



H. Stephen Bralley

Turning Points in Adventist Education:

A Video Series

During the 2023 North American Division Educators' Convention in Phoenix, Arizona, U.S.A., a series of six short videos highlighting significant turning points in Adventist education was shared. The production of these videos was a collaboration between the North American Division Office of Education (NADOE) and the NAD Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research under the direction of Michael W. Campbell, who serves as the director. The idea for the series grew from Campbell's and my shared love of history, a deep curiosity about the past, and a passion for connecting people with what can be learned from the past and how it applies to today and the future.

Michael W. Campbell puts the need for the video series into context: "We have a rich and diverse history in Adventist education with significant points in its development that have shaped its influence today. From the mid-1800s to today, Adventists have created the

largest Protestant education system in the world. Adventist schools can be found in nearly 150 countries, 85,000 teachers, 1.5 million students, and 7,500 schools.* We hope that the introduction of these videos will help people recognize the amazing impact of Adventist education and allow us to embrace our role in evangelism and ministry fully. We believe these first videos will lead to more stories being produced in the future, continuing to highlight significant moments throughout our history."

Education is wholistic; it is a ministry. It encompasses the physical, social, and spiritual aspects, which are just as important as academics. We have unique lessons to learn from the mistakes and suc-



cesses of those who came before us. When we recognize the founders of Adventist education were men and women just like us, we recognize their inspiration is available to use as well. They had work to do, and so do we. All of us can participate in the ministry that was started in the late 1800s. It's essential to recognize that our founders fought to stay focused, and the system has receded and surged throughout its history. This history is worth exploring; in many cases, our system is envied by other denominations, yet Adventists don't often recognize or know the system's value.

Here is a brief synopsis of the series:

Turning Points in Adventist Education, Part 1:

The early Seventh-day Adventist Church questioned how they should live and work if they expected Jesus to return soon. How could this earnest group of believers go from vehemently denouncing education to building one of the world's largest private education systems?

<https://vimeo.com/853360970>

Turning Points in Adventist Education, Part 2:

A poorly appreciated man, Goodloe Harper Bell, was the first Adventist educator. Could Adventists repair the educational neglect created by their early misunderstanding?

<https://vimeo.com/853368541>

Turning Points in Adventist Education, Part 3:

Adventist education became too successful in the 1870s; however, they needed a cohesive plan. An unlikely advocate shapes Adventist education into a unique ministry of wholistic learning.

<https://vimeo.com/853368722>

Turning Points in Adventist Education, Part 4:

Adventist education in crisis: Rapid growth leads to disagreements about its future direction. Was the education ministry larger than the men and women who started it?

<https://vimeo.com/853369402>

Turning Points in Adventist Education, Part 5:

Apathy creeps into Adventist education a decade after the crisis. An education convention helps revive the ministry and helps to forge the distinctive teaching philosophy of Adventist education more clearly.

<https://vimeo.com/853368999>

Turning Points in Adventist Education, Part 6: Adventist education needs to be more balanced and fight irrelevancy. How could Adventist schools reach their full potential? Could pursuing something better lead the system to a deeper understanding of its purpose?

<https://vimeo.com/853370039>

These videos are freely available and may be used schoolwide or in classrooms to introduce students and educators to Adventist education history. For more information, contact the NAD Office of Education at <https://v1.adventisteducation.org/off.html>.

*According to the General Conference Annual Statistical Report, in 2022, there were 9,836 institutions and primary schools, 117,115 teachers, and 2,173,886 students. See General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, *2023 Annual Statistical Report New Series, Volume 5: Report of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists' 2022 Statistics* (Silver Spring, Md.: General Conference, 2023), 94: https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Statistics/ASR/ASR2023.pdf?_gl=1*fdvt22*_ga*NzE2MDg4NDY3LjE3MDI2NTU3NTQ.*_ga_2VBYH6KEBQ*MTcwMjY1NTc1NC4xLjAuMTcwMjY1NTc1NC4wLjAuMA.

H. Stephen Bralley, MS, is the Director of Secondary Education and Accreditation for the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists in Columbia, Maryland, U.S.A. Before accepting this position, Mr. Bralley served as the Superintendent of Education for the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Goodlettsville, Tennessee, U.S.A. He has also worked as a principal, multigrade teacher, and boys' dean within the Adventist system and as a teacher in the public system. Mr. Bralley earned a BS in Secondary Education from Tennessee Technological University (Cookeville, Tennessee) and an MS in Learning Technology and Leadership from Pepperdine University Graduate School of Education and Psychology (Los Angeles, California, U.S.A.). He is also endorsed in elementary and secondary education in social studies, history, English, religion, and civics.

Recommended citation:

H. Stephen Bralley, "Turning Points in Adventist Education: A Video Series," *The Journal of Adventist Education* 85:4 (2023): 36, 37. <https://doi.org/10.55668/jae0058>.