

Local Church

At Home, and Yet Away From His Homeland

Hebrews 11:13 — “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”

Elwin Winthrop Snyder was born on February 26, 1865, in the United States. At the age of eighteen, he was called to work as a colporteur, achieving much success, which led him to the position of director of Literature Ministries at the Pennsylvania Conference. His leadership skills caught the attention of the Foreign Missions Committee of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. So, in June 1891, he was invited to gather a team of three colporteurs to officially begin a literature ministry in South America. Snyder, then 26, chose two other young single young men — A. B. Stauffer, 32, and Clair Nowlen, 26 — to help him in the endeavour.

Snyder and his associates went to South America and became a watershed for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in several South American countries. Snyder also took over as mission field secretary and travelled throughout South America. In 1901, Snyder focused on the preaching of the message in Paraguay, as he learned that there were four Sabbath keepers there. On his trip to Paraguay, he spent about six months trying to encourage the few Sabbath keepers in that country and seeking new converts through evangelistic campaigns. In one of his accounts, he talks about the joy of baptising five new members. For about fourteen years, Snyder worked in South America until his health failed. Snyder never regained his strength and died at age 54, leaving a legacy of courage and pioneering spirit.

Appeal: Much of the world's early missionary efforts were carried out by foreigners who left their homeland to dedicate their lives to preaching the gospel. Our offerings should ideally be given as a promise — a covenant with God — faithfully, regularly giving a covenant proportion of our earnings to support the programs that God has instituted to reach every person on this earth so Jesus can come. Now it is our turn to invest in sending missionaries to other parts of the world, in gratitude for what was once done on our behalf. “God has given you precious privileges and advantages in sending you the light of His truth, and you are to improve these blessings, and let others share your mercies” (Ellen G. White, *Reflecting Christ*, p. 206).