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# Adventist Journey

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## My Journey

Every day I get in the classroom and preach the Word. Through 51 years I've been on this journey of being closer to Jesus and helping young people to know Jesus and learn more about His Word and dig deeper—training pastors and teaching young people, and just growing in Jesus.

Visit [nadadventist.org/ajpedritomaynardreid](http://nadadventist.org/ajpedritomaynardreid) for more of Maynard-Reid's story

**PEDRITO MAYNARD-REID,**  
*professor of biblical studies and missiology,  
Walla Walla University*



Cover photo by Dan Weber

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## ADVENTIST JOURNEY

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# A YEAR OF RESPONSES

## TO NEEDS CREATED AND DEEPENED BY

Seventh-day Adventist churches, ministries, and food pantries supported by Adventist Community Services continually served their communities during unprecedented times.

BY MYLON MEDLEY

# THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

**I**n late 2020 Dan Weber, director of communication for the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, noticed a question posed to the NAD Twitter account (@NADAdventist) that bluntly asked what the Adventist Church had done for people during the COVID-19 pandemic. The author of the tweet seemed to be unaware of how Adventists have responded to the tremendous needs created by the pandemic.

"I shared several examples I knew of how local churches and ministries had stepped up in providing relief to those in need," said Weber. "This online interaction caused me to pause and reflect. I know many Adventist churches have helped their local communities, but I, like the person who reached out on Twitter, wanted to know more."

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 virus outbreak a global pandemic on March 11, 2020. Two days later the president of the United States declared a national emergency as a result of the widespread effects of the novel coronavirus. It was around this time that many local counties, cities, and states began establishing mandatory quarantine protocols on nonessential services. This left many in employment limbo and dramatically impacted the economy. Disenfranchised communities were hit the hardest. In response, Adventist churches and ministries—including some of the 1,358 centers supported by Adventist Community Services—have sprung to action to serve the immediate needs of their communities.

"On behalf of the NAD administration, NAD ACS leadership

would like to express sincere appreciation to the Adventist church members in North America for their diligence in supporting the ACS Food Relief projects regarding the novel coronavirus [response]," said Sung Kwon, NAD ACS executive director. "I would especially like to thank the ACS union/conference directors and volunteers for their self-sacrificial commitment to serve our communities in the NAD territory as we follow what Jesus said in Matthew 5:16: 'In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven'" (ESV).\*

The following are a few snapshots out of many examples that showcase how Adventists served their communities during the past 12 months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**MARCH 2020**

The pastor's wife of the Newport Seventh-day Adventist Church coordinated a sewing project that created masks for healthcare providers who had limited access to personal protective equipment (PPE).

Through vigorous prayer, Janet Allen, director of the Jackson Community Services Center of the Jackson Seventh-day Adventist Church in Michigan, was able to secure immediate funding to continue operating the church's food bank when it seemed they would have to halt their operation. The bags of food packed by volunteers included health information and COVID-19 GLOW tracts.

*By the end of March more than 6.6 million people had filed for their first week of unemployment benefits, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.*

**APRIL 2020**

Adventist Community Services of the North American Division invested \$1.5 million—\$25,000 per conference—for relief efforts. An additional \$500,000 was provided for PPE and buckets. As a result of the grants, reports of service immediately came in from various regions of California; Queens, New York; Escanaba, Michigan; and the Tri-Cities metropolitan area of Washington State.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Moab, Utah, planted 20,000 potato seeds in a lot near their property to harvest potatoes for the community.

The homeless ministry of the Omega Seventh-day Adventist Church in New Haven, Connecticut, was able



A volunteer checks the bags at the NECACS center in Corona, New York. JeNean Lendor/ Northeastern Conference

to maintain its “warming center” and offer showers to its visitors through Showers of Blessing mobile shower unit operated by ACS Greater New York. Following safety protocols, this church has managed to provide not only warm meals but also hygiene methods on a daily basis for up to 70 homeless people in their city.

*By the end of April there were more than 1 million confirmed COVID-19 cases in the United States, according to Johns Hopkins University.*

**MAY 2020**

The ACS Montana Conference's Hot Springs Thrift Store resumed operations in the small town in northwest Montana. Customers were able to peruse items outdoors in a safe, socially distanced environment. In addition to food and other typical items given away, the store also obtained a dozen flood buckets and reusable ACS shopping bags from the Montana Conference that were given away with clothing or cleaning items, depending on customer needs.

*ACS Michigan Conference helped facilitate the delivery of rice, beans, and sweet potatoes to 420 Rwandan and Burmese refugees living in Grand Rapids, Michigan.*



Volunteers of ACS Montana Conference's Hot Springs Thrift Store prepare to receive visitors. ACS Montana Conference



ACS workers unload produce from the City Harvest truck that delivered 12 pallets of food on July 13. JeNeane Lendor/Northeastern Conference

### JUNE 2020

Volunteers of the Compassion Alaska Program, which is an extension of the Alaska Conference's Arctic Mission Adventure, sewed 1,500 masks and distributed hygienic products for residents living in seven remote villages.

*On June 26 the White House Coronavirus Taskforces addressed the alarming spike of COVID-19 positive cases in the country's Southern states, including Texas, Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, and South Carolina.*

### JULY 2020

ACS of the Greater New York and Northeastern conferences entered a partnership with City Harvest, one of the largest food banks in New York, to provide food for their 100 ACS food banks to distribute throughout the state. City Harvest made its first delivery of 12 pallets of food on July 13.

### AUGUST 2020

The parking lot of the Auburn City Seventh-day Adventist Church in Auburn, Washington, was transformed into a food distribution center with a drive-through food bank and a designated COVID-19 testing site. Typically 190 tests were administered each week.

### SEPTEMBER 2020

Members of the St. Louis Central Seventh-day Adventist Church gifted local health-care workers with notes of appreciation, healthful snacks, and fun decorations. More than 10 boxes were gifted to workers.

Westbank United Seventh-day Adventist Church in New Orleans, Louisiana, rose to the occasion when families, who were already facing food insecurity because of the pandemic, experienced the effects of Hurricane Laura, which struck the state of Louisiana late August. In addition to local contributions, they received and distributed 1,586 boxes of food from Farmers to Families of Fort Worth, Texas, and a 16-foot truckful of items sponsored by the Fondren Seventh day Adventist Church of Houston, Texas.

*The U.S. surpassed more than 200,000 deaths linked to COVID-19 by the end of September, according to the Washington Post. The total number of COVID-19 cases climbed to 7 million.*

### OCTOBER 2020

The Spokane Central Seventh-day Adventist Church relaunched its "STEAM Ahead @Discovery Junction" on October 21 as a safe space for up to 12 students who attend Garfield Elementary School in Spokane, Washington, to connect to wifi in order to attend school virtually. Prior to the pandemic, Discovery Junction operated as an after-school enrichment program offering activities in science, technology, engineering, arts, and math for low-income children.

Members of the DuPont Park Seventh-day Adventist Church in Washington, D.C., organized a back-to-school giveaway and collective baby shower for its surrounding community. The church provided essential items to 223 new and expectant moms and families at the event.



A student at Garfield Elementary School accesses wifi at Discovery Junction, which is an initiative of the Spokane Central Seventh-day Adventist Church. Upper Columbia Conference

**NOVEMBER 2020**

Adventist Community Services Greater Washington, located in Silver Spring, Maryland, distributed nearly 1,200 Thanksgiving holiday boxes containing turkeys, nonperishable food items, and fresh produce.

**DECEMBER 2020**

Student athletes of Orangewood Academy in Garden Grove, California, were able to carry out their annual “Holiday Hoops” event to serve children in their community. More than 150 children were served at this event alone, and many more will be blessed because of the overflow in donations.

*The first doses of the COVID-19 vaccines by Pfizer and Moderna were distributed throughout the U.S. on December 14. The first case of the COVID-19 UK variant was confirmed in the U.S. on December 29.*

As of March 17, the Parker Street Food and Furniture Bank had already received 579 clients, with 1,221 household members benefited.

**JANUARY 2021**

NAD ACS received a \$250,000 grant, then matched the funds in order to provide \$500,000 to ACS food pantries in the division. The pantries were able to use the funds for food distribution, personal protective equipment, and ACS supply buckets.

**FEBRUARY 2021**

In addition to its monthly LIFT community food distribution ministry, the Keene Seventh-day Adventist Church in Keene, Texas, started a 24/7 Little Free Pantry for its neighbors. The self-serve outdoor cabinets house non-perishable food items available for anyone in need.

*The U.S. passed a tragic milestone of half a million deaths caused by COVID-19, as reported by Johns Hopkins University. According to the Center for Disease Control, nearly 77 million vaccinations have been administered. Further, the Johnson and Johnson vaccine, which was developed by Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies, was granted Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) by the Food and Drug Administration on February 27.*

**MARCH 2021**

The Parker Street Food and Furniture Bank continued to provide assistance to those in need with its various programs such as food bank, food delivery, and emergency assistance. They also supplied clients with furniture, clothing, and household items on a daily basis. In March 2020 this Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, community service center received 663 food bank, visits with 1,384 household members benefited. March 2021 numbers will supersede last year’s—as of March 17, the Parker Street Food and Furniture Bank had already received 579 clients, with 1,221 household members benefited.

\* Bible texts credited to ESV are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

*Mylon Medley is an assistant director of the North American Division Office of Communication. Check out the link [ow.ly/8aAQ50DZADM](https://ow.ly/8aAQ50DZADM) for more details on each of these snapshots reported on from across the division.*



A Parker Street Food and Furniture Bank worker in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, hands a food box to one of their clients. Photo provided by Cynthia Louis/Parker Street Food and Furniture Bank

# NAD NEWS BRIEFS



## “Together in Mission” Voted Quinquennial Focus for North American Division

**O**n February 25, 2021, the North American Division executive committee met to vote on a quinquennial strategic focus and approve an April 29 business meeting to hold NAD vice president, department director, and associate director elections. NAD president G. Alexander Bryant chaired the meeting, disseminating the proposed strategic focus. During the virtual meeting, Kyoshin Ahn, NAD secretary, also presented a statement from a writing committee of executive committee members tasked with its creation, which, according to the document’s preamble, “addresses issues specific to the NAD, and contextualizes the [General Conference’s] ‘One Humanity’ document into the North American setting.”

The executive committee voted approval of both the strategic focus and the April 29 elections. After some discussion the document, “A Call to Live in Harmony With God and Others,” was referred back to the writing committee.

Bryant shared a detailed presentation that was both a devotional thought and outline of the strategic focus that the NAD has been honing since its year-end meeting this past fall. He explained that throughout the intervening months the NAD met several times with union and conference presidents; the NAD leadership team (comprised of vice presidents, directors, and associate directors) and division staff; Adventist Media Ministries directors; executive leaders from the health institutions; higher education leaders; and other division institutions, including Pacific Press Publishing Association, Christian Record Services, and

← NAD president G. Alexander Bryant unpacks the division’s quinquennial strategic focus during the February 25, 2021, executive committee meeting.  
*Pieter Damsteegt*

the North American Division Evangelism Institute.

“We’ve gone through the process of meeting with so many different leaders to get input and suggestions on what strategic focus we can have as we move forward,” Bryant said. “We cannot maximize the potential that we have as a division unless we are all moving in the same direction with the same strategic focus.”

This voted focus will incorporate the General Conference theme “I Will Go,” with special divisional emphasis on media, multiplying, and mentorship.

Near the close of the meeting, Randy Robinson, NAD treasurer, shared an update on the 2021 budget as well as record-breaking 2020 tithe figures, which were more than \$1 billion.

Robinson explained that because of the tithe performance, the division was able to use its reserves and allocate \$10 million in stimulus money to assist local conferences, churches, and schools. While recognizing that many churches and members are still struggling, he added, “The generosity of our people across North America, and the benevolence of our heavenly Father, gave us the ability to do that. And we’re just so grateful.”

—*Kimberly Luste Maran,*  
*NAD Office of Communication*

## ADVENTIST INAUGURATED AS PRESIDENT IN PALAU

On November 21, 2020, Adventist Surangel Whipps, Jr., won the presidential election in Palau, becoming the tenth president of this beautiful Pacific nation. Whipps was sworn in as president on January 21, 2021, during the inauguration ceremony at the Palau National Capitol.

The pillars of church and family supported the president through the ceremony. His parents both delivered speeches and with his wife, Valerie, and their three daughters standing at his side, Whipps placed his hand on a Bible held by the couple's son and took the oath of office.

The inauguration program incorporated members of the local Seventh-day Adventist church and school. Pastor Chamberlain Kinsiano, the associate pastor of the Koror Seventh-day Adventist Church, offered the invocational prayer for the ceremony. Later in closing, after the president's inaugural address, the Koror Seventh-day Adventist Youth sang the song of hope "Heal Our Land."

Whipps continues to be an active member of the Koror Seventh-day Adventist Church in Palau. His church leadership roles include church deacon, member of the Guam-Micronesia



With his wife and four children by his side, Surangel Whipps, Jr., a Seventh-day Adventist, is sworn in as president of the nation of Palau on January 21, 2021. Richard Brooks/Lightning Strike Media Productions

Mission executive committee, board member of the Guam Seventh-day Adventist Clinic, and chair of the Palau Adventist School board. —Grace Lloyd, Guam-Micronesia Mission Communication

## Record High Attendance at the "Something Better in Education" Adventist Education Conference

Monday, February 15, 2021, signaled the start of the three-day Association of Seventh-day Adventist School Administrators (ASDASA) conference. Every five years ASDASA meets to help Adventist education leaders to stay on top of current research and trends to remain effective in their roles. ASDASA has been growing in popularity as education leaders have collaborated on timely issues facing Adventist schools while growing professionally with presentations focused on innovation and excellence. Part of that innovation and excellence was transitioning to the 2021 online event. More than 55 speakers presented to more than 700 education professionals during the event.

"We stepped forward in faith with our union directors to run our first-ever virtual conference," Arne Nielsen, North American Division (NAD) vice president for education, shared. We didn't know what to expect—we are delighted to report our largest attendance in the history of the event, with 711 attendees from across the NAD."

In addition to addressing mission and vision with the unveiling the new Journey to Excellence (J2E 2.0) framework, the NAD Office of Education also rolled out an ambitious new mental health initiative during the conference. Evelyn Sullivan, NAD director for early childhood and REACH, describing the resources, shared:



Some of the attendees during a session of the 2021 ASDASA virtual conference held in February 2021. Screen shot provided by NAD Adventist Education

"In partnership with experts in the field of mental health and the Adventist learning community, we are developing a website and series of tools for teachers and students to combat the growing epidemic of mental health issues in our schools and community."

The commitment to adaptability during the COVID-19 pandemic was also reported on during the conference. Many Adventist schools all across the NAD have done something most schools in the U.S. have not been able to do this year—meet face to face in classrooms with safety precautions in place. This past summer NAD Adventist educators spent hours creating or providing safety shields, outdoor classrooms, creative classroom spaces, alternate scheduling, personal protective equipment, and, of course, technology backups for hybrid options for families and unexpected closures.

—Leisa Morton-Standish, NAD Adventist Education

**MISSIONARY:** Schley Valencia **LOCATION:** Spokane, Washington, USA

## Connecting the Pieces

*Schley Valencia was born in the Philippines and is volunteering with Total Health Spokane, a nonprofit ministry in Spokane, Washington. She enjoys playing musical instruments and doing outdoor activities related to nature.*

**W**hat's your story? Many people wonder how a volunteer finds their calling and what leads them to that decision. My story begins in December 2019, when I was a volunteer science teacher at the Ebeye Seventh-day Adventist School in the Marshall Islands. With my contract ending at the mission school in June 2020, and the General Conference Session scheduled at the same time frame, I had great hopes of going since the church in Ebeye had secured a booth and was scheduled to participate in special music. However, my plans drastically changed because of COVID-19. I began praying in earnest. Where do I go? What should I do next? Should I leave or stay on the island?

In June I was impressed to fly to my relatives in California, believing that God would be my guide. I knew He would unfold His plan to me piece by piece, like a puzzle. It didn't make sense at first, but when the few pieces began to connect, I started to see a picture. I must admit, I doubted and I questioned, but I felt God's hand leading me to the purpose to which He had called me.

Two weeks after arriving in California, I saw a post on Instagram by the North American Division Office of Volunteer Ministries (NADvolunteers), searching for volunteers from all across the U.S. I logged into the Adventist Volunteer Services website and began my own search. I narrowed it down to three choices, one of them being the Total Health Spokane program. I told God that I would go with whichever one responded first, but I favored the Total Health Spokane program because of its wholistic approach to health and unique partnership with both medical and gospel work. I received my answer, and have enjoyed the fellowship of Northview Seventh-day Adventist Church for six months!

Our typical day at Total Health Spokane starts with a group devotional before we interact with clients partnered with each volunteer through online health coaching. Prior to this, we were trained in how to help



I knew He would unfold His plan to me piece by piece, like a puzzle. It didn't make sense at first, but . . . I started to see a picture.

clients identify their purpose and health goals. Then we motivate and support them on their journey to better physical, mental, spiritual, and social health.

The team is also actively involved in the Northview church activities, both inreach, which includes assisting with worship services, Bible study groups, work bees; and outreach, such as food distribution through a food bank and Better Living Center, Discovery Junction Ministry (which provides education to at-risk children), and book distribution of *The Great Controversy*.

I've grown in this experience. It has taught me that I also need to practice what I am sharing with my clients, to have a lifestyle that I could keep wherever I go in this world. The challenge in this kind of ministry is to truly incorporate what our doctor has told the team about what sets the sacred health coaching apart from the secular: It makes you holy, not just healthy; alters your character, not just your conviction; changes your heart, not just your habits; and you could achieve this, not by your willpower, but by the power of the will of God.

Visit [www.HeSaidGo.org](http://www.HeSaidGo.org) to see North American Division Office of Volunteer Ministries service opportunities for individuals 18 to 79 years of age.

BY G. ALEXANDER BRYANT

# Called for This Moment

**I**t has been a year since we were deeply impacted by the dreadful coronavirus pandemic. Each of us can recall what it felt like as we watched, in almost stunned disbelief, the country shut down—offices closed down, churches closed, restaurants closed, professional sports canceled, children sent home indefinitely from school, citizens required to stay home, grocery stores running out of basic items, hand sanitizer in short supply, and toilet paper being fought over in the aisles. The pandemic has brought an economic downturn, with food insecurity reaching a level not seen since the Great Depression. We have witnessed an unparalleled reaction to social injustice and inequality. During the past few months we have witnessed an historic political schism that has threatened the fabric of our democracy as we know it.

What sense have you made of it as a Seventh-day Adventist? Is God concerned about this world? Is God speaking? If so, what is He saying to us? What message have you received from all of this?

These are the pertinent questions we should be asking. God is using these events to speak to His church and to His people. He has given us a message that is crafted for our time. It is a message of “hope and wholeness.” This is exactly what people are searching for in this uncertain season. A message of hope and wholeness and hands that will meet the felt needs and provide relief is what people are desperately craving.

This was never so clear to me as it was a few days ago when my wife and I met a homeless woman named Danielle. She needed money to pay for a night’s stay at a Travelodge hotel. If she didn’t have the money by 11:00 a.m., the hotel would place her things outside on the parking lot. I asked her what she would do the next day if we paid for one night, and she said, “I will come out and ask again.” She told me her story of a lost job and a series of unfortunate circumstances that led to her current sad situation. But then she abruptly cried out, “I am a human being,”

and again, “I am a human being,” as she tried unsuccessfully to hold back what would become a cascade of tears rolling down her cheeks. She was trying to convince herself of her worth and value as a human being. She was trying to beat back the looks of pity, and even some looks of disgust, as she watched people look down their nose at her. And some would not even look her way at all.

My wife and I paid a week for her at the motel as she waited for space to open up at a shelter. I will probably never see Danielle again; however, she made an indelible impression on me. I have helped before, but the cry “I am a human being” still rings in my soul. It spoke so forcefully to the destitute of humanity.

There are so many feeling hopeless and helpless on a level that is rare in this country. God has given us a message for Danielle and the countless millions of others who are looking for hope. Perhaps in this moment, with so much unrest in so many quarters, God has gotten the world’s attention, and people are open to listening and being touched in ways they have not been before. God has positioned the church for the right time and given us the right message for this time—now we must go and give it and live it! Now is the time to live out our theme “Together in Mission”! We are called for this moment.

Is God speaking?  
If so, what is  
He saying to us?

*G. Alexander Bryant is president of the North American Division.*



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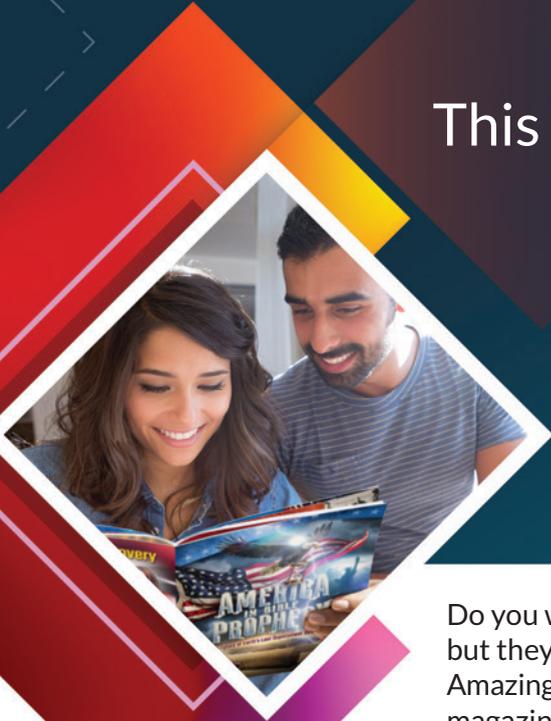
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