



General Conference Executive Committee Newsletter

An informative publication for members of the General Conference Executive Committee as a service through the office of the Chair

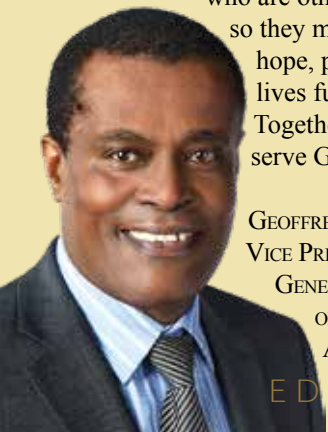
JULY 2020

The mission of the

Adventist Church aims at ministering to the whole person—mentally, physically, spiritually and socially—based on Biblical principles. The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is a strong vehicle of the church in this noble ministry. Just as parts of the body work in a coordinated, harmonious manner for life, ADRA and the Church work together in unique ways to serve humanity in this life as we prepare for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Together we serve so all may live as God intended.

As a humanitarian agency, ADRA focuses on aspects of human development and relief to extend God's love and compassion to populations in need. Along with the church, in the name of God and power of Christ, ADRA works for generational, transformational change. The immense opportunities before us include: developing schools and feeding the needy in Africa; designing and providing psychological support resources in South America; feeding families who lost everything to COVID-19 in North America, and so much more.

Through this work of the church and ADRA, God will reach out to bless those who are otherwise forgotten so they may experience hope, purpose and lives full of potential. Together we stand to serve God and humanity.



GEORGEY MWBANA
VICE PRESIDENT
GENERAL CONFERENCE
OF SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTISTS
EDITORIAL



ADRA AND THE CHURCH: UNITING IN FAITH AND PARTNERSHIP

BY MICHAEL KRUGER, ADRA PRESIDENT

*I*n my three decades in finance, I learned that structure is the antidote to unpredictability. Within that structure, the most pressing crises can be resolved; the most complex questions can be answered; the most unusual challenges can be anticipated. When I stepped into the role of president of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), I found the same principle applied. Even within an industry as complex and far-reaching as international humanitarian relief and development, structure is the antidote to unpredictability. For every drought, flood, hurricane, earthquake, or plague of locusts,

there are protocols and policies to guide our disaster response. For every barren field, dry well, empty classroom, and densely populated refugee camp, there are appropriate channels for funding, implementing, monitoring and evaluating our response.

The list of what ADRA responds to—and how we do so in a manner that is timely, effective, and long-lasting—is extensive. Our work brings life and hope to millions around the globe, through projects as broad as clean water and as specific as literacy training for adults. But beneath it all runs the same principle I have come to value throughout my

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In Cambodia, ADRA partnered with hospitals and health centers to provide masks, gloves, and sanitizing alcohol.

career: structure is the antidote to unpredictability.

And then, just months ago, a virus threatened the foundations of that structure.

CHALLENGED BY A VIRUS

In the early stages of the pandemic, ADRA was quick to respond with food, water, cash vouchers, and more for the most vulnerable in the path of the virus. At the time, that path seemed narrow and manageable. As the weeks passed, however, the path widened and extended to multiple countries, and then multiple continents.

Accordingly, ADRA ramped up our initial response to include more than 70 countries. In Mexico, we worked to support the hearing impaired; in Slovenia, we sent health baskets to staff and residents in nursing homes; in Cambodia, we partnered with hospitals and health centers to provide masks, gloves, and sanitizing alcohol.

The virus continued to spread, and our response intensified. In New

Zealand, we distributed grocery vouchers to more than 1,000 families in need. In Kenya, we set up hand washing and sanitation stations; in Finland, we partnered with local food banks. In Brazil, we began delivering food baskets to refugees and vulnerable families.

But as our humanitarian response continued to chase the virus along its global path of destruction, our own organization began to feel its effects. By early March, our programs in 130 countries had to be slowed down or put on hold while we launched a global COVID-19 taskforce to determine next steps and deal with the response in a coordinated manner.

In that same week, governments started to shut down all businesses, travel, and borders. And just like that, the world came to a stop. Within the span of six months, the structure that has stabilized ADRA for decades was shaken. For the first time in my professional life, it seemed like unpredictability had the upper hand.

But even in those early days of unpredictability, the structure that holds ADRA together proved tougher than the virus. It is not just our dedicated staff and many partners that keep us running. Overwhelmingly, our continued success is due to the unfading foundational belief that we are serving so all may live as God intended; it is the passion that fuels our common desire to be the hands and feet of Jesus, even if we have to wear a mask while doing it.

More than anything, however, it is the partnership with the Adventist Church that keeps our structure intact.

Since our beginning, ADRA has existed as the global humanitarian arm of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and we have never forgotten it. It is our shared beliefs that fuel our shared ministries. It is because of the Bible and the promises of God that both ADRA and the Church exist to change the world for the better and to inspire hope in a hopeless world, even as our activities assume different forms.

But during this pandemic, our ministries and wide-ranging activities don't only share the same goal—in many cases, we also walk the same path to get there.

A PRECEDENT FOR PARTNERSHIPS

When Hurricane Dorian hit The Bahamas in 2019, the loss of life and infrastructure was devastating. Even for ADRA the Category 5 hurricane proved challenging. Flights were grounded, roads and runways were washed away, and whole regions were still under water. We mobilized our Emergency Response Team, but the initial obstacles seemed

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By working as partners, ADRA and the Adventist Church delivered a stronger, broader, and more efficient response to the disaster than either could have done independently.



In Kenya, ADRA set up hand washing and sanitation stations

insurmountable without local partnership.

ADRA knew that the Adventist Church was perfectly positioned as the ideal local partner. The church there understood the region, the community, and the immediate needs. Best of all, they were familiar faces to those in search of a helping hand. The Adventist presence is strong in The Bahamas, and their engagement after Dorian reaffirmed what many Bahamians already knew: Adventists don't just preach the Gospel; we practice it.

To quote Ellen White in *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, “The world will be convinced, not by what the pulpit teaches, but what the church lives” (p. 16).

By working as partners, ADRA and the Adventist Church delivered a

stronger, broader, and more efficient response to the disaster than either could have done independently. More importantly, the partnership showed what is possible when we live the Gospel together, a priceless experience that found new footing when disaster struck again—this time on a global scale.

A SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION

Our response to Hurricane Dorian showed us what is possible when ADRA and the Adventist Church work together to provide assistance and change lives. When COVID-19 began its path of destruction, ADRA and the Church took the same structure of partnership beyond The Bahamas and applied it globally.

That premise of unified,

global compassion is ingrained in what it means to be a Seventh-day Adventist. Ellen White emphasized this point in *The Ministry of Healing*:

“Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with people as one who desired their good. He showed sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He invited them, ‘Follow Me’” (p. 143).

She expands on this same point several times in this book, and in many of her writings, further illustrating the value of Christian charity:

“Many have no faith in God and have lost confidence in man. But they appreciate acts of sympathy and helpfulness. As they see one with no

inducement of earthly praise or compensation come into their homes, ministering to the sick, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, comforting the sad, and tenderly pointing all to Him of whose love and pity the human worker is but the messenger—as they see this, their hearts are touched. Gratitude springs up. Faith is kindled. They see that God cares for them, and they are prepared to listen as His Word is opened” (p. 145).

PARTNERSHIP FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

It is well known that life is at times difficult and painful, even for those of us with support systems, safety nets, and the knowledge of salvation. For others who lack those blessings, life

can feel hopeless. And that was true even before the globe was ravaged by a virus.

Today, millions around the world are out of work. People who never expected to be in line at a food bank are standing there now. ADRA and the Seventh-day Adventist Church have an opportunity—an obligation, even—to share Jesus with a desperate world.

ADRA and the Church have always provided hope; now is the time to come together to provide life. As an agency of change, ADRA has the proven experience, the partnerships, and access to resources. As the body of Christ, the Church has the networks, the passionate members, and a reputation of lovingkindness. It's a transformative partnership like no other in the world today.

Few examples better illustrate the practical value of the Church and ADRA coming together than the work that is being done in the United States. Today, ADRA and Adventist Community Services (ACS) are partnering on a \$2.4 million initiative to provide food to 200 food pantries and medical equipment to the people and communities in the U.S. most in need. The significance and value of this partnership cannot be overstated. By combining our resources, connections to partners and local communities, and the massive church infrastructure, we have the opportunity to change lives more efficiently than ever before.

Consider, also, the work being done with the church in South America. Not only are we partnering in that division to respond to specific COVID-19-related needs across nations, we are also developing a groundbreaking approach to address psychosocial needs throughout the entire division. By working with the church's information technology infrastructure, together we are developing a cellphone application

for psychosocial response. This creative approach is allowing ADRA and the Church to use technology to bring us together and strengthen us.

Still in the development stages, this app will connect thousands of trained Adventist volunteers with potentially millions of people in need of support. By using features popularized by apps like Uber and Grubhub, this app will provide users with access to resources, guidance, or just a listening ear—depending on their needs. This app further demonstrates the impact ADRA and the Church can make when united as two bodies working as one.

The same is true in Africa. Across the three church divisions in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has nearly 300 urban and rural health facilities that provide essential health services in poorly serviced areas at a nominal fee. Because of our reputation as a faith group that provides health care, some communities and governments (including those in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana) have come to the Adventist Church for help.

Because the health facilities do not have sufficient medical supplies to meet the current and projected needs, however, ADRA has been focusing the COVID-19 response on health-related interventions and has largely partnered with the Adventist Church. Because of this, critical health messages have been disseminated through countless channels and shipments of personal protective equipment supplies have been delivered to ten large hospitals



In Finland, ADRA partnered with local food banks.

and health centers across Africa.

“Every Child. Everywhere. In School.”

Consider, too, the work of ADRA and the Church to address the economic and academic casualties of the pandemic. Before the virus, 262 million children were out of school. We do not yet know what those numbers will be in the coming school years, but recent UN reports suggest the data will be dire.

Now more than ever, our “Every Child. Everywhere. In School.” campaign—a global initiative spearheaded jointly by ADRA and the Church—is critical. This campaign has gathered more than one million signatures from more than 100 countries around the world, with the sole purpose of advocating for the rights of out-of-school children to have access to education.

One day the virus will be defeated, but the damage could last generations. By partnering with the Church, ADRA

will continue to fight for the rights of children. This starts with advocating on their behalf, but includes our multi-country school feeding initiative, a program in southern Africa that feeds thousands of children every day. It also includes working with the church to bolster schools, and improve access to food security, livelihoods training, and economic stability.

This is what happens when ADRA and the Church come together. More people receive care. More people renew hope. More people discover God.

HOPE FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

There are countless examples of how ADRA and the Church have come together to make the world a better place. There are even more examples of how we plan to maintain that partnership for the future. A massive community feeding initiative in Africa supplied by Adventist community gardens and driven by over 10,000 women's and youth ministry leaders that have already been trained by ADRA. Total Member Involvement continuing to engage with ADRA and their community across the globe. Psychosocial care reaching millions in South America. The list goes on, and with it, the number of people who learn that Adventism is not only a set of beliefs, but

also a set of actions.

When COVID-19 tore across the globe, I began to wonder if our existing structure at ADRA could withstand the unpredictability. My concerns were short lived. When God is in the structure, nothing can prevail against it. And when ADRA and the Church come together, there is no longer reason to doubt the strength and impact of our mission.

One of my favorite passages from Ellen White comes again from *The Ministry of Healing*, the source that has fueled much of my thoughts and, indeed, much of the history of ADRA and the Church:

“There is need of coming close to the people by personal effort... The poor are to be relieved, the sick cared for, the sorrowing and the bereaved comforted, the ignorant instructed, the inexperienced counseled. We are to weep with those that weep and rejoice with those that rejoice. Accompanied by the power of persuasion, the power of prayer, the power of the love of God, this work will not, cannot, be without fruit” (p. 143).

That power of the love of God is our structure, and that structure is the antidote to all unpredictability. If ADRA and the Seventh-day Adventist Church continue in our partnership, our work will not, *cannot*, be without fruit.



ADRA works during COVID pandemic in Uganda.



While the global pandemic has altered how we live our lives in many ways, it's still important to do all we can to stay healthy. One very important component of health is keeping fit. Numerous scientific studies have shown the many benefits to mind, body, and soul that exercise brings, and in spite of the pandemic there are still numerous ways to exercise. Here are some everyday habits that can help lead to better fitness.*



1 SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT.

To encourage regular exercise, make a non-negotiable time for exercise in your calendar. Often, early mornings provide the least interrupted time.



5 RECORD YOUR WORKOUTS.

Logging your exercise is key to being able to see progress, showing where you started from and what you are able to achieve. It also helps you to challenge yourself as your fitness improves.



9 MAKE IT FUN.

Choose an exercise that you *enjoy* doing. The key to staying active for life is to find activities you enjoy that allow you to move your body every day.



2 EAT BREAKFAST.

Eating a well-balanced, healthy breakfast every day can help fuel your mind and body and keep you energized all day. It also reduces cravings for high-calorie food.



6 TRY SOMETHING NEW.

Humans are creatures of habit, and it's easy to get stuck. Trying something new or different can provide new motivation and helps give overused muscles a rest while building up new muscle groups. It's always good to check with your doctor first before trying an activity you've not done before.



10 TAKE A BREAK.

Don't feel guilty about resting from your exercise routine—especially on Sabbath. The body needs rest from a daily workout, giving time to allow bones, muscles, tendons and tissues time to rebuild and reboot.



3 SET (AND CELEBRATE) GOALS.

Having a goal, such as a minimum of 10,000 steps per day, or running a set distance, or losing a certain number of pounds or kilos, etc. can provide the motivation needed to get up and move! Once you achieve your goal, make time to celebrate your accomplishment, and then set your sights on a new goal.



7 NEVER MISS A MONDAY.

Of course, there are always exceptions, but many fit people make sure to start their work week by exercising, as it sets the tone for the rest of the week.



4 FIND A CHEERLEADER.

During the pandemic, it may not be possible to exercise in groups, but let someone—your spouse, a friend—in on your exercise plans so they can help cheer you on to your goals!



8 GET ENOUGH SLEEP.

Sleep is crucial recovery tool for anyone striving to be fit. Active adults can benefit the most from a consistent sleep schedule that allows 7-9 hours of rest each night.



*These tips and more can be found at [Active.com](https://www.active.com).

COVID-19 Financial Impact Report Summary:

How the coronavirus is affecting operations at the world headquarters

During the GC Executive Committee meeting held July 9, 2020 via Zoom, Juan Prestol-Puesán, GC Chief Financial Officer, reported how the financial impact of COVID-19 is affecting financial operations at the General Conference. Following the presentation, the executive committee voted to receive the report and affirmed the direction outlined in the report. Following is a summary of the report given by Juan Prestol-Puesán.

BACKGROUND

In view of the fact that we adopted the current budget for fiscal year 2020 in October 2019, we invoke the following provisions found in the *GC Working Policy* to address the adjustments and changes currently needed.¹

In addition to the approval of the budget for 2020, the Annual Council 2019 voted a Tithe Parity program affecting percentages of tithe between the GC and the North American Division, and the GC and the overseas divisions for the years 2021-2030. When budgets are adopted, administration, and treasury in particular, are responsible for its careful implementation and for guiding it to its successful end.

In view of the disruption of income, disruption of operations, economic slowdown, and the ensuing worldwide impact, the General Conference faced a threefold challenge, namely due to:

1. the normal and expected challenges of implementing a budget;
2. the tithe parity income reduction;
3. the financial constraints and limitations brought by the pandemic.

STEPS IMPLEMENTED

In the year 2020, the GC itself is expecting a negative financial impact to tithe and mission offerings of approximately 26 million dollars². In view of this, the following steps for implementation have been adopted:

1. Suspend allocations to selected functions due to lack of income
2. Institute budget reductions in departments and programs
3. Reduce, (RIF), reallocate, and redirect personnel as needed
4. Adjust remuneration, area travel, travel budgets, and other pertinent areas
5. Plan further reductions as needed
6. Redirect the application of funding from existing allocations to other areas of need as the circumstances require it.

BUDGETARY APPROACH

It is also the intention of GC Administration to give its best effort to implement the following budgetary approach for 2021:

1. Maintain the same level of appropriation to divisions and institutions
2. Continue as voted the implementation of the Tithe Parity program voted at Annual Council 2019 beginning January 1, 2021.
3. Apply reserves identified to ensure the Tithe Parity program to the implementation of items 1 and 2 above, in order to seek the presentation of a balanced budget for 2021.
4. Reassess the financial situation after fiscal year 2020 income has been recorded. This reassessment will provide needed data covering the 12 months of income for 2020.
5. Maintain communication with the entire world field through the division treasurers and division officers as to the progress of the strategy.

It was further noted that the current financial impact could affect the number of General Conference personnel recommended to be elected at the General Conference Session in 2021.

¹Applicable provisions are found in 1) Constitution & Bylaws. Article VI, Sec. 1, c (Chief Financial Officer expected to provide financial leadership); GC Working Policies S 09, sections 10,15, 20 (Operating Deficits); S 24, sec. 15, 3,4 (Liquidity and Allocations); S 38, sections 10,15, 20 (Budget preparation, approval, and implementation).

²A document estimating the impact is available from the Office of the Treasurer of the General Conference.



G. Alexander Bryant Voted NAD President

On July 9, 2020, the GC Executive Committee met virtually to receive the name of G. Alexander Bryant, the recommendation for division president, from the North American Division's (NAD) nominating committee and executive committee. Bryant was confirmed in a vote of 153 to 5.

Ted N.C. Wilson, General Conference president who chaired the NAD nominating and executive committees held on July 6 and July 7, said, "I'm looking forward to a renewed focus on the three angels' messages and I believe that Elder Bryant can help lead in that great adventure, because that is what is entrusted to each of us. [He] is a mission-focused individual. He is someone who is a careful listener to people. He will take [these cares] to the Lord and ask for guidance. ... I believe that God can use him in a very, very special way."

"I am first indebted to God for His call to ministry and secondly to those who have poured into my life over the years," said Bryant in response to the vote. "I am deeply humbled by the confidence Elder Wilson, our chair, and the NAD and GC executive committees have placed in me with this assignment. This task is too big for one individual or office. It is abundantly clear to me that it takes all of us working together to advance God's kingdom and I just deeply covet your prayers."

Glenward Alexander ("Alex") Bryant most recently served as executive secretary of the NAD

and associate secretary of the GC, positions he's held since October 2008 when elected at the GC Annual Council in Manila, Philippines. Bryant was reelected at the 2010 GC Session. Before coming to the division, Bryant served as the president of the Central States Conference in Kansas City, Kansas.

Bryant graduated with a double major in Theology and Business Administration from Oakwood College (now Oakwood University) in 1982. He began his ministry that same year in Missouri and Kansas. In 1986, Bryant was ordained, and he earned a Master of Divinity degree from Andrews University in 1988. The Central States Conference voted Bryant to serve as Youth/Pathfinders/ National Service Organization director, Temperance director, and superintendent of Education in 1990. He became president in 1997. In addition to pastoring several churches early in his career, Bryant also served as a student missionary to Japan for one year. During his college years, Bryant served as Adventist Youth director at Oakwood College and the Black Students Association of the Seminary (BSAS) president at Andrews University.

Bryant is the second African American elected to serve as NAD president. Charles E. Bradford, the division's first president, was also African American. Previous division presidents include Alfred C. McClure, Don C. Schneider, and Daniel R. Jackson.



G. Alexander Bryant

He is married to the former Desiree Wimbish, who served as associate superintendent of Education for the Potomac Conference, superintendent of Education for Central States Conference, as well as former principal of the V. Lindsay Seventh-day Adventist School in Kansas City, Kansas. Desiree currently serves as assistant director and projects coordinator for Adventist Education in the NAD. The Bryants have three adult children and three grandchildren.

Adapted from an article by Kimberly Luste Maran, published by the North American Division on July 9, 2020.

New GRI Director and GCAS Associate Director Voted

During the GC Executive Committee held via Zoom on July 9, 2020, Ronnie Nalin was appointed as the new director of the Geoscience Research Institute (GRI), and Boris Cardenas was elected as associate director for workflow and innovation of the General Conference Auditing Service (GCAS).

Nalin will replace James Gibson, who recently retired after more than three decades leading GRI. Cardenas has been tapped for a role that has been retitled Workflow and Innovation, according to GCAS director Paul Douglas.

New GRI Director

A native of Italy, Nalin earned a Master of Science degree and a doctorate in Earth Sciences at the University of Padova, Italy. Since 2007, he has served at the GRI first as an assistant researcher geologist and, since 2014, as an associate researcher. In 2018, Nalin was appointed the GRI deputy director.



Ronnie Nalin

Nalin has also served as an adjunct assistant professor at the Department of Earth and Biological Sciences at Loma Linda University in California.

For 15 years, Nalin has been a guest speaker and field trip leader on several continents, especially at events designed to provide continuing education and training to Adventist science teachers and professors. A scientific researcher, Nalin has published dozens of articles in peer-reviewed journals on sedimentary geology.

Nalin is a member of several professional associations, including the Geological Society of America and the International Society of Sedimentologists.

New Associate Director at GCAS

Cardenas, a native of Colombia, brings to his new position more than 20 years of experience in auditing, financial, and management accounting. He is a Certified Public Accountant with expertise gained from working at the accounting firms of Deloitte and Arthur Andersen. He has also been a lecturer at Colombia Adventist University in Medellin, Colombia.



Boris Cardenas

For the past 13 years, Cardenas has served with GCAS and brings to his professional responsibilities a range of competencies that include a high level of analytical and problem-solving skills, bilingualism, and an appreciation for working in cross-cultural environments.

In his new position, Cardenas will manage a global workflow process directly with regional managers and in coordination with area associates. He is expected to coordinate on resource planning and management of the auditing services provided. Cardenas is also expected to provide in-depth investigations of identified problems and propose innovative solutions for consideration.

—Adapted from Adventist Review online, July 10, 2020.

Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists Released Online

Did you know that the first woman authorized to practice medicine in Mexico was a Seventh-day Adventist? Dr. Lillis Wood Starr served as a missionary to Mexico.

Did you know that one of the first Seventh-day Adventist missionaries to Papua New Guinea was Fijian, Peni Tavodi? He died while serving there, after a fatal snake bite.

Or did you know that it took the first Adventist missionaries to the far west of China up to *sixty days* of travel each way?

These stories and thousands more are found in the Seventh-day Adventist Church's first online reference work, the *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists* (*ESDA*) which launched on July 1.

WHAT IS ESDA?

The *Encyclopedia* is the fruit of a five-year project of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It launches with 2,100 articles and 3,200 photos, most of them never published before. *ESDA* Online is a free resource that will be regularly revised: at least another 6,000 articles will be added, along with many more photographs, plus video, audio recordings, and original documents. In addition, existing articles can be corrected and augmented. While a version will eventually appear in print, the *ESDA* Online will be both more flexible and accurate than any printed work could be—and also easily available to anyone with a cell phone.

WHY ESDA?

The old *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* was published in 1966; the second revised edition appeared in 1996. The worldwide Adventist Church has experienced dramatic shifts in that time, not least in global membership.

In 2014, the executive officers of the General Conference asked the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research (ASTR), to produce a replacement for the venerable *SDA Encyclopedia*. Dr. David Trim, ASTR director, came up with a plan for a truly global and



online encyclopedia, which the world Church funded. Because it was to be an entirely new work rather than a revised edition, it was given a new title: the *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*.

It has been prepared by hundreds of researchers and authors and dozens of editors from around the world, writing on the institutions, organizations, and first church members and church leaders of their own nations and people groups. All articles have been peer reviewed.

Trim has overseen the *Encyclopedia* as Editor, while the role of Managing Editor was filled by Dr. Benjamin Baker initially, and, since 2018, by Dr. Dragoslava Santrac.

ESDA GOALS

- Supply reliable and authoritative information on Adventist history, crucial events and themes, organizations, entities, institutions, and people
- Strengthen Adventist identity in a fast-growing worldwide movement, heightening awareness of distinctive doctrinal and prophetic beliefs
- Provide a reference work for those new to Adventist faith, mature in the faith, and not of Adventist faith, to learn about all aspects of Adventism
- Bring out the role of denominational organization in fulfilling the church's mission
- Highlight the missional challenges still remaining in order to "reach the world"
- Reflect the nature of the world church today, both in subject matter and in those who write and edit the encyclopedia

THE FUTURE

According to Trim, although *ESDA* Online launches with more than 2,000 articles, there are more than twice as many articles that still need to be written. World Church funding will continue for another two years. Trim also states that many of those who've written articles to date found the experience faith affirming, even transforming. He appeals to Adventist scholars of all disciplines, and to any church member who is passionate about Adventist heritage, to contact the *Encyclopedia* office (encyclopedia@gc.adventist.org) if they'd be willing to write or peer review articles.



By Design Biology: The science of life from a biblical worldview

Anyone enthusiastic about high school students being thoroughly educated in biology from a biblical perspective can celebrate the publication of *By Design Biology: The Scientific Study of Life*. This new textbook for secondary school biology classes will be a powerful tool in the hands of teachers and an eye-opening revelation of God’s amazing creation for students. The team of Christian authors and editors who poured immeasurable effort into this new resource was led by Dr. Timothy Standish, senior research scientist at the Geoscience Research Institute (GRI). The executive editor was Dr. Larry Blackmer, who recently retired as North American Division Vice President for Education, who, like Standish, is a trained biologist.

Some may fear that a textbook written with a biblical worldview will ignore the materialistic theory of evolution that students are required to understand in university. “Skipping over evolution—which is pushed with ever more enthusiasm in secular textbooks—is common in both

private and public schools,” notes Dr. Standish. “Our objective has not been to disregard evolution, but to ensure that students educated using *By Design Biology* will have a better understanding of evolution than their peers. Teaching students what the theory of evolution is and showing how it is used to explain natural phenomena, empowers them to see why it fails as a theory explaining life. But showing a theory’s inadequacies is only part of what is needed, students should also understand that there is a better and more satisfying understanding of nature that liberates them to see all the beauty and wonder that God put there and equipped us to discover! This book strives to share that emancipating view.”

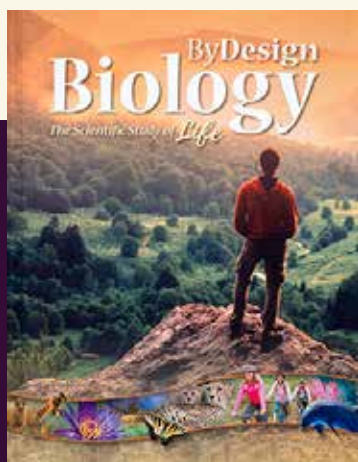
The publisher, Kendal Hunt Publishing Company, worked diligently with the authors and editors to ensure that *By Design Biology* meets the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). These educational standards have been widely criticized for their rigidly materialistic focus at the expense of the diverse worldviews found among high school students. But the NGSS are being adopted by most

states; students who do not meet them will be at a significant disadvantage. “At the end of the day,” says Dr. Standish, “the NGSS actually helped us as we sought to give students the clearest possible understanding of evolutionary theory. Our aim is not to indoctrinate students with a one-sided presentation of information that only favors our view, it is to provide students with a clear and informed choice between a materialistic and a theistic view of life.”

Schools interested in improving their biology curriculum by adopting *By Design Biology*, parents interested in supplementing their children’s secular education in biology using this book and anyone who desires a deeper understanding of biology for themselves can get more information about *By Design Biology* from this Kendall Hunt website:

<https://rpd.kendallhunt.com/program/bydesign-biology>

Additional information can be found at: <https://rpd.kendallhunt.com/blog>
<https://science.adventisteducation.org/textbooks/biology/>



ADVENTISTS IN THE FIRST CHRISTIAN NATION

BY RICKY OLIVERAS, ADVENTIST MISSION

M eet Vigen, a Global Mission pioneer serving in Armenia.

Although Armenia was the first nation to adopt Christianity as its official religion, Adventists have been praying for opportunities to share a *unique* message with the people living in its capital city, Yerevan.

“Our main goal is to spread the Three Angels’ Messages in this area,” Vigen says. “To serve people through health ministry.”

After working in this neighborhood for two-and-a-half years, Vigen started a small group of believers. This group is excited to share the Adventist message, and they have found that health ministry is the best way to connect with the community.

Over the past year, they’ve put on small health expos featuring lifestyle seminars such as the “Breathing Free” program for people who smoke. Healthy cooking classes are a favorite among community members. They love learning new recipes and tasting the food in a social setting.

Some of the members started a colporteur ministry, knocking on people’s doors and offering them an opportunity to buy Adventist literature. As their group became known in the neighborhood, they decided to hold a series of Bible meetings in their small rented space.

They mailed and passed out dozens of invitations to these upcoming meetings, but just before the day of the event, they were kicked out of the building. It’s very difficult and expensive to rent space in this part of the city, so the members did the only thing they could: they prayed.

“After a few days of prayer, we found a building on the same street, only two doors down from our former building!” Vigen says. “It was an incredible miracle from God.”

Taking this as a sign from God, the meetings went on as planned. One woman in the community who received an invitation from a friend was Karine. She was willing to try anything to fill a feeling of emptiness she couldn’t explain.

This story was originally published in [Mission 360](#), March, 2020.



“I met Vigen about two years ago,” she says. “When I heard him speaking, it touched my heart. I began to understand the Bible, and that empty space inside me was filled.”

Karine was baptized and is now a very active member of the Adventist church.

“I became like a new person,” she says. “I’m more faithful to God now. Wherever I go, I feel a peace and comfort that wasn’t there before.”

Mission work in cities like Yerevan can be extremely difficult. Church planting can seem like an impossible task at times, but through prayer and God’s power, new groups of believers can start. Global Mission pioneers like Vigen have found that by using Christ’s method of ministry, they can break through barriers that they couldn’t otherwise.

“We want to show people that we love them, that we’re interested in them and are prepared to help them solve their everyday problems,” Vigen says. “I think the gospel is the answer to many problems that people have.”



Clockwise: Karine attended Bible meetings and gave her heart to Jesus; Church members demonstrate how to create healthy meals; Participants enjoy their meal.



WORLD HEADQUARTERS BUILDING RE-OPENS

After a mandatory 17-week closure due to the Coronavirus, the world headquarters building re-opened to staff on Monday, July 13, 2020. The re-opening followed strict government guidelines, including a thorough and continuous cleaning of the facility, and a staggered approach to building occupancy, beginning with a limit of 25 percent of the workforce present simultaneously. To facilitate this, employees are on rotation teams—some coming in Mondays and Wednesdays, others on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The re-opening included several new protocols:

- Mandatory masks in common areas and when engaging with others
- Temperature scanning every morning
- Health questionnaire to be completed by every employee
- Laptops cleaned upon returning
- Touchless time clocks
- Common areas of the building and doorknobs, cleaned 3 times a day
- Restrooms transferred to paper towels to avoid blowing germs around
- Offices cleaned daily
- Stairwells designated up or down to avoid contact on the stairs
- Visitors only with appointment and subject to temperature scanning
- Plexiglass installed in areas with frequent people contact
- Conference rooms restricted to a maximum number of participants as listed in each room
- Zoom meetings preferred over gatherings
- No food service
- No potlucks in departments
- No company travel permitted
- Personal travel subject to potential 14-day quarantine upon return



MISSION CONTINUES DURING CORONAVIRUS

Although the Coronavirus has disrupted life in many ways, the Church's ministry and mission are moving forward in exciting and innovative ways. During a GC town hall meeting held via Zoom on July 20, 2020, a special video report was shown, highlighting how world Divisions are working to keep churches active, encouraging members to help carry forward our God-given mission. This inspiring report was produced by the GC Communication Department and [can be downloaded here](#).

