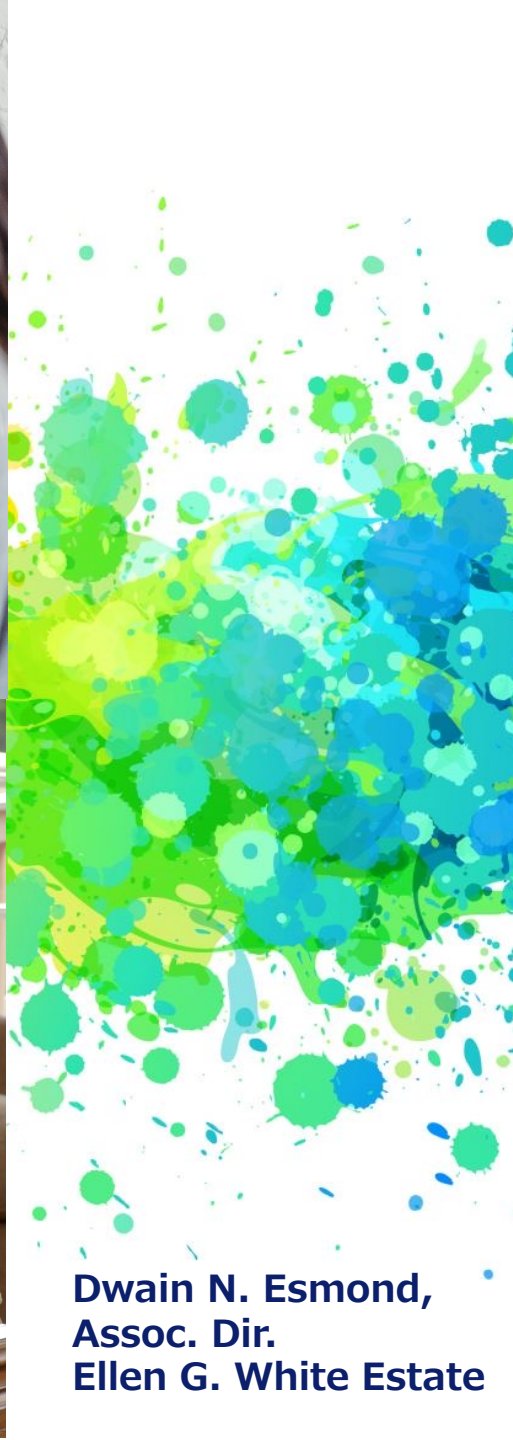


# Back to the Altar

RECLAIMING THE FAMILY  
ALTAR: Digital Strategies  
for the 21st Century  
Adventist Family



A Daily Place for God in  
Every Heart and Home  
**2022–2027**



**Dwain N. Esmond,**  
Assoc. Dir.  
**Ellen G. White Estate**

# HOW KIDS GO PLAY "OUTSIDE" TODAY



# GRADUATION



# STANDING IN LINE



**WHAT'S THE POINT OF BEING AFRAID  
OF THE ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE**



**WHEN YOU'RE ALREADY A ZOMBIE?**



**Is Digital  
Media  
Evil?**

**Are  
Devices  
Evil?**

# The Height Of Mobile Addiction





# Benefits for Individuals

- **Connectivity** and Community
- Education
- **Information** and Updates to stay informed
- **Awareness** of what is happening locally and in the world
- **Ability to share anything** with Others
- Supporting **Noble Causes**
- Can be a **good stress reliever**, a way to **decrease loneliness**





# Benefits for Families

- Provide **cost-free connectivity** with family from anywhere at any time.
- Can **stay connected with family via statuses**, sharing photos and videos.
- **Can share your problems and feelings** in hard times with a geographically separated family member.
- Provide an **instant source of connection** with the family to **students and workers abroad**.
- **Efficient source of establishing a friendly atmosphere** for family relationships by group chats and events sharing.



## **A Special Note I Received**

**“Sir, my brother in Christ. I know we don’t know each other, but I literally prayed to God if I can find you some day on Facebook.**

**When you were making the Red Door daily videos, it was a heavenly blessing to me. God used you to refine my spiritual life. I’m grateful for Jesus in you.”**

# Time Well Spent?

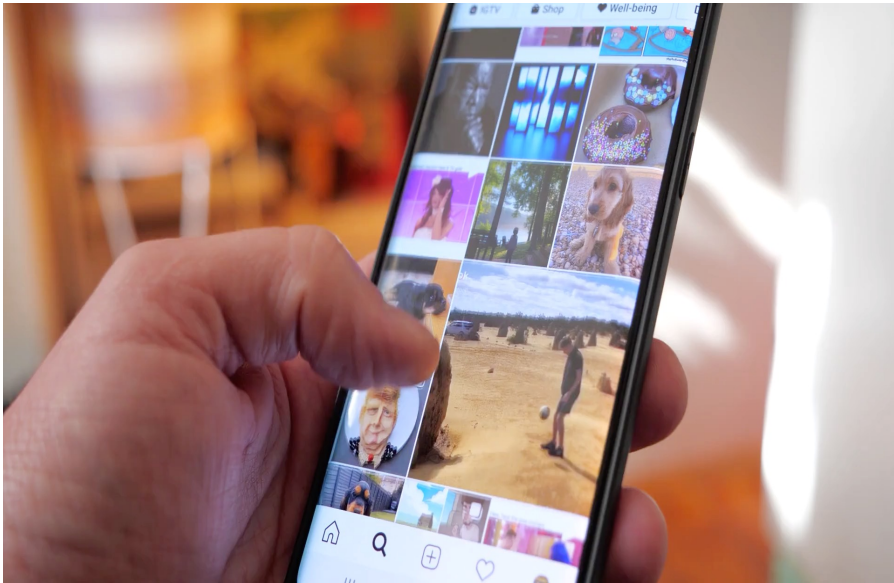
- The Average Social Media user spent **2 hours and 27 minutes** per day on social media in 2022.
- **50.1% of the time spent on mobile** was done using social media apps in 2020.



# Average Screen Time

- Globally, the average screen time per day is **6 hours 58 minutes**.
- The average American spends **7 hours and 4 minutes** staring at a screen per day.
- Americans spend an average of on their phone per day **3 hours and 43 minutes**.
- Experts recommend less than **2 hours** of screen time per day.
- Daily screen time peaked at **7.7 hours** daily during the COVID-19 Pandemic.—*Zippia Research*





- Do you find yourself **spending more time** on your cell or smartphone **than you realize**?
- **mindlessly passing time** on a regular basis by staring at your cell or smartphone?
- **losing track of time** when on your cell or smartphone?
- spending more time texting, tweeting or emailing **as opposed to talking to people in person**?
- Has the amount of **time you spend** on your cell or smartphone been **increasing**?



- Do you wish you could **use your cell or smartphone less?**
- **Do you sleep with your cell or smartphone** (turned on) under your pillow or next to your bed regularly?
- Do you find yourself **viewing and answering texts, tweets and emails at all hours of the day and night**—even when it means interrupting other things you are doing?
- Do you text, email, tweet, or surf **while driving or doing other similar activities** that require your focused attention and concentration?
- Do you feel your use of your cell or smartphone **decreases your productivity at times?**
-



- Are you reluctant to be without your cell or smartphone, even for a short time?
- Do you feel ill-at-ease or uncomfortable when you accidentally leave your smartphone in the car or at home, have no service or have a broken phone?
- When you eat meals, is your cell or smartphone part of the table setting?
- When your cell or smartphone rings, beeps or buzzes, do you feel an intense urge to check for texts, tweets, emails, updates, etc.?
- Do you find yourself mindlessly checking your cell or smartphone many times a day, even when you know there is likely nothing new or important to see?

•



- Scoring: If you answered Yes to:
- 1 - 2. **Your behavior is normal** but that doesn't mean you should live on your Smartphone.
- 3 - 4. **Your behavior is leaning toward problematic** or compulsive
- 5 - or above: It is likely that you may have a **problematic or compulsive Smartphone use pattern.**
- 8 or higher - If your score is over 8 you might consider seeing a psychologist, psychiatrist, or psychotherapist **who specializes in behavioral addictions for a consultation.**
- *Source: Center for Internet and Technology Addiction*





# Negatives for Individuals

- ATTENTION
- MEMORY
- THOUGHT
- EMPATHY
- META-AWARENESS
- ATTITUDE
- PHYSICAL HEALTH



# Landmark Lawsuit

- **500 School Districts in America suing Social Media Companies**
- “**knowingly causing emotional harm**” to children through their platforms”
- have “caused a mental and emotional health crisis” among students marked by “**higher proportions of anxiety, depression, thoughts of self-harm**” and low self-esteem.”



# Surgeon General Vivek Murthy

- **1/3 or more of girls aged 11-15 say they feel addicted to certain SM Platforms**
- **"46% of adolescents aged 13-17 said social media makes them feel worse.."**

*Advisory on Social Media and Youth  
Mental Health, May 2023*

## A Study of 250 Undergraduates at UC San Diego

1. **Available Cognitive Capacity**—how fully a person's mind can focus on a task
2. **Fluid Intelligence**—interpreting and solving unfamiliar problems

Leave phone on desk (Scored Worst)

Place phone in pocket (Scored in middle)

Leave phone in a different room (Scored best)

Researchers concluded, the "integration of smartphones into daily life **appears to diminish such vital mental skills as "learning, logical reasoning, abstract thought, problem solving, and creativity."** (2017, Journal of the Association for Consumer Research)



# Negatives for Families

- **Changed Family Culture**, especially the joy of family gatherings
- **Increased Isolation** of Family Members
- **Changed Marital Relationships**-- present but emotionally absent
- **Decrease in Family Importance**-- decreases dependence on parents, and bond with parents
- **Others Get the Best of us**, Family gets the Rest of us



# Serious Spiritual Implications

- As screen time exceeds face to face time, **we are losing the inherent richness and fullness of immediate, direct contact. "We are created with an innate desire for unmediated contact and communication with God" (p. 93).**
- Genesis 1-3: Adam and Eve had daily **face to face communication with God**





# Negatives for Children

- **Negatively affects child psychology,** Deteriorating memory function
- Reduces sleep cycles, **Limits creativity**
- **Diminishes communication** between parent and child, Shortens attention spans
- Potentially encourages **violent and aggressive behavior**
- **Premature thinning of Cortex** (7 Hrs. or more per day)
- **2 Hrs. or more per day—score lower on thinking and language tests**

# By Beholding we are Being...**REWIRED**

**"We give technology the power to shape and change and fashion us, **remaking ourselves in its image**" (p. 27).**

*(Source: Tim Challies, *The Next Story: Faith, Friends, Family and the Digital World*)*





# A Battle for the Mind



- “Every organ of the body was made to be servant to the mind. **The mind is the capital of the body.**
- **“The mind controls the whole man. All our actions, good or bad, have their source in the mind. It is the mind that worships God and allies us to heavenly beings.** Yet many spend all their lives without becoming intelligent in regard to the casket [jewel case] that contains this treasure”–1MCP 72
- **“The mind is the Lord’s garden, and man must cultivate it earnestly** in order to form a character after the divine similitude” (2MCP, p. 800).

**9 Rules** for  
**Technology**  
**Use in Every**  
**Family**  
**By Kira Lewis**

*In This House*

**TECHNOLOGY IS A  
PRIVILEGE** NOT A RIGHT

**ALL TECHNOLOGY MUST BE  
PARENT APPROVED**

*We value people more than technology*

**DEVICES DON'T COME TO THE DINNER TABLE**

**THERE IS NO TECH BEHIND CLOSED DOORS**

CHORES AND HOMEWORK COME BEFORE TV OR VIDEO GAMES

**TURN IT Off IS NOT A  
NEGOTIATION**

**WE BREAK IT WE HELP PAY TO REPLACE IT**

WE USE TECHNOLOGY APPROPRIATELY

**OR WE LOSE IT**

# SPIRITUAL DIGITAL HYGIENE

Individuals

## BEST PRACTICES FOR SPIRITUAL DIGITAL HYGIENE

1

### CONSIDER DOING A DIGITAL DETOX

- Try one week without non-work social media/Internet/TV use
- Keep a journal of your feelings and emotions

### SET A LIMIT ON YOUR MEDIA USAGE

- Identify 2 healthy hobbies/activities to do
- Track your usage with apps

2

3

### BE MINDFUL OF YOUR BEHAVIOR ONLINE

- Use the Bible's Filter: Phil. 4:8

### ADOPT A NO-DEVICE RULE DURING SOCIAL GATHERINGS

- This will be a challenge. Don't just catalogue moments, enjoy them

4

5

### TURN OFF NOTIFICATIONS AND DELETE UNUSED APPS AND SOFTWARE

### DETERMINE HOW YOU WILL USE MEDIA TO DEEPEN YOUR WALK WITH GOD AND MINISTER TO OTHERS

6

7

### ISHARE YOUR SPIRITUAL DIGITAL MEDIA HYGIENE HABITS WITH OHTERS AND WHY WHEN ASKED



# Why We **Must Do** **This...Ephesians 2:1-10**

“And **you He made alive, who were dead** in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, **according to the prince of the power of the air**, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and **were by nature children of wrath**, just as the others.

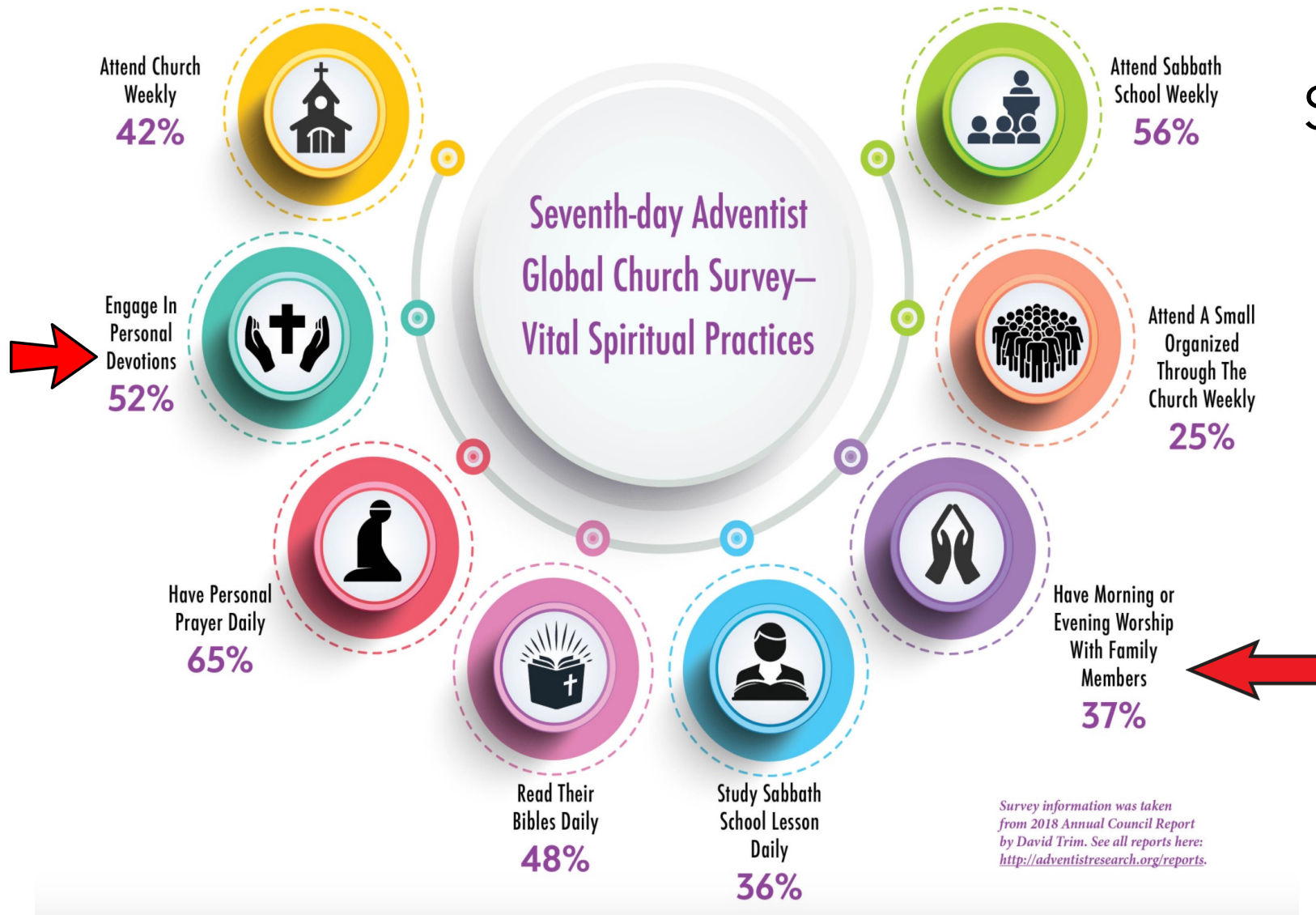


# Why We Must Do This...Ephesians 2: 1-10

**"But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,** even when we were dead in trespasses, **made us alive together with Christ** (by grace you have been saved), and **raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,** that in the ages to come **He might show the exceeding riches of His grace** in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; **it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.**



# Why We Must Do This...Ephesians 2:1-10



## KPI 5.1

Significant increase in the number of church members **regularly praying, studying the Bible, reading the writings of Ellen White, and engaging in other personal devotions.**

Responsible for Implementation:  
**ABSG, ASTR, WHT, FM, GCMA, GCSS/PM**

# IMPORTANCE OF THE PERSONAL ALTAR

- "But the hour is coming and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father: **for the Father seeketh such to worship Him in spirit and in truth**" (Jn. 4:23).
- "There is nothing more needed in the work than **the practical results of communion with God**"—9T143
- "No words can properly set forth **the deep blessedness of genuine worship.**"—9T143



# IMPORTANCE OF THE FAMILY ALTAR:

“Like the patriarchs of old, those who profess to love God **should erect an altar to the Lord wherever they pitch their tent....Fathers and mothers should often lift up their hearts to God in humble supplication for themselves and their children. Let the father, as priest of the household, lay upon the altar of God the morning and evening sacrifice**, while the wife and children unite in prayer and praise. In such a household Jesus will love to tarry.”--  
CG518





# The Altar Antidote

## Negative Effects of Unhealthy Social/Digital Media Use

It damages our ability to concentrate and focus

It makes us feel lonely

It stresses us out

Depression & Anxiety

Negative Body Image

Unhealthy Sleep Patterns

General Addiction

Cyberbullying

FOMO

Unrealistic Expectations

## Healing Effects of Worship

- Calms the mind and trains it to focus
- Decreases loneliness, increases intimacy w/God
- Reduces and removes stress and worry
- Reminds us that God is in control/God lifts us up
- Body made by God, inhabited by God, precious to God
- Worship calms to heart and leads to better rest
- God fills the emotional needs that lead to addiction
- Unconditional love and acceptance from God
- Living in God's will means I am always in the right place. I'm missing what I should miss
- Godliness and contentment, great gain



## Because We Must Do this!

“Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, **having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth**—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people— saying with a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; **and worship Him** who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water’ ” (Rev. 14:6-7).

**Can a Church that worships at 37% or 52% effectively proclaim a worship-centered message to the world?**

# Our **First Duty**...

**"Our first duty toward God and our fellow beings is that of self-development. Every faculty with which the Creator has endowed us should be cultivated to the highest degree of perfection, that we may be able to do the greatest amount of good of which we are capable"–**

*Child Guidance, p. 395*



# One Family...

**"One well-ordered, well-disciplined family tells more in behalf of Christianity than all the sermons that can be preached. Such a family gives evidence that the parents have been successful in following God's directions, and that their children will serve Him in the church."** –*Adventist Home*, p 32

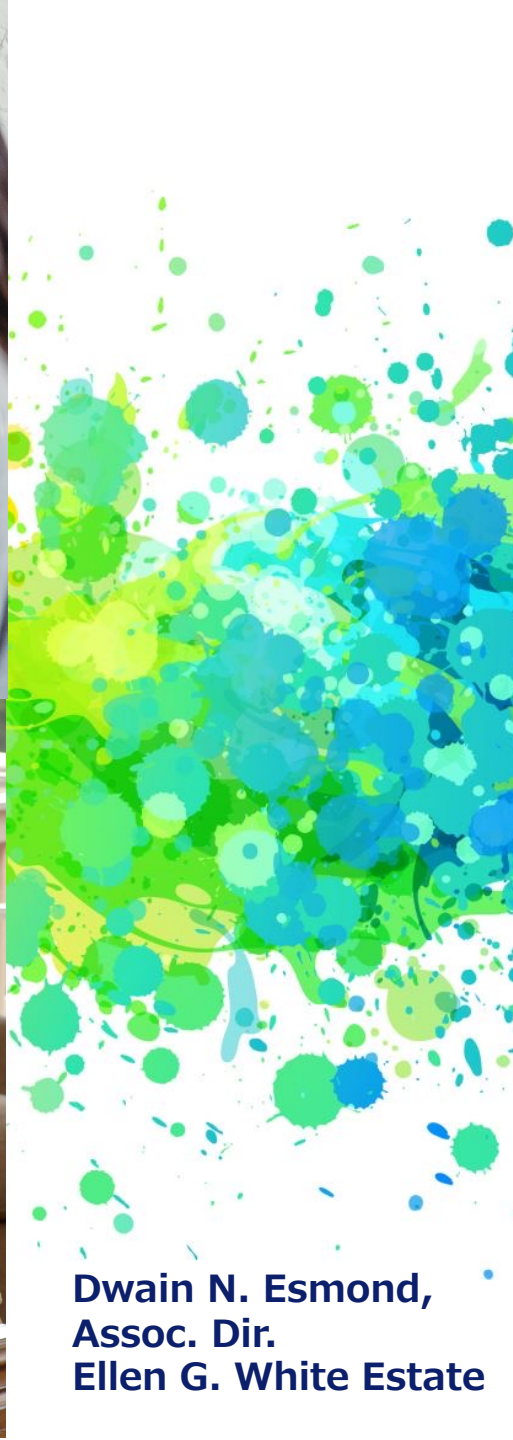


# Back to the Altar

RECLAIMING THE FAMILY  
ALTAR: Digital Strategies  
for the 21st Century  
Adventist Family



A Daily Place for God in  
Every Heart and Home  
**2022–2027**



**Dwain N. Esmond,**  
Assoc. Dir.  
**Ellen G. White Estate**