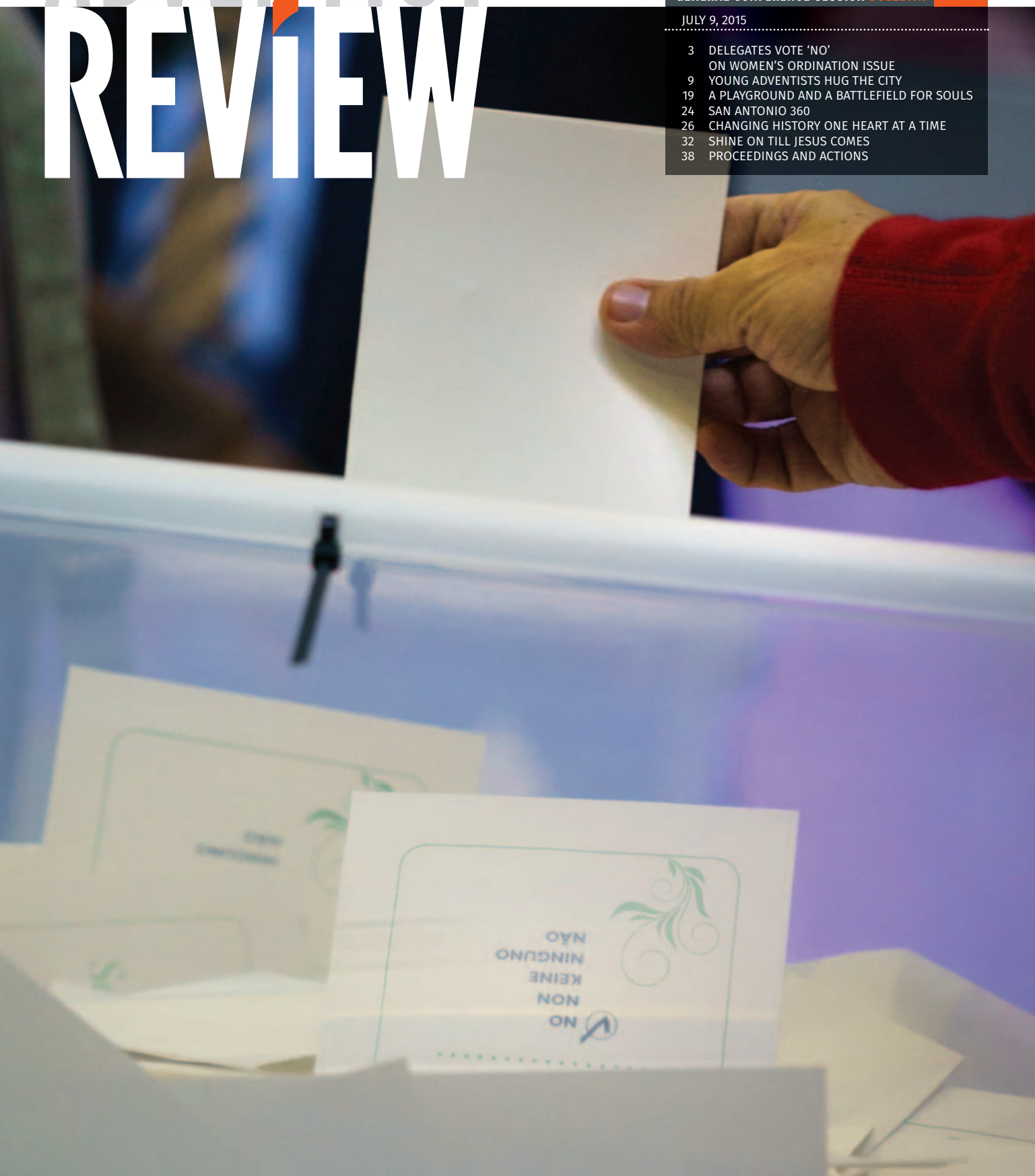
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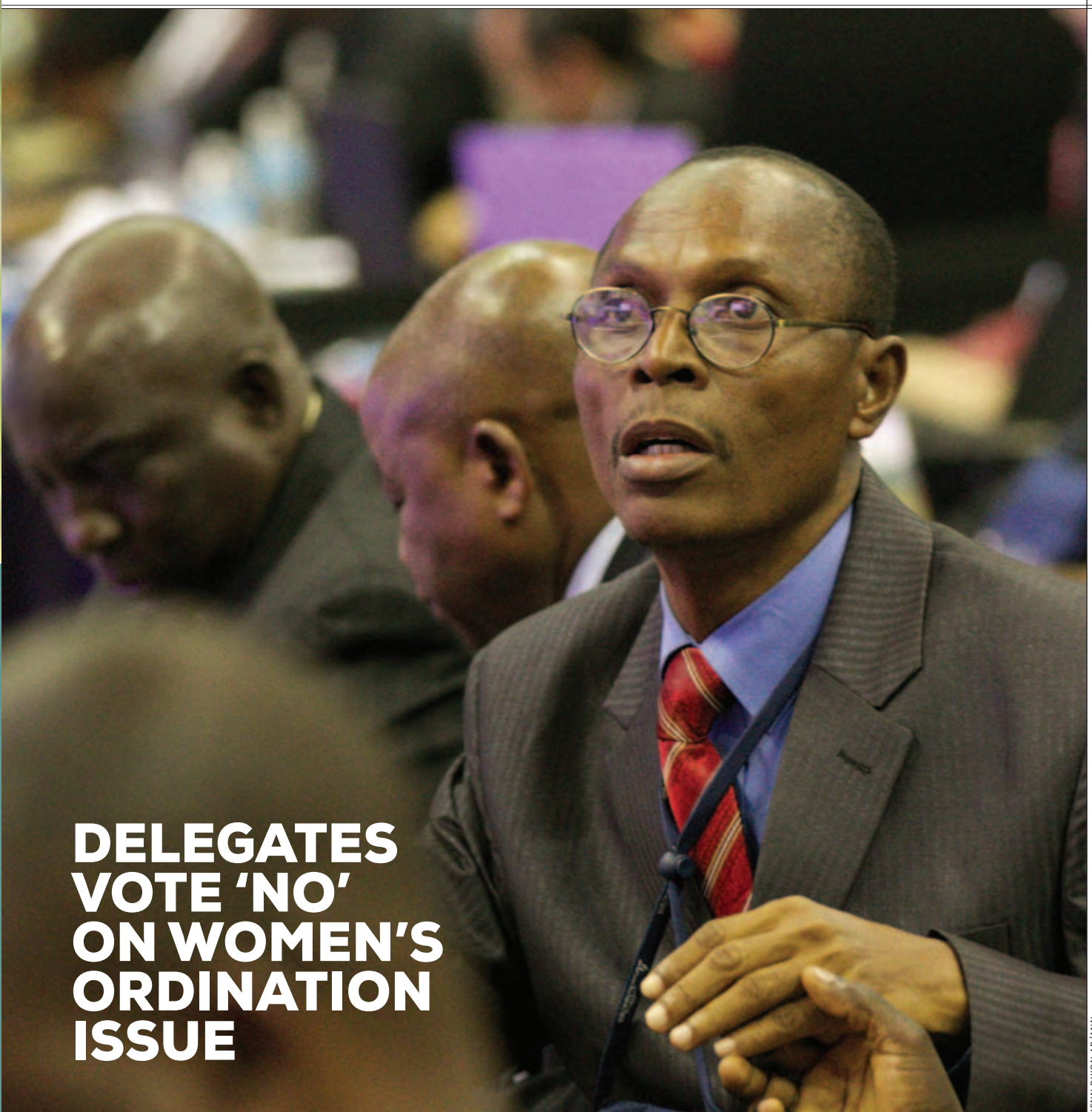
JULY 9, 2015

3 DELEGATES VOTE 'NO' ON WOMEN'S ORDINATION ISSUE
9 YOUNG ADVENTISTS HUG THE CITY
19 A PLAYGROUND AND A BATTLEFIELD FOR SOULS
24 SAN ANTONIO 360
26 CHANGING HISTORY ONE HEART AT A TIME
32 SHINE ON TILL JESUS COMES
38 PROCEEDINGS AND ACTIONS




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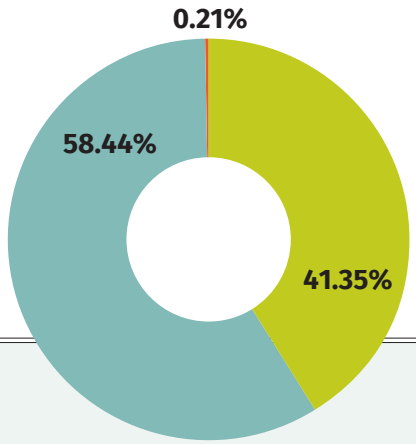
NEWS



DELEGATES VOTE 'NO' ON WOMEN'S ORDINATION ISSUE

KENN DIXON *AR*/ANN

COVER PHOTO BY JOSEF KISSINGER *AR*/ANN



977 YES
1381 NO
5 ABSTAINED

CHURCH PRESIDENT APPEALS TO MEMBERS TO UNITE IN THE CHURCH'S MISSION.

ANDREW MCCHESNEY AND MARCOS PASEGGI *AR*/ANN

Delegates turned down a motion that would have allowed each division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to decide for itself whether to ordain women to the gospel ministry in its territory.

By a margin of 1,381-977, with five abstentions, delegates by secret ballot ended a five-year process characterized by vigorous and sometimes acrimonious debate.

General Conference president Ted N.C. Wilson appealed to church members to unite in the mission of the church after the vote at the 2015 General Conference session in San Antonio, Texas.

"Now is the time to unify under the bloodstained banner of Jesus Christ and His power, not our power," Wilson said after the ballots were counted on tables at the front of the Alamodome stadium. "Now is the time to unify in our mission as Christ's church."

He thanked delegates for the "careful and prayerful manner in which they carried themselves and addressed the subject" during six hours of discussion.

A secret ballot system was used that General Conference officers said offered the most fair and secure voting process possible.

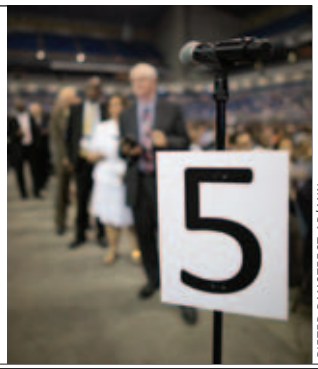
"We have tried to be transparent, honest, and thoughtful, and to ensure the privacy of the vote to the best of our ability," said Nancy Lamoreaux, chief information officer for the General Conference and organizer of the logistics for Wednesday's vote.



KENN DIXON *AR*/ANN

The ballots were printed on special paper, cut to the size of a half sheet of letter paper, and divided in half. One half contained the word "Yes," printed in five languages, and the other the word "No," also in five languages. The languages are English, Spanish, French, German, and Portuguese.

The secret balloting system was prepared well in advance of the General Conference session as a backup in case an electronic voting system didn't work, said undersecretary Myron Iseminger, whose sector oversees



PIETER DAMSTEEGT AR/ANN



While delegates were discussing the ordination issue, church members were interceding in the prayer room. DOMINIK ZEH AR/ANN

voting at GC Sessions. The e-voting system, which debuted at the GC session, proved problematic, and delegates voted on Sunday to no longer use it.

"From the beginning we had a backup plan in case the electronic ballots didn't work," Iseminger said.

Wilson, who opened the morning session with an appeal for all church members to abide by the vote's outcome, underscored both then and after the vote that decisions made by the General Conference in session carry the highest authority in the Adventist Church.

The daylong discussions, which began at 9:30 a.m. and broke for a two-hour lunch at noon, stopped nearly a dozen times for prayer. Participants engaged in silent prayer, one-on-one prayer, and group prayer. Scores more Session attendees packed special prayer rooms organized by the General Conference's Ministerial Association and Women's Ministries departments.

Both Wilson and Michael L. Ryan, a retiring general vice president of the General Conference who chaired Wednesday's discussions, voiced delight at the "sweet spirit" that permeated the proceedings.

Ryan made sure proper meeting decorum was followed, chiding attendees several times for applauding during the discussions. Delegates agreed earlier to refrain from applause in an effort to keep emotions under control.

Ryan, who announced the final vote results, sharply admonished a group of Alamodome attendees who broke into applause at the outcome.

"There is nothing triumphal about this," he said. "There are no winners or losers."

Erton Köhler, South American Division president, echoed Ryan's sentiment that this was not a political contest.

"My expectation for the church is not to have winners or losers, but that each one may feel the decision as God's and may make it his or her own," he told the *Adventist Review*.

"God gifts all believers with unique spiritual gifts to carry on the mission of the church and to edify and build up the body of Christ. Ordination is not a criterion for giftedness. I long for the church to keep in focus clearly that the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts was poured out on both men and women. The gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12 belong to both men and women.

"So ordination is not a criterion for service, witness, or proclamation. I really believe now that we need to focus on maximizing the gifts of all members of the church—young and old, male and female—coming together in unity to focus on the mission of the church. We need to move from our discussions on ordination to focus on how to reach a lost world for Christ."

Mark Finley,* evangelist, editor-at-large at *Adventist Review

"Members of the North American Division are naturally disappointed in the vote, but we are very committed publicly and privately to our world church and to continuing our cooperative efforts to be a blessing in the world church. Our intention is to be a part of that final movement that hastens the day when Jesus comes."

***Daniel R. Jackson,* president, North American Division**

"Today North America faced a disappointment for many, many members and for the women who are in ministry. For those who do not believe that this was the right vote, I would challenge them to think of Joshua and Caleb, who went forward after they could not go into the promised land and stayed faithful to God's people."

***Don Livesay,* president, Lake Union Conference, NAD**

"We will keep preaching, and we will keep uplifting Jesus."

Elizabeth Talbot, The Jesus 101 Biblical Institute



JOSEF KISSINGER AR/ANN



DOMINIK ZEH AR/ANN

"May everyone have the humility to acknowledge that God can manifest His will in a way that differs from personal opinion."

Jerry Page, Ministerial Association director, also spoke of humility. "If we take time in prayer, humble confession, repentance, and service for others, we can move forward instead of spinning around and going backward because of the conflicts," he said.

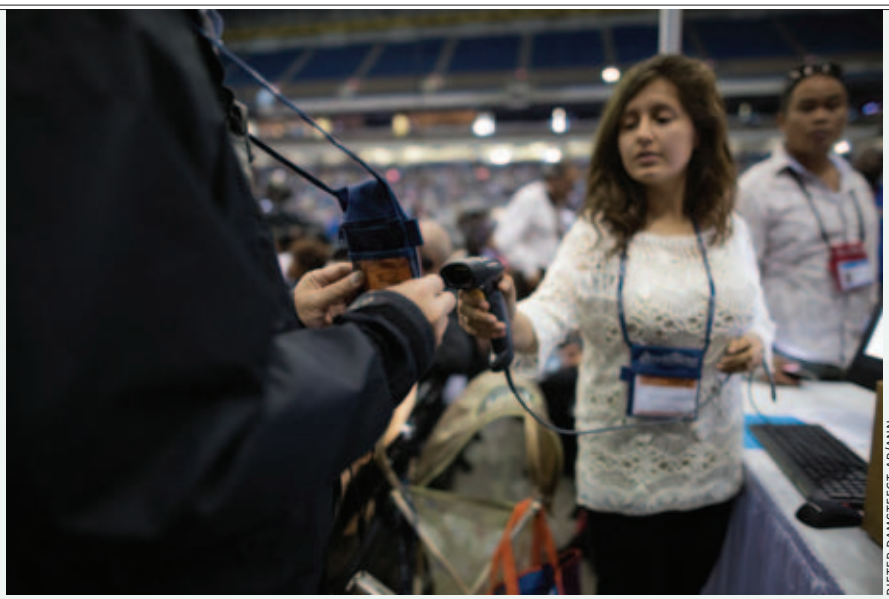
Lisa Beardsley-Hardy, education department director, said she hoped delegates would show respect toward each other.

"My hope and wish is for forbearance on behalf of our brothers and sisters who face ministry challenges in ministry that differ from ours around the world," she said. "Forbearance is a grace that can only come from God, not to hold one another hostage or abandon the body when something offends us."

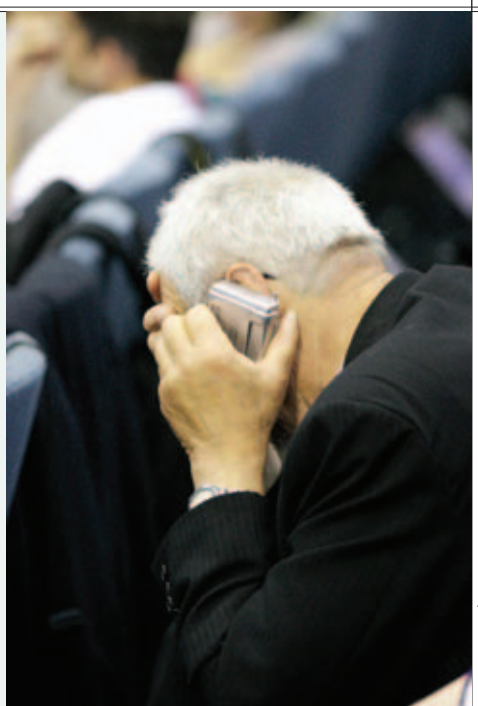
2,363
VOTES CAST

A total of 2,363 ballots were cast in the vote on a motion prepared by senior General Conference officers and division presidents and approved at the 2014 Annual Council, a business meeting of world church leaders. The motion read in full: "After your prayerful study on ordination from the Bible, the writings of Ellen G. White, and the reports of the study commissions, and after your careful consideration of what is best for the church and the fulfillment of its mission, is it acceptable for division executive committees, as they may deem it appropriate in their territories, to make provision for the ordination of women

"Our mission is bigger than any issue that may arise in the Seventh-day Adventist Church at any time of our church life. We must remain united. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a mission and an agenda to finish the work that our Lord left to us. We should not allow any issue to divide us." –Blasious Ruguri, East-Central Africa Division president



PIETER DAMSTEEGT AR/ANN



KENN DIXON AR/ANN



JOSEF KISSINGER AR/ANN

to the gospel ministry? Yes or No."

A total of 40 delegates—20 who supported and 20 who opposed the motion — took to microphones to express their positions on the motion. The discussion was stopped 35 times by delegates who wished to make "points of order," objections to how some aspect of the proceedings was being carried out.

Partway through the afternoon proceedings, Ryan invited Jan Paulsen, a former president of the General Conference, to make a statement.

Paulsen urged delegates to vote "yes," saying it was a matter of trust. He said church members had to trust that their counterparts in other divisions knew better what their local churches needed.

Ryan also invited Wilson to make a statement. Wilson did not recommend a "yes" or "no" vote, saying only, "My views are rather well known and I believe them to be biblically based."

Wednesday's proceedings began with an agreement from the delegates to end discussion for a vote at 4:30 p.m. to begin the voting process. As the time approached, a number of delegates urged Ryan to extend the discussions, but Ryan declared the requests out of order.

General Conference executive secretary G.T. Ng indicated during Wednesday's discussions that the General Conference hoped for full compliance from all church entities.

"We are one church," Ng said.

Sandra Blackmar and Michael Campbell contributed to this report.





PHOTOS: JOSAFAT ZEMLEDUCH AR/ANN

ADVENTIST MEMBERSHIP SURGES IN SAN ANTONIO DESPITE DAUNTING RAIN

MAJOR EVANGELISTIC INITIATIVE SHOULD YIELD MORE THAN 700 BAPTISMS.

BY EVAN KNOTT, *ADVENTIST REVIEW*/ANN

Seventh-day Adventist Church membership in San Antonio, Texas, is on track to grow by 20 percent as the result of a major evangelistic initiative, which for many weeks was threatened by record rainfall.

More than 700 baptisms are expected by August 2015, the one-year anniversary of the start of the multifaceted evangelistic initiative led by veteran evangelist Mark Finley. The initiative was timed to move into its most public phase just before the opening of the denomination's quinquennial General Conference session in the Alamodome on July 2.

"What's significant about that number of baptisms is that we have only about 3,500 church members in San Antonio, with only about 2,000 to 2,200 attending church regularly," Finley said. "So if you take the 3,500 figure and you add 700 new persons, that's 20 percent of the existing membership!"

Speakers at the evangelistic meetings in May and June also included South American evangelist Alejandro Bullón, Breath of Life television ministry speaker Carlton Byrd, and young adult evangelist José Rojas.

The San Antonio region was inundated with 14.9 inches (37.8 centimeters) of rain in May and June, nearly double the annual average for those months, causing flooding that made international headlines. Finley said the bad weather, which arrived just as the evangelistic initiative culminated with a series of meetings in May and June, posed a serious challenge to the effort, but people still attended the meetings.

"On a number of nights the rain just poured down," he said. "It was very difficult for people to get there. Yet even on those low nights we would have a significant audience with us, no lower than 350 to 450. That would be on our bad nights with terrible, terrible rain pouring down."

Finley, who praised God for the turnout, said many people who are joining the church first came into contact with Adventists through health and wellness programs conducted at local churches since August 2014 and a three-day clinic that provided more than $20 million in free health care to 6,192 people at the Alamodome stadium in April.

One such person is Patty.

"We were at the Alamodome for three days, and Patty came all three days," Finley said. "She was impressed with the joy on people's faces, the peace in their hearts."

The free clinic ended on a Friday, and Patty walked into the Laurel Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church the next morning, on Sabbath, he said. At the church, she signed up for programs such as Reversing Diabetes and Natural Lifestyle Cooking.

"She was so excited about what she was receiving and the changes in her life," Finley said.

When Finley's nightly meetings, titled "Ancient Discoveries," began at the Shrine Auditorium on San Antonio's north side in May, Patty rode an Adventist Church-provided bus to the venue daily. She was baptized on the evening of July 3, the first Friday of the General Conference session in the Alamodome.

San Antonio's north side, an area with little historic Adventist presence, is an affluent community with multiple evangelical megachurches. "Ancient Discoveries" attracted more than 1,100 nonmember guests in two months.

"The attendees are quickly embracing Christ's love with commitment and passion," said Mark Lien, pastor of the newly formed Northern Adventist Fellowship, a new congregation being planted as a result of the "Ancient Discoveries" series. "It's an awesome thing to be a part of."

Seventh-day Adventist General Conference president Ted N. C. Wilson participated in the last week of the "Ancient Discoveries" series, offering encouragement to pastors and volunteers and preaching twice in the final week of the campaign about the book of Revelation.

"How exciting to see what God is doing in the lives of people when they hear the full prophetic messages preached in Seventh-day Adventist evangelistic meetings," Wilson said. "We all become reconverted as we thrill to the accuracy and depth of God's Bible truth and His plans for His people as we anticipate Christ's soon coming."

Finley said San Antonio's results could be replicated anywhere.

"Our intent is to share with the Adventist world field that you can take a city like San Antonio with a population of 1.2 million and make a significant impact if you develop a biblical, Christ-centered, comprehensive strategy that focuses on the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs of people," he said.







PHOTOS BY DOMINIK ZEH *AR*/ANN

YOUNG ADVENTISTS HUG THE CITY

BY KIMBERLY LUSTE MARAN, *ADVENTIST REVIEW*/ANN

Hello, my name is Linda, and you're . . . ?"

"Marcus."

"I'm from Kenya. Where are you from?"

"I'm from Texas."

"We are out here just giving hugs as part of our mission—and here to spread God's Word. We are from the Seventh-day Adventist Church."

And the brief conversation started. It ended with a hug. And a smile.

Linda Oyier, a 30-year-old from Nairobi, Kenya, is part of the Impact San Antonio young adult group focusing on community service in the city center this week. After morning worship and a training session involving community and prayer, about 500 Impact delegates split up to various locations in San Antonio. The group of 50 that included Oyier went to the Alamo fort to give free hugs and offer people on the street a dollar for their story.

"I wanted to do the city center project to meet different people and spread God's Word, His love, in a simple way," Oyier said. "To tell them that God is love—you don't have to be in our religion to know that God loves you. We are all loved."

The outreach involves the Impact delegates holding signs advertising free hugs—and approaching people near the Alamo. The delegates offer the hug, using it to start a conversation. Delegates are supposed to relate to, sympathize with, and encourage the people they meet—then surprise them with a dollar for participating. According to Impact city center hug coordinator Josue Peralta, delegates practiced verbal exchanges on the bus, asking each other about work or school and sharing a quick story about God in their life. "There's no better ice breaker than giving someone a genuine, caring hug," said 19-year-old Peralta. "And following up with a word about Christ in their lives, you're pointing them to Christ."

> "WHEN I GOT THE CALL FROM THE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR, I DIDN'T EVEN LET HER FINISH SPEAKING, AND I SAID, 'YEAH, I'M WILLING. LET'S DO IT.'"

Hundreds of people were approached and engaged. A handful of men and women resting in the shade in front of the Alamo were pleasantly surprised by their exchange with one gregarious group of young delegates who doled out hugs, chatted, prayed with the group, and finally sang "Happy Birthday" to one of the men, a cancer survivor.

"It was good," said a woman who received a hug. "And they prayed with us too. At first I said, 'No, it's too hot to be hugged,' but he said it would be just a short [hug], so I said, 'O.K.' I liked when they asked to pray with us."

Peralta, born in the Dominican Republic, moved to Wisconsin in 2002 and will study economics and political science at the University of Wisconsin this fall. He knows the team made a difference. He's glad to be part of Impact and part of the city outreach: "God is good, He leads. When I got the call from the volunteer coordinator, I didn't even let her finish speaking, and I said, 'Yeah, I'm willing. Let's do it.'"

Although the exchanges with Alamo passersby were short and dollars weren't given out, the group believes the outreach was a success. The bus trip back buzzed with excitement as the delegates sang hymns.

"When it's meeting other people, when it's leading out and trying to get other people to fall in love with Jesus Christ, it's just basic logic," said Peralta. "It's win-win; can't lose. The Lord really blessed."



ADVENTIST REVIEW APP UNVEILED

READING THE GOOD OL' *REVIEW* IS NOW EASIER THAN EVER

BY STEPHEN CHAVEZ, *ADVENTIST REVIEW*/ANN

Just 166 years after James White carried the first edition of *Present Truth* to the post office in a carpetbag, the *Adventist Review* (*AR*) released its first app. Although the app's release will likely be upstaged by other events taking place at the General Conference Session in San Antonio (Fundamental Beliefs, women's ordination), the app significantly improves the availability of feature articles until now only available in print or online.

Speaking about changing reading habits, Claude Richli, associate publisher of *Adventist Review*, said, "We know a lot of people consume information on the [*Adventist Review]* Web site, something like 300,000 visitors every month. But we also know that this is not the way people want to read material that lifts them up, builds their faith, deepens their relationship with Jesus, and builds their identity with the church."

The *AR* app takes most of the feature articles that appear in print or online and makes them completely portable in a digital format. Because news and news commentaries are frequently updated on the *AR* Web site, they will not be available on the app; but the rest of the magazine will be. Articles will appear just as they do on the Web site, except in a format to fit smartphone screens.

The *Adventist Review* app is available for free from the Apple Store. But each issue is available only to subscribers. A 12-month subscription costs US$17.99, and single issues cost US$2.99. Now available only for Apple devices, the app will be accessible for Android devices in a few weeks.

An *AR* app would have saved James White an eight-mile walk in the July heat.



Local Baptist Church youth are helping to keep food service labor costs low by volunteering to distribute water at lunchtime. DAVID B. SHERWIN *AR*/ANN

LOCAL BAPTIST CHURCH OFFERS HELPING HANDS

YOUTH FROM BEAUTIFUL GATE BAPTIST CHURCH HELP KEEP FOOD SERVICE COSTS LOW.

BY SANDRA BLACKMER, *ADVENTIST REVIEW*/ANN

Youth from the local Beautiful Gate Baptist Church have graciously been lending a helping hand to food service workers throughout the General Conference Session in San Antonio. As a result of their help with distributing bottles of water and frozen fruit bars to guests each day during the lunchtime meal, as well as overseeing the fresh fruit and cookie tables, session food service director Jeanette Jump says labor costs are being kept low.

"The name of their group fits so well—Helping Hands," said Jump, also special events coordinator for Employee Food Service for the General Conference office. "We are so grateful for their help."

The Helping Hands group of about 20 people comprise mostly youth but also a few parents. They are raising funds to pay for a week at summer camp for kids that can't afford it themselves, so RK Group, the catering company responsible for providing the Session meals, is aiding their efforts. RK is donating funds to help pay the way for the young Session worker campers. And the young people seem to be enjoying the job.

"It's been fun," said Yairesan Chez from Helping Hands, adding that most of the people "have been really nice."

Witnessing other cultures has also been eye opening for some of the young people. Marisol Acosta said she's appreciated how the international Adventist group "are all united. It's a privilege to be part of it." She added that it's been "a great opportunity for myself and my church so people will learn who we are and what we stand for."

SCANNERS AND PLATE DISTRIBUTORS

Adventist youth are doing their part to assist with the meal service as well. Some 14 teens are greeting the guests with a smile, scanning their meal cards, and handing them a plastic plate. Receiving no pay for their work, the young people still see it as rewarding.

"It's fun to help people," said Somiaya Goulvourne from Tennessee, "and I'm making friends at the same time."

Volunteer Jemima Klingbeil said that speaking multiple languages has been useful.

"I know only two languages—German and English—but sometimes when I'm trying to help a person who speaks Spanish, I call my sister and say, 'Hey, get over here,' because Hannah speaks Spanish," Jemima said.

Hannah Klingbeil noted that the cafeteria is busiest on Sabbaths.

"We dash out of church and race here, and then there's a rush of people," she said. "On Sabbaths we feed thousands more people than during the week."

The scanning team is lead by David Macomber, a bush pilot from Chad.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE?

So is all this young assistance really vital to the food service program?

"We could not have done it without their help," Jump said. "They are all truly amazing young people."



Creation science is on display at the Faith and Science Council's booth in the exhibition hall.

DAVID B. SHERWIN AR/ANN

BRIGHT NEW WORLD

UNDERLINING FAITH IN GENESIS

BY EVAN KNOTT, *ADVENTIST REVIEW*/ANN

What connects the world premiere of a movie, a whale skeleton, and some of the best new scholarship about the biblical doctrine of Creation?

As one of the newest organizations exhibiting at this General Conference (GC) Session, the Faith and Science Council (FSC) is celebrating the close link between Creation and redemption. The exhibit (booth A502 of the exhibit hall) aims to demonstrate that the relationship between the natural sciences and the Bible's account of creation can be complementary.

Session attendees who visit the booth will find Geological Research Institute scientists available to the public for answering questions concerning biology, geology, paleontology, and biblical Creation.

"What we're hoping to communicate is the everlasting gospel of Revelation 14:6-7—that we are to worship our Creator and our Redeemer," say Dr. Timothy Standish of the Geoscience Research Institute.

The exhibit features a variety of fossils for exhibition patrons to examine. Attendees can visit the booth to discover the "Fossil of the Day" as well as see the skeleton of a beluga whale.

"We tried to pull together a collection of fossils that illustrates various aspects of the fossil record and design in nature," says Standish.

The FSC exhibit is also distributing free tickets to the world premiere of *Living Waters: Intelligent Design in the Oceans of the World* on July 10 in San Antonio. The documentary, produced by Illustra Media, features breathtaking cinematography and examines evidences of a Creator from ocean life.

"This is the latest from Illustra Media. Anyone who has seen their films knows that this is fabulous stuff!" says Standish.

The premiere of *Living Waters* is expected to attract a large number of evangelical Christians from the greater San Antonio area in addition to the Adventists attending GC Session, reports Standish. "This is a wonderful way we all can join together as Christians and celebrate our belief in the biblical Creation and enjoy one another's company."

Tickets for *Living Waters* are in limited quantity, and FSC representatives say they will be distributed on a first come, first served basis.

In addition to the world premiere of *Living Waters*, FSC is also sponsoring a series of media presentations on Creation during the General Conference Session called "Yes, Creation!" There will be presentations in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and French, and a schedule can be found at the FSC booth in the exhibit hall.

"This is an opportunity for us to roll out some of the fabulous media that has been produced in association with the Faith and Science Council," says Standish.

Attendees of the GC Session can also purchase a new book on Creation in the Old Testament co-produced by the Faith and Science Council in cooperation with the Biblical Research Institute and the Geoscience Research Institute. *He Spoke and It Was: Divine Creation in the Old Testament*, edited by *Adventist Review* associate editor Gerald Klingbeil, is the first book in a new Creation series produced by this partnership.

He Spoke and It Was can be purchased through the Adventist Book Center. A more comprehensive, scholarly version, *The Genesis Account and Its Reverberations in the Old Testament*, can be purchased through Andrews University Press. The second volume of the Creation Series will deal with Creation in the New Testament and is expected to be released some time next year.

The Faith and Science Council was created by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists to study the interrelationships of science and Scripture, with particular attention to Creation. The council's membership comprises scientists, theologians, educators, pastors, and church administrators.

BEYOND FORGIVENESS TO RECONCILIATION

THE STANDARD IS HIGHER FOR CHRISTIANS, MUCH HIGHER.



DOMINIK ZEH AR/ANN

BY DAVID SEDLACEK

For Jesus, there was no negotiating about the priority of love.

Once a clever lawyer asked Jesus about the greatest commandment in the law. "Jesus replied: '"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments'" (Matt. 22:37-40).

In other words, Jesus was emphasizing that everything else in Scripture must be filtered through the lens of love for God and, just as important, love for our neighbors.

The apostle John wrote, "Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen" (1 John 4:20).

This principle of love is foundational to all relationships because "God is love" (1 John 4:8). Relationships between parents and children, spouses, and members of the church family are all subject to this principle of love.

The sad reality is that in our humanness we often fall far short of this biblical imperative. Self gets in the way and too frequently unhealthy conflicts between people result in broken relationships. In this fallen world we hurt one another. In most cases the hurt is unintentional, but it's still painful. As a

If God made peace with everyone by the death of Jesus on the cross, aren't we compelled to do the same thing with each of our brothers and sisters, no matter how much we disagree about an issue?

result, a strain or distance can occur in relationships. Often relationships are broken, altogether in an attempt to keep from being hurt again.

MY STORY

Nearly 30 years ago, when I first became a Seventh-day Adventist, I had a narrow view of God's love. I was raised in a family in which being right was more important than being loving. I loved God the best way I knew, but I didn't understand that my relationship with God was fear-based. My internal belief system said, "If you don't do everything right, and keep all the commandments, you'll be judged and condemned."

The problem with my fear-based religion was that in my self-righteousness I put myself as judge and jury above others. I looked down on others and condemned them because they weren't doing everything I considered right. Because I was so judgmental, I missed seeing people; and I saw their differences as faults.

I left the organized church for a short time, priding myself that I wasn't leaving the "true church" but what I considered "Babylon," or the false church. I thought of myself as part of the "true" remnant. I asked to have my name removed from the church books. In this process, I hurt my wife, my children, and my church family, to say nothing of how I hurt my precious Lord.

Through a series of events the Lord introduced me to a correct understanding of grace and righteousness by faith. My heart was broken. I went back to my church family, confessed the error of my previous thinking, and was welcomed back into its fellowship with open arms. I was the recipient of the grace and forgiveness I so badly needed.

In this process one dear sister stands out. We had moved to California to serve at Weimar Institute. The Lord had already done a lot of work on me, but I was still quite rigid in my thinking because these patterns were so deeply ingrained in my thinking, emotions, and living. Despite who I still was at the time, this sister didn't judge me, reject me, or distance herself from me. She simply loved my family and me.

At first I couldn't understand. I judged her as a flaming liberal. But that didn't deter her love for me. She kept her heart open to me, even when mine was closed to her. I began to understand God's love through this sister to whom I am eternally grateful. I had never experienced such a thing, and my heart was melted.

PERFECT IN LOVE

Jesus shared this perspective with His followers: "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. . . . If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:43-48).

In this passage from the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus connects perfection with love. The command to be perfect is the command to love maturely and selflessly. Unfortunately, instead of this type of love, we often relate to others as functional enemies. Instead of blessing them, we curse them; instead of doing good to them, we show hatred by the way we treat them. If we pray for them at all, it's so that they will be molded into an image of our making.

Forgiveness is an essential element of true Christian love. Humanly speaking, when we're hurt by another person or group, we can choose whether or not to forgive. Forgiveness essentially involves acknowledging the hurt, grieving the loss, and experiencing comfort from "the God of all comfort" (2 Cor. 1:3), and from others in a trusted community. Humility in forgiveness acknowledges that I'm no better than those who hurt me, because I'm capable of inflicting the same pain on others. (If you are uncertain of this truth, simply ask God to show you how you are like those who hurt you.)

Forgiveness is a call to heart searching, to see the hurting and sinful ways in my own heart (Ps. 139:23, 24). When someone hurts us, that person owes us a debt (Matt. 18:23-35). The decision to forgive is a choice to no longer require satisfaction of that debt, but to stamp it "paid in full." This implies that I surrender the right to bring it up again and rub it in the person's face. Like the Father, I must cast it into the sea of forgetfulness.

Forgiveness doesn't gloss over differences or pretend they don't exist, but it opens my heart to others in love. Prayer for those who hurt me opens my heart to them even more. As the apostle Peter wrote: "Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing" (1 Peter 3:8, 9).

MOVING TOWARD RECONCILIATION

Through this process we are now positioned for the possibility of reconciliation. Humanly speaking, the last thing we want to do is reconcile with those who hurt us. We want to stay away from them, cut them off, wish they didn't exist.

I'm thankful God didn't treat me that way. We were restored to relationship with God through the work of Christ. "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the



JOSEF KISSINGER AR/ANN

message of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:18, 19).

Are we willing to no longer count our brothers' and sisters' sins against them, but rather to be ministers of reconciliation, just as Jesus was with us? This is the result of regeneration, of being a new person in Christ (verse 17).

In practical terms, this means being willing to have conversation with those who hurt me, or who may see things differently than me. It means that I may have to listen carefully without judgment so that I can hear the heart of others to understand how important an issue is to them.

Reconciliation might mean a willingness to apologize for a real or perceived hurt we have caused others. "For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross" (Col. 1:19, 20).

If God made peace with everyone by the death of Jesus on the cross, aren't we compelled to do the same thing with each of our brothers and sisters, no matter how much we disagree about an issue? Is being "right" about an issue more important than maintaining a loving relationship?

LOVE THAT COMPELS US

She was dying; the family had been called. My friend and his wife drove to Texas to be with his brother and failing sister-in-law whom he had prayed with and for many times during the course of her illness. When they arrived, my friend prayed with her one last time. As she faintly recognized his voice, she physically responded but was unable to speak.

All the family was around her bed as the Sabbath drew to a close. Everyone knew the end was near. Her favorite songs were hymns. One of her sons put his iPhone next to her ear and played "I'd Rather Have Jesus." While the song played, her body noticeably relaxed, and with a few short breaths she breathed her last.

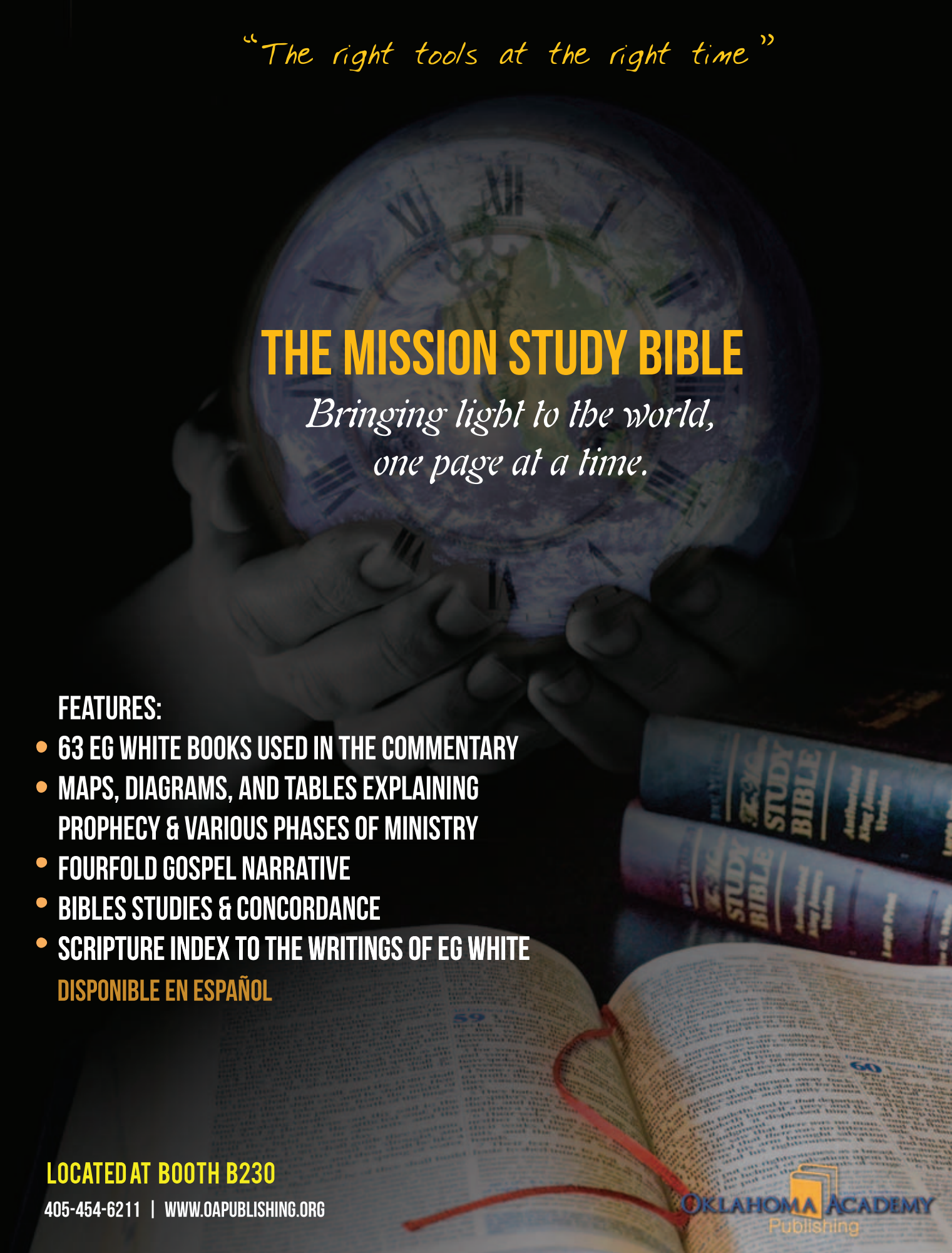
My friend went out to the patio to support his grieving brother. They were followed by nieces and nephews openly sobbing, expressing their grief at the loss of their beloved grandmother. He soon realized that everyone had left the room except the women—his wife, daughter, and his brother's two daughters-in-law. Before her death, the dying woman asked her eldest son that she be dressed before leaving her bed. The women ministered to her by washing and anointing her entire body with a fragrant lotion in a sacred ceremony reminiscent of the anointing of the body of Jesus. When they finished, they dressed the woman in one of her finest suits, as she had requested. The culmination of this sacred, private moment was to be a celebration. Everyone was deeply moved.

Perhaps the greatest fruit of this touching ceremony, however, was the reconciliation between family members who had long been separated by relational stress. Some hadn't spoken in many years. Now, at the death of this godly woman, years of bitterness melted away, and they held each other close. Later at the funeral the woman's three brothers, who hadn't spoken to each other for many years, stood with their arms around each other beside the casket. Before she died she asked that they put away the differences that had separated them for so long. Their love for her overcame their bitterness, and they granted her request by reconciling.

What will it take for us to be reconciled to one another? Is the death of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ enough? Will we crucify Him afresh, determined to hold on to our bitterness and hatred? What else can we do to bring our hearts into harmony with His character of love?

David Sedlacek is a professor of family ministry and discipleship at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States.

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The Advent Movement and Jesus' Return



BY ALAIN CORALIE

DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE PRESENTED WEDNESDAY MORNING, JULY 8, 2015

This was the moment they'd been waiting for. After 40 years of wandering and delayed hopes, of pitching tents and digging graves, they were now at the edge of the Promised Land.

But between the children of Israel and Canaan was the river Jordan, almost bursting at its banks. As they reached the river, they "lodged there" (Joshua 3:1).[1]

LODGED BY THE RIVER

This was no accident. As they lodged by a surging and swollen river it dawned on them that the task before them was humanly impossible: God would have to show up one way or another for them to make it.

Sometimes we have to lodge at some Jordan rivers to understand that only God can deliver! Sometimes we have to face darkness to know the Lord as our light; to become weak to recognize that the Lord is our strength; to be broke to realize that God is our provider; to experience sickness and pain to know the Balm that makes the wounded whole.

Israel's lodging at the river Jordan helped them understand that their situation required divine intervention.

That period was also meant to be a time of preparation for what God was about to do. Joshua said to the people, "Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you" (verse 5). The Lord was about to perform wonders among His people, and His people needed to be ready for it. They could not enter into Canaan without some consecration, some revival and reformation, some renewal and transformation. So as they waited at the edge of the Promised Land, the children of Israel consecrated themselves to God.

INTO THE RIVER

The time for stepping forward in faith had come. I can hear the sounds of the shofar blasting in the camp, the shuffle and bleat of a million feet and sheep and goats. I can see the ark pressing forward, and the people following down the bank. The priests approach the raging flow. They dip their feet into the river. As dusty feet meet frenzied, furious waters, the current suddenly stops. They walk halfway over the Jordan and stand in the bed of the river as the people cross, not on muddy or soggy ground, but on dry ground.

As they crossed the Jordan, they waved goodbye to years of wandering in the desert and said hello to the land that flows with milk and honey. And when they had all crossed, Jordan rolled on as before, overflowing its banks.

STONES OF REMEMBRANCE

Then God told Joshua to do something odd: He told Joshua to call out 12 leaders of the 12 tribes of Israel, command each one to pick up a stone from the middle of the river bed, and carry it on his shoulder into the Promised Land. Then they were to set up these stones as pillars at a place called Gilgal.

Why did they have to set up this pillar? What do these stones mean? If they could speak they would cry out, "Your God is faithful!" Setting up these stones in Gilgal was to fix on the people's mind that God had been faithful from their start in Egypt to their crossing into the Promised Land.

These stones were a sign (Joshua 4:5, 6), and "a memorial to the children of Israel forever" (verse 7). They were a vivid and tangible witness of God's power and presence in Israel's history. For God knew that even a memorable event like the crossing of the river Jordan could soon be forgotten.

Sometimes we can be so forgetful. God blesses us, and we forget. God delivers us, and we forget. God makes a way for us, and we forget. So when God asks us to remember, He's not simply asking us to exercise our memory skills—He's asking us to dwell upon His action in our lives; to cherish and celebrate the wonderful things He has done.

It's a dangerous thing to forget our past: people that do not remember their history are people with no identity and no future; if we don't know how we got here, we won't know why we are here or how we'll get there. We'll suffer disorientation and confusion regarding our present condition and our future direction.

Could this be a real danger we face as a people? Could it be that some of us feel embarrassed by our past and want to distance ourselves from it in an effort to be more trendy and relevant in this day and age? Could it be that some of us do not even know how we got here as a denomination?

How can we forget people such as William Miller, Ellen White, or John N. Andrews? How can we forget the contributions of Anna Knight, H.M.S. Richards, Sr., and E. E. Cleveland? How can we forget 1844, 1863, and 1888? If there is a time we should remember how God has moved in the midst of history to bring about this great movement, it is now!

We are not the product of some prophetic misinterpretation! We are not the result of some hermeneutic miscalculation! This church has been called into existence by God, established by God with a specific mission: to proclaim God's final message to a perishing world, and to prepare people for Christ's soon return. By all means, let's not forget.

Joshua 4:19 reminds us of God's faithfulness: "Now the people came up from the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they camped in Gilgal on the east border of Jericho."

Mention of the tenth day of the first month is significant. The Passover was instituted on the tenth day of the first month (Ex. 12:2, 3). Mentioning the tenth day of the first month reminds us here that God had not forgotten His promise. The same God who initiated their departure from the land of slavery guaranteed their arrival into Canaan. The same God who at Creation had said, "Let the dry land appear" (Gen. 1:9), gathered up the Jordan waters so that His people could cross on dry ground. God had been faithful to His people.

As we look back over the years, can we testify that God has been good to us as a people? Has He been faithful? Yes, He has! Who would have bet on a movement that started with a Great Disappointment? Who would have bet on a denomination that started with a bunch of inexperienced youth and a 17-year-old girl who claimed to receive visions from God? Yet here we are, decades later, one of the fastest growing denominations, almost 20 million members around the world, with "nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history."[2]

God's hand can be seen from the beginning of this movement all the way to where we are now: the border of the Promised Land.

STONES FOR TOMORROW

What else do these stones mean? "When your children ask, . . . then you shall let your children know, saying, 'Israel crossed over this Jordan on dry land'; . . . that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty, that you may fear the Lord your God forever" (Joshua 4:21-24).

If these stones could speak, they would proclaim, "Your God is mighty!" The text makes it clear that God wanted to let all

the surrounding nations know that He is mighty! He wanted to demonstrate that He specializes in the impossible, that He accomplishes the unfeasible and achieves the unattainable.

And God got the Canaanites' attention! They panicked (Joshua 5:1). But at the same time, those stones at Gilgal were also a message of encouragement and empowerment to the Israelites, a sign of God's continued presence, evidence that He would still be working for them. These were not milestones only; they were stepping-stones. They were to remind them of past triumphs, and also point to future victories.

Adventists are not only a community of memory, but foremost a community of hope; an eschatological people. By definition, we look forward. We cannot afford only to look back to our pioneers. We also need to be pioneers ourselves, forging ahead, reaching out in mission and service, knowing that God is still active, still leading. And we, His people, are to respond accordingly. We are here to possess the land. We are people with a mission!

We point people to Jesus Christ, a Savior who can forgive them when they've gone wrong, who can strengthen them when they are weak and challenge them when they become complacent. They need to know that there is a God who can not only dry the river Jordan but also dry the tears in their eyes in the new earth John saw.

So tell them about the manger. Tell them about the cross. Tell them about the empty tomb. Tell them about our High Priest. Tell them about His second coming. Tell them about Jesus, "that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty, that you may fear the Lord your God forever."

We can count on His promises. And when He says He's coming again, He's coming again! It seems to me that up above my head I can hear music in the air. Up above my head. I can hear the great trumpet sounding. Up above my head I can hear the angels sounding the shout of His coming.

Fellow pilgrim, lift up your head and behold your King. Shout with a voice of triumph. He's coming again. Time will soon be enveloped into eternity. Trials and troubles will soon be history. Distress and sadness will soon make room for gladness. Death will soon be canceled by life, and this mortal body shall put on immortality. Yes, He's coming again.

Fellow pilgrims bound for our eternal Canaan, lift up your eyes, lift up your voices, "lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord" (Ps. 116:13, NIV),[3] He's coming again. Sing a joyful song, He's coming again. Tell the nations He's coming again. Bless His name. Lift Him up. Rejoice in Him. Praise Him. Honor Him. Trust in Him! Lean on Him. Bow down before Him. Adore Him. Worship Him. He's coming again!

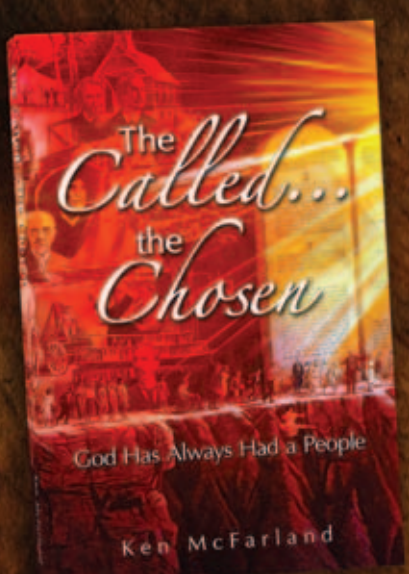
[1] Unless otherwise noted, Bible texts in this article are from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

[2] Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1915), p. 196.

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Alain Coralie is associate executive secretary of the East-Central Africa Division, located in Nairobi, Kenya. He and his wife, Caroline, have one daughter, Audrey-Joy.

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SOUTHERN AFRICA-INDIAN OCEAN DIVISION REPORT

PAUL RATSARA
PRESIDENT





In the midst of Africa's breathtaking beauty, which includes Victoria Falls, live a people who long to connect with God, their Creator. PIXABAY

A Playground and a Battlefield for Souls

The Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division is home to sandy deserts and lush rain forests.

You will witness the world's largest single sheet of falling water if you follow the meandering Zambezi River through southern Africa to Victoria Falls, where a perpetual rainbow creates a spectacular wonder of the world.

You will feel Africa if you go on safari in Botswana or Malawi, or if you opt for an adventure in the last untouched rain forests of Madagascar.

When you breathe in the fresh air atop Table Mountain in South Africa, you will exclaim: "'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth!'"

In the midst of such breathtaking beauty live a people who long to connect with God, their Creator.

This is Africa: a playground and a battlefield for souls.

God's key instrument in this cosmic struggle are the 3,346,372 members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division. Here are some of their stories.

TOTAL PARTICIPATION

Rima is 6, and has diligently preached the gospel in Madagascar for the past two years. Armed with the Bible, blessed with a good memory, and encouraged by his mother, Rima stands tall as he preaches the Word.

The Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division offers regular preaching seminars for children, allowing them to sharpen their calling and to be equipped with homiletic skills.

Child preachers are a growing phenomenon in the division, but church members of all ages are sharing Jesus.

Three years ago Jato Mailose Sibanda was perhaps the continent's most active centenarian. Although he has slowed down a little, Sibanda at the age of 113 is now the world's oldest active Pathfinder and Adventist preacher. Advocating a vegetarian diet, regular exercise, a good attitude, and constant trust in the Word of God, he is inspiring a deeper commitment for the three angels' messages in the hearts of young and old.

But the work of spreading the gospel is dependent on lay members. The division has only 1,552 pastors for its 9,992 churches and 13,068 companies and groups.

LAY MEMBERS TAKE THE LEAD

Church membership has grown rapidly in the division as lay members lead.

Many factors have contributed to the growth, but the use of small groups has proven to be one of the most effective. More than 31,000 people were baptized in just eight months after thousands of small Bible study groups were organized in Angola. More than 3,000 people were baptized on a single Sabbath in Madagascar.

Every new member immediately becomes a soul winner, a participant of the division's Fishers of Man program that trains them to become disciples who lead others to Jesus.

Among the new soul winners is N. K. Kerk, a former ordained minister in the Dutch Reformed Church, now an Adventist evangelist. His decision to fully accept the biblical truths as taught by the Adventist Church testifies to the power of the Word of God and the persuasive influence of the Holy Spirit.

Our church members embrace Adventist



Meals on Wheels Community Service inspires hope and shares love with each of the millions of meals served every year. SID

Church cofounder Ellen G. White's statement in *Steps to Christ*: "There is nothing more calculated to strengthen the intellect than the study of the Scriptures."* For this reason, the division has fully embraced Revived by His Word, the daily Bible reading plan from the General Conference.

Young people are especially active in sharing Jesus. More than 1,000 young people from around the world descended on South Africa and became the hands and feet of Jesus for Impact South Africa, a division-organized prelude to the third International Youth Congress. People's hearts melted as they saw the young people reaching out to those who are needy, preparing food for those who are poor, feeding those who are hungry, and comforting those who are elderly.

It is Christ's method of meeting people at their point of need that motivates volunteer and self-sponsored youth groups to organize themselves into mission groups at home and beyond. Using their gifts and talents to the glory of God, young people are inspiring other young people to surrender to Christ through the gift of music on the streets, in airports, in stadiums, and at special events.

A division-wide growth in initiatives and participation is linked to division leaders' vision casting and consistent efforts to develop leadership. We organize an annual leadership summit that exposes church members to an international group of God-fearing leaders and helps them ensure that their work accomplishes the mission of the church. On a grassroots level, training is ongoing in every church ministry. Spirit-filled men and women are training and being trained in God's service.

Historically, Adventist education has been the channel through which church pioneers spread the gospel. The tradition continues in the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division. With 149 high schools, 249 grade schools, and 12 institutions of higher learning, the spirit of Adventist education is alive and well. As young people graduate from our institutions and enter the job market, government and business leaders recognize the unique contribution that Adventist education is making to improve local communities, further raising the credibility of the church.



Rima is 6 and has diligently preached the gospel in Madagascar for the past two years. SID

CHURCHES, TV, AND HIV

As the church in this region grows, the need for more church buildings is also growing. We are indebted to Maranatha Volunteers International and other ministry partners, such as Lightbearers International and Remnant Publications, for their consistent investment in the growth of the division. Maranatha has completed 3.995 projects, including 2,797 churches.

We have 3,955 literature evangelists sharing Jesus through the printed page.

From books to digital media, the division is employing every means to spread the gospel.

SIDMedia, located in Cape Town, South Africa, produces a variety of creative programs for Hope Channel to meet the spiritual needs of people who can be reached only through modern technology.

Since January 1, 2015, Hope Channel Zambia has been broadcasting 24 hours a day, bringing hope and blessings to Zambians and others through powerful, Bible-based messages and inspirational music. Hope Channel Malawi was officially launched on February 15, 2015, and also broadcasts around the clock.

In hard-to-reach villages in Madagascar, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, and Namibia, Adventist World Radio is making a significant difference through solar-powered or hand-cranked radios that it supplies.

During this quinquennium Africa lost one of its greatest leaders, Nelson Mandela. We acknowledge and pay tribute to the role that he played in the struggle for democracy in South Africa.

At the same time, as a church we place a high value on a key part of democracy—religious freedom—and have been proactive in engaging national and political leaders in every country on our territory. In Botswana, Gaborone mayor Haskins Nkaigwa recently affirmed the Adventist health message after attending a health seminar.

We campaign regularly against the abuse of women and children, showing that the church is committed to the protection and well-being of the vulnerable. Our friends and neighbors are looking at Adventists as role models of destigmatization against those who live with HIV/AIDS and are applauding our biblical position of abstinence before marriage. Adventists living with HIV/AIDS are leading the way in encouraging others to know their status by testing, thereby receiving treatment and improving the quality of life.



At 113, Jato Mailose Sibanda is the world's oldest active Pathfinder and Adventist preacher. SID

We believe that everybody—no matter who they are, what they do, or where they're from—deserves the opportunity to live a fulfilling and meaningful life. As Christians, that's what we've been called to do. Therefore no one is left out of ADRA's reach in the division. Since 1964 the Meals on Wheels community service has been inspiring hope and sharing love with every meal served. Reaching out to destitute and vulnerable elderly people and children, the church-owned agency operates 512 volunteer-driven service centers throughout southern Africa. Millions of meals are served every year.

The Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division is a territory that God's finger has touched with breathtaking views and unbelievable natural phenomena. But the Seventh-day Adventist Church in this region is consistently demonstrating that the most precious jewels of Africa are not the waterfalls, diamonds, or nature, but the people, for whom Christ died.

* Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1956, p. 90.



Peruvian Union University

Booth B556

The flagship institution in Peru is excited about its present and future.



BY MARCOS PASEGGI, *ADVENTIST REVIEW*/ANN

Seventh-day Adventist higher education in Peru has come a long way since the Industrial Institute was founded in 1919 in Miraflores, a district in the capital city of Lima. Years later, after moving an hour east and being eventually chartered as a university in 1983, the now Peruvian Adventist University has one main campus and two branches across the country, with over 13,000 students and a combined offer of 43 degree programs.

Peruvian Union University's exhibit in booth #B556 of the convention center invites delegates and visitors to stop by to "enjoy the wonders of Peru." Together with an impressive plotted photograph of Machu Picchu and a multicolor map of the country, a third giant poster reveals the beauty of the university campus that, as advertised, is a place "where things turn out for the better."

"We really believe that together we can make our students' dreams come true," says Le-Roy Alomía, director of the university public relations office. "This is a place with a healthy Christian environment that fosters academic enterprise of a high order."

The university, which is advertised as a place "for young people with big dreams and lofty ideals," is based on the wholistic approach to education advocated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Its three campuses strive to provide a balanced education. That is why a music school, a foreign language institute, student work centers, and sports activities all find a place as part of the curriculum-related activities.

"We have two immediate goals," says Dr. Maximina Contreras Castro, the university president, in a brief interview with the *Adventist Review*. "We want to strengthen the degree programs by increasing and improving our laboratory facilities. We are in urgent need of new labs for our program in medicine introduced three years ago and for our brand new program in architecture and civil



engineering. In addition, enrollment increase in degree programs in nutrition also demands new laboratories."

"That's not all," adds Dr. Castro. "Our greatest dream is to have a church building on our campus. In recent years, we have been meeting in a huge makeshift tent, which is far from ideal."

"But we have begun the construction of a church building, which, when finished, will seat 3,500," says Contreras. "Our goal is to complete the church building by 2019, the year of our centennial celebrations."

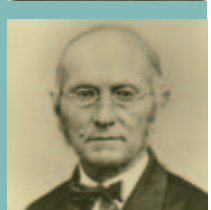
Stories From Our Past

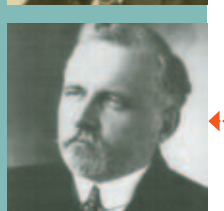
James Nix, director of the Ellen G. White Estate, brings Adventist History to life during the evening devotionals.

















What are early missionaries telling us?

BY SANDRA BLACKMER, *ADVENTIST REVIEW*/ANN

Serving 50 years as a missionary in a foreign country. Risking personal funds to purchase property for the church. Traveling as a single woman all the way to India from the United States to work as a missionary in a time when such things "just weren't done."

White Estate director Jim Nix told these stories, and more, of Adventist missionaries during the first 50 years of the church's mission program, on Wednesday evening, July 8. Session attendees learned of the deep, heartfelt commitment to God and incredible spirit of sacrifice evidenced by men and women during the formative years of Seventh-day Adventism—such as W. A. Spicer, a former GC president; William H. Anderson, a missionary to Africa; John Burden, founder of Loma Linda Sanitarium (now Loma Linda University); and Georgia Burrus, a missionary to India.

Focusing on Spicer, Nix shared the story of Spicer's election as president of the General Conference at the 1922 GC session in Battle Creek, following the nominating committee's inability to decide whether to reelect A. G. Daniells to the post. A letter Spicer wrote to his wife following his election, which Nix read, revealed his personal thoughts on the surprising turn of events.

Some delegates said they were astonished by the stories and inspired by these people who gave their all for God.

SAN ANTONIO 360°


1


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1. IT'S TIME TO PRAY: Delegates pray together during the Wednesday morning business session. PHOTO: KENN DIXON, *AR*/ANN

2. STORYTELLER EXTRAORDINAIRE: James Nix, director of the Ellen G. White Estate, brings Adventist history to life during an evening devotional. PHOTO: DICK DUERKSEN, *AR*/ANN

3. SERVICE WITH A SMILE: Kari Remmers (left) and Jemima Klingbeil, two of the faithful group of volunteers, check the meal tickets of GC Session attendees and delegates. PHOTO: SETH SHAFFER, *AR*/ANN

4. FULL HOUSE: A picture of the Alamodome during the business session on Wednesday morning. Empty seats were at a premium. PHOTO: SETH SHAFFER, *AR*/ANN

5. LONG LINES: Lines formed early behind the microphones on the floor of the Alamodome during the ordination of women discussion on Wednesday morning. PHOTO: KENN DIXON, *AR*/ANN

6. THE QUEEN IS IN SESSION: Annalisa Quade in the children's Sabbath school on the first Sabbath of the GC Session. PHOTO: TOR TJERANSEN, *AR*/ANN

7. FROM EVERY NATION, TRIBE, TONGUE, AND PEOPLE. Tabitha N. Makana from the East-Central Africa Division during the evening report of her division. PHOTO: JOSAFAT ZEMLEDUCH, *AR*/ANN

8. SEND A POSTCARD: Visitors to the Columbia Union booth in the North American Division section of the convention center can take an unforgettable picture. PHOTO: ELSIE TJERANSEN, *AR*/ANN

9. A CHAIR IN ACTION: Mike Ryan, a general vice president of the General Conference, chairs the important Wednesday business session. PHOTO: TOR TJERANSEN, *AR*/ANN

10. GREAT COPY: A delegate absorbed in the reading of the daily bulletin of the *Adventist Review*. PHOTO: TOR TJERANSEN, *AR*/ANN


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The South Pacific Division is not only the largest Adventist division by territory, it is also the most diverse. SPD

Changing History One Heart at a Time

Think of a globe.

Divide its circumference into thirds in your mind.

Then imagine a division so immense that it stretches a third the circumference of that globe.

That is the South Pacific Division. It stretches almost 8,000 miles (13,000 kilometers), from the Cocos Islands in the west to Pitcairn Island in the east, and from the Antarctic in the south to above the equator in the north.

The South Pacific Division is not only the largest Adventist division by territory—it is also the most diverse. Papua New Guinea alone has about 850 languages. The division stretches from modern metropolises to some of the most isolated inhabited locations on earth. It includes the world's most southern city, where cold winds from the Antarctic blow, through to consistently balmy tropical atolls. The division encompasses countries that are majority Polynesian, Melanesian, Micronesian, and Caucasian. There are large Indian, Chinese, Arabic, Sudanese, and Chilean communities, among others, within its borders.

So how do Adventists reach a territory so immense and a population so diverse? By remembering that we have nothing to fear when we recall how God has led in Adventist history.

It was 1908 when the first three Seventh-day Adventist missionaries, Septimus and Edith Carr and Peni Tavodi, arrived in Port Moresby, capital of what is today Papua New Guinea. The governor had previously divided the area around Port Moresby between various Christian denominations. The Adventists met a "cool" reception from the other missionaries when they arrived. But they weren't deterred. They headed out of Port Moresby to a remote area in the mountains to start their mission among the Koiari people.

From the start, it didn't go well.

The Koiari were noted by early explorer Alexander Morton to be particularly warlike. They certainly weren't interested in the gospel. The Adventists set up a mission station and labored in remote Bisiatabu for a full year without a single baptism. The next year also ended without a baptism. The same pattern repeated over the next three years.

Finally, in the sixth year, a teenage boy was baptized. Soon after, the boy's father withdrew him from the Adventist mission, and that ended his association with the church.

If this beginning wasn't discouraging enough, Peni Tavodi, who by then was married to Aliti, was bitten by a venomous snake in 1918. He died, but not before making a passionate appeal to the young men at the mission to give their lives to Jesus.

Imagine the scene after Peni died. Ten



years of extraordinary labor, and all to show for it was one teenage boy who had abandoned the faith, one dead missionary, his widow, and his fatherless children. Would you wake up the next day and preach the gospel again?

It wasn't until 1920—12 years after the first Adventist missionaries arrived and two years after Peni Tavodi died—that a boy named Baigani accepted the gospel. This time, however, things were different. Baigani served Jesus for many years and had a profound influence.

More missionaries followed. In 1924 Pastor William Lock baptized 11 young people in Bisiatabu. By the mid-1930s Adventist missionaries were in many new areas of the country. The Lock family moved along a rugged trail known as the Kokoda Track, inland to the village of Efogi. There they set up a mission school and clinic. All along the Kokoda Track the Adventist message was preached.

At the time, however, no one knew that in just a few short years the Kokoda Track would go from being an obscure trail in a forgotten part of the world to the center point of one of the greatest dramas in human history: the battle between imperial Japanese forces and the Australians, New Zealanders, and their allies.

Unlike most battles, the lasting symbolism of the Kokoda campaign is not a fighter, general, or weapon. Rather it is the Papuans who displayed remarkable kindness and selflessness in assisting wounded soldiers to safety. So impressed were the Australians by the Papuans that they called them "Kokoda angels." Bert Buros, an Australian combat engineer, captured the admiration and thankfulness Australian soldiers felt to those who helped the wounded in a poem: "Many a lad will see his mother, and husbands see their wives, just because [Kokoda angels] carried them to save their lives."

An Australian soldier put it this way: "Believe me, when this war is over and its history written, there is one chap that should get a large share of the praise. He is the [Papuan]. . . . He sometimes arrives with bleeding shoulders, puts the wounded gently down, shakes himself, grins, and off he goes for another trip."



Avondale College of Higher Education in Australia is continuing to gain recognition. SPD

Speaking at the fiftieth anniversary of the Kokoda campaign in 1992, Australian prime minister P. J. Keating said: "Above all, we should honor and express our profound admiration for the Papua New Guinean carriers whose stalwart support was crucial to the final victory."

In recent years academics have striven to demythologize the Papuans who saved wounded Australian and New Zealand soldiers. They note that many were coerced into service by the Australian military. While this provides texture and context for the story, it still fails to explain why people who were so mistreated were so kind in return. After all, the early accounts of the people were of a warlike, bloodthirsty culture. What changed?

For that, you have to go all the way back to 1908. Those 12 long years struggling to find a single person to accept the gospel had born fruit by the time of the Kokoda campaign. "By the time World War II erupted, every village along the Kokoda Trail had come under some measure of Adventist mission influence, with baptized members in most village," Alan Smith wrote in *Adventist Record* on September 9, 1995. "The Koiaris had become so transformed that when the Japanese penetrated the area in their advance toward Port Moresby, the Koiaris decided to remain loyal to their missionary friends."

Steven Barna, an Adventist pastor in villages along the Kokoda Track whose



Pacific Adventist University in Papua New Guinea is among the most selective universities in the world.
SPD

grandfather was a "Kokoda angel," confirms that the kindness was linked to Christianity. "It was love that drove the hearts of the people to help," he says.

Firsthand accounts back this up.

Pastor Lock, in his book *Locks That Open Doors*, tells of receiving a letter of thanks from Lieutenant R. I. McIlray, who wrote: "I am writing this letter to tell you of the grand job done by the [Papuans] of your mission . . . the good work of your people who apparently have by your example and teachings reached a stage where they can teach us something of Christian ideals."

Perhaps an even more extraordinary report came from Australian commando Robin Sydney McKary, who said in an interview with Daniel Connell: "You had your loyal and your disloyal [Papuans]. . . . Without being in any way sectarian, we found that the Seventh-day Adventists were by far outstanding in loyalty. I know of not one Seventh-day Adventist adherent who was any way disloyal. I don't know what it is, but it just worked out that way. . . . The other religions could be one way or the other, but the Seventh-day Adventists for some reason were particularly loyal and . . . well, they always were a cleaner people, they taught them cleanliness and respect and loyalty and cheerfulness. And, you know, I've got no beef for the Seventh-day Adventists . . . [but] if you had to rely on a [Papuan] without knowing him, or knowing the circumstances, you know, the fact that he was a Seventh-day Adventist would swing you."

In a time of greatest trial, the change the gospel makes in people's lives came through.

Today about 10 percent of Papua New Guineans identify themselves as Seventh-day Adventists in the national census. That is almost a half million more people claiming to be Adventists than the church counts as members. Maybe it is linked to the tremendous influence that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has in the country today. Adventists occupy many high government offices. More than 50 percent of the students studying medicine in the country are Adventists. Adventist run a respected education and health network around the country. Pacific Adventist University is among the most selective universities in the world.

And Papua New Guinea is only one part of the South Pacific Division, where the gospel is still changing history one heart at a time.

According to national censuses, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is now the fastest growing multiethnic church in both New Zealand and Australia.

In both countries Adventists run the premier health and wellness companies, which organize the biggest children's triathlon series in the world and produces the most trusted breakfast food.

Avondale College of Higher Education continues to gain recognition. Two Adventist grade schools surpassed 7,600 competitors to make it into the top 100 academic schools in Australia. Sydney Adventist Hospital is the largest private hospital in Australia. And Adventist Media is widely recognized as the leading Christian media organization in the region.

Across the Trans-Pacific, Mission to the Cities initiatives have resulted in exceptional growth. In 2014, baptisms in Vanuatu soared by more than 550 percent, and baptisms in the Solomon islands rose by more than 250 percent. Baptisms in Samoa increased by 400 percent in 2013.

Is the growth real? Jesus said that where our money is, that's where our hearts are. So let's look at dollars and cents.

During the past five years, the division's tithe is up by 24 percent, growing at more than twice the increase in cost of living in four of the five years. The division now gives the highest world mission offerings as a percentage of tithe of any division in the world. Australia, with its small population, today is the fourth-highest tithe-paying nation in the world, with Australians averaging almost 50 percent more tithe per member than North Americans.

Is it all good news? No. The Adventist Church in the South Pacific is in desperate need of the Holy Spirit. Our only hope is Jesus. The same Jesus who walked with those early missionaries out of Port Moresby and down the Kokoda Track. The same Jesus who lived in the hearts of the Koiaris as they carried broken men back to safety. The same Jesus who today continues to change history across the South Pacific, one heart at a time.

HopeChannel

REACHING THE WORLD LIKE NEVER BEFORE



Meriam

Undisclosed Country

Where she lives the cost of converting to Christianity is reinforced with real stories of arrest, persecution, and even death. Yet, Christ came into her home through Hope Channel streaming online. "My life and yours could be in danger if you tried to visit me," Meriam emailed. "But I feel peace in my heart. Thank you for the programs that give me promises from God."

TELEVISION THAT CHANGES LIVES | 36 channels, 34 languages

hopetv.org

Outpost Centers International

Booth C1163

OCI network impacts big cities, remote villages.





Chris Borcherding, a pilot for Peru Project, evacuates a medical patient. COURTESY OF OCI

BY SANDRA BLACKMER, *ADVENTIST REVIEW*/ANN

Outpost Centers International (OCI), a nonprofit network, provides nurture and support to a family of some 100 lay-led, self-supporting health, education, and evangelism ministries worldwide. Their collective vision is to work from country settings to impact metropolitan centers. OCI provides leadership training, makes available practical resources, and facilitates ministries' growth as they look for creative ways to introduce the gospel to their communities.

OCI began operation in 1983 under the leadership of Warren Wilson, a former president of Wildwood Lifestyle Center and Hospital in Wildwood, Georgia. The growth of supporting ministries called for the formation of a new organization. Wilson's goal for OCI was to serve as a "counselor and encourager" to many of these new institutions.

More than three decades later, the organization continues to execute its mission to help sustain existing self-supporting ministries of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and establish new ones. These ministries include schools, assisted-living centers, orphanages, evangelistic training programs, agricultural development, vegetarian restaurants, and publishing houses, among others.

OCI is particularly committed to investing in the personal and spiritual lives of young leaders. That begins with support and training for young couples such as Chris and Amy Borcherding and connecting them with veteran workers. The Borcherdings accepted a call to serve at Peru Projects, located along the Amazon River, where Chris, a pilot, is director.

"It has been a blessing to meet with other leaders and hear of their struggles





and how they've gotten past them," the Borcherdings say. "[We] take courage that others have been here before, and God can use each of us."

OCI president Steven Grabiner sees mentoring young families as an essential part of the organization's ministry.

"It is vital that current leaders are constantly sharing their experiences to help prepare younger leaders," Grabiner says.

Grabiner, who previously served as OCI vice president for 5 years and director of Riverside Farm Institute in Zambia for 10, was elected president in 2011.

To learn more about Outpost Centers International, visit booth C1163 in the exhibit hall, or go to http://www.outpostcenters.org.

On the Money

Juan R. Prestol-Puesán (second from right), elected treasurer of the General Conference, stands with his predecessors (from left) Robert E. Lemon (2002-2015), Robert R. Rawson (1995-2002), and Donald F. Gilbert (1985-1995). Prestol-Puesán exudes confidence that the financial stewardship of the church, under God's guidance and with the faithfulness of His people, will remain strong and mission-oriented. He is the twenty-sixth treasurer since the first General Conference session in 1863. PHOTO: DAVID B. SHERWIN



SOUTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION REPORT



Indonesia Cares: Indonesia care groups use contextualized resources.
ABE CARPENA/SSD

Shine On Till Jesus Comes!

During this past quinquennium the Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD) joined the world church in emphasizing revival and reformation as the heart of mission and evangelism. The motivating slogan "Revival, Reformation, and Beyond" became the foundation for programs and activities in the entire region.

The rationale for this adaption of the world church's slogan is that there have been calls for revival and reform in the past, which started with great zeal and enthusiasm. After a while, however, the movement flickered and faded away. Thus, the word "beyond" was added to emphasize the overarching objective of revivals and calls for reform— the finishing of the proclamation of the gospel and ushering in the return of Jesus.

Related programs from the world church headquarters were contextualized with the goal of members becoming more intentional in prayer, Bible study, and personal witnessing. SSD departmental directors developed programs for these areas and made sure that all church departments, services, and agencies were involved. Participation in annual Weeks of Prayer, Ten Days of Prayer, the 777 prayer initiative, and daily Bible studies were encouraged at all levels of church organization.

INTEGRATED EVANGELISM LIFESTYLE

As an umbrella for all SSD revival and reformation initiatives, the Integrated Evangelism Lifestyle (IEL) plan was conceived. Using a family approach, every baptized member is encouraged to be personally involved in a caring and loving ministry within the home and immediate neighborhood in partnership with the local church. Essentially this long-term program focuses on personal witnessing and nurturing of new church members.

With this family approach to evangelism, IEL progresses in three phases over the course of a year. Two major components make the initiative effective when properly conducted: the IF (intercessor family) and the CF (cared family). The IF is the Adventist family who spends time in Bible study and prayer as they experience personal revival while establishing good relationships in their locale. While a traditional family was the original focus, any Adventist member can invite other Adventists in their social circle to join together to make a family group.

An IF befriends a non-church member family to become its CF. The bond between the IF and CF breaks down barriers as the friendship develops. This encourages open conversation about family life, health, and spiritual matters. A weekly study group is formed between these two families/family groups, using health and family materials as a starting point.

Over time this group moves from these topics to Bible study. Meanwhile the local church hosts community-friendly activities with the CF in mind. Eventually the CF is invited to an evangelistic series. The goal of this long-term collaboration between the IF and local church would be that the Adventist church become a home for the CF. After baptism, new members continue to meet weekly with their care group for nurturing and discipleship. Where this program is properly conducted, missions and conferences experience tremendous growth.

In order to achieve the ideal use of the program, individuals from the local level to administrators were introduced to the concept in a variety of ways. Members received resource materials to use in the local level. Training sessions about nurturing were held in the unions, missions, conferences, and institutions, as well as for local pastors. Additionally, church administrators in the region accepted the challenge of personally modeling the program.

As a result, members were strengthened spiritually and became more involved. Former members returned to church, and new members joined. As a result, more than 200,000 new members



were added in the challenging territory of SSD during this past quinquennium.

MEDIA

In addition to emphasis on personal witnessing and one-to-one relationships, the SSD also focused on tapping technology to reach people on a larger scale. While the traditional way of sharing the good news is still effective, the use of print media, the Internet, radio, and television have been vigorously promoted in areas with such access.

In October 2013 Hope Channel Philippines was officially inaugurated with the acquisition of a national TV franchise and frequencies in major towns and cities across the country. Hope Channel Philippines is also on satellite broadcast. Today there are Hope TV stations in three major Philippine cities: Manila, Cebu, and Cagayan de Oro. More than 20 FM and AM Adventist radio stations now broadcast positive programming throughout the archipelago. Programs in the four major dialects of the country—Tagalog, Cebuano, Hiligaynon, and Ilocano—are produced. To support the ongoing operation, church members have committed to giving at least 50 cents every Sabbath.

On August 8, 2014, Hope Channel Indonesia was also officially inaugurated in Jakarta. Today millions of Indonesians watch the Hope Channel in their own language. A small Adventist FM radio station was also inaugurated in Manado, North Sulawesi, Indonesia. It broadcasts the good news of the coming kingdom to approximately a half million people.

MISSION TO THE CITIES

The urban areas of SSD are prime audiences for our technology ministries. However, a more personalized approach is also needed. To meet this need, Adventist city dwellers in SSD have developed unique evangelism programs in their communities. The urban evangelism initiative known as Mission to the Cities has been heartily embraced here and was officially launched in Metro Manila with world church president Ted N. C. Wilson as the main speaker. In addition, 75 satellite meetings were held simultaneously in different parts of Manila during the two-week series.

In the months leading up to the evangelistic series, church members and leaders engaged in a variety of community evangelism programs in the areas of health and wellness, parenting, children and youth, and compassionate acts. The SSD's One Year in Mission (OYIM-SSD) focused on friendship evangelism in the business sector of Manila and subsequently studied the Bible with interested young professionals there.

With more than 3,000 people baptized during the May evangelistic series and the 7,000 baptisms resulting from related community programs offered by local churches, Hope Manila 2014 has resulted in more than 10,000 baptisms.

Field school training for city evangelism was offered to leaders of the nine unions and two attached missions of the SSD. This training enabled them to initiate Mission to the Cities programs in the urban areas of Malaysia, Myanmar, Indonesia, and other parts of the Philippines.

CENTERS OF INFLUENCE

Another long-term aspect of Mission to the Cities involves centers of influence. These are wholistic ministry establishments located in popular urban areas, and offer interest-based services. In the SSD they include restaurants, music schools, and language centers. They are designed to be places where people can build relationships and find a sense of belonging among new friends.

In Laos a vegetarian restaurant in the capital city of Vientiane offers healthy food and lifestyle improvement classes. In Thailand members offered health, cooking, and music classes as a prelude to a 25-site evangelistic series. After the series, interest in the music classes remained so high that a music school was opened to reach the community. There is even a mobile center of influence in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Originating from an existing urban health ministry, a mobile medical unit brings health care to high-need areas there.



A central Philippines care group emphasizes the family approach, which includes special children's features. KIONA COSTELLO/SSD

EDUCATION

Health care continues to be a practical method of meeting community needs. Countless medical missions are held in many of our SSD countries each year and bring free medical care to underprivileged communities.



A staff member at Manna vegetarian restaurant in Laos welcomes customers. TERESA COSTELLO/SSD

A university-based blood drive held at the Asia-Pacific International University (APIU) campus in Thailand received government recognition after hosting a mobile eye surgery clinic for the Thai Red Cross Society.

After 30 years of dreaming, planning, and praying, the education program of the SSD has achieved a major breakthrough with governmental approval for the opening of the first Adventist College of Medicine in Asia. The College of Medicine at the Adventist University of the Philippines will begin classes in August 2015. It will be the sixth College of Medicine for the Adventist education system worldwide.

OUTREACH TO MARGINALIZED GROUPS

With more than 70 ethnic groups and hundreds of dialects in our territory, we have a rich cultural spectrum. Within this diversity we have a number of marginalized groups that we have attempted to reach in the last five years.

For example, in a mountainous region of the Philippines, more than 70 Protestant church leaders from the same tribal group converted to Adventism. Nurturing of this specialized group continued in this quinquennium with culturally centered fellowship and training and livelihood programs. Subsequently the number of converts has continued to grow while membership retention remains stable. In other areas of the SSD, dedicated Adventists serve ethnic minority groups through literacy programs, livelihood projects, and health-care outreach.

ADRA

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) continues to maintain an essential presence in SSD countries. During times of disaster ADRA volunteers bring hope and needed supplies to the people most affected. In the aftermath of tragic events, rehabilitation and livelihood projects sustain the well-being of communities.

In many areas of Southeast Asia there is a long history of not only this much-appreciated service but also of life improvement. ADRA Vietnam recently celebrated 25 years of service in the country and has initiated more than 200 projects among marginalized groups. With a focus on health, livelihood, environmental issues, and education, past projects have included disease prevention, microbusiness development, sanitation, and student sponsorships.

CONCLUSION

With almost 1 billion inhabitants in the 14 countries of the division territory, most of whom are non-Christians, the challenges are many. Religious freedom is being challenged in some of our countries, but doors that were previously closed are opening in others. Societal problems such as poverty and secularism are overwhelming in some areas. But our members give and serve as abundantly as they can in spite of this. Civil unrest is part of the history in parts of the region, but our churches seek to be centers of peace and positive influence.

Sometimes it seems an almost impossible task to accomplish the mission of the church in this part of the world. However, the joyful service, selfless attitudes, and resilient faith of our members inspires us. They walk with Jesus through their tiny villages, crowded neighborhoods, and maze of metropolises bringing a word of encouragement, hope through health seminars, and enthusiasm for long-range lifestyle improvement. With the power of the Holy Spirit, we in the Southern Asia-Pacific Division believe that in God's own time the work will be finished.

For what has been accomplished during these past five years, we ascribe glory, honor, and praise to God. We thank Him for all His blessings and guidance. We also thank the General Conference and other sister organizations and institutions worldwide for the assistance they have given to support the work in the SSD territory.



ADRA Vietnam: ADRA Vietnam continues to bring hope to all parts of the country. ADRA VIETNAM

STATS&MISSION

MISSION TO THE CITIES

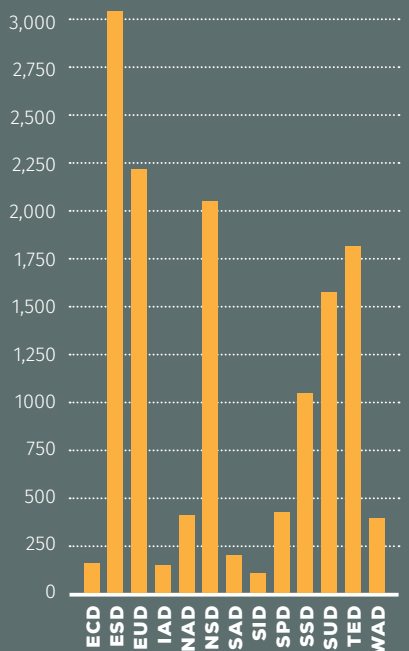
THE FACTS: Urban areas of 1 million+

- **Global Adventist-to-population ratio:** one per 392 people
- **Adventist-to-population ratio in large urban areas:** one per 555 people
- **Global Adventist-congregation-to-population ratio:** one per 50,000
- **Global Adventist-congregation-to-population ratio in large urban areas:** one per 90,000
- 3.1 million of Adventism's 18.48 million church members live in large urban areas of 1 million people or more, that is, 16.77 percent. So only one in six Adventists live in the areas that are home to a quarter of the world's population.
- 42 of the 504 urban areas of 1 million+ have fewer than 10 Adventists living in them.

1M+ URBAN AREAS:

RATIO PER DIVISION

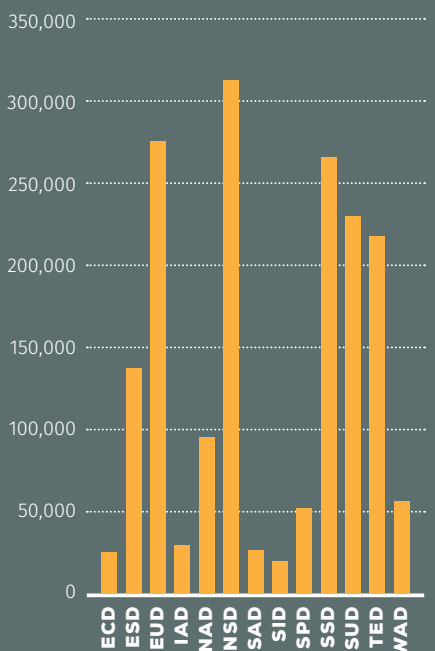
POPULATION TO **MEMBER**



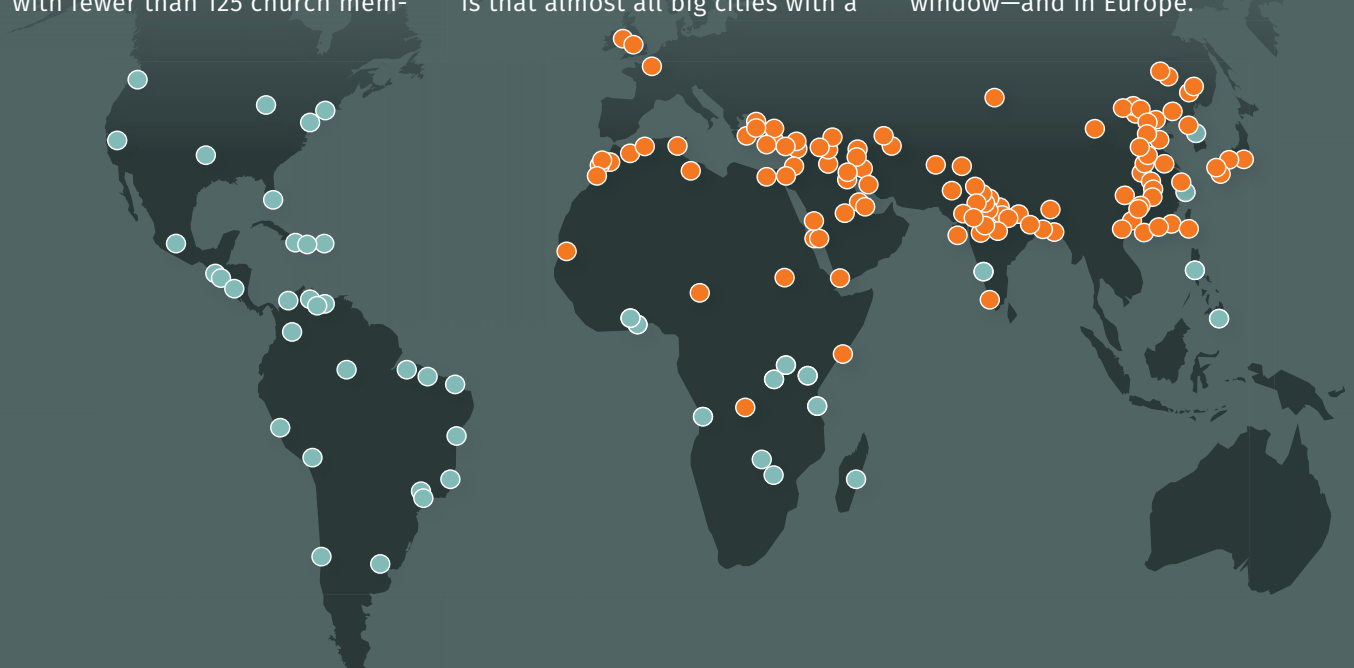
1M+ URBAN AREAS:

RATIO PER DIVISION

POPULATION TO **CONGREGATION**



This map shows the most reached and unreached cities in the world: cities with more than 20,000 Adventist church members living in them are in green; those cities with fewer than 125 church members are in red (125 is the average size of an Adventist congregation, so red shows cities without the equivalent of an Adventist congregation in them). What this reveals is that almost all big cities with a strong Adventist presence are in the Americas and sub-Saharan Africa, with just a few in Asia. The big cities with the weakest Adventist presence are all in the 10/40 window—and in Europe.



DATA PROVIDED BY THE OFFICE OF ARCHIVES, STATISTICS, AND RESEARCH

United

La Sierra group serves through music.



"If we can't serve, then we shouldn't be on stage because music is a divine gift."

BY JULIANA BAIONI, *ADVENTIST REVIEW*/ANN

The vocal ensemble United knows what it means to exercise faith. This group from La Sierra University in Riverside, California, despite only having been formed less than two years ago, has already traveled significantly and is often used by La Sierra as an outreach tool. As a smaller group, ranging from 10 to 16 members, they are flexible enough to respond to a last-minute invitation and represent the university in different contexts.

While their director, Javier Gonzalez, had been scheduled for several appointments as a solo tenor during the session, the group was not scheduled for any performances. Thanks to many prayers, grassroots work, networking, and blessings from the Holy Spirit, United is now scheduled to perform on various stages two or three times a day for the duration of the session. The group also had the privilege of performing on the Alamodome main stage during the evening worship of Monday, July 6, with the Chamber Singers of the Universidad Adventista de Chile. Gonzalez, who works at La Sierra as a professor of vocal studies, said, "It shows that even when plans don't go as you want them to, God's Spirit leads."

When asked how she would feel about singing in front of the world church, La Sierra alumna and ensemble member Sara Pinto da Silva replied, "At La Sierra, our mission is to serve those around us. We want to see and know God, but we also want to serve those around us. It will be a blessing for us to share the talents that God gave us with those that surround us."

In fact, service is an integral part of what makes this group special. Music, for United, is not just about entertainment. It's about ministry and connecting to people, with perceptions of who the musicians are offstage being of much higher importance than of who they are onstage. Members of United can be seen mingling with the crowds both before and after performances.

Gonzalez has a special burden for imparting to his students the concept of music as service, which he learned from his college mentors, Dr. James Bingham and Dr. Virginia-Gene Rittenhouse. "If we can't serve, then we shouldn't be on stage because music is a divine gift. It's a gift where can we actually participate with Him. If He gave me the gift, it's my job to give the gift away. In the end, the reward will be the people we touch."

Music not only has the ability to serve God's people but also has the unique and singular ability to unify the church in a way that nothing else can. "When you get people into a room to listen to a concert, they are, in fact, connecting to each other, no matter their politics, race, color, creed, or beliefs. In that moment," says Gonzalez, "music disarms all of us, and we all become one."

It seems that for this group, their name truly fits its mission.

MORE MUSIC

United will be performing on various stages for the remainder of the session. Here is a listing of some other musical groups or soloists who will be performing in the Alamodome from Thursday evening through Sabbath, July 9-11.*







THURSDAY, JULY 9

Donnell Josiah
Cherukuri Victor Sam
Arautos do Rei
John Mathews
Kerri Williams
Orlando West SDA Church Choir
Loma Linda Southern Asia Adventist Community Choir
Lucas Hernandez
Oakwood Adventist Academy Elementary Choir
Aeolians
Michael Harris
The Atteys

FRIDAY, JULY 10

Tiffany Campbell-Dailey
Deon Muschette
Stephanie Dawn
Christina Martins
Victor Clairmont
Angela Bryant-Brown
Neville Peter
Pro-Musica Choir of Antillean University
The Young Ambassadors
Rudy Micelli
Charles Haugabrooks
Jennifer La Mountain

SABBATH, JULY 11

Rachel Hyman and Neville Peter
UNAI Chorale
Nigerian Adventist Centennial Choir in North America
AFASS Angklung Ensemble
"The Presence of God" (DVD), Williams Costa, brass and orchestra
Jennifer LaMountain
Mass Brass Group
Adoration in Worship Mass Choir
Mass Choir
Aeolians
Mary Grace Gellekanao
Journey Ministries
Banda Sinfónica de la Universidad de las Antillas
Coral Carlos Gomes
Restoration
Magomeni Seventh-day Adventist Church Choir
Jarrod McNaughton
Mass Choir

*This schedule was provided by the General Conference Music Committee, and will not include participants added to programming during the session.

Ninth Business Meeting

Sixtieth General Conference session, July 7, 2015, 9:25 a.m.

ELLA SIMMONS: I call to order the morning business session. [Prayer.]

We will continue our work on the fundamental beliefs.

I call Artur Stele and his team, Ángel Rodríguez and Bill Knott, to join us. The rules of participation on which we agreed yesterday and observed during the session indicate there is a two-minute limit on individual contributions from the floor, and we add an additional minute on contributions from the floor when translation is needed.

The standard rule of order for repeat visits to the microphone is that if no one is in the queue and no one else wishes to speak, you may do so.

BERIT ELKJAER: It is my experience that our new Adventists and our young people in the church have huge difficulty relating to our fundamental beliefs in the present formulation. One reason could be that we are dealing with fundamental beliefs written 35 years ago. In the meantime, we have received several new translations of the Bible.

I move that we set up a committee to rewrite our fundamental beliefs in a modern language.

This committee is not just to change a word here and there, but to work through the fundamental beliefs and rewrite them in a modern language and maybe even shorten them.

ELLA SIMMONS: I ask Dr. Stele to share with you something that is in the making that might be helpful.

ARTUR STELE: These fundamental beliefs are written in such a way that would, in a short way, present what we believe. It might not be the best evangelistic tool.

We intend, after these statements are accepted, to work on a book that will present them in a language that is understandable for the young generation.

ELLA SIMMONS: We have made note of this information and this request, and it will go to Steering Committee.

LARRY BOGGESS: I would request that as these items are presented we listen to the body, because I think that is what we are here for, to give guidance as we move on these various agenda items.

ELLA SIMMONS: We will move to the report from the small committee.

ARTUR STELE: Yesterday, additional work was requested. We have worked hard, and we are ready to present some of the results of our labor.

There are four fundamental beliefs that have been referred back: numbers 1, 6, 8, and 24.

Let's start with the fundamental belief 24. A suggestion was made yesterday that we replace one word that appears twice in the context of typology. The suggestion was to replace the word "symbolized" with "typified."

We have therefore made the suggested change, and I move it.

ELLA SIMMONS: We have a second.

RAY ROENNFELDT: I would remind the delegates that the word "typified" is not used commonly in the English language these days, whereas "symbolized" is used. So I would recommend we keep the original wording.

BHAJU RAM SHRESTHA: I prefer to use "typified" because what it is in the context antitype and type. "Symbolized" is a very broad term, but "typified" is specific.

REINALDO SIQUEIRA: I would like to support the use of the word "typified." The Fundamental Beliefs have a specific purpose for the church, which is to maintain the clarity of our beliefs.

ISTRAHEL SCHOREA: The word "typified" perhaps gives a better meaning. But for us from the Netherlands, English is not our first language, and if we have to translate this word, it may be problematic. And maybe other countries will be dealing with the same problem, so we want to stay with the word "symbolized."

BERTOLD HIBNER: I would like to ask about translation. If we would were to translate the Fundamental Beliefs into another language, and we have difficulties to find the exact word, how much liberty do we have to adopt another word in such language?

ARTUR STELE: The intent of the Fundamental Beliefs is to present them in the English language as clearly as possible. Every other language really needs to do the best that is possible to present the intended meaning.

STEFAN GIULIANI: The comments seem redundant, so I move the previous question.

ELLA SIMMONS: I'm reminding you that we're voting to cease debate. [The previous question was voted; debate ceased.]

[The main motion was voted.]

ARTUR STELE: We now go to the fundamental belief 8, "The Great Controversy." There was a suggestion yesterday to replace the word "worldwide flood" by "global flood."

We have implemented the change. I therefore move the adoption of fundamental belief 8.

MEGAN MOLÉ: Yesterday I presented a suggestion to the committee regarding lines 28 and 29 that I deemed necessary.

I was just wondering if this was considered by the committee.

ARTUR STELE: Yes, we have considered all the recommendations, and decided to accept only one change.

[Fundamental belief 8 was voted.]

ELLA SIMMONS: Dr. Stele, the next item, please.

ARTUR STELE: Now we go to the fundamental belief 1. Yesterday there was a request to reconsider the word "final" since it has a chronological aspect to it. We revised that word and also made two other changes. The word "final" was replaced by "supreme." We also changed the expression "holy men" to "inspired authors," and the sentence "God has committed to man" we replaced with "humanity."

ROGER ROBERTSEN: The committee has been working hard to find a better word, but for me it's still not good enough. I would like *sola scriptura* within the document. So we should use the word "sole" instead of "only."

ARTUR STELE: We have considered many words, and this is the one that we have retained.

JIM HOWARD: Thank you, Madam Chair. I too would like to speak to line 22. The terminology "the uninspired authors" is, I don't believe, what we would want to do to reflect what the Spirit of Prophecy uses when referring to those who wrote the Bible.

GERARD DAMSTEEGT: I appreciate the efforts for inclusive language. But as I reiterated yesterday, inclusive language is being used if you can substitute "male" and "female." In this case you cannot, because there were no females that wrote any of the Bible.

If we want to maintain the *sola scriptura* principle we have to go back to "men."

ARTUR STELE: Because a number of speakers have pointed out that this is a direct biblical reference, we should stay with the Scriptures.

This is exactly what we have intended to do. The reference comes from 2 Peter 1:20, 21. There Peter uses the Greek word *anthropos*.

[In 1 Peter 3:1-5, speaking to wives about adornment, Peter says in verse 4: "let the hidden person . . ." or "hidden man . . ."; the Greek word there is *anthropos*.]

When we go to 2 Peter 1:20, 21, Peter uses *anthropos*. But he doesn't say that men have written the prophecy. He speaks that *anthropos* have spoken the prophecy. And the Bible states about at least 10 women prophets, and a number of prophecies are really presented as they were spoken; for example, by Anna, by Miriam, and others.

And so to be biblically correct, here the best way to interpret, to translate, the word *anthropos* is to be gender-inclusive. And so we believe that if you want to be biblically correct, this is the way to go.

JOHNG HAENG KWON: Mrs. White made a distinction between authors and writers. Back then God was referred to as author of the Bible, and the men who wrote the Bible were referred to as writers.

Mrs. White, in *Selected Messages*, book 1, page 25, says, "The Bible points to God as its author; yet it was written by human hands." And in *Selected Messages*, book 1, page 21; "God, as a writer, is not represented [in the Bible]. The writers of the Bible were God's penmen."

PASSMORE MULAMBO: On line 22 we use 2 Peter 1:20, 21, but we tweak it. And I would suggest that instead of tweaking what we want to represent, could we not state the verse as it is within Scripture? I believe this fundamental belief is foundational to scriptural authority, which influence all other fundamental beliefs that we have.

I move that instead of tweaking the language of 2 Peter 1:20, 21, we actually state the verse in quotation marks.

ELLA SIMMONS: Or suggest it.

ERIC HENSEL: I would rather see the word "sole" instead of "definitive" in line 26 in order to make it clear that SDAs stay on *sola scriptura* ground.

KWABENA DONKOR: My comment has to do with the replacement of the word "final" with "supreme." I think we are dealing with a fundamental belief that has to deal with the use of Scripture in the church and in theology, also. I'm wondering whether you've considered the word "normative."

I hear talk about *sola scriptura*. It means that we are looking at the Bible as a source of revelation but also the normative source.

Would you consider the word "normative" instead of "supreme"?

EDISON SAMRAJ: In understanding truth and keeping the Reformation principle *sola scriptura* as our foundational principle, I think it would be in order for us to give focus that there's nothing beyond or above it—it's the final word.

The word "ultimate" is more contative of finality than even "supreme."

L. JAMES GIBSON: I speak to line 22 on the word

"authors." The use of the word "authors" on line 22 does not exclude the concept that only men were involved.

We could substitute words such as "writers" or even "people" and accomplish the same thing.

JUAN BOSCO VANEGA: When it comes to line 22, it refers to "authors." Especially in Spanish, it would be a bit of confusion, taken in mind, with Ellen G. White. She presents God as the only author of the Bible. This is why the apostle Peter says that the doctrines are already explained. It would be better to leave it as it is, as Peter says, "men of God."

DAVID RIPLEY: Perhaps it is the word "authors" that may be tripping us up. If we make this gender-exclusive, then we have to be saying that the words of Miriam were not inspired or the words of the mother of Jesus, Mary, or those of Elizabeth were not inspired. We need to say that those who spoke and wrote were all inspired.

JEROEN TUINSTRA: The Bible originated as an oral tradition, so the stories of the Bible were told and therefore prophesied, and God has never been gender-exclusive with prophets.

Today and yesterday it was claimed that the Spirit of Prophecy has authority over the formulation of doctrine.

Ellen White says that we are not to use her writings to settle doctrinal issues. The testimonies of Sister White should not be carried to the front.

"The Testimonies are not to take the place of the Word. . . . Let all prove their positions from the Scriptures and substantiate every point they claim as truth from the revealed Word of God" [*Evangelism,* p. 256]. "But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. . . . Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain "Thus saith the Lord" in its support" [*The Great Controversy*, p. 595].

We're dealing here with the Bible. Let's stick to the Bible.

ELLA SIMMONS: Bill Knott will tell us the background information that would assist the body in understanding the motion. It is a clarification.

BILL KNOTT: The committee is fully aware that we live in charged and contentious times, when others who mishandle Scripture attempt to read into it various agendas of social or political or cultural consequence. I can tell you, as someone who has functioned with this committee for the past four and a half years, that we have carefully, prayerfully worked to exclude those other social and cultural agendas from the work in front of you today. Our focus has been and continues to be one of integrity with the meaning of the Word of God and doing it in a way that Seventh-day Adventists around the world can wholeheartedly embrace and affirm this central understanding of the Scriptures at the heart of our faith.

Many others, perhaps, have sometimes assumed that other agendas were creeping in. As someone who's been with this process throughout, I can assure you, we have made every attempt to exclude those.

ELLA SIMMONS: Thank you. It is clear, it is carried.

[The motion to accept the fundamental belief on creation as proposed was approved.]

ARTUR STELE: We will give some introductory remarks so that our delegates will understand the work that was done in order to accomplish fundamental belief 6, "Creation."

We have received a number of suggestions yesterday. We have considered them, taking into consideration also that our work on the fundamental belief 6 assignment to harmonize fundamental belief 6 with the statement Affirmation of Creation.

ÁNGEL RODRÍGUEZ: We made an effort to exclude, as much as possible, terminology that was ambiguous, so that intentionally the statement is rejecting evolutionary thinking, theistic evolution, or any way of interpreting Genesis 1 along evolutionary lines.

That is my first point. I want to make two more comments. The second has to do with the use of the word "recent." This word was found in the document Affirmation of Creation. We took it from there. We put it here. The word is not used to date creation. In other words, the intention of the use of this word is not to date the divine act of creation. If I'm not mistaken, the church has never officially dated the divine act of creation as recorded in Genesis 1.

The intention of the word is to help establish the belief that the creation itself took place not too long ago.

We acknowledge that the genealogies found in the Bible are not complete, but they provide enough evidence to indicate that creation took place not too long ago.

My third comment is about the emphasis on the literal reading of the creation narrative. It is a historical description of the event of creation.

BILL KNOTT: You will note that the initial sentence that had been proposed in the document as of yesterday has been removed, the one that says, "God is the creator of all things." It is not because we do not believe in God's creative activity in all things. But one helpful comment identified that there were certain things in the material world formed by human beings that should not be laid at the charge of God; thus that sentence is removed. Now the beginning sentence is: "God has revealed in Scripture the authentic and historical account of His creative activity."

Next we heard from a number of respondents on the floor that we needed to identify carefully the historic Adventist understanding that God, at an earlier date, created angels and other portions of the universe before moving to the creation of Planet Earth. And we sought to embrace their contributions in the sentence that now begins: "He created the universe, and in a recent six-day creation the Lord made "the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them," and rested on the seventh day. The recitation of Exodus 20:11. The many comments made yesterday identifying the need for an understanding of sequence are embraced in what is now the second sentence of the document.

The third sentence, "Thus He established the Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of His creative work, performed and completed during six literal days that together with the Sabbath constituted the same unit of time that we call a week today." This merely conjoined the ideas that we had been mandated as a committee by the session of 2010 to bring together the Affirmation of Creation and the previous language of the fundamental belief "Creation."

And from there, the document reads, as it did yesterday, "The first man and woman were made in the image of God as the crowning work of Creation, given dominion over the world, and charged with responsibil-

SESSION SNAPSHOT



While delegates are engaged in business on the floor of the Alamodome, their friends and family members enjoy a few moments of quiet "meditation."

DOMINIK ZEH AR/ANN

ity to care for it. When the world was finished it was ‹very good,' declaring the glory of God."

I hope that short rationale for the changes that the committee considered and is bringing back to you today will underscore the point that throughout this five-year process we have been listening intently to those who are offering positive suggestions for improving the language of this fundamental belief.

ARTUR STELE: I would like to move this suggested wording of the fundamental belief 6, "Creation."

TED N. C. WILSON: We appreciate the opportunity to share about this particular fundamental belief, and I want to thank you for the wonderful way in which you have progressed through these fundamental beliefs.

This particular item was voted to be brought to the General Conference for discussion and refinement. I personally very much endorse it.

There is an interesting observation about the word "recent."

We have come to the point where we need to clarify that this process was not old. So "recent" is supposed to mean "not old."

Personally I firmly believe in what the Spirit of Prophecy has indicated and with what we have understood in terms of biblical historicity that the earth is approximately 6,000 years old.

ELLA SIMMONS: We are ready for comments.

JAMES STANDISH: We heard in our discussion that there is some confusion over what "day" means in Exodus 20. "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day." If the first six days weren't literal days, why do we rest on a literal seventh day?

MARVIN WRAY: I am troubled by the inclusion of the word "recent" in there because it does not clarify. To me this makes it more ambiguous. It's not a biblical term.

When I go back and teach my congregation, who's going to monitor whether I'm teaching it according to a formal definition or according to my understanding and my interpretation?

ROGER ROBERTSEN: I really don't believe in in a six-day creation week. I believe in a seven-day creation week. The Bible says that God finished His creation on the seventh day. The Sabbath is not a symbol; it's reality. And we, as Sabbathkeepers, Seventh-day Adventists, we should use the phrase "seven-day creation week," because the Sabbath, even though it is invisible, is still reality.

ARTUR STELE: We felt that the reference to the Sabbath several times down below in the statement takes care of it. If you take the statement as a whole, it raises no question.

KATHRYN PROFFITT: There is confusion with respect to science versus what the Bible says. God does not have to operate in terms of how empirical science humanly defines creation. It really is important when we talk about such words as "recent" or "literal days." "Even to even" means sunset to sunset.

If God could not speak our life into existence, how can He re-create us instantly?

It is important that we as a church clarify, for not only the world, but also for our teachers and professors, so they know clearly where we stand. There is confusion as to what our church teaches, and this motion clarifies it according to the Bible.

CLIFFORD GOLDSTEIN: There have been some comments regarding why we need to be so specific with the language, and yet it's very important. This issue didn't arise in a vacuum.

For decades now there has been an attempt, one way or another, to try to bring into our church an ideology that is completely, totally foreign and alien to biblical principle. We are doing this purposely to exclude evolution.

On line 35 I would suggest putting "and then" in a recent six-day creation the Lord made the heaven, the earth. I do think we want to be clear that we do not believe that the universe is 6,000 years old. Just adding one word there would help make this distinction clear.

FLOYD MORRIS: My understanding in terms of the church's position as articulated by the president just now is that we believe that the earth has been created 6,000 years ago, approximately. Now, if it is that I'm to go by the English language, it does not accord with the use of the word "recent."

I have a suggestion that because of my visual challenge I'd like my wife to read.

MRS. MORRIS: "He created the universe and in our understanding of the six-day creation," eliminating "recent."

BILL KNOTT: The suggestion was made from the floor and had been considered as part of the committee's deliberations last evening about how to indicate the concept of sequence in the second sentence. We concluded, after a lengthy discussion, that the clause "He created the universe," with a comma, and a subsequent clause that begins "and in a recent six-day creation" in fact illustrates the sequence that Adventists have historically believed about God creating the angels and other portions of the universe and then at a later date moving to a six-day creation of the planet. However, the insertion of the word "later" seemed to us unnecessary given the two clauses separated by the comma.

ADRIAN PLATTS: My problem is with the sentence "He established the Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of His creative work, performed and completed during six literal days that together with the Sabbath constituted the same unit of time that we call a week today."

We measure time according to a rising and setting sun. When the sun has risen and set seven times, a week has elapsed. The week that is considered the template had a rising and setting sun on only three, possibly four, days, because the sun was created on the fourth day. This means there were only three or four literal days, and not six.

I would ask the committee to reconsider this wording.

ISRAEL KAFEERO: The word "recent" is necessary. And for that reason, I call the question to this motion.

ELLA SIMMONS: We have a second? The motion is to move to the previous question.

This vote calls for two-thirds, and no debate.

All in favor raise your green cards.

All opposed the same sign.

The motion is carried.

Dr. Stele, remind us of the motion.

ARTUR STELE: The motion is to accept the fundamental belief 6, to amend it as was presented.

ELLA SIMMONS: All in favor of the motion, raise your green cards.

All opposed, the same sign.

It is carried.

ELLA SIMMONS: We're going to item 143, "Statement

SESSION SNAPSHOT



Digital clocks on the floor of the Alamodome count down the amount of time speakers at the various microphones have to voice their comments.
KENN DIXON AR/ANN

of Confidence in the Writings of Ellen G. White."

ARTUR STELE: We are making a special attempt to show that the Scriptures and the writings of Ellen G. White are relevant. So it's not an attempt to present in totality, but really something that we would like to emphasize.

I am reading "Statement of Confidence" on page 71. "As the delegates to the 2015 General Conference session in San Antonio, Texas, we express our deep gratitude to God for the continuing presence of the various spiritual gifts among His people (1 Cor. 12:4-11; Eph. 4:11-14) and particularly for the prophetic guidance we have received through the life and ministry of Ellen White (1827-1915).

"On the centennial of her death, we rejoice that her writings have been made available around the globe in many languages and in a variety of printed and electronic formats.

"We affirm our conviction that her writings are divinely inspired, truly Christ-centered, and Bible-based. Rather than replacing the Bible, they uplift the normative character of Scripture and correct inaccurate interpretations of it derived from tradition, human reason, personal experience, and modern culture.

"We commit ourselves to study the writings of Ellen G. White prayerfully and with hearts willing to follow the counsels and instructions we find there. Whether individually, in the family, in small groups, in the classroom, or in the church, a combined study of the Bible and her writings provide a transforming and faith-uplifting experience.

"We encourage the continued development of both worldwide and local strategies to foster the circulation of her writings inside and outside the church. The study of these writings is a powerful means to strengthen and prepare His people for the glorious appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

I move it. [The statement was moved and seconded.]

DENNIS MEIER: For clarity, I would move to amend the sentence to read "Rather than replacing the Bible, they uplift the normative character of Scripture," and to delete the rest of the sentence. This, I feel, will correct inaccurate interpretations derived from church traditions, human reason, personal experience, and modern culture.

RONALD NALIN: I'm speaking on the suggested amendment.

We should use "she exposes incorrect interpretations, instead of "correct inaccurate interpretation." The lesser light points us to the greater light.

So I speak against the motion to amend. I'd like to suggest that the word "normative character of Scripture" makes it clear that we stand on the foundation of *sola scriptura*. The Spirit of Prophecy is simply the lesser light pointing to the greater light.

JIM HOWARD: "I recommend to you, dear reader, the Word of God as the rule of your faith and practice" [*Early Writings,* p. 78]. Very clearly, the gift of prophecy given to us was for, at least in part, correcting those who err in their understanding of the Bible, and we need to uphold that.

GERARD DAMSTEEGT: There is a problem with the amendment. And I would like to cite the words of the prophet in regard to the relationship of correction. "The Word of God is sufficient to enlighten the most beclouded mind, and may be understood by those who have any desire to understand it. But notwithstanding all this, some who profess to make the Word of God their study are found living in direct opposition to the plainest teachings.

"Then, to leave men and women without excuse, God gives plain and pointed testimonies, bringing them back to the Word that they have neglected to follow" [*Selected Messages,* book 3, p. 31].

ELLA SIMMONS: The amendment reads "Rather than replacing the Bible, they uplift the normative character of Scripture," period, deleting the remainder of that sentence.

[The amendment was defeated.]

VIVENCIO BERMUDEZ: In connection with the Statement of Confidence, if it is proper, may I raise a question as to what is the real stand of our church with regard to the Spirit of Prophecy, or Ellen G. White's writings? First, is it a test of fellowship? And the second is Is it a test of leadership? When I mean "test of fellowship," can we baptize a person who does not accept this Statement of Confidence? And can we appoint a church leader who is not a firm believer of the gift of prophecy?

LOWELL COOPER: I have a question about the expression "modern culture" on line 23. And I'm wondering if the use of this expression doesn't allow room for an interpretation that suggests wrong interpretations of Scripture coming from premodern cultures would not be addressed. It seems to me that if we deleted the word "modern," we would strengthen the document by including all forms of culture, not just modern. This is a suggestion.

ERIC HENSEL: When we say that the writings of Ellen G. White correct inaccurate interpretation of the Bible, I feel that we, with good intentions, make a mistake with our hermeneutics when we say that we believe in *sola scriptura*. But with using Ellen White to "correct inaccurate interpreting of the Bible," Ellen G. White becomes the normative over the Bible and how the Bible should be read. This leads to use of her writings as a corrector of biblical authority, as if everything she wrote were 100 percent what we can understand in the Bible. We would exclude the Holy Spirit for every reader and never grow in knowledge if we take the sentence as we read it.

JOHN THOMAS: I call question on the motion.

ELLA SIMMONS: I see support. All for the ceasing debate, please raise your cards. All opposed, same sign.

Thank you. It is carried. In this case, we do actually move to the original motion. And if we can see that motion as well. Dr. Stele, please remind us, and we will move forward.

[The motion to approve the statement on confidence in the writings of Ellen G. White was voted.

ARTUR STELE: I would like just to remind the delegates that it was stated that this statement is against the fundamental belief about the gift of prophecy. I would just remind that, in the statement that we voted yesterday, we have the following sentence: "Her writings speak with prophetic authority and provide comfort, guidance, construction, and correction to the church."

So it's in harmony with the fundamental belief.

ERIC TEO: [Prayer.]

ELLA S. SIMMONS, *Chair*
JOHN H. THOMAS, *Secretary*
NILTON D. AMORIM, GARY PATTERSON,
and CLAUDE SABOT, *Proceedings Editors*

Tenth Business Meeting

Sixtieth General Conference session, July 7, 2015, 2:00 p.m.

DELBERT BAKER: [Called session to order.]

JONAS ARRAIS: [Prayer.]

DELBERT BAKER: At this time we call the GC corporation member meeting, which will be chaired by President Ted Wilson.

[GC corporation member meeting.]

DELBERT BAKER: Now we are moving on to the *Church Manual.*

Pastor Miranda and Harald Wollan will lead in the discussion.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: Item 413 is referring to the way deacons are trained and who is responsible for the training of the deacons and deaconesses.

Last year the Annual Council took an action to approve that the Ministerial Association is in charge of the training of deacons and deaconesses. In order to reflect this, we propose to you the section that has to do with the training of the deacons and deaconesses, and we are inserting this into the *Church Manual.*

HARALD WOLLAN: Item 413, lines 41 to 43.

I need to make a correction of what we brought to you previously, because by mistake we have added on line 41 "of the conference." We need to delete that.

The purpose with deleting it is to make it clear that it is the Ministerial Association that is responsible for providing training material.

I move that we read from line 41 to 43 as follows: "The Ministerial Association, in connection with the departments, promotes the training and equipping of deacons. However, the pastor, in conjunction with the elder(s), has the primary responsibility for training the deacons."

DELBERT BAKER: It has been moved and seconded.

Discussion on the item now.

HARALD WOLLAN: The three words after "conference" will be deleted because it means that the Ministerial Association at all levels has the responsibility.

JONAS ARRAIS: By doing that, we will see the same that appears in the *Church Manual,* page 75, when it talks about the elders. Over there it says "the Ministerial Association" but does not mention "conference." So it eliminates the idea that only on the conference level do we have people in charge to train, to equip the deacons and deaconesses in our church. My suggestion is also to include in this moment what is written on page 106 regarding deaconesses, because the same phrase appears there.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: We agree with that.

HARALD WOLLAN: We are talking about the training of the deacons in order to take care of all aspects of the church. There are various departments that deal with various sections of the mission of the church, and they cooperate together with the elders and the pastors where there is a need. The training material is provided and produced by the Ministerial Association. Sometimes the material comes from the General Conference; sometimes from the union; sometimes from the confer-

ence. But the primary contact for the pastor to get the training material will be the local conference.

DELBERT BAKER: We are ready for the vote.

Those in favor, please uplift your card.

Those opposed, same.

It is carried.

HARALD WOLLAN: On the next page we have deleted the difficult English word "ordinance" which is an old expression.

The statement now reads: "Deacons are not authorized to preside at the Lord's Supper, baptism, or business meetings and are not permitted to perform the marriage ceremony or officiate at the reception of transfer of members."

JUSTIN LYONS: The word "baptism" has been inserted. When I read in Acts 6 that Philip was a deacon and baptized the eunuch, I'm wondering if we're putting ourselves at odds with Scripture.

HARALD WOLLAN: We have never practiced that individuals of the church can baptize unless they're ordained elders or pastors.

GERARD DAMSTEEGT: I call your attention to the substitution of the word "ordinance" with "service." In the New Testament we have three sacred ordinances. It's a little different than service.

DELBERT BAKER: Thank you.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: We received this recommendation from one of the divisions. And one of the reasons they presented to us is that the word "ordinances" is a difficult word to translate into different languages. If there is another word that can replace it and be easily translated into different languages, we have no objection against it.

JONAS ARRAIS: I support this motion as it is. The word "service" is not describing the ordinance. It is just describing the service of foot washing.

DELBERT BAKER: That's very helpful. Same microphone. We have Finn Eckhoff.

FINN ECKHOFF: The *Church* Manual does not explain what is meant by the word "ordinance," and to leave it in without explaining makes confusion.

MEGEN MOLÉ: I move the previous question. [The previous question was voted. Then the main motion was approved.]

HARALD WOLLAN: We move to one item dealing with the deaconesses. [Some changes have been suggested.]

I'd like to move the amendments here.

ED GALAN: For the sake of clarity I would implore that the GC leaders offer some form of a glossary. I'm not asking that every jot and tittle and period and "T" to be crossed.

I agree with what Elder Miranda: it's impossible to provide all details in every section, but a glossary of definitions for ordinance, license, credentials, etc., will go a long way to helping all laypeople and workers of all divisions.

MEGEN MOLÉ: I move to replace the word "ordinances" with the phrase "the Lord's Supper," comma, "baptism," and also that we replace the word "cannot" with the phrase "are not permitted."

I'd like to move this amendment.

DELBERT BAKER: I have a second.

[The amendment was seconded and approved.]

FUN FACT

100,000

The number of photos that will be taken during the session by the team of 10 professional photographers.

MARK FROELICH AR/ANN



There is a change of name of the Adventist Youth. Instead of Adventist Youth it's now called Adventist Youth Ministries. Then the additional change of Adventist Community Services or Dorcas Society, instead of Community Services/Dorcas Society.

I move this change.

DELBERT BAKER: It's been moved and seconded.

Those in favor, uplift card.

Those opposed, same sign.

It is carried.

HARALD WOLLAN: Item 416 is a brief addition in which we outline who might be helpful in counting offerings to make sure that it is done in a proper fashion. To make sure that we do not forget our deacons and deaconesses, we have included that on line 12.

I move this addition.

DELBERT BAKER: It is moved and seconded.

Those in favor, uplift card.

Those opposed, same sign.

It is carried.

HARALD WOLLAN: Number 417 deals with the Community Services/Dorcas Society leader. As I mentioned previously, we have found it necessary to redefine the services there.

On line 9: "Adventist Community Services Leader or Dorcas Society Leader——The church elects the Adventist Community Services leader or Dorcas Society leader, assistant leaders (as needed), and secretary-treasurer of Adventist Community Services, which in some areas is known as the Dorcas Society."

Then we refer to the note section, Chapter 14. "This organization gathers and prepared clothing, food, and other supplies for those in need and works closely with the Adventist men, deacons, deaconesses, and other church departments in community outreach. Adventist Community Services or Dorcas Society ministry, however, includes more than giving material aid. It focuses on identifying needs and responding with services based on these specific needs. Examples are educational seminars, community development, visiting, counseling, and other services relevant to the community."

HARALD WOLLAN: On lines 25 and 26: "The Adventist Community Service leader or Dorcas Society leader is a member of the Personal Ministries Council and the church board." And then on line 28: ". . . who is a member of the council as well as the church board."

I move these changes.

DELBERT BAKER: It's been moved and seconded.

Now for discussion on this item.

QEDUMUSA MATHONSI: Is Community Services synonymous to Dorcas? And if that's the case, is the Adventist Men organization excluded in Community Services?

MAY-ELLEN COLON: In many parts of the world the Dorcas Society is doing identical work with Adventist Community Services. And in the manual it appears that sometimes they can coexist. In some parts of the world that has caused confusion.

DELBERT BAKER: All those in favor, uplift the card.

Those opposed, the same sign.

It's carried.

HARALD WOLLAN: By common consent we can agree that even in the heading we use Adventist Community Services or Dorcas Society leader; that we have the same word there on line 3 as we have on line 9.

DELBERT BAKER: All those in favor, say "Aye." All those in favor, say "Aye."

Those who are opposed.

It is agreed.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: The next is item 418.

This is referring to the Youth Ministries. We accepted a new program in the Youth Ministries Department. I'm referring to Public Campus Ministries. It was accepted and voted during the 2014 Annual Council and is not included in the *Church Manual*.

We have also the suggested change of name of Adventist Youth Society to Adventist Youth Ministries. This is more inclusive.

The secretary will introduce the suggested changes and deletions of this section.

HARALD WOLLAN: This whole section we are starting on is actually a total rewrite. We will see at the end of the document on this agenda item there is a lot of cross-outs.

On page 111 you have some definitions from line 24. You have Adventist Youth Mission, you have the motto, and the AYM. Then on lines 31, 32, and 33, various levels of the Youth Ministries are described.

From line 31, "The youth ministries program of the church comprises three broad categories, namely: Junior Youth," specified here in parentheses; "Senior Youth" is also specified in parentheses; "and Public Campus Students," and that is specified as well, as ages 16 to 30-plus.

From line 28 on page 112 you have the Adventist Youth Ministries Committee described.

On line 31, the Adventist Youth Ministries Committee includes the following church-elected officers: young adults, director, Public Campus Ministries director or coordinator, ambassador director, Pathfinder director, Adventurer director.

And then further down we are also changing just a matter of capitalizing "S" in "schools," Sabbath School. And then we include the children's ministries leader.

On page 113, line 1, it describes what takes place if there is no Ambassador ministry or youth ministry established in the local church.

Line 5, Pathfinder and Adventure Ministries. It's described here that they are organized. And if they are not, until such are organized, some plans need to be made for this age group to be taken care of.

From line 9 to line 11 we talk about the Adventist Youth Ministry director, and we refer to the previous name and the description of what he will do.

From line 18 to 20, Young Adults Committee, we describe how that functions. The Young Adults Committee is responsible for the young adults' activities and so on.

This continues down to line 13, the Public Campus Ministries, and this is an addition.

From line 31: "Strengthening the Youth Ministries of the church, Public Campus Ministries (PCM), in collaboration with the Adventist Ministry to college and university students (AMiCUS), provides vision and strategic planning for ministry to and support for Seventh-day Adventist students (ages 16-30+) who attend public colleges, universities, and tertiary educational institutions around the world."

Line 37 describes the coordinator or the director of the Public Campus Ministries.

GILBERT CANGY: I just would like to include a couple of points of clarification.

Essentially, in terms of substance, there is no significant changes to the previous document. But there are three elements here that the body would need to be clear on.

First of all, there is a change in nomenclature. Throughout the document the previously known Adventist Youth Society is being changed to Adventist Youth Ministry.

We now have Adventist Youth Ministries that embraces all branches of youth ministry, starting with Junior Youth, which covers Adventurers and Pathfinders; Senior Youth, etc.

The second change is related to the introduction of the Ambassador Ministry, which is a new level of ministry that focuses on the needs of young people between 16 and 21. Because of that we have come up with a relatively new term, "Young Adults," to distinguish between Ambassadors and the older ones. So under Senior Youth the ages 16 to 30 is now divided in two: Ambassadors, covering 16 to 21; and Young Adults, 22 to 30.

The third category is related to public campuses. The church felt the need for a special ministry for young adults on public campuses.

FRENSLY PANNEFLEK: Can somebody explain the difference between AMiCUS and Public Campus Ministries?

ARMANDO MIRANDA: AMiCUS is the acronym of Adventist Ministries to College and University Students.

AMiCUS is the umbrella that include several departments, including chaplaincy, youth, education, health ministries. Public Campus Ministries is the specific ministry that works and deals with the Adventist students in public colleges and universities.

DAVID TRIM: By restricting Public Campus Ministries to public college/university students, there is a danger of misunderstanding. Many Adventist tertiary students are in private institutions; not Adventist institutions, but private ones. Elder Miranda did indicate that he might be willing to change it. But seeing this is part of the proposed change, then if this is being referred back, perhaps that could be looked at.

The wording I would suggest would be "the special needs of tertiary students on nondenominational campuses," as I think that would cover everything. And I would request that the committee look at it when it's taken back.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: We have no objections. It's accepted.

LANTE THOMPSON: I just want to plead if it's possible for us to move the Public Campus Ministries from the Youth Department to the Chaplaincy Department.

ARMANDO MIRANDA: The General Conference has approved at the Annual Council that Public Campus Ministries would be under the Youth Department. However, we never took any vote in regard to divisions and unions or local fields. We said that each level will decide under what umbrella Public Campus Ministries will be.

[The statement on Youth Ministries, after a few changes, was voted by the delegates.]

HARALD WOLLAN: We will consider the issue of how to deal with something being referred back to the Nominating Committee, because it's not very clear.

So the new wording we are suggesting is on page 119, lines 24-26: "After giving due consideration to the objections presented, the committee will exercise its judgment as to whether or not any change is warranted in the committee's recommendation to the church business meeting." [This was seconded and voted.]

DELBERT BAKER: Page 123.

HARALD WOLLAN: We now deal with the definition of the business meeting of the church. It hasn't been clearly understood that the business meeting is actually the constituency meeting of the local church. [Changes on the business meetings were voted.]

On page 128 we are defining the Finance Committee. It reads: "Each church should have a mission-driven, broad-based consultative financial planning and budgeting process with a committee structure that can give detailed review to the ongoing financial planning and budgeting. In some cases, this may take the form of a finance committee. In other cases, in smaller churches, this process may be handled directly by the church board. If the church establishes a separate Committee for this purpose, the responsibilities should include reviewing budget requests and the review of the annual operating budget as well as a review of the financial position of the church as reflected in the financial statements. The approval of the budget and the review of the financial statement shall then be recommended to the church board and onward to the business meeting of the church for action." [This was approved by the delegates.]

HARALD WOLLAN: On page 124 we are dealing with the operation of the church board.

[Additions and deletions were made.] [On page 125 emphasis was placed on the primary functions of the board, which is "to ensure that members are nurtured and mentored in a personal dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ."]

[Another emphasis was on retention. On page 125 it reads: "The church, individually and collectively, shares responsibility for ensuring that every church member remains part of the body of Christ."]

On page 126, one of the responsibilities of the board is to "study membership lists and initiate plans for reconnecting (reclaiming) members who have separated from the church."

[The recommended changes were discussed.]

DELBERT BAKER: At this time we have a report from the Nominating Committee.

HOMER TRECARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have a report. It's still not our last report, but we are making progress. And our secretary, Dr. Leslie Pollard, will read that to us.

LESLIE POLLARD: We will present the slate of names, and we'd like, per yesterday's desire of the delegates, to vote the entire slate.

Publishing, director, Almir Mauricio Marroni (new to this position).

Treasury, associate treasurer, Mr. Delbert Pearman (new to this position).

Education, associate director, Dr. Mike Lekic (incumbent).

Education, associate director, Dr. Hudson Kibuuka (incumbent).

Education, associate director, Dr. John Wesley Taylor (incumbent).

Education, associate director, Dr. Julian Melgosa (new to this position).

Sabbath School and Personal Ministries, associate director, Dr. Ramon Canals (new to this position).

Public Affairs and Religious Liberty, director, Dr. A. Ganoune Diop (new to this position).

Public Affairs and Religious Liberty, associate director, Dr. Nelu Burcea (new to this position).

Public Affairs and Religious Liberty, associate director, Dwayne Leslie (incumbent).

Women's Ministries, associate director, Mrs. Racquel Arrais (incumbent).

Children's Ministries, associate director, Dr. Saustin Mfune (incumbent).

Ministerial Association, associate director, Mr. Jonas Arrais (incumbent).

Ministerial Association, associate director, Dr. Robert

Costa (incumbent).

Ministerial Association, associate director, Dr. Derek Morris (incumbent).

Ministerial Association, associate director, Dr. Willie Hucks II (incumbent).

Ministerial Association, associate director, Dr. Anthony Kent (incumbent).

This is the slate of names representing the recommendations of the Nominating Committee. I so move them.

DELBERT BAKER: Is there a second? Seconded.

We're ready for a vote of the slate.

All those in favor of as read, please show by the uplifted card.

It's very clear.

Those opposed, same sign.

Excellent.

HOMER TRECARTIN: Mr. Chairman, Could we could bring them out to be introduced?

[Applause.]

DELBERT BAKER: Thank you. We welcome the new persons.

DELBERT BAKER: Thank you for the report. We'll just continue on with the items with the *Church Manual* for the next few minutes. Let's give them a hand. Thank you.

[Applause.]

LORRAINE QUESTEL: I'd like to say how encouraged I am by the emphasis on retention and following up on the interests that are in harmony with our mission.

HARALD WOLLAN: We have gotten a lot of good input. And I think it is necessary that the *Church Manual* Committee will re-evaluate the document in line of some of the input we have gotten. So I will take it back to the *Church Manual* Committee.

DELBERT BAKER: In light of this it's being suggested that we refer the document back to the committee.

ANDREI MOLDOVANU: [Prayer.]

DELBERT BAKER and TED N. C. WILSON, *Chairs*
JOHN H. THOMAS, *Secretary*
NILTON D. AMORIM, GARY B. PATTERSON, and CLAUDE SABOT, *Proceedings Editors*

Session Actions

Sixtieth General Conference Session
July 7, 2015, 2:00 p.m.

DEACONS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 8, Local Church Officers and Organizations, pages 76 to 78, Deacons, to read as follows:

Deacons

The New Testament identifies the office of deacon with the Greek word *diakonos*, from which the English "deacon" is derived. The Greek word is variously interpreted as "servant, minister, writer, attendant" and in Christian circles has acquired the specialized meaning now attached to "deacon."

The men who came to be known as the seven deacons of the apostolic church were chosen and ordained to attend to the business of the church. (See Acts 6:1-8.) Their qualifications, slightly less exacting than those of elders, are listed in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

"The fact that these brethren had been ordained for the special work of looking after the needs of the poor did not exclude them from teaching the faith. On the contrary, they were fully qualified to instruct others in the truth, and they engaged in the work with great earnestness and success."— AA 90.

"The appointment of the seven to take the oversight of special lines of work proved a great blessing to the church. These officers gave careful consideration to individual needs as well as to the general financial interests of the church, and by their prudent management and their godly example they were an important aid to their fellow officers in binding together the various interests of the church into a united whole."—AA 89.

Today appointment of deacons through election brings similar blessings in church administration by relieving pastors, elders, and other officers of duties that deacons may perform well.

"The time and strength of those who in the providence of God have been placed in leading positions of responsibility in the church should be spent in dealing with the weightier matters demanding special wisdom and largeness of heart. It is not in the order of God that such men should be appealed to for the adjustment of minor matters that others are well qualified to handle."—AA 93.

The Ministerial Association, in connection with the departments, promotes the training and equipping of deacons. However, the pastor, in conjunction with the elder(s), has the primary responsibility for training the deacons. (See Notes, #3, p. 167)

Board of Deacons—Where a church has a number of deacons, it should - No change

Deacons Must Be Ordained—Newly elected deacons cannot fill their - No change

Deacons Not Authorized to Preside—Deacons are not authorized to preside at ~~any of the ordinances of the church~~ the Lord's Supper, baptism, or business meetings and are not permitted to ~~cannot~~ perform the marriage ceremony or officiate at the reception or transfer of members.

If a church has no one authorized to perform such duties, ~~it~~ the church leader shall contact the conference for assistance.

Duties of Deacons—The work of deacons involves a wide range of services for the church, including:

1. Assistance at Services and Meetings—Deacons are usually - No change
2. Visitation of Members—In many churches visitation is arranged - No change
3. Preparation for Baptismal Services—Deacons make necessary - No change
4. Assistance at Communion Service—At the ~~celebration of the ordinance~~ service of footwashing, the deacons or deaconesses provide everything needed, ~~needed for the service,~~ such as towels, basins, water, and buckets. After the service they see that the utensils and linen are washed and properly stored.

Remaining bread and wine should not be consumed, but disposed of in a respectful manner by deacons and deaconesses following the Lord's Supper.

5. Care of the Sick and Aiding the Poor and Unfortunate—Deacons - No change
6. Care and Maintenance of Property—In churches where the - No change

DEACONESSES - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 8, Local Church Officers and Organizations, pages 78 and 79, Deaconesses, to read as follows:

Deaconesses

Deaconesses were included in the official staff of the early Christian churches.

"I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church [deaconess] in Cenchrea, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also" (Rom. 16:1, 2).

Deaconesses should be chosen for their consecration and other qualifications that fit them for the duties of the office.

The Ministerial Association, in connection with the departments, promotes the training and equipping of deaconesses. However, the pastor, in conjunction with the elder(s), has the primary responsibility for training the deaconesses. (See Notes, #3, p. 167)

Board of Deaconesses—If a church elects several deaconesses, it should - No change

Ordination Service for Deaconesses—Such a ~~service~~ service, like the ordination of deacons, would be carried out by an ordained pastor currently credentialed by the conference. The ordination service should be characterized by simplicity and performed in the presence of the church.

If they retain church membership, deaconesses do not have to be ordained again if they move their memberships to other churches. When the term for which they were elected expires, they must be reelected if they are to continue to serve as deaconesses.

Deaconesses Not Authorized to Preside—Deaconesses are not authorized to preside at any of the services of the church or business meetings and cannot perform the marriage ceremony or officiate at the reception or transfer of members.

If a church has no one authorized to perform such duties, the church leader shall contact the conference for assistance.

Duties of Deaconesses—Deaconesses serve the church in a wide variety of activities, including:

1. Greeting and Visiting Guests and Members—In many - No change
2. Assistance at Baptisms—Deaconesses ensure that female candidates - No change
3. Arrangements for the Communion Service—Deaconesses and deacons arrange for everything needed for this service and see that everything used is cared for afterward. (See p. 121.)

Before the communion service begins, deaconesses ~~make arrangements for~~ set the communion table, including preparing the bread and wine, ~~arranging the ordinance table,~~ pouring the wine, placing the plates of unleavened bread, and covering the table with the linen provided for that purpose.

Deaconesses assist in the ~~ordinance~~ service of footwashing, giving special aid to women visitors and new members.

4. The Care of the Sick and the Poor—Deaconesses assist deacons in - No change
5. Care and Maintenance of Property—In churches where the - No change

FUNDS OF AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS (TREASURER) - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 8, Local Church Officers and Organizations, pages 81 and 82, Funds of Auxiliary Organizations, to read as follows:

Funds of Auxiliary Organizations—Auxiliary organization funds include such funds as church outreach

programs, family life, Adventist Youth Ministries, Adventist Community Services or Dorcas Society, ~~Society, Community Services/Dorcas Society,~~ Sabbath school expense, and that portion of the health ministries funds belonging to the church, and may include church school funds. All money received by and for these organizations is turned over promptly to the church treasurer by the secretary of the organization, the deacons, or whoever has received the funds. These funds belong to the auxiliary organizations of the church. They may be disbursed only by order of the auxiliary organization to which they belong.

The treasurer shall give receipts for all funds received. On receiving money from the treasurer, the secretary of the auxiliary organization shall give a proper receipt to the treasurer.

RECEIPTS TO MEMBERS (TREASURER) - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 8, Local Church Officers and Organizations, page 83, Receipts to Members, to read as follows:

Receipts to Members—Receipts should be issued promptly for all money received from members, no matter how small the amount, and a strict account of all receipts and payments should be kept by the treasurer. All general offerings not in envelopes should be counted by the treasurer in the presence of another officer, preferably a deacon or deaconess, ~~deacon,~~ and a receipt given to such officer.

ADVENTIST COMMUNITY SERVICES LEADER OR DORCAS SOCIETY LEADER – CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 8, Local Church Officers and Organizations, page 98, Community Services/Dorcas Leader, to read as follows:

Adventist Community Services Leader or Dorcas Society Leader—The church elects the Adventist Community Services leader or Dorcas Society leader, assistant leaders (as needed), and secretary-treasurer of Adventist Community Services, which in some areas is known as the Dorcas Society. (See Notes, #14, p. 170.) This organization gathers and prepares clothing, food and other supplies for those in need and works closely with the Adventist Men, deacons, deaconesses, and other church departments in community outreach. Adventist Community Services or Dorcas Society ministry, however, includes more than giving material aid. It focuses on identifying needs and responding with services based on these specific needs. Examples are educational seminars, community development, visiting, counseling, and other services relevant to the community. ~~Community Services/Dorcas Society Leader—The church elects the Community Services/Dorcas Society leader, assistant leaders (as needed), and secretary-treasurer. This organization gathers and prepares clothing, food, and other supplies for those in need and works closely with the deacons and deaconesses. Community Services/Dorcas ministry, however, includes more than giving material aid. It encompasses adult education, visiting, homemaking, home nursing, counseling, and other services.~~

The Adventist Community Services Leader or Dorcas Society Leader is a member of the Personal Ministries Council and the church board. If the church operates a Community Services center, the personal ministries council is its governing committee. The Council appoints the director of the center, who is a member of the Council as well as the church board. ~~council.~~

YOUTH MINISTRIES - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To refer Youth Ministries, *Church Manual* Amendment, back to the *Church Manual* Committee.

YOUTH MEETINGS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 10, Services and Other Meetings, pages 127 and 128, Youth Meetings, to read as follows:

Youth Meetings

Leaders of the church's various youth groups should schedule regular meetings that involve the church's young people in meaningful activities that will tie them closer to the church and train them for useful service. (See also pp. 100-105.)

Senior Youth Ministries Meetings (Ambassadors and Young Adults)—Senior Youth Ministries meetings should convene on a regular schedule and focus on developing the spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical characteristics of the church's youth. Meetings also provide Christian social interaction and witnessing programs supporting the soul-winning plans of the church. For resources, see Notes #9, p. 177.

Public Campus Ministries Meetings—Where the church has appointed a Public Campus Ministries director/coordinator, meetings should be organized to care for the special needs of public college/university students in consultation with and support of the Adventist Youth Ministries Committee.

Junior Youth Ministries Meetings (Adventurers and Pathfinders)—Junior Youth Ministries meetings are similar in purpose to Senior Youth Ministries, but involve junior youth. Adventurer Club meetings provide specialized programs for primary/early school-age children designed to complement and strengthen parental involvement in early childhood development, while Pathfinder Club meetings provide specialized indoor and outdoor activities for the holistic development of children from 10 to15 years old. Meetings and other activities are to be carried out according to conference policies as outlined in the club manuals and in coordination with other youth-related and family-related organizations of the church.

Adventist Youth Society Meetings—Adventist Youth Society meetings should meet on a regular schedule and focus on developing the spiritual, mental, and physical characteristics of the church's youth. Meetings also provide Christian social interaction and witnessing programs supporting the soul-winning plans of the church. The Adventist youth ministries committee encourages and coordinates Adventist Youth Society activities and those of other youth organizations. (See p. 102.) For resources, see Notes, #9, p. 177.

Adventist Junior Youth Society Meetings—Adventist Junior Youth Society meetings are similar in purpose to Adventist Youth Society meetings but involve junior youth. If there is a church school, the Adventist Junior Youth Society is usually a part of the school's spiritual curriculum. (See Notes, #10, p. 177.)

Ambassador Club Meetings—Ambassador Club meetings provide specialized programs to meet the needs of youth, ages 16 through 21, and promote their involvement in the Church. Its meetings and other activities are to be carried out according to conference policies and in coordination with other youth/young

SESSION SNAPSHOT



Young adults excited to be attendees at the 60th annual GC session with the opportunity to witness the church's vote on women's ordination.

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adult ministries of the local church.

Pathfinder Club Meetings—The Pathfinder Club meetings provide specialized programs for junior youth and in some areas have replaced the Adventist Junior Youth Society meetings. Churches where both function should coordinate their activities. Pathfinders will meet according to conference departmental policy.

Adventurer Club Meetings—Adventurer Club meetings provide specialized programs for primary/early school-age children designed to complement and strengthen parental involvement in early childhood development. Meetings and other activities are to be carried out according to conference policies as outlined in the club manuals and in coordination with other youth-related and family-related organizations of the church.

OBJECTIONS TO THE REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 9, Elections, page 109, Objections to the Report of the Nominating Committee, to read as follows:

Objections to the Report of the Nominating Committee—Members may object to the nominating committee's report and should present their objections in person to the committee before the second reading of the report by making an appointment through the chairperson or pastor. Or, at the time of the second reading of the report, a member may request that the whole report be referred without discussion to the committee for further consideration. It is the usual procedure for the chairperson to accept the referral. However, if the request becomes a motion, it is nondebatable and is decided by majority vote.

The chairperson should announce when and where the committee will meet to hear objections. At that time members making objections, or any other member who desires to do so, should appear before the committee. If the election is deferred because of objections, it would be a serious matter for those raising objections to fail to appear before the committee.

~~The committee should give due consideration to the objections presented. If they are found to be justified, the committee should substitute new names for those to which objection was made.~~ After giving due consideration to the objections presented, the committee will exercise its judgment as to whether or not any change is warranted in the committee's recommendation to the church business meeting. When the report is again presented, the church proceeds to vote on the report of the committee.

Trivial or groundless objections to any name should never be made, but if there are serious reasons that any nomination should be changed, these reasons should be stated to the nominating committee.

UNAUTHORIZED SPEAKERS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To refer Unauthorized Speakers, *Church Manual* Amendment, back to the *Church Manual* Committee.

COMMUNION SERVICE - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To refer Communion Service, *Church Manual* Amendment, back to the *Church Manual* Committee.

BUSINESS MEETINGS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 10, Services and Other Meetings, pages 123 and 124, Business Meetings, to read as follows:

Business Meetings

The local church operates within defined roles in Seventh-day Adventist Church structure. Within the context of those roles, the business meeting is the ~~governing body~~ constituency meeting of the local church. (See p. 29.) Members in regular standing are encouraged to attend and are entitled to vote. A member under censure has no right to participate by voice or vote.

Business meetings shall be held at least once a year. The pastor, or the board in consultation with and support of the pastor, calls the meeting. Business meetings typically are announced a week or two in advance at the regular Sabbath worship service, with detail as to time and place. The pastor, an elder arranged by the pastor, or, in some cases, the conference president, serves as chairperson of the business meeting.

Each church decides what the quorum will be for future meetings. Votes by proxy or letter are not permitted.

Major items should be decided at a regular or specially called business meeting.

The business meeting has authority over the board and may delegate responsibilities to the board in addition to those already assigned by the *Church Manual*. (See pp. 124-127.)

The business meeting agenda should include reports about the work of the church. At least once a year the agenda should include reports covering church activities. Based on those reports, ~~presentation of~~ a proposed plan of action for the next ~~year~~ year, including an annual budget, should be presented for approval. When possible, reports and plans for the next year should be presented in writing. (See Notes, #7, pp. 176, 177.)

In order to maintain a spirit of cooperation between the church and conference, the church shall secure counsel from conference officers on all major matters.

Conference and union officers (president, secretary, treasurer) or their designee may attend without vote (unless granted by the church) any business meeting of any church in their territory. An action to allow voting is not required if the officer is currently a member of that congregation.

FINANCE COMMITTEE - *CHURCH MANUAL* ADDITION

VOTED, To add a new section, Finance Committee, to the *Church Manual*, Chapter 10, Services and Other Meetings, following Church Board and Its Meetings, on page 127, to read as follows:

Finance Committee

Each church should have a mission-driven, broadly-based consultative financial planning and budgeting process with a committee structure that can give detailed review to the ongoing financial planning and budgeting. In some cases, this may take the form of a finance committee. In other cases, in smaller churches, this process may be handled directly by the church board. If the church establishes a separate committee for this purpose, the responsibilities should include reviewing budget requests and the review of the annual

FUN FACT

2,500 people walked or ran in the InStep 4 Life 5K Fun Run for a total of **7,767** miles (12,500 kilometers) That's more than the distance across the United States *plus* the distance across Africa.

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operating budget as well as a review of the financial position of the church as reflected in the financial statements. The approval of the budget and the review of the financial statement shall then be recommended to the church board and onward to the business meeting of the church for action.

CHURCH BOARD AND IT'S MEETING - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To call for the vote on Church Board and It's Meeting, *Church Manual* Amendment.

CHURCH BOARD AND ITS MEETINGS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

VOTED, To refer Church Board and It's Meetings, *Church Manual* Amendment, back to the *Church Manual* Committee.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT #5

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

General Conference

Associate Treasurer
Delbert B Pearman

Children's Ministries
Associate Director:
Saustin S Mfune

Education
Associate Directors:
Hudson E Kibuuka
Mike M Lekic
Julian M Melgosa
John Wesley Taylor V

Ministerial Association
Associate Secretaries:
Robert Costa
Willie E Hucks II
Anthony R Kent
Derek J Morris

Public Affairs and Religious Liberty
Associate Directors:
Nelu Burcea
Dwayne O Leslie

Publishing Ministries
Director:
Almir M Marroni

Sabbath School/Personal Ministries
Associate Director:
Ramon Canals

Women's Ministries
Associate Director:
Raquel C Arrais

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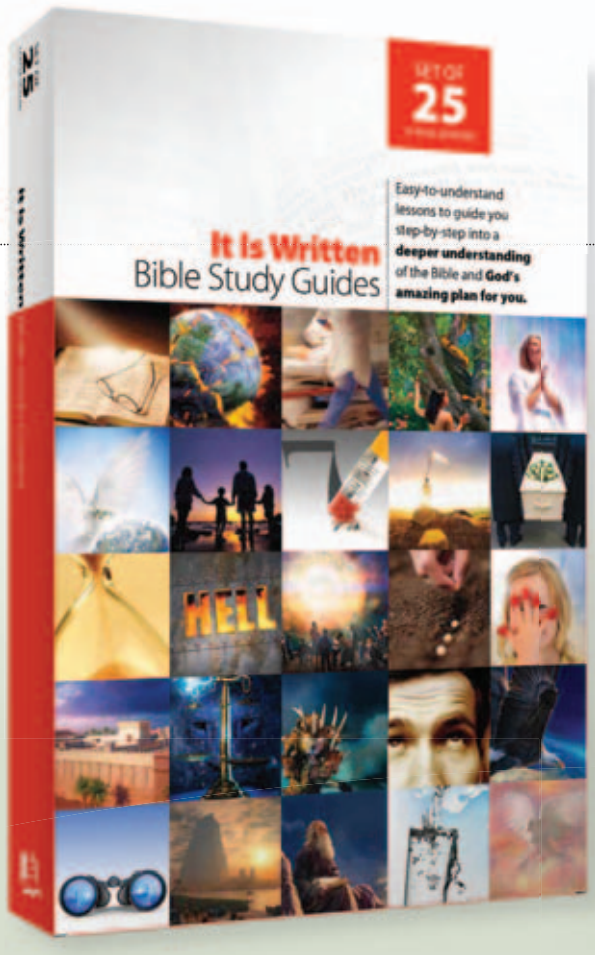
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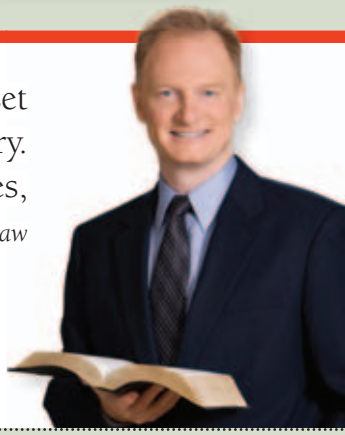


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