

NADcloud Executive Summary

North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists

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of Seventh-day Adventists®

Summary

The North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists (NAD) serves one of the most geographically dispersed and operationally diverse ministry networks in the world. Thousands of churches, schools, hospitals, ministries, and administrative organizations rely on technology every day to support worship, education, finance, communication, healthcare, and evangelism.

Yet across the division, IT capability, security posture, and operational maturity vary widely. Many ministries are being asked to manage technology risks and infrastructure demands that exceed their available staffing and resources. This increases risk, inefficiency, and missed opportunities for mission innovation. At the same time, increasing regulatory and societal pressure increases the risk of public IT service providers cutting off access to Adventist entities because of anti-discrimination policies.

As a direct response to these challenges, the NAD established the NADcloud in 2021 to expand the service portfolio it offers to the field. The NAD commissioned a \$3 million Tier 3–compliant datacenter, purpose-built for the entire field. A uniquely mature and resilient Adventist-owned datacenter environment, it is purpose-built to support scalable, resilient, cost-effective IT infrastructure. More than a collection of servers or software, the NADcloud is shared infrastructure built by the Church and for the Church, to ensure that technology strengthens mission rather than distracts from it.

Through shared infrastructure, backup and disaster recovery, website and application hosting, and software platforms, the NAD replaces fragmented and duplicative systems with a unified, professionally managed foundation. These services reduce operational risk, improve cybersecurity posture, and relieve local ministries of the growing burden of maintaining complex infrastructure they are increasingly unable to staff or secure on their own.

As of 2026, NADcloud supports approximately 70 clients across the Division, hosting mission-critical applications, safeguarding petabytes of sensitive data, and delivering enterprise-grade resilience that many entities could not realistically achieve independently. Any Adventist academy, university, conference, union conference, or media ministry within the NAD territory may become an NADcloud client, along with any internal NAD department. All NADcloud services are entirely subsidized by the NAD and offered at no additional cost to the field.

The NADcloud exists to help the field conserve donor dollars, reduce risk, strengthen mission, redirect resources from infrastructure to frontline ministry, and ensure that church leaders do not need to solve every IT challenge alone.

Challenges Facing the Church Regarding IT

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America faces growing challenges in leveraging information technology effectively. Without intervention, they risk undermining the Church's ability to operate securely, efficiently, and innovatively in support of its mission.

Ministries face significant challenges, such as:

- **Efficiency:** Reinventing the wheel across multiple organizations leads to resources being spent on infrastructure rather than on innovation and on frontline ministry.
- **Economies of Scale:** Higher costs from duplicated systems.
- **Expertise Scarcity:** Difficulty attracting and retaining IT professionals.ⁱ
- **Personnel Shortage:** Only a third of conferences and unions within the NAD have a full-time IT employee.ⁱⁱ
- **Data Governance and Security:** Inconsistent practices leading to greater risk.
- **Vendor Lock-In:** Dependence on commercial cloud providers, which can end service at any time because of anti-discrimination policies that may classify some Adventist doctrines as hate speech.

Feedback from Administrators in the Field

Church administrators across the NAD territory have expressed both challenges and aspirations for IT within the NAD. Surveyed in 2024, their feedback highlights the urgent need for a more coordinated, sustainable approach:

- **Collaboration vs. Governance:** Leaders want to see cooperation across the field, but they are also concerned about losing local control if IT becomes too centralized.
- **High Costs for Small Conferences:** Smaller entities are often hit hardest by IT expenses and want solutions that leverage shared resources to reduce costs.
- **Time Zone Coverage:** Administrators, especially on the West Coast, emphasize the need for IT support that aligns with their operating hours.
- **Right People in the Right Places:** A strong desire exists to ensure that staffing and leadership align with the Church's mission and values.
- **Adaptability:** Solutions must be standardized for efficiency but flexible enough to adapt to local ministry needs.
- **A Call for More from IT:** Administrators want to see IT move beyond "keeping the lights on" and infrastructure maintenance. They want IT to become a strategic partner and enabler of innovation, directly supporting frontline mission.

A Path Forward

These challenges underscore the urgent need for strategic IT consolidation, data sovereignty, standardization, resilience, innovation, and governance. By scaling proven approaches like the NADcloud, the NAD is building a sustainable, secure, and innovative IT ecosystem that empowers

ministries to focus on people, ministry innovation, outreach, education, and community service rather than infrastructure.

A core component of NADcloud is sustainability through simplicity. By reducing architectural and operational complexity, the NADcloud can be managed by a lean team, an essential advantage in a world where IT expertise is scarce and costly.

The mission of the NADcloud is simple: **amplifying the Gospel Mission through unified IT.**

With the NADcloud, the NAD envisions a church focused on the Great Commission and unified in its technical infrastructure.

The NADcloud team strives to embody values of both technical excellence and Christian service, such as Integrity, transparency, synergy, innovation, stewardship, service, empowerment and autonomy, purpose, well-being, and democratization of knowledge.

NADcloud Core Services and Ministry Value

Service	Ministry Impact	IT Impact	Business Impact
Virtual server hosting	Enables focus on evangelism, education, and service instead of servers.	Provides enterprise-class redundancy, storage performance, and cybersecurity safeguards at shared cost.	Ensures consistent, trusted infrastructure that underpins critical applications such as AdventistGiving, AE-Connect, and department operations.
Website hosting	Provides a simple, affordable way to build websites that members can trust.	Ensures websites remain compliant, secure, and connected to Church IT systems.	Demonstrates stewardship by pooling resources for a shared, well-managed hosting platform.
Disaster recovery	Protects years of financial, member, and operational data from loss.	Provides ransomware resilience and compliance with denominational and industry best practices.	Reduces duplication of effort and cost by providing a centralized, shared backup infrastructure.
Shared software tools	Strengthens collaboration, workflows, and security across ministries.	Provides standardized, supported platforms that reduce shadow IT and improve security.	Reduces duplicate licensing, improves efficiency, and helps departments modernize business processes.

Physical equipment hosting	Provides a home for appliances or systems that cannot yet move to virtual environments.	Offers peace of mind knowing that critical physical hardware is secured and reliable.	Demonstrates good stewardship by avoiding duplication of facilities across multiple organizations.
Uptime Institute Tier 3 Compliant	Provides peace of mind knowing critical data and applications are housed in a resilient environment.	Guarantees their workloads are protected against power or cooling failures.	Demonstrates good stewardship by investing in scalable, sustainable infrastructure that supports systems across the division.

Governance, Cybersecurity, and Auditing

The NAD prioritizes cybersecurity as a core foundation of trust, ensuring that ministries, departments, and members can operate confidently in a secure IT environment. A layered security approach, combined with continuous monitoring and auditing, reduces risk and protects sensitive data across all NADcloud services.

The NADcloud operates under the advisement of the NAD Technical Standards Committee (TSC), which provides strategic guidance to ensure services and decisions are transparent, mission-aligned, sustainable, and focused on the needs of the field. TSC's membership is primarily comprised of union conference IT directors and representatives from K-12 and higher education institutions. This framework is designed to ensure that the NADcloud's strategic focus stays on the field and that its processes are built to respond to evolving ministry and technology needs of the field.

Governance isn't just about compliance. It is about stewardship. For ministries, this provides confidence that services are fair, accountable, sustainable, and responsive to their needs. This also ensures services align with NAD-wide standards.

Conclusion

The NADcloud is more than a datacenter or a suite of technical services. It is a strategic expression of the NAD's commitment to stewardship, resilience, data sovereignty, collaboration, and mission enablement. At its heart, the NADcloud is not about technology, it is about serving Christ. Its purpose is to free ministries, schools, and departments from the burdens of managing infrastructure so they can focus on what matters most: people, faith, and mission. By reducing time and money spent maintaining technology, ministries can focus more directly on evangelism, discipleship, education, healthcare, and community service.

Looking ahead, the NADcloud will continue to expand its offerings, strengthen its resilience, and empower ministries with tools for digital evangelism and collaboration. But its focus will remain unchanged: to be a strategic partner for ministry, enabling the North American Division of Seventh-day

Adventists to share the Gospel more effectively, securely, and sustainably, both today and into the future.

ⁱ Adventist organizations are struggling to attract and retain skilled IT professionals. Factors include:

- Expanded Threat Landscape: Cybersecurity risks demand specialists, not generalists.
- Regulatory Complexity: Compliance with privacy, financial, and nonprofit regulations adds to the burden.
- Generalist Expectations: Many Church roles expect IT staff to cover networking, security, support, and application management simultaneously, which leads to burnout. This results in duplication of effort, higher turnover, and a tendency to prioritize infrastructure maintenance over innovation.

ⁱⁱ Of the 68 union and conference offices in the NAD,

- ~⅓ employ a full-time IT staff member.
- ~⅓ rely on partial IT support or their union office.
- ~⅓ outsource IT entirely to contractors or operate without in-house IT staff.

Industry standard best practice is for organizations to have 1 IT support employee per 70 employees when the organization has high levels of technical standardization and 1 IT support employee per 45 employees when there is a lack of technical standardization. The SDA church in North America has approximately 11,000 employees and 180 IT employees, a 62:1 employee to IT employee ratio. However, if it is estimated that roughly half of SDA IT employees time is dedicated to IT support, the ratio drops to 124:1, well under industry best practices. Additionally, the SDA church in North America currently has low levels of technical standardization, increasing the need for IT support employees.