

Adventist
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INSPIRATION & INFORMATION
FOR NORTH AMERICA



Adventist Journey

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In times that I had failures, I thanked the Lord that He allowed me to experience humility in the process. I thank the Lord for leading my life, . . . It is all because of Him that I am here.

—EDGAR LLOREN,
retired pastor/Ministerial director,
Guam-Micronesia Mission

ENL



Visit nadadventist.org/ajedgarlloren
for the video, and check out pages 24-25
for more of Lloren's story.

Cover photo by Art Brondo



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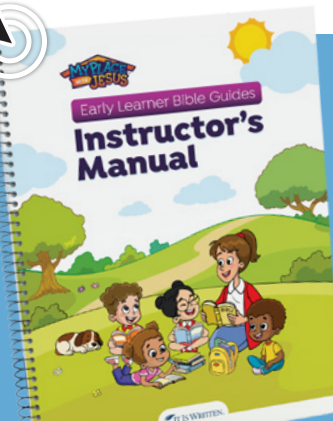
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What Kind of “Vegan” Are You?

Recently, while on vacation, I visited a vegan restaurant. As I often do, I asked, “What is the best-selling item on the menu?” To my surprise, the server answered my question with one of her own.

“That depends,” she said. “What kind of vegan are you?”

Caught off guard, I shrugged and replied, “I’m a vegan.”

She smiled and asked again, “No, what kind of vegan are you really?”

Still confused, I said, “Well, what other kind of vegan is there?”

She explained that there are transitioning vegans and plant-based vegans. A transitioning vegan wants to avoid animal products but still wants vegan food to look like, taste like, and have the texture of the meat they are trying to leave behind. A plant-based vegan, on the other hand, seeks food in its most natural state, without the additives and processing that many meat substitutes require.

Then she made a statement that stayed with me.

“Unfortunately,” she said, “many vegans never leave the transitioning stage.”

Her comment was insightful, thought-provoking, and surprisingly relevant. I do not bring up this story to discuss our dietary choices; rather, it brought to my mind other questions: What kind of Christians are we? Are we stuck at the transitioning stage? Or are we Jesus-based, Jesus-centered, and Jesus-directed Christians? Are we allowing Christ to continue His transforming work in our lives, or have we become comfortable where we are in the transition?

A transitioning Christian’s priorities, values, and viewpoints are similar to that of the world. This type of Christian looks, acts, and pursues a replica of the same desires that the world pursues. A transitioning Christian wants to have the values of the world and Jesus at the same time.

Jesus addressed this when He said, “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ . . . For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matt. 6:31-33, NKJV).

Notice that Jesus is not saying that we don’t need certain things to exist in life; rather, He is challenging the priority that we place on these things. In fact, He states clearly, “Your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.”

If we remain in the transitioning stage, we may settle for a Christian experience that mirrors the values of the society around us, in which our time and energies are focused primarily on securing the things of this life.



Jesus calls for a more Christ-centered and Christ-based life, where the number-one priority is seeking Him first, with all other things falling a distant second, including doing work for Him.

Christ calls us to prayer, to deepen our relationship with Him, and to keep growing until our lives increasingly reflect His character. The danger is not necessarily that we are in transition—the danger is that we become content at that stage.

As I interact with my neighbors, family members, coworkers, and friends, what kind of Christian do they see? Do they see one who has a different set of values, priorities, with Jesus as number one, or do they see a transitioning Christian who has never made it to a Christ-centered, Christ-based life?

The server asked me, “What kind of vegan are you?”

Interesting question. But the more pertinent questions are: What kind of Christian are you—transitioning or Jesus-based? Are you content at the transitional phase?

G. Alexander Bryant is the president of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists.

LARGEST EHUDDLE TO DATE HIGHLIGHTS SMALL GROUP VISION

BY LORI FUTCHER, SOUTHWESTERN UNION
COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR;
WITH REPORTING BY CHRISTELLE AGBOKA,
NAD NEWS WRITER/NEWS PRODUCER

What began in 2015 as a gathering of conference presidents and evangelism directors to share best practices has grown into an annual event drawing pastors, elders, and church leaders from across the North American Division (NAD). This year, for the first time, the gathering also included 25 theology students, reflecting the NAD's growing focus on equipping NextGen leaders. From February 23 to 25, 2026, nearly 500 participants gathered in Houston, Texas, for the largest-ever eHuddle, where they heard concise, high-impact presentations highlighting evangelism efforts already bearing fruit and initiatives designed for continued impact. Thousands more watched online.

Themes addressed across seven English-language sessions on February 23 and 24 encompassed vision, the gospel, and the work of the Holy Spirit; compassion-driven evangelism; media evangelism; missional small groups; church planting; and other best practices. The English sessions concluded with a powerful altar call led by José Cortés, Jr., NAD Ministerial Association associate director for evangelism, and a closing prayer by Gerardo Oudri, associate Ministerial director for resources. A similar program was presented in a full day of Spanish sessions on February 25.

Among the creative outreach models shared were a Saturday Café hosted in their home in Alberta, Canada, by Roberson and Thaksheela Dorelus; Church Under the Bridge, a ministry led by lay pastors Geraldo and Mandy Alonso that provides food, clothing, mobile showers, and laundry services to unhoused neighbors in San Antonio; and online small groups launched by Deidre Rivera-Martin in Arlington, Texas.

The Power of Missional Small Groups

At the opening session, José Cortés, Jr., introduced a new initiative to establish 50,000 missional small groups across the division by 2030. The initiative, developed at the recommendation of the pastoral evangelism advisory in 2025, draws from the biblical account of the early church, when a Pentecost harvest was followed by believers gathering in homes to break bread and grow together.

"That would help bring people to Jesus," said Cortés, "because it's easier to bring a friend to Jesus than to bring a total stranger to Jesus."



Church leaders gather in prayer around speaker Naraya Omar at the 2026 eHuddle. *Merari Medina*

In addition to supporting evangelistic efforts, Cortés said, small groups can foster authentic community, strengthen post-baptism retention, improve attendance, deepen intentional discipleship, develop leadership, spur revitalization, and multiply churches.

Presenters shared stories of small group experiences and offered practical guidance on how to structure such groups for long-term success.

Jonathan Burnett, a pastor from Chicago, described his discouragement after a small group training he believed had failed. Unbeknownst to him, one of the eight attendees had started a small group at her workplace. Though none of the participants were Adventists, they began meeting every Sabbath afternoon in her home and later invited Burnett to join them.

"When I got into that room," he told eHuddle participants, "I felt like the book of Acts had come to life."

"I have discovered that the Spirit of God is not limited by my limitations," he added. "In fact, it is in my weaknesses that His strength is made perfect."

Trusting God Through Challenge

In a session on church planting, the Cancino family also shared the challenges they faced after moving to the United States to accept a call in Washington State.

"The only subject I didn't pay too much attention to was English, because I thought I would never use it," said Juan Cancino, the college-aged son named after his pastor father.

"We were struggling, especially with the language," said Julienna Cancino, the family's college-age daughter. "We felt that we didn't belong, and the language barrier was very great."



Members of the Cancino family share their journey of overcoming challenges as church planters at the 2026 eHuddle. *Merari Medina*

"I have discovered that the Spirit of God is not limited by my limitations. In fact, it is in my weaknesses that His strength is made perfect."

When the children expressed frustration about learning English, their parents responded, "You guys are going to learn this language, and you're going to consecrate it to God." The family then prayed together.

With his son translating, Pastor Cancino recounted his disappointment upon discovering he would be pastoring churches smaller than he had expected. He committed himself to prayer and began visiting members. Over time, the congregations grew.

Later, when the family sensed a call to reach second-generation

Hispanics, they again faced a challenge.

"We were so busy in our Hispanic communities that we didn't speak English," said Carly Cancino through her daughter's translation. "How were we going to open a bilingual church when we didn't speak English?"

They began with four families.

"We remembered the dangerous prayer that we prayed when we said we were going to consecrate this language to the Lord," Carly said. "And now [our children are] preaching in English!" she said,



Jonathan Burnett shares insights on small groups during a presentation at the 2026 eHuddle. *Merari Medina*



José Cortés Jr., NAD associate Ministerial director for evangelism and eHuddle organizer, stands beside NextGen pastor Angelica Torres as she prays during the 2026 eHuddle in Houston, Texas. *Merari Medina*



José Cortés, Jr. and Gerardo Oudri, associate directors of the NAD Ministerial Association, lead pastors and other church leaders in a powerful altar call at the conclusion of the 2026 eHuddle. *Merari Medina*

noting that translating their parents' sermons has trained them as preachers.

"Look what God did with us," young Juan added. "We never imagined learning this language, and now He's using this new language He gave us as part of His ministry."

The theme of trusting God through challenges surfaced in several other presentations.

Attendees were moved by Naraya Omar's journey in ministry after overcoming the loss of her parents, teen pregnancy, divorce, addiction, mental health challenges, and spiritual unmooring. After exploring other religions, she felt a pull back to the faith and calling her father—a convert who planted five churches—had passed on to her.

When her home church rejected her, she said, "God Himself found me." While giving Adventism "one more try," she visited a new church plant, BELOVE, in Washington, D.C. Inspired by its welcoming atmosphere, she and a friend launched Safe Haven, a small group for young adults, "outcasts like us" in northern Virginia. Several group members came to Christ and are discipling others. Safe Haven became BELOVE Nova, a congregation led by BELOVE pastor Joanne Cortés.

Today Omar is an ordained elder and vocational lay pastor at BELOVE Nova and is completing her master's to become a pastor. "I learned that God uses anybody, clean and unclean, old and young, men and women," she concluded.

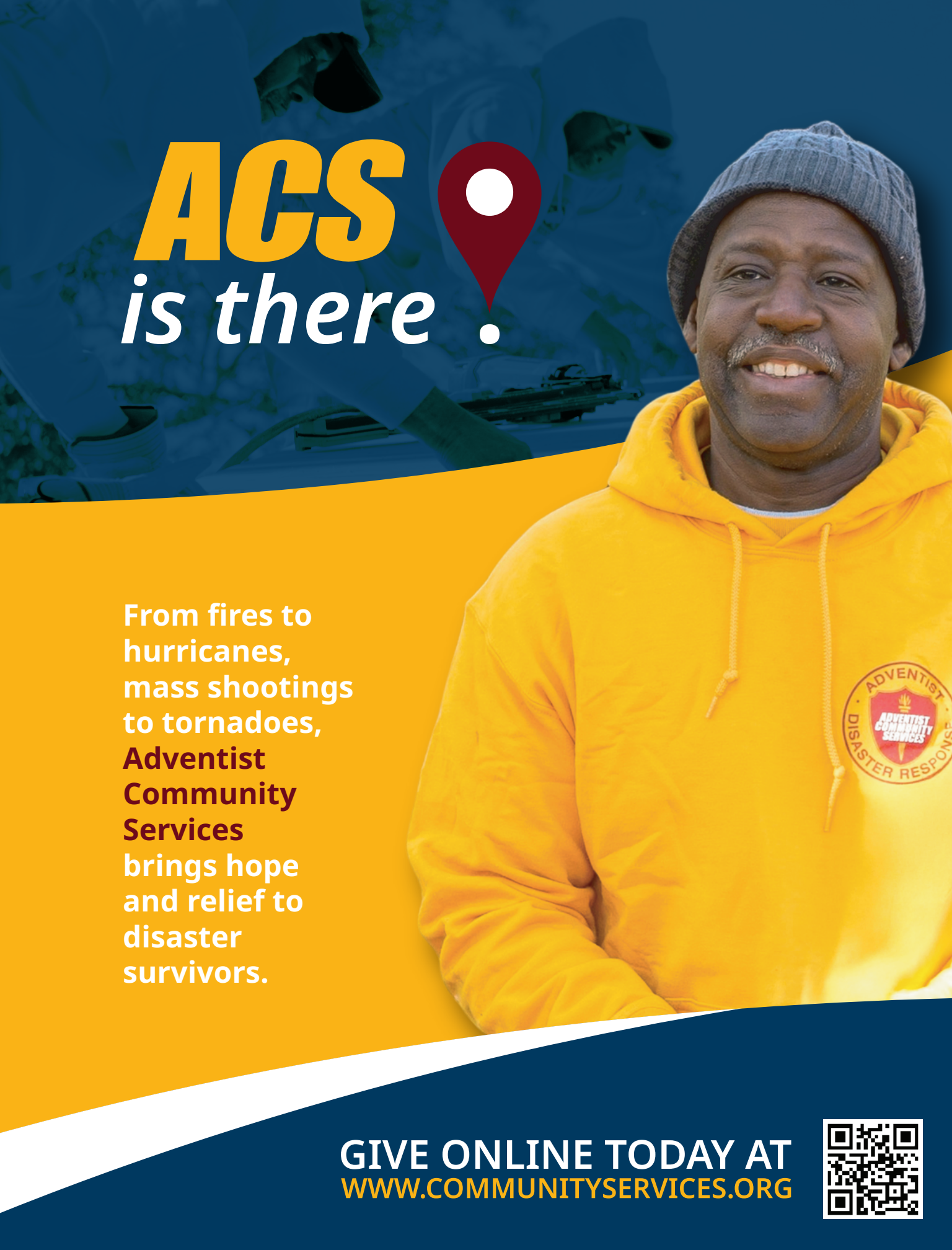
Evangelism and Compassion

In another presentation, Ray Valenzuela and Doug Cross, pastors in the Minneapolis, Minnesota, area, shared how their church responded to recent immigration enforcement activity. Volunteers soon mobilized to support affected families with food and other essentials.

As the number of households seeking assistance grew, Valenzuela asked God how the church, which lacked a proper food pantry, could meet the need. God provided through generous donations from churches and community groups.

Several recipients requested Bibles and asked to connect with a church. The story was one of many showing that evangelism and acts of compassion are inseparable.

eHuddle participants said they appreciated the transparency of speakers who shared both victories and setbacks. "We can learn from their mistakes and their victories," said Abraham Guerrero, a pastor from Oklahoma. "It's more about what people are doing than what books say."



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PENTECOST 2026 BOOT CAMP EQUIPS CHURCH LEADERS FOR EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING

BY ART BRONDO, NAD MEDIA PRODUCER

Nearly 500 pastors, church planters, and ministry leaders gathered March 11–15 at Camp Kulaqua Retreat and Conference Center in High Springs, Florida, for the Pentecost 2026 Boot Camp, five days of training designed to strengthen evangelism, discipleship, and church planting across the Seventh-day Adventist Church's North American Division.

The event is part of the division's broader Pentecost and Beyond initiative, a multiyear effort focused on mission, revival, and church growth. José Cortés, Jr., associate Ministerial Association director for evangelism for the North American Division, shared that the boot

camp builds on a series of ministry training events that began in 2016.

"This is the eleventh installment of boot camps in North America," Cortés said.

During previous years the division hosted several separate events focused on specific ministry areas such as church planting, church revitalization, pastoral evangelism, and volunteer lay leadership. Organizers recently combined those events into a single gathering so participants could receive training across multiple areas of ministry.

"In the past, we were doing five boot camps every year," Cortés said. "We decided to combine them so people can come once and receive training in all these areas."

Training Focused on Mission

This year participants attended workshops and presentations on church planting, church revitalization, pastoral evangelism, volunteer lay leadership, and missional small groups.

Cortés said the goal is to help churches move beyond growth toward multiplication.

"We want to see a church in North America that not only grows but multiplies"

He also emphasized the importance of discipleship and engagement for long-term church growth.

"The future of the church is not determined only by the number of baptisms, but by the follow-up that we do," Cortés said.

← Pastors, church planters, and ministry leaders gather for a group photo with organizers from the North Pacific Union Conference during the Pentecost 2026 Boot Camp, held March 11–15 at Camp Kulaqua Retreat and Conference Center in High Springs, Florida. *Art Brondo*

One major initiative connected to the training is the goal of establishing 50,000 missional small groups across the North American Division over the next five years. These groups are intended to meet in homes and community spaces, creating environments where people can build relationships and explore faith.

“We don’t believe that evangelism is done in only one way,” Cortés said. “But at the end of the day, we want to see more disciples and more churches.”

Part of a Broader Mission Movement

Gerardo Oudri, associate director of the division’s Ministerial Association, said the boot camp supports the broader Pentecost and Beyond movement by equipping leaders to carry out the church’s gospel mission.

“Pentecost was not just about having many people baptized,” Oudri said. “It was about receiving the Holy Spirit and the church being led to fulfill its mission.”

He noted that the event encourages both spiritual renewal and practical ministry training. “We want people to be spiritually uplifted and inspired,” Oudri said. “Not only by the presentations but also by the interactions.”

Combining several ministry tracks into one event also gives participants a broader view of how different outreach approaches can work together, he added.

Networking and Collaboration

For many participants the opportunity to connect with other ministry leaders is one of the most valuable aspects of the boot camp.

↓ José Cortés, Jr., associate Ministerial director for evangelism for the North American Division, welcomes attendees to the boot camp and highlights, during one of his presentations, the importance of discipleship and engagement for long-term church growth. *Art Brondo*



Michael Lewis, a presenter at the event, said conversations outside the main sessions often provide encouragement and practical insight.

“Often, what really helps people move forward in ministry is the conversations that happen off the stage,” Lewis said.

Those discussions allow pastors and leaders to share experiences, challenges, and strategies.

“Pastoral ministry can be lonely,” Lewis said. “To come to boot camp and talk with someone who understands what you’re trying to do is like air to your lungs.”

Lewis said the event has already led to collaboration among leaders, including a new project he plans to develop with another presenter to improve ministry processes.

International Participation

Although the boot camp focuses on the North American Division, it also attracts participants from other regions of the world.

This year a delegation of nearly 40 leaders from the South Pacific Division attended the training, representing Australia, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea.

Wayne Krause, director of Global Mission, Study Centers, Church Planting and Mission to the Cities for the South Pacific Division, said the event helps expose leaders to the broader global church.

“We want to expose our team to the wider Adventist family,” Krause said. “It helps them see how ministry is happening in other parts of the world. We learn what others are doing and then ask how it could work in our context.”

The diversity of the South Pacific Division highlights the complexity of global mission work. Papua New Guinea has experienced significant church growth in recent years, while countries such as Australia and New Zealand face increasing secularism.

“About 20 years ago roughly a third of Australians identified as Christian,” Krause said. “Today Christianity is clearly a minority.”

Despite those differences, Krause said, gatherings such as the boot camp strengthen partnerships across the global church.

“Events like this remind people that they are not alone,” he said.

From Ideas to Action

Organizers say the ultimate goal of the boot camp is to help ministry leaders turn ideas into action in their communities.

“In leadership you need vision, and you need strategy,” Oudri said. “But eventually you need action.”

Participants are encouraged to return to their churches with practical strategies for evangelism, discipleship, and church planting.

Lewis said the training often reenergizes pastors facing ministry challenges. “Boot camp can help a person push through those challenges,” he added.

For Cortés, the event reflects a larger vision for the future of the church.

“We want to see a multiplying church in North America,” he said. “A church that disciples people and plants new congregations.”

MISIÓN NEXT 2026

An endowment helps strengthen ministry among Hispanic leaders, programs.

BY HEIDI STRAW CAMARGO, FREELANCE WRITER

Being a pastor is challenging. Being a pastor working across different cultures can be even harder. The Ministerial Association is charged with the task of supporting pastors in North America, but there never seem to be enough resources. “Almost anywhere you go in the North American Division (NAD), you’re going to have a multicultural church,” said José Cortés, Jr., NAD Ministerial Association associate director for evangelism. “So we were thinking about what we can do to help all of our pastors understand their setting so they can be more effective.”

The unexpected partial solution came when the Lilly Endowment invited them to submit a proposal to its National Initiative to Strengthen Hispanic Pastoral Leaders and Congregations program. Ultimately, a \$1.5 million grant was awarded to the division in 2025 to fund an innovative initiative called Misión Next, which is supporting Hispanic pastors and church leaders in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The Misión Next program is a yearly certification program with in-person and online components that culminates with an annual in-person training and fellowship event, all conducted in Spanish. The program targets four groups. The first is first-generation Hispanic pastors and leaders, for whom the main focus is contextualization. “They have a passion for mission, but they may not be as familiar with the North American context,” explained Cortés. The next group is second- and third-generation Hispanics. “They’re familiar with the context, but how can they be more missional?” Cortés shared. “The third group is Hispanic leaders in administrative church roles, and the fourth is what the Ministerial team calls “NextGen”—young people and students who will be the next group of pastors and church leaders. A limited number of scholarships are available to NextGen seminary students who need help to cover the costs of coming to the training event.

In the first event last October, more than 500 Hispanic seminary students, pastors, and church leaders from across the division gathered together at Camp Kalaqua in Florida. “It was a family conversation,” said

Cortés. “We have the grandparents, kids, women, men . . . but we wanted to have a family conversation about how to make life better for our people and ministry more effective.”

This fall, participants will gather again at Camp Kalaqua for the second session of Misión Next training, October 5-8. The Ministerial team will also soon be launching a “Mission Next” English-language-based program that will benefit all English-speaking pastors across the division. This effort is not covered by the Lilly grant, but it will benefit from many of the materials and lessons learned that have come from Misión Next. The first Mission Next English-language event will take place in February 2027 in connection with an existing pastoral training event, eHuddle, on the campus of Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. The Ministerial team is also planning to utilize the next session of the major CALLED Pastors’ Family Convention happening in the summer of 2027.

“We really appreciate the strong steering committee that provides the strategic direction and accountability for this project,” said Gerardo Oudri, NAD associate Ministerial director of resources. This team includes union and conference presidents and Ministerial directors, local church pastors, Hispanic leaders and NAD undertreasurer Chad Grundy. “And Lilly is a great donor,” said Oudri. “They like what we have been doing so much that they have added an additional \$300,000 to the grant for activities next year.” The Ministerial team has also been invited to submit a proposal to the endowment for a multi-million-dollar church planting project.



BY JOSÉ CORTÉS, JR.

What Happens After Pentecost?

From 2020 to 2025 the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America welcomed 197,680 people who accepted Jesus and entered our church family through baptism or profession of faith. The past three years have been extraordinary—2023 through 2025 rank among the finest years for reaching people in the North American Division's (NAD) history. Last year marked the second-highest baptism year ever recorded for the NAD. Thanks in part to the Pentecost 2025 initiative, 43,052 people were baptized in a single year—nearly five people every hour across our continent.

These are not just numbers. Each number has a name. Each name is a person who has experienced the love of Jesus, received the blessed assurance of salvation, and now lives with the blessed hope of His return. These figures are nothing without the human stories they represent—families restored, lives transformed, and hope rekindled across a desperate world.

Yet a critical question demands our attention: how many did we retain? Between 2020 and 2025 we lost approximately 77,862 members through death, transfer, voluntary departure, relocation, and other circumstances. Each loss weighs heavy on our hearts, calling us to create pathways to reclaim and restore those who can be reached. Nevertheless, our net gain of 119,818 members represents a remarkable 10 percent growth over five years—a 2.24 percent increase in 2025 alone. This makes the Adventist Church in North America one of the most rapidly growing denominations on our continent. The victory is real, but the work is incomplete. Growth without retention is merely an open faucet.

After Pentecost: The Acts Model

United in prayer, our union and conference evangelism and Ministerial directors from across North America asked the Holy Spirit how to strengthen the faith of 119,818 new members. This led us to the book of Acts—to the early church right after Jesus' ascension. There we were reminded of a simple yet profound pattern found in Acts 2:46, 47: "Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added

to their number daily those who were being saved."

These practices bound believers together and became the catalyst for exponential growth. That realization sparked a vision: What happens after Pentecost? Small groups happen. Missional small groups, gathering in homes and other places to fellowship, eat, praise, and study God's Word together. This conviction birthed our commitment to establish 50,000 missional small groups across North America between 2025 and 2030.

Why Small Groups Matter

Small groups—whether called life groups, connect groups, wholistic groups, or missional small groups—create authentic communities in which faith is lived, not merely professed. They strengthen evangelism through trusted relationships, improve retention by keeping people connected, and provide a natural setting for discipleship, leadership development, and multiplying disciples, leaders, and congregations.

If someone were to write about the church in North America as Luke wrote about the early church in Acts, I hope they would record something like this: Every day across North America—from the United States to Canada, from Bermuda to Guam and Micronesia—followers of Jesus gathered in churches and in homes. They shared meals, prayed together, and did life in missional small groups with joyful and sincere hearts. They loved their neighbors, served their communities, and lived their faith where they worked, studied, and lived. And every day the Lord added to their number people who were discovering Jesus and choosing to follow Him.

More than a vision, this is our calling. This is what happens after Pentecost! Are you in?

José Cortés, Jr., is an associate director for the Ministerial Association of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists.



← Attendees enjoy an evening worship service at the 2022 CALLED convention. *Pieter Damsteegt*

THANK YOU, PASTOR!

**Providing space for pastors—
and their families—to recalibrate**

BY WILLIE EDWARD HUCKS II

The weekend before my sixteenth birthday found me confused and searching for identity. For the previous eight years I knew I wanted to be a pastor. However, questions that consumed me about my worthiness for such a call combined with external voices led me to question the vocation that I thought God wanted me to pursue. I heard it all from family and friends: “Pastoral ministry doesn’t pay well.” “You should pursue medicine.” “You can do better than work for the church!” I needed clear direction from God.

A few mornings later I audibly heard His voice for the first time in my life. And that experience started me on a journey that—without regrets—continues to this day.

A Most Rewarding Life

A lot of people will focus on the challenges of pastoral ministry. Pastors hear enough about that and need to hear more about what is rewarding, which includes a front-row seat for joyful events such as baptisms, weddings, child dedications, ordination and commissioning ceremonies, and others.

While I didn’t include funerals in that previous list, we as pastors have also discovered that it is rewarding to be present for people in their darkest moments. Family members receive solace through our ministry of presence and our heartfelt expressions.

We also get to guide people in their search for meaning. And while that may seem to apply only to the youth, each stage of life requires a fresh understanding of meaning. We guide individuals from their childhood into their golden years with all its challenges.

CALLED Pastors’ Family Convention 2027

Every five years the North American Division (NAD) Ministerial Association—with invaluable assists from many other departments throughout NAD headquarters—organizes the CALLED Pastors’ Family Convention. CALLED, to be held June 21-24 next year, is a gathering for pastors and their families from across the division, celebrating their invaluable contri-

butions to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America.*

CALLED is designed so we as pastors can recalibrate. If you arrive on Monday evening for the first plenary session with a heavy heart, we want you to leave on Thursday morning with your burdens lifted. Every plenary and breakout session, every event—whether for children, youth, young adults, or others—will be designed with an inclusivity that welcomes every attendee into the family. The worship experiences during each of the six plenaries will be crafted with an intentionality that lifts the attendees into God’s presence while at the same time modeling the possibilities for communal praise that inspires.

Our team is creating an experience designed to renew and inspire pastors, spouses, and children (pastor’s kids, or “PKs,” of all ages), strengthening marriages, families, and single individuals for ministry and life.

Pastors often feel as if their lives are lived in a fishbowl, and in some cases they feel as if every word spoken and every decision made are being scrutinized. CALLED is designed to demonstrate the Adventist Church’s strong affirmation of pastors, their families, and what they do for their local congregations, as well as the communities they serve. Furthermore, for pastors who serve in remote areas, separated by hours from the next pastoral district, it becomes easy to feel disconnected from the larger ecclesiastical community, social media notwithstanding. CALLED provides a venue to reestablish and strengthen those connections.

Many pastors love their work so much that they’d do it for free. But we know that “free” doesn’t pay the bills—mortgage, electricity, car, etc. Finances can be as much of a challenge and a source of stress for pastors as it is for members. We as Ministerial directors repeatedly hear this legitimate refrain.



A pastoral family checks in at the registration kiosks at the 2022 CALLED convention. *Bryant Taylor*



A pastoral family poses for a photo during registration time at the 2022 CALLED convention. *Bryant Taylor*

An often-overlooked element of well-being is financial well-being. Once again, CALLED will provide financial coaching that benefits our pastoral families now and into the retirement years.

NAD Ministerial, and our union and conference Ministerial directors, hear the requests from pastors for additional resources. CALLED will provide more than 100 breakout sessions with cutting-edge best practices designed to lift ministries to the next level. The evangelistic Shark Tank returns, also sharing boots-on-the-ground approaches that work and can be tailored to fit your community setting.

CALLED provides a vision that sees beyond today and places us into eternity. While we wait for the second coming of Christ, we live. But while we live, we must always remember the blessed hope, for it opens the door to the fulfillment of God's promise: "The tabernacle of God is with [us], and He will dwell with [us]" (Rev. 21:3, NKJV).

Pastor Appreciation Month

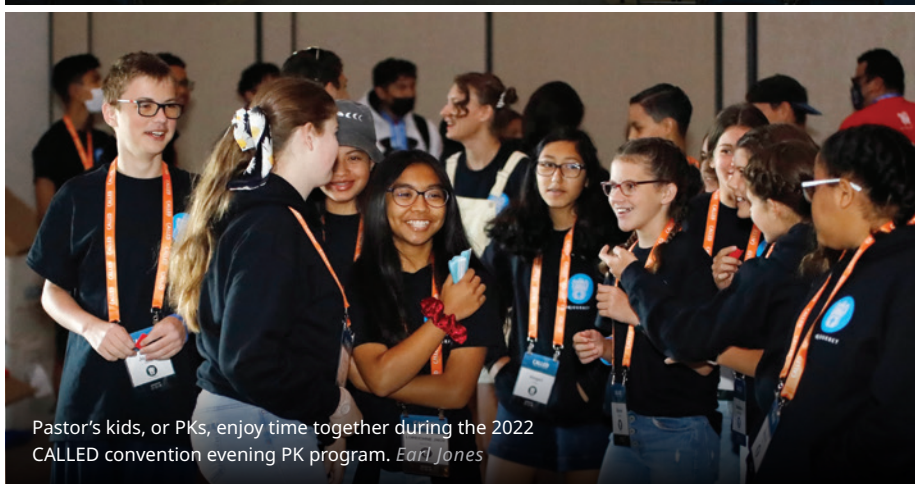
October is Pastor Appreciation Month in the United States. And so right now, on behalf of the NAD leadership and the Ministerial Association, we say, "Thank you, Pastor!"

Thank you to the men and women who have answered the call to ministry. Thank you for your commitment to your congregations and your community. Thank you for bringing people to the cross and guiding them to leave their burdens with their Savior.

We encourage you to take a moment to share a word of gratitude with your



A group of attendees pose for a photo on the 2022 CALLED convention stage. *Pieter Damsteegt*



Pastor's kids, or PKs, enjoy time together during the 2022 CALLED convention evening PK program. *Earl Jones*

pastor this month. If they have sat with you in your darkest hour, if they've helped you develop your spiritual gifts or inspired you with a moving sermon, let them know that their work has impacted your life. As Hebrews 10:24, 25 reminds us: "Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, . . . encouraging one another." We are on this journey together, and we are made stronger as we build each other up.

*Next year's CALLED theme, "Be Well," emphasizes whole-person wellness, encourages physical, financial, and spiritual well-being, and provides opportunities for renewal, connection, and encouragement in ministry.

Willie Edward Hucks II is the director of the Ministerial Association for the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists.

PARTNERS IN MINISTRY

Showing love and gratitude for those who serve and strengthen our churches

BY DESIREE BRYANT

God has called His followers to carry forth the mission of the church, which is to tell the world that God loved us so much that He left His throne in heaven and came to this sin-sick earth and lived, died, and rose again so that whoever accepts this free gift could have eternal life. We are also to share that He's coming soon, and that we have a limited time to accept this wonderful offer!

He's called a select group not only to minister to the world but also to pastor congregations: preaching, teaching, and training parishioners to go and make disciples—the mechanism for which the mission is to be carried to the world. Pastors carry forth this work alongside their spouses and children.

The Ministerial spouses may not have been called to pastor, but have been called to minister for the Master! Their job, although most often not out front but rather behind the scenes, can be difficult.

Ministering to this group in the current state of our world has become increasingly complex. Pastors' spouses often juggle the demands of balancing family, work, personal, and church responsibilities; setting healthy boundaries; discovering their unique roles in ministry; building relationships with church members; and navigating through conflicts.

Today pastors and their spouses face the added challenges of racial and political divides, social justice issues, mental health concerns, vaccination debates, and growing distrust in leadership across every sector, making the work of shepherding a congregation—and supporting the one called to shepherd it—both demanding and, at times, overwhelming.

This month we are expressing gratitude to our pastors and their families. We have a special time designated to give thanks, but we as Christians know that every day is a day of thanksgiving. Let's remember to love and support our pastors and their family not only during the month of October but throughout the year!

I invite you to join me in saying thank you! To our Ministerial spouses, to our pastors' children, thank you for your service to the church. Thank you for sacrificing your time and sharing your spouse and parents with your local church. Thank you for standing by their side and carrying the good news of the gospel! We see you, we love you, and we appreciate all you do to support the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

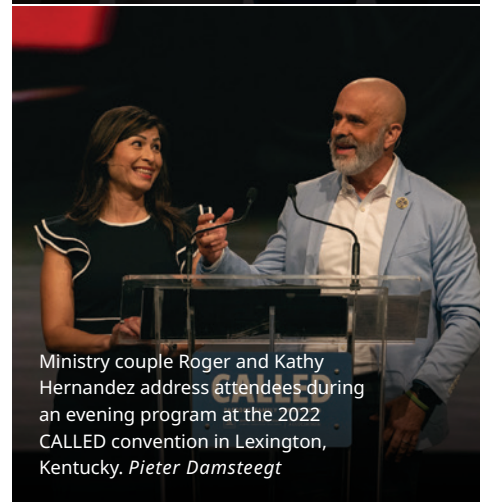
This upcoming Sabbath and throughout the year, share a hug or kind word of encouragement when you see your pastor's family serving

Ministerial spouses support each other during a session at the 2022 CALLED convention.

Luis Sanchez



A group of ministry leaders pose for a photo during registration time at the 2022 CALLED convention. *Bryant Taylor*



Ministry couple Roger and Kathy Hernandez address attendees during an evening program at the 2022 CALLED convention in Lexington, Kentucky. *Pieter Damsteegt*

your members and community. Invite them for a meal and fellowship together. Think of ways to show them you care for them as much as they care for you and your church.

Desiree Bryant is an associate director for the Ministerial Association and Ministerial Spouses leader for the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists.

A COMPLEMENT OF RESOURCES

Ministry systems and frameworks: Such as the 7 Core Qualities of an Effective Pastor, the 7 Stages of Pastoral Ministry, and the Multiply ecosystem.

Continuing education: Hundreds of courses on the Adventist Learning Community (ALC) platform, with more added every year.

Support for the journey: Such as the newly launched, online, automated Pastor Support Survey and the new NAD Ordination and Commissioning Guide, both based on the 7 Core Qualities and housed on ALC.

Policy: The NAD Ministerial Association continually strives to improve church policy, to better support pastors and their families.

PASTORAL RESOURCES

A Biblical Pattern for God's Mission

BY GERARDO OUDRI

What do the crossing of the Red Sea, the fall of Jericho's walls, and the death of Goliath have in common? Each follows the same pattern for mission success: *God*, then *people*, then *things*. That order matters for Ministerial resources in the twenty-first century.

God First

When it comes to the resources needed for mission, God is always the first and greatest resource. Israel crossed the Red Sea because God parted it; Jericho's walls fell because God brought them down; Goliath fell because God intervened.

The same principle applies to the church's mission today. More than strategies, budgets, or programs, the North American Division (NAD) Ministerial Association believes the church's greatest need is complete dependence on God through the baptism of the Holy Spirit (see Zech. 4:6; Acts 1:8).

In 1927 A. G. Daniells, the first General Conference Ministerial director, wrote to L. E. Froom: "For 40 long years the Lord has been trying to lead us into that Pentecostal experience to fit us for efficiency in evangelism, but we have fallen into one trap after another and so defeated the Lord's purpose. Institutionalism, administrationism, financialism, foreign-missionism—these, one after another, have gripped us so hard that we have never gotten the baptism, the most important issue of all."

People

The next most important "resource" for mission is people. Moses parted the Red Sea; Joshua led the battle against Jericho; and David defeated Goliath. People are the resource a pastor should focus on most, after God, to fulfill the Great Commission.

Ellen G. White wrote: "From the beginning, God has been working by His Holy Spirit through human instrumentalities for the accomplishment of His purpose in behalf of the fallen race" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 53; see also Eph. 4:11-13).

Often God and people are enough. But the biblical pattern includes a third component.

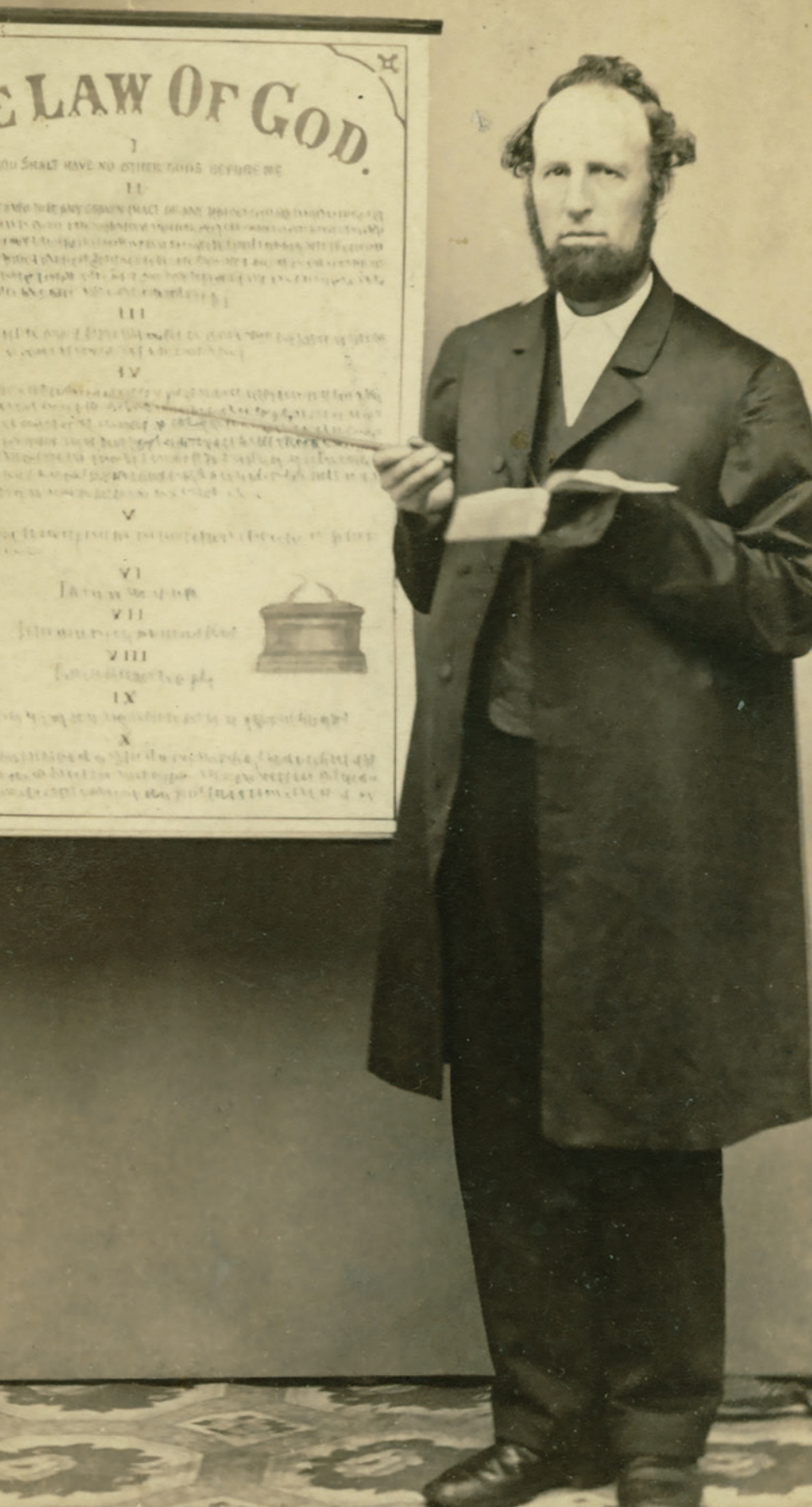
Things: Resources for the Journey

God told Moses, "Raise your staff" (Ex. 14:16); told Joshua to have seven priests carry trumpets before the ark (Joshua 6:4); and let David sling a stone that struck Goliath's forehead (1 Sam. 17:49). God uses things/resources to accomplish His mission.

A key role of the NAD Ministerial Association is providing resources, in several forms, for union and conference Ministerial directors and local church pastors, as shown in the box on this page. In addition to these, Ministerial provides the Best Practices newsletters, books, training events such as eHuddle and Multiply boot camps, financial support for church planting, resources for spouses and families, and the CALLED convention.

In short, missional practices may change with time, but God's *modus operandi* does not. May we, as gospel workers, depend more on *God*, pray for wisdom to mobilize His *people*, and keep seeking *resources* that equip us to reach our world with Christ's message of hope and wholeness.

Gerardo Oudri is an associate director for the Ministerial Association of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists.



LICENSED TO PREACH:

The Origins of Adventist Pastoral Ministry

BY MICHAEL W. CAMPBELL

While at a camp meeting, a youthful William B. Hill was asked by a veteran minister: “Brother Hill, if we give you a license to improve your gift, will you use it?” He had to decide whether to renew his contract as a schoolteacher and pondered the question.

“I had firm faith in the promise of God to be with the laborers even unto the end of the world,” and reflecting upon Matthew 19:29 about forsaking all for Christ, he still felt overwhelmed. Knowing he would certainly face “poverty, privation, even to the want of sufficient clothing to protect me from winter’s chilling [Minnesota] blasts, and have met with opposition,” yet he did say, “By Thy grace I will.”

Hill went home and began to prepare. As he traveled, someone offered him a ride. The stranger asked him if he was an Adventist minister. Hill told him: “I am sent out to improve my gift, but how I will succeed time will tell.” By the time he arrived in Hutchinson, as it turned out, the ministers who were supposed to be there had not arrived. That evening they needed someone to speak. Hill hesitated lest he “make a failure of it.” Yet he earnestly “lifted my heart to the Lord for help.” He took as his text John 3:16 and felt “freedom in

Photos Courtesy of the Ellen G. White Estate

presenting the love of God . . . as manifested in the gift of His Son.” He wryly added: “There was at least one good point in the discourse—it was short.”¹

By now the dye was cast. Hill devoted the rest of his life to the ministry. And while Adventist pastoral ministry has never been “easy,” the story of how the denomination came to value and provide for ministers of the gospel is one that is perhaps not always so well known.

Origin Story

It was a long and complex beginning for Adventist ministerial. Most of the earliest Sabbathkeeping Adventists were part of the Christian Connection, which generally upheld itinerant preaching as the ideal. Since most of those early ministers had served in ministry in other denominations, they considered their ordination as still valid. Yet as imposters, or those who departed from the faith, preyed upon unsuspecting believers, this became an important catalyst for church organization. Even more challenging, some of the most promising young ministerial candidates gave up ministry—not because they wanted to, but because they needed to feed and clothe their families. How could a fledgling movement support those who felt it was their passion and calling to preach Christ and the distinctive message they felt called to proclaim?

Today it may seem surprising that mission—especially supporting those able to devote their lives to full-time ministry—was a primary catalyst behind church organization. The very first “General Conference” session took place May 20–21, 1863, in Battle Creek, Michigan. In the chair was Jotham M. Aldrich, assisted by Uriah Smith as secretary. The primary purpose of business was to present the credentials of delegates, after which they considered a proposed constitution. The first article stated: “This Conference shall be called the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.” After appointing duly elected officers and an executive committee,

Ministers served a dual purpose by encouraging local believers while at the same time always keeping the mission of the church paramount.

other terms of reference included parameters for future delegates and sessions, changes to the constitution and bylaws, and a model constitution for constituent conferences.

What is not as well known (but just as important as the structure) was that the General Conference was created for “the special supervision of all ministerial labor” that served “as a missionary board.” This meant setting standards for recognizing duly authorized ministers, making sure they received wages, and an appeal process for ministers who felt unfairly treated. Church leaders believed it was also vital that ministers have the tools they needed, so one subsequent action was to encourage the printing of a new evangelistic chart, afterward known as the “1863 chart” because of its association with this historic gathering, and a chart featuring the Decalogue. These charts would become tools used by Adventist pastors and often prominently displayed in Adventist meeting houses.²

Adventist leaders encouraged church members to continue to support Systematic Benevolence (or what was sometimes referred to simply as “Sister Betsey”). This was the first way early believers developed a fairer way to support the mission of the church, especially to provide enough funds to support those engaged in full-time ministry. The system, based on 1 Corinthians 16:2, set





aside some funds for gospel work at the beginning of each week.

Since most early believers were farmers in rural locations, this system was based largely on property and crops grown on the property. In the boom and bust, however, it became clear that a better system was needed. This led to more Bible study, which included study of other biblical passages, including Malachi 3:8-11. In 1869 J. N.

Andrews argued that the tithing

system wasn't merely part of the ceremonial law, but could be traced back to Melchizedek. During the next decade church leaders discovered, especially as conditions warranted and through careful Bible study, that there was a better way. Ellen G. White strongly affirmed this new system, noting that in addition to better facilitating mission, it also provided an opportunity to receive divine blessings through generous giving.

Ministry Support

As the church grew, so did the need for ministers.³ Early believers frequently appealed to denominational leaders, requesting visits among isolated believers. It was not uncommon for members to go many months, or even years, without seeing a minister. So when

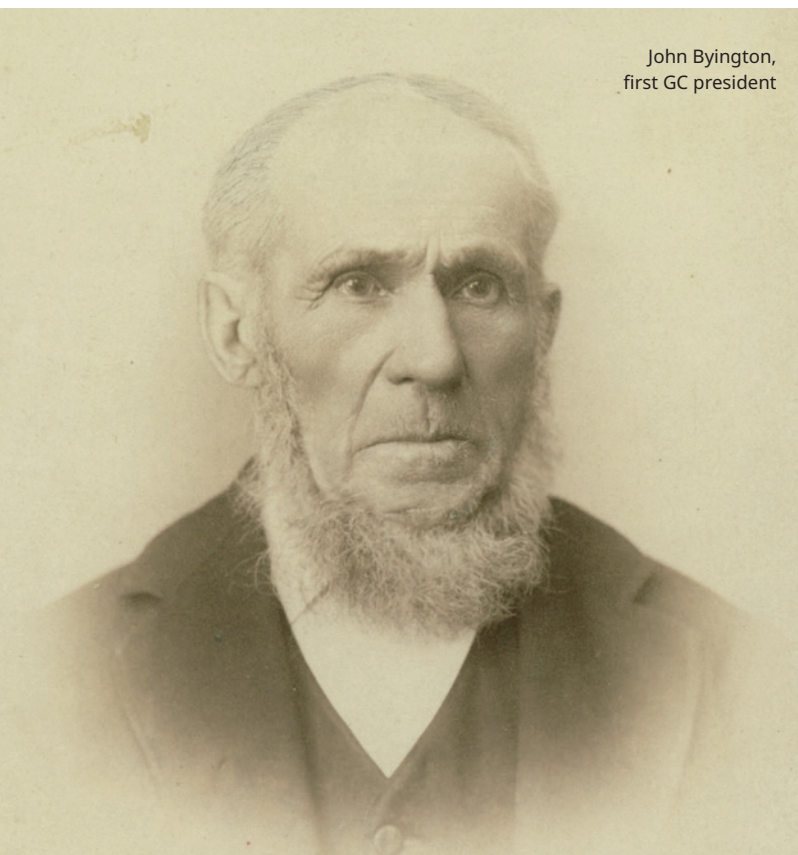
there was a minister available, it was a cause for celebration that typically included celebrating all of the church ordinances—notably foot washing, the Lord's Supper, and baptism of those who were ready. It was not unusual to gather those from far and wide to make it a weekend occasion, often billed as a “monthly” or “quarterly” meeting.

Such gatherings consisted of Bible study, prayer, hymn singing, and of course, biblical preaching. Early Adventists were especially fond of the Lord's Supper, which they dubbed the “Advent ordinance” because it was a special occasion to affirm both their belief in Christ's sacrificial death, as well as His promise to celebrate this sacred ordinance in the heavenly Canaan land.

The primary work of the minister was twofold: to make sure that local churches functioned properly and to pursue evangelistic objectives. The first was accomplished by making sure the local church was properly organized with local church leaders. Usually this meant appointing a local church elder and deacon to look after the spiritual and physical needs of believers. Unless the congregation was particularly large, most churches typically had only one elder or deacon.

This began to change as some congregations grew larger, notably in such places as Battle Creek, Michigan, which was the headquarters of the growing church from 1855 until the turn of the century. The earliest job description for an Adventist minister dates to 1873, during which ministers were admonished to check church records and lists of members; and, most important, to ascertain the spiritual condition of members. This meant visiting the backslidden, sending letters to those who were absent, and encouraging outreach in their community. Ministers served a dual purpose by encouraging local believers while at the same time always keeping the mission of the church paramount.

Church organization has always been about the mission of the church. As the church organized, it helped to develop a system for supporting the ministry and, most important, facilitating the church's mission. Life was not easy for early believers, especially for ministers, who often suffered for lack of means to travel or even just to support their families. Yet as the church grew, leaders developed and adapted, based on Scripture, the best plan they could to make sure that the mission always came first.



John Byington,
first GC president

¹W. B. Hill, *Experiences of a Pioneer Minister* (1892), pp. 51-55.

²“Report of General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists,” *Review and Herald*, May 20, 1863, pp. 204, 205.

³Michael W. Campbell, “Seventh-day Adventists and the Formation of Ministerial Identity: Lessons From Our Past,” *Ministry*, October 2014, <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2014/10/seventh-day-adventists-and-the-formation-of-ministerial-identity>

Michael W. Campbell is director of Archives, Statistics, and Research for the North American Division.

MINISTERING to the Minister

The North American Division Ministerial Association provides resources and development for pastors and their families, as well as supports these endeavors at the union and conference level. Church members can also minister to their ministers through active engagement in their local church, supporting pastors in their tasks and initiatives and with tokens of love and appreciation. If a pastor has blessed your Adventist journey in a specific way, let them know how much they mean to you today!



10 PASTOR APPRECIATION MONTH GIFT IDEAS

- 1 Prepare a special Sabbath meal just for their family
- 2 Handwrite a note of appreciation
- 3 Plan a surprise recognition with a testimonial video of how they have been a blessing to your church
- 4 Gift their family a fun outing (zoo, amusement park, state fair, sports game, etc.)
- 5 Bless them with your talent (photo session, boat ride, baked goods, etc.)
- 6 Offer the parents a night of free babysitting
- 7 Treat the spouse to an outing with friends
- 8 Send a care package to their children studying away from home
- 9 Purchase gift cards to their favorite stores
- 10 Fill a basket with their favorite treats and goodies



CALLED PASTORS' FAMILY CONVENTION

CORE THEMES



Jesus
at the
Center



Wholeness
and
Well-being



Effective
Pastoral
Ministry



Mission
and
Multiplication



**CALLED 2022:
PASTORS' FAMILY
CONVENTION**
June 19-22, 2022
Lexington, Kentucky



Nearly
6,000
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\$120k

awarded via "Evangelism Shark Tank" for soul-winning ideas.

100 → 15
applicants funded

\$20,000 1st Place
\$10,000 2nd Place
\$5,000 3rd Place
\$3,000 4th Place
\$2,000 5th Place



(three recipients
per category)

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- ☒ Colleague Connection
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- ☒ Children & Youth Programs

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These individuals are part of the 30 who started a new walk with Christ during Eugene Spanish Church's Pentecost 2025 evangelistic series. *Cristian Alvear*

In North Pacific Union, A Church gets to the Heart of Evangelism

As part of the NAD's Pentecost 2025 initiative, Eugene Spanish church in Oregon set out to transform lives through faith.

In January 2025 the church placed a large, vibrant heart on the pulpit, inviting members to write on it the names of individuals they wanted to lead to Jesus. Throughout each service the congregation prayed together, asking for divine intervention in the lives of those they had named.

For two months the church community united in prayer, conducted Bible studies, organized special programs, and shared fellowship meals that fostered a lively and encouraging atmosphere. These activities set the stage for an evangelistic campaign led by Gerizin de Peña, Oregon Conference evangelist, which took place March 1-8, 2025.

Every day of the campaign drew an impressive turnout, with approximately 170

attendees filling the church on the final Sabbath. This significant response from the community resulted in 30 individuals deciding to give their lives to Jesus through baptism.

"I'd never experienced the privilege of baptizing so many individuals in a single day," reflected Cristian Alvear, pastor of Eugene Spanish church. "I believe that the Holy Spirit, as it was during Pentecost, is being poured out this time. Witnessing children, young people, and adults choosing to follow Jesus is truly awe-inspiring and fills one's soul with joy."

Among those baptized was Metabel, who had been a member of an Adventist church in Mexico during her childhood. After losing her way because of personal challenges, she learned that her sister had written her name on the heart at the church, joining the community in praying



for her. This gesture stirred something within her, prompting her to begin studying the Bible with her family.

With each truth unveiled, tears of realization filled her eyes as she absorbed the messages of hope and love. During the campaign a profound moment came when she, alongside her husband, two daughters, and son-in-law, stepped forward to be baptized. In that moment Christ became the steadfast center of their family, solidifying their commitment to a life of faith together.

—Cristian Alvear, Eugene, Oregon; this article was originally published on the Northwest Adventists (North Pacific Union Conference) website.

Baptisms are celebrated at the Eugene Spanish church after the Pentecost 2025 evangelistic series concluded.
Cristian Alvear



In Guam-Micronesia Mission, A Harvest of Souls in Guam

From August 5 to 22, 2025, Leslie Pollard, assistant to the North American Division president for clergy continuing education, and his wife, Prudence Pollard, led the Pentecost 2025 evangelistic series at Agana Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church in Guam. Hosted by lead pastor Ryland Kuarte, the event blended powerful preaching with nightly health education.

Meetings were held five nights a week, with strong participation from local churches. Leslie explored what the Bible says about navigating the challenges of life in the twenty-first century under the theme “System for Survival.” He also used biblical and historical references to highlight signs that we are living in the end-times and to offer hope in Christ’s soon return.

Prudence, a registered dietitian and educator, shared practical health nuggets each evening. A children’s program rounded out the event’s offerings. The outcome was inspiring: at the end of the series, 12 individuals committed their lives to Christ through baptism.

Reflecting on the experience, Leslie Pollard shared, “Pentecost 2025 has been a tremendous blessing to our North American Division and to everyone who participated in the meetings. The spirit of unity we felt in Guam, from our local church pastor, to the members, to the baptismal candidates, spoke volumes about the dedication of our people.”

He concluded: “To anyone who missed sponsoring a meeting in 2025, I would say, Plan to ‘jump in’ in 2026, and I guarantee you that your life will be forever changed.”



About Guam-Micronesia Mission

Oversight of Guam-Micronesia Mission, an administrative region of the Seventh-day Adventist Church comprised of islands in the western Pacific Ocean, shifted from the Southern Asia-Pacific Division to the NAD in 2011. Headquartered in Guam, the mission also encompasses the islands of Majuro, Ebeye, Saipan, Palau, Chuuk, Yap, Pohnpei, and Kosrae. Today the region is home to more than 5,800 Adventists.

—NAD Office of Communication

He Changed the Direction of My Life

The Adventist Journey of Edgar Lloren

EDITED BY ART BRONDO

I came from a very poor family. Like many young people, I spent my teenage years searching for my identity and wondering what my future would be. I didn't have much, and I wasn't sure where my life was headed.

Looking back now, I can see that everything began to change when I accepted Jesus into my life. That was the starting point. I didn't know what the future would hold, but I could already see that God was changing the direction of my life.

A Step of Faith

My first introduction to the Adventist faith came when I was 17 years old. A group of young people came to a village near ours to conduct Vacation Bible School. Every Sabbath they gathered the children, taught us Bible stories, helped us memorize Scripture, and sang songs about Jesus.

My grandmother, who raised me, didn't want me to go. But every afternoon after lunch she would take a nap. I'd wait until she had fallen asleep, quietly slip out through the kitchen, and run to where the Vacation Bible School was being held.

Those afternoons left a lasting impression on me. I learned Bible verses. I learned songs. More important, I began learning about Jesus.

I wanted to finish high school before being baptized, because I believed that once I graduated, I would be old enough to make my own decisions about college, my future, and my faith. After graduation an evangelistic meeting was held in our town. I began studying the Voice of Prophecy lessons, and through those studies I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior. Soon afterward I was baptized.

That decision was one of the hardest I had ever made.

My family was deeply Roman Catholic. Two of my relatives were priests, and my grandmother had spent most of her life working at the cathedral before retiring as secretary to the bishop. I wanted to honor my family, but I also knew I had to follow where God was leading me.



Edgar Lloren, retired pastor/Ministerial director, Guam-Micronesia Mission
Art Brondo

Before my baptism I went to ask my father for permission. He already had another family, but I wanted him to know what I had decided.

When I told him I wanted to become a Seventh-day Adventist, he became so angry that he grabbed his sickle. I thought that might be the end of me.

I cried and said, "I will be a good boy. Just allow me."

He looked at me and realized I was serious. He said that if I truly wanted to become a Seventh-day Adventist, and if I promised to be a good son, I could go.

I left that home filled with joy. I remember thanking the Lord and telling Him, "I will trust my life to You, and I know You will guide my future."

I have never regretted that decision.

Hard Knocks University

After I finished high school, my parents couldn't afford to send me to college, so I joined the publishing ministry. Looking back, that became one of the greatest experiences of my life.

We used to call publishing "Hard Knocks University." It wasn't easy, but it shaped my personality. It taught me discipline, perseverance, and how to trust God in everyday life. It also gave me the opportunity to save money for college.

As I prayed about the future, I simply told the Lord, "Take my life. I am willing to go where You want me to go."

After saving enough money, I enrolled at Mountain View College to study theology. I worked my way through school and later joined the SULADS missionary program, serving for about 14 months in remote communities. Those experiences helped me financially, but more important, they prepared me for ministry.

When I graduated, I expected to become a district pastor, as many of my classmates were. Instead, I was invited to serve as a hospital chaplain.

Looking back, I can see His hand guiding me.

Working with patients and their families taught me lessons I couldn't have learned anywhere else. Later I was sent to study public health so I could combine chaplaincy with community health education.

After those studies, I was assigned to help pioneer a new Adventist hospital in Davao City.

At the same time, our local church dreamed of opening an elementary school. We had only about 900 pesos in the treasury. But our members believed that God would provide.

Sawmill companies donated lumber. Hardware stores donated nails and other building materials. Within about three months we had the structure standing, and later the mission provided funds for the roofing. Before long, we had a complete elementary school serving children from first through sixth grade.

When I look back on those years, I know I was only one small part of what God was doing. We had dedicated leaders. I was simply one person who wanted to help. But God allowed me to be part of building ministries that continue serving people today.

Later I was called to teach at Mountain View College. I loved helping prepare young people for ministry, and eventually I was sent for further study in biblical studies. When I returned, I taught, served in student affairs, and later joined the administration.

Every assignment reminded me of something I had learned years before. If I trusted God with my life, He would continue to lead.

An Island Call

After years of ministry in the Philippines and later in the mainland U.S., my wife and I sensed God calling us once again.

For several years one passage of Scripture kept speaking to me. Every time I came to Isaiah 42:12, where the islands are called to give glory to the Lord, it seemed to speak with a stronger voice.

I found myself asking, "Lord, how will the people of the islands praise You if no missionaries, pastors, nurses, doctors, or teachers go to them?"

One day the president of the Guam-Micronesia Mission called and told me that they had been praying and that my name had been recommended.

I asked him, "What time were you praying?" Around that same time, I had felt a strong impression from the Lord that He was calling me.

I told him I needed to speak with my wife. That evening, before I had even explained everything, she said, "I think it's time for me to retire. Let's take the call." At that moment I simply thanked the Lord. I knew He had answered my prayer.

When we arrived, Super Typhoon Yutu had recently devastated much of the region. Buildings were damaged. Trees had been stripped bare. Many families were living in tents.

As we drove through the community, I couldn't hold back my tears. We began visiting families, delivering supplies, praying with people, and helping however we could.

Later I was asked to serve as Ministerial secretary for the mission. One of my greatest joys was seeing pastors who had faithfully served for many

There were trials.
There were failures.
There were humbling moments. But the Lord used every one of them to shape my life.

years finally become ordained. They could now baptize, organize churches, and fully minister on their own islands.

Then COVID-19 arrived.

For a while it seemed that ministry had stopped. Churches closed. Home visits stopped. I wondered if I had misunderstood God's leading.

Then the Lord opened another door.

We learned how to livestream our worship services. What began with only a handful of viewers eventually reached thousands. At one point more than 24,000 people watched.

As I reflect on my life, I can say only that everything is because of God. I started with no promise of a future and very few resources. There were trials. There were failures. There were humbling moments. But the Lord used every one of them to shape my life. He allowed me to serve in publishing, chaplaincy, public health, education, pastoral ministry, teaching, administration, and mission work. None of those were plans I made for myself. They were opportunities God placed before me as I continued trusting Him.

When people ask what gives me joy, I think of all the ways God has led me. I found joy in the publishing ministry. I found joy in teaching. I found joy in watching students become leaders. I found joy in serving the islands.

But I know that my greatest joy is still ahead. One day, when Jesus returns, I hope to hear Him say, "Welcome, faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Lord."

Art Brondo is a media producer for the North American Division.



The Common Thread

How Quiet Faithfulness Shapes Lives It Will Never See

BY PHIL ROBERTSON

I have learned many lessons throughout my experience in ministry, and there is one that I believe stands at the top in importance. It is the realization that the most important outcomes of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's work are hidden from most of the people who help make that work possible.

Consider with me the stories of two young adults. They come from very different backgrounds. They have never met. Yet a common thread runs through both of their stories. One is a young woman we will call Jane, from the central part of the United States. The other is a young man we will call David, who lives on the West Coast.

Jane carries deep wounds from her adolescent years; she had suffered years of trauma and abuse. Jane describes a brokenness most people could not imagine.

A number of years ago Jane met a young woman at a ballet class. Her new friend told her about a program at her Adventist church. Every Easter weekend the church presented a live portrayal of the events surrounding the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. The church had shared that program with many people for more than 10 years.

One evening Jane's friend invited her to help coach the angels. Someone had to choreograph their positions and movements so every scene carried its full weight. Jane agreed to attend the next rehearsal.

The script moved her. So did the sincerity of the people telling the story. She stepped in with her whole heart, and on the Sabbath before Easter 2017 Jane experienced the greatest story ever told from two perspectives, coach and spectator.

But her personal life still held the old patterns. Pain pushed back against the new hope she had found in a safe community of Jesus followers. She entered relationships that repeated the same old destruction. She tried another church for a season, and instead of a home to heal in, she found judgment. Still, through most of the next 10 years, Jane returned each spring to help tell the story, as an actor and as a coach.

Then came 2026. The director recognized Jane's gifts and her years of faithful involvement and invited her to serve as one of the scene directors. The new role drew her past the auditions, the costumes, the scripts, and the rehearsals, and into the full mission of the church. Weekly worship became important to her as she participated along with the leaders in updates to the congregation.

That year landed differently. The presentation was among the most powerful in the program's history. When it ended, Jane told the director she wanted to be baptized. She wanted to be a member, not just a visitor for a few months each year. A short while later she was baptized. Today she tells others what a difference Jesus has made in her life, and the spiritual family she always wanted has welcomed her with open arms.

Stepping Into Service

David had a different experience growing up. His parents came from families active in the Adventist Church and its ministries, and both had received Adventist education.

David's parents worked at the same conference summer camp one year. The friendship they began led to marriage and family a few years later.

David was also born into a church family rich with ministries for children. Pastors mentored him. He grew active in youth ministry and

Photos from Getty Images



in worship. David attended the same Adventist school from the elementary grades through academy, and then he enrolled at an Adventist university to prepare for pastoral ministry.

In his senior year David joined his fellow ministerial students for the annual interviews with conference presidents from across the union. One president looked twice at David's last name and asked about his parents. David learned that this conference president had directed the camp during the very summer David's parents met. He went on to share a few warm memories about them with David.

David graduated with a degree in ministerial studies. He now serves on the staff of a local church, and has begun to realize his life's calling.

I have watched this pattern repeat across a lifetime of ministry. A program is developed and stands ready before anyone knows who will need it. A camp, a classroom, a congregation waits, quietly funded and quietly staffed, until God brings someone with an open heart through the door.

Faithfulness: More Than Generosity

Here are two young adults in different places, with different histories, and one thread runs through both of their stories. Inside that thread sits a question neither of them can answer. Who provided the resources that empowered the ministries that changed their lives?

No one knows. God designed it that way. Faithfulness is anonymous by design. Faithfulness is more than generosity. While we choose to bring our tithe as He has directed, it is not a gift. These funds actually represent people who return what God declares actually belongs to Him. Returning it to Him is an act of obedience, a spiritual discipline practiced quietly, week after week, year after year. In addition, offerings spring from hearts of gratitude for God's blessings.

God moves a member to tithe, and the funds they bring are combined with that of thousands, even millions, of others. Together these resources sustain the work of ministry, from the pastors who mentored David, to the camp where his parents met, to the educators in the schools that shaped him, to the congregation that told the Easter story year after year until Jane felt ready to join the family.

Jane and David were both nurtured by God's Spirit to make a decision to follow Jesus, and both sensed God's call to ministry. David heard a call to pastoral ministry, and Jane seeks to share the hope of Jesus with others who walk difficult paths. The ministries that reached them stood in place at the exact moment of need. They did not appear by accident. Kindness alone did not build these ministries. Obedience did. People returned what is His because He asked, and they trusted Him with outcomes they would never see.

Somewhere a person returned tithe in an ordinary moment. An envelope in the offering plate. A click of a mouse button or a few taps on a phone. That person will likely never learn Jane's name or shake David's hand, and on this side of eternity that person may never know that their faithfulness helped choreograph angels, staff a summer camp, educate children, or place a mentor in a young man's path.

But heaven keeps better records than we do. One day the thread will show, from end to end, every gift, every ministry, every life. Until then, we give the way God gives to us. Freely. Faithfully. Quietly. Right on time for ministry.

Phil Robertson currently serves as a part-time pastor in the Texas Conference. He retired from full-time ministry after serving as executive secretary/treasurer for the Texico Conference for more than 11 years.

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Miracle in the Valley

A hospitalist at Adventist Health Tulare makes a lifesaving roadside stop

BY KIM STROBEL, ADVENTIST HEALTH PROGRAM MANAGER FOR RELIGION, FAITH, AND MISSION



It was a summer day in Visalia, a small town in California's San Joaquin Valley, just a two-hour drive south of Sequoia National Park and its famous General Sherman Tree.

Tim Farmer's wife, Arlene, told her husband she wanted to make the drive to visit their daughter an hour away.

"Honey, let me wash the car before you go," Farmer said. And since no wife can argue with an offer like that, he headed outside while she finished prepping for her trip.

At the same time, Dr. Utkarsh Singh, a hospitalist at Adventist Health Tulare, was driving home from work when his phone rang. Opting not to use Bluetooth that day, Singh pulled to the side of the road and stopped to answer the call. As he was talking, he glanced up at the house next to him and saw a man washing a car in his driveway. Then he saw the man stumble and fall to the ground.

Tim Farmer was having a heart attack, and Singh was there in front of Farmer's house watching it happen.

Jumping Into Action

Quickly hanging up his call, Singh jumped out of the car, dialed 9-1-1, and hurried toward the house. Ringing the doorbell to alert anyone in the house, he then rushed to Farmer to begin CPR as he talked with the emergency dispatcher.

"After some intense resuscitation efforts, we managed to restore his heartbeat," said Singh. "EMS arrived swiftly and took him to the hospital for further care. His wife was beside herself with gratitude, clutching my hand and thanking me over and over. I told her she should head to the hospital."

Farmer had quintuple bypass surgery and a defibrillator installed, spending the next 16 days in the hospital. One day not long after Tim returned home, his daughter asked him, "Dad, did you ever get to meet the doctor who stopped? Do you know who it was?" When he said no, she decided to make a sign and post it in the front yard. "Maybe he lives around here, and he'll see the sign and stop by," she said.

The day Singh providentially stopped along the road and helped Farmer, Singh wrote in his journal: "I hope one day I can go visit that man. I hope one day I'll be able to see him and see how he's doing."

Tim Farmer was having a heart attack, and Singh was there in front of Farmer's house watching it happen.

Seeing Signs

One day as he was driving home again, Singh saw a sign hanging from a tree outside the Farmers' house. It said: "Thank you for helping me!!! You were a miracle sent by God to save me! Please stop by so we can thank you in person!"

Singh's heart pounded as he knocked on the door and stepped inside the home. "There he was, sitting in his chair, smiling—the same man I had seen fall that day. The sight was surreal," said Singh. "In that moment I felt an overwhelming sense of relief and joy. I thank God every day for that moment, for the opportunity to be a miracle in someone's life, and for the reminder that sometimes the greatest medicine is simply human compassion. That incident recharged my spirit and transformed my perspective. It reminded me why I chose this profession—to serve, to heal, and to connect"

Ezequiel Nichols is the Mission and Spiritual Care director for Adventist Health Tulare. He loves to share this miracle story. It's an example of the love the hospital has for the community. "God used Dr. Singh to save someone's life," Nichols said. "That is what Adventist Health is all about, living God's love by inspiring health, wholeness, and hope."



NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION LAUNCHES ONEVOICE27 INITIATIVE, INVITES COMMUNITIES TO EXPERIENCE “ALL THINGS NEW”

The world church initiative will unite members around a shared mission focus leading to September 2027.

**BY KIMBERLY LUSTE MARAN,
EDITOR OF ADVENTIST JOURNEY**

The North American Division (NAD) of Seventh-day Adventists is joining the church’s worldwide movement to share the hope of Jesus Christ through All Things New, the public-facing expression of the global OneVoice27 initiative.* Through OneVoice27, the NAD is looking to mobilize members, churches, schools, ministries, conferences, and unions around a shared mission focus leading to September 2027.

“Building on the momentum of Pentecost 2025 and the ongoing Pentecost and Beyond community engagement and evangelism initiative, OneVoice27 can serve as a rallying point for Seventh-day Adventists across North America as we prepare to share a Christ-centered message with our communities,” said G. Alexander Bryant, NAD president. The public-facing expression of that effort is All Things New, inspired by the promise of Jesus in Revelation 21:5: “I am making everything new.”

“Jesus remains the answer to the deepest needs of humanity,” Bryant continued. “The message of All Things New reminds us that Christ is still restoring lives, healing hearts, and offering hope for the future. Our desire is for every member to experience that renewal and then become a messenger of hope within their own community.”

The OneVoice27 initiative officially launched September 5, 2026, beginning a yearlong mobilization

← On July 29, 2026, NAD president G. Alexander Bryant describes the division's approach to the OneVoice27 initiative as GC president Erton Köhler and ASI president Danny Houghton look on. *Kimberly Luste Maran*

effort leading to September 2027. The worldwide emphasis culminates that month, marking approximately 2,000 years since Christ's baptism and the beginning of His public ministry. The global initiative seeks to unite the Seventh-day Adventist Church in a prayerful, coordinated, and contextualized effort to share the story of Jesus and the gospel message through personal witness, local outreach, and media ministries.

"OneVoice27 is how we come together as a church family around a common mission," said Rick Remmers, assistant to the president of the North American Division and secretary of the NAD's OneVoice27 committee. "All Things New is the message we share with our neighbors, friends, and communities. OneVoice27 unites us internally so that together we can invite others to experience the hope and renewal found in Jesus Christ."

A cornerstone of the initiative is an invitation for members across North America to pray and read (or reread) *The Desire of Ages*, by Ellen G. White, and share the story of Christ's life and ministry with others.

"Before we can effectively share Jesus, we must spend time with Him," Remmers said. "We are inviting members to journey through *The Desire of Ages* together and rediscover the beauty of Christ's character, His compassion, and His mission to save humanity. Our prayer is that this experience will inspire a renewed commitment to discipleship and mission."

As part of the initiative, Pacific Press Publishing Association will produce a special sharing book consisting of chapters from *The Desire of Ages*. The North American Division hopes to distribute 5 million copies throughout its territory, creating opportunities for members to engage friends, neighbors, coworkers, and community members in conversations about faith.

"The true strength of this initiative will not be found in a program or campaign," Remmers said. "Its impact will be seen when church members personally share the message of Jesus with people in their everyday lives. Every book distributed, every conversation started, and every act of kindness offered can become an opportunity for God to work in someone's heart."

Four Major Emphases

The initiative will unfold through four major emphases designed to help members model the life and ministry of Christ:

- **Pray Like Jesus** will focus on spiritual renewal through prayer, Bible study, and reading *The Desire of Ages*.
- **Serve Like Jesus** will encourage churches and members to engage in acts of compassion and community service that reflect Christ's love.
- **Share Jesus** will mobilize members to distribute the sharing book; participate in personal witnessing, including sharing their faith in digital spaces; and engage in coordinated outreach efforts across North America.
- **Follow Jesus** will focus on discipleship, spiritual growth, Bible studies, and helping individuals take next steps in their faith journey.



Digital Outreach

The initiative also includes a comprehensive digital outreach strategy designed to extend the reach of the gospel across North America. Consistent with the global initiative's emphasis on using all forms of media for mission, divisions, unions, conferences, churches, schools, ministries, and members will be equipped with resources for social media engagement, including posts, reels, short films, videos, and other shareable content for platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and other digital channels.

A dedicated digital platform will serve as a central hub for those responding to the All Things New message, providing opportunities to request prayer, access spiritual resources, explore Bible studies, and connect with local Seventh-day Adventist churches.

Bryant said the initiative represents an opportunity for the church to unite around a simple but powerful mission.

"As we approach 2027, we have a unique opportunity to focus together on Jesus Christ—His life, His ministry, and His invitation to new life," Bryant said. "When members pray together, serve together, share together, and follow Jesus together, God can do extraordinary things. Our prayer is that countless people across North America will discover the hope, peace, and renewal that can be found only in Him."

*Editor's Note: OneVoice27 is a global Seventh-day Adventist initiative that unites church members, leaders, institutions, and ministries around a shared mission focus leading to September 2027. All Things New is the public-facing message through which that mission emphasis is being shared with communities across North America and around the world.

NAD NEWS BRIEFS



North American Division Premiers Faith at Work, a New Documentary Web Series

Just in time for summer watching, the first episode of the North American Division's new documentary web series, *Faith at Work: Stories of Service and Hope*, premiered June 26, 2026, on the @NADAdventist YouTube channel.

The 10-episode series highlights practical, hands-on ways that churches and schools across the division are connecting with their communities. Each episode showcases a creative outreach hosted by a church or school during the 2025 Pentecost initiative, offering practical ministry inspiration for congregations looking for new ways to serve this summer.

Featured outreach efforts include ESL classes, dental care, community gardens, and a food bank that has served its community for more than 50 years. All nine unions in

the North American Division are represented in the series.

The release of the series is part of this year's Pentecost and Beyond emphasis, building on the momentum churches began during Pentecost 2025. After the June 26 premiere, one episode were released weekly on the NAD YouTube channel throughout the summer.

"These stories remind us that ministry often begins with simply paying attention to the needs around us," said series executive producer Julio C. Muñoz. "The churches and schools featured in *Faith at Work* are teaching, healing, building relationships, and sharing hope in very practical ways. Together they offer a beautiful picture of what following Jesus' example can mean."

Kimberly Luste Maran, NAD director of Communication, said

← Screenshot from one of the Faith at Work web documentary videos, which premiered on June 26, 2026.

she hopes the series will inspire pastors, church members, educators, and ministry leaders to think intentionally about how they can serve their own communities.

"The stories featured in this series reveal how members across North America are putting their faith into action," said Maran, who also served as an executive producer on the series. "I hope viewers will see something that sparks a new idea, encourages them to try something different, and helps them recognize opportunities for ministry in their own communities."

The series was produced in collaboration with filmmakers connected to the Sonscreen Film Festival community, giving emerging and professional Adventist storytellers an opportunity to help document ministry taking place across the division.

"This series was an enormously collaborative effort," said Rachel "Rynn" Scribner, producer of *Faith at Work*. "It was especially meaningful to see the church celebrating the creativity of filmmakers who grew up in the Sonscreen community and are now using those gifts to tell stories for their church."

Scribner said she hopes viewers come away encouraged by the creativity, care, and commitment shown by the featured churches and schools.

"These episodes show faith being put into practice in real communities," Scribner said. "I'm excited for viewers to see the creative ways churches and schools are serving, connecting, and sharing hope."

—NAD Office of Communication



Weymouth
Spence
Provided by
Washington
Adventist
University

Washington Adventist University President to Transition to New Role

Washington Adventist University (WAU) announced on June 2, 2026, that Weymouth Spence, Ed.D., concluded his tenure as president on June 30, 2026, and transitioned to a new role, effective July 1, 2026.

In this new role Spence will devote his attention to advancing critical campus infrastructure initiatives central to WAU's long-term success. He will build on the momentum of the university's Vision 2030 plan to drive academic innovation, strengthen partnerships, and increase institutional visibility to enhance the learning environment for student success.

"For 18 years Spence has been a steadfast force at Washington Adventist University, steering the institution through periods of meaningful growth, transformation, and purpose-driven progress," said Marcellus T. Robinson, WAU board of trustees chair. "His ongoing dedication remains invaluable as he advances several key strategic priorities."

Since assuming the presidency on January 2, 2008, Spence has championed a bold vision centered on academic excellence, mission alignment, and workforce readiness. Now he will help advance several development and infrastructure planning initiatives that are already underway and designed to diversify the university's revenue stream to increase student scholarships, enhance student life, improve campus facilities, and expand opportunities for innovation and community engagement.

"Vision 2030 is not simply a plan—it is a commitment to the future of our students, faculty, and community," said Spence. "This decision allows me to dedi-

Center for Youth Evangelism Appoints Pedro Perez as International Pathfinder Camporee Director

The Center for Youth Evangelism has officially appointed Pedro Perez as the new International Pathfinder

Camporee director. Perez steps into the role succeeding Ron Whitehead, who provided visionary leadership as both the CYE executive director and International Pathfinder Camporee director for 29 years.

Perez brings to the CYE a wealth of experience, most recently serving as the Pathfinder and Adventurer director for the Florida Conference since 2017. His extensive background in youth ministry also includes leading in the Florida Conference as Youth Ministries director (2010–2017) and previously serving as Youth director for the Southern New England Conference.

"We are excited to have Pastor Pedro Perez as our new International Camporee director!" North American Division Youth and Young Adult Ministries director Tracy Wood eagerly voiced. "We look forward to collaborating with him and the CYE team in serving our vast network of club ministries leaders throughout the North American Division. We anticipate that our 2029 NAD Stand Strong International Camporee will be phenomenal under Pedro's leadership as we collaborate together in new ways!"

Perez has additional leadership experience, successfully serving in both youth pastor and senior pastor roles. He holds a Doctorate of Ministry and a Master of Divinity from Andrews University, alongside a Bachelor of Theology from Union College (now Union Adventist University). Perez and his wife, Claudia, have two young adult children.

"I am thrilled to welcome Pastor Perez to the CYE team as our new camporee director. He brings to the team extensive evangelistic youth ministry experience in addition to his creative and intentional way of building leaders for the church," NAD vice president Wendy Eberhardt shared. "The international camporee is a monumental experience in the spiritual journey of a Pathfinder, and I am confident that [he] will continue to move the camporee forward as a life-changing space where Pathfinders grow their faith and build discipleship connections that will last an eternity."

—Center for Youth Evangelism



Pedro Perez

Provided by the Center for
Youth Evangelism

cate focused leadership to the transformational campus initiatives that will help position WAU for a better future by seeking sustainable growth and impact."

In the interim, the board of trustees has asked Cheryl Kisunzu, Ph.D., former WAU provost, to postpone her retirement and serve as interim

president, effective July 1. A committee composed of representatives from WAU's constituent community has been formed to begin the search for a new president. Elfreda V. Blue, Ph.D., was appointed as the new provost of Washington Adventist University, taking office on July 27, 2026.

—Washington Adventist University

Southwestern Adventist University Names Nelu Nedelea as Twenty-seventh President

The Southwestern Adventist University board of trustees voted on May 21, 2026, for Nelu Nedelea to become the twenty-seventh president of the university. He will assume the office on July 15. Nedelea most recently served as system vice president of Mission and Ministry for Mercy, one of the largest Catholic health systems in the United States.

"I am deeply honored and humbled by the opportunity to serve as president of Southwestern Adventist University," says Nedelea. "I believe this is a moment to build bridges between faith, innovation, academic excellence, and service. My family and I are excited to join a community committed to developing students not only for successful careers but also for lives of purpose, leadership, and meaningful impact."

"Nedelea's deep commitment to mission, his proven leadership across complex organizations, and his heart for forming the next generation made him the ideal candidate for the role of president. We thank God for His leadership in the selection process, and we know the university is in good hands, because it's in God's hands," says Elton DeMoraes, chair of the Southwestern Adventist University board and president of the Southwestern Union Conference.

The university's presidential search committee engaged the services of FaithSearch Partners, who assisted in narrowing the field of qualified Seventh-day Adventist candidates to a select group who met the key skills and characteristics desired in the university's next president. The interview process included panel and individual interviews, as well as engagements with faculty, staff and students, who then provided feedback to the search committee.

"Nelu Nedelea brings exactly what we were looking for: a leader who has integrated mission and values at scale, and who leads from his faith. The committee believes he is the right person, at the right time, to lead Southwestern Adventist University," says John Page, Southwestern Union Conference treasurer and chair of the search committee.

Nedelea earned a Doctor of Philosophy in Global Leadership and Change from Pepperdine University in 2024, a Master of Business Administration in Health Care Management from La Sierra University in 2018, and a Master of Science in Chaplaincy from Loma Linda University in 2016. He is an ordained minister within the Seventh-day Adventist Church



↑ Nelu Nedelea, recently named president of Southwestern Adventist University
Provided by Southwestern Adventist University

and holds active ministerial credentials through the North American Division.

He began his career as a lead pastor in Romania and Canada, directing teams of more than 30 staff and volunteers and overseeing community-based educational and capital development initiatives. He later served as director of Mission Integration and Spiritual Care for Adventist Health in Bakersfield, St. Helena, and Glendale, California, before joining Mercy in 2022, where he led system-wide mission integration across more than 40 hospitals and 900 care sites and provided executive leadership for more than 300 team members. He is fluent in Romanian and conversational in Spanish.

"Southwestern Adventist University is entering a season of great opportunity, and I am confident that God has prepared Nelu Nedelea for this moment," says DeMoraes. "His love for students, his devotion to the mission of Adventist education, and his servant's heart will be a blessing to this campus and to the entire Southwestern Union family. We ask the church to join us in praying for him, for Southwestern, and for the work God is calling us to do together."

—Gerson Pancorbo, Southwestern Union Conference

Sophia

just lost her husband

One of her most important questions is how to take care of her daughter and still make a significant impact on her local church. Her friend Susan has given her some ideas, but she's still navigating the details.



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ADVENTIST REVIEW

Please enjoy the following pages 37-46, which feature content curated by *Adventist Journey* from the magazine, *Adventist Review*.

80

The number of years in which the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty (AIDLR), a nongovernmental organization, has been promoting and defending freedom of conscience, worship, and religion worldwide. An anniversary celebration took place during the Conscience and Liberty 2026 Conference in Toledo, Spain, March 24-26. The event brought together about 70 invited participants from across the globe for three days of in-depth reflection, debate, and action on the state of freedom of religion or belief in an increasingly turbulent world.

“What would happen if, as Seventh-day Adventists, we were not defined as much by a list of characteristics as by a relationship to a Person? What if what defined us was a relationship, a way of understanding the world and mission in connection to that relationship?”

—Jonathan Contero, associate director of the Center for Secular and Post-Christian Mission of the General Conference, during a workshop at the I Will Go International Mission Congress at Sagunto Adventist College in Sagunto, Valencia, Spain, March 21. Contero explained that the way we do church can drive or jeopardize mission, as he called Adventist members to make Jesus the center of everything we do when reaching other people, especially those from a secular background.

MORE THAN 25,000

The number of people who attended recent evangelistic meetings in Cochabamba and Oruro, Bolivia. The initiative was part of the *La Esperanza es Jesus* (Hope Is Jesus) evangelistic caravan, a series of large-scale gatherings held in both cities. International speaker Alejandro Bullón presented the messages, with additional attendees making spiritual commitments that will be followed up by local congregations. At the close of the series, 325 people were baptized following two days of public preaching.

“He is a deeply mission-driven leader with exceptional experience across clinical care, academic medicine, and health-care operations. . . . [He] understands both the complexity of our integrated organization and the sacred responsibility of our global calling.”

—Thomas Lemon, chair of the Loma Linda University Health Board of Trustees, reflecting on the April 16 vote to appoint Anthony Hilliard to serve as president of the health-care organization, effective July 1. Hilliard earned his medical degree from the Loma Linda University School of Medicine and completed his residency and cardiology fellowships at the Mayo Clinic, where he received multiple national honors. Since returning to Loma Linda University Health in 2009, he has served in progressively senior leadership roles, including, since 2024, chief executive officer of the hospitals.

ONEVOICE27 EXPANDS AS CHURCH LEADERS CALL FOR BOLD, UNITED MISSION

At Spring Meeting regional leaders hear plans ahead of the 2027 initiative.

Hannah Drewieck, *Adventist Review*

Seventh-day Adventist regional leaders attending Spring Meeting on April 15 heard an expanded presentation on OneVoice27, a worldwide evangelism initiative designed to bring together media outreach, local churches, and members in a global effort to share the gospel in September 2027.

“OneVoice27 is not a new name that you give for the same things that you’re already doing. Because if you just give the name to do exactly what you are doing, this is not a movement. That is just maintenance,” said Erton Köhler, president of the General Conference (GC). “OneVoice27 is a call to think outside of the box, to think of something we didn’t do before, to mobilize the church, to be more aggressive in the mission of the church. This is an opportunity to move beyond where we are right now.”

Köhler also pointed leaders to September 5, 2026, as the initiative’s planned global launch date, when Adventist entities, institutions, and members around the world will use social media and other media platforms to announce what is coming and begin building momentum for the church’s worldwide effort to share the gospel in September 2027.

Spiritual Preparation for 2027

A central focus of the presentation was the spiritual preparation of church members worldwide, with leaders emphasizing that the initiative must be grounded in prayer, Scripture, and a renewed focus on Christ.

“Every great movement of God begins with prayer,” Ramon Canals, GC Ministerial Association secretary, said. “OneVoice27 is no exception. The key to every missionary, evangelistic, soul-winning success is prayer.”

“WE ARE IN TO SPEAK WITH A LOUD VOICE, WITH ONE VOICE,” SAID PAUL H. DOUGLAS, GC TREASURER. “WE ARE IN FOR THE HARVEST—THE HARVEST OF THE SEEDS SOWN IN HOMES, IN LOCAL CHURCHES, AND IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE. WE ARE IN TO ENSURE THAT ALL WHO HEAR THE VOICE OF GOD WILL BE PART OF THE FAMILY OF GOD.”

Canals called the global church to unite in a 40-day prayer initiative from July 23 to August 31, 2027. The initiative is designed to prepare members spiritually ahead of the September outreach by fostering revival, deeper consecration, and a collective focus on mission. Members are

also encouraged to study the biblical books of Daniel and Revelation, which leaders described as foundational to the Adventist Church’s mission.

Mário Martinelli, GC Publishing Ministries director, introduced the 2027 Missionary Book of the Year. The sharing resource will center on Daniel and Revelation and will include the full biblical text, explanatory commentary, visual illustrations, and QR codes linking to additional content. The book is currently in development, with English copies expected in October 2026 and translations to follow, making it accessible for global distribution.

Alongside this, Merlin Burt, director of the Ellen G. White Estate, encouraged members to read *The Desire of Ages* as part of their spiritual preparation. Plans are underway to release a special edition titled *Jesus: The Desire of Ages*, featuring updated language, Scripture references, and a six-month daily reading plan. These preparation materials are intended to help members deepen their relationship with Christ as they prepare to share Him with others.

“OneVoice27 needs to be in our DNA,” said Audrey Andersson, a GC vice president, emphasizing that departments across the General Conference are working to integrate the initiative into their ministries—from Children and Family to Education, Stewardship, and Youth—so that members of all ages can take part in the mission.

“All Things New: Hope Starts Here”

While OneVoice27 serves as the name of the internal initiative, Alyssa Truman, GC Communication director, emphasized that it will not be the message shared publicly. Instead, church leaders introduced a global theme intended to resonate across cultures, belief systems, and media platforms.

The theme, developed by a working group of departmental leaders, institutional representatives, and communication professionals, is “All Things New: Hope Starts Here,” drawn from Revelation 21:5. Truman explained the theme was designed to be broad enough to connect in both Christian and non-Christian contexts, adaptable across formats ranging from social media to large-scale advertising, translatable, and personal enough to speak to individual experiences of pain, loss, and a longing for restoration.

“‘All Things New’ is not our promise as a church. It is God’s promise to His children,” said Truman. “We want each member to internalize that message for themselves, and as we create content to share, we want to ensure that the world hears that restoration can come only through Jesus Christ.”

Resources to Equip Members and Reach Seekers

“The impact of OneVoice27 will never be accomplished through the institutions of the church,” said Richard Stephenson, a GC associate treasurer. “It will be accomplished through the local church member sharing Jesus.”

Stephenson explained that the General Conference is focusing on two primary objectives: equipping members and reaching seekers.

To support this, several global initiatives are being developed. These include the creation of shareable, member-generated content across digital platforms, supported by a centralized content engine where members can access and contribute resources. A global digital billboard and signage campaign will also place the message of “All Things New: Hope Starts Here” in high-visibility public spaces, directing individuals to learn more.

In addition, Jim Howard, Adventist World Radio president, introduced Global Bible School as a supporting tool to help churches receive and nurture interest through digital outreach. The platform uses online and mobile-based Bible studies to engage individuals and connect them with local churches for follow-up and discipleship.

Together, these efforts are designed to make it easier for members to share their faith while ensuring those who respond are connected to local church communities.

Youth, Local Churches, and Global Coordination

A key component of the initiative is the Global Creators Summit, scheduled for July 20-23, 2026. The event will bring together 10 content creators or influencers from each of the Adventist Church’s global divisions to collaborate, receive training, and begin developing content for OneVoice27. Participants will return to their respective regions equipped to create and share digital content, mentor others, and expand the church’s presence across online platforms.

“The objectives and goals of OneVoice27 will not be realized unless our young people are mobilized to participate in the mission of the church,” said Busi Khumalo, GC Youth Ministries director.

Khumalo noted that young people are uniquely positioned to contribute to the initiative, particularly in digital spaces, and encouraged leaders to intentionally involve them in both media-based outreach and local church ministry.

Crystal Ward, GC associate Ministerial Association secretary, emphasized that the initiative also depends on the active involvement of local churches and members. She noted that individuals can participate in a variety of ways, including sharing content, forming small groups, studying the Bible with others, and building relationships within their communities.

Presenters also outlined a collaborative structure to support the initiative, including significant GC funding and coordination through designated GC liaisons who will work with divisions around the world.

A Call to Harvest

“We are in to speak with a loud voice, with one voice,” said Paul H. Douglas, GC treasurer. “We are in for the harvest—the harvest of the seeds sown in homes, in local churches, and in the public square. We are in to ensure that all who hear the voice of God will be part of the family of God. Heaven is in. God is in. Are you in?”

General Conference president Erton Köhler chairs the session that introduced updates to the OneVoice27 initiative to the GC Executive Committee during Spring Meeting on April 15. Photo: George Nelson/Adventist Media Exchange (CC BY 4.0)



CHURCH LEADERS RECOMMEND MERGER IN GERMANY TO INCREASE MISSION EFFICIENCY

Delegates to the next GC Session will vote on the proposed German Union Conference.



Marcos Paseggi, *Adventist Review*

Members of the General Conference Executive Committee (GC EXCOM) voted to recommend the merger of the North German Union Conference (NGU) and the South German Union Conference (SGU) into a single German Union Conference. The vote took place on the first day of the 2026 Spring Meeting of the body at the Seventh-day Adventist Church headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, April 14.

A Response to Current Realities

According to General Conference (GC) vice president Tom Lemon, the move is a response to “ongoing missional, administrative, and organizational considerations.” He added that “the merger builds on several years of increasing collaboration between the two unions, including the alignment of departmental functions, shared strategic planning, and the consolidation of administrative operations.” He explained, “These developments have demonstrated the benefits of unified leadership and coordinated mission strategy while reducing duplication and complexity.”

Likewise, GC associate secretary Karen Porter explained that establishing a single German Union Conference “will provide a clearer organizational structure, improve the ability to respond to demographic and societal changes, and support a more agile and mission-focused use of human and financial resources.”

A Historical Review

GC EXCOM members and invitees then watched a short video giving the history and rationale for this proposed merger.

“This context explains why we have worked consistently for nearly 40 years to provide a lean structure to a highly overorganized church,” explained the video narrator at the beginning of the presentation. “Our goal is to fulfill our mission more efficiently, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God to a society in secular Europe.”

The video explained how in 1984 the SGU initiated the examination of a potential merger, and in 1987 an expert group was commissioned to study the merger, which was officially recommended in 1989. “The historic fall of the iron curtain opened new possibilities for unity across Germany, and the political reunification of West and East Germany transformed the landscape for church organization,” it added.

From 1992 there were several failed attempts to merge, including a divided vote in 2002 when the NGU voted for the merger but the SGU voted against. But in 2013 both unions launched a process of increasingly close collaboration, laying the groundwork for unity. “Despite setbacks, the vision for unity was never abandoned,” and “cooperation became the bridge toward an eventual merger.”

Since 2014 these attempts included one chief financial officer and one secretary (vice president) serving both territories simultaneously, one budget, joint departments, and joint governance. “Rather than waiting for a formal merger vote, the two unions began functioning as one in practice—building trust, aligning systems, and demonstrating that unity was already possible. This period

produced tangible, lasting integration across every dimension of the church.”

In November 2022 the Inter-European Division, which includes Germany, unanimously approved the merger.

Advantages of the Move

According to regional church leaders the merger will support strategy—giving the territory high agility in a rapidly changing society—and unity, as the church will speak with one voice in public. It will also provide greater efficiency and improved finances.

“The merger is not merely a future plan—it is already a present reality in practice. Years of deliberate integration have yielded measurable results that demonstrate that the model works,” the narrator said.

Reinvestment in Mission

Efficiency improvements and cost savings are already being reinvested in mission growth, regional church leaders said. “The organizational integration is not just about saving money; it is about redirecting every freed dollar toward the mission of the church.” These gains have already translated to US\$580,000 for evangelism and small-group series across Germany, \$1.85 million for HopeTV, and \$1.15 million for church-planting initiatives.

From the floor Alexander Ott, associate secretary of the GC, celebrated the German leaders’ focus on mission. “We see two unions streamlining resources,” something that “will be a stepping stone toward being more effective for mission.” **✚**

Grounded in the Bible

Our unshakable
foundation

Erton C. Köhler

Grounded in the Bible, focused on the mission” is more than a slogan. It is the compass that guides the Adventist movement in this decisive time. While the world drifts on a sea of shifting convictions, the global remnant church can stand firm only when it is anchored to the eternal foundation of God’s Word.

We live in a world of instability. Borders shift, truths are renamed, and values lose their anchors. The rain of doubt pours relentlessly, rivers of post-truth flood billions of screens, and the winds of relativism blow into hurricanes of indifference. In the midst of this avalanche of uncertainty, one question inevitably arises: Is there anything that does not change? Is there a foundation that remains secure?

Jesus answers with absolute clarity. In Matthew 7:24-27 He tells the story of two builders—one wise, the other foolish. Both build. Both face storms. But only one remains standing. What makes the difference? The foundation. One builds on rock, while the other builds on sand. In the original Greek the word for “rock” is *petra*, meaning a solid, deep, immovable mass. That is the foundation of God’s people—the living and eternal Word of God. According to 2 Timothy 3:16, 17, that



Word is “God-breathed,” able to teach, correct, restore, and equip every person for every good work. In other words, Scripture is not just one book among many; it is the ground of eternity.

The house may be beautiful, the design bold, the decor modern—yes, it may look impressive. But if it stands on sand, it will fall. Only those who build on what cannot be moved will stand firm. And in these times there is only one unshakable foundation: the Word of God.

The Word Is Inspired

In 2 Timothy 3:16 Paul tells us, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” The original Greek word, *theópneustos*, literally, “God-breathed,” paints a powerful picture. This brings us back to Creation: the same God who breathed life into Adam now breathes truth into the pages of Scripture. The Bible is not just a book written by humans; it is heaven’s breath captured in human language. It is not a dictation of divine power, but the divine breath expressed through human words.

This inspiration is not merely poetic, nor is it partial—it is complete. The Word was formed by the Spirit, revealed by God, written by consecrated individuals, and preserved across the centuries through sacrifice and faith. “God cares for us as intellectual beings, and He has given us His Word as a lamp to our feet and a light to our pathway,” writes Ellen White.¹ Even in these days of cultural darkness and ideological tempests, the Word of God still shines brightly, providing clarity and direction.

Today voices multiply across every channel—experts, algorithms, trends—yet none carry the authority of the Eternal. That is why the Bible does not need to be updated; it needs to be applied. It should not be reinterpreted to please culture; it must urgently be proclaimed to transform hearts.

A 2023 report from the organization Open Doors revealed that more than 360 million Christians face severe persecution worldwide, many simply for possessing or sharing a Bible.² In some countries owning Scripture is treated as a crime against the state. In others, surveillance systems alert authorities when biblical texts are accessed online. In some places state cameras are installed inside Christian churches. Notice this: If the Word were irrelevant, it would not cause such fear. The enemy knows its power—and God’s people must know it too.

When everything around us trembles,
it stands. When ideologies change, it
stands. When structures fall, it endures.

The Word Is Sufficient

The next verse, 2 Timothy 3:17, affirms that the Word makes the person of God “complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” The Greek word *artios* means complete, fully capable, fully prepared. In other words, the Bible is self-sufficient. It requires no

complements, no embellishments. It shapes character, leads to salvation, and sustains mission.

Throughout history, religious movements have shipwrecked by abandoning Scripture. Others turned to human traditions, mystical visions, and theological fashions. Yet biblical faithfulness has always been the axis of true Christianity—and in the end-times it will be no different.

“If men had been willing to receive the truth so plainly stated in the Scriptures concerning the nature of man and the state of the dead, they would see in the claims and manifestations of spiritualism the working of Satan with power and signs and lying wonders,” writes Ellen White.³ Scripture has never been insufficient. The problem is that many have set it aside or twisted it for their own advantage.

Therefore, it must be clearly stated: the global mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is built not on human strategies but on the Word. We are a people of the Book. And wherever the Bible is central, heaven works miracles beyond imagination.

In Psalm 119:105 the psalmist declares, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” The Hebrew word for “lamp” is *ner*—a small oil lamp used to light one step at a time on dark trails. The Word does not promise to reveal the entire future, but it guarantees light for the next step—and that is enough.

The Word Is Practical

Jesus’ metaphor in Matthew 7 is unmistakable: the difference between ruin and endurance lies in obedience to the Word. It is not enough to know; we must live it. It is not enough to hear; we must put it into practice.

The church will be strengthened not by creative ideas but by obedient faith. Stability comes not from the amount of biblical knowledge, but from submission to it—faithful obedience to God and communion with Him under the shadow of His grace. In this way, when end-time Adventism faces persecution, trials, and testing, only those firmly grounded in the Word will remain steadfast.

In 2017 a 7.1-magnitude earthquake struck central Mexico. Many modern buildings collapsed, yet some older structures remained intact. Engineers would explain that the secret is in having a deep, discrete, but solid foundation. The same is true for the church. What sustains a church is not what shines on the surface, but what lies beneath. And there is only one foundation that never fails: the Word of God.

The Bible is not merely a book for theological debates; it is a guide for daily life. It shapes how we treat others, manage resources, respond to crises, and make decisions. Every area of life not grounded in the Bible is vulnerable to collapse.

Is the Bible Still Sufficient for Us?

The essential question is not how many Bibles we own, but whether we are truly grounded in the Word. There is a difference between memorizing verses and depending on the Word. The remnant church will be recognized not merely by professing correct doctrines but by living in covenant with revealed truth.

The people who keep the commandments and hold the testimony of Jesus (Rev. 12:17) are those who will not compromise the authority of the Word. It is our moral code, our prophetic foundation, our missionary manual, and our divine love letter.

When everything around us trembles, it stands. When ideologies change, it stands. When structures fall, it endures. After all, the Bible is the only book that reads the human heart even as it is being read.

Let Us Return to the Word

Today God calls leaders, families, youth, elders, children, teachers, and preachers to return to the foundation. There is only one future for the church—upon the Rock. There is only one power for the mission—the Word.

Will you rebuild your life on Scripture? Will you place every ministry plan, every family step, every financial decision under “Thus says the Lord”? Do you desire the Bible to be your foundation and not merely an ornament?

Then stand up. Reconsecrate yourself. Return to the Word. Pray with the Bible open. Decide with the Bible in mind. Preach with the Bible in your heart. For only those who are grounded in the Bible and focused on the mission will remain standing.

Maranatha! 

¹ Ellen G. White, in *Review and Herald*, Aug. 21, 1888, par. 6.

² Open Doors Hong Kong, “World Watch List 2023: Overview,” <https://www.opendoors.org.hk/en-US/news/latest/wwl23-overview/>.

³ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 559.

Ertan C. Köhler is the president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Only those who build
on what cannot be
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there is only one
unshakable foundation:
the Word of God.



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A BOGUS DOCTRINE?

Was the sanctuary doctrine made up just to explain why Jesus didn't come back in 1844?

The claim circulated widely in 1979. Was the sanctuary doctrine biblical, or was it just a convenient excuse to avoid embarrassment? The Daniel and Revelation Committee, with the Biblical Research Institute, addressed the issue with seven published volumes. These showed that the sanctuary doctrine is a solid Bible teaching. The early Adventist discovery is sound: The “cleansing of the sanctuary” in Daniel 8:14, rather than describing Christ cleansing the earth at His second coming, points to the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary through a work of judgment.

Daniel 2, 7, and 8 tell the same basic story, each chapter adding more detail. Four metals in an image represent four kingdoms in Daniel 2. Four unclean animals represent the same kingdoms in Daniel 7, but with the addition of a little horn that rises from the fourth beast (Dan. 7:8). Then a heavenly judgment begins, with the “Ancient of Days” (verse 9) and “One like the Son of Man” (verse 13) taking part.

Daniel 8 repeats the same sequence but leaves out Babylon, because Babylon was near its end when the vision is given. This time clean animals—a ram and a goat—stand for Medo-Persia and Greece. The little horn in Daniel 8 comes from one of the four winds, or directions, and points to Rome. It shows pagan Rome in its earthly (horizontal) conquest (Dan. 8:9, 10) and papal Rome in its (vertical) attack on heaven, the Prince of the host,

and the place of God’s sanctuary (verses 11, 12). A clean animal would have been inappropriate to symbolize Rome, with its “transgression of desolation” (verse 13) or “abomination of desolation” (Dan. 11:31; 12:11; see also Matt. 24:15).

Heaven’s answer to the Papacy’s attack on God’s sanctuary and people (symbolized by “the host” and “the stars” [Dan. 12:3]) comes in Daniel 8:14: After 2,300 “evening-mornings,” the sanctuary would

heavenly judgment. This judgment not only deals with the beasts and the little horn (Dan. 7:11, 12, 26; 8:13, 25) but also concerns God’s people (Dan. 7:9, 10, 13, 14, 22, 27; 8:13, 24, 25).

The starting point of this judgment is connected with the 70-week prophecy of Daniel 9. Both time periods focus on Christ’s atoning work: The 70 weeks point to His sacrifice on the cross, and the 2,300 days point to His Day of Atonement

Before Christ returns, the subjects of His kingdom must be clearly identified through this heavenly judgment, which began in 1844.

be cleansed. This points to a heavenly Day of Atonement. In the earthly sanctuary service both a ram and a goat were used on that day, and in that order (Lev. 16:3, 9). On that day the sanctuary was cleansed from the sins confessed during the year. The blood of the Lord’s goat was sprinkled first in the most holy place, on and before the mercy seat, to atone for the broken law inside the ark.

When Daniel 7 and 8 are compared, Daniel 8:14 clearly describes the same

ministry in the heavenly sanctuary.

Before Christ returns as “King of kings and Lord of lords” (Rev. 19:16), the subjects of His kingdom must be clearly identified through this heavenly judgment, which began in 1844. Only then can He “reward . . . every one according to his work” (Rev. 22:12). **✠**

Clinton Wahlen is an associate director at the Biblical Research Institute.

WHAT TO DO WITH DOUBT

Many, especially those who are young in the Christian life, are at times troubled with the suggestions of skepticism. There are in the Bible many things which they cannot explain, or even understand, and Satan employs these to shake their faith in the Scriptures as a revelation from God. They ask, “How shall I know the right way? If the Bible is indeed the Word of God, how can I be freed from these doubts and perplexities?”

God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His Word, are all established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. Yet God has never removed the possibility of doubt. Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration. Those who wish to doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith.

It is impossible for finite minds fully to comprehend the character or the works of the Infinite One. To the keenest intellect, the most highly educated mind, that holy Being must ever remain clothed in mystery. “Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?” . . .

The Word of God, like the character of its divine Author, presents mysteries that

Learning to trust what finite minds cannot fully explain

Ellen G. White

can never be fully comprehended by finite beings. The entrance of sin into the world, the incarnation of Christ, regeneration, the resurrection, and many other subjects presented in the Bible, are mysteries too deep for the human mind to explain, or even fully to comprehend. But we have no reason to doubt God’s Word because we cannot understand the mysteries of His providence. In the natural world we are constantly surrounded with mysteries that we cannot fathom. The very humblest forms of life present a problem that the wisest of philosophers is powerless to explain. Everywhere are wonders beyond our ken. Should we then be surprised to find that in the spiritual world also there are mysteries that we cannot fathom? The difficulty lies solely in the weakness and narrowness of the human mind. God has given us in the Scriptures sufficient evidence of their divine character, and we are not to doubt His word because we cannot understand all the mysteries of His providence. . . .

The Bible unfolds truth with a simplicity and a perfect adaptation to the needs and

longings of the human heart, that has astonished and charmed the most highly cultivated minds, while it enables the humblest and uncultured to discern the way of salvation. And yet these simply stated truths lay hold upon subjects so elevated, so far-reaching, so infinitely beyond the power of human comprehension, that we can accept them only because God has declared them. Thus the plan of redemption is laid open to us, so that every soul may see the steps he is to take in repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, in order to be saved in God’s appointed way; yet beneath these truths, so easily understood, lie mysteries that are the hiding of His glory—mysteries that overpower the mind in its research, yet inspire the sincere seeker for truth with reverence and faith. The more he searches the Bible, the deeper is his conviction that it is the Word of the living God, and human reason bows before the majesty of divine revelation.

To acknowledge that we cannot fully comprehend the great truths of the Bible is only to admit that the finite mind is inadequate to grasp the infinite; that man, with his limited, human knowledge, cannot understand the purposes of Omniscience. ❧

Seventh-day Adventists believe that **Ellen G. White** (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of ministry. This excerpt is taken from *Steps to Christ*, pp. 105-108.

HOW, WHEN, AND WHO?

The final sign

Erton Köhler

The question has not changed. It echoes from the Mount of Olives into every generation. When will Christ return? And how will we know? Jesus answered both, but maybe not in the way many expect. He redirected attention from speculation to *mission*.

In Matthew 24 Christ presents a sequence of signs. Wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes. “You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. . . . But the end is not yet” (verse 6). These realities intensify and disturb, yet they do not determine the end. “All these are the beginning of sorrows” (verse 8). They describe a world without God, not the timing of God.

That distinction is decisive. Instead of being heaven’s initiative, these signs are the result of humanity’s distance from its Creator. Conflicts multiply, suffering expands, and disorder increases, yet the message of Jesus is unmistakable. The enemy may shake the world, but one thing he does not do is set the clock. Satan can’t determine the end of time, but God and mission do. Destruction won’t mark the final chapter of history. History will close when Christ’s *purpose* is fulfilled.

Then comes the decisive statement: “This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come” (Matt. 24:14). Not war, not crisis, not collapse. The final signal is proclamation!

This changes everything. It answers the how, when, and who. Who will carry that witness? All Christians are called to lift up Christ. The proclamation of His soon return, however, has been

The enemy may
shake the world,
but one thing he
does not do is
set the clock.

placed at the center of the Advent movement. Our pioneers were shaped by Scripture, tested by disappointment, and sent back with renewed clarity. The remnant church was called to prepare the world. Speculating about the latest headlines is

not the focus. Scripture describes these people as those who “keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 12:17), and as being entrusted with the everlasting gospel for “every nation, tribe, tongue, and people” (Rev. 14:6).

Rather than being a message of fear, it is a message of urgency and grace. Heaven does not delay, but waits in mercy. As Ellen G. White wrote: “To prepare a people to stand in the day of God”^{*} was the purpose entrusted to God’s people. So

where should our eyes be now? On rumors? On predictions? On headlines? Or on the unfinished map of mission and the millions still waiting to hear?

How? When? And who?

The answer is clear. The mission defines the moment. The message defines the movement. And the church defines the witness.

If this is the final sign . . . who will proclaim it? 

^{*} Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 311.

Erton C. Köhler is the president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.



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