "church politics" and appreciate all that our church does. And now, in my sixth session, I gain another new perspective, another job that's different from all the rest—mom.

Living the GC Session life with my 2-year-old daughter, Audrey, has been an experience. Trying to think of multiple ways to keep her busy throughout the day has become the new norm. Before leaving for St. Louis, I researched walkable things to do in the city to try to create a plan for our daily routine. We did manage one walk to the Gateway Arch, but so far the excessive heat has won the battle of us attempting to have a daily adventure outside. Our trips to the convention center for lunch and briefly visiting my husband, Mark (who is working at this session), have been some of the most exciting parts of our day, because we could finally leave the hotel. I also have to give a shout-out and big thank-you to the woman on the lunch staff who has graciously offered to follow me in line to make Audrey's plate for me and carry it to our table more than once. Getting food for yourself and your toddler in the lunch line is quite a balancing act!

I struggled for a while with FOMO (fear of missing out). I wanted to be in the action. I missed my former jobs. I missed being behind the scenes. I missed helping others. I even missed doing what my family calls the "GC Session walk," zigzagging

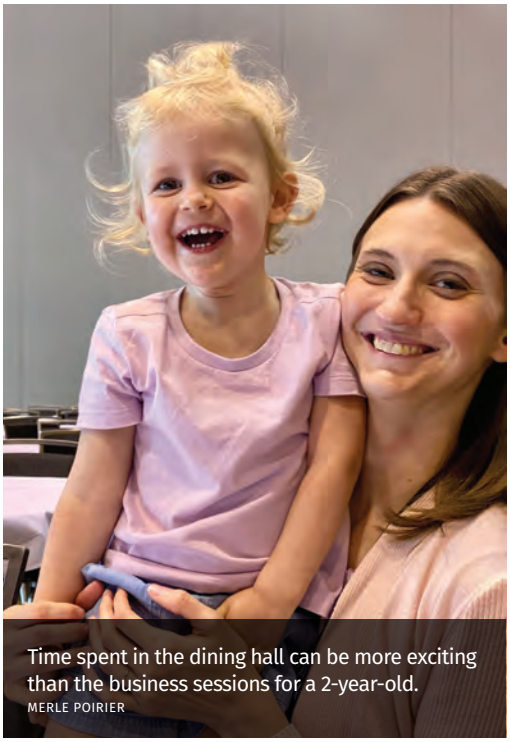


MARK FROELICH

quickly through the crowds to get to the next place. I wanted to be where everything was happening. Now I've traded my fast "GC Session walk" for a more leisurely one with a stroller (while trying to avoid running over people's feet), and instead of spending hours working and interacting with hundreds of people each day, my days are spent focusing on one person—Audrey. It's been a bigger adjustment than I anticipated, but today I realized this new job of mine creates a unique way of viewing session, as well as a priceless opportunity.

As I write, Audrey is taking her Sabbath afternoon nap. She just experienced her first GC Session church service. Before church began, I took her to the children's Sabbath School section of the convention center to register. It ended up being a longer process than expected, but once we made it past registration, instant relief came over me—I wasn't the only one! There were others just like me! It may seem silly to not think about other toddler moms attending session, but I hadn't seen anyone Audrey's age until stepping into the Beginners room, suddenly I didn't feel so alone. The Alive in Jesus team did a great job welcoming all the toddlers to the different stations. Audrey warmed up to the helpers and her fellow beginners immediately. Being around others just like us was something I think both her and I needed after a week of trying to adjust to our new routine.

From there I made the nerve-racking decision to sit with my family in the front row of the dome for the church service. It's been a tradition for us since my mom has worked with the *Adventist Review*, so I was very familiar with the feeling, except for one big change—navigating it with a very active 2-year-old. The last thing I'd want would be for Audrey to be a distraction not only to those sitting around us but also those on the platform. And what if she started crying? We were in front of literally the entire stadium, and the closest exit was not exactly close. I prayed my way through the service, and God answered. Some snacks and toys in our Sabbath bag helped Audrey stay quiet and entertained for most of the service, and we can successfully check off that GC Session Sabbath experience for her.



Time spent in the dining hall can be more exciting than the business sessions for a 2-year-old.
MERLE POIRIER

Although she'll have lots of pictures and videos to look back on one day, Audrey is too young to remember this GC Session. She doesn't understand the significance of welcoming a new GC president or how amazing it is to sit on the front row of a stadium full of Adventists from around the world singing "Lift Up the Trumpet" and "We Have This Hope." Her memory of how everything looked and felt will fade away. But that doesn't lessen the impact of what she has experienced during these 10 days. A seed has been planted. It's building the foundation for her to one day see just how incredible the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is. It's with that knowledge that I realize this new role and perspective on GC Session is one of the most valuable I could ever have. And who knows? This could be just the beginning of her journey to reaching six GC sessions one day too.

Lisa Froelich is wife to Mark, who is working as a photographer at the 2025 GC Session, mother to Audrey, and chair of the Music Department at Spencerville Adventist Academy in Maryland.

Postgraduate Education With a Heart for Mission

GINGER KETTING-WELLER

The world needs today what it needed nineteen hundred years ago—a revelation of Christ."*

These words, penned by Ellen White, are as true today as they were then. The world needs leaders who, through their life and ministry, can represent God to a world devoid of God's love and mercy. Leaders who humbly conduct their duties with a loving, gentle spirit. Inspiring, motivating, and encouraging those under their care by their Christlike influence.

The early missionaries across Asia recognized the need for local leaders—leaders who understood the culture, worldview, and context of the local churches in Asia. Leaders whose Christlike influence would inspire and grow the local church in Asia to be a blessing. Many had a vision for training national workers who would shoulder the responsibility of carrying the gospel to their citizens. Thus, from the beginning, the development of people to carry the gospel message was prioritized across Asia by early leadership, and schools were established.

The journey to establish AIIAS started in 1967 when the Far Eastern Division appointed a committee to explore creating a division graduate school. On March 23, 1972, the committee voted to name the institution Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIIAS). The journey culminated eventually in 1986 with the Filipino Presidential Decree formally establishing AIIAS as an international graduate school in the Philippines. The journey was driven by an overarching vision to train local leaders to serve the church in Asia.

As a General Conference institution, AIIAS joins Andrews University, Loma Linda University, and the Adventist University of Africa in preparing leaders from around the globe. Its special emphasis on Asia remains with AIIAS serves primarily the Northern and Southern Asia-Pacific divisions and the Chinese Union Mission (formerly Far Eastern Division).

AIIAS has embraced a vision beyond mere leadership training. It includes training leaders with a purpose—the burden of carrying the gospel to others. Adventist mission is at the heart of all AIIAS degrees. It is central to who we are.

Uniquely positioned for missions, AIIAS is situated within the 10/40 window. We are surrounded by all the major religions, including Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Shintoism, Confucianism, Catholicism, atheism, agnosticism, and animistic Indigenous religions. There are urban clusters and megacities, isolated villages and rural towns, and everything in between. The AIIAS vision is "A Christ-centered community of leaders with a heart for mission." Built into our degree programs is a spiritual element, with a missions emphasis. The mission trips, outreach, and service are meant to prepare local missionaries who will serve the church in Asia and the world. Every year there are a variety of mission opportunities. The photos included in this report tell the stories of the Graduate School and Theological Seminary's mission activities during 2024.

Our prayer is that God will continually empower us to equip our students to be missional leaders with a heart for others to be a blessing to society.

* Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1905), p. 143.

Ginger Ketting-Weller serves as president of AIIAS.



AIIAS has embraced a vision beyond mere leadership training. It includes training leaders with a purpose.



Education Department Student Association (ESDA) Mission Trip Thailand 2024


Business School Mission Trip Mindanao 2024


EDSA Mission Trip Thailand 2024


Seminary Evangelism 2024


Seminary Community Outreach 2024


Public Health Mission Trip India 2024

Experience AIIAS. Change your world!



ISRAEL FIELD REPORT

Proclaiming Peace in Israel



Israel Field Baptism Day, during which 30 candidates gave their life to God

Warmest greetings from Jerusalem, the city of peace. Christians who live in Israel enjoy a unique and extraordinary privilege: they dwell in the very land where the biblical narrative unfolded. Every hill and valley echoes with the footsteps of prophets, kings, and the Messiah Himself. To walk the streets of Jerusalem, to visit Galilee, Bethlehem, or the Mount of Olives, is not just a historical journey—it is a spiritual encounter with the Word of God.

One of the great motivations for all members of the Israel Field is to share with the population the everlasting message of peace "to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people" (Rev. 14:6). Since Jesus is our peace (Eph. 2:14), our inspiration comes from the fact that He is the promised Messiah, and Emmanuel, God with us. The inhabitants of the country of Israel are very knowledgeable and are unequivocally acquainted with the Old Testament writings. Our goal is not to argue, to proselytize, but to gently reveal the beauty of Yeshua, who is the promised Redeemer, rooted "in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms" (Luke 24:44). We don't see this message as an invitation for all to distance themselves from the heart of the message conveyed by Judaism. We just share the good news of salvation for "everyone who believes, for the Jew first" (Rom. 1:16), which is a natural extension, the fulfillment of the biblical prophetic revelation.

ISRAEL FIELD OUTREACH

God has given us the grace to witness 75 baptisms during the past three years. According to Oleg Elkine, executive secretary of the Israel Field, 860 members and friends are worshipping God in 21 congregations across Israel. Each is full of gratitude for the overwhelming support coming especially from the General Conference office, as well as the South American and Inter-American divisions. We wish the best of success and prosperity and God's blessings to all entities that are investing in the Israel Field. In addition, during the past year of activities, the Israel Field joined the General Conference initiative when we scheduled the first Field Baptism Day in May 2025. We were blessed to see 30 candidates give their heart to God.

Each baptism is a true miracle representing a remarkable action of the Holy Spirit. A good example is Zoriana, a young girl who spent the years of her childhood in Israel. She decided to make a covenant with the Lord through baptism, insisting her baptism be in the Jordan River during the week before she was scheduled to leave for Canada. The baptismal ceremony was to be Sabbath, October 7, 2023. But the date created several internal problems, including for members of her family. After much negotiation, the baptism was moved to a week earlier. Everything went well. It was only after the beginning of the war in Israel on October 7 that Zoriana understood, as well as her family, that if



they had gone ahead with the date initially chosen, there would have been no baptism. The war would have stopped everything. Clearly God answered Zoriana's prayer, allowing her to turn a new page in her life through the waters of baptism.

Another aspect of our ministry to the people of Israel is the translation of our books into Hebrew. Through the resolute efforts of Shalom David and through generous donations from those who want to facilitate the spreading of God's message, numerous books have been published. *Child Guidance* was published in 2022; *The Adventist Home* was finalized in 2023; and *Messages to Young People* was published in 2024. The publishing team is providing an extraordinary contribution by translating the *Adult Bible Study Guide* for adults, as well as *Guide* for juniors. But another aspect should be emphasized. Through the kindness of Safeliz Publishing House in Spain, 80,000 *Steps to Christ* were published in Israel. We are proud to disseminate this message in Israel, and we are doing it in eight languages.

One essential activity is led by our Youth Department. They are doing tremendous things in challenging situations. Our youth are very diverse. Some have been born in Israel. Many others come from different countries around the world. The main goal of the Youth Department is to create spaces where young people can come together in worship and fellowship so they can integrate and feel part of the church in Israel. To reach this goal, the department is organizing four meetings a year, in different places in Israel, and one youth camp, which usually includes worship and outdoors activities. A special thanks to Gerardo Farias and Dara Doroshenko, who are leading the youth projects with wisdom, enthusiasm, and the right vision.

During a long and disturbing conflict, during which Israel has had to fight against seven different adversaries, during which stress is felt across the country, our message of optimal and wholistic health has been well received. Ilona Grizan, Health Department director for the Israel Field, organized her work, initially serving displaced people who lived far from their homes. She then expanded her outreach to other segments of the population, including those directly involved in the conflict. Andrei Borz, director of Shalom David, has supported her ministry well, providing valuable assistance with his members who have tirelessly provided quality care, healthy and delicious food, massage, stress management classes, counseling, prayers, and more.

CONQUERING NEW HORIZONS

The Israel Field is not just maintaining existing congregations. Through the constant and vast support of Global Mission, we were able to develop four different projects during the past three years: Bat Yam, Holon, Azerbaijani group, and Nazareth. In each we have had fantastic experiences of transformed lives. One example is Luba, a volunteer who knows how to establish quality contacts with the native population. Currently she is organizing classes for beginners in Hebrew. She is presenting Bible studies to 30



Youth camp in Israel in 2023



Israel Field Faith Convention in Nazareth in 2023, with Elder Ted Wilson as guest speaker



Gathering of Romanian-speaking members in 2024. Despite challenging situations, our members are courageously facing problems, including war.

to 40 non-Adventist visitors. God blessed the work of Luba. Two congregations were born through her tireless ministry.

One of the most effective ways to bring the everlasting message of peace to each and every one in Israel is through media. We are delighted with the support of Hope Channel International and understand that without their help it would have been difficult for us to make significant progress. Also, our partnership with Hope Media Germany is an enormous blessing for the Israel Field. Special thanks goes to Klaus Poppa and his team for everything they do, facilitating the creation and the development of the Hope Channel Israel ministry. We would also be remiss not to mention Adventist World Radio, which is contributing significantly to the success of the radio studio in Nazareth for the Arabic-speaking population.

INNOVATIVE VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF THE ISRAEL FIELD

During wartime there are not many methods that work well in preaching the biblical message of peace. People are not ready to listen to theological debates or even to enter into a discussion that challenges what they have always believed. Ellen G. White said in *Gospel Workers*: "[Christ's] compassion knew no limit. On so large a scale did He conduct His work of healing and teaching that there was no building in Palestine large enough to receive the multitudes that thronged to Him."* This is how we developed our six compassion projects in Israel: Haifa, Tel Aviv, Nazareth, Galilee, Jerusalem, and youth ministry. Everything has worked well. One of them, Haifa, was accomplished in an exceptional way. Under the direction of communication director Sergey Greg, our building is open six days per week. In addition, Haifa United organized some meetings with those impacted by our ministry of compassion and prepared a concert as well as other activities outside its facility. More than 150 non-Adventists attended these gatherings. We can only say, To God be the glory!

CONCLUSION

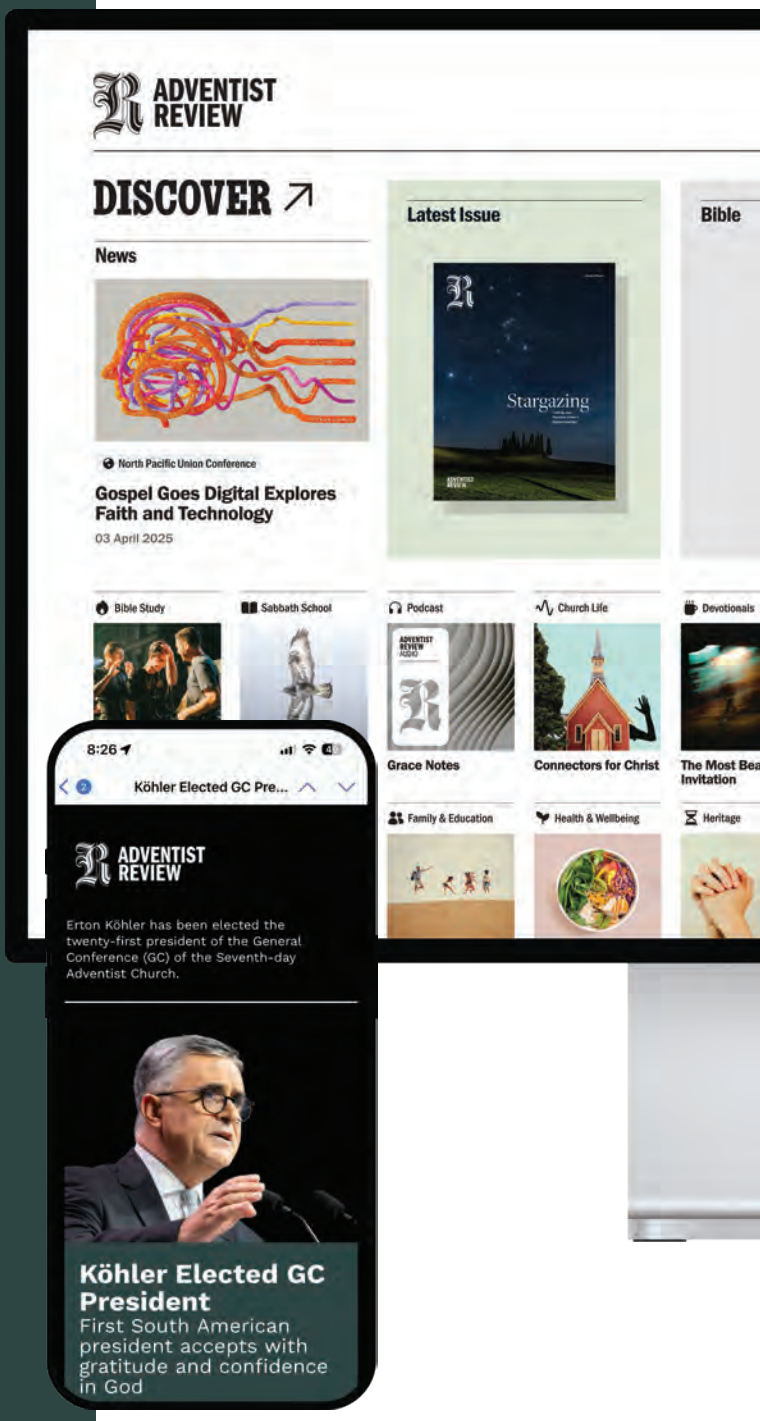
It is an immense privilege to be among the inhabitants of this beautiful country. As Eben Loriezo, treasurer of the Israel Field, as well as a spiritual leader of four churches said, "We can do nothing alone. It is only the power of the Holy Spirit that can help us to fulfill God's mandate and the solidarity of our members across the world." We need your prayers. Please intercede for God's people in Israel.

May the words of the prophet Isaiah become our reality very soon: "For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall My covenant of **peace** be removed" (Isa. 54:10). We want to act with determination to bring that wonderful message to all. May we be worthy of His grace and execute His will in the land of the Bible.

* Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1915), p. 41.

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NORTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION REPORT

I Will Go in the Most Challenging Field



Pastor Ted Wilson and his wife, Nancy, center, pose with the field officers of the NSD.

The Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD) is a territory of diverse ethnicities and religions with a long history of rich cultural heritage. Throughout its vast landscape 680 million people live in the countries of Japan, Korea, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Taiwan, Mongolia, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and North Korea.

NEW TERRITORIES OF NSD

In 2019 the Chinese Union Mission, part of the NSD up to that time, became directly attached to the General Conference (GC). Because of this, the NSD requested new territories to be added to its division. On October 23, 2023, at the eighth business session of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division, the territories of Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka (previously of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division), and Nepal (previously of the Southern Asia Division) joined the NSD.

Since then, the division's Muslim population has grown to nearly 400 million, presenting challenges and opportunities. Added to the deeply rooted religions of Buddhism, Taoism, Shintoism, and Hinduism, these diverse but entrenched beliefs both humbled and urged the leaders of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division to their knees in prayer for the millions within its lands who need a Savior.

CHALLENGES IN NEW TERRITORIES

Through diverse efforts and initiatives NSD officers and directors immediately began visiting these newly added countries. They held mission strategy meetings with each country's union and mission officers, and visited educational, medical, and mission institutions to assess the situation. And they encouraged local leaders, listened to their challenges, and discussed potential improvements.

As a result, they were able to lay the foundation for further development in mission work in these new territories.

GENERAL CONFERENCE LEADERS VISIT NSD

With unified awareness of the great challenges of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division, the leaders of the GC joined the NSD last November to encourage and strengthen those who have been called to carry out this weighty mission.

President Ted N. C. Wilson, executive secretary Erton C. Köhler, treasurer Paul H. Douglas, and assistant to the president Magdiel Pérez Schulz



visited Korea and attended NSD's year-end meeting and the 120th anniversary of the Korean Union Conference.

During this time Elder Wilson delivered encouraging messages to the division's executive committee. He led a revival meeting at Sahmyook Central church in Seoul, and preached God's message for the Korean Adventist members during the 120th anniversary, strengthening Korean believers to continue in their pursuit of mission.

With a dedicated commitment to achieving a balance between mission and spirituality during the past quinquennium, the NSD actively promoted the GC initiatives through such programs as Global Total Member Involvement, Comprehensive Health Ministry, Biblical Creationism, Back to the Altar, and Human Sexuality.

GLOBAL TOTAL MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

As a part of the GC's emphasis on "Global TMI—Disciple Making Evangelism and Harvest 25," the Northern Asia-Pacific Division launched the "Loud Voice 2025" project. This project has been holding simultaneous evangelistic meetings in 2,025 locations around the division, with the goal of baptizing 20,250 people throughout the year 2025.

Church workers and members across the NSD have been actively participating in these evangelistic efforts in the spirit of "Mission First," dedicating their lives to God and to fulfilling Jesus' gospel commission.



Public Campus Ministry (PCM) missionaries take a pledge before leaving for the mission field.

Each institution is an important soul-winning ministry, where God's love is practiced, and many people are meeting Jesus and being transformed.

To accomplish this, the NSD has established strategic and systematic mission projects designed to reach people in this constantly changing world.

MISSION REFOCUS

Through the GC "Mission Refocus" strategy, the NSD has chosen to concentrate evangelistic efforts on the front lines, where the gospel is most urgently needed, developing plans to successfully share the gospel.

PIONEER MISSION MOVEMENT

In 2002 the NSD created the Pioneer Mission Movement (PMM) to reach the frontlines of the mission field. Since then, 149 PMM missionaries have been dispatched to 26 countries. This project sends pastoral families to overseas mission fields for six years to plant churches and share the gospel with local communities.

A PMM PASTOR'S MISSION STORY

Pastor Kwon Soon-Bum is one of the PMM missionaries sent by the NSD to Taiwan. Initially he faced many challenges because of the secular environment and Indigenous religions in Taiwan. Yet God has worked amazing miracles through his ministry. The church gradually grew from 15 members, with 30 young people receiving baptism, and 70 more people finding new life in Jesus through his efforts.

Pastor Kwon is also dedicated to Public Campus Ministry, sharing the gospel with young people. He aims to establish a university mission center and to develop mission-study materials to train student missionaries.



Those participating in the 1000 Missionary Movement hold candles high as they are dedicated for service.

Hwang Lu-Xian was among those students Pastor Kwon met through his ministry. Hwang first visited the Beitun church through the campus ministry and was baptized in July 2020, but he faced strong opposition from his family. Most Taiwanese families follow Buddhism, which is deeply rooted in their daily lives and forms an essential part of their existence. Facing rejection, he eventually left his home and lived in the Beitun church for about two years, holding on to his faith while serving the church.

Despite these hardships, he experienced God's guidance and embraced a new dream. Following that dream, he moved to Korea at the end of 2023, to begin his studies at Sahmyook University. He is now studying for a master's degree in theology at the seminary, responding to God's calling.

Across Taiwan, Pioneer Mission Movement pastors and young Public Campus Ministry missionaries are spreading the gospel. They continue to build the kingdom of God on campuses, in churches, and in daily lives.

So far, PMM missionaries have been sent to Japan, Taiwan, Mongolia, China, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Macao, Korea, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Congo, Uganda, Russia, Tanzania, Indonesia, India, Kosovo, Türkiye, Northern Cyprus, Peru, Armenia, Vietnam, Pakistan, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Cambodia. As a result, 369 churches and companies have been established, and 34,719 people have been baptized.

1000 MISSIONARY MOVEMENT

Since 1993 the 1000 Missionary Movement (MM) has played a crucial role in frontline missions, sending young people into mission fields and empowering them through dedicated service. After intensive training on the 1000 MM campus in the Philippines, operated jointly by the Southern Asia-Pacific and Northern Asia-Pacific divisions,



Participants in the 1000 Missionary Movement shout the missionary chant during training.



NSD president, YoHan Kim (left), and North Korea Mission director, BeomSeok Oh (far right), hold a North Korea mission banner with the General Conference officers.

these young people are sent two by two to mission fields, where they devote one year for mission.

For the past 32 years nearly 12,000 young people from 64 countries have served as missionaries. The fruits of their labor include 80,585 baptisms, 809 church buildings constructed, and 1,530 churches and companies established in 47 countries.

NORTH KOREA MISSION

Among all the challenges the NSD encounters in its mission work, the most difficult is reaching North Korea. Even today 25 million North Koreans suffer from hunger and lack of freedom, and have never had the opportunity to hear about God. Under the guidance of the GC, the NSD established the North Korea Mission department in 2021 and is actively involved in mission activities for North Korea.

To prepare for the opportunity of entering North Korea, the NSD has coordinated a prayer campaign, engaging many dedicated people in intercessory prayer. Missionaries are now being trained through various educational programs to be ready to share the gospel when the time comes to enter this closed country. Recently, because of these efforts, North Korean defectors have accepted the Adventist faith and have been baptized.

DEPARTMENTAL MINISTRIES

Each department of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division has carried out various initiatives over the past years.

The Stewardship Department continues to hold seminars for pastors and church members across the NSD to educate and encourage workers and members to be faithful in their tithes and offerings, explaining the importance of putting God first and demonstrating His goodness through faithful giving.

The Youth Department successfully organized the third international Pathfinder Camporee with 4,000 participants, fostering the faith of young people. Changed lives through the activities and spiritual gatherings stand as a testament to the hard work of planning and overseeing such an event.

Sabbath School and Personal Ministries, as well as the Ministerial and Children's, Women's, and Family Ministries, faithfully visit the various NSD countries to instruct in how to raise children, form happy marriages, and grow stronger spiritually as pastors and spouses. Their work addresses the realities that pastors and churches face.

The Education Department spreads its umbrella over each school institution to ensure that schools and colleges remain true to academic standards



NSD President YoHan Kim (center) receives a key from Southern Asia-Pacific Division president Roger Caderma (second from left), symbolizing the transfer of Sri Lanka to NSD as a newly acquired field.



Certificates are presented to Pioneer Mission Movement (PMM) missionaries by NSD president YoHan Kim.

while imparting the love and saving grace of Jesus, knowing that one of the greatest tools of evangelism of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is education.

The Health Ministries Department continues to oversee numerous evangelistic seminars aimed at training local churches in healthier habits, providing foot massage therapy and healthy meal preparation, and informing members and nonmembers of the health hazards related to a poor diet and lack of exercise.

The Communication Department uses the power of the written word, film, and video, and the fast-paced, ever-changing internet possibilities, to inform and reach millions of people, often within seconds. The department constantly works in technology to find new avenues to communicate the ageless story of Jesus and His love.

Adventist Mission oversees the multiple mission groups within the NSD, encouraging and instructing missionaries, finding the best candidates for the mission field, visiting mission sites to see and feel what missionaries are experiencing, and sending forth, with God's blessing, courageous and fearless men and women ready to reveal the love of God to those around them.

INSTITUTIONAL GROWTH

Currently there are 233 institutions, including universities and colleges, secondary and primary schools, hospitals and clinics, publishing houses and food industries, serving the people of the NSD territory. Every year thousands of students accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior in these centers of academia. Each institution is an important soul-winning ministry, where God's love is practiced, and many people are meeting Jesus and being transformed.

Our gracious God has richly blessed the humble efforts of His people in the Japan Union Conference, the Korean Union Conference, the Pakistan Union Section, the Bangladesh Union Mission, the Taiwan Conference, the Mongolia Mission, the Sri Lanka Mission, and the Nepal Section as they have worked to spread, in a mighty way, the three angels' messages to the hundreds of millions who call our territory "home." We praise God for the wonderful way in which He has guided our footsteps to accomplish His mission.

I WILL GO IN THE MOST CHALLENGING FIELD

The Northern Asia-Pacific Division exists for the sole purpose of placing "mission first," to carry out the gospel commission of reaching 680 million people within the NSD territory. Following the mission given by God, we will continue to proclaim the gospel to the ends of the earth, shouting the slogan "I Will Go!"

Mission is not our choice; it is our identity and our life. As Jesus' second coming draws near, let us continue to move forward! Maranatha!

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SOUTH AMERICAN DIVISION REPORT

A Living Church



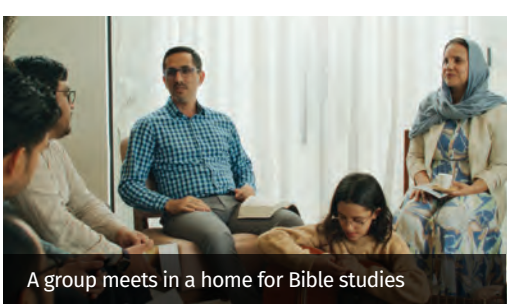
President Stanley Arco prays with administrators during one of the leadership meetings. GUSTAVO LEIGHTON

From 2022 to 2025 the Seventh-day Adventist Church in eight South American countries has been faced with the reality of a world experiencing the concrete effects of post-pandemic years. The period was marked by remarkable changes in people's behavior. It was a period that required diverse efforts to fulfill the mission of preaching the gospel, always in search of greater and more complete involvement of members in preparing people for the return of Jesus Christ. In other words, Seventh-day Adventists in South America understood the urgent need to work more fervently for a living church.

But what does a "living church" mean? This slogan is undergirded by a concept that both inspires and challenges at the same time. The 2,704,791 members, gathered in 30,282 congregations, under the leadership of 5,563 pastors, have come to understand that they need to intensify the mission inside and outside the walls of the churches located in such countries as Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay, as well as the Falkland Islands. This is happening in congregations, conferences, missions, unions, as well as education institutions, health institutions, publishing houses, and the humanitarian agency.

BIBLE TEACHING

To inspire even more women, men, youth, children, teenagers, and elderly individuals, who are already a lively and mission-minded group, four emphases gave direction to the last triennium. The Seventh-day Adventist Church in South America highlighted four pillars that generated coordinated and interconnected



A group meets in a home for Bible studies

STANLEY ARCO
PRESIDENT



actions in order to enhance sustainable internal growth and a greater reach of people for the kingdom of God.

An important highlight was the need to have more members ministering in Bible studies and, naturally, a greater number of people instructed in the Word of God. During this period, 2,120,145 new students of the Bible were registered within the territory on different platforms. There are a myriad of stories behind these figures. It is gratifying to mention people who began their studies with the help of the consolidated teaching support system, through the friendly robot Esperança (an artificial intelligence system) under the coordination of the Novo Tempo Communication Network. The chatbot is equipped with a vast database that helps people understand the texts and themes in the Bible. Novo Tempo's Digital Bible School has experienced 108 percent growth during the past three years.

But there are also examples of the commitment of "flesh and blood" missionaries, such as Juventino André. Born in the community of Terra Preta do Limão, in Barreirinha, Amazonas state (northern Brazil), he is an example of a South American who gives Bible studies in a personal way. To date, he devotes the first hours of the day to looking after the land and the animals. The rest of his time is devoted entirely to the mission. Juventino André rows daily to the communities near his home to give Bible studies. He often travels to the community of Terra Preta, which requires about 30 minutes of rowing.



Some volunteer Bible instructors travel by boat to teach the gospel in certain regions of South America.



A young digital evangelist using their gifts to preach the gospel to different audience

Seventh-day Adventists in South America understood the urgent need to work more fervently for a living church.

THE FUTURE

The future is not just about digital technologies, but about people. From 2022 until now, the South American Division (SAD) countries have invested time and resources in inspiring the so-called new generations. The idea is to build and consolidate good relationships between the youngest and the most experienced in the church. This has opened space for children, teenagers, and young people to become even more involved in proclaiming Jesus' return. And in the case of the youngest, to be qualified to become the future leaders of the denomination.

The movement has meant, in practical terms, that around 1.1 million children and teenagers participated in some way, between 2022 and 2024, in evangelism and discipleship projects. In addition to this, a project was launched in 2024 to allocate financial resources for the construction and refurbishment of rooms for activities with children and teenagers during Sabbath School. At least 155 projects are already underway, in a partnership between the division, unions, and fields.

And it's not only the children who have been working to show the principles of the kingdom of God. A significant group of more than 1.3



Even in remote regions of the forest there are Adventist congregations holding regular weekly meetings.

million young people have also made a difference in the past three years, through projects such as Caleb Mission, One Year in Mission, and other spiritual and social activities.

The effort to evangelize the younger generations also includes the 406,051 students who are spiritually prepared in the Adventist Education Network's teaching units. Colleges, schools, and universities go beyond the idea of simply offering technical and scientific content; they go further and provide opportunities for spiritual growth and the learning of eternal values.

Of course, when talking about new generations, it should be remembered that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has taken the initiative to produce audiovisual content to reach this audience in an appropriate language. The streaming platform Feliz 7 Play continues to produce content geared for children and teenagers. By April 2025 the number of users on the platform had reached 1,328,230, and the number of views of the content (series, cartoons, movies, documentaries) had reached 47,007,580, both in Portuguese and Spanish.

SABBATH SCHOOL AND ELDERSHIP

The synergy between new and experienced generations favors the fulfillment of the mission. Therefore, a church that is alive and strongly focused on the mission of spreading the gospel needs a consistent biblical foundation, which results in highly committed leadership. For this reason the other two emphases of the South American Division during the past three years have included actions related to strengthening Sabbath School and eldership. During the quinquennium there was a significant effort to revitalize the Sabbath School. In 2022 the number of Sabbath School members was 1,127,771, rising to 1,252,717 in 2025, resulting in a growth of 11.1 percent. There was also a 5.6 percent increase in the number of small groups in homes. In 2022 there were 160,034, rising to 169,054 in 2025.

Men and women have served as elders in their local churches. They are the ones who lead the local congregations daily. During the past three years the national body, made up of 45,181 officers (including group directors), has been qualified

mainly through support courses in the areas of theology and leadership. The aim is for the elders to support the district pastors more effectively and to help coordinate the projects and programs that take place in the churches on a weekly basis.

CROSS-CULTURAL MISSION

The four South American emphases exist to enhance mission. And the idea is to go beyond the commitment to evangelize around us, accepting the divine mandate to go "to the ends of the earth." In other words, it means looking back on our history and learning from the example of those who came before us. The Adventist missionaries who arrived in South America, especially in the nineteenth century, gave their time and lives for the sake of evangelism in inhospitable places under very adverse conditions.

Today the global Mission Refocus project aims to increase and speed up the exchange of missionaries between different countries. And the South American Division has responded positively. One highlight from 2022 to 2025 was sending missionaries on cross-cultural work as the division carried out a special program to consecrate and send missionaries. In all, the project foresees that 50 families will serve in countries in the 10/40 window, where the message of Jesus is still not well known.

Another avenue for the permanent sending and receiving of missionaries is the Adventist Volunteer Service (AVS). Currently the territory of the eight countries served by the SAD has contributed to sending and maintaining 392 missionaries and volunteers to serve in different parts of the world. This group of dedicated and altruistic people integrates community, educational, cultural, and spiritual projects in regions with specific needs.

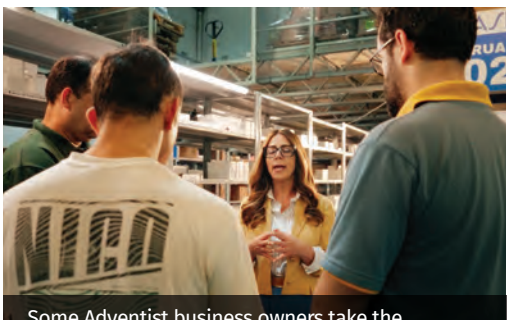
LIVING WORD

The life of a church is largely based on respect for and faithfulness to the Word of God. Despite technological advances, printed books and magazines with content compatible with biblical teaching and different Bible models still make up the list of materials used by the church in South America for evangelism. Believing in the prophetic guidance contained in Ellen White's writings, South American Adventists have produced more than 55.5 million copies of different missionary books predominantly for free distribution campaigns from 2022 to 2024.

The continuous activity of distributing books, magazines, and Bibles also takes place through the tireless group of 10,345 colporteurs in the eight South American countries. This includes representatives of the Publishing Ministry who are considered permanent, full-time literature evangelists, as well as student literature evangelists, who use part of their vacations or free time to get involved in evangelism by sharing and selling quality literature.



One of the mission boats that sails the Amazon serving riverside communities



Some Adventist business owners take the opportunity to gather employees to pray with them, witnessing in their workplace.



The concept of a living church for Seventh-day Adventists in the eight South American countries forming the SAD is based on integration and cooperation toward the same goal—proclaiming the soon return of Jesus Christ.

DISCIPLESHIP, MISSION, AND SOLIDARITY

The great movement for a more alive church goes beyond structures and institutions, reaching spiritually transformed people. They are individuals led by the Holy Spirit, who decide to serve Jesus. And from that decision, they become disciples who teach the Bible through a life of self-giving and unity.

Between 2022 and 2024, 660,458 people joined the church in the eight countries served by the SAD through baptism, rebaptism, or profession of faith. These people demonstrated their commitment to God in different ways, including, for example, faithfulness in tithing. During this period there was a 35.35 percent increase in tithe remittance.

From 2022 to 2024, in the territory of the South American Division, there is an official record of 1,959,533 individuals giving Bible studies. And unity assists this push to transform the lives of others. The efforts of many have resulted in significant social aid through ASA (Adventist Solidarity Action) and ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) between 2022 and 2024.

During this period ADRA helped almost 4 million people in South America. ASA, which operates in the context of local congregations, helped more than 6.1 million people through different projects coordinated by volunteers in the eight countries of the region.

The concept of a living church for Seventh-day Adventists in the eight South American countries forming the SAD is based on integration and cooperation toward the same goal—proclaiming the soon return of Jesus Christ. While preparing themselves and others for the final redemption, Adventists remain active in fellowship and mission, faithful to God and focused on demonstrating love to others in practical ways.

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NEWS



Prime Minister James Marape invited the Wilsons on stage to present a gift.
JAMES BOKOVOY

PNG HEAD OF STATE ATTENDS GC SESSION

PRIME MINISTER JAMES MARAPE REPORTS ON PNG 4 CHRIST INITIATIVE

JARROD STACKELROTH

The prime minister of Papua New Guinea (PNG) has taken part in a presentation on Global Total Member Involvement (TMI) during the sixty-second General Conference (GC) Session, even singing an item with members of his group Footprints Ministry during the Friday evening program.

The Honorable James Marape, prime minister of PNG, spent the Sabbath hours at the session and thanked the church for the invitation to attend.

"I want to say thank you very much for inviting us to be part of the sixty-second General Conference Session," he said.

"I want to say [that the PNG 4 Christ program] was a success as far as conversion was concerned—[the] work of nurture is still going on."

He went on to thank the church for their impact on the country during the program.

"From the government's perspective it was a blessing for us. When we have the most diverse nation on the face of Planet Earth, more than 836 languages spoken by the 11 million people of my country, all united under Christ coming together, I just want to say thank you very much to the church—from the global church to my own SPD, to my own union mission and all the local missions, for pulling together the conversion of more than 500,000 people and church interest of a million in a country of more than 11 million people. Thank you for your prayers worldwide.

"Thank you very much for all the support that has come to PNG in making it a country that 100 percent knows the Seventh-day Adventist truth exists."

Marape then invited outgoing GC president Ted and Nancy Wilson to join him on stage, and presented them a framed gift of gratitude for their support. Wilson not only preached

"Thank you very much for all the support that has come to PNG in making it a country that 100 percent knows the Seventh-day Adventist truth exists."

at one of the 2,300 sites but also traveled to various parts of the country to present, open churches, dedicate prayer rooms, and encourage the church membership.

"I want to invite Elder Wilson and Nancy on stage. The church from the South Pacific wants to say thank you very much for the strong leadership. They led the church up front. He was not just the president of the global church; he was a pastor and an evangelist. . . . May God bless your family in your continued ministry for the Lord."

"It has been almost 2,000 years since Jesus said to go to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. PNG qualifies as the ends of the earth. We are here presenting the gospel to all of you," he said.

The Footprint Ministry male vocal group, joined by Marape, then sang the song "Awesome God." Marape has been singing with the Footprint Ministry since his days as a boarding student at Kabiufa Adventist Secondary School in the 1980s. The group includes Vagi Thoa, Ismael Nombe, Ray Paul, and Magaru Riva.

During the half-hour segment a delegation from PNG, including PNG Union Mission president Malachi Yani and South Pacific Division president Glenn Townend, shared stories on the impact of the 2024 PNG 4 Christ campaign on the country.

Yani said the church in PNG had been praying for eight years in the lead-up to the program, which was delayed four years because of the COVID-19 pandemic. "I believe the Lord will continue to bless the church in your country, my country, and around the world."

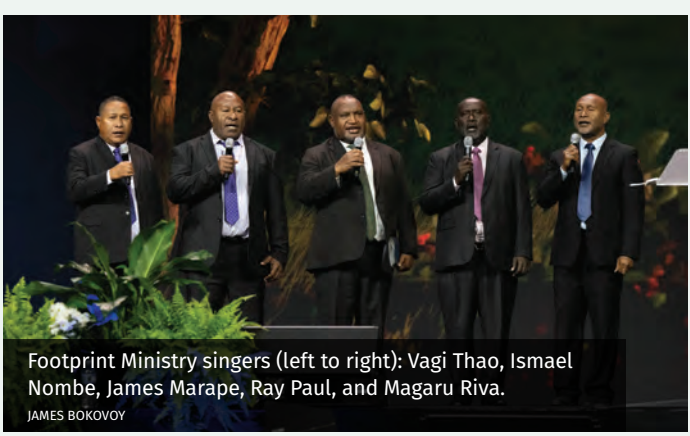
Townend grew up in PNG, and his father served as a missionary during the same era as Marape's father. He told the story of Lae, a town he remembered as having one church 50 years ago but saw 200,000 people gather for the PNG 4 Christ programs spread across the city.

Attendees heard a brief testimony from Yank Rut, a businesswoman from Western Highlands Mission who was the TMI coordinator there. She personally provided 56 PA systems and speakers in all the sites, planted 201 TMI churches in preparation for dedication, supplied 28 signboards, funded 102 sites, and accommodated international doctors and preachers at her newly built hotel, Mount Ararat, in Mount Hagen.

The last to present were Kelvin and Irene Waukave, a lay couple living near Goroka, Eastern Highlands Simbu Mission. Kelvin lost his brother to coronavirus in 2020. He said his family had been inspired by Ellen White's words, which he paraphrased as saying, "The work which the church fails to do in times of peace and prosperity we will have to do in times of crisis."

The family planted a church in their home, using the Discovery Bible Reading method. Their small group was able to meet regularly, and studied the Gospels and the book of Acts. They added 98 members during PNG for Christ.

"Our story of small groups represents hundreds and thousands of small groups, small churches, individuals who came together under the banner of Christ, with the strategic foundation of TMI, laid the foundation of more than 300,000-plus baptisms in PNG in 2024," said Kelvin Waukave.



Footprint Ministry singers (left to right): Vagi Thao, Ismael Nombe, James Marape, Ray Paul, and Magaru Riva.
JAMES BOKOVOY


JOSEF KISSINGER

CHURCH GROWTH LEADS TO NEED FOR NEW AND REORGANIZED UNIONS

NEW REGIONS EXCITED FOR NEW MISSION OPPORTUNITIES

JARROD STACKELROTH

Since the 2022 General Conference Session, membership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has increased by 8 percent, with the Seventh-day Adventist Church needing to establish 11 new and reorganized unions in the three years since.

It was one of the first items of business that General Conference delegates were asked to vote on at the sixty-second GC Session so that the delegates from that region could fully participate in the session.

The two new union conferences are Southwestern Philippine Union Conference and the Mid-Ghana Union Conference. There are nine new union missions: South Sudan Union Mission, Northern Luzon Philippine Union Mission, Southern Luzon Philippine Union Mission, Southeastern Philippine Union Mission, North-Central Ghana Union Mission, North-East Cameroon Union Mission, West-Central Cameroon Union Mission, Costa Rica Union Mission, and Nicaragua Union Mission.

There has been significant growth since the previous General Conference Session only three years ago, with membership increasing by 1,449,831 people.

In announcing the motion, Chairman Artur Stele, GC vice president,

The Philippines is one country that has experienced significant growth, and the addition of new unions will help them take care of the growing membership.

remarked, "It's a great joy to receive new unions into the sisterhood, isn't it?"

The motion passed was: "To accept into the sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church the new and reorganized Union Conferences and Union Missions, as recommended in the General Agenda (items 111-116)." The vote was accepted 1,740 votes to 8.

"Welcome to the wonderful family of God as an official union," said General Conference president Ted Wilson. "May God bless you as you participate in this session."

The joy was visible as the crowd applauded delegates from the new unions, who were asked to stand up and make themselves known, with a group from Costa Rica appearing on the big screens, waving their national flag.

South Sudan had been an attached territory since 2015, after becoming an independent country in 2011. South Sudan is administered by the East-Central Africa Division and has 146 churches across four fields and a total membership of 76,899. The union had only 26,347 members in 2016.

The Philippines is one country that has experienced significant growth, and the addition of new unions will help them take care of the growing membership.

Luzon is the largest and most populous of the Philippines' 7,641 islands, and the capital, Manila, is based in the newly formed Northern Luzon Philippine Union Mission.

"By God's grace the church in Northern Luzon has experienced steady growth— from bustling urban settings, as well as going to the mountains and the villages," said Pastor Sherman Fiedacan, Communication director for the Northern Luzon Philippine Union Mission, as well as president of Hope Channel Philippines.

"The gospel continues to touch the hearts of the people, and we now serve about 300,000 members in 30 provinces."

The union now has four missions and one conference, and Pastor Fiedacan said the conference can more easily focus on the needs of the urban area around Manila and is planning to continue to grow the influence of Hope Channel and digital evangelism in the region.

"Our aim is to strengthen the infrastructure for the mission, to train and equip local leaders, and to expand the digital ministry of the church through the Hope Channel Philippines."

The Southwestern Philippine Union Conference is the mother union from which the newly formed unions came. "The mother union is grateful to witness how the growth of the work in our territory has produced tremendous results, particularly in the strategic and efficient management of resources and mission," said Pastor Roxie Joy Pido, Communication director for Southwestern Philippine Union Conference. "This development allows for a more focused approach in caring for our churches and ensuring their active and well-guided participation in Total Member Involvement.

"Before [dividing], the union was overseeing 10 missions and conferences covering the entire Mindanao archipelago, with a total land area of 97,530 square kilometers (37,656 square miles). Now with the territory divided into two unions—each managing five missions and conferences—we are better equipped to empower our leaders, workers, and members for greater mission impact."

The Southeastern Philippine Union Mission will contain 14 of the 28 provinces in Mindanao, one of the country's three main island groups.

"It is so humbling and deeply inspiring to see the Southeastern Philippine Union Mission now recognized as a union mission," said Rhoen P. Catolico, director of Communication and Public Affairs and Religious Liberty and Adventist Media for the Southeastern Philippine Union Mission. "We feel honored and energized, knowing that God has led us to this milestone."

When unions were first established in the late 1890s, their purpose was to help the church mobilize and meet the local needs of mission. That role has not changed, and according to Pastor Fiedacan, these new unions hope to continue "reaching the unreached and preparing hearts for Christ's return."

Second Business Meeting

SESSION ACTIONS

62nd General Conference Session, St Louis, Missouri, July 4, 9:30 a.m.

ADOPTION OF SESSION AGENDAS

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the motion to reconsider the failed motion on the item, Adoption of Session Agendas.

ADOPTION OF SESSION AGENDAS

VOTED, To not reconsider the failed motion to amend the General Conference Session agenda to add to the agenda a review and discussion of the 2015 General Conference Administrative Committee statement on immunization, specifically its claim about peer reviewed scientific literature in addition to the Bible and writings of Ellen G White.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

VOTED, To accept the report of the General Conference Secretary, Erton C Kohler, as attached to the official copy of the minutes.

Guillermo E Biaggi, Chair
Karen J Porter, Secretary
Hensley M Moorooven, Actions Editor
Tamara K Boward, Recording Secretary

Third Business Meeting

SESSION ACTIONS

62nd General Conference Session, St Louis, Missouri, July 4, 2025, 2:00 p.m.

TREASURER'S REPORT

VOTED, To accept the report of the General Conference Treasurer, Paul H Douglas, as attached to the official copy of the minutes.

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S OPINION AND CERTIFICATION

VOTED, To accept the independent auditor's reports on the Combined Financial Statements of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists as of December 31, 2024, 2023, 2022, 2021, and 2020; so rendered by the accounting firm of Maner Costerisan, PC.

Thomas L Lemon, Chair
Elbert Kuhn, Secretary
Hensley M Moorooven, Actions Editor
Marietta R Fowler, Recording Secretary

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT #1

VOTED, To approve the following partial report of the Nominating Committee presented by John Wesley V Taylor, Chair (GC); Ella S Simmons, Vice-chair (GC); Magdiel E Perez Schulz, Secretary (GC); and Mae-Lyna Beaubrun-Fleury, Assistant Secretary (NAD):

General Conference
President: Erton C Kohler

Fourth Business Meeting

SESSION ACTIONS

62nd General Conference Session, St Louis, Missouri, July 6, 2025, 9:30 a.m.

A DIVINELY APPOINTED MINISTRY- CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the motion to amend the item, A Divinely Appointment Ministry - *Church Manual* Amendment.

A DIVINELY APPOINTED MINISTRY *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To not amend the motion, A Divinely Appointed Ministry - *Church Manual* Amendment, by adding "conduct baptisms" on line 26 following "ordain elders."

A DIVINELY APPOINTED MINISTRY - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

Upon the decision of the chair, the request to refer the item, A Divinely Appointed Ministry - *Church Manual* Amendment, back to the *Church Manual* Committee was accepted.

CREDENTIALS AND LICENSES- *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate on and vote on the item, Credentials and Licenses - *Church Manual* Amendment.

CREDENTIALS AND LICENSES - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment aims to eliminate unnecessary repetition as the information in this deleted paragraph is also found on page 126 of the *Church Manual* under the section, Authorized Speakers. This clarifies the distinction between denominational employees and local church leaders who do not hold credentials.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 4, Pastor and Other Church Employees, pages 35 and 36, Credentials and Licenses, to read as follows:

Scan this QR code to read all of the Session proceedings and actions online.

Credentials and Licenses

God's work is to be jealously safeguarded by responsible leaders from the local church to the General Conference. Official credentials and licenses are issued to all authorized ~~full-time~~ Church employees and are granted by controlling committees for limited periods.

In a local conference, the committee confers authority upon individuals to represent the Church as pastors and gospel workers. This authority is represented by the granting of credentials and licenses, which are written commissions, properly dated and signed by the officers of the conference. The authority thus conveyed is not personal or inherent in the individual but is inherent in the granting body, which may recall the credentials for cause at any time. Credentials and licenses granted employees are not their personal property and must be returned when employment is terminated or at the request of the organization that issued them.

No one should be allowed to speak to any congregation unless he/she has been invited by the church in harmony with guidelines given by the conference. It is recognized, however, that there are times when congregations may be addressed by government officials or civic leaders; but all unauthorized persons shall not be given access to the pulpit. (See pp. 126-127.)

Expired Credentials and Licenses—Credentials and licenses are granted - No change

Retired Employees—Retired employees deserve honor and consideration - No change

Former Pastors Without Credentials—Individuals previously ordained as - No change

Audrey E Andersson, Chair
Claude J Richli, Secretary
Hensley M Moorooven, Actions Editor
Tendani P Severance, Recording Secretary


CHRISTINA COLLARD

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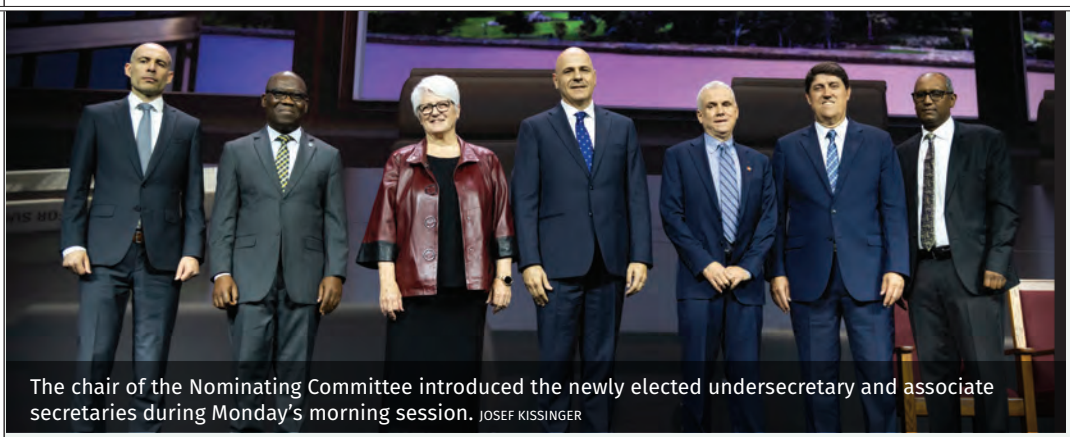
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NEWS



The chair of the Nominating Committee introduced the newly elected undersecretary and associate secretaries during Monday's morning session. JOSEF KISSINGER

UNDERSECRETARY AND ASSOCIATE SECRETARIES ELECTED

SECRETARY TEAM IN PLACE FOR THE NEXT QUINQUENNIUM

BECKY ST. CLAIR

On Monday, July 7, the Nominating Committee of the General Conference (GC) Session announced the nomination of the undersecretary and six associate secretaries for the GC. Of the seven nominees, five are incumbent.

Hensley M. Moorooven has been elected to continue serving as undersecretary of the General Conference for the coming quinquennium, a role to which he was first elected in 2018. Moorooven also serves as liaison officer to the South Pacific Division and the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division.

Gary D. Krause will continue in his position as associate secretary, a position he has held since 2010. Krause serves as liaison officer to the Israel Field and director of Adventist Mission, which oversees the Global Mission Centers, church planting, and mission promotion. Krause previously served in Australia.

Elbert Kuhn will continue as associate secretary, a role he has been in since 2018. He also serves as liaison officer to the East-Central Africa Division and the Middle East and North Africa Union Mission, as well as the Adventist University of Africa, and is director of Adventist Volunteer Service.

Alexander Ott will be joining the secretariat team as an associate secretary for the coming quinquennium, moving from his current position as general secretary of the Austrian Union of Churches Conference, a role he has held since 2023. Prior to this he served in Lebanon, Asia, and Kyrgyzstan as mission director and pastor.

Karen J. Porter has been elected to continue as associate secretary. She has held this position since 2014. Porter also serves as liaison officer to the Euro-Asia Division and the Ukrainian Union Conference, as well as for the Deferred Mission Appointment Program. She is codirector of International Personnel Resources and Services, and has previously served in Sri Lanka, Russia, and Cyprus.

Gerson P. Santos will continue in his position as associate secretary, a position he has held since 2015. He also serves as liaison officer to the Inter-American Division, the North American Division, and the South American Division. He has previously served in Brazil.

Selom Kwasi Sessou has been elected to begin his first service as associate secretary for the GC. He comes to this position from his current role as secretary for the West-Central Africa Division. Sessou has more than 13 years of experience in church administration, from mission work to the union and division levels.

COVER PHOTO BY DAVID B. SHERWIN



The chair of the Nominating Committee introduced the newly elected undertreasurer and associate treasurers during the Sunday's afternoon session. MARK FROELICH

GENERAL CONFERENCE DELEGATES ELECT TREASURY TEAM

FINANCIAL LEADERSHIP SET FOR NEXT FIVE YEARS

BECKY ST. CLAIR

On Sunday, July 6, the Nominating Committee of the General Conference Session announced the nomination of undertreasurer and six associate treasurers for the General Conference (GC). Of the seven nominees, six are incumbent.

J. Raymond Wahlen II was elected to continue as undertreasurer for the GC in 2015. Prior to taking this role, Wahlen served as associate treasurer for five years, and before that, he worked as the special assistant to the treasurer and director of the Seventh-day Adventist accounting software system.

Timothy H. Aka will continue in his role as associate treasurer for the GC. Elected to this position in 2015, Aka came to the GC from a business finance background. He joined the team as investment manager just one year prior to his election, and has extensive experience in the financial sector, including at Edward Jones and TD Waterhouse.

Sabrina C. DeSouza will continue as associate treasurer for the GC. She came to the position in 2023 after serving as vice president for financial administration and chief financial officer for Oakwood University for 21 years. Prior to her tenure at Oakwood University, DeSouza worked for the GC as an auditor.

German A. Lust has been elected to continue in his current role as associate treasurer of the GC, a position he has held since 2018, while also serving as codirector and treasurer for International Personnel Resources and Services, and as treasurer for the Institute of World Mission. Prior to his election Lust served as treasurer of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division for three years.

Gideon M. Mutero was elected as a new associate treasurer of the GC for the coming quinquennium, after serving as the vice president for finance of Hope Channel International since 2011. He has served the global church in nearly every treasury role, from conference to division to the GC. Prior to Hope Channel International Mutero was CFO at ADRA International.

Josue Pierre was elected to continue as an associate treasurer of the GC, a position he has held since 2022. Before that, he served as associate general counsel of the GC for six years. Prior to joining the Office of General Counsel, Pierre served as an associate county attorney with the Prince George's County, Maryland, Office of Law for four years.

Richard T. Stephenson will continue as associate treasurer for the GC. Elected to this position in 2022, Stephenson previously served as director of Information Technology Services for the North American Division, a role he took on in 2018. Along with his treasury position, Stephenson was also elected in 2022 to serve as director of Tech Operations and Strategy at the GC.

SET BACK; PULLED TOGETHER

HOW THE EUD TURNED LOSS INTO MISSION-DRIVEN RESILIENCE

BECKY ST. CLAIR



Paulo Macedo, Communication director for the Inter-European Division, shares how a devastating setback in their GC plans brought the division together to further the mission. DAVID B. SHERWIN

The year 2024 marked 150 years since the beginning of Adventism in Europe, when John Nevins Andrews came as a missionary to Switzerland with his children in tow and set up the foundation of what is now the Inter-European Division (EUD).

"In honor of this anniversary, we're focusing this year on two primary pillars of our division," says Paulo Macedo, Communication director for the EUD. "The first is history, as we reflect on the blessings we have received in Europe throughout the past 150 years. The second is mission, to show what we are currently doing in our territory, across various languages, cultures, and geography."

The EUD covers 20 countries with almost as many languages, and is comprised of 200,000 Adventist church members.

"Compare this to South America, where they have only two primary languages for all 13 countries," Macedo commented. "Europe is incredibly diverse, with not just a plethora of languages but also a large variety of cultures, mentalities, and worldviews."

With all of this in mind, the leaders of the EUD began to think how they would represent their territory at their exhibits during the sixty-second General Conference Session (GC) in St. Louis, Missouri. The vision that emerged highlighted unity and collaboration.

"We may be diverse in our experiences, but we have a shared history, and our mission remains the same," Macedo said. And thus was born the EUD "neighborhood" for the GC exhibition hall. Conference and union ministries were partnered to build their own presence for the neighborhood: publishing, education, unions, health, and media ministries collaborating on combined spaces to highlight their work, with a central "lobby" area for the division headquarters.

"BUGS ARE NOT STRONGER THAN GOD"

"From the very beginning we were operating under the concept of unity," Macedo said. Together the ministries planned panels, displays, and products. "The willingness to collaborate was great."

Safeliz, a publishing house in Spain, even offered to ship everything for the division to save the division money. Each group sent their materials to Spain to be packed in two containers and shipped to the United States. "It was a huge undertaking to get every gift, every rollout, every TV, every activity, ev-

“We may be diverse in our experiences, but we have a shared history, and our mission remains the same. We worked together, relied on each other, and made something happen.”

ery giveaway from across 20 countries in one place by our shipping deadline,” Macedo admits. “But we did it.”

Everything was coming together—literally—very well. And then disaster struck.

“When our containers got to customs and they opened one for inspection, they found a bug,” Macedo said sadly. “It was, unfortunately, a bug that could be dangerous to the crops here, so we were told we would be unable to use anything from either of our containers here in St. Louis. We could either ship them back to Spain or destroy everything. This was a huge blow to us.”

Disappointed and empty-handed, the booth coordinators had two choices: give up, or give it another try. They opted for the latter. After praying together, they jumped into action, each ministry group coordinating their spaces together, heading to IKEA to find replacement furniture and decor and working with local printers to get a few flyers and postcards printed.

“In the end, it’s nothing like what it would have been had we been able to use our original materials,” Macedo pointed out. “But we worked together, relied on each other, and made something happen. We’re here.”

Safeliz was, unfortunately, hit the hardest by the loss, as 80 percent of their resale stock was in the two containers, and they will take a significant financial hit as a result.

“Honestly, this has been an important spiritual and life lesson,” Macedo said. “Sometimes even when you pray and have a good plan, and feel as though you’re following God’s guidance, life throws a bug at you. Then you’re lost, and you don’t know what to do. But let’s keep on going—together. Bugs cannot stop our mission, because bugs are not stronger than God.”



An unexpected challenge at customs meant the EUD exhibit had to be started from scratch once the team arrived in St. Louis. Together they made it happen. DAVID B. SHERWIN



After St. Louis experienced a devastating tornado, church officials presented the city of St. Louis with a disaster relief check. MARK FROELICH

CHURCH PRESENTS $100,000 CHECK TO CITY MAYOR

MAYOR SPENCER THANKS CHURCH FOR IMPACT ST. LOUIS PROGRAM

JARROD STACKELROTH

On Monday morning of the General Conference (GC) Session, the Seventh-day Adventist Church presented a US$100,000 check for disaster relief to the mayor of the city of St. Louis, Missouri, United States, after the region was struck by a tornado on May 16.

Mayor Cara Spencer attended the event to thank the church for holding their sixty-second GC Session in the city.

"On behalf of the city of St. Louis, I would like to extend a warm welcome to the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church here in St. Louis. We hope you've had a successful conference so far, and continue to enjoy a productive time in St. Louis."

The church has been conducting outreach and service projects in St. Louis, including Pathway to Health, a mega health clinic, book distribution, and park cleanup, as well as supporting local shelters, under an initiative called Impact St. Louis.

"The Seventh-day Adventist Church's service to cities mirrors the work that many cities around the world are familiar with," said Spencer. "Mayors and governments know that we cannot do the monumental and complex work required in today's city alone. It will take all of us working together."

In her two-minute speech, the mayor also reflected on the recent tornado that did US$1.7 billion in damages, took five lives, and damaged more than 5,000 structures.

"It will be a joint effort for neighbors, churches, small businesses, and many people from around the world to rebuild our community.

"We know you're a part of this effort, and we're truly grateful," said Spencer.

At the completion of her speech, Spencer was joined onstage by GC treasurer Paul Douglas, who announced the presentation of the check.

"When we heard the terrible news of the May 16 tornado that damaged the city of St. Louis, our hearts were heavy and burdened with pain," he said.

"So collectively church leaders contributed to do something about it."

The large ceremonial check was brought onstage by GC president Erton Köhler, who had previously introduced the mayor and read her bio; North American Division president Alexander Bryant; and Mid-America Union Conference president Gary Thurber, in whose territory St. Louis falls.

"We would like to present to you a check for $100,000 on behalf of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a token of appreciation for you and this city, and our hearts being touched by the pain that was experienced here," said Douglas.

"We pray God's encouragement and healing for all of those who have suffered. Our churches and our leadership in this area also stand ready with this city to help rebuild."

The mayor responded with a short thank-you. "This is not just a token of your appreciation. This is a real investment in the future of our community. And we hope that you continue to come back to St. Louis and continue to make your personal investments here."

"This means so much to our city. We're grateful that you're here, and we're truly grateful for this investment in our future. Thank you," she said.

Spencer was joined by Brad Dean, president and CEO of Explore St. Louis and of the America's Center Convention Complex, and Jennifer Poindexter, director of Meet St. Louis, who have helped facilitate the organization of the GC Session.

"They have worked tirelessly with GC Session management and area vendors and services to make this a highly successful event for both the church and the city," said Köhler in his intro.

Spencer has been mayor only since April 15 this year and is the city's third consecutive female mayor.



Testimonies from around the globe were a highlight of Friday night's Global Total Member Involvement report. Attendees were regaled by inspiring stories of innovative mission projects, with reports from laypeople, ministries, Adventist World Radio, and, always a highlight, those present who chose to make a public declaration of their faith through the waters of baptism. Some of the young people who made the decision were a product of Ted Wilson's evangelism program in St. Louis.

PHOTO BY JOSEF KISSINGER



Virgie Baloyo stands with Family Ministries directors Willie and Elaine Oliver after receiving her award.
JOSEF KISSINGER

LEADERS HONORED WITH CHURCH'S HIGHEST FAMILY MINISTRIES AWARD

SPALDING MEDALLION PRESENTED DURING SPECIAL LUNCHEON AT GC SESSION

BETH THOMAS

On Sabbath, July 5, four recipients received the highest recognition the Adventist Church can give for lifetime achievement in the field of Family Ministries. These individuals join more than 50 others who have been honored with the prestigious Arthur and Maud Spalding Medallion since its introduction in 1990.

The awards event took place during a special luncheon facilitated by current Family Ministries codirectors Willie and Elaine Oliver. Also recognized for their assistance and oversight for the Family Ministries Department were Geoffrey Mbwana, General Conference vice president, accompanied by his wife, Nakku; and Ray Wahlen, undertreasurer of the General Conference, with his wife, Maurine.

AN AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Named for the first codirectors of the General Conference department established in 1922, the Spalding Medallion denotes "dedication to the work of family ministries, creative implementation of Bible principles, knowledge of family issues, and gifted and winsome ways of presenting the dynamics and processes of developing and sustaining marriage and family relationships," Willie said. Recipients have demonstrated these principles in their faithful and committed service to families.

The 2025 Spalding Medallion recipients are as follows:

Raquel Queiroz da Costa Arrais, director of Children, Women, and Family Ministries for the Northern Asia-Pacific Division, a position she has held since 2021. Arrais has been involved in Women's and Children's Ministries and Shepherdess leadership at all levels of church structure, beginning in 2000.

Virgie Baloyo, director of Family, Children, and Women's Ministries for the Southern Asia-Pacific Division. Throughout her extensive career Baloyo has served as a magazine editor, assistant professor, and ministry director. She has led family conferences, marriage seminars, and pastoral couple trainings, and has written on family and relationships from a biblical worldview.

Alacy Mendes Barbosa, director of Family Ministries and Possibility Ministries for the South American Division. Barbosa is an ordained pastor and educator. He has led retreats, held family conferences, and provided counseling sessions for more than 36 years. He says his passion is helping families build happy homes on the way to their heavenly home.

Jongimpi and Nomthandazo Papu, codirectors of Family Ministries for the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean (SID) Division. They were first elected in 2010 and returned to the role in 2022. Together the Papus founded Masterful Couples and Families, a ministry serving people of all faiths. They are popular speakers for marriage retreats and events.

PERSONAL COMMITMENT

One common thread among all the recipients was their personal commitment to building up families, not as a job, but as a calling.

Baloyo emphasized this when asked what the award meant to her. " There are many things I cannot do, but this one [serving families] I gladly do because I see the transformation it brings to families. This award is just the icing on the cake! I'm deeply humbled because I know I have done so very little."

These leaders carry forward the legacy of Arthur and Maud Spalding, whose early vision for Family Ministries laid the groundwork for hands-on service to families around the world.

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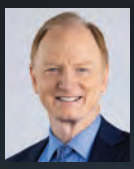
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THE MODEL

The Sanctuary and the End



JOHN BRADSHAW

DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE PRESENTED SUNDAY MORNING

JULY 6, 2025

In Yangon, Myanmar, is a structure that really has to be seen to be believed. The Shwedagon Pagoda is considered the most sacred Buddhist pagoda in the country. It might have been constructed more than 2,500 years ago, while the Buddha was still alive. At 325 feet—or 99 meters—tall, the entire structure is covered in gold, and the top is adorned with almost 2,500 rubies and 5,500 diamonds, including one that weighs 76 carats.



Holy living includes the attitudes we manifest, our willingness to love one another, even when we don't like a vote.

In the south of India, in Tamil Nadu state, is a temple that some describe as worthy of being one of the seven wonders of the world. The Brihadishvara Temple is a Hindu temple, originally constructed about 1,500 years ago. Seeing is believing. Unchanged for 1,000 years, it remains a breathtaking structure.

This is what religious people do: to honor their gods, they build temples, which are often magnificent. We could mention St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, St. Paul's Cathedral in London, or the still-unfinished Sagrada Familía in Barcelona. Incredible buildings, all designed for the purpose of worship, or enhancing your journey on your chosen religious path.

THE CHRISTIAN TEMPLE

The Bible-believing Christian has no earthly temple to point to. Instead, we look to a temple in heaven, "the sanctuary . . . the true tabernacle, which the Lord erected, and not man" (Heb. 8:2). Although we've been told that "no earthly structure could represent its vastness and its glory,"* we don't look in its direction to admire its architecture. The temple for the end-time Christian believer exists to inform and impact our Christian experience, to teach us that there is a God in heaven who has done everything He can to save us from the wages of sin.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). Not even sin could prevent a loving God from dwelling in the midst of His people. He said to Moses, "Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it" (Ex. 25:8, 9).

This tabernacle wandered with Israel in the wilderness, which is another way of saying that God went with Israel. In the pillar of cloud and fire, God was with His people. Moses struck the Rock in the presence of that cloud, and Jesus caused the water to flow. Ten plagues, bitter water, manna on the ground . . . and God was with His people. Now He would dwell in their midst. A two-room structure was established, with every detail and every service designed to teach the salvation story.

There would be an altar for sacrifices; a laver where priests would wash; a room containing an altar, a table, and a candelabra—each of them object lessons. The table of showbread pointed the people to Jesus, the Bread of Life. The seven-branched candlestick prefigured Jesus, the Light of the world, and the Light of *our* world if we're constantly fed with the oil of the Holy Spirit so that *we* may be the light of the world. The altar of incense saw incense rising before God, representing the righteousness of Christ ascending heavenward with our prayers.

In the most holy place were found two statues of angels atop the ark of the covenant, which contained, among other things, the Ten Commandments. The journey into the sanctuary traced the path from penitence to oneness with God, from brokenness to wholeness, from unrighteousness to righteousness, from unholiness to holiness.

THE CALL ON YOUR LIFE

It speaks to us of the calling God places on our lives. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1).

There is intensity in his language: "*I appeal to you.*"

"By the mercies of God." *Oiktirmos.* Paul is the only New Testament writer who uses this word. Paul invokes the compassion God has for His people. He doesn't say, "I appeal to you based on the justice of God." He tells us, "God longs for you, desires to save you. Consider the depths of God's compassion for you."

I beseech you therefore, by the mercies of God, "that you present your bodies a living sacrifice." This is, of course, an oxymoron. Alive, but placed on the altar. This is the life to which God calls us. This is not the first time Paul has written this way to the Romans; it's the very same thought as Romans 6:1: "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?"

It was the logically illogical question to ask based on what he had written previously: "For as by one man's disobedience many

THANAKORN LAPPATTARANAN / ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES PLUS / GETTY IMAGES

were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more" (Rom. 5:19, 20). Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? His answer is unambiguous: "Certainly not!" (Rom. 6:15). Paul explains vital Christianity: "How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" (verse 2). The person who comes to faith in Jesus dies to sin and is raised up from the dead to walk in newness of life.

THE CHALLENGE TO LAODICEA

The challenge we face as Laodicean Christians in a sinful world is to walk in newness of life. Some throw their hands up in desperation and declare it too difficult. Others justify their carnality by claiming the Bible doesn't mean what it says, rationalizing sin, and pretending Sabbath breaking, wine drinking, and so forth are not offensive to God. I can assure you they are. God calls us to be living sacrifices; human nature wants to dismiss sin as inconsequential.

If "Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary" (Ps. 77:13), we are to be living sacrifices, "dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:11). Not Pharisees. Not loveless critics. Jesus already warned us that we think we are rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing, and He says to us, "You need the righteousness of Christ!" That's where our hope is: only in Jesus. Then we grow to represent Him more and more.

Back in Romans 12:1 Paul goes on to say that a living sacrifice should be "holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." We are called to holiness. Monitor your attitude throughout this General Conference Session. You may disagree with decisions, which is your right, but watch and see how that disagreement alters you. Nothing about what Jesus said in John 13 has changed. "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). Those who take it upon themselves to be the correctors, the critics, the accusers of the brethren—not people who disagree, as disagreement is biblical, but those who air their dirty linen and attack the church—had better have some good excuses for their behavior, because they will need those excuses in the judgment.

Holy living includes the attitudes we manifest, our willingness to love one another, even when we don't like a vote. Even when we feel our leaders have let us down. What did Paul call it? "Your reasonable service." The Greek word he used is *logikos*. Rational. Logical. It's rational to be a living sacrifice, irrational not to be. Logical to put your life on the altar of burnt offering, illogical not to do so.

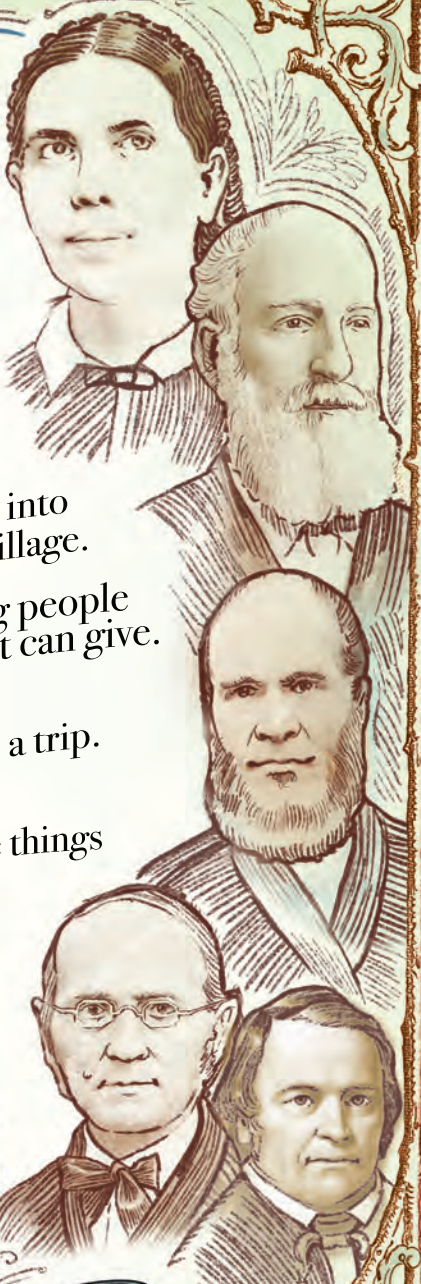
We are here at this General Conference Session to do the business of the church, and the real business of the church is to grow in the likeness of Jesus, to grow in holiness. God can do that work in your life. Paul's remarks are based on 11 prior chapters. All are sinners, he has said. Righteousness does not come by the law, he has said. Righteousness comes through faith in Jesus, he has said. Justification—pardon—brings peace, he has said. You will have to battle your carnal heart, but there is a way out of slavery to self, and that is Jesus Himself. Paul said, "I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Rom. 7:25).

If we can go from this place with a prayer in our hearts—"Let my life be a living sacrifice"—then being here will have been worth something. If we cannot, this will have been an expensive exercise in lukewarmness. Let me appeal to you today: Seek holiness. Seek Christ. Seek His righteousness. Better than that, claim it. Claim the righteousness of Jesus as your own. Be that living sacrifice for Jesus. We want Jesus to do a great work in this world. But first, let Him do that great work in you.

* Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1890, 1908), p. 357.

John Bradshaw is the president of *It Is Written.*

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ADVENTIST HERITAGE MINISTRIES

ADVENTIST VOLUNTEER SERVICE REPORT

Reaching the World Through Volunteers



A group of volunteers serving in the Southern Union Mission in the Euro-Asia Division

Adventist Volunteer Service (AVS) has continued to grow through the years, expanding its global impact and reaching new heights in volunteer engagement, training, and service. This report highlights the accomplishments, growth trajectories, and future vision for AVS from 2022 to 2025, focusing on such key areas as the expansion of the Schools of Mission, an increased number of volunteers transitioning into full-time missionaries, the development of training materials, the new AVS logo and slogan, and adaptation to current global political challenges. As the department looks toward the future, the vision remains to ensure that the movement reaches every corner of the globe, transforming lives through service and faith.

SCHOOLS OF MISSION

One of the most significant accomplishments of AVS in recent years has been the substantial growth of the Schools of Mission (SoM). From 2022 to 2025 the number of SoMs has grown exponentially, with 296 active schools training volunteers worldwide. These schools, located in diverse regions, provide essential training and spiritual guidance for individuals who feel called to serve as volunteers. The programs are designed to equip volunteers not only with practical skills but also with a deep understanding of the cultural, social, and spiritual contexts in which they will work.

SoMs are essential in preparing volunteers for a wide range of service opportunities, including

ELBERT KUHN
DIRECTOR



church planting, education, health care, media, and humanitarian outreach. The increase in the number of schools has provided broader access to training for individuals in different regions, enabling them to serve both locally and internationally. The growth of these schools reflects the rising global demand for trained volunteers and the increasing recognition of the value of service in spreading the message of hope and faith.

GROWTH IN FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES

Another area of remarkable growth has been the number of volunteers who, after completing their service terms, have transitioned into full-time missionary work. From 2022 to 2025 the trend of volunteers pursuing long-term full-time missionary careers has shown significant growth. Many volunteers, inspired by their experiences and deepened faith during their short-term service, are now committed to lifelong missionary endeavors.

This growth has been facilitated by partnerships with the General Conference, regional divisions, and other church organizations that provide resources, training, and support to assist volunteers in transitioning to long-term service. The rise in volunteers becoming full-time missionaries reflects the significant impact that short-term service can have on an individual's life, prompting them to dedicate themselves to the mission of the church in a permanent capacity. Whether in remote areas or urban centers, these full-time missionaries continue the work they started as volunteers, and their dedication spreads the gospel in new and creative ways.

DEVELOPMENT OF TRAINING MATERIALS

Through the years there has been significant progress in developing training materials used by Schools of Mission worldwide. These materials are carefully designed to address the various needs of volunteers, from spiritual and emotional preparation to practical skills in health, education, and community development. In 2022 a comprehensive update of the training curriculum was completed, incorporating feedback from volunteers and field leaders, along with new research on effective mission work.

The updated materials now include modules on intercultural communication, trauma-informed care, digital evangelism, and sustainable development. These topics are particularly relevant in the context of a rapidly changing world, where volunteers must be adaptable, culturally sensitive, and equipped to tackle a variety of global challenges. The creation and distribution of these training resources has been crucial in ensuring that volunteers are well prepared for the complexities of mission work, enhancing their effectiveness and confidence in service.

Furthermore, these training materials are available in multiple languages, reflecting the global nature of the AVS movement. By ensuring



An eye clinic in Galapagos



A child receives dental care in Timor Leste.

that resources are accessible to volunteers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, AVS is fostering a truly international network of mission workers who can collaborate and learn from each other, regardless of geographical or cultural differences.

NEW ADVENTIST VOLUNTEER SERVICE LOGO AND SLOGAN

In 2023 AVS unveiled a new logo and slogan that encapsulate the heart of its mission. The new logo, featuring vibrant colors and dynamic lines, symbolizes the energy, movement, and transformation that occur when individuals step out to serve. The accompanying slogan, "Change the World, Change Your World," captures the essence of what it means to be a volunteer—both the joy of transforming the world through service and the personal transformation that occurs when one becomes a servant of others.

The new visual identity and slogan serve as a reminder to volunteers that their service is not just about helping others but also about being transformed in the process. It reflects the Christian principle of mutual transformation—how those who serve often receive more than they give. The logo and slogan have been embraced by volunteers around the world, becoming a rallying cry for those committed to living a life of service.



Volunteers at Hope Channel Asia in Thailand

Many volunteers, inspired by their experiences and deepened faith during their short-term service, are now committed to lifelong missionary endeavors.

ADAPTING TO POLITICAL CHALLENGES

The global political climate has made international volunteer service more difficult in recent years because of increased travel restrictions, conflicts, and changing immigration policies. In response, the intradivision volunteer program has grown significantly, enabling individuals to serve in their own countries or nearby regions. This model reduces logistical barriers while still offering meaningful mission opportunities. It strengthens local church communities and allows volunteers to contribute to the global mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church by making a difference close to home.

In regions in which international volunteering is restricted, AVS has been creative in offering online volunteer opportunities, such as virtual teaching, online health consultations, and digital evangelism. This adaptability ensures that even when physical borders present challenges, the volunteer spirit can still thrive through innovation and digital outreach.

LOOKING FORWARD: REACHING EVERY CORNER OF THE GLOBE

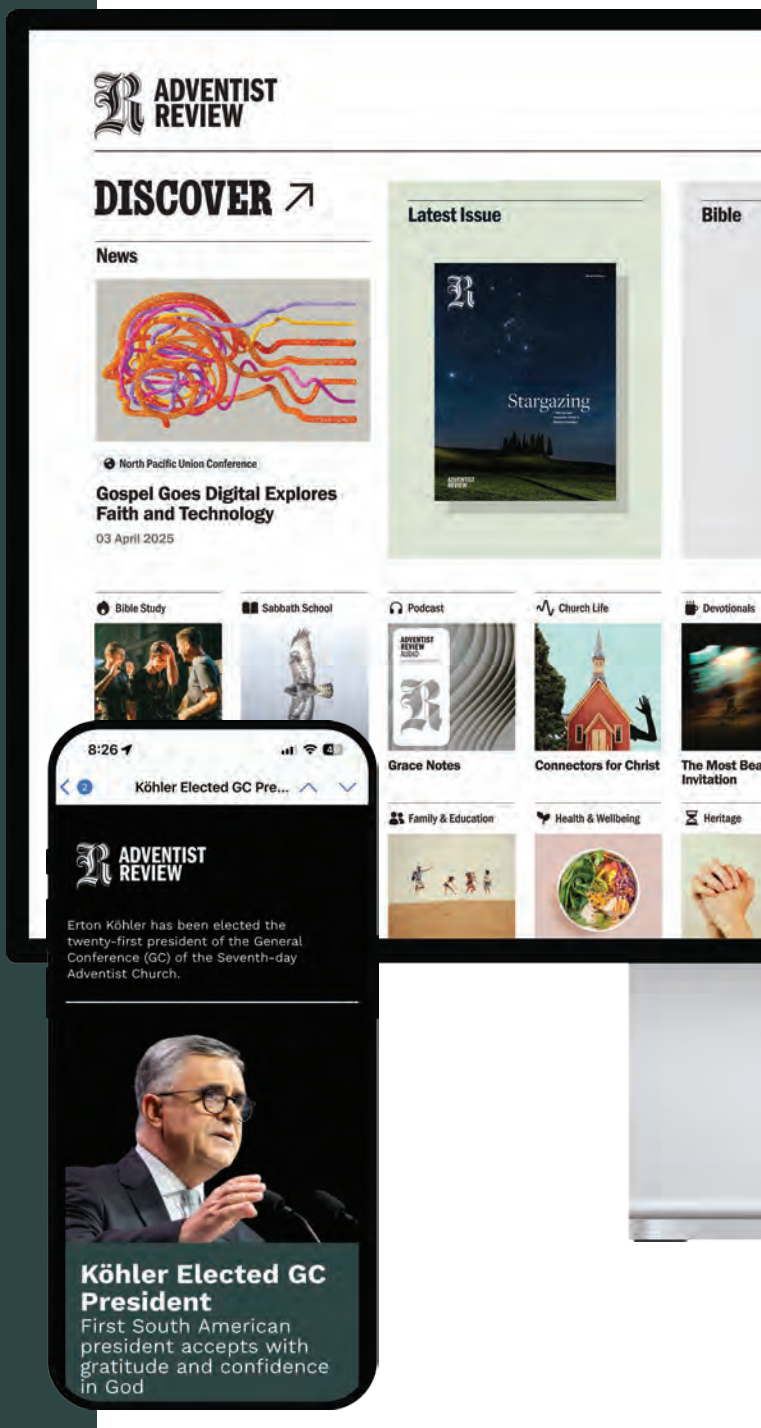
As AVS continues to expand and evolve, the department focuses on ensuring that the volunteer movement reaches every corner of the globe. The ultimate vision for the future is a world in which every individual who feels called to serve can find opportunities to do so, whether locally or internationally. The global network of Schools of Mission will keep growing, equipping more volunteers to serve with faith, humility, and dedication.

The next steps for AVS involve strengthening partnerships with regional divisions to ensure that volunteers are deployed to areas of greatest need. Additionally, the department is working to expand its outreach to underrepresented regions, where the gospel message can have a significant impact. AVS is also committed to ensuring that training materials remain relevant, timely, and effective, continually adapting to the changing needs of the global mission field.

With a renewed sense of purpose and an unwavering commitment to its mission, the Adventist Volunteer Service is poised to make an even greater impact in the years to come. As the department looks toward the future, it is inspired by the transformative power of service, confident that through the dedication of its volunteers the world will be changed—and, in turn, the volunteers themselves will be changed.

CONCLUSION

The growth of Adventist Volunteer Service from 2022 to 2025 has been marked by increased numbers of trained volunteers, a larger network of Schools of Mission, and a rising number of volunteers committing to full-time missionary service. The development of new training materials, the introduction of a new logo and slogan, and the expansion of the intradivision volunteer program have all contributed to a vibrant and dynamic movement that is impacting lives worldwide. Despite global political challenges, AVS has adapted to ensure that the mission continues to spread. With a forward-looking vision, AVS is committed to reaching every corner of the globe, transforming lives, and spreading the message of hope, one volunteer at a time.



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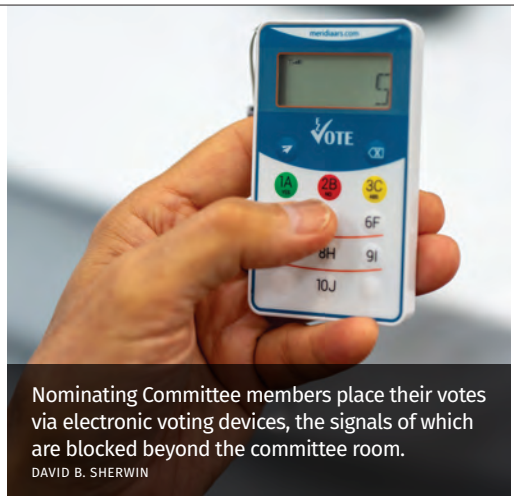
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Behind the Scenes with the Nominating Committee

How are church officers elected?

BECKY ST. CLAIR



Nominating Committee members place their votes via electronic voting devices, the signals of which are blocked beyond the committee room. DAVID B. SHERWIN

One of the important functions of delegates is to select church leaders for the coming quinquennium through the Nominating Committee. But how does this process work? We took a look behind the scenes to learn just that.

On day one of the session, delegates from each of the church's 13 divisions, attached regions, plus General Conference (GC) representatives gather in caucus rooms to determine who will represent their region on the Nominating Committee.

Each division's representation allotment is 10 percent of their session delegation, and they each decide independently how they will determine that 10 percent for the Nominating Committee. The GC allotment is 8 percent of caucus membership.

Once the representatives are selected in the caucuses, the list of names is presented to the opening business session for review and approval. In 2025 the list is 277 names long.



Members of the Nominating Committee for the 2025 General Conference Session chat briefly before deliberating begins. DAVID B. SHERWIN

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Upon entering the meeting room, members of the Nominating Committee are required to seal their phones in machine-locked pockets for the duration of the meeting. DAVID B. SHERWIN

As committee members gather, they pass through security to have their badges scanned for access, and they are given nondisclosure agreements to sign and an electronic voting device. The signals of these devices are blocked beyond the meeting room.

When they enter the room, the representatives are required to relinquish their phones and seal them in secure pouches, which are locked by a machine at the door and tagged with a security device. The pouches remain locked until the meeting's conclusion, and cannot be reopened except by the machine. Due to the seriousness of the task, members of the committee are told that anyone caught using an undisclosed secondary device will be immediately dismissed from the committee, and a public announcement requesting a division replacement representative will be made from the main meeting platform.

To ensure every representative is able to participate fully, translation services are provided in Spanish, Portuguese, French, and Russian.

The first order of business for the Nominating Committee is to choose a chair, a process that is overseen by the sitting GC president. Once the committee chair is selected, the GC president leaves, and the selection of a vice chair, secretary, and assistant secretary begins.

Throughout these honed processes, there is also an attitude of prayer that drives the committee in its deliberating.

Committee members are asked to submit names for consideration for the GC presidency, then as a group they discuss, vote to pare down the list, and discuss again until they have selected a single candidate for the role.

Once the candidates have been finalized, the committee chair goes to the main meeting stage, where programming has continued throughout the committee's meeting, and a brief interruption to the main meeting is allowed for the announcement of the new officers.

Throughout these honed processes, there is also an attitude of prayer that drives the committee in its deliberations. In a 2022 article about the Nominating Committee, a statement by Hensley Moorooven, GC undersecretary, remains an appropriate reminder for this GC Session. "We want the Holy Spirit to be involved [in this process], because there are things we can do, but there are also things we cannot do. We need to rely on the Lord."*

* Maryellen Hacko, ANN, "How Session Works: Nominating Committee," https://adventist.news/news/nominating-committee, accessed July 7, 2025.

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Free at Last! (or not)

When expectations of a retiree weren't exactly how things went

ELLA SIMMONS

Have you ever had a longtime dream come close to realization and then just slip through your fingers like dry sand? This is how I felt at the beginning of this session. You see, this is my first General Conference (GC) Session after my retirement in 2022.

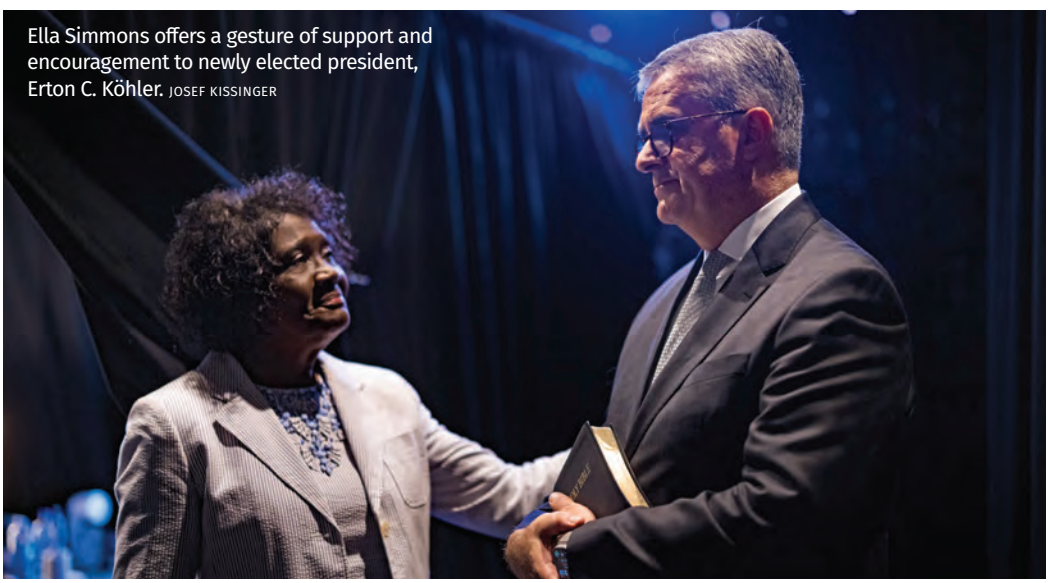
After enjoying a full and beautiful Sabbath, GC Session delegates returned to the dome early Sunday morning for another spirit-filled, hope-inspiring sermon by John Bradshaw. Pastor Bradshaw did not disappoint. His rousing message was simple yet profound. You'll want to pull that sermon for yourself. It's well worth your time.

Following a short benediction, I rose fully energized to exit the auditorium for the long and hurried walk over to the Nominating Committee room to take up my responsibilities with renewed strength and interest.

Yes, can you imagine that I am serving on the Nominating Committee? I had come to St. Louis as a stress-free retiree almost giddy under the illusion of sitting back in the GC section on the floor—*the floor*—with no responsibilities, never to ascend the platform, simply taking in the programs, reports, and participating in decisions only by casting my one vote after others had done all the preparatory work.

May I confess something? Don't judge me, though. Upon arrival last Wednesday evening, I even bragged about my newfound freedom from committee work! When we came into the hotel, I immediately ran into some GC leadership team members with whom I had served during the 17 years of my GC employment. I was quick to point out to them that they were rushing to meetings, and I now didn't have to go to any committee meetings. In fact, my words were: "I am free!" [free from committee meetings].

Well, all that changed suddenly on Thursday when my dear colleagues voted me onto the Nominating Committee. My freedom bubble was ruthlessly burst. My dream of ease as a passive delegate was violently shattered. My expectation for quiet-observer-of-session-proceedings status was cruelly obliterated. Then at our first meeting, to add insult to injury, my brothers and sisters voted me vice chair of the committee. I wondered how much more damage they could inflict on me.



Ella Simmons offers a gesture of support and encouragement to newly elected president, Erton C. Köhler. JOSEF KISSINGER

Well, it was finally Friday afternoon. After a full day of grueling Nominating Committee activities—establishing processes and operational structures, nominating and vetting names, protracted discussion, with some necessary redundant comments and inquiries, and voting on candidates (all of whom are known and loved)—I found myself on the GC Session platform with the Nominating Committee team making the first report to the body of delegates. I wondered how this could be. My husband and I said farewell to this platform for the last time back in 2022. I asked myself, and perhaps the Lord: How did I get back up here? Sunday morning we were ready to go at it again.

After the election of the new GC president, the members were eager to see what God would achieve. In fact, it appeared that the entire body was on alert for what would come to the floor. After all, it was a given that there would be a new GC secretary, for the previous secretary was now GC president. Whose name would rise to the top; who would the Lord call? The quizzical glances or shy, sometimes sly, wistful comments in passing gave away the secret desires of many delegates.

When the Nominating Committee members were called to leave the larger body to take up their responsibilities for a second day, I experienced another jolt to my soul. It was at this moment, as I was basking in the glow of the Word from John Bradshaw's message echoing in my head, my phone signaled a call.

As I glanced at the phone, I glimpsed the face of our granddaughter, our first grandchild, on the caller ID. Although the noise of the moving masses was nearly deafening, the distraught voice of our granddaughter pierced through. My Sweetie Girl, as I have called her for all of her 37 years, was sobbing uncontrollably.

Terror flashed through my mind. I begged her to tell me what was wrong. "What has happened?" Nana, my baby's other grandmother, had died. She had been ill, quite ill, for the past few years, but had been on the mend. Now she was suddenly and unexpectedly gone, and my Sweetie Girl was hurting. I wanted to rush to her side, to hug and console her; but all I could do was cry and pray with her over the phone for I had to go into the Nominating Committee.


JOSEF KISSINGER

The now-experienced committee members were there early ready to engage in the urgent work of identifying leaders for God's church and its ministry and service to the world. They came with many fresh and some tried ideas. There was much discussion, many creative suggestions for process and progress. Of course, there were many opinions about candidates whose names were nominated for consideration. Yet, with the vast diversity of individuals, needs, and perspectives, there was a sweet spirit of unity and harmony in the meeting, and the committee accomplished a great deal.

The Nominating Committee chose for recommendation for GC secretary Richard (Rick) McEdward and for GC treasurer Paul Douglas. We followed with the selection of six men and one woman for GC general vice president. Finally, we slid in one more report for action of the full body just prior to its adjournment, the seven associate treasurers.

And I, I lost myself in God's work and got through it all with only one text message exchange with my granddaughter. After a long, long day I called my Sweetie Girl to check on her. She was still hurting, but sufficiently recovered. I was relieved and we both were able to settle down to rest. Sunday was not an ordinary day for me, but somehow I doubt that it was extraordinary for God. Let us remain faithful by God's saving and enabling grace.

Ella Simmons served as a general vice president of the General Conference from 2005 to 2022.

ALICE IS HOPE

HANNAH DREWIECK

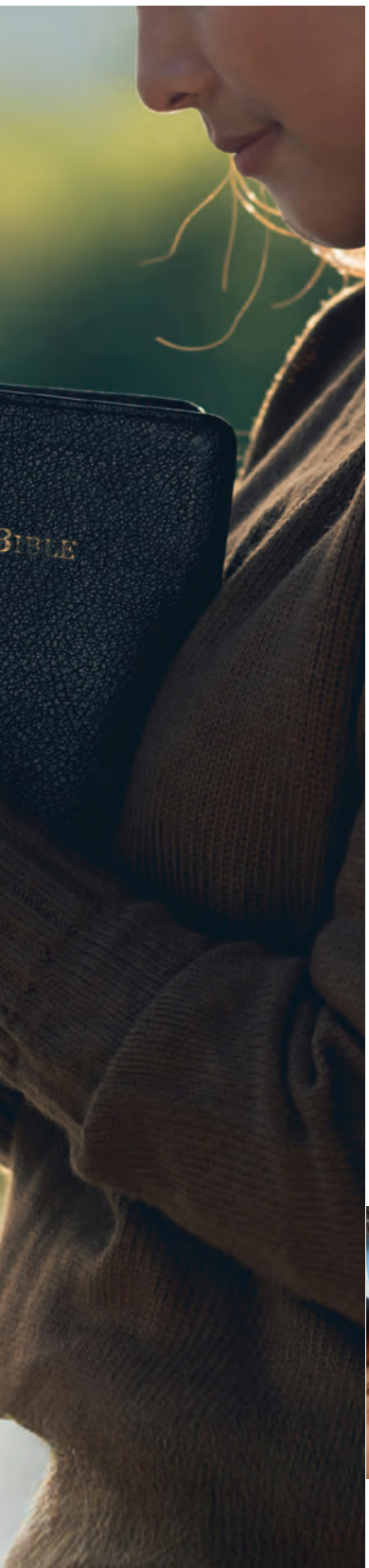
HOPE CHANNEL EVENING DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE PRESENTED MONDAY JULY 7, 2025

Hope is not just something we carry. It's something we become when we allow God to use us, even when we least expect it. That's what happened to Alice in Brazil. Her story isn't about someone who was eager to serve or was searching for purpose. It's about someone who reluctantly said yes and was transformed by the experience of mission.

When Alice's parents, Alan and Blanch, gave their lives to Christ after Alan's near-death experience with COVID-19, Alice did not follow them into faith. She didn't want to be part of their new life. Her response was not just distant but defiant. "I was in that rebellious phase," she later admitted. "I was trying to show my parents that I didn't want to be there, that I didn't accept this change."

Alan and Blanch had encountered God in the middle of a crisis, witnessed healing, and found a spiritual family. But they couldn't share it with the person they loved most. "She was at home while we were at church seeing so many wonderful things and not being able to share them with her," Alan remembered. "The place that was supposed to bring happiness became a place of heartache because she wasn't there with us."





Her parents didn't give up. Her friends kept inviting. Her church kept praying.



Blanch kept praying, asking God why Alice wouldn't come to church. Still, they kept hoping. Then came an opportunity. Alice was invited to join a mission trip to Guyana. It felt like a door opening. Alan and Blanch thought, *Maybe if she comes, she'll experience something different*. But Alice said no. Again and again.

Her parents didn't give up. Her friends kept inviting. Her church kept praying. And through the persistence of love, she finally said yes. Not out of passion, but because she felt pressured. And that is where the miracle began.

In the midst of service—translating for evangelism and medical consultations, playing with children, holding the hands of the sick—Alice began to see the world differently. She saw the poverty. She heard the stories. She felt the needs. And as she poured herself out for others, something poured in. She realized she wasn't just helping others receive hope. Mission was the very thing God used to awaken hope in her.

It wasn't only her parents who saw the difference. Her teammates did too. Her friend Bia shared what it was like to serve alongside her during the trip: "When she walks into a place, she already has that smile on her face—the kind that wants to show Jesus," Bia said. "She already knows the words she's going to say. They have to be words of love, of care. And it has never been any different with anyone."

Alice now lives with the deep awareness that she may be the only exposure to the Bible someone ever has. That awareness drives her to serve, to speak with love, to carry herself in a way that reflects Christ. "I can be a source of comfort to this person, a sign of hope and a future, a sense of belonging, of love, of God's care," she said. "I must always give my best, because wherever I go, I want people to see a little bit of Jesus' love in me."

This is what mission does. It doesn't just bless those who receive. It shapes those who go. In Alice's life, mission became the place where God met her, moved in her, and changed her story forever.



That's why Alice is hope. That's how we can all be hope.

Hannah Drewieck is the communication coordinator for Hope Channel International.

Adventist WHO?

Connecting our heritage with identity and mission

BRENDA KIŠ

He was just 13, but the impression made on Jim Nix in 1960 was profound. On his way to a youth congress in New Jersey, this California boy joined 750 other young people on a bus tour of historic Adventist sites in Battle Creek. With his face glued to the window, young Jim was seeing his future without realizing it.

Six years later at La Sierra College he heard a Week of Prayer speaker mention an elderly member of his congregation who had known Ellen White, J. N. Loughborough, and S. N. Haskell. That summer Nix drove north to interview Grace White-Jacques, Ellen White's youngest granddaughter; May Lacey-White, Willie White's widow; Ella White-Robinson, another granddaughter of Ellen's; Mabel White-Workman, Ella's sister; and others.

In 1969, while Nix attended the seminary at Andrews University, he noticed during a visit to Battle Creek that some of the houses he had seen in 1960 were no longer there. That was troubling, but what could he do? While working in the Heritage Room at Loma Linda University in 1980, he received a call from Duff Stoltz, an Adventist lay historian living in Battle Creek, asking for Nix's help in saving the home of James White's parents, Deacon John and Betsey White, which was slated for destruction by the city of Battle Creek. Four concerned men—Stoltz, Nix, Larry Crandall, and Paul Gordon—met that September to discuss saving Adventist historical sites. In 1981 Adventist Historic Properties, Inc., was founded. Today Adventist Heritage Ministries (AHM) comprises four sites in the eastern half of the United States, where the Adventist movement began.

WHY EXIST? WHY MAINTAIN THESE PROPERTIES?

These are the "commemorative stones" that teach us what happened in these places and remind us of the Lord's leading. That's *history*.

This is where we discover firsthand the origins of the prophetic movement into which He has called us. That's *identity*.

This is where we are reminded that "we have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history."[1] That's *security*.

Homes, barns, meetinghouses, and welcome centers near a cornfield; Ascension Rock; the ruins of a pilgrim home; or an assembled building in a village all beckon to those who come to experience the lives of our pioneers. Behind the walls of the boyhood home of Joseph Bates, the William Miller house and farm, the Hiram Edson site, James and Ellen White's home, the John Harvey Kellogg Welcome Center, and others, the world of the 1800s draws visitors into our past. The pioneers come alive through oral stories, films, and interactive elements, captivating both old and young. These living museums serve as tools to bring the stories of our past to life.

ADVENTIST HISTORY IS EVANGELISM

Not only do Adventist believers learn about their spiritual ancestors in these places, but AHM sites also attract non-Adventist vacationers, history buffs, schoolteachers and their students, filmmakers, and visitors from around the world.



Site directors Minguita and David wait to welcome you to the William Miller home and farm.
DAVID VELAZQUEZ



Come join the ship's crew at the Joseph Bates boyhood home! COLIN AND SHERRYL RAMPTON

A local Catholic congregation as well as doctoral students from Harvard University come to the William Miller site annually! A boat room tells the story of sea captain Joseph Bates and his discovery of the **Sabbath**. Ascension Rock at the William Miller site highlights the **Second Coming**. The Bible Prophecy Trail, even the cornfield across from the house, help visitors to visualize Hiram Edson's discovery of the **heavenly sanctuary** truth. As more Seventh-day Adventist pioneer homes are relocated to or replicated at the Historic Adventist Village in Battle Creek, the story of the early Adventist Church and the role of the **Spirit of Prophecy** is shared. Even nearby Oak Hill Cemetery, where the White family and many of our pioneers are resting, gives us the chance to talk about the **state of the dead** and the **resurrection**. Site directors and volunteers introduce people to these doctrines in an engaging way at each site so that casual passersby make contact with these great biblical truths. *That's evangelism!*

These living museums serve as tools to bring the stories of our past to life.

COME AND BE INSPIRED

Did I hear you say you'd like to see these places? We would love to welcome you!

If you want to follow a chronological order, start in Whitehall, New York, at the William Miller farm (open year-round). Next, drive west to the Edson farm (open spring to fall) in Port Gibson, New York, not far from Niagara Falls. Then head east to the Bates boyhood home (open spring to fall) in Fairhaven, Massachusetts. From there, travel west again to Battle Creek, Michigan, where the Historic Adventist Village (open all year) sits next to the famed Battle Creek Sanitarium, built by John Harvey Kellogg.

Please make your reservations at www.adventistheritage.org in advance, so you can get the most from your visit.

We invite you to come and see, to listen to exciting stories where they happened. It's time to take the history of our Seventh-day Adventist movement seriously. As you stand on the very places where it all began, you will be inspired to exclaim with the prophet, "Praise God! As I see what the Lord has wrought, I am filled with astonishment and with confidence in Christ as leader."[2]

[1] Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 9, p. 10.

[2] Ellen G. White, *Last Day Events* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1992), p. 72.

Brenda Kiš is the editor of the Adventist Heritage Ministries *Bulletin* and resides in Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States.

SESSION GALLERY



Members of the South American Division excitedly wait backstage before their report. JOSEF KISSINGER



Before going on the platform, all participants visit the makeup area. DAVID B. SHERWIN



The Northern Asia-Pacific Division report included a presentation of colorful traditional dress and fans. DAVID B. SHERWIN



How some choose to entertain themselves during long meetings JOSEF KISSINGER



CHRISTINA COLLARD



Kato Samuel sings with the six-member group, Jehovah Shalom Accapella-Uganda. DAVID B. SHERWIN



The prayer room is a supportive part of GC Session. MARK FROELICH



JAMES BOKOVOY

ALL PHOTOS © AR


JOSEF KISSINGER

First Impressions of the General Conference

Perspectives from first-time visitors from around the world

JARROD STACKELROTH

The General Conference (GC) Session brings people from all over the world. Some have attended multiple times, while others are attending for the first time. *Adventist Review* went looking for first-time attendees to hear about how they arrived at session and to ask them about their impressions of the first weekend.

For nurse Christy Albert, who lives in Qatar, her attendance almost did not happen. Three or four days before she was supposed to travel, her mother got "really sick."



"I had to take her from the UK back to India and put her in the hospital, so I thought this trip wouldn't be possible for me. But my mother became stable, so I was in a dilemma. Should I make the trip, or should I take care of my mom?"

Her mother told her that since all the money was paid, she should go. Her brother came to look after her mother, and she traveled back to the UK. Her flight from the UK to New York was delayed and then canceled. She had to book another flight at extra expense. "We made it here by God's grace. I have no regrets. The people here and the joy that we get outweighs the difficulty I went through the previous week."



Travel was fairly smooth for Laurentiu Mot, head of the Adventus University in Romania. He has been to the U.S. before for theological

conferences but never to attend a GC Session. For Mot it is more than 19 hours of flight time. The number of attendees at the Sabbath program, he felt, was impressive.

"This is probably the most attendees I've seen at any church meeting, and of course there are many people from different parts of the world," said Mot.



Martin Mvula is the husband of a delegate from Zambia. His wife was the top literature evangelist in Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division (SID) and was nominated to be a delegate for their region. Mvula, a member of Lusaka Central church, was also impressed by the inclusiveness of the event. "It has given us that [sense of] belonging to this church," he said. "It's the highest meeting of the church as it is, so to be found here and participate is really fantastic." Mvula and his wife had to travel to Kenya, before flying to Chicago and then down to St. Louis.

There are also attendees of all ages.



Max, 16, from Inter-European Division, is volunteering at the lunch service.

"It is interesting to have so many people who believe in the same thing as I do in one place," he said. "It's an honor for me, and I appreciate it very much—that I can be here and see how big decisions for our church are made."

Max was inspired by the leadership shown.

"I found it very interesting and inspiring how [Ted] Wilson gave his office away. I found it really uniting what he did," said Max. "I was really impressed, and it showed me that our church is united and how important it is for us that we are still all together."

Sabbath is always a highlight at GC Session.

"The first Sabbath was colorful," said Albert. "We were so excited to see people of different cultures and different nationalities. We really felt that it was a glimpse of how heaven would be: the music, the singing, the preaching, the colorful people. As I said, it's a glimpse of a little heaven on earth."

"[Sabbath morning] was quite simple," said Mot.

"We were so excited to see people of different kinds and different nationalities. We really felt that it was a glimpse of how heaven would be like."

"I expected, because there are many people present and because it's such an important event, to have a lot of things done before the sermon, and when the sermon began, I actually didn't notice. I'm already in it, at its core. And then of course it finished on time. So I was impressed."

These session attendees will not just take away gifts from the exhibition hall, but memories and faith building lessons.

"What the president [Köhler] said actually stuck with me," said Mvula. "He said, 'Jesus is coming. I will go.' That is the message I have. Very, very important. And everyone else must know that it's just a little time: Jesus is coming. I'll make sure that I pull my friends, a lot of them, to the church. We'll go; we'll walk along."

"As brothers and sisters, we are supposed to share the love of Jesus," said Albert. "Take this mission seriously, and take Jesus seriously. Get our lives ready for His coming."

Mot is making connections he hopes will help his work. "I hope to enrich our networking by the end of the session. And of course, get a bit of the vision of the new team—at least as far as it is related to higher education. And I hope that will help in what we are going to do next," said Mot.

Max takes home a new outlook.

"I think I will have a new perspective on our whole Adventist world, especially how in our Adventist movement all the offices are working together, and I will take with me faith and how the people treat each other, which is really heart-warming around here."

Equipping Missionaries for Cross-cultural Mission Service

OSCAR OSINDO

Do missionaries still go? The answer is a resounding *yes*! Missionaries *still* go. In fact, now more than ever before, missionaries are "*from everywhere to everywhere*." During the past three years the Institute of World Mission (IWM) has trained more than 400 missionaries from more than 50 countries for service in 60 nations.

WHO ARE WE?

The Institute of World Mission (IWM) is the missionary training arm of the General Conference Secretariat. We provide training and support to missionaries and contribute to the missiological thinking of the worldwide church.

MISSIONARY TRAINING

Training missionaries is more than creating mission awareness. In preparing missionaries for effective cross-cultural service, it is vital to equip them with the knowledge and skills they need to face the challenge of cultural differences, language barriers, and to be culturally sensitive as they prepare to proclaim the gospel in a culture other than their own.

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Cultural sensitivity is grounded in biblical principles. The apostle Paul emphasized adapting to different cultures to win people for Christ, stating, "I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some" (1 Cor. 9:22, NIV).

Cultural sensitivity is crucial not just for missionaries going abroad but also in multicultural church contexts. In reaching others, "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with people as one who desired their good. He showed sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me.' "*

HOW CAN IWM SERVE YOU?

Whether your mission is reaching out to people of other cultures in a foreign land or in your homeland, the Institute of World Mission can help you serve more effectively.

- Attend a Mission Institute (see next section), Re-entry, or other cross-cultural training events. **instituteofworldmission.org**



Missionary Re-entry seminar in Brazil



Mission Institute in Thailand



Missionary Kid program in Thailand



Mission Institute in Michigan, USA

Training missionaries is more than creating mission awareness.

- Enroll in an online Passport to Mission class available through Adventist Volunteers: **adventistvolunteers.org** and VividFaith: **vividfaith.com.**

Additional resources:

- *Passport to Mission,* 5th edition (December 2024, Twenty-fifth Anniversary Edition)
- *Introduction to Adventist Mission,* by Gorden Doss

Both books are available on Amazon.com.

WHAT IS A MISSION INSTITUTE?

A Mission Institute is a three-week cross-cultural training event for missionaries and their families, and anyone interested in gaining a deeper understanding of the missionary call. Participants engage in meaningful discussions, participate in hands-on activities, and learn from experienced missionaries about the challenges and joys of serving in diverse cultures. For families attending, we offer age-appropriate activities for each member, ensuring everyone can learn and grow together. We believe that when God calls Mom or Dad, He calls the whole family, and we are committed to equipping them in their missionary journey.

Join us in fulfilling the Great Commission with cultural understanding and sensitivity. Together, let's go from everywhere to everywhere!

* Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1905), p. 143.

Oscar Osindo is the director of the Institute of World Mission.

Science With a Higher Purpose

RONNY NALIN

Hammering a block of granite in the thin air above 4,000 meters (13,120 feet) in the Peruvian Andes. Extracting DNA from refrigerated fish shipped from Lake Tanganyika. Measuring dinosaur claw marks impressed on sandstone layers in the Bolivian Cordillera Oriental. These are some of the unique activities through which scientists seek to fulfill the twofold mission of the Geoscience Research Institute (GRI)—to explore the natural world and share an understanding of nature consistent with the biblical teaching of origins.

RESEARCH

GRI has engaged in earth history research relevant to a biblical worldview, actively investigating such topics as geochronology, magmatic processes, dinosaur tracks, sedimentary formations, and genetic variability in the context of speciation. Major projects have been conducted in globally significant sites, including the Peruvian Cordillera, Torotoro National Park, Galápagos Islands, and Lake Tanganyika.

Between 2022 and 2025 GRI scientists published numerous peer-reviewed articles, abstracts, and book chapters, disseminating original results within the scientific community. Participation in professional meetings further solidified GRI's presence in the academic sphere.

EDUCATION

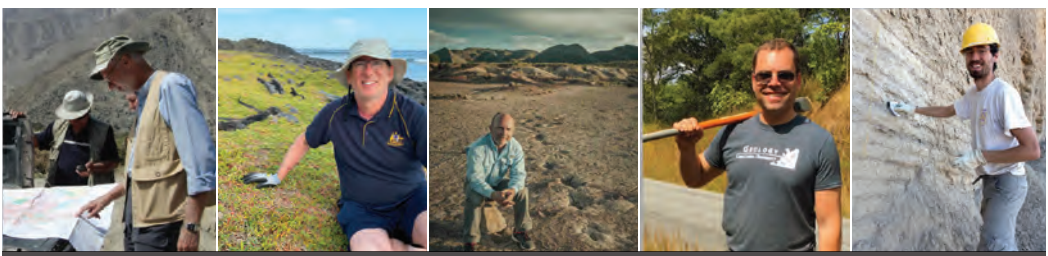
A major achievement in education was the launch in 2023 of a new Certificate in Faith and Science, in collaboration with the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies and the Southern Asia-Pacific Division. GRI also provided regular instruction at the Department of Earth and Biological Sciences (EBS) of Loma Linda University (LLU), and guest lectures or classes at other Adventist institutions of higher learning.

In the aftermath of the COVID pandemic, field-based educational initiatives were resumed with landmark events. Adventist teachers of the North American Division (NAD) explored the geology of Arizona in a GRI-led field conference, and educators of the East-Central Africa Division converged in Tanzania for the first GRI-led field conference on the continent of Africa. GRI's global outreach was enhanced through participation in seminars and conferences which equipped educators, pastors, leaders, and students with new perspectives on faith and science.

RESOURCES

GRI expanded its repository of educational and research materials. The GRI website (www.grisda.org) saw the launch of a digital museum featuring curated fossil collections, new photo galleries and book reviews, and continued to provide regular compilations of relevant science news.

Audiovisual content contributed to a growing online presence, including episodes of the *Seeking Understanding* film series, a documentary on dinosaur footprints, and short-form science news videos.



GRI scientists engaged in field work. From left to right: Dr. Ben Clausen consulting a geologic map; Dr. Tim Standish studying marine iguanas; Dr. Raúl Esperante next to a dinosaur trackway; Dr. Lance Pompe ready for rock sampling; Dr. Ronny Nalin cleaning an outcrop.



The GRI team providing instruction in the field. Left: at the Grand Canyon (AZ) with teachers from NAD. Right: at the rim of the Ngorongoro Crater (Tanzania) with an international group of church leaders and educators.

These resources were disseminated through GRI's social media channels (Instagram and Facebook: @Geoscienceresearchinstitute) and other church media platforms, such as the Hope Channel.

GRI also contributed to producing, reviewing, and funding projects sponsored by the GC Faith and Science Council (FSC), including the *Long Story Short* videos, *The John 10:10 Project* short videos, and the *Creation Detectives* comic book series.

MENTORING

Mentorship involved direct supervision of graduate students at LLU's EBS program and engagement with postdoctoral researchers. The institute supported students through research guidance and academic networking, and facilitated their transition to professional and educational roles within the Adventist educational system.

GRI also strengthened its partnerships with Adventist professionals worldwide, hosting visiting scholars, connecting experienced scientists and emerging researchers, and ensuring that dedicated students had access to research opportunities that nourished faith and scientific inquiry.

CAPACITY BUILDING

GRI's regional outreach was amplified through collaborations with existing GRI branch offices and resource centers, providing them with financial support, scientific and educational consultation, and guidance through leadership transitions. Two new branch offices were recently established in the Euro-Asia Division and West-Central Africa Division.

GRI also played a key role in global church initiatives, including the annual Creation Sabbath celebration (www.creationsabbath.net), and established a close partnership with the new FSC director of marketing and promotion. Finally, an intentional effort was made to explore missional opportunities in the territories of the Middle East and North Africa Union Mission, using creation and science as a starting point of connection.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

Looking ahead, GRI aims to continue pursuing its field-based research projects; enhance access to top-rated laboratory facilities and equipment; and expand its expertise in digital applications for data analysis. GRI will also continue to actively mentor students who feel called to serve God through the study of His creation and collaborate with professionals who can contribute to the institute's mission.

Specific areas of engagement will include organizing field conferences and seminars, developing and revising curricular material, and supporting teaching through dedicated academic modules or programs.

GRI also plans to establish additional branch offices and resource centers, further solidifying its global presence. Continued development of multimedia resources, combined with strategic marketing and use of digital platforms, will broaden GRI's impact.

COMMITMENT TO MISSION

As we move into the next phase of our journey, GRI remains committed to engaging in meaningful research, expanding our educational reach, and acknowledging God as Creator. In so doing, we seek to honor our mission to explore the natural world while upholding biblical truth.

Ronny Nalin, Ph.D., is director of the Geoscience Research Institute and a general field secretary of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

SOUTHERN ASIA DIVISION REPORT

Making Progress With God's Leading



Baptisms in Ongole, Andhra Pradesh

The Southern Asia Division (SUD) unites three nations: India, Bhutan, and the Maldives.

India, the world's most populous country, with 1.438 billion people, is home to eight major religions, with Hinduism as the dominant faith. Christians make up 2.3 percent of the population. India also boasts vast linguistic diversity, with 19,500 languages and dialects, and 645 identified tribes, plus more than 3,000 unrecognized tribes.

The island nation of Maldives has a population of more than 500,000 people, with Islam as its state religion. It consists of 1,192 coral islands.

Finally, Bhutan is a Buddhist nation with a population of about 800,000.

Christianity's roots in India trace back 2,000 years to the time when Thomas, one of Jesus' disciples, introduced the gospel to southern India. The Adventist message arrived in 1893, first reaching Kolkata and Chennai. Since then the church has established congregations, educational institutions, medical centers, and media networks.

DATA REPORTS

The Office of Secretariat manages and provides services in five crucial areas: church policy, missions, human relations, administrative operation, and special initiatives.

Statistics	
Unions	7
Sections	39
Conferences	8
Regions	22
Attached fields	2
Total churches	4,598
Total companies	4,785
Total membership *(as of 4th quarter 2024)*	1,179,867
Total kingdom growth	25,255 (per annum)

The Treasury Department plays a crucial role in managing and stewarding financial resources, promoting transparency, and supporting the church's mission.

1. During fiscal year (FY) 2022-2023, which marked the recovery phase following the COVID-19 crisis, we witnessed a 20 percent growth in tithes and offerings. In the recently concluded FY 2023-2024, we recorded a 9 percent increase in tithes and an impressive 20 percent increase in offerings.

2. We have reached a significant milestone, having received US$11.87 million (₹1.085 billion INR) in tithes and offerings during FY 2022-2023, and US$11.98 million (₹1.186 billion INR) in FY 2023-2024.



CFO Report (April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2024)			
Particulars	**2021 - 2022**	**2022-2023**	**2023-2024**
Lay tithe	582,907,286	686,099,866	744,862,888
Other tithe	175,516,394	225,065,389	246,484,930
Total tithe	**758,423,680**	**911,165,255**	**991,347,818**
Membership *(as of 1st quarter 2025)*	1,153,101	1,164,674	1,165,406
Tithe per capita (INR)	**658**	**782**	**851**
Tithe per capita (USD)	**8.22**	**9.78**	**10.63**
Percent increase	17%	20%	9%
Offerings			
Total offerings received	128,169,413	173,722,552	194,456,186
Offerings per capita (INR)	**111.15**	**149.16**	**166.86**
Offerings per capita (USD)	**1.39**	**1.86**	**2.09**
Percent increase	14.32%	35.54%	11.93%
Offerings on tithe percent	17%	19%	20%
Total tithes and offerings	886,593,093	1,084,887,806	1,185,804,004

3. For FY 2023-2024 the tithe per capita stands at US$10.63 (₹852.00 INR), while offerings per capita amount to US$2.09 (₹166.86 INR).

MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION

While we officially launched Impact 2025 in 2024, we have already made remarkable progress:

Our planned goal is to conduct evangelistic efforts in 3,000 physical locations. Additionally, our media ministry is targeting 1,000 locations, with a combined baptismal goal of 30,000 by May 2025. More than 2,000 evangelistic meetings have been conducted as of December 2024, with 28,365 baptisms recorded thus far. The remaining meetings are expected to surpass the planned goal by May 2025.

Achievements	
Evangelistic meetings	3,400
Revival meetings	2,788
Temperance rally	168
Health seminar	48
Baptisms	28,365
New churches built	82
New churches planted	628
Pastors trained	248
Lay members trained	170
Cell phone evangelism	140
Bible conferences held	48

The I Will Go and TMI plans outline 10 key objectives across mission, spiritual growth, and leadership, using media, evangelism, education, health, publishing, and outreach to share the three angels' messages. We have implemented these in our territory and initiated them at all levels of our institutions.

Daily worship and Bible readings are transforming lives, promoting a place for God in every heart and home. Trainings are being provided to department directors, elders, youth, and laypeople. The General Conference's 777 initiative has inspired a spiritual awakening and unity. Members and institutions are actively adhering to the 777 prayer times and structured Bible reading plans printed and distributed.

REGIONAL REPORTS

Our mission in the East Himalayan region began in 1997 and was officially organized in 2009. It now has 19 churches, 12 church buildings, 32 small groups, and 934 members, and is served by two ordained pastors, three pastoral workers, and 17 volunteers.

The mission in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands region continues to grow with three churches, five companies, and 428 members. The work includes a kindergarten school as part of the education ministry, and recently two Bible workers have opened a new mission frontier in the remote Little Andaman region.

House churches have reached unentered areas where there are no churches because of building cost barriers. Through the Holy Spirit, conversions have occurred, and there are now 848 house churches.



The Great Controversy book distribution

India houses numerous refugees, especially from Myanmar. Our church caters to their emotional and spiritual needs. The Delhi metropolitan area has a church in Sitapuri for Burmese refugees. Additionally, they are accommodated in our various institutions.

We have a limited Adventist presence in the Maldives, mostly among migrants. Together with the South Tamil Conference and Adventist World Radio (AWR), the SUD is working to establish house churches in this territory.

The Silk Route initiative targets Bhutan, Bangladesh, Kashmir, and Leh-Ladakh—challenging yet opportunity-rich areas where AWR and partners are advancing the mission through media and focused outreach.

DEPARTMENTAL ACTIVITIES

Department Activities (2022-2025)									
Sl. No	Department	Training	Council	Meeting/ Programs	Work Shop/ Seminar	Retreat	Virtual Meeting	Camp	WOP
1	Youth	20	11	18	12	7	35	3	7
2	Women's	3,117	393	3,934	1,050	2,040	184	-	22
3	Shepherdess	29	48	84	23	10	51	11	7
4	Communication	20	39	32	12	-	29	-	-
5	Children's	1,409	392	2,252	1,357	164	713	82	8,883
6	Chaplaincy	21	28	15	16	2	26	1	-
7	Special Ministries	650	320	1,470	410	-	1,750	-	-
8	Spirit of Prophecy	450	280	1,250	380	-	1,450	-	-
9	Health	30	30	25	10	10	200	1	-
10	SSPM	1,776	208	1,464	5,968	32	6,848	20	7,898

Sabbath School. Through Sabbath School our mission is to foster fellowship, outreach, and mission-minded Bible study. A division-wide advisory in Pune gathered more than 1,800 delegates, with similar sessions held at various organizational levels. Sabbath School books were printed in major Indian languages and distributed to members. Sidewalk evangelism has been implemented across all unions, with hundreds of training programs conducted; members and pastors actively participating; and most unions with appointed individuals to oversee these efforts.

Stewardship. More than 1,200 church members have received training for stewardship, support local and global missions, and emphasize transparency and accountability, leading to an increase in tithe and offerings emittance.

Youth Ministries. The annual youth Week of Prayer (WOP) is held in Adventist institutions. The Global Youth Day initiative encourages youth involvement in community outreach, including visits to hospitals, orphanages, and destitute homes, also distributing food, medicine, and school supplies. More than 2,500 delegates participated in the youth congress that was held in Vyara, Gujarat.

Children's Ministries. Our mission is to make disciples of children up to age 14 by equipping churches, families, and caregivers with resources and training to help nurture a lifelong relationship with Jesus. An advisory was held in Hapur, along with training sessions conducted at various levels.

Women's Ministries. We empower women to fulfill God's mission through service and sharing His Word. Since 2022, 107 students have graduated, and 48 women's congresses offered training across unions and conferences. A division-wide advisory was held at Pune. More than 1,500 delegates attended the advisory.



New church building construction in Arunachal Pradesh



House church in Chhattisgarh

Global Mission. Global mission is the front line of our division outreach. With a special focus on the 10/40 window, we seek to reach urban and suburban areas through targeted evangelism. Currently 290 volunteers are engaged in 300 mission projects across the SUD, including eight newly launched city initiatives through three centers of influence.

Special Ministries. Sixteen supporting ministries operate in the SUD, with more than 2,280 volunteers. These are front-line evangelists who work to enter in unentered territories.

Public Campus Ministries. Public campus ministry (PCM) aims to ground young people in Adventist truth and empower them to share Jesus on their non-Adventist campuses. Five congresses across the SUD gathered more than 1,500 delegates.

Adventist Child Care. Since 2005 Adventist Child India has supported more than 1,400 students in 34 schools across 16 states in India. The program assists children from poor Adventist families, nurturing them for mission-focused lives.

Adventist Possibilities Ministries. We focus on all seven areas of possibilities ministry: bereavement for spousal loss; blind and low vision; caregiver support; physical immobility; deaf and hard of hearing; mental health; and orphans and vulnerable children. This ministry operates two special schools and four orphanages.

Communication Department. Our mission includes public relations, media outreach, digital efforts, and internal church communication. A division-wide advisory was conducted via Zoom, and 121 training sessions were held at various levels during the past three years.

Adventist Media Center. Adventist Media Center (AMC) has been sharing the gospel across India for more than 75 years through FM, shortwave, and social media. Its flagship production center is the Adventist Media Center in Pune.

Adventist World Radio. Adventist World Radio (AWR) focuses on broadcasting, evangelism, and publishing, with eight regional studios in India and

Daily worship and Bible readings are transforming lives, promoting a place for God in every heart and home.

29 internet studios in tribal languages, supported by 75-plus missionaries for follow-up work.

Center for Digital Evangelism. AWR has established two Centers for Digital Evangelism (CDE) in India. These are spiritual call centers where digital missionaries use digital tools to nurture people online on Bible truths. AWR plans to expand by establishing more centers across unions within the SUD.

Hope Channel India. Hope Channel India is a satellite channel with 22 YouTube channels producing programs in 25 different languages in India.

Oriental Watchman Publishing House. The publishing house celebrated 100 years of service on November 7, 2024. During the past three years it has produced and distributed more than 1 million missionary books, educational materials, health literature, and Spirit of Prophecy writings in more than 15 languages. In 2023 alone 151,350 copies of *The Great Controversy* were distributed.

Education Department. Our aim is to empower students for wholistic development in physical, mental, social, and spiritual growth.

Educational Program	
Schools	297
Teachers	10,551
Students	2,10140
Colleges	6
College of Nursing	4
Universities	2

Medical Educational Trust Association Surat of Seventh- day Adventists (METAS). METAS operates two day schools, three boarding schools, one management college, four nursing schools,



Spicer Adventist University graduation

three nursing colleges, one multidisciplinary university, and three hospitals. Annually, more than 300 nursing professionals graduate. METAS has empowered more than 800 health professionals since the 1920s.

Medical Trust. Our mission is to provide health care and improve well-being in underserved areas. We operate 10 hospitals and one nursing college, supported by dedicated doctors and nurses.

Spicer Adventist University (SAU). SAU is a pioneering institution that has graduated 403 pastors and 216 teachers in the past five years, offering 27 courses in business, science, and theology. In 2022 it launched its Doctor of Ministry program.

Maranatha India. The contributions of Maranatha India include: 2,010 churches, nine elementary education centers, 233 tsunami relief houses, 1,064 water wells, 147 toilets, and 42 school campuses with 233 buildings and 408 classrooms.

ADRA India. ADRA India reached 1.92 million people through 26 projects in health, livelihood, education, protection, and humanitarian response, with a 53 percent increase in project volume and a 24 percent rise in fund utilization per beneficiary.

Future Plans. Plans in the Southern Asia Division include the following:

- Conduct 50 evangelistic meetings in metro cities.
- Establish 50 new churches in unentered territories.
- Build 100 churches over the next five years.
- Reach 1,000 villages.
- Build centers of influence in Delhi and the Maldives.
- Organize youth leadership seminars in key cities.
- Build media centers in Ranchi, Trivandrum, Bangalore, and Hyderabad, and launch a Hindi satellite channel.
- Establish an arts and sciences college and a medical hospital in Southeast India Union.
- Establish AWR's CDE at Spicer Adventist University.

IN CONCLUSION

We express our gratitude to General Conference president Ted Wilson for his unwavering dedication and support. We also appreciate the role of Secretariat for their diligent recordkeeping, the Treasury for their financial backing, and the departmental directors for their contributions. Special thanks is awarded to supportive ministries, generous donors, pastors, leaders, and volunteers who continue to support the mission.

As we look ahead, let us work together with urgency, assured that Christ's return is hastened through united efforts. Maranatha!

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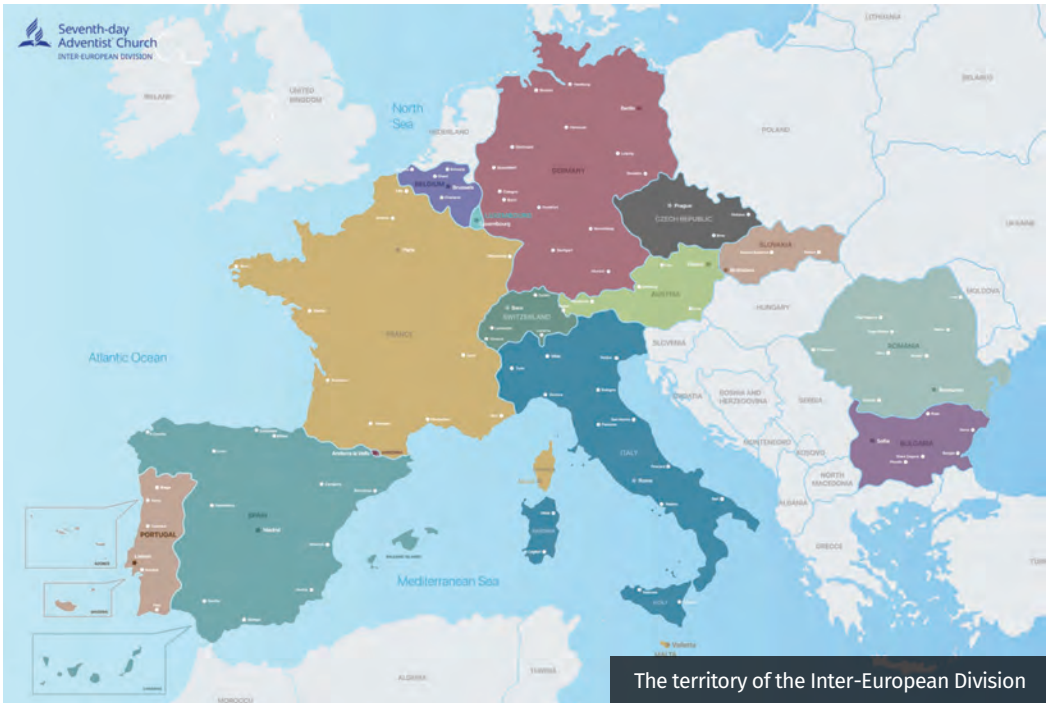
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INTER-EUROPEAN DIVISION REPORT

150 Years in Mission



The territory of the Inter-European Division

A DIVERSE AND DYNAMIC DIVISION

The Seventh-day Adventist Church's Inter-European Division (EUD) is a vibrant and multicultural field of the global Adventist movement. With headquarters in Bern, Switzerland, the EUD oversees the work of the church in 20 central, western, and southern European countries: Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, France, Germany, Gibraltar, the Holy See, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Spain, and Switzerland, with a combined population of more than 345 million.

Inter-European Division website

With approximately 185,000 baptized members who worship in 2,519 churches and 563 companies, the division is a breathtaking linguistic and cultural mosaic, administered by six union conferences and five unions of churches to provide contextualized mission and leadership at the local level.

The division and its unions support a variety of institutions, including 11 publishing houses, 8 media centers, 27 care institutions, and 121 educational institutions, from kindergartens to universities. Among those, directly managed by the division, are Friedensau University in Germany, Campus Adventiste du Salève in France, Clinique La Lignière in Switzerland, Safeliz Publishing House in Spain, and Hope Media Europe in Germany. This network provides the stage for extensive evangelism, education, health, and communication programs that promote the church's mission across the continent.

A LEGACY IN HISTORY: 150 YEARS OF MISSIONING IN EUROPE

The roots of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Europe date back to the ninteenth century. The Adventist message first reached the continent through the efforts of missionary Michael B. Czechowski, a Polish Catholic priest who con-



verted to Adventism and carried the gospel to Switzerland in the 1860s.

By 1874 John N. Andrews, the first missionary to be sent by the General Conference, had arrived in Switzerland and laid a firm foundation for institution building and evangelism. The early years were marked by intensive mission work—despite governmental pressure and pressure from state, majority churches. Next developed were the primary institutions, such as publishing houses and schools, followed by the expansion of health ministries.

Over time the European Adventist Church has endured wars, revolutions, religious persecution, and very often aggressive laicism. With each challenge, however, the church simply kept moving forward and sharing the biblical message of care for others and hope in Christ.

Celebrating 150 years of Adventist work in Europe, the EUD is still a reflection of the pioneering spirits of those early missionaries, but with the cultural sensitivities and spiritual requirements of modern European society.

STRATEGIC VISION 2022–2025: "I WILL GO—REACH THE WORLD"

The Inter-European Division's strategic plan, in alignment with the General Conference plan "I Will Go," articulates a contextualized and clear vision and mission. The strategy revolves around four foundational areas of emphasis:

a. Growth in the Spirit: "Reach Up to God." This emphasis stimulates individual, family, and corporate spiritual growth. It challenges greater participation in Bible study, prayer, and worship—leading to dynamic spiritual lives that impact others.

b. Growth in Relationships: "Reach In With God." A prime goal is creating a positive church climate, in which building strong relational connections, supporting emotional well-being, and maintaining a culture of service and compassion for each other are encouraged in congregations.

c. Growth in Mission: "Reach Out With God." This phase seeks to energize mission as lifestyle. The plan emphasizes city outreach, church planting, digital mission, and creative evangelism, with specific attention to the involvement of young people and lay members. Innovative plans, such as special union mission projects, starting urban centers of influence, and digital projects, are the centerpieces of this strategy.

d. Leadership Growth: "Reach Beyond With God." Leadership development is included in sustainable mission. The EUD invests in pastor and lay leader training to be visionary, resilient, and mission-oriented—equipping them to lead the church in a plural, often secular, environment.

The plan also demands interdepartmental collaboration and localization. Resources and materials are developed in consultation with union leaders to meet the expressed needs of local fields, especially in retention, discipleship, and public outreach.





MAIN ACTIVITIES AND MISSION ENTERPRISES

From 2022 to 2025 the Inter-European Division developed a series of major ventures, such as evangelism, media, education, health, youth, and engagement with society. Some of the main highlights are given below.

1. Evangelism and Church Development

Despite the growing secularism in Europe, the Inter-European Division remains dedicated to advancing mission outreach. The division is presently supporting 88 mission-initiated projects in its field, including 24 active Global Mission projects and 41 union-level special mission projects, among others.

A foundation of this approach is the establishment of urban centers of influence—already in eight locations—which are multifunctional community centers providing services such as health education, language instruction, and Bible study. These centers meet local needs, serving as both service centers and spiritual portals.

The His Hands initiatives, which have a presence in eight regions, are community-based volunteer initiatives that empower church members to serve their neighbors through acts of service and social care. These initiatives have established strong bridges of trust between the church and the broader community, often leading to open doors for spiritual conversations and Bible studies.

Five Media Projects for Mission further amplify outreach by utilizing contemporary platforms to spread hope on digital and broadcasting media.



The Inter-European Division headquarters in Bern, Switzerland

This wholistic strategy manifests the EUD's strategic intent of weaving mission into everyday life and encountering people where they are—physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Whether through humanitarianism, education, urban outreach, or digital evangelism, the EUD continues to prioritize the announcement of the gospel in a pluralist Europe, encouraging members and institutions to be visionary, adaptive, and firmly based in Christ's mission of love and transformation.

2. Media Mission and Digital Discipleship

Being aware of the power of change that digital platforms hold, the EUD places a high priority on media as a mission tool to access populations who might never set foot inside a church. Through collaborations with Hope Media Europe and eight local centers, the church develops content that engages contemporary digital culture.

One of the key areas of this strategy is GAiN Europe, which has become a center for media practitioners, communication directors, personal ministries coordinators, publishing leaders, youth leaders, and digital missionaries. GAiN Europe develops partnering that enables leaders to use new technology and media resources for mission.

The past few years have seen GAiN Europe particularly focus on preparing young influencers for Jesus—empowering them to be digital disciples who leverage their platforms to share faith, hope, and compassion. The events include workshops, idea labs, and networking that connect creatives with mission-oriented projects. The growth from 186 participants in Bucharest (2022) to 295 in Budva (2024) reveals the increase of interest and involvement of ministries from local fields, coming from EUD and TED.

The Global Media Collaborative Initiative, former Media Network Project, now under the leadership and support of the General Conference, is a cooperative venture started by EUD, TED, and Hope Media Europe in 2016 that gathers a growing network of divisions and media centers from around the world

in missionary efforts. From "Fathers" to "Purpose," the latest production project, a large group of media materials were released on several topics that related to a broad audience around the world.

3. Adventist Education: Shaping Minds, Shaping Mission

Education remains a mainstay of the EUD mandate, with 121 Adventist schools—83 kindergartens and primary schools, 28 secondary schools, 3 worker training schools, and 7 universities. These schools are not institutions of academic learning alone—they are mission centers, closely integrated into their local churches and communities.

In a region in which public education is free and often of high quality, Adventist schools offer something uniquely valuable: an open, warm community in which students and teachers alike are encouraged to encounter Jesus. This solid spiritual foundation combined with academic intensity has made many of these schools hubs of influence. Increasing numbers of schools are being planted in cities where mission potential is greatest.

A fine illustration is the one in Bucharest, Romania, where the old "Labyrinth" church was renovated into a new school. Its hall of celebration became the Sabbath place of worship for the local church, symbolizing the melding of education and redemption.

4. Health Ministries

Health provides a powerful door of opportunity for mission in secular cultures. The division's 27 institutions of care—hospital, clinics, lifestyle centers—give Christ-centered care while being centers of influence within their communities.

Lifestyle education and preventive health are promoted through wellness programs, expos, and seminars by the EUD. The wholistic health message resonates strongly with European people, offering a modern and compassionate witness to the Adventist faith.

Clinique La Lignière in Switzerland, which has served for more than 115 years, is a classic example of this mission. It has evolved into an integrated institution that addresses biological, psychological, social, and spiritual needs. Its recent addition in Lausanne is a testament to its emphasis on wholistic healing, and the division's investment on its development.

Waldfriede Hospital in Berlin is also centered on dignity, personal responsibility, and spiritual care. Patients are provided with a philosophy of healthy living and redemptive healing that is grounded in a relationship with God.

Training and empowerment of Adventist health workers have been at the forefront. Meetings such as the Congress on Lifestyle Centers in Coimbra, Portugal, had more than 220 attendees from around the world, which indicates just how much the EUD's health outreach model fascinates individuals everywhere, opening opportunities for mission.

5. Involvement With Society and Lines of Witnessing

Engagement with society is a pillar of the EUD's witnessing. With the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), the church has responded rapidly to crises of humanity—most recently the war in Ukraine. Across the division, local churches, schools, and health centers joined forces with ADRA to offer shelter to refugees, distribute aid, and bring hope. Youth and seniors volunteered, making churches centers of compassion and practical ministry.

The division expresses its commitment to religious freedom with a strong support for PARL initiatives. Freedom of conscience is promoted by the division in conjunction with the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty (AIDLR). Key activities comprise international forums, e.g., the 2023 AIDLR symposium on freedom of religious expression, with a presence of more than 80 international experts, and the "Faith for Rights" forum in association with the United Nations and University of Coimbra, in 2024.

Upon witnessing shifting societal norms, the church also responds to challenges to biblical values in an unmistakably gracious fashion. An instance is the 2024 Biblical Human Sexuality Conference in



The 2023 Pathfinder camporee took place in Friedensau, Germany.

Bulgaria's city of Plovdiv, when church leaders reaffirmed biblical principles and emphasized unconditional love. Such initiatives reinforce the EUD's determination to be voice of Bible principles and conscience, as well as doers of healing and justice in an increasingly complex world.

6. Youth Ministries and Pathfinders

In a continent undergoing demographic aging, the passion and dedication of young people are rays of hope. With infectious energy and enthusiasm for mission, youth are remolding the Adventist Church's influence in Europe through means of innovative projects and vigorous missionary engagement.

During the past five decades the EUD Youth Department has focused on preparing the youth to serve, developing their relationship with God and laying foundations on solid relationships so that they lay down foundation stones for society-impacting projects.

A notable one is AMiCUS Romania, with an active membership of more than 1,000 students and professionals in 13 university centers. This ministry has been a volunteerism, self-improvement, and civic activities advocate that brings about hope and change in communities. In Germany "1 Year for Jesus" is a creative discipleship experience in which young individuals serve a year doing missionary and community service work. It prepares them for lifetime mission and leaves a lasting social legacy. NEXT MEET, from Spain, responds to real needs within communities through creative outreach, having a lasting influence in communities abroad.

The 2023 EUD Pathfinder Camporee in Friedensau, Germany, brought together more than 2,700 teenagers from 14 countries, with worship, Bible study, intercultural dialogue, and character building. It was a threshold event, empowering teenagers to own their faith and mission.

MISSION IN A CHANGING EUROPE

The Inter-European Division is at the crossroads of history and innovation as we commemorate 150 years of mission. We are preserving our past based on personal and institutional missionary efforts while boldly embracing the challenges of the day—secularism, diversity, and digitalization.

Guided by its vision and fueled by the Holy Spirit, the EUD remains a living witness to the love of God in Europe. Whether preaching, healing, teaching, or ministering, the division is steadfastly committed to its mission: declaring the abiding gospel with clarity, compassion, and hope, aspiring to fulfill its proclamation "to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people" (Rev. 14:6).

Indeed, the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Europe is by no means complete. Through faith and perseverance the Inter-European Division goes forward—rooted in the past, attuned to the present, and reaching toward eternity.



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Fifth Business Meeting

SESSION ACTIONS

62nd General Conference Session, St Louis, Missouri, July 6, 2025, 2:00 p.m.

GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSIONS - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease all debate and proceed immediately to voting.

GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSIONS - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: As it is now taking more than a year in some places to apply for and receive a visa to travel to the United States, this item is being recommended to give divisions and their delegates more time to prepare.

VOTED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Constitution

Article V—General Conference Sessions, to read as follows:

ARTICLE V—GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSIONS

Sec. 1. The General Conference shall hold quinquennial sessions [See 207-25GSa]

Sec. 2. The General Conference Executive Committee may call special - No change

Sec. 3. At least one-third of the total delegates authorized hereinafter - No change

Sec. 4. Generally, regular or specially called General Conference Sessions - No change

Sec. 5. The election to any office enumerated in Article VI, Sec. 1. and all - No change

Sec. 6. Minutes of the General Conference Session shall be approved at - No change

Sec. 7. The delegates to a General Conference Session shall be designated - No change

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT #2

VOTED, To approve the following partial report of the Nominating Committee:

General Conference

Secretary: Richard E McEdward

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT #3

VOTED, To approve the following partial report of the Nominating Committee:

General Conference

Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer: Paul H Douglas

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT #4

VOTED, To approve the following partial report of the Nominating Committee:

General Conference

General Vice Presidents:

Audrey E Andersson

Leonard A Johnson

Thomas L Lemon

Pierre E Omeler

Robert Osei-Bonsu

Saw Samuel

Artur A Stele



La Melodia Chorale sings to open the Sunday evening meeting. DAVID B. SHERWIN

Sec. 8. Regular delegates shall represent the General Conference's member - No change

Sec. 9. Regular delegates shall be allotted on the following - No change

Sec. 10. Delegates at-large shall represent the General Conference - No change

Sec. 11. Division administrations shall consult with unions to ensure - No change

Sec. 12. Credentials to sessions shall be issued by the General Conference - No change

Sec. 13. Calculations for all delegate allotments, as provided for in this article, shall be based upon:

The membership as of December 31 of the ~~second~~ third year preceding the General Conference Session.

The number of denominational entities eligible for inclusion in determining quotas and which are in existence as of December 31 of the ~~second~~ third year preceding the General Conference Session.

Sec. 14. Parliamentary Authority: The parliamentary authority pertaining - No change

TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATION - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

VOTED, To refer the motion, Territorial Administration - Constitution and Bylaws Amendment, to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

APPROPRIATIONS - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

VOTED, To table the motion, Appropriations - Constitution and Bylaws Amendment.

GENERAL CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE -CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

Upon the decision of the chair, the request to refer the item, General Conference Executive Committee - Constitution and Bylaws Amendment, back to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, was accepted.

GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSIONS - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: *Adventist World* magazine will be changed to a rebranded version of *Adventist Review* magazine beginning with the August 2025 edition.

VOTED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Constitution

Article V—General Conference Sessions, to read as follows:

ARTICLE V—GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSIONS

Sec. 1. The General Conference shall hold quinquennial sessions at such time and place as the General Conference Executive Committee shall designate and announce by a notice published in the *Adventist Review* ~~or *Adventist World*~~ or other publications voted by the General Conference Executive Committee in three consecutive months beginning at least four months before the date for the opening of the Session. In case special world conditions make it imperative to postpone the calling of the Session, the General Conference Executive Committee, in regular or special council, shall have authority to make such postponement, not to exceed two years, giving notice to all constituent organizations. In the event that the General Conference Executive Committee exercises its authority to postpone a Session, it shall also have the authority to set the subsequent regular Session at such time and place as it shall see fit, not to exceed five calendar years from the date the postponed Session was convened.

Sec. 2. The General Conference Executive Committee may call special - No change

Sec. 3. At least one-third of the total delegates authorized hereinafter - No change

Sec. 4. Generally, regular or specially called General Conference Sessions - No change

Sec. 5. The election to any office enumerated in Article VI, Sec. 1. and all - No change

Sec. 6. Minutes of the General Conference Session shall be approved at - No change

Sec. 7. The delegates to a General Conference Session shall be designated - No change

Sec. 8. Regular delegates shall represent the General Conference's member - No change

Sec. 9. Regular delegates shall be allotted on the following - No change

Sec. 10. Delegates at-large shall represent the General Conference - No change

Sec. 11. Division administrations shall consult with unions to ensure - No change

Sec. 12. Credentials to sessions shall be issued by the General Conference - No change

Sec. 13. Calculations for all delegate allotments, as provided for in this [See 200-25GS]

Sec. 14. Parliamentary Authority: The parliamentary authority pertaining - No change

GENERAL CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: *Adventist World* magazine will be changed to a rebranded version of *Adventist Review* magazine beginning with the August 2025 edition.

VOTED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Constitution

Article VIII—General Conference Executive Committee, to read as follows:

ARTICLE VIII—GENERAL CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Sec. 1. The Executive Committee of the General Conference shall consist of:

Ex Officio Members—1) Those elected as provided for - No change

2) Presidents of unions - No change

3) The president-executive director - No change

4) The editor of each of the following publications: ~~*Adventist Review/Adventist World*~~, *Adventist Review*, *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, *Ministry*.

5) The director of each of the - No change

6) The president and board chair of Ellen G White Estate.

b. Elected Members - No change

Sec 2. Minutes of the General Conference - No change

ADVENTIST REVIEW MINISTRIES—ENTITY NAME CHANGE

VOTED, To change the name of the entity Adventist Review Ministries to Adventist Review.

MAKING CHANGES (WHY A *CHURCH MANUAL*) - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To amend, Making Changes (Why a *Church Manual*) - *Church Manual* Amendment by adding "may" prior to "prepare a Supplement" on line 23 as follows:

In 1948, recognizing that local conditions sometimes call for special actions, the General Conference Executive Committee voted that ~~"each division, including the North American Division of the world field, prepare~~ each division of the world field may "prepare a 'Supplement' to the new *Church Manual* not in any



Every morning devotional ends with personal and group prayer time. CHRISTINA COLLARD

way modifying it but containing such additional matter as is applicable to the conditions and circumstances prevailing in the division; the manuscripts for these Supplements to be submitted to the General Conference Committee for endorsement before being printed."—*Autumn Council Actions*, 1948, p. 19.

SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment restates who is generally appointed as secretary of the school board as it is earlier explained on page 98 of the *Church Manual* under the section, Church School Board.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 11, Services and Other Meetings, page 139, School Board Meetings, to read as follows:

School Board Meetings

The church school is usually supervised by a church school board. The church elects a chairperson to preside over meetings and a secretary to keep records of meetings and actions. The principal of the school generally is appointed secretary of the board. This board should meet at regular times. Special meetings may be called by the chairperson. Some churches prefer to have the church board, or a subcommittee of the church board, also serve as the school board. (See also pp. 97-98.)

NOMINATING COMMITTEE AND THE ELECTION PROCESS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To not table the motion, Nominating Committee and the Election Process - *Church Manual* Amendment.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE AND THE ELECTION PROCESS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the motion to amend the item, Nominating Committee and the Election Process - *Church Manual* Amendment.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE AND THE ELECTION PROCESS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To not amend the motion, Nominating Committee and the Election Process - *Church Manual* Amendment, by removing the additions on page 51, lines 2-5.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE AND THE ELECTION PROCESS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the item, Nominating Committee and the Election Process - *Church Manual* Amendment.

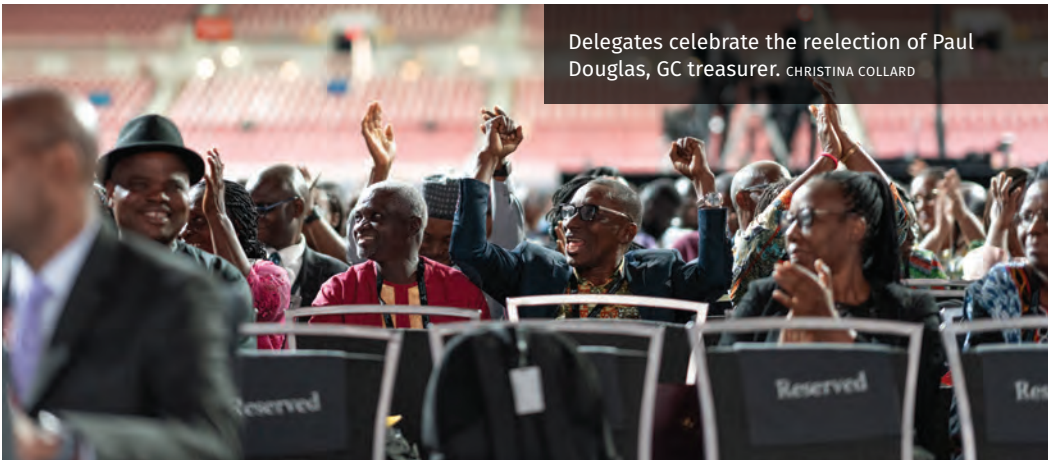
NOMINATING COMMITTEE AND THE ELECTION PROCESS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment clarifies that the nominating committee recommends names to the church and is not responsible to elect individuals to serve. It also specifies that the pastor/chair of the nominating committee and treasurer help determine the eligibility of nominees to hold church office.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 10, Elections, pages 116-120, Nominating Committee and the Election Process, to read as follows:

Nominating Committee and the Election Process

Officers are elected every one or two years (See p. 77.) through an appointed nominating committee. In exceptional circumstances, and in consultation with the conference, the term of office may be extended an additional year. This committee brings its report to the church, which then votes on the names presented. This procedure enables the church to give careful study to each



Delegates celebrate the reelection of Paul Douglas, GC treasurer. CHRISTINA COLLARD

name prior to election and avoids the competitive element that may arise when nominations are made from the floor.

The nominating committee shall study the needs of the church and inquire into the fitness of members to serve in the different offices. This is another reason officers shall not be nominated from the floor or by general ballot.

The church may decide based on its needs that it would be best served with a standing nominating committee. As such, it may appoint such a committee which would function year-round to ~~make nominations for~~ recommend to the church names to fill vacancies or to fill regular positions identified in the *Church Manual*.

The size of the nominating committee will range from five members in a small church to a larger number in a large church. The number to be chosen is left to the discretion of each church and should be studied by the board. A suitable recommendation then will be brought to the church, using a minimum of time in the Sabbath worship hour.

Quorum—The quorum for the nominating committee may be determined - No change

When and How the Nominating Committee Is Appointed—The nominating - No change

How the Process Works—The steps of the nominating process - No change

Who Should Be Members of the Nominating Committee—Only members - No change

Work of the Nominating Committee—The chairperson should call a meeting of the committee as soon as possible after its election. With earnest prayer the committee should begin preparing a list of nominees for all offices. Nominees must be members in regular standing of the church making the appointments. The returning of a faithful tithe is a prerequisite for holding church office. The pastor or chair of the nominating committee shall work with the treasurer to develop a process by which only members eligible to hold office are nominated. This should be done in such a way that maintains as much confidentiality as possible. ~~The list of nominees will be presented to the church at a Sabbath service or at a specially called business meeting. In making their selections, the committee may counsel with others who are well informed. This committee does not nominate either the pastor or the assistant pastor(s), who are appointed by the conference.~~

The list of nominees will be presented to the church at a Sabbath service or at a specially called business meeting. In making their selections, the committee may counsel with others who are well informed. This committee does not nominate either the pastor or the assistant pastor(s), who are appointed by the conference.

The list of officers to be considered by the nominating committee may vary with size of membership. A larger church may determine it needs more officers. A smaller church may have fewer. The committee deals with all leadership positions except Sabbath School teachers, who are recommended by the Sabbath School council and approved by the board. See Notes, #1, pp. 184-185, for a list of possible officers.

Nominating Committee to Get Consent of Prospective Officers—Having - No change

Members May Appear Before the Nominating Committee—Members - No change

Nominating Committee Discussions Are Confidential—All inquiries - No change

Reporting to the Church—The nominating committee's report is presented - No change

Objections to the Report of the Nominating Committee—Members may - No change

Filling Vacancies Between Elections—If an office of the church becomes - No change

Geoffrey G Mbwana, Chair
Claude J Richli, Secretary
Hensley M Moorooven, Actions Editor
Nichole N Miles, Recording Secretary

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT #5

VOTED, To approve the following partial report of the Nominating Committee:

General Conference
Undertreasurer: J Raymond Wahlen II
Associate Treasurers: Timothy H Aka
Sabrina C DeSouza
German A Lust
Gideon M Mutero
Josue Pierre
Richard T Stephenson

Sixth Business Meeting

SESSION ACTIONS

62nd General Conference Session, St Louis, Missouri, July 7, 2025, 9:30 a.m.

MEMBERSHIP RECORD - *CHURCH MANUAL* ADDITION

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the motion to amend the item, Membership Record - *Church Manual* Addition.

MEMBERSHIP RECORD - *CHURCH MANUAL* ADDITION

VOTED, To not amend the motion, Membership Record - *Church Manual* Addition, by removing "and the members may be removed by a vote of the church" from lines 24 and 25 on page 53.

MEMBERSHIP RECORD - *CHURCH MANUAL* ADDITION

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the item, Membership Record - *Church Manual* Addition.

MEMBERSHIP RECORD - *CHURCH MANUAL* ADDITION

RATIONALE: This amendment creates a new section regarding the Membership Record that is separate from the section on Transferring Members (see 406-25GSb) and provides more detail on the need for constant redemptive membership review.

VOTED, To add a new section, Membership Record, to the *Church Manual*, Chapter 7, Membership, following Transferring Members, on page 61, to read as follows:

Membership Record

Membership Record—The church should have one current, regularly updated membership record. Names are added or removed only on the vote of the church, at death, or at the member's request. (See p. 87.) Membership records are subject to review by the conference of which the local congregation is a constituent. This rule, which also applies to every entity or level of the organization, provides the maximum privacy of members' personal information and shall comply with legal requirements. (See pp. 87-88.)

Multiple Membership Records—Where it emerges that a church member's membership record is held at more than one church, the membership record at the local church where the record is most recent will be regarded as the current membership, and any other membership record of that church member will be removed by vote of the relevant church as an adjustment out. This is only to deal with a situation where an additional membership record has inadvertently been recorded; no member is to lose his or her current membership in this way. If a person has been a member of their local church, but their membership record had inadvertently not been recorded, that person can, by vote of the church, be registered as a member as an adjustment in.

Membership in the Conference Church—Isolated members should unite with the conference church, which is a body organized for the benefit of believers who otherwise would be without church privileges. Aged and infirmed members who live near a church and conference officers and other employees, including pastors, should be members of a local church, not the conference church.

The conference president is the presiding elder of the conference church, and the work normally carried by the clerk and the treasurer is handled by the conference secretary and treasurer. Since the church has no board, all business normally conducted by a local church board is conducted by the conference executive committee, which also appoints delegates from the conference church to the conference session.

Redemptive Membership Review—Jesus called His Church to fulfill the Great Commission to make disciples. With this goal in view, local churches should aim to create a warm and caring environment for spiritual growth and to encourage all ministries of the church to be united in making mature and faithful disciples.

A healthy church develops a nurturing plan that equips every member to be involved in disciple-making using their talents and spiritual gifts. In addition, it should create a strategy to retain and reclaim former and inactive members through (1) a regular redemptive membership review process and (2) reclaiming ministries.

Redemptive membership review intends to improve pastoral care based on the foundation of accurate membership records. Nevertheless, it must have a redemptive purpose of seeing people rather than numbers. Updating the records should be motivated by the goal of being more effective in pastoral care and reaching the lost.

In the Bible we find the words, "[N]ot forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching" (Heb. 10:25). There is great need to seek for those who are far away. Ellen G. White says, "If the lost sheep is not brought back to the fold, it wanders until it perishes. And many souls go down to ruin for want of a hand stretched out to save" (COL 191). It is a most needed ministry to review the membership records and to approach this exercise in a Christ-like redemptive way.

In the unfortunate situation that members may still be missing after every effort has been made to locate them and welcome them back into fellowship, the church may certify that it has tried without success to locate the members, and the members may be removed by a vote of the church. The clerk should record in the membership record: "Location unknown. Voted to designate as missing." (See pp. 71-72.)

Resources—For a brief description of the redemptive membership review process, see Notes, #1, p. 179.

TRANSFERRING MEMBERS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the motion to amend the item, Transferring Members - *Church Manual* Committee.

TRANSFERRING MEMBERS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To not amend the motion, Transferring Members - *Church Manual* Amendment, on page 54, lines 33-36 as follows:

Careful consideration should be given by the church clerk, church pastor, and first elder of the granting church and the church clerk, church pastor, and first elder of the receiving church to ensure the members in the process of being transferred are living in harmony with the fundamental teachings and related practices of the church.

TRANSFERRING MEMBERS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the motion to amend the amendment to the item, Transferring Members - *Church Manual* Amendment.

TRANSFERRING MEMBERS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To not amend the amendment to the motion, Transferring Members - *Church Manual* Amendment, by removing "In the case that full consensus is not reached, the pastor, first elder, or the board should request guidance from the conference," and retaining "The pastor, the first elder, and the church board should carefully consider changes to membership status (transfer, baptism, and profession of faith)," from lines 23-26 on page 55.

TRANSFERRING MEMBERS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the motion to amend the item, Transferring Members - *Church Manual* Committee.

TRANSFERRING MEMBERS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To amend the motion, Transferring Members - *Church Manual* Amendment, by removing "The pastor, the first elder, and the church board should carefully consider changes to membership status (transfer, baptism, and profession of faith). In the case that full consensus is not reached, the pastor, first elder, or the board should request guidance from the conference." from lines 23-26 on page 55.

TRANSFERRING MEMBERS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment clarifies the function of church clerks and the process of membership transfer.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 7, Membership, pages 57-61, Transferring Members, to read as follows:

Transferring Members

When members move to a different area, the clerk of the church holding their membership records should write to the secretary of the relevant conference requesting that a pastor in the new locality visit them and help facilitate their membership transfer to the new congregation.

The clerk of the church holding the membership records also should notify the transferring members of the intention to give their new addresses to the conference.

Members who move to another locality for longer than six months should make immediate applications for letters of transfer. Members moving to an isolated area with no church within a reasonable distance should apply to join the conference church.

Method of Granting Letters of ~~Transfer—Members~~ Transfer—The church clerk should encourage those regularly attending his/her church to request a transfer of their membership. Members should apply for their letters of transfer to the clerk of the church with which the members desire to unite (the receiving church). That clerk sends the request to the clerk of the church from which the members desire to transfer (the granting church). (For alternative method, see p. 58.)

When the clerk of the granting church receives the request, the clerk brings it to the pastor or elder, who in turn presents it to the board. Careful consideration should be given by the granting church and the receiving church to ensure the members in the process of being transferred are living in harmony with the fundamental teachings and related practices of the church. After due consideration, the board votes to recommend, favorably or otherwise, to the church. (See pp. 37-40, 41, 55-61, 71-73, 87.) The pastor or elder then brings the recommendation to the attention of the church for a first reading. Final action is taken the following week, when the request is presented to the church for a vote.

The purpose of the one-week interval is to give members an opportunity to object to the granting of the letter. Objections ordinarily should not be publicly stated but be lodged with the pastor or elder, who then refers them to the board for consideration. The board should give each objector opportunity to appear to present his/her objection. If the objection is not based on valid grounds, the person raising objection should be admonished to withdraw it. If the objection is based on valid grounds, it is the duty of the board to investigate. Final action on granting the letter is deferred until the matter has been satisfactorily settled.

If the objection involves personal relationships, every effort should be made to effect reconciliation. If public offenses are involved, disciplinary measures may be called for. If there is some spiritual lapse, efforts should be made to restore the member.

Clerk to Prepare Letter—When the church has granted the letter - No change

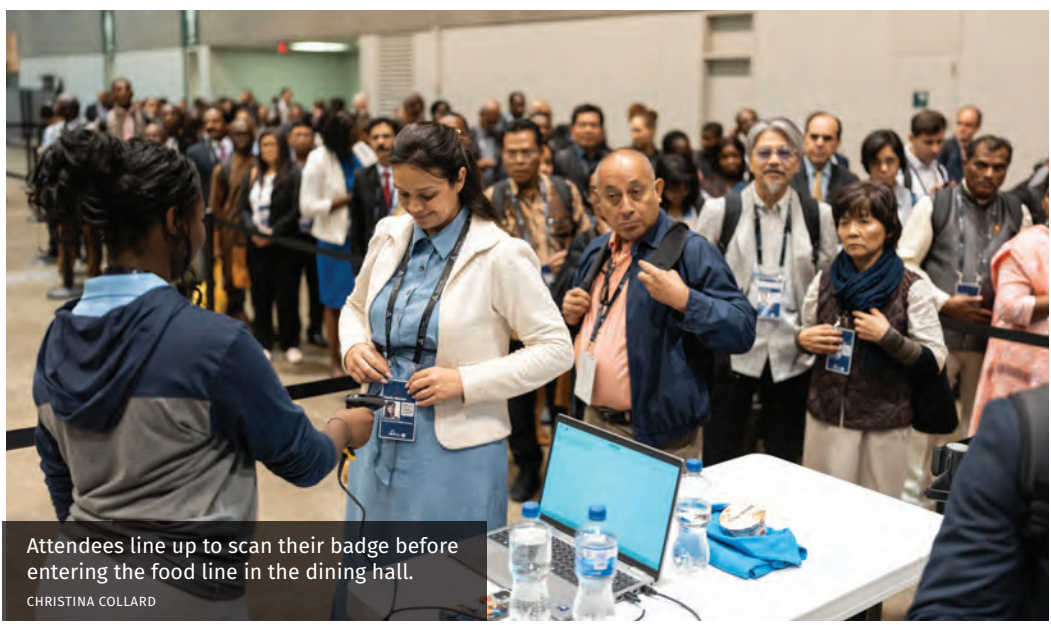
Letter Valid Six Months—A letter of transfer is valid for six months from - No change

Alternative Method for Membership Transfer—A division may approve - No change

Membership During Transfer—Under no circumstances shall the clerk - No change

Receiving Members Under Difficult Conditions—World conditions - No change

Counted in Statistical Reports—When quarterly and annual statistical - No change



Attendees line up to scan their badge before entering the food line in the dining hall.

CHRISTINA COLLARD

If Member Is Not Accepted—The receiving church must receive the - No change

Letters Granted Only to Those in Regular Standing—Letters of transfer are granted only to members in regular standing, never to a member under discipline. Qualifying statements are out of order except when the pastor or board of the granting church has factual or proven knowledge that the member has been involved as a perpetrator of child abuse. In that case, for the safety of children, the pastor or elder should provide a confidential statement alerting the pastor or elder of the congregation to which the member is transferring.

If a member who has moved to a new location has grown indifferent, the pastor or elder of the granting church may, to be clear in the matter before the transfer is granted, take up the question with the pastor or elder of the receiving church.

No Letter Without Member's Approval—In no case should a church vote - No change

Church Board Cannot Grant Letters—A board has no authority to vote - No change

Membership in the Conference Church—Isolated members should unite with the conference church, which is a body organized for the benefit of believers who otherwise would be without church privileges. Aged and infirmed members who live near a church and conference officers and other employees, including pastors, should be members of a local church, not the conference church.

~~The conference president is the presiding elder of the conference church, and the work normally carried by the clerk and the treasurer is handled by the conference secretary and treasurer. Since the church has no board, all business normally conducted by a local church board is conducted by the conference executive committee, which also appoints delegates from the conference church to the conference session.~~

~~Membership Record—The church should have one current, regularly updated membership record. Names are added or removed only on the vote of the church, at death, or at the member's request. (See p. 87.)~~

~~Redemptive Membership Review—Membership records are kept up to date by the local church. They are subject to review by the next higher organization. This rule, which also applies to every entity or level of the organization, provides the maximum privacy of members' personal information and shall comply with legal requirements. (See pp. 87-88.)~~

~~In the Bible we find the words, "[N]ot forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching" (Heb. 10:25). There is great need to seek for those who are far away. Ellen G. White says, "If the lost sheep is not brought back to the fold, it wanders until it perishes. And many souls go down to ruin for want of a hand stretched out to save" (COL 191). It is a most needed ministry to review the membership records and to approach this exercise in a Christ-like redemptive way.~~

Pierre E Omeler, Chair
Karen J Porter, Secretary
Hensley M Moorooven, Actions Editor
Tamara K Boward, Recording Secretary

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT #6

VOTED, To approve the following partial report of the Nominating Committee:

General Conference
Undersecretary: Hensley M Moorooven
Associate Secretaries: Gary D Krause
Elbert Kuhn
Alexander Ott
Karen J Porter
Gerson P Santos
Selom K Sessou

ADVENTIST REVIEW VOLUME 202 | NUMBER 11

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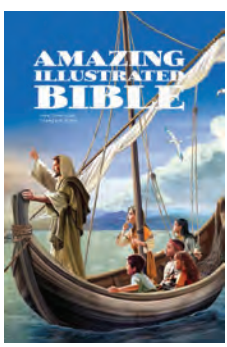
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ADVENTIST REVIEW

GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION
BULLETIN 5
GC 25

JULY 9, 2025

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NEWS

DELEGATES VOTE IN FIVE NEW DIVISION PRESIDENTS

CONCURRENTLY, EIGHT INCUMBENTS ARE REELECTED TO THEIR POSITIONS.

MARCOS PASEGGI, *ADVENTIST REVIEW*

In the July 7 afternoon business session at the sixty-second General Conference (GC) Session, in St. Louis, Missouri, United States, delegates voted to accept the recommendations of the Nominating Committee for the president positions in the 13 divisions, or major church regions, of the Seventh-day Adventist Church around the world. Delegates voted overwhelmingly to reelect the incumbents in eight regions and to elect new presidents for the other five divisions. Division presidents are also vice presidents of the GC. The five new presidents with their respective regions are highlighted below.

ABNER DE LOS SANTOS, INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION (IAD)

A former General Conference vice president from 2015 to 2025, Abner De Los Santos has been elected as president of IAD. A native of Mexico, De Los Santos began his ministry as a district pastor and later served in key administrative roles in his home country, including conference executive secretary, union executive secretary, and union president.

Before his decade of leadership as a GC vice president, De Los Santos served as one of three vice presidents of the IAD from 2010 to 2015 and previously held the role of president of the North Mexican Union.

De Los Santos has more than 39 years of denominational service. He is married to Leticia, and together they have two adult children and four grandchildren.

BARNA MAGYAROSI, INTER-EUROPEAN DIVISION (EUD)

The executive secretary of the EUD since 2015, Barna Magyarosi has been elected as the new president of that church region.

Magyarosi was first elected to a leadership position in the regional Adventist Church in South Transylvania, Romania, in 2001, heading the Sabbath School Department. In 2003 he moved to the Romanian Adventist Theological institute, in Cernica, Romania, as a lecturer. In 2005 he was appointed a lecturer of Old Testament studies and became the director of the theological institute that same year.

In 2010 Magyarosi was elected head of the Education and Family Ministries departments of the EUD at the GC Session in Atlanta, Georgia. In this role he also became chair of the EUD's Biblical Research Committee. He is married to Noémi-Laura, and they have one daughter, Blanka.

SOON GI KANG, NORTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION (NSD)

Soon Gi Kang was elected as the new president of the NSD for the next 2025-2030 quinquennium. Kang is the first person in the history of the division to have been elected president while serving as president of a union conference.

Born in 1965, Kang graduated with a degree in theology from Sahmyook University in South Korea and later earned a Master of Divinity degree from the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIIAS) in the Philippines. He also finished the coursework for the Doctor of Ministry degree in the same school.

Kang began his ministry in 1990 as an associate pastor at the Sahmyook Central church. Over the years he served in various churches and administrative roles, including Youth Ministries director of the East Central Korean Conference (ECKC), Ministerial secretary of the East Central Korean Conference, and Sabbath School and Personal Ministries director of the Korean Union Conference (KUC).

In 2020 he was elected president of the ECKC and later that same year became president of the KUC. During his term he promoted global mission expansion through such initiatives as the 10/40 Global Mission Project. Kang and his wife, Shin JinHee, have two children, Minseok and Minkyung.

COVER PHOTO BY JOSEF KISSINGER



MARK FROELICH

JOHN VICTOR CHINTA, SOUTHERN ASIA DIVISION (SUD)

Delegates voted to accept the nomination of John Victor Chinta as the new president of SUD. Chinta was the executive secretary of the SUD, being elected to that position in 2022. As division secretary Chinta was in charge of not only maintaining accurate records but also supporting the church's mission and evangelism efforts, working with other leaders to ensure that the church's goals and objectives were met, serving as a liaison between the church's leadership and its members, and playing a key role in the development of the church's strategic plans.

Chinta began his service as a church pastor in the South Andhra Section in India in 1988 and later served as a department director in the same region, region director in the South Bengal region, and president of the Southeast Andhra Section. He was elected president of the East-Central India Union in Hyderabad in 2015.

BASSEY UDOH, WEST-CENTRAL AFRICA DIVISION (WAD)

Bassey Udoh, president of the Eastern Nigeria Union Conference since December 2012, has been voted as the new president of the WAD.

Udoh has a degree in religion and business administration (1990), a Master of Religion in pastoral ministry (1995), and a Ph.D. in religious studies (social ethics), which he completed in 2008. He has extensive experience in Nigeria, where he served as executive secretary, Ministerial secretary, Stewardship director, and then president of what was then the Eastern Nigeria Union Mission.

As an evangelist, Udoh has conducted numerous evangelistic series across the world. He is also a chaplain colonel of Dominion Chaplain Corps International, and pro-chancellor and chair of the Governing Council of Clifford University.

INCUMBENT DIVISION PRESIDENTS

Harrington S. Akombwa, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division (SID)
Stanley E. Arco, South American Division (SAD)
G. Alexander Bryant, North American Division (NAD)
Roger O. Caderma, Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD)
Daniel Duda, Trans-European Division (TED)
Mikhail F. Kaminskiy, Euro-Asia Division (ESD)
Blasious M. Ruguri, East-Central Africa Division (ECD)
Glenn C. Townend, South Pacific Division (SPD)

DELEGATES VOTE *CHURCH MANUAL*, BYLAWS AND CONSTITUTION ITEMS

THIS IS WHAT WAS DISCUSSED AND VOTED ON JULY 6 AND 7 DURING GC SESSION.

MARCOS PASEGGI, *ADVENTIST REVIEW*

The fifth, sixth, and seventh business meetings during the General Conference Session included discussions and motions related to the *Church Manual*. These were the first two of several sessions where *Church Manual* and Bylaws and Constitution issues are expected to be discussed and voted on, leaders explained.

On the morning of July 6, delegates voted to amend the *Church Manual* in the section dealing with the credentials and licenses of pastors and other employees. The rationale was to eliminate unnecessary repetition, church leaders explained.

Delegates also voted to amend the wording of the suggestion that each division prepare a Supplement to the *Church Manual* to include items pertaining to its region. The wording was changed to "may" to express it as a suggestion.

CHANGES TO THE *CHURCH MANUAL*

The *Church Manual* Committee reports proposed nonsubstantive editorial changes to the main content of the *Church Manual* to an Annual Council of the General Conference Executive Committee, which may give final approval, leaders explained. They added: "However, in the event the Annual Council determines by one-third vote that an editorial change substantively alters the meaning of a passage, the proposed change must go to the General Conference Session."

They also explained that at the final Annual Council of a quinquennium, the General Conference Executive Committee reviews all changes to the notes and coordinates the changes. "A new edition of the *Church Manual* is published after every General Conference Session," they said. "The most recent edition should always be used."

OTHER MOTIONS

Another motion related to a school board, specifying that the principal of the school is generally appointed secretary of the board.

A final motion on the *Church Manual* on July 6 dealt with the nominating committee and the election process. It clarifies that the nominating committee "recommends names to the church and is not responsible to elect individuals to serve." It also specifies that the pastor/chair of the nominating committee and treasurer help determine the eligibility of nominees to hold church office.

BYLAWS AND CONSTITUTION ISSUES

Delegates discussed a motion dealing with how to calculate delegate allotments for the General Conference Session based on the number of members in a particular region. The motion called to add one full year—from the second to the third year preceding the event. The rationale is that it is now taking more than a year in some places to apply for and receive a visa to travel to the United States, leaders explained. "This item is being recommended to give divisions and their delegates more time to prepare," they said.

After discussing the item, delegates voted to refer the motion to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

A change was proposed that would allow church leaders to make significant decisions at the Spring Meeting, which a sizable number of delegates follow virtually every year. In the past, major decisions were debated and voted on only at Annual Council every fall. After discussion, it was decided to refer the item back to the Policy and Bylaws Committee.

Two more motions concerned *Adventist Review*. The first included acknowledging that the *Adventist World* magazine will cease publication, to be replaced by a world edition of *Adventist Review* beginning in August 2025. The second was a name change from Adventist Review Ministries to Adventist Review. Both motions passed.

"God has so arranged that when we work in harmony with Him in these things there will flow great spiritual blessings to us."

DURING THE SIXTH AND SEVENTH BUSINESS MEETINGS

On July 7, delegates reconvened to discuss and vote other items related to the *Church Manual*. Leaders introduced an addition to the *Church Manual* that seeks to create a new section regarding the Membership Record that is separate from the Transferring Members section and provides more detail on the need for constant redemptive membership review.

Delegates introduced and discussed several amendments to the main motion on the Transferring Members section, and voted not to amend a number of them. They voted, however, on an amendment that removes the fact that "the pastor, the first elder, and the church board should carefully consider changes to membership status."

Another amendment sought to clarify the function of church clerks and the process of membership transfer. The amendment added that "the church clerk should encourage those regularly attending his/her church to request a transfer of their membership." While deleting other sections, it added that "careful consideration should be given by the granting church and the receiving church to ensure the members in the process of being transferred are living in harmony with the fundamental teachings and related practices of the church." The motion to amend that section of the *Church Manual* passed.

EDITORIAL CHANGES, OFFERINGS, AND STEWARDSHIP

Another amendment voted deals with members who move and don't report it. It included only an editorial amendment to make the wording consistent, and it was passed.

Delegates also voted an amendment that seeks to express the importance of giving offerings as part of worship. "Voluntary offerings and the tithe constitute the revenue of the Lord's work," the *Church Manual* quotes from page 74 of Ellen G. White's *Acts of the Apostles*.

Another amendment voted seeks to transmit the importance of stewardship in all areas of life. Among other things, it states that "our conscientious stewardship of God's blessings helps to build our faith. God has so arranged that when we work in harmony with Him in these things there will flow great spiritual blessings to us."

Other items, upon the decision of the chair, were referred back to the *Church Manual* Committee to discuss some of the amendments delegates suggested.

SABBATH SCHOOL, COMMUNION OFFERING, AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Another amendment voted incorporates making disciples an important part of Sabbath School and specifies the responsibility of the Sabbath School secretary.

Regarding Communion, a voted amendment now specifies that "an offering for the poor may be taken as the congregation leaves. This offering is promoted as an addition to regular and systematic offerings."

Another amendment passed emphasizes that "the treasurer should never comment on personal giving decisions." Also, that "the treasurer and the pastor should never disclose individual giving records, except with consent of the giver, as required by law."


CHRISTINA COLLARD



Young people prepare to impact St. Louis for Jesus.
NICOL BELVEDERE / AME (CC BY 4.0)

YOUTH ON A MISSION
GC SESSION VOLUNTEERS IMPACT ST. LOUIS

BETH THOMAS

Many eyes are fixed on the business sessions and elections taking place inside the Dome at America's Center, but a different kind of mission is quietly taking over the streets of St. Louis. Under the leadership of Busi Khumalo, General Conference (GC) Youth Ministries director, a dedicated team of young volunteers is making a difference—one garden, one street, and one book at a time. And they've got their work cut out for them.

This coordinated community outreach, known simply as Impact St. Louis, is a collaborative effort between the GC Youth Ministries Department and local leaders, including Tyrone Douglas, Youth and Adventist Community Services (ACS) director for the Mid-America Union Conference, and Byron Wright, Youth Ministries director for the Central States Conference.

Locally based, Wright was excited to partner with this effort. "Outreach and making the community better is really where my passion is, and so it was a no-brainer for me to get involved wherever I could," says Wright.

When asked how this project was born, Khumalo shares, "In Youth Ministries, we have an initiative called Global Youth Day [GYD], which happens once a year. This event is basically an extension of GYD. Our slogan is 'Be the Sermon.' We want our young people to be the sermon in a practical way, folding their sleeves, getting their hands dirty, getting into the gutter, and making sure they impact the lives of those who are God's people."

His team reached out to the city of St. Louis to determine how the youth could help. "They helped us identify projects," he says. "We want to put Christianity into practical terms. We want to walk the walk and talk the talk."

One of Wright's responsibilities is overseeing the garden outreach effort. Two community gardens, the Southside Wellness Center and the Fresh Starts Community Garden, are being beautified by a team of volunteers from Monday through Wednesday. City cleanup crews are hitting the streets each day through Thursday.

Maygen Daley, a young guest from the Bahamas, was on the litter crew yesterday. "It wasn't bad; we were just cleaning up the streets. I was in a group with people from the Caribbean, so it was like being at home!"

Another group of volunteers is working with the ACS Supply Distribution Center, run by the Mid-America Union ACS team, to distribute essential items to families in need following an intense hurricane that struck the area in May.

Perhaps the most ambitious outreach project is the citywide book distribution planned for Sabbath, July 12. All the volunteers will work together to share uplifting literature downtown and around the iconic Gateway Arch.

The mission doesn't stop when the sun sets, though!

Each evening, youth gather at the Marriott Grand Hotel for a mix of worship, mission-focused conversations, leadership advice, and social activities.

During a week filled with decision-making and *Church Manual*-shaping, these youth are reminding the church—and the city—what mission looks like on the ground. It's sweaty, gritty work. And it's exactly the kind of impact the world needs right now.



A volunteer weeds a local community garden.
NICOL BELVEDERE / AME (CC BY 4.0)



Sarafina Sikwata from East-Central Africa Division expresses concern about the language used in the *Church Manual* during the Sunday morning business session on July 6. To move a motion, make a point of order, or speak for or against a suggested change, delegates line up at the microphone and scan in using their name tag so they can be identified by the chairperson of the session. Delegates then have a two-minute time limit to get their point across.

PHOTO BY JOSEF KISSINGER



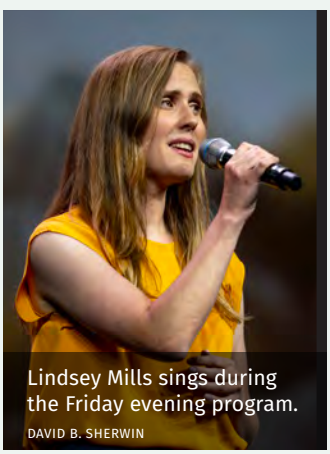
Instrumentalists share their talents during the divine service on Sabbath.
CHRISTINA COLLARD

FROM AUDITION TO APPEAL
WHAT IT TAKES TO BRING MUSIC TO THE MAIN STAGE AT GC SESSION

BETH THOMAS

Music is a powerful tool to prepare hearts, settle minds, and set the tone for worship. "Music was made to serve a holy purpose, to lift the thoughts to that which is pure, noble, and elevating, and to awaken in the soul devotion and gratitude to God."* Understanding this sacred role, the music coordination team for the General Conference (GC) Session takes their responsibility seriously. And as beautiful strains of voice and instrument waft through the Dome at America's Center, heaven draws a little nearer.

The multilayer process of music selection begins three years before the session. A team of individuals work with each of the 13 divisions and the attached fields to choose a music coordinator for that region. The local music coordinator then solicits organizations such as universities, academies or high schools, and congregations with good musical talent to recruit musicians to send in audition materials. The division music committee then selects the music that will be presented to the GC Music Committee for final review.



Lindsey Mills sings during the Friday evening program.
DAVID B. SHERWIN

The committee looks for cultural appropriateness, theological correctness, and uniqueness in such entities as children's choirs, mission groups, or original compositions—or groups from world regions experiencing particular hardship. Gaspar Colón, a vice chair of the GC Music Committee, said, "This is part of the inspiration we look for—for people to see that even in places where life is difficult, there is a swell of praise."

Once they have approved a piece, it is designated to the location where it will be performed: the main stage, the youth or children's divisions, or in the Ferrara Theater, located on the ground floor of the convention center.

Approved musicians are notified with ample time to make arrangements to attend session. Often groups must raise funds and apply for visas, a process that can be time-consuming. The GC Session Music Committee provides letters of invitation for musicians to present to their embassies, hopefully expediting the visa process.

There is still another layer of process, however. The Office of General Counsel at the world church headquarters must review every song, every lyric, and every translation, as well as public domain hymns, to ensure the music falls within our legal rights to broadcast.

When musicians arrive, they check in at the main music office in the America's Center Dome, where they receive their schedule.

First-time session attendee Lindsey Mills, a singer-songwriter from Colorado, United States, shared her original song, "A Thousand Fires," on the main stage following Global Total Member Involvement testimonies Friday evening. She said, "As soon as you get here, you let the committee know that you've arrived—they need to know where their musicians are! They book rehearsal rooms and arrange sound checks for us when possible. Then, when it's your scheduled event, you wait backstage until your performance, so you're ready to go on." Her excitement to share the message through music was palpable.

We can assume with confidence that each soloist, group, or instrumentalist shares the same enthusiasm as they prepare to elevate and "to awaken in the soul devotion and gratitude to God" during the sixty-second GC Session.

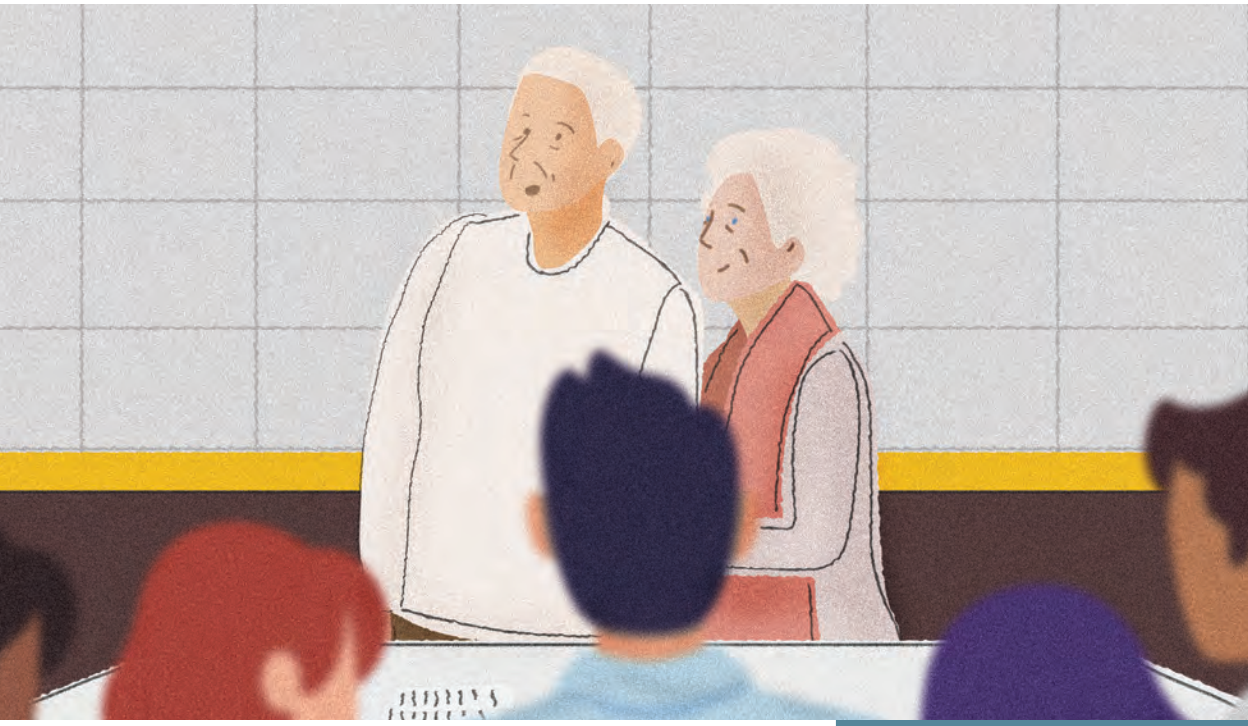
* Ellen G. White, *Christian Education* (Battle Creek, Mich.: International Tract Society, 1894), p. 62.

Jim and Donna

are in good health,

happily retired, and love their community. They want to pass on their legacy of giving to their grandchildren and want them to have a say in how they begin to make donations with their funds each year. They've called a family meeting to explore interests and gauge how to move forward with exciting contributions that all can see the fruit of.

To learn more about Jim and Donna's journey—
scan the QR code or visit **willplan.org/JimandDonna**



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THE SIGN



JOHN BRADSHAW

DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE PRESENTED TUESDAY MORNING, JULY 8, 2025

In 2013 a street vendor set up a stall in Central Park in New York City, claiming to be selling originals by the British street artist Banksy. Although Banksy, from Bristol in the west of England, is a modern-day art sensation, the paintings were being sold for US$60, ludicrously cheap for artworks that could have been priced at tens of thousands. Banksy originals have sold for millions, yet it wasn't until midafternoon that the first painting sold—to a woman who negotiated a 50 percent discount. Then a tourist from New Zealand bought two, followed by a man from Chicago

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Opposition to the Sabbath is like opposition to creation. You can't logically debate one or the other, as both are solidly biblical.

who purchased four of the supposed Banksy originals.

It turns out the pictures *were* authentic Banksys, and the people who bought them for US$60—or less—could, if they chose to do so, sell them for as much as US$100,000 each. The people in Central Park that day who dismissively brushed by the artworks simply didn't appreciate or understand the opportunity.

In the beginning God created. Light. The atmosphere. The ground and plants. The sun moon and stars. Birds and sea creatures. Land animals and humans, and then . . .

"And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made" (Gen. 2:2, 3).

Like the people in Central Park who dismissed the Banksy originals as a hoax, people today walk by the Sabbath, a magnificent original created by God Himself, without realizing their opportunity.

Jesus said the Sabbath was made for the human family. When Adam and Eve came forth from the hand of God, there was no Sabbath. God made it specifically for them—and us. That makes it precious; you treasure a gift if it was made for you by someone you know or love. It occupies a special place in your heart. God made the Sabbath with *you* in mind, giving you time away from the distractions of the world, and time close to the heart of God. You get to step back from many of your responsibilities and rest from your labors. God saw we needed this, and He knew that in keeping the Sabbath we would be reminded more vividly of Him.

Satan hates the Sabbath because it speaks of our Maker, the one who "formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (Gen. 2:7). The Sabbath declares our dependence on God and acknowledges His sovereignty. Every seventh day we step back from our regular routine and enter into an experience with God different from the other six days of the week.

KEEP IT HOLY

God repeatedly underscored the importance of the Sabbath. The manna fell six days a week but not on Sabbath, because that day was different. Typically the manna would last only a day before it began to spoil, except for the manna collected on the sixth day, which lasted through the Sabbath. This all happened prior to the giving of the law on Sinai, predating the giving of the Ten Commandments.

God says to us today, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it" (Ex. 20:8-11).

The same God said, "If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the Lord; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the Lord has spoken" (Isa. 58:13, 14).

It must surely be time for a revival of Sabbathkeeping among God's people. Parents can make the Sabbath a joy for children. Worship services should be vital. We can't sleepwalk our way through church, inflicting lifeless preaching upon God's people. And might I make this request of preachers everywhere? Preach the Word. Lift up Jesus. Sabbath morning is for calling sinners and

saints to repentance and surrender, that they might see Jesus on the cross. The last place a person should hear a lifeless sermon is a Seventh-day Adventist church. We have set our preachers and teachers up for success with 28 fundamental beliefs, Daniel and Revelation, the three angels' messages, Calvary and an empty tomb, and Jesus' ascension to heaven. We have the blessed hope. Jesus is coming back soon! Our people should be leaving church on Sabbath morning ablaze, excited, challenged, and convicted. There ought to be fresh bread in the sanctuary every Sabbath morning.

When we sit down in a Seventh-day Adventist church on Sabbath, we're making some bold claims. We are saying that we were made in the image of God, that Jesus is our Savior, and that His Word is the rule of our faith and practice. We wouldn't be keeping the Sabbath if the Bible didn't command it. In keeping the Sabbath, we're claiming that we honor the teachings of the Bible. So let's be sure we do that. We open ourselves up to criticism when it is seen that we are keeping one while ignoring others—and that criticism is valid.

In addition to being a sign of God's creative power, the Sabbath is a sign of God's *re*-creative power, His ability to re-form in us the character of Jesus, lost because of sin. "Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you" (Ex. 31:13).

CELEBRATE THE SABBATH

That's a big claim to make: "We keep the Sabbath, and it is a sign that God sanctifies us." So how are we doing with that? We don't want to be Pharisees, of course, but we do want to have a deep sense of our responsibility before God. Sabbathkeepers should be growing spiritually, growing in holiness, and constantly reaching out after God. There's nothing casual about our love for God. There's nothing casual about Jesus sweating blood. There's nothing casual about Calvary, and there's nothing casual about what is going on right now in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary.

We don't want to be casual in our keeping of the Sabbath. It isn't just another day. It isn't a day for business. It isn't a day for eating at your favorite restaurant. We have the preparation day to take care of that. Polluting the Sabbath was responsible for a great many problems in Israel. At the same time, the Sabbath is to be full of joy. Anyone who has visited the Western Wall in Jerusalem on a Friday evening has seen the exuberance with which Jewish people welcome the Sabbath. While we aren't to be imitators of anyone, it occurred to me, as I witnessed soldiers dancing and young men and women singing loudly and people praying, that the Sabbath should be celebrated and not simply observed, as one would the anniversary of a bombing or the overthrow of a government.

Ellen White wrote in *Early Writings* about a time God's people would "[proclaim] the Sabbath more fully."[1] She said that some would be disturbed by that, "as they could not refute the Sabbath truth."[2] Opposition to the Sabbath is like opposition to creation. You can't logically debate one or the other, as both are solidly biblical. Sound arguments against either one do not exist—which could either make us arrogant or fill us with awe as we consider the opportunity God has placed before us.

According to the Bible, we're approaching a time when the question of the Sabbath will be front and center. But it isn't really about the Sabbath, is it? Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). The question is love for God. And those who love God with an open heart will keep the Sabbath here on earth, and, by the grace of God, keep it one day soon in heaven.

[1] Ellen G. White, *Early Writings* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1882, 1945), p. 33.

[2] *Ibid.*

John Bradshaw is the president of It Is Written.



SCAN HERE FOR **ADRA's SCHEDULE** OF **EVENTS!**

Serving With Conviction

Supplying legal ministry to the church

KARNIK DOUKMETZIAN

For more than 80 years the Office of General Counsel (OGC) has been providing quality legal services to the General Conference, its divisions and institutions, and other denominational organizations around the world. Since the office was established in 1936, six individuals have served as general counsel. As the legal needs of the church have increased, so has the role OGC plays in providing legal services and advice to denominational entities and leadership. Retirement and reassignments at the last General Conference Session brought about some personnel changes at OGC. Currently the in-house staff of six lawyers, an immigration specialist, and three assistants provide legal services and counsel to the General Conference, its divisions, and its institutions. The work of the church in many parts of the world is complicated by laws, regulations, and issues that make it difficult to carry out the mission and spread the gospel.

In addition to OGC, many more lawyers working in division, union, conference, and institutional offices provide legal services to their local entities around the world. Lawyers employed by the church provide the necessary means and expertise to assist the church in handling legal issues, in turn allowing the mission of the church to go forward.

Each of the lawyers in OGC is committed to the church's mission, forgoing the compensation and benefits offered in the commercial marketplace or private practice to support the church with their unique talents. In addition to their legal responsibilities, some of the staff have participated, as time permits, in overseas mission or evangelistic efforts. Having a trained legal team that knows the law and intimately knows the church, its mission, its structure, and its beliefs is most advantageous in advising and protecting the church.

The Office of General Counsel proactively protects the church by advising leadership on the legal and policy implications of a wide range of policy and administrative decisions. The work of OGC covers many of the legal issues that large multinational organizations contend with, such as human resources and employment issues, contracts, corporate matters, immigration issues, intellectual property, data privacy, and litigation. Being a religious charitable organization, however, also involves unique legal issues, such as the charitable status and the General Conference group tax exemption in the United States or employment discrimination of church members because of Sabbath observance. In addition, at times the church needs to express its voice and viewpoint before the United States Supreme Court on cases that are significant to the church. In those instances OGC coordinates and prepares legal briefs submitted to the Supreme Court for their consideration.

We wish to recognize the contribution of three of our colleagues who left the OGC after the last General Conference Session. Thomas Wetmore retired after serving 38 years as associate general counsel, an endurance record that will be very difficult to tie or break. We are very grateful for Tom's service to the church in the specialized areas of tax and retirement. Our associate Josue Pierre was elected as an associate treasurer of the General Conference at the last session, and our associate Jennifer Woods accepted a position as director of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty and general counsel for the Lake Union Conference.

With those departures, a new group of talented associates joined the OGC team. Following are the lawyers and specialists who currently comprise OGC's team and their respective areas of expertise:

- Deputy General Counsel Todd McFarland covers litigation, parliamentary procedure, and church-state and religious liberty litigation, and represents the General Conference in various litigation matters. A member of the OGC team since 2006, he has represented many church



Ready to Serve: (L-R, front row) Mary Ellen Winegardner, Yoko Fujioka-Mathew, Karnik Doukmetzian, AnnaGabriella Colon, Taylor Gordon; (L-R, back row) Sheryl Brodie, Ruben Gandia, Jason Tracey, Justin Baham, Todd McFarland

members who suffer employment discrimination because of their Sabbath observance.

- Associate Annagabriella Colon oversees the areas of retirement, pension, employee benefits, religious nonprofit charitable organizations tax law, and organizational structure and governance issues. Since joining the OGC team in 2021, she has also represented the General Conference (GC) and the North American Division at professional conferences, pension and tax work groups, and at government agencies.
- Associate Justin Baham joined OGC in November 2021 and oversees intellectual property issues, including trademarks and copyrights. He advises the GC and departments, Hope Channel, Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), and other entities and institutions on compliance with protecting and enforcing intellectual property rights and managing licenses associated with those rights.
- Associate Ruben Gandia joined OGC in September 2022 and provides legal advice, guidance, and review to the GC, ADRA, and Hope Channel in employment law, human resources compliance, and education. He also provides general legal advice to various other GC institutions and departments.
- Associate Jason Tracey joined OGC in August 2024 and oversees contract reviews, commercial transactions, real estate, and purchasing and procurement matters for the General Conference, the North American Division, and their associated entities and institutions, as well as for ADRA.
- Sheryl Brodie has worked with OGC for the past 23 years and is our immigration specialist. She works closely with the Human Resources Office of the General Conference, the North American Division, ADRA, and other organizations to coordinate and manage temporary work authorizations and visas for employees coming from other countries.
- Karnik Doukmetzian has been general counsel since 2009. In addition to directing the overall work of the OGC, he works closely with the GC and division administrators on a wide variety of issues, including general corporate matters, commercial transactions, and legal reviews.

OGC exists to provide quality, timely, and competent legal counsel to the church, its institutions, and church leadership in this increasingly complex and litigious age.

Karnik Doukmetzian is general counsel for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Strategic Commitment to Mission, Ministry, and Missiology

VINCENT INJETY

Adventist University of Africa (AUA) embarked on its noble mission in the early 2000s with the vision to become a leading postgraduate theological institution for church workers across Sub-Saharan Africa. Nestled just outside Nairobi, Kenya, AUA opened its doors in 2006 under the auspices of the General Conference (GC) and the support of three African divisions: West-Central Africa (WAD), East-Central Africa (ECD), and Southern Africa-Indian Ocean (SID). Nearly two decades later AUA continues to fulfill its mission, preparing leaders for impactful service in Africa and globally.

I WILL GO: LEADERS IN SERVICE

AUA is comprised of two schools: the Theological Seminary and the School of Postgraduate Studies, offering a total of 13 postgraduate programs in biblical and applied theology, leadership, business administration, public health, and applied computer science. The university boasts a legacy of more than 1,000 graduates from 38 countries in Africa, actively contributing to the church's mission worldwide and furthering the I Will Go strategy.

In line with the strategic initiative of mission refocus, AUA has collaborated with the WAD to train 30 missiologists in the past year, enhancing mission outreach within the 10/40 window. Additionally, the faculty members have engaged in evangelistic efforts in the ECD and SID and plan to participate in WAD Impact 2025.

The faculty, consisting of global experts, play a crucial role in shaping the academic journey of the students, ongoing professional development of leaders and making scholarly contributions. AUA encourages rigorous research among students and faculty to enrich knowledge and benefit the community. Every staff member contributes to providing outstanding postgraduate education grounded in biblical principles, preparing competent leaders to serve the church and society.

I WILL GO: SERVING INTENTIONALLY

Designated as a model learning institution, AUA's administration, faculty, and staff have embraced technological advancements and pedagogical approaches to meet the needs of both the church and society. Innovations in educational delivery include developing online programs through our



The iconic library building speaks to the commitment to developing leaders for service.



Students from WAD work toward their Master of Arts in Missiology.

Under divine providence—and with the unwavering dedication of our leadership, faculty, students, and alumni—AUA is poised to further the mission of the church.



Doctoral leadership students attended a research conference at AUA.



AUA president, Vincent Injety, confers the first PhD in Biblical and Theological Studies to a graduate.

Open, Distance, and eLearning Centre, which facilitates access to quality education globally.

AUA has sought to train and equip the underserved groups and diverse-language speakers. Currently the university offers a Master of Divinity in French and plans to offer a Master of Divinity in Portuguese.

During this triennium the Kenyan Commission for University Education and the Adventist Accrediting Association reaffirmed AUA's accreditation status. Several scholarship programs support students' educational pursuits, ensuring they can focus on their studies without much financial burden.

I WILL GO: FOUNDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

AUA is well-positioned to meet the educational and training needs of the constituency in Africa. AUA is committed to:

- Upholding the philosophy of wholistic education.
- Addressing the global church's and continental training needs by tailoring academic programs accordingly.
- Establishing ourselves as a center of excellence in postgraduate education and research.
- Cultivating vibrant spiritual life and community engagement while honoring our African heritage.
- Under divine providence—and with the unwavering dedication of leadership, faculty, students, and alumni—AUA is poised to further the mission of the church. We praise God for the successes already achieved and for those yet to come. With God's blessing we will continue to fulfill our mission, honoring our commitment to serve and educate.

Vincent Injety is president of the Adventist University of Africa.

A Fond Farewell

BILL KNOTT



The 2022 GC Session *Adventist Review* Team
DAVID B. SHERWIN

RESOURCING THE MINISTRY



It's an unusual metric by which to measure a colleague's value—but Kim Brown proved its accuracy time and again.

During my 25 years in leadership with the church's major journals, I learned to gauge a team member's contribution by how little I had to worry about the areas they managed. By that standard, Kim Brown quickly became one of the most valuable members of the *Adventist Review* team during the nearly eight years I admired her skills as the ministry's financial manager.

Kim had an exceptional grasp of our ministry's growing scope. She understood—down to the last detail—how the complex network of international payments and contracts supporting our work actually functioned. She worked tirelessly with General Conference Treasury staff to manage one of the largest departmental budgets at the church's world headquarters.

She also led the development of an annual budget that, at its peak, reached nearly US$9 million. Kim carefully documented for both our internal team and the church leaders on our board how changes in global magazine contracts or vendor logistics would affect our bottom line. Her attention to detail was matched by her personal warmth and kindness—qualities that helped navigate moments of tension in a team filled with strong personalities. She was often the listening ear colleagues turned to for encouragement and renewed perspective when challenges loomed.

The millions of readers around the world who have been blessed by the ministry of *Adventist Review* and *Adventist World* owe Kim Brown a deep and enduring thank-you.

TALENT TO SPARE



Job titles often obscure more than they reveal. Learning that Merle Poirier has served as operations manager for *Adventist Review* and *Adventist World* for the past 12 years—and did similar work for 12 years before that—might lead readers to assume she labored quietly in the background of one of the church's largest media organizations.

The reality is quite the opposite.

During the 21 years I had the privilege of being her colleague, Merle might best be described as the "Indispensable Person," "Problem Solver Extraordinaire," or "Omni-competent Team Member." When she joined the *Adventist Review* team in 2001, we knew of her talents as a designer and newsletter editor. Year by year we discovered her deep capabilities in systems management, logistics, operational scheduling, and institutional liaison work.

Her impressive skills as both author and editor were evident in the pages of *Adventist Review* and *Adventist World*, for which she researched and wrote major historical features, edited late-breaking stories, and helped coordinate a complex editorial and production calendar.

Merle brought both clear-eyed vision and unwavering passion to her work. No one was more loyal to the history and tradition of the *Adventist Review*—the Seventh-day Adventist Church's oldest and most influential journal—and no one better understood the global reach and diversity of *Adventist World*. When spirits flagged and the editorial team grew weary, Merle modeled the resilience and focus that kept others moving. She was the glue that held the operation together through cycles of both expansion and retrenchment, always looking for—and finding—solutions to seemingly intractable problems.

"Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates." — Proverbs 31:31

Bill Knott served at *Adventist Review*/*Adventist World* from 1997 to 2022, the last 16 years as executive editor. He has served as an associate director of GC Public Affairs and Religious Liberty since early 2023.

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Nothing About Us Without Us

Adventist Possibility Ministries puts inclusion at the heart of GC Session

BETH THOMAS

As thousands gather in St. Louis for the sixty-second General Conference Session, most people notice the big things—delegates casting votes, inspiring sermons, and colorful international attire. But behind the scenes a quiet and intentional effort is ensuring that everyone—regardless of physical ability—can fully participate in the global church event.

Ernesto Douglas Venn, assistant to the president for Adventist Possibility Ministries and coordinator for Adventist Deaf Ministries International, has spent the past three years working with a dedicated team to prepare for attendees with special needs.

From the very beginning, Venn and his team have followed the principle: Nothing about us without us. "I rely on the first-person experience of my team, my global team," he explained.

PLANNING FOR THE DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING COMMUNITY

One of the most complex aspects of accessibility planning has been making sure deaf delegates and attendees feel seen and included. It's more complicated than it sounds. "We had multiple committees. One committee worked with the deaf community to help look at the accessibility needs for sign language." Once the unions communicated the accessibility needs of their delegates, Venn's team went to work to provide for the different sign languages necessary.

A common misconception is that one sign language fits all. But just as there are different regional dialects for spoken languages, each nation has its own sign language—although there are branches of sign language that are interconnected. Some, such as French and American Sign Language (ASL), have a shared history.

Multiple sign language interpreters are present in Women's Ministries meetings, youth Sabbath School, and the general sessions inside the Dome. Online, the GC Session YouTube channel is live-streaming American Sign Language interpretation of key events, reaching more than 1,200 viewers each day.

"We set all of this up initially for one in-person delegate—Pastor Jeff Jordan, who is the only deaf Adventist pastor in North America," Venn said. "But we're seeing many more people connect online, and they're sending messages thanking us. They want to know what's going on, and they appreciate this service."

Partnering with Adventist World Radio, the team also ensured that devices are available inside the Dome for people with hearing loss. "There's always more to do, especially as technology improves," Venn said. "But we're grateful for what's been possible this time around."



A group of Adventist Possibility Ministries task force ambassadors with Pastor Ernesto Douglas Venn. JAMES BOKOVOY

“There’s always more to do, especially as technology improves, but we’re grateful for what’s been possible this time around.”

FOR THOSE WITH VISION IMPAIRMENT

For those who are blind or have low vision, the convention center’s Americans with Disabilities Act compliance covers many physical needs. But Venn points to Juliana Santos, his cochair for the task force for those who are blind or with low vision, for deeper insight.

“I have found here in general that the city is very accessible,” she said. “The convention center does not have tactile strips or marks on the floor [for canes], however. One area that could be improved is providing a device with an audio description of the PowerPoint slides, the visual backgrounds on the main stage, and the beautiful clothing. We would benefit from that.”

Santos’ husband describes things happening on the main stage for her, but there are no general materials available in Braille—except at the Christian Record Services for the Blind booth in the exhibit hall. Having these resources would improve the experience for people with visual impairments.

NAVIGATING WITH MOBILITY NEEDS

Accessibility for wheelchair users has also been a focus. “Because St. Louis is a gracious host, provisions for accessibility are just part of the stadium. I did do a spot check, though [I have a sensitivity to this because of my mother-in-law],” Venn said.

Venn mentioned a recent moment when a delegate’s battery-operated wheelchair died on the sidewalk. “Another delegate and I helped push him back to his hotel,” he said. “That’s the kind of thing people aren’t aware of, especially with the distance between things.”

For those needing mobility support, local providers in St. Louis were vetted and included in the city’s welcome materials for attendees, as well as on the official session app.

Terry Trecartin, a member of the Adventist Possibility Ministries task force and an ambassador for wheelchair users, shared his personal experience. “Inside the convention center, the carpets are a little bit rough and my hands get tired, but I can get to all the buildings here. There are elevators, and the hallways are wide. And as long as there are curb cuts in the sidewalk, I can go anywhere.” His wife, Shannon, was quick to add that all the levels of the stadium have wheelchair seating with clearly designated spots.



Alisa Barnes is one of seven sign language translators at the 2025 GC Session. CHRISTINA COLLARD

Adventist Possibility Ministries has partnered with Hope Channel, Adventist News Network, and *Adventist Review* to help tell the story and provide technical and media support. “We can say thank you to IT and the Hope Channel team who built an elaborate and comprehensive area for sign language livestreaming,” Venn said.

At the 2025 GC Session intentional efforts by Adventist Possibility Ministries are making a meaningful difference for attendees with different abilities. From sign language interpretation in multiple languages to mobility information, a dedicated team has worked behind the scenes to ensure that all participants can fully engage. It reflects a growing awareness within the Adventist Church that inclusion isn’t optional—it’s essential to mission.

To watch session proceedings in ASL, use this link: https://www.gcsession.org/live/ or scan the QR code.

Good News in a War Zone

Adventist clinic serves on the front lines in Ukraine

BECKY ST. CLAIR



Yuri Bondarenko, psychiatrist and CEO of Angelia Clinic, explains the current situation for his clinic team in Ukraine. JAMES BOKOVOY

In Kyiv, Ukraine, a team of 12 medical professionals, plus receptionists and drivers, settle in for an 8- to 10-hour trip to the next day's mobile clinic site. Early the next morning they set up the semi-truck trailer offices before opening to the public at 9:00 a.m. They spend the next nine hours providing 400-plus services to approximately 120 patients, both adults and children—lung checkups, echocardiograms, ultrasounds, dental work, pediatrics, psychiatric evaluations, neurology, and general care.

During Ted N. C. Wilson's President's Report on Thursday evening at the General Conference Session, Yuri Bondarenko, psychiatrist and CEO of Angelia Clinic, shared briefly what they are currently doing in Ukraine, and the conditions in which they are doing it.

"Two to three times per week the drones attack," Bondarenko said during the report. "[As we speak], my wife and daughters have now been in our bomb shelter for six hours. A few months ago we had a staff member killed by a drone while on an assignment. We need constant prayers and support."

The clinic, which maintains a permanent physical location in the city, has been operating for 11 years, but their services became even more critical in 2022, when Russia again invaded Ukraine. The medical team of 30 consists of mental health specialists, neurologists, general practitioners, cardiologists, traumatologists, dentists, physical therapists, gynecologists, and pharmacists.

"The situation continues to deteriorate," Bondarenko said in an interview after the Wilson report. "Our country is fighting, but it's been three years under traumatic stress. We have exhaustion and burnout, and we live in survival mode." He added that more than 65 percent of Ukraine's population is in need of psychiatric care.

That 65 percent could very easily include Bondarenko and his team, considering the conditions under which they live. On mobile clinic days, groups take the trucks into villages whose proximity to the front lines mean medical care is insufficient at best, nonexistent at worst.

"One of the cities we visit regularly is located on a river," Bondarenko says. "That mile-wide river is the only thing separating that city from the enemy." The city used to have a population of more than 300,000, and is now around 40,000. "The riverside bank is a death zone," Bondarenko adds. "Drones are constantly hunting for civilians." Ukrainian military members don't wear uniforms because it's too dangerous to be identified as such, so Russian drones simply hunt for anyone.

"Usually when I am there, I stay with a friend who lives about a mile from the river," says Bondarenko. "I don't sleep well." The never-ending barrage of artillery, shells, and mines makes sleeping difficult to impossible. "It's a constant whistle and boom, hearing houses and buildings explode."

Even 20 miles beyond the front lines, which is where the clinic volunteers work most of the time, there are flying bombs no one can hear until they're just overhead. The holes they leave could hide a three-story building. "The Lord has protected us so far," Bondarenko says. "God is so good."

ALL-ROUND CARE

Sleep deprivation added to anxiety and stress is a serious challenge for mental health. Knowing this, Bondarenko goes to great lengths to protect himself

Angelia Clinic Bible workers have built a list of 2,000 contacts who want to study the Bible, and there are still 4,000 people waiting for phone calls.

and his team. As an official mental health trainer for Ukraine military chaplains, Bondarenko emphasizes the importance of self-care, including prayer, breathing techniques, time in nature, contrast (alternating-hot-and-cold) showers, and singing.

His top recommendation to maintain mental health? Hugs.

"When you give or receive a hug, you are creating dopamine and oxytocin, and decreasing cortisol levels," he explains. "I've consulted for more than 20 years, and two of my standard assessment questions are: 'Did your parents hug you often in childhood?' and 'Does your partner hug you frequently?' Very often the answer to both is no."

Recently an older woman came to the mobile clinic to see a psychiatrist and told Bondarenko she no longer wanted to live. Her home and her church had both been destroyed, and she was living in a very small room without heating. Two of her three children were living in Russia, and the third worked at a seaport under constant drone attacks. She couldn't even speak to her children in Russia, let alone hug them.

"My mom lives in Russia, and she's the same age as this woman," Bondarenko says, tears in his eyes. "I told the woman I hadn't been able to hug my mom for three years either, and asked if I could hug her. After a few minutes of hugging, she started smiling."

Angelia Clinic works with Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) to provide a comprehensive, whole-person ministry to the people of Ukraine. A team of General Conference-supported lay Bible workers go each day to locations ADRA has recently visited to do mental and spiritual health needs assessments. Fifteen percent of respondents say yes to studying the Bible, and 70 percent say yes to having someone call them to pray.

"When our prayer workers call them, many times people cry because no one has called them for many months," Bondarenko says. "Some of them have lost everyone and have no one left to call them. Many are experiencing depression." One third of these phone calls have resulted in requests for Bible studies.

During the past five months alone Angelia Clinic Bible workers have built a list of 2,000 contacts who want to study, and there are still 4,000 people waiting for phone calls for prayer.

"This is only one district of five," Bondarenko says. "And we have only three Bible workers to conduct assessments and two prayer workers to make phone calls. We trust the Lord will provide a way for this ministry to continue."

The name "Angelia" is a combination of the concept of an angel's care and *euangélion*—Greek for "good news." "Our name essentially means: 'Good news; you will be healed,' " says Bondarenko.

Last September Bondarenko was in southern Ukraine when a drone attack wiped out several buildings near the seaport. While out looking for people to help, he met a family whose home had been destroyed—for the second time in two years. "I asked them where their home was, and the woman pointed to the empty sky above a pile of rubble. I immediately thought, *She pointed in the right direction, because we all have mansions in heaven*," he shares. "My prayer is not to stop or finish the war; my prayer is 'Lord, come soon.' "



Bondarenko hugs a woman missing her children in Russia after she shared with him that she no longer wanted to live. YURI BONDARENKO

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62nd GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION

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In Search of a Feast

Working behind the scenes at the General Conference Session.

EMANUEL PELOTE

I woke up hungry. Not for the oatmeal, eggs, and potatoes that would soon be served in the hotel dining room, but for something that can be served only at the banquet table of Christ. It has been a busy week, and today would be even more busy, I knew. But what I really wanted was an unambiguous moment to worship God. I knew that I had much to accomplish today, but I prayed that God would allow my service to be an act of worship. In my morning meditation the image of worship described in Revelation 4:10, 11 came to me:

"The twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: 'You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power.' "

I prayed, *God, can You help me be a crown-caster today? May whatever I have, whatever I do, become an instrument of worship.* I didn't want to be distracted by the grandeur of the meetings or the significance of the decisions being made—but rather, by the grandeur of what God is hoping to accomplish in and through me.

Still, when you're at the General Conference Session, there's no escaping the importance of what's happening. For me, the day held two significant items that were especially important to my life and ministry: First, I was looking forward to attending my wife Karen's final presentation on the General Conference Journey Stage in the exhibit hall. Second, given my role as special assistant to the president of the East-Central Africa Division, I was anticipating the report from the Nominating Committee as to whom I would be working with beginning today. I tried not to speculate—but I couldn't stop wondering what it might mean to cast my crown down before the Lord in response to what was to come.

One event I try never to miss is the morning prayer circle hosted by the GC Communication team in the global media room. I also serve as the division's Communication director, and I love that the Communication family here at GC Session understands that we're not simply communication or media, but are doing uniquely Adventist communication and media. Grounded not in equipment and editing, but in prayer and praise.

Following prayer, we had a short meeting to review


JAMES BOKOVOY

reporting assignments for the day. Then we gathered in the media booths to listen to the morning devotional. John Bradshaw's message reminded me how hopeful and beautiful our message really is.

After the devotional I made my way to the exhibit hall to support my wife's presentation on parenting. It's always a joy to see someone using their gifts to bless others—but it's even more meaningful when that someone is the person you love. I was also blessed by the music and testimony of Olethea Phoenix dela Cruz Daquila, a gifted 15-year-old young woman from the Philippines.

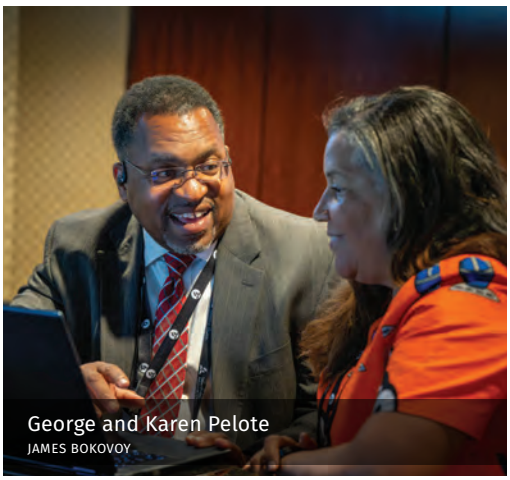
For those who love mission and ministry, the exhibit hall at GC Session is a feast. It awakens a hunger for tools and ideas you didn't even know you wanted until you see them. I visited two key booths that day: the Center for Online Evangelism, which helps members make our church visible and understood online; and FARM STEW, a ministry transforming communities around the world. Both have made a real impact in the East-Central Africa Division, and it was encouraging to offer them words of support.

Later I returned to the session floor. The floor discussions have been a highlight for me—every detail presented is thoughtfully considered by delegates from around the world. Today many had clearly mastered the art of "calling the question," helping to keep the process moving while allowing everyone's voice to be heard.

The air grew electric in the afternoon as we awaited the Nominating Committee's report on division leaders. I slipped away to the prayer room to join others who were calling on heaven to bless the church's future. This room had become familiar to me during the session—a place where I had regularly asked God to give us unity, love, and trust in His leading.

One committee member, without sharing details, expressed deep appreciation for the spirit of humility and prayer that had shaped the deliberations. I didn't ask for more. It was enough to know that the Holy Spirit had been present and active throughout.

Later that evening I attended the press conference hosted by the GC Communication Department. The GC treasurer and secretary answered questions from the media with clarity and conviction. Beyond their administrative insight, what stood out most was their frequent and natural reference to Jesus. Their words reflected both deep experience and a sincere love for God's mission.



George and Karen Pelote
JAMES BOKOVOY

One member expressed deep appreciation for the spirit of humility and prayer that had shaped the deliberations.

I didn't make it to dinner that night. Instead I found a different kind of feast. I encountered several Adventist influencers and a pastor who had recently published a book on disciple-making. We talked about unity in the church, the mission before us, and how to strengthen bonds between members, pastors, and leaders. Before long we were huddled in a circle, hands on shoulders, bowed in prayer. I imagine that from a distance we may have looked like a human crown—laid down together at the feet of Jesus.

That is what GC Session reminded me of. Not just business. Not just decisions. But worship. Whatever we carry—our work, our gifts, our roles—are all best placed in His hands.

Because He is worthy.

Emanuel Pelote is attending and serving at the General Conference Session from the East-Central Africa Division, where he is special assistant to the president.

SESSION GALLERY



Delegates from China show support from the floor. CHRISTINA COLLARD



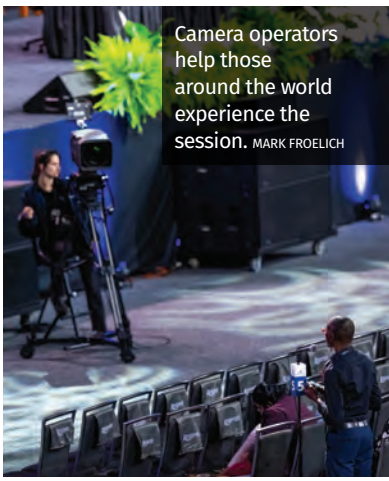
Microphones are kept busy by delegates reacting to motions on the floor. JOSEF KISSINGER



The Tsikirai family from the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division share their talents for morning worship. JAMES BOKOVOY



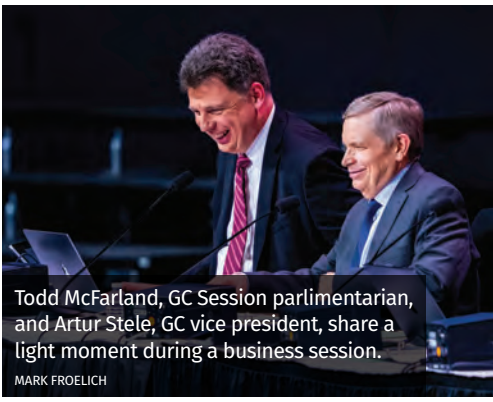
Women's Ministries meetings include a break for exercise and stretching. CHRISTINA COLLARD



Camera operators help those around the world experience the session. MARK FROELICH



John Bradshaw, director, It Is Written, is the devotional speaker each morning. MARK FROELICH



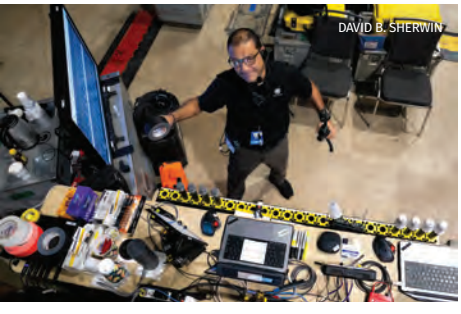
Todd McFarland, GC Session parlimentarian, and Artur Stele, GC vice president, share a light moment during a business session.
MARK FROELICH



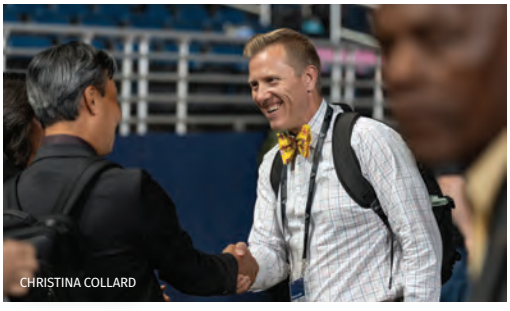
JOSEF KISSINGER



Participants in the Southern Asia Division report wore colorful saris. JOSEF KISSINGER



DAVID B. SHERWIN



CHRISTINA COLLARD

ALL PHOTOS © AR

Feeding the 5,000

How the GC food service team is handling challenges of meals for a diverse crowd

BECKY ST. CLAIR

Any parent will tell you that trying to please every member of the family at every meal is close to impossible. Each person has their own preferences on flavor, cuisine, and spice level, to name a few. Here at the General Conference (GC) Session the GC food service team is trying to please is a group of approximately 5,000 people.

ONE PLATE MUST FIT ALL

"We do site checks before each GC Session, including taste tests of menu options," explains Ludi Leito, food service manager for the session, who also works for Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA). "Our chef is amazing. He puts a lot of himself into his work, and it is important to him that we are pleased with the food."

The challenge comes when a meal must be mass-produced to the level of the thousands eating during the event.

"We are a tricky group," Leito says. "Because we're a global group, everyone has different ways of doing things and different ways we like our food." For example, she says, some people prefer vegan meals; others want their food spicy or salty or mild. There are many different dietary restrictions to consider, as well. One person even contacted Leito and said they were unable to eat rice, which has been a primary dish at each meal during session.

"Rice is a staple for the majority of our church members," Leito explains. She also says they don't add salt to the rice in consideration for members who may be unable to include it in their diet for any number of reasons. "It's much easier to add seasonings after it's cooked than it is to take them out."

The serving method during each meal also plays a huge role in the food experience during session. In the past, Ludi says, plates were pre-served, and attendees simply received a plate already loaded with food, rather than serving themselves.

"We have a buffet-style serving line, and when people see or hear the word 'buffet,' I think they automatically think 'all you can eat,' " says Leito. "It's not really 'all you can eat;' based on our contract with the catering company, it's meant to be one plate of food and one water bottle per person at each meal."

THE ONE-PLATE PROBLEM

Because of the unrestricted access to plates and serving spoons, many GC Session attendees have been filling multiple plates with food and walking out with a stack of meals to share outside the meal hall.

"Many of them are taking the food to their children, for whom they didn't purchase meal tickets," Leito says. "And while we, of course, don't fault them for wanting to make sure their kids have food, those meals should be purchased ahead of time so the whole family can be included in the meal count during preparation."

Before each meal, the food service team provides the catering company with the most accurate head count they can, based on the number of meals purchased. The catering company plans for 5-10 percent more than the number provided, which is the industry standard for meal service.

"When people come through line and take more than their share of what was prepared, those further back in the line find there is nothing left when they arrive at the table," Leito explains. "This is heartbreaking to us, because we've done our best to ensure that everyone who has purchased a meal has access to the full service we're providing."

The catering staff and volunteers at the scanning tables and exits do their best to remind those at the serving tables that there is only one plate of food allowed per person, and direct them to where they can purchase meal tickets, but that interaction can sometimes be difficult.

"Most of our volunteers are high school students wanting to help out while they're here with their parents," Leito says. "They are an incredible group of kids, and I couldn't have asked for anyone better,



Approximately 5,000 people are served at each meal during the GC Session. JOSEF KISSINGER

but I have also told them not to sacrifice their body, peace of mind, or Christianity by confronting anyone. Some people can become quite aggressive when we remind them of the one-plate limit."

REFINING THE SYSTEM

To rectify the situation, session management, food service, and catering leaders have begun managing portions by having staff serve the entrées. This limits the amount of food each person takes, and ensures that those further back in line are assured a meal, as well. Additionally, they have shifted the layout of the tables, a simple change with significant impact.

"Before, we started with the salads, then worked our way down to the entrée, breads, and desserts," Leito says. "We have now moved the featured entrée to the end of the table, so that by the time people get there, the real estate available on their plate for the entrée is much less than it was where the entrée used to sit, near the front of the table."

Every day, Leito takes notes on what works and what doesn't, feedback received at each meal, and comments from the staff. These notes are used to "tweak the system" in effort to make each meal experience better.

"Food is so important to people, and we want them to have a positive experience here," Leito comments. "We want them to get what they're paying for, and to enjoy what they're eating."

NOT JUST A MEAL

Every little change is working toward the expected large crowd coming through the lunch line on Sabbath, Leito says. So while they work hard to ensure a positive experience throughout the session, they really want to end on a hugely positive note.

Each year, GC attendees receive a post-event survey, which includes questions about meals. The feedback received from these surveys is used to make plans for food at the next GC Session. "We try to build upon the menus every time," Leito says. "We tweak them, change them, remove meals that weren't well received, keep ones that were, and we definitely use recommendations from the surveys as we plan."

Leito adds that making meals happen during GC Session is not a simple "night-before" thing. Individuals from session management to catering staff are involved in the multiple steps of the process. "It's not thrown together last-minute," she says. "There is a lot of thought and consideration that goes into all of this, and we have a lot of demographics to take into account as we plan. Trying to please everyone isn't easy, but we do our best to make the majority as happy as possible."

So will the popular burgers be back this year? Unfortunately not, Leito says. "We did not expect those to be the hit they were, so I definitely wish we could bring them back. But I've taken note for the future, for sure!"

Food is important, and ensuring that a group of thousands is fed sufficiently is, unfortunately, not quite as simple as blessing a basket of five loaves of bread and two fish. Feeding the thousands at GC may not be a miracle, but thanks to careful planning, daily adjustments, and a lot of heart, it comes pretty close.

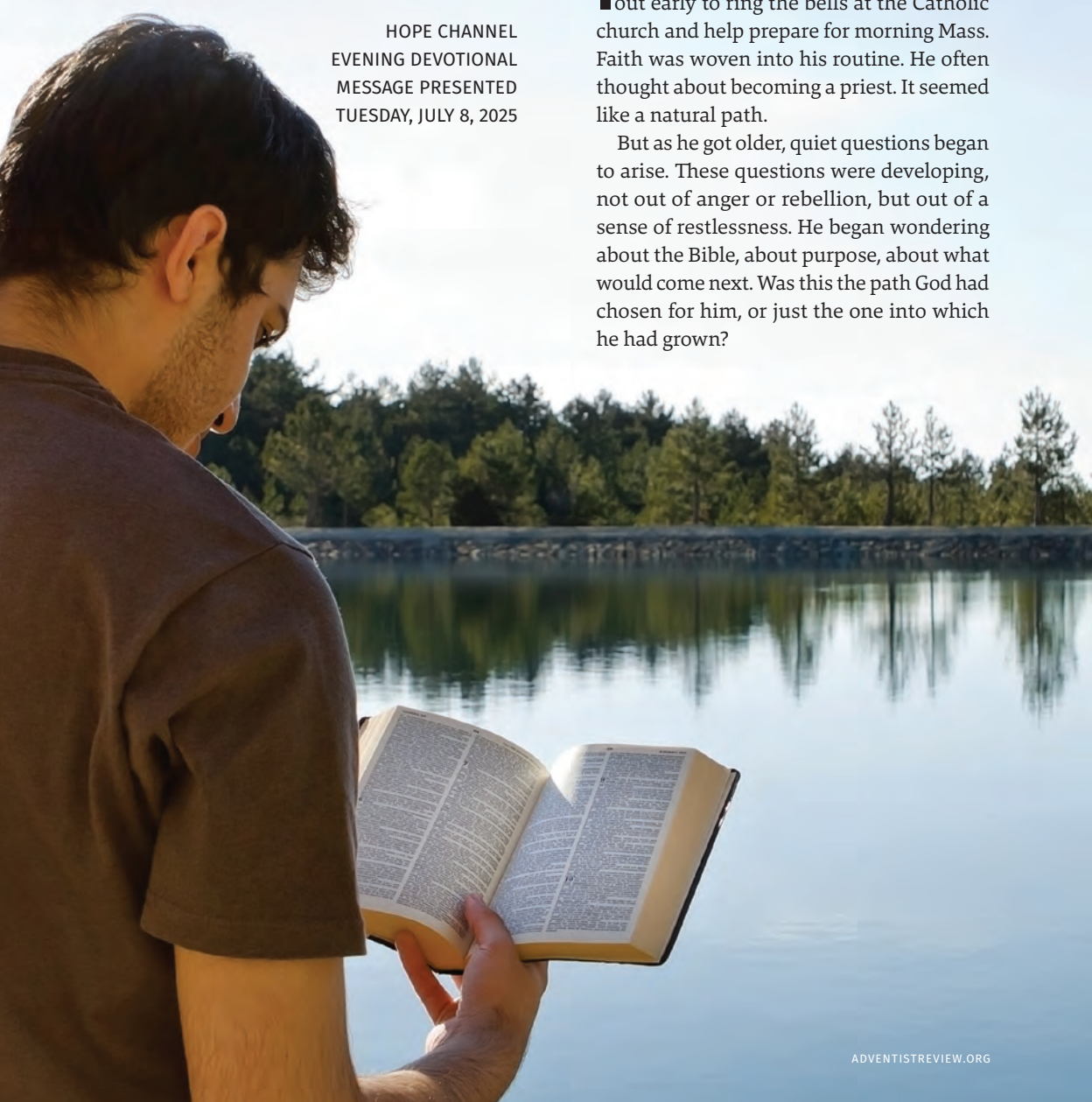
IRVING IS HOPE

HANNAH DREWIECK

HOPE CHANNEL
EVENING DEVOTIONAL
MESSAGE PRESENTED
TUESDAY, JULY 8, 2025

In a small town in Mexico, Irving's days used to begin before sunrise. He would slip out early to ring the bells at the Catholic church and help prepare for morning Mass. Faith was woven into his routine. He often thought about becoming a priest. It seemed like a natural path.

But as he got older, quiet questions began to arise. These questions were developing, not out of anger or rebellion, but out of a sense of restlessness. He began wondering about the Bible, about purpose, about what would come next. Was this the path God had chosen for him, or just the one into which he had grown?





He found himself in an in-between season. He hadn't left the old life entirely, but he couldn't go back to it either.



Those questions lingered until his uncle invited him to a small Bible study group. Irving joined, unsure of what he'd find. What he discovered surprised him—especially the message of the Sabbath. At first it felt like learning a new language. The shift wasn't easy. He didn't walk away from everything he knew. Instead, he began observing the Sabbath quietly, carving out time for prayer and study even when work made full observance difficult.

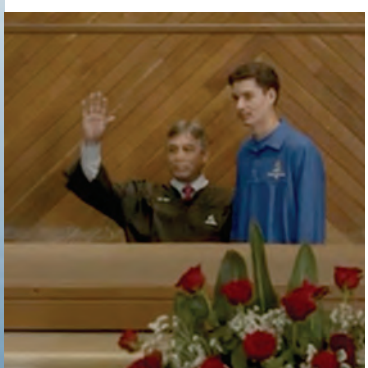
He found himself in an in-between season. He hadn't left the old life entirely, but he couldn't go back to it either. Still, he trusted God to meet him in the middle. "Wherever God allowed me to be," he would later say, "I also trusted He would take care of me."

That trust deepened when he was offered a new job—one that gave him Sabbaths off. For Irving, it wasn't just a better schedule; it was confirmation. The moment felt clear. It was time to take the next step. He decided to be baptized.

Irving gently shared the news with his family. He wasn't trying to persuade them or prove anything. He just wanted them to know. He hoped they would come, but he understood that they might not. His decision wasn't dependent on anyone else. It was personal.

The baptism took place in a quiet, sacred moment. Irving stepped into the water with calm assurance, not looking for attention, just choosing to follow where God had led him.

His mother wasn't there. And today that weighs heavily on her. She carries sadness over missing the moment. But even in her absence something began to shift. The love she has for her son—and the strength of his quiet commitment—made an impact. God used Irving's transformation to stir something in his family.



Irving didn't just make a decision. He became a witness. He became hope. And if we too are willing to be witnesses, we can become hope.

Hannah Drewieck is the communication coordinator for Hope Channel International.

EAST-CENTRAL AFRICA DIVISION REPORT

God's Faithfulness and Our Impact



BLASIOUS M. RUGURI
PRESIDENT



The church in the East-Central Africa Division (ECD) is deeply committed to urgently finishing the work of reaching our nations for Christ in preparation for His imminent return. The ECD encompasses 12 countries, with a combined population in 2025 of more than a half billion people. These countries include: Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. By 2030 the population of this division is expected to rise by approximately 75 million. In just 25 years, by 2050, the population of the ECD region will surpass 1 billion souls!

Half of the ECD territory consists of high-priority nations for mission that are considered part of the 10/40 window territory. These nations—Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and the self-governing island of Zanzibar—are all experiencing rapid population growth. Our 10/40 window population is projected to rise by 40 million to 265 million people by 2030 and will continue to grow to nearly 350 million by 2050. While the growth of these nations and urban centers presents significant challenges, it also presents an incredible opportunity for God to work. Within these 10/40 window nations God has faithfully answered our prayers by giving the church 10,000 baptisms among these majority non-Christian faith communities since 2022. As we continue to pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, we believe that God will do extraordinary things in this growing territory, reaching millions of new souls for Christ across the 10/40 window.

Indeed, God has shown remarkable faithfulness to His people in the East-Central Africa Division by blessing the church with more than 1 million baptisms since the start of 2023. Today the church in ECD is home to more than 5.7 million members, with more than 90 percent of them remaining faithfully engaged in the church long-term.

ECD EVANGELISTIC IMPACT
EEI2025

A DIVINE STRATEGY TO REACH NATIONS: FROM SPECTATORS TO DISCIPLE-MAKERS

Given the explosive growth of urban centers and the rapid population increases, traditional public evangelism alone could not keep pace. If the reach of the three angels' messages does not significantly expand, we anticipate more than 1 billion unreached people living in ECD territories by 2050. This rapid growth of cities and populations across the region led the division to develop a bold strategy for evangelism, known as ECD Evangelistic Impact 2025 (EEI2025). Aligned with the Reach the World: I Will Go strategy of the world church, EEI2025 is an urgent call for Total Member Involvement. Members are being called to transition from being passive spectators to becoming active disciple-makers, so that the everlasting gospel is rapidly preached to all nations as a witness for Christ.

EEI2025 was built around six major campaigns designed to create opportunities for members to win souls for Christ within their spheres of influence. As with all great movements of God, the foundation for EEI2025 was a call to prayer.

PRAYER IMPACT

The ECD called on every member and family to identify at least 10 individuals—relatives, neighbors, friends, and colleagues—whom they would pray for and then witness to using Christ's method. The division created prayer cards for members to list the names of these 10 people and commit to praying for them daily. On the back of the card was a reminder of the steps of Christ's method for reaching people.

God also led the ECD to focus on personal revival among the faithful. The In Discipleship



ministry was invited to train thousands of church leaders, pastors, elders, and key lay leaders across several unions within the division in personal discipleship and disciple-making skills. The Adventist Messengers (adventistmessengers.org) ministry was also launched to drive Total Member Involvement through a digital outreach strategy. Through this ministry, members have been given a platform to rally to the mission of the church and to unite their efforts with those of ministers and officers of the church. Through this initiative the ECD is raising an army of at least 1 million members who are being rightly trained to work together so that millions of unreached souls online can be reached for Christ.

HOPE FOR AFRICA: A NEW VISION FOR SATELLITE EVANGELISM

Rather than focusing solely on large venues, the Hope for Africa campaign leveraged the power of social media to deliver world-class evangelistic programs that members could easily share with friends, neighbors, and colleagues. These programs were streamed online and translated in multiple languages, making the gospel messages easy for members to share. This new approach enabled the program to be shared in more than 20,000 homes, offices, churches, and public venues, resulting in 200,000 baptisms across the division.

The HopeFor.Africa website was created by the ECD with the strong support of the Center for Online Evangelism to inspire, equip, and empower members to reach the world using Christ's method style evangelism online for Christ.

FAMILY IMPACT: EMPOWERING FAMILIES AS DISCIPLE-MAKERS

The ECD called on every Adventist family to prayerfully and intentionally minister to other families as disciple-makers. When one Adventist family heard the call, they began praying daily for relatives they hoped to reach for Christ. They visited their relatives together, prayed, and sought to meet their needs. The kindness was welcomed, and soon both families were worshipping and studying the Bible together. During the Family Impact harvest campaign this disciple-making family invited their relatives to attend the family themed evangelistic meetings. The entire family of seven accepted the truth and were baptized. Through this initiative the Family Impact campaign led to more than 185,000 baptisms across the division!

HOMECOMING IMPACT: REACHING THE "HOME" COMMUNITY

The Homecoming Impact campaign reframed the traditional concept of public evangelistic outreach, calling not only pastors but every believer around the world to be ready to stand and preach the gospel of Christ first in their "home" communities, and then to the ends of the earth.

One local elder decided to take a very personal approach to sharing his faith in the community. Armed only with prayer and a Bible, he took time off from work and started visiting homes one by

one over a period of two weeks to minister to all who welcomed him. As a result, more than 300 souls were touched for Christ and baptized!

Demonstrating that the Adventist missionary spirit is still alive 150 years after J. N. Andrews sailed to Europe, hundreds of leaders from around the world joined the ECD Homecoming Impact campaign. General Conference leaders, including Pastor Ted Wilson—who preached in Juba, South Sudan—were among them. Officers, pastors, missionaries, and departmental leaders from every level of the church came to bless communities across the ECD.

One of the overseas church members who accepted the call to come and preach in one of the nearly 7,000 sites in the ECD insisted on coming to share her faith despite warnings that she was too ill to travel and preach. Dozens were baptized and received new life as a result of her efforts, and the faithful Adventist missionary was miraculously healed of her ailment as she risked everything to serve the Lord!

All told, more than 130,000 souls were added to the kingdom of God through the witness of thousands of believers who gave their best for the kingdom during the Homecoming Impact campaign!

YOUTH IMPACT: ENGAGING THE NEXT GENERATION

The Youth Impact campaign inspired youth and young adults to share Christ's message on campuses, in communities, and online. As they witnessed to their classmates on campuses and in their communities, more than 1,000 young people also led public evangelistic sites in their communities. Their efforts resulted in more than 85,000 baptisms for the kingdom of God!

CHILDREN'S IMPACT: DISCIPLING THE NEXT GENERATION

The Children's Impact campaign called attention to the vital role of discipling our children. The Children's Impact campaign served as an awakening for the church to the reality that if we do not call our own children and their friends to make a willing, understanding commitment to Christ, then we will have no basis on which to stand against the enemy of their souls when he uses all of his deceptive charm to warmly welcome them to worship the things of this world. In one example of how members impacted their communities through this campaign, one woman determined to become a disciple-maker despite not knowing how to read. She began ministering to the children in her community and their families by purchasing food and clothes for those who were in need. As she shared the gospel with the families she met, her young son would read the Bible texts for her. Dozens were brought to the faith as a result of this ministry. More than 40,000 souls were won to Christ in this way.

THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

Through these efforts God has used the members of the church to reach more than 1 million souls for Christ in just two years. Along with this growth in numbers, the ECD has seen an increase in maturity, developing numerous centers of influence, including radio stations, hospitals, media centers, and schools.

Financially, the ECD has become a strong net contributor to the global church. The division has also been entrusted with the responsibility of expanding the gospel work in Sudan, one of the most challenging regions within the 10/40 window.

THE WAY FORWARD

The way ahead for the East-Central Africa Division is clear. Through fervent prayer and a member-led movement of disciple-makers, we will complete the work in this territory. "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matt. 24:14).

Visit ecdadventist.org or evangelisticimpact.org to learn more about ECD Evangelistic Impact 2025 and beyond.

UKRAINIAN UNION REPORT

Unshaken

We are deeply grateful to the Lord for His mercy and protection! The war with Russia has been going on for more than three years now, and in these difficult times we are sincerely grateful for the prayers and tireless support of the family of God around the world for the church in Ukraine. The ministers and church members, united by a common faith, continuously carry the light of the gospel, because by saving human lives we testify to the imminent coming of Christ. The Lord is always with us; He extends His helping hand to everyone. Every heart should hear this message of hope!

The Ukrainian Union Conference had 38,407 church members at the beginning of 2025. There are 727 congregations, 191 groups, eight conferences, five institutions, five medical sanitariums, two medical centers, and 24 schools. During the three years of the war, 2022-2024, 2,784 people joined the church through baptism and 157 through profession of faith.

Unfortunately, 1,702 church members emigrated, transferring their membership outside Ukraine, making the number of church members outside Ukraine 6,220. In these difficult, exhausting, sometimes unbearable, and dangerous conditions caused by the war, the Adventist Church sacrificially and devotedly continues to fulfill the mission of Christ, which we briefly reflect in this bulletin.

MINISTRY TO OTHERS

Support Nearby, a new all-Ukrainian initiative of the church, aimed to make each local church a "sanctuary" of wholeness, healing, and grace for people traumatized by war and life. The project is based on Christ's method alone: mingling with people, serving with compassion, and gaining their trust.

Ukrainian Ministerial Association secretary Kostiantyn Tepfer shares that the ministry of pastors and their families has increased in the



past three years. Pastors began a new ministry to evacuate people from dangerous frontline towns and villages. While transporting people under fire, they discovered the power of prayer and faith in practice. Many hours spent on the road turned into practical evangelistic programs. As they returned, the pastors transported thousands of tons of humanitarian aid.

Pastors' wives, who remained at the ministry site, helped people on the ground. Up to 3,000 loaves of bread were distributed daily in the church building. We were excited by the opportunity to conduct various evangelistic and social programs. These efforts helped Ukrainian pastors baptize more than 1,000 people every year.

In the context of the war, Ministerial Spouses Association director Olena Nosova has had a ministry focused on certain areas to support



pastors' families by helping pastors' wives in recovering and self-regulating during times of uncertainty; training pastors' wives for missionary service; and supporting pastors' children by engaging them in Bible study and the Spirit of Prophecy through specific programs, quizzes, and quests.

Roman Prodaniuk, Adventist Mission director, reports that despite the difficult circumstances of the war, the church in Ukraine did not stop serving. Adventists took people out of the war zone and housed, fed, counseled, and preached the three



angels' messages to them. Although congregations were smaller because of members fleeing the country, our buildings



were filled with new people seeking support from the people of God. We held evangelistic programs under fire in the basements of the church buildings. The evangelistic programs have not stopped for three years now, and people are growing spiritually and entering into a covenant with God.

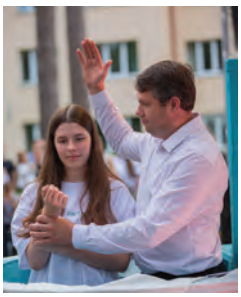
CHILDREN'S, FAMILY, YOUTH, AND WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

The war years were a test for the children of Ukraine. Children's Ministries director Maryna Tepfer reports there was much grief, loss, and terrible things that children should not know or see. God's church and parents do a great deal to ensure that children believe, pray, and laugh. Despite the constant danger, the Lord protected us and helped us hold Vacation Bible Schools and camp meetings for refugee children. We prayed with the children, sang psalms, and studied the Bible. We constantly provide physical and emotional assistance to those living on the front lines.



With God's help and the support of the global church, we have been able to actively serve the children of Ukraine for the past three years, despite many leaders and children moving abroad. Club Ministry coordinator Maksym Buha shares that the union organized a Ukrainian Pathfinder Camporee, as well as more than 20 field schools to train leaders, and summer and winter camps for the children of military personnel and families affected by war. We also actively participated in the Bible Experience. With God's help and the church's support, we continue to serve in our country, giving hope and support to those who need it.

"We are living in difficult times, but despite this, we do not give up. The main goal of our youth ministry is to support young people spiritually and provide them with all the opportunities for spiritual growth," states Youth Ministries leader Ivan Romaniuk. "We also create conditions and organize events where they can meet, share experiences, and support each other. The two years of COVID and three years of war have significantly distanced us from each other, but thanks to God's help, we were able to hold large-scale events three times a year that brought the youth of Ukraine together. Each church became a center of influence, and new youth projects have been born during the war. All of this showed that for God, difficult circumstances have never been an obstacle to doing mission when there are people full of the Spirit and determination."



Vitalii and Liudmyla Kryvoi, Adventist Family Ministries coleaders, report that many Ukrainian families lost their homes and were forced to move. Some families are separated by distance, building their relationships in difficult conditions. Unfortunately, some families have lost loved ones. But despite all the challenges, Adventist families are united in fulfilling Jesus' commission. Prayer meetings, family programs, and family marathons have helped families to look forward with faith and trust their lives to the Lord.



The Women's Ministries Department organized three-day "Women of Hope" retreats, which were held in each of the eight conferences to provide spiritual, physical, and psychological support. The department also created a Telegram channel "Women's Ministry in Ukraine" to strengthen communication with



1,960 Women's Ministries leaders and active sisters of local churches.

The reality of church life and ministry in Ukraine during the past three years has been challenging, reports Vitalii Kryvoi, union treasurer, but it has been a joy to see the words of Ephesians 2:4 fulfilled: "God . . . is rich in mercy . . . " It was thanks to Him that we were blessed to receive everything we needed for "life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). Only the Lord gave strength to everyone for daily work, and His love opened our hearts to be faithful to Him in tithes and sacrifices in gratitude for God's protection and defense. It was thanks to His mercy that we gratefully felt the prayer and financial support from brothers and sisters from all over the world, which demonstrated in practice that the love of Christ unites us.

DEPARTMENTS SERVING OTHERS

ADRA Ukraine. ADRA Ukraine proved to be a powerful force in the context of the full-scale war in Ukraine. During the past three years, Leonid Rutkovskyi reports that the organization, with the support of international donors, has become a lifeline for the most vulnerable populations, including internally displaced persons, senior citizens, orphans, and veterans. The organization helps children from orphanages and shelters, hospital patients, large families, those who have lost their homes, and other people who have found themselves in difficult situations as a result of the war.





Education. The war brought great challenges to educational institutions in Ukraine. The Adventist college in Bucha was occupied for a certain period, with active fighting around it. There were regular rocket attacks and power outages throughout Ukraine. School students had to be in a bomb shelter at every air-raid alarm. But thanks to God, the Adventist college suffered only minor damage, and all students were evacuated in time. In addition, during the war, new schools were established, new school buildings were constructed, and the number of students in Adventist schools grew to exceed prewar levels, reports director Kostiantyn Kampen.



Angelia Adventist Clinic. Yurii Bondarenko, director, reports that despite the war in Ukraine, Angelia Adventist Clinic continues to fight for every suffering soul. During these difficult years of war, our mobile clinics have visited 200-plus locations, cared for 16,000 souls, and provided nearly 52,000 services. In Kyiv the Angelia clinic has treated more than 10,000 patients and provided medical treatment to hundreds of war victims in the hospital, restoring their physical, mental, and spiritual health. We have not given up, and will continue to fight for every soul entrusted to us by God as long as possible. The Lord heals through our weakness, showing His almighty power.



Chaplaincy Ministry. More than 170 pastors and church members are actively involved in chaplaincy ministry as volunteers led by Serhii Lutskyiy. Our chaplains support the military and their families by visiting hospitals, providing spiritual and emotional support to wounded soldiers, praying for their recovery, and helping with transportation. They are also there for those who are experiencing a loss; they support the families of the deceased, organize funeral services, share the pain of loss, and help them find hope.

Prayer Ministry. During the war, prayer ministry became an invisible but powerful shield for the church and people of Ukraine. Led by Tetiana



Rutkovska, daily prayer chains united believers in a continuous request to God for protection, peace, and healing, as well as offering prayers for soldiers, refugees, and those who have lost loved ones. Prayer groups actively support pastors and volunteers working in the war zone. For the first time in the history of Ukraine, a National Day of Prayer was introduced on February 24, 2025, symbolizing unity and hope. The Back to the Altar initiative has become a movement that has united all departments of the church and directed them to revive personal, family, and church worship.



Hope Media Group. Under the leadership of Maksym Krupskyi, Hope Media Group is a unique missionary organization that unites Hope TV channel, Voice of Hope radio (AWR branch), Bible School, and Contact Center. Starting with the Bible School, founded in the early 1990s, the mission project has developed into a powerful organization, with seven production studios in different parts of Ukraine. Today it is through these media tools that the Lord touches hearts, comforts, changes lives, and encourages us to serve our neighbors. During the war we continue to broadcast around the clock, expanding our audience despite the difficult circumstances. Support this ministry by using the QR code.

Music Ministry. This special outreach of the church, headed by Olena Nosova and Yuliia Kampen, provides three main areas of support. Inside the church they provide organization, mobilization, and improvement of ministry in times of war, especially with a decrease in the number of active church members who have gone abroad. The Missionary Music Ministry is a means of therapy and testimony to God's grace for those affected by the war, including displaced persons, families of those liable for military service, and families of the dead.



The ministry also organizes concert programs to raise funds for the military who need help at the front lines, as well as orphans and the hospitalized. Finally, they have compiled *Songs of Praise and Worship,* a new collection in Ukrainian, which includes 650 songs (scan the QR code to listen).

Source of Life Publishing House. During the war and up to the present, the publishing department, in collaboration with the publishing house, has continued to work toward its mission of publishing necessary literature. Director Viacheslav Kulaha shares that the publishing house has printed 380,220 copies of *Steps to Christ*; 100,000 copies of the *To Hope Again* magazine, by Mark Finley; 88,000 copies of the *Jesus Cares About You* magazine; 60,400 copies of *I Will Not Forsake You*; 5,600 copies of the Teen Bible; and 570,000 copies of *The Great Controversy*. We are grateful to God for the opportunity to sow "seeds of hope."



Our secretary, Volodymyr Velechuk, concludes that despite the difficult circumstances of war, migration of church members, challenges with personnel for ministry, tests of faith, etc., the church continues to fulfill the mission of Christ and respond to His call of "Surely I am coming quickly!" with "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:20).

SOUTH PACIFIC DIVISION REPORT

Empowered by the Spirit



A teacher and her students at Mountain View Adventist College in Sydney, Australia

The Seventh-day Adventist Church dreams of God reproducing the dramatic growth of the early church through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, and becoming a multiplying, disciple-making movement. Since the previous General Conference (GC) Session in St. Louis in 2022, the South Pacific Division (SPD) has had a taste of this divine outpouring of the Spirit. Among the 47 million people in our territory, one in every 55 people is now a Seventh-day Adventist. During this period we've seen 263,414 people commit to Jesus through baptism. As a result, our membership has grown to 854,497 and continues to rise. We give God all the glory for what He is doing in our midst.

GARDENING FOR CHRIST

Papua New Guinea for Christ was where God showed His extraordinary presence, triggering a movement across our division. Originally conceived in 2016 at the request of the General Conference, the Papua New Guinea Union Mission (PNGUM) was invited to host a Total Member Involvement (TMI) reaping event in early 2020. The PNGUM and SPD planned and worked toward that event. In the lead-up the church in PNG began to fast and pray twice a week. Local missions developed their members into disciple-makers. Training in simple methods to share faith and build community was held all over the country. Discovery Bible Reading groups became popular. Lay leaders learned to read the Bible in stories and chapters, and ask questions that engaged families and workmates in the message of Scripture.

One of the most significant features of this preparation phase was the widespread adoption of what is known in PNG as "the gardening model of evangelism," based on the parable in Mark 4:3-20. This follows the basic life principle that we

GLENN TOWNEND
PRESIDENT



reap what we sow. If you want to harvest a big crop, there is a process of preparing the soil, sowing the seed, cultivating the plants, harvesting the crop, and then multiplying the harvest. *Preparing the soil* refers to any activity that opens a person's heart to receiving God's Word. This includes listening, supporting health and education, ministering to those who are disabled, and offering welfare services, including food and clothing. ADRA was helpful in this phase, especially through village water supply projects.

Sowing the seed is sharing the gospel, telling the story of Jesus, reading the Bible, and allowing its message to bring about life change. GLOW tracts, *Signs* magazines, and other literature were widely distributed. Adventist World Radio (AWR) taught WhatsApp evangelism. *Cultivating the crop* saw people learning to read the Bible themselves, praying, and growing in their relationship with God while navigating trials and temptations with support from their community.

The harvest came through public evangelistic meetings, which were planned to happen in early 2020 but were stopped by the COVID pandemic. The pandemic, however, could not stop the church growing. When churches were closed, thousands of Discovery Bible Reading groups were formed and became the basis of 10,000 new house groups and churches being established. Some of these groups have now grown to 800 people. The harvest was eventually held from April 27 to May 12, 2024, at 2,300 sites around the country. The level of commitment was extraordinary. People used their holidays to participate. Some gave up their jobs for a year to help prepare. Businesspeople donated fuel, food, accommodation, and transport for guest presenters. Such sacrifices were made across the country.

The PNG church did not need to invite the rest of the world to participate, but I am so glad they did. From across the South Pacific Division, 230 preachers (pastors, evangelists, teachers, and others) traveled to PNG to participate. It did not matter if someone was preaching for the first time

Sowing the seed is sharing the gospel, telling the story of Jesus, reading the Bible, and allowing its message to bring about life change.

or was a seasoned public evangelist, whether leaning conservative or liberal, young or old, male or female—God moved powerfully wherever His Word was preached. The unity was evident at every level—GC, SPD, PNGUM, local missions/conferences, and local churches all working in harmony. In many places, messages delivered in English were heard by people in their own languages. There were miracles—those with disabilities walked, blind individuals could see, illnesses disappeared, demons were cast out. Hundreds of thousands sat through rain to hear the messages. And the greatest miracle of all—lives were transformed by the thousands. All who were involved knew we were experiencing something special. The local disciples and churches did not expect such an amazing response.

PNG for Christ was a God experience, and the impact extended beyond PNG. The preachers from Fiji, Samoa, New Zealand, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Australia, and beyond went home with amazing stories, igniting a desire for God to do the same thing in their countries. The strategic focus of the



ADRA volunteers at Bairnsdale feed the community.

SPD for the next quinquennium is to help each region prepare for such wonderful blessings from the Lord. We also thank God for the preachers from North America, Europe, Asia, and Africa who returned home from PNG with a new vision for their own territories.

Many churches in PNG more than doubled their membership because of PNG for Christ. This has created urgent needs—but the kind we rejoice in. The SPD has allocated funding for thousands of World Changer Bibles and Godpods for the new disciples of Jesus. The SPD and GC have provided funds for roofing iron for new church buildings. Ongoing training in discipleship, biblical teaching, and leadership development continues. A special focus on stewardship is helping people gain life skills—trades, agriculture, business—and understand the importance of putting God first. Tens of thousands of people are being trained in these programs. Local pastors, elders, and leaders continue their sacrificial service, nurturing and developing the new disciples.

GROWTH BEYOND

Beyond PNG, growth is being seen across the SPD, particularly in Adventist education. Our schools have grown from 81,871 students in 2022 to 91,250 currently. In each union, schools contribute at least 10 percent of baptisms. Teachers are dedicated to preserving and promoting Adventist identity. A special Abide Bible, created by the Australian Union, has been given to all staff in Adventist schools around the SPD, and is now being used for staff, family, and class worships. School chaplaincy is also growing in reach and impact.

Our tertiary institutions continue to flourish. Pacific Adventist University in PNG has grown from 1,300 to 1,700 students, and its graduates serve in government and public service roles across the Pacific. Fulton Adventist University College (Fiji) has increased enrollments from 900 to 1,301, and Sonoma Adventist College (PNG) from 579 to 731. Mamarapha, the Indigenous Bible College for Australia, reaches 230 communities scattered across the country. The Omaura School of Ministry (PNG) is producing hundreds of grassroots pastors with little formal education but strong spiritual grounding. Avondale University is now ranked as Australia's number-one university for employment outcomes and student learning and care. Its nursing course is the best in the country. Across all our educational institutions the focus remains on spiritual growth, character development, service to others, and commitment to God's mission.

Radio ministry continues to be one of our most effective outreach tools. In Australia, Faith FM is a network of small low-powered community radio stations. The Australian Union with Adventist World Radio (AWR) have seen Faith FM's audience grow to 2.8 million listeners each month, with 28 percent coming from Hindu, Muslim, and Jewish backgrounds, and 30 percent being under the age of 30. Presenters host community dinners in broadcast areas, helping people to grow in faith and commitment to Jesus. Most countries in the South Pacific also have effective radio ministries, reaching and nurturing isolated and unreached communities.



One of the thousands of 10,000 Toes volunteers doing a free health check to help reduce type 2 diabetes.



International and local pastors baptize in the sea near Arawa, Bougainville, during PNG for Christ.

This year we are commemorating a century since Nevill Westwood, the first person to circumnavigate Australia by car, completed his journey. Nevill, a Seventh-day Adventist literature evangelist, and a friend left Perth, Western Australia, on August 4, 1925, in a 1923 Citroen 5CV and arrived back 147 days later. This year two church-led ministries are retracing Nevill's journey, stopping at many of the places he visited. This has encouraged community engagement, with 269 churches and 90 public evangelism programs. A book has been published, and literature evangelists are selling this alongside their regular life-changing and God-filled books.

The Trans Pacific Union has followed the gardening cycle of evangelism, combined with a yearly focus based on the GC "I Will Go" strategy—"I will go to my family" (2022), "neighbor" (2023), "workplace" (2024), and "to the ends of the earth" (2025). This year the union has trained and sent 47 volunteer missionaries to Timor Leste and West Indonesia under the Mission Refocus strategy. The SPD is committed to sending more missionaries to our partner Southern Asia-Pacific Division. PNGUM is partnering with the East Indonesia Union, Australia with the Southeastern Asia Union, and New Zealand with the Malaysia Union. God's message will indeed go to the ends of the earth.

The New Zealand Pacific Union has supported church planting and public evangelism in New Caledonia amid ongoing racial tension in the country. In French Polynesia growth continues through media and evangelism. In New Zealand (and the Cook Islands) Hope Channel on free-to-air TV receives approximately 100,000 viewers per month. The viewers are being connected with other digital ministries, and some are coming to church. The union's Digital Discipleship Conference had 230 participants.

Adventist Media supports the disciple-making movement through radio, television, and digital media. The annual Digital Discipleship training events throughout the SPD are equipping people to share our message in effective ways online. The Sabbath Gift initiative has seen 1.4 million hits, with 38,000 people searching the website for Sabbath information. Mums at the Table, a digital ministry that shares parenting tips for mothers, has developed into a face-to-face ministry. There are currently 19 Mums at the Table meet-up groups across Australia and New Zealand, with some of the mothers and children now being involved in Sabbath School, Adventurers, Pathfinders, and church.

Health Ministries continues to grow rapidly. The 10,000 Toes Campaign, focused on turning the tide on type 2 diabetes and other lifestyle



Preaching during one of the 2,300 sites for PNG for Christ

diseases in the South Pacific, ran a Mega Health clinic with AWR in Mount Hagen before PNG for Christ. A voluntary program, 10,000 Toes has now trained 13,000 representatives in 13 countries of the Pacific. The volunteers provide basic health assessments and run intervention programs following the Adventist health message. Many villages and towns have become open to the Adventist message after people have experienced life-changing results through new health habits.

In New Zealand and Australia, ELIA Wellness promotes wholistic health through its focus on seven dimensions of wellness—emotionally thriving, physically energized, socially connected, vocationally enriched, spiritually empowered, intellectually engaged, and environmentally attuned. Together with 10,000 Toes, they have established 137 wellness hubs that have run 7,000 wellness programs across the Pacific. ELIA's Lifestyle Medicine Center at Sydney Adventist Hospital (SAH) runs research-backed intervention programs. The SAH (affectionately known as the San) continues to train health professionals through partnerships with Avondale University (nurses) and the Australian National University (doctors). The San has a strong chaplaincy teaching and training program and ministry. The Sanitarium Health and Wellbeing group continues to produce healthy nutritional meals—2.7 billion serves of food globally each year, with 2.1 billion of that in the South Pacific. The group is changing lives every day through whole-person health. The Sanitarium group is very active in support of community and church projects. They are major donors to school breakfast programs in Australia and New Zealand. People who connect with our movement know that their health can improve.

To fuel the missionary movement, the SPD has allocated 20 percent of its budget to strategic projects during the past decade. There is also a leadership academy helping leaders to grow spiritually and gain skills in change management and disciple-making.

There is much more that we can share about what God is doing through His people in the SPD. This is but a snapshot of the blessings we have received from Him. The SPD may be small, but we are delighted to be a part of God's global end-time movement, working together to fulfill the mission in every part of the world.



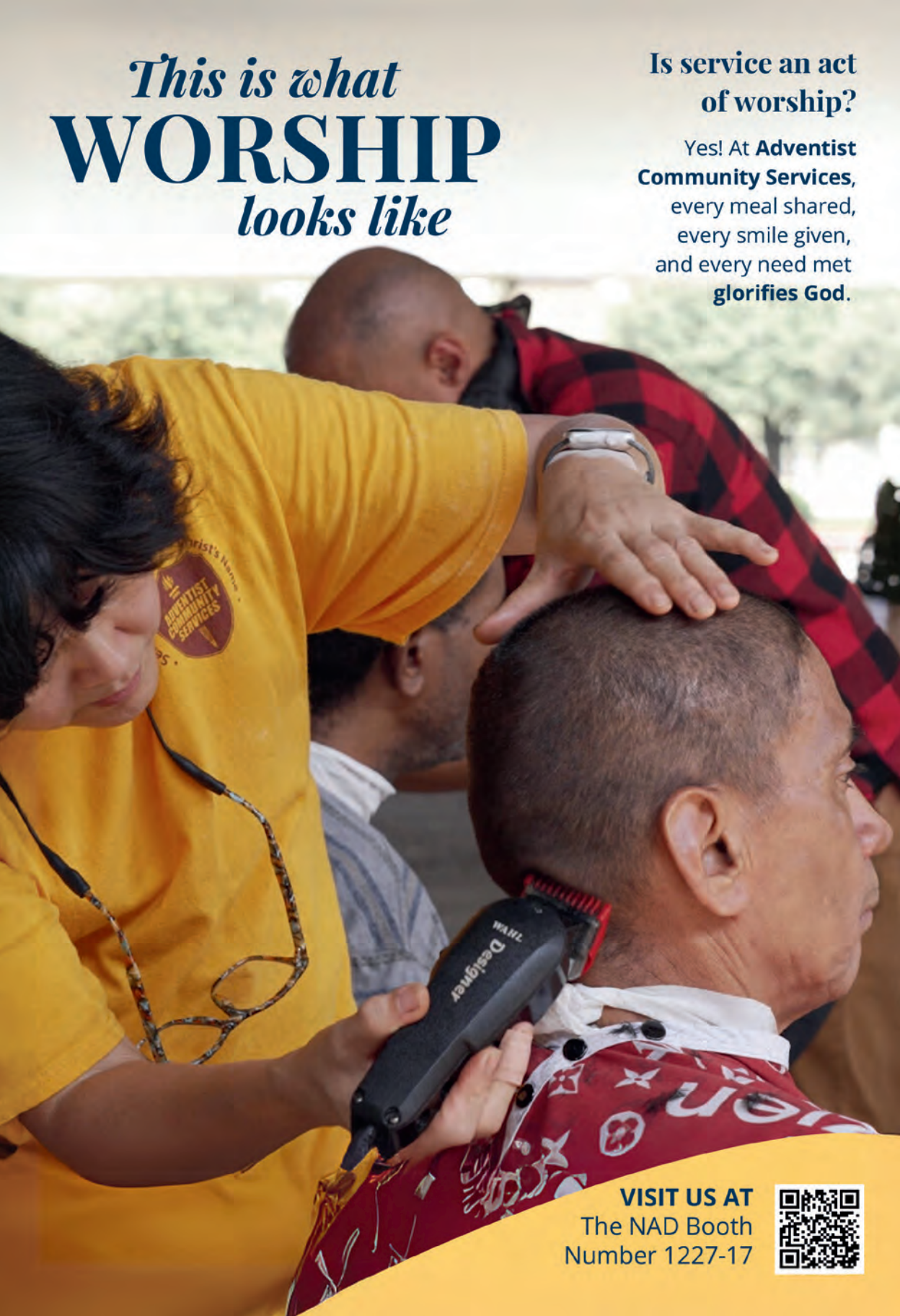
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Fifth Business Meeting

SESSION ACTIONS (ADDITIONAL ITEM)

62nd General Conference Session, St Louis, Missouri, July 6, 2025, 2:00 p.m.

MAKING CHANGES (WHY A *CHURCH MANUAL?*) - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To amend, Making Changes (Why a *Church Manual?*) - *Church Manual* Amendment by adding "may" prior to "prepare a Supplement" on line 23 as follows:

In 1948, recognizing that local conditions sometimes call for special actions, the General Conference Executive Committee voted that ~~"each division, including the North American Division of the world field, prepare~~ each division of the world field may "prepare a 'Supplement' to the new *Church Manual* not in any way modifying it but containing such additional matter as is applicable to the conditions and circumstances prevailing in the division; the manuscripts for these Supplements to be submitted to the General Conference Committee for endorsement before being printed."—*Autumn Council Actions*, 1948, p. 19.

MAKING CHANGES (*WHY A CHURCH MANUAL?*) - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This provision allows the inclusion of detailed information specific to all world division to be included in the *Church Manual*, without specifying the inclusion of the North American Division.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 1, Why a *Church Manual?*, pages 18-19, Making Changes, to read as follows:

Making Changes

The General Conference through the years voted important changes concerning the *Church Manual*. Realizing the importance of conducting the worldwide work of the Church "decently and in order," the 1946 General Conference Session voted that "all changes or revisions of policy that are to be made in the *Manual* shall be authorized by the General Conference Session."—*General Conference Report*, No. 8, p. 197 (June 14, 1946).

In 1948, recognizing that local conditions sometimes call for special actions, the General Conference Executive Committee voted that ~~"each division, including the North American Division of the world field, prepare~~ each division of the world field may "prepare a 'Supplement' to the new *Church Manual* not in any way modifying it but containing such additional matter as is applicable to the conditions and circumstances prevailing in the division; the manuscripts for these Supplements to be submitted to the General Conference Committee for endorsement before being printed."—*Autumn Council Actions*, 1948, p. 19.

The 2000 General Conference Session authorized the reclassification of some existing *Church Manual* material into the Notes section as guidance and examples rather than mandatory ~~material,~~ material and approved the process for making changes. Changes in the *Church Manual*, except for the notes and editorial changes, can be made only by action of a General Conference Session, where delegates of the world ~~church~~ Church have voice and vote. If a local church, conference, or union conference/mission wishes to propose a *Church Manual* revision, it should submit its proposal to the next constituent level for counsel and study. If that level approves the proposal, it submits the suggested revision to the next level for additional evaluation. If the various levels approve the proposal, it eventually comes before the General Conference *Church Manual* Committee, which considers all recommendations. If the *Church Manual* Committee approves a revision, it prepares it for presentation at an Annual Council and/or General Conference Session.

Revision of a note follows the same procedure. The General Conference Executive Committee may approve changes to the notes at any Annual Council.

The *Church Manual* Committee reports proposed nonsubstantive editorial changes to the main content of the *Church Manual* to an Annual Council of the General Conference Executive Committee, which may give final approval. However, in the event the Annual Council determines by one-third vote that an editorial change substantively alters the meaning of a passage, the proposed change must go to the General Conference Session.

At the final Annual Council of a quinquennium, the General Conference Executive Committee reviews all changes to the notes and coordinates the changes with any proposed amendments to the main content of the *Church Manual*.

A new edition of the *Church Manual* is published after every General Conference Session. The most recent edition should always be used. This edition incorporates amendments made at the postponed 2020 General Conference Session, which took place in 2022.

Geoffrey G Mbwana, Chair
Claude J Richli, Secretary
Hensley M Moorooven, Actions Editor
Nichole N Miles, Recording Secretary

Seventh Business Meeting

SESSION ACTIONS

62nd General Conference Session, St Louis, Missouri, July 7, 2025, 2:00 p.m.

MEMBERS MOVING AWAY AND NOT REPORTING - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This editorial amendment provides clarity and make the wording consistent with section on Redemptive Membership Review (see 406-25GSa).

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 8, Discipline, pages 71-72, Members Moving Away and Not Reporting, to read as follows:

Members Moving Away and Not Reporting—When members move, they should inform the clerk or elder of their new address. While remaining members of that church, they should report and send their tithe and offerings at least quarterly. If, however, members move without leaving a forwarding address and make no effort to contact or report to the church, and the church cannot

locate them for at least two years, then the church may certify that it has tried without success to locate the members and the members may be removed by a vote of the church. The clerk should record in the membership record: ~~"Whereabouts~~ "Location unknown. Voted to designate as missing."

FINANCE - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the motion to amend the item, Finance - *Church Manual* Amendment.

FINANCE - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To amend the item, Finance - *Church Manual* Amendment, by retaining lines 40-43 on page 58 which read as follows:

"God has made the proclamation of the gospel dependent upon the labors and the gifts of His people. Voluntary offerings and the tithe constitute the revenue of the Lord's work. Of the means entrusted to man, God claims a certain portion—the tenth. He leaves all free to say whether or not they will give more than this."—AA 74

FINANCE - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment expresses the importance of giving offerings as part of worship.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 12, Finance, pages 141-147, to read as follows:

Finance

The biblical plan for the support of the work of God is by the tithes and offerings of His people. The Lord says, "Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house" (Mal. 3:10). The Church has followed this plan from its earliest days.

The Bible and Spirit of Prophecy present a beautiful picture of giving as a part of worship. "So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work" (2 Cor. 9:7-8).

"The system of tithes and offerings was intended to impress the minds of men with a great truth—that God is the source of every blessing to His creatures, and that to Him man's gratitude is due for the good gifts of His providence."—PP 525.

"Tithes and offerings for God are an acknowledgment of His claim on us by creation, and they are also an acknowledgment of His claim by redemption. Because all our power is derived from Christ, these offerings are to flow from us to God. They are to keep ever before us the claim of redemption, the greatest of all claims, and the one that involves every other."—6T 479.

"The tithe is sacred, reserved by God for Himself. It is to be brought into His treasury to be used to sustain the gospel laborers in their work."—9T 249.

"He has given His people a plan for raising sums sufficient to make the enterprise self-sustaining. God's plan in the tithing system is beautiful in its simplicity and equality. All may take hold of it in faith and courage, for it is divine in its origin. In it are combined simplicity and utility. . . . Every man, woman, and youth may become a treasurer for the Lord and may be an agent to meet the demands upon the treasury. Says the apostle: 'Let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.' "—3T 388, 389.

"God has made the proclamation of the gospel dependent upon the labors and the gifts of His people. Voluntary offerings and the tithe constitute the revenue of the Lord's work. Of the means entrusted to man, God claims a certain portion—the tenth. He leaves all free to say whether or not they will give more than this."—AA 74.

"Besides the tithe the Lord demands the first fruits of all our increase. These He has reserved in order that His work in the earth may be amply sustained. . . . If all would pay a faithful tithe and devote to the Lord the first fruits of their increase, there would be a full supply of funds for His work."—6T 384.

"This matter of giving is not left to impulse. God has given us definite instruction in regard to it. He has specified tithes and offerings as the measure of our obligation. And He desires us to give regularly and systematically. . . . After the tithe is set apart, let gifts and offerings be apportioned, 'as God hath prospered you.'"—RH, May 9, 1893.

"God has given special direction as to the use of the tithe. He does not design that His work shall be crippled for want of means. . . . The portion that God has reserved for Himself is not to be diverted to any other purpose than that which He has specified. Let none feel at liberty to retain their tithe, to use according to their own judgment. They are not to use it for themselves in an emergency, nor to apply it as they see fit, even in what they may regard as the Lord's work."—9T 247.

"If we love Jesus, we shall love to live for Him, to present our thank offerings to Him, to labor for Him."—COL 49.

"Our heavenly Father did not originate the plan of systematic benevolence to enrich Himself, but to be a great blessing to man. He saw that this system of beneficence was just what man needed."—3T 405.

Stewardship [See 407-25GSb]

Tithe [See 407-25GSc]

Offerings [See 407-25GSd]

General Financial Counsel [See 407-25GSe and 408-25GS]

STEWARDSHIP - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the item, Stewardship - *Church Manual* Amendment.

STEWARDSHIP - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment expresses the importance of stewardship in all areas of life.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 12, Finance, page 142, Stewardship, to read as follows:

Stewardship

Christians are God's stewards, entrusted with His ~~goods~~ blessings and, as His partners, responsible to manage them in harmony with His guidelines and principles. The divine counsel is that as His stewards, we are to "be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4:2) and live according to His will as we worship Him with our whole lives (Rom. 12:1-3, Gen. 12:2-3). Stewardship covers every aspect of Christian life and experience, including the stewardship of our means. ~~(1 Cor. 4:2). Though the question of stewardship covers many aspects of Christian life and experience, without doubt the stewardship of our means is vitally important.~~ It concerns the entire Church family and involves our recognition of the sovereignty of God, His ownership of all things, and the bestowal of His grace upon our hearts.

While this aspect of Christian stewardship concerns our material possessions, it nevertheless ~~reacts upon~~ defines our Christian experience. The Lord requires certain things of us, in order that He may do certain things for us. ~~Our yielding obedience to what our heavenly Father requires places this phase of stewardship upon a high spiritual plane. He does not arbitrarily demand either that we serve Him or that we recognize Him with our gifts. But He~~ In all areas of our lives, God invites us to obey His word and then trust His promises. Our conscientious stewardship of God's blessings helps to build our faith. God has so arranged that when we work in harmony with Him in these things there will flow great spiritual blessings to us. ~~to our own hearts great spiritual blessings.~~

"God desires all His stewards to be exact in following divine arrangements. They are not to offset the Lord's plans by performing some deed of charity or giving some gift or some offering when or how they, the human agents, shall see fit. It is a very poor policy for men to seek to improve on God's plan, and invent a makeshift, averaging up their good impulses on this and that occasion, and offsetting them against God's requirements. God calls upon all to give their influence to His own arrangement."—9T 248.

TITHE - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

Upon the decision of the chair, the request to refer item, Tithe - *Church Manual* Amendment, back to the *Church Manual* Committee was accepted.

OFFERINGS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

Upon the decision of the chair, the request to refer item, Offerings - *Church Manual* Amendment, back to the *Church Manual* Committee was accepted.

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY - *CHURCH MANUAL* ADDITION

Upon the decision of the chair, the request to refer item, Transparency and Accountability - *Church Manual* Addition, back to the *Church Manual* Committee was accepted.

TO COOPERATE WITH THE CONFERENCE (ELDERS) - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment expresses the need for local church officers and pastors to support the division offering plan.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 9, Local Church Officers and Organizations, page 81, To Cooperate With the Conference (Elders), to read as follows:

To Cooperate With the Conference—The pastor, elders, and all officers should cooperate with conference officers and departmental directors in carrying out approved plans. They should inform the church about the offering plan adopted by the division for their territory and ~~of~~ all regular and special offerings, promote all the programs and activities of the church, and encourage all officers to support conference plans and policies.

Elders should work closely with the treasurer and see that all conference funds are remitted promptly to the conference treasurer at the time established by the conference. Elders should see that the clerk's report is sent promptly to the conference secretary at the close of each quarter.

Elders should regard all correspondence from the conference office as important. Letters calling for announcements should be presented at the proper time.

In the absence of the pastor, the first elder (see pp. 120-121) should see that the church elects delegates to conference sessions and that the clerk sends the names of delegates to the conference office.

TREASURER - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment transfers the information on Sabbath School Offerings from the section on Sabbath School (see 407-25GSi) to this section on the Treasurer, and adds information on how this offering is allocated in different division Offering Plans.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 9, Local Church Officers and Organizations, pages 88-91, Treasurer, to read as follows:

Treasurer

Because of the important functions of the treasurer, it is wise to choose one who can be elected to a new term of office to provide continuity in record keeping and reporting. Large churches may elect assistant treasurers as needed.

The treasurer can greatly encourage faithfulness in the returning of tithe and deepen the spirit of liberality on the part of the members. A word of counsel given in the spirit of the Master will help members to render faithfully to God His own in tithes and offerings, even in a time of financial stringency.

Treasurer the Custodian of All Funds—The treasurer is the custodian - No change

Conference Funds—Conference funds, which include tithe, all regular - No change

Sabbath School Offerings—Any offering collected during Sabbath School should be accurately recorded by the Sabbath School secretary, who will pass them on to the treasurer as soon as possible. Extension division offerings should be added to the offering regularly collected during Sabbath School.

In territories that have adopted the Combined Offering Plan, these offerings should be distributed according to the formula voted by the division for that Offering Plan. As part of the promotion of any offering collected during Sabbath School in those territories, the givers should be informed that part of their offerings will fund the quarterly world mission projects sponsored by the General Conference.

All Sabbath School offerings in territories that use the Calendar of Offerings Plan, and the Personal Giving Plan are for the support of the mission fields and are to be passed on in their entirety to the conference. These funds include the regular weekly Sabbath School offering, the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, Mission Investment, and Birthday-Thank Offering. These Mission funds will then be distributed by the conference according to policy. No mission funds may be retained by the church or conference.

In territories that have adopted the Personal Giving Plan or the Calendar of Offerings Plan, these mission funds are transmitted to the conference office as outlined in the section above ("Conference Funds"). The regular church budget should make provision for Sabbath School expenses, as for other ministries or departments of the church.

Sabbath School Funds—All Sabbath School offerings are to be passed over weekly to the treasurer by the Sabbath School secretary-treasurer, the treasurer keeping a careful record of all such offerings. These mission funds are transmitted to the conference office as outlined in the previous paragraph. Sabbath School expense funds are held in trust, subject to the orders of the Sabbath School council (See pp. 103-104.), to meet the routine expenses of the Sabbath School.

Local Church Funds—Local church funds include church - No change

Funds of Auxiliary Organizations—Auxiliary organization funds - No change

Safeguarding the Purpose of Funds—All offerings and gifts contributed by individuals for a specific fund or purpose, under all three offering plans, ~~Funds—When an offering is taken for worldwide missions or for any general or local enterprise, all money placed in the offering plate (unless otherwise indicated by the donor) shall be counted as part of that particular offering. All offerings and gifts contributed by individuals for a specific fund or purpose~~ must be used for that purpose. Neither the treasurer nor the board has the authority to divert any funds from the objective for which they were given.

The funds of auxiliary organizations, often donations given for specific purposes, are raised for that special part of the church's work for which the auxiliary organization is established. Such funds are held in trust by the treasurer, and they too may not be borrowed or in any way diverted by the treasurer or the board from the objective for which they were raised.

When an auxiliary organization is discontinued, the church in a regular business meeting may take action indicating the dispo-



CHRISTINA COLLARD

sition of any balance of funds in the account of the organization.

Money for Personal Literature Orders—Money for personal orders - No change

Proper Method for Payment of Money by Members—The treasurer - No change

Receipts to Members—Receipts should be issued promptly for all - No change

Proper Method of Remitting Funds to the Conference—In sending - No change

Preservation of Financial Documents—Financial - No change

Books Should Be Audited—The conference - No change

Relations With Members Confidential—The treasurer should [See 409-25GS]

WORLD HEALTH MINISTRIES SABBATH OFFERING - *CHURCH MANUAL* DELETION

RATIONALE: This section is being removed since this offering is no longer collected.

VOTED, To delete the *Church Manual*, Chapter 9, Local Church Officers and Organizations, pages 100-101, World Health Ministries Sabbath Offering, which reads as follows:

World Health Ministries Sabbath Offering—The entire World Health Ministries Sabbath Offering is sent to the conference to be distributed according to policy. Upon the church's request to the conference, up to 25 percent of the offering received in the church may revert to the church for health ministries programs.

SABBATH SCHOOL - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment incorporates making disciples as an important part of Sabbath School and specifies the responsibility of the Sabbath School secretary. The details regarding Sabbath School Offerings are being moved to the section on the Treasurer (see 407-25GSg).

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 9, Local Church Officers and Organizations, pages 103-106, Sabbath School, to read as follows:

Sabbath School

The Sabbath School, the primary religious education program of the Church, has four purposes: study of the Scripture, fellowship, community outreach, and world mission emphasis. The General Conference Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department distributes the Sabbath School Bible study guide for all age levels, provides designs for Sabbath School programming within the context of the various world division cultures, provides resources and training systems for Sabbath School teachers, and promotes world mission ~~Sabbath School~~ offerings. Because it incorporates the core spiritual elements of Bible study, prayer, fellowship, and mission, Sabbath School is an essential part of the church's strategy for making disciples.

"The Sabbath school is an important branch of the missionary work, not only because it gives to young and old a knowledge of God's Word, but because it awakens in them a love for its sacred truths, and a desire to study them for themselves; above all, it teaches them to regulate their lives by its holy teachings."—CSW 10, 11.

"The Sabbath school, if rightly conducted, is one of God's great instrumentalities to bring souls to a knowledge of the truth."—CSW 115.

Officers of the Sabbath School Council—The church elects - No change

Sabbath School Superintendent and Other Sabbath School Officers—The superintendent is the leading officer of the Sabbath School and should begin planning for its smooth and effective operation as soon as elected. The superintendent should support the plans and emphases of the conference Sabbath School department and should implement decisions of the Sabbath School council concerning the operation of the Sabbath School. The church may elect one or more assistant superintendents.

The secretary should complete the quarterly report on the appropriate form immediately after the last Sabbath of the quarter and mail it before the deadline to the conference Sabbath School and personal ministries directors. The secretary also should place a copy in the secretary's permanent file, give copies to the superintendent and the pastor, and present it at the business meeting. In addition, any offering collected during Sabbath School should be accurately recorded by the Sabbath School secretary, who will pass them on to the treasurer as soon as possible. (See p. 88.)

The Investment secretary promotes the Investment plan for mission support in all Sabbath School divisions and keeps all members informed as the program progresses.

The Vacation Bible School (VBS) director leads in organizing, promoting, and launching community evangelism through the annual VBS. The church may assign this responsibility to the children's ministries coordinator.

The council may appoint a music director for the Sabbath School in consultation with division leaders. As an expression of worship, music should glorify God. Singers and other musicians should be as carefully selected as are the leaders for other parts of the Sabbath School service and should be measured by the same standards. (See pp. 101, 155, 157.) The council also may appoint pianists and organists for the divisions.

Sabbath School Division Leaders—The church board elects a leader - No change

Sabbath School Teachers—The Sabbath School council chooses - No change

Sabbath School Offerings—The Sabbath School secretary should accurately record Sabbath School offerings and pass them on to the treasurer as soon as possible. Extension division offerings should be added to the regular Sabbath School offerings. Many Sabbath Schools take offerings for Sabbath School expense. With the exception of that expense fund, all Sabbath School offerings are for the support of the mission fields and are to be passed on in their entirety by the treasurer to the conference. These funds include the regular weekly Sabbath School offering, the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, Sabbath School Investment, and Birthday Thank Offering. Each is to be identified as a separate fund in the financial system of the church. Mission funds are distributed according to policy. No mission funds may be retained by the church or conference.

The Sabbath School expense offering and the mission offering, where the calendar of offerings is being used, shall not be taken as one offering and divided according to an agreed-upon formula or percentage. The offerings may be taken as combined offering where the church is operating under a division-approved combined offering plan.

Resources—For Sabbath School and personal ministries - No change

CONDUCTING THE COMMUNION SERVICE - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the motion to amend the item, Conducting the Communion Service - *Church Manual* Amendment.

CONDUCTING THE COMMUNION SERVICE - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To not amend the item, Conducting the Communion Service - *Church Manual* Amendment, by replacing "may be" with "must" on line 33, page 73.

CONDUCTING THE COMMUNION SERVICE - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the motion to amend the item, Conducting the Communion Service - *Church Manual* Amendment.

CONDUCTING THE COMMUNION SERVICE - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To not amend the item, Conducting the Communion Service - *Church Manual* Amendment, by removing "This offering is promoted as an addition to regular and systematic offerings" from lines 33-34 on page 71.

CONDUCTING THE COMMUNION SERVICE - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the item, Conducting the Communion Service – *Church Manual* Amendment.

CONDUCTING THE COMMUNION SERVICE - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment explains that any offering taken following the Communion service would be as an addition to regular and systematic offerings.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 11, Services and Other Meetings, pages 131-132, Conducting the Communion Service, to read as follows:

Conducting the Communion Service—Length of Service—Time is not the most significant factor in the communion service. However, attendance can be improved and the spiritual impact increased by (1) eliminating extraneous items from the worship service on this high day, (2) avoiding delays before and after foot-washing, and (3) having the deaconesses arrange the emblems on the communion table well beforehand.

Preliminaries—The introductory portion of the service should be brief, including only short announcements, a hymn, prayer, offering, and a short sermon before separating for the foot-washing and returning for the Lord's Supper.

Foot-Washing—Each church should have a plan for meeting the needs of its members for the foot-washing service. (See Notes, #5, p. 188.)

Bread and Wine—Following the foot-washing, the congregation comes together once again to partake of the bread and the wine. (See Notes, #6, pp. 188-189.)

Celebration—Communion should always be a solemn, never somber, experience. Wrongs have been righted, sins have been forgiven, and faith has been reaffirmed. It is a time for celebration. Let the music be bright and joyous. The service should end on a high note, such as with a musical feature or congregational singing, followed by dismissal.

An offering for the poor ~~is often~~ may be taken as the congregation leaves. This offering is promoted as an addition to regular and systematic offerings.

After the service the deacons and deaconesses clear the table, collect the utensils, and respectfully dispose of any remaining emblems. In no case should these emblems be consumed or returned to common use.

REGULATION OF SOLICITING FUNDS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: The paragraph being removed is relevant to international service employees, rather than local church activities, and is unnecessary since the main point is covered in the first paragraph.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 12, Finance, page 145 and 146, Regulation of Soliciting Funds, to read as follows:

Regulation of Soliciting Funds—The following are regulations for soliciting funds:

1. No conference, church, or institution, without special counsel and arrangement, shall plan work requiring solicitation of funds from outside its territory. Any solicitation within its territory shall be in harmony with local, union, division, and General Conference policies. No authority is granted to denominational employees representing special interests in one part of the field to solicit help in any other part of the field or in any other conference without arrangement with and written authorization from conference officers where the fund-raising would take place.

2. The following principles protect churches from unauthorized, fraudulent, and undenominational solicitation:

a. Pastors and officers shall not grant the privilege of the pulpit to persons for fund-raising who have not been recognized or recommended by the conference. (See pp. 126-127.) No permission shall be granted to solicit funds either publicly or privately without such recognition.

b. All funds contributed for any cause in response to appeals shall be passed through regular church channels.

c. Conference and church officers shall take such steps as

may be necessary to prevent unauthorized or illegal public solicitation.

3. No campaign other than the Annual Appeal (Ingathering or equivalent appeal), which involves using Appeal literature and containers with authorized Appeal labels, shall be conducted for the solicitation of money for either home or overseas mission work. Unions and conferences should prevent violations of this regulation.

~~4. Interdivision employees visiting their home churches or otherwise communicating with their home bases are asked to solicit funds only for enterprises included in the budget of appropriations, working in cooperation with churches and conferences to raise the funds required to meet the appropriations on which our world mission work depends. All such funds shall be passed through regular channels.~~

RELATIONS WITH MEMBERS CONFIDENTIAL - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the item, Relations with Members Confidential - *Church Manual* Amendment.

RELATIONS WITH MEMBERS CONFIDENTIAL - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment expresses the need for confidentiality regarding the giving practices of members.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 9, Local Church Officers and Organizations, page 91, Relations With Members Confidential, to read as follows:

Relations With Members Confidential—The treasurer should always remember that ~~relations with individual members are strictly confidential. The treasurer should never comment on~~ personal giving decisions are strictly confidential. The treasurer and the pastor should never disclose individual giving records, except with consent of the giver, as required by law, as needed to audit or review the church's financial records, or as needed for the nominating committee process (see p. 118). ~~the tithe returned by any member or on the income or anything concerning it except to those who share the responsibility of the work.~~ Great harm may be caused by failure to observe this rule.

USE OF "DISCIPLESHIP" - *CHURCH MANUAL* DIRECTIVE

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the item, Use of "Discipleship" - *Church Manual* Directive.

USE OF "DISCIPLESHIP" - *CHURCH MANUAL* DIRECTIVE

RATIONALE: This amendment intends to highlight the idea of active disciple-making and its evangelistic engagement.

VOTED, To approve a directive to amend the *Church Manual*, by replacing "discipleship" with "disciple-making" or "making disciples," where appropriate.

Artur A Stele, Chair
Gary D Krause, Secretary
Hensley M Moorooven, Actions Editor
Marietta R Fowler, Recording Secretary

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT #7

VOTED, To approve the following partial report of the Nominating Committee:

General Conference

Vice Presidents Assigned to Divisions:

Harrington S Akombwa, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division
Stanley E Arco, South American Division
G Alexander Bryant, North American Division
Roger O Caderma, Southern Asia-Pacific Division
John Victor Chinta, Southern Asia Division
Abner De Los Santos, Inter-American Division
Daniel Duda, Trans-European Division
Mikhail F Kaminskiy, Euro-Asia Division
Soon Gi Kang, Northern Asia-Pacific Division
Barna Magyarosi, Inter-European Division
Bassey Effiong Okon Udoh, West-Central Africa Division
Blasious M Ruguri, East-Central Africa Division
Glenn C Townend, South Pacific Division

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NEWS



CHRISTINA COLLARD

DELEGATES VOTED TO ACCEPT NOMINATION OF 14 GC DEPARTMENT DIRECTORS

THREE NEW DIRECTORS ARE ADDED TO AN EXPERIENCED TEAM OF INCUMBENTS.

MARCOS PASEGGI, *ADVENTIST REVIEW*

On the afternoon business session of July 8, delegates to the sixty-second General Conference Session in St. Louis, Missouri, United States, voted to approve the nominations of 14 departments of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Most of the directors are incumbents, with only three newly elected to their positions, as detailed below.

Nelu Burcea, Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL)

Burcea started working at the General Conference in October 2015 as an associate director of the department that he now leads. He has developed relationships with various international institutions on behalf of the Adventist Church and the International Religious Liberty Association. He brought to the PARL Department a strong educational background, administrative skills, and a long-term commitment to ministry and mission, church leaders said.

The new director's previous appointments have been as director for Communication and Public Affairs and Religious Liberty for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Romania and director of the Romanian Adventist Media Center, which includes the Speranta television network and Voice of Hope radio network. He has also served as a local church ordained pastor and has led numerous evangelistic campaigns in Europe and the United States.

Burcea has many educational credentials, including a Ph.D. in economics, specializing in business ethics and human dignity; a master's degree in management of business development; and a bachelor's degree in theology. He has also completed postgraduate studies in mass media, marketing, and diplomatic protocol and postdoctoral research at Oxford Center for Mission Studies on religious freedom.

Mario Martinelli, Publishing Ministries

Martinelli brings more than four decades of experience in Adventist publishing and marketing. He was Publishing Ministries director across several church regions in Brazil and then marketing manager at the Brazil Publishing House.

Martinelli also led the Book Division of the Review and Herald Publishing Association in the United States, and since 2010 has been the CEO of Safeliz, the Adventist publishing house in Spain. In that position he has been a strong supporter of evangelism and revival efforts of the regional and world church.

He has been an ordained pastor since 1984 and has a Master of Divinity (1995) and Master of Business Administration (1996). In 1997 he graduated with a Doctor of Ministry degree. The title of his dissertation was "Marketing Strategies for Seventh-day Adventist Literature in Brazil."

According to ANN: "Under Martinelli's leadership, Adventist publications have reached more than 120 countries through expanded distribution channels. He has overseen the development of specialized Bibles for various Adventist audiences and organized global book launches through conferences and seminars.

COVER PHOTO BY JOSEF KISSINGER

His lifelong dedication to literature evangelism and mission-driven publishing has helped bring gospel-centered materials to readers across languages, cultures, and continents."

Alyssa Truman, Communication

Alyssa Truman joined the General Conference Communication Department in 2022, first as digital evangelism manager and then as assistant Communication director. She managed the Adventist News Network (ANN) and led out in an overhaul of the website and an increase of its footprint.

She replaces Williams Costa, Jr., who is retiring after leading the department for 15 years. In her previous experience Truman was a marketing manager for Adventist World Radio (AWR).

Truman has a M.A. in pastoral ministries from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. She is married to Trent Truman, the creative projects manager for the North American Division, and they have three adult daughters.

GC DEPARTMENT DIRECTORS (INCUMBENTS)

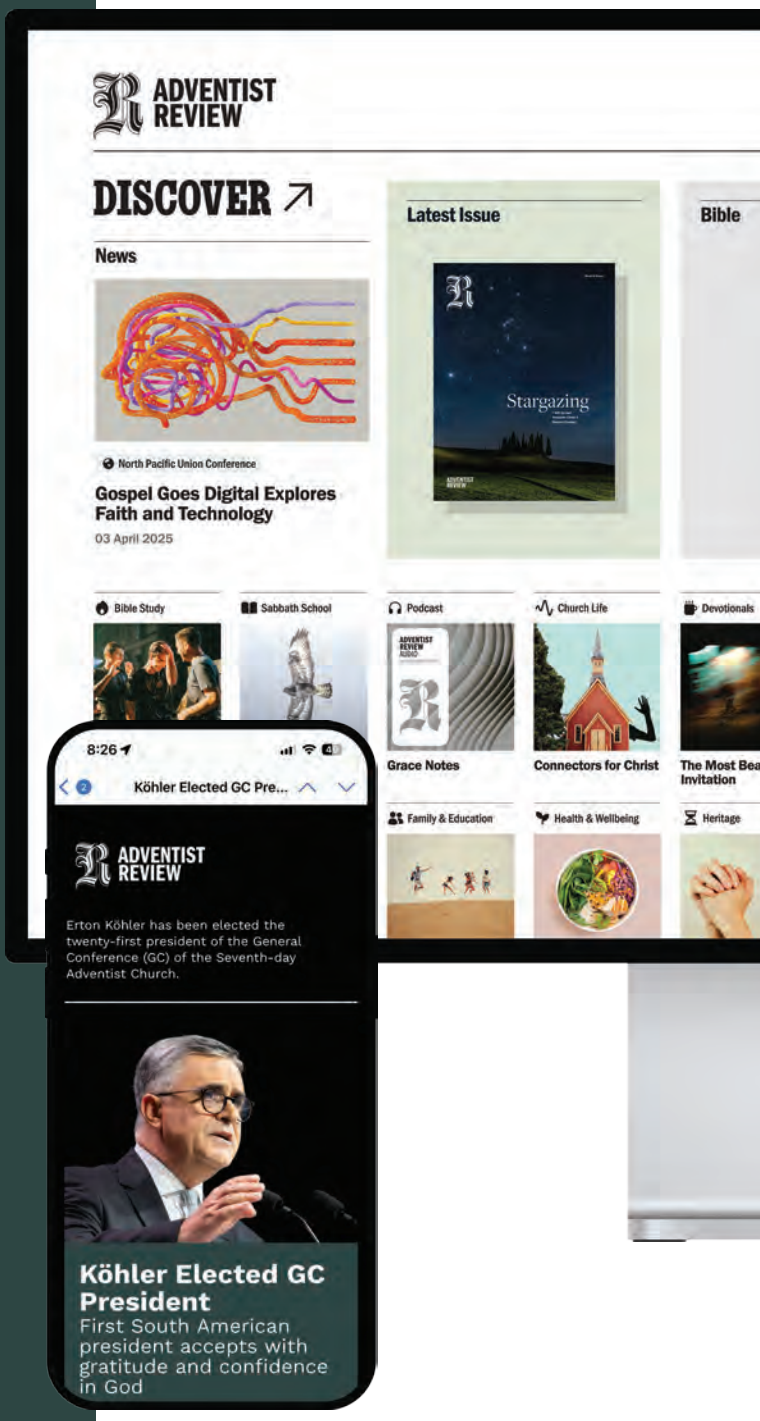
Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries: **Ivan H. Omaña**
Children's Ministries: **Orathai Chureson**
Education: **Lisa Beardsley-Hardy**
Family Ministries: **Wilbert Oliver**
Health: **Zeno L. Charles-Marcel**
Ministerial Association Secretary: **Ramon J. Canals**
Planned Giving and Trust Services: **Hector Reyes**
Sabbath School and Personal Ministries: **James Howard**
Stewardship Ministries: **Marcos Faiock Bomfim**
Women's Ministries: **Galina Stele**
Youth Ministries: **Sibusiso B. Khumalo**

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"Having someone who extends a hand and says, 'This is hard, but I'm here with you,' is the first step toward healing."

FINDING THE PATH FORWARD

CHAPLAINS PROVIDE COUNSELING FOR TRANSITIONING LEADERS AT GC SESSION

BECKY ST. CLAIR

For many leaders their identity and their professional role are one and the same. While this means that they usually pour themselves fully into that role, it also means that when they no longer fill that role, they also find themselves struggling with a sense of identity. This is true even for leaders within the Adventist Church. And during the General Conference (GC) Session, when elected positions come up for consideration in Nominating Committee, the struggle can become all too real.

"When you serve this church, you serve it with everything," states Ivan Omaña, director of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries for the General Conference. "I'm the son of a pastor who served this church fully, and when he was not reelected, it was very painful and difficult for him."

This experience gave Omaña motivation to try to alleviate that pain for others. This year, for the first time at session, a team of 20 chaplains from every division around the globe have coordinated to make counseling services available for any church employees who find themselves in a time of transition.

A room was made available for private counseling within the convention center, and every day of the session there is a chaplain on duty in the room throughout the day.

"Although a chaplain will not help you resolve all the questions that come to mind," Omaña admits, "having someone who extends a hand and says, 'This is hard, but I'm here with you,' is the first step toward healing."

The chaplains providing counseling at the GC Session are men and women trained in providing ministry of presence and professional care, bound by the chaplain's code of ethics. Every conversation is completely confidential.

The suddenness of no longer filling a role can bring on feelings of grief, doubt, loss, and loneliness. Many leaders find themselves asking such questions as "What did I do wrong?" They may feel lost, unsure of what the future holds. Some may decide to retire; others may choose to redesign their ministry.

"This is our team's opportunity to remind them that God calls, and God's call never ends," Omaña says. "When you go through such a change as this, you need guidance. The chaplain can't help you find your identity in one meeting, but they can shine a light on a path forward."

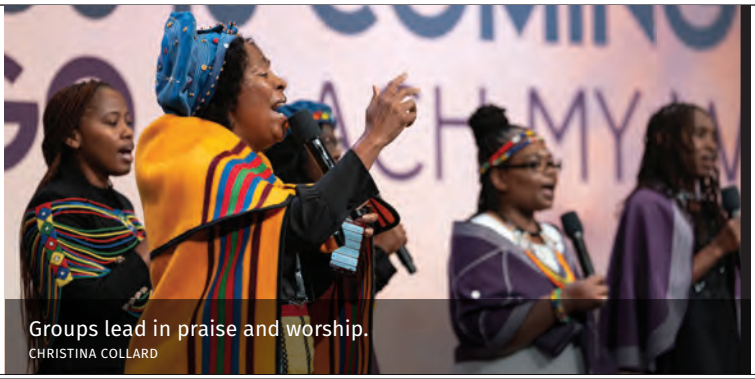
Anyone looking for a counselor can consult their division's chaplaincy directory to find someone to talk with (the director of chaplaincy at the GC is also a resource), and they are happy to talk—even if it's not Omaña. "Regardless of who fills this role, every chaplaincy director will have the same attitude. That's why we're here," Omaña says.



In moments of transition, spiritual care and guidance are essential for healing.

DAVID B. SHERWIN

When Omaña was studying to be a counselor, a trauma professor defined trauma as "being terrified and alone." Suddenly losing one's identity can certainly be isolating, and the need for spiritual care in those moments is high. "You're in the middle of a sea of Adventists who just voted for someone else," Omaña points out. "You need someone to say, 'I don't know how it feels for you, but I'm going to hold your hand and pray with you, and we'll figure things out.' "



Groups lead in praise and worship.
CHRISTINA COLLARD

EQUIPPED TO SERVE, EMPOWERED TO LEAD

GATHERING OF ADVENTIST WOMEN FOCUSES ON SPIRITUAL GROWTH, FELLOWSHIP, AND MISSION READINESS

BETH THOMAS

Women from across the globe are gathering in St. Louis for a unique four-day event hosted by the General Conference (GC) Women's Ministries and Ministerial Spouses Association. This four-day program (July 7-10) held in the America's Ballroom at the convention center brings together female leaders and ministry spouses for inspiration, learning, and fellowship. Meetings include devotionals, division reports, practical seminars, exercise breakouts, and worship led by groups from various world divisions—many dressed in traditional attire representing their cultural backgrounds.

"It would be a missed opportunity not to gather when so many women from different divisions are here in one place," said Galina Stele, GC Women's Ministries director. "We want to give them the opportunity to learn from each other, support one another, and grow spiritually and missionally."

Each morning begins with a devotional by Nina Atcheson, Adventist educator and editor of the new Alive in Jesus Sabbath School curriculum. "She helps us connect more closely with Jesus in our personal devotional lives," Stele said.

Afternoon seminars address practical topics, including surrender to Christ, discovering spiritual gifts, family health, trauma recovery, and mission engagement. Presenters include Sikhululekile Daco (*Adventist Review* associate editor), Karen Holford (Family Ministries director, Trans-European Division), Margret Mulambo (Ministerial Spouses Association, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division), and Elaine Oliver (General Conference Family Ministries associate director), .

Division reports from both Women's Ministries and Ministerial Spouses directors allow leaders to hear how women are being nurtured and empowered across the globe. "Our church is incredibly diverse, and it's enriching to see what our sisters are doing in other corners of the world," said Stele.

Jasmin Stankovic, a volunteer from Australia, supports language translation efforts for Spanish and Portuguese speakers. When asked what she enjoyed most about the event, she said, "The best part is the sense of community. Even if we've never met, we feel like sisters. It's like a blended family."

All meetings are translated into multiple languages—Spanish, Portuguese, French, Russian—and, for the first time, include American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation. "We are recording everything with ASL included, so even if people can't attend live, they can still be blessed," Stele added.

The meetings will conclude with a consecration service led by Pastor Ramon Canals, director of the General Conference Ministerial Association. Organizers hope participants leave not only encouraged but also recommitted to their local ministries.

"We've been planning this for more than a year," said Stele. "It's our prayer that every woman who attends leaves feeling nurtured, empowered, and ready to serve."



Nina Atcheson leads a morning devotional.
CHRISTINA COLLARD



International participants in the Women's Ministries meetings search for translation radios featuring their preferred languages—a potent reminder of the truly global nature of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Monumental effort goes into ensuring that as many as possible of the people who have traveled to St. Louis are able to participate meaningfully in meetings; translation is available for many of the events taking place at GC Session.

PHOTO BY CHRISTINA COLLARD



Bediako shows a delegate the new online Seventh-day Adventist Biblical-Theological Dictionary at the BRI booth.
MARK FROELICH

DICTIONARY OF THEOLOGICAL TERMS FREE AND AVAILABLE

MEMBERS AND PASTORS CAN USE THE RESOURCE TO ENHANCE BIBLE STUDY

JARROD STACKELROTH

A new resource that can help church members and pastors with their personal Bible study has been developed by the Biblical Research Institute (BRI) and is now available for free online.

Promoted during the BRI video report Wednesday morning at the General Conference Session, the *Seventh-day Adventist Biblical-Theological Dictionary* will contain 5,698 entries when complete. So far, about 1,500 have been submitted. The length of articles varies, from 50 words up to 4,000.

Daniel Bediako, BRI associate director of the General Conference, was editor of the project, alongside BRI assistant director, Keldie Paroschi.

"This is a huge project," said Bediako. "We have had a Bible dictionary that's more or less historical and biblical, but now we are combining theology and even ethics."

"The dictionary does not seek to be comprehensive, but to present what is useful for theological and practical understanding, and Adventist concerns," said Bediako.

The South Pacific Division (SPD) received the letter A, the section of the dictionary with the most words, 584. Some examples are *Abida, Advice, Alexandria,* and *Ancestors.* The categories include people, places, plants, objects, animals, Old and New Testament terms, and the meaning of biblical names and theological terms.

The letter S has the second most entries, with 531, and is assigned to the West-Central Africa Division. Trans-European Division was assigned the letter F and has now finished, so they have been assigned other projects. The letter with the smallest number of words is letter X, with only one word, *Xerxes* (which has not been completed yet), with the letter Y being the second least, with 15 words.

"[It is] not just the number of entries that makes this a significant and difficult project," said Danijela Schubert, who helped coordinate the SPD entries. "The writers of the articles are a very select group of people. They all have a doctorate from a theological field or are in the process of obtaining one. Also, the process of approval is rigorous."

The project's scope is vast. "It is an international project," said Bediako. "We have assistant directors in all the world divisions."

When writers finish, they submit their entry to the assistant editor in each division. The entry is then submitted to the division's Biblical Research Committee for comments. Once approved, it is then submitted to the BRI. Editors Bediako and Paroschi review every entry.

"We've also added depth," said Bediako. "Sometimes, if an entry in the old edition is 800 words, this time it's about 3,000 words."

The whole dictionary will be available for free online, accessible everywhere and able to be updated at any time. "We have told the authors that we are writing for the ordinary church member," said Bediako. "If we use Hebrew and Greek terms, we still translate them so that you know that this is the word we're talking about. It reads so that even high school graduates are able to understand it."

Bediako hopes all the entries will be completed by next General Conference Session in 2030.

Visit at dictionary.adventist.org.

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THE MYSTERY

It's not the end; it's the beginning



JOHN BRADSHAW

DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE PRESENTED WEDNESDAY MORNING, JULY 9, 2025

He was as sorry as everyone else when he learned his friends had lost a family member to death. But optimistic he could do something about it, a self-proclaimed prophet in a certain country convinced the grieving family to open the dead man's grave. Promising to re-create the resurrection of Lazarus, he climbed down into the grave, opened the casket, and lay down on top of the deceased, shouting in his ear, urging him to wake up. But whereas Lazarus was raised from the dead, the deceased, on this occasion, was not.



URILUX / E+ / GETTY IMAGES

As our friend learned, death is difficult to overcome. But not for the lack of trying. For several years Silicon Valley billionaires have been investing in possible solutions to counteract dying. And while some have seen impressive results in terms of positive health impacts and reducing biological age, there haven't been any real signs that someone is about to outwit the grim reaper. Transhumanists, who promote the idea of merging humans with machines and inserting microchips into human bodies, still haven't managed to crack the code of life. Cryogenics has been promoted as a way to preserve a body until the time a person may be brought back to life. In 2002 the body of Boston Red Sox legend Ted Williams was cryogenically frozen in liquid nitrogen, but as yet, science has provided no evidence Ted Williams' experience is a viable alternative to that which has plagued our planet for 6,000 years.

A PROFOUND TRUTH

These futile exercises serve to obscure one of the greatest realities of all. Jesus said 2,000 years ago, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). Job wrote, "For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God" (Job 19:25, 26).

What we're fond of referring to as "the state of the dead" is one of the most profound truths in the entire Bible. We live, we die, we sleep the sleep of death, and then, when Jesus returns, the saved who have died in faith in Jesus are raised from their dusty beds. They are brought back to life to die no more. This world was not designed to be the sum of human existence. God offers everyone everlasting life.

Our time on this earth is brutally short. Even if you live 80, 90, or even 100 years, you have experienced only the tiniest fraction of what God has prepared for you. "Let not your heart be troubled," Jesus promised. "You believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:1-3). Having just told His closest friends that He was going to die, Jesus assures them that they can face their uncertain future with confidence, because He would one day come back to gather them and take them to be with Him in His Father's house.

I love that the Bible is a book of common sense. There isn't another plausible explanation for what happens in death, let alone another biblical explanation. We know what we can know. People live, and people die. We can't speak from experience about what happens next. The Māori of New Zealand believe that the spirits of the dead travel to the northernmost point of the country before descending into the sea and the underworld, then returning to their ancestral homeland. Australian aboriginals believe the dead enter a realm known as the Land of the Dead. What both traditions have in common with virtually all other cultures is the belief that the dead, in one way or another, survive bodily death. Yet no one has ever seen the soul of a dead person. No one can explain how a disembodied spirit exists independently of the human form. No one has ever reconciled the idea that the dead may witness our lives on this earth—surely as distasteful an idea as any ever conceived. If you want to live forever, if you want to know what happens in death, if you want to unlock the key to living a successful life in

This world was not designed to be the sum of human existence.

Faith in Jesus is dying to the old life of sin and being reborn to live a life of victory.

this world, I recommend to you the plain teachings of the Word of God, the only place you can learn what you can't know from experience about death.

IT'S NOT THE END

This is 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17. "For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."

What a thought! The dead in Christ shall rise! Death is not the end for the believer in Jesus.

Can you imagine that day? When Jesus returns, those who died in faith and now sleep in death will live again. Think of the reunions as loved ones are reunited! We will never again know the devastating, empty, desperate feeling of learning that a loved one has passed. But through faith in Jesus, we can anticipate the joy of immortality, the awe of beholding an innumerable company of angels, and the thrill of seeing Jesus.

Yet the beauty of the Bible teaching on the state of the dead goes beyond proof texts about sleep and stories of resurrections and canceled funerals. Notice what Paul said in Romans 6.

"Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" (Rom. 6:1, 2). Dead to sin! "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (verses 3, 4). And then verse 7: "For he who has died has been freed from sin."

As blessed as we are to understand what the Bible teaches about death, what is just as important is understanding what Paul says to us about death in Romans 6, and the impact it has on our spiritual lives.

"Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (verse 11). The problem so many people have in their Christian experience is that they never realize that faith in Jesus isn't simply a modification of the old life. Faith in Jesus isn't simply accepting a new belief system and relying on enthusiasm for Jesus to file some of the rough edges off your life. Faith in Jesus is dying to the old life of sin and being reborn to live a life of victory. You're no longer motivated by your own desires, but by Jesus dwelling in your heart. You begin to say with Paul, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

The same writer penned these remarkable words: "For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). And there's the key to a meaningful life of faith. Jesus at work in the life of the believer. An undivided heart, the carnal nature having been put to death that Christ might reign on the throne of your life.

Our understanding of death tells you more than that the dead sleep. It tells you your old life may die, and that in the place of that old life, a new creation may exist for the glory of God.

John Bradshaw is the president of It Is Written.

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Together but Different

Two perspectives of one couple's first time at a General Conference Session.

MELJOHN ESTACHIO

Attending the General Conference (GC) Session of the Seventh-day Adventist Church for the first time has been one of the most meaningful experiences of my life. It has given me a deeper understanding of the church's worldwide mission and helped me grow in faith and love for God. Even when, because of my wife's medical condition, I found myself in the first few days of the session watching live online from a hotel, I still felt the unifying spirit of all the attendees.

From the moment I walked into the convention center the first time, I felt something special. Thousands of Adventists from around the world were gathered together. I saw people from many different countries wearing their traditional clothing, speaking many different languages, yet united in one faith. It was like a picture of heaven, where people from every nation worship God together. It will be just like the children's song—everyone is precious in God's sight.

Each day the session began with worship. The music was powerful and uplifting. Choirs and orchestra from different parts of the world sang with joy. The sermons were full of inspiration, reminding us to stay faithful and active in God's mission. One message that stood out was the reminder: "Jesus is coming soon. Get involved!" This made me think more deeply about my role in sharing the gospel.



MJ jumps in to serve by distributing the GC Session to the delegates. JOSEF KISSINGER

The GC Session is also about the work of the church. I watched how leaders and delegates from all over the world came together to discuss important decisions. They prayed before speaking, and even when people had different opinions, they still showed respect and unity. It was clear to me that the Holy Spirit was leading.

One of my favorite parts was visiting the exhibit hall. I saw booths from different ministries, schools, hospitals, and mission projects. It was amazing to learn how the Adventist Church is serving people in many ways—through education, health, media, and community service. I saw how God is working around the world, and it made me proud to be part of this movement. And I appreciated the freebies being handed out by the different ministries.

I met many new friends aside from the friends I've known but not seen for several years. Some were pastors, youth leaders, missionaries, or just regular church members like me. Even though we came from different backgrounds, we shared the same hope and the same love for Jesus. We prayed and laughed together, encouraging each other, especially during lunchtime in the dining hall.

Sabbath was unforgettable. Thousands came together for worship. The preaching was powerful, and the testimonies from missionaries touched my heart. Some were working in difficult and dangerous places, but they stayed strong because of their love for God. It reminded me that we all have a mission, no matter where we are.

This experience helped me see the Seventh-day Adventist Church not only as a local congregation but also as a worldwide family. We may have different cultures, but we share one faith, one mission, and one hope in Jesus Christ. It was a powerful reminder that the church is alive, growing, and preparing for Christ's soon return.



MELJOHN ESTACHIO

MELINOR ESTACHIO

Faith-building. Being able to attend the GC Session in person is already a miracle and an answer to countless prayers. Considering my medical condition, the almost 24-hour trip from the Philippines, the change of time zones, my fluctuating blood pressure, the extreme temperatures, all I can say is "Hallelujah! The Lord is good! His mercies endure forever! And while only seeing a small fraction of our global church family, I am really happy to be part of this worldwide movement. *Thank You, Lord, for making me a part of this church!*

Eye-opening. Hearing the reports and stories thus far, I wanted at one point to cry, because there's still so many people who seem unaware of Christ's love. How does the church growth and retention rate compare to the increase in world population? Is what I'm doing enough? *O Lord, am I really where You want me to be? Help me to completely surrender to You, that I may know and obey faithfully.*

Listening to the discussions on the floor, I could not help comparing them to local church board meetings or constituency meetings, only this was much broader, the impact greater, especially when it came to the *Church Manual* amendments. *Dear Father, please give clarity in all amendments, that Your wisdom will be revealed even in the translations.*

Focused. When my husband and I ran the Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD) booth, my job was to take Polaroid pictures. It was fun seeing all the smiling faces with the carabao (water buffalo found in the Philippines) and the surprised look of the youngsters when the Polaroid film came out of the camera. But it got me thinking: *What is this booth for? What are we doing here?* But the Lord reminded me the SSD theme of Harvest 2025—The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.

Dear Father, enable us through Your Spirit to be intentional in laboring in Your harvest, wherever it may be. May we give generously from the resources You've entrusted to us. May we rejoice when You finally come to gather Your people. Amen.

MelJohn (MJ) Estachio serves as director of Life Hope Center in the Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD). **Melinor**, his wife, works in the SSD office.

Enabling Global Mission

KAREN PORTER

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has long been committed to spreading the gospel across the world, a mission that spans cultures, languages, and geographies. A crucial aspect of fulfilling this mission is deploying dedicated international service employees (ISEs)—individuals who are called to serve in mission fields around the globe. While each individual is employed by their calling/host organization, the General Conference International Personnel Resources and Services (IPRS) team plays a pivotal role in supporting these missionaries throughout all stages of their service, from recruitment to repatriation, with the ultimate goal of enabling ISEs to focus on their mission of spreading the gospel.

MISSION AND PURPOSE OF IPRS

At the heart of IPRS is its mission to provide excellent service in human resources, finance, and relocation support, ensuring that ISEs have the resources and care they need to fulfill their calling. IPRS aims to handle all the logistical and bureaucratic challenges associated with international missionary work, allowing ISEs to concentrate on the work they are called to do, whether that be in pastoral, medical, educational, or other specialized fields.

THE PRIORITIES OF THE MISSION REFOCUS PROGRAM

The IPRS team works in alignment with the priorities set by the Mission Board, which has outlined strategic focuses to guide the church's global mission. These priorities emphasize areas of greatest need, such as:

- Direct-contact mission with the goal of establishing new worshipping groups.
- Focusing on countries within the 10/40 window and among people groups with non-Christian religions.
- Reaching urban areas with populations exceeding 1 million.
- Ministering to regions that are postmodern or post-Christian.
- Addressing areas with a low Adventist-to-population ratio.
- Providing high-impact equipping for direct-contact mission by managing and training local direct-contact workers.

While IPRS acknowledges that other positions not fitting these criteria may still be important, these priorities are the team's focus. They help direct the allocation of resources, training, and support, ensuring that mission efforts target the most urgent needs and challenges around the globe.

THE PROCESS OF RECRUITING AND DEPLOYING ISES

IPRS collaborates with General Conference Secretariat (SEC), Treasury (TRE), Presidential (PRE), world divisions, attached unions/field, and General Conference institutions to ensure the missionary's call aligns with the church's broader mission objectives. This coordinated effort ensures that ISEs are deployed to the right areas, addressing the most urgent needs for mission work in countries with limited access to Christian resources.

The IPRS team is engaged from the moment individuals are identified as candidates for mission service, whether in pastoral work, health care, education, or other specialized areas. These individuals must be baptized, in regular standing within the church, and demonstrate a strong commitment to the mission of spreading the gospel. Furthermore, they must possess the necessary experience and qualifications, including educational degrees such as a master's degree, depending on the role.

FINANCIAL AND LOGISTICAL SUPPORT FOR ISES

Once an ISE is ready to serve, IPRS is responsible for the comprehensive support necessary to ensure their relocation and continued mission service. This support includes addressing financial and logistical issues, such as providing funding, shipping personal belongings, and facilitating transportation to the mission field.

The IPRS team also collaborates closely with divi-



sions or organizations that may have specific requirements for the position, ensuring that budgetary constraints are met and that the ISE is equipped with the necessary tools to thrive in their environment. ISEs are typically supported by the General Conference's mission budget, but there are occasions when local organizations cover the expenses.

IPRS ensures that missionaries are equipped, cared for, supported, and able to return home with their mission work accomplished—leaving a lasting impact on the world.

HUMAN RESOURCES AND ONGOING IN-FIELD SUPPORT

Once an ISE is deployed, IPRS continues to provide ongoing human resources support, manage annual leave, and offer pastoral and psychological care. The IPRS team ensures that the ISE is adequately supported in their work, both professionally and personally, by providing guidance and addressing any challenges they may encounter while in the field.

The annual leave allows the ISE to renew personal contacts, remain connected to their homeland society, and enjoy association with family (parents and/or children), while providing a period of change and rest. It also offers the opportunity to stimulate interest in missions at home churches as the ISE visits them with up-to-date reports.

PERSONNEL RETURN AND REPLICATION OF SERVICES

Upon completing their mission service, ISEs undergo a comprehensive process for personnel return. IPRS ensures a smooth transition by handling all aspects of repatriation, including the shipment of personal belongings, returning individuals to their home countries, and processing the final financial settlement.

Moreover, IPRS helps ensure that the experiences and knowledge gained during their service are not lost. The church encourages sharing these valuable lessons with others, promoting the replication of successful models and strategies that ISEs have used in the field. This feedback loop is essential for the continued growth and effectiveness of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's global mission efforts.

CONCLUSION

In prioritizing regions with the greatest need and providing missionaries with the resources and care they require, the IPRS team plays a critical role in the work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church by offering comprehensive support to international service employees throughout their mission journey. By managing logistical, financial, and human resources concerns, IPRS enables ISEs to concentrate on their primary calling: spreading the gospel. The IPRS team ensures that missionaries, whether in pastoral, medical, educational, or other specialized roles, are equipped, cared for, supported, and able to return home with their mission work accomplished—leaving a lasting impact on the world.

Karen Porter is an associate secretary of the General Conference.

Sharing Christ With the Hardest-to-Reach People on Earth for 54 Years

DUANE MCKEY

An average day at Adventist World Radio (AWR) is an adventure. Reaching the world—including the hardest-to-reach people—with the good news is one of the ministry's goals and often involves creative solutions. On any given day you'll find AWR:

- Broadcasting on more than 2,000 stations around the globe.
- Sharing the Bible via solar-powered "Godpods" in remote areas.
- Meeting felt needs through health outreach—including with a semitruck providing hope and help across Ukraine.
- Hearing from hardened criminals whose lives have been transformed after learning about the gospel—such as rebel soldiers who have put down their guns and let go of deep-seated vendettas to follow Jesus.

A BRIEF HISTORY

Adventist World Radio's first broadcast hit the airwaves in the fall of 1971. Manager Allen Steele and his wife, Andrea, led a small group of dedicated believers in those early days, and throughout the decades it has grown to become a powerhouse for the gospel via shortwave, AM/FM radio, digital audio, podcasts, YouTube evangelism, cell phone evangelism, health outreach, in-person evangelistic series, and more.

Initial broadcasts were transmitted via shortwave radio in Portugal, which provided programming to Europe and the former USSR in 10 languages for 12 hours a week. In the years that followed, AWR added more and more countries, aided significantly by powerful transmitters and 300-foot towers in Guam that began broadcasting in 1987. By 1996 AWR was already broadcasting in more languages than Voice of America and the British Broadcasting Corporation. In 2005 the potential coverage of the towers alone had grown to 3.5 billion people.

SOLAR-POWERED BIBLES

AWR has always been more than a radio ministry. In 2007 AWR began sending "Godpods"—solar-powered audio players containing the Bible, Bible studies, sermons, and children's material—to villages in South Sudan that couldn't be reached otherwise.

Since then, AWR has sent Godpods worldwide, customized with local dialects. Godpod stories have poured into the ministry ever since: from the converted thief who stole a Godpod and couldn't believe the "radio" worked inside his cave, to prisoners on death row who gave their hearts to Jesus after listening to a Godpod during their final days, to children who have memorized entire chapters of the Bible and like to fall asleep listening to the device. You too can own a Godpod. Stop by the AWR radio/Godpod booth in the Level 1 hallway to purchase yours during GC Session.

FROM BROADCAST TO BAPTISM

In 2017, when current ministry president Duane McKey came on board, AWR expanded its focus even further with the name "AWR360°—Broadcast to Baptism." Through this new initiative nearly every aspect of the ministry encourages people to connect with the local Adventist church near them.

This outreach includes the establishment of AWR's Center for Digital Evangelism in the Philippines, staffed by young people on fire for the gospel. Every day they respond to prayer requests, Bible questions, and comments left on AWR's social media pages and YouTube videos.

Some of the most popular videos, created by the AWR headquarters staff, are the uplifting "miracle videos" filmed around the world, featuring stories of hearts transformed by God's love.

During the COVID-19 worldwide lockdown, the ministry released two online programs when AWR couldn't do as much in-person evangelism. Unlocking Bible Prophecies, featuring AWR vice president Cami



AWR President Duane McKey and Executive Vice President Cami Oetman at one of more than 2,300 meetings during Papua New Guinea for Christ in 2024.

Oetman, and Earth's Final Countdown, by McKey, quickly saw millions of views in more than 30 languages. Many people wrote to AWR to say they had joined the church after watching these series.

AWR continues to press forward, and in the last year alone the ministry:

- Launched 17 new radio stations and 146 new internet radio stations.
- Sent 33,461 Godpods to people in 26 countries.
- Printed 220,000 Spirit of Prophecy books.
- Expanded its reach in the Middle East through AWR's radio station/center of influence in Nazareth, which has now become a beacon of light for the Arab world.
- Printed more than 10 million tracts in multiple languages, with more than 4 million Pidgin English tracts distributed in Papua New Guinea (PNG) alone. During the Paris Olympics a group of young people also distributed tracts in multiple languages.

IN-PERSON EVANGELISM AND HEALTH EVENTS

In-person evangelistic series and health events are also a core part of the ministry. In partnership with the General Conference's Total Member Involvement (TMI) initiative, more than 2,300 AWR evangelistic series were held across Papua New Guinea (PNG) in 2024, resulting in hundreds of thousands of baptisms.

In addition, through AWR360° Health (joined by Pathway to Health for this event), medical teams provided more than 26,000 free services in PNG, including cataract surgeries, dental services, and health screenings.

In 2023, during Christ for Europe, AWR and TMI partnered with 1,530 churches in 38 countries across Europe to hold evangelistic meetings. Guest speakers and local preachers connected with the community from Ireland to Italy to Iceland to Ukraine.

McKey summed up this event, as well as AWR's ministry as a whole: "Christ for Europe truly did exceedingly abundantly above all we could ask or think! This series showed us that there's a hunger for Bible truth across Europe, even though it's a place many people write off as too hard to reach. But we've seen that no place is too hard when you preach the full message!"

CONNECT AND LEARN MORE

Stop by the AWR booth (#2023) at GC Session to meet the AWR staff and hear the latest ministry news.

AWR is also debuting two new "miracle stories" books at GC Session, which you can receive at the booth for any donation: one by AWR president Duane McKey and one by AWR360° Nazareth director Wisam Ali—featuring stories of God's leading during the past few years. There will also be book signings throughout the event. Visit awr.org/gcsession to see the schedule and download digital versions of the new books.

To learn more about AWR and to watch inspiring miracle videos, visit awr.org.

Duane McKey is a field secretary for the General Conference and president of Adventist World Radio.

Seek Knowledge. Affirm Faith. Change the World.

BORDES HENRY SATURNÉ



Andrews University students, employees, and alumni celebrate their cultural heritage at the annual parade during Alumni Homecoming Weekend. JONATHAN LOGAN



Pioneer Memorial church has been the spiritual home for generations of world changers. REBEKAH HELSIUS



The Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, which recently celebrated its ninetieth anniversary, prepares pastors and leaders for service in the world church. DARREN HESLOP

As a premier educational institution of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Andrews University values its rich legacy of transformative education rooted in faith, scholarship, and global engagement. Since its founding in 1874, Andrews University has consistently welcomed the world into its community and then sent its graduates back to the world to bring about positive change. The university remains dedicated to equipping students with a desire to be active followers of God and engaged members of their communities.

Approximately 100,000 alumni have reflected on its succinct mission statement during their memorable academic journey at Andrews University: "Seek knowledge, affirm faith, and change the world." They have forever internalized the values, aspirations, and ideals of their alma mater. The echo of these profoundly powerful words continues to resonate in their hearts, solidifying in their thoughts the apocalyptic imperative to change the world with a transformative message of hope.

FROM ALL NATIONS, TRIBES, PEOPLES, AND TONGUES

Andrews University, ranked number one for ethnic and racial diversity, has a long tradition of welcoming faculty and students from around the world. This aligns with the church's mission to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19, 20). With people from more than 100 different countries, it is a foretaste of the great reunion described in Revelation 7:9: ". . . a great multitude . . . from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb" (NIV).

SPIRITUAL LIFE ON CAMPUS

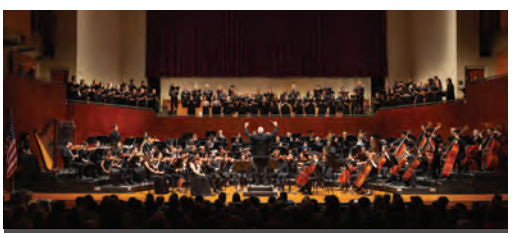
Andrews University offers a distinctive Seventh-day Adventist environment that nurtures spiritual growth both in the classroom and through Weeks of Prayer, chapel services, prayer meetings, Bible study groups, service trips, and student missionary opportunities. Ministry opportunities abound at Pioneer Memorial church and in other local congregations.



University president John Wesley Taylor V addresses a group of students in the School of Leadership. BORDES HENRY SATURNÉ



The Global Campus, launched in the summer of 2024, combines preexisting units to coordinate and streamline services for domestic and international students. DARREN HESLOP



The Howard Performing Arts Center is a world-class facility for fine arts presentations, located near the main entrance to the Andrews University campus. BLAISE DATOY

THE SEMINARY

The seminary offers six doctoral programs, five master's degree programs, and six dual-degree programs, as well as postdoctoral studies for a number of students. The academic journal *Andrews University Seminary Studies (AUSS)* publishes cutting-edge research articles, dissertation abstracts, and book reviews.

THE SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP

For the past 30 years the School of Leadership has equipped individuals to better serve God, the church, and the public. The highly flexible programs are designed to meet the needs of individuals in various fields. This dynamic community has produced leaders and professionals around the world.

THE GLOBAL CAMPUS

The Global Campus extends access to Seventh-day Adventist education, creating a virtual community designed to nurture learning. It supports faculty and students by promoting best practices in distance education and international partnerships. The Global Campus also operates Griggs International Academy and maintains the official records of Griggs University.

RICH MUSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Andrews University has been blessed with a strong music program and a state-of-the-art performance space. In addition to several official university ensembles and the WAUS radio station, students and employees participate in worship and praise across campus and in the community.

CONCLUSION

At Andrews University, the flagship institution for higher education of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, we are determined more than ever to *seek knowledge, affirm faith, and change the world.* Would you join us in that sacred and thrilling endeavor?

For more information, please visit www.andrews.edu, call 269-471-6509, or email undergrad@andrews.edu or graduate@andrews.edu.

Bordes Henry Saturné is vice president for Strategic Enrollment Management, Marketing, and Communication for Andrews University.



Esther Kim serving at the *Jeology* booth
JOSEF KISSINGER

One Mission, Many Nations

ESTHER KIM

I walked into the Dome for the first time with a heart full of anticipation. This was my very first time attending a General Conference Session, and I had come as an exhibitor for *Jeology* (@itsjeology on Instagram), a ministry devoted to helping people read and understand the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Our booth, nestled among countless others, was just one thread in the rich tapestry of global Adventist ministry on display. But as the days unfolded, I realized the GC Session was more than an event; it was a glimpse of what the kingdom of God on earth might look like.

The day began early with morning worship, led by John Bradshaw. His message was both timely and timeless, a stirring call to keep the Word of God close to our hearts, to prepare for Christ's soon return, not through sensational news headlines or fear-driven interpretations, but through grounded faith and Scripture. He reminded us of

Matthew 24:14, that the end will not come until "this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world." It's not the rise of chaos or antichrist powers that signals the end; it's the global fulfillment of the Great Commission.

For me, that message hit close to home. Jeology is built on the conviction that the Bible must be central in the final work of God's people. As Pastor Bradshaw spoke, I felt reanchored in that mission. Revelation 14 describes a people who "keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus," a people who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. That's the church I want to be part of. After worship I joined a group of attendees in prayer. Though we were strangers just moments before, we prayed like family, about our ministries, our burdens, and the hope of Jesus' return. There's something beautiful about being surrounded by people who share not only your beliefs but also your sense of urgency and purpose.

There's something beautiful about being surrounded by people who share not only your beliefs but also your sense of urgency and purpose.

The morning business meeting was another layer of the GC experience, perhaps less emotionally charged, but just as important. Having served in student government at my university, I was surprised by how familiar the parliamentary procedures felt. But it was more than procedural familiarity that struck me; it was the realization that this was a world church, united in structure yet rich in diversity. Decisions were made that will impact millions of Adventists globally. Amendments to the *Church Manual*, nominations for division offices—it all revealed how much care and prayer goes into building a global body of believers.

For lunch my friend and I opted for a humble classic: peanut butter-and-jelly sandwiches on the side of the hallway wall. We skipped the official meal lines, which were surprisingly efficient, and joined the many attendees who had brought meals from home. There was something charmingly communal about it: people from all over the world sitting on the floor, sharing food, stories, and laughter. It reminded me that this wasn't just a conference; it was a family reunion on a global scale.

After lunch the Dome filled with music as choirs from around the world lifted their voices in praise. The diversity was breathtaking, languages, dress, rhythms, and melodies from every corner of the globe. And yet we were singing one song. One praise to one God. In that moment I caught a glimpse of heaven, not as a vague concept, but as a living reality. A place where every nation, tribe, and tongue worships in harmony.

Later in the afternoon I attended a session during which a motion was brought forward strongly encouraging churches to elect a coordinator for public campus ministries. As someone who has served in campus ministry for nearly a decade, I was touched deeply by this. While I've been blessed to work with churches that support our mission, I know many student groups who operate without consistent church backing, no home base, no financial support, no mentoring network. Seeing delegates advocate for stronger support of public campus ministries was not just encouraging—it felt like an answer to years of prayer.

Looking back on the day, I am filled with gratitude. What stood out most wasn't any single sermon, vote, or song; it was the overwhelming sense that we are not alone. That across oceans and languages and cultures there are people who love Jesus, cherish His Word, and are eager for His return. Meeting them, talking to them, praying with them—it was a reminder that the gospel is alive and is moving.

For anyone who's never attended a General Conference Session, I would say this: come, at least once in your life. Come not just to witness the business or browse the exhibits, but to be reminded that you are part of something much bigger than yourself. I came as an exhibitor. I left reinspired as a disciple.



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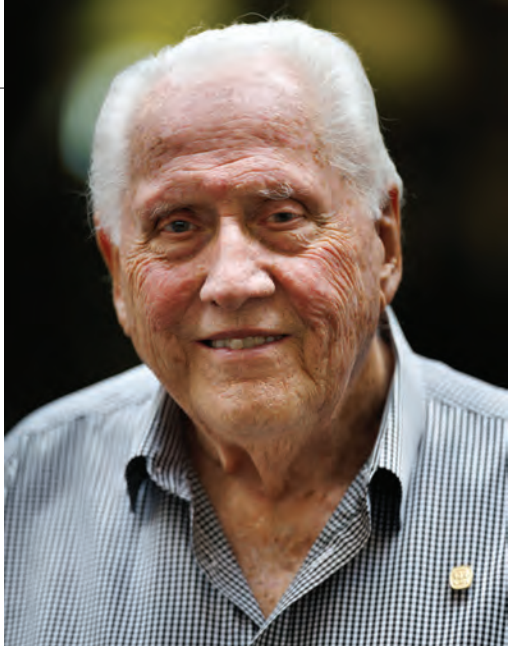
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Ralph S. Watts, Jr.

His legacy of mission, ministry, and service

BETH THOMAS



JOSEF KISSINGER

Ralph S. Watts, Jr., will never forget his first General Conference Session: San Francisco, California, in 1940. He was 7 years old. His family had just been evacuated from war-torn Korea, where his father served as president of the Korean Union. His father's position as a delegate enabled them to attend session that year.

Watts grew up in a world shaped by mission and movement. He attended school in Shanghai until political unrest forced another evacuation. Their family moved to Singapore, where with the help of a missionary tutor, Ralph continued his schooling. He was already aware that ministry—and leadership—were part of his calling.

After Watts entered pastoral ministry in Nebraska, his administrative gifts quickly became evident. By age 32 he was a division departmental director; then he was elected president of the Southeast Asia Union. His leadership spanned continents—from Korea to the United States—and included pivotal roles as president of several conferences.

A conversation in 1985 shifted his path. Then-General Conference president Neal Wilson stopped him in a hallway during a board meeting visit and asked, "Are you married to the Southern California Conference?" Watts loved leading the conference, loved the people. He didn't want to leave. But Wilson was starting something new: a restructured relief agency—ADRA—and he needed Watts to lead it.

Reluctant at first, Watts agreed after encouragement from his wife, Pat, to give it three years. He stayed for 17. Under his leadership ADRA expanded from a fledgling disaster relief agency into a global development powerhouse. His vision helped turn ADRA into a trusted name across the Adventist Church and in international humanitarian circles.

Even after his retirement in 2002, Watts didn't slow down. He assisted in managing the main stage for two GC sessions from behind the scenes, chaired the board of Quiet Hour Ministries, and led a charity focused on building women's health centers across Asia and Africa. "My heart breaks for these women," he said. "They carry the water, raise the children, run the home—often while their husbands don't offer much assistance."

In all, he has attended 17 or 18 (he's lost track now) General Conference sessions—missing only one in 1954 while studying Greek during college. From San Francisco to Vienna, from Dallas to Toronto, and eventually to St. Louis, each session has marked a chapter in his decades-long service to the church.

At age 92 he has returned once more to the General Conference Session in St. Louis, representing the General Conference as a delegate at large. This will likely be his last.

He hopes the church will embrace a sense of urgency as it moves into the future. "The older I get," he says, "the more I want the church to realize we don't have five more years. There has to be that kind of urgency. You look at what is happening in our world today! We don't realize how close we are. I believe that I can live to see Jesus come, because I think it's going to happen quick."

Watts has lived through war, displacement, church growth, and global change, but his faith and purpose have not wavered. From San Francisco to St. Louis, from pastor to president, from missionary child to global leader—Ralph Watts has served wherever God called.

And he's never lost sight of the mission.



Each morning at 9:00 a.m. members of all five health-care systems gather in their joint exhibit to pray for the requests on the tree. JOSEF KISSINGER

Unique in Identity; Unified in Mission

North American Division-based health-care systems join together at the Genereral Conference Session

BECKY ST. CLAIR

It's the tree that draws people in—a three-tiered 16-foot structure with ribbon branches that sway gently in the exhibition hall. Beneath it attendees pause to write prayers or reflections on leaf-shaped cards, then quietly attach them to the branches, adding their voices to the hundreds already fluttering above. But the tree represents more than just a peaceful moment—it stands at the heart of a meaningful and perhaps unexpected collaboration. In this space five Adventist health-care systems have come together to share one space, one story, and one mission of healing.

The Spirit of Reflection Tree resides in the joint exhibit shared by AdventHealth, Adventist Health, Adventist HealthCare, Kettering Health, and Loma Linda University Health. Though the five North American-based health-care entities have shared exhibit space for the past two General Conference (GC) sessions, this is the first year they have also each displayed their individual brands.

The similarities between their names often leads to confusion among the general Adventist population. "We definitely wanted to show up in this exhibit in our own brands, so people can see them, begin to understand them, understand the geography associated with each one, and answer some of those questions," says Garrett Caldwell, director for external communications at AdventHealth. "So we thought, *Let's come together. Let's share the foundation we have in common and tell our story collectively.*"

"While each system operates from its own unique histories and geographical areas, they are all part of the ecosystem of ministries making up the overall impact of the Seventh-day Adventist Church."

Even the setup of the exhibit illustrates the concept of "many parts, one body" (see 1 Cor. 12:12), which is exactly the message they are trying to send: while each of the systems operates from their own unique histories and geographical areas, they are all part of the ecosystem of ministries and organizations making up the overall impact of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Individual systems working together toward one collective mission.

Once they decided to work together, coordinating teams from each system began meeting monthly, then weekly for the final six months. They developed a foundational statement they dubbed "the manifesto" and identified key messages they wanted to convey. Then it was a matter of determining how to make that message tangible and experiential for exhibit guests.

"Collaboration means you have to take into consideration others' perspectives, creative visions, and intended purposes, and put them together with yours—which may be very different," comments Costin Jordache, senior vice president for strategy and brand at Adventist HealthCare. To aid with this goal, the executives met to determine a path of clarity for their combined teams. "We had a lot of meetings to get to that point," Jordache says. "Collaboration is hard. But we were all determined to make it work, and in the end it was worth it."

The spirit of collaboration isn't limited to this exhibit. The five health-care systems already work together in meaningful ways, including through the Adventist Health Policy Association, where their CEOs advocate together on legislative issues in Washington, D.C., and through a bioethics consortium that allows leaders to navigate complex questions at the intersection of faith, ethics, and health care.

While these ongoing efforts reflect behind-the-scenes cooperation and alignment of mission, Sabbath afternoon will offer a public expression of that unity. For the first time, all five CEOs will stand side by side on the main stage to share how their individual organizations are part of a shared purpose bringing healing and hope through Adventist health care.

That same spirit of unity is embedded in the physical layout of the GC Session exhibit itself, designed with an open, central space for reflection and connection. Distinct brand displays line the perimeter, surrounding what has quickly become the emotional and spiritual heart of the exhibit: the Spirit of Reflection Tree. Though not intended to be the centerpiece of the exhibit, it quickly became apparent to the exhibitors that the tree was capturing not only the attention but the hearts of attendees.

"People come to the tree, and they pray," says Caldwell. "Sometimes they cry. They share their story, their hope, and their prayer. We believe even this is the beginning of a healing experience."

The leaf cards provided at a table under the ribbon branches of the tree feature a variety of 16 different prompts and accompanying scriptures to encourage visitors to express gratitude, joy, hope, and peace. On the back is blank space for writing prayer requests, and provided clips allow visitors to attach those requests to the tree.

"Over the course of GC [Session], we want to fill the tree with leaves," Caldwell says, referencing Revelation 22:2, which, in talking about the tree of life, says, "The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

Each morning at 9:00 a.m. the exhibit staff from all five systems gather around the tree and pray for the requests hanging there. They are written in multiple languages, and range from hope-filled gratitude to faith-filled petitions. Going forward, the hope is that the five systems will re-create a similar concept in their hospital lobbies for patients, families, visitors, staff, and administration.

"This is the ministry of health care," states Jordache. "These organizations must operate like the best businesses in the world, because without revenue there's no ministry, but we are very much fueled by the understanding that we form, with the church, an ecosystem of impact within our communities."

What has unfolded at GC Session isn't just a successful exhibit—it's a glimpse of what's possible when mission drives collaboration. In a world that often prioritizes competition over connection, these five health-care systems chose to tell one story, together, demonstrating that unity doesn't require uniformity and that working side by side can amplify impact without sacrificing identity.

SESSION GALLERY



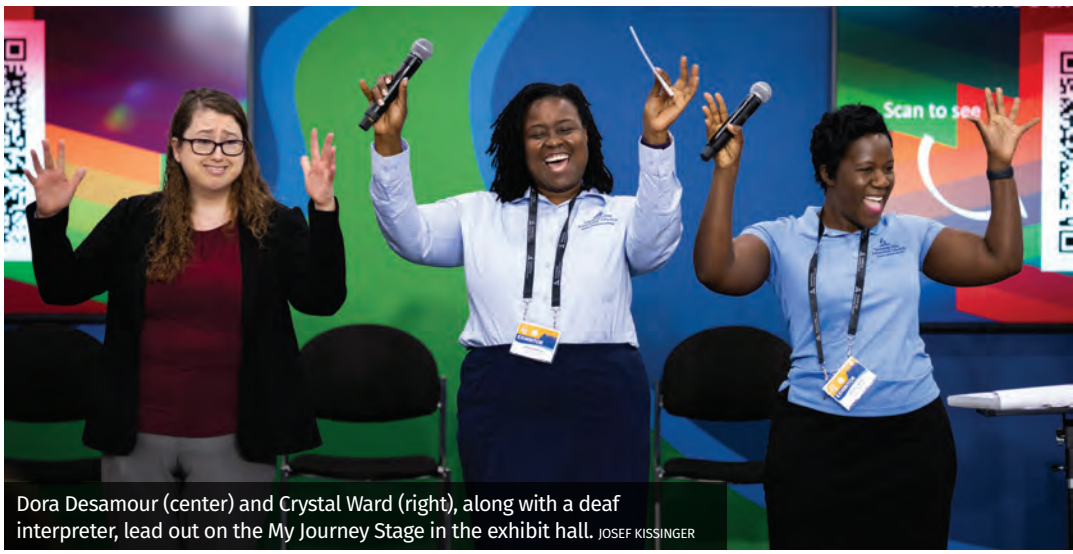
DAVID B. SHERWIN



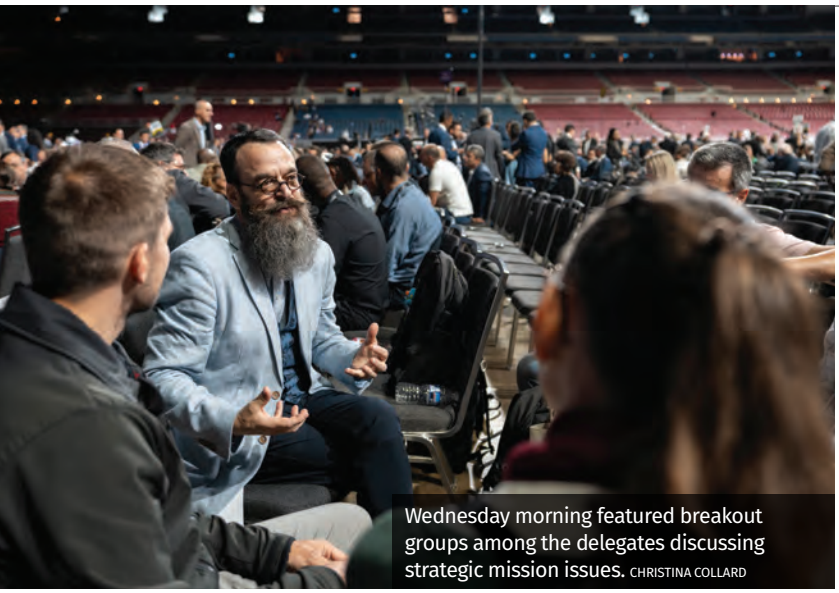
Abner De Los Santos participates in one of the morning worships. MARK FROELICH



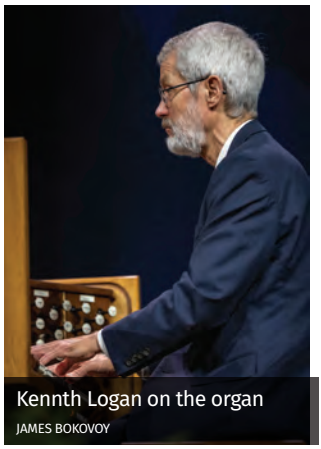
A participant from the Southern Asia Division report greets delegates and attendees. JOSEF KISSINGER



Dora Desamour (center) and Crystal Ward (right), along with a deaf interpreter, lead out on the My Journey Stage in the exhibit hall. JOSEF KISSINGER



Wednesday morning featured breakout groups among the delegates discussing strategic mission issues. CHRISTINA COLLARD



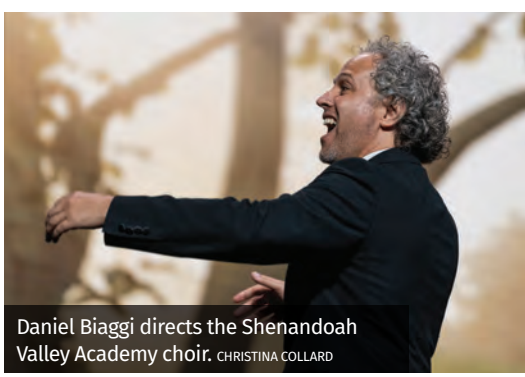
Kennth Logan on the organ
JAMES BOKOVOY



MARK FROELICH



All elected officials have their portrait taken. MARK FROELICH



Daniel Biaggi directs the Shenandoah Valley Academy choir. CHRISTINA COLLARD

ALL PHOTOS © AR



Pastor Don MacLafferty leads in a prayer session. MARK FROELICH

The Real Center of Power

Daily prayer opportunities unite attendees in spiritual focus.

BETH THOMAS

In America's Center Convention Complex, Room 120 hums with a quiet energy. An estimated 1,000 guests are coming together daily—not to debate motions or cast votes, but to seek divine guidance through prayer.

Coordinated by the General Conference Ministerial Association and part of the Revival and Reformation initiative, these prayer sessions provide an opportunity for reflection and intercession. They are open to everyone and provide a space for attendees to pray for the business of the church, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the personal burdens they carry.

These are significant meetings, and decisions are being made for the future of our church. "We believe the Holy Spirit needs to guide those decisions," said Melody Mason, one of the coordinators. "Of course we have consecrated leaders who are praying, but we believe that we are like Aaron and Hur behind the scenes, holding up the arms of Moses. We are here to hold up the arms of our leaders, to pray for the Holy Spirit to be poured out on every aspect of session, whether it's the worship services, the agendas, the committee meetings, the nominations—we're here to pray."

And it's not only delegates and family members who are taking advantage of the prayer room. Convention workers and people from off the street also feel comfortable joining in the prayer sessions, Mason said. "They've told us, 'This is my favorite place to come during my break,' and they're praying with us."

Whether whispered in Room 120, scribbled on a Post-it note, or lifted silently in front of a city map, each petition is a reminder that prayer is the heartbeat of the church.

The prayer room is open from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and daily programs begin with a revival time when guests join in worship and praise. This is followed by a study on Elijah, during which they learn lessons from his life on how to be God's last-day "Elijah"—calling for revival and reformation. Pastor Don MacLafferty has been leading these sessions, interspersed with a study of the Word and prayer.

Room 120 remains open throughout the day for personal prayer and meditation.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

The prayer room is not the only place where guests can explore this power. Several ministries in the exhibit hall are offering unique spaces for prayer and reflection.

One special place is a quiet corner in the General Conference Family Ministries booth, covered with brightly colored Post-it notes holding very specific prayer requests. Sharing about their Prayer Rest Stop, Dawn Venn, senior editorial assistant for Family Ministries, said, "People will pause here for quite a while and just pray over the requests they see—the people, the countries. Then they'll leave and bring back their family members or friends to experience this."

Others are adopting this idea of a prayer wall as a ministry for their own churches. "It is an easy way to engage the community and church through prayer. Visitors can take a photo of the posted prayer requests to take home to pray over," said Daniel Taipe, a creative consultant working with Family Ministries. "Guests are recognizing names and prayer requests of friends and promising to pray over them. It's a simple activity to connect members together."

And while there are opportunities to uplift specific personal prayer requests, booths such as Mission to the Cities and the Ministerial Association highlight large secular cities and local towns in need of prayer. At the Global Missions exhibit, Karilyn Suvankham, communication specialist with the Department of Adventist Mission at the General Conference, shared how people can use the Mission to the Cities prayer map featuring 580-plus cities of 1 million or more people to specifically pray for the unreached in those areas of the world.

In yet another area, a Spirit of Reflection Tree stands in the center of the North American Division Adventist health-care systems exhibit, a statement to the uniting power of spiritual connection with the divine that crosses cultural boundaries. (For more on this story, see Becky St. Clair's feature on p. 26.)

Whether whispered in Room 120, scribbled on a Post-it note, or lifted silently in front of a city map, each petition is a reminder that prayer is the heartbeat of the church.



A guest adds a prayer request to the Family Ministries wall. JOSEF KISSINGER



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Also stop by **AWR's Godpod/Radio Booth** *(level 1 hallway near Au Bon Pain)* to purchase a solar-powered Godpod. With this robust audio player, you can **tune in to GC Session meeting translations** in French, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. Each Godpod includes an audio Bible, which you can customize in your own language—more than 70 to choose from!

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ADHILAKSHMI IS HOPE

HANNAH DREWIECK

HOPE CHANNEL
EVENING DEVOTIONAL
MESSAGE PRESENTED
WEDNESDAY, JULY 9, 2025

For 21 years Adhilakshmi carried the ache of ungranted prayer requests. Despite her burning desire to be a mother, she could not conceive a child. There was no explanation of which she was aware. It just seemed as if there were a growing silence that followed her through her home in Meyyur, a village in southern India.

Her husband's family didn't hide their disappointment. She was quietly pushed out of celebrations, left on the edges of joy. Over time the shame settled in her bones. The pain turned inward. And one day, when it became too much, she tried to end her life.





The doctors hadn't been able to help. No treatment had worked. But God had heard. And the same community that once looked down on her now watched in awe.

But even in that darkness God was already moving. One afternoon as she sat alone with the television playing in the background, something caught her attention. A Christian meeting was airing on Hope Channel India. She paused. She watched. She listened. And for the first time in a long time something stirred. It wasn't joy—not yet. But it was hope. It was small and fragile, but alive.

She began attending Christian gatherings in her village and nearby towns. Her mother, Pootha Lakshmi, also started to believe, followed by her brother Murugan and his family. Together they found something beautiful. But not everyone saw it that way. The village fought back. Accusations flew. Locals claimed Christians were spreading foreign ideas with foreign money. They tried to shut down the meetings. The pressure was real. But so was the faith.

One night Pootha Lakshmi knelt and wept as she prayed. "Lord, my daughter has been without a child for 21 years. If You bless her with a child, I will accept You." Adhilakshmi and her husband prayed too, quietly but earnestly: "If the Lord blesses us with a child, we will accept Him."

They couldn't say it aloud, not yet, but their hearts had already chosen Jesus. And then God moved.

Despite fierce resistance a church was built in their village. People tried to tear it down. But it stood. Before the dedication, Pootha Lakshmi brought her daughter to the nearly finished church. She spent the entire day crying at the altar, begging God for a miracle.

That same month Adhilakshmi conceived. The doctors hadn't been able to help. No treatment had worked. But God had heard. And the same community that once looked down on her now watched in awe. When the baby boy was born, they named him Samuel, and they dedicated him in the very church built by prayer, tears, and faith.

It all started with a broadcast. A single message on a quiet day that reached a woman on the edge of despair. From there it grew into a prayer circle, a family of believers, a church standing strong in the face of opposition.

Adhilakshmi's story isn't just about receiving a child. It's about what happens when people choose to believe together. When families pray in unity. When a community stands for the truth, even when it's hard. That's how the message spreads. That's how hope multiplies.

Adhilakshmi and her community united to become hope. We are all hope.

Hannah Drewieck is the communication coordinator for Hope Channel International.

TRANS-EUROPEAN DIVISION REPORT

Good News From Unexpected Places

During 2022-2025 the Trans-European Division (TED) embarked on a strategic journey under the theme "Engaged In Mission" (the TED version of "I Will Go"). With a renewed focus on mission, leadership development, and digital discipleship, leaders across 28 countries and territories were invited to extend love to the whole person, grow lifelong disciples together with all ages, and multiply communities among people groups, old and new. Below are just a few of the stories that reflect this ongoing journey and God's rich blessings.

EXTENDING LOVE

In 2022 the Adriatic Union Conference (AUC) launched the Helping Hand Ministry Center in Pula, Croatia. Since opening its doors, it has served more than 5,000 people, providing free health, psycho-social, and emotional support to those in need. Funded by the TED, the AUC, and the Croatian Conference, the center offers a unique integration of professional care and spiritual exploration. It not only provides therapeutic services and online counseling but also hosts engaging group workshops that address emotional growth, relationships, and spirituality for those interested.

The community's response has been overwhelmingly positive. Locals have expressed deep gratitude for the support they have received, especially during the challenging times following the COVID-19 pandemic. In spite of the center's connection to the Seventh-day Adventist Church being clear, it is warmly embraced by those it serves. Many not only have found healing but have also been introduced to Christ through their journey with Helping Hand.



The Helping Hand Center in Pula, Croatia, is well-received for offering free health, psycho-social, and emotional support to those in need. MIŠO HAVRAN

The center's impact has gained national recognition. Croatia's leading television network, HRTV1, featured Helping Hand on its respected program *Together in Spirit*, highlighting the valuable contribution the ministry has made to improving lives. The broadcast praised the team's compassionate and professional approach, especially in responding to the emotional and mental health needs of the community.

Encouraged by the success in Pula, the conference now plans to expand the model by establishing a similar center in the capital, Zagreb. With professionals already showing interest and a shared vision for collaboration between centers, the future of Helping Hand points to a growing network of care and outreach.

For more on this story, scan the QR codes.

GROWING LIFELONG DISCIPLES

Health Coaching in Sweden. A profound shift is taking place in Adventist Health Ministries: moving away from simply dispensing information to recognizing that true lifestyle changes require more than knowledge. They demand relational, emotional, and contextual support. To accomplish this, in Brunskog, Sweden, *LifeStyleTV* championed a new relational approach by hosting the Lifestyle Coaching Skills Workshop in its studios in February 2024. Spearheaded by Katia Garcia Reinert, associate director of Health Ministries at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (GC), the workshop was a trailblazer.





The heart of this movement is a biblically grounded conviction not just by giving advice, but by journeying together. DAVID NEAL

Participants from across Europe—Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Belgium, and Scotland—were encouraged by Reinert to see themselves, not as travel agents, but as tour guides. Travel agents plan the trip and send the travelers on their way—their job ends before the journey begins. Tour guides, on the other hand, go with the travelers, offering support, sharing insights, and helping them reach their destination. That is the heart of lifestyle coaching—not giving advice from a distance, but walking alongside someone as they work toward better health.

At its heart this movement is rooted in the New Testament call to support one another—not just by providing information, but by journeying together. This coaching model values empathy over instruction, creating space for real, lasting change. As one participant noted, knowing what is healthy is not the same as living it. That is why shared experience, grace, and companionship make all the difference.

For more on this story, scan the QR code.

Education—A Growing Ministry. As of 2023, the TED operates 62 educational institutions: 32 primary schools, 25 secondary schools, and five higher education providers. These are staffed by 683 teachers and more than 280 support personnel, serving 4,329 students. The five higher education institutions within TED are in the United Kingdom (UK), Poland, Serbia, Hungary, and Croatia. The largest is the Polish College of Theology and Humanities, with 694 students at the end of 2023. Because of the faithful work and the testimony of teachers and staff, 76 students were baptized across the division between 2022 and 2024.

In September 2018 Kompas, the first Adventist kindergarten in Poland, was launched by the Polish College of Theology and Humanities in Podkowa Leśna, near Warsaw. By 2023 it had officially expanded into a primary school. The school started with 13 children and has since grown to 75, with the teaching staff increasing from 3 to 32 across both the nursery and primary school.

MULTIPLYING COMMUNITIES

Historic Baptisms in Cyprus. In June 2024 the warm waters of Amathunda Beach in Limassol, Cyprus, became the site of a life-changing spiritual event. Twenty individuals were baptized—ages 10 to 75—a powerful testament to God's transforming work in people's lives, both young and old. This also marked a 15 percent growth in Adventist membership in Cyprus.

Among the newly baptized were Ellenique van Vliet-Chrysanthou and Jeroen van Vliet, a successful fashion industry couple who had spent



A celebration of joy in June 2024 with a baptism in the Mediterranean Sea described by one person present as an "unforgettable moment of heaven touching earth." CYPRUS MISSION



The Baltic Union and Greece cohort—not just planting churches but igniting a movement. ANTHONY WAGENERSMITH

14 years searching for purpose in life. They found it in Christ and publicly dedicated their lives to Him. Their baptism was witnessed by their Cypriot family, as they expressed a fervent desire to share the gospel and discern God's voice more clearly in their lives.

A few weeks later a wave of baptisms followed, with powerful stories of faith, healing, and family restoration. Among them were Iurii and Olga Paseniuk, a Ukrainian couple who found refuge and a new spiritual home in the Limassol Adventist Church. Also baptized was Sasho Velkov Stoyanov, a former substance abuser whose transformation was an answer to his son Mario's prayers. In a touching family moment, Mario's mother and aunt were also baptized. A young couple, Angel and Elizabeth Dimitrov, joined the Bulgarian Adventist group through baptism, while Pallavi Morem, a passionate Bible student from a Hindu background, was baptized alongside her teenage son. Her husband was welcomed into membership by profession of faith, completing a family's united commitment to Christ.

Eight young Pathfinders also took their stand for Jesus, each bringing their own testimony of courage and devotion. Valentino Vladimirov chose baptism over football, and Emmanuel Mirilov was baptized by his father, Branislav Mirilov, in a deeply moving moment of grace and reconciliation. Other baptized believers included Ernest Akochere from Cameroon, and two Rwandan women, Cyiza Tumukunde and Deborah Icyeza, who testified to finding spiritual refuge and family in Christ. The service overflowed with joy, music, and tears—heaven touching earth as lives were eternally changed by God's grace.

For more on this story, scan the QR code.

Church Planting on the Rise: The ACTS Movement. In 2023 the TED launched the ACTS Church Planting Support System—a relational, cohort-based initiative designed to support volunteer and paid church planters across Europe. Through four learning modules and peer coaching, participants are equipped to grow in leadership while establishing vibrant new faith communities. In partnership with local unions, three regional residencies have been established: one in the Nordic countries and the Netherlands, one in the Baltic countries and Greece, and one in the British Union. While church planting efforts averaged seven per year between 2000 and

2021, by 2025 an inspiring 85 new churches are at various stages of development, including 15 global mission projects.

This church-planting momentum is matched by a renewed focus on evangelism. In collaboration with unions and the GC's Christ for Europe initiative, more than 100 evangelistic series were held in 2023 alone, with follow-up continuing through 2024. To support this surge, the TED Mission Board allocated approximately US$3.15 million between 2022 and 2024, including $2.4 million through Global Mission and $750,000 for local church projects. Together these initiatives are fueling a movement of growth and faith—one church, one community, and one story at a time.

For more on this story, scan the QR code.

Christ for Europe: A Long-Term Initiative. Christ for Europe is a long-term initiative led by the GC in partnership with Europe's three divisions, including the TED. Its aim is to share the gospel across the continent with boldness and cultural sensitivity, recognizing Europe's diversity and spiritual complexity. Since 2023 the TED has supported numerous mission projects, working alongside GC personnel and local pastors to combine strong biblical proclamation with an understanding of each local context.



The Christ for Europe "I Will Go" team cycling around the Shetland Islands, UK, sharing literature and making friends. JAMES BOTHA

One of the strongest responses to Christ for Europe came from the British Union Conference (BUC), which launched the Reflecting Hope initiative in early 2023. Supported by Adventist World Radio, this lay-led, clergy-engaged movement involved 62 pilot congregations across the BUC territory, aiming to make mission an organic, locality-appropriate part of church life. Throughout the year, churches hosted outreach and evangelistic events, culminating in a November gathering of 250 representatives to review progress and prepare for future expansion.

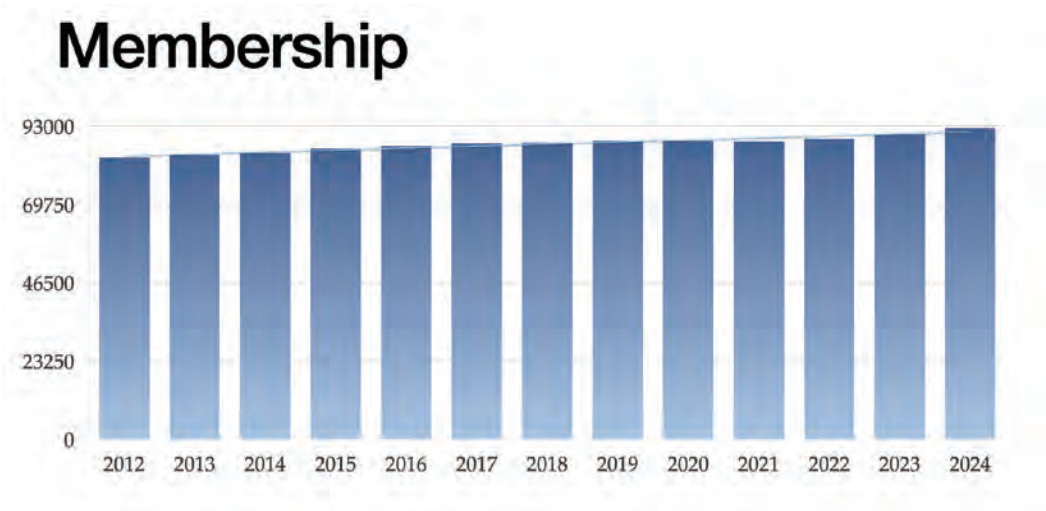
At the heart of this initiative is a renewed focus on Christlike love and spiritual growth. Mission is reframing the church's posture—from self-preservation to selfless service. As members discover and use their spiritual gifts, communities are being transformed into "open-door churches," places where people are welcomed, supported, and led toward Christ through authentic, practical love.

For more on this story, scan the QR code.

One Year in Mission and Service. From 2022 to 2024, the TED and Newbold College of Higher Education have offered more than 60 young adults the opportunity to combine academic learning with hands-on mission. Each year participants spend one semester studying at Newbold, followed by three months of service across the division and beyond—blending theory with practice in a meaningful way.

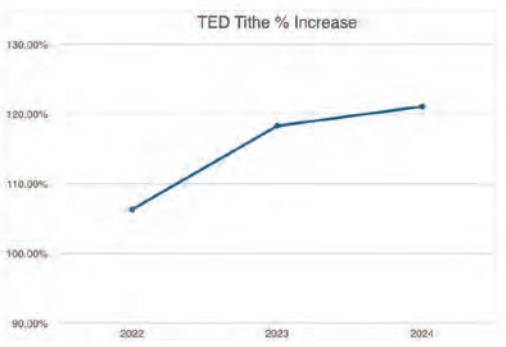
The program has a lasting impact on participants' spiritual and personal growth. It deepens their relationship with God, fosters community with like-minded peers, and equips them with valuable evangelistic skills. For several of them it also became a turning point in discerning God's call to pastoral ministry, shaping their future paths in faith and service.

For more on this story, scan the QR code.



BUSY LOVING, BUSY GROWING, AND BUSY SHARING

This brief report reveals a vibrant picture of God's people in the TED actively loving, growing, and sharing their faith. By the end of the first quarter of 2025, TED membership reached 92,591 members across 1,407 churches and companies. These are organized into 11 unions and three attached fields within 28 European countries and territories, serving an estimated population of 208 million. Since 2022 God added 4,084 new members, representing 4.61 percent growth in membership, and nine new congregations. These numbers reflect ongoing growth that exceeds population growth and a commitment to the church's mission.



During the past three years tithe contributions increased by 6.3 percent in 2022, 11.27 percent in 2023, and 2.35 percent in 2024, respectively, a pattern that reflects a broader global trend. The increases in 2022 and 2024 were below the UK's annual inflation rates, while 2023 was the only year in which tithe growth outpaced inflation.

Furthermore, the tithe growth was greater than the increase of membership. The membership growth rates for the same period were 0.79 percent, 1.47 percent, and 2.13 percent. We give thanks to God for our faithful members, led by our 631 pastors, and we deeply appreciate their commitment to God.

God's work across the TED continues to inspire, echoing the call to never grow weary of doing good (see Gal. 6:9). From Iceland to Cyprus, from Ireland to Hungary, and from Greece to Estonia, leaders, pastors, teachers, members, and support staff have been busy loving, busy growing, and busy sharing.

For more on this story, scan the QR code.

MIKHAIL F. KAMINSKIY
PRESIDENT



EURO-ASIA DIVISION REPORT

Our Mission: Keeping Hope Alive



ADRA provides food and clothing throughout the region.

Boundless expanses, a rich palette of cultures, and a diversity of traditions—this is what may be found in the Euro-Asia Division (ESD). A land with a 1,000-year history, where Europe and Asia meet. A place of confrontation and historical intertwining of Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism. A region where empires, cultures, and people have collided throughout the centuries, forming a complex mosaic of ideas and beliefs. Of the 12 countries in the ESD territory, almost half—Russia, Belarus, Moldova, Armenia, and Georgia—confess the Orthodox faith. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Afghanistan are Muslim.

When ranked by area, the ESD is the largest division of the church. We have a population of about 300 million people, with more than 57,000 Adventists living and ministering in 1,545 congregations and groups. In most of our territory adherence to traditional values is juxtaposed with secularism and preoccupation with the material. In spite of difficulties the Adventist Church in the ESD continues to proclaim the three angels' messages. Our greatest emphasis is in engaging lay members in ministry, which is reflected in our I Will Go general strategy.

"Three years of life and ministry are behind us," reports Mikhail Kaminskiy, ESD president. "Looking to the past, we as church members in the Euro-Asia Division take several things with us into the future—the faithfulness of God's children, the self-sacrifice of pastors, and the diligence of laborers as well as their generosity; hospitality; [and] their love for their neighbors, for Jesus, and for His Word. In fact, it is by the Word that we live. For only it endures forever. And only it offers hope."

MISSIONARY MINISTRY: TRAINING AND PRACTICE

Taking part in missionary ministry is a challenge given to all ESD pastors. During the past three years efforts have been made to train pastors and to involve them in conducting evangelistic programs. Pastors field schools were held in all the unions of our division, with all church ministers participating. During the day they were trained by experienced evangelists, and in the evening they conducted evangelistic programs in

local congregations. As a result, 10 evangelistic programs were held, through which many people were baptized. But most important, the field schools were the first step toward hundreds of evangelistic programs that pastors would implement in their congregations.

The General Conference Back to the Altar initiative has been implemented at all levels of the church, which contributed to the personal spiritual growth of believers and the revival of the tradition of home worship services in Adventist families.

In 2024 our division hosted the Pastors' Kids Congress. When we see young people ready to follow in their fathers' footsteps to continue their life's work, it gives us confidence that the mission of the church will be continued in spite of all the difficulties and obstacles.

BIBLE SCHOOL: EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVANGELISM

In recent years the ESD congregations have paid considerable attention to the development of a Bible School initiative, especially in online format. Hundreds of church members and pastors have led Bible classes with friends, relatives, and people they've just met.

Part of the project includes experiences from across the division shown weekly to congregations in short video format. Milana Balan, a member of the Adventist church in Moscow's Vostochnaya community and a student at I. M. Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University, relates this story: "I studied in a music school and suggested to one of my teachers to consider studying Bible School lessons. When we met again, I asked her if she had ever studied the Bible. I discovered that previously she preferred not to discuss this subject with anyone, but after a short conversation I asked: 'Do you want to really get to know God? Not just to know that He exists, but to know what God is like?' I prayed while she considered her answer, and she said: 'Well, perhaps yes.' We started a Bible study, and after a short time she was baptized! There is no greater joy for me than to see a person give their life to Christ!" Milana is one of many students throughout the Euro-Asia Division who are evan-



Recent graduates of Zaoksky Adventist University

gelizing their fellow students and teachers and leading them to Christ.

YOUTH IN MINISTRY

Between 2022 and 2025 one of the priorities was training, engaging, and entrusting responsible ministry to young people. Community youth meetings, electing young people to serve local congregations, summer camp meetings, creative youth activities on city streets—all these and more engaged young people in the mission of the church.

One Year in Ministry was one of our youth's major mission projects. In the city of Samara, Russia, young people worked throughout the year in a new center of influence. They led in youth meetings, health exhibitions, and special outdoor activities every day. As a result a new congregation was formed a year later. Similar projects with teams take place each year in different cities in the ESD territory. Special attention is paid to the education of leaders. Youth ministry leadership schools were held in all the unions, which brought together more than 2,000 attendees.

In 2023 the Youth Congress in Zaoksky brought together 1,200 young people. About 50 young girls and boys mastered various methods of missionary service by taking part in numerous workshops. The culmination was the dedication to God and baptism of 53 young people on the last day of the congress. More than 100 responded to the call to become pastors, and 20 expressed a desire to participate in the One Year in Ministry project.

Elementary and secondary education is actively growing as part of the ESD Education Department ministry. There were 27 primary schools and 17 secondary schools registered in 2024, with more than 2,000 students attending. Children and teens are working with chaplains to study the Bible and to learn to build their relationship with God.

The only Protestant institution of higher education is Zaoksky Adventist University, which trains pastors, chaplains, and teachers for Adventist schools. The campus of Zaoksky Adventist University could be called "the Euro-Asia Division Center of Youth Life." The largest forums gathering thousands of young people are held here.



The Euro-Asia Division office

One important project is Official Volunteer Cooperation With Museums of the Tula region, where Zaoksky students provide substantial assistance and support. Such community involvement opens up new opportunities for the mission of the church.

Children's Ministry in the ESD is aimed at educating the younger generation and involving them in the mission of the church. During a five-year period, Holiday Bible Schools have been attended by approximately 30,000 children, a third of whom were not from Adventist families. The outcome of this ministry was the baptism of more than 900 children under the age of 15. Ministry in children's departments in congregations, camp meetings in conferences and unions, mission projects involving children, and more help them learn to serve God and their neighbors.

MEDIA SYNERGY IN MISSION FULFILLMENT

Media ministry is developing in the ESD territory. In October 2024 Hope Channel Russia cele-

brated its tenth anniversary. It broadcasts its programs over the internet, cable networks, and streaming platforms. The number of viewers and the regions covered by the message are constantly growing. Radio programs are broadcast in many languages and reach residents in such countries as Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and many others.

Media ministry also collaborates with other church departments, achieving a more effective fulfillment of the church's mission. Digital evangelism projects in the Euro-Asia Division are prayer programs for people in big cities. On social media people are invited to share their prayer needs. Then a pastor speaks to them, and they are invited to join a local congregation. Through this ministry the message of hope reaches thousands of people.

For more than 30 years the Source of Life Publishing House has presented God's message through books. The production of printed literature has faced many challenges in recent times, but despite this, more than 2 million Adventist books, magazines, and missionary materials are published annually.

Literature evangelists in the ESD are some of the most dedicated workers in the field of God. Thanks to them, many people are becoming acquainted with end-time truth and joining the church. Distribution of the book *The Great Controversy* is another way to engage church members in ministry. Local congregations order thousands of books each year to distribute to their friends, acquaintances, and anyone with whom they come in contact.

Internet resources are actively involved in this book promotion, gaining hundreds of thousands of views.

Wrote one of the visitors to the Book of the Year project website: "My family practices Buddhism, as does our whole Republic of Buryatia. I found the true God on the pages of the beautiful book *The Great Controversy*. When I started reading this book, I realized that this was the truth I had been looking for [for] so long."



Hope Channel Russia celebrates 10 years on the air.

PRACTICAL EVANGELISM

In Moldova 6-year-old Alice saw a video in church depicting what life is like for children living in Africa. "We have such good gifts, and they don't even have clean water," she said to the pastor. "I want to raise 20,000 leu [about US$1,000] to help them." The pastor told the congregation about her idea. Alice began to stand at the door of the church every Sabbath with a homemade box and an invitation to donate. In addition, Alice had beautiful long hair. When she discovered her hair could be sold, she decided to cut it and raise more money. Eventually, after three years, the amount needed had been raised and was donated to the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) to be directed to help children in Africa.

In 10 countries of the Euro-Asia Division ADRA provides humanitarian aid, following Christ's example of welfare ministry. In recent years thousands of people affected by floods in the Far East, Siberia, Ural, and Kazakhstan have obtained aid, including the earthquake victims in Afghanistan. In addition, support was provided to thousands of refugees in armed conflict zones in Russia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. Many of them found temporary shelter in Georgia and Moldova. ADRA also implements development programs for children and teenagers in Moldova, and feeds and clothes the homeless in Kyrgyzstan. ADRA shows compassion and assistance in both peaceful and difficult times.

One way to reach secularized society is through the ministry of the Adventist Church's Health Department. Good health, according to Scripture, is one of God's greatest blessings, and caring for it is a work to which everyone is called. To motivate their fellow citizens to take care of their health and encourage them to lead a healthy lifestyle, Adventists are opening sanitariums, health-food cafés, and rehabilitation centers in the Euro-Asia Division. Through the All-Russian organization Health League of Nations, the Seventh-day Adventist Church received a presidential grant to promote the principles of a healthy lifestyle among the population. Volunteers of the church regularly organize health exhibitions for adults and children as prevention and health education, talking about how to preserve and strengthen health through a healthy lifestyle. For several years church members have been actively participating in the All-Russian campaign 10,000 Steps to Life, conducting cooking classes and organizing Sabbath events and health weeks.



Leaders at a Back to the Altar initiative bringing people together for revival and reformation

All areas of the church's ministry are focused on the main goal—to continue to spread the message of hope and to labor in the field of God.

Perhaps one of the most effective instruments of mission are the Adventist health centers. The services provided by such centers are varied and address all areas of human life: physical, emotional, and social. Guests of the health centers are invited to continue fellowship in the Bible School project. People are happy to respond, and the fellowship continues.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE WITH HOPE

The past three years have been a time of searching for effective ways to preach God's Word. New houses of prayer have been built in the Euro-Asia Division; schools and impact centers have been opened for ministry to adults, children, and youth. Thousands of evangelistic projects were accomplished, and field schools and Bible conferences were held.

The Bible School initiative has become an inspirational project in every congregation that encourages even the humblest church members to pick up a Bible and offer another Bible lesson to their friends and acquaintances. They then minister to them to help lead them to the kingdom of God. This is the calling of the church both in the present and in the future.

All areas of the church's ministry are focused on the main goal—to continue to spread the message of hope and to labor in the field of God. Those who are obedient to the love of the Lord cannot stop moving toward His coming, remaining faithful to Him, and doing the work of salvation together with Him.

WEST-CENTRAL AFRICA DIVISION REPORT

Mission Unstoppable



A joyful baptismal ceremony taking place in Cotonou, Benin. WADMEDIA

Spanning from the Atlantic coast to the Sahara Desert, the West-Central Africa Division (WAD) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is an area known for its remarkable diversity and vibrant spirituality. This distinctively varied region encompasses 22 countries, home to more than 478 million people. WAD membership hit the symbolic bar of 1 million in 2024. Within bustling cities, peaceful rural areas, terrorist-stricken regions, ancient customs, and modern developments, Adventism is gaining a strong foothold.

A LAND OF MISSION

Nations such as Benin, Cameroon, Nigeria, Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Cabo Verde, and Ghana each narrate unique stories of faith, hardship, and spiritual revival. The 10/40 window covers 11 of our countries. They present both hurdles and opportunities for the church's mission.

The church is growing, and more and more people are understanding the real sense of freedom in Christ. In the heart of Hêvié Akossavié, a neighborhood famed as a stronghold of voodoo in Cotonou, Benin, Hensley Moorooven, undersecretary of the General Conference, led the Pentecost 2024 campaign from April 14 to 27, 2024, under the theme "Hope for a Troubled World."

On April 27, the final day, under the scorching sun, 18 pastors attended the baptismal candidates. Among the candidates, Christine had broken away from her old life to follow Jesus Christ. "The slavery and obstacles had lasted too long," she said. She entered one of the three wooden baptistries built for the occasion.

Toward the end of the ceremony, undecided souls succumbed to the repeated calls of Selom Sessou, WAD executive secretary. One by one they were led to the baptistry.

Four women faced hostile spirits during their baptism. Three were quickly freed from these malevolent influences in the name of Jesus. The fourth required a session of deliverance prayers outside the water before she was finally freed.

Komlan Adjéoda Simon Djossou, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Eastern Sahel and preacher at Segbeya, in Cotonou, emphasized the significance of the event, noting that "Hêvié is a global center of voodoo, attracting



followers from all over the world in search of power. It is a locality deeply feared and entrenched in voodoo rites and practices."

TESTED BY CHALLENGES

The mission in WAD is facing various difficulties. On April 16, 2025, a group of Adventist students traveling from Port Harcourt to Babcock University for the GYC Africa program were kidnapped along the Benin-Lagos Expressway, Ore, Nigeria. Around 5:00 p.m., one bus carrying 18 passengers was attacked by gunmen, resulting in one student being shot and rushed to the hospital for emergency medical attention. Seven others were injured while 10 were kidnapped by the armed assailants and taken into the forest. The kidnapped students were forced to walk for more than 40 hours barefoot in the bush, crossing four rivers, and subsisting on mangoes, cocoa, and dirty water during their captivity. Thank God they were released, and the injured responded well to treatment.

After the WAD Dream Pathfinder Camp 2023, held on the campus of Valley View University in Accra, Ghana, which brought together more than 12,000 participants, a participant from Chad was captured by the jihadist militant group Boko Haram. Facing imminent death, he turned to prayer. He was miraculously released!

A former Anglican priest and now Adventist pastor, Hillary Didi Kato, exemplifies strong faith during hardship. Even after 50 of his church members were kidnapped, his congregation remains steadfast, praying constantly for the safe return of their captive brethren, two of whom were killed in the bush and four released.



Graduation ceremony of medical missionaries following a division-wide training at Valley View University, Ghana. Lydia Chiyame receives her certificate from WAD Health Ministries leadership. WADMEDIA

Besides sociopolitical instability in the Sahel region, many nations within our territory deal with natural disasters, religious extremism, and humanitarian challenges. Nigeria, Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso regularly encounter religious violence and displacement, yet the Adventist community remains steadfast and committed.

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) has been crucial in offering humanitarian aid to forcibly displaced people and refugees. Between 2022 and 2025, ADRA helped more than 2 million people, distributing 208,311 tons of food and setting up 142 vegetable farms to support local food security in Cameroon.

Our Health Ministries Department is playing a key role in the communities. With 79 health-care facilities and nearly 12,000 dedicated staff that have welcomed more than 3 million patients, the church is also involved in training medical missionaries.



A vibrant gathering marking the closing day of the Pan-African Youth Congress in Nigeria. WADMEDIA



Group photo marking the conclusion of the WAD Annual Council in Grand-Bassam, Côte d'Ivoire, November 2024. WADMEDIA

STORIES OF CHANGE AND BROKEN CHAINS

In regions steeped in occult practices, the Adventist message continues to liberate individuals and communities from spiritual shackles. Notably, Chief Ikpe Asuquo Umoh from Nigeria converted and generously donated land for a new church, significantly impacting his village. In Batouri, Cameroon, an entire family once plagued by sickness and poverty experienced God's restorative power and resumed normal life.

Between 2022 and 2025 more than 50 pastors from other denominations joined the Adventist Church, marking a widespread spiritual revival. One of them, Joseph Zom, a former Anglican priest for 31 years, discovered Sabbath truths that led him to embrace Adventism. He now serves as a church planter. He started a new branch in Kurmin Musa, his village in Nigeria.

Major evangelistic campaigns profoundly impacted thousands. A satellite crusade led by Christopher Holland from Port Harcourt, Nigeria, resulted in more than 21,000 baptisms across 2,515 centers. A powerful story unfolded in Ubimini, locally known as the "Indian Village of Nigeria" because of its deep-rooted traditions in demon worship. James Enuada Didia, 58, renounced ancestral traditions for Christ despite death threats.

In Ubimini, we entered their sacred room. We toppled the two earthen statues: a god (Ibudu) and a goddess (Nwanyi) linked by a sacrificial altar. We toppled the idols and set fire to the symbolic objects of worship (clothes, bonnets, talismans, bells, etc.). It was freedom through Jesus.

Reflecting on these events, WAD president Robert Osei-Bonsu described the campaign as a "true Pentecost experience," significantly reviving believers' faith and attracting many new converts. He praised the crucial role of media: "We praise God for the ministry of Hope Channel in the Adventist Church and in our division. It is a door that opens with new perspectives for media ministries."

The WAD Impact 2025 initiative with a goal of 200,000 baptisms has so far produced more than 126,000 baptisms from more than 13,000 sites. Looking ahead, the WAD Impact Family initiative will pave the way to an ambitious global satellite evangelism campaign, "Lagos for Christ 2026." This net event, broadcast worldwide by Hope Channel, promises to further expand the church's global mission, opening new opportunities for media-driven evangelism.



Participants of the Pan-African Youth Congress actively sharing messages of hope in the community. WADMEDIA

MEDIA: EXTENDING GOSPEL REACH

In July 2024 we launched Hope Channel Afrique that targets the French-speaking audience in 15 of our countries. Media ministries continue to significantly enhance evangelistic efforts. With 172 radio stations, one TV channel, and six television studios, Adventist World Radio and Hope Channel have reached millions throughout the division.

The influence of digital evangelism is clear through stories like that of Eric Ahedor, the founder of Christ New Creation Evangelical Church. Inspired by teachings on Hope TV, he converted to Adventism in 2022, donating church properties and continuing his devoted service despite the loss of his wife. He is studying theology in Valley View University, Accra, Ghana.

One powerful testimony includes a Pentecostal church leader previously involved in occult practices, who, after hearing the message on Facebook, was led to conversion. An evangelistic campaign at his church resulted in mass baptisms and a transformed congregation in Ghana.

Markus M. Dangana, WAD treasurer, while addressing participants at the first Adventist technology conference at Babcock University, expressed his dream of "seeing more and more creatives and IT personnel involved in mission through technology." The meeting took place in February 2025 with participants that came from each union.

WAD FACTS AND FIGURES

WAD LEADERSHIP
President: Robert Osei-Bonsu
Executive Secretary: Selom K. Sessou
Treasurer: Markus M. Dangana

WAD STATISTICS (APRIL 2025)
Countries: 22
Unions: 12
Conferences: 57
Missions: 27
Regions: 4
Churches: 5,451
Companies: 5,509
Membership: 1,077,337
Membership retention: 105%
Evangelistic and pastoral employees: 1,876
Other employees: 1,473
Official languages: Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Spanish
Native languages: 1,000+
Population: 478M

EDUCATION IN WAD
Universities: 5
1. Adventist University of West Africa (LIBERIA)
2. Babcock University (NIGERIA)
   World's largest Seventh-day Adventist university by boarding student population
   Students: 12,975
3. Clifford University (NIGERIA)
4. Université Adventiste Cosendai (CAMEROON)
5. Valley View University (GHANA)
   Ghana's first private university

Baptisms: 453
Number of schools: 1,139
Teachers: 3,870
Enrollment: 64,425 students

HEALTH MINISTRIES IN WAD
Clinics and dispensaries: 56
Hospitals and sanitariums: 35
Inpatients and outpatients: 2,553,832

PUBLISHING HOUSES
1. Advent Press (GHANA)
2. Imprimerie Adventiste (CAMEROON)

OUR VARIOUS LINKS
Website: wad.adventist.org
Facebook: facebook.com/wadventist
TikTok: tiktok.com/@wadventist
X: https://x.com/WAdventist
Instagram: instagram.com/wadnewshope

WEST-CENTRAL AFRICA DIVISION
Media: youtube.com/@wadventist
Hope Channel Afrique: youtube.com/@hopechannelafrique

COLLECTIVE ACTION: A MISSION UNSTOPPABLE

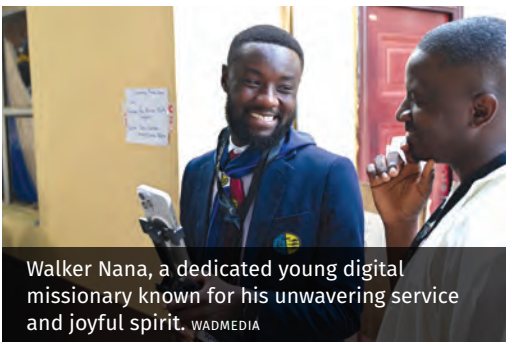
Our division prioritizes education within its strategic mission, utilizing it to nurture both academic excellence and spiritual growth. Prestigious institutions such as Babcock University and Valley View University embody this vision. Babcock University, internationally recognized as the largest Adventist boarding school, currently enrolls 12,975 students, while Valley View University, Ghana's first private higher education establishment, remains devoted to cultivating future Adventist leaders.

WAD's educational impact is broad-reaching, with 1,139 schools in the region employing 3,870 committed teachers who educate 64,425 students. These schools serve as crucial developmental venues, preparing young people to pursue their roles in mission and leadership. Such strategic initiatives as the "1,000 Young Adventist Missionary Volunteers" and major events such as the Pan-African Youth Congress 2024 at Babcock University have significantly promoted youth engagement focused on mission.

Enhancing inclusive outreach, the Adventist Possibility Ministries Department ensures that the gospel reaches everyone, particularly marginalized and disadvantaged populations. The Adventist Mission consistently maintains links with communities that are hard to reach, exemplifying Christ's compassion through prayer, practical assistance, and community service.

Moreover, literature evangelism is a key component of outreach efforts, with 632 literature evangelists distributing more than 1.3 million books, leading to 1,314 baptisms. These resources quietly witness in areas where overt evangelism faces obstacles.

The division's recent administrative restructuring reflects strategic insight, resulting in the formation of two new unions in Cameroon: West-Central Cameroon Union Mission, based in Yaoundé, and North-East Cameroon Union Mission, in Ngaoundéré. In Ghana the reorganized Northern Ghana Union Conference led to the creation of the Mid-North Ghana Union Conference in Kumasi and North-Central Ghana Union Mission in Techiman.



Walker Nana, a dedicated young digital missionary known for his unwavering service and joyful spirit. WADMEDIA

WAD's mission flourishes, defined not merely by figures but by lives changed and communities revitalized.

Inspired by early pioneers like Hannah More, whose courage in 1863 introduced Adventism to the region, women continue to drive this legacy, greatly contributing to more than 12,965 recent baptisms.

The initial efforts by early missionaries have blossomed into a strong community of more than 1 million Adventists across 12 unions, 57 conferences, and 27 missions. Our endeavors have resulted in an impressive yield of 172,220 baptisms from 2022 to early 2025.

Youth also have an active role, participating enthusiastically in such initiatives as Global Youth Day, resulting in more than 21,000 baptisms. WAD's mission flourishes, defined not merely by figures but by lives changed and communities revitalized—truly an unwavering mission infused with divine grace. This is unstoppable mission.

Written by **Abraham Bakari**, director of Communication and Public Affairs and Religious Liberty for the West-Central Africa Division.

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Eighth Business Meeting

SESSION ACTIONS

62nd General Conference Session, St Louis, Missouri, July 8, 2025, 9:30 a.m.

RELATIONS WITH MEMBERS CONFIDENTIAL - CHURCH *MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the motion to reconsider the item Relations with Members Confidential - *Church Manual* Amendment.

RELATIONS WITH CHURCH MEMBERS CONFIDENTIAL – *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To not reconsider the item, Relations with Members Confidential - *Church Manual* Amendment.

CHURCH BOARD AND ITS MEETINGS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

Upon the decision of the chair, the request to refer item, Church Board and Its Meetings - *Church Manual* Amendment, back to the *Church Manual* Committee was accepted.

BUSINESS MEETINGS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the amendment to the item, Business Meetings -*Church Manual* Amendment.

BUSINESS MEETINGS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To not amend the item, Business Meetings - *Church Manual* Amendment, by adding "This method should not be used when the agenda is dealing with personal or confidential issues," following "meeting" on line 30.

BUSINESS MEETINGS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

Upon the decision of the chair, the request to refer item, Business Meetings - *Church Manual* Amendment, back to the *Church Manual* Committee was accepted.

TO FOSTER TITHING (ELDERS) - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the motion to amend the item, To Foster Tithing (Elders) - *Church Manual* Amendment.

TO FOSTER TITHING (ELDERS) - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To amend the motion, To Foster Tithing (Elders) by replacing "should regard" with "must keep" on line 15 of page 83.

TO FOSTER TITHING (ELDERS) - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment expresses the need for confidentiality regarding the giving practices of members.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 9, Local Church Officers and Organizations, page 80, To Foster Tithing (Elders), to read as follows:

To Foster Tithing—By faithfully returning tithe, elders do much to encourage other members to return a faithful tithe. (See pp. 142-143, 175.) Elders can foster tithing by public presentation of the scriptural privilege and responsibility of stewardship and by personal labor with members in a tactful and helpful manner. Elders must keep all personal giving information as strictly confidential.

Elders should regard all financial matters pertaining to members as confidential and shall not give such information to unauthorized persons.

ADVENTIST YOUTH MINISTRIES - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

Upon the decision of the Chair, the request to hold discussion on the item, Church Board and Its Meetings - *Church Manual* Amendment, until after lunch was accepted.

Guillermo E Biaggi, Chair
Claude J Richli, Secretary
Hensley M Moorooven, Actions Editor
Tendani P Severance, Recording Secretary

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT #8

VOTED, To approve the following partial report of the Nominating Committee:

East-Central Africa Division
- Secretary: Moses Maka Ndimukika
- Treasurer: Yohannes Olana Beyene

Euro-Asia Division
- Secretary: Ivan I Velgosha
- Treasurer: Oleg Voronyuk

Inter-American Division
- Secretary: Pierre Caporal
- Treasurer: Ivelisse Herrera

Inter-European Division
- Secretary: Ruben de Abreu
- Treasurer: Norbert G Zens

North American Division
- Secretary: Kyoshin Ahn
- Treasurer: Judy R Glass

Northern-Asia Pacific Division
- Secretary: Toshio Shibata
- Treasurer: Tae Seung (Ted) Kim

South American Division
- Secretary: Edward Heidinger
- Treasurer: Edson E de Medeiros

South Pacific Division
- Secretary: Michael B Sikuri
- Treasurer: J Francois Keet

Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division
- Secretary: Gideon P Reyneke
- Treasurer: Hopekings K Ngomba

Southern Asia Division
- Secretary: Ujwal Anant Kandane
- Treasurer: Riches Christian

Southern Asia-Pacific Division
- Secretary: Samuel Yotam Bindosano
- Treasurer: Jacinto M Adap

Trans-European Division
- Secretary: Robert C Csizmadia
- Treasurer: Nenad Jepuranovic

West-Central Africa Division
- Secretary: Vincent Roger Same
- Treasurer: Dickson Sarfo-Marfo

Ninth Business Meeting

SESSION ACTIONS

62nd General Conference Session, St Louis, Missouri, July 8, 2025, 2:00 p.m.

GENERAL CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

Upon recommendation of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, the item, General Conference Executive Committee - Constitution and Bylaws Amendment, was withdrawn.

TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATION - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: Now that the full General Conference Executive Committee is invited to participate in a hybrid Spring Meeting, agenda items previously handled only at an Annual Council are now open for consideration at Spring Meeting.

VOTED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Bylaws, Article I—Territorial Administration, to read as follows:

ARTICLE I—TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATION

Sec. 1. The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, hereinafter - No change

Sec. 2. The duly organized divisions are: East-Central Africa Division, Euro-Asia Division, Inter-American Division, Inter-European Division, North American Division, Northern Asia-Pacific Division, South American Division, South Pacific Division, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division, Southern Asia Division, Southern Asia-Pacific Division, Trans-European Division, and West-Central Africa Division. The boundaries of these divisions shall be subject to adjustment at a Spring Meeting or Annual Council ~~Annual Councils~~ of the General Conference Executive Committee.

Sec. 3. If a territorial adjustment is made at ~~an~~ a Spring Meeting or Annual Council, it shall be made only provided each division and other territory affected is represented at the council by at least one of its officers, or in the case of an unorganized territory, by a senior church leader from that territory. An exception to the requirement of such representation shall be made in a condition of emergency. In such a case, the General Conference Executive Committee shall make whatever adjustments are necessary for the conduct of the work in the territories affected.

Sec. 4. Administrations of all organizations and institutions within a - No change

APPROPRIATIONS - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

VOTED, To take from the table the motion, Appropriations - Constitution and Bylaws Amendment.

APPROPRIATIONS - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the motion to amend the item, Appropriations - Constitution and Bylaws Amendment.

APPROPRIATIONS - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

VOTED, To amend the item, Appropriations - Constitution and Bylaws Amendment, by removing "Spring Meetings or," on line 18 to read as follows:

"Sec. 1. The General Conference Executive Committee shall make its regular appropriations to the world field at Annual Councils. These appropriations are to be based on a methodology that promotes mission priorities to be fulfilled through the work of world divisions and other denominational entities. ~~budget requests from the fields.~~

APPROPRIATIONS - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: Now that the full General Conference Executive Committee is invited to participate in a hybrid Spring Meeting, agenda items previously handled only at an Annual Council are now open for consideration at Spring Meeting. The language regarding the process by which appropriations are considered is being updated to reflect current realities.

VOTED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Bylaws, Article XIX—Appropriations, to read as follows:

ARTICLE XIX—APPROPRIATIONS

Sec. 1. The General Conference Executive Committee shall make its regular appropriations to the world field at Annual Councils. These appropriations are to be based on a methodology that promotes mission priorities to be fulfilled through the work of world divisions and other denominational entities. ~~budget requests from the fields.~~

Sec. 2. Appropriations shall be made subject to the receipt of the full amount - No change

Sec. 3. Appropriations for major projects shall be held in trust for the - No change

Sec. 4. All funds raised in divisions, except the regular funds belonging to - No change

Sec. 5. To the extent permitted by law, General Conference funds in all the - No change

ADVENTIST YOUTH MINISTRIES - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the motion to divide the question on the item, Adventist Youth Ministries - *Church Manual* Amendment.

ADVENTIST YOUTH MINISTRIES - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To not divide the question on the motion, Adventist Youth Ministries - *Church Manual* Amendment, into two parts separating the AYM Motto from the rest of the text.

ADVENTIST YOUTH MINISTRIES - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment expresses the importance of youth disciple-making.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 9, Local Church Officers and Organizations, pages 110 to 115, Adventist Youth Ministries, to read as follows:

Adventist Youth Ministrie

The various youth organizations of the church should work closely with the ~~youth ministries~~ Youth Ministries department of the conference. The church works for and with its youth through Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM). Under the AYM, youth are to work together, in cooperation with the wider church community, towards the development of a strong youth ministry that includes spiritual, mental, and physical development of each individual, Christian social interaction, and an active witnessing program that supports the general soul-winning plans of the church. In the quest for ~~discipleship,~~ disciple-making, the goal of AYM should be to bring all youth to a saving relationship with Christ, build them up in His Word to reflect a Christ-like character, train them how to serve the ~~church~~ church, public campuses, and communities using their spiritual gifts, and send them out to reach the communities in the power of the Holy Spirit.

AYM Mission—To lead young people into ~~a~~ an authentic saving relationship with Jesus Christ and help them embrace His call to disciple-making and mission involvement. ~~discipleship.~~

AYM Motto—The love of Christ compels me. ~~us.~~

AYM Aim—The Advent Message to all the world in my generation.

AYM Pledge—Loving the Lord Jesus, I promise to take an active part in the youth ministry of the church, doing what I can to help others and to finish the work of the gospel in all the world.

The ~~youth ministries~~ Youth Ministries program of the church comprises ~~three~~ two broad categories, namely: Junior Youth (Adventurers: ages 4-9 and Pathfinders: ages 10-15) and Senior Youth (Ambassadors: ages 16-21, Young Adults: ages 22-30, and Public Campus Students and Staff (PCM): ages 16-30+). Public Campus Ministry is a specialized Senior Youth Ministry because it caters for both Ambassadors and Young Adults on public campuses. ~~ages 10-15), Senior Youth (Ambassadors: ages 16-21 and Young Adults: ages 22-30), and Public Campus Students: ages 16-30+.~~

God said to Moses, "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates" (Deut. 6:6-9).

The apostle Paul added, "Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12).

"We have an army of youth today who can do much if they are properly directed and encouraged. . . . We want them to be blessed of God. We want them to act a part in well-organized plans for helping other youth."— GCB, Jan. 29, 1893, p. 24.

"We have an army of youth today who can do much if they are properly directed and encouraged. We want our children to believe the truth. We want them to be blessed of God. We want them to act a part in well-organized plans for helping other youth. Let all be so trained that they may rightly represent the truth, giving the reason of the hope that is within them, and honoring God in any branch of the work where they are qualified to labor."— GCB, Jan. 29, 1893, p. 24.

"When the youth give their hearts to God, our responsibility for them does not cease. They must be interested in the Lord's work, and led to see that He expects them to do something to advance His cause. It is not enough to show how much needs to be done, and to urge the youth to act a part. They must be taught how to labor for the Master. They must be trained, disciplined, drilled, in the best methods of winning souls to Christ. Teach them to try in a quiet, unpretending way to help their young companions. Let different branches of missionary effort be systematically laid out, in which they may take part, and let them be given instruction and help. Thus they will learn to work for God."—GW 210.

"With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior might be carried to the whole world!"—MYP 196.

While there is to be an active Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) in every church, it is important that the youth program not be isolated from the rest of the church. In addition to their AYM participation, youth should be integrated into responsible leadership and in all lines of church work. As young elders, deacons, and deaconesses, for example, they can work with and learn from experienced officers.

"In order that the work may go forward in all its branches, God calls for youthful vigor, zeal, and courage. He has chosen the youth to aid in the advancement of His cause. To plan with clear mind and execute with courageous hand demands fresh, uncrippled energies. Young men and women are invited to give God the strength of their youth, that through the exercise of their powers, through keen thought and vigorous action, they may bring glory to Him and salvation to their fellow men."—GW 67.

Adventist Youth Ministries Committee—The Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) Committee is the umbrella organization in the church for the general planning of the youth ministry program. (See pp. 139-140.) The AYM Committee includes the following church-elected officers: Young Adults leader, Public Campus Ministry ~~Ministries~~ leader/coordinator, Ambassador leader, Pathfinder director, Adventurer director, plus the ~~personal ministries~~ Personal Ministries leader, youth Sabbath School division leader, ~~children's ministries~~ Children's Ministries leader, ~~health ministries~~ Health Ministries leader, principal of the school, the AYM advisor, and the pastor. The Young Adults leader, Ambassador leader, Pathfinder director, Adventurer director, and Public Campus Ministry ~~Ministries~~ leader are members of the church board.

If there are no distinct Ambassador Ministry or Young Adults Ministry ~~ministry or young adults ministries~~ established in the church, or until such time as they are established, the AYM Committee will plan for the senior youth ministry to include both age groups.

In parts of the world where there is no Pathfinder or Adventurer ministry, or until such time as they are organized, the AYM Committee will plan for appropriate activities for the junior youth.

The Young Adults leader may chair the AYM Committee. The committee should meet as necessary to develop short- and long-range goals and plans for a successful ministry. (See Notes, #19, p. 184.)

Young Adults Ministry ~~Ministries~~ Committee—The Young Adults Ministry ~~Ministries~~ Committee is responsible for Young Adult activities and works in coordination with the Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) Committee.

The church elects the following Young Adults Ministries officers: leader, associate leader, secretary-treasurer, and music director. This group forms the nucleus for the Young Adults Ministry ~~Ministries~~ Committee, which appoints other officers for the respective activities.

Local churches are encouraged to have Young Adult committees and to establish Senior Youth Societies (SYS). Senior Youth Societies serve as forums where evangelistic plans and senior youth issues are discussed. SYS will encompass the Ambassadors, Young Adults, and Public Campus Students. In these SYS meetings, young professionals should mentor those who are younger than them. The Young Adults Ministry Committee will manage the SYS.

Public Campus ~~Ministries—Strengthening~~ Ministry—Strengthening the Youth Ministries of the church, Public Campus ~~Ministries~~ Ministry (PCM), in collaboration with the Adventist Ministry to College and University Students (AMiCUS), provides vision and strategic planning for ministry to and support for Seventh-day Adventist students (ages 16-30+) who attend college or university institutions not operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Public Campus ~~Ministries~~ Ministry Leader/Coordinator—The church ~~may~~ should appoint a Public Campus ~~Ministries~~ Ministry leader/coordinator to develop an intentional ministry with the purpose of caring for the special needs of college or university students in nearby institutions not operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and discipling them to fulfil the AYM goal, mission, motto, and aim, in consultation with and support of the Adventist Youth Ministries Committee. Each local church may adopt one or two public campuses to support Adventist students and staff in executing their mission obligations and furthering their education or professional lives.

Ambassador Ministry—The Ambassador Ministry provides - No change

Ambassador Committee—The Ambassador Committee is responsible for Ambassador activities and works in coordination with the Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) Committee.

The church elects the following Ambassador officers: leader, associate leader, secretary treasurer, assistant secretary-treasurer, and music director. This group forms the Ambassador

Committee which appoints other officers for the respective activities.

Pathfinder Club—The Pathfinder Club provides a church-centered outlet for the spirit of adventure and exploration, in the context of spiritual development and soul-winning, for ages 10 to 15. Activities are carefully tailored to ~~include~~ include, but not limited to, spiritual growth, leadership skills, witnessing opportunities, disciple-making, outdoor living, nature exploration, crafts, hobbies, or vocations.

Pathfinder Committee—The Pathfinder Club director and deputy directors are elected by the church. (See pp. 111-112, 184-185.) If two deputy directors are elected, there should be one male and one female. One of the deputy directors may also serve as club secretary and treasurer.

Additional Pathfinder staff may include instructors of ~~craft and nature~~ honor classes and counselors who are each responsible for a unit of six to eight Pathfinders.

Resource materials are available from the conference ~~youth ministries~~ Youth Ministries director.

Everyone involved in work with minor children must meet Church and legal standards and requirements, such as background checks or certification. Local church leaders should consult with the ~~conference~~, conference AYM, which will ascertain and advise as to what background checks and certifications are available and/or required. (See Notes, #8, pp. 180-181.)

Adventurer Club—The Adventurer Club provides home and church - No change

Adventurer Committee—The church elects the club director and associates. (See pp. 111-112, 184-185.) Additional staff members are selected by the administrative staff of the club.

Resource materials are available from the conference ~~youth ministries~~ Youth Ministries director.

Everyone involved in work with minor children must meet Church and legal standards and requirements, such as background checks or certification. Local church leaders should consult with the conference, which will ascertain and advise as to what background checks and certifications are available and/or required. (See Notes, #8, pp. 180-181.)

continued in Bulletin 7

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT #9

VOTED, To approve the following partial report of the Nominating Committee:

General Conference

Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries
Director: Ivan H Omaña

Children's Ministries
Director: Orathai Chureson

Communication
Director: Alyssa Truman

Education
Director: Lisa M Beardsley-Hardy

Family Ministries
Director: Willie Oliver

Health Ministries
Director: Zeno L Charles-Marcel

Ministerial Association
Secretary: Ramon J Canals

Public Affairs and Religious Liberty
Director: Nelu Burcea

Planned Giving and Trust Services
Director: Hector O Reyes

Publishing Ministries
Director: Mario Martinelli

Sabbath School and Personal Ministries
Director: James M Howard

Stewardship Ministries
Director: Marcos F Bomfim

Women's Ministries
Director: Galina Stele

Youth Ministries
Director: Sibusiso B Khumalo

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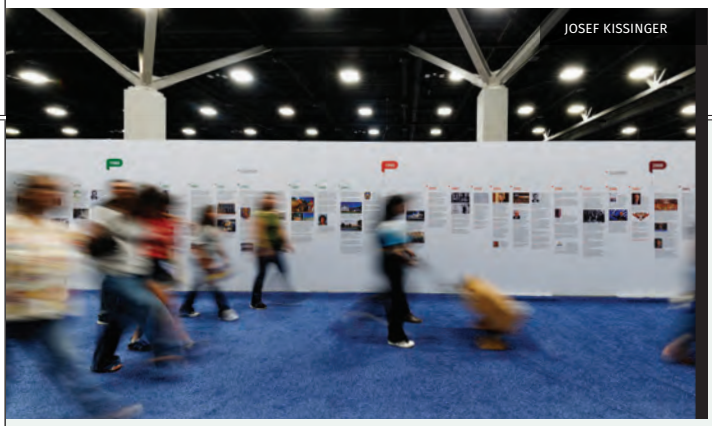
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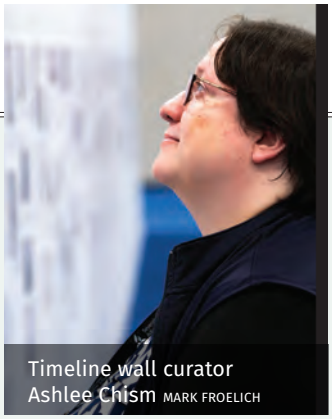


NEWS

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JOSEF KISSINGER



Timeline wall curator Ashlee Chism MARK FROELICH

CLOUD OF WITNESSES

GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION TIMELINE WALL BRINGS ADVENTIST HISTORY TO LIFE.

BETH THOMAS

A striking visual centerpiece in the General Conference (GC) Session exhibit hall is drawing attendees into the story of the Seventh-day Adventist Church—not through sermons or seminars, but through history itself.

The timeline wall, curated by Ashlee Chism, Archives and Library manager at the General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research (ASTR), and a committee of four others, offers a narrative of Adventist history from the beginning of its establishment to the present. Gracing the exterior wall of the GC exhibit area, the display aims to inform everyday church members—not just scholars or leaders—of key events and individuals who have shaped the denomination's journey.

The timeline begins with the official organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1863, accompanied by a nod to the earlier adoption of the denomination's name. From there it features departmental milestones, major mission initiatives, membership growth statistics, and highlights from previous GC sessions.

Chism emphasized the importance of historical accuracy, cross-referencing committee minutes, denominational periodicals, and archival sources. "Fortunately, since I work at the archives, I had access to materials—some of which are publicly available online," she noted.

Design collaboration with Tanya Holland from GC Communication and external designer Daniel Taipe ensured the wall was both informative and visually cohesive with the exhibit aesthetic.

Remarkably, the project was finalized in just a few months—from March to early May—and has already received positive feedback. Chism's favorite response came from a visitor who recognized the name of Mary Britton, one of the first Black female Adventist physicians, listed under the year 1902. Britton, along with her classmate Lottie (Isbell) Blake, was included in the timeline to honor their shared historical impact.

"She said Britton had been a member of her home church in Lexington, Kentucky, and she hadn't expected to see her on the wall," said Chism.

For Chism, the wall is about representation and inspiration. "When I was growing up, I didn't see many women in church history beyond Ellen White," she shared. "But this timeline includes editors, missionaries, doctors, mothers, and more."

She calls the timeline Cloud of Witnesses, inspired by Hebrews 12:1. "It allows us to see our Adventist history in the past, compare it to the present, and look to the future of the church. That's what I hope people will take from this experience. They can see themselves in Adventist history and their place in the church's future as well."

While there are no confirmed plans for a permanent version yet, discussions are underway for adapting the timeline into another format—possibly digital—so more people can access its content. As for the 2030 GC Session? "We may just need to add another five years," Chism smiled.

COVER PHOTO BY CHRISTINA COLLARD



On July 5 the combined orchestra and choirs filled the stage with music during the Sabbath worship program at the sixty-second General Conference Session of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
DANIEL GALLARDO/IAD

ELEVATING WORSHIP THROUGH MUSIC

MONTEMORELOS UNIVERSITY PERFORMS AT WORLDWIDE EVENT.

BRENDA CERÓN, INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION NEWS

Serving as the primary orchestra and choir for the General Conference (GC) Session is not a new honor for Montemorelos University (MU)—an Adventist institution overseen by the Inter-American Division. It's the culmination of years of service, commitment, and musical growth in support of the Adventist Church.

The journey began in 2015, when MU geographic proximity made it possible to support the session musically. In 2022, amid ongoing pandemic restrictions, MU again played a key role in supporting the church's global musical programming.

A MISSION-DRIVEN CONTRIBUTION

"Montemorelos University is an institution of the Adventist Church," said Ismael Castillo, MU president. "That's why we participate in the global mission of the church."

During this session the MU orchestra and choir have been tasked with leading the music for Sabbath specials, important moments, and the congregational singing throughout the event.

"Adventist music isn't just about art—it's a channel for worship and connection with God," Oscar Castillo, director of the Handel Choir and leader of MU's music team, said. "That's our driving purpose."

THREE YEARS OF PREPARATION

Planning began immediately after the 2022 session ended. During those three years the university gathered music, arranged partnerships, and organized the complex logistics needed to transport musicians and instruments.

While most musicians flew into St. Louis, Missouri, United States, large instruments were transported by land. Instruments that were too difficult to bring were generously lent by Sunnydale Adventist Academy.

The primary choir includes 32 MU members and has expanded to 160 voices with support from choirs representing Andrews University, Korea, Central America, and South America. The 31-member MU orchestra was also strengthened through collaborations with other groups, including the AdventHealth Orchestra from Florida.

"The repertoire is diverse and global," Oscar Castillo said. "The world church's Music Committee selected the Sabbath specials, and we proposed pieces for congregational singing. We've also been asked to accompany guest artists and support major events."

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES WITH FAITH

One of the greatest hurdles has been financial.

"As a Latin American university, funding travel to the U.S. is always difficult because of currency differences," Ismael Castillo said. "But God keeps opening doors. It's getting easier to find support, thanks to people who believe in this ministry and in what we do."

MU's involvement also helps promote the Adventist philosophy of music in worship. "Music is one of the university's most important contributions to the church," Oscar Castillo said.

VOICES THAT BRIDGE GENERATIONS

Germán Encinas, 51, a brass ensemble and orchestra member, has attended seven GC sessions. "It's a great responsibility to represent one of the church's key educational institutions on its biggest stage," he shared. "At the same time, it's a joy to do what I love and praise God alongside people from around the world."

Scan this QR code to read more.



Ever wondered what it's like to be a chemist? Or to kayak down a river? Give both a try at Union Adventist University's photo sets, exploring some of the many options for areas of study at the university. JOSEF KISSINGER

DESIGNED FOR CONNECTION

HOW INTENTIONAL, INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCES HELP EXHIBIT BOOTHS STAND OUT IN A CROWDED HALL

BECKY ST. CLAIR

Stepping into the exhibit hall at the General Conference (GC) Session, you're instantly immersed in a whirlwind of motion, color, and sound. The steady hum of activity thrums through the immense space, punctuated by laughter, music, and amplified voices. With hundreds of exhibits vying for attention, navigating the hall can be both exhilarating and overwhelming. In such a lively and layered environment, how do you choose where to center your attention? How do you ingest and digest the feast of information surrounding you?

Perhaps the more important question is How can exhibitors design an experience for visitors that breaks through the noise and overwhelms and draws them directly to their story? To explore the art and science behind standout exhibit design, I sat down with Daniel Bruneau, director of experience design and innovation at the *Adventist Review*.

Becky St. Clair: *What do attendees typically look for—or subconsciously respond to—when walking through an exhibit hall?*

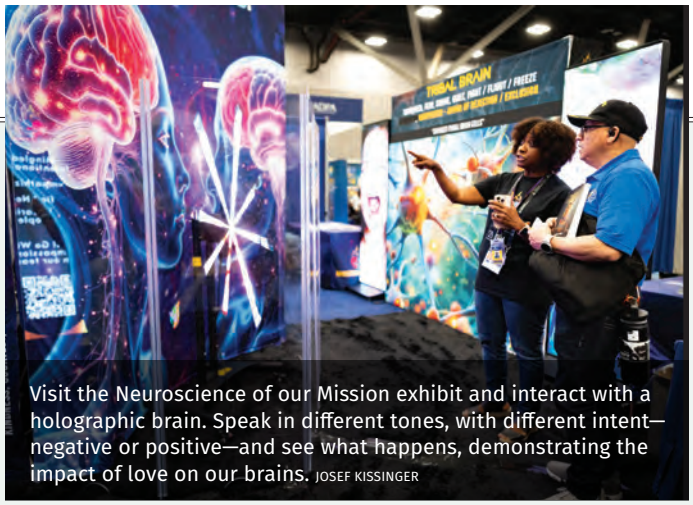
Daniel Bruneau: Attendees may walk in scanning for information, their senses and attention drawn by sounds around them, the visual displays of booths, and by the interaction with others, but what they truly respond to—often subconsciously—is how a space *feels*.

As Don Norman, the well-known researcher in human design, emphasizes, people rarely remember the exact details of an interaction, but they do remember how it made them feel. A booth that is visually coherent, emotionally inviting, and easy to navigate signals purpose. Subtle cues such as lighting, spacing, movement, and tone of voice help people decide—almost instantly—whether this is a space worth stepping into or simply walking past. In many ways, they're not looking for more content; they're looking for *connection.*



At the Middle East and North Africa Union Mission (MENAUM) exhibit, you can pick up a passport and spend the week filling it with stamps from all the different countries in MENAUM. Each day stories from four different countries are featured. JOSEF KISSINGER

"In many ways, [exhibit visitors are] not looking for more content; they're looking for connection."



Visit the Neuroscience of our Mission exhibit and interact with a holographic brain. Speak in different tones, with different intent—negative or positive—and see what happens, demonstrating the impact of love on our brains. JOSEF KISSINGER

BS: *What role does interactivity play in helping people connect with a booth's message?*

DB: Interactivity transforms passive observation into active participation—and that shift can be cognitively powerful. When people engage with a booth physically or conversationally, they're more likely to form an emotional link with its message, which brings us back to this idea of connection.

Touching, trying, responding, or even choosing activates the brain in ways that static signage never can—it essentially creates a *cognitive investment*, which makes the message more memorable and meaningful. In fact, this memorability-meaningful connection is powerful, and it lasts beyond booth experience.

BS: *How does one find a way to create that memorability-meaningful connection? What questions should someone ask themselves before designing an exhibit for something like the GC?*

DB: There are a number of core questions to ask that really play into this memorability-meaningful connection:

What do we want people to feel when they step into this space?

Can we craft a story that draws people in? Our brains are wired to remember stories far better than facts alone.

What is the one thing I want them to remember after they leave?

Can we create/invite interaction, not just observation?

Similarly, how do we minimize cognitive overload?

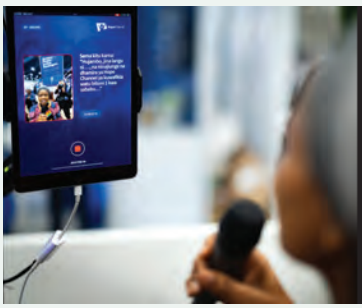
Is there a clear journey from entry to exit—or does it feel confusing? This doesn't have to be applied to just large booths—it can work with small booths also.

Are we designing for efficient use of people's time?

BS: *How does one create an exhibit experience that resonates beyond the event itself—that sticks with visitors long after they've stepped away?*

DB: Ultimately, it's about crafting a memorable emotional experience—delivered with intention, but in a way that feels organic rather than forced. In other words, the experience should feel seamless. Every element should flow naturally, yet come together as part of a coherent story that stays with the attendee long after they leave the booth. That's what makes the experience meaningful, and what truly creates a lasting connection between your exhibit and its visitors.

The photos accompanying this story are examples of exhibits successfully applying the user experience principles Bruneau mentions in his interview.



At the Hope Channel exhibit, record yourself speaking in any language, then listen as AI translates what you've said into more than 70 languages—even using your voice! The process is powered by Jetstream, a video management platform created by Adventist Cloud. JOSEF KISSINGER



Natalie Hord (left) and Amber Duncan (right) stand at their security stations. DAVID B. SHERWIN

HOPE AT THE DOOR

A FAITH-BASED MINISTRY IS PROVIDING SECURITY AND SECOND CHANCES.

BETH THOMAS

A small group of women working security at the 2025 General Conference (GC) Session have a story that goes beyond badge checks and bag screenings.

The team, all participants in a nondenominational faith-based recovery program called OneWay Restoration, traveled from Mobile, Alabama, United States, to work at the convention center this week. They're serving as part of a broader effort coordinated through Kingdom Promotions and Andy Frain Services to provide staffing support for major events across the United States.

"We've been here since last week," said Natalie Hord, one of the team members. "We get here at 5:00 a.m., and while the first few days were long—17-hour shifts—it's slowed down now. We're working regular eight-hour days."

The women are part of a nine-month residential program designed to help individuals struggling with addiction, abuse, homelessness, and other life challenges. The ministry's founders, Nathan and Jane Belcher, are both former heroin addicts who went through a similar recovery program in Birmingham, Alabama, before launching this ministry in Mobile. The program is provided at no cost to participants and is funded entirely through donations and work opportunities such as this one.

Hord said she was referred to the program by a social worker after a period of unstable housing. "I told her I didn't have permanent housing, and she gave me the number for OneWay Restoration," she said. "She told me, 'This is the one that's really going to help you get your life together the most.' "

Participants live in a dorm-style home, attend daily Bible studies, and receive ministry training with an emphasis on the writings of Paul and the apostles. After completing the program, many stay involved in ministry, while others are supported in finding employment and housing.

During the GC Session the women are responsible for morning security shifts. Another team from a local St. Louis ministry, which has partnered with GC Session management in previous years, takes over in the afternoon.

Hord said attendees have been respectful and kind. "People thank us for keeping them safe. Some bring pins or souvenirs. Someone even brought a big box of cookies yesterday!" she said.

While language barriers sometimes pose a challenge, Hord said guests often use their phones to translate, or other attendees step in to interpret.

The security assignment also supports practical needs. "The money we earn goes back to the ministry," Hord said. "It covers our food, housing, and even medical care. I just got to see an eye doctor and get glasses for the first time in years."

Amber Duncan, another member of the team, shared, "We've worked for state fairs, the Professional Golfers' Association (PGA), and the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR), to name a few. It helps fund the ministry."

Both Duncan and Hord said the ultimate goal is to offer people in difficult situations a path forward.

"Give Jesus a chance," Hord said. "You never know what God has in store for you. So just give Him a chance, be obedient, and work hard for the Lord, and He'll work things out."



DAVID B. SHERWIN

TRANSLATORS FULFILL KEY ROLE DURING GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION

INTERPRETERS MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR PROCEEDINGS TO BE UNDERSTOOD AROUND THE WORLD.

JEFFERSON PARADELLO, SOUTH AMERICAN DIVISION, FOR ANN, AND *ADVENTIST REVIEW*

The multiple languages represented in the global Seventh-day Adventist Church pose a challenge, but they also offer a unique opportunity to share the message that Jesus is coming soon, church leaders said. Part of this process relies on the work of translators, who also served during the sixty-second General Conference (GC) Session in St. Louis, Missouri, United States.

The church's quinquennial gathering, which in 2025 includes 2,809 delegates representing members from more than 200 countries, has a built-in system to provide translation of the meetings into eight languages—Chinese, French, German, Korean, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, and Spanish—for those attending in person.

Having these languages available at such an event not only facilitates understanding but ensures that the outcome of the discussions reaches local churches, leaders said. "Not all delegates, myself included, speak English," said César Efren Gonzalez from Cuernavaca, Mexico. "By relying on the work of translators, we are able to fulfill the purpose for which we are here."

A MINISTRY THAT CONNECTS PEOPLE

To make all GC Session meetings understandable for delegates, a group of professionals and volunteers work across the three daily meeting blocks. In total, 71 individuals make up the translation team for the eight languages, translation coordinator Roger Steves said. His role is to build interpreter teams and ensure they have all the tools they need to do their job—scripts, video presentations, and other resources.

"This is truly a ministry. Interpretation isn't just about translating words; it's about building bridges," he explained. "At the General Conference Session, where crucial decisions are made that affect millions of members around the world, it is vital that everyone has a voice. Our work makes that possible. In that sense, we're not just interpreting speeches—we're helping the global church family function as one."

CONTRIBUTING TO THE CHURCH'S MISSION

Tiana Rabearison, originally from Madagascar and now living in the United States, is participating for the first time on the French interpretation team. He believes this work breaks down barriers in preaching the gospel to every tribe and language. "It's the fulfillment of the promises of the Holy Spirit," he noted.

Simultaneous interpretation is mentally and physically demanding—far more than the type of translation most people are familiar with, Steves explained. "To help manage the intensity, interpreters are assigned in teams of two, and each team covers a specific time slot."

Steves took time to extend special thanks to individuals who have been instrumental in making this work possible. Among them he mentioned Marius Andrei, the only Romanian interpreter for this session. "His incredible dedication—covering shifts all by himself—is a true demonstration of the spirit of service that defines this ministry. We are deeply grateful for his commitment."

Scan this QR code to read more.



JAMES BOKOVOY

PLANES, TRAINS, AND OUTBOARD MOTORS

ONE WOMAN'S JOURNEY TO ST. LOUIS

JARROD STACKELROTH

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is a beautiful and, in many places, untouched land, filled with steep mountains, fast-flowing rivers, and thick tropical jungles. Just south of the equator, PNG has temperate highlands, dry coastal regions, river deltas, numerous islands, and hot, humid lowlands. Travel is difficult. Often the only transport is by plane (as highways have not been cut through the rugged terrain) or watercraft (to reach a town with roads that connect the wider world).

Meet Michell Sawavi Gongogi.

She comes from a remote area on the northern edge of PNG's tail, separated from the capital by the mountainous spine of the country. Delegates and guests have come to St. Louis, Missouri, United States (U.S.), from every corner of the map, but Gongogi made quite a journey to get here and fulfill her role as a delegate.

Gongogi hails from Musa, in the Northern and Milne Bay Mission—one of nine missions and one conference that make up the Papua New Guinea Union Mission.

To get to St. Louis, Gongogi took a dinghy (small outboard motorboat) across the bay. From there she took a truck into Popondetta, a large town and the site of the mission office. Popondetta airfield was built during World War II by the U.S. military as one of the easiest airfields to access on the northern side of PNG.

From Popondetta, Gongogi flew to PNG's capital, Port Moresby, before flying down to Brisbane, Australia, and then a 14-hour flight to Los Angeles, California, U.S. But Gongogi's journey was not finished. She then had to fly to Chicago, where, with many other attendees from PNG, she caught a train down to St. Louis.

But the road to St. Louis was not just physical. Gongogi is employed by the mission to oversee church work in her remote region. She looks after two organized churches and 14 hand churches (a hand church is a group planted from a larger group). They are spread out, and the only way to serve them is to walk.

"Most times I never used to eat," she said. "I walk from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. in order to get to another village."

Once she arrives, she runs the program that is on the calendar she prepared at the start of the year. Stewardship programs, retention programs, communion, revival meetings—she must keep to the schedule, as she cannot contact people there in advance, because they may not have internet or phone reception.

If she's sick, she walks anyway and never misses an appointment.

"It's the remotest part and the hardest path, but I love the Lord."

Gongogi has worked in ministry for 10 years, four in remote Musa, the region she is from.

"I love to be with people. I love sharing Jesus with others," she said. "I love missionary work."

Those seeds were planted by her father. He was a missionary, and he would take picture rolls out to share Bible stories with people who often couldn't read. But Gongogi's parents died when she was 5, and she was raised by her uncle. "Looking back to what my parents did, I love sharing Jesus with others, so I grew up with that mindset."

During PNG for Christ there were 541 baptisms from Gongogi's region, and she was selected by her mission to attend the General Conference Session.

The session is inspiring Gongogi. "It's really giving me some kind of strength to go and do more."

"When I hear testimonies, stories about missionaries touching lives, it's energizing me to do more."

Jarrod Stackelroth is managing editor of *Adventist Record* and *Signs of the Times* for the South Pacific Division. He is currently in St. Louis working with the *Adventist Review* team.



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THE MISSION

Staying on the Path



JOHN BRADSHAW

DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE PRESENTED THURSDAY MORNING, JULY 10, 2025

I was born and raised in New Zealand, a beautiful country hidden away at the bottom of the world. It's an island nation, so there are beaches and boats everywhere you turn. There are fjords, like the ones in Norway, and mountains only a little shorter than the Swiss Alps. Our natural disaster of choice is the earthquake, and there's a lot of thermal activity. You quickly learn that you always stick to the path. If you don't, the consequences can be severe, even deadly.

Almost two millennia before the Seventh-day Adventist Church came into existence, God spoke to us about staying on the path. He knew that human beings

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We cannot afford to be sidetracked, even by worthy endeavors.

tend to wander. There were only 10 generations from Adam to the Flood. Things can quickly spiral out of control. It's important to stay on the path.

Seeing ahead of time the challenges a small group of believers would endure, God spoke to John 2,000 years ago: "'Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth.' So I went to the angel and said to him, 'Give me the little book.' And he said to me, 'Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth.' Then I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter. And he said to me, 'You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings'" (Rev. 10:8-11). Prophesy again!

That was God's message to us 1,800 years before we existed. That's our path, as given to us by God. In that same book the three angels' messages are given to us as our message to the world. The everlasting gospel must be preached. We cannot afford to be sidetracked, even by worthy endeavors. If it isn't the Word of God, if we're not reaching the lost, if it isn't evangelism, we're straying from the path.

A SOLEMN MESSAGE

Revelation 3 is a solemn wake-up call to a church that doesn't know it is wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. It's easy to lose focus when the church is advancing in many places around the world. Yet the servant of the Lord told us, "A storm is coming, relentless in its fury. Are we prepared to meet it? We need not say: The perils of the last days are soon to come upon us. Already they have come. We need now the sword of the Lord to cut to the very soul and marrow of fleshly lusts, appetites, and passions."[1]

On July 4, 2023, with 150 meters (almost 500 feet) left in the annual Peachtree 10K road race in Atlanta, Georgia, Senbere Teferi of Ethiopia was leading the women's event. The $10,000 first prize was virtually in her hand when a motorcycle accompanying the runners turned off the course and up a side street. Thinking she was being signaled to turn, Ms. Teferi followed the police motorcycle off the course. Instead of winning $10,000 for first, she won $3,000 for finishing third. It's important to stay on the path.

Jesus is soon to return. There is no better time to be proclaiming the gospel. Not the recitation of a set of lifeless doctrines, but a message that offers hope, transforms lives, and develops in people the character of Christ. We can be guilty of salvation by orthodoxy. We don't want that. Our doctrines are to connect us with Christ and mold and form our characters. We've been told that the message of the third angel is the message of righteousness by faith in verity. We've been called to proclaim a powerful Christ, a saving Christ, a forgiving Christ, a resurrected Christ, a soon-returning Christ. And time is running out.

If we emphasize the Word of God and the power of the Word of God, there is no movement, no faction, no agenda that can overcome the power of the gospel. But our message must have genuine power, power that comes from time in the presence of God, power that comes from the Holy Spirit breathing through our teaching.

UNNUMBERED SCHEMES

In 1993 the General Conference Ministerial Association produced a book on preaching written by Charles Bradford. *Preaching to the Times* is a remarkable book in which Elder Bradford states that we need to be preaching substantial themes, such as "Living in the Sight of God Without a Mediator." That master preacher was encouraging ministers of the gospel to urge people into a deep relationship with the Savior, to understand the issues in the great controversy, to turn their backs on sin, and to yield their hearts to the King of kings and Lord of lords. We neither need nor want what we see in Isaiah 30:10: "Who say to the seers, 'Do not see,' and to the prophets, 'Do not prophesy to us right things; speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits.'"

There is a distaste for Bible teaching in some hearts. After 6,000 years Satan is at the top of his game. People are distracted. "Satan invents unnumbered schemes to occupy our minds, that they may not dwell upon the very work with which we ought to be best acquainted. The archdeceiver hates the great truths that bring to view an atoning sacrifice and an all-powerful Mediator. He knows that with him everything depends on his diverting minds from Jesus and His truth."[2]

We are here to be honest with one another. We know that masses of our own people do not keep the Sabbath. They're not reading the Spirit of Prophecy, and are therefore walking in the twilight when they could be walking in the bright light of noonday. Many who identify as Adventists are barely reading their Bibles and have a minimal personal devotional experience. This close to the return of Jesus, that is a calamity.

An interesting feature of the church's Annual Council in 1978, held in Takoma Park, Maryland, was the reading of a greeting from then U.S. president Jimmy Carter, read by then General Conference vice president Neal C. Wilson. A church member who worked at the White House had arranged for that greeting to be written and read. And that Annual Council was notable for another reason.

Just after announcing his retirement, Robert Pierson "shared some of his concerns," the minutes note. Here is a short excerpt:

"Brethren and sisters, this is not just another church—it is God's church!

Already there are subtle forces beginning to stir. Regrettably, there are those in the church who belittle the inspiration of the total Bible, who scorn the first 11 chapters of Genesis, who question the Spirit of Prophecy's short chronology of the age of the earth, and who subtly and not so subtly attack the Spirit of Prophecy.

"There are some who point to the reformers and contemporary theologians as a source and norm for Seventh-day Adventist doctrine. There are those who wish to forget the standards of the church we love. There are those who covet and would court the favor of the evangelicals; those who would throw off the mantle of a peculiar people; and those who would go the way of the secular, materialistic world.

"I appeal to you earnestly—don't let it happen! We are not Seventh-day Anglicans, not Seventh-day Lutherans—we are Seventh-day Adventists! This is God's last church with God's last message!"

God is looking for men and women with a burden for souls who love God's church and God's truth more than they love their lives, to see that this message under God goes through to the kingdom. The task ahead is not going to be easy. If I understand the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy correctly, ahead lies a time of trouble, a time of challenge such as this church and the world have never known before.

Years ago sailors had a saying: "Below 40 degrees latitude, there is no law. Below 50 degrees," the saying went, "there is no God." One of the greatest rescue missions we know of is Ernest Shackleton's journey from Elephant Island to South Georgia Island. It was all below 50 degrees. The oceans there are beyond rough, and a little group of men sailed 800 miles across the roughest seas on the planet in an open lifeboat seven meters (23 feet) long. They used rudimentary navigation equipment. They were looking for a dot in the vast Southern Ocean, and because their navigator, Frank Worsley, kept the little boat on course, they made it precisely to their destination.

Brethren and sisters, we simply must stay on course. Jesus is coming back soon. The church must not retreat, and it must not deviate from God's Word and God's commission. Let us, by God's grace, stay the course until Jesus returns.

[1] Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 8, p. 315.

[2] Ellen G. White, *Our Father Cares* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1991), p. 90.

John Bradshaw is president of It Is Written.

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We Serve the World

The Review and Herald Publishing Association continues its legacy and mission.

MELINDA WORDEN

The year 2025 marks not only the sixty-second General Conference Session of Seventh-day Adventists but also the 176-year anniversary of the Review and Herald Publishing Association (RHPA). During that time the RHPA has been publishing truth-filled materials, reaching many lives around the world for the Lord.

PARTNERS IN MISSION

In recent years our small, dedicated staff has worked closely with the Ellen G. White Estate, departments of the General Conference, and the church-owned publishing houses worldwide. The RHPA has continued its role as a publisher, adhering to the guidance left by Ellen White in her poignant words to the publishing houses: "Let it never be forgotten that these institutions are to cooperate with the ministry of the delegates of heaven. They are among the agencies represented by the angel flying 'in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come.' Revelation 14:6, 7."[1]

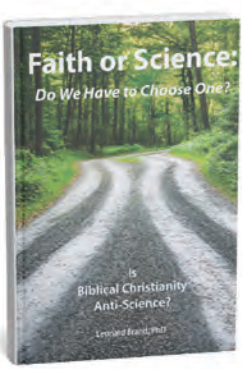


We are honored to be the official publisher for the Ellen G. White Estate. James and Ellen White founded the Review and Herald, with James serving as the first president and Ellen White being our most respected author. We assist the White Estate with agreements, licenses, and permissions for materials they hold copyrights for. Ellen White's writings are timeless and form a crucial part of our ministry and mission. A recent addition is the latest Ellen G. White devotional, *Living in the Light.*

SERVING THE GLOBAL CHURCH

As a General Conference institution, we continue to support the General Conference departments and fellow institutions by lending our expertise in publishing and printing for projects that benefit the world. Recently the Review and Herald has served as the publisher and/or consultant for several materials produced by the General Conference, including the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, *Back to the Bible* (part of the Back to the Altar initiative), the *Alive in Jesus* Sabbath School curriculum, and the Sharing Book and GLOW programs of the General Conference Publishing Department.

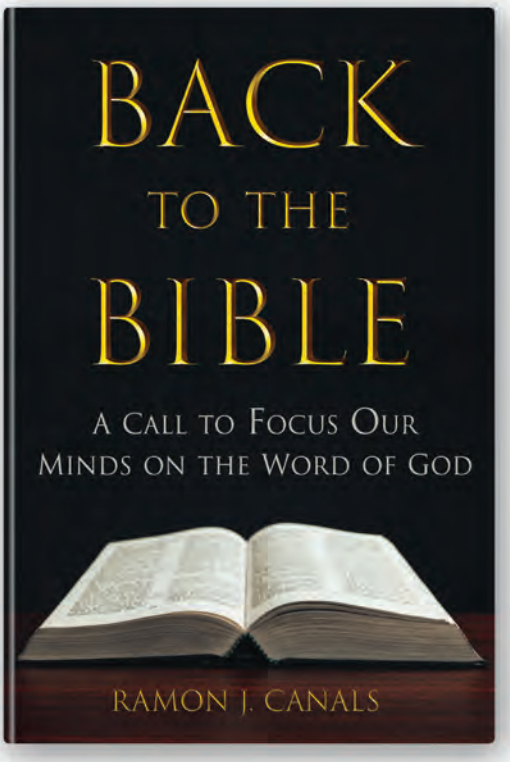
Understanding the similarities and differences between science and faith is the focus of a book we published this year with the Geoscience Research Institute. *Faith or Science: Do We Have to Choose?* was written by Leonard Brand, Ph.D. It offers key insights into how those with differing views on creation can still find common ground.



In 2024 Hope Channel/Hope Studios produced the movie *The Hopeful.* Hope Studios asked the RHPA to assist in producing a book sharing heartwarming stories about the Adventist pioneers featured in the movie. The result, *The Hopeful*, features stories from the lives of Ellen and James White, William Miller, Joseph Bates, Joshua Himes, Rachel Oakes Preston, J. N. Andrews, and his children, Charles and Mary.

MULTIPLYING THE MESSAGE

Following in the footsteps of the early missionary pioneers, we consider it a privilege to



work closely with our fellow publishing houses around the world. One of the ways we do this is by creating co-publishing licenses, which allow the material to be translated (or printed in English) and distributed in their territory. Once again, we find direction from Ellen G. White: "A far greater effort should be made to extend the circulation of our literature in all parts of the world. The warning must be given in all lands and to all peoples. Our books are to be translated and published in many different languages. We should multiply publications on our faith in English, German, French, Danish-Norwegian, Swedish, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, and many other tongues; and people of all nationalities should be enlightened and educated, that they, too, may join in the work."[2]

In 2024 we collaborated with the publishing house in Norway to copublish the English version of Daniel Pel's *Stories That Transform*, a book that offers fresh insight into the parables of Jesus.

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Maintaining the same mission and goals that the Review and Herald Publishing Association has upheld since the days of the early pioneers, "We Serve the World" remains as true today as it was when we first started!

These 176 years have witnessed many Review and Herald books flow from the presses or be downloaded through the fiber optic lines of the internet. Although many of our older titles haven't been readily accessible, we are now pleased to bring numerous older volumes back into print, thanks to advances in technology, including *Today Is Friday, The Lord Is My Shepherd, Unmasking the Spirits,* and *The Certainty of the Second Coming*. More titles can be found on our website, www.reviewandherald.com, as we continue to make additional books available.

Maintaining the same mission and goals that the Review and Herald Publishing Association has upheld since the days of the early pioneers, "We Serve the World" remains as true today as it was when we first started! We look forward to Christ's soon return, and until then, we will respond to the call "I Will Go" by publishing works that will prepare others for eternity.

"Let our publishing houses do all in their power to diffuse to the world the light of heaven. In every way possible call the attention of the people of every nation and tongue to those things that will direct their minds to the Book of books."[3]

[1] Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 7, pp. 139, 140.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 160.
[3] *Ibid.*

Melinda Worden serves as vice president for the Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Continuing the Teaching and Healing Ministry of Jesus

RICHARD H. HART

Loma Linda University Health serves as the flagship academic health sciences center of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Since its founding in 1905, it has sent out many medical missionaries. These alumni have played a significant role in establishing the church's clinics, hospitals, schools, and health systems in many parts of the world. Numerous influential Seventh-day Adventist hospitals were initially founded by graduates of Loma Linda University. In recent decades Loma Linda University has provided consulting services to help develop six Seventh-day Adventist medical schools in various countries around the world.

Today Loma Linda University graduates serve as missionaries and consultants through Adventist Health International and various projects with other church entities. From 2020 to 2025 more than 3,000 faculty, students, and staff embarked on mission trips to assist those in need. In partnership with Adventist Health International, Loma Linda University Health is directly involved with more than 50 Adventist mission hospitals and 100 clinics worldwide.

Loma Linda University Health is among the leading faith-based academic medical centers in the United States. It operates a university with eight professional schools, a network of six hospitals, and a 1,200-member physician practice group. The close working relationships between academic and clinical programs result in outstanding education and patient care.

Its researchers uncover groundbreaking approaches to nutrition, cancer, heart disease, neonatal development, stroke, and brain trauma, among other fields. The medical center and children's hospital are the only major trauma centers serving one fourth of California's landmass. In recent years Loma Linda University Health has received multiple awards for hospital safety, employee satisfaction, innovation, and being the top hospital of choice in its region.

FOCUS ON HEALTH

Loma Linda University Health has also played a crucial role in promoting the Seventh-day Adventist Church's message of healthy living globally. While church members were once seen as peculiar people for not smoking, eating meat, or drinking alcohol, modern science has confirmed the benefits of healthy living.

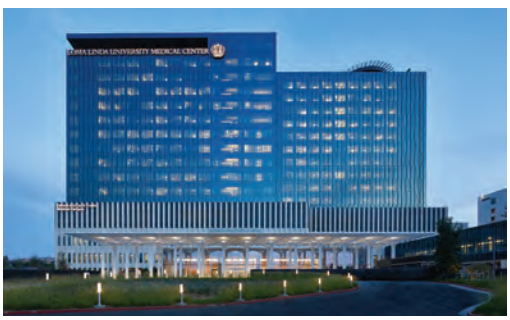
Loma Linda was recognized as one of the five original Blue Zones known for longevity and the only one in North America. The study of 96,000 church members at the School of Public Health received major funding from the U.S. National Institutes of Health and is regularly cited in journal articles and top-tier news outlets worldwide.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church operates more than 100 nursing schools globally, and Loma Linda University School of Nursing—the university's oldest school—has a legacy in many of those countries through nursing education and enhanced nursing practices.

In 2016 Loma Linda University Health opened its San Bernardino campus, which includes a community clinic for those who are medically underserved, together with San Manuel Gateway College. The college offers certificate training programs for high school graduates, providing them with career opportunities in health care and future opportunities for professional growth. The entire San Bernardino campus serves as a unique educational model, with physicians, medical res-







idents, health professional students, and San Manuel Gateway College students all serving patients together.

STRONGER TOGETHER

Loma Linda University Health is building on our recent capital campaign, which included the construction and opening of the Troesh Medical Campus, our 16-story flagship medical center. Our next goal for campus transformation is to achieve federal recognition as the first faith-based comprehensive cancer center. Through research and discovery our doctors are excited that new therapies will soon be available to treat cancer at the cellular level—innovations that are currently on the frontier of medicine but will become standard in the future.

The School of Nursing is expanding to address the urgent need for more nurses. This will double our number of graduates. The construction of a three-story addition will include larger classrooms, student collaboration and study space, and faculty-development space necessary to expand our teaching capacity.

Loma Linda University Health is among the leading faith-based academic medical centers in the United States.

Our children's hospital outpatient services will soon feature a new state-of-the-art outpatient pavilion, serving as a central hub for many of our children's health specialists and providing more convenience for patients and their families.

Plans are underway for a new university village, featuring more residence halls, additional marketplace options, and enhanced social facilities.

Loma Linda, Spanish for "beautiful hill," was founded by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1905 after the leaders purchased a hotel and transformed it into a sanitarium. Early church leaders took a significant risk, grounded in faith, to make the purchase with private funds.

In her dedicatory address for the Loma Linda Sanitarium in 1906, Seventh-day Adventist Church cofounder Ellen White stated that the institution was to make a major contribution to the work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church by becoming a training center "of the highest order." More than a century later the organization's legacy and involvement around the world validate her challenge in remarkable ways.

Within our global church we will continue the teaching and healing ministry of Jesus Christ, just as we have for more than a century. Our 18,000 employees and 4,400 students share this commitment to physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual wellness.

Richard H. Hart is president of Loma Linda University Health.

Large and Diverse

Learning from a church with many voices, languages, and ideas

STACI DAVENPORT


MARK FROELICH

Each morning my day here at the General Conference (GC) begins with breakfast in the hotel lobby, surrounded by delegates, family members, and guests from the East-Central Africa Division (ECD) who are also based at the hotel where I am staying. I have recognized Ethiopian Amharic being spoken in addition to several other languages that I didn't recognize. Many women wore beautiful high-end Africa-made fabrics, well-tailored into nice dresses. I'm an interdivision service employee (ISE) based in Chad, which is in the West-Central Africa Division (WAD), but I observed that some customs of dress for important meetings in Chad seem to be similar to those in some ECD countries. Other participants wore unique and contrasting styles apparently more specific to their region within ECD.

On the walk to the convention center each morning, and while waiting for the walk sign at crosswalks near my hotel, I often hear a variety of other languages. Groups of GC Session participants speaking Portuguese are based in a hotel next door to mine.

Walking down the long convention center hallway today, as every day, I was again surrounded by a current of people flowing toward the exhibition hall and Dome, many in Western business, church, or casual clothing, but some also in diverse cultural dress, again all speaking various languages.

While participating in business sessions as a delegate each day, I have listened to discussions on various issues from a wide diversity of perspectives. At times, to some delegates a particular item on the table seems small and straightforward to approve as written, while delegates from other divisions point out how crucial an amendment this part of the *Church Manual* or constitution and bylaws would be when applied in their particular field. As we discuss and vote on amendments to amendments to motions to amend, fellow delegates or chairpersons remind us of the need for efficiency to cover all of the business before us. During a lunch break, the *Church Manual* Committee met to discuss several items that had been referred back to the committee by the floor after concerns were raised from several divisions. Many delegates opted to join the discussion in the much smaller committee room to further discuss the spirit behind some of the changes to the *Manual* and how those might best be expressed in a way that would communicate effectively in different fields.

Our diversity within the church is a strength and a challenge. To incorporate views from such a large and diverse body is not easy or efficient. We have to exercise patience and deliberate curiosity about each other's perspectives to incorporate cultural differences, translation concerns, generational differences, and revisions for consistency and clarity into policies that are intended to be helpful in guiding the entire church body. Despite these challenges, the structure that we have allows us to continually grapple with what it means to be a global church. We have the opportunity to demonstrate unity in a world that becomes more and more divided and stridently oppositional along every possible dividing line,

not only in cross-cultural interactions but even within cultures, communities, and families. As we respectfully listen to each other and humbly adjust our own positions, we demonstrate what it really means to be disciples of Jesus. He told us that His disciples would be defined by love for one another. Sometimes we see this in small group discussions as we had today on the floor. Sometimes we see it in such committee meetings as the *Church Manual* Committee. Sometimes we struggle to demonstrate love by being patient with one another during large floor discussions, especially if the business session is running late into lunch or dinner or if those of us who are joining this process for the first time stumble over procedural rules of order.

In this context I am also reminded that time away from the host division where I normally serve does not mean a break from the spiritual battlefield. God is working in every part of the world, and the opposing spiritual forces are also engaging in conflict all over the world. The great controversy plays out even here at our General Conference Session, just as it does in each local church, each family, and each life, as we choose to side with Jesus or choose to side with His foes each day, choosing loving patience or selfish pride in each decision and interaction.

I've been thinking this week about some of Ellen White's statements about the General Conference in session. "God has ordained that the representatives of His church from all parts of the earth, when assembled in a General Conference, shall have authority. The error that some are in danger of committing is in giving to the mind and judgment of one man, or of a small group of men, the full measure of authority and influence that God has vested in His church, in the judgment and voice of the General Conference assembled to plan for the prosperity and advancement of His work" (*Gospel Workers*, p. 490).



MARK FROELICH

It's to this huge, sometimes awkwardly large and diverse, group that God has granted the highest ecclesiastical authority for the Adventist Church.

We might be tempted to think that the highest authority is vested in a small committee or maybe in some higher elected church office. Sometimes we even hear delegates on the floor state this idea—that a smaller committee has decided or the president has spoken, so who are we to question or add more to the discussion. However, it's to this huge, sometimes awkwardly large and diverse, group that God has granted the highest ecclesiastical authority for the Adventist Church. What a remarkable concept and responsibility! What an opportunity for this body to show our care for each other—for members across the world in places that each of us alone can't understand or imagine. What an opportunity to shine as examples of God's love in a dark and divided world! As we allow the Holy Spirit to work in us, we have the privilege of collectively living out the truth: our identity as disciples of Jesus and our realization of His saving love for us develops unity even in our vast diversity.

Staci Davenport is a graduate of Loma Linda University School of Medicine as a deferred mission appointee, currently serving at Béré Adventist Hospital in Chad, Africa, since 2018.

Serving the Church Through Biblical Scholarship

ELIAS BRASIL DE SOUZA

Founded in 1975, the Biblical Research Institute (BRI) has served the General Conference (GC) and the world church for 50 years. The BRI exists to explore biblical truth, promote the study and practice of Seventh-day Adventist theology and lifestyle, and provide theological expertise and resources for the GC administration and the world church. It identifies areas of doctrinal and theological concern, encourages and facilitates dialogue within the Adventist theological community, and fosters unity in doctrine and the study of Scripture throughout the world church.

The BRI also coordinates the efforts of the Biblical Research Institute Committee (BRICOM), a group of about 50 theologians and administrators from various regions of the world. Important work on ethics and lifestyle issues is carried out by the Biblical Research Institute Ethics Committee (BRIEC), which consists of about 10 scholars providing biblically based guidance on urgent ethical and cultural challenges. Additionally, the BRI collaborates with division-level Biblical Research Committees (BRCs).

For areas requiring deeper biblical research, the BRI collaborates with other Adventist theologians and scholars to enhance the understanding and expression of biblical truth. When challenges to Adventist doctrine or practice arise, the BRI helps address these challenges by strengthening theological unity and fostering a deeper grasp of Scripture. It tackles biblical, theological, and ethical issues through both oral presentations and written materials. The BRI also serves in an advisory role to church leaders regarding biblical interpretation, doctrine, and theological trends. It provides theological advice on resources produced by the GC departments and services and plays a significant role in collaborating with the Geoscience Research Institute through the Faith and Science Council.

BRI's quarterly newsletter, *Reflections*, is published digitally four times a year and is available through a free subscription. It offers articles and book reviews on a wide range of theological and practical topics, aiming to inform pastors and church leaders worldwide about current trends and essential theological questions. BRI scholars serve on several GC committees, are invited to lecture at international Bible conferences, speak at major academic events at Adventist universities across the globe, and have made contributions to theological education and ministerial formation by teaching courses at the master's and doctoral levels in educational programs at Adventist institutions.

Since the last BRI report in 2022, several significant projects and initiatives have been completed. One of the most important initiatives, the Biblical Theological Retreat (BTR), stands out as a unique project aimed at theological education. It was designed to inspire and support theology and religion professors in their mission to train pastors for service in the church. Approximately 500 theological educators from around the world have participated in the BTRs, representing most world divisions and General Conference institutions. The five-day program addressed topics related to Seventh-day Adventist fundamental beliefs, identity, and mission. To support underserved regions, electronic resources including Ellen G. White writings and Seventh-day Adventist materials have been distributed to educators, particularly those from areas with limited access.

Recognizing the importance of world communication and social media, the BRI has enhanced its digital presence through active accounts on Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and YouTube. BRI scholars have created theological and doctrinal content for YouTube and other digital platforms. Most BRI publications are also available in digital formats (e.g., Logos Bible Software, Kindle), increasing their global accessibility. The BRI website has also been redesigned and will be accessible in multiple languages.



One major BRI project is the Seventh-day Adventist International Biblical-Theological Dictionary, which is already available online. This dictionary will include a wide range of biblical and theological terms from an Adventist perspective. Although it is still in progress, the first 1,500 entries are already accessible.

Some of the lasting contributions of the BRI are its publications, which assist the church, as well as its administrative and theological leaders and pastors in addressing the pressing questions posed by culture, society, and the academic world. During its 50 years of service, the BRI has produced numerous publications, including the seven-volume landmark work on Daniel, Revelation, and the sanctuary (DARCOM Series); the *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*; a three-volume series on marriage, sexuality, and the family; an important work on the sanctuary; two major volumes addressing the Sabbath in the Old and New Testaments; and a three-volume work on biblical interpretation, including the volume *Biblical Hermeneutics: An Adventist Approach,* which was produced at the request of the 2015 GC Session.

During the past three years BRI researchers and collaborating Adventist scholars have engaged in several significant projects. To address the questions raised regarding the doctrine of the Trinity, the BRI has produced a two-volume work: the first volume, *Revisiting the Trinity,* thoroughly examines biblical, theological, and historical matters in a scholarly manner, while the second, *Exploring the Trinity*, provides concise answers to 62 questions on this crucial doctrine. In response to recent developments in technology, bioethics, and AI, the BRI, through its Ethics Committee, has published *Technology, Ethics, and the Future*, which offers biblical guidance on the ethical implications of technology and related fields. Acknowledging the church's ongoing need for clarity on human sexuality, the BRI has also published *Theology of Flesh and Bones,* a volume dedicated to the theology of the body, providing a solid biblical framework for this critical area.

Two additional publications have been completed. *Sola Scriptura: Authority, Reliability, and Relevance of the Bible* addresses questions regarding biblical authority, inspiration, canon, and related topics for a lay readership. The other publication, *A Legacy of Theological Scholarship,* provides a history of the BRI itself, chronicling its intertwined journey with the development of Seventh-day Adventist scholarship and its dedication to preserving, defending, and promoting biblical truth.

On behalf of the BRI team I wish to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of our fellow scholars; Artur Stele, who, as chair of BRICOM, has provided invaluable guidance and advice; and for the support and encouragement of Pastor Ted Wilson. Finally, our utmost gratitude belongs to the Lord for giving our team the wisdom, persistence, and strength to pursue such vital projects. Every aspect of the work carried out by the BRI ultimately aims to uphold the authority of God's Word—the Bible—and to bring honor to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

For more information, please visit the BRI website: www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org.

Elias Brasil de Souza is field secretary of the General Conference and director of the Biblical Research Institute.

Streams of Light . . . Round the World

JUSTIN KIM

The year was 1848. Ellen White received a vision she recounts in *Life Sketches*: "After coming out of vision, I said to my husband: 'I have a message for you. You must begin to print a little paper and send it out to the people. Let it be small at first; but as the people read, they will send you means with which to print, and it will be a success from the first. From this small beginning it was shown to me to be like streams of light that went clear round the world.' "[1]

A year later a publication commenced that would predate the founding of the Adventist Church, the organization of the General Conference, and every other ministry related to the denomination. Eventually involving such Adventist household names as James White, Uriah Smith, John N. Andrews, and A. T. Jones, this little sheet of six by nine inches originally titled *The Present Truth* would later become a publication to millions around the world.

Though uneducated, inexperienced, and without financial support, James and Ellen, through sacrifice and commitment, advanced the paper with God's guidance and sustenance. The name morphed from *The Present Truth* and other iterations to eventually become *Adventist Review*. Today it is one of the oldest Christian publications in the United States, continuously published since 1849. In July 2024 this divinely inspired ministry celebrated 175 years of service.

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

After 11 issues of *The Present Truth* and five issues of *The Advent Review* in 1849 and 1850, James White reorganized the two publications to become the *Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*. Now, after 20 years of the international circulation of *Adventist World* and the 175 year legacy of *Adventist Review*, history will repeat itself. A new publication under the name *Adventist Review* will continue while bringing the best of *Adventist World*: its internationality, its global reach to millions of readers, and its accessibility in numerous languages and formats.

This updated publication will have a new logo and visual identity that takes its cue from one of the past nameplates of the *Adventist Review*. The "R" symbol pays homage to the ministry's prophetic past but also refers to its more familiar household name as just the "*Review*." It will retain the content style of the *Adventist Review* while having the same trim size and number of pages as *Adventist World*.

This united publication will reflect the mission, theology, and responsibility of a Seventh-day Adventist. Our mission is: To create Bible-based content, both print and digital, to unite Seventh-day Adventists, deepen their historical faith, and strengthen their unique identity and responsibility to prepare the world for the second coming of Christ. Our vision is: To prepare a people. The new format will make it easier to share, print, and distribute globally—delivering inspiring, Christ-centered content across cultures and continents.

From evangelistic material the *Review* has pivoted to an emphasis on discipleship and revivalistic materials, helping readers' biblical understanding of the times, showcasing the Adventist perspective on various issues, and underscoring the need for evangelistic witness to the world. The format will be simple, without making the content simplistic, in order to communicate the latest, balanced, Christ-focused, mission-relevant, and church-passionate content.

ADAPTING FOR THE TIMES

Pivoting also to a digital-first mode, the ministry will publish more articles and content online than in print, as well as house new revivalistic video, audio, and written material. The news division has and will continue to provide robust coverage and commentary of all things happening in the Advent movement around the world. *KidsView* magazine continues to be a popular and sought-after publication for Adventist elementary school students, as well as subscribers.

The website adventistreview.org has been newly developed, future-proofed, and optimized. Each day brings new feature articles and news content. This major update allows a response in real time to international crises, natural disasters, and breaking news.



Recently *Adventist Review* coordinated with division leadership to aid in digital and print distribution throughout the world. Since then, we have seen fruits from division collaboration. The Southern Asia-Pacific Division helped with digital awareness and increased sign-ups to new digital products. The Chinese Union is translating the publication into Mandarin Chinese and assisting with digital distribution to the Chinese diaspora worldwide. The East-Central Africa Division has supported digital content for Swahili readers on WhatsApp. This summer, we are launching our English and Spanish content on WhatsApp, with plans to eventually branch out to French and other languages.. The South American Division publishing houses will freely distribute the print publication and release featured online articles from *Adventist Review* through social media. More digital platforms have been secured through the Sabbath School app and the 7Me app on both Apple and Android platforms.

English **Spanish** **Swahili**

CONTENT CREATION

There are new columns, such as Gerald and Chantal Klingbeil's Transitions; The Pioneering Pastor, by Shane Anderson; actual global missionaries in the field writing for Beyond Borders; and many more. Continuing columns include Cliff's Edge, by Cliff Goldstein; Reimagining Faith, by Shawn Brace; Q&A's with Family Ministries and Biblical Research Institute scholars; and others. In addition, Drs. Zeno Charles-Marcel and Peter Landless will continue their well-loved column on health topics.

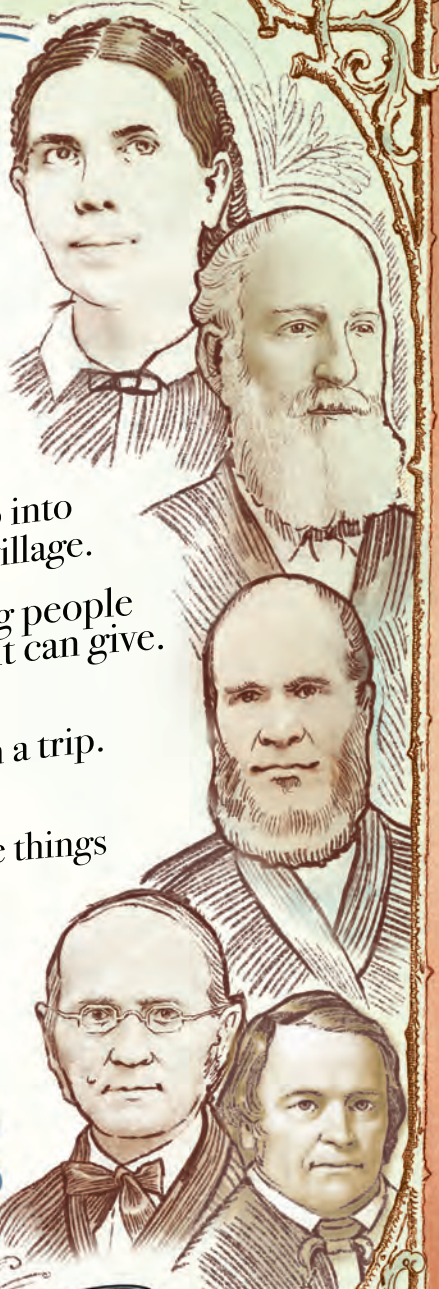
The pillars of Adventist theology have been central to the *Adventist Review* since its early editors wrote passionately about the sanctuary, the Sabbath, the Second Coming, salvation, and the state of the dead. To articulate, defend, and deepen these topics and others such as righteousness by faith, the three angels' messages, and Bible prophecy, two new theology sections have debuted: Discipleship of the Mind, through the writings of John Peckham; and Sabbath School Reflections, designed to aid in the weekly study of the *Adult Bible Study Guide*.

In July 2025 *Adventist Review* will continue to be the church paper of record for things related to the General Conference Session. News, features, photos, devotions, sermons, videos, mission reports, interviews, transcripts, new leadership appointments, and significant church decisions will be made available through our website and session *Bulletins*. Adventists around the world will be better aware of and passionate for the mission, challenges, and breadth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

[1] Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1915), p. 125.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 136.

ADVENTIST HERITAGE MINISTRIES



How much do you and your family know about the Adventist pioneers?

Ever wonder about their passions and personal lives?

Relive their adventures with God and people of their times.

In several U.S. states you can step into their lives via their homes and a village.

Time is short. We and our young people need the inspiration such a visit can give.

AHM invites you to first visit adventistheritage.org and plan a trip. Then come!

God will speak to you through the things you see and hear and touch.

Experience our Seventh-day Adventist roots for yourself!

ADVENTIST HERITAGE MINISTRIES



DAVID B. SHERWIN

Front row, L to R: David Sherwin, Merle Poirier, Shawn Boonstra, Justin Kim, Sikhu Daco, Greg Scott, Ellen Musselman, Jane Sherwin; Second row, L to R: James Cavil, Ida Cavil, Marvene Baptiste, Beth Thomas, Jean Boonstra; Third row, L to R: Jamica Armstrong, Enno Mueller, Felix Ortiz, Daniel Bruneau, Marcos Paseggi, Becky St. Clair, Brett Meliti, Sharon Tennyson, Kim Brown; Back row, L to R: Brandon Armstrong, Nick Lindsay, Jonathan Walter, Jarrod Stackelroth, Josef Kissinger, Mark Froelich, Christina Collard, James Bokovoy

Your *Adventist Review* Team

The passionate people who keep you in the loop each day

SHAWN BOONSTRA

If you're here in St. Louis, you see a brand-new magazine—a daily bulletin—landing in the Dome every single day. At 56 pages, it rises well above the status of flyer or pamphlet. It's a full-featured, full-color periodical that both journals the business of the church and brings to life the otherwise-unseen personal experiences that take place at GC Session.

It is anything but automatic. It is a miracle of publishing that has been going on as long as General Conference sessions themselves, and it takes an army of dedicated writers, photographers, videographers, editors, and support staff to make it happen. The *Adventist Review* team gathers each day for a brief worship and to review what must happen in the next 10 to 12 hours. For the rest of the day they will encounter each other only like ships passing in the night, because there is so much to do. Delegates and attendees will see these team members flitting about the convention center, hunting down the stories that best reflect the experiences of the session and the work of the world church.

Not all who help are on the payroll of *Adventist Review,* either. Many are passionate contractors and volunteers who see the importance of keeping the process moving forward each day. The *Adventist Review,* after all, is the publication of record for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and what is chronicled each day will really matter to the church of tomorrow. The daily publication, which serves as a much-loved souvenir for many global delegates, also provides an opportunity to future generations to witness the growth, the passion, and the forward momentum of their church.

In addition to the daily print magazine, they produce online blogs and feature stories. The tireless team, pictured above, is committed to making sure that you can see and understand your church clearly.

Eyes Growing Dim

It is my first GC Session wearing reading glasses. This side of Paradise, there's no turning back.

MARCOS PASEGGI

I still remember when the ophthalmologist came back with the results of my eye checkup many years ago.

"Is everything OK, Doc?" I asked him.

"Indeed," he said. "In fact, I have a special request about your results. Would you allow me to show your corneal test in our weekly case studies discussion?"

"Of course, Doc. But why?"

"Well, your cornea is the widest I have ever seen! Your vision is perfect. It's out of the ordinary," he replied, as he used terms such as "visual acuity" and "sharpness of eyesight."

"I'll take that!" I said with a broad smile as I left his office. *Exceptional eyes! Who would have thought? An out-of-this-world vision!*

END OF A RIDE

Fast-forward a couple of decades and thousands of hours later of screen time in offices, event halls, planes, and hotels of all types and with all kinds of light fixtures. In 2025 it would be hard to serve in the *Adventist Review* newsroom during the sixty-second General Conference (GC) Session in St. Louis, Missouri, United States, without my reading glasses.

My 20/20 vision was exceptional while it lasted. Friends and acquaintances confirm that I have outlasted them all, in some cases for years. Still, the time has come when I find it hard to read magazines, labels, and texts without some magnifying help.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

Every GC Session includes ecstatic welcomes and fond farewells; the sixty-second session is no exception. Seasoned leaders who have excelled in their positions age and, sometimes with declining health or what they believe are more exciting life projects, they decide it's time to retire. A fresher, often younger generation with redoubled stamina and novel ideas is called to replace them. Some seem to be ready, some don't. Still, they embrace the call and pledge to contribute to the same goal.

Older leaders leave with a trove of experiences, expertise, and the wisdom of many battles. Novel leaders commit to serve as they learn from them, try to do it better with the Spirit's help, and keep moving God's church forward.

SO LATE SO SOON

Chatting with some of those new retirees, I often hear them sharing similar thoughts. "It went so fast!" they say. "There was a time when I thought I would never get old. And yet, here I am. Ready to call it quits. Not wanting to commute anymore. Tired of meetings and work trips. With increasing health challenges and a more pressing need to rest."

Retirees come back to GC Session to meet old acquaintances and reminisce. Last time we saw them, they were still going strong. Now, some of them walk with the help of family, friends, or a cane, or ride an electric wheelchair. Some of them seem slower, frailer, and weaker by the day.

As Dr. Seuss put it: "How did it get so late so soon?"

DAILY RENEWAL

When facing the challenges of ministry and the unavoidable passing of time, the apostle Paul didn't deny or rant about it. Instead he made an unambiguous call to "not lose heart" (2 Cor. 4:16). Why? Because, he wrote, "even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day" (verse 16). In the context of the blessed hope, our afflictions are "light" and "for a moment," as we "do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (verses 17, 18).

As it turns out, my service to God's church has an expiration date. One day—hopefully in a distant future—I might not be able to keep making a tangible contribution to the organized church. But praise be to God, my reading glasses are just temporary. I am looking forward to heavenly vision.



On Tuesday Manuel López and his family unexpectedly reunited with Karen Godfrey, who was part of the project building the orphanage in which he grew up.

JULIE Z. LEE

An Unexpected Reunion

A mission comes full circle at the General Conference Session

BECKY ST. CLAIR

Tuesday felt like any other day. Karen Godfrey, vice president for advancement for Maranatha Volunteers International, was at the General Conference (GC) Session's exhibit hall, smiling, talking, and answering questions about Maranatha. On Tuesday Godfrey's colleague brought a photo to her.

"The gentleman in the photo had just stopped by the booth, and he'd grown up in a Maranatha-built orphanage in El Salvador," Godfrey shares. "When she told me his name was Manuel, I suddenly knew exactly whom she was talking about. It was Manuelito!"

In the mid-1990s Godfrey was involved with a Maranatha building project: a new home for 13 orphans living in a too-small house. At the time, no out-of-country adoptions were allowed in El Salvador, so Maranatha was working with local entities to build them a larger space.

"Very soon after we started the project, a little boy about 2 years old arrived," Godfrey remembers. "His name was Manuelito, and he was almost immediately everyone's favorite. He was active and fun and just happy all the time."

When the project was finished, Godfrey never heard anything about the orphans in El Salvador. Until Tuesday, when Manuelito appeared at the Maranatha exhibit with his wife and daughter.

"It was just so fun and also emotional to see him again," Godfrey says, grinning. "Over the years you think about kids like him and wonder how they're doing and where they are now, but you almost never find out."

Manuel López—Manuelito to those who know him—is the fifth of nine brothers. Of the nine, he is the only one to have finished high school, completed college, and developed a relationship with Jesus.

"When I was little, the orphanage instilled in me a desire to help other people," Manuelito says through a translator. "The impact that institution had on my life is simply unbelievable. Sometimes I try to imagine how my life would be had I not arrived at that place, and I see that God really set me apart. I work for the church, I preach, and I'm serving the Lord. I really believe God led me to what I do."

Manuelito is now a husband and father, working for the Honduras Union Mission, in charge of multimedia. He was also able to share information about another child who grew up in the orphanage with him, letting Godfrey know she was working at an Adventist university in Mexico, and is happily married. He also shared that the group has been talking about a reunion at the site where the orphanage (which has since been closed) used to be—a family reunion back home.

For Godfrey and the Maranatha team, this unexpected reunion was more than just a heartwarming moment—it was a rare glimpse into the long-term impact of their ministry. The GC Session, with its global draw and shared mission, created the one space where such a meeting could happen.

"You do this work because you believe in the mission," Godfrey reflects. "But most of the time, you're planting seeds and never get to see what grows from them. This week we got to see the fruit."

In a crowded convention center thousands of miles from El Salvador, the story that began with a construction project three decades ago found its continuation. And for a ministry built on building futures, there's no greater gift than witnessing one come full circle.

SESSION GALLERY



JOSEF KISSINGER



JAMES BOKOVOY



Audrey Andersson, General Conference vice president, chairs one of the business sessions. MARK FROELICH



Participants from the Ukrainian Union Conference during their report JOSEF KISSINGER



JOSEF KISSINGER



DAVID B. SHERWIN



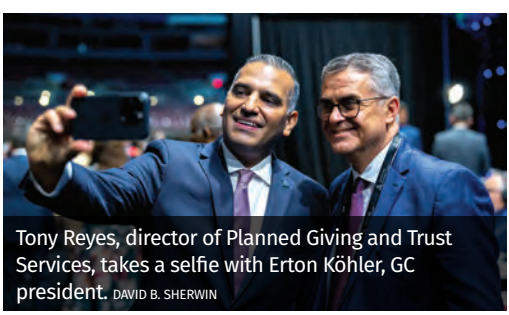
Mike Ryan preached a sermon completely from memory and taken only from Scripture. MARK FROELICH



DAVID B. SHERWIN



Twelve Gates Choir, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division JAMES BOKOVOY



Tony Reyes, director of Planned Giving and Trust Services, takes a selfie with Erton Köhler, GC president. DAVID B. SHERWIN

ALL PHOTOS © AR

God Is in Control. Always.

When an expected trip to General Conference Session doesn't happen.

NOMPILO CHILEMBO



NOMPILO CHILEMBO

Last year I received my invitation to attend the General Conference (GC) Session in person—a moment I had only ever dreamt about. Being selected as a delegate felt like an honor and a calling. It was more than just attending a meeting: it was about being part of the decision-making process that helps shape our global church. I imagined myself walking the halls of the convention center, meeting fellow believers from around the world, joining in song and prayer, and engaging in discussions that would mold the future of our community as Adventists. I imagined it would be a little taste of heaven, being in one space with fellow believers from across the globe. Despite all my excitement and preparation, however, I was denied a visa to the United States. Not once, but twice.

When I got the news, I felt a mixture of disappointment, confusion, and even a little heartbreak. It felt as if the door to this sacred opportunity had been shut right in front of me. I found myself asking God, "Why?" I thought I was going to be there—not just for the experience, but to fulfill a duty. I had hoped to sit in that hall, raise my voice in the meetings, and represent the people who entrusted me with that responsibility. Instead, I found myself on the other side of a screen, watching it all unfold from home.

And yet, as the days passed and I tuned in to the livestream, something deeper began to stir in my heart. In the stillness of my living room, with my Bible in one hand and my notepad in the other, I was reminded of a truth I've always known—but sometimes forget when my plans don't go my way: God is in control. Always.

I had my plans. I had my expectations. I even had my itinerary. But God had something else in mind. Maybe it was for my own good. Maybe for reasons I'll never fully understand. But what I do know is this: "All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

This verse echoes in my mind as I watch the GC Session from home. It isn't the experience I envisioned, but it's still deeply meaningful. I find myself listening more intently, praying more fer-

vently, and reflecting more deeply than I might have if I had been in the thick of the conference rush. I guess God sometimes removes us from the crowd so He can speak to us in the quiet.

Being a delegate means being part of something much bigger than yourself. It's a role of service, of discernment, and of prayer. Delegates carry the weight of their local church communities and help make decisions that affect the entire global church body—on matters of doctrine, policy, leadership, and mission strategy. It's not a position of power but of responsibility.

So when I was invited, I felt a deep sense of mission. Not making it in person didn't take that sense of calling away. And as I watch from afar, I have come to realize that even though my physical voice isn't in the room, my prayers still are. My heart is still in tune with what's happening. My faith, my convictions, and my love for this church don't need a badge or a seat in the auditorium to be valid. And I know I'm not alone. Many other delegates from around the world faced the same challenges—visa denials, travel restrictions, health issues. But that hasn't stopped God's work.

Despite not being there physically, I feel connected. The GC Session is not just about being in one place—it's about being united in the Spirit. Across time zones and cultures I have joined thousands of others tuning in from home. The worship, the testimonies, the reports of mission and growth—they reach us. They inspire us. They remind us that the church is alive and moving forward, even when we can't be physically together.

As the delegates debate and vote on important matters, I am reminded that the outcomes are not just in human hands—they are guided by God. Even in moments of disagreement or uncertainty, I have peace knowing that God is still leading His church. He has brought us through crises, theological storms, and cultural shifts—and He will continue to do so.

Watching from home has given me a chance to intercede in prayer more than I might have at the actual venue. Each session becomes an opportunity to pray: "Lord, guide this vote. Give wisdom. Protect unity. Let Your will be done." It's comforting to know that at the end of the day, no matter how much debate happens, Jesus remains the head of the church. Human voices might differ, but His voice always brings clarity and peace.

It's not a position of power but of responsibility.

If you're reading this and you, too, couldn't make it to the GC Session—whether as a delegate, a visitor, or simply a member hoping to experience it all in person—I want to say this to you: You are not left out. You are not forgotten.

You are still part of the global family. Your prayers, your support, your faith—it all contributes to the health and strength of this body of believers. Whether in a pew, a prayer group, a dorm room, or a small living room like mine, we are all the church. And God sees every one of us.

I don't know what opportunities lie ahead. I don't know if I'll get the chance to be a delegate again. But I do know this: Wherever God places me, whether on a platform or behind a screen, I will trust Him.

Sometimes, missing out is actually being positioned for something greater. Sometimes, delays are divine. And sometimes, watching from afar gives you a clearer view of what really matters.

So, I'm grateful—for the invitation, even though I couldn't go. I'm grateful for the experience of watching from home. And I'm especially grateful for the reminder that God's plans are never hindered by man's systems.

Whether you were there in person or joined from a distance, I pray that you felt God's presence and heard His voice. Because at the end of the day, that's what matters most.

Nompilo Chilembo is a delegate from Zimbabwe who failed to attend the session because of visa issues.

"I commend unto you this Book."



DWAIN ESMOND BY DAVID B. SHERWIN

In early 1845, while in vision, Ellen Harmon, later Ellen White, held up this large family Bible on extended arm for 20-30 minutes. This remarkable event aptly represented her work—which was to uphold and point to the Bible in her prophetic work. Her writings are filled with Scripture and point to Scripture.

Her first tract emphasized: "I recommend to you, dear reader, the Word of God as the rule of your faith and practice. By that Word we are to be judged. God has, in that Word, promised to give visions in the '*last days*'; not for a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of His people, and to correct those who err from Bible truth" (*Early Writings*, p. 78).

Her last communication to the assembled General Conference Session in 1909 was to hold up her Bible and say, "Brethren and sisters, I commend unto you this Book" (*The Spirit of Prophecy in the Advent Movement*, p. 30). This Bible, along with more about Ellen White's ministry, will be featured during the Friday evening devotional.



Pinceladas de esperanza y reflexión sobre el mensaje divino

La Biblia devocional con comentarios del Pr. Alejandro Bullón llega para acompañar al hermano de iglesia, para ayudar al predicador y para acercar a cualquier persona que busque a Dios.
Contiene 1.189 comentarios, uno para cada capítulo de la Biblia, y 5 propuestas para el año bíblico.

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There are 1,189 devotional notes, one for each Bible chapter, and 5 Bible reading plans to help you read the Bible in one year.

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ZAWUDE IS HOPE

HANNAH DREWIECK

HOPE CHANNEL
EVENING DEVOTIONAL
MESSAGE PRESENTED
THURSDAY, JULY 10, 2025

Hope moves through people. It spreads from one heart to another, carried in conversations, shared in homes, and lived out in everyday choices. That's what happened in a village in Ethiopia, where one man's unexpected encounter became the beginning of something much bigger.

Zawude was walking to a nearby village when heavy rain forced him to stop and seek shelter. He stepped inside a stranger's home, where a television was playing. Hope Channel was on.

What he heard caught his attention. The teaching felt different—clear, compelling, rooted in the Bible. "They were teaching the truth," he said. "And it entered my heart."



This is the power of hope shared. One message sparked a ripple.



He asked about the church. They told him it was called "Seventh-day Adventist"—a name he had never heard before. But he wanted to know more. He returned home and gathered eight others, and together they went to visit the church.

That was just the beginning.

Zawude and his wife, Zenebu, began worshipping regularly. Others followed. A group of 50 soon grew to more than 100. "Before, we didn't know any verses," Zawude said. "We did not understand the Bible. And I informed the church members about Hope Channel."

All across Ethiopia similar stories are unfolding. In one town a man searching through spiritual programs paused when he heard Hope Channel teaching about the Sabbath. That moment helped him understand the gospel more clearly than ever before. In another area a church committee studied what they were seeing and came to a united decision: they had been missing something essential, and they were ready to embrace the full truth.

Zawude's own life began to shift in practical ways. He found meaningful work. His home was more peaceful. His faith shaped how he lived. He started leading his family with intention and clarity.



This is the power of hope shared. One message sparked a ripple. One conversation turned into a movement—one step toward reaching 1 billion people with the message of eternal hope.

We are all hope. And hope starts here.

Hannah Drewieck is the communication coordinator for Hope Channel International.

SOUTHERN AFRICA-INDIAN OCEAN DIVISION REPORT

Celebrating Mission, Growth, and Leadership



The Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division (SID) is a vibrant and expansive territory encompassing 23 countries across southern Africa and the islands of the Indian and Atlantic oceans. Today SID stands not only as one of the fastest-growing regions of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church but also as the second-largest division, with more than 4.3 million baptized members.

We believe that this remarkable growth is no coincidence. It is the fruit of intentional, coordinated efforts by pastors, lay leaders, and members, all responding to the global call of Tell The World—I Will Go, with a focus on Total Member Involvement. Every church, every member, every department, has united in a shared mission: to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

This report highlights the period from July 2022 to April 2025, focusing on three core strategic priorities that have shaped our journey: mission and evangelism, spiritual growth, and leadership development.

From January 2022 to April 2025 the SID recorded a total of 868,111 baptisms. As of December 31, 2024, church membership across the division exceeded 4.3 million. Of this number, 3.3 million members (approximately 76 percent) have been officially registered in the Adventist Church Management System (ACMS), a reflection of the division's unwavering commitment to discipling new believers, nurturing existing members, and reclaiming those who may have drifted away.

In support of the global church's strategic evangelism focus, SID launched Impact SID, a bold and ambitious division-wide evangelistic initiative that began in 2023 and will continue through 2030. This initiative aims to systematically engage every union and attached field within the division through coordinated evangelistic campaigns, empowering pastors, lay members, and institutions to share the gospel in word and action.

HARRINGTON SIMUI AKOMBWA
PRESIDENT



CHRIST OUR HOPE

Botswana was the first territory to be impacted, with evangelistic meetings held in Francistown and Gaborone. Thirty evangelism sites came alive, supported by a vibrant mix of pastors and lay preachers. Running under the theme "Christ Our Hope," hundreds of people attended the evening evangelism meetings, and the Botswana Union Conference welcomed the preachers with open arms.

A heart-stirring highlight was the timely inclusive outreach by Possibility Ministries. A campaign site for individuals with special needs was conducted in Francistown. The government's endorsement of this initiative affirmed the ministry's growing impact. By the end of the campaign, 234 individuals were baptized, among them five special needs brothers and sisters. One elderly woman, in a moving speech during her baptismal service, tearfully declared that it is never too late to accept Jesus as your personal Savior.

A notable highlight in spiritual leadership was the visit by General Conference treasurer Paul Douglas to Kanye Adventist Mission Hospital in Botswana, where he conducted an evangelistic meeting. After the weeklong evangelism campaign 120 people were baptized.

MOUNTAINS OF TRANSFORMATION

Impact South Africa unfolded in Cape Town and its surroundings. More than 50 evangelism sites were established across the Western Cape, with overwhelming participation from local and regional leaders. In Lesotho, also known as the Mountain Kingdom, Zimbabwe Central Union Conference leaders participated in the campaign, resulting in 34 baptisms. In total, 428 individuals have been baptized across the Southern Africa Union Conference as a result of this initiative.

THE GOSPEL IN ROYAL COURTS

The country of Eswatini witnessed a royal turning point. During General Conference president Ted Wilson's visit to the royal family, meaningful spiritual conversations took place. These moments of connection eventually led to Prince Bandzile choosing to be baptized. As a result of the prince's powerful testimony, further interest in the royal courts was sparked, and four royal warriors who had engaged in Bible studies also committed to Christ through baptism. The baptism served as a symbol of how intentional outreach and genuine connection can open doors to hearts even among the royals of society, demonstrating how spiritual connections transcend cultural thresholds.



Hearing-impaired members rejoice in their opportunities to serve.



Harrington Akombwa, division president, baptizes Prince Bandzile (left).

A NATION REVIVED

In 2024 Zambia became the center of one of the largest and most impactful evangelism campaigns in the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division. Both the Southern and Northern Zambia union conferences joined forces, resulting in more than 2,000 evangelism sites mobilizing pastors and lay evangelists from across the division. Church members conducted health expos, community service projects, and acts of compassion during the day, while Bible studies and evangelistic meetings were held each evening. The mission was wholistic, addressing both spiritual and physical needs, in line with Christ's method of His ministry of love and compassion.

During the initial phase 133,000 people were baptized, and the number continues to grow. A moving moment came from Mukobeko Maximum Prison where nightly meetings were held. Hope blossomed behind bars as 300 inmates surrendered to Christ. SID also installed Hope Channel satellite dishes, decoders, and TV screens, ensuring ongoing spiritual nourishment behind bars.

MEDIA MINISTRY

The power of media was evident throughout the campaign. In Kitwe division vice president Jongimpi Papu preached at a live broadcasting site at Edgar Chagwa Lungu Mall, while Tony Nyirenda, president of Malawi Union Conference, led a second broadcast from Jacaranda Adventist Church in Lusaka. Together these broadcasts reached more than 110,000 viewers through Hope Channel Zambia and various digital platforms. One standout testimony came from Brother Cornelius, who after watching the campaign on Hope Channel traveled hundreds of miles from Ndola to Lusaka to be baptized, demonstrating the far-reaching impact of media ministry.

IMPACT IOUC: A UNITED ISLANDS VISION

The launch of Impact Indian Ocean Union Conference (IOUC) 2025 took place in Antananarivo, in Madagascar, drawing a crowd of more than 35,000 people. Division leadership officially opened the evangelism meetings, along with division Ministerial Association director Passmore Mulambo and the IOUC leadership. The launch was honored by the presence of her worship, the mayor of Antananarivo, Harilala Ramanantsoa, who pledged her support for the initiative. Division leadership also challenged members to bring a guest, and in response to an altar call, more than 500 people accepted Christ. As the campaign gains momentum, it is projected that approximately 5,000 evangelism sites will be established across the islands of IOUC—Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, and Réunion.



The Launch of the Impact IOUC Evangelism initiative

WHOLISTIC MINISTRY

The health of a church can often be measured by how its members, young and old, find joy in witnessing for Christ and making disciples. In the SID territory this joy is evident. Church members across the region have taken ownership of the mission, actively engaging in ministry and outreach in diverse and innovative ways as they embark on our strategic plan of I Will Go.

One such example comes from a rural village in Zimbabwe, where Dozen Zimbudzi, a leader of an apostolic church, had a vivid dream. In it he was told that men would soon arrive, bringing not

only spiritual insight but also practical solutions for his community. Soon after, members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church visited the village. Their message extended beyond Bible study. They introduced hands-on training in beekeeping, soap making, and other sustainable practices tailored for drought-prone regions.

Zimbudzi was deeply moved by the integrated approach to ministry, which addressed both the spiritual and practical needs of his people. He chose to be baptized, and his decision sparked a ripple effect. Inspired by his transformation, 70 village heads and community leaders also accepted the gospel and were baptized, choosing to follow the teachings of the Bible.

HEALTH MINISTRY IMPACT

In the warm heart of Malawi, Blantyre Adventist Hospital continues to play a vital role in the region's health-care landscape. Already renowned for its compassionate and high-quality care, the hospital reached a new milestone in 2023 when it successfully performed its first open-heart surgery—a complex procedure that highlighted the skill and dedication of its medical team.

This monumental achievement was recognized by the Ministry of Health, which awarded Blantyre Adventist Hospital a five-star rating, a distinction rarely granted, as most hospitals typically receive between two and three stars. The hospital's capabilities are further enhanced by an onsite oxygen plant, allowing it to deliver consistent, high-quality care even in resource-limited settings. Blantyre Adventist Hospital stands as a shining example of how we can reach the world and how faith-based institutions can lead in providing lifesaving services while transforming communities with Christ's healing ministry.

ONE BOOK, MANY SOULS

In Angola the power of literature evangelism is changing lives. In Cunene Province more than 100 members of an apostolic church, including



Wedding guests received copies of *The Great Controversy* as gifts from the bride and groom.

a leading evangelist, chose to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church after reading *The Great Controversy*. The profound message of the book led to a collective decision to be baptized. Meanwhile, João Nogueira and his wife, Filipa, a young couple passionate about evangelism, seized a unique opportunity to share their faith at their wedding by distributing 258 copies of *The Great Controversy* to their guests. This heartfelt gesture has since inspired a new tradition among literature evangelists in the region, sharing spiritual literature at weddings and other community gatherings.

Today this practice is helping to carry the message of redemption to new audiences. *The Great Controversy* is making a lasting impact in Angola as church members intensify their strategic plan of One Member, One Soul, one book and one community at a time.

FRIENDSHIP EVANGELISM IN ACTION

On the islands of São Tomé and Príncipe a group of dedicated young people is leading a creative and compassionate evangelism initiative through the Caleb Project. During school holidays these youth set up mobile hair salons, offering free grooming services as a way to connect with people in the community. What begins as an act of kindness becomes a pathway to deeper spiritual conversations. Through these connections they offer

Bible studies, invite individuals to church, and share their faith with love and sincerity. Their outreach has proven incredibly effective, resulting in 39 baptisms. This is a powerful example of how friendship evangelism and personal connection can open hearts to Christ.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH ACROSS THE DIVISION

From 2022 to the present, SID has prioritized spiritual maturity through a variety of intentional initiatives:

Revival and Reformation Campaigns: Implemented across unions with strong participation in the global 10 Days of Prayer and 40 Days of Revival programs.

Quarterly Fasting and Prayer Events: Encouraging intercessory prayer for leadership, families, and spiritual revival.

Digital Discipleship and Bible Study Platforms: Virtual study groups, youth prayer chains, and use of Hope Channel content for spiritual enrichment.

Spiritual Leadership Development: Training elders, Sabbath School leaders, and local evangelists in Bible doctrine and Christ-centered discipleship.

Youth and Children's Spiritual Activities: Programs such as Pathfinder Bible Experience and Bible boot camps have deepened engagement and understanding of Scripture among young people.

Women and Men's Ministries Retreats: These gatherings fostered spiritual renewal, relational growth, and leadership empowerment.

Leadership Development: Empowering Leaders for Mission

In pursuit of strategic leadership excellence, SID has hosted key leadership development seminars aimed at equipping leaders for mission effectiveness. In 2023 a high-impact seminar was held at Babcock University in Nigeria, where regional and institutional leaders received training on integrity, innovation, and mission-aligned leadership practices. Similarly, in 2024 a major seminar in Durban, South Africa, brought together executive officers, departmental directors, and



institutional leaders from across the division to reflect on servant leadership, team synergy, and sustainability in ministry. Guest speakers came from the General Conference and Andrews University. These gatherings served as both learning platforms and spiritual renewal experiences, empowering leaders to return to their fields with renewed vision and purpose.

MISSION THAT TRANSFORMS LIVES

As we reflect on the journey from July 2022 to March 2025 we are reminded that the mission in SID is more than programs and statistics—it is people transformed by the power of the gospel. We believe that the stories shared in this report point to one undeniable truth: mission changes lives. Whether it's a church leader stepping into a new journey through practical knowledge, a young person discovering purpose through service, or entire communities uniting for transformation, the SID remains unwavering in its commitment to spreading God's love, one person at a time.

The SID is deeply dedicated to the mission of Christ, rooted in spiritual growth, driven by bold leadership, and propelled by Total Member Involvement. With our eyes fixed on Jesus, we continue our journey, pressing on with unshakable faith, until every heart has heard, and the Lord of the harvest returns.

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SOUTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION REPORT

A Spiritual Farming Journey



In a moving outdoor baptismal ceremony, new believers publicly declare their faith in Jesus Christ.

DAN OROZCO

Across the vast and complex landscape of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD), the mission field stands as one of the most diverse and challenging in the world. Home to more than 699 million people, this territory spans a multitude of cultures, languages, religions, and economic realities. In regions where Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and secularism are deeply rooted, sharing the love of Jesus Christ demands creativity, faith, and intentionality.

Yet amid these obstacles, the Adventist Church in this region has witnessed God's gracious leading. From bustling urban centers to remote islands and mountain villages, Christ's message continues to take root. Church leaders, missionaries, and members have tirelessly implemented context-sensitive strategies to reach receptive hearts with the gospel.

The mission story of the SSD mirrors that of a spiritual farmer—preparing the ground, sowing the seed, cultivating the crop, reaping the harvest, and preserving the yield. As the apostle Paul wrote: "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Gal. 6:9). Ellen White also affirms: "As the Spirit of God breathes on the soul, the hidden seed springs up, and at last bears fruit to the glory of God."*

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

During the past three years the SSD has deliberately focused on preparing the ground for mission by implementing a range of strategies rooted in a contextualized approach to outreach and discipleship. One major advancement has been the reorganization of church territories to enable more targeted and efficient evangelism.

In the Philippines, the North and South Philippine union conferences were divided, resulting in the creation of the Northern Luzon Philippine Union Mission, Southern Luzon Philippine Union Mission, Southeastern Philippine Union Mission, and Southwestern Philippine Union Conference. These adjustments allow resources and leadership to be better aligned with mission needs.

To extend leadership closer to local communities, the SSD established new regional headquarters in previously underserved areas. Newly organized entities include the Jakarta-Banten Conference,

ROGER O. CADERMA
PRESIDENT



Papua Barat Daya Mission, Papua Tengah Mission, Mindoro Island Mission, and the Southeastern Caraga Mission. Additional missions were established in South Central Mindanao, Northwestern Panay, Northern Sabah, and Central Luzon.

In Indochina, the Laos Region transitioned into full mission status, marking a significant step in reaching the 10/40 window. The Northwestern Sumatra Mission is also undergoing formal inclusion in the *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*. Meanwhile, two regions in Thailand—Western Thailand and Northeastern Thailand—are being developed for official recognition.

These expansions are more than administrative—they're intentional acts of planting spiritual infrastructure to ensure every community has access to the gospel.

SOWING THE SEEDS

In alignment with the Global Total Member Involvement (GTMI) movement, the SSD has launched massive evangelistic campaigns throughout the region since 2022. These campaigns are the result of prayerful planning, strategic collaboration, and a deep desire to share Christ in every possible way.

In Thailand, the Christ for Thailand initiative brought the gospel to a largely Buddhist population, marking a meaningful breakthrough in public evangelism. In Indonesia, Living Hope Indonesia and Hope for Indonesia organized simultaneous campaigns across East and West Indonesia, mobilizing thousands.



Amid political unrest and spiritual hunger, the Living Hope Myanmar evangelistic campaign continues to draw hearts to Christ.

SOUTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION

In Myanmar, despite ongoing political unrest, Living Hope Myanmar moved forward by God's grace, reaching multiple areas with the gospel message. In Laos and Cambodia large-scale evangelistic efforts were made possible through collaboration with Adventist World Radio (AWR), enabling access to areas previously difficult to reach.

These collective efforts have seen remarkable participation. More than 90 percent of churches in the division have joined in evangelistic activities, revealing a shared conviction that every member has a role in finishing the work.

In the Philippines, the Adventist Church used both traditional and digital tools. Friendship camps, Pathfinder training, and public campus ministries helped build bridges of trust for young people and their parents, while the online evangelism series *My Journey With God* engaged thousands in a digital walk through the Bible—showing that hybrid ministry models are not only possible but powerful.

Another key initiative in sowing seeds has been the widespread distribution of *The Great Controversy*, which was translated into major languages across the division—including Bahasa, Malay, Thai, Tagalog, and Cebuano. More than 2.8 million copies have reached homes, schools, and communities, quietly sharing hope and pointing readers to Christ's soon return. In sensitive regions the printed page has served as a silent missionary, planting seeds of truth.

The Health Ministry continues to play a vital role in this phase of mission. During the past four years new hospitals have opened in Indonesia and the Philippines, including Palangka Raya Adventist Hospital, Adventist Hospital Tupi in South Cotabato, and Northern Luzon Adventist Hospital. In addition, several clinics have been established in Palawan, such as a dialysis center in Brooke's Point and a clinic of Adventist Hospital Palawan in El Nido. Other Adventist hospitals across the division have also expanded their facilities and enhanced their services to meet growing needs. These medical institutions offer more than physical treatment—they embody

compassion, build trust, and serve as tangible expressions of Christ's healing touch, introducing communities to the life-transforming message of Adventist health.

Education continues to be a powerful tool for mission. Adventist schools and universities across the SSD are not only producing academic excellence but nurturing students—Adventist and non-Adventist alike—to become servant leaders. Through values-based education and spiritual mentoring, these institutions are shaping hearts to join in the church's mission.

SSD has also stepped beyond its borders. In 2024, leaders collaborated with the East-Central Africa Division (ECD) to participate in their Homecoming 2024 Evangelistic Campaign, where thousands gave their lives to Jesus. This act of global partnership is a testament to the strength of inter-division unity and shared mission.

The SSD has also partnered with local Adventist organizations to sponsor scholarship programs for students from challenging mission territories, including Pakistan, Mongolia, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Kenya. These students are currently pursuing graduate-level studies, representing such fields as education, ministry, missiology, business, leadership, and public health. Many of the scholars come from underprivileged backgrounds, including former Muslims and individuals from remote or marginalized communities—particularly those living near the Myanmar-Thailand border. By investing in their education, the SSD is equipping future leaders to return to their communities and strengthen the church's presence in some of the most spiritually and socially complex parts of the world.

To build on this momentum, the SSD has launched Harvest 2025—a yearlong evangelistic campaign mobilizing every member, leader, and institution in the division. The goal is clear: saturate the region with the gospel, reaching the unreached and preparing a people for the return of Christ.

CULTIVATING THE CROP

After the seeds have been sown, the ground must be carefully cultivated. Through the Mission Refocus initiative, the SSD is nurturing spiritual interest by placing missionaries in areas in which the gospel is beginning to stir hearts.

Currently eight missionaries are already serving across SSD territories, while 17 are preparing for deployment. Globally, an additional 71 missionaries are being trained and processed to serve in such sensitive areas as central Asia, the Middle East, and parts of Africa. Support from sister divisions—including South America, South Pacific, and Inter-America—continues to strengthen this movement.

Mission Refocus is not about rapid outcomes; it's about deep, lasting impact. It's about softening hearts, building trust, and preparing people to receive Christ. As Hosea urges: "Break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord" (Hosea 10:12).

Part of nurturing also happens within local churches. Church members are encouraged to influence their spheres through friendship, compassion, and discipleship. In this effort care groups have emerged as a vital strategy.



Leaders, missionaries, and members from across the Southern Asia-Pacific Division gather in cultural attire, representing unity in diversity.

SOUTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION



Moments before baptism, pastors and members join in collective prayer over new believers.

SOUTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION

From homes and campuses to offices and communities, members of all ages have embraced the care group model. These small gatherings foster spiritual growth, prayer, and meaningful conversations. Today more than 98,000 care groups are active across the division—quietly transforming families, bridging church and community, and creating lasting spiritual connections.

HARVEST HAS COME

Since the beginning of the current quinquennium in 2022, more than 420,000 people across the Southern Asia-Pacific Division have accepted Jesus through baptism. This milestone reflects the power of unity, strategy, and Spirit-filled ministry.

Key to this growth has been the integration of traditional and digital evangelism, vibrant care group networks, and collaborative efforts between various ministries and institutions. No method has been left unexplored, because the urgency of the gospel demands our best.

The global pandemic was not a setback—it was a catalyst. In the face of lockdowns and disruption, members found new ways to reach out. The crisis became a call to move forward, fueled by the conviction that Christ is coming soon and that countless souls are still waiting to hear His name.

PRESERVING THE YIELD

While celebrating what has been achieved, the SSD recognizes that the work is not done. As we move ever closer to the final chapters of earth's history, the need for faithful laborers grows.

As of 2024, the SSD is home to more than 1.6 million members and more than 12,000 churches. This vast spiritual family, when fully mobilized, can become a movement for transformation that ripples across nations.

But this will take more than participation—it will take prayer, surrender, and commitment. Every member must feel the call, not only to rejoice in the harvest, but to preserve it, nurture it, and keep sowing more seeds.

THE HARVEST CONTINUES

This report reflects more than statistical progress—it is a testimony of God's faithfulness in the mission field of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division. The soil has been tilled. The seeds have been sown. Lives have been changed. But the work is not finished.

From overcoming a global pandemic to navigating economic, cultural, and religious barriers, the Southern Asia-Pacific Division has witnessed the faithful guidance of the Holy Spirit at every turn. Through the united efforts of literature evangelists, health professionals, educators, youth, women, children, lay members, and missionaries—supported by digital endeavors and outreach initiatives—a vibrant movement of hope continues to grow across the region.

Yet, as any faithful farmer knows, the harvest is part of an ongoing cycle. The work continues—not by human effort alone, but through the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit. Our skills may be limited, but when placed in God's hands, even the smallest seed can bear eternal fruit.

We press on—sowing, nurturing, and reaping—until every person in this region has had the chance to hear the name of Jesus. For the Lord of the harvest leads the way, and in Him we place our hope.

* Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1900, 1941), p. 65.

INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION REPORT

Living the Mission



Hundreds were baptized on April 26, 2025, in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, as part of evangelistic efforts that welcomed more than 23,000 new members from January to April across the Chiapas Mexican Union. All 24 unions in the Inter-American Division also joined in unprecedented outreach. DANIEL GALLARDO/IAD

Every breath we take is evidence that our Creator makes provision for us to live. And to live is not just to breathe, but to experience fellowship, to enjoy, to rejoice, and to be thankful.

Living the Mission is a concept that takes on a much broader meaning. It's no longer just about doing or feeling, but about integrating God's will into our daily lives. Every strategy, event, effort, and initiative in the Inter-American Division (IAD) territory becomes more meaningful when the mission is lived.

ANSWERING THE CALL

Our church members across our 25 unions, having answered the call "I Will Go," travel from towering buildings to the most remote places to serve others with love. They are committed to teaching and sharing the good news of salvation, always striving to reflect the character of Christ and make the promise of Joel 2:28 real: "And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy" (NIV).

As we live the mission in the beautiful territory of Inter-America, we are witnesses of how the Lord has blessed His church. Today we praise His name for the growth, not just in numbers, but in transformed lives.

Currently the IAD has 157 local fields, organized into more than 25,000 churches and companies, with a total membership of 3.7 million. This growth is the result of the united work of pastors, laypersons, and those who work in institutions and other ministries as they passionately respond to God's call.

A SPIRIT OF GENEROSITY

The current global situation, with its political and economic tensions, has not stopped the faithfulness of our brothers and sisters in Inter-Amer-



ica. Through them God performs a weekly miracle of generosity, allowing the church to become a powerful instrument to bless the world.

We see the love and commitment with which church members express their complete trust in the divine provider by returning their tithes and offerings. This is a tangible reflection of a faith community that not only proclaims the message but actively lives the mission.

From the northern reaches of South America, in countries such as Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana, to Central America, Mexico, and the beautiful islands of the Caribbean, men and women have answered the call "I Will Go," living the mission with deep commitment and love.

ALL THE FAMILY IN MISSION

This commitment has been clearly demonstrated, as more church members and families have embraced both personal and public evangelism across all levels of the church. Each department and ministry have united under the initiative All the Family in Mission, working together to share the gospel and engage others in mission.

Thanks to the remarkable engagement in this movement, more than 1 million laypersons have served as Bible instructors, more than 250,000 families have witnessed to at least one other family, and 100,000 small groups have engaged in evangelistic outreach. Thousands more have contributed to community projects, church planting, and sustained health ministry efforts.

These initiatives, carried out during the past two years, have culminated in major reaping campaigns, including territory-wide coordinated baptismal ceremonies. More than 800,000 new members have joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the IAD during this 2020-2025 period.

Since its establishment in 1922, the Inter-American Division has been driven by one clear goal: to see church members actively living out the mission God has entrusted to us. This calling is woven into the very fabric of who we are—like the air we breathe across the 42 countries that form our dynamic, fast-growing, and deeply connected mosaic of cultures. What unites us is a collective calling: to share the love of Jesus and the hope of His soon return.

REACHING REMOTE AREAS

In the most remote regions of our territory, such as the eastern plains of southern Colombia where dirt roads lead to dozens of Indigenous communities, Misael Artunduaga, a lay Bible instructor, has been living the mission through listening, connecting, and forming friendships with them. Misael met the leader of one of the Indigenous communities and gifted him a Bible, which soon turned into studying the Word of God.

He travels on his motorcycle two, three, and sometimes 13 hours to the many remote communities, socializing and integrating into their culture, fishing with them, planting cassava in their small gardens, and telling them about Jesus while living in their communities for weeks at a time. Misael considers his work with Indigenous communities one of the most meaningful and fulfilling experiences of his life. For him, living the mission means getting involved with these Indigenous brethren, spending time with them, preparing them for Jesus' second coming.



Lay Bible worker Misael Artunduaga with one of the 11 ethnic communities in the eastern plains of south Colombia, where he has been ministering for six years. LIBNA STEVENS/IAD

Thanks to Misael's initiative, the gospel has reached 11 of the 67 Indigenous communities in the region, and nearly 700 persons have been baptized there. The church has now appointed a local pastor to assist in ministering to the new congregations formed in the region.

A CLEAR CALLING

Roger Alleyne, a lay evangelist, born and raised on the island of Tobago, found a clear purpose in living the mission as a young man after experiencing the joy of a life transformed in Christ. He left his ungodly ways after listening to his grandmother, who raised him, urging him to go to church, any church. Roger came upon a Seventh-day Adventist Church, and it was there that he understood about the second coming of Christ and felt a deep commitment to sharing that good news with everyone around him.

Realizing that he had a clear calling from God and wanting to be better prepared as a lay evangelist, Roger decided to study theology while continuing to work as a technician at the electric company. While visiting homes for his work, he finds people searching for truth, looking for things to satisfy their hearts.

Roger has been seizing every opportunity to share hope. Thanks to his love for Christ, he has conducted dozens of evangelistic campaigns throughout the Caribbean and other parts of the IAD, resulting in more than 600 persons who have given their lives to Jesus.

EXPANDING URBAN MISSIONAL CHURCHES

Across the Caribbean Sea in Panama City, Panama, is Jonathan Pacheco, a radiologist, who was raised in the Adventist Church but left for a period. Sometime later he and his family began attending church sporadically and went through a painful marital crisis during that period.

Everything changed when a friend invited them to a new urban missional church called Conexión 7. He and his wife felt the warmth of the members and loved the vision of presenting the gospel in a different and innovative way and decided to be part of it.

Soon after, Jonathan and his family turned their home into a space for discipleship, where the mission is lived out through conversations, laughter, social activities, Bible study, and much prayer.

Today the Pacheco family is actively participating in mission, sharing the gospel with professionals, neighbors, and friends in their small group. Several have already been baptized, and the group has expanded to become a second urban missional church in Panama this year.

For Jonathan and his family, living the mission means that others can learn through him and his family what God's love is about.

ASSISTING VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

In the city of Tapachula, in Chiapas, Mexico, where thousands of migrants pass through facing uncertainty, danger, and pain, Tanya López, a young medical doctor, has been sharing compassion and service through an ADRA Mexico project for three years. Her journey to living the mission began after a doctor colleague invited her to a youth small group back home in Guadalajara in northern Mexico.



Tanya López has been assisting migrants for the past three years through ADRA Mexico's free medical clinics in Tapachula, Chiapas, Mexico. INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION

A devout Catholic, she was impressed with the kindness and peaceful connection in the small group. Soon after, she began taking part in the outreach projects of the Adventist Church in reaching needy communities where Bible stories were told, songs were sung for children, and free medical services were given by ADRA volunteers. Soon she began taking part in ADRA medical brigades, where she served as a doctor. The warm welcome from the young people and their example of being involved in the mission strengthened Tanya's budding faith and awakened two childhood dreams of hers: working with children and serving vulnerable communities.

There, amid service, she not only got involved in the work through ADRA but also gave her life to Jesus. Tanya has seen families arrive—children, teenagers who travel alone, pregnant women, women who have suffered abuse during their journey, just for being migrants.

There are cases that bring tears to her eyes, but she remembers what Jesus did for people regardless of where they came from or what they had done. She knows God charted her path to share compassion and love with every encounter, every patient she cares for.

For Tanya, living the mission means answering the call of Jesus to serve people and live with love and commitment. When young professionals such as Tanya integrate their vocation with a spiritual calling, the mission stays alive.

Each of these stories represents just a glimpse of what the members of God's great army in Inter-America are doing, committing themselves deeply and being used as valuable instruments in the hands of the Lord.

WHOLEHEARTED COMMITMENT

This is the passion of our members as they live the mission—filled with hope and wholehearted commitment.

There are families and individuals whose active faith drives them to engage with innovation and creativity, using every available means at their disposal. They support such institutions as publishing houses, hospitals, health food factories, the educational system, radio, television, and digital evangelism, reaching more people every day.



A team of Adventist cyclists toured Colombia from October 11–15, 2023, covering 420 kilometers (260 miles) as part of the Hope on Wheels initiative, sharing books, water, and encouragement. SOUTH COLOMBIA UNION

Time is short, and many have yet to hear about Jesus.

From the hundreds of Adventist cyclists in Colombia engaging fellow riders and community members through the I Want to Live Healthy initiative to the many church members across Mexico participating in 5K walks and runs, the movement for healthier living is growing stronger every day. This same passion drives a network of health food factories producing hundreds of healthy food products throughout the Inter-American Division.

The mission continues to thrive through dozens of vibrant urban missional churches, centers of influence serving diverse people groups more than 900 primary and secondary schools, 14 universities, and 12 hospitals. It also reaches hearts through dozens of radio stations and Hope Channel Inter-America television network, along with its 19 media centers across the territory—all working together to instill the hope of the gospel and invite others to take part in Living the Mission.



IAD administrators express their commitment to funding Mission Refocus initiatives worldwide during the Festival of Mission Refocus at Montemorelos University in Mexico, November 9, 2024, as part of the Year-End Executive Committee Meetings. LIBNA STEVENS/IAD

To further strengthen this ongoing mission effort, the Inter-American Division with its 25 unions has committed to the church's Mission Refocus initiative in this triennium in collaboration with leaders from eight world church divisions. Resources have been dedicated to supporting local workers in evangelism, sponsoring missionary couples, funding church planting teams, building churches, providing Bibles and literature, supporting school infrastructure, and offering student stipends and more.

This Mission Refocus strategy collaboration has deepened the IAD's commitment to mission, driving efforts to double financial support for global mission and evangelism initiatives during the next five years.

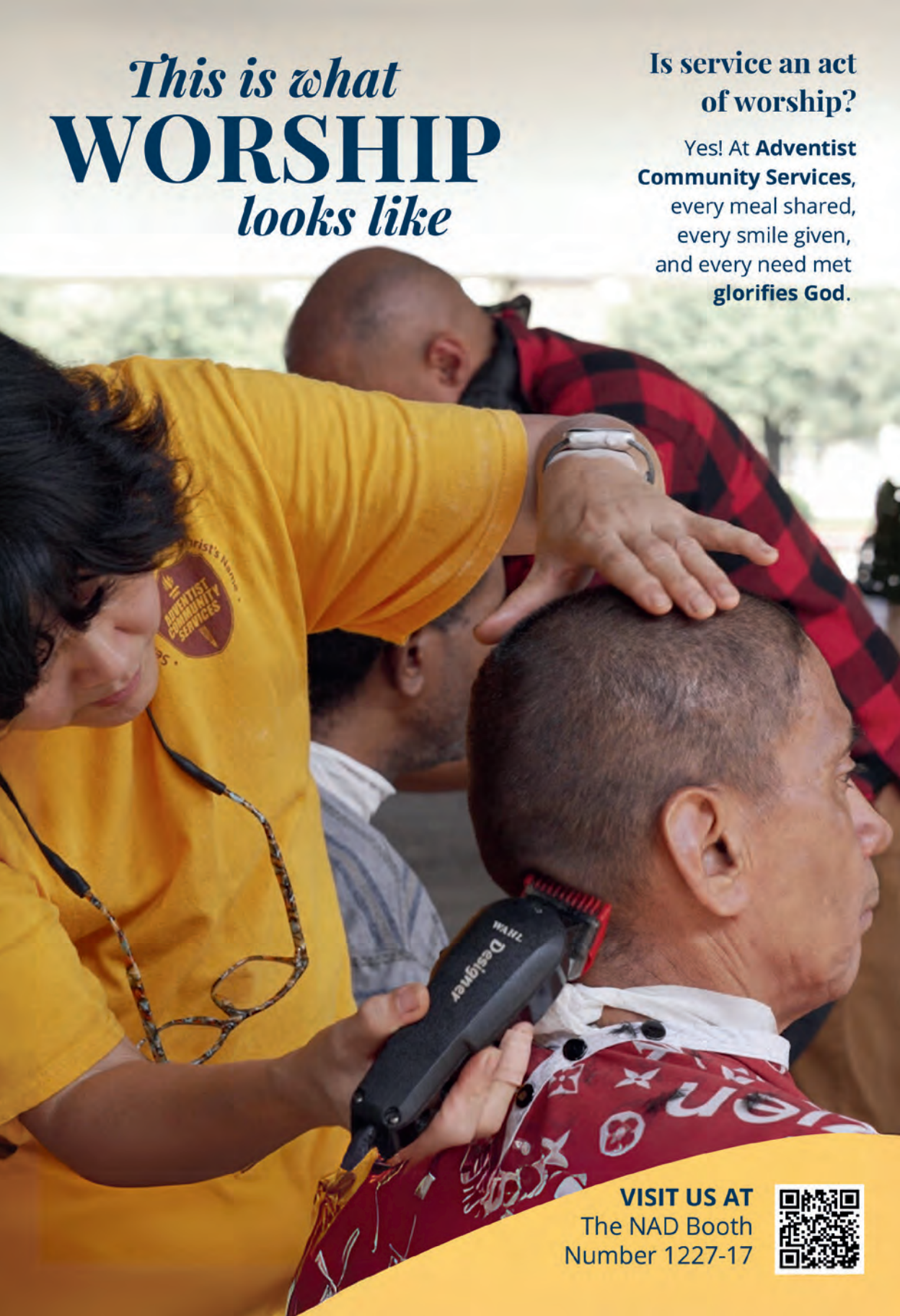
EMBRACING THE GREAT COMMISSION

The Inter-American Division embraces the identity described in 1 Peter 2:9—as a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession called to declare the praises of Him who brought us out of darkness into His wonderful light. This divine calling shapes our mission: to reflect God's glory, to reach every corner of our territory, and to lead others into the light of Christ through educating, serving, and evangelizing.

Time is short, and many have yet to hear about Jesus. And He wants them to be saved! With great humility and deep gratitude we offer our praises to Him for inviting us to be part of His mission.

We continue to preach hope, serve with dedication, and educate with faith, keeping our eyes on the cross and our hearts focused on the mission—until Christ returns and every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Maranatha!


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Ninth Business Meeting

SESSION ACTIONS (CONTINUED FROM BULLETIN 6)

62nd General Conference Session, St Louis, Missouri, July 8, 2025, 2:00 p.m.

AYM Officers—The leaders/directors of the five youth ministry entities must exemplify Christlike graces and have a burden for soul ~~winning~~ winning and nurturing, and display contagious enthusiasm. The five leaders/directors are members of the church board. In helping motivate youth to work together and take responsibilities, the leaders/directors will be in the background—guiding, counseling, and encouraging youth, helping them gain experience and the joys of achievement. The leaders/directors should study the youth profile of the church and seek to involve every eligible youth in the Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM).

The leaders/directors will keep in touch with the pastor, advisor, and the conference ~~youth ministries~~ Youth Ministries director, taking advantage of opportunities for in-service training and leading their respective ministry into a cooperative relationship with the church and the conference.

The associate leaders/deputy directors (if needed) will assist the leaders/directors and perform leadership duties when the leaders/directors are absent. The respective committees may assign additional responsibilities to the associate leaders/directors.

The secretary-treasurers will keep a record of the activities of their respective ministries, submit monthly reports on forms provided to the conference ~~youth ministries~~ Youth Ministries director, and encourage youth to report their witnessing activities during the ten-minute personal ministries period.

The respective assistant secretary-treasurers (if needed) assist with the secretary- treasurers' work as assigned.

AYM Advisor—The Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) advisor may be an elder or other person on the board who understands the objectives of the AYM, is sympathetic with youth and their involvement in the church's ministries, and will serve as a valued counselor to the youth. The advisor serves as a guide or counselor to AYM officers and joins them regularly in AYM Committee meetings.

The ministry leader should become acquainted with the conference ~~youth ministries~~ Youth Ministries director and keep the director informed of changes in officer personnel and other AYM matters. Along with AYM leaders, the advisor should attend conference youth training institutes to keep informed about developments in youth ministry.

For the sake of continuity, the advisor, if possible, should serve multiple terms.

Everyone involved in work with minor children must meet Church and legal standards and requirements, such as background checks or certification. Local church leaders should consult with the ~~conference~~, conference AYM, which will ascertain and advise as to what background checks and certifications are available and/or required. (See Notes, #8, pp. 180-181.)

Resources—For ~~youth ministries~~ Youth Ministries resources, see Notes, #20, p. 184.

SETTING TITHING EXAMPLE - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the motion to amend the item, Setting Tithing Example - *Church Manual* Amendment.

SETTING TITHING EXAMPLE - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To not amend the item, Setting Tithing Example - *Church Manual* Amendment, by adding "in a systemic plan" following "Church" on line 14.

SETTING TITHING EXAMPLE - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the item, Setting Tithing Example - *Church Manual* Amendment.

SETTING TITHING EXAMPLE - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment expresses the importance of local church officers setting an example in not just returning a faithful tithe, but also in giving offerings to the Church.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 9, Local Church Officers and Organizations, page 77, Setting Tithing Example, to read as follows:

~~Setting Tithing Example—All officers shall set an example in the matter of returning a faithful tithe to the Church.~~ Setting an Example in Tithe and Offerings—All officers shall set an example in the matter of returning a faithful tithe and giving offerings to the Church. Anyone who fails to set such an example shall not be elected to church office.

USE OF "THIRTEENTH SABBATH OFFERING" - *CHURCH MANUAL* DIRECTIVE

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the item, Use of "Thirteenth Sabbath Offering" - *Church Manual* Directive.

USE OF "THIRTEENTH SABBATH OFFERING" - *CHURCH MANUAL* DIRECTIVE

RATIONALE: Since the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering is collected throughout the quarter, the additional name, "Quarterly Mission Project Offering," is being added for clarity.

VOTED, To approve a directive to amend the *Church Manual*, where appropriate, by replacing "Thirteenth Sabbath Offering" with "Thirteenth Sabbath Offering (also known as Quarterly Mission Project Offering)."

CAPITALIZATION OF CHURCH DEPARTMENTS -*CHURCH MANUAL* EDITORIAL DIRECTIVE

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the item, Capitalization of Church Departments - *Church Manual* Editorial Directive.

CAPITALIZATION OF CHURCH DEPARTMENTS - *CHURCH MANUAL* EDITORIAL DIRECTIVE

RATIONALE: This editorial amendment provides consistency and clarity throughout the *Church Manual*.

VOTED, To approve a directive to amend the *Church Manual*, where appropriate, by capitalizing the names of church departments (e.g. Family Ministries, Youth Ministries, etc).

DISSOLVING OR EXPELLING A CHURCH - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the item, Dissolving or Expelling a Church - *Church Manual* Amendment.

DISSOLVING OR EXPELLING A CHURCH - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment clarifies the original purpose of the text.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 5, Organizing, Uniting, and Dissolving Churches, pages 40-42, Dissolving or Expelling a Church, to read as follows:

Dissolving or Expelling a Church

"Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the

word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. . . . For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones" (Eph. 5:25-30).

This spirit should permeate all efforts to help an erring church and all aspects of any discipline that may be applied—always to help and save for the cause of God.

Church status is not necessarily perpetual. A church may be dissolved or expelled from the sisterhood of churches for the following reasons:

1. Loss of Members—Occasionally, despite efforts to preserve - No change

2. Discipline—Occasions for expelling a church for disciplinary reasons are rare because the mission of the church is to seek and to save. Where serious problems such as apostasy, refusal to operate in harmony with the *Church Manual*, or rebellion against the conference persist, earnest efforts should be made to avert the need for expulsion. The pastor should seek to deepen the spiritual life of the church through preaching and personal visitation ministries. The conference should encourage a series of revival meetings to lead the members to renew their covenant with their Lord. If these efforts are unsuccessful, the pastor, in cooperation with the conference executive committee, should counsel with the church and its leadership, seeking to bring healing and reconciliation and to preserve the church.

Such remedial measures are preferable to permitting the deterioration of relationships, which could lead to expulsion of the church.

However, if all efforts to preserve the church fail, the conference executive committee should give careful study to the question of expulsion. If such action is decided upon, the conference shall follow the following procedure:

a. The decision to recommend expulsion, with supporting - No change

b. If the church does not accept the recommendation, it may respond in one of the following ways:

1) Eliminating the causes for discipline and - No change

2) Appeal to the union executive committee, or to the division in case of a union of churches, to ~~arbitrate~~ mediate on behalf of the church.

c. If the church remains in rebellion, the conference - No change

d. If the constituency takes action to expel, the conference - No change

ADJOURNMENT

VOTED, To adjourn the business session of the General Conference Session and convene a meeting of the General Conference Corporation Members' Meeting.

Thomas L Lemon, Chair
Elbert Kuhn, Secretary
Hensley M Moorooven, Actions Editor
Nichole N Miles, Recording Secretary

Tenth Business Meeting

SESSION ACTIONS

62nd General Conference Session, St Louis, Missouri, July 9, 2025, 9:30 a.m.

No actions voted.
Audrey E Andersson, Chair
Gary D Krause, Secretary
Hensley M Moorooven, Actions Editor
Tamara K Boward, Recording Secretary

Northern Asia-Pacific Division delegate Lisa Sangsook Choi offers prayer. CHRISTINA COLLARD





DAVID B. SHERWIN

***ADVENTIST REVIEW* PHOTOGRAPHY TEAM**
David B. Sherwin, Jane Sherwin, Josef Kissinger, Mark Froelich, James Bokovoy, Christina Collard

Eleventh Business Meeting

SESSION ACTIONS

62nd General Conference Session, St Louis, Missouri, July 9, 2025, 2:00 p.m.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT #11

VOTED, To approve the following partial report of the Nominating Committee:

General Conference

General Conference Auditing Service
Director:
Robyn W Kajiura
Associate Directors:
Jonathan Beagles
JoJean Birth, North America
Gary Blood
Boris Cardenas
Rogelio Cortez
Guillermo Leal
Furaha Mpozembizi, Trans Africa
Jeremy Smith, Trans Asia Pacific
Maurine Wahlen
To be named, Trans Euro Asia

General Conference Auditing Service Board
Lay Members:
Annette Barlow, South Pacific Division
Dennis Brown, Inter-American Division
Kwaku Danso-Abeam, West-Central Africa Division
Ailton Dorl, South American Division

Aurel Duca, Euro-Asia Division
Wendell Ganhinhin, Southern Asia-Pacific Division
Raylin Gibbs, Northern Asia-Pacific Division
Patrick Boniface Ojera, East-Central African Division
Frensly Panneflek, Trans-European Division
Antonio Paulino, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division
John Satelmajer, North American Division
Boban Varghese, Southern Asia Division
To be named, Inter-European Division

Ex-Officio Members:
Erton C Kohler, President, General Conference
Richard E McEdward, Secretary, General Conference
Paul H Douglas, Treasurer, General Conference
Thomas L Lemon, Vice President, General Conference
Robyn W Kajiura, Director, GCAS

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT #12

VOTED, To approve the following partial report of the Nominating Committee:

General Conference

Children's Ministries
- Associate Director:
  - Nilde Itin

Communication
- Associate Director:
  - Samuel Gil Soldevilla

Education
- Associate Directors:
  - Juvenal Balisasa
  - Anneris Coria-Navia
  - Socrates Quispe
  - Richard A Sabuin

Family Ministries
- Associate Director:
  - Elaine Oliver

Health Ministries
- Associate Directors:
  - Yury Bondarenko
  - Milton A Mesa
  - Katia Reinert

Ministerial Association
- Associate Secretaries:
  - Jeffrey O Brown
  - Aurora Canals
  - Anthony R Kent
  - Jongimpi Papu
  - Crystal E Ward

Public Affairs and Religious Liberty
- Associate Directors:
  - Elie Henry
  - Samuel H Neves

Publishing Ministries
- Associate Director:
  - Super M Moesi

Sabbath School and Personal Ministries
- Associate Director:
  - J Daniel Ebenezer
  - E Douglas Venn, Adventist Possibility Ministries

Stewardship Ministries
- Associate Director:
  - Aniel Barbe

Women's Ministries
- Associate Director:
  - Omobonike Adeola Sessou

Youth Ministries
- Associate Directors:
  - Petronio Genebago, Senior Youth
  - Alfred Asiem, Pathfinders and Adventurers

Thomas L Lemon, Chair
Karen J Porter, Secretary
Hensley M Moorooven, Actions Editor
Tendani P Severance, Recording Secretary



MARK FROELICH

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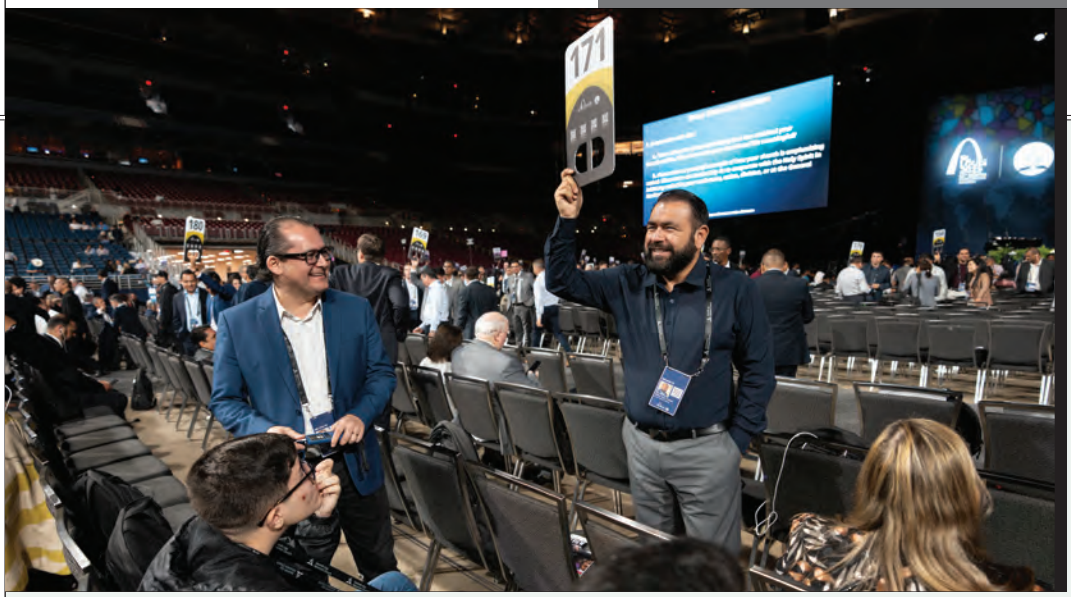
JULY 12, 2025

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NEWS



Delegates met in small groups to discuss four strategic pillars.
CHRISTINA COLLARD

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS INSPIRE PRACTICAL MISSION

BOTTOM-DOWN FEEDBACK ON STRATEGIC PILLARS HOLDS DELEGATES' INTEREST

JARROD STACKELROTH

A significant amount of time during General Conference (GC) Session was dedicated to the church's four I Will Go (IWG) strategic pillars for the new quinquennium. The pillars are Communion With God, Identity in Christ, Unity in the Spirit, and Mission for All.

Across four two-hour blocks between Wednesday and Friday, delegates were asked to break into small groups to discuss, pray over, and talk about the practical implications of each of the pillars, with a process in place to provide feedback as well.

During the sessions a devotional message was presented by speakers from the Biblical Research Institute (BRI), Ellen G. White Estate, and *Adventist Review,* followed by the small group discussions.

"The threefold purpose of these segments was to strengthen the I Will Go strategic focus pillars; to generate ideas for implementation in strategic planning; and to give the delegates a voice in the process," said Sikhululekile Daco, *Adventist Review* associate editor, who cohosted the sessions with evangelist Mark Finley.

ChanMin Chung, director of Global Mission Centers, was instrumental in coordinating the program. "This may be the first time we've tried this kind of spiritual interaction as part of our business session. We believe that this is an important matter," he said.

"GC leadership thought it a good idea and a good opportunity to foster that interaction among our delegates."

SMALL GROUP POWER

There were 280 small group leaders assigned for discussion on given topics. Each group leader was provided a large cardboard sign to hold up so others could find them. On the signs were four QR codes, where the group leader could scan in and convey each group's discussion to the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, directed by David Trim, who will collate and convey the results to administration.

One of the small group leaders was Cheonneth Strickland, secretary of the Greater Sydney Conference, in Australia.

"The discussions gave the delegates time to meet as a team to discuss the strategic pillars of the GC. We enjoyed connecting with others from different missions or con-

COVER PHOTO BY JOSEF KISSINGER



Mark Finley and Sikhu Daco facilitated the discussions.
JOSEF KISSINGER

ferences. We shared ideas and experiences in how we do church."

On Wednesday, July 9, in the morning session, the delegates focused on communion with God.

In the afternoon session they covered identity in Christ.

"As Dwain Esmond [devotional speaker and associate director of the Ellen G. White Estate] finished, it came to me that perhaps if we take this part of the program seriously, it may be some of the most important work we do at this session," said Thomas L. Lemon, GC general vice president, who chaired the Wednesday afternoon session.

On Thursday and Friday mornings the final two pillars—Unity in the Spirit and Mission for All—were covered.

"We wanted to bring diversity," said Chung. "Even in terms of presentation style, because, as you notice, they all have different styles. Some were energetic, some more reflective—not only presenters but also our hosts."

A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

The delegates appreciated the integration of these group discussions into the program. "The atmosphere completely changed from the rest of the week," said Daco. "Even during the discussion times it was calm, quiet. And so many people lined up to share when the microphones were opened. It was such a blessing."

"It's been like a breath of fresh air," said Daco. "It's been so important to incorporate the spiritual conversations into the midst of the business that needs to happen."

"We are so diverse, but it is Jesus and His mission that unites us," said Strickland.

Feedback from delegates was positive. "One delegate mentioned that this has impacted the lives of delegates," said Chung. "I heard that comment from a lot of different people. When we had only nine minutes remaining for the open mic feedback at the end of the segment, there were still 29 people in the queue to speak. So I see very positive feedback from the leadership and from delegates."

Chung also felt that the delegates appreciated the bottom-up mode of communication, the opportunity to feel empowered to speak about something that they were passionate about: mission.

"Not everything was coming just from the stage or from certain people; this section gave people the opportunity to feel heard and to share their faith with their neighbors and the wider group," he said.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

"We talk a lot of strategy," said Chung. "But often we notice that that strategy becomes kind of a silky document in the bookshelf. We create those documents, but practice doesn't come—real-life application doesn't come."

"Here, we are trying to connect strategy and practice together," he said.

The hope from church leadership is that those who travel home from GC Session will take practical ideas and a heart for mission with them.

For Strickland, one of the sessions was very practical and will help him in his ministry.

"Some of the devotions and sermons on the strategic pillars were excellent," he said.

"I really enjoyed Elias Brasil de Souza, BRI director, speaking from three passages in Scripture on unity.

"I learned a lot from this. Now I have three sermons from his presentation that I'm planning to use."

Church leaders were not confident that the delegates would appreciate this part of the session program. There was a fear that delegates would skip the sessions or not be keen to take part. And while some of that did happen, overwhelmingly the feedback was positive.

"I underestimated the level of maturity of our delegates. Their participation in this program has been beyond my expectations," said Chung.

Strickland agreed. "The delegates enjoyed this more than anything else. The business of the church was good, but having time to talk about mission individually was a great change."



MARK FROELICH

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS STORIES OF THOSE COMMITTED TO FRONTLINE MISSION

THE I WILL GO THEME IS MOVING THOUSANDS TO REACH THE UNREACHED, LEADERS SAY.

MARCOS PASEGGI

A trip down memory lane turned into more recent initiatives, heartwarming testimonies, and reports on breakthrough developments during the I Will Go mission program on July 12. The three-hour report, during the last day of the sixty-second General Conference (GC) Session of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, in St. Louis, Missouri, United States, called members and special guests to redouble efforts to reach the billions of people around the world who still need to hear a message of hope in Jesus.

"Thank you for joining us," said Caleb Haakenson, a producer in the Office of Adventist Mission, as he and two other hosts opened the highly visual, multipart program. "Fasten your seat belts, as we'll be taking you all over the globe to watch stories of people who said, 'I will go.' "

A GLOBAL MISSION

Gary Krause, Adventist Mission director, reminded the congregation how the arrival of J. N. Andrews as a missionary to Europe in 1874 triggered a golden era for mission, as an increasing number of committed Adventists embraced missionary deployments around the world to share Jesus wherever they went.

Krause shared how 35 years ago the Adventist Church moved from outreach initiatives focused mainly on increasing their membership to others more focused on reaching all people groups around the world. The Global Mission Person to Person program voted in 1990 marked a shift toward a more intentional and conscientious effort to enter unreached areas, establishing an Adventist presence where there had been none, he explained. "For the first time, we started to think not just in terms of geography in our mission but also in terms of people groups," Krause said. "And we started to think not only about Christians but also about people of other world religions."

MISSION REFOCUS WINDOWS

More recently the church has embarked on a new initiative called Mission Refocus, which seeks to redirect funds and human resources to three "windows," or pockets with limited or no Adventist presence. This includes the 10/40 window, a region of the world where most people live but where Christianity is a clear minority; the urban window, focused on the largest cities in the world; and the post-Christian window. The goal is "to start new groups of believers and make disciples for [Jesus]," Krause said.

This also includes the support of Global Mission Centers, focused on connecting and reaching people from the major world religions, including Hinduism, Islamism, Judaism, and others. "It's where faith meets context, where Scripture speaks to culture, and where hope becomes a lived experience," a video narrator explained.

"Removing just one barrier can open hearts in a way that preaching alone sometimes cannot."

NOVEL APPROACHES TO MISSION

For Adventist missionaries it implied going out of their comfort zones and trying new approaches to connecting with people. It's all about "breaking down barriers that stand in the way of the gospel," the narrator explained.

For Khamsay Phetchareum, director of the Global Mission Center for Adventist-Buddhist Relations, it meant supporting an initiative of having a burial place for those Buddhists who accepted the Adventist faith. "For those of a Buddhist background, the idea of accepting a new faith that doesn't offer a dedicated cemetery is distressing," the narrator shared, explaining that burial ceremonies are considered even more important than weddings.

The center led by Phetchareum is providing these special places across Thailand and other countries and connecting with Adventist families that don't know where to bury their loved ones. According to Global Mission Centers director ChanMin Chung, this initiative has led to more people being open to the gospel message. "Removing just one barrier can open hearts in a way that preaching alone sometimes cannot," he said.

FOOD AND HOSPITALITY

In Taichung City, Taiwan, breaking down barriers and connecting with the locals meant opening the Come N See Café in the heart of the central district. The café has become a place where young Taiwanese, especially students, come to connect, explore spirituality, and find a sense of community, leaders behind the initiative said.

"Our customers are our neighbors," Soonbum Kwon, Korean pastor and the missionary behind the café, said. Kwon, who had experience in Public Campus Ministry working with students in public universities, envisioned moving the ministry off campus as well. With the support of the world church, he opened the café as a place where students could enjoy good food and find Jesus in the process.

Some of the first students who were baptized are now volunteers supporting the ministry, which includes Bible studies, vespers, and other spiritual activities. It also offers Korean language classes, cooking workshops, and social events that attract new customers. "Through our café Taiwanese students and families are getting to know about God's love," cook Nam Dong Hyeon said.

FIVE CEOS TOGETHER IN MISSION

The last part of the I Will Go program included a first-of-its-kind report. The CEOs of the five Adventist health-care networks in the United States shared what they are doing to impact the world around them as they strive to follow in Jesus' footsteps. These included the CEOs of AdventHealth, Adventist Health, Adventist HealthCare, Kettering Health, and Loma Linda University Health.

The CEOs shared testimonies of what the networks they lead are doing to show the love and compassion of Christ with those who need not only physical but also mental and spiritual healing. "Every encounter brings us closer to the sick and hurting," said AdventHealth president and CEO David Banks of the network that treats 22 million patients a year in more than 100 hospitals and 2,700 medical offices and outpatient clinics. "Mingling with people today means going beyond the walls of our hospitals and treatment centers and deep into our communities."

The report included stories of people such as Michael, an addict who began to heal when he found someone who cared for him; and Keith, a terminal patient who, through virtual reality technology, fulfilled his dream of "visiting" the Grand Canyon. It also included the story of Richard, a stage 4 prostate cancer patient who found healing thanks to medical research once thought unimaginable; and of Mattie, a baby who underwent a liver transplant after a prolonged coma to eventually recover. "This is the ministry of Adventist health care," network leaders said. "Until Jesus returns to make all things whole."

Scan this QR code to read the full story.


JOSEF KISSINGER

"I AM JUST A WILLING VESSEL"

CRYSTAL WARD ELECTED AS GC MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION ASSOCIATE SECRETARY.

MARCOS PASEGGI

Growing up in Brooklyn, New York, Crystal Ward's late grandmother used to tell her extended family, "Stick together, trust God, and pray for the Holy Spirit." Ward complied, without knowing at the time how God would answer her prayers. On July 9, during the sixty-second General Conference Session in St. Louis, Missouri, Ward was elected as an associate Ministerial secretary for the world church.

Just one day before, on July 8, Ward had written to God in her prayer journal. "Lord, I just want to be used in an impactful way, however you want to use me," she had written. Not in her wildest dreams could she have imagined that less than 24 hours later, she would receive a mandate to support Adventist pastors, elders, and deacons at a global level.

"I am in awe," Ward said. "I was told that this is an opportunity to impact the world church on a global platform. And when I look back, I can see it's an answered prayer."

SUCCESS IN WALL STREET

Ward's story seems out of a movie script. She studied finance and investments and specialized in policy and executive management. She eventually made it into the corporate world of Wall Street, where she ended up as a senior vice-president in banking.

There was a point, however, when Ward felt she wanted to do something more fulfilling. "I wanted to live the purpose God was calling me for. But at the time, I honestly didn't think it was a call to full-time ministry."

PANDEMIC TURNAROUND

Then the COVID-19 pandemic hit. While Ward had always supported her local church, the closure of churches allowed her to get even more involved. With the encouragement of her local church pastor, Ward began to host a Sabbath School table. Then she got involved with *Ephesus TV*, a show where she hosted people such as one of the candidates for New York mayor and the district attorney. "It was a platform about listening to people's testimonies and seeing how the church could partner and do more work with the community," she shared.

It was during that time that Ward felt a distinct call to ministry. "Intellectually, I knew what it was to be called, but then the experience happened. I prayed about it, fasted, and talked to some of my mentors, who told me, 'Indeed, you are being called to ministry.' "

Three years to the day Ward was installed as Spencerville Adventist Church pastor in Maryland, she was elected to her new position at the GC. "It seems God is taking me to another level of impact," she says.

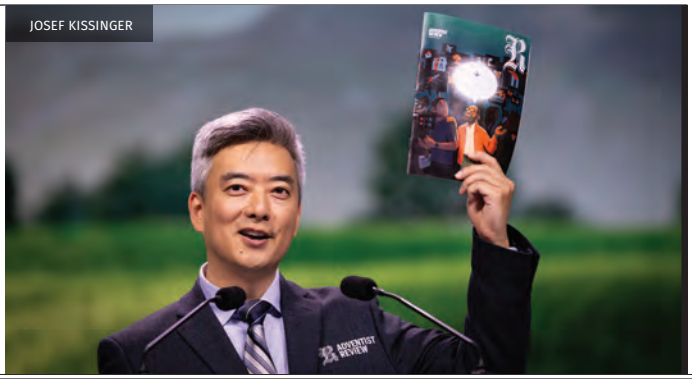
GOD'S CALL ABOVE EVERYTHING ELSE

Ward is convinced God prepared her, even when she didn't know that this is what He had for her. "It had never been my decision to become a pastor," she emphasizes.

Serving as a pastor in the Adventist Church is not always easy for a woman, Ward conceded. She says that she hasn't experienced any negative comments directly. "Of course, I have met people who don't believe in women in ministry. But I know that God called me, and my responsibility is to answer to that call," she says.

Ward explains that her experience in the corporate world has prepared her for this moment. "There were many times that I was 'the only'—the only female, or the only Black person, or the youngest person—. So that has been something that I don't even think about."

In that sense, Ward says, her strength is found in focusing on the certainty of her call. "I just know that God called me. Anywhere that God puts me, I just operate within the purpose and the call that He has for me. I'm just a willing vessel. And the package that I come in happens to be a female, a Black female, but the call is the same."


JOSEF KISSINGER

MAGAZINE EDITORS INTRODUCE A REVAMPED *ADVENTIST REVIEW*

MINISTRY DISCUSSED NOVEL FEATURES, NEW EMPHASIS ON ITS DIGITAL REACH.

MARCOS PASEGGI

In 1848 Ellen G. White saw a vision for a publication that was to be "streams of light" that went around the world. One year later, in 1849, James White started a small paper. The *Adventist Review* is today the descendant of this vision, reminded *Adventist Review* editor Justin Kim on July 12.

In a brief presentation to thousands attending the final day of the sixty-second General Conference (GC) Session in St. Louis, Missouri, United States, Kim highlighted the latest changes to the 176-year-old publication, which has connected and inspired Adventist members from before the official Adventist Church was organized in 1863. "*Adventist Review* continues to point souls to Jesus today," he said.

FROM TWO TO ONE

Kim explained how in 2005 the *Adventist World* magazine became popular as it was shipped around the world, connecting and inspiring Adventist members. He noted that "the two sister magazines have somewhat two different fields, and recently it made sense to merge them to unify the world church under one magazine. . . . For marketing simplicity, brand clarity, and global economics, we have consolidated our products under one name, the *Adventist Review*," Kim said.

A NEW OLD LOGO

Kim also referred to the newly designed logo, which stems from one of the original nameplates. "We chose the stylized R that refers to the affectionately named *Review*," he said. "There is a new printed trim size, a new design, new formats, and new fonts, all coming under the new merged name."

Throughout its history, Kim said, the *Review* "has inspired members, encouraged readers, and informed the church. It includes the best features from theological, medical, and missiological professionals." He added, "It has theology for laypeople, a children's submagazine pullout called *KidsView*, all aesthetically designed to strengthen, unite, and deepen God's remnant people."

INCREASING ITS DIGITAL PRESENCE

In his presentation Kim also reported that the magazine is pivoting to a greater digital presence, including a WhatsApp channel in Swahili, English, and Spanish, as well as other social media platforms. It is expected that new languages will be added soon, he said. The magazine website, adventistreview.org, includes more GC Session content, videos, Sabbath School commentaries, children's stories, news, and blogs.

A day before, on the stage of the exhibition hall of the GC Session venue, a panel discussed what makes the new *Adventist Review* unique, and introduced the August 2025 issue. Shawn Boonstra, *Adventist Review* associate editor, explained how the issue seeks to help members not to be alarmed but to be aware of what's going on in the world. "It's not so much about knowing what's going to happen in the minutiae. It's more about recognizing it when it takes place," he said. This is precisely what *Adventist Review* tries to do.

Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide editor Clifford Goldstein, one of the magazine's columnists for 30 years, explained that he's always trying to find a rational way of underpinning his beliefs. "I read a lot, and then I filter everything I read through my Adventist faith. And I hope it enables me to help others to also understand their faith," he said. "We are preaching a message that nobody else is preaching, and that's a sacred responsibility."



JAMES BOKOVOY

DOCUMENTARY TELLS REFUGEE STORIES

WORLD PREMIERE OF ADRA'S *STRANGERS AMONG YOU* FILM

JARROD STACKELROTH

On Thursday, July 10, in the Ferrara Theater at the General Conference (GC) Session in St. Louis, Missouri, United States, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) premiered a documentary on the plight of the world's refugees

Called *Strangers Among You*, the story follows refugees, migrants, and displaced people as they fight to feed their families, find employment, stay safe, and make new starts. The documentary was filmed in Colombia, Lebanon, Canada, Poland, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Thailand.

Director of the film, Arjay Arellano, said he started shooting the film in 2022 and was editing the 75-minute documentary right up until an hour before the first screening.

"[*Strangers Among You*] is a documentary film born out of countless miles traveled, countless stories heard, and countless moments of humanity captured on camera, because storytelling has power—it can tear down walls, soften hardened hearts, and spark action. It reminds us that behind every statistic, every news headline, there is a face and a dream," he said.

Arellano believes the film's human stories are relatable. A mother from Ukraine cannot find work in Canada, a father from Syria struggles to make enough money to feed his family, an ADRA worker in Colombia thinks about her unborn child as she feeds and interviews families of *caminantes* (walkers) walking across borders to provide a better life for their children.

The name of the documentary is based on Leviticus 19:34.

"As Christians we're called to look after the least of these, to welcome the stranger, to love our neighbors near and far," said Arellano. "My hope tonight is that this film opens our eyes, moves our hearts, and reminds us that in God's kingdom there are no strangers."

The film draws attention to some of ADRA's projects, including those that have struggled to maintain funding and are at risk of shutting down, such as a school for refugees in Lebanon.

Israa, from Syria, whose family is featured in the documentary, shares her dreams of getting an education. Her little brother wants to become an engineer or a doctor.

"I think I can speak on behalf of all of us when I say if that movie right there didn't move you, there's something not quite right on the inside," said Korey Dowling, ADRA International's vice president for people and excellence. "Because it just can't help moving you to action, to do something."

For Arellano it is important to tell the stories in a way that retains the dignity and humanity of the subjects.

"I feel as though the documentary helps to explain what ADRA does, but I want [viewers] to think about the people in the film," said Arellano. "These are families and communities—they have dreams, and because of what's happening around the world, all these opportunities are being taken away from them."

ADRA hopes to distribute the film on Adventist campuses and in ADRA offices around the world.

For updates on the film, visit adra.org/strangersamongyou.



HOPE AWAY FROM HOME

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After graduating high school, refugee's face the challenge of finding a job. Impact Hope's vocational training program empowers young adults to launch their careers!

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THE GIFT

Focusing on prophecy and the Spirit of Prophecy



JOHN BRADSHAW

DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE PRESENTED THURSDAY MORNING, JULY 10, 2025

A few feet beneath the Vatican's Belvedere Courtyard lie the skeletal remains of an elephant. Of course, elephants were not common in Italy at the time. Yet in 1962, workers installing a heating and cooling system were surprised to find elephant bones, which dated back to the sixteenth century.

Wanting permission to expand Portugal's control of shipping routes to India, the king of Portugal sent a trove of rare goods to the Vatican, hoping to convince Pope Leo X to look favorably on his request. He sent gold, jewels, textiles, and an elephant.

THOMAS KINTO

Ellen White was a lesser light to bring attention to the greater light of Scripture.

Pope Leo X (born Giovanni di Lorenzo de'Medici), who later excommunicated Martin Luther, was delighted. There had been few elephants in Italy since Hannibal crossed the Alps with three dozen pachyderms more than 200 years before the birth of Jesus. An elephant hadn't been seen in Rome for hundreds of years. But sadly for everyone involved, Hanno the elephant survived in Rome for only three years, the victim of less-than-stellar medical care. And so it was that he was buried in the Belvedere Courtyard, a stone's throw from the Sistine Chapel—a final resting place for the king of Portugal's gift.

The Bible often speaks of gifts. Motivated by a desire to save himself and his family, Jacob sent a rather generous gift to Esau—more than 500 head of livestock. Mary procured an expensive alabaster jar of ointment for Jesus. The queen of Sheba showed extravagant generosity to King Solomon. The Wise Men brought gifts to Baby Jesus and His parents—gifts fit for a King. And the Bible is a gift given to the human family. Salvation is, of course, the greatest gift of all.

The Holy Spirit is also given as a gift and is freely available to every one of us. "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" (Luke 11:13). And God, the great gift-giver, bestows upon His church a vitally important gift in the latter days of this earth's history. We read about it in the book of Revelation.

"And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 12:17).

We're speaking of a time that is surely unfolding as we speak. The dragon —Satan—is enraged at the woman, the church, to the extent that He makes war with her offspring, the remnant. And the remnant is described as those that keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

It is no secret that the devil is angry with the church. He hates the very idea that God would have committed the last-days message of justification by faith and the story of the great controversy to a modern Israel. He despises that this group would keep the commandments—all of them. Today he walks about as a roaring lion seeking to devour the church. John doesn't describe this event as merely a battle, a skirmish, a fracas, or a brouhaha. This is *war*. And the enemy of souls wants to nullify the impact of those people down here in the end of time who keep the commandments of God—who present to the world the seal of God in place of the mark of the beast, and who have the testimony of Jesus. And as John himself told us: "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10).

The Spirit of Prophecy has been given to the church to point us to Jesus; to keep us focused on the reason for our existence; to help us to see a little deeper inside our own darkened hearts; to reveal the great issues in these last days of history; and to assist us in our journey toward eternity. A statement like the following ought to sober you up while providing you with a little insight into some of what is happening in our time.

"Satan is . . . constantly pressing in the spurious to lead away from the truth. The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Prov. 29:18, KJV). Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God's remnant people in the true testimony."[1]

She goes on: "There will be a hatred kindled against the testimonies which is satanic. The workings of Satan will be to unsettle the faith of the churches in them, for this reason: Satan cannot have so clear a track to bring in his deceptions and bind up souls in his delusions if the warnings and reproofs and counsels of the Spirit of God are heeded."[2]

We understand now why God would give this gift.

Satan must attack the testimonies if he is to succeed, because they show us the character of God and the character of the enemy, and they point us relentlessly to the Bible as our rule of faith and practice.

Let me appeal to the world church: Don't let go of the Spirit of Prophecy. I want to encourage church leaders and church members to emphasize this precious gift. The Statue of Liberty was a gift, but this gift IS liberty, as it directs us to the One who died to set us free from sin and condemnation. We're not doing God's work when we're in opposition to the testimonies. We're doing the work of another power altogether.

Without neglecting the Bible for even a moment, read the Spirit of Prophecy. Read the Conflict of the Ages series. Your faith will grow, your love for spiritual things will increase, and your spiritual life will deepen. Read *The Great Controversy*, and then read it again. That's the book that brought me to faith in Christ. It changed my life. If you haven't read it, let it change yours also. Read *The Desire of Ages*. Read *Christ's Object Lessons*. See in those pages the character of Christ. See the love of God. Read the *Testimonies for the Church*. They were written specifically with the church in mind. You will find your own situation in there again and again.

Someone asks, "Can't I do that by simply reading the Bible?" God's people had the law, and yet He raised up Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and others to share a specific message for the times in which these prophets lived. The early church had the entire Old Testament, yet God gave the gift of prophecy through Philip's four daughters, and Paul, and Agabus, and Barnabas and Silas. The early church contained people who knew Jesus, yet God said, "I have more for you."

I wouldn't advocate for Ellen White's ministry if the Bible didn't do so. "The remnant . . . which . . . have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 12:17, KJV). Clear! God would not give a gift that you didn't need.

There are people who are concerned about those who misuse Ellen White's writings. And I sympathize with that. But there are people who misuse cellphones, and yet every person here has one in their pocket. People misuse automobiles, and we're not walking everywhere in protest. People misuse the internet, yet I haven't seen a single person in the past 10 days carrying a newspaper. If someone has misused something, you don't have to do the same. People misuse the Bible, but you're not about to become an atheist. Bless your children and introduce them to the Spirit of Prophecy. Invest in your students and encourage them to become familiar with this special blessing.

The gift of prophecy is persistently biblical. Ellen White was a lesser light to bring attention to the greater light of Scripture. Although only 2 percent of her writings are predictions, the predictions she made under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit are stunningly accurate. She strongly affirmed that the incarnation of Christ, and the fruit of her life was such that no one could ever accuse her of not being a true Christian. By every measure we have at our disposal, the gift of prophecy can be trusted. Strengthen your soul with this remarkable gift and look forward to that magnificent event she so often spoke and wrote of.

"The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all flow life and light and gladness, throughout the reals of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love."[3]

[1] Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958, 1980), book 1, p. 48.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 678.

John Bradshaw is president of It Is Written

Carol

is 80 and living with gratitude every day.

She had a friend tell her about ways to take advantage of new tax benefits so that she could help in a greater capacity. She is as excited as ever to help the youth program at her church continue to grow. But Carol still has questions.

To learn more about Carol's journey—
scan the QR code, or visit **willplan.org/Carol**



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What We'll Take Home

Session attendees reflect on takeaways beyond exhibit giveaways.

BECKY ST. CLAIR

Amid the abundance of giveaways at the General Conference (GC) Session exhibition—stacks of paper, piles of books, and a variety of keepsakes in every shape and color—attendees often also take home something far more meaningful. Beyond the souvenirs, many leave with renewed hope, fresh motivation, a sense of reassurance, and lasting connections.

Several attendees reflected, in conversation, on what they're taking with them—not in their suitcases, but in their hearts and minds.



CIRILO GODILANO, SOUTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION

This is a great experience, gathering the faithful and meeting people from around the world. Sitting in the meetings and seeing how our church is run administratively and spiritually is really tremendous. It lifts us up and shows how God is really working with our churches to advance the gospel.



PATRICIO ANDRES PAVEZ CORNEJO, SOUTH AMERICAN DIVISION

One of the beautiful things I have seen here is the unity of the church, with unity in mission. There are so many awesome ministries seeking to reach people for Christ, and that is something meaningful I'll take home with me.



NATASHA GULZAR, NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION

I'm going to take home the friendships I made from meeting new people here. I met some people from Fiji, Cameroon, and a lot of different places, and it was really cool to talk to them and learn about their different cultures.

JOSEF KISSINGER





JOSEPH RAMOS, NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION
I've been looking for materials to use for personal evangelism, and while I was here I realized I could give my neighbors *The Spirit of Prophecy* books whenever I want to give them gifts. So I bought quite a few of those, and am excited to use them.



MAURIZIO CARACCIOLO, INTER-EUROPEAN DIVISION
I will take home with me many things, but especially the spirit of fraternity. The relationships, the people we met, new projects we could start together with some colleagues from regions outside of ours. It has also been good to have the opportunity to tell people that we have publishing houses and schools in Italy, because so many do not know.



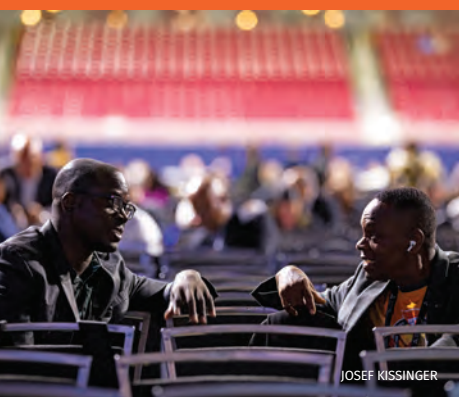
PETER MFUM KOFI ARTHUR, WEST-CENTRAL AFRICA DIVISION
Sometimes when you're out there, you think you're alone. But then you come here and see that people are interested in the Adventist hope, and from here I can go home and tell them we are not alone in doing God's work.



BALISASA VICTORIA, WEST-CENTRAL AFRICA DIVISION
Here I see so much brotherly love. There is no discrimination between White and Black—with whoever you meet you are happy, joyful, smiling, and you find that it brings us together to be one people. When I greet people, I find they are really interested in where I come from, and that makes my heart feel good. Adventism brings us together as one family, and I really saw that here at the GC Session.

Becky St. Clair is a freelance writer living in California.

SESSION GALLERY



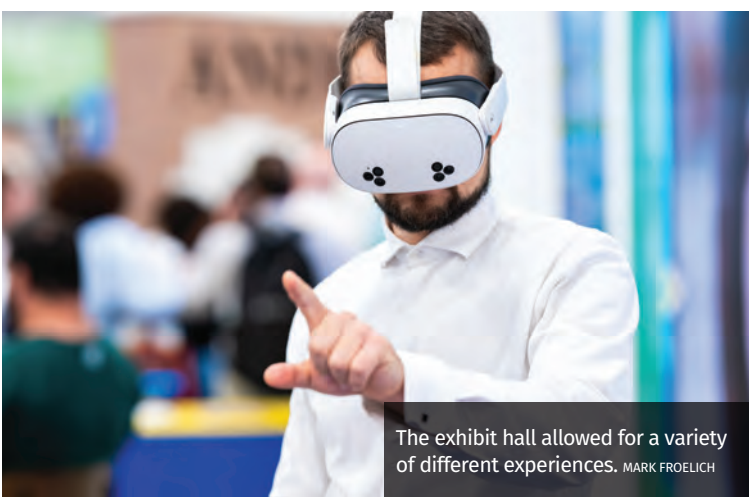
JOSEF KISSINGER



JAMES BOKOVOY



Participants from the Inter-American Division during their report on Thursday evening CHRISTINA COLLARD



The exhibit hall allowed for a variety of different experiences. MARK FROELICH



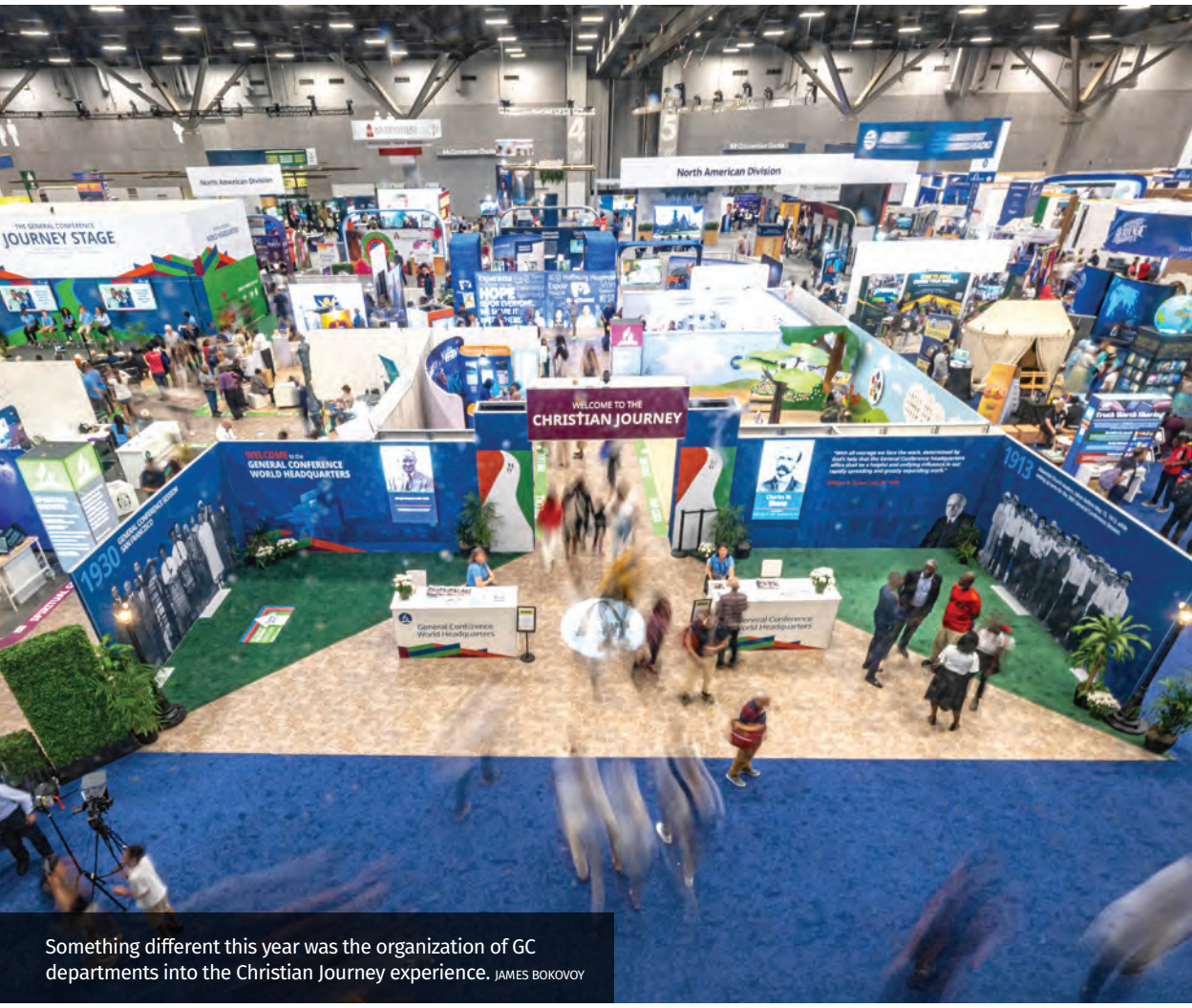
Jennifer LaMountain sang several times during the GC Session. DAVID B. SHERWIN



Exhibit hall friends CHRISTINA COLLARD



JAMES BOKOVOY



Something different this year was the organization of GC departments into the Christian Journey experience. JAMES BOKOVOY

ALL PHOTOS © AR

RISING WITH PURPOSE

A church grounded in the Bible and focused on mission



ERTON C. KÖHLER
GC PRESIDENT

SERMON PRESENTED
SABBATH MORNING
JULY 12, 2025

This sermon was preached on the second Sabbath of General Conference Session. It has been truncated for space, but elements of oral style have been retained.—Editors.

I would like to invite you to turn your hearts, ears, and eyes to our blessed hope: the second coming of Jesus. This hope reminds us that "Jesus is not preparing something for us, but He is preparing us for something He has already prepared."[1] The hope the Lord planted in our hearts should fill us with a sense of urgency, but unfortunately many of us have lost that urgency. In reality, "the early Christians expected Jesus to come *very soon*, our parents expected Him to come *soon*, and we expect Him to come *sometime* in the future."[2]

We cannot forget that a hopeless world is in desperate need of a hopeful church. As stated by the Swiss theologian Emil Brunner: "What oxygen is for the lungs, such is hope for the meaning of human life. Take oxygen away, and death occurs through suffocation; take hope away, and humanity is constricted through lack of breath; despair supervenes, spelling the paralysis of intellectual and spiritual powers by a feeling of the senselessness and purposelessness of existence."[3]

When we think of our blessed hope, one of the most significant quotations from Ellen White says: "The Lord is coming. We hear the footsteps of an approaching God."[4] What a powerful quotation from the Spirit of Prophecy! Every time I read it, I ask myself, How close are these footsteps?

To find the right answer to this question, we need to reflect more deeply on the signs of the second coming of Jesus mentioned in Matthew 24. If we study Matthew 24 with more attention, we will see two groups of signs that encapsulate all the signs of the Second Coming presented in the Bible. I believe we have enough Bible evidence to say that Jesus will come only when both groups of signs occur together.

The first group of signs appears in Matthew 24:4-13, where we can find a list of tragedies that will happen in the world, including "wars and rumors of wars" (verse 6), "famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places" (verse 7), as well as hate, false prophets, and lack of love (verses 9-13). In the Bible we have many other verses about the negative signs of the Second Coming showing that this world is falling apart.

The second group of signs is represented by Matthew 24:14, where we can see a church rising powerfully for mission. Matthew 24:14 calls our attention to the gospel of the kingdom being preached to the entire world. We

We cannot forget that a hopeless world is in desperate need of a hopeful church.

have absolute confidence that soon the present kingdom of Christ's grace will give place to the future kingdom of His glory, when He appears in the clouds of heaven. What a glorious day it will be!

The hope of the Second Coming is expressed in many prophecies throughout the Bible. This message was entrusted to us, as Seventh-day Adventists, to preach boldly "to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people" (Rev. 14:6). Our movement came into existence because of this glorious hope, and it is part of our spiritual DNA. It is expressed in our very name "Adventists," and it is the core of our fundamental beliefs.

A WORLD IN CRISIS

We all agree that our world is falling apart. The negative signs are before our eyes, and we can see them everywhere. I don't need to say much on this matter, but I would like to highlight at least some of them. Let me call your attention first to the symbolic Doomsday Clock, which appeared for the first time in 1947 in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*.[5] This clock illustrates how close humanity is to a global catastrophe leading humanity to self-destruction.

On January 28, 2025, the clock was set at 89 seconds to midnight, which means closer to midnight than ever before since it was created more than 75 years ago.[6] In setting the clock one second closer to midnight, the Science and Security Board sends a stark signal: our world is in an extremely dangerous situation, at the very border of a global disaster. And this is not the only indicator that things are not getting better, but rather worse and worse every day.

Unquestionably this is the work of God's enemy in his untiring attempts to destroy this world. He uses the human agents sowing selfishness, hatred, polarization, betrayal, corruption, and all kinds of degeneration of human personal and social behavior (see 2 Tim. 3:1-5). He also acts through natural disasters, and we can see the increase of nature's violence in droughts, fires, and floods. We can see a global crisis in such areas as finances, morality, politics, society, environment, and, unfortunately, even in the religious world.

Ellen White alerts us that "the agencies of evil are combining their forces and consolidating. They are strengthening for the last great crisis. Great changes are soon to take place in our world, and the final movements will be rapid ones."[7] She is talking about great changes happening with increasing urgency. In reality, we have no time to recover from one tragedy, and then the next one is already here. Each one is more devastating than the previous one. This is an accurate picture of our days.

AGENTS OF HOPE

All these tragedies, crises, and problems require our attention, our love, our care. We are called to be agents of hope, committed to relieve the suffering of humanity. Our attention cannot be focused on all the negative signs around us. This is not the emphasis of the second coming of Jesus. We can't spend our time always looking for a tragedy here and another there that could motivate us to be prepared for the Second Coming. Our message is not a message of fear or sensationalism. It is a message based on hope and security, not anxiety or fear (see Luke 21:25-28). We are moved by hope. All the negative signs showing the world falling apart are not our priority. The direction the world is taking is not in our hands and does not depend on us.

Our focus is on a church rising powerfully for mission. This is God's priority, and it needs to be our priority as well. To finish the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom to all the world is the major sign of the second coming of Jesus.

We can easily recognize that the world is falling apart. But I have a question for us to think

Our focus is on a church rising powerfully for mission.

about: Is the church already rising powerfully for mission? If we are just an army in a trench, we are already a defeated army. Our church is not called to be a warehouse, but rather a distribution center. While the direction of this world is not in our hands, the responsibility to rise up for mission is ours. We have the call, the commission, the promise of the power of the Holy Spirit, and the certainty that Jesus will be with us always, even to the end of the age (see Matt 28:18-20).

OUR COMMITMENT

At this very special occasion I would like to invite you, in all your initiatives, not only to deal with the world falling apart, but to prioritize the raising of the church powerfully for mission. Gottfried Oosterwal reminds us that "mission is the heartbeat of the church. If it stops, the church ceases to be. Each institution, every program, and any activity of the church has meaning—and the right to exist—only if it participates in mission. . . . No believer, really, can sing in church, 'Redeemed, redeemed, Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb,' or pray, 'Thy kingdom come,' without thereby binding himself to participate in Christ's own mission. Nobody can truly say that he belongs to God's own people unless he serves Christ as a missionary."[8]

But if you are not "committed to mission you are like a firefighter who runs into a burning building just to fix a painting on the wall."[9] This should never ever be our condition. But it will end up happening to us if we prioritize what is not our real priority. If we would like to see Jesus coming in the clouds of heaven, this is the time for us as a global church to rise up powerfully for mission. This is a call for all of us—our children, our teens, our young adults, our experienced people, our aged ones; for man and woman, the deaf, the blind, and all other people with disabilities; for each member, pastor, or leader. It is a call for all areas of the church—for every local church, every organizational level, and each institution.

The church will arise powerfully for mission only if we have a deep commitment to be grounded on the Bible and focused on the mission, praying earnestly for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. We desperately need a revival in our personal life and in the life of the church, making us a people who advance on our knees. We need a reformation that will prepare us to live, not according to our personal opinions, but according to God's orientation. We want a church that loves, believes, and seeks the guidance of the Spirit of Prophecy, revealed through the prophetic ministry of Ellen White. A church that is ready to use all means for the mission. A church committed to distributing literature, which plays a prophetic role, using the latest technologies to reach people where they are, without barriers, and can communicate the message to the fast-paced minds of our days. Indeed, a church that was born in the nineteenth century but is prepared to face the challenges and needs of the twenty-first century.

A church that is ready to be raised powerfully for mission moves forward in an integrated way, recognizing that together we are stronger, we go further, and we arrive faster. A church that promotes unity among the different generations, avoiding silos of isolation. In Ellen White's own words: "My brethren, allow nothing to come in that will separate you from one another or from God. Talk not of differences of opinion, but unite in the love of the truth as it is in Jesus."[10] Our differences are like musical notes: together, in God's hands, they can form the most harmonious and beautiful symphony. This does not mean that we will not have differences and problems, but that we will know how to disagree with love, education, and balance, avoiding polarization and strengthening integration.

Our church will be raised powerfully for mission only if mission is the priority of our initiatives, meetings, personnel, and resources. We can't be distracted by things that are not the real priority of our church. But you know that the more we grow, and the more we increase our structure, and the more complex we become, the greater becomes the risk of drifting away from our sacred mission. This happens when we start celebrating other achievements apart from fulfilling the mission that the Lord has entrusted to us.

Our mission is very clear: to preach the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12 to the entire world, and this always within the framework of hope. We can adjust methods, but never change our Bible-based message. Our methods and strategies need to be refocused to reach the most challenging areas and people groups around the globe. We need a mission that promotes a healthy and dynamic growth in quantity combined with a deep growth in quality.

We can't be a church that measures its growth by a simple ABC—Attendance, Buildings, and Cash—but one that is strongly committed to the "D" of Disciple-making. A church that can expand our front doors and close our back doors. A warmer church, which is not focused only on itself, like a club of saints, but which is focused on people. After all, Jesus came for people, lived for people, ministered to people, died for people, and when He returns, He will take only people to heaven.

A church rising powerfully for mission is one that can respond to God's call as well expressed by George Matheson: "[Lord,] send me to the hearts without a home, to the lives without a love, to the crowds without a compass, to the ranks without a refuge! Send me to the children that none have blessed, to the famished that none have fed, to the sick that none have visited, to the demoniac that none have calmed, to the fallen that none have lifted, to the leper that none have touched, to the bereaved that none have comforted!"[11]


JAMES BOKOVOY

Our church will be raised powerfully for mission only if mission is the priority of our initiatives, meetings, personnel, and resources.

How I would love to see our church rising powerfully for mission with its feet on the ground, but its eyes fixed on heaven! A church with a clear call to be distinct but not distant (see John 17:15). A remnant church called to prepare this world for the second coming of Jesus, our blessed hope. Yes, Jesus is coming soon, and we can "hear the footsteps of an approaching God."[12] "Soon we shall see Him in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. And in His presence the trials and sufferings of this life will seem as nothingness."[13]

CONCLUDING REMARKS

We, gathered here in this dome, represent "every nation, tribe, tongue, and people" around the world (Rev. 14:6). By faith we can behold that glorious day in which Christ will appear in the clouds of heaven for our everlasting salvation, and join the great multitude "of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands" (Rev. 7:9). You and I must be there!

We can see the world falling apart, but the Lord is calling us, as His representatives. What better time could we have to make a commitment, as the worldwide Adventist family, to focus on the mission and rise powerfully for mission, through the power of the Holy Spirit?

We have here the representatives of the 212 countries and territories where we are present, and leaders of our 23-plus million members. We are the people the Lord can use to raise and mobilize the church powerfully. We are those the Holy Spirit would like to use as channels of blessings. Here are those who can preach the gospel of the kingdom to the entire world (Matt. 24:14) to see Jesus coming in our generation. Please, let's work together with the Holy Spirit to raise the church powerfully for mission.

This is the time to keep our feet on the ground but also keep our eyes on heaven, waiting for the day when the Lord, "with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God" (1 Thess. 4:16), will appear in the clouds of heaven. And finally, the church will not only be powerfully raised for mission, but will also be wholly prepared for heaven.

While waiting for that glorious day to arrive, let's renew our hope that Jesus is coming soon, and commit ourselves to I Will Go. If you would like to renew your commitment to the Lord, to His mission, and to the second coming of Jesus, our blessed hope, please, stand up while the choir sings.

[1] Anonymous saying.

[2] Ruben M. Scheffel, *Com a eternidade no coração*, Daily Devotional for 2010 (Tatuí, SP, Brazil: Casa Publicadora Brasileira, 2009), p. 116. (Emphasis supplied.)

[3] Emil Brunner, *Eternal Hope*, trans. Harold Knight (London: Lutterworth Press, 1954), p. 7.

[4] Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946), p. 219.

[5] "The Clock Starts Running," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, https://thebulletin.org/doomsday-clock/timeline/.

[6] John Mecklin, ed., "Closer Than ever: It Is Now 89 Seconds to Midnight," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Jan. 28, 2025, https://thebulletin.org/doomsday-clock/.

[7] Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 9, p. 11.

[8] Gottfried Oosterwal, *Mission: Possible: The Challenge of Mission Today* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1972), p. 15.

[9] Saying attributed to Dwight L. Moody.

[10] E. G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 11.

[11] George Matheson, *The Representative Men of the Bible: Adam to Job* (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, [1902]), p. 173.

[12] E. G. White, *Evangelism*, p. 219.

[13] Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1917), p. 731.







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I WILL GO
I WILL GO
I WILL GO



The divine worship service in The Dome at America's Center, July 12, 2025

JAMES BOKOVOY

Through the Eyes of a Child

Kids share their views about General Conference Session.

BETH THOMAS

The General Conference (GC) Session is a big event. It impacts the grown-ups and the kids. From colorful booths to worship with thousands, kids from all around the world are discovering how special it is to be part of a worldwide church family. We asked a few of them to share their favorite parts of session—and what they've been learning.



Lila, 9

Q: What's the most exciting thing you've seen?

"The stage! It's so big, and there are so many seats! I like seeing the different pictures of cities on the screen."

Lauren, 7

Q: Why do you think so many people are here?

"Because our church is from all over the world! Lots and lots of people came here."



Amy, 15

Q: What have you learned about God and His church?

"I've loved seeing how diverse our church is! I am lucky to be a part of a church that has a lot of different cultures represented, but it still doesn't have as many as are present here. It's been so amazing working in the exhibit hall, because I've been able to meet so many people from different countries and languages. It's also been really interesting to learn about different countries, because I'm interested in going somewhere as a missionary. This gives me an idea of where I'd like to go."



Benjamin, 6

Q: Why do you think people came from all over?

"To see important things and learn how our church works."

Enoch, 6

Q: What's something fun you've done here?

"There's a booth with a big airplane you can sit in! I haven't gone in yet, but I really want to. I also help my dad at his booth—I hand out stickers!"



PHOTOS BY CHRISTINA COLLARD



Benjamin A., 14

Q: What surprised you the most?

"I was surprised by how many ministries are here! I knew there'd be a lot, but it's just really inspiring to see so many people doing God's work in different ways."



Cyrus, 15

Q: What's it like to be around so many Adventists?

"It feels like one big family. Even if you don't know everyone, it feels like you do—nobody's a stranger here."



Adriel, 16

Q: What will you tell your friends when you go home?

"It's a cool event to have like a huge church family all around, to see the different ministries and the booths and to see where God is leading, especially as we come to these final years of life here on earth, to see where God is leading with the General Conference and with our church."



Naomi, 10

Q: How would you describe GC Session to a friend?

"I would tell them that it was a big convention and that it was really fun, especially the booths, and learning how God can work through the different ministries—and also the talks!"

Sarah, 4

Q: Why do you like GC Session?

"It looks nice! People wear pretty costumes. It makes me want to visit the countries they're from!"

From preschoolers to teens, it's clear: GC Session is a place to explore, learn, and see how God is working within His worldwide family. And whether it's airplanes, stickers, the stage, pretty outfits, or meeting new friends from across the globe, there's something here for everyone.

Stewardship Department Launches *Generous Acts* at GC Session

JARROD STACKELROTH

A book of stewardship-themed dramas, great for creative church services, has been launched by the General Conference (GC) Stewardship Department on July 11 at the GC Session in St. Louis, Missouri, United States.

Authored by Australian semiretired business consultant Ken Long, *Generous Acts* contains brief parable-like scripts ready to use at a local church.

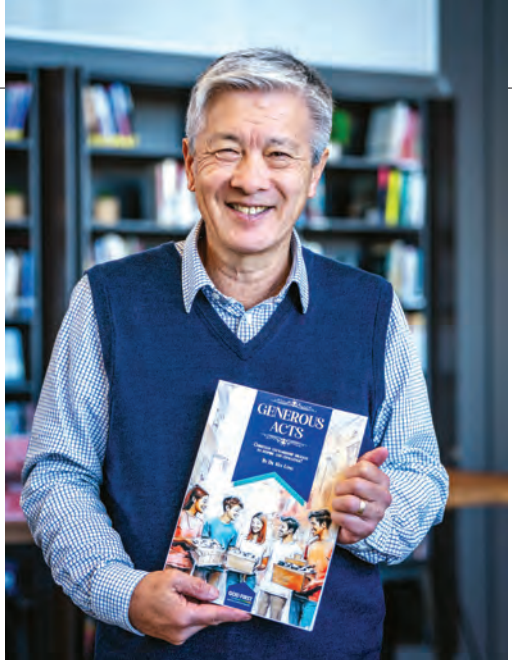
"*Generous Acts* is a book of stewardship dramas in which stories come alive, faith is ignited, and the message of stewardship unfolds in unforgettable ways," said Long. "As Jesus used different ways to connect with His audience, so we can use drama to engage our congregations and inspire them to think about stewardship and generosity."

The book dedication took place in the exhibition hall, on the Journey Stage, and was attended by Marcos Faiock Bomfim, GC Stewardship Ministries director; Aniel Barbe, GC Stewardship Ministries associate director; and Busi Khumalo, GC Youth Ministries director, as well as a number of division Communication directors.

"Some people may ask, 'Why have stewardship books?' The reason is not that you want to have more money in the church," said Bomfim. "First, stewardship leads people to connect their lives to God and to offer themselves to serve God. And we return tithes and offerings because Jesus, in Matthew 6:21, says, 'Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.' It strengthens our connection with God."

The book is a resource that has potential for ministry by and for young people

"*Generous Acts* is a resource that speaks to the felt needs of the youth. We believe that it will enhance the collaboration that already exists between the Youth and Stewardship departments," writes Khumalo in the book's foreword.



ROD LONG

The book is the latest collaboration between Long and the Stewardship Ministries Department, following *The Model Steward Canvas* and *The Model Steward Canvas Workbook*. Long also authored *The Giving Equation* and has a passion for delivering the message of stewardship differently.

"Stewardship and giving have always been central to my life. It feels as though God has called me to be a stewardship evangelist—someone who shares the incredible benefits that come when we recognize His ownership and respond accordingly," writes Long in the book's preface. "While a sermon provides valuable insights, a dramatic performance creates an immersive experience that captivates the audience."

Long describes himself as a stewardship champion and said he has been passionate about stewardship all his life.

"[I've been] frustrated by the general failure of churches, ministry and laity, to comprehend the God-given benefits of giving and the focus, almost exclusively, on giving from the church organization's perspective. This stewardship approach ignores the compelling, giver-oriented way in which Jesus presented stewardship.

Long's other book, *The Model Steward Canvas*, has been designed to assist aspiring entrepreneurs in developing a business model with a kingdom purpose. The GC is currently translating the resource into Portuguese and Spanish.

For a copy of *Generous Acts*, follow this link: https://stewardship.adventist.org/generous-acts-book-word-pdf.



Comrades in Arms: Four longtime *Adventist Review* team members are retiring: (left to right) Merle Poirier, Lael Caesar, Bill Knott, and Claude Richli. DAVID B. SHERWIN

Retired Church Leaders Honored

During the Sabbath afternoon program, July 12, at the sixty-second General Conference Session in St. Louis, Missouri, U.S., 30 church leaders of the world church were honored, as they move into retirement.

Those honored were staff of the General Conference, its institutes, as well as division executive officers, including presidents, secretaries and treasurers. The number represents the years of service to the church.

Guillermo E. Biaggi, General Vice President, General Conference—50

Mario A. Brito, President of Inter-European Division—44

Lael O. Caesar, Associate *Adventist Review* Editor, General Conference—46

Dennis R. Carlson, Director of Planned Giving and Trust Services, General Conference—46

Williams Costa, Jr., Director of Communication, General Conference—53

Ganoune Diop, Director of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty, General Conference—39

George O. Egwakhe, Associate General Conference Treasurer—47

Daniel E. Herzel, Associate Director of Auditing Service, General Conference—46

Hudson E. Kibuuka, Associate Director of Education, General Conference—45

Yo Han Kim, President of Northern Asia-Pacific Division—34

Bill M. Knott, Associate Director of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty, General Conference—46

Ezras Lakra, President of Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division—40

Peter N. Landless, Director of Health Ministries, General Conference—49

Andrea T. Luxton, President of Andrews University—41

Wendell W. Mandolang, Secretary of Southern Asia-Pacific Division—43

Almir M. Marroni, Director of Publishing, General Conference—43

Geoffrey G. Mbwana, General Vice President, General Conference—48

Duane McKey, President of Adventist World Radio, General Conference—54

Julian Melgosa, Associate Director of Education, General Conference—43

Derek Morris, President of Hope Channel International—48

Daisy Jane Orion, Associate Treasurer, General Conference—50

Timothy L. Poirier, Associate Director of Ellen G White Estate, General Conference—44

Claude J. Richli, Associate Secretary, General Conference—35

Marlon de Souza Lopes, Treasurer of South America Division—46

Alberto R. Timm, Associate Director of Biblical Research Institute, General Conference—43

Joel Tompkins, Treasurer of Northern Asia-Pacific Division—35

Filiberto Verduzco, Treasurer of Inter-America Division—45

Thomas Wetmore, Associate General Counsel, General Conference—40

Ted N. C. Wilson, President of General Conference—51

Lori T. Yingling, Director of Human Resources, General Conference—43

*Years of service were supplied by retirees and have not been verified by the various Seventh-day Adventist retirement plans.



Delegates proudly showcase their cultural heritage during the Mission on the Move pageant on the final Saturday night. JOSEF KISSINGER

Mission on the Move

Global church family shines in colorful finale.

BETH THOMAS

In a vibrant display, the sixty-second General Conference (GC) Session's final weekend came to a close with the anticipated Mission on the Move pageant—a tradition that began in 1958 and continues to inspire members nearly seven decades later.

Mission on the Move 2025 was held the evening of Sabbath, July 12, in the Dome at America's Center and celebrated the Seventh-day Adventist Church's global presence. Brightly colored cultural attire and a sea of flags represented the more than 23 million Adventist members from 212 countries and territories worldwide.

For many, the pageant is a highlight of GC Session—a rare opportunity to see representatives of the global Adventist family together in one place. "It concludes the session on a spiritual high," said Gary Krause, associate secretary of the General Conference and director of Adventist Mission. "It reminds us of our remaining challenges, but celebrates our unity in diversity in focusing on our mission to all the world."

Season Cromwell, host and producer with Hope Channel International, and world-renowned baritone Wintley Phipps served as moderators, giving a short description of each division and its constituent countries. As each region was introduced, delegates and representatives walked proudly around the Dome, showcasing their heritage and the ways God is moving in their part of the world.

Cromwell appealed to attendees, "The flags you see today represent our global church. But while we celebrate, let's notice the flags that represent unreached countries. Let's remember the mission challenge that still faces us in the three mission refocus windows—the 10/40 window, the post-Christian window, and the urban window. As we watch the flags pass before us this evening, may they not only represent where the church currently is—but where our mission must still go!"

PHOTO GALLERY


CHRISTINA COLLARD


CHRISTINA COLLARD


MARK FROELICH


DAVID B. SHERWIN


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The Quiet Cost of Leadership

The unseen courage of families who follow the call

BECKY ST. CLAIR

The applause may be loud, the moment full of promise—but what follows a Nominating Committee announcement at the General Conference (GC) Session often signals the start of a life-altering journey, not just for the leader, but for the spouse and family standing quietly behind them.

Loida Pamplona studied medicine in Spain and specialized in obstetrics and gynecology. After her residency, she obtained a job at a hospital near their home. A few years after starting this job, Loida earned her Ph.D. in medicine. Then she had her first child and focused on her family.

Last week during GC Session, Loida's husband, Samuel Gil Soldevilla, was nominated to serve as associate Communication director for the GC. This meant a relocation from Spain to Maryland, United States (U.S.).

"We had hours to decide," Pamplona shares. "And we had not expected this at all."

Professionally, the transition for Samuel is relatively simple. For Loida, it's not so simple, as medical degrees do not transfer as easily internationally. "I don't expect to work [in the U.S.] as a gynecologist," she admits.

Paula Sabuin had an established career as a nurse, having worked in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Korea for nearly 20 years. But as a pastor's wife, she was also expected to fill roles she wasn't trained for. "They thought the pastor's wife should be a pastor, too," she explains.

In 2022, when her husband, Richard Sabuin, accepted a call to serve as associate director for the Education Department at the GC, Paula had to walk away from her career as a nurse. "I miss my job as a nurse, because I loved my patients," Paula shares. She has also found her life in the U.S. much lonelier than the one she enjoyed in Asia. "When my husband is away, I cry alone, I pray alone. It's very hard."

Liliam Martinelli and her husband, Mario, moved from Brazil to Spain 15 years ago when he began serving as CEO of Editorial Safeliz, a publishing house in Spain. It was a difficult transition, but over the years, the Martinellis helped plant a church, made many friends, and settled into life in Spain. Then last week Mario was elected to serve as director of the GC Publishing Ministries Department. "It's difficult to leave the publishing house, our local church, and our friends behind," Liliam says. "I cried and prayed a lot."

At the same time, "our greatest challenges are God's opportunities," she adds. "The two of us are one before God, so the call is for both of us, and I know God has a mission for me, too."

Becky St. Clair is a freelance writer living in California.



Seventh-day Adventist Goats

JARROD STACKELROTH

It's a humid morning in St. Louis. I've grabbed a bite of breakfast and a juice in a local café right across the road from the convention center where the General Conference (GC) Session is taking place.

If you've been to a café in the early morning, you'll be familiar with the scene of people rushing in and out, mostly in a hurry, grabbing and going, with barely time to say hi.

A young girl comes up to me, all smiles. She wants a bite of my breakfast, and her mom apologizes. I say it's fine. I've got a 2-year old at home. She is pulled away from my side by her mom shaking the bag she has bought. The little girl follows her mom, who is now her best opportunity for a snack.

From the street entrance comes a young couple who seem to be in the company of a man with no shirt. As he walks in, he takes some kind of light jacket and wraps it around his torso, leaving the front zipper open. While the man looks dishevelled, hair dreadlocked, and clothes ill-fitting, the young couple are well dressed, clean cut, and fresh faced. They interact with the man, buying him a meal and a drink. They pay and leave, while he waits to collect his food. He leaves shortly after, prize in hand.

I have no way of knowing if that couple are Adventists, but it's not a stretch to believe they were. They left the café, crossing the street in the direction of the convention center.

Like the priest and the Levite, they were on their way to fulfill important religious purposes. But like the Samaritan, they stopped to help their neighbor.

The brief interaction gave me an important lesson. While it's easy to get caught up in the politics of the church at a time like GC Session, this young couple saw an opportunity to do good. They saw a way they could bless their neighbor. Not to convert but to feed the hungry.

We need to remember to make the main thing the main thing!

We love talking about who is elected. Delegates and visitors flood the exhibition halls to grab free stuff. We enjoy the music and feel proud of our worldwide diversity and mission efforts. But right in front of us, on every corner, there are needs.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to be like Jesus.

Like the priest and the Levite, they were on their way to fulfill important religious purposes.

Now, let me give a disclaimer. I don't love the people that use this argument of focusing on the mission to shut down conversation. It is healthy for us as a people to discuss and wrestle with what we believe, to care about theology, strategy, and structure. We need the frameworks to facilitate mission.

But I've been in the church long enough to know that it's easy to make a program our focus, to talk and debate for endless hours without any activity.

The faith of Jesus is to be lived out. Those who have been washed by the blood of the Lamb need to have fresh and recently lived testimonies. We should be asking, every day, whom we can serve, restore, and even feed. To be a Seventh-day Adventist means we are waiting in eager anticipation of Jesus' return. But when He gets here, will He find a flock who fed, watered, clothed, and visited Him, or a herd of goats?

I'm talking to myself as well. As we leave St. Louis, let's ask Jesus to help us find an opportunity to serve Him today.

Jarrod Stackelroth is managing editor of *Adventist Record* and *Signs of the Times* for the South Pacific Division. He is currently in St. Louis working with the *Adventist Review* team.

Scan this QR code to read all of the Session proceedings and actions online.

Eighth Business Meeting

SESSION ACTIONS CORRECTION

62nd General Conference Session, St Louis, Missouri, July 8, 2025, 9:30 a.m.

ADVENTIST YOUTH MINISTRIES - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

Upon the decision of the Chair, the request to hold discussion on the item, Adventist Youth Ministries - *Church Manual* Amendment, until after lunch was accepted.

Guillermo E Biaggi, Chair
Claude J Richli, Secretary
Hensley M Moorooven, Actions Editor
Tendani P Severance, Recording Secretary

Twelfth Business Meeting

SESSION ACTIONS

62nd General Conference Session, St Louis, Missouri, July 10, 2025, 9:30 a.m.

A DIVINELY APPOINTED MINISTRY - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the item, A Divinely Appointed Ministry - *Church Manual* Amendment.

A DIVINELY APPOINTED MINISTRY - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment expresses how important it is for pastors to focus on training the local church leadership in the mission and work of the church.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 4, Pastors and Other Church Employees, pages 32 to 35, A Divinely Appointed Ministry, to read as follows:

A Divinely Appointed Ministry

Seventh-day Adventist ministers bear the God-given responsibility of proclaiming the everlasting gospel, making disciples, and equipping the saints according to their spiritual gifts in order to equip them for service (Eph. 4:11, 12; 2 Tim. 4:2). As Ellen G. White stated: "It was at the very beginning of His ministry that Christ began to gather in His helpers. This is a lesson to all ministers. They should constantly be looking for and training those who they think could help them in their work. They should not stand alone, trying to do by themselves all that needs to be done" (letter 53, 1905).

Among other responsibilities, pastors are called to do the work of an evangelist, reading God's word publicly and teaching obedience to it (1 Tim. 4:13; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; 4:2, 5). They are to encourage and exhort the believers (1 Tim. 5:1, 2; 6:2), and rebuke sinners (1 Tim. 5:20); ordain elders (1 Tim. 5:22; Titus 1:5); encourage the church to help the poor and those in need (Matt. 25:40); uphold the truth and take a firm stance against false doctrines (1 Tim. 1:3, 4; 4:7; 6:20, 21; Titus 1:9). They should be examples to the believers in all matters of faith and practice (1 Tim. 4:12). "Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:2-3). Another important part of the pastoral work is the visitation ministry. Ellen G. White stated: "Remember that a minister's work does not consist merely in preaching. He is to visit families in their homes, to pray with them, and to open to them the Scriptures. He who does faithful work outside the pulpit will accomplish tenfold more than he who confines his labors to the desk."—9T 124.

All believers have the privilege of being part of "a royal priesthood" that proclaims "the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:5-9). To support and guide this work God "gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:11, 12).

The New Testament describes how the leadership of the church was established. During His ministry on earth, Jesus appointed twelve apostles to accompany Him on His travels and sent them out to preach the Gospel and heal the sick (Mark 3:14, 15; Luke 6:13). He also sent out a larger group of seventy (Luke 10:1-23). This indicates that the organization of the church was initiated by Jesus Christ Himself in order to fulfill the mission of making disciples and teaching Bible truth (Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:8).

Soon after Christ's ascension, the apostles faced increasing demands with the fastgrowing church in Jerusalem. To cope with these challenges, they divided the leadership responsibilities in the local church into different areas. Seven men were chosen to "serve tables," caring mainly for the practical and material needs of the church, while the apostles confined themselves "to prayer and the ministry of the Word" (Acts 6:2, 4). Both leadership groups were involved in serving or ministering, but the manner of their involvement differed significantly. These avenues of ministry reflect the offices of deacon and elder/overseer described in Paul's writings (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:6-9). While most elders and deacons ministered in local settings, some elders, such as Timothy and Titus, were itinerant and supervised greater territory with multiple congregations (1 Tim. 1:3, 4; Titus 1:5).

In harmony with the leadership model of the Jerusalem church, the apostles appointed elders as spiritual leaders in every church (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5). This practice explains why apostles, when they left Jerusalem to preach the Gospel, did not leave a leadership vacuum in this major center of the early church. Several years later, Barnabas and Saul delivered to the elders the relief contributions they had collected from far-flung churches for the needy believers in Judea (Acts 11:29, 30). As Ellen G. White indicates, the "organization of the church at Jerusalem was to serve as a model for the organization of churches in every other place where messengers of truth should win converts to the gospel."—AA 91.

These New Testament principles of church organization guided Seventh-day Adventists in the years prior to and the decades

following its official organization as a church in 1863. During this time, ministers were employed by the various conferences as administrators and evangelists, raising up churches, and visiting established churches that needed counsel. Following the model of ministry of Timothy and Titus, conference-employed ministers almost never functioned as resident or "settled" pastors of a local church, in contrast to the practice in most Protestant churches then and now. In this regard, Ellen G. White wrote: "Instead of keeping the ministers at work for the churches that already know the truth, let the members of the churches say to these laborers: 'Go work for souls that are perishing in darkness. We ourselves will carry forward the services of the church. We will keep up the meetings, and, by abiding in Christ, will maintain spiritual life. We will work for souls that are about us, and we will send our prayers and our gifts to sustain the laborers in more needy and destitute fields.'"—6T 30. "As a general rule, the conference laborers should go out from the churches into new fields, using their God-given ability to a purpose in seeking and saving the lost."—Ev 382.

As a divinely appointed ministry, ministers are "to sow the seeds of truth. Place after place is to be visited; church after church is to be raised up. Those who take their stand for the truth are to be organized into churches, and then the minister is to pass on to other equally important fields."—7T 19. "Just as soon as a church is organized, let the minister set the members at work. They will need to be taught how to labor successfully. Let the minister devote more of his time to educating than to preaching. Let him teach the people how to give to others the knowledge they have received. While the new converts should be taught to ask counsel from those more experienced in the work, they should also be taught not to put the minister in the place of God. Ministers are but human beings, men compassed with infirmities. Christ is the One to whom we are to look for guidance."— 7T 20. "Our ministers should plan wisely, as faithful stewards. They should feel that it is not their duty to hover over the churches already raised up, but that they should be doing aggressive evangelistic work, preaching the Word and doing house-to-house work in places that have not yet heard the truth. . . . They will find that nothing is so encouraging as doing evangelistic work in new fields."—Ev 382.

These inspired counsels remain just as relevant today. Our ministers have the solemn responsibility of leading their congregations in the mission of reaching others for Christ. As Ellen G. White stated, "The work of God in this earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers."—9T 116. And "when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away" (1 Peter 5:4).

"God has a church, and she has a divinely appointed ministry. 'And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. . . . '

"Men appointed of God have been chosen to watch with jealous care, with vigilant perseverance, that the church may not be overthrown by the evil devices of Satan, but that she shall stand in the world to promote the glory of God among men."—TM 52.

Conference President—The conference president should be an - No change

Conference Departmental Directors—Conference departmental directors - No change

Ordained Pastors—Ordained pastors appointed by the conference committee - No change

Licensed Pastors—To give individuals an opportunity to demonstrate their - No change

Bible Instructors—The conference may employ Bible instructors and assign - No change

Conference Directs Church Employees—The conference president in - No change

TITHE - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the item, Tithe - *Church Manual* Amendment.

TITHE - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment expresses that faithfulness in tithing is vital to the work of the Church.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 12, Finance, pages 142 and 143, Tithe, to read as follows:

Tithe

~~In recognition of the biblical plan and the solemn privilege and responsibility that rest upon members as children of God and members of His body, the Church,~~ In loving response to the gift of salvation (Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:8-10), and in accordance with the biblical plan (Lev. 27:30), all are encouraged to faithfully return a tithe, one tenth of their increase or personal income, into the denomination's treasury.

Tithe shall not be used in any way by the local church, but held in trust and remitted to the conference treasurer. Thus tithe from all the churches flows into the conference treasury, and percentages are forwarded to the next level in accordance with General Conference and division working policies. This allows the Church to be a disciple-making movement in its regions, actively fulfilling its mission of sharing the everlasting gospel to the whole world in preparation for Christ's soon return. ~~next-higher level in accordance with General Conference and division working policies to meet the expenses of conducting the work of God in their respective spheres of responsibility and activity.~~

These policies have been developed for the gathering and disbursing of funds in all the world ~~and for the conducting of the business affairs of the cause. The financial and business aspects of the~~ for funding mission and evangelistic initiatives, and for conducting the business affairs of the Church. The financial and business aspects of this work are of great importance. They cannot be separated from the proclamation of the message of salvation. They are indeed an integral part of it.

Systematic Benevolence and ~~Unity—The~~ Unity—God's Word invites all believers to be faithful and systematic in their returning of tithe and giving offerings. The financial plan of the Church serves a larger purpose than appears in its financial and statistical reports. The system of sharing the funds with the world fields, as outlined by General Conference *Working Policy*, serves a wonderful purpose of unifying the Church's spiritual work throughout the world.

How Tithe Is to Be Used—Tithe is held sacred for the work of the ministry, for Bible teaching, and for the support of conference administration in the care of the churches and of field outreach (missionary) endeavors. Tithe shall not be spent on other work, on paying church or institutional debts, or on building programs, except as approved under General Conference *Working Policy*. For more information on the use of tithe, review Stewardship Ministries Resources, ~~see~~ Notes, #1, p. 190-191.

"A very plain, definite message has been given to me for our people. I am bidden to tell them that they are making a mistake in applying the tithe to various objects which, though good in themselves, are not the object to which the Lord has said that the tithe should be applied. Those who make this use of the tithe are departing from the Lord's arrangement. God will judge for these things."—9T 248.

How Tithe Is Handled—Tithe is the Lord's and is to be brought as an act of worship to the conference treasury through the church in which the person's membership is held. Where unusual circumstances exist, members should consult with conference officers.

Church and Conference Officers to Set Example—Elders and other officers, as well as the pastor and conference and institutional employees, are expected to set good leadership examples by returning tithe. No one shall be continued as either a church officer or conference employee who does not conform to this standard of leadership.

CONTINUING *CHURCH MANUAL* AGENDA

VOTED, To continue with the *Church Manual* agenda.

OFFERINGS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the item, Offerings - *Church Manual* Amendment.

OFFERINGS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment expresses the importance of giving offerings as an act of worship and explains the different offering plans.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 12, Finance, pages 143-145, Offerings, to read as follows:

Offerings

In addition to the tithe, Scripture emphasizes our privilege and responsibility to bring offerings to the Lord. We are encouraged to give offerings cheerfully and systematically as an act of worship for all that God has blessed us with, both great and small. Giving offerings is an act of loving sacrifice and a response of gratitude as we follow the Holy Spirit's promptings. Malachi 3:8-12 warns about withholding offerings and tithe and encourages us with the promise of God's blessing that will be poured out in abundance. Since the Church's earliest days, believers have given liberal offerings that have blessed and prospered God's work. ~~our obligation to bring offerings to the Lord. Withholding of offerings is classed with withholding tithe and is called robbery (Mal. 3:8). Since the Church's earliest days, members have given liberal offerings that have blessed and prospered God's work.~~

~~In addition to the traditional calendar of offerings program, where each offering taken is for a specific purpose, the General Conference has approved the combined offering system and the personal giving plan.~~ The Church has three offering plans: the Combined Offering Plan, the Calendar of Offerings, and the Personal Giving Offering Plan. Each division executive committee is authorized to determine which plan(s) will be used in its territory.

Regular and Systematic Offerings—Regular and systematic offerings are given after any income or increase in assets (Proverbs 3:9) as an act of worship, in recognition of God's blessings. They represent a worshiper's chosen proportion of any income or increase in assets (Deut. 16:17; 1 Cor. 16:2). One's expression of worship through financial stewardship begins with tithing and the support of the Church through regular and systematic offerings. Worshipers should be encouraged to distribute their regular and systematic offerings to equitably cover all the mission needs of the Church, locally, regionally, and internationally (Acts 1:8).

Where the Combined Offering Plan is practiced, worshipers are encouraged to give their regular and systematic offerings as unassigned offerings, that will be equitably distributed by the church according to a prearranged formula, covering all the mission needs of the Church, locally, regionally, and internationally (Acts 1:8). All unassigned offerings, collected at any time or mode, including during Sabbath School, will be distributed according to this same formula. (See p. 89.)

"Those churches who are the most systematic and liberal in sustaining the cause of God are the most prosperous spiritually."—3T 405.

"If the plan of systematic benevolence were adopted by every individual and fully carried out, there would be a constant supply in the treasury. The income would flow in like a steady stream constantly supplied by overflowing springs of benevolence."—3T 389.

Sabbath School Offerings—The Church's most widely used and successful method of regular systematic giving is through Sabbath School offerings, which are devoted to world mission work.

Other Offerings—Other offerings may be necessary from time to time for world mission work and for local projects. However, such offerings should be limited so as not to detract from the purpose and benefit of promoting regular and systematic giving. When such offerings are collected, they are to be used for the specific purpose for which it has been given. Those offerings should be promoted and given above and beyond regular return of tithe and systematic offerings through the local church. (For information regarding offerings collected during Sabbath School, see p. 88.) ~~are taken from time to time for world mission work and for general and local projects. When any offering is taken, all money collected, unless otherwise indicated by the donor, shall be counted as part of that particular offering.~~

Special Gifts to Fields—The financial support of the worldwide work of the Church is based on the budget system. Appropriations are made to the various fields on the basis of budgeted needs. This is a fair and equitable method of distributing the funds.

Where special gifts outside the regular budget plan are made to a particular field, a disparity is created to the disadvantage of other fields. If such gifts are given for the purpose of starting new work, the work thus started may languish when the special gift is used up, or it may have to be included in the budget for its future support. Thus other fields, with perhaps greater needs but without the opportunity of making them known, would be deprived of their equitable part of general funds that would be diverted to the work started by special gifts.

History has proved the wisdom of having members generously and loyally give their offerings and gifts through the accepted channels and knowing that every field shares in the benefits of their giving.

Assisting the Poor and Needy—Offerings for the poor and needy ~~are~~ may be taken to assist the members who require help. A reserve fund should be kept for such emergency cases. In addition, the church should take a benevolent attitude toward all in need, and the board may make appropriations from this fund to assist the church's health and welfare work for families in the community.

Church Budget for Local Expenses—The most satisfactory method of providing for church expenses is the budget plan. Before the beginning of the new budget year, the board should prepare a budget of expenses for church activities during the next year. The budget should include all income and expenses, including those related to all departments. It should provide for such projected costs as utilities, insurance, maintenance, janitor service, funds for the poor and needy, and church school expense. (See Notes, #2, p. 191, for sample budget.)

The budget should be presented to the church for its study and adoption, and for plans to assure that funds shall be provided to balance the budget during the coming year. Funds to meet the church expense budget may be raised by offerings or subscriptions. Members should be urged to support their local church in proportion to their financial circumstances.

Announcing Tithe and Offerings—Returning tithe and giving offerings is an essential part of the worship service. Great care should be given to announcing the tithe and offering collection during Sabbath School, Sabbath worship service, and, where possible, via church bulletins and other church communications. The announcement should promote biblical stewardship principles, including giving as an act of worship, the clear connection that exists between giving and mission, the value of regular and systematic giving, and the wonderful blessings that result from faithfulness. Resources are available through the offices of Adventist Mission and Stewardship Ministries of the

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TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY - *CHURCH MANUAL* ADDITION

RATIONALE: This addition underscores the importance of accountability through transparency and financial reporting.

VOTED, To add a new section, Transparency and Accountability, to the *Church Manual*, Chapter 12, Finance, following Auditing, on page 147, to read as follows:

Transparency and Accountability—The church should prepare quarterly reports to be presented to the church members. These reports should include information about the proper governance of funds, the adequate allocation of resources for mission-related purposes, and testimonies highlighting the impact of contributions on advancing the Church's mission. Furthermore, the church should present an annual report showing the proportion that is systematic in returning tithe and giving offerings.

CHURCH BOARD AND ITS MEETINGS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the motion to amend the item, Church Board and its Meetings.

CHURCH BOARD AND ITS MEETINGS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To not amend the item, Church Board and its Meetings - *Church Manual* Amendment by adding "the study and promotion of the writings of Ellen G White, Adventist history, and Adventist identity" after "Bible study" on line 16, page 13 of the revised agenda.

CHURCH BOARD AND ITS MEETINGS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the item, Church Board and its Meetings - *Church Manual* Amendment.

CHURCH BOARD AND ITS MEETINGS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment intends to highlight the importance of disciple-making, evangelism, and reclaiming ministries in the strategic plans of the church board.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 11, Services and Other Meetings, pages 134 to 138, Church Board and Its Meetings, to read as follows:

Church Board and Its Meetings

Definition and Function—Every church must have a functioning board whose members have been elected during a church business meeting. Its chief concern is having an active and comprehensive plan to fulfill its mission of making disciples, which includes evangelism, outreach to the community, and the spiritual nurture and training of the church. ~~discipleship plan in place, which includes both the spiritual nurture of the church and the work of planning and fostering evangelism.~~

Included in church board responsibilities are:

1. ~~An active discipleship plan.~~
2. ~~Evangelism in all of its phases.~~
3. ~~Spiritual nurturing and mentoring of members.~~
4. ~~Maintenance of doctrinal purity.~~
5. ~~Upholding of Christian standards.~~
6. ~~Recommending changes in church membership.~~
7. ~~Oversight of church finances.~~
8. ~~Protection and care of church properties.~~
9. ~~Coordination of church departments.~~

[Additional paragraph, see 411-25Gb]

The gospel commission of Jesus tells us that making disciples, which includes baptizing and teaching, is the primary function of the church (Matt. 28:18-20). It is, therefore, also the primary function of the board, which serves as the chief committee of the church. When the board devotes its first interests and highest energies to involving every member in proclaiming the good news and making disciples, most problems are alleviated or prevented, and a strong, positive influence is felt in the spiritual life and growth of members.

Christ's love for the Church needs to be manifested within the Church by His followers. Being a disciple entails not only Biblical teaching, but also a passionate commitment to loving our fellow believers unconditionally. This was the heart of Christ's message to His disciples as He faced the cross (John 15:9-13). Christ's command to them applies to us: that we "love one another." Ellen G. White's powerful insight into this historical scene is still vital for us: "This love is the evidence of their discipleship."—DA 677, 678.

~~Spiritual Nurture—Christ's love for the Church needs to be manifested within the Church by His followers. True discipleship entails not only Biblical teaching (Matt. 28:20), but also a passionate commitment to loving our fellow believers unconditionally. This was the heart of Christ's message to His disciples as He faced the cross (John 15:9-13). Christ's command to them applies to us: that we "love one another." Ellen G. White's powerful insight into this historical scene is still vital for us: "This love is the evidence of their discipleship."—DA 677, 678.~~

Therefore, it is one of the primary functions of the board to ensure that members are nurtured and mentored in a personal, dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ.

Making Disciples—The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ, who live as His loving witnesses and proclaim to all people the everlasting gospel of the Three Angels' Messages in preparation for His soon return (Matt. 28:18-20, Acts 1:8, Rev. 14:6-12). The purpose of the Church as the body of Christ is to intentionally make disciples so that they continue in an active and fruitful relationship with Christ and His Church.

Disciple-making is based on an ongoing, lifelong relationship with Jesus. The believer commits to "abiding in Christ" (John 15:6-8), to being trained for fruitful ~~discipleship~~ disciple-making by sharing Jesus with others, as well as to leading other members to also be faithful disciples.

The Church, individually and collectively, shares responsibility for ensuring that every church member remains part of the body of Christ.

Membership—The board is elected by the members at the time - No changes

Officers—The chairperson of the board is the conference-appointed - No change

Meetings—Because the work of the board is vital to the - No change

Work of the Board—The board is responsible to: 1. Develop and oversee an active, ongoing disciple-making plan which includes both spiritual nurture and evangelistic outreach. This plan is the most important item for the board's attention. ~~Ensure that there is an active, ongoing discipleship plan in place, which includes both spiritual nurture and outreach ministries. This is the most important item for the board's attention.~~

~~2. Study membership lists and initiate plans for reconnecting (reclaiming) members who have separated from the church.~~

~~3.~~ 2. Educate and nurture all members into a personal and dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ; one that includes prayer, Bible study, attending Sabbath School, witnessing, intentional spiritual growth, and using their talents and spiritual gifts in the church and community. ~~Train local church leadership in how to encourage intentional spiritual growth in themselves and others.~~

3. Study the membership list and initiate plans for reconnecting with (reclaiming) members who have separated from the church.

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A healthy church develops a nurturing plan that equips every member to be involved in disciple-making using their talents and spiritual gifts. In addition, it should create a strategy to retain and reclaim former and inactive members through (1) a regular redemptive membership review process and (2) reclaiming ministries. (See p. 61.)

4. Evangelize the outreach (missionary) territory of the church. Once each quarter an entire meeting should be devoted to plans for evangelism. The board will study conference recommendations for evangelistic programs and methods and how they can be implemented locally. The pastor and the board will initiate and develop plans for public evangelistic meetings.

5. Coordinate outreach programs for all church departments, although each department develops its plans for outreach within its own sphere. To avoid conflict in timing, competition in securing volunteers, and to achieve maximum beneficial results, coordination is essential. Before completing and announcing plans for any program, each department should submit its plans to the board for approval. The departments also report to the board on the progress and results of their outreach programs. The board may suggest how departmental programs can contribute to the preparation, conduct, and follow-up of a public evangelistic campaign.

6. Encourage the personal ministries department to enlist all members and children in some form of personal outreach (missionary) service. Training classes should be conducted in various lines of outreach ministry.

7. Encourage the interest coordinator to ensure that every interest is personally and promptly followed up by assigned laypersons.

8. Encourage each department to report at least quarterly to the board and to members at business meetings or in Sabbath meetings in regards to spiritual nurture and evangelism.

9. Receive regular reports. The board should consider details of church business and receive regular reports of the treasurer on the church's finances. ~~The board should study the membership record and inquire into the spiritual standing of all members and provide for visits to sick, discouraged, or backslidden members.~~ Other officers should periodically report.

10. Promote Adventist education.

Committees of the Board—The board should permit no other business - No change

CHURCH BOARD AND ITS MEETINGS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the item, Church Board and its Meetings - *Church Manual* Amendment.

CHURCH BOARD AND ITS MEETINGS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment intends to highlight the importance of disciple-making, evangelism, and reclaiming ministries in the strategic plans of the church board.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 11, Services and Other Meetings, pages 134 to 138, Church Board and Its Meetings, to read as follows:

Church Board and Its Meetings

Definition and Function—Every church must have [See 411-25GSa]

Included in church board responsibilities [See 411-25GSa]

In addition to this overarching plan, the church board is to ensure the protection, safeguarding, and care of all church attendees, foster faithfulness to biblical teaching and uphold Christian standards in the church, recommend changes in church membership, oversee church finances, coordinate the work of the various departments of the church, and maintain church properties.

The gospel commission of Jesus tells us that making [See 411-25GSa]

[Additional new paragraph, see 411-25GSa]

Spiritual Nurture—Christ's love for the Church needs to be manifested [See 411-25GSa]

Making Disciples—The mission of the Church is to make disciples [See 411-25GSa]

Membership—The board is elected by the members at the time - No changes

Officers—The chairperson of the board is the conference-appointed - No change

Meetings—Because the work of the board is vital to the - No change

Work of the Board—The board is responsible [See 411-25GSa]

Committees of the Board—The board should permit no other business - No change

BUSINESS MEETINGS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the item, Business Meetings - *Church Manual* Amendment.

BUSINESS MEETINGS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment allows for church business meetings to be held virtually.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 11, Services and Other Meetings, page 134, Business Meetings, to read as follows:

Business Meetings

The local church operates within defined roles in Seventh-day Adventist Church structure. Within the context of those roles, the business meeting is the constituency meeting of the local church. (See pp. 28-29.) Members in regular standing are encouraged to attend and are entitled to vote. A member under censure has no right to participate by voice or vote.

Business meetings shall be held at least once a year. The pastor, or the board in consultation with and support of the pastor, calls the meeting. Business meetings should be announced a week or two in advance at the regular Sabbath worship service, with detail as to time and place. The pastor, an elder chosen by the pastor, or, in some cases, the conference president, or his designee, serves as chairperson of the business meeting.

Each church decides what the quorum will be for future meetings.

Where authorized by the conference executive committee (who shall give guidance on basic principles and technical solutions) and approved by the church, members may participate in business meetings by means of an electronic conference or similar communication by which all persons participating can communicate with each other at the same time, and participation by such means shall constitute presence in person at such a meeting. Votes by proxy or letter are not permitted.

Major items should be decided at a regular or specially called business meeting.

The business meeting has authority over the board and may delegate responsibilities to the board in addition to those already assigned by the *Church Manual*. (See pp. 134-138.)

The business meeting agenda should include reports about the work of the church. At least once a year the agenda should include reports covering church activities. Based on those reports, a proposed plan of action for the next year, including an annual budget, should be presented for approval. When possible, reports and plans for the next year should be presented in writing. (See Notes, #7, pp. 189-190.)

In order to maintain a spirit of cooperation between the church and conference, the church shall secure counsel from conference

officers on all major matters.

Conference and union officers (president, secretary, treasurer) or their designee may attend without vote (unless granted by the church) any business meeting of any church in their territory. An action to allow voting is not required if the officer is currently a member of that congregation.

Audrey E Andersson, Chair
Elbert Kuhn, Secretary
Hensley M Moorooven, Actions Editor
Nichole N Miles, Recording Secretary

Thirteenth Business Meeting

SESSION ACTIONS

62nd General Conference Session, St Louis, Missouri, July 11, 2025, 9:30 a.m.

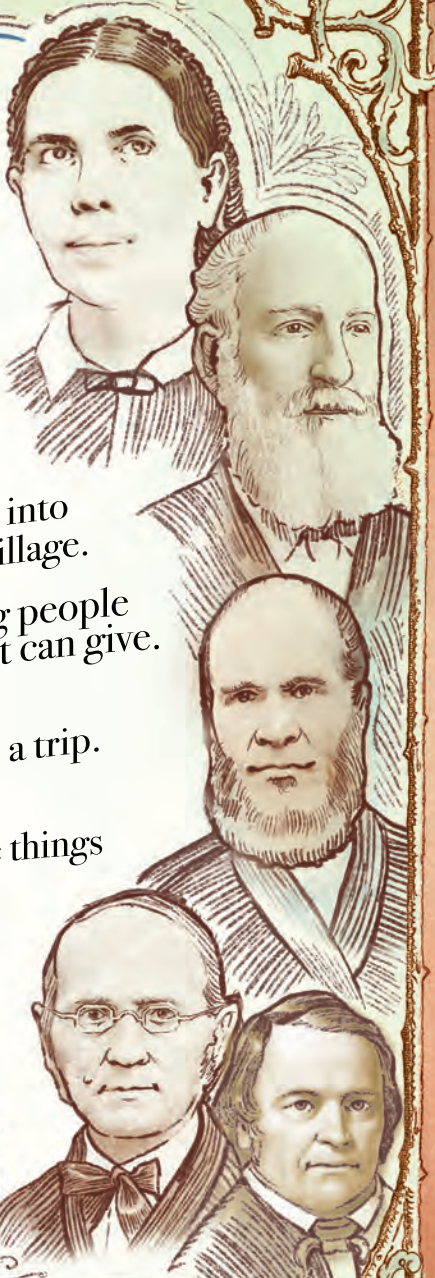
ADJOURNMENT
VOTED, To adjourn sine die.

Pierre E Omeler, Chair
Claude J Richli, Secretary
Hensley M Moorooven, Actions Editor
Nichole N Miles, Recording Secretary



DAVID B. SHERWIN

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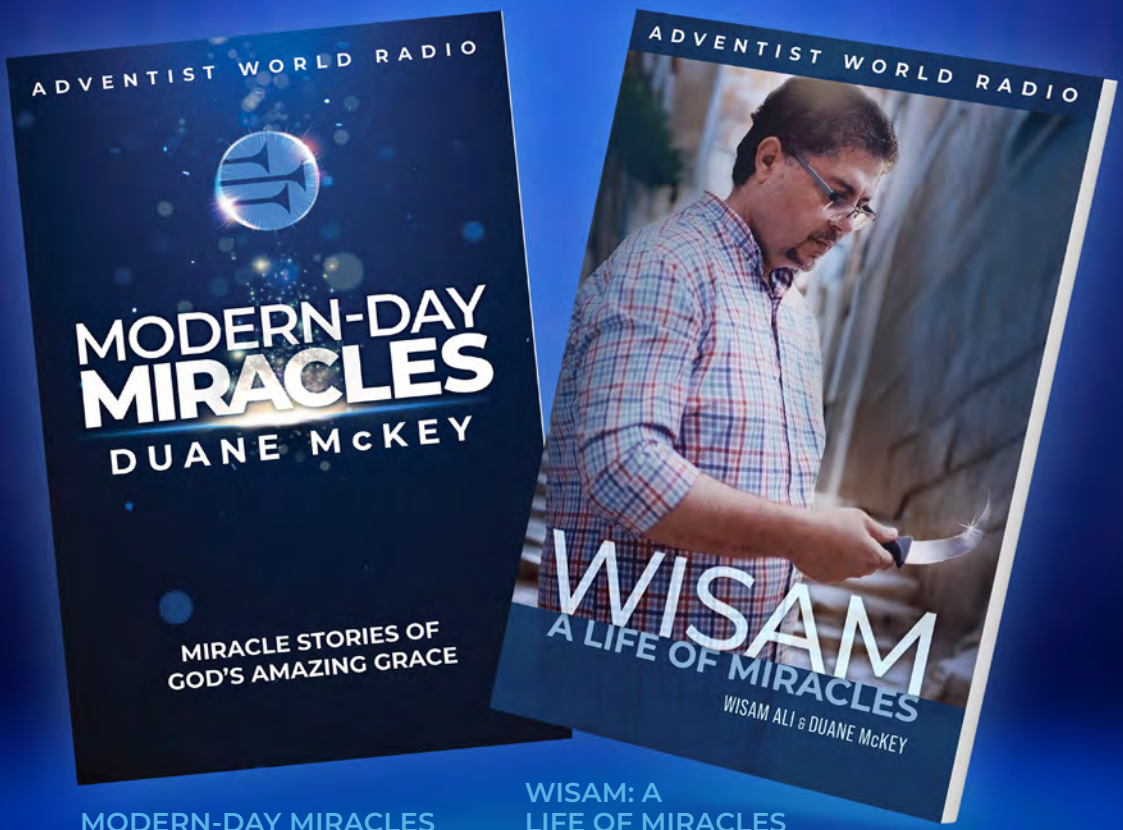
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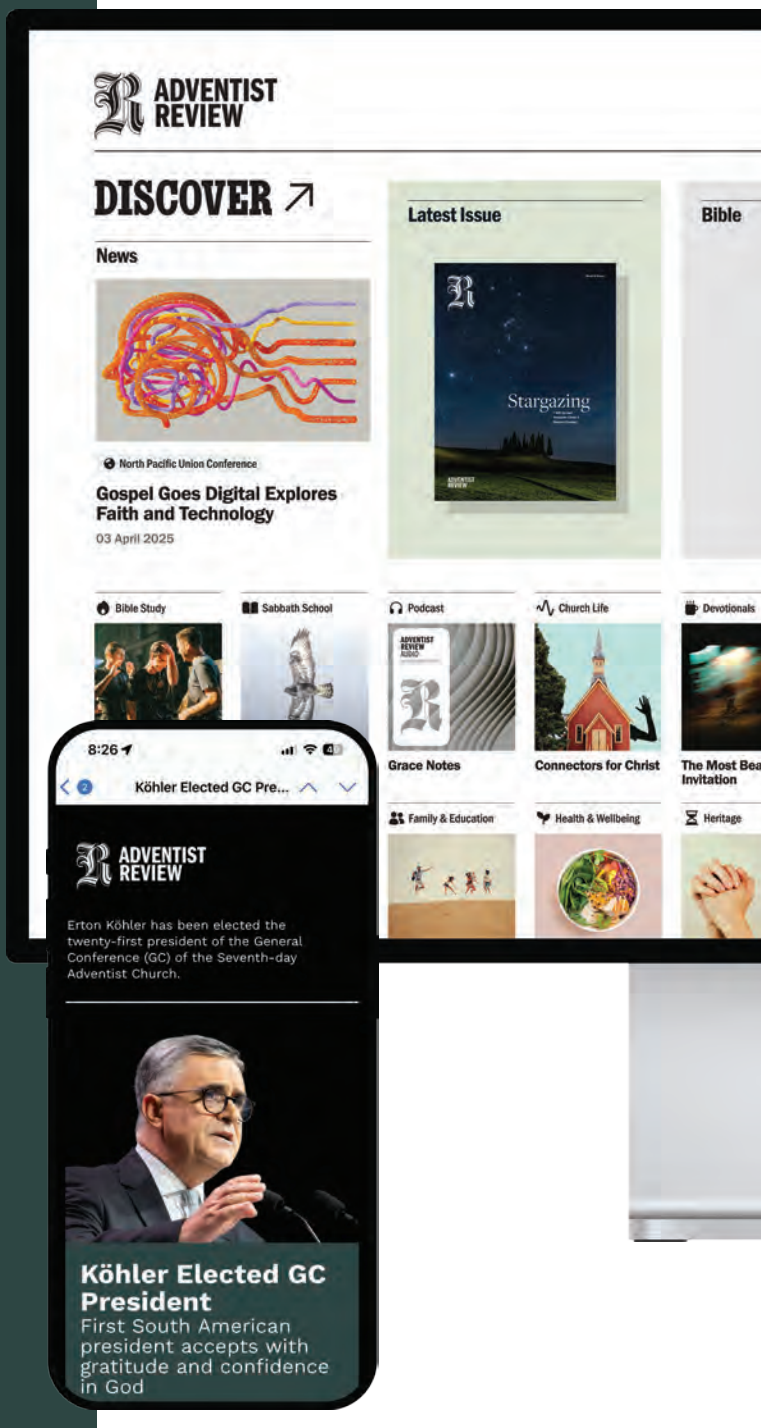
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