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TELLING THE STORY

Archives, Statistics, and Research (ASTR) Newsletter - Issue #21



Autumn 2024 Greetings from ASTR!

ASTR has had a busy summer! With our staff traveling to various conferences and activities around the world, with Issue #21, we're glad to bring you a sample of our adventures serving God and learning more about our Church's members. Below you'll read about the AHSRA conferences, ASDAL conference, ASI gathering, our participation in a mission trip to Havana, Cuba, and multiple Campmeetings. We also have an article on the unreached regions of the world, and an article on the first mission work in China. Altogether, they represent the many ways that ASTR staff can and do participate in the life of the Church outside our offices. We hope our readers have similarly enjoyed a diverse range of activities this past summer as they also participated in the life of the Church!



Safary Wa-Mbaleka, center, with the attendees of the AHSRA Conference at the Adventist University of the Philippines

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ASTR's Summer Travels!

The staff from ASTR have attended several events during the summer of 2024, and are happy to report that all of them were both interesting and successful!

Adventist Research Growing through AHSRA Conferences

Research plays an important role in strategic planning and evaluation of services, programs, and operations. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is increasingly integrating research into its culture to enhance its mission. As a result, in partnership with ASTR, three chapters of the Adventist Human-Subject Researchers Association (AHSRA) have been created: the international chapter with the headquarters at Andrews University (USA), the African chapter headquartered at Adventist University of Africa (Kenya), and the Asian chapter with the headquarters at Adventist University of the Philippines.



Attendees of the 2024 AHSRA-Africa Conference at Helderberg College of Higher Education

This year (2024) in May, AHSRA-International held its annual research conference at Andrews University, with about 60 delegates (both face-to-face and virtual attendance). In June, AHSRA-Africa held its second research conference at Helderberg College of Higher Education (South Africa) which drew 30 to 35 delegates from all over Africa, the US, and the Philippines (both physically and virtually). In July, AHSRA-Asia held its first-ever research conference at the Adventist University of the Philippines with about 60 delegates

participating face-to-face and unnumbered more virtually. I, as ASTR's Research and Evaluation Manager, attended and spoke at all three events, promoting the research culture in support of the work of the Church.



Attendees of the 2024 AHSRA Conference at Andrews University

All three conferences were enriched with different keynote, plenary, and concurrent sessions in various fields, including but not limited to Adventist beliefs and practices, health, business, education, science and technology. Most presentations were about human respondents. AHSRA-Asia was predominantly about research completed on Adventist respondents, programs, beliefs, practices, churches, institutions, and organizations. The other two conferences included non-Adventist attendees. The conferences in the US and South Africa were international, with delegates coming from more than 10 countries each.

Although most delegates in all the conferences were from Adventist higher education institutions, a few were church leaders and others from non-Adventist colleges and universities. All the conferences resulted in new perspectives on Adventist research, collaboration opportunities, and a desire to expand the AHSRA network around the world to provide a platform for Adventist scholars to share their findings and resources, and to support the Church with current facts.

Safary Wa-Mbaleka, Research and Evaluation Manager

Association of SDA Librarians Annual Conference

On June 24-27, 2024, ASTR hosted the 44th Annual Conference of the Association of Seventh-day Adventist Librarians (ASDAL). While ASDAL's business sessions have been virtual since 2021 and hybrid since 2023, this conference was the first fully hybrid conference hosted for ASDAL, with 23 attendees on-site and 7 attendees online.

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The theme of the conference was "Assessing User Experience in Libraries", and presentations were given on and around this topic on the first two days of the conference. Attendees heard about the establishment of the South Pacific Division's Heritage Centre, about the growth of the North American Division Archives, and about the digitization of the Eva B. Dykes Collection at Oakwood University. The conference heard an update about the Adventist Digital Library, especially on its transfer to a new platform and use of transcription software. Other presentations included studies and updates done on library spaces at several Adventist universities, an update from the *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, and the introduction of gamification tools (such as Kahoot) that libraries could use in user instruction.



ASDAL Conference

The four day was June 26, and in-person conference attendees traveled by bus to Washington, D.C., where they visited the Library of Congress as a group and were free to visit any Smithsonian museum of their choosing in the afternoon. The forecast threatened thunderstorms and the day was extremely hot, but everyone had a wonderful time seeing sights in Washington, D.C.

On the last day of the conference, which concluded with a banquet featuring a wonderful banquet, ASDAL members assessed ASDAL itself. A panel of previous association presidents answered questions about the past and where ASDAL might go in the future, and roundtable discussions were conducted in person and online to discuss pressing issues. The business session on this day also included the presentation of the work of the Constitution and By-Laws committee, which recommended structural changes to the Association which would allow it to better reflect its current operation as well as the values of its members and continue to create a space for Adventists who are professional records

managers, librarians, and archivists the world over to come together and support each other in their work.

Ashlee Chism, Research Center Manager

ASTR Attends Adventist Services and Industries (ASI) Convention

The Adventist-laymen's Services and Industries (ASI) Convention took place in Orlando, Florida from July 31 – August 3, 2024. Dr. David Trim presented at the Friday night service, inspiring many with his message, while Roger Bello, Elizabeth Henry, and Jaya Singh represented ASTR at the Exhibition Hall at ASI. Attendees were pleased to learn about the resources available to them – for some it was for the first time, and for others it was a reminder of what is available. Many attendees expressed gratitude for the services we provide and encouraged us to keep up the good work.



ASTR Booth at the 2024 ASI



Elizabeth Henry at the ASTR Booth, with Roger Bello (L) and Jaya Singh (R) behind her

ASI attendees also enjoyed playing the various games and activities we had at the booth. The two most popular activities

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were the matching game, and the jigsaw puzzle of a photo from the Archives. The *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists* match games and the photo cards were among the most sought-after giveaways of our booth, though the jigsaw puzzle was a close second. We look forward to attending a future ASI.

Elizabeth Henry, Digital Records Manager

Esperanza para Cuba

Two of our staff, Roy Kline and Reiko Davis, were privileged to attend a mission trip to Cuba under the leadership of Secretariat. Over the 10 days, July 26 – August 4, 2024, they painted the outside entrance, the sanctuary and three other interior rooms of a church in Havana, held Sabbath and evening meetings at five different churches, and helped collate, staple and fold Sabbath School quarterlies at the Church's printing press.



It was truly a humbling and transforming experience for them. It was an honor connecting with the local people and watching the baptisms throughout the week and on the closing Sabbath. It will be an experience they will never forget.

Reiko Davis,
Office Coordinator

Baptism in Cuba



Preparing Sabbath School quarterlies in Cuba



Painting the Church in Havana, Cuba



The GC Secretariat Team in Havana, Cuba



Seminario Teológico Adventista de Cuba

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ASTR Director David Trim Speaks at Multiple Campmeetings

This summer I spoke at the Southern New England Conference and British Columbia Conference camp meetings. The SNEC camp meeting was held in South Lancaster, Massachusetts, in a large property surrounding the conference office (and next to the old Atlantic Union College campus). I took a morning seminar for five mornings, Monday through Friday, on the theme of United for Mission: with two presentations about how the Seventh-day Adventist movement came together, organized and united for mission between 1844 and 1863; about how our pioneers eventually, after much hesitation, embraced foreign mission beyond the shores of North America; then with two presentations on New England: the first on the contribution of New England to the founding and early development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, up to c.1900; the second on the church in the Southern New England Conference since its founding in 1903. The final presentation, on Friday morning, before my wife and I left for home, was on the challenge of mission today and the need for members in North America to still be committed to supporting worldwide mission.



ASTR Director, Dr. David Trim, speaking at the British Columbia Conference's 2024 Campmeeting

In the beautiful mountain-valley setting of Camp Hope, the British Columbia Conference's dedicated camp ground and retreat center, I preached sermons for the vespers on the first Friday and Sabbath evenings, then took a seminar on three mornings, Monday through Wednesday. This year's camp meeting theme was "Coming Home" and my two sermons addressed this subject from different perspectives. The seminar was also entitled "United for Mission" with the first two subjects being the same as in SNEC, but the third seminar was on Adventist history in British Columbia. On the Thursday, my wife and I traveled two hours to Vancouver and from thence to Orlando for ASI, which is described in a separate article.

It was wonderful to have contact with our church members both from New England and British Columbia. There was a good response to the seminars. In Massachusetts, attendance topped one hundred at one point and average attendance was high. In British Columbia, attendance averaged fifty to sixty. I also had multiple members come up to me and donate rare books and documents from the history I had been sharing in their respective territories. These strengthen the Rebok Memorial Library special collections and mean future researchers coming to the GC Archives will be able to access materials that might not be in other denominational libraries. It also speaks to the enthusiasm local church members have for the history of the church in their region. We welcome further such donations!

David Trim, Director of ASTR

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They Loved Not Their Lives unto the Death

This article's heading is taken from Revelation 12:11 (KJV): "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." The Bible verse aptly describes God's devoted servants' unconditional faith and commitment to witnessing about Christ to the world. Notice how giving testimony appears amidst death, Christ's ("the blood of the Lamb") and His followers' ("unto the death"). Yet "they loved not their lives unto the death" because the love of God exceedingly surpasses every other love. Did you know the English word "martyr" comes from the ancient Greek work *martys* "testimony, witness"? The Greek word originally described a person giving evidence in court and later was applied to Christ's disciples who testified about Jesus' resurrection and ministry of salvation. Since from the very beginning sharing the gospel included credible prospects of suffering and death, martyr gradually came to depict someone who sacrifices their life for the gospel's sake.

Paying the ultimate price for the gospel has been the experience of many of God's children throughout history, including the more recent and present times. The [Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists](#) (ESDA) shares the stories of many Adventist missionaries who sacrificed much and even died in the mission field.¹ Among them are Edwin H. Wilbur (1869–1914), who died in China and with his wife, Susan (1872–1965), was the denomination's first official missionary in mainland China, and Maude Amelia (Thompson) Miller, the first Adventist missionary who died in China. The following narrative has been adapted from two ESDA articles:



Susan and Edwin Wilbur

Michael W. Campbell's article on the [Wilburs](#) and Ruth Crocombe's article on [Dr. Maude Miller](#).



Harry and Maude Miller at the time of their wedding in 1902

米樂爾夫婦，一九〇二年婚禮攝
摘自中國醫生一四二面

The Wilburs Travel to China

On October 6, Edwin and Susan (Haskell) Wilbur left for China with Dr. S. L. and Myrtle S. Lockwood, sailing on *The Empress of India* from Vancouver for Yokohama, Japan, where they arrived on October 21. The Lockwoods stayed as missionaries in Japan while the Wilburs continued their journey on to Hong Kong. They finally arrived at Hong Kong on October 31, 1902, where they were met by [J. N. Anderson](#). They went immediately to work learning the Chinese language. Soon after their arrival, Susan discovered she was pregnant, giving birth to a son named Robert Morrison Wilbur on July 9, 1903. The choice of a name for their firstborn was based upon the inspirational life of Robert Morrison (1782-1834) who, in 1819,

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translated "the entire Bible into the Chinese language," and whose grave they also visited.

Early Missionary Efforts in Canton and Hong Kong

By December 1, 1902, the Wilburs left Hong Kong and relocated 90 miles up the Pearl (Zhujiang) River, becoming the first official Adventist missionaries to do missionary work in mainland China. After two months, Edwin noted that the people in Canton were "very friendly" to them. Despite the fact that when they traveled they would hear children say "*Bonquoy! Bonquoy!*" meaning "foreign devil," those who lived near their home would instead say "*Sin Sang!*" meaning "teacher."² Soon Wilbur translated a tract on the "Law of God" into Chinese. After the initial pamphlets made available through [Abram La Rue](#) and the Andersons, this tract was the first of its kind made available and translated by Adventist missionaries specifically for use in mainland China. The Wilburs periodically returned to Hong Kong, where they continued to work on their language study and selling English publications. Abram La Rue, the self-supporting missionary who started the Adventist work in Hong Kong, passed away on April 26, 1903. The Wilburs arrived with enough time to help take care of La Rue for the last few weeks of his life and then continue his work.

By June 1904, J. N. Anderson made an appeal for someone to take the place of the Wilburs in Hong Kong so that someone new could begin learning the language while the Wilburs pressed back into the mainland to "take up work for the Chinese." The next month they reported that Edwin could read the gospel of Mark and give simple Bible studies in the Cantonese dialect.

Maude and Harry Miller Arrive in China

About a year after the Wilburs came to China, Doctors Maude and [Harry Miller](#) arrived in China aboard the Canadian Pacific Ship *Empress of India* on November 7, 1903. They were among a group of six medical missionaries sent by the Seventh-day Adventist Church to China. Other members of the group included Doctors Arthur and Bertha [Selmon](#) and nurses Charlotte [Simpson](#) and Carrie [Ericksen](#). Guided by the more experienced Eric and Ida [Pilquist](#), who were formerly with the British Foreign Bible Society, the Millers established a dispensary in the inland town of Hsin Tsai, or Sin-tsai Hsien (now Xincai), in the province of Henan. From the very beginning, they decided to adopt the local culture, all wearing



Maude Miller

Chinese clothing and the men bearing a shaved forehead and "queue." While in Hsin Tsai, Maude gave birth to twin boys, who only lived for a few hours after birth.

In 1904, they opened another dispensary in nearby Shan Tsai in Henan. They also established the first printing press in Shan Tsai, where some of the early Adventist Chinese publications were produced. Despite suffering health issues in China, Maude successfully mastered Mandarin and taught the gospel in addition to her medical work caring for large numbers of sick local women and children, for whom she had a burden.

Canton as Missionary Base

The Wilburs returned to Canton about August 1, 1904, to assist J. N. and [Emma Anderson](#) and [Ida Thompson](#). Susan worked closely helping Ida with the girls' school that Ida opened on April 1, 1904. Edwin subsequently started a school for boys opened on August 11, 1904, named Yuk Chee or Yi Zhi. The Wilburs for their part taught school and preached in Chinese. Later the two schools would merge to form Sam Yuk School, the forerunner of Hong Kong Adventist College.

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By 1905, the Wilburs' began to increasingly use Canton as a new base from which to do missionary exploration. Edwin reported that the most important missionary trait for working in China was patience. He reported that on Friday evenings, they had from 15-20 people in attendance, with 40-60 present on Sabbath morning. "We have been badly handicapped," he noted, "because of our limited knowledge of the language and customs of the people. There is not one of our company here but has lost time because we had no one to tell us some of the



Ida Thompson, seated, with the Wilburs, 1903

things it was necessary to know. Now, if new workers are sent to Canton, they can learn as much in one year as we did in two."³ They hoped to expand their missionary footprint with a small Chinese monthly paper once J. N. Anderson returned from America. Susan conducted Bible work with women in their homes. She was meeting with 15 women, giving them daily Bible studies and teaching them how to sing. Early missionary work for women would become characteristic of early Adventist missions overall in China. The Wilburs adopted a young Chinese girl, Oilene, born July 14, 1905.

The First Adventist Missionary Death in China

In the spring of 1905, the news that Dr. Maude Miller died hit the far-flung group of early Adventist missionaries rather hard. Maude was the first Adventist missionary who died in China. She died of tropical sprue – a rare nutritional disorder – on March 14, at age 24. At her request, Maude was buried wearing Chinese clothing. Following local custom, she was buried outside Shan Tsai's city wall.⁴ At a time when women were largely confined to domestic roles, Maude was a pioneer. She was an equal partner in her husband's mission and greatly missed by the entire Adventist missionary force in China.



The Wilburs home in Canton, 1907

The Work Continues

Thanks to repeated appeals for more help, Edwin and Susan Wilbur welcomed the new workers: Winfred (1880-1968) and Bessie [Hankins](#) (1879-1965) and Law (1867-1919) and Edith (b. 1877) [Keem](#).



Edwin and Susan Wilbur with Oilene and Robert, 1910

In June 1907, the Wilburs relocated to Kongmoon, about 45 miles from Canton and a short ride by steamer from Hong Kong. They were the only Europeans living in the town. However, they brought with them literature to distribute and a young man, Brother Cheung, from their Canton Bible school. After a year, Wilbur was able to report the first fruits of their labor: "A Chinese Christian dentist enlarged his house, that we might have a place in which to live. A Christian widow, a shopkeeper, who was one of the first women to accept the gospel, is also the first to accept the Sabbath. Soon after our arrival, she consented to our using one room of her house for meetings."⁵ These weekly Sabbath meetings began on July

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13, 1907, with an attendance of 20-30 people. The growing work required a strategic decision to divide personnel resources between work for the two people groups: the Hakkas and the Cantonese, who did not wish to mingle with the Hakkas. By 1911, the work in south China expanded from one to four congregations with a membership of 114. From November 18-23, 1913, Wilbur organized a general meeting for the Cantonese region in Fatshan, during which 22 persons were baptized.

Another Missionary Death in China

In early 1914, the Wilburs went with a delegation of church leaders to look for a new mission station. They chose a site in Pakhoi (Beihai), a city in the southern part of Kwang-tung, but instability at Pakhoi necessitated that the Wilbur family remain there until Dr. Law Keem went in his place. Unfortunately, their missionary efforts were cut short when Edwin died on May 1, 1914, in Pakhoi, from malaria and heart failure. He was known to have had a weak heart for several years previously. The official announcement of his death in the *Review and Herald* described him as "a faithful and devoted missionary, and loved the people among whom he labored."⁶



Canton Girls School, Susan Wilbur back row, 1909

The Work Continues Yet Again

After Edwin's death, Susan determined to stay as a missionary in China. She was encouraged to work in Hong Kong, doing Bible work among the Chinese women. She stayed there for a little over two years, where she supervised the Bethel Girls' School. On September 23, 1916, Susan left Shanghai with her two sons on *The Empress Japan* on their way home to return to America. Oilene joined them a few years later. In 1917, the General Conference voted an appropriation since Susan was



Canton Boys School, Edwin Wilbur in the center, 1909

diagnosed with tuberculosis. Susan lived in San Francisco and Oakland where she taught in a Chinese school and helped raise up an Adventist congregation in Chinatown. Like her husband, Edwin, Maude Miller, and many others who died in the mission field, Susan "loved not her life unto the death" serving until she died in Canby, Oregon, 1965, because her mission field was every place where she lived.

Prepared by Dragoslava Santrac, ESDA Managing Editor

¹ For uplifting stories of Adventist missionaries who died in the mission field, see also D. J. B. Trim, *A Living Sacrifice: Unsung Heroes of Adventist Missions* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press, 2019).

² E. H. Wilbur, "China," *Adventist Review and Herald*, March 17, 1903, 16.

³ E. H. Wilbur, "China," *Adventist Review and Herald*, July 27, 1905, 14.

⁴ W. A. Spicer, "The Message of Another Missionary Grave," *Adventist Review and Herald*, May 4, 1905, 3-4.

⁵ E. H. Wilbur, "China," *Adventist Review and Herald*, May 28, 1908, 17.

⁶ Notes, *Adventist Review and Herald*, May 14, 1914, 24.

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Countries and Areas of the World with/without a Seventh-day Adventist Presence

To determine if there is an SDA presence in a country or area of the world, established work criteria must be met to include, but not limited to:

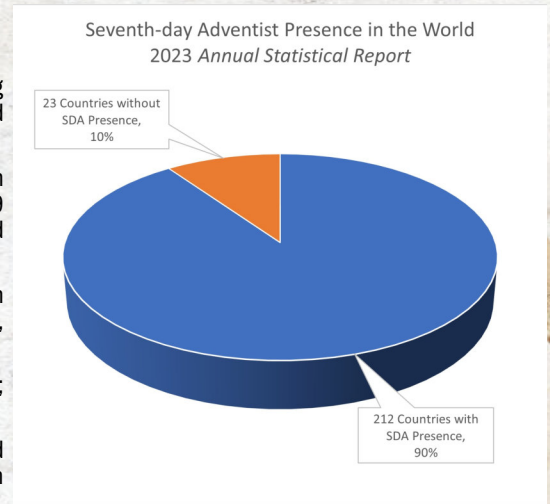
- 1) when an organized church meets regularly;
- 2) when a mission station, healthcare facility, or school is functioning regularly; or
- 3) when a regular full-time employee is based in the country or area and is carrying outreach or soul-winning activities, such as a Sabbath School class, an organized company, or a language school.

There are 235 countries and areas of the world identified and recognized in the Global Mission Table 2, found on page 108 of the *2023 Annual Statistical Report*. This list is based on UN M49 (Standard Country or Area Codes for Statistical Use; Series M, No. 49), publication developed and maintained by the United Nations Statistics Division.

Global Mission Table 2 displays the list of countries and areas of the world in which there is an SDA presence. This list also includes the number of ordained ministers, churches, companies, members, and population for each identified country.

Currently, there are 212 countries and areas of the world where the SDA Church has a presence; this, essentially means that there is an organized SDA church within this territory.

Excluding the countries that do not meet the aforementioned criteria, there are 23 countries and areas of the world in which SDA work is not established as can be seen below in Global Mission Table 1a:



GLOBAL MISSION (GM) Table 1a
Countries and Areas of the World Where
Seventh-day Adventist Work is Not Currently Established
As of December 31, 2022

Country or Area of the World	Continent	Division/Attached Field	Population Estimate Mid-2022	Country or Area of the World	Continent	Division/Attached Field	Population Estimate Mid-2022
Afghanistan	Asia	Euro-Asia	41,129,000	Mauritania	Africa	West-Central Africa	4,740,000
Aland Islands	Europe	Trans-European	30,000	Monaco	Europe	Inter-European	40,000
Brunei Darussalam	Asia	Southern Asia-Pacific	442,000	Palestine, State of	Asia	Inter-European	5,355,000
Comoros	Africa	Southern Africa-Indian Ocean	837,000	Saint Barthelemy	North America	Inter-American	11,000
Gibraltar	Europe	Inter-European	33,000	Saint Pierre and Miquelon	North America	North American	6,000
Greenland	North America	Trans-European	57,000	San Marino	Europe	Inter-European	34,000
Guernsey	Europe	Trans-European	67,000	Somalia	Africa	East-Central Africa	17,598,000
Holy See	Europe	Inter-European	1,000	Syrian Arab Republic	Asia	Middle East and North Africa Un	22,125,000
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Asia	Middle East and North Africa Un	88,551,000	Tokelau	Oceania	South Pacific	1,000
Korea, Democratic People's Rep of	Asia	Northern Asia-Pacific	26,069,000	Western Sahara	Africa	Middle East and North Africa Un	576,000
Liechtenstein	Europe	Inter-European	39,000	Yemen	Asia	Middle East and North Africa Un	33,697,000
Maldives	Asia	Southern Asia	579,000				

Summary

Countries and areas of the world (See p. 108)	235
Countries and areas of the world in which Seventh-day Adventist work is established	212
Countries and areas of the world in which Seventh-day Adventist work is not established (listed above)	23
Estimated population of the world as of June 30, 2022	7,963,235,000
Estimated population of countries and areas of the world in which Seventh-day Adventist work is established	7,721,218,000
Estimated population of countries and areas of the world in which Seventh-day Adventist work is not established (listed above)	242,017,000

By tracking statistics for countries as areas of the world in which SDA work is/is not established, the Church is more aware of where we are reaching the world with the gospel of the Lord and where we can improve.

Meredith Carter, ASR Editor

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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.

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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:

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- 2) Donate Online by visiting:
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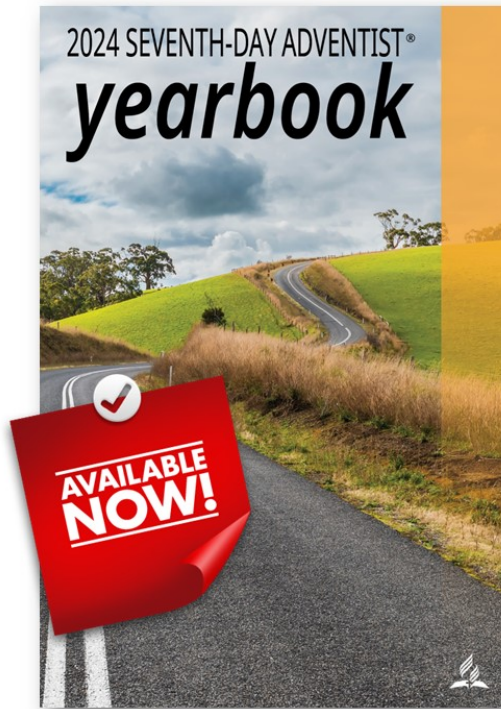
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