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in Jerusalem

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Adventist World



Adventist World



About the Cover

Chandler Bom regularly helps run camera, including a 20-foot jib, at the Loma Linda, California, University Church. He is so passionate about his role that in order to practice he built his own jib in his parents' living room.

Cover Photo: Kevin Ekvall

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Unwired Worship

By Bill Knott

I've been coming here to worship for more than half a century now. This place is as much a spiritual home to me as any walled church building I've ever attended, or even those I've preached in.

But there's no sound system to help me hear the choir, unless you count the wind whispering through the giant pine trees that line this sanctuary.

And there's no preacher at a microphone, though you may hear the words the Spirit Himself speaks through the memory: "Be still and know that I am God."

No air conditioning system, purring quietly, alleviates the heat when I come here to worship on a hot July morning. No gas furnace delivers humidity-controlled warm air when I sit here in the freezing fog of February.

Whatever serves for lighting is only what the Father hung in the sky millennia ago—"the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also" (Gen. 1:16).

No high-definition screens confront me in the foyer, announcing church potlucks and men's ministries, nor is there a blinking billboard out beside the road advertising this week's sermon.

Here on a west-facing hillside above the rolling green landscape of land I love, I've been worshipping the Lord since my parents first brought me here at the age of 9. Drawn by the simple, unwired tranquility of the place, I've returned to pray dozens of times since, usually alone, to listen to the choir of songbirds in the hedges down below; to feel the rain on my upturned face in a springtime storm; to pull my coat even tighter about me when this sanctuary is decked with snow.



This outdoor place of worship—"Cathedral of the Pines" they call it—has been the place I've come to find the Lord who both predates all our technology and will finally outlast it, too. For at their best, our walls and lighting, microphones and carpets, video displays and smoothly-functioning heating systems sometimes actually obscure the great, untameable reality of God. Our screens and pixels frequently become our chief memories

of encounters with "the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple" (Isa. 6:1).

Unless we sometimes seek the Lord in places where we confront our true size in God's universe, we are in danger of creating a God "in our own image," one who fits conveniently within the screen of our iPads or our smartphones.

As you read this month's *Adventist World* and note the thoughtful discussions of how believers can wisely use new digital technologies, lay down the magazine to find a quiet hour to stand beneath an open sky and sing with me, "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth" (Ps. 8:1).

We believe in the power of prayer, and we welcome prayer requests that can be shared at our weekly staff worship every Wednesday morning. Send your requests to prayer@adventistworld.org, and pray for us as we work together to advance God's kingdom.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church hosted a pan-African festival of religious freedom in the Amahoro National Stadium in Kigali, Rwanda. A crowd of 30,000 attended the meeting. Among them were religious liberty delegates from nearly 30 countries, representatives from human rights organizations, government officials, African scholars, and African entrepreneurs.

Photo: Abraham Bakaji



“It’s a titanic, complex job we have ahead of us. But it is achievable. I am leaving this place full of hope.”

—Susana Tonda, director of Sename, the National Services for Minors in the country of Chile. Tonda made the comments at an ADRA-sponsored seminar at San Sebastian University in Santiago, Chile, about foster families and the protection of their rights. ADRA Chile leaders report that the organization has worked for the past 24 years to assist children and teenagers in need of a temporary home, as an accredited supporting body of Sename.

18,793

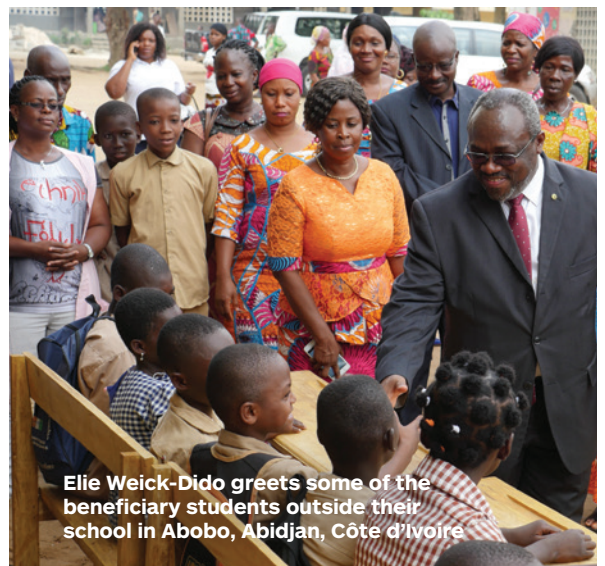
The number of structures damaged or destroyed by the Camp Fire in northern California, United States. The November fire covered an area of about 153,000 acres and was responsible for 88 deaths—the most of any California wildfire in recorded history. Among the damaged structures were the Paradise Seventh-day Adventist Church, which burned completely, and the Feather River Medical Center—part of the Adventist Health hospital network—which sustained damage to part of its campus after successfully evacuating all patients and staff.

“I aspire to be a cogwheel in a community that can become stronger together in the love of Jesus, so that His love may be shown through us all to our fellow Europeans.”

—Helgi Jónsson, a Seventh-day Adventist medical doctor and psychiatrist, who was recently elected as health ministries director for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Trans-European Division. Jónsson, who is from Iceland, works as a consulting psychiatrist and has also served in the Danish health system.

“The government cannot meet the needs of its population alone. It is therefore necessary to help our authorities.”

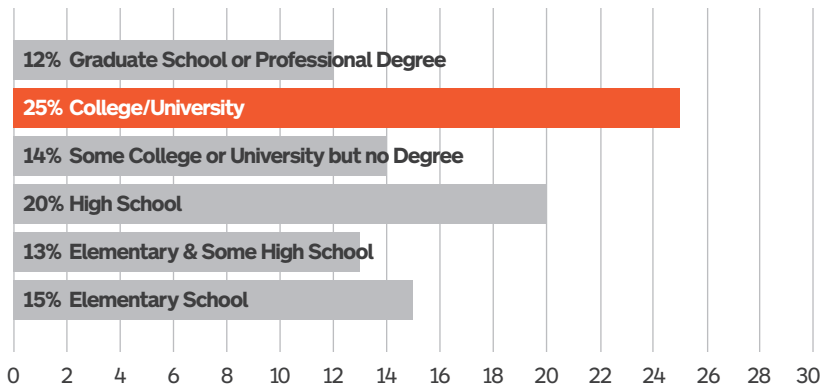
—Elie Weick-Dido, president of the Adventist Church’s West-Central Africa Division (WAD) headquarters in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire. WAD leaders and staff recently delivered a donation of about 300 school benches to a school district in nearby Abobo. The school district serves 15 primary schools and three kindergartens, with very limited and crowded seating. The donation is part of a comprehensive plan for the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a religious and social entity to support government efforts to improve the life of its citizens.



Elie Weick-Dido greets some of the beneficiary students outside their school in Abobo, Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire

Photo: WAD News

Education Level of Adventists Around the World



Source: Adventist Global Church Member Survey, 2013

“We discovered, much to our chagrin, that up to 70 percent of the cars on the island have radios that receive only up to 90 MHz.”

—Colin Dunn, project manager for the installation of a new Adventist-operated radio station on the island nation of Kiribati in the South Pacific. The Adventist Hope Radio license was 91 MHz, but Dunn and his team discovered that most cars on the island come equipped with radios that can tune to a maximum of 90 MHz. Attempting to find a solution, radio announcer Tarataake Angirio visited a former president of Kiribati who held an unused license for 89 MHz. The former president officially relinquished his license to Hope Radio.

130

British Adventists who became conscientious objectors during World War I. Some served in noncombatant units; others ended up in prison or were harshly punished. Europe recently commemorated the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day, on which World War I hostilities officially ceased on the Western front.

5 to 10

The number of Pathfinder clubs that will initially be established in various public schools across the island nation of Jamaica. The Ministry of Education in Jamaica is taking steps to allow the Adventist young people's organization (Pathfinders) to set up clubs in primary and high schools across the nation. Pathfinders is an organization that assists young people in developing the life skills and discipline necessary to take up church and community leadership positions.

Digital Evangelism Center Established in the Philippines

By Edward Rodriguez, Southern Asia-Pacific Division News

The Seventh-day Adventist Church recently inaugurated the first-ever Adventist World Radio (AWR) Center for Digital Evangelism in Silang, Cavite, Philippines.

The Center for Digital Evangelism (CDE) aims to connect with radio listeners and offers them in-depth learning about Christianity and Jesus through Bible studies and other online resources. As more CDEs are established in other regions of the world, AWR has indicated that it seeks to partner with Adventist division offices and institutions to advance the growth of the church's online influence.

Another objective of this center is to use social media as an additional tool for evangelism, organizers say.

Social media sites such as Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, and Instagram, among others, are some of the avenues through which digital evangelists are planning to reach out to those seeking spiritual information online.

Administrators and guests from the AWR headquarters, Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD), and union conference officers were present during the inauguration and of the center.

Citing the significant number of calls and text messages received daily through ongoing radio programs and social media outlets, AWR hopes that the listener-initiated communication "will not fall through the cracks" but will serve as

Its goal is to connect radio contacts with Bible study and discipleship options.

the beginning of a spiritual journey.

"There are thousands of people around the world intentionally listening to our programs. But most of the times it ends there," explains Kyle Allen, vice president for Adventist World Radio. "We need to find a way that we can connect to them, make friends with them, and make them feel they are cared for. That is where the Center for Digital Evangelism comes in."

After successful radio programming efforts in Africa, the Philippines, and Japan, AWR leaders saw the need for this center to be established to cater to the growing needs of listeners.

"The first phase of this Center for Digital Evangelism focuses its attention on India and the Philippines. A pioneering group of four to eight digital missionaries will go to the Philippines for a year of mission," said Karen Glassford, AWR Center for Digital Evangelism director. "They will be trained to facilitate evangelism over the phone, and on how to make each call count for more conversations in the future," she added.

"One radio program can lead to engagement, which can then lead to offering a prayer or studying the Bible. There is an unlimited possibility of sharing Jesus with just one call," Glassford shared.

Glassford is the newest addition to the Adventist World Radio family, hired to assist in the continuous development of the institution through the Center for Digital Evangelism. She most recently worked at the Institute for World Mission at the Seventh-day Adventist world headquarters. ©



The Adventist Church in the Southern Asia-Pacific region, in partnership with Adventist World Radio, recently inaugurated a Center for Digital Evangelism in Silang, Cavite, Philippines.

Photo: Southern Asia Pacific Division News

Cell Samples Delivered to International Space Station

By Florida Hospital News and Adventist Review

Several residents of central Florida, United States, are now in space—at least a small part of them.

Muscle cells from research-study participants at Florida Hospital's Translational Research Institute for Metabolism and Diabetes (TRI) blasted off toward the International Space Station in mid-November 2018 as part of an experiment to examine the effects of a weightless environment on muscle health.

"We know microgravity has quite detrimental effects on skeletal muscle. After a long stay in space, astronauts come back in a very weak state and are often confined to wheelchairs until their muscles can recover," said Paul Coen, an investigator at TRI. "This experiment will allow us to study the effects of microgravity on muscle cell biology."

TACKLING HEALTH PROBLEMS

The TRI is a part of the network of Florida Hospital Clinical Institutes, and aims to bridge the gap between the research laboratory and the patient's bedside. Researchers and medical professionals collaborate on clinical trials to tackle some of today's biggest health problems, such as obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. The findings from the spaceflight will be important because the research can also be applied to finding treatments for age-related muscle loss, known as sarcopenia, institute officials said.

The cell samples came from eight participants in a recent study on aging and muscle loss, which was supported by the U.S. government's National Institute on Aging and conducted by Coen. They were scheduled to lift off at 4:23



The Antares rocket, with Cygnus resupply spacecraft onboard, is ready for takeoff at NASA's Wallops Flight Facility in Virginia.

Photo: NASA/Joel Kowsky

a.m., November 16, 2018, aboard a Cygnus cargo ship from NASA's facility at Wallops Island, Virginia. The Cygnus will be lifted into space atop a Northrop Grumman-produced Antares rocket.

HOW IT WORKS

The cells rode into orbit on a "lab on a chip" developed in part by Siobhan Malany, a scientist at Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute and president of Micro-gRx. Because the cells have a limited life span, researchers have only a brief window of time to study the effects of weightlessness, Malany said.

"We're hoping to get seven days of microgravity; then the samples will be preserved, frozen, and stored until they're brought back on a SpaceX Dragon capsule," she said. "Essentially they get shipped to us by FedEx from the middle of the ocean." The team will study the gene expression changes in the cells sent to space compared to the cells that remained on earth.

Each chip is a little smaller than a business card, Malany said, with

Adventist hospital research project to study effects of microgravity on muscles.

four 2-centimeter-wide squares. Two chips are going into space, with eight separate experiments in progress.

All told, the lab is contained in a 10-centimeter by 30-centimeter box, including boards, electronics, pumps, fluidics, and a small microscope that will take multiple images throughout the cells' trip in orbit, Malany said. Future missions will also contain a camera and additional electronics to monitor muscle contraction.

ABOUT FLORIDA HOSPITAL

Opened in 1908, Florida Hospital is a faith-based health-care institution focused on providing whole-person care. It is one of the largest not-for-profit hospitals in the country, with more than 2 million patient visits per year—more than any other hospital in the U.S., according to the American Hospital Association.

Florida Hospital is a member of Adventist Health System, which has nearly 50 hospitals and hundreds of care sites in 11 states. Following a rebranding process, Adventist Health System and Florida Hospital became known as AdventHealth as of January 2019. ©

3,873,848

SID membership as of
December 31, 2017

20

The number of liters of safe water per person per day from a recently installed Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) kiosk in Mocuba, Mozambique. The kiosk will provide water for more than 1,000 people. The Mocuba District of the Zambezia province in Mozambique has suffered from inadequate safe water for years. Prolonged drought conditions in Southern Africa have worsened the situation. 📌

450

The number of attendees to the first division-level Adventist-Laymen's Services and Industries (ASi) meeting in SID. Participants came from Zambia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Malawi, Madagascar, Mozambique, Botswana, Swaziland, Namibia, Seychelles, Mauritius, Principe, and South Africa. An offering of R450,000 (about US\$40,000) was collected during the ASi event. More was donated later to meet the needs of a proposed budget of R500,000 (about US\$50,000). Funds will be used for four mission projects.

"I don't understand why the only orthopedic surgeon qualified to operate on my neck in Zimbabwe was available on the day of my emergency surgery."

—Alfred C. Machona, a theology student at Solusi University in Zimbabwe, following a head-on collision auto accident that dislocated his spine and caused life-threatening internal injuries to his wife, Fortunate. Machona has since reflected on the unique circumstances that came together to save his life and that of his wife. Among others, the only qualified orthopedic surgeon who had plans to spend Christmas overseas, performed Machona's emergency operation in the morning and caught his flight that afternoon.

"The Adventist culture of not wanting to mingle with society must change. We are the salt of the earth. Salt that refuses to come out of the bottle is useless; it can never benefit anyone. Salt is intended to leave the saltshaker in order to influence that which is around it. We carry the last message of God's love to a perishing world in these last days. Being the salt of the earth is not optional for followers of Jesus Christ."

—Solomon Maphosa, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division.



Photo: Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division

Perspective



Calling Out the Silent Majority

Why we need to talk about pastoral burnout, depression, even suicide.

The following was originally posted on AdventistReview.org. Due to the universal nature of the concern it addresses, we have included it in this month's Adventist World.—Editors

Some months ago a disturbing piece of news popped up on my news feed. "California Church Shocked After Pastor Commits Suicide," blasted the headline—and for a moment my heart beat faster.

Andrew Stoecklein, the lead pastor of the evangelical Inland Hills church in Chino, California, passed away after having attempted suicide a day before. The church's website showed a dynamic young pastor with a wonderful wife and three young sons.

What pressures, pain, and hurt must have driven this young man of God to step into the irreversible void of suicide?

We don't like talking about burnout, depression, or even suicide when we talk about Adventist pastors. Yet all of these emotions and conditions are a present reality in Adventist clergy as well. Spiritual leaders, dynamic pastors, passionate preachers, consummate

evangelists—they all constantly face the real challenges of ministry in a media-driven world of constant tweets and Facebook postings, where personal space becomes less and less available.

Pastoring is hard and can be very lonely at times. Pastors live in the "on" mode most of the time. They have to. They need to be shepherds caring constantly for a diverse and often hurting flock.

We expect them to be administrative geniuses, leading people from different walks of life with differing needs and experiences who don't always see eye to eye. They should look beyond the walls of their church buildings to reach the unreached and lost. They should keep an eye on the church building's structure and maintenance, while at the same time expanding their media presence in a world that expects full media coverage.

I am an ordained pastor, and I often feel overwhelmed by the needs I see around me. So what can we, members of local congregations, do that goes beyond diagnosis? Here are four practical suggestions:

First, tell the pastors in your life again and again how much they are appreciated. I know that the large majority of members love and appreciate their pastors, but are we speaking up? Most of the time a pastor hears from members when they are unhappy or when there is

conflict. Positive feedback will go a long way in affirming a pastor who experiences constant pressures.

This doesn't mean that we may not sometimes disagree with the pastor. But we disagree in a Christ-like manner while at the same time affirming our loving relationship.

Second, open your heart and, if possible, your home to your pastor. When last did you invite the pastoral family for a meal without an agenda?

Third, commit to pray for your pastoral family on a daily basis. Wonderful things happen when we pray for people. God is able to take away overly critical attitudes.

Fourth, hold up your pastor's arms when there is need for loving, yet decisive, support. Don't forget that pastors are not superheroes. Like all of us, they are human and frail, and they make mistakes. Sometimes holding up your pastor's arms means volunteering to look after three young children so that the pastoral couple has a free evening (or weekend) for themselves and their needs as a couple. Sometimes holding up your pastor's arms means speaking up in a board meeting when the tone is not right or the subject gets too personal.

I am calling out the silent majority in Adventist congregations in support of their hardworking, at times hurting, pastors. Go, get busy, and do it right away before we read another painful headline. ©



Focus

Navigating a Digital Life

Global perspectives on raising Christian kids in this digital age.

W

hile I am responsible for Adventist Review Ministries Media Lab and deeply involved in cutting-edge media and technology, I grew up as a missionary kid in Madagascar and West Africa and was not exposed to high tech until I was 17 years old. Fun and games centered on building toy cars and other trinkets from scrap. I wouldn't exchange my childhood

experience for anything, because it developed in me the ability to think creatively, very much outside of the proverbial "box," to find different solutions.

In the United States' Silicon Valley, high-level executives are seeing firsthand that too much technology exposure has the potential to harm children. Some even say that social media platforms and gaming designers create addictions in otherwise normal individuals. Employees of tech giants such as Google, Apple, and Yahoo are sending their children to schools where teachers prefer a more hands-on, experiential approach to learning that contrasts sharply with the increasing trend toward filling classrooms with the latest electronic devices. Instead, these campuses look to the role of imagination in learning with a more wholistic approach.

In our digital age, technology is increasingly a huge part of our lives. But navigating it effectively (for with the good comes the bad) is very important to Christian parents. What are the benefits, and what are the pitfalls? Read on to hear perspectives from parents, educators, and tech professionals as you seek ways to make technology a help rather than a hindrance to your child's mental, emotional, and spiritual development.

—Daryl Gungadoo, United Kingdom

WHAT'S A PARENT TO DO? SET AN EXAMPLE

I am a mother of a 6-year-old and a 4-year-old. They get very limited screen time. When they do, it is for when we are on airline flights (they can use a tablet) or when they are sick at home (they can watch a couple episodes of their favorite show). Other than that, they can watch an occasional episode of a cartoon or the Sabbath School lesson story.

While we understand that technology is present in their lives and will remain so, we also believe there is a time and a place for it. They will eventually learn everything they need to learn when it comes to electronic devices and their use, but they have only a very short period of time in their lives when they are able to play, to enjoy the outdoors running free, to get dirty and actually enjoy it, and to experience the world around them with all five senses.

Screens are highly addictive. Once you give in, it's easy to get hooked. This is true not only of children but also with adults. Everywhere we go, we see people looking at their phones, blank expression in their eyes, immersed in a never-ending scrolling loop. Many are parents. They have little children standing next to them, craving their attention. They ask questions to which parents reply with "aha," "mmmh," without really knowing what their kids have asked in the first place.

If we are so addicted ourselves, how can we expect our children not to be?

Electronic devices are an easy and inexpensive babysitter. Media provides such instant gratification and high level of stimulation that it is difficult to switch off. After two hours of videos, how can kids be expected to "go and create something"? The more screen time we give, the more they want. It's like a drug.

We grew up with no technology whatsoever, so we went outside and played with other kids. Real games, real interaction, and real conversations and problem solving. Nowadays it's more and more obvious how people hide

behind the “safety” of the screen to be who they would like to be in real life but don’t dare for fear of rejection and many other reasons. We are losing the ability to connect with other human beings, of being present without having 20 parallel conversations via Messenger, WhatsApp, Telegram, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and so on. What has happened to just being in the moment and enjoying it, giving our full attention to the person we have in front of us?

It’s not fair that for our own convenience our kids are going to miss out on that. They are going to miss out on real friendships, on real experiences, and most important, on a real childhood, where they spend quality time with their parents, laughing, playing, reading, talking, loving, and feeling loved.

We want to create an environment for our children to develop the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy,

peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control [Gal. 5:22]). An excess of screen time is definitely not conducive to Galatians 5. On the contrary, we observe children lacking in social skills and language skills, impatient, aggressive, and having emotional development delays, shorter attention spans, and even health challenges. The most important question we have to ask ourselves then is, “What is screen time displacing in our children’s lives?” When we look at the answer to that, how can we not act?

—Asun Olivan, Spain

IS TECH FRIEND OR FOE?

As a school principal, I cannot deny that computers have become an integral part of modern education.

At Newbold School our children use laptops for a variety of learning purposes. Our teachers use them

to plan and teach lessons, and our administration system is conducted online, all with excellent results. The Internet alone has opened up a world of instant information that allows children to explore their learning independently and to improve their knowledge.

But we all know that computers are not restricted to learning, and this is where problems can arise. The main problems are often associated with the entertainment and social media aspects of computing. These can have a profoundly negative effect on the development of children’s social awareness and their ability to keep themselves safe.

Although hugely popular, social media is not without its problems. On the one hand, we can connect with friends from the past, foster online connections with friends of other friends (usually whom we’ve never met in person), and

Distraction Level Down, Focus Level Up

Media and character development

Adventist World associate editor Gerald Klingbeil recently spoke with Delwin García, principal of Great Lakes Adventist Academy, a boarding academy located in Cedar Lake, Michigan, United States, about high school students and media use.

Great Lakes Adventist Academy includes a policy in the handbook limiting access to personal media devices (including smartphones) among students while they are on campus. What motivated the school board and faculty to include this policy?

With the advent of smartphones, people are carrying supercomputers in their pockets. I use my smartphone for everything. They are wonderful tools. But they can also be tools of destruction. Our young people have such a busy schedule already that they can also be huge distractions. We recognize that on a smartphone young people can access anything they want at any time. A lot of young people already struggle with pornography, media addiction, video gaming. We are doing what we can to help minimize that temptation and help curb that desire to always have a screen in front of them.

Tell us about your experience with this policy.

Most of the parents we talk to about our cell phone policy offer a sigh of relief, or praise, or hallelujah. It’s not parents that we have struggles with. We have shared research with our staff, and our team is on board with the policy not to allow students to have their own personal



keep track of anyone who allows us to follow them. We can join chat rooms and talk with people from all over the world. Many people take online interaction even further, using it for dating, listening to music, watching movies, and for shopping. Much of youth culture (particularly early to late teens) is closely linked to social media and gaming, which in turn can negatively affect how young people interact with others.

Equally so, high-speed clicking from site to site on electronic devices can lead to impatience in the real world. The ability to click past something that is irrelevant or takes too long to read can't be applied to our dealings with human beings directly in our presence. And that can result in excessive impatience with the real world, leading to an inability to cope with the slower pace of "real time." The volume of communication through

computer devices is also creating an evolution of language and the way the written word is presented. Children have to be taught how to separate formal language from informal patten exchanged through social media, often accompanied by emojis that replace words entirely.

One aspect of change that is extremely worrying is safety in our digital lives. It is all too easy for unscrupulous people to groom children into agreeing to dangerous meetings. Grooming for sexual abuse and drug running has become so common that all school staff personnel need to have regular training in order to teach children how to protect themselves online. Fortunately, it has now become a crime in the United Kingdom to groom a child online, so police can immediately make arrests based on inappropriate sexual messaging. Parents should take this threat seriously and always set

up strong parental control settings on their children's computers to ensure their children are safe while using them. The thought of an unwelcome stranger in one's house, even if it is a virtual presence, is indeed frightening.

Although the use of various tech can present serious threats, it is also extremely valuable, and it is here to stay. Indeed, we should not wish to get rid of it all, as it can help us create and learn amazing things. It is never computers or the Internet that cause problems, but rather the people who use them. Using a computer as a tool that we control rather than allowing it to control us is the first step toward a healthy relationship between humanity and the Internet.

We should teach our children the importance of time management, good manners, and how to keep themselves safe while using tech. Like anything else in life, a

devices. It's the students who have the hardest time wrapping their minds around the fact that they may have to live without their cell phone for 25 days out of the month. I reassure them that no student has ever died from not having their cell phone.

The reality is that after a few weeks or a few months we actually have students approach us and say, "You know what, this is a good thing. I have better friendships now, because I'm not distracted by the pseudofriendships that I have online." We are most likely the only Adventist academy, at least the only academy I know of, that doesn't allow students to have their mobile devices or tablets. We don't allow them, period.

We are living in the twenty-first century, with lots of technology all around us. How are you preparing young people to enter into a media-saturated world?

We recognize that we are in the twenty-first century, and we do provide computers and communication. We have phones in the dorms; the students may use landlines for free. We have Skype stations, where they may interface with their parents "face to face" while they're away at boarding academy. We have computer

labs on campus, and all our seniors have computers in their dorm rooms, where they may access Facebook, and they may access the Internet or e-mail. The difference is that the school has some accountability. We own those computers, and we filter the computers. Even though we can't possibly filter everything, there's that added layer of accountability that students know is there.

In your experience over the past years as you see graduates leaving, and sometimes coming back after a year or two for alumni weekends, how do you see resilience develop?

We are trying to teach principles. Some critics of our policy would say, "How can they live out the principles that you're teaching them if you're not giving them access to media?" The reality is that we are giving them access to media, but it's in a controlled environment. The other thing that we've discovered is that as students have a detox throughout the month, the distraction level goes down and the focus level goes up. It's in that time that we can really focus on character development. That's what we're here for as an Adventist school system. It's not just academics, it's character. ©

computer is only as dangerous as we invite it to be.

—Jaki Crissy, *United Kingdom*

GAMES AREN'T ALWAYS JUST THAT

As a Bible-based media start-up entrepreneur and a father, the best thing I can do is ensure that the media I create and the media that I allow my child to consume will be wholesome on many different but interconnected levels. While the physical effect of devices on our children (eye development, biological tissue damage from emanating radiation, WiFi, data frequencies) is of utmost importance, the content that they consume has the power either to weaken their moral compass and relationship to God or to strengthen it.

Apart from the more obvious red flags within kids' programs, there are more subtle areas of content that slip our attention and can have a long-lasting negative impact on our children. These can be separated broadly into two levels: production level and story. As parents we should examine the media we allow our children to consume through specific lenses.

At the production level, besides staying away from programs that have too many flashing lights and excitable and complex high-tempo

music, the timing of each scene is often overlooked. Research has shown that for small children, scenes that last only three to five seconds and then cut to a different scene can cause attention deficit issues. The ideal length for scene sequences is 20 seconds. New emerging technologies, such as virtual reality, can present more natural media consumption, where viewers control the exact framing of the action, because their device acts like a portal where they can look around at the present world.

At the story level it becomes trickier to weed out negative programs, but here are a few clues to look for. Is the emphasis more on entertainment rather than the moral of the story? The aim of all media should be to inform and to deliver a message. If the message is more of one of being entertained, then questions should arise in our minds about whether we should allow our children to consume this or not. Are the antagonists portrayed in a way that children will find attractive and cool, even though their actions may be wrong? We have to be very careful here. The enemy of our souls wants us to be attracted and drawn to rebellious attitudes and wrongdoing. We need to teach our children how to reject the wrong and choose the right.

Research has shown that when we watch or engage in media, what we see goes straight past the moral filter of our brains. At a core level we cannot tell the difference between wrong or right, fact or fiction. Consuming media is a bit like dreaming, but we are fully awake. The action we see on the screen gets translated into our subconscious as something that we are doing. So when we witness a violent act on the screen, at the subconscious level it is as if we are doing this act ourselves. It becomes more solidified if the main characters are carrying out these acts. This is even more so in games, as part of the gameplay involves players committing acts that they would be imprisoned for in real life. The secular world does not acknowledge this connection for obvious reasons. But as followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to be more careful and wiser about what we put into our bodies, for by beholding, we become.

—Karl DaSilva, *Scotland*

DIGITAL MEDIA CAN SHIFT CULTURE

I grew up in a different age, a time when library books had index cards stamped with due dates before you went home with them. When we needed the ultimate authority



What Can We Do?

In helping our kids keep the balance in a digital world, lead by example

on certain subjects for homework, we went to the library and the reference section where we'd look for *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Kids now search Google, YouTube, and a myriad of social networks to inform and educate themselves.

In the islands of the South Pacific digital media has had a huge impact on everyone, impacting the very fabric of Pacific Island cultures. There have been reported cases of abuse by men toward their wives stemming from spending too much time on Facebook, rather than having the evening meal ready on time. Petty differences not spoken about publicly are aired on social media instead of being discussed face to face. There is a way that issues are dealt with, and using social media is inappropriate in many family situations.

I can speak only from an indigenous Fijian perspective and share a very small angle of a global phenomenon that I believe we have yet to truly understand. The consumption of digital media within the islands has created a generation of insatiable consumers. The saying "Ignorance is bliss" no longer applies when young people are bombarded with advertising for the latest gadgets, clothes, food, motor vehicles, social activities, etc. Children in the islands are

impacted by social media just as much as their counterparts in other parts of the world. The mistake is often made thinking that life in the Pacific Islands is slower, more laid-back, and less sophisticated. This may be true in certain places, but if you live in more urban centers with a data plan on your phone, you have the world in your hands.

Children in the islands used to be seen and not heard. But with the arrival of digital media, it has propelled them onto a platform that they are still (like the rest of us) trying to control. They may not be as addicted to gaming in the same way as their Australian and New Zealand counterparts, but they aren't that far behind. Young people throughout the Pacific actively update their WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram accounts at a quick pace.

Digital media has also changed some of the cultural practices of the region. For example, when there is an engagement, the birth of a child, or a death announcement, certain traditional protocols are followed. But the entry of social media and digital devices is having an impact on how these significant life events are communicated and celebrated.

It may seem as if the impact of digital media has been totally negative, but it is not completely so. Digital media has given Pacific Island

Kids now search Google, YouTube, and a myriad of social networks to inform and educate themselves.

young people an avenue through which they may level the playing field with the rest of the world. The important issue, however, is how parents actively communicate with their children about appropriate uses of this resource.

Digital media is not going away. So the skill set that needs to be learned is how to use it effectively. I have been encouraged in seeing how Fijian youth have used social media to invite and inspire friends to attend church youth activities. Social media is fast becoming the most effective way to reach our young people, so it is in the best interest of parents and those who work with children to understand where the children are and guide them on how to best approach this journey.

—Litiana Turner, Fiji

The authors of our cover feature all present different facets of raising children in an increasingly digital world. We've culled together a few of their tips.

While much good has come from advances in technology, there are also perils. There are things as parents, grandparents, guardians, and educators we can employ to help our children find a healthy balance with regard to technology and a prevalent digital landscape. Here are some quick tips to start with.

- Think about what the greatest influence on your child is and what is shaping them. Choose media use wisely based on these values.

- When exposing children to technology, keep in mind that parents and caregivers are their best role models and examples.

- Instead of screen-time babysitting, find ways to stop and spend time that kids so richly deserve.

- Be intentional: think about how certain uses of technology guide our children toward developing the fruit of the Spirit. And yes, you can find things on the Internet that can help you with that. So be selective and dig deep.

- It is OK for our children to have moments of boredom. Creativity is cultivated when kids have to find ways to entertain themselves with whatever is around. It can be done! ©

Keep Pressing On

We are nearly home.



Never has it been more important to work together as God's remnant people than in these closing days of earth's history. As we see signs of Christ's coming intensifying, the need for unity among God's remnant people becomes increasingly evident. The true measure of the church's success is found in its unwavering devotion to Jesus Christ and its unfaltering commitment to our God-given mission and message found in Revelation 14.

We must not turn back from walking with Christ, for the Bible shows that turning from faithfulness to God and His Word can have disastrous consequences. When Eve turned just slightly from God's Word, she left herself open to the serpent's deceptions. When Lot's wife turned her head just one time for a forbidden glance at her former home, she lost her life. When the children of Israel wanted to turn away from the Promised Land and go back to Egypt, their bodies were left lying in the desert.

Paul counsels: "Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13, 14).

SINGLE-MINDED COMMITMENT

This was the walk of faith experienced by Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Sarah. "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" (Heb. 11:13).

This single-minded commitment to God and straightforward understanding of His Word was the Lord's intent for His chosen people. "You shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may live and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days in

the land which you shall possess" (Deut. 5:33).

As long as God's people were unwavering in their devotion to the Lord and His Word their success was guaranteed. Yet repeatedly they exchanged moving ahead in faith with turning back in fear.

On the very borders of the Promised Land they exclaimed, "Why has the Lord brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt" (Num. 14:3, 4).

SOUND DOCTRINE OR OWN DESIRES?

Centuries later Paul instructed Timothy to preach the Word. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears

away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables” (2 Tim. 4:3, 4).

It is important to note that both in ancient Israel and the Christian church, God’s people had no problem submitting to leadership as long as their leaders capitulated to their desire to be led away from the Lord’s commandments and be turned back to the world from which they had been delivered. But this cannot be. We must never deviate from the direction the Lord leads us according to His Word.

As the stream of modern culture rushes headlong toward destruction, standing firm on the solid rock of Scripture will make it appear as though we are removing ourselves from society. But seeking God’s approval must always be our top priority.

Consistent faithfulness to Christ and His Word is possible only through the power of the Holy Spirit. The level of spiritual vitality to which we are called is not something that can be achieved through human effort. We must rely wholly on the Spirit of God to work in our hearts until we reach “the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13).

The One who calls us individually is the same God who established the Seventh-day Adventist Church as His remnant people with a mandate to proclaim the three angels’ messages to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people (see Rev. 14:6).

This far-reaching and seemingly insurmountable goal must be accomplished in an organized manner with the cooperation of church workers and dedicated lay members. Ellen White wrote: “The work of God in this earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work, and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers.”¹

TIME TO WORK

Through the Holy Spirit’s power we must bridge the gap between the grand ideals we long for and the practical duties that face us if we are to finish the work in this generation. We must come to the realization that the first step in finishing the work is actually going to work.

“We should all be workers together with God,” wrote Ellen White. “No idlers are acknowledged as His servants. The members of the church should individually feel that the life and prosperity of the church are affected by their course of action.”²

Breathe life into your local Sabbath School by showing up on time having studied your Bible and Sabbath School lesson and being prepared to enthusiastically discuss what you’ve learned. Let older members see young people in prayer meeting interceding for others before God’s throne of grace. Minister to those who are underprivileged by volunteering at a Community Services center. Carry and distribute evangelistic literature wherever you go. Request that at your local Adventist academy or college the time, energy, and money spent on varsity sports for one year be spent on evangelism training, programming, and direct outreach to the community instead. Have a voice in the direction of your church by attending church business meetings and accepting, when the nominating committee calls, positions of responsibility—no matter how large or small.

If the Seventh-day Adventist Church is going to meet the Lord’s ideal of being His end-time remnant, not just “we” as a denomination but you and I individually must work for Christ in service to others.

When we each allow the Holy Spirit to change us into the likeness of Jesus, we will automatically begin doing the work He has asked

The first step in finishing the work is actually going to work.

of us. The character of Christ will be seen in what we do, not merely in what we don’t do. Ellen White described the result:

“When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own. It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain.”³

The latter rain will soon fall, empowering God’s people as they submit completely to Him. Christ is coming soon! He is calling each of us to move forward in faith, and to submit our lives to Christ’s power to make us more like Him. God is calling us individually to make the personal sacrifice required to be the mission-driven church we were meant to be. ☺

¹ Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1915), p. 352.

² Ellen G. White, *Christian Service* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1925), p. 10.

³ Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1900, 1941), p. 69.

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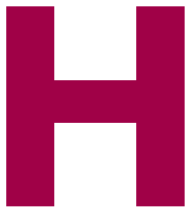
Devotional

The Last Paralytic in Jerusalem

What was his
connection to the
others whom
Jesus healed?

BY DANIEL BOSQUED





Have you ever missed a great opportunity? Has anything good happened to everyone except you? Have you ever felt that God has blessed many, but He just passed you by?

A story in the Bible may reflect those feelings. It's the story of the healing of the paralytic man in Acts 3.

We know that he was lame from birth; that he was more than 40 years old (see Acts 4:22); that he sat every day asking for alms at the gate called Beautiful at the Temple; and that during His ministry Jesus had not cured him. He may have been one of the last people in Jerusalem not to have felt Jesus' healing touch.

A CONNECTION?

Before we review this story, let's recall the story of another man who appears in the Gospels, the man cured at the Pool of Bethesda (John 5:2-9). Jesus noticed him because he had been ill for 38 years. Jesus approached him, and after a brief dialogue cured him with a simple command: "Rise, take up your bed and walk" (verse 8).

An important element of this story is that Jesus was the one who approached him. Normally those who were sick were brought to Jesus. Or someone asked for help on their behalf. But on this occasion, of all the sick people in Bethesda (many, according to the text [verse 3])—Jesus chose him.

I am struck by the possible links of this story in John 5 and that of Acts 3. Bethesda was located in the city of Jerusalem, and the paralytic in John 5 had been ill for 38 years. It was the same time as our friend from Acts, since it is said that he was more than 40 years old shortly after the death of Jesus. So when the healing at Bethesda took place in John 5, he would have been about 38 years old too. Therefore, they had been sick about the same time. Perhaps our friend had also been in Bethesda at other times, among the crowd of "sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed" (verse 3). Who knows?

When Jesus walked through Bethesda before reaching the paralytic, He passed by other sick people, maybe other paralytics. He walked beside their beds; He heard their cries; but He did not heal them. Why not?

Ellen White observes that Jesus wanted to heal more people that day, "but it was the Sabbath day. Multitudes were going to the temple for worship, and He knew that such an act of healing would so excite the prejudice of the Jews as to cut short His work."¹

Jesus had a reason for every action. We know that He could not heal everyone without obstructing His work, but why did he choose this paralytic and not another?

Again, Ellen White notes that this was a desperate case: "His persistent efforts toward the one object, and his anxiety and continual disappointment, were fast wearing away the remnant of his strength."²

The paralytic was apparently about to give up. Jesus knew all the cases and chose him.

Maybe the disabled men from Acts and John knew each other. Maybe they even saw each other again. Can you imagine the conversation?

"You're walking!"

"Yes, Jesus healed me!"

"Where is He?"

"I don't know. He was at Bethesda a few moments ago."

What would have crossed the other man's mind? Joy for the healing of

someone sick? Anxiety about trying to be healed too? Maybe he started looking for Jesus at Bethesda.

At least twice Jesus performed several miracles at the same time in Jerusalem, both in the Temple. One at the beginning of His ministry (John 2), and the other at the end of His ministry (Matt. 21).

About the first occasion Ellen White writes that after purifying the Temple, Jesus stayed attending the sick who came to Him. "All received attention. Everyone was healed of whatever disease he had."³ On the second occasion "the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them" (Matt. 21:14). Ellen White adds that those who returned to the courtyard "stood transfixed before the wonderful scene. They saw the sick healed, the blind restored to sight, and deaf receive their hearing, and the crippled leap for joy."⁴

Jesus healed everyone present. But our friend was not among them. For some reason he missed the many healings of Jesus. Maybe he began to feel that he was always in the wrong place.

ANOTHER CHANCE

On other occasions Jesus took the initiative to meet those who needed Him. For example, with the Samaritan woman "He needed to go through Samaria" (John 4:4); with the Canaanite woman "Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon" (Matt. 15:21); with the demoniacs of Gadara "they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes" (Mark 5:1).

So the Gospels tell of at least three types of healing: (1) people who came to Jesus and were healed; (2) people who asked for help for those who could not come, such as the man taken to the roof of the

The man no longer asked for a miracle; he just wanted to survive.

house in Capernaum (Mark 2); and (3) people who sought out Jesus.

Interestingly, our friend did not fall into any of these categories. Normally when Jesus passed through a city no one was left sick.

What evidence do we have to reconstruct this story of the paralytic in Acts 3 and Jesus? Ellen White writes about him: “This unfortunate man had long desired to see Jesus, that he might be healed; but he was almost helpless, and was far removed from the scene of the great Physician’s labors.”⁵ His case was therefore a desperate, fruitless search. Jesus had not looked for him, he did not find Jesus, and nobody took him to Jesus.

Ellen White describes his last effort to see Jesus: “His pleadings at last induced some friends to bear him to the gate of the temple, but upon arriving there, he found that the One upon whom his hopes were centered, had been put to a cruel death.”⁶

Imagine how he must have felt! I imagine him crying out, “Why, Lord? All have been healed except me!”

Forty years not being able to walk. Forty years of broken dreams. Forty years trying to be healed. But he was always in the wrong place. And when he finally got close to Jesus, he learned that Jesus had been killed.

Our friend had to mourn. Perhaps after a certain time he accepted with resignation that he would never be cured. Drying his tears, he thought, *At least I will not be a burden to anyone. I still can ask for alms. I will do that for the rest of my life.*

“Take me to the Temple, please,” he probably asked his friends.

In reading the story this way, everything makes sense. The man was brought every day to the door of the Temple. When he saw the disciples, he “asked for alms” (Acts 3:3).

Notice, he no longer asked for a miracle; he just wanted to survive.

SOMETHING BETTER

But when Peter approached, he said to the man: “‘Look at us.’ So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. Then Peter said, ‘Silver and gold I do not have’” (verses 5, 6).

It seemed like the last straw. A bad joke.

But I like to imagine Peter’s conversation with our friend: “I have nothing of what you expect, because I am a time traveler. I’m here to remind you of your dream. I’ve come to give you what you’ve been looking for. I bring you something from Jesus of Nazareth.”

Ellen White observes: “As Peter thus declared his poverty, the countenance of the cripple fell; but it grew bright with hope as the apostle continued, ‘But such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.’”⁷

What? In the name of Jesus? Jesus was alive?

“And [Peter] took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankles bones received strength. So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking

and praising God” (Acts 3:7-9).
What a wonderful story!

HEALING FOR ALL

I don’t know where you are. Maybe you were healed long ago in Bethesda. Maybe Jesus found you there and healed you directly.

Maybe Jesus had to go away because you were far away. Maybe someone brought you to Jesus, or good friends asked for Jesus to heal you.

Or maybe you’re like our friend, sitting at the door of the Temple with broken dreams, frustrated by the undeniable feeling that God has passed you by. You may feel forgotten by God. The last paralytic of Jerusalem.

If so, your story’s not over. God’s ways are inscrutable, unattainable, and incomprehensible. Because when we least expect it, a messenger of God can come into our lives and speak to us in the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

Every day we meet people like the paralytic. Evicted. At the door of the Temple. Hopeless. Without illusion. They no longer ask for a miracle. They feel forgotten by God.

Our mission, like that of Peter and John, is to remind them of a promise in Jesus’ name: Don’t give up. Keep believing. Keep trusting. Because one day not too far in the distance, there in the temple of the Most High God, you also will walk, leap, and praise God. ©

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940), pp. 201, 202.

² *Ibid.*, p. 202.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 592.

⁵ Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 57.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 57, 58.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

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Millennial Voices

Jesus in Bad Company



Are you really going there to meet your pastor? That place is nothing short of a pub!"

The bewildered security officer stared at me in utter disbelief. I smiled and nodded. Yes, it was hard to believe that anyone would enter the university premises claiming to be meeting his pastor at The Joint. The Joint was a recreation area with round tables in the open air where students met to socialize. Initially started as a restaurant, it had become widely known for licentiousness, alcohol,

and drugs. "Lord, glorify Yourself today through us," I prayed as I drove through the densely populated university campus offering homes to more than 70,000 students from Kenya and other countries. *These students need You, Lord. How can we share Your love with all of them?*

Our Bible study group, composed of two pastors, an expatriate missionary, my best friend, and me, had agreed to meet for our weekly session at The Joint. Having embarked on a discipleship series, we had decided it was time to get out of our comfort zones and follow what we believed to be our Lord's calling. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19) was our theme verse, and the imperative "Go!" our operative word. Jesus knew that His disciples would need to venture into unknown territory and go where people were, including "secular" Samaria and the ends of the earth. We knew exactly where our Samaria was.

We sat down at one of the tables and looked around at the students socializing. Music played in the background, and broken beer bottles littered the ground. I could smell a whiff of marijuana. What a place! We prayed and asked for the Lord to open doors for witnessing and

outreach in that student community that needed the Lord but didn't know Him. Chad and Brian, two university students, sat at our table, and we began to have small talk about their studies and university life. Chad was a well-kempt young man, eloquent and outspoken, and engaged us in conversation. Brian, covered by tattoos and with dreadlocks hanging over his bloodshot eyes, looked uninterested and left after a while.

Soon we started to share about spiritual matters with Chad. Much to our surprise, he told us that he came from an Adventist background. However, he had stopped going to church years ago. His eyes lit up as we shared about God's love. Christ's blood shed at Calvary can save absolutely anyone! No one is beyond redemption. Chad seemed to soak up every word. At the end of our conversation he promised he would share these truths with his friends and invite them the following week to our Bible study. God was moving in the heart of this secular student community!

As I drove home that day, feeling the warm glow of having ministered to someone in a most unlikely place, I realized that the Great Commission was just that—a call to venture out of my "churchy" comfort zone to where people were.

Jesus Himself befriended tax collectors, prostitutes, and sinners with the sole aim of reclaiming their hearts for eternity. Why would He keep such "bad" company, much to the dismay of the religious leaders of His time? He had a heart for the lost. He left His heavenly comfort zone and transformed into His disciples those who had been lost.

That's what He is calling you and me to do today. ©

Frederick Kimani, M.D., a consulting physician born in **Nairobi, Kenya**, is passionate about building bridges between God and young people through music.

Our Stories Have Meaning

God's story is better understood when we tell our own.

The Argentina Union Conference opened its Heritage Center at River Plate Adventist University on October 21, 2018. Visitors to the center learn about the history of the Adventist Church in South America and Argentina through the true-life experiences of early missionaries.

Why tell their stories? God communicates with us through stories that are life testimonies. Stories help us reflect on God's actions. Reading or listening to others tell their stories is important because we see how God worked in their lives.

STORIES CONNECT PEOPLE

Stories create community. Georg Riffel accepted the Adventist message in Kansas, United States. His beliefs were so strong that he was among the first group of Adventist missionaries to travel to Argentina.

As they shared their testimonies about their relationship with Jesus and His soon coming, they wrote history with their lives. They developed friendships. They looked for people with whom they shared common interests and related to them at that level. These missionaries created a bond with those who were seeking truth and found hearts willing to accept the gospel. Each town and each culture thus became connected by stories they lived and shared together.

STORIES DEFINE US

The first missionaries identified themselves as Seventh-day Adventist Christians. Their narratives reflect the fact that it was important for them to believe in the sure hope of Jesus' return. That defined the new situations they faced.



Georg Riffel (left) was one of the first Adventist missionaries to Argentina. Albert Stauffer, one of the first literature evangelists in South America, arrived in 1891.

Our Heritage Center seeks to listen to others' stories, opening a window that gives us a glimpse into how others saw themselves, and what they did as a result.

When the first missionaries arrived in Crespo, Entre Ríos, Argentina, they shared their testimonies with community friends. This bold undertaking brought new challenges to the Adventist Church. These workers wrote to the General Conference requesting more missionaries for Argentina.

From their stories we can look back and learn about their decisions, their successes, their mistakes, and their attitudes. We catch a glimpse of their humanity, as well as their faithfulness, as we appreciate the challenges they faced.

STORIES GIVE MEANING

When the General Conference learned of the challenges of reaching different places in the vast South American territory, it sent more missionaries.



← The Heritage Center at River Plate Adventist University was inaugurated October 21, 2018. Exhibits trace the history of Adventist missions in South America.

A group of literature evangelists join church leaders on hand for the ribbon-cutting as the center is opened to visitors.



In 1891 the first three colporteurs arrived in South America: Clair Nowlen, Edwin Snyder, and Albert Stauffer. Richard Craig arrived in 1893. He was responsible for maintaining a bookstore and directing colporteurs.

Craig and his family settled in Buenos Aires. They established a school in their own home. Thus he and his wife began adding to the stories of their students, as when we build a wall brick by brick. The “building” we know today as the church began as a result of one life that touched another, that touched another, and so forth.

The stories we read and hear about others help us to remember that we’re not alone. Different perceptions bring depth and breadth to the way God worked in other peoples’ lives, giving us a better understanding of our own history. It has been said that the only way to avoid making the mistakes of the past is to remember its lessons.

STORIES AS THEOLOGICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

Stories tell how the Word became flesh for everyone. They tell of the presence of God in the tragedies and celebrations of life.

Our history is registered in the great narrative of the cosmic conflict—the story of redemption. God’s plan is huge. Our lives, by comparison, are relatively insignificant. But we do play a part, just as did the missionaries of the past. This gives us hope and meaning in the midst of tragedy and pain, and the courage to advance.

Not all the missionaries were young. Lucy Post, the first single woman who volunteered to go to South America, was nearly 50 years old when she set out to be a missionary. Her decision was inspired by stories she heard from missionaries.

Post arrived in South America in July 1895, the middle of winter in the Southern Hemisphere. After her arrival, she spent time with her brother’s family, who lived in Nueva Palmira, Uruguay. Five weeks later, on August 31, 1895, Post organized the first Adventist congregation in that country—a Sabbath School composed of more than 20 people whom she had visited since her arrival.

EACH STORY IS A GIFT

No two stories are ever exactly the same. This is why each story is so important: it reminds us how wonderful God is.

I am the only me in the universe. My unique story is the most excellent gift I have. If I do not tell it, it will remain silent.



I am the only me in the universe. My unique story is the most excellent gift I have.

When we share our stories, each story becomes a sacred treasure, a gift that rejuvenates the lives of everyone who hears it or reads about it. In this sense *any* story, moment, or situation is transcendent.

It’s not hard to imagine many interesting and unique stories from your region that define what God is doing in the Adventist church where you live. History does not end with what happened in the past; it extends to our present, and throws us into the future.

I invite you to join with believers past, present, and future to see what God can do through us in the great matrix of the history of His grace. ©

Silvia C. Scholtus, Ph.D., is director of the Heritage Center at River Plate Adventist University, **Libertador San Martín, Entre Ríos, Argentina.**

Sharing God's Word in the British Museum

A unique approach

Hi! I'm leading a free tour of the top seven attractions of the British Museum. We're going to look at 4,000 years in 45 minutes. We'll be leaving in five minutes. No tips accepted." I stood on the front steps of one of the most prestigious archaeological museums in the world, recruiting visitors to check out my tour.

"What's the catch?" everyone wanted to know.

"I'm a student finishing up my master's degree," I explained. "I just spent two months doing archaeological research in Greece and Turkey. I have a week here in London before I go back to

the United States to finish my studies, so I thought I would share a bit of what I've discovered."

What they didn't know was that I was in London for a mission trip with my wife, Caitlin; brother, Jakob Serns; dad, Dan Serns; and friend Austin McKey. In the mornings our small team distributed thousands of Bible tracts to the masses in tourist areas. In the evenings we partnered with a local church to help start Bible studies in their neighborhood. In the afternoons I led evangelistic tours through the British Museum. Jakob was my "tour assistant," Caitlin was the photographer, and Dan and Austin played the roles of tour participants. We prayed that God would use the tours to open people's hearts to His Word.

GROWING GROUPS

People joined the tours, which ranged from eight to 45 participants. That week we led more than 400 people on 12 tours through the British Museum.

My "Top Seven Attractions Tour" looked at an artifact from each of the major Western world civilizations: (1) Egypt, (2) Assyria, (3) Babylon, (4) Persia, (5) Greece, (6) Rome, and (7) divided Europe. My goal was to use history and archaeology to gradually validate the Bible as God's Word. For Egypt and Assyria I drew connections to Joseph and Hezekiah. At the artifacts from Babylon I presented the great image of Daniel 2. Throughout the rest of the tour we saw the prophecy fulfilled artifact by artifact. At the end I shared how Bible prophecy continues into the future. I encouraged my tour group to check out Daniel 2 in the Bible to see what comes next. We also offered free sets of Amazing Facts Bible study guides for further study.

We had people from many different countries, cultures, and faith backgrounds. Some of our tour participants came from countries in which it is illegal to speak openly about subjects that I presented on the tour. It was thrilling to see God opening people's minds and challenging their worldviews.

LESSONS FROM HEZEKIAH

When my tour group got to the Lachish reliefs from Assyria, I told the story about King Sennacherib. His goal was to take over Israel (Judah) and prove himself stronger than Israel's God. His conquest was wildly successful. He captured town after town in Israel—46 cities in all. Lachish was the last stop before Israel's capital at Jerusalem. The Lachish reliefs depict the story of Sennacherib's absolute devastation of the Israelites at the battle of Lachish. Now nothing stood in the way of the Assyrians taking down the capital and nation.

Sennacherib's 185,000 soldiers surrounded Jerusalem in a siege. They sent a nasty letter threatening the



Dustin Serns (right) shares biblical history and prophecy while leading tours at the British Museum in London.

people of Israel. “Don’t listen to your God! He can’t save you! Don’t listen to your king! He can’t save you either! You might as well surrender now!”

King Hezekiah received the letter with distress. He brought it into the Temple and stretched it out before the God of Israel. He prayed, “God, You chose us as a nation to represent Your character to the nations around us. Consider these threats from our enemies who claim they are stronger than You. Now, O Lord, deliver us, so that all the kingdoms on earth may know that You alone are God” (see 2 Kings 19).

Then I showed tour participants the Taylor Prism, which tells Sennacherib’s side of the story. Sennacherib’s inscription says that he took 46 cities in Israel and locked up King Hezekiah in Jerusalem “like a bird in a cage.” So why did he stop? Why did he leave?

The morning after Hezekiah’s prayer, all of Sennacherib’s 185,000 soldiers surrounding the city of Jerusalem *were found dead*. “You decide how they died,” I said, “but I can tell you that it was not by Israelite soldiers.” Some were shocked as they were compelled to intelligently consider a God who miraculously intervenes in human history.

Later on the tour, a woman from England asked me, “Do you really believe the Bible is the Word of God?”

“Well, that’s what the Bible itself claims,” I said. “It’s a unique and bold claim. It’s either a complete lie, or it’s true. From everything I have studied, the evidence seems to suggest that it’s true.” The artifacts right before her eyes were confronting her to seriously consider—possibly for the first time—that there could be a God who communicates with people in a clear, reliable, and accessible way.

MEETING RESISTANCE

God was working through the tours. It didn’t take long, however, before we met some resistance. The British Museum staff began noticing us. The museum offers its own free tours, usually with no more than a half dozen participants. *Who was this guy leading hordes of people through the museum a couple times each afternoon?* I was openly sharing some unpopular biblical ideas. So we began receiving increased attention from the museum staff, and tension was building. Finally, halfway through the week, there was a confrontation.

My 40 tour participants and I crowded in front of the statue of Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of sex. I

explained about the Temple of Aphrodite in Corinth, which hosted anywhere from 300 to 1,000 temple prostitutes. I shared about a newcomer to town named Paul who gave the Corinthians some startling new ideas about sex and started reading the story from the Bible (see 1 Cor. 6). Out of the corner of my eye I could see the museum staff member looking more and more uncomfortable. “Paul believed that people can change, not by their own power but by the power of Jesus Christ, who, he claimed, had died and resurrected and was the Savior of humanity,” I continued. The words were scarcely out of my mouth when the staff member came swooping in.

“Stop! Stop! You can’t do this here!” he interrupted, looking upset. I wondered if this was the end of my British Museum tours. Then he said, “You’re blocking the way.”

I realized what was happening. He didn’t have authority over what I said, only whether or not people blocked the walkway. Our group was too big for the small area. So I answered, “No problem; we were about to head to the next artifact anyway.” Turning to the tour participants, I said, “Let’s go over to the Rosetta stone.”

Two “undercover” museum staff members joined our tour that afternoon. I noticed the radios hidden under their jackets. At the end of the tour one of the guards was the first to give an enthusiastic applause. He then said, “This was one of the best presentations I have ever heard! I have never heard history and the Bible blended in that way!” A couple days later I gave him a copy of Ellen White’s book *The Great Hope*.

We never had another problem at the museum throughout the rest of the week. God made sure His Word was heard. God speaks to anyone who will listen. He speaks through the Bible. He speaks through history and archaeology. He speaks through people—even a teenage-looking, unofficial tour guide and his team in a famous museum. God will make sure His Word is heard. Will you let Him speak through you? ©

Check out basic video recordings of the tour online at www.youtube.com/top7tours.

Dustin Serns, pastor of the Port Orchard Seventh-day Adventist Church in **Washington, United States**, loves pursuing Jesus and His mission with his wife, Caitlin, and their daughter Quinn.

Death at Creation

Q

Was there death in the cosmos before the origin of sin?

A

This is a question whose answer seems to be obvious, yet it is a little complex because of the fact that scholars have been unable to formulate a generally accepted definition of “death.” Besides, the Bible does not seem to consider the flora to be alive, and therefore it does not die; it simply fades away or dries up. It is not my intention to define death, but to address your question.

1. SIN AND DEATH

The Bible establishes a direct correlation between sin, natural death, and end-of-the-world death. Adam and Eve experienced death as a result of their rebellion against the Creator (Gen. 2:17). After the Fall sin and death found an entrance into the world, and consequently all sin and all die (Rom. 5:12). Death, like sin, is universal and inescapable. It is, in fact, the wages of sin (Rom. 6:23). The primary emphasis between sin and death is that spiritual death is eternal separation from God as rebellious sinners are eliminated from the universe (Rev. 20:10, 14, 15). For repentant sinners, natural death is not final, but only a sleep in Christ until the resurrection. The bodies of believers have not yet been redeemed from the power of death (Rom. 8:23), but they will be at the coming of Christ (see 1 Cor. 15:53-56).

2. CREATION AND DEATH

God, who is life Himself, is the only and exclusive origin of all life. He did not create a self-existent universe, but rather a universe that had a beginning and, theoretically, could have an end; it did not emanate from God. God is the One who through His presence

and power sustains His creation in such a way that it continues to be. Immortality is a divine attribute that none of God’s creatures possess in themselves (see 1 Tim. 6:16). Does this mean that all creatures are by nature and by definition mortal—that is to say, that it is a matter of time before they die? Certainly not! It means that God’s divine intention and design was to bring into existence creatures that would never die, for He would always sustain them. Consequently there was no death before the Fall.

3. LIFE AND DEATH

Having reached that conclusion, I would suggest that before the Fall, death was known at the conceptual level, but not at the experiential level. This is to be expected if creation, as we suggested above, is not self-existent. There must have been some awareness of the nature of all creatures. This may sound like speculation, but it is not. The concept of death was introduced by God before the Fall when He said to Adam, “You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die” (Gen. 2:17, NIV). The serpent denied not the concept of death but the phenomenon of actually dying; there was no death. This is one of the most radical cosmic lies pronounced by a creature in an attempt to raise all creatures to the level of the divine. Death is the result of sin, but life is the result of the death of Christ for those who believe (see Rom. 5:17). ©

Angel Manuel Rodríguez is retired after serving the church as a pastor, professor, and theologian.



Health & Wellness

Managing Technology

For the good of our health

Our children have just entered their teen years. Many of their friends have smartphones and use them constantly. It seems as if we are fighting a losing battle to manage their use wisely, and also keep to what we judge is reasonable exposure to screen time. Should we keep trying?

Most certainly, yes! We are living in the most connected era of all time. Yet it seems that people are *talking* meaningfully and deeply with each other less and less. We recently watched a family enter an airport lounge—mother, father, and four children ages ranging from about 4 to 16 years. As they circulated looking for seating, the 4-year-old, angrily waving his smartphone, was repeatedly shouting: “I need Wi-Fi connection!” The older children had “tuned out” the scenario as they listened to music through their noise-canceling earphones.

It’s not uncommon to see families in restaurants glued to their devices. Perhaps they are texting each other? We hope so, because they don’t often speak.

Social media is helpful in keeping friends informed and updated. The Internet provides a treasure trove of helpful information at our fingertips. These advances need to be discerningly, carefully, and wisely used. For all the good information out there, dangerous and damaging disinformation also exists. Additionally, the way these tools are used can lead to unwanted consequences, including “Facebook depression,” cyberbullying, pornography, and screen addiction.

CONSIDER

- Taking phones to bed is unhealthy, depriving us of sleep and rest.
- Incoming alerts can disturb sleep and increase the concern of “missing out” on what’s happening, therefore raising anxiety. Increased daytime tiredness follows.

- Increased anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem follow inadequate sleep.
- Unmanaged and bedtime social media use can specifically increase pressure to be available at all times and further disrupt healthy sleep.
- Dedicated, device-free family times are needed on a regular basis. Family meals provide such an opportunity and yield healthful benefits.

Keep working to keep screen time optimized and healthy in the family. Parents need to lead by example. Our children may wish that parents would get off their screens and just talk with them.

We recommend an excellent edition of *Adventist Review*, available in the online archives. It is themed “Rearing Children in a Technological World: What to Do, What to Avoid,” October 27, 2011. It is informative, balanced, and an excellent resource—all the more relevant today than when it was first published.

When it comes to God’s wise instructions, God’s people should “impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” (Deut. 6:7, NIV).

Let’s keep speaking with our children, communicating with them, unconditionally loving them, and even understanding them. They are the church of *today*—and they are worth it! ©

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Miss Azalea's Funeral



"May I Tell You a Story?"

BY DICK DUERKSEN

Miss Azalea, single and never married, lived in tiny love-filled rooms above her small shop. Her shop stocked simple things people might want to buy without having to walk long distances to the big markets. Her home was known as a "safe place," always filled with an atmosphere of transforming love.

On the day of her funeral, the pastor watched as mourners came. Stone steps led from the street to the wide wooden doors, old steps, chipped and worn by decades of worshippers. Two deaconesses, their soft white gloves the only nonblack in their worship uniforms, led members and guests to empty chairs until all the seats were filled with people who had learned about love from Miss Azalea.

The front rows remained empty, reserved for a very special group who were ushered to their places as the music began to play. They arrived as individuals, some with friends, many with small children, each filling a place of honor as close as possible to Miss Azalea.

A skilled choir sang hymns, the same ones Miss Azalea had sung on so many worship days. The congregation, vibratos enhanced by the loss of a fine friend, joined the choir, lifting the music so strongly that the walls bulged outward and the ceiling seemed to open wide enough so that all heaven could hear.

After much singing, long praying, and more singing, the pastor, his special robes

moving with the Spirit, walked slowly to a wooden pulpit the size of a small ship.

The sanctuary was silent now, as if prepared to hear the worst.

"She's gone," the pastor began. "The evil cancer finally took her from us. But even as her physical health dimmed, the light of Miss Azalea's love stayed bright. We're all going to miss her.

"We all knew Miss Azalea very well," the pastor continued. "And each of us loved her as she loved us."

The church filled with amens, hallelujahs, and loud cries of "Thank You, Jesus!"

"As we all know, Miss Azalea always wanted to have children but never achieved her dream."

The church once again erupted in affirmations and sorrow. Then the pastor raised his arms to quiet his flock.

"However," he said, "Miss Azalea did not bury her talent of motherhood, but chose from among us 21 children: 21 motherless children; 21 fatherless children; 21 children who lived in the gutters of our city; 21 children who needed love; 21 children who learned God's love in Miss Azalea's home; 21 children who were given God's gift of a mother's love; 21 of God's children—Miss Azalea's children!"

The pastor waved his arms toward the front rows and bowed to the special guests.

It was a long time until the congregation settled down from praising God, Miss Azalea, all 21 children, and each



other. When silence finally returned, the pastor continued.

“Today, as the most important part of this service of love and worship, all 21 of Miss Azalea’s children have come to tell us about their mother.”

One by one they came forward, telling the stories that everyone already knew. Nothing new there, for Miss Azalea had loved each of these children within the safety of this congregation.

When 20 children had told their stories, the pastor waved for the choir to sing again. The choir, robed in gold, sang as if Gabriel had brought a legion of angels to sing along.

As the music died away, Cindy stood, number 21. Miss Azalea’s youngest child. She hadn’t come alone. Beside her came a small girl, holding tightly to her mother’s hand.

“My name is Cindy, and I am Miss Azalea’s twenty-first child,” she began.

“Miss Azalea found me one night behind a trash dumpster. I was huddled in a large cardboard box, and the night was cold. Very cold. I had just given birth to a tiny baby girl all by myself in my cardboard box. I was terrified about what to do next. I needed a hit of heroin, and I also knew I needed some clean rags, water, and diapers. But I had no money, so I was trying to get up the courage to go out into the cold and find a man who might pay me enough money so I could buy a few diapers.”

The church was hushed in that terrifying pause that comes just before a huge storm flattens your house.

“Miss Azalea found me there, right then. She must have known—because she arrived with a clean blanket and some warm water.”

“Come with me, daughter,” she said. “Then Miss Azalea carried me and my baby down the street and up the stairs to her house. It was clean, the most beautiful home I had ever seen. She filled her bathtub with warm water, washed my baby, washed me, put clothes on us and delicious food in us. All the time she was singing and loving us like we were real people who were worth something!”

It is possible that everyone in the church was crying as Cindy spoke. Everyone reviewing their own stories of meeting Miss Azalea’s determined love.

“It took time,” Cindy finally continued. “Miss Azalea finally helped me get off heroin and worked with me every day so that my baby would grow up to be a normal, happy, and healthy girl.”

“Miss Azalea helped me get a real education and cared for my daughter while I took classes. She helped me get a decent job here in town. Every day she taught me about Jesus and helped me become part of this, our church family.”

“No, Miss Azalea did not have any children. But I, number 21, am her luckiest daughter! Miss Azalea showed me love, and even better, showed me Jesus.”

The church erupted with joy, everyone raising their arms in praise, everyone shouting “Hallelujah!” and everyone singing “Amazing Grace” louder than it had ever been sung before.

“Miss Azalea never had any children,” the pastor said. “But her heavenly mansion will be overflowing with family!”

“A-A-A-A-MEN!” ☺

Dick Duerksen, a pastor and storyteller living in **Portland, Oregon, United States**, is known around the world as “an itinerant pollinator of grace.”

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Seventh-day
Adventist Church



Apollo: How One Little Bird Became Famous

Apollo is a cockatiel who loves attention. The very first day that Kristina, his owner, brought him home to live with her, he followed her around the kitchen while she cooked dinner. He was only 6 months old. His little feet ran very fast to catch up with her, because he was too young to fly yet.

Soon Apollo learned to fly. Whenever anyone came into the room, he would fly to their shoulder and begin whistling his favorite songs.

How did Apollo learn to sing? Kristina taught him every day.

He also learned to play peekaboo with Kristina, which was a lot of fun.

One day Kristina made a video of Apollo playing peekaboo. She wanted her mom and dad to see how talented Apollo was, so she put it on YouTube for her parents to see.

Kristina was surprised when many different people around the world started finding Apollo's video and pressing the "like" button. Soon Apollo's video had more than 100,000 views! Everybody loved Apollo. He became very popular.

Soon Kristina got an e-mail. A company wanted to pay Kristina to use Apollo's video on TV. They sent Kristina \$250! Wow! Apollo and Kristina were rich! Kristina bought Apollo a shiny new food bowl and some new toys.

Kristina searched for Apollo's name online and found out that people were writing blogs about him. These people didn't know anything about Apollo's real life, but they took pictures from the video and made up stories about him. Other people made their own videos with their own birds, copying Apollo because



Bible Treasure

“What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?”

(Luke 9:25, NIV)

they wanted to be popular too.

What happened to Apollo doesn't just happen to the cutest pets—it happens to people too. Have you ever posted a picture or video on Facebook, Instagram, or YouTube and watched carefully to see if you would get lots of views? Have you ever looked at a friend's post and been jealous of how much attention they got? We sometimes try to use our talents to get more attention. Other times we try to copy other people so that we can be cool and popular.

But what happens if your

posts or talents don't get many likes or much attention? If we determine our value only by what others think of us, we can become sad and lonely. Jesus is our true friend. He wants us to know that we are valuable to Him no matter what. He loves us so much that He died on a cross so that we can spend time with Him forever in heaven.

When Jesus was on earth, He asked His disciples a very important question: “What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?” (Luke

9:25, NIV). So instead of copying other people to try to become popular, why not spend time copying our best and perfect friend, Jesus? When we imitate Jesus, we become better friends to others, and the best version of our unique selves.

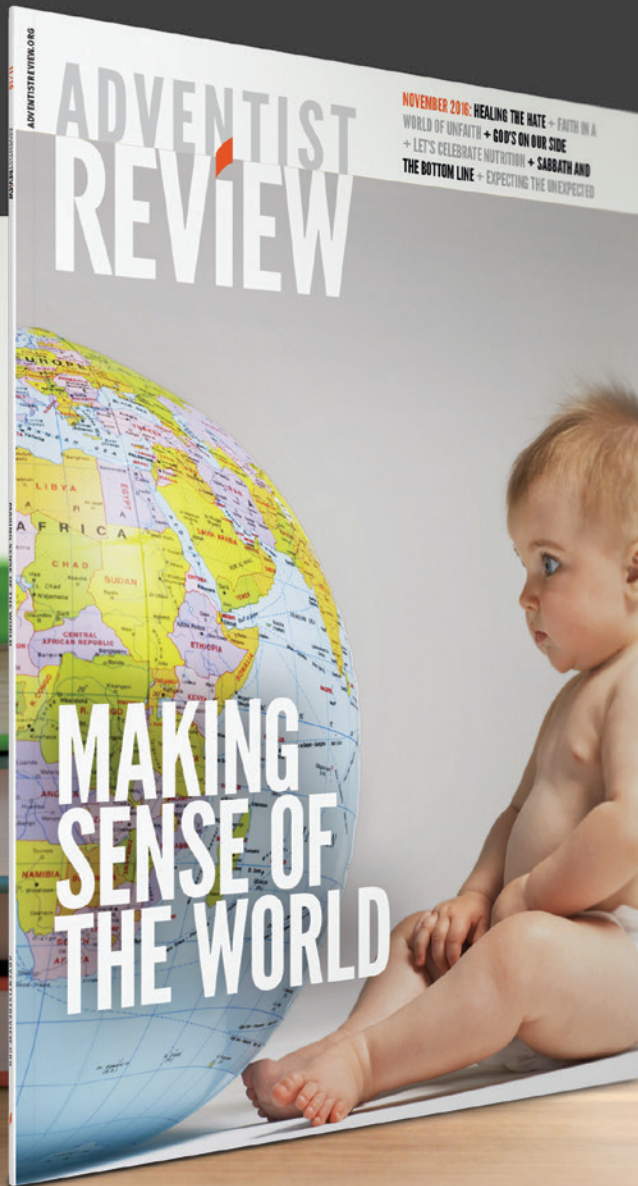
Apollo's story reminds us that attention on social media is very small compared to the special friendship Jesus wants to have with us. ©



Watch Apollo Play Peekaboo!
bit.ly/2qM6Ltg

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