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TELLING THE STORY

Archives, Statistics,
and Research (ASTR)
Newsletter - Issue #13



Autumn 2022 Greetings from ASTR

As autumn approaches, the beauty of many colors in the northern hemisphere can be seen. The leaves become a rainbow of reds, yellows, oranges, and many shades in between. Each of nature's seasons have many lessons to teach us. In this issue, our focus is on education. We hope you enjoy an article about Alma McKibbin, one of our leading pioneers in Adventist education. Also featured are articles on how educated our Adventist leaders are in different regions, as well as how many schools we are operating around the world. We trust you will enjoy learning from these articles as well as from the many colors in the school of nature.



Alma McKibbin (Loma Linda University Special Collections)

Alma McKibbin: A Pioneer of Adventist Church School Curriculum

Since the early days Adventists have believed that education is a vital aspect of the Adventist mission work, embodying Christ's redemptive work for humanity in restoring human beings to the image of God, their Creator. Primary education for children was advocated by Adventists as early as the 1850s and 1860s, and in the early 1870s the Church began to develop a denominationally based school system. Since then thousands upon thousands of Adventist educators have shared the core values of Bible-based education in the many Adventist schools worldwide. The following is a biography of Alma Estelle Baker McKibbin, a pioneering Adventist educator and author of the first Bible lesson textbooks for primary education. It was adapted from a longer article by [Laura Wibberding](#) in the [Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists](#) online.

Early Life, Healdsburg College and Marriage

Alma was born November 26, 1871, in Webster County, Iowa, the firstborn child of Alonzo Baker (1841-1927) and Estella Baker (1851-1911). In the summer before her senior year of high school, two Adventist ministers, Charles P. Haskell and B. F. Stureman, came from Denver to hold meetings in Saguache, Colorado, where Alma and her family lived.¹ Alma was baptized, along with her mother and grandmother. They became the core of a new Adventist church.

In the fall of 1889, Alma enrolled at Healdsburg College, California, where she took the teacher training course. Along with her college studies she took Bible worker's training, and managed children's Sabbath Schools through correspondence. During her third year at Healdsburg she married Edwin McKibbin (1866-1896), who was already teaching at Healdsburg. Unfortunately,

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Alma and Edwin McKibbin, shortly after their marriage in 1892
(Photo courtesy of Alonzo Baker, My Sister Alma and I (Pacific
Press Publishing Association, 1980), at Archive.org)

Bible-based, using no public school textbooks in any subject but math. The facilities were poor, and the students famously unruly. McKibbin taught from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., then stayed up late writing the next day's lessons in her cold room. She was forced to take a six week break because of pneumonia and depression, and when she returned the board had run out of funds and could not pay her. She managed to complete the year, surviving on a diet of mostly walnuts.²

For this feat, Alma McKibbin is often called the first Adventist church school teacher in California. Since home schools and other church-sponsored schools had been tried already, it is more accurate to say she created and taught the first Adventist church school curriculum.

In the summer of 1899, Alma taught at a teacher's training institute at Healdsburg College for 13 weeks. She then remained in Healdsburg as principal of the Healdsburg Preparatory School, beginning in the fall of 1899. During the summers she conducted teacher training institutes. Though she encouraged the other teachers to write their own Bible lessons, most found themselves incapable once in their teaching positions. Alma revised the Bible lessons she initially developed in Centralia and officially published them in 1903. The first edition was so urgently demanded that she printed and shipped each section as soon as it was written. These were known as the "shoe-string books," since recipients had to bind them themselves. Over the next years, while teaching full time, she wrote separate lessons for each grade, and continually revised them. Her books were used as Adventist Bible textbooks for more than 50 years.



Alma Baker McKibbin awarded an
honorary doctorate by Pacific
Union College in 1972. Standing:
PUC President Floyd O.
Rittenhouse and Alma McKibbin's
niece, Helen Morris (Photo
courtesy of Alonzo Baker, My
Sister Alma and I (Pacific Press
Publishing Association, 1980), at
Archive.org)

shortly thereafter Edwin was diagnosed with tuberculosis. Alma taught his classes for him that winter. The couple moved to southern California in 1894 to live with Edwin's relatives, where their infant son Lorin (1893-1894) died at 11 months old. Alma worked to support Edwin until his death on November 4, 1896.

Educational Innovator

With no income and exhausted health, bereaved of both her husband and son at age 25, Alma moved in with friends and taught their youngest children. She then agreed to teach the eight-grade Centralia, California, church school the next year. The conditions were daunting. The church wanted all the curriculum to be

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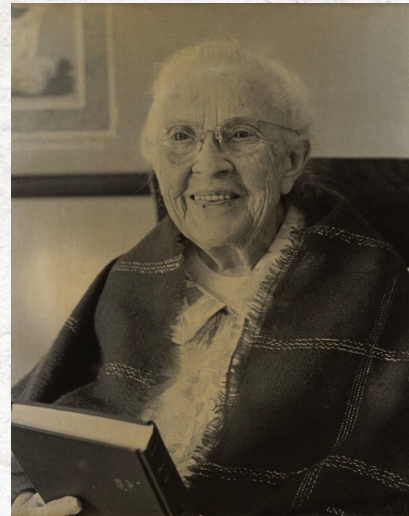
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Alma McKibbin at 90 years of age holding the book containing the
names of 1,300 of her past students (E.G.White Estate)

honorary Doctor of Literature degree from PUC,⁵ and the
Adventist educator's Medallion of Merit.⁶



Alma Baker McKibbin (Credit: Archive.org)

Alma Baker McKibbin died on July 16, 1974. She was
buried in Healdsburg, California. She had worked for the
church 33 years, authored 15 books, most of them Bible
textbooks,⁷ and pioneered Adventist elementary
education. In 1990, the North American Division
established the Alma McKibbin Sabbatical Award for K-12
educators.⁸

Adapted by Dragoslava Santrac

¹ Marie Louise Myers, "Historical/Analytical Study of The
Contributions of Alma E. McKibbin to the Seventh-Day Adventist
Church School System" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 1992), 36.

² Susie Myers, "A Woman's Struggle to Pioneer a Curriculum,"
Adventist Heritage, Spring 1995, 39.

³ "Preparatory School Dedication Set for April 9," *Pacific Union
Recorder*, March 25, 1942, 4.

⁴ "First Event Successful," *Pacific Union Recorder*, April 15, 1957, 8.

⁵ "New Briefs: Pacific Union," *Adventist Review*, July 27, 1972, 21.

⁶ "100 Year Old Educator is Awarded the Medallion of Merit," *Pacific
Union Recorder*, April 17, 1972, 2.

⁷ "McKibbin, Alma Estelle Baker, 1871-," *WorldCat Identities*,
accessed February 21, 2021, <https://www.worldcat.org/identities/lccn-n80056257/>.

⁸ "NAD Establishes Sabbatical Award," *Adventist Review*, September
13, 1990, 7.

From Healdsburg to Angwin to Mountain View

In 1911, McKibbin moved to Angwin to teach Bible history
(her favorite subject) at Pacific Union College (PUC). The
famous 1918 influenza pandemic came to Angwin during
the 1918-1919 school year. McKibbin contracted the virus
three times, finally forcing her to retire at 48.

Reluctantly, she moved to Mountain View, California, in
1922, where her brother Alonzo Baker was by then
working at Pacific Press as an editor. McKibbin spent
three years teaching Bible and Adventist history at
Mountain View Academy during the 1920s before settling
into real retirement.

Legacy

On April 9, 1942, Alma was the guest of honor at the
dedication for McKibbin Hall, a new preparatory school
building on the campus of Pacific Union College,³ which
still operates today. In 1957, she was a featured speaker
for PUC's 75th anniversary.⁴ In 1972, she received an

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Two New Finding Aids Available for Perusal

Recently, the J. Wayne McFarland Collection (MS 31) and the Lowell R. Rasmussen Collection (MS 32) have had finding aids created for them. These finding aids can be found on the ASTR main website (<https://bit.ly/3QSuli6>) under "Manuscript Collections."

The McFarland Collection (MS 31) was donated in 2017 by Margaret McFarland, daughter of J. Wayne McFarland. The collection contains documents, notes, a handmade hymnal, pamphlets, and books with marginalia once owned by J. Wayne McFarland (1913-2011), Seventh-day Adventist physician, administrator, editor, and educator, who was one of the co-creators of the Five-Day Plan to Stop Smoking. It also includes five very short films related to the Five-Day Plan to Stop Smoking. To learn more about Dr. McFarland and about the collection, visit <https://bit.ly/3ybLKuR>.

The Rasmussen Collection (MS 32) was donated in 2019 by Homer Trecartin, Rasmussen's grandson. The collection contains correspondence, photographs, and other documents related to the life and career of Lowell Reed Rasmussen (1907-1998), who was a Seventh-day Adventist educator and administrator. Some of the materials are related to his work with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, an accrediting commission based in the western United States. To learn more about L. R. Rasmussen and about the collection, visit <https://bit.ly/3Rv5lb2>.

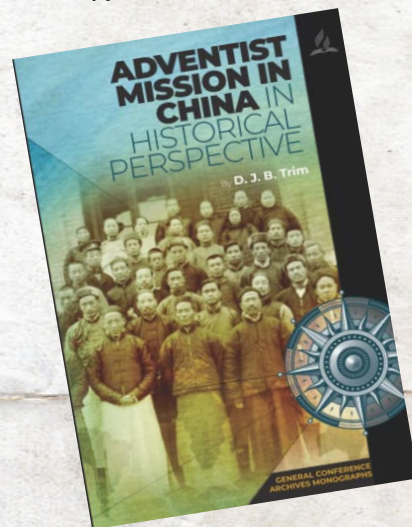
Both collections, part of the Rebok Memorial Library, are open for research. Learn more about how to set up a research visit at <https://bit.ly/3M2YgCX>.

If you have historical materials that you're interested in donating to the General Conference Archives or to the Rebok Memorial Library, email us at

archives@gc.adventist.org, and one of our team members will happily discuss a potential donation with you.

Ashlee Chism

We're excited to announce that our most recent publication on Adventist history is now available, *Adventist Mission in China in Historical Perspective*. You can purchase a copy [here](#).



For another reminder, don't forget to acquire your own copy of the forthcoming 2022 Annual Statistical Report [here](#):



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Level of Education of Adventist Church Leaders

*"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and
become more, you are a leader."—John Quincy Adams¹*

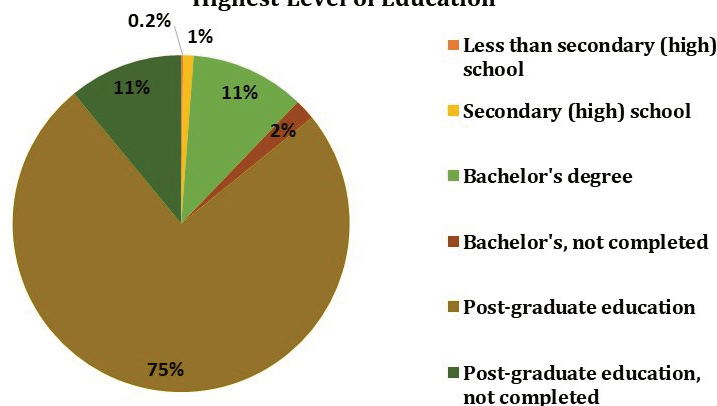
Leadership is important, and it is even more crucial in the church setting. The church leadership should lead people to Jesus and high biblical standards. Then, does church leaders' education matter?

Probably, hardly anyone will argue against it. John F. Kennedy stressed the necessity of continuous learning for a leader: "Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other."² From its early history, the Adventist Church focused on people's education. In *Christ's Object Lessons*, Ellen G. White underlines that education makes the church work more effective: "And those who would be workers together with God must strive for perfection of every organ of the body and quality of the mind... Of every Christian the Lord requires growth in efficiency and capability in every line."³ She continues in the same book: "The uneducated man who is consecrated to God and who longs to bless others can be, and is, used by the Lord in His service. But those who, with the same spirit of consecration, have had the benefit of a thorough education, can do a much more extensive work for Christ. They stand on vantage ground. The Lord desires us to obtain all the education possible, with the object in view of imparting our knowledge to others."⁴

If it is so important, do we have any data on education of the Adventist church leaders? Yes, church administrators were surveyed at the end of the 2013 and 2017 Annual Councils and division Year-End Meetings. The findings are available on the [Adventist Research website](#). The 2017 Church Leadership Survey totaled 440 responses. Although not all church leaders participated in this research, the sample gives enough information about Adventist leadership.

How well are Adventist administrators educated? The findings of the last survey are more than satisfying! Figure 1 shows that worldwide, 75% of church leaders have post-graduate education, and in addition, 11% partially completed it. Thus, 86% of church administrators had surpassed the undergraduate level. Only 1% have secondary (high) school level as their highest education.

Figure 1. 2017 Church Leadership Survey:
Highest Level of Education



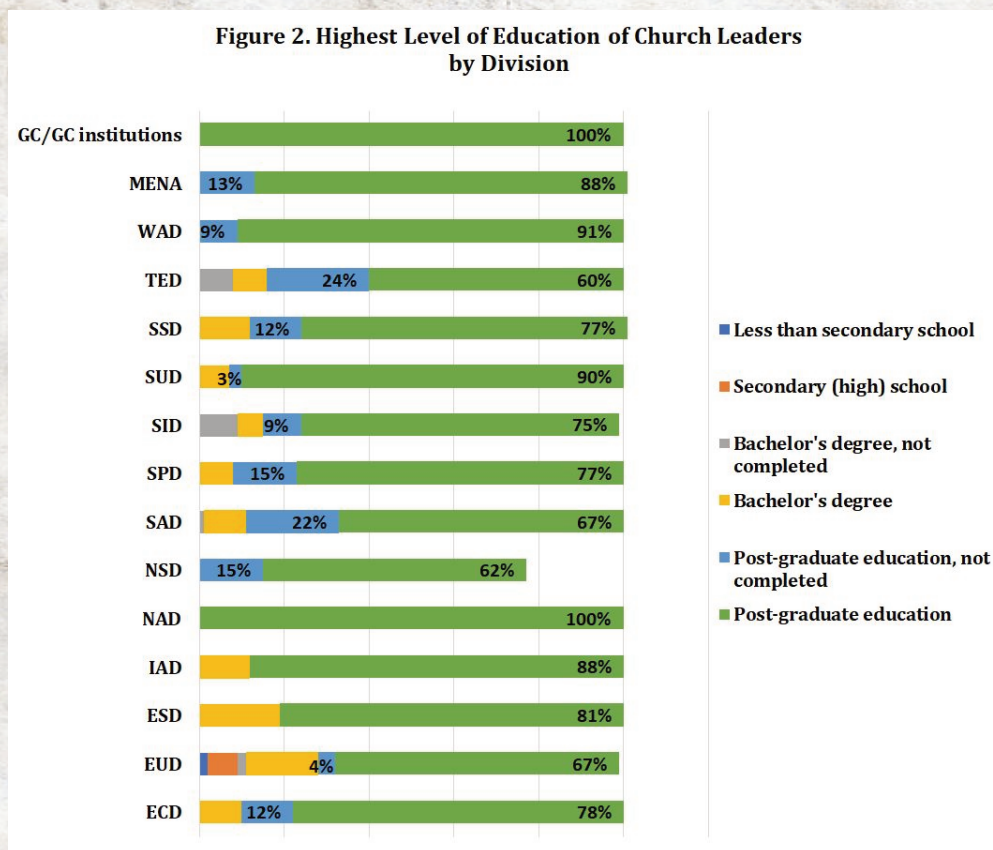
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Figure 2 shows that in breakdown by division; it is clear that, again, a majority of church leaders in all divisions and the attached Middle East and North Africa Union have post-graduate education completed or partially completed. Some divisions have more leaders with Bachelor degrees than others. Nevertheless, it is not an indication of their young age. Overall, administrators with post-graduate qualifications comprised 60% or more of church leadership in each division. It is evidence of highly educated leadership in our worldwide Church.



Church administrators were also asked, regardless of the areas of concentration, in what universities (Adventist, public, or of other denominations) they received their education on each level. A majority had received their education in Adventist institutions (Figure 3—see next page). Interestingly, more administrators studied for academic doctorates outside Adventist universities (40%) than for other degrees. Of them, 28% received academic doctoral diplomas from public universities and 14% from institutions of other denominations. In contrast, only 20% of church leaders with a professional doctoral degree received it from non-Adventist universities, while 80% studied in Adventist educational institutions. Also, 85% of all church leaders graduated with a Bachelor's degree from Adventist institutions.

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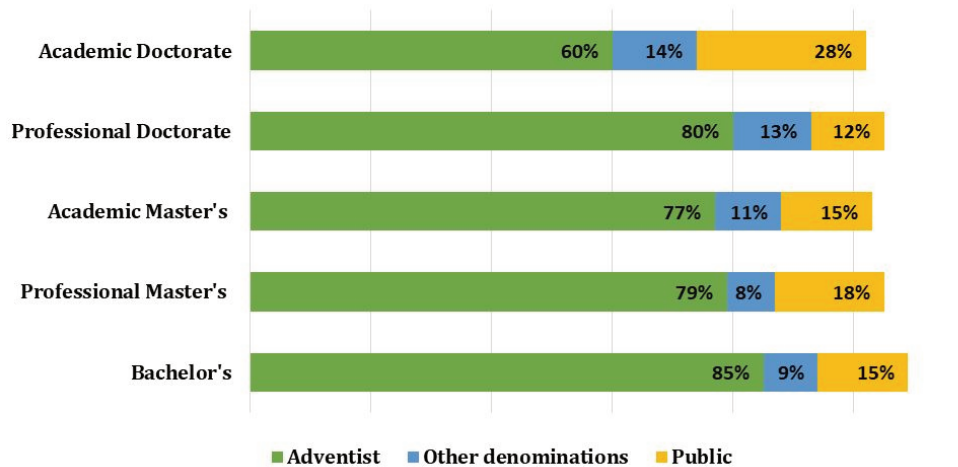
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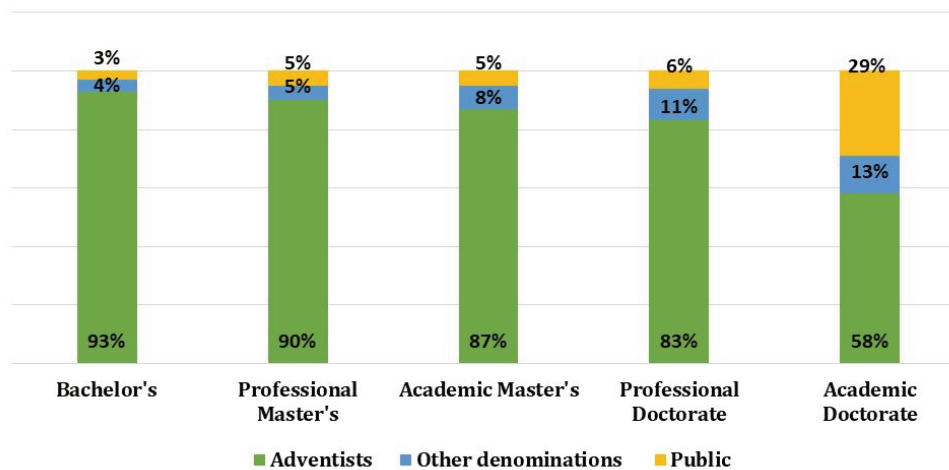
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**Figure 3. 2017 Church Leadership Survey:
Education Received in Different Types of Institutions**



Since the survey participants were working for the Adventist Church, the survey also asked how many of them had their concentration area in church ministry, theology, or religion; and in what type of institutions they studied these disciplines. The results show (Figure 4) that a majority of church leaders took these areas of concentration in Adventist institutions. The numbers are especially high for Bachelor's (93%) and professional Master's (90%) degrees. However, more leaders with academic Doctorates (42%) studied church ministry, theology, or religion in public or other denominational institutions than leaders who pursued other degrees. The gap is really impressive especially compared with a Bachelor's degree—only 7% took classes in these areas outside Adventist institutions. Leaders with Professional Master's or Doctorates received in non-Adventist universities composed 10% and 17% respectively. More studies are needed to explain these findings.

**Figure 4. Education in the Areas of Religion,
Church Ministry, and Theology**



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Having looked at the undergraduate and graduate degrees of Adventist leadership, we need to remind ourselves that a Christian should never graduate from the school of Christ. The following words refer to the conference presidents, but can be applied to any church administrator: "Many of those who have responsibilities laid upon them, who are chosen to be presidents of conferences, are not selected because of their perfection of character, or because of their superior knowledge, but because the Lord signified that if they would be humble enough to learn and not think they were all ready to graduate, He would teach them His way."⁵

In October through November this year, Adventist administrators will fill out the Church Leadership Survey again. The church officers, associate officers, departmental directors, or associate departmental directors of all levels of the church organization are invited to participate. We are looking forward to receiving new data on Adventist church leaders!

Galina Steele

¹ Blog "10 powerful quotes on leadership to inspire your organization," Qualtrics, May 20, 2020.

² Ibid.

³ Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald, 1900), 330.

⁴ Ibid., 333.

⁵ Ellen G. White, MS 55, "Development of Workers" (June 3, 1897).

New Issues of the Canadian Adventist Messenger Uploaded to the Online Archives

The digital records team of the Office of Archives, Statistics and Research (ASTR) continually works to digitize materials for many reasons, among them to make them available to administrators, researchers, and the general public.

We are pleased to report that, in collaboration with the office of *Canadian Adventist Messenger*, we have closed a 10-year gap of this periodical on the Online Archives. During the last year, *Messenger* reached out to us, to help us fill the gap on the Online Archives by sending us hard-copies of the *Messenger* periodicals for the years 2001 through 2011. The staff at ASTR has since worked diligently to digitize, process, and upload these 123 periodicals. Please feel free to browse them at the [Online Archives](#).

Elizabeth Henry



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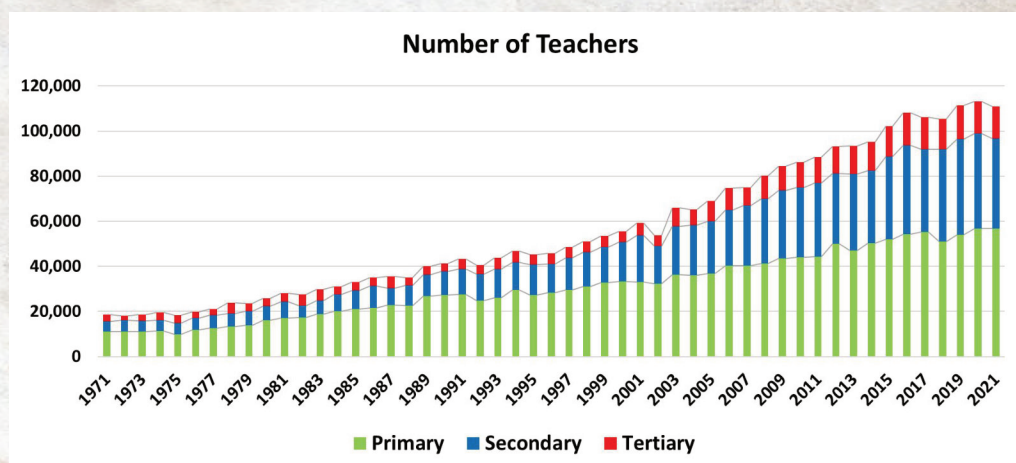
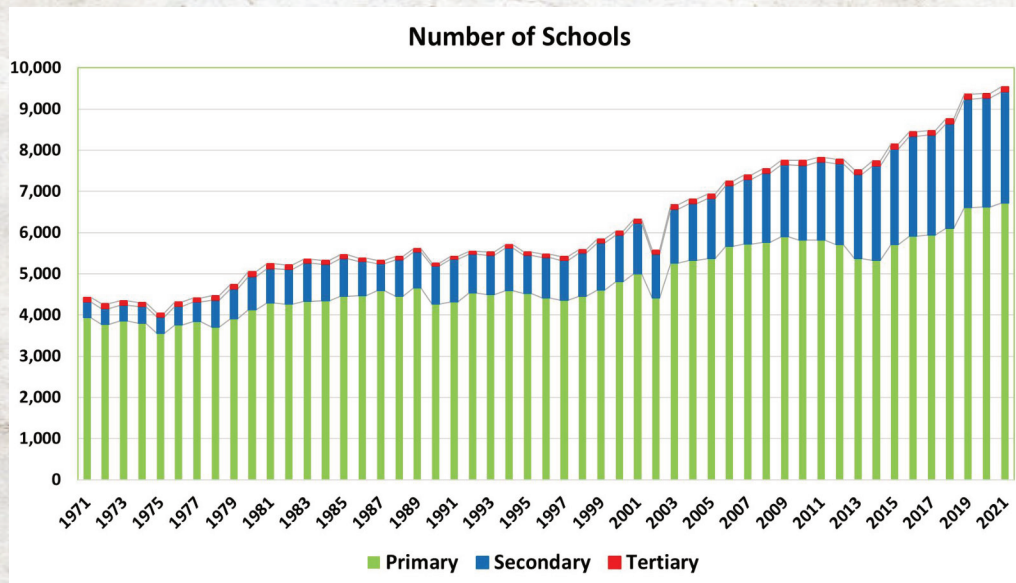
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Number of Schools and Teachers

The Seventh-day Adventist Church education system is one of the largest, fastest-growing Christian school systems in the world. Beginning in the 1870s, the SDA Church education system has grown exponentially to a current 9,589 world-wide schools, with 111,482 dedicated teachers and an enrollment of 2,064,761! As seen in the chart below, in just the last 50 years alone, the number of primary schools has increased by 71%, secondary schools by 612%, and tertiary schools by 5%. And in the next chart, the number of primary school teachers has increased by 412%, secondary school teachers by 789%, and tertiary school teachers by 355%. Praise God our Church continues to grow in this area!



Meredith Carter

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Employee Profile: Ashlee Chism



Hello, Ashlee, glad to have you share with us! So where are you from—or perhaps what places have you lived? Share a little about your background with us.

I'm from the American Midwest. Specifically, I'm from northwestern Indiana. I worked at Adventist summer camps in Indiana and Wisconsin, went to college in Tennessee and Michigan, and spent ten months as a student missionary teacher in the Marshall Islands.

What was your introduction into the Adventist faith? What was the Church like where you grew up?

I was raised an Adventist, so I was introduced to it as an infant. I grew up in a very small congregation (less than thirty people attended weekly) where I was one of the handful of kids (the others were my younger siblings!). We shared a pastor with another church in the district, which was a little bigger than mine and had more kids there, so I was able to participate in Pathfinders as well. But the adults in my congregation let me ask lots of questions, of which I had plenty, and they involved me in things. I did my first Scripture reading when I was seven, probably around the time or just after I was baptized, and I remember going to church business meetings with my

mom. The head elder (who was also the treasurer) would always hand me the financial reports just like everybody else, and he would answer my questions just like he answered anybody else's. When I was eleven I joined the adult Sabbath School class, which is where I realized just how big the Adventist Church is. What clued me in was the maps on the back of the quarterlies. My tiny church was part of something global! The congregation also helped support my education when I decided to attend academy as a dorm student; without their help, going to Indiana Academy might not have happened.

So when did you join ASTR, and what are your special duties here? What do you enjoy most about being here, are there any particular challenges you face, and what are you most looking forward to in the future?

I joined ASTR as its new assistant archivist in August 2015, though I had previously been an intern in ASTR the summer before. In 2018 I became the Research Center Manager. My duties include but are not limited to accessioning and processing archival collections (essentially, making historical materials accessible for use by researchers and seeing to the materials' overall preservation); overseeing the Rebek Memorial Library (so, identifying books to add to the collection, cataloging them, that sort of thing); and working with researchers when they make visits here to the Archives and to the Library. The scope of my duties allows me the privilege of working with all of the other teams in ASTR to varying degrees (I don't know if people realize just how much the existence and keeping of records underlies all of what we do in ASTR!). I've also enjoyed meeting so many fantastic people, whether through performing accreditations, being a part of professional groups, or having researchers coming to do research. I also get to know what people are researching when they visit the Archives, so I enjoy getting a sense of what's being discussed by the historians and other scholars of church history, and it's fascinating.

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I'd say my biggest challenge might be the backlog, but any archivist, Adventist or not, is going to say that! There's just so much that I want to connect researchers with, but there's only one me, after all, so it takes time to get through the backlog of what one wants to accomplish while also keeping on top of new donations. (Don't get me wrong! I love getting new donations; I just have to be careful to keep new donations from becoming part of the backlog.)

I am looking forward to getting more finding aids finished and posted to the ASTR website so that researchers can peruse them and see what sorts of rich archival sources are more easily available to them for the historical work they're doing.

We're very happy to have you here with us in ASTR, but what other educational or work experiences have you had that prepared you to join ASTR?

I studied to become an archivist at the University of Michigan. Specifically, I have a master's degree in information science, specializing in archives and records management. During my time in graduate school, I worked at the Stacks Office at the university library (where I learned how to read Library of Congress call numbers, among other things) and then as a student librarian at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, which is on the campus there at the University of Michigan. It was at the Ford Library that I learned how to process collections, create finding aids, and how to work with audiovisual materials. Before that, while I was a student at Southern Adventist University, I worked in the university's Writing Center and as a reader in the English and Communications departments. I also worked at summer camp, most recently as the crafts and ceramics director. Those three things may not seem connected to the work I do here at ASTR, but skills I picked up in each of those roles have turned out to be very useful in this position.

Anything else you'd like to share with us--personal hobbies, things of that sort? What do you enjoy outside of work?

I like playing with my cat, Merry, who will have been with me for three years come November 2. She's very cute and very insistent that we play often with one of those dangly toys that she can chase. I've begun learning how to work with watercolor paints, and I'm also very fond of reading.

Thanks for sharing with us! We're glad our readers can learn more about you and the work you do for ASTR!



Ashlee with her family. . . and her distinguished
resident scholar, Merry

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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:

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