

# ADVENTIST REVIEW

JUNE 8, 2022

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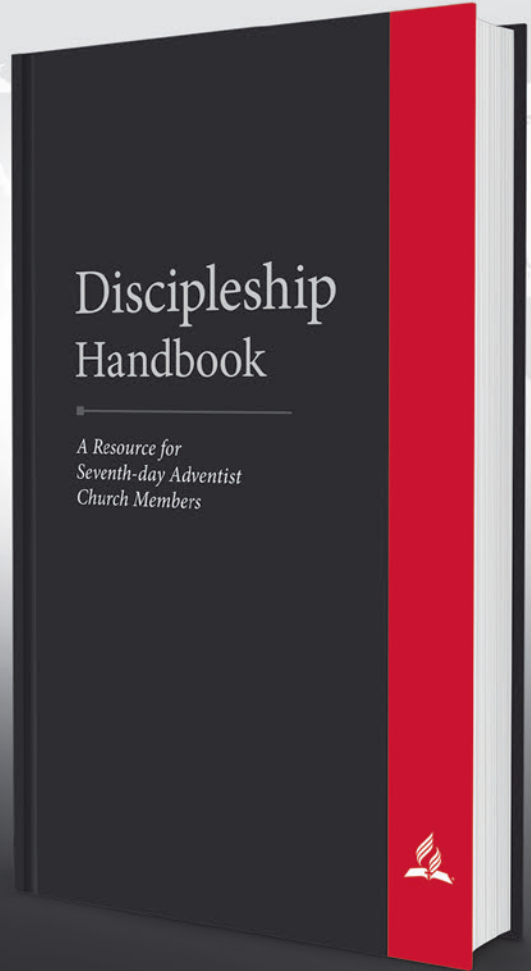
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**“Audrey promotes collaboration and teamwork with everyone with whom she works. She has never met a stranger, and her optimistic outlook is contagious.”**

**Lori Yingling, p. 9**



JOSEF KISSINGER © AR

## TED N. C. WILSON REELECTED AS GENERAL CONFERENCE PRESIDENT

**DELEGATES TO THE 61ST GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION VOTE TO ACCEPT THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION.**

MARCOS PASEGGI, ADVENTIST REVIEW

**D**elegates to the 61st General Conference (GC) Session in St. Louis, Missouri, United States, voted to accept the recommendation of the Nominating Committee to reelect Ted N. C. Wilson as president of the General Conference on June 6. With their vote, delegates confirmed Wilson, who has been president of the denomination since 2010, for the 2022-2025 period. It will be his third term as president.

“Our goal is to maintain focus on what God has called the remnant church to do,” Wilson said. “But a single person cannot do it. We are a team of almost 22 million members.”

### ABOUT THE PROCESS

The Nominating Committee includes more than 260 members from among the delegates of every major church region and the General

Conference. Members nominated to the committee by their respective regional caucuses on or before June 5 met on the afternoon of June 6 to discuss the first item, which has been historically the nomination of the president.

At the end of the June 6 evening business session, retired GC vice president Lowell Cooper, who earlier in the day had been elected as president of the Nominating Committee,



went to the podium to present the body's first report. "We've been hard at work during several hours," Cooper said. "We had the opportunity to discuss several names as potential candidates for the position of General Conference president."

Cooper explained to delegates why they spent several hours to come to a decision. "It took us a while to get organized, to understand protocol," he said. It included making sure the electronic voting app was working properly and that those members participating through Zoom videoconferencing could interact with the in-person members.

"It took some time to get acquainted with parliamentary procedures," Cooper added, "in a group that has several different languages and cultures, and the necessities of translators. We've had some time in working ourselves into a team."

### RECOMMENDATION TO THE FLOOR

Cooper shared that the Nominating Committee felt that God has blessed the church with leaders. So, "after discussion, we voted, and the Nominating Committee has a recommendation to bring for your consideration tonight on a vote on one name that we took," he said, before calling Nominating Committee secretary Magdiel Pérez Schulz to present that report and recommendation with the delegates.

After Pérez Schulz presented the name of Wilson for the position, delegates voted electronically to approve the recommendation. ▀



DAVID B. SHERWIN © AR

## HEARING THE HEART OF A LEADER

*For decades, the first interview given by a newly-elected General Conference president is with the editor of the Adventist Review. This interview was conducted in the former St. Louis Rams locker room by Bill Knott, executive editor of Adventist Review Ministries, and Marcos Paseggi, news contributor to Adventist Review Ministries, minutes after Elder Wilson's reelection as president.*

**AR: It's been almost 50 years since the Adventist Church has invited a leader to a third term. What does that feel like for you in terms of the opportunity to help make an impact over time?**

TW: It's certainly a humbling experience. It does not embolden me in any way. I do recognize that we need to maintain focus on what God has assigned His remnant church to do, and that is the proclamation of the Three Angels Messages. I hope to focus even more on helping church members realize their responsibility and also to help local church leaders, as well as through the ranks of church administration, to recognize that we are coming to the end, and things need to be focused on what God intends for this church to do.

**Are there any initiatives that are on your mind, perhaps some that you have not tackled?**

We're going to be redoubling our efforts on Revival and Reformation. It's what we need every day. Also, we now are focusing on Comprehensive Health Ministry 2.0, which is going to involve a re-emphasis on the right arm of the gospel, the kind of work Jesus did. These things are a natural outgrowth of our relationship with the Lord. It's actually doing the gospel in a practical manner. So we're going to emphasize in a greater way the connection to the Three Angels Messages, because we're told in the Spirit of Prophecy that the third angel's message is vitally connected to medical missionary work. The medical missionary work is not the message, but it is the right arm. So we're also going to emphasize that in Mission to the Cities. And we haven't run out of cities to work in. We still have a lot of work to do, but I don't think we have much time because the Lord is coming very soon. And, of course, Total Member Involve-



ment, our strategic plan; *I will Go* will continue through the rest of this quinquennium. The *I will Go* campaign has just caught on all over the world because it's so personal and it's so focused on mission. The one thing that I'm also going to be focusing on in a stronger way is inviting all of us to plead for the latter rain of the Holy Spirit.

**We are talking in a locker room where coaches used to talk to sport teams. Picking up that metaphor for a moment, what do you think that means for the role you've just accepted again?**

Well, it certainly means that we have to do this in a team effort. Let's tie that in. You cannot just pull a few strings and expect everything to happen. And especially within the church structure, which is basically a voluntary organization, people are part of it because they love the Lord. That's what we call Total Member Involvement, that everybody is doing something for Jesus. It's not something I can sit in an office and pull a few strings and send a few emails. No, it has to be caught in the hearts of leaders and members alike that we are part of something much grander than simply an earthly endeavor. This is a movement led by God. So, talking to the team—a large team of almost 22 million members—it's very important to get the message out. In some ways, it's more challenging because there are a lot of other messages out there. We're called to a very special purpose. I would encourage our team, our wonderful church members, to focus on where we are in Earth's history and realize every person has a job and place that God has given to them.

**“So I would encourage every leader to truly know they are part of something much bigger than themselves.”**

**Ted N. C. Wilson, p. 5**

**Many people say that one of the key roles you fill is helping to develop people to be leaders in other units, tens of thousands of Adventist pastors, hundreds of conference presidents, about 160 union presidents. Thinking about that group of people in leadership, what do you want to say to them?**

Each leader has to find his or her own way of relating to this magnificent call that God has given to us as a church, but they can't shy away from that call. They can't change the dynamic of what it is to be a Seventh-day Adventist. Some people I think would like to turn that into some other definition, but the church is built on a biblical foundation. [This] has to be internalized by administrators and leaders who recognize that this mighty movement, born of God, is something that they have to invest in with everything they have in order to help move it along through God's power.

It's interesting that you should mention “leadership” because we have in the works; something that we're calling the General Conference Leadership Development Program. We have taken steps to put it into an arena where leaders have looked at it and they're excited. We will be voting it in, in a more dynamic way where we will develop leaders who have a focus on organization, structure, and mission. It's just part of who we are.

So I would encourage every leader to truly know they are part of something much bigger than themselves. They need to understand that that big picture can only happen when they're taking time with the Word, spending time reading the Spirit of Prophecy, taking time in prayer. God will open the way for them because it's not just pulling strings and a few votes we take and everybody gets into lockstep. No, it doesn't happen that way in the church. We know that. Instead, it's inspiring people to tell them we're part of something so fantastic.

**If I were to ask you where you wanted to be tonight, you would say right here; I know that. So I'm going to ask you if you could be anywhere you wanted to be in two weeks from now, where would you and your family be?**

In a couple of weeks part of our family will be in a beautiful valley in the mountains, in one of our favorite places to hike. We have been able to take each one of our daughters and their families there. The last time was about four years ago and COVID has kind of thrown stuff in. But we've made plans. So, barring some COVID mishap, we hope to be hiking in the mountains. 🗡️

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This is an edited version of an interview with Ted N. C. Wilson shortly after he was reelected as president. For the full video interview please see our website at [www.adventistreview.org](http://www.adventistreview.org).

**“I see no problem with this wording. This is about facilitating mission.”**

**Mario Alvarado**

## DELEGATES APPROVE CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT ON THE ORDINATION OF ELDERS

**NEW WORDING SEEKS TO CLARIFY SOME ASPECTS OF THE CHURCH'S BUSINESS MEETING, LEADERS SAY.**

MARCOS PASEGGI, ADVENTIST REVIEW

One of the amendments to the *Church Manual* proposed at the June 6 evening business session resulted in an extended discussion from the floor and required delegates to take several related votes over a 75-minute period. General Conference (GC) associate secretary Gerson Santos introduced *Church Manual* item 409-22, which, he said, sought “to clarify some aspects of the church’s business meeting.”

The proposed amendment relates to the ordination of local church elders. The rationale for it is to allow for consistency of wording between the sections on elders and deacons/deaconesses, addressing some confusion in areas where women are ordained as elders.

Specifically, it was recommended to amend the *Church Manual* regarding the ordination of elders, adding the sentence underlined below. It also changed the phrase “serve as deacons” to “deaconate,” as seen below.

“Ordination of Elders—Election to the office of elder does not in itself qualify one as an elder. Ordination is required before an elder

has authority to function. When a church in a business meeting votes the election of new elders, it also authorizes their ordination. Between election and ordination, the elected elder may function as church leader but not administer the ordinances of the church. . . .

“Once ordained, elders need not to be ordained again if reelected, or upon election as elders of other churches, provided they have maintained regular membership status. They are also qualified to the deaconate to serve as deacons.”

### MOTION TO REFER BACK TO COMMITTEE

After the motion was introduced, GC delegate Gerard Damsteegt made a motion to send the original motion regarding the amendment back to the *Church Manual* Committee because it did not address the confusion about ordaining women elders. “Women elders were voted at Annual Council but never at General Conference Session,” he reminded delegates.

Several delegates approached the microphones to comment in

favor or against the motion to refer the amendment back. “The original motion is clear, and I don’t see the need to refer it back,” Mario Alvarado, a delegate from the North American Division (NAD), said. “I see no problem with this wording. This is about facilitating mission.”

Eventually, Stefan Giuliani, a delegate from the Inter-European Division, moved to end debate, effectively terminating discussion on the issue. Delegates voted 92.3 percent in favor, and 7.7 percent against closing all debate on the motion.

Damsteegt’s motion to refer the original amendment back to the *Church Manual* Committee was defeated, with 43.9 percent in favor of referring back and 56.1 percent opposed. This action enabled the floor to open discussion of the original motion.

### DISCUSSION ON AMENDMENT

Several delegates approached the microphone to comment in favor of or against the motion to integrate the originally proposed amendment into the *Church Manual*.

Once again, Giuliani moved a motion to cease all debate and proceed immediately to voting. The motion was seconded, and passed by 88.5 percent for to 11.5 percent against.

Delegates immediately proceeded to vote on the main motion to amend the *Church Manual*. When the electronic poll closed, the screen showed that 75.7 percent of delegates had voted in favor of the motion and 24.3 percent against. The motion was carried. ▀



## LATE EVENING DISCUSSION POINTS TO CLARIFICATION ON ORDINATION OF ELDERS AND DEACONESSSES

WILONA KARIMABADI, ADVENTIST REVIEW

**T**uesday's first late-evening business session addressed two items on the clarification of election and ordination for elders who are female and deaconesses. The discussion, which lasted almost until the close of the meeting, was filled with numerous questions and comments from assembled delegates, both in person and via Zoom videoconferencing.

Karnik Doukmetzian, general counsel, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, offered this useful context: "The ordination of elders and the action taken was to recognize that once a church business meeting votes a new elder, it is assumed that the authorization is granted for them to be ordained, so there doesn't need to be a separate action for ordination. Once you elect them, it au-

tomatically assumes that permission has been granted for them to be ordained—regardless of whether they are male or female."

At moments, the items under review were met with comments bringing up issues about women's pastoral ordination—a topic that is not on this Session's agenda. This led to lively discussion and passionate speeches.

"You have to read that within the context of the church's position, which allows every division to make up its mind on whether they are going to have female or male elders," Doukmetzian said. "The second piece," he continued, "is elders who are subsequently elected as deaconesses don't have to be ordained as deaconesses because the ordination of an elder covers that as well. So, once you have been ordained

as an elder, that transfers over to your position as a deaconess."

There was one singular action that the chair immediately referred back. But there were three where a vote was taken to refer back or not, and ultimately they were all voted down.

"Those will be referred back to the *Church Manual* Committee, which will meet Thursday at noon," Doukmetzian said. "The full *Church Manual* Committee will review those requests and report back to the Session on any changes they are recommending or if they are going to stand. These changes to the *Church Manual* have been brought forward because of requests that have come from different divisions. Then they are discussed by the *Church Manual* Committee as language recommendations come forward, processed through AdCom, through Executive Committee, and then on to the floor. So the language has been reviewed and approved at different levels." If the *Church Manual* Committee chooses to forego making any changes, it will be brought back to the floor to vote on the current wording.

These particular agenda items were brought forward primarily for clarification to make sure there was no ambiguity or confusion in the language that currently exists in the *Church Manual*. Official policy on these matters was not under review.

To follow the livestream of the church's business sessions, visit [adventistreview.org](http://adventistreview.org).





## DELEGATES RETURN ERTON KÖHLER AS GC SECRETARY, PAUL DOUGLAS AS GC TREASURER

BOTH HAD BEEN FIRST TAPPED FOR THOSE POSITIONS IN APRIL 2021.

MARCOS PASEGGI, ADVENTIST REVIEW

**D**elegates to the 61st General Conference (GC) Session in St. Louis, Missouri, United States, voted to accept the Nominating Committee recommendation of electing Erton Köhler (above right) as GC executive secretary on June 7. They also voted to accept the recommendation of electing Paul Douglas as GC treasurer. Köhler and Douglas were first elected to these positions in April 2021 and will serve for the 2022-2025 term.

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

degree from Andrews University.

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

Köhler is married to Adriene Marques, a nurse, and the couple has two children.

Douglas (above right) was born in Jamaica and has served in various capacities at General Conference Auditing Services (GCAS)

since 1986, when he was appointed audit manager. He holds a bachelor's degree and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree in accounting, as well as a professional certificate in Strategic Management and Leadership.

In 1993, Douglas became a GCAS regional manager. In 1997, he was elected GCAS assistant director, becoming GCAS associate director in 2000. For the past 14 years, he has served the Seventh-day Adventist Church as GCAS director.

In 2020, he developed the "Roadmap to Resilience" initiative for church leaders and their governing committees. This initiative seeks to prepare leaders "to sustain mission in times of crisis and provide an agile response to rapidly emerging realities."

In both cases, delegates voted overwhelmingly to accept the committee recommendations. 🗳️



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## ANDERSSON AND VALENTINE JOIN NEW GENERAL VICE-PRESIDENTIAL TEAM

WILONA KARIMABADI, ADVENTIST REVIEW

**T**uesday morning's general business session featured the election of seven vice presidents to the General Conference executive team, an addition of one position since the 2015 Session. They are returning leaders Guillermo E. Biaggi, Abner De los Santos, Thomas L. Lemon, Geoffrey Mbwana, and Artur Stele. Ella Simmons, the first female general vice president in the church's history, is retiring.

Audrey Andersson of the Trans-European Division (TED) and Maurice R. Valentine II from the North American Division (NAD) are this Session's newly elected vice presidents.

Audrey Andersson most recently served as executive secretary of the TED—the only woman who has ever held that position in any division throughout the General Conference. Born in Ireland, Andersson graduated from Newbold College with a degree in theology. Her career was initially spent in the secular world—she ran a daily news service oper-

ation from the High Court in London and had her own communication company. She moved to Sweden when she married her late husband, Lars. Andersson was then called to the Swedish Union to serve as executive secretary, and from there she transitioned to executive secretary of the TED. She will be the second female to serve as a general vice president and the first European woman. According to Lori Yingling, director of General Conference Human Resources, “Audrey Andersson has proven herself to be a valuable asset to the work of the church. Audrey promotes collaboration and teamwork with everyone with whom she works. She has never met a stranger, and her optimistic outlook is contagious. I am so happy for her election to the office of vice president; she will be a positive addition to the presidential team and to the world field.”

Maurice R. Valentine II comes to the General Conference from the

NAD, where he has served as vice president for media ministries since April 2021. Before joining the NAD, Valentine led the Lake Union for six years, first as executive secretary and then as president. He served in the Mid-America Union as president of the Central States Conference and served as vice president for administration (executive secretary). He also held the position of union ministerial director from 2006 to 2012. Prior to serving in the Mid-America Union, Valentine was assistant to the president in the Central States Conference, where he had begun his pastoral ministry in 1985. Over the course of 28 years, he pastored a dozen churches in Colorado, Iowa, Missouri, and Nebraska. Valentine is married to Sharon (Livingston) Valentine, and they have three adult children. “I’m encouraged by the election of Maurice Valentine to vice president of the General Conference,” Ron Smith, president of the Southern Union, said. “His gifts of cordiality, commitment to integrity, and deep-seated missional consciousness will assist in fostering responsible ministry for our world church.”

Guillermo Biaggi, a native of Argentina and former president of the Euro-Asia Division, was elected in 2015. Abner De los Santos hails from Mexico and previously served as vice president for member retention for the Inter-American Division. He joined the vice-presidential team in 2015, alongside Thomas Lemon, former president of the Mid-America Union in the NAD. Artur Stele, born in Kazakhstan, has been a pastor and academic dean and division president, and Geoffrey Mbwana was previously president of the East-Central Africa Division. Both became general vice presidents in 2010. 🍀





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DEVOTIONAL

# THE REST OF THE STORY





**DWAIN N. ESMOND**

DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE  
PRESENTED TUESDAY  
MORNING, JUNE 7, 2022

**M**any years ago I received a call to speak for a youth Week of Prayer in Brisbane, Australia. I was fairly young in ministry at the time, and the thought of going halfway around the world to preach the gospel filled me with a mix of apprehension and excitement. After much prayer I accepted the invitation, and the day soon arrived to make the long trek to the land of beautiful sights and even more beautiful people.

God blessed the Week of Prayer, as many precious youth and adults gave their lives to Christ. On the final Sabbath more than 1,500 people filled a small arena to hear the last message and my final appeal. My heart was deeply touched as some 300 people pressed to the front to accept the call to eternal life with Christ. God's fingerprints were everywhere that day!

After the benediction I noticed a young man sitting to the side of the stage. The youth pastors and chaplains were ministering to those who had come forward, but this young man waited quietly, alone. He was waiting for me. I made my way over to him and we struck up a conversation. I'll call him Kyle.<sup>1</sup>

"Is there something that I can do for you?" I asked amid the tears and prayers happening all around us. "May I pray with you?" I continued.

Kyle paused for what seemed like an eternity. "What do you do when you feel no need for God?" he said softly. "I mean, what do you do when you can't feel God? I feel nothing. I feel no need for God."

I searched for answers. Lots of deep "theological thoughts" filled my mind. I could tell him that feelings are notoriously fickle and should not be trusted. I could tell him that faith was the antidote to his feelings (Heb. 11:1), and that it comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Rom. 10:17). But something told me to just listen to Kyle, and when I did, he began to tell me his story.

At the end he asked me to pray for him. I prayed as earnestly as I could that God would make Himself real to Kyle and that Kyle would know His presence and His love. We parted ways that day, but the story of Kyle still haunts me. It is a little unfinished story in a big unfinished story.

### THE BIG STORY

The big story is God's unprecedented effort to reconcile fallen humanity to Himself and pluck them from the hand of the devil (Gen. 1-3). It is the promise of a Savior (Gen. 3:15) and the call of a patriarch (Gen. 12) through whom would come a mighty people, chosen to be God's earthly ambassadors in saving the lost.

This is the story that moved a freshly resurrected Jesus to charge disciples then—and now—to "go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:19, 20, NKJV).

This magnificent commission is the most wonderful job description ever given to human beings. It is both commission and confirmation, calling and coronation, challenge and consolation! It is a call to rescue the perishing and care for the dying—all done with Jesus by our side. You might call this *the best of the story!* Saved by Jesus and working with Jesus to save others! Hallelujah!

It is this high point of the gospel narrative that excites the first "loud-mouth" angel of Revelation 14:6, who proclaims his message with ear-shattering power. He declares an "equal-opportunity gospel" from an "equal-opportunity

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Savior,” a message to be shared with “every nation, tribe, tongue, and people.” What is his message? “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water” (verse 7, NKJV). What a message!

### THE TEST OF THE STORY

The second angel proclaims another loud message that unmasks the false, confused systems of worship—collectively termed Babylon—infesting the hearts of lost human beings: “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (verse 8, NKJV).

In this message God calls all human beings to forsake their broken altars and go back to the altar of true worship to God (John 4:23). Will human beings continue to grope in darkness, or worship Him who is calling them out of darkness into marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9)? You might call the message of the first two angels *the test of the story*.

Not to be outdone, there follows another angel whose message is more sobering than the first two: “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb” (Rev. 14:9, 10, NKJV).

Ellen White wrote in Letter 209, 1899: “The power of the proclamation of the first and second angels’ messages is to be concentrated in the third.”<sup>2</sup> How so? Because the third angel’s message captures the everlasting gospel of the first, as well as its call to worship God! It embraces the second angel’s appeal for separation from false worship and all that is unlike God.

But the proclamation of this message is different in that it delivers a fearsome warning to any who worship the beast or receive his mark in their foreheads or hands. You might call this *the stress of the story*. We are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, assured that it is God who works in us both the will and do of His good pleasure (Phil. 2:12, 13). The Holy Spirit will lead all who desire it to a saving knowledge of Christ.

Lest we shirk our responsibility to help God

write a beautiful ending to humanity’s salvation story, Ellen White cautions: “The work of preaching the gospel has not been committed to angels, but has been entrusted to men. Holy angels have been employed in directing this work, they have in charge the great movements for the salvation of men; but the actual proclamation of the gospel is performed by the servants of Christ upon the earth.”<sup>3</sup> We have a part to play in God’s big story of salvation, and all the little stories in between.

### THE REST OF THE STORY

When we play our part in God’s story, accepting the ministry of reconciling lost human beings to God (2 Cor. 5:18), there are moments when we get to hear the rest of the story. I got one such moment many years after my trip to Australia. This time the call came to do a Week of Prayer in New Zealand. I was invited there by a youth director for one of the local conferences.

One night while dining at his home, he said, “You don’t remember me, do you?” I had to confess that I did not. “It’s OK,” he said laughing and smiling. “Do you remember when you came to Australia many years ago? You were there doing a Week of Prayer in Brisbane?” That I did remember, and he had my undivided attention. What he said next jolted me out of my temporary amnesia. The years have blurred his exact words, but not the sentiments he expressed.

“I attended that Week of Prayer,” he began. “I didn’t really want to go, but my mom made me go. It was there that I gave my heart to Christ. I went to college and became a pastor. Now I’m a youth director. God used you to help save me,” he said, no longer smiling. My heart was deeply moved as I listened to the rest of the story. He who was led to Christ was now leading others to Christ. That God would allow me, a sinner, to be a part of such a beautiful story is difficult for me to comprehend. What amazing grace!

I still do not know what became of Kyle. One day soon, at the coming of Jesus Christ, I hope to hear the rest of the story. ■

<sup>1</sup> Kyle is a pseudonym.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Voice in Speech and Song* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1988), p. 329.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 312.

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**Dwain N. Esmond** is an ordained pastor, author, and editor. He currently serves as associate director/editor of the Ellen G. White Estate.

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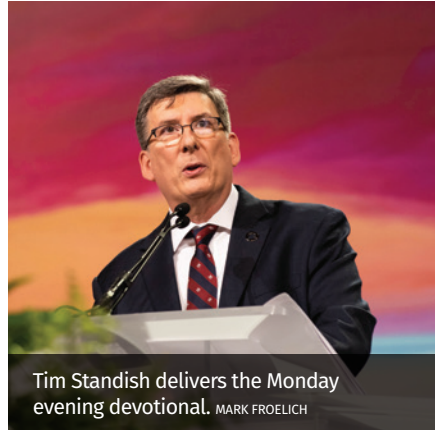
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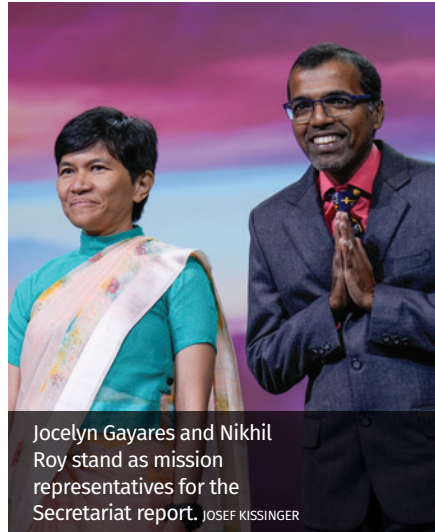
# SESSION GALLERY



Victor Okezie Ikpeazu, a delegate for the West-Central Africa Division JOSEF KISSINGER



Tim Standish delivers the Monday evening devotional. MARK FROELICH



Jocelyn Gayares and Nikhil Roy stand as mission representatives for the Secretariat report. JOSEF KISSINGER



General Conference volunteers assist at the information booth in the Convention center. MARK FROELICH





Delegates head to food services following the morning business session. MARK FROELICH



Ruthy Tiner Kibirige, a delegate from the East-Central Africa Division, submits her vote. JAMES BOKOVOY



Meeting new friends: a crucial part of General Conference Session. MARK FROELICH



Kenneth Logan, organist for the General Conference Session. JOSEF KISSINGER



## A CHURCH OF CONTRASTS

*A pending subject?*



**DANIEL BOSQUED**  
PRESIDENT, SAGUNTO  
ADVENTIST COLLEGE,  
SPAIN

**T**he pandemic has changed many things in our daily lives. Since the first lockdown in 2020 there have been drastic transformations in the way we study, work, shop, or experience church.

The impact on many local congregations has been noted. We have all seen how attendance has drastically decreased. Members have migrated “digitally” and follow church programs in other parts of the world.

In the case of this General Conference Session, the pandemic has not only been responsible for two consecutive postponements and significantly reduced visitor attendance but also forced the implementation of a hybrid format with face-to-face and remote attendance.

Monday afternoon, much of the work of the Session focused on changes to the *Working Policy* and the *Church Manual*. They were technical discussions that we were wisely invited to interpret through “mission glasses.” After all, policies and procedures are established in conjunction with the rest of the world family to order the life of the church and better define its function.

I found it extremely enriching to recognize the impact that a simple word in the *Church Manual* can have in different parts of the world. It was very interesting to listen to delegates from places as distant as Norway, the United States, Colombia, the Philippines, or Nigeria explain their vision on the drafting of some proposals and the effects that their modification could imply in the local churches of their territories.

Something that really caught my attention: some of the delegates are participating by Zoom videoconference in the Session late at night from their homes with exposed brick walls, poor lighting, and connection problems, and yet they make important contributions to the Adventist Church from their mobile phones. Theirs were interventions intertwined with professors and administrators gathered in a modern convention center, with an impressive display of technology and a digital voting system.

A church of contrasts, without a doubt.

In the midst of the contrasts that a worldwide church represents, however, with a presence in widely different contexts, it’s easy to see that the administrative reality of the church, reflected in the delegates present, has a wide margin for improvement with respect to its diversity.

Perhaps converting the contrasts into elements of institutional wealth is still a pending issue. Statistics for the 2,680 delegates to this Session show that 25 percent are more than 60 years of age. The vast majority are more than 50 years old, and only 3 percent are under 30 years old. Likewise, less than 20 percent of the delegates are women, even though the majority of church members worldwide are women.

Perhaps we need to internalize that the more varied and representative the church is at all levels, the more receptive, creative, agile, sensitive, and capable of dialogue we will be to engage a complex world that still waits to be reached.

I believe that we can achieve a better integration of the contrasts that our church shows, as a strength that allows us to be a movement that reaches every “nation, tribe, people, and tongue.” We can then take the gospel to the ends of the earth. 🗝



“Your estate plan  
is a gift allowing your  
family to focus on

**memories**

not challenges.”

—Eve Rusk

Director of Planned Giving and Trust Services  
Idaho Conference



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# SECRETARIAT: OFFICE OF ARCHIVES, STATISTICS, AND RESEARCH

*Of data, mission, and people*

The Secretariat report, from GC Secretariat’s Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, is structured around the three themes of data, mission, and people. This whole report is, of course, data, but it’s also about mission and people.

## OUR VIEW OF MISSIONAL SUCCESS

Statistics show that if we conceive of the Adventist Church’s mission simply as outreach, then it is flourishing, despite a significant dip because of the pandemic. The year 2004 was the first of 16 years in a row of 1 million or more accessions globally (accessions being the total of baptisms, rebaptisms, and professions of faith). Then came the coronavirus pandemic.

From 2019 to 2020, accessions declined by more than a half million, from 1.32 million to 800,000, the lowest number of global accessions since 1997. In 2021, however, despite the ongoing effects of COVID-19, accessions increased by more than 200,000, so that they once again topped 1 million. This included 230,970 rebaptisms of people who had once been members and left the church, but then returned.

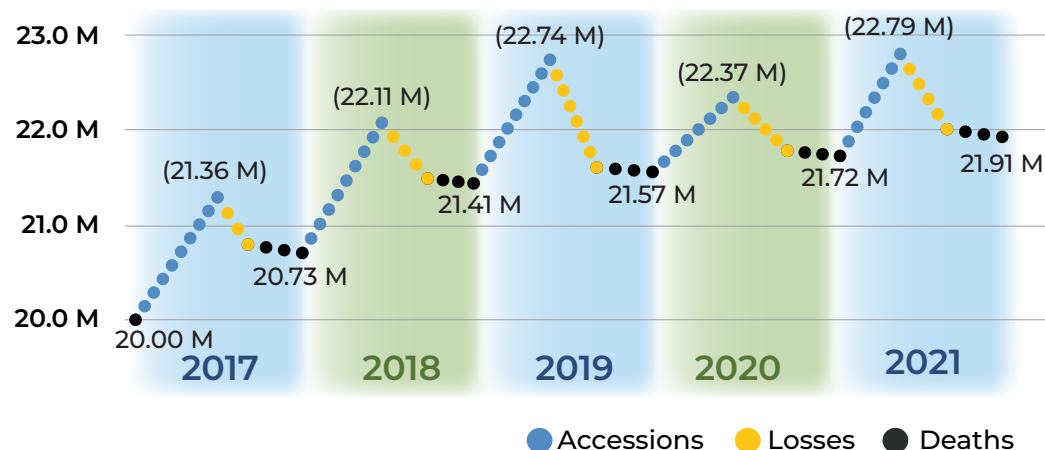
Some divisions have dedicated programs for reaching former members, and we hope all divisions will emulate their example. A total of 1,069,234 people joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 2021. We praise God for this rebound in Adventist outreach and acknowledge our pastors’ and members’ role in achieving it.

If, however, we conceive of the church’s mission as *keeping* as well as *adding* members, then the Adventist Church faces some challenges, for we experienced significant losses, and we know that there will be more to come as membership audits are implemented across the world.

## FACTORS IN GROWTH AND LOSS

The infographic shows annual membership changes during the past five years (2017 through 2021). The lines of blue dots show the net accessions. Despite the past two years of pandemic, in the five years represented by this chart a total of 5.9 million people joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The numbers in parentheses show what membership might have been if there had been no losses. Of course, there will always be

## Changes in Membership Over Five Years





deaths and some voluntary losses, but these parenthetical figures are still striking.

The black dots show the number of deaths. The lines of yellow dots represent living losses: that is, the net total of persons dropped from membership, missing members, and negative adjustments (the latter a category often used for the results of membership review). The downward yellow line in 2019 is particularly steep: this was the first-ever year in which living losses exceeded 1 million.

Accessions, deaths, and losses together affect church growth. As a result of their interplay, the church's reported membership at the end of 2021 was some 21.91 million. Though a total of 3.6 million people left the church during the five years illustrated in this chart, even this has positive implications for mission. For in certain parts of the world, church leaders now have an accurate sense of their membership for the first time in some years, and that means they can plan better, both for outreach and for nurture and retention. That means, in turn, that both outreach and inreach can be done more effectively and compellingly.

#### **BENEFITS OF ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH**

Church growth is one sign of successful mission. But we often think of church growth only in terms of congregations or church members, whereas, as the Adventist Church grows, so, too, do its numbers of organizations and institutions.

By *organizations* I mean local conferences and missions, and the different kinds of unions. It will be helpful, in considering organizational and institutional growth, to consider a longer-term period than the past five or 10 years. In what follows, I look at 50 years' worth of data, as this provides valuable perspective.

From 75 union conferences and union missions in 1970, unions have grown (also adding two more kinds of union) to a total of 138 in 2020—an increase of 84 percent. When it comes to the local

## **Data shows us how God has led and prospered the efforts of His people in mission.**

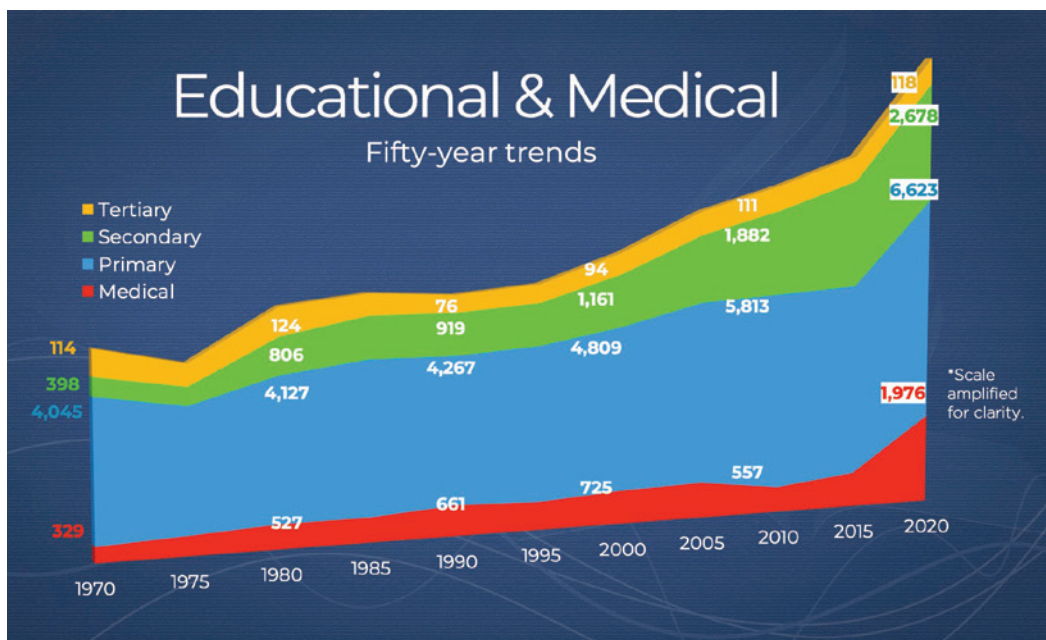
conference or mission, growth has been rather more dramatic, from 379 in 1970 to 731 missions and conferences at the end of 2020—a growth rate of 93 percent. During the past quinquennium conferences and missions increased by 76, or 11 percent, and three new unions were added.

Some church members see the increase in the number of organizations as evidence of the church becoming more bureaucratic, a bad thing, they believe, for the church's mission. But in many parts of the world, new conferences and missions power growth. These organizations provide leadership close to the local church level and therefore are responsive both to challenges and opportunities. They also provide training, resourcing, and equipping of pastors and church members. Unions train and equip conference and mission leaders and provide regional direction.

The growth of organizations in Latin America and Africa, in particular, is associated with dramatic growth rates in congregations and membership in those regions. An increase in the number of organizations can thus be a good thing for mission. Furthermore, as the church grows numerically and expands into regions where it once had no or minimal presence, the number of organizations is bound to grow, serving the increasing and spreading population of Seventh-day Adventists.

Another way in which the Adventist Church has grown in the past 50 years is in numbers of





institutions. If we look at educational institutions (see graph above), while tertiary institutions have increased only a fraction over the past half century, primary schools have increased by 64 percent and high schools by 570 percent. Schools are a vital engine for church growth in many parts of the world, so this is an important, positive trend.

What of all kinds of medical institutions? They have increased since 1970 from 329 to 1,976, representing a growth of 500 percent.

How has the church's workforce grown? The church's core group of workers is its pastors. In 1970 the church had 13,870 pastors worldwide. At the end of 2020 there were 33,530 pastors, an increase of 142 percent. As we think about people, these pastors, fulfilling their divinely called vocation to ministry, are crucial to the mission of the church.

In contrast to pastors, the total of all other employees increased by 159 percent. This is slightly more than the growth rate in the number of pastors, and it highlights that as the church

grows, it faces the danger of institutionalization, which tends to be harmful to mission.

The difference in the two growth rates is relatively small for a half century, which suggests that institutionalization is not currently as much of a challenge as some fear, though it is something we must be on guard against. It must be remembered, too, that our 75,000 employees in schools and colleges often function like pastors, as schools power dynamic church growth in many parts of the world.

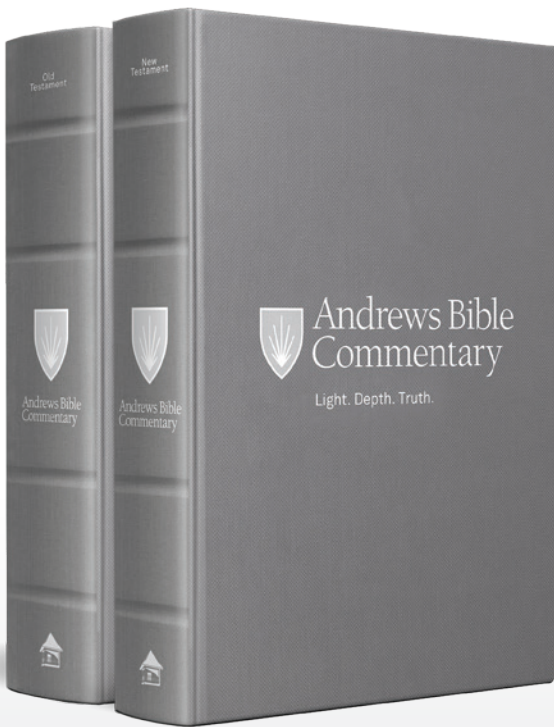
### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the fundamental impression from this review of statistical data, both in recent years and the past 50 years, is of a growing church. This is grounds neither for complacency nor for self-congratulation. There are trends we need to be aware of, and areas in which we can—and need to—do better. But the data shows us how God has led and prospered the efforts of His people in mission. ✎



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**Mark Finley**, world evangelist

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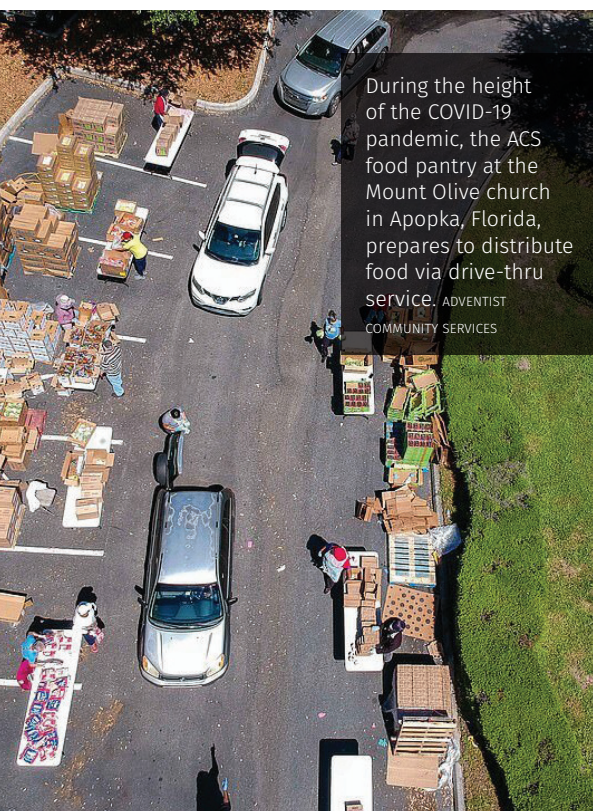
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# NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION

*Together in mission*



During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ACS food pantry at the Mount Olive church in Apopka, Florida, prepares to distribute food via drive-thru service. ADVENTIST COMMUNITY SERVICES

**D**uring the past seven years the North American Division (NAD) has focused on spreading the distinctive Christ-centered Seventh-day Adventist message of hope and wholeness. Since 2015 we have seen nearly 220,000 people baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America.

The focus has been not just on adding members, but making disciples for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Our emphasis has been to inspire each member with the knowledge that God gave them unique gifts to use for Him in drawing men and women to the heart of Jesus, presenting His love and the news of His soon return.

In 2015 under the leadership of former NAD president Daniel Jackson, we launched the Plant 1000 initiative, a vision to plant 1,000 new con-

gregations by 2020. We were well on our way to achieving that objective, but COVID-19 curtailed our efforts. By God’s grace, however, we planted more than 900 new congregations across the division by the end of 2020.

We have taken some creative approaches to church planting. Many of our pastors provided excellent leadership in innovative strategies to reach nonreligious people. They designed outreach activities and worship around the reality that a significant number of people in our territory have no religious background or exposure to Christian traditions or teachings.

Many of these church plants have concentrated on small groups, children’s programming, and extending the ministry of Jesus to the communities in which they serve. Their focus has been on meeting felt needs in their communities and mingling with others “as one who [desires] their good.”

## CREATIVE APPROACHES

One example of this creative approach to church planting can be seen in the ministry of Pastor Joanne Cortes, who has planted a new congregation in Washington, D.C. Cortes started from scratch, looking for people to join the launch team in 2020. Now church attendance averages 80-100 attendees every week, with 80 percent of those attending not previously going to church. Cortes shared that the “D.C. Campus” includes 50



ACS workers unload produce from a City Harvest truck in New York City. JENEAN LENDOR





members through baptisms, professions of faith, and transfers.

She has used Christ's methods by mingling with the community—showing sympathy and ministering to their needs. She has been creative in meeting the physical, mental, and spiritual needs of the people in her community in this COVID environment and has seen people embrace God's call in their lives. Cortes is one of many pastors who have been creative and adaptable in meeting the needs of those for whom Christ died and whom He is still calling to join His remnant church.

In our existing churches we have intentionally found creative ways to do Jesus' ministry in various contexts. We see centers of influence beginning to multiply throughout the territory. They range from a counseling center in downtown Washington, D.C., sponsored by the Capitol Hill church; to a contemporary outreach post in downtown Baltimore, Maryland, sponsored by the Ellicott City church; to a transitional house for former inmates and homeless called the HOPE (Helping Others Prepare for Eternity) House in Tacoma, Washington, sponsored by the Washington Conference.

One long-standing center of influence in British Columbia, Canada—the Church in the Valley—provides free oil changes and even donates automobiles to those in need in the community, in addition to a host of other ministries, including home renovations. Our churches also operated more than 1,500 food distribution centers during the past few years.

### ESSENTIAL OPERATIONS

During the pandemic, when most churches, schools, and businesses were asked to close, some of our Adventist churches were asked by their respective local government officials to stay open—or to reopen—because the community services they provided were deemed essential.

One such example is the New Haven church in Overland Park, Kansas. Individuals lined up week

after week to receive a box of food and other items from the church. Their ministry was so impactful that it caught the attention of local news networks that broadcast the church's ministry far and wide. These types of stories highlighting the ministry of many of our local churches can be seen again and again in cities across our division.



Herminio Irizarry discovered the *Adventist History Podcast* and began listening from his home in Virginia. He was baptized on October 16, 2021, by podcast host and Peoria (Illinois) church pastor, Matthew Lucio. PROVIDED BY LAKE UNION HERALD

### FAITHFUL MEMBERS

We praise God for what He has done and continues to do in the area of finances in our division, especially the faithfulness of His people in returning tithe. As a division, we reached the \$1 billion annual tithe threshold. During the quinquennium and for the years 2020 and 2021 the tithe in North America totaled more than \$7.4 billion.

We experienced record-level tithe gains. It is especially noteworthy that even during a pandemic, when most churches were not meeting in person for a significant portion of that time, we continued to see the tithe increase. Almost every conference experienced significant tithe gains.

God prepared our division more than a decade ago with the ability to return tithe online through the AdventistGiving platform. With this tool members can return tithe and give offerings to their local



Darnisha Thomas, who pastors in the Minnesota Conference, takes a selfie with a group of Pathfinders at the NextGen Ice Cream Social. MYLON MEDLEY



Students at the Majuro Seventh-day Adventist Mission School in Micronesia work together on a class assignment. DAN WEBER



The 2020 NAD year-end meeting goes completely virtual for the first time, relying on the division's technical team and Zoom to livestream the business meeting. PIETER DAMSTEEGT



After a two-year wait, Your Best Pathway to Health holds a free megaclinic in Indianapolis at the Lucas Oil Stadium. Pictured with a patient is Miriam Morgan-Skinner, DNP, FNP, CWCN. AMUEL GIRVEN

## NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION CONTINUED

churches without being physically present. Only God could foresee and prepare us for a moment like this. Along with hymn writer Fanny Crosby, we say, "To God be the glory, great things He hath done!"

Many of our churches and schools were closed during the pandemic, and in an effort to assist our local conferences, the division provided what was termed a stimulus package. The NAD office provided more than \$10 million in funding, and most of our unions added their own funding in addition to this unprecedented appropriation. Nearly \$2 million supported those involved in community outreach and relief through the NAD Adventist Community Services ministry department.

### UNSUNG HEROES AND VIRTUAL SPACES

As the pandemic began to take hold of our world, we had to close our churches and schools. Overnight we had to shift to doing worship services, prayer meetings, business meetings, board meetings, and ministry in general online.

Most of our churches were not prepared for this sudden adjustment; however, by God's grace, in a couple of weeks thousands of congregations across the NAD made the adjustment. We owe this adjustment and a debt of gratitude to media specialists, communication directors, and audiovisual specialists. Thousands of them worked tirelessly to get their local churches online in an effective and meaningful way. They used Zoom, YouTube, Facebook, and other social media platforms to ensure that the members stayed connected and the outreach ministry of the church continued to move forward.

As a result, many congregations have seen their attendance double and triple, and some are now reaching more than 10 times the number of people they reached before the pivot to an online service. We don't know where this will take us, but we do believe God is using this to multiply our efforts and to assist us in reaching thousands who were out of our reach before this shift to the virtual space.

When the pandemic hit, we witnessed an unprecedented spirit from our NAD pastors and

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## God has given each member unique gifts to use in drawing men and women to the heart of Jesus.

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congregations. Many shifted to a virtual space, streamlined their services, adapted their strategy, and exercised creativity in an effort to adjust to their present realities. Some started drive-in churches, where they used their church parking lot as an auditorium. Families would drive their cars, roll down their windows, and listen to the music and the preached word.

One such example is the Patmos Chapel church in Orlando, Florida, where members came by the hundreds and worshipped from their cars. Others met outside under trees in nature and enjoyed Sabbath School and divine worship service in places such as Paradise, California.

No matter what track they took, our churches showed remarkable resilience, adaptability, flexibility, and grit to ensure that the ministry of Jesus continued to go forward.

### EDUCATORS

The NAD educational system has a total of 918 childhood programs/schools. This includes a variety of configurations for the pre-K-to-12 platform. We operate 13 colleges/universities. All counted, 3,808 early childhood students, 37,817 elementary students, 11,680 secondary students, and 20,939 college/university students attend our schools.

Although our teachers and educational administrators have always done a fantastic job, the level of our appreciation for these mighty warriors of God went up a hundredfold during the pandemic. They too had to pivot at a moment's notice from in-person teaching to online instruction, primarily through Zoom.

In many cases, some had to transition to a hybrid model, managing students in-person and online at the same time. They did a herculean job of keeping our students on track with their educational pursuits while helping them cope with the mental strain and stressors that COVID-19 unleashed.

As a result of their faithful and tireless efforts, we actually witnessed an increase in enrollment in the pre-K-to-12 program. We thank God for

such dedicated and faithful men and women who are teaching in our schools and leading Adventist education throughout the division.

### HEALTH-CARE WORKERS

In the NAD there was a newfound respect for health-care workers and the institutions they serve. We have five health-care systems that collectively lead 1,148 clinics/hospitals throughout our territory. They are engaged in the healing ministry of Jesus every day, and thousands are touched by their compassionate ministry. This pandemic revealed the level of commitment, courage, and resolve they have in delivering care and healing at the risk of their own lives.

There are countless stories that demonstrate their bravery and selflessness as they ministered to the helpless and sometimes to the hopeless. They indeed showed our world and our community the disinterested benevolence of Jesus Christ. The church is blessed to have the Adventist health-care system as a part of its organizational orbit.

### TOGETHER IN MISSION

The NAD is intently focused on the mission in its territory. We will never abandon the call of Jesus in Mark 16:15: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation" (NIV).

During the past seven years we sent out 2,728 long-term missionaries and more than 50,000 short-term missionaries. With God, and our NAD leaders and membership, we will work to grow His church exponentially through three key areas of focus: multiplying His disciples, using media, and mentoring our next leaders.

Together in mission we will go! While the pandemic has slowed us down a bit in the past two years, we believe that God has called us to reach North America and the world with the distinctive Christ-centered message of hope and wholeness. ▀

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



## NORTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION

*Mission First! "I Will Go" to the ends of the earth*



The Northern Asia-Pacific Division's (NSD) motto, "Mission First," responds to the Great Commission Jesus gave His followers in Acts 1:8: "You shall be witnesses to Me . . . to the end of the earth." Church leaders and members of the NSD territory have dedicated their lives to sharing the three angels' messages with the 230 million people living in Japan, South Korea, Mongolia, Taiwan, and North Korea. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the gospel commission to reach the millions of souls living in our division will be accomplished!

### MISSION FIRST! I WILL GO TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

The NSD continues to embrace the difficult task of reaching those deeply rooted in traditional religions, secularism, and materialism, based on the prosperity-driven mindset of cultures within our territory.

Despite these obstacles, the Lord has blessed His work in remarkable ways throughout the past seven years. We've held more than 8,700 evangelistic meetings, resulting in 23,276 new members who accepted Jesus through baptism. At the end of December 2021 our division-wide membership stood at more than 285,000. The dedicated efforts of church leaders, pastors, and members continue to bless people's lives with the spirit of "Mission First! I Will Go to the Ends of the Earth."

### "I WILL GO" INITIATIVE, EVANGELISM, AND POST-COVID-19

Signs of Jesus' second coming are present everywhere, but many parts of the NSD territory still need to be reached with the gospel. Cities full of people have not yet heard that message. Jesus said, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Matt. 24:14, NIV).

Following the guidance of the General Conference and division leadership, unions and conferences in the NSD territory have created their own "I Will Go" strategies for each field according to their circumstances. The NSD is promoting its "I Will Go" strategy with the slogan "10/40 With Christ," which aims to increase church attendance to 100,000 every Sabbath and baptize 40,000 new members during these quinquennial years. We believe that these goals can be fulfilled as church leaders and members unite in earnestly working to win souls.

The world is in crisis because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and evangelistic efforts have changed. Church gatherings have been restricted and even banned by governments, and because of social distancing restrictions, it has become more challenging to meet with people for Bible studies or to personally share the gospel.

Our local conferences and churches embraced this evangelistic challenge by creating new mission



strategies that best fit the post-COVID-19 environment. We need to have a digital transformation that will strengthen and expand our onsite meetings and gatherings by developing and utilizing online platforms and digital media content.

### MISSION CONTINUES DURING CRISIS

The COVID-19 pandemic presented a seemingly insurmountable mission obstacle, as churches had to close Sabbath onsite gatherings. But in the midst of these challenges, members and institutions found new ways of worshipping and sharing the gospel with their friends and neighbors.

Sahmyook Health University in South Korea began conducting small-group Bible studies through social media and initiated a virtual mission festival, enabling people to continue their mission work. Through their efforts 73 students accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Throughout this quinquennium, Sahmyook Health University pastors have baptized more than 100 precious students every year.

In Mongolia, in the face of a strict national lockdown, all of the Mongolian churches held online evangelistic meetings in October 2021, demonstrating their strong missional enthusiasm. The Japan Union Conference continues with gospel work as they focus on the Mission Unusual Tokyo project. Taiwan churches didn't stop their evangelistic activities either. The Beitun church continued to move forward in its ministries through small-group evangelism, summer Bible camp, and university campus evangelistic series to reach young people.

God is mightier than any crisis, and He performs great miracles. We praise the Lord and thank our leaders and church members for creating innovative methods to move forward even in this time of difficulty.

### RECONFIGURATION OF THE NSD TERRITORY

Since standard denominational structures and relationships do not operate in China, it has been

challenging for the Chinese Union Mission (CHUM) to participate in NSD forums as per the patterns of normal denominational organization. Therefore, discussions were held to reorganize the NSD territory by attaching CHUM directly to the General Conference to build its internal oversight structures.

During the 2019 Annual Council, the Executive Committee voted to approve the realignment of the NSD territory by removing China, including Hong Kong and Macao, from the division territory, and attaching them to the General Conference. Leaders of both organizations expressed their commitment to continue the collaboration and support for each other in future mission endeavors.

2018 NSD International Mission Congress held in KINTEX, Goyang, South Korea



### NSD INTERNATIONAL MISSION CONGRESS

In August 2018 the division hosted the second NSD International Mission Congress in Goyang City, South Korea, to promote its "Mission First" spirit. Four thousand members from 40 countries participated in the congress. Participants heard spiritual messages and missionary reports, attended seminars, and visited booths. NSD leaders and members renewed their dedication for mission, uniting to "go forward" to accomplish the gospel commission.

On the final Sabbath of the event, with 7,000 people in attendance, a young man who left North Korea for freedom was baptized by General Conference president Ted N. C. Wilson. The young man accepted Jesus as his personal Savior and became a citizen of God's kingdom. Praise the Lord!



A PMM missionary in Taiwan baptizes a college student on August 21, 2021.



2017 NSD Pathfinder Camporee

### **PIONEER MISSION MOVEMENT**

The Pioneer Mission Movement (PMM) is NSD's Global Mission church planting project, which began in 2003. Since that time, 138 PMM pastors, along with their families, have left the comforts of their home countries to serve as cross-cultural church-planting missionaries. They often work in challenging areas where the seeds of the gospel have not yet been planted. These missionaries have committed to spending six years at their posts of duty.

Currently 35 PMM missionaries are planting churches in 13 countries, including Japan, Mongolia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Northern Cyprus, Indonesia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Russia, Turkey, Cambodia, and the Philippines. Through their dedicated service over the years, 344 churches and companies have been established, and 33,780 people have been baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

To support the evangelistic activities of PMM missionaries, the Golden Angels ministry was established in 2004, with eight young people devoting one year on a volunteer basis to serve as NSD's singing missionaries.

### **1,000 MISSIONARY MOVEMENT**

Jointly operated by the NSD and the Southern Asia-Pacific Division, the 1,000 Missionary Movement (1,000 MM) continues to train and dispatch hundreds of Adventist youth from across the world

into mission fields. After intensive training on the 1,000 MM campus, located in the Philippines, these young people are sent in pairs to mission fields, where they devote one year to the Lord.

Since 1993 nearly 11,335 young people from 64 countries have joined this movement. The fruits of their labors include 74,392 baptisms, the construction of 800 church buildings, and 1,491 churches and companies established in 47 countries.

### **YOUTH MINISTRIES**

There are 447 Adventist students in 48 non-Adventist colleges in the NSD territory sharing the three angels' messages with the motto "Follow Jesus, Embrace His Mission, Change the World." Since 2019, 38 college students recruited from eight countries have served the Lord for one year as overseas Public Campus Ministries (PCM) missionaries in Taiwan and Mongolia.

In Japan, Adventist youth have been spreading the gospel message in dynamic ways through the Youth Rush program. Since 2016, Youth Rush members have visited 73,579 houses and distributed 28,438 books that teach Japanese people about God.

Adventist youth in South Korea have been actively participating in youth evangelistic efforts. Since 2015, Adventist youth in South Korea introduced 33,312 seekers to the Bible and held 714 youth evangelism meetings. As a result, 2,067 young people were baptized.





NSD president SiYoung Kim during the 2018 NSD International Mission Congress



Many people were baptized during the city evangelism event in Taiwan.

### NORTH KOREA MISSION

Even though it takes only 30 minutes from the NSD's headquarters to reach the North Korean border, the country remains closed—making it an unentered territory for the gospel message. There are 26 million people living in North Korea, but for the past 70 years they have been sealed off from the outside world and denied religious freedom.

The motto of NSD's new North Korea Mission department is: "God will open the door when we are ready." The department has set a new goal of training 1,000 missionaries for the North Korean Mission and organizing 100 mission teams to plant 100 churches in North Korea when future opportunities arise.

Please pray that God will open the doors to North Korea so that the 26 million people there can know Jesus and choose to follow Him.

### MISSION UNUSUAL TOKYO

Tokyo is one of the richest cities in the world, with nearly 40 million residents. Because of secularism and materialism, sharing the gospel is a great challenge. Considering the ratio of church members to the general population, each Adventist member in Tokyo would need to reach 10,000 people. To overcome this challenge, the Japan Union Conference has started the ambitious project Mission Unusual Tokyo, in partnership with the Northern Asia-Pacific Division and the General Conference.

Since 2020 five missionary families have started their mission work. While still learning the language and culture, they are already in contact with people and have begun small-group discipleship trainings. Soon their efforts will be joined by Global Mission Pioneers, urban centers of influence, volunteers, and tentmakers for a massive church planting project.

### GO FORWARD

Mission is not optional; it's a God-given mandate. "Evangelism, the very heart of Christianity, is the theme of primary importance. . . . The Advent message . . . must swell to a loud cry reaching the uttermost parts of the earth."<sup>1</sup>

There are many challenges still ahead of us, but all of them are mission opportunities. As we focus on our powerful God and go forward, God will be with us, and He will bless the mission activities in which we are involved. "God will do great things for those who trust in Him."<sup>2</sup>

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, God's people will move forward to the ends of the earth to accomplish the gospel commission given by Jesus. Please join us in praying that the Lord will continue to bless His mission in the NSD! ▀

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1890, 1908), p. 493.



# IN THE BEGINNING . . .

*God Created*





**RONNY NALIN**

DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE  
PRESENTED TUESDAY  
EVENING, JUNE 7, 2022

**W**e were not there when our world first came to be. Our belief that God created it is based on the testimony of the Word of God. Many feel, however, that the recent expansion of scientific knowledge has marginalized the Bible's role in finding truth about origins. The Bible is often presented as an outdated reflection of premodern thinking, essentially devoid of factual information when it comes to earth history.

But what if trusting the Word of God offers insight that is sharp, powerful, and able to illuminate our best scientific efforts? Following are some selected examples from the Word of God that will resonate deeply with those who have dedicated their life to the study of nature.

### **GENESIS 1:1: "IN THE BEGINNING . . ." AND PHYSICS**

All the matter in the universe, including you and me, is made of very small elementary particles that interact and hold together. The atom, for example, is a tiny unit of matter with a nucleus made of particles called protons and neutrons. Protons and neutrons have a very specific mass.

Nobody knows why the mass of protons and neutrons has these specific values and not a slightly different number. These values are a given, a fact of our universe. However, protons and neutrons can form the atomic nucleus because their masses have precisely these values. If the values were just a fraction smaller or a fraction bigger, the chemical elements, and therefore we and this world, could not exist.

Like the mass of the proton and the neutron, all the given or "fundamental constants" of the universe, the numbers we can only measure without knowing where they came from, have the perfect value for us to exist. What physicists observe at the most fundamental level makes perfect sense in light of God's Word. The universe looks calibrated because there is a Designer.<sup>1</sup>

### **ISAIAH 45:18: FORMED TO BE INHABITED**

The more we understand the earth as a series of interconnected systems of solids, liquids, and gases, the more we see the great intelligence that designed balance between all the different factors that make life possible. Among the many examples that could be discussed, liquid water is worth a special mention. We are so used to this simple molecule because it's everywhere, and we think of it as a normal, commonplace, everyday substance, but it is just the opposite.<sup>2</sup>

Liquid water is the perfect carrier for all sorts of substances with the exact low viscosity for easy movement within the body and within plants. It stores and transports heat better than almost any other liquid; it has unexpectedly high melting and boiling points; it's not flammable; it's nontoxic; and it has a high-density liquid phase relative to the solid phase, which is why ice floats on water.

Liquid water is so essential that about 55 to 75 percent of our bodies is made of it. Is it just one of many fortunate coincidences



# A biblical worldview broadens our thinking to include new questions, at times opening our eyes to see things that were not noticed before.

that there is so much liquid water available on the surface of our planet? Not if God “made the earth” and “formed it to be inhabited.”

## 1 CORINTHIANS 13:12: A DIMMED PICTURE

The Word of God also alerts us of limits to our understanding. When we look at data in nature from a biblical perspective, we are not always able to make sense of everything. When this happens, what are some principles that can help us deal with this aspect of our journey?

Trust in the Word of God means, at times, acknowledging that God’s wisdom and power are greater than what can be contained in the papers we write about processes and features observed in the world. Trust in the Word of God, however, should come with respect for science. This implies a commitment to publish our research, doing the best we can with the tools we have, and exploring with method, integrity, and excellence, because “only if Christians can be trusted in areas scientists know will they be trusted in areas scientists don’t know.”<sup>3</sup>

We should seek for coherence between the Bible and science, and there is value in this convergence. Coherence should not be forced. It’s better for us to learn to coexist with tension. We should never forget that our goal throughout this process of discovery is to share with others a better picture of a Christlike God, “a powerful God who does much more than humans can explain and a good God who is trustworthy in the face of evil.”<sup>4</sup>

## GENESIS 7:19: A GLOBAL FLOOD

In the Bible we find a depiction of a major catastrophe, the Flood, but many do not accept the historical reality of this recent cataclysm. Yet in the geologic record we find many examples where catastrophe is the answer that makes sense. “If more and more processes in geology require invoking catastrophe, we should not be surprised, since our view of earth history predicts as much. That should encourage us to keep looking.”<sup>5</sup>

Our trust in God’s Word gives us a somehow

unconventional perspective when looking at the geological record. Rather than being a problem, this can be seen as an asset for insight and direction. A biblical worldview broadens our thinking to include new questions, at times opening our eyes to see things that were not noticed before. “God is the most knowledgeable geologist ever, and, contrary to the prevailing worldview, following His biblical outline of history can give us an advantage.”<sup>6</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In dedicating our life to the study of nature while anchored on solid faith in God and the Scriptures, we model a journey that never seeks to diminish the value of the Word of God but treasures it as a true compass in the quest for understanding. When we assimilate the Word of God, making it our daily nourishment, we establish it as the foundational platform from which to go and explore the world and its complexities.

The Bible provides us with key landmarks necessary to correctly understand the history of our planet, including Creation week, the Fall and the entrance of evil into the world, the Flood, the incarnation of God in Christ, and the promise of future restoration. This is the historical framework that positions us in the right place to find the true meaning of our existence and, most important, that leads to a personal encounter with our Creator. ▀

<sup>1</sup> See A. Popov, “The Fine-tuning of the Universe,” in *Design and Catastrophe: 51 Scientists Explore Evidence in Nature*, ed. L. J. Gibson, R. Nalin, and H. M. Rasi (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 2021), pp. 3-5.

<sup>2</sup> See R. Hayes, “The Exceptional Properties of Water,” available at [www.grisda.org/living-with-the-exceptional-1](http://www.grisda.org/living-with-the-exceptional-1), accessed Nov. 24, 2021.

<sup>3</sup> B. Clausen, “What Adventists Have to Share With the Scientific Community,” *Dialogue* 30, no. 3 (2018): 10-14, available at <https://dialogue.adventist.org/3065/what-adventists-have-to-share-with-the-scientific-community>, accessed Nov. 24, 2021.

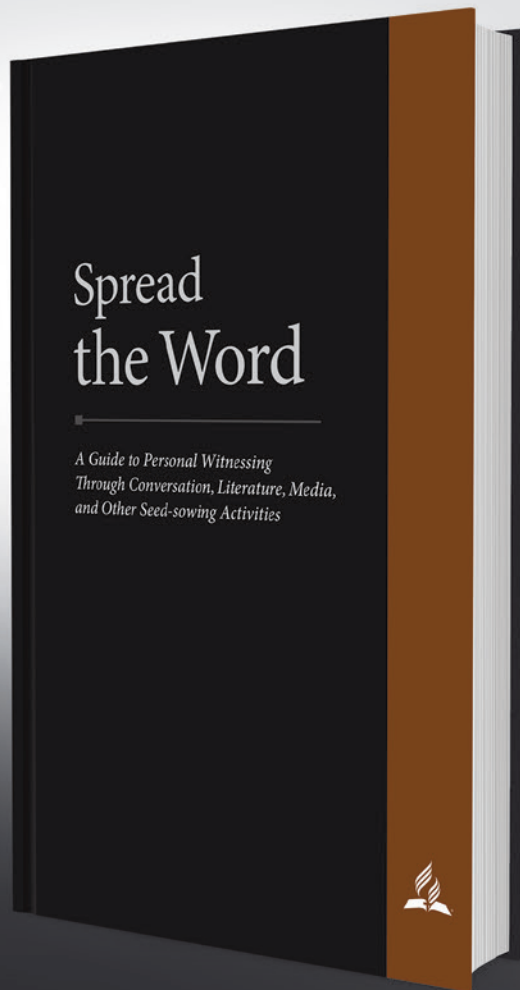
<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> A. Chadwick, *Megabreccia and Catastrophe*, available at: [www.grisda.org/megabreccia-and-catastrophe-1](http://www.grisda.org/megabreccia-and-catastrophe-1), accessed Nov. 24, 2021.

<sup>6</sup> L. Brand, *Questions: Their Role in Discovery*, available at [www.grisda.org/questions-their-role-in-discovery-1](http://www.grisda.org/questions-their-role-in-discovery-1), accessed Nov. 24, 2021.

**Ronny Nalin**, Ph.D., is director of the Geoscience Research Institute.

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## SOUTH AMERICAN DIVISION

*A church on the move*



The past seven years have been marked by challenges, but also by great achievements. This story should have been told in 2020, but COVID-19 changed everything. Now the South American Division (SAD) recalls countless miracles from a church that kept moving although the world was stunned by a pandemic of global proportions.

Between 2016 and early 2020 Adventists mobilized to preach, help others, and speak about Jesus in different ways. With the arrival of the pandemic, however, there was a moment when everything stopped—except the will of Adventists in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and the Falkland Islands to see Jesus come back. Throughout the past few years a deep sense of mission, creativity, and the intelligent use of technology have been applied to preaching the good news of salvation.

Today 2,568,812 members meet weekly to worship in nearly 29,000 churches and groups across eight countries. Through them the gospel reaches every region, no matter how challenging or remote.

### TECHNOLOGICAL AND AUDIOVISUAL ADVANCES

Even before the pandemic, the SAD was modernizing its structures. New technological options

include the Adventist Institute of Technology, the Christian content streaming platform *Feliz7Play*, the artificial intelligence service system *Esperança* (Hope), and other resources for members.

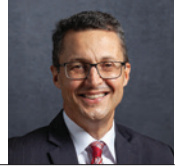
The release of the *7me* app allowed members to stay connected, even when churches were closed. Through the app, members can pay tithe and offerings, request membership transfers, create prayer groups, make prayer requests, follow church finances, and integrate with others.

SAD also invested in the *Feliz7Play* platform. With content in Portuguese and Spanish, the collection offers films, original series, clips, sermons, and documentaries that so far have resulted in 97,936,371 views. In 2021 a new app was launched, enabling everyone to watch, download, and follow their favorite content.

The platform gave rise to two other products. The first is a distance course that teaches young people how to broadcast on YouTube and employ this talent in preaching the gospel. The second brings together Adventist podcasts in two languages to facilitate the consumption of this type of media.

*Esperança* is a robot that teaches the Bible through a messaging app. The user can choose from





several study topics. From there the chatbot sends questions and answers and, if the student wishes, forwards the contact to the nearest pastor so that they can meet face to face. This tool has borne fruit, and hundreds of people have been baptized.

### **NEW GENERATIONS**

All of these resources complement and support essential ministries of the church, such as Pathfinder and Adventurer clubs. Originally the SAD planned to start a club in each church. Even during the pandemic, some unions reached the goal. Across the territory, 86 percent of churches have a functioning club. The number of Pathfinders grew by 133 percent and Adventurers by 183 percent. Today, a total of 460,777 children and teenagers are part of a club in South America.

The Caleb Mission project provided support during the pandemic. During the past seven years almost 1 million volunteer missionaries have participated in social and spiritual outreach in cities across the region. More than 4,000 South Americans left their homes, countries, and jobs to serve others through the One Year in Mission project.

A strong characteristic of Adventist youth is solidarity. In addition to other projects, they also donate what is most precious: life. The monthly Vida por Vidas blood drive has provided life-giving blood to more than 3 million people.

### **EVANGELISM**

The pandemic has not stopped the preaching of the gospel. Between 2016 and 2021, 1,314,441 people joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church because of the influence of pastors, workers, and volunteer evangelists whose lives are a testimony to the power of mission.

Different tools were used to reach these people. In addition to digital technology, the Impact Hope literature project distributed more than 163 million free books and other material to homes in South America. In addition, with 307,650,014

downloads of digital versions of these titles, it was possible to reach different parts of the world.

### **SOCIAL PROJECTS**

At the end of each year, members mobilize to collect food and essential items for the More Love in Christmas project, which serves thousands of families. With overwhelming economic needs during the pandemic, the church expanded this outreach to include More Love in Easter. The Adventist Solidarity Action offers support to the community outside these holidays, too. This work assisted 2,235,181 people with clothes, food, vocational courses, and other resources.

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) provided assistance during the most challenging moments. Refugees, victims of natural disasters, and the socially vulnerable received support through various projects and emergency responses. More than 5.5 million people's lives were transformed by volunteer doctors, social workers, dentists, and other professionals.

Shortly after the pandemic started, the Women's Ministries Department launched the Ouvido



## SOUTH AMERICAN DIVISION CONTINUED

Amigo project. This outreach connects people with emotional and mental needs with volunteer psychologists who provide free counseling. Since that time, nearly 21,000 people have received professional assistance.

### INSTITUTIONS

The list of institutions within the SAD is large—from hospitals, schools, and food factories to publishing houses. More than that, however, are the benefits they bring to the community. Clinics, hospitals, and healthy living centers played a key role in saving lives during the pandemic.

Between March 2020 and February 2022, 26,414 patients received treatment for COVID-19. One of them was André Dantas, current president of the East Brazil Union Mission. After contracting the virus, he was admitted to Belem Adventist Hospital. In just a few days, he had to be intubated, and his life hung in the balance. “We had a family prayer and then the sedation equipment arrived. They tried to put it on, but they couldn’t because I couldn’t breathe properly. I put on the mask myself,” he says.

It took 41 days for Dantas to wake up again. After a few more days in the hospital, he was discharged, did intensive rehabilitation work, and within a month was back in his pastoral ministry. Although weakened by his lengthy illness, today he is able to testify to others of his miraculous recovery. This outcome is the result



of the tireless dedication of hundreds of doctors and thousands of nurses and other health professionals who have committed to take care of those who need it most.

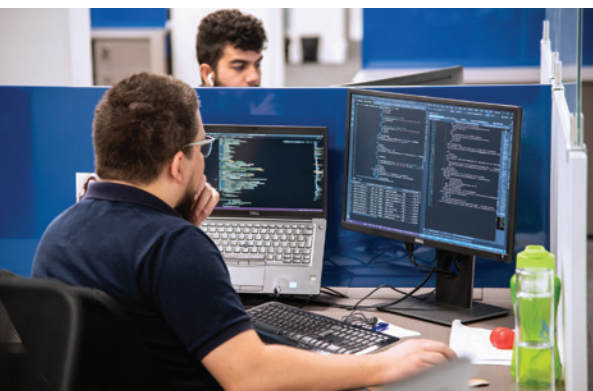
Brazil Publishing House and the South American Spanish Publishing House have continued their work, as well as the Brazil Food Factory and Argentina Food Factory, which produce healthy food products for consumers.

Adventist education also “reinvented itself” during the past few years, without losing the clear focus of transmitting spiritual values to students. At 836 Adventist schools, colleges, and universities, 323,417 students received a quality education. With the need for distance learning, an already-existing framework was enhanced, allowing students and teachers to quickly continue learning remotely.

The Adventist Technology Institute (ATI) takes care of all data management systems, information, and services so the church is more efficient and handles data with the necessary security. These systems enable the church to develop solutions to improve daily church life.

### MINISTRY AND MISSION

All of the results mentioned in this report rely on the commitment and support of ministers who have dedicated their lives in service to others. Pastoral contact with members remains strong in the South American territory, although adapted for current health protocols. In the thousands of churches scattered across the region, 4,793 pastors work tirelessly to oversee, preach, and advise.



## In South America, Adventists are committed to preaching the gospel using every possible resource.

Currently there are 1,443 students being trained in theological schools in South American countries. Among them, some are seeking further preparation to serve the church by continuing in postgraduate and master's courses. Virtual education has allowed more to participate.

It was pastors who, during the most challenging time for the world in recent decades, took the risk to save people. While most of the population was isolated at home, pastors took to the streets and churches, hospitals and cemeteries, offering consolation and comfort to those who lost relatives and friends. This came at the cost of many lives—lives sacrificed for the sake of ministry.

Another group committed to preaching the gospel are literature evangelists. Books and magazines are taken from house to house, company to company, spreading the message of hope. This ministry trains hundreds of young people and supports entire families.

### CHURCH EVERYWHERE

South American Adventists are present in several countries. Through Adventist Volunteer Service projects, people leave their homeland, work, and family to be representatives of Jesus in countries where even talking about Him is often prohibited. They risk their lives and the lives of their families for a greater purpose: presenting the truth to as many as will listen. There are more than 700 missionaries spread across 62 countries.

Church doesn't just happen inside a building. True Christianity happens in homes, on the streets, in virtual meetings, in messages, in helping others. In South America the church is on the move, always seeking to reach more people with a message that transforms lives and promotes salvation. Both young and old are committed to making Jesus' return a reality and leaving, once and for all, this world of suffering and pain. South American Adventists are profoundly convicted that Jesus must return soon! 📱





## ISRAEL FIELD

### *The Everlasting Message of Peace for Israel*

**E**ight hundred thirty Adventist brothers and sisters living in Israel send greetings from Jerusalem, the city of peace. Dwelling close to extraordinary monuments of biblical history nourishes our faith in a deep and meaningful way. Whether we mention Capernaum, Carmel, Jericho, Megiddo, or Jerusalem, we are overwhelmed with the splendor and majesty of God's action in favor of this planet.

We are thrilled to walk in the footsteps of Jesus and His apostles. While waiting for the New Jerusalem, we are doing everything possible to share the message of hope and healing in Israel, from Genesis to the book of Revelation.

Israel is a very diverse country, where Christians represent only 2 percent of the population. We give glory to God for 227 new believers baptized during the past seven years. Our 22 congregations worship God in different languages: Hebrew, Russian, Arabic, Tagalog, Amharic, Romanian, Spanish, and Azerbaijani, to name a few.

#### **CENTERS OF INFLUENCE**

In a country with so many safety threats and where walls between religions are extremely tall, it is important to choose the right approach in order to share with others the everlasting message of peace. One of the most effective methods is to create centers of influence. Through the faithful and generous support of Global Mission, we have



12 Baptisms in Yardenit, one of the baptismal sites on the Jordan river in Israel traditionally related to John the Baptist. The event was organized in collaboration with the Adventist World Radio and Elder Duane McKay.

several centers where we mingle with people, minister to their needs, earn trust, and share the message God has given.

The Life and Hope Center in Haifa is benefiting from its exceptional location close to the Baha'i gardens, which naturally attracts visitors. The best month is December, when Hanukkah and Christmas festivities uplift cultural diversity. Jews, Christians, and Muslims regularly come to our various activities. For example, in December 2021 more than 3,000 non-Adventists entered the Life and Hope Center and enjoyed music, food, artistic events, and more.

In Bat Yam, Luba Belder is working as a Global Mission volunteer. In 2019 she started the Hebrew



Family Day for Israel Field Employees (pastors and volunteers) at Masada, an ancient fortification overlooking the Dead Sea.



Language School for New Immigrants, studying Old Testament Hebrew through free classes. She began with texts about prayer in the Bible. Her students were profoundly impacted. Part of this program was also to visit important biblical sites.

At the Mount of Blessings they had a worship service. One of the students shared all nine beatitudes from the Gospel of Matthew, then Belder gave a short message, inspired by Jesus' sermon on the mount. The bus was full of people. Thirty-four students committed to study Jesus' command: "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of people" (Matt. 4:19, NASB).

Nazareth is a special place for all Christians because Jesus grew up there. By God's grace we've organized multiple efforts to reach the Arabic population, such as computer training, health presentations, English as a Second Language lessons, etc.

Adventist World Radio (AWR) recently built a new studio here—an immense blessing for the Israel Field. This project will bring hope to Jerusalem and the entire region.

Our members in Ashdod are sharing hope in a creative and effective way. Their mission statement keeps them focused on the essentials. Three years ago the church started a social project with monthly meetings. They invite such professionals as speech pathologists, physiotherapists, or other medical personnel to speak, or they simply organize outings for families in the city.

As a result of these efforts, a year and a half ago the Ashdod church organized an Adventurers club. Today there are more non-Adventist families in these meetings than church members. Last autumn we had a family weekend. Most of the families from the club joined the gathering. By God's grace we see a regular increase in attendance and the growing impact of God's Word.

### TRANSFORMED LIVES

Let's mention some of the mighty acts of God during the past seven years:

- Ruth, a devoted young woman, discovered the Bible through contact with one of her

friends. She fell in love with God and made the decision, despite cultural, ethnic, and religious obstacles, even the danger of death, to follow Jesus and be baptized.

- A 22-year-old girl came sporadically to church, then stopped and decided that her only priority would be to enjoy life, partying and spending time with friends. She soon discovered that her life was out of control. After several years of church absence, she heard of a youth meeting with a guest speaker from the General Conference. She came and was baptized with six other young people.
- A couple came to meetings organized by our church and discovered that God answers prayers. They had had difficulty conceiving and wanted a child. They expressed their request to the pastor and his wife, who organized several intense prayer sessions. They surrendered their will to God and presented their case. By God's grace their life was changed forever, and soon the woman became pregnant.

Please pray for Israel and for the impact of our PEACE strategic plan. It is inspired by the words of the apostle Peter pronounced in Caesarea, in the house of Cornelius: "In every nation [including the country of Israel] anyone who fears [God] . . . is acceptable to Him. . . . The message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ. . ." (Acts 10:35, 36, NRSV). May the message of the everlasting gospel bring peace to all. And may we soon see the fulfillment of God's promises so we can be part of the New Jerusalem. 🍀



Beautiful music and delightful fellowship during the Worship Service of Tel Aviv Ghanaian SDA Church. The Israel Field is blessed to have representatives of many countries in the land of the Bible.

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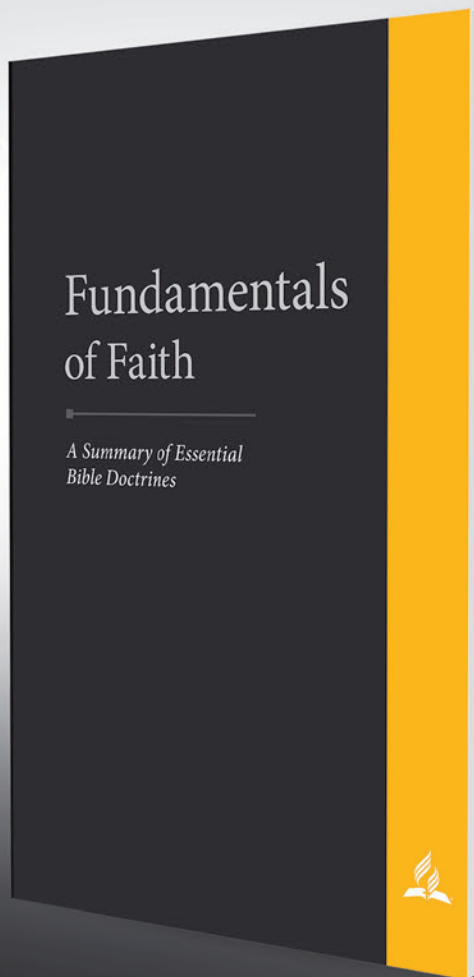
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## DELEGATE OF THE DAY PROFILE

# A TEACHER FOLLOWING THE GREATEST TEACHER

WILONA KARIMABADI

She could have stayed home and been one of the many who opted to participate in this 61st Session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists through Zoom videoconferencing. But Uma Edward Pilli, principal of the Seventh-day Adventist school in Hyderabad, India, journeyed thousands of miles anyway to participate in person. “I came to [have a hand in] choosing our leaders,” she says. “There should be a change in certain areas, and here we can voice those choices because this is a bigger platform for us to verbalize our thoughts and meet and learn from different cultures.” Despite the smaller size of this year’s Session, that is still an integral part of the GC Session experience.

Pilli, who just celebrated her thirty-second wedding anniversary,

is enjoying a bit of role reversal at the Session. Her husband is treasurer of the East Central India Union, but Pilli was the one chosen by the Southern Asia Division to be the delegate this year. “I am the actual delegate here this time, and my husband is the accompanying spouse,” she says, laughing. “In 2015, he was the delegate, and I was the spouse.”

In addition to taking an active role in church business as an official delegate, Pilli is loving every moment of the intercultural exchange a GC Session has to offer. “I just shared a table with people from Israel, Lebanon, and Venezuela. It was so nice meeting them, and we shared what we had—not just emotions and all, but food, even snacks I brought from India. They liked it.”

As an educator in a school that is 99-percent Muslim (historically,

Hyderabad has a significant Muslim population) in a country that has made sharing Christianity a lot more difficult in recent years, Pilli finds the way forward is through modeling Christ. “My students will say, ‘Ma’am, you’re different.’ So, through my silence and my actions, I can preach about Jesus because I cannot verbalize anything [about Christianity] to them.”

Pilli comes to GC Session with a burden for members and leaders alike to have the same zeal and steadfastness of early church pioneers. “The pioneers just did a better job. Our leaders need to lead and influence us in such a way that we can go to the cross of the Lord without argument. Whatever the world is doing, why should we follow?”

With a passion for Christ and seeking to follow Him in all things, Pilli’s great ambition as she nears retirement is to not really retire. “My desire now is to retire and settle down in my remote village and start some kind of school for underprivileged children. While I still have the energy, I want to have a small church and teach more through habits [and actions] and lead people to Jesus instead of just preaching directly about His word. We can silently preach regardless of whatever profession we are in. We don’t need to verbally take a pulpit and speak big,” Pilli says. “I want to be an influence on someone. I want to live the life Christ wants me to live, but [even] without saying anything, I want to help people follow Christ.”



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# HopeChannel

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The *Adventist Review* has served the Seventh-day Adventist Church as the official record of the deliberations of its General Conference Sessions since the denomination was organized in May 1863. Believers around the world look to this record to understand the shaping of policies, the election of key leaders, and the development of mission initiatives. The record provided either in the pages of the *Adventist Review* or on our website are supplied by the official record-keeping office of the church, the General Conference Secretariat, and published without abridgement by the *Adventist Review*.

As the church has dramatically expanded in

the past few decades, the volume and scope of the records of its quinquennial sessions has also greatly expanded, particularly when there have been discussions about and revisions to some of the church's organizing documents.

At the 2022 General Conference Session, the *Adventist Review* and General Conference Secretariat are working closely to provide a prompt and accessible record of the actions and proceedings of each day's business meetings through both print and Web delivery. Readers may find the actions listed in the printed Bulletins as well as on the website.

## First Business Meeting

### SESSION ACTIONS

61st General Conference Session, St Louis, Missouri, June 6, 2022, 10:00 a.m.

#### GENERAL CONFERENCE RULES OF ORDER

VOTED, To approve the General Conference *Rules of Order* as the parliamentary authority for the 61st General Conference Session.

#### MCFARLAND, TODD R, PARLIAMENTARIAN—GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION - 2022

VOTED, To appoint Todd R McFarland, Associate General Counsel of the General Conference Office of General Counsel, as parliamentarian for the business meetings of the 61st General Conference Session.

#### MOTION TO LIMIT SPEECHES

VOTED, To limit speeches for the 61st General Conference Session to two minutes, or three minutes if the speaker needs translation.

#### ADOPTION OF THE DAILY PROGRAM

VOTED, To adopt the daily program of the 61st General Conference Session as found in the Program Guide.

#### ADOPTION OF SESSION AGENDA

VOTED, To adopt the agenda for the 61st General Conference Session.

#### STEERING COMMITTEE—GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION - 2022

VOTED, To approve the 2022 General Conference Session Steering Committee, as follows:

##### STEERING

Ted N C Wilson, Chair

Hensley M Mooroooven, Secretary

Members: Kyoshin Ahn, Timothy H Aka, Stanley E Arco, Guillermo E Biaggi, Mario A Brito, G Alexander Bryant, Sheri Clemmer, Abner De los Santos, Paul H Douglas, Karnik Doukmetzian, George O Egwakhe, Larry R Evans, Mark A Finley, Elie Henry, Raafat A Kamal, Mikhail F Kaminskiy, Si Young Kim, Erton C Kohler, Gary D Krause, Elbert Kuhn, Ezras Lakra, Thomas L Lemon, German A Lust, Solomon Maphosa, Geoffrey G Mbwana,

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Invitees: Tamara K Boward, Williams S Costa Jr, William M Knott

#### STANDING COMMITTEES—GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION - 2022

VOTED, To approve standing committees for the 2022 General Conference Session, as follows:

##### CHURCH MANUAL

Guillermo E Biaggi, Chair

Abner De los Santos, Vice-chair

Gerson P Santos, Secretary

Tamara K Boward, Recording Secretary

Members: Kyoshin Ahn, Viktor Alyksyeyenko, Audrey E Andersson, Kingsley C Anonaba, Rudy R Baloyo, Bert B Beach, Lesleigh A E Bower, Elias Brasil de Souza, Changhyun Choi, Alain G Coralie, Paul H Douglas, Karnik Doukmetzian, Robert B Dulay, George O Egwakhe, Dwain Esmond, Stanley B Fernandes, Carolyn Forrest, Pavel Goia, Edward Heidinger, Elie Henry, Anthony R Kent, Erton C Kohler, Khrabbor Kharbteng, Linda Mei Lin Koh, Stephane Le Guilcher,

Barna Magyarosi, Geoffrey G Mbwana, Rainford McIntosh, Wilson Measapogu, Hensley M Mooroooven, Rodia M M Musonda, Isaiah M G Ok, Jerry N Page, Rayla Pikeri, Leslie N Pollard, Gideon P Reyneke, Claude J Richli, Richard A Sabuin, Mykola Shpylchuk, Michael B Sikuri, Heather-Dawn K Small, Florence M S Sombie, Artur A Stele, Alberto R Timm, Ted N C Wilson.

##### CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

Ted N C Wilson, Chair

Geoffrey G Mbwana, Vice-chair

Hensley M Mooroooven, Secretary

Laurie J Schmidt, Recording Secretary



Members: Kyoshin Ahn, Viktor Alyeksyeyenko, Audrey E Andersson, Kingsley C Anonaba, Rudy R Baloyo, Lisa M Beardsley-Hardy, Guillermo E Biaggi, Elias Brasil de Souza, Mario Brito, Pierre Caporal Sr, Alain G Coralie, Abner De los Santos, Paul H Douglas, Marlon de Souza Lopes, Karnik Doukmetzian, Edward Heidinger, Vincent Injety, Nenad Jeuranovic, Leonard A Johnson, Orlan Johnson, J Francois Keet, Erton C Kohler, Michael Kruger,

Eibert Kuhn, Thomas L Lemon, Andrea T Luxton, Barna Magyárosi, Todd R McFarland, Wilson Measapogu, Derek J Morris, Daisy J F Orion, Kathryn L Proffitt, Gideon P Reyneke, C Randolph Robinson, Blasious M Ruguri, Richard A Sabuin, Saw Samuel, Michael B Sikuri, Ella S Simmons, Joel D Tompkins, Bassey E O Udoh, Ivan I Velgosha, Chinta J Victor, Teixera M Vinte, James Winegardner, Jennifer Woods, Lori T Yingling.

Invitee: Tamara K Boward.

#### **ZIMBABWE CENTRAL UNION CONFERENCE, ZIMBABWE EAST UNION CONFERENCE, AND ZIMBABWE WEST UNION CONFERENCE—NEW UNION CONFERENCES**

VOTED, 1. To recognize and record the reorganization of the former Zimbabwe Union Conference into three union conferences known as the Zimbabwe Central Union Conference, the Zimbabwe East Union Conference, and the Zimbabwe West Union Conference, effective January 1, 2018.

2. To accept the Zimbabwe Central Union Conference (SID) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

3. To accept the Zimbabwe East Union Conference (SID) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

4. To accept the Zimbabwe West Union Conference (SID) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

#### **BELIZE UNION MISSION—NEW UNION MISSION**

VOTED, 1. To recognize and record union mission status for the Belize Union of Churches Mission, effective October 13, 2019.

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

#### **NORTHERN GHANA UNION CONFERENCE—NEW UNION CONFERENCE**

VOTED, 1. To recognize and record union conference status for the Northern Ghana Union Mission, effective October 10, 2021.

2. To accept the Northern Ghana Union Conference (WAD) into

the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

#### **NETHERLANDS UNION OF CHURCHES CONFERENCE—NEW UNION OF CHURCHES CONFERENCE**

VOTED, 1. To recognize and record union of churches conference status for the Netherlands Union Conference, effective May 5, 2017.

2. To accept the Netherlands Union of Churches Conference (TED) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

#### **MALAYSIA UNION MISSION AND SOUTHEASTERN ASIA UNION MISSION—NEW UNION MISSIONS**

VOTED, 1. To recognize and record the reorganization of the former Southeast Asia Union Mission into two union missions known as the Malaysia Union Mission and the Southeastern Asia Union Mission, effective December 31, 2021.

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

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

#### **EASTERN ETHIOPIA UNION MISSION AND WESTERN ETHIOPIA UNION MISSION—NEW UNION MISSIONS**

VOTED, 1. To recognize and record the reorganization of the former Ethiopian Union Mission into two union missions known as the Eastern Ethiopia Union Mission and the Western Ethiopia Union Mission, effective November 17, 2019.

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

3. To accept the Western Ethiopia Union Mission (ECD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

[Nominating Committee action can be found in *Bulletin 2*.]

#### **AMENDMENT TO THE AGENDA**

VOTED, To call for the vote on the amendment to the agenda.

#### **AMENDMENT TO THE AGENDA**

VOTED, To retain the session agenda as presented and voted.

Artur A Stele, Chair

Gerson P Santos, Secretary

Hensley M Mooroooven, Actions Editor

Joanne Stango, Recording Secretary

## SECOND BUSINESS MEETING

### SESSION ACTIONS

61st General Conference Session, St Louis, Missouri, June 6, 2022, 2:00 p.m.

#### **NEW UNION CONFERENCES, NEW UNION MISSIONS, AND NEW UNION OF CHURCHES CONFERENCE**

The following new entities were recognized:

1. Zimbabwe Central Union Conference
2. Zimbabwe East Union Conference
3. Zimbabwe West Union Conference
4. Belize Union Mission
5. Northern Ghana Union Conference
6. Netherlands Union of Churches Conference
7. Malaysia Union Mission
8. Southeastern Asia Union Mission
9. Eastern Ethiopia Union Mission
10. Western Ethiopia Union Mission

#### **TRANS-CAUCASUS UNION OF CHURCHES MISSION—DISSOLUTION**

VOTED, To recognize and record the dissolution of the former Trans-Caucasus Union of Churches Mission in the EuroAsia Division, effective January 1, 2021. The Division has reorganized the territory.

#### **ELECTION - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS EDITORIAL AMENDMENT**

RATIONALE: This editorial amendment clarifies that the General Conference Executive Committee approves recommendations from divisions regarding their representation on the Committee.

VOTED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Constitution, Article VI—Election, to read as follows:

## ARTICLE VI—ELECTION

Sec. 1. The following shall be elected at each regular session - No change

Sec. 2. The following shall be approved by vote of the General Conference Executive Committee at a subsequent meeting, following recommendations from the divisions:

Other persons to serve as members of the General Conference Executive Committee as provided for in Article VIII, Sec. 1. b.

## DEPARTMENTS AND ASSOCIATIONS—DIRECTORS/SECRETARIES, ASSOCIATES, AND ASSISTANTS - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS EDITORIAL AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This editorial amendment alphabetizes the names of the departments.

VOTED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Bylaws Article X—Departments and Associates—Directors/Secretaries, Associates, and Assistants, to read as follows:

## ARTICLE X—DEPARTMENTS AND ASSOCIATIONS—DIRECTORS/SECRETARIES, ASSOCIATES, AND ASSISTANTS

Sec. 1. Departmental and association directors/secretaries and associate directors/secretaries shall be elected by the General Conference Session and assistants shall be appointed as determined by the General Conference Executive Committee to serve the world Church through the Ministerial Association and the following departments: Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries, Children's Ministries, Communication, Education, Family Ministries, Health Ministries, Planned Giving and Trust Services, Public Affairs and Religious Liberty, Publishing Ministries, Sabbath School and Personal Ministries, Stewardship Ministries, ~~Planned Giving and Trust Services~~, Women's Ministries, and Youth Ministries

Should changes to the departmental structure of the General Conference be deemed necessary, such changes may be approved and implemented by action of the General Conference Executive Committee in Annual Council and continued, subject to ratification at the next General Conference Session. When additions or changes to department or association structures are implemented at times other than in connection with a General Conference Session, the General Conference Executive Committee at an Annual Council shall also address the staffing needs involved until the next General Conference Session.

Sec. 2. The departmental, association, agency, and service directors/secretaries - No change

Sec. 3. The term "associate director/secretary" shall be used to designate those - No change

Sec. 4. The term "assistant director/secretary" shall be used to designate those - No change

Sec. 5. Departmental and association directors/secretaries, associates, and - No change

## USE OF "TELEPHONE CONFERENCE" - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS EDITORIAL DIRECTIVE

RATIONALE: This directive allows for electronic conference and makes the terminology consistent with what is found in General Conference *Working Policy*.

VOTED, To approve a directive to amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, where appropriate, by deleting "telephone conference" and replacing it with "electronic conference."

## GENERAL CONFERENCE UNDERSECRETARY AND ASSOCIATE SECRETARIES - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment accomplishes the following:

1. Reflects that, in an effort to be consistent with other divisions, the secretary of the North American Division will no longer be an associate secretary of the General Conference.

2. Replaces the name of "interdivision employees" with "international service employees" to be consistent with changes that

have been made in General Conference *Working Policy*.

VOTED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Bylaws Article IV—General Conference Undersecretary and Associate Secretaries, to read as follows:

## ARTICLE IV—GENERAL CONFERENCE UNDERSECRETARY AND ASSOCIATE SECRETARIES

Sec. 1. An undersecretary and associate secretaries shall be elected to share - No change

Sec. 2. The secretary of the North American Division, by virtue of election to that responsibility, shall also be an associate secretary of the General Conference.

~~Sec. 3. Sec. 2.~~ The role of the General Conference undersecretary and associate secretaries, in relationship to the divisions, includes the following:

a. To serve as liaisons with division secretaries as assigned by the General Conference secretary.

b. To facilitate the processing of calls for ~~interdivision employees: international service employees.~~

c. To recruit ~~interdivision employees international service employees~~ to fill the needs of the divisions.

d. To assist the divisions with personnel and policy matters.

## GENERAL CONFERENCE UNDERTREASURER AND ASSOCIATE TREASURERS - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment reflects that, in an effort to be consistent with other divisions, the treasurer of the North American Division will no longer be an associate treasurer of the General Conference.

VOTED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Bylaws Article V—General Conference Undertreasurer and Associate Treasurers, to read as follows:

## ARTICLE V—GENERAL CONFERENCE UNDERTREASURER AND ASSOCIATE TREASURERS

Sec. 1. An undertreasurer and associate treasurers shall be elected to - No change

~~Sec. 2. The treasurer/chief financial officer of the North American Division, by virtue of election to that responsibility, shall also be an associate treasurer of the General Conference.~~

~~Sec. 3. Sec. 2.~~ The role of the General Conference undertreasurer and - No change

## UNAUTHORIZED SPEAKERS - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This item clarifies who may be invited to speak in the church and addresses confusion caused by the implication that a layperson could not preach because they do not hold credentials.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 10, Services and Other Meetings, pages 120-121, Unauthorized Speakers, to read as follows:

~~Unauthorized Speakers—Under no circumstances should a pastor, elder, or other officer invite strangers or any unauthorized persons to conduct services. Individuals who have been removed from the ministry or who have been removed from membership in other places, or designating persons who have no authority from the church, should not be given access to the pulpit. Those worthy of confidence will be able to identify themselves by producing proper credentials.~~

Authorized Speakers—Only speakers worthy of confidence will be invited to the pulpit by the local church pastor, in harmony with guidelines given by the conference. The local elders or church board may also invite speakers, in consultation with the pastor, and in harmony with conference guidelines. Individuals who are no longer members, or who are under discipline, should not be given access to the pulpit.

At times it is acceptable for government officials or civic leaders to address a congregation, but all others should be excluded from the pulpit unless permission is granted by the conference. Every pastor, elder, and conference president must enforce this rule. (See pp. 34, 118, 119.)

\*See "Terms Used in the *Church Manual*" p. 18

#### CHURCH SCHOOL BOARD - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

**RATIONALE:** This amendment removes the confusing term "union school board" and replaces it with "multiconstituent school board" to be more consistent with the rest of the section.

**VOTED,** To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 8, Local Church Officers and Organizations, pages 90-92, Church School Board, to read as follows:

Church School Board—The administrative body of every elementary (primary) school and junior academy (partial high school) operated by one church shall be a church school board elected by the church or a school committee appointed by the church board. Thus this body may be a separate school board, the church board, or a school committee of the church board appointed for this purpose. Division working policies explain the functions of school boards.

School board members should be chosen for their consecration, their belief in and loyalty to the principles of Christian education, their good judgment and tact, their experience in school matters, and their financial judgment and ability. They should believe in and be willing to follow denominational educational policies and recommendations.

If two or more churches jointly operate what is known as a multiconstituent school, the administrative body shall be drawn from the constituent churches.

One or more members of the school board should be chosen from among the members of the church board, so that the school board may be closely related to the church board.

The pastor should be a member of the school board. If the school is operated by more than one church, generally the pastors of the participating churches concerned are members of the board.

In junior academies and elementary schools, the principal or head teacher should be a member of the board.

Some members of the board may be parents of children attending the school, so the board may profit from parental viewpoints and counsel resulting from close observation and experience.

The school board officers shall be a chairperson and a secretary. If the school is operated by one church, the church elects the chairperson.

In multiconstituent school boards, additional officers shall include a treasurer, a vice chairperson, and an assistant secretary. At its first meeting after its election, a union multiconstituent school board elects its own chairperson from among its members. In the event that agreement between the churches is not possible, the appointment will be made by the conference board of education or the conference committee. The principal of the school generally is appointed secretary of the board.

Any action of a multiconstituent school board that involves the supporting churches in financial obligations must be submitted to their respective boards for approval.

Where a separate school board is elected, one of two plans may be followed to establish time of election and term of office: (1) all the members may be elected at the close of the calendar or fiscal year and function for one year; (2) the members of the first board may be chosen for terms of one, two, and three years, respectively,

with replacement members being chosen each succeeding year for a term of three years. The purpose of this plan is to have a nucleus of experienced members on the board to ensure a continuity of policy. When a midterm vacancy is filled, the new member serves the remainder of the original term.

The school board or school committee should meet at a regular time and place at least once each month during the school year.

The school board chairperson calls meetings, presides, sees that the actions of the board are carried out, and countersigns all financial orders issued by the secretary. The chairperson is a member ex officio of the elementary school and junior academy inspection committee, which surveys and evaluates the school and its work.

The secretary keeps a permanent record of meetings, issues orders for money to pay accounts or obligations, and carries on correspondence for the board.

Where one church operates a school, the work of the treasurer is usually carried by the church treasurer or an assistant church treasurer, who receives tuition and other money, pays out money on the order of the secretary (countersigned by the chairperson), keeps a careful account of all transfers, and at each monthly meeting gives a detailed report to the board. In a multiconstituent board, a treasurer is appointed by the union board.

#### USE OF "BAPTISMAL CEREMONY" - CHURCH MANUAL DIRECTIVE

**RATIONALE:** This directive will make the terminology more consistent throughout the *Church Manual*.

**VOTED,** To approve a directive to amend the *Church Manual* where appropriate, by replacing "baptismal ceremony" with "baptismal service." In areas of the world where "baptismal ceremony" is preferred due to differences in other languages, "baptismal ceremony" may be retained as long as the term is used consistently throughout the text of the *Church Manual*.

#### MEETINGS (CHURCH BOARD AND ITS MEETINGS) - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

**RATIONALE:** This amendment allows for electronic participation in church board meetings.

**VOTED,** To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 10, Services and Other Meetings, page 131, Meetings, to read as follows:

Meetings—Because the work of the board is vital to the life, health, and growth of the church, it is recommended that it meet at least once each month, more frequently if needed. It is well to fix the monthly meeting time for the same week and the same day each month.

The board meeting is announced at the regular Sabbath worship service, and all board members are urged to attend.

Each church should determine at a business meeting the number of board members who must be present to constitute a quorum at future meetings. Where allowed by local law, board members may participate in meetings by means of an electronic conference or similar communication by which all persons participating can communicate with each other at the same time, and participation by such means shall constitute presence in person at such a meeting.

Votes by proxy or letter are not permitted.

Ella S Simmons, Chair  
 Karen J Porter, Secretary  
 Hensley M Mooroven, Actions Editor  
 Tamara K Boward, Recording Secretary



# Third Business Meeting

## SESSION ACTIONS

61st General Conference Session, St Louis, Missouri, June 6, 2022, 7:00 p.m.

### ORDINATION OF ELDERS – CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

VOTED, To call for the vote on the referral of the item, Ordination of Elders – *Church Manual Amendment*.

### ORDINATION OF ELDERS – CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

VOTED, To not refer the item, Ordination of Elders – *Church Manual Amendment*, back to the *Church Manual Committee*.

### ORDINATION OF ELDERS – CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment allows for consistency of wording between the sections on elders and deacons/deaconesses and addresses some confusion in areas where women are ordained as elders.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 8, Local Church Officers and Organizations, page 73, Ordination of Elders, to read as follows:

Ordination of Elders—Election to the office of elder does not in itself qualify one as an elder. Ordination is required before an elder has authority to function. When a church in a business meeting votes the election of new elders, it also authorizes their ordination. Between election and ordination, the elected elder may function as church leader but not administer the ordinances of the church.

The ordination service is performed only by an ordained pastor currently credentialed by the conference. As a courtesy, a visiting ordained pastor may be invited to assist. However, only on the specific request of conference officers would a visiting ordained pastor or a retired ordained pastor conduct the ordination.

The sacred rite of ordination should be simply performed in the presence of the church and may include a brief outline of the office of elder, the qualities required, and the principal duties the elder will be authorized to perform. After the exhortation, the ordained pastor, assisted by other ordained pastors and/or local elders who are participating in the service, will ordain the elders by prayer and the laying on of hands. (See p. 37.)

Once ordained, elders need not be ordained again if reelected, or upon election as elders of other churches, provided they have maintained regular membership status. They are also qualified to the deaconate, serve as deacons.

### ORDINATION SERVICE FOR DEACONESSSES – CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

VOTED, To call for the vote on the referral of the item, Ordination Service for Deaconesses – *Church Manual Amendment*.

### ORDINATION SERVICE FOR DEACONESSSES – CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

VOTED, To not refer the item, Ordination Service for Deaconesses – *Church Manual Amendment*, back to the *Church Manual Committee*.

### ORDINATION SERVICE FOR DEACONESSSES – CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This change is being recommended in order to keep the text in line with the *Church Manual*, Chapter 8, Local Church Officers and Organizations, page 78, Deacons Must Be Ordained.

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 8, Local Church Officers and Organizations, page 80, Ordination Service for Deaconesses, to read as follows:

Ordination Service for Deaconesses—Such a service, like the ordination of deacons, would be carried out by an ordained pastor currently credentialed by the conference. The ordination service should be characterized by simplicity and performed in the presence of the church.

If they retain church membership, deaconesses do not have to be ordained again if they move their memberships to other churches. When the term for which they were elected expires, they must be reelected if they are to continue to serve as deaconesses.

Elders subsequently elected as deaconesses should not be ordained as deaconesses because ordination as elder covers this office.

Abner De los Santos, Chair  
Claude J Richli, Secretary  
Hensley M Mooroooven, Actions Editor  
Joanne Stango, Recording Secretary

### NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT #1

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

General Conference  
President: Ted N C Wilson

## ADVENTIST REVIEW

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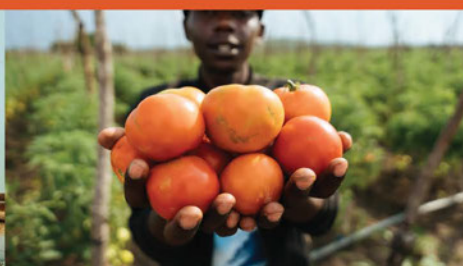
100 cows as a sustainability project, new kitchen, three water towers, bio gas project, vehicle to transport students, and paint for existing buildings.

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