



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

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2022

Mission featured

prominently at this year's Annual Council. The LEAD Conference's "Mission Refocus," challenged us to refocus on reaching some of the most difficult areas of the world, while the Back to the Altar initiative reminded us that before we can reach others, we must first reach our own homes. Each morning we were blessed by powerful testimonies from young people. On Sabbath afternoon we partnered with local church members to distribute more than 9,500 copies of the life-changing book, *The Great Controversy*.

Comprehensive Health Ministry plays an integral part in mission, and we were poignantly reminded of how that mission is being carried forward through the *Angelina* clinic in Ukraine and by others worldwide.

A new collaborative leadership program was unveiled, and a series of practical orientations were presented for the benefit of the more than 100 new members of the GC Executive Committee.

We hope this issue of the ECN will serve not only as a reminder of this year's Annual Council but as a helpful resource with its many links, summaries, and more.

May the Lord bless as we move forward together in saying "I Will Go" reach the world for Him!

TED N.C. WILSON
PRESIDENT
GENERAL CONFERENCE



EDITORIAL



BACK TO THE ALTAR AN INSIDE-OUT REVOLUTION*

BY DWAIN N. ESMOND, PH.D. (CAND.)
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, ELLEN G. WHITE ESTATE

Editor's Note: At the 2022 Annual Council, the GC Executive Committee voted the "Back to the Altar" initiative (see sidebar). While the article below was originally written for pastors, we believe it has a broader application for all church leaders, including GC Executive Committee members. Wording has been slightly adapted to fit all leaders.

According to research by the Christian publisher Lifeway, the average American home contains more than three Bibles. Fifty-two percent of Americans think the Bible is an excellent source of moral teaching, 35 percent say it is life-changing, and 36 percent believe it to be true. That said, Lifeway reported that "more than half of Americans have

read little or none of the Bible," and less "than a quarter of those who have ever read a Bible have a systematic plan for reading the Christian scriptures each day." Why don't more Americans read it? The excuses ranged from "I don't prioritize it" (27 percent) to "I have read enough of it" (13 percent).

These data would, no doubt,

vary by country should similar studies be undertaken, but one thing is sure: Bible reading is a fairly good predictor of devotional life. The 2018 Global Church Member Survey of Seventh-day Adventists reported that only 48 percent of Adventists read their Bibles daily. The study also found that while 65 percent have daily prayer, only 36 percent of Adventist members study the Sabbath School lesson daily. Those results may be best explained by two other critical findings from the survey: only 52 percent of Adventists engage in personal devotions, and only 37 percent of Adventist families have morning or evening worship.

Whether or not we choose to accept it, the data suggests that a large percentage of Seventh-day Adventist members lack a consistent personal devotional experience with God. The broken worship altar in the Adventist Church represents the single greatest threat to Seventh-day Adventist life and purpose, and every leader should be alarmed. People who lack a consistent devotional walk with God cannot know Him, love Him, or effectively share Him with others. Godless living is a tree filled with the poisonous fruits of selfishness, pride, idolatry, and countless other harbingers of spiritual death.

WE KNOW THE SIGNS

As leaders, we see it every time a call for evangelism is met with yawns, an outreach initiative fizzles due to lack of involvement, or an invitation to koinonia falls prey to a more stimulating digital endeavor. We know when members have been with God and when they have not. We also know when we have been at our altars and when we have not. There is a marked lack of peace, power, and purpose in our ministry as we try to manufacture what God wants to manifest in and through us.

The restoration of personal and family worship among Seventh-day Adventists is the most pressing need of our time, but doing so will require much prayer and effort from pastors and other leaders.

Today, we face the challenge of technologies that, while providing some efficiencies, increasingly occupy our time while altering our minds. Digital addictions have left many of us anxious, irritable, lonely, stressed, depressed, sleepless, and unhappy with life. Ironically, personal and family worship practices calm our minds, decrease loneliness, reduce stress, increase peace, fulfill our emotional needs, and teach us contentment.

How important is this endeavor? Ellen White gives us a clue: “God should be the highest object of our thoughts. Meditating upon him [God], and pleading with him, elevates the soul and quickens the affections. A neglect of meditation and prayer will surely result in a declension in religious interests.” Are we not witnessing signs of that neglect in God’s church?

JESUS HAD AN ALTAR

Time spent with God was Jesus’ secret to wise decision-

“

Time spent
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making and life-
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LDS MEDIA/DEL PARSONS

STARTING AN INSIDE-OUT REVOLUTION

making and life-transforming power. In Luke 16:12, 13, before choosing the 12 disciples, Jesus spent all night at the altar of prayer with His Father. Ellen White writes, “His spirit was often sorrowful as he felt the powers of the darkness of this world, and he left the busy city and the noisy throng, to seek a retired place to make his intercessions.” She later adds, “His example is left for his followers.”

Jesus knew that His followers would need a thriving altar to endure life on Earth. He prayed “ ‘that [we] may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent’ ” (John 17:3, NKJV). His disciples’ knowing God and knowing Him were the twin desires of His heart, which was not lost on the disciples or those who later followed Him. The redeemed apostle Paul so craved this knowledge that he wrote, “What things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ” (Phil.

3:7, 8, NKJV). This is the core competency of the Christian life—knowing and possessing God!

A CAUSE EVERY LEADER SHOULD EMBRACE

Pastoral ministry [and other leadership positions] today has been impacted by many changes in our world. Many of us were dragged, kicking and screaming, into the digital age as the COVID-19 pandemic closed our houses of worship. We developed new ways of reaching hearts and touching lives, but this has not been easy! Several studies have found that while religious participation tends to benefit health and wellness, this is not always true for religious professionals. Stress and burnout among clergy members have led to severe mental distress, anxiety, and depression. Because of this, I hesitate to add anything else to our already full plate of responsibilities, but we must add one more thing: rebuilding the worship altar among Adventist individuals and families.

This year the Seventh-day Adventist Church launched the Back to the Altar initiative, a movement to encourage

A 2018 worldwide survey of Seventh-day Adventists found that only 34 percent of Adventist homes are engaging in regular morning and evening worship, and only 52 percent of church members have any personal devotions at all. Can a church with an end-time message centered in worship—the Three Angels’ Messages of Revelation 14:6-12—deliver such a solemn message if its members are not faithfully engaged in personal and family worship? Can we proclaim effectively what many do not practice daily?

In order to address these issues, the GC Executive Committee voted on Tuesday, October 11, “To approve the creation and implementation of the Back to the Altar initiative to encourage the daily, habitual practice of morning and evening worship in the lives of Seventh-day Adventist individuals and families for personal revival, reformation, and outreach. Back to the Altar seeks to safeguard the spiritual lives of members and others from the negative effects of digital media by promoting good digital hygiene and sharing healthy ways to use media for fellowship and evangelism.”

To read a detailed description of this exciting initiative, including the need and rationale for the initiative, the biblical foundation, how it fits in with our Fundamental Beliefs and *I Will Go* KPIs, initiative goals and more, click [here](#).

To watch the Back to the Altar video presentation from Annual Council 2022, click [here](#).

For full PowerPoint presentation, click [here](#).

daily personal and family worship in the life of every Seventh-day Adventist. By 2027, we hope to see at least 70 percent of Adventist members engaged in daily morning and evening worship.

As pastors and other leaders, we set the “spiritual diet” of the church. What we emphasize gets priority, and what we fail to emphasize dies. Here are the most critical things that all leaders can do to help members rebuild their broken worship altars:

1 Start with your own worship altar. Amid your many responsibilities, are you leading your family to the worship altar, or have you outsourced that responsibility to someone else in the family? Ellen White comments, “Nothing can excuse the minister for neglecting the inner circle for the larger circle outside. The spiritual welfare of his family

comes first.” We must lead by example.

2 Share your walk with God often. One of the best ways to strengthen members’ devotional altars is to share what God is doing with you at yours. Communion with God is so effectual that “men will take knowledge of us, as of the first disciples, that we have been with Jesus. This will impart to the worker a power that nothing else can give.” Show members the joy that you find in worshipping God, and they will crave their own experience with God!

3 Encourage healthy digital mental hygiene. This may seem like an odd inclusion on this list, but it is crucial to rebuilding our altars. Studies show that digital media occupies ever-increasing amounts of our time, and

constant digital connection leaves us emotionally spent, anxious, stressed, and burdened. A critical part of rebuilding our altars is making space for God. Private piety is the stage for personal revival and reformation. It is also the fuel for outreach with real-world impact—the Isaiah 58 call to do righteousness and justice in the world. Pastors (and other leaders) must teach—or bring in resource persons who can teach—healthy digital culture for individuals and families to safeguard the spiritual lives and witness of members.

4 Pray, pray, pray. Pray for the personal spiritual lives of your members. A church tasked with proclaiming the worship-centered messages of Revelation 14’s first, second, and third angels cannot do so while its members are not worshipping. We cannot do publicly

what we are not doing privately. Ask God to rebuild the worship altars in your home and church, and He will.

“This article first appeared under the title “Back to the Altar: A Cause for Every Pastor” in the December 2022 issue of *Ministry*,® International Journal for Pastors, www.MinistryMagazine.org. Used by permission.



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ANNUAL COUNCIL 2022

Annual Council 2022 opened on Thursday morning, October 6, with a strong emphasis on mission, featuring a LEAD Conference encouraging a “Mission Refocus” to reach the entire world—including the most challenging places—with the Three Angels’ Messages.

LEAD CONFERENCE: MISSION REFOCUS



Rick McEdward, president of the Middle East and North Africa Union (MENA), pleaded with leaders to “focus our mission where the mission is not yet.”

Consultant and writer, Jamie Eckert, highlighted the importance of customizing evangelistic efforts to reach people of different cultures and beliefs and including the full Adventist message.



Yure Gramacho, Tokyo Mission Unusual (MUT) Director leads a multicultural team of five missionary families. His wife, Lais, is a Global Mission Pioneer for MUT. Their children, Kauai, 9, and Kael, 5, support their parents in mission!



Kim Sunhwan, Adventist Mission Director for the Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD), spoke of the challenges of reaching a population where (excepting Korea) 97 percent have no Christian background.



Erton Köhler, GC Executive Secretary, called attendees to invest in the people of an unreached country through prayer, action, or finances, and invited all to come forward and take one or more flags representing an unreached country.



Dr. Neil Nedley, along with other GC Executive Committee members and attendees, choose flags of unreached countries.

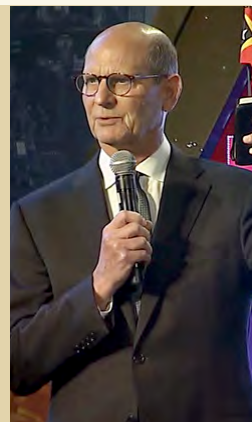
(PC: Enno Muller/AME (CC BY 4.0))



Division and GC attached union presidents stand on platform holding their chosen flags of unreached countries.

(PC: Enno Muller/AME (CC BY 4.0))

Ted Wilson, GC President, holds the flag of Timor-Leste, a country he was soon to visit. “Know that God is going to carry this work forward, but He will work through all of us,” he said. “It’s only going to be through the power of the Holy Spirit and the Latter Rain.”



LEAD CONFERENCE: COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH (ANGELIA CLINIC)

THE LOVE OF CHRIST IN ACTION



Angelia Team 

“How can this generation be reached with the gospel? How can the messages of the three angels be relevant to a post-modern generation that has little confidence in Scripture?” asked Pastor Mark Finley during his presentation on Friday, October 7. Despite our differences, he said, all humans have a common need. “Deep within the fabric of our being, there is a desire to live life to the fullest, to be whole physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. What is comprehensive health ministry? It is really the love of Christ in action.”

Nowhere has this love been more evident than through the staff of the Adventist medical clinic, *Angelia*, in Kyiv, Ukraine, who continue to provide desperately needed services under the most challenging circumstances.

Recognizing the need for physical food, the clinic freely provides freshly baked bread, clean drinking water, and other staples to the population. Clinic CEO, Yury Bondarenko, holds some bread, available at no cost.



The *Angelia* Clinic in Kyiv offers medical and dental services from a whole-person perspective. They have continued to serve during the incredible challenges of the last several months.



Some of the staff who are still serving, and others who have lost their lives in the recent conflict.



Medical staff regularly pray together as they seek to serve under the most trying circumstances.

LEAD CONFERENCE: COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH (ANGELIA CLINIC)

ANGELINA CLINIC

Clinic staff travel in specially equipped medical vans throughout Ukraine, saving the lives of those who would otherwise not receive desperately needed medical care.



The *Angelina* Clinic plays a vital role in providing very difficult to obtain medications to those in need.

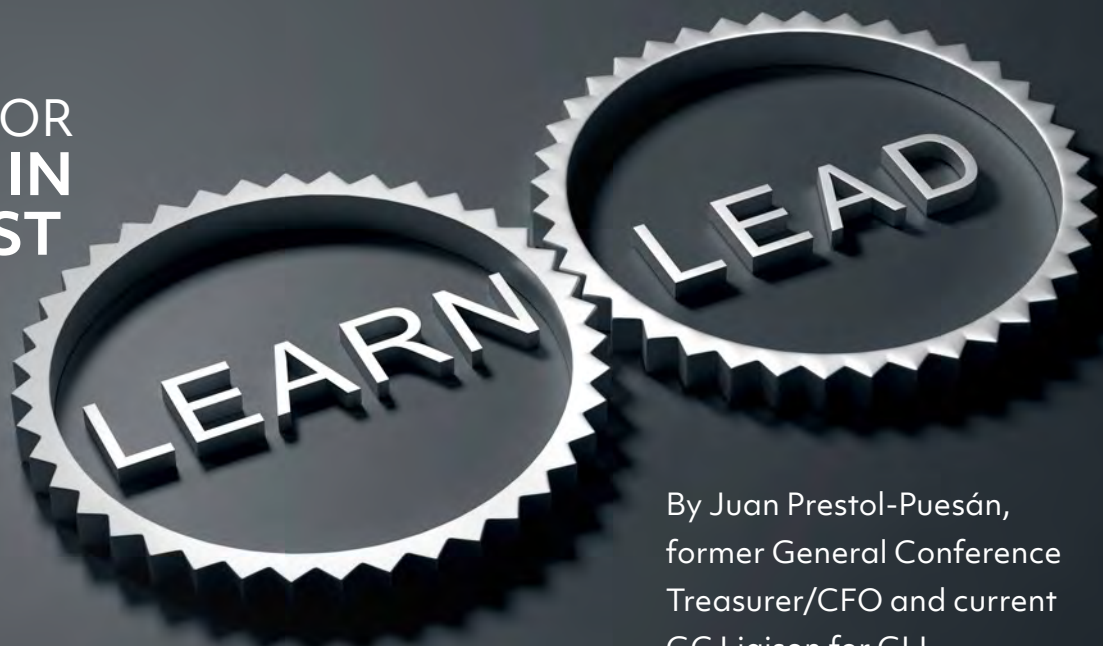
During this time, the *Angelina* dental clinic is the only provider of dental services in Kyiv.



The clinic sends vans into the surrounding regions, providing food staples and clean water to those not able to travel into Kyiv.

THE CASE FOR **GROWTH IN ADVENTIST LEADERS**

A New
Leadership
Development
Initiative



By Juan Prestol-Puesán,
former General Conference
Treasurer/CFO and current
GC Liaison for GLI

Editor's Note: During the Leadership, Education, and Development (LEAD) Conference GC Executive Committee members were introduced to the GC Leadership Development Program and its partnership with the Global Leadership Institute (GLI) of Andrews University. In the following article, Juan Prestol-Puesán explains the need for Adventist leadership training and its relation to mission.

Leaders are essential to communities and acknowledging that it is also a great need in the Adventist church should not be surprising. As the General Conference embraces a new leadership development initiative a few thoughts may help us to clarify the scope and importance to mission and organizational life of this new program and how important is faith to those entrusted to lead.

THE NEED FOR FAITH

Leadership education is popular everywhere, and it is so in the Adventist church. From its beginning, the contribution of leaders to Adventism has been uniquely valuable. Early in the life of the church many Adventist leaders developed themselves without much formal schooling, and they led while living under limitations, persecution, and hardship. We owe a debt of gratitude to

them for their courage, their example, and their guidance. They embodied excellence to many of us. However, the reality of today is that many church entities, departments, and institutions are actively involved in developing qualified people for positions of leadership.

What is the purpose of the General Conference in entering the leadership “Adventist market” and seeking worldwide participation in a leadership development effort? What is the importance for mission that leaders understand better their commitment to grow? How do we know that this new emphasis follows the correct orientation? These questions need our attention.

A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

To be a leader in the Adventist denominational structure is a privilege offered to those believers who responds to His calling and decide

to make a service contribution to mission. Seventh-day Adventist leaders stand to benefit much when they understand the denomination and when they understand their own personal educational and spiritual journey. Leadership, as expressed by J. Robert Clinton, is “a dynamic process in which a man or a woman with God-given capacity influence a specific group of God’s people toward His purposes for the group.”¹

The biblical record consistently presents the leader as one who is divinely called and empowered for a task.² Once they have responded affirmatively, they embark on a spiritual journey as they grow in the knowledge of God, His purposes, and His mission.³

Adventist leaders are involved in a spiritual journey. The new initiative of the General Conference seeks to reclaim participants from the negative effects of loneliness,



doubt, discouragement, demotivation, perplexity, dissatisfaction, frustration, “quiet-quitting,”⁴ burnout, and lack of commitment. Also, issues such as mediocrity, inefficiency, systemic failures, lack of cooperation, lack of innovation, dissent, passive opposition can be fertile ground for a mindset of defeat and can be seen and addressed.

These and other afflictions weigh heavily and take a toll on those entrusted to lead. They need to grow in the application of the best work methods and by reconnecting with Christ as the source of spiritual power. Ellen G. White wrote “Education, culture, the exercise of the will, human effort, all have their proper sphere, but they cannot change the heart; they cannot purify the springs of life. There must be a power working from within, a new life from above, before men can be changed from sin to holiness. That power is Christ.”⁵

Adventist Leaders in Search of Balance

In his work entitled “Embracing Religions in Moral Theories of

Leadership,” Ali Aslan Gümüşay⁶ stated that the Abrahamic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—acknowledge three elements that can significantly impact leadership principles and practices: 1) a belief in the existence of and a relationship to a God; 2) the faith in and pursuit of a hereafter purpose; and 3) the belief in and attempted adherence to a sacred scripture.

A true Adventist leader is Christ centered (a relationship with God); is a believer in God’s plan of salvation as outlined in the controversy between good and evil (faith and pursuit of God’s guidance and purpose); and becomes adhered to the truth, as it is revealed in the Word of God (relies on the sacred scripture) placing him/herself in the best position to reach his/her fullest potential.

These three elements help bring religion, faith, values, beliefs, and commitment together in ways not found in secular positive, moral, and ethical leadership theories because, as Gümüşay affirms, “for some

believers, their religion is conceived as an “ultimate concern”⁷.

In simple words, Gümüşay is saying in his paper that moral theories of leadership⁸ (Authentic, Ethical, Servant, and Spiritual) are not sufficient in and of themselves to provide the guidance religious leaders desire and require to develop. It means that faith is clearly essential for an Adventist leader to be able to connect the wisdom and knowledge of theories with the commitment to his/her faith.

Indeed, a leader benefits from the wisdom and knowledge that theories provide, but there is a need to balance theoretical knowledge and faith, helping prevent leaders from becoming religious fanatics, or cold and disengaged practitioners. Such a balance between faith and theory is essential for balanced growth in service, as neither should exclude the other.⁹

PERSONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL GROWTH

Adventist leaders function

best when they understand their calling, when they live and function within a truth framework, and when they balance their commitment to service with a clear understanding of values such as trust, honesty, integrity, and transparency. Distinctive qualities and virtues such as these will help leaders move mission forward.

The purpose of the leadership development program is to provide leaders opportunity to reflect, learn from their successes and failures, and bring their work in line with Jesus, His mission, His message, and His calling. The leadership development program seeks to offer them the space to reflect, reconnect, and recommit.

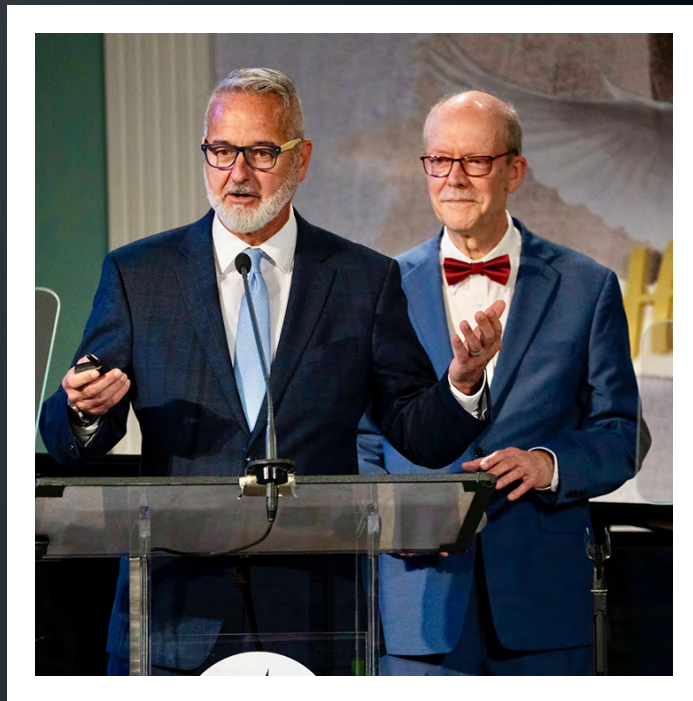
Ellen G. White was on point when she wrote “When the mind of man is brought into communion with the mind of God, the finite with the Infinite, the effect on body and mind and soul is beyond estimate. In such communion is found the highest education. It is God’s own method of development.”¹⁰

A NEW COLLABORATIVE ARRANGEMENT FOR MISSION

This initiative is the result of a joint effort of the General Conference and Andrews University’s Global Leadership Institute (GLI). A new collaborative arrangement created to help many continue their journey better equipped with renewed inspiration, clearer vision, and a new sense of urgency.

In 2016 the process began with conversations and dreams of doing something on leadership growth and innovation. It received a new impulse in Cape Town, South Africa in February 2020 at the Global Leadership Conference, and found a fertile ground and a clearer focus through pilot programs conducted in Europe and the South Pacific between the years 2020 and 2022.

In its present form the program may complement existing leadership development efforts and initiatives of divisions that have them already in place, but also it may serve as a valuable primary source for other territories that offer more modest and limited leadership development options to their personnel. Your prayers are solicited on behalf of this initiative. May the energy and the resources invested be a timely blessing to many in their journey of service.



Randy Siebold (left) and Erich Baumgartner, representing the Andrews University side of the GLI partnership.

For more on GLI and to watch the leadership presentations from Annual Council, visit andrews.edu/gli/.

¹ Robert J. Clinton, *The Making of a Leader*, (Colorado Springs, CO: NAV Press, 1988), p.44.

² Genesis 12:1-9; Exodus 3:1-15; Joshua 3:7; 4:14; 1 Samuel 1:18; 16:10-13; Jer. 1:1-4; Acts 6:1-4; 1:21-26; 9:1-9.

³ A.W. Tozer, as quoted by Charles Swindoll in his book on Moses expressed “A true and safe leader is likely to be one who has no desire to lead but is forced into a position of leadership by the inward pressure of the Holy Spirit and the press of the external situation.” Charles R. Swindoll, *Moses*, (Nashville, TN: Word Pub. 1999).

⁴ In recent media presentations the concept named “quiet-quitting” has been presented as a reaction of employees to the demands of the job environment. “In a nutshell, “quiet-quitting” is about rejecting the notion that work has to take over one’s life and that employees should go above and beyond what their job descriptions entail. This can take many forms – including turning down projects based on interest, refusing to answer work messages outside of working hours or simply feeling less invested in the role.” <https://www.linkedin.com/news/story/what-is-quiet-quitting-4887785/>.

⁵ Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn, 1908), p. 18.

⁶ Ali Aslan Gümüşay, “Embracing religions in moral theories of leadership,” *Academy of Management Perspectives*; <https://journals.aom.org/doi/10.5465/amp.2017.0130>. Dr.Gümüşay is a Lecturer at the University of Hamburg, Germany and at Vienna University of Economics and Business, Vienna, Austria.

⁷ *Ibid.* p.3

⁸ Moral theories of leadership incorporate a concern for others, altruism, ethics, integrity, transparency, and role modeling.

⁹ In writing to a Brother Hull Ellen White expressed “Your success as a minister depends upon your keeping your own heart. You will receive more strength by spending one hour each day in meditation, and mourning over your failings and heart-corruptions, and pleading for God’s pardoning love, and the assurance of sins forgiven, than you would by spending many hours and days in studying the most able authors, and making yourself acquainted with every objection to our faith, and the most powerful evidence in favor of our faith.” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, January 19, 1864, cited in *Pastoral Ministry*, p. 25.

¹⁰ White, *Acts of the Apostles*, (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn, 2015), p. 129.

LEAD CONFERENCE: COMMUNION SERVICE

REFOCUSING ON GOD'S MISSION

For the first time, a large scale communion service was held at the Seventh-day Adventist world headquarters on Friday evening, October 7. More than 340 members of the GC Executive Committee, including some spouses, participated in the special service in small groups scattered throughout the multi-storied building in Silver Spring, Maryland. Hosted by the Institute of World Mission, the service included an opportunity for each participant to sign a card inviting them to refocus on sharing God's message throughout the world. At the end of the special evening, participants gathered in the atrium for a final moment of reflection, singing, and prayer led by GC president Ted N.C. Wilson.



Pako Mokgwane, GC Youth Ministries Assoc. Director, serves Jim Howard, Director of GC Sabbath School and Personal Ministries. PC: Sherrie Wendt

Communion Service program

Two of the many small communion services taking place throughout the GC Building on Friday evening. PC: Enno Müller/AME (CC BY 4.0)



Executive Committee members pray together during the foot washing service. PC: Sherrie Wendt

Gathering in the atrium with Ted N.C. Wilson, GC President, the service ended with participants singing "We Have This Hope" in their language of choice. PC: Enno Müller/AME (CC BY 4.0)



EMBRACING GOD'S MISSION OF RESTORATION: A Call to Every Leader and Member*

By Marcos Paseggi, Adventist Review Ministries

As the world and society disintegrate, the church is also impacted. In the midst of this, God calls us to engage in ministry to restore His image in people, Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, said. Wilson's assertion was the focus of his pastoral address during the 2022 Annual Council on October 8, at the church's headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland.

During his Sabbath worship service message, Wilson called every Adventist leader and member to avoid distractions and focus on proclaiming the three angels' messages, biblical messages that call people to return to the worship of the true God. "Avoid picky, unproductive debates and contention. Focus on the Lord and His wonderful biblical truth in all its glory," Wilson said.

A COMPREHENSIVE MINISTRY

As Seventh-day Adventists consider how to live just before Christ's return and what role to play, Wilson discussed the significance of the Bible teaching in Isaiah 58. It is a chapter, he said, that "gives us a bold key to unlock our role and ministry at the end of time."

Wilson explained that God calls each one of us to "sound the alarm" by embracing a comprehensive ministry that caters to the physical and spiritual needs of people within the church and beyond. It is a ministry that, according to Ellen G. White, "will bring life into the churches."

WHAT THE MINISTRY ENTAILS

According to God's message through the prophet Isaiah, Wilson explained, the ministry counteracts our natural selfishness and calls us to open up to meet other people's needs. "God is saying, 'Don't be self-absorbed, self-centered, or self-focused,'" Wilson said. "Take care of those around you who are in need. Help people who are chained to horrible habits. Bring relief to those who are weighed down with burdens. Help those who are enslaved to become free through Christ's power. Remove the hurtful circumstances that keep people from their full potential. You have food; share it. You have a roof over your head; share it. You have clothing; share it. Stop pretending to know [God]; really show it by doing something for your fellow human beings."

In doing so, Wilson said, we will be following Christ's comprehensive ministry, which "involved teaching eternal



ENNO MÜLLER/AME (CC BY 4.0)

truths and putting them into practical application, lifting people from degradation to see what He ultimately wanted for them: eternal life."

SHOWING GOD'S LOVE

It is not about preaching a social gospel but applying the three angels' messages of Revelation 14, which are "a practical call to restoring the image of God in human beings through the Holy Spirit's power," Wilson said. "The practical application of those profound prophetic messages is seen in the tangible things He does through us in fulfilling Christ's ministry. People are longing to see the love of God shown in practical ways in our lives ... When they see the unselfish love of God manifested in our lives as a practical testimony, they will ask why we act this way; they will be driven to the foot of the cross, to Christ's amazing grace, and to His changing power."

Wilson specifically highlighted medical missionary work, also called “comprehensive health ministry,” which entails reaching out to people in need and ultimately leading them to Christ. That practical application of Christ’s ministry is tied directly to the final proclamation of the third angel’s message, which calls believers to eschew error and embrace God’s full truth, he said.

REPAIRERS OF THE BREACH

Wilson explained that sin has made a breach in the law of God and against that background, in Isaiah 58, we are called to be “repairers of the breach.” He quoted White from her book *Welfare Ministry*, where she wrote, “With the work of advocating the commandments of God and repairing the breach that has been made in the law of God,

we are to mingle compassion for suffering humanity. . . . It is only by an unselfish interest in those in need of help that we can give a practical demonstration of the truths of the gospel” (p. 32).

Being repairers of the breach implies lifting up the Word of God to restore His law “to its rightful place and point people to the Author of the Scriptures, our God and Savior,” Wilson said. It also includes restoring the blessings of the Sabbath to its rightful place. “Rightly understood and observed, the Sabbath is the key to man’s happiness both here and in the hereafter,” Wilson read, quoting

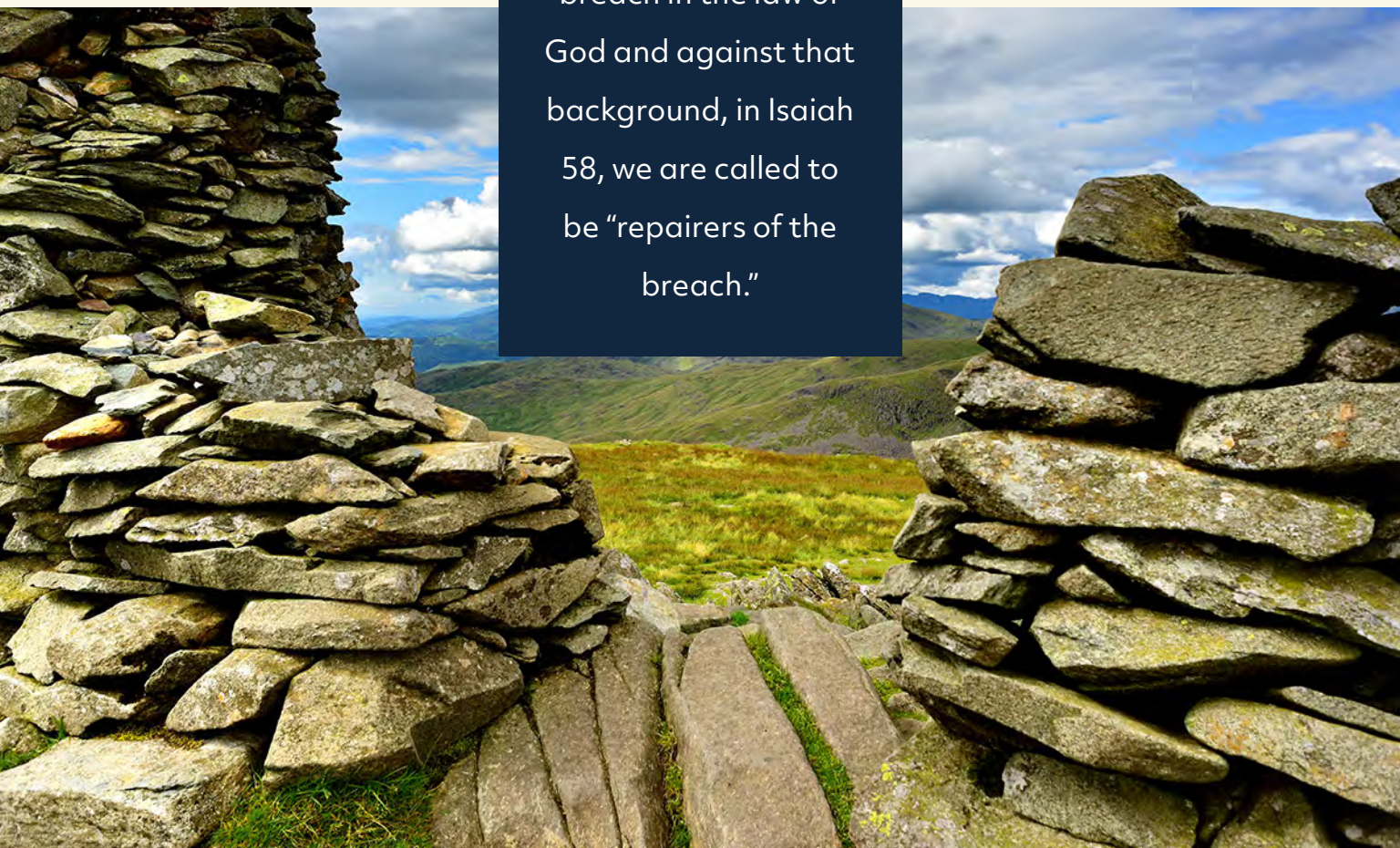
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Sin has made a breach in the law of God and against that background, in Isaiah 58, we are called to be “repairers of the breach.”

from the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*. “The Sabbath is one of the greatest blessings bestowed upon men by a loving Creator.”

In closing, Wilson called every church leader and member to embrace this mission of restoration. “As part of proclaiming the three angels’ messages, be a repairer of the breach. Do something for God as part of Total Member Involvement! We can’t help people by philosophizing on the sidelines . . . [We must] use our talents to make a spiritual and practical difference in the lives of people through the Holy Spirit’s power. Ask God to lead you to those who need help. He will do it. Be a repairer of the breach! God will cause us to walk on the high places of the earth as we follow His will.”

*The original version of this article was posted on the Adventist Review [website](#).



LEADERS AND MEMBERS PARTNER FOR MISSION ALIVE “A Refreshing, Spiritually Reviving Opportunity”

By Stephen Apola, Associate Director, GC Publishing Ministries



More than 200 GC Executive Committee members, invitees, and their spouses, attending the 2022 Annual Council joined local church members on Sabbath afternoon, October 8, to distribute copies of *The Great Controversy*.

The 223 leaders and spouses were distributed equally among 16 local English, Spanish and Portuguese churches within the conferences of Chesapeake, Potomac, and Allegheny East.

About 420 church members united with the delegates in distributing more than 9,500 books door to door.

The outreach, dubbed *Mission Alive*, brought together 14 local pastors who worked together with the GC Personal Ministries and Publishing Ministries departments to coordinate the outreach.

The purpose of the outreach was to kick off *The Great Controversy Project 2.0*, a mass door-to-door distribution of the 2023 and

2024 Missionary Book of the Year, *The Great Controversy*.

The churches also used the opportunity to send out Bible study offers and evangelistic series invitations.

Many participants stated how this outreach activity was a very refreshing and spiritually reviving opportunity. Watch their exciting testimonies in a [short video report here](#).



ANNUAL COUNCIL 2022: SABBATH LITERATURE DISTRIBUTION

SECRETARY'S REPORT UNROLLS NEW CRITERIA FOR MISSION SPENDING

Revamped model will help leaders prioritize frontline service.*

By Marcos Paseggi, Adventist Review Ministries

The General Conference (GC) Secretary's Report at the 2022 Annual Council called on leaders to support a plan to refocus the Seventh-day Adventist Church's priorities for missions worldwide. Members of the Secretariat team presented key parts of the report on October 9 at the church's headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland. Presentations covered the past—the historic mission tradition of the Adventist Church; the present—what current statistics indicate; and an emphasis on the future—how a suggested new model of using more resources for mission would work.

"The Seventh-day Adventist Church was not called to be a parking lot but a launching pad," GC

executive secretary Erton Köhler said. "We need to move forward in faith."

Köhler reminded the more than 340 delegates attending Annual Council that the Adventist Church has been called to a global mission. In 1900, 83 percent of Adventist members lived in North America, he shared. In 2022, that figure has declined to 6 percent. "We are a global church with a global mission," Köhler said. "We cannot focus only on our local needs; we need to look at our global challenges to finally preach the gospel of the kingdom to all the world." And he added, "At Secretariat, we are working focused on that commitment."

LONGSTANDING FOCUS ON THE MISSION FIELD

Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research (ASTR) director David Trim shared how in 1903 the Adventist Church "underwent a dramatic reorganization to ensure that the [church] could reach out to all the world."

The focus of General Conference leaders at that time was on "unentered territories and unreached people." It is what they called "the mission field," which was vast, Trim said, because it included "all areas outside the homelands" of North America, Central and Western Europe, and Australasia. "These home fields were expected to take the message to the mission field," he said.

Trim underlined the current need to send missionaries to frontline mission work more than to administrative positions. That need has moved Adventist leaders serving in the GC Secretariat to suggest a mission refocus model, he said.

REFOCUSING ON MISSION

The slow drift from focusing on frontline missionaries to other areas of service has motivated leaders to devise a plan to refocus on the mission of the church, GC associate secretary Karen J. Porter explained as she introduced her report. "The challenge now is . . . how to use our mission



David Trim addresses delegates as part of the Secretary's Report.

Karen Porter (left) with German Lust presenting a portion of the Secretary's Report.



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resources by identifying mission-critical people groups and locations that have not yet been reached with the gospel,” she said.

Porter explained that international service employees (ISEs)—missionaries sent by the church to serve in other regions of the world church—are serving in various capacities around the globe. Those serving in administrative positions, however, currently represent 35 percent of the total. Others serve the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) or in education, medical institutions, or auditing services. “While these categories

of assignments are good, we must put more emphasis on reaching the unreached,” Porter said.

NEW MISSION PRIORITIES

In April 2022, the GC Mission Board voted on new priorities for sending missionaries, in what Porter defined as its “new mandate.” Priorities include direct-contact mission to create new worshipping groups, urban areas of more than 1 million population, and 10/40 window countries and people groups of non-Christian religions. (The 10/40 window is a region of the world where a majority of the

world’s population lives but where Christians are in the minority.

Porter also prioritized postmodern and post-Christian regions, low Adventist-to-population ratio sectors, and high-impact equipping for direct-contact mission.

The goal is to have 35 percent of the mission and international employees’ budgets meet the criteria by 2027 and 70 percent by 2032, she reported. “We realize this is a very ambitious goal,” Porter said, “but we also realize that with all of us working together in unity, we can effect this change.” She explained, “We are not saying that the positions that do not meet the criteria are not important or are not needed: we are only saying that these criteria are our priority today.”

A NEW ASSESSMENT SCALE

It’s all about acknowledging that the Adventist Church can improve the way it uses resources for mission, Porter said. But at the same time, the shift will be accomplished carefully and methodically, not randomly. For instance, GC Secretariat has created a scale to evaluate primary budgets by asking seven key strategic questions that reflect the priorities voted by the Mission Board. Porter explained that each question had been assigned a range of points, and each budget was analyzed based on how closely the position focused on the priorities. “Three hundred and twenty-seven individual budgets have been put through this matrix,” Porter reported

The questions include: How focused is the position on direct-contact mission with the goal of creating new worshipping groups? And, How focused is the position on training local people for direct-contact mission?

Porter reported that among

the budgets the Secretariat team analyzed, only one reached the ideal 31 points. The funding in question has been assigned to a church planter who serves in a 10/40 window country, in a city of more than 1 million, and in direct-contact ministry. Those resources are also used at a local level (non-administrative), and the ratio of Adventists to the population is high (i.e., few members, as compared to the overall population).

HOW TO MOVE FORWARD

Porter reported that next, the Mission Board is planning to review the budgets of international missionaries with divisions and

institutions and that divisions and institutions will work on a plan to reassign budgets to mission priority areas. The Mission Board will also determine the mission-matrix threshold (i.e., the minimum number of points required in each specific case). “It will be somewhere between 15 and 20 [out of 31] points,” Porter said.

She also shared that some projects already meet the new criteria, such as Mission Unusual Tokyo, Hope for Kolkata, and a special project in an unidentified country that restricts mission activity. She encouraged leaders to use Adventist Mission data to identify strategic mission opportunities. Those data can

inform Global Mission leaders and other decision-makers to align their projects with these new criteria, she said. “As we refocus our mission resources, I challenge you to think about what sacrifices you are willing to make so that those who haven’t heard about Jesus . . . can also hear this message,” Porter said.

Köhler summed up the component pieces reported by the Secretariat team. “Our main challenge is to keep focused on what our real priority is,” he said. “It’s time to work together . . . to refocus on our mission.”

Read more at: <https://adventistreview.org/news/secretarys-report-calls-leaders-to-remember-their-call/>



Pastor Erton Köhler and the rest of the Secretariat team presented an extensive report at the 2022 Annual Council.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Investing in Mission*

By Marcos Paseggi, Adventist Review Ministries

“There is an old adage that says, ‘Put your money where your mouth is,’” GC Treasurer, Paul Douglas, told GC Executive Committee members during his Treasury presentation on October 10. “I would like to translate that adage to us today by saying, ‘We need to put our money where the mission is.’”

Douglas defined three elements that inform the church’s mission strategy: Intelligence, Integration, and Investment.

“Intelligence is knowing where to go, where those who are still unreached are, and where are the opportunities so we can broadcast them and find the people who can fit these opportunities,” he said.

The church also needs integration, because everyone needs to be working together with just one cause, just one purpose, Douglas said. “We also need investment of our financial and human resources to be aligned intentionally to the mission strategy,” he said.

Douglas explained that the mission strategy should have an expected outcome. “We need to reflect whether we had or not the right intelligence. Do we have the right balance of integration? Do we have the right balance of investment to ensure that there is an effective outcome in our strategy?” he asked.

HIGHLIGHTING MISSION

Douglas then shared five elements that can inform this shift toward dedicating more funds to frontline mission.

First, he said, it is important to prepare financial reporting to highlight mission. The current financial reporting usually highlights appropriations, funding for international employees (missionaries), the GC Auditing Services (GCAS), GC Administered and office operations, Douglas explained.

He revealed that starting in January 2023, the new financial reporting will focus more on mission strategy and support, educational institutions, and media and publications. Besides regular office operations, it will also seek to zero in on leadership development and accountability. “We need financial reporting that focuses us on mission,” he said.

INCREASING SELF-SUPPORT

Another key element is to promote higher levels of self-support for organizations. Douglas explained that in the next few months, GC Treasury leaders will begin a study of the resources the GC distributes to the world field.

“We need to be more targeted, more strategic in our use of appropriations,” Douglas said, while explaining that there are some tough questions leaders need to ask themselves. “Are we supporting the administration of a division or are we supporting the mission activities in the territory?” he asked. “We will need to adjust how we look at



appropriations and shift to support the strategic decisions related to the use of our resources.”

Douglas said leaders believe that promoting higher levels of self-support will enable a greater focus on mission, because entities will be able to live within their means, and the resources they receive can be focused on a particular area.

MISSION, NOT MACHINERY

The idea, Douglas said, is to learn ways of positioning resources toward mission and not machinery or administrative expenses. He explained that an analysis of the current use of budgets for mission shows that out of 31 possible points, the average score worldwide is 8.1, something that highlights the church’s mission drift and the need to refocus mission resources.

If leaders want to increase the allocation of funds to mission, it is essential to change the criteria used. Among other things, Douglas reaffirmed the mission refocus

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criteria adopted by the Church for implementing direct contact mission with the goal of creating new worshiping groups. Leaders will also focus on 10/40 Window countries, people groups of non-Christian religions, and urban areas with populations above one million people. He also mentioned postmodern and post-Christian countries or regions; low Adventist-to-population ratios in countries, regions, or people groups; and high impact equipping for direct contact mission. “The key question we need to ask ourselves is, ‘How do we move our resources from the machinery to the mission?’” he said.

MISSION OPPORTUNITIES ARE KEY

Douglas also said it is essential to provide information about mission opportunities. “We need to identify these opportunities. . . broadcast these opportunities. . . count the cost of these opportunities; we need to give people the opportunity to own these opportunities,” Douglas said. “But how can they own these opportunities if

they have no information?”

He explained that in the 1930s, at the height of mission giving, 60 cents of every dollar was allocated for world missions. Today, that number is 3.5 cents. “Just imagine what we could have done if we had sustained that level of giving!” Douglas said.

Together with Adventist Church cofounder Ellen G. White, Douglas said he believes that “the more we support mission outside of our local area, the more prosperous will be our mission” in the local places we serve.

A Renewed Emphasis on Frontline Mission

As a last element, Douglas shared how in 2021, the GC received a large contribution from a member’s estate. “When we received these funds, we could have easily taken it to try [to] balance the budget,” he said. “But the General Conference administration decided that instead of doing so, maybe it’s time to exemplify putting the money where the mission is. So, we decided that, instead of taking it into the budget, to assign and make these

funds available for local churches to get involved in ‘I Will Go’ initiatives.”

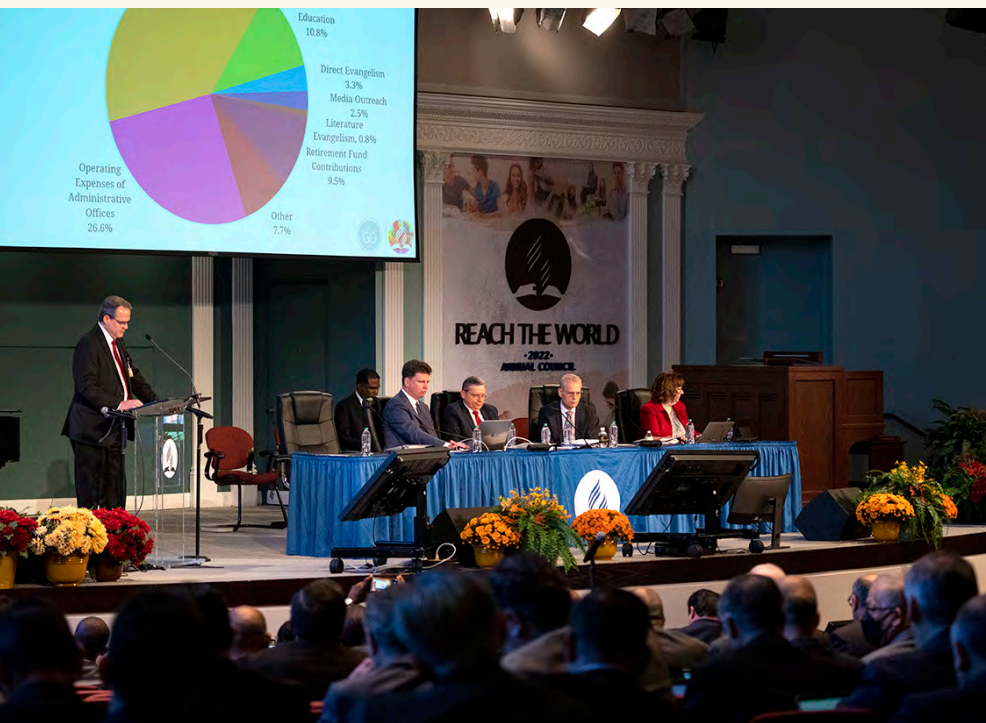
Douglas explained the purpose of the shift was to inspire local churches to engage in reaching their communities, to invest in the frontline mission of the local church, and to impact the world for Christ, one community at the time. He shared that so far, 19 projects have been approved for 2023 in the amount of US\$1,642,940.

Projects include inviting the neighborhood to a block party with blood pressure, cooking, farmer’s market, mental health and dental services in Denver, Colorado. Also, open and develop a welcome center, social and evangelism place in Geneva, Switzerland; and build a youth center in Lomé, Togo. The funds will be also used for a potato growing ministry for a food pantry, public school meals, and education in Moab, Utah; provide Bibles to two tribes in Harer, Ethiopia; and build a Day Care and Play center to adequately prepare children ages 2-5 for Primary School in Musuing, Zimbabwe.

Douglas quoted Ellen G. White, who in the May 5, 1904, issue of the *Review and Herald*, wrote, “Our church-members should feel a deep interest in home and foreign missions. Great blessing will come to them as they make self-sacrificing efforts to plant the standard of truth in new territory. The money invested in this work will bring rich returns. New converts, rejoicing in the light received from the Word, will in their turn give of their means to carry the light to others.”

Douglas said he couldn’t agree more. Referencing Matthew 24:14, he said, “When we marshal all of our financial and human resources to preach the gospel, the end will come.”

“The original version of this article appeared on the *Adventist Review* website.



LONGTIME BIBLE SCHOLAR HONORED

Research Library Dedicated

A newly revamped reference and research library named in honor of Dr. Gerhard Pfandl, longtime associate director of the church's Biblical Research Institute (BRI), was dedicated on October 10 during Annual Council.

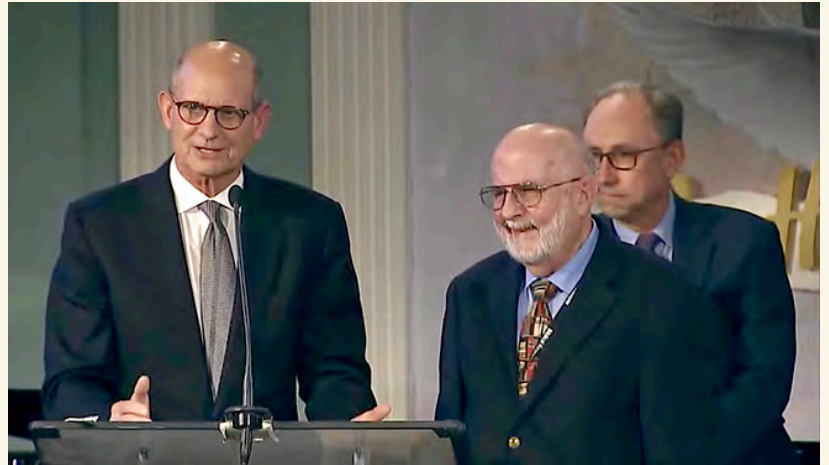
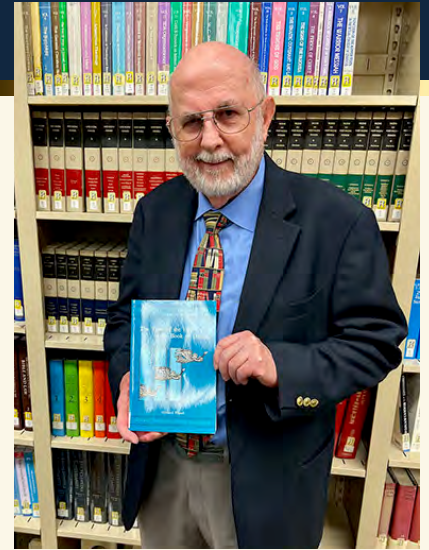
One important aspect of the work of BRI is to publish resources that answer questions on important topics relevant to the Church. The library is an indispensable tool for the BRI scholars who use it regularly in their research and writing.

When Pfandl came to the BRI in 1999, the library contained 2,000 to 3,000 books. Since then, he has been very active in expanding the library into a collection that now contains more than 10,000 volumes.

"The books in the BRI library are the toolbox for the scholar," said Pfandl. "Just as the plumber needs his tools to do a job, the scholar needs books to do their job—writing articles for church papers, books for the church, and at the moment we are producing quite a number of books. So, it's important that we have a good library for the scholars to use, so they can do their job," he said.

Pfandl was completely surprised when it was announced that the library would be named in his honor—the "Gerhard Pfandl Library." Watch the video of the [announcement and Pfandl's response here](#).

To read more about the library and BRI [click here](#). To watch a video report about the library, [click here](#).



BRI scholars with Dr. Gerhard Pfandl

POSITIONS AND APPOINTMENTS VOTED AT THE 2022 ANNUAL COUNCIL

Upon recommendation of the Nominating Committee, the GC Executive Committee voted to fill the following positions on October 9, 2022. In addition, numerous committee memberships were filled. For a complete listing, GC Executive Committee members may consult AC 2022 Minutes.

FIELD SECRETARIES

Elias Brasil de Souza
Merlin D Burt
Michael Kruger
Duane McKey
Derek J Morris
Ronald Nalin
Magdiel E Perez Schulz
James S Winegardner

EURO-ASIA DIVISION

President: Mikhail F. Kaminskiy
Secretary: Ivan I. Velgosha
Treasurer: Vladimir I. Tkachuk

BIBLICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Director: Elias Brasil de Souza
Assoc. Director: Daniel K. Bediako
Assoc. Director: Frank M. Hasel
Assoc. Director: Alberto R. Timm
Assoc. Director: Clinton L. Wahlen

GEOSCIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Director: Ronald Nalin
Research Scientist: Benjamin L.L. Clausen
Research Scientist: Raul Esperante
Research Scientist: Timothy G. Standish

OFFICE OF ARCHIVES, STATISTICS, AND RESEARCH

Director: David Trim

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Editor: David Trim

PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Associate Director: William M Knott
(Effective January 1, 2023)

ADVENTIST REVIEW/ADVENTIST WORLD

Editor: Justin Kim
(Effective January 1, 2023)

DIALOGUE

Editor-in-Chief: Lisa M. Beardsley-Hardy
Editor: John M. Fowler
Editor: Hudson E. Kubuuka

ELDER'S DIGEST

Editor: Anthony R. Kent

JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION

Editor: Faith-Ann McGarrell
Assoc. Editor: Julian Melgosa

MINISTRY MAGAZINE

Editor: Pavel Goia
Assoc. Editor: Jeffrey O. Brown

SABBATH SCHOOL BIBLE STUDY GUIDES

Adult, Editor: Clifford R. Goldstein
Adult, Assoc. Editor: Soraya L. Homayouni
InVerse, Editor: Joseph Reeves
Junior/Earliten/Youth, Editor:
Rosanne Peach
Children's, Editor: Nina Atcheson

GC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER ORIENTATION

IMPORTANT ITEMS PRESENTED

During the 2022 Annual Council a series of four short orientation sessions were provided by the GC Secretariat and Office of General Council for the benefit of the GC Executive Committee members.

1. Election Buddy.

In the first session, Hensley Mooroooven, GC undersecretary, led out in a presentation regarding the reliability of the Election Buddy (EB) software used for voting by all GC Executive Committee members, along with a tutorial for those who may be using the system for the first time. Assisting him with the presentation were Josue Pierre, an attorney who currently serves as a GC associate treasurer; Dan Herzel, and auditor serving as an associate director of the General Conference Auditing Service (GCAS); and Kenrie Hylton, an IT Specialist serving as an associate director for IT Development.

During the presentation, Pierre assured members that EB was “a stable, secure platform. We know it has built-in security features to ensure that no one can tamper with your vote,” he said. “Your vote remains anonymous and cannot be linked to any specific voter.”

Herzel explained that EB is auditable, allowing auditors to check that only eligible voters are casting votes. “We know *who* has voted, but *not how* they voted,” he said.

Hylton provided very practical advice to members, referring them to two helpful resources for voting:

1) the GC voting website: **Vote.gc.adventist.org**

Here members will find technical assistance, tutorials for using EB (in 5 languages), and a helpful FAQ section.

2) GC voting email: **Vote@gc.adventist.org**

Members may send inquiries to this email if they need technical help in casting their vote(s).

View the [full presentation here](#), beginning at timestamp 37:17.

2. Working Policy.

Karnik Doukmetzian, General Counsel for the General Conference and North American Division, explained the importance of the *General Conference Working Policy* (GCWP). “The *General Conference Working Policy* is the collection of the Church’s global leadership decisions regarding how entities live and work together,” he said. As examples, he cited:

“B 15 05 Authoritative Administrative Voice of the Church—The General Conference *Working Policy* contains the Constitution and Bylaws of the General Conference, the Mission Statement and the accumulated or revised policies adopted by General Conference Sessions and Annual Councils of the General Conference Executive Committee. It is, therefore, the authoritative voice of the Church in all matters pertaining to the mission and to the administration of the work of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination in all parts of the world.” (emphasis his).

“B 15 10 Adherence to Policy Required—1.The General Conference *Working Policy* shall be strictly adhered to by all organizations in every part of the world field. The work in every organization shall be administered in full harmony with the policies of the General Conference and of the divisions respectively. No departure from these policies shall be made without prior approval from the General Conference Executive Committee ...” (emphasis his).

In addition, Doukmetzian explained the difference between the **bold** and regular print within the model bylaws and constitution: “Those sections of the model bylaws that appear in bold print are **essential to the unity of the Church** worldwide and **shall be included** in the bylaws as adopted by each union conference. Other sections of the model bylaws may be modified as set out in Bylaw Article XII, provided they continue to be in full harmony with the provisions of this model,” he read from the *Working Policy* D 10 05 (emphasis his).

Watch the [full presentation here](#). Download [presentation slides here](#).

3. Conflict of Interest

In this third orientation session, Karnik Doukmetzian focused on GCWP E85 05, “Conflict of Interest And/Or Commitment.” Quoting the GCWP Definition of “Conflict of Interest,” and “Conflict of Commitment” he read:

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“**Conflict of interest** shall mean any circumstance under which an employee or volunteer by virtue of financial or other personal interest, present or potential, directly or indirectly, may be influenced or appear to be influenced by any motive or desire for personal advantage, tangible or intangible, other than the success and well-being of the denomination.”

“**A conflict of commitment** shall mean any situation which interferes with an employee’s ability to carry out his/her duties effectively. Elected, appointed, or salaried employees on full-time assignment are compensated for full-time employment; therefore, outside or dual employment or other activity, whether compensated or not, that in any way interferes with the performance of an employee’s duties and responsibilities is a conflict of commitment.”

Doukmetzian outlined the four-step process, titled “The 4 Ds,” of managing a conflict of interest: Define, Disclose, Determine, and Document.

He also provided two points of “Actionable Advice”:

- Conflict of interest should be a regular item on every board agenda and periodically discussed by the whole board/committee.
- Be proactive in requiring every employee of our organization to complete and submit a Conflict of Interest and/or Commitment form on an annual basis.

Watch the [full presentation here](#); download [presentation slides here](#).

4. Important Resources and Tools for GC Executive Committee Members

The goal of the final orientation session, presented by Hensley Mooroooven, GC Undersecretary, and Tami Boward, Policy and Projects Manager for GC Secretariat, was to “Acquaint committee members with the tools available for accessing relevant and useful information regarding the meetings of the General Conference Executive Committee.” Pointing out the importance of this information, Mooroooven said, “These are very useful tools and resources that will help you fulfill your fiduciary duties as a member of the Executive Committee.”

The presentation centered on two items of importance:

1. GC Executive Committee email address: GCExecCom@gc.adventist.org

It is from this address that all communication with GC Executive Committee members is sent. This includes, but is not limited to:

- * Letters of Invitation
- * Agenda items
- * *The Executive Committee Newsletter*

All Executive Committee members should ensure this email address is whitelisted in their email software so they will receive importance correspondence related to the GC Executive Committee.

2. GC Executive Committee website: executivecommittee.adventist.org

The GC Executive Committee website contains a wealth of information and shareable resources. “We want to equip you as you go to your division, to your union, [as to] where to find the information,” Mooroooven said.

Watch the [full presentation here](#).

The website will be discussed in further detail on the following page of the *GC Executive Committee Newsletter*.

GC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WEBSITE: An Essential Source

executivecommittee.adventist.org

Seventh-day Adventist Church

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Registration Newsletter Watch Live

The General Conference Executive Committee

The General Conference Executive Committee is the second highest governing body of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, after General Conference Session. In between Sessions, the Executive Committee has the power to appoint committees; elect and/or remove officers, directors and associate directors of departments/associations/services; and effect the retirement of an elected or appointment position.

2022 Annual Council Presentations

Video and presentations from the 2022 Annual Council.

OTHER LINKS

- [Schedule of Meetings](#)
- [I Will Go: 2020-2025 Strategic Plan](#)
- [Meeting Archives](#)
- [Executive Committee Portal](#)
- [My Meetings](#)
- [General Conference Session](#)

The General Conference Executive Committee website is an essential tool for GC Executive Committee members and everyone interested in the activities of the GC Executive Committee. The website provides a wealth of information and resources including:

- [Schedule of Upcoming Meetings](#)
- [Registration link](#)
- [Agendas and Daily Schedules](#)
- [Livestream link](#). Available to share with others.
- [2022 Annual Council Presentations](#), including video and downloadable PowerPoint slides, arranged chronologically
- [2022 LEAD Conference Presentations](#), including video and downloadable PowerPoint slides

- [Meeting Archives](#)
Full videos of all meetings are available at the bottom of the page.
- The [GC Executive Committee Newsletter](#)
- Link to the [Executive Committee Portal](#), giving access to Annual Council minutes, information regarding travel, hotels, food service, insurance, mail and packages, per diem and reimbursement, visa information, translation services, spouse program, and more.

■ Other helpful links to: the [I Will Go Strategic Plan](#); [GC Session](#), the [Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual](#); the official [Seventh-day Adventist Church website](#), and more.

While space does not permit us to report on all of the excellent presentations and reports given during the **2022 Annual Council**, we encourage you to visit the GC Executive Committee website where you will find all of the presentations and reports from this past Annual Council, including links to the slide presentations and handouts, as well as the full videos of each morning and afternoon session.



THE BACK PAGE

Directions: For more information on an item, click on the corresponding number on the map.

1 An archaeology team of students and employees from Southern Adventist University in **Collegedale, Tennessee**, and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem uncovered a hair comb with linguistic significance. Discovered at Tel Lachish in Israel during a 2016 excavation, the comb features the first known, complete, alphabetic sentence ever discovered. The discovery of writing on the comb was only made in 2022, as Dr. Madeleine Mumcuoglu was photographing the object under certain light. The inscription was deciphered by semitic epigraphist Dr. Daniel Vainstub at Ben Gurion University. The findings by the joint expedition between the Hebrew University and Southern Adventist University were published in the *Jerusalem Journal of Archaeology*.

2 The Sanatorio Adventista del Plata (SAP) and the Universidad

Adventista del Plata (UAP), in **Libertador San Martin, Entre Rios, Argentina**, organized the second national and fourth Latin American edition of the Congress of Lifestyle Medicine, which took place on November 2–4. The congress was attended by 200 health professionals, representing 23 countries. The meeting was endorsed by the Argentine Society of Lifestyle Medicine (SAMEV), and the Latin American Society of Lifestyle Medicine. Lifestyle medicine is a growing trend in South America.

3 After severe floods near **Bodgon, Bulgaria** which placed at least one village completely underwater, knocking out bridges and infrastructure, and damaging or destroying more than 200 homes, ADRA Bulgaria responded. ADRA staff have been cleaning the homes of those affected and providing them with essential items, food, and support. ADRA Serbia is assisting with

the efforts.

4 A 100-year-old woman named Mrs. Makoa gave her life to Jesus and was baptized on October 8, 2022 on the island nation of **Madagascar**. This centenarian and great-grandmother, from the rural community of Ampahana, Antalaha, was practicing witchcraft before her conversion and was greatly feared by the community. Passionate about evangelism, her granddaughter Soatiana studied the Bible studies with her grandmother who surrendered her life to Jesus.

5 The Livingston Seventh-day Adventist Church in **Canning Vale, Western Australia**, has found a unique way to connect with their community. This year the church hosted its sixth Bible in Bloom flower festival with the theme, “Messages of Hope.” A total of 19 arrangements were on display,

each depicting an encouraging message of hope on which the viewer could reflect. Visitors were given the opportunity to show their appreciation for Bible in Bloom by donating to a charity. This year’s beneficiary was the Light of Hope School in Cambodia, and more than AU\$2,000 was raised towards their work with underprivileged children.

6 Through the Voice of Youth EXPAND initiative, the Southern-Asia Pacific Division (SSD) Adventist Youth Ministries Department, located in **Silang, Cavite, Philippines**, equipped 1,215 Voice of Youth teams, totaling 32,326 young people, to reach out to communities for Jesus in 2022. Exponential Advancement via Nurturing and Discipleship (VOY EXPAND) has led to the baptism of 23,154 new believers from Bangladesh, Pakistan, the Philippines, Myanmar, Malaysia, and the Southeastern Union this year.