

# "WE AIM AT NOTHING LESS THAN THE WHOLE WORLD"

The Seventh-day Adventist  
Church's Missionary  
Enterprise and the General  
Conference Secretariat,  
1863-2019

By **A. L. Chism,**  
**D. J. B. Trim &**  
**M. F. Younker**



**GENERAL CONFERENCE  
ARCHIVES MONOGRAPHS**



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than the whole world”**

**General Conference Archives Monographs**

**Volume 1**



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**A. L. CHISM**

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**M. F. YOUNKER**



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# **Foreword**

by Erton C. Köhler

Someone once said that a healthy organization should grow like a moving car, the driver looking straight ahead through the windshield, without taking their eyes off what is left behind in the rearview mirror. This is the concept that David Trim, Ashlee Chism, and Michael Younker emphasize throughout this book. They present the vision and strategies of the past, but in doing so, they renew our focus in the present and envision the future completion of the mission that is in our hands. The reading touched me and I am sure it will also provoke and challenge you.

Look to the past. The structure of the primitive church and the Adventist church, as well the organization of the General Conference Secretariat, were designed to serve the mission laid out in Matthew 28 and Acts 1. We are not an organization that has a mission, but a mission that has an organization. We have to remember, always, that our calling as divinely mandated fishermen is to catch fish, not to care for aquariums.

The loss of original focus is a great risk for religious institutions. Peter Grist and Chris Horst state: “Without careful attention, faith-based organizations will inevitably drift from their founding purpose and mission.” They mention extreme examples, such as Harvard University, which began as a mission-focused organization but today is described as “godless”.<sup>1</sup> Such examples are an alert for us also.

Our focus needs to become clearer as the mission, which was once important, has now become urgent. We cannot be distracted

by secondary issues. Control over the end of the world belongs to God, but the mission to preach until the end of the world belongs to us. If that is not our priority, we will be like a firefighter who runs into a burning building just to fix the pictures to the wall.

The challenge of world mission is immense! According to data from Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, "Approximately 400,000 Christian missionaries target 2.1 billion unevangelized population, 29% of the world's population".<sup>2</sup> If we are to continue making progress, we need to invest heavily in our missionary movement, prioritize it in our agendas, facilitate our processes, and simplify the sending of new missionaries. Only then we will recapture the impact of transcultural mission and reach today's unreached communities and cultures.

Behind all the data and analytics that you will find in this book, is the reminder that we can't afford to lose time. We need to become bolder and more direct to reach the "multitudes in the valley of decision" (Joel 3:14), because "Every day the probation of some is closing. Every hour is passing beyond the reach of mercy. And where are the voices of warning and entreaty to bid the sinner flee from this fearful doom? Where are the hands stretched out to draw him back from death? Where are those who with humility and persevering faith are leading with God for him?"<sup>3</sup>

May the Holy Spirit use your reading of this book to awaken a renewed sense of mission that is capable of reaching sincere hearts where they are, across the street or across the world.

Erton C. Köhler  
General Conference Secretary

## Notes to Foreword

<sup>1</sup> Peter Grist and Chris Horst, *Mission Drift* (Bloomington, Minn.: Bethany House, 2014), 16.

<sup>2</sup> Lisa Kralina, “What's Your Ministry Score? The ministry valuation playbook”, *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership*, 13:1 (Spring 2019), 30.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Washington, D.C.; RHPA, 1890), p. 140.





# Preface

by

G. T. Ng

The founding of the Seventh-day Adventist Church was based upon a prophetic understanding of Revelation 12–14 in which the gospel must be proclaimed to all “that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” (Rev. 14:6 KJV). The church was *about* mission and mission was deeply rooted in the DNA of the Church. Historically, the Adventist Church, particularly the General Conference Secretariat, was central to the mission expansion of the church with the recruiting, training, and dispatching of missionaries as its core business. Yet somewhere along the way, as mission rapidly expanded, general busy-ness and the call of the urgent trumped the important business of the church; the strategic focus on mission gradually and imperceptibly was neglected. The church became a victim of its success.

David Trim and his co-authors have done a masterful job as astute scholars, piecing the historical facts together from archives. The message of the book is clear: that no organization is exempt from mission drift, no matter how lofty its original mission may once have been. It takes constant vigilance and renewal for an organization to stay the course of mission because organizations by nature are prone to obsolescence and irrelevance. Thus, regular review and evaluation should be instituted to ascertain mission effectiveness as a church.

This book is a wake-up call: to faithfulness in mission in the face of exponential growth of membership and institutions, as well as organizational complexity. In the words of the authors of this book, “mission control” must be in place to give mission oversight and strategic focus, a thousand distractions notwithstanding. The book is also a call to Adventist Church leaders and members to engage in reflection and evaluation, and see if the church has been faithful to the purpose for which it was founded—and, if not, to heed the call to faithfulness in mission despite the tyranny of the urgent.

An African proverb says, “A goat owned by many villagers will soon die of hunger.” If every department is about mission, who is really in charge of mission? Mission is too crucial to be relegated to happenstance. It needs a “mission control.” This book is not only a call to faithfulness in mission; it is a call to administrative oversight and strategic focus in mission.

The famous Swiss theologian, Emil Brunner, wrote: “The Church exists by mission, just as a fire exists by burning.”<sup>1</sup> Under God’s guidance, the prophetic mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church will continue to move forward valiantly to the time of the end until “the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Hab. 2:14).

G. T. Ng, Ph.D.  
(Immediate past General  
Conference Secretary)

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<sup>1</sup> Emil Brunner, *The Word and the World* (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1931), 108.

## Authors' Preface & Acknowledgments

This book's origins lie in a commission from Dr. G.T. Ng, executive secretary (2010–2021) of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (GC), to the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research (ASTR), to research the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's official missionary-sending program, the role of the GC Secretariat in that program, and its role in planning worldwide, cross-cultural mission more generally. Much of the material that follows was initially presented at a retreat of GC Secretariat in August 2017, involving the secretary, undersecretary, associate secretaries and assistant secretary, and the directors and associate directors of the offices and services that report to the secretary.\*

Dr. Ng, in that original assignment to ASTR, asked us to assess in particular whether the current priorities of the world Church's International Service Employee program are the same as those of the makers of the Adventist Church's missionary-sending program a century and more ago. He felt instinctively that the answer was *no*. In this book we will share with you evidence that his hunch was correct. In recent years, priorities *have* changed.

At the 2017 retreat, David Trim presented two papers; Dr. Ng and other colleagues encouraged their development into a book. It is the first book in a new series: General Conference Archives Monographs. The development process, however, took some time. The comments of colleagues, at the retreat and after, highlighted

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\* That is, Adventist Mission, Adventist Volunteer Services, Institute of World Mission, International Personnel Resources and Services, Seventh-day Adventist Membership Systems, Vivid Faith, and ASTR.

areas that needed clarification or deserved expansion; subsequent research and writing revealed some aspects that required more thorough analysis and others that had been overlooked but needed to be addressed. During the development process, Ashlee Chism and Michael Younker were added as co-authors; without their contributions, this monograph would not exist.

Each of the three authors carried out original primary-source research, but in addition we gratefully acknowledge the assistance of colleagues, as follows—in GC Secretariat, Lissy Park and Karen Porter supplied statistics of interdivisional/international service employees; in ASTR, Benjamin Baker and Patricia Brauer assisted with archival research, Muriel Bello compiled most of the statistics on which we rely heavily, while Roy Kline took on some of David Trim's administrative load to facilitate writing. We are very much obliged to each of them.

We are grateful to colleagues who attended the retreat in 2017 and who by their criticisms and praise, their comments and insights, shared at the time and subsequently, helped to shape the development of the original papers into this book. We offer our appreciation to Cheryl Doss, Karen Glassford, Sherri Ingram-Hudgins, Myron Iseminger, Gary Krause, Rowena Moore, Hensley Mooroooven, Oscar Osindo, Karen Porter, Gerson Santos, Claude Richli, John Thomas, Homer Trecartin, and Ray Wahlen; and to Wendy Trim, who was not at the retreat, but read and commented on drafts of several parts of this book.

The authors are delighted that it includes a Preface by Dr. Ng: while he is now retired, he not only directly stimulated this book; he also, indirectly, by his leadership in Secretariat over the last eleven years, inspired it. We are also very pleased that the new GC secretary, Erton Köhler, has contributed the Foreword. Both the present secretary and his predecessor read the manuscript closely in draft; both made a number of observations that improved the end result.



Finally, we are indebted to the academic peer reviewers, Dr. Barry Oliver and Dr. Gary Krause for their role in enhancing the quality of what follows. However, the usual caveats apply: only the three authors are responsible for the final text and for the errors, oversights, or omissions that remain. Despite its imperfections, we believe that this book presents a view of Adventist history that is new and is highly relevant for the Adventist present and future.

Ashlee L. Chism  
David J. B. Trim  
Michael F. Younker



## List of Abbreviations

ADCOM	Administrative Committee
ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
AIAS	Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies
ARH	<i>Advent Review &amp; Sabbath Herald / Review &amp; Herald / Adventist Review</i>
ASR	<i>Annual Statistical Report</i>
ASTR	Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research
AVS	Adventist Volunteer Services
BL, IOR	The British Library, London: India Office Records
CAR	Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University
fld.	Folder
DB	<i>Daily Bulletin of the General Conference</i> [i.e., of the GC Session]
FMB	Foreign Mission Board (1889–1903)
GC	General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
GC Ar.	General Conference Archives
GCB	<i>General Conference Bulletin</i>
GCC	General Conference (Executive) Committee
GCC Proc.	GCC “Proceedings”: the title of GCC minutes for 114 years—GC Ar., RG 1, bound in volumes up to end of 1977, cited by volume and page, rather than box <sup>1</sup>
GCC Minutes	Title of minutes from 1978 onwards: GC Ar., RG 1, cited by annualized page numbers only, rather than box/folder <sup>2</sup>
GCOM	GC Officers’ Meeting Minutes (GC Ar., RG 2)
GMIC	Global Mission Issues Committee
IDE	Interdivisional Employee
IPRS	International Personnel Resources and Services
ISE	International Service Employee

<i>JAMS</i>	<i>Journal of Adventist Mission Studies</i>
MBSFC	Mission Board Strategy and Funding Committee
MPPC	Mission Personnel Processing Committee
NAD	North American Division
n.d.	No date
n.p.	No place of publication
Pacific Press	Pacific Press Publishing Association
RG	Record Group
RHPA	Review and Herald Publishing Association
<i>SDAE</i>	<i>SDA Encyclopedia</i> , 2nd rev. [i.e., 3rd] edn, 2 vols. (1996)
SVM	Student Volunteer Movement
VMS	Vigilant Missionary Society
White, TC	Ellen G. White, <i>Testimonies for the Church</i> , 9 vols. (Mountain View, Calif. & Omaha, Nebr.: Pacific Press, 1948)
<i>YB</i>	<i>Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook</i> <sup>3</sup>

## Notes to Abbreviations

<sup>1</sup> Note that, starting with the meeting of Jan. 26, 1967, all GCC minutes' page numbers begin with the last two digits of the year, i.e., in 1967 the minutes pagination goes from p. 322 (Jan. 19, 1967) to p. 67-323 (Jan. 26). The reason for this change is unclear.

<sup>2</sup> Preserved in folders, rather than bound volumes, and the title of "Proceedings" no longer used.

<sup>3</sup> Note that the title format has varied considerably over the years; some editions have additional words or a different word order, but all include these words in the title.

## Chronology of Events

May 21, 1863: At the Seventh-day Adventist Church's inaugural General Conference Session (May 20–23, 1863), the GC's first constitution was adopted.

May 18, 1869: The 7th GC Session (May 18–24) voted to consider Switzerland "missionary ground"; Switzerland was the first area outside the United States of America to be so designated by the Adventist Church.

August 15, 1874: The 13th GC Session created the General Tract & Missionary Society to liaise between the state tract societies and the Church's publishing houses.

September 15, 1874: John N. Andrews along with his children, Mary and Charles, sailed from Boston, headed for Switzerland: the first missionaries sent overseas by the Church.

December 17, 1878: John N. Loughborough sailed for England where he established the British Mission.

April 17–23, 1879: At the 4th Special GC Session, Andrews recommended that an official be appointed to care for foreign missions and missionaries. The Session elected W. C. White to this role (temporarily).

November 7–December 1, 1879: The 18th GC Session created a Missionary Board to oversee the Church's foreign missions.

December 7–19, 1882: In meetings held concurrently with the 21st GC Session, the General Tract & Missionary Society became the International Tract & Missionary Society.

November 8–20, 1883: The 22nd GC Session elected Uriah Smith to the office of secretary (for the fourth time) but amended the Church's constitution to add a fourth officer, a corresponding secretary; membership of the GC Committee was increased from three to five.

November 13–December 12, 1887: At the 26th GC Session, the constitution was amended to increase the number of officers from four to seven, adding home mission, foreign mission, and educational secretaries. W. C. White was elected first foreign mission secretary.

October 17–November 8, 1888: At the 27th GC Session, the first report by a foreign mission secretary was given.

October 18–November 5, 1889: The 28th GC Session voted to establish the Foreign Mission Board.

February 26, 1891: Several Seventh-day Adventists attended the first International Convention of the Student Volunteer Movement.

February 19–March 8, 1897: The 32nd GC Session abolished the positions of education, home mission, and foreign

mission secretaries. In practice the term "foreign mission secretary" was still used for the secretary of the Foreign Mission Board; by this year it had already begun to pull away from the GC for a variety of reasons.

April 2–23, 1901: The Church was restructured at the 34th GC Session; reorganization included the universal adoption of the union conference model, the transformation of the various independent associations and societies into departments, and the enhancement of the authority of the GC Committee. Arthur G. Daniells was elected president; Howard E. Osborne was elected secretary.

March 27–April 13, 1903: Daniells was re-elected by the 35th GC Session; William A. Spicer and Irwin H. Evans were elected secretary and treasurer. The original Foreign Mission Board was superseded by the GC Executive Committee which became the Mission Board; the Foreign Mission Board ceased to operate while the Mission Board legally continued to exist. This Session also voted to move the headquarters to a location "in the Atlantic states".

August 10, 1903: The GC headquarters was set up in rented accommodation in the District of Columbia while new buildings were being erected in Takoma Park, Maryland.

June–July 1904: The offices of home secretary and statistical secretary were created to assist the secretary. The officers appointed Estella Houser first home secretary, and H. Edson Rogers

the first statistical secretary. Rogers recommenced the publication of the *Yearbook*.

May 11–30, 1905: The 36th GC Session met in Washington, D.C. President Daniells set out a strategic vision of greater efforts in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, emphasizing areas that were strongholds of Buddhism, Confucianism–Daoism, and Islam.

June 5, 1905: The positions of home secretary and statistical secretary were made permanent soon after the GC Session.

October 4, 1906: Tyler E. Bowen appointed the second home secretary

May 16, 1907: Discontinuation of the General European Conference.

1907: The *Annual Statistical Report* began publication in this year.

May 13–June 6, 1909: Walter T. Knox elected to replace Evans (who became first president of the Asiatic Division) as treasurer at the 37th GC Session.

May 15–June 8, 1913: At the 38th GC Session, collection of statistics from division, union, and local conferences and missions was formally added to the secretary's duties.

November 21, 1915: The Executive Committee appoints John L. Shaw the first assistant secretary.

March 29–April 14, 1918: The 39th GC Session was held in San Francisco. The office of associate secretary was created and Shaw elected to fill it.

May 11–28, 1922: The 40th GC Session was held in San Francisco, California. Spicer was elected president; Daniells

was then elected secretary; Shaw was elected treasurer.

December 1923: The 60th *Annual Statistical Report*, covering the year 1922, gave statistics on missionaries for the first time, under the heading “Laborers Sent to Foreign Fields”.

May 27–June 14, 1926: The 41st GC Session was held in Milwaukee. Cecil K. Meyers, an Australian, was elected secretary; he was the first secretary or executive officer not a U.S. citizen.

October 17, 1933: Meyers left office; Milton E. Kern was elected secretary.

May 26–June 8, 1936: At the 43rd GC Session in San Francisco, outgoing Secretary Kern used *Secretariat* as a collective descriptor for his department during his report to the Session. This was probably the first use of the term in Adventist history. The Session elected Ernest D. Dick as secretary.

May 26–June 7, 1941: The 44th GC Session was held in San Francisco. Both Tyler Bowen and Edson Rogers retired at this Session.

April 5, 1942: Secretary Dick brought to Spring Council a remarkably bold plan for mission in the Middle East.

September 19, 1952: Denton E. Rebok was elected secretary after Dick took up the presidency of the Seminary halfway through his fourth term.

May 24–June 5, 1954: The 47th GC Session met in San Francisco. Walter R. Beach was elected secretary.

June 19–28, 1958: At the 48th GC Session in Cleveland, Henry T. Elliott retired after twenty-five years as an

associate secretary—a record for this office.

October 23, 1964: Autumn Council issued guidelines in relation to the sending of student missionaries.

June 11–20, 1970: The 51st GC Session met in Atlantic City. Clyde O. Franz was elected secretary.

October 15, 1972: Autumn Council formalized the status of the Institute of World Mission, mandating several training institutes each year.

April 5, 1973: The Spring Meeting set up a Committee on Organization and Decision Making to consider reform of GC headquarters administration.

April 2–4, 1974: Agenda item tracking codes were used for the first time in Spring Meeting’s agenda and minutes.

July 10–19, 1975: The 52nd GC Session was held in Vienna, Austria: the first Session held outside the United States. The office of undersecretary was created, with policy- and governance-focused responsibilities. The office of the statistical secretary was merged with the GC Archives, creating the Office of Archives and Statistics.

April 5–6, 1978: The Spring Meeting agenda and minutes included, for the first time, a reference line before each item, indicating committees or groups by which it had been reviewed.

April 16–26, 1980: The 53rd GC Session was held in Dallas. G. Ralph Thompson, a native of Barbados in the Inter-American Division, became the second person not a U.S. citizen to be elected secretary.

September 1985: Adventist Frontier Missions was incorporated.

July 6–14, 1990: The 55th GC Session was held in Indianapolis. The Global Strategy document was approved at this Session—the origins of the Global Mission initiative.

October 10, 1991: Annual Council recreated the Administrative Committee—the existing ADCOM merged with the informal but longstanding weekly “officer meetings” and was given an expanded role and authority.

June 29–July 8, 2000: The 57th GC Session was held in Toronto, Canada, only the third Session held outside the U.S.A. Matthew A. Bediak, a native of Ghana, then in the African-Indian Ocean Division, became secretary, the first African to be elected an executive officer of the GC.

June 28, 2005: The Office of Adventist Mission was created through a merger of Global Mission and the Office of Mission Awareness.

June 29–July 9, 2005: The 58th GC Session was held in St. Louis. On July 6, Rosa Banks was elected an associate secretary, becoming the first woman to hold this office.

June 23–July 4, 2010: The 59th GC Session was held in Atlanta. G. T. Ng, a native of Singapore, in the Southern-

Asia Pacific Division, became the first Asian to be elected as a GC executive officer.

June 14, 2011: The Office of Archives and Statistics was renamed the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, and the Office of Assessment and Program Effectiveness was merged with it.

April 18, 2012: Spring Meeting voted the funding to establish Seventh-day Adventist Membership Systems

July 10, 2014: The GC Executive Committee elected Karen J. Porter an associate secretary: it was the first time an assistant secretary became an associate since the 1920s; she was just the second female associate secretary.

March 19, 2020: Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the 61st GC Session was postponed.

January 12, 2021: The 61st GC Session was postponed again.

June 29, 2021: GC ADCOM appointed Oscar Osindo director of the Institute of World Mission—the first director from a former mission field.

April 14, 2021: After Secretary Ng’s retirement at the Spring Meeting, Erton Köhler, a native of Brazil, in the South American Division, was elected secretary, becoming the first Latin American executive officer of the GC.



## INTRODUCTION

From early in their history, Seventh-day Adventists were impelled by a strong theology of mission, believing that God's purpose since ancient times was that "God's glory, His character, His merciful kindness and tender love . . . were to be revealed to all mankind."<sup>1</sup> Adventists were instructed by Ellen G. White, their prophet, that, from apostolic times, "the church of Christ on earth was organized for missionary purposes." A key insight in her thought was that only "Christian missionary work furnishes the church with a sure foundation."<sup>2</sup> In Christ's service, moreover, "its mission" remains "to carry the gospel to the world."<sup>3</sup> The Seventh-day Adventist Church for much of its history has seen its mission as carrying the gospel and the messages of the angels of Revelation 14 to the world.<sup>4</sup> In consequence, it, too, has been "organized for missionary purposes". From initial hesitation about whether they should try to carry the gospel and their distinctive prophetic understanding beyond the shores of North America, the pioneers of the Adventist Church grew to believe that the entire world was their vineyard.<sup>5</sup> For, they were told by Ellen White, "the Lord has marked every phase of missionary zeal that has been shown by His people in behalf of foreign fields. He designs that in every home, in every church, and at all the centers of the work, a spirit of liberality shall be shown in sending help to foreign fields."<sup>6</sup>

The subject of this book is how the Seventh-day Adventist Church has "organized for missionary purposes", in order "to carry the gospel to the world", and the structures the denomination put in place to be able to "send help to foreign fields." Adventists at times confuse *mission* with *evangelism* or *outreach*; evangelism,

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however, can and does happen in what Adventist church leaders of the early twentieth century usually referred to simply as the *home fields*. Given that even in the Church's numerical strongholds, in some countries of the Caribbean, the South Pacific, and Africa, there is around one Adventist for every ten people in a country, it is hard to imagine a time when outreach, whether via personal witnessing, literature, education, or public evangelism, will not be integral to the Adventist Church, everywhere. But that is not what we mean by *mission* in this book—and neither is it what Adventist pioneers meant when they spoke simply of *mission* or *missionaries* (as opposed to *home mission*). What they meant and what we mean by “mission” is what Adventists for much of our history also called *overseas mission* or *foreign mission* (these terms and others such as *home field* and *mission field* are examined in Chapter One and Chapter Five). What does *foreign mission* mean in the twenty-first century, when the Adventist Church is multi-cultural and, like the world at large, truly globalized?

Here we borrow terminology from the Secretariat of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (GC)—the branch of the world Church headquarters responsible for organizing and enacting mission. It defines its role as “provid[ing] administrative leadership and strategic direction to the world Church in making disciples *to reach the unreached*”. By mission we thus mean cross-cultural mission; pioneering mission to unreached and under-reached areas and people groups; mission that extends the bounds of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, geographically, numerically, linguistically, and/or ethnically.<sup>7</sup>

The zeal of pioneer Adventist missionaries and those who came after them is part of the story related in this short book. Yet, it tells not the personal stories of outstanding missionaries,<sup>8</sup> but rather the story of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's formal efforts to organize global missions as they were admonished to do; the story told here, then, is the collective, shared, Adventist story.<sup>9</sup>

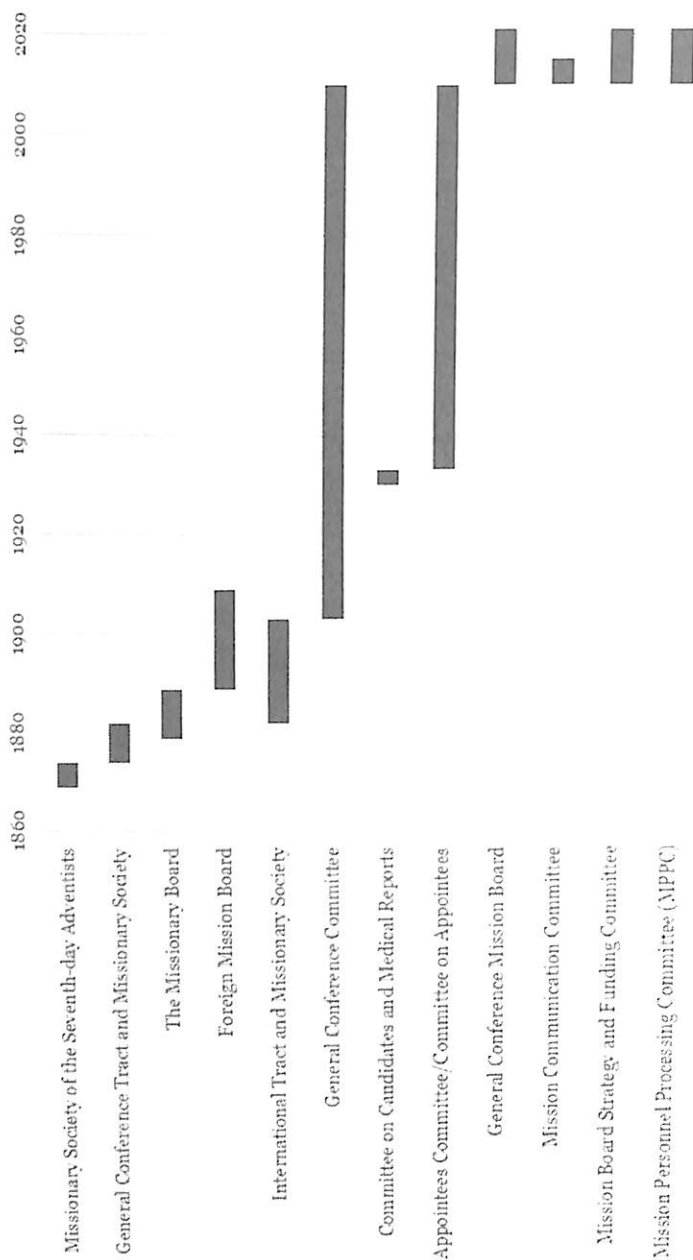
## Introduction

The reader will find descriptions of the church's pioneers and later leaders discussing the formation of missionary societies and committees, engaged in literary endeavors, shaping policies, and in various other methods, all concerned with how they thought the foreign mission work *ought* to proceed, and how it in fact *did* proceed; we note relevant discrepancies between the two. Along with this analysis is a wealth of statistics (a focus of Chapters One and Two), which chart the progress of "foreign" or "overseas" mission work. These statistics are mostly shown in graphic rather than tabular form, providing helpful visual aids.

At the same time, it is important to stress that this book is not intended to provide anything close to what would be described as a *complete* history of what church leaders, a century and more ago (and historians since), often called the "missionary enterprise" of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The ways in which this and similar terms were used has its own history, but suffice to say the meaning shifted: after the mission-focused church reorganization of 1901–1903, *missionary enterprise* and *mission enterprise* were both used, but the former became the preferred term used by world-Church leaders for Adventists' effort in foreign/overseas mission fields in the aggregate, perhaps reflecting the increasing numbers of missionaries working as part of what they now called the *missionary enterprise*.<sup>10</sup>

The present goal is more modest than a comprehensive history of the enterprise. It is a study of how the Adventist Church, corporately and collectively, organized itself to manage a global missionary enterprise—and did so with considerable success—before, in the last half century, the very organizational structures set up for that purpose gradually came to focus on other matters. Alongside that shift, not coincidentally the number of missionaries deployed internationally and cross-culturally went into a decades-long decline; recent signs suggest that trend has been arrested, but has it been reversed, or will the 2010s prove to be merely a blip?

Figure 1: Boards, Committees, and Societies Directly Involved in Managing the Mission Work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church



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While we do not know the details of what the future holds for the church's missionary enterprise, this history is written in the hope of helping to shape the decisions that will make that future. Although one of the basic purposes of this book is to provide an historicized understanding of how the missionary enterprise was established and developed, it additionally seeks to help scholars and church members better understand the *current* state of cross-cultural mission in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, including projected trends and shortcomings. With this in mind, this book's final purpose is to inform decision-making by those whose task it is to organize Adventist mission programs, that the Church might more efficiently work toward finishing the task of spreading the gospel to the entire world.

## Structures in Context

Having noted that this is essentially a history of how Seventh-day Adventists organized for mission, it is vital to acknowledge that the administrative structures—within which the Adventist missionary enterprise operated and by which it was managed—have been very complicated. A variety of committees with sometimes overlapping lines of command have been responsible for or exercised oversight over Adventist mission endeavors during the last 150 years. To help clarify, the committees responsible for calling missionaries and for setting strategy and policy are set out in Figure 1 (p. 4, facing).

The structures are one context for Adventist mission—without understanding how the organization actually worked, there will be no proper understanding of the successes and disappointments, the strengths and weaknesses. Much of this history is devoted to explaining how, in fact, the church's organization for dispatching

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and maintaining missionaries worked. But all operations at the GC work within the committee system, and thus Figure 1 provides an overview of one important context and how it evolved.

What, however, of other contexts? The remainder of this chapter explores the wider circumstances in which Adventist mission developed and took place; it provides a framework for the more focused analysis that begins in Chapter One. First, what was the overall mission vision that framed the missionary enterprise, and how did that evolve? Second, what challenges were systemic, faced both by Adventists in particular and by other Protestant missionaries in general? And how did Protestant missionary societies organize for mission?

## A Widening Vision

What was the purpose of the Adventist Church's missionary program? Unsurprisingly, it evolved over time. Barry Oliver, the path-breaking historian of Adventist Church organization, argues that the "main objective" of the missionary enterprise in its early decades was to establish "missionary outposts in societies whose cultural background was similar to that of the missionaries who left the shores of North America."<sup>11</sup> The missiologist Børge Schantz argued that though "mission to non-Christians was approved of and praised" by Adventists, it was seen as the responsibility of other Protestants—when "they had brought people to Christ," then Adventists would take over, "bringing them the last warning."<sup>12</sup>

Mission, then, was initially aimed at "people like us", who had not heard "present truth." In the early twentieth century, however, attitudes changed. This was due in large part to Ellen G. White, who repeatedly counseled church leaders and church members of the importance of mission to adherents of non-Christian religions. She naturally also wanted nominal Christians in Western nations

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to hear a fuller presentation of Biblical truth, but in the last twenty years of her life she increasingly looked beyond what were thought of as “civilized countries” and, in a trend which we consider further in Chapter Five, directed Adventists’ attention to the heartlands of animism, and to East, Southeast, and Southern Asia in which the dominant religions and belief traditions are those missiologists often term “world religions”: Buddhism, Confucianism-Daoism, Hinduism, and Islam.<sup>13</sup> But Ellen White’s admonitions required an administrative response to operationalize them.

What we will see (particularly in Chapter Five, though the quantitative effects will be seen in Chapter One) is that, in the early twentieth century, an organizational reorientation took place that reflected Ellen White’s missional thought; a vital role was played by leaders such as Arthur G. Daniells, President of the General Conference (GC) from 1901; William A. Spicer, who had worked for Hindus in India before becoming the GC Secretary in 1903; and Irwin H. Evans, who, following six years as GC Treasurer (1903–9), served as the first president of the new Asiatic Division, where indigenous Christian groups were tiny and Buddhism, Shintoism, and Confucianism were a considerable challenge. We analyze the Church’s reorganization and reorientation for mission in Chapters Four and Five, but it should be noted here that Daniells, Spicer, Evans, and others, were the first church leaders to think about and plan for Adventist mission strategically, and that they prioritized reaching people who were unreached by Christianity, thus putting into practice Ellen White’s wider vision for Adventist mission.

In the early 1900s, the situation of the late nineteenth century, described by Oliver, began to shift. Adventist missionaries went in increasing numbers to Africa and Asia. In sub-Saharan Africa, they evangelized adherents of traditional religions; in Southeast Asia and China, they engaged with members of rival world religions. In India, North Africa, and West Asia, to be sure, they largely targeted the members of the indigenous Christian churches, which were

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ancient but had relatively few adherents—even so, Adventists were still engaging with very different cultures. Thus, Adventist mission in the twentieth century, in contrast to the state of affairs outlined by Oliver, came to be often, even predominantly, directed at people very dissimilar to “us”, knowing little or nothing of Christianity, much less of Adventism’s distinctive biblical doctrines. Adventist mission had become cross-cultural before that term was coined.

### Cultural and Historiographical Contexts

What, however, was entailed in going beyond familiar contexts, to ones that were highly different? This question can be answered in the particular, but needs to be addressed in comparative context, because Seventh-day Adventist missionaries were not working in isolation but rather, as they were well aware, were part of a wider phenomenon of Protestant mission enterprises;<sup>14</sup> further, mission history is a flourishing subdiscipline and so this history itself needs to be contextualized.

#### *Cultural adaptation in comparative context*

Other mission boards and missionary societies had to face and overcome intercultural challenges. Seventh-day Adventists drew on, but also contributed to, wider Protestant mission thought and practice, as we will see (pp. 178–79). Early Adventist missionaries had to internalize for themselves, from first-hand experience, the lesson learned by one of the first American foreign missionaries, the Baptist Adoniram Judson, that “Burma was not Connecticut”.<sup>15</sup> Adventists, in fact, faced the need to contextualize to local cultures, a process that confronted all Western missionaries.

The Adventist missiologist Gordon Doss observes: “The word ‘contextualization’ raises questions and fears”—particularly the fear of “abandoning the primacy of the Bible for the sake of being



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culturally relevant”, or of “watering down the Gospel or making conversion easy”.<sup>16</sup> As a result, use of the word “contextualization” can create more heat than light, with debate about the meanings it is *perceived* to have, which can obscure the actual process involved. As Doss points out, “Almost every preacher, teacher, evangelist, or missionary instinctively tries to make the message credible and relevant”. This was true of the apostles; it remains true today.<sup>17</sup> The real question is not *if*, but *how*, contextualization will take place: will it be effective or not; biblically authentic, or not.<sup>18</sup> Part of what GC Secretariat has done over the decades has been, both informally and, recently, formally through the medium of the Global Mission Issues Committee, to guide Adventist church leaders, missiologists, and missionaries towards a model of “faithful contextualization” (which we discuss in Chapter Seven).

To many Western Christians, the crucial importance of culture in shaping belief is a recent concept, encountered in books such as Philip Jenkins’s *The next Christendom*. Many found it shocking, but Jenkins drew on a wide range of authoritative scholarship that made his work compelling.<sup>19</sup> For some readers, the adaptation of Christianity to local cultures and resulting shifts in spiritual-life practices was something they would encounter in person, the fruit of what is sometimes called “reverse evangelization”, by Christians from the Global South, in the Global North—what was traditionally Christendom, but is now post-Christian. However, missionaries had long encountered, in the mission field, the need to adapt the gospel to a variety of cultural and linguistic contexts. Adventists had the same experience as they went overseas: cultural adaptation was needed, first in Europe, then—even more so—in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the islands of the Pacific. Yet Adventists initially “found themselves replicating the mistakes by early missionaries from other Protestant denominations.”<sup>20</sup> At first, probably Adventists, like many other Protestant missionaries, “did not pay much attention” to issues about national cultures.<sup>21</sup>

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Yet, in practice, many Adventist missionaries in different parts of the world started “learning to adapt to local cultures”; some did so fairly quickly and many did so effectively.<sup>22</sup> At first the learning process was partly inadvertent; but as historians of missions in other Protestant traditions have argued, sometimes the most effective contextualization arises out of instinctive understanding of the principles rather than a “conscious attempt”.<sup>23</sup> By the 1920s, however, and then thereafter, Adventists and other Protestants were willing to consciously learn from each other’s experiences, as we show in Chapter Six, although Adventists never suffered doubts about “the moral certitude of Christianity” as did many Protestant missionaries, from a range of theological and spiritual traditions.<sup>24</sup> Over the course of the twentieth century, if Adventist missionaries individually and, in some places at some points in time, the church collectively, did not adapt to local cultures, there is no doubt that these instances were outnumbered by individual and institutional examples of authentic, successful contextualization. This is one reason for the global growth of the Adventist Church.

Adventists going out into the world faced both advantages and disadvantages in comparison to other missionaries. While various scholars show that the nature of “Catholic sacramental tradition” makes it “more open to . . . contextualization than the Protestant tradition with its focus upon the word”, another perceived Catholic advantage is the international presence of the Roman Catholic Church in contrast to Protestantism’s “compartmentalization into regional churches” (which had consequences considered below).<sup>25</sup> The first factor affected Adventist mission but could be overcome; the second factor fortunately did not apply to Seventh-day Adventists. As populations began to move more after World War II, the presence of Adventist churches and believers providing a welcome to Adventists was an important factor of growth. Many readers in various countries may be aware of how immigration from the Global South has fueled Adventist church growth in the

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Global North in the late twentieth century and the twenty-first century.<sup>26</sup>

### *Mission structures*

Having learned, in part, from other Protestant missionaries' *experiences*, did the Seventh-day Adventist Church learn from how other denominations or mission boards *structured and organized* themselves for missional success? The almost unique ecclesiastical polity of the Adventist Church makes its mature mission structures likewise distinctive, but this is not to say that there were no areas of overlap, especially in the early stages of Adventist organization. However, general mission history has recently been concerned not so much with organizational structures as with how missionaries upheld, implemented, imposed, contested, and subverted power structures of different kinds: of empire, gender, race, and class. This has produced a rich and interesting historiography.<sup>27</sup> Yet it yields few insights about how missionary activity was organized—a subject explored mostly in older works.<sup>28</sup> This present book is unusual, then, in terms of recent mission historiography, on which, however, we draw in what follows to put Adventist mission structure in context.

The chief distinction between the mature Adventist context and the wider Protestant context is the international nature of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, unlike most churches. One of the hallmarks of Protestant missionary bodies is competition and disagreement. This partly reflected how they were structured and their relationships to the formal Churches out of which they sprang; we say more about this below, but it should be noted that points of disagreement included about whether Roman Catholics or members of Orthodox Churches even needed to be converted by Protestant missionaries (Seventh-day Adventists were in no doubts about this point). Inevitably, too, questions arose about how far the authority of mission boards and missionary societies extended

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beyond their home countries, especially over mission fields as they matured; there were debates about levels of financial support and decolonization. Turf wars and resentment, as well as cooperation, all resulted at different times and places in the last two centuries.<sup>29</sup>

The situation was made more convoluted because Protestant missionary enterprises were characterized by complexity. Multiple organizations were involved in foreign mission—not just the “mission boards” and “missionary societies”, but Bible societies, Sunday School unions, tract societies, education societies, and the YMCA and YWCA. This is brought out well in an older study of early American Protestant mission that we quote here for it brings into relief some distinctive features of Adventism’s *centralized* model of mission, as it emerged in the twentieth century.

The missionary societies proper selected missionaries and supported them [in their] fields of labor; the Bible societies . . . provid[ed] money in aid of Bible translations and for the printing of the Bible in foreign tongues; the Sunday School unions organized the youth of the [home] land . . . broaden[ing] the base of the missionary structure; the tract societies, interested . . . in the diffusion of the gospel, put it into the hands of those who could read . . . ; and the education societies . . . prepared men [sic] without whom the gospel could not be effectively preached either on home or on foreign fields.

This continued to be the situation, well into the mid-twentieth century. Some of these organizations were voluntary associations, but others were ecclesiastical bodies; yet even the latter might be independently incorporated, giving them considerable autonomy; even those which had their origins within one denomination might compete with each other. Church leaders could struggle to control them.<sup>30</sup>

What we have just described could almost depict the Seventh-day Adventist Church up to the celebrated organizational reforms of 1901–3; but ironically, to some extent it could also describe the

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Adventist situation in the twenty-first century. Chapter Three shows how Adventists, too, had their tract societies and Sabbath School societies (the equivalent of a Sunday School union) which, like the Foreign Mission Board of 1889–1903 was separately incorporated and thus legally independent of ecclesiastical bodies. The restructuring at the start of the last century, described in Chapter Four, changed all that. Thereafter, for some eight or nine decades, there was only one Seventh-day Adventist missionary enterprise, directed by GC Secretariat. However, the 1990s and early 2000s saw a return to a myriad of intersecting ministries: some are official church entities, others are “supporting” or self-styled “independent” ministries, but irrespective of designation, many overlap, and in some cases compete, both with each other and with the official missionary enterprise managed from GC Secretariat.

The causes of this situation, which we would describe as regress rather than progress, include, we suggest, a gradual but definite shift in the approach to mission at the General Conference, which is explored in Chapter Seven. Again, in the last decade there have been signs of a reaction, but whether the trend has been reversed, it is too soon to say. Learning the lessons of the past is crucial if the future is to be one that benefits Adventist mission.

## Overview of Contents

The book is organized as follows. Part One (Chapters One and Two) provide a concise historical overview of the overall missionary enterprise, identifying its trends and patterns, especially by use of statistics. In particular, what a *missionary* is, in technical terms is defined, the organizational role of the administrative structure and

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its relationship to missionary activities is briefly examined, and important trends in missionary recruitment and employment are charted. These two chapters draw heavily on statistics and, in effect, constitute a quantitative history of the Adventist missionary enterprise. Last, Part One describes and analyzes the development of two key features of the enterprise—its medicalization and bureaucratization, two tell-tale signs of the modern age.

Part Two (Chapter Three to Chapter Seven) specifically focuses on the history of the branch of the headquarters of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (GC) that has been most responsible for organizing and enacting our missionary enterprise—the GC Secretariat. Here, a more detailed glimpse into the key historical developments in certain timespans will be reviewed in relation to the Secretariat. These include the earliest efforts from 1863–1901 (Chapter Three), the periods thereafter, from 1901–c.1970 (Chapters Four–Six), and then c.1970–2020 (Chapter Seven). Some basic contemporary trends will be readily apparent—for example, that, as our global geographical reach has expanded, with local structural units of the church assuming greater supervision over various countries and regions, the number of missionaries has declined. Obviously, in some ways, this would seem both a logical development and a desirable one.

However, such a situation presents us with critical questions that arise upon further reflection: if one of the important tasks of the organized church is to focus on reaching the unreached, then, with the growth of the church's organization reaching new levels of geographic spread and complexity, has the organizational church, at all levels, devolved somewhat into superintendence and bureaucratization at the expense of truly *pioneering* mission of the kind that transformed the Seventh-day Adventist Church from a sect of the American Midwest to a global denomination? In particular, have Adventists in the prosperous West (which today includes eastern South America as well as the longstanding

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Adventist mission “home fields” in North America, Western Europe, and Australasia) lately begun to assume that there are no foreign mission fields left? Whether this is, in fact, true or untrue is then also an important question that this book explores—one that should have great significance for the future plans enacted by church leaders focused on missions and for the attitudes church members take to cross-cultural mission.

The Conclusion will provide some reflections but also sketch out what we see as a path forward to completing the church’s missionary enterprise. It began nearly 150 years ago, in 1874, but received new impetus from major reforms in church structure 120 years ago in 1901. It had some of its strongest momentum—impelled by church organization intended to achieve exactly that effect—around a hundred years ago, during the 1920s; and that was the start of what might be seen as a “golden age” of Adventist mission, a half century of expansion that can be seen with hindsight to have ended some fifty years ago, in c.1970. The Conclusion explores, if briefly, that path forward that we feel is encouraged by this study of history.

The Adventist Church’s missionary enterprise today is centered on “International Service Employee(s)” (ISEs), while up to 2014 it was “Interdivisional Employee(s)” (IDEs); the language, apparently bland and bureaucratic, is significant.<sup>31</sup> The earlier term was “missionary appointee”. Although the terminology has changed, for more than 120 years, the world Church, through the GC Secretariat, identified and recruited (or “called”, the term Adventists have officially used) church workers in areas where the church was strong and sent them to, sustained them in, and returned them from, areas where the church was weaker or needed (or at any rate wanted) workers in general, or particular kinds of expertise (this last point is explored in Chapter Two). Missionaries were drawn from ‘homelands’ and sent to “mission fields” (this terminology is unpacked in Chapter One). Yet it was not only in

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personnel that the world Church drew from where it was stronger to help areas that were weaker; the same was true of finances.

It was as a result of this strategic mode of operation—identifying strengths and weaknesses and addressing them as one Church instead a collection of regional denominations (as easily could have been the case without the vision of church leaders in the 1860s) that the Seventh-day Adventist Church gradually first expanded around the world and then experienced significant growth in many former mission fields that have now become heartlands of the Church; whereas Europe, for example, the source of many missionaries and substantial funds in the past, has now in effect become a mission field.<sup>32</sup> But the Seventh-day Adventist Church as it exists today, around the world, substantially is the fruit of the Church's "missionary enterprise", managed by the General Conference Secretariat.

Because of the importance of missionary-sending programs coordinated from the GC headquarters, and funded from the GC's financial resources, they are a chief focus of this book. Missionary deployment did not, however, take place in a vacuum. The management of this process not only took place, after 1903, in the GC Secretariat, it also to some extent was *planned* and *directed* by GC Secretariat. So that function, too, lies at the heart of this book. Both the substance of its narrative and its overall argument are the same: that the church's world missionary-sending program and its general planning for mission no longer reflect the priorities of those who set them up and gave them weight in the church; and that this in large part explains why "mission" has in some respects faltered since c.1970.

To a significant extent, the changes were connected to the changing priorities within GC Secretariat, which can be quickly summarized as follows: Planning, strategizing for, and promoting missions was downgraded, and fostering sound administration and policing policy was prioritized. This might be described as the



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bureaucratization of Secretariat, but as we show later, there was a largely contemporaneous and, in essential ways, similar trend concerning what kinds of missionaries were funded, recruited, and deployed. Simply put, the missionary program also became more bureaucratized and, moreover, medicalized, technologized, and specialized. These changes occurred outside and beyond the direct influence of the GC Secretariat, reflecting a wider change in the attitudes of denominational leadership as they engaged an evolving and changing world. The official mission enterprise of the Adventist Church initially had as its primary focus sending workers into all the world to preach and to teach (the great commission as given in Mark 16:15 and Matthew 28:20), with a secondary emphasis on supplying the needs of institutions. As we will see, however, there was a shift to a primary focus on finding and dispatching specialized administrators—technocrats and ecclesiastical bureaucrats—to work in institutions and organizations. This is of course a legitimate, even a worthy goal, but it is right to question whether it ought to be the *primary* goal of the denomination's cross-cultural mission program. It certainly represents a significant shift.

A change in purpose is not always a bad thing; the world changes, and if organizations do not evolve, they may die. Mission creep, however, can end up sapping an organization's very reason for existence. In the case of the IDE/ISE program, our shift in emphasis, from working with people in order to make disciples, to protecting and perfecting administrative and institutional infrastructures, is one that would have taken our pioneers aback; it should also give us, at the very least, pause for significant reflection: in what direction should the Seventh-day Adventist Church's missionary program go in the future?

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *The story of prophets and kings* [1917] (Mountain View, Calif. & Oshawa, Ont.: Pacific Press, 1943), p. 313; *The desire of ages* [1898] (Mountain View, Calif. & Oshawa, Ont.: Pacific Press, 1940), p. 583.

<sup>2</sup> White, *TC*, vi, 29; Ellen G. White, *Gospel workers*, 2nd edn. (Washington, D.C.: RHPA, 1915), p. 464.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, *The acts of the apostles* (Mountain View, Calif. & Oshawa, Ont.: Pacific Press, 1911), p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the declaration of the founding General Conference Session: “We have before us the great work of disseminating light upon the commandments of God, the faith of Jesus, and the truths connected with the third angel’s message”: May 23, 1863: in *ARH*, 21 (May 26, 1863), 205.

<sup>5</sup> On the transition from seeing “the world” as meaning, in effect, North America, to recognizing it as meaning, truly, the world, see D. J. B. Trim, “‘Illuminating the whole earth’: Adventism and foreign mission in the Battle Creek years (1859 to c.1912)”, in Alberto R. Timm and James R. Nix (eds.), *Lessons from Battle Creek: Reflections after 150 years of church organization* ([Silver Spring, Md.]: RHPA, 2018), pp. 134–61.

<sup>6</sup> White, *Gospel workers*, p. 465.

<sup>7</sup> See “Our Mission” and “Our Methods” at the GC Secretariat website: <https://secretariat.adventist.org/> (emphasis in quotation supplied).

<sup>8</sup> On this point, it is important to note that, to a great extent, mission advanced through the zeal of those whom we have *not* remembered as great missionaries—the efforts of many anonymous missionaries are the backbone that enabled the success of those we do remember. For stories of forgotten missionaries, see D. J. B. Trim, *A living sacrifice: Unsung heroes of Adventist Mission* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press, 2019).

<sup>9</sup> An earlier overview of this story is D. J. B. Trim, “Fit for purpose? The General Conference Secretariat and Seventh-day Adventist mission in historical purpose”, *JAMS*, 11:2 (Fall 2015), 183–94.

<sup>10</sup> A. G. Daniells to E. E. Andross, June 12, 1906, Outgoing Letterbook, no. 38, p. 864, in GC Ar., RG 11, box no. 0147–48. At the 1911

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GC Biennial Council, held at Friedensau in Germany, the minutes record use of both “our world-wide missionary enterprises” and “our missionary enterprises”: July 5, 1911, in GCC Proc., IX, 8. “Missionary enterprise” was used by Adventists in the late nineteenth century in a different sense, for which the term, “mission enterprise” was used by early twentieth-century church leaders: for *specific* enterprises, or enterprising work on behalf of foreign or home missions. But roughly from the 1903 GC Session (on which see Chapter Four), “missionary enterprise” was used (with a few exceptions) for the collective work of the church in “foreign” (“overseas”) mission fields: e.g., see W. A. Spicer, “A special mission enterprise”, *ARH*, 80:28 (July 14, 1903), 24; C. H. Jones, “Donation to Mission Board”, *Atlantic Union Gleaner*, 11 (Nov. 4, 1903), 510; GCC action, meeting of Jan. 16, 1906, GCC Proc., VII, 91; O. O. F[ortner], “A home for the Kaffir [sic] mission”, *South African Missionary*, 4:8 (Aug. 1906), 1; letter from George F. Enoch (pioneer missionary to Barbados), publ. in *The Welcome Visitor*, 11:1 (Jan. 2, 1907), 1; news notes, *North Pacific Union Gleaner*, 2:38 (Jan. 15, 1908), 8; E. H. Gates, “What youth and children can do for missions”, *The Workers’ Bulletin*, 19:42 (April 21, 1908), 3. A notable example of an earlier usage is in the title of E. G. White, “Missionary enterprise the object of Christ’s church”, *ARH*, 71 (Oct. 30, 1894), 673. Similar terminology has been used both by Adventist writers and by academic historians of mission, for the latter of whom it is common: see, e.g., Arthur W. Spalding, *Christ’s last legion* (Washington, D.C.: RHPA, 1949), p. 197; Murray A. Rubinstein, *The origins of the Anglo-American missionary enterprise in China, 1807–1840*, ATLA Monographs, 33 (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 1996); Andrew Porter, “Church history, history of Christianity, religious history: Some reflections on British missionary enterprise since the late eighteenth century”, *Church History*, 71 (Sept. 2002); 555–84, in title and at 556, 559–60, 563, 575–76, 583; Jeffrey Cox, *The British mission enterprise since 1700* (New York: Routledge, 2008); and David W. Kling, *A history of Christian conversion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 468, 474–75, 490, 634, 638, 665. While “missionary endeavor” and “missionary project” are also used by scholars, we use “enterprise” as it is found in the primary sources.

<sup>11</sup> Barry David Oliver, *SDA organizational structure: Past, present*

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and future, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series, 15 (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1989), pp. 43–44.

<sup>12</sup> Børge Schantz, “The development of Seventh-day Adventist missionary thought: A contemporary appraisal”, 2 vols., unpubl. Ph.D. diss. (Fuller Theological Seminary, 1983), 1, 252–53; cf. Gary Krause, “Adventism among the world religions”, *JAMS*, 6:2 (2010), 93–94.

<sup>13</sup> D. J. B. Trim, “Ellen G. White and Adventist mission”, in Alberto R. Timm and Dwain N. Esmond (eds.), *The gift of prophecy in scripture and history* (Silver Spring, Md.: RHPA, 2015), pp. 333–53.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Trim, “Adventism and foreign mission”, pp. 136, 145–46, 159.

<sup>15</sup> Jay Riley Case, *An unpredictable gospel: American evangelicals and world Christianity, 1812–1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 33.

<sup>16</sup> Gordon R. Doss, *Introduction to Adventist mission* (Silver Spring, Md./Berrien Springs, Mich.: Institute of World Mission, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists/Department of World Mission, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, 2018), p. 214.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 216; and see generally Dean E. Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2005); Christopher J. H. Wright, *The mission of God* (Downer's Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2006), ch. 15.

<sup>18</sup> Doss, *Introduction to Adventist mission*, pp. 216–19 at 216; cf. Flemming, *Contextualization*, pp. 13–14.

<sup>19</sup> Jenkins, *The next Christianity: The coming of global Christianity* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); see esp. ch. 6, “Coming to Terms”. On Jenkins's reception and sources see David Maxwell, “Writing the history of African Christianity”, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 36 (2006), 395.

<sup>20</sup> Trim, “Adventism and foreign mission”, pp. 145–47 (quotation at 145).

<sup>21</sup> John M. Prior and Alle Hoekema, “Theological thinking by Indonesian Christians 1850–2000”, in Jan Sihar Aritonang and Karel Steenbrink (eds.), *A history of Christianity in Indonesia*, Studies in Christian Mission 35 (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2008), p. 791.

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<sup>22</sup> Trim, “Adventism and foreign mission”, p. 148.

<sup>23</sup> Peter Wood and Emma Wild-Wood, “‘One day we will sing in God’s home’: Songs sung in the Anglican Church in North-East Congo (DRC)”, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 34 (2004), 167.

<sup>24</sup> Tetsuko Toda, “Conflicting views on foreign missions: The Mission Board of Philadelphia yearly meeting of Friends in the 1920s”, *Quaker History*, 100:2 (Fall 2011), 17; cf. Kling, *A history of Christian conversion*, 490–92. See Norma Youngberg’s memoir, *Under sealed orders: The story of Gus Youngberg* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1970), pp. 86–88, for the perspective of two Adventist missionaries of the 1920s on the faith of some Protestant missionaries they met, and the doubts and equivocations they encountered in others.

<sup>25</sup> Prior and Hoekema, “Theological thinking by Indonesian Christians”, p. 791; cf. K. A. Steenbrink, et al., “Christianity in Javanese culture and society”, in Aritonang & Steenbrink, *A history of Christianity in Indonesia*, p. 722; and see, e.g., Jenkins, *Next Christianity*, pp. 116–19.

<sup>26</sup> See Ronald Lawson, “From American church to immigrant church: The changing face of Seventh-day Adventism in metropolitan New York”, *Sociology of Religion*, 59 (1998), 329–51; idem, “When immigrants take over: The impact of immigrant growth on American Seventh-day Adventism’s trajectory from sect to denomination”, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 38 (1999), 83–102; D. J. B. Trim, *A passion for mission* (Bracknell, U.K.: Newbold Academic Press, 2019), pp. 153–57, 210–12.

<sup>27</sup> Key contributions to this historiography and indicative of its broad currents are Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the flag: Protestant mission and British imperialism in the 19th and 20th centuries* (Leicester, U.K.: Apollos, 1990); idem (ed.), *Missions, nationalism, and the end of empire* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2003); Andrew Porter, *Religion versus empire? British Protestant missionaries and overseas expansion, 1700–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004); Norman Etherington (ed.), *Missions and empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); and Hilary M. Carey, *God’s empire: Religion and colonialism in the British world, c.1801–1908* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). For the German perspective (important in

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general for Protestant mission history and also in the particular Adventist context, given German Adventism's heavy contribution to foreign mission in the first half of the twentieth century), see Jeremy Best, *Heavenly Fatherland: German missionary culture and globalization in the Age of Empire* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021); and Stefan Hörschele, *Christian remnant – African folk Church: Seventh-day Adventism in Tanzania, 1903–1980*, Studies in Christian Mission, 34 (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2007), pp. 37–127.

<sup>28</sup> For example, the bicentennial history of the celebrated American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission (the oldest mission board in the United States) has almost nothing to say about how the Board was organized, or how it related to Protestant denominations or to other mission boards as they were created: Clifford Putney and Paul T. Burlin, *The role of the American Board in the world: Bicentennial reflections on the organization's missionary work, 1810–2010* (Eugene, Oreg.: Wipf & Stock, 2012). Contrast with William E. Strong, *The story of the American Board: An account of the first hundred years of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* (Boston, New York & Chicago: Pilgrim Press, 1910).

<sup>29</sup> See, e.g., Strong, *Story of the American Board*, pp. 41–42, 482–83; Marvin D. Hoff, *The Reformed Church in America: Structures for mission*, The Historical Series of the Reformed Church in America, 14 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1985), p. 51; Dana L. Robert, *Christian mission: How Christianity became a world religion* (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009) pp. 69–70, 92–93; Philip Wingeier-Rayo, “The impact of the World Missionary Conference on Mexico: The Cincinnati Plan”, in Miguel Alvarez (ed.), *The reshaping of mission in Latin America*, Regnum Edinburgh Centenary Series, 30 (Oxford: Regnum, 2015), pp. 37–38, 41, 43–44.

<sup>30</sup> J. Orin Oliphant, “The American missionary spirit, 1823–1835”, *Church History*, 7 (1938), 126–27. See Strong, *Story of the American Board*, pp. 140–42, 145–46, 320, 325, 330–33, 464–68, 484–86; Earl R. McCormac, “Missions and the Presbyterian schism of 1837”, *Church History*, 32 (1963), 41–42; Hoff, *Reformed Structures for mission*, pp. 43–52, 125–32, 158–59.

<sup>31</sup> See below: in Chapter Two, p. 63, in Chapter Seven, p. 232.

<sup>32</sup> Trim, *A passion for mission*, pp. 28–30.

## **PART I**





## Chapter One

### What is a “missionary”?

Significant portions of both this chapter and the following chapter are based on statistics. The nature of the data available complicates the analysis: we have important data on missionaries for part but not the whole of our history. As such, it will be helpful to clarify a few points about our missionary statistics, points of which some readers will be unaware. This chapter focuses on the raw numbers concerning missionaries; the following chapter looks more closely at those missionaries to reveal what they were actually doing. First, however, it must be made clear that these chapters are looking at major trends for the purpose of identifying major areas both of success, and of challenge that should awaken our concern. If there are serious problems with the missionary enterprise, they will emerge from an overview of statistics. That is to say, there is a “story” behind the numbers, if we look closely. And it is just such stories, or patterns, that may prove crucial for missiologists, church administrators, and interested lay members.

The key metric for missionaries, for most of the church’s history, was the annual number of “missionaries dispatched”: the year’s total of *new* “appointees” (a term officially adopted in 1910)<sup>1</sup> sent out into the mission field. It is unclear why no count was kept of the number of missionaries in service—on the face of it, a more important figure. The GC only began reporting the annual total of IDEs in service in 1997,<sup>2</sup> and early in the 2000s GC Secretariat did a retrospective assessment of numbers “in field” back to 1979.<sup>3</sup>

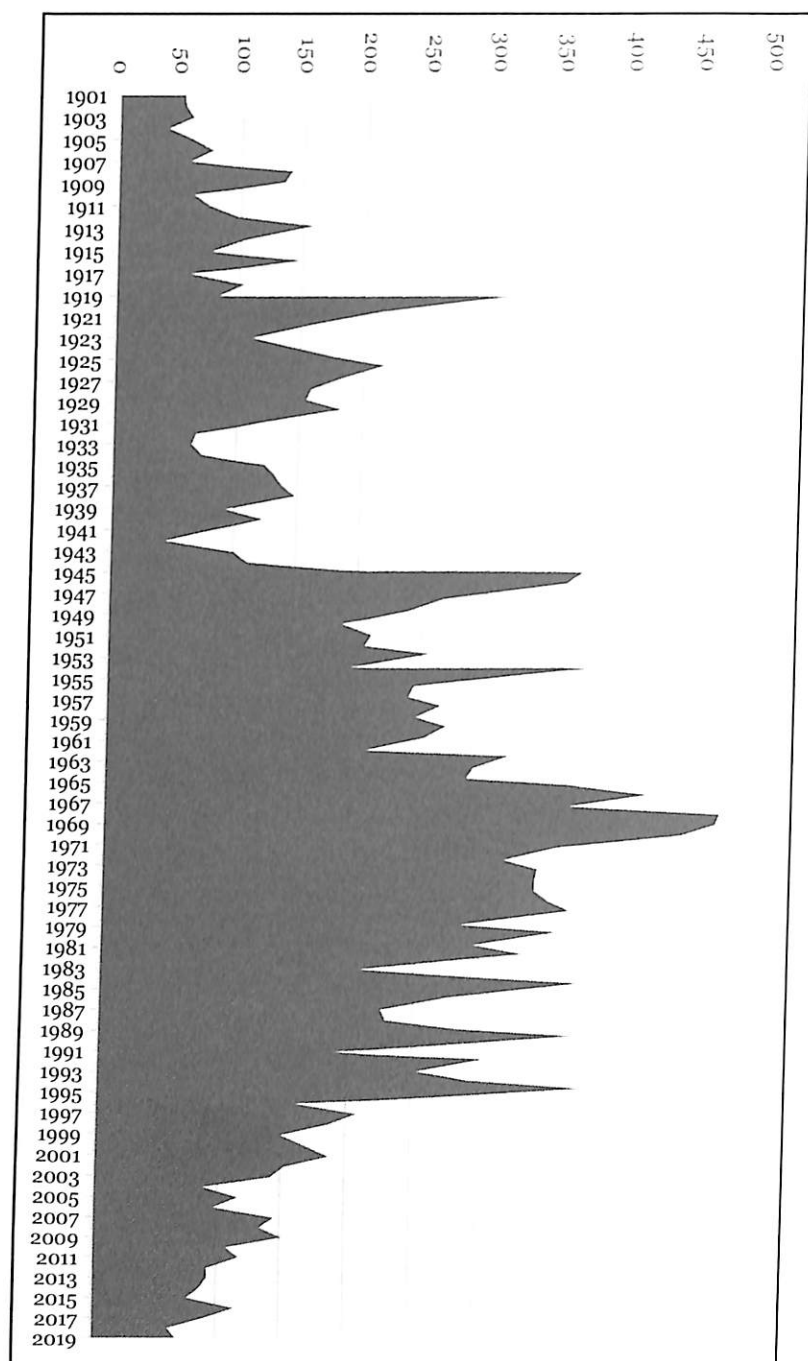


Figure 1.1: New Missionary Appointees *Per Annum*, 1901–2019

## What is a “missionary”?

Thus, starting in 1979, there are statistics for the total number of missionaries *currently serving* each year. For the main GC missionary metric, new missionaries or IDEs/ISEs appointed, there are reliable annual statistics from 1901 to the present (Figure 1, p. 2).<sup>4</sup> In addition we have some data on where missionaries were called from and the type of work they were called to do. Some of this data was retrospectively compiled by Secretariat: one report, prepared for the secretary’s report to the 1970 GC Session, gives breakdowns of the annual totals of new missionary appointees, by division of origin, for 1958 through 1969.<sup>5</sup> Another report, prepared in the early 1980s, gives annual breakdowns of the types of work missionaries were being sent to carry out for 1946 through 1980. The statistics are incomplete but constitute a large enough sample that the proportions must be roughly accurate.<sup>6</sup> From 1998 onward we have annual reports that classify the type of work IDEs were called to do, as well as the divisions they were called from and to which they were sent. Finally, we have what seem to be reliable statistics for the annual totals of appointees from the North American Division (NAD) from 1903 onwards.<sup>7</sup> By extrapolation, this gives us the figures for total non-NAD origin appointees from 1903 up to the present.

When we say that we have “reliable statistics” for certain periods, however, what are they statistics *of*? When we speak, for example, of annual totals of new “missionaries,” who was, or is, regarded as a missionary? In other words, what was being counted? This is not only a question relevant for statistics; as we are looking at the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s foreign missionary program, what exactly are we actually talking about? Over the course of the soon-to-be century and a half since the denomination dispatched John Andrews abroad as its first foreign missionary, are we comparing apples with apples?

The Adventist Church only formally defined those working in its missionary enterprise in 1974, exactly one hundred years after

## Chapter One

Andrews sailed for Europe.<sup>8</sup> Probably there was always a sense of “everyone knows what a missionary is”, so that there was no need to define it. Of the two formal definitions of a missionary adopted in the last 43 years, neither can simply be applied retrospectively. The definition of an “interdivisional employee” (IDE), adopted in 1974, cannot be applied before 1909 and arguably not until after the 1918 GC Session when divisions took on something like their present form. The definition adopted in 2013, “a denominational worker serving in a foreign country,” cannot be easily applied to our history, for reasons that will become clear in a moment.

In *official* terminology, “missionary” was not used for much of our history. For example, the *1923 Annual Statistical Report* was the first to report statistics on missionaries, but the title of the relevant table was “*Laborers Sent to Foreign Fields*.” Its title was changed in 1927 to “*Evangelistic Laborers Sent to Foreign Fields*,” changed again in 1941 to “*Workers Sent to Foreign Fields*,” and, in 1958, to “*Workers Sent to Mission Fields*.” In 1975, after the adoption of the terminology of “IDE,” the table was entitled “Regular new workers accepting calls outside the home division,” which is bureaucratese, but at least describes what was being counted; in 1998, the table became more briefly but even more blandly titled the “International Deployment of Personnel” (which did not count anything like all denominational personnel deployed internationally). Back in the 1930s the application forms that would-be missionaries completed were to serve as “workers in . . . mission fields,” not missionaries.

Why the absence of the iconic term “missionary” from our official records? By the 1970s there were cultural and political reasons (discussed in Chapter Two, below, p. 63). But fifty years earlier, it was, we suggest, because church leaders liked to stress that there were *home* missionaries as well as *foreign* missionaries. In any case, Adventists talked and wrote about missionaries all the time for much of the twentieth century, even if not in official forms.

## What is a “missionary”?

In the absence of a formal definition of missionaries for the period up to 1975, we are obliged to deduce in hindsight what Adventists understood “missionaries” to be.

Happily, it is possible to ascertain from practice how the term was defined. In the 1870s, definition was easy: a missionary was someone sent overseas from the United States. But thanks to such missionaries, the Church first created new Adventist heartlands beyond the original North American homeland, and then recruited church workers in them. By the first decade of the twentieth century, if not earlier, British, German, Swedish, Australian, and South African workers and their families were engaged in what Adventist editors, writers, and church leaders all described, at the time and since, as missionary service.

Thereafter, “foreign” could no longer mean simply outside the U.S.A. But a foreign missionary could also not simply be described as *any* “laborer” working a country foreign to him or her. For example, in the 1890s or early 1900s, a Dane working in Sweden or a German in Switzerland apparently was not a “missionary” and neither was a U.S. citizen working in Canada. But a German in the Middle East or a Swede in Africa was; and, at least early on, a Dane, pastoring in Finland and a French pastor in Portugal were counted as missionaries, too. That seems to be because Finland and Portugal were initially termed mission fields—yet an *American* or *Canadian* working in Germany, the Scandinavian countries, or Great Britain *also* counted as a missionary, even after they stopped being regarded as mission fields.

Corresponding to the ambiguousness of “missionaries,” the term “mission field” is another Adventists did not formally define. In practice, it meant more than an organizational unit with the title of mission; this is evident from the fact that, by the 1920s, regions clearly regarded as mission fields included organized conferences. Recognition that the term “mission field” was only loosely defined makes it possible to establish a working definition of “missionary”.

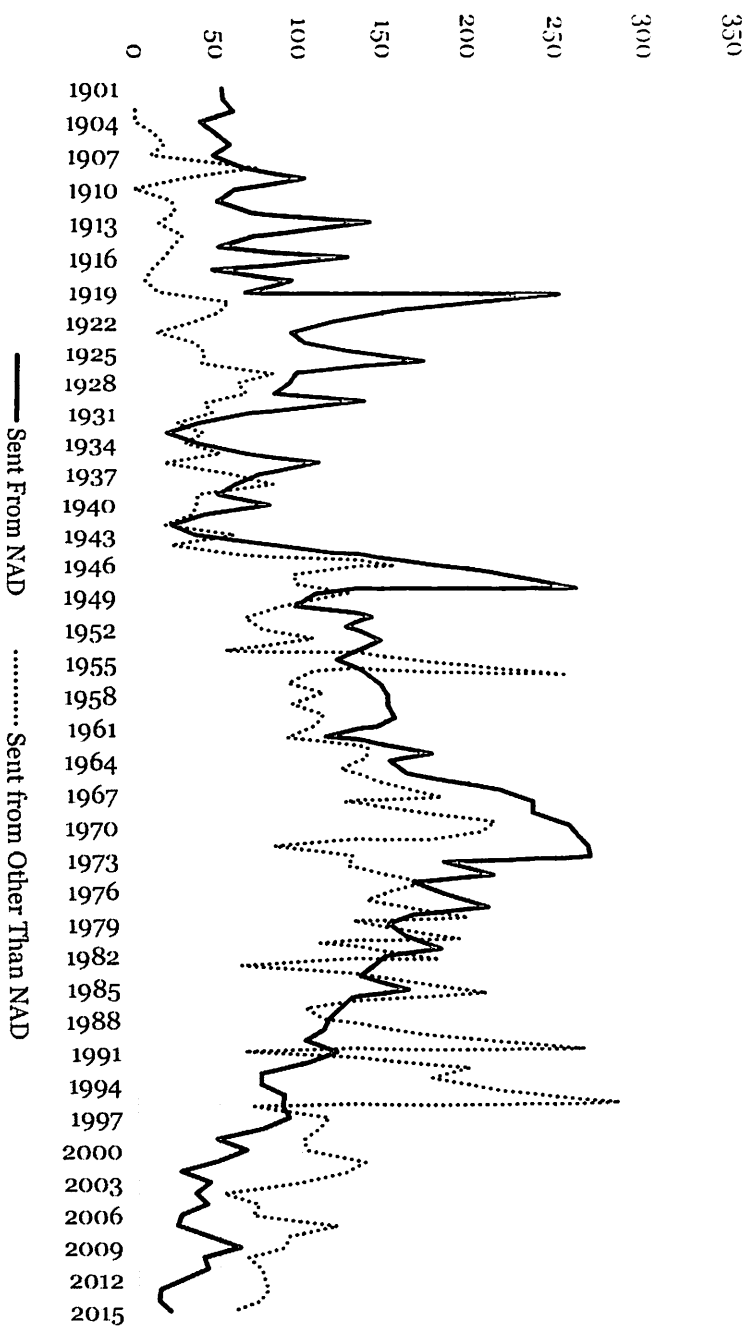


Figure 1.2: New Missionaries Per Annum 1901–2015: NAD Total and All Other Divisions' Total

## What is a “missionary”?

For the first hundred years of denominational foreign mission, a “missionary” was an American working *anywhere* outside North America; or a national of another country (and, as early as 1908, missionaries from outside North America exceeded those from North America, though this would not be repeated again until 1938: Figure 1.2, facing page) serving in a country foreign to them, *if* it was a mission field; and in either case, it was a person whose call to serve went through the General Conference Committee. This, in sum, is what the statistics starting in 1901 count. Thus, in this book, when we refer to statistics on “missionaries”, up to 1974 we mean missionaries according to the working definition just provided. From 1975 onwards, we refer to IDEs (retitled ISEs in 2014). In fact, the working definition above continued to be broadly applicable even after the adoption of the terminology of IDE.<sup>9</sup> In practice, probably most people who had been counted as “Workers Sent to Mission Fields” would have been counted as IDEs and vice-versa, so that the change would not have had much direct impact on missionary statistics.

There were exceptions. For example, church leaders from other countries called to the General Conference were often not classed as “sent to mission fields” early in our history, but from 1975 have regularly been classified as IDEs. In recent years, former mission field divisions such as those in Africa and Asia are making greater use than in the past of expatriate, but intra-divisional (even intra-union), workers who have not counted as IDEs, but might have been counted as missionaries in the old days—but then, in the old days, mission fields were more likely to call Westerners to serve as missionaries than to make use of national workers in regional foreign mission fields. Moreover, during the five decades that the three European divisions incorporated African mission fields, when church workers were called to mission appointments within those divisions, they were frequently (but not invariably) made via the General Conference; more recently, the two divisions

## Chapter One

based in Western Europe, the Inter-European Division and Trans-European Division, used interdivision budgets for intra-divisional workers in the Middle East (and they are not alone in this kind of usage). All this points to the persistence, in practice, of the old informal definition, despite the adoption of a new formal definition that should, in theory, have changed things. Old practices, like habits, often continue.

It is important to acknowledge that the statistics we have from 1901 can only be broadly, rather than entirely, consistent. Given the period and the lack of firm definitional criteria, there will be some workers counted as missionaries in the past who would not be now and vice versa. But these would have been exceptions and would not affect the trends revealed by the statistics of the large number of "missionaries" as defined above. It is also the case that we cannot say that statistics for the Adventist Church's official missionary enterprise represent the entire missionary effort of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Only since 2013 have intra-divisional missionaries in foreign countries been included in missionary statistics; in the first year of the new style of reporting (2014), divisions reported 415 of these workers in service worldwide, which is suggestive about their importance. As noted earlier, however, there is reason to believe that their numbers have increased recently, with several divisions making less use made of Westerners.

Also, the many workers from Australia and New Zealand who since 1901 have served in mission fields in the Pacific island nations were processed by the Australasian Union Conference (or, later, by the South Pacific Division), and thus never appear in GC records unless they later went to other continents. From the early twentieth century until as late as the 1960s, some British and European missionaries sent to East Africa were processed through the Northern European Division (NED), or even the British Union, and thus they never crossed the GC's statistical horizon; however,



## What is a “missionary”?

as already noted, many sent to the NED’s African territories from its European territories *were* called through the GC, even though they went within their own division. In all these kinds of cases the numbers involved for most of our history were relatively small. As such, we believe that the statistics presented and analyzed, in this chapter and throughout the book, represent fairly accurately the majority of Adventists working in mission fields, so that the trends that emerge from the statistics can be taken as indicative of overall, world-Church trends in support for missionaries.

To sum up: The Adventist understanding of “missionary” is consistent enough to allow evidence to be drawn from across the period as a whole, and still be comparing “apples with apples.” This allows us to use, with appropriate caution, the statistics for GC missionaries since 1901. They do have limitations but can be effectively used to indicate trends in the Adventist mission enterprise.

## Trends in Missionary Recruiting

The most significant trend in missionary recruiting can be summed up as a narrative of “rise and fall.”

As seen above (Figure 1.1, p. 26), after the landmark 1901 church reorganization, the number of mission appointees increased until World War I, then spiked again in 1920, before remaining buoyant for a decade until the coming of the Great Depression. In the first twenty years after the General Conference Committee took on the role of denominational Mission Board in 1901, the Seventh-day Adventist Church sent 2,257 “laborers to foreign fields.” Even in the fifteen years from the start of the Great Depression until the end of World War II, there were 1,597 new appointees. The quarter-

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century following, 1946–1970, was the golden age of the Adventist Church's foreign missionary program: in these twenty-five years, "Workers Sent to Mission Fields" totaled 7,385. During World War II, church leaders had already boldly planned to make up for the inevitable recession during the war years,<sup>10</sup> and they continued to build on success. Indeed, 1969 and 1970 saw the highest and second highest numbers of new appointees in our history: 473 and 470 respectively. These two years were the apogee. Since then, the story quantitatively, if not qualitatively, has been one of decline.

In sum, from 1901 onward, there was steady growth in the numbers of new appointees, checked only by the Great Depression and Second World War. This was followed by remarkable growth, which plateaued at the end of the 1960s. Since that point, however, the numbers of long-term missionaries being appointed have gone steadily and inexorably down.

### Different Metrics, Same Story

A similar story emerges from a consideration of the numbers of missionaries *in service*, as opposed to new appointees. As noted above, we do not have statistics for annual totals of *serving* missionaries until recently—starting in 1979, i.e., *after* the decline in new appointments had set in. Figure 1.3 (facing page) charts the numbers of missionaries in the field each year; one sees that there was a gradual decline in the numbers of missionaries serving each year during the middle 1980s, and then, in the late 1980s and very early 1990s a sharp decline. The rest of the 1990s saw a minor revival and effective stability until the mid-2000s when, in common with the figures for *new* IDEs, a further gradual decline began. This was arrested during the early 2010s, although there has been a further shallow decline. The overall picture is clear and complements that of new appointments.

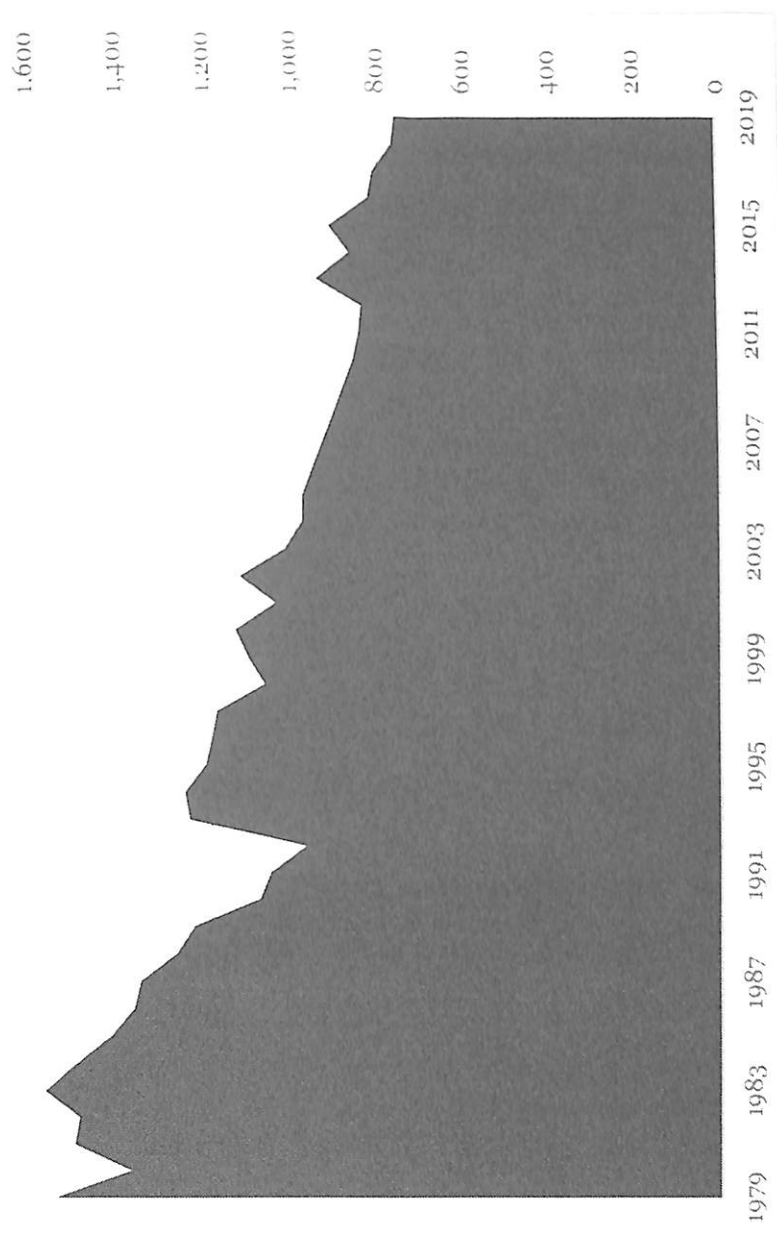


Figure 1.3: IDEs/ISEs in Service Per Annum, 1979–2019

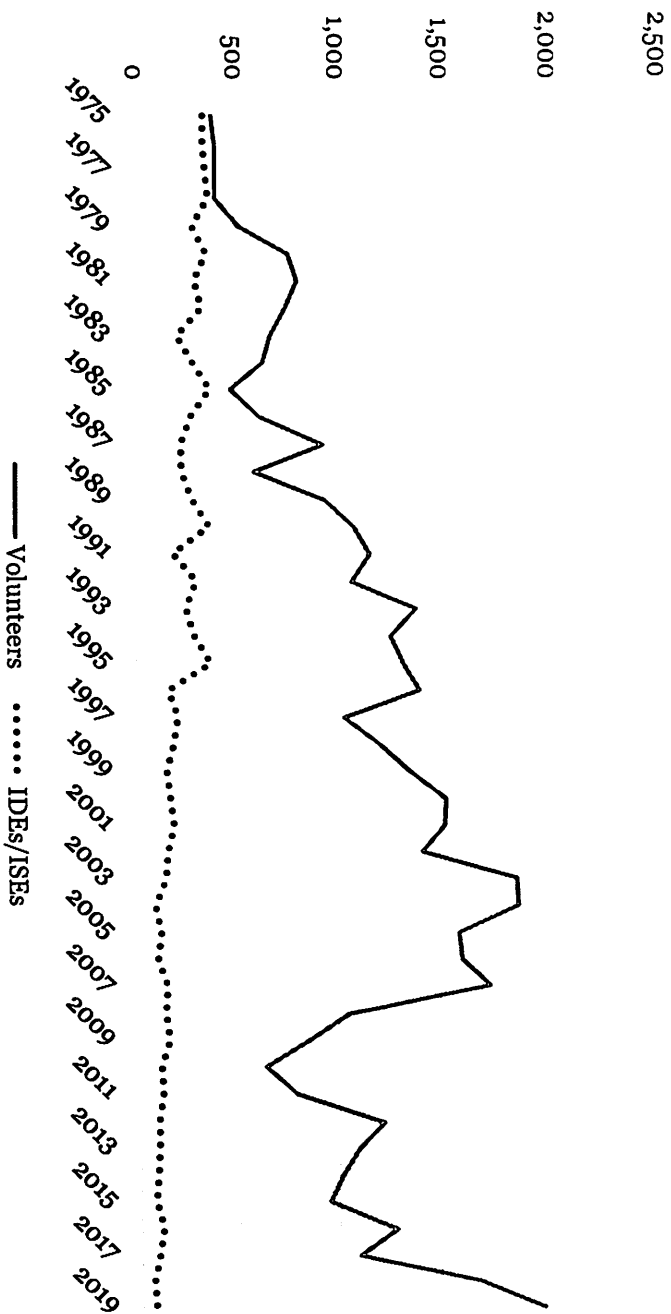


Figure 1.4: New Missionaries Per Annum, 1975–2019: Volunteers and IDEs/ISEs

## What is a “missionary”?

In the last fifty years, volunteers became a significant feature on the Church’s missionary landscape (Figure 1.5). Over the period, the number of volunteers sent each year dramatically increased, as the number of IDEs dispatched annually declined (Figure 1.4). To some extent this makes up for the long-term decline in numbers of long-term missionaries.<sup>11</sup> Volunteers are partly of interest for our statistics, though, because they distort them. The great majority of volunteers serve for one year, whereas traditional missionaries went for many years and today’s ISEs go for several years. Thus, at least four or five thousand volunteers would be needed to equal the manpower deployment of a thousand ISEs. All this is apart from the fact that longer-term missionaries bring to bear considerably greater sensitivity and knowledge on the culture around them than do short-term volunteers, and their knowledge lasts for several years instead of being lost after just a single year.

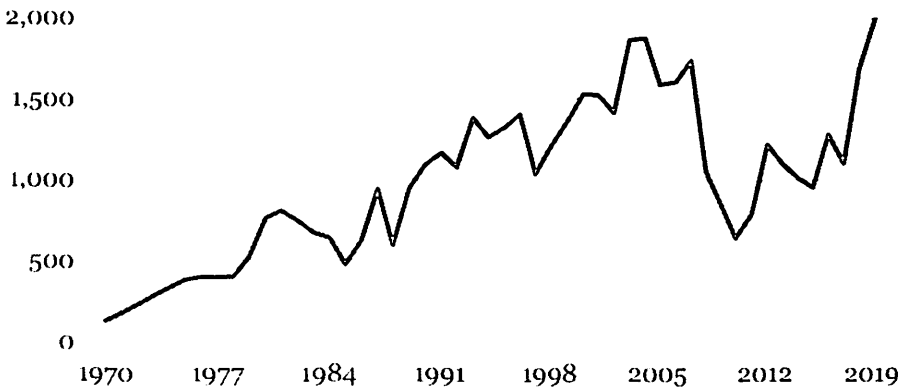


Figure 1.5: New Volunteers *Per Annum*, 1970–2019

The significant numbers of volunteers going out each year bear witness to a continuing interest in mission service among church members and are welcome for that reason; they are also welcome

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because volunteers can and do play a role supporting the work of long-term missionaries. A decrease in the number of ISEs (who are very expensive) can thus to some extent be made up by the increased use of more cost-effective volunteers, whose swift returns to their homelands help church members there to feel a sense of connectedness with other parts of the world. Nonetheless, volunteers cannot make up for the steep decline in the numbers of long-term missionaries both sent out and maintained in the field. Short-term volunteers tend to fill small gaps here and there in the mission enterprise—a boys' dean here, a maintenance assistant there, a media assistant over there. The cavernous need for qualified long-service missionaries has not been filled or substituted by volunteers. Only rarely are they doing the work the Church would expect from long-term missionaries.

While Figure 1.4 gives an insight into the balance between the two kinds of missionaries, it is seen clearly in Figure 1.6; it shows,

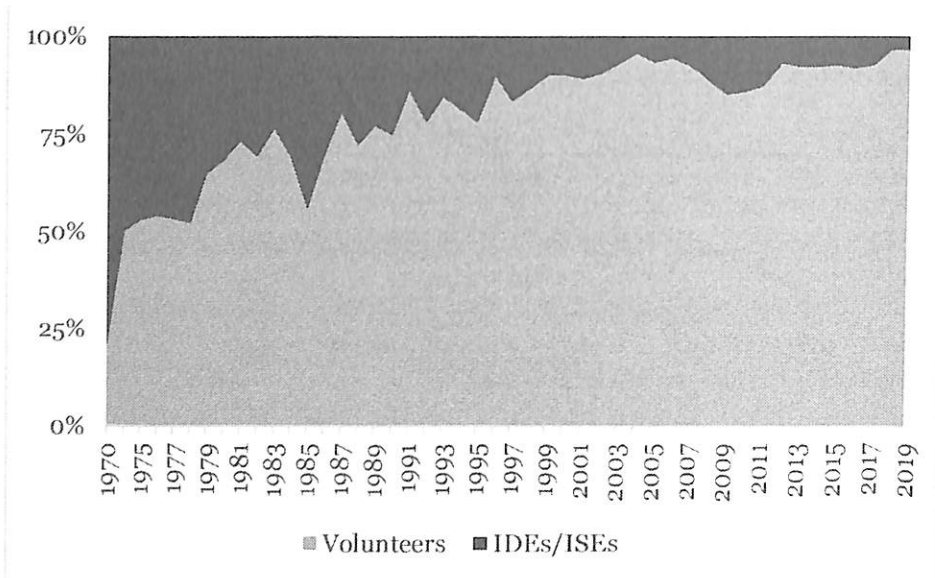


Figure 1.6: Balance of Volunteers and IDEs/ISEs, 1970–2019

## What is a “missionary”?

for a fifty-year period (1970 through 2019), the balance between appointees/IDEs/ISEs on the one hand and volunteers on the other—both categories are shown as proportions of the whole. In 1973, volunteers were more than 50 percent of the total number of new missionaries for the first time, but IDEs/ISEs never exceeded half the total again. Indeed, the last time they exceeded 40 percent was in 1985; the last time they were even equal to one in five was 1995.

The net fall in numbers of long-term missionaries is not the only disquieting trend. What should also be of concern is that the decline has occurred as the Adventist Church has experienced dramatic growth. There has thus been, even more, a falling away if one considers the trend in missionary numbers expressed as a *ratio* of appointees/IDEs per ten thousand church members, as is shown in Figure 1.7 (p. 40, over).

When one look at the figures in this way, one sees that the high point of Adventist missionary *commitment* was in 1920, when the number of appointees was equivalent to slightly more than 16 for every 10,000 members. This was arguably an artificial high, for, after the several years of World War I, in which few missionaries were sent because of the risks in taking ship abroad,<sup>12</sup> an unusually high number of new appointees sailed for their mission stations in 1920. The 310 new missionaries of 1920 were not matched again until the analogous post-war year of 1946, when 370 were sent overseas—just the first of seventeen years, in the thirty-five years following the end of World War II, which saw more than 300 new missionaries appointed. But the church membership was growing in that period and thus these numbers reflected a lower *per capita* commitment than the 310 of 1920—or even the 212 of 1921, a more realistic figure which represented more than 10 missionaries per 10,000 members. Yet 1921 was the sixth year (the first was in 1907) that new missionaries were equivalent to 10+ per 10,000 church members. The 1920s were good years, even seen through the lens

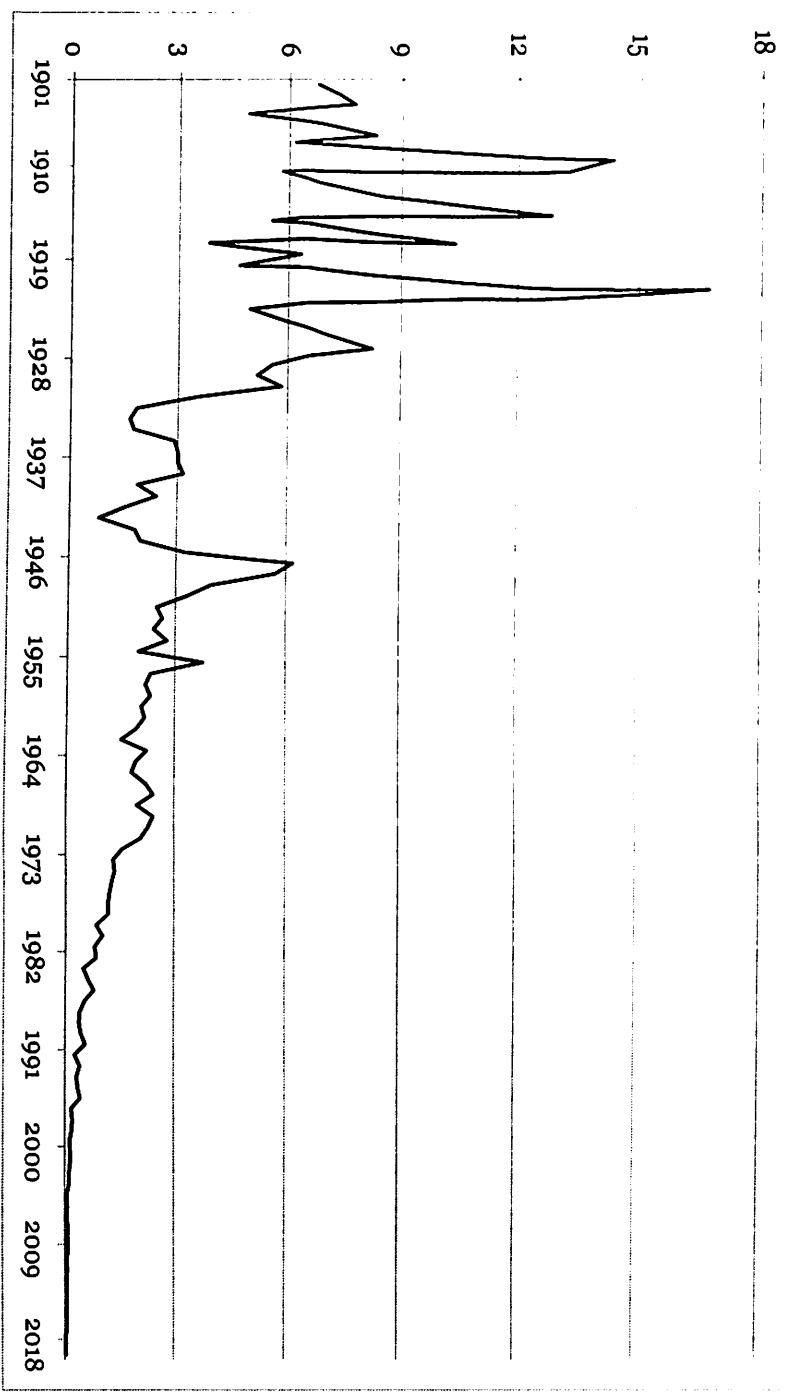


Figure 1.7. New Missionaries per 10,000 Members, 1901–2019



## What is a “missionary”?

of the missionaries-per-10,000-members ratio (Figure 1.7), before a decline due to the Great Depression and World War II, though the chart still shows spikes in the mid-to-late 1940s and the mid-1950s, reflecting an initial post-war mission expansion,<sup>13</sup> sustained by rising Church income in Western countries during the economically flourishing 1950s.

What, however, of the last seventy years? There is a period of general stability (with a few troughs but also a few spikes) from 1950 to 1970. Since then the trend has been relentlessly downward which reflects the downward trend in actual numbers as well as the ratios. However, the nature of what is being measured is that there will inevitably be annual fluctuations. It is thus appropriate to view these statistics not only as the actual numbers each year, but also as five-year moving averages. The trend depicted in Figure 1.8 only confirms the picture indicated by the annual statistics; the post-war boom is still present, but thereafter the graph shows first

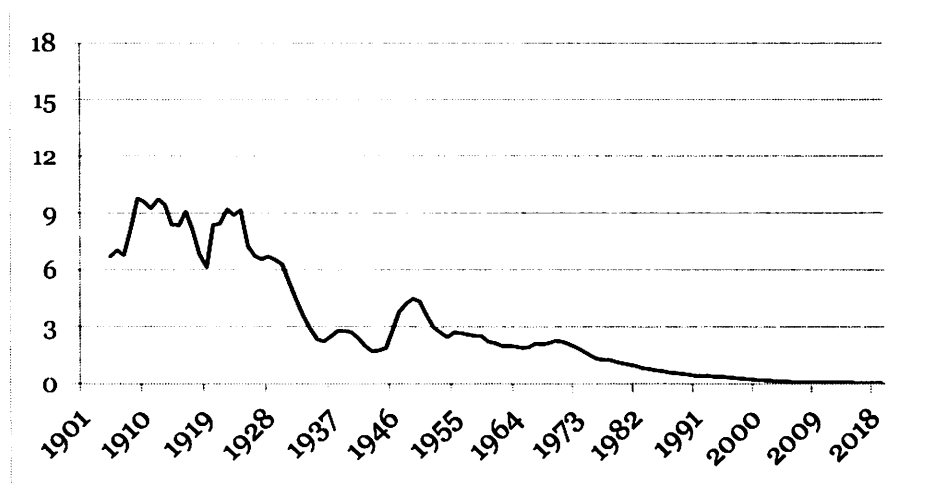


Figure 1.8: New Missionaries per 10,000 Members, 1901–2019:  
Five-Year Moving Averages

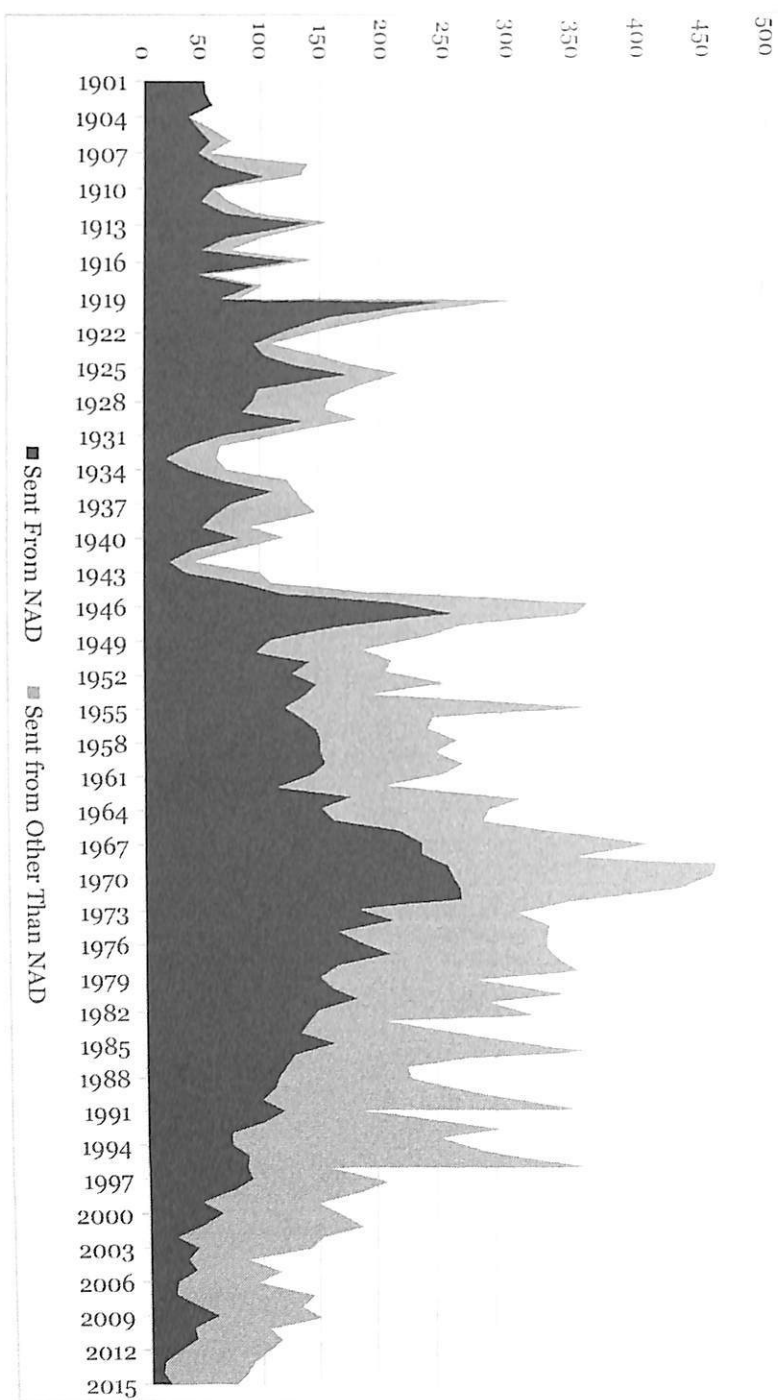


Figure 1.9: New Missionaries, 1901–2015: NAD and All Other Divisions' Total as Proportion of Grand Total

## What is a “missionary”?

gradual decline, then a sharper drop-off. Whichever way we look at the data, the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church is sending fewer missionaries, even as membership has grown exponentially—which makes the story harder to understand.

In contrast to the story of decline is a second significant trend, but an encouraging one of extraordinary growth in the percentage of missionaries from beyond North America, including from former (and even some current) mission fields. How the rest of the world has taken on the burden of the missionary enterprise is evident in Figure 1.9 (facing page) which shows total numbers of new appointees *per annum* for the period 1901–2015, but in two categories: the NAD total and the total of all other divisions combined. Even more revealing is the percentage split between NAD and non-NAD appointee/IDEs in the same time span, shown in Figure 1.10; it does not show the actual numbers which of course

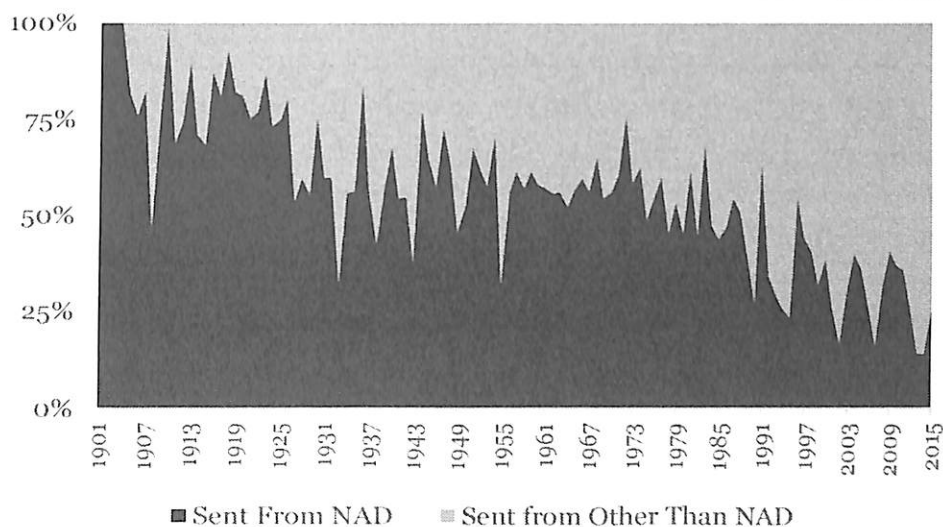


Figure 1.10: New Missionaries, 1903–2015, NAD and All Other Divisions: Annual Percentage Share of Total

## Chapter One

have declined overall but it reveals the significance of missionaries from outside the NAD, who are now regularly twice or three times as many in number as new missionaries from the original homeland.

In sum, during the 1950s and '60s, North American missionary recruitment grew, which helped to feed the record number of appointees; it was stable in terms of percentage into the early 1970s before declining. Contrastingly, in more recent years the rest of the world has taken up a greater share of the burden of recruiting for the denomination's shrinking cross-cultural missionary program.

\* \* \*

Thus far, after first considering the question of definition, we have delineated the overall trends of the Church's missionary enterprise. But this broad statistical context has left a number of questions unasked. In Chapter Two we will examine the trends in missionary employment, which help to reveal just what it was missionaries *did* while serving. Such data, when seen in connection to the above general statistics, will shed significant complementary light on the evolving nature of the mission enterprise and the precise nature of its decline.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> GCC, meeting of Sept. 26, 1910, in GCC Proc., VIII, 275.

## What is a “missionary”?

<sup>2</sup> *ASR 1997*, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> “International Deployment 1958–2003”, n.d., GC Ar., RG 21, Misc. Files.

<sup>4</sup> It should be noted GC Secretariat retrospectively created lists of historical statistics, including one for new missionaries dispatched back to 1874; but our research for this book revealed many errors, especially but not only in statistics for the first quarter-century or so of our missionary enterprise. The statistics presented in this present book *supersede* any/all charts or tables in previous publications by any of the three co-authors, or, collectively, by ASTR.

<sup>5</sup> “Missionaries sent from world field [1958–69]” and “From home base to front line 1962–1969”, both n.d. (but probably 1970), GC Ar., RG21, Misc. Files. The second document is clearly based on the first; it was published as a table in W. R. Beach, “Report of the General Conference Secretary”, *ARH*, 147, Supplement, *General Conference Report*, no. 2 (June 14, 1970), 7–10, table at p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> “Categories to which missionaries were appointed”, n.d., GC Ar., RG 21, Misc. Files.

<sup>7</sup> “New missionaries sent out from North America [1874–1983]”, n.d., and “New missionaries sent out from North America 1900–”, n.d. (c.1995: orig. only had one page, which ended in 1978, with a continuation page with data 1984–1995), and “New Interdivision Employees Sent Out from North America,” n.d. (c.2011—this gives figures from 1874, the same data as the previous two files, but updates through 2011): all GC Ar., RG 21, digital archive. The research for this book reveals that the statistics in these files are based on an inaccurate assessment of American missionaries in early decades. Figures from 1903 onward seem to be reliable.

<sup>8</sup> A definition of “missionary” was adopted in 2013: “Persons who are sent by the Seventh-day Adventist Church to work for periods exceeding two months in a foreign country or with unreached people groups” (Secretaries’ Council, Oct. 7, 2013). The term “IDE” had been defined when adopted at the 1974 Annual Council: Oct. 9, 1974, GCC Proc., XXIII, vii, p. 74–282. But we have found no definition of “missionary” or cognate terms earlier than 1974.

<sup>9</sup> On which see below, in Chapter Two, p. 63.

<sup>10</sup> See below, in Chapter Six, pp. 185–86.

## Chapter One

<sup>11</sup> In addition, since 1993 the Church has used considerable numbers of global mission pioneers: see below, in Chapter Seven, p. 225.

<sup>12</sup> The pioneer missionary to Britain and India, Homer R. Salisbury, did so and lost his life when his ship was torpedoed: see Ashlee L. Chism, "Salisbury, Homer Russell (1870-1915) and Lenna (Whitney) (1873-1923)", *ESDA*: forthcoming.

<sup>13</sup> See below, in Chapter Six, pp. 182-83, 196-97.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Trends in Missionary Employment**

Chapter One examined statistics illustrative of the overall trends in missionary recruiting. There are natural follow-up questions, however, about the kind of work those missionaries did when in the field. Has there been any evolution in what it is missionaries do? If so, what impact has it had on the overall missionary enterprise? In Chapter Two we examine these questions and do so (again, as in Chapter One) in long-term perspective, over the whole of the last hundred and twenty years.

In considering the trends in types of missionary employment it is fitting first to acknowledge that one of the largest categories of employment (or non-employment) has been that now classified as “unassigned spouse”. For much of the twentieth century, these were virtually all wives, who, up to c.1980, commonly did not have employment (see Figure 2.1, p. 48). They made up a very high proportion of the total number of adult missionaries each year; indeed, from 1946 (the first year for which we have statistics) through 1980, the average annual proportion was 43 percent. These data, as noted earlier, are incomplete, but it is likely that the proportions are roughly correct—not only for the thirty-five years charted on the next page, but also for the previous forty-five years. The heyday of the foreign missionary program was only made possible by the willingness of many wives to sacrifice the potential of extra wages, or careers of their own.<sup>1</sup> They gave themselves to the missionary enterprise just as much as their husbands.

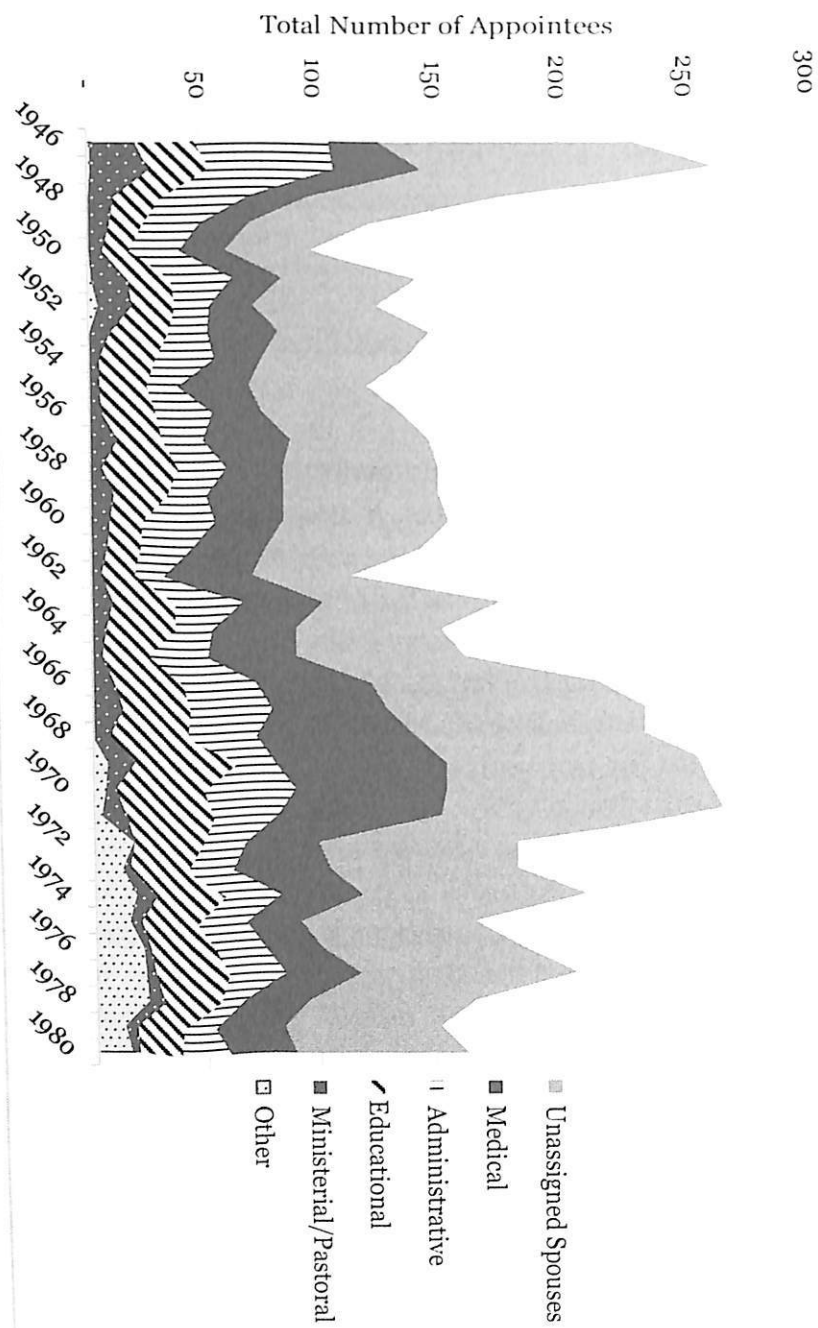


Figure 2.1: Missionary/IDE Employment, 1946–1980: Appointees and Spouses



## Trends in Missionary Employment

### Overview of Trends

Having acknowledged the importance of spouses (usually wives), when we look at the types of work appointees have been called to perform, and in fact performed, there has been a significant trend away from employing missionaries in frontline work—that is, working in direct contact with people of other religions or the non-religious in mission-field areas—rather than working in institutions or administrative headquarters. On the face of it, this shift seems understandable: after all, literature evangelists from the United States no longer work in the Caribbean, Central America, South America, or Southeast Asia, regions where, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they were prominent in the early spread of Adventism. There is now no need to call missionary pastors or evangelists to Uganda, Rwanda, or Tanzania, as was still happening up to the 1970s, because there are now many local people able to do evangelism, do it more cost-effectively, and do it better. Equally, whereas once mission and union presidents were always Western missionaries (which in some regions remained the case even after the workforce as a whole had indigenized), that is now rare (though the Middle East and China are examples where it is the case, at the time of writing).

It may seem inevitable, then, both that there should be fewer missionaries than in the past *and* that the proportion appointed to work directly in contact with local people in mission fields is less than it once was. Yet the reality is that there are huge populations (in the aforementioned Middle East and China, but in other areas too) that have been barely accessed by Adventists, so that the need of missionaries is no less; there is also still need of missionaries whose work is pastoral, evangelistic, or spiritual in nature. To be sure, such missionaries are *not* needed any longer in some areas that once were mission fields but now are home to large Adventist communities, with Adventist-to-population ratios better than in

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the original "home fields"; yet they *are* needed elsewhere. One *has* to ask, then, not only why there are fewer missionaries and fewer engaged in direct contact with the people they are called to work among. One has also to ask why no major redeployment of direct-contact missionaries has taken place *from* former mission fields (some of which should now be thought of as home fields) in Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, and parts of Southeast Asia and the South Pacific, *to* North Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, parts of Southern Asia and East Asia, and parts of Western Europe.

The reasons are complex but include important trends in the late-twentieth-century missionary enterprise that emerge clearly from statistics of missionary employment. These trends, which we summarize as institutionalization, especially medicalization and bureaucratization, represent a significant shift, one evident even before many African, Asian, and Latin American mission fields became strongholds. The end result is the appointment of ISEs *either* to work in institutions that are increasingly high-tech and provide services far more structured than in the past, so that missionary teachers, nurses, physicians, etc., have less contact with ordinary people than was once the case, *or* to serve in major headquarters (typically of divisions, sometimes of unions), where they relate mostly to other church employees, rather than to the people the Church wants to win—their direct contact with ordinary people is far more limited than if they were called to administrative duties even in a local conference or mission office, much less to pastoral or evangelistic work. The shift in the focus of missionaries once in service has become more pronounced in the last thirty years. But the trends started earlier.

The result has been, in effect, a gradual redefinition of what a missionary *is*—even as the older concept of a "missionary" has probably persisted among church members in North America and Europe. The specialized roles of ISEs, as perceived today, are not so relevant in many mission-challenged regions of the world. This

## Trends in Missionary Employment

helps to explain why the numbers of ISEs have declined, at a time when billions of people know little or nothing of Jesus, so that there is, on the face of it, still a need for talented church workers to be called to regions of the world without enough resources to evangelize their own territory. Today, thanks to the spread of Adventist higher education, missionaries are as likely to come from Mexico or the Philippines as from traditional home fields. But they, like the many ISEs still drawn from the Global North, are largely called to technical, technocratic lines of work; and this has been the case for several decades.

There is a range of evidence for this shift. First there are the objective data of statistics which illustrate the trend both toward medicalization and towards bureaucratization. There is also the evidence of correspondence and minutes. But first we will look at the *quantitative* evidence that illustrate the trends, and then we will look at the *qualitative* evidence of texts and documents.

### Quantitative Analysis

As observed in Chapter One, the statistics we have for categories of employment for the period 1946–80 were retrospectively put together and Secretariat was evidently unable to find information about some appointees, because the numbers for each category of employment do not, in most years, equal that year's total of new appointees. But while the statistics are incomplete, each year's figures are a large enough sample for confidence in the accuracy of the *proportions*, if not the numbers. These statistics thus are a reasonable guide to the *trends* in types of employment in the thirty-five years after World War II, which saw a steady rise and then the start of a decline in annual totals of new appointees.

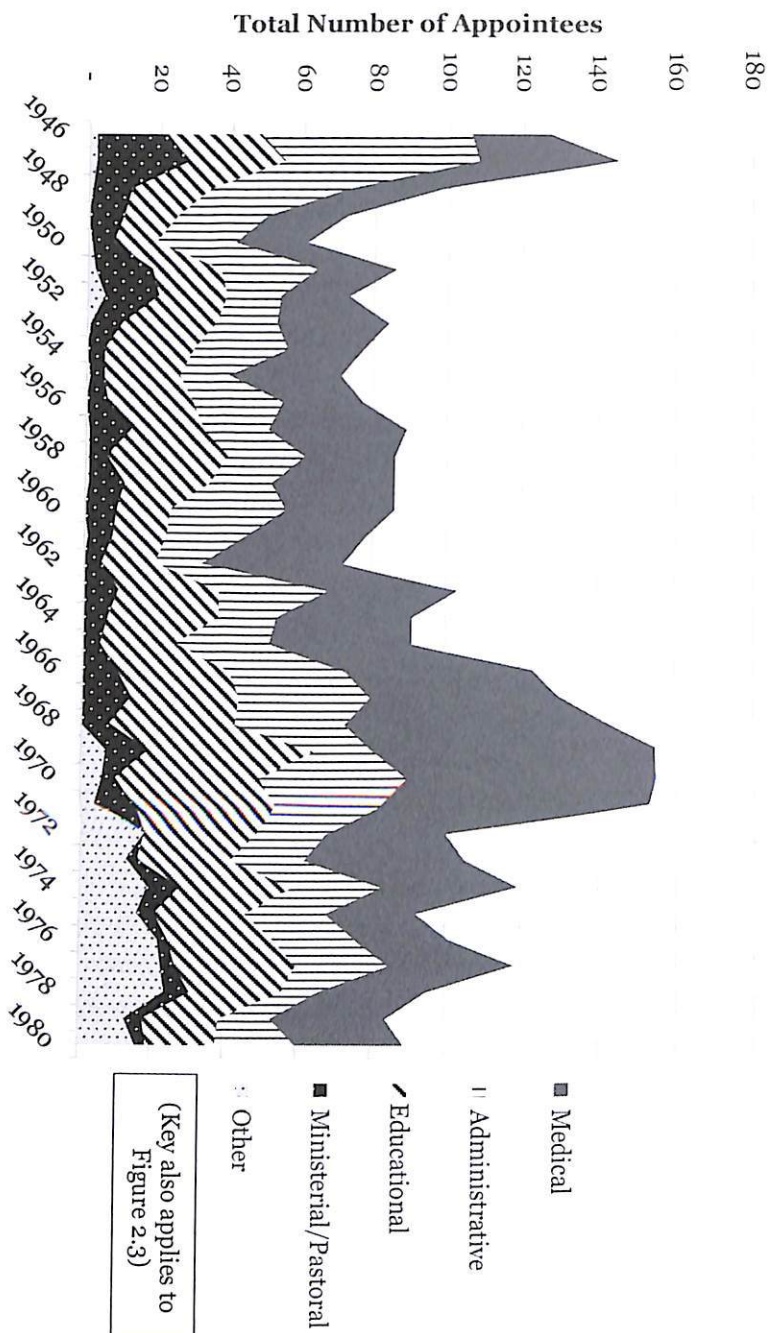


Figure 2.2: Missionary/IDE Employment, 1946–1980: Types of Employment of New Appointees

## Trends in Missionary Employment

The chart on the facing page (Figure 2.2) shows the actual numbers for 1946–80; it illustrates the increasing importance of the medical sector in the 1960s–1970s. This is underscored if one looks at the employment statistics (as in Figure 2.3, below) as a *percentage share* for each category of employment annually. This reveals the relative importance of front-line evangelistic/pastoral workers in the 1940s and 1950s, which dwindled dramatically in the 1970s even as medical employment looms ever larger. Church administration and education are substantial sectors throughout the period, but administrators decline from second-largest share to third, replaced by educators, whose rising proportion points to the increasing number of institutions reliant on missionaries.

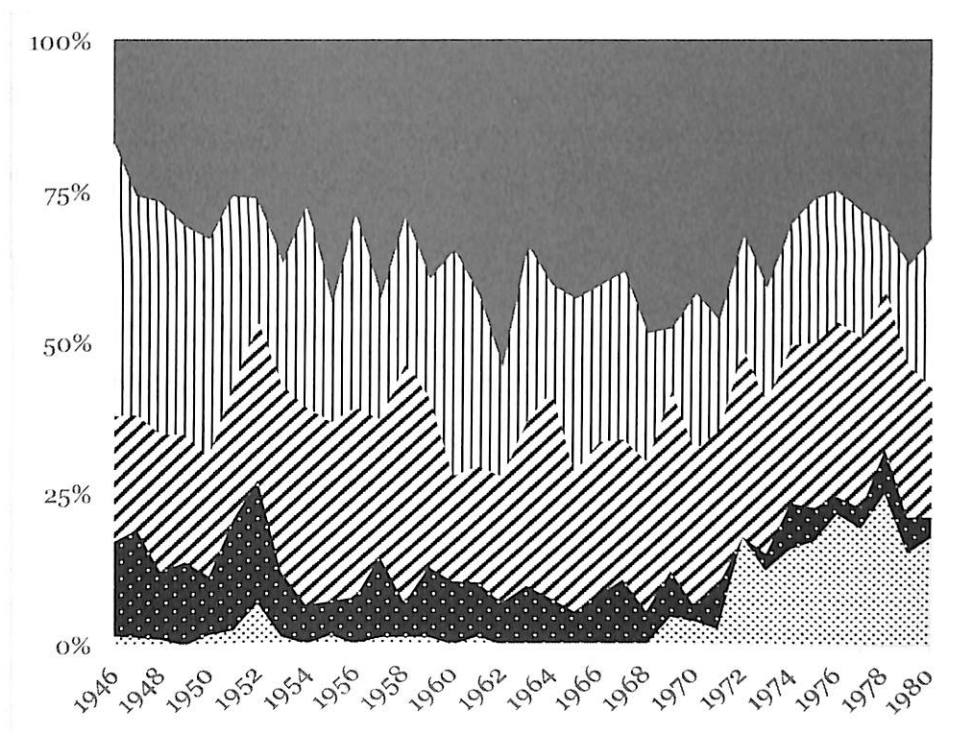


Figure 2.3: Distribution Between Types of Employment

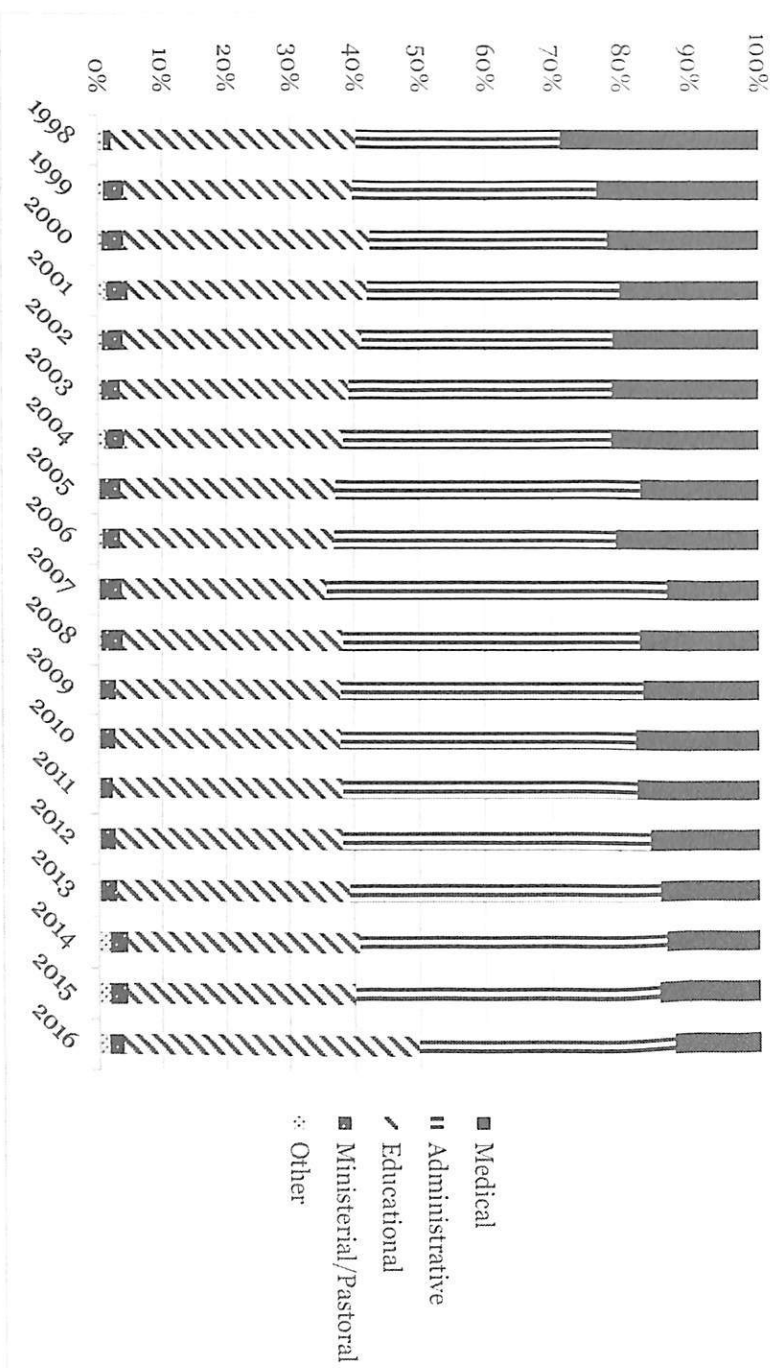


Figure 2.4: IDE/ISE Employment, 1998–2016: Types of Employment (Excluding Unassigned Spouses)

## Trends in Missionary Employment

What of the twenty-first century? As noted in Chapter One, starting in 1998 Secretariat produced annual reports which include classification of the types of work that IDEs in service were doing. The chart on the facing page (Figure 2.4) shows the statistics for category of employment for IDEs/ISEs in service in the field, excluding unassigned spouses (who in contrast to 1946–80 have usually been less than one-fifth of total and who now include some husbands); these statistics are shown to 2016, when the criteria for determining categories were revised, meaning the data thereafter are not strictly comparable). Figure 2.4 shows the *proportion* of the whole engaged in each type of employment. There is a striking difference between the two periods: the key shift is that the share (of a diminishing pool of workers) who were engaged in health and medicine did not increase in the twenty years; indeed, it decreased somewhat. The huge area of growth from the late 1990s was in general administrative work, which was the largest sector every year in the period, with an annual average share of 33 percent of missionary employees; and in education, which was never less than a quarter of the whole and averaged 28 percent. Pastoral and evangelistic workers lost only a little share, but they were starting from a very low bar, which did not improve at all. On average, only 2.2 percent of missionaries serving in the field are doing pastoral or evangelistic work.

## Qualitative Analysis

The statistics reviewed above support three hypotheses that arise from surveying textual and documentary evidence relating to the twentieth century, and from interviews with church leaders from around the world, relating to the twenty-first century:

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*First*, a sustained and mounting trend towards medical employment of missionaries in the twenty years to c.1980.

*Second*, the growth of for-profit Adventist education in some of the Church's world divisions, for which a well-educated and professionally qualified workforce is needed, almost necessitating, in many parts of the world, an international workforce.

*Third*, the increasing importance of administration at all levels of structure, and the need within headquarters for more specialized staff, especially accountants whose experience and skillsets makes passing audits more likely, and media and information technology specialists.

The documentary evidence for these trends is explored in more detail below.

### Medicalization

Medical missions were originally significantly evangelistic in nature. In the very early twentieth century, most Adventist medical "institutions" were clinics. This was true even of what later became hospitals but began in a rather humbler fashion. Nurses were regularly among the earliest missionaries sent to countries. For example, in India, where self-supporting literature evangelists started work in the early 1890s, the first four missionaries who were officially appointed (i.e., appointees) by the Foreign Mission Board arrived in 1895; the second party consisted of three nurses: two women, Samantha Whiteis and Margaret Green, and one man, G. P. Edwards (plus Edwards's wife).<sup>2</sup> In China, likewise, where the first Adventist missionary (from 1888) was a self-supporting lay worker, Abram La Rue, after the first party of three appointees arrived in Hong Kong in February 1902, a second party followed in October of that year: two nurses, Edwin Wilbur and his wife



## Trends in Missionary Employment

Susan. A year later, a party of six missionaries landed at Hong Kong: four physicians (Harry and Maude Miller, and Arthur and Bertha Selmon) and two nurses (Charlotte Simpson and Carrie Erickson).<sup>3</sup> Large sanitariums would later be established in China, but the Selmons and Millers did not work in hospitals; they and the nurses had to work in basic, sometimes primitive, conditions, which contributed to Maude Miller's death in 1905.<sup>4</sup>

Where there was no doctor and no nurse, a minister would deliver basic medical or dental care. Examples include John H. Krum and his wife, Leontine, the first missionaries to Palestine, and Ferdinand and Ana Stahl, celebrated pioneer missionaries to Bolivia and Peru. The Krums arrived in Palestine in 1898. For more than two years, John met with limited success in literature ministry. But then they founded "treatment rooms" in Jerusalem, in which, Krum reported in 1901, the "sick of all descriptions are being healed"—and from this as he also observed, came "more openings for Bible work than formerly".<sup>5</sup> From the start of Ferdinand and Ana Stahl's ministry, they offered basic medical treatment to the indigenous people of the Andes. In improvised "clinics and in mud huts [they] set bones, soothed fevers, pulled teeth, lanced boils, amputated members, and delivered babies."<sup>6</sup> (At the end of the book, Illustration 1 shows Stahl extracting a tooth in Bolivia, in 1911.) Stahl told the 1926 GC Session: "I should like to see a great many more of our medical people over there in South America. We need you very much." However, he assured his hearers, the medical work could be done by anyone who had faith. "Talk about qualifying, brethren and sisters, you are qualified! . . . Anybody who wants to do missionary work, the Lord will qualify".<sup>7</sup>

Even when clinics had a physician on staff they were engaged in fairly basic medicine, rather than being inaccessibly distant, almost godlike figures, as they would become in large hospitals. This meant that they, like the nurses, were engaged up close and personal with local people; medical work was innately missionary

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work in the classic sense of being evangelistic. Evidence of this is the fact that, in the 1890s and early 1900s, doctors sent to the mission field were regularly ordained, though those that worked in sanitariums in North America often were not. The reason was that a doctor in the mission field was on the front line and thus often would necessarily be engaged in ministry to souls as well as bodies.<sup>8</sup>

There is also explicit evidence of the way missionary doctors felt themselves to be on the front line of mission. For example, during the 1909 General Conference Session, at a meeting of the Medical Missionary Department, the experienced missionary Dr. Adalbert A. John, “read an inspiring paper,” emphasizing his view of “the medical missionary work—*preaching and healing—as one work*”, and giving examples of how his medical work had “opened the way” for witnessing to Mexican people.<sup>9</sup>

The professionalization and scientification of medicine that took place in the first quarter of the twentieth century began to have an effect on Adventist healthcare.<sup>10</sup> But missionary hospitals continued to be conceived of primarily as an entry wedge to allow proselytizing work.

Two division presidents’ reports to the 1926 GC Session make this point. African Division President William H. Branson told delegates that Bechuanaland (today’s Botswana) had been “a closed country to us”, with missionaries unwanted—“but [the British colonial authorities] said We do want doctors. We have no doctors.” Dr. Arthur H. Kretchmar, who had qualified as a doctor both in Britain and in the United States, was admitted and filled “an opening in [a] tribe”—and, Branson reported, “Inside of a year the whole tribe held its doors wide open, and we had full access to go in and preach the gospel.” Alexander W. Cormack, president of the Southern Asia Division, observed: “It is a very difficult thing to find a point of contact with some of these high-caste Indian people”. But, he continued, “that point of contact is provided for

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us . . . in the right arm of the message that God has given to us; and it is upon you, brethren and sisters, that the responsibility devolves of producing more of these medical missionaries for these needy fields."<sup>11</sup>

Gradually, though, there was a shift in mindset to simply maintaining and expanding the institutions that had previously been created. Hospitals were obliged to keep up with the ever-quickenning pace of innovation in medical technology and practice—if they did not, they might decline and be forced to close, and the idea that institutions, like individuals, might have a lifespan is one that Adventists rarely contemplate. Far too often, neither does the question: What are we keeping an institution going *for*? Adventists seem to feel instinctively that institutions *must* be maintained, for their closure seems like defeat. There is no question that many hospitals in mission fields retained a strong mission ethos; others, however, seemed happy to become the institution of preference for elite clienteles. This might be justified in terms of the profits and contacts that could be made and that would be directed to mission, but in practice the success of the institution seems to have become a mere end rather than the means to a greater end.

This tendency was evident at Shanghai Sanitarium-Hospital as early as the 1930s and later at Dar el-Salaam Hospital in Baghdad. Both were nationalized long ago, but there are mission hospitals in parts of Asia that the Church still operates today about which similar comments could be made; church leaders by the 1960s would boast, to church members, if not to the outside world, of how favored they were by royalty and wealthy clients, though how this helped (or helps) fulfil mission is opaque. An alternative example from history is Benghazi Adventist Hospital, opened in Libya in 1956, as a way of establishing an Adventist presence in what had been literally forbidden territory. The hospital was a success, in terms of healthcare, but had negligible missional

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impact on the indigenous population. In 1960, 17 staff members organized a church, but, by the time the revolutionary government of Muammar al Gaddafi nationalized the hospital in late 1969, there had been just one baptism in Libya and that was of an Italian expatriate. All the Seventh-day Adventists in the country were missionaries and their family members and all were expelled: thirteen years of first-rate medical work had resulted in no measurable missional results.<sup>12</sup>

As hospitals developed, moreover, they often abandoned the preventive medicine that had once characterized the Adventist approach to health and medical care. They also had ever larger needs for staff. Much of the time and energy of the Middle East Division administration went into the oversight of Dar el-Salaam Hospital and then Benghazi Adventist Hospital, and particularly into recruiting the very large workforces both needed, which, in order that staff members were Adventist, had to be largely if not wholly drawn from outside the division. For example, at the time of Benghazi's nationalization, the hospital relied on an expatriate staff of 105 missionaries, who came from around the world, and all of whom then required repatriation, at considerable expense.<sup>13</sup>

By the late 1960s there was a growing recognition among leaders of the missionary enterprise that it might be evolving in ways that were not entirely positive, and that locating the majority of missionaries in institutions might be ensuring they had little contact with local people.<sup>14</sup> At a Secretariat staff meeting in 1967, Secretary Walter R. Beach "presented comparative statistics on the number of current missionaries from North America, as of March, 1967 and as of October, 1964." He pointed out "that the medical and educational groups [had] increased" significantly, whereas the administrative and ministerial groups had decreased.<sup>15</sup> This seems, however, to have prompted no action.

By 1974, the needs of medical institutions loomed so large in the minds of some church leaders as they considered missionary

## Trends in Missionary Employment

recruiting that, for the first time, the Appointees Committee seriously discussed the “use of non-Adventist personnel to fill positions in overseas health-care institutions.” The committee requested Secretariat to draft a statement on this matter. The resulting draft emphasized “that the chief aim of our medical institutions is to cooperate in the evangelistic thrust of the church by revealing Christ to those who come under the influence of their personnel.” Secretariat’s version of the statement included three points, “reaffirm[ing] the principle that SDA institutions should generally be staffed with SDA personnel” and making it difficult for divisions and institutions to take on “non-Adventist professionals”. Yet it is striking that, while the Committee of Appointees adopted the report, it was only after “the addition of [a new] paragraph” affirming “that there may be . . . circumstances where it may be desirable to appoint a non-Adventist.”<sup>16</sup> Even to contemplate this as a possibility was a radical new departure that indicates how medical employment needs were now driving the missionary enterprise of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

## Bureaucratization

There has also, we argue, been a tendency to bureaucratization—and, moreover, to technocratization, technologization, and hyper-specialization.

In the 1950s, the pioneer missionary to the Middle East, George D. Keough [Illustration 25], then based in Beirut, lamented that the new missionaries coming out from America only “want to administer, and if there is nothing to administer they do not get down to work, but seek to create administrative posts for themselves.”<sup>17</sup> In the 1940s-’50s, there was some cynicism among veteran missionaries about the new generation; but that is not to say that there was not some grounds for their cynicism. Keough

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was not, or was not only, taking a cheap shot or engaging in rhetoric. Keough always retained his taste for direct work with indigenous people. He was later very proud that, in the late 1930s, though then the Arabic Union Mission president, he had “raised up the church in Amman,” in Jordan.<sup>18</sup> In the early 1950s, then aged in his 70s and holding senior administrative positions in the Middle East Division, he nonetheless, so the local union president reported, “had a hand” in a “series of evangelistic meetings” in the Arabic church in Beirut.<sup>19</sup> But these were the attitudes of an older generation. The attitudes were changing.

In 1972, Adventist missiologist Gottfried Oosterwal, who worked in the Institute of World Mission,<sup>20</sup> was invited to make a presentation to the GC Appointees Committee, which at that time exercised the key role, alongside Secretariat, in the GC missionary program. Oosterwal observed: “Today, Seventh-day Adventists have more missionaries in the field than any other protestant [*sic*] denomination, and in more areas of the world.” So far, so good, his audience may have thought, but then he added some less comfortable comments, observing that “a marked change in the pattern of missionary service” was taking place:

The vast majority of SDA missionaries are going out not so much to work for unbelievers, but rather for the members of the church in overseas fields. This is clearly reflected in the type of missionaries the church is sending out: the majority serve as teachers and in para-educational professions in Adventist schools; another large group consists of medical and paramedical personnel. At the bottom of the list are administrators.

But in fact there was an even lower category: “Hardly any evangelistic or ministerial workers are leaving the shores of North America today. The new missionary can . . . be characterized by the term: *specialists*.”<sup>21</sup> Oosterwal then predicted trouble ahead, based on the trends he had identified: “Mission may become

## Trends in Missionary Employment

too much church-oriented, thereby spending increasing amounts of money on the build-up of the church and the institutional care of its members and too little for the evangelistic outreach.” In what was a lengthy presentation, he later summarized: Missionaries today are teachers, professionals and specialists.”<sup>22</sup> This trend has only intensified in subsequent decades. Indeed, with the addition of calls to work in information technology, ISEs today are even more specialized, indeed technologized, than they were 45 years ago, when Oosterwal made his prescient diagnosis.

Two years later, in 1974, a notable shift in terminology took place. Decolonization and national liberation movements, along with the loss, in Buddhist, Hindu, and Islamic countries, of privileged status previously enjoyed by Christian denominations under imperial rule, made the term “missionary” unacceptable in many nations. In 1973 the Sabbath School Department raised this fact, delicately pointing that, “in some areas,” terms such as “missions, missionaries, mission offerings, missionary service, mission fields, foreign missions, etc. . . . are seldom used; yet, denominational publications printed in ‘home base’ lands use them copiously to the perplexity of church members in other lands.” In response, the GC Administrative Committee appointed an *ad hoc* committee.<sup>23</sup> The result was a process culminating, more than a year later, in the action at Annual Council in 1974, “regarding acceptable substitute terminology,” which suggested use of the term “‘interdivision worker’ . . . instead of the term ‘missionary.’”<sup>24</sup> This led, in turn, nine years later, to the adoption by Annual Council of “interdivisional employee” as the preferred term for a missionary.<sup>25</sup>

What is notable in the above is that, for the first time in our history, a missionary was defined by *church structure* rather than by service in a *mission field*. This is the very stuff of bureaucratic rationalization. Even though the intention was largely to make cosmetic changes to avoid controversy in some areas of the world,

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it is still revealing of a mindset. Indeed, it is consistent with developments in the GC Secretariat in the 1970s (as we show later, in Chapter Seven). But it is notable that the people who worked in Secretariat were aware of what was happening.

In 1983 there was a discussion of the missionary enterprise at Secretariat Staff Meeting—by this time, such overall deliberations, which were common at staff meetings in the 1950s–’60s, were unusual, and this one only took place because Secretary G. Ralph Thompson had scheduled it as a topic. The minutes record interesting conclusions. One was: “The kind of missionary we are training now is different than those we trained 15 or 20 years ago.” Then one member of the Institute of World Mission offered the following keen insight:

We have had a shift in the type of missionary we are sending out. This shift comes from our efforts to nationalize our staffs overseas. The supportive personnel that we are sending out are helping to prepare national leadership. We will, therefore, continue to need a large number of professionals, medical personnel, higher education personnel, and some administrative-level personnel.<sup>26</sup>

The Secretariat discussion concluded that, because “Division and Union level is where the need is determined, and we can only recruit as they request,” GC leaders “need to lay the burden on Division leadership” to emphasize “pioneer missionary work and pioneer evangelism.”<sup>27</sup>

There is other evidence, too, of Secretariat’s cognizance of trends. In 1984, for example, the undersecretary discussed with the associate secretaries the case of an American pastor who had been “under appointment to mission service” and had his call fall through but was still keen on mission service. The Minutes record, blandly: “The Staff expressed their opinion that much of the problem in appointing [him] is the fact that there are such few openings for pastor-evangelists.”<sup>28</sup> But this had certainly not



## Trends in Missionary Employment

always been the case. Consider for example that sixty years earlier during a discussion of missionary recruiting at the 1924 Annual Council, it was noted: “That at the present juncture we call particular attention to the need of recruits in the ministry, Bible work, elementary teaching, and colporteur work.”<sup>29</sup> The only institutional work mentioned is elementary schools. The contrast with later years is stark.

With hindsight, the end of the Secretaryship of Walter Beach was a turning point. He can be seen to have held at bay certain tendencies, though perhaps he was fortunate to have retired (1970) before they became irresistible. But Beach foresaw what was coming. In his farewell report to the 1970 GC Session he warned: “For us the Advent Movement is too often the End of the World, Incorporated.”<sup>30</sup> Whether or not he was thinking of the Adventist missionary enterprise, soon enough it was to become far too incorporated. The same was arguably to be true of Secretariat, too, as we will see in Chapter Seven.

## Conclusion

It is now almost 150 years since John N. Andrews sailed for Europe, the very first Adventist “laborer sent to a foreign field.” The number of new long-term missionaries, now called ISEs, being appointed to serve each year is remarkably low and not growing.

The four-year annual average of appointees for 2012 through 2015 was 86: this is not much more than the 85 that was the average number of appointees for the first four years of World War II, which included 1942, which, with 44, was the lowest year for appointees of any year since the nineteenth century. The four-year average has since fallen again: for 2016 through 2019 it is 83.25

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per year. This is only slightly higher than the average of 81.5 per annum for the first four years of the Great Depression, which gives some context! The last time before 2012–15 that there were three years in a row with fewer than 100 appointees in each was 1932–34 but the last time that there were four years in a row (which was the case for 2012 to '15) was 1905–8. The church membership in 1908, however, was 97,579 as opposed to 21,723,992 (at the end of 2020). We can add that in seven of the last eight years (2012–19) there have been fewer than 100 new ISEs.

Now, using the definition of “missionary” adopted in 2013 (which includes local people engaged in cross-cultural, front-line mission as well as long-term volunteers), missionaries *in service* in 2019 totalled approximately 7,300.<sup>31</sup> How does that compare to the past? Each year in the quadrennium 1905–1908, the new *appointees* were the equivalent of more than 6 per 10,000 church members, whereas today all the *missionaries* in service are equal to a fraction more than 3 per 10,000 members. Of this small body of missionaries, the proportion engaged in actually sharing the gospel, in actually encountering ordinary people in mission fields, is also lower than at any time in the first half of the twentieth century.

It is true that there are now a larger number of Adventist volunteers, while many church members go on short-term mission trips, which was not the case half a century ago; moreover, there is television, radio, the internet, and social media, all of which have the potential to reach far more people than simply a few more missionaries. But TV and radio have been around for a long time, including years when the number of “workers sent to mission fields” was rather higher. In any case, TV and the internet in practice seem to be most successful in already Christianized countries,<sup>32</sup> and recent research suggests that radio needs “boots on the ground”, following up interests with a personal touch. Short-term mission trips do more to build enthusiasm in Adventist

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heartlands for yet more short-term foreign missions than they do in reaching and evangelizing unreached people groups. That is not to say volunteers, of either the short-term or year-long sort are not wonderful, but *they do not replace long-term missionaries*, who learn to adapt to local people and cultures.

Adventists have taken literally Christ's words to His followers near the end of His earthly ministry: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all; and then shall the end come" (Matt. 24:14 KJV). Adventists want to preach the good news of God's kingdom to all the world; for, as President Arthur G. Daniells put it in 1905, summarizing what was a consensus among church leaders: "Then, and not till then, will the end come, for which we so earnestly long."<sup>33</sup> Many of the nations of the world have had the gospel proclaimed widely in their territories already; what does this mean in light of Adventist eschatology? Here, remarks by Erton Köhler, then South American Division president (who, in April 2021, became GC secretary), made in 2015 to the Global Mission Issues Committee,<sup>34</sup> are particularly apposite: Köhler argued that, were Adventists to keep reaching ever larger percentages of the same nations, but fail to preach "this gospel of the kingdom" to *all* nations, the end still would not come. If the gospel is to be successfully proclaimed to all nations, then the Adventist Church needs more long-term missionaries, reaching the unreached.

To conclude this overview of the history of the foreign missionary enterprise of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, it is, by all kinds of metrics, at a low ebb. If the Church wants to reach the world, there is a strong case that more of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's resources should be invested in cross-cultural mission and in front-line mission, and that world Church resources should be committed to those regions of the world where the local church lacks the resources to reach its territory. This would be a radical shift and yet also a conservative one, because it

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would be reverting to the model of mission of a century ago, which is what made this church truly a worldwide movement. Such a shift would require more than additional funding; and more, too, than recruiting and sending more cross-cultural missionaries; significant administrative reforms might also be required. Yet all the evidence we have indicates that the foreign missionary program is no longer the denominational priority it once was—and that its focus is no longer as much on reaching the unreached as it once was.

Perhaps Adventists are actually okay with that. But if not, we cannot keep on doing business as usual.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> For one instance of this wider trend, see Milton Hook, “Gray, Kenneth John (1912–1986) and Dorothy Beatrice (Smith) (1915–1999)”, *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*: <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=D7WQ>

<sup>2</sup> Lester Devine, “Masters, Fairley (1869–1954)”, *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*: <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=A7ZT>; sub “India”, *SDAE*, 1, 747–48.

<sup>3</sup> *YB 1904*, p. 73; sub “China”, *SDAE*, 1, 334; Handel Luke, “Hong Kong–Macao”, in Gil G. Fernandez (ed.), *Light dawns over Asia: Adventism’s story in the Far Eastern Division 1888–1988* (Silang, Philippines: AILAS Publications, 1990), p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> D. J. B. Trim, *A living sacrifice: Unsung heroes of Adventist mission* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press, 2019), pp. 58–59.

<sup>5</sup> L. R. Conradi (president of the European Union Conference), report to thirty-fourth GC Session (1901), quoting letter from Krum:

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“Missionary talks given in the Tabernacle: April 13”, *GCB*, 4, Extra no. 11 (April 15, 1901), 247; and Arthur Whitefield Spalding, *Christ’s last legion* (Washington, D.C.: RHPA, 1949), p. 450 and cf. p. 34.

<sup>6</sup> Charles Teel, Jr., “Fernando and Ana Stahl—Mediators of personal and social transformation”, in Jon L. Dybdahl (ed.), *Adventist mission in the 21st century: The joys and challenges of presenting Jesus to a diverse world* (Hagerstown, Md.: RHPA, 1999), p. 279.

<sup>7</sup> Forty-First GC Session: A. W. Truman, “Medical Department Meetings” (May 27, 1926), report in *ARH*, 134, Supplement, *General Conference Report*, no. 34 (June 17, 1926), 9.

<sup>8</sup> See D. J. B. Trim, “Ordination in Seventh-day Adventist history”, Theology of Ordination Study Committee, Jan. 15–17, 2013: <https://www.adventistarchives.org/january-2013-papers-presented>, pp. 22–23.

<sup>9</sup> Thirty-Seventh GC Session: “Medical Missionary Department” (meeting May 16, 1909), minutes in *General Conference Bulletin* 6:3 (May 17, 1909), 29, emphasis supplied. Dr. John initially served as a missionary in England and Wales for the International Tract and Missionary Society and returned to the States in 1894 to attend medical school in Michigan and Illinois. See Frederick Griggs, “Dr. A. A. John”, *ARH*, 98:15 (April 14, 1921), 22.

<sup>10</sup> See D. J. B. Trim, “Attitudes to science and medicine among Adventist church leaders, c.1880–1936”, in Lynden J. Rogers (ed.), *Changing attitudes to science within Adventist health and medicine from 1865 to 2015* (Cooranbong, N.S.W., Australia: Avondale Academic Press, 2015), pp. 92–103.

<sup>11</sup> Truman, “Medical Department Meetings”, p. 10.

<sup>12</sup> Jay P. Munsey, “The right arm of the gospel in Libya”, *ARH*, 137:21 (26 May 1960), p. 22; D. J. B. Trim, “Seventh-day Adventist Mission in the Middle East” (ASTR, unpublished report, 2011), pp. 11, 31; Benjamin Baker, “The vanished mission field”, *Mission 360°*, 5:1 (2017), 20–21.

<sup>13</sup> Trim, “Seventh-day Adventist Mission in the Middle East”, 33, and

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Baker, "Vanished mission field", 21–22. See Benghazi Hospital files, for 1963–73, GC Ar., RG ME 31, box no. R1355. Many of the missionaries came from the Far Eastern Division.

<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, there seems to have been no wider reflection as to whether reliance on mission posts and compounds was by this time separating missionaries from local people; for an example of this kind of self-critical reflection by other Protestants, see Michael Baer's comments on Indonesia, in *Business as mission: The power of business in the kingdom of God* (Seattle: YWAM Publishing, 2006), p. 81.

<sup>15</sup> Committee on Appointees, March 22, 1967, Appointees Committee Minutes, 1967–68, p. 1797, GC Ar., RG 21, box MIN 27.

<sup>16</sup> Committee on Appointees, March 20, 1974: rubric "Offers of Service by non-Adventists" and voted statement with that heading, Appointees Committee Minutes, pp. 74–47, 48, GC Ar., RG 21, box MIN 29.

<sup>17</sup> Keough to Arthur Vine, 17 Aug. 1950, Roy Graham Library, Newbold College, Keough Papers, fld. 4, no. 69.

<sup>18</sup> Keough to John Bodell, 4 Nov. 1970, Rebok Memorial Library, Keough Papers (unaccessioned manuscripts).

<sup>19</sup> East Mediterranean Union president's report, Nov. 1954, p. 2, in GC Ar., RG MEEM11, box R1327, fld. "Circular Letters".

<sup>20</sup> See below, in Chapter Six, pp. 189–90.

<sup>21</sup> Committee on Appointees, Feb. 2, 1972, three-page attachment to Appointees Committee Minutes between pp. 72–14 and 72–15, quotations at pp. 1, 2 (emphasis supplied), GC Ar., RG 21, box MIN 28

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. Cf. Gottfried Oosterwal, *Mission: Possible* (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publ., 1972), p. 50.

<sup>23</sup> GC ADCOM, Aug. 27, 1973, Minutes p. 73–70, GC Ar., RG 2, box MIN 1.

<sup>24</sup> GCC, Oct. 9, 1974, GCC Minutes p. 74–282; see also ADCOM, May 30, 1974, Minutes p. 74–137, GC Ar., RG 2, box MIN 1; GC Officers meeting, Oct. 3, 1974, GCOM, p. 74–37.

<sup>25</sup> Annual Council, Oct. 11, 1983, a.m., GCC Minutes p. 83–359.

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<sup>26</sup> Secretariat Staff Meeting, June 1, 1983, Minutes p. 83-95, GC Ar., RG 21, box MIN 253.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 83-96.

<sup>28</sup> Secretariat Staff Meeting, Feb. 6, 1984, Minutes, p. 84-22, GC Ar., RG 21, box MIN 253.

<sup>29</sup> Autumn Council, Oct. 20, 1924, a.m., GCC Proc., XII, ii, 747.

<sup>30</sup> W. R. Beach, "Report of the General Conference Secretary", *ARH*, 147, Supplement, *General Conference Report*, no. 2 (June 14, 1970), 11.

<sup>31</sup> *ASR 2020*, p. 11.

<sup>32</sup> For example, the most successful Adventist television network is, by some distance, Novo Tempo in Brazil.

<sup>33</sup> Thirty-Sixth GC Session: A. G. Daniells, presidential address, in *ARH*, 82:19 (May 11, 1905), 9, emphasis supplied. On this consensus, see Barry Oliver, "Why are we who we are? The ecclesiological polemic that shaped reorganisation," in Reinder Bruinsma (ed.), *Faith in search of depth and relevancy: Festschrift in honour of Dr Bertil Wiklander* (N.p.: Trans-European Division of Seventh-day Adventists, 2014), pp. 446-47.

<sup>34</sup> On the GMIC, see below, in Chapter Seven, pp. 226-27.





## **PART II**



## **Chapter Three**

### **Seeking “the Mission”**

#### **Organizational Experience and Domestic Evangelism, 1863–1901**

In the more than 150 years since the Seventh-day Adventist Church was founded at the first General Conference Session in May 1863, many things have changed throughout the institutional structure in the Church. One of the few that has remained the same is the office of Secretary, which is as old as the General Conference (GC) itself, but of course the role of the GC Secretary has changed. One of the changes is that he (and the secretary has always been a “he”) gradually acquired a staff—and its role, too, has changed over the years. However, as this implies, the role of the Secretariat has not been a constant in Adventist history nor in its mission endeavors. Secretariat’s role underwent organizational evolution. Initially it was primarily “secretarial” in the common understanding of that term, but it grew to encompass a much broader purpose—it grew to become integral to the orchestration of the missionary enterprise. However, after a long period of being primarily focused on foreign mission, its main concerns instead came to be governance, policy, and administration. Mission was still in its portfolio, but it did not have the same priority, even as successive secretaries and their associates insisted that it did. Uncovering the causes, characteristics, and consequences of this evolution of Secretariat is the theme of Part Two of this book.

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### Outline of Part Two

By way of overview, whereas Chapters One and Two focused on the origins and development of what today we call the ISE program, and illustrated its data chronologically and statistically, in Chapters Three through Seven we will trace the history of the mission enterprise from an administrative perspective. In those five chapters we discuss the development of GC Secretariat, especially in relation to the mission enterprise. This approach means that there is overlap chronologically between Parts One and Two (and some between Chapters Five and Six), but while this chapter and the following four chapters are a logical continuation of the previous two, they offer a substantially different perspective on the history of the Adventist missionary enterprise—when it was and was not successful, and more specifically *why* it was and was not successful; its history is viewed through the administrative lens of the GC and eventually the Secretariat. The view continues, then, to be a top-down one; a history of Adventist mission from the perspective of the missionary on the ground is much to be desired, but since, as we shall see, few if any church workers could have been sustained in mission fields in the absence of an administrative structure undergirding them, we see this history as a necessary precursor to what would be a much longer, more granular, but very revealing “ground-up” history.

What we show in this chapter is that the secretary’s role in the first four decades of the Church (phase one, 1863–1901) was chiefly as a conduit for communication and the collection of information. In Chapter Four we begin a three-chapter narrative of the emergence of Secretariat in the subsequent seven decades (phase two, 1901–c.1970): Chapter Four explores the significance, for the missionary enterprise, of the reorganization of the General Conference and its assimilation of the Foreign Mission Board during 1901–1903. Chapter Five details how Secretariat became

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what might be termed “mission control”: the world Church’s center for recruiting, training, and deploying of missionaries worldwide. Unfortunately, today it seems that this phase of the Secretariat’s promotion of mission has become a largely forgotten part of Adventist history. Many church leaders, much less church members, are unaware of Secretariat’s role in mission. Chapter Six will explore, in particular, the *impact* of Secretariat on foreign mission during the period 1930–1970, an era that now seems like a golden age of missions. It is the final era (phase three, 1970–present), however, that many readers will remember and will be examined in Chapter Seven. Secretariat still functioned as a central clearing point for calling missionaries and setting missionary-related policies, but it simultaneously became more and more focused on supporting the church’s burgeoning bureaucracy, and on policing Policy. In this period, Secretariat underwent, to put it bluntly, a process of bureaucratization that matched the bureaucratization of missionaries (described in Chapter Two). Most recently, the GC Secretariat proper and its associated entities at the Church’s world headquarters seem to be entering a new (fourth) phase, of a renewed focus on strategically planning for outreach to unreached people groups, and on supporting and developing cross-cultural mission, including the missionaries to undertake it.

The history depicted in these chapters provides a basis for the Conclusion, which will argue that being a center for the focused planning of mission is what the Seventh-day Adventist Church needs most from the GC Secretariat in the twenty-first century if the Church is to finally make a real or more penetrating impact on territories such as the 10/40 Window and large cities, where, in its 150 years, the Church has had minimal influence. The Adventist Church needs the GC Secretariat once again to become Adventist “mission control.”

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### Organizing for Mission—But to Where?

Just before the Church's official organization, Adventists already had a growing sense that "the field is the world"; in other words, that they could not be content to reach only their nearest neighbors. When writing about the parable of the wheat and the tares and Jesus' words, "The field is the world" (Matt. 13:38) in an issue of the *Review* from 1857, Alfred S Hutchins (later president of the Vermont Conference), commented: "The Field is the world; not the section near where you may live, nor where I may."<sup>1</sup> While Hutchins wrote in a time prior to the organization of any overseas work undertaken by the Adventist Church (and, indeed, wrote prior to the Church's official organization) and likely thought in terms only of reaching the whole of the state he lived in, the groundwork for the Church's focus on "sections not near where" Adventists lived is visible in his words. It would take time, though, for this concept of "the world" to come to *mean* the world.

### Organizing for the Purpose of Mission

Some, at least, of the original founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church thought of mission primarily in terms of foreign mission. This is implicit in the provisions of the first General Conference constitution (May 1863), and particularly in the responsibilities that it assigned to the GC Executive Committee, which for its first century was almost always known simply as the General Conference Committee (GCC). It was to have "general supervision of all ministerial labor . . . and missionary labor, and as a *missionary board* . . . have the power to decide where such labor is needed, and who shall go as missionaries to perform the same."<sup>2</sup> That is to say, the General Conference was created to

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foster synergy between the state conferences to help promote mission work where there was not a state conference.

Looking back, forty-two years later, the mission-minded and reforming General Conference President Arthur G. Daniells stated that “the first committee was a Mission Board.”<sup>3</sup> That language, like the same terminology used in that first constitution evoked, quite unmistakably, the great Protestant mission boards founded in Britain and America in the seven decades prior to 1863. All were predominantly concerned with overseas mission. The term “missionary board” thus connoted foreign mission and its use in the first GC constitution, along with discussions between early leaders of the denomination, suggests that some, at least, of the delegates who founded the General Conference in May 1863, had in mind mission beyond North America (one who definitely did was co-founder James White [see Illustration 2]).<sup>4</sup>

The GC Committee assumed responsibility for financing the missionary system. Those who worked as missionaries in North America were funded by church members: tithes and offerings; offerings taken up in Sabbath Schools; donations; appropriations from state conferences. The Executive Committee was responsible for deciding how these moneys would be allotted to the various missions and missionaries. It should be noted that in the early years when GC Sessions were held annually, fiscal decisions were largely decided by session votes, rather than by the Executive Committee.

Although the ways these mission endeavors were financed probably varied, a GC session on May 17, 1866, referred to a “General Conference Missionary Fund” to which the Michigan State Conference donated \$500. The Missionary Fund had in fact preceded the establishment of the General Conference in 1863, for there are reports in the *Review & Herald* of debts being repaid and donations being made to the fund. But with the incorporation of the church this fund was institutionalized, though again, what was

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meant by “missionary work” was not always what we might mean by it today. In August 1875, for example, \$1,000 from a “general missionary fund” was used to relieve debts incurred in starting the *Signs of the Times*. Four years later, the fund was mentioned as a source for paying for the college education of young people aspiring to be missionaries—and by this time, missionary was coming to mean *foreign* missionary.

Importantly, this “missionary fund” is described in early sources as one option for funding, along with “the expense of their own friends,” “their own church” (for some local churches also had missionary funds), the “Conference,” or other means as the General Conference Committee saw fit. These in sum were the funding sources of early missionary work, with the GC Committee overseeing the process and becoming involved in a lesser or greater way depending upon the circumstances.

Initially, Adventist “missionary work” was confined to the United States and Canada. Those US states in which the Adventist presence was small were termed missions: for example, New England was a mission until the 1870 GC Session made it into a conference. The individuals who did ministry in mission areas were missionaries: thus, John N. Loughborough and Daniel T. Bourdeau, for example, sent to California in 1868, were both termed missionaries (and reacted to California as many cross-cultural missionaries do today when sent overseas from the US). At this point, missions and missionaries did not necessarily imply working overseas. And this was in some respects and for certain demographics a very long-lasting concept.

### The First Missionary Societies

The 1869 GC Session voted to consider Switzerland “missionary ground”,<sup>5</sup> the first locale outside of the United States to be thus



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designated. At that same session, a “Missionary Society of the Seventh-day Adventists” was created and a constitution adopted, which included, as the stated objective, “to send the truths of the Third Angel’s Message to foreign lands and to distant parts of our own country, by means of missionaries, papers, books, tracts, &c.”<sup>6</sup> This might be seen as the beginning of the GC’s international missions program, but if May 18, 1869 was its date of birth, it died prematurely as an infant. The “Missionary Society of the Seventh-day Adventists” held its first annual meeting in 1870 but nothing more is heard of it; it seems that the emphasis in its constitution on sending missionaries to foreign lands was replaced by the easier tasks of sending literature thence and working for émigré groups within the United States.<sup>7</sup> It is also likely, however, that this society was overtaken by the creation of new, local missionary societies.

Although any centrally organized efforts would not bear fruit at this time, it was not for a lack of effort by the laity, and it is worth visiting this history briefly. Initially Adventists saw the church’s publishing work as the primary method of evangelism, outside of personal contact and preaching. Indeed, M. E. Olsen, in a pathbreaking early history of the Adventist Church opined: “The early Adventists may be said to have been, all of them, purveyors of tracts and papers.”<sup>8</sup> This is seen clearly in the earliest attempts to coordinate and systematize the distribution of published Adventist materials.

### *From Vigilant Missionaries to Tract and Missionary Societies*

As far as can be determined, the first systematic approach came in the organization of the ‘Vigilant Missionary Society’ (VMS) by a group of women in South Lancaster, Massachusetts, New England around 1869.<sup>9</sup> These women—Mary E. Haskell (1810–1894) [seen in Illustration 3], Mary Priest (1824–1889),

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Roxana Rice (1829–1909), and Rhoda Wheeler (1813–1891)—elected a president (Rice) and a secretary (Priest) and began their work. At their own expense, they mailed Adventist reading material and corresponded with people across New England.

These women understood that, with the world as their field, more than financial support of mission work was necessary; a readiness to personally do outreach work was vital. Accordingly, these women did other local work—they engaged in intercessory prayer, visited neighbors, personally distributed tracts, persuaded other local women to join their society, and generally used their funds and their feet to spread the Adventist message.

Mary Haskell's husband, Stephen [Illustration 4], taken with these ladies' ideas, their organized efforts, and practical actions, formally organized a separate "State Tract and Missionary Society" for the New England Conference in 1870, and held the New England Conference Tract Society's first quarterly meeting in February 1871.<sup>10</sup> This Tract Society placed the Vigilant Missionary Society as a local women's auxiliary to itself, despite the previous existence and operation of the VMS. Stephen Haskell then publicized tract societies through the pages of the *Review*; throughout the rest of the year, other conferences created state-level societies, though the names of these societies were not systematic—some were Tract and Missionary Societies, others were Missionary and Book Societies, and still others were Book and Tract Societies—but all were intent on systematically focusing the evangelistic work they were doing rather than leaving it to be done piecemeal by various individuals. Church leaders saw, with approval, the growth of these organizations. Indeed, Adventist Church co-founder James White, on a trip to Massachusetts visited with Stephen Haskell and, after encouraging "our brethren in other Conferences" to do similar work, remarked: "Our people everywhere can go to work, see the fruits of their labor, and grow

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stronger, and still stronger. Or they can do nothing, grow weak, and die out. God save us.”<sup>11</sup>

At the church’s General Conference session held December 29, 1871 to January 3, 1872, the handful of delegates unanimously voted to recommend the creation of Tract and Missionary Societies to their state conferences. To that end, they appointed a committee, including a former GC President John N. Andrews, to “[perfect] a plan for [the societies’] formation.”<sup>12</sup> The committee’s recommendations were published in the pages of the *Review*, including a model constitution for each of the state conferences to follow. The object of the Tract Society was straightforward:

1. The proper distribution of our Tracts, Pamphlets, and Books. 2. To obtain subscribers for our periodicals; to collect dues and renew subscriptions; and to pay subscriptions for the worthy poor . . . 3. To visit, and to labor (by correspondence or otherwise), for the encouragement and help of the scattered ones of like precious faith; for those who are falling back because of discouragements; and to interest all within the reach of our influence in the great truths connected with the last message of mercy to the world. 4. To find homes for worthy widows and orphans.<sup>13</sup>

The denomination as a whole was still two years out from sending its first official missionary (the aforementioned John N. Andrews, sent to Switzerland in 1874, where he started a journal, and a publishing house to print and distribute it) so the committee also stated their rationale for formalizing tract and missionary work. “Order is necessary to the work of God,” they wrote. “To suppose otherwise is to deny his word. . . . Order equalizes, and thereby lightens our burdens. It unites effort, and cements hearts; and in union there is strength.” Essentially, the committee argued that better organization of a congregation’s or a conference’s efforts would increase the efficiency and efficacy of those efforts. They reminded the readers of the *Review* that the object of the new society was “not merely to scatter tracts and other reading

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matter, but also to visit and pray with individuals and families. Let the object in our minds be to awaken an interest in divine things, and so bring souls to Christ; to prepare a people for the solemn realities of the Judgment.”<sup>14</sup>

Further organization was needed. At this point, responsibility for overseeing the tract and missionary work fell solely on the state conferences; there was no organization responsible for the *overall* work done by the conferences, or that dealt directly on their behalf with the publishing houses. This changed at the twelfth General Conference Session, held November 14–16, 1873. There the delegates agreed to “consolidate” the system of Tract and Missionary Societies “by some general organization.” That way, each conference’s society could have representation to this general organization, which would report to the General Conference Session and “thus uniformity of action be secured.”<sup>15</sup> This indeed falls in line with the idea that better organization would lead to better efforts and better results from those efforts. However, this overarching organization did not happen until August 15, 1874. There, the minutes lay out the official organization of the new “General Conference Tract and Missionary Society.” James White was elected president; George I. Butler vice-president; Benn Auten treasurer; and Stephen Haskell business agent.<sup>16</sup> Under the umbrella of this larger Tract Society, which liaised with the publishing houses on behalf of the conferences, the state tract societies coordinated work within their territories and supported the efforts of any local Vigilant societies created in the wake of the systematization of tract work. The early missionary efforts by a small group of women in Massachusetts had been transformed into a pattern of action throughout the Church as it then existed.

In 1882, the scope of the General Tract and Missionary Society broadened (or, rather, the society caught up with its growth) when it was renamed the International Tract and Missionary Society. Stephen Haskell was its president and Maria

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L. Huntley the secretary and treasurer [Illustration 5].<sup>17</sup> Due to Haskell’s numerous other duties at the time, it was Huntley and her assistants who bore the brunt of the work. By 1887, a crucial year for the development of Adventist foreign missions, as will be described later in this chapter, there were Seventh-day Adventist publishing houses in Australia, Great Britain, Norway, and Switzerland. But we jump ahead of ourselves.

### *Overview of Developments and their Significance*

To summarize, as noted, the Tenth General Conference Session recommended the creation of local Tract and Missionary Societies, based on the example of the Vigilant Missionary Society, and provided a model constitution for conferences to follow. The missionary work undertaken by these societies was almost entirely home mission work, chiefly distributing literature and making personal visits. The 1874 GC Session voted to reorganize the independent societies under one General Conference Tract and Missionary Society, which then adopted a new constitution.

Several things should be noted here: First, these societies received the backing of General Conference Sessions. Second, they were, however, local societies initially, and related to the state conferences, before they were endorsed by the General Conference and then turned into local chapters of one large society. Third, in 1873 the Church decided to send its first missionaries overseas (discussed below). Organizing the General Tract and Missionary Societies in 1873 and reorganizing it in 1882 (and doing so for the express purpose of advancing mission), shows that early Adventists collectively valued the work the tract societies did and that their concept of mission work was expanding to include places abroad in addition to those nearby. Fourth, involvement with the Tract Society was a way for women to actively contribute to mission: while Haskell was the longstanding president, two women were the other officers for

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many years: Maria Huntley was the secretary and Minerva Jane Chapman the treasurer.<sup>18</sup> In addition to these leadership positions, women took a large role in what was called “home mission” work, which, as described earlier, was the work of the Vigilant societies. Fifth, the organization title magnifies a key component of early Adventist missions: literature distribution. And here is where the original, purely domestic missionary societies began to expand their horizons.

The publishing and distribution of this literature was a major cost in mission work though Adventists embraced it partly because sending literature across the seas (often to relatives of immigrants to the United States) was cheaper than sending a missionary, and mailing literature was enthusiastically adopted by ethnically based societies, such as the Swedish Vigilant Tract and Missionary Society formed in New England in 1877.<sup>19</sup> At the 1882 GC Session, Haskell reported to the delegates that the general society had changed its name to the International Tract and Missionary Society, indicative of the desire to use literature to reach beyond the seas.<sup>20</sup> This was not purely aspirational, as the society did send workers overseas and pay for them (complicating lines of communication and control with other committees and boards set up in the following decade). One such worker was Jennie Thayer, sent by the International Tract and Missionary Society to Britain in 1882 to run its book depository there; she ran afoul of Stephen Haskell once he was assigned in 1887 to the British Mission by General Conference leadership; it is fairly clear from archival sources that their personalities and opinions regarding the organization of the work in Britain did not harmonize with each other.<sup>21</sup> This is only one example of the larger general problem. These complications of communication and control would ultimately require drastic action for the Church to continue efficient and effective mission work, but more on that in Chapter 4.

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### Creating a “Foreign” Mission Enterprise

While the concept of “the field is the world” meant supporting mission work near and far by funds and deeds, only gradually did Adventists recognize, perhaps reluctantly, that they could not proclaim the Third Angel’s message to all peoples only by mailing pamphlets to them. The first official missionaries, both within North America (in the United States and beginning in 1871, Canada) and, from 1874, across the seas, were all sent out by the General Conference. That is to say, and it is a point that must be emphasized, foreign missions could barely get one foot out of the door through the initiatives of grassroots enthusiasm alone. Foreign mission required direction; and in this the GC’s involvement was crucial. The assembled delegates, sometimes in established committees, other times in *ad hoc* committees, decided who needed to go where, and then financed (albeit meagerly) the mission.

### Evolving Ideas

James White and J. N. Andrews had appealed through the *Review* to church members, starting in 1869, to donate money to a mission fund for Switzerland, but to no avail.<sup>22</sup> Things changed once the Adventist groups who had sprung up in Europe asked not for funds but for an “American messenger” (i.e., a missionary) to be sent them to provide leadership and “to direct the propagation of the truth.”<sup>23</sup> This was brought to the eleventh GC Session in the spring of 1873, where James White championed the cause. The following August in 1874 a resolution was passed to send Andrews to Switzerland as soon as feasible.<sup>24</sup> It was taken on the same day as the action to create a GC Tract and Missionary Society, which

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indicates how literature evangelism by mail was still seen as a legitimate form of mission, alongside “laborers.”<sup>25</sup> That September, Andrews and his two children, Mary and Charles [Illustration 6], set sail for Europe, becoming the first missionaries the denomination sent overseas.

Part of what had changed was what Adventists understood “mission” to mean. At that crucial eleventh Session, James White repeatedly used the term “world-wide” to describe the third angel’s message.<sup>26</sup> Late that year, White published an article in the *Review* arguing: “The field is the world.”<sup>27</sup> That concept entailed more than financial support of mission work; it also included a readiness and, indeed, a willingness to personally go into the world in order to work it. Less than six months later, in the spring of 1874, Stephen Haskell emphasized this, declaring:

The field is the world, and men and women are called for who are willing to devote their lives to the work of saving souls. Upon the right hand and upon the left, souls are perishing and are calling for help. That means of help God has placed within our reach, and bidden us go work in his vineyard. The most solemn part of our life will be the decision we make in reference to these providential calls.<sup>28</sup>

Haskell initially wrote, of course, in a time when the great majority of Seventh-day Adventists were in North America, but he was consistent in his belief that the field was the world throughout his life and, indeed, lived to see (and do) work in that field.

In addition to developments in Adventist missional thought, however, it is important to note clearly that senior church leaders decided a missionary should be sent to Switzerland and took that decision to a session for ratification, which chose the missionary, and supplied the funds that were needed. A similar pattern was followed four years later: that year’s session unanimously adopted a resolution to open a mission in Great Britain and recommended John Loughborough, who sailed to England in December 1878.<sup>29</sup>



## Seeking the “Mission”

Parallel to the above developments, it is interesting to observe that the early Adventist interest in foreign missions found a source of motivation from outside the denomination—we were open-eyed observers. In 1880, the first reference to the non-Adventist periodical *The Missionary Review of the World* appears in the *Review & Herald*; it would go on to be cited 339 times over the next 60 years or so.<sup>30</sup> Founded in 1878 by Royal G. Wilder, *The Missionary Review of the World* played an important role in inspiring the Student Volunteer Movement (SVM), which Royal’s son, Robert P. Wilder, would help initiate in 1886 with Dwight L. Moody at the Mt. Hermon meeting in Northfield, Massachusetts.<sup>31</sup> Adventist leaders and prominent members soon picked up on their initiatives, reporting on the 1886 Mt. Hermon meeting in the *Review* in 1889, where Maria Huntley highlighted the wisdom of enlisting “the interests of young men and women in missionary labor before their purposes in life become fixed.”<sup>32</sup> As this illustrates, Seventh-day Adventists were very open to new ideas, wherever they may be found; knowing this helps in some ways to understand how Adventist concepts of “mission” evolved.

Yet, changes in thought could only go so far. There also had to be practical steps, not least if worldwide mission was to be funded.

## Could Better Organization Help?

Money was always an issue. With missions in Europe burgeoning, and seeming more and more promising, how to fund the work there became a major discussion point. In 1876, at the first ever Special GC Session held between the annual sessions, “a large part of the time . . . was occupied in considering how best to raise means” for missions in Europe and other places.<sup>33</sup> No solution was identified at the session. There were various causes of financial embarrassment for missionaries on the ground, which

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undoubtedly included limited resources in the American homeland, but another was a lack of organizational systems for identifying needs in the mission field and then communicating them, both to the home headquarters and to the church members whose support would be needed if funds were to be provided.

General Conference session minutes from the first three decades of the church show the Executive Committee as tasked with the following functions with regard to missions: overseeing all missionary activity; determining who should do mission work, and where; determining what mission field(s) should be entered; raising money for missionaries; deciding where raised money should go; addressing problems that arose in the mission field; forming committees to support missions; and receiving reports from missionaries. Yet this does not mean that the GCC actually carried out most of these duties (some we can verify; others we cannot); nor does it mean that the committee carried them out satisfactorily. There is reason to believe it did not.

At a Fourth Special Session, held in the spring of 1879, J. N. Andrews was present. American born and bred, a veteran of the earliest days of the movement, its great theologian, and a former GC president, his words carried great weight. Andrews spoke eloquently of the “difficulties under which laborers in foreign fields are placed, while the General Conference Committee are so scattered, and are so overburdened with other duties.” His solution was that the GC appoint an official specifically to care for overseas missions and missionaries, which he described as “an officer . . . corresponding in some respects to the Secretary of the Missionary Boards of other denominations”. Andrews proposed that such “an officer . . . be selected, who shall inform himself fully in reference to all the foreign work, and be prepared to respond to the communications of laborers in foreign fields without delay;” the delegates voted to approve the position until the regular

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session later that year, electing Ellen G. White’s son, W. C. (Willie) White, as this “officer”.<sup>34</sup>

That autumn, 1879, the regular session did not continue the position, but did extensively debate a proposal to establish a Mission Board. In the end, it voted to create a “Missionary Board”, which was to “have special oversight of all our foreign missions, under . . . the General Conference Committee.” Given the original intention that the GC Committee itself would be a “missionary board” this was an admission of relative failure. Willie White is listed first among those elected, and in light of this and his election to the temporary position earlier in the year, he probably convened the group, but it is notable that three of the first seven members were women: Minerva Chapman, the GC treasurer; Maria Huntley, secretary of the Tract and Missionary Society; and Maud Sisley, who was not yet 30 years old.<sup>35</sup>

It is difficult to know what impact the Missionary Board had at the time. There is little sense from GC Session minutes of the Missionary Board’s work, but stray references show it existed,<sup>36</sup> and if, as is likely, it conducted the bulk of its business outside sessions, then we would have no record of such, since there are no minutes of any standing GC committees or boards from this early. The Missionary Board may have played a role in the European Missionary Councils of the early 1880s that provided strategic direction to mission in Europe. In 1886, missionaries sent overseas numbered in double digits for the first time, so the board probably had some success, despite our lack of sources about what it actually did. But it does not seem to have taken a leading role in driving a mission-related agenda at GC Session. Thus, one may conclude that its successes were not sufficient to dissuade the 1887 Session action, discussed below, to establish the post of the Foreign Mission Secretary which was clearly an attempt to strengthen the church’s mission enterprise.

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It is notable that many of the resolutions that pertained to missionary work adopted at GC Sessions were often first introduced by individuals and then sent to an *ad hoc* committee which was appointed to discuss them, or other committees presented resolutions to the GC delegates. Few such resolutions were introduced by the Executive Committee and none are recorded as originating with the Missionary Board. A wide range of committees drafted resolutions about mission or missionaries, including the following: Committee on Resolutions, Committee on Fields of Labor, Committee on City Missions, Missions Boards of various state conference, Committee on Credentials and Licenses, Committee on the Distribution of Labor, and Committee on Finances. Although the GC had charge of the church's mission enterprise, there was a lack of central direction. This impression is reinforced by the brief history of the Labor Bureau, established by the 1886 Session to determine the worthiness of financial needs arising from the mission field. In practice, its membership was distinct from the Missionary Board's and it steered its own unique course. In the end, the Labor Bureau made no contribution to foreign mission.<sup>37</sup>

From the developments described so far, one gets the feeling that several Adventist leaders were on the verge of a making a breakthrough in their foreign missionary vision; but was there the organizational structure and support to take it forward and make the vision happen? It is to this question that we now turn.

### **Delegating Duties—the Evolving Role of the Secretary**

The mission enterprise seemed to have stalled by the mid-1880s, due in part, perhaps, to its eclectic and feeble beginning and partly

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to its unsystematic organization. What had been started needed to go further and become more centralized. What followed over the next two decades would fundamentally alter the Adventist foreign missionary enterprise. The key to unlocking potential was to find a better way to organize Adventist efforts. Ultimately, the solution to the problem of organization was to be found in the office of the GC Secretary and its staff. How this happened is a story worth telling, however, because Secretariat, too, has undergone some significant changes; some of them proved more useful than others. There are, moreover, many misconceptions about the Secretariat, so it is important to clarify what it has been and can be.

The constitution adopted on May 21, 1863, provided that the General Conference’s “officers . . . shall be a President, Secretary, Treasurer, and an Executive Committee of three, of whom the President shall be one” (Art II).<sup>38</sup> In 1863, there were just six conferences, employing a total workforce of thirty, and around 125 local churches with 3,500 members; because there was not much to administer, there were few administrators. Furthermore, for the denomination’s first 25 years, with Adventists limited both geographically and numerically, GC Sessions were held annually, so most important matters and decisions were taken to the Session, rather than to committees. Thus, the three officers and the Executive Committee were less important than they later became. It is not entirely clear what the officers did in those early years. The constitution briefly defined the Treasurer’s function, but about the other two officers it stated simply: “The duties of the President and Secretary shall be such respectively as usually pertains to those offices” (Art. III). What this seems to have meant in practice was that the secretary took the minutes at the annual Sessions. In addition, following an action taken by the fourth GC Session in 1866 that thenceforth every conference should submit statistical reports to the secretary, from 1867 onwards, he presented a statistical report to each annual Session. But these

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seem to have been the sum of the secretary's official duties for the first twenty years of the organized Seventh-day Adventist Church.

As the church grew, however, administration became more important. So, too, did the mundane task of taking official minutes, since Sessions lasted longer and took more actions, which were also more substantive and consequential in nature. Every major decision taken by GC Sessions or by the Executive Committee was summarized and recorded by the secretary. These included decisions on church organization; missionary strategy and placement; creation of new church entities; and resolving questions on doctrine, financial matters, and the denominational stance on political and governmental matters.

By 1883, the number of congregations, church members, and employees had all quadrupled or more in the twenty years since 1863. There were 32 conferences along with the Central European, British, and Scandinavian Missions.<sup>39</sup> More and more decisions were being deferred by the annual Sessions to the GC Committee (as the Executive Committee was typically called). At the 1883 GC Session, complaints were voiced that "More thorough work [could] be accomplished in the various branches of our cause by faithful correspondence on the part of secretaries." This seems to have been directed at the GC Secretary, A. B. Oyen, for the Session did not re-elect him; instead, it voted back into office the veteran Uriah Smith (who had previously served 17 one-year terms in three separate spells as secretary: 1863–1873, 1874–1876, 1877–1881). The Session also amended the constitution to add a fourth officer: the Corresponding Secretary (who seems, however, to have worked under the direction of the Secretary). Membership of the GC Committee (GCC) was also increased for the first time, from three members to five.<sup>40</sup>

The role of the Secretary's office had evidently evolved and grown. It now revolved around maintaining correspondence with the conference and mission secretaries; sharing with them the

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decisions taken by Sessions and by Executive Committee meetings (themselves given official form by the secretary); and trying to ensure that these decisions were being honored and implemented by the burgeoning denomination.

By the late 1880s there was evidently a desire for greater direction of the denomination’s mission enterprise. In 1886, the GCC membership was increased to seven and, for the first time, the Secretary was elected a member.<sup>41</sup> Thereafter, he invariably was a member of the Executive Committee, though the Treasurer as yet was not; and neither would be *ex officio* members until after the 1901 reforms. The 1887 Session, in an important moment in both GC administrative history and wider Adventist history, amended the GC constitution to increase the number of officers from four to seven, with the addition of “a home mission secretary, a foreign mission secretary, and an educational secretary.”<sup>42</sup> This was an interesting step and reflected wider currents in a church still working out how best to manage foreign missions. It should be noted that this step reflected the desire of Andrews’s proposal eight years earlier in 1879, though by now Andrews had been dead for four years.

It was a week into the 1887 Session when Willie White, who already had a keen interest in missions,<sup>43</sup> proposed the creation of the three new officer positions mentioned above, and the vote was carried.<sup>44</sup> Evidently there was a different rationale for the home mission and foreign mission secretaries than for the position of education secretary, which can be seen as a precursor to the Education Department created 16 years later.<sup>45</sup> Meanwhile, a week after the motion had been carried, which hints at considerable discussion in backrooms, all three positions were filled—and Willie White [seen in Illustration 7 from around this time] was elected the first Foreign Mission Secretary.<sup>46</sup>

In this position, which did not carry with it membership of the Executive Committee, White essentially did the work that the

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Committee had originally been intended to do. Ten months later, at the 1888 GC session, better known for theological and generational conflict, Willie White gave the first Foreign Mission Secretary's report.<sup>47</sup> We might call this the first Secretariat report on mission, though not given by the Secretary *per se*. The secretary's role at this time seems to have still been primarily that of keeping the minutes and records of GC Sessions, following through on whether actions had been implemented, and loosely supervising the work of the corresponding secretary, whose role was increasingly redundant given that the Foreign Mission Secretary would correspond with mission stations and missionaries. The significance of Willie White's role can partly be measured by the fact that in the winter of 1888–89, with President Olsen overseas, White was effectively acting GC president.<sup>48</sup>

By the time Willie White delivered his first report as Foreign Mission Secretary, Adventist missionaries were working in Switzerland (the first mission), Denmark, England, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, and Sweden, in Europe; and Australia, Guyana, and South Africa, outside Europe. Willie White's report set a pattern for the future: lengthy reports to sessions, updating delegates and visitors of the church's progress in the mission field and presenting the needs of the work. Such reports would become an integral part of GC sessions and, beginning with White's, were regularly published, initially in the *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, later in the *General Conference Bulletin*, and the *Review & Herald*. Within the above context, and remembering the year 1888 for its other challenges, it is notable that the Church also found it within itself to push forward on its plans for foreign missions. It would be true to say that the first coordinated foreign mission endeavors, from a strategic point of view, were birthed amidst and despite theological controversy. This is a lesson Adventists could profitably remember—the mission should come



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first. Yet, this did not mean the missionary enterprise had yet reached a state of efficiency. Something had to change.

### **The Foreign Mission Board**

By 1889, of 33 conferences, six were in Europe and the South Pacific, with, additionally, missions in Britain and South Africa.<sup>49</sup> The Missionary Board was attracting criticism from church leaders, including missionary leaders. John Corliss, for example, who had served in Australia, publicly identified a “painful contrast” between what the board “ought to [have] done” and what it did.<sup>50</sup> Important decisions were taken at the 1889 Session, though only after considerable debate and after very active encouragement by GC President Ole Olsen. The Session voted to hold future GC Sessions on a biennial instead of annual basis, and to increase both the responsibilities of the Executive Committee and its membership (from seven to nine). Most importantly, it was voted to establish a Foreign Mission Board (FMB). This meant the end of the effectively moribund Missionary Board and the creation of an institutional basis for the foreign mission secretary.<sup>51</sup>

More precisely, the 1889 Session approved a constitution for the FMB and established a Foreign Mission Committee, composed of six people, whose terms were to be of the same length as those of GC officers. The committee had minor duties in its own right, but its importance was that its members, meeting together with the Executive Committee, would constitute a “Foreign Mission Board” with the task of managing the missionary enterprise of the General Conference.<sup>52</sup> On November 5, 1889, the Session voted to approve additional articles and by-laws to operationalize the FMB and its leadership.<sup>53</sup>

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For the next fourteen years, it was with the Mission Board, as the FMB was often called, that responsibility lay for administering the church's foreign missionary program. The FMB initially had a positive impact, as Bruce Bauer has argued.<sup>54</sup> It also grew in importance; a manifestation of this came at the 1897 GC Session, which abolished the education, home mission, and foreign mission secretaries. The term "foreign mission secretary" continued to be used for the next six years, but no longer referred to the same role; it now referred to the secretary of the FMB, who was appointed by the Mission Board, not elected by the GC Session. The Board also elected a president, who in practice had taken over the foreign mission secretary's role of coordinating planning.<sup>55</sup>

Overall, the Foreign Mission Board was to take on: addressing the needs of missions in countries entered—and not entered—around the world; sending money to missions around the world; appointing missionaries to serve in these missions and transferring them when expedient; determining new fields to which missionaries should be sent; raising the funds needed for sending and sustaining of missionaries; selling and acquiring mission property (an important point, one to which we will return in chapter 4); publishing a missions magazine; reporting at GC Sessions on the progress of the foreign work, and making appeals there for the needs of the fields; providing budget and allocation charts of foreign missions; vigorously promoting missions; and any other tasks pertaining to the leadership of foreign missions. As will be seen in Chapter Four, virtually all these responsibilities were to be passed to the GC Executive Committee in 1903 and would, in practice, be exercised by the GC Secretariat, except for the acquisition and disposition of property.

The Board met apart from the General Conference Session and very full minutes survive, which reveal robust discussions.<sup>56</sup> Its unusual structural relationship to the Church warrants a few additional remarks. Notable among the administrative details are

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those found in sections 5, 10, and 11 of the Bylaws. What should be pointed out first is that in Section 10, the Foreign Mission Committee was established. Comprised of six members, their terms were to be of the same length as those of the GC officers. However, in Section 11 it was further clarified that the "Executive Committee and the Foreign Mission Committee shall [together] constitute a Foreign Mission Board of fifteen, for the management of the foreign mission work of this Conference."<sup>57</sup> As such, it seems clear that at first the FMB was to be a direct part of the GC by virtue of the fact that all the Executive Committee members were, unusually, also members of the board, suggesting that the FMB was intended to hold precedence over any other committees, societies, and associations.

Somewhat contrastingly, however, section 5 stipulated the duties of the foreign mission secretary as follows: "maintain a regular correspondence with superintendents of missions, and with . . . supervising committees of the foreign mission enterprises under the management of the Foreign Mission Board; to make regular reports of the condition and wants of the missions, to the Board, or to such standing committees as may be created for this purpose by the Board; to communicate the decisions of the Board to its agents in foreign countries; and to report to the Conference at its sessions, the workings of the Board, and the condition, progress, and wants of its foreign missions."<sup>58</sup> The detail that the foreign mission secretary would only report to the GC annually may perhaps have foreshadowed the fact that, by 1897, the FMB had begun to separate from the GC. It even created its own Executive Committee.<sup>59</sup> In practice, it took significant decisions which had the effect of eroding the overlap between membership of the General Conference Committee and the Foreign Mission Board. It seems initially this separation stemmed in part from confusion concerning the relationship of the FMB to the Medical Missionary Board,<sup>60</sup> but probably there were other factors as well.

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To be sure, the FMB regularly made recommendations to the General Conference Session. But these were for the most part *pro forma* and had to do with what missionary was sent where. The GC Session delegates almost always accepted the Board's recommendations since its leadership had both a broad and often-intricate knowledge of the foreign work. Again, this helped to move the FMB in the direction of semi-independence. Its headquarters was separate from the wider church headquarters: originally in Philadelphia, but later moved to New York City in the rooms of the International Tract Society. This was on the reasonable grounds that it meant the FMB headquarters was "in close touch with our shipping and forwarding interests to our missionaries in all parts of the world. Most of our missionaries arrive and depart from this port to and from foreign fields. In fact, the present location seems ideal. The heart-throbs of a mighty world pulsate on every side."<sup>61</sup> Even so, the physical separation of the FMB from the GC headquarters is further evidence that the Mission Board was operating independently of the General Conference to a great degree, with limited oversight.

Furthermore, notwithstanding the creation of the Foreign Mission Committee in 1889, veteran leader Stephen N. Haskell, for one, continued to stress the importance of the International Tract and Missionary Society, with which, as we have seen, he had been closely associated, and which also was sending missionaries!<sup>62</sup> Rivalry between different entities in the church is nothing new and can inhibit progress, even when it reflects genuine differences about the most effective way to proclaim present truth, rather than simply power struggles. Nonetheless, in the late 1890s there were a whole series of rivalries affecting the Adventist mission enterprise.

Part of the problem was partly the toxic atmosphere that had developed in Battle Creek. This in turn owed much to the malign influence of Dr. John H. Kellogg. In addition, however, the GC

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president elected in 1897, George A. Irwin, was unduly protective of his power. The Foreign Mission Board began to be seen—began to see itself, even—as being in rivalry with the GC officers, at least when it came to the mission fields. Having two bodies “at the top” responsible for mission planning, fundraising, and strategizing did not lead to these functions being carried out more efficiently; instead, they were often not done at all, because of assumptions on both parts that the other body was responsible or would take action, while in addition there was overlap, duplication, and other redundancies leading to general inefficiency. The lack of clarity about the respective powers of the Mission Board and the GCC resulted in inaction at the top and confusion on the ground. This resulted, in turn, in irate and exasperated mission leaders. For example, Edson White wrote from his Mississippi Valley mission to his mother in Australia, expressing his frustration with leaders at the top who stifled local initiative.

In this part of the field where I am working, the principle seems to be . . . “Where there is a head, HIT IT.” If the General Conference is so balled up that they cannot or will not do anything for [this field] then why not stand aside & let those who will help do something?<sup>63</sup>

If this is how a leader who was the son of the prophetess and based relatively close to Battle Creek felt, the frustration felt in Europe and Australia by dynamic leaders such as Ludwig Conradi and Arthur Daniells (respectively) is understandable; waiting for weeks for answers from Battle Creek to enquiries about matters that could have been handled locally left them indignant. Unsurprisingly they began to contemplate sweeping reform.<sup>64</sup>

\* \* \*

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### **The End of the Nineteenth-Century Church**

In the meanwhile, however, the role of the GC Secretary increased, and he was given his own office in the Review and Herald press building, which also functioned as the GC headquarters in Battle Creek.<sup>65</sup> The Secretary's job had become a full-time one, keeping abreast of developments around the world, keeping minutes of GC Committee meetings, and informing the world church of its decisions as well as those of the sessions. In 1899, Secretary Lewis A. Hoopes told that year's GC Session that, in the preceding two years, "the work of the Recording and Corresponding secretaries was put into the hands of one person" and that "it seems to me that it would be better if the two secretaries were merged into one." Discussion ensued over the use of General Secretary versus Secretary; but, in the end, fourteen years after the secretary's position was split, it was reunited into one with the simple title of Secretary.<sup>66</sup>

For the period 1863–1901, almost the first forty years of the church's life, the GC Secretary's role was essentially one of recording, collating, and presenting information and then communicating it to conference and mission leaders. It was not yet an executive role and neither was it especially closely identified with mission though the secretary was tasked with communicating with missionaries around the world. This would change, however, with the dramatic reorganization that was soon to follow between 1901–1903, which included the introduction of new personalities into positions of administrative power and influence.

In summary, the main point to take away from Adventism's early efforts to engage in foreign missions is that when it was done outside of the central leadership of the Church, and left to either lay groups or to competing committees that often worked around the General Conference leadership, it was done in a somewhat

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haphazard way. This was the case often because one body would assume the other was taking care of certain details, while the other assumed the same. Thus, duplication in some matters of planning, and neglect to plan at all for other details, ultimately led to wasted efforts and inefficiency. After a time, the clear result was stunted and then stagnant growth, especially given the limited resources available at the time. At the end of it all, in spite of good intentions on the part of individuals, there was a failure to fully ignite the engine of foreign missions.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> A. S. Hutchins, “The Field is the World”, *ARH*, 9 (March 26, 1857), 168. The ethos Hutchins articulated is also seen in words penned in 1874 by Stephen Haskell: see p. 88. For more on Hutchins, see M.E. Kellogg, “Death of Elder A. S. Hutchins”, *ARH*, 71 (July 17, 1894), 458–9.

<sup>2</sup> Text of the constitution is in *ARH*, 21 (May 26, 1863), 204–5 (emphasis supplied).

<sup>3</sup> Thirty-Sixth GC Session: A. G. Daniells, “The President’s Address: A Review and an Outlook—Suggestions for Conference Action,” *ARH*, 82:19 (May 11, 1905), 6.

<sup>4</sup> D. J. B. Trim, “‘Illuminating the whole earth’: Adventism and foreign mission in the Battle Creek years (1859 to c.1912)”, in Alberto R. Timm and James R. Nix (eds.), *Lessons from Battle Creek: Reflections after 150 years of Church organization* ([Silver Spring, Md.]: RHPA, 2018), pp. 137–38.

<sup>5</sup> Seventh Session, 4th meeting, May 18, 1869, GC Session Minutes, vol. 1 (May 1863–April 1879) p. 42, GC AR, RG o, box 6873.

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<sup>6</sup> Seventh GC Session, May 18, 1869: see James White, "Seventh-day Adventist Missionary Society," *ARH*, 33 (June 15, 1869), 197.

<sup>7</sup> Eighth Session: "First Annual Meeting of the S.D.A. Missionary Society", March 20, 1870, minutes in *ARH*, 35 (March 22, 1870), 106.

<sup>8</sup> M. E. Olsen, *A history of the origin and progress of Seventh-day Adventists* (Washington, D.C.: RHPA, 1926), 411.

<sup>9</sup> *YB 1889*, p. 5. There has been no in-depth study of how the tract and missionary societies functioned, though they are briefly treated in Olsen, *Origin and progress*, pp. 411-19; in the Church's first history textbook, *Lessons in denominational history* (Washington, D.C.: RHPA, 1944), pp. 165-9; in A. W. Spalding's *Origin and history of Seventh-day Adventists, Volume Two* (Washington, D.C.: RHPA, 1962), pp. 79-82; and the Church-sponsored university-level textbook, R. W. Schwarz's *Light bearers to the remnant* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1979), pp. 152-4.

<sup>10</sup> Stephen N. Haskell, "The New-England Conference Tract Society", *ARH*, 37 (Feb. 28, 1871), 37:11.

<sup>11</sup> James White, "Eastern Tour", *ARH*, 38 (Nov. 21, 1871), 180.

<sup>12</sup> James White, "Business Proceedings of the General Conference", *ARH*, 39 (Jan. 9, 1872), 28-29.

<sup>13</sup> "Missionary and Tract Society", *ARH*, 39 (Jan. 23, 1872), 45.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> George I. Butler, "Business Proceedings of the Twelfth Annual Meeting of the S. D. A. General Conference", *ARH*, 42 (Nov. 25, 1873), 190.

<sup>16</sup> George I. Butler, "Proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual Meeting of the Gen. Conf. of S. D. Adventists", *ARH*, 44 (Aug. 25, 1874), 74-75. The society was never referred to by this name, however; in later references to it, the word "conference" never appears.

<sup>17</sup> "Proceedings of the International (General) Tract and Missionary Society", in *YB 1883*, p. 38. On Maria Huntley and on Minerva Chapman, see Cecilia Ramos, "Huntley, Maria L. (1848-1890)", *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*: <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=C9Jo> and Brian E. Strayer, "Chapman, Minerva Jane (Loughborough)



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(1829–1923)”, *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*: <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=8940>.

<sup>18</sup> S. N. Haskell, “The General Conference Tract organization”, *ARH*, 49 (Jan. 18, 1877), 21; D. M. Canright, “The Tract Societies and Eld. Haskell’s work”, *ARH*, 50 (Nov. 1, 1877), 140.

<sup>19</sup> James Sawyer, “The cause among the Swedes”, *ARH*, 51 (Feb. 7, 1878), 47. The New England society claimed in 1875 to have distributed tracts in “English, French and German” to ten countries: H. B. Stratton and Mary Martin, “Annual Report of the New England Tract and Missionary Society”, *ARH*, 46 (Nov. 25, 1875), 167.

<sup>20</sup> S. N. Haskell, “International (General) Tract and Missionary Society”, *ARH*, 60 (January 2, 1883), 6–7. Haskell notes that the seventh annual session of the Tract Society was “held in connection with the General Conference at Rome, N. Y.” (i.e., the twenty-first GC Session).

<sup>21</sup> Ashlee Chism, “Coordination and conflict: The effects of inspiration and institutionalization in the early Seventh-day Adventist Church”, unpublished paper, presented at the Winter Meeting 2020 of the Ecclesiastical History Society, Birmingham, U.K., Jan. 18, 2020.

<sup>22</sup> Trim, “Adventism and foreign mission”, pp. 140–41.

<sup>23</sup> Albert Vuilleumier, Jules-Etienne Dietschy, and Jules-Henri Guenin, letter of Nov. 29, 1872, GC Ar., RG 72, box 13721D, fld. “Albert Vuilleumier original letters”, French original and contemporary English translation.

<sup>24</sup> Trim, “Adventism and foreign mission”, pp. 141–45.

<sup>25</sup> Butler, “Proceedings of Thirteenth Annual Meeting”, pp. 74–75.

<sup>26</sup> [James White], “Conference address”, *ARH*, 41 (May 20, 1873), 180–81, 184. For context, see Trim, “Adventism and foreign mission”, pp. 144 and 158 n. 65. However, though moving to a global conception of what “mission” meant, they still saw it witnessing to other Protestants about distinctive Adventist beliefs: see above, Introduction, pp. 5–6.

<sup>27</sup> J[ames] W[hite], “The cause at Battle Creek”, *ARH*, 43 (Dec. 30, 1873), 20.

<sup>28</sup> S. N. Haskell, “Report of labors”, *ARH*, 43 (April 28, 1874), 158.

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<sup>29</sup> Seventeenth Session, 10th meeting, Oct. 14, 1878, GC Session Minutes, I, 137, GC Ar., RG O, box 6873.

<sup>30</sup> "Notes of News," *ARH*, 55 (Jan. 22, 1880), 62.

<sup>31</sup> Edward Allen, "The impact of the Student Volunteer Movement on the Seventh-day Adventist Church," unpubl. paper, pp. 1-3. Available at [https://www.academia.edu/30939341/\\_The\\_Impact\\_of\\_the\\_Student\\_Volunteer\\_Movement\\_on\\_the\\_Seventh-day\\_Adventist\\_Church\\_](https://www.academia.edu/30939341/_The_Impact_of_the_Student_Volunteer_Movement_on_the_Seventh-day_Adventist_Church_).

<sup>32</sup> M[aria] L. H[untley], "The Student Missionary Uprising," *ARH*, 66:50 (Dec. 17, 1889), 62.

<sup>33</sup> Special Session of the General Conference, March 31, 1876, GC Session Minutes, I, 95, GC Ar., RG O, box 6873.

<sup>34</sup> Fifth Meeting, "Business Proceedings of the Fourth Special Session of the General Conference of S[eventh-]D[ay] Adventists," *ARH*, 53 (Apr. 24, 1879), 133.

<sup>35</sup> James White, "Eighteenth Annual Session," *ARH*, 54 (Nov. 20, 1879), 161; id., "General Conference," *ARH*, 54 (Dec. 4, 1879), 184.

<sup>36</sup> E.g., Twenty-Sixth Session, 9th meeting, Nov. 22, 1887, minutes in *YB 1888*, p. 39. Note: A report from an *ad hoc* committee to the 1887 Session twice refers to "Mission Board(s)" but missions at this time had boards instead of executive committees (cf. *YB 1886*, p. 11, list of "European Mission Boards") and it is clear from the minutes that the references are to these governing committees, not to a GC mission board: Twenty-Fifth Session, 12th meeting, Dec. 5, 1886, minutes in *Yearbook 1887*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>37</sup> Twenty-Fifth Session, Dec. 5, 1886. See bureau reports, *ARH*, 64 (Feb. 22, 1887), 128, and 66:4 (Jan. 22, 1889), 64; cf. advertisement *ARH*, 66 (Feb. 12, 1889), 111.

<sup>38</sup> The constitution text is in *ARH*, 21 (May 26, 1863), 204-5.

<sup>39</sup> *YB 1884*, p. 73.

<sup>40</sup> Twenty-Second Session, 9th, 12th, and 13th meetings, Nov. 14 and Nov. 19, 1883, minutes in *YB 1884*, pp. 38-39, 41; GC Constitution as amended in 1883, *ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>41</sup> Twenty-Fifth Session, 9th and 14th meetings, Nov. 29 (p.m.) and

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Dec. 6, 1886, minutes in *YB 1887*, pp. 32, 41.

<sup>42</sup> Twenty-Sixth Session, 14th meeting, Nov. 27, 1887, minutes in *YB 1888*, p. 46 (and *ARH*, 64 (Dec. 13, 1887), 777); GC Constitution as amended in 1887: *YB 1888*, p. 91.

<sup>43</sup> For his influence on events in Europe (then a mission field), see O. A. Olsen letter from Norway to GC President G. I. Butler, Feb. 23, 1887, pp. 5, 7, copy in Presidential Letterbook 1887–1889, pp. 12, 14, GC Ar., RG 11, box O109.

<sup>44</sup> Twenty-Sixth Session, 8th meeting, Nov. 20, 1887, in *YB 1888*, p. 37.

<sup>45</sup> The educational secretary’s position had been discontinued, after a decade, by the 1897 GC Session. The creation of a department as Adventists currently understand that term took place at the 1903 Session: cf. Thirty-Fifth Session, 19th meeting, Apr. 9 (p.m.), 1903, proceedings in *GCB* 5 (Apr. 10, 1903), 158; *sub* “Education, Department of”, *SDAE*, I, 495–96.

<sup>46</sup> Twenty-Sixth Session, 14th meeting, Nov. 27, 1887, minutes in *YB 1888*, p. 46.

<sup>47</sup> Twenty-Seventh Session: full text of report in *YB 1889*, pp. 72–78.

<sup>48</sup> W. C. White to O. A. Olsen, Nov. 27, 1888, Presidential Incoming Letters, GC Ar., RG 11, box 3059, fld. 11.

<sup>49</sup> See *YB 1890*, p. 59.

<sup>50</sup> J. O. Corliss, “The demands of foreign fields,” *ARH*, 67 (June 17, 1890), 374.

<sup>51</sup> See Bruce L. Bauer, “Congregational and mission structures and how the Seventh-day Adventist Church has related to them”, unpubl. D.Miss. diss. (Fuller Theological Seminary, 1982), 104–40; and, more succinctly, *sub* “Mission Board”, *SDAE*, II, 97.

<sup>52</sup> Twenty-Eighth Session: minutes in *DB*, 3, nos. 1, 5, 6 and 14 (1889), 1, 45, 59, 139.

<sup>53</sup> Twenty-Eighth Session, 17th meeting, Nov. 4 (a.m.), 1889, *DB*, 3 (Nov. 5, 1889), 141–42.

<sup>54</sup> Bauer, “Congregational and mission structures”, p. 194.

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<sup>55</sup> Thirty-Second Session actions: see *GCB*, 2, nos. 1 and 3 (1897–1898), 67, 129; and, for an example of the FMB secretary being called “the Foreign Mission Secretary”, see Thirty-Third Session, 20th meeting, Feb. 25 (p.m.), 1899, *DB*, 8 (Feb. 28, 1899), 102.

<sup>56</sup> See GC Ar., RG 48, boxes O 374 (1889–1892) and 11122 (1892–1906).

<sup>57</sup> *DB*, 3 (Nov. 5, 1889), 141–42.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141.

<sup>59</sup> FMB Minutes (March 24, 1897), p. 10, GC Ar., RG 48, box 11122.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9–10.

<sup>61</sup> Thirty-Fourth Session, 5th meeting, April 5 (p.m.), in *GCB*, 4 (April 7, 1901), 94.

<sup>62</sup> Haskell to Olsen, Sept. 30, 1889, Presidential Incoming Letters, GC Ar., RG 11, box 3059, fld. 11.

<sup>63</sup> J. E. White to E. G. White, June 18, 1899 (capitals in original), Ellen G. White Estate, Correspondence.

<sup>64</sup> See A. G. Daniells speech at thirty-eighth Session, 13th meeting, May 22, 1913, in *GCB*, 7 (May 23, 1913), 108, reminiscing about how matters had been in the 1890s.

<sup>65</sup> A. L. White, “The story of the Review and Herald fire”, *ARH*, 154:49 (Dec. 8, 1977), 3.

<sup>66</sup> Thirty-Third Session, 26th meeting, March 1, 1899, *DB*, 8 (March 3, 1899), 139.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Finding the Mission**

#### **Making Foreign Mission the Focus of The General Conference, 1901–1903**

Chapter Four continues the journey begun in Chapter Three, but from the perspective of the reorganized General Conference. The previous review of how the Adventist philosophy of organized mission evolved beyond personal evangelism, which remained somewhat domestically focused, provides a valuable context from which to understand the evolving perspective of the GC and specifically the Secretariat, especially as foreign missions came to the forefront. In what follows, we now turn toward the era of greatest growth in the foreign mission enterprise; the GC officers, and especially the secretary, will play a foundational role.

As a precursor to the above, but setting the tone for what was to come, Adventism's growing interest in foreign missions was beginning to extend beyond the FMB in the 1890s; there was also a willingness to look outside the Church itself for inspiration. In the February 17, 1891, issue of the *Review* a notice was published concerning the first International Convention of the SVM.<sup>1</sup> On February 26, the Adventist leader of the Battle Creek foreign missions band, Frederick Rossiter, was a delegate to this first SVM convention in Cleveland, Ohio.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, Georgia Burrus, who also happened to be the only delegate from any school in California,<sup>3</sup> attended as a delegate from the Pacific Bible School of

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Oakland, which apparently had an arrangement with the Pacific Press during 1891-1895 to provide some evening education. The meetings evidently helped to inspire Burrus to continue engaging in missions, because she would become one of the first Adventist missionaries to India.<sup>4</sup>

The 1891 SVM convention was also attended by Percy T. Magan, who had just returned from a two-year journey around the world with Stephen Haskell surveying opportunities for Adventist missions. While Haskell immediately reported to the GC leaders on their trip, Magan continued onward to Cleveland to attend the SVM convention, and later reported on how impressed he was with the movement. “Theirs is a MOVEMENT,—a scattering out to heathen lands;—not a *theory* that the world ought to be evangelized, but a movement which is destined to accomplish that event.”<sup>5</sup> The aggressive spirit of the SVM struck a chord with the views younger leaders like Magan had about mission.<sup>6</sup> Early in the next decade Adventists would officially adopt a similar view of mission, as being to reach the unreached, anywhere in the world they might be found. But while this new vision would be realized more fully within the Adventist Church, it would require some specific organizational conditions.

### **Reorganizing for Mission, 1901–3**

In 1901, an extraordinary, even radical, restructuring of the church’s organization took place at the urging of Ellen G. White [Illustration 8 shows her addressing the Session]. She had recently returned from nine years’ mission service in Australia, during which she had recognized that the system of organization that had worked for a sect restricted to the Northeast and Midwest of the

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United States did not work well for a church that now had a foothold in all the world's inhabited continents. The reforms were sweeping, and the 1901 Session is rightly one of the more famous events in Seventh-day Adventist history. We do not go into detail about it here, largely because it has been superbly described and analyzed by Barry Oliver. Many Session actions, however, had implications for foreign mission; notable ones included universal implementation of the union conference model, which previously had been restricted to Australasia and Europe; the abolition of the multifarious independent associations and societies (such as the Tract and Missionary Society, discussed in the previous chapter), and their transformation into departments, present at each level of structure but under the authority of the officers at each level; and the assignment of enhanced representation and authority to the General Conference Committee.<sup>7</sup>

The reorganization, however, was not completed in 1901. The final steps were taken in 1903, although that year's GC Session has attracted less scholarly attention than 1901.<sup>8</sup> These steps were in terms of personnel as well as further structural reform. Different officers were elected to serve alongside the president elected in 1901, Arthur G. Daniells, then just 43 years of age, freshly returned to the United States after fourteen years of mission service in New Zealand and Australia; Daniells would be GC president for the next twenty-one years and remained influential until his death in 1935.<sup>9</sup>

The officers elected with him in 1901 had been Howard E. Osborne as Secretary and Harvey M. Mitchell as Treasurer. Both served just one term and were then replaced—it is not entirely clear why but inability to get on with Daniells, and/or to measure up to his standards seems likely. It is noteworthy that neither man was elected at the 1901 Session but by the Executive Committee over several weeks subsequently.<sup>10</sup> Osborne was only aged 27 when elected secretary and probably found the post too much for him; he suffered a serious illness while Secretary that may have been

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stress related.<sup>11</sup> There is evidence, moreover, that Mitchell did not have the same vision of worldwide mission as Daniells.<sup>12</sup> With both his brother officers regarded as unsatisfactory, Daniells apparently asked for and was given a different team in 1903 to help fulfill his vision for foreign mission. Thus, a new secretary and a new treasurer, who shared Daniells's passion for mission, were elected in 1903.

The new secretary was William A. Spicer, who had been secretary of the FMB since 1901—this may have been a gesture towards continuity, given that 1903 saw the end of the board as it had operated; but he and Daniells shared the same philosophy and it is likely that Daniells was aware of that by 1903. Spicer not only advocated greater expansion of mission, but also sought better ways for the world Church to organize for “foreign mission” success. Spicer served as Secretary until 1922 when he became president. Irwin H. Evans was Treasurer from 1903 to 1909. Like Daniells, but unlike Mitchell and Osborne, both Spicer and Evans had served overseas as missionaries themselves; Evans's passion for mission would again be realized in the field, when in 1909, he became president of the Asiatic Division (the first Adventist world division). Evans was succeeded by Walter T. Knox, who had not served overseas but who had been president of the California Conference when it included early mission stations in Hawaii and Mexico. Daniells actively wanted him as GC Treasurer and, with Evans being used “on the ground” in Asia, Knox served as treasurer from 1909 until he retired in 1922.<sup>13</sup>

The “further structural reform” implemented in 1903 was the end of the Mission Board as it had been known and its effective supersession by the Executive Committee. The reorganization of church administrative structure from 1901–1903 marked the end of this once powerful board.<sup>14</sup> However, in many respects, we might say that the FMB was not replaced so much as rearranged. At the 1901 GC Session, as part of the organizational reforms, the



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possibility of having the General Conference Committee "take the place of all the present boards and committees" had been raised.<sup>15</sup> Church leaders who publicly argued in favor included Daniells and Evans.

This was an interesting concept as it pertained to the Foreign Mission Board, however, because the members of the GCC were already *ex officio* members of the FMB, as noted in Chapter Three, though as explained there, the board was tending to act more and more autonomously. Importantly, the GCC was to be expanded to 25 members, and it was agreed that it would take over all other boards and committees. From the sustained debate that followed the above proposal in 1901, however, it is clear that at the time many were aware of some problems concerning the status of the FMB and its work but did not want to be rushed into a major decision; it became plain that the board's fate would be decided at a later time.<sup>16</sup> That time would, in fact, follow two years later. Meanwhile, the first steps of consolidation of the Mission Board with the General Conference had been taken in 1901, with the liquidation of the Board's real estate in New York City, and "the removal of the [FMB] headquarters to Battle Creek".<sup>17</sup>

The year after the epochal 1901 Session, at a meeting of the GC officers' group, Daniells declared that "he believed the future work of the General Conference would be, primarily, that of a great Missionary Board; therefore, he thought that all work could be handled by one committee," instead of requiring a separate Mission Board and General Conference Association. It was agreed to "suggest to officers of the General Conference Mission Board and General Conference Association that they form an outline of a plan for simplifying the organizations of the General Conference, and present the same to the next General Conference in Session."<sup>18</sup>

The reasons why Daniells was keen to move quickly on the independence of the FMB have to be inferred, but they probably included the trend towards autonomous action by the FMB, which

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both reflected, and had been partly caused by, its physical separation from the GC headquarters, and by the FMB's creation in 1897 of its own Executive Committee, which increasingly took important decisions. The GC leadership team sought to bring back mission planning within their direct reach and influence.

### **The General Conference Committee As Mission Board**

Accordingly, on April 6, 1903, at the Thirty-Fifth GC Session, the Committee on Plans brought a report that included this proposal: "That the General Conference Committee hereafter be the Mission Board of the denomination."<sup>19</sup> It was part of a plan both to expand the membership and to extend the responsibilities of the Executive Committee, taking the next step in the reform process initiated in 1901.

As Arthur Daniells observed, in speaking to the report, "the province of the General Conference Committee is of an advisory character to a large extent". The "organization of the Union Conferences" in 1901 meant "the administrative work" had been "taken . . . from any central place and located . . . in the Union Conferences", so that the role of the GC Committee was now "of a missionary character". Daniells's solution was both to expand the membership of the committee, making it representative of the whole world Church, including by making union presidents *ex officio* members, and to give it greater powers (making it truly an executive committee, though he did not phrase it thus), but with powers relating to the concerns of the whole, and in particular to the issue of missions and missionaries.<sup>20</sup> In the end, the plan won the day, and five days later, a simple and to-the-point amendment was voted to the GC Constitution: "The General Conference

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Committee shall have the supervision of the missionary operations of the denomination.”<sup>21</sup>

The Foreign Mission Board was superseded, partly because it had tried to operate almost independently of the GC officers and Executive Committee, but partly because church leaders, including Ellen White, had lost confidence in it.<sup>22</sup> The FMB formally ceased operating in 1903, but the Executive Committee *became* the Mission Board (with “foreign” dropped from the title); as a legal entity, “the Mission Board” was not wound up: it retained an existence in name that allowed it, as W. C. (Willie) White observed to the 1903 Session, “to be utilized for necessary legal business”. This included management of property. Many properties overseas had been registered in the name of the Mission Board; to transfer ownership of them all to a different legal entity would have been time-consuming and expensive, and possibly difficult, and so the Board needed to have an ongoing legal existence. When necessary, property matters were dealt with by the *Trustees* of the Mission Board, rather than the full General Conference Committee (though they rarely met separately).<sup>23</sup> This technicality did not detract from the new reality: it was clear to all that the Executive Committee henceforth was responsible for missions and missionaries.

It is of significance that Willie White, his perspective enlarged by his time in Australia, elaborated quite pointedly on the general rationale which seemed to carry the day by sharing that “the body itself is the missionary work,” and not a “limb” or one of the “departments” of the greater whole, and its primary purpose is found in “our one and only commission” which “is to go and preach to all nations.”<sup>24</sup> White’s words were a rebuttal to the agitations of some, such as Edward A. Sutherland, who voiced concern that the GCC had focused—and would focus—too much on foreign mission:

It seems to me that the Foreign Mission Board has practically swallowed up the General Conference Committee; and the chairman

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of the Foreign Mission Board, or the president, has . . . an opportunity . . . to turn means into the channel in which he is especially interested, so that other departments will suffer. And during the last two years this thing has been done. . . . But mistakes have been made in swinging everything so heavily toward the foreign mission work, that other departments of the work have suffered.<sup>25</sup>

But Sutherland's idiosyncratic views proved to be unpersuasive.

Following in the wake of the uniform adoption of the new union conference structure (discussed below) which would allow, even encourage, local leaders to concentrate closely on concerns in established areas in America and Europe, it was the arguments of A. G. Daniells and W. C. White that carried the day in 1903. The FMB's functions were subsumed by the GCC, though occasionally the nomenclature appears in citations of old minutes. When asked why the GCC should subsume the FMB, Evans essentially stated the following: At this point the FMB was a separate and distinct board from the GCC, but that arrangement had worked in an inefficient way. As a solution, the new leaders wanted to centralize authority but do so through a broad and representative committee. ("The design is to group under management of this larger committee [the enlarged General Conference Committee, including all union presidents] the various departments of our work.") This new iteration of the GCC would have "no specific work, no locality to operate in, unless the Foreign Mission Board should give it its territory."<sup>26</sup> However, if only the FMB had survived, while all the other branches were placed under the GCC, the FMB would have been left alone, an orphan organizational entity, as it were. Under the GCC, in contrast, mission could be organized in the best manner possible, drawing on all of the departments rather than being the responsibility of, in effect, one department, while always having the counsel of the GCC collectively. Thus, being taken over by the GCC was the only way the Mission Board could truly survive and still perform its original purpose.

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What veteran leaders had desired and been urging had finally come to pass. Back at the time of the 1901 Session, Uriah Smith had articulated his view that the GC Committee should "distribute its administrative responsibilities among the union conferences, and to get into a position where it could give all its time and influence and power to missionary problems." If Daniells and the GCC did this, Smith believed, it would enable the Church "to send forth in this generation this gospel of the kingdom, for a witness to all nations."<sup>27</sup>

Returning to the 1903 GC Session, at it, Daniells shared his vision of what ought to happen now that the GC *had* shared "its administrative responsibilities among the union conferences", which was that it *ought* to dedicate "its time and influence and power to missionary problems". Daniells declared:

But the administration in the United States has all been taken away, and is now placed in the hands . . . of men . . . appointed to that work in the East, and the North, and the South, and in the Central and Western states. But while that has been going on, our missionary problems have been greatly increasing. More workers than ever before are being sent out . . . [which] has increased the work of the Mission Board. And as I have studied it, I have become convinced that one of the great purposes of the General Conference Committee would be to deal with these world-wide problems everywhere.<sup>28</sup>

He suggested that the "president of every Union Conference and the chairman of every Union mission field in the world ought to be a member of that committee", so that the church would have "the whole world directly represented on the General Conference Committee." To that, he urged, should be added "the leading men in the departments . . . and put on a few men of special experience, and special ability . . . and you have a thoroughly representative committee, representing all the interests of this great work." Such a "truly representative" body would be, Daniells continued, "a World's Conference Committee." And he concluded: "Now, that, to

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my mind, brethren, is what should be the Mission Board of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination.”<sup>29</sup>

This is, of course, how things eventuated, but having argued for a larger committee to take on a larger share of the world’s work, his colleague Willie White was keen that the point not be lost sight of that this would be the preponderant part of the new GC Committee’s work. Using terms similar to those of Daniells, White stressed that the General Conference “is a world’s conference”.<sup>30</sup> Given Daniells’s proposal, and in light of the implementation over the previous two years of the union conference model of structure, White rhetorically asked, “what is there left for a General Conference to do?” Having posed the question, he provided the answer:

Why, the General Conference has to look after the mission fields; the General Conference, by this system of organization, is forced to become a mission board; and our General Conference must . . . let Union Conferences attend to the work of their Union Conference. And the only thing that is left for the General Conference Committee is to do the mission work; and I pray God that its full strength may be given to that part of the work.<sup>31</sup>

The full significance of these views are perhaps lost if viewed through the mists of time. This was not a period of unalloyed peace in the Adventist Church. Instead, it was in this era that Dr. John H. Kellogg actively resisted control by the Church of its medical institutions, while advancing unorthodox theological views. It can be forgotten that Kellogg was not a party of one; he was, rather, the leader of a faction that included prominent church leaders and socially eminent church members, especially from around the Church’s Battle Creek nerve center.<sup>32</sup> The conflict swirling around Kellogg and to a great extent driven by him was deeply polarizing—church leaders, physicians, and educators, all were pushed to take sides.<sup>33</sup> That in such times the Church’s leaders were willing to see

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considerable ecclesiastical authority devolved to a lower level of structure is remarkable. Yet it paid off, for the new union conferences and their leaders *helped* to resist the Kellogg party's efforts to seize control of the direction of the Adventist Church.

The General Conference officers did not, however, accept any rival to the authority of the GC headquarters at supra-union level, or over the denominational missionary enterprise. This is reflected in Daniells's determined and successful bid to suppress the "General European Conference" which was "discontinued" by vote of the GCC in 1907, so that there would be no resurrection of the divided control over mission that characterized the FMB years. Some scholars see the discontinuation of the "European General Conference" (the titles seem to have been used interchangeably) in essentially cynical terms, primarily as reflecting Daniells's desire to assert the power of the General Conference. However, even though Daniells was certainly concerned not to see the creation of a rival, it seems clear that he was chiefly motivated by missional concerns, especially the (to him) very recent history of contested authority over missionary work and the consequent stagnation of the church's missionary endeavor.<sup>34</sup>

### A New Vision

Familiarity has perhaps lessened our sense of how radical were the changes of 1901. A broader context may help with this. As we noted in the Introduction (above, pp. 11–12), Adventists up to 1901–03 were organized for mission rather like most Protestant churches. There was a tract society, a Sabbath School society, and separate educational institutions, all operating broadly autonomously. Like other Protestants, Adventists faced, in consequence, the problem

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of a degree of incoherence. However, whereas other Protestants addressed such difficulties in the 1960s and 1970s, centralizing authority (at least for a time) under unitary mission boards or committees,<sup>35</sup> Seventh-day Adventists had done this at the turn of the century. The reforms were radical, then, not only in contrast to what had gone before, but also in the context of wider Protestant approaches to organizing for mission. Bearing this in mind, it will be helpful to summarize the changes in organization and mindset that took place in 1901 and 1903. This period was a real watershed because it involved more than the adoption of union conferences and departments across the board in Adventist ecclesiastical structure. Four other things were crucial, though they are often ignored.

*First* was the way in which reformed organizational structures were implemented and how church leaders related to them. In effect they had achieved what they had aspired to in 1901–03: the GC became primarily concerned with advancing foreign mission. To adopt a political metaphor, one that Daniells and others used during 1902–4, much of the world church had been made *self-governing*; all agreed that this was positive.<sup>36</sup>

*Second* was the development of new administrative structures *within* the GC, including a transition away from overlapping and competing associations to departments, operating at each level of church structure, with guidance from leaders of those departments at the GC headquarters. In addition was the creation, largely by Secretary Spicer and his Secretariat team, in the twenty years after 1903, of a complex system for recruiting missionaries from the North American homeland and the new European and Australian heartlands, and deploying and sustaining them in mission fields in Latin America, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and the islands of the Pacific (this is examined in the next chapter). The Church today still essentially uses the administrative systems developed during Spicer's secretaryship.



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*Third* was the change in literal and figurative perspective allowed by the move of headquarters from Battle Creek, Michigan, to Takoma Park, near Washington, D.C. The decision to move from Battle Creek to somewhere "in the Atlantic states" had been yet another momentous decision taken at the GC Session in April.<sup>37</sup>

The GC headquarters itself began moving in August 1903, the publishing association followed, and new institutions (a college and a sanitarium) were founded as the sanitarium in Battle Creek fell into the hands of John Kellogg. Yet as it turned out, escaping "Kellogg's negative influence was only one . . . of the benefits of the move from provincial Michigan to the nation's capital".<sup>38</sup> As Daniells foresaw at the 1903 GC Session, the move offered "great opportunities for mission enterprise". Willie White had even seen an argument for locating the GC headquarters in London, though in the end he preferred it "to be on the Atlantic Seaboard close to New York City . . . Philadelphia [or] the National Capital."<sup>39</sup> Although neither man anticipated all the advantages that would accrue, they grasped the potential.

In Washington, the church headquarters would be close to the foreign embassies to which requests for authorization to start work in new mission territories and applications for visas for missionaries had to be submitted—a vital, indeed indispensable, but laborious and time-consuming process, expedited by being adjacent to Washington.<sup>40</sup> The presence of international banks in the national capital enabled the transmission of funds to and from church headquarters and mission stations around the world.<sup>41</sup> Takoma Park was on a major rail line, important for managing the mission homeland of North America, but also close to the large port of Baltimore, from which missionaries could sail or their possessions be shipped (while the even larger port of New York was easily accessible by train).<sup>42</sup> "New opportunities presented themselves," by moving to the US capital, "and new horizons were opened, mental as well as geographical."<sup>43</sup>

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The change was essential for a movement that, increasingly and purposefully, faced not inwards to Lake Michigan and the US Midwest and West, but outwards, across the oceans. Yet, the move away from Michigan *enabled*, but did not *effect*, global expansion in Adventist mission. The shift of headquarters mattered because the *focus* of church leaders, not just their homes, had shifted. This brings us, therefore, back to that group of leaders who, from 1903, onwards managed the enlargement of the church's missionary enterprise.

*Fourth*, then, was the vision and passion for mission shared by the General Conference officers, working together closely. Each year from 1903 to 1922, when Daniells was succeeded by Spicer, and indeed beyond, all three executive officers were passionate proponents of worldwide mission, especially (as will be seen in Chapter Five) to non-Christian people groups. Daniells's zeal for mission was often articulated in committees, behind the scenes, but from early in his career, his preaching and addresses to church workers inspired those who heard him by his dynamic passion for mission.<sup>44</sup> We want to dwell on, and to underscore, the significance of this aspect—the importance of actions taken by individuals in key leadership roles. The institutions and mechanisms were very important, but so, too, were the personalities. We suggest that the new organizational model made a difference as far as the Church's foreign mission program was concerned, in large part because the three GC officers were determined to transform the missionary enterprise of the Adventist Church. Simply put, other officers would not have made as much of the organizational reforms as did Daniells, Spicer, Evans and Knox (they can be seen in Illustrations 9–12).

We already reviewed the roles of Evans and Knox above (p. 112) but it is worth highlighting here their contribution to the team led by Daniells and Spicer. The latter two were General Conference officers together until 1926 and were visionaries of global mission.

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However, so, too, were Evans, treasurer from 1903 to 1909 (and subsequently a division president and general vice-president and thus still an officer, although initially in the Asiatic mission field), and W. C. White, who continued to exercise very considerable influence behind the scenes for many years, and who now had several years of foreign mission service under his belt (in contrast to when he had been elected foreign mission secretary!). As we also saw above, Knox had not served outside the Americas, but he shared the priorities of Daniells and developed Evans's work in building the financial infrastructure necessary to realize the common goal. Moreover, increasingly those brought into departmental leadership and as support to the three officers had mission experience. By the 1920s, this had become almost a *sine qua non* for senior positions at the world headquarters. Above all, however, we suggest, it was Daniells and Spicer who took advantage of the organizational reforms to drive forward their vision of mission.<sup>45</sup> They were a team, together with the treasurer and the General Conference Committee, which had become the Adventist Church's Mission Board. As Chapter Five will show, Daniells and Spicer planned strategically for mission advances in an unprecedented way.

It was during the Daniells and Spicer administrations, from 1901 through 1930, that Adventism truly became a worldwide movement; it did so, we argue, in large part because the head of the church was also the head of its missions. In fact, both Daniells and Spicer essentially viewed the two roles as one. No longer was there lack of clarity about the respective powers of the Mission Board and the GC Executive Committee, resulting in paralysis. The GC Committee now *was* the Mission Board, a fact some scholars have misunderstood, even though it often used that title itself.<sup>46</sup> It did so not only of necessity, when making decisions about some properties in mission fields (as described above, p. 115). It also did

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so voluntarily but calculatedly because “mission board” was a well-understood term: both within the Adventist Church and beyond it.

Within the Church, decisions taken by the GC Committee *relating to foreign mission and missionaries*, i.e., taken *when it was acting in its capacity as the Mission Board*, would be referred to, including by church institutions and by Secretariat staff, as decisions of “the Mission Board” (or just “the Board”)— the GC headquarters is even referred to as “the mission board office”.<sup>47</sup> Outside the church, European officials, whether in their capitals or in colonies, had power over vast swathes of Africa and Asia. They made decisions about whether or not to permit missionaries to enter new regions and districts, or into an entire colony. They were accustomed to dealing with missionary boards and mission boards from a variety of Western countries, but denominational executive committees were unfamiliar to them. As a result, in dealing with governments, church officials often ascribed the overarching authority under which their missionaries operated as being “the Mission Board” rather than the church’s Executive Committee; while some might see this as making a fine distinction, because the two were effectively the same, there is no question of misrepresentation, given both the fact, just cited, that church entities treated the GC Committee as acting as the FMB when it took foreign mission-related decisions, and the fact that, legally the Mission Board continued to exist—and even if Willie White had not foreseen all the implications, it surely was exactly these sorts of “necessary legal reasons”, that he had in mind in 1903.<sup>48</sup>

We see here what one historian of Protestantism has called “Adventism’s knack for adapting to the world” and its “pragmatic” culture.<sup>49</sup> The Church has often exhibited a flexible and common-sense approach to problem-solving. Adventists adopted a radical approach to organization in 1903, one that set them apart from all other Protestant missionary organizations (as discussed above, pp. 119–20) It made Adventists more flexible and responsive in their

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missionary enterprise, yet its radicalism and distinctiveness meant it had the potential to cause confusion that could result in practical difficulties for the sending-out of missionaries. So Adventist church leaders simply adapted their terminology, varying it according to their audience and what they were accustomed to. Nor was doing so unique to these circumstances. For the historian, it can cause difficulties, because of the way church leaders used different terminology for the same thing in different situations; but it was done largely to *further mission*.

Regardless, in any case, of what name it operated under, the bottom line was that all the swelling authority and resources of the Executive Committee and (as we will see) of the GC presidency and administration, as well as the personal influence of the top leaders, were now dedicated to the church's mission enterprise. The GC Committee's primary business *was* "overseas mission". As a result, the next few decades saw the beginning of a golden era of Adventist missions—and the foundation of the modern, worldwide Church.<sup>50</sup>

The GC Committee had attempted to function as a missionary board in the 1860s and 1870s and failed. Why did it succeed in the 1900s? The transition from mission being the responsibility of the FMB to the GCC was successful because after 1901 there was a sound organization that devolved operational authority to the unions. No longer did GC administration and the Executive Committee have to relate to and supervise an ever-increasing number of conferences and a large number of quasi-independent associations whose interrelationships could be bewildering. It was, in sum, because of the structural changes introduced at the 1901 and 1903 Sessions that the GCC could dedicate itself to being a missionary board. This then allowed the personal commitment and dynamism of the officers who served from 1903 to accomplish a major change: of mindset more than of structure. But these factors were intertwined and arguably interdependent.

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The statistics examined in Chapter One have already revealed to us that it was after the General Conference Committee became the Adventist Church's Mission Board that Adventist mission really began to expand around the world and to enjoy sustained success. But what exactly was it that led to that success? In this chapter we suggested that church growth—numerical and geographical—was partly due to structural change, partly to personnel change at the top. Still, what did the new leaders of the newly reorganized General Conference *do* to effect the expansion of the Adventist missionary enterprise? *How* did measures taken in Takoma Park help to open up new territories, reach new people groups, and send—and sustain—more missionaries? And what was the role of the GC Secretariat? To these subjects we now turn in Chapter Five, which examines how the 1901–1903 reorganization played out over the next two-to-three decades, focusing on the role of GC leadership and in particular of the team that Spicer created to support the work of the General Conference Secretary. It was in this period and thanks in large part to the Secretary's team that mission was, so to speak, taken to the next level.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> "International Convention of the Student Volunteer Movement," *ARH*, 68:7 (Feb. 17, 1891), 102.

<sup>2</sup> P. T. Magan, "Convention of the Student Volunteer Movement," *ARH*, 68:10 (March 10, 1891), 150–151. In addition to Rossiter and

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Magan, additional named delegates from the Battle Creek Sanitarium include Dr. A. N. Loper, Mrs. M. Foy, Mrs. E. H. Whitney, and Miss Jean Whitney.

<sup>3</sup> *The Report of the First International Convention* (Boston, 1891), p. 194. (Available to download at <https://ia601406.us.archive.org/31/items/studentvolunteeroounknuoft/studentvolunteeroounknuoft.pdf>.)

<sup>4</sup> See Gordon E. Christo, "Burgess, Georgia Burrus (1866–1948", in *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*: <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=AHXD>.

<sup>5</sup> Magan, "Convention of the Student Volunteer Movement," p. 150.

<sup>6</sup> Magan's drive and passion for mission is evident in his foundational and inspirational leadership at the College of Medical Evangelists, today's Loma Linda University: see M. L. Neff, *For God and C.M.E.: A biography of Percy Tilson Magan upon the historical background of the educational and medical work of Seventh-day Adventists* (Mountain View, Calif. & Omaha, Nebr.: Pacific Press, 1964).

<sup>7</sup> See Barry David Oliver, *SDA organizational structure: Past, present and future* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1989); and, for concise overviews, idem, "The principles and process of denominational reorganization, 1901–1903", *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*: <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=DC19>; and David J. B. Trim, "'Something more in the way of organization': Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiastical polity in historical perspective", *Ministry*, 89:9 (Sept. 2017), 16–19.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Oliver, "Principles and process", for the reforms as prolonged, rather than a one-off event in 1901.

<sup>9</sup> Benjamin McArthur, *A. G. Daniells: Shaper of twentieth-century Adventism* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press, 2015) definitively supersedes May Cole Kuhn, *Leader of men: The life of A. G. Daniells* (Washington, D.C.: RHPA, 1946) and John J. Robertson, *A. G. Daniells: The making of a General Conference president, 1901*. Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1977) though the latter is still valuable.

<sup>10</sup> Mitchell was elected at the meeting of April 19 and made a permanent invitee on April 22; only on April 23 was a subcommittee of

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three, appointed and chaired by President Daniells, authorized “to act . . . in the selection of a General Conference Secretary”; two days later, at the meeting of April 25, “The selection of a . . . Secretary . . . was considered at some length, but no definite recommendation was made”: GCC Proc., v, 2–3, 7, 8, 12. Osborne became secretary sometime in the first two weeks of May; missing minutes make it impossible to be precise, but see news-note in *ARH*, 78 (May 14, 1901), 312.

<sup>11</sup> On Osborne, his life sketch states: “He was two years secretary of the General Conference, when a severe attack of pleuropneumonia caused him to resign his position, and go to California for his health, which was quite rapidly restored.” This sounds like a stress-related breakdown in health. See “Obituaries”, *ARH*, 85:14 (April 2, 1908), 31.

<sup>12</sup> Mitchell may have suffered illness in office as well: he died in 1904 (aged only 55) and his life sketch noted that he had been “suffering for several months with a complication of diseases”. But as his death occurred 20 months after the 1903 Session it seems unlikely that this was the cause of his “un-election”. Further, the absence of GC representation at his funeral service suggests a falling out with Daniells and/or other senior church leaders. See “Obituaries”, *ARH*, 81:52 (Dec. 29, 1904), 23.

<sup>13</sup> There is no authoritative biography of Spicer, but see Godfrey T. Anderson, *Spicer: Leader with the common touch* (Washington, DC & Hagerstown, Md.: RHPA, 1983), which does draw on his correspondence. Despite the importance of Evans and Knox there are no biographies of either. See E. D. Dick, “Death of Elder I. H. Evans”, *ARH*, 122:49 (Dec. 6, 1945), 24; H. A. Morrison, “I. H. Evans”, *ARH*, 122:51 (Dec. 20, 1945), 1, 20, 23; C. H. Watson, “Death of Elder W. T. Knox”, *ARH*, 108:48 (Nov. 26, 1931), 24; and A. G. Daniells, “Elder W. T. Knox”, *ARH*, 108:51 (Dec. 17, 1931), 1, 21, which is especially revealing of Daniells’s esteem for Knox.

<sup>14</sup> There is no comprehensive study of this process; it was addressed by Bruce L. Bauer in his pioneering study, “Congregational and mission structures and how the Seventh-day Adventist Church has related to them”, unpubl. D.Miss. diss. (Fuller Theological Seminary 1982), pp. 148–50; the present study is a more sustained consideration of the 1903 process and what followed.

<sup>15</sup> Thirty-Fourth Session (1901), 10th meeting, April 10, a.m., report



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in *GCB*, 4:8 (April 11, 1901), 185.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.

<sup>17</sup> GCC meetings, Apr. 25 and 26, 1901, in *GCC Proc.*, v, 14, 16. In the end a buyer could not immediately be found, and it was decided to rent out the property, making “the quickest rental possible at the best terms” that could be secured: Informal meeting of GCC, May 22, 1901, minutes in *GCC Proc.*, v, between pp. 51 and 54.

<sup>18</sup> “Informal Minority Council of General Conference Committee”, [morning] Oct. 17, 1902, in *GCC Proc.*, v, 115a.

<sup>19</sup> Thirty-Fifth Session (1903), 12th meeting, April 6, a.m., report in *GCB*, 5:7 (April 7, 1903), 100.

<sup>20</sup> Daniells's speech, in *ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Thirty-Fifth Session, 23rd meeting, April 11, 7 p.m., proceedings in *GCB*, 5:13 (April 14, 1903), 195; this is also included as no. 9, in the list of “Actions Taken”, under the “Summary of Conference Proceedings” report, *GCB*, 5:14 (Aug. 1903), 222.

<sup>22</sup> See Oliver, *SDA organizational structure*, p. 133n.

<sup>23</sup> Thirty-Fifth Session, White, speech at 23rd meeting, April 11, 1903, in *GCB*, 5:13 (April 14, 1903), 195. For instances of continuing “Mission Board” usage, see Daniells to Conradi, June 24, 1904, and Daniells to Spicer, June 14, 1906, Presidential Outgoing Letters, GC Ar., RG 11, Letterbook no. 34, p. 196, and Letterbook no. 38, p. 938. The trustees were listed as “Legal Trustees of the Foreign Mission Board” (a separate heading) in the *Yearbook* when its publication was resumed: *YB 1904*, p. 12 (and thereafter in each year's edition up to and including 1919). For an example of their work, see the “Meeting of the Trustees of Foreign Mission Board”, July 6, 1904, which was solely about property in the Cook Islands (minutes appended to *GCC Proc.*, vol. VI, without pagination). Not only did the trustees legally have power over the Board's properties, but also, because they were distinct from the Mission Board *per se* (the GCC), such meetings of trustees allowed business to be transacted without calling a meeting of the full GC Committee. Such trustees' meetings seem not to have been common and to have decreased as the reorganization of 1903 became ever further in the past.

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<sup>24</sup> Thirty-Fifth Session (1903), 20th Meeting, April 9, 7 p.m., report in *GCB*, 5:11 (April 11, 1903), 169–70.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 169.

<sup>26</sup> Thirty-Fifth Session (1903), 15th Meeting, April 12, 11 a.m., GC Ar., RG o, box 11300, “GC Session Recording Secy. Minutes March 27–Apr. 6 1903”, pp. 58–59.

<sup>27</sup> Reported by A. G. Daniells, tribute to Smith, *ARH*, 80:10 (March 10, 1903), 4.

<sup>28</sup> Thirty-Fifth GC Session (1903), Daniells, speech at 12th meeting, April 6, a.m., in *GCB*, 5:7 (April 7, 1903), 101.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> White uses this expression twice in a speech at the 13th meeting, April 6, 3 p.m., in *ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>31</sup> W. C. White, speech at 19th meeting, April 9, 2 p.m., in *GCB*, 5:10 (April 10, 1903), 158.

<sup>32</sup> See Daniells’s graphic description of a meeting he, Irwin Evans, W. W. Prescott and G. B. Thompson had with Kellogg and his supporters: Daniells to Spicer (itinerating in Great Britain), June 14, 1906, GC Ar., RG 11, Presidential Outgoing Letterbooks, no. 38, pp. 940–41. On Kellogg, the literature is vast but see James L. Hayward, “Kellogg, John Harvey (1852–1943)”, *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*: <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=89LQ> for a recent and reliable overview. For overviews of Kellogg’s career that highlight his role in the controversy of the early 1900s, see Richard W. Schwarz, “The perils of growth: 1866–1905”, in Gary Land (ed.), *Adventism in America: A history* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1986), pp. 129–30, 132–37; and see now Bill Knott, “Scoundrels, opponents, and apostates”, in Alberto R. Timm and James R. Nix (eds.), *Lessons from Battle Creek: Reflections after 150 years of Church organization* (n.p. [Silver Spring, Md.]: RHPA, 2018), pp. 96–102, 106.

<sup>33</sup> A sense of this can be gained from the primary sources compiled in *Windows: Selected readings in Seventh-day Adventist Church history 1844–1922*, ed. Emmett K. Vande Vere (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publ., 1975), pp. 250–65. For Kellogg’s role as a stirrer-up of conflict, see Knott,

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"Scoundrels, opponents, and apostates", pp. 99–101; cf. Schwarz, "Perils of growth", pp. 135–37.

<sup>34</sup> See, e.g., Daniells to E. E. Andross, June 12, 1906, GC Ar., RG 11, Presidential Outgoing Letterbooks, no. 38, p. 864; GCC Council (held in Gland, Switzerland), May 16 p.m., 1907, GCC Proc., VII, 291–94 ("discontinued" at p. 291); and *pace* George Knight, *Organizing for mission and growth: The development of Adventist church structure*, 2nd edn (Hagerstown, Md.: RHPA, 2006), pp. 134–35: Knight assumes Daniells was seeking simply to assert power and largely disregards the question of *why*, overlooking the consequences, in the 1890s, of unclear authority over the missionary enterprise.

<sup>35</sup> Bauer, "Congregational and mission structures", pp. 189, 193. Cf. e.g. Marvin D. Hoff, *The Reformed Church in America: Structures for mission*, The Historical Series of the Reformed Church in America, 14 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1985).

<sup>36</sup> For example, A. G. Daniells, "The Southern Union Conference", *ARH*, 79:5 (Feb. 4, 1902), 75; Thirty-Fifth (1903) GC Session, A. T. Jones, speech at 19th meeting, April 9, 2 p.m., in *GCB*, 5:10 (April 10, 1903), 154; A. G. Daniells, "The Canadian Union Conference", *ARH*, 81:42 (Oct. 20, 1904), 17.

<sup>37</sup> Thirty-Fifth Session: "Actions Taken", no. 8 (in "Summary of Conference Proceedings" report), *GCB*, 5:14 (Aug. 1903), 222.

<sup>38</sup> D. J. B. Trim, "'Illuminating the whole earth': Adventism and foreign mission in the Battle Creek years (1859 to c.1912)", in Alberto R. Timm and James R. Nix (eds.), *Lessons from Battle Creek: Reflections after 150 years of Church organization* ([Silver Spring, Md.]: RHPA, 2018), p. 150.

<sup>39</sup> Thirty-Fifth Session: Daniells's speech during 12th meeting, April 6, a.m., in *GCB*, 5:7 (April 7, 1903), 101; White, speech during 13th meeting, April 6, 3 p.m., *ibid.*, 102—but the printed proceedings omits much of his speech, including the quoted words which are in the original minutes: GC Ar., RG 0, box 11300, fld. "GC Session Recording SECY. Minutes March 27–Apr. 6 1903", pp. 70a–70b.

<sup>40</sup> On the complexity of obtaining visas or permits, and how long the

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process could take, see the discussion in Chapter Five, below, pp. 140–42.

<sup>41</sup> This is another aspect of Adventist history that has received little scholarly attention and needs more research. Emma Howell Cooper, “God was ready the day the banks closed”, *ARH*, 156:37 (Sept. 13, 1979), 4–6, while anecdotal, is suggestive as to the importance of adjacency to Washington’s banks.

<sup>42</sup> Schwarz, “Perils of growth”, pp. 131–32.

<sup>43</sup> Trim, “Adventism and foreign mission”, pp. 150–51.

<sup>44</sup> Percy T. Magan “Life Sketch of Arthur Grosvenor Daniells”, *ARH* 112:16 (April 18, 1935), 2, and comments made by a number of former colleagues during the Battle Creek and Takoma Park memorial services for Daniells, reported in *ibid.*, 8–11.

<sup>45</sup> Past scholars have tended to single out Daniells: e.g., Gottfried Oosterwal, *Mission: Possible* (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publ., 1972), pp. 29–30; Gary Land, “Shaping the modern Church 1906–1930”, in Land (ed.), *Adventism in America*, pp. 139–40. However, the joint importance of Spicer and Daniells was highlighted by R. W. Schwarz, *Light bearers to the remnant* (Boise, Idaho & Oshawa, Ont.: Pacific Press, 1979), pp. 354–55.

<sup>46</sup> At times the GC Committee used that title and the “Mission Board” title alongside each other, e.g., *Manual for missionary appointees: Issued by the General Conference Committee of Seventh-day Adventists (the Mission Board of Seventh-day Adventists)* (1927), copy in Rebok Memorial Library, Special Collections: Pamphlet Collection, LF 172. For examples of misunderstanding, see Bauer, “Congregational and mission structures”: p. 168, “the General Conference Committee [was turned] into a virtual mission board” (cf. pp. 189, 194); p. 195, “Daniells made the whole General Conference Committee operate *as if it were* a mission board” (emphasis supplied). Instead, as we show here, it *was* the mission board, both *de jure* and *de facto*. Schwarz seems to see the Mission Board as wrapped up in the process of “departmentalizing” and fails to note the true significance of developments with the GC Committee in the realm of foreign mission: “Perils of Growth”, pp. 128–30 (quotation at 130).

<sup>47</sup> Examples could be multiplied, but include the following (all from

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GC Ar., RG 21), which are from an extensive chronological span: L. M. Bowen (General Business Manager of Loma Linda Sanitarium) to T. E. Bowen, Apr. 12, 1916, box 3283, fld. "Bowen, T.E."; Spicer to R. G. Schaeffer, Nov. 7, 1916, box 3288, fld. "S"; T. E. Bowen to Ferdinand Stahl, Mar. 30, 1919, p. 1, and J. L. Shaw to Stahl, Sept. 28, 1919, p. 1, box 3306, fld. "Stahl Correspondence"; [B. E. Beddoe?] to Winifred Allen, July 4, 1926 and F. R. Millard to Edwin Gibb (Far East Division Secretary), May 11, 1961, in "Allen, A. N." and "Latourette, Donald Paul" appointee files, nos. 45085, 31209.

<sup>48</sup> Examples of the use of "Mission Board" in dealing with governments could be multiplied, but the following are indicative:

1) Ira Hankins, in his "Application for Registration—Native Citizen" to the US Consul, Durban, South Africa, Sept. 5, 1922, states that he will serve in Africa until "recalled by the Home Board", US Consular Registration Applications, 1916–1925, no. 48505, in Ancestry.com, *U.S. Consular Registration Applications, 1916–1925* [database on-line] (Provo, Utah: Ancestry.com, 2012).

2) C. H. Anscombe, Transportation Secretary in the U.K. for the "Mission Board of Seventh-day Adventists", to Secretary of State for India, 14 June 1939; C. H. Silver to Chief Passport Officer (draft), and to "The Secretary, The Mission Board of Seventh-day Adventists" [i.e., Anscombe] (draft), June 19, 1939: all in BL, IOR/L/PJ/7/2690. On Anscombe and his role acting for both the GC and the Northern European Division, see D. J. B. Trim, *A passion for mission* (Bracknell, U.K.: Newbold Academic Press, 2019), pp. 85, 278.

3) E. D. Dick (GC Secretary) to U.S. Department of the Interior, April 30, 1941, writing, *inter alia*, of how the GC had "operated for many years the missions in Africa . . . under the direction of our Board", copy in S. M. Konigsmacher appointee file, GC Ar., RG 21, box 9872, file no. 46243.

<sup>49</sup> Alec Ryrie, *Protestants: The faith that made the modern world* (New York: Viking, 2017), pp. 226, 236.

<sup>50</sup> Here we respectfully demur from Bauer's conclusion that the supersession of the FMB by the GCC as Mission Board laid the "seeds for future decline" ("Congregational and mission structures", pp. 184–85 and cf. pp. 191–92, 194–95, 150–51).



## **Chapter Five**

### **Mission Control**

#### **The Emergence of Secretariat, 1901–c.1930**

The significance of the 1901–1903 reorganization is sometimes not fully appreciated because it is seen in the context of tensions within Adventism, rather than of the desire to strengthen outreach beyond the Church. To be sure, the reorganization helped to resolve many tensions—personal, theological, structural—in the original North American homeland of the Church. Although certain challenges intensified, such as the conflict between John H. Kellogg and senior Church leaders over the relationship of Adventist medical institutions to the organized Church, the new structure resolved many issues present at the time, even as it also articulated a more thoughtful and mission-oriented approach to local and world governance, as described in Chapter Four. What is vital to keep in sight, however, is that the structural changes were intended to allow church leaders to make worldwide mission their focus, and that this is what happened; reform also provided a framework for creating new initiatives to accomplish their goals. What was to come next would be the realization of the goals and aspirations that underlay organizational restructuring.

As we noted in the last chapter, the move from Battle Creek, Michigan, to Washington, D.C., proved instrumental in reorienting the focus of the church headquarters from North America to the entire globe. In Chapter Four we also suggested the importance of the individuals involved, and of their personal interest in mission,

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in ensuring that the GC officers and departments did, in fact, focus on foreign mission. In this chapter we will argue that personalities could only do so much. Without the development of the General Conference Secretariat as a command center for the missionary enterprise, church leaders' passion for reaching the world could not have been realized. To do so, systems and internal structures were needed, and this is what Secretariat created and managed. In addition, it took on two other key functions: planning for mission expansion; and promoting mission, involving the sympathies of individual church members in the plans and processes developed at the Church's world headquarters. Secretariat laid the essential administrative foundations for a dramatic expansion of foreign mission. It became the Adventist Church's "mission control".

### **Mission Control Emerges**

Some might imagine that, after the Church's reorganization, the secretary's duties were lessened, for, with the spread of unions, there was considerable devolution of responsibilities for church governance to other levels of denominational authority. In fact, however, the secretary's responsibilities progressively *increased*, because, with more sophisticated governing structures, increasing membership, and expanding mission, there was more for the GC headquarters to oversee. Further, many new duties were assigned to the office of the GC Secretary, which took on responsibility for recruiting and dispatching missionaries, coordinating their activities, and caring for them, as well as for publicizing and promoting foreign mission among church members in the denomination's original North American and its new European and Australian heartlands.



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The result was the creation of the GC Secretariat, though during the Daniells–Spicer years that term seems to have been used collectively for the leaders of *departments* (who then were titled secretaries), rather than for the *staff* of the GC Secretary. Perhaps unconsciously seeking such a term, Spicer in 1918 spoke of the headquarters department “in which the secretaries work”.<sup>1</sup> At the time, “Secretariat”, a borrowing from French, still sounded like a foreign term in many parts of the English-speaking world.<sup>2</sup> When, at the 1936 GC Session, the Secretary, Milton Kern, used “Secretariat” in his report as a collective term for his department, it probably was the first time it was used in this way.<sup>3</sup> The new term took a while to stick: as late as the 1950s, minutes of internal meetings of the Secretariat staff use the term “Secretarial”. But regardless of nomenclature, the key facts are that both the number and the responsibilities of the Secretary’s staff greatly expanded in the three decades after 1901 as Secretariat became the center of the Adventist Church’s missionary enterprise.

## Secretariat Personnel and Functions

From the start of his secretaryship, Spicer had a strong concept of the importance of unity, including unity of action. Soon after his election, he wrote in the *Review* of two “axiomatic truths”, that “The whole is equal to the sum of all its parts” and “The whole is greater than any one of its parts”, and declared them “equally applicable to this message” as to mathematics. “The message as a whole is composed of, and is equal to, the sum of all its different parts or divisions. The message as a whole is greater than any one of its parts or divisions.” He wrote further of how the “educational work . . . the distinctive work of schools and colleges, did not create the message, but was created by the message.” The same was true, he continued, of “The medical work, as a distinctive department

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of work” and “the publishing work”—none created the message, “but [all were] created by the message.” The whole message could not be reduced “to one of its parts only.” If any of the component parts made “the attempt to get out of their place” they would “become a hindrance rather than a blessing.”<sup>4</sup> Under his leading, Secretariat (though it would not assume that title until after he left it) was to demonstrate the virtue of unity of control, in mobilizing unity of purpose for united action. Yet Spicer’s accomplishments were never those of a one-man band, and part of his leadership achievement was in building a team of one accord, an orchestra that performed under his direction.

In 1904, two new positions subordinate to the Secretary were created: Home Secretary and Statistical Secretary. Yet unlike the new secretaries of the 1880s, these positions were to assist the GC Secretary rather than, as it were, to compete with him. This was made clear by the way they were reported in the *Yearbook*, where they are listed, along with the new position of assistant treasurer, immediately following the officers, under the heading “Appointed Assistants”. Yet at the same time this arrangement and verbiage also elevated the Secretary’s two new “assistants” above ordinary clerical staff. Estella Houser, who had been on the staff of the Foreign Mission Board, was the first GC Home Secretary. Harvey Edson Rogers, who had worked in clerical positions at the GC headquarters since January 1889, been “statistical clerk” and clerk of the General Conference Committee since April 1901, and become a trusted member of the small GC headquarters staff, was appointed first General Conference Statistical Secretary. Initially instituted on a provisional basis, the three positions were made permanent in June 1905, following the General Conference Session in May of that year.<sup>5</sup> Houser left the position in 1906 to complete medical studies; she was replaced by Tyler E. Bowen, who had been secretary-treasurer of two conferences in North America. He continued in senior positions in GC Secretariat for

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thirty-five years. Bowen [shown in Illustration 13] retired in 1941, as did Rogers, whose thirty-seven years in a senior Secretariat position are a record.<sup>6</sup>

As statistical clerk, Edson Rogers (as he was known) already had contributed to the renewed publication of the *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* in 1904 (after an interval of nine years). As statistical secretary, he initiated publication of the standalone *Annual Statistical Report* in 1907. It was a separate publication (instead of appearing in the pages of, variously, the *Review*, early *Yearbooks*, and *General Conference Bulletin*), which gave church statistics greater prominence among denominational leaders, but in addition it did more than *summarize* reported numbers. Unlike the earlier annual reports, Rogers *analyzed* the numbers he had gathered. He had begun to do this before appointment as GC Statistical Secretary; in 1903 President Daniells referred to how “there has been some statistical work” done under Secretary Spicer’s supervision.<sup>7</sup> As influential Adventist author Arthur Spalding (who knew Rogers) put it, after he passed away: “The gathering of statistics before Rogers was partial and fragmentary. He expanded and *systematized the work*.”<sup>8</sup> The expansion in the role of Secretariat was endorsed in an action taken by the 1913 GC Session, amending the constitution to add to the Secretary’s formal duties: “to collect such statistics and other facts from division, union, and local conferences and missions, as may be desired by the conference or the executive committee.”<sup>9</sup>

The addition of Rogers to the secretary’s team was vital, for, as it accumulated more data, the Secretariat took over the role of planning—deliberately and purposefully—for expanding mission. In the years following, Secretariat itself continued to expand in size: mission planning, managing requests from mission fields for missionaries, finding and processing missionary recruits, and dispatching them to the fields, took more and more time. This was reflected in an action of the GCC in 1911, to appoint Bowen to the

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additional office of Missionary Secretary; perhaps for that reason, until 1915 he was titled Assistant Secretary, albeit without the formal GCC sanction that was the basis for the appointments in 1905.<sup>10</sup>

The 1913 Session had established a new officer position: GC Assistant Treasurer. In 1915 the Executive Committee set up a subcommittee to consider how the headquarters could achieve both greater efficiency and greater connection with the world field. Acting on its report, the GCC, “to increase the staff of general workers in order to compass the work of keeping in touch with the fields”, voted to create a new position: “assistant secretary of the General Conference”.<sup>11</sup> Bowen assumed a new title, that of office secretary. Today this sounds like a clerical position, but the *Review* reported a year earlier on how a “well-known government statistician” had been hired by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America as their “office secretary”. The term to contemporaries seems to have implied direction of the whole staff of an office, *i.e.*, in Bowen’s case, supervision of the secretary’s staff. As office secretary, Bowen was effectively a second assistant secretary, working with John L. Shaw, who had been called from the presidency of Washington Missionary College (having been a missionary to India for many years and then been influential in the administration of the NAD), to become the first assistant secretary to GC Secretary Spicer.<sup>12</sup>

The Secretariat staff had to liaise with union conferences (especially though not only) in North America, each of which, as Willie White urged, was “to be a recruiting agency [with] the headquarters of each Union Conference [as] the headquarters of the work of recruiting foreign workers [i.e. workers for foreign missions] in that Union.”<sup>13</sup> This liaison work initially fell to Bowen though when associate secretaries were added starting in 1918 (below, p. 142) they took it over; but Bowen for decades oversaw the process of obtaining visas and permits for missionaries to

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enter foreign nations and the colonies or protectorates of imperial powers. The process was typically so complex that Bowen had to manage (indeed, he created) a system of equal complexity for processing missionaries. Secretariat identified separate stages which it then tracked for each missionary family, including what visa or permit was needed; when an application was submitted; if/when it was received by Secretariat and the missionary (not least because if, as happened, missionaries mislaid their actual permit papers, having this information might expedite the process of obtaining duplicates). Secretariat also tracked the additional steps for obtaining a US passport. Copies of all correspondence with embassies were kept, mostly in a central register.<sup>14</sup> (A sense of the processing system can be gained from photographs of the registers: Illustrations 14 and 15.)

This could all be very time consuming as well as complex. As a British Embassy official told Bowen in July 1916, in a telephone conversation regarding Charles and Eva Lowry, who the church had called to serve in Burma (then part of British India), “considerable time must elapse before the necessary permission can be obtained from the Government of India”. What followed was a correspondence that took at least three weeks and included application forms being returned at least twice because insufficient copies had been submitted! Charles and Eva Lowry did go as missionaries to Burma, arriving on September 18, 1916—seven weeks and one day after Bowen’s telephone conversation with Roberts. This probably was untypically fast.<sup>15</sup> For example, applications for permits for India for Ross and Hattie Porter and Carl E. Weeks were submitted on September 6 the same year; it took just over four weeks before the embassy forwarded the application papers to London; the authorities there approved “permits to proceed to India” seven weeks after the applications were dated; and it must then have taken time for documents to be received in the GC headquarters. Bowen had a personal hand in

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both these application processes.<sup>16</sup> He seems to have overseen the obtention of all official documentation for all missionaries who were US citizens, even those serving in another country as missionaries when called to a new posting (as in the case of the Porters who were in Shanghai). Those called from Europe seem to have related directly with European colonial authorities and less evidence survives of what was involved; but even in those cases, GC Secretariat had to provide supporting documentation for the respective governments, and of course had to manage the church's own internal administrative process.<sup>17</sup>

Bowen's interest in a missionary did not cease when he or she departed overseas. He maintained a voluminous correspondence with missionaries in the field, often dealing with logistical or technical matters relating to their work, but also encouraging them and sending them news of the church. In late 1916, Petra Tunheim wrote fulsomely to him from Java thanking Bowen "for your very kind and cheery letter . . . . It gave me such a joy to read it." Just over seven years later Ferdinand Stahl wrote from Peru assuring him, "if I should get a letter from you every day I would not think it too much. Your letters always have been of great encouragement to us."<sup>18</sup>

With the conducting of analysis and projections, and the management of missionaries, in addition to keeping in touch with the church around the world and the duties of the secretary as an officer of the General Conference, the GC Secretariat was growing both in influence and in size. Its importance was both recognized and underscored when the 1918 Session created (and filled) the position of associate secretary, which, unlike the assistant and statistical secretaries, was one of the officers of the General Conference (though like them he was, as his title implied, certainly junior to the Secretary).<sup>19</sup> Assistant Secretary Shaw [Illustration 17] became first ever GC Associate Secretary in 1918; the assistant secretaryship was then left vacant until filled in January 1921 by

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the thirty-three-year-old Australian Cecil K. Meyers [Illustration 18].<sup>20</sup> The 1922 Session made the statistical secretary an *ex officio* member of the General Conference Committee; in moving the amendment to the constitution that this move required, Spicer, with typical warmth, affirmed his longstanding colleague, Rogers: “We have but one Statistical Secretary in the denomination.”<sup>21</sup> Spicer was elected president in 1922 but continued to set the tone and to stress the importance of Secretariat’s planning role. Four years later, the 1926 Session amended the Constitution again to provide for multiple (initially two) associate secretaries.<sup>22</sup>

Amongst other things, the additional senior appointments in Secretariat allowed travel to be shared between the GC secretary and his associate(s). This acknowledged a principle enunciated by Bowen, that, when they were traveling, GC “brethren” needed *both* to be able to spend enough time “to give . . . good help” (especially counsel) *and* to “come in touch with conditions” in the mission fields they visited, which made them better “able to help in a strong way on the Board on returning”—and, because gaining such knowledge took time in the field (on top of the length of time of long sea journeys), as the church grew, it was essential to have a larger number of senior staff in Secretariat, to share the load.<sup>23</sup>

President Daniells recognized the important role played by the Secretariat as a whole, which was already evident by the 1918 GC Session: “The system of reporting we have developed makes it unnecessary for the president to give an extended survey of the world-field and the progress of the work. The secretary will give a general review of the field”. He made similar comments in 1922, praising “the efficient system of reporting we have developed”.<sup>24</sup> This allowed Daniells, in his presidential addresses, to focus on casting a vision—and, as we will see, it was a bold, global, and data-driven vision, out of which emerged a truly global movement.

The secretary’s staff played a role in administering Church organization, to be sure, but the increase in staff *in* the GC

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headquarters was largely a result of the need to administer the fast-growing foreign mission program around the world; Secretariat looked *outside* the headquarters and beyond Takoma Park. And it did so to great effect.

### Expansion of the Missionary Enterprise

In the 1890s, expansion both in mission fields and numbers of missionaries had stalled. After 1901, however, the number of missionary appointees increased until World War I, then spiked again in 1920, before remaining buoyant for a decade until the coming of the Great Depression (Figure 5.1). During World War I, many missionaries were obliged to return home (or were interned by hostile nations) and yet the first global conflict was not as damaging to the Church's missionary enterprise as it might have been. During the five years between the 1913 and 1918 GC Sessions,

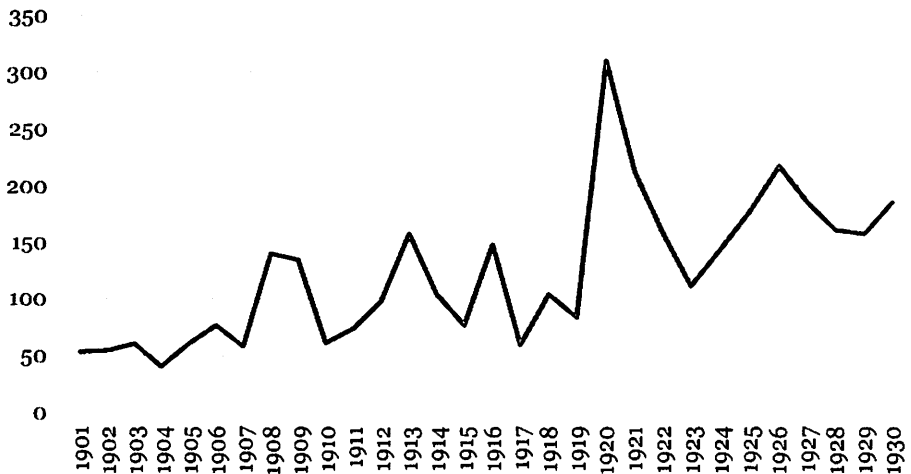


Figure 5.1. New Missionaries Dispatched, 1901–1930



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Spicer proudly told the 1918 Session, “542 of our brethren and sisters have gone . . . into the regions beyond”, an average “well above the hundred a year”.<sup>25</sup> In the first twenty years after the GC Committee replaced the Foreign Mission Board (1904–1924), the Adventist Church sent 2,399 “laborers to foreign fields.” By 1930, the total number of new missionaries sent in the first three decades of the century (starting with 1901, the year of organizational reform and ending in 1930, before the impact of the Great Depression was felt) was 3,638.

The great majority of these thousands of missionaries were recruited, processed, sent across the seas, and supported there, by the General Conference Secretariat.

## Mission Control Mindset

The growth of the early twentieth century prompts two questions: What was Secretariat seeking to do? Did it have an overarching concept and if so, what was it?

## Secretariat’s Objectives

Most fundamentally, Secretariat sought to expand the boundaries of foreign mission, entering unentered territories, reaching unreached “people groups” (as they would be described today). Simply put, foreign mission was the top priority of Secretariat.

It is striking, for example, that Spicer titled several of his Session reports simply as “The Mission Field Outlook”.<sup>26</sup> And by *mission field* he meant those areas outside the mission homelands of North America, Central and Western Europe, and Australasia.

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The “Secretary’s report” at Sessions regularly included the world field, but Spicer distinguished between “home and foreign fields”, between “mission lands” and “home bases”. He spent much of his time talking about the foreign fields, stressing those that had recently been entered, or remained unentered. When he turned to speak of the home fields at length, it was (for example) to describe, approvingly, how NAD was providing 571 out of 708 missionaries in one quadrennium, or how conferences were “sharing their tithe, and promoting the weekly offerings throughout the churches”. In every “union or local conference . . . fostering and promoting . . . interests and gifts for missions is a matter of regular conference work, into which the laborers put all their hearts and souls. It has revolutionized our foreign missionary enterprise.”<sup>27</sup> As far as he was concerned, the homelands, having been organized into union conferences, required limited attention; Spicer’s primary interest in the home fields was as sources of financial support *for*, and personnel to serve *in*, the foreign mission fields.

Furthermore, for the first sixty years of the twentieth century, Secretariat had a core concept of mission, one that reflected Ellen G. White’s mission priorities at the time that Secretariat emerged. From 1891–1900, serving as a missionary herself in Australia, en route to which she stopped in some South Pacific islands, White began to plead for greater efforts reach Africa, China, India, Japan and the islands of the Pacific.<sup>28</sup> In 1901, Daniells, now president, took her at her word and expressed his “ardent desire to see a strong corps of workers sent to India and China and other Oriental countries”. Probably to his surprise, the prophetic counsel instead effectively was to wait, until “our institutions—our sanitariums, publishing houses, and schools—[had] reach[ed] a higher standard”, so that “workers sent to foreign fields [would] be more effective”.<sup>29</sup>

Thanks to the reforms undertaken in 1901–1903, church finances and organization both began to improve, and, crucially,

alternatives to the institutions in Battle Creek began to emerge. And now Ellen White began to stress ever more clearly and emphatically that Adventist mission was to encompass “the whole earth” including those living beyond the bounds of Christendom; she “increasingly emphasized” mission to “adherents of non-Christian religions” during the last fifteen years of her life.<sup>30</sup>

This should be borne in mind because the evidence makes it clear that, for Spicer and for his successors in the secretaryship, Kern, Meyers, Dick, Rebok, and Beach, the chief desire was *to enter unentered territory and to preach Christ to those who did not know Him*. These leaders—particularly Daniells and Spicer, who had worked closely with Ellen White—had internalized, and now began to operationalize, her perspective on reaching the “whole earth”. This was the overarching objective of Daniells and Spicer as president; of Spicer’s protege and successor as President, Charles Watson, who, as president in Australasia, had actively promoted mission to Southeast Asia and to the South Pacific;<sup>31</sup> and later of J. Lamar McElhany in his long presidency (1936–1950).<sup>32</sup> They all wanted to see the “home fields” converted, too—but then, believing counsel of Ellen G. White in 1900, that “the prosperity of the home work depends largely, under God, upon the reflex influence of the evangelical work done in countries afar off”, Daniells and Spicer indubitably believed—as, almost certainly, did the others—that, in words written by Spicer, “When the witness has been borne abroad, the work may be finished at home in short order. The reflex influence of a missionary crusade that shall sweep the world will of itself prepare believers to rise and finish the work in this country.”<sup>33</sup> In the mission fields, all were happy to see Catholics, members of Orthodox and Eastern Churches, and nominal Christians of other Protestant denominations converted and become more authentic followers of Jesus Christ; but all these GC leaders had a particular burden for converting adherents of what missiologists today often call “world religions.”

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### Supporting Presidential Planning

In addition to this emphasis, Daniells exemplified, to use a term that was not yet in vogue, strategic planning: that is, purposeful, big-picture planning for mission advances, which weighed how an advance in one region might affect others and took calculations of this kind into account in decision-making. At the 1905 GC Session, for example, Daniells set out a strategic vision of greater efforts in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. He thus stressed areas that were *not* Christian; indeed, he drew attention to countries that were strongholds of Islam, Confucianism—Daoism, and Buddhism.

Who can tell [he asked delegates] why seven hundred and twenty of our ministers should be located in America among one-twentieth of the world's population while only two hundred and forty of our ministers are sent forth to work for the other nineteen-twentieths? What good reason can be given for spending annually \$536,302.76 tithes among seventy-five millions, and only \$155,516.57 among fourteen hundred millions of the world's perishing? We rejoice that we are able to name so many lands in which we have opened missions; but we deeply regret that in many of them our laborers are so few, and our efforts are so feeble. We should materially strengthen our missions in Nyassaland [*sic*] [Malawi], Rhodesia [Zambia and Zimbabwe], China, Korea, Ceylon [Sri Lanka], Turkey, and Egypt. We should not delay longer to enter such lands as the Philippines, Madagascar, Greece, Uganda, and Persia [Iran]. All that started this movement at the beginning, and has urged it onward to its present position, urges us with increasing emphasis to press on until this gospel of the kingdom shall be proclaimed in all the world for a witness unto all nations. Then, and not till then, will the end come, for which we so earnestly long.<sup>34</sup>

Daniells in this paradigmatic speech did two things. First, he drew attention to the needs of mission in the non-Christian world. This reflected the views of Ellen White, and she in turn implicitly but plainly endorsed Daniells; a testimony of 1909 mirrors his

phrasing from 1905, speaking likewise of millions, and in the same areas Daniells had spoken of:

In Africa, in China, in India, there are thousands, yes, millions, who have not heard the message of the truth for this time. They must be warned. The islands of the sea are waiting for a knowledge of God.<sup>35</sup>

But she was to give the clearest endorsement almost ten years after the 1905 GC Session speech. In the last year of her life, she significantly amended the 1892 edition of *Gospel Workers*, adding a new paragraph (one of the last that came from her pen), and declared: “I feel intensely over the needs of foreign countries, as they have been presented before me. In all parts of the world angels of God are opening doors that a little while ago were closed to the message of truth. From India, from Africa, from China, and from many other places is heard the cry, ‘Come over and help us.’”<sup>36</sup> That this was literally her last word on mission makes its message all the more poignant and compelling.

In the 1905 speech, however, Daniells did more: he modelled the concept of planning strategically, based on statistics, in order to reach the non-Christian world [Illustration 16 shows Daniells and Rogers together]. This continued to be a theme of Daniells’s administration—and, as we shall see, it shaped his colleagues’ thought and practice.<sup>37</sup> Secretariat in particular embraced this approach and embodied it, providing the data that underlay much mission planning. In this respect Secretariat was, however, the partner of GC Presidential. In 1904, commenting in the *Review* on the statistical report for 1903, Daniells observed: “Some find little that is of interest in statistical reports. But they have a purpose. The Lord saw wisdom in placing genealogical tables, statistics, and historical records of various kinds in the Bible.” He also recommended the report “to all occupying official positions”.<sup>38</sup>

At the 1904 Autumn Council, Daniells led a discussion on the “needs of the mission field” that included (as the minutes record)

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“many items of comparative statistics”: some of them Adventist, some relating to world population. There is little doubt that these statistics came from Spicer’s team and it was certainly Rogers who supplied the detailed “statistical report of offerings for missions” that Daniells “reviewed” later in the same council. But is it notable that, in both cases, Daniells led the discussions.<sup>39</sup>

In 1917, Daniells himself prepared a “detailed report on the Philippine Mission,” initially shared with the other officers and departmental directors at the GC headquarters as a basis for a request to allocate more resources; the Philippines was of course one of the territories that Daniells had singled out in 1905. His 1917 report begins with a detailed demographic, geographical, and cultural profile of the island country, studded with statistics, including but not limited to Adventist organizational statistics.<sup>40</sup> Francis M. Wilcox, long-term editor of the *Review & Herald*, summed Daniells up well: “He proposed means and measures which might be adopted, he presented concrete and workable plans.”<sup>41</sup>

As president of the world Church, Daniells’s planning encompassed the church’s heartlands as well as the foreign missions; but he prioritized foreign mission and advocated for it throughout the twenty-one years of his presidency, even though, well before its conclusion, his view (and his fellow officers’) of the primacy of mission had been accepted so completely that Daniells no longer felt the same need to *argue* for it—but still he *drew attention* to foreign mission fields. In 1918, for example, in his presidential address to that year’s GC Session, he declared that “this Conference should plan for a far stronger and more extensive foreign mission work than anything we have yet approached.” He continued: “No argument is needed in support of this proposal. The very character of our message demands it.” He also, however, stressed that, looking “into the future, we see some problems that bulk large on the horizon” which needed “to receive from us the

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most earnest, prayerful study that we are capable of giving them.” This stress on reflection and analysis is typical of the General Conference leadership in the decades after 1901. And Daniells emphasized that, where a “limit to successful soul-winning work” *had* been met, it arose, “in nearly every land we have entered”, from a “limit to the number of our workers and our facilities for carrying on the work.” He then urged, yet again, the need of increased effort by the mission homelands and increased investment of resources in the mission fields. He concluded with the words used as the title of this book: “We aim at nothing less than the whole world. This Conference should lay plans for more rapid strides and for mightier achievements.”<sup>42</sup>

Addressing the Fortieth GC Session, Daniells formally recommended to delegates: “That we immediately enter upon a larger, stronger, and far more enthusiastic campaign in behalf of what we call mission fields. This is the greatest hour in the history of the world [and] in our history as a people for a mighty forward movement in non-Christian lands.” He continued in terms that would make some cringe today, but which must have resonated with those who heard him: “My brethren, we must look this problem squarely in the face. The great majority of the nations, kindreds, and tongues to whom we are commanded to proclaim our Lord's last message of mercy and warning, are in the superstition and darkness and terrible degradation of heathenism. If they are ever rescued, it must be done by the church in the homeland.”<sup>43</sup> Here Daniells uses the language of Revelation 10 and 14, biblical passages central to Seventh-day Adventist collective identity which impelled them to the work of foreign mission.<sup>44</sup> But he also picks up on the theme of the vital role the homelands had to play in foreign mission expansion which was also the effect of his appeal to give “leaders in the mission fields . . . more workers . . . . The missionaries already in the fields are overworked. Many are breaking down. Every

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representative of our mission fields attending this Conference will tell you that the needs for men are great beyond expression".<sup>45</sup>

In 1922, Daniells also returned to the other *leitmotif* of his presidency: planning. Only thus could the needs of the homelands and the mission fields be married; only thus could resources be applied most effectively where most needed. He appealed for long-term goals to be the basis for laying a series of short- and medium-term plans, identifying a series of steps to be taken to "hasten the finishing of this work". After "earnest, thorough consideration" by leaders "of large experience", the GC Session ought, he urged, to "set goals" and make "definite, workable plans" that "should be entered upon at once, and every preacher, every church officer, every conference and institutional leader, should have a part" in implementing.<sup>46</sup>

### Planning for Reaching the World's Religions

This strategic, data-driven, and world-encompassing view of mission was typical of GC leaders in this era, as was an emphasis on reaching populations of Hindus, Muslims, and adherents of East Asian religions and traditions. These populations were so sizable that statistics underscored the need for mission beyond Christendom. World-Church leaders then drew attention to the need, using numbers, and encouraging boldness in taking on the world, despite the immensity of the task. Perhaps it helped a little that, as historian Richard Schwarz notes, "Initially Adventists had little concept of the difficulties involved in meeting sophisticated non-Christian religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Islam." It took time, too, to engage with the vast number of "languages and dialects" and alphabets that had to be learned.<sup>47</sup> What Church leaders did, however, was to use the very enormity of the task as a grounds for urgency.



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Several examples follow of this mindset and its articulation to the church at large, but many more could be given. In 1907, for example, William W. Prescott, then president of the Review and Herald Publishing Association and editor of the *Review*, urged his readers to consider “what a privilege they would feel it to be to give of their means for the extension of this message in all lands!” He bade them:

Think of the four hundred millions in China! Think of the three hundred millions in India! Remember that one half of the population of the world is found in China, India, and Africa. Our workers who are toiling beyond their strength in these heathen lands are under no greater obligation to minister to these benighted people than are those who are adding farm to farm or thousands to thousands while surrounded with all the comforts and conveniences which money can furnish.<sup>48</sup>

The same year, the GC Sabbath School departmental secretary, George B. Thompson, wrote from Kolkata to encourage North American Adventists to think of the 300 million Indian “souls to whom the gospel is to be carried” and many “more than this number in China. To all these we are debtor to give the gospel. . . . The message, thank the Lord, has girdled the globe. But what we see is only a beginning. . . . [A] mighty flood of humanity yet lies before us unexplored. What do we intend to *do* about it?” Thompson returned to this literally global theme in 1918, in the leading article of the first bulletin of that year’s GC Session: “O what a vision is needed for so vast a work, dealing with the eternal destinies of the human race!”<sup>49</sup>

A year later, a data-heavy article about mission in East Asia and Southeast Asia was published in the *Review*; written by Associate Secretary John Shaw, it included not just current church statistics but also analyzed the statistical development of Asian missions.<sup>50</sup> Nine years earlier, in 1910, Shaw, then the India Union

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Mission superintendent, had reported in the *Review* about plans agreed by the Mission Board (i.e., the Executive Committee acting in that capacity), to send all new mission appointees to the Foreign Mission Seminary in Takoma Park for training before they took up their appointments, for which there was a very clear rationale: “We must send of our best to the great heathen lands of Africa, India, and China.”<sup>51</sup> Both the plan and Shaw’s language bear the impress of W. A. Spicer.<sup>52</sup>

For Spicer, not only was it the role of the GC mission leaders to set strategic priorities—it was also above all else their role to channel world-Church funds and personnel resources *to those who had never heard of Jesus*. This was his top priority. This is how he summarized Adventist attitudes in the early 1890s, when he had been secretary of the Foreign Mission Board:

We didn’t have much of an idea of going to the heathen. We didn’t expect to go in any really strong way. We never expected to go to the Catholic countries, We thought: We will get a few along the edges, and the Lord will come; but the Lord all the time had in mind this purpose, of calling the heathen, of calling through all the Catholic lands for His people to come.<sup>53</sup>

This last part of Spicer’s retrospective view harmonizes more naturally with Jesus’s words in Matt 24:14, that the “gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” Spicer’s own attitudes toward “heathen” people changed by serving as a missionary in India. He began to encourage North American Adventists to feel responsibility for remote fields, populated by non-Christians. He became passionate about “fields like India and China where surely we ought to run through with the message, telling the people what these things mean before the very closing scenes are upon us.”<sup>54</sup>

At the 1903 Session, having just been elected secretary, Spicer made an appeal to delegates to do more in China, in which the first

Adventist minister, John Anderson, had only arrived the year before. Spicer shared with the delegates a letter from Anderson proposing “that every conference in America send one of its laborers to enter that great land.” Some administrators might have dismissed this as impracticable and simply said nothing about it, but Spicer not only shared it, he continued: “It may be thought too much, and that it is not a practical suggestion; but surely it would not be too much for China’s four hundred millions. These fifty years we have heard of the woes and sorrows of China; but during these fifty years, we have never told suffering China of the glorious message of salvation that God has given to us”.<sup>55</sup>

Such a message was, as would become apparent, typical of his approach and not only in his readiness to cite facts and figures; it also reflects his passion for the non-Christian world and his recognition that to reach it with the Adventist message it would be necessary to mobilize the comfortable church members of the homelands. This was to become the great theme of his twenty-seven years in the GC administration. In 1899 he had written from India: “The world is one field and the harvest surely will not be gathered in any place until the whole is ripened.”<sup>56</sup> It is a characteristic appeal, but also articulates a consistent message. At the Session at which he was elected General Conference President, for example, Spicer affirmed simply but eloquently that the church “is one fellowship in all the world . . . . Others may have a church South and a church North, a work in one continent independent of all others; but with us it is one field . . . And in all the world it is one people, ‘our folks’ all of them, of many nations and tongues,—the people of the prophecy of Revelation 14”.<sup>57</sup>

We have quoted Daniells and Spicer at some length in this section, but church leaders’ own words, often deployed to impel the church to greater effort for worldwide mission, give a telling insight into what GC leaders prioritized. They sought to foster a culture of worldwide mission and sacrifice for mission—especially

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to followers of African traditional religions and Animism, to Buddhists and Hindus, and to adherents of Confucianism and Islam. They wanted planning for expansion in mission fields to be purposeful, intentional, and strategic—and to be directed from the General Conference headquarters (whereas union conferences naturally focused on their own plans for their own territories). And in all these goals, world Church leaders were extremely successful—another reason we have dwelt on the roughly thirty years after the Church’s re-organization in 1901. What is also notable, however, is the emphasis on statistical and other data in all the reports and statements quoted here. This reflects the increasing importance of the Statistical Secretary and the extent to which, in their mission planning, church leaders used statistics and other data gathered and analyzed by the General Conference Secretariat. It was, assuredly, now mission control.

### Consequences and Conclusions

There are various ways to measure the impact of “mission control”—while one is overall church growth, another is church growth in different parts of the world. Table 1 presents the total membership

**Table I. Total Membership by Decade, 1900–1930**

Year	Total Membership
End 1900	75,767
End 1910	104,526
End 1920	185,450
End 1930	314,253

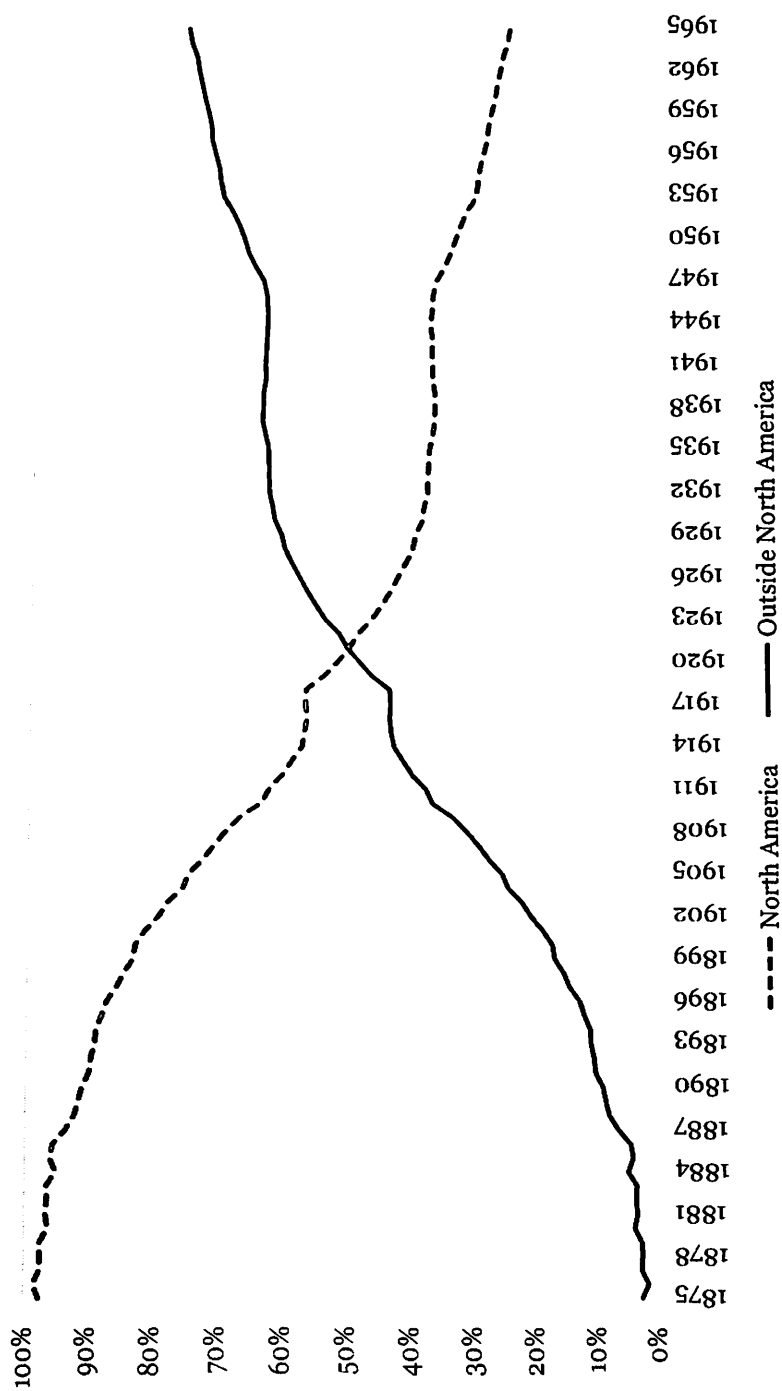


Figure 5.2: Percentage of Total Membership Inside and Outside North America, 1875-1965

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each decade starting in 1900 and ending in 1930. On p. 157, Figure 5.2 charts the balance between membership in North America and the rest of the world. Table I shows that the 1900 membership increased by 38 percent in the first decade of the twentieth century; in the next decade it grew more than 77 percent, in spite of World War I; and although growth becomes more difficult as movements grow larger, the decadal growth in the 1920s almost matched the 1910s, with membership increasing another 70 percent.

The statistics shown in Figure 5.2 start with 1875, at which point the Adventist missionary enterprise had only just begun, and conclude in 1965. The tipping-point years are 1920 and 1921: in 1920 the North American membership was 51.7 percent of the total and the rest of the world's share was 48.3 percent; the corresponding figures in 1921 were 49.83 and 50.17 percent. Thus, 1921 was the year that membership beyond North America finally exceeded that within the NAD. Meanwhile, 1917 was the last year that more than 50 per cent of global accessions were within North America. By the early 1920s, Adventism was truly a global faith.

\* \* \*

This chapter covers some thirty years and is disproportionately longer than Chapters Three, Six, and Seven, each of which covers four decades or more. The Church's mission enterprise between 1901 and 1930 may seem far distant in time, in relation to our ever rapidly changing world, and to the kinds of mission challenges the church now faces. But these three decades, and the decisions taken in them, illustrate the central thrust of this book. They are also almost at the chronological center: sixty years after 1844, forty years after the Adventist Church's foundation, and ninety years before the present day. This chapter deals with

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administrative systems central to the missionary enterprise as it developed; indeed, with administrative systems still central to the Church's missionary enterprise.

Simply put, the changes to Church organization devised and implemented during this period are the fulcrum around which Adventist mission history pivots. That infrastructure, carefully and deliberately built by Daniells and Spicer (and Spicer's staff), still underpins how the Church functions in the twenty-first-century. Without a clear understanding of how the system has been built and utilized, it would be difficult—if not impossible—to see that system's strengths or to identify any weaknesses it may have developed in its years of steady, sturdy service. This narrative about the Adventist past, of a century and more ago, is essential in order to plan and prepare effectively for the Adventist future.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> A. W. Spalding, *Christ's last legion: A history of Seventh-day Adventists, covering the years 1901–1948* (Washington, D.C.: Review & Herald, 1949), p. 491; sub “Director, Departmental”, *SDAE*, I, 460–61; Secretary's report to the thirty-ninth Session, publ. as W. A. Spicer, “The mission-field outlook”, *ARH*, 95:14 (April 4, 1918), 7–9, quotation at 7.

<sup>2</sup> See Michael Bentley, *The liberal mind 1914–1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 76. For the French origins, see *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. “secretariat”.

<sup>3</sup> Forty-Third Session (1936): M. E. Kern, “The Secretary's Report”, *ARH*, 113:24, General Conference Report, no. 3 (May 31, 1936), 59.

<sup>4</sup> “Some simple truths”, *ARH*, 80:29 (July 21, 1903), 3–4. This short article is unsigned, but it is the fourth item on the “Editorial” pages, at a

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time when Spicer was second of two associate editors, and it sounds like his writing style; hence our identification of him as the author.

<sup>5</sup> GCC, June 5, 1905, Proc., VII, 24; *YB 1904*, p. 11. See anon., "Harvey Edson Rogers", *The Student's Journal*, 26:6 (June 1897), 7; A. W. Spalding, "Largely personal", *ARH*, 123:29, General Conference Report no. 7 (June 13, 1946), 176; sub "Rogers, Harvey Edson" and "Statistical Secretary", *SDAE*, II, 467, 702; cf. "Harvey Edson Rogers" (obit.), *ARH*, 120:12 (March 25, 1943), 19. Rogers's appointment as Clerk of the GCC was voted Apr. 19, 1901, GCC Proc., V, 2-3; his role and Houser's are reported in "Organization of General Conference Committee", *GCB*, 4 (Apr. 22, 1901), 377. That Rogers was trusted is evident in his appointment to serve as one of five "incorporators of the [new] General Conference Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists" in the District of Columbia: GCC Minority Meeting, Apr. 13, 1904, in GCC Proc., VI, 97.

There is conflicting evidence about when the three positions in question were actually created. At the same meeting at which the GCC appointed Rogers and Houser in June 1905, it also voted to "release . . . Professor Bland" from the "assistant treasurership" and to call Harvey A. Morrison to that post. Yet Rogers, Houser, and W. T. Bland are all listed in the 1904 *Yearbook*, by the titles that were not voted until the following year, and under the heading "Appointed Assistants" to the officers; and the statistical report for 1903, published in the *Review* in August 1904, gives Rogers as its author and twice terms him "Statistical Secretary" (*ARH*, 81:33, Aug. 18, 1904, p. 16). The most likely explanation is that the officers (rather than the Executive Committee) made these appointments in 1904 as a potentially temporary measure, until the 1905 Session finalized the budget; and that their decision was retrospectively formalized by the GCC, in a series of councils held following the conclusion of the thirty-sixth Session on May 30. This must remain a hypothesis, because officers' minutes only survive very patchily from before the 1920s. However, it is notable that the first reference to an "Assistant Secretary, with special reference to the work in the home field", which seems to describe Houser's position, occurs in minutes of an "Informal Minority meeting of General Conference Committee", July 19, 1904, at which it was proposed that W. A. Colcord take this position (GCC Proc., VI, 113). Colcord had departmental responsibilities in publishing and as Religious Liberty departmental secretary: cf. "Informal



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Meeting" GCC, Mar. 4, 1904 and Minority Meeting GCC, Mar. 9, 1904, *ibid.*, pp. 94, 96. One can deduce that he declined and that Houser, who was at this point already trusted by the officers (being an invitee to a meeting of June 23 and serving as secretary for meetings of officers on July 5 and 6, 1904, *ibid.*, pp. 108, 110–12), was appointed in his place, by an "Informal" or Minority meeting of the GCC or a "Meeting of Officers", minutes of which did not survive—and this is credible because there is a gap in the 1904 GCC minutes between the July 19 meeting and the first meeting of Autumn Council on Sept. 15, yet it seems unlikely that there was no meeting at all. Finally, by that Autumn Council, Houser was clearly fulfilling the function of a home missionary secretary: see meeting of Sept. 20, 1904, GCC Proc., vi, Autumn Council minutes [separately paginated], 15.

It should also be noted that the intent of the officers and GC Committee that both the secretary and treasurer have senior assistants was frustrated because Morrison decided to remain at Union College. The position of assistant treasurer was not revived for more than a decade (see below, note 11).

<sup>6</sup> Autumn Council, Oct. 4, 1906, GCC Proc., vii, 200; W. A. Spicer, "A missionary leader" [Houser obit.], *ARH*, 99:20 (May 18, 1922), 22; Forty-Fourth GC Session (1941), 15th meeting, June 5 a.m., in *ARH*, 118:30, "General Conference Report", no. 9 (June 8, 1941), 222; Bowen obit., *sub* "In remembrance", *ARH*, 132:43 (Oct. 27 1955), 27; on Rogers see Spalding, "Largely personal", p. 176; and on Bowen see also n. 12, below. The Statistical Secretary's position later evolved into that of Director of the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, which has produced this monograph.

<sup>7</sup> Daniells, speech during thirty-fifth GC Session (1903), 12th meeting, April 6, a.m., in *GCB*, 5 (April 7, 1903), 101.

<sup>8</sup> Spalding, "Largely personal", p. 176 (emphasis supplied). Each edition of the *ASR*, starting with the 1907 edition, includes a lengthy text by Rogers, analyzing the reported figures; he gradually added summative tables of statistics beyond the "headline" metrics, and, starting with *ASR* 1910, he added charts. His analysis from the first was comparative: either chronological, showing historical development; geographical, between different parts of the world church; or ecclesiastical, comparing Adventist metrics with those of other denominations. Rogers's personal

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papers include abstracts of statistics and lengthy lists of facts, all of which he had compiled and which must have taken long, painstaking work: Rebok Memorial Library, Special Collections, MS 1, unpaginated.

<sup>9</sup> Thirty-Eighth Session (1913), 14th meeting, May 22, 2:30 p.m., in *GCB*, 7:7 (May 23, 1913), 111.

<sup>10</sup> Autumn Council, Oct. 30, p.m., 1911 and GCC meeting, Nov. 6, 1911, in *GCC Proc.*, IX, 110, 132; *YB 1913*, p. 5, *YB 1914*, p. 5, *YB 1915*, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> Thirty-Eighth Session (1913), 14th meeting, May 22, p.m., in *GCB*, 7:7 (May 23, 1913), 111–12, quotation at 111 (the position of assistant treasurer was an officer position, unlike the short-lived 1904 predecessor); GCC meeting, Nov. 21, 1915, *GCC Proc.*, X, 365–66. It should be noted that the Assistant Treasurer position was not actually filled until the 1919 Autumn Council, which additionally appointed a “Second Assistant Treasurer” (one of the “Appointed Assistants”, not an officer): see Autumn Council, Oct. 14 (9 a.m. and 5 p.m.), 1919, *GCC Proc.*, XI, ii, 433–34, 441; *YB 1920*, p. 6.

<sup>12</sup> See Shaw to W. T. Knox, March 30, 1916, GC Ar., RG 21, box 3288, fld. “S”; *sub* “Shaw, John Luis”, *SDAE*, II, 599–600; *YB 1916*, p. 5, which lists both the new assistant secretary, J. L. Shaw, and Bowen as Office Secretary (a title he retained until his retirement in 1941: cf. *YB 1941*, p. 9)—there is no GCC action retitling Bowen’s position but the consistent *Yearbook* usage for the next twenty-five years is confirmed by his notebooks and correspondence. On “office secretary” usage, see untitled note, *sub* “The work and the workers”, *ARH*, 91 (Jan. 22, 1914), 95.

*Note:* A position of Assistant Secretary for Europe had been created in 1908 (Spring Council, April 22, 1908, *GCC Proc.*, VII, 469); it is listed in the *Yearbook* for that year (1908, p. 10) and up to the 1913 edition. However, this official was based at the European Division headquarters and was in effect the predecessor of a division secretary, rather than the later assistant secretary in GC Secretariat; indeed, he appears in the *Yearbook* under the European Division as secretary after 1913, reflecting the reforms made to church structure at that year’s Session (*YB 1914*, p. 93).

<sup>13</sup> Thirty-Fifth Session (1903): White, speech to 13th meeting, April 6, p.m.: this part of his remarks was omitted from the published record

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but is in the original minutes, in GC Ar., RG 0, box 11300, fld. "GC Session Recording Secy. Minutes, March 27–Apr. 6 1903", p. 70a.

<sup>14</sup> See Bowen's voluminous notebooks, "Information concerning missionaries under appointment", GC Ar., RG 21, box 2528. An example page from one of these notebooks can be seen in the Illustrations section of this monograph. For an example of lost papers, see Bowen to British Embassy, Sept. 24, 1916, GC Ar. RG 21, box 3283, fld. "Bowen, T.E."—the missionary in question was Nelson Z. Town.

<sup>15</sup> See Arnold Roberts to T. E. Bowen, July 22, 191 (quotation); and Roberts to Bowen, Aug. 3, 1916; H. Keynman to Bowen, Aug. 8, 11 and 12, 1916: all in GC Ar., RG 21, box 3283, fld. "Bowen, T.E." These and other letters to/from the British Embassy in the same folder suggest Bowen was well known to the British Embassy, which was prepared to expedite permits in some situations (Bowen to "British Embassy", Sept. 29 and Oct. 2, 1916, Keynman to Bowen, Oct. 5, 1916: *ibid.*). Tragically, Charles Lowry died of smallpox only three years later: for this and the dates of the Lowrys' arrival see D. J. B. Trim, *A living sacrifice: Unsung heroes of Adventist missions* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press, 2019), p. 81.

<sup>16</sup> The applications are all dated Sept. 6, there are additional documents (notarized by Edson Rogers, who was a notary public, and witnessed by Bowen) on Oct. 3; the documents were forwarded to London on Oct. 5; the relevant official wrote to the British Embassy on Oct. 23: all in BL, IOR/L/PJ/6/1461, file 4281.

<sup>17</sup> Because there are not good division archives, there is much less surviving documentary evidence. In the case of Christian and Ani Kirstin Jensen, however, for whom calls to serve in India were made in the late summer of 1924 (see minutes of European Division Committee meeting, Aug. 4, 1924 and Mid-Summer Council, Minutes, 1924–1926, pp. 187, 234, action numbers 507(b), 570(3), GC Ar., RG EP 1, box 6599) and formally voted at that year's Autumn Council (Oct. 20, 1924, GCC Proc., XII, ii, 745), a file survives in the archive of the British government's India Office. The Jensens' permit applications were submitted in Copenhagen and supporting documentation includes notarized copies of letters from GC Secretariat, signed by Assistant Secretary Meyers; only in early February 1925 did officials in London begin to process the applications, and there is no record (or date) of outcome: BL, IOR/L/E/7/1379, file 743. However, the Jensens sailed for India from London on April 3, 1925,

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and arrived at Bombay on April 24: "Missionary Sailings", *ARH*, 102:20 (May 14, 1925), 24; "News Notes", *Eastern Tidings*, 20:8 (April 15): 6—almost six months after they started the process of obtaining permits.

<sup>18</sup> Tunheim to Bowen, Dec. 6, 1916, and Stahl to Bowen, Feb. 26, 1924, GC Ar., RG 21, box 3298, fld. "Tunheim, Petra" and box 3505, fld. "1924—Stahl".

<sup>19</sup> Thirty-Ninth Session (1918), 16th meeting, April 10, p.m., *GCB* 8:11 (Apr. 12, 1918): 162–63; cf. *YB* 1919, pp. 5, 264.

<sup>20</sup> Meyers was appointed by the GCC in April 1920 but he had first to be released by the Australasian Union Conference and then travel to the USA; while Australian leaders forecast that he would arrive in Washington, D.C. in January 1921, he actually disembarked at San Francisco, Feb. 22, 1921 and did not arrive in Washington until late March. See GCC, meetings of Apr. 5 and June 27, 1920, and March 21, 1921 (the first meeting at which Meyers is listed "present" with the addition: "Just in from Australia"): GCC Proc., XI, 680, 757, 1006; *YB* 1921, p. 6; and Meyers's naturalization petition, Oct. 28, 1928, US National Archives and Records Administration, RG 21, NAI no. 654310, *Federal Naturalization Records, 1795–1931* [database online] (Lehi, Utah: Ancestry.com, 2016): <https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/61200/00779716000544?pid=15775>. Uniquely for a GC associate or assistant secretary, J. L. Shaw later became treasurer: see obit., *ARH* 129:35 (Aug. 28, 1952), 22.

<sup>21</sup> Fortieth Session (1922), 26th meeting, May 28, p.m., in "Twenty-Sixth Meeting", *ARH*, 99:29, "General Conference Special", no. 9 (June 22, 1922): 30 (capitalization as in the original).

<sup>22</sup> Forty-First Session (1926), 4th and 15th meetings, May 30, a.m. and June 3, a.m., in "General Conference Reports", *ARH*, 103:23 (May 31, 1926): 8, and no. 26 (June 4, 1926): 12; cf. *YB* 1927, p. 321.

<sup>23</sup> Bowen to Stahl, Dec. 14, 1919, p. 3, GC Ar., RG 21, box 3306, fld. "1919—Stahl correspondence".

<sup>24</sup> Daniells, "The President's Address" [Thirty-Ninth Session], *ARH* 95:14 (April 4, 1918), 5; "The President's Address", [Fortieth Session] *ARH*, 99:21, General Conference Special, no. 1—Extra (May 22, 1922), 4.

<sup>25</sup> Spicer, "Mission-field outlook" [1918], p. 7.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*; idem, "The mission field outlook", [Fortieth Session] *ARH*,

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99:21, General Conference Special, no. 1—Extra (May 22, 1922), 7–8, 15.

<sup>27</sup> Spicer, “Mission-field outlook” [1918], *passim*; new countries entered are itemized on p. 8, quotation about home and foreign fields at p. 9. Numbers of missionaries in the 1918–1922 quadrennium are in *idem*, “Mission field outlook [1922], p. 7, as is the quotation about mission lands and home bases.

<sup>28</sup> D. J. B. Trim, “Ellen G. White and Adventist mission”, in Alberto R. Timm and Dwain N. Esmond (eds.), *The gift of prophecy in scripture and history* (Silver Spring, Md.: RHPA, 2015), pp. 349–50. Daniells felt this was partly because time in Australia broadened her horizons beyond North America and Europe: see Arthur Grosvenor Daniells, *The abiding gift of prophecy* (Mountain View, Calif., Omaha, Nebr., Cristobal, Canal Zone & Portland, Oreg.: Pacific Press, 1936), pp. 309–10.

<sup>29</sup> White to Daniells, Sept. 26, 1901, *TC*, VIII, 87.

<sup>30</sup> See Trim, “Ellen White and Adventist mission”, pp. 334–35, 348–51 (quotation at 348; discussion of her repeated use, during 1900–1903, of the language of “whole earth” at 350).

<sup>31</sup> John B. Trim, “‘Millions bound to idols’: The role of Australian missionaries in the Far East”, unpublished paper (2004); Milton Hook, “Watson, Charles Henry (1877–1962)”, *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*: <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=687E>.

<sup>32</sup> *Pace* Bruce L. Bauer, “Congregational and mission structures and how the Seventh-day Adventist Church has related to them”, D.Miss. diss. (Fuller Theological Seminary, 1982), p. 168, who argues that “when Daniells and Spicer passed from the scene . . . no dynamic mission promoter took their place” and that then the arrangement of having the GCC as the Mission Board did not work (cf. pp. 152–53). However, this is at odds both with the expansion of the missionary enterprise shown already in Chapter One, and with the continuing dynamism of foreign mission, which we illustrate in the rest of this chapter and in Chapter Six.

<sup>33</sup> White, *TC*, VI, 27; W. A. Spicer, “A fresh stroke for missions”, *ARH*, 79:14 (April 8, 1902), 6. The concept of a “reflex influence” is discussed more in Chapter 6. In a 1904 letter (not for publication), Daniells uses the term “regions afar off” when writing of how the Adventist message, “is making far greater headway at the present time outside of the United States than it is here”, thanks to the generosity of American Adventists,

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implying that, thanks to them, in time the situation would be reversed: Daniells to Conradi, June 24, 1904, Presidential Outgoing Letterbooks, no. 34, p. 197, in GC Ar., RG 11, Box 0144-45; cf. the incisive summary of Daniells's perspective in R. W. Schwarz *Light bearers to the remnant* (Boise, Idaho & Oshawa, Ont.: Pacific Press, 1979), p. 355.

<sup>34</sup> Thirty-Sixth Session: "The President's address: A review and an outlook", *ARH*, 82:19 (May 11, 1905), 9.

<sup>35</sup> White, *TC*, IX, 51.

<sup>36</sup> Ellen G. White, *Gospel workers* (Washington, D.C.: RHPA, 1915), 465. For context, see Trim, "Ellen White and Adventist mission", pp. 349-51

<sup>37</sup> Pace Bauer, "Congregational and mission structures", p. 160: his claim is that church leaders "did not discuss or articulate a clear policy during this period to guide them in developing a system of priorities". However, his contention is based on a more limited evidential basis than we have drawn on in this study; see what follows.

<sup>38</sup> A. G. Daniells, "Study our statistical report", *ARH*, 81:33 (Aug. 18, 1904), 16.

<sup>39</sup> GCC meetings of Sept. 18 and 20, 1904, GCC Proc., VI, Autumn Council section [separately paginated], pp. 7, 13.

<sup>40</sup> Presented to GCC, "Informal Meeting", Feb. 20, 1917, GCC Proc., X, i, 558; and see other items relating to the Philippines at this meeting and another informal meeting of Feb. 22, 1917, *ibid.*, 559-61.

<sup>41</sup> Wilcox made his comments at the Takoma Park memorial service for Daniells, reported verbatim in *ARH*, 112:16 (Apr. 18, 1935), 11. While doubtless an encomium, reflecting the principle *De mortuis nihil nisi bonum* (speak no ill of the dead), they certainly evince a view among church leaders of the time that laying concrete plans was a positive thing.

<sup>42</sup> Daniells, "President's address" [1918], pp. 6-7.

<sup>43</sup> Daniells, "President's Address" [1922], p. 6.

<sup>44</sup> Trim, "Adventism and foreign mission", pp. 134, 140-41, 143-44.

<sup>45</sup> Daniells, "President's Address" [1922], p. 6.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 6.

<sup>47</sup> Schwarz, *Light bearers to the remnant*, p. 357; this passage seems not to have survived into the revised edition of 2000.

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<sup>48</sup> W. W. Prescott, "Editorial", *ARH*, 84:38 (Sept. 19, 1907), 3.

<sup>49</sup> G. B. Thompson, "What are we going to do?", *ARH* 84:15 (April 11, 1907), 12, emphasis in original; idem, "The General Conference", *ARH*, 95:14 (April 4, 1918), 3.

<sup>50</sup> John L. Shaw, "Beginnings of mission work in . . . Malaysia, China, Japan, Korea, and the Philippines", *ARH*, 96:32 (Aug. 7, 1919), 2, 19.

<sup>51</sup> J. L. Shaw, "Plan for securing foreign mission recruits", *ARH*, 87:33 (Aug. 18, 1910), 17. For the six-part action voted, see minutes of GCC meeting of July 1, 1910, GCC Proc., VIII, 250–51.

<sup>52</sup> The plan came from a subcommittee Spicer was secretary of: GCC, meetings of April 17 and June 15, 1900, GCC Proc., VIII, 214, 246. We can deduce, moreover, that Shaw was something of a protege of Spicer's: it is notable that Shaw, who was not then a GCC member, was assigned by the GCC (see minutes cited in previous note) to write articles about the plan for the *Review*, *Signs of the Times*, *Southern Watchman*, and *Youth's Instructor*; even more indicative of Spicer's patronage are Shaw's appointment as the first assistant secretary in 1915, election as the first associate secretary in 1918, and election as GC Treasurer by the 1922 Session, which elected Spicer to the presidency.

<sup>53</sup> Forty-Second Session (1930): W. A. Spicer, "I know whom I have believed", *ARH*, 107:37 (June 26, 1930), 3.

<sup>54</sup> W. A. Spicer, "From India", *ARH*, 77:7 (Feb. 13, 1900), 11–12.

<sup>55</sup> Spicer, speech to the thirty-fifth Session (1903), 8th meeting, April 2, a.m., *GCB*, 5:5 (April 3, 1903), 65.

<sup>56</sup> W. A. Spicer, "Literature for India", *ARH*, 76:33 (Aug. 15, 1899), 18.

<sup>57</sup> Spicer, "Mission field outlook" [1922], p. 15.





## **Chapter Six**

### **Mission Expansion**

#### **Secretariat and Worldwide Church Growth**

Historians tend to be skeptical of claims about golden ages and the good old days; knowing what the past was actually like, they are naturally disinclined to view it through rose-tinted spectacles. Yet, when it comes to a commitment to worldwide mission, the decades from c.1910 to c.1970 take on a roseate hue.<sup>1</sup> This is not to suggest that everything was perfect in the church theologically or spiritually, nor yet in the management of the Adventist missionary enterprise; however, the degree of collective enthusiasm for, and commitment to, pushing missionaries into new, unreached territories, or regions with large under-reached populations, was astonishing. Missionaries were constantly being sent and sustained around the world. As we will see in Chapter Seven, that changed in the last third of the twentieth century. But in this chapter, we focus on that era when the world Church was focused on “foreign missions” above any other concern; doctrinal disputes did not detract or distract from mission.

This chapter, however, is more than a chronological narrative of the period c.1930–c.1970. It begins by examining thematic questions that span the whole of what was a remarkable era of missional emphasis and success. Following the organization of what we have called “mission control” between 1901–1930, crucial questions emerged. One was how the Church’s various regions would relate to and sustain each other, particularly how the “home

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field” areas related with those territories still regarded as mission fields. We will examine these issues first, before addressing the Church’s mission activities in relation to the challenges of the Great Depression and World War II, and the opportunities that came in its aftermath.

### **Resources for Mission**

#### Financial and Personnel

How was this increasingly large mission operation to be funded? From where would the resources come to equip those being sent to foreign mission fields?

Earlier we noted that GC leaders took the view that the homelands, having been organized into union conferences, required little from them, but that they wanted support from the unions of the heartland. They were needed as sources of resources, without which the boundaries of mission would not be pushed back, nor growth experienced in the mission stations already established. The “home” unions could function, as it were, as storehouses from which to draw financial support and as recruiting agencies from which to draw personnel to staff overseas locations. The unions in North America, Europe, and Australasia could provide out of their abundance to the rest of the Church.

This is not to say that the GC was uninterested in what happened in those “home field” unions, or that leaders in those unions wanted no attention from the GC; neither should it be imagined that world Church leaders had what might be termed an instrumental view of their relationship with those unions, merely in terms of resource flows. At all levels, it is clear, church leaders simply could not imagine anything other than being closely knit;

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GC leaders usually were widely experienced and so their counsel was both solicited frequently and respected when given. In administrative terms, however, union conferences were, as we have seen, “self-governing” (the 1901 principle)—they were self-sufficient: not just financially, but administratively, intellectually (most union conferences had their own colleges to train workers and their own schools), and in terms of sustaining Adventist identity—one might say they were morally self-reliant, as well as providing their own financial needs and being net contributors to, rather than recipients of, GC funds (whereas missions and union missions *were* net recipients). And things were this way because of almost universal agreement that this was how things should be. At unions, at the embryonic divisions, and at the General Conference, there was agreement that the GC’s primary role was to mobilize resources and allocate them appropriately to meet goals that had been generally agreed for the expansion of the church.

### *Supporting Foreign Mission*

The church in North America came to strongly endorse the view that its role was to fuel mission growth. This was a process rather than an epiphany. At the time of the 1901–3 reforms, support for worldwide mission was present in the North American homeland, but somewhat patchy. In Chapter Five, we quoted from a well-known counsel of Ellen G. White, written in 1900: “The home missionary work will be farther advanced in every way when a more liberal, self-denying, self-sacrificing spirit is manifested for the prosperity of foreign missions; for the prosperity of the home work depends largely, under God, upon the reflex influence of the evangelical work done in countries afar off.”<sup>2</sup> These are words that Seventh-day Adventist church leaders, especially those from GC Secretariat, have quoted often since then, but at times Adventists have plainly doubted whether Ellen White meant what she said. Some church leaders in the NAD feared that giving to missions by

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their church members would not leave sufficient funds for work in their homeland. Even six years after White's powerful words, in 1906, President Daniells, writing to a church leader in Britain, still felt that effort was needed to "create a foreign mission sentiment in this country [the United States] that does not exist at present"—however, he went on to observe "that the mission fields are gaining ground every day in the states [*sic*]."<sup>3</sup>

Two points should be made, however. First, context is crucial: by 1906 American Adventists were already giving more *per capita* for foreign mission than American Christians in general. According to Edson Rogers's analysis, the "average amount contributed for foreign missions by all the members of the religious bodies in the United States" was 44¢; the equivalent figure for Adventists was \$5.85, or "an amount more than thirteen times greater than the average per capita [giving] of the members of all the other religious bodies" in the United States.<sup>4</sup> It was also higher than *per capita* mission giving by members of the United Presbyterian Church of North America (UPCNA), for which the distinction was claimed of being "the [US] denomination with the highest per capita mission giving." Whatever the situation in Daniells's view in 1905, "foreign mission sentiment" among American Seventh-day Adventists was strong in relative terms and became yet more entrenched. In 1932 *per capita* giving for missions by Seventh-day Adventists in the United States was still higher than that of UPCNA members.<sup>5</sup> In 1960, according to analysis in the *Review*, Adventists were still the USA's "heaviest contributors" to foreign missions, with an average contribution of \$28 "per member for overseas work", almost *double* the next largest average *per capita* contribution of \$14.40 by 'Evangelical Free Church members'.<sup>6</sup>

Understanding this enables us to see the real significance of words spoken by Irwin H. Evans, the North American Division president (and former GC treasurer), to the 1918 Session (which was a *joint* session of the General Conference and the North

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American Division Conference): “We must make the territory occupied by the North American Division Conference the base of supplies for both men and means, in carrying on our great world-wide mission work.” He noted that it would be a mistake “for us to believe that we can abandon the home field to carry on its own activities . . . and give our entire . . . resources to heathen lands”. However, he concluded: “There is no limit to the needs of the General Conference in both men and money. . . . and this field must carry the load and furnish the supplies”.<sup>7</sup> This was not a desperate attempt to stimulate an uninterested audience. The great mass of North American church leaders or church members would have accepted wholeheartedly the view that they had to bear most of the burden of “furnish[ing] the supplies” for mission, globally.

Adventist culture became infused with the idea that “the one business of Seventh-day Adventists” was to proclaim the Advent message to the world—and that said business, supported by the home fields with funds and personnel, should be pursued regardless of national origin.<sup>8</sup> For most of the twentieth century, this concept was close to the homeland heart of Adventism: that the Advent message was to be broadly proclaimed, and that this was done through the wholehearted support of those who already believed. Expressed as “The world is one field” by William Spicer (as seen in the previous chapter), the concept was more commonly stated as “The field is the world”, a phrase that had appeared in the pages of the *Review* as early as 1857 (a point we noted in Chapter 3). As the Church organized and grew in its missionary enterprise (the process described in earlier chapters), the *Review* reflected the expansion by incorporating this concept visually in its masthead. Starting in 1886, the *Review*’s masthead featured a globe bearing the banner “Our Field” sitting squarely between the words *Advent* and *Review*; this was updated four years later with a slightly larger globe carrying the banner “The Field is the

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World”, an image that, in several slightly different iterations and almost without interruption, sat atop the *Review* until 1933.<sup>9</sup> It was the title of an article by Secretary Walter R. Beach in 1954, in which he affirms that “this world concept of the task will eliminate any distinction between ‘home’ and ‘foreign’ missions.”<sup>10</sup>

Was there, however, a concomitant effect on the work in the home fields? In the early 1900s, were the skeptics right to fear that there were enough funds to build up the church in the home fields *or* in the mission fields, but not both? Or did the church in North America and elsewhere feel the reflex benefit of which Ellen G. White had written? It is interesting that missiologists from other faith traditions are in no doubt that work in mission fields *did* have a positive “reflex impact” on churches in homelands.<sup>11</sup> What recent research shows, empirically, is that, as *per capita* mission offerings increased in the North American Division, so, too, did church membership, and *per capita* tithe, even when adjusted for inflation.<sup>12</sup> The greater the spirit of generosity to missions abroad, whether in the giving of money, time, or talents, the greater the volume of resources that became available at home. That this was so was undoubtedly because most North American church leaders and church members came to enthusiastically accept their role as primary resource base for worldwide mission, as did leaders and members in Australia and Europe.<sup>13</sup> There was agreement in these regions that, indeed, they had to “carry the load and furnish the supplies” which enabled Adventist missionaries to go ever further afield, ever more successfully.

### *Promoting Generosity towards Foreign Mission*

While there was a concerted effort by all GC leaders to stimulate liberal giving to missions by North American and European Adventists, which generally met with a generous response, it was particularly Secretariat which worked to promote munificence among “home field” church members. Starting in

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1903, “Harvest Ingathering” gradually assumed a place on the annual calendar of most local churches in home base countries, and in the workflow of GC Secretariat. Ingathering’s origins go back to 1903 but it was only practiced regionally within North America until 1908, when the GC “recommended the Ingathering plan to all churches, approving the use of a special . . . number of the *Review* [to promote it] to the public”.<sup>14</sup> Thereafter, every year, rank-and-file church members would solicit donations for overseas mission projects from their non-Adventist neighbors and businesses in their community. This could be extremely successful in raising money for mission and it spread to Europe and Australasia.<sup>15</sup> From an early stage, it was something in which GC Secretariat invested a massive amount of time and effort. While church members of a certain age will remember Ingathering well, and will further remember that it was based on considerable personal effort by church members, what is not so well known is that their labors were founded on a huge effort by church leaders, especially in Secretariat.

Stories suitable for use in Ingathering publicity materials, aimed outside the church, were collected throughout the year and then prepared for publication by Secretariat, which also worked to promote the quarterly (Thirteenth Sabbath) Mission Offering and the Annual Sacrifice Offering, along with a variety of other offering programs, introduced, revised, and discontinued at various points. One such, introduced in the 1910s, to which members were encouraged to subscribe weekly, began as the “Ten-cent-a-week-fund”, became the “Twenty-cent-a-week Fund”, then the “Twenty-five-cent-a-week Fund” (and continued to increase with inflation), more than four-fifths of which went to support foreign missions.<sup>16</sup>

Promoting generosity towards foreign mission became a huge part of Secretariat’s work; in 1917, for example, Tyler Bowen, in a letter to a missionary in Southeast Asia, wrote of how “we are now right in the throes of preparing” materials for “Harvest Ingathering

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. . . It is really a year about affair of it here at the Mission Board, for no sooner is one year's campaign over than we have to begin preparation for the next". Letters from missionaries around the world were regularly turned into articles for the *Review*, *Mission Quarterly*, and the union papers in North America. Secretariat was constantly working to "prepar[e] matter coming in from the fields" to go to press. Some missionaries wrote articles intended for publication; but in the Archives are countless reports from the field editorially marked up, with directions for what should be retained, what omitted, and what lightly revised in order to make, out of a personal letter, what appeared to be a purpose-written article. The GC Secretary himself at times wielded the blue pencil, as did all the senior staff, for, as one wrote "there is a constant demand on us for live mission matter to keep the altar fires brightly burning on the homeland hearts."<sup>17</sup>

Although at times the economic situation, particularly during the Depression, meant the North American field did not provide quite the level of financial support that was hoped for at the GC, there was always support. Secretariat officials were always careful to articulate gratitude to the North American conferences, even while encouraging still greater levels of commitment to foreign mission. As one letter to a conference officer affirms: "We are glad to be able to write out to the missionaries in the fields of the loyal interest manifested by the brethren and sisters here at home in raising funds and the willingness also shown in sacrificing sons and daughters and of the best of laborers to supply the ever increasing demand made upon us in foreign fields."<sup>18</sup> These latter words are a reminder that generosity was called for in the home fields, in terms of personnel as well as of finances. This was true of all the "home fields": as one of Spicer's deputies wrote of "the workers" needed in the mission field (in terms that show how little nationality concerned Secretariat), it "matters little whether they go from the North American base, the European base or the



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Australaysian [*sic*] base, they are one in the one blessed message” (and, as his words indicate, one in the bearing of the burden of mission).<sup>19</sup> This generosity in terms of personnel was shown by individual missionaries and their families, willing to make great sacrifices in order to share the Adventist “blessed message”; but it was shown by union, conference, and institutional administrators, as well, willing to part with often key members of their work force.

With hindsight, one can see it is possible that some of the most talented workers in Northern Europe ended up going as missionaries to East and West Africa, to the lasting benefit of the Adventist Church there, but the detriment of the church in the Nordic lands and Great Britain.<sup>20</sup> In North America, with a larger Adventist population, there were enough capable and committed church members that some of the best and brightest could be sent abroad, yet a critical mass still retained for the work “at home”. Nonetheless, in North America, Europe, and Australasia, the church forewent the efforts of some of its most gifted workers, at least for a time. But on the whole, the time and talents were sacrificed as cheerfully as funds—and this ran deep, for it was members who gave and collected for missions, and families who had to bid farewell to members heading for the mission field, not knowing when, or if, they would return. None of this would have happened, though, without the pervasive belief that the world was the Church’s field to work; nor without the constant behind-the-scenes work of GC Secretariat to provide a steady diet of inspiring stories to church members across the home fields and to enlist and sustain missionaries around the world.

## Intellectual and Inter-Church Resources for Mission

After the organization of what we have called “mission control” between 1901–1930, the question became, could this philosophy

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focusing on missions at the GC and Secretariat in particular endure as the world marched into the twentieth century? The answer, as we will see, is very much “yes.” While there would be many trials, the successes would be even greater. But along the way toward sharing more about how that happened, it may be helpful to briefly review what would grow to be an increasingly delicate issue as the church became a global movement, and that would be how the Adventist missionaries should relate to the growing number of other Christian missionaries around the world in historically non-Christian lands.

While those in Secretariat increasingly had served in foreign mission fields prior to their roles at the GC headquarters, they knew, even with funding, resources, and other means of support steadily coming in from home-field unions, that their knowledge base of how mission was being done also needed expanding. Their focus on worldwide mission, particularly on reaching non-Christian religions, is evident, too, in Secretariat’s positive attitude to other Protestant missionaries. Such views not only were characteristic of GC leaders, especially of Secretariat (as we show below); they were also shared by church members in North America. The attitude manifested itself in multiple ways, including in cautiously cordial relations with other Protestants, and in fundraising.

From soon after the 1901–1903 reorganization, all the way through to the decade after World War II, there was a remarkable willingness on the part of Adventists in North America at the individual, congregational, and corporate church levels (including those working in the GC Secretariat), to cooperate with and, to an extent, support, the work of other Protestant mission boards and societies engaged in cross-cultural mission “overseas”. This often took the form of sending delegates to mission conferences in order to gain and share knowledge, and, possibly, to use current terms, to network and boost the Church’s ‘brand recognition’. Knowing

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of the work and organizations of other Protestant missionaries was useful knowledge to any Adventist serving in a foreign field, and other Protestants would learn of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its work. For example, the Seventh-day Adventist Church sent two delegates to the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh; one was General Conference Secretary Spicer, who attended, however, as secretary of the Seventh-day Adventist Mission Board.<sup>21</sup> Spicer corresponded with leaders he met in Edinburgh for a number of years thereafter, even quoting them in GC Session reports.<sup>22</sup> By 1917, Adventists were regarded as so expert in mission to the non-Christian world that the Board of Missionary Preparation, an interdenominational body, asked for advice from Secretariat, one of whose staff already had cordial relations with the nondenominational Missionary Education Movement.<sup>23</sup>

As already noted, the development of Ingathering proved a powerful source of additional revenue for Adventist missions, by drawing on resources from outside the Church. Yet, in North America, at least, missional fundraising went both ways. During the inter-war years, church leaders and church members alike were sympathetic to the work of other Protestant missionary organizations. Just as people from outside the church donated to the Adventist missionary enterprise, via Ingathering, so too Adventists could respond enthusiastically to appeals such as the campaign by the Young Women's Christian Association for its "World Service Program" (for "practical missionary work" in the Orient and elsewhere); local churches might even find themselves praised in local newspapers for setting an example.<sup>24</sup> North American Adventists may have felt a sense of reciprocity for Ingathering; but it is also possible that they simply felt a degree of solidarity with other Protestant missionaries.<sup>25</sup>

In both the 1936–37 and 1937–38 academic years, the first two academic years of the newly opened Seventh-day Adventist

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Theological Seminary, at a time when the GC president regularly attended its Board, the Seminary had Samuel Zwemer, one of the best-known Protestant missionaries of the era and a distinguished scholar as well as missionary, give a series of three lectures to students—lectures subsequently published in *The Ministry*, the church's journal for its pastors.<sup>26</sup> In the early 1940s, in the absence of Adventist specialized missionary training programs, GC leaders initially sent future missionary families “to attend the Kennedy School of Missions” at Hartford Seminary, which styled itself as “an interdenominational university of religion.”<sup>27</sup> From the 1930s, through the '40s and '50s, and into the late '60s, Secretariat had harmonious and broadly cooperative relationships—including sharing information and inviting speakers for Adventist events and missionary training—with inter-church missionary bodies and other Protestant churches' mission boards. Organizations that the GC, through Secretariat, had relationships with included the Foreign Missions Conference, the Congregational Mission Board, and the National Council of Churches of Christ Division of Foreign Missions: all with the knowledge and consent of the GC officers.<sup>28</sup> The secretary also served, in 1929, on the council of the American Bible Society.<sup>29</sup>

It is possible, then, to distinguish, up to a point, between how Adventist church leaders at large felt about relations with other denominations in general, and the specific attitudes the leaders of the Adventist missionary enterprise had to other Protestant missionary organizations in particular. Because the GC Secretary and his staff were determined to see the church's missionaries cross cultural barriers successfully, they were willing to dialogue with other Christians and draw on their experiences, in order to develop and instill in Adventist missionaries the skills and mindset necessary for missional success; but they were also willing to let Protestants benefit from Adventist knowledge. As Beach put it in 1954, “we shall cooperate with all men of good will and purpose”.<sup>30</sup>

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### Depression and World War

Having considered some of the different resources for mission and how they were supplied, for the rest of this chapter we turn back to a narrative. In this section, we consider the troubled years of the 1930s and 1940s; in the final section we will cover the post-war halcyon days of the Adventist missionary enterprise and the evolving nature of Secretariat's ongoing role as "mission control".

#### Sustaining Mission During the Great Depression

The Great Depression inevitably led to some retrenchment and a decline in the numbers of missionaries sent out, yet, as with World War I (see above, pp. 144–45), the effects were not as damaging as they might have been. Church leaders during the 1930s ensured that missionaries and mission stations faced as few cuts as possible. Unquestionably important in protecting the mission enterprise were two largely forgotten secretaries: Cecil K. Meyers (secretary 1926–33) and his successor, Milton Kern (1933–36) [Illustration 19]. Meyers was the first secretary born outside the United States, the first GC executive officer who was not a US citizen, and, as the son of the first European converts in Calcutta, one who fully grasped the importance of mission stations.<sup>31</sup>

Kern had been active in youth work from the 1890s onward. He had been an early leader of the Young People's Missionary Volunteer movement, whose initial focus was explicitly unreached areas. Its watchword was "reaching the world for Christ this generation", a concept copied from youth missionary movements in wider Protestantism, but internalized in Adventism.<sup>32</sup> Initially, evangelistic work done for and by young people had been handled by the Sabbath School Department, but rapid growth of the youth

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work necessitated the creation of a separate department at the General Conference and other levels of church structure; this was achieved with the organization of the Young People's Missionary Volunteer Department in May 1907. Kern, known for his previous work at Union College and with the Central Union Conference, became its first departmental secretary at the GC.<sup>33</sup> For twenty-three years he helmed the Missionary Volunteer Department, stating at the end of it, "[W]e are very sensible of the fact that the department has not accomplished all that needed to be done, although we must recognize the blessing of God in what has been accomplished in working for the spiritual welfare of our youth and by enlisting them in missionary endeavour. There has been a gradual and steady growth in the membership of the young people's organization since its beginning."<sup>34</sup>

In 1930, Kern was elected as a General Conference associate secretary. In 1933 Meyers resigned to focus on a different leadership role, coordinating the Church's medical missionary work.<sup>35</sup> Kern was elected by the 1933 Autumn Council as Meyers's successor.<sup>36</sup> Kern was adamant that, despite the Depression, the primary duty of Secretariat was "selecting and recommending to the [General Conference] Committee for appointment, workers for the mission fields".<sup>37</sup> Both Meyers and Kern were determined to maintain the numbers of missionaries and the number of mission stations in spite of a financial crunch in the North American church. The numbers reflect this, as is evident in Figure 6.1 (facing page), which provides an overview of the numbers of new missionaries sent overseas each year for the first forty years of the twentieth century: from 1901, the year of organizational reform, to 1940, when the effects of World War II began to be felt. In 1930 and 1931, the denominational workforce in North America was cut by 10 percent; yet, in the foreign mission fields, the workforce decreased less than 5 percent, although salaries and allowances were cut.<sup>38</sup> In 1930, numbers of new missionaries sent

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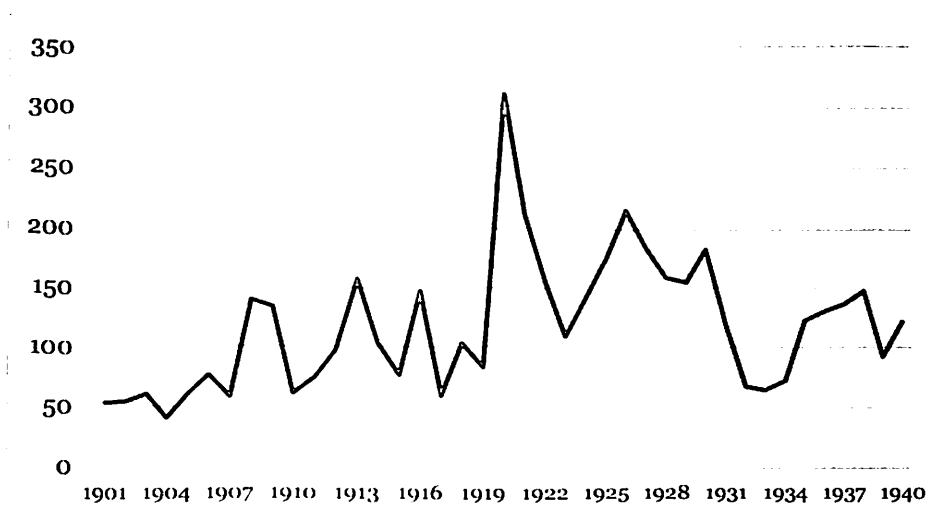


Figure 6.1. New Missionaries Dispatched, 1901–1940

overseas actually went up; but then the effects of the disastrous economic downturn were felt. The 119 missionaries sent overseas in 1931 were equal to only 65 percent of the 183 sent in 1930. The next three years were far worse: the total for those years was 203—fewer than the annual totals in 1920, 1921 or 1926; the annual average for those three years (1932–34) was 67.67, the lowest for any three-year period since 1904–1906. Yet then the numbers of appointees reasonably rebounded until the beginning of World War II. In all, there were 628 new mission appointments from 1930 through 1935; significantly, too, as Kern pointed out in his report to the 1936 GC Session, 45 percent of the new missionaries originated from outside the North American Division, a much higher percentage than normal. While the figure of 628, in a six-year period, stood in contrast to the 714 appointed in just the preceding four years, it was, as Kern told the 1936 Session, still a sizeable number, given that, in his words, “we have been passing through most serious times, with cut budgets and depleted

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working forces.”<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, Kern stressed, “not one mission station has been abandoned during these hard years.”<sup>40</sup> It was thanks in no small part to the mission focus of Meyers and Kern that mission stations were maintained and provided with a sufficient workforce.

During the first forty years of the century, starting in 1901, the year of major reorganization, through to 1940, 4,713 missionaries were sent “to foreign fields”. Even in the fifteen trying years from the start of the Great Depression until the end of World War II, the church still sent 1,597 new appointees to mission fields. Of these large numbers of missionaries, the overwhelming majority (and, after 1930, virtually all) were recruited, dispatched abroad, and sustained overseas, by the Secretariat team.

Understanding, moreover, the need for extra efforts to motivate church members in NAD to give generously to support mission and to volunteer for service overseas, GC Secretariat innovated in mission promotion. Meyers pioneered the use of documentary movies of mission fields to educate North American members (and non-members, since the Church appealed for funds more widely through Ingathering) about realities in those fields.<sup>41</sup> One film showing in Battle Creek, at the time of the 1932 Annual Council, as part of a public lecture by Meyers, won praise from the local newspaper (in a town that was no longer solidly Adventist), and Meyers continued to make movies about Adventist mission fields, including after he left Secretariat.<sup>42</sup> Kern, who replaced Meyers soon after this, appealed to the 1936 Session for “greater efforts [to] be put forth” to promote mission service by the youth in North America, founded on “well-planned cooperation between the schools and the General Conference Committee.”<sup>43</sup> This bore long-lasting fruit, as will be seen later in this chapter, but in addition the use of motion pictures to promote mission became characteristic of Secretariat. Kern’s successor, Ernest D. Dick, helped to supervise the editing of a film shot of the 1936 GC



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Session. Two years later, the GC invested funds in a project by several Protestant mission boards to cooperatively create “a comprehensive set of motion pictures of missions in Africa,” while also, in response to a request from the GC officers—prompted by members of Secretariat—unions in mission fields filmed “the most outstanding features of [their] work,” films taken and produced into composite motion pictures by the respective divisions.<sup>44</sup>

### Wartime Vision

The Second World War inevitably had a very negative impact on the missionary enterprise, but as soon as the war was over, there was a huge increase in the number of mission appointees sent out, thanks in large part to the men who served from 1936 to 1950 as GC President and Secretary: respectively J. Lamar McElhany and Ernest D. Dick [Illustrations 20–21].<sup>45</sup> In the spring of 1942, when Allied victory in World War II was by no means assured, indeed at the height of the military success of the Axis powers, Dick pushed forward an extraordinarily bold agenda, as one of the associate secretaries described it soon afterwards in a letter to a future missionary:

At . . . the Spring Meeting of the General Conference Committee earnest consideration was given to the necessity of having missionary families under appointment and securing such preparation as is available here in the homeland for work . . . when this present conflict ceases or when the Lord otherwise indicates that the way is open for missionaries to be sent forward once more. . . .

The General Conference has decided that ten families should be immediately placed under appointment and definitely earmarked for work in the Moslem lands in the Near East with the understanding that arrangements would be made for these missionary appointees to study the language of the field and other subjects here in this country in preparation for the time when they can go forward to those mission

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fields. It is understood that it may be a year or two or possibly longer before the Lord opens up the way . . . to those fields once more.<sup>46</sup>

Church leaders set aside funds, and arranged for training of missionary families, awaiting that day when peace returned. Some of them were, as noted above, initially sent “to attend the Kennedy School of Missions [which was known for its expertise in Islam] in preparation for work among the Moslems.”<sup>47</sup> George D. Keough, a pioneer missionary to the Middle East and mission contextualizer *par excellence*, was brought to Washington from the Arabic Union Mission to head a program on Islamic culture and Arabic language at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary [Illustration 25]. Keough was aided by a second faculty member, an Iraqi Adventist, Khalil Ibrahim (who adopted the name Carl Bremson). This was a considerable commitment by the church. Keough and Bremson’s task was to train future missionaries to the Middle East, theologically as well as practically. Within a year of the end of the war, considerable numbers of new missionaries began arriving in the Middle East; a number of graduates of the Seminary program and their families travelled to Egypt even before the war was over.<sup>48</sup>

The other priority was China. There was an extraordinary resurgence in missionary numbers surprisingly soon after the end of the war. In late 1945 and 1946, when Asia was still in chaos and transportation extremely difficult, missionaries who had stayed on through the war were taken home on well-deserved furloughs (and then brought back), and new missionaries were sailing for China. By the end of 1946 there were 93 missionaries working in the China Division, including 41 ordained ministers; just twelve months later, the total number had increased almost 50 per cent to 135, of which 55 were ministers; 1948 saw another increase to 158 foreign missionaries, 52 of whom were ministers.<sup>49</sup> Sadly, the

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Communist victory in the Chinese Civil War meant these numbers collapsed in 1949 and 1950.

What is striking is that the world Church's top priorities after the destruction of the Second World War—priorities set *during* the war, so that the Church could (and did) seize the missional initiative as soon as the war ended—were the heartlands of two of the world's great faiths, Islam and Confucianism-Daoism. Dick and McElhany saw the goal of the Adventist missionary enterprise and the GC's role in it, in the same way as had Daniells and Spicer.

### Secretariat and the Post-War Mission Boom

In the 1950s and 1960s, initially under Dick as Secretary, briefly under Denton E. Rebok (1952–54) [Illustration 22], and then for sixteen years under Walter R. Beach (1954–70) [Illustration 24], GC Secretariat continued to be responsible for the Church's foreign mission program, while the secretary's role became ever more important, as one of the three premier GC officers. Beach—articulate, well read, and a thinker—regularly had a crucial part in decision-making processes during Figuhr's presidency and in Pierson's first term (after which Beach retired).<sup>50</sup> These were the golden days of Adventist mission, with a weekly column listing new “missionary sailings” in the *Review* and annual numbers of new appointees climbing steadily.

Beach provided outstanding leadership, but was assisted by a core leadership group: if many associate secretaries served brief terms, several, whose service overlapped, served for many years, providing continuity and a reservoir of rich experience.<sup>51</sup> Henry T. Elliott provided a crucial link between the years of the Depression and the flourishing 1950s, serving 1933–58: his colleagues valued

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his “ability as an organizer . . . and his friendly . . . manner”, and thought him a careful and outstanding worker. Elliott’s twenty-eight years as an associate are a record [he is shown in Illustration 23].<sup>52</sup> But in addition, Norman Dunn served twenty years, 1947–66; Erwin Roenfelt sixteen years, 1946–62 (and then became Northern European Division president, which speaks to his qualities); William P. Bradley served fourteen years, 1946–70; and, spanning the boom years and into the 1980s, Duane S. Johnson served eighteen years, 1962–80 and David H. Baasch sixteen years, 1966–82. Thanks partly to a pool of capable leaders and partly to a common understanding of the purpose and importance of the Church’s missionary enterprise, Secretariat remained, decidedly, “mission control.”

### Training Missionaries

Under Beach’s leadership, the world Church accepted the need to train missionaries for service in what could be radically different cultures; and it began to take steps towards meeting this need.

It was not the first time: in 1910 the Executive Committee, in its capacity as the Mission Board “changed its plan of selecting workers for our various mission fields. Instead of picking up workers wherever they may be found, without very full . . . ability and fitness for the work”, it was agreed “to call workers for the mission field to the Foreign Mission Seminary for the purpose of . . . giving them necessary training for work in other lands.” Ninety missionaries went through the training program in the next four years, before, for reasons that remain unclear, the GC accepted the college’s conversion to a general college with a new name.<sup>53</sup> In the mid-’40s (as noted above), missionary training had taken place at the newly founded Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. In 1946, however, George Keough was called back to the Middle

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East and specifically missionary training was not sustained at the Seminary.

In 1956, Beach chaired a small working group “to study how a missionary orientation program could be developed”.<sup>54</sup> There is no indication of awareness of what had been done four decades earlier and no reference in surviving records to the Seminary’s role in missionary training in 1940s, though Henry Elliott would have remembered it. With the expansion of mission then taking place and the rapidly changing nature of the world, there is little doubt that the need had grown even greater in the forty-two years since the Foreign Mission Seminary changed its character and title, or the decade since the Theological Seminary shifted its focus. Even before the Executive Committee had given its formal approval, Secretariat had moved to planning the first such “orientation”.<sup>55</sup> A proposal did emerge from Beach’s committee, which was initially referred back to it by the GC officers. Eventually a revised proposal for all missionaries from NAD, plus their wives and children, to undergo a six-week “Missionary Orientation Program” at the SDA Theological Seminary, was taken to one of the biannual meetings of GC officers with “home and overseas officers,” and referred by them to Autumn Council, which voted to approve it. The program was to be offered three times a year; “workers sent by overseas divisions” would be permitted (but not required) to go through the orientation. The annual budget (excluding the cost of salary for missionaries while they took the course, which was to be borne by the “calling division”) was US \$32,935.12 (almost half a million dollars in 2020 values), of which the GC would bear 76 per cent.<sup>56</sup>

In the end, not until the 1960s was the orientation program firmly established; initially it took place annually on the campus of Andrews University. The initial instructors, employed as faculty by Andrews, which was strongly supportive, were an experienced American educator Myrl O. Manley, a veteran of thirteen years in the Southern Asia Division, and a Dutch theologian, Gottfried

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Oosterwal, called to Andrews from the Far Eastern Division where he had served seven years [Oosterwal is shown in Illustration 26]; but from the start, a GC Associate Secretary was regularly one of the instructors. In the late 1960s a separate "orientation program" was hosted by Loma Linda; while Manley suggested to Beach that "our attitude should be one of cooperation and not competition", Secretariat took a different view, albeit one tactfully expressed. Beach, writing to Loma Linda officials, stressed that "the General Conference is *sponsoring* [the] mission orientation course" at Andrews, and Secretariat's expressed "desire that our appointees and furloughees [*sic*] attend the course at Andrews University" proved to be decisive. In 1972, the "Summer Institute of World Mission" was formally established as the permanent Institute of World Mission, and its role and influence has grown since.<sup>57</sup>

### Promoting and Recruiting

During W. R. Beach's sixteen years as secretary, Secretariat spent much of its time not only in processing calls for missionaries and dealing with missionaries serving in the field, but also in strongly promoting the cause of missions in the homelands and recruiting missionaries. At a staff meeting in the spring of 1955, for example, there was a discussion about "[t]he desirability of field visitation by the Secretaries" [i.e., associate secretaries]. The minutes note:

It is felt that our Secretaries . . . who deal with overseas division calls, should be given opportunity to attend workers' meetings, conference sessions, Youth Congresses, etc., so they may . . . become acquainted with the young workers and estimate their ability to do successful work in overseas fields.<sup>58</sup>

The result of this discussion was a list of assignments to make sure that such opportunities for promotion and recruiting opened up.

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In 1955, for example, a plethora of opportunities—camp meetings in Arizona, workers' meetings in Indiana, Iowa, and Canada, a visit to Atlantic Union College, to name a few—are listed for the associate secretaries, some of which had already been arranged.<sup>59</sup>

This is only one example of literally dozens of references in the Secretariat staff meeting minutes, some of them brief, some several pages in length, to associate secretaries making regular visits, at least annually, to every college and most of the hospitals in North America. There they spoke about missions—to nursing, pre-med, and theology students, but also to business, chemistry, elementary and secondary education, “industrial arts, and . . . secretarial science majors”; they interviewed potential appointees and attended faculty meetings in an attempt to encourage teachers to think “Are we doing our part in Mission Recruitment?” These appointments took formidable amounts of time, including initial planning with institutions conducted by mail, but Secretariat was clear that it was a core part of their function—not only to identify potential future missionaries, but to increase awareness of and enthusiasm for the Adventist Church’s missionary enterprise.<sup>60</sup>

Part of the role of the Secretariat was to look inwards and help coordinate the *departmental* work regarding foreign mission, and the minutes reflect this. From repeated references in the minutes of internal Secretariat meetings, the secretary and associates were very clear on the need to work together with General Conference departments, which had specialized knowledge of their areas, to identify workers whom Secretariat would then recruit, train, and send overseas. In planning staff visits to college and hospital campuses, Secretariat over the years regularly coordinated and worked closely with the Medical Department, especially in one of its major tasks, recruiting doctors to serve in mission hospitals.<sup>61</sup> Secretariat also had a good working relationship with the Bureau of Public Relations (ancestor of the Communication Department), with which Secretariat collaborated in producing promotional

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materials. In 1956, for example, staff from the bureau met with the Secretariat staff to develop plans for inspiring young people. Among these were writing articles for the *Youth's Instructor* and college papers, corresponding with "students who indicate an interest in mission service", and preparing "a leaflet or brochure" to give to young people, in which "The general idea of service in the cause, in our institutions, across the street and across the seas, could be given emphasis."<sup>62</sup>

Secretariat was also responsive to requests from those in the field, working with personnel on the ground (so to speak) to know who best to send where. At one meeting, the associates discussed a request from ex-Secretary Denton Rebok for Secretariat to send a representative to Southern Missionary College "in the interest of missions". While the specific need to send someone to the school had already been met, "[t]he opinion was stated that we should *continue our plan of college visitation* so far as the way is clear to do so and we have Secretaries who can meet the appointments" and the committee agreed that Secretary Beach would coordinate more closely with the colleges in order to have them all be visited "between the present time and the end of the year".<sup>63</sup>

Secretariat wanted to work collaboratively but there was a collective sense that it had the most expertise on missions and missionaries. When a suggestion was made, for instance, that a doctor be added to Secretariat for the explicit work of recruiting doctors as overseas workers, the staff discussed it in earnest but agreed:

If we were going to have a special medical man to solicit doctors for overseas fields, it would be only proper to have a special educational man to find educational workers, a special ministerial man to find ministers. We receive in the Secretarial Office all the information concerning the calls. We are as well qualified as any man would be to find people to answer these calls.<sup>64</sup>



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There was, however, a general willingness to subordinate all to the demands of mission, and departments were not proprietorial. The coordination of departments with the overall goals of Secretariat demonstrates this.

In the mid-1960s, for example, a working group on missionary recruiting submitted a report on “unifying our procedures in the various departments of the General Conference which deal specifically with securing commitments to overseas service.” The committee’s report praised “the loyal support to the mission program which is offered by the General Conference Departments, especially . . . the Medical, Missionary Volunteer, and Education Departments.” At this time, all “the various departments” were energetically engaged in recruiting potential missionaries. So active were they, indeed, that the Committee on Appointees, which received the report, felt it necessary to formally recommend that, when departments heard “from individuals who indicate[d] a definite, immediate interest in dedicating their lives to mission service,” they should “be turned in to the office” of the Secretary, who would then allocate names to the associate secretaries. Thereafter only “the Secretarial Department” (as it was called) was to communicate with candidates, transmitting the various appropriate forms and guiding them through appropriate stages of the process.<sup>65</sup> It is notable how actively departments were involved in promoting missionary service and soliciting people to take it on. There was no sense, as would creep in later, of missionary service being the sole prerogative of Secretariat. Nor was that Secretariat’s aim; it simply sought a systematic approach once people offered to serve, and the Committee on Appointees recommended that it continue to facilitate promotion of mission service by the departments.<sup>66</sup>

In spite of this inward coordination, Secretariat’s focus was outward. In preparing for the 1958 General Conference Session, Beach (then drawing to the end of the first of four terms as GC

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Secretary) asked that “each [division] Secretary supply to him three high points of chief history in each division during the past four years” for inclusion in his Secretary’s report; he reminded them that it was “not his plan to refer to the work of the departments unless there is something outstanding”.<sup>67</sup> This was, of course, not to dismiss the work done by the departments; their directors had opportunities to present on their accomplishments at GC Session. Beach wanted to emphasize that the “the church of the remnant was marching into all nations”; indeed, he echoes those who had come before him when he told the Session:

Christ’s disciples were sent forth to make disciples of all nations. The Christian program was not . . . to be dressed in Eastern or Western garb, or the garb of any one people or culture. The Christian organization was to be a world missionary church . . . . And so we are, more definitely and completely as the years go by.<sup>68</sup>

In other words, Adventists, regardless of where they lived, were to consider the entire world as their field. Beach’s understanding of the church’s missional task was very much in line with that of all his predecessors back to 1903.<sup>69</sup>

### Student Missionaries

Secretariat’s deliberate moves to promote mission work at times bore unexpected fruit. The 1964 Autumn Council, in response to “a program for sending out ‘student missionaries’” that had “developed spontaneously on a number of our North American college campuses”, recommended “procedures and principles” for whenever a college’s Missionary Volunteer Society proposed “to send one of its number as a student missionary”. These procedures and principles included close cooperation between the colleges, local Missionary Volunteer Societies, the GC Missionary

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Volunteer Department, and Secretariat.<sup>70</sup> This student missionary (SM) program would expand throughout the late 1960s, and the principles and procedures sketched out in 1964 would also be expanded as well as clarified in years to come, including the creation of what was originally called the Adventist Volunteer Service Corps to handle that workload apart from Secretariat's regular load of calling, training, and sending overseas workers.

Yet, can this program be truly regarded as *spontaneous* when the record shows Secretariat as pursuing a deliberate promotion of mission work for at least a decade by the time of the program's inception? Regardless, by 1967 the program had "30 young people" involved in it and had generated "real . . . enthusiasm" on the campuses of at least some NAD colleges. It had also been integrated well enough into the staffing solutions of the overseas fields that, when the question of suspending the program during Youth Congresses arose, "the Secretaries [felt] that it would not be wise to drop student missionaries [even] for such a period, as a youth congress would not substitute for the program, and it [was thought] doubtful that the overseas fields would want to go along with such a plan".<sup>71</sup> After four years of seeing the program in action, Secretariat recognized that it served both to add to the numbers of missionary personnel and to further embed commitment to foreign mission in the "home" populations. GC associate secretaries were actively engaged in the SM program, based on strong, personal connections with the North American colleges and hospitals, which continued to be prime sources of regular missionary appointees, as well as Student Missionaries.<sup>72</sup>

## The Post-War Mission Boom—Summing Up

Secretariat consistently sought not only to recruit but also to build awareness of mission worldwide, and thereby to inculcate a spirit

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of sacrifice and generosity. Those who could would go; those who could not would pray or give. *Everyone* had their role to play in working the world field for the cause of Christ. At the 1964 Annual Council, Secretary Beach drove home the point, declaring “we are a world missionary church—not just a church with missions in all the world”.<sup>73</sup> The impact is apparent in Figure 6.2, below, which shows the steady rise in numbers of new missionary appointees, annually from 1940 through 1970 (it thus complements Figure 6.1, on p. 183, which charts statistics for 1900–1940).

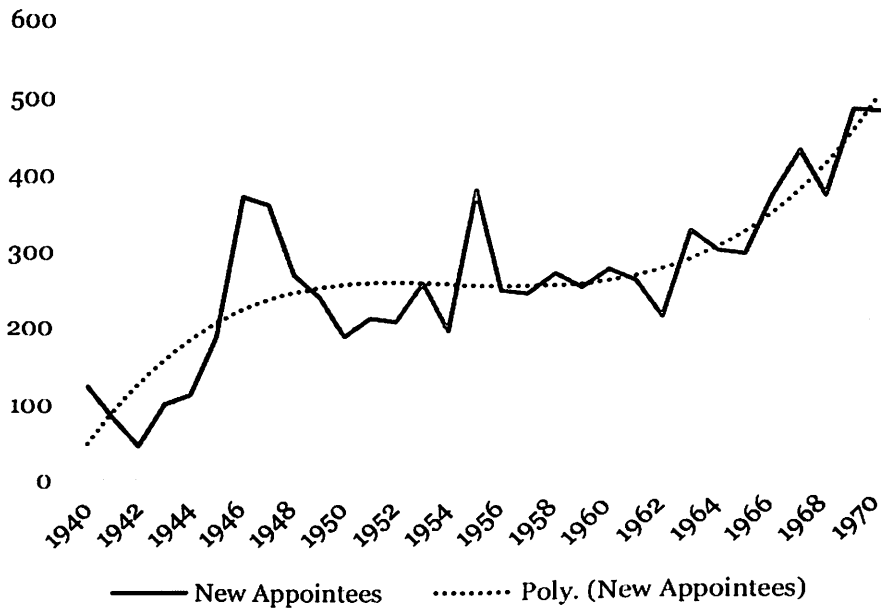


Figure 6.2: New Appointees, 1940–1970

In 1969–70, new missionaries totalled 970: by far the largest number of new missionaries sent into service in any two-year period in the Church’s history. But as the chart illustrates, it is no coincidence that 1969–70 marked the high point of the missionary

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enterprise, for 1970 concluded an era of twenty-five years of mostly steady growth in missionary numbers. The record number of missionaries sent overseas in 1969–70 was a natural outgrowth of what came before: from the low of 1941, through the high numbers sent abroad during 1945–47, artificially inflated by the dispatch of large numbers of appointees who had been waiting improvements in world conditions to travel, which in part led to the decline of 1948–50, whose other cause was the collapse of the Church in China, and then occasional peaks and troughs in the fifties and sixties—yet overall, the trajectory was up, and, after 1950, *sustainably* so. The graph on the facing page charts more than the annual numbers: it includes a polynomial trendline,<sup>74</sup> which shows more clearly the steadily upward trajectory in this era.

The rise and rise of Adventist mission in the quarter-century after the end of World War II was the result of a huge, concerted team effort by church administrators, educators, medical leaders, and, of course, church members in North America, Western Europe, South Africa, and Australasia. Mission promotion was steered by Secretariat, but with strong support from the GC Public Relations Bureau and other GC departments and their leaders. There is no sense of any disjuncture between Secretariat and any of the GC departments; instead, they followed its lead. At the same time, the documents of the period illustrate the strong support given by the officers of “homeland” divisions and unions: when the secretary or associate secretaries called for assistance, they enthusiastically responded, indeed, sometimes took the initiative in finding ways to increase support for mission fields in the home fields. The broader Adventist population were in sync here with the organized Church, making financial and physical sacrifices to support mission efforts in sections of the world near *and* far from where they lived.

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It must be stressed, however, that this this vast missionary enterprise necessitated a commensurate volume of coordination, administration, and promotion—and that all were functions of the GC Secretariat. It played the key central role in the unparalleled expansion of Adventist mission in the quarter-century following World War II.

\* \* \*

As we review the period from 1901 to 1970, it is difficult to not be inspired by the level of commitment to worldwide mission in the Adventist Church at large, yet what is particularly impressive is the attention to detail concerning organization for mission by church leaders, especially in Secretariat. Commitment without wisdom is likely to be ineffectual, but when it is allied to good leadership and management it can accomplish extraordinary things. Tremendous challenges were overcome around the world throughout the above period, which make it worthy of examination and emulation. At the same time, many lessons learned by the Church's missionaries and mission leaders in this era, through frequent interactions with diverse cultures and religions, may need to be relearned; so, too, may the lesson of how important is a one hundred percent focus on reaching the world if the bounds of mission are to be pushed back.

But before we reflect further on how the future might unfold, we need to conclude our historical overview. In Chapter Seven we turn to the last fifty years and consider developments since 1970.

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Richard W. Schwarz and Floyd Greenleaf, *Light bearers: A history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, [1979] rev. edn. (Nampa, Idaho & Oshawa, Ont.: Pacific Press, 2000), 273–76.

<sup>2</sup> White, *TC*, VI, 27.

<sup>3</sup> Daniells to E. E. Andross, June 12, 1906, Outgoing Letterbook, no. 38, p. 864, GC Ar., RG 11, box no. 0147–48.

<sup>4</sup> See *ASR* 1909, pp. 5, 16.

<sup>5</sup> Adventist *per capita* giving to missions in 1902 was \$2.11 while the UPCNA figure was \$2.00; in 1932, the figures were \$31.69 (SDA) and \$28.96 (UPCNA): see H. E. Rogers, “Statistical report of Seventh-day Adventist Conferences and Missions for the year ending December 31, 1906”, in *ARH*, 84:38 (Sept. 19, 1907), 9; *ASR* 1932, p. 4; and David Dawson, “The New Wilmington Missionary Conference, 1906–2015”, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 39 (2015), 128.

<sup>6</sup> Ecumenical News Service report, in *ARH*, 138:2 (Jan. 1961), 2.

<sup>7</sup> I. H. Evans, “North American Division President’s Address”, *ARH*, 95:14 (April 4, 1918), 13 (emphasis supplied).

<sup>8</sup> The quoted phrase is from W[illiam] A. S[picer], “A Long Life Spent for God”, *ARH*, 99:54 (December 14, 1922), 7. This is Spicer’s eulogy of Stephen N. Haskell, who was consistent in his belief that the field was the world throughout his life and, who indeed, lived to see (and do) work in that field. To read more on the concept of “the field is the world”, see above, in Chapter Three, pp. 78, 88.

<sup>9</sup> To see examples of these mastheads, see the Jan. 5, 1886 issue of the *ARH* (63:1) and the Jan. 7, 1890 issue (67:1). The use of the globe and banner was not *centrally* used in 1908 and 1910–1913, but the globe was still a part of the images used on the *Review*’s front page in those years. Indeed, four years out of the time span of 1886 through 1933 still leaves forty-three years that the “The Field is the World” image was used in the masthead (and, as we have seen, these four years were some in which Church leadership was reorganizing how the Church’s missionary enterprise).

<sup>10</sup> W. R. Beach, “The field is the world”, *The Ministry*, 27:12 (Dec.

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1954), 7–8 (quotation at 8).

<sup>11</sup> Stuart Piggins, “The reflex impact of missions on Australian Christianity”, in Mark Hutchinson and Geoff Treloar (eds.), *This gospel shall be preached: Essays on the Australian contribution to world mission*, Studies in Australian Christianity, 7 (Sydney: Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity, 1997), pp. 7–26.

<sup>12</sup> D. J. B. Trim, with Duane C. McBride and Shannon M. Trecartin, “The ‘reflex influence’ and the bystander effect: Historical trends in mission giving among North American Adventists”, in Petr Činčala and John Gavin (eds.), *As one who serves: Research for Adventist ministry to members, families, and communities* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Institute for Church Ministry, forthcoming); this paper includes detailed contextualization of Ellen White’s counsel on the subject and it “deflates” the figures for both tithes and mission offerings using the economic history website, *Measuring Worth*: <https://www.measuringworth.com>.

<sup>13</sup> On the Northern European Division, see D. J. B. Trim, *A passion for mission* (Bracknell, U.K.: Newbold Academic Press, 2019), pp. 73–78, 95–98, 101.

<sup>14</sup> *Sub* “Ingathering”, *SDAE*, 1, 767–68, at 768.

<sup>15</sup> For Ingathering’s significance in the Northern European Division, for example, see Trim, *A passion for mission*, pp. 60, 95–98.

<sup>16</sup> For example, the change from 20¢ to 25¢ a week was made at the 1917 Autumn Council: Nov. 5, 1917, GCC Proc., x, 682–83, which also specifies the proportion that went to foreign missions.

<sup>17</sup> See Petra Tunheim to T. E. Bowen Dec. 6, 1916, Jan. 9 and Sept. 5, 1917, and Bowen to Tunheim, Feb. 27, 1917 (all quotations at p. 2); but even though Tunheim was a prolific author, Bowen pressed her for more reports that Secretariat could turn into articles, urging her (Oct. 30, 1917, p. 2) to “write us some of the experiences coming to you and the other brethren and sisters . . . . We like the good letters that tell of heart-longings for the rescue of those in darkness”: all in GC Ar., RG 21, box 3298, fld. “Tunheim, Petra”. See also, e.g., A. J. Sanderson to Spicer, May 22, 1916; Bowen to Ferdinand Stahl, Mar. 30, 1919, p. 2, and Sept. 28, 1919, p. 2; same, Mar. 18, 1924, p. 2, and Stahl to Bowen, Oct. 3, 1924, p.



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2: GC Ar., RG 21, box 3288, fld. "S"; box 3306, fld. "1919-Stahl correspondence"; and box 3505, fld. "1924-Stahl".

<sup>18</sup> See the letters exchanged between Asa Smith, Secretary-Treasurer of the Wyoming Conference, and T. E. Bowen: Smith to Bowen, Nov. 6, 1916, and Bowen's reply, Nov. 10, 1916 (quotation at p. 2), both in GC Ar., RG 21, box 3288, fld. "S".

<sup>19</sup> Bowen to Stahl, p. 2, Dec. 14, 1919, GC Ar., RG 21, box 3306, fld. "1919-Stahl correspondence".

<sup>20</sup> Trim, *A passion for mission*, pp. 361-62.

<sup>21</sup> Keith A. Francis, "Ecumenism or distinctiveness? Seventh-day Adventist attitudes to the World Missionary Conference of 1910", *Studies in Church History*, 32 (1996), 477-87.

<sup>22</sup> W. A. Spicer, "The mission-field outlook", *ARH*, 95:14 (April 4, 1918), 9, cf. p. 8.

<sup>23</sup> See correspondence of Rev. Frank Sanders (Board of Missionary Preparation) with Spicer and Shaw, and Harry S. Myers (Missionary Education Movement Movement) with Shaw, Jan.-May 1917, GC Ar., RG 21, box no. 3291, fld. "Board of Missionary Preparation".

<sup>24</sup> "Y.W.C.A. Campaign for Needed Funds", *Brainerd* [Minn.] *Daily Dispatch*, March 20, 1920, p. 7.

<sup>25</sup> This is a subject that warrants further research, not least because it casts new light on how and why Ingathering could be successful. In addition, research is needed about the *scope* of Adventist contributions to other denominational and interdenominational missionary bodies (both the amounts and how many local congregations got involved); and of course about the *motivations* of Adventist giving.

<sup>26</sup> See Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary Board meetings, Jan. 12, 1937, p. 2, and Sept. 21, 1937, p. 5, Seminary Board minutes in Andrews University Archives, CAR; "History of the School of Graduate Studies and Potomac University", *sub* "Andrews University", *SDAE*, 1, 76; Alan Needy, "Zwemer, Samuel Marinus", in Gerald H. Anderson (ed.), *Biographical dictionary of Christian missions* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1999), 763; and Andrew Tompkins, "Seventh-day Adventist approaches to other religions: Preliminary findings from

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1930–1950, Part I”, *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, 54 (2016), 343–44.

<sup>27</sup> GCC, July 9, 1942, GCC Proc., xvi, ii, 507, GC AR., RG 1, Box 13751; see Hartford Seminary, “Our History”: <http://www.hartsem.edu/about/our-history/>.

<sup>28</sup> See Officers’ Meetings, Apr. 21, 1937, April 26 and July 23, 1939, GC Ar., RG 2, GCOM, 2nd series, p. 2204 (sending medical missionaries on furlough to “a meeting of the medical missionaries under the auspices of the Foreign Missions Conference”), p. 3298 (“to send delegates to a session of the Foreign Missions’ Conference to be held in Philadelphia”), and p. 3439a (collaborative fund-raising with the ‘Foreign Missions Conference’); meeting of the “Committee on General Conference Missions,” Nov. 9, 1941, GC Ar., RG 21, box 6595, fld. “DF 1: Committee on General Conference Missions: 1941”, p. 15 (cooperation with Congregational Mission Board); Officers’ Meetings, June 25 and 26, 1950, Oct. 6, 1954, and July 23, 1956, GC Ar., RG 2, GCOM, pp. 50–148, 50–150, 54–242, 56–162, and Secretariat staff meeting, May 31, 1955, minutes, p. 5, GC Ar., RG 21 (cooperation with the Division of Foreign Missions); and Associate Secretary Clyde O. Franz to M. G. Hardinge (at Loma Linda), May 15, 1967, GC Ar., RG 21, box 10563, fld. “1967 General Correspondence H” (Franz refers to attending “a meeting of the Africa Department of the National Council of Churches” and, in writing to Hardinge, was following up on a request from the “Executive Secretary of World Missions for the Evangelical Covenant Church of America”). It is perhaps significant that the veteran missionary to China, John Oss, seems to have subscribed to the Division of Foreign Missions’ *China Bulletin*: several copies (1957–59) survive in the Oss Collection, CAR, Collection 67, box 3, fld. 4.

<sup>29</sup> GCC, Oct. 24, 1929, authorizing “C. K. Meyers” in response “to the invitation of the American Bible Society to attend a meeting of the Advisory Council and Budget Committee” on Dec. 4: GCC Proceedings, XIII, iii, 1018.

<sup>30</sup> Beach, “The field is the world”, p. 7.

<sup>31</sup> Meyers was born in Calcutta, lived in India and Burma, was educated in England, and from the age of 19 lived in Australia; only in

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1928, two years after election as General Conference Secretary, was he naturalized as a US citizen. See his completed “Biographical Information Blank”, Aug. 18, 1912, GC Ar., RG 21, record no. 114932, which includes comment about his parents being the “first European believers in India” and “initial members of the first church organised in that country”; naturalization petition (cited in Chapter Five, above, n. 20, p. 164); and listing in the 1930 US Census, Takoma Park, Md., Roll 877, p. 3B, District 0034, microfilm no. 2340612, in *1930 United States Federal Census* [database on-line] (Provo, Utah: Ancestry.com Operations, 2002), [https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/6224/4606974\\_00327?pid=105510765](https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/6224/4606974_00327?pid=105510765).

Meyers later left church employment and spent his last thirteen years before retirement as an executive in a paper manufacturing company; he was so completely forgotten that he has no *SDAE* article and, though his funeral was presided over by Ralph Watts, an Adventist pastor, his death in Feb. 1964 seems not to have been noted in Adventist journals: see clippings of newspaper obits. (original sources not noted), appended to his Biographical Information Blank.

<sup>32</sup> Kern was the first Missionary Volunteer Department Secretary, from 1907 to 1930, when he was elected GC Associate Secretary; in 1936, Ernest D. Dick was elected Secretary and Kern became President of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. See Kern’s obituary, *ARH*, 139:8 (Feb. 22, 1962), 21; *sub* “Kern, Milton Earl”, *SDAE*, 1, 863–64; Edward Allen, “The Student Volunteer Movement as context for Seventh-day Adventist missions”, unpubl. paper read at the conference “Situating Adventist History”, at Washington Adventist University and Seventh-day Adventist Church World Headquarters, Jan. 8–9, 2018.

<sup>33</sup> Thirty-Seventh Session: M. E. Kern, “Report of the Young People’s Missionary Volunteer Department”, *GCB-DB*, 6:20 (June 6, 1909), 326–29.

<sup>34</sup> M. E. Kern, “The Missionary Volunteer Department”, *ARH*, 107:27 (June 4, 1930), 90–93.

<sup>35</sup> Meyers resigned at the 1933 Autumn Council to “devote his entire time” to being secretary of the International Medical Service Foundation, creation of which had been advocated for by Meyers and been approved

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in principle by the 1932 Autumn Council, which elected him first secretary (“on the understanding that Elder Meyers will continue as secretary of the General Conference”); it was legally incorporated over the course of 1933. For actions, see Autumn Council, Oct. 19 (a.m.) and 20 (p.m.), 1932 and Oct. 17 (a.m. and p.m.), 1933, and GCC meetings of Oct. 16, Nov. 6 and 9, 1933: GCC Proc., XIV, iii, 754–56, 777 (quotation) 1053–57, XIV, iv, 1066, 1068 (quotation), 1140, 1143–48; and see L. H. Christian, “The Medical Foundation”, *Advent Survey*, 5:10 (Oct. 1933), 7.

<sup>36</sup> Autumn Council, Oct. 22, 1933, GCC Proc., XIV, iv, 1097

<sup>37</sup> Forty-Third Session: M. E. Kern, “The Secretary’s Report”, *ARH*, 113:24 (May 31, 1936), 59–61.

<sup>38</sup> Calculated from *ASR* 1931.

<sup>39</sup> Kern, “Report”, p. 59.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>41</sup> See GCC, Oct. 28, 1929, approving reimbursement of “the expense incurred by C. K. Meyers in procuring picture films on his trip to the Far Eastern Division”, in GCC Proceedings, XIII, iii, 1020; and Meyers to A. W. Cormack (president of the Southern Asia Division), Oct. 25, 1931, concerning “three reels of mission films” and certificate of the same date, signed by Meyers (in his capacity as Secretary of the “General Conference Mission Board of the Seventh-day Adventists”) for use with US Customs: both in Cormack’s appointee file, GC Ar., RG 21, box 9838, appointee file 45503.

<sup>42</sup> “Council adjourns Saturday evening for public movie!”, *Battle Creek Enquirer*, Oct. 20, 1932, p. 16. The subheader summarizes: “World traveler [i.e., Meyers] who convinced Adventists of value of educational films to give lecture at Sanitarium Union.” A few months later, the GCC voted to authorize him to spend time in New York City “in work on his Ethiopian film” (perhaps on the soundtrack and/or editing): GCC, May 29, 1933, GCC Proc. (GC Ar., RG 1), XIV, iii, 987. According to an obituary, “From 1936 to 1945 [Meyers] made freelance motion pictures and lectured abroad”: see clipping attached to his Biographical Blank (cited above, n. 31).

<sup>43</sup> See Kern, “Report”, pp. 60–61.

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<sup>44</sup> GCC, July 20, 1936, GCC Proc., xv, i, 37. GC Officers meeting, March 11, 1938, GC Ar., RG 2, GCOM, 2nd series, p. 2608 (and cf. meeting of Oct. 19, 1938, *ibid.*, p. 2992); South American Division Executive Board, Dec. 18, 1938, in SAD Executive Committee Minutes (GC Ar., RG SA1), II, 1484–85 (quotation at 1484).

<sup>45</sup> See *sub* “McElhany, James Lamar”, *SDAE*, II, 1–2; and, on Dick (who, like Meyers, has no *SDAE* entry), see C. O. Franz, “Former GC Secretary Dies”, *ARH*, 154:31 (Aug. 4, 1977), 23; and the longer life sketch in *ARH*, 154:48 (Dec. 1, 1977), 23.

<sup>46</sup> T. J. Michael to A. G. Zytoskee, 13 Aug. 1942, in Zytoskee appointee file GC Ar., RG 21, file no. 29973.

<sup>47</sup> GCC meeting, July 9, 1942, Proc., XVI, ii, 507. See articles on Hartford Seminary’s website: <https://www.hartsem.edu/about/our-history/> and <https://www.hartsem.edu/macdonald-center/the-muslim-world-journal>.

<sup>48</sup> GCC meeting, July 9, 1942, Proc., XVI, ii, 507; B. P. Hoffman, “Towards new advances in the Moslem world”, *ARH*, 119:47 (Nov. 19, 1942), 17–18; D. J. B. Trim, “Seventh-day Adventist mission in the Middle East: A History” (ASTR; Report, January 2011), pp. 28–29. Keough taught biblical theology as well, which meant that students were taught wholistically about mission: see minutes of “S.D.A. Theological Seminary” faculty, meetings of Sept. 20, 1943, March 1, 1944: Andrews University Archives, CAR, Seminary Faculty Minutes; and *Bulletin of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary: 1943–1944*, copy in CAR.

<sup>49</sup> This draws on ASRs for 1946–48 and YB, 1946, 1947, 1948, and 1949.

<sup>50</sup> Despite Beach’s significance, again, there is no biography. For brief views of his life and career, see “Former GC Secretary dies”, *ARH*, 171:1 (Jan. 6, 1994), 6; “Beach”, *North Pacific Union Conference Gleaner*, 89:2 (Jan. 17, 1994), 24; and “Beach, Walter R.”, *Pacific Union Recorder*, 94:13 (Sept. 5, 1994), 29. A good example of his gifts as thinker and writer is *Dimensions in salvation* (Washington, D.C.: RHPA, 1963).

<sup>51</sup> See Appendix, below, pp. 281–84, a complete listing of associate secretaries and their terms of office.

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<sup>52</sup> D. W. Hunter to “Family of H. T. Elliott” (a letter of condolence after his death), Sept. 28, 1967, GC Ar., RG 21, box 10563, fld. “1967 General Correspondence E”; this letter acknowledges the fact that Elliott was the longest-serving GC Associate Secretary.

<sup>53</sup> GCC meeting of July 1, 1910, GCC Proc., VIII, 250–51; part of the action voted was to commission J. L. Shaw to write for the *Review* about the plan, and the quotations are taken from Shaw, “Plan for securing foreign mission recruits”, *ARH*, 87:33 (Aug. 18, 1910), 17; and see *sub* “Columbia Union College”, *SDAE*, I, 396–97. (Note: the name adopted in 1914 was “Washington Missionary College”, which did not, however, indicate a role training appointees; the title today is Washington Adventist University.)

<sup>54</sup> See GC Officers’ Meeting, May 9, 1956, GC Ar., RG 2, GCOM, p. 56-102.

<sup>55</sup> Officers’ Meeting, July 23, 1956, *ibid.*, p. 56-162.

<sup>56</sup> Officers’ Meetings, Oct. 3 and 10, 1956, *ibid.*, pp. 56-217, 56-224; Officers’ Meeting with Overseas Officers, Oct. 15, 1956, minutes in GCOM, pp. 56-229–56-231 (budget at p. 56-231); Autumn Council, Oct. 24, 1956, GCC Proc., XIX, iii, pp. 680-83 (1956 dollars converted to 2020 values using <https://www.measuringworth.com>).

<sup>57</sup> GCC 1972 Autumn Council, Oct. 15, 1972, a.m., GCC Proc., XXIII, iv, pp. 72-1121, 1122; Richard Hammill (President, Andrews University) to Beach, Sept. 11, 1966, and Manley to Beach, July 18, 1967, GC Ar., RG 21, box 10565, fld. “Mission Emphasis”; Manley to Associate Secretary Clyde O. Franz with attachments, July 18, 1967, GC Ar., RG 21, box 10564, fld. “Manley, M.O. (AU)”; Manley obit., *ARH*, 165:45 (Nov. 10, 1988), 22. See “In Memoriam: Gottfried Oosterwal”, and Russell Staples, “Gottfried Oosterwal — Inspirational Missiologist”, *JAMS*, 11.2 (2015), v–xi; and *sub* “Institute of World Mission”, *SDAE*, I, 772–73.

On the Loma Linda issue, see, in GC Ar., RG 21: P. W. Dysinger to W. R. Beach, Feb. 8, 1967 (encl. “Loma Linda | University Mission Orientation Program | Summer 1967”) and Beach’s reply (quotation), Feb. 22, 1967, in box 10564, fld. “Loma Linda University 1967”; Manley to Associate Secretary Duane S. Johnson, March 30, 1967 (encl. another copy of the Loma Linda flyer), Johnson’s reply, April 26, 1967 (quotation

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at p. 1), and Manley to Beach, April 7, 1967 (quotation at p. 1), all in box 10564, fld. "Manley, M.O. (AU)". So effective was the institute that one division created its own local version: see Graeme Humble, "Institute of World Mission, South Pacific Division", in *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*: <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=27XY>.

<sup>58</sup> Secretarial Staff Meeting, May 31, 1955, Minutes 1955–1956, p. 5, GC Ar., RG 21, Box MIN 251, fld. "Secretariat Staff Meeting Minutes (1955–1960) 1".

*Note:* At this time they still referred to themselves as the "Secretarial Department" rather than "Secretariat", and the titles of the minutes from their meetings employ the earlier term, though *folder* titles (which were given by GC Ar. staff subsequently) reflect the later term, "Secretariat".

<sup>59</sup> Secretarial Staff Meeting, July 12, 1955, Minutes 1955–1956, p. 9, GC Ar., RG 21, box MIN 251, fld. "Secretariat Staff Meeting Minutes (1955–1960) 1"; Staff Meeting, April 15, 1958, unpaginated minutes, *ibid.*, fld. "Secretariat Staff Meeting Minutes (1955–1960) 2".

<sup>60</sup> Secretariat correspondence preserves innumerable letters to and from institutions about planned "Mission Emphasis" weeks, conducted by associate secretaries. To give only a few examples that illustrate the points made in the text, taken from just one year, see: "Mission Emphasis 1967–1968" (undated), which lists 22 colleges and hospitals to be visited in just the first four months of 1967; F. O. Rittenhouse (president of Pacific Union College) to Johnson, Nov. 22, 1966, and Johnson to Rittenhouse, Dec. 4, 1966 and Feb. 10, 1967; and minutes of a Columbia Union College faculty meeting, March 15, 1967 (quotation): GC Ar., RG 21, box 10565, fld. "Mission Emphasis"; and Associate Secretary David H. Baasch to Winton Beaven (president of Columbia Union College), March 14, 1967, box 10562, fld. "1967 General Correspondence B".

<sup>61</sup> Secretaries' Meeting, Jan. 17, 1956, and Staff Meeting, March 6, 1956, Minutes 1955–1956, pp. 44, 66: GC Ar., RG 21, box MIN 251, fld. "Secretariat Staff Meeting Minutes (1955–1960) 1".

<sup>62</sup> Secretarial Staff Meeting, April 24, 1956, Minutes 1955–1956, p. 82, GC Ar., RG 21, box MIN 251, fld. "Secretariat Staff Meeting Minutes (1955–1960) 1".

<sup>63</sup> Secretaries' Meeting, Jan. 17, 1956, Minutes 1955–1956, p. 45, GC

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Ar., RG 21, box MIN 251, fld. "Secretariat Staff Meeting Minutes (1955-1960) 1", emphasis supplied.

<sup>64</sup> Secretariat Staff Meeting, April 15, 1958, unpaginated, GC Ar., RG 21, box MIN 251, "fld. Secretariat Staff Meeting Minutes (1955-1960) 2".

<sup>65</sup> Committee on Appointees, April 15, 1965: report of *ad hoc* "Committee on Procedures in Recruiting", and accompanying actions, in Committee on Appointees Minutes, 1965-66, p. 1544, GC Ar., RG 21, box MIN 24.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., point no. 5.

<sup>67</sup> Secretariat Staff Meeting, April 1, 1958, unpaginated, GC Ar., RG 21, box MIN 251, fld. "Secretariat Staff Meeting Minutes (1955-1960) 2".

<sup>68</sup> Forty-Eighth Session: W. R. Beach, "The General Conference Secretary's report", *ARH*, 135:27 (June 22, 1958), 27.

<sup>69</sup> Early in his first term as secretary he had already argued (1954): "We go out to convert men, not to Protestantism, nor to any special brand of Christianity. We must bring them to God's 'everlasting gospel'." Beach, "The field is the world", p. 7.

<sup>70</sup> GCC, Oct. 23, 1964, GCC Proc., XXI, iii, 809-10. Secretariat was initially reluctant to send current students rather than graduates out for short-term service, especially those of high school age, but agreed to "list this question with the Officers and Union Presidents" and "list it for study at the biennial Autumn Council" at their March 26, 1963 meeting (Secretariat Staff Meeting, March 26, 1963, GC AR., RG 21, box MIN 251, fld. "Secretariat Staff Meeting Minutes (1963-1967)". Clearly the response to the listing of the question was in favor of the program; or, at least, against quashing it.

<sup>71</sup> Secretariat Staff Meeting, Sept. 14, 1967, GC Ar., RG 21, box MIN 251, fld. "Secretariat Staff Meeting Minutes (1963-1967)". Examples of enthusiasm on campuses from the same year (also GC Ar., RG 21): Wilbur K. Nelson (Pacific Union College) to Johnson, April 25 and May 30, 1967, and Johnson to Nelson, May 25, 1967; and Manley to Johnson, May 30, 1967; in GC Ar., RG 21, respectively box 10564, fld. "Manley, M.O. (AU)", box 10565, fld. "1967 General Correspondence N".

<sup>72</sup> E.g., reports on correspondence with La Sierra College regarding



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the French school at Collonges, in Staff Meetings, Jan. 12 and March 29, 1966, and Jan. 24, 1967, Minutes 1966, pp. 1–2, 17, and 1967, p. 2, in GC Ar., RG 21, box MIN 251, fld. “Secretariat Staff Meeting Minutes (1963–1967)”; and, in a random year, 1967, see correspondence (all in GC Ar., RG 21): e.g., J. O. Emmerson (Portland Sanitarium & Hospital) to Associate Secretary R. R. Frame, Jan. 13, 1967, box 10563, fld. “1967 General Correspondence E”; Manley to Johnson, May 30, 1967, box 10564, fld. “Manley, M.O. (AU)”; Associate Secretary Edwin Gibb to A. N. Nelson (“Faculty Field Representative of La Sierra College), Feb. 6 and 14, 1967 and Nelson to Johnson, May 2 and 9, 1967, box 10565, fld. “1967 General Correspondence N”.

<sup>73</sup> GCC, Oct. 23, 1964, GCC Proc., XXI, iii, 810.

<sup>74</sup> A fourth-order polynomial trendline, calculated using Microsoft Excel.



## Chapter Seven

### Mission Drift

#### The Third Phase of Secretariat, c.1970–2019

As we have seen, for many years Secretariat primarily focused on recruiting and maintaining missionaries, and planning for mission expansion. Since the 1970s, however, perhaps even the late 1960s, the role of Secretariat has evolved yet further. In the Adventist Church's first forty years the GC Secretary's role had been one of collating and corresponding; in the next seventy-odd years the role was that of joint primary planner for mission expansion and chief executive of the missionary program. But in the last half century, we suggest that the role has evolved further again: it has become that of chief bureaucrat and guardian of *Working Policy*. These are in fact very important functions; the problem is not that Secretariat actively works to improve governance or that it created an office apparatus appropriate to its responsibilities, but that attention to administration has left insufficient time to plan for and to promote mission.

We are dealing here with relatively recent history, well within living memory. This means that we, inevitably, lack true historical perspective. Furthermore, the authors all work within Secretariat, broadly conceived, and thus we cannot be truly detached. Bearing this in mind, in this chapter we have drawn more on secondary sources than in other chapters, reflecting judgments already reached, while continuing to utilize, where appropriate, minutes

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and other church records entrusted to the GC Archives. This chapter is shorter than Chapters Three, Five and Six, partly because of the lack of critical perspective and partly because some of the most significant developments were addressed in Chapter Two; yet while we do not dwell on particular episodes, we have elucidated significant trends and important recent developments.

### Shifting Focus

#### Secretariat and Administration

As Secretariat spent more time policing policy and administration, its own collective self-identity altered; meanwhile, roughly in step with Secretariat's shifting sense of itself, GC departments gradually stopped seeing overseas missionary work as being a top priority for themselves. For example, in 1981, a meeting that two associate secretaries had with NAD Adventist college chaplains, to plan for Mission Emphasis Week, was the occasion for a prolonged, almost philosophical, discussion within GC Secretariat about its role in the denomination's mission program. According to the minutes: "It was pointed out that there is a philosophical aspect that affects . . . Secretariat. We are not a 'promotional' office, we are an 'administrative' office." Some attendees expressed concern that suggestions arising from the chaplains' meeting "include quite a bit of promotion" by Secretariat. This prompted comments that the "Communication Department should be the arm of all GC areas [and] *should* provide a 'service' to us."<sup>1</sup>

The concern expressed about lack of promotion of missionary recruiting by the GC Communication Department is, we suggest, an early manifestation of the attitude evident today in a number of world-Church entities that mission is really the business of the

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Secretariat and the Office of Adventist Mission—GC departments and other bodies get on with their “own business”, which they see as ministry to existing church members. Yet, as we saw in Chapter Six, this had emphatically not been the case earlier in the twentieth century, when virtually all departments regularly contributed to missionary recruiting and promotion.

What is also striking, however, is Secretariat’s attitude: “We are *not* a ‘promotional’ office, we are an ‘administrative’ office.” This represents a remarkable shift in mentality: as we saw earlier, from the 1910s the Secretariat absolutely regarded itself as engaged in promoting as well as administering the Adventist Church missionary enterprise—and it was particularly committed to promotion in the 1950s and 1960s. The associate secretaries of that era would have found it astonishing that college chaplains *needed* to suggest that Secretariat become involved in “quite a bit of promotion” and that the staff of Secretariat found this daunting, because of course on-campus promotion had been a huge part of the associates’ regular workload. Yet a change in the secretary and the passage of little more than a decade had been sufficient to effect a sea change in mentality. The 1970s saw a major shift in emphasis for the world headquarters as a whole, and Secretariat in particular. The changed focus was maintained thereafter despite the election in 1980 of G. Ralph Thompson, a native of Barbados, the first secretary “of color” (to use an Americanism) and the first not from one of the former “home fields”.<sup>2</sup> It is to the exact nature of that major shift in emphasis and focus that we now turn.

## A Burgeoning Bureaucracy

The change of focus at the headquarters was largely a result of the expansion, in every sense, of the denomination. By 1970, 107 years

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after the General Conference was established, it had 75 member unions, comprising 379 conferences and missions, employing a workforce of over 26,000, with more than 2 million members of 16,505 local churches.<sup>3</sup> The administration at the center needed to grow in complexity and size as well, and it did so; yet paradoxically, what did not increase was the number of associate secretaries.

Recognizing a need, and at the urging of President Robert H. Pierson, in 1973 the Executive Committee appointed a “Committee on Organization and Decision Making,” chaired by Pierson and including Secretary Clyde Franz [shown in Illustration 27] and Treasurer Kenneth H. Emmerson, as well as vice presidents and the undertreasurer.<sup>4</sup> The committee completed its work within ten weeks, suggesting that it drew on concepts already present in the minds of Pierson and Franz. As a result of its recommendations, the Executive Committee created the first permanent committees with extensive delegated authority: the President’s Administrative Council (PRADCO); the President’s Executive Advisory (PREXAD); and the GC Administrative Committee (ADCOM). The Executive Committee additionally (1) approved the first GC organizational chart, (2) introduced for the first time a formal distinction between the executive officers and the wider officer group (“constitutional officers” as they were dubbed), and (3) recommended the addition of a new officer position, the undersecretary.<sup>5</sup>

In the early 1980s, PRADCO and ADCOM were merged. In 1991, the report of a Commission on Governance (the first major committee or commission to examine the organization of the GC headquarters since the 1973 committee) led to the effective re-founding of ADCOM. It was merged with the longstanding (but informal) “officer councils” that had met since 1930; its authority and role were expanded; and it became recognizably the GC ADCOM known today (subsequent reforms have not been as major as those of 1991).<sup>6</sup> These changes were, however, the working out

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of the system established by President Pierson and Secretary Franz in 1973.

The truth is, administration is necessary, even if nobody loves bureaucracy. In the early twentieth century, Secretariat created an administrative infrastructure that was the foundation for mission expansion—in other words, a very much needed bureaucracy. In the 1920s and 1930s, moreover, Secretariat had played a central role in the creation of a policy framework for the world Church. Whereas for the first sixty years the leadership group was cohesive enough that written policy was not necessary, since everyone knew the distinctive “Adventist way of doing things”, by the 1920s generational change and the expansion of the leadership group meant that what once was common knowledge about Adventist ecclesiastical principles and practices needed to be codified. Over a number of years, the church brought together and arranged systematically, in separate texts devoted to specific areas, voted actions of GC Sessions and the GC Committee, along with the body of generally recognized Adventist practice.

The first such text was the *Manual for Ministers* in 1925, which, like all these publications, went through multiple editions.<sup>7</sup> Secretariat had some involvement in compiling this work, but was integral to the preparation, the following year, of *Working Policy*. At the 1926 GC Session, President Spicer briefed delegates about the plan for a policy book, commenting on how voted “items are scattered all through our minutes”, and about a plan “to collect these actions, state them briefly and concisely, and have them in a little pocket pamphlet, so that we can turn to it and see what the working policy is.”<sup>8</sup> It had been planned to have the new *Working Policy* voted by the Session, but the sheer number of voted actions it was necessary to find and systematize meant that the committee working on it did not have a report ready by Session, which voted to refer the matter to the 1926 Autumn Council.<sup>9</sup> It duly approved: “A careful digest . . . in a leaflet form for the use of executives and

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workers. This summary of General Conference actions will constitute a working policy, providing valuable information to our leaders in every part of the world field.”<sup>10</sup> After the first edition in 1926,<sup>11</sup> *Working Policy* was usually revised every second or third year. However, starting in 1986 there has been an annual edition; and, following the precedent set in 1926, it has always been subject to emendation by Autumn/Annual Council.

The final important codification of practice and principle was the *Church Manual*, first published in 1932, which incorporated the first formal statement of “Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists” (though as a doctrinal statement, this was qualitatively different to *Policy*). It was originally approved—and subject to amendment—by Autumn Council, but starting with the forty-fifth Session in 1946, only a Session has been able to amend the *Church Manual*.<sup>12</sup> Every session since 1946 either revised or reapproved the *Manual* and in practice a new recension was published quadrennially from 1959 to 1971 (reflecting revisions at the 1958, 1962, 1966 and 1970 Sessions), and quinquennially thereafter. The process of revision, which is lengthy, is steered by Secretariat.<sup>13</sup>

In other words, Secretariat had always been about more than mission. It has always been involved in administration, in the work of formalizing and codifying practice, and then in the fine detail of amending and updating the resulting texts. And its role in this kind of work stemmed from the growth of the Church in the early 1900s. So, its involvement in similar work starting in the 1970s was not an innovation. Whereas previously, however, work of this kind had been in balance with the work of planning and operationalizing mission, the 1970s put Secretariat’s responsibilities out of balance, tilting them towards paperwork and administrative minutiae.

Secretariat provided the indispensable administration of the expanding committee system, responsible for the business of ADCOM (and PRADCO) in addition to the Executive Committee (which in this period still met frequently outside Spring Meeting



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and Annual Council), and for officers' meetings. Secretariat had long been efficient, but with hindsight it seems clear that, in the 1970s, Secretariat became more professional in its approach to administration. It adopted new methods to deal with business more efficiently: tracking codes of agenda items were included in Executive Committee minutes for the first time in the minutes of the 1974 Spring Meeting.<sup>14</sup> Four years later, the agenda and minutes of the 1978 Spring Meeting included, for the first time, a reference line before items (apparent in agendas or minutes from the last forty-odd years), indicating the committees or groups from which the item had originated, and which had reviewed it.<sup>15</sup>

This last feature may have been introduced by the first undersecretary, because, as recommended by the Committee on Organization and Decision-Making, the 1975 GC Session created a position of undersecretary as an officer position. Specific duties included serving as agenda secretary for the GC Session, Annual Council, Spring Meeting, and officers' meetings; responsibility for *Working Policy*; and helping provide oversight to administrative and personnel matters within the Secretariat. The creation of this new position along with its assigned responsibilities speaks volumes about the trajectory of Secretariat in the 1970s. As we saw above, it had played a key role in the preparation and publication of *Working Policy* in 1926 when it was, as Spicer had suggested, "a little pocket pamphlet", only 63 pages long. But *Working Policy* became ever larger: in 1970, this chapter's starting point, it was 340 pages in length.<sup>16</sup> The latest edition is 830 pages,<sup>17</sup> and that is after the 2014 Annual Council excerpted the old section N and constituted it as a standalone volume; the latest edition of this distinct *ISE Working Policy* is 252 pages long.<sup>18</sup>

It was not only that *Policy* kept growing; policy-related duties could not be restricted to the undersecretary. Divisions adopted their own localized *Working Policy* books. Division secretaries and the ever-increasing number of union and conference/mission

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secretaries had their own snowballing administrative loads and needed assistance and advice. The GC associate secretaries (whose numbers, as already noted, remained the same) spent ever more and more of their time in advising and training their counterparts at other levels of church structure, helping them to ensure that they were working in accordance with world Church policies, and assisting them to improve the professionalism and effectiveness of division and union Secretariats.

All these are worthy and valuable contributions to the global Seventh-day Adventist Church. Yet, somewhere along the way, something had to give. And amid all these other pressing duties, what got sidelined was the very thing that for seventy years had been the most important function of the GC Secretary and Secretariat: *foreign mission*.

### **Stagnation of the Missionary Enterprise**

It is a striking fact that, in the late 1980s, when the term *foreign mission* finally fell definitively out of use, *global mission*, as it became known in 1990, was placed under Presidential. Distracted by increasingly heavy administrative responsibilities, Secretariat had not been able to stop the world church's mission program experiencing mission drift. It was not the result of any conscious decision or the fault of any one person; gradually, though, church priorities evolved and shifted.

Partly that was because of the growth and maturing of the Church in many former mission fields—even as the original home fields grew more slowly or not at all. In addition, independent nations that had been Western colonies were more reluctant to admit pastoral workers than in the days of their subjugation (with

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which missionaries were often identified); increasingly, mission-field countries would only issue visas to workers with professional qualifications and/or technical skills. While the causes are various, the effect has been a gradual lessening in the number of long-term cross-cultural missionaries, but with this has gone a substantial real-terms decline in the mission offering. It is difficult to measure this both due to inflation and to the Church's practice of converting all sums into US dollars.<sup>19</sup> This makes it necessary to take into account many different inflation rates and exchange rates. There is, though, a steady metric that measures the level of commitment of church members to mission, which is the mission offering as a percentage of tithe. This tells us the extent to which rank-and-file church members are willing to sacrifice for the mission enterprise, which provides an index of their support. Table II illustrates how this has gradually dwindled, though with a particularly marked fall (more than 50 percent) in the 1970s.

**Table II. Mission Offerings as a Percentage of Tithe, 1919–2019**

1919	55.00%
1929	62.18%
1939	48.50%
1949	37.61%
1949	37.61%
1959	29.45%
1969	22.61%
1979	10.40%
1989	7.68%
1999	4.66%
2009	3.70%
2019	3.57%

With the decline in numbers of frontline mission workers, the mission stories that had once been a staple of Adventist culture

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were told less frequently; the net effect was both to beget a persistent myth that the Seventh-day Adventist Church's mission work was largely done, and to engender among church members still enthusiastic about cross-cultural mission a (false) perception that the organized Church was not doing it. This fed into fewer volunteers for missionary service and, undoubtedly, into the decline in offerings to support the Church's missionary enterprise. A negative cycle had been spawned.

As we saw in the last chapter, the record number of foreign missionaries sent into service in a single year was 473, in 1969; in 1970, the number was 470. But in the fifty years since then—during which Secretariat's focus gradually shifted—the number of new IDEs, as missionaries were titled in 1983,<sup>20</sup> dispatched into service steadily decreased. Only once, in 1986, did the number of new IDEs in one year exceed 400; in the last decade, in seven years the annual total was in double, rather than triple digits.<sup>21</sup>

By a twist of fate, 1986 not only exemplifies the shift in GC Secretariat from "mission control" of frontline mission to control of policy and governance; it also coincided with the creation of Adventist Frontier Missions (AFM), which incorporated in the late summer of 1985, and sent its first missionaries, the Scalzi family, overseas in March 1987.<sup>22</sup> The organization was first mentioned in a short article in the *Review*, describing AFM as "a new mission organization working in cooperation with the Adventist Church".<sup>23</sup> When Myron Widmer, associate editor of the *Review*, wrote in 1988 from the Philippines and Singapore, as part of a series of "firsthand reports of Adventism in the Far East", his description of meeting Marc Scalzi is given equal column space to that of visits to official denominational educational institutions such as Philippine Union College and AIIAS. His meeting with Scalzi prompts him to write, "The story Marc shares pulls on my heartstrings and causes me to reevaluate my giving to mission funds and my comparatively soft life in the United States. I ask myself, 'Am I willing to go to

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such a remote and pioneer missionary post as this?” Strikingly, Widmer continues: “Other questions float through my mind—questions probably asked by our church’s early pioneers as they left, not for today’s modern institutional ‘missionary’ posts, but for the remote hinterlands of the world”.<sup>24</sup> Widmer draws a contrast with the institutionalized mission infrastructure of his present and implies that AFM was doing the work done in the past by the Church’s missionary enterprise.

That this article appeared in the pages of the Church’s flagship journal is telling as to the perception many North American church members had (and perhaps still have) of the missionary enterprise. Although distant from the day-to-day work of Secretariat, they recognized the shift in priorities that had taken place and identified the need that the shift was leaving unmet. It is, then, surely no coincidence that the mid- to late-eighties both marked the start of a further steady decline in the numbers of missionaries in service *and* the starting point of an organization that presents itself as being, in some ways, the real heirs of the original missionary enterprise. The decline in numbers of IDEs and ISEs sent to the field is partly due to success in former mission fields, partly to changes in the wider missional environment within the Seventh-day Adventist Church; but it is also a symptom of a larger problem, namely a longstanding decline in support among members for the official missionary enterprise.

An insight into this is afforded by the analysis in Chapter One, showing appointee numbers expressed as a ratio of missionaries per 10,000 members (Figures 1.7–1.8, pp. 40–41). There we see the extent of support for the Adventist missionary enterprise in terms of the potential personnel resources available, which, like total membership, have risen year on year for over a century. As noted in Chapter One, the 310 new appointees of 1920 were the equivalent of slightly more than 16 missionaries per 10,000 church members. The equivalent figure each year since 2012 has been less

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than one-twentieth of an IDE/ISE per 10,000 members. The collective missionary effort relative to world Church membership is but a fraction of what it was even in 1980, when the ratio was one missionary per 10,000 members. Even ten missionaries per 10,000, which was achieved in 1921, would, in 2021, be 2,100 new cross-cultural missionaries: far in excess of the record 400-odd new appointees of 1969–70, much less the 83 that was the annual average of new ISEs for the four-year period, 2016–19.

It is only right to acknowledge the shifts that have taken place in mission capacities and needs. South America, for example, generated no excess funds in the 1940s; it *was* a mission field, on the whole, until very recently. It was a consumer of mission; then much of it (certainly Brazil) became self-supporting. Parts of the South American Division still need funds and skilled workers, but those are received from other parts of the division. The division as a whole has thus become self-sustaining. Only recently, however, did it become a net contributor *to* mission, worldwide, instead of a consumer *of* mission. There are African nations that were mission fields until even more recently, but that are now self-sustaining—training pastors, doctors, and nurses in Adventist universities, and having sufficient funds for the evangelization of their territory. Yet some of these countries still receive ISEs, legacy missionaries, paid for by the world Church. These countries are net beneficiaries of the Adventist missionary enterprise when they could be making a net contribution to it. Meanwhile, Europe, which once supplied resources that powered growth elsewhere, now stands in need of mission resources itself. Several unions in which the Church has long been established and which supplied not only missionaries but also leaders of the world Church, now require world-Church resources to evangelize their territory, so much so that they will no longer be net contributors to mission. Once “home fields”, they now require the sustenance of the Adventist missionary enterprise.

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In sum, there was a complex and ever-changing environment in which church leaders, at the regional level as well as the world level, had to function, and which world-Church leaders, especially in Secretariat, had to negotiate. Yet, when one considers that there are still billions of people who have yet to hear the distinctive Adventist understanding of the good news of Jesus, the decline in the missionary enterprise must be judged regrettable from the wider Church's point of view; more, it must be judged to be in part, at least, due to an abundance of distractions to Secretariat. If it is hard to hit a target when the goalposts are moving, it is even harder when one takes one's eyes off the ball. Secretariat, collectively, burdened by administration, kept only one eye on the prize. It was not, we suggest, a sufficiently strong advocate for mission, and did not think enough about the overall trajectory, or what might need to change. For all the good intentions of secretaries and associate secretaries in the last half century, they allowed the enterprise to drift.

### **Secretariat in the Era of Global Mission**

By the late twentieth century, Seventh-day Adventist mission was "on autopilot", as Dr. G. T. Ng put it in 2010.<sup>25</sup> Yet no one had made a conscious decision that Secretariat should downplay the world Church's mission program; nor had anyone purposefully chosen to shift the focus away from entering new territories and reaching unreached people groups. Instead, both happened incrementally, as decisions were taken, the full implications of which were not always apparent at the time. But we can now see the impact clearly.

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### Mission Drift—And A Course Correction

One reason for these developments was that the growing strength of the Church in what once had been mission fields meant that the nature of global mission changed. But “as the church grew, mission appeared to lose its intentionality and attention.” As a result, Dr. Ng argues, in the early twenty-first century “mission appear[ed] to be running by default, without a strategic focus.”<sup>26</sup> The Adventist Church, from the GC to the local congregation, always affirmed that the Church’s focus was on reaching the unreached. However, the majority of baptisms from the “1000 Days of Reaping” (1980–1985) and “Harvest 90” (1985–1990) quinquennial programs and the various Net initiatives of the 1990s came in areas that *were already heavily reached*. These global programs did not do much to advance Adventism where it was unrepresented or significantly under-represented. The Church was evangelizing easy territory.

There was some awareness among church leaders of this problem. One result was the “Global Strategy” plan, which had its origins in the late 1980s, was adopted by the 1989 Annual Council, and was “enthusiastically endorse[d]” at the beginning of the 1990 GC Session.<sup>27</sup> It was explicitly conceived as a corrective to mission drift; it was based on research which showed, first, that in 1,800 of “5,000 geographical units of about 1 million [people] each . . . we have no ongoing work” and, second, that these unreached million-strong populations were overwhelmingly concentrated in “China [and] Central Asia, the Islamic areas of North Africa and the Middle East, the Hindu areas in and around the Gangetic Plain, and the Buddhist areas of Southeast Asia.” The Adventist Church had yet to penetrate the strongholds of the world religions. Charles Taylor, who helped to craft the Global Strategy, wrote in 1990: “The pioneers of our church came from a Christian background and took for granted the fundamental truths of the gospel. And they targeted most of their evangelistic outreach at people who



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already believed the basic message of Christianity.”<sup>28</sup> As we saw in Chapter Five, this was not entirely true, certainly not up to c.1950. Yet it is probably a fair summary of subsequent trends, especially in the 1970s and 1980s.

The Global Strategy document gave rise to the creation of a GC entity, Global Mission, which was ably led by Michael L. Ryan from 1990, initially as the “Global Mission Executive Secretary”; he was elected a general field secretary at the 1995 GC Session, and in 2003 a general vice president, though “continu[ing] to oversee the Global Mission activities.”<sup>29</sup> Founded to engage people of other religious traditions and create an Adventist presence in unentered areas, the Global Mission office brought a strategic approach to the planning of church planting, based initially on the research underpinning the Global Strategy document and later on new metrics regularly reported in the *Annual Statistical Report* (which had a “Global Mission” section added).<sup>30</sup>

The office also swiftly created “study centers to look at ways of building more effective bridges to . . . Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, and Hinduism”.<sup>31</sup> A Global Center for Islamic Studies was created in 1989, led by veteran missiologist Børge Schantz and was initially a standalone GC institution.<sup>32</sup> Buddhist and Hindu Study Centers followed by 1994, when all three were under Global Mission; a Jewish Study Center was established by 1996 and a Secular Center by 2000.<sup>33</sup>

Meanwhile, in 1993 Global Mission introduced “Global Mission Pioneers”: church planters but in effect missionaries, for their task was to plant new worshipping groups among unreached and under-reached people groups, though they were (and are) drawn from the same or similar people groups as those whom they would missionize.<sup>34</sup> This innovation supplied extra missionaries, buttressing the number of IDEs, though it should be noted that, as seen in Chapter Two, the decline in missionary numbers already was of long standing by the time the Pioneers were created.

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Yet, despite its data-driven and innovative approach, Global Mission faced obstacles. Ryan found that church leaders in many regions instinctively thought of “reaching only the minority [Christian] religious groups in [a] country” and were reluctant to make plans to reach hard-to-convert devotees of the country’s major religion(s) even where those adherents made up more than 80 percent of the population.<sup>35</sup> As Adventist missiologists have argued, moreover, though the Global Mission initiative stemmed from realization of the lack of missional *success* in certain territories, in practice, missiological *reflection* about the methods needed to effect the global strategy, and in particular about faithful contextualization, ensued after actual methodological innovation. This, together with the practical reluctance to change longstanding missional targets, impeded efforts to convert followers of world religions (who, as we saw in Chapter Five, had once been seen by Secretariat as a major target of the missionary enterprise), in contrast to nominal Christians and animists who fueled Adventist church growth and conversion rates in the late twentieth century.<sup>36</sup>

Efforts to achieve faithful and critical contextualization *were* made. Starting in 1997 they were guided by the Global Mission Issues Committee (GMIC).<sup>37</sup> This was created as a forum for the Global Mission team, including the Study Center directors, and academic Adventist missiologists to meet with the GC and division officers and department directors, which meant it had value even as a talking shop. It was more than that, however. Papers (some of them very substantive) were read to the GMIC, which approved statements, recommendations, and guidelines about controversial issues, particularly those relating to contextualization;<sup>38</sup> and GMIC discussions had two major outcomes.

First, what became the new Fundamental Belief 11, “Growing in Christ”, emerged out of GMIC deliberations about the influence of belief in spirits, particularly in the “10/40 Window” region of the world.<sup>39</sup> A Fundamental Belief has to be approved by a General

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Conference Session (which was done at the fifty-eighth session in 2005, which also elected Rosa Banks as the first woman Associate Secretary [Illustration 30]); thus, the new Belief had necessarily undergone a sustained review process before adoption, but the initial impetus of the GMIC discussions was important in this significant adjustment of the Adventist Church's doctrinal statements.

Second, contextualization continued to be a problematic area. In the mid-2000s the GMIC discussed relevant matters at length, which helped give rise to a major document, *Roadmap to Mission*. It endorsed "faithful contextualization", set out what that entailed, and provided guidelines on how to achieve it. This *Roadmap* was then added to *Working Policy*.<sup>40</sup> After thirteen annual meetings the GMIC came under the umbrella of Secretariat,<sup>41</sup> as part of the larger internal structural reforms discussed in the final section of this chapter. Thus, for eleven of its twenty-four meetings—nearly half of its lifetime—it has been managed by GC Secretariat.

The measures just discussed were intellectual ones rather than practical steps, but they were vital to ensure that the missionary enterprise remained faithful to its original vision. Yet, meanwhile, the more practical initiatives at the world headquarters had some positive effect, but not the impact hoped for. Global Mission was created in 1989 and operationalized in 1990 to coordinate the Global Strategy initiative.<sup>42</sup> Early in 1994, a "World Mission Awareness and Promotion Committee" was created at the GC headquarters, and the post of Director of Mission Awareness was then created and filled (by Gary Patterson, initially) to *promote* mission around the world. Patterson's appointment evolved into the Office of Mission Awareness, which, like Global Mission, was not responsible at this time to Secretariat, but rather came directly under Presidential—an eloquent statement about the perceived role of Secretariat by the 1990s.<sup>43</sup>

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Together, Global Mission and Mission Awareness helped to funnel GC resources and (increased) church-member donations to the 10/40 Window. However, the world Church made no major reallocation of resources from one-time mission areas that had effectively been reached to those that had not (which includes, but is not limited to, the 10/40 Window). The Global Mission strategy produced impressive church growth in some areas, but it achieved little in many others. This was partly because the areas of greatest strategic focus for Global Mission were the areas of the world that were hardest to reach.<sup>44</sup> Yet it was also the case that world-Church resources continued to be channeled to areas where the Adventist Church already had a substantial presence. As the 2010 Annual Council acknowledged, in order for the world Church to be faithful to its agreed “prioritization of the 10/40 Window and big cities”, it “require[d] a greater transfer of resources to those areas”. One of the goals set was to “[i]ncrease the number of missionaries of all types working to establish the Church in the most unentered parts of the world.”<sup>45</sup>

Only since 2017, however, have ISE budgets (gradually) begun to be reassigned to mission priority areas, even as the numbers of new ISEs have continued to decline. Two of the reasons why change has been slow have been acknowledged by the Executive Committee. The machinery for recruiting missionaries “is antiquated, fragmented, frequently takes months, and is often segregated from the planning, funding, and processing of other types of missionaries and other broad-range plans for mission.” Second: “The current system of control over IDE . . . budgets does not always allow strategic placement of missionaries.”<sup>46</sup> The system set up in the 1910s was a wonderful achievement, but it did not undergo sufficient redevelopment in the intervening eleven decades.

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### Mission in the Late-Twentieth and Early Twenty-First Centuries

In sum, in the decades following c.1970, the Adventist Church to a great extent continued patterns of planning for and resourcing of worldwide mission that reflected the needs and dynamics of the early and mid-twentieth century, rather than of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Without anyone realizing it, those patterns had become ruts that were just followed, repeating what had been done before. Not enough thought was given to whether honoring our original goals meant doing something different. And the body that should have been giving thought to that question was Secretariat.

It is surely the case that Adventists kept doing the same thing because it brought extraordinary success—which it did, in Latin America, much of sub-Saharan Africa, and the islands of Southeast Asia and the South Pacific. But as a result, the Church as a whole lost sight of the fact that across most of the 10/40 Window, in much of Western and Central Europe, and in large urban areas almost everywhere, under-reached people groups grew in number, as did the total unreached population.<sup>47</sup> Meanwhile, materialism and postmodernity pose new missional challenges to the Church in areas with large concentrations of church members such as North America, Australasia and, increasingly, Latin America. Globally, during Secretariat's third phase, the focus of mission shifted ever more from "pioneer mission to mission of least resistance."<sup>48</sup>

### **Secretariat and Mission: The Last Ten Years**

Today, "the work of Secretariat revolves around three broad areas of responsibility": executive, administrative, and missional. First,

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the secretary and associate secretaries are officers of the General Conference and fulfil the functions pertaining thereto, including service on the GC Executive Committee and major committees and boards, and counselling leaders at other levels of church structure. Second, Secretariat prepares and preserves agendas and minutes of major GC standing committees and boards; it coordinates “the development and review of General Conference *Working Policy* as well as . . . the . . . *Church Manual*”; and it is the “administrative liaison office for the General Conference to all world divisions.” Third, it “provides support . . . and strategic input for the mission program of the . . . Church, including selection and appointment of international service employees and volunteer personnel for all calls between divisions.”<sup>49</sup> In addition to the Secretariat proper are a number of entities, discussed later in this section; the director or manager of each of them is answerable to the secretary and each has responsibilities connected to the three roles noted above (i.e., executive, administrative and missional), which includes a specific subset of the administrative function that is the responsibility at union and local conference/mission level of their secretaries but is assigned to ASTR at the GC level: the collection, reporting, and analysis of organizational data, especially statistics.<sup>50</sup>

The election in 2010 by the fifty-ninth GC Session of Dr. Gantheow Ng (invariably known simply as “GT”) as GC Secretary and of Homer Trecartin as Undersecretary, alongside a new President, Ted N. C. Wilson, resulted in significant reforms. Ng was a native of Singapore; he had served internationally in Cambodia, Malaysia, and the Philippines and had a PhD in missiology from Andrews University. He understood how Secretariat worked because he had been secretary of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division 2000–2006, then been a GC associate secretary for four years (Ng’s election was the first time an associate secretary had become secretary since Clyde Franz in 1970).<sup>51</sup> Trecartin was also an experienced cross-cultural missionary with diverse experience and had worked at the

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GC in Global Mission 2005–2008 and thereafter as an associate secretary.<sup>52</sup>

With ten years' hindsight, the election of Ng and Trecartin can be seen partly as a reflection of a wider recognition that things had to change in the missionary enterprise; but subsequently, with President Wilson's strong support, Ng and Trecartin capitalized on that already-existing desire for change, introducing significant reforms of the way the Church organized for mission. After not quite eighteen months in office, the 2011 Annual Council elected Trecartin president of the new Greater Middle East Union Mission (soon renamed the Middle East and North Africa Union), but for over a decade Ng helped to effect a change in approach at the world headquarters. If elected because of a desire to do things differently, Ng indubitably shaped the ensuing reforms and their impact.

By 2010 it had become plain that greater unity of purpose and closer alignment between all the church's mission-related entities was needed. In response to this need, the General Conference Mission Board was created to oversee the world church's mission program: to improve strategizing and planning for missions, and communication about mission news and needs; to coordinate between different entities and levels of structure; and to align needs, resources, and strategic priorities.<sup>53</sup> It initially had three standing committees, each of which had considerable authority assigned to it: the Mission Board Strategy and Funding Committee (MBSFC),<sup>54</sup> the Mission Communication Committee (MCC),<sup>55</sup> and the Mission Personnel Processing Committee (MPPC)<sup>56</sup>—in effect the successor to the venerable Appointees Committee (established in 1933, taking over from the Committee on Candidates and Medical Reports which began in 1930). In practice, no clear role for the MCC emerged and it was soon dissolved, but the other two standing committees have met regularly over the last nine years.

One area where the Mission Board had an impact was mission to large urban areas. Immediately before the 2013 Annual Council,

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a conference titled “It’s Time” was held at the world headquarters. It brought together all GC and division officers, department directors, and Adventist Mission directors to evaluate and strategize regarding the generally minimal or non-existent Adventist presence in the world’s major urban areas. At the end of five days of discussions, it was agreed that, indeed, the time had come for sustained and purposeful outreach in the world’s million-plus metropolises. The conference’s deliberations were based on extensive research by the Global Mission Study Centers and ASTR.<sup>57</sup> The outcome was a document that made a powerful statement of intent, but did more, for it included a set of objectives, series of processes, and system of reporting to ensure accountability; this went to Annual Council and was approved by it.<sup>58</sup> “It’s Time” provided a powerful impetus to urban mission around the world and has resulted in the founding of numerous urban “centers of influence”, which follow a distinctive community-based model of outreach.

Another area of innovation has been in different categories of missionaries. To IDEs, retitled ISEs in 2014,<sup>59</sup> who are relatively expensive and may be called to serve in any set of circumstances, and Global Mission Pioneers, who are inexpensive but only serve in very particular contexts, have been added a range of other types of missionary worker. There are “Waldensian Students”, inspired by the Waldenses written about by Ellen G. White, who in Europe’s Middle Ages took the vernacular Bible around Christendom by studying at diverse universities; the Adventist equivalent study at universities in nations where missionaries are prohibited, thus having an excuse to live among unreached people, to whom they discreetly witness. Direct-contract workers are contracted with for specific and time-limited projects, after which they return. There has been increased use of Tentmakers: Adventist laypeople with jobs in countries where Adventists have nil or a limited organized presence, who witness on a personal, informal basis, supported by



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the organized Church with training and resources, but without church salaries.

All are long-term missionaries, but have a low maintenance cost and are more easily recruited than ISEs (indeed may be self-selecting); they have provided new ways to increase the number of missionaries. More use could be made of all of these, but the innovations are a positive sign, though it should be acknowledged that most did not originate in Secretariat or the Mission Board, though the Church has been supportive.

A fair question is whether the Mission Board is having the far-reaching impact that had been hoped for it, especially in the area of mission strategy, or whether it has become simply another committee that merely processes important but essentially routine business. This in turn prompts questions about whether increasing the Mission Board's scope of authority and the structure of the standing committees responsible to it might produce a change for the better. These are issues that surely deserve exploration. As evidence, however, of determination to do better and to take mission off "cruise control", the creation of a new Mission Board (what at first sight appears almost like a reversal of the decision of 1903) is significant in and of itself.

In the world headquarters, meanwhile, not all entities whose work focused on mission were under the secretary. Furthermore, close coordination and collaboration within, between, and across Secretariat proper and its several associated entities, had become fragmented. After his election in 2010, Secretary Ng recognized this situation and ensured a restructuring of the headquarters mission team. New entities were established to meet the evolving needs of the church and capitalize on new opportunities created by technology. Since 2010 all these mission-related entities have been placed squarely under the General Conference Secretary, forming what is informally known in the GC headquarters as the "Mission Family" of entities:

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1. The Office of Adventist Mission, created in 2005 by bringing together Global Mission and Mission Awareness under one umbrella, but given a larger role in 2010 and firmly placed under Secretariat.<sup>60</sup> An important subset of the Office is the Global Mission Centers (previously named Study Centers); a sixth, the Urban Ministry Center, was added in 2012.<sup>61</sup>
2. Adventist Volunteer Services (AVS): the entity responsible for sending, supporting, and repatriating volunteers.
3. The Institute of World Mission, which was empowered by the creation of a specific oversight committee to provide guidance and direction, and to represent its views in other committees.<sup>62</sup>
4. International Personnel Resources and Services (IPRS), renamed in 2011: the entity responsible for processing, sending, and sustaining ISEs; it works closely with MPPC (since 2014 it has had, as one of its co-directors, Karen Porter, the first assistant secretary to become an associate since the 1920s and only the second woman to serve as associate secretary [Illustration 32]).
5. The renamed, rejuvenated, and reconceptualized Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, which now undertakes not only historical and statistical but also social-scientific research, and which has been responsible since 2015 for creating a major online reference work, the *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, launched in 2020.<sup>63</sup>
6. Adventist Membership Systems, added in 2012.<sup>64</sup> It assists organizational units to move from recording membership on paper to using software, improving the reliability and the variety of membership statistics.
7. The latest addition is *Vivid Faith*, an integrated online platform dedicated to connecting would-be missionaries or mission donors with mission opportunities. It reflects

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Dr. Ng's enthusiasm for technology and illustrates how GC Secretariat (and the Church more generally) seek new and modern ways to improve participation in the missionary enterprise.<sup>65</sup>

8. The oldest part of the "Mission family" is the Secretariat proper: the six associate secretaries and their assistants. The number of associate secretaries has not increased despite the growth of the Church and the expansion of their responsibilities.<sup>66</sup>

Together all these entities are responsible to the Secretary of the General Conference. Crucially, all these entities now work together, utilizing their different areas of expertise collaboratively, intentionally, and very amicably.

A specific example has been the work of IPRS and the Institute of World Mission in the second half of the 2010s to create "a comprehensive missionary care/mentoring program"—meeting a goal set by the 2010 Annual Council.<sup>67</sup> Multiple Mission Family entities have cooperated since 2018 in the "Mission Unusual" initiative. It aims to reallocate ISE budgets to high mission-priority areas (and to this end, starting in 2019, IPRS started to meet with each division's officers to discuss how divisions can relinquish ISE budgets they have had at their discretion back to the GC, for use in the 10/40 Window and in unreached areas). Mission Unusual also seeks to establish a transparent way of assigning funds to mission projects based on needs rather than wants; and to model novel approaches to cross-cultural mission that can be adopted and adapted in different local contexts.<sup>68</sup>

A regular weekly meeting of the senior management of all the "Mission Family" entities, called "Mission Leadership Council" (MLC), was put in place in 2011, though since the 2015 GC Session directors of these entities have met only quarterly and the whole senior leadership group bi-annually. There were also planning

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retreats in 2012 and 2014. In effect, MLC was a continuation, or rather a restoration, of the regular Secretariat Staff Meeting, which was initiated by Secretary Beach, and which took place from the 1950s through the 1990s until suspended during the secretaryship (2000–2010) of Matthew Bediako [shown in Illustration 29].

Furthermore, leaders of most “Mission Family” entities also serve on the MBSFC. It is unclear whether, in the last decade, the right balance of the MBSFC’s time has been spent strategizing for mission as opposed to dealing with funding issues. It is important, however, that it has included senior leaders, not just from Treasury and Presidential, and not only from the Secretariat proper, but also from the wider group of entities that come under the secretary and that bear the brunt of strategizing for mission and of managing the missionary program. It means there is greater opportunity for working cooperatively to reenergize the cross-cultural mission enterprise of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Have all the problems been solved? By no means—more remains to be done. But the General Conference Secretariat has started to change course.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Secretariat Staff Meeting, May 4, 1981, GC Ar., RG 21, Minutes p. 81-90 (emphasis supplied), GC Ar., RG 21, box MIN 253: Secretariat Staff Meeting Minutes (1981–1983).

<sup>2</sup> Thompson served as secretary for twenty years, a record for one spell in office (four terms), though Uriah Smith’s twenty-one years and nine months as secretary (in four non-sequential periods in office, in 22

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one-year terms) is the overall longest tenure of the office of GC secretary. Thompson is shown in Illustration 28.

<sup>3</sup> *ASR* 1970.

<sup>4</sup> GCC Spring Meeting, Apr. 5, 1973, GCC Proc., XXIII, v, p. 73-1498.

<sup>5</sup> GC Officers meeting, June 20, 1973, GCOM, pp. 73-239, 240, encl. minutes of meeting of Committee on Organization and Decision-Making, June 10-14, 1973, pp. 1-9, following GCOM p. 73-240; GCC, June 21, 1973, GCC Minutes pp. 73-1563, 1564. The effect was immediate: the first meetings of PRADCO and ADCOM were in July 1973.

<sup>6</sup> Annual Council, Oct. 10, 1991, approving the recommendations of the Commission on Governance: GCC Minutes pp. 91-412-15.

<sup>7</sup> *Manual for ministers* (Washington, D.C.: The [General] Conference, 1925); *Seventh-day Adventist minister's manual* (Silver Spring, Md.: The Ministerial Association, 1992); *Seventh-day Adventist minister's handbook* (Silver Spring, Md.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Ministerial Association, 1997; 2nd edn, 2009).

<sup>8</sup> Forty-First Session (1926): Spicer remarks during 30th meeting, June 9, a.m., in *ARH*, 103:30 (June 10, 1926), 2.

<sup>9</sup> C. H. Watson remarks, and record of vote, *ibid*.

<sup>10</sup> "Report of the Autumn Council of the General Conference", [Sept. 29-Oct. 5, 1926], *ARH*, 103:54 (Nov. 4, 1926), 12, *sub* "General: Working Policy".

<sup>11</sup> *Constitution, Bylaws and Working Policy of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists* (1926).

<sup>12</sup> *Church Manual* (n.p.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 1932); see D. J. B. Trim, "These we believe: Formulating fundamental Adventist beliefs", *ARH*, 198:3 (March 2021), 23-24.

<sup>13</sup> Editions are not numbered, but the latest is the 19th: *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (n.p.: RHPA, 2015)—copyright by "the Secretariat, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists".

<sup>14</sup> Spring Meeting, April 2-4, 1974, GCC Proc., XXIII, vii, pp. 74-67ff.; the codes first appear at p. 74-121, for the p.m. meeting of April 2.

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<sup>15</sup> Spring Meeting, April 5–6, 1978, GCC Minutes, pp. 78–75ff.; simple uses are on p. 78–76, the first complex reference lines on p. 78–78. GCC Minutes to 2004 and Session minutes to 2010 are available at <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Minutes/Forms/AllFolders.aspx>.

<sup>16</sup> *Constitution, Bylaws and Working Policy* (1926) and *Constitution, Bylaws and Working Policy of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists* (1970).

<sup>17</sup> *Working Policy of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2020–2021*.

<sup>18</sup> *International Service Employee Working Policy* (April 2021); this *ISE Working Policy* is governed by the GC Mission Board, rather than by Annual Council, and thus it can be (and in practice several times has been) amended twice-yearly instead of only annually.

<sup>19</sup> For one attempt to analyze mission offerings taking inflation into account, see D. J. B. Trim, “Adventist church—growth and mission since 1863: An historical-statistical analysis”, *JAMS*, 8:2 (2012), 63–64.

<sup>20</sup> Annual Council, Oct. 11, 1983, a.m., GCC Minutes p. 83–359.

<sup>21</sup> See above, in Chapter One, Figure 1.1, p. 26.

<sup>22</sup> “Our history”, *Adventist Frontier Missions*, <https://afmonline.org/about-us/our-history/>. Accessed April 5, 2021.

<sup>23</sup> Anon., “Missions effort breaks new frontiers”, *ARH*, 164:33 (Aug. 13, 1987), 7.

<sup>24</sup> Myron Widmer, “Philippines and Singapore: A church on the move and growing”, *ARH*, 165:29 (July 21, 1988), 8–10 (original italics).

<sup>25</sup> G. T. Ng, “Mission on autopilot”, in Rudi Maier (ed.), *Encountering God in life and mission: A festschrift honoring Jon L. Dybdahl*, Andrews University Mission Studies, 7 (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Department of World Mission, Andrews University, 2010), pp. 203–24.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 203.

<sup>27</sup> Annual Council voted “to approve the document, Global Strategy of the Seventh-day Adventist Church” Oct. 10, 1989, GCC Minutes, pp. 89–471–82. However, since a Global Strategy Coordinating Committee had already been created by the Executive Committee in the spring of

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1987 (GCC meeting of May 21, 1987, GCC Minutes, pp. 87-172-74) its origins go earlier than 1989. The 1990 GC Session approved a resolution, "To accept and enthusiastically endorse the concept of Global Strategy, as adopted by the 1989 Annual Council": Fifty-Fifth Session, 1st meeting, July 5, 1990, see report in *ARH*, 167:28, GC Bulletin no. 2 (July 8, 1980), 19; transcript of action in "Session actions", *ARH*, 167:29, GC Bulletin no. 3, (July 9, 1990), 10.

<sup>28</sup> Charles Taylor, "Global strategy", *Ministry*, 63:8 (Aug. 1990), 13, 15.

<sup>29</sup> "General Conference Annual Council news in brief", Oct. 13, 2003, <https://adventist.news/news/annual-council-news-in-brief>. For Ryan's call to be "Executive Secretary of Global Mission", effective Dec. 1990, see Executive Committee actions of Nov. 8 and Nov. 21, 1990, pp. 13-14 of "Excerpts of General Conference Committee Minutes", Oct.-Dec. 1990, between GCC Minutes, pp. 90-458, 459. For his election as a General Field Secretary, see summary of "World Leaders Elected for 1995-2000", *ARH*, 172:35, GC Bulletin no. 10 (July 20-27, 1995), 31. From 1997, Ryan is in the *Yearbook* as "General Field Secretary" for "Global Mission": *YB* 1997, p. 26 (but *YB* 1996, p. 27, still has him as Global Mission's executive secretary, albeit at pp. 17-18 also listing him as a general field secretary).

<sup>30</sup> The first "Global Mission" table appeared in 1989: *ASR* 1989, pp. 40-42; a similar but more elaborate table appeared in the first dedicated "Global Mission" section the following year: *ASR* 1990, pp. 43-46. After three years of reports it was expanded to three tables, the original table becoming Global Mission Table 2: *ASR* 1993, pp. 39-43. Table 2 has remained essentially the same ever since, though a fourth table has been added: for the current Global Mission section see *ASR*, new series, 2 (2020): 100-05.

<sup>31</sup> Gary Krause, "Adventism among the world religions", *JAMS*, 6:2 (2010), 100.

<sup>32</sup> Schantz was called to direct the "Center for Islamic Studies" in the spring of 1989: GCC Spring Meeting, April 13, 1989, GCC Minutes, p. 89-159. By the autumn of the year it was titled the "Global Center for Islamic

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Studies” and was a separate institution: GCC meeting, Oct. 12, 1989, GCC Minutes, p. 89-622; *YB 1990*, p. 26.

<sup>33</sup> *YB 1994*, p. 24; *YB 1996*, p. 27; *YB 2000*, p. 27. And see Krause, “Adventism among the world religions”, 100–03 on the early history of the Buddhist, Islamic, and Jewish Study Centers.

<sup>34</sup> We are grateful to our colleagues in the Office of Adventist Mission for confirming that Global Mission Pioneers were introduced in 1993. They are first listed in the *YB* under Global Mission three years later: *YB 1994*, p. 27. The first time they were formally referenced in executive committee records proceedings was in Matthew Bediako’s Secretary’s Report of 2001: Annual Council, Sept. 26, 2001, GCC Minutes, p. 01-66.

<sup>35</sup> Krause, “Adventism among the world religions”, p. 94.

<sup>36</sup> W. Kuhn, “Adventist theological-missiology: Contextualization in mission and ministry”, *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 27 (2016), 186–87; Krause, “Adventism among the world religions”, p. 94.

<sup>37</sup> The next two paragraphs are based partly on the recollections of members of GMIC members of the late 1990s and the 2000s.

<sup>38</sup> Papers presented to the GMIC and the Recommendations and Statements it approved in its early years can be found in Bruce L. Bauer (ed.), *Adventist response to cross-cultural mission: Global Mission Issues Committee papers*, 2 vols., Andrews University Mission Studies, 3–4 (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Department of World Mission, Andrews University), vol. I, 1998–2001 (2006), vol. II, 2002–2005 (2007).

<sup>39</sup> For 10/40 Window countries as defined by the General Conference Mission Board, see the map in *YB 2021*, p. 450.

<sup>40</sup> *General Conference Working Policy*, A 20, “Roadmap for Mission”; it first appears in the 2009–10 edition. See A 20 15, no. 3: “contextualization must be faithful to the Scriptures, guided by the Spirit, and relevant to the host culture” (p. 61 in the 2020–2021 edition). The “Roadmap” was approved by the 2009 Annual Council: meeting of Oct. 13, 2009, GCC Minutes, pp. 09-364–370; for the role of GMIC in helping to produce the document, we draw on the insights of committee members during the 2005–10 quinquennium. On “faithful contextualization” and what it involves, see the insightful discussion by Gorden R. Doss,



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*Introduction to Adventist mission* (Silver Spring, Md./ Berrien Springs, Mich.: Institute of World Mission, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists/Department of World Mission, Andrews University, 2018), pp. 218–21.

<sup>41</sup> GC ADCOM meeting, Sept. 7, 2010, ADCOM Minutes, p. 10-242, GC Ar., RG 2, box D 12 35.

<sup>42</sup> Sources are in nn. 27–28, above.

<sup>43</sup> The committee was created in Feb. 1994; the following month, a Director of Mission Awareness was appointed: GC ADCOM, meetings of Feb. 1 and March 1, 1994, ADCOM Minutes, pp. 94-28, 29, and 94-40, GC Ar., RG 2, box MIN 10. The director was elected by the GCC at Spring Meeting: March 30, 1994, GCC Minutes, p. 94-28. The Office of Mission Awareness is not listed in the *Yearbook* under that name until the year it was merged with Global Mission: *YB 2005*, p. 19.

<sup>44</sup> We are indebted to our colleague Gary Krause for discussion of this point.

<sup>45</sup> “General Conference Mission Board Proposal”, voted by the 2010 Annual Council, Oct. 12, p.m., 2010, *sub* “Statement of the Challenge”, point 2(a) and *sub* “Goals of Reorganization”, point 1(e), in GCC Minutes, pp. 10-290, 291.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, points 4 and 5.

<sup>47</sup> See Kuhn, “Adventist theological-missiology”, p. 180; Ng, “Mission on autopilot”; and Marcelo Dias and Wagner Kuhn, “Adventist mission: From awareness to engagement — Part 2,” *Ministry*, 87:9 (2015), 23–26.

<sup>48</sup> Ng, “Mission on autopilot”, p. 221.

<sup>49</sup> “About Us”, GC Secretariat website: <https://secretariat.adventist.org/about/>.

<sup>50</sup> In fulfilling these functions, secretaries at all levels of church structure are supported by a suite of ASTR websites: <https://adventistdirectory.org>, <https://www.adventiststatistics.org>, <https://www.adventistyearbook.org>.

<sup>51</sup> Ng, Transportation and International Personnel Service file, GC Ar., RG 31, file no. 91372; *YB 2006*, p. 21; *YB 2007*, p. 19; Zanita Fletcher,

## Chapter Seven

“Adventures in ministry: The life of G. T. Ng”, *Adventist World*, April 2, 2021: <https://www.adventistworld.org/adventures-in-ministry-the-life-of-g-t-ng>.

<sup>52</sup> Trecartin’s career is detailed in his IDE file: GC Ar., RG 21, file 38332.

<sup>53</sup> See proposal to General Conference & Division Officers meeting, Oct. 6, 2010, minutes in GC ADCOM Minutes, pp. 10-1023–30, GC Ar., RG 2, box D 12 35. As per n. 45, above, the proposal was approved by Annual Council: Oct. 12, p.m., 2010, GCC Minutes pp. 10-290–97.

<sup>54</sup> Annual Council, Oct. 12, 2010, p.m., GCC Minutes pp. 10-293, 297–99.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10-293, 300–01.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10-293, 302–04.

<sup>57</sup> “It’s Time! Refocusing Adventist urban mission for the 21st century”, Silver Spring, Md., Sept. 27–Oct. 1, 2013.

<sup>58</sup> “It’s Time—The urgency of urban mission: Plans for mission to the cities”, Annual Council, Oct. 15, 2013, GCC Minutes, pp. 13-115–122.

<sup>59</sup> Annual Council, Oct. 13, 2014, GCC Minutes, pp. 14-115, 116.

<sup>60</sup> GCC meeting of June 28, 2005, and 2010 Annual Council: Oct. 12, p.m., and 13, a.m., 2010, GCC Minutes pp. 05-123, 10-294, 295, 10-305.

<sup>61</sup> Annual Council 2012, Oct. 14, p.m., 2012, GCC Minutes, p. 12-110.

<sup>62</sup> GC ADCOM, Sept. 24, 2013, ADCOM Minutes p. 13-363, GC Ar., RG 2, box D 12 35.

<sup>63</sup> The change in title to ASTR, and associated closure of the Office of Assessment and Program Effectiveness and transfer of its research function to what became ASTR, was approved by GC ADCOM, June 14, 2011, ADCOM minutes, pp. 11-156, 157, GC Ar., RG 2, box D 12 35. On the change and the research consequently done by ASTR see Galina Stele and D. J. B. Trim, “ASTR, AHSRA, and new horizons for Adventist human-subject research”, in Petr Činčala (ed.), *A fresh look at denominational research: Role, impact, and scope* (Lincoln, Nebr.: AdventSource, for Institute of Church Ministry, 2018), pp. 55–62. For the *Encyclopedia*, see <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org>.

## The Third Phase of Secretariat

<sup>64</sup> The funding was appropriated by the 2012 Spring Meeting: April 18, 2012, a.m., GCC Minutes, pp. 12-85, 86.

<sup>65</sup> Officially announced at the 2017 Annual Council (Annual Council, Oct. 8, 2017, GCC Minutes, p. 17-86) and promoted on the *Review's* website ("Adventist Church launches new mission website", Oct. 10, 2017), VividFaith is envisioned as using new and modern ways to connect people around the globe with mission opportunities, from volunteer service to full-time employment. As of this writing, the initiative's website (<https://vividfaith.com/>) has not launched officially, but it is operational and has been in its beta testing phase since June 2020. VividFaith also has an active presence on social media, including Twitter (@vividfaith), Facebook (@myvividfaith), and Instagram (@vividfaithliving), vital for reaching potential new missionaries. Fylvia Kline was appointed manager of VividFaith on Aug. 5, 2018.

<sup>66</sup> If one compares the *Yearbooks* from this year and sixty years ago, one finds that in 1961 there were six associate secretaries (*YB 1961*, p. 12) and six in 2021 (*YB 2021*, p. 23), but one of the latter directs the Office of Adventist Mission (which, as we have seen, is a relatively recent addition) and so there are only five associate secretaries currently doing the work done by six in 1961, despite the fact that in the last sixty years, the total number of unions, conferences and missions has grown from 430 in 1960 to 853 in 2020 (*ASR 2020*, p. 109).

<sup>67</sup> Oct. 12, p.m., 2010: GCC Minutes, p. 10-291, point 2(c). For the creation of the missionary care program, see report to GC Mission Family Strategic Planning Advisory, Aug. 21-22, 2018, meeting minutes pp. 8-19, GC Ar., RG 21, Miscellaneous Files.

<sup>68</sup> See "Mission Unusual" reports to GC Mission Board, Oct. 5, 2018 and Oct. 9, 2019, in Mission Board minutes, GC Ar., RG 7, pp. 18-40, 41 and 19-32, 33.



## CONCLUSION

### Aiming at the Whole World

#### I

In 1918, GC President Arthur Daniells recommended to delegates to that year's General Conference Session: "That we immediately enter upon a larger, stronger, and far more enthusiastic campaign in behalf of what we call mission fields." In a speech already quoted in Chapter Five (pp. 150–51) he concluded: "We aim at nothing less than the whole world. This Conference should lay plans for more rapid strides and for mightier achievements." These words of one of Adventist history's greatest mission advocates and one of its first mission strategists not only supply this book's title but also its argument. Speaking now not as historians so much as church members, eager to see this movement finish its historic mission of "telling to the world" the messages of the angels of Revelation 14, we believe it is veritably time for the Adventist Church to "lay plans for more rapid strides and for mightier achievements." We hope that Adventist readers, having reached this point, will agree.

Some might wonder: Why? After all, Seventh-day Adventist Church membership has risen throughout its history, faster than the world's population (Table 2, p. 246).<sup>2</sup> However, as one church leader cautions: "There are more people on earth today who are not Adventists than there were a hundred years ago."<sup>3</sup> While as a church we have grounds for satisfaction about perpetual growth, there is no room for complacency, for not only is the rate of global growth beginning to plateau,<sup>4</sup> but there are also in any case billions

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**Table III. Seventh-day Adventist Global Membership and  
Estimated Global Population, Dec. 31, 1870–Dec. 31, 2020<sup>5</sup>**

Year	Reported Global Church Membership	Estimated Global Population (billions)	Estimated Unreached Population (billions)
End 1870	5,440	1.360	1.3599
End 1880	15,570	1.443	1.4429
End 1890	29,711	1.532	1.5319
End 1900	75,767	1.628	1.6279
End 1910	104,526	1.74	1.7398
End 1920	185,450	1.861	1.8608
End 1930	314,253	2.070	2.0696
End 1940	504,752	2.296	2.2956
End 1950	756,812	2.520	2.5192
End 1960	1,245,125	3.022	3.0207
End 1970	2,051,864	3.698	3.6959
End 1980	3,480,518	4.414	4.4105
End 1990	6,694,880	5.321	5.3143
End 2000	11,687,239	6.067	6.0553
End 2010	16,923,239	6.892	6.8751
End 2020	21,723,992	7.800	7.7782

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unaware of the Adventist message, as the table on the facing page shows. We therefore endorse these other words of Daniells, spoken to the 1922 Session (quoted above, p. 151): "This is the . . . hour in the history of the world [and] our history . . . for a mighty forward movement in non-Christian lands". As we showed in Chapter Five, church leaders of the era agreed with Daniells; consequently, Adventists *did* make "a mighty forward movement", indeed a whole series of forward movements. But as we have also seen, in the last fifty years the Adventist Church came to focus more on the "Christian lands". As a result of the Global Mission initiative, described in Chapter Seven (pp. 224 - 27), there *has* been "forward movement" in the last thirty years in the non-Christian countries of the 10/40 Window, and yet that movement has not matched the progress made in the rest of the world; but this reflects the fact that the vast majority of the Church's mission resources continued to go toward the rest of the world.<sup>6</sup>

It is often said that history repeats itself; whether or not this is sometimes true, Daniells's words are no less true today than they were a hundred years ago. Yet we have reached that conclusion not through mere reminiscence, nor idealization of the past, nor any thought repetition of what we as Adventists might believe always to have been true, but rather through statistical and documentary analysis of the trends in the Adventist mission enterprise over the past century.

## II

The story, and mission, of Adventism has been and remains that of enlightening the world with the "everlasting gospel", the story of sharing good news for all who receive it among those "that dwell on the earth" from "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Rev 14:6 KJV). This book has taken a different approach

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to telling this story, however, from that of previous Adventist historians. It has not focused on the sublimity of theology, nor dwelt on the impressive growth of membership and infrastructure (schools and medical institutions) now seen in certain regions of the world. Rather, this book has set out to accomplish something unique amongst Adventist historiography, and that is to focus on just *how* the Adventist church expanded as systematically and *globally* as it did, a story seen from an administrative perspective, primarily through the lens of the GC Secretariat. It is thus the story of how the Adventist foreign missionary enterprise was organized as such, and it is accompanied by the most complete overview of statistics yet published on this subject.

What we have seen in this study is that, at the moment, the story has not yet reached its climax. To borrow a New Testament metaphor (2 Tim. 4:7, cf. 1 Cor. 9:24–26, Gal. 5:7, Heb. 12:1), the race is not yet run, we have not yet finished the course, and the Church is not yet even close to a victory lap. The data (see Chapters One and Two) and, therefore, the conclusions of this book point us toward a different goal than resting on our laurels. To the contrary, the data of this book suggests a call to action—more pointedly, an *urgent* call to *change course*, and to embrace many elements of an earlier mission-focused vision, one promoted by church leaders of the past, not least Daniells, Spicer, and their immediate successors.

The Adventist Church, to be sure, has achieved an impressive presence around the globe, but we as a body have not reached all corners of it. Numerous cities of one million inhabitants or more have no significant Adventist presence—or no presence at all. The sobering truth we face is that, while the percentage of the world's population that is Adventist has increased since our inception, the *quantity* of people in the world unaware of the Three Angels' Messages has also grown and is *greater* today than a century ago. Yet, despite these facts, both the actual *number* of cross-cultural missionaries engaged in mission to unreached peoples, and the



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**proportion** of church membership that they represent, have fallen precipitously.

Are we as a movement prepared to face both the historical lessons and what our own statistics currently indicate about our missionary enterprise, its spirit and effectiveness? Returning to the words of Daniells, he reminded his audience, "My brethren, we must look this problem squarely in the face." If "[t]he great majority of the nations, kindreds, and tongues to whom we are commanded to proclaim our Lord's last message of mercy and warning, are . . . ever [to be] rescued, it must be done by the church in the homeland" (quoted above, p. 151). Just what a "homeland" or "home field" is has never been static; indeed, a distinctive part of the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is how the definition of "home fields" has been dynamic, and an ever widening category, so that Brazil, Kenya, Mexico, the Philippines—countries that not that long ago were still mission fields—are, in effect, now home fields, sending missionaries to other parts of the world.

Yet, this success of the missionary enterprise should not blind us to the fact that, again, Daniells's words have never been truer wherever and whatever the homelands are, the burden of mission will fall on church members living in them. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that missionaries are disproportionately still drawn from the Global North—and, for various reasons, including educational opportunities, that is likely to remain true in the near future. Given the responsibility that lies on "home fields", the traditional homelands among them, the question, then, is how can we best return our Church to its globally focused missionary spirit?

While every Christian is called by God personally to participate individually in the great mission outlined in Revelation 14, the Seventh-day Adventist pioneers soon realized that organization was essential, for several different reasons. Some of these reasons involved theological cohesion, but perhaps the most

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important reason for organizing soon became evident in the success early Adventist evangelists had in spreading the message. This inspired enthusiasm for doing more, including coordination of those undertaking missionary work. The evolution of the appropriate forms of organization that might facilitate a wider expansion is an important part of what this study has uncovered. But they developed slowly and in the face of inhibitions about “foreign” mission work that we perceive as a recurrent temptation to the Church in its various home fields.

After the Adventist Church had established itself to some degree in various places throughout the United States (the first “homeland”), it overcame theological misunderstandings and natural apprehensions, and sent missionaries to Europe—the literal homeland of many early Seventh-day Adventists who were immigrants to the United States. Gradually, we see God prompting the Church to go into “the regions beyond”, to farther-flung fields inhabited by people of radically different cultures and religious beliefs. However, it won acceptance only slowly. For example, in 1898, Ellen G. White wrote that “the Lord has said, ‘This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come’ (Matthew 24:14).” Yet she then added that “unbelief has kept the work centered in a few places, and the message has not advanced as it should.”<sup>7</sup> It would indeed be painful if history were to repeat itself to the Church’s embarrassment.

As we showed in Chapters Three–Six, after the 1901–1903 reorganization, initiated by church leaders who had worked closely with Ellen White and *were* willing to aim at widespread expansion as she urged, there was an urgent search to identify the *optimal* form of organization for our desired purpose of evangelizing the world. Church leaders embraced the use of political and social data, statistics, and other strategic information, as well as theology, in their planning and decision-making. They made choices that had

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a ripple effect on Adventist culture and their example was followed at other levels of denominational structure. The shift in emphasis within the GC Headquarters, from the administration of the home fields, to the facilitation and management of the flow of resources and missionaries from home fields into *appropriate* foreign fields, revolutionized and energized the Adventist mission enterprise.

Who oversaw the massive collective endeavor resulting from the deliberate actions taken by church leaders in that era? The General Conference Secretariat did, and to great effect, especially during the first seven decades of the twentieth century. During most of this “golden age” of Adventist mission, the number of missionaries sent out *and* their ratio to homeland members were both high. The tremendous geographic expansion of the Adventist Church to a near-global presence was the result. It is from this era that many, if not all, the Church’s most famous missionary stories come, stories which demonstrate the Church’s success in achieving a presence throughout most of the world.

However, what can certainly be described as success did not guarantee perpetual success. The processes and structures that facilitated that success may, over time, need to be evaluated to find what continues to work and what does not. Without evaluation and self-reflection, it is easy for any individual, let alone an entire, growing, active organization to drift off course. If Adventists as a body do not analyze the methods, which, in the past, led to much success and evaluate them for their potential for success *now*, they risk the future success of that cause for which so much has been sacrificed. We do not propose simply turning the clock back. But to ignore the trends detailed in this book also entails the risk that the successes of the past lead to our future failure. Were Adventists to ignore their past history, then they would, as Ellen G. White suggests, have much reason to fear for the future.<sup>8</sup> What history shows (see Chapters Two and Seven) is that, after 1970, the GC Secretariat came to manage fewer and fewer missionaries. Success

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truly did not lead to perpetual success. Decline can be attributed in part to cultural changes both in the various home fields and in the mission fields, but at the same time, it is partly also traceable to other factors.

These included the bureaucratization of Secretariat, largely in order to manage a much larger global infrastructure—but not a larger *missionary* infrastructure. Another factor was probably the changing nature of what it was missionaries typically *did*. This led to a shift in Secretariat's focus, as more and more missionaries came to serve in larger medical institutions and in bureaucratic or technical support positions in what we may call “established” foreign fields. Fewer and fewer worked in foreign fields with a less established Adventist presence or did work that directly connected with outreach.

After some time, this reality began to impact the home fields' view of what it is missionaries did and do. When they return to their homelands, stories about “tech support” do not inspire the same kind of urgency as do stories of lives transformed by Christ and His gospel, shared personally by the returned missionary. A diminution of support in homelands was the natural outcome.

The data of the past century necessitates a response by the church leaders and church members of the twenty-first century. Perhaps another shift in the focus of the GC headquarters, and specifically of the GC Secretariat—one akin to that which took place 120 years ago—may be required to fully reignite the engine of the Adventist Church's mission enterprise. Such a focus on expanding the boundaries of mission is one that the Church had in the past, and thus can return to again. If it is to be true to its theological rhetoric, and to its own heritage, the Seventh-day Adventist Church cannot rest satisfied with attaining a nearly global presence, or be focused on building up where it already has a strong presence. Rather, the Church must press on to achieving “the whole world”.

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We believe, as did Ellen White, Arthur Daniells, and William Spicer, among others, that the goal of evangelizing the world, while apparently overwhelming, *is possible*. But the accomplishment of this daunting objective, originally called for by Christ Himself, requires the Adventist Church to revive its historic emphasis on data-driven planning and relevant organization for cross-cultural mission, in ways applicable to our postmodern world. Only with such a renewed focus will the Church again be pushing, as Ellen G. White admonished, towards a time “when the members of the church of God do their appointed work in the needy fields at home *and abroad*, in fulfillment of the gospel commission”; when that happens, “the *whole world* will soon be warned and the Lord Jesus will return to this earth with power and great glory”.<sup>9</sup>

It is surely significant that Ellen White, at the end of her life, was reflecting on and choosing to publicly endorse the value of planning, which is an important part of the story told in this book. Working with her secretaries, in what turned out to be the last year of her life, to finalize the text of *Prophets and Kings* (published posthumously), Ellen White chose to take, reutilize, and republish counsel about the value of planning first published in the *Signs of the Times* in 1883 in a reflection on Nehemiah. She had already republished the 1883 article once, in 1904, selecting that twenty-one-year-old article in response to a request from *Southern Watchman* for an article—and she did so literally just as A. G. Daniells was beginning publicly to prioritize data-driven planning. At the end of her life, she chose to republish her words regarding Nehemiah for a new generation of Adventists; they were revised and polished, but the essential message of 1883 and 1904 was preserved: “Careful consideration and well-matured plans are as essential to the success of sacred enterprises today as in the time of Nehemiah.”<sup>10</sup> It is arguably a message of enduring relevance. As we can now say, with the advantage of hindsight, as well as historical insight, it is only when such careful planning is fully

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united with the Church's vision to evangelize the world that the work of realizing the Great Commission progresses most rapidly.

### III

Once it was relatively easy to make decisions about where to send missionaries and about the work they did once they got there. Missionaries of all Christian traditions, including Adventists, took picture rolls and magic lantern shows into what they thought of as wilderness, to convert people they often patronizingly called savages. Today it is the descendants of so-called savages who are likely to be sending their best and brightest as missionaries to the worldly-wise, overly sophisticated secular nations of what was once Christendom. Today, "cross-cultural" does not necessarily mean "North America to Africa"; often it means the opposite.

Some might think it inevitable that most missionaries are now professors, managers, doctors, information technologists, and other technical specialists, because expertise in higher education, in high-tech medicine and nursing, in accounting, information technology, and management, is what Adventism in the Global South still *needs* but cannot always supply from its own resources, and which the Global North *can* provide. Medicalization and bureaucratization, by this reckoning, are simply outcomes of the inescapable workings of the laws of supply and demand. But there *are* still parts of the world where local Adventist communities cannot supply the pastors and evangelists needed to proclaim the gospel, or where clinics, in which medical personnel get personal with local people, would be cost-effective and socially appropriate ways of helping people to achieve good health.

Perhaps the problem is one of priorities. It may be that we need to have a greater formal differentiation between essentially reached areas and mission fields. In the former, ministry is to

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nurture the existing church and to support its institutions—this is a legitimate use of funds for the Church in that region, but surely does not require world Church resources, which could then be reserved for supporting work in the latter, where the church is *not* yet built up. Mission fields lack the resources—whether human or financial—to evangelize their own territory. This is true of parts of Western Europe and West Africa; it is true across North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia; in much of East Asia; and in parts of Southern Asia and Southeast Asia. In each case, the Church's presence is small enough, and the cultural challenges and financial (and/or legal) constraints it faces are significant enough, that it struggles to make breakthroughs. For those regions, the assistance offered by the Church worldwide will be more than merely useful or offering a value-added element; it is *needed* for progress to be made.

Should world Church financial resources be deployed where there are sufficient members (and sufficient funds, at least by local cost-of-living-standards) to preach, teach, and make disciples? Or ought these resources instead to be committed to those areas of the world where Adventists lack the critical mass to successfully evangelize? To adapt Gottfried Oosterwal's words, spoken to the Secretariat staff in 1983 (above, p. 64), Adventists "need to [have a greater] burden . . . to do pioneer missionary work and pioneer evangelism"—and this should be encouraged by Church leaders, especially in GC Secretariat, among counterparts at other levels of church structure.

The chief conclusion of this study is that, in the forty years or so following c.1970, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the "Great Second Advent Movement", departed from the original goals and aspirations of its collective mission project. While a reorientation has begun in the last ten years, it is not clear that it has turned the tide definitively. Change is natural and inevitable, but there is good reason to regret the shift that has taken place. The changes, on the

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whole, were inimical both to the original goals of Seventh-day Adventist mission and to current aspirations to reach the world. Yet the changes crept in, gradually, without church leaders ever making a conscious choice between different options. Even so, it cannot be said that the changes took church leaders completely unawares.

As we saw in Chapter Two (pp. 60–64), at various times, members of Secretariat explicitly recognized that the church's missionary workforce was shifting from a primarily soul-winning one to a primarily technical one, much of it located in countries that already had a significant Adventist presence, much of it dedicated largely to maintaining institutions that in many cases were themselves corporately ever more uncertain about how they related to the denomination's soul-winning objectives. Although Secretariat periodically identified what was happening, there seem to have been too few opportunities for stepping back and thinking in big-picture terms, or for asking almost philosophical questions about "what are we doing". Instead, the constant operational and administrative needs to respond to calls for employees from outside North America and to advise about policy and governance left insufficient time for reflection. The tyranny of the now and the urgent pushed aside long-term thinking and planning, and so Secretariat simply dealt with the business at hand—it ended up, as G. T. Ng characterized it in 2010, "on autopilot" (above, p. 223).

Decisions are made by omission as well as by commission and in effect, Adventist church leaders from around the world joined collectively in just such a decision in the last half century, albeit one reached incrementally, which helps to explain why a part of the church's work as integral to Adventist identity as the mission enterprise could be relegated. It suffered a thousand cuts, salami slicing rather than a stab to the heart, as a myriad of small decisions were made, with the best of intentions, the long-term implications of which remained unperceived at the time or for years after. Yet,



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having analyzed the history, with hindsight, we can see that the effect was the same as if a purposeful decision to downgrade cross-cultural mission to unreached and under-reached people groups had in fact been taken in 1975, 1990, or 2000.

Our purpose in this book is not to place blame. Church leaders did the best they could with the information they had available at the time. Instead, having set out the history, we seek to highlight the end result—and to challenge the Adventist Church collectively to head in a different direction, one more in tune with its history. We recognize the difficulties an organization as large as the global Seventh-day Adventist Church faces in changing course. But it is said that the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

If the voyage Adventists have collectively been on for 160 years is to end in the home port we have so long had in sight, and to do so sooner rather than later, then the denomination needs to continue to address the missteps of the past, carrying on the reorientation begun in the last decade. It needs to keep moving in a different direction, slowly at first, perhaps, but determinedly, and gradually quickening the pace.

To maintain that momentum, many steps, rather than just one, will in fact be required. One would be a serious discussion among church leaders about how to get back closer to the vision of their predecessors of a century and more ago, who ambitiously adopted a whole-world approach to mission, something rational minds might have deemed crazy; but the Church's forefathers and foremothers thought all things possible by faith. Questions which could be considered include the place of the organization. In 1901–1903 the Adventist Church radically restructured in order to prioritize mission; there was willingness to do whatever it took. The structure put in place nearly 120 years ago may in fact still be highly suitable for facilitating mission—the problem may be with the way it is used rather than the structure itself. But perhaps there are ways it could be adapted to become even more effective. The

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role of the Mission Board, created in 2010, might be reconsidered; one step would be to strengthen its role in planning strategically for mission expansion. Further, the issues identified in 2010 about the way missionaries are managed (above, p. 228) have not yet been fully addressed. Systems pioneered in Secretariat more than a century ago, which served the Church wonderfully well, could be streamlined and made more efficient by use of twenty-first-century technologies and concepts.

While the conclusions of this book primarily point toward the need for the GC Secretariat itself to continue its return toward the focus on mission it had in the first half of the twentieth century (a point to which we will return shortly), an important step will be to acknowledge that the ability of Secretariat to reignite a passion for cross-cultural mission to the many unreached and under-reached areas around the world depends on the support and cooperation of the Adventist Church's world divisions. Unfortunately, and for many reasons, some of the oldest divisions (the original "home fields"), primarily in the Global North, along with some divisions that are now strongholds of the Church, have become inward looking. Perhaps church leaders in such regions have felt that, with the completion of our "structural coverage" of the globe, their attention should focus solely on local evangelism. One might also suggest that the general membership in such regions may have also lost their focus on the needs of the rest of the world, following years of glowing reports of missional success that have not always done justice to the difficulties the Church faces in mission in the 10/40 Window region and elsewhere.

However, there is an outstanding example that illustrates a lay awakening that is occurring. In the South American Division, an initially lay/student-led congress, "I Will Go" (not to be confused with the GC's Strategic Plan for 2020–2025, which adopted the name of the student initiative, reflecting the GC leadership's own desire to highlight cross-cultural mission) began meeting annually

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in 2015. This was a “bottom up” rather than top-down initiative, arising at Universidad Adventista del Plata, the church’s university in Argentina; and in its early days it was driven by the university and the Argentine Union. It soon attracted, however, the support and counsel of their local division leadership, including that of Erton Köhler, then SAD president. It also had the support of GC Secretariat: Associate Secretary John H. Thomas (then director of AVS) was closely involved, and Secretary Ng was a supporter. The explicit purpose of the “I Will Go” conferences was to foster cross-cultural mission service, outside the SAD, among young people.<sup>11</sup> One hopes that this example will be emulated in other divisions.

We want to stress, however, that another important step—indeed a crucial one—will be to recognize the vital importance, in the historical expansion of the Adventist missionary enterprise, of the role of GC Secretariat as “mission control”. What should its role be in the twenty-first century? The administrative duties that Secretariat has taken on in the last forty years are important, but we conclude from this history that *only* at the world headquarters can planning that is truly strategic—planning for mission advances of the kind that characterized the early and mid-twentieth-century Adventist Church—take place.

At the world headquarters, moreover, there is an unparalleled concentration of mission expertise in the “Mission Family” because of its entities’ longstanding responsibilities for recruiting, training, sending, sustaining, supporting and returning missionary appointees and international service employees; for planning and resourcing global church planting; and for promoting mission and fostering mission-giving around the world. The GC Secretariat is the logical location for “mission control”, as it was for much of our history. And mission needs to be the Secretariat’s top priority—as it was for much of our history.

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### IV

If the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to make significant inroads in countries dominated by Buddhism, the East Asian religions and traditions, Hinduism, Islam, and postmodernity, then, we believe, history suggests it needs to recapture the collective boldness and vision that characterized it in the early twentieth century. It needs to break out of the ruts it corporately fell into in the late twentieth century. Reviving the spirit and the vision will enable the Church to find new ways to increase the number of missionaries and be more relevant in the fulfillment of its mission in and among unreached territories and people groups.

We want to stress that renewing commitment to the spirit of Adventist leaders like Ellen and Willie White, Daniells, Spicer, and others, does not mean we should be doing "business as usual" or simply perpetuating structures and processes inherited from our forebears. The Seventh-day Adventist Church must continue to evaluate how it has done business in the past and keep what works while simultaneously seeking for new methods, new structures, and new strategies to tell "the old, old story" to the whole world.

Why must the Church do so? The analysis of the data points to an urgent need to put in place innovative, less bureaucratic systems, structures, and processes for mission and international, intercultural service, so that the Church can utilize members with a passion for mission as well as those with administrative skills or professional expertise, drawing them from everywhere, sending them everywhere they are needed. The Church needs, too, to keep scrutinizing the methodologies used by missionaries when in the field. Frontline missionaries are the best placed to innovate, based on their knowledge and experience of local contexts, but corporate missiological and organizational reflection on methods is needed, and new or adapted missional methodologies, when successful, should be shared with other missionaries, for they might be able

## Conclusion

to be applied (or adapted) more widely. Finally, the Church also needs to intensify and broaden the use of technology.

For all of these things to happen, there needs to be a central body: a nexus for internal communication within church structure, but also a body that communicates the vision of world Church leaders and helps to turn that vision into workers on the ground, whether ISEs, volunteers, tentmakers, “global mission pioneers”, or a new category of missionary that the Adventist Church has yet to create.

To underscore the points already made, such a central body exists and needs to be re-empowered: GC Secretariat. It is best positioned to identify global places of need and to channel global resources and willing people to those areas. It is best placed to review missional innovations and share good practice, and to develop or disseminate new technologies. The General Conference Secretariat should resume its historic role of shaping and directing the Seventh-day Adventist missionary enterprise.

By applying insights from history, that enterprise can be taken up with renewed passion, vigor, and success. Adventist mission must never be again be set to autopilot, for Adventists still aim at nothing less than the whole world.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the title of the classic narrative history by C. Mervyn Maxwell, *Tell it to the world: The story of Seventh-day Adventists* [1976], rev. edn. (Mountain View, Calif. & Oshawa, Ont.: Pacific Press, 1977).

<sup>2</sup> As well as Table 2, see D. J. B. Trim, “Adventist church-growth and mission since 1863: An historical-statistical analysis”, *JAMS*, 8:2 (2012),

## Conclusion

51–74 at 54–57.

<sup>3</sup> Associate Secretary Gary Krause, Director of the Office of Adventist Mission, quoted in Gina Wahlen, “100 years of mission giving: Making a world of difference,” *Adventist World—NAD*, 8:11 (Nov. 2012), 29.

<sup>4</sup> David Trim, “Mission challenges”, report to 2020 Annual Council: <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Statistics/Other/2020%20Annual%20Council%20Statistical%20Report.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Trim, “Adventist church-growth and mission since 1863”, Table 1, p. 53, updated with 2020 figures for both membership and population.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 65–71.

<sup>7</sup> Ellen G. White, *Manuscript releases*, vol. XIII (Hagerstown, Md.: RHPA, 1990), p. 395.

<sup>8</sup> “We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history”: *Life sketches of Ellen G. White* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1915), p. 196.

<sup>9</sup> Ellen G. White, *The acts of the apostles* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1911), p. 111 (emphasis added).

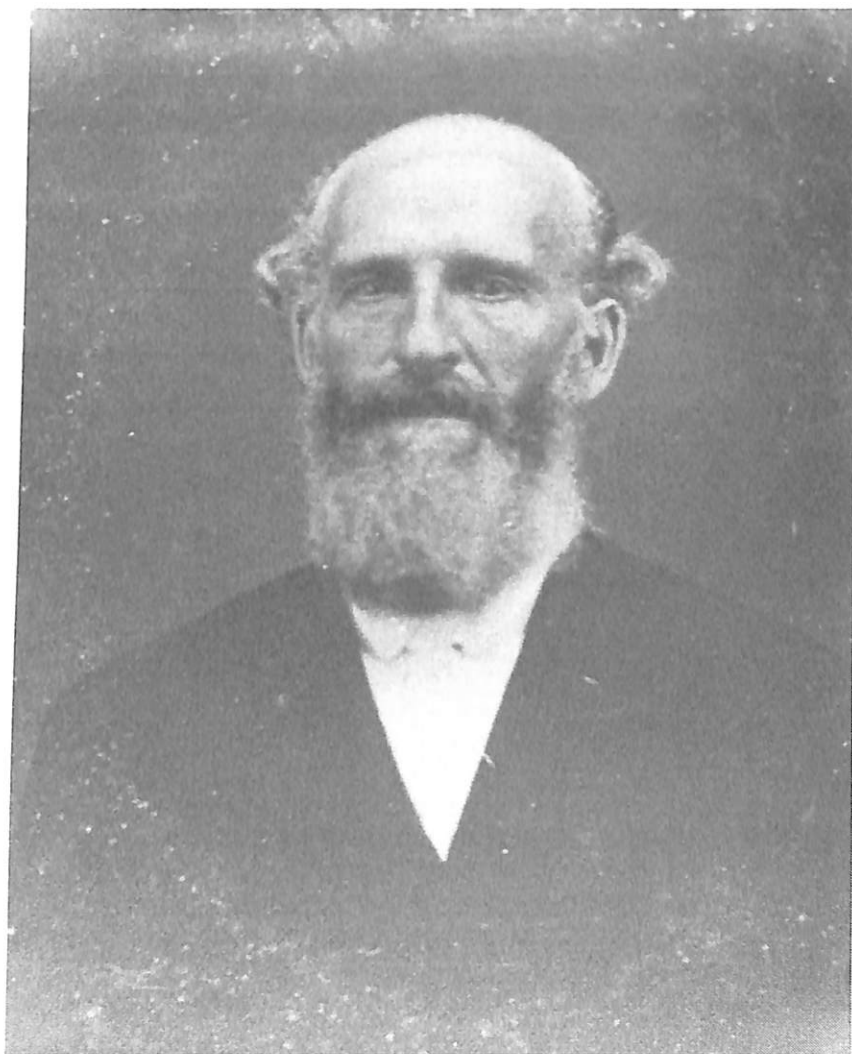
<sup>10</sup> E. G. White, “Nehemiah desires to restore Jerusalem”, *Signs of the Times*, 9:45 (Nov. 29, 1883), 529–30 at 530; E. G. White, “Prudence and Forethought”, *The Southern Watchman*, Mar. 15, 1904, at [https://egw.writings.org/?ref=en\\_SW.March.15.1904.par.2&para=489.812](https://egw.writings.org/?ref=en_SW.March.15.1904.par.2&para=489.812); Ellen G. White, *The story of patriarchs and kings* [1917] (Mountain View, Calif. & Oshawa, Ont.: Pacific Press, 1943), p. 634.

<sup>11</sup> Mariela Espejo, “‘I Will Go’ continues to foster Adventist volunteer service around the world”, *Adventist Review Online*, Oct. 2, 2019: [www.adventistreview.org/church-news/story14095-i-will-go-continues-to-foster-adventist-volunteer-service-around-the-world](http://www.adventistreview.org/church-news/story14095-i-will-go-continues-to-foster-adventist-volunteer-service-around-the-world). Ng attended the 2019 congress and praised it at a meeting of Mission Leadership Council; Thomas reported to the council about the several congresses he attended. We are obliged to Erton Köhler for sharing his memory of his perspective on the early days of “I Will Go”.

## Illustrations



1) L-R, Ferdinand Stahl (1874–1950), Joseph Westphal (1861–1949), and an unidentified man give medical aid to Aymara people at the Lake Titicaca Mission in 1911. This photo originally appeared in the *ARH*.



**2)** James White (1821—1881), Church co-founder seen here around 1872, pushed for better organization of the Church's mission work.

Courtesy: Ellen G. White Estate





**3) Mary Haskell (1812–1894)** was one of the women who organized the very first Vigilant Missionary Society in South Lancaster, Massachusetts.  
Courtesy: CAR



**5) Maria Huntley (1848–1890)**, seen here c.1883, was one of the key leaders in the General Tract and Missionary Society.  
Courtesy: Ellen G. White Estate



**4) Stephen N. Haskell (1834–1922)**, seen here in the 1880s, advocated for the creation of Tract and Missionary Societies in the 1870s and 1880s.  
Courtesy: GC Ar.



**6) John N. Andrews (1829–1883)**, seen here c.1870s, was the first American Adventist officially sent to a foreign field. He and his children, Mary and Charles, traveled to Switzerland in 1874.  
Courtesy: CAR



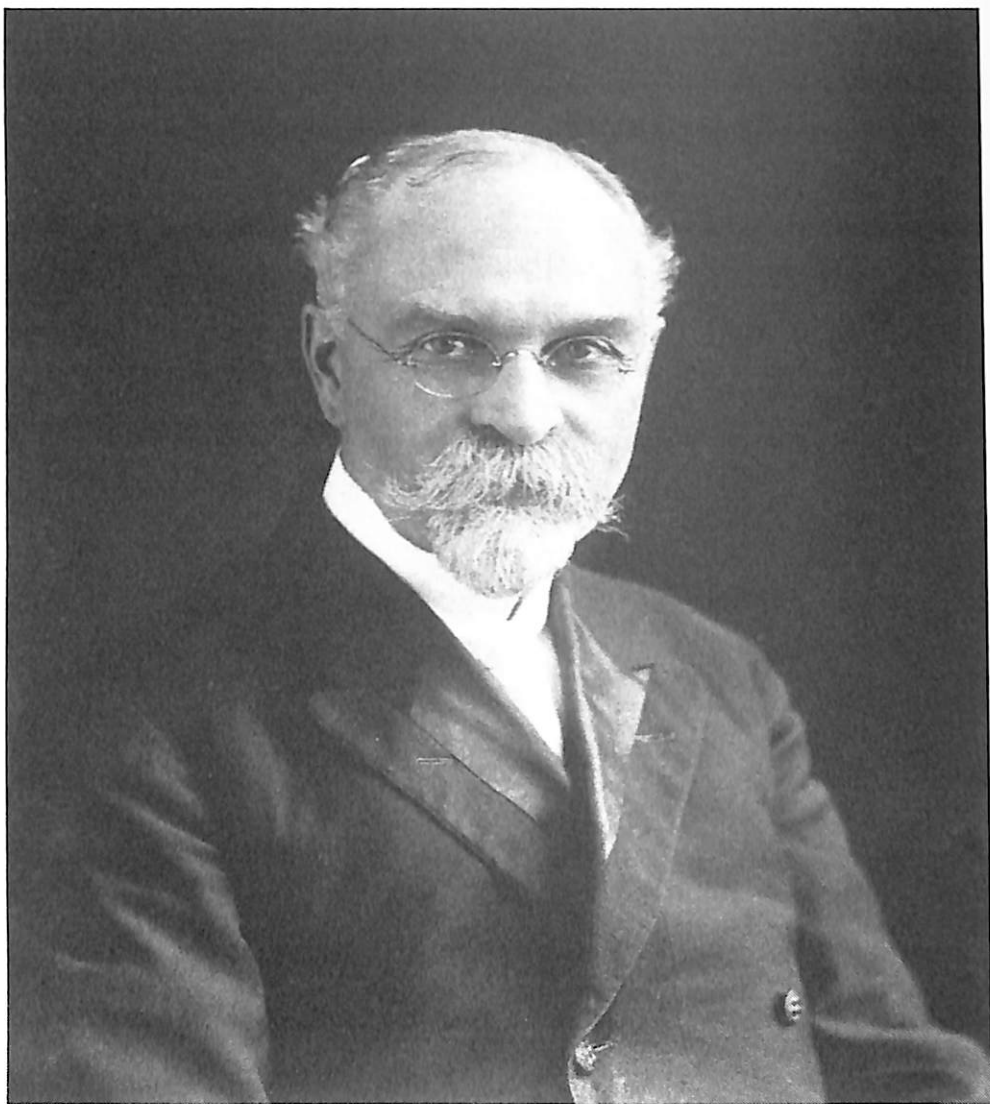
7) William Clarence White (1854–1937), seen here c.1880s, was the first Foreign Mission Secretary, serving in that role from 1887 to 1891, even though he did not have any overseas experience at the time.

Courtesy: Ellen G. White Estate



**8)** Ellen G. White (1827–1915), recently returned from Australia, addresses the delegates at the 1901 General Conference Session. It was at this Session that the Adventist Church's organizational structure was reorganized.

Courtesy: GC Ar.



**9)** Arthur G. Daniells (1858–1936), elected as GC President in 1901 and serving until 1922 (and seen here in a photo from the 1910s), led out in setting the strategic vision of the Adventist Church's global work.

Courtesy: GC Ar.



**10)** William A Spicer (1865—1952) was GC Secretary from 1903 through 1922, and GC President from 1922 to 1930. He is seen here in a photograph taken around the time he was elected as Secretary.  
Courtesy: RHPA Photograph Collection, GC Ar.



**11)** Irwin Evans (1862—1945) was GC Treasurer from 1903 to 1909.  
Courtesy: GC Ar.



**12)** Walter T. Knox (1858—1931) was elected as GC Treasurer in 1909 and served in that position until 1922.

Courtesy: RHPA Photograph Collection, GC Ar.



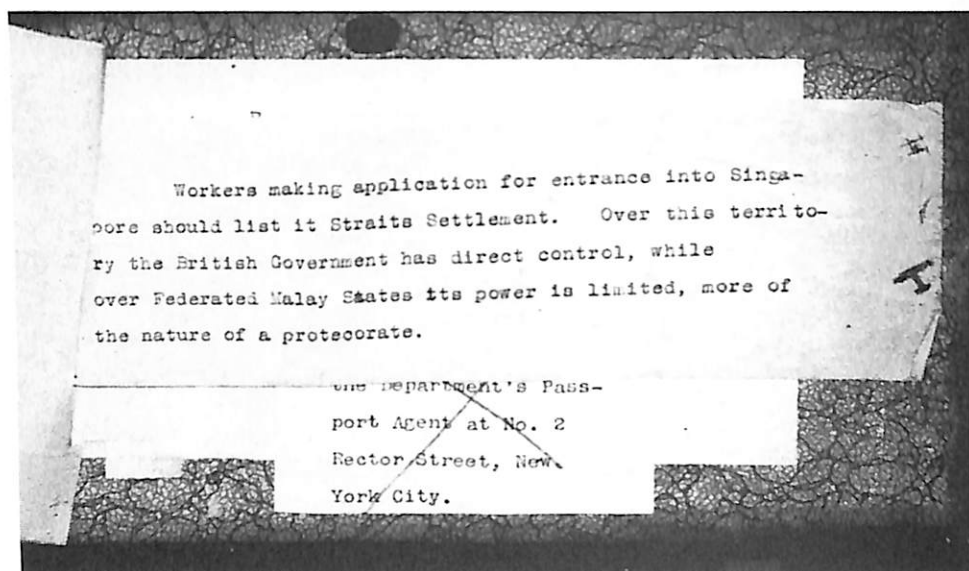
**13)** Tyler Bowen (1865—1955), seen here around 1928 with his wife Gertrude, served in various capacities in Secretariat beginning in 1906 and lasting until his retirement in 1941.

Courtesy: RHPA Photograph Collection, GC Ar.

NAME		1918	FIELD	Application Blanks for British Permits Sent	App. Blanks for Brit. Permits Sent Emb.	British Permit Received and sent Applicant
E. F. Peterson,	Ill.					
304 W. Allen St., Springfield,	Inoa Union					
J. S. James, C/o Pacific Union College						
St. Helena, Calif.	Asiatic					
Carl Weeks, C/o W. T. Weeks,	"					
Bowling Green, Ohio.	"					
E. E. Andrews,						
Takoma Park, D. C.	Jamice					
L. O. Shepard, W. S. Conn. Address.	India					
Trane Outlier, Hinsdale, Ill. San.	May 7					
Walter W. Murray & Wife, (Self and)	Salvador					
National City, San Diego, Cal. Paradise San.	May 13					
W. A. Spicer & Wife,	Australia					
Takoma Park, Md.	May 20					
E. Kern,	Australia					
Takoma Park, D. C.	India & Singapore					
Mrs. Elizabeth W. Martin,	Mexico					

14) As Office Secretary, Tyler Bowen (1865-1955) oversaw the complex process of obtaining visas and permits for Adventist missionaries and administrators traveling overseas. His tracking system fills three notebooks, full of mostly handwritten entries and notes, spanning 1917-1941. In this example from 1918, you can see Bowen tracking permits for Secretary Spicer's trip to Australia.

Courtesy: GC Ar.



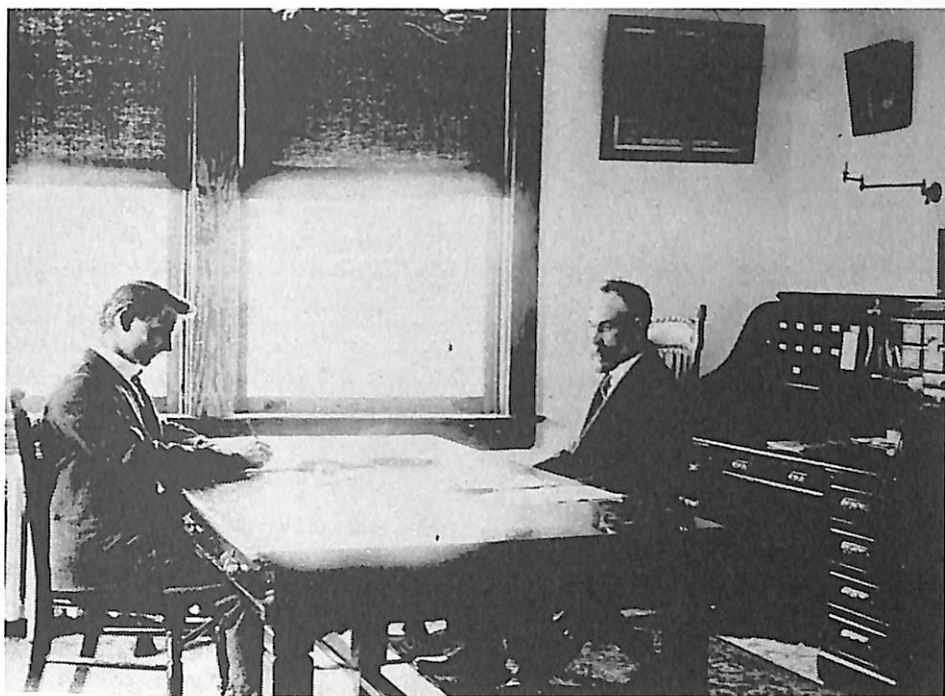
Workers making application for entrance into Singapore should list it Straits Settlement. Over this territory the British Government has direct control, while over Federated Malay States its power is limited, more of the nature of a protectorate.

~~the Department's Passport Agent at No. 2 Rector Street, New York City.~~

15) Tyler Bowen's notebooks also contain items pasted in, such as a list of British Consulates in the United States, updates from the American passport office, and, as you can see here, a reminder aimed at easing the approval of overseas workers' applications to enter Singapore.

Courtesy: GC Ar.





**16)** Seen in this photograph from 1906 with President Daniells (right), H. Edson Rogers (1867—1943) became the first Statistical Secretary in 1904, serving in that position until his retirement in 1941. His responsibilities eventually evolved into today's Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research.  
Courtesy: GC Ar.



**17)** John L. Shaw (1870—1952) was the first Assistant Secretary, later an Associate Secretary, and worked with T. E. Bowen for Secretary Spicer. Uniquely for a GC associate or assistant secretary, Shaw later became the GC Treasurer.

Courtesy: RHPA Photograph Collection, GC Ar.



**18)** Cecil K. Meyers (1887—1964) was Secretary from 1926 to 1933. He was the first General Conference Secretary to have been born outside the United States of America.

Courtesy: ARH



**19)** Milton E. Kern (1875—1961) was Secretary from 1933 to 1936.

Courtesy: RHPA Photograph Collection, GC Ar.



**20)** J. Lamar McElhany (1880—1959) led the Adventist Church as GC President during 1936 to 1950, steering the denomination through the Great Depression and World War II.

Courtesy: RHPA Photograph Collection, GC Ar.



**21)** Secretary E. D. Dick (1888—1977) seen here shortly after his re-election in 1941. Dick steered the Adventist Church's mission enterprise through the last half of the Great Depression and through World War II and set a bold agenda for evangelizing the Middle East.

Courtesy: RHPA Photograph Collection, GC Ar.



**22)** Denton E. Rebok (1897—1983) was Secretary from 1952 to 1954.  
Courtesy: GC Ar.



**23)** Henry T. Elliott (1888—1967) was Associate Secretary from 1933 to 1958, and the length of his career in Secretariat is a record.

He provided continuity in Secretariat from Kern's first term through the end of Beach's first term. Courtesy: RHPA Photograph Collection, GC Ar.



**24)** Walter R. Beach (1902–1993) was Secretary from 1954 to 1970. He instituted regular meetings within Secretariat and was deliberate about promoting overseas mission. Courtesy: RHPA Photograph Collection, GC Ar.



**25)** George D. Keough (1882–1971), seen here at the 1946 General Conference Session, was a mission innovator and pioneer missionary to the Middle East. Courtesy: GC Ar.



**26)** Gottfried Oosterwal (1930–2015) was an influential missiologist and trainer of Adventist missionaries, pictured here in the late 1960s or early 1970s. Courtesy of the Oosterwal family



**27)** Clyde O. Franz (1913–2017) was Secretary from 1970 to 1980. Courtesy: GC Ar.



**28)** G. Ralph Thompson was Secretary from 1980 to 2000. This image of him appeared in the July 10, 1990 issue of the *ARH*, when he was re-elected as Secretary.



**29)** Matthew Bediako, a Ghanaian, was the first African elected as an executive officer of the General Conference. He served from 2000 to 2010. Courtesy: GC Ar.



**30)** Rosa Banks was the first woman elected as a General Conference Associate Secretary on July 6, 2005.  
Courtesy: GC Ar.



**31)** G. T. Ng, the first Asian to serve as a General Conference executive officer, was Secretary from 2010 to 2021. During his term, several steps were taken to take Secretariat off “autopilot”.  
Courtesy: GC Ar.



**32)** Karen Porter was the first Assistant Secretary to be elected an Associate Secretary since the 1920s and only the second woman (elected July 10, 2014).  
Courtesy: GC Secretariat

## Appendix—Secretariat Office Holders

### General Conference Secretaries

Name	Title	Tenure
Uriah Smith	Secretary	1863–1873
Sidney Brownsberger	Secretary	1873–1874
Uriah Smith	Secretary	1874–1876
Charles W. Stone	Secretary	1876–1877
Uriah Smith	Secretary	1877–1881
A. B. Oyen	Secretary	1881–1883
Uriah Smith	Secretary	1883–1888
Dan T. Jones	Corresponding Secretary	1888–1891
Willard A. Colcord	Corresponding Secretary	1891–1893
Leroy T. Nicola	Corresponding Secretary	1893–1897
Lewis A. Hoopes	Secretary	1897–1901
Howard E. Osborne	Secretary	1901–1903
William A. Spicer	Secretary	1903–1922
Arthur G. Daniells	Secretary	1922–1926
Cecil K. Meyers	Secretary	1926–1933
Milton E. Kern	Secretary	1933–1936
Ernest D. Dick	Secretary	1936–1952
Denton E. Rebok	Secretary	1952–1954
Walter R. Beach	Secretary	1954–1970
Clyde O. Franz	Secretary	1970–1980
G. Ralph Thompson	Secretary	1980–2000
Matthew A. Bediako	Secretary	2000–2010
G. T. Ng	Secretary	2010–2021
Erton C. Köhler	Secretary	2021–

## General Conference Corresponding and Recording Secretaries

Name	Title	Tenure
Frederika H. Sisley	Corresponding Secretary	1883–1884
Minerva J. Chapman	Corresponding Secretary	1884–1887
W. H. Edwards	Recording Secretary	1887–1896
A. G. Adams	Recording Secretary	1896–1897

## Foreign Mission Secretaries/Secretaries of the Foreign Mission Board (FMB)

Name	Title	Tenure
William C. White	Mission Secretary	1887–1891
William A. Spicer	Secretary of the FMB	1891–1893
Francis M. Wilcox	Secretary of the FMB	1893–1897
Julius E. Jayne	Secretary of the FMB	1897–1901
William A. Spicer	Secretary of the FMB	1901–1903

## Home Mission Secretaries

Name	Title	Tenure
E. W. Farnsworth	Home Mission Secretary	1887 – 1888
George B. Starr	Home Mission Secretary	1888 – 1889
L. C. Chadwick	Home Mission Secretary	1889 – 1889

## Home Secretaries

Name	Title	Tenure
Estella Houser	Home Secretary	1903–1906
Tyler E. Bowen	Home Secretary	1906–1912



## **Assistant Secretaries**

Position created 1912; suspended 1926–1980

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Tenure</b>
Tyler E. Bowen	Assistant Secretary	1912–1915
John L. Shaw	Assistant Secretary	1915–1919
C. K. Meyers	Assistant Secretary	1920–1922
Malcolm N. Campbell	Assistant Secretary	1922–1923
Benjamin E. Beddoe	Assistant Secretary	1923–1926
Rowena Olson	Assistant Secretary	1981–1989
Eunice Rozema	Assistant Secretary	1981–1989
Elaine A. Robinson	Assistant Secretary	1989–2005
Dian R. Lawrence	Assistant Secretary	2005–2011
Karen J. Porter	Assistant Secretary	2011–2014
Lissy Park	Assistant Secretary	2015–

## **Office Secretaries/Secretariat Coordinator**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Tenure</b>
Tyler E. Bowen	Office Secretary	1915–1941
Roger Altman	Office Secretary	1941–1945
Arthur H. Roth	Coordinator (Secretariat)	1974–1979

## **General Conference Associate Secretaries**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Tenure</b>
John L. Shaw	Associate Secretary	1918–1922
C. K. Meyers	Associate Secretary	1922–1926
Benjamin E. Beddoe	Associate Secretary	1926–1930
E. Kotz	Associate Secretary	1926–1933

Milton E. Kern	Associate Secretary	1930–1933
A. W. Cormack	Associate Secretary	1933–1955
Henry T. Elliott	Associate Secretary	1933–1958
Thomas J. Michael	Associate Secretary	1941–1947
James I. Robison	Associate Secretary	1945–1958
Erwin E. Roenfelt	Associate Secretary	1946–1962
William P. Bradley	Associate Secretary	1946–1970
Norman W. Dunn	Associate Secretary	1947–1966
Roger Altman	Associate Secretary /	1951–1955
Assistant to the President		
Eldine W. Dunbar	Associate Secretary	1955–1966
Frank L. Peterson	Associate Secretary	1955–1962
Francis R. Millard	Associate Secretary	1958–1965
Duane S. Johnson	Associate Secretary	1962–1980
Albert F. Tarr	Associate Secretary	1962–1966
W. Duncan Eva	Associate Secretary	1965–1966
David H. Baasch	Associate Secretary	1966–1982
Robert R. Frame	Associate Secretary	1966–1970
Clyde O. Franz	Associate Secretary	1966–1970
A. Edwin Gibb	Associate Secretary	1966–1974
Donald W. Hunter	Associate Secretary	1966–1975
Harold D. Singleton	Associate Secretary	1966–1970
Lowell L. Bock	Associate Secretary	1970–1975
Charles E. Bradford	Associate Secretary	1970–1978
Bernard E. Seton	Associate Secretary	1970–1977
Roy F. Williams	Associate Secretary	1970–1985
J. William Bothe	Associate Secretary	1975–1985
Don A. Roth	Associate Secretary	1975–1990
Maurice T. Battle	Associate Secretary	1977–2000

Warren S. Banfield	Associate Secretary	1978–1980
Donald R. Christman	Associate Secretary	1980–1985
Charles D. Watson	Associate Secretary	1980–1990
Bob. E. Jacobs	Associate Secretary	1982–1985
Leo S. Ranzolin	Associate Secretary	1985–1990
Fred G. Thomas	Associate Secretary	1985–1986
Robert L. Woodfork	Associate Secretary	1985–1988
Samuel C. S. Young	Associate Secretary	1985–1990
Robert L. Dale	Associate Secretary	1987–1990
Meade C. Van Putten	Associate Secretary	1988–1990
Harold W. Baptiste	Associate Secretary	1990–2002
Larry W. Colburn	Associate Secretary	1990–2000
Mario Veloso	Associate Secretary	1990–2000
Ted N. C. Wilson	Associate Secretary	1990–1992
Gerald D. Karst	Associate Secretary	1992–1994
Lowell C. Cooper	Associate Secretary	1995–1998
D. Ronald Watts	Associate Secretary	1996–1997
Vernon B. Parmenter	Associate Secretary	1997–2008
Donald R. Sahly	Associate Secretary	1998–2000
Douglas Clayville	Associate Secretary	2000–2006
Agustin Galicia	Associate Secretary	2000–2015
Theodore T. Jones	Associate Secretary	2000–2005
Claude A. Sabot	Associate Secretary	2000–2010
Roscoe J. Howard III	Associate Secretary	2002–2008
Rosa T. Banks	Associate Secretary	2005–2015
G. T. Ng	Associate Secretary	2006–2010
Homer Trecartin	Associate Secretary	2008–2010
G. Alexander Bryant	Associate Secretary	2010–2020
Myron A. Iseminger	Associate Secretary	2010–2011

Gary D. Krause	Associate Secretary	2010–
John H. Thomas	Associate Secretary	2010–2020
Harald Wollan	Associate Secretary	2010–2015
Karen J. Porter	Associate Secretary	2014–
Hensley M. Mooroven	Associate Secretary	2015–2018
Claude J. Richli	Associate Secretary	2015–
Gerson P. Santos	Associate Secretary	2015–
Elbert Kuhn	Associate Secretary	2018–
Kyoshin Ahn	Associate Secretary	2020–

### **General Conference Undersecretaries**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Tenure</b>
A. Edwin Gibb	Undersecretary	1974–1983
David H. Baasch	Undersecretary	1982–1986
Fred G. Thomas	Undersecretary	1986–1991
Athal H. Tolhurst	Undersecretary	1991–2002
Larry R. Evans	Undersecretary	2002–2010
Homer W. Trecartin	Undersecretary	2010–2011
Myron A. Iseminger	Undersecretary	2011–2018
Hensley M. Mooroven	Undersecretary	2018–

### **Statistical Secretaries, Archivists, and Directors and Assistant Directors of Archives and Statistics and of ASTR**

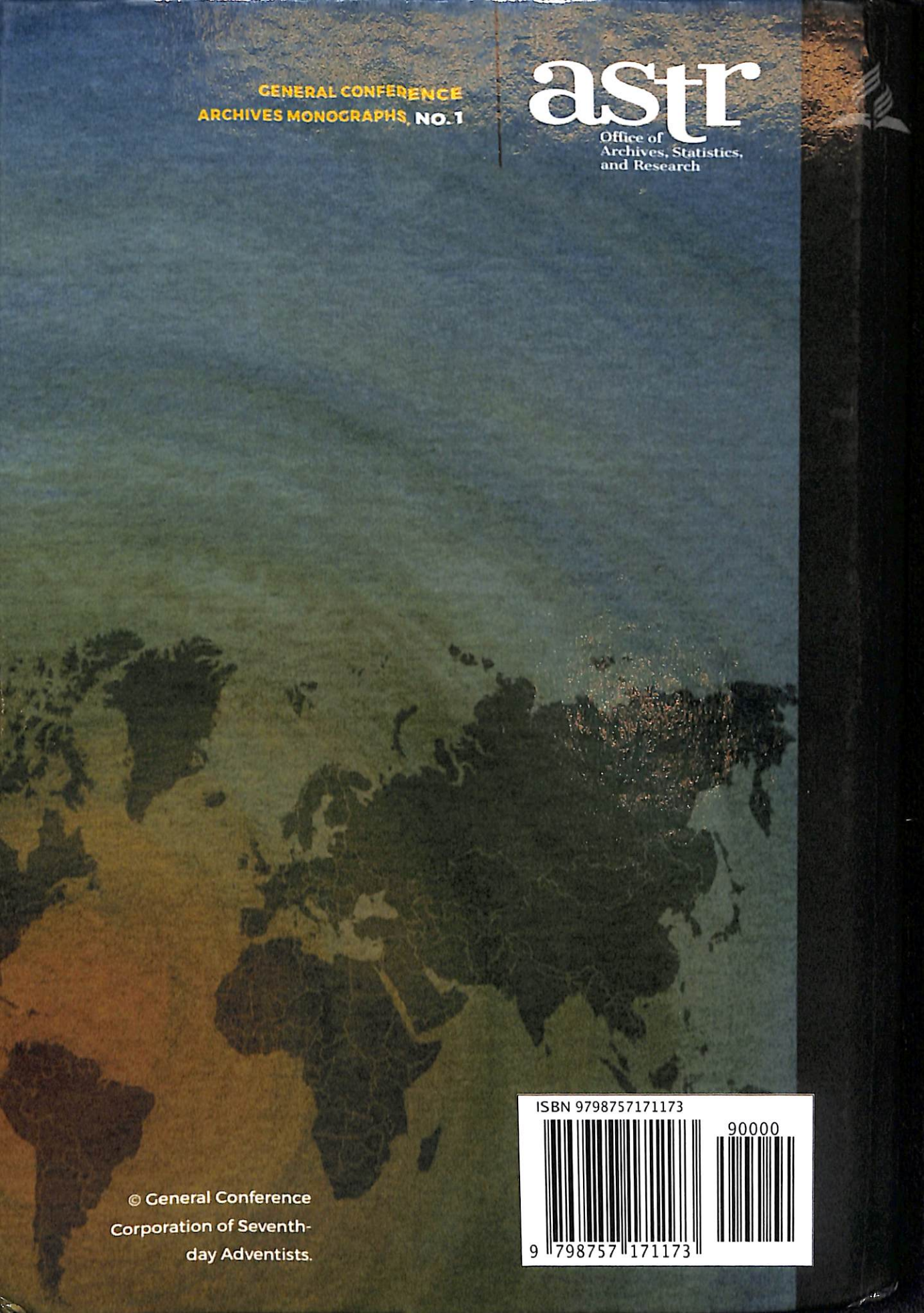
<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Tenure</b>
H. Edson Rogers	Statistical Secretary	1903–1941
Claude Conard	Statistical Secretary	1941–1950
E. J. Johanson	Statistical Secretary	1950–1952

H. W. KLASER	Statistical Secretary	1952–1962
E. Lee Becker	Statistical Secretary / Auditor	1962–1965
Robert J. Radcliffe	Statistical Secretary / Auditor	1965–1966
Jesse O. Gibson	Statistical Secretary	1966–1975
F. Donald Yost	Archivist	1973–1975
	Director of Archives & Statistics	1975–1995
Evelyn D. Osborn	Assistant Director of Archives & Statistics	1980–1997
R. William Cash	Director of Archives & Statistics	1995–1998
Bert B. Haloviak	Assistant Director of Archives & Statistics	1980– 1998
	Director of Archives & Statistics	1998–2010
Peter Chiomenti	Assistant Director of Archives & Statistics	1997–2011
	Assistant Director of ASTR	2011–2015
Weslynn C. Sahly	Assistant Director of Archives & Statistics	2000–2001
Rowena J. Moore	Assistant Director of Archives & Statistics	2003–2011
	Assistant Director of ASTR	2011–2020
David Trim	Director of Archives & Statistics	2010–2011
	Director of ASTR	2011–
Roy Kline	Assistant Director of ASTR	2015–

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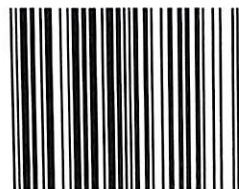
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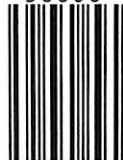


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