

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Heaven is our goal and we all look forward to the second coming of Christ. Therefore, ASI endeavors to lead lay Adventist Christians to become disciples of Jesus by teaching the clear word, urging cooperative involvement with the Church, creating opportunities for sacrificial service, encouraging, and supporting Christ-like ministries, providing a venue for committed ministries to tell their stories, giving opportunities for sharing resources with those who have chosen to make hands-on service their calling.

Becoming a member takes some commitment, but becoming a disciple is costly. Few are willing to pay the price of believing, joining, and doing what Jesus lived. Within ASI there is a place for spiritual learners, a place to teach/learn to be team players within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, opportunities for short-term “evangelists” to go to all nations, a place for the business and professional members to find reliable “partners”, and a place for the searcher to find a new beginning in service. All this because Jesus is coming soon. Have we done enough? Hardly a start of what we could do.

HOW SHOULD WE LIVE?

God’s final gift of grace toward sinners is revealed in the everlasting gospel that includes a reminder of His creation, His justice, His plan for worship, a call for His people to fear and respect Him, and to give glory to Him by living a spirit-filled, cleansed life of forgiveness and surrender that reveals God’s character of love in fallen but redeemed humanity, and who follow His word where it leads. But more than this, we are privileged to share the everlasting good news with everyone, everywhere, to the ends of the earth, to all nations and to all people, by every means possible.

ASI is gifted with ministries that have pioneered an experience in healthful living, that have taught and shown generations of searchers how to regard our bodies as His temple, and which lessons deserve our daily respect and faithful response by living healthfully.

As we await Jesus’ return, we will increasingly notice, be concerned about, and aid the disadvantaged, hungry, thirsty, lonely, needy, sick, and in prison without being asked.

IN CONCLUSION

Thank you for reading ASI: The Reason for our Existence. Our prayer is that you will join with us as a member, a supporter, a learner, or co-laborer to make meaningful Jesus’ command that we go everywhere sharing the everlasting gospel, making disciples of all nations, so that He may soon return and gather his own to Himself.

THE REASON FOR OUR EXISTENCE

ASI
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ASI was born out of a need to assist the Seventh-day Adventist Church with a way to relate to an expanding lay ministry movement who sensed a call to unite with the Church to spread the everlasting gospel to the whole world. There were about fifty schools, hospitals and sanitariums, restaurants, treatment rooms, farms, and a variety of shops, all geared to harvest souls, not profit. For seventy-five years ASI has continued to expand its' mission of assisting Adventist lay persons to realize their dream of sharing the gospel everywhere by all means. ASIs' current scope of enabling Adventist laity to personally find a way to spread the gospel would encourage the pioneers. ASIs' relevance now, is more than before. We'll show why in responding to four existential questions: 1) Why are we here? 2) Where did we come from? 3) Where are we going? 4) How should we live?

WHY ARE WE HERE?

Just before Jesus' ascension, he answered the question "Why are we here"? In a command that includes all people who take His name to "Go and make disciples of all nations".

The disciples and early church members embraced His command as they went everywhere telling His story, risking and enduring punishment, selflessly sharing what they had with those in need, making Jesus' command their reality.

The pioneers of the Adventist Church understood His call, responding to the messages of a soon coming Savior, the everlasting gospel, and the three angels' messages as the focus of their lives moving in real sacrifice from a small, dejected band to a world-wide expression of service.

ASI and its supporting ministries, and professional and business members also embrace Jesus' command and are inspired by our forebearer's commitment and example, leading to a resolve to extend the good news of salvation and a soon coming Savior to all nations by using all means and resources in cooperation with the Seventh-day Adventist church.

WHERE DID WE COME FROM?

ASI was founded in 1947 as a department of the General Conference to provide a path of cooperation and communication between Church leaders and lay supporting ministries. Uniquely within the Adventist church, self-supporting ministries developed in the south of the United States from the work of Madison College beginning in 1904 under the leadership team of Drs. E.A. Sutherland and Percy Magan. The biblical example of the apostle Paul's wide-ranging evangelism while providing for his own support as a tent maker was an encouragement to lay persons trained at Madison to use health centers, schools, sanitariums, businesses, and other means to spread the gospel, and establish Adventist churches, while supporting themselves.

Sutherland and Magan served the Church as capable leaders in the developing the Adventist education system at Union, Battle Creek, Walla Walla and Emanuel Missionary colleges. They were committed to providing a bible-based, rural, practical training for missionaries and gospel workers, free from a focus on the classics, sports and competition found in colleges of the world.

Blessed by a close relationship with Ellen G. White, Sutherland and Magan were deeply grounded in biblical truths, including righteousness by faith, and an unwavering belief, commitment, and support of the Spirit of Prophecy and the innovative educational reforms urged by Mrs. White, but resisted by many students, church, and educational leaders.

Sutherland and Magan resigned denominational employment as leaders of Emanuel Missionary College in 1903. With the support of Ellen White, they founded the Nashville Agricultural and Normal Institute (renamed Madison College in 1930), as a lay self-supporting ministry. Former General Conference President, Robert H. Pierson said about Sutherland that he was a man of God, a man of action, a problem solver, an innovator, and a great leader in God's last day cause. With divine providence, hard work, skillful leadership, and perseverance, Madison College prospered as a place where students and teachers studied and worked together learning practical skills needed in missionary settings. When ASI was formed in 1947, there were more than 50 similar ministry units supporting the Adventist church in the spread of the everlasting gospel. In the intervening years, ASI has grown to include businesses and professional members, and has greatly expanded the work of Madison. The same characteristics that led to the success of Madison are keys to ASI's endurance and success: the adherence to truth, guided by principles, innovation, persistence in problem-solving, and providential insight in support of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

E.A. Sutherland served as the first ASI President. Percy Magan served as an early stabilizing President of the College of Medical Evangelists at Loma Linda California.