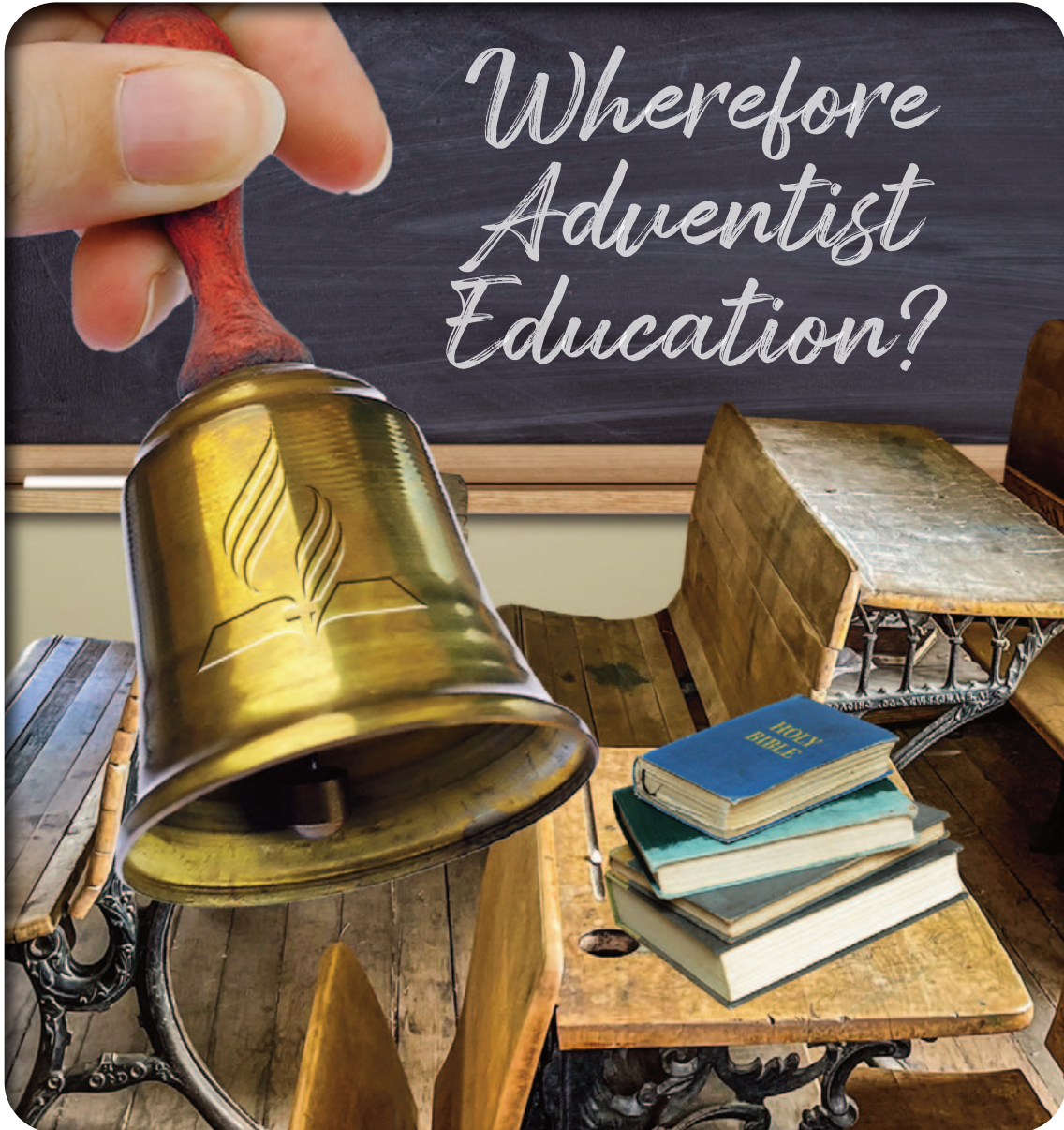


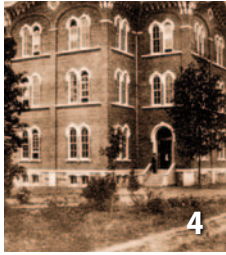
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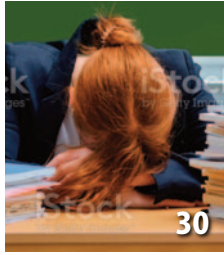
*Wherefore
Adventist
Education?*

PERSPECTIVES ON THE VALUE OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION





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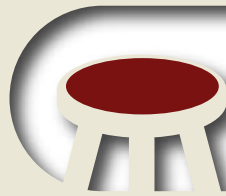
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Julián Melgosa



The Three-legged Stool

I grew up in the inner city of Madrid, Spain. Only occasionally could my family take me to experience the blessings of nature available in the country. I must have been five years old when I first saw a real cow, which seemed much larger than I had imagined based on pictures and toys. Next to the cow in the pen, I distinctly remember seeing a three-legged milking stool. Someone explained that this tripod stool provided the necessary balance to milk the cow, regardless of the irregularity of the terrain. Later, in school, I learned that three points determine a plane (as long as they are non-collinear), which explained the suitability of that unique chair design. Furthermore, the three-legged milking stool could suffer from imperfections, such as one leg being slightly longer or shorter than the others, and still provide reasonable stability.

How fascinating, it seemed to me, that one could sit stably on a three-legged chair, yet all the chairs I knew about had four legs! Years later, I observed that many principles, theories, or ideologies were founded upon three elements. And this leads me to the point of this editorial: Christian education has been built upon three pillars: *the home*, *the local church*, and *the school*, each representing one leg of the stool.

The first—and often the most important—source of learning is the home, the family. It is the place where children learn their primary language and the basics of social interactions, where they first have an opportunity to receive and give love and affection. Soon they are introduced to the church congregation, typically years before they enter formal schooling. The local church is a great source of religious/spiritual knowledge. It provides a setting to learn about the love and saving power of Jesus presented in an attractive way to children in Sabbath school, in clubs such as Adventurers and Pathfinders, as well as in special services for children and opportunities to serve the community. These provide opportunities for positive interactions with peers from the earliest stages of development and often go beyond the Sabbath day, as many friendships develop in the church setting. Last, children go to school and learn the necessary knowledge and skills to adjust to their particular culture and society. There, students can follow sophisticated curricula and experience a replica of the

greater social world that will prepare them for life.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a long and firm tradition of education. Abundant counsel from an inspired source has been given from its early history about the influence of home, church, and school and how these three sources influence student development:

- “In His wisdom the Lord has decreed that the family shall be the greatest of all educational agencies. It is in the home that the education of the child is to begin. Here is his first school. Here, with his parents as instructors, he is to learn the lessons that are to guide him throughout life—lessons of respect, obedience, reverence, self-control.”¹

- “God has appointed the church as a watchman, to have a jealous care over the youth and children, and as a sentinel to see the approach of the enemy and give warning of danger.”²

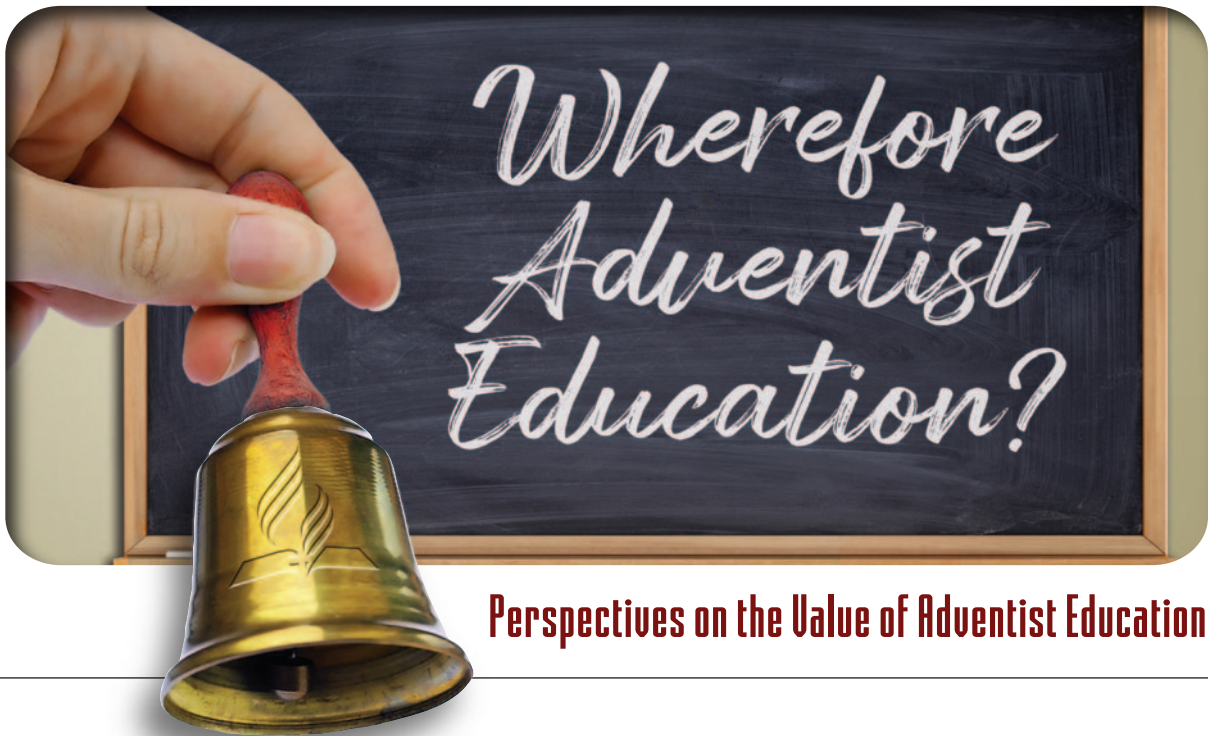
- “Wherever there are a few Sabbathkeepers, the parents should unite in providing a place for a day school where their children and youth can be instructed. They should employ a Christian teacher, who, as a consecrated missionary, shall educate the children in such a way as to lead them to become missionaries.”³

Ellen G. White received inspiration to put in writing hundreds if not thousands of pages of advice to develop Christian education, knowing that given the complexity of each institution—family, school, and local church—intentional effort must be put into nurturing and supporting interaction and a harmonious relationship among them.

For this reason, I like the metaphor of the three-legged stool. A child may come from a dysfunctional family, but school and church may compensate for that deficiency. Or he or she may attend a church that lacks a loving atmosphere, but the local school and family may provide sufficient nourishment. Or a school may struggle to fulfill its responsibilities, but the church and the family might step in and provide the resources necessary to build up the school. The metaphor allows for variations in the home, the church, and the school while seeking to maintain a stable educational experience.

Undoubtedly, God has appointed multiple sources to enhance learning and education and ensure that the good news of salvation through Jesus reaches every child. I have known adults who had had a mediocre church and school

Continued on page 44



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 disappointed. 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

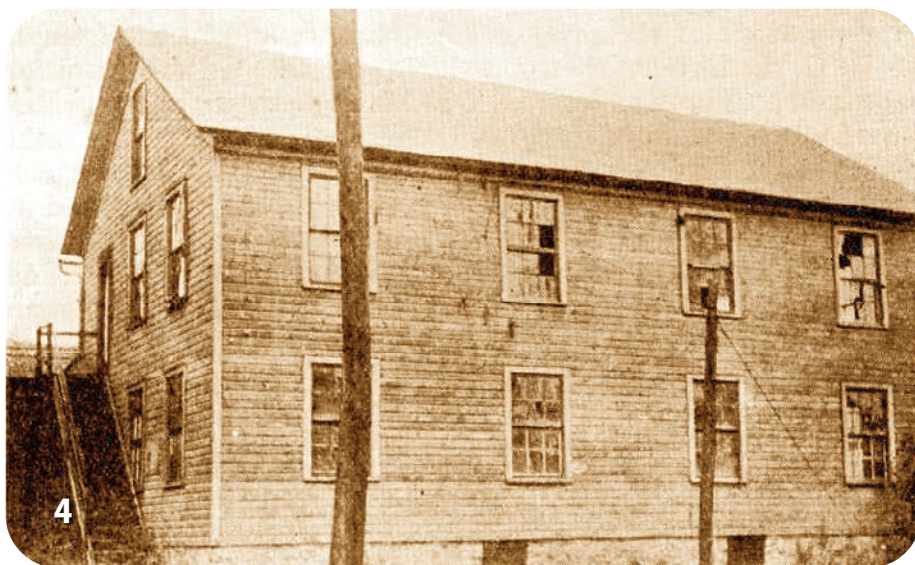
The School Committee

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

Center for Adventist Research

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

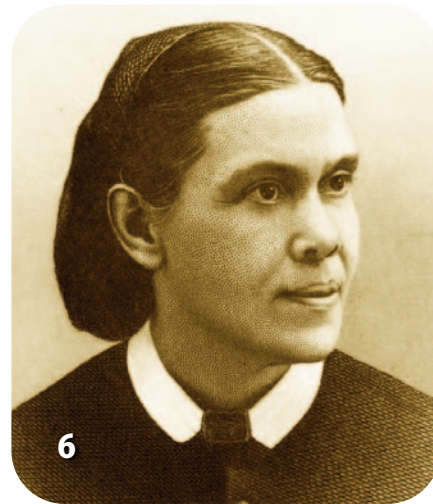
He emphasized the purpose of the school: “There are plenty of places in the land where any of this class could go to obtain an education in other languages, grammar, rhetoric, logic, history, philosophy, and the sciences in general; but they would lack the other advantage which they would need, that 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



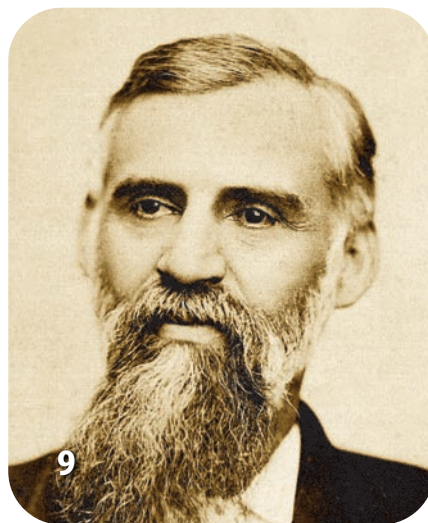
James Springer White, 1821-1881

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.”

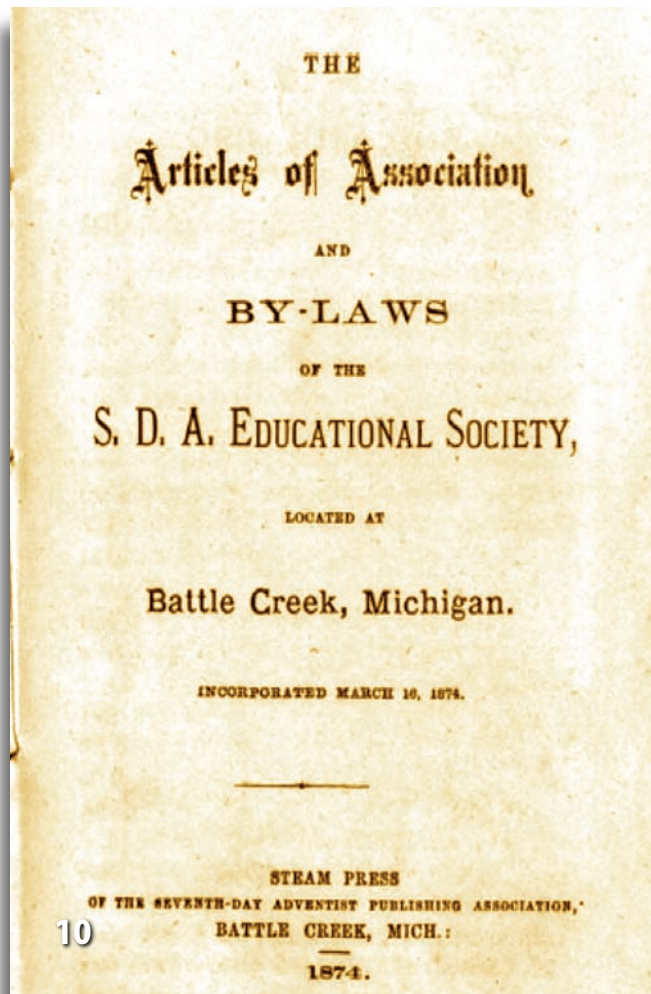
The bylaws described the plan for the institution, which would include “a primary department, a department for instruction in the common English branches, also for teaching other languages, for giving instruction in the truths of the Bible, and for such other studies as are thought by the trustees to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

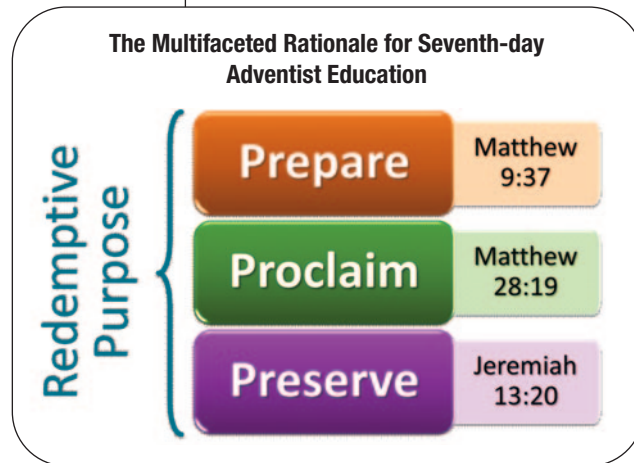
Corresponding to these early perspectives on the value of Adventist education, Scripture also identifies a multifaceted mission for Adventist education. Jeremiah 13:20, for example, poses the question, “‘Where is the flock that was given to you, your beautiful flock?’” (NRSVUE).⁶⁷ This points to the 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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ventists since 2010. Dr. Taylor earned a PhD in education from Andrews University and an EdD in educational psychology from the University of Virginia (Charlottesville, Virginia). This article is based on a presentation at the Conference on Adventist Identity, October 13-15, 2022, at Andrews University. He may be contacted at jwtaylor@andrews.edu.

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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.



Leadership Strategies and Strategic Planning for Times of Crisis and

BEYOND

When I was appointed superintendent of schools, my primary concern was understanding what was and was not working in the schools within the conference. It wasn't any secret that K-12 schools in my conference were declining in number and enrollment. So, in a meeting with the leadership teams from all the schools, I asked: "What things do you do mostly as a team of educators at your respective campuses?"

The answers were similar to those I had heard many times. These leaders felt overwhelmed trying to accomplish everything while consistently having to react to daily crises. For example, they stated, "We are busy in meetings; managing staff; trying to balance the

budget; responding to students, parents, and stakeholders; and growing enrollment."

Then I asked my second big question: "Is it working for you?" Again, the answer was like those I had commonly heard in similar organizational settings: "Well, kind of, but not as well as we would like. It's frustrating to put in so much effort—doing so many things—with so few positive results."

My dialogue with the school leaders expanded into a sincere outpouring of frustration. The leaders spoke with sincerity, their voices describing failed efforts, misplaced emphases, misaligned support in funding, and unclear lines of authority and accountability. I concluded that the problem was focusing on *what* was done instead of *how* things were done. In many instances, institutional

leaders are *generalists*—doing many things but lacking specificity of focus. Generalists fulfill a necessary function. Managing the daily operations of an institution, especially if there is limited support staff, is essential, and many generalists find themselves problem-solving, putting out fires, and avoiding crises. However, this is not the same as strategic leadership.

Leadership Approach Needed for Educational Renewal

Educational renewal depends on moving from a generalist approach to a more strategic one. While the generalist can deal with immediate and short-term crises, he or she cannot adequately address the varying demands of the modern Adventist edu-

BY GREG BALDEO

educational landscape. When institutional leaders fail to adopt a strategic approach, they appear ineffective despite their dedication and strenuous efforts.

While every leader can become a strategic leader, much of the challenge in accomplishing that goal is the training leaders receive because most were educated to be generalists rather than strategic leaders.¹ To be a strategic leader, one must acknowledge that times have changed and act accordingly—and determine whether that requires giant steps or incremental actions. Strategic leaders cut through and surpass the ambiguous, clouded, and vague. They understand and communicate the institutional realities, develop focus areas, and align resources for goal accomplishment.

When objectives and priorities get muddled, usually by application of the generalist approach, those attempting to execute the institution's mission become less focused and ineffective. Unfortunately, this problem can also occur when a leader has a great vision but cannot communicate it. So, there must be more correlation between vision, communication, and key decision processes.

This article explores components associated with Adventist educational renewal through strategic thinking. It focuses on strategic leadership in Adventist learning institutions and the corresponding characteristics of this approach. Adventist education benefits significantly when a strategic leadership and thinking approach is implemented.

Educational Renewal—A Definition

Educational renewal may be defined as “providing all students with the best education to seize opportunities for success in the path they choose.”² It inspires positive working and learning environments, facilitates cooperation among educators, and increases opportunities for students, teachers, and staff to grow and learn.

Significance of Educational Renewal

One of the most critical needs of modern times is educational renewal.

Education loses its significance if the students experiencing it are not continuously learning new, transferable skills and relevant concepts. That realization must prompt educational administrators to identify multiple inter-related elements needing change.

Among the elements required for educational renewal is a focus on how people learn and how the human brain works. Learners should gain the ability to establish values, skills, and attitudes that will enhance their capabilities over time.³ Modern society has progressed into the Information Age where new technology has created new tools that enhance learning and facilitate the learning processes; however, these tools require people to acquire learning much differently than in the past. For example, they can enable learners to link with other learners virtually and access educational materials from various parts of the globe through learning-manage-

ment systems such as Blackboard, Moodle, Canvas, or one of the many other platforms. As a result, some traditional educational practices have become obsolete, and new ones have emerged.

Elements of Strategy

Most people perceive strategic leadership as a particular set of actions and decisions that are followed in institutions.⁴ However, the *strategic leadership concept* offers a reliable foundation for the four elements that develop its overall meaning.⁵ First, according to Davies, strategic leadership takes a more comprehensive view using aggregated trends and data instead of depending on disaggregated details and random data. Second, strategy strongly emphasizes long-term and medium-term operational goals instead of short-term ones. Third, it helps stakeholders to view strategy as a necessary perspective and makes



strategic reasoning the center of their focus and culture. Last, strategy is more essential to achieving vision than is commonly recognized.⁶

The Role of Strategy in Adventist Schools' Long-term Sustainability

With proper direction, appropriate strategies should address the significant challenges facing modern Adventist educational institutions—ensuring they achieve relevance while remaining faithful to the mission of Adventist education's philosophical framework, which is God-centered and Bible-based, service-oriented, and kingdom-directed. Adventist education radically differs from secular approaches because it is anchored in divinity—God's character, purposes, and the ultimate goal of redeeming humanity.⁷ In such a setting, every child is seen as created in the image of God and as a candidate for heaven.

The challenges of achieving these goals are compounded by the emergence of globalization, technology, and a pandemic that has profoundly shifted learners' thinking. These challenges accrue from instabilities relating to schools' performance, such as enrollment, financial variables, and low faculty and staff morale. The absence of strategic leadership is one of the many enablers of these challenges.

Lautoka found that strategic leadership is a significant determinant of educational renewal because of its positive impact on students' learning and faculty and staff morale,⁸ thereby improving the overall performance of schools, teachers, and students. This is encouraging when one considers the challenges of Adventist education. However, such achievements can only be reached by creating relevant, measurable short-term strategic agendas as well as long-term sustainability plans. Research shows that failure to establish long-term strategic plans reduces the sustainability of short-term effectiveness.⁹ The concept is incongruent with the usual societal assumptions, which perceive long-term effectiveness as the product of short-term plans rather than the other way around. The goal is sustainability.

Setting up and running short-term operations in an environment that needs to be prepared to operate based on long-term strategies is not ideal. Also, learning institutions may suffer unbearable hardships when attempting to establish long-term plans if the ineffectiveness of the short-term plans drives them into further crisis. Therefore, effective long-term strategies in educational sectors must complement short-term effectiveness and vice versa.

Strategic Thinking

School administrators need to create strategies that link strategic leadership and strategic thinking.¹⁰ Research shows that focusing only on strategic planning is a significantly limited way of defining the scope of any given strategy. Strategic planning works in tandem with strategic thinking. As a result, educational administrators who emphasize this type of thinking will significantly enhance the process and outcomes of educational renewal. For instance, Davies stated that strategic planning is heavily criticized as a management tool because it is reductionist, predictable, and linear.¹¹ School administrators should encourage strategic conversations about the educational program offerings and trends within the learning environment and other areas. Such conversations can help inspire thinking in a strategic way and foster support for long-term goals through the ideas generated.

Operationalizing Strategic Thinking

The above discussions review definitions of components associated with the role of strategy and strategic thinking. Although understanding these connections is essential as one reflects on the focus of this article, it should be noted that strategy must be crafted with attention to research, best practices, and moral principles; it must also translate into measurable, correlated actions. These components must be in place for strategies to be effective and maintain their significance, since studies show that achiev-

ing intended change is possible only by engaging in these processes.¹²

Strategic thinking includes integrated planning, processing, and adhering to a shared vision in the organization. Together, these actions can bring about crucial changes to current leadership paradigms within Adventist institutions. For instance, how administrative meetings at the senior governance levels are conducted should be distinctively different from how operational meetings are held. Operationalizing strategic thinking, therefore, should be manifested in deliberate efforts to achieve specific goals.

According to Pietersen, five principles are associated with strategic processes. They include *insight*, *focus*, *alignment*, *execution*, and *renewal*. Each is discussed below.¹³

- *Insight* refers to people's ability to make sense of their surroundings and comprehend their effects on their organizations and the way they envision the future.

- *Focus* addresses the need for individuals to home in on choosing the right things at the right moments and assessing the desirable and feasible courses of action needed to complete their implementations.

- *Alignment* refers to the critical job of matching the skill sets of individuals in an organization with necessary tasks to ensure the execution of the strategic plan.¹⁴

- *Execution* describes the organization's or an individual's speed and effectiveness in implementing strategic leadership procedures within the operational structure.

- Last, *renewal* aims at how organizational stakeholders (educational administrators, educators, and educational personnel) can re-envision the institution's purpose after learning through the strategic process.

Kaplan and Norton used principles like the ones listed above to define the process of translating strategies into actions.¹⁵ According to them, five stages must be addressed to accomplish this goal.

The first step involves the translation of a strategy into operational

terms. It also addresses the ability of the organization/individual to implement the desired strategies. Second is aligning the organization to fit the strategy. This is one of the most challenging areas in the process because it involves changing the stakeholders' mindsets from focusing on what happened in the past to embracing an adjusted strategic direction. The third step is making the strategy the aim and guide of everyone's job and corresponding performance indicators. This ensures that the strategy has been incorporated both operationally and strategically and that the environment is prepared for the kind of dialogue needed to shape future behaviors. The fourth step is making strategy a continuous process, ensuring it is revisited and reinforced through frequent development plans and reviews. The final step is the strategic mobilization of change by the educational leaders, educators, and everyone impacted by the plans. This stage helps keep administrators in the education sector "on their toes," alert to the threats and opportunities that affect the implementation of the strategy and ensuring that they demonstrate commitment to the strategy, its implementation, and those who are served by it.

The above discussion shows that turning strategies into actions is a detailed process subject to multiple factors. Because strategic leadership capabilities are central to determining the success of educational renewal, the institution's senior leaders must possess the skills to ensure success at each stage of the implementation process. The importance of having the necessary leadership capabilities is discussed in the next section, with an analysis of leadership styles in general, emphasizing the benefits of strategic leadership.

Characteristics of a Strategic Leader

One of the significant challenges associated with leadership is identifying the differences between strategic leaders and other good leaders (see the

Characteristics of Strategic Leaders

The literature on leadership shows that both *operational (generalist)* and *strategic* leadership approaches are essential for successful organizations. Operational leaders manage the day-to-day needs of an institution. They set and implement goals and objectives, implement policy, monitor procedures, and possess knowledge of what an organization offers in terms of products and services.*

Strategic leaders possess the same abilities but are skilled at long-term visioning for the organization, articulating a clear mission, and framing goals and objectives within broad knowledge of the competitive landscape. They do so in a way that motivates others to buy in and own the strategic vision.†

Unfortunately, preferring one type of leader over the other can be detrimental to an organization's ability to pivot during times of change or fully achieve long-term goals. Educational renewal in Adventist education requires more emphasis on training and developing strategic leaders and nurturing strategic thinking. Below are the characteristics of strategic leaders:‡

- Anticipate** changes;
- Challenge** the status quo;
- Interpret** data to make decisions;
- Align** vision, mission, and goals with needs within the marketplace;
- Learn** about themselves, others, and their organization through data collection and continuous assessment;
- Communicate** and listen with empathy;
- Collaborate** with honesty, humility, and diplomacy;
- Innovate** with passion and commitment.

* Hidayat Rizvi, "Organizational Leadership Versus Strategic Leadership: Which Is Better for Business?" (2022): <https://hidayatrizvi.com/operational-leadership-vs-strategic-leadership/>.

† Ibid.

‡ Marisa Sailus, "Strategic Leadership: 10 Characteristics of a Good Leader" (2023): <https://www.clearpointstrategy.com/blog/strategic-leadership-characteristics>; Paul J. H. Schoemaker, Steve Krupp, and Samantha Howland, "Strategic Leadership: The Essential Skills," *Harvard Business Review* (2013): <https://hbr.org/2013/01/strategic-leadership-the-essential-skills>.

Characteristics of Strategic Leaders insert on this page). Strategic leaders use long-term planning to cast a vision for an organization's sustainability and growth, and they have the skills to engage others in crafting and innovating processes to meet those goals. These individuals are often seen as transformational, transformative, and charismatic leaders.¹⁶ Other types of leadership styles have their place (i.e., generalist or operational leaders who excel at managing, monitoring, and executing day-to-day operations),¹⁷ especially in larger schools where responsi-

bilities may require compartmentalization. However, strategic leadership is more often required in modern society, where the types of learning activities required in schools and those in high demand in the workplace are at a crossroads and daily redefined. Educational renewal in Adventist education calls for strategic leaders who can clearly assess the current status of their schools and define solutions to the following questions:

1. What are the issues within the

current educational landscape as they relate to the scope and mission of Adventist education? How is the school fulfilling its responsibility to integrate faith with learning?

2. What new types of course offerings should Adventist educators provide to enhance future learning processes?

3. What are the individual and organization/institutional-level requirements (licensure and certification) needed to facilitate the learning outcomes required for future learning and employability?

4. How should Adventist administrators reorganize their organizational culture, climate, and characteristics to adapt to new research on best practices and trends in student learning?

The above questions suggest a reliable starting point to shaping educational renewal because the management of the learning processes must be both strategically driven and future-oriented. According to Kapur, strategic leaders must have the ability to guide their groups or organizations through a significant change process.¹⁸ More specifically, leaders in educational institutions are responsible for directing their teams and stakeholders using strategically appropriate approaches. For example, leaders, in collaboration with other educational stakeholders—conference and union leaders, school boards, school staff, parents, and students—focus on implementing their tasks, designing solutions for the prevailing problems, providing input, making effective decisions, and other achievements needed for collaboration in creating a productive learning environment and a wholistic experience. The discussion below includes the specific characteristics that should define a strategic leader.

Strategic leaders are able to contextualize and assess their current environments and, based on these actions, challenge the status quo when planning for the future. First, however, they must understand the contextual settings of their institutions to have a more complete understanding of the present while at the same time looking toward the future.¹⁹

The second characteristic of strategic leaders is dissatisfaction with conditions when things are not going well. They sense the need for improvement within their institutions and eagerly seek sustainable change. Strategic leaders constantly seek to transform their organizations to a different status by advocating strategic thinking and approaches because they are dissatisfied with the current conditions.

The third characteristic of such leaders is the ability to map their organizations' future growth and standing. Strategic leaders should develop a

Based on the literature already referred to in this article, strategic focus, intent, and implementation are not optional leadership capabilities—they are vital in the progress from strategies to actions.

conceptual understanding of the desired future for their institutions by creating a relatively concise but comprehensive structure to guide organizational actions as they pursue these goals. Additionally, they should have the necessary capabilities to determine the critical periods for strategic transformations within their scope of service.²⁰ Although the discussion in the earlier parts of this article showed that change and translation of strategies to actions are continuous processes, certain objectives are time-bound, and will be significant predictors of the success of the overall

processes. Such objectives are referred to as *strategic inflection points*.²¹ During these critical moments, strategic leaders engage in meaningful actions like moving in new directions, creating new strategies, and developing new or expanding goals.

The fifth element used to define these leaders is the ability to translate strategies into actions through planned processes. Planned processes should include three primary factors—strategic focus, intent, and implementation.²² Based on the literature already referred to in this article, strategic focus, intent, and implementation are not optional leadership capabilities—they are vital in the progress from strategies to actions.

To illustrate this section, when I was appointed as superintendent of schools, my first approach with my administrative team was to make sense of the reality in which we operated. Schools were failing, and workers were frustrated with their efforts. Acknowledging everyone's frustration with the current situation, we collaboratively identified a preferred future, listed priority areas, and aligned resources to accomplish goals. As a result, within a couple of months, we were able to reverse a five-year trend of declining enrollment, improve staff and faculty morale, and position the conference for a positive future.

Finally, leadership is strategic if the individuals can create meaning for their constituents. Leaders portray this characteristic by upholding dialogue and strategic conversations with all stakeholders.²³

Recommendations

The following recommendations, which are not exhaustive, outline some recommended avenues for Adventist leaders of educational institutions to explore that will inspire educational renewal through strategic change.

1. Strategic Leadership Education: Leaders in Adventist educational institutions take responsibility for engaging stakeholder groups in strategic

leadership education. Senior leadership in these groups include education leaders at the various administrative levels and institutional boards that commit to providing an ongoing education “campaign” at multiple levels to engage stakeholders in strategic thinking. This campaign, although time-consuming, is worth the investment. It may include but is not limited to infomercials (short videos that can be used to share bullet points of the strategic vision), focus-group sessions, strategic professional seminars, online courses, and department-specific training with strong, direct strategic emphases.

2. Strategic Personnel: Adventist leaders should be perceptive in selecting and appointing personnel who possess strategic mindsets and skills to serve the institution. Actively identifying, recruiting, training, and mentoring such individuals will help support the whole process, including buy-in by those who may be resistant to change due to prior experiences. Buy-in is essential to succession planning. These individuals—leaders and stakeholders—must be helped to understand the strategic, contextual settings, after which they can create clearly articulated comprehensive checkpoints on the journey to strategic educational renewal.

3. Strategic Conversation Centers: Leaders in Adventist educational environments should engage in dialogue and conversations about strategic planning with their stakeholders at all levels. Consideration could be given to creating “conversation centers” where discussions about strategy in general, as well as specific, strategic approaches, take place as part of the journey. Conversation centers are akin to “think tanks” because they help to guide the alignment of knowledge and policies to achieve desired other desired outcomes for students, teachers, building-wide plans for the school’s physical plant, or plans for the future. However, unlike think tanks, conversation centers engage all stakeholders.

Definition of Key Terms

Strategic leadership: The acts of setting priorities, aligning resources, and executing plans for student-centered outcomes based on institutional needs, realities, and goals.

Strategic thinking: Consistent, deliberate, and systematic ways institutional administrators see and understand where the institution needs to go, how to get there, and how to use opportunities and challenges to create institutional value.

Educational renewal: A process by which institutional administrators and stakeholders deliberately and consistently align strengths and opportunities to build something better.

In my conference, for example, we have set up professional learning communities (PLC) where teachers of similar grades or grade ranges can talk together and learn from one another about what is relevant and applicable to learning in the age range to guide strategic implementation.

4. Spiritual Strategic Leadership: Plans for educational renewal and strategic leadership must not ignore or exclude spiritual matters. Our Chief Leader and Master Teacher advocated educational renewal and spiritually sound, strategic leadership through the principles included in His parables and teachings. Matthew 7:24 to 27, although not the only illustration, probably is Jesus’ most direct reference to strategic thinking. These verses anchor, frame, and provide guidance for implementing a strategic leadership approach. Jesus’ teaching was strategic and purposeful. He was a strategic leader who made sense of reality and set priorities for His disciples, teaching them, with a specific vision in mind, to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). His visionary, strategic thinking led Him to invite the disciples,

“Come, follow me, . . . and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19, NIV).²⁴ The Chief Leader and Master Teacher used insight, focus, alignment, execution, and renewal to carry His message.

5. Strategic Assessment: Leaders at all levels of the Adventist educational sphere should be bold enough to engage in meaningful and strategic assessment, which may be qualitative and/or quantitative. This would include strategically assessing whether the philosophy of Adventist education is sufficiently embraced by the board of trustees, administrative teams, and key stakeholders, who are already strategically positioned. These assessments might be peer-to-peer reviews, appreciative inquiries (a data-collection model²⁵), and/or top-down, bottom-up assessments, with the results used in transparent and sound decision-making.

Conclusion

Implementing strategic leadership is the most reliable way to ensure educational renewal and effectiveness in contemporary Adventist education. Leaders should possess the ability and also commitment to create the values, skills, and attitudes that will harness the elements of strategy and, together with their teams, achieve optimum outcomes. Additionally, to deal with the challenges of modernization and the Information Age, leaders must be prepared to pivot and adapt in order to achieve Adventist educational renewal.

In recent years, some traditional educational practices have become obsolete, and alternative approaches have emerged or are emerging. Change is inevitable in such times. Thus, strategic leadership capabilities are essential to ensure that leaders and personnel engage in strategic thinking in order to achieve success and renewal so that we will truly be perceived as “the head, not the tail” (Deuteronomy 28:13) and lead the way in education. ✍

This article has been peer reviewed.



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7. We can gather from the story of God's interaction with the children of Israel that the aim of true education was, and continues to be, an understanding of God's character and purposes. In the book *Education*, Ellen White wrote, "A knowledge of God, fellowship with Him in study and in labor, likeness to Him in character, were to be the source, the means, and the aim of Israel's education—the education imparted by God to the parents, and by them to be given to their children" ([Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1903], 44). The same applies today.

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21. In the 1990s, the term "strategic inflection point" was made popular by Andy Grove, then CEO of Intel. The idea behind the term is that there are times in an institution's history when changes in technology, the economy, the ecology of the planet, and the competitive marketplace will stir up either panic or the need for strategic change. A strategic leader will be able to gauge what is needed based on the available data and make the appropriate correction. See the transcript of Grove's presentation at the Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management (1998): <https://www.intel.com/pressroom/archive/speeches/ag080998.htm>. See also Stanley K. Ridgley, *Strategic Thinking Skills* (Chantilly, Va.: Great Courses Teaching Company, 2012).

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25. Appreciative Inquiry is an organizational model. Leaders in organizations and communities use this approach, which consists of questions and dialogue to help stakeholders engage in conversations about strengths, opportunities, and assets that can be used to the benefit of the organization or group. See "Appreciative Inquiry" (n.d.): <https://organizingengagement.org/models/appreciative-inquiry/#:~:text=Appreciative%20Inquiry%20is%20an%20asset,their%20communities%2C%20organizations%2C%20or%20teams>.



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Phygital Disciple-making: A Response to the

PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic affected every aspect of human life and resulted in new “social distancing” norms. One direct result of that isolation was high mental distress, impacting crucial aspects of people’s lives and interactions. After its first lockdown in mid-March 2020, India and many other countries took many temporary measures to keep the population safe. Among these was the temporary closure of worship centers and schools. These communities had to find new ways to operate and fulfill their mission.

Disciple-making is at the core of the Christian faith. The teacher-student relationship is essential to introduce students to Jesus while helping them trust and follow Him. The essence of that process is teaching all that Jesus taught His disciples and modeling it in everyday life. Learning and growth is a lifelong journey that relies on social interactions.

Since the popularization of the Internet, socialization has been happening in the phygital¹ world, a virtual space that bridges the gap between the physical and digital worlds. This model of human interaction intensified

during the pandemic. In 2022, the authors of this article conducted a quantitative study of Seventh-day Adventist church members in India. Using simple random sampling, a questionnaire was distributed among the sample population by electronic media (i.e., e-mail, WhatsApp, and Messenger). A total of 372 responses were recorded for data analysis using percentage, mean, median, mode, and correlational methods. This study’s guiding research questions were: *How did the pandemic affect human interaction regarding social distancing and mental distress? How did that affect Christian religiosity? What missiological response would address the fallout from the crisis and prepare for the future?* Applying the findings, the study supports phygital disciple-making as one method of dealing with social distancing during the pandemic, the mental distress it caused, and how to navigate new social configurations.

The Experience of “Seeing but Not Touching”

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in history’s greatest and most extensive isolation events. Lockdowns were used to stop the virus from spreading.² The pandemic’s

influence on humankind was severe, as the deadly virus took millions of lives. The whole globe was put under lockdown. People lost their lives, jobs, basic necessities, easy access to medical care and education, and the virus caused deprivation in every aspect of life.³ During this crisis, people were secluded in their homes. This seclusion led to several mental health issues and heightened negative emotions such as loneliness, shame, guilt, and fear. An article by Hwang et al. published in *International Psychogeriatrics* reports that:

“Being lonely has several adverse impacts on mental health. Reduced time in bed spent asleep (7 percent reduced sleep efficiency) and increased wake time after sleep onset have been related to loneliness (Cacioppo et al., 2002; Fässberg et al., 2012). Increased depressive symptoms may also be caused by loneliness, poor self-rated health, impaired functional status, vision deficits, and a perceived negative change in the quality of one’s life (Lee et al., 2019). A systematic review of suicide risk also found that loneliness is associated with both suicide attempts and completed suicide among older adults (Fässberg et al., 2012). Loneliness, along with depressive symptoms, are related to worsening cognition over time.”⁴

Besides loneliness, shame and guilt are two distinct, unpleasant, self-conscious emotions the pandemic elicited.⁵ The threat of the deadly COVID-19 virus raised doubts, fear, and confusion in people’s minds.⁶ This has been identified as one of the contributing elements to spiritual deprivation, the perception that God’s presence and intervention in the world are no longer active.⁷

Unlike birds and other animals, which are known for “territoriality,” a social-distancing behavior, humans are more likely to practice “physical distancing,” merely distancing but not claiming territory. However, the distancing causes isolation and communication deprivation, which have dissocialized individuals. Fear of the unknown has been inculcated in everyone, creating suspicion and “guesstimation” about others. Sikali mentions that social distancing poses the risks of increased social rejection, more impersonality and individuality, and a loss of community. It negatively impacts learning and growth and prevents people from adequately socializing, an essential human need. These measures sent a

powerful psychological message: fear of others and the notion that members of the community are possible carriers of dangerous viruses and life-threatening illnesses.⁸

Mandy Oaklander observes that handshakes are only one type of contact that has vanished because of the COVID-19 pandemic.⁹ Hugs, high fives, tentative back pats, shoulder squeezes, and all the other little points of touch that humans use when standing closer than six feet apart have also become less common. Likely, the effects of social distancing will still be felt long after the pandemic has subsided. In a collectivist society such as the Indian one, where human contact is highly valued

and people express themselves by touching, hugging, shaking hands, and even touching feet,¹⁰ social distancing tends to have a bigger impact.

Technology, over time, had already facilitated physical distancing. People have worked from home, used various technologies to attend school virtually, stayed in touch with family and friends, or even shopped for medicines and groceries.¹¹ However, the stay-at-home policies implemented during the pandemic led most of the world to adopt the notion of “seeing but not touching.” The question remains: How will human beings, as social animals, function after the stay-at-home policies have ended? Once physical contact has resumed, will fear of contact with

others remain?¹² People depend on one another for many things, including interaction, functioning, and survival.

The Inception of Virtual Rendezvous in Education

The COVID-19 pandemic presented obstacles that necessitated a complete transition from conventional in-person to virtual or digital learning and engagement for all population sectors. The large-scale adoption of virtual rendezvous in education became essential to keep teachers and students connected amid the crisis. Consistent with the Adventist philosophy of education, school leaders sought to incorporate discipleship, which prioritizes comprehensive, wholistic growth, during this period of change. Instructors adopted technology as a tool for not only imparting information but also for helping students develop analytical reasoning abilities and emotional acumen amidst these challenging circumstances.

Through the effective, practical application of digital tools, students could engage virtually and discover future

Consistent with the Adventist philosophy of education, the incorporation of discipleship, which prioritizes comprehensive, wholistic growth, was successfully assimilated into this period of change.

opportunities as they navigated through various online platforms designed for e-learning. Therefore, although these technological tools cannot entirely substitute for the inherent value of face-to-face classroom engagement, they offered promising avenues for augmenting educational encounters during this period and continue to do so, as students have returned to in-person learning.

During the pandemic, connecting virtually offered hope—the opportunity to see and hear others, to keep working despite the conditions, and to reduce the spread of the virus. Many businesses were also able to save money since employees could not travel.¹³ While the circumstances initially necessitated these virtual rendezvous, this method of communication may have lasting value even after the situation has returned to normal. The innate adaptability of the educational process, and the tools used to facilitate teaching and learning, enable us to customize and consider students' complex and dynamic needs. Therefore, "educating during crisis" has opened new possibilities whereby we can leverage existing technological resources available today for academic progress now and in the future.

For many students, educators, and educational administrators, the pandemic exacerbated concerns about access to education and even decisions about the viability of pursuing higher education and professional training. According to various reports, the closure of schools during the pandemic may have impacted more than a billion children globally.¹⁴ Schools were swiftly closed with no time to plan how to proceed. Educators and students had to adjust quickly to new and ever-changing situations.¹⁵ Virtual educational meetings and activities became widely employed, indicating a shift to new cyberspace frontiers.¹⁶

According to Li and Lalani, even before COVID-19, the education technology market was already growing. It is expected to reach a total market size of \$354 billion by 2025. Since COVID-19, there has been a substantial increase in the utilization of language applications, virtual tutoring, video conferencing tools, and online-learning software.¹⁷ Sherman reported in 2020 that Zoom video-conferencing software jumped 30-fold in April as the COVID-19 pandemic forced millions to work, learn, and socialize remotely.¹⁸ According to Zipia.com, Zoom had 10 million daily meeting participants in December of 2019, but by the end of 2022, 300 million people attended meetings on Zoom every day.¹⁹

Anderson, Rainie, and Vogels reported on research that asked 915 innovators, developers, business and policy leaders, researchers, and activists to consider what life would be like in 2025 after the global pandemic. Respondents said that relationships with technology would deepen as larger segments of the population became

more reliant on digital connections for work, education, health care, daily commercial transactions, and essential social interactions.²⁰

It is evident that although technology's capacity to connect people may not be new, the impact, influence, and implementation of a virtual lifestyle became evident during the pandemic. Almost every aspect of life had to be adapted to the new reality during the crisis.

The Impact of Social Distancing on Christian Religiosity

The socially isolated lifestyle also had its impact on religiosity. Online worship services were the most emblematic change during the pandemic. In the United States, a survey pointed out that while 91 percent of churches closed their buildings to the public, more than 80 percent of assiduous Christians indicated that their church was offering internet or television services, and 57 percent of these adults were watching programming in this way due to the pandemic.²¹ This includes young people who remained at home during school closures.

During the pandemic, religious venues were closed in India, and all religious activities were suspended until the Indian government released Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). Religious services were then conducted using the SOP respecting social distancing and other norms. Despite different views on the issue, a few churches in India started to conduct online worship in August 2020.²² In the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the congregations adopted online platforms to conduct their worship services and other functions, using Zoom, Google Meet, and YouTube.

A Quantitative Study Among Seventh-day Adventists in India

A quantitative study of Seventh-day Adventist church members in India was conducted to describe the impact of social distancing on people and their spiritual lives. Using simple random sampling technique, a Google Forms questionnaire was distributed among the sample population by electronic media (i.e., e-mail, WhatsApp, and Messenger). The Cronbach's Alpha of the 25 items measured on the 5-point Likert scale is 0.841. A total of 371 responses were recorded and analyzed. Descriptive statistical mean and percentage analysis were major tools used in addition to qualitative content analysis.

In the sample demographics, 69 percent were male, 30 percent were female, and 0.3 percent declined to reveal their gender. Almost all the respondents (93 percent) were in the age group of 18 to 36 years old (7 percent were older than 37 years of age). In addition, 83 percent were single, and 88 percent did not have children. That indicated that most of the respondents were young people (or young adults) and unmarried. Other



relevant information: Most respondents had been Christians for most of their lives; a total of 96 percent were members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and 67 percent said they had attended an Adventist school.

Limited Socialization

Four major observations were made based on the responses, the first relating to limited socialization. Ninety percent of the respondents said that the social structure had changed how people connect. Another 63 percent said the pandemic affected their societal relationships with their neighbors.

Although social media and other online communication platforms were helpful during the pandemic crisis, they were limited in their ability to replace the emotional support received from the actual presence of people. Maslow identified two needs that those resources could not satisfy: the need for social connection and love from others.²³ That social disconnect gives rise to frustration, anxiety, and anger, among other negative emotions, which are not beneficial for one's mental health.

Confidence in God

Respondents were asked if the pandemic gave rise to doubts about the existence of God or any other doubt in general. While most responded that the pandemic did not give rise to any doubt (more than 60 percent average), the remaining respondents expressed feelings of doubt and fear resulting from the crises (40 percent). Of this group, a surprisingly small portion (9 percent) responded assertively that the pandemic gave rise to doubts about the existence of God. Doubt and unsurety

are the first steps in forming a gap in a relationship and can result in mental distress. Specifically, unsurety about the existence of God implies that the person questions how such a pandemic can occur if there is a God in control. This state of mind quickly results in frustration and possible depression. The 40 percent who expressed feelings of doubt and fear may not be in constant doubt about the existence of God but circumstantial doubt due to the crisis. Other surveys have shown that doubting one's faith during a crisis is a very common phenomenon.²⁴

According to Hall, "The COVID-19 pandemic tests everyone's spiritual wellbeing, atheists and believers alike. . . . People in spiritual distress often no longer believe the world is a safe place. They might lose hope and have a difficult time finding meaning and purpose in what's happening to them. For a religious person, that often takes the form of losing faith in a loving and merciful God after witnessing a tragic event. But even those who don't pray to a higher power still usually have some belief in how the world works which gives them a sense of safety and security. Serious illness and tragic events can challenge these anchors and throw a person into turmoil."²⁵

Doubts and questions are not necessarily deleterious to developing one's faith; it all depends on how these doubts are addressed. Left without intervention and support, this state of mind may lead to frustration and other negative feelings. A significant concern is that although the church and schools typically offer help during these times, this was challenging for church and education leaders during the pandemic.

Greater Proximity to God

Collected data from the authors' study revealed that this pandemic brought a small percentage of people closer to God. Although it may seem like a positive outcome, the follow-up question is this: Why did people come closer to God in such perilous times? The answer is *fear*. The pandemic created much panic worldwide. There was no cure for the disease, uncountable deaths, a scarcity of resources to sustain life, and uncertainty about everything else. The pandemic fostered deeper contemplation about life in the minds of many people.

It was essential to determine whether it is conceivable for people to feel alone and experience a spiritual void despite their perception of having an intimate relationship with God. An average of 20 percent in the authors' survey responded that they felt that way despite coming closer to God during the pandemic. The data showed that people could be far from God when they think they are close to God, and all these phenomena are cognitive states that lead to frustration and anxiety.

Scope of Discipleship

Questionnaire responses to the authors' survey revealed that respondents had great expectations of their pastors as their spiritual guides. This included the campus pastor, chaplains, and religious leaders in schools. There was a positive correlation coefficient (value of +1.0) as far as the respondents' expectation that the spiritual leader should call them or listen to their struggles at least once a week. People look up to pastors and spiritual leaders as counselors and guides during challenging times. They rely on words of encouragement and promises from the Word of God to help lighten their troubled minds and reaffirm their faith and confidence in God.

Collected data also revealed a positive correlation coefficient (+1.0) about respondents' desire to have their church friends talk to and physically meet them occasionally. Students on college and university campuses also benefit from this type of interaction with one another and community members.

Virtually, if Not Physically

One central and core observation in the authors' survey was the respondents' desire to develop and grow in their relationship with God. Although the pandemic has been frustrating and has kept people distant from one another, 90 percent of respondents said they wanted to get closer to God. About 70 percent of the respondents would prefer an online worship service if they could not meet in a physical church. This is the scope and opportunity for virtual discipleship in practice.

Phygital Disciple-making as a Missiological Response

The COVID-19 pandemic has tested people's faith and left religious leaders with many challenges. According to a Pew Research Center survey released in December 2021, 29 percent of U.S. adults said they had no religious affiliation (an increase of 6 percentage points from 2016), with Millennials leading that shift.²⁶

Each generation is characterized by a crisis, according to academics. The Vietnam War impacted Baby Boomers, the AIDS epidemic impacted Generation X, and the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack and the 2008 economic crisis impacted Generation Y (also known as Millennials). Now, scholars point out that the COVID-19 pandemic will be defining for Generation Z (those born between 1995-2012). These are possible influences of the crisis on the development of these young people: a more independent political position, a more pointed sense of inclusiveness, and an even more entrepreneurial and creative attitude. Finally, this generation will be even more interested in volunteering than Generation Y.²⁷

However, all this will continue to happen in a different social space. Generations Z (ages 12 to 28 years) and Alpha (0 to 11 years) youth were born in a digital world. They have only known a world with computers and mobile phones. Technology is an extension of their way of knowing and relating to the world. Additionally, for them, the face-to-face and virtual dimensions function as one reality (phygital). After all, social media is not just a place to share information but, above all, to be social.

One common objection to using social media for worship or discipleship points to the limitation of virtual socialization—the absence of physical contact. But, as Mulinshas suggested, “to argue that face-to-face connection is the only valid form of spiritual relationship is to argue that our spiritual connection with God, not yet face-to-face, is lacking or somehow ‘less real.’ The Spirit of God transcends space and distance. He is able to usher His presence into the lives of those who earnestly seek Him. One day in heaven our connection with our Creator will be greatly enhanced. We will see Him face-to-face. But until then, our connection with God is every bit as real and profound, or He would change the way we interact with Him because He wants to connect intimately with His children.”²⁸

Successful discipleship in the digital space requires intentional efforts to build relationships and maintain connections. For online discipleship to thrive, digital disciples must be engaged and trained. Digital discipleship must move beyond posting Bible passages on social media platforms, sharing links to resources, or colorful posters announcing an event or concert. For ministry in the digital space to be successful, it must “place itself into the context of the digital lives of youth and young adults.”²⁹

To do this, there must be planned efforts to build meaningful connections through conversations about living as a young person or young adult, discussions about beliefs and doubts, and assurances that behind the digital platforms are genuine, faithful individuals that care. Hunt emphasizes that “youth and other faith leaders should think of the digital space as ministerial oratories, places that are limitless in how the teachings and traditions are shared and how far they may reach.”³⁰

Two other vital observations: (1) effective communication depends on the language employed and the medium used to reach people in various demographics, and (2) discipleship assumes a journey shared by faith leaders and their disciples, which includes navigating the digital world.³¹

The possibilities for online discipleship are almost endless (see Resources for Digital Discipleship). But it depends on the strategic positioning of the church and its schools in ways that allow them to answer questions, provide comfort, meet needs, empower members and students, support social media influencers, build digital communities, and show Jesus’ love compellingly.³²

Conclusion

It has been suggested that the COVID-19 pandemic is not a blizzard but the beginning of a little ice age—“a once-in-a-lifetime change that is likely to affect our lives and organizations for years.”³³ There is no going back to normal; *change* is the operative word. And possibly the most difficult change for people is “to set aside confidence in their current playbook as quickly as possible.”³⁴ While retaining the essential values and beliefs, it is time to tap into the current creative potential to develop a new vision.

On the one hand, during the period of confinement with COVID, many people had more time to re-engage with forgotten projects and hobbies, deal with personal challenges, and reflect on decisions and relationships, including spiritual ones; on the other hand, pastors and religious leaders also had the opportunity to reflect on fundamental ecclesiastical understandings. In times of crisis, when facilities and comforts are no longer available, there is the possibility of rediscovering the true essence of

systems and organizations. The timing is fundamentally important for a decision: to recover beliefs and make meaningful changes or to preserve the status quo?³⁵

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused much devastation around the world. A positive outlook, however, can attempt to identify opportunities in that context. As people were forced to learn how to navigate the virtual environment in many dimensions of life, includ-

Resources for Digital Discipleship

Jamie Jean Schneider Domm, *Digital Strategy for Reaching Young Professionals* (Columbia, Md.: North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, 2020). The author, the digital strategist for the North American Division, prepared this free resource to facilitate the use of digital tools and social media to reach the 18- to 30-year-old demographic. Available for download here: https://www.sdadata.org/uploads/8/1/9/8/81986746/final_digital_strategy_for_reaching_young_professionals_august_2020.pdf.

_____, “**5 Steps to Becoming a Digital Evangelist**” (2020): <https://www.sdadata.org/digital-evangelism-blog/category/digital-discipleship>. Schenier Domm outlines five steps educators and others involved in ministry can use to engage on digital platforms and social media: (1) Determine your target audience and platforms; (2) Develop a strategy; (3) Research relevant content ideas; (4) Make time for engagement and community building; and (5) Engage in digital door-knocking.

Seth Pierce, *Social Media 101* (Lincoln, Neb.: AdventSource, 2020). This resource is a well-crafted guidebook for anyone stepping into the social-media landscape. It is designed to answer a variety of questions, such as what social media is, which platforms work best for different audiences, social-media etiquette, and how to use the various platforms effectively. Pierce provides practical, clear guidelines for engaging online. Available from AdventSource: <https://www.adventsource.org/store/adult-ministries/communication/leadership/social-media-101-40326>.

Rachel Lemons Aitken, “Digital Discipleship,” *Ministry* 91:5 (2019): 23-25: <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2019/05/Digital-discipleship>. Rachel Lemons Aitken, founder of Digital Discipleship in the Australian Union (South Pacific Division), offers food for thought for anyone making a foray into digital discipleship. While the emphasis is specific to churches, many of the principles can be applied effectively in education.

The North American Division’s Social Media and Big Data website (<https://www.sdadata.org/>) offers many tips, videos, and links to informative blog posts for those using social media to connect and engage in ministry.

The Trans-European Division’s *Communication and Media Guide* is another practical resource with templates and guides to create an effective social-media presence for discipleship. Available for download here: <https://ted.adventist.org/news/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/TED-Communications-Media-Guide-2.0-INTERACTIVE-COMPRESSED.pdf>.

The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists offers several opportunities for training in the area of digital discipleship. Visit <https://connect.adventist.org/digital> to learn how to become a Digital Missionary, and view “Social Media 101: Why Be Online and Why Now” with the team from Adventist World Radio: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jil4eZWKn8>.

ing religiosity, perhaps that combination of physical and digital can have a lasting effect by providing a viable environment for fruitful spiritual growth. ✉

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Jessica Burchfield

The Power of

I can't do it all over again. I can't handle the mental and physical toll of being a high school teacher. I'm not strong enough, smart enough, or brave enough.

Maybe it's just me, but these thoughts constantly swirl in my head, coloring my sweet summer days with a dark cloud of apprehension. I know God has called me to be an educator, but some days I just don't feel adequate. I'm fearful that I won't measure up, that I won't make lasting connections, and that my classroom culture isn't enough to stem the tide of depression and anxiety in this generation.

Being a teacher in a post-COVID world has been challenging, to say the least. In the past few years alone, we have dealt with a global pandemic, shifting educational standards, a rise in school violence, and increasing professional responsibilities, all while attempting to maintain a standard of excellence in the classroom.

As I stood at the beginning of another school year,

I felt more than a little overwhelmed. *Truthfully, I was terrified.* I know I'm not the only one who has felt this way. We, as educators, are all on a quest to find the "magic formula" that will make us the teacher that our students need.

The Power of Perseverance

Over the course of my Christian walk, I have heard many messages of encouragement. I learned that God is the source of light and life; through Him, I find rest, comfort, and renewed mercies every day. As a child, I memorized verses like Joshua 1:9 that remind me of God's continued presence: "This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go" (NLT).*

If Joshua, David, and Moses could do it, why can't

I? They were just normal people called by God to do incredible things. I'm just a normal teacher trying to make a difference. Where is my courage?

I know that God is in control, and He is bigger than my fear. I know His presence can be felt in every circumstance, difficult or not, that I face every day. I know He has called me to be on the front lines of education in the hormonal trenches of high school. I know all of this.

But then come the parent e-mails, the staff meetings, the parent-teacher conferences, the professional-development seminars, the troublesome students, the social-media trends, and I just don't know if I can do it another year.

Then I remember Habakkuk . . .

"Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vines; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation! The Sovereign Lord is my strength!" (Habakkuk 3:17-19).

Habakkuk wasn't a teacher, but this verse speaks to my anxious educator's heart in an incredibly personal way.

The Book of Habakkuk is a short, three-chapter journey of one man's struggle to see divine providence in the lives of his people. With the hand of God seemingly absent from the plight of the nation of Israel, Habakkuk stands alone among prophets as he questions God and His sovereignty. *I have been there. Actually, I'm living there right now.*

This past school year was difficult. Teachers are some of the hardest-working people I know, and I am honored to be counted as one. We burn the candle at both ends, trying to maintain work and home balance while finding time to protect our mental health.

Last year, I didn't do very well at one of these things, let alone all three. I took on too much, trying to be everything for everyone, and my health began to suffer. I felt as if I was drowning; yet, here I am, getting ready for another year.

It all comes down to the power of yet.

The Power of "Yet"

It was a late April evening last school year, the opening night of *Alice's Adventures at Wonderland High*, a brand-new pop musical lovingly written for my students. I had worked tirelessly for months crafting the script while my friend and coworker wrote songs that perfectly told the story of teenage angst and the craziness of high school. More than just a light and fluffy jaunt through Wonderland, our musical dealt with self-confidence, body issues, mental health, and depression, all within Lewis Carroll's trippy, colorful world.



We poured our souls into this musical, and our students were just as invested. I was thrilled, nervous, stressed, and incredibly proud not only to be the playwright but also the director of this talented cast of young adults.

I was also wearing a heart monitor.

To the outside world, I was living the dream; teaching incredible students, directing a hit musical, working hand in hand with teenagers to tell their stories in an authentic way, and championing mental health within our educational communities. But truth be told, I was quite literally falling apart at the seams, not

heeding my own advice. My heart rate was skyrocketing, I couldn't sleep, I was constantly angry, and I found myself arguing with my loved ones over silly things. I was so out of balance, and my health was fluctuating in response to the stress levels I was experiencing.

It was that great burnout that we all know and fear.

Thankfully, the school year ended, and I had a short window of time to recover and rejuvenate. I spent time working on my physical health. I attended church events and had dinners with friends. I started feeling like myself again. Summer. The glorious respite for educators.

In the midst of my mental and physical recovery, I began to ask, "Why do I do this to myself? Is it really worth it?" The answer was surprising: ". . . yet will I rejoice in the Lord."

Just as Habakkuk said, despite it all, my joy needs to be rooted and grounded in the Lord. He placed a calling upon my life to educate young minds. *My struggles should never outweigh my calling.* This revelation truly changed my perspective.

By no means am I likening myself to the great heroes of the faith; rather, I recognize that focusing on my problems, albeit minimal at most, can overwhelm me and deplete the joy I find when walking with God. My cup was empty, and I failed to acknowledge my weakness, thinking that I could do it all on my own.

Alone, I was without strength, drowning in the churning sea of responsibilities, but when I fell on my knees before God, laying my cares at the feet that walked on water, I found the joy that surpasses understanding, a peace that overwhelms my fear, and a love that consumes any remnant of anxiety.

"I will never forget this awful time. . . . *Yet I still dare to hope when I remember this:* The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning. I say to myself, 'The Lord is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in him!'" (Lamentations 3:20-24, italics supplied).

Even though everything fell apart last year, **yet** I still rejoice. I was broken, burned out, and discouraged, **yet** I held on to the hope that God was creating a new work in me for my good and His glory.

I am going to finish this school year with a sense of purpose. I'm taking time to steep myself in the Word of God, to pray, and to refresh my soul. I know I am exactly where God wants me to be.

As we make our way through another school year, let's choose to take joy in the Lord, to truly allow Him to cover our daily routine with His grace and mercy.

Let's be confident that He will use us to bless our students and coworkers. Let's truly love our constituents, responding with kindness, modeling our Savior's compassion on us.

Let's truly embrace the power of "YET" in our daily lives. By doing so, we **YIELD** our insecurities and frustrations to our ever-loving Saviour, **ENERGIZE** our morning devotionals to grow our faith each day, and **TRIUMPH** over the struggles and failures of living as a vibrant Christian amidst a culture that actively seeks to tear down Christianity and those who follow Scriptural principles. The Power of YET is life-changing.

*You are strong enough. You **can** do it all over again. You **can** handle the mental and physical toll of being a high school teacher. You **are** strong enough; You **are** smart enough; You **are** brave enough. **You are a teacher.** ☺*

This article has been peer reviewed.

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Karen Holford

Helping Your Students to Flourish!

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increase in the number of children and adults experiencing anxiety and other negative/draining emotions. More students of all ages are struggling to balance their emotions, and to develop resilience for the ups and downs of everyday life. When children come to school, overwhelmed by feelings that they lack the skills to manage well, it is very difficult for their brains to be ready and open to new learning.

Flourish! is a tool based on the research of psychologist Barbara Fredrickson,* who chose to study the positive and uplifting experiences that help people to flourish, rather than the negative and draining experiences that can cause distress and illness. Fredrickson identified the 10 most common negative/draining emotions: anger, fear, stress, shame, guilt, embarrassment, frustration, sadness, contempt, and disgust. She also identified the 10 most common positive/uplifting emotions: gratitude, wonder, inspiration, interest (having an engaging hobby), hopefulness, a positive sense of purpose in life, peacefulness, laughter, joy, and kindness.

Fredrickson and her team discovered the importance of learning how to balance one's emotions. As human beings live in a broken and hurting world, it is perfectly normal for them to experience some of the draining emotions. However, people can learn how to balance their draining emotions with positive emotions, to prevent them from becoming overwhelmed by distress. The research indicates that people probably need to have at least three times as many positive emotions as negative ones to remain balanced, and an even higher ratio to flourish.

Although Fredrickson's findings are recent, the apostle Paul used similar ideas to help him "flourish" when he was in prison and awaiting execution. In the fourth chapter of Philippians, Paul listed some of the things that were helping him to be resilient in the face of a distressing and frightening situation. He chose to praise God because God is always praiseworthy no matter what is happening in our lives. He chose to be kind and gentle to others, and whenever we are kind, we are blessed in positive ways, too, because this stimulates the secretion of feel-good and healthy oxytocin in the human brain. He gave all his worries to God in prayer. He chose to do things that filled him with peace such as contemplating nature and God's creation. He focused on positive and beautiful thoughts and shared that he had learned how to be content, whatever the situation.

For several years, while practicing Frederickson's ideas, I have discovered that they help me to be calmer, happier, and less stressed. This inspired me to create **Flourish!** as a simple tool to help people of all ages, including children, learn how to balance their emotions. I concluded that it would be helpful to create a set of posters focusing on the positive emotions and describing simple ways to experience each of them. Each poster contains a Bible verse, a short statement about why this emotion is important, and 10 ways to experience the positive emotion. There is also a colorful tree poster on which younger children can stick a green leaf every time that they choose to do one of the flourishing ideas or engage in related activities. A full set of these downloadable posters can be found at <http://www.ted.adventist.org/family/flourish>.

Examples of “Flourishing” Activities for the Classroom

Gratitude

- Ask students to write the letters of the alphabet down the side of a sheet of paper. Then ask them to write down at least one thing for which they are grateful, beginning with each letter of the alphabet.
- Younger children can make a gratitude list themed around the colors of the rainbow. Ask them to list or draw things that they are thankful for, that are red, yellow, orange, green, blue, and purple.
- At the end of each school day, ask students to share what they are most thankful for. Each student can call out his or her gratitude item, in turn, to create an uplifting and energizing way to close the day.

Wonder

- Create a table for unbreakable items of natural wonder. Include a magnifying glass, and some books about nature with awesome pictures. Place a timer on the table and encourage students to pause and study an object for at least one minute, to discover something new that they haven’t seen before, and to be filled with wonder at God’s awesome creation.
- Ask older students to take photos of the amazing things they see in nature. Gather these pictures and make a weekly or monthly PowerPoint presenta-

tion of their “wonder” photos. This can help them to pause and look at the beautiful things in their world.

Inspiration

- Let students choose an inspiring Bible verse each week and explore it together. Place it in the center of a bulletin board and invite students to post their anonymous thoughts in the space around the verse. This can help the students who are more introverted to respond to the verse, too, because they do not have to speak in front of others.
- Ask students to research and write a paper about an inspiring person in the Bible, in their family, or in the world today. How does this story inspire them to live their lives?

Interest/Flow

- Create a space for interesting activities or challenges in the classroom. This can be a place where students can spend time when they have finished their class work. Include challenging puzzles, nicely presented craft materials, interesting books, and age-appropriate construction kits.
- Invite parents and friends of the school who have interesting hobbies to talk to the students about their activities.



Hopefulness

- Give your class something to look forward to each day, or each week. This might be reading an engaging story aloud, chapter by chapter; showing a funny video clip; or providing a special treat if the class has achieved a weekly target.
- Gather the students' dreams and hopes, written on paper cloud-shapes, and arrange them on a bulletin board. Look for ways to encourage them to achieve their dreams.

A Positive Sense of Purpose

- Help students to identify their personal strengths, spiritual gifts, passions, talents, skills, and resources, and to use their gifts in a helpful project for the community.
- Encourage students to list several things they did well at the end of each school day. This can be very affirming at the end of a tiring day, and it can help them to identify their growth.
- Celebrate individual and group accomplishments, however big or small.
- Tell each student that he or she is beloved by God and brings Him joy.

Peacefulness

- If possible, designate a quiet corner in the classroom or in your school. Call it a "safe space" and screen the area with see-through nets and fairy lights. Play quiet music, set out soft pillows for seating, soothing books to read, battery-operated candles, and lavender to smell.
- Give students a soapy solution to blow bubbles (see Homemade Bubble Solution Recipes) because blowing bubbles is naturally relaxing for the mind and body.

Laughter

- Laughter helps to open students' minds so

that they are ready to absorb new information. Post a different cartoon or funny picture on the wall or bulletin board each week.

- Tell a short, funny, relevant story at the beginning of a classroom or read a funny book as a serialized story.
- Incorporate brain breaks, icebreakers, or games such as charades or "Minute to Win It" to help build community and generate fun while learning.

Joy

- Joy is different from laughter, because it is possible to have happy experiences that are not hilariously funny. Ask students to share their happiest moment in each week and to describe why it was so happy.
- Invite students to write stories about a time when they were very happy, or when they made someone else feel happy.

- Ask older students to interview several different people about what makes them most happy. Invite them to present their findings to the class, and to say what surprised them most about their interviewees' reactions.

Kindness

- Start a kindness jar, into which students drop a button whenever they have experienced an act of kindness from another student. Ask them also to write the act of kindness in a log-book, stating the name of the person, the action, and the date. When the jar is filled with kindness buttons, the class shares a treat together as a reward. Check that the number of buttons is the same as the kindnesses logged in the book so that students don't "cheat" by filling the jar with their own buttons!
- Choose a class kindness project to do in your community so that the students experience the blessings of sharing kindness with others.

Homemade Bubble Solution Recipes

Basic Bubble Solution

- 1 cup (237 ml) water
- 2 tablespoons (30 ml) light Karo syrup or 2 tablespoons glycerin
- 4 tablespoons (60 ml) dishwashing liquid

Stir all ingredients together until dissolved.

Sugar Bubbles

- 1 cup (237 ml) water
- 2 tablespoons (30 ml) liquid detergent
- 1 tablespoon (15 ml) glycerin
- 1 teaspoon (5 ml) sugar

Mix all ingredients together until the sugar dissolves.

Colorful Bubbles

- 1 cup (237 ml) soap or soap powder
- 1 quart (946 ml) warm water
- Liquid food coloring

Dissolve soap in warm water. Mix in the food coloring until you get the shade you want.

For more ideas, see Amanda Rock, "How to Make Your Own Bubble Solution," *verywell family* (2022): <https://www.verywellfamily.com/homemade-bubbles-2764571>; Home Science Tools, "DIY Bubble Recipe: Make Your Own Super Bubbles" (2023): <https://www.homesciencetools.com/article/how-to-make-super-bubbles-science-project/>.

- Make a list together of the different ways the students can be kind, or have been kind, to one another and to their families. Gather their ideas, write them on paper hearts, and make a display of them.

“Flourishing” Teachers

Before teachers can help students to understand and balance their emotions, they need to have the knowledge and skills to take care of their own emotions. Educational administrators can plan a workshop for teachers where they learn the importance of balancing their own emotions and give them hands-on experience of some of the simple activities included on the **Flourish!** posters. (An online webinar by Karen Holford is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oizeR09tD7o>, or contact her for more details. See e-mail address at the end of this article.)

It is important for the teachers to incorporate these “flourishing” activities into their lives on a regular basis so that choosing healthy ways to balance their emotions becomes a natural way for them to respond to stressors. Then they will be better equipped to help the children balance their complex emotions.

Some schools choose to have a well-being corner in the teachers’ room, on a table, or in a basket. It may contain a beautiful book of inspiring Bible verses or devotions; a book of good humor and cartoons to make them laugh; interesting puzzles to absorb their attention; and objects of natural wonder. Teachers can also gather and share their own ideas for activities that can help them, and their students, to balance their emotions.

Blending “Flourishing” Activities Into School Routines

Flourish! can easily be adapted to a variety of school contexts. Most of the activities described on the posters can be used by different age groups and don’t need any special equipment. If the school has a social media group, simple activities can be shared with the school community on a regular basis.

“Flourishing” Rooms


An Adventist school near London, England, created a wellbeing room for the students and filled it with activities to help them experience different positive emotions. Peaceful music plays in the background. Battery-operated candles flicker safely. There is a wonder table where children can explore natural objects and experience awe, with an arrangement of beautiful rocks and shells, interesting wood and bark, and books of nature photos. Another table has craft materials and challenge-cards to inspire students’ creativity. A basket of funny books sits next to a pile of pillows to make a laughter nook. A bulletin board is covered in sticky notes with “Thank you!” messages

written on them. Interesting puzzle toys fill a large bowl on the table, and on the walls, beautiful posters of Bible verses provide inspiration.

Brain Breaks

Some of the **Flourish!** activities can be used as “brain breaks” in the classroom. Teachers can select a handful of the simple activities and scatter them throughout the school day. These experiences can give the students a positive emotional boost, which may help their brains to learn better as well as enabling them to experience the positive emotions that bring them joy and strengthen their resilience.

Finally

Flourish! is a simple, inexpensive way to integrate positive emotions into the lives of the staff and students in schools. When students experience the good and natural effects of choosing to engage with positive emotions, and practice them regularly, they will soon learn to be intentional about incorporating them into their lives. These positive emotions will help them to learn better, become more resilient, experience better mental health, and have happier relationships. The **Flourish!** posters are freely available and can be used in a variety of ways. If you wish to translate them, or if you need them in different versions (.pdf, .jpg and .psd) please contact me for the files (kholford@ted.adventist.org). 

This resource has been peer reviewed.

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*Barbara L. Fredrickson, *Positivity* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2011).

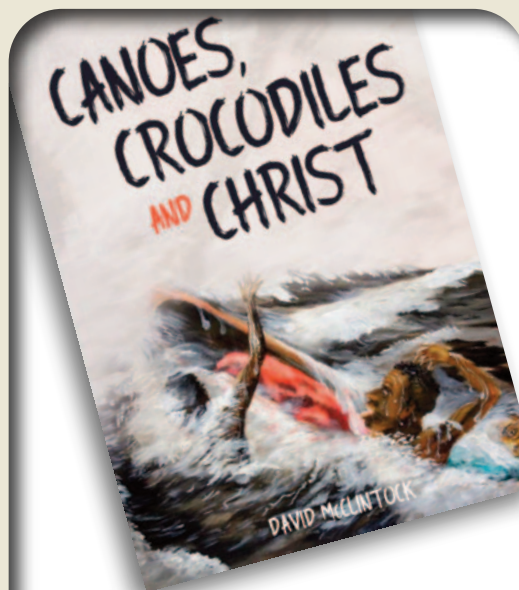


Faith-Ann A. McGarrell

How powerful is the God of heaven? More powerful than the *puri puri*?¹ Cannibals? Crocodiles? Cyclones? Haru Hariva’s story challenges readers to answer this question at every twist and turn. In *Canoes, Crocodiles, and Christ: The Story of Haru Hariva*, David McClintock shares accounts of the life of this Adventist pioneer missionary from the South Pacific Division. A nonfiction narrative, the story is set in the tropical jungle villages and harbor towns of Papua, New Guinea. It chronicles Haru Hariva’s life from the early 1900s until he died in 1967. Each chapter takes the reader on a journey with Haru as he navigates growing up in the village of Heperu without his mother, learns to love his father while living in Bootless Bay, and as he learns about Jesus at the small mission school at Hiloi. Readers will cheer him on as he pursues an education in Bisiatabu near Port Moresby, marries Kaura, and, together with her, raises 12 children.

From Village Chief Heir to Missionary for God

The story begins with the death of Haru’s mother, snatched from his life by a crocodile. Haru’s father, Hariva, a village chief, struggles with losing his wife and, shortly after, his baby daughter, Rouru. He blames the *puri puri* for bringing devastation to his family. Young Haru’s loss is intensified when his father, consumed with grief and fear of the *puri puri* magic, leaves Haru behind to begin life again in Bootless Bay, far away from Heperu village. Left to live with his Uncle Purahakaia, Haru becomes a perceptive, observant young man. After a short time, his father returns, and together they move to Port Moresby. Here, Haru learns about a particular



Canoes, Crocodiles, and Christ: The Story of Haru Hariva

(Warburton, Victoria, Australia: Signs Publishing, 2021). ISBN 9781922373281 (Print), 9781922373298 (Ebook). 152 pages. US\$14.99. To order this book, visit <https://adventistbookcenter.com/canoes-crocodiles-and-christ-the-story-of-haru-hariva.html>.

school where children learn to read and sing songs about Jesus. At this school, he learns the song, “Jesus Loves Me, This I Know,” and his life is transformed. At this school, the cloud of superstition and sorcery is lifted, and Haru sees the power of the God of heaven. Nothing kept him away from school, not even his father’s beatings. Haru committed his life to sharing the gospel with the people along the Turama River, the Kigo district, the coast of Mandang, and many other locations so that they, too, could learn about Jesus and God’s great love.

A Captivating Story

Canoes, Crocodiles, and Christ: The Story of Haru Hariva is a captivating story. The engaging narrative captures the reader’s attention. The author, having lived and worked in Papua, New Guinea, uses vivid, descriptive language to transport readers into the thick tropical rainforests, mountainous landscapes, and tumultuous open seas.

Each of the 15 chapter titles helps tell the story as well. For example, “Taken by a Crocodile” reveals what happened to Haru’s mother. The chapter titled “Saved From the Pot” relates his introduction to the people living in villages along the Turama River and their transition from a diet composed primarily of pig and human flesh to one of fruits, nuts, root vegetables such as taro, yams, and sago; from worshiping spirits to being Bible-reading, Sabbath-keeping Christians; and “Raised From the Dead” and “Vasiti” tell contrasting stories of sickness, death, and learning to trust regardless of how God chooses to answer prayer.

The book, illustrated by Bryan Paul, has a mix of

hand-drawn illustrations and black-and-white photos. The black-and-white pencil drawings highlight the theme of each chapter, and historical photos from the Adventist Heritage Center in Cooranbong, Australia, show Haru, members of his family, and various friends and fellow missionaries mentioned throughout the book.

At the end of each chapter, readers will find a “Notes” page with definitions of terms and colloquial sayings, descriptions of flora and fauna, and facts about the terrain, traditions, and historical backgrounds. At the end of the book, there is a glossary of terms culled from more than 800 language dialects spoken in Papua, New Guinea, of which Haru spoke 32. There is also a “Questions for Discussion” section that has three questions for each chapter. The questions help readers dig deeper, and this is especially effective in chapters dealing with sickness, death, loss, or unanswered prayers. Several questions ask readers to make applications to their own lives.

Critique

Much of what takes place in this story happens in the jungle and in and around water. As a result, there are long passages describing how canoes were made out of logs, the need for canoes that would survive the strong ocean currents, the types of vines and branches that could be used to make paddles and ropes, and several instances where life was threatened or lost as a result of water. While some might find the descriptions lengthy, they provide readers with insight into how much effort, work, and skill was required to survive during this period. Children learned early to use natural resources to survive and developed a healthy respect for water—home to crocodiles and swift, unpredictable currents.

Some might question who tells this story and why it is not told by Haru’s family. A current debate in non-fiction writing revolves around whose story it is to tell. One author says it this way: “The ethical questions around writing stories that are not ours alone are ones that many writers struggle with—while others don’t struggle nearly enough.”² In the book’s preface, it is evident that David McClintock wrestles with this question. He grew up in Papua New Guinea and returned to serve as principal of the Mouth Diamond Adventist High School near Port Moresby. He taught Hariva’s granddaughters and worked with Haru’s oldest son, Daniel, who served as associate director of education for the Papua New Guinea Union

Mission. He also knew Naphtali, another son who worked at Kabiufa Adventist High School. McClintock talked with Kaura, Haru’s wife, and Zita Hibo, Haru’s daughter, both of whom shared willingly copious stories of Haru’s life. At the close of the book, there are two pages titled “The Legacy Continues,” where the author traces Haru’s legacy in the lives of his 12 children. It was their desire that he tell these stories.

More importantly, stories such as these must be told for the generations that follow. This is evident in the chapter titled “The Ultimate Price,” which relays the tragedy that took the lives of Delys, David, and Adrian Lemke, the wife and sons of Ernest Lemke, a pioneer missionary in the South Pacific Division. In this book, we read the story from the perspective of Haru and Uvaipi, another missionary. In other narratives of this tragic event,³ those who were part of the rescue mission were referred to as native teachers and workers; their names were not recorded. So, it is here, in this book, that we learn that Uvaipi rescued Lester, Pastor Lemke’s young son, and took him to shore; that Haru and Uvaipi were the workers and teachers who paddled the canoe for two days to get Pastor Lemke and Lester to the Australian Petroleum Company Base along the Omati River. This book cements their names in the record of Adventist history in the South Pacific and fulfills the author’s desire that “the story of Haru Hariva is one that must not be lost” (p. vii).

At the close of the book, there are two pages titled “The Legacy Continues,” where the author traces Haru’s legacy in the lives of his 12 children. It was their desire that he tell these stories.

Recommendation

Currently, *Canoes, Crocodiles, and Christ: The Story of Haru Hariva* is part of the Year 9 curriculum (Grade 10 in the U.S.) for 15-year-old students in the South Pacific Division. It would be suitable for independent reading for students in Grades 7 through 9. For students younger than 12 years old (Grade 7), it should be read with discussion and guidance from teachers or parents, especially given the weighty themes.

This book will remind readers of the days of early mission stories with references to “picture rolls” and “talking mats” (a term used for the picture roll), angel messengers, and powerful dreams with messages from God. *Canoes, Crocodiles, and Christ: The Story of Haru Hariva* captures the adventure of a far-gone era of mission work. The writing is crisp yet descriptive, and the author achieves good storytelling through rich dialogue.

The vocabulary words are simple and easy to read, even when addressing serious themes such as death, commitment, sacrifice, the supernatural, and the ultimate triumph of good over evil.

Overall, this book is recommended for anyone with an interest in Adventist history, and beyond that, for anyone who loves a good, true story. In the relay of Haru's experiences throughout the book, the overriding theme that "God's presence does not always insulate us from tragedy" (p. 101) is seamlessly juxtaposed with Haru's declaration and confident assurance that "God is sufficient" (p. 141). This is a message that will encourage readers, even today. ✍️

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *Puri puri* is what the people living in remote villages of Papua New Guinea call sorcery or supernatural witchcraft.

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Margaret Adeogun

James White Library Celebrates Its

85th Anniversary

The 85th anniversary of the James White Library (JWL) and the current building's 60th are significant achievements and milestones for the Andrews University community (Berrien Springs, Michigan, U.S.A.) and the Seventh-day Adventist higher-education system. The celebration was planned to coincide with the alumni homecoming weekend of September 22 to 25, 2022, to get alumni involved and encourage them to reminisce about their experiences in the James White Library. The celebration offered alumni the opportunity to promote the library among their social and professional networks, spreading the word about the library and making

connections that was hoped would lead to lasting friendships and support for the library. The library anniversary committee organized programs to celebrate its extensive past and exciting future through events that captured the essence of the library and its place in the Andrews University learning community and the history of education within the global Seventh-day Adventist Church.

One such event featured Meredith Jones Gray, professor of English at Andrews University. A prolific writer and researcher of Andrews University history, Jones Gray's research activities have given her a comprehensive knowledge of the library's development timeline, as evidenced in her work *As We Set Forth: Battle Creek Col-*



Audience attending the James White Library's 85th anniversary celebration.

lege and Emmanuel Missionary College.¹ At this opening event on Friday, September 23, 2022, Jones Gray presented her historical research under the title “The James White Library: A History” at the library’s gallery. In the presence of campus community members, friends, patrons, retired and current library staff, and leaders of Adventist education, Jones Gray presented a description of the evolution of the James White Library. Her compelling description of the library’s development using graphics, photographs of the construction, library floor plans, and photographs of patrons, students, and workers of all ages from 1937 to the present evoked joyful memories of the past and how the Lord has led the library.² It was a time for reminiscing, especially for those who witnessed the early days of library services and the development of its resources. This presentation will be included in a forthcoming book on the story of Andrews University that follows Jones Gray’s previous work.

The event’s venue was memory-provoking: The professionally crafted historical timeline exhibits in the gallery highlighted photographs, milestones, pioneering library staff, and founders of the institution, all of which communicated values and memorialized the library’s history. All the eye-catching and thought-provoking wall graphics complemented Jones Gray’s presentation, heightened the occasion’s significance, and reminded participants of God’s faithfulness.

The reception that followed the presentation allowed time for more reminiscences as alumni, retired library staff, and current students and employees shared their memories of the library. A few even recalled the library’s beginnings in the current building, of moving loads of books in carts from the old library to the new one, and how impressed they had been with the size of the building.

The library anniversary committee organized more programs for the year to celebrate its achievements and exciting future through events that capture the essence of the library and its place in the Andrews University learning community.

The Stafford Collection

This celebration also showcased the Stafford Collection, recently acquired from Atlantic Union College in Lancaster, Massachusetts. Thus, on September 24, 2022, the library organized a guided tour for alumni, guests, and campus community members to explore the James White Library and browse the Stafford Collection. The Stafford Collection comprises approximately 1,400 works of literature, previously housed at Atlantic Union College’s G. Eric Jones Library. Some American poets, including A. R. Ammons, Langston Hughes, and Carlos Williams, and British poets, W. H. Auden, Gerard

Manley Hopkins, and William Butler Yeats, are featured. The poets’ works (some signed editions), biographies, criticisms, theses, dissertations, bibliographies, and other reference sources make up this unique collection.

The collection is named in honor of the late Otilie Frank Stafford (1921-2006), a distinguished professor of English who served at Atlantic Union College for 50 years. The collection, focused on 20th-century American and British poets, was established in 1991. Dr. Stafford’s husband of 58 years, Homer Stafford, and friends of the Staffords contributed financially to the growth of this special collection that memorializes her exceptional teaching and outstanding leadership at Atlantic



Guest presenter, Meredith Jones Gray, professor of English and author of *As We Set Forth: Battle Creek College and Emmanuel Missionary College*.

Union College and elsewhere. The JWML is fortunate to inherit this rare and highly valuable collection. Its addition to other special collections will enhance students’ learning experience and boost the teaching, learning, and research activities of the Andrews University teaching and learning community.

A Brief History of the James White Library

In 1937, the first brick academic building on the Andrews University campus was built to house the James White Memorial Library (JWML). Previously housed in the administration building of what was Emmanuel Missionary College for some 30 years, the library collection had grown and expanded from its small start in Battle Creek College. By 1956, the JWML had outgrown its facility.³ Designed to accommodate some 30,000 books, it then housed 50,000! When students left for

summer breaks, books were stacked on the floor, in the hallways, and overflowed into staff offices—wherever there was space.

A new facility was built in 1962.⁴ Its 45,000 square feet were intended to house up to 280,000 volumes. Construction of an additional section was completed in 1976. Today, the extension houses most book stacks, while the older part holds most of the administrative offices, doctoral carrels, and reference areas. When the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary moved from Washington, D.C., to Berrien Springs in 1962, the James White Memorial Library merged with the seminary collection and was reborn as the James White Library.

In 1992, the card catalogue was replaced by the on-



Paulette McLean Johnson, Andrews University dean of libraries, presents a gift of appreciation to Meredith Jones Gray.

line computer catalog called JeWeL. Books began to be barcoded, making circulation and inventory functions much easier. Several renovations were completed, including the Center for Adventist Research (CAR) in 2000, the Lobby (2010), and the Multimedia Center (2012). Also, compact shelving was installed for the university archives housed in CAR.

During the past decade, investments in information technology and JWEL digital initiatives have advanced knowledge creation and discovery at Andrews University. For example, the Andrews University Digital Commons (officially named Digital Commons @ Andrews University), launched in 2015 and hosts publications by Andrews University faculty and students, making the university's scholarship accessible globally. To date, it has more than five million downloads worldwide. The integrated Discovery platform (2020) simplifies search-

ing for resources, and the chat reference service provides ready communication between patrons and library personnel. Future plans include a library renovation that would provide varied modern spaces for current and emerging library services.

Community members can register at the James White Library and borrow library books. The Adventist worldwide educational and theological community can access digital and print library resources through interlibrary loans. Libraries within North America may also request print resources through interlibrary loan. Library staff scan articles in print journals from library holdings and email the copies to Adventist libraries worldwide. In addition, a wealth of digital content is freely available online through the Digital Commons. This content includes dissertations, theses, and the online archives of journals published by the university, making the work of our students and faculty a helpful resource for the worldwide Adventist educational community. The James White Library is a jewel of Andrews University, where global scholars are made. Supporters and others are invited to make it their home away from home. ✍

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Guest Editorial *Continued from page 3*

experience but flourished mentally, physically, and spiritually because of a strong family influence. Others have been judged and mistreated by their local church, and a caring family and school have compensated for the negative influences. As educators, we have a sacred responsibility to strengthen the leg of the stool for which we are responsible in our schools, classrooms, and interactions with the home and church. The ultimate goal, however, is to produce a stool with three robust and unwavering legs so that students have the best opportunities to grow in connection with God and their fellow human beings.

In conclusion, parents, pastors, teachers, and students must work faithfully and in a coordinated manner to support children's spiritual, mental, physical, and social growth. Only in eternity will we find out how many souls of young people have been saved by the intervention of home, church, and school.

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