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Stories With a Purpose

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Stories With a Purpose

IN 2022, THE ANDREWS UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR FAITH ENGAGEMENT LAUNCHED “IN PASSING,” A PODCAST THAT AIMED TO SPARK A SENSE OF INTIMACY WITH GOD BY UNCOVERING THE BEAUTY OF HUMANITY THROUGH STORIES OF STUDENTS AT ANDREWS UNIVERSITY.

▼ Season 1 of “In Passing” was hosted by Kendra Miranda (center) with co-hosts Isaac Peterson (left) and Raabe Garcia (right).

The podcast was hosted by Kendra Miranda with co-hosts Isaac Peterson and Raabe Garcia, all Andrews students from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. In March of that year, during their first “In Passing” episode, Kendra, Isaac and Raabe explained that as they made plans for the podcast, the title came naturally.

Raabe said, “We were thinking about ‘What’s the thing that happens every day when you go to a place?’ You pass by so many people. And the reality is we don’t get enough time to actually sit down and talk with them ... this [podcast] is a space where we don’t have to just pass by quickly, but we can take some time to get to know each other.”

In further explaining the goals and mission of the podcast, Kendra noted the story of the blind beggar in Luke 18, where Jesus was just passing by—but He healed the man. He passed by with intention. Kendra said, “We’re wanting to dive into the reality that we can pass by people with intention. With purpose. With expectation. With confidence ... it’s not a bad thing to pass by. It’s just where our hearts are at and what we’re doing with that passing by. Jesus was someone who passed by, and He passed by in the most beautiful ways that were life-changing to the people around Him. And we are here to do the same.”

Throughout season 1, each episode focused on the theme of “seasons.” The team wanted to inspire community, change and relationships and help individuals recognize that no matter the season of life, good or bad, no one has to navigate a situation alone. Student guests spoke to belonging, finding purpose and success, times of questioning and transition, developing confidence and moving forward.

Prescott Khair, associate chaplain for the Center for Faith Engagement, worked with the podcast hosts. He says, “In the times we live, it is easy to forget that our individual stories can create moments of shared connection. Season one of the



Photo courtesy: Center for Faith Engagement

'In Passing' podcast served as a space where students could share about the season in which they probed the larger questions of life and transitions into young adulthood. As an office dedicated to the faith engagement of our campus community, this provided one more opportunity for our students to express and share how their faith played a significant role in these moments. Storytelling is part of Andrews University's strategic focus, as well, and this was one way we operationalized it on the student level."

During the 2022–2023 school year, the role of podcast host was picked up by Angel Pereira, a Master of Divinity student in his last year at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. Angel had made it his mission to get to know people on campus—he served as an administrative pastor for New Life Fellowship and hosted the campus Talent Show and banquets. When he heard of the "In Passing" host opening, he thought, "What better way to get to know more people?"

Angel met with Chaplain Prescott to brainstorm the year's theme. They recognized that college is a time of growth through transition for all students, as some are moving from high school to university and others are finishing their schooling and moving into adulthood and the "real world." They settled on the idea of "growth in the gray areas."

Angel and producer Isai Ramirez developed a long list of student guests. Angel says, "I interviewed a group of friends who had been friends from freshman year to senior year. That was probably one of the most-listened to episodes as they talked about how rare it is to have the same group of friends for so long. I interviewed an ex-military Buddhist about being at Andrews as a non-Adventist. God really put people in my path."

It was evident, too, that God was not only guiding who to feature on the podcast but how conversations would develop. Angel saw shy students step out of their comfort zone and genuinely be themselves. He also recalls an episode where he talked with a friend who was at a spot in her relationship with God where she was questioning a lot. "When I asked her to be on the podcast, she agreed but said she may not say the nicest things about God,"

he says. "She ended up not saying a single thing that was controversial. We just had a conversation about life and where she is on her journey. She said she came into the process with a bad attitude and thought she'd take the opportunity to express her anger toward God but it never came out."

As intended, the podcast setting provided a safe space for community. And Angel recognized his own personal growth as a result—in seeing God's leading but also in developing skills as a conversationalist with a purpose. "It was wonderful," he says.

"Andrews University's Center for Faith Engagement is committed to providing opportunities and spaces for students to engage with faith in meaningful ways. The 'In Passing' podcast represents one such student-led opportunity," says Prescott. "The equipment and studio will remain available for other students to engage in telling the stories of faith and community. As an office we remain wholly committed to inspiring resilient disciples of God, and telling stories of faith through digital media is just one avenue we have to make that mission a tangible reality." ■

Gillian Panigot is communication manager & FOCUS editor in the Office of University Communication, Andrews University.



Photo courtesy Angel Pereira

▲ Season 2 of "In Passing" was hosted by Angel Pereira.