

# ADVENTIST REVIEW

JUNE 9, 2022

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Division presidents and their wives right after their election by the Session

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## DELEGATES VOTE FIVE NEW DIVISION PRESIDENTS

**IN THE OTHER EIGHT REGIONS, INCUMBENTS ARE ELECTED FOR ANOTHER TERM.**

MARCOS PASEGGI, *ADVENTIST REVIEW*

In the June 8 afternoon business session at the 61st General Conference (GC) Session in St. Louis, Missouri, United States, delegates voted to accept the recommendation of the Nominating Committee for the president positions in the thirteen 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.

### **YO HAN KIM, NORTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION (NSD)**

Kim was elected as NSD president after serving as NSD director of Adventist Mission and assistant to the NSD president. Previously, he had served as associate director and director of the 1000 Missionary Movement (1000MM) in the

Philippines for a total of 10 years. He also served as business manager of Sahmyook Health University in the Korean Union Conference from 2006 to 2012, and Mongolia Mission president from 2016 to 2021.

When Kim was director of the 1000MM, he managed the construction of most of the buildings needed for the ministry with donations. Then, as president of the Mongolia Mission, he helped coordinate the purchase of more than 8.32 square miles (21.55 square kilometers) of

land for future use of the church in the territory.

**HARRINGTON AKOMBWA,**  
*SOUTHERN AFRICA-INDIAN OCEAN DIVISION (SID)*

Delegates voted to accept the recommendation to elect Harrington Akombwa as the new SID president. Until his election, he was president of the Zambia Union Conference/Southern Zambia Union Conference, a position he held from 2008 to 2020. Working in church administration since 1994, he also served as Zambia Union Conference secretary (2000-2008) and president of the West Zambia Field (1994-1998).

Akombwa completed undergraduate and graduate studies at Solusi College (later Solusi University) and, in 2010, a Doctor of Ministry in Leadership at Andrews University.

**ROGER CADERMA,** *SOUTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION (SSD)*

Roger Caderma was elected as the new president of the SSD after delegates accepted the recommendation of the Nominating Committee. In the past few months, he had been serving as SSD vice president. From 2017 to 2021, Caderma had served as president of the South Philippine Union Conference, after being the region's executive secretary from 2015 to 2017. Before that, he was president of the Southern Mindanao Mission from 2008 to 2015 and stewardship and planned giving director of the South Philippine Conference from 2005 to 2008. He also served in religious

liberty positions, both in the South Philippine Conference and the Western Mindanao Conference.

As Southern Philippine Union Conference president, Caderma led a region that was consistently at the top in number of baptisms in the division. He also initiated the Mega Church Integrated Projects (MCIP), which helped to fund the construction of churches on a rotation basis.

**DANIEL DUDA,** *TRANS-EUROPEAN DIVISION (TED)*

Appointed TED education director in 2005, Daniel Duda has also served in the past few years as TED field secretary and TED Adventist Mission director. From 2005 to 2015, he also was the region's ministerial secretary.

Duda has served as a pastor, evangelist, theology lecturer, and ministerial secretary in the Czechoslovakian Union. He also served in the Russian Federation as head of the Theology Department and academic dean at Zaoksky Theological Seminary (now Zaoksky Adventist University) before arriving at Newbold College in 1998, where he held several positions.

Duda is passionate about studying the Bible and sharing his findings with others, being a frequent speaker at camp meetings in Western, Central, and Eastern Europe.

**ROBERT OSEI-BONSU,** *WEST-CENTRAL AFRICA DIVISION (WAD)*

Robert Osei-Bonsu was voted as the new WAD president after

serving as dean of the Theological Seminary at Adventist University of Africa (AUA) in Kenya. He had been an associate professor at AUA since 2020.

With extensive experience as an educational leader, Osei-Bonsu had served before 2020 not only as a church pastor in Ghana but also in various educational administration positions at Ghana's Valley View University, including as rector (chief academic and administrative officer) and pro-vice chancellor of the school.

As a young pastor, Osei-Bonsu had served as youth, chaplaincy, and communication director of the South Central Ghana Conference.

## INCUMBENT DIVISION PRESIDENTS

### East-Central Africa Division

Blasious Ruguri

### Euro-Asia Division

Mikhail Kaminskiy

### Inter-American Division

Elie Henry

### Inter-European Division

Mario Brito

### North American Division

G. Alexander Bryant

### South American Division

Stanley Arco

### South Pacific Division

Glenn Townend

### Southern Asia Division

Ezras Lakra





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## ELECTED LEADERS INCLUDE NEW FACES ON WELL-ESTABLISHED TEAMS

**DELEGATES VOTE TO ACCEPT DOZENS OF NOMINATING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS.**

MARCOS PASEGGI, ADVENTIST REVIEW

**D**elegates to the 61st General Conference (GC) Session in St. Louis, Missouri, United States, voted to accept the recommendations of the Nominating Committee on dozens of church leaders on June 7, 2022. The names voted include several new faces in a team of well-established GC departments, as well as GC Treasury, GC Secretariat, and GC Auditing Services. Those new to their positions are briefly featured below, starting with GC Secretariat, followed by GC Treasury and GC Auditing Service, and concluding with departmental directors.

### SAW SAMUEL

Delegates voted to elect Saw Samuel as an associate secretary of the GC. He will fill a position left vacant by John Thomas's retirement. Samuel had been serving as president of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division since 2016.

As a division president, Samuel sought new ways to reach the many Buddhists and Muslims in his region even as he sought wisdom from God to value each day as a

precious gift to be used wisely.

He was first elected executive secretary of the division in 2010. Before that, he worked for two years as ministerial secretary of the Southeast Asia Union Mission in Singapore. The rest of his career as pastor and administrator were spent in Thailand, serving as executive secretary of the Thailand Adventist Mission (2002-2008); director of the Leadership Education and Development (LEAD) program at the Thailand Adventist Mission (2006-2008); Youth director at the Thailand Adventist Mission (2002-2004); pastor of the Bangkok Adventist Hospital Church (2000-2002); and chaplaincy coordinator for Seventh-day Adventist English Language Schools in Thailand (1998-1999).

### JOSUE PIERRE

Delegates voted to elect Josue Pierre as an associate treasurer of the GC. Since 2016, he has been serving as associate general counsel of the GC. Prior to joining the Office of General Counsel, he served as an associate county attorney with

the Prince George's County, Maryland, Office of Law from 2012 to 2016.

Pierre, a Juris Doctor (George Washington University), is a member of the Maryland and District of Columbia bars in the United States. His practice areas include contracts, transactions, real estate, purchasing, procurement, and data protection.

### RICHARD STEPHENSON

Richard Stephenson was elected as an associate treasurer for technology operations and strategy. Before his election, he was serving as director of Information Technology (IT) services for the North American Division (NAD).

Stephenson became IT director for Madison Academy in Tennessee in 2005. In that role, he launched one of the first one-to-one laptop programs in the NAD, equipping every student with a laptop and printer, and leading the shift to an online learning environment. In 2008, he transitioned to director of IT for the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference, its first full-time IT director. Stephenson placed significant emphasis on educational technology for the dozens of schools in the conference.

In 2009, Stephenson accepted the call to serve as associate director of IT for the Southern Union Conference in Georgia, and in 2013, he became IT director in that region. Under his direction, the Southern



JAMES BOKOVY © AR

Union began to host centralized payroll and accounting at the union office, as well as many other services, on behalf of its conferences.

Stephenson loves to integrate technology into the organization in a way that produces positive change.

### IVAN OMAÑA

Ivan Omaña was elected director of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries (ACM) less than a year after he became associate director of that department in August 2021.

Since 2015, Omaña had served as the assistant director of ACM for the NAD, providing support, encouragement, and denominational oversight to more than 300 chaplains in all areas of chaplaincy in the Pacific Union Conference and the North Pacific Union Conference. Previously, he served as senior chaplain at Florida Hospital Kissimmee (now AdventHealth Kissimmee; 2002-2015) and as a chaplain in Adventist Care Centers (2000-2002). During the 1990s, Omaña was a pastor in the West Central Venezuela Conference, where he also served as the official translator for every major evangelistic and ecclesiastical event.

### ORATHAI CHURESON

Orathai Chureson was elected Children's Ministries director. She has served in the same position for the Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD) since 2015 and also served as Families Ministries director in that region (2015-2021). Additionally, since 2021, she has served as a coordinator for the Ministerial Spouses Association in the SSD.

Chureson, who holds a Ph.D. in Education (Curriculum and Instruction), has experience as a teacher, business office clerk, and later, a tertiary instructor in the English Department of the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS).

She is a published author, having authored the books *A Glimpse of God's Grace* and *Homeward Bound: Sermons for Children and Families*.

She is married to the newly elected GC associate secretary Saw Samuel.

### RAMON CANALS

Delegates voted to elect Ramon Canals ministerial secretary of the General Conference Ministerial Association after being director of GC Sabbath School and Personal

Ministries (SSPM) since April 2017.

Canals was born in the Dominican Republic but grew up in New York. He served for years as a local church pastor in the New Jersey Conference in the NAD and has been a full-time evangelist, associate ministerial director, and Hispanic ministries coordinator.

As leader of SSPM, Canals worked with division, union, and conference leaders to cast the vision of Total Member Involvement, an initiative of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to get every member involved in mission. Canals enjoys encouraging people to get involved in the community and soul winning.

As an evangelist, Canals has conducted evangelistic meetings on most continents. He has also helped to train Sabbath school teachers and taught seminars for leadership conferences around the world.

### AURORA CANALS

Aurora Canals was elected director of Pastoral Spouses and Families. Before being tapped for her new position, she was serving as undertreasurer of the Chesapeake Conference in the NAD.

Canals is an accomplished professional with a comprehensive accounting and payroll management background. Before acquiring a degree in Business Administration, she worked with her husband as assistant evangelist in the Oregon Conference in the NAD. In that role, she helped prepare candidates for baptism. As a Ministerial and Hispanic coordinator's wife, Canals



organized convocations for training and resourcing church members to fulfill the church's mission.

### **JAMES M. HOWARD**

James M. Howard was voted as the new director of Sabbath School and Personal Ministries. He had been serving as associate director of the same department since August 2021.

Before taking his current role at the General Conference, Howard served as a pastor in the Ohio and Michigan conferences and as the evangelism coordinator and Personal Ministries director for the Michigan Conference. His ministry was preceded by a 12-year accounting career in which he last held the position of business unit controller.

Throughout his ministry of preaching, teaching, training, and developing soul-winning resources, he has helped both leaders and laypeople to accept the call of Christ to share the three angels' messages with others. His burden is to lead every member to a closer walk with Jesus through communion with God, fellowship with the church, and active involvement in both personal and public outreach.

### **BUSI KHUMALO**

Busi Khumalo was elected as the new director of Youth Ministries, after serving as Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries and Adventist Youth Ministries director for the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division since 2010.

An alumnus of Helderberg College in South Africa, where he pursued undergraduate and graduate studies, Khumalo had served as Youth director of the Southern Africa Union Conference from 2004 to 2010.

"A church without young people is a dead church," Khumalo says. "I believe that young people are the future of the church."

Khumalo has also been known as a firm supporter of urban evangelism, emphasizing the role young people can play in it. "Young people are dynamic, highly educated, sophisticated, and some are apathetic to matters of faith. We need to engage in extraordinary measures to reach the elite in the world's societies. Thus, [we must be] intentional in including Adventist young people to reach out to their counterparts." 🍌

## **INCUMBENTS RETURNED TO THEIR POSITION**

### **GENERAL CONFERENCE SECRETARIAT**

Moise J. F. Hensley Mooroven, undersecretary

Gerson Santos, associate secretary

Claude Richli, associate secretary

Gary Krause, associate secretary, Adventist Mission

Elbert Kuhn, associate secretary, Adventist Volunteer Service

Karen Porter, associate secretary, IPRS

### **GENERAL CONFERENCE TREASURY**

J. Raymond Wahlen II, undertreasurer

Timothy Hiroki Aka, associate treasurer, Investments

George Egwakhe, associate treasurer

German Lust, associate treasurer, IPRS

Daisy Orion, associate treasurer

### **GENERAL CONFERENCE AUDITING SERVICES**

Robyn Kajjura, director

Gary Blood, associate director

Boris Cardenas, associate director

Daniel E. Herzel, associate director

Guillermo Leal, associate director

C. Maurine Wahlen, associate director

Associate regional directors

### **GENERAL CONFERENCE DEPARTMENTS**

Communication: Williams Costa Jr., director

Education: Lisa Beardsley-Hardy, director

Family Ministries: Wilbert Oliver, director;

Elaine Oliver, associate director

Health: Peter Landless, director

Planned Giving and Trusted Services: Dennis Carlson, director

Public Affairs and Religious Liberty: Ganoune Diop, director

Publishing Ministries: Almir Marroni, director

Stewardship Ministries: Marcos Faiock Bomfim, director

Women's Ministries: Heather-Dawn Small, director

## Sixty-four percent of attending delegates indicated that this is their first GC Session.

### THE NEW FACE OF THE SESSION

SHAWN BOONSTRA, ADVENTIST REVIEW

Thanks to the pandemic, the General Conference (GC) Session has a bit of a new face: the stands above the Session floor are typically far more crowded this time than in the past, and there is no physical exhibit space for global ministries and institutions to showcase their work (although there is a virtual exhibit space you can access through the GC Session app).

Another remarkable way in which the session is wearing a new face: the number of new participants. As the nominating committee prepared its work, associate general counsel Josue Pierre helped members calibrate the digital election platform, called

ElectionBuddy. To test the voting, “we tend to ask, not a serious question, but a question that will reveal to us that the system is working,” he commented. “So one of the questions I thought of—especially for the nominating committee—was, ‘How many of you have never served on a General Conference nominating committee?’ To our surprise, the overwhelming majority had never served [before].”

About 63 percent, it turns out, were new to the process. “I think we’re really at a turning point where we’re seeing a turnover of the old guard into the new guard,” Pierre explained.

A similar calibration vote that was conducted to acquaint delegates with the voting process for the Session revealed a parallel phenomenon to what was experienced in the nominating committee. Sixty-four percent of attending delegates indicated that this is their first GC Session.

In addition to all the new faces in the Session, there has also been a significant turnover in conference administration. According to Pierre’s sources at the North American Division (NAD), more than half of the conference presidents in the NAD over the past two years are new.

The mission of the church never changes, but the faces sure do. 🦋

### VICE PRESIDENTS ELECTED

Seven general vice presidents were elected, including two new officers: Audrey Andersson, former executive secretary of TED (center), and Maurice Valentine, former NAD vice president (right). Elected incumbents include Thomas Lemon, Artur Stele, Guillermo Biaggi, Abner De Los Santos, and Geoffrey Mbwana.



DAVID B. SHERWIN © AR





Delegates to the 2022 GC Session voted electronically using a mobile app.

JAMES BOKOVY © AR

## HOW ELECTIONS WORK AT A GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION

SHAWN BOONSTRA, ADVENTIST REVIEW

**T**he election process at the General Conference (GC) Session can be shrouded in mystery for a lot of people watching from afar. During the course of the Session, more than one hundred positions are filled. As the new officers are presented each day, many people wonder: How in the world were they chosen? Does a shadowy cabal make decisions in the background? Is the election a foregone conclusion?

Not at all. If you've participated in filling positions at your local church, you likely already know how the process works. Usually, once a year, a local church congregation selects a nominating committee that meets to discuss and vet names for the various offices of the church, ranging from elders and deacons to Sabbath school teachers and the various department heads. Once the nominating committee has prayed over the names and discussed the best choice for each position, they bring the results of their deliberations back to the congregation, which then votes on their candidates. Once all the names are approved by popular vote, the candidates assume their new offices.

It works the same way at all levels of the church, Claude Richli of the General Conference Secretariat explains.

"It's basically the same process

throughout the whole system. . . . When the conference constituency takes place, every church is apportioned a certain number of delegates, based on the size of the church, to be sent as constituent members. When they get to the constituency meeting, they are recognized as delegates, and some of them will be selected to be on the nominating committee by the organizing committee—meaning there are two committees that do their work, so that it reduces the risk of political interference. This process takes place in the same way at the union level and at the division level.

"So let's say, for instance, at the division level you will have unions recommending to the division the delegates that they would like to send to the General Conference Session. And then through the division comes a recommendation to the General Conference Administrative Committee and then Executive Committee. So it goes through many levels. The people who are here have been vetted throughout the whole system."

The Nominating Committee faced a considerable task during the long days of the 61st Session. Their first discussion lasted nearly five hours before the committee brought back the name of incumbent Ted Wilson for General Conference president.

That is just one of many positions to nominate, which means that the committee will be *very* busy throughout the course of the week.

The process is expedited considerably by using online technology. In the past, paper ballots were cast and manually counted, which could slow down the voting process considerably. In St. Louis, delegates are using ElectionBuddy, a digital voting system that enables delegates to vote by using their personal devices. The system—known to be secure—has been working smoothly, in spite of the hiccups faced by delegates on the first day of the Session, when WiFi connectivity in the auditorium became a little spotty as delegate usage suddenly swamped it during some of the earliest votes. North American delegates were encouraged by the chair to switch to their cell-phone data connections, and the problem was quickly resolved as demands on the routers dropped. After the bugs were ironed out, the voting ran smoothly, and voting participation on most agenda items has been high.

How are General Conference officers chosen? Essentially, *you* choose them. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has always been a grassroots, bottom-up organization, and the highest authority of the church is the assembly of delegates at the General Conference Session. When the newly elected officers appear on the platform each day, they are there because of a process that started with you. ▀



BY JONGIMPI PAPU

DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE  
PRESENTED WEDNESDAY  
MORNING, JUNE 8, 2022

This issue of how righteousness is attained remains important for Adventists. How are we justified before God? On what basis does God declare us righteous? Abraham believed in God, and this was accounted to him as righteousness. On this basis alone, Abraham was accepted by God and declared righteous. This is not a “just believe” theology but a platform that makes it possible for Christ to change our hearts so that we are able to do His will. According to Ellen White, this is a subject that should occupy the minds of those who live at the end of time:

# FAITH THAT WORKS

*Connecting covenant and faith*



“The point that has been urged upon my mind for years is the imputed righteousness of Christ. I have wondered that this matter was not made the subject of discourses in our churches throughout the land when the matter has been kept so constantly urged upon me. . . . There is not a point that needs to be dwelt upon more earnestly, repeated more frequently, or established more firmly in the minds of all than the impossibility of fallen man meriting anything by his own best good works. Salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ alone.”<sup>1</sup>

The statement—“And he [Abraham] believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness” (Gen. 15:6)—is sandwiched between two questions. The first one, “What will You give me?” as recorded in Genesis 15:2, opens our eyes to the significance of faith as the ground for righteousness. The second question—“How shall I know that I will inherit it?” (verse 8) introduces us to the covenant God made with Abraham, a covenant whose key focus is obedience.

### THE FIRST QUESTION

This text “And he [Abraham] believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness” (verse 6) demands careful investigation. Paul, in Romans 4, references this text in his argument on justification by faith. In Galatians 3 he refers to those disobedient to the truth of justification by faith as fools who have been bewitched. James takes great pains in chapter 2 of his book to show his audience that faith without works is dead and uses Abraham’s experience to illustrate the point.

### *What Led to the Question?*

God had appeared to Abraham on three separate occasions (Gen. 12:2; 12:7; 13:15). We have no record of verbal response from Abraham. But on this occasion, as Abraham felt the need to talk to God, for the first time we share his opinion. The reassurance God gave Abraham inspired him with confidence not only to ask a question but to share his opinion. The assurance was that God would be Abraham’s “shield” and his “exceedingly great reward” (Gen. 15:1).

This reassurance prompted Abraham for the first time to ask God about the nature of this reward, seeing that God had not given him offspring. In accordance with prevailing custom, Abraham points God to Eliezer, his servant, as a

legitimate heir of his house. Abraham’s servant, the man from Damascus, would be Abraham’s contribution to fulfilling God’s promise. This would exclude any possibility of a miracle; it would not demand faith. This was the natural and cultural way of solving the predicament of not having a child of his own.

### *God’s Response*

“This one,” God responds, “shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir” (verse 4). The Lord repeated His promise of many descendants for Abraham once more. Abraham was faced with two options: believing God or continuing to trust in the human-devised “Eliezer plan.” We are told that Abraham chose to believe God, and He “accounted it to him for righteousness”

Paul retells this story in Galatians 3:8: “And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, ‘In you all the nations shall be blessed.’” This statement reached far beyond Isaac to Christ, the promised Son of God. Abraham accepted this promise by faith, he believed the gospel, and he accepted God’s provision for the salvation of humanity.

Paul suggests that the truth in Genesis 15:6 is the same truth celebrated by David in Psalm 32:1, 2: “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity.” Abraham’s transgression was forgiven, his sin covered, and righteousness was imputed to him based on his faith.

Let the record show that Abraham believed God. This was in stark contrast to what took place in the Garden of Eden: Adam and Eve were chased out of the Garden of Eden, as Ellen White puts it, for believing the words of Satan and disbelieving the words of God.<sup>2</sup> It was their disbelief that led to their fall. Eating the fruit was a confirmation of an attitude of unbelief.

Abraham, by his belief in God, was qualified to inherit the garden of Eden. In 2 Chronicles 20:7 and Isaiah 41:8, Abraham is referred to as God’s friend. But it is in James 2:23 that this friendship is linked to the statement “Abraham believed God.” God’s friends are those who believe in Him. Friendship is based on trust.

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# The condition of God's covenant with Abraham was perfect obedience; a blameless character. This is possible for those who appropriate His grace and live a life of faith in God.

## *God's Promise Is the Gift of His Son, Jesus.*

"What will you give me?" Abraham asked. God's answer was *Not only will I give you Isaac, the promised son—I am your exceedingly great reward.* Paul says the promise was to Abraham and his Seed, who is Christ (Gal. 3:16). "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). The Sabbath symbolized God's desire to be with humanity. In the garden of Eden, Adam and Eve had all the gifts, but the greatest was God's presence. It has always been about His presence and not just His presents.

*What will you give me?* John says, And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people" (Rev. 21:3). I agree with William Handy who penned the Negro spiritual "Give me Jesus, give me Jesus, you may have all this world, give me Jesus."<sup>3</sup>

## THE SECOND QUESTION

"How shall I know I will inherit it?" This is not a question inspired by doubt. Abraham did not want to know so he could believe. He believed the word of God and hence the desire to know. Ellen White says Abraham "begged for some visible token as a confirmation of his faith and as evidence to after-generations that God's gracious promises toward them would be accomplished."<sup>4</sup>

## *God's Response to Abraham's Second Question*

*How shall I know that I will inherit it?* In response to this question, the Bible says, "On the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram" (Gen. 15:18). In the covenant God promises to bless Abraham and expects him to walk before [Him] and be blameless (see Gen. 17:1). They both walked between the cut animals, symbolizing the fate of anyone who breaks the covenant. He saw it and was glad. Ellen White says, "The plan of

redemption was . . . opened to [Abraham] . . ."<sup>5</sup> It is in this sense Abraham rejoiced to see the day of Christ (John 8:56).

## *Abraham Learns to Be Obedient to God's Voice*

Interestingly, Abraham had to be declared righteous to walk before the Lord blameless. Blamelessness does not lead to God's acceptance, but is the result of acceptance before God. In taking Hagar as his second wife, Abraham failed the test, but was not declared unrighteous, for it was by faith and not works that he was declared righteous. God's grace does not give up on us because of our failure, but instead teaches us to learn from our failures.

In Genesis 22 Abraham's obedience to the voice of God was tested to the limit. "God desired to prove the loyalty of His servant before all heaven, to demonstrate that nothing less than perfect obedience can be accepted."<sup>6</sup> Abraham's act of faith met with God's approval: "Now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me" (Gen. 22:12). The covenant promise was repeated in Genesis 22:18 because Abraham obeyed God's voice. Abraham met the condition of the covenant.

## CONCLUSION

John the Revelator describes the last-day remnant as those who "keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:12). God can then say to them, "Now I know that you fear Me, for you have obeyed My voice" (see Gen. 22:12)✍

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Faith and Works* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1979), pp. 18, 19.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1890, 1908), p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> See *The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1985), no. 305.

<sup>4</sup> E. G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 137.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

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**Jongimpi Papu** is a professor of applied theology at the Adventist University of Africa in Nairobi, Kenya.

# CITY SIDEWALK EVANGELISM MINGLING & INVITING CHRIST'S METHOD IN ACTION

## WHAT IT IS

The General Conference Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department is launching an exciting initiative called City Sidewalk Evangelism. The premise is simple. Targeting major cities, individuals will spend two weeks offering invitations to a series of Bible studies planned for the following two weeks—a four-week ministry cycle. This cycle will be repeated for a year using different teams of individuals. The invitations will be given in busy city areas near the host church.

## WHAT IT WILL DO

- Utilize an affordable, simple method
- Find people who the Holy Spirit has convicted to believe and live by God's Word
- Transform churches into lighthouses of hope
- Inspire pastors to train and mentor
- Grow members into disciple-makers
- Connect new interests with a church community for discipling
- Result in baptisms and church growth
- Fulfill God's purpose for His church

## HOW TO APPLY

Host churches, conferences, or unions should apply for participation to their respective divisions (or GC-attached field/union mission). Funding is available. Informational brochure and local and division application forms can be found at [SSPM.adventist.org/forms](http://SSPM.adventist.org/forms).

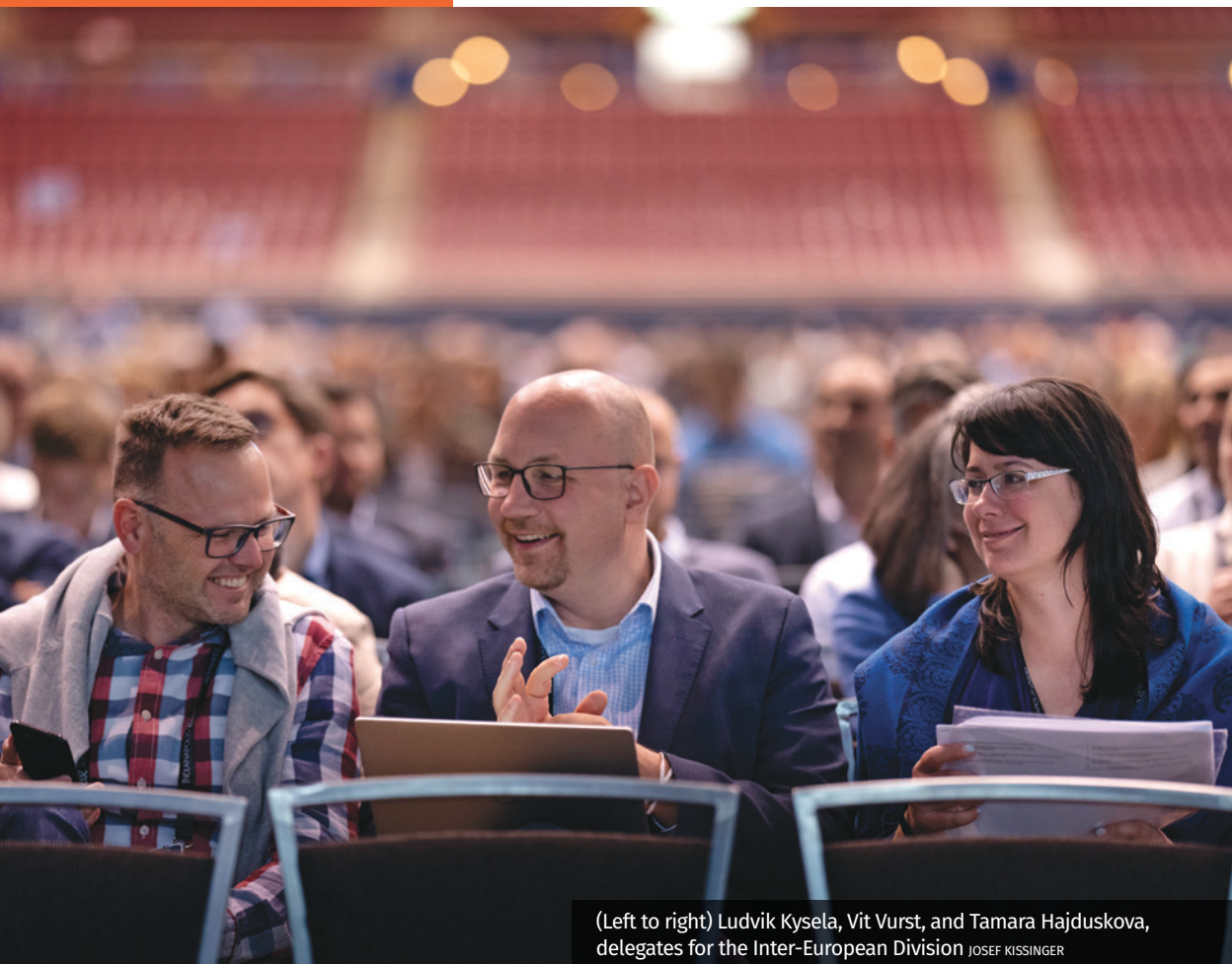


General Conference  
Sabbath School and  
Personal Ministries





# SESSION GALLERY



(Left to right) Ludvik Kysela, Vit Vurst, and Tamara Hajduskova, delegates for the Inter-European Division JOSEF KISSINGER



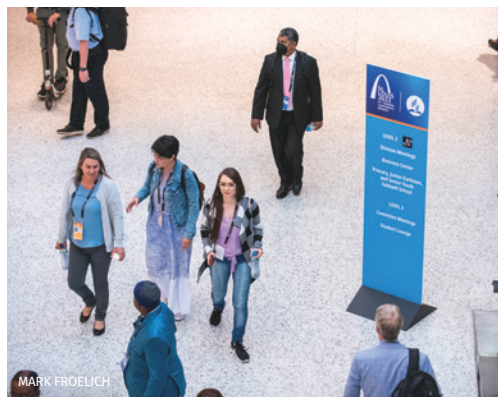
All elected personnel have a photo session with the *Adventist Review* official photographer MARK FROELICH



Paul H. Douglas, GC treasurer, during the afternoon business session JAMES BOKOVY



Oleksandr Zaitsev of the Ukrainian Union delegation distributes Ukrainian flags JAMES BOKOVOY



Session attendees are welcomed and cared for by convention guest host staff MARK FROELICH



Ted Wilson, GC president, greets people on the street DAVID B. SHERWIN



Todd McFarland, the Session parliamentarian MARK FROELICH



Former GC secretary, GT Ng, greets the delegates JOSEF KISSINGER





GC  
2025

## WORLD VOICES

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JOSEF KISSINGER © AR



## A CHURCH THAT SPEAKS BY DOING



**PEDRO TORRES**  
COMMUNICATION  
DIRECTOR FOR THE  
FRANCO-BELGIAN UNION

One of the characteristics of the church is *inclusiveness*. Jesus said, “Whoever comes to me I will never drive away” (John 6:37, NIV). The body of Christ is inclusive par excellence. Only from this perspective can we, as the three angels of Revelation 14, truly preach the everlasting gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

Such proclamation is the purpose of General Conference Sessions. When we read the last sentence of Revelation 14:6, we may think of this Session, of people of different origins, from a multitude of countries, dressed in their different ways, speaking their different languages . . . Looking at the delegates, we can see their distribution by linguistic affinity, by country, by other cultural traits. And we naturally identify more easily and closely with those with whom we communicate better.

There is a group of people in one area of the auditorium, however, that looks heterogeneous, different. What makes the group unique is the fact that it comprises a variety of backgrounds. But something special unites them: they “speak” with their hands. They are the group of hearing impaired, or deaf.

These brothers and sisters “speak” a universal language, one that transcends barriers, borders, and cultures and uniquely unites those who speak it, regardless of where they come from, how they dress, or how old they are. I am referring to sign language.

I want to congratulate the organization of the 61st Session of the General Conference for transforming this event into an opportunity to practice what we profess, to be an inclusive church.

As the son of a deaf mother, I grew up in a context that has taught me to observe hands and actions more than just words, to pay attention to details that others would not see or perceive. I am happy to see a worldwide church that allows sign language to be provided constantly, both on the floor and on the Internet. Some consider hearing impairment to be a handicap, but they may not realize that those who speak sign language cannot be silenced by surrounding noise, for it does not interfere with their communication. When I was a child, I could “talk” to my mother even if she was at a considerable distance, where the voice was not audible. Speaking with “gestures,” speaking by “doing” rather than by “saying,” is an advantage that the rest of us do not fully appreciate.

This helps us appreciate that Jesus did much more than He said. “Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written” (John 21:25, NIV). This inclusiveness toward the deaf community fills me with hope. I see a church that speaks with “actions” as well as “words.” If we are able to imbue this principle into the plans of the church, we will be a church that “speaks” by “doing,” and that language, as that of my childhood, will never be disrupted by the noises of this world. “Doing” brings heaven closer. 🦶





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## SOUTH PACIFIC DIVISION

*Preparing people to meet Jesus*



**T**he South Pacific Division (SPD) is a vast territory comprising many people, languages, and cultures. In this beautiful and diverse region of 42 million people—a region of remote tropical islands, rugged mountain villages, coastal communities, and busy modern cities—God is doing amazing things.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific spans 19 countries, with more than 80 percent of members living in Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Islands. Throughout the last quinquennium, our key ministry strategies have been centered on discipleship, health, Mission to the Cities, and media. During the past two years we have added leadership development as an important priority.

### DISCIPLESHIP

Church members in the South Pacific are united in our vision to be a thriving Adventist movement, living our hope in Jesus and transforming the Pacific. From New Caledonia to Vanuatu, from Tuvalu to Tonga, people's lives are being transformed as they study God's Word with their friends and families.

In Papua New Guinea (PNG), as in the rest of the SPD, church leaders have been training members in how to implement clear and simple disciple-making strategies, including the Discovery Bible

Reading (DBR) method. This involves prayerfully reading aloud a passage of Scripture together, answering basic questions, and discovering Jesus' truth in the process.

During the past three years the SPD Discipleship Ministry team has consistently used DBR as the foundation. Now new groups are multiplying into church plants. In the Eastern Highlands Simbu Mission (PNG) there are 222 organized churches that, between them, have planted 592 "branch churches," including church plants and small groups. Most of this growth has occurred thanks to the intentional creation of branch Sabbath Schools. Branch Sabbath Schools are conducted by Sabbath School class teams, gathering families near their homes to sing and read the Gospels using the DBR method. The story is similar in Madang Manus Mission, where 62 organized churches have planted 185 new churches.

Large evangelistic campaigns have also been a key part of the disciple-making strategy. In 2018 more than 2,000 people attended a weeklong evangelistic series in Buka, North Bougainville (PNG). A citywide campaign in Auckland, New Zealand, in 2017 saw a new church planted on a previously unentered island (Waiheke) and had a regular livestream viewership of 400-600 for each evening meet-





ing. In 2019 in Victoria, Australia, more than 1,600 people attended the opening session for the *Revelation Today* evangelistic series and a large number of viewers joined via livestream. At the conclusion of the series, 159 attendees requested baptism.

### ADVENTIST HEALTH

Promoting health and well-being has been a key strategy of the SPD as we face a crisis with lifestyle disease. Type 2 diabetes is entirely preventable but is contributing to 80 percent of deaths in the Pacific Islands. Every 20 minutes a limb is amputated, so SPD Discipleship and Health launched the 10,000 Toes campaign with the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), enabling churches to become wellness centers that can help with diagnosis and prevention. The Fiji, Papua New Guinea, and Solomon Islands governments have asked the Adventist Church to partner with them in this health initiative.

Health is opening new frontiers for disciple-making—our medical teams have been invited to conduct health screenings in villages where there is no Adventist presence. More than 40,000 people have attended our health expos, with many attending follow-up initiatives and asking for Bible studies.

The Complete Health Improvement Program, commonly known as CHIP, continues to make a big impact in Pacific communities, helping people to live healthier lives. We have even run CHIP programs in tourist resorts, with their chefs requesting our vegetarian recipes. Alongside CHIP, the Community Health Education Program, or CHEP, is training church members to present health and lifestyle messages to their local communities.

Two of our institutions are leading the way in community health and well-being. Changing lives every day through whole-person health is the purpose of the Sanitarium Health and Wellbeing Company. Sanitarium Weet-Bix is Australia and New Zealand's most trusted breakfast cereal, and with Sanitarium Up & Go, a nutritious liquid breakfast, and So Good nondairy milks, they lead the breakfast

cereal category. Life Health Foods leads the vegetarian and vegan food market in both Australia and New Zealand. Vitality Works, offering employee health programs and the health improvement program CHIP, has more than 600 of Australia and New Zealand's leading companies as their clients. Sanitarium has a deep social commitment, providing breakfast at schools and the world's largest kids' triathlon event, the Weet-Bix Kids TRYathlon, to improve child health and well-being.



Sydney Adventist Hospital (the San), with its mission of "Christianity in Action," is transforming lives by caring for the whole person: physical, mental, and spiritual needs. Employing more than 2,200 staff, the San is known for its state-of-the-art technology and patient-focused care, with a world-class reputation in cancer treatment and the addition of ELIA Wellness, a lifestyle medicine program, under its umbrella.

### ADVENTIST MEDIA

Media is crucial to the work of disciple-making. In Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Islands, a network of Hope radio stations is bringing the gospel message to sometimes remote communities in the Pacific Islands, beyond where our hands and feet can reach. Hope Radio is being broadcast into areas where there is no Adventist presence. In Kiribati—one of the world's smallest and most isolated countries—the new Hope Radio station is making





a big impact. Listeners are coming to church—even the Kiribati president is tuning in! In Australia, Faith FM is broadcast in nearly 200 locations, including remote outback communities. Adventist World Radio (AWR) has supported the SPD in this effort.

Radio is just one platform, however. Print, web, and social media are all being used to connect with our diverse communities. We created a video series, *I AM*, for non-Adventist university students, and produced “God of Hope,” a documentary and art exhibition, at the San as a unique way to bring hope to hospital patients and use art as a catalyst for spiritual dialogue.

Digital media is providing exciting opportunities for disciple-making. *Mums at the Table (MATT)* was a TV program that became a closed Facebook group with more than 10,000 members. *MATT* is also on Pinterest. It provides interactive material to help mothers raise children at different ages. *MATT* now has 22 Meetup groups in Australia, and several of the group members have become involved with Adventist schools and churches. Digital media is taking people from the screen to face-to-face contact and the kingdom!

Television, too, is playing a key role. American Samoa and Tahiti now have Hope Channel TV. In Fiji, Hope Channel is broadcasting on free-to-air TV—the only 24-hour Christian TV station in the country.

Hope Channel New Zealand is also on free-to-air TV and has a monthly average viewership of 200,000. After gratefully receiving the Thirteenth

Sabbath Offering in the third quarter of 2016, Hope Channel New Zealand purchased new equipment and produced local programs such as the *Finding Home* series. What an impact it has made! The Adventist Church is developing a reputation as people who give to their community. In fact, people are walking into our churches after watching Hope Channel.

### MISSION TO THE CITIES

In Australia and New Zealand 86 percent of people live in the cities. Many live in apartments or secure buildings, so connecting with them is not easy. As a result, we have come up with new and creative ways of ministering in urban spaces—meeting people, building relationships, and strengthening the sense of community. One initiative is the Tut Roadshow, a mobile museum filled with artifacts that brings the wonders of ancient Egypt into schools and community centers along the east coast of Australia.



Creating Centers of Influence is another approach that is working well in our big cities. In Auckland, New Zealand, projects such as community gyms and food drives partner with local organizations for the health and well-being of city residents. Father-son woodworking groups and community pancake breakfasts enable members to make connections.

Building a bold online presence is another successful strategy to connect with people in busy urban spaces. Fresh content, consistent blogging,



and online streaming are bringing new people to church. Innovative tools such as Eventbrite and Meetup gather guests to events and strengthen the sense of community.

#### **ADVENTIST EDUCATION**

Adventist schools and tertiary institutions in the South Pacific have a clear focus on transforming young lives for Jesus. The SPD operates 387 Adventist schools, enrolling nearly 71,000 students. During the 2015-2020 quinquennium, 8,938 students chose to follow Jesus through baptism.

In PNG the Bible Summary project has been introduced in all Adventist schools, with students encouraged to read and summarize a chapter of the Bible every day. Schools allocate at least 30 minutes in the timetable each day for this initiative. Introducing our students to the value of God's wisdom and His Word has had a significant impact. Along with improvements in handwriting and spelling, teachers have noticed improved behavior among the students, and fewer disciplinary issues. The Bible Summary project has now been adopted by some government schools, which are reporting the same improved outcomes.

Across the SPD, 70,000 World Changer Bibles have been distributed to students for personal Bible study, along with resources that equip and encourage them to become disciple-makers. School chaplains have been trained and resourced to support the mission of the church more actively.

At our tertiary institutions students are being empowered to become disciple-makers. At Pacific Adventist University (PAU) staff and students have been busy planting churches on and off campus.

They have been building relationships through community service projects, evangelistic programs, hospital visitations, and prison Bible studies. As a result, prisoners have been baptized and eight churches planted around the PAU campus. At the same time, the crime rate in the area has decreased by 20 percent.

In Australia, Avondale University College is transforming lives through weeks of worship and service projects. Students are leading other students to Jesus through Bible study. Many students are attending and leading Life Groups. One theology student took Avondale's Life Group ministry from 30 people across five groups to 230 people attending 27 groups, led mostly by college students. Indeed, Avondale College church has experienced the largest number of baptisms in the North New South Wales Conference.

#### **TOTAL MEMBER INVOLVEMENT**

Across the division an eager army of disciples have embraced Total Member Involvement initiatives by using their gifts and talents to reach out to their communities through such activities as feeding the poor and widows, town cleanups, prison ministries, sports events, hospital visitations, singing ministries, and refugee care.

As we enter the next quinquennium, Adventists in the South Pacific will continue to show our faithfulness to the mission of the church through health, media, and education. And in our disciple-making we, with Jesus, will develop missional leaders in all entities. By God's grace we will continue to grow as a disciple-making movement, transforming the Pacific and preparing people to meet Jesus. ✍

# SOUTHERN AFRICA-INDIAN OCEAN DIVISION

*Embracing “I Will Go”*



**T**he church in the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division (SID) is thankful for its 4.1 million baptized members. The church has grown, despite the pandemic and other economic factors. The SID family continues to rally behind the Total Member Involvement (TMI) initiative, as church members and entities embrace the call to reach the world and impact communities through the “I Will Go” strategic plan. Here are some of the highlights from the SID during the past seven years.

## SHARING HOPE AND HEALING

In an effort to impact one of the wealthiest provinces in South Africa, the SID Personal Ministries Department coordinated the Gauteng 2018 Sharing Hope and Healing initiative. During the campaign, a bedridden woman received a visit from Adventist church members. After an elder prayed over her, she walked for the first time in five years! She began attending Bible studies and has since been baptized.

In Maputo and Nampula, Mozambique, a team

of dentists, opticians, and general practitioners from Loma Linda University, Portugal, and various parts of the SID provided free medical care for more than 9,000 patients during a health expo.

Members conducted health expos across the Indian Ocean Union Conference as well, with hundreds in the community receiving free medical treatment from eyesight to dental care.

## ADVENTIST WORLD RADIO ADVANCEMENTS

The “Broadcast to Baptism” dream finally became a reality as SID Adventist World Radio (AWR) launched in March 2022. The station, powered by SIDmedia, is a game-changer in urban Christian radio. In the short time the station has been on the air, 19 people have been baptized.

The Northern Zambia Union Conference continues to embrace media as a tool for evangelism. Through the ministry of AWR, many households continue to receive hope during these troubled times. The AWR Zambia for Christ evangelistic campaign, held across the country, resulted in more than 18,000 baptisms in one day.





At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic AWR conducted a two-week live radio campaign in conjunction with Midlands East Zambia Conference in which nearly 300 people were baptized, a sign that media evangelism is an effective way to spread the gospel.

### **YOUTH MINISTRY**

Besides media use, the Northern Zambia Union youth left no stone unturned during the 2022 Global Youth Day (GYD). GYD Week of Prayer sessions held throughout the union resulted in 20,204 baptisms.

The Caleb Mission, a project developed in the South American Division, has taken the SID by storm, as young people within the territory have taken it upon themselves to participate in voluntary mission work during their school holidays.

Adventist youth in São Tome and Principe, an



attached field of the SID, use their vacation time to conduct Bible studies in unentered areas while also building homes for the less privileged. In addition to all of this, they also conduct health expos for the community. The project has become so popular that it is televised on national television every week.

As part of a community SID Pathfinder launch, the first-ever Pathfinder drill for youth with special needs was held in Gauteng, South Africa. Pathfinder club members who are hard of hearing expressed their joy in participating in this drill. Church members donated uniforms to ensure that each club member looked the part. After the drill, five girls joined not only the Pathfinder club but the Seventh-day Adventist Church as well.

In Lubango, South-Western Angola Union, the youth have adopted a transport system offering free transportation on Friday evenings to commuters. During the bus ride the young people conduct a worship service for the passengers and distribute free Christian literature. In just the span of an hour they can reach more than 100 people.

Through this initiative several individuals have indicated that they want to know more about the church, while some now attend worship services. In the same area, young people decided to offer free haircuts, which has drawn a lot of attention from the public. Youth have a “captive audience” for Bible studies while their clients have their hair cut.

In 2019 residents of Emkhonyeni village, Matabeleland North province, Zimbabwe, were overwhelmed with joy at the official handover of a borehole drilled for them by Adventist youth. This community has had no access to clean water for many years. The only water available had been a seasonal dam from which they shared unclean water with animals. One senior community member said they haven’t had clean water in the village since 1950.

Mr. V. Ncube, chair of the District Water and Sanitation subcommittee, said that several attempts had been made to provide the community with clean water, but none of the efforts were successful.

## SOUTHERN AFRICA-INDIAN OCEAN DIVISION CONTINUED

“When members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church came, seeking for a go-ahead for a partnership in this project, we discouraged them as we had engaged trained water engineers and surveyors who had failed to get water in the area in the past,”



As a result of evangelistic meetings in Malawi, a Pentecostal pastor and his entire congregation joined the Adventist Church.

said Ncube. It was a miracle when they managed to strike water at 22 meters (72 feet) and on an uphill location. Most of the boreholes in Bubi district are dug as deep as 70 meters (230 feet).

He emphasized that the water this community had found was a miracle from God, as everything else they had tried failed to yield the results they had tried to accomplish. The community is now hoping to have solar-powered equipment for the borehole so that piped water can also reach the nearby school.

### INTENTIONAL SOUL WINNING

The North-Eastern Angola Union has grown so much over the past six years that the territory has been realigned from two conferences to four. As a result of TMI, there has been an increase of 100,000 new converts, bringing the total current membership to 282,507 members.

In 2019 more than 20,000 people were baptized in the Malawi Union Conference as a direct result

Among them was a former Pentecostal pastor and his family, who, upon hearing the Sabbath mes-

sage, joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church with his entire congregation.

The church in Zambia is very intentional when it comes to soul winning. Just in the past quinquennium, more than 270,655 souls were baptized. During COVID lockdowns, intensive two-week evangelistic campaigns were conducted in the capital city of Lusaka, both virtually and physically in some places, following safety protocols. Seventeen thousand new believers were added to the church. Currently the membership in the Southern Zambia Union Conference stands at 800,000 baptized members.

### ADVENTIST PRESIDENT ELECTED IN ZAMBIA

It was a jubilant time for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Zambia as His Excellence Hakainde Hichilema was appointed as Zambia's seventh president. In a country with more than 1 million baptized Seventh-day Adventist members, it is an honor to have a state leader who is not only a member of the Adventist Church but a Master Guide as well.

Following his inauguration, Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders were invited to worship at the statehouse on the family's first Sabbath there. Accompanied by his wife, First Lady Mutinta, Hichilema (or HH, as he is affectionately known) reiterated that Zambia is and would remain a Christian nation. In his address, the president encouraged the church to promote peace and continue spreading the Word of God.

Let us continue to pray for Adventist church members who hold influential positions in different parts of the world.

### MINISTRY THROUGH PERSONAL EFFORT

In Zimbabwe, the Mugari family noted that some children were not able to access school because of lack of funds. They opened a Center of Influence to meet the need. Pardon Mugari and his wife, Blessings, established a primary school in Arcturus Mine, an area on the outskirts of Harare, the capital city of Zimbabwe. The school

## Church members and organizations have embraced the call to reach the world and impact communities.

caters to less-privileged children who live in the farming community.

Through personal funds, the family provides free Christian education by paying the salaries for eight teachers in the school. Not only has the Center of Influence produced brilliant students who excel in their studies, but some members of the community have made the decision to be baptized as a result.

A church now stands in this farming community where there was no prior Adventist presence. The Mugari family say this is only a small part they are playing in evangelism as they participate in the “I Will Go” strategic plan.



### HELPING VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

In response to the socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly the need for daily provisions, members in Zimbabwe ministered to vulnerable communities by providing meal packs. The church donated 2,220 10-kilogram bags of corn meal and 4,444 one-kilogram packets of beans to more than 2,200 vulnerable homes in Bulawayo and its surrounding areas. Recipients included the elderly, widows, disabled, and child-headed homes.

The minister of state for Bulawayo province, Honorable Judith Ncube, and Angeline Masuku, the former provincial governor, endorsed the efforts and were on hand to receive an additional donation of face masks (produced by Solusi University) for essential workers in the civil service. The government officials said, “By providing food to 2,220 households, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has fed more than double that number, because each household has more than two people on average.”

The government appreciated these efforts, given

the untold suffering many homes faced during the pandemic, further compounded by the country’s economic situation. By taking care of those in need, the church was making a difference in the community.

Rufura Primary School in Mberengwa, a remote area in Zimbabwe, has existed without a solid structure since the 1950s. In this area with a minimal Adventist footprint, Zimbabwe Central Union Conference (ZCUC) took the opportunity to start erecting a structure that will remind the community for many years to come of the God of the Adventists.

In conjunction with the local community, the Mberengwa rural district council and Adventist-laymen’s Services and Industries (ASI), ZCUC combined efforts to build a classroom block and teachers’ cottages within one week.

More than 30 builders volunteered to participate in this project. Subsequently, 50 people gave their lives to Jesus and were baptized on-site. A Global Pioneer has since been appointed to assist the local pastor in nurturing the new congregation.

### CONCLUSION

The SID has learned many lessons during the COVID-19 pandemic, one of which is that media works. It is one of the best avenues to reach people in our territory. In our strategic plan for the future, division leaders have put a strong emphasis on digital evangelism. We believe that through this medium, the work ahead of us will be accomplished, and Jesus will soon return.

The mission field in SID is the post-Christian and secular minds in 16 megacities, African traditionalists, Chinese, Hindu, immigrant, and Muslim communities. We challenge members to open their homes and begin appropriate, self-sustaining, and self-replicating small groups that will enable people from these unreached people groups to walk through a disciple-making journey. As the SID territory embarks on our strategic plan of “I Will Go!” church members are on fire for Jesus, and we give God all the praise and glory. 🍌





# WE CAN BELIEVE THE WORD OF GOD



**SUZANNE PHILLIPS**

DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE  
PRESENTED WEDNESDAY  
EVENING, JUNE 8, 2022

**W**e can believe the Word of God! As a scientist I am often confronted with data and “conclusive” evidence that contradicts a plain “Thus saith the Lord.” In our current day, scientists have claimed authority over what they believe should be truth. However, as Seventh-day Adventists, we recognize that the Bible claims there is only one Truth, and within its pages is found the wisdom to draw you to that Truth.

While the Bible does not say a lot about how we should conduct science or study of the natural world, it does make bold claims about some things that we would consider “science.” Therefore, the Bible rightly should inform the conclusions of the wonderful but absolutely “human” construct that is science.

In Hebrews 11 we find that followers of God have been asked to exercise faith. Not only will we need to put this faith in practice, but if we do not exercise faith, it’s impossible to please God (verse 6). Paul explicitly points out in Acts 14:17, as well as Romans 1:20, that God has not left Himself without a testimony; that in fact there are evidences of the reality of God all around us; and that God has not left us to practice a *blind* faith. Interestingly, the evidences that Paul gives are natural phenomena, and from our view looking back, those evidences are what we might consider scientific in substance.

#### **SCIENCE SUPPORTS THE BIBLE**

So are there scientific evidences that support the claims of the Bible? The answer is: “Yes, absolutely.” Geology and archaeology offer some very clear evidences that unequivocally support the claims of the Bible, while other evidences require further study. In the fields of mathematics, physics, and astronomy we find that the natural world operates within a series of laws (laws that we can define, if not understand). These laws and constants allow life to flourish on this planet.

The laws found in the natural world testify to their creation by a law-giving God, and mirror the reality that if we too would function within the moral laws of love that God has given, we too would flourish. In the field of biology we find overwhelming evidence that living things are exquisite in beauty and design; that they often function in an optimal manner, carrying out feats of engineering and mechanical excellence that no human designer could imagine, much less accomplish.

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# “The attributes of God are clearly seen from what He has made.”

## SCIENCE REVEALS GOD’S ATTRIBUTES

Paul says in Romans that the attributes of God are clearly seen from what He has made. In the living world we find amazing and abundant testimonies of the originally created “goodness” that harken back to His fiat creation described in Genesis. I am amazed when I study the organisms in my field—bacteria. They have exquisite systems for sensing the world around them and are able to perceive even minute changes in their environment.

These organisms are the foundation of life on this planet. Without microorganisms the ecosystem of our world would not function. They are responsible for providing nitrogen as well as a large percentage of the available oxygen to other living organisms, including humans. Everything in the natural world that works so well is a testimony to its originally created goodness. God said that He created “good” things, and the natural world is an ever-increasing testimony of organs, organisms, ecosystems, and inanimate systems functioning in such an amazing fashion that it’s often beyond human comprehension.

Some systems take years of study before we can even begin to scratch the surface in understanding their structure and function. But it is not only because they are oftentimes difficult to understand that these testify to God’s creative power, for even those things that scientists apparently comprehend are a testimony of fiat goodness. For example: conception and fetal development. Scientists know many of the important genes and proteins involved in this process, yet the origin of this complexity, intricacy, information, and resiliency is still awe-inspiring to any scientist.

In Acts Paul says God’s testimony of Himself includes the reality that “joy fills our hearts.” The human mind practices and experiences things beyond what would be predicted from a natural origin alone. We experience joy! According to

Paul and science alike, that smile on your face is evidence of an origin beyond natural law.

## SIN HAS LEFT ITS MARK

The Bible claims other things about that natural world, something that is also plainly evident in nature. Sin has marred creation. Death reigns. Predation, suffering, pain, human selfishness, and greed are actually measurable in a scientific manner.

Without delving into the awfulness of this reality, I want only to point out that God indicates that when His will is manifested in the natural world—for example, on His “holy mountain” (Isa. 11:9, NIV)—that “they will neither harm nor destroy” (verse 9, NIV) and the “wolf will live with the lamb” (verse 6, NIV) and the “infant will play near the cobra’s den” (verse 8, NIV).

So when we see anything that deviates from this beautiful picture of the natural world as described by Isaiah, we can know that it’s the result of sin, and is not God’s will. In fact, it was predicted by God as the outcome of sin. That itself is a testimony of the truthfulness of the Bible.

The evidences of the natural world support my belief in the Bible. But the stronger testimony is my own. I see what God has done for me. I know that unless I am with God, I cannot experience love, joy, or peace, no matter what worldly thing I try to grasp. He has asked us to taste and see that He is good.

We are His witnesses. He says, “So that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and apart from me there is no savior. I have revealed and saved and proclaimed” (Isa. 43:10-12, NIV). Our lives are a testimony that we can believe the Word of God. ▀

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**Suzanne Phillips**, PhD, is the chair of the Earth and Biological Sciences Department at Loma Linda University, in Loma Linda, California, United States.



# The Great Controversy

## Project 2.0



Jesus is coming!  
Get involved in  
distributing millions  
of *The Great Controversy*  
in 2023 and 2024.

*"Here is missionary work for all to engage in."*

Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Health*, p. 466



# SOUTHERN ASIA DIVISION

*Uniting together to hasten His coming*



One of the many Adventist education centers in the Southern Asia Division

**T**he Southern Asia Division of Seventh-day Adventists (SUD) consists of India, Nepal, Bhutan, and Maldives. India is the second most populous country in the world, with a population of 1.4 billion people and eight major religions. While Hinduism represents the majority, Christians make up 1.7 percent of the population. There are more than 19,000 languages or dialects spoken in India. There are about 645 distinct tribes with more than 3,000 unidentified tribes. The SUD territory is home to megacities Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, and Bengaluru, which are cities with populations exceeding 10 million.

## SPIRITUAL ROOTS

Christianity in India traces its roots to the disciple Thomas, who planted seeds of truth there 2,000 years ago and died a martyr. The three angels' messages came to India in 1893, first reaching the shores of Kolkata and Chennai, then spreading throughout the 28 states of India and its neighboring countries. As a result of the sacrifices and the efforts of our pioneers, today there are churches, educational institutions, medical establishments, media outlets, and many more ministries.

## "I WILL GO" STRATEGIC PLAN (2020-2022)

The "I Will Go" plan outlines 10 objectives divided into categories of Mission, Spiritual Growth, and Leadership. It shares the three angels' messages through media, evangelistic meetings, relief work, redemptive education, outreach ministries, mission work, health, and publishing.

## YOUTH MINISTRIES

An annual youth Week of Prayer is conducted in all the major educational institutions. The Global Youth Day initiative provides ways for young people to reach out and get involved in such community projects as visiting destitute homes, hospitals, and prisons. Food, medicines, and notebooks for children are distributed on the streets and in orphanages.

## TOTAL MEMBERSHIP INVOLVEMENT (2016-2020)

Total Membership Involvement (TMI) ignited awareness among church members of all ages. In Kolkata, Adventist World Radio (AWR) conducted five medical camps, screening more than 2,600 patients and performing 178 life-changing cataract surgeries.



Kolkata, a city of more than 15 million, had only one church, even though Adventism reached it more than 100 years ago. Elder Ted N. C. Wilson and his wife, Nancy, led a 15-day evangelistic meeting in the city. The event was a great encouragement to Adventists in Kolkata. During the series the city was divided into 50 zones for follow-up. Members have entered 27 of these areas so far, and 16 churches now meet, with a total of 137 members.

AWR organized 12 mega medical camps in June 2019 in Chennai. More than 4,800 patients received medical screening, and 225 eye surgeries were performed. Visiting evangelists conducted 60 evangelistic meetings in conjunction with local pastors, leaders, and Bible workers, who led out in 450 TMI meetings.

Even with water scarcity, distance issues, and work challenges, people from all walks of life came to the event and were blessed. The success we had in Chennai continued as AWR led 10 TMI events in Pune in 2019. As a result, follow-up work and worship has begun in four locations. These events were organized by the Sabbath School Ministries Department, Medical Trust, and Health Ministries.

### **GLOBAL MISSION**

The primary focus of Global Mission is to reach unentered territories by concentrating on evangelism and implementing projects. Currently 290 volunteers are working on 300 projects in Nepal, Bhutan, and northern India. Eight new Global Mission city projects in major cities of northern India have been started.

### **STEWARDSHIP**

Church members are nurtured to prioritize God over everything else and acknowledge that He is our provider. They are trained to support the local and worldwide mission, incorporating transparency at all levels. We have trained more than 1,200 pastors and leaders from various



Mr. Francis, a Catholic believer, with health issues and paralysis, shared how he was comforted and strengthened after attending an evangelistic series.

levels within our division. As a result, we saw growth in systematic giving even during the COVID crisis.

### **METAS**

The Medical Educational Trust Association Surat (METAS) of Seventh-day Adventists is a collaborative endeavor of five schools, four colleges, a university, and three hospitals, with institutions serving since the 1920s.

During the pandemic, the hospitals reached out to the community to provide free checkups, free PPE kits, and hand sanitizers to the police task force, sanitary workers, and other frontline workers. ADRA India provided three oxygen generation plants, oxygen concentrators, pulse oximeters, PPE kits, and other medical supplies.

One night the oxygen supply for METAS was dangerously low, with enough to last only until 6:00 the next morning. The medical oxygen suppliers could arrive only by 7:00 a.m. the next day. Hospital administrators explained the situation to the patients and their relatives. They chose not to move to another hospital. Special prayer requests were announced globally, and by the next morning at 5:00 a.m. a tanker arrived and replenished the oxygen supply before it ran dry.





A graduation at Spicer Adventist University

### SPICER ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY

Spicer Adventist University has been a pioneer in Adventist education since 1915. This institute has prepared thousands of missionaries to work in God's vineyard. During this quinquennium 58 pastors and 216 teachers entered into service for the Master.

### THREE ANGELS' MESSAGES PROJECT (3AM)

The 3AM is a project initiated by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (GC) through Hope Channel International, which spreads the three angels' messages to the world through social media using young adults. We produced the programs in four of our regional languages. Thirty-two passionate speakers participated and follow-up work is continuing. We have reached more than a half million people for Christ through Hope Channel India.

### HIMALAYAN SECTION

Nepal has a population of more than 30 million. Christianity does not have a legal space, and experiences persecution. Groundwork began in 1949, with the mission field organized in 1991. Nepal currently has 40 organized churches and 28 com-

panies and small groups meeting in home church buildings. Twelve pastoral workers along with 67 Bible workers serve a membership of more than 7,800. Scheer Memorial Hospital is a highly respected institution serving the community.

### EAST HIMALAYAN FIELD

Bhutan is a landlocked nation with a population of about 800,000 people. Bhutan owns and operates medical and educational entities that are free of charge to its citizens. The Adventist Church is not permitted to operate educational institutions. Access to Bhutan is limited. Groundwork began in 1997, and the field was organized in 2009. Now there are 19 organized churches in 12 buildings and 32 companies and small groups, with a membership of more than 1,000. Three ordained pastors, four pastoral workers, and 24 volunteers serve this region.

### MALDIVES

In the Maldives we have a limited Adventist presence. Members worship mostly in house churches. The division is working with the South Tamil Conference to enter and organize small groups and companies.



Sarad Kumar Banjare, a Pentecostal pastor, attended Adventist Zoom meetings regularly. He was baptized in 2021, and changed the day of worship from Sunday to Saturday in his church. As a result, many of his members stopped coming. While discouraged, he did not give up. He conducted three evangelistic meetings and many of his members were baptized in 2022.

# Church members are nurtured to prioritize God over everything else and acknowledge that He is our provider.

## MARANATHA INDIA

Maranatha Volunteers International has been aiding God's work in India since 1999. They have provided 23 years of dedicated support to the SUD. Maranatha has built 1,950 churches, eight elementary education centers, and 300 tsunami housings, and has dug more than 300 water wells. Maranatha has worked on 41 different school campuses, providing 250 buildings and 400-plus classrooms.

## ADRA INDIA

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) focuses on health, education, protection, livelihood, and disaster relief sectors. The pandemic hit India hard in 2021, and ADRA, with the tremendous support of its donors from around the world, was able to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable. Clinics and hospitals across India received oxygen generation plants, ventilators, and other important hospital equipment through ADRA's assistance.

ADRA was also able to carry out vaccine awareness programs and other relief and livelihood projects during the pandemic. Food and cash assistance was also provided to hundreds of needy families impacted by COVID.

## FUTURE PLANS

- 50 major evangelistic meetings in metro cities
- 50 church plants in unentered territories
- 100 churches built in this quinquennium
- Reach 500 villages in this quinquennium
- Focus on Mission to the Cities for the metropolitan cities of Delhi, Raipur, Ahmedabad, Kozhikode, Salem, Kolkata, Hyderabad, and Nagpur
- Develop a center of influence in the NCR region of Delhi
- Develop a center of influence and prayer cell in Maldives
- Conduct Youth Leadership seminars in major cities

- Build production centers in Hapur, Ranchi, Jaipur, Trivandrum, Bangalore, and Hyderabad and have an indigenous satellite channel in Hindi

- Establish an arts and science college and medical hospital in the Southeast India Union

Our departmental directors' initiatives have brought great success in our division. We are thankful to our supporting independent ministries, generous donors, pastors, leaders, and volunteers. Before darkness arrives, let us all unite together and raise our voices to hasten the coming of our Saviour. Maranatha! 🙌

## STATISTICS as of December 2021

EVANGELISTIC ACHIEVEMENTS	
Evangelistic Meetings	1,400
Revival Meetings	1,603
Temperance Rally	78
Health Seminar	05
Baptisms	16,148
New Churches Built	78
New Churches Planted	450
Pastors' Training	85
Lay Training	162
Cell Phone Evangelism	100
Bible Conferences	25

CHURCH PROGRAM	
Unions	7
Sections	41
Conferences	8
Regions	24
Attached Fields	3
Total Churches	4,577
Total Companies	4,783
Total Membership	1,149,871
Total Kingdom Growth	12,715 (per annum)

# FEEDING OF THE 3,000 AND ANSWERING QUESTIONS

*Meet some of the volunteers tasked with making the Session run smoothly.*



## DEBBIE MICHEL, ADVENTIST REVIEW

The 61st General Conference (GC) Session is run by an army of volunteers, many of them students and young adults who are keeping the gears turning for the massive gathering of Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders in the heart of downtown St. Louis, Missouri, June 6-11, 2022.

Volunteers are responsible for a host of tasks, such as scanning meal badges, providing translation during the business meetings, and answering questions at information booths throughout the bustling America’s Center Convention Complex.

Spearheading the Andrews University pages program is Erica Bradfield, who brought a group of 30 students who speak Cantonese, French, Korean, Mandarin, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Urdu, Swahili, and other African languages.

So, what questions are people asking the student pages at the information kiosks?

“Usually, it’s directional,” Bradfield says. “Where is this room? Where is the dome? How do I get meal tickets? Where do I get my badge? I don’t have a badge, where can I go to see the program? Things like that”

## MEET SOME OF THE VOLUNTEERS

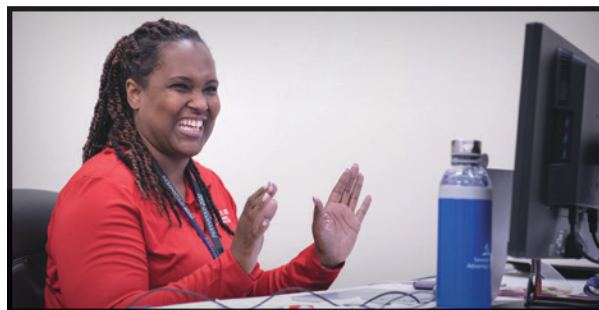
Elsie Mokaya originally hails from Kenya and is pursuing a master’s degree in music at Andrews University. As the first-time Session attendee sits at her desk watching the global community of delegates and their families in their native attire parading past her, she is struck by the many requests for how to find the prayer room.

“I feel like that has been the most consistent room everybody’s been looking for,” Mokaya says. “And it clearly shows that a lot of people are really praying for the Session right now, and they’re just putting everything in God’s hands.”

She has also received many questions from local residents who want to observe how the church conducts its business.

Mokaya, who recently returned from a trip to Madagascar, where she participated in teaching music to children, says there’s a certain manner in representing Christ at public events such as the Session.





"It can be by saying good morning as they pass, you know, by smiling at them. Even though you're wearing a mask, you can smile with your eyes and just wave at them," she says. "So, we may not necessarily be reading the Bible or preaching to them, but just by using kind words and speaking to them with a kind heart is a way of reflecting Christ."

Sandratra Randrianarivo, who goes by the name of Ando, a native of Madagascar and fluent in French, arrived in the U.S. only six months ago to begin the master's program in Community and International Development at Andrews University. Thinking of the people she has assisted in navigating their way around the convention center and the city of St. Louis brings up tears for her.

"It been an amazing experience," she shares. "There are people here who don't speak English, and when they come, they're like, 'Oh, we don't understand English,' and I'm really happy to help them."

She reflects on her life of service, saying, "Jesus gave us the example of offering His time, and as followers of Jesus we also need to give and do what He did. This world won't get better unless we do that."

Viviene Dyer, the most experienced volunteer of the group, is serving at her third GC Session. The Jamaica native is pursuing a Ph.D. in higher education administration at Andrews University.

Yes, the questions she hears at the booth are repetitive, but that doesn't bother her.

"For me, volunteering is a personal effort," she states emphatically. "Don't look at your brother and don't look at your sister and say, 'What are they doing?' It's, 'I will go and do for the Lord.'"

"I believe that what the Lord has blessed us with is not just for us. If we're not sharing it with others,

then our lives are just in vain. And the Lord expects us to share with others what His blessing has shared with us. We can't keep it to ourselves."

Kelly Thompson is the assistant to the food services director and helps manage a team of high school and college students.

"They are phenomenal," she says. "They're happy, cheerful. They love what they're doing. I'm happy to say the church is giving a great example to our youth of how we can be."

But there are situations that pose a challenge. A few people who are rude or skirting the rules have created frustrations.

Her prayer is that this doesn't have a negative effect on the youthful volunteers. "I hope that doesn't harden their hearts," Thompson says ruefully, "you know, not wanting to work for the church or [be] members in the church because of these experiences that they're having."

As a schoolteacher, Thompson is turning these experiences into teachable moments and is delighted to see the young volunteers grow almost overnight.

"You're seeing them start kind of being timid, but becoming a little bit firmer than when they started," Thompson says. "I'm walking around to see if they need any help, and I hear them affirm themselves. You see a little smile on their faces. Like, 'I did it!' And then talking to them at the end and they're like, 'Oh, I'm loving this. I want to do this again tomorrow.' So, that's a joy to see the kids doing that." ♣



## OPERATION MIDPOINT

LAEL CAESAR

I write on day three of Adventism’s ultimate global encounter, a General Conference (GC) Session. Looking back, our gaze reviews: it’s our 61st; we’re meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, a Midwestern American city founded in 1764 and famous for its 630-foot- (190-meter-) tall Gateway Arch; our Session is set to be shorter—6 days instead of 10; it’s fallen later—7 rather than 5 years later—than our usual schedule.

What more do we see, looking back?

Pastor (and blogger) Chad remembers. He’d anticipated that it would “feel a little more like business and a little less like a gathering” than previous Sessions he’s attended. And what about Session 61 strikes him most at midpoint? “This GC Session has felt more prayerful [thanks to] Monday morning’s worship, with many extended seasons of prayer in small groups, one-on-one, and privately.”

**The GC Session has filled me with more longing than ever for that great reunion when we *all* get to heaven.**

Sharon, accompanying her husband, a delegate from the Trans-European Division, has lived and savored three things most over the first three days: (1) morning meetings—“The morning worships have been wonderful”; (2) healthy food—“They feed us volumes of healthy rice and lentils or black-bean stews”; (3) snuggly greetings—“Everywhere I turn, I see someone I am excited to greet! I am enjoying this Session more than I thought possible.”

Lena, also a delegate’s spouse, considers that “although the delegates are busy, there is not as much action for families and guests. The pace of the GC [Session] has slowed down. More time for reflection and for extended exchanges with friends.”

Millennial Hannah, attending her fourth GC

Session, has been loving it to the max. She says: “It was exciting for me to see all the people that were able to come from all over the world to worship together and work on the official business of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.”

Voice of Prophecy speaker-director Shawn Boonstra looks back over multiple past Sessions and the first days of Session 61: “This session is missing some of the energy that came with larger international crowds and an exhibit hall, but I’m finding the work of God’s remnant church taking place in St. Louis no less important or inspiring. I deeply appreciate the sincerity of the delegates in moving our work forward in meaningful ways.”

I wanted to know what my interviewees see ahead, over this Session’s remaining days and into others beyond, should we detain our Lord’s return. Their answers provide crucial insight into the value and importance of the democracy that makes these meetings possible and necessary.

Shawn: “I think that continuing the present model would be an overall improvement. I like the leaner model because while the business session is essential, the world is descending into chaos around us, and it’s becoming more and more important to stretch our resources and preserve them for the work of frontline outreach.”

Chad: “Sometimes less is more. That is not the case with a GC Session; more is better! More people, more voices to sing, more choirs, more booths to wander through, more days, more wonderful sermons, more is better! I want Jesus to return before 2025, [but if not], I look forward to being with our global Adventist family back here in St. Louis for a *full* General Conference Session!”

The last word comes from Lena:

“We miss a lot. If you’ve been a ‘GC junkie,’ waves of nostalgia sweep over you. So at this midpoint, the GC Session has filled me with more longing than ever for that great reunion when we *all* get to heaven: what a wonderful GC Session that will be!”



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# SCOTT GRADY RUNS THE SHOW

*Meet the man behind the Adventist Church's largest livestream production.*

**DEBBIE MICHEL, ADVENTIST REVIEW**

Shortly before the 2015 General Conference (GC) Session in San Antonio, Texas, United States, Scott Grady made an unexpected transition.

The previous Session's technical director, Warren Judd, was planning to retire and wanted to train someone who could assume the role of coordinating the complex, multiday production. Grady seemed like a natural fit because he had directed the previous Session's evening programs. When he said yes to leading in 2015, he did not know the training period would be abbreviated. Judd, who was intending to pass along all his knowledge, died from liver cancer.

While processing the shocking news, Grady managed to pull off a successful production in Texas.

**PLANNING FOR THE NEXT SESSION**

Fast-forward to June 2022 in St. Louis, Missouri. Scott Grady and his technical crew are command central for the audiovisual operations of the 61st GC Session. Grady is sitting for an interview backstage at the America's Center Convention Complex as members of the crew dart back and forth in the cavernous dome.

Since rolling into town on Sunday, May 29, with a semitrailer filled with equipment, Grady has had a series of long days getting ready for the Session, which officially opened June 6, 2022.

"I'm getting five to six hours of sleep each evening," he says with a laugh and no hint that he would rather be any place else. "It boils down to wanting to be a part of the mission of the church. I just feel like I want to be a part of letting people know what's going on in the church and trying to facilitate to this."

Although a contractor was hired to lay down miles and miles of cables and hang more than 100 feet of drapes for the backdrop, Grady and his crew of 30 are very busy. The crew might be responsible for fewer studio setups this go-round, but the complication is in running a hybrid Session, where hundreds of delegates are online and a few thousand are attending in person. This has meant installing studio equipment in the nominating committee room so that translators can be heard and Zoom videoconference coordinators can monitor the feed.

Grady's team consists of directors, graphic operators, engineers, Zoom videoconference operators, audio technicians, a producer, and master control. They oversee the coordination of eight foreign language translations plus



DAVID B. SHERWIN © AR



American Sign Language. These are streamed to a videoconference platform and the livestream (which is available for viewing from [adventistreview.org](http://adventistreview.org)).

#### **“RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME”**

Grady’s interest in college wasn’t in media production. In fact, he was studying aviation at Andrews University. One day, his dad, who was an Adventist pastor in Michigan, had the idea to create local introductions to Faith for Today broadcasts that were airing on the area cable station. When Faith for Today gave the green light, Grady began taping his father.

“I look back, and the production was terrible,” he says. “I don’t think we even set up any lights.”

But those humble beginnings caught the attention of someone at the station. Grady’s dad was asked who was editing those local segments. That connection turned into a two-year stint recording church services across Benton Harbor, Michigan, and broadcasting them on the cable station each Sunday.

When he graduated from Andrews University and couldn’t find a job in aviation, Grady moved with

his parents to California. His father was working for what would become the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) and was once again instrumental in his career journey. Grady was asked to film some of the work they were doing to bring awareness to the ministry. That stint turned into ADRA’s asking Grady to help establish a media department.

“It’s just been a series of being in the right place at the right time,” Grady says. “I run into college students who want to get into it, and I don’t have a good answer. It’s just doing whatever people need done and not worrying about how many hours it’s going to take.” But the best answer he can think of is that God has put him in the right place at the right time.

Still, it’s mindboggling, he says. “Just this morning as I was getting ready to come over here [to the convention center], I was asking, ‘Why me?’ It’s been a long journey, and there are people on my team who are infinitely smarter than I am. This couldn’t happen without the team. I’m in way over my head sometimes with a lot of this stuff. But I keep doing it, and I know it’s got to be God.”



DAVID B. SHERWIN © AR



ANTHONY KENT

## SAVING TEN THOUSAND TOES

SHAWN BOONSTRA, ADVENTIST REVIEW

On June 5, eight weary but inspired bicyclists arrived in St. Louis, Missouri, completing a 1,200-mile (1,900-kilometer) trip from Washington, D.C., in celebration of the work of Australian pioneer missionary Philip Reekie, who, in the late nineteenth century, delivered Adventist literature to remote locations by bicycle. Through Reekie's tireless efforts, the family of one of the cyclists—Anthony Kent—came into the Adventist Church, and more than 20,000 Adventists in the South Pacific now trace their church roots to Reekie's work.

In addition to distributing copies of *The Great Controversy* and *Your Bible and You* along the route, the cycling missionaries also raised awareness for a very special cause in the South Pacific Division

(SPD). “The biggest challenge in our division, health wise,” cyclist and SPD president Glenn Townend explains, “is lifestyle diseases, and particularly type 2 diabetes. Every twenty minutes in the South Pacific, someone gets a limb removed. I grew up in Papua New Guinea; when I was a kid there in the seventies, nobody had type 2 diabetes. Now it’s estimated that one million of the eight million Papua New Guineans has it.”

Western diets and lifestyles have taken a toll on the region. “They sell their garden produce,” Townend elaborates, “to go to the shop and buy Western food because they think that’s the thing to do. It’s a huge challenge. The governments haven’t known what to do, and as a church, we’ve got a health message, and we know—scientifically—that you can often reverse type 2 diabetes by a better lifestyle, getting back to their original food and exercise.”

The profound need led to the creation of a crucial campaign known as Ten Thousand Toes. The cyclists wore special gloves and socks on their journey to raise awareness for the campaign, marked with a logo that features a foot with a missing toe—a sobering reminder of the toll of poor lifestyle choices. “We wore them symbolically,” Townend continues. “We were wanting to make sure that people thought about health and our efforts to save ten thousand toes.”

The reception was positive. “I was stopped maybe ten times a day,” Townend remarks. “In eleven days of riding, I think I only had two people who said no [to the literature we were offering].”

The response to the Ten Thousand Toes campaign in the South Pacific has been phenomenal. Governments are now turning to the Seventh-day Adventist Church for solutions. Adventist churches are becoming wellness hubs for their entire communities, and the communities love it. “The Adventists are helping us!” is a common refrain. In the Solomon Islands, there now is an entire island where *everybody* has been trained in how to deal with type 2 diabetes.

“We want every village and every town throughout the South Pacific to have an Adventist presence and kit to help people test for type 2 diabetes—and our dream is becoming a reality,” Townend says.

The South Pacific Division is already planting churches as a result of the program. ▀

You can learn more about the cyclists’ mission at [iwillgoride.org](http://iwillgoride.org).





Neji Ouni



Bassam Abdallah

## DELEGATE OF THE DAY PROFILES

# CHRISTIAN GROWTH AND TRUTH TELLING

WILONA KARIMABADI

It's not often that you meet a pastor and a business teacher from the Middle East in the same hour. But Neji Ouni, who pastors an international church in Tunisia's capital city of Tunis, and Bassam Abdalla from Beirut, Lebanon, made it easy for me. Both men are delegates representing the Middle East and North Africa Union (MENA). Ouni is in St. Louis attending the General Conference Session to enjoy the blessing of being around large numbers of people who believe as he does. "I wanted to be with our brothers and sisters and especially because it's such a great opportunity to be with such a number of Adventists," he says. "This is my first time being with this number of Adventists. I have been in the United States before and attended a GYC convention. That number was high, but not like this."

Ouni is a long way from home—from his wife, son, and daughter and the country he loves. When asked what is wonderful about his homeland, he only smiles and says, "Everything is wonderful."

Bassam Abdalla is an instructor in management and marketing at Middle East University. "I thought it would be a good opportunity to

come here and see how people live, get to know them, and meet our brothers and sisters here. I took it as an obligation to come and participate," Abdalla says. He's far from home too, far from a beautiful part of the world he wishes more of us would visit. "Our country is on the

**"I want us to accept others and not to judge them, to accept that others are different from us."**

Mediterranean Sea, and where I come from—Middle East University—we are located on top of a hill with beautiful greenery and scenery. I highly recommend it."

These two friends share a heart for the gospel and for growth as Christians. They find they are hearing and learning things at Session that align with that. "I want us [as Adventists] to be able to grow," lifelong Adventist Abdalla says. "And I want us to accept others and not

to judge them, to accept that others are different from us. When we can relate to them, I think this is an opportunity to grow [as believers] at an even faster pace."

Ouni, as a pastor in a Muslim country, has a special task in carrying the gospel to all who will hear it, and he's passionate about that. "What is dear to my heart is when I share the gospel with people and I see a response to study the Bible together," he says. "When I share the gospel, that's my best moment. [In Tunisia] we have freedom to share our faith. Of course, we need to be careful how we do it. I learned long ago that it is my job to share what I have. I have Jesus, and so I have to share Him with people without talking against their religion."

Abdalla's world right now is largely framed by his job as a university instructor, and he sees himself as more than someone who imparts specific information to his students. "I'm passionate about my job and how I interact with students on a personal level. I think it's a good opportunity for me to lead by example and to put into practice what we believe based on the faith that we live."

For both Ouni and Abdalla, the big picture of truth and faith lies at the core of who they are as Adventists. And it's something both are willing to share. "I wish we as Adventists could be better understood by other Christians," Ouni says. "But we need to keep preaching the truth, the whole truth. Because if it's not the whole truth, it's not the truth." ❖

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MARK FROELICH © AR

# Fourth Business Meeting

## SESSION ACTIONS

61st General Conference Session, St Louis, Missouri, June 7, 2022, 9:15 a.m.

### SECRETARY'S REPORT

VOTED, To call for the vote on the Secretary's Report.

- Thomas L Lemon, Chair
- Ella S Simmons, Chair
- Gerson P Santos, Secretary
- Hensley M Mooroooven, Actions Editor
- Tamara K Boward, Recording Secretary

### SECRETARY'S REPORT

VOTED, To accept the report of the General Conference Secretary, Erton C Köhler.

### NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT #2

VOTED, To approve the following partial report of the Nominating Committee:  
General Conference  
 Secretary: Erton C Köhler

### NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT #4

VOTED, To approve the following partial report of the Nominating Committee:  
General Conference  
 General Vice Presidents:  
 Audrey E Andersson  
 Guillermo E Biaggi  
 Abner De los Santos  
 Thomas L Lemon  
 Geoffrey G Mbwana  
 Artur A Stele  
 Maurice Valentine

### NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT #3

VOTED, To approve the following partial report of the Nominating Committee:  
General Conference  
 Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer: Paul H Douglas



## Fifth Business Meeting

### SESSION ACTIONS

61st General Conference Session, St Louis, Missouri, June 7, 2022, 2:00 p.m.

#### INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

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, 2019, 2018, 2017, 2016, and 2015; and as of December 31, 2021, and 2020; so rendered by the accounting firm of Maner Costerisan, PC.

#### TREASURER'S REPORT

VOTED, To call for the vote on the acceptance of the Treasurer's report.

#### TREASURER'S REPORT

VOTED, To accept the report of the General Conference Treasurer, Paul H Douglas.

Guillermo E Biaggi, Chair  
Gary D Krause, Secretary  
Hensley M Mooroooven, Actions Editor  
Joanne Stango, Recording Secretary



#### SECRETARIAT TEAM

**FRONT ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT):** Saw Samuel; Karen Porter; Claude Richli; Hensley Mooroooven (undersecretary);  
**BACK ROW:** Gary Krause; Elbert Kuhn; Gerson Santos

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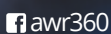
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# Sixth Business Meeting

## SESSION ACTIONS

61st General Conference Session, St Louis, Missouri, June 7, 2022, 7:00 p.m.

### PASTOR AND OTHER CHURCH EMPLOYEES - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate on the motion.

### BOARD OF ELDERS - CHURCH MANUAL ADDITION

VOTED, To call for the vote on the item, Board of Elders - *Church Manual* Addition.

### BOARD OF ELDERS - CHURCH MANUAL ADDITION

RATIONALE: The *Church Manual* references a board of elders, but there has been no additional information or definition. This new section explains the organization and purpose of this board.

VOTED, To add a new section, Board of Elders, to the *Church Manual*, Chapter 8, Local Church Officers and Organizations, following Religious Leaders of the Church, on page 73, to read as follows:

Board of Elders—Where a church has a number of elders, it should organize a board of elders chaired by the pastor or his/her designee and with the first elder or another elder serving as secretary. Such a body provides a way to distribute responsibility and coordinate their contributions for the well-being of the congregation. It also provides a training ground where elders are instructed in their duties. The board of elders is accountable to the church board.

### TO FOSTER BIBLE STUDY, PRAYER, AND A RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS (ELDERS) - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment encourages elders to focus on the nurture and spiritual growth of members.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 8, Local Church Officers and Organizations, page 75, To Foster Bible Study, Prayer, and a Relationship with Jesus (Elders), to read as follows:

To Foster Bible Study, Prayer, Nurture, and Spiritual Growth of Members—As and a Relationship With Jesus—As spiritual leaders, elders are responsible for encouraging members to develop a personal relationship with Jesus by strengthening their habits of

### NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT #7

VOTED, To approve the following partial report of the Nominating Committee:

#### General Conference

#### General Conference Auditing Service Board

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John Satelmajer	North American Division
Victor Singh	Southern Asia Division
Masao Yanaga	Northern Asia-Pacific Division
To be named	Euro-Asia Division

##### Ex-Officio Members:

Ted N C Wilson	President, General Conference
Erton C Köhler	Secretary, General Conference
Paul H Douglas	Treasurer, General Conference
Thomas L Lemon	Vice President, General Conference
Robyn W Kajjiura	Director, GCAS

#### General Conference Auditing Service

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 C Maurine Wahlen  
 Sandra Grice

### NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT #5

VOTED, To approve the following partial report of the Nominating Committee:

#### General Conference

Undersecretary: Hensley M Mooroooven

#### Associate Secretaries:

Gary D Krause  
 Elbert Kuhn  
 Karen J Porter  
 Claude J Richli  
 Saw Samuel  
 Gerson P Santos

### NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT #6

VOTED, To approve the following partial report of the Nominating Committee:

#### General Conference

Undertreasurer: J Raymond Wahlen II

#### Associate Treasurers:

Timothy H Aka  
 George O Egwakhe  
 German A Lust  
 Daisy J F Orion  
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personal Bible study and prayer. Elders should model a commitment to Bible study and prayer and should support all ministries and promote programs of the local church and the local conference. They should also be committed to nurture and to inspire the spiritual growth of church members. prayer. An effective personal prayer life of every member, supporting all ministries and programs of the local church, and the local conference, will enhance the church's mission. Elders may ask the board to appoint a council to assist in this role of development and encouragement.

## RELATIONSHIP TO THE PASTOR (ELDERS) - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

**RATIONALE:** This amendment clarifies the process by which an elder can chair the church board.

**VOTED,** To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 8, Local Church Officers and Organizations, pages 73 and 74, Relationship to the Pastor (Elders), to read as follows:

Relationship to the Pastor—If the conference committee assigns a pastor or pastors to the congregation, the pastor, or senior pastor if more than one, should be considered the ranking officer and the local elders as assistants. Since their work is closely related, they should work together harmoniously. The pastor should not assume all lines of responsibility, responsibility but should share these with the elders and other officers. The pastor regularly serving the church acts as the chairperson of the board. (See pp. 32, 131.) There may be circumstances, however, when it would be advisable for an elder to act as chairperson, with the approval of the pastor or, if the church is without a pastor, the conference president, chairperson. The pastoral work of the church should be shared by the pastor and the elders. In counsel with the pastor, the elders should visit members, minister to the sick, foster prayer ministries, arrange or lead out in anointing services and child dedications, encourage the disheartened, and assist in other pastoral responsibilities. As undershepherds, elders should exercise constant vigilance over the flock.

If the pastor is a licensed minister, the church or churches served should elect the pastor as an elder. (See p. 33.)

Because the pastor is appointed to the position in the church by the conference, the pastor serves the church as a conference employee, is responsible to the conference committee, and maintains a sympathetic and cooperative relation to and works in harmony with all the plans and policies of the local church. Elders, who are elected by the church, are responsible to that body and to its board. (See below.)

Hensley M Mooroooven, Chair  
Erton C Köhler, Chair  
Elbert Kuhn, Secretary  
Hensley M Mooroooven, Actions Editor  
Tamara K Boward, Recording Secretary

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT #8

**VOTED,** To approve the following partial report of the Nominating Committee:

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Children's Ministries

Director: Orathai Chureson

Communication

Director: Williams S Costa Jr

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Director: Lisa M Beardsley-Hardy

Family Ministries

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Associate Director: Elaine Oliver

Health Ministries

Director: Peter N Landless

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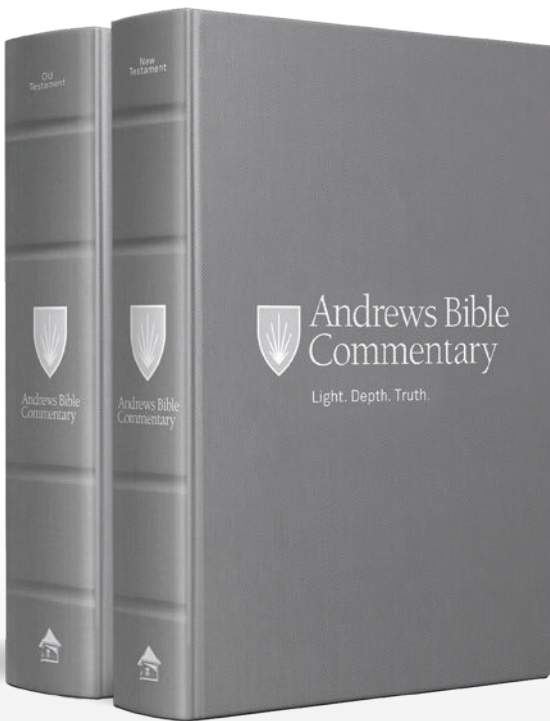
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