



Pastor Colby Maier sharing expertise on sharing Jesus via short video across multiple platforms.

Adventists equipped to be digital disciples

📍 Parramatta, NSW | Juliana Muniz

More than 180 aspiring digital evangelists from across the South Pacific Division (SPD) were equipped to share their faith more effectively on digital platforms at the Digital Discipleship Conference from May 5 to 7.

Participants from Fiji, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Australia and New Zealand gathered in Parramatta (NSW) to hear featured keynote speakers experienced in digital evangelism across various mediums such as TikTok, YouTube, podcasts, gaming, Instagram and film.

The conference aimed to equip, inspire and motivate church members to share their faith using digital tools. Tim McTernan, the event organiser and Adventist Media marketing manager, highlighted the importance of using digital tools to promote spiritual growth, particularly among younger generations.

He shared the statistic that 46 per cent of Gen Z use TikTok on a weekly basis to make spiritual decisions. "If young people are going to social media for spiritual growth, what will they find? We need to be there to guide these young people and equip them with what the Bible says," Mr McTernan added.

Speakers such as Justin Khoe, Pastor Colby Maier, Pastor Tim Gillespie, Dave Adamson and American film producer Terry Benedict shared their expertise in using media and digital platforms to spread the gospel and make disciples. The conference also offered workshop sessions on various topics.

Mr Benedict, who co-produced the Oscar-winning movie *Hacksaw Ridge*, highlighted the power of storytelling in conveying biblical principles and inspiring people to be better versions of themselves. He emphasised the need for creative people and storytellers "to create and tell stories based on biblical principles that people can relate to and apply in their own lives".

A survey conducted after the event revealed positive feedback with many expressing they felt inspired and equipped to share their faith using digital tools.

Pastor Josh Stothers from Castle Hill Adventist Church expressed his excitement in applying the insights and tools learned from the conference to his local church's digital ministries. "I plan to apply what I've learnt in a couple of ways: Firstly, I would love to continue to build up the digital ministries of the local church that I pastor and continue to work on our strategies as a team. I also really enjoy making short-form content for my personal social media and I got lots of awesome new tools and ideas from the event to test out," he said.

The Digital Discipleship team plan to upload the conference presentations to <digitaldiscipleship.au> and their social media pages, making the content accessible to church members worldwide.

making headlines

Lighting up camporee

Sprint sensation and world record holder Usain Bolt was the main attraction on day two at the Inter-American Division (IAD) Pathfinder Camporee in Jamaica. "Usain Bolt is a role model for both young people and adults globally," said Pastor Balvin Braham, vice president of the IAD. "We wanted him at our camporee to demonstrate to the youth that it is possible to achieve according to your God-given potential."—ANN



The solidarity truck

The mountainous region of Rio de Janeiro received a visit from "The Solidarity Truck", a mobile service unit maintained by ADRA Brazil. 240 volunteers joined the initiative, helping to distribute approximately 3000 meals and more than 1600 pieces of clothing. They also offered about 400 free haircuts, legal advice and medical care. The free services benefited more than 4400 people.—IAD

Evangelism kids

The Adventist Church in Chile has launched a discipleship project for children aged 6–12 years. The project seeks to permanently support the work of parents in the formation of children with a missionary and evangelistic vision towards their peers.—SAD

Happy Christians

The 2022 Australian Community Survey found that Australians who identify as "Christian" or "Religious and Spiritual" or those who attend religious services have higher levels of life satisfaction on average than other Australians. They are also more satisfied with their communities.—NCLS Research