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A watercolor illustration featuring a globe on the left side, rendered in shades of blue, green, and purple. To the right of the globe is a large, vibrant flower in shades of yellow, orange, and red. The background is a mix of these colors with soft, blended watercolor textures. A white outline of a person's head and shoulders is superimposed over the globe and flower, facing right.

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06 The pastor and the church school: Partnering for success

Ella Smith Simmons

Celebrate what can happen when a pastor and a principal team up together.

10 Ground zero in the great controversy: The struggle for the minds and hearts of the next generation

George R. Knight

Dream with the author of inspiring a new generation with God's end-time apocalyptic vision.

14 The gatekeeper: What if pastors could reverse the decline in church school enrollment?

Shane Anderson

How much power does the pastor really have to influence enrollment?

18 Strengthening Adventist education—Recommendations for pastors and officers

Jerome Thayer, Anneris Coria-Navia, Aimee Leukert, Elissa Kido, and Larry Blackmer

A synergy of pastors, officers, teachers, and church members is needed to provide a saving environment for the young people in Adventist schools.

22 Give them a fighting chance

Carlton P. Byrd

Is the mission of Christian education too great? It may require great energy and financial output, but the author urges all Adventist pastors, parents, and church members to give our young people a fighting chance.

25 We is more powerful than I

Pamela Consuegra

The ultimate success of the church and school includes an intentional collaboration of pastors and teachers.

04 Letters

05 Guest Editorial

17 Revival and Reformation

28 Dateline

29 Resources

30 Practical Pointers

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MD 20904-6600 U.S.A.
www.ministrymagazine.org
ministrymagazine@gc.adventist.org

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ASSOCIATE SECRETARIES
Jonas Arrais, Jeffrey Brown, Robert Costa,
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MINISTERIAL RESOURCE CENTER COORDINATOR

Cathy Payne

+1 301-680-6511

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"Change is difficult, especially for large, religious organizations. May God help us."

Open to the Holy Spirit

Thank you for that important story ("Revival and the Holy Spirit," February 2017). Generations have passed away since that happened. Ellen G. White also wrote, "When the books of Daniel and Revelation are better understood, believers will have an entirely different religious experience."^{*} We know "knowledge has increased" in modern times. But have we, as a people, made any significant progress to "better understand" the prophecies of Daniel

and Revelation since she wrote that statement? We all know the answer to that question. We have to be open and teachable, in order for the Holy Spirit to reveal to us a better understanding. Change is difficult, especially for large, religious organizations. May God help us.

—Greg Bratcher

Back to the Future

I am a volunteer missionary doctor and pilot in remote northern Vanuatu in a province of islands. I serve as an elder

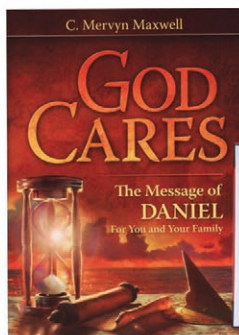
in a local church which we planted and which is now organized. The above article ("Back to the Future: Lay-led Churches and a Return to Our Roots," February 2017) is excellent. We are already aiming to implement a combination of the two suggested approaches David Klinedinst made in his article.

—Mark Naomi Kay

^{*} Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assoc., 1962), 114.



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Lisa Beardsley-Hardy, PhD, is director of education, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.



Affirming the pastor: “Gatekeeper” to Seventh-day Adventist education

We left while it was still dark. The sun began to rise as we descended into the Great Rift Valley in Kenya. We were on our way to Kamagambo Adventist College to hold a conference for 700 teachers. As we traveled, our driver told us how the work started there. Back in 1906, Arthur Carscallen came to Kenya after graduating from what would later become Newbold College in England. He settled in Nyanza province in an area of tribal warfare between the Luo and Kisii people. After years of fruitless effort trying to plant churches, Carscallen started a school and enrolled four children. This proved to be a massive engine for church growth.

Following his example, some missionaries left Nyanza for the central region, and they started a school among the Kikuyu, who were otherwise hostile to the colonials “taking our land.” The father of our driver was one of those earliest students in Muruguru at the foot of Mount Kenya. While there he accepted Christ and went on to become a pastor. Today one of his sons is vice president of finance for Hope Channel in Silver Spring, Maryland, and the other—our driver, and the source of my information—is Dr. Andrew Mutero, education director for the East-Central Africa Division. As of 2015, we have 55 primary schools, 36 secondary schools, and two universities in Kenya, with a church membership of over 866,296.

Then I was in Peru. This time I traveled by boat to a school on the highest navigable body of water in the world, in the remote Peruvian Andes, with education director Jorge Maquera as our guide. Jorge Maquera has now written *Operación Andes Libres: Construyendo la Utopía*, informing us that education also

launched gospel outreach in Peru. There are now 90 primary and 69 secondary Adventist schools, and 27,000 students in Peru. At Peruvian Union University, another 7,000 tertiary students are preparing for service as pastors, nurses, physicians, teachers, and in other professions. In 2015, Seventh-day Adventist membership was 407,492 in Peru.

I’m happy that in Africa, India, the Philippines, and Inter- and South America, among other areas, the demand for schools and teachers exceeds the available supply. But I’m mourning because in other parts of our world field, Seventh-day Adventist parents are making other choices, Seventh-day Adventist schools are closing, and Seventh-day Adventist children and young people by the thousands are missing out on the mental, physical, social, and spiritual blessings of Adventist Christian education.


Dr. Ella Simmons, vice president for the world church and a local church elder, speaks with joy and humility about the successful partnership she had with her local pastor as the principal of a church school. As educators we want pastors to know that we accept Dr. George Knight’s pastoral challenge that the goal of the school must run hand in hand with the goal of the church, namely, to train our students and church members to carry the apocalyptic message of Revelation 14:6–12 to all the world, until Christ returns.

I began by highlighting two regions I recently visited. I close by highlighting three pastors I recently encountered. The first was a youth pastor whom I met with her homeschool association. They were on fire for Adventist education. Everybody received the book *Education* by Ellen White.* Most parents do not

home school, though. For these parents, the good news is that as of 2015 there are 8,208 Seventh-day Adventist schools around the world from which to choose, with 102,779 teachers educating some 1,922,990 students.

The second pastor I encountered was Dr. Jiri Moskala, dean of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University. All master of divinity students will now take a course on the ministry of education! Dr. Moskala believes that church schools must be “powerful evangelistic centers for building bridges in the community.” They can be centers for creative programs that draw people to the school who might not readily come to events in the church. “The school,” he says, “should be a church during the week.”

My final pastor is South American Division president, Erton Köhler. He said, “We don’t have schools. Rather, we have churches that we build in the shape of schools!”

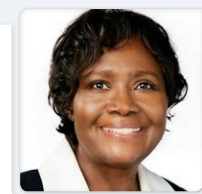
Home, school, and church; parents, teachers, and pastors: “A threefold cord is not quickly broken” (Eccles. 4:12, KJV). 

My training in theology and my service in chaplaincy have given me an unquestionable appreciation for one thing: the sacrificial work of pastoral ministry. Thank you, pastors, for what you do in the churches. Thank you for what you do in the hospitals. And, from the bottom of my heart, and on behalf of educators around the world, thank you for what you do in our schools. We love you; we need you; and we thank you.

* I recommend this book to every pastor, as well as receiving the *Journal of Adventist Education* (jae.adventist.org). Both are available in many languages and as apps for computers and smartphones.

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Ella Smith Simmons, EdD, is a vice president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.



The pastor and the church school: Partnering for success

About 35 years ago Isaac Lester, a seasoned pastor, and I, a new principal with some leadership experience, began a running conversation about the pastor's role in Adventist education. This, the mid-1980s, was a period during which new concepts of pastoral roles and leadership were being discussed and tested widely in the United States. Many had come to view the pastor's role as that of chief executive officer, a CEO/leader type, whose job was to cast vision, then motivate and rally the members to carry on the work of the church.¹ Others held to a more hands-on role for pastors. As we would be working together, I needed to know my pastor's stand on this crucial subject.

Fortunately, we both had two priority goals: (1) the elevation of educational quality at our local church school and (2) the expansion of educational opportunities and access to the children of our church and, to some degree, the children of the wider community. Our church community was fairly typical, made up of working-class and professional members. Even though many of them had migrated to the suburbs, they continued to support the little school located in an urban setting.

Given the related challenges and our mutual aspirations, we vowed mutual respect and support and set out on a

journey to provide the best possible leadership and nurture to that church school. I have treasured this experience and wish with all my heart that other principals could form such rich partnerships with our wonderful pastors. I learned from the Adventist Pastor: A World Survey that there are very real factors that stand in the way of this being replicated on a wider scale.

Undertrained and overstretched

This study, conducted by Roger Dudley and Petr Cincala, provides significant information about the pastor's journey. Seventh-day Adventist pastors feel that God called them to be a pastor (96 percent), and they enjoy being a pastor (95 percent). They feel that being a pastor seems to fit their spiritual gifts (91 percent). Further, most feel supported by their congregations (83 percent) and their local conferences (73 percent). Dudley and Cincala observed that this was a "major finding" "since the morale of the ministers has much to do with the success of their ministry."²

However, as might be expected, these numbers dropped when it came to various other ministries of the pastors. While 46 percent of ministers said they got by most of the time and 36 percent felt that they had sufficient time for other necessary pastoral tasks, 18

percent (766 pastors) reported that they rarely or never got their work done. This finding is significant because it pertains to the individual pastor's ability to support the local church school. The survey revealed a need for additional education and training for practicing pastors—an "obvious but often overlooked need for pastoral development." In fact, 70 percent of the pastors indicated that from their own perspective they were not sufficiently trained "to maximize their ministry." I began to realize that Elder Isaac Lester was—not just metaphorically, but also statistically—one of a kind.

Pastor-principal partnership

It all began with our introductory conversation in the school cafeteria one day about our respective operational responsibilities and authorities. Who was responsible for what and in what capacity? Was the pastor to be lead administrator for both the church and the school or was the principal to take the administrative lead of the school? How should we work together? Who would bear responsibilities for the spiritual health of the school, for general programming at the school, and parent-relations connected to the school? Who would take responsibility for its financial viability? Who would speak for the school outside the church context to

the higher organizations of the Adventist Church, the conference and union, and to the local public community?

These and related questions got the conversations started and, to this day, we return to them from time to time, including the focused interview I conducted with Elder Lester for this project. In this article, you will find the culminations of many conversations, the developing crystallizations of some, and even a few remaining questions that have survived our departure from that setting long ago. These findings have come from tested, theoretical answers to specific queries, our trial-and-error discoveries, and the ongoing promptings of the Holy Spirit. These are our lessons learned, the sum of our information cache, our knowledge base, and our wisdom repertoire for pastoral support of Adventist education at the local school/church level.

An ever-present problem

Given that the Adventist Church has operated schools for close to 150 years, it is somewhat strange that this question of the pastor's role in Adventist education is still present in the church worldwide. Perhaps it stems from the continuing and generally emerging role of the local church pastor, with the church school being just one of too many responsibilities. Perhaps it derives from the pastor's overall lack of personal experience with Adventist education that has resulted in diminished understanding of the need for Adventist schools at the local level. Perhaps it may simply be related to the absence of emphasis and clear direction from the church's higher organizations that articulate well-defined goals for other priority ministries such as public evangelism, church planting, and support of foreign missions.

Our approach to the problem

Elder Lester and I began in our context, looking first to Scripture. Our foundation was from God's directions for educating children. First among these directive principles is Deuteronomy 6:4-7: "Hear, O Israel: The

LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children."³

Next we took literally Isaiah's words: "All your children shall be taught by the LORD, and great shall be the peace of your children" (Isa. 54:13). Then we analyzed our situation and found that it resembled one described by Ellen White in an address delivered in the St. Helena Sanitarium (California) chapel, July 14, 1902. She spoke regarding "the necessity of withdrawing our children from the public schools, and of providing suitable places where they can be educated aright." She further said, "I have felt surprised at the apparently indifferent attitude of some, notwithstanding the oft-repeated warnings . . . with reference to their future, eternal interests."⁴ While our church had a long history of providing Adventist education for its children, it now was becoming irrelevant to many members due, we found, to at least three factors: cost, perceptions of lost quality, and a general indifference to the necessity of Adventist education.

We drew principles from the schools of the prophets as one of our models, though we were often challenged to make operational associations to twentieth-century urban education. Nevertheless, we gleaned valuable guidance. One point particularly stood out to us. We were alarmed that many of the children in the congregation lacked a reference point to the Adventist Church, important historical references that church school education would provide. In that regard Ellen White said, "There is a work of sacred importance for ministers and people to do. . . . They are to revive and recount the truths that have come to seem of little value to those who do not know by personal experience."⁵ Then we took the counsel that admonishes our churches to teach the children to be diligent in missionary work and to teach them self-denial and self-sacrifice for the good of others and

the advancement of Christ's cause.⁶ Elder Lester embraced these as personal challenges in his teaching and preaching through his pastoral role in supporting our church school.

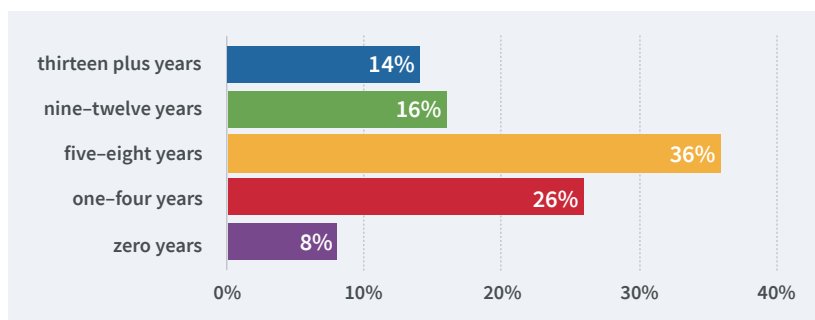
Challenges of the current context

Our approach and experiences in themselves may be of value to some, but we must consider the current context for Adventist education by looking to what little we have in the way of statistics regarding pastors and Seventh-day Adventist education. We shall look at the global pastors survey.

In 2013, the General Conference received a report of findings from research it had commissioned to survey pastors in the nearly 600 local conferences and missions of the world church. The entire population of field pastors of the thirteen divisions of the church comprised the population for the study. The intent of the study was to investigate the pastors' attitudes, practices, and personal feelings in regard to specific ministries and programs of the church. This study included a brief survey sequence on pastors' involvement with church institutions, educational institutions being among them.⁷

Data from this survey segment came from the following question: "Do you personally, as a pastor, work with any of the above institutions such as educational, medical, publishing, etc.?" Pastors were instructed to respond with "yes" or "no" indicating their work with these three types of church institutions. Of the 4,261 pastors surveyed, 1587 (just over 37 percent) reported that they work with educational institutions, and 2672 (63 percent) reported that they do not work with educational institutions.

Another question asked the pastors about their own education. They were asked to indicate the number of years of their education that had been in Adventist schools. Pastors reported that 8 percent of them had no Adventist education while 14 percent had 13 or more years of Adventist education. The largest group, 36 percent, had five to eight years of Adventist education.



The survey found that the ideal pastoral assignment is a district of two or more smaller churches (37 percent), followed by 25 percent for a fairly large church with one pastor, and 17 percent for a larger church with a multi-pastor staff. Only 14 percent made their first choice of a congregation connected with an educational institution or hospital.

Essentials of what schools need from pastors

This study can be understood as a study of a single case pastor-principal partnership in promoting Adventist education. This was brought current through a focused, reflexive interview to verify perceptions and articulate lessons learned as words of wisdom and advice for today's pastors who are seeking guidance.

Local church schools have particular needs for direct and indirect support from their pastor(s). While recognizing the heavy load of responsibilities that weigh on the local church pastor, we found that, in a more ideal world, the essentials of pastoral support for local schools would include that the pastor must:

- be familiar with the general basics of Adventist education, its scriptural foundations, philosophy, goals and objectives, structures, content/curricula, instructional methods, personnel, and so forth;
- be familiar with the particulars of the local church school, with a clear understanding of what should be the topmost priority within the local context;
- be knowledgeable of the church's needs for education, quantitatively and qualitatively;
- work collaboratively with the school principal and openly support the

principal's leadership of the school, including providing guidance if a principal goes astray;

- be willing to promote the school by being visible at the school, interacting appropriately with school personnel, students, and parents in casual encounters, worship, spiritual instruction, baptismal classes, and so forth;
- be active on the local school board or serve as an advisor to the board for governance oversight, including policy development and implementation;
- promote the school through preaching and teaching to educate members on the nature and necessity of Adventist education;
- promote the school by providing time during church services for the school's teachers and students to take part in or lead out in various aspects of the service on regular and special days;
- lead in advocating for the provision of resources for the church school from the local church budget, private donors, and sources at the higher levels of church organization for providing teachers, school facilities, student transportation, and so forth; and
- seek to garner support for the church school when visiting members—those with children and those who have no children.

God's continuing call

The upbringing of the church's children and youth requires the attention and nurture of an entire congregation, and this necessitates the pastor to rally the congregation to that aim. No one

else can do this work to full success. The pastor is the greatest influence in a local congregation or district. To ensure the confidence of the members and pastors, church schools must constantly evaluate themselves to be sure their conduct is aligned with the evangelistic mission of the church. "When properly conducted, church schools will be the means of lifting the standard of truth in the places where they are established."⁸ To this end "the church has a special work to do in educating and training its children."⁹

Classic and contemporary research clearly and consistently provides convincing evidence that educational success for schools and individual students requires significant parental involvement with community support in the schools. Historically, the church's most notable model for supporting Adventist education requires the commitment of the home, school, and church. It is imperative that the pastor, while not taking on the operational details, support this alliance in cooperation with parent leaders and school personnel.

Hindrances to crucial partnerships

Schools need pastoral support in order to engage more families and members of the church community in the schools. Pastors must identify the right individuals and small groups within the local church who have the related knowledge and skills to lead or carry out a variety of efforts. At one time the Adventist Church was to rely heavily on the Home and School Association for significant parent involvement in the schools with support of the church community. Originally, there was to be a Home and School Association in every church where there was a church school or the intent to organize a church school. However, in many locations and over time, there has not been sufficient involvement in and support of the Home and School Association.

Pastors searching for means and methods should call for, and actively support and revive, a Home and School Association in the local church, and use it to recruit as many church

members as possible to partner with the school. Plans and policies for organizing and sustaining a Home and School Association are outlined in the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*. The Seventh-day Adventist Home and School Association is designed to be far more than the typical public school Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). The ultimate goal is to have all church members enlisted to promote Adventist education and, operated properly, the Home and School Association would be a tremendous blessing to our schools, churches, and pastors.


Conclusion

It needs to be said that pastors can realize their full potential for influence on our schools only in partnership with mutually supportive local school principals and teachers. The principal or lead teacher, in particular, can hold up the pastor's arms as the pastor seeks to draw the congregation into a faith commitment to the education


of the church's children and youth. Nevertheless, there must be support from the Adventist Church at levels beyond the local congregation.


Time will tell regarding how the church will respond to meet the pastors' needs and provide more and better in-service education for Adventist pastors worldwide. According to the findings of the study, these developmental opportunities, along with increased and wider fellowship with other church workers, and even greater support from the conference and congregation, will enhance the pastors' ability to engage in the ministries of the local churches, including the local church school. This has profound implications for our colleges, universities, and seminaries.

If Adventist education is to be successful at the local church level, the local church pastor must be committed to Seventh-day Adventist education and actively support and promote it, both in the congregation and in the local church school. For this to happen with

necessary intensity, within the milieu of expectations pastors face on a daily basis, Adventist Church administration must sound the clarion call for Christian education to be as central to the work as evangelism and church membership retention. Until this takes place, dreams of a reorientation in Christian education will remain just that—dreams. 


- 1 S. Joseph Kidder, "The Biblical Role of the Pastor," *Ministry*, April 2009.
- 2 Roger Dudley and Petr Cincala, *The Adventist Pastor: A World Survey* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists ASTR, 2016), 4.
- 3 Except as otherwise stated, all Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version (NKJV).
- 4 *Notebook Leaflets From the Elmhaven Library* (Leaves of Autumn Books, 1985), 1:77. See also Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 3 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1980), 209.
- 5 Manuscript 22, 1890, in *Notebook Leaflets From the Elmhaven Library* (Leaves of Autumn Books, 1985), 2:155.
- 6 See Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948) 6:429.
- 7 Dudley and Cincala.
- 8 Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students Regarding Christian Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1913), 176.
- 9 White, *Testimonies*, 6:193.





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George R. Knight, EdD, is professor emeritus of philosophy and church history at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States.



Ground zero in the great controversy: The struggle for the minds and hearts of the next generation

Hiroshima! Ground zero! I was standing at the spot above which the world's first atomic bomb detonated. Frightful in its consequences. Shattering in its implications. The world was never the same.

- Ground zero is where the action takes place.
- Ground zero is where change happens.
- Ground zero is where the course of world history is shifted in new directions.

Ground zero and education

Ground zero in the great controversy between Christ and Satan is the struggle for the hearts and minds of the next generation. Education is not something that takes place at the edge of human history for the benefit of children and young adults. No! Education stands at the very center of where the future is going. The education of today's young people will shape tomorrow's world.

Hitler understood the strategic importance of education.¹ As a result, one of his early moves was to gain control of the schools because he saw them as shapers of the next generation as he sought to fulfill his mission of world domination, the Nazi millennium. Hitler not only sought to control

education through the schools but also by such avenues as the media and the Hitler Youth movement. He utilized every avenue possible to control and shape the minds of the young because he knew that their minds and hearts would determine his success. In short, Adolf Hitler realized the basic truth that education is ground zero in the great struggle for world dominion. Education for Hitler was not only an "evangelistic" technique to win the hearts and minds of the young but also a tool that prepared leadership for the future of the National Socialist movement. And Hitler was not alone in grasping that fact. Hundreds of miles to the east, Joseph Stalin and the Communist Party followed the same pattern in Russia.

For both Hitler and Stalin, education was central to the accomplishment of their mission. With that truth in mind, secularist George S. Counts has pointed out that "to shape educational policy is to guard the path that leads from the present to the future. . . . Throughout the centuries since special educational agencies were first established, the strategic position of the school has been appreciated by kings, emperors, and popes, by rebels, reformers, and prophets. Hence, among those opposing forces found in all complex societies, a struggle for the control of the school is always evident. Every

group or sect endeavors to pass on to its own children and to the children of others that culture which it happens to esteem; and every privileged class seeks to perpetuate its favored position in society by means of education."²

Likewise, Counts observed that the failure of revolutions has been a record of the failure to bring education into the service of the revolutionary cause. Revolutionary bodies will possess no more permanence than the small bands of idealists who conceived them if the children of the next generation cannot be persuaded to push the revolution to its logical conclusion.³

Jesus knew the significance of that truth. One of the titles central to His ministry was *didaskalos*, which means "teacher" or "master." Instructing His 12 disciples was the focal point of His mission because He knew that without trained leadership, His mission would have no impact on the future. And one of His last commands was for His followers to take His message to all the world. That command should be called the *Great Educational Commission* because at the very heart of that commission was the charge to *teach* all that He had taught.

Martin Luther, too, realized the centrality of education. At the very core of the Reformation was the doctrine of justification by faith as taught in the Bible. But people could not truly

grasp that all-important understanding unless they had a Bible in their own language. So Luther translated both testaments into German. But that would do no good unless people could read. And it was that insight that eventually led to the development of universal public education. In 2017, the 500th anniversary of the Ninety-Five Theses, we need to remember that the great initiator of the Protestant Reformation was primarily an educator. He knew that if the truths of the Reformation were to prosper that its leaders needed to invest in education, especially along two lines: (1) the education of future leaders and (2) the education of the populace in the principles of the Bible.

The Puritans who settled the New England wilderness of North America in the late 1620s and early 1630s grasped that same idea. As a result, by 1636 they had established Harvard to train leaders, and in 1642 and 1647 they had legislation in place for compulsory elementary and

secondary education so that children could be taught Puritan principles.

Similar thoughts led to the development of public education in the young United States. The same can be said regarding the rise of Roman Catholic education. Every movement needs both leaders who understand its principles and a populace in harmony with them.

In the modern world, the struggle to control the minds and hearts of the young is still on the front burner. Thus the United States has been shaken for the past half century by the “culture wars”⁴ regarding what should be taught in the schools. The plain fact is that those who control education have the power to shape the future.

Ellen White had no doubts about that truth. “By a misconception of the true nature and object of education,” she wrote, “many have been led into serious and even fatal errors.”⁵ Again, she wrote, “The necessity of establishing Christian schools is urged upon me very strongly. In the schools of today many things are

taught that are a hindrance rather than a blessing. Schools are needed where the word of God is made the basis of education. Satan is the great enemy of God, and it is his constant aim to lead souls away from their allegiance to the King of heaven. He would have minds so trained that men and women will exert their influence on the side of error and moral corruption, instead of using their talents in the service of God. His object is effectually gained, when, by perverting their ideas of education, he succeeds in enlisting parents and teachers on his side; for a wrong education often starts the mind on the road to infidelity.”⁶

Some do not get it

The idea of the centrality of education in the struggle for the hearts and minds of the next generation seems clear enough. Christ understood it, as did Hitler, Stalin, Luther, the Puritans, Ellen White, the leaders of the American democratic system, and the Roman Catholics.

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But some Seventh-day Adventists have failed to grasp one of the most elementary facts of political and religious history—namely, that education stands at ground zero in the great controversy.

For example, some pastors, and even administrators, have argued that Adventist education “is stealing money from evangelism.” A concerned church member has written that “the pastor of my church has decided that Christian education is irrelevant and not soul winning and therefore our local [Adventist] school should be closed so as not to waste any of the money that he could be putting into his evangelism to win souls. . . . He has even presented a sermon on the evils of not bearing fruit, which is a great sermon topic, except when his whole point was that our academy does not bear any visible fruits and therefore should be closed.”

From that perspective I wonder how our pastor/friend would have evaluated the ministry of Jesus, who worked with His disciples for three years and went to the cross without one of them having

been converted. But the New Testament tells us that they eventually got the point and became mighty evangelists. Jesus had planted seeds that over time sprouted into a worldwide harvest. That is what educators of all types do.

Yet it is one of the sad facts of Adventist history that the denomination had a difficult time supporting Christian education. It would be nearly 20 years before the denomination established its first successful school. That 1872 school became Battle Creek College in 1874, the year that Adventism sent its first official foreign missionary.

The development of the denomination’s first college and the sending of its first missionary in the same year was no accident. The Adventist leadership had come to recognize that it had a duty to preach the three angels’ messages to all the world. And, if it was to do so, it needed an educational system to prepare pastors, editors, translators, and other skilled individuals to work not only in English but also in other languages.

It was mission that led to the establishment of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. And at its best a conscious recognition of mission stands at the very heart of Adventist education.

That truth is further emphasized by developments in the ongoing history of Adventist education. The establishment of a college to train leadership was good in itself, but it only fulfilled half of the educational imperative. The other half was the establishment of an elementary system to guide the hearts and minds of the young in their earliest and most formative years. But that would not take place until the 1890s, 50 years after the Millerite disappointment.

The decade itself is of interest because it was during the 1890s that Adventism truly became a worldwide movement. In 1890, the denomination had only 8 missions with a handful of missionaries, but by 1900 it had 42 missions around the world with nearly 500 missionaries. But that was just the beginning. By 1930 the church was

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The 1890s also witnessed the turning point in Adventist education. The church entered the 1890s with 16 schools, but it exited the decade with 246. And, as with mission, that expansion would continue, with over 600 schools in 1910 and more than 2,000 in 1930.

Once again we see that mission expansion and education go hand in hand. At its very best, Adventist education and Adventist mission partner on at least two levels.

First, as the denomination entered new areas of the world, it realized the need to train leaders. Thus the 1890s saw the establishment of Adventist training schools and colleges in the far corners of the earth.

The second great change in Adventist education during that decade was the development of a worldwide elementary system through the urging of Ellen White, who wrote that there should be an Adventist school established where there were as few as six children.⁷ The elementary system functioned as an evangelistic arm of the church to win the hearts and shape the minds of the young in their formative and most impressionable years.

Shane Anderson highlighted the importance of education when he wrote that “in my experience Adventist education is one of the most effective ways to prepare young people for the second coming of Christ. . . . I believe that our schools—rightly run—are more successful at doing this than any other single evangelistic method, including Revelation seminars, church planting, felt-needs evangelism, or contemporary worship services. Also I believe that Adventist education has been the key to propagating our unique Adventist mission in the world. It has been the medium for shaping our values, finding our spouses, and raising Advent-minded families. Adventist education has even provided a nationwide and, yes, global sense of connectedness and community.”⁸

The most important words in Anderson’s statement are “rightly

run.” Just what is it that Seventh-day Adventist schools are supposed to teach through dedicated Christian teachers who have a firm commitment to the Adventist Church and its mission?

Adventist educational essentials⁹

That question brings us to the three essential goals of Adventist education. The first is to prepare young people to function successfully in this present world. Education for excellence in this life and success in this world is an essential aspect of Adventist education. But if that is all it achieves, it has failed. After all, that is also the function of the public or government schools. And they often do an excellent job in accomplishing that goal.

That thought brings us to the second great goal of Adventist education, which Ellen White hints at in the opening paragraph of her book *Education*. “True education,” she writes, “means more than the pursuit of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man.”¹⁰ In other words, Adventist education is for this earth. But it is more. It is also education for eternity.

That goal comes into sharp focus in *Education*’s first chapter and again in its fourth as Ellen White repeatedly sets forth education as a “work of redemption.” “The teacher’s first effort and his constant aim,” she writes, is to help students come into a saving relationship with Christ.¹¹

With those forceful ideas Ellen White sets forth education as evangelism. And with that fact she places education at the center of the great controversy and views teachers as God’s agents or ministers in the struggle over the hearts, minds, and souls of the coming generation. Adventist education is not at the edge of the church’s mission to the world but, rather, one of its most crucial elements.

But there is a third aspect of the Adventist educational commission—namely, the teaching of its unique

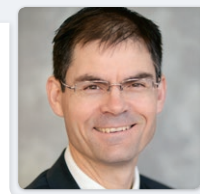
doctrinal package and especially the denomination’s apocalyptic understanding and the implications of that understanding for worldwide mission and the Second Advent.

Adventism’s unique task is to preach God’s end-time apocalyptic message found in Revelation 14:6–12 to all the world. That understanding has led generations of Adventist young people to give their lives in obscure mission fields and has prompted older church members to sacrifice not only the nearness of their children but also their financial means to fulfill the prophetic imperative. It has also placed education at the center of the denomination’s agenda.

In conclusion, it should be noted that Adventist schools are unique institutions that fill a special place in the great end-time controversy between Christ and Satan. As such, they not only prepare students for life in this world, they not only introduce young people to Jesus as Lord and Savior, but they also inspire the coming generation with an understanding of God’s end-time apocalyptic vision with the aim of leading them to dedicate their lives to that vision and the advent of their Lord. ❖

- 1 See George R. Knight, “Adolf Hitler and Ellen White ‘Agree’ on the Purposes of Education,” *Journal of Adventist Education*, 65, no. 1 (2002): 4–11.
- 2 J. Crosby Chapman and George S. Counts, *Principles of Education* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1924), 601, 602.
- 3 George S. Counts, *The Soviet Challenge to America* (New York: John Day, 1931), 66, 67.
- 4 James Davison Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (New York: Basic Books, 1991); Jonathan Zimmerman, *Whose America? Culture Wars in the Public Schools* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 2002).
- 5 Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1913), 49.
- 6 Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing, 1923), 541.
- 7 Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), 6:199.
- 8 Shane Anderson, *How to Kill Adventist Education (and How to Give it a Fighting Chance!)* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 2009), 12.
- 9 For a more complete discussion, see George R. Knight, “Education for What?” *Journal of Adventist Education*, 79, no. 1 (2016): 6–12; George R. Knight, *Educating for Eternity: A Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy of Education* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2016), 63–108.
- 10 Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1903), 13.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 15, 16, 30.

Shane Anderson, DMin, is senior pastor at the New Market Seventh-day Adventist Church, New Market, Virginia, United States.



The gatekeeper: What if pastors could reverse the decline in church school enrollment?

When I graduated with a theology degree in the mid-1990s, I thought being a pastor meant that I would focus my time only on churches, not schools. I could not have been more wrong.

From my first district (which had a K–10 church school) until my present church (which shares a campus with a 120-student elementary school and a 180-student boarding academy), I have been intimately engaged with Adventist education. And, in spite of the profound challenges that such engagement can bring, I have zero regrets. This has been a profound blessing, and today I cannot imagine doing church ministry without also being involved in a school.

That being said, it is no secret that the global Adventist school system currently faces severe challenges. Much hand-wringing has been done, for instance, regarding the seemingly endless decline in enrollment in North America over the last 30 years. And, yes, I have been one of those hand-wringers.

But my fretting usually goes in a different direction than most others I know. They are primarily, and understandably, concerned about stemming the growing cost of education, overcoming various challenges to educational quality, mastering better marketing techniques, and the like. And, naturally, I share some of these concerns, for they are undeniably

important. But my primary concerns are different, for I believe that the greatest challenges facing Adventist education are not methodological but, rather, pertain to missiology (*why* we do what we do in Adventist education) and personnel (*who* we ask to carry out that task and *why*). Space constraints prohibit me from tackling the missiological concerns in this article. But I will say something about personnel—and be forewarned: what I must say has very little to do with teachers or school administrators.

“But how can that be?” you might ask. “Teachers and administrators are the ones primarily responsible for the dearth of students enrolling in Adventist schools, aren’t they?” This is a fascinating question, one that in my experience we often answer with a seemingly irrefutable “Yes!” After all, conventional wisdom says, there will be improved enrollment when teachers teach better and administrators (for instance) market and recruit better.

But it is my contention that while professional competencies for school employees are crucial, they will yield very, very few long-term dividends by themselves. Why? Because such reform efforts, in my experience, almost universally ignore an entire segment of key education personnel: the gatekeepers.

Who are the gatekeepers?

After spending the last eight years speaking publically to or consulting

privately with more than 10,000 teachers, administrators, and pastors in North, Central, and South America, and throughout the Caribbean, I have come to a firm conclusion: Not principals, not administrators, not teachers, but *pastors are the gatekeepers of Adventist education*. Teachers and administrators are and should be the “kings” and “queens” of the Adventist education “castle.” But pastors are the guards standing at the castle gate, determining who gets into the castle—and who does not. And because of this gatekeeper role, it is my contention that pastors’ influence exceeds that of teachers, principals, administrators, educational vice presidents, conference presidents, and university presidents in determining enrollment levels in Adventist schools. In other words, pastors have more influence on the enrollment in—and therefore, the sustainability of—Adventist schools *than any other single position in the church*.¹

Here are five reasons I believe it to be true.

The reasons

First, it should be self-evident that the majority of potential students who ought to most naturally be drawn to Adventist schools can be found in the pews of Adventist churches. (I remember a conference vice president for education in North America who once

remarked that if even half of the eligible students from Adventist churches in North America were to be enrolled in Adventist schools tomorrow, most of the problems in Adventist education would be removed overnight.) This means—and this is absolutely crucial to understand—that most families who are making educational decisions for their children are first being influenced *not* by the school, its teachers, or its administrators. They are instead first being influenced by the congregation, *and, yes, by the pastor*—which leads to a second point.

A second reason that pastors are the gatekeepers of Adventist education is that the pastor is usually considered to be *the* spiritual leader in the local church. That means he or she can have a formidable impact on the entire spectrum of decisions a family might make, including decisions regarding education. The pastor thus has influence on families making educational decisions that can precede, exceed, and even

completely eclipse that of educational professionals (and, in my experience, this remains true whether a church has a constituent relationship with a school or not).

For instance, at my current assignment, we are blessed to have some exceptionally good teachers and administrators. But when it comes time for families to decide where their children are going to go to school next year, my influence nearly always exceeds that of the staff of the school. If a family is unsure as to whether or not they ought to enroll their student in one of our schools and a teacher or the principal comes to visit with them, the family may or may not enroll their children. But if I go to visit with the family and appropriately encourage them to enroll their children, they nearly always will (in fact, in 13 years at my current church, I have done dozens of such visits, and only failed to enroll the child once). I believe this is not because I am some superman leader but, rather, because

this is simply how church life generally works in the world today: Other leaders have influence, but the local pastor usually has an even greater ability to sway opinion.

A third reason that pastors are the gatekeepers of Adventist education is that they are often the church-board chair. This is extremely important for at least one reason: money. Whatever else a church board does, it most certainly allocates money for ministry, including money to assist families in educating their children. Our local church here, for instance, spends between \$125,000 and \$150,000 annually making Adventist education possible for various families in our congregation. That is a substantial amount—and, no, I am not saying that I, as pastor, am solely responsible for that money being allocated in that way. But it is also undeniable that I do play a very substantial role in shaping our budget, as do all pastors who understand their mandated job description correctly. Notice clearly what this means: Not only

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are pastors able to strongly influence whether or not the children in their church choose to go to an Adventist school, they are also able to strongly influence whether or not those children's parents can actually afford to pay for such schooling. And again, in my experience, this influence precedes and even eclipses any that might come from an educational professional.

A fourth reason pastors are the gatekeepers of Adventist education: they have the pulpit. In terms of effectiveness and regularity, no other medium of communication in the local church comes close. Few people will discuss the school newsletter over Sabbath lunch. But the sermon (for good or for ill!) will almost certainly merit such attention. And if a pastor chooses to either denigrate (which is rare) or ignore (which, in my experience, is incredibly common) Adventist education in his or her sermons, chances are very low that families will choose to send their children to Adventist schools. Conversely, if the pastor chooses to actively highlight the supreme virtues of Adventist education during his or her sermons, and to do so on a regular basis, the chances are high that families will choose to send their children to Adventist schools. And, again, note: no teacher, no administrator, nor any other position in the Adventist Church has access to such an influential medium with such regularity.

Fifth, unlike any other leader employed by the Adventist Church, pastors usually have substantial influence in every leg of what has traditionally been called "The Three-legged Stool": that union between the church, the home, and the school. A principal, for instance, may have influence with church members who have students in his or her school. But the pastor will usually have influence not only with those families but also with the rest of the families in the church who do not have any family ties with the school. This phenomenon thus represents a locus of influence that no other leader has, influence that could be used to make a powerful, positive difference in Adventist education.

But what's in it for me?

Many pastors, after hearing me talk about them being the gatekeepers of Adventist education, are understandably cautious. "OK, I get it," they say, in essence. "But I'm incredibly busy already, and I can't imagine taking on the task of advocating for Adventist education." In other words, why should I do this? There are many reasons, but I will share just five.

First, pastors whose churches become active constituents of an Adventist school may end up with more money to do ministry—as well as more members and attendees—than pastors who do not. Larry Blackmer, current vice president of education for the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, tells the story of how, years ago, he did a five-year study of all the Adventist churches in Michigan. He found that during that five-year period, all churches actively supporting an Adventist school had increased in tithe, attendance, and membership. Conversely, all churches that did not actively support an Adventist school declined in tithe, attendance, and membership.

Does this guarantee that your church will prosper if it actively supports a school? No. But Dr. Blackmer's study—as well as the personal experience of dozens of pastors I have met who live outside of Michigan—indicates there is definitely something about supporting Adventist education that can lead to more money, attendees, and members.

Second, pastors who strongly support Adventist education will likely have more disciples in their church than those who do not. Why? Because when done correctly, *Adventist education is discipleship*. Our primary calling as pastors is to make disciples of Christ. In my experience, Adventist education, properly done, helps me to make disciples in ways that are better formulated, more engaging, and more permanent than anything I could ever do on my own. In light of this, Adventist education can actually save time for pastors who support schools, for they do not carry the discipleship burden by themselves.

Third, done correctly, a strong Adventist education program for your members' children can enable those children to do at least two things. First, they can avoid the dangers of a secular or non-Adventist education (dangers that are substantial: evolutionary theory, the diminution of the Sabbath, moral relativism, etc.). Second, those students are much more likely to learn to become Adventist missionaries for Christ—and what pastor would not want more such people in his or her church?

Fourth, a strong connection to an Adventist school can help your church become what might be called a "life center"—that is, a place where Adventists and potential Adventists of *all ages* gather for fellowship, study, evangelism, encouragement, friendship making, et cetera. This dynamic occurs because an Adventist school brings an element of cross-generational ministry to a local church that is very difficult to otherwise achieve. I have seen this happen repeatedly in my own church, as well as in a multitude of others, and it brings incredible energy to the life of the church!

Fifth, most pastors realize that churches with high morale tend to bring in not only more money but also generate more willing volunteers than churches with low morale. So note the cycle: Good schools often make for happy churches; happy churches naturally are more attractive to new members; new members mean more ministry, more money, more volunteer hours, et cetera. I have seen this cycle happen over and over in my own and countless other churches that support Adventist schools.

OK, I am convinced. Now what?

What should a pastor do who takes his or her gatekeeper role seriously?

First, *regularly and passionately give your members strong, biblical, and compelling reasons to be Seventh-day Adventist Christians*. If members have such reasons to belong to the Adventist Church, they will almost certainly have reasons to send their children to Adventist schools as well.

Money—including money to pay for big Adventist school tuition bills—follows vision but rarely precedes it. Convince your members of the Adventist vision, and the case for Adventist education will be abundantly easier to make.

Second, *preach regularly and without reservation about the necessity of Adventist education.* I believe Adventist education was divinely ordained. I, thus, do not preach about Adventist schools as though they are optional but, rather, as being essential to the development of—and, in many cases, even the salvation of—our children. I do not equivocate on this point. Instead, I appropriately, passionately, and clearly preach of the necessity of children attending Adventist schools. This is part of the reason why for more than a decade at my church, we have never dipped below 92 percent of our eligible students attending Adventist schools.

Third, *visit personally with families who have children eligible for Adventist schools.* This is not a substitute for teachers visiting prospective families. But with your influence, you can sway families that are on the fence teachers sometimes cannot.

Fourth, *get to know the school—its students, teachers, needs, etc.—and become its number one advocate.* This advocacy takes place in public discourse, private conversations, on the school board, on the church board, when working with conference officials, when talking to parents, and so on. Will this take some time in your schedule? Yes. But such advocacy generally pays off more handsomely than it ever costs in that it can yield more money, more volunteers, greater church member enthusiasm, higher membership, increased attendance, higher morale, and, ultimately, vastly improved missional effectiveness. (Perhaps those

who say Adventist education is “too expensive” have not tried to live without it!)

A profound blessing

It has been a profound blessing for me to partner with Adventist schools throughout my ministry. How about you, Pastor? Are you currently supporting an Adventist school? If so, use your influence to fill it with students. Is there no Adventist school nearby? Find the nearest one, no matter how far, and adopt this school. Make it your church’s special mission outreach. After all, you are the gatekeeper of Adventist education—one of the most influential and effective discipleship methods ever devised—and there is a line of people at the gate waiting for you to invite them in. ¹

1 For an expanded video presentation by the author on the pastor’s role as gatekeeper, see <https://vimeo.com/181066120>.

5 ways to encourage youth in Total Member Involvement

1. Encourage youth to develop a personal relationship with Jesus through daily time in the Word, time in prayer, and through active witnessing and evangelism. Show them by example what true faith, authentic Christianity, and discipleship look like. Encourage them to seek higher ideals for God’s honor and glory.

2. Encourage youth to be creative as they seek to follow biblical principles by finding ways to be part of Total Member Involvement. Ellen White writes, “Never, never feel the slightest disturbance because the Lord is raising up youth to lift and carry the heavier burdens and proclaim the message of truth.” Remember, youth are not inhibited by the same limitations that we often are as adults. Because of this, they dream big, pray big, and plan big!

3. While we mentor our young people, do not try to control them too tightly or hold them back from moving forward with producing good biblical fruit (Matt. 7:17, Phil. 4:8). As we get closer to the end of time, God will use simple means, which we do not expect, to accomplish His great purposes. Let us not discourage our youth as they seek to do great things for God.

4. Look for active ways to encourage youth in their many different endeavors to be involved and lead out. Get them involved in making decisions, leading out in evangelism and preaching, and rallying the support of their fellow youth in sharing the gospel. Ellen White tells us, “Make [the youth] feel that they are expected to do something. The Lord chooses them because they are strong.” We

underestimate what godly young people can accomplish for God’s glory.

5. Finally, pray with youth and encourage them to pray for one another and their churches. Ask them to pray that those who have left the church can be reclaimed, unbelievers would find the truth, and the proclamation of the three angels’ messages can go forward, opening the way for the outpouring of the latter rain. “With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world!” Let’s get ready! Jesus is coming soon! ¹

—Ted N. C. Wilson, PhD, is the president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

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**JEROME THAYER, ANNERIS CORIA-NAVIA,
AIMEE LEUKERT, ELISSA KIDO,
AND LARRY BLACKMER**

Jerome Thayer, PhD, serves as director of the Center for Statistical Services at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States.

Anneris Coria-Navia, EdD, serves as director of the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence and an associate professor of curriculum and instruction at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States.

Aimee Leukert, PhD, serves as assistant director of the Center for Research on K-12 Adventist Education at La Sierra University, Riverside, California, United States.

Elissa Kido, EdD, serves as director of the Center for Research on K-12 Adventist Education and a professor of education at La Sierra University, Riverside, California, United States.

Larry Blackmer, EdD, serves as vice president for education for the North American Division, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.



Strengthening Adventist education— Recommendations for pastors and officers

Taking one's place behind a pulpit is a heavy responsibility. Much prayer, study, and preparation goes into the task of sharing God's Word with a congregation. Regardless of whether this is in a simple, white clapboard church with a dozen members or in a stained-glass, vaulted-ceiling, high-reaching-steeple church in front of thousands, the goal is the same: sharing Jesus with the congregation. It is a formidable job—and one often fraught with obstacles and challenges.

But there is a whole cadre of troops who also have this mission, an army of thousands of individuals who have dedicated their lives to spreading the gospel to their "congregations." They, too, have a pulpit and stand before listeners of varying abilities and demographics and groups of varying sizes. But whereas the church contains the pulpit for pastors as they minister to their parishioners, the classroom contains the pulpit for teachers as they minister to their students. The 4,000, or more, teachers in the North American Division (NAD)

Adventist K-12 educational system, let alone the thousands around the world, are co-laborers with pastors in a common mission. The works of pastors and teachers complement and strengthen each other. In the truest sense, they are a ministry team.

NADET

The recent decline in enrollment in Adventist schools across North America should be of grave concern to both educators and pastors. These two ministries are so closely aligned that the thriving, or faltering, of one will, inevitably, affect the other.

NAD leaders have been concerned about this issue for some time, as they witness schools closing and enrollment numbers dwindling. Thus, in May 2014, the NAD Administrative Summit appointed an NAD Education Task Force (NADET), chaired by Elissa Kido from La Sierra University, with Larry Blackmer, NAD vice president for education, as secretary. Their job was to critically assess the current state of Adventist

education in the NAD and, based on that analysis, make recommendations to strengthen the educational system.

In early 2015, two Andrews University professors, Anneris Coria-Navia and Jerome Thayer, began a research project, called "Strengthening Adventist Education" (SAE), with NAD support to study the same issues. They collected data from 27 interviews (about half with educators and half with non-educators), 16 focus groups (with 184 educators and 108 conference and union officers), and online surveys (95 educators and 52 officers).

The NADET—with their team of 19 educators, lay persons, and administrative officers—worked for almost two years, discussing the myriad of factors affecting Adventist education, drawing perspectives from a think tank comprised of over 40 individuals both in and out of education and working in subcommittees to further focus on specific issues.

Both groups functioned independently and came up with many

recommendations for strengthening Adventist education, which, upon closer analysis, revealed many similar findings. The NADET presented their full report at the NAD Year-End Meeting in October 2016. All recommendations in the report were discussed and approved by a strong majority of the attendees.

As stakeholders in Adventist education, we believe that this journal's readership should not only be informed about these recommendations but also be equally inspired and concerned by the findings. The recommendations shed great insight on the current state of Adventist schools and make clear suggestions as to the direction the NAD needs to take, in order to build a stronger educational system. Many of the recommendations from the two studies are equally relevant to educators, pastors, and officers; others are primarily relevant to educators. A companion article to this one, with recommendations for educators, is being concurrently published in the *Journal of Adventist Education*.¹

There are three reasons why the recommendations in the next four sections of this article need to be seriously addressed: (1) they were approved by a strong majority of the attendees at the 2016 NAD Year-End Meeting comprising mostly of pastors and church administrators; (2) they were the result of a two-year NAD-appointed task force (NADET); and (3) they were supported by a majority of almost 300 church officers and educators at division-wide focus groups in the SAE study. The full 63-page NADET report can be obtained from the Center for Research on K-12 Adventist Education at La Sierra University, and the full 77-page SAE report can be obtained online.²

This article reports the issues identified by the members of the task force and SAE focus groups but does not attempt to suggest how the recommendations should be implemented. Identifying appropriate strategies for implementation of each recommendation will require further study by pastor and officer groups at the conference, union, and/or division levels.

Many of these recommendations are not a surprise—many might even be considered to be common knowledge. However, the members of the task force and focus groups felt that they had not been addressed satisfactorily and still need attention.

Importance and mission of Adventist education

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was founded on firm biblical principles, an unwavering belief in the Second Coming, and the all-encompassing saving grace of Jesus. These tenets directed the formation of the Adventist educational system, as early church members built schools that would academically educate and spiritually nurture their children. The desire for quality education met with the conviction to share Adventist beliefs and, in that intersection, Adventist education was born.

As time has passed, however, there has been a noted change among members as to the identity and perception of the Adventist Church, which has led to a distinctly different perspective on the place and necessity of the Adventist educational system. Adventist education should be rich with strong academics, yet there are also ingredients unique to successful Adventist schools that demand focus. These elements are centered in religion/spirituality, “service and caring,” as well as the extent to which the constituency values an Adventist education.³

Recommendations

We recommend that a comprehensive plan be developed to increase denominational loyalty and stewardship, specifically as it relates to the importance and mission of Adventist education.

Attention needs to be given to attitudes and values of church members, educators, pastors, and officers as they relate to the Seventh-day Adventist denomination in general and Adventist education in particular.

At every level (local church to General Conference) there needs to be a renewed focus on the value

of belonging to and supporting the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Without denominational loyalty, parents are less likely to support Adventist education.

Because many members and pastors have not attended Seventh-day Adventist schools, there needs to be increased focus on the importance of Adventist education to the mission of the church. Members who become Adventists as adults, and have not attended Adventist schools, are unlikely to understand the value of Adventist education unless effort is made to instruct them in this area. This becomes particularly important for pastors who joined the church as adults and did not attend Adventist schools.

As members see the importance of Adventist education, and its centrality to the mission of the church, there needs to be increased focus on the importance of all members financially supporting Adventist schools, whether they have a child in an Adventist school or not. It is also important for *all* churches to financially support the Adventist education system (whether they have a local Adventist school or not).

A healthy church-school relationship can exist only if the teachers and principal of the Adventist school realize the value and importance of involvement in the local Adventist church, and if the pastor realizes the value and importance of being involved in the local Adventist school. The teachers, principal, and pastor need to value each other's contribution and work together as partners in their ministry to the children of the church.

When these leaders make personnel decisions for persons who will be responsible for the education of our children (including teachers, principals, pastors, and conference officials), those whom they are considering must have a firm commitment to the church and Adventist education and be able to articulate the unique mission of both.

Collaboration between pastors and educators

It is common for evangelistic ministries (pastors) and educational

ministries (teachers) to function somewhat independently. Since both ministries are crucial to the development of children, collaboration between these two types of ministries will facilitate the success of mutually held ministry objectives. Support from church pastors, the conference office, and members of the constituency comprise three of the thirteen prioritized “ingredients” that contribute most to school success among Adventist

responsibilities for educational and noneducational officers at the conference, union, and division levels and principals, teachers, and pastors at the local level. How could teachers work with pastors in the church, and how could pastors work with the teachers in the school? Barriers that make cooperation between pastors and educators difficult need to be eliminated. At the conference level, there should be a yearly pastor-teacher meeting,

common reason given by parents for not enrolling their children in Adventist schools.⁸ Yet, the challenge surrounding affordability expands beyond the difficulties parents face in paying tuition.

The pricing model for Adventist education must be brought into focus and properly examined in its given contexts. Mainda highlights the need for a pricing restructure, in light of heightened vulnerability to enrollment decline due to price insensitivity.⁹ Rick

While the quality of education is a significant factor in a family's choice of a school for their child, the purpose and mission of a school is equally important.

institutions.⁴ In a study exploring the qualities of exceptional partnerships between pastor and school, results demonstrated that such partnerships yield varied streams of financial support, a meaningful presence among students and faculty, spiritual support and accountability, and church-based promotion of the school, including access to regular participation in services.⁵ Each of these aspects represents elements that favorably promote enrollment success.

Recommendations

We recommend a comprehensive, system-wide plan that specifically fosters conditions in which pastors and educators can collaborate effectively for the spiritual nurture of children and their families connected to the church and/or school. This plan will require more communication between evangelistic ministries (pastors) and educational ministries (teachers) and greater intentionality. It would include

or retreat, where the two groups meet and plan together. Officers should periodically assess each pastor-teacher ministry team. The university/seminary training of teachers and pastors should incorporate strategies of how to work together. This might include having prospective teachers and pastors meet together in a common class.

Finances

The matter of cost and affordability is a recurring theme in the literature. Studies show that the cost of tuition is a factor of concern for parents, contributing to the decline of enrollment in NAD K–12 schools.⁶ Philip Mainda found that parents, regardless of school choice for or against Adventist education, have indicated that the cost of tuition is unaffordable, requiring financial sacrifice and/or financial aid. In the absence of either or both of these, parents are more inclined to select public education.⁷ In a study by Dennis Marshall, high tuition cost was the most

Newberry raises this issue among factors that impact enrollment at private schools. He contends that an examination of “pricing strategy in light of future sustainability” is essential.¹⁰ Strategic planning needs to address financial viability, ensuring affordability, accessibility, and quality in Seventh-day Adventist schools, taking into consideration tuition and other streams of financial support.

Financing Adventist education is the responsibility of the whole church, it is a practical expression of both stewardship and evangelism. To deal with increasingly higher tuition, lower average income levels, and societal changes, Adventist education needs a new financial model, more financial accountability, and strategic planning.

Recommendation

We recommend that the problem of low enrollment can be addressed only if there is less reliance on tuition and more reliance on other sources of revenue. In

particular, we recommend that more of the financial burden should be shifted from parents of children in Adventist schools to *all* members in *all* churches.

To deal with the expense side of the financial situation, we recommend increased accountability by requiring schools to adopt and implement a financial dashboard, use a standard accounting/financial reporting system, require yearly assessment of school sustainability and viability, and include financial accountability in the accreditation evaluation process.

We recommend the development of a comprehensive plan for strategic placement of boarding academies to address whether academies should be consolidated or closed.

Marketing and public relations

Studies suggest that parental perceptions carry the most weight toward “overcoming” financial and other barriers that typically challenge school choice.¹¹ Indeed, those who send their children to Adventist schools must have both the “money *and* the desire” to do so.¹² Beyond this, parental satisfaction is a key contributor to retention.¹³

Therefore, more attention and support needs to be allocated to marketing and public relations for Adventist education. There needs to be a shift to include both “quality” and “purpose” in the content of marketing materials. While the quality of education is a significant factor in a family’s choice of a school for their child, the purpose and mission of a school is equally important. While the main responsibility for marketing and public relations lies with educators, the pastors and officers also have a significant role to play.

Recommendations

We recommend that each school have a comprehensive marketing and public relations plan. This plan would include cooperation between teachers, the principal, and the pastor as they work in an intentional way to both convey important, accurate, and timely information to parents and constituents

and receive helpful feedback from them. Since most educators and pastors are not trained in marketing and public relations, the conference, union, and/or division should provide this expertise. Each school should compile relevant data that can be used to communicate the quality of the school to parents and constituents. Teachers and pastors should clearly communicate the value and uniqueness of Adventist education.

Conclusion


There are a number of issues that need to be addressed by educators, pastors, and officers in order to strengthen Adventist education. The list is daunting, and the task monumental, but the alternative—the continued decline of enrollment—is unacceptable.

The strong approval of the NADET recommendations at the NAD Year-End Meeting, as well as the administrative support given to the SAE study, provided an excellent first step in effecting change in the educational system. However, it will take a commitment and investment from all stakeholders to ensure continued progress in Adventist education.

While there are areas that can be tended to only by educational leadership within our church, many recommendations rest well within the jurisdiction of pastors and officers. These recommendations call for both teachers and pastors to put in extra effort to collaborate, as ministry teams, and for leadership at the division, union, and conference levels to make necessary changes in the system to more fully support Adventist schools. Our studies plainly show that for the Adventist educational system to thrive, the combined effort of educators, pastors, and officers is needed.

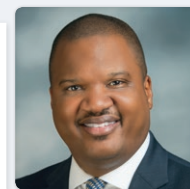
Adventist schools have a unique role to play in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its future. They have the opportunity to provide children with a quality education alongside lessons and modeling in how to develop a deep relationship with their Savior. However, our schools can reach their

full potential and make the biggest impact only when they do so in collaboration with the local church.

Two pulpits, one mission. 

- 1 See Jerome Thayer et al., “Strengthening Adventist Education in the North American Division—Recommendations for Educators,” *The Journal of Adventist Education* 79, no. 2 (2017): 32–37.
- 2 Anneris Coria-Navia and Jerome Thayer, “Strengthening Adventist Education,” NAD research report (2016), retrieved from <http://circle.adventist.org/browse/resource.phtml?leaf=27873>.
- 3 See Richard C. Osborn, “Ingredients of the Most Successful Schools in the North American Division,” *The Journal of Adventist Education* 68, no. 1 (2005): 4–9; Berit von Pohle, (2013), “Constituents’ Perceptions in Northern California Conference: Determining What Aspects of Seventh-day Adventist Education Are Important” (doctoral dissertation, La Sierra University, 2013).
- 4 See Osborn for more details.
- 5 Bill Keresoma, “Pastors and Schools—A Dream Team,” *The Journal of Adventist Education* 71, no. 2 (2008–2009): 27–32.
- 6 For more information, see Gustavo Gregorutti, “Trends Influencing in Adventist K-12 Schools: A Review of the Literature,” *The Journal of Adventist Education* 70, no. 2 (2007–2008): 10–17; Dennis E. Marshall, “An Investigation Into the Issue of Low Enrollment in Adventist Schools in Canada and How It Is Being Addressed,” Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada (November 2008), retrieved from http://catnet.adventist.ca/files/resources/res_41.pdf; Humberto M. Rasi, “Adventist Education in the 21st Century: Eight Significant Trends,” *The Journal of Adventist Education* 72, no. 5 (Summer 2010): 6–9.
- 7 Philip Omenge Mainda, “Selected Factors Influencing School Choice Among the Seventh-day Adventist Population in Southwest Michigan,” *Journal of Research on Christian Education* 11, no. 2 (Fall 2002): 185–218.
- 8 Marshall.
- 9 Mainda.
- 10 Rick Newberry, “Nine Factors That Affect School Enrollment Growth” (2012), retrieved from <http://www.enrollmentcatalyst.com/2012/03/21/nine-factors-that-affect-school-enrollment-growth/>.
- 11 For more information, see Gustavo Gregorutti, “Factors Influencing Enrollment in Adventist K-12 Schools: A Review of the Literature,” (2007), retrieved from <http://circle.adventist.org/download/FactorsInfluencingK12Enrollment.pdf>; Olivia Dianne Beverly, “An Assessment of Factors Influencing Student Enrollment Within the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-Day Adventist Secondary Schools” (doctoral dissertation, Wayne State University, 2010), retrieved from http://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/oa_dissertations/137/.
- 12 See Loren Seibold, “Why Adventist K-12 Education Struggles,” *Spectrum* (January 2009), retrieved from <http://spectrummagazine.org/node/1326>; Gene Edelmach, “Helping the Impossible Become Possible: Removing the Financial Barriers to Enrollment,” *The Journal of Adventist Education* 64, no. 1 (2001): 14–17.
- 13 Newberry.

Carlton P. Byrd, DMin, is speaker/director of Breath of Life television ministries and senior pastor, Oakwood University Church, Huntsville, Alabama, United States.



Give them a fighting chance¹

Our church cannot be immune to new ideas, new goals, and new plans. We talk about these new ideas, goals, and plans through mission and vision. When God gives a vision for ministry, you know it is of God because the vision outlives you.

Christian education is a God-given vision. A God-given vision does not die with you; neither does it rest on your wallet or pocketbook. I have never had a vision for ministry that I could afford. If I could afford it, then I would say, “I did it.” So God makes sure I cannot afford it, and you cannot afford it; so when God does it, we can say, “God did it!” If it’s God’s will, then it’s God’s bill. If it’s God’s choice, then it’s God’s invoice. That is Christian education.

Our world is stricken with many societal ills that are plaguing our young people. When we talk about ministry and the gospel message to boys and girls, and our young people, we can’t help but think of Adventist Christian education. The servant of the Lord says, “In the highest sense the work of education and the work of redemption are one, for in education, as in redemption, ‘other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.’ 1 Corinthians 3:11.”²

A hospital, not a hospice

Yet the interest and support for Christian education is waning.³ We

must do something about it. Our vision for ministry, our methods, our manner, our action plans for the future of this church must center on effectively reaching our children, youth, and young adults. If not, we die.

The church is a hospital; it is not a hospice. A hospice tries to make you comfortable before you die; a hospital tries to make you well so that you do not die. We have got to make ministry to our children, youth, and young adults a priority, because we are not here to make the church a comfortable place to die. This is not to displace our senior adults or anybody else. Young people stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before them. But this is to acknowledge the need to intentionally reach our youth; because Satan is trying to destroy them.

What do I mean?

In the first instance, young people today are exposed earlier than ever to illegal drugs. Based on a 2007 survey by the Centers for Disease Control, 45 percent of high school students nationwide drank alcohol and 19.7 percent smoked pot during a one-month period. According to the same survey, nearly 50 percent of all young people between the ages of 12 and 17 said it would be “fairly easy” or “very easy” to get marijuana. One in five said it would be easy to get cocaine, and one in ten said it would be easy to get heroin. It’s not just happening in the world, it’s also happening in the church. Whatever you are looking for,

you will find it—and even at a Christian school.⁴

Beliefs

In a study conducted by the Barna Group for the Adventist Church in 2013, 17 percent of all Adventist young adults between the ages of 18 and 29 feel it is OK to use illegal drugs, 26 percent think it is OK to engage in premarital sex, 44 percent feel that it is OK to drink alcoholic beverages, and 50 percent do not feel modesty is important.⁵

Millennials—persons who have reached adulthood in the twenty-first century—make up 26 percent of the United States’ population but only 14 percent of the Adventist population in the United States. The average age of a United States’ resident is 35, while the average age of an Adventist in the United States is 61. We desperately need our young people.

In the last eight years, 33 percent of our Seventh-day Adventist members in the North American Division have left the church. Of those who have left, 63 percent were young adults, and we are sitting around debating about music and arguing about drums, women in ministry, and what time the young people get to church. I’m just praising God that they’re singing about God *in* church.

Suffer the little children

Some people say, “It’s the shaking time. This is what’s going to happen right before the Lord comes. The youth are going to leave the church. Let’s just

give up.” No, we can’t give up. We have to fight for our kids. Fight for our young people. Fight for our young adults. Give them a fighting chance.

These are our children. These are our grandchildren. Yes, their music is loud. Yes, their hair is red, yellow, black, and white. Yes, their dresses are sometimes too short. Yes, they have hats on in church when they need to take them off. But we are not going to give up on them. We’ve got to fight for them. Our children are a heritage from the Lord. The devil cannot, will not, shall not, have our young people. Jesus

old enough to be lost, then they’re old enough to be saved.”

In the second instance, the passage says, “And they brought young children to Him, *that He should touch them*” (v. 13, KJ21; emphasis supplied). The people wanted Jesus to touch and bless the children. But the passage continues, “And His disciples rebuked those that brought them.” The disciples, Christ’s followers, Christ’s ambassadors, church people, thought that Jesus should be focused on the adults and not give so much attention to the children. The disciples were

give money to the church. You don’t contribute to the church.” “You’re a liability, not an asset. You’re an expense, not a source of revenue, you should be seen and not heard.”

Without realizing it, we are keeping our young people away from Jesus. The children are not able to get to the house of God; the youth and young adults don’t want to get there. The world is full of enough hindrances for our children—drugs, alcohol, sexual perversions, violence, bad influences, and peer pressure—to keep them out. Let’s not help the world. Give our

*Our children are a heritage from the Lord.
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said in Mark 10:14, “ ‘Don’t push these children away. Don’t ever get between them and me. These children are at the very center of life in the kingdom. . . . Unless you accept God’s kingdom in the simplicity of a child, you’ll never get in’ ” (*The Message*).

In the first instance, the passage says, “And they brought young children to Him” (v. 13, KJ21). God is calling us to be sensitive to the spiritual welfare of all children, not just our own. All of our children need Christian education. And we are not pushing them off on to something that’s inferior. The research is clear: “In all grades, in schools of all sizes, students in Adventist schools outperformed the national average in all subjects.”⁶ Some parents prefer to wait until their children are old enough to decide for themselves about spiritual things, yet they don’t let them wait until they are old enough to decide for themselves if they should go to school, go to the doctor, or clean their room. One pastor states, “If they’re

trying to keep the children away from Jesus. Sometimes, without realizing it, we keep the children away from Jesus. They can’t drive to Sabbath School. They can’t drive to Adventist Youth Ministries. They can’t drive to choir rehearsal. They can’t drive to Pathfinders or Adventurers. And they can’t drive to our schools.

We say, “I’m too tired. Nothing’s really going on over there. You don’t have to go.”

What we do not realize is that we are keeping them away from Jesus. Because if they can’t get to God’s house, how are they going to know about Jesus? But not just the children; we are keeping the youth and young adults away from Jesus, too, and we don’t even realize it.

We say, “You can sing only one style of music.” “You can’t clap in here.” “You can’t usher.” “You can’t serve on the pulpit.” “We’ve been doing it this way for years, and we’re going to keep doing it this way.” “You don’t

children, our youth, and our young adults a fighting chance.

Age of decision

When we invest in our children, we are investing in the kingdom. Not only that, what we invest in our children we are investing in the kingdom of God. Eighty-three percent of those who come to know the Lord do so before the age of 18. In fact, 2 out of every 3 solid Christians make the decision for Christ between the ages of 13 and 19. If the Lord delays His coming, where will this church be in 20 years if we don’t invest in our young people today? We invest in houses that get eaten by termites, burned down, or blown away in a tornado or hurricane. We invest in cars that rust, break down, and get crushed for scrap metal. We invest in clothes that go out of style, get too small, or get too big. But what we invest in our children, young people, and young adults will count for eternity.

This church was started by young people, and the servant of the Lord says it will be finished by young people. “With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world!”¹ Serving the Lord isn’t just for the older folks. Serving the Lord is for young folks too. Jesus put the disciples in their place: *beneath* the children. He stated, “Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein” (Mark 10:15, KJV).

Christian education and ministry to youth cannot be taken lightly. We are losing our youth to the many false religions of drugs, alcohol, gangs, sexuality, homosexuality, and the lifestyles of this world. Old forms of teaching no longer have an effect on our young people. The way you found Jesus may not be the way a young person finds Jesus. The way your mother came in may not be the way you came in. The way you came in may not be the way your child comes in. You cannot do eight-track ministry in an Internet-downloaded society. We’re up there preaching and talking, and they sit in the pews and distract themselves on their phones, on the Internet, on Twitter, because they either find the message boring or of no interest. Don’t misunderstand: there is nothing wrong with our message, the message remains the same, but the methods must be different.

People are tired of revelation without relevance. They are tired of seeing the emphasis of policy placed over the needs of people. They are getting tired of being unable to come to a church where they cannot share their burdens and problems simply because they are afraid of what others might say if they come clean. People want real, authentic, life-changing, soul-saving, scratching-where-the-people-itch ministry.

Messages to young people

Young people often say, “I’m not going to church because those people

don’t understand and they’re not trying to understand.” Tradition always puts the institution higher in importance than the individual. Tradition puts religion above relationship, the law before love, and the commandments before Christ; when, in reality, we are to keep the commandments because of Christ.

Jesus died for people: young, old, all people. So the passage closes by saying, “And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them” (Mark 10:16, KJ21). Jesus blessed them. He blessed the children. He blessed the young people.

Now the first part of this message was primarily for the young at heart. But the final part of this message is for the young. Young people, God wants to put His hands on you and bless you. Catholic film writer Martin Doblmeier said that Adventist education is superior; he made a movie about it.² But young people want a taste of the church and a taste of the world. You can’t have God’s hands on you and Satan’s hands on you at the same time. You can’t be in church on Saturday morning and then be in the club on Saturday night. You can’t have a Bible in your hand during the worship and then have a marijuana joint in your hand during the week. You can’t take pictures in the lobby after church and post them on Instagram for your friends to see and then take pictures in your bathroom at night and post them on Snapchat when you think only one person will see.

Young people, check your behavior and your appearance. Young men, you can’t praise God in church and curse people in the week. Young ladies, you can’t dress holy and saintly in church and then dress loose and light during the week. Don’t follow the world’s standards. “Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.” Trust God. Satan is no match for Jesus.

When on this earth, Satan threw his best shots at Jesus and never could win. He threw disease at Jesus, but Jesus said, “By My stripes ye are healed.” He threw temptation at

Jesus, but Jesus said, “Not My will but my Father’s will be done.” He threw fame at Jesus, but Jesus said, “You will worship God alone.” He threw the depressed and hopeless and the addicted at Jesus, but Jesus said, “You are whole.” He threw hatred at Jesus, but Jesus said, “Father, forgive them.”

He threw storms at Jesus, but Jesus said, “Peace be still.” He threw death at Jesus, but Jesus said, “Lazarus, come forth.” What a mighty God we serve.

Whatever Satan may have, Jesus has more. He has given us the home, the church—and the school. Do not let anything keep our children, youth, or young adults away from Christian education. Whatever the obstacle or objection, Jesus is the overcomer. Nehemiah said, “ ‘Don’t be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your families, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes’ ” (Neh. 4:14, NIV).

Older folk, give our young people a fighting chance. Young folk, don’t give up, don’t give in. Hang on in there. Give yourselves a fighting chance. 🏆

1 This article is adapted from a sermon preached at Oakwood University Church, based on Mark 10:13–16, KJV.

2 Ellen G. White, *Counsels for the Church* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1991), 202.

3 John Wesley Taylor V, “What Is the Special Character of an Adventist College or University?” *Journal of Adventist Education*, January–March, 2017, <https://jae.adventist.org/en/2017.2.5>.

4 Gary Hopkins, “Christian Education and High-Risk Behaviors,” *Adventist Review*, July 27, 2006, <http://archives.adventistreview.org/article/640/archives/issue-2006-1521/christian-education-and-high-risk-behaviors>.

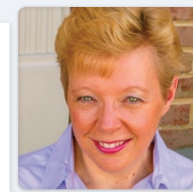
5 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists/Barna Group, “Seventh-day Adventist Church Young Adult Study,” 2013, <http://www.youngadultlife.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Barna-SDA-Millennials-Report-final.pdf>.

6 “The Cognitive Genesis Study,” http://adventisteducation.org/assessment/cognitive_genesis/numbers.

7 Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1952), 271.

8 Martin Doblmeier, *The Blueprint: The Story of Adventist Education* (2013). See Journey Films, “Blueprint Intro,” video, 1:59, accessed May 5, 2017, <https://vimeo.com/75863840>.

Pamela Consuegra, PhD, is associate family ministries director for the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.



We is more powerful than I¹

Take one sheet of paper from the envelope on your tables and one pair of scissors, one each for every two people. Work with a partner at your table. Pretend that paper is the problem you face. Your challenge is to cut a hole in that one piece of paper that is large enough for the two of you to walk through.”

I give this sample exercise to pastors and teachers. I have conducted numerous full-day interactive workshops where pastors and teachers sit in small teams around a table planning, dreaming, and working together on mission. Our challenge in Christian education is to cut a hole large enough, to have a passion deep enough, and to make a path wide enough for pastors and teachers to walk through together. I have received numerous testimonies from pastors, teachers, and conference administrators about how this day gave them a new appreciation of each other’s ministry and provided them a new opportunity to explore ways to enhance both of their missional goals.

Organizations do not exist in isolation. Rather, they are embedded in a wide variety of social networks that provide opportunities to achieve their goals. Churches, schools, and the constituents they serve also exist within a community—a social network. If we follow the logic that an organization’s success is contingent upon how they put their resources to work, then we can conclude that it is important

to understand how to capitalize on existing relationships. These available relationships are an asset to an organization, and it is only as we utilize these relationships in collaborative ways that the benefits will be fully realized.

Specifically, how can we, as an organization, maximize the potential for Adventist churches and schools to partner in ministry?

Schools and churches

Teachers: “How can you intentionally connect the church to your school for those who may tour your facility and for non-Adventist parents?” I ask pastors: “How can you intentionally connect the school to your church for visitors, Bible study interests, and new as well as old members?”

It is easy to forget our interdependence upon each other and set out alone to pursue our organizational mission. Many churches and schools function within comfortable “boxes” without regard to the opportunities within arms reach. However, even in those times when there is an admission of the need to develop inter-organizational connections, there is an accompanying challenge in knowing how to forge those links in a sustainable fashion. All too often, we see two buildings with two different ministries and two disconnected missions.

Adventist schools and churches are embedded within a system that provides them with rich opportunities to achieve their missional goals. The

Seventh-day Adventist Church and school are referred to as a system; yet research reveals that these two parallel organizations often function in isolation to each other and fail in utilizing available relationships in the attainment of their missional goals.² A collaborative relationship between the two ministry leaders, Adventist pastor and teacher, would enhance the missional goals of both the church and the school.³

Sahlin strongly argued for the need to collaborate as a team in furthering the goals of both the church and the school. He says that this sense of connectedness is missing and many Adventist schools are operating at arm’s length from the church.⁴ Patterson summed up the problem in this manner: “Consequently, two parallel organizational systems—the church and the school—function at the local level with minimal structured interaction between the denominationally employed leaders serving each.”⁵

According to the statistics on the North American Division (NAD) Department of Education website, the Adventist Church of today operates over 7,200 schools worldwide, with nearly 1.5 million students.⁶ The primary aim of Seventh-day Adventist education, it says, is to provide opportunity for students to accept Christ as their Savior, allow the Holy Spirit to transform their lives, and fulfill the commission of preaching the gospel to all the world.

The website of the NAD, meanwhile, states that the church seeks to enhance

quality of life for people everywhere and to let people know that Jesus is returning soon.⁷ A close examination of the goals of these two entities reveals that they are closely aligned, as both have a redemptive purpose.

Adventist schools operate in close relationship with Adventist churches. Children often attend both the school and sponsoring church, and much of the school budget comes directly through appropriations from the local church. This relationship of both the church and school provides an opportunity for the two entities to collaborate in such a way so as to benefit both. The goal of early Adventist education was to

other suffers; if either one is neglected, the church suffers. The educational program of the church and the evangelistic program of the church must go hand in hand.⁹ He wrote that the Christian school is the most indispensable method that we have of saving our children within the church.

United in mission

Perhaps Adventist schools should adopt a power-packed statement contained in the *Lutheran Board Manual for Elementary Schools*: “Lutheran theology and educational philosophy clearly advocate a united ministry of pastor and principal. These two are considered

to you. The bottom line in the missional goal of both the church and the school is redemptive in nature.

In one school I recently visited, the classroom teacher asked all the students to repeat their mission statement. Those young elementary students repeated their school’s mission statement in unison, word-for-word, and by memory. The students were clear as to what the mission of their school was. In addition, the church held this same mission statement. This common missional goal was forefront in the minds of all involved in both church and school.

Conversations between pastor and teachers regarding the commonality of

Pastors and teachers in collaborative relationships express greater happiness, decreased stress, less anxiety, and fewer sleepless nights in knowing that they have a “partner in ministry.”

prepare the student for a life of service, and while that goal has remained, another emerged as being central. In the book *Education*, Ellen G. White said that the work of education and the work of redemption were one and the same.⁸

Introducing students to Jesus as their Savior should be the ultimate goal in every Adventist classroom. Many pastors and teachers were concerned that a failure to collaborate may lead to the demise of the church and the school; however, some feel that the ultimate price to be paid may be that some may not be in heaven as a result of a failure to work together in positive ways to achieve missional objectives.

According to Lowell Rasmussen, the church’s two greatest commands were to preach and to teach, to evangelize and to educate. “If one is neglected, the

to have calls from God to serve in the ministry, and they are partners in the gospel. The Lutheran day school should be an integral expression of the church’s mission. To separate the ministry of the pastor from the ministry of the school will result in failure. The pastor and the principal should meet together regularly to coordinate their efforts and to improve the effectiveness of their ministry as partners for Christ. They are a part of the same team.”¹⁰

It is not a matter of two different or separate entities but, rather, one entity with two branches, each realizing the vital part they play toward reaching their missional goal. The mission of the school is an extension of the mission of the church. If you try to separate the two, then both fall short of the missional goal that God has entrusted

mission center on the realization that they are both aiming for the same goal and that together they have the possibility of achieving far greater results than by working independently. So much more can be accomplished when working together for the same goal than could be accomplished if you act alone.

Common goal attainment is perhaps one of the biggest arguments that one can use to promote this high level of collaborative practice between pastor and teacher. Newton Hoilette writes: “There is no need for conflict, for feelings of inferiority or privilege. Both pastors and teachers are on the same team. Instead of rivalry, there should be professional and spiritual collegiality. There is a need for parity, for mutual respect, regard, support, understanding, and cooperation.”¹¹ If

the goals of the Adventist pastor and those of the Adventist teacher have parallels, then perhaps the application of collaborative theories into daily classroom practice would benefit educators, students, schools, churches, and our communities at large in positive ways.

Why it matters

As a direct means of fulfilling their missional goal, pastors and teachers identify the best way to help the students make a decision to accept Jesus. If the pastor is an active participant in the life of the school, this means that the students have greater opportunity to develop positive relationships with the pastor. In turn, this naturally leads to a great probability that the student will have spiritual discussions with the pastor and be drawn to Jesus.

The pastor and teachers working together in a positive relationship sets a positive role model for students. In addition, when an Adventist school has a positive relationship with the church, it creates a sense of security for the older church members, who could be assured of the sustainability of the church as they witness young people from the school taking on leadership roles and becoming active participants.

Combined planning and dreaming also are seen to lead to improved health of the pastors and teachers. Pastors and teachers in collaborative relationships express greater happiness, decreased stress, less anxiety, and fewer sleepless nights in knowing that they have a “partner in ministry.” Successes are shared with their ministry partner as are burdens and concerns. Having another to help “shoulder” the burdens makes them easier to bear.

Recommendations for pastors

Because this article is targeted specifically to pastors, I will include some recommendations to maximize the pastor/teacher relationship. However, there are recommendations for teachers too. Recommendations for pastors include the following:


1. Closely align the goals of the church and the school so that a common mission goal is clear.
2. Identify your strengths and weaknesses. Hold discussions with the school staff on how you may maximize the use of your strengths in order to attain your ministry goals.
3. Make the school a priority in your calendar.
4. Be visible and active on the school campus on a regular basis.
5. Schedule special Sabbaths in the church calendar to focus on Adventist education.
6. Schedule regular times with your teaching ministry team to discuss goals and dreams.
7. Discuss any differences with teachers and deal with conflicts in private according to scriptural principles.
8. Be a cheerleader for the school, staff, and students from the pulpit.
9. Be intentional about creating opportunities to get to know your educational partner in ministry outside the school environment.
10. Pray daily for your teachers as partners in ministry.
11. Do not expect perfection in your educational partners in ministry.
12. Make full use of that “relational oil” of collaboration as you build relationships with those you serve in the church and school family. In so doing, your ministry will be blessed.

Conclusion

At the close of our workshop I ask: “What are the benefits of a positive pastor-teacher collaboration for church members, parents, and children?” What are the benefits for your ministry? Then pastors pray with their team-member teachers. But it does not end with prayer. We then appeal to pastors and teachers:

1. Define your commitment or the change you want to make.
2. Describe it as a clear, realistic, and measurable outcome.
3. Identify the steps.
4. Define resources needed to make it happen.

5. Sign it and have your ministry partner sign it as well.

What an encouragement it was for the teachers to know they had the support of their pastors. What an encouragement it was for the pastors to know that their teachers were passionate about lifting up Christian education. In setting out to describe the collaborative practices of Adventist pastors and teachers, I listened to them tell a story of collaboration at its best. It is a story of the possibilities when one pastor and one teacher unite in their common missional goal: the salvation of young people. Indeed, Adventist education and evangelism are inseparable. If we are to fulfill our common mission, Adventist pastors and teachers must link their arms in collaborative practices, raise their voices in collective prayers, and cut a hole large enough for both ministry partners to walk through. 

1 This article is based on the dissertation, “A Multiple-Case Study Describing Collaborative Relations Between Adventist Pastors in the Eastern United States,” written by Pamela Consuegra, PhD (Andrews University, School of Education, 2012).

2 See Stan Patterson, “Organizational Expectations and Role Clarification of Pastors and Educators Serving K–10 Schools Operated by the Georgia-Cumberland Conference of Seventh-day Adventists” (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Andrews University, 2007); Monte Sahlin, “Preacher-Teacher Collaboration,” *Ministry*, August 1985, 12–14, 17.

3 Ibid.

4 Monte Sahlin, “Pastor and Teacher: Cooperating for Success,” *Journal of Adventist Education* 48, no. 1 (Oct–Nov 1985): 8–11.

5 Patterson, 5.

6 Seventh-day Adventist Church, North American Division, “Education,” 2012, <http://www.nadadventist.org/article/27/ministries/education> [This link is no longer valid.]

7 Seventh-day Adventist Church, North American Division, “About Our Church,” 2012, <http://www.nadadventist.org/article/2/about-our-church>.

8 Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1952), 30.

9 Lowell R. Rasmussen, “Minister in the Making: Evangelism and Education,” *Ministry*, January 1950, 15, 16.

10 Martin F. Wessler, *Board Manual for Lutheran Elementary Schools* (St. Louis, MO: Board for Parish Services, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, 1987), 32.

11 Newton Holette, “The Same Gift: ‘And . . . to Some, Pastors and Teachers,’” *Journal of Adventist Education* 55, no. 2 (Dec. 1992–Jan. 1993), 4.

► President of Colombia helps fourth-grade Adventist student with homework

Barrancabermeja, Santander, Colombia—Eight-year-old **Gabriela Rico**, a student at the Libertad de Barrancabermeja Adventist School in Barrancabermeja, Colombia, recently needed to complete a social studies assignment that would detail the accomplishments of the nation's president. So she went online to contact Colombia's president, **Juan Manuel Santos**.

"I found something on the Internet about the president, but I didn't understand it because it was written for adults," said Gabriela. So she wrote the following on his Facebook page: "Mr. President Santos, my name is Gabriela Rico and I am eight years old. In my school, I was asked to find out what your accomplishments are as president, but I have not found much on the Internet. Can you please help me?"

Two days later President Santos posted a video on his website that addressed Gabriela and provided the answers she needed. The video went viral. Soon local and national media wanted to know Gabriela's story.

"I had no idea that so many people would come, but I was sure the president could respond to me because he is a normal, common person," said Gabriela. She was happy that the president took time to answer her.

For Gabriela, it was also an opportunity to witness about the Sabbath. Gabriela noticed his reply, which was sent on a Friday evening, after Sabbath church activities. She then sent a video thanking President Santos for his response.

"I want to thank you Mr. President for answering me, and I am going to tell you that I had not replied because I am a Seventh-day Adventist and spent the day

at church and had not been able to answer you," said Gabriela in a video message.

On February 27, Gabriela presented her homework and got the highest grade possible. President Santos congratulated Gabriela on his Twitter and Instagram accounts.

The assignment was meant to help children identify promises the president had accomplished so they could see the importance of being a good leader and following through with what you say, explained **Titiana Murallas**, Gabriela's fourth-grade teacher. "I also wanted to foster investigative and critical thinking."

"Each one of us has responsibilities at home, at school, or at work, like the adults," said Gabriela. "We are children, and even though we are children, soon we will be big and we should always be responsible and persevere."

Libertad de Barrancabermeja Adventist School is a K–5th grade school and one among 17 primary and secondary schools in North Colombia. [Shirley Rueda/Inter-American Division Staff]

► Australian Adventist educator receives highest academic title in Thailand

Wahroonga, New South Wales, Australia—**Warren Shipton**, an Australian native and academician of Asia-Pacific International University in Thailand, recently received the highest academic ranking title from the Thai palace for his contributions to education and science.

This is the first time the award of Professor has been given to both a

foreigner and an academic from a private university in the 100-year history of tertiary education in Thailand.

"Receiving the honor was most unexpected as it has been reserved traditionally for academics at state universities where the title is vigorously guarded," said Shipton. "I simply could not believe that I was the first foreigner to break through the glass ceiling and,

of course, it was a great advertisement for our Adventist university in Thailand."

Shipton lives in Brisbane but teaches online at Asia-Pacific International University, the only Adventist university in Southeast Asia. He is also currently undertaking research for the university and often travels to Thailand to present courses.

"Personally, it gave me a feeling of greater acceptance by the Thai people," said Shipton. "That is something that all foreigners seek in the countries they find themselves or seek to serve." [Maritza Brunt | *Australian Adventist Record*]

► Adventist education training goes global with pan-African conference

Kigali, Rwanda—What do you do when a training event you recently offered gets very positive feedback? Judging by the education department of the General Conference in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States, you recharge and do it again—this time even better and in a global setting.

On February 15–19, 2017, 239 Seventh-day Adventist educators from across the African continent and adjacent Indian Ocean islands met in Kigali, Rwanda, for the first of four planned worldwide regional conferences on Seventh-day Adventist education. The participants, who came from the three

regions—or divisions—of the world church in Africa, represent 45 percent of the 8,208 Seventh-day Adventist schools around the world, 39 percent of its 102,779 teachers, and 52 percent of its nearly 2 million students.

"Annual Council 2016 voted to authorize the Education Department,

in collaboration with the various world divisions—or regions—to develop a guiding philosophy and a worldwide, regionally responsive plan for Seventh-day Adventist education,” said **Lisa Beardsley-Hardy**, education director of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, when explaining the rationale for these regional events.

The topics mentioned in the objectives discussed included establishing measurable goals to increase the number of schools and Adventist students, increasing retention and academic excellence, developing educational resources for alternative models of education, and identifying innovations that may serve to enhance the affordability

and sustainability of Seventh-day Adventist schools.


Similar conferences are planned for other regions in the next few months, as the Education Department tries to cover every major division, or region, of the world church.

“At these conferences, participants will formulate educational plans that incorporate local, national, and regional priorities and objectives,” said Beardsley. “It is also expected that they make recommendations to Annual Council in October 2017 on how to achieve higher visibility for education globally.”

Besides small-group discussions and plenary sessions, participants of

the Rwanda conference

enjoyed devotional messages by church leaders, moments of worship on Friday evening and Saturday, and even a visit to the Kigali Genocide Memorial Center on Saturday afternoon.

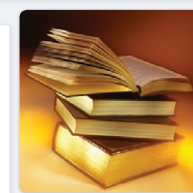
Most participants were not shy about expressing their appreciation for the event. “The conference provided me with many ideas to enhance my leadership,” said one of the participants. “I would like this conference to take place more often, and to consider including school board chairs, treasurers, and even pastors.” [Marcos Paseggi | senior correspondent, *Adventist Review*] 



RESOURCES

Educating for Eternity

by George R. Knight, Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2016.



The *Adventist Review* called George Knight “probably the most prolific author since Ellen White.” He has written more than a dozen books on Adventist history and more than a dozen books on New Testament and theological topics.

In *Educating for Eternity*, Knight returns to his original scholarly roots—the philosophy of education. The slim volume—it is only 150 pages including indexes, footnotes, and bibliography—sets out to define a unique path for Adventist schools in the twenty-first century. And the book succeeds.

Knight is at his best reducing complex topics to simple concepts, albeit often expressed in sentences at least as complex as the topics. (One paragraph in *Educating for Eternity* has only three sentences, but they are 26, 33, and 31 words long. The sentences would be a grammarian’s delight!) In this book, Knight explains metaphysics, epistemology, and axiology—and does it in a 19-page first chapter.

Those three concepts form the basis of Knight’s prescription for Adventist education. He wraps an Adventist metaphysical view of the world in a description of the great controversy theme that would be understandable to a non-Christian. There are uniquely Adventist teaching methods and values to shape his vision of an Adventist school.


Knight then adds five chapters about how to implement these principles in Adventist schools.

He begins with a focus on the student, then talks about the teacher. Discussion of curriculum, teaching methods, and the school’s function in the society are held for later.

Knight describes Adventist education as Jesus-oriented teachers helping shape Jesus-oriented life decisions made by students. It is a wholly useful perspective. The interaction between student and teacher is the heart of Adventist education. I spent almost 25 years teaching, and my students remember me far more than they

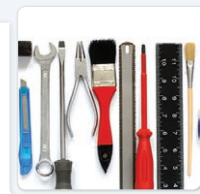
remember specific assignments and content.

Pastors will find the book useful in two ways. Reading the book will help pastors develop a stronger vision of what Adventist education can be as a partnership between schools and churches and homes. Viewing a church school as a partner in ministry provides the only basis for a successful Adventist school, and the book is a great asset for a pastor who wants to do that.

The book also includes “Points to Ponder,” thought questions at the end of each chapter. They would make great discussion starters for a group reading this book. For example, consider a church board planning to start a church school. The board reads a chapter or two before each board meeting, then discusses the “Points to Ponder” questions, and creates a clear mission partnership for the school and the church. 

—Reviewed by Kermit Netteburg, PhD, a retired church pastor, Adventist educator, and administrative leader residing in Maryland, United States.

Jerrell Gilkeson, EdD, is director of education and children's ministries for the Atlantic Union Conference, South Lancaster, Massachusetts, United States.



Two ministries, one monorail

There are many questions being asked in Adventism today. One of the most compelling is this: How necessary is Adventist education to the survival of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's mission? For us in the Atlantic Union Conference, this pertinent question needed a practical answer; we believe we found one. What was it—and how did it come about?

Context

After the turn of the century, there was mounting evidence that forces were at work which were destroying the Adventist Church from within. The North American pastorate was becoming decidedly less educated through the church's K-16 system. Large numbers of pastors were being seminary educated without ever having set foot in an Adventist church school. They were then being asked to pastor churches where 50 percent or more of the church budget was being used for a school, and they had received little instruction about its importance and no direction on how to operate it. In 2003, the Atlantic Union Conference education directors, under the leadership of Rosemary Tyrrell, held the "Niagara Summit" in Niagara Falls, New York. Dr. R. Clifford Jones represented the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, and thus began the movement toward seminary-trained pastors having one class in Christian education.¹ It was now time to take it to the next level.

In 2009, more than 700 Seventh-day Adventist pastors and teachers from the northeastern United States and Bermuda met together for a first-of-its-kind convention in Providence, Rhode Island, with the goal of uniting educators and ministers in Christian service for young people and their families. Keynote speaker and veteran educator, Dr. George R. Knight, applauded the

Union for the "understanding that brought both pastoral clergy and educational clergy under one roof for a shared professional convention."²

The union ministerial and education offices determined that there must be a bold action to unite the church and school in the effort of soul-winning. The grassroots evangelism of our children could not be allowed to dwindle and take a backseat to public evangelism. The 180 formal school days were now viewed as a platform for the evangelism of church and community students, one that could no longer be overlooked. A comprehensive *Pastors and Teachers Manual* was needed to make the work of this convention more than a one-time event. The *Manual* could live on to guide pastors and teachers in how they could work together to accomplish their shared goals.³

Uses

Under the leadership of union president/ministerial director, Dr. Donald G. King, and director of education, Astrid Thomassian, a team of pastors and teachers created a manual that was to direct nearly one thousand pastors and teachers in the northeastern United States and Bermuda.⁴ As Dr. King stated, "One of the goals of the . . . *Pastors and Teachers Manual* is to help to create a monorail from these two distinct rails or services of the Seventh-day Adventist Church."⁵


The *Manual* was filled with practical instruction and ideas for a united, complementary ministry in the local church with a school. It can be used:

- as a study guide for a conference ministerial and education retreat, teleconference series, or another area for professional growth;
- by conference ministerial and education directors in the mentoring of pastors and teachers joining the ministry workforce;
- as the launching platform for a pastor (pastoral staff) and teacher

(teaching staff) to meet for prayer and sharing of vision/mission;

- in a constituent school setting with multiple churches supporting a single school; and
- by ministerial and education directors as a map to aid dysfunctional church and school districts when problems or conflicts occur.⁶

We praise God that He has given us our children, the commission to tell the world of His love, and a school system to accomplish our task. The *Manual* was created to be a blessing to the church with a school. As a single unit, the church/church school can be a wonderful evangelistic tool for the students in the church and the community. It has been said that 60 percent of the church's baptisms are people under the age of 18. The teaching of these members, as they mature into disciples of Jesus Christ, is possible through the teaching ministry.

Jesus prayed, "Father, I pray that they may be one, even as we are one" (John 17:22). This prayer includes the church and church school. This prayer includes the pastor and the teacher—that they may be one in the anointing Holy Spirit power to fulfill the commission and ministry that each has been given. 

1 Ednor Davison, "More Than 700 Meet in First-Ever Event in Providence," *Adventist Review*, September 10, 2009, <http://advstrvw.securelytransact.com/article/2817/archives/issue-2009-1525/25cn-more-than-700-meet-in-first-ever-event-in-providence>.

2 *ibid.*

3 Online supplementary resources included a Christian education Bible study and companion materials developed by Jeffrey Brown. See <http://atlantic-union.org/education/christian-education-bible-study/>.

4 *Pastors and Teachers Manual: Together in His Calling* (South Lancaster, MA: Atlantic Union Conference, 2009), <http://atlantic-union.org/education/manuals/>.

5 Donald G. King, quoted in Atlantic Union Conference, *Pastors and Teachers Manual*, 40, <http://atlantic-union.org/education/manuals/>.

6 See also *REACH Resource Manual: Reaching to Educate All Children for Heaven*, http://adventisteducation.org/downloads/pdf/REACH_Manual_3rd_Edition.pdf.

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