Sharing Christ Through Technology

This article is excerpted from two morning worships given by Dr. Gordon Bietz, President of Southern Adventist University (SAU) in Collegedale, Tennessee, at the Adventist Virtual Learning Network and Computing and Mission Conference held at SAU June 27 and 28, 2002. The spoken quality has been retained.

By Gordon Bietz

I love technology. I got my ham radio license nearly 30 years ago. In the late '70s, I think I was the first on my block to buy a handheld calculator. It could add, multiply, and divide and had a LED display. I love computers. My first was an IBM Display Write machine with eight-inch floppy disks. I was eager to get a home computer, and when I did, I bought the most up-to-date one available, a 486 computer with a 20 mg hard drive. I love E-mail and frequently fall into the trap of checking my messages multiple times a day rather than doing my work!

It is easy to get caught up in technology—easy to be so fascinated with the mechanism that we forget the message, to enjoy the technology and forget the task, to be charmed by the machinery and forget the mission. The purpose of these tools—the goal—is to move people closer to the image of God. To make us more God-like. To fulfill the gospel commission. To go into all the world and make disciples of all nations.

Going into all the world is rather easy now with the Internet and other forms of technology. With my ham radio, I can go into all the world from my house. The "going" part has been made easier—but the "make disciples" part is still a challenge.

We must remember our goal—to live as Jesus lived. To live spiritual lives. But what does it mean to be spiritual? To paraphrase the Apostle Paul:

"When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with a fancy Web site, brilliant graphics, or even superior content as I proclaimed to you my testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. . . . My message and my communication were not with PowerPoint, streaming video, or culturally appropriate graphics, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom but on God's power." (See 1 Corinthians 2:1-5.) ✐

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The remainder of this talk discusses the "fruits of the Spirit" and concludes that love must be the basis for living spiritual lives and making our online activities meaningful. If you like paraphrases, you'll enjoy Bietz's version of 1 Corinthians 13. Read "Sharing Christ Through Technology" at http://www.avln.org/jae/.