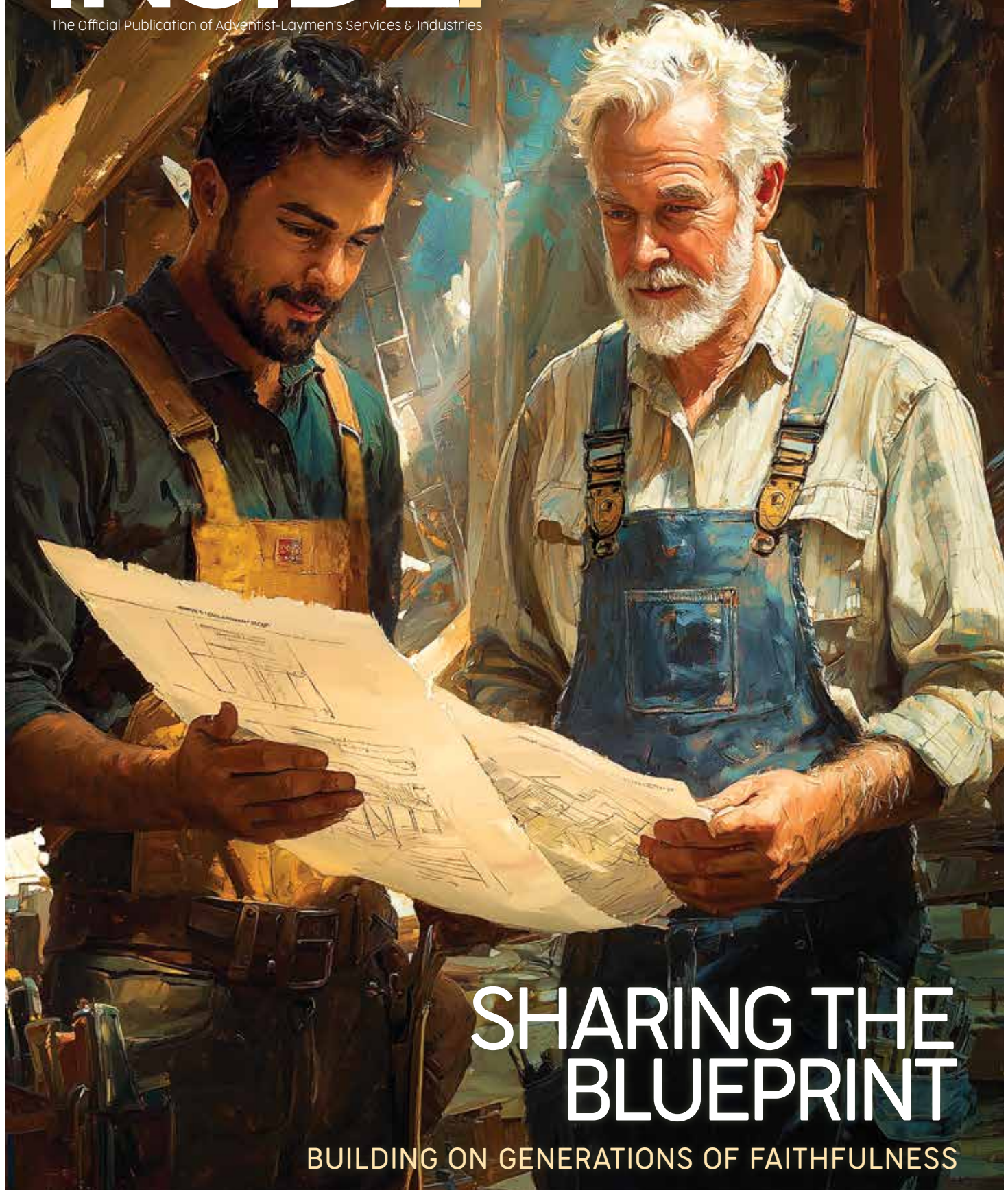


SUMMER/FALL 2025

INSIDE *ASI*

The Official Publication of Adventist-Laymen's Services & Industries



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EDITOR'S NOTE

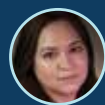
SHARING THE BLUEPRINT: Building on Generations of Faithfulness

In this issue of *Inside ASI*, we honor the leadership of individuals who have shaped ASI, helping it grow into a force for mission while keeping in line with the legacy of the Madison model. The articles within these pages highlight the stories of remarkable people—Harold Lance, Dwight Hilderbrandt, Garwin and Denzil McNeilus, Mark Finley, and Dan Houghton—each of whom has made a lasting impact on ASI's mission, growth, and direction. They have been instrumental in advancing ASI's vision of supporting self-supporting ministries and creating opportunities for lay-led evangelism.

Each of these leaders has played a vital role in building the framework that has allowed ASI to flourish as a catalyst for mission. Their collective wisdom, innovation, and dedication have not only helped strengthen the organization but have also paved the way for future generations of laypeople to continue advancing the Gospel. From fostering partnerships with the laity and clergy to championing the selfless, sacrificial work of mission, they have shown us the power of collaboration and vision.

ASI's strength lies in the blueprint it helped to create, a blueprint that continues to guide mission and inspires all who join in the work of spreading God's message to the world.

Jessica Lozano
Inside ASI Editor



Jessica Lozano is the Communication Director for ASI.

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Sharing the Blueprint

EDITORIAL by JAMES HARTLEY

What is the purpose of ASI? Why does it exist? Aren't church events and institutions enough for the work of God? These are questions that have often been posed to me as I've traveled the past twenty years in ministry. While many thoughts and answers to these questions come to mind, maybe in the simplest terms I can look at my own experience and say, I wouldn't be in the church today if it wasn't for ASI and its ministries.

If it wasn't for a team of dedicated lay members operating a mission-focused vegetarian restaurant, I'm not sure if I would have ever been introduced to the

SDA church. That first contact at the restaurant led to my connecting with other, connected ASI ministries, eventually leading to my conversion and baptism. So, what is the purpose of ASI? It's about inspiring and engaging our church membership to be more directly invested in God's work, helping to hasten our Lord's return. For too long we have leaned heavily on the ordained ministers to do the work of the church. Ninety-nine percent of the Seventh-day Adventist church are lay members. They are the army of God that needs to be mobilized and put to action if we are to finish God's work.

The roots of ASI involve this very

effort. In 1904, the Southern Union was the smallest of all the unions in the US. It was largely an unworked field and a bit undesirable, especially to a northerner from that timeframe. Appeal after appeal was made for church members to move to the south and make an influence for God. Few responded until a small team from Emmanuel Missionary College (EMC), now Andrews University, answered the call, left their positions with the church in Michigan and moved south with the aid of Edson White and his missionary boat, the Morning Star. Ellen White accompanied the bold journey as she was highly interested in opening a school that would train lay



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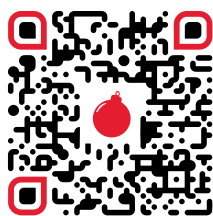


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members for self-supporting missionary service. Through vision and providence, God led them to a large farm property in Madison, Tennessee, eight miles northeast of Nashville. They were led by Edward Sutherland, who had just resigned his position as president of EMC to embark on this precarious yet, mission-driven journey to the south. Directed by inspired counsel, the team established the first self-supporting ministry in the church. This school would bring no financial or legal liability to the organized church. They would work in harmony with the church, maintaining strong communication channels, while they advanced the mission of the church sacrificially. A board of directors comprising faithful church members who were committed to the vision and purpose of Madison College would be responsible for its success.

The education had an effective blend of agriculture and industrial skills, along with academics in education, health, and the Bible. Students gained a well-rounded balanced education, ready to meet the challenges of the mission field. One-by-one, graduates began opening ministries of their own as the work spread throughout the south. By 1942, there were 47 self-supporting institutions operating, most of which were heavily influenced by Madison College. These ministries, largely educational or health related, were healing and educating thousands of people. These institutions also brought many opportunities for employment for church members.

As the Southern Union flourished through vibrant lay activity and church growth, attention was brought to the General Conference which recommended a new department be established called ASI, the Association of Seventh-day Adventist Self-Supporting Institutions. Edward Sutherland, from Madison, was appointed as its first president. ASI would formally connect these institutions with the church as recognized “supporting ministries.” It

would also connect the ministries together as they gathered year by year at ASI conventions to get inspired and recharged.

In the late 1970s, ASI expanded its vision by opening its membership to businesses and professionals among our church membership who wanted to help strengthen the hundreds of supporting ministries around the world and to inspire each church member on what they can also do personally to “Share Christ in the Marketplace.” Today, ASI (Adventist-Laymen’s Services & Industries) is a thriving organization that makes a tremendous impact on the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In recent decades, ASI has continually refined that original “blueprint,” incubating innovative lay-driven ministries—from marketplace outreach and self-supporting health centers to digital evangelism and mission-focused enterprises—that have energized church members around the globe. ASI not only equips individuals to serve but also injects fresh ideas and momentum into the organized church, ensuring we remain agile, unified and ever more effective in hastening the Lord’s return.

The blueprint for finishing the work of God has been given to us through scripture and inspiration. It requires individual consecration and total member involvement. All are called to serve God and to help hasten our Lord’s return. ASI is helping to cast that vision, to inspire, equip, and mobilize the lay members of our church for service.



James Hartley is the general vice president for ASI and serves as the executive vice president for Outpost Centers International. James is engaged in ministry with his wife, Dani, and their daughters, Layla and Lauren.

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FORT EDUCATION AFRICA - Weimar, CA
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GEMS OF TRUTH - San Diego, CA
GOOD NEWS TV - ROCKY MOUNTAIN - Longmont, CO
JOY BROADCASTING NETWORK - Apopka, FL
KIND-HEARTS CHILD AID DEVELOPMENT - Walla Walla, WA
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QUO VADIS MINISTRY - Vallejo, CA
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DRAFTING THE BLUEPRINT

Harold Lance and the Legacy of ASI and ASI Missions, Inc.

It was 1980 in Lake Kiamesha, New York. The ASI convention had just wrapped, and Harold Lance stood among a modest group of attendees, marveling at what had just happened.

That year, despite a small turnout of just 125 attendees, members gave an unprecedented \$105,000 to fund a city

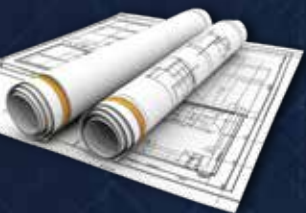
evangelism project in New York. It was five times more than the usual offering.

Lance, then a successful trial lawyer in Southern California, had just chaired his first ASI convention. What began that year, though, was far more than a generous outpouring.

Later that night, a member approached him and said: “We shouldn’t

be satisfied with \$100,000. We’re living in momentous times. What if we aimed for ten million?”

The challenge was laid at Lance’s feet. If ASI were to create an organization to support large-scale mission development and oversight, the ASI member would donate the first million to the cause.



THE BLUEPRINT IN PROGRESS

ASI Through the Years



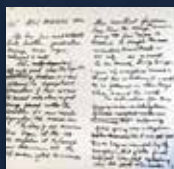
1904 – Madison College

Founded by E.A. Sutherland and Percy Magan, this self-supporting institution in Tennessee emphasized health, agriculture, and education. It became the philosophical foundation for what would later become ASI’s model for independent lay-led ministry.

1947

1947 – First ASI Convention & Founding of ASI

The Association of Seventh-day Adventist Self-Supporting Institutions (ASI) held its first convention, officially organizing ministries into a collaborative network of lay-led schools, clinics, businesses, and outreach efforts.



1982 – Founding of ASI Missions, Inc.

Established as ASI’s nonprofit entity to manage offerings and project funds with transparency, independence, and agility while collaborating with denominational partners. *Pictured: Harold Lance’s handwritten notes announcing the creation of ASI Missions, Inc.*

“Suddenly,” Lance says now, “the project lurched from talk to reality.”

That moment gave birth to ASI Missions, Inc., an entity that would become the operational and financial engine behind some of ASI’s most recognizable projects. But more than that, it captured the spirit of what ASI has always been—a partnership between vision and faithfulness, between lay conviction and church mission.

A MOVEMENT ROOTED IN NECESSITY

Lance, now 93, has been called a “grandfather” of ASI—a term not of hierarchy, but of historical memory. His fingerprints are on nearly every development within the Adventist-Layman’s Services and Industries (ASI) network over the past fifty years. Yet he’s quick to point away from himself and toward the movement’s foundations.

“ASI in North America is entirely unique,” he explains. “It wasn’t just an idea to get laypeople involved. It was a response to a real need.”

That need, as Lance describes it, traces back to Madison College, the self-supporting institution in Tennessee that trained workers for medical missionary and gospel service. Madison’s model sparked a proliferation of independent

ministries across the American South in the early 20th century—ministries that both blessed and perplexed the organized church. These were not official church institutions, but they were deeply Adventist in identity and mission. How could the two work together?

“ASI gives people a picture of what’s possible in service. It shows what laypeople can do when they follow God’s leading.”

—Harold Lance

“ASI was formed so the church and lay ministries could sit at the same table—not as rivals, but as collaborators,” Lance says.

The earliest members were connected to Madison and institutions like it.

Though they were independent, their work filled a vacuum in underserved territories. It was NC Wilson, General Conference vice president, who helped bring the laypeople and the church together. Wilson’s exposure to Madison brought him a deeper understanding of the lay cause, and under his guidance, ASI was officially formed in the 1940s as a General Conference–affiliated body. “ASI’s roots were at the highest level of the church,” says Lance.

GROWING PAINS AND GROWING UP

Lance first attended an ASI convention in the early 1970s. At the time, he was a well-established trial lawyer serving on the Southeastern California Conference executive committee. ASI at that time, he says, still carried a more casual atmosphere and was a little bit “cowboy.”

But in the late ’70s and early ’80s, a quiet shift began. ASI moved from being a loosely structured group to a professionally managed, mission-focused ministry organization. Church leaders and lay members had to wrestle with questions of ownership, governance, and voice. Lance recalls a defining moment at an ASI convention when laypeople asserted that they were



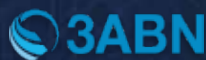
1983 – Happiness Digest Project

ASI launched this literature initiative focused on distributing *Steps to Christ* under the title *Happiness Digest*. It printed millions of copies and sparked a long-running ASI emphasis on low-cost, high-impact literature.



1990 – ASI Book Project

An extension of the Happiness Project, this made nine core Ellen G. White books—including *The Desire of Ages*, *The Great Controversy*, and *Christ’s Object Lessons*—available for purchase and distribution at subsidized prices. Nearly 9 million books have been sold for giveaway. NAD later adopted the books to gift to new members.



1985 – Launch of 3ABN

Danny Shelton presented his vision at ASI’s 1985 convention in Big Sky, Montana. A spontaneous slot opened due to a storm, and donations received that weekend launched 3ABN—a lay-led Adventist TV network that has since become a global ministry.

co-architects of the mission. “That’s when the culture changed,” he says.

Lance served as ASI president in the early 1980s and later led ASI Missions, Inc. for nearly two decades. Under his guidance, ASI launched its signature global projects—from printing millions of *Steps to Christ* through the Happiness Book Project, to providing metal roofs in the Roofs Across Africa project, to partnering with Maranatha Volunteers International on the One-Day Church initiative. But just as importantly, ASI championed the “small stuff”: quiet ministries, start-ups, and mom-and-pop medical missions that never made headlines but transformed lives.

“The best stories,” he says, “aren’t always the big ones. They’re the hundreds of small ministries that ASI has encouraged and helped. Places like Riverside Farm in Zambia, which recently needed solar power in order to refrigerate their banana crop, for example.”

FOUNDATIONS AND FRIENDSHIPS

In 1989, after decades in law, Lance made an unexpected decision. He walked away from his thriving legal practice to become president of Outpost Centers International (OCI), an organization born from the same

spirit of lay action that fueled ASI. OCI was focused specifically on coordinating self-supporting ministries across the globe.

“I had never asked for any position,” he says. “But when Warren Wilson, OCI’s founder, asked me to take it on, I said yes.”

What followed was nine years of growth and deepening credibility for OCI. Under Lance’s leadership, the organization professionalized its structure, expanded globally, and supported ministries in over 30 countries. Though OCI and ASI remain separate entities, Lance describes them as “friends”—with many OCI member ministries still benefiting from ASI project offerings.

AN ARCHITECTURE OF TRUST

Of all the innovations ASI has undertaken, Lance believes that ASI Missions, Inc. remains the most structurally significant. “It brought stability and strategy,” he says. “It meant projects were selected carefully. Every application is vetted, summarized, and reviewed. Follow-up is required. Reports are filed. It’s rare that anything goes wrong because we built it that way.”

Today, ASI Missions, Inc. continues to steward millions in donor funds each

year, distributing support to about 35 projects annually, including both church entities and lay ministries. Roughly 20% of those funds go to official church initiatives—like Spirit of Prophecy translation work in partnership with the White Estate or funding for Southwestern Adventist University’s paleontology project—but the majority of financial support goes to the kinds of lay-led efforts that ASI was designed to foster.

“This is what happens when the church and its members work in trust,” Lance says. “That’s not common in every part of the world, but it has been a defining feature of ASI in North America.”

A PICTURE OF WHAT’S POSSIBLE

As he reflects on more than 50 years of involvement in ASI, Lance is not wistful—he’s hopeful. His stories are not nostalgia but blueprints: markers laid for the next generation to follow and build upon.

“ASI gives people a picture of what’s possible in service,” he says. “It shows what laypeople can do when they follow God’s leading.”

He sees organizations like GYC as part of ASI’s extended family—offspring, in a sense, of the same spirit of mission. But

THE BLUEPRINT IN PROGRESS

ASI Through the Years



Early 1990s – Roofs Over Africa

Initiated by ASI in partnership with Global Mission, this project provided prefabricated roofs for churches in Africa where congregations worshipped in open-air or incomplete structures. For about \$800 per unit, materials were shipped and installed to provide permanent, visible places of worship—elevating visibility and impact in communities. Over 11,000 roofs were installed through this initiative.



Early 1990s – Picture Rolls Project

Marilee McNeilus spearheaded a durable, waterproof set of illustrated Bible stories, distributed globally in tubes for use in areas without electricity.



1992 – Adventist Communication Network (ACN) / Hope Channel Origins

ASI collaborated in early satellite test broadcasts under ACN, which became the foundation for the General Conference’s Hope Channel.

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his real hope lies in what happens next: that young adults, business professionals, missionaries, and passionate believers will see ASI not as a legacy to preserve, but a platform to expand.

"You don't have to leave your job or sell everything to serve God," he says. "But when He opens a door—say yes.

Whether it's teaching Sabbath school, going on a mission trip, or saying yes to something bigger—you'll find He's already taken care of the rest."

Lance has lived that reality. Since leaving his law practice in 1989, he's never drawn a paycheck. Yet, he says, "Our net worth today is greater than

when we left. That's not a financial story. It's a faith story."

And so he shares the blueprints with an invitation: Follow where God leads. Say yes. The plan is already drawn.

INSIDE ASI editorial team.



1995 – NET Evangelism (NET '95 and onward)

Developed with input from ASI, Hart Research Center, and the NAD. ASI played a key role in planning, financing, and supporting the first satellite evangelism series with Mark Finley. The NET series led to over three million baptisms worldwide and more than 200 evangelistic broadcasts.



Mid-1990s – Magabook Project

Inspired by *Christ's Object Lessons* student-mentorship model, ASI funded the development and printing of magabooks (magazine-style evangelism books) to support student colporteurs. Millions were sold. ASI covered development costs, inventory funding, and printing to reduce program costs.



PLAIN DEALING & A PURPOSE

DWIGHT HILDERBRANDT KEEPS IT SIMPLE

If you had asked Dwight Hilderbrandt in 1993 where his ministry journey would lead next, he wouldn't have had any inkling that he would become connected to ASI. At the time, he was the treasurer for the Southwestern Union Home Health Education Service, and had previously been the treasurer for the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference. He expected he might retire in a similar role of pastoral and administrative for

for the Adventist Church. But then, he took on a volunteer position as the ASI liaison for the Southwestern Union, something he did mostly on his own time, he recalls. Within months, that volunteer post turned into something larger: an interview, then an invitation to become the Secretary-Treasurer of Adventist-Laymen's Services and Industries (ASI). He accepted.

Within the year, he had moved to Maryland to begin his work with ASI

full-time, and what followed would be nearly a decade of operational transformation, cross-departmental partnerships, and spiritual innovation that helped shape ASI's future.

"I always believed the laypeople were essential to the mission of the church," Hilderbrandt says. "That was my ministry philosophy long before I got to ASI. But here, I saw a chance to really put that into practice."

Hilderbrandt came to ASI during

THE BLUEPRINT IN PROGRESS

ASI Through the Years



1999 – Youth for Jesus
Launched at the 1999 ASI Convention in Orlando, this initiative trains teens to conduct full evangelistic series. Students handle all aspects—from Bible work to preaching—resulting in baptisms and long-term ministry growth.



2000 – New Beginnings DVD Evangelism
Developed by ASI in partnership with It Is Written and Mark Finley, this DVD-based evangelism kit includes full sermon scripts, graphics, and training materials for lay people. Tested in the Philippines with 3,000 baptisms. Translated into dozens of languages; now downloadable from ASI's website.



Early 2000s – Church Websites Initiative (netAdventist)
Hart Research Center and TAGNet (under ASI) developed the netAdventist content management system, used by 9 of the 13 world divisions. It powered thousands of church and school websites for over 17 years, with zero recorded security breaches.

Benny Moore (left) and Dwight Hilderbrandt (right) speaking together for a DVD evangelism training event.

a transitional time. The organization had matured, with a growing convention presence and expanding mission offerings, but its identity as a lay-led movement was still taking shape.

“There was a bit of a gap between the ASI office at the NAD and the lay leadership,” Hilderbrandt remembers. “Not tension, just a separation. I felt early on that my job was to change that.” He did so not by issuing directives, but by inviting collaboration. “One of the first things I said to a leader was, ‘It’s not what I’m going to do about it—it’s what are we going to do about it.’ And that set the tone. We were a team.”

That spirit of partnership defined his tenure. Hilderbrandt brought clarity and transparency to ASI’s finances, strengthened relationships with church leaders, and ensured that lay leaders had not just voice, but ownership in the mission.

“It was never about building a separate structure,” he says. “It was always about aligning with the church and sharing in the work of the Great Commission.”

As Secretary-Treasurer, Hilderbrandt helped facilitate many of

ASI’s projects, including New Beginnings, a lay-focused evangelism DVD series developed in collaboration with Mark Finley. “We were laypeople,” Hilderbrandt recalls. “We didn’t know how to preach. So we partnered with someone who did.”

The first field test took place in 2000 in the Philippines, where lay-led teams conducted simultaneous evangelistic series using the DVDs. More than 3,000 people were baptized.

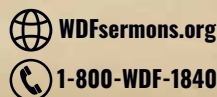
“It was a partnership of faith and a desire to serve,” he says. “And it worked.” He also helped with the launch of Youth for Jesus in 1999, which began with a fully evangelistic

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tent series at Forest Lake Academy and continues to train young people today.

Hilderbrandt also helped spur a revival of the literature ministry with the Magabook program, working across departments, including publishing, education, and youth ministries, to reduce the cost of printing and subsidize books so students could earn



Mid-2000s - Ellen G. White Translations

Inspired by ASI member Wim Wiggers, ASI partnered with the White Estate to expand global access to EGW writings. From 2008 on, ASI invested \$100,000+ annually. As of 2025, her works are available in over 150 languages online. This project is now part of a global initiative that includes AI-powered translation.

Early 2000s–2010s

GYC, AMEN, and Others Incubated

GYC (Generation of Youth for Christ) emerged from Youth for Jesus and found its footing at ASI conventions before becoming a standalone youth ministry movement. AMEN (Adventist Medical Evangelism Network) was also birthed at ASI, providing a platform for medical professionals to connect mission and practice.



2007 – One-Day Church

An evolution of the roofs project, One-Day Church provided full prefabricated steel-frame church kits that could be erected in a single day. Partnering with Maranatha Volunteers International, ASI facilitated the global distribution and building of more than 11,000 structures, later expanding to include One-Day Schools, greenhouses, and even medical outposts.



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facility in Minnesota for the project. "That project took a miracle just to get the right machine we needed to manufacture the parts," Hilderbrandt says. "But God provided."

Through all of it, his method remained the same: steady, collaborative, and committed to the church.

Hilderbrandt brought a leadership ethic of accountability and trust. "When I came in, the board didn't

and shared commitments, church leaders and lay people planning side by side. "There was no formal statement that said 'we're partners now,'" he says. "But we were."

A favorite quote sits on Hilderbrandt's desk: "Nothing astonishes men so much as common sense and plain dealing." The words are from Ralph Waldo Emerson, but, "They work in ministry, too," he says.

Though he retired from his formal ASI role in 2002, Hilderbrandt remained involved in various ways for years, coordinating booths, processing memberships, and mentoring new leaders.

Today, Hilderbrandt's hope for ASI's future is clear: "Keep the mission front and center. Stay lay-led. Stay church-connected. And keep showing what can happen when people say yes to serving."

"You've got to have a shared goal. And that goal is still what it always was: reaching people with the Gospel of Christ."

Then, as now, Dwight Hilderbrandt believes the work is worth it. "Given the right support, the next generation will rise just like the last did," he says. "They already are."

INSIDE ASI editorial team.

tuition and share their faith door-to-door. "We bought 50,000 books at a time," he says. "The biggest order the publisher had seen was 5,000."

During Hilderbrandt's time, the early infrastructure for the One-Day Church project was built in partnership with Maranatha and people like Garwin McNeilus, who offered his manufacturing

really know where we stood financially," he says. "I decided they would know everything. Total transparency."

That earned him confidence from church-employed leaders and ASI lay officers and members alike, and it set the foundation for a solid working relationship.

He remembers long conversations,

THE BLUEPRINT IN PROGRESS

ASI Through the Years



2010s–2020s

Continued Expansion of "Evergreen" Projects

- ASI continued significant investment in:
- Picture Rolls (refreshed and redistributed)
 - ASI Books (redesigned and reprinted)
 - Ellen White translations and technology-enhanced platforms
 - Satellite evangelism and youth programs



2023 – New Beginnings Health/Bible Study Kit

ASI partnered with It Is Written to create a product designed to share health messages and Bible truths together in a package of twenty life-changing study guides.



**HEARTS
4 MISSION
INTERNATIONAL**

2022 – Launch of Hearts for Mission International

Incubated by ASI Missions, Inc., H4MI offers free life-saving surgeries and evangelistic outreach in underserved areas. As of 2024, over 75 lives saved and multiple baptisms recorded. Funded through ASI overflow offerings for two consecutive years.



2024 – ASI AI Initiative

Led by Dan Houghton and Denzil McNeilus, this project is developing a vetted Adventist AI platform by compiling a custom dataset of Adventist-authored content. Focus areas include biblical Q&A, translation, sermon building, and educational tools for lay members and ministries.



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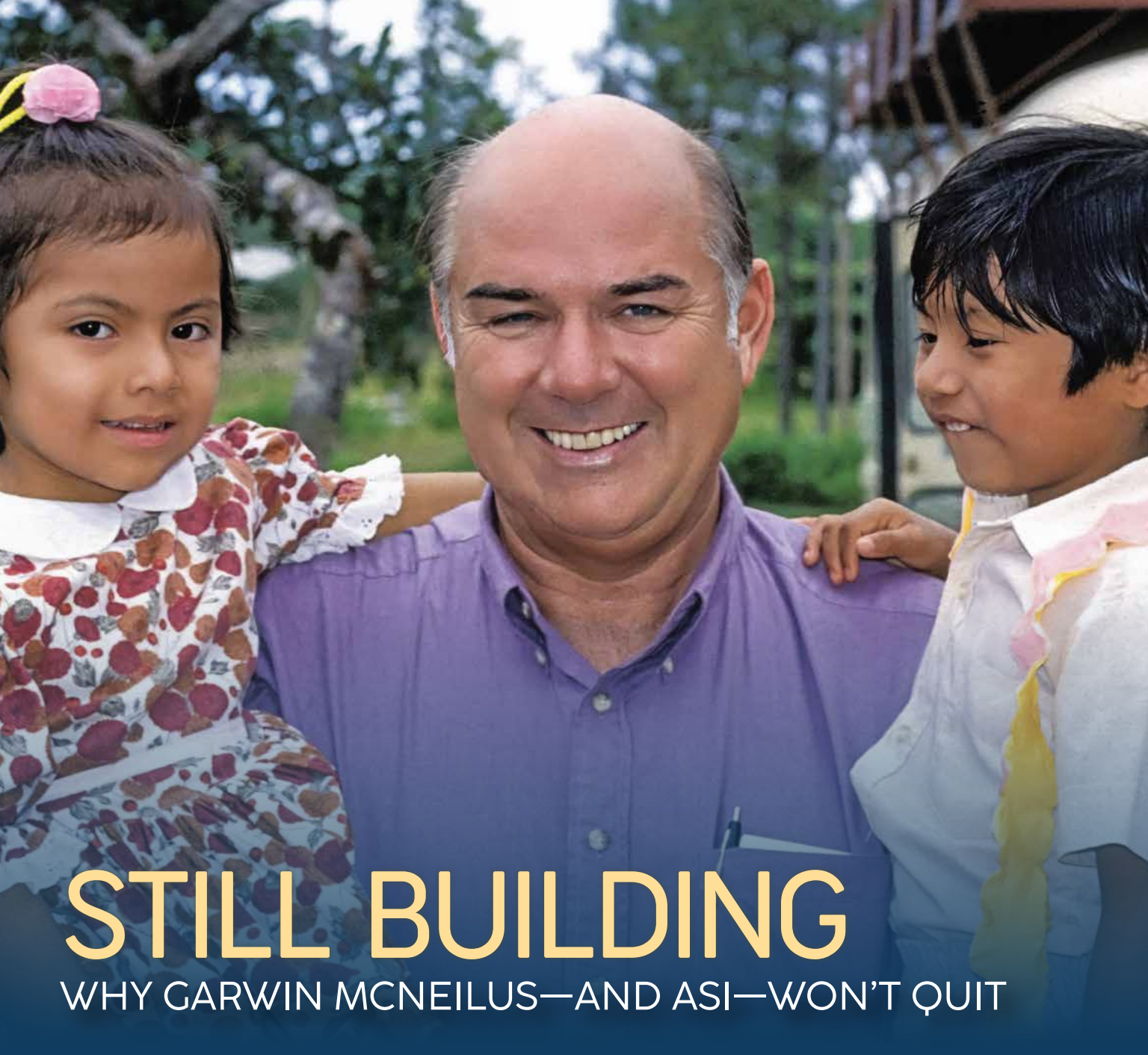
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STILL BUILDING

WHY GARWIN MCNEILUS—AND ASI—WON'T QUIT

We weren't put on this earth to sit around," says Garwin McNeilus. "Maybe when I get old," he says with a small laugh. "But the Bible doesn't say we're supposed to quit." McNeilus is 86, and that unwavering commitment—to keep building, keep serving, keep going—has defined his life. It's a philosophy that has also shaped ASI.

Garwin's background in business

and construction, having founded McNeilus Truck & Manufacturing in Dodge Center, Minnesota, as well as his get-it-done spirit, provided him with the tools and resources to contribute in very specific ways. Garwin has long been a committed supporter, a board member, and, more than anything, a man of action. "I do look at the big picture," he says, "but the big picture is really just a whole bunch of small ones put together."

Garwin's introduction to ASI came through his son, Denzil, who attended his first ASI convention in 1987 with his wife Donna. "We'd never met people so passionate about sharing Jesus—people who used their businesses and their resources as a platform for ministry," Denzil says. "These people don't just talk about ministry—they live it. We wanted to be part of that."

That introduction led to deeper involvement for the whole family.

Garwin attended the next convention in Calgary, Canada, and the family hasn't missed one since. "It's enriched our lives so much," Garwin says. "There's not a day that goes by without something to do with ASI."

An initiative that Garwin quickly became involved in was Roofs Over Africa, a program inspired by a request from then-division president Ted Wilson. In many African congregations, members could construct church walls but lacked the funds for a roof. Roofs Over Africa stepped in to fill the gap.

Over time, the project provided an estimate of more than 11,000 roofs, transforming open-air services into sanctuaries of stability and worship. "They need a place to gather, to worship, to hold baby dedications and funerals," Garwin says. "Without a roof, it's not a church home."

That concern gave rise to a next step: the One-Day Church. In 2007, a brainstorming session with ASI and Maranatha International to design a prefab structure that could be quickly shipped and assembled brought forth a relatively inexpensive kit that would allow congregations to build a steel frame in one day and then be finished later with local materials. The initiative quickly expanded to One-Day Schools, offering similar shelter and permanence to students.

The impact has been enormous. To date, ASI-related efforts have helped complete tens of thousands of churches and schools, as well as contributed to tens of thousands of baptisms across countries like Madagascar, India, Angola, Cuba, Myanmar, and many more. "It's evangelism through construction," Garwin says. "When you build it, they will fill it."

Garwin says the One-Day School has a special place in his heart.

"To build a one-day school, start

in the morning, finish it off, and that night, take the little kids by the hand, take them in and show them their desks," he says, "It's rewarding."

In the late 90s, while completing a construction project in India, he was approached with a challenge that widened his evangelism focus.

"You're good at building churches—but have you ever thought about filling one?" The question stayed with Garwin. He was hesitant. He'd never preached before. On his way home, he called his friend, Bob Paulson, and said, "Let's do an evangelistic series. You preach, and I'll coordinate the meetings," he said.



Denzil McNeilus, who was president of ASI in 2000, handing out DVD players, which would be used by local lay evangelists to present the newly-developed New Beginnings evangelism material in Cambodia.

The result? Over 3,000 baptisms from that one series.

Denzil, who serves as chairman and CEO of Sterling State Bank, also poured

Last Generation for Christ publications

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who submits to Him.

M.L. Andreasen, The Sanctuary Service, p. 299

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▲▲ **Garwin McNeilus** (right) participating in evangelism in India.

▲ **Donna McNeilus and Dwight Hilderbrandt** in the Philippines in 2001 for New Beginnings evangelism.

his energy into ASI, most publicly as ASI president from 1999 to 2003. During his leadership, the organization further expanded its evangelistic footprint. He and Donna, also a past ASI president, were instrumental in promoting the New Beginnings DVD series, enabling laypeople to lead evangelism meetings. Denzil has also been deeply involved in the

development of ASI internationally, traveling across the world to work with lay members. Over nearly four decades, Denzil has helped establish more than twenty ASI chapters across Europe, Asia, and Africa—coordinating the first gatherings in countries from Romania to the Philippines, training lay leaders in the organizational templates and and mentorship networks each new

chapter needs to flourish. “Every time a group of people sees how their talents and resources can fuel ministry, the spark spreads,” he says.

Both Garwin and Denzil emphasize that ASI’s strength is its people. “It takes everyone,” Denzil says. “You have visionaries, funders, builders, evangelists, logisticians, teachers. The Lord created each person with different talents—for us to work together.”

“It’s not separate. It’s oneness,” Garwin adds. “We all have different roles, but we serve one mission.”

That mission is grounded in a vision of church members working hand-in-hand with leadership. Denzil references *Gospel Workers*, page 352: “The work of God in this earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work, and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers.” That quote, he says, drives their commitment.

From 300 attendees at the first convention Denzil and Donna attended in 1987 to nearly 3,000 today, ASI has grown significantly—but its purpose remains unchanged: to empower laypeople to share Christ in the marketplace.

“Once you experience the joy of sharing Jesus,” Denzil said, “you can’t stop. As Dwight Hilderbrandt always says, ‘It’s like a disease with no cure.’”

Denzil and Garwin see the blueprint for the mission as far from finished. As Garwin’s tenacity makes clear, that commitment doesn’t retire. “We weren’t meant to quit,” he says. “There are too many people who haven’t been reached. We’ll stop when the Lord comes—or when He lays us to rest. Until then, we’ll keep building.”

INSIDE ASI editorial team.



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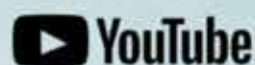
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**DAN
HOUGHTON**

& the Ministry of Making Things Work

Working Together: Dwight Hilderbrandt (center), former Secretary-Treasurer for ASI with four past presidents of ASI. From left: Ray Hamblin, Denzil McNeilus, Dwight Hilderbrandt, Harold Lance, and Dan Houghton at a mass baptism in the Philippines in 2001.

God has given us the privilege of creating moments for the Holy Spirit to work.”

That statement, made by Dan Houghton, captures the essence of his leadership and experiences within Adventist-laymen’s Services and Industries (ASI). For more than 40 years, Houghton has helped ASI grow as a launchpad for innovation, collaboration, and Gospel-centered ministry through faithful service and careful stewardship of ideas.

Houghton was a businessman who first attended an ASI convention with his family in 1983, held in Guntersville, Alabama. There were around 250 people in attendance.

“It was a small group,” he recalls, “but it felt significant. Right away, we sensed that ASI was a place where ideas for ministry could grow.” That first

experience, meeting Harold Lance, Neil Wilson, and a host of passionate believers, left a lasting impression. “We fell in love with it,” Houghton says. “And we never missed a convention, except during COVID.”

A pastor’s kid who was trained and experienced in healthcare administration, Houghton’s heart was drawn to ASI’s mission of “Sharing Christ in the Marketplace.” He worked as a regional director for Adventist Health System in Wisconsin, overseeing a network of care facilities, but remained actively engaged in lay-led outreach.

In the late 1980s, that calling deepened when he joined Hart Research Center. An ASI collaborator, Hart Research became a practical engine for developing and supporting mission projects.

“ASI has always been about people

coming together, creative, faith-driven people, offering their strengths to the Lord’s work,” he says. His contribution has often been in helping others take good ideas and move them forward. He calls it project management. Others might call it vision.

An early project that solidified Houghton’s commitment to ASI was the 1983 Happiness Project, which aimed to distribute *Steps to Christ* in an updated, inexpensive, and accessible format. Houghton witnessed people like Harold Lance and many others bring the project to fruition. He realized that he was among many who saw the project as a personal mission. “Nearly every family in ASI has a story about a relative who was introduced to the Adventist message through literature evangelism,” he says. His own grandfather, during the Great

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Depression, encountered a colporteur selling *The Great Controversy*, an encounter that led to his family's involvement in the church. "So when the Happiness Project came up," Houghton recalls, "It was in our DNA. We needed to do this."

That initial effort blossomed into the ASI Book Project, which has now circulated more than nine million low-cost books to be shared for free by members around the world. The ASI Book Project includes beautifully redesigned editions of Ellen G. White's core works, such as *Steps to Christ*, *The Desire of Ages*, and *The Great Controversy*, produced inexpensively for wide-scale distribution. Funded and managed by ASI members, the project was developed in partnership with Adventist publishing houses and has become one of ASI's most successful and long-running evangelistic efforts. Houghton helped coordinate production, fundraising, and distribution, ensuring the project would continue.

Another ASI-led initiative was the Picture Roll project, designed to provide high-quality visual Bible teaching aids for use in areas with limited resources. Houghton helped organize production and printing, even sending team members to China to ensure quality. "We just wanted people to have the tools they needed," he says. Over time, the Picture Rolls reached remote regions around the world, and Houghton notes that several individuals have traced their spiritual conversion back to encountering these simple, durable teaching visuals. "It's amazing what the Holy Spirit can do through something so practical," he reflects.

Houghton also played a key role in supporting the NET evangelism series in the 1990s. Working with leaders like Ray Hamblin and Mark Finley, ASI partnered with the North American Division to develop and promote satellite evangelism across the globe. The results were historic—millions of people were baptized through the NET

meetings, many of them introduced to Adventism for the first time via large screens in remote villages or rented halls.

The New Beginnings DVD series grew from the NET series' momentum. Again, ASI members collaborated to make evangelistic sermons available in a format that anyone could use—complete with visuals, scripts, and translations. Houghton and Denzil McNeilus, who championed the project, along with a group of ASI leaders, field-tested the program in the Philippines. "It worked," he says, "not because we were clever, but because God honors humble efforts to share His Word."

Houghton's experience in business helped ASI navigate new technological territory as well. In the early 2000s, he chaired a technology committee for ASI which would develop the netAdventist platform, a secure, global website solution adopted by nine of the church's thirteen divisions. It served thousands of churches and ministries



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for nearly two decades, supporting their outreach efforts online.

One project of major impact has been the Ellen G. White translations initiative. Sparked by an ASI member's request to help bring *Steps to Christ* into Indian dialects, the project grew under ASI's leadership and funding to become one of the most far-reaching digital ministries in the church. Today, more than 150 languages are represented, and the EGW app and website serve millions around the world. "We caught a wave of what God was already doing," Houghton says. "Our job was just to support it."

That support often means finding the right people and encouraging them to lead. In 2022, Dan helped encourage the launch of Hearts for Mission International (H4MI), a



The Houghton family leading in song at an ASI convention. From left: Dan, Jamey, Karen, and Danny Houghton.

surgical ministry operating under ASI Missions, Inc. H4MI has already saved dozens of lives and brought spiritual healing to underserved regions. "It started with a conversation and a need. We just helped move it forward," says Houghton.

Most recently, Houghton co-chairs ASI's Adventist AI Initiative, which is focused on building a secure, theologically sound dataset for future ministry applications. "We want to be careful. But we also want to be ready," he says. "AI isn't going away. So let's use it for something good."

If there's a common thread in Houghton's experiences working with ASI, it's this: make room for the Spirit to work. That idea, creating moments, creating space, is one he returns to often. "It's been about working together to accomplish something bigger than any one of us," he says.

That spirit of collaboration is woven into ASI's identity. Houghton points to Ellen White's counsel in *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 9, p. 117: "The work of God in this earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers." That vision, he says, is what ASI has been modeling for decades.

"ASI doesn't exist to replace the church," Houghton says. "It exists to

support it—to bring members, leaders, and ministries together in a shared mission."

From books to websites and apps, from evangelism to healthcare, Houghton's story with ASI is one of strategic imagination, seeing what could be, building teams to bring it to life, and letting God direct the outcome. Houghton marvels at what ASI has accomplished by standing on the shoulders of those who came before. Building collaboratively on their efforts has helped shape some of the most impactful lay-driven projects in Adventism today.

Houghton is one of many whose story is a reminder that the Gospel spreads not only through preaching but through faithful logistics, behind-the-scenes innovation, and the ministry of making things work.

What began for Houghton as an invitation to a small gathering in 1983 has become a lifelong journey of service. He remains active on the board of ASI Missions, Inc., advising and encouraging new projects. He is grateful to have been able to witness what God has accomplished through ASI, noting, "Just look at what can get done when no one cares about getting credit."

"It's been a privilege," he says simply. "And it's still a privilege."

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HARVESTING TOGETHER

Mark Finley's Blueprint for Collaboration in Mission

Mark Finley has spent nearly six decades serving the Seventh-day Adventist Church—as pastor, evangelist, and administrator, driven, he says, by the life-transforming power of the gospel. His journey from a teenage convert to one of Adventism's most recognized voices has been enhanced by a passion for lay-led ministry. His partnership with Adventist-Laymen's Services & Industries (ASI) shows what can happen when clergy and laity unite in mission. Finley emphasizes, "We are stronger together than we are apart."

Finley's spiritual journey began when, between his senior year of high school and freshman year of college, he answered his father's invitation to explore Seventh-day Adventism. After attending evangelistic meetings and experiencing a deep conviction of God's leading, he enrolled in theology at Atlantic Union College. There, he realized that "God had a unique message, a prophetic people, a movement of destiny to impact the world" in the work of the Adventist Church.

He began his ministry as associate pastor, then served as district pastor and field secretary for the church's Center for Global Evangelism. From 1991 to 2004, Finley steered the *It Is Written* television ministry, pioneering satellite evangelistic crusades (made possible in part by ASI's support) and reaching millions



Mark Finley presented a seminar on end-time integrity at the 2024 ASI Convention in Orlando, Florida. Finley has been attending ASI conventions since the late 1980s.

around the globe. That same innovative and collaborative spirit carried him into church headquarters, first as vice president of the General Conference and now as Assistant to the President, where he continues to shape global evangelism strategy and training.

Finley first encountered ASI's self-supporting ministries in 1974 through influential leaders at the Wildwood Medical Missionary Institute, who pointed out schools like Madison College and the power of lay initiative. When he attended his first ASI convention in the late 1980s, he was struck by the energy and dedication of lay members who were "totally sold out

for Christ, yet not under the church's employment." Over the past 35 years that admiration has only strengthened.

Although ASI membership is reserved for laypeople, Finley's role as a church employee has positioned him uniquely as both collaborator and advocate. Beyond the role played by Finley and ASI in satellite and television evangelism, he has partnered with ASI members on many projects such as Bible distribution in China, where ASI financed study Bibles and lesson materials; the *It Is Written* Bible, supported by ASI, which combined Scripture with study helps; and pastor sponsorship, including bringing 60 Chinese pastors to the

2015 General Conference Session and organizing their tour of Adventist heritage sites. Through each endeavor, Finley witnessed ASI's ability to mobilize resources, creativity, and heart, all for advancing the Gospel.

Finley describes ASI as "a catalyst for mission," providing an umbrella under which hundreds of supporting ministries can flourish without losing doctrinal integrity or drifting into isolation. He points to ASI-spawned initiatives such as the Adventist Medical Evangelism (AMEN) Network, gathering over 600 physicians at its conventions, Generation of Youth for Christ (GYC), inspiring young believers worldwide, and Outpost Centers International (OCI), uniting self-supporting service organizations.

By offering structure, accountability and fellowship, ASI helps ensure that lay-driven ventures both honor the church's mission and operate with operational excellence—something

Finley sees as vital, especially when resources or personnel at the denominational level are limited.

Finley's life work stresses a vital truth: the greatest harvest comes when pastors, professionals and laypeople labor side by side. "We are stronger when we harvest together," he urges, and emphasizes that ASI has a proven record of faithfulness to Christ, fidelity to Adventist doctrine, and commitment to the church's end-time mission.

Finley prayerfully invites any dedicated Adventist member to consider how they are being called to serve and how they might be blessed by connecting to ASI with the following simple roadmap:

Pray for Conviction and Clarity.

"Pray that God will deepen the conviction you have," Finley counsels, so that your next steps are grounded in divine leading rather than human ambition.

Attend an ASI Convention. "Walk through the booths, talk to people, hear inspirational preaching, and see testimonies from those involved in ministries that mirror your interests."

Start Small, Start Local. "Don't wait until you can do something great," he warns. Instead, act on what God places on your heart, whether that's leading a small-group Bible study, hosting a cooking or wellness seminar, or supporting a health program in your church.

Find a Mentor. "Get names of people who are willing to give you counsel and guidance in the ministry God has laid on your heart."

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HEEDING HIS CALL

Josh Long Elected ASI Mid-America Chapter President

Josh Long, a bariatric surgeon from Colorado, has been elected president of the Mid-America chapter of Adventist-laymen's Services and

Industries (ASI), bringing with him a passion for medical ministry, a heart for soul-winning, and a vision for deeper evangelistic integration across business and church life.

Raised in Texas and a graduate of Southwestern Adventist University, Long credits his spiritual clarity to a year as a student missionary in India. That experience shifted his focus from business to medicine and rooted in him a lifelong commitment to serving others, physically and spiritually.

"That year really redirected my life," Long reflects. "It grounded me in mission. I came back and changed my major to pre-med, and my wife and I both entered medicine with the desire to serve."

Long and his wife, Sharmini Long, an endocrinologist, operate a private medical practice called LiveNew in Denver. The name reflects not only their commitment to helping patients reclaim their health through bariatric surgery and lifestyle change, but also their shared belief in the transformational power of grace.

"We see so many people who are physically and spiritually worn down," Long says. "Every day in our clinic, we have opportunities to minister, not just with good medicine, but with encouragement, prayer, and practical tools rooted in the Adventist health message."

Over time, this personal ministry has borne fruit. From neighbors attending Bible studies to patients joining Sabbath School, the Longs have seen lives changed simply by inviting others into their home, practice, and church.

Their home church, the Franktown Seventh-day Adventist Church, has become a vibrant evangelistic hub, blending traditional outreach with health ministry. The church has launched nearly 60 ongoing Bible studies, many of which are connected to broader health initiatives. In September 2025, they plan to hold a full-scale evangelistic series integrating spiritual and health-focused components.

"Health ministry is the right arm of the Gospel," Long explains. "And with the two combined—medical work and evangelism—we're already seeing an amplified harvest."

Long first connected with ASI formally in 2022. Though he had long admired its mission, he initially hesitated to join, focusing on building their medical practice and local church responsibilities. But after attending the 2022 General Conference Session, he sensed a calling.

"I remember praying, 'Lord, I



Honored to serve. Josh Long was elected to serve as Mid-America Union's ASI chapter president.



A Family Ministry: Josh Long and his wife, Sharmini, minister through their medical practice, as well as to and through their three sons, Jaiden, Jude, and Jace.

really want to be involved in global ministry—but I know You’ve called our family to be here right now,” he says. “That’s when I felt impressed to stop waiting and get involved in ASI.”

He attended a Mid-America chapter meeting that same year, was invited to join the board shortly afterward, and has been actively involved ever since. The call to serve as chapter president came unexpectedly, but felt unmistakably Spirit-led.

“ASI has such a unique role in our church,” Long says. “It mobilizes laypeople in a way that affirms their calling to ministry through business and professional life. That’s a message we need to hear more—not just that we can serve where we are, but that we’re called to.”

Long credits mentors like Dan Houghton and Jamey Houghton, longtime family friends and fellow ASI supporters, with helping him see

the broader impact ASI can make. He also draws inspiration from leaders like Mark Finley and others who have championed the movement’s evangelistic vision.

“Even if they don’t know it,” he says, “they’ve been mentors to me through their words, their example, and their faithfulness.”

Now, as chapter president, Long hopes to deepen collaboration between business owners, healthcare professionals, and church leaders across the Mid-America Union.

“My vision is simple: that every member of ASI Mid-America will feel empowered and equipped to use their professional life as a platform for ministry,” he says. “Whether you’re a physician or a plumber, God has placed you in a mission field. ASI is here to help you reach it.”

Despite a full professional life, Long is also committed to his local

church and to raising his three sons. He believes the church must offer a model of truth and spirit that is both firm in doctrine and full of grace.

“At Franktown, we’ve seen what happens when a church embraces both the Spirit of Prophecy and the spirit of Jesus,” he says. “People show up at the door, looking for answers. And when you meet them with truth and love, God does the rest.”

For Long, ASI isn’t about titles or programs—it’s about helping people come alive in Christ.

“God doesn’t need our perfection. He just needs our willingness,” he says. “If we say yes, He will do the rest.”

INSIDE ASI editorial team.



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The graphic features a large hexagonal frame on the right containing a photo of two men on a stage, one speaking into a microphone. The background is dark blue with white and light blue text and graphics.

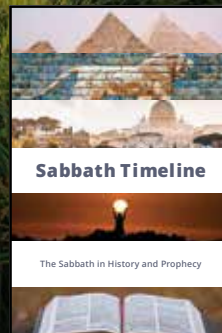


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