

182nd Annual Summary of the Seventh Day Baptist Missionary Society

2023-2024

Thank you to everyone who has partnered and supported the work of the Missionary Society this year! Together, we have reached new heights in equipping, mobilizing, and partnering for global kingdom impact and transformation.

This page serves as a summary and table of contents of what is contained in the body of the report on the following pages.

EQUIPPING

1. ***Africa Bible College:*** The final seminar, with two classes and graduation, was held in Rwanda in December. Seventeen students from eight countries graduated. Discussions are underway about what the next cohort of ABC will look like.
2. ***SDBU 261:*** The Intro to Missions class was taught during the Fall 2023 Semester
3. ***Visiting Instructors Program:*** During October and November, two ABC graduates visited the US and taught at the Emerging Leaders Weekend. Plans are underway for our next Visiting Instructors to come to the US in the Spring of 2025.
4. ***Board Continuing Education:*** The Board of Managers continues to require missions education requirements for board service
5. ***Perspectives on the World Christian Movement:*** Did you know the Missionary Society will fund the course for one person at every SDB Church in North America?
6. ***Mentoring:*** Andy & Garfield continue 1-on-1 mentoring with conference leaders from around the world

MOBILIZING

1. ***Global Partnerships:*** We are mobilizing North America Based churches and other churches around the world to work together.
2. ***ABC Missions Module:*** The final module of ABC cast vision for missions work.
3. ***Field Worker Program Pilot:*** Preparations for the Field Worker program in South Asia continue.
4. ***Weekly Prayer Meetings:*** We meet weekly for prayer via Zoom. Join us!
5. ***Missions Week:*** This week raised awareness and funds for Unreached People Groups.

PARTNERING

1. **Countries Visited:** The countries we visited include Burundi, England, Ethiopia, Ghana, Jamaica, Malawi, Rwanda, South Asia, South Sudan, and Uganda.
2. **Disaster Relief & Humanitarian Aid:** We have helped with disaster relief in Malawi, Kenya, and Burundi, provided health support for leaders in need from various countries, provided refugee support in South Asia, and supported orphans in the DRC.
3. **Sustainable Projects & Development:** The projects we have supported in this area this year include a Uganda Pride Poultry Farm, the completion of Wheeler Village at Theme Station in Malawi, support for church building construction (Burundi, South Asia, Zambia), a fish farm project in South Asia, vocational training in DRC, and the purchase of a Conference Headquarters for the Burundi Conference.
4. **Evangelism & Outreach:** We have provided funds to purchase Bibles in multiple countries, as well as funding outreach efforts in Ivory Coast.
5. **Unreached People Groups:** We have continued to provide regular support for two workers from the US conference who are working with UPGs, in addition to encouraging our partners around the world to ask if God is leading them to minister to culturally close UPGs.
6. **Collaboration:** The Missionary Society and its Directors continue to collaborate with other SDB Organizations, associations, and churches inside and outside the US as well as other Christian organizations.

Don't forget to check out our website at www.sdbmissions.org!

There, you can sign up for newsletters or check out our new donor portal - and when visiting, don't forget to follow us on social media.

You may have noticed we've changed the way we talk about certain countries or locations around the world. This is not because we don't want to be transparent. Rather, when we are partnering with those in areas where there are stricter regulations or volatility around issues of faith, we have chosen to use general terms to keep our partners safe. We believe this is the best way to show love and respect to them.

If you would like more info on any of the items in this report, please reach out to the person listed for that item:

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EQUIPPING

- 1. AFRICA BIBLE COLLEGE:** This two year program with 12 modules is designed to provide ministry and theological training to pastors and leaders in our conferences in some parts of the African continent. The seventeen students who graduated represent 8 countries - Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. We are excited to continue to see how God will use these leaders and Conferences for His kingdom building. We were also able to have discussions around what it might look like for the next cohort of ABC students. Some of the graduates will become instructors, supported by current instructors. Eventually, we intend for Africans to completely assume the leadership and operation of the ABC. *Questions? Reach out to Andy.*
- 2. SDBU 261:** This 15 week course, a collaboration between the Missionary Society and SDBU, was taught for the fourth time this fall. It is a broad overview of missions looking at the biblical basis for missions, missions history, the current state of the world, mission strategy, and culture. The course focus is to actively engage students in missions activity in their current context and broaden thinking around how individuals and churches in North America can become involved with missions to the unreached. In an effort to make it more accessible, there are no prerequisites for this course. *Interested? Reach out to Miriam.*
- 3. VISITING INSTRUCTORS PROGRAM:** Pastor Quistin Chalwe from Zambia and Pastor Kingsley Gauti from Malawi visited the United States as the inaugural pair of instructors in the Visiting Instructors Program (VIP). This program is a partnership between the Missionary Society, Africa Bible College, the North American General Conference, the Memorial Fund, and others. The pair spent their first two weeks in Wisconsin. During the weekend of October 27-29, they presented seminars during the first ever Conference Emerging Leaders Gathering. Topics included answering questions of faith from an African Perspective. The instructors then traveled to Florida where they attended the South Atlantic Association and participated in the SALT (South Atlantic Leadership Training) graduation, devotions on the beach, and presentations to General Council. Plans are underway to bring the next two Visiting Instructors - Jean de Dieu Karimutumye (Rwanda) and John Ryakitimbo (Tanzania) - in the Spring of 2025. We are so grateful for the many hands working together to spread the Kingdom! *Interested? Reach out to Miriam.*
- 4. BOARD CONTINUING EDUCATION:** For the last three years, the Board of Managers has required all members to complete continuing education requirements for continued board service. The options include taking either the Perspectives on the World Christian Movement course for at least Certificate level, or successful completion of the SDBU261 Course. These requirements must be completed within

any new member's first year of service. In addition, each meeting opens with some shorter continuing education focus. The continuing education classes help us to deepen our understanding of missions theology, God's love for the nations, and current missiological concepts so that we can steward the influence we have been given more effectively. *Questions? Reach out to Miriam.*

5. **PERSPECTIVES ON THE WORLD CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT:** Did you know the Missionary Society will fund the course for one person at every SDB Church in North America? We think missions education matters. The way we think about things determines how we behave and what we prioritize. The Perspectives Course is one of the most comprehensive and accessible tools available in missiology. If no one in your church has taken this course at the Missionary Society's expense in the last 5 years, you are eligible! *Interested? Reach out to Miriam.*
6. **MENTORING:** As Pastors Garfield Miller and Andy Samuels interact with SDBs globally, they have been able to assist with leadership development, in different Conferences, through 1-on-1 mentoring to Pastors and leaders. These mentoring relationships encourage spiritual maturity, ministry, SDB Beliefs, and Polity in the context of the mentees' own cultures. This has particularly been effective with younger Pastors/leaders and has led to ongoing personal relationships, as well as strengthened partnerships between Conferences and the Missionary Society. *Questions? Reach out to Andy.*

MOBILIZING

1. **GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS:** Global Partnerships, previously the Sister Church program, seeks to unite churches around the world for mutual encouragement and support. Churches, associations, or conferences wishing to participate will go through training before being partnered with another group. These partnerships focus on reciprocal relationships and can include various types of mutual support such as financial support, prayer support, biblical teaching, communication and encouragement. *Interested? Reach out to Miriam.*
2. **AFRICA BIBLE COLLEGE MISSIONS MODULE:** The final module of the ABC curriculum was a course on missions. After learning about God's heart for all peoples and the number of people groups that still don't have access to the gospel, we had a country-specific project. Each student or group from the same country sat down with joshuaproject.net and identified all the UPGs in their own country. Then, they looked through the list and identified any UPGs that were culturally or geographically close to them. All but one country represented could quickly identify a UPG they could easily see a way to begin reaching out to. In fact, one of the students is from a UPG and has already started to minister among these people! We

discussed realistic initial steps that can be taken to start mobilizing their conferences and churches for ministry to these people. For a few years the board has been talking about UPGs and praying for ways that we can engage them. We are beginning to see how God can specifically use the Missionary Society and its partners to fulfill this task. Praise the Lord! *Questions? Reach out to Miriam.*

3. **FIELD WORKER PROGRAM PILOT:** Preparations for the Field Worker program continue. Andy has been meeting with one leader from South Asia for training for what we are hoping to be the first field worker in a new field in that region of the world. There have been a few roadblocks, but things seem to be progressing again. Please pray for the success of this program as we hope this may be a template to multiply Kingdom work among SDBs in other areas of the world as well. *Questions? Reach out to Andy.*
4. **WEEKLY PRAYER MEETINGS:** We have intensified prayer in the life and work of the Missionary Society and are seeking the help of more and more who are passionate about reaching persons globally for Christ and can commit to pray. Volunteers primarily participate in weekly prayer conference calls. *Are you interested in participating in our regular calls or helping with prayer support in another way? Reach out to Andy.*
5. **MISSIONS WEEK:** This year, missions week was held February 18-24. The theme was “Missions: The Heartbeat of God,” and we heard daily devotionals each day from Board members. Each day also had educational videos. Funds were raised for work with Unreached People Groups. *Questions? Reach out to Miriam.*

PARTNERING

1. COUNTRIES VISITED:

- **Burundi** - In September, Andy traveled to Burundi with John Ryakitimbo (Tanzania) immediately after the SDB World Federation session. They engaged in discussions with the Burundi SDB Conference leaders about the urgent need to purchase a property for their conference headquarters, as required by the government. During their visit, they also preached, taught, and inspected a recently constructed tank and well, facilitated by the Missionary Society, serving a local SDB Church and the broader community. *Questions? Reach out to Andy.*
- **England:** In December 2023, Andrew Samuels traveled to the UK to meet with the leadership of the Mill Yard SDB Church in London. The visit aimed to address ongoing conflicts within the church and foster resolution. Despite efforts, some parties were not cooperative, leaving the major issues unresolved. The Missionary Society and the SDB World Federation continue

to monitor the situation and formulate further plans to help resolve the conflict. This trip emphasized the ongoing commitment to supporting SDB churches and fostering unity and growth within the community. *Questions? Reach out to Andy.*

- **Ethiopia:** In March 2024, Andrew Samuels traveled to Ethiopia, accompanied by Pastor Mading Bol. The primary purpose of the trip was to visit and support the SDB churches in Ethiopia, which had been established mainly through the efforts of Pastor Bol among the Nuer South Sudanese people. They visited the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa, where they engaged with the vibrant SDB community led by Elder Riek Chuol Lengdit. The trip included teaching lessons on Seventh Day Baptist identity and witnessing the ministry's impact on refugees and displaced people. This visit strengthened the bond between the Missionary Society and the Ethiopian SDB community, highlighting the significant growth and passion within these churches. *Questions? Reach out to Andy.*
- **Ghana:** On a visit to Ghana in May, Andy led a service to welcome the Ghana SDB Conference into the membership of the SDB World Federation. While there, he, along with leaders of the SDB Conference, also met with the Director of Church Mobilization for International Justice Mission (IJM) Ghana to discuss a partnership, as IJM Ghana diligently works to combat child trafficking by collaborating with law enforcement agencies, rescuing victims, and seeking to restore them to safety and strength. The SDB Conference leaders and the IJM Ghana leader agreed on next steps toward a partnership. *Questions? Reach out to Andy.*
- **Jamaica:** In December 2023, Rev. Andrew Samuels and his wife, Kay Samuels, traveled to Jamaica to participate in the centennial banquet of the Jamaica Conference. Rev. Samuels served as the keynote speaker at the banquet, celebrating 100 years of SDB witness on the island. The visit also included engaging with local church leaders and congregations, discussing the future direction of the conference, and exploring opportunities for further collaboration. The trip aimed to honor the rich history of the Jamaica Conference while looking forward to continued growth and partnership. *Questions? Ask Andy.*
- **Malawi:** In September 2023, a delegation from the USA & Canada, including Andrew Samuels and Garfield Miller, attended the World Federation Sessions in Malawi. During this visit, there were significant opportunities for face-to-face interaction with leaders from at least 15 SDB conferences worldwide. Rev. Miller presented on "Missions in the 21st Century" and emphasized the

importance of conferences organizing their own mission agencies in partnership with the SDB Missionary Society. The visit also included the dedication of the Wheeler Village, consisting of four staff houses and a classroom block. The Wheeler Village is located at the Thembe Station. From May 14 to 23, 2024, Rev. Andrew Samuels traveled to Malawi and Ghana, funded by the SDB World Federation. In Malawi, he engaged with local SDB leaders and congregations regarding ongoing projects. His visit to Ghana aimed to strengthen ties with the SDB community, provide leadership training, and explore new opportunities for collaboration, including a new relationship with International Justice Mission. This trip further solidified the SDB Missionary Society's commitment to supporting and developing leadership within the African conferences, ensuring continued growth and effectiveness in their ministries. *Questions? Reach out to Andy.*

- **Rwanda:** In December, Pastor Andy and Miriam traveled to Rwanda for the final session of the first cohort of SDB Africa Bible College. These classes were Biblical Leadership and Introduction to Missions. During the week, students reviewed previous material and learned new concepts. A significant project at the end of the Missions class involved using joshuaproject.net to identify Unreached People Groups (UPGs) within their countries. Each student or group identified UPGs that were culturally or geographically close to them, with all but one country finding UPGs they could potentially reach. One student, already from a UPG, has begun ministry efforts among his people. This project has shown how the Missionary Society and its partners can engage with UPGs, fulfilling a long-standing prayer and goal. The week concluded with a joyous graduation celebration, led by a brass band through the streets of Rwanda, with local officials and a large crowd in attendance. Seventeen students graduated, representing eight countries: Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. The discussions also included plans for the next cohort of ABC students, with some graduates expected to become instructors, ultimately aiming for Africans to fully lead and operate the ABC. *Questions? Reach out to Miriam.*
- **South Asia:** From September to November 2023, Danny Lee and his wife Danita embarked on a nearly three-month trip to South Asia. During their time there, they witnessed and participated in remarkable ministry activities, including over 100 baptisms, 30 baby dedications, and the delivery of over 60 gospel messages. They facilitated numerous decisions for Christ, conducted seven days of pastor conferences, and oversaw the construction of four new churches and the purchase of land for future church buildings. Additionally,

they distributed over 300 Bibles in the local language and built strong relationships with the local community. Pastor Garfield was able to join them for two weeks and provide leadership training and further strengthen the partnership between the Missionary Society and local churches in South Asia. *Questions? Reach out to Garfield.*

- **South Sudan:** In March 2024, Pastor Mading Bol and a representative from the SDB Missionary Society traveled to South Sudan. This trip marked a significant milestone as it was the first time an SDB Missionary Society team successfully entered South Sudan, having previously faced challenges with government entry requirements. The journey included visits to six of the twenty-two SDB churches established in South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Egypt, primarily serving the Nuer tribe. These visits involved teaching sessions on SDB identity, Sabbath theology, leadership, and stewardship, with vibrant participation from the congregations. The team also visited churches located in refugee camps and internally displaced persons (IDP) areas, witnessing firsthand the challenges and resilience of the communities. The mission was a powerful testament to the growth and impact of the Seventh Day Baptist movement in these regions, largely attributed to Pastor Bol's dedicated ministry. *Questions? Reach out to Andy.*
- **Uganda:** After attending the World Federation Sessions in Malawi, Garfield Miller traveled to Uganda with Pastor Fred Maduka from Malawi. The primary purpose of this trip was to further the Uganda Pride Poultry and Animal Farm project and strengthen the work of the SDBs in Uganda. They met with the six project directors, visited the Land Office and Bank, and toured the property, which includes a house and land prepared for poultry houses. Despite challenges with bank fund transfers and contractor negotiations, they made significant progress. Garfield and Pastor Fred also visited four churches—Kasambya, Kkyegegwa, Bulijjo, and Lukaaga—and facilitated a leadership seminar with local pastors and leaders. This trip reinforced the commitment of the local directors to the project and provided crucial support for the churches and orphanage in Uganda. Then, in May, Pastor Maduka again visited the project to follow up and finalize some details about the well. *Questions? Ask Andy.*

2. DISASTER RELIEF AND HUMANITARIAN AID:

- **Malawi Flood Relief:** Funds were sent to help with lingering victims of Cyclone Freddy.
- **Kenya Flood Relief:** Between April and May 2024, prolonged heavy rains and flooding caused catastrophic damage and loss in Kenya, which affected

Seventh Day Baptists significantly. Partnering with the General Conference's Committee on Social Action and Disaster Relief (CSADR), funds were sent to help with relief efforts.

- **Burundi Flood Relief:** The rainy season in Burundi brought heavy showers for months, exacerbated by the El Nino weather pattern. With collaboration from the General Conference's Committee on Social Action and Disaster Relief (CSADR), funds were sent towards providing relief.
- **Health Support:** The Missionary Society sometimes provides urgently needed funding for medical needs of a few key leaders, their spouses, and children. Help for hospital stays, and other needs were given for the leader of the Sierra Leone Conference, whose condition has improved greatly. *Questions? Ask Andy.*
- **Refugee Support:** Our partner in South Asia lives on a border where his people group moves back and forth between two countries. This people group is facing severe treatment, and many are refugees. We have been able to support food and ministry efforts for these refugees. *Questions? Ask Miriam.*
- **DRC Orphan Project:** There are twenty three orphans in the DRC that receive ongoing support that goes towards food, housing, medical expenses, and school fees for these children. This group not only provides for the physical, but also emotional and spiritual needs of these children. Support for one orphan is \$35 per month. *Interested in getting involved? Reach out to Garfield.*

3. SUSTAINABLE PROJECTS AND DEVELOPMENT:

- **Uganda Pride Poultry Farm:** The Missionary Society is partnering with Children's World Impact (CWI) to establish a self-sustaining poultry farm in Uganda. This project is on the final building phase and is nearly complete. Its goal is for the chicken farm to support an orphanage, as well as some local widows who will be managing them both. *Questions? Reach out to Andy.*
- **Wheeler Village Construction, Malawi:** Thanks to a generous donation from Douglas Wheeler and family, this year saw the completed construction of the Wheeler Village compound in the village of Thembe. This compound houses a school, medical clinic, a classroom building with two classrooms, as well as 4 staff houses. *Questions? Reach out to Andy.*
- **Church Building Construction:** In many of the countries where we work, governments and locals don't recognize the legitimacy of a church unless there is some kind of building associated with it. Recognizing this, we were able to support the construction, renovation, or transition to iron sheet

roofing for various groups in Burundi, South Asia, and Zambia. *Want more info? Reach out to Andy.*

- **Fish Farm Project in South Asia:** This tilapia farm project was the first of its kind for the Missionary Society, and is doing very well. The farm is already producing sustainable income to support the families and Kingdom work in the area. Praise the Lord! *Want more info? Ask Andy.*
- **Vocational Training in DRC:** The Missionary Society has sent funding for three orphans who aged out of the ongoing DRC orphans support program. These three will receive vocational training so they may become self-sufficient. One of these young adults is already serving in a ministerial capacity. *Questions? Reach out to Andy.*
- **Burundi Conference Headquarters:** Thanks to the generous funding from the Shiloh church in New Jersey, the Burundi conference was able to purchase a conference headquarters building. This helped the SDB Churches in Burundi to avoid the shutdown of their 58 churches with approximately 4,000 believers. Thank you! *Questions? Reach out to Andy.*

4. EVANGELISM AND OUTREACH:

- **Bibles Distribution:** The Missionary Society has distributed funds to multiple countries to purchase Bibles in local languages for Gospel work. A significant amount of the funding came from the Gospel Feet Fun Run last year at Conference. The countries which we have received funding for Bibles this past year include Uganda, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Zambia, Mozambique, and South Asia. *Want more info? Reach out to Andy.*
- **Outreach Events in Ivory Coast:** The Missionary Society helped fund a few outreach events in two locations in the Ivory Coast. These areas are close to where the church members live, and have populations of UPGs present in the area. Pray that these outreach efforts will be effective for Kingdom growth. *Questions? Reach out to Andy.*

5. UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS: The Missionary Society is seeking how we can become more involved in reaching the Unreached Peoples of the world. One immediate way is that there are two SDB individuals within the North American Conference who have partnered with other groups who focus on reaching UPGs. We offer monthly support to one person who is in the US working with refugee UPGs, as well as helping another with a Vision Trip to determine where to relocate to work with UPGs. Additionally, our educational efforts, including those during ABC and when traveling have focused more on this. Many opportunities exist for our partners who are culturally and/or physically close to UPGs. Pray that the Lord would open

doors and that we and our brothers and sisters would be faithful to respond to these opportunities. *Questions? Reach out to Miriam.*

6. COLLABORATION:

- ***North American Conference:*** In collaboration with the World Federation, a trip was undertaken to the UK, to Malawi and to Ghana as explained above. The Missionary Society is also represented by one or more of its Directors on the Coordinating Leadership Team (CLT), on the General Conference's Committee on Social Action and Disaster Relief (CSADR), and on the Committee On Support and Retirement (COSAR). Our Chief Executive Director also serves as a PULSE Facilitator. He also attended the SDB Pastor's Conference in New Jersey. Several North American Churches were visited by Missionary Society Directors, as well as the South Atlantic Association and Renew West. In addition, Miriam Berg traveled to and helped coordinate the Emerging Leaders weekend in October. *Questions? Reach out to Andy.*
- ***Other Partner Conferences:*** On a daily basis our Directors have communications with international conference leaders to strengthen partnership, and assist with development and ministry. These partnerships have mutual benefits, including the acquisition of knowledge on culture, ministry approaches, the application of Biblical principles, SDB beliefs & polity worldwide, and leadership development. *Questions? Reach out to Andy.*
- ***Other Organizations:*** This last year, we were able to collaborate in varying capacities with Children's World Impact, International Justice Mission, Global Frontier Missions, and Interserve. *Questions? Reach out to Miriam.*