

## COMMUNICATING THE ADVENTIST MESSAGE AFTER THE WORLD WAR I (1918–1922)

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### Abstract

Communicating the Adventist message has met many challenges, moreover, in times of war. However, Seventh-day Adventist Church, after World War I, had remarkable growth especially outside the North American region even though after the War, the world experienced the Spanish Flu (pandemic, 1918–1919) and economic challenges (especially in the United States from 1918 to 1921). How did this denomination overcome the difficulties? And what were the factors that helped this church to grow? This research finds some significant elements to the successful efforts of evangelism by SDA Church from 1918 to 1922. In addition to these aspects, this article suggests three ways for the church growth amidst these difficulties. The first is to communicate the message through institutional evangelism or systematic evangelism and the other is to exercise temporary training or consistent training. The institutional evangelism and temporary training affected ordinary and temporal growth, but systematic evangelism and consistent training stimulated extraordinary progress. The third is to focus on Jesus Christ in communicating any Adventist message, not on the doctrines themselves.

**Keywords:** Adventist message, World War I, Spanish flu pandemic, Media, Evangelism

### INTRODUCTION

The Sabbatarian Adventists, after the Great Disappointment in 1844, were one of the smallest groups among the ex-Millerites. In

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1863, the Sabbatarian Adventists established themselves as Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church. Nowadays, this group becomes the largest among other Adventist denominations. As a major Christian Sabbatarian Adventist group, this church has passed many challenges in communicating its message to the world.

After World War I (WW I), the Adventist church struggled in proclaiming the messages because of the destruction caused by the war, economic recession, and the pandemic. The result of the four years war resulted in an economic recession in many countries. The United States (US), where the majority of SDA churches were located until 1921, got the impact of these economic difficulties. From August 1918 to March 1919 and from January 1920 to July 1921, this country faced economic problems<sup>1</sup> that contributed to the effectiveness of the church in doing its mission. Nevertheless, this denomination survived and still grew.

Economic difficulties were not the only problem after WW I, the world had a pandemic, namely, Spanish Influenza. This disease was one of the worst in human history and at least 50 million died from 1918 to 1920<sup>2</sup> and infected about “a third of the world’s population.”<sup>3</sup> The plague was called Spanish Influenza since Spain was the first country to report the serious problem caused by this virus.

The Spanish flu, the shortened name of Spanish Influenza, killed many people in different countries and continents. A study of the pandemic reports that the highest death toll in Asia was India with 18 million, in Africa was Nigeria with 455,000, in America was the US with 675,000, in Europe was Russia/USSR with

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<sup>1</sup> “US Business Cycle Expansions and Contractions,” National Bureau of Economic Research, July 19, 2021, <https://www.nber.org/research/data/us-business-cycle-expansions-and-contractions>; cf. Anthony Patrick O’Brien, “Depression of 1920–1921,” in *Business Cycles and Depressions: An Encyclopedia*, ed. David Glasner (New York: Routledge, 2013), 151–53.

<sup>2</sup> *Smithsonian Timelines of History* (London: Dorling Kindersley, 2011), 353.

<sup>3</sup> Ben C. Blackwell, John K. Goodrich, and Jason Maston, eds., *Reading Revelation in Context* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2019), 70.

450,000, and in Oceania was Australia with 14,528.<sup>4</sup> The same study also estimates that the reports were understated because of limited sources and data. This research concludes that the estimation of the death toll could reach 100 million people died during this pandemic.<sup>5</sup>

This Spanish flu infected anyone without showing discrimination. It caused the death of one of the most important assistance of Lenin in Russia<sup>6</sup> to a church leader in California.<sup>7</sup> The transmission of this plague is similar to COVID-19. The virus spread through “viral infection spread by body fluids (airborne or on contaminated objects).”<sup>8</sup> When a person is contaminated with the virus “the symptoms included headaches, body aches, fever, cough, fatigue, and chills, possibly progressing to pneumonia.”<sup>9</sup> As the disease hit all kinds of ages, the vulnerable ages for this plague were between 25 and 34.<sup>10</sup>

This pandemic generally had three waves. In the US, the first was in the spring and summer of 1918, the second wave was in the autumn of the same year, and the third was in the winter of 1919. These waves also hit many countries only less than a year.<sup>11</sup> In the US itself, the first case was reported on March 4, 1918, in the Funston military camp in Kansas. In a few months, it has been spread

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<sup>4</sup> Niall P. A. S. Johnson and Juergen Mueller, “Updating the Accounts: Global Mortality of the 1918–1920 ‘Spanish’ Influenza Pandemic,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 76.1 (2002): 110–14.

<sup>5</sup> Johnson and Mueller, “Updating the Accounts,” 115.

<sup>6</sup> Martin McCauley, *Who’s Who in Russia Since 1900* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 204.

<sup>7</sup> Brian Froese, *California Mennonite* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2015), 61.

<sup>8</sup> *The Encyclopedia of War From Ancient Egypt to Iraq* (London: Dorling Kindersley, 2012), 388.

<sup>9</sup> Duane C. S. Stoltzfus, *Pacifists in Chains: The Persecution of Hutterites during the Great War* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2013), 175.

<sup>10</sup> T. L. Frazier, *A Second Look at the Second Coming: Sorting through the Speculations* (Chesterton, IN: Ancient Faith, 1999), 212–13.

<sup>11</sup> Johnson and Mueller, “Updating the Accounts,” 107.

all over the world<sup>12</sup> and “was probably aided by large-scale movements of troops and by the weakened immune systems of populations suffering from malnutrition.”<sup>13</sup> As the result, of 116,000 US soldiers who died in WW I,<sup>14</sup> 43,000 troops lost their lives only in France because of this plague.<sup>15</sup> All over the world, the Spanish flu killed more people than those who died because of WW I (38 million).<sup>16</sup> This deadly virus took the lives of million people only in approximately two years.

As the COVID-19 pandemic, the Spanish flu caused US governments to close their public facilities and meeting including churches and schools. This effort was successful to reduce the number of people infected and deaths.<sup>17</sup> However, it was not the case for those in prison. As a consequence, many people died in jail.<sup>18</sup> There were requirements to use masks in public, especially in October and November 1918 during the second wave of this pandemic,<sup>19</sup> and they helped reduce the outbreak.

After reviewing the condition of the world and also US after the WW I, amidst the economic problems and the pandemic, the SDA church strived to do its mission. What were the efforts of this denomination in fulfilling its calling in these difficult situations? What were the contributing factors that cause this church to survive and even still grew after WW I (1918–1922)? The following sections will discuss these two inquiries.

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<sup>12</sup> Frazier, *A Second Look at the Second Coming*, 212–13.

<sup>13</sup> *Smithsonian Timelines of History*, 353.

<sup>14</sup> *The Encyclopedia of War*, 277.

<sup>15</sup> *The Encyclopedia of War*, 388.

<sup>16</sup> Jeff Myers, *The Secret Battle of Ideas about God: Overcoming the Outbreak of Five Fatal Worldviews* (Colorado Springs, CO: Cook, 2017).

<sup>17</sup> Mark Jackson, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Medicine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 374.

<sup>18</sup> Stoltzfus, *Pacifists in Chains*, 175.

<sup>19</sup> Stoltzfus, *Pacifists in Chains*, 174.

THE GROWTH OF SDA CHURCH AFTER  
THE WORLD WAR I (1918–1922)

Despite of challenges faced by the SDA church during the second decade of the twentieth century, the denomination still grew. WW I and the Spanish flu pandemic helped to lessen the growth of the church. The statistic of the denomination growth can be seen in the table below.

Year	SDA Membership <sup>20</sup>	Growth [%] <sup>21</sup>	NAD Membership	Growth [%]	Non-NAD Membership	Growth [%]
1918	162,667	5.72 <sup>22</sup>	92,750 <sup>23</sup>	6.51 <sup>24</sup>	69,917	4.69
1919	178,239	9.57	96,983 <sup>25</sup>	4.56	81,256	16.21
1920	185,450	4.04	99,423 <sup>26</sup>	2.51	86,027	5.87
1921	198,088	6.81	100,673 <sup>27</sup>	1.25	97,415	13.23
1922	208,771	5.39	103,356 <sup>28</sup>	2.66	105,415	8.21

<sup>20</sup> 1924 *Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, [1924]), 257.

<sup>21</sup> This percentage is the growth rate compared to the previous year.

<sup>22</sup> The membership of SDA church in 1917 was 153,857. 1924 *Year Book*, 235.

<sup>23</sup> 1919 *Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, [1919]), 243.

<sup>24</sup> The membership of NAD in 1917 was 87,073. 1918 *Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, [1918]), 235.

<sup>25</sup> 1920 *Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, [1920]), 278.

<sup>26</sup> 1921 *Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, [1921]), 205.

<sup>27</sup> 1922 *Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, [1922]), 216.

<sup>28</sup> 1923 *Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, [1923]), 3.

In 1918, when WW I ended, the percentage of the churches in the US was higher than the growth of the overall SDA and the non-NAD (North America Division) membership. The cause was that the most casualties of this war were those outside North America as well as those who died in the pandemic. The more significant cause was that the report of the European Division, the second largest division at that time, only repeated what has been listed in the previous year. However, it was not the case for the next years when the war was over and the worldwide outbreak wave in 1919 was less severe.<sup>29</sup>

### *The Growth in NAD*

The discussion about the growth of SDA membership in history cannot be separated from the NAD since this division, up to 1921, had the largest members with more than 50%. Even though it seems that the NAD experienced a tendency of declining growth after 1918, however, it shows better condition if it was compared with the growth of other Christian denominations in North America. At least, this division still gained new converts between 1918 and 1922.

The condition of Christianity in North America at the closing war indicated a steep decreasing interest in religious matters. Washington Gladden, a non-Adventist clergy, noted a tendency of society to be indifferent to spiritual things at the close of WW I. He wrote,

At the close of our Revolutionary War the churches were nearly deserted; at the close of the Napoleonic war there was a great dearth of religion; and our own Civil War was followed by some unfruitful years. All the indications are that this war will close with a shrinkage in the religious life of the nations that are at war.... We are approaching the end of this war—at least I hope we are approaching it with less religion than we had when we be-

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<sup>29</sup> Johnson and Mueller, "Updating the Accounts," 107.

gan it. That is to say, the religious experience of the people is less convincing, less satisfying, now than it was then.<sup>30</sup>

As a result of this declining spirituality, many pastors resigned from their posts and the young generation had less interest to attend church worship. The editor of *Review and Herald* reported that during WW I there were 3 million children among Christian communities who did not attend Sunday school if it was compared to before the war. A similar fact to the adults, there were less than half of attendees in the church during the war and 20 percent of pastors resigned and looked for other jobs.<sup>31</sup> This information indicated Gladden's observation was reflecting the condition of Christians in North America at that time.

The growth rate of NAD from 1918 to 1922 was nearly 3.5%. It was not so bad since the other Christian denominations generally had lower progress. The evangelistic effort had less rivalry from the Protestant denominations since "revivalism in general diminished during the twenties."<sup>32</sup> Public evangelism by well-known evangelists got hardly support from Christian societies because of financial difficulties after the war and secularization after WW I.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, an obstacle was created by SDA evangelists as they played with an unsound biblical approach to prophecy. During WW I, Adventist evangelists interpreted Turkey as the King of the North, and this nation would be expelled from Europe and established its new post in Jerusalem.<sup>34</sup> This prediction was not fulfilled. This failure contributed to the indifference to the Adventist mes-

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<sup>30</sup> Washington Gladden, quoted in "Religious Effect of the War," *Review and Herald* [RH], February 14, 1918, 8.

<sup>31</sup> [Francis M. Wilcox], "Decline in Church Attendance," *RH*, March 11, 1920, 7.

<sup>32</sup> Howard B. Weeks, *Adventist Evangelism: In the Twentieth Century* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1969), 122.

<sup>33</sup> Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), 141.

<sup>34</sup> Benjamin McArthur, *A. G. Daniells: Shaper of Twentieth-Century Adventism* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2015), 362, 367.

sage from the audiences.<sup>35</sup> The growth would have been higher if the evangelists had been more cautious with this message.

While the individual and local congregations' revival in general Christian churches diminished, Adventist evangelistic institutionalism got its momentum. Nearly 3.5% of growth in NAD was mainly by the evangelistic efforts of the Conferences.<sup>36</sup> In spite of the support of the local congregation, the main trigger of evangelism in this period was the central church (higher) organization. This condition resulted in the NAD not maximizing its opportunity to have more converts. The growth would be better if the organization mobilized more church members in doing evangelism through continual discipleship and not merely based on an organizational support of evangelism.

### *The Growth Outside NAD*

As the table shows, between 1918 and 1922, the percentage of membership divisions outside NAD indicates a better trend of growth than the overall SDA church and NAD. Except in the year 1918, the church growth percentage outside NAD performed higher than the worldwide church and its origin country. The less growth in 1918 was caused by the casualties of war and the pandemic. Of the three waves of the plague, two of them happened in 1918 and more than 40 million died outside the territory of NAD. The other explanation for the lower percentage in 1918 was that European Division, which had the second largest membership after NAD, did not report the growth because of the condition amidst WW I. The report was only reprinted from the previous year.<sup>37</sup>

Adventist leaders outside NAD described their progress during this period (between 1918 and 1922) that God has led them in the

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<sup>35</sup> Bull and Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary*, 141.

<sup>36</sup> Howard B. Weeks, *Adventist Evangelism in the Twentieth Century*, 123.

<sup>37</sup> *1919 Year Book*, 112.



previous years. Among Unions under the European division, only British Union Conference (BUC) consistently reported their progress annually, the WW I prevented the annual report of other Unions. Their reports appeared again in 1922 (for the 1921 progress report) that showed a number of new members and churches received into the denomination. The BUC described their progress that even though many challenges and difficulty in 1918 but God has led them to have the highest converts in the last five years.<sup>38</sup> After the war, this Union also informed that the growth was better in 1919.<sup>39</sup> The report for the work in 1920 indicates better results, this Union reentering the British East African field that was closed because of war.<sup>40</sup> In 1922, several Unions in the European division were able to report their steady progress despite the financial struggle. They testified how God blessed them with new believers each year in spite of the difficult situation.<sup>41</sup>

The third biggest membership in SDA during this period was in Far Eastern Division (former name was East Asian Division, before 1919). At the end of 1917, the number of baptisms was 822.<sup>42</sup> In 1918, the number of potential new believers was nearly the same for all division members.<sup>43</sup> As a result, there were 1,210 new members added between June 1919 to June 1920.<sup>44</sup> At the end of 1922, the membership doubled from 1918. Since 1900, this division had about double membership every four years.<sup>45</sup>

The work in Asia developed with the establishment of new division in 1920. The new organizational structure was the Southern Asia Division. A year before, there was a new Union established in

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<sup>38</sup> *1919 Year Book*, 243.

<sup>39</sup> *1920 Year Book*, 278.

<sup>40</sup> *1921 Year Book*, 205.

<sup>41</sup> *1922 Year Book*, 217–20.

<sup>42</sup> *1919 Year Book*, 244.

<sup>43</sup> *1920 Year Book*, 279.

<sup>44</sup> *1921 Year Book*, 206. Cf. *1920 Year Book*, 279.

<sup>45</sup> *1922 Year Book*, 230.

India.<sup>46</sup> In 1922, this division had 4 Unions, 13 mission fields, 41 churches, and 1,423 church members.<sup>47</sup>

Latin America remarkably grew between 1918 and 1922. The first division in this territory was the South American Division. It was established in January 1916. In only 6 years, there was a new division formed in 1922, namely Inter-American Division. In 1919, South American Division reported that in only two years the membership increased “nearly one-third” from 1916.<sup>48</sup> This division also testified that “each year marks progress in South America.”<sup>49</sup> In 1922, these two divisions had 6 unions, 8 local conferences, 25 mission fields, and 17,661 members.<sup>50</sup>

The Africa Division was created in 1919. It consisted of 2 unions, the South African Union Conference, which was established in 1902, and the Zambesi Union Mission. In 1916, the church added the last Union. In 1919, the president of the South African Union wrote that 1918 “has been the best year in the history of the South African native work.”<sup>51</sup> In 1922, this division had 51 organized churches and 3,814 church members.<sup>52</sup>

The General Conference (GC) formed the Australasian Division on May 24, 1922. This division comprised only one Union, the Australasian Union Conference. This Union Conference is the oldest Union in the SDA church. The progress of the work in several lines of ministry that supported evangelism contributed to new converts, and a new conference was organized in 1920.<sup>53</sup> This division

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<sup>46</sup> 1920 *Year Book*, 283.

<sup>47</sup> 1923 *Year Book*, 3.

<sup>48</sup> 1919 *Year Book*, 244.

<sup>49</sup> 1921 *Year Book*, 212.

<sup>50</sup> 1923 *Year Book*, 3–4.

<sup>51</sup> 1919 *Year Book*, 254.

<sup>52</sup> 1923 *Year Book*, 4.

<sup>53</sup> 1922 *Year Book*, 233.

reported that in 1922, there was a Union, 8 local conferences, 11 mission fields, 215 churches, and 8,436 members.<sup>54</sup>

The remarkable progress of God's work outside NAD caused better growth in terms of church membership. In spite of many challenges and trials including WW I, economic problems, and the Spanish flu pandemic, evangelism was still the main focus of the church. As a consequence, in 1922, for the first time in the SDA church history, the number of members outside the NAD outnumbered the origin country. The period between 1918 and 1922 indicated the striving of the church to cope with the hardship of those times. The growth of the church was marked by the establishment of 4 new divisions, the Africa Division (1919), Southern Asia Division (1920), Inter-American Division (1922), and Australasian Division (1922). How did this denomination communicate its message during this period? The next section will reveal it.

## MESSAGE AND MEDIA USED BETWEEN 1918 AND 1922

### *Message and Media for Evangelism in the NAD*

What were the message and media used by the Adventists during this period? The three angels' messages were the standard of Adventist proclamation. Lessons in biblical prophecy and doctrinal approach were many times used by Adventist evangelists. After WW I, there was a paradigm change in how the church shares the message to others.

Instead of emphasizing doctrines, the evangelists started to emphasize Jesus Christ, the message giver. Two decades earlier, A. T. Jones reminded the church of this need. He wrote, "Yet we are told that in giving this last message to the world, we are to go out

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<sup>54</sup> 1923 Year Book, 4.

into the highways and hedges, and are not to present doctrine as the prominent thing, but Christ first.”<sup>55</sup> At the 1919 Bible Conference, the focus on Christ in preaching and teaching was maintained. A. G. Daniells, the GC president, in reporting the result of this Bible Conference, wrote that “Christ should be made the central theme in all our teaching and preaching.”<sup>56</sup> In relation to this, W. W. Prescott, who actively discussed the divinity of Christ at the 1919 Bible Conference, wrote a book entitled *Doctrine of Christ* in 1920. He also prepared the 1921 Sabbath School Quarterly Lesson in which he discussed the person, work, union, and the kingdom of Christ.<sup>57</sup> The emphasis on Jesus did not mean to not preach the distinctive Adventist doctrines, but rather to preach Jesus in every distinctive Adventist doctrine.

The Adventists mainly emphasized public evangelism after the pandemic. But during the pandemic, because of governmental restrictions, some Adventists used popular newspapers to disseminate sermons. One of the most successful evangelists using this media was Louis K. Dickson. He testified, “One man told us that on an inbound Northern Pacific train he walked through and personally counted fifty persons reading a sermon article in the *Oregonian* and the *Journal*, the two dailies in which our meetings were reported.”<sup>58</sup> In addition to using Adventist publications, Adventist evangelists wrote in popular newspapers to disseminate their sermons.

Adventist evangelists were willing to change their approach to doing evangelism. The camp meeting was the main venue for public evangelism. A new way to gather people during this crisis time was by tabernacle evangelistic meetings. The first effort to use this

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<sup>55</sup> A. T. Jones, “Christ and the Doctrine,” *RH*, July 4, 1899, 424.

<sup>56</sup> A. G. Daniells, “The Bible Conference,” *RH*, August 21, 1919, 4.

<sup>57</sup> [W. W. Prescott] *Sabbath School Quarterly Lessons* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1921). These four quarterly lessons centered on Jesus.

<sup>58</sup> L. K. Dickson, “Portland, Oreg.,” *RH*, August 14, 1919, 26.

approach in the SDA church happened on January 5, 1919, in Charleston, West Virginia. This evangelistic meeting ended on May 11, 1919, with the result of 110 new believers. This public meeting occurred after a few months of postponing because of the pandemic. Charles T. Everson said that the money to build this wooden tabernacle was mainly from outside the church. This tabernacle was used since it was more expensive to rent a convenient theater or auditorium, especially for the long term.<sup>59</sup> About this new way of evangelism, J. S. Washburn, one of the speakers in the Charleston evangelistic meeting wrote,

We believe that God has blessed the tabernacle experiment, and that this means of promulgating the message can be followed out in many cities of the world, and practically mark a new era in our work. Thus with tents in the summer time, and tabernacles in the winter time, our ministers may be continually at work, every day in the year.<sup>60</sup>

Adventists began using this strategy—following the example of Billy Sunday who has used this wooden tabernacle since 1910—just at the end of WW I and when the permission to have mass gatherings was granted because of the pandemic.

The evangelistic effort in NAD between 1918 and 1922 was mainly the initiative of the church organization while other Protestant denominations were less enthusiastic about doing public evangelism because of financial problems. The organizational support was the strong point during this period, unfortunately, this was not followed by local congregation initiative. During this period, Adventist evangelists learned that messages centered on Jesus in their preaching were important while they shared the Adventist distinctive doctrines. The NAD evangelists also willed to try new ways to disseminate the message. They used popular newspapers and not only Adventist publications to share their sermons and religious

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<sup>59</sup> Weeks, *Adventist Evangelism in the Twentieth Century*, 131–32.

<sup>60</sup> J. S. Washburn, "Charleston, W. VA.," *RH*, May 8, 1919, 22.

ideas. They also attempted to try a new way, using tabernacle evangelistic meetings, to hold public evangelistic efforts.

*Message and Media for Evangelism  
Outside the NAD*

The emphasis to focus on Jesus was a statement in the 1918 Constitution and By-Laws of the General Conference. Under article number 2, it is stated that “the object of this Conference is to teach all nations the everlasting gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”<sup>61</sup> This declaration, which was formulated in 1913, indicates the focus on Jesus while the church proclaimed the Adventist distinctive doctrines. Since this Constitution was voted by the worldwide church, all SDA churches should follow it.

As the result, there were statements from Adventist leaders outside NAD that showed their agreement to this Constitution during this period. J. W. Westphal, a leader of Austral Union, in his annual report said that “we are keeping the true Sabbath of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and above all trying to follow in his footsteps.”<sup>62</sup> J. H. Smith, an officer of Bahama Mission stated, “After a month’s work at this point only one took a stand for the faith of Jesus.”<sup>63</sup> A division secretary of Far Eastern, C. C. Crisler wrote an annual report that “Japan offers unnumbered opportunities for the propagation of the gospel truth that is to prepare a people for the coming of Jesus.”<sup>64</sup> A superintendent from North Brazil Union Mission, H. Meyer, wrote enthusiastically about evangelism in his territory and mentioned that many Indians in the Arizona River basin

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<sup>61</sup> 1919 *Year Book*, 264.

<sup>62</sup> 1918 *Year Book*, 249.

<sup>63</sup> 1919 *Year Book*, 260

<sup>64</sup> 1920 *Year Book*, 281.

“never heard the name of Jesus.”<sup>65</sup> These statements described that the Adventist messages and Jesus Christ cannot be separated.

The membership growth outside the NAD was caused by the support from the central organization to send missionaries from the origin country even amidst financial difficulties. During this period (1918-1922), the GC sent 845 missionaries whereas the five years before (1913-1917) were 542.<sup>66</sup> The divisions and unions leaders outside NAD recognized this advantage. A leader of the South American Division acknowledged this by saying that new missionaries who came to their territory have “been a source of strength and encouragement.”<sup>67</sup> C. C. Crisler said that the 1920 year was “the best in our history” to receive foreign missionaries since nearly a hundred workers has come to this division.<sup>68</sup> The growth of the work outside NAD was at the expense of the growth in the origin country. Warren E. Howell, the educational department secretary of the GC observed, “The Macedonian cry is heard from every quarter of the globe, while our home base is being stripped to the minimum to supply the need. For example, in one of our most thrifty unions, the president told me a short time ago that no local conference in the union had more than two ordained ministers.”<sup>69</sup> The support of GC was essential for the spreading of the message.

The way that the non-NAD territory conducted evangelism varied from one division to another. In Africa, camp meetings could be an effective way to reach people. South African Union Conference reported that they had thousands of attendees in their several camp meetings.<sup>70</sup> In the West German Union, evangelistic meetings

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<sup>65</sup> 1920 Year Book, 291.

<sup>66</sup> 1923 Year Book, 249.

<sup>67</sup> 1919 Year Book, 248.

<sup>68</sup> 1921 Year Book, 206.

<sup>69</sup> Warren E. Howell, “An Emergency in Our Educational Work?” *RH*, May 1, 1919, 2.

<sup>70</sup> 1920 Year Book, 295.

in halls and chapels brought hundreds of souls.<sup>71</sup> In addition to this, the leaders of the Divisions and Unions testified that schools and medical works were effective to impress the truth or reaching the people with the message.

Most of the divisions and Unions reported that sharing the message through literature was the most effective media particularly to start the work in an unentered area. South American Division testified that the publishing work was successful to meet their target. It is “a record breaker for this field. Everywhere doors are opening wide for the message of truth.”<sup>72</sup> The work in Africa was progress because of this literature. The leader wrote, “We are expecting the coming year to make a strong campaign for our papers, for through this medium many minds are being awakened to the truth.”<sup>73</sup> In the Southern Asia Division, thoughtful work has been done in publishing work.<sup>74</sup> In Far Eastern Division, this literature reached “tens of thousands of homes” in a month.<sup>75</sup> In Europe, the Scandinavian Union reported that the “work is well organized, and our churches are busily employed scattering our smaller publications.”<sup>76</sup> In Australasian Division also testified that “the year has been successful in every way, and our band of bookmen in the field have been greatly encouraged in their activity.”<sup>77</sup> These statements show how important literature is for sharing messages and winning the souls for Jesus.

One very important thing is the church member training. In every Division outside the NAD, they could see the need for training schools. Initially, the purpose was to fill the lacking number of workers to labor in the fields. So far, the work outside NAD de-

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<sup>71</sup> 1922 *Year Book*, 219.

<sup>72</sup> 1919 *Year Book*, 249.

<sup>73</sup> 1919 *Year Book*, 254.

<sup>74</sup> 1921 *Year Book*, 211.

<sup>75</sup> 1921 *Year Book*, 207.

<sup>76</sup> 1922 *Year Book*, 220.

<sup>77</sup> 1922 *Year Book*, 234.



pended on missionaries from NAD. The training schools would fill this gap.

The following statements are showing the leaders from outside NAD's testimonies of the need for training schools to advance the work. C. C. Crisler realized the difficult situation of doing evangelism in Asia, and stated, "Groups of youth in training in many places [China, Singapore, and Korea], such as those that have been named, form a substantial basis of hope for days to come."<sup>78</sup> Based on this reason, then, there were more training schools in many places including in China and the Philippines during this period.<sup>79</sup> India also established a training school for a purpose of "steady growth."<sup>80</sup> A year after this statement, J. E. Fulton, a vice president of the Southern Asia Division stated an establishment of a training school "is second to none in importance. The training of our young people for the work should engage our strongest effort."<sup>81</sup>

Latin America Divisions showed their enthusiasm to establish more training schools. O. Montgomery, vice president of the South America Division, stated, "notwithstanding our earnest efforts to quickly train and develop men on the field, and the splendid work which is being done by our training schools in this direction. The need of South America is trained leadership and an increased staff of workers."<sup>82</sup> The training was a necessity. In order to meet the need of the "Brazilian youth ... to realize the call of the Lord to proclaim to their countrymen," a training school was to be established.<sup>83</sup> S. E. Kellman saw this need in Cuba as he wrote, "We must establish and maintain some sort of training school whereby we may educate native workers for this field, or we shall continue

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<sup>78</sup> 1919 Year Book, 245.

<sup>79</sup> 1922 Year Book, 231–32.

<sup>80</sup> 1920 Year Book, 284.

<sup>81</sup> 1921 Year Book, 211.

<sup>82</sup> 1920 Year Book, 286.

<sup>83</sup> 1920 Year Book, 288.

to make slow progress in the various lines of our work.”<sup>84</sup> A Caribbean Mission leader, C. V. Achenbach, wrote that “We have an earnest class of young people in training who will largely provide the necessary help for carrying the gospel to the thousands in this field.”<sup>85</sup> J. E. Bond, A leader from Mexican mission, stated that “perhaps our greatest need is a good strong training school.”<sup>86</sup>

The Australian and African divisions indicated a similar need. Australia focused on the training of medical workers.<sup>87</sup> Through this effort, Australia contributed to medical missionary work for the Southern Asia Pacific and Oceania territories. Africa also established a training school at Kaffir in the area of Bethel Mission.<sup>88</sup>

The spirit of training can be seen in most of the divisions outside NAD. About the growth of the church during the 1920s, Gary Land observes that “the non-Christian continents of Asia and Africa, as well as, Catholic Latin America, showed the most rapid rate of growth.”<sup>89</sup> The emphasis on training, during this period, appeared in the annual offering that fell on January 19. Organizational support for training is consistently needed in order for the church to grow healthy.

## CONCLUSION

The SDA church between 1918 and 1922 faced great challenges in spreading the truth. At the end of WW I, the economic situation was not stable and the Spanish flu pandemic contributed to limiting the access to reach souls for Christ. However, this denomination could overcome this difficulty. The growth rate of the NAD

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<sup>84</sup> 1920 *Year Book*, 296.

<sup>85</sup> 1922 *Year Book*, 235.

<sup>86</sup> 1922 *Year Book*, 240.

<sup>87</sup> 1922 *Year Book*, 235.

<sup>88</sup> 1920 *Year Book*, 295.

<sup>89</sup> Gary Land, “Shaping the Modern Church 1906-1930,” in *Adventism in America: A History* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 120.

was higher than the other Protestant denomination, even though it generally was lower than the overall growth in the SDA church. At the end of 1922, the membership outside NAD outnumbered the origin country. Several factors contributed to the growth of the SDA Church after WW I.

First, there was strong and wholeheartedly organizational support from the central church (higher organization) on evangelism. In the NAD after WW I, the central organization initiated and financed most of the evangelistic efforts that contributed to this period called institutional evangelism. For the outside NAD territory, the central church sent more missionaries to foster evangelism.

Second, there was a shift of paradigm that the message should focus on Jesus, not on the doctrines themselves. In the evangelistic meetings, the centrality of Jesus Christ got more attention than merely preaching the Adventist distinctive doctrine. This focus helped the audiences to see the Adventist doctrines in a more Christian way than a sectarian one.

Third, in the medium of how to reach people, the church was willing to adapt the most effective way according to the situation therein. In NAD, some evangelists changed the approach to society by adapting to new ways. Tabernacle evangelism, instead of camp meetings, was utilized in the proper situation. Outside the NAD, various ways were used to spreading the message. Several Divisions used schools and medical works to reach the people. For most Divisions in the GC, distributing the message through literature was effective in reaching the people. Popular newspapers were used to disseminate the Gospel in NAD. This approach was new for the NAD Adventist evangelists. For the outside NAD, the use of literature printed by Adventist publishing houses was extensively utilized to share the truth whenever the situation permitted.

Fourth, the church realized the need for more training centers to equip the church members to involve in evangelism. As the result, the establishment of training centers for doing theological, medical,

evangelical, and publishing works was rampant for the expansion of the message.

There are three principles of growing can be drawn from this research. First, after WW I from 1918 to 1922, if the church wants to maintain ordinary growth use institutional evangelism (planning and financial support mainly from the higher organization and not from the local church). But if the church wants to have more than usual growth use systematic evangelism (a joined planning, training, financing, and doing evangelism between the local church and the higher organization). Second, if the church wants to grow temporarily, do temporary training. If the church wants to grow consistently, do consistent training. It means training is a necessary element in order to maintain the church's growth. Third, the Adventist message will have the fullest power only if it focuses on Jesus Christ, not on doctrines themselves.