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Adventist Church Records 34,653 Baptisms in 2025, Highest Since 2009, as Annual Council Ends

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"Pray Our Way Out, Grow Our Way Out."

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

The Seventh-day Adventist North American Division (NAD) recorded 34,653 baptisms in 2025 - its highest single-year total since 2009 - as its Annual Council concluded on 3 November 2026 in Columbia, Maryland. Total accessions for 2025 reached 43,052, counting baptisms plus about 8,400 professions of faith, an average of 118 people joining the church every single day. The council met from 29 October to 3 November, and its final reports were published on 7 November 2026.

Behind that number sits a story that stops you cold. During the Pentecost 2025 initiative, a woman incarcerated for murder - a woman who believed she was beyond grace, unworthy of forgiveness - chose baptism. And she was not baptised alone. Twelve other people went into the water with her. One life, written off by the world, became thirteen new beginnings in a single service.

Adventist Baptisms 2025: 34,653 - Highest Since 2009

The last time the division saw numbers like this was 2009, when a year of evangelism drove baptisms past 41,000. Seventeen years later, 2025 came closer than any year since. Membership stood at nearly 1.33 Million at the end of the third quarter of 2026, a net increase of 12,608 people - growth that is real, measured and sustained, not a single crowded weekend.

Young people are driving it. Youth aged 10 to 19 led baptisms from 2008 to 2025, averaging 8,200 a year, while young adults aged 20 to 39 averaged 6,680 a year. That is the opposite of the story so often told about the church in North America - that the young have left and are not coming back. In the Adventist Church, teenagers and twenty-somethings are the ones walking into the baptistry, in the same season that has seen mass baptisms elsewhere in America, as reported in Thousands Baptized at Oceanside Beach: Inside the Movement San Diego Revival 2026.

The Pentecost 2025 initiative sits at the heart of the surge. More than 5,200 churches and schools took part, and the initiative produced nearly 43,000 baptisms and professions of faith across the division. It was not a single event but a division-wide push - thousands of local congregations, each doing the same work in their own neighbourhoods, adding up to a number no single crusade could produce.

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

READ THE FULL STORY

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