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# Adventist Journey

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## My Journey

I have been part of medical missionary work as an optician since 2012. When you put glasses on a three- or four-year-old child for the first time and he looks up into his mother’s face and he can see her for the first time, the smile and the connection that comes between them . . . words can’t explain it, but, you know, that’s straight from God.

Visit [nadadventist.org/ajdavidreed](http://nadadventist.org/ajdavidreed) for more of Reed’s story.

**DAVID REED,**  
optician, Washington



Cover photo by Art Brondo

**Dear Reader:** The publication in your hands represents the collaborative efforts of the North American Division and *Adventist Review* magazine (Justin Kim, editor), which follows *Adventist Journey* (after page 16). Please enjoy both magazines!

*Adventist Journey* (ISSN 1557-5519) is the journal of the North American Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The Northern Asia-Pacific Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists is the publisher. It is printed monthly by the Pacific Press® Publishing Association. Copyright © 2025. Send address changes to your local conference membership clerk. Contact information should be available through your local church.

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A. Vol. 8, No. 9-10 September/October 2025. **Adventist Journey Publication Board** G. Alexander Bryant (chair), Kimberly Luste Maran (secretary), Kyoshin Ahn, Judy R. Glass, Wendy Eberhardt, Adam Fenner, Minner Labrador, Calvin Watkins Sr., Ivan Williams Sr., Rick Remmers, Julio Muñoz, Karnik Doukmetzian, legal advisor **Scripture References** Unless otherwise noted, all Bible references are taken from the *The Holy Bible, New International Version*. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

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## ADVENTIST JOURNEY

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Visit us online!

*Adventist World* and *Adventist Review* magazines have come together, starting with the July/August edition! Check out the “new” *Review* right here, after the *Adventist Journey* magazine pages. And for the rest of 2025, *Adventist Journey* will be published every other month as we plan for an update coming in 2026.



G. Alexander Bryant, North American Division president, shares the NAD report during the General Conference Session on July 5, 2025.  
*Ronald Pollard*

# GOING FORTH TOGETHER IN MISSION

**Highlights from the General Conference Session,  
the Adventist Church's official business meeting.**

**BY CHRISTELLE AGBOKA**

**A**fter holding a truncated, five-day session in June 2022, in St. Louis, Missouri, with a virtual exhibit hall and a portion of delegates attending online, the General Conference held its sixty-second business session in the same location on July 3-12, 2025.

The 10-day session also included concerts, a prayer venue, programming for two Sabbaths, and the return of the GC Session exhibit hall with 1,100 booth spaces. Weekend attendance at the event included at least 40,000.

A total of 2,508 delegates attended the business session in person. Along with vibrant worship services, the business sessions included updates to church policy, reports on initiatives, and the election of world church leaders—including GC officers and vice presidents, department directors and associate directors, and officers from the church's 13 divisions. Leaders also presented presidential, secretariat, and treasury reports from the GC, along with department ministry reports and division reports.\*

## **North American Division Report**

On Saturday evening, July 5, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America (NAD) presented the first division report at the 2025 General Conference Session. NAD president G. Alexander Bryant, executive secretary Kyoshin Ahn, and treasurer Judy R. Glass introduced the video, which focused on the division's ministry activities and accom-

plishments during the past three years. While the time frame covered for this report was shortened due to the global pandemic, the report shared that the division's impact over these years was far-reaching and significant.

NAD spans nine countries and territories and 14 time zones, with a membership of more than 1.3 million in more than 7,000 congregations, worshipping in more than 40 languages. Its territory also includes close to 1,000 schools, 13 universities and colleges, a vast network of hospitals and clinics, and several media ministries.

Since 2022, NAD members and leaders across Bermuda, Canada, Guam-Micronesia, and the U.S. have united in their individual and collective answer to Christ's disciple-making call, embodying the strategic plan of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church: "I will go." Under the quinquennial theme, "Together in Mission," with three focal points of multiplying disciples, harnessing media for outreach, and mentoring current and next generation leaders, the division has made strides in spreading the distinctive, Christ-centered Seventh-day Adventist message of hope and wholeness in its territory.

From 2022 through 2024, nearly 205,000 people publicly accepted Christ through baptism, including 1,215 young people at the 2024 Believe the Promise International Pathfinder Camporee in Gillette, Wyoming. They join members in 6,810 churches and 894 companies.

In 2024, division leadership reflected on the biblical promise that the Spirit of God would be manifested at the earth's close, as it was on the day of Pentecost (see Acts 2). Thus, they conceptualized Pentecost 2025—the NAD's invitation for church leaders and members to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and hold at least 3,000 proclamation initiatives division-wide. The report indicated that 5,200 churches and schools registered to participate and are engaging in creative evangelism in their regions.

Pentecost 2025 is a reminder that the work of multiplication is not just for church leaders; every member is called to prayerfully use their gifts and spheres of influence to make disciples who make other disciples. The report challenged the audience to consider how they could use innovative outreach, digital platforms, and traditional methods to spread the good news throughout North America and beyond.

The report also highlighted the division's expanding media ministry, noting the growth of online worship during the COVID-19 pandemic and the continued blend of in-person and digital services. NAD media ministries, including *It Is Written*, *Voice of Prophecy*, *Breath of Life*, *Faith for Today*, *Jesus 101*, *La Voz de la Esperanza*, and *LifeTalk Radio*, continued programming while also launching new evangelistic efforts. Hope Channel Canada reached more than a million viewers in its 2024 debut. Digital initiatives such as the 10,000 Digital Disciples, online prayer movements, and new resources have strengthened outreach, and the Sonscreen Film Festival continued to showcase young filmmakers and produce values-based stories in collaboration with Adventist institutions.

The next segment of the report centered on mentorship, sharing that the NAD recognizes that the

continued success of the church is in the hands of youth. Division-wide mentorship efforts that encompass Pathfinders, young adult leadership training, public campus ministries, schools, early childhood education institutions, colleges and universities, NextGen ministry initiatives, and mentorship and training from division leaders were displayed through photos and video from across the NAD.

Another key mentorship area mentioned—training cohorts—are equipping and empowering the many conference, union, and division leaders who are new to their roles amid massive leadership changes since 2021. The aim is to equip young people and current leadership to stand firm in their

Pentecost 2025 is a reminder that the work of multiplication is not just for church leaders; every member is called to prayerfully use their gifts and spheres of influence to make disciples who make other disciples.

## New General Conference President Elected

**E**rton C. Köhler was elected to the office of the president of the General Conference on July 4, 2025, during the 62nd GC Session in St. Louis, Missouri.

Köhler's election marks the beginning of his first term as the spiritual and administrative leader of a worldwide movement that spans more than 200 countries and includes more than 23 million members.

"Before any other word, I'd like to tell you that I move forward renewed in my confidence in the Lord and in the church," Köhler said.

The nomination came to the floor after prayerful deliberation by the Nominating Committee, composed of delegates from each of the church's global divisions and attached fields. The committee's recommendation was then presented to the delegates in attendance, who voted to confirm Köhler's nomination during the business session at the Dome in America's Center.

Since his election to the position of GC secretary during the 2021 Spring Meeting held at the church headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, Köhler has championed a bold and prophetic call for the global church to refocus its mission. Under his leadership, the church launched the *Mission Refocus* initiative. Before joining the GC in 2021, Köhler served as president of the South American Division since 2007.

With his new role as GC president, Köhler is expected to continue advancing this mission-driven framework, mobilizing members to become disciple-makers, aligning church operations with frontline ministry, and strengthening the church's prophetic voice in a rapidly changing world.

—Adventist News Network



faith as they serve God. As shared in the video report, these efforts are bearing fruit on campuses, churches, and workplaces division-wide.

The NAD strives to exemplify faith in action through its community service projects, healthcare systems, and local and global missions, and provided several examples of this in the report. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, community outreach efforts surged, with more than 1,500 congregations opening food distribution centers. Furthermore, Adventist Community Service leaders offered critical disaster response, including spiritual care, after hurricanes, shootings, wildfires, and other events in the past three years.

The five healthcare systems in the division continued providing holistic healing during this time. As of 2025, these systems encompass more than 100 hospitals, 2,700 medical offices, urgent care centers, outpatient clinics, and surgery centers. Through their research, health exams, and surgeries, they exhibit faith in action, offering quality care and compassionate service in the vein of Christ's healing ministry.

The report specifically honed in the NAD's strong focus on mission work, which included mention of the thousands of missionaries annually sent out globally and with the division itself. And across North America, the division is making inroads in reaching more than 1,200 tribes and Indigenous nations. For example, March 2025 marked the launch of Diné Adventist Radio's first full-power FM station—KDHH 89.5 FM, going live to reach listeners across Tuba City, Kaibeto, and the Western Agency of the Navajo Nation. The groundbreaking project aiming to reach the Navajo population with the Seventh-day Adventist message of hope, health, and healing came to fruition after years of laying the foundation.

The video report concluded with this affirmation: "The mission isn't slowing down. It's growing. We are together in mission. The call is ours. We will go."

### NAD Officer Elections

On Monday afternoon, July 7, 2025, delegates at the 62nd General Conference (GC) Session voted in favor of the nomination of G. Alexander Bryant as president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America. Bryant, the division's current president, began his presidency in July 2020, when the GC executive committee elected him to replace the late Daniel R. Jackson, who retired on July 1, 2020. Bryant was elected by the General Conference in session in 2022.

Following his election, Bryant shared a few remarks. "I'm very humbled at the opportunity to serve the church here in the North American Division and [by] the confidence that the people, the nominating committee, my [NAD] caucus, and this entire body have placed in me," he said. "In the [NAD], our theme has been 'Together in Mission,' and I believe the Lord wants us to double down on that," he continued. "We look forward to every entity in our North American Division territory . . . working together to help finish the work so we can go home and see our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

During the morning business meeting on July 8, at the 2025 General Conference Session in St. Louis, Missouri, North American Division (NAD) executive secretary Kyoshin Ahn and treasurer Judy R. Glass were elected to serve another term when session delegates voted to approve the nominating committee recommendations for all 13 division secretaries and treasurers. Ahn and Glass are set to serve the 2025-2030 term.



"I consider it a privilege and honor to serve my NAD family over the next five years," said Ahn.

When asked what the next quinquennium might look like, Ahn shared that prayerfully the NAD "has been carrying out these 3M's strategies — mentorship, media, and multiply — and we are going to continue our efforts in accomplishing what we have envisioned for this decade."

"It's an honor to be elected and to serve the North American Division. It's a big responsibility, but I know that God will be with me on every step," said Glass after being elected.

Glass, the NAD treasurer since June 2023, added, "My main priority going forward is to keep the division in good financial condition and continue to be a good steward of the money that we've been entrusted with—and to look at the ways that we can build the division and make it stronger. We [want to continue to] support our entities and organizations throughout [the NAD]."

—Kimberly Luste Maran contributed to this report.

\* Visit [nadadventist.org/news/nad-coverage-2025-gc-session](http://nadadventist.org/news/nad-coverage-2025-gc-session) for the North American Division's coverage of this year's GC Session.



Delegates hold up their voting cards during the 2025 General Conference Session. *Bryant Taylor*



Delegates from different parts of the world find a moment to mingle before a meeting at the 2025 GC Session. *Charles Ed II Aguilar*

## Highlights from the GC President's Report at Session

In his report during the 62nd General Conference Session on July 3, 2025, then General Conference (GC) president Ted N. C. Wilson presented a global overview of Seventh-day Adventist mission during the 2022–2025 period. His remarks focused on Total Member Involvement (TMI), evangelistic campaigns, education, health outreach, and church growth around the world.

“We give God all the glory for what He has done through you, members and leaders of His remnant church,” Wilson said.

Wilson opened by acknowledging global crises such as wars, disasters, and division, then reaffirmed the church's mission amid these challenges. Referencing Revelation 12:17 and a statement by Ellen G. White, he emphasized the faithfulness and global reach of God's people in these final days.

“God will have a people,” Wilson said. “A chosen people from all nations, all tongues, in all parts of the habitable world.”

One of his first mission reports focused on Papua New Guinea and PNG for Christ, where more than 10,000 home Bible study groups were formed in advance of large-scale public evangelism. Volunteers provided more than 23,000 free medical treatments before the meetings began, opening doors for spiritual engagement. Thousands were baptized as a result of the multi-phase outreach effort.

Wilson also emphasized the Adventist Church's efforts to reach urban and secular populations. In Prague, Czech Republic, meetings were held under the “Christ for Europe” initiative, highlighting mission in post-Christian societies. In San Francisco, California, members partnered with Streams of Light International to distribute literature and conduct multilingual evangelistic meetings. The campaign included

evening services, translation support, and free meals. A musical highlight featured a Slavic choir composed of Adventists from both Ukraine and Russia, offering a message of unity in faith.

“Children play a vital role in Total Member Involvement,” Wilson stated, highlighting the involvement of children and youth in spreading the gospel.

In Ecuador, more than 800 children participated in the “Evangelism Kids” project, which teaches mission as an active lifestyle. In Burundi, a girl named TMI—named after the initiative—prayed for a voice for mission and then used her singing and personal witness to bring her teachers and classmates to church.

Across East-Central Africa, more than 50,000 evangelistic meetings were held, leading to more than 900,000 baptisms. In Zambia, 80,000 baptisms were recorded during the “Impact SID” campaign. In Eswatini, Prince Bandzile Dlamini and four of his warriors were baptized, publicly affirming their commitment to share the gospel.

Since 2022 Adventist media has expanded exponentially. Hope Channel International expanded its network to 84 channels and introduced AI dubbing technology capable of translating video content into more than 30 languages. In 2023, Hope Channel's Hope for Africa campaign contributed to 194,000 baptisms. Adventist World Radio (AWR) added 187 new radio and internet stations. AWR also distributed more than 73,000 audio devices and received more than 80,000 Bible study requests from its new station in Bogotá, Colombia.

—*Angelica Sanchez*

# “PITCHING” IT FORWARD

G. Alexander Bryant, North American Division president, recognizes both the St. Louis Cardinals organization’s generosity in his youth and the church members who helped transform his life as he throws out the first pitch at a baseball game.

**BY KIMBERLY LUSTE MARAN**



Left to right: Desiree Bryant, a North American Division (NAD) Ministerial Association associate director, and G. Alexander Bryant, NAD president, pose before Bryant heads to the field for the St. Louis Cardinals’ first pitch on July 10, 2025.

Photography by Kimberly Luste Maran

On Thursday, July 10, 2025, as the General Conference Session was winding down, G. Alexander Bryant wound up his pitching arm as he chose a different dinner than the rest of the week. At 6:45 p.m. CT he threw out the first pitch at the St. Louis Cardinals game. It was a rare and deeply meaningful opportunity for the president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America (NAD).

At age 9 Bryant and his family moved from Arkansas to St. Louis for his father's job. Bryant attended St. Louis's Columbia Elementary School and Sumner High School. In his youth the Cardinals' community schools access program gave tickets to straight-A students. A baseball fan, Bryant worked hard and received tickets to more than 20 regular season games during the course of several years.

"This generosity allowed me to see a world beyond my school, beyond my neighborhood," said Bryant, who, while in his 30s, was one of the youngest on record to serve as a conference president in the Adventist Church. "During a pivotal time in my development it gave me a glimpse of opportunities and possibilities for my future that I would not have had access to if it weren't for going to those games."

Simultaneously in those formative years Adventist neighbors visited Bryant's home. These laypeople shared some materials with the family and asked if the Bryants would be interested in Bible studies. A 14-year-old Bryant took them up on the offer and ended up being the first in his family to be baptized.

"The reason I'm so passionate about things like Pentecost 2025 is that I am a recipient of someone going out, knocking



Left to right: Todd McFarland, General Conference deputy general counsel; Melissa Reid, an associate director for NAD Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL); G. Alexander Bryant, NAD president; Desiree Bryant, an associate director for the NAD Ministerial Association; and Orlan Johnson, NAD PARL director, pose for a photo op before Bryant throws the first pitch on July 10, 2025.

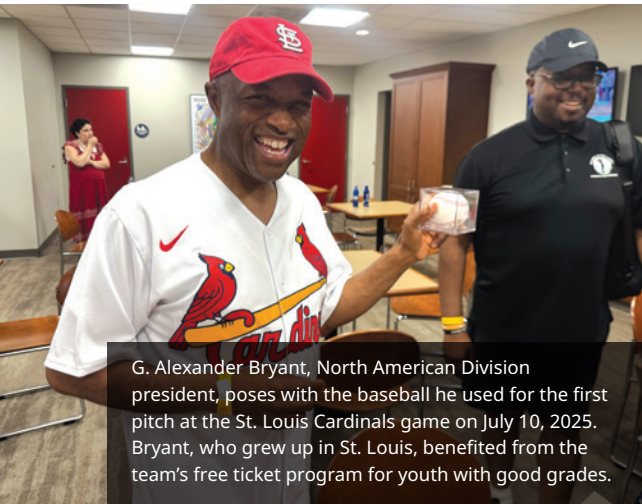
on a door, and asking a family if they want to do Bible studies," Bryant shared. "They were not pastors and not preachers. They were not paid. They were doing it because they wanted to spread the love of Christ. I would not be here were it not for someone having that type of passion."

And those members did more than give Bible studies. In the growing-up years that followed, they provided him a place to keep the Sabbath—away from the TV and distractions at home—and he rotated spending Sabbaths after church with several families.

"They poured into me at that time. . . . Different families kind of adopted me, and every Sabbath they would take turns inviting me home so that I didn't have to go back to a non-Adventist atmosphere," said Bryant. "Later on, my family did become Adventist. My heart is here in this city because of what they've done for me."

### Pitching It Forward

Temperatures were still hovering around 90 degrees Fahrenheit when Bryant and his wife, Desiree, a North American Division Ministerial Association associate director, walked into the baseball stadium and into the first pitch waiting room. Several Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL) representatives gathered with the Bryants and others celebrating, on that same evening,



G. Alexander Bryant, North American Division president, poses with the baseball he used for the first pitch at the St. Louis Cardinals game on July 10, 2025. Bryant, who grew up in St. Louis, benefited from the team's free ticket program for youth with good grades.

the community-focused Cardinals Disability Pride Night. After about 15 minutes the Cardinals' representative came out with the first-pitch baseball and handed to Bryant. Rolling his shoulders, flexing his fingers, Bryant gripped the ball. He swung his arm slowly a few times, thinking about the windup and toss to come. He lofted it gently in the air—one, twice—big smile lighting his face as he continued to conversate.

"This is not only a coming home for Elder Bryant and a chance to step out on the field with appreciation for the outreach of the Cardinals all those years ago," Orlan Johnson, NAD PARL director, said. "It's an opportunity to share about the Seventh-day Adventist Church with those in the stands and those watching on their screens."

Johnson continued: "Although our outreach is different than a baseball organization's outreach, our church is committed to community engagement and outreach, and Elder Bryant being here this evening is indicative of his leading in a true witnessing fashion."

### On the Mound

The signal was given for Bryant to make his way through the corridors and tunnels onto the field. Cell phone cameras clicked and clicked as he and Desiree posed with the team mascot. The announcer, just a few feet from the

Bryants, read from a script describing Bryant's gratitude for opportunities the team had provided in his youth, details about the Adventist Church in North America and worldwide (including its membership numbers and impact), and Bryant's role today in leading the NAD. His voice echoed throughout the stadium as cameras continued to click and video cameras rolled. Suddenly it was time for the pitch. Bryant strode out to the mound.

Ball in hand, Bryant focused on the plate, the catcher's glove. Taking a deep breath, he lifted his arm in the air and let the ball fly. A curveball with a hop just before the plate went into the mitt of the awaiting catcher. With an ear-to-ear smile Bryant walked back to home plate for a photo and the baseball.

"I had remarkable opportunities growing up here in St. Louis, and it's been a remarkable opportunity to be able to see how God's church works from a close-up perspective all those years ago—it's been very impactful in my life," he said, sharing that toward the end his final year of high school he dropped out—but not for long. "The local Adventist academy principal found out I had dropped out, and he told me that God had something special for my life and that I needed to go back to school," Bryant shared. "It had been about six weeks, and I felt that I was too far behind."

The principal disagreed and gave Bryant a blueprint: go to each teacher and tell them that he'd made a mistake. That he'd make up all the work, and that he'd be at the top of the class and graduate with honors. Bryant did, they let him back into school, and he kept his promise. Bryant went on to Oakwood University (at that time Oakwood College), earning undergraduate theology and business degrees, and then continuing through a doctoral degree, and serving the church as a pastor and administrator.

"My story would not be possible were it not for faithful members of the Northside Seventh-day Adventist Church who nurtured me," added Bryant.

"I'm grateful for the experience today. But more than that, I am grateful for our message of hope. Let's go and tell the world."

*Kimberly Luste Maran is Communication director for the North American Division and editor of Adventist Journey. Visit <https://www.nadadventist.org/news/pitching-it-forward> to read online and watch a video of the event.*

### NAD News and Features From GC Session

With the return to General Conference Session programming many were accustomed to in the pre-COVID-19 era, there was not only a return to full delegate attendance in person, but the exhibit hall came to life with ministry representatives from around the world. Friends met up with friends, ministry was exhibited front and center, and many again experienced what some call a "foretaste of heaven." To see more feature and news coverage of GC Session from the NAD team, visit: [nadadventist.org/news/nad-coverage-2025-gc-session](https://www.nadadventist.org/news/nad-coverage-2025-gc-session).

BY IVAN L. WILLIAMS, SR.

# Honoring Our Shepherds, Appreciating Their Families

**A**nd I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding" (Jer. 3:15, KJV).

Each October, churches take time to intentionally express gratitude for one of the most important and often underappreciated callings in the body of Christ: the ministry of the pastor and their family. Pastor Appreciation Month, sometimes called Clergy Appreciation Month, is a beautiful opportunity to pause and acknowledge the tireless work, quiet sacrifices, and steadfast love that shepherds—and those who walk alongside them—pour into their congregations year-round.

Pastors not only preach; they give spiritual counsel, vision-cast, and sacrificially walk with us through life's most joyous celebrations and its heaviest valleys. They visit the sick, comfort the grieving, pray for the prodigal, and counsel the weary. They teach God's Word faithfully, even when the culture resists it. They lead with both courage and compassion, often carrying burdens we never see.

And behind the pastor stands a family that also carries the weight of ministry. Spouses and children share in the calling—not because they chose the pulpit, but because they love the one who did. They often give up personal time, privacy, and sometimes even their own dreams in order to support the demands of pastoral life. They open their home for fellowship, share their loved one with the congregation, and quietly serve in ways that rarely receive recognition.

The apostle Paul's words in 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13 capture the spirit of this month: "Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other." This is more than a suggestion—it's an invitation to intentional love and respect for our shepherds.

## Why Pastor and Family Appreciation Matters

Ministry can be deeply rewarding, but it can also be exhausting. Studies have shown that many pastors experience seasons of burnout, loneliness, and discouragement. The constant emotional weight of caring for others, the spiritual warfare that comes with

leading God's people, and the expectations of being "on call" 24/7 can take a toll on both the pastor and their family.

When a church family takes the time to encourage, uplift, and bless its pastor, it sends a powerful message: *You are seen. You are valued. You are loved.* It also breathes life into their ministry, giving them fresh strength to continue serving with joy. Appreciation fuels endurance.

It's important that we don't focus just on the pastor during this month. A spouse often shoulders ministry responsibilities without official titles or pay. The spouse may be the quiet prayer warrior, the behind-the-scenes organizer, or simply the pastor's listening ear.

Pastor's children also deserve recognition. They grow up in a "glass house," where their lives are often under more scrutiny than their peers'. They share their parent with an entire congregation and learn early on the reality of sacrifice. Your words of encouragement and understanding can make a profound difference in their lives.

## A Final Word

This October, let us be intentional in celebrating Pastor and Family Appreciation Month. Let's remember that we are honoring not only a role but also the people who have devoted their lives to pointing us to Jesus. May our words be sincere, our actions generous, and our prayers fervent.

To our pastors and their families: thank you. Thank you for answering the call when it would have been easier to say no. Thank you for loving, even when it costs you. Thank you for standing in the gap, praying, teaching, and walking alongside. Your labor is not in vain, and your reward is great in heaven.

We see you. We honor you. We love you.

Pastors not only preach; they give spiritual counsel, vision-cast, and sacrificially walk with us.

*Ivan L. Williams, Sr., is North American Division vice president for strategic leadership and Ministerial Association director.*

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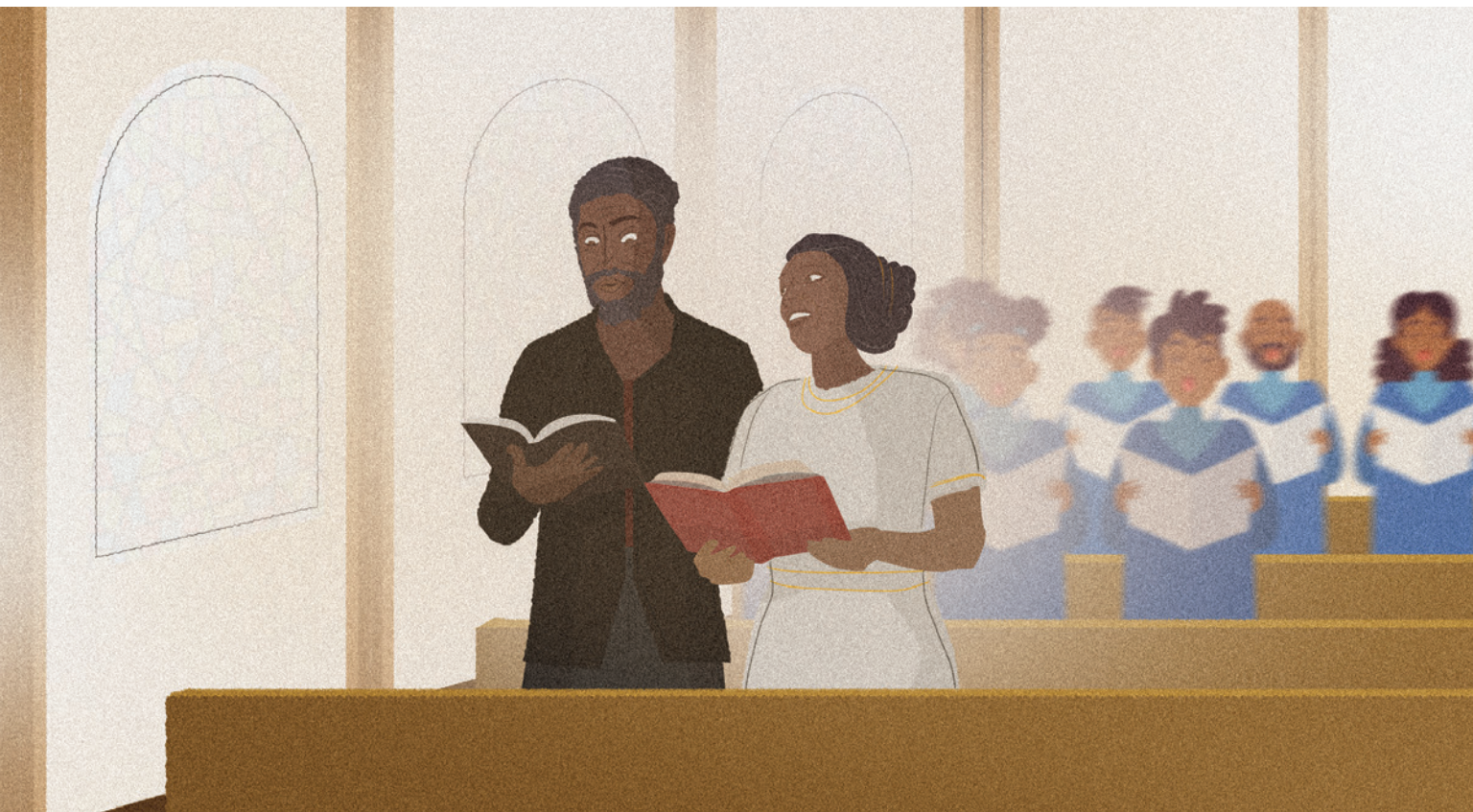
# Sherry and Gary

are ready to retire next year.

They need some advice on tax implications and ways to navigate this next stage in life. They are prepared to get more involved at church but want to ensure their bills are taken care of before they retire and give a significant donation to the children's programs.



To learn more about Sherry and Gary's next steps—scan the QR code or visit [willplan.org/SherryandGary](https://willplan.org/SherryandGary)



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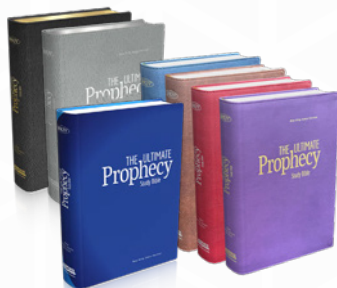
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