

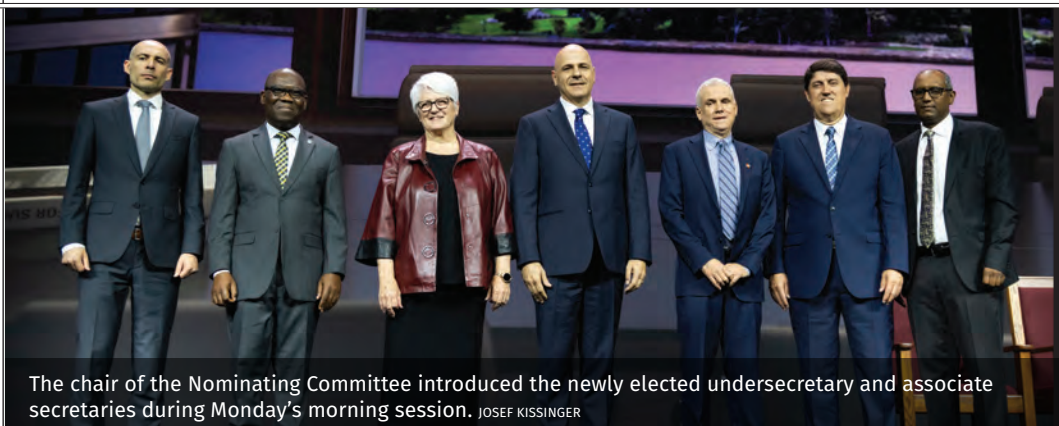
# ADVENTIST REVIEW

JULY 8, 2025

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# NEWS



The chair of the Nominating Committee introduced the newly elected undersecretary and associate secretaries during Monday's morning session. JOSEF KISSINGER

## UNDERSECRETARY AND ASSOCIATE SECRETARIES ELECTED

### SECRETARY TEAM IN PLACE FOR THE NEXT QUINQUENNium

BECKY ST. CLAIR

**O**n Monday, July 7, the Nominating Committee of the General Conference (GC) Session announced the nomination of the undersecretary and six associate secretaries for the GC. Of the seven nominees, five are incumbent.

**Hensley M. Mooroooven** has been elected to continue serving as undersecretary of the General Conference for the coming quinquennium, a role to which he was first elected in 2018. Mooroooven also serves as liaison officer to the South Pacific Division and the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division.

**Gary D. Krause** will continue in his position as associate secretary, a position he has held since 2010. Krause serves as liaison officer to the Israel Field and director of Adventist Mission, which oversees the Global Mission Centers, church planting, and mission promotion. Krause previously served in Australia.

**Elbert Kuhn** will continue as associate secretary, a role he has been in since 2018. He also serves as liai-

son officer to the East-Central Africa Division and the Middle East and North Africa Union Mission, as well as the Adventist University of Africa, and is director of Adventist Volunteer Service.

**Alexander Ott** will be joining the secretariat team as an associate secretary for the coming quinquennium, moving from his current position as general secretary of the Austrian Union of Churches Conference, a role he has held since 2023. Prior to this he served in Lebanon, Asia, and Kyrgyzstan as mission director and pastor.

**Karen J. Porter** has been elected to continue as associate secretary. She has held this position since 2014. Porter also serves as liaison officer to the Euro-Asia Division and the Ukrainian Union Conference, as well as for the Deferred Mission Appointment Program. She is codirector of International Personnel Resources and Services, and has previously served in Sri Lanka, Russia, and Cyprus.

**Gerson P. Santos** will continue in his position as associate secretary, a position he has held since 2015. He also serves as liaison officer to the Inter-American Division, the North American Division, and the South American Division. He has previously served in Brazil.

**Selom Kwasi Sessou** has been elected to begin his first service as associate secretary for the GC. He comes to this position from his current role as secretary for the West-Central Africa Division. Sessou has more than 13 years of experience in church administration, from mission work to the union and division levels. 🦋



The chair of the Nominating Committee introduced the newly elected undertreasurer and associate treasurers during the Sunday's afternoon session. MARK FROELICH

## GENERAL CONFERENCE DELEGATES ELECT TREASURY TEAM FINANCIAL LEADERSHIP SET FOR NEXT FIVE YEARS

BECKY ST. CLAIR

On Sunday, July 6, the Nominating Committee of the General Conference Session announced the nomination of undertreasurer and six associate treasurers for the General Conference (GC). Of the seven nominees, six are incumbent.

**J. Raymond Wahlen II** was elected to continue as undertreasurer for the GC in 2015. Prior to taking this role, Wahlen served as associate treasurer for five years, and before that, he worked as the special assistant to the treasurer and director of the Seventh-day Adventist accounting software system.

**Timothy H. Aka** will continue in his role as associate treasurer for the GC. Elected to this position in 2015, Aka came to the GC from a business finance background. He joined the team as investment manager just one year prior to his election, and has extensive experience in the financial sector, including at Edward Jones and TD Waterhouse.

**Sabrina C. DeSouza** will continue as associate treasurer for the GC. She came to the position in 2023 after serving as vice president for financial administration and chief financial officer for Oakwood University for 21 years. Prior to her tenure at Oakwood University, DeSouza worked for the GC as an auditor.

**German A. Lust** has been elected to continue in his current role as associate treasurer of the GC, a position

he has held since 2018, while also serving as codirector and treasurer for International Personnel Resources and Services, and as treasurer for the Institute of World Mission. Prior to his election Lust served as treasurer of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division for three years.

**Gideon M. Mutero** was elected as a new associate treasurer of the GC for the coming quinquennium, after serving as the vice president for finance of Hope Channel International since 2011. He has served the global church in nearly every treasury role, from conference to division to the GC. Prior to Hope Channel International Mutero was CFO at ADRA International.

**Josue Pierre** was elected to continue as an associate treasurer of the GC, a position he has held since 2022. Before that, he served as associate general counsel of the GC for six years. Prior to joining the Office of General Counsel, Pierre served as an associate county attorney with the Prince George's County, Maryland, Office of Law for four years.

**Richard T. Stephenson** will continue as associate treasurer for the GC. Elected to this position in 2022, Stephenson previously served as director of Information Technology Services for the North American Division, a role he took on in 2018. Along with his treasury position, Stephenson was also elected in 2022 to serve as director of Tech Operations and Strategy at the GC. 🍀



## SET BACK; PULLED TOGETHER HOW THE EUD TURNED LOSS INTO MISSION-DRIVEN RESILIENCE

BECKY ST. CLAIR

**T**he year 2024 marked 150 years since the beginning of Adventism in Europe, when John Nevins Andrews came as a missionary to Switzerland with his children in tow and set up the foundation of what is now the Inter-European Division (EUD).

"In honor of this anniversary, we're focusing this year on two primary pillars of our division," says Paulo Macedo, Communication director for the EUD. "The first is history, as we reflect on the blessings we have received in Europe throughout the past 150 years. The second is mission, to show what we are currently doing in our territory, across various languages, cultures, and geography."

The EUD covers 20 countries with almost as many languages, and is comprised of 200,000 Adventist church members.

"Compare this to South America, where they have only two primary languages for all 13 countries," Macedo commented. "Europe is incredibly diverse, with not just a plethora of languages but also a large variety of cultures, mentalities, and worldviews."



Paulo Macedo, Communication director for the Inter-European Division, shares how a devastating setback in their GC plans brought the division together to further the mission. DAVID B. SHERWIN

With all of this in mind, the leaders of the EUD began to think how they would represent their territory at their exhibits during the sixty-second General Conference Session (GC) in St. Louis, Missouri. The vision that emerged highlighted unity and collaboration.

"We may be diverse in our experiences, but we have a shared history, and our mission remains the same," Macedo said. And thus was born the EUD "neighborhood" for the GC exhibition hall. Conference and union ministries were partnered to build their own presence for the neighborhood: publishing, education, unions, health, and media ministries collaborating on combined spaces to highlight their work, with

a central "lobby" area for the division headquarters.

### "BUGS ARE NOT STRONGER THAN GOD"

"From the very beginning we were operating under the concept of unity," Macedo said. Together the ministries planned panels, displays, and products. "The willingness to collaborate was great."

Safeliz, a publishing house in Spain, even offered to ship everything for the division to save the division money. Each group sent their materials to Spain to be packed in two containers and shipped to the United States. "It was a huge undertaking to get every gift, every rollout, every TV, every activity, ev-



**“We may be diverse in our experiences, but we have a shared history, and our mission remains the same. We worked together, relied on each other, and made something happen.”**

ery giveaway from across 20 countries in one place by our shipping deadline,” Macedo admits. “But we did it.”

Everything was coming together—literally—very well. And then disaster struck.

“When our containers got to customs and they opened one for inspection, they found a bug,” Macedo said sadly. “It was, unfortunately, a bug that could be dangerous to the crops here, so we were told we would be unable to use anything from either of our containers here in St. Louis. We could either ship them back to Spain or destroy everything.

This was a huge blow to us.”

Disappointed and empty-handed, the booth coordinators had two choices: give up, or give it another try. They opted for the latter. After praying together, they jumped into action, each ministry group coordinating their spaces together, heading to IKEA to find replacement furniture and decor and working with local printers to get a few flyers and postcards printed.

“In the end, it’s nothing like what it would have been had we been able to use our original materials,” Macedo pointed out. “But we worked together, relied on each other, and

made something happen. We’re here.”

Safeliz was, unfortunately, hit the hardest by the loss, as 80 percent of their resale stock was in the two containers, and they will take a significant financial hit as a result.

“Honestly, this has been an important spiritual and life lesson,” Macedo said. “Sometimes even when you pray and have a good plan, and feel as though you’re following God’s guidance, life throws a bug at you. Then you’re lost, and you don’t know what to do. But let’s keep on going—together. Bugs cannot stop our mission, because bugs are not stronger than God.”



An unexpected challenge at customs meant the EUD exhibit had to be started from scratch once the team arrived in St. Louis. Together they made it happen. DAVID B. SHERWIN

After St. Louis experienced a devastating tornado, church officials presented the city of St. Louis with a disaster relief check. MARK FROELICH



## CHURCH PRESENTS \$100,000 CHECK TO CITY MAYOR

### MAYOR SPENCER THANKS CHURCH FOR IMPACT ST. LOUIS PROGRAM

JARROD STACKELROTH

**O**n Monday morning of the General Conference (GC) Session, the Seventh-day Adventist Church presented a US\$100,000 check for disaster relief to the mayor of the city of St. Louis, Missouri, United States, after the region was struck by a tornado on May 16.

Mayor Cara Spencer attended the event to thank the church for holding their sixty-second GC Session in the city.

"On behalf of the city of St. Louis, I would like to extend a warm welcome to the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church here in St. Louis. We hope you've had a successful conference so far, and continue to enjoy a productive time in St. Louis."

The church has been conducting outreach and service projects in St. Louis, including Pathway to Health, a mega health clinic, book distribution, and park cleanup, as well as supporting local shelters, under an initiative called Impact St. Louis.

"The Seventh-day Adventist Church's service to cities mirrors the work that many cities around the world are familiar with," said Spencer. "Mayors and governments know that we cannot do the monumental and complex work required in today's city alone. It will take all of us working together."

In her two-minute speech, the mayor also reflected on the recent tornado that did US\$1.7 billion in damages, took five lives, and damaged more than 5,000 structures.

"It will be a joint effort for neighbors, churches, small businesses, and many people from around the world to rebuild our community.

"We know you're a part of this effort, and we're truly grateful," said Spencer.

At the completion of her speech, Spencer was joined onstage by GC treasurer Paul Douglas, who announced the presentation of the check.

"When we heard the terrible news of the May 16 tornado that damaged the city of St. Louis, our hearts were heavy and burdened with pain," he said.

"So collectively church leaders contributed to do something about it."

The large ceremonial check was brought onstage by GC president Erton Köhler, who had previously introduced the mayor and read her bio; North American Division president Alexander Bryant; and Mid-America Union Conference president Gary Thurber, in whose territory St. Louis falls.

"We would like to present to you a check for \$100,000 on behalf of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a token of appreciation for you and this city, and our hearts being touched by the pain that was experienced here," said Douglas.

"We pray God's encouragement and healing for all of those who have suffered. Our churches and our leadership in this area also stand ready with this city to help rebuild."

The mayor responded with a short thank-you. "This is not just a token of your appreciation. This is a real investment in the future of our community. And we hope that you continue to come back to St. Louis and continue to make your personal investments here."

"This means so much to our city. We're grateful that you're here, and we're truly grateful for this investment in our future. Thank you," she said.

Spencer was joined by Brad Dean, president and CEO of Explore St. Louis and of the America's Center Convention Complex, and Jennifer Poindexter, director of Meet St. Louis, who have helped facilitate the organization of the GC Session.

"They have worked tirelessly with GC Session management and area vendors and services to make this a highly successful event for both the church and the city," said Köhler in his intro.

Spencer has been mayor only since April 15 this year and is the city's third consecutive female mayor. 🍀



Testimonies from around the globe were a highlight of Friday night's Global Total Member Involvement report. Attendees were regaled by inspiring stories of innovative mission projects, with reports from laypeople, ministries, Adventist World Radio, and, always a highlight, those present who chose to make a public declaration of their faith through the waters of baptism. Some of the young people who made the decision were a product of Ted Wilson's evangelism program in St. Louis.

PHOTO BY JOSEF KISSINGER





Virgie Baloyo stands with Family Ministries directors Willie and Elaine Oliver after receiving her award.

JOSEF KISSINGER



## LEADERS HONORED WITH CHURCH'S HIGHEST FAMILY MINISTRIES AWARD

**SPALDING MEDALLION PRESENTED DURING SPECIAL LUNCHEON AT GC SESSION**

BETH THOMAS

On Sabbath, July 5, four recipients received the highest recognition the Adventist Church can give for lifetime achievement in the field of Family Ministries. These individuals join more than 50 others who have been honored with the prestigious Arthur and Maud Spalding Medallion since its introduction in 1990.

The awards event took place during a special luncheon facilitated by current Family Ministries codirectors Willie and Elaine Oliver. Also recognized for their assistance and oversight for the Family Ministries Department were Geoffrey Mbwana, General Conference vice president, accompanied by his wife, Nakku; and Ray Wahlen, undertreasurer of the General Conference, with his wife, Maurine.

### AN AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Named for the first codirectors of the General Conference department established in 1922, the Spalding Medallion denotes “dedication to the work of family ministries, creative implementation of Bible principles, knowledge of family issues, and gifted and winsome ways of presenting the dynamics and processes of developing and sustaining marriage and family relationships,” Willie said. Recipients have demonstrated these principles in their faithful and committed service to families.

The 2025 Spalding Medallion recipients are as follows:

Raquel Queiroz da Costa Arrais, director of Children, Women, and Family Ministries for the Northern Asia-Pacific Division, a position she has held since 2021.

Arrais has been involved in Women's and Children's Ministries and Shepherdess leadership at all levels of church structure, beginning in 2000.

Virgie Baloyo, director of Family, Children, and Women's Ministries for the Southern Asia-Pacific Division. Throughout her extensive career Baloyo has served as a magazine editor, assistant professor, and ministry director. She has led family conferences, marriage seminars, and pastoral couple trainings, and has written on family and relationships from a biblical worldview.

Alacy Mendes Barbosa, director of Family Ministries and Possibility Ministries for the South American Division. Barbosa is an ordained pastor and educator. He has led retreats, held family conferences, and provided counseling sessions for more than 36 years. He says his passion is helping families build happy homes on the way to their heavenly home.

Jongimpi and Nomthandazo Papu, codirectors of Family Ministries for the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean (SID) Division. They were first elected in 2010 and returned to the role in 2022. Together the Papus founded Masterful Couples and Families, a ministry serving people of all faiths. They are popular speakers for marriage retreats and events.

### PERSONAL COMMITMENT

One common thread among all the recipients was their personal commitment to building up families, not as a job, but as a calling.

Baloyo emphasized this when asked what the award meant to her. “There are many things I cannot do, but this one [serving families] I gladly do because I see the transformation it brings to families. This award is just the icing on the cake! I'm deeply humbled because I know I have done so very little.”

These leaders carry forward the legacy of Arthur and Maud Spalding, whose early vision for Family Ministries laid the groundwork for hands-on service to families around the world. 🍀

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# THE MODEL

*The Sanctuary and the End*



**JOHN  
BRADSHAW**

DEVOTIONAL  
MESSAGE  
PRESENTED  
SUNDAY MORNING  
JULY 6, 2025

In Yangon, Myanmar, is a structure that really has to be seen to be believed. The Shwedagon Pagoda is considered the most sacred Buddhist pagoda in the country. It might have been constructed more than 2,500 years ago, while the Buddha was still alive. At 325 feet—or 99 meters—tall, the entire structure is covered in gold, and the top is adorned with almost 2,500 rubies and 5,500 diamonds, including one that weighs 76 carats.





## Holy living includes the attitudes we manifest, our willingness to love one another, even when we don't like a vote.

In the south of India, in Tamil Nadu state, is a temple that some describe as worthy of being one of the seven wonders of the world. The Brihadishvara Temple is a Hindu temple, originally constructed about 1,500 years ago. Seeing is believing. Unchanged for 1,000 years, it remains a breathtaking structure.

This is what religious people do: to honor their gods, they build temples, which are often magnificent. We could mention St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, St. Paul's Cathedral in London, or the still-unfinished Sagrada Família in Barcelona. Incredible buildings, all designed for the purpose of worship, or enhancing your journey on your chosen religious path.

### THE CHRISTIAN TEMPLE

The Bible-believing Christian has no earthly temple to point to. Instead, we look to a temple in heaven, "the sanctuary . . . the true tabernacle, which the Lord erected, and not man" (Heb. 8:2). Although we've been told that "no earthly structure could represent its vastness and its glory,"\* we don't look in its direction to admire its architecture. The temple for the end-time Christian believer exists to inform and impact our Christian experience, to teach us that there is a God in heaven who has done everything He can to save us from the wages of sin.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). Not even sin could prevent a loving God from dwelling in the

midst of His people. He said to Moses, "Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it" (Ex. 25:8, 9).

This tabernacle wandered with Israel in the wilderness, which is another way of saying that God went with Israel. In the pillar of cloud and fire, God was with His people. Moses struck the Rock in the presence of that cloud, and Jesus caused the water to flow. Ten plagues, bitter water, manna on the ground . . . and God was with His people. Now He would dwell in their midst. A two-room structure was established, with every detail and every service designed to teach the salvation story.

There would be an altar for sacrifices; a laver where priests would wash; a room containing an altar, a table, and a candelabra—each of them object lessons. The table of showbread pointed the people to Jesus, the Bread of Life. The seven-branched candlestick prefigured Jesus, the Light of the world, and the Light of *our* world if we're constantly fed with the oil of the Holy Spirit so that *we* may be the light of the world. The altar of incense saw incense rising before God, representing the righteousness of Christ ascending heavenward with our prayers.

In the most holy place were found two statues of angels atop the ark of the covenant, which

contained, among other things, the Ten Commandments. The journey into the sanctuary traced the path from penitence to oneness with God, from brokenness to wholeness, from unrighteousness to righteousness, from unholiness to holiness.

### THE CALL ON YOUR LIFE

It speaks to us of the calling God places on our lives. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1).

There is intensity in his language: "*I appeal to you.*"

"By the mercies of God." *Oiktimos*. Paul is the only New Testament writer who uses this word. Paul invokes the compassion God has for His people. He doesn't say, "I appeal to you based on the justice of God." He tells us, "God longs for you, desires to save you. Consider the depths of God's compassion for you."

I beseech you therefore, by the mercies of God, "that you present your bodies a living sacrifice." This is, of course, an oxymoron. Alive, but placed on the altar. This is the life to which God calls us. This is not the first time Paul has written this way to the Romans; it's the very same thought as Romans 6:1: "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?"

It was the logically illogical question to ask based on what he had written previously: "For as by one man's disobedience many

were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more" (Rom. 5:19, 20). Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? His answer is unambiguous: "Certainly not!" (Rom. 6:15). Paul explains vital Christianity: "How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" (verse 2). The person who comes to faith in Jesus dies to sin and is raised up from the dead to walk in newness of life.

### THE CHALLENGE TO LAODICEA

The challenge we face as Laodicean Christians in a sinful world is to walk in newness of life. Some throw their hands up in desperation and declare it too difficult. Others justify their carnality by claiming the Bible doesn't mean what it says, rationalizing sin, and pretending Sabbath breaking, wine drinking, and so forth are not offensive to God. I can assure you they are. God calls us to be living sacrifices; human nature wants to dismiss sin as inconsequential.

If "Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary" (Ps. 77:13), we are to be living sacrifices, "dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:11). Not Pharisees. Not loveless critics. Jesus already warned us that we think we are rich and increased with goods and have need of

nothing, and He says to us, "You need the righteousness of Christ!" That's where our hope is: only in Jesus. Then we grow to represent Him more and more.

Back in Romans 12:1 Paul goes on to say that a living sacrifice should be "holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." We are called to holiness. Monitor your attitude throughout this General Conference Session. You may disagree with decisions, which is your right, but watch and see how that disagreement alters you. Nothing about what Jesus said in John 13 has changed. "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). Those who take it upon themselves to be the correctors, the critics, the accusers of the brethren—not people who disagree, as disagreement is biblical, but those who air their dirty linen and attack the church—had better have some good excuses for their behavior, because they will need those excuses in the judgment.

Holy living includes the attitudes we manifest, our willingness to love one another, even when we don't like a vote. Even when we feel our leaders have let us down. What did Paul call it? "Your reasonable service." The Greek word he used is *logikos*. Rational. Logical. It's rational to be a living sacrifice, irrational not to be. Logical to put your life on the altar of burnt offering, illogical not to do so.

We are here at this General Conference Session to do the business of the church, and the real business of the church is to grow in the likeness of Jesus, to grow in holiness. God can do that work in your life. Paul's remarks are based on 11 prior chapters. All are sinners, he has said. Righteousness does not come by the law, he has said. Righteousness comes through faith in Jesus, he has said. Justification—pardon—brings peace, he has said. You will have to battle your carnal heart, but there is a way out of slavery to self, and that is Jesus Himself. Paul said, "I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Rom. 7:25).

If we can go from this place with a prayer in our hearts—"Let my life be a living sacrifice"—then being here will have been worth something. If we cannot, this will have been an expensive exercise in lukewarmness. Let me appeal to you today: Seek holiness. Seek Christ. Seek His righteousness. Better than that, claim it. Claim the righteousness of Jesus as your own. Be that living sacrifice for Jesus. We want Jesus to do a great work in this world. But first, let Him do that great work in you. 🍀

\* Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1890, 1908), p. 357.

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**John Bradshaw** is the president of *It Is Written*.





# ADVENTIST

# HERITAGE

# MINISTRIES

How much do you and your family know about the Adventist pioneers?

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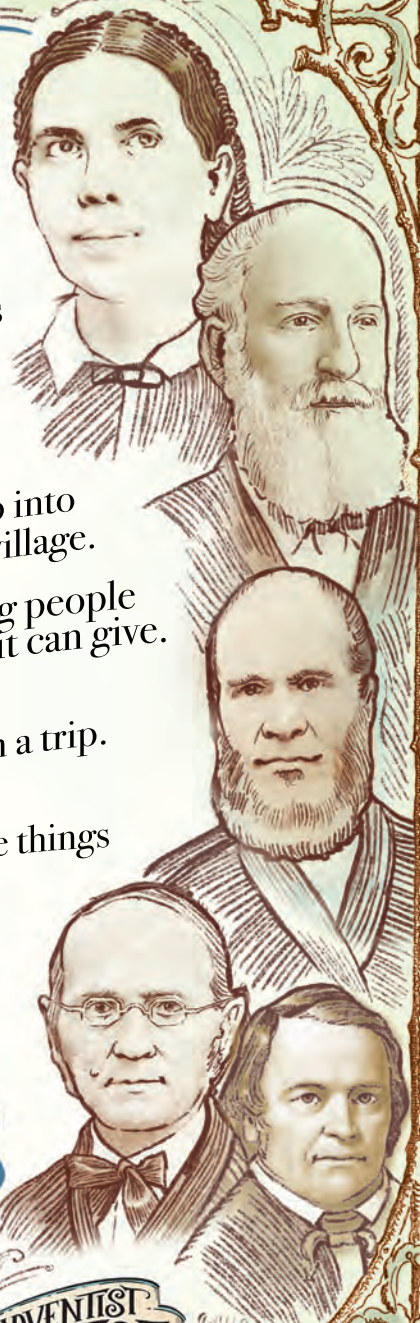
In several U.S. states you can step into their lives via their homes and a village.

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ADVENTIST  
HERITAGE  
MINISTRIES



# ADVENTIST VOLUNTEER SERVICE REPORT

*Reaching the World Through Volunteers*



A group of volunteers serving in the Southern Union Mission in the Euro-Asia Division

**A**dventist Volunteer Service (AVS) has continued to grow through the years, expanding its global impact and reaching new heights in volunteer engagement, training, and service. This report highlights the accomplishments, growth trajectories, and future vision for AVS from 2022 to 2025, focusing on such key areas as the expansion of the Schools of Mission, an increased number of volunteers transitioning into full-time missionaries, the development of training materials, the new AVS logo and slogan, and adaptation to current global political challenges. As the department looks toward the future, the vision remains to ensure that the movement reaches every corner of the globe, transforming lives through service and faith.

## SCHOOLS OF MISSION

One of the most significant accomplishments of AVS in recent years has been the substantial growth of the Schools of Mission (SoM). From 2022 to 2025 the number of SoMs has grown exponentially, with 296 active schools training volunteers worldwide. These schools, located in diverse regions, provide essential training and spiritual guidance for individuals who feel called to serve as volunteers. The programs are designed to equip volunteers not only with practical skills but also with a deep understanding of the cultural, social, and spiritual contexts in which they will work.

SoMs are essential in preparing volunteers for a wide range of service opportunities, including



church planting, education, health care, media, and humanitarian outreach. The increase in the number of schools has provided broader access to training for individuals in different regions, enabling them to serve both locally and internationally. The growth of these schools reflects the rising global demand for trained volunteers and the increasing recognition of the value of service in spreading the message of hope and faith.

### **GROWTH IN FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES**

Another area of remarkable growth has been the number of volunteers who, after completing their service terms, have transitioned into full-time missionary work. From 2022 to 2025 the trend of volunteers pursuing long-term full-time missionary careers has shown significant growth. Many volunteers, inspired by their experiences and deepened faith during their short-term service, are now committed to lifelong missionary endeavors.

This growth has been facilitated by partnerships with the General Conference, regional divisions, and other church organizations that provide resources, training, and support to assist volunteers in transitioning to long-term service. The rise in volunteers becoming full-time missionaries reflects the significant impact that short-term service can have on an individual's life, prompting them to dedicate themselves to the mission of the church in a permanent capacity. Whether in remote areas or urban centers, these full-time

missionaries continue the work they started as volunteers, and their dedication spreads the gospel in new and creative ways.

### **DEVELOPMENT OF TRAINING MATERIALS**

Through the years there has been significant progress in developing training materials used by Schools of Mission worldwide. These materials are carefully designed to address the various needs of volunteers, from spiritual and emotional preparation to practical skills in health, education, and community development. In 2022 a comprehensive update of the training curriculum was completed, incorporating feedback from volunteers and field leaders, along with new research on effective mission work.

The updated materials now include modules on intercultural communication, trauma-informed care, digital evangelism, and sustainable development. These topics are particularly relevant in the context of a rapidly changing world, where volunteers must be adaptable, culturally sensitive, and equipped to tackle a variety of global challenges. The creation and distribution of these training resources has been crucial in ensuring that volunteers are well prepared for the complexities of mission work, enhancing their effectiveness and confidence in service.

Furthermore, these training materials are available in multiple languages, reflecting the global nature of the AVS movement. By ensuring



An eye clinic in Galapagos



A child receives dental care in Timor Leste.

# ADVENTIST VOLUNTEER SERVICE REPORT CONTINUED

that resources are accessible to volunteers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, AVS is fostering a truly international network of mission workers who can collaborate and learn from each other, regardless of geographical or cultural differences.

## NEW ADVENTIST VOLUNTEER SERVICE LOGO AND SLOGAN

In 2023 AVS unveiled a new logo and slogan that encapsulate the heart of its mission. The new logo, featuring vibrant colors and dynamic lines, symbolizes the energy, movement, and transformation that occur when individuals step out to serve. The accompanying slogan, “Change the

World, Change Your World,” captures the essence of what it means to be a volunteer—both the joy of transforming the world through service and the personal transformation that occurs when one becomes a servant of others.

The new visual identity and slogan serve as a reminder to volunteers that their service is not just about helping others but also about being transformed in the process. It reflects the Christian principle of mutual transformation—how those who serve often receive more than they give. The logo and slogan have been embraced by volunteers around the world, becoming a rallying cry for those committed to living a life of service.





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## Many volunteers, inspired by their experiences and deepened faith during their short-term service, are now committed to lifelong missionary endeavors.

### ADAPTING TO POLITICAL CHALLENGES

The global political climate has made international volunteer service more difficult in recent years because of increased travel restrictions, conflicts, and changing immigration policies. In response, the intradivision volunteer program has grown significantly, enabling individuals to serve in their own countries or nearby regions. This model reduces logistical barriers while still offering meaningful mission opportunities. It strengthens local church communities and allows volunteers to contribute to the global mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church by making a difference close to home.

In regions in which international volunteering is restricted, AVS has been creative in offering online volunteer opportunities, such as virtual teaching, online health consultations, and digital evangelism. This adaptability ensures that even when physical borders present challenges, the volunteer spirit can still thrive through innovation and digital outreach.

### LOOKING FORWARD: REACHING EVERY CORNER OF THE GLOBE

As AVS continues to expand and evolve, the department focuses on ensuring that the volunteer movement reaches every corner of the globe. The ultimate vision for the future is a world in which every individual who feels called to serve can find opportunities to do so, whether locally or internationally. The global network of Schools of Mission will keep growing, equipping more volunteers to serve with faith, humility, and dedication.

The next steps for AVS involve strengthening partnerships with regional divisions to ensure

that volunteers are deployed to areas of greatest need. Additionally, the department is working to expand its outreach to underrepresented regions, where the gospel message can have a significant impact. AVS is also committed to ensuring that training materials remain relevant, timely, and effective, continually adapting to the changing needs of the global mission field.

With a renewed sense of purpose and an unwavering commitment to its mission, the Adventist Volunteer Service is poised to make an even greater impact in the years to come. As the department looks toward the future, it is inspired by the transformative power of service, confident that through the dedication of its volunteers the world will be changed—and, in turn, the volunteers themselves will be changed.

### CONCLUSION

The growth of Adventist Volunteer Service from 2022 to 2025 has been marked by increased numbers of trained volunteers, a larger network of Schools of Mission, and a rising number of volunteers committing to full-time missionary service. The development of new training materials, the introduction of a new logo and slogan, and the expansion of the intradivision volunteer program have all contributed to a vibrant and dynamic movement that is impacting lives worldwide. Despite global political challenges, AVS has adapted to ensure that the mission continues to spread. With a forward-looking vision, AVS is committed to reaching every corner of the globe, transforming lives, and spreading the message of hope, one volunteer at a time. 🌱



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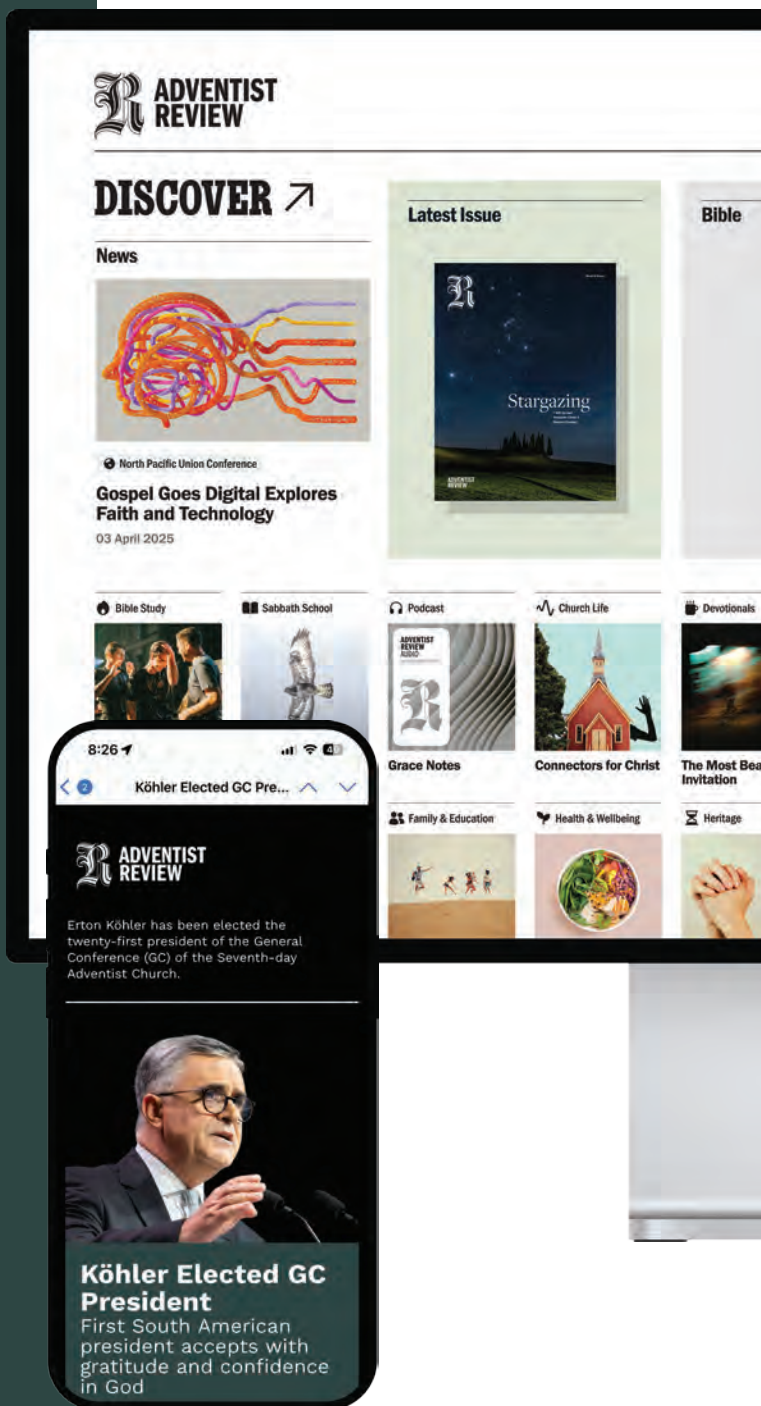


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# Behind the Scenes with the Nominating Committee

*How are church officers elected?*

**BECKY ST. CLAIR**

**O**ne of the important functions of delegates is to select church leaders for the coming quinquennium through the Nominating Committee. But how does this process work? We took a look behind the scenes to learn just that.

On day one of the session, delegates from each of the church's 13 divisions, attached regions, plus General Conference (GC) representatives gather in caucus rooms to determine who will represent their region on the Nominating Committee.



Nominating Committee members place their votes via electronic voting devices, the signals of which are blocked beyond the committee room.

DAVID B. SHERWIN

Each division's representation allotment is 10 percent of their session delegation, and they each decide independently how they will determine that 10 percent for the Nominating Committee. The GC allotment is 8 percent of caucus membership.

Once the representatives are selected in the caucuses, the list of names is presented to the opening business session for review and approval. In 2025 the list is 277 names long.



Members of the Nominating Committee for the 2025 General Conference Session chat briefly before deliberating begins. DAVID B. SHERWIN



Upon entering the meeting room, members of the Nominating Committee are required to seal their phones in machine-locked pockets for the duration of the meeting. DAVID B. SHERWIN

As committee members gather, they pass through security to have their badges scanned for access, and they are given nondisclosure agreements to sign and an electronic voting device. The signals of these devices are blocked beyond the meeting room.

When they enter the room, the representatives are required to relinquish their phones and seal them in secure pouches, which are locked by a machine at the door and tagged with a security device. The pouches remain locked until the meeting's conclusion, and cannot be reopened except by the machine. Due to the seriousness of the task, members of the committee are told that anyone caught using an undisclosed secondary device will be immediately dismissed from the committee, and a public announcement requesting a division replacement representative will be made from the main meeting platform.

To ensure every representative is able to participate fully, translation services are provided in Spanish, Portuguese, French, and Russian.

The first order of business for the Nominating Committee is to choose a chair, a process that is overseen by the sitting GC president. Once the committee chair is selected, the GC president leaves, and the selection of a vice chair, secretary, and assistant secretary begins.

**Throughout these honed processes, there is also an attitude of prayer that drives the committee in its deliberating.**

Committee members are asked to submit names for consideration for the GC presidency, then as a group they discuss, vote to pare down the list, and discuss again until they have selected a single candidate for the role.

Once the candidates have been finalized, the committee chair goes to the main meeting stage, where programming has continued throughout the committee's meeting, and a brief interruption to the main meeting is allowed for the announcement of the new officers.

Throughout these honed processes, there is also an attitude of prayer that drives the committee in its deliberations. In a 2022 article about the Nominating Committee, a statement by Hensley Moorrooven, GC undersecretary, remains an appropriate reminder for this GC Session. "We want the Holy Spirit to be involved [in this process], because there are things we can do, but there are also things we cannot do. We need to rely on the Lord."\*

\* Maryellen Hacko, ANN, "How Session Works: Nominating Committee," <https://adventist.news/news/nominating-committee>, accessed July 7, 2025.

## Free at Last! (or not)

*When expectations of a retiree weren't exactly how things went*

**ELLA SIMMONS**

**H**ave you ever had a longtime dream come close to realization and then just slip through your fingers like dry sand? This is how I felt at the beginning of this session. You see, this is my first General Conference (GC) Session after my retirement in 2022.

After enjoying a full and beautiful Sabbath, GC Session delegates returned to the dome early Sunday morning for another spirit-filled, hope-inspiring sermon by John Bradshaw. Pastor Bradshaw did not disappoint. His rousing message was simple yet profound. You'll want to pull that sermon for yourself. It's well worth your time.

Following a short benediction, I rose fully energized to exit the auditorium for the long and hurried walk over to the Nominating Committee room to take up my responsibilities with renewed strength and interest.

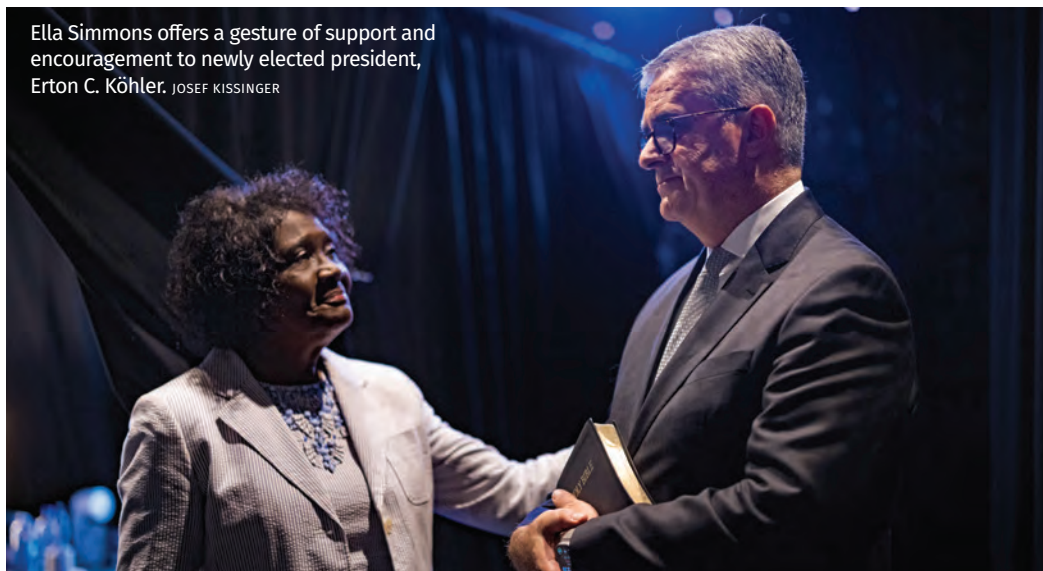
Yes, can you imagine that I am serving on the

Nominating Committee? I had come to St. Louis as a stress-free retiree almost giddy under the illusion of sitting back in the GC section on the floor—the floor—with no responsibilities, never to ascend the platform, simply taking in the programs, reports, and participating in decisions only by casting my one vote after others had done all the preparatory work.

May I confess something? Don't judge me, though. Upon arrival last Wednesday evening, I even bragged about my newfound freedom from committee work! When we came into the hotel, I immediately ran into some GC leadership team members with whom I had served during the 17 years of my GC employment. I was quick to point out to them that they were rushing to meetings, and I now didn't have to go to any committee meetings. In fact, my words were: "I am free!" [free from committee meetings].

Well, all that changed suddenly on Thursday when my dear colleagues voted me onto the Nominating Committee. My freedom bubble was ruthlessly burst. My dream of ease as a passive delegate was violently shattered. My expectation for quiet-observer-of-session-proceedings status was cruelly obliterated. Then at our first meeting, to add insult to injury, my brothers and sisters voted me vice chair of the committee. I wondered how much more damage they could inflict on me.

Ella Simmons offers a gesture of support and encouragement to newly elected president, Erton C. Köhler. JOSEF KISSINGER





Well, it was finally Friday afternoon. After a full day of grueling Nominating Committee activities—establishing processes and operational structures, nominating and vetting names, protracted discussion, with some necessary redundant comments and inquiries, and voting on candidates (all of whom are known and loved)—I found myself on the GC Session platform with the Nominating Committee team making the first report to the body of delegates. I wondered how this could be. My husband and I said farewell to this platform for the last time back in 2022. I asked myself, and perhaps the Lord: How did I get back up here? Sunday morning we were ready to go at it again.

After the election of the new GC president, the members were eager to see what God would achieve. In fact, it appeared that the entire body was on alert for what would come to the floor. After all, it was a given that there would be a new GC secretary, for the previous secretary was now GC president. Whose name would rise to the top; who would the Lord call? The quizzical glances or shy, sometimes sly, wistful comments in passing gave away the secret desires of many delegates.

When the Nominating Committee members were called to leave the larger body to take up their responsibilities for a second day, I experienced another jolt to my soul. It was at this moment, as I was basking in the glow of the Word from John Bradshaw's message echoing in my head, my phone signaled a call.

As I glanced at the phone, I glimpsed the face of our granddaughter, our first grandchild, on the caller ID. Although the noise of the moving masses was nearly deafening, the distraught voice of our granddaughter pierced through. My Sweetie Girl, as I have called her for all of her 37 years, was sobbing uncontrollably.

Terror flashed through my mind. I begged her to tell me what was wrong. "What has happened?" Nana, my baby's other grandmother, had died. She had been ill, quite ill, for the past few years, but had been on the mend. Now she was suddenly and unexpectedly gone, and my Sweetie Girl was hurting. I wanted to rush to her side, to hug and console her; but all I could do was cry and pray with her over the phone for I had to go into the Nominating Committee.



The now-experienced committee members were there early ready to engage in the urgent work of identifying leaders for God's church and its ministry and service to the world. They came with many fresh and some tried ideas. There was much discussion, many creative suggestions for process and progress. Of course, there were many opinions about candidates whose names were nominated for consideration. Yet, with the vast diversity of individuals, needs, and perspectives, there was a sweet spirit of unity and harmony in the meeting, and the committee accomplished a great deal.

The Nominating Committee chose for recommendation for GC secretary Richard (Rick) McEdward and for GC treasurer Paul Douglas. We followed with the selection of six men and one woman for GC general vice president. Finally, we slid in one more report for action of the full body just prior to its adjournment, the seven associate treasurers.

And I, I lost myself in God's work and got through it all with only one text message exchange with my granddaughter. After a long, long day I called my Sweetie Girl to check on her. She was still hurting, but sufficiently recovered. I was relieved and we both were able to settle down to rest. Sunday was not an ordinary day for me, but somehow I doubt that it was extraordinary for God. Let us remain faithful by God's saving and enabling grace. 🍀

**Ella Simmons** served as a general vice president of the General Conference from 2005 to 2022.

# ALICE IS HOPE

HANNAH DREWIECK

HOPE CHANNEL  
EVENING DEVOTIONAL  
MESSAGE PRESENTED  
MONDAY JULY 7, 2025

**H**ope is not just something we carry. It's something we become when we allow God to use us, even when we least expect it. That's what happened to Alice in Brazil. Her story isn't about someone who was eager to serve or was searching for purpose. It's about someone who reluctantly said yes and was transformed by the experience of mission.

When Alice's parents, Alan and Blanch, gave their lives to Christ after Alan's near-death experience with COVID-19, Alice did not follow them into faith. She didn't want to be part of their new life. Her response was not just distant but defiant. "I was in that rebellious phase," she later admitted. "I was trying to show my parents that I didn't want to be there, that I didn't accept this change."

Alan and Blanch had encountered God in the middle of a crisis, witnessed healing, and found a spiritual family. But they couldn't share it with the person they loved most. "She was at home while we were at church seeing so many wonderful things and not being able to share them with her," Alan remembered. "The place that was supposed to bring happiness became a place of heartache because she wasn't there with us."





## Her parents didn't give up. Her friends kept inviting. Her church kept praying.

Blanch kept praying, asking God why Alice wouldn't come to church. Still, they kept hoping. Then came an opportunity. Alice was invited to join a mission trip to Guyana. It felt like a door opening. Alan and Blanch thought, *Maybe if she comes, she'll experience something different.* But Alice said no. Again and again.

Her parents didn't give up. Her friends kept inviting. Her church kept praying. And through the persistence of love, she finally said yes. Not out of passion, but because she felt pressured. And that is where the miracle began.

In the midst of service—translating for evangelism and medical consultations, playing with children, holding the hands of the sick—Alice began to see the world differently. She saw the poverty. She heard the stories. She felt the needs. And as she poured herself out for others, something poured in. She realized she wasn't just helping others receive hope. Mission was the very thing God used to awaken hope in her.

It wasn't only her parents who saw the difference. Her teammates did too. Her friend Bia shared what it was like to serve alongside her during the trip: "When she walks into a place, she already has that smile on her face—the kind that wants to show Jesus," Bia said. "She already knows the words she's going to say. They have to be words of love, of care. And it has never been any different with anyone."

Alice now lives with the deep awareness that she may be the only exposure to the Bible someone ever has. That awareness drives her to serve, to speak with love, to carry herself in a way that reflects Christ. "I can be a source of comfort to this person, a sign of hope and a future, a sense of belonging, of love, of God's care," she said. "I must always give my best, because wherever I go, I want people to see a little bit of Jesus' love in me."

This is what mission does. It doesn't just bless those who receive. It shapes those who go. In Alice's life, mission became the place where God met her, moved in her, and changed her story forever.

That's why Alice is hope.  
That's how we can all be hope. 📖

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





# Adventist WHO?

*Connecting our heritage with identity and mission*

**BRENDA KIŠ**

**H**e was just 13, but the impression made on Jim Nix in 1960 was profound. On his way to a youth congress in New Jersey, this California boy joined 750 other young people on a bus tour of historic Adventist sites in Battle Creek. With his face glued to the window, young Jim was seeing his future without realizing it.

Six years later at La Sierra College he heard a Week of Prayer speaker mention an elderly member of his congregation who had known Ellen White, J. N. Loughborough, and S. N. Haskell. That summer Nix drove north to interview Grace White-Jacques, Ellen White's youngest granddaughter; May Lacey-White, Willie White's widow; Ella White-Robinson, another granddaughter of Ellen's; Mabel White-Workman, Ella's sister; and others.

In 1969, while Nix attended the seminary at Andrews University, he noticed during a visit to Battle Creek that some of the houses he had seen in 1960 were no longer there. That was troubling, but what could he do? While working in the Heritage Room at Loma Linda University in 1980, he received a call from Duff Stoltz, an Adventist lay historian living in Battle Creek, asking for Nix's help in saving the home of James White's parents, Deacon John and Betsey White, which was slated for destruction by the city of Battle Creek. Four concerned men—Stoltz, Nix, Larry Crandall, and Paul Gordon—met that September to discuss saving Adventist historical sites. In 1981 Adventist Historic Properties, Inc., was founded. Today Adventist Heritage Ministries (AHM) comprises four sites in the eastern half of the United States, where the Adventist movement began.

## WHY EXIST? WHY MAINTAIN THESE PROPERTIES?

These are the “commemorative stones” that teach us what happened in these places and remind us of the Lord's leading. That's *history*.

This is where we discover firsthand the origins of the prophetic movement into which He has called us. That's *identity*.

This is where we are reminded that “we have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history.”<sup>1</sup> That's *security*.

Homes, barns, meetinghouses, and welcome centers near a cornfield; Ascension Rock; the ruins of a pilgrim home; or an assembled building in a village all beckon to those who come to experience the lives of our pioneers. Behind the walls of the boyhood home of Joseph Bates, the William Miller house and farm, the Hiram Edson site, James and Ellen White's home, the John Harvey Kellogg Welcome Center, and others, the world of the 1800s draws visitors into our past. The pioneers come alive through oral stories, films, and interactive elements, captivating both old and young. These living museums serve as tools to bring the stories of our past to life.

## ADVENTIST HISTORY IS EVANGELISM

Not only do Adventist believers learn about their spiritual ancestors in these places, but AHM sites also attract non-Adventist vacationers, history buffs, schoolteachers and their students, filmmakers, and visitors from around the world.



Site directors Minguita and David wait to welcome you to the William Miller home and farm.

DAVID VELAZQUEZ



Come join the ship's crew at the Joseph Bates boyhood home! COLIN AND SHERRYL RAMPTON

A local Catholic congregation as well as doctoral students from Harvard University come to the William Miller site annually! A boat room tells the story of sea captain Joseph Bates and his discovery of the **Sabbath**. Ascension Rock at the William Miller site highlights the **Second Coming**. The Bible Prophecy Trail, even the cornfield across from the house, help visitors to visualize Hiram Edson's discovery of the **heavenly sanctuary** truth. As more Seventh-day Adventist pioneer homes are relocated to or replicated at the Historic Adventist Village in Battle Creek, the story of the early Adventist Church and the role of the **Spirit of Prophecy** is shared. Even nearby Oak Hill Cemetery, where the White family and many of our pioneers are resting, gives us the chance to talk about the **state of the dead** and the **resurrection**. Site directors and volunteers introduce people to these doctrines in an engaging way at each site so that casual passersby make contact with these great biblical truths. *That's evangelism!*

### COME AND BE INSPIRED

Did I hear you say you'd like to see these places? We would love to welcome you!

If you want to follow a chronological order, start in Whitehall, New York, at the William Miller farm (open year-round). Next, drive west to the Edson farm (open spring to fall) in Port Gibson, New

## These living museums serve as tools to bring the stories of our past to life.

York, not far from Niagara Falls. Then head east to the Bates boyhood home (open spring to fall) in Fairhaven, Massachusetts. From there, travel west again to Battle Creek, Michigan, where the Historic Adventist Village (open all year) sits next to the famed Battle Creek Sanitarium, built by John Harvey Kellogg.

Please make your reservations at [www.adventistheritage.org](http://www.adventistheritage.org) in advance, so you can get the most from your visit.

We invite you to come and see, to listen to exciting stories where they happened. It's time to take the history of our Seventh-day Adventist movement seriously. As you stand on the very places where it all began, you will be inspired to exclaim with the prophet, "Praise God! As I see what the Lord has wrought, I am filled with astonishment and with confidence in Christ as leader."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 9, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Last Day Events* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1992), p. 72.

**Brenda Kiš** is the editor of the Adventist Heritage Ministries *Bulletin* and resides in Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States.

# SESSION GALLERY



Members of the South American Division excitedly wait backstage before their report. JOSEF KISSINGER



Before going on the platform, all participants visit the makeup area.

DAVID B. SHERWIN



The Northern Asia-Pacific Division report included a presentation of colorful traditional dress and fans.

DAVID B. SHERWIN





How some choose to entertain themselves during long meetings JOSEF KISSINGER



CHRISTINA COLLARD



Kato Samuel sings with the six-member group, Jehovah Shalom Accapella-Uganda. DAVID B. SHERWIN



The prayer room is a supportive part of GC Session. MARK FROELICH



JAMES BOKOVY



## First Impressions of the General Conference

*Perspectives from first-time visitors from around the world*

**JARROD STACKELROTH**

The General Conference (GC) Session brings people from all over the world. Some have attended multiple times, while others are attending for the first time. *Adventist Review* went looking for first-time attendees to hear about how they arrived at session and to ask them about their impressions of the first weekend.

For nurse Christy Albert, who lives in Qatar, her attendance almost did not happen. Three or four

days before she was supposed to travel, her mother got “really sick.”

“I had to take her from the UK back to India and put her in the hospital, so I thought this trip wouldn’t be possible for me. But my mother became stable, so I was in a dilemma. Should I make the trip, or should I take care of my mom?”

Her mother told her that since all the money was paid, she should go. Her brother came to look after her mother, and she traveled back to the UK. Her flight from the UK to New York was delayed and then canceled. She had to book another flight at extra expense. “We made it here by God’s grace. I have no regrets. The people here and the joy that we get outweighs the difficulty I went through the previous week.”

Travel was fairly smooth for Laurentiu Mot, head of the Adventus University in Romania. He has been to the U.S. before for theological





conferences but never to attend a GC Session. For Mot it is more than 19 hours of flight time. The number of attendees at the Sabbath program, he felt, was impressive.

"This is probably the most attendees I've seen at any church meeting, and of course there are many people from different parts of the world," said Mot.



Martin Mvula is the husband of a delegate from Zambia. His wife was the top literature evangelist in Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division (SID) and was nominated

to be a delegate for their region. Mvula, a member of Lusaka Central church, was also impressed by the inclusiveness of the event. "It has given us that [sense of] belonging to this church," he said. "It's the highest meeting of the church as it is, so to be found here and participate is really fantastic." Mvula and his wife had to travel to Kenya, before flying to Chicago and then down to St. Louis.

There are also attendees of all ages.

Max, 16, from Inter-European Division, is volunteering at the lunch service.



"It is interesting to have so many people who believe in the same thing as I do in one place," he said. "It's an honor for me, and I appreciate it very much—that I can be here and see how big decisions for our church are made."

Max was inspired by the leadership shown.

"I found it very interesting and inspiring how [Ted] Wilson gave his office away. I found it really uniting what he did," said Max. "I was really impressed, and it showed me that our church is united and how important it is for us that we are still all together."

Sabbath is always a highlight at GC Session.

"The first Sabbath was colorful," said Albert. "We were so excited to see people of different cultures and different nationalities. We really felt that it was a glimpse of how heaven would be: the music, the singing, the preaching, the colorful people. As I said, it's a glimpse of a little heaven on earth."

"[Sabbath morning] was quite simple," said Mot.

**"We were so excited to see people of different kinds and different nationalities. We really felt that it was a glimpse of how heaven would be like."**

"I expected, because there are many people present and because it's such an important event, to have a lot of things done before the sermon, and when the sermon began, I actually didn't notice. I'm already in it, at its core. And then of course it finished on time. So I was impressed."

These session attendees will not just take away gifts from the exhibition hall, but memories and faith building lessons.

"What the president [Köhler] said actually stuck with me," said Mvula. "He said, 'Jesus is coming. I will go.' That is the message I have. Very, very important. And everyone else must know that it's just a little time: Jesus is coming. I'll make sure that I pull my friends, a lot of them, to the church. We'll go; we'll walk along."

"As brothers and sisters, we are supposed to share the love of Jesus," said Albert. "Take this mission seriously, and take Jesus seriously. Get our lives ready for His coming."

Mot is making connections he hopes will help his work. "I hope to enrich our networking by the end of the session. And of course, get a bit of the vision of the new team—at least as far as it is related to higher education. And I hope that will help in what we are going to do next," said Mot.

Max takes home a new outlook.

"I think I will have a new perspective on our whole Adventist world, especially how in our Adventist movement all the offices are working together, and I will take with me faith and how the people treat each other, which is really heart-warming around here." ♦



# Equipping Missionaries for Cross-cultural Mission Service

OSCAR OSINDO

**D**o missionaries still go? The answer is a resounding *yes!* Missionaries *still* go. In fact, now more than ever before, missionaries are “*from everywhere to everywhere.*” During the past three years the Institute of World Mission (IWM) has trained more than 400 missionaries from more than 50 countries for service in 60 nations.

## WHO ARE WE?

The Institute of World Mission (IWM) is the missionary training arm of the General Conference Secretariat. We provide training and support to missionaries and contribute to the missiological thinking of the worldwide church.

## MISSIONARY TRAINING

Training missionaries is more than creating mission awareness. In preparing missionaries for effective cross-cultural service, it is vital to equip

them with the knowledge and skills they need to face the challenge of cultural differences, language barriers, and to be culturally sensitive as they prepare to proclaim the gospel in a culture other than their own.

## CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Cultural sensitivity is grounded in biblical principles. The apostle Paul emphasized adapting to different cultures to win people for Christ, stating, “I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some” (1 Cor. 9:22, NIV).

Cultural sensitivity is crucial not just for missionaries going abroad but also in multicultural church contexts. In reaching others, “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with people as one who desired their good. He showed sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’”

## HOW CAN IWM SERVE YOU?

Whether your mission is reaching out to people of other cultures in a foreign land or in your homeland, the Institute of World Mission can help you serve more effectively.

- Attend a Mission Institute (see next section), Re-entry, or other cross-cultural training events. [instituteofworldmission.org](http://instituteofworldmission.org)



Missionary Re-entry seminar in Brazil



Mission Institute in Thailand



Missionary Kid program in Thailand



Mission Institute in Michigan, USA

## Training missionaries is more than creating mission awareness.

- Enroll in an online Passport to Mission class available through Adventist Volunteers: [adventistvolunteers.org](https://adventistvolunteers.org) and VividFaith: [vividfaith.com](https://vividfaith.com).

Additional resources:

- *Passport to Mission*, 5th edition (December 2024, Twenty-fifth Anniversary Edition)
  - *Introduction to Adventist Mission*, by Gorden Doss
- Both books are available on Amazon.com.

### WHAT IS A MISSION INSTITUTE?

A Mission Institute is a three-week cross-cultural training event for missionaries and their families, and anyone interested in gaining a deeper understanding of the missionary call. Participants engage

in meaningful discussions, participate in hands-on activities, and learn from experienced missionaries about the challenges and joys of serving in diverse cultures. For families attending, we offer age-appropriate activities for each member, ensuring everyone can learn and grow together. We believe that when God calls Mom or Dad, He calls the whole family, and we are committed to equipping them in their missionary journey.

Join us in fulfilling the Great Commission with cultural understanding and sensitivity. Together, let's go from everywhere to everywhere! 🌍

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

**Oscar Osindo** is the director of the Institute of World Mission.

# Science With a Higher Purpose

**RONNY NALIN**

**H**ammering a block of granite in the thin air above 4,000 meters (13,120 feet) in the Peruvian Andes. Extracting DNA from refrigerated fish shipped from Lake Tanganyika. Measuring dinosaur claw marks impressed on sandstone layers in the Bolivian Cordillera Oriental. These are some of the unique activities through which scientists seek to fulfill the twofold mission of the Geoscience Research Institute (GRI)—to explore the natural world and share an understanding of nature consistent with the biblical teaching of origins.

## RESEARCH

GRI has engaged in earth history research relevant to a biblical worldview, actively investigating such topics as geochronology, magmatic processes, dinosaur tracks, sedimentary formations, and genetic variability in the context of speciation. Major projects have been conducted in globally significant sites, including the Peruvian Cordillera, Torotoro National Park, Galápagos Islands, and Lake Tanganyika.

Between 2022 and 2025 GRI scientists published numerous peer-reviewed articles, abstracts, and book chapters, disseminating original results within the scientific community. Participation in professional meetings further solidified GRI's presence in the academic sphere.

## EDUCATION

A major achievement in education was the launch in 2023 of a new Certificate in Faith and Science, in collaboration with the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies and the Southern Asia-Pacific Division. GRI also provided regular instruction at the Department of Earth and Biological Sciences (EBS) of Loma Linda University (LLU), and guest lectures or classes at other Adventist institutions of higher learning.

In the aftermath of the COVID pandemic, field-based educational initiatives were resumed with landmark events. Adventist teachers of the North American Division (NAD) explored the geology of Arizona in a GRI-led field conference, and educators of the East-Central Africa Division converged in Tanzania for the first GRI-led field conference on the continent of Africa. GRI's global outreach was enhanced through participation in seminars and conferences which equipped educators, pastors, leaders, and students with new perspectives on faith and science.

## RESOURCES

GRI expanded its repository of educational and research materials. The GRI website ([www.grisda.org](http://www.grisda.org)) saw the launch of a digital museum featuring curated fossil collections, new photo galleries and book reviews, and continued to provide regular compilations of relevant science news.

Audiovisual content contributed to a growing online presence, including episodes of the *Seeking Understanding* film series, a documentary on dinosaur footprints, and short-form science news videos.



GRI scientists engaged in field work. From left to right: Dr. Ben Clausen consulting a geologic map; Dr. Tim Standish studying marine iguanas; Dr. Raúl Esperante next to a dinosaur trackway; Dr. Lance Pompe ready for rock sampling; Dr. Ronny Nalin cleaning an outcrop.





The GRI team providing instruction in the field. Left: at the Grand Canyon (AZ) with teachers from NAD. Right: at the rim of the Ngorongoro Crater (Tanzania) with an international group of church leaders and educators.

These resources were disseminated through GRI's social media channels (Instagram and Facebook: @Geoscienceresearchinstitute) and other church media platforms, such as the Hope Channel.

GRI also contributed to producing, reviewing, and funding projects sponsored by the GC Faith and Science Council (FSC), including the *Long Story Short* videos, *The John 10:10 Project* short videos, and the *Creation Detectives* comic book series.

### MENTORING

Mentorship involved direct supervision of graduate students at LLU's EBS program and engagement with postdoctoral researchers. The institute supported students through research guidance and academic networking, and facilitated their transition to professional and educational roles within the Adventist educational system.

GRI also strengthened its partnerships with Adventist professionals worldwide, hosting visiting scholars, connecting experienced scientists and emerging researchers, and ensuring that dedicated students had access to research opportunities that nourished faith and scientific inquiry.

### CAPACITY BUILDING

GRI's regional outreach was amplified through collaborations with existing GRI branch offices and resource centers, providing them with financial support, scientific and educational consultation, and guidance through leadership transitions. Two new branch offices were recently established in the Euro-Asia Division and West-Central Africa Division.

GRI also played a key role in global church initiatives, including the annual Creation Sabbath celebration ([www.creationsabbath.net](http://www.creationsabbath.net)), and established a close partnership with the new FSC direc-

tor of marketing and promotion. Finally, an intentional effort was made to explore missional opportunities in the territories of the Middle East and North Africa Union Mission, using creation and science as a starting point of connection.

### FUTURE OUTLOOK

Looking ahead, GRI aims to continue pursuing its field-based research projects; enhance access to top-rated laboratory facilities and equipment; and expand its expertise in digital applications for data analysis. GRI will also continue to actively mentor students who feel called to serve God through the study of His creation and collaborate with professionals who can contribute to the institute's mission.

Specific areas of engagement will include organizing field conferences and seminars, developing and revising curricular material, and supporting teaching through dedicated academic modules or programs.

GRI also plans to establish additional branch offices and resource centers, further solidifying its global presence. Continued development of multimedia resources, combined with strategic marketing and use of digital platforms, will broaden GRI's impact.

### COMMITMENT TO MISSION

As we move into the next phase of our journey, GRI remains committed to engaging in meaningful research, expanding our educational reach, and acknowledging God as Creator. In so doing, we seek to honor our mission to explore the natural world while upholding biblical truth. 🌿

**Ronny Nalin**, Ph.D., is director of the Geoscience Research Institute and a general field secretary of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

# SOUTHERN ASIA DIVISION REPORT

*Making Progress With God's Leading*



Baptisms in Ongole, Andhra Pradesh

**T**he Southern Asia Division (SUD) unites three nations: India, Bhutan, and the Maldives.

India, the world's most populous country, with 1.438 billion people, is home to eight major religions, with Hinduism as the dominant faith. Christians make up 2.3 percent of the population. India also boasts vast linguistic diversity, with 19,500 languages and dialects, and 645 identified tribes, plus more than 3,000 unrecognized tribes.

The island nation of Maldives has a population of more than 500,000 people, with Islam as its state religion. It consists of 1,192 coral islands.

Finally, Bhutan is a Buddhist nation with a population of about 800,000.

Christianity's roots in India trace back 2,000 years to the time when Thomas, one of Jesus' disciples, introduced the gospel to southern India. The Adventist message arrived in 1893, first reaching Kolkata and Chennai. Since then the church has established congregations, educational institutions, medical centers, and media networks.

## DATA REPORTS

The Office of Secretariat manages and provides services in five crucial areas: church policy, missions, human relations, administrative operation, and special initiatives.

Statistics	
Unions	7
Sections	39
Conferences	8
Regions	22
Attached fields	2
Total churches	4,598
Total companies	4,785
Total membership <i>(as of 4th quarter 2024)</i>	1,179,867
Total kingdom growth	25,255 (per annum)

The Treasury Department plays a crucial role in managing and stewarding financial resources, promoting transparency, and supporting the church's mission.

1. During fiscal year (FY) 2022-2023, which marked the recovery phase following the COVID-19 crisis, we witnessed a 20 percent growth in tithes and offerings. In the recently concluded FY 2023-2024, we recorded a 9 percent increase in tithes and an impressive 20 percent increase in offerings.

2. We have reached a significant milestone, having received US\$11.87 million (₹1.085 billion INR) in tithes and offerings during FY 2022-2023, and US\$11.98 million (₹1.186 billion INR) in FY 2023-2024.



CFO Report (April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2024)			
Particulars	2021 - 2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Lay tithe	582,907,286	686,099,866	744,862,888
Other tithe	175,516,394	225,065,389	246,484,930
<b>Total tithe</b>	<b>758,423,680</b>	<b>911,165,255</b>	<b>991,347,818</b>
Membership (as of 1st quarter 2025)	1,153,101	1,164,674	1,165,406
Tithe per capita (INR)	<b>658</b>	<b>782</b>	<b>851</b>
Tithe per capita (USD)	<b>8.22</b>	<b>9.78</b>	<b>10.63</b>
Percent increase	17%	20%	9%
Offerings			
Total offerings received	128,169,413	173,722,552	194,456,186
Offerings per capita (INR)	<b>111.15</b>	<b>149.16</b>	<b>166.86</b>
Offerings per capita (USD)	<b>1.39</b>	<b>1.86</b>	<b>2.09</b>
Percent increase	14.32%	35.54%	11.93%
Offerings on tithe percent	17%	19%	20%
Total tithes and offerings	886,593,093	1,084,887,806	1,185,804,004

3. For FY 2023-2024 the tithe per capita stands at US\$10.63 (₹852.00 INR), while offerings per capita amount to US\$2.09 (₹166.86 INR).

## MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION

While we officially launched Impact 2025 in 2024, we have already made remarkable progress:

Our planned goal is to conduct evangelistic efforts in 3,000 physical locations. Additionally, our media ministry is targeting 1,000 locations, with a combined baptismal goal of 30,000 by May 2025. More than 2,000 evangelistic meetings have been conducted as of December 2024, with 28,365 baptisms recorded thus far. The remaining meetings are expected to surpass the planned goal by May 2025.

Achievements	
Evangelistic meetings	3,400
Revival meetings	2,788
Temperance rally	168
Health seminar	48
Baptisms	28,365
New churches built	82
New churches planted	628
Pastors trained	248
Lay member trained	170
Cell phone evangelism	140
Bible conferences held	48

The I Will Go and TMI plans outline 10 key objectives across mission, spiritual growth, and

leadership, using media, evangelism, education, health, publishing, and outreach to share the three angels' messages. We have implemented these in our territory and initiated them at all levels of our institutions.

Daily worship and Bible readings are transforming lives, promoting a place for God in every heart and home. Trainings are being provided to department directors, elders, youth, and laypeople. The General Conference's 777 initiative has inspired a spiritual awakening and unity. Members and institutions are actively adhering to the 777 prayer times and structured Bible reading plans printed and distributed.

## REGIONAL REPORTS

Our mission in the East Himalayan region began in 1997 and was officially organized in 2009. It now has 19 churches, 12 church buildings, 32 small groups, and 934 members, and is served by two ordained pastors, three pastoral workers, and 17 volunteers.

The mission in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands region continues to grow with three churches, five companies, and 428 members. The work includes a kindergarten school as part of the education ministry, and recently two Bible workers have opened a new mission frontier in the remote Little Andaman region.

House churches have reached unentered areas where there are no churches because of building cost barriers. Through the Holy Spirit, conversions have occurred, and there are now 848 house churches.





India houses numerous refugees, especially from Myanmar. Our church caters to their emotional and spiritual needs. The Delhi metropolitan area has a church in Sitapuri for Burmese refugees. Additionally, they are accommodated in our various institutions.

We have a limited Adventist presence in the Maldives, mostly among migrants. Together with the South Tamil Conference and Adventist World Radio (AWR), the SUD is working to establish house churches in this territory.

The Silk Route initiative targets Bhutan, Bangladesh, Kashmir, and Leh-Ladakh—challenging yet opportunity-rich areas where AWR and partners are advancing the mission through media and focused outreach.

DEPARTMENTAL ACTIVITIES

Department Activities (2022-2025)									
Sl. No	Department	Training	Council	Meeting/ Programs	Work Shop/ Semi- nar	Retreat	Virtual Meet- ing	Camp	WOP
1	Youth	20	11	18	12	7	35	3	7
2	Women's	3,117	393	3,934	1,050	2,040	184	-	22
3	Shepherdess	29	48	84	23	10	51	11	7
4	Communication	20	39	32	12	-	29	-	-
5	Children's	1,409	392	2,252	1,357	164	713	82	8,883
6	Chaplaincy	21	28	15	16	2	26	1	-
7	Special Ministries	650	320	1,470	410	-	1,750	-	-
8	Spirit of Prophecy	450	280	1,250	380	-	1,450	-	-
9	Health	30	30	25	10	10	200	1	-
10	SSPM	1,776	208	1,464	5,968	32	6,848	20	7,898

**Sabbath School.** Through Sabbath School our mission is to foster fellowship, outreach, and mission-minded Bible study. A division-wide advisory in Pune gathered more than 1,800 delegates, with similar sessions held at various organizational levels. Sabbath School books were

printed in major Indian languages and distributed to members. Sidewalk evangelism has been implemented across all unions, with hundreds of training programs conducted; members and pastors actively participating; and most unions with appointed individuals to oversee these efforts.

**Stewardship.** More than 1,200 church members have received training for stewardship, support local and global missions, and emphasize transparency and accountability, leading to an increase in tithe and offerings emittance.

**Youth Ministries.** The annual youth Week of Prayer (WOP) is held in Adventist institutions. The Global Youth Day initiative encourages youth involvement in community outreach, including visits to hospitals, orphanages, and destitute homes, also distributing food, medicine, and school supplies. More than 2,500 delegates participated in the youth congress that was held in Vyara, Gujarat.

**Children's Ministries.** Our mission is to make disciples of children up to age 14 by equipping churches, families, and caregivers with resources and training to help nurture a lifelong relationship with Jesus. An advisory was held in Hapur, along with training sessions conducted at various levels.

**Women's Ministries.** We empower women to fulfill God's mission through service and sharing His Word. Since 2022, 107 students have graduated, and 48 women's congresses offered training across unions and conferences. A division-wide advisory was held at Pune. More than 1,500 delegates attended the advisory.



New church building construction in Arunachal Pradesh



House church in Chhattisgarh

**Global Mission.** Global mission is the front line of our division outreach. With a special focus on the 10/40 window, we seek to reach urban and suburban areas through targeted evangelism. Currently 290 volunteers are engaged in 300 mission projects across the SUD, including eight newly launched city initiatives through three centers of influence.

**Special Ministries.** Sixteen supporting ministries operate in the SUD, with more than 2,280 volunteers. These are front-line evangelists who work to enter in unentered territories.

**Public Campus Ministries.** Public campus ministry (PCM) aims to ground young people in Adventist truth and empower them to share Jesus on their non-Adventist campuses. Five congresses across the SUD gathered more than 1,500 delegates.

**Adventist Child Care.** Since 2005 Adventist Child India has supported more than 1,400 students in 34 schools across 16 states in India. The program assists children from poor Adventist families, nurturing them for mission-focused lives.

**Adventist Possibilities Ministries.** We focus on all seven areas of possibilities ministry: bereavement for spousal loss; blind and low vision; caregiver support; physical immobility; deaf and hard of hearing; mental health; and orphans and vulnerable children. This ministry operates two special schools and four orphanages.

**Communication Department.** Our mission includes public relations, media outreach, digital efforts, and internal church communication. A division-wide advisory was conducted via Zoom, and 121 training sessions were held at various levels during the past three years.

**Adventist Media Center.** Adventist Media Center (AMC) has been sharing the gospel across India for more than 75 years through FM, shortwave, and social media. Its flagship production center is the Adventist Media Center in Pune.

**Adventist World Radio.** Adventist World Radio (AWR) focuses on broadcasting, evangelism, and publishing, with eight regional studios in India and

**Daily worship and Bible readings are transforming lives, promoting a place for God in every heart and home.**

29 internet studios in tribal languages, supported by 75-plus missionaries for follow-up work.

**Center for Digital Evangelism.** AWR has established two Centers for Digital Evangelism (CDE) in India. These are spiritual call centers where digital missionaries use digital tools to nurture people online on Bible truths. AWR plans to expand by establishing more centers across unions within the SUD.

**Hope Channel India.** Hope Channel India is a satellite channel with 22 YouTube channels producing programs in 25 different languages in India.

**Oriental Watchman Publishing House.** The publishing house celebrated 100 years of service on November 7, 2024. During the past three years it has produced and distributed more than 1 million missionary books, educational materials, health literature, and Spirit of Prophecy writings in more than 15 languages. In 2023 alone 151,350 copies of *The Great Controversy* were distributed.

**Education Department.** Our aim is to empower students for wholistic development in physical, mental, social, and spiritual growth.

Educational Program	
Schools	297
Teachers	10,551
Students	2,10140
Colleges	6
College of Nursing	4
Universities	2

**Medical Educational Trust Association Surat of Seventh- day Adventists (METAS).** METAS operates two day schools, three boarding schools, one management college, four nursing schools,



Spicer Adventist University graduation

three nursing colleges, one multidisciplinary university, and three hospitals. Annually, more than 300 nursing professionals graduate. METAS has empowered more than 800 health professionals since the 1920s.

**Medical Trust.** Our mission is to provide health care and improve well-being in underserved areas. We operate 10 hospitals and one nursing college, supported by dedicated doctors and nurses.

**Spicer Adventist University (SAU).** SAU is a pioneering institution that has graduated 403 pastors and 216 teachers in the past five years, offering 27 courses in business, science, and theology. In 2022 it launched its Doctor of Ministry program.

**Maranatha India.** The contributions of Maranatha India include: 2,010 churches, nine elementary education centers, 233 tsunami relief houses, 1,064 water wells, 147 toilets, and 42 school campuses with 233 buildings and 408 classrooms.

**ADRA India.** ADRA India reached 1.92 million people through 26 projects in health, livelihood, education, protection, and humanitarian response, with a 53 percent increase in project volume and a 24 percent rise in fund utilization per beneficiary.

**Future Plans.** Plans in the Southern Asia Division include the following:

- Conduct 50 evangelistic meetings in metro cities.

- Establish 50 new churches in unentered territories.
- Build 100 churches over the next five years.
- Reach 1,000 villages.
- Build centers of influence in Delhi and the Maldives.
- Organize youth leadership seminars in key cities.
- Build media centers in Ranchi, Trivandrum, Bangalore, and Hyderabad, and launch a Hindi satellite channel.
- Establish an arts and sciences college and a medical hospital in Southeast India Union.
- Establish AWR's CDE at Spicer Adventist University.

### IN CONCLUSION

We express our gratitude to General Conference president Ted Wilson for his unwavering dedication and support. We also appreciate the role of Secretariat for their diligent recordkeeping, the Treasury for their financial backing, and the departmental directors for their contributions. Special thanks is awarded to supportive ministries, generous donors, pastors, leaders, and volunteers who continue to support the mission.

As we look ahead, let us work together with urgency, assured that Christ's return is hastened through united efforts. Maranatha! 🕊





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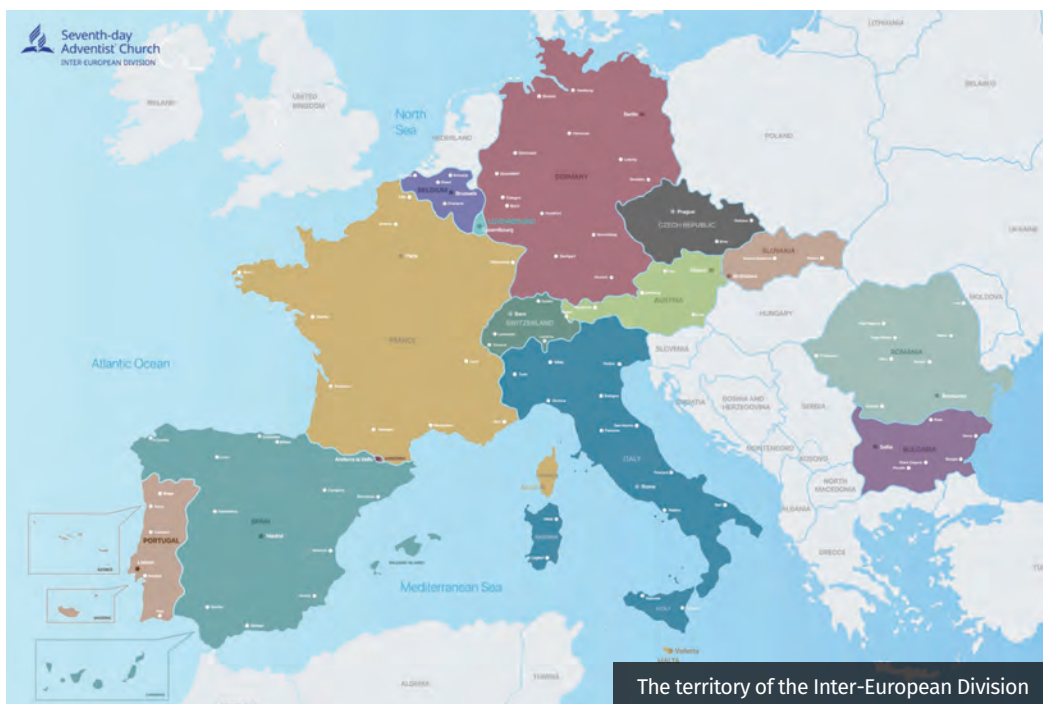


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# INTER-EUROPEAN DIVISION REPORT

*150 Years in Mission*



## A DIVERSE AND DYNAMIC DIVISION

The Seventh-day Adventist Church's Inter-European Division (EUD) is a vibrant and multicultural field of the global Adventist movement. With headquarters in Bern, Switzerland, the EUD oversees the work of the church in 20 central, western, and southern European countries: Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, France, Germany, Gibraltar, the Holy See, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Spain, and Switzerland, with a combined population of more than 345 million.



Inter-European  
Division website

With approximately 185,000 baptized members who worship in 2,519 churches and 563 companies, the division is a breathtaking linguistic and cultural mosaic, administered by six union conferences and five unions of churches to provide contextualized mission and leadership at the local level.

The division and its unions support a variety of institutions, including 11 publishing houses, 8 media centers, 27 care institutions, and 121 educational institutions, from kindergartens to universities. Among those, directly managed by the division, are Friedensau University in Germany, Campus Adventiste du Salève in France, Clinique La Lignière in Switzerland, Safeliz Publishing House in Spain, and Hope Media Europe in Germany. This network provides the stage for extensive evangelism, education, health, and communication programs that promote the church's mission across the continent.

## A LEGACY IN HISTORY: 150 YEARS OF MISSIONING IN EUROPE

The roots of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Europe date back to the nineteenth century. The Adventist message first reached the continent through the efforts of missionary Michael B. Czechowski, a Polish Catholic priest who con-



verted to Adventism and carried the gospel to Switzerland in the 1860s.

By 1874 John N. Andrews, the first missionary to be sent by the General Conference, had arrived in Switzerland and laid a firm foundation for institution building and evangelism. The early years were marked by intensive mission work—despite governmental pressure and pressure from state, majority churches. Next developed were the primary institutions, such as publishing houses and schools, followed by the expansion of health ministries.

Over time the European Adventist Church has endured wars, revolutions, religious persecution, and very often aggressive laicism. With each challenge, however, the church simply kept moving forward and sharing the biblical message of care for others and hope in Christ.

Celebrating 150 years of Adventist work in Europe, the EUD is still a reflection of the pioneering spirits of those early missionaries, but with the cultural sensitivities and spiritual requirements of modern European society.

## STRATEGIC VISION 2022–2025: “I WILL GO—REACH THE WORLD”

The Inter-European Division’s strategic plan, in alignment with the General Conference plan “I Will Go,” articulates a contextualized and clear vision and mission. The strategy revolves around four foundational areas of emphasis:

### a. Growth in the Spirit: “Reach Up to God.”

This emphasis stimulates individual, family, and corporate spiritual growth. It challenges greater participation in Bible study, prayer, and worship—leading to dynamic spiritual lives that impact others.

**b. Growth in Relationships: “Reach In With God.”** A prime goal is creating a positive church climate, in which building strong relational connections, supporting emotional well-being, and maintaining a culture of service and compassion for each other are encouraged in congregations.

### c. Growth in Mission: “Reach Out With God.”

This phase seeks to energize mission as lifestyle. The plan emphasizes city outreach, church planting, digital mission, and creative evangelism, with specific attention to the involvement of young people and lay members. Innovative plans, such as special union mission projects, starting urban centers of influence, and digital projects, are the centerpieces of this strategy.

**d. Leadership Growth: “Reach Beyond With God.”** Leadership development is included in sustainable mission. The EUD invests in pastor and lay leader training to be visionary, resilient, and mission-oriented—equipping them to lead the church in a plural, often secular, environment.

The plan also demands interdepartmental collaboration and localization. Resources and materials are developed in consultation with union leaders to meet the expressed needs of local fields, especially in retention, discipleship, and public outreach.





## INTER-EUROPEAN DIVISION REPORT CONTINUED

### MAIN ACTIVITIES AND MISSION ENTERPRISES

From 2022 to 2025 the Inter-European Division developed a series of major ventures, such as evangelism, media, education, health, youth, and engagement with society. Some of the main highlights are given below.

#### 1. Evangelism and Church Development

Despite the growing secularism in Europe, the Inter-European Division remains dedicated to advancing mission outreach. The division is presently supporting 88 mission-initiated projects in its field, including 24 active Global Mission projects and 41 union-level special mission projects, among others.

A foundation of this approach is the establishment of urban centers of influence—already in eight locations—which are multifunctional community centers providing services such as health education, language instruction, and Bible study. These centers meet local needs, serving as both service centers and spiritual portals.

The His Hands initiatives, which have a presence in eight regions, are community-based volunteer initiatives that empower church members to serve their neighbors through acts of service and social care. These initiatives have established strong bridges of trust between the church and the broader community, often leading to open doors for spiritual conversations and Bible studies.

Five Media Projects for Mission further amplify outreach by utilizing contemporary platforms to

spread hope on digital and broadcasting media.

This wholistic strategy manifests the EUD's strategic intent of weaving mission into everyday life and encountering people where they are—physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Whether through humanitarianism, education, urban outreach, or digital evangelism, the EUD continues to prioritize the announcement of the gospel in a pluralist Europe, encouraging members and institutions to be visionary, adaptive, and firmly based in Christ's mission of love and transformation.

#### 2. Media Mission and Digital Discipleship

Being aware of the power of change that digital platforms hold, the EUD places a high priority on media as a mission tool to access populations who might never set foot inside a church. Through collaborations with Hope Media Europe and eight local centers, the church develops content that engages contemporary digital culture.

One of the key areas of this strategy is GAI<sup>n</sup> Europe, which has become a center for media practitioners, communication directors, personal ministries coordinators, publishing leaders, youth leaders, and digital missionaries. GAI<sup>n</sup> Europe develops partnering that enables leaders to use new technology and media resources for mission.

The past few years have seen GAI<sup>n</sup> Europe particularly focus on preparing young influencers for Jesus—empowering them to be digital disciples who leverage their platforms to share faith, hope, and compassion. The events include workshops, idea labs, and networking that connect creatives with mission-oriented projects. The growth from 186 participants in Bucharest (2022) to 295 in Budva (2024) reveals the increase of interest and involvement of ministries from local fields, coming from EUD and TED.

The Global Media Collaborative Initiative, former Media Network Project, now under the leadership and support of the General Conference, is a cooperative venture started by EUD, TED, and Hope Media Europe in 2016 that gathers a growing network of divisions and media centers from around the world



The Inter-European Division headquarters in Bern, Switzerland

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in missionary efforts. From “Fathers” to “Purpose,” the latest production project, a large group of media materials were released on several topics that related to a broad audience around the world.

### **3. Adventist Education: Shaping Minds, Shaping Mission**

Education remains a mainstay of the EUD mandate, with 121 Adventist schools—83 kindergartens and primary schools, 28 secondary schools, 3 worker training schools, and 7 universities. These schools are not institutions of academic learning alone—they are mission centers, closely integrated into their local churches and communities.

In a region in which public education is free and often of high quality, Adventist schools offer something uniquely valuable: an open, warm community in which students and teachers alike are encouraged to encounter Jesus. This solid spiritual foundation combined with academic intensity has made many of these schools hubs of influence. Increasing numbers of schools are being planted in cities where mission potential is greatest.

A fine illustration is the one in Bucharest, Romania, where the old “Labyrinth” church was renovated into a new school. Its hall of celebration became the Sabbath place of worship for the local church, symbolizing the melding of education and redemption.

### **4. Health Ministries**

Health provides a powerful door of opportunity for mission in secular cultures. The division’s 27 institutions of care—hospital, clinics, lifestyle centers—give Christ-centered care while being centers of influence within their communities.

Lifestyle education and preventive health are promoted through wellness programs, expos, and seminars by the EUD. The wholistic health message resonates strongly with European people, offering a modern and compassionate witness to the Adventist faith.

Clinique La Lignière in Switzerland, which has served for more than 115 years, is a classic example of this mission. It has evolved into an integrated institution that addresses biological,

psychological, social, and spiritual needs. Its recent addition in Lausanne is a testament to its emphasis on wholistic healing, and the division’s investment on its development.

Waldfriede Hospital in Berlin is also centered on dignity, personal responsibility, and spiritual care. Patients are provided with a philosophy of healthy living and redemptive healing that is grounded in a relationship with God.

Training and empowerment of Adventist health workers have been at the forefront. Meetings such as the Congress on Lifestyle Centers in Coimbra, Portugal, had more than 220 attendees from around the world, which indicates just how much the EUD’s health outreach model fascinates individuals everywhere, opening opportunities for mission.

### **5. Involvement With Society and Lines of Witnessing**

Engagement with society is a pillar of the EUD’s witnessing. With the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), the church has responded rapidly to crises of humanity—most recently the war in Ukraine. Across the division, local churches, schools, and health centers joined forces with ADRA to offer shelter to refugees, distribute aid, and bring hope. Youth and seniors volunteered, making churches centers of compassion and practical ministry.

The division expresses its commitment to religious freedom with a strong support for PARL initiatives. Freedom of conscience is promoted by the division in conjunction with the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty (AIDLR). Key activities comprise international forums, e.g., the 2023 AIDLR symposium on freedom of religious expression, with a presence of more than 80 international experts, and the “Faith for Rights” forum in association with the United Nations and University of Coimbra, in 2024.

Upon witnessing shifting societal norms, the church also responds to challenges to biblical values in an unmistakably gracious fashion. An instance is the 2024 Biblical Human Sexuality Conference in

## INTER-EUROPEAN DIVISION REPORT CONTINUED



The 2023 Pathfinder camporee took place in Friedensau, Germany.

Bulgaria's city of Plovdiv, when church leaders reaffirmed biblical principles and emphasized unconditional love. Such initiatives reinforce the EUD's determination to be voice of Bible principles and conscience, as well as doers of healing and justice in an increasingly complex world.

### 6. Youth Ministries and Pathfinders

In a continent undergoing demographic aging, the passion and dedication of young people are rays of hope. With infectious energy and enthusiasm for mission, youth are remodeling the Adventist Church's influence in Europe through means of innovative projects and vigorous missionary engagement.

During the past five decades the EUD Youth Department has focused on preparing the youth to serve, developing their relationship with God and laying foundations on solid relationships so that they lay down foundation stones for society-impacting projects.

A notable one is AMiCUS Romania, with an active membership of more than 1,000 students and professionals in 13 university centers. This ministry has been a volunteerism, self-improvement, and civic activities advocate that brings about hope and change in communities. In Germany "1 Year for Jesus" is a creative discipleship experience in which young individuals serve a year doing missionary and community service work. It prepares them for lifetime mission and leaves a lasting social legacy. NEXT MEET, from

Spain, responds to real needs within communities through creative outreach, having a lasting influence in communities abroad.

The 2023 EUD Pathfinder Camporee in Friedensau, Germany, brought together more than 2,700 teenagers from 14 countries, with worship, Bible study, intercultural dialogue, and character building. It was a threshold event, empowering teenagers to own their faith and mission.

### MISSION IN A CHANGING EUROPE

The Inter-European Division is at the crossroads of history and innovation as we commemorate 150 years of mission. We are preserving our past based on personal and institutional missionary efforts while boldly embracing the challenges of the day—secularism, diversity, and digitalization.

Guided by its vision and fueled by the Holy Spirit, the EUD remains a living witness to the love of God in Europe. Whether preaching, healing, teaching, or ministering, the division is steadfastly committed to its mission: declaring the abiding gospel with clarity, compassion, and hope, aspiring to fulfill its proclamation "to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people" (Rev. 14:6).

Indeed, the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Europe is by no means complete. Through faith and perseverance the Inter-European Division goes forward—rooted in the past, attuned to the present, and reaching toward eternity. ■





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# Fifth Business Meeting

## SESSION ACTIONS

62nd General Conference Session, St Louis, Missouri, July 6, 2025, 2:00 p.m.

### GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSIONS - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease all debate and proceed immediately to voting.

### GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSIONS - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: As it is now taking more than a year in some places to apply for and receive a visa to travel to the United States, this item is being recommended to give divisions and their delegates more time to prepare.

VOTED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Constitution

Article V—General Conference Sessions, to read as follows:

#### ARTICLE V—GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSIONS

Sec. 1. The General Conference shall hold quinquennial sessions [See 207-25GSA]

Sec. 2. The General Conference Executive Committee may call special - No change

Sec. 3. At least one-third of the total delegates authorized hereinafter - No change

Sec. 4. Generally, regular or specially called General Conference Sessions - No change

Sec. 5. The election to any office enumerated in Article VI, Sec. 1. and all - No change

Sec. 6. Minutes of the General Conference Session shall be approved at - No change

Sec. 7. The delegates to a General Conference Session shall be designated - No change

### NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT #2

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

[General Conference](#)

Secretary: Richard E McEdward

### NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT #3

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

[General Conference](#)

Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer: Paul H Douglas

### NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT #4

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

[General Conference](#)

General Vice Presidents:

Audrey E Andersson

Leonard A Johnson

Thomas L Lemon

Pierre E Omeler

Robert Osei-Bonsu

Saw Samuel

Artur A Stele



La Melodia Chorale sings to open the Sunday evening meeting. DAVID B. SHERWIN



Sec. 8. Regular delegates shall represent the General Conference's member - No change

Sec. 9. Regular delegates shall be allotted on the following - No change

Sec. 10. Delegates at-large shall represent the General Conference - No change

Sec. 11. Division administrations shall consult with unions to ensure - No change

Sec. 12. Credentials to sessions shall be issued by the General Conference - No change

Sec. 13. Calculations for all delegate allotments, as provided for in this article, shall be based upon:

The membership as of December 31 of the ~~second~~ third year preceding the General Conference Session.

The number of denominational entities eligible for inclusion in determining quotas and which are in existence as of December 31 of the ~~second~~ third year preceding the General Conference Session.

Sec. 14. Parliamentary Authority: The parliamentary authority pertaining - No change

#### **TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATION - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT**

VOTED, To refer the motion, Territorial Administration - Constitution and Bylaws Amendment, to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

#### **APPROPRIATIONS - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT**

VOTED, To table the motion, Appropriations - Constitution and Bylaws Amendment.

#### **GENERAL CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT**

Upon the decision of the chair, the request to refer the item, General Conference Executive Committee - Constitution and Bylaws Amendment, back to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, was accepted.

#### **GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSIONS - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT**

RATIONALE: *Adventist World* magazine will be changed to a rebranded version of *Adventist Review* magazine beginning with the August 2025 edition.

VOTED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Constitution

Article V—General Conference Sessions, to read as follows:

##### **ARTICLE V—GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSIONS**

Sec. 1. The General Conference shall hold quinquennial sessions at such time and place as the General Conference Executive Committee shall designate and announce by a notice published in the *Adventist Review* or *Adventist World* or other publications voted by the General Conference Executive Committee in three consecutive months beginning at least four months before the date for the opening of the Session. In case special world conditions make it imperative to postpone the calling of the Session, the General Conference Executive Committee, in regular or special council, shall have authority to make such postponement, not to exceed two years, giving notice to all constituent organizations. In the event that the General Conference Executive Committee exercises its authority to postpone a Session, it shall also have the authority to set the subsequent regular Session at such time and place as it shall see fit, not to exceed five calendar years from the date the postponed Session was convened.

Sec. 2. The General Conference Executive Committee may call special - No change

Sec. 3. At least one-third of the total delegates authorized hereinafter - No change

Sec. 4. Generally, regular or specially called General Conference Sessions - No change

Sec. 5. The election to any office enumerated in Article VI, Sec. 1. and all - No change

Sec. 6. Minutes of the General Conference Session shall be approved at - No change

Sec. 7. The delegates to a General Conference Session shall be designated - No change

Sec. 8. Regular delegates shall represent the General Conference's member - No change

Sec. 9. Regular delegates shall be allotted on the following - No change

Sec. 10. Delegates at-large shall represent the General Conference - No change

Sec. 11. Division administrations shall consult with unions to ensure - No change

Sec. 12. Credentials to sessions shall be issued by the General Conference - No change

Sec. 13. Calculations for all delegate allotments, as provided for in this [See 200-25GS]

Sec. 14. Parliamentary Authority: The parliamentary authority pertaining - No change

#### **GENERAL CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT**

RATIONALE: *Adventist World* magazine will be changed to a rebranded version of *Adventist Review* magazine beginning with the August 2025 edition.

VOTED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Constitution

Article VIII—General Conference Executive Committee, to read as follows:

##### **ARTICLE VIII—GENERAL CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Sec. 1. The Executive Committee of the General Conference shall consist of:

Ex Officio Members—1) Those elected as provided for - No change

2) Presidents of unions - No change

3) The president-executive director - No change

4) The editor of each of the following publications: *Adventist Review*, *Adventist World*, *Adventist Review*, *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, *Ministry*.

5) The director of each of the - No change

6) The president and board chair of Ellen G White Estate.

b. Elected Members - No change

Sec 2. Minutes of the General Conference - No change

#### **ADVENTIST REVIEW MINISTRIES—ENTITY NAME CHANGE**

VOTED, To change the name of the entity Adventist Review Ministries to Adventist Review.

#### **MAKING CHANGES (WHY A CHURCH MANUAL) - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT**

VOTED, To amend, Making Changes (Why a Church Manual) - Church Manual Amendment by adding "may" prior to "prepare a Supplement" on line 23 as follows:

In 1948, recognizing that local conditions sometimes call for special actions, the General Conference Executive Committee voted that "each division, including the North American Division of the world field, prepare each division of the world field may "prepare a 'Supplement' to the new Church Manual not in any



Every morning devotional ends with personal and group prayer time. CHRISTINA COLLARD

way modifying it but containing such additional matter as is applicable to the conditions and circumstances prevailing in the division; the manuscripts for these Supplements to be submitted to the General Conference Committee for endorsement before being printed.”—*Autumn Council Actions*, 1948, p. 19.

#### **SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT**

**RATIONALE:** This amendment restates who is generally appointed as secretary of the school board as it is earlier explained on page 98 of the *Church Manual* under the section, Church School Board.

**VOTED,** To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 11, Services and Other Meetings, page 139, School Board Meetings, to read as follows:

School Board Meetings

The church school is usually supervised by a church school board. The church elects a chairperson to preside over meetings and a secretary to keep records of meetings and actions. The principal of the school generally is appointed secretary of the board. This board should meet at regular times. Special meetings may be called by the chairperson. Some churches prefer to have the church board, or a subcommittee of the church board, also serve as the school board. (See also pp. 97-98.)

#### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE AND THE ELECTION PROCESS - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT**

**VOTED,** To not table the motion, Nominating Committee and the Election Process - *Church Manual* Amendment.

#### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE AND THE ELECTION PROCESS - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT**

**VOTED,** To cease debate and vote on the motion to amend the

item, Nominating Committee and the Election Process - *Church Manual* Amendment.

#### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE AND THE ELECTION PROCESS - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT**

**VOTED,** To not amend the motion, Nominating Committee and the Election Process - *Church Manual* Amendment, by removing the additions on page 51, lines 2-5.

#### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE AND THE ELECTION PROCESS - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT**

**VOTED,** To cease debate and vote on the item, Nominating Committee and the Election Process - *Church Manual* Amendment.

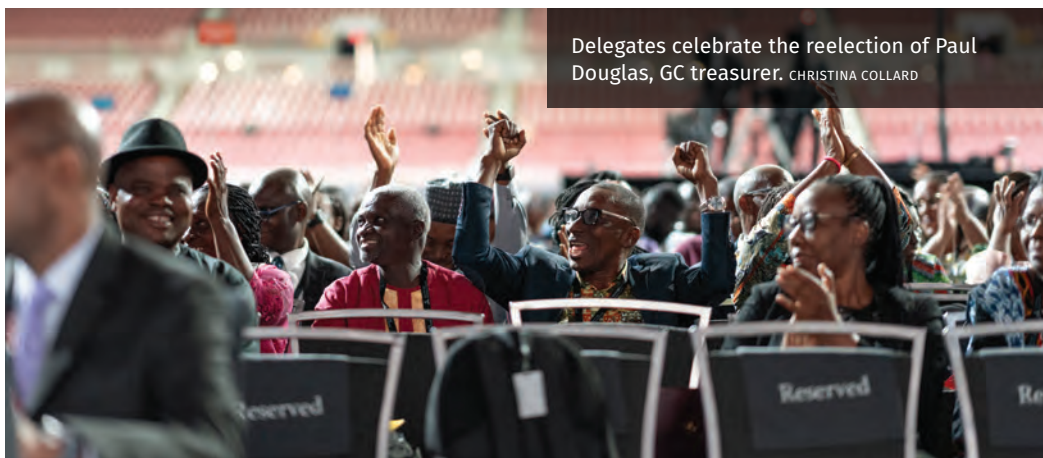
#### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE AND THE ELECTION PROCESS - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT**

**RATIONALE:** This amendment clarifies that the nominating committee recommends names to the church and is not responsible to elect individuals to serve. It also specifies that the pastor/chair of the nominating committee and treasurer help determine the eligibility of nominees to hold church office.

**VOTED,** To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 10, Elections, pages 116-120, Nominating Committee and the Election Process, to read as follows:

Nominating Committee and the Election Process

Officers are elected every one or two years (See p. 77.) through an appointed nominating committee. In exceptional circumstances, and in consultation with the conference, the term of office may be extended an additional year. This committee brings its report to the church, which then votes on the names presented. This procedure enables the church to give careful study to each



Delegates celebrate the reelection of Paul Douglas, GC treasurer. CHRISTINA COLLARD

name prior to election and avoids the competitive element that may arise when nominations are made from the floor.

The nominating committee shall study the needs of the church and inquire into the fitness of members to serve in the different offices. This is another reason officers shall not be nominated from the floor or by general ballot.

The church may decide based on its needs that it would be best served with a standing nominating committee. As such, it may appoint such a committee which would function year-round to make nominations for recommend to the church names to fill vacancies or to fill regular positions identified in the *Church Manual*.

The size of the nominating committee will range from five members in a small church to a larger number in a large church. The number to be chosen is left to the discretion of each church and should be studied by the board. A suitable recommendation then will be brought to the church, using a minimum of time in the Sabbath worship hour.

Quorum—The quorum for the nominating committee may be determined - No change

When and How the Nominating Committee Is Appointed—The nominating - No change

How the Process Works—The steps of the nominating process - No change

Who Should Be Members of the Nominating Committee—Only members - No change

Work of the Nominating Committee—The chairperson should call a meeting of the committee as soon as possible after its election. With earnest prayer the committee should begin preparing a list of nominees for all offices. Nominees must be members in regular standing of the church making the appointments. The returning of a faithful tithe is a prerequisite for holding church office. The pastor or chair of the nominating committee shall work with the treasurer to develop a process by which only members eligible to hold office are nominated. This should be done in such a way that maintains as much confidentiality as possible. The list of nominees will be presented to the church at a Sabbath service or at a specially called business meeting. In making their selections, the committee may counsel with others who are well informed. This committee does not nominate either the pastor or the assistant pastor(s), who are appointed by the conference.

The list of nominees will be presented to the church at a Sabbath service or at a specially called business meeting. In making their selections, the committee may counsel with others who are well informed. This committee does not nominate either

the pastor or the assistant pastor(s), who are appointed by the conference.

The list of officers to be considered by the nominating committee may vary with size of membership. A larger church may determine it needs more officers. A smaller church may have fewer. The committee deals with all leadership positions except Sabbath School teachers, who are recommended by the Sabbath School council and approved by the board. See Notes, #1, pp. 184-185, for a list of possible officers.

Nominating Committee to Get Consent of Prospective Officers—Having - No change

Members May Appear Before the Nominating Committee—Members - No change

Nominating Committee Discussions Are Confidential—All inquiries - No change

Reporting to the Church—The nominating committee's report is presented - No change

Objections to the Report of the Nominating Committee—Members may - No change

Filling Vacancies Between Elections—If an office of the church becomes - No change

Geoffrey G Mbwana, Chair

Claude J Richli, Secretary

Hensley M Mooroooven, Actions Editor

Nichole N Miles, Recording Secretary

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT #5

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

General Conference

Undertreasurer: J Raymond Wahlen II

Associate Treasurers: Timothy H Aka

Sabrina C DeSouza

German A Lust

Gideon M Mutero

Josue Pierre

Richard T Stephenson



# Sixth Business Meeting

## SESSION ACTIONS

62nd General Conference Session, St Louis, Missouri, July 7, 2025, 9:30 a.m.

### MEMBERSHIP RECORD - CHURCH MANUAL ADDITION

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the motion to amend the item, Membership Record - *Church Manual* Addition.

### MEMBERSHIP RECORD - CHURCH MANUAL ADDITION

VOTED, To not amend the motion, Membership Record - *Church Manual* Addition, by removing "and the members may be removed by a vote of the church" from lines 24 and 25 on page 53.

### MEMBERSHIP RECORD - CHURCH MANUAL ADDITION

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the item, Membership Record - *Church Manual* Addition.

### MEMBERSHIP RECORD - CHURCH MANUAL ADDITION

**RATIONALE:** This amendment creates a new section regarding the Membership Record that is separate from the section on Transferring Members (see 406-25GSb) and provides more detail on the need for constant redemptive membership review.

VOTED, To add a new section, Membership Record, to the *Church Manual*, Chapter 7, Membership, following Transferring Members, on page 61, to read as follows:

Membership Record

Membership Record—The church should have one current, regularly updated membership record. Names are added or removed only on the vote of the church, at death, or at the member's request. (See p. 87.) Membership records are subject to review by the conference of which the local congregation is a constituent. This rule, which also applies to every entity or level of the organization, provides the maximum privacy of members' personal information and shall comply with legal requirements. (See pp. 87-88.)

Multiple Membership Records—Where it emerges that a church member's membership record is held at more than one church, the membership record at the local church where the record is most recent will be regarded as the current membership, and any other membership record of that church member will be removed by vote of the relevant church as an adjustment out. This is only to deal with a situation where an additional membership record has inadvertently been recorded; no member is to lose his or her current membership in this way. If a person has been a member of their local church, but their membership record had inadvertently not been recorded, that person can, by vote of the church, be registered as a member as an adjustment in.

Membership in the Conference Church—Isolated members should unite with the conference church, which is a body organized for the benefit of believers who otherwise would be without church privileges. Aged and infirmed members who live near a church and conference officers and other employees, including pastors, should be members of a local church, not the conference church.

The conference president is the presiding elder of the conference church, and the work normally carried by the clerk and the treasurer is handled by the conference secretary and treasurer. Since the church has no board, all business normally conducted by a local church board is conducted by the conference executive committee, which also appoints delegates from the conference church to the conference session.

Redemptive Membership Review—Jesus called His Church to fulfill the Great Commission to make disciples. With this goal in view, local churches should aim to create a warm and caring environment for spiritual growth and to encourage all ministries

of the church to be united in making mature and faithful disciples.

A healthy church develops a nurturing plan that equips every member to be involved in disciple-making using their talents and spiritual gifts. In addition, it should create a strategy to retain and reclaim former and inactive members through (1) a regular redemptive membership review process and (2) reclaiming ministries.

Redemptive membership review intends to improve pastoral care based on the foundation of accurate membership records. Nevertheless, it must have a redemptive purpose of seeing people rather than numbers. Updating the records should be motivated by the goal of being more effective in pastoral care and reaching the lost.

In the Bible we find the words, "[N]ot forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching" (Heb. 10:25). There is great need to seek for those who are far away. Ellen G. White says, "If the lost sheep is not brought back to the fold, it wanders until it perishes. And many souls go down to ruin for want of a hand stretched out to save" (COL 191). It is a most needed ministry to review the membership records and to approach this exercise in a Christ-like redemptive way.

In the unfortunate situation that members may still be missing after every effort has been made to locate them and welcome them back into fellowship, the church may certify that it has tried without success to locate the members, and the members may be removed by a vote of the church. The clerk should record in the membership record: "Location unknown. Voted to designate as missing" (See pp. 71-72.)

Resources—For a brief description of the redemptive membership review process, see Notes, #1, p. 179.

### TRANSFERRING MEMBERS - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the motion to amend the item, Transferring Members - *Church Manual* Committee.

### TRANSFERRING MEMBERS - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

VOTED, To not amend the motion, Transferring Members - *Church Manual* Amendment, on page 54, lines 33-36 as follows:

Careful consideration should be given by the church clerk, church pastor, and first elder of the granting church and the church clerk, church pastor, and first elder of the receiving church to ensure the members in the process of being transferred are living in harmony with the fundamental teachings and related practices of the church.

### TRANSFERRING MEMBERS - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the motion to amend the amendment to the item, Transferring Members - *Church Manual* Amendment.

### TRANSFERRING MEMBERS - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

VOTED, To not amend the amendment to the motion, Transferring Members - *Church Manual* Amendment, by removing "In the case that full consensus is not reached, the pastor, first elder, or the board should request guidance from the conference," and retaining "The pastor, the first elder, and the church board should carefully consider changes to membership status (transfer, baptism, and profession of faith)," from lines 23-26 on page 55.

# **TRANSFERRING MEMBERS - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT**

VOTED, To cease debate and vote on the motion to amend the item, Transferring Members - Church Manual Committee.

# **TRANSFERRING MEMBERS - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT**

VOTED, To amend the motion, Transferring Members - Church Manual Amendment, by removing “The pastor, the first elder, and the church board should carefully consider changes to membership status (transfer, baptism, and profession of faith). In the case that full consensus is not reached, the pastor, first elder, or the board should request guidance from the conference.” from lines 23-26 on page 55.

# **TRANSFERRING MEMBERS - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT**

RATIONALE: This amendment clarifies the function of church clerks and the process of membership transfer.

VOTED, To amend the Church Manual, Chapter 7, Membership, pages 57-61, Transferring Members, to read as follows:

## Transferring Members

When members move to a different area, the clerk of the church holding their membership records should write to the secretary of the relevant conference requesting that a pastor in the new locality visit them and help facilitate their membership transfer to the new congregation.

The clerk of the church holding the membership records also should notify the transferring members of the intention to give their new addresses to the conference.

Members who move to another locality for longer than six months should make immediate applications for letters of transfer. Members moving to an isolated area with no church within a reasonable distance should apply to join the conference church.

Method of Granting Letters of Transfer—Members Transfer—The church clerk should encourage those regularly attending his/her church to request a transfer of their membership. Members should apply for their letters of transfer to the clerk of the church with which the members desire to unite (the receiving church). That clerk sends the request to the clerk of the church from which the members desire to transfer (the granting church). (For alternative method, see p. 58.)

When the clerk of the granting church receives the request, the clerk brings it to the pastor or elder, who in turn presents it to the board. Careful consideration should be given by the granting church and the receiving church to ensure the members in the process of being transferred are living in harmony with the fundamental teachings and related practices of the church. After due consideration, the board votes to recommend, favorably or otherwise, to the church. (See pp. 37-40, 41, 55-61, 71-73, 87.) The pastor or elder then brings the recommendation to the attention of the church for a first reading. Final action is taken the following week, when the request is presented to the church for a vote.

The purpose of the one-week interval is to give members an opportunity to object to the granting of the letter. Objections ordinarily should not be publicly stated but be lodged with the pastor or elder, who then refers them to the board for consideration. The board should give each objector opportunity to appear to present his/her objection. If the objection is not based on valid grounds, the person raising objection should be admonished to withdraw it. If the objection is based on valid grounds, it is the duty of the board to investigate. Final action on granting the letter is deferred until the matter has been satisfactorily settled.

If the objection involves personal relationships, every effort should be made to effect reconciliation. If public offenses are involved, disciplinary measures may be called for. If there is some spiritual lapse, efforts should be made to restore the member.

Clerk to Prepare Letter—When the church has granted the letter - No change

Letter Valid Six Months—A letter of transfer is valid for six months from - No change

Alternative Method for Membership Transfer—A division may approve - No change

Membership During Transfer—Under no circumstances shall the clerk - No change

Receiving Members Under Difficult Conditions—World conditions - No change

Counted in Statistical Reports—When quarterly and annual statistical - No change



Attendees line up to scan their badge before entering the food line in the dining hall.

CHRISTINA COLLARD

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If Member Is Not Accepted—The receiving church must receive the - No change

Letters Granted Only to Those in Regular Standing—Letters of transfer are granted only to members in regular standing, never to a member under discipline. Qualifying statements are out of order except when the pastor or board of the granting church has factual or proven knowledge that the member has been involved as a perpetrator of child abuse. In that case, for the safety of children, the pastor or elder should provide a confidential statement alerting the pastor or elder of the congregation to which the member is transferring.

If a member who has moved to a new location has grown indifferent, the pastor or elder of the granting church may, to be clear in the matter before the transfer is granted, take up the question with the pastor or elder of the receiving church.

No Letter Without Member's Approval—In no case should a church vote - No change

Church Board Cannot Grant Letters—A board has no authority to vote - No change

Membership in the Conference Church—Isolated members should unite with the conference church, which is a body organized for the benefit of believers who otherwise would be without church privileges. Aged and infirmed members who live near a church and conference officers and other employees, including pastors, should be members of a local church, not the conference church.

The conference president is the presiding elder of the conference church, and the work normally carried by the clerk and the treasurer is handled by the conference secretary and treasurer. Since the church has no board, all business normally conducted by a local church board is conducted by the conference executive committee, which also appoints delegates from the conference church to the conference session.

Membership Record—The church should have one current, regularly updated membership record. Names are added or removed only on the vote of the church, at death, or at the member's request. (See p. 87.)

Redemptive Membership Review—Membership records are kept up to date by the local church. They are subject to review by the next higher organization. This rule, which also applies to every entity or level of the organization, provides the maximum privacy of members' personal information and shall comply with legal requirements. (See pp. 87-88.)

In the Bible we find the words, "[N]ot forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching" (Heb. 10:25). There is great need to seek for those who are far away. Ellen G. White says, "If the lost sheep is not brought back to the fold, it wanders until it perishes. And many souls go down to ruin for want of a hand stretched out to save" (COL 191). It is a most needed ministry to review the membership records and to approach this exercise in a Christ-like redemptive way.

Pierre E Omeler, Chair  
Karen J Porter, Secretary  
Hensley M Moorooven, Actions Editor  
Tamara K Boward, Recording Secretary

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT #6

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

### General Conference

Undersecretary: Hensley M Moorooven

Associate Secretaries: Gary D Krause

Elbert Kuhn

Alexander Ott

Karen J Porter

Gerson P Santos

Selom K Sessou



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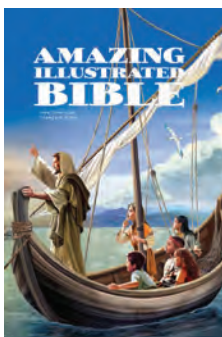
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