



President's 2021 Constituency Report



As I review the blessings of the Lord in what looks to be the end of the pandemic, I can truly praise God for what He has done. Certainly, this has been the worst disease to grip the world since the 1918 influenza pandemic. While we mourn the loss of friends and family who succumbed to this disease, or any other cause, during the last year, we look forward to the great and grand reunion when Jesus, as He promised, returns to save us out of this world and escort us to heaven for 1,000 years and then return us to the earth made new.

We are so grateful for all the first responders in our territory: nurses, physicians, technicians, hospital



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administrators, fireman, EMT personnel, police officers, and others who stepped up to help people through this pandemic. We owe all of them our heartfelt gratitude, and we thank God for them.

We have endured the closure of our church buildings. However, since the church is by definition the “called-out ones” or the members, the actual church has never closed. Jesus correctly stated that “the gates of hell shall not prevail against” the church of which He is head (Matthew 16:18, KJV).

We continue our mission given to us by our Lord, summed up in our session theme, “So Send I You.” As you have read in past articles and current reports, ministries directed by faithful souls have continued, often in different formats than previously used. We are indebted to those who learned to creatively adapt methodologies so we could continue our service to our loving Lord in spite of stay-at-home orders and social distancing.

During the last five years, as I have traveled to different events in the union for various reasons, such as fulfilling a speaking request from one of our churches or attending a meeting, I have been asked, “How is the union doing?” While I have not always been sure what the questioner intended to learn from this inquiry, I did have a “first thought” response to that question: “The union does as well as the seven local conferences are doing.”

You see, the union is really the conferences operating in concert to fulfill the purposes for which we were established: to accomplish the work of building up God’s church in the Southwest corner of the United States. And this is carried out by the faithful souls in every conference.

Together, for the last five years, the entire forces of the Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists have been marshaled together to accomplish the purposes of the union as found in its bylaws:

“The purposes for which this Union is formed are:

- A. To teach the everlasting gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14 and to lovingly persuade people to become His disciples and responsible members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
- B. To coordinate Christian ministries including but not limited to pastoral, teaching, literature, and health ministries.
- C. To promote the worldwide mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
- D. To provide opportunity for the sharing of resources, thus encouraging the accomplishment of the Church’s mission throughout the entire territory of the Union.”

That is the wording of our legal document. It is another way of saying that we are responding positively to Jesus’ call



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to each and every one of us: "So Send I You." We have adopted the motto of "Love. Serve. Lead." as a way of focusing our mission from the union perspective. We love people. We serve them in whatever way we can. And most of all, we want to lead them to Jesus. So while we may at times during this session deal with the many administrative actions that are needed, they are all designed to implement that motto—helping us to demonstrate our love for Jesus and for all people, serving others as Jesus did, and providing the servant leadership of Jesus so that many more can come to Him.

As you will read in the following reports of the elected personnel who have served in the past quinquennium, God's ministry, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the empowerment of His Spirit, is being facilitated and is ongoing throughout our territory.

The people who live and serve in the seven conferences and five states in which our conference members dwell (Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, and Utah) have been fulfilling the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church throughout our territory in their own unique way. The details of samplings of these various activities are included in the monthly mailing of the Pacific Union Recorder.

There are approximately 54,600,459 souls in our territory. That is a huge number of people whom we have been entrusted to reach for God's cause.

I believe in the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination and have committed myself to participating in it personally and professionally for 46.7 years of my life. I have come to realize through my many years of observation that the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, while expressed in a worldwide or global manner, is made specific through the deployment of the spiritual gifts. Individuals living in a particular contextual setting at a particular time have been given these gifts for use in the service of the gospel and the upbuilding of God's church.

The various cultures of the citizens in the Pacific Union differ greatly one from another, and in many cases, are drastically different from most other places in the country or, for that matter, the rest of the world. This has shaped our mission strategies as we seek to reach this diverse population for God, wanting to tell of His saving goodness.

Our approach in the territory we live in has often, but not always, taken the particularities of our context in mind as we move to continuously fulfill the calling that God has given us. While the folks who live in the large metropolitan areas of the union have found those souls who will respond to one method of outreach or evangelism, there are other methods utilized in more rural areas. Some approaches that yielded "fruit" in years gone by are no longer as effective as they may have been in the past.



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This has necessitated new methods, without forsaking the core of our biblically-founded beliefs. Ellen White wrote, "New methods must be introduced. God's people must awake to the necessities of the time in which they are living. God has men whom He will call into His service,—men who will not carry forward the work in the lifeless way in which it has been carried forward in the past.

G. Alexander Bryant, president of the North American Division, states, "The hope and truth that we have is [built on] more than just what we've done in the past. We can take the truths we've embraced as a church and make them applicable to today's challenges in society.... We can be a voice that people go to in these uncertain times and [hear] the certainty that we know God is going to get us through."

In our union, we have attempted to devise and employ appropriate new methods to reach the large number of people in our territory. One way we have done this is to grant funds to new efforts through the Pacific Union Evangelism Endowment (which has come to be known as the Creative Evangelism Endowment because of the previous formula that gave points to a request—which needed to include 20 creativity points to be successful). I am sure our Treasurer's report can give more details about this process.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been awarded to churches and conferences with the intent of reaching souls for whom Christ died with the three angels' messages, uplifting Jesus as the answer to a fallen world.

And this brings me back to thanksgiving.

I am very thankful to God for directing His work. We pray daily for God to give us direction, to show us how to follow His leading in advancing His work. We are grateful to every pastor and every member of our churches who has faithfully stood in their place to build up the kingdom of God. We thank our members for returning tithe and giving offerings to finance the operations of the church in our territory and beyond.

As has been previously announced, I will be retiring this fall after 46.7 years of full-time ministry to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. While I cannot say that it has been all "sunshine and light," it has been a privilege to serve God and His people in an official capacity. As a pastor and administrator, I can truly say, "God is good all the time, and all the time, God is good."

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve in this Pacific Union territory since 1984. Audrey and I have been blessed in the friendships we have made, and we have grown by the grace of God as we have met each challenge through which God has led us.



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It is our heartfelt prayer that God will continue to lead through the new leadership team that will be voted into office at this upcoming constituency session.

In conclusion, I would like to point you to an appropriate Bible verse. As we consider the work of the Good Shepherd and hear His call "So Send I You," let us meditate on His words that are so full of meaning:

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10, KJV).