

**“One of the Least of These”  
World Orphan Sabbath  
November 21, 2020 (or alternate date)**

**Introduction**

Tragically, millions of children all over the globe have become orphaned for many reasons: war, famine, displacement, disease or poverty. Of the more than 155 million children classified as orphans, 15.1 million have lost both parents.

The Adventist World Church has as set aside November as a time to focus attention on the needs of orphan and vulnerable children through the Adventist Possibility Ministries' initiative. This Sabbath has been set aside to especially remember orphans who live in the shadows and remind us all that we have the **possibility** to alleviate the suffering they experience.

**Power Point Slide 2**

James 1:27 tells us what pure religion is all about.

Read James 1:27 – “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” KJV

There are several supporting ministries of the church who answer this call to provide care to orphans. One such organization that partners with Adventist Possibility Ministries is International Children's Care, also known simply as ICC.

**Power Point Slide 3**

- ICC was Established in 1978 by Elder Bob Folkenberg, Sr. and Pastor Ken and Alcyon Fleck
- ICC Creates Families for Orphans
- Through time, over 4,100 children have become a part of the ICC family.
- This Ministry Involves Personal Evangelism over Time – and for Eternity

A shining example of the results of such a ministry for orphan children is the story of Timothy.

**Power Point Slides 4-10**

**Share Story of Timothy**

Timothy was a beggar boy on a railway station platform in India. On the best days, strangers took pity on Timothy and gave him morsels to eat. On the worst days, Timothy dug in the trash for food, or even ate nothing at all. He had little hope that life would ever change. Little did he know that God cared for him, and that He was preparing a new life for Timothy's future!

A kind pastor from Flaiz Adventist School stood on the platform where Timothy lived. As the pastor waited for the train, he glanced around the station. There, he noticed a heartbreaking sight. Timothy stood in tattered and dirty clothes, obviously

hungry. Worst of all, the boy had a look of hopelessness in his eyes. The pastor's heart melted with compassion and so he approached.

"I know of a place where children get good food, clothes and a good education," the pastor said. "Children live with a mother and father who love them. It's called the ICC Sweet Home children's village. Would you like to live there?"

It sounded like a dream to Timothy. In fact, it sounded too good to be true. Although the stranger had a kind face, Timothy felt uncertain. He refused, and the pastor hesitantly walked away. Not knowing what else to do, the man said a silent prayer for the homeless child.

A moment later, the train approached. The pastor bent to pick up his briefcase, but it wasn't on the ground anymore. It was in the arms of Timothy. "Sir, that is our train," He said. "Let us go."

The next morning when Timothy arrived at the Sweet Home Children's Village, the staff welcomed him warmly. They quickly found out that he didn't know his last name, the names of his parents, or the name of the village where his parents lived. He could not remember anything about his family. He had lived on the platform of the railway station ever since the death of his parents.

Fortunately, thanks to generous gifts from the worldwide ICC family, it is possible for the Sweet Home to be a safe haven for children like Timothy who desperately need a home, a family and an opportunity to go to school.

Timothy grew up in Sweet Home and attended elementary and high school at the Flaiz Adventist School. After his high school graduation, Timothy went to study Theology at Spicer Memorial College (now called Spicer Adventist University). He received a bachelor's degree in 2014 and successfully completed a Master's Degree in 2016.

After obtaining his master's degree, Timothy returned to his "home" and joined the Flaiz College as a teacher in the Department of Theology. He is now "paying forward" the support given to him by teaching at the same school where he was a student several years before. Timothy is recognized as being a good teacher and a talented preacher.

The kind support of donors made possible a great transformation in Timothy's life. He is grateful for the prayers and financial support of his sponsors, as well as the love shown to him from that moment on the train station and onward. Timothy stands as an excellent example of how investment in the life of an orphan child pays forward a wonderful blessing as they give back in a life of service.

**Timothy's is just one of many children whose lives have been brought up from the pit of despair into the light of a new life. Through the 40 years of ministry on behalf of orphan children many of the children of ICC have given their hearts to Jesus and their lives in service to him. Within the ICC family of children there are pastors and teachers, doctors and nurses. And all this is made possible through caring and often sacrificial support of people just like you.**

**Power Point Slide 11 – Matthew 25:31-40**

**Dividing the Sheep and the Goats**

**Towards the end of His ministry on earth, Jesus told the story of when He comes in His glory and separates His true followers (His sheep) from those who are imposters (the goats). What is the difference between these two groups? *Pause***

**Let's read the story in Matthew 25:31-40**

**31** When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: **32** And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats: **33** And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

**34** Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: **35** For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: **36** Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

**Do you see how an orphan child is depicted in each of these conditions that Jesus spoke about?**

**Hungry, Thirsty, A stranger, Naked, Sick, In Prison**

**Listen to how the righteous respond to Jesus.**

**37** Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed *thee*? or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink? **38** When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*? **39** Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? **40** And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, **Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.**

**Power Point Slide 12 – Caring for “the least of these”**

**Focus on that phrase for a moment – Least of these? Can you think of a better example of what Jesus was talking about than an orphan child?**

**Power Point Slide 13 – Sherlin when she arrived**

**Story of Sherlin**

1. This is **Sherlin**.
2. Three years old when she joined ICC Las Palmas Children's Village in the Dominican Republic.

3. When she arrived – she was **hungry, sick, on desperate need of a stable family** to provide loving care.
4. Because of a **self-destructive lifestyle**, sherlin's **mother can't provide care** for her or any of Sherlin's siblings.
5. The children have different fathers.
6. Sadly, Sherlin's mother is in an **advanced stage of tuberculosis** and **may not survive**.

**Matthew 25:36 “I was Sick... and you visited me”**

1. Government **officials intervened**.
2. **The asked the Las Palmas director to accept Sherlin.**
3. Before doing so, our village director, Samilin, **visited her** and asked that Sherlin have a **medical evaluation**.
4. **She tested positive for TB** but **does not have** it nor was she contagious.

**Matthew 25:35 “I was a stranger... and you took me in”**

1. After much **careful consideration and prayer**, Samilin agreed to **take Sherlin into** the Las Palmas familiy.
2. Samilin asked to have **instruction on how to properly care** for her.
3. Samilin took Sherlin to a **pediatric immunologist**. She received **the proper medical protocols** to protect the other children.

**Matthew 25:35,36 “I was hungry, thirsty, naked... and you gave me food, water and clothing.”**

1. When Sherlin arrived, she suffered from **malnutrition**.
2. Immediately the Las Palmas staff went to work providing her with food and clothing as well as water to drink and for bathing.
3. In a short while, Sherlin looked and felt much better.

**Though the road that brought her to a loving family at Las Palmas was tragic and filled with uncertainty, one thing is certain: with the loving care she is receiving in her new family, Sherlin has an opportunity now to heal both physically and emotionally.**

**Power Point Slide 14 – Sherlin recently**

**Matthew 25:36 “I was in Prison... and you came unto me”**

**Unlike most prisoners, orphan children like Sherlin are innocent victims held captive by circumstances far beyond their control. Yet the shackles of poverty, abuse and neglect are very real. The mission God has given to us all is to come alongside these children, to release the chains that bind them and free them from the prison of poverty and neglect — giving them hope for the future. This is a special rescue mission that you can participate in as well.**

**Power Point Slide 15 – Orphans**

Can you see that, in a unique sense, the orphan child fits every one of the descriptions of “the least of these” that Jesus spoke about in Matthew 25?

1. The **orphan** is a **stranger** that needs to be taken in and **released from the prison** of poverty, abuse and neglect.
2. When an orphan arrives she is **hungry, thirsty, naked, and wearing only the clothes she has.**
3. And yes, many children like Sherlin are **sick.**

**Please don't miss this important point. When you take interest in and support an orphan child, you are demonstrating not only a special love for one of Jesus' children in need, you are demonstrating your love for Jesus Himself.**

**What a blessing for the children!**

**And what a blessing for you – if you join in this mission!**

**There are many more children like Sherlin just waiting to come in and they are waiting for someone like you to take an interest in them.**

**Power Point Slide 16 – Will you answer God's call to serve...**

**Will you answer God's call to serve “the least of these” as you prepare for Jesus' soon return?**

**May God bless you. May God bless this church as we seek to serve the least of these.**

**Power Point Slide 17 – More information can be found at**

**Prayer**