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TELLING THE STORY

Archives, Statistics, and Research (ASTR) Newsletter - Issue #17



Autumn 2023 Greetings from ASTR!

We here at ASTR hope our readers have had a pleasant summer, wherever you may be located! The ASTR staff has had a very busy summer, including many of our team traveling to attend several major Adventist conventions. You can read more about our presence around the world at ASI, the NAD Educators' Convention, and ASDAL in the articles below.

In addition to learning about what we've been up to, we're glad to share more historical nuggets from our past! We're pleased to share articles about Walter Ining's life and ministry, as well as statistics about our Youth Ministry programs and what motivates people to share more with foreign missions.

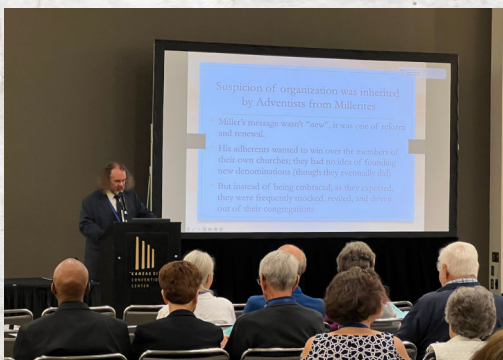
ASTR Staff Attend ASI and NAD Educators' Conferences

One of the highlights of our staff's summer was representing ASTR at both the Adventist-Laymen's Services and Industries (ASI) and North American Division Education conventions. We're glad to share brief reports of our activities and impressions from those who attended these events.



Roy Kline (L) and Rosette Kibuuka (R) at ASI in Kansas City

Continuing ASTR's participation in the annual (ASI), held this year on August 2-5, 2023, at Kansas City's Convention Center, our staff members Rosette Kibuuka, Roger Bello, Roy Kline, and David Trim were all glad to share about our resources to the attendees. Dr. Trim also shared a presentation during one of the sessions. Overall exhibitor presence was significant, although noticeably down from pre-pandemic events. ASTR was fortunate to have the booth closest to all visitor traffic coming in from the escalator. Among our giveaway items the most sought after were the Adventist pioneer photo cards, produced by our [Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventist's](#) personnel. The carnival wheel of SDA trivia questions continued to be popular and, somehow, no matter what question was landed on by children they always won! It provided wonderful moments to speak about the Church's rich history to visitors looking for a better understanding of the roots of Adventism. It also afforded the opportunity to nurture



David Trim speaking about our pioneers at ASI in Kansas City

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the seeds of curiosity and pride in children's interest in their Church. We look forward to returning to ASI, in Orlando, in August 2024.



Manuela Coppock enthusiastically sharing one of our flyers at the NAD Educators' Convention in Phoenix

Three of our staff members also enjoyed the opportunity to fly into the Arizona desert for a few days, where, despite the heat outdoors, we were thankful to enjoy a "cool" time indoors at the Phoenix Convention Center from August 7-10, 2023, in Phoenix, Arizona. Gladly representing ASTR in Phoenix were Reiko Davis, Manuela Coppock, and Michael Younker.



NAD teachers having fun playing "Connect 4" while we share more about SDA history with them

The NAD Educator's Convention was well attended, with some 6,000 teachers enjoying various keynote and 6 breakout sections, featuring nearly 300 speakers. ASTR was one of 150 registered exhibitors, and we were well positioned

alongside the Adventist Heritage and Ellen G. White Estate booths, helping encourage our teachers to maintain an enthusiasm for their heritage. We provided a number of giveaways, including more of our pioneer photo cards. Our "Connect 4" game was also highly popular with those passing by, giving us a chance to share about the many resources ASTR offers. We also had attendees help us put together a puzzle of some unknown pioneers, which kept visitors attentive to our booth. Overall, it was a very positive experience networking with our visitors, and it was wonderful to see how passionate our SDA teachers were about their work.

Michael Younker



Two of our visitors after proving their puzzle-master skills

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Adventist Missionaries Among the Arabs in Bible Lands

Walter and Frieda Ising's lives were a vivid portrayal of sacrifice, dedication, and zeal for the Adventist mission work that led to establishing Adventism in parts of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Palestine. The following account of their life has been adapted from an [article](#) by Chigemezi-Nnadozie Wogu in the *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists (ESDA)* at encyclopedia.adventist.org (all photos from ESDA).



Walter and Frieda Ising

Walter began his church service as Ludwig R. Conradi's personal secretary. From 1905 to 1908 Ising was secretary of the German Union, which also covered Russia, Austria, Hungary, and the Eastern Balkan states. Around the end of 1905 he also began serving as editor of the Adventist German church paper *Zions-Wächter*. In 1908, after a mission center was established in Beirut by Conradi, the then vice-president of the General Conference and leader of the unofficial European division, someone was needed to lead the new mission in the Middle East. Ising was chosen for this task.

Missionary Work in the Middle East

In April 1908 Ising, who had just turned 27, was sent with his wife, Frieda, and their baby daughter to the Levant Union Mission (covering Greece, Crete, the Ottoman Empire, Egypt, parts of Northern Africa, and Persia). Its headquarters was in Beirut, Lebanon, where the Isings settled and began to lead the Adventist mission in the Middle East. At that time the Adventist presence in the Arabic countries was minimal. Ising reported that work had started in Beirut, Haifa, Jaffa, and Jerusalem, with a membership of "only about twenty, including the workers themselves."¹

Early Ministry and Marriage

Walter Konrad Wilhelm Ising (born March 30, 1881) and Frieda Schlegel (born January 29, 1884) met in 1904 at the Mission Seminary in Friedensau, Germany, where Walter studied to become a pastor and Frieda was a nurse trainee. Walter proposed to marry Frieda by asking the school band to serenade her. They were married in August 1907.



H. J. Loeb sack, L. R. Conradi, Walter Ising, August 1924

Things turned out quite difficult for the missionary couple. "Hardly had Walter and Frieda arrived when both contracted typhoid fever. At the advice of other Westerners, they were moved out of Beirut into the hills. Left prostrate, Walter could no longer dream about how to transform the work; instead he devoted himself to prayer and reflection. He earnestly asked God to help them "find His people among the inhabitants of this land."²

With a conviction to do God's work, Ising moved back to Beirut and started offering Bible classes. In 1909, he baptized a group of men from the Ottoman province of Mesopotamia—today's country of Iraq. He enrolled in the Syrian Protestant College to study Arabic. He offered Bible studies in his home specially geared towards the students at the college. The students from the Christian communities of northern Syria and Iraq became his first converts.

Soon afterwards Ising began mission strategizing. He approached the work in three ways. First, he began working by building on what was already done by the workers there. In

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this vein, he travelled widely over his field, in Syria, Palestine, Arabia, and Mesopotamia, reaching isolated brethren and opening the fields for workers. Through all the dangers and discomforts of Oriental travel in that time—on foot, on horseback and camelback, on coastwise trading vessels, and crude native river boats, he made himself familiar with the conditions and the prospects for the gospel through this wide area. In Mosul and Baghdad, he found and established faithful members.³



The first 7 members in Mosul, Iraq, baptized by Walter Ising in 1923

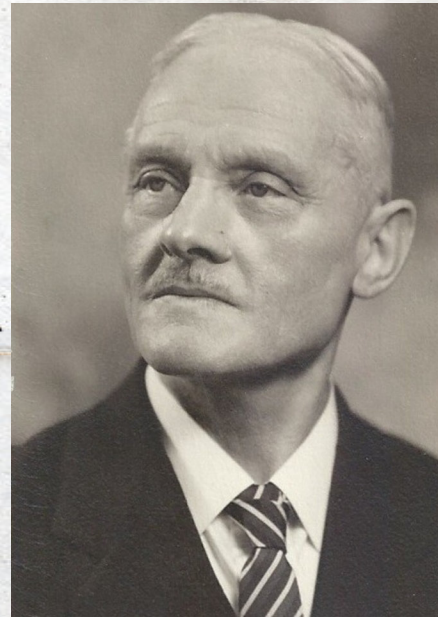
Second, Ising focused on German communities at first, because he found that he was not yet knowledgeable of the Arab culture, language, and people. In Haifa, he visited Mrs. Müller, an Adventist German nurse, who was working among the German settlers and colonists. He used her contacts in hopes that there would be an interest in the Adventist message. Unfortunately, he found limited interest among his German compatriots.

Third, aside from studying Arabic, which he pursued earnestly, he labored for the transition of the mission to indigenous leadership. Plans for this were realized beginning in 1928.

Egypt and Back to Europe

Around 1913, Ising became the superintendent of the mission in Lower Egypt with a combined membership of 50 people. Soon after he went to Iraq for about a year to organize the Adventist work there. While he was in Iraq, Frieda and their young daughter went to London. In 1914, when World War I

broke out, Frieda took care of wounded English soldiers, while Walter, who at the time was living in Egypt, a British territory, was interned throughout the war. As a German citizen, he was sent to a concentration camp on the Island of Malta, where he spent 61 months without sufficient food or water. With Ising interned, work in Lower Egypt was stopped. After the Armistice on November 11, 1918, Frieda went to Friedensau to work as a midwife. A year later the family was finally reunited. Ising taught at the Mission Seminary in Friedensau and for six months directed the Home Missionary and Sabbath School departments of the West German Union Conference.



Walter Ising

In July 1920, Ising was elected secretary of the European Division. As division secretary, he visited the Middle East. He renewed contact with a group of 120 men from As-Salt in Transjordan, who before World War I had requested to join the Adventist Church if educational support was provided. The group had a disagreement with their own denomination. Ising did not approve of the request when it was made, since it did not present a true picture of conversion to Adventism. After the war, Ising rethought the matter and resumed contacts with the As-Salt group. This type of engagement appears to be the first attempt of Adventists to work in the desert.

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Middle East Again

In December 1928, the Isings were called back to the Middle East mission. Walter was appointed superintendent of the Arabic Union Mission and continued there for seven years. Ising's focus this time was the support of indigenous leadership and ministers.

In 1930, while Ising was in Palestine, the first baptism occurred in this region. In 1935, Ising convened a workers' meeting to discuss how Adventist workers could be better prepared to serve Muslim communities. A working group was organized to study Muslim religious thought and history and recommend evangelistic approaches. Each participant was encouraged to acquire a fundamental knowledge of Islam and to study two books in the field of Islam within one year.

Ising's book *Among the Arabs in Bible Lands* was the fruit of his first-hand encounters in Palestine, Jerusalem, Lebanon, Damascus, and Babylon. This book contains a positive account of Islam and its adherents. Ising's narrative of the Middle Eastern culture, society, geography, plants, and animals qualifies his book as an anthropological work in its own right. Such work coming from an Adventist in the 1920s was exceptional.

Central European Division and the General Conference

In 1937, the Isings returned to Europe when Walter was appointed the Central European Division secretary. In 1938, Walter became associate departmental secretary in charge of the General Conference Sabbath School department. From 1946 to 1950, he was a GC field secretary. As an administrator and mission strategist, Ising ensured that policies favoring the Church's mission efforts were carried out. Frieda served with the Dorcas Society and was a lifelong member of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. She received a plaque from the Red Cross for her humanitarian activities. Walter Ising died September 23, 1950. Frieda Ising died July 11, 1966. However, their legacy continues to live in the many places worldwide where they selflessly served.

Adapted by Dragoslava Santrac, ESDA Managing Editor



Walter K. Ising, 1938

¹ Walter K. Ising, "Palestine," *Review and Herald*, August 6, 1908, 17.

² David Trim, "Where the People Are," *Ministry*, January 2016, 9.

³ Arthur Whitefield Spalding, *Christ's Last Legion* (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1949), 451.

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The Walter Ising Collection

The Walter K. Ising Collection, donated to the General Conference Archives in 1987, contains personal appointment diaries, journals, spending logs, photographic negatives, a photo album, and glass slides belonging to Walter Konrad Wilhelm Ising, who lived from 1881 to 1950. These materials are related to Ising's work as a Seventh-day Adventist missionary and church administrator in Germany, Lebanon, Egypt, Palestine, and the United States during the 1920s to the 1940s. You can learn more about Ising's life in the *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists* article which appears in this newsletter.

Ising kept his personal appointment diaries, which cover various years within the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, mostly in shorthand and in German. These have not yet been translated, transcribed, or digitized. The photo album and glass slides are mostly from the 1920s and 1930s and document life in the Adventist mission stations in the Middle East, including travel, meetings, and landmarks.

While these materials have not yet been digitized, you can see descriptions of the notebooks and the glass slides in the finding aid, which you can find at <https://bit.ly/3s2j7Ah>.

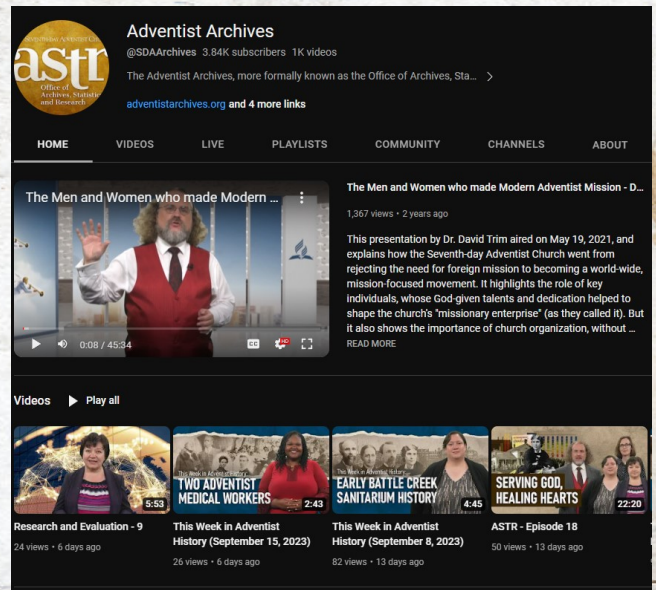
Ashlee Chism, Research Center Manager



Walter Ising (General Conference Archives)

Remember Us Online!

Remember that we keep an active YouTube account with several videos highlighting what we've been up to lately. Check us out at <https://www.youtube.com/user/SDAArchives>.



Find us also on Facebook and Instagram, respectively, at <https://www.facebook.com/GC.SDA.Archives> and <https://www.instagram.com/adventistarchives/>



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ASTR Attends ASDAL Conference



Elizabeth Henry, Digital Records Manager for ASTR presenting in Nairobi, Kenya at ASDAL

Twenty-one attendees, representing eleven entities – including the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research (ASTR), Adventist University of Africa, Adventist University of Central Africa, Adventist University of the Philippines, Andrews University, Burman University, Clifford University, Friedensau Adventist University, Kaduna State University, Oakwood University, and River Plate University – and 4 continents gathered under the theme of “Library Research and Internalization” at AUA.

Over the course of the next couple of days, attendees attended numerous presentations, grouped in different sessions. The first day of sessions was focused on record management and technologies. Presentations were made on the recent acquisition of Adventist resources, the Adventist Digital Library and SDA Periodical Index platforms, approaches to digitizing Adventist resources and a practical “How-to-do it” guide for records managers. The evening ended with a hybrid business meeting session.

The second day of the conference focused on Library Services. Papers with the following titles were presented: Attitudes, Competencies, and Adoption of Information Communication Technologies among University Employees; Librarian/Faculty Collaboration in Information Literacy at Andrews University: A faculty Perspective Study; Relationship between research collaboration and research productivity of librarians in Public Universities; North-West Nigeria; Academic Library Values, and Intercultural Sensitivity Assessment: The Case of Public Services Student Staff at James White Library. The evening activities were ended with another hybrid business Session.

ASTR’s representative to this year’s ASDAL Conference, Elizabeth Henry, presented a practical “how-to-do-it” guide for records managers and archivists. This presentation aimed to answer commonly asked questions when entities are making the decisions to digitize their holdings. Some of these questions include how to decide what to digitize, what to keep and what throw away, what kind of technology is needed to scan, what are the minimum scanning standard and where can I find resources to help on the way.

The 44th Annual ASDAL Conference is planned for June 2024 at the General Conference.

Elizabeth Henry, Digital Records Manager

The 43rd Annual Conference of the Association of Seventh-day Adventist Librarians (ASDAL) took place June 27-29, 2023 hosted by the Judith Thomas Library of the Adventist University of Africa (AUA) in Nairobi, Kenya. The ASDAL is, as it says on its website www.asdal.org, an organization for individuals interested in Seventh-day Adventist librarianship. It was formed to enhance communication between Seventh-day Adventist librarians and to serve as a forum for discussion of mutual problems and professional concerns of Seventh-day Adventist librarians.



Participants at the Opening Ceremony of ASDAL, June 2023

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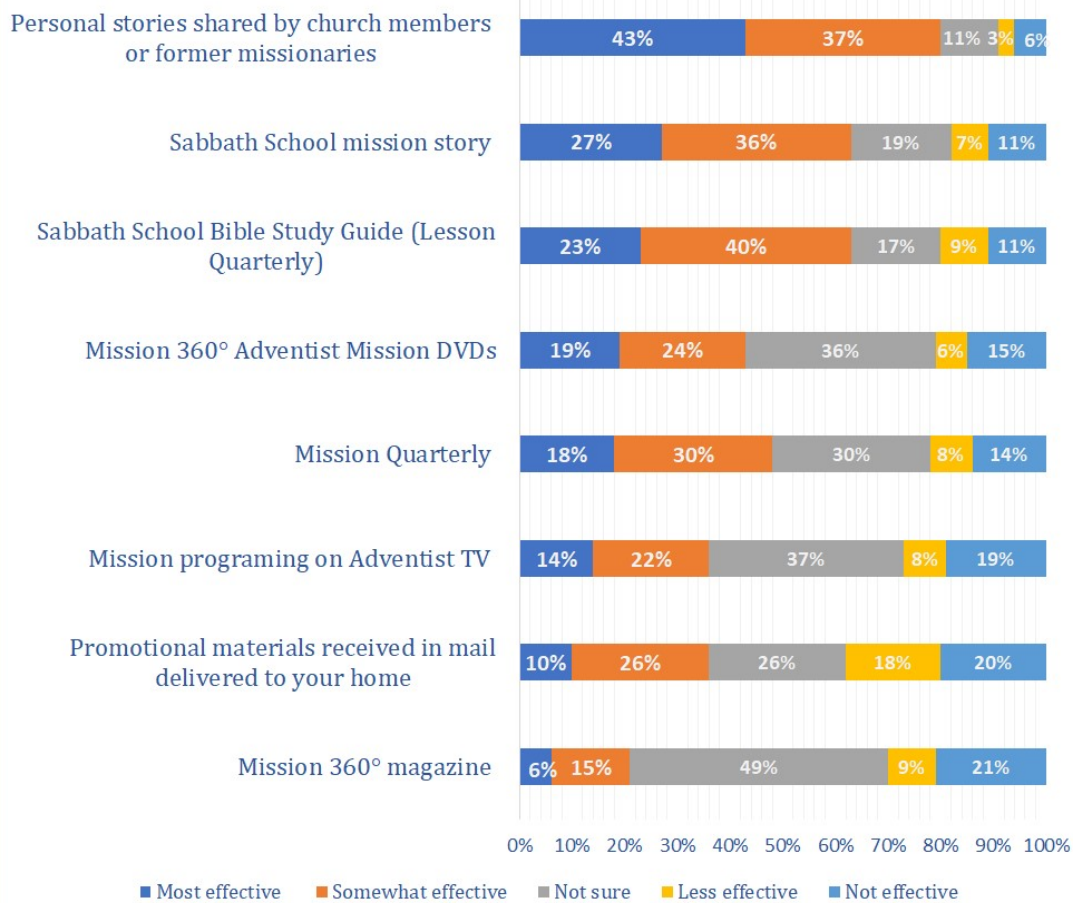
The Impact of Personal Mission Stories

Have you ever dreamed about being a missionary in a foreign country? Are you interested in cross-cultural adventures? Or are you passionate about bringing the good news of Jesus to those who never heard about Him? If so, what has stimulated your interest in the missionary activities? Have you read a book or seen a movie? Or have you had a chance to meet or talk with missionaries of modern times and listen to their breathtaking stories?

Interestingly, research shows that the stories of missionaries matter. They impact us by unfolding the sacrifices missionaries and their families make and by making it known that God's providence is still at work, especially in difficult situations. These stories also help us be more sacrificial.

The Mission Offering Study, conducted in 2015 in the North American Division by Drs. Petr Činčala, Rene Drumm, and Duane McBride, under the supervision of the General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, identified the role mission stories play for church members and the importance of making a mission offering more personal.

To what extent is your giving for missions influenced by:



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One of the main questions in this study was what motivates Adventist church members to give to World Missions. The participants reviewed a long list of possible motivators. About two-thirds (63%) reported Sabbath School mission stories and stories published in the Sabbath School Bible Study Guide (Lesson Quarterly) were either the most effective or somewhat effective methods to promote mission giving, with 27% and 23%, respectively, seeing them as the most effective motivators. However, by far, personal stories shared by church members or former missionaries overran all listed means. About 80% saw, to one degree or another, their effectiveness, with 43% considering them as the most effective motivator.

It is also important to note that materials mailed to members' homes were seen as the least effective approach, with 38% of the respondents indicating this method was not effective. Basically these responses may reflect that, increasingly, material received through the mail is ignored. This may reflect our internet age, or that home mail is so extensive that material sent to members' homes gets lost amidst the volume of other mail.

Thus, the data consistently showed that the personal stories of missionaries are by far the best and most effective motivators for mission giving! Even in this age of texting and tweeting, a personal story and a personal touch may be the most effective motivator. Cross-tabulation analysis revealed that this is especially true for first-generation Adventists.

Many respondents in this study were not aware of needs in the mission field or of the impact of their contributions. There is a need of a personal connection to the mission projects. This can be achieved in a variety of ways: plan missionary visits, do mission trips with your church members and youth, ask members to share their experiences and stories from these mission trips, adopt some mission projects by your church, use livestreaming to tell stories from mission fields, etc. The data suggests that, even in this social networking age, personal connections and personal stories about mission are the best motivators for sustained or increased mission offering giving. And, although we live in the 21st century, the need of people who are willing to go outside their comfort zone to bring the good news about Jesus is still present. And we need to hear their stories. And we need to support them! Visit the Adventist Research website www.adventistresearch.info to know more about this study.

Galina Stele, Research and Evaluation Manager

This summer, two members of ASTR's staff, director David Trim and Galina Stele, met with the General Conference Future Plans Working Group Committee (FPWG) on July 21-27 at Ouray, CO, to develop the world Church's strategy for the new quinquennium. The committee members reviewed reports on four global surveys: the Meta-Analysis Report on the Global Church Member Survey III, the Adventist Pastors' Survey Report, the Institutional Workers' Survey Report, and the report on the Adventist Administrators' Survey. Keeping in view the current challenges, opportunities, and trends in the Adventist Church, they adjusted the *I Will Go* strategic plan and developed a new version. The preliminary strategic plan for 2025-2030 will be shared with division executive officers in fall 2023.



FPWG, 2023 Strategic Planning Retreat, Ouray, CO

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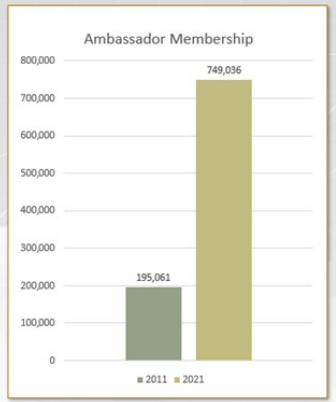
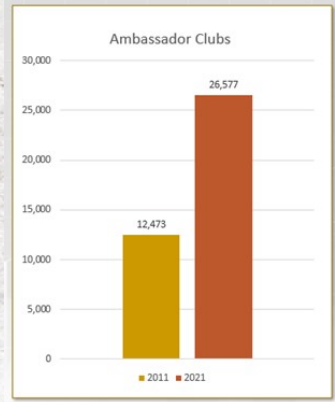
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Youth Ministries Statistical Data

The Youth Ministries statistics table was last reported in the 2019 Annual Statistical Report but is still collected annually by the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research and continues to be compiled and analyzed for statistical purposes.

Year	AY Societies	AY Membership	Ambassador Clubs	Ambassador Membership	Pathfinder Clubs	Pathfinder Membership	Adventurer Clubs	Adventurer Membership
1910	647	12,408	...	...	...	...	...	...
1920	2,208	41,918	...	...	...	...	...	...
1930	3,825	84,823	...	...	...	...	...	...
1940	6,822	148,898	...	...	...	...	...	...
1950	10,902	208,354	...	...	...	...	...	...
1960	14,064	449,596	...	...	...	...	...	...
1970	19,107	630,827	...	...	2,768	59,371	...	...
1980	29,100	1,044,947	...	...	7,203	91,482	...	...
1990	39,547	1,916,652	...	...	11,425	379,538	...	...
2000	52,991	2,792,940	...	...	22,830	624,516	...	...
2010	72,228	3,139,508	10,802	133,287	37,864	1,448,916	25,823	1,484,040
2014	85,631	2,899,897	18,167	235,247	36,296	1,522,553	27,492	1,382,272
2015	72,125	2,446,228	17,034	392,403	38,743	1,491,483	28,376	1,328,910
2016	78,642	2,413,644	18,611	392,257	44,829	1,588,624	33,820	1,326,340
2017	79,647	2,427,509	18,615	393,293	47,325	1,625,482	35,495	1,328,039
2018	100,878	3,440,341	29,291	482,161	58,361	1,728,963	46,062	1,557,293

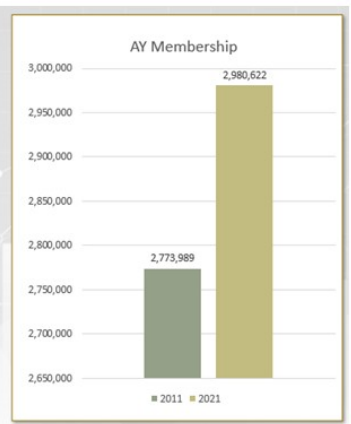
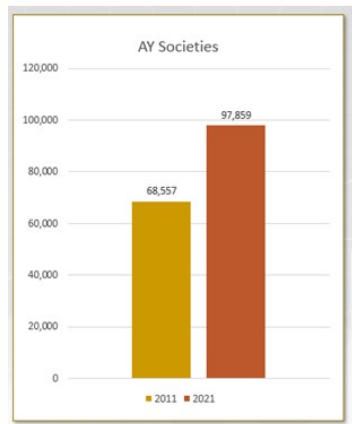
For evaluation and comparison, in 2011 the number of youths in AY Societies was 68,557 and in 2021 the figure rose to 97,859. This is a 43% increase in a 10-year span! There was also an increase in AY membership of 7%, from 2,773,989 in 2011 to 2,980,622 in 2021.



In the area of Pathfinders, the clubs grew from 35,812 in 2011 to 61,202 in 2021 and with overall Pathfinder membership the figures rose from 1,352,920 in 2011 to 1,614,130 in 2021.



Regarding Adventurers, the clubs more than doubled from 26,454 in 2011 to 58,163 in 2021. Overall, Adventurer membership was the only area that declined by 11%, from 1,433,040 in 2011 to 1,275,811 in 2021.



Ambassador Clubs more than doubled from 12,473 in 2011 to 26,577 in 2021. Ambassador membership grew remarkably by 284%, from 195,061 in 2011 to 749,036 in 2021!



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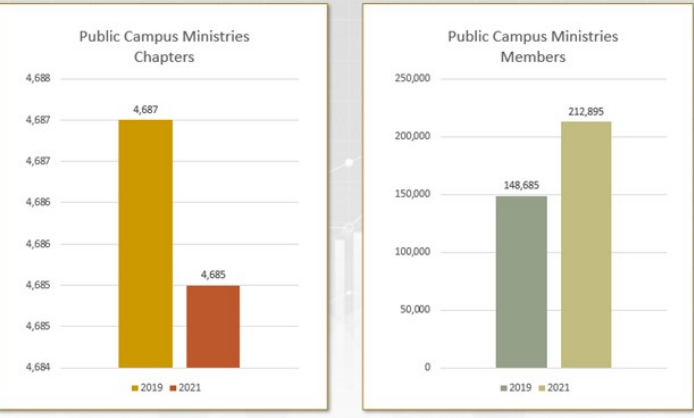
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The number of Public Campus Ministries chapters recently began reporting in 2019 and have held steady from 4,687 in 2019 to 4,685 in 2021. In addition, the number of Public Campus Ministries members increased from 148,685 members in 2019 to 212,895 in 2021.

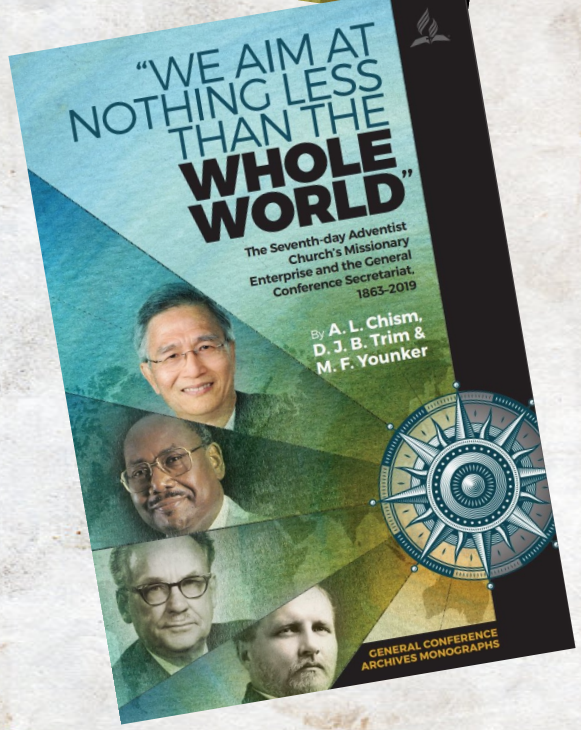


For more information on world statistics of the Seventh-day Adventist Church go to www.adventiststatistics.org.

The screenshot shows the ASTR website interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: ASTR HOME, DIRECTORY, ENCYCLOPEDIA, ONLINE ARCHIVES, RESEARCH, STATISTICS, and YEARBOOK. Below this is a search bar and a section titled 'CURRENT STATISTICS' with a list of reports for various divisions and the General Conference. A 'LINKS' section is also visible at the bottom left.

Meredith Carter, Annual Statistical Report Editor

Remember, you can also read more Adventist history in the *Journal of Adventist Archives*, as well as our *Monograph series*!



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As always, remember to help us Tell the Story!

As a reminder, our purpose here at ASTR is to tell the Adventist story. We want to inform and inspire church members toward a renewed commitment to the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church by sharing our history.

You can help us to tell the story in two ways:

First, help us to preserve the story: your stories and the Church's story! Letters and other documents, memoirs, photographs, tape recordings, audio and video cassettes, films, and historic books and magazines: all enable us to recover the story of how, in the words of Ellen White, "the Lord has led us . . . in our past history" and of how God has worked in the lives of individual church members. They are the raw materials from which Adventist history can be researched by scholars and without which parts of that history will be lost. So please, [contact us](#) about sending your family's documents, photographs, and other historic materials to us so that they can be preserved and used to help the great Second Advent Movement fulfill its prophetic mission.

Second, help us to conserve and to share the story—to pass it on to the next generation. Historic Adventist photographs and movies allow us to connect with our past in a way nothing else can, because we look into the eyes of those who sacrificed to make this Church. We want to digitize those precious resources, scanning them electronically so they can be accessed by everyone. We especially want to connect with young people. By digitizing photos and movies, we can help them to understand "the way the Lord has led us and His teaching in our past history"—we can help them to connect with our pioneers and be inspired to service.

Haven't received your Newsletter? [Sign up HERE](#). For previous issues visit our [website](#).



Your gift of at least \$25 could:

- Digitize 100 feet of film = five minutes viewing time, or
- Conserve, digitize, and publicize one historic Adventist photograph from our collection of thousands, or
- Contribute to our continuing effort to preserve and digitize rare Adventist books, pamphlets, and magazines

Two ways to Donate:

- 1) Mail your remittance to:
GC Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research
12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD
20904
- 2) Donate Online by visiting:
www.adventistarchives.org/tellthestory
and click the "Donate" link.

