

# ADVENTIST REVIEW

GENERAL  
CONFERENCE  
SESSION  
BULLETIN 2



JULY 6, 2025

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## Walking Into the Next Quinquennium

*Erton C. Köhler elected  
General Conference president*

# NEWS

MARK FROELICH



## KÖHLER ELECTED GC PRESIDENT

**FIRST SOUTH AMERICAN PRESIDENT ACCEPTS WITH GRATITUDE AND CONFIDENCE IN GOD**

JARROD STACKELROTH

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

The Nominating Committee of the sixty-second General Confer-

ence Session, held in St. Louis, Missouri, United States, recommended the name, which was passed by delegates with a vote of 1,721 to 188 on July 4 during the afternoon session.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

God guide your next steps.”

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

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

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

Köhler spearheaded the Mission Refocus initiative, a strategic plan for the GC Secretariat between 2022 and 2025. Included was a focus on reclaiming missing members, dis-

ciple-making, and streamlining the international call process.

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

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

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





MARCOS PASEGGI

## “GOD WILL DO EVERYTHING THAT’S NEEDED FOR US TO MOVE FORWARD”

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

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

Congratulations; we cannot imag-

ine the mind space you’re in. I just want to ask you, on a personal level, how are you feeling right now?

**Erton Köhler:** I’m feeling speechless. But I’m feeling confident in the Lord. Because we know that He is guiding this church. And I’m very confident God will do everything

that’s needed for us to move forward as a church family, for me and our other leaders, and especially for the life of the church.

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



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

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

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

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

**JK:** The church has not had a secretary become president since 1922.

How do you think your experience as a secretary will inform your leadership as the General Conference president?

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

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

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

I understand a little bit more the challenge of our worldwide mission. And I want to focus much more on the needs that we have around the world to preach the

gospel and to see Jesus come in the clouds of heaven.

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

MARK FROELICH



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

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

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

touch, emphasize, and deal with.

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

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

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

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

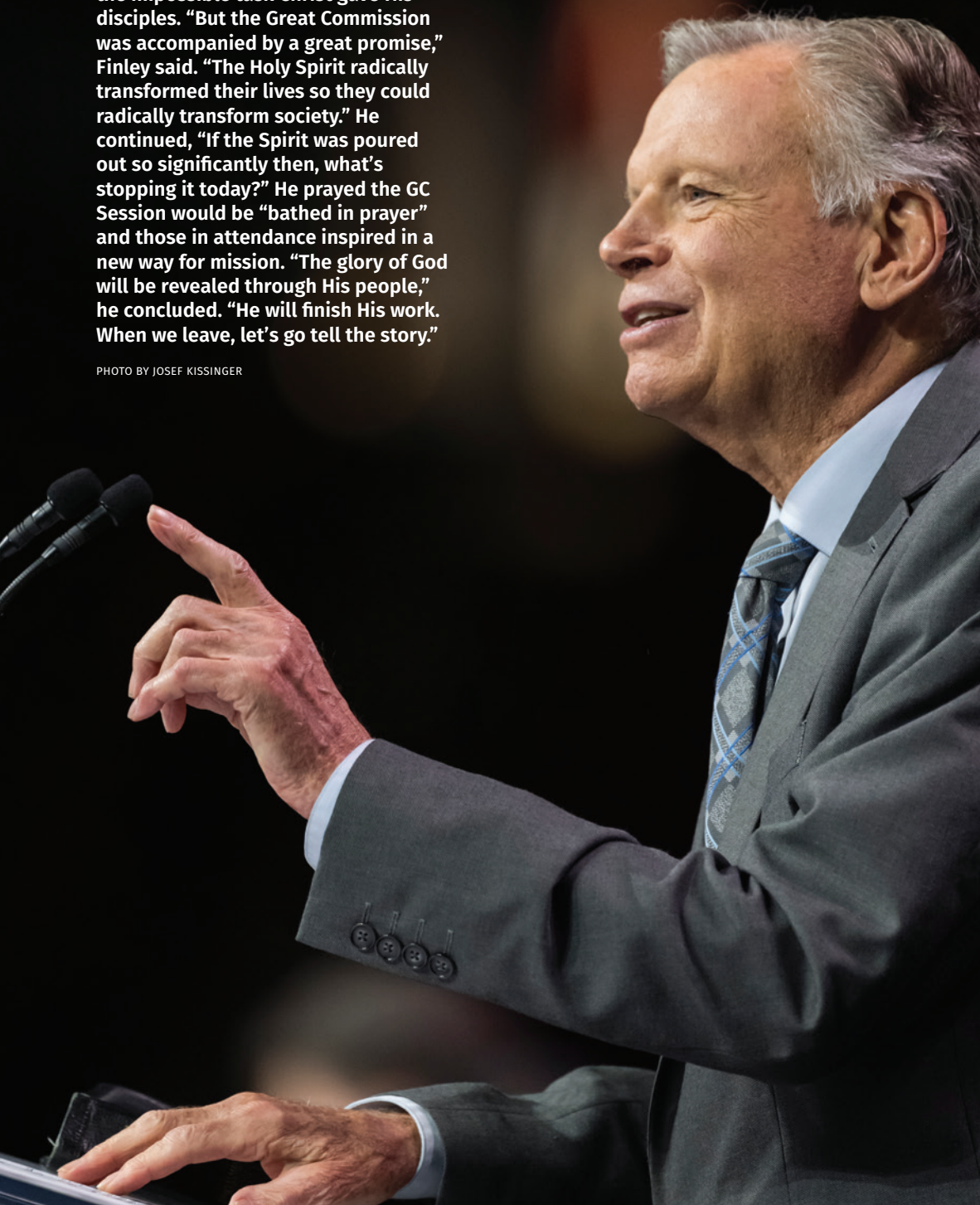
The third one, I like to read the Bible, trying to pay attention to what God could say to me.

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

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

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

PHOTO BY JOSEF KISSINGER







## DELEGATES VOTE ON FIRST BUSINESS ITEMS, PASS THE SESSION AGENDA

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

MARCOS PASEGGI, ADVENTIST REVIEW

**T**housands of Seventh-day Adventist delegates, special guests, and visitors met at the America's Center Convention Complex on July 3 in the afternoon for the first business session of the sixty-second General Conference Session in St. Louis, Missouri, United States. Delegates arrived from every region of the church for the major business session gathering of the worldwide Adventist Church.

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

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

### VOTE ON MOTIONS

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

membership of three committees serving during the session.

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

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

### A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

Before the vote, GC president Ted N. C. Wilson explained that some of the issues raised are the result of the misinformation shared about the standing of the GC regarding vaccination and the role of science. The original statement on “responsible immunization,” approved in 2015 well before COVID became a household name, stated that the Adventist health message is based on the Bible and the writings of Adventist Church cofounder Ellen

G. White. It is also “informed by peer-reviewed scientific literature,” Wilson read.

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

### MOTIONS DEFEATED, OTHER MOTIONS PASSED

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

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

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



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# THE BOOK

*The primacy of Scripture*



**JOHN  
BRADSHAW**

DEVOTIONAL  
MESSAGE  
PRESENTED  
FRIDAY MORNING  
JULY 4, 2025

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





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

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

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

## **WHAT WE BELIEVE**

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

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

We believe Jesus is in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary. We believe He entered it in 1844 because the Bible teaches it. We believe in the investigative judgment

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

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

**WHY WE'RE HERE**

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

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

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

another, even as God in Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:32).

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

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

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

by God's Word, the entire family was baptized, along with his in-laws. The Holy Spirit drew them, and the power of God's Word brought them into the remnant church.

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

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

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# SECRETARY'S REPORT

## *Integrated for Mission*

**T**he General Conference (GC) Office of the Secretariat is all about integrating its resources for the fulfillment of the church's mission. It comprises seven entities, all integrated with each other: the Office of Adventist Mission (AM); Adventist Volunteer Service (AVS); the Institute of World Mission (IWM); International Personnel Resources and Services (IPRS); VividFaith (VF); the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research (ASTR); and the Adventist Church Management System (ACMS).

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

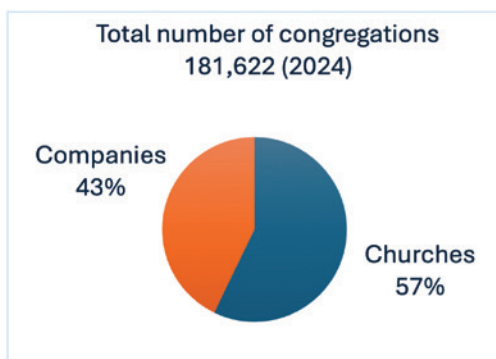
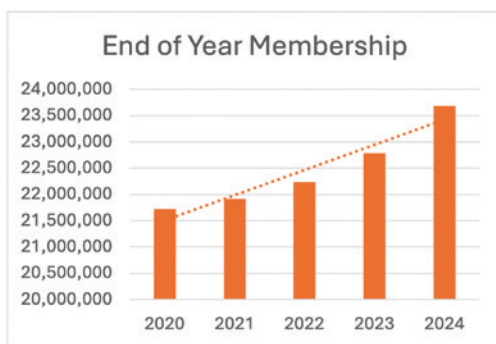
### TRACKING PROGRESS AND GROWTH

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

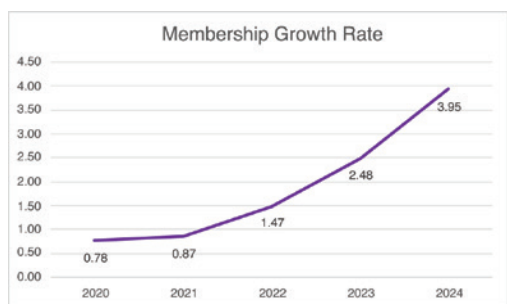
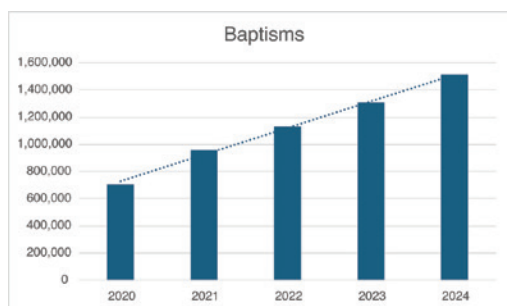
### STATISTICAL REPORT

As custodians of church statistics we have witnessed tremendous growth: from 3,500 members in 125 churches in 1863 to 23,685,110 members<sup>1</sup> in 103,869 churches and 77,753 companies—an

8 percent increase in the past three years. The work of the church is formally established in 212 countries and territories. More than 349,479 people are employed to serve in our churches and institutions worldwide, including in 970 administrative units that form the backbone of the church (divisions, unions, conferences, and missions). All of them are represented by the 2,809 delegates to this General Conference Session.<sup>2</sup>



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



## MISSION REFOCUS

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

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

From 2020 to 2025 the General Conference sponsored 126 missionaries who left their coun-

tries for service. A total of 628 are currently in the field. They represent 66 countries, and they work in 88 countries.

## MISSIONARY CARE

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

## ADVENTIST MISSION

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

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

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



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

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

### **ADVENTIST VOLUNTEER SERVICE AND VIVIDFAITH**

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

Through VividFaith, AVS has been able to expand volunteer recruitment by offering more than 5,000 mission opportunities and connecting them with 21,000 registered volunteers. This is redefining mission service beyond traditional short- and long-term overseas assignments. It

offers remote work opportunities, local community projects, employment of all kinds, and even partnerships with non-Adventists—expanding the ways to serve and share our faith. Working with 180 recruiting entities, VividFaith has processed 1,427 people for mission service as of March 2025. A training event in the Inter-American Division increased volunteer openings in that division from 6 in 2024 to 158 by March 2025. VividFaith enhances mission strategy by serving as a catalyst for innovative approaches and partnerships, aligning with Mission Refocus and the I Will Go strategic plan.

### **INSTITUTE OF WORLD MISSION**

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

### **OUR MISSION IN THE HOME FIELD**

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

the spiritual condition of our members. The membership management system (ACMS) can be very helpful in this process.

### **RECLAIMING THE LOST**

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

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

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

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

### **SECRETARIAT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

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

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

### ONE HUNDRED FIFTY YEARS OF MISSION

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

The work in Switzerland was not easy. This affected his health and that of his family, to the extent that Mary died of tuberculosis during a visit

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

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

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

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

<sup>1</sup> As of March 17, 2025.

<sup>2</sup> The delegate number fluctuates dependent upon delegate travel, visas, and more. This is the number as of publication.

<sup>3</sup> Accessions consist of baptisms, former members' baptisms, professions of faith, and adjustments.





ADRA

VISIT US AT  
**Booth  
817**



World  
Premiere of

***Strangers  
Among You***

Ferrea Theater  
Thursday, July 10  
5 pm–7 pm

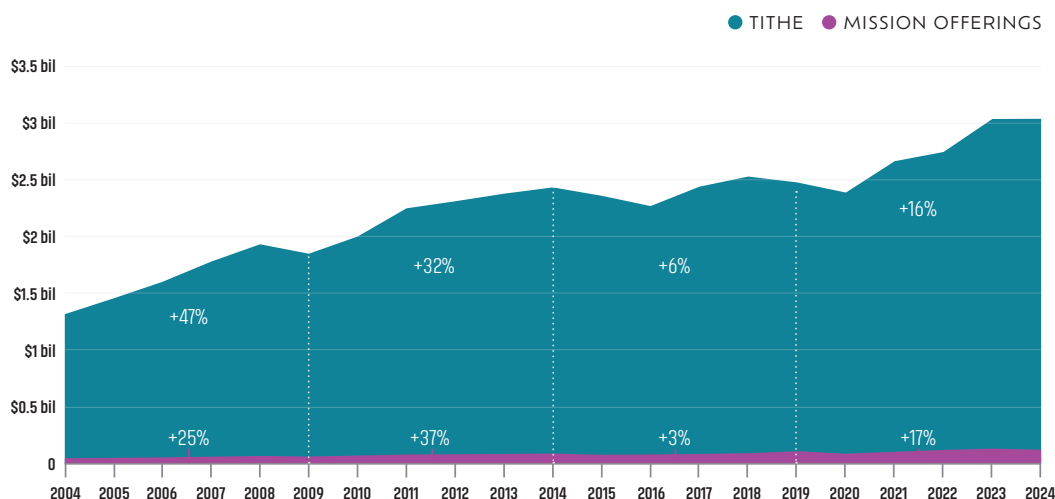
**SCAN HERE FOR ADRA'S SCHEDULE OF EVENTS!**





# TREASURY REPORT

## Mobilizing Resources for Mission



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

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

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

### GLOBAL TRENDS IN GIVING

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

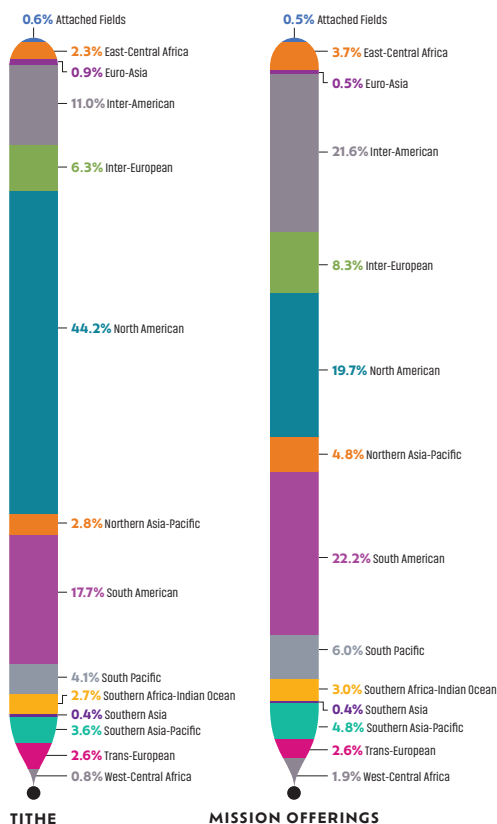
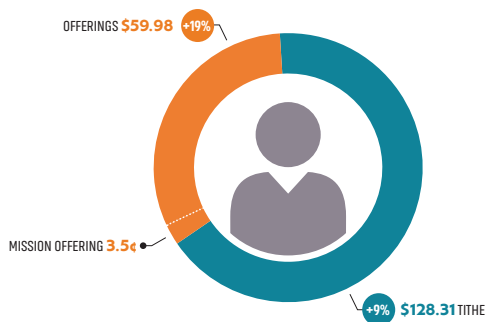


of 17 percent from the previous quinquennium ending in 2019. By comparison, however, the previous quinquennium had an increase in total world mission offerings of 3 percent.

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

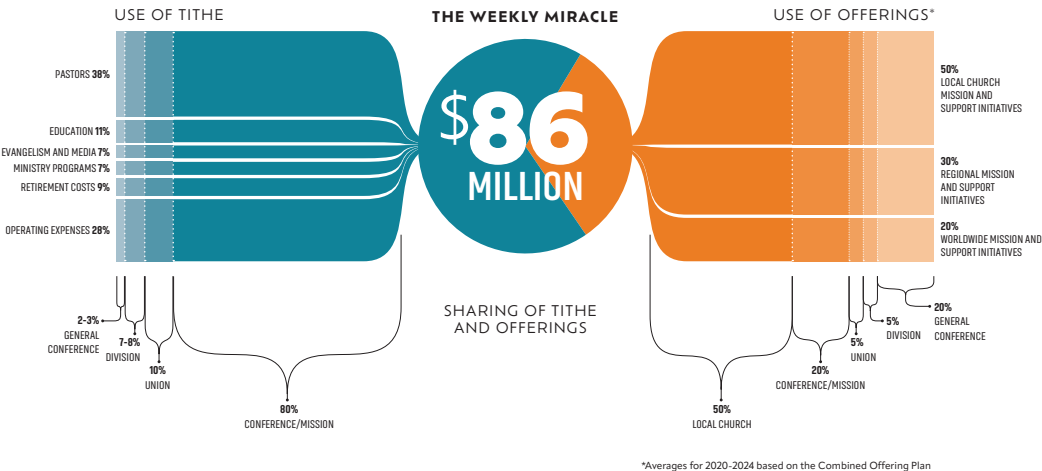
Giving for world missions continues to represent an average of 3.5 cents to every tithe dollar. In the 1930s, the peak of giving for world missions, the average was 60 cents. Certainly there needs to be a revival of giving toward world mission and a renewal of commitment toward being part of supporting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

#### TITHE & OFFERINGS PER CAPITA



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

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



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

FINANCIAL POSITION AND PERFORMANCE

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

kingdom and praise Him for the strong financial position considering the prevailing global economic conditions.

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

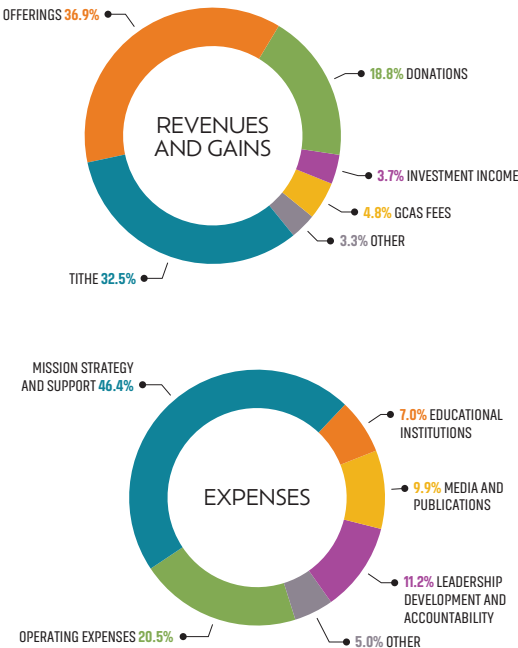
The total revenues and gains for the quinquennium was an annual average of \$271 million, of which 32.5 percent was from tithe; 36.9 percent from offerings; 18.8 percent from donations; 3.7 percent from investment income; 4.8 percent from engagement fees charged by General Con-



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

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

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



## INVESTMENT IN MISSION

### *Funding for Divisions and Institutions*

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

### *Funding for ISE Program*

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

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

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

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

### *Funding Our Global Mission Program*

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

### **INNOVATION IN MISSION**

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

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

embrace every avenue to share the everlasting gospel, the kingdom grows, and heaven rejoices with us.

### **INTEGRATION IN MISSION**

#### *Media Synergy*

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

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

#### *Stewardship and Treasury Partnership*

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

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

The partnership document outlines five key points:

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

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

### INVOLVEMENT IN MISSION

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

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

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

### LOOKING AHEAD

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

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

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

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



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

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1915), p. 465.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, in *Review and Herald*, Dec. 2, 1890.

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



# And So It Begins

*First day at the 2025  
General Conference Session*

**AUDREY ANDERSSON**

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

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

At session there is never a problem getting my steps. I headed back to the convention center to join the Inter-European Division (EUD) caucus meeting. (Caucus is the term for a meeting of all the delegates from a division.) This was important, time-sensitive presession business—choosing representatives for the main Nominating Committee, and the EUD Nominating Committee. The

names needed to be sent to GC Secretariat by 12:30 at the latest, so they could be voted on in the first business session. The EUD headquarters are based in Switzerland, so it was no surprise that the meeting ran like clockwork thanks to the efficiency of Mario Brito and Barna Magyarosi, the current president and secretary. Later I will chair the EUD Nominating Committee when they come up with names to recommend to the main Nominating Committee, for the division officers. After that, the division president takes over.

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

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

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



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

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

The afternoon business session was fascinating. For those expecting my views on the proceedings or an analysis of the amendments to the agenda, I must disappoint you. I listened to the proceedings on multiple levels. First, we are a global family. Even in the most harmonious families, tension occasionally arises. There are always different viewpoints. It is the same in our church family. So I listened to what was being proposed. Second, I attempted to determine whether there were underlying issues. With my policy brain, I wondered if there were alternative ways to resolve the tension. Last, as I am chairing next week, I

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

watched and tried to learn from Artur Stele, the vice president chairing the business session. Afterward, as I talked with my fellow vice presidents, we all agreed he set the gold standard.

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

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

# SESSION

## GALLERY



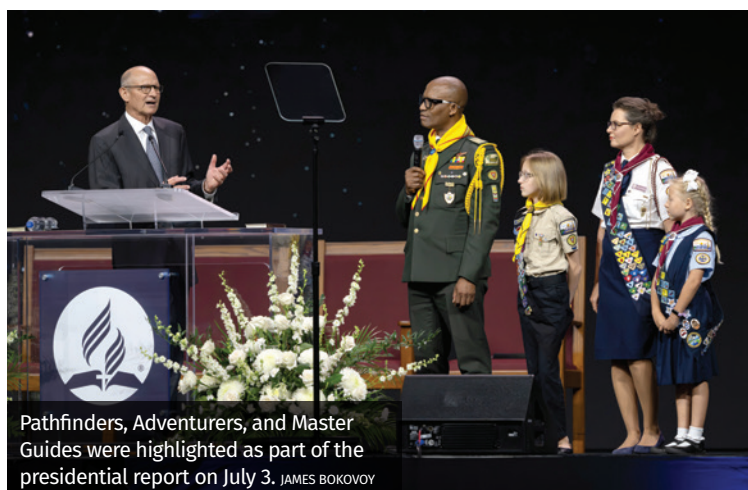
Deaf interpretation is provided at the GC Session. JAMES BOKOVY



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



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



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



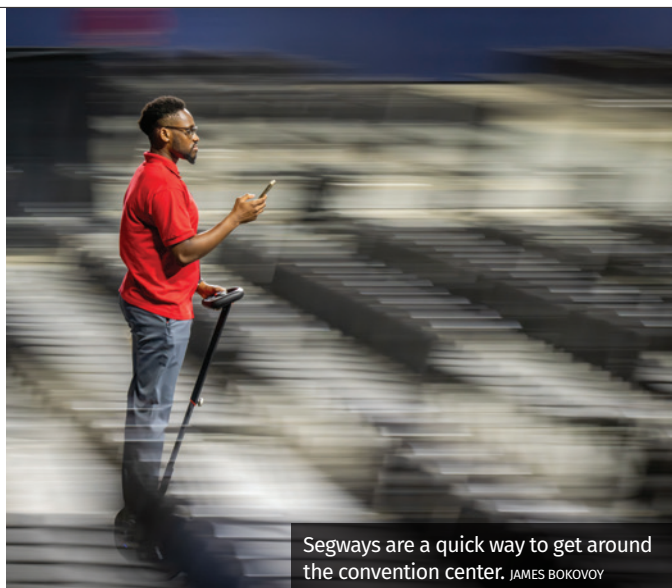
Setting up a display in the exhibit hall. DAVID B. SHERWIN





One of the younger attendees at GC Session.

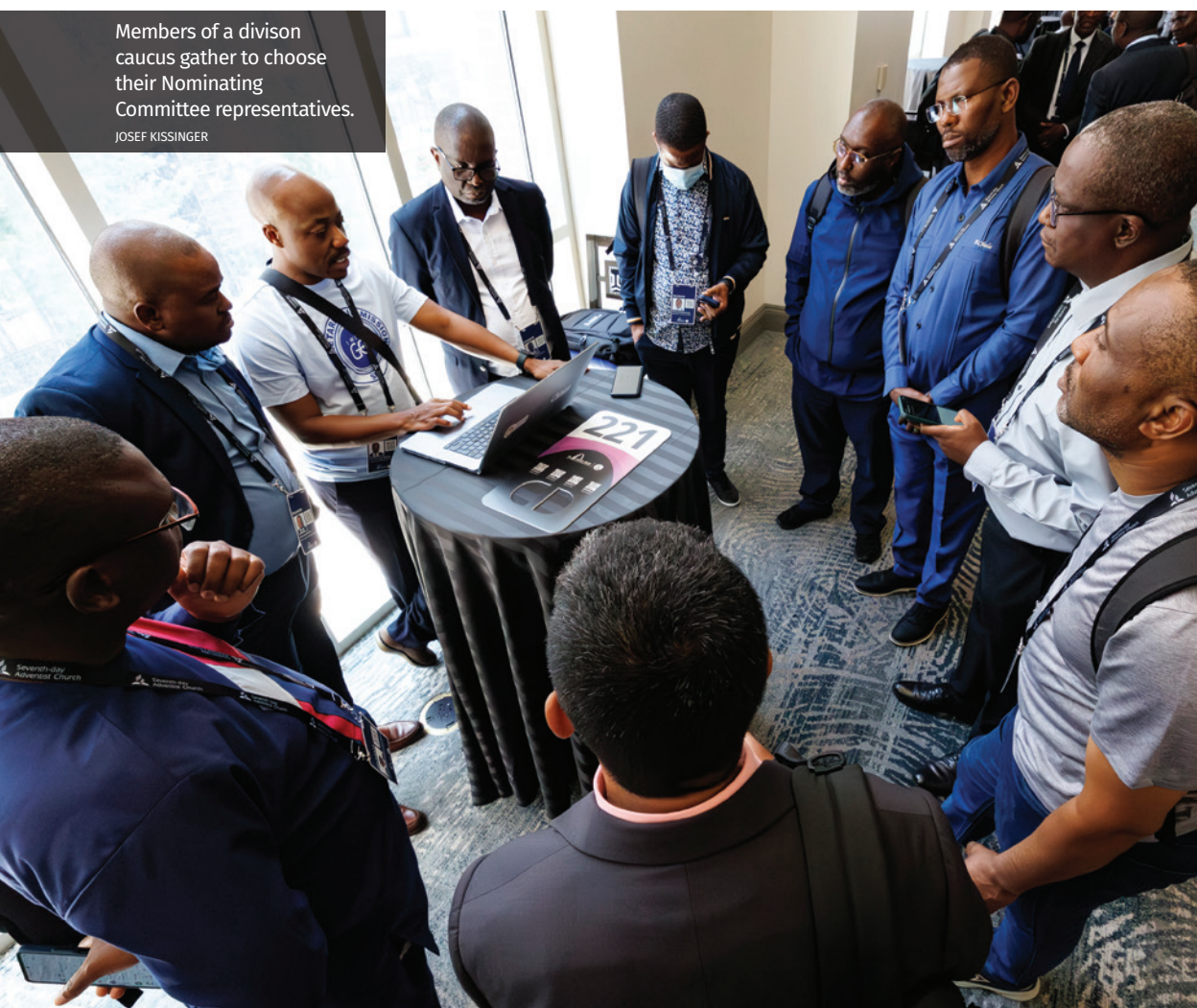
DAVID B. SHERWIN



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

Members of a division caucus gather to choose their Nominating Committee representatives.

JOSEF KISSINGER



# Where Adventist History Meets Tomorrow

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

**DAVID TRIM**

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

## MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

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

In ASTR, we:

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

## RESOURCES AND TOOLS

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

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

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

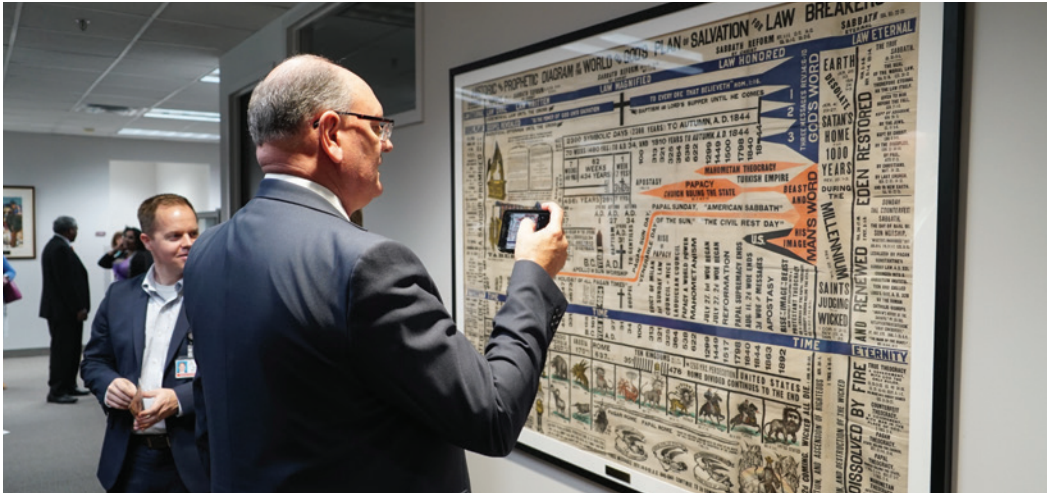
**Research:** [AdventistResearch.info](http://AdventistResearch.info) exists to inform church leaders, pastors, church members, and scholars about important research regarding the ministry, mission, and administration of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The web team publishes a biweekly blog, which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

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

**Yearbook:** [Adventist-Yearbook.org](http://Adventist-Yearbook.org) is an online version of the annually printed *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*. It contains information on the General Conference,







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

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

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

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

#### OTHER SERVICES PROVIDED

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

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

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

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

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



# The Gift of Light

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

**MERLIN D. BURT**

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

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

The translation plan “Sharing the Gift of Light” has resulted in more than 500 newly translated books into 45 languages, including 24 languages for the very first time. *The Great Controversy* alone, which was the special sharing book for the world church during 2023 and 2024, grew from 90 to 132 languages. Millions of copies were published and circulated. At the April 2025 Spring Meeting of the General Conference Executive Committee, an expansion of the previous plan dubbed “Shar-

ing the Gift of Light 2.0” was voted for the new quinquennium. A special emphasis will be given to translating *Steps to Christ*, *The Desire of Ages*, and *The Great Controversy* into mission languages to support the worldwide mission of the church. Divisions and unions will determine which languages are most needed. The new special sharing book for this quinquennium is *The Desire of Ages*.

## GROWTH AND PROMOTION

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

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

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

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

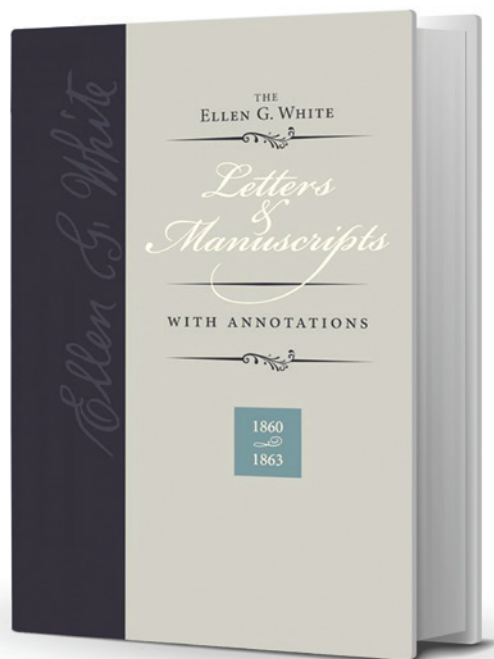
Another important White Estate initiative is a landmark collaboration with the General Conference Department of Education to facilitate the further training of teachers in the area of Ellen White and Adventist history. A three-year, 18-credit EGW and Adventist Studies Academic Certificate has been offered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

## HERITAGE AND HISTORY

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

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

Adventist Heritage Ministries continues to operate four sites in the United States, with thousands of visitors each year. The William Miller home and chapel in New York point people to faith in the soon coming of Jesus. The Hiram Edson farm, also in New York, tells the story of the heavenly sanctuary min-



The second annotated volume was released in 2024 and is available at [AdventistBookCenter.com](https://AdventistBookCenter.com).

istry of Jesus. Joseph Bates's home in Massachusetts chronicles the beginning of Sabbathkeeping Adventists. Finally, the Historic Adventist Village in Battle Creek, Michigan shows the organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, its publishing, health, and education ministries, and the importance of Ellen White's prophetic ministry.

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

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

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

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

# BOLDNESS IN MISSION



**ERTION KÖHLER**  
GC SECRETARY

SERMON PRESENTED  
SABBATH MORNING  
JULY 5, 2025

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

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

## PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

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

When we study the Bible, one of its most impressive themes is how powerfully God calls, empowers, and uses His children. There

are multiple examples from the beginning to the end of the Bible. Think of Noah, Abraham, Moses, and other rich stories of ordinary people accomplishing extraordinary things. But the most relevant story is that of Jesus Christ and the way His life impacted this world.

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

## GOING FORWARD IN BOLDNESS

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

ings, power, or positions. They asked for boldness in mission.

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

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

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

### **BOLDNESS BRINGS RESULTS**

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

This didn’t happen because the first believers decided to wait comfortably for something supernatural. They cried out for the power

of the Holy Spirit, acted boldly, and witnessed miracles. They lived with the expectation of Christ’s imminent return, and this sense of urgency drove them to be bold.

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

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

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

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

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

### END-TIME BOLDNESS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### BOLD EXAMPLES



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



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

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



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



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



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



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



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

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



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



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



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



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



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



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



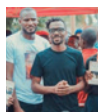
and planted the first Seventh-day Adventist church in the province, with 22 people baptized.



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



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



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

## CALLED TO BOLDNESS

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

For this reason I invite you to first renew your commitment to be bold in mission. You can move

forward trusting that nothing is impossible for God. He can prepare the way for His messengers, give the right words for His preachers, and reach hearts that will be strategic to support the growth of the mission worldwide. He is just waiting for us to move forward with boldness.

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

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

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

<sup>1</sup> Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, "How Long?" *Adventist World*, August 2020, p. 26.

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

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

<sup>4</sup> Ellen G. White, *Welfare Ministry* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1952), p. 65.

<sup>5</sup> Ellen G. White, in *Review and Herald*, May 16, 1882.

<sup>6</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 612.

<sup>7</sup> Ellen G. White, *Last Day Events* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1992), p. 202.

<sup>8</sup> Not real name; protected for security reasons.

<sup>9</sup> Not real names; protected for security reasons.

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

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 283.

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# ALAN IS HOPE

HANNAH DREWIECK

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

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

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







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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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**Hannah Drewieck** is the communication coordinator for Hope Channel International.

# NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION REPORT

*Moving Forward in Mission*



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

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

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

## MULTIPLYING MISSION

The strategic focus of multiply has centered on expanding disciple-making efforts across urban

and rural contexts alike. With church membership close to 1.3 million in a territory of 390 million, intense prayer, courageous faith, and bold thinking were in order. We asked ourselves, “What if all our media ministries, educational institutions, and leaders aligned under one purpose, at one time, to make a kingdom impact?”

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



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

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

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

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

#### URBAN OUTREACH

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

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



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



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



## NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION REPORT CONTINUED



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



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

### DISCIPLES IN THE DIGITAL SPACE

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

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

One such impact emerged during a two-day pilot of live chat via a collaboration with Adventist.org over Easter weekend. Of 34 inquiries, four individuals requested connections with local churches. One of them, a woman in North Carolina whose daughter died in a high-profile

prison case, was searching for peace. She drove to a local Adventist church several times, but stayed in her car. She kept returning, however, because she felt a sense of calm just being there. She visited Adventist.org, found the chat feature, and linked up with Adventist Connect staff. The woman began Bible studies and is now preparing for baptism. She credits the online chat as the turning point. We praise God for how digital ministry is drawing others to Christ and our church!

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

### EMPOWERING NEW LEADERS

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



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

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

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

### FAITHFUL IN PURPOSE

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

### EXTRAORDINARY, EVERYDAY MINISTRY— IN THE NAD AND BEYOND

We must not forget that our educational and health-care institutions are dedicated to the mission of the church. The North American Division supports 855 schools, offering a range of early childhood through grade 12 in schools and/or centers. From 2022 to 2025 these schools/centers served an average of 55,631 students annually. In addition, the NAD operates 13 colleges and universities, enrolling an average of 20,784 students each year. We are grateful to God

for such faithful and dedicated men and women who teach in our schools, leading Adventist education throughout the division. And we give Him extra praise for the 328 schools that have joined the Pentecost 2025 initiative.

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

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



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

## NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION REPORT CONTINUED



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

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

### MOVING FORWARD IN MISSION

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



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


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

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

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

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

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

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

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# MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA UNION REPORT

## *Step Into the Impossible*

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

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

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

### **THE SCOPE OF OUR MISSION**

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

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

Now let's shift this frame of reference from the global Adventist community to the MENA region, where the ratio drops dramatically to one Adventist for every 99,100 people. At this ratio it would

take you 65 days of walking before you passed one of our 6,036 members.

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

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

### **DIGITAL OUTREACH: BREAKING BARRIERS**

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

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

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



### **ARISE BEIRUT: A BEACON OF HOPE**

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

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

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

Ladisa joined her mother's Bible study, and together they decided to be baptized after attend-

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

### **A STORY OF TRANSFORMATION: YOUSSEF**

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

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

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

### **REFUGEE TO MISSIONARY: SAMIR'S JOURNEY**

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

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

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

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

### **DIGITAL DISCIPLESHIP: LAYLA'S SECRET FAITH**

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

What seemed like a small, solitary act quickly unfolded into what has become a lifelong transformation. An empathetic representative of the channel joined Layla on her journey, gently guiding her down a hidden path of discovery, until she was ready to meet with an Adventist small group in person, where she continued growing in her newfound faith. With each secret conversation Layla's hidden light grew

stronger, a light that has inspired other seekers to quietly proclaim a faith that will not be silenced.

### **THE GOSPEL LIKE YEAST: QUIET GROWTH, LASTING CHANGE**

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

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

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

### **AMIRA'S JOURNEY: FROM STUDENT TO MISSIONARY**

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





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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### A CALL TO FAITH AND COURAGE

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

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

Step into the impossible. Be the light. ✦

\*A pseudonym used to protect privacy.





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# First Business Meeting

## SESSION ACTIONS

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

### **SOUTH SUDAN UNION MISSION—NEW UNION MISSION**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



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

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

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

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

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

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

## MOTION TO LIMIT SPEECHES

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

## STEERING COMMITTEE—GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION - 2025

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

### STEERING

Ted N C Wilson, Chair

Hensley M Mooroooven, Secretary

Members: Timothy H Aka, Harrington S Akombwa, Audrey E Andersson, Stanley E Arco, Guillermo E Biaggi, Mario A Brito, G Alexander Bryant, Roger O Caderma, Ramon J Canals, Abner De los Santos, Sabrina C DeSouza, Paul H Douglas, Karnik Doukmetzian, Daniel Duda, George O Egwakhe, Mark A Finley, Elie Henry, James M Howard, Mikhail F Kaminskiy, Yo Han Kim, Erton C Kohler, Gary D Krause, Elbert Kuhn, Ezras Lakra, Thomas L Lemon, German

A Lust, Geoffrey G Mbwana, Todd R McFarland, Duane McKey, Pierre E Omeler, Robert Osei-Bonsu, Lissy Park, Magdiel E Perez Schulz, Josue Pierre, Karen J Porter, Claude J Richli, Blasious M Ruguri, Michael L Ryan, Saw Samuel, Gerson P Santos, Silvia Sicalo, Artur A Stele, Richard T Stephenson, Glenn C Townend, E Douglas Venn, J Raymond Wahlen II

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

## STANDING COMMITTEES—GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION - 2025

VOTED, To approve standing committees for the 2025 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, Clement J Arkangelo Mawa, Hananiya A Bayawa, Daniel K Bediako, Lesleigh A E Bower, Elias Brasil de Souza, Ramon J Canals, Carlos Cardoso Pinheiro, John Victor Chinta, Orathai Chureson, Robert C Csizmadia, Paul H Douglas, Karnik Doukmetzian, George O Egwakhe, Dwain Esmond, Pavel Goia,

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

Gideon P Reyneke, Teddy Romeoz Donald, Saw Samuel, Selom K Sessou, Michael B Sikuri, Michael Sokupa, Artur A Stele, Chizu Takahashi, Ivan I Velgosha, Kay White, Ted N C Wilson. Hiroshi Yamaji

### CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

Ted N C Wilson, Chair

Geoffrey G Mbwana, Vice-chair

Hensley M Mooroooven, Secretary

Nichole N Miles, Recording Secretary

Members: Kyoshin Ahn, Audrey E Andersson, Yohannes O Beyene, Guillermo E Biaggi, G Alexander Bryant, Merlin D Burt, Dario M Caviglione, John Victor Chinta, Riches Christian, Orathai Chureson, Robert C Csizmadia, Markus M Dangana, Abner De los Santos, Paul H Douglas, Karnik Doukmetzian, Richard H Hart, Edward Heidinger,

Elie Henry, Andi Hunsaker, Vincent R Injety, Leonard A Johnson, Mikhail F Kaminskiy, Joshua Soongi Kang, Ginger Ketting-Weller, Erton C Kohler, Thomas L Lemon, Barna Magyarosi, Wendell W Mandolang, Todd R McFarland, Duane McKey, Musa G Mitekaro, Ronald Nalin, Hopekings K Ngomba, David Nommik, Pierre E Omeler,

Lissy Park, Magdiel E Perez Schulz, Josue Pierre, Gideon P Reyneke, Saw Samuel, Selom K Sessou, Michael B Sikuri, Sugih Sitorus, Artur A Stele, Ivan I Velgosha, Clinton L Wahlen, Lori E Williams, Hiroshi Yamaji, Malachi Yani, Norbert G Zens

Invitee: Tamara K Boward

## ADOPTION OF THE DAILY PROGRAM

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

### Thursday, July 3

12:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m. Lunch

2:00 p.m.-2:10 p.m. Opening Remarks

2:10 p.m.-3:10 p.m. Session Opening Worship

3:10 p.m.-3:50 p.m. Official Session Opening

3:50 p.m.-5:00 p.m. Business Session

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





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

#### Friday, July 4

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

#### Sabbath, July 5

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

#### Sunday, July 6 - Wednesday, July 9

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

#### Thursday, July 10

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

#### Friday, July 11

8:00 a.m.-8:50 a.m. Worship  
8:50 a.m.-9:15 a.m. Prayer Session

9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Business Session  
12:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m. Lunch  
2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. Business Session (*if needed*)

#### Sabbath, July 12

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

#### **ADOPTION OF SESSION AGENDAS**

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

#### **ADOPTION OF SESSION AGENDA**

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

#### **ADOPTION OF SESSION AGENDAS**

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

#### **ADOPTION OF SESSION AGENDA**

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

#### **ADOPTION OF SESSION AGENDAS**

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





Session attendees enjoy the large exhibit hall.  
DARREN HESLOP



# **NOMINATING COMMITTEE—GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION - 2025**

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

1. Adams, Monique
2. Adeleye, Ezekiel
3. Adu-Manu, Kofi
4. Aguilar, David
5. Allen, Robin
6. Alves Caxeta, Sergio
7. Amo Mensah, Osei
8. Annor-Boahen, Kwame
9. Arrais, Jonas
10. Asekun-Olarinmoye, Esther
11. Ashir, Ruth
12. Ashley, Grace Ann
13. Assienin, Salomon
14. Atencio Marquez, Elmer
15. Badu, James
16. Bae, Young Hee
17. Barishinga, Lamec
18. Barlizo, Eliezer Jr.
19. Barlow, Annette
20. Bauer, Celinda
21. Baysah, Glory I.
22. Beaubrun-Fleury, Mae-Lyna
23. Belmonte, Benjamin
24. Ben, Strike
25. Bendah, Nelson G
26. Bernard, Roger
27. Bindosano, Yotam
28. Biraro, Irene
29. Birgen, Regina
30. Biru, Daka
31. Bondarciuc, Lev
32. Britis, Charles
33. Brooks, Eglan
34. Brown, Everett
35. Brown-Domiguez, Arlene
36. Bwanale, Chifundo
37. Byilingiro, Hesron
38. Byrd, Carlton
39. C, Tawkthanga
40. Cabance, Nyrh
41. Cajobe, Gerardo
42. Camara, Roger
43. Caporal, Pierre
44. Carcamo Morales, Rodrigo Alberto
45. Carillo, Michelle
46. Carpin, Eddy-Michel
47. Carvalho Ferreira, Wilian
48. Castillo, Ismael
49. Castro Insunza, Mirna
50. Caviglione, Dario
51. Cesano, Mario Gabriel
52. Chalasani, Karunakar
53. Chilundo, Alfredo
54. Chishimba, Joseph
55. Choi, Ho Young
56. Christopher Sekar, Jai Kumar
57. Chuenjit, Somchai
58. Cik, Peter
59. Craig, Carlos

60. Cretu, Andrei
61. Dalu, Abraham
62. Daniel, Frisco
63. de Abreu, Ruben
64. De Gracia Gonzalez, Jose
65. De Raad, Robert
66. de Souza Dantas, Andre
67. de Souza Ferreira, Tiago
68. Devadhas, Daniel
69. Devis Arias, Ney
70. Djossou, Adjeoda
71. Djuma, Dalila
72. Doukmetzian, Karnik
73. Dube, Thandolwethu
74. Dullinger, Werner
75. Dziarkach, Vadzim
76. Dziegielewski, Jaroslaw
77. Edmond, Seneque
78. Felix, Charo
79. Finley, Mark
80. Freedman, John
81. Garcia, Narcedalia
82. Garcia, Uilson Leandro
83. Garcia Arroyo, Ever
84. Garcia Perez, Jorge
85. Georgiev, Milen
86. Gonzalez, Osmar
87. Hachalinga, Passmore
88. Halemane, Peter
89. Hansuwanchai, Thana
90. Helminen, Aimo
91. Hernandez Ramirez, Eddy
92. Hla, Po Po
93. Inada, Yutaka
94. Injety, Vincent
95. Ishaya, Istifanus
96. Jadhav, Brijesh
97. Jara Zegarra, Samuel



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

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



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The 2025 General Conference Session  
Nominating Committee DAVID B. SHERWIN





## *Pinceladas de esperanza y reflexión sobre el mensaje divino*

La Biblia devocional con comentarios del Pr. Alejandro Bullón llega para acompañar al hermano de iglesia, para ayudar al predicador y para acercar a cualquier persona que busque a Dios. Contiene 1.189 comentarios, uno para cada capítulo de la Biblia, y 5 propuestas para el año bíblico.

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