

# ADVENTIST EDUCATION





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Faith-Ann McGarrell

I tried to get out of it—I really did, but there was no getting around the requirement. If I wanted to pursue denominational teacher certification, I would have to take the course “The Gift of Prophecy,” also known among my peers as the “Ellen White course.” To make matters worse, the course was only being offered at 7:00 a.m., Monday through Friday, during a hot, humid, summer intensive session. To say I dreaded the experience would be an understatement. I imagined long, boring lectures filled with a litany of “Ellen White said. . . .” this or that, and an overwhelming emphasis on end-time events and preparing for the final crisis, since unfortunately up to this point, that had been my experience with Ellen White and prophecy in Adventist schools. She was to me, as she was to many of my generation, a mystical figure, a specter of judgment, a baton of correction.

Thankfully, my expectations were wrong. The professor for the course, a gentle, humorous, gifted storyteller, began each class period with a short reflection on a passage of Scripture, after which he led the class in singing songs of the faith—old favorites and ones we would learn throughout the semester. He shared compelling, humanizing stories about the lives of early Adventist pioneers—stories that revealed real people with human foibles in relatable experiences, some humorous, others tragic, and others still that demonstrated their passion and love for Jesus Christ and a willingness to sacrifice every material possession to spread the “good news.” Well-versed in Adventist history, he reveled in sharing stories that ripped away the façade of absolute piety behind which many of the pioneers are so often carefully shrouded. We challenged him with questions about what we had heard, or what someone claimed that “Ellen White said,” and he would answer by directing us to passages where we could read together what she truly said and in what context. His responses were kind; his demeanor, authentic. We wrote reflections and dug deep to uncover our biases, hopes, and aspirations, and by the end of that course, many found kinship with the early Adventist pioneers.

What I also did not anticipate was the impact that class would have on my personal and professional growth during that hot, humid summer and beyond. Under the guidance of a caring, kind professor, I, along with hun-

dreds of future Adventist educators over the many years since, have gained not only knowledge of the gift of prophecy, but also a balanced perspective on Ellen White’s writings in relationship to the Scriptures,<sup>1</sup> a deeper appreciation for her writings and her personal awareness of her role and her own ministry,<sup>2</sup> and an affirmation of God’s plan for each individual human being, especially those who responded to the call to teach.<sup>3</sup>

More than 20 years later, in September 2019, I had the privilege of joining 73 Adventist educators from around the world on an Adventist History Study Tour sponsored by the General Conference Department of Education. For

10 days, we visited several historic Adventist sites. We not only read and listened to stories about the early Adventist pioneers, but also visited the preserved or reconstructed homes where they once lived, walked the streets they walked, experienced what their lives might have been like as well as the challenges of day-to-day living they most likely faced. Together we pondered the recurring question: “How did they accomplish so much with so little?” We were each moved by their legacy of commitment to the cause of Christ and the search for Truth, and joined them in looking forward to the day when our “weary footsteps will never roam—our trials past, our joys complete,” and we will be “Safe in our Father’s home.”<sup>4</sup>

The articles in this issue explore a variety of topics. Barbara Fisher writes about the important role teachers have in creating age-specific experiences that can help lead students toward a relationship with God. She discusses several factors that influence their readiness for such an experience and barriers that they may encounter. Emphasized is the value of caring, nurturing teachers who model the Christian experience with authenticity (see page 12).

Three articles delve into different aspects of Ellen White’s contributions to the Adventist philosophy of education. Anna Galeniece explores the eschatological dimensions of Adventist education in the writings of Ellen White (see page 18); and, in *Perspectives*—a feature section dedicated to challenging topics in Adventist education and how educators navigate them—Derek C. Bowe shares his reflections on Ellen White, fiction, and his own response throughout the various stages of his own pro-

“Ellen White  
Said . . .”

## Dispelling Myths and Reaffirming Faith

*Continued on page 45*





## Recommendations for Educators and Academic Administrators

Earning a college degree is generally considered to be the key to successful career pathways,<sup>1</sup> a means for social mobility,<sup>2</sup> and one of the only ways to remain competitive in the international marketplace of the 21st century.<sup>3</sup> In the Seventh-day Adventist Church, many employees—including teachers and academic administrators—pursue additional credentialing to enhance their professional skills and to advance in their careers. However, in recent years, ethical questions have arisen related to various individuals' aca-

demetic integrity<sup>4</sup> and the quality and legitimacy of academic degrees and other types of credentialing certain individuals have pursued.<sup>5</sup> The purpose of this article is to address the issue of degree fraud, share the biblical basis regarding integrity as it relates to such situations, present ways to identify reputable colleges and accredited degree programs, and inform administrators and teachers, so they can better advise students about how to avoid enrolling in non-reputable institutions and programs.

In this article, we will use Teferra's definition of Academic Fraud/Misconduct, which he describes as "mani-

fest[ing] in multiple forms that include plagiarism, nepotism, corrupt recruitment and admission, cheating in exams, misrepresentation and falsifying of records, biased grading, bribery, conspiracy and collusion, among others."<sup>6</sup> However, this article will primarily focus on academic fraud—misrepresenting academic credentials that a person has earned from non-reputable colleges and unaccredited degree programs.

Many times, potential students are deceived and recruited to enroll in low-quality, non-accredited institutions, often referred to as "diploma

BY SYDNEY FREEMAN JR., IBRAHIM M. KARKOUTI, and TY-RON M. O. DOUGLAS

mills.”<sup>7</sup> In other cases, students and adult employees have knowingly enrolled and received credentials at such institutions<sup>8</sup> with the intent of using these non-accredited, fake credentials/degrees to obtain employment, raises, and promotions. This goes against the moral values and principles that any professional should embrace. Adventist educators must exhibit more care in this regard because their choices are not only a reflection of their own personal integrity, but their actions also misrepresent the Christian community and standards of Jesus Christ. While Christians have an earthly mandate to ensure that they are being honest regarding academic integrity, they also have a higher ethical standard that they must uphold. Ellen White said, “No deviation from strict integrity can meet God’s approval.”<sup>9</sup> In the next section of this article, we will provide a synopsis of global examples of diploma fraud and discuss its impact on religious and secular institutions and industries.

#### **A Global Perspective on Major Degree Issues**

Problems with academic and degree fraud occur in all parts of the world.<sup>10</sup> In the United States, accrediting agencies assess the quality of higher education and ensure that postsecondary institutions meet quality educational standards that foster professional learning environments.<sup>11</sup> Degrees from universities with accredited educational programs are highly regarded by both students and employers.<sup>12</sup>

Even countries that have well-developed accreditation guidelines with clear standards for educational quality experience challenges with academic and degree fraud. This has led the International Center for Academic Integrity to sponsor an annual *International Day of Action Against Contract Cheating* (students paying others to write their papers).<sup>13</sup> This event was created to raise awareness and focus attention on the issues of academic integrity and educational fraud worldwide.<sup>14</sup>

In the Middle East and North Africa, in many cases, low-quality ed-

ucational options and lax educational policies degrade students’ academic achievement and jeopardize their future career plans.<sup>15</sup> For example, some Arab countries still lack educational policies that regulate e-learning programs. As a result, online degrees are negatively perceived by community members and employers, who do not consider them as valid employment credentials.<sup>16</sup>

Another major issue facing Arab countries today is the fake multi-million-dollar traditional (face-to-face/in classroom) degree industry.<sup>17</sup> Today, more than ever, governments and societies are fighting degree for-

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primarily for plagiarism.  
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gery rings in Lebanon, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. In Lebanon, the Ministry of Higher Education and the Lebanese Military Intelligence Directorate recently commissioned fact-finding missions to investigate degree-forgery cases at two well-known private universities.<sup>18</sup> Authorities suspect that university administrators and employees created a network that sold fake degrees to civilians and military personnel for US\$9,000 each.<sup>19</sup> According to Akoum,<sup>20</sup> five soldiers were arrested for purchasing fake diplomas and using them to obtain military promotions.

Likewise, education authorities in

Kuwait uncovered 400 fake university degrees in the fields of law and education.<sup>21</sup> Following the raid, Kuwaiti investigators accused an Egyptian resident working at the Ministry of Higher Education of forging degrees for 50 people in government, private, and legal sectors in Kuwait.<sup>22</sup>

In a similar incident, eight professors at Kuwait’s Public Authority for Applied Education and Training were found guilty of possessing fake doctorate certificates they received from illusory universities in Greece.<sup>23</sup> According to the culprits, the price of fake degrees in Kuwait depends on their level but is usually in the range of US\$12,000.<sup>24</sup>

In Saudi Arabia, people with fake degrees still hold key positions in both public and private sectors.<sup>25</sup> According to Al-Mulhim, the Saudi authorities have not taken any measures against the institutions issuing fake degrees. He wrote: “What is more distressing is the fact that even the so-called institutions, which award these fake certificates or degrees are also doing brisk business without hiding the true nature of their operations. . . . One of them is located in London and it openly cooperates with some elements in the education sector.”<sup>26</sup>

Another global issue in academic fraud is plagiarism and falsification of data.<sup>27</sup> In 2012, Russia, at the direction of its president, launched an initiative to become a leader in scientific research. With this initiative came many monetary incentives and promises of promotions in rank to faculty who published their work. However, in January 2020, a staggering report by the Russian Academy of Sciences Commission for Countering the Falsification of Scientific Research found that 2,528 research articles in 541 Russian journals needed to be retracted. As of January 6, 2020, 263 Russian scientific journals had agreed to retract 869 research articles, primarily for plagiarism. Other reasons included intentional duplication of content in multiple journals and unclear authorship.<sup>28</sup>

Such cases are not limited to public education. Within the religious sector, breaches of academic integrity also

occur. Within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, two recent cases documented by the local and international press alleged that several educational and church administrators committed academic fraud. In India, local authorities issued arrest warrants for three senior administrators at an Adventist university whom they alleged had obtained fake doctorate degrees.<sup>29</sup> These allegations came as a shock to the constituents of the Adventist university, some of whom started questioning the legitimacy of the school because the accused administrators were supposed to uphold the ideals of the Adventist philosophy of education.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, in South Africa, an elected church official was alleged to have hired a ghost writer for his doctoral dissertation. The subsequent fallout led to the individual's resignation.<sup>31</sup>

### Toward a Biblical Framework of Academic Integrity

The writers of this article believe that, as a Christian community, we should hold ourselves to the highest standard of integrity, and that there is a need to develop a biblically based framework for academic integrity, given the issues of academic fraud and cheating that can impact educational institutions globally at every level. Such a framework would provide guidance for those pursuing and seeking to obtain academic training and hold institutions offering academic degrees and credentialing accountable. Although the Bible does not explicitly provide examples of academic integrity as we would define it in modern times, the Scriptures do provide us with examples of integrity that align with the values that should be practiced in academic matters.

The foundation for such a framework should be based on biblical admonitions and examples of integrity. One such example is demonstrated in the life of Joseph. In several instances, the Bible recounts how Joseph's personal integrity guided his decisions, even when it seemed that taking the easy way out would have been benefited him (Genesis 37-39). Joseph's main concern was to please God:

"How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9, NIV).<sup>32</sup>

Another example can be found in the life of Job. Even though he questioned God (Job 3:11), was encouraged and tempted to curse God (chap. 2:9), and experienced total personal devastation and trauma, he did not waiver in his integrity and obedience. The Book of Daniel also provides several examples of God's people displaying integrity under pressure: Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to eat the king's food and drink when exiled in Babylon (Daniel 1); Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were thrown

into the fiery furnace for not bowing to a false god (Daniel 3); and Daniel was cast into a den of lions for praying to the God of heaven instead of the Babylonian king (Daniel 6).

Given that all humans are fallible and often have lapses in judgment, there is a need for redemption when people are uninformed and make mistakes. Unfortunately, however, many lapses in judgment are the product of an intentional decision to mislead others or illegitimately gain benefits for oneself; yet, even in such situations, redemption is still a possibility. A biblical example is Peter. In Matthew 26:69 to 75, despite having spent three years with Jesus, Peter denied knowing who

## Box 1. Resources for Assessing Quality and Accreditation

AAA – The Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges, and Universities  
<https://adventistaccreditingassociation.org/resources/>

CHEA – The Council for Higher Education Accreditation  
<https://www.chea.org/chea-recognized-organizations>

CHEA/CIQG – The Council for Higher Education Accreditation/International Quality Group  
<https://www.chea.org/chea-ciQG-memorandum-of-affiliation>

ENQA – European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education  
<https://enqa.eu/>

EMREX – A network that facilitates the secure exchange and protection of academic records and electronic data (academic and personal) owned and handled by students, institutions, and organizations.  
<https://emrex.eu/>

ETINED – The Council of Europe Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education  
<https://coe.int/en/web/ethics-transparency-integrity-in-education/home?desktop=true>

FRAUDOC – Guidelines on Diploma Mills and Document Fraud for Credential Evaluators  
<http://www.cimea.it/it/progetti-in-evidenza/fraudoc/fraudoc-project.aspx>

HAQAA – Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation Initiative  
<https://haqaa.aau.org/>

NOKUT – Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education  
<https://www.nokut.no/en/application-services—foreign-education/>

U. S. Department of Education – The Database of Accredited Postsecondary Institutions and Programs  
<https://ope.ed.gov/dapip/#/home>



Jesus was and declared that he was not a follower of the Galilean. Even though this was a major lapse in integrity, God empowered Peter to preach the gospel (Acts 9:36-43) and to powerfully testify that the Gentiles could be followers of Christ (Acts 10 and 11). The notion of redemption is key in these situations, particularly when individuals who have made mistakes express remorse. Yet, redemption must be balanced with other factors such as maintaining academic standards and appropriate consequences for fraud and dishonesty. The consequences of such actions can discredit the legitimacy of a degree and potentially harm the school, employer, clients, and the church.

To this end, a biblical framework of academic integrity should include the following:

**For the student:**

1. *Embrace individual responsibility by practicing due diligence.*

Scriptures such as Proverbs 11:14; 14:15; 19:2; and Matthew 7:7 (GNT)<sup>33</sup> provide a biblical foundation for individuals to take responsibility for their actions, specifically in the area of conducting personal research. A person should exercise due diligence when investigating whether to enroll in an academic institution. This means ensuring that the degree, program, and/or institution is recognized and accredited by the appropriate accrediting bodies (church, state, and/or government). If the institution is unaccredited, find out why. It may be that the institution is new and just beginning the lengthy process toward becoming eligible for accreditation; that accreditation is not required (as is the case with some programs of study) although the institution is recognized and given permission by the government to operate; or that secular accreditation requirements demand that the institution compromise its system of beliefs, as is the case with some seminaries and Bible colleges.<sup>34</sup> Also, take note of and investigate the accrediting body. Many schools that are actually diploma mills claim to be accredited, but often the

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entities under which they are accredited are not recognized by any legitimate source either within the government or a church organization.

2. *Make a U-turn when appropriate if you uncover new, credible information.*

When Christians uncover reliable information indicating that the direction they are going or the decisions they have made are incorrect or improper, they should immediately make appropriate changes. There is scriptural evidence that supports this type of action (see James 5:19 and 20 and 2 Peter 3:17 and 18). When people realize belatedly that they are pursuing a degree from an unaccredited institution or diploma mill, they should withdraw immediately and request a tuition refund. If individuals have obtained employment on the basis of enrollment in this type of degree program, the employer should be notified about the problem. The next step would be for the person to find a legitimate institution in which to pursue his or her academic training.

The example of David's willingness to be honest with Saul about the fact that he could not fight in Saul's armor is a biblical example of the blessing of honesty (1 Samuel 17:39)—both to the individual and the institution. David likely would have lost the fight with Goliath and, in so doing, caused an Israelite defeat, if he had not had the courage to say, *This armor is not suit-*

*able. If I can't fight in what God has given me, then I am not the right person for this task.*

3. *Accept appropriate consequences for your actions.*

Although we have argued the case for redemption, we recognize that actions have consequences. Even if someone did not intend to deceive or harm, damage may still have occurred, and restitution must be made. The Bible is replete with examples of leaders recognizing and acknowledging their wrongful deeds, yet God required them to still undergo discipline for their actions (see Proverbs 19:20 and Ecclesiastes 7:5). Moses is one such example. In Numbers 20:1 to 12, the Israelites had been wandering in the wilderness with no access to water and other food necessities. Moses and his brother Aaron asked God to provide the people with water. God told Moses to speak to a rock, and water would be provided for the people. However, Moses disobeyed by striking the rock with his staff. Because he was disobedient, he was not allowed to enter the Promised Land toward which he had led the people for 40 years.

In such cases, when consequences are enforced, a person who has committed the offense must acknowledge his or her wrong. The notions of grace and mercy should not be weaponized by a guilty person to escape appropriate consequences. People who commit such offenses should be humble, reflective, and apologetic regarding their actions. A commitment to honesty and integrity in future actions should be the stance of the person who is truly repentant.

**For the institution/church:**

1. *Embrace and enforce the corporate responsibility of preserving high standards.*

Scriptures such as 2 Corinthians 8:21 and Philippians 4:8 describe clear expectations of integrity to which Christians should adhere. In addition to the individual's duty to conduct thorough research regarding an institution's status, it is also the responsibility

ity of a hiring organization and its administrators to conduct a careful investigation to make sure that all of their employees' degrees or other forms of credentialing are legitimate. Both human-resource administrators and supervisors should conduct background checks on all employees to verify their academic credentials. Adventist universities should carefully scrutinize the qualifications submitted by applicants to make sure that degrees were earned from accredited schools, and that none of the documents is fraudulent.

2. *Act with grace that offers the possibility of redemption.*

Above all, if a person has obtained an illegitimate degree or other form of credentialing, the hiring organization should investigate and take appropriate action. If disciplinary action is necessary, it should be undertaken with the goal of balancing grace, redemption, and fairness. The Bible admonishes in 1 Peter 5:10, 2 Peter 3:9, and Colossians 3:13 that we are to extend forgiveness and love to one another. These principles should apply for individuals found to have intentionally misled or deceived the hiring organization, even if it means removal from a position due to their lack of appropriate credentials.

God's handling of Adam and Eve's indiscretion at the tree of knowledge of good and evil offers a model for addressing the failures and frailties of our human condition and penchant for seeking to fulfill legitimate needs in illegitimate ways. We are reminded that even before Adam and Eve sinned, God had made provision through Christ to address the sin problem (Genesis 3). Similarly, effective leaders and organizations must be proactive rather than reactive in developing a process to address this problem of illegitimate degrees and credentialing before the problem occurs in their organization.

Adventist leaders and educators should avoid engaging in dishonest behavior or any actions that might create the perception of impropriety. Students must be taught the significance of academic integrity along with the conse-

**Adventist leaders and educators should avoid engaging in dishonest behavior or any actions that might create the perception of impropriety. Students must be taught the significance of academic integrity along with the consequences disregard for it can have on their personal and professional lives.**

quences disregard for it can have on their personal and professional lives. The Book of Proverbs provides us with sound counsel in this regard: "people with integrity walk safely, but those who follow crooked paths will slip and fall" (chap. 10:9, NLT).<sup>35</sup> It is important avoid being deceptive, as Proverbs 11:3 states: "the integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity" (NIV). And given that ultimately, Adventist leaders and educators are accountable to God, they must be honest in all dealings: "the godly walk with integrity; blessed are their children who follow them" (Proverbs 20:7, NLT).

#### **How to Avoid Non-Reputable Postsecondary Institutions**

Higher education institutions that provide fraudulent degrees are often referred to as diploma mills.<sup>36</sup> These schools offer low-quality educational programs and are not regulated by government or private quality-assurance organizations. All teachers, administrators, and students are encour-

aged to investigate whether the school in which they plan to study is accredited before applying for enrollment. Failure to attend accredited schools and enroll in legitimate programs will lead to unrecognized degrees that governments, graduate programs, and employers refuse to accept.<sup>37</sup> According to the U.S. Department of Education,<sup>38</sup> professionals and students pursuing postsecondary degrees or certifications can avoid fraudulent organizations by considering the following features as red flags:

1. The school offers fast-track degree programs, offers credit for life experiences, and requires fewer credit hours than similar programs offered by accredited universities.

2. Tuition fees are charged on a per-degree basis rather than on the basis of credit hours earned by students.

3. Financial discounts or incentives are offered for individuals willing to pursue more than one major.

4. University Websites that cite non-existent accreditation bodies are predatory.

5. If faculty profiles and qualifications are not disclosed, this indicates a lack of institutional accountability.

6. The university lacks an actual physical location. Vague addresses or addresses with nothing but post-office box numbers or suite numbers are further evidence that it is a fake university.

7. Scholarship scams that ask students for payment in advance are questionable.

8. University Websites that end in .com are likely to be connected to a commercial institution whose primary motive is financial profit. Most legitimate universities end in .edu, although some may also have a country code added, while others may not have .edu at all but rather an organizational URL. Also, Websites with missing links, corrupted files that do not open properly, misspellings, and grammatical errors are likely proof of deceptive practices. Course descriptions and promotional materials online often contain mis-



spellings and grammatical errors.

The above recommendations can assist anyone investigating the credibility of a post-secondary institution. In the next section, we will provide recommendations to help administrators investigate the legitimacy of diplomas and credentials.

### Countering Academic Fraud: Recommendations for Administrators

Verifying the legitimacy of diplomas and credentials is the responsibility of every academic institution and organization. The academic registrar or human-resources officer should consider the following when vetting the credentials of a potential student or employee:

1. **Sequence.** Traditionally, a high school diploma or general-education diploma (GED) precedes a bachelor's degree, and a bachelor's degree is typically earned before a Master's or doctoral degree. An out-of-sequence listing of degrees is a red flag, as is the absence of any preceding degree. For example, an applicant's moving from a bachelor's to a doctorate without evidence of having earned a Master's degree should raise suspicion, as

would the possession of a Master's degree and/or doctorate without proof of a bachelor's degree and/or high school diploma.

2. **Time.** An undergraduate degree typically requires three to four years to complete, a Master's one to two years, and a doctorate usually requires three or more years. A degree earned in a short time span—or several degrees earned over a short time period—indicates that something may be amiss.

3. **Location.** With the growth of online and distance education, an individual can enroll in an institution that is some distance away from his or her home. If this is the case, check and make sure the institution listed is an accredited distance-learning program.

4. **Familiar-sounding but not-quite-right names.** Many diploma mills tend to use names that appear very similar to those of legitimate institutions. If the school's name seems vaguely familiar but not quite right, this warrants investigation. The same caution applies for foreign colleges and universities. If the individual lists a school outside of the country in which he or she currently resides, and there is no evidence of his or her

having lived in that country, this should be verified.<sup>39</sup>

Here are some suggestions for verifying the legitimacy of documents and engaging in due diligence to identify fraudulent credentials:

1. *Contact the institution directly.*

Ask to speak with the academic records department. The school's registrar should be able to confirm factual information such as when the individual attended the school (dates), what degree he or she earned, and should be able to provide transcripts once the applicant has requested and paid for the service. Note that more and more diploma mills are offering "verification services" such as a live person to answer inquiries by telephone and mail out verification information. So, more needs to be done beyond just calling and talking to someone.

2. *Do an online search.* Concerted effort must be devoted to researching the institution and verifying the diplomas/degrees earned. Just because a school looks and sounds legitimate does not mean that it is. Check to see if the institution is accredited by a recognized accrediting agency. Does the school have the appropriate national, regional, or programmatic accreditation? Does the name of the school appear online connected with lawsuits or questionable situations? When perusing the school's Website, look at areas such as tuition (is it charged by the entire degree or by credits, course, or semester, as is typical in most legitimate schools?). What are the degree requirements? Are there specific program requirements, or is the primary requirement life and work experience? Call surrounding schools, and ask if transfer credits from the institution under review are accepted by them. This may provide more information or help to alert other neighboring institutions.

3. *Request verification from the potential student or employee.* Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the potential student or employee to provide verification that the diplomas and degrees he or she is presenting were earned from an accredited institution. This is especially so if these credentials are re-

### Sidebar 1. Resources for Checking Degree Credentials\*

Academic administration and human-resource personnel have a responsibility to verify the credentials of each potential student or employee. Fake diplomas and degrees fall into three main categories:

- Diploma/degree from an accredited institution that has been bought or illegally secured. In many cases, the individual never attended the school.
- Diploma/degree/transcripts issued by an accredited institution, but the information has been tampered with in some way to make the applicant more appealing.
- Diploma/degree issued by a school that does not exist as a legitimate institution (diploma mill), and there is evidence that the individual not only paid for it, but that little to no coursework or training was required.

\* Linda J. Børresen and Stig Arne Skjerven, "Detecting Fake University Degrees in a Digital World," *University World News* (September 2018): <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20180911120249317>.

quirements for financial assistance or positions the person will hold.<sup>40</sup>

Fighting academic corruption requires vigilance on all fronts (see Figure 1). Academic institutions and hiring organizations must have in place strong verification and authentication policies that will help them uncover fraud. This includes oversight and training of personnel, purchasing and implementing the use of software products that can identify and track red flags, and an overall commitment to preserving and upholding high standards.

### Conclusion

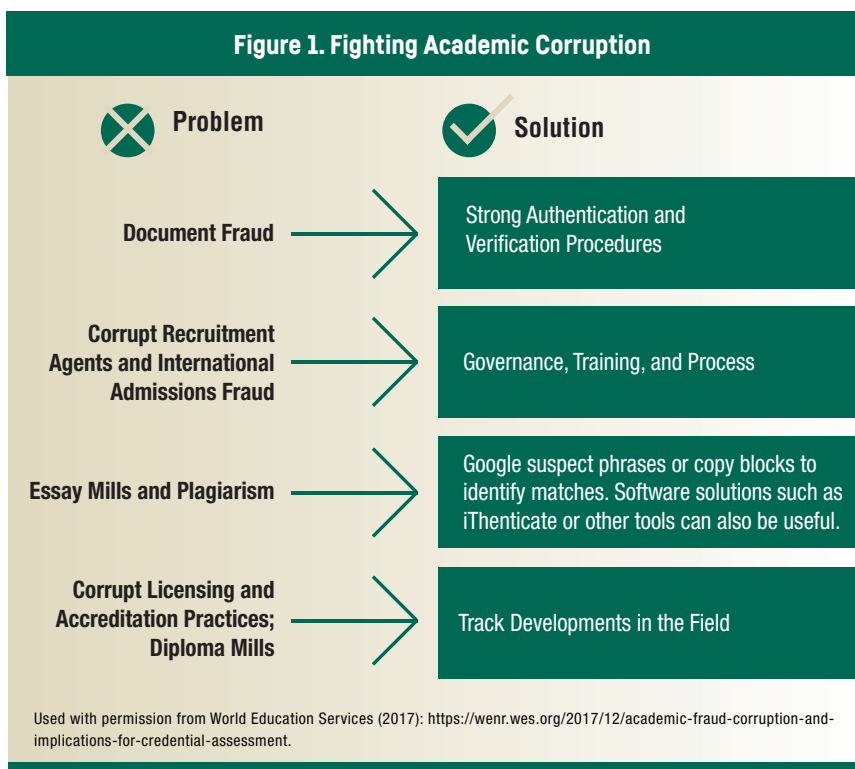
The choice of an academic institution in which to study is a very important decision in a person's life. A significant amount of time and financial resources are invested in a high-quality education. Therefore, it is vitally important that teachers and administrators carefully research the institutions in which they plan to pursue advanced studies. Educators can also actively provide the students they serve with resources to assist them in doing the same thing as they prepare to continue their studies. Armed with a framework to guide decision-making and reminded of typical red flags, informed choices are possible. It is the hope of the authors of this article that the information provided will empower individuals to make sound choices when selecting academic institutions and pursuing academic credentials and degrees. ✍️

*This article has been peer reviewed.*



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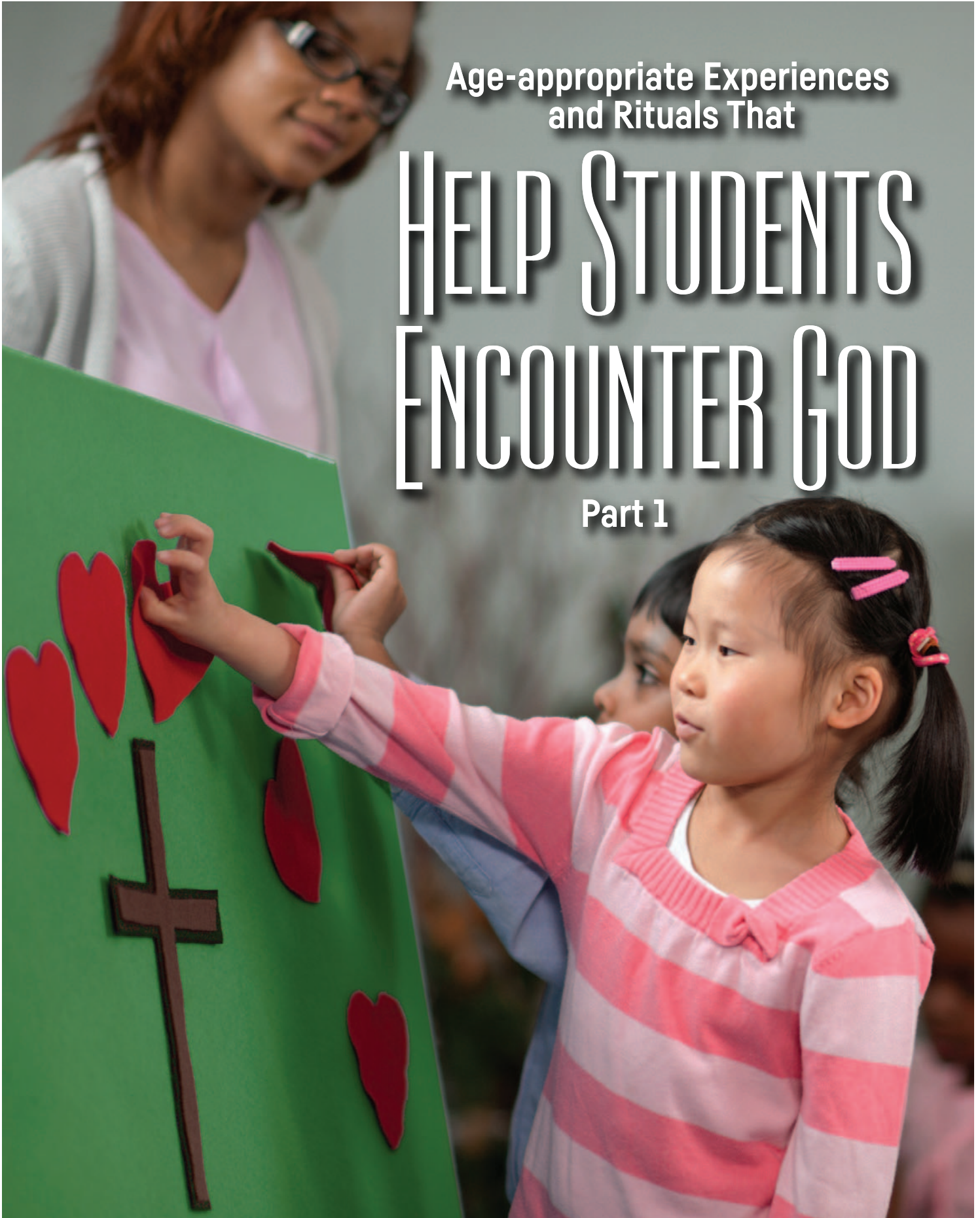
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Age-appropriate Experiences  
and Rituals That

# HELP STUDENTS ENCOUNTER GOD

Part 1



Christianity is about experiencing a personal relationship with God, and salvation encapsulates this experience. After the initial decision to accept salvation offered by Jesus Christ, Christians renew that commitment on a daily basis, gradually maturing in their understanding of God's love and grace. Experiencing salvation is a process that involves daily, lifelong learning and communication with God.

Salvation is God's gift to everyone, irrespective of age, but how students experience salvation is generally age-specific. Habenicht and Burton portrayed salvation as a maturational process involving the two important aspects of cognition and a nurtured faith.<sup>1</sup> Research from the Barna Group indicates that the majority of people who accept salvation do so before the age of 13 (see Figure 1).

Barna has written that the "[p]rimary window of opportunity for effectively reaching people with the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection is during the pre-teen years. It is during those years that people develop their frames of reference for the remainder of their life—especially theologically and morally."<sup>3</sup> What a sobering and challenging thought for Christian educators!

Adventist teachers acknowledge that a 1st-grade student can experience an age-appropriate, conversion experience that is just as real and compelling as a pre-teen's conversion experience. But, due to the chronological and maturational differences between the 1st grader and the pre-teen, each conversion experience will be different, idiosyncratic, and age-specific. Adventist teachers need to validate a 1st-grader's spiritual encounters because these formative experiences can become the foundation that can reassure and give direction to a young student's spiritual journey. Interestingly, some pre-teens comment that their spiritual maturity can be traced back to these very early faith-affirming experiences.

An altar call that is included as part of Week of Prayer meetings, or a similar school program, can act as a catalyst to: (a) prompt students to consider their response to God's unfailing love; or (b) provide the opportunity for students to publicly announce that their life is now committed to God. Understandably, any group of students will respond to an altar call in a variety of ways and for a variety of personal reasons. Frequently, the student's earlier life experiences with a significant Christian individual (e.g., parent, minister, teacher, friend, etc.), will either have enhanced or negatively influenced the student's concept of the character of God and/or the significance of Christian salvation and the conversion experience.

The following four scenarios illustrate why some students decide to respond to a public altar call. They are:

1. Students who want to please an adult respond to an adult's influence rather than to a godly conviction<sup>4</sup>;
2. Students who are captured and caught up in the mood of the event respond without having made a conscious decision to follow Christ<sup>5</sup>;
3. Students who are fearful and terrified of eternal spiritual consequences if they don't respond to an altar call feel compelled and obligated to respond; and
4. Students who are under godly conviction genuinely desire and respond to an altar call to surrender their heart and life to Christ.

After an altar call program, it may be advisable for Adventist teachers to take time to discuss and address the meaning and implications of a personal conversion experience. Not every student in the class will have a Christian background, and this often emotionally driven experience may be uncharted territory for non-churched students. Therefore, teacher explanation, debriefing, and clarification may be necessary. It's crucially important for students and teachers to recognize the difference between: (a) responding

**Figure 1. Age at Which Individuals Chose to Become a Christian**

**43 percent** accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior before reaching the age of 13;

**13 percent** between the ages of 18 to 21 years; and

**23 percent** made that commitment to Christ after their 21st birthday.<sup>2</sup>

to an altar call; and (b) responding to God’s love because of an altar call. Sometimes these two concepts can be confused in the emotion of the experience as demonstrated in the four scenarios above.

Another topic that needs attention in the Christian classroom involves an understanding of the conceptual differences between the terms *knowing God* and *knowing about God*. The term *knowing about God* (head knowledge) often indicates that a person has knowledge about God, the Bible, etc., but not a personal relationship with God. Whereas the term *knowing God* (heart knowledge) usually indicates that a person has a personal heart-relationship with God that extends far be-

yond a superficial knowledge. The latter term describes an active engagement, while the former involves passive knowledge.<sup>6</sup> The teacher’s goal is for each of his or her students to personally experience God on a daily basis (heart knowledge) rather than just having a head knowledge about Him.

### Factors That Influence a Student’s Readiness for Salvation

A child’s concept and understanding of salvation can be influenced, either positively or negatively, by the factors listed in Figure 2. Adventist teachers need an awareness of the impact that these factors can have on a child’s readiness for salvation.

**Figure 2: Factors That Influence a Student’s Readiness for Salvation<sup>7</sup>**

<b>Home influences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive parental modeling of a committed Christian life can demonstrate to a student the power of salvation.</li> <li>• Parental hypocrisy regarding the application of Christianity may impede a student’s understanding of salvation.</li> <li>• Different religious affiliations held by parents may result in a young person experiencing conflicting parental loyalties.</li> </ul>
<b>Cognitive maturity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental maturity and chronological age may not always be synchronized.</li> <li>• Different levels of cognitive maturity influence a student’s ability to understand and experience salvation.</li> <li>• Some cognitively precocious students may understand the implications of salvation at a younger age than their peers. These students can be highly sensitive to hypocrisy and may be deeply conscious of their fallibility and sinfulness.</li> </ul>
<b>Emotional security</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If early in life, students have a stable home and see consistency in parental interactions, in most cases, this will help them develop a positive sense of trust and love. This type of home climate can also help them to love and trust Jesus.</li> <li>• Students from an insecure, dysfunctional, or deprived home may have difficulty developing an understanding of trust and love.</li> </ul>
<b>Biblical knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge about, a belief and confidence in, and a love of the Bible will assist students to comprehend and respond to salvation.</li> </ul>
<b>Personality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some students appear to be religiously inclined and have a sensitive and emotional nature.</li> <li>• Some students who are deep thinkers may take time to process information before responding to it.</li> <li>• Some students may show no overt interest in Christianity unless a significant adult challenges them to think about developing a personal relationship with God.</li> </ul>
<b>Religious upbringing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the child’s religious background has been based on a solid biblical foundation, he or she will be ready at a younger age to accept Jesus.<sup>8</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Peer pressure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students may be swayed by the attitudes of their friends.</li> <li>• Students who are spirituality minded will often be attracted to friends with the same attitude. The reverse is also true. Like attracts like.</li> </ul>
<b>Early childhood contact with Christianity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive initial experiences with Christianity, especially in early childhood, may contribute to and influence the lifelong acceptance of salvation and a Christian lifestyle.</li> </ul>



## Leading Students to Understand and Accept Salvation

Unlike any other faith and belief system, there are no steps that people can follow to make them acceptable to the God of Christianity. Christians believe “that God has already completed the steps and simply calls on us to receive Him in faith.”<sup>9</sup> Salvation involves accepting what Jesus has already done for us.

Children develop an understanding of salvation based on the level of their cognitive development. To help students understand the abstract concept of salvation, the *Children’s Ministry Resource Bible* provides multiple, practical age-specific ideas such as the following:<sup>10</sup>

1. *The Wordless Book*, which uses colored paper to symbolize the story of salvation, presenting the Cosmic Conflict story in an abridged form.<sup>11</sup>

2. *The Salvation Hand*. Each finger on the hand has a specific statement and Bible verse that describes the message of salvation.<sup>12</sup>

If a student asks, “How can I be saved?” Calkins suggests that teachers can use the following uncomplicated explanation:

1. Jesus loves us as we are. Nothing can make Him love us more or less than He does right now.

2. Wrongdoing is called sin, and everyone has sinned. Everyone needs Jesus because no one is good enough for heaven without His help.

3. Jesus is the sinless Son of God. He died for our sins. Believing in Him is the only way to heaven.

4. We pray and ask Jesus to forgive our sins, admitting we need His help. We cannot do it on our own. If we choose to accept Him into our lives, He can create in us new thoughts and actions.

5. If we accept Jesus into our lives, we will become His adopted child—a child of the King. We will now belong to His kingdom on earth and have a reserved place in His heavenly kingdom.<sup>13</sup>

Helping students to understand salvation, and then to witness their acknowledgement and acceptance of Jesus as their personal Savior, is a highlight of every Christian educator’s career.

## Barriers to Experiencing God

Numerous media attractions and sociocultural issues continually bombard Christians young and old. The family unit is under attack, self-harm is on the rise, and substance abuse is in epidemic proportions. All these issues can become barriers to a child experiencing God on a personal level. Adventist educators, however, are in the unique position of being able to help students address these barriers if they themselves have personally experienced the grace and love of God. As teachers model what it means to be strongly committed to and involved with a Christian worldview and lifestyle, students in their care will witness and experience the meaning of strong Christian leadership.

There are significant barriers that thwart a student’s ability to experience a personal relationship with God, including the following:

1. **Hypocrisy of adults:** Young people can detect hypocrisy very quickly in adults. According to Habenicht and Burton, hypocrisy can inoculate students against Christianity.<sup>14</sup>

2. **Lack of love and trust in early childhood:** Dysfunctional families are incapable of giving children the love, care, nurture, and sense of security that everyone needs. In such families, children learn not to trust or love another person, and it becomes difficult for them to trust God.<sup>15</sup>

3. **Poor parenting:** Some parents are permissive and laid-back while others are controlling and severe. Children’s early concepts of God come from the way their parents interact with, and treat, them.

4. **Distorted images of God:** Children taught to believe that God always answers prayers sometimes develop distorted images of God when their prayers are not answered in the way they anticipated. Parents who portray God as being harsh, dictatorial, and a revengeful Being present a warped view of God to their children.<sup>16</sup>

5. **Family break-up:** When a child’s family is in crisis, he or she may not understand what is happening, and may become aggressive and/or withdrawn. Such children learn to turn off their emotions to protect their inner sensitivity in order to survive. Because developing a relationship with God often includes one’s emotions, young people who struggle with regulating their emotions or whose emotions are out of control due to life circumstances may have a difficult time dealing with their emotions.<sup>17</sup>

6. **People pressure:** Pressure from adults to become a Christian may result in children rejecting Christianity. Also, when a child’s parents each belong to a different faith, this can cause the child to feel torn between the two religions and pressured by a parent to accept or reject one or the other parent’s religion.<sup>18</sup>

7. **Lack of belonging:** Belonging resolves the sense of need and provides a sense of purpose. In many cases, students who build friendships with their Christian peers have a greater sense of belonging and higher self-worth. Students who lack Christian friends often leave their faith community because they do not feel they have anything in common with that community.<sup>19</sup>

8. **Media influence:** Media often make fun of Christians and Christianity, portraying Christians as people who are incompetent, boring, and inept. Young people will have to develop resiliency and knowledge to counter these stereotypes in order to live as Christians in the 21st century.

9. **Misunderstanding of the relationship between faith and reason:** Faith and reason are neither opposites nor mutually exclusive. History demonstrates that some of the world’s greatest discoveries were made by Christian scholars, e.g., Louis Pasteur, Galileo, and Isaac Newton. How sad that many people in modern society consider Christian faith, reason, and scholarship to be incompatible. “To believe in God is not to put the mind on hold—rather, it is mind and heart and sometimes also the body working together to make meaning in one’s life.”<sup>20</sup> This is because Christians recognize that their mind, heart, and body together play a significant role in their reasoning, cognition, and faith development.

10. **Abuse:** This is of growing concern worldwide. Unfortunately, it also happens in a Christian context, not just between adults and children, but often among peers as well. To abuse the trust of a child is to destroy that child's trust in God. God has no patience with people who harm a child. He says in Matthew 18:6: "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matthew 18:6, KJV). Christian teachers and schools have a responsibility to create safe spaces for children and young adults by establishing policies that prevent and address abuse.

Leading a student to understand and accept salvation is a responsibility and a privilege. It also requires teachers to be knowledgeable and sensitive about this delicate process. Adventist educators should provide as many opportunities as possible for students to experience God. Some students will eagerly accept any opportunity to experience and connect with God; some may choose to reject the provided opportunities; while others may need assistance to overcome

barriers obstructing their involvement in this experience.

Teachers need to know, understand, and experience salvation for themselves before they can authentically explain and demonstrate it to a student. It is the responsibility of Adventist educators to sow the seeds of God's love and grace. The Holy Spirit waters and nurtures their growth, and God ensures the harvest.

### Experiencing God Through Music

Music has a vital role in reaching and touching the heart with spiritual truth. However, music may motivate for good or evil because it touches the emotions and can make a person more susceptible to suggestions that encourage or denigrate godly thoughts and intentions. Students need to be taught how to choose music that honors God and does not corrupt their head, heart, or hand. When life becomes difficult, and students are struggling to make sense of their world, memorized faith-based songs encourage, inspire, and positively motivate. Music can be a vehicle to connect or re-connect a person to God.



## Experiencing God Through Answered Questions

As students mature and move from a concrete and literal cognitive understanding to a more abstract approach to thinking, some of them will question certain aspects of their faith. Unanswered prayer, the role of angels, and the challenges of negotiating difficult times are some of the most commonly raised issues. Students need to develop their faith and make it their own, and questioning is one way to facilitate this ownership. Teachers need to be sensitive and provide support for the students as they discover and develop, or reject, aspects of a personal faith.

An important aspect of a maturing faith for students is their realization of their role in the cosmic conflict. Everyone feels the consequences of the evil one as he creates as much havoc as he can, and then encourages people to think that God is the culprit. With reference to the devil, Habenicht and Burton pointed out that, "God's people are not immune from his strikes."<sup>21</sup> However, when unfortunate things happen in life, students need to understand that God is not the problem; indeed, He can be the solution to the problem.<sup>22</sup> If God stepped in every time something negative happened, then many people would follow God from the wrong motives. If students learn to trust God when things are tough, they will discover that He is trustworthy. Trusting God does not change the circumstances, but it will change the students' attitudes and the way they deal with the issues. When students are hurting, teachers may reassure them by saying: "Jesus is right beside you. He will carry you in his arms. He loves you and is crying too."<sup>23</sup>

## Closing Thoughts

Growing in Christ and experiencing God are enhanced through age-appropriate experiences. As students mature, they will question previously accepted beliefs as they take greater responsibility for their own faith, and this questioning should be welcomed as a learning opportunity. Experiencing God may be interrupted or delayed by barriers that children experience in their relationships with others. Christian teachers are privileged to have the opportunity to help remove these barriers in their classrooms, through modelling and living a Christian lifestyle. ✍

Part 2 of this article will appear in the April-June issue.

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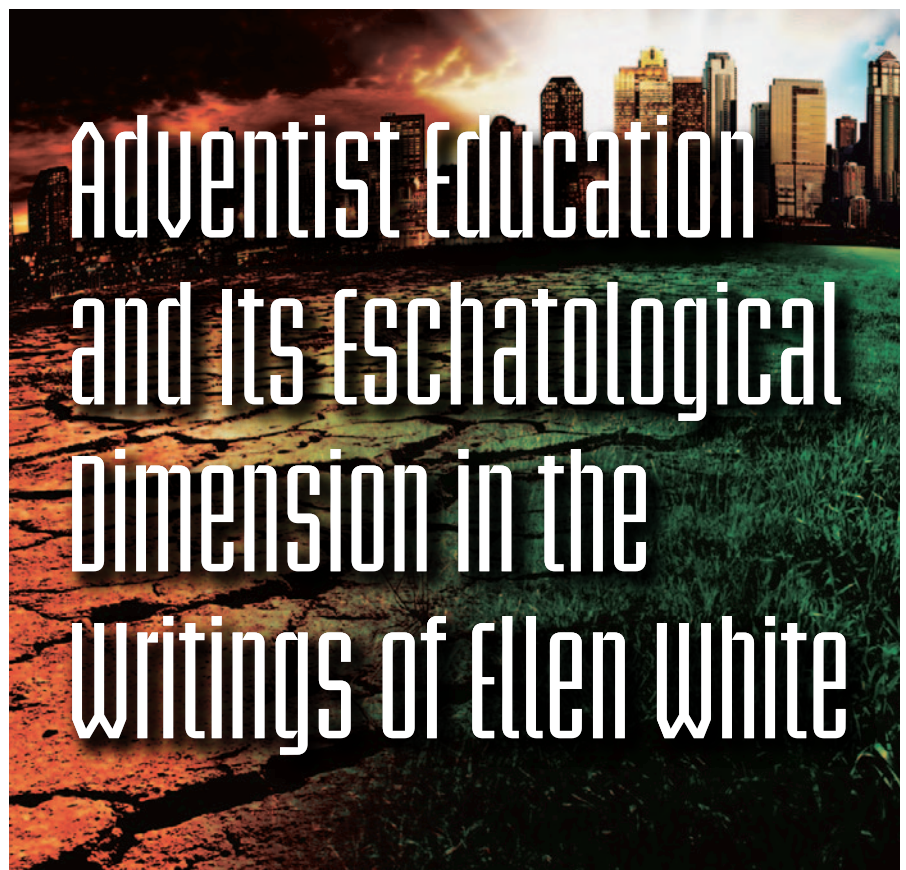
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Seventh-day Adventists have historically placed a high value on the Bible and its multifaceted truth, which has been illuminated and supported by the writings of Ellen G. White. Her writings have proved their authenticity concerning various aspects of life, including the universal challenges of this world and the rapidly developing last-day events. Moreover, the Bible

repeatedly points out that the biblical knowledge of God and His will for humanity are to be shared with every human being. That is one of the reasons why Ellen White frequently spoke about Adventist education, which imparts and fosters a balanced development of the whole person spiritually, intellectually, physically, and socially in a faith-and-learning environment.

The philosophical value of Adventist education and its proper imple-

mentation in the lives of God's people in the context of the final eschatological events are inseparable concepts. Thus, considering the eschatological context of the great controversy between good and evil, truth and falsehood, Ellen White called on the church to be educated in "the working out of God's purpose in the history of nations and in the revelation of things to come," because there are

BY ANNA M. GALENIECE

“lessons to be learned, the work to be done, the transformation of character to be effected.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, this article seeks to clarify, in the light of the Spirit of Prophecy, the nature and function of those challenges in the context of Adventist education that every teacher and educational administrator must face, recognize, and overcome in order to be ready for the rapidly approaching final eschatological events.

### The Three Pillars of Adventist Education

Seventh-day Adventist education has been built on three historical pillars that bring together the past, the present, and the future: *redemption*, *wholeness*, and *permanence*. Adventist education has its own unique history of about 145 years since the beginning of Ellen White’s contribution to it and the establishment of the first Adventist school in 1872.<sup>2</sup> However, to find the beginning of the extended history of education, one must go back throughout the ages of humanity. The educational pattern established by God in the Garden of Eden was characterized by close association and a direct relationship between humanity and divinity.<sup>3</sup> At that time, the first created human beings were exposed to physical, mental, and spiritual lessons which they were privileged to learn from surrounding nature and directly from their Creator. The first couple would carry these wholistic lessons with them throughout their life, long after they were displaced from their original home (Genesis 3:24).

Many years later, Moses in his last sermon called God’s people to continuously educate their children—when they sat, walked, laid down, and rose up—in order to impart to them the moral values of life (Deuteronomy 6:7). These standards of a proper training of a child have not diminished with time. The words of the Lord to the priest Eli, “those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed” (1 Samuel 2:30, NKJV),<sup>4</sup> remind the contemporary generations to revere the Almighty God.

Thus, the principles of Christ-centered educational methodology—to touch the human heart with knowledge of eternal values—were first introduced in Eden, taught by the patriarchs, repeated by Jesus, and re-emphasized throughout the ages by faithful believers who shared them with their children. These principles have not been altered with the passing of time or change of geographical

The notion that redemption engages the attention of the Creator of the universe elevates the students. They are given the privilege of being engaged in the highest educational exercise ever known to human beings, one that will even be the subject of study throughout the unending ages of eternity.

location. From the writings of Ellen White, these are deduced to be *redemption*, *wholeness*, and *permanence*.<sup>5</sup>

### Redemption

Ellen White devoted numerous pages to the topic of Christ’s redemptive acts of love on behalf of the fallen human beings. Such books as *The Desire of Ages*, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, *Steps to Christ*, *The Ministry of Healing*, et cetera, offer profound insights about Christ’s sacrifice. However, in the book *Education*, Ellen White put a special accent on educa-

tion by vividly describing it as a work of redemption. In Chapter 4 she explained this concept by stating that “[i]n the highest sense the work of education and the work of redemption are one.”<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the aim of this unity is to help students to initiate an intimate relationship with Christ that will become the “controlling power”<sup>7</sup> in their lives (1 Corinthians 3:11). Without this transformation, education becomes “more harmful than beneficial.”<sup>8</sup>

In addition to this, Ellen White stated that “the science of redemption is the science of all sciences.”<sup>9</sup> This is the training that can be compared to the process of restoration because it is the method “by which the soul is trained for heaven.”<sup>10</sup> The notion that redemption engages the attention of the Creator of the universe elevates the students. They are given the privilege of being engaged in the highest educational exercise ever known to human beings, one that will even be the subject of study throughout the unending ages of eternity.<sup>11</sup>

### Wholeness

*Wholeness* is another fundamental principle of true education, as can clearly be seen in Ellen White’s writings. It stands for “the preparation of the physical, mental, and moral powers for the performance of every duty; it is the training of body, mind, and soul for divine service.”<sup>12</sup> This calls for a wholesome approach to life in general and education in particular. For human beings to experience a wholistically balanced development, the curricula also need to be balanced and well-rounded. Therefore, we must include faith elements in the learning process, as well as for physical education that will benefit not only the body, but also the mind and soul of the students of all ages.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, Adventist education, when planned and implemented effectively, presents a balanced perspective that incorporates the academic aspects of the students’ development.<sup>14</sup> Effective physical training that engages youth in productive work helps them to elevate their minds to spiritual realities

and develop their character<sup>15</sup>; and character is the quality that can endure throughout eternity.<sup>16</sup>

At the same time, physical labor is not a free passport to heaven (Acts 4:12; Romans 6:23); neither is the process of character formation and development a matter of gaining credit with God, for “our works in and of themselves have no merit.”<sup>17</sup> It is only through the grace of God that individuals grow and develop to reach “the perfection of Christian character, striving continually for conformity to the will of God.”<sup>18</sup> Hence, a balanced, wholistic development of the person plays a decisive and distinguishing role in true education, contrasts sharply with all other educational approaches and philosophical standards.

### **Permanence**

The third principle of Adventist education stands for its continuity throughout the “whole period of existence possible to human beings.”<sup>19</sup> Ellen White described in detail a perspective of continuous learning processes that begin in the womb, continue throughout childhood and adolescence and into maturity, and extend into eternity if the person stays faithful to God. Thus, much of her writings are dedicated to personal development before the individual reaches adulthood,<sup>20</sup> starting with prenatal influences on the embryo through the mother’s attitude and disposition.<sup>21</sup> The value of such stimuli is often ignored or misunderstood. However, God values even unborn children, and He has a plan for each one of them (Isaiah 49:1, 5; Jeremiah 1:5).

Ellen White wrote in depth about the value of home education and recommended that both parents should play an important role not only as teachers, but also by standing in place of God to their young ones to enable them to comprehend His beautiful character.<sup>22</sup> She frequently emphasized that the Christian home

should be “a symbol of the home in heaven<sup>23</sup>” where true education is combined with love, and discipline molds and fashions the young.

At the same time, Ellen White was a great advocate for church schools<sup>24</sup> being established whenever and wherever possible, whether connected to small or large churches in rural or urban areas, for the benefit of children’s wholistic development, and where children can learn the value of service to others. For this reason, the

**Adventist education plays a crucial role in the further development of true identity in the minds and hearts of young ones by preparing them to become active participants in God’s missiological plan on this earth. The missiological concept combines two traditional approaches that must work together.**

moral quality of teachers’ character should be considered as important as their intellectual development: “The teacher’s spiritual growth is sustained by the interaction between two imperatives—religious beliefs and religious practices.”<sup>25</sup>

In addition to church schools, Ellen White stressed the importance and value of the local church where education continues for all ages training church members to carry forth the work of bringing others to Christ.<sup>26</sup> She urged that “there should be no delay in this well-planned effort to educate the church mem-

bers”<sup>27</sup> so that they will grow in Christian graces and unbelievers around them “may be charmed by the faith that produces such results.”<sup>28</sup> Thus, God’s people of all ages and ranks can grow in grace through obtaining a wholistic education, because “the works of salvation and redemption are available to all who would avail themselves of the opportunity through Christ.”<sup>29</sup> There are no exceptions to the continual educational process, except one’s personal rejection of it, because “[i]n the school of Christ students never graduate. Among the pupils are both the old and the young.”<sup>30</sup>

As a culmination of a continuous educational journey, Ellen White prophetically elaborated on this grand occasion with the heavenly scenes in mind: “All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God’s children. With unutterable delight we shall enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings.”<sup>31</sup> That is why she consistently called her readers to pursue true education on this earth as much as possible, so that God’s people can not only live with Him throughout eternity, but also in order that the education gained here “will be perfected in heaven” where the redeemed “will only just enter a higher grade.”<sup>32</sup>

### **Adventist Education: Missiological Purpose**

Adventist education plays a crucial role in the further development of true identity in the minds and hearts of young ones by preparing them to become active participants in God’s missiological plan on this earth. The missiological concept combines two traditional approaches that must work together. On the one hand, there is a need to preserve the identity of the church by protecting and nurturing the church’s youth. On the other hand, the missiological element and the way of living are critical aspects. If the church wants to faithfully fulfill the Great Commission in view of Christ’s soon coming, these



two dimensions must be combined.<sup>33</sup> However, in its essence, while the second aspect was strongly emphasized by God's messenger more than 100 years ago, it has not yet been fully utilized in the Adventist educational system.

Ellen White envisioned young people being in the very front of God's work and ardently leading its missionary outreach to the world. To her, they "will with their ardent zeal stir up the sluggish energies of God's people, and so increase the power of the church in the world."<sup>34</sup> In *Education* she proclaimed: "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!"<sup>35</sup> This calls for Adventist educational institutions to seriously reconsider not only a re-emphasis on the preservation of true Adventist identity, but also its missiological purpose in order to fulfill Christ's commission (Matthew 28:19, 20) and advance God's kingdom.

### **Adventist Education: Transformational Discipleship**

Nurturing spiritual disciplines in the lives of young people depends on surrounding them with teachers and educational administrators they can trust. In other words, they need adult role models who love them unconditionally while showing them the reality about themselves, people around them, and God as their Maker and Redeemer.<sup>36</sup> This group of adults includes not only teachers and administrators at school and parents at home, but also the local church members, church pastor, and his or her team of lay ministers. The influential role of these individuals in education is crucial and should not be minimized since they are in the business of developing citizens for the kingdom of God.

Esmond, elaborating on the same note, calls for education providers to model transformational discipleship instead of behavior modification among young ones.<sup>37</sup> Transformational discipleship requires not just a

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one-time interaction, but the establishment of a lasting friendship with a positive role model. He explains that in order to help children and youth "make the leap from mere belief in God to owning their walk with Him, and by extension His counsels to them, churches must create opportunities for them to be mentored by caring, mature followers of Christ."<sup>38</sup> By extension, the underlying point here is to educate church members concerning their responsibility of being "spiritual parents" to every child and young adult in the local church and church school.

Thus, the eschatological aspect of Adventist education can be fully grasped and implemented when a combination of education at home, in Adventist schools, and the equipping church with its pastor, are actively involved in God's mission. This collaboration of the above-mentioned entities will not only motivate young people, but also arm them with insights and understanding concerning their responsibilities before and during final eschatological events so that they will be ready and willing to dedicate their talents, energy, and indeed

their entire lives to prepare themselves and others for eternity.<sup>39</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Ellen White's eschatological statement, "The last great conflict between truth and error is but the final struggle of the long-standing controversy concerning the law of God,"<sup>40</sup> calls for every Adventist to become serious concerning the quality of their spiritual lives and to teach others the value of establishing a loving relationship with Christ. There will be a final collision between human laws and the precepts of Yahweh, between the clear commandments of the Bible and counterfeit religion based on human tradition.<sup>41</sup> Hence every believer, whether young or old, has to be educated and established in Christ in order to overcome the enemy and be victorious at the soon coming of Christ.

This calls the contemporary Seventh-day Adventist Church to re-examine and re-emphasize the importance of Adventist education by all its means and on all its levels in order to be able to stay faithful in the face of the rapidly approaching eschatological events. One must remember that the authentic education given in the Bible and recapped in the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy will stand the test of time and continue through eternity. In her writings, Ellen White contributed immensely to this cause. She called on believers to get personally acquainted with Christ and His will, and to teach the principles of Christianity to their children at home, school, and church. They "need courage, firmness, and a knowledge of God and His Word" so that "the light of a godlike character" in their lives will "shine the brightest,"<sup>42</sup> and they will choose to become the winners on God's side. Therefore, one of the greatest challenges facing all educators and school administrators, including the parents, pastors, and church members, is to clearly understand the true value of Adventist education, its significance, and its far-ranging consequences, to reassess and support it with all the available means, because "[t]hose who are wise shall shine

Like the brightness of the firmament,  
And those who turn many to right-  
eousness Like the stars forever and  
ever” (Daniel 12:3, NKJV). ✍

**This article has been peer reviewed.**



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Maybe you've noticed—many of the younger generation aren't reading Ellen White. Often the problem is that, to them, her writings have lost their relevance. So how can church leaders, including teachers and educational administrators, encourage young people to read her books?

**1. You are the introduction!** People associate the message with the messenger. If you project a sad, angry, or judgmental attitude, unconsciously young people will project this onto Ellen White's writing. They will also pick up on your nonverbalized attitudes. Make sure the introduction is positive. No one should be introduced to Ellen White with, "Ellen White says you shouldn't . . . ."

**2. The guilt trip probably won't work.** The younger generation has much to keep them entertained. For many, reading is difficult, as they are tuned into visual stimuli. They need to be shown the relevance of her writings in order for them to make the effort to explore her writings.

**3. Share your experience.** One way you can show relevance is by sharing your experience. How did an Ellen White book bring you closer to God? How did it help you in a crisis? What practical advice from her writings helps you solve a problem?

**4. Share a favorite quote.** While younger generations might not be into lengthy reading, they are quick to latch on to short, relevant quotes. Short quotes, preferably one or two lines, will go further and have more of an impact than longer paragraphs. The challenge is to not take these quotes out of context. It is also important to select positive, Christ-centered quotes. Yes, Ellen White has many pointed things to say about sin and sinful practices, but until young people have their own personal relationship with Jesus, these statements will be more likely to repel than draw them.

**5. Tell human interest stories.** For some, Ellen White seems to be a kind of Adventist saint—far removed from our daily struggles. Leaders have sometimes been embarrassed to tell of her struggles and victories, thinking that these would somehow discredit her to a younger generation. In fact, it does the opposite. Knowing she had struggles and challenges makes her relatable and demonstrates God's ability to carry each of us through life's challenges.

**6. Give a book.** Encourage the practice of giving a high quality (not a cheap paperback) book such as *Steps to Christ* for special occasions. Baptisms, birthdays, or graduations can be important moments to gift a book. Be sure the young person knows this is personal (perhaps with his or her name en-

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graved) and not some sort of advertising.

**7. Positively role model advice.** This is perhaps the most difficult but also the most effective way to get young people reading Ellen White's writings. They are looking and wondering if her writings really make a difference. Are the leaders who quote Ellen White the nicest or nastiest Christians? Do they have happy, healthy marriages? What is their relationship to their children? Do they loudly promote a vegetarian diet and just as loudly announce that they hardly ever get more than four hours sleep at night because they are so busy working? Young people are not looking for perfection, but authenticity.

**8. Never use Ellen White as a weapon** or club to beat a young person into submission or try to control others. The first application of her advice should always begin with the individual teacher or educational administrator.

Ellen White's writings have much to offer. By God's grace, Adventist educators can help young people discover in her writings biblical principles, timeless advice, and a saving relationship with Jesus. ✍

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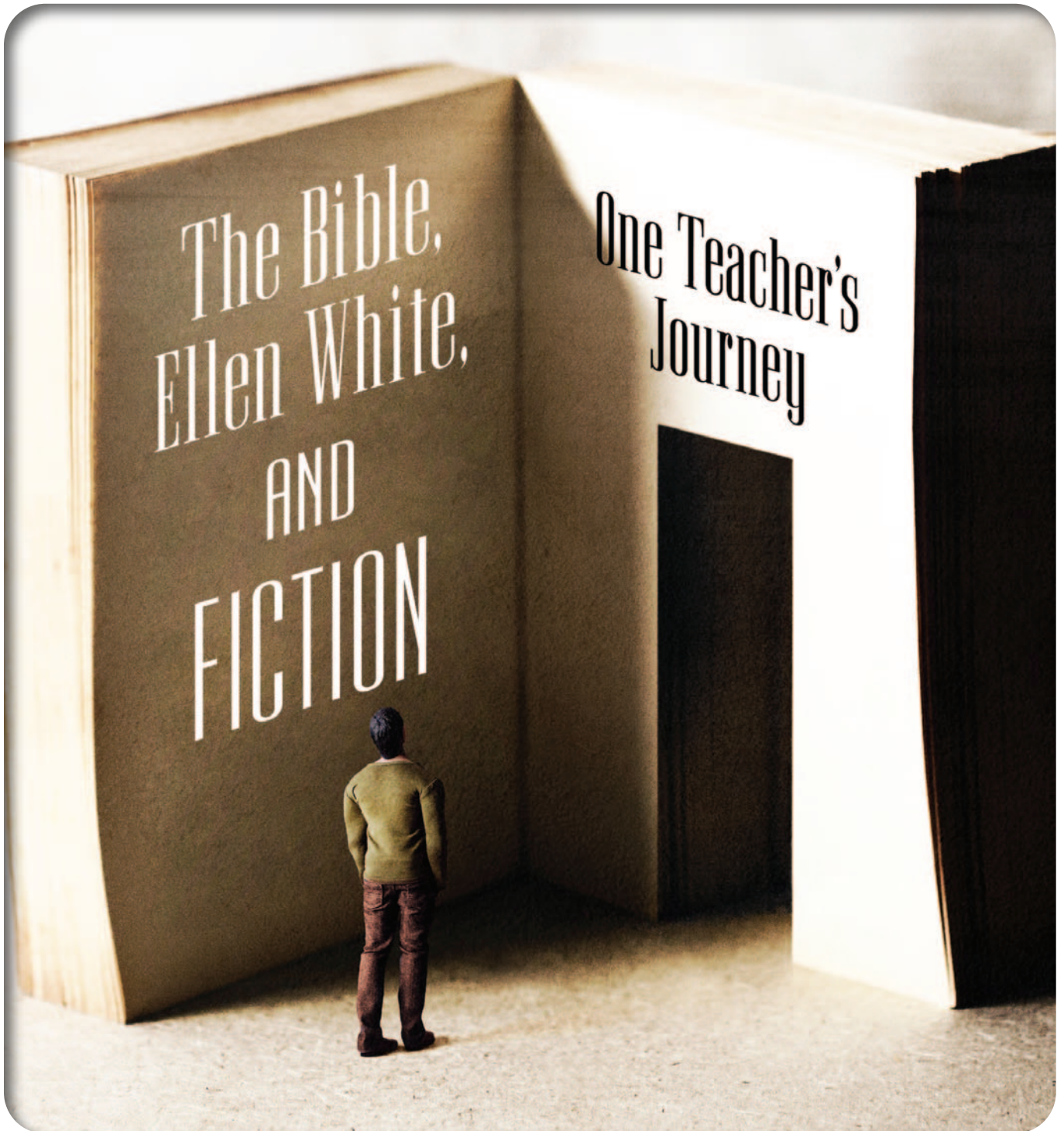
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Derek C. Bowe



**M**y journey with fiction has been a long one—stretching from the untroubled days of childhood to the tumultuous years of youth, as well as from the probing, vigorous period of young manhood to the settled, flowering stage of late adulthood. In my engagement with fiction, I have experienced joy and light, but I have also suffered unexpected sadness and endured deep darkness. My journey has been blessed with God-fearing, selfless teachers, but it also has been challenged by agnostic and career-absorbed professors. All along my Emmaus pathway, despite my foolishness and slowness of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken, Jesus has been with me, patiently prodding me to an understanding of fiction's role.

My initial engagement with fiction was biblical in nature. It was graced with childhood's peace and buttressed by life-forming principles. As though it were not decades ago, I remember my younger sister and myself as preschoolers sitting together enveloped in our mother's arms, one on the left and the other on the right. There we lisped the songs of Zion, memorized the Beatitudes and other Scriptures, and wonderingly heard the parable of the prodigal son and other stories—all narrated in our mother's inimitable style. This was later fleshed out in my elementary school years by Naomi Blatch, my public school teacher.<sup>1</sup> Even now I can see each of us toddling to the front of the class, taking turns to read stories from *Bible Firsts*. To my recep-

tive mind, it was thus natural to see the Bible stories and heroes as most fascinating.

All of that changed, however, as I continued my journey. In middle school, I encountered the worlds of the Brothers Grimm, a landscape peopled by Hansel and Gretel and darkened by witches and evil stepmothers. There I learned to relish folk tales of Jack and the Beanstalk, ogres and dwarfs, and waifs and fairy godmothers. It was a strange world, but while its darkness and suspense caused my heart to pound and breath to stop, it destroyed my peace, moving Jesus to the outskirts of my thoughts. High school's fictional world next loomed on the horizon, appealing to, and in some ways creating, my growing rebelliousness, with its introduction of apparent sexual freedom in the works of authors like D. H. Lawrence and John Updike, of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and *Couples* fame, respectively. As I became immersed in fiction, using it as a hub for my life and writing my own stories and plays, one of which was award-winning, peace deserted me, and Jesus became a faint echo. Still, mesmerized by fiction's strange pull, I perceived myself as sophisticated, avant-garde, and liberated.

While a partial return to the first works of my childhood provided some steadiness and satisfaction during my Adventist college years, my journey with fiction even then was sometimes puzzling. In my undergraduate years, a warm and unquestionably competent English professor kept immoral fiction from entering his courses, while retaining works that focused on epics and hinted at the fanciful and magical. However, he faithfully correlated them to life and

counter-balanced them with the Bible. A new way of seeing fiction thus opened to me, but something was still missing. Unfortunately, the vacuum was not filled by my graduate school program's paying its obligatory homage to Shakespeare and other luminaries of fiction. In fact, my uneasiness deepened with a professor's focus on Geoffrey Chaucer's fabliaux, naughty tales of cuckolded husbands and straying wives, narrated in a stream of unchecked description and salaciousness. Revolted by the place given the raunchy tales in this Adventist institution, I penned a more than 20-page analysis titled "Chaucer's Reeve's and Miller's Tales: Medieval Pornography?" I found the writing of this project paper cathartic, and became convinced that fiction's roles were not only to entertain its readers cleverly and to appeal to their appreciation of beauty skillfully, but also to petition their higher selves wisely and uplift them morally.

My journey with fiction afterwards took a momentous turn. After graduate school, I myself became a teacher of fiction. Newly minted and enthusiastic, I faced a quandary at my undergraduate alma mater. Would I now teach fiction with the sometimes distasteful content of my educational past? Would I instead teach it in a kind of synthesis, mimicking my undergraduate professor's lead of sifting out overtly harmful works, but keeping ones that I regarded as innocuous, though questionable? Or would I terminate it altogether? Over the years, a nagging conscience and increased interaction with my students

helped me to answer these questions.

Surprisingly, one of the students inadvertently helping me along the way was a freshman in a composition course. Taking issue with one of the course's assigned stories, he objected to a jaded Hemingway character's apparent disparagement of God when, in his reflections, he mocked religion and The Lord's Prayer in such phrases as "Our nada who art in nada, nada be thy name" ("A Clean, Well-Lighted Place").<sup>2</sup> However, to me the charac-

**Jesus employed an arsenal of literary devices to captivate His audience's attention and grace His stories with the same commitment to beauty and perfection that He lavished on His created works.**

ter's outburst was born of disillusionment and in no way obscene or irrelevant; it was merely factual, revealing his confusion and despair.

The student, on the other hand, saw it as dangerous and sacrilegious, demonstrating one of many opinions why fiction should not be taught in the Christian school. I countered, exclaiming that Jesus Himself used fiction, employing it effectively in many of His parables. While I later honored the student's desire not to read

any fiction by assigning him factual substitutes, privately I was troubled. His brave and unqualified dedication to his beliefs simmered in my mind. Could he, a freshman, be right, and could I, an instructor taught by luminaries in my field, be wrong? Most importantly, was he being used to bring me back to what I myself had objected to when reading Chaucer's fabliaux in graduate school?

The other student challenging my perspective on fiction was a junior in a colleague's upper-division literature course. Where his younger counterpart was zealous and boisterous in proclaiming his views, he was calm and analytical in objecting to an Ernest Gaines novel. Armed with actual passages from the novel, he sat in my office (I now served as chair of the English Department), explaining his discomfort with its offensive language, immoral situations, and ultimate effect. His approach invited me to consider whether God supported such works being taught at His school—and to young people being prepared for service on earth and citizenship in heaven. I was moved by the tact and obvious truth of his remonstrance—so moved, in fact, that I encouraged my colleagues to avoid teaching such works.

That was not the end, for the young man reignited the simmering flame occasioned by the first student. Painstakingly, I evaluated my own courses, removing from them everything that ran counter to the Bible's counsel on imagination and truth. No longer could I try to massage them into sanitary fare for student consumption. No longer would I subject students, in the name of artistry and relevance, to the unabashed filth, raunchiness, violence, and graphic sexuality of such works as Amiri Baraka's *Dutchman*, Allen Ginsberg's *Howl*, and Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*.

The Scriptures guiding my reassessment assumed a clarity and dimension that I had somehow overlooked. I found King David helpful

when he wrote, "I will set no base thing before mine eyes; I hate the works of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave unto me" and "A perverse heart shall depart from me; I will know no evil thing" and (Psalm 101:4; 101:3, ASV).<sup>3</sup> Paul was helpful, advising, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Ephesians 4:29, KJV). To me, the apostle clarified the whole matter when he implored, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8, KJV).

I also found Jesus' own use of stories most instructive. As the Master Teacher, He always told them with a clear purpose—people's restoration to the joy, health, and fulfillment that they knew at the beginning of time. He came, He emphasized, "that they could have life—indeed, so that they could live life to the fullest" (John 10:10, CEB).<sup>4</sup> This dedication did not prevent Him from arming His tales from an arsenal of literary devices, but He employed them to captivate His audience's attention and grace His stories with the same commitment to beauty and perfection that He lavished on His created works. His stories brim with such literary features as personification, metaphor, simile, hyperbole, irony, soliloquy, and allusion, and run the gamut from comedy and tragedy to allegory and faction—the use of actual events for storytelling purposes. Thus, the parable of the sower dazzles not only with Jesus' brilliance in using a well-known activity to illustrate a point about the gospel's reception, but it also plumbs the multi-layered, beleaguered nature of the human mind.



**“We are to extol neither idolatry nor men who did not choose to serve God. Years ago, reproof was given our editors in regard to advocating the reading of even such books as ‘Uncle Tom’s Cabin,’ ‘Aesop’s Fables,’ and ‘Robinson Crusoe.’ Those who begin to read such works usually desire to continue to read novels.”**

Certainly, the parable of the prodigal son poignantly captures the infectious joy of a loving father as he welcomes home his life-bruised son but, in a stroke of genius, Jesus leaves the story’s ending in His audience’s hands: How are they going to treat the prodigal sons and daughters of their own circles? Are they going to stand sulking and judgmental outside the welcoming parties, or are they going to join the fun and embrace them since they were “dead and [have] come back to life” and “lost, but now . . . found”? (Luke 15:32, NLT).<sup>5</sup> All of this shows that when fiction is used as Jesus used it, it is an engaging, instructive tool for illuminating and helping the human condition. When it is not, it cheapens and even degrades this God-given gift, shortchanging its audience.

I have found that Ellen White,<sup>6</sup> who said her writings are a lesser light leading readers to the Bible’s greater light, underscored and amplified its position on fiction. When I speak with respected, knowledgeable colleagues my concerns about fiction, I encounter several objections. First, they maintain that when Mrs. White spoke against fiction, she was protesting the dime novels of late 19th-century America, not fiction in general. Second, if fiction were to be weeded out of our curriculum, we would cripple our students’ chances of entering secular graduate schools and relegate

our own institutions to Bible college status.

Respectfully, I have not found evidence to support the first objection. Indeed, statement after statement from the Spirit of Prophecy maintains the opposite. Perhaps just a few would suffice here, however. In *The Adventist Home*, Mrs. White wrote about the harmful effects of story tales, classical myths, and infidel authors. She lamented:

“The world is deluged with books that might better be consumed than circulated. Books on sensational topics, published and circulated as a money-making scheme, might better never be read by the youth. . . . The practice of story reading is one of the means employed by Satan to destroy souls. It produces a false, unhealthy excitement, fevers the imagination, unfits the mind for usefulness, and disqualifies it for any spiritual exercise. It weans the soul from prayer and from the love of spiritual things.

“Works of romance, frivolous, exciting tales, are, in hardly less degree, a curse to the reader. The author may profess to teach a moral lesson; throughout his work he may interweave religious sentiments, but often these serve only to veil the folly and worthlessness beneath.”<sup>7</sup>

Her opposition to fiction was clear, broad, and firm, even taking to task

writers like William Shakespeare and Harriet Beecher Stowe. In *Manuscript Releases*, volume 6, she stated:

“Brethren, let us come to our senses. In more ways than one are we departing from God. Oh how ashamed I was of a recent number of the ‘Signs of the Times!’ On the first page is an article on Shakespeare, a man who died a few days after a drunken carousal, losing his life through indulgence of perverted appetite. In this article it is stated that he did many good works. Man is extolled. The good and the evil are placed on the same level, and published in a paper that our people use to give the third angel’s message to many of those who cannot be reached by the preached Word. . . .

“When we give the message in its purity, we shall have no use for pictures illustrating the birthplace of Shakespeare, or for pictures similar to the illustration of heathen goddesses that was used to fill the space on the first page of a recent number of the ‘Review and Herald.’ *We are not to educate others along these lines.* God pronounces against such articles and illustrations. I have a straightforward testimony to bear in regard to them. We are to extol neither idolatry nor men who did not choose to serve God. Years ago, reproof was given our editors in regard to advocating the reading of even such books as ‘Uncle Tom’s Cabin,’ ‘Aesop’s Fables,’ and ‘Robinson Crusoe.’ Those who begin to read such works usually desire to continue to read novels. Through the reading of enticing stories they rapidly lose their spirituality. This is one of the principal causes of the weak, uncertain spirituality of many of our youth.”<sup>8</sup>

Concerning the second objection about fiction’s importance and its removal weakening our academic program, Mrs. White had a dream in which Jesus Himself gave valuable advice to Adventist educators. They were avidly supporting the use of books by infidel authors, seeing them as necessary to the curriculum. How-

ever, Jesus differed, thoroughly explaining His position:

“One who is, and has long been, our Instructor, stepped forward, and taking in his hand the books which had been earnestly advocated as essential to a higher education, he said, Do you find in these authors sentiments and principles which make it altogether safe to place them in the hands of students? Human minds are

easily charmed by Satan’s lies; and these works produce in the mind a distaste for the contemplation of the word of God, which, if received and appreciated, insures eternal life to the receiver. You are creatures of habit, and if you had never read one word in these books, you would today be far better able to comprehend that Book which above all other books, is worthy to be studied, and which


gives the only correct ideas regarding higher education.

“Because it has been customary to include these authors among your lesson books, and because this custom is hoary with age, is no argument in its favor. This does not necessarily recommend them as safe or essential books. These books have led thousands where Satan led Adam and Eve, to eat of the tree of knowledge which God has forbidden. They lead students to forsake the study of the Scriptures for a line of education that is not essential. The words of men who give evidence that they know not Christ are not to find a place in our schools.”<sup>9</sup>

In a searing conclusion that brought the debate to an unquestionable conclusion, Mrs. White reported Jesus’ final words: “The Messenger of God took books from the hands of several teachers, and laid them aside, saying, *There never has been a time in your lives when a study of these books was for your present good and advancement, or for your future eternal good.*”<sup>10</sup>

My lifelong journey of navigating fiction’s turbulent waters, guided by such biblical and Spirit of Prophecy counsel, has come to an end. I no longer embrace fiction, viewing it as instructive, entertaining, innocuous, or necessary. Instead, I now see it as subtly dangerous, beneficial only when strictly used in the ways Jesus modeled. I understand Harry Emerson Fosdick’s inveighing against much of modern fiction in his book *Twelve Tests of Character*:

“Our fathers used to witness the public execution of criminals. The theory was that the sight of violent death in punishment for crime would teach the people a lesson. But it did no such thing. The penologists learned that after public executions murders and crimes of violence increased. They discovered that brutality begets brutality. In consequence, we keep our executions behind closed doors.



As lights of the world and salt of the earth, we are to be about endorsing and proclaiming literature that enlightens and purifies; we are, in short, to be about our Father’s business of doing all we can to help heal a hurting, broken world—all of which starts in our personal lives and the classroom.

“So, too, it is arrant imbecility for us to suppose that our unashamed and vociferous sex interest, our sex dramas, sex novels, sex films, sex lectures, and sex caricatures of psychoanalysis, with all their information, are helping to cleanse the life of our youth. Their effect is not cleansing but coarsening. They do not waken the aspiration for purity; they accustom the mind to impurity. We cannot wash our linen clean in dirty water.”<sup>11</sup>

Why should we subject ourselves and our impressionable students to the works of writers who often were themselves debauched and searching, incapable of piloting their own courses? Why should we not heed the later repentance of several, who, Like Chaucer<sup>12</sup> and Boccaccio,<sup>13</sup> rejected their works’ immoral content? Instead of embracing fiction, should we not heed the Bible’s assessment when it asserts, “Look to God’s instructions and teachings! People who contradict his word are completely in the dark” (Isaiah 8:20, NLT)? Although there never was a safe time when Christian teachers could dabble in fiction in their classroom and private lives, it is now doubly unsafe for us “upon whom the ends of the world are come” (1 Corinthians 10:11, KJV). We are God’s “letters of recommendation . . . to be known and read by all” (2 Corinthians 3:1,2, NRSV).<sup>14</sup> Thus, we cannot afford to taint any part of our lives with scribbles of satanic origin. As lights of the world and salt of the earth, we are to be about endorsing and proclaiming literature that enlightens and purifies; we are, in short, to be about our Father’s business of doing all we can to help heal a hurting, broken world—all of which starts in our personal lives and the classroom. ✍

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*This article has been peer reviewed.*

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#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Prior to United States Supreme Court rulings in 1962, prayer and Bible reading were common practices in American public schools. See Frank McGee, “Supreme Court Rules Against Requiring Prayer in Public Schools,” *NBC Learn K-12* (June 17, 1963): <https://archives.nbclearn.com/portal/site/k-12/flatview?cuecard=3006>.

2. Ernest Hemingway, “A Clean, Well-Lighted Place” (1933): <https://pdf4pro.com/view/a-clean-well-lighted-place-1933-url-der-org-2e7a74.html>.

3. *American Standard Version*, 1901. Section Headings Courtesy BereanBible.com © 2013, 2014 Used by Permission.

4. Quoted from *Common English Bible* (CEB) Copyright © 2011 by Common English Bible.

5. Quoted from *Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

6. Ellen White’s writings on fiction have many contexts. Some of her letters on the subject were written during the period when Adventist colleges were forging curricula that did not rely on the classic tradition of Greek and Latin studies. Other letters were written in the 19th century to Adventist printing presses such as Pacific Press in California and the Review and Herald in Battle Creek, both of which were accepting fictional materials for printing. For more on Ellen White’s statements on fiction see Keith Clouten, “Ellen White and Fiction: A Closer Look,” *The Journal of Adventist Education* 76:4 (April/May 2014): 10-14: <http://circle.adventist.org/files/jae/en/jae201476041005.pdf>.

For more on the curricula in early Adventist colleges, see Floyd Greenleaf, *In Passion for the Word* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press, 2005), 80-103.

7. Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1952), 412, 413.

8. \_\_\_\_\_, *Manuscript Releases 1897* (Silver Spring, Md.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1990), 6:279, 280. Italics supplied.

9. \_\_\_\_\_, “The Bible in Our Schools,” *ibid.*, 263, 264.

10. *Ibid.*, 265. Italics supplied.

11. Harry Emerson Fosdick, *Twelve Tests of Character* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1923), 44. See also recent comparative research showing murder rates in death-penalty states as higher than in non-death-penalty states, which, it is said, supports Fosdick’s observation: Death Penalty Information Center (updated 2020): <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/facts-and-research/murder-rates/murder-rate-of-death-penalty-states-compared-to-non-death-penalty-states>. Fosdick’s point, though, is that widespread viewing of sexual immorality creates further degradation, just as deliberate exposure to public hangings unwittingly leads to more brutality.

12. At the end of *The Canterbury Tales*, Geoffrey Chaucer makes a stunning confession, apparently written sometime after the poem’s original publication date. In it, he seeks “for the mercy of God” and the prayers of his readers for his “translations and compositions of worldly vanities” like Troilus and Criseyde, *The Canterbury Tales* (specifically “those that tend toward sin”), and *Parliament of Fowls*. He thanks Jesus, Mary, and “all the saints of heaven” for his works of nonfiction like “the translation of Boethius’s Consolation of Philosophy, and other books of legends of saints, and homilies, and morality, and devotion.” (See Harvard University, Geoffrey Chaucer Website, “10.2 Chaucer’s Retraction” [2018]: <https://chaucer.fas.harvard.edu/pages/chaucers-retraction-0.>)

13. Becoming more and more religious in his older years, Giovanni Boccaccio had to be persuaded by his friend Petrarch “from burning his own works and selling his library.” (See Umberto Bosco, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, “Giovanni Boccaccio: Italian Poet and Scholar” (modified in January 2020): <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Giovanni-Boccaccio>.)

14. 2 Corinthians 3:1-2. *New Revised Standard Version* (NRSV). *New Revised Standard Version Bible*, copyright © 1989 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.





Javier Girarte Guillén

# Far Beyond the Virtual Classroom:



# The Power of Home Visitation

*“The King will reply, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me”” (Matthew 25:40, NIV).<sup>1</sup>*

**D**uring my employment as a summer online instructor at UM Virtual at the University of Montemorelos in Mexico, I have worked with students from a variety of countries who enroll in online courses. These are usually employed full-time students, and most of them are married with children. Because of their life and work experiences, many of these students never had the opportunity to earn a degree. Other students, already professionals, want to train for a second career or earn additional credentials or degrees to further their career.

I also teach in a traditional classroom at a large Adventist secondary school, Instituto Soledad Acevedo de Los Reyes (also in Montemorelos, Mexico), where we are encouraged to do home visitations. Visiting students in their own home environments is a good way to get to know them and to build a good relationship with the family, especially at the beginning of the school year. I must confess I haven't conducted these visits as often as I could have; I'd rather invite students over for vespers on Friday or Saturday night; but indeed, the times I've visited students in their homes, the experience has been meaningful.

However, in my work as an online instructor at the college and university level, visiting students at home would be quite complicated, even impossible, since the online courses that UM Virtual enrolls students from around the world. But given the ben-

efits of this practice, I wondered if it would be possible to do something similar with online students.

During the summer of 2018, I had the opportunity to do so. During one of the video class sessions I was conducting with a few students, I asked them about the places they were currently living. Four lived in the United States (California and Washington), one in Peru, others in Columbia, Mexico, and so on. I even had a student who lived in Germany. But when I heard a student say that she lived in Montemorelos, the same city where I live, I was greatly surprised. Not only that, she lived in the same neighborhood as I did! Finally, I had the chance to visit an online student, not virtually, but in person. What follows are a few tips from my experience conducting a home visitation with my online student; however, many of these are also good practice for general face-to-face classrooms, as well:

**Tip No. 1: When conducting home visits, make sure other members of the family (or other people) will be in the home at the time of the visit.**

This tip may seem obvious, but it is crucial that other people are present during the visit. This protects both the teacher and student from allegations of misconduct. Also, the student may feel more confident when family members are present. And most importantly, when family members participate in home visits, they engage in the education of the student.

After chatting awhile online, my

student and I arranged a time for me to visit her home the following week. I asked her if there would others in her home, and she said that her family was going to be there. I learned that she lived with her family in a large single-room house in which the living spaces were divided by curtains.

**Tip No. 2: Learn as much as you can about the student and his or her family.**

I really didn't know much about this student. What I learned from chatting with her was that she could not take regular classes because she suffered from osteoarthritis, a severe form of degenerative arthritis. I decided to research more information about this disease prior to our scheduled visit and found that “it's the most common type of arthritis. When the cartilage—the slick, cushioning surface on the ends of bones—wears away, bone rubs against bone, causing pain, swelling and stiffness. Over time, joints can lose strength and pain may become chronic.”<sup>2</sup> She couldn't move, so her life was spent in a wheelchair, where she was constantly assisted by her family, especially her sister.

**Tip No. 3: Learn about what the student likes and try to please him or her.**

I also learned that this student was fond of figs; so, since I have a fig tree in my back yard, and the fruit was already ripe, I grabbed a bunch of the best figs, and put them in a bag. I found some red ribbon and used it to tie a nice bow on the bag, and then headed to my student's house. It took

## More Reading on Home Visits

me only a few minutes to get there. How many times had I walked by this house? If I only had known a student lived there, I would have visited more often.

When I arrived at the home, she was already waiting for me. I greeted her with a big smile, and then gave her the bag of figs. She couldn't hide her happiness to see the bag full of delicious sweet purple figs. She thanked me for the fruit and smiled shyly.

### Tip No. 4: Ask first before shaking hands.

As is customary in Mexican culture, I shook her hand firmly but politely and softly—at least that is what I thought. I was wrong! My student immediately cried out in pain. I felt so embarrassed; I didn't know what to do. She explained that due to her osteoarthritis, when her bones rub against one another, it causes severe pain. I apologized over and over! It is important to know how best to greet the student when entering the home. What may be appropriate in one setting might be inappropriate in another.

After that embarrassing and painful introduction, we sat together in the living room. We talked about her life and how difficult it was for her to perform the most basic daily tasks. Although discussing her challenges brought her to tears at one point in our conversation, she never stopped smiling and spoke positively about her life.

### Tip No. 5: Be emphatic with your students; you do not know what is really happening in their working lives and family.

We enjoyed a short, pleasant visit. A few days later, she posted in our online class forum that for her, my home visit was one of the best experiences in the class. She said she had had a wonderful time, even though the pain in her bones never ceased during the visit. I replied that I was sorry for having caused her discom-

fort, to which she replied that the pain wasn't caused by my well-meaning handshake, it was just pain she lived with every day.

Her bravery inspired me. She rarely complained. During the visit to her home, I realized that she was really very sick. She barely moved her body; and her hands, which were on her lap all the time, seemed very weak. I noticed, however, that her mind was sharp, and she expressed firm determination to earn her de-

gree. Despite her condition, she was trying hard to reach her goals, and my class was not the only one she was taking at the time. She told me that sometimes she wanted to quit. Her disease and pain didn't allow her to do the homework, and sometimes she was so tired she couldn't even read or dictate to her sister so she could type for her.

Occasionally, she had to be in the

**Education by Ellen G. White:** <https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/29/toc>.

The book *Education* speaks to the value of home visits where parents and teachers work together and the power of home visits in Chapter 33 titled "Co-operation."—Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1903), 283-286.

**Project Appleseed:** <https://www.projectappleseed.org/teacher-home-visits>. A summary of a study that tracked 14 schools over three years and the impact of their home-visitation initiatives. Researchers' findings included increased student performance, parent involvement, and generally positive attitudes toward school as well as reduced discipline problems.

**Edutopia: "Home Visits 101"** (January 19, 2017): <https://www.edutopia.org/article/home-visits-101-cristina-santamaria-graff>. Cristina Santamaria Graff shares that home visits can help improve parent involvement in students' school lives. Several tips are shared for coordinating an effective home visitation program.

**Home Visits: Tips and Resources for Making Safe and Effective Home Visits:** <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/video/attachments/home-visitor-safe-home-visits.pdf>. A comprehensive list of tips and resources compiled by the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Excellence at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee. Includes suggestions for establishing rapport, setting boundaries during visits, and safety before, during, and after visits.

**Home Visiting—Resources:** <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/browse/keyword/home-visiting>. Prepared and maintained by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, this resource provides several articles on coordinating home visits for kindergarten and early elementary school.

**7 Tips for Successful Home Visits:** <https://midtesol.org/7-tips-for-successful-home-visits/>. MIDTESOL is the Mid-America Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. The authors note that home visits, while challenging due to changing schedules of both parents and teachers, can reap positive outcomes such as opening lines of communication between home and school.



hospital for several days, which made it impossible for her to work on course projects. She was worried about not being able to submit all the work on time. I told her that since this was an open course, she could take the time she needed in order to complete the assignments. She was happy to hear that, and I was glad to be able to offer that solution. This approach was not unique to me. Other teachers at UM Virtual were aware about the condition of this student and willingly made similar arrangements to give her extra time to complete her activities. These arrangements were supported by the school's Calificación Diferida, (Deferred Grade) policy, which means any student can ask for extra time to complete the course if needed.

During my hour-long visit, we talked about her plans for the future, her family, and the reasons she had decided to pursue a career as an accountant. She spoke openly, and I noticed she felt free to do so. We had a great talk, after which I thanked her and her family for the warm welcome and left.

### Final Reflection

Once outside the house, I experienced mixed feelings. On one hand, I had planned the visit to provide encouragement to a student, but on the contrary, it was I who received encouragement! No wonder the Bible says, "You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out" (Deuteronomy 28:6).

It's been two years since that visit. Since then, my student has faced many other difficulties: In the past 16 months, her older brother and her mom have passed away, and her disease progressed to the point that she had to quit school. Will she be able to finish her career? I don't know; however, I believe she *can* because she has the courage to do so.

As a teacher and tutor, home visitations have provided me with a tremendous opportunity to learn more about my students and their

families, their challenges, goals, and will to succeed. Over the past several years, I have had several experiences with home visits. One series of home visits was to the home of a student who could not attend school regularly because of a bone cancer diagnosis and subsequent treatments. Regular home visits allowed him to keep up and eventually successfully take his exams. Another series of visits was to a student who returned home after several weeks in the hospital and felt disconnected from school. Both of these students and their families appreciated the opportunity to stay connected with the school, not only in terms of keeping up with assignments, but knowing that they were part of a school community that missed them.

One memorable visit took place during the Christmas holiday, since no other day could be scheduled with the family. I will never forget the student's response. She said with awe: "I can't believe Mr. Girarte is in my house having dinner on Christmas!" This memory remains with me because the best experience I've ever had with home visits was when my own 3rd-grade teacher visited me! It was long time ago, but I still vividly recall the experience.

These visits have taught me how to best help my students reach some of their goals and have created memories that both I and my students will remember long after the courses are over. Education philosopher Paulo Freire stated: "Educators need to know what happens in the world of the children with whom they work. They need to know the universe of their dreams, the language with which they skillfully defend themselves from the aggressiveness of their world, what they know independently of the school, and how they know it."<sup>3</sup> Home visits are one way for teachers to engage with their students, and their students' families,

outside of the formal, sometimes intimidating, confines of the classroom. Home visits have the potential to help teachers "strengthen the ties that bind them to their pupils," and in doing so, help them "learn how to deal more successfully with their different dispositions and temperaments,"<sup>4</sup> and meet their needs. ✍

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**Javier Girarte Guillén, BA**, is a middle-school English teacher at the Instituto Soledad Acevedo de Los Reyes in Montemorelos, Nuevo Leon, Mexico.

He has also more than 15 years of experience teaching English as a Second Language. During the summer months, he serves as tutor for UM Virtual at Montemorelos University (Mexico). He completed his BA in Education from Universidad de Guadalajara, Mexico. He enjoys sharing resources, some of which can be found on his personal blog page at <https://mrgirart.wixsite.com/teachingstrategies/200-reasons-a-teen-s-devotional>, and on the Adventist Educators Blog: <https://educators.adventist.org/2018/10/13-reasons-or-200-reasons-1/>.

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### Recommended citation:

**Javier Girarte Guillén**, "Far Beyond the Virtual Classroom: The Power of Home Visitation," *The Journal of Adventist Education* 82:1 (January-March 2020): 30-33.

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### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. All Scripture texts in this article are quoted from the *New International Version* of the Bible. Scripture quotations credited to NIV are from *The Holy Bible, New International Version*. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.
2. Arthritis Foundation, "What Is Arthritis?" (n.d.): <https://www.arthritis.org/about-arthritis/understanding-arthritis/what-is-arthritis.php>.
3. Paulo Freire, *Teachers as Cultural Workers* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1998), 72-73.
4. Ellen G. White, *True Education: An Adaptation of Education* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press, 2000), 177.



Frank W. Hardy

**Jorge Platon Maquera Sosa, *Caminos Que No Se Olvidan [Paths That Are Not Forgotten]*** (Lima, Peru: Universidad Peruana Unión-Centro de Aplicación Editorial Unión, April 2019), Gerardo Medina León, ed. ISBN: 978-9972-604-67-6. 256 pages (Hardback), PEN50/US\$14.95.

This book was written in Spanish by Jorge Platon Maquera Sosa, who is a professor of math education and director of postgraduate studies in education at Peruvian Union University, also known as Universidad Peruana Unión (UPeU), in Lima, Peru. He was director of education for the Lake Titicaca Mission, then director of the Juliaca Campus of UPeU, and later director of education for the North Peru Union. Drawing on his many years of working in education, he relates the stories of 22 young people who learned to recognize God’s providential leading in their lives and to surmount difficulties in order to achieve a noble purpose. Each chapter in the book deals with a different student, so the number of students is the number of chapters. The driving motivation of each individual was to obtain a Christian education and, more specifically, to study at Peruvian Union University.

Peruvian Union University is a Seventh-day Adventist institution of higher learning, to which a medical school was added in 2012. It has three campuses—at Juliaca, Lima, and Tarpoto, all in Peru, South America. It also has schools of engineering and architecture, health sciences, human sciences and education, management sciences, and theology as well as a division of graduate studies.<sup>1</sup>

The students Maquera writes about experienced widely different chal-



lenges. All had some connection with Seventh-day Adventists or were members of the church; all were challenged financially and by other circumstances, some more than others. But all learned to place their trust in God and developed a stability of purpose and strength of character in the process that can only elicit our admiration. Some were opposed by their families; one (Mara) was raised in an orphanage and grew up longing for a family she could call her own. Some were people of exceptional talent who were able to secure scholarships, but many were ordinary people with whom the average reader can relate.

In this world, God’s children come from “every nation and tribe and language and people” (Revelation 14:6, ESV)<sup>2</sup> and grow up under every imaginable kind of circumstance, and yet God has only one standard for human behavior (He *is* the standard for human behavior). He can be equally fair to all His children and yet lead each one through circumstances that bear the thumbprint of his or her own unique individuality.

My personal recommendation would be to start with the story of Luana (chap. 13). The circumstances of her birth were such that her survival

through infancy was not assured. Her family had to relocate at one point and never got all the way to their intended destination, getting off the bus with no money for food or lodging. Gradually, their circumstances changed, but even so, it should have been completely impossible for Luana to ever be able to attend an upscale Seventh-day Adventist university. But she did survive, God led her family through every difficulty, and she did attend UPeU. And God is continuing to lead her now.

These are inspiring stories, and readers are in the author’s debt for relating them. Unfortunately, the volume has not yet been translated into English. It is hoped that this will occur soon so that the book can reach an English language readership. ✍

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**Frank W. Hardy, PhD**, earned his doctorate from the University of New Mexico, U.S.A., where he studied linguistics. Dr. Hardy is currently retired after several years of service at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Maryland, U.S.A.

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**Recommended citation:**

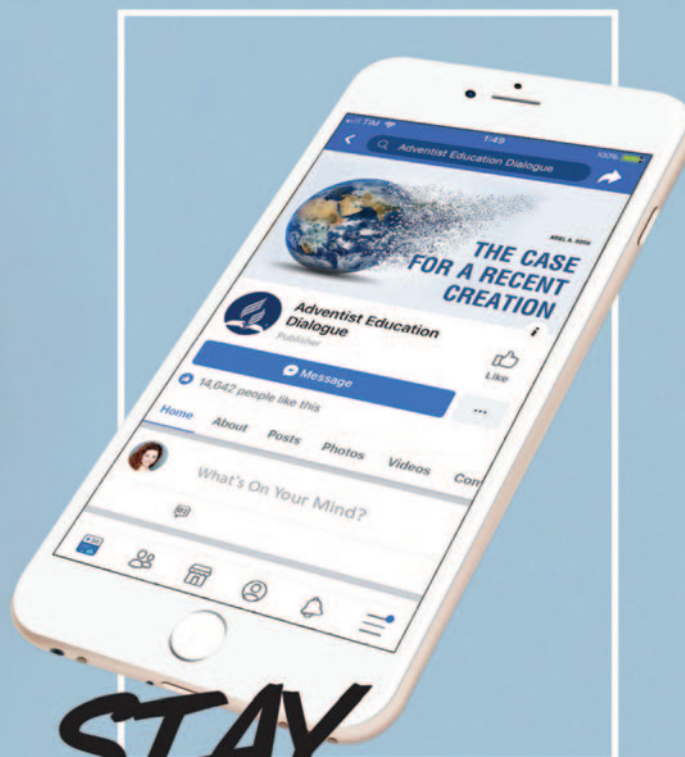
**Frank W. Hardy**, Book Review of *Caminos Que No Se Olvidan [Paths That Are Not Forgotten]*, *The Journal of Adventist Education* 82:1 (January-March 2020): 34.

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**NOTES AND REFERENCES**

1. See <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/>.
2. *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*. ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

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Faith-Ann McGarrell



# Adventist History Study Tour:

On Thursday, September 26, 2019, a group comprised of 73 Seventh-day Adventist university presidents, division education directors, General Conference education staff, and several spouses who work as educators assembled in the church's world headquarters auditorium in Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A., in preparation for a 10-day journey into the past: the Adventist History Study Tour. Together, the group represented all 13 divisions of the Seventh-day Adventist world church. From September 26 through October 6, they would have the opportunity to read about the early Adventist pioneers and visit renovated and preserved replicas of homes, historic churches, and marked gravesites. By visiting these historic locations, participants would not only learn about the past, but also be inspired and re-energized to continue the work of Adventist education and mission.

Two experts in Adventist heritage and history led the tour: James R. Nix, director of the Ellen G. White Estate in Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A.; and Merlin D. Burt, director for the Center for Adventist Research

## Walking in the Footsteps of the Pioneers

and professor of church history at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, U.S.A.

Participants assembled for an orientation session led by Lisa Beardsley-Hardy, General Conference (GC) director of education, and translated by Julián Melgosa, GC associate director of education. The session provided participants with an opportunity to introduce themselves, to share information about the division each represented, and to describe their roles.

Nix offered a brief background for and overview of the study tour, after which participants collected their tour materials, schedules, and luggage, boarded the buses, and departed on an expedition that would travel through Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, and to Battle Creek, Michigan.

Through engaging storytelling, readings, visits to a variety of sites, and several worship experiences, tour participants collaborated, networked, and established new friend-

ships while renewing old ones. Nix and Burt utilized their own unique storytelling skills and humor to weave together inspirational human-interest stories, historical details, and songs to transport tour members to the time of the early Adventist pioneers. Readings from the tour textbooks, *Adventist Pioneer Places: New York and New England* and *Battle Creek: A Guide to Historic Adventist Sites*,\* allowed each participant to follow along with the tour guides at each designated stop.

Several morning and evening devotionals and presentations on early Adventist education pioneers and medical evangelism provided insight into the challenges faced by early Adventist educators seeking to advance Adventist education with limited resources. Historic sites of the homes of pioneers such as Joseph Bates, John Nevins Andrews, William Miller, and others provided attendees with a glimpse of the daily life and challenges faced by the early Millerite and Adventist pioneers. Memorable experiences such as sharing in a communion service at the Miller Chapel, singing together while standing on Ascension Rock or in Hiram Edson's barn, and

worshipping together at the Historic Adventist Village in Battle Creek, Michigan, created a bond among the participants, not just as fellow educators and colleagues, but also as fellow believers in the soon return of Jesus Christ.

Several participants shared how these experiences increased their knowledge of early Adventist history. Many were inspired by how much the early Adventist pioneers were able to accomplish with limited resources—and committed themselves to doing more with the resources currently available to them. Begin-

ning on page 40 are a few of the many reflections shared by study-tour participants about the impact of the experience.

An outcome of the study tour was the establishment of a restoration project supported by Seventh-day Adventist university presidents and institutions. Educators were made aware of the various restoration needs and were inspired as a group to launch the Little Red School House Restoration Project at the William Miller farm, Whitehall, Low Hampton, New York. The budget, which included not only restoration

of the school house, but also reconstruction of the attached woodshed, was set at US\$45,000, which includes US\$10,000 for furnishings (historical desks, etc.), and US\$5,000 for landscaping. By the end of the tour, the study tour group had raised US\$41,386 in pledges. The fundraising project is well underway and is open to any individual or institution that would like to contribute. More information on how to do so is available on page 43. (See also the “Little Red School House Restoration Project” on page 42 of this issue of JAE.)



**A.** Some of the university presidents and spouses who participated in the Adventist History Study Tour together with GC education director Lisa Beardsley-Hardy, GC associate education directors, and General Conference president, Ted Wilson.  
**B.** One of the textbooks used as a guide throughout the tour.



For some, this was the first time they had visited historic Adventist sites in North America, while many others had either taken the tour before or at least visited individual sites. However, for many of the participants, experiencing the study tour with fellow colleagues in Adventist education added another dimension—one of camaraderie, support, and shared mission. From spending time in conversation and sharing challenges and solutions on the hours-long bus rides between sites, to fellowshiping at mealtime and worshipping together, singing old Advent hymns, and praying for one other, attendees built and strengthened bonds of friendship and support. The experience of walking in the footsteps of the pioneers will continue to have an impact on Adventist education leaders as they return to their home institutions and continue fulfilling the mission of Adventist education. ✍

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\* Merlin D. Burt, *Adventist Pioneer Places: New York and New England* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald, 2011); also, James R. Nix, *Battle Creek: A Guide to Historic Adventist Sites* (Battle Creek, Mich.: James R. Nix, 2018).

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**Faith-Ann McGarrell, PhD**, is Editor of *The Journal of Adventist Education*.<sup>®</sup> She can be reached at [mcgarrellf@gc.adventist.org](mailto:mcgarrellf@gc.adventist.org).

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**Recommended citation:**

**Faith-Ann McGarrell**, “Adventist History Study Tour: Walking in the Footsteps of the Pioneers,” *The Journal of Adventist Education* 82:1 (January-March 2020): 36-41.



A



B



C



D



E

- A. Singing at Annie Smith’s grave.
- B. Merlin Burt tells the story of Annie Smith.
- C. James Nix tells the story of Joseph Bates.
- D. Efrain Velazquez-Hernandez washes the feet of Nathaniel Velazquez, his son, on Ascension Rock.
- E. Julián Melgosa translates for Merlin Burt in Hiram Edson’s barn.



**“O For That Flame”**

My first encounter with the Adventist pioneers—James and Ellen White, Joseph Bates, and others—was in Missionary Volunteer (now Adventist Youth) meetings in the 1960s. When I later joined the teaching service, I found myself teaching about these people in the primary (elementary) school classes. Of all the pioneers, I was the most fascinated and obsessed with William Miller, especially his reconciliation of historical events with meticulous mathematical calculations of when the Second Advent should occur.

In my wild imagination, I thought of William Miller as a person who lived in a town or village, moving from one place to another within the same town/village, preaching and teaching about Jesus’ return. Thus, I very eagerly looked forward to visiting this place. After seeing how isolated the site is, I wondered how he managed to go to different places to preach. The forest must have been much thicker at that time, infested with many dangerous wild animals and snakes. Possibly that was why he carried a gun so he could defend himself from big ferocious animals.

The walking paths may have been narrower back then, the rivers filled with more water, and bridges rougher and crudely built; yet, Miller went about preaching. So did others such as Joseph Bates and James and Ellen White. Then I thought: With incomparably better transport and communication systems, why do we appear obsessed by issues we face today?

The old Adventist hymn spontaneously popped into my mind: “O for that flame of living fire Which shone so bright in saints of old; Which bade their souls to heaven



The entire group gathers at Ascension Rock (above) and Hiram Edson’s barn.

aspire, *calm* in distress, in *danger* bold!”<sup>1</sup>

I wondered to myself: “Where is that Spirit, Lord, which dwelt in William Miller, made the hearts of Bates, the Whites, and Andrews glow with energy divine?” (a paraphrase of No. 264, verse 2 from the *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*).<sup>2</sup>

I have decided to adjust my attitude toward evangelism, to see it differently from what I am used to, by God’s grace. Never had it ever crossed my mind that one day I would physically visit the sites, trample over possible footprints or sit where possibly Joseph Bates, William Miller, James and Ellen White, or Hiram Edson sat or touched. Oh, how

wonderful, how marvelous God’s grace is, especially to me!



**Mozecie Kadyakapita, PhD,** is Director of Education for the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division in Johannesburg, South Africa.

#### REFERENCES

1. William H. Bathhurst, “O For That Flame of Living Fire,” *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* (Word Edition), No. 264 (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald, 1988). Italics supplied.
2. Ibid.

#### Affirmed Faith

The Adventist History Study Tour for university presidents was an eye-opener for me. It made real and vivid the stories of pioneers like William Miller, J. N. Andrews, and James and Ellen White that we heard back in Missionary Volunteer and Adventist Youth classes. The trip affirmed my faith in our beliefs. It confirmed that we have not followed after some cunningly devised fables. My eyes have seen, my hands have touched (the tombstones), my ears have heard the stories and experiences of our pioneers. Now I know that the pioneers were men and women of like passions as we have. They defied all challenges, loss of loved ones prema-



**A.** Grace and Ademola Tayo at the gravesites of James and Ellen White.



**B.** Richard Sabuin leads out in the communion service at the William Miller Chapel.  
**C.** Mozecie Kadyakapita at the home of James and Ellen White in Adventist Village, Battle Creek, Michigan.  
**D.** Eber Liessi at the Battle Creek Sanitarium.





turally, endured diseases and deprivations. In the sun, in the rain and sunshine, they gave their all. Imagine Joseph Bates spending his all [money] in printing tracts on the Sabbath message while trusting God to provide food for his family. Or Ellen White listening as [her son] Henry requested to be buried near his baby brother, awaiting the resurrection morning. And what more can we say about this amazing crop of very young, ordinary people who turned the world upside down?

I asked myself the question, “What is my excuse in a world where technology has made preaching, traveling, and education easier?” What is hindering me from giving my best and doing my best to touch lives and to further the course of God’s work on our campuses? Absolutely nothing! I pray that this once-in-a-lifetime experience will transform our lives to make us better instruments in the hand of God.

My sincere appreciation to Dr. Lisa Beardsley-Hardy and her team at the General Conference Department of Education. Thank you for the opportunity given to spouses of the university presidents to participate in the trip. The humor and passion with which Elder Nix and Dr. Burt presented the stories have made an indelible mark on my heart. God bless you. May God keep us faithful until we meet again as a group to “No! Never part again!”\*



**Grace O. Tayo, PhD,** is a Professor of Animal Nutrition Science at Babcock University in Nigeria.

\* Isaac Watts, “There Is a Land of Pure Delight,” *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* (Word Edition), No. 449, Refrain (Hagerstown, Md: Review and Herald, 1988).

### “The Lord Will Provide”

For me and my wife, joining the Adventist History Study Tour was just like stepping backward 200 years. History is for us no longer just a body of knowledge; it is now a personal experience. By observing closely the passion of our pioneers in searching for the truth and proclaiming it, our sense of mission has been strengthened. By understanding the beginning of the church’s journey, our sense of direction toward the future has been more assured. By learning about how God has been with the church in its ups and downs, our faith in His leading to bring us to our heavenly destination has been revived. By fellowshiping with colleagues from around the world during the tour, our sense of unity and involvement in God’s work has been reaffirmed. If you ask us of just one message we have carried along from the tour, we would echo the motto of Joseph Bates, “The Lord will provide.”\*



**Richard Sabuin, PhD,** is Director of Education for the Northern-Asia Pacific Division in Goyang City, South Korea.

\* Arthur Whitefield Spalding, *Footprints of the Pioneers* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1947), 47: <http://centrowhite.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Footprints-of-the-Pioneers-Arthur-Whitefield-Spalding.pdf>.

### Strengthened and Affirmed

I have always enjoyed reading and meditating on the stories of the early Adventist pioneers and what they contributed to the advancement of the Adventist work. I had even had the privilege of visiting most of these historic places.

But this time, I set as my objective to capture experiences that could

help me in my duties as an administrator at an Adventist institution. I wanted to look for ways in which our pioneers dealt with issues related to church leadership and relationships between and among themselves, with different backgrounds and peculiar personalities.

For me, having served as a church leader for several years and recently given the responsibility for the general direction of a higher education institution, I always like to have a united team, working together, sharing friendship because in this way God will bless more and the results will be better and bigger. However, anyone who deals with human beings knows that this ideal is not always possible.

With that in mind, I was comforted to hear about relationship difficulties and different views that our early leaders also experienced—at different levels of the church, in diverse subjects such as choosing the name of the organization, how to use the institution’s resources, how to deal with issues of ecclesiastical discipline, doctrinal themes, and so on, including their personal and matrimonial relationships. And yet God used them!

I am left strengthened and comforted as a leader, and inspired to work better with different people, seeking that the Lord would use the varied talents and dispositions to advance His work, until the day when He Himself decides that the time has come to finish it.



**Eber Liessi, DPT,** is President of Bahia Adventist College in Capoeiruçu, Cachoeira, Brazil.





Lisa M. Beardsley-Hardy

## Little Red School House Restoration Project

Children learned to read and write in the Little Red School House near William Miller's farm in Whitehall, Low Hampton, New York. When belief in Christ's soon return splintered the local Baptist church, religious meetings were also conducted there.\* An excerpt of those events is shown in the sidebar. A drawing of the school is shown, along with pictures of the deteriorated school house today, on page 43.

The Little Red School House Restoration Project is supported by Seventh-day Adventist university presidents and institutions. Your support will bring the historic Little Red School House back to life! It will help to restore it from top to bottom. On the outside, there will be a new roof and new siding. Old beams will be replaced to stabilize the structure. New floors will be installed, and the walls and ceiling will be completely restored. All the windows will be redone. A little woodshed, which was original to the farm, will be restored and added to the front of the entrance.

Tradesmen and volunteers will restore the School House in such a way as to preserve its historical integrity. Visitors will be able to step back in time. When it is finished, the Little Red School House will proudly take up

its role of teaching a new generation! Your generous support and prayers will make this dream a reality so that both young and old will experience history firsthand and learn about the importance of education for eternity.

The restoration budget includes the following:

Historical restoration of the Little Red School House and reconstruction

of the woodshed: US\$45,000

Furnishings (historical desks, etc.): US\$10,000

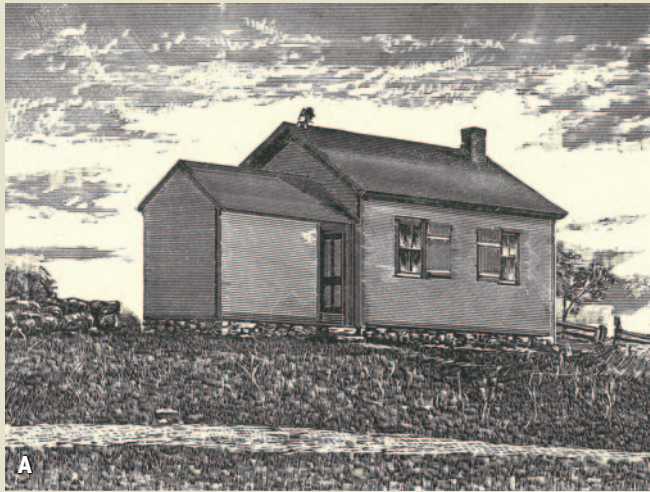
Landscaping: US\$5,000

There are four ways to contribute:

1. Send a check or money order to the General Conference. Write "AHM 137035/Miller Farm School" on the memo line, and mail it to: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Attn: Donation Cashier, 12501

"The church voted that they would support the gospel, or a minister, by taxing themselves equally, according to their ability. Here the first seeds were sown which indicated a division of the church. Two or three of the rich brethren declared they would not submit to the *vote* of the church, and withdrew their support: The majority of the church then engaged Elder Jones, a Baptist minister. This was in the fall or summer of 1843. In the spring of 1844, the minority engaged Elder Dillaway (a strong opposer of the Advent doctrine after 1843), for half of the time, and demanded of the church the meeting-house. But as Elder Jones had been engaged for a year, the meeting house was not given up until the fall; when the brethren, rather than have any contention, gave it up to Elder D. and his hearers, and held their meetings in a school house, where the minority had formerly held theirs. On the 29th of January, 1845, the minority called an *ex parte* council, in a private manner, so that it was not known to the church until the council met. This council, which was constituted on the day above mentioned, . . ."

\* Excerpt from *A Brief History of William Miller: The Great Pioneer in Adventist Faith* (Boston: Advent Christian Publication Society, 1915), 256, 257.



A



B



D



C

**A. Sketch of the Little Red School House.  
B. and C. Front and rear views of the school house.  
D. Funds will go toward reconstructing the woodshed  
adjacent to the school house.**

Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904, U.S.A.

2. Make a credit-card contribution to the General Conference (AHM 137035/Miller Farm School). Contact Linda Alinsod at (301) 680-6229 or [AlinsodL@gc.adventist.org](mailto:AlinsodL@gc.adventist.org) if giving by credit card. The merchant service provider charges a fee of 2.5 percent, which we will ask the donor either to add to his or her contribution or agree that the net amount (less the fee) be sent to AHM.

3. Send a credit memo from the division to be credited to Adventist Heritage Ministries (AHM 137035/Miller Farm School). General Conference in-

stitutions (e.g. Andrews University, Loma Linda University, AIIAS, Adventist University of Africa) may send a credit memo directly to the General Conference. Division institutions may send a credit memo to the General Conference via their base division.

4. Donate online directly to Adventist Heritage Ministries: <https://www.adventistheritage.org/index.php/support>.

Individuals who need a receipt to support a charitable contribution deduction on their United States Fed-

eral/State Income Tax form may provide the mailing address where they prefer the receipt to be sent. ✉

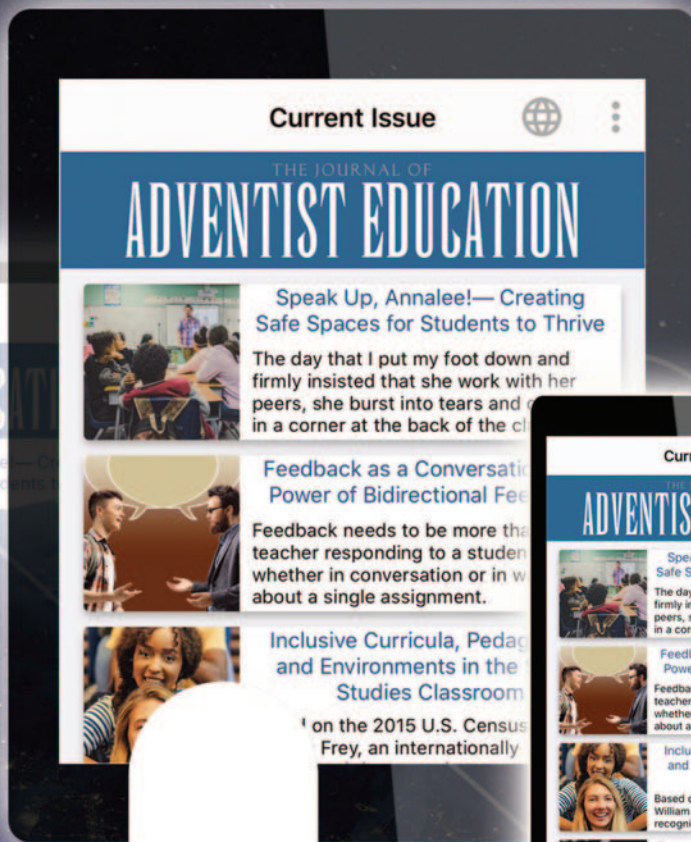
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**Lisa M. Beardsley-Hardy, PhD, MPH, MBA,** is Director of Education for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, headquartered in Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A.

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## Editorial *Continued from page 3*

fessional teaching journey (see page 24). A third article, by Chantal Klingbeil, titled “Introducing Ellen White to a New Generation,” is a reprint from the *General Conference Executive Committee Newsletter*. Klingbeil offers eight helpful suggestions for introducing a new generation to the writings of Ellen White in gentle, relevant, and meaningful ways (see page 23).

Highlights from the Adventist History Study Tour are recounted in a short photo essay that recaps through narratives and photos the experiences of participants (see page 36); the second short essay introduces the “Little Red School House Restoration Project,” a project supported by Seventh-day Adventist university presidents and institutions to fund the restoration of the old school house on the William Miller Farm. Schools and institutions interested in participating will find information on how to do so on page 42.

The remaining articles include a book review—a feature we’re reintroducing after some time—of Jorge Platon Maquera Sosa’s *Caminos Que No Se Olvidan (Paths That Are Not Forgotten)* by Frank Hardy, a collection of 22 stories from students about how Seventh-day Adventist education transformed the trajectory of their individual lives (see page 34); a *Best Practices at Work* article by Javier Girarte Guillén on the power and benefits of home visits; and finally, an article that addresses a serious topic for both teachers and educational administrators as they continue their professional growth: “Avoiding Fake Degrees and Diploma Mills: Recommendations for Educators, Administrators, and Academic Registrars” by Sydney Freeman, Jr., Ibrahim Karkouti, and Ty-Ron M. O. Douglas (see page 4).

We welcome your comments and invite you to consider writing for us.<sup>5</sup> Whether a feature-length article, a book review, or a submission to our *Best Practices at Work* or *Perspectives* feature sections, your contribution to THE JOURNAL

OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION can be a source of inspiration to the beginning teacher and administrator or a treasure trove of new ideas for those already in service. We look forward to hearing from you!

### Recommended citation:

**Faith-Ann McGarrell**, “Ellen White Said . . .”: Dispelling Myths and Reaffirming Faith,” *The Journal of Adventist Education* 82:1 (January-March 2020): 3, 45.

### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. For more, see Ellen G. White Estate®, “How Do Ellen G. White’s Writings Relate to the Bible? The Authority of Ellen G. White’s Writings” (2020): <https://whiteestate.org/legacy/issues-scripint.html/>; EGW Writings, “The Position of ‘The Bible, and the Bible Only’ and the Relationship of This to the Writings of Ellen White” (2020): <https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/741.111>.

2. See also, Ellen G. White Estate®, “Ellen G. White’s Understanding of How Her Writings Relate to Scripture” (2020): <https://whiteestate.org/legacy/issues-scripegw.html/>.

3. Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1903). See specifically the chapters, “The Teacher Sent From God” (pp. 75-83) and “An Illustration of His Methods” (pp. 84-96), and the section on the “Underteacher” (pp. 275-287), where teachers in training are encouraged to meditate on God’s promises found in Revelation 3:8; Psalm 32:8; Matthew 28:20; and 2 Corinthians 3:18.

4. Annie R. Smith, “How Far From Home?” in *The Gospel in Song* (Takoma Park, Md.: Review and Herald, 1926), 198: [http://www.hymnary.org/text/how\\_far\\_from\\_home\\_i\\_asked\\_as\\_on](http://www.hymnary.org/text/how_far_from_home_i_asked_as_on).

5. Visit <https://jae.adventist.org/en/for-authors> for a complete overview of guidelines for writing and submitting an article for consideration, along with a list of preferred topics.

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