

Perspectives on the Value of Adventist Education

The Seventh-day Adventist Church operates a global educational system with 111,476 teachers and 2,064,741 students in 9,589 educational institutions, primary through university.¹ The extent of the Adventist school system is itself a statement of the present value that the denomination places on education within the context of faith. Was this always the case? We will consider early evidence of the perceived value of Adventist education within a historical context.

In the Beginning

The Seventh-day Adventist denomination arose from the Millerite movement, which focused on the expected return of Christ in 1844. In anticipation, many families withdrew their children from school.² When the return of Christ did not occur as anti-

ipated, some believers maintained that Christ's coming was still imminent and, consequently, did not believe that education was important or necessary.³ Further, those children of Adventist families who did attend school were often bullied for their faith. As a result, in the years after 1844, as well as before the Great Disappointment, some parents chose not to send their children to school.⁴

This anti-education view persisted in some segments of Adventism. Nearly two decades later, for example, W. H. Ball wrote to *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*⁵ asking if it is "right and consistent for us who believe with all our hearts in the immediate coming of the Lord, to seek to give our children an education?"⁶ As late as 1872, G. I. Butler, General Conference president, observed that there were Adventists who felt "much distressed at the prospect [of establishing a denominational school], thinking it is a denial of our faith in the soon

coming of Christ, and that it will all end in formality and spiritual death."⁷

Not many years passed after 1844, however, before at least certain Sabbath-keeping Adventists began to recognize the need for education for their children. Following a practice common at the time, especially in rural areas, one or more families would hire a teacher to teach their children. What was noteworthy is that the education in these early Adventist homeschool cooperatives was provided by someone who shared their religious beliefs.⁸

Early Sabbatarian Adventist Schools

One of the earliest Sabbatarian Adventist schools⁹ began operating on December 16, 1853, in Bucks Bridge, New York, under the leadership of a farmer-preacher, John Byington, who would later become the first president of the church's General Conference.

BY JOHN WESLEY TAYLOR V

John Byington's daughter, Martha (Photo 1), age 19, was the teacher and had 17 students enrolled.¹⁰ The following year, Lucinda Payne became the teacher, and in 1855, the baton passed to Martha's brother, John Fletcher Byington. The school now met in the church building rather than in a home, and some children from non-Adventist families were also enrolled.¹¹

Meanwhile, in 1854, an Adventist home school was conducted in Jackson, Michigan,¹² and another in Northfield, Vermont, under the leadership of Josiah Hart, an Adventist pastor, with Mary Baker as a teacher of Hart's four children.¹³ Some of the early home-school attempts may have been influenced by an article by Joseph Bates in the *Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* in which he urged parents to provide religious instruction to their children,¹⁴ as well as Ellen White's article "Duty of Parents to Their Children" in which she advocated, "Parents, if you wish to save your children, separate them from the world, keep them from the company of wicked children."¹⁵

In October 1855, James and Ellen White moved the Adventist printing press to Battle Creek, Michigan. Their son, Edson, would later recall that he enrolled in "the first Adventist school in Battle Creek [which] was conducted by Mrs. M. M. Osgood. . . . It ran about one year."¹⁶ In 1856, in his early 20s and having served as a public school teacher, Robert Holland opened a private school in Battle Creek for the children of Sabbath-keeping Adventists. However, the school duration was brief due to parents' dissatisfaction with lax discipline at the school.¹⁷ Around this time, James White would write a three-part series of articles in *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, advocating that it would be better for children to be educated at home by parents or by a Sabbath-keeping tutor than to be exposed to immorality in the public schools.¹⁸

In 1858, with the support of the leaders of the Battle Creek church, John Fletcher Byington (Photo 2), who had taught at the Bucks Bridge school, planned to open a school in



Martha Dorner Byington Amadon, 1834-1937
General Conference Archives



John Fletcher Byington, 1832-1872
Center for Adventist Research

Battle Creek. James White promoted the school in *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, stating, "Bro. J. F. Byington designs commencing a School in Battle Creek the First day of February, 1858, for the benefit of the children of Sabbath-keepers in the place, and also those abroad."¹⁹ He noted that "much anxiety has been expressed by several brethren and sisters in other towns in regard to sending their children to a good School in Battle Creek. This, and the wants of our own children, has induced us to invite Bro. Byington to open a School here."²⁰

Sadly, the school did not last long. W. C. White noted that "the high hopes of Elder White and the officers of the Battle Creek Church regarding this school effort were never realized. The people who criticised [sic] Robert Holland for too little discipline, criticised Fletcher Byington for too much discipline, and after a brief and stormy experience, the enterprise was abandoned."²¹ Nevertheless, John Fletcher Byington's initiative may denote the first church-promoted school among Sabbath-keeping Adventists.

James White, however, was disheartened. In 1861, in response to William Russell, who had written to *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* in hopes of establishing a school in Battle Creek, James White, as editor, replied, "We have had a thorough trial of a school at Battle Creek, under most favourable circumstances, and have given it up, as it failed to meet the expectations of those interested. We therefore wish to be excused from acting any part in reference to your enterprise."²²

It did not help matters that in 1862 the city of Battle Creek built a new school, known as "Number Three," in the west section of the town, where most of the Adventist families lived. W. C. White recalled that good teachers were hired, who endeavored to conduct the school in harmony with Christian principles. As a result, many Sabbath-keeping Adventists sent their children to this public school. As students would graduate from Number Three and move to the high school, however, "parents became perplexed and anxious as they observed that the worldly and irreligious influences were moulding the character of their children."²³ Something needed to be done.

Groundwork for the First Denominational School

In May 1863, the Seventh-day Adventist denomination was formally organized.²⁴ By 1866, the Health Institute had been established, the publishing work at the *Review and Herald* was expanding, and the Battle Creek

church had grown to nearly 400 members.

About this time, a Michigan school-teacher in his mid-30s, Goodloe Harper Bell (Photo 3), came to the Western Health Reform Institute in Battle Creek in poor health.²⁵ Although largely self-educated, Bell had also studied at Oberlin College,²⁶ although he had not graduated, due to his father's death. Through the health program, Bell recovered and became a Seventh-day Adventist. While in Battle Creek, Bell began to teach grammar and writing to several Adventist young people, including James White's son, Edson.²⁷

When the leaders of the Battle Creek church learned of Bell's work, they employed him in 1868 to teach a day school.²⁸ After one year, however, the Battle Creek church abandoned its sponsorship due to the financial burden of the school. Bell, however, continued the school (Photo 4) for a time as a personal endeavor.²⁹

Meanwhile, young people working at the publishing house and at the Health Institute began to request educational opportunities. Ellen White recommended that "the Review and Herald hands should have the opportunity of school privileges combined with their work."³⁰ In response, early morning classes in penmanship and evening grammar classes were organized, along with instruction in Bible doctrines and the sciences, with Bell contributing.

Eventually, however, Bell succumbed to the heavy pressure of responsibilities at the Battle Creek church and criticism, and left Battle Creek sometime during 1871. On December 10, Ellen White wrote a stern rebuke to the Battle Creek church regarding their treatment of Bell, while acknowledging that he had also made mistakes.³¹

The School Committee

Meanwhile, James and Ellen White had returned to Battle Creek from Greenville, Michigan, where they had been living for two years, "and entered heartily into planning, and preparation for a school, that should grow into a Training School for Christian



Goodloe Harper Bell, 1832-1899

Olsen Family Photograph Album, Loma Linda University



The old Review and Herald building where Goodloe Harper Bell conducted his school.

Olsen, 1932, p. 333. <https://ellenwhite.org/media/images/1209>.



Uriah Smith, 1832-1903

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Workers, and finally into a denominational college."³²

In early 1872, several meetings took place among the Adventists in Battle Creek on the topic of education. James and Ellen White convened these meetings and spoke about the importance of founding a denominational school. As a result, a committee was established for the "immediate establishment of a school," with Uriah Smith as chair (Photo 5).³³

On April 16, 1872, the committee published an article in the *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* titled "A School in Battle Creek."³⁴ The article began with a series of questions:

"Shall we take hold, as a people, of the subject of education, and form an educational society? Shall we have a denominational school, the object of which shall be, in the shortest, most thorough and practical way, to qualify young men and women, to act some part, more or less public, in the cause of God? Shall there be someplace provided where are young people can go to learn such branches of the sciences as they can put into immediate and practical use, and at the same time be instructed on the great themes of prophetic and other Bible truth?"

Although the development of a formal institution was the overarching

goal, the committee opined that “the more immediate need is to start the school in some form. To this end we would like an immediate response from all who would be glad to attend such a school.” Perspective students were asked to respond to the first market survey in Adventist education:

1. What studies have you already taken, and what proficiency have you made in them?
2. What studies in the regular English branches do you wish to take up?
3. Do you wish to learn French, German, Greek, or Latin, one or all?
4. Is it your special object to fit yourself to take some part in the work of God?

In the May 7, 1872 issue of *The Advent Review and Herald of the Sabbath*, George I. Butler, General Conference president, wrote: “The School must commence at the earliest point practicable. Two brethren are coming from Europe, to be educated in the English language, and become more fully acquainted with our faith.” He explained that the school “is not designed to be a local affair, designed for the children of Sabbath-keepers here in Battle Creek. . . . This movement is designed for the general benefit of the cause.”³⁵

He emphasized the purpose of the school: “There are plenty of places in the land where any of this class could go to obtain an education in other languages, grammar, rhetoric, logic, history, philosophy, and the sciences in general; but they would lack the other advantage which they would need, that is, the society and influence of those of like faith, and lectures and instruction on the different points of Bible truth as they hold them.”

A May 14 update reported that the school committee had formally requested the General Conference Committee to assume management of the project.³⁶ The General Conference agreed, and the proposed school became the first denominational educational endeavor. The update included an announcement that the first school term would begin on June 3 and would last 12 weeks. “A place is pro-

vided, and teacher engaged.”³⁷ The update concluded by delineating that the chief object is “to aid those who contemplate becoming public laborers in the cause of truth.”³⁸

In a subsequent article, Butler declared, “We want a school to be controlled by our people where influences of a moral character may be thrown around the pupils which will tend to preserve them from those influences which are so common and injurious in the majority of the schools of the present day; and in this school we want a department in which those who would labor in the ministry, or in other public positions of usefulness, may receive that instruction which will qualify them for the duties of those positions. . . . We want our children to have a chance for mental culture without moral loss.” He affirmed that the General Conference Committee would supervise the school.³⁹

In the June 11 *The Advent Review and Herald of the Sabbath*, Uriah Smith announced that the school had commenced on June 3 as planned, with 12 students and Goodloe Harper Bell as teacher.⁴⁰



Ellen Gould White, 1827-1915

Ellen G. White Estate

The “Proper Education” Articles

Ellen White (Photo 6) supported the school project through her articles. Starting with the September 1872 issue of *The Health Reformer* and for the next year, she would prepare an article on the topic of education for almost every monthly edition, many of

these articles bearing the title, “Proper Education.” These installments were based on the “Proper Education” manuscript, her first extensive essay on the topic of education, penned in January 1872.⁴¹

She began the series by stating, “It is the nicest work ever assumed by men and women to deal with youthful minds. The greatest care should be taken in the education of youth to vary the manner of instruction so as to call forth the high and noble powers of the mind.”⁴² While the final portion of that first article would address health and physical development, as might be expected in a health journal, its primary emphasis was on “how to direct the developing intellect.” She explained:

“This [development] embraces more than merely having a knowledge of books. It takes in everything that is good, virtuous, righteous, and holy. It comprehends the practice of temperance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love to God, and to each other. In order to attain this object, the physical, mental, moral, and religious education of children must have attention.”

The goal was to develop persons who could think and act for themselves, having “an opinion of their own” and “confidence in themselves.” Ellen White pointed out that “those who make it their object to so educate their pupils that they may see and feel that the power lies in themselves to make men and women of firm principle, qualified for any position in life, are the most useful and permanently successful teachers.”

Subsequent articles in the series would emphasize the importance of manual labor in the school, the role of research and reflection, the need for school breaks, the advantages of a delayed start for young children, teaching through example, education for practical life, and the pernicious influence of ungodly school companions, among other topics. She would conclude the full essay by affirming: “We need a school.”⁴³

Transition Toward College-level Training

James White (Photo 7) envisioned not merely Bell's select school, but also an institution of higher education. In a March 11, 1873, address to the General Conference in session, he stated: "We want a denominational school . . . in which the languages, especially the spoken and written languages of the present day can be taught, and learned by young men and women to prepare them to become printers, editors, and teachers; and if we can do no more, where our young men that are about entering the ministry, and women, too, who are to be laborers in this great work, can be instructed thoroughly in the common branches, where their minds can be disciplined to study. . . . I know of no branch that needs our attention so much at the present time as a denominational school."⁴⁴

The General Conference session proceeded to adopt three resolutions on the topic of education. The first was "to take immediate steps for the formation of an Educational Society, and establishment of a denominational school."⁴⁵ The final resolution delineated the role of the school as a place "where those who give themselves to the work of the Lord may discipline their minds to study, and at least qualify themselves to read, speak, and write the English language correctly; where our people can send their sons and daughters with comparative safety; and where men and women may study those languages especially now spoken by the people of those nations from whom we hope to gather a harvest of souls to the Lord."⁴⁶

The following month (April 1873), John Nevins Andrews (Photo 8) wrote an editorial in *The Advent Review and Herald of the Sabbath*: "It is very evident that such a place for instruction is greatly needed. It is not enough that those who offer themselves to become laborers in the work of the ministry should be men of piety. This is indeed indispensable, but it is also necessary



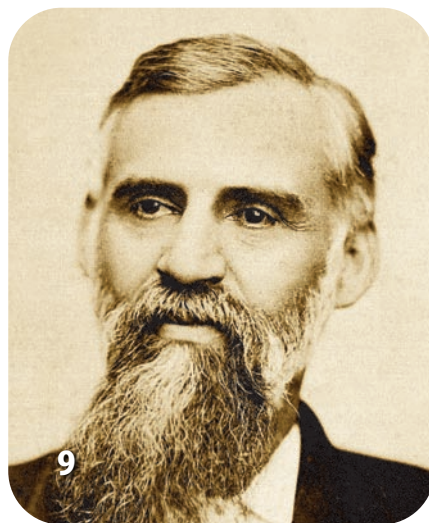
James Springer White, 1821-1881

Ellen G. White Estate



John Nevins Andrews, 1829-1883

Ellen G. White Estate



George Ide Butler, 1834-1918

Adventistdigitalibrary.org

that those who teach others should have knowledge to impart." He further argued that "the calls that come from every quarter, from men speaking other languages, must be answered by us. We cannot do this in our present circumstances. But we can do it if the Lord bless our effort in the establishment of our proposed school."⁴⁷

George Butler (Photo 9), General Conference president, concurred: "The next great necessity among us is the school. . . . We cannot accomplish that work unless we have proper buildings in which to teach, lecture, and instruct those who have something to do in the cause, as well as our children whom we wish to have kept from the influences prevailing largely among the secular schools of the present time. . . . No other great undertaking is so urgent as this."⁴⁸

In July, James White would highlight the matter of funding: "We should have had a denominational school of some magnitude, for the education of young men and young women, preparatory to engaging in the several departments of the great work. . . . There should be immediately raised \$50,000 for our first school."⁴⁹

By the fall of that year, funding exceeding the goal had been pledged, with \$10,000 already in hand. By December 31, 1873, a 12-acre plot of ground had been purchased as the site of the new school.⁵⁰ This, however, brought the need to formally organize an educational association to hold the assets.

Establishing the Educational Society

To organize the legal society needed to establish the school, a meeting was called in Battle Creek on March 11, 1874. The group assembled chose George Butler, General Conference president, to serve as chair and Uriah Smith as secretary. Pursuant to the provisions of the laws of Michigan, a seven-member board of trustees was elected.⁵¹ These then signed

the Articles of Association (Photo 10), which gave the Adventist Educational Society the right to “hold real estate, to erect suitable buildings, and to establish and manage a college for the instruction of young people of both sexes in the sciences, languages, and the Holy Scriptures.”

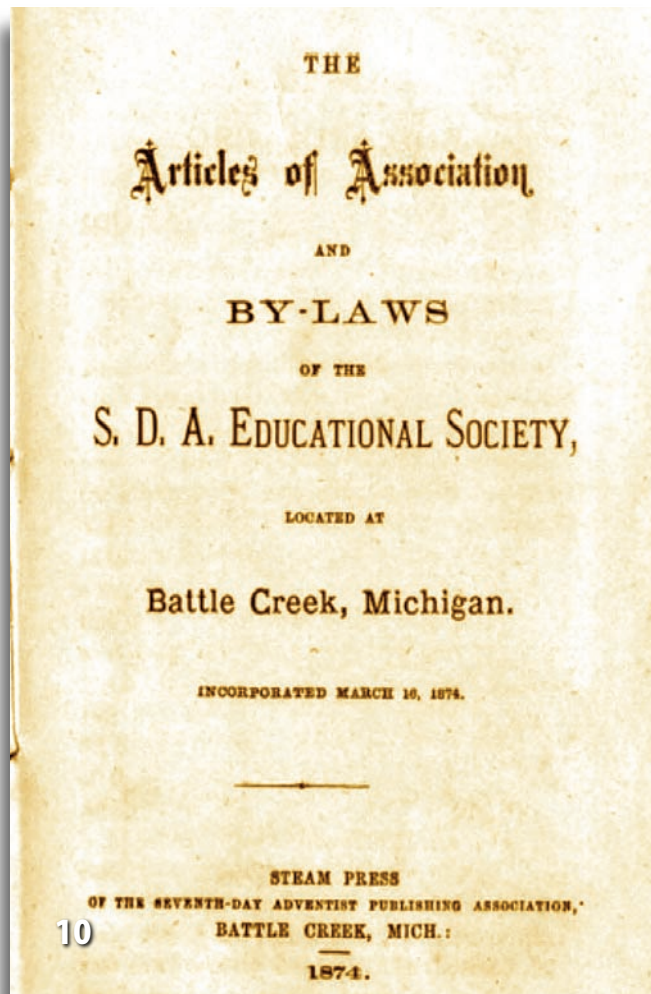
The bylaws described the plan for the institution, which would include “a primary department, a department for instruction in the common English branches, also for teaching other languages, for giving instruction in the truths of the Bible, and for such other studies as are thought by the trustees to be necessary to properly educate those who may attend.”

The Seventh-day Adventist Educational Society, located in Battle Creek, was legally incorporated on March 16, 1874.

The First Denominational College

The launch of the first Adventist college was an incremental process. In June 1872, the denomination had sponsored its first school, adopting Bell’s select school and agreeing to assume administrative oversight. That month, Uriah Smith would write in *The Advent Review and Herald of the Sabbath*, “This may seem to some like a small beginning. But a beginning, however small, is something. . . . Friends of the cause, you have now another institution to remember in your prayers. Don’t forget the school.”⁵²

On July 25, Ademar Vuilleumier, a Swiss citizen, enrolled as the first overseas student. When the fall term began on September 12, enrollment had more than doubled to around 40 students, who were joined by another 15 scholars, principally workers at the Review and Herald publishing house who attended an evening grammar



Article of Association and By-laws of the S. D. A. Educational Society, 1874

Heritage Room, James White Library, Andrews University



Sydney Brownsberger, 1845-1930

Center for Adventist Research

class.⁵³ The school now moved to the church building and continued there for about a year.

Two months after the school opened, James White wrote in *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*: “We have long felt the want of a denominational school, for the especial benefit of those who feel it to be their duty to dedicate their lives to the cause of God as teachers of his word. One of the principal objects of such a school would be a thorough course of instruction in the fundamental principles of the faith and hope of Seventh-day Adventists.”⁵⁴

For the winter term, starting mid-December 1872, two more teachers were hired. In the fall of 1873, Sidney Brownsberger (Photo 11), in his late 20s and a fairly recent convert to Adventism, was assigned the management of the school. Brownsberger had graduated from the classical department of the University of Michigan, had 10 years of teaching experience, and had

been serving as superintendent of schools in Maumee, Ohio.⁵⁵

M. E. Olsen described the opening of the winter term on December 15, 1873: “The school, having an enrollment of 110, was removed to the new third building of the Review and Herald office which had just been completed. Steam-heated and provided with desks, it was a decided improvement over the church, which was very inadequately warmed by two stoves. With the opening of the third term G. H. Bell resumed his connection with the school as head of the English Department.”⁵⁶

With the purchase of land and with the Educational Society in place, 1874 saw the construction of a three-story college building with capacity for 400 students.⁵⁷ During this time, James White was elected the institution’s

first president and would serve in this capacity until 1880.⁵⁸ Brownsberger served as principal and was responsible for the day-to-day operation of the institution.⁵⁹

The fall term commenced August 24 with seven full-time teachers. The programs included a five-year classical course (the college program), a three-year English course (which would become the teacher-training program), and a two-year special course for preparing gospel workers.⁶⁰

By December, construction was nearing completion, and the school transferred operations to the new facility, “with rooms for the science department in the basement, study and recitation rooms on the first and second floors, and a large chapel and assembly room on the third floor” (Photo 12).⁶¹ The inauguration of the building took place on January 4, 1875, at 10:00 a.m., with outside temperatures at 10 degrees below zero. James White gave the opening address.⁶²

The institution, however, did not have a name.⁶³ At first, it had been proposed that the institution be named “James White College” as White had been instrumental in launching the college, but he did not agree.⁶⁴ Finally, the February 11, 1875, issue of *The Advent Review and Herald of the Sabbath* announced that the new school was officially designated as Battle Creek College.⁶⁵

Battle Creek College, the denomination’s first collegiate institution, would evolve into Emmanuel Missionary College in 1901 with the transfer to Berrien Springs, Michigan, and then to Andrews University in 1960. It is named after J. N. Andrews, the first official Seventh-day Adventist missionary, who had been sent to Europe in 1874, and who, at the 1873 General Conference session, had introduced the proposal to establish the institution.

Analysis of Perceived Value

Education was the last of the four cornerstones of the Seventh-day Ad-



Battle Creek College, late 1870s

Vande Vere (1972) indicates that the figures on the stairs are Sydney Brownsberger (left) and James White (right).

Courtesy of The Journal of Adventist Education

ventist Church to be developed, preceded by the publishing ministry (1849), the centralized organization of the denomination (1863), and the health-care ministry (1866). By contrast, the first denominational school was established in 1872, and the first educational facility inaugurated in 1875, with primary Adventist education not becoming widespread until around 1900.

While there were pockets of resistance to the concept of education, early Adventist leaders quite frequently articulated the value of Adventist education, whether this pertained to the scattered and short-lived early school initiatives or to the founding of the first college at Battle Creek.

In denominational literature examined from the 1850s through the mid-1870s, the value of Adventist edu-

cation was referenced at least 50 times, most commonly in articles and announcements appearing in the *Review*. Spokespersons included James White, George I. Butler, and Ellen G. White, in addition to the members of the School Committee and of the Educational Society corporately. Others, such as John Nevins Andrews and Uriah Smith, also contributed.

Some of the earliest expressions regarding perceived value included: (1) being taught by someone of the same faith, (2) being separated from immorality in the public schools, and (3) receiving instruction in both matters of religion and “the common branches.” Others would nuance these values as safeguarding the spiritual and moral interests of children, pro-

viding a safe haven from corrupting influences, associating with students of like faith, and becoming more fully acquainted with the tenets of the Adventist faith.

While Ellen White concurred with these perceived values, she especially highlighted the value of Adventist education in terms of character formation, the development of persons who could think and act for themselves, and the redemptive purpose of Adventist education, themes which were not significantly developed by other advocates. Even in reference to the college, she would write: “When I was shown by the angel of God that an institution should be established for the education of our youth, I saw that it would be one of the greatest means ordained of God for the salvation of souls.”⁶⁶

Starting in 1872 and beyond the Ellen White articles, the emphasis on the value of Adventist education shifted. While there were still occasional references to the earlier aspects, the focus turned strongly to the value of preparing gospel workers. This included being thoroughly instructed in the common branches, including the sciences; obtaining a mastery of the English language and of foreign languages, the latter for the purpose of mission; and receiving a solid grounding in “the truths of the Bible,” for the purpose of ministry.

It is perhaps significant that the development of the first Seventh-day Adventist college paralleled this worker-training emphasis. It would not be until the 1890s that there would be a renewed focus on the education of the children in the church, wherein the earlier expressions of value, and particularly those delineated by Ellen White, would again receive attention. At this time, Adventist education would enter a period of exponential and sustained growth.

Conclusion

Although salient at different moments, there are core factors in the rationale for Adventist education that were clearly articulated in early Adventist history and that coalesce into a

continuing identify for Seventh-day Adventist education.

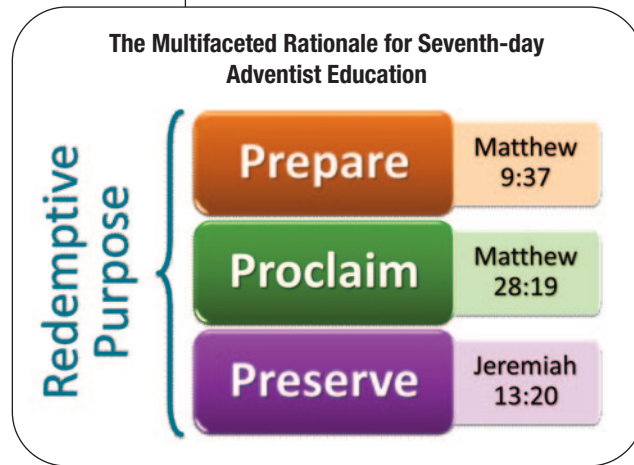
Corresponding to these early perspectives on the value of Adventist education, Scripture also identifies a multifaceted mission for Adventist education. Jeremiah 13:20, for example, poses the question, “‘Where is the flock that was given to you, your beautiful flock?’” (NRSVUE).⁶⁷ This points to the value of providing a place where children and youth can receive an education in the context of faith, interacting with teachers and fellow students in a setting that *preserves* a clear Adventist focus.

Matthew 28:19 presents a second dimension: “‘Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations . . . teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you’” (NKJV). This *proclaims* the truth of God’s Word as it informs each subject area. It highlights the evangelistic, disciple-making function of Adventist education, where we seek to have students understand the divine plan, developing a biblical worldview for life and learning.

A third facet in Adventist education *prepares* disciple-makers: Those who will go to reach the unreached, having been effectively equipped to carry forward the gospel mission. This answers to Christ’s call, “‘The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few’” (Matthew 9:37, NKJV). The preparation of gospel workers, however, is not limited to higher education nor solely to the formation of denominational employees. It must begin early on, as we instill the perspective that all are to be laborers together with God, and as we provide meaningful opportunities for witness and service.

Encompassing these three key functions, however, is the redemptive purpose of Adventist education: That stu-

dents may experience God’s saving grace and choose to join the family of God, now and throughout eternity (Psalm 25:5; 2 Timothy 3:15). This is paramount. Ellen White, for example, reminded educators that “the all-important thing” should be the salvation



of their students.⁶⁸ And she stated even more broadly that “the work of education and the work of redemption are one.”⁶⁹

While this multifaceted rationale for Adventist education shown above certainly presents the challenge to forge these goals into a cohesive real-life approach, it also provides Adventist education with the opportunity to create a distinctive Christ-centered, Bible-based, mission-focused, kingdom-directed educational system, transforming lives now and for eternity. This is the crucial role of faith-based education as an enduring element of Seventh-day Adventist identity. ✍️

This article has been peer reviewed.



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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. December 31, 2021. Education Department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, available at <https://www.adventist.edu/tion/education-statistics/>.

2. Mary P. Cummings to Flora H. Williams, December 9, 1927: "The children of those who embraced the message at that time, were all taken out of school, because the Lord was coming so soon" (Flora H. Williams Papers, RG 9, Box 58, General Conference Archives). See also Arthur Whitefield Spalding, *Captains of the Host: First Volume of a History of Seventh-day Adventists Covering the Years 1845-1900* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1949), pages 421 and 439-441.

3. On the front page of the first issue of *The Youth's Instructor*, for example, James White would write: "It is a fact that many who profess to be looking for Christ and the judgment, have greatly neglected their duty to their children. Some have thought that because Christ was so soon coming, they need not bestow much labor on their children. This is a grievous error, sufficient to call down the frown of Heaven" ("An Address" [August 1852], 1).

4. M. Ellsworth Olsen, *A History of the Origin and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald 1932), 331. Mary P. Cummings to Flora H. Williams, 1927, recorded that "R. F. Cottrell's family of four children, his brother Harvey Cottrell with four children, brother Solomon's family with four or five [children], one or two others and myself [were] taken out of the schools and did not go to school again until five years

later, at least most did not go, some never."

5. Since 1849, there have been a number of names for the church's flagship publication: *The Present Truth*, *The Advent Review*, the *Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, the *Review and Herald*, *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, and beginning in 1978, *Adventist Review* (see <https://adventistreview.org/feature/our-roots-and-mission/>).

6. "Questions and Answers," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 21:4 (December 23, 1862): 29. Ball further inquired, "If so, should we send them to a district or town school, where they learn twice as much evil as good?" James White replied that "the fact that Christ is very soon coming is no reason why the mind should not be improved. A well-disciplined and informed mind can best receive and cherish the sublime truths of the Second Advent." While James White recognized the deleterious influences at public schools, he declared, "To take children from school, where they would receive some sort of discipline, and let them run in the streets, as some have done, to get a corrupt street education, is but little less than insanity." He added, however, "No general rule can apply to all children. We must take into the account a variety of circumstances; viz., the character of the schools, embracing both teachers and students, the dispositions of our children, the instructions and government they receive at home, etc., etc. Mothers, if they are what they should be, are the best teachers of small children." White then referenced their own experience. "We have not sent our children to public school till the eldest was fifteen. Considering all the circumstances we fully believe we have acted wisely in keeping them from schools which lacked discipline, and then in sending them when a school was established in our part of the city of the highest order of discipline to be found in common schools."

7. "Our School at Battle Creek," *The Advent Review and Herald of the Sabbath* 39:25 (June 4, 1872): 197.

8. Washington Morse, an early Adventist minister, recalled: "During the years 1853-54, the sentiment prevailed quite largely among S. D. Adventists that their children should be educated more directly under the supervision of those of the same faith than was possible in the public schools. In conformity with this idea, there were many instances of home schools among our people, where the children of one or more families were gathered together, and a teacher procured who was firm in the faith, and competent to instruct in matters of religion, as well as in the common branches of school education" ("Items of Advent Experience During the Past Fifty Years - No. 6," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 65:44 [November 6, 1888]: 689).

9. Although with a somewhat different function and format, we would be remiss if

we did not give credit to the earliest and largest Sabbatarian Adventist school, furnished with teachers, students, and a formal curriculum: the Sabbath school. As early as 1852, there was an emphasis on establishing Sabbath schools for the children of Adventists, with James White as one of the early advocates. In the July 8, 1852, issue of *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, James White noted that "these [Sabbath] Schools can be held where there are but two or three children as well as where there are more" (3:5:37). The next month, he published the first issue of the *Youth's Instructor* and included "Sabbath-School Lessons." In the October 28, 1852, issue of *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, James White encouraged, "We recommend to all who have not established Sabbath schools, to do so at once" (3:13:104). The Sabbath schools took hold. The January 6, 1953, issue of *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, for instance, published a letter from John P. Kellogg (dated December 28, 1852), which stated: "We have a Sabbath school here of fifteen scholars. They are much interested in the Youth's Instructor" (3:17: 136).

10. The school register included the following names: "Cynthia, Seymour, Sydney, Eddie (Aaron Hilliard's children); Clark, Cyrus, Parmelia (Henry Hilliard's children); John, Orange, Ellen, Lucy (Penoyer children); Sam Crosby children; and the Peck boy" (G. Amadon, "The First President of the General Conference: John Byington, Farmer-Precacher," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 121:25 [June 22, 1944]: 6, 7).

11. John Byington Buck to Flora Williams, September 28 and October 3, 1927, Flora H. Williams Papers. The Bucks Bridge and other early Adventist schools are further described in: W. C. White, "Pioneer Pilots in Christian Education"; and Edson White, "The Early Schools Among Seventh-day Adventists in Battle Creek," in *Founders' Golden Anniversary Bulletin, 1874-1924*, pages 26-29 and 46 respectively, General Conference Archives, LF 5706; Keld J. Reynolds, "Centennial Day in Adventist Education," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 130:49 (December 3, 1953): 24; and Ethel L. Young, "Our Elementary Schools of Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," *ibid.* 149:14 (April 6, 1972): 7-11.

12. Myrta Kellogg Lewis to Flora Williams, cited in Flora H. Williams, *Forerunners of Our Educational System: Sketches Relating to Our First Schools*, RG 9, Box 58, General Conference Archives, n.d. Alonzo Kellogg and his brother Lucius were among the students.

13. Also, during the early 1850s, Marion Concordia Stowell taught school at the home of a Sabbatarian preacher, George W. Holt, in Oswego, New York.

14. Joseph Bates, "Duty to Our Children," *Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 1:5 (January 1851): 39, 40.

15. Ellen G. White, "Duty of Parents to Their Children," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 6:6 (September 19, 1854): 46. James White's article in *The Youth's Instructor* 1:1 (August 1852), previously noted, may also have been influential.

16. Edson White, "The Early Schools Among Seventh-day Adventists," 46. A careful analysis of the early Battle Creek schools among the Adventists and the sometimes-conflicting dates and order of teachers is provided by Wilbur Arthur Burton, "A History of the Mission of Seventh-day Adventist Education, 1844-1900," PhD Dissertation, Kansas State University, 1987.

17. W. C. White, "Memories and Records" (DF 256), 1, available at <https://ellenwhite.org/media/document/7478>

18. James White, "Sabbath-Keepers' Children," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 10:16 (August 20, 1857): 125, 126; 10:17 (August 27, 1857): 133, 134; 10:18 (September 3, 1857): 141. He stated, for example, "In many locations Sabbath keepers can employ pious and devoted teachers, who, with the united efforts of parents at home, can do much in leading their children in the path of virtue and holiness. . . . We would plead for the children, that they, at least, be taught to read and write the English language, and other common branches as far as possible, provided it can be done without exposing them to the corrupting influences of our [public] schools. . . . Shall we come out of Babylon, and leave our children behind?" Nonetheless, he acknowledged that it was preferable for children to attend a public school if there was no other alternative. "To take them from the common schools, and let them run at large with the children in the streets, is a still greater evil" (see *ibid.*, August 20, 1857, page 125).

19. James White, "School at Battle Creek," *ibid.* 11:10 (January 14, 1858): 80.

20. James White highlighted that John Byington's "success in teaching has been good. Teaching is the business of his choice, and we expect he will teach an excellent School." The announcement concluded by stating that "youth and children sent here to school will have to comply with the rules of the Teacher, and the wishes of the Committee, out of School, as well as in School, who will find them boarding places with brethren on reasonable terms. Those wishing to send scholars, will please write immediately to Eld. James White."

21. W. C. White, "Memories and Records," 2. The school was discontinued sometime in 1859.

22. *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 18:1 (September 24, 1861): 184.

23. W. C. White, "MRecords," 3.

24. At this gathering of delegates, May 20-23, the General Conference was organized and a constitution adopted. At an earlier meeting, however, held October 4 to 6, 1861, the churches of Michigan had banded together to form the first state conference. Earlier still, the name "Seventh-day Adventist" had been selected at a special conference called at Battle Creek between September 28 and October 1, 1860.

25. Bell was also a recent widower, his wife, Catharine, having died on February 2, 1866, leaving him with several young daughters.

26. Oberlin College in Ohio featured an innovative curriculum that dispensed with the classics and featured health, religious training, combined work with study, and prepared students for mission and service (Olsen, *A History of the Origin and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists*, 193, 332; Floyd Greenleaf, *In Passion for the World: A History of Seventh-day Adventist Education* [Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press, 2005], 23).

27. A description of the initial encounter between Bell and Edson White is recorded in E. M. Cadwallader, *A History of Seventh-day Adventist Education* (Payson, Ariz.: Leaves of Autumn Books, 1958, reprint 1975), page 22; and in Olsen, *A History of the Origin and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists*, page 333.

28. Students included Edson and Willie White, John Harvey and William Keith Kellogg, Homer Aldrick, E. R. Jones, E. C. Loughborough, and J. Byron Sperry (Mary Alicia Steward, "The Beginnings of Our School Work," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 10:1:38 [September 18, 1924]: 30). In the August 18, 1868, issue of *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, James White would report: "Bro. G. H. Bell will commence the second term of his select school in Battle Creek, Sept. 9. This school has thus far proved a success" (32:9, 144). A "select school" meant that the teacher's pay was based on student tuition. By early 1869, the church organization provided the original Review and Herald printing office, a two-story, 20- by 30-foot frame building, for use by Bell's select school.

29. Bell would serve as editor of *The Youth's Instructor* from May 1869 through February 1871. He also served as Sabbath school superintendent at the Battle Creek Church, significantly shaping the focus and format of Sabbath school.

30. Maud Sisley-Boyd to Mary Kelly-Little, April 16, 1931, quoted in Mary Kelly-Little, "Development of the Elementary Schools of Seventh-day Adventists in the United States" (MA thesis, University of Washington, 1932). Cited in M. E. Marroquin, "The Historical De-

velopment of the Religion Curriculum at Battle Creek College, 1874-1901" (PhD dissertation, Andrews University, 2001), 36.

31. Ellen G. White, "Testimony to the Church at Battle Creek" (Battle Creek, Mich.: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1872); Ellen G. White Estate, Pamphlet 123, 1-10; Lindsay, "Goodloe Harper Bell: Teacher," 53-55.

32. W. C. White, "Memories and Records," 4. While James and Ellen were leading advocates, they were joined in this endeavor by Elders Butler, S. N. Haskell, Uriah Smith, and J. N. Andrews, among others.

33. Spalding notes that in the establishment of the training school, "James White's voice swayed the people and tipped the balance" (*Captains of the Host*, 247). James White's influential role as an initiator is further described in Roy E. Graham, "James White: Initiator," in George R. Knight, ed., *Early Adventist Educators* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1983), 11-25.

34. Vol. 39, No. 18, 144.

35. George Ide Butler, "The Proposed School," *The Advent Review and Herald of the Sabbath* 39:21 (May 7, 1872): 168.

36. "The School," *ibid.* 39:22 (May 14, 1872): 176.

37. That teacher was Goodloe Harper Bell. In March correspondence, Ellen White had urged Bell to return to Battle Creek and teach at the school that would soon open. Bell replied on April 9 that, while he had lingering misgivings about being accepted or succeeding, he would be willing to return.

38. Although the focus was to better equip gospel workers, the article added, "Of course, those who have no such object in view, but who wish merely to acquire an education under the advantages and in the society here offered, are at perfect liberty to attend."

39. G. I. Butler, "Our School at Battle Creek," *The Advent Review and Herald of the Sabbath* 39:25 (June 4, 1872): 196, 197.

40. Uriah Smith, "The S. D. A. School," *ibid.* 39:26 (June 11, 1872): 204.

41. The "Proper Education" manuscript was published in December 1872 as part of the *Testimony for the Church*, No. 22 (available at <https://egwwritings.org/book/b12799>). It is also available in *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1948) volume 3, pages 131-160, and in *Fundamentals of Christian Education* (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publishing Assn., 1923), pages 15-46. A detailed analysis of the "Proper Education" philosophy can be found in Burton, Chapter XII, "Philosophical Foundations for an Education Mission," pages 134-143. Ellen White's keynote phrase in the manuscript was the affirmation, "We are reformers" ("Special Testimony to Battle Creek Church," PH086, 1898.).

42. Ellen G. White, "Proper Education,"

The Health Reformer 7:9 (September 1, 1872): 284-286.

43. _____, "Proper Education," *Testimony for the Church* — No. 22, 48. The role of Ellen White in Adventist education is further described by George R. Knight in his essay "Ellen G. White: Prophet," in Knight, ed., *Early Adventist Educators*, 26-49.

44. James White, "Conference Address Before the General Conference of the S. D. Adventists, March 11, 1873," *The Advent Review and Herald of the Sabbath* 41:23 (May 20, 1873): 180, 181, 184. He added, "They feel that they must give their children an education: and they send them to the [city] academy, where they backslide. If the moral and religious influence of the church where our school shall be established be good, so that our leading men and ministers can testify that the influence is all right, we can have a school of two hundred students; yes, you might as well say three hundred, or four, or five hundred. The patronage is sure; it may be depended upon" (ibid., 181).

45. The second stated that a certificate of character would be required of prospective students, and should they fail to live up to the standard, "they shall be promptly discharged."

46. "Proceedings of the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the General Conference of S. D. Adventists," *The Advent Review and Herald of the Sabbath* 41:14 (March 18, 1873): 108.

47. J. N. Andrews, "Our Proposed School," ibid. 41:16 (April 1, 1873): 124.

48. G. I. Butler, "The School," ibid. 41:19 (April 22, 1873): 148.

49. James White, "Permanency of the Cause," ibid. 42: 4 (July 8, 1873): 28, 29. This amount in 2022 would represent \$1,276,599 using a Consumer Price Index calculation, \$9,567,474 in terms of the relative wage of an unskilled laborer, and \$18,547,006 calculated on per capita GDP (<https://www.measuringworth.com>).

50. G. I. Butler, "Our New School Grounds," *The Advent Review and Herald of the Sabbath* 43:4 (January 6, 1874): 29. This plot of land, however, did not present the conditions that James and Ellen White had envisioned for the new school.

51. Comprised of George I. Butler, Harmon Lindsay, Ira Abbey, Uriah Smith, E. B. Gas-kill, Orrin B. Jones, and Horatio Lindsay. James White was not present, as he and Ellen White had departed Battle Creek in December 1873 to support the denominational work in California (Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Progressive Years: 1862-1876* [Silver Spring, Md.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1986], vol. 2), 395.

52. Uriah Smith, "The S. D. A. School," *The Advent Review and Herald of the Sabbath* 39:26 (June 11, 1872): 204.

53. Cadwallader, *A History of Seventh-day Adventist Education*, 24-30. Olsen, *A History of the Origin and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists*, 335; Emmett K. Vande Vere, *The Wisdom Seekers* (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publishing Assn., 1972), 18.

54. James White, "Denominational School," *The Advent Review and Herald of the Sabbath* 40:8 (August 6, 1872): 60.

55. Further information can be found in Joseph G. Smoot, "Sidney Brownsberger: Traditionalist: Teacher," in Knight, ed., *Early Adventist Educators*, 72-94. Bell had been considered for the position of principal of the growing school, but as he held no formal college degree, the board had decided to look elsewhere.

56. Olsen, *A History of the Origin and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists*, 335, 336. See also Carl William Shafer, "History and Educational Philosophy of Seventh-Day Adventist Secondary Schools," Master's thesis, University of Richmond, 1945, available at <https://scholarship.richmond.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2007&context=masters-theses>.

57. G. I. Butler, "Our Educational Society and School Building," *The Advent Review and Herald of the Sabbath* 43:16 (March 31, 1874): 124; Vande Vere, *The Wisdom Seekers*, 22.

58. Floyd Greenleaf notes that James White "was the de jure president of Battle Creek College, although he never claimed the title" ("Heroes of Adventist Education," *Adventist Review* 184:24 [August 23, 2007]: 24-27). Vande Vere states: "It is erroneous, however, to imagine White as a mere figure-head, for in such matters as debt reduction, the opening of new departments, and the adoption of the student proctor system, his policies molded the administration's actions" (Vande Vere, *The Wisdom Seekers*, 29).

59. Vande Vere, *The Wisdom Seekers*, 29. While White would continue to raise funds for the college and shape its policies and development, he felt that he needed someone to whom to delegate the more routine operational responsibilities, especially as James and Ellen White frequently were away from Battle Creek.

60. Maurice Hodgen, *School Bells and Gospel Trumpets: A Documentary History of Seventh-day Adventist Education in North America* (Loma Linda, Calif.: Adventist Heritage Publications, 1978), 17-20. Nurses continued to receive separate training at the Battle Creek Sanitarium. The American Medical Missionary College (AMMC), which would later disassociate itself from the Adventist Church and merge with the University of Illinois College of Medicine, was an outgrowth of the classes at the Battle Creek Sanitarium.

61. Olsen, *A History of Origin and Progress*

of Seventh-day Adventists, 336.

62. Uriah Smith, "The Opening of the School," *The Advent Review and Herald of the Sabbath* 45:2 (January 8, 1875): 12.

63. In the *Review*, the institution had been consistently and simply referred to as "the school." Although the *Daily Journal* of Battle Creek used term *college* as early as November 1873, the *Review* did not use the designation until December 1, 1874 (Vande Vere, *The Wisdom Seekers*, 25, 26; Uriah Smith, "The Biblical Institute," *The Advent Review and Herald of the Sabbath* 44:23 [December 1, 1874]: 184).

64. Olsen, *A History of the Origin and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists*, 337.

65. Uriah Smith, "Battle Creek College," *The Advent Review and Herald of the Sabbath* 45:7 (February 11, 1875): 56. Smith explained, "It has been decided to give our school this name, more at present for the sake of convenience than for any other reason. Our charter makes provision for all grades of instruction from the primary to the highest. We can therefore use this name though we have not yet all the departments and the full course of instruction that pertain to a college proper. But chiefly this name is now adopted to distinguish our school from other schools in this city. There is not another institution of learning here that goes by that name, hence it will conveniently and fully designate ours."

66. Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1876/1948), 4:419.

67. Scripture texts credited to NRSVUE are quoted from the *New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition* of the Bible. New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. Scripture texts credited to NKJV are quoted from the *New King James Version* of the Bible. Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

68. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 436.

69. _____, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1903), 30.