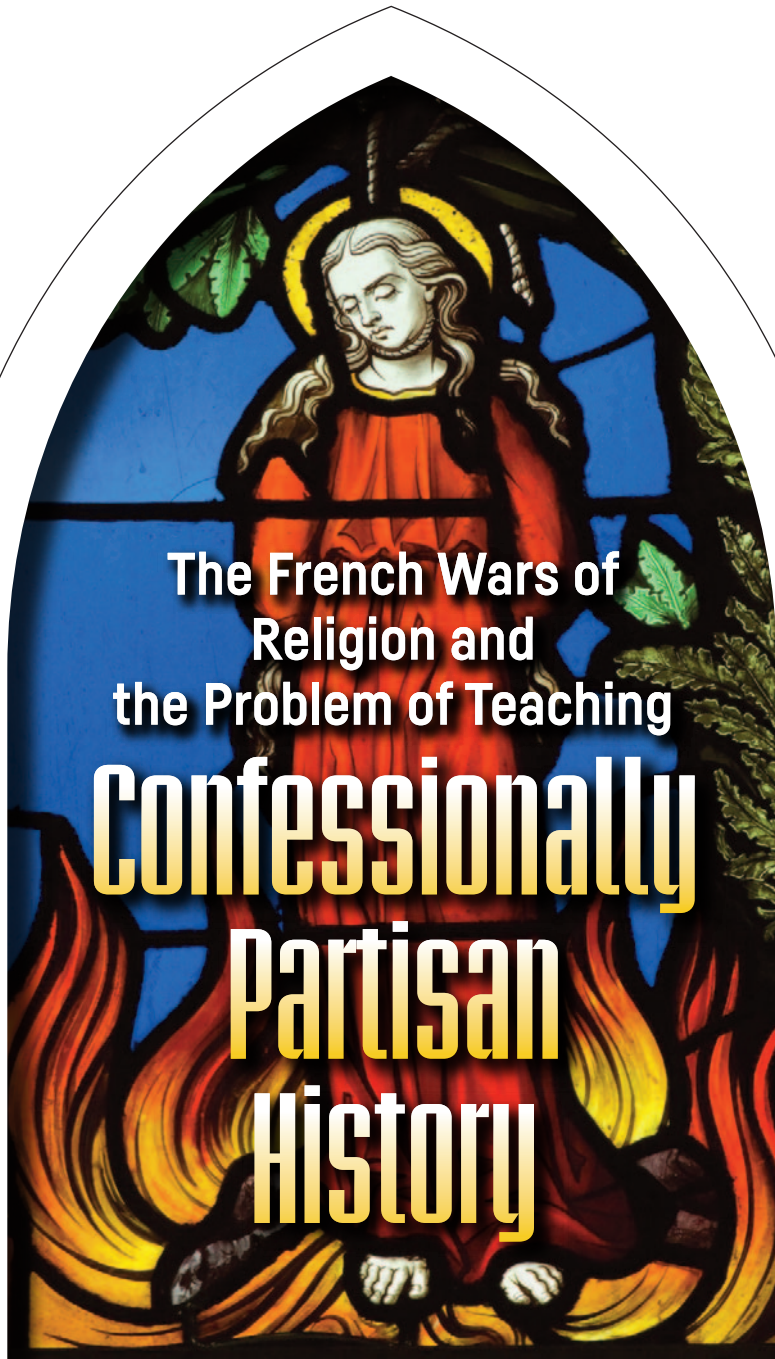


# ADVENTIST EDUCATION



The French Wars of  
Religion and  
the Problem of Teaching

## Confessionally Partisan History



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Faith-Ann McGarrell



# CURVEBALLS AND LEMONADE:

## Surviving Change in Difficult Times

What do we do when life throws us a curveball? Some would say, “Hit it!” Others might respond, “Get out of its way!” The term *curveball*, taken from baseball, is a frequently used idiom in American English. In baseball, a pitcher may throw a curveball to confuse the hitter. Although launched with low velocity (typically 5 miles per hour slower than a regular fastball), the throw has a high spin, which causes it to take a sudden, unpredictable arc as it approaches the plate and the person at-bat.<sup>1</sup> The rate of speed and sudden downward turn trick the hitter into overestimating the ball’s trajectory, which often results in a strikeout or, worse, being struck by the ball. And so, as an idiom, the term means “a tricky, difficult, unusual situation due to the change in direction into an unusual place.”<sup>2</sup>

In early 2020, the world was thrown a global curveball. COVID-19 emerged slowly, picked up momentum, and continues to take arcs that no one can predict. Like the hitter at the plate, each of us must decide when and how to swing and what to do in the aftermath. One well-known quotation says, “When life throws you a curveball, hit it out of the park!”<sup>3</sup> Or, you may be more familiar with the proverbial “When life gives you lemons, make lemonade!” In print, both aphorisms might sound comforting; the prospect of making something good out of something terrible fills us with opti-

mism and hope. Yet, in reality, the unpredictability of life can cause anxiety, worry, fear, heartbreak, sorrow, and a bevy of other emotions that can leave us drained, overwhelmed, and feeling hopeless. And so, finding practical ways to journey through very dark periods is essential for survival. Here are a few that I have found helpful:

### 1. Find an anchor.

Followers of Christ can find an anchor in biblical promises. We can spend time with our anchor, Jesus Christ, through prayer, daily Bible study, and staying connected with supportive, positive people in our lives. Hymn writer Priscilla Owens asked the question, “Will your anchor hold in the storms of life?” and answered with a resounding, “We have an anchor that keeps the soul.”<sup>4</sup> Scripture assures us that “We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure” (Hebrews 6:19, NIV).<sup>5</sup> For the Christian, hope *is* Jesus—that He came as our Redeemer and Savior<sup>6</sup> and, in doing so, promised to be sufficient for *any* challenge we may encounter until His return.

### 2. Feel the feelings.

Sometimes, we hit it out of the park and experience the exhilaration and euphoria that come from overcoming an immediate challenge. At other times, however, everything goes wrong, and we strike out, or life takes

*Continued on page 45*

# What Five Students of the ENCOUNTER

## Adventist Bible Curriculum Taught Us About Their Spirituality

**T**he concept of spirituality is a vital element of Adventist education. Developers of the *Encounter* Bible curriculum have shown its centrality by placing an “authentic incarnational spirituality” in its curriculum, harnessed “to a concept where God is abiding and enabling of meaning, identity, purpose and character in the individual’s life.”<sup>1</sup> The following case study explores how student spirituality has manifested itself in one school in response to the intentions of curriculum developers and Bible teachers.

### Research Procedure

In 2017-2018, the authors engaged in qualitative research to understand how the educators in Australian Adventist schools were teaching the *Encounter* Bible curriculum. Lanelle Cobbin’s “Transformational Planning Framework” underpins this curriculum.<sup>2</sup> Cobbin directed the writing of its primary school units, while Nina Atcheson directed the writing of secondary units. The writing process began in New Zealand in 2006, moved to a collaborative effort with Australia in 2007,

and then to North American Adventist education in 2014. In Australia, a committee of 12 oversaw a planning and writing process that involved six writers and numerous teacher groups, who collectively completed the writing of 132 Year 1-10 units in 2012. Nine locations around the world now use the *Encounter* curriculum.<sup>3</sup>

In this study, respondents comprised 45 groups of students, averaging six in number, in classes from Years 3 to 10 at 12 primary and 10 secondary school campuses.<sup>4</sup> We used a “focus-group interview” approach with a set of questions to guide the discussion. However, these questions were adaptable to allow us to explore interesting or idiosyncratic responses.<sup>5</sup> Questions covered student perceptions of *Encounter*, the word *encounter*, teaching methodology, engagement with learning, unit content, and aspects of spirituality.

As part of a multiple case-study approach, the following individual case discusses responses to three questions in one of four student interviews in one school. We note that generalizability and transference of findings are not core components of the case-study paradigm. Instead, it seeks to unearth

patterns of awareness that teachers may want to consider in designing classroom experiences. In this instance, we interviewed a group of five Year 5-6 students (aged 11 and 12) selected from two classes. Their religious affiliations were Adventist, Baptist, Christian of no denomination, Buddhist, and Hindu. The pattern of religious composition in this group is typical for many Australian Adventist schools.

### Literature Review

The term *spirituality* is difficult to define, often described as a moving target,<sup>6</sup> and “elusive, diverse and sometimes ambiguous.”<sup>7</sup> Although elusive, it does have a core, namely a “sense of felt connection.”<sup>8</sup> Described in numerous studies of children’s spirituality as “relationality,” the essence of this connection is “an inner sense of a living relationship to a higher power.”<sup>9</sup> In this vein, David Perrin described Christian spirituality as “dependent on the dynamic relationship between the Spirit of God and the human spirit.”<sup>10</sup>

Spirituality is closely related to religious faith and is often confused with

BY BARRY HILL and PHIL FITZSIMMONS

it. In reviewing the literature on their respective properties, Hill<sup>11</sup> found that the two concepts have much in common. For example, both include trust, belief, commitment, relational connectivity, value priorities, a search for meaning, a desire to sense God's presence, a quest for transcendence, prayer, knowing God through daily experience, and altruistic service. However, despite these commonalities—and in agreement with Rossiter's<sup>12</sup> perspective—Hill concluded that the terms differ in emphasis. He has found religious faith to be primarily oriented to trust, belief, knowledge of God, and worldview. At the same time, spirituality leaned toward spiritual identity, life meaning, relationality, awareness of God, and spiritual sensitivity, elements that recent children's spirituality literature has frequently explored.

There are sound reasons to clarify the relationship between faith and spirituality. First, understanding the evolving spirituality literature can assist the teaching of both spirituality and religion. The spirituality field has developed considerably in the past two decades,<sup>13</sup> which, according to Miller,<sup>14</sup> has established child spirituality as a relative certainty. In contrast to earlier studies, recent research has gathered children's perceptions of their spirituality ethnographically, resulting in an emerging picture of a spirituality that differs from the adult perspective and embraces different spiritual needs.<sup>15</sup> Second, Tacey has explained how clarification can help teachers to better use spirituality as a gateway to developing student faith that can in turn anchor students' spirituality.<sup>16</sup>

Because spirituality is complex, researchers tend to describe its components or themes rather than define it.<sup>17</sup> For example, in a comprehensive review of early childhood spirituality literature, Adams, Bull, and Maynes<sup>18</sup> described 12 themes for middle childhood. These were: the innateness of spirituality, relationality, connectedness as a deeper aspect of relationality, spiritual identity, search for life meaning and purpose, transcendence, a journey toward unity with the Other (God), the "here and now" experience

of spirituality in daily life, creativity and achievement, moral sensitivity, awe and wonder, and the darker side of spirituality. We will now discuss seven of these themes and two others.

The quality of love, intimacy, and assurance experienced by young children in their relational attachments to family or caretakers appears to shape their ongoing faith development significantly. In discussing the possible

**In their attempts to pursue self-transcendence, children are inclined to look for God's presence in the ups and downs in everyday life, expressing their spirituality as "here and now" experiences that contrast with the approaches of many adults.**

impact of divorce on this faith journey, Chris Keisling<sup>19</sup> has cited the well-known research of Granqvist and Kirkpatrick,<sup>20</sup> who drew on attachment theory to show significant relationships between the quality and styles of childhood attachment and their impact on children's prayer behaviors, images of God, and attachment to God.

As part of attachment, children's sense of connectedness and relationship are also vital components of their spirituality. The writing of Parker Palmer,<sup>21</sup> David Hay and Rebecca Nye,<sup>22</sup> and Ruth Wills<sup>23</sup> illustrate the rich literature on this topic. Numerous

studies have examined Hay and Nye's version of relationality, "relational consciousness," believing it to be the core of children's spirituality.<sup>24</sup> While analyzing data, Nye realized that "relational consciousness" had emerged as a common thread tying together the spirituality of the schoolchildren she was interviewing.<sup>25</sup> She called this kind of consciousness "an unusual level of consciousness, something distinctively reflective, and that referred to the child's sense of connection to self, others, things, the world and God."<sup>26</sup>

Hay and Nye believed awareness was synonymous with consciousness, describing it as being children's holistic awareness of a reality that is "more like sensory awareness."<sup>27</sup> Further, they elucidated three inter-related types of spiritual sensitivity that contributed to this awareness: awareness sensing, mystery sensing, and value sensing.<sup>28</sup>

Children's relational orientation merges with their quest for transcendence, defined as "being meaningfully involved in, and personally committed to, the world beyond an individual's personal boundaries."<sup>29</sup> In their attempts to pursue self-transcendence, children are inclined to look for God's presence in the ups and downs in everyday life, expressing their spirituality as "here and now" experiences that contrast with the approaches of many adults.<sup>30</sup>

Various studies have explored children's relationship with God as an aspect of transcendence. For example, Mata-McMahon<sup>31</sup> reviewed five studies of children's spiritual meaning-making and relationships with God, noting that in a study by Moore et al.,<sup>32</sup> prayer was the most commonly discussed theme. Overall, she concluded that irrespective of religious background, "God, and the child's relationship to God, tends to have a strong presence in early childhood. Spirituality, and particularly the notion of God, consistently was found to comfort and even improve children's wellbeing."<sup>33</sup>

Another aspect of children's spirituality is their search for meaning and purpose,<sup>34</sup> a search assisted by the development of spiritual language<sup>35</sup> and



Examples of the *Encounter* Adventist Bible Curriculum teaching units and lessons for different levels.

aspects of the communication process that create meaning.<sup>36</sup> Further, making meaning is tied to the formation of spiritual identity. For Gibbs, “identity formation was clarified within multiple scenarios of relational connectedness.”<sup>37</sup> Such identity is seen as a core component of spirituality in that it enables children’s reflection related to a sense of self, and a grasp of their place and purpose in the world.<sup>38</sup>

Spirituality also involves a valuing process that includes value sensing<sup>39</sup> and prioritizing life values relating to what we hold sacred.<sup>40</sup> Hay and Nye<sup>41</sup> cited Donaldson, who wrote of people’s progression “from self-centred emotion to an experience of value that transcends personal concerns.” Children’s moral valuing, relationships, and search for transcendence collectively lead them to express another aspect of their spirituality, namely performing acts of altruistic service, contributing to the greater good, and treating others well.<sup>42</sup>

Having sketched a partial research profile of children’s spirituality, we now turn to our interview with them. Student names are pseudonyms to ensure anonymity.

#### Discussion

After we commenced with our “ice breaker” question: “**What do you think of *Encounter* Bible?**” Georgia quickly responded, “*Encounter* is very confronting. I like it because you have to like reflect on yourself, and really it’s very interesting.” In expressing the idea of being confronted, she illustrated Otto’s assertion that religious, spiritual experience could both fascinate/attract, and disturb/shock.<sup>43</sup> Given our overall analysis and the unpacking of the responses from this cohort, we believe *Encounter* was highly effective in confronting and stimulating reflection. Further, her self-reflection exhibited a higher reflective consciousness that helps enable spirituality.

Stephen followed with a similar ob-

servation that “It’s very interesting, and like it’s part of our lives, and sometimes like it helps us get well from illness, or anything that you might struggle with, or like a depressing moment.” Not only were his perceptions affirming of the *Encounter* Bible curriculum, but they also indicated that children’s spirituality expresses itself in the context of their everyday life experiences—including the ups and downs and “here and now” life struggles of their social world.

The next response, from Chloe, was “Um, ’cause I’m not Christian, so I haven’t learned about these things in the past. I am new, so I mean it is good to learn about it and what God has said.” Although not a Christian, Chloe was still open to learning about God and positive about *Encounter* Bible. While she attended this school, her openness and desire to learn were a gateway to finding her true identity

and the meaning of her life.

Sarah declared her religious heritage by saying, “I am a Christian, an SDA. I just love *Encounter* because it’s just a time for me to, you know, build my relationship with God, and feel His comfort, and you know, I feel He’s there for me.” By affirming her assurance and comfort in sensing God’s nearness and consciously building her relationship with God, Sarah demonstrated the relational core of her spirituality.

Finally, Daniel concluded, “It’s great to learn new things about Him and things that He has done.” In numerous interviews at all year levels in our research, a common theme was students’ love of learning new insights from the Bible. It is part of their thirst for deep meaning, itself a component of spirituality.

Besides showing interest and enjoyment in *Encounter* Bible classes, these students had already started to reveal their spirituality in various ways by simply responding to one question that related only indirectly to it.

Our second question was, “**Does *Encounter* Bible help you think about life?**” Chloe started by relating her day’s experience to a Bible memory verse: “Yeah, ’cause we sometimes look up Bible verses, and for our homework we have a Bible verse to memorize. And like when I’m sleeping, before I go to bed I always go back on my day, and then I remember the Bible verse. ‘Oh, I could have done that instead of that. Why did I ever do that?’”

The inclination to reflect on a day’s experience is spiritual. In the process of integrating the meaning of a Bible verse with her experience, Chloe showed the kind of reflective self-awareness that engaged her sense of spiritual accountability and openness to improvement. Such reflection both accesses and engenders higher spiritual consciousness.

Daniel then showed a thoughtful approach to the Bible through the lens of history. “Well, I do think deeply a lot about life. Bible classes do make me think deeper, which is opening a lot more ideas, experiences, and the like . . . different ideas of history and what’s coming and what’s gone.” This

response was spiritual in that he not only sought to make sense of his life through a historical framework, but also treasured the diversity of new ideas and experiences in Bible as part of deeper meaning making. And his linguistic mastery helped sharpen his spiritual perception.

Georgia found the emotion and meaning of music in *Encounter* Bible deeply moving. In her words, “Yeah, I definitely do think about life, like some bits in Bible topics are really one

**Having been immersed in children’s responses, we tend to believe that admitting to struggling is spiritually authentic. The literature has established that the expansion of children’s spirituality can involve life dilemmas, inner struggle, conflict, and difficult mental work.**

on one with God. And like there’ll be some songs that the teacher will play on the screen, and you’ll have the lyrics with you, and just those words in the song. They’re really touching, and you really feel God speak to you during those moments. And it’s really like if you’re having a bad day it will really just help you to see life from a different perspective, and you really realize how you can fix it all, and that God is always with you.” Here Georgia strongly engaged the relational domain of spirituality (one on one with God). First, she showed emotional

and valuing sensitivity by being touched through exploring song lyrics. Then her strong emotional feeling spring boarded her allusion to God’s nearness, even to an expression of closeness that had an intimate, transcendent feel. The assurance of connection with God then transferred to her experiential struggles and changed her perspective on dealing with them. This whole spiritual process showed a sustained sense of God’s presence that enabled her to gain a sense of control of some difficulties in her life.

Stephen then reflected on his spiritual struggle. “So yeah, I know *Encounter* Bible has really helped me through struggling times, like when my dad was sick I really prayed, and I never used to do that, so it helped me get through a lot.” Having been immersed in children’s responses, we tend to believe that admitting to struggling is spiritually authentic. The literature<sup>44</sup> has established that the expansion of children’s spirituality can involve life dilemmas, inner struggle, conflict, and difficult mental work. Further, Stephen had made a significant life change that could indicate the influence of the Holy Spirit in his life.

Following Stephen, Sarah talked us through three aspects of her reflections about life. “*Encounter* Bible [class] absolutely makes me think deeply about my purpose in life, and it just makes me think deeply about things I haven’t explored yet, like questions I haven’t answered myself, and especially when my grandmother was in hospital. . . . I would pray and pray and pray and she actually got better. . . . Also, every night before I go to bed I open the Bible and look at a memory verse . . . or this Bible book that I read.”

Sarah’s response illustrated the presence of spirituality in each aspect of her experience. The search for life meaning and purpose was spiritual, as was her sensitivity to the mystery of life. Hay and Nye would call this mystery sensing.<sup>45</sup> Her prayer and the conviction of answered prayer as the assurance of God’s intervention were both spiritual. Finally, being reflective about a day’s experience in conjunction with the meaning of a Bible

verse was also spiritual, something we noted earlier about Chloe.

Our third most difficult and probing question was “**What does it mean to be spiritual?**” Daniel thought for a minute, then declared, “It’s not just being—you know, I’m a Christian, and I’m going to learn all about this. It’s more about getting really deep and having a relationship with God, so getting connection, having connection there. It’s more, something more, yeah.” For Daniel, spirituality was all about his relationship with God. His relational spirituality called for depth in the sense of focusing intently on God, making an effort, despising the superficiality of simply learning about Christianity and assuming a Christian identity. His use of the word *connection* was also repeated many times in other schools by students at all levels we surveyed.

Chloe chimed in with “I really love what he has said, and it’s so true. It’s just like that. . . . You can’t just be like ‘Oh, nah, I’m just gonna do something else.’ No, you have to put aside your priorities and your distractions and actually put your all into it. You actually have to commit something to be spiritual.” This description of spirituality took another angle on avoiding superficiality, the angle of deep commitment (“you have to actually put your all into it”). As a component of human faith, commitment also spills over into spirituality in students’ minds.

Georgia echoed the sentiments of her two classmates. “Yeah, to be spiritual, it’s not like I go to school every day and learn about [the] Bible. That doesn’t make you spiritual. It’s more like you need to dig deeper, and you really like pray, and you need to talk to God, and you need to ask Him, and stuff like that. You need to have that relationship with God.” The theme of “digging deep,” avoiding superficiality, was perpetuated in this third relational account. But here it was linked with prayer as the conversational, communication aspect of spiritual relationship.

Sarah then engaged us with nature. “Well, my grandparents are very spiritual, like they point out the littlest

things that are so beautiful. And it’s like they point out this smooth rock and say, ‘Oh you can paint on that, you can make a beautiful picture.’ . . . That’s really, I don’t know, it’s just amazing.” In her enthusiastic affirmation of her grandparents’ spirituality, Sarah was displaying two aspects of her own spirituality. The first was her close relational attachment to her grandparents, and the second was her use of an aesthetic framework to express her sensory connection with beauty in nature.

Finally, Stephen’s reflections centered on the relationship between Christian and non-Christian spirituality. “I think spirituality is to do with Christianity, but not always, not in all contexts. You can be spiritual in other religions. Yeah, many other ways. It’s not just Christian. So this is a hard one.” Stephen was raising a question about the relationship between Christian faith and spirituality, and by implication about the challenge for *Encounter Bible* in teaching faith and spirituality in classes where Adventist students are a minority. His observations reminded us that we are in the 21st century, a time when according to Tacey, there is a spirituality revolution occurring in which “our social scene is full to the brim with individual and esoteric spiritualities.”<sup>46</sup>

### Conclusion

One 40-minute interview with a group of five students showed us much about their spirituality. This served to confirm other student perspectives from other schools across Australia. Furthermore, the qualities of spirituality on display resonated with discussions in current children’s spirituality literature. More importantly, *Encounter Bible* was doing what it should for these five students.

Rebecca Nye<sup>47</sup> commented that there is a continuum in the way in which children everywhere express their spirituality. At the first and most basic level, they refer to “first questions” or broad principles. Then they begin to talk about religion and make conscious associations with religious traditions. Finally, they reveal religious insights that express their experience of spirituality directly. The students we interviewed

clearly fitted the third category. For this group—and for that matter, every other group we interviewed—*Encounter Bible* was giving them a spiritual life advantage, and spiritual wellbeing.

Finally, a challenge in Australian Adventist schools is the presence of numerous students of other faiths or no faith in Bible classes. When we asked the group if they liked having students of different religious faiths in class, responses were lively and unanimous in sentiment. Students all respected other perspectives and worldviews, saying things like, “You do respect them; don’t put each other down,” and “I feel that we really put aside our differences when there is Bible.” The valuing of comparison that invites openness to difference, the divergent, and the new reveals a different search for meaning that now characterizes children’s spirituality. ✍

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*This article has been peer reviewed.*

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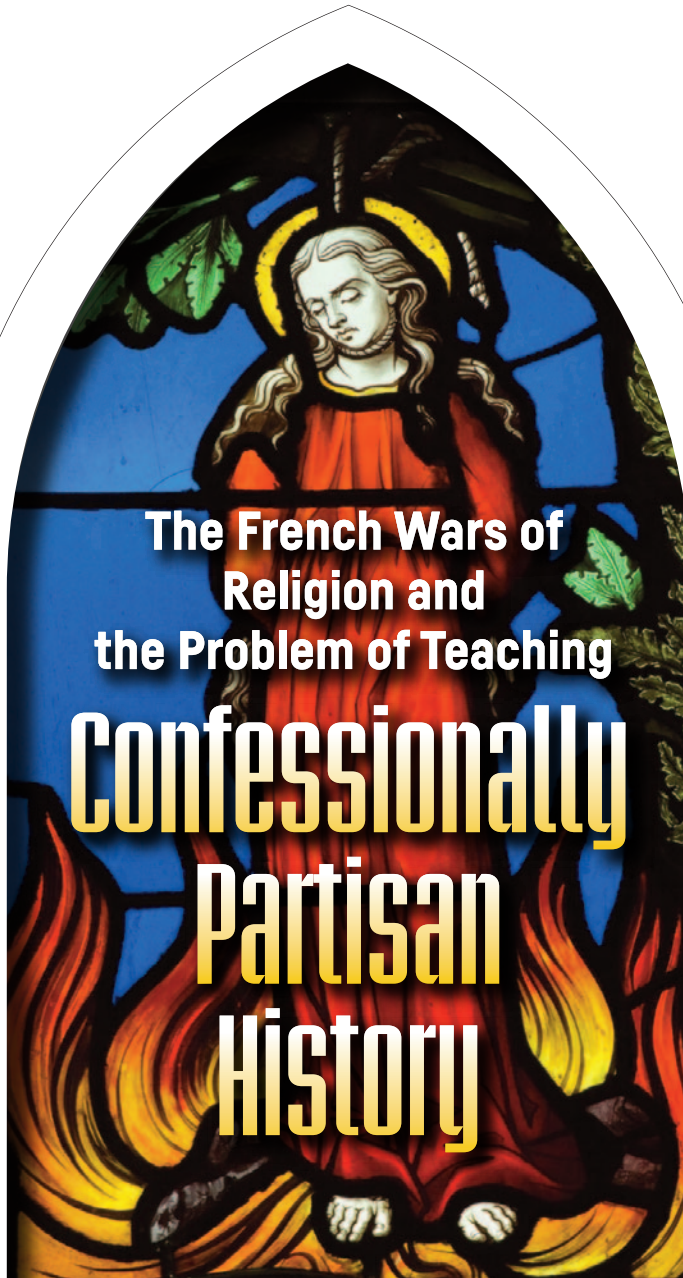
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**H**ow should Seventh-day Adventist scholars and teachers treat the historical events of a period of warfare, violence, and cruelty in the name of religion, such as the French Wars of Religion, when most of the violence and viciousness seems to come from one side? How do we do justice to the historical reality without seeming to perpetuate a triumphalist and polemical Protestant narrative of history? Can we model objectivity to our students and still honor the spirit of the Reformers?

### **A Problem With Teaching the Reformation**

Seventh-day Adventist history teachers face a problem when it comes to teaching the Reformation. We are members of a denomination which, from its mid-19th-century North American origins, has always been suspicious of, when not downright hostile to, the Roman Catholic Church in general. Specifically, our view of both the 16th-century Reformers and the era bearing their name has tended to be essentially that of traditional Protestant historiography.<sup>1</sup> When it comes to the history of these events, we are confessionally partisan.

## **The French Wars of Religion and the Problem of Teaching Confessionally Partisan History**

Yet the discipline of history, perhaps more than any other of the humanities, demands objectivity and distancing of teachers and researchers from their own assumptions about their subject. In English literature, as practiced today, it is perfectly legitimate for a text to be read from varied perspectives or to have multiple interpretations. In anthropology, the concept of “distance” between researcher and subject is increasingly perceived as a legacy of imperialism, and *reflexivity*, i.e., the effect a subject

group has on a researcher who becomes truly part of that group, is the new watchword.

In history, however, objectivity is still vital. This is not to say that historians imagine that they come to a subject without preconceived ideas; but the historian must do all in her or his power to put those preconceptions to one side and be objective. This is not only an issue for those Adventist historians who publish actively; so intrinsic is objectivity and scholarly detachment to the discipline that schoolteachers, too, inevitably seek to model it in the classroom—or else they are not teaching actual history.

A particular problem with objectivity comes when the Adventist teacher or researcher engages with the

European wars of religion that followed the Reformation, and which raged roughly from the early mid-16th century to the later mid-17th century. Not only are teachers confronted with a range of atrocities, all carried out in the name of Christianity; they also find that the bulk of the murder and mayhem had its origin with the adherents of the Church of Rome. Is there a way we can be equally true to our discipline, the evidence, and to our faith?

BY D. J. B. TRIM

I think there is, and this article explores one approach, taking the example of the *guerres de religion*: the French Wars of Religion (1562-1598). My approach to how these might be taught draws not only on the historical evidence but also on a frank recognition of my own background and consequent biases.<sup>2</sup>

My approach reflects, too, my belief that neither Seventh-day Adventists in particular, nor Protestants in general, have a unique monopoly on a relationship with God. And while an integral part of being a Seventh-day Adventist is recognizing that God has revealed to us truths ignored by members of other Christian denominations, it is nevertheless clear that we do not yet have a complete grasp of divine truth, either. In consequence, when we are in the classroom, it is inappropriate to teach either a triumphalist or a hostile narrative about any individual Christian tradition. We should acknowledge that God has been honored by (and will ultimately honor) people from all denominations.<sup>3</sup>

This approach allows us to honor both professional standards (by teaching and publishing objective history) and Christian standards. The two can be complementary, rather than contradictory, even when considering the Reformation or wars of religion.

### Personal Preconceptions

My first acquaintance with the French Wars of Religion came as a boy, and my view was shaped by two similar but different formative influences. My father was a second-generation Seventh-day Adventist pastor, and so the family's history books that I consumed as a child and adolescent made it very clear that Protestants were the good guys and Catholics the bad guys. But there was an additional, specific influence on how I thought about the Reformation in France—one I am sure I share with many other Adventist high school and college teachers.

Walter C. Utt, the distinguished long-time Pacific Union College-based historian, did not turn his detailed re-

search on the Huguenots of Louis XIV's reign into scholarly monographs; instead, he wrote two carefully accurate historical novels for adolescents and older children, vividly capturing the French Reformed world in the mid- to late-1680s, when religious liberty in France was destroyed. These books were very popular. I grew up reading them, and as a result, the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes was a recognizable event to me from a very young age.

Utt's novels were set decades after the end of the Wars of Religion, but because of their content, my boyish imagination was captured by the heroism and drama of the Huguenots' battles; my sympathies were also captured by the fact that it seemed as if *the right side won*. Thus, I instinctively identified Huguenots as doubly the "good guys." When I first read that the Prince de Condé's cavalry at the Battle of Dreux (1562) were

mostly clad in white (probably cassocks, over their full-plate armor), it seemed only appropriate. Utt thus certainly influenced how I viewed the earlier period.

As I grew older and studied early modern history at college and then researched the French Wars of Religion for my PhD, of course I discovered that the campaigns of the wars were filled with bloody deeds of cowardice, cruelty, and brutality, and that alongside the formal warfare, informal, communal violence was endemic, in which brutality and cruelty were even more common. So, to what extent do the influences of my youth still affect me? To some extent, it need not matter. Historians of the Reformation era have tended to come from clear confessional positions, but so long as they recognized this (and allow for it), it has not made their work less credible or historically respectable. In any case, very few modern Christian histo-

### Sidebar 1

#### *Duty to Scholarship and Faith*

This article has focused on 16th-century France but offers an example of how teachers can approach either the Reformation in other countries or other wars of religion. Accepting that there is good and ill on both sides does not mean a retreat into postmodernist relativism. The Huguenots strayed into violent and unchristian behavior themselves, but they did so in resisting Catholic violence, and in their enthusiasm to communicate to their fellow citizens a correct understanding of God's love for humanity.

Modern Western society gives offense to Muslims because of its crass materialism; Western political leaders often exercise power cynically, and with little regard, outside their own borders, for the freedoms they claim to hold dear. Neither of these shortcomings is the slightest justification for the murders of adults and children of various nations, races, and faiths. But they should make teachers and students alike think about how we, as Christian citizens, ought to act in the future.

In teaching the history of confessional disputes or conflicts, or in teaching the modern clash of faiths, it is our duty as teachers to make students aware when all sides are at fault; yet where one side is more responsible for violence than the other(s), it is also our duty as teachers to make that clear. But we shouldn't fear to point out the flaws of past generations of Protestants, or of our own present-day nations and societies, for, in so doing, we simply make students aware of the nature of fallen human beings. In that, we do justice to the demands both of scholarship and of our faith.

rians, regardless of their formative influences or instinctive prejudices, carry over the historical confessional enmities they study into the present day or their personal lives.

If most Seventh-day Adventists are, like me, still cheering (in some part of our minds) for the Reformers and their followers when reading historical accounts of the 16th and 17th centuries, probably many of us would like reconciliation with Roman Catholics, at a personal level, albeit not at the institutional, ecclesiological, or theological levels. Then, too, those who practice the discipline of history, whether at high school or college level, are well aware of the professional imperative to be objective.

There are many factors, then, that lead Christian historians of Reformation Europe to seek to distance themselves from the people they study. However, the French Wars of Religion pose a particular problem to Protestant historians because in their studies of the Wars of Religion, historical fact and personal prejudice seem to coincide.

### Catholic Repression and Persecution

When considering the record of religious violence in late 16th-century France, guilt seems to lie overwhelmingly with those on the Roman Catholic side.

In the 1540s, there were mass executions of Protestants in many French towns. Although these were quasi-judicial proceedings against people convicted of heresy, they are striking because of the numbers killed. And they were succeeded by less formal and more massive acts of brutality. In 1561, for example, when convicted heretics were released by royal decree as part of a short-lived attempt to achieve compromise, in the town of Marsillargues, a Catholic crowd rounded them up “and executed and burned them in the streets.”<sup>4</sup>

Then in 1562, the First Civil War/War of Religion was triggered by the slaughter of a whole congregation of Huguenots worshipping in a barn outside the small town of Vassy. It was the

first of many massacres, of which the St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre in Paris (August 24, 1572) is only the best-known and most horrific. In less than 24 hours, some 3,000 Huguenots, including women and children and the elderly, were murdered (something Pope John Paul II carefully avoided apologizing for during his visit to Paris in August 1997 when he provocatively celebrated a public mass *on* St. Bartholomew’s Day).

In the weeks that followed the massacre in Paris, between two thousand and five thousand more Huguenots were killed across France as the news of the massacre arrived in the country’s cities. This set off copycat massacres of the local Protestant populations. At Bordeaux, the killings occurred after a Jesuit preached a sermon “on how the Angel of the Lord had already executed God’s judgment in Paris, Orléans and elsewhere and would do so in Bordeaux.”<sup>5</sup>

Elsewhere, though, massacres often did not take place in the hot blood of religious fervor—the degree of calculation is sometimes chilling. In Rouen, for example, many of the Huguenots were in prison, and Catholic zealots broke into the jail “and systematically butchered them.”<sup>6</sup> In Lyons, the lead-

ing Catholic killers made public display of their bloodied clothing in the streets, being boastful rather than regretful.

Where Catholics lacked the numbers or confidence to attempt to put all their confessional rivals to the sword, they used other tactics. Thus, at Sens, in 1562, a mob, drawn from both the town and nearby villages, confronted the Calvinists coming out of church and engaged them in “a bloody battle.”<sup>7</sup> In Lyon the same year, Catholic boys stoned Protestant worshippers on their way to service. At Pamiers in 1566, a youth society performing a ritual in honor of Pentecost entered the Calvinist quarter as the local pastor was preaching, then began to sing “kill, kill,”<sup>8</sup> and serious fighting began that was [to last] for three days.<sup>9</sup>

The violence spilled over even into the organized campaigns of the civil wars in which, in theory, the rule of war ought to have applied. But Louis I de Bourbon, prince de Condé, leader of the Huguenot cause up to 1569, was murdered as he tried to surrender after being unhorsed in the Battle of Jarnac in March 1569. Two other Huguenot generals, Montgomery and Briquemault, were denied the rights of pris-

## Sidebar 2

### *Ideas for Teaching the Wars of Religion*

- For college-level courses: the great Renaissance English playwright, Christopher Marlowe, wrote a play about the St. Bartholomew’s Massacre, *The Massacre at Paris*. The great 19th-century French novelist, Alexandre Dumas, wrote a famous novel with the massacre and religious conflict at its center, *La Reine Margot* (sometimes published in translation under this title, sometimes as *Queen Margot*). For a particularly capable group of students, studying the historical evidence about the massacres along with these classic literary texts will be enriching and prompt reflection about the nature of historical evidence and of history itself.

- Use role-play: Divide the class into three groups. Assign one the part of 16th-century French Catholic nobles; the second, the part of ordinary Catholic citizens; and the third, the part of Huguenots. Have the students do background reading, then come to class ready to explain and to justify why their historical counterparts took the actions they did in massacres and violence. Students will start to see beyond their own preconceptions.

oners after being captured in 1574, and instead were executed by being broken on the wheel—judicially tortured to death.<sup>10</sup>

As the distinguished American historian Natalie Zemon Davis has highlighted in her important study of religious violence in the *guerres de religion*, Catholic violence went beyond the grave—not only were Huguenot lives taken, but their corpses were also desecrated. In Normandy and Provence, “leaves of the Protestant Bible were stuffed into the mouths and wounds of corpses.”<sup>11</sup> In 1568, when word spread that a Huguenot was about to be buried in a consecrated cemetery, “a mob rushed to the graveyard, interrupted the funeral, and dragged the cadaver off to . . . the town dump.”<sup>12</sup>

The dead body of Admiral de Coligny, the celebrated Huguenot leader, whose murder was one of the first actions of the St. Bartholomew’s Massacre, was mutilated, stoned, and hanged on a gibbet before finally being burned. At Provins in 1572, a Huguenot corpse had ropes tied to its neck and feet and was then made the subject of a tug-of-war competition between the boys of the town, before they dragged it off to be burned.<sup>13</sup>

Elsewhere, it was commonplace for Huguenot bodies to be thrown into rivers or burned, but bodies were also mocked and derided as they were dragged through the streets to their fate, and frequently “had their genitalia and internal organs cut away.”<sup>14</sup>

All this is not simply the stuff of propaganda; it is well-documented historical fact. It is easy, then, to portray the Catholics in the Wars of Religion as a malign force—as oppressors and persecutors, with Calvinists as victims who eventually defended themselves. A confessionally partisan interpretation of late 16th-century France seems to conform to the evidence.

### **Protestant Aggression and Intolerance**

The conundrum, then, is this: How we do justice to the historical reality of the Wars of Religion without falling

into one of two traps: on the one hand, perpetuating the very divides that resulted in brutal and bloody conflict in late-16th-century France, which would for most of us be inconsistent with our personal morality; but on the other hand, seeming simply to be elevating partisan views to the level of scholarly conclusion, which is professionally unacceptable. How are Adventist educators to teach the period in a fair and open-minded spirit, when the worst excesses were on the Catholic side?

It is important to remember that the Huguenots were not guiltless—they were an active ingredient in the combustible recipe that produced the explosion of violence in late 16th-century France. In Rouen, just in 1560 and 1561, “there were at least nine incidents variously described in the documents as ‘tumults’, ‘riots’, and ‘seditions’: . . . all of them arising out of actions”<sup>15</sup> by the Huguenots. In Agen in 1561, Protestant artisans systematically destroyed the altars and statues in the town’s Catholic churches. At Lyon, a Calvinist shoemaker interrupted the Easter sermon being preached by a Franciscan friar, crying out “You lie”—a claim punctuated by the gunshots of Huguenots waiting outside in the square.<sup>16</sup>

Across France, Protestants would frequently interrupt masses or Corpus Christi processions to seize the host and then crumble it before indignant Catholics (for whom, because of their belief that it was Christ’s literal body, this was a horrible blasphemy), proclaiming it “a god of paste” or “a god of flour,” rather than the real body of Christ.<sup>17</sup> Similar patterns were repeated often: Catholic religious processions were regularly showered with rubbish; they, like church services, were disrupted by psalm-singing, whistling, or slogan-chanting Protestants; and frequently, churches were “cleansed,” with offending objects deliberately desecrated with spit, urine, and excrement before being smashed. Priests, monks, and friars, or officers of the law holding Protestant prisoners, were often beaten

or killed, and occasionally even tortured to death.<sup>18</sup>

It is not only what the Huguenots *did*; it is what they did *not* do. They were unwilling to accept that Catholics were also sincere Christians and were unwilling to compromise on any points. The most influential 16th-century French proponent of toleration of other Christians was a Roman Catholic, Michel de L’Hospital, chancellor of France in the 1560s. He came to believe, genuinely and passionately, that toleration was what was right for followers of Christ, who, as de L’Hospital wrote, “loved peace, and ordered us to abstain from armed violence . . . ; He did not want to compel and terrorise anybody through threats, nor to strike with a sword.”<sup>19</sup>

Calvin actually condemned violent action by the Huguenots, urging them not to resist but to suffer persecution according to the New Testament model; it was the great nobles, who he felt had a duty and responsibility in the French polity, on whom he urged action on behalf of the French Reformed churches. But Calvin condemned the leading Calvinist advocate of toleration, Sebastian Castellio, for his views, and leading Huguenot pastors did likewise.<sup>20</sup>

For that matter, Henry de Navarre’s willingness to compromise on some points in order to end conflict was an important factor in ending the wars, but in so doing he provoked the condemnation of many of the Huguenots, both leaders and rank and file. Of course, Henry acted as he did partly to advance himself, in order to be unchallenged king of France (which he became as Henry IV). However, he also did genuinely want to end decades of confessional conflict; and it seems likely that this could not have been achieved without some compromises.

Many Huguenots felt that Henry should instead have had faith in God, defied human logic, and a miracle might have been worked. My own instinct, indeed, is to say, with Peter and the other apostles, “‘We ought to obey God rather than men’” (NKJV).<sup>21</sup>

Yet ultimately, Henri's willingness to abjure was vital in ending religious violence. Which course of action, then, was the more in keeping with the example of our Lord? It's a perplexing question.

### The Nature of Early-modern French Religious Violence

None of this changes the fact that the Huguenots were much more sinned against than sinning in 16th-century France. The intolerance of the Roman Catholic majority was the motor that drove religious conflict in France.<sup>22</sup> As Natalie Zemon Davis pointed out nearly 30 years ago, there was a clear qualitative difference between the violence of Calvinists and Catholics.<sup>23</sup>

Calvinists wanted to change the mind of the majority population, and so they destroyed sacred objects to show they were not actually sacred, and killed priests because they perceived them to be leading the people astray. Catholics, however, wanted to rid themselves of a large proportion of the population whom they regarded as pollution or a cancer. This is why some 3,000 Huguenots could be killed in Paris in 24 hours on August 24 and 25, 1572—a chilling parallel to the nearly 3,000 killed in three attacks on September 11, 2001.<sup>24</sup> For French Roman Catholics, the Huguenots were the problem—killing them was the first step toward recovering divine favor. In short, whereas Catholic violence was directed against *people*, Calvinist violence was largely directed against *things*. It was therefore inherently always more limited than Catholic violence.

Yet the crucial facts are that Calvinists still perpetrated violence: They murdered priests, and they were guilty of intolerance and oppression. While the distinction between the two forms of violence is an important one, we are, as it were, talking here about the lesser of two evils, not of a contrast between good and evil.

## Helpful Resources

### On religious wars and religious persecution in the post-Reformation period:

Philip Benedict, *Rouen During the Wars of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

Richard Bonney and D. J. B. Trim, eds., *Persecution and Pluralism: Calvinists and Religious Minorities in Early Modern Europe, 1550-1700* (New York, Oxford, and Bern: Peter Lang, 2006).

Keith Cameron et al., eds., *The Adventure of Religious Pluralism in Early Modern France* (New York, Oxford & Bern: Peter Lang, 2000).

Natalie Zemon Davis, "The Rites of Violence: Religious Riot in Sixteenth-century France," *Past and Present* 59 (1973): 51-91; reproduced in *Society and Culture in Early Modern France: Eight Essays* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1975).

*Anabaptists*. Website devoted to the denominational descendants of the Anabaptists and their beliefs, which includes a number of primary and secondary sources: <http://www.anabaptists.org/>.

*De Bello Belgico*. Website devoted to the Eighty Years' War, containing a wide range of primary sources, lists of important figures with brief biographical information, some scholarly essays, and bibliographies. English-language version: <https://dutchrevolt.leiden.edu/english/Pages/default.aspx>.

Hanover College, Internet Archive of Texts and Documents—The Protestant Reformation. This provides links to a wide collection of electronic primary sources, including texts by Luther, Calvin, and others: <http://history.hanover.edu/early/prot.html>.

### General works on "wars of religion," especially between Christianity and Islam:

M. J. Akbar, *The Shade of Swords: Jihad and the Conflict Between Islam and Christianity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).

Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God: Fundamentalism in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000).

\_\_\_\_\_, *Fields of Blood: Religion and the History of Violence* (New York and Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014). Armstrong's book is somewhat biased against evangelical Christianity, so must be used carefully. However, it is full of interesting information and insights: valuable for teachers, but perhaps not appropriate for students.

Richard Bonney, *Jihad: From Qu'ran to Bin Laden* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004). Bonney was originally an historian of early-modern Europe and thus brings an interesting perspective.

Norman Housley, *Religious Warfare in Europe, 1400-1536* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). Bridges the gap between the Crusades and the Reformation.

Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2003).

Peter Partner, *God of Battles: Holy Wars of Christianity and Islam* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998).

## Conclusion

There is a part of me that thrills when I read the narrative of the Battle of Coutras by Agrippa d'Aubigné (the distinguished Huguenot historian, who was recording events in which he had participated),<sup>25</sup> knowing that both the overweening arrogance of the Catholic League's army and the overwhelming numerical superiority on which it was based were about to be shattered by the moral superiority of the outnumbered but zealous Huguenot cavalry, chanting the 118th Psalm as they charged. But there is also a part of me that thrills when reading Michel de L'Hospital's heartfelt, gospel-based plea for acceptance of alternative points of view—and that recognizes that de L'Hospital, a devout follower of Rome, was closer to the spirit of the Gospels than many followers of the Reformation.

Is there then a fundamental point about the French Wars of Religion, which we, as Christians, should bear in mind as we research, and to which we should draw our students' attention as we teach? I suggest it is that Protestants and Catholics alike failed to live up to the high standards of our Lord and Savior who declared: "You have heard that it was said ' . . . hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you."<sup>26</sup> My own recurrent failures to live up to this ideal should make me slow to condemn either side as being less Christian than I. The right course, perhaps, both as a Christian and as an historian, is instead to try to understand why so many firm believers could act so contrary to the wishes of Christianity's Founder and foundation. The result of such an approach will be sensitive and objective history that produces an enhanced understanding of the past. It will also, I believe, be history that is genuinely Christian. ✍

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21. Acts 5:29. All Scripture quotations in this article are quoted from the *New King James Version*® of the Bible. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
22. As Ellen White identified; see *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1911), 276, 277.
23. Davis, "The Rites of Violence," especially page 174.
24. Cf. H. H. Leonard, "The Huguenots and the St. Bartholomew's Massacre," *The Huguenots: History and Memory in Transnational Context: Essays in Honour and Memory of Walter C. Utt*, David J. B. Trim, ed. (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2011), 65, 66.
25. Théodore-Agrippa d'Aubigné, *Histoire Universelle*, Alphonse de Ruble, ed. (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1893), 7:161. Originally published between 1616 and 1620).
26. Matthew 5:43, 44.



## on Pedagogical Hospitality and Remote Learning

Teaching involves teachers acting as hospitable hosts who create learning spaces that welcome their students into learning. Smith asks his readers to reimagine teaching as an act of hospitality where the classroom is a “hospitable space.”<sup>1</sup> Parker Palmer draws on such a space when he describes pedagogical hospitality as the place where teachers treat their students with compassion and care, inviting them into a place where they can both listen and be listened to. Derrida’s seminal work on hospitality, which explored welcoming refugees and others across individual and national borders, helps with this reimagining.<sup>2</sup> He defines hospitality as inviting and welcoming the stranger who is “treated as a friend or ally, as opposed to the stranger treated as an enemy.”<sup>3</sup>

Each of these notions of hospitality underscores the importance of welcoming our students, which is equally

important during times of remote learning like those that took place during the school lockdowns of COVID-19. This article explores pedagogical hospitality in remote learning with reference to the experience of Special Religious Education (SRE) teachers in public schools.<sup>4</sup>

Like hosts at a dinner party, teachers must carefully plan for involvement of all their student-guests to ensure that everyone feels welcome to participate, and no one is left out. According to Derrida, this hospitality takes two forms: unconditional and conditional hospitality. Unconditional hospitality is the perfect hospitality we aspire to that welcomes all people without question or condition, where there is a “welcome without reserve and without calculation, an exposure without limit to whoever arrives.”<sup>5</sup>

By contrast, conditional hospitality describes the reality of hospitality where both the host and guest(s) have specific roles, rights, and obligations that are attached to their behavior.

When a host offers conditional hospitality, he or she chooses who to welcome, how long they can stay, and what they can do while they are guests.<sup>6</sup> Pedagogical hospitality is a mix of these two kinds of hospitality. On one hand, teachers graciously and expectantly welcome all students into their classrooms, regardless of who they are, but they also have conditions of entry and remaining that include behavioral and learning expectations for each student.

### Pedagogical Hospitality

Providing a welcoming and open space for all students regardless of who they are, what they have done, or what they believe eloquently speaks of God’s love and welcome to all. Throughout the biblical narrative, God is a hospitable God who defends the cause of the orphan, the widow, and the alien (Psalm 146:7-9) and prepares an eternal table and rooms for His guests (Psalm 23:5, John 14:2, 3). By

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attempting to provide unconditional hospitality, teachers enact God's hospitable actions toward the outsider, foreshadowing the heavenly feast.<sup>7</sup> When a Christian offers hospitality, he or she is demonstrating the welcoming nature of God. Consequently, Severe suggests that "hospitality is a primary avenue the gospel is lived within the teaching profession."<sup>8</sup>

Asymmetrical power relationships are inherent in hospitality.<sup>9</sup> Whenever a guest is invited to cross the threshold, go through the door, and inside the house, a subtle, unequal power relationship is implied.<sup>10</sup> This is because to be hospitable, hosts "must have some level of control over their home,"<sup>11</sup> a place where they expect their guests to act in certain ways.<sup>12</sup> The simple existence of the threshold and door "means that someone has the key to them and consequently controls the conditions of hospitality."<sup>13</sup> Therefore, however generous and welcoming the host, his or her role includes control over what takes place, which reminds the guests of their place in the relationship.

This asymmetrical power structure also exists in teaching. However, pedagogical hospitality emphasizes the need for teachers to reduce this imbalance by helping their students to become not just guests, but actual co-hosts in the learning. Wright identifies three pedagogical principles for religious education that could be appropriate for any classroom: creating space, encountering others, and listening for wisdom. She points out that underpinning these principles is a lived pedagogy where teachers enable students to flourish by being willing to be both hosts and guests in their classrooms.<sup>14</sup>

Similarly, Ruitenbergh reminds teachers that they do not own their classrooms but must welcome their students and humbly make a place for them. This humble welcome is a consequence of the host understanding that he or she is indebted to others who have shown him or her hospitality in the past.<sup>15</sup> Such a recognition of indebtedness makes more sense for the Christian, who recognizes that

God has shown hospitality by inviting human beings to a relationship with Him, making Himself known and enabling us to know Him. Paradoxically, while God is omnipotent, He humbly chooses to "[make] himself nothing,"<sup>16</sup> graciously sending His Son to earth—who was born in a stable, "taking the very nature of a servant" and "becoming obedient to death" (Philippians 2:6-8).

**Rather than being hosts to students who cross the threshold into their classrooms, teachers find themselves sitting (in a virtual space) with their students who are working at kitchen benches, dining-room tables, lounge chairs, and desks in their homes.**

### **Pedagogical Hospitality and Remote Learning**

Remote learning changes pedagogical hospitality relationships because teachers are not only hosts but also become guests as they "enter" their students' homes, albeit remotely, to teach. Rather than being hosts to students who cross the threshold into their classrooms, teachers find themselves sitting (in a virtual space) with their students who are working at kitchen benches, dining-room tables, lounge chairs, and desks in their homes. If teachers are teaching syn-

chronously, they may encounter parents who wander in and out of the learning space because they are helping their child or as they get on with their daily lives. Teachers may, as happened to me on my first day of remote learning, become unwilling listeners to a family argument, or, as other teachers described, watch as their students are interrupted by pets, siblings, the radio, or any of the myriad of distractions that constitute their home lives. In the classroom, teachers can control many of these things, but as guests in their students' homes, they must graciously work within the constraints of the household's conditional hospitality.

An initial exploration into pedagogical hospitality began during doctoral research into the pedagogy of Special Religious Education (SRE) teachers.<sup>17</sup> Using participant interviews, reflective journals, and document analysis, a constructivist grounded-theory methodology investigated the beliefs and experiences of a group of respondent SRE teachers in state schools in two Australian states: New South Wales and Victoria. Twenty-three teachers, who between them taught 58 classes in 32 city, urban, and rural primary schools, participated in the study to answer the research question: *How do SRE teachers' beliefs and experiences influence their pedagogy?* These SRE teachers were chosen through purposive sampling to ensure a broad range of experience and expertise. Included in the study were teachers from their first year of SRE teaching to ones with more than 40 years of teaching, male and female teachers, teachers aged between 22 and 91, teachers with formal education and/or theological qualifications, and teachers working at schools with between 34 and 620 students. The findings of this study inform subsequent comment on the context and practice of SRE teachers, while comments on remote learning are anecdotally sourced from formal supervisory interactions as well as informal collegial experiences during school COVID-19 lockdowns in March and April 2020, providing a narrative

of COVID-19-adapted practice.

Volunteer SRE teachers provide Christian education in state schools in many parts of Australia. They have a stronger sense of being guests in schools than regular schoolteachers because they are not part of the school staff, they borrow another teacher's classroom, and they stay in the school only for the duration of their lessons. In addition, students and parents can choose to not participate in SRE lessons and can make this choice at any time during the year. As guests of the school and the classroom teacher, SRE teachers have to teach within the constraints of a host-and-guest hospitality relationship. This is captured by Jane,<sup>18</sup> who describes how her experience of being a guest in the classroom means that "it doesn't matter now nice the teacher is . . . my teaching is very different when they are there."

The SRE teachers' experiences of being guests bear similarities to online classroom teachers' experiences as they teach remotely in their students' homes.<sup>19</sup> First, like SRE teachers, online-classroom teachers teach in spaces that are not their own, where other adults (in this case, parents) are more involved in what is being taught. This is particularly pronounced when online-classroom teachers teach about issues and ideas that might not be consistent with the beliefs of the home—especially during Christian-development lessons, chapel services, or devotions.

Second, SRE teachers often have limited access to school resources, similar to the situation of online-classroom teachers, who cannot control the resources students have available during their learning. Finally, like SRE teachers, online-classroom teachers' students can more readily "opt-out" of learning by not engaging in the lessons. The strategies SRE teachers have developed to manage their guest status in each of these situations may be helpful during remote learning and beyond.



### Teachers Must Function in Spaces That Are Not Their Own

Classroom teachers act as hosts to their students as they cross the threshold into their classrooms. Good hosts invite their guests to "make themselves at home" and ensure that the environment is inviting to their guests. In the classroom, this means ensuring that the attitude of the room is inviting and generous and that students feel respected and comfortable asking questions and sharing their ideas and opinions. It also means ensuring that practical things such as the temperature of the room and the availability of seats and desks for all students are accommodated. Throughout these actions, classroom teachers retain their power, implicitly and explicitly saying "you are welcome if you . . ."

In contrast, SRE teachers' experiences in the classroom are closer to being guests because they teach as the

guests of both the schools where they volunteer and of the teachers, who often stay in the room while they teach. As guests, they are humbly reliant on the welcome that they are offered. If it is positive, they are welcome to the resources of the school, are provided with appropriate spaces for teaching, and are supported in their teaching. Conversely, in a less-welcoming environment, SRE teachers must accept the classrooms they are allocated, even when they are inappropriate. This is illustrated in how Nerida describes having no control over the rooms that she has been given to teach in, which are "sometimes really pathetic and not conducive to learning."

In addition to accepting the teaching space they receive, SRE teachers must also accept interventions and in-

interruptions by the classroom teacher, even if these are not welcome. This interruption can take two forms. First, the classroom teacher might intentionally interrupt the teaching to add his or her own thoughts or intervene in a behavioral issue. For example, Jane describes a classroom teacher who listens with “half an ear” to her lessons, “popping up with something” to add to the lesson.

Second, classroom teachers might interrupt the SRE teacher by their lack of consideration for what is happening in the classroom. For example, Shirley describes how while she is teaching, the classroom teacher will act as if there’s no one in the class and “have a conversation with another teacher in the room” while she is teaching.

Remote learning bears many similarities to the experiences of SRE teachers. Like SRE teachers who work in spaces they do not control, remote learning takes place in students’ homes where online-classroom teachers have limited control over the space. Although online-classroom teachers and schools may develop protocols and expectations for student participation in remote learning, ultimately, they share control with the parents, who welcome them as they teach remotely in their students’ homes. As hosts, parents determine where their children learn, whether other things are taking place during the learning, and the level of interruption the students experience. In this conditional hospitality, parents can be a support and encouragement, but their presence may also be less positive. They may distract the students by, for example, talking during a lesson or explaining a task in a way that is not helpful.

As hosts of the classrooms, classroom teachers not only control the physical space in which they teach, but they also create the ethos of the learning environment. In contrast, SRE teachers are guests of the existing ethos of the classroom. As they enter classrooms to teach about their Christian faith, they encounter an environment that can range from positive to hostile. SRE teachers recognize that

they may be challenging the worldview of both their classroom teachers who are listening to their teaching and the students’ parents, who hear the stories after school. For example, in a classroom where Patricia knows the classroom teacher does not agree with her beliefs, she describes being aware of her guest status when she sees the classroom teacher “look up” when a student asks a “curly question, and then [the teacher] nods and goes back to what she is doing.” In such circum-

**Remote learning is similar to SRE teaching because when online-classroom teachers enter their students’ homes, the values and beliefs that they hold and share in their classrooms may be different from the values and beliefs of the home.**

stances, it can be difficult to develop camaraderie between SRE teachers and classroom teachers. In a similar way, Elissa worries about teaching Christian content with which her students’ parents will disagree. She acknowledges that there may be lessons “that almost end up disrespecting [parents’ beliefs; and] at worse, they can think that it might be brainwashing.”

However, when SRE teachers, like Bart, find a classroom teacher who is a Christian, there is a meeting of likeness, a sharing in a common spiritual-

ity that acts as a modifier on the guest/host relationship. The SRE teacher is no longer Derrida’s<sup>20</sup> “stranger”; someone who is “unknown, where I know nothing of him” but an ally and friend. Several of the SRE teachers commented on this experience; Nicole describes how the “whole atmosphere will be quite different” when there is a “Christian principal who is one hundred percent behind you.”

Remote learning is similar to SRE teaching because when online-classroom teachers enter their students’ homes, the values and beliefs that they hold and share in their classrooms may be different from the values and beliefs of the home. This is particularly the case as online-classroom teachers share their Christian faith through prayer, Bible reading, Christian-development lessons, and chapel services. For example, in my Year 6 class, where we start the day with a Bible reading and prayer, I have been strongly aware that this may be the first time that these things have taken place in a student’s home. This has made me hesitate and consider carefully both what I am saying, and how I am saying it.

### **Teachers Sometimes Lack Access to Resources**

One responsibility of a classroom teacher is to organize the necessary resources for a lesson. This may include rearranging the furniture in the room, providing paper copies of necessary work, and distributing other necessary hands-on resources. When teaching at school this is a relatively simple organizational component of teaching. However, as guests of the school, this is often not the case for SRE teachers. SRE teachers are reminded that they are guests when they must ask permission to use the classroom facilities and resources. This is exemplified in Ruby’s description of how it is helpful when the “school is on board” because she can “ask for things that help you teach better.” Because of this, many SRE teachers do not use the school’s resources, preferring to make do with whatever they can carry into the les-

son. This can create a situation where, as Bart explained: “everything has to be portable, get up, put down, everything is rushed.”

Regardless of the friendliness of the welcome, this experience is encapsulated in Jane’s description of what it means to be a guest: “Being a guest, there’s no assumptions. I’m not assuming and teaching the lesson as if it’s my classroom. We’re the guest; we’re the volunteer. We have to ask to use things.”

As guests in students’ homes, online-classroom teachers also have limited access to the resources they would normally use in their teaching. As has already been stated, online-classroom teachers cannot control the spaces where their students learn. Students may be learning at a dining-room table or desk, or sitting on their bed. In addition, because online-classroom teachers are not physically present, like the SRE teachers, they must “make do” with whatever they can “carry in” to the lesson because students may not have the required resources. For example, recently in a math lesson, I asked students to bring a ruler and paper to the lesson. However, three of my students did not have a ruler in the house that they could use. This further shifts the power balance, as online-classroom teachers rely on the resources available in their students’ homes and/or their students’ willingness to ensure they have them with them during the lesson. To adjust to this situation, online-classroom teachers need to create resources that can be accessed online or modify their lessons for a situation where there is less access to resources.

### Students Can More Readily Opt Out

Teachers need to establish a supportive and safe classroom environment where students are motivated and challenged in their learning. Coe et al. describe aspects of hospitality when they emphasize the importance of teachers developing trusting, empathetic, and respectful relationships with their students, and developing a learning climate characterized by high

expectations and high challenge.<sup>21</sup> These acts of hospitality are supported when teachers develop lessons that engage and support the learning of all students so that they are motivated and challenged in a safe space. For SRE teachers, the need to create engaging, interesting lessons is magnified because participation is voluntary, and students (with their parents’ permission) can opt out at any time during the year. For John, this means always “having something that they really connect with so they go, ‘yeah, I still want to come to SRE.’” Ruby identifies the tension that this desire creates: “If they are having a good time, they will want to come and bring their friends. So, there’s a tension to walk. You don’t want to turn it into a 30-minute slot of games and child minding; at the same time, you want them to walk away saying, ‘that was fun and I learned about Jesus.’”

The experience of SRE teachers bears similarities to remote learning. While students cannot officially opt out of their remote learning, it is much easier for them to unofficially do so than when they are in a classroom. They can opt out by selective use of the mute button, having several tabs open on their computer, not showing up for a conference, inventing computer issues, or being present but disengaged. For example, one online-classroom teacher described how she called a parent to discuss a solution to patchy Internet and discovered that the problem had been invented by her child.

In these situations, it is difficult for online-classroom teachers to use their repertoire of classroom-management techniques that are effective in the classroom, an additional reminder of their guest status in remote learning. In addition, the strategies that online-classroom teachers use to engage their students may not be effective, further challenging their role as hosts to learning.

### Learning From SRE Teachers’ Experiences

Because they want to retain good relationships in the schools where they teach, SRE teachers work at being

“good guests” who behave in a peaceable manner. They are sometimes frustrated at how their hosts treat them and how this affects their teaching, but they continue in the relationship because teaching SRE is so important to them. Shirley illustrates this by explaining how as the visitor she must always be polite, even when the teachers are not polite to her, and she “can have three teachers in the room all talking while I’m trying to do my lesson.”

As guests in the classrooms where they teach, SRE teachers are accustomed to having to develop relationships with their hosts in a way that classroom teachers have not generally experienced. Their intentional approach to improving the welcome they receive reveals their understanding of the conditional hospitality they experience. Their role as guests is typically a proactive one as they try to move from being a stranger who is treated as an enemy, to a friend or ally. This is not done simply to be friendly guests, but because it makes their job easier. Without this relationship, Nerida explains that there can be “a negative attitude or a culture that is negative about SRE that filters down to the kids; it’s pretty hard to work in with that.” SRE teachers predominantly attempt to deal with this issue by using a variety of approaches to working on their relationships with individual teachers, the principal, and the office staff. When Joshua felt that his principal was “scarcely welcoming,” he made a point of showing an interest in the school to indicate that “I’m not just an interloper.” In a similar vein, Shirley helps her classroom teacher with playground duty before her SRE lesson, Ruby ensures that she says hello to the school receptionist, and Renee brings in an occasional special morning tea for the school staff. The SRE teachers thereby invest in their school relationships because of the contingent nature of the welcome they receive.

Obviously, online classroom teachers cannot provide morning tea or help with chores around the home,

but they can attempt to understand how well their students' parents interact with the learning and what support may be appropriate for them. Online classroom teachers may need to be more explicit about their timetable for the day and their expectations of students. For example, many online-classroom teachers I have spoken to post a timetable for the day on the student platform and also send a copy to all parents. Online teachers may choose to thank the parents for hosting the learning, at the same time considering how to make suggestions about the spaces where their students work. Because online classroom teachers are now guests in their students' homes, they may balk at having such a conversation especially as they may feel like, in Joshua's words, an "interloper." The traditional lines have shifted, and online-classroom teachers can now only gently make suggestions; having a strong relationship between the online classroom teacher and parent will greatly enhance the interactions. This does require additional time, but I have spoken to many teachers who describe how they are in much greater contact with parents than in normal circumstances. This can lead to a level of cooperation and support that may bear fruit beyond remote learning.

As online-classroom teachers teach in spaces they do not control, they must accept that they will have to make do with the spaces in which their students learn. Like the SRE teachers who come fully prepared for a lesson and who have no expectations of the space where their students will be learning, teaching during remote learning requires a high level of preparation and thoughtfulness about what will be effective in this environment. Because online-classroom teachers cannot assume that students have certain resources, they need to find ways to adapt the resources they usually use, develop different resources, or communicate with parents about basic supplies that will be helpful in the lesson.

Just as the SRE teachers work hard to create engaging lessons to stop their

students from opting out of SRE, this also becomes important during remote learning. As online classroom teachers must develop new ways of engaging their students, using technology, and creating appealing lessons.

It is also important that online classroom teachers continue to develop strong relationships with their students, albeit using different approaches than the ones they used in the classroom. For example, one online-classroom teacher describes how he builds

**Online-classroom teachers try to treat their students with unconditional hospitality by remembering their names and welcoming them at the door, looking out for their individual needs, showing them love and care, and working at building strong relationships in the classroom.**

in time online for playing games and sharing stories with his students. In addition, online-classroom teachers have had to learn to gauge their students' engagement in an online world so they can redirect them back to their learning when necessary. One online-classroom teacher explained how she has developed a protocol for how students face their computers, how much of their body must be showing during a conference, and that they must always have the camera on. She also described how she can tell from the reflections in their eyes whether her

students are looking at the correct screen when she is teaching.

In remote learning, online-classroom teachers may be experiencing being guests for the first time. However, they must also continue to work at being welcoming hosts to their students. As always, this is more than "creating a 'nice place' where 'nice people' can be nice to each other"<sup>22</sup>; it takes effort and risk.<sup>23</sup> Chalwell, speaking of Christian teachers and hospitality, asserts that the "hospitable work that teachers do in their classroom revolves around the way they treat their students and the way they present themselves. They try to treat their students with unconditional hospitality by remembering their names and welcoming them at the door, looking out for their individual needs, showing them love and care, and working at building strong relationships in the classroom. They also offer themselves to their students by telling personal stories, being willing to answer questions about their faith when it is appropriate, acting in a godly manner, and remembering that their students are made in the image of God."<sup>24</sup>

In these ways, teachers work with their students to create a learning community where students not only feel welcome but can also begin to share a welcome with others.

Classrooms are never just teachers' spaces. Rather, they are shared by students and teachers. Teachers can work to create a classroom that reduces the power imbalance of hospitality by encouraging student collaboration and decision making to enable them to act as hosts to one another and to the teacher. During remote learning, this sharing of hospitality extends into the family home, where involvement with parents unexpectedly becomes part of the classroom dynamic. For some online-classroom teachers, this means explicitly welcoming and including parents in the learning; this is especially the case with younger students. Other online-classroom teachers have described how they have increased their level of communication with parents; speaking directly to them during their

online lessons, e-mailing and phoning parents in order to collaborate in developing strategies that support students' learning needs.

Teaching within the shared hospitality of remote learning is challenging. Not just because online-classroom teachers must share the hosting but also because it requires innovative use of technology, a degree of vulnerability as online-classroom teachers try out new ideas, careful consideration for maintaining student safety in an online world, and developing ways for students to share their stories. Perhaps online-classroom teachers need to be generous to themselves, taking solace from Hung's question: "How can a teacher treat her [sic] students with hospitality as much as possible?"<sup>25</sup> That is, online-teachers' hospitality will look different, it won't always be perfect, it may be shared with a parent, it may rely on new strategies, it will take effort and risk, but online-classroom teachers can still offer hospitality as much as possible in this different context.

Hospitality matters because it helps to create safe spaces where students are excited about what they are learning. Hospitable environments give opportunities for students to share and to inspire one another with their new learning; they can share their stories in safety, share different ideas without risk, and listen carefully to one another. This is particularly important as Christian teachers bring religious ideas and practices into their hosts' homes. This may be a completely foreign experience for families. It is important that Christian teachers come as humble guests to these homes, confidently, but not arrogantly, being open about their faith. As always, they need to provide opportunities for students to express their opinions and opposing ideas with a generous and kind welcome.

Immanuel Kant, in his discussion of universal hospitality, shared a comment about a guest that "as long as he [sic] peacefully occupies his space,

one may not treat him with hostility."<sup>26</sup> Consequently, as guests in remote learning, it is important that online-classroom teachers behave in a peaceful and generous manner toward their hosts.

In whatever context teaching takes place, the starting point for pedagogical hospitality for Christian teachers must lie in their relationship with God. Pohl suggests that "hospitality emerges from a grateful heart; it is first a response of love and gratitude for God's love and welcome to us."<sup>27</sup> Pedagogical hospitality needs to be understood not only in terms of particular tasks, but also as a way of being; "an intentional practice that reflects a process and perspective rather than specific tasks teachers must add to their already overtaxed schedules."<sup>28</sup> However, some tasks are worthy of consideration: devotional time spent with God helps to embed Christian teachers' awareness and joy of God's invitation to them and the students they teach. It keeps God at the center of all hospitable endeavor and helps Christian teachers in these challenging times to welcome their students to learn. ✍

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# Loyalty, Loyalty, Loyalty

## Using Data-driven Decision-making to Improve Enrollment

**A**dventist School of the Heartland (ASH)<sup>1</sup> is a private elementary school located in the rural Midwest of the United States. The two-teacher school saw its enrollment peak at 45 students during academic years 2004-2005 and 2005-2006.<sup>2</sup> By the 2020-2021 academic year, the school had 18 students from 13 families. Marketing efforts by the ASH administration have not yielded the desired increase in student enrollment. Similarly, there has been a decline in enrollment among Adventist K-12 schools within the North American Division.<sup>3</sup> Researchers have found that positive school image, promotion, marketing of school programs, and parent loyalty are associated with increasing enrollments.<sup>4</sup> For this evaluation, we (the authors) defined “parent loyalty” as actions that promote or lead to enrollment at ASH.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, in the literature, Li and Hung define school image as follows: “School image can be formed by many different factors and is the result of a cumulative process that incorporates experience over time, diverse information, and marketing activities of the school. . . [h]owever, school image can be enhanced when parents are satisfied with the perceived school marketing activities.”<sup>6</sup>

Through a replicative evaluation based on the work of Li and Hung, we sought to determine (1) which current marketing strategies were most effective for learning about ASH and (2) how school image is influential in developing parent loyalty at ASH.

### Marketing Strategies for Faith-based Schools

Mainda’s study analyzed the relationship between several factors and parent choice for enrolling their

child(ren) in Adventist schools instead of public education in southwest Michigan.<sup>7</sup> The study found statistical significance with most factors, such as placing a high level of importance on Christian education, a desire for the teachers to be spiritual, Adventist biases in selecting same-faith education, and cost of tuition. Although data and resources were limited in Mainda’s study, it addressed parent loyalty and marketing strategies for an Adventist school and causes for low enrollment. Similarly, in research from Thayer et al., the North American Division Educational Taskforce (NADET) and the Strengthening Adventist Education (SEA) research project addressed the importance of school quality and accountability for Adventist schools<sup>8</sup> and made several recommendations. The uniqueness of the Adventist educational system comes from the ability to provide education and nurture students spiritually. One recommendation suggests developing a system-wide plan that emphasizes the recruitment and preparation of qualified teachers, a consistent training program of the unique curriculum, and providing support for the teachers to enforce effective education and create a nurturing environment.

Another vital element to fostering parent loyalty and a positive school image is the collaboration between the church and the school. Anderson stated, “Decades ago it was considered de rigueur that pastors would wholeheartedly support our schools.”<sup>9</sup> In a 2017 article, Thayer et al. reported, “many members and pastors have not attended Seventh-day Adventist schools, there needs to be increased focus on the importance of Adventist education to the mission of the church.”<sup>10</sup>



In this study, ASH experienced the benefit of a supportive pastor. The local Adventist pastor visits the school for a weekly whole-school chapel service, conducts small group Bible studies with the older students, and is “very supportive of [ASH’s] events and makes an effort to attend them,” reported the school’s teaching principal. The pastor promotes church events at the school, and likewise, the school has the opportunity to make announcements at church. The pastor also encourages the students to participate in worship service (e.g., reading Scripture).<sup>11</sup>

### Conceptual Framework for Loyalty

The ASH evaluators adapted a questionnaire from Li and Hung to collect and ultimately share more credible and reliable feedback.<sup>12</sup> Li and Hung investigated how marketing strategies can enhance parents’ loyalty in the educational context. Their results showed that the selected marketing strategies significantly and meaningfully determine the perception of school image; however, promotion strategies (e.g., formal and informal communication with parents) are the most effective strategy.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, school image is an effective predictor of parent loyalty. While school image fosters the relationship between marketing strategies and parent loyalty, findings also suggest that school administrators can use marketing strategies to enhance school image, which results in increased enrollment. Badri and Mohaidat, along with Skallerud, examine three themes: school image, parent satisfaction, and parent loyalty.<sup>14</sup> Utilizing previous research, the ASH evaluation team conducted and completed in late 2020 a comprehensive review of how marketing strategies impacted school image and parent loyalty. The adapted survey helped identify current marketing strategies and allowed the team to propose a framework for effective marketing.

### Methods

The study consisted of a mixed-methods approach to gather data about marketing efforts and parent loyalty at ASH. A multi-pathway questionnaire, which measured marketing tactics and parent loyalty, was distributed to various stakeholders (i.e., pastor, church members, school board members, parents, community members, and ASH administration). Our team conducted an initial interview with ASH’s teaching principal to evaluate the school’s marketing program and create an action plan to address enrollment and retention goals for the upcoming accreditation process. This meeting offered insight into understanding ASH’s needs and hopes for the future of its marketing and recruitment initiatives.

The team used Qualtrics as the survey medium.

All quantitative questions in the survey were adapted from Li and Hung, and the team created the qualitative questions with the needs of ASH and the goals given by the principal in mind.<sup>15</sup> The survey was designed with display logic that branched into three surveys to target each group (pastor, church members, school board members, parents, community members, and ASH administration) with specific questions for that sample type. To account for reliability and validity, several pilot surveys were distributed to staff members of a neighboring Adventist school. Their feedback was used to change the language in the survey to be more precise and more concise. The Qualtrics form was made available in print and digital format by the ASH principal. Participants had two weeks to complete the survey.

### Data Analysis and Findings

The evaluation team used convenience sampling to collect surveys from participants. The sampling goal was to collect 75 percent of the surveys from the entire group of families, staff, and board members. Sixteen surveys were returned by participants who identified as being in one or more categories. Thirty-three percent of the board members and 100 percent of the school administrators and teachers responded to the survey. The parent response rate was 62 percent of the 13 families. Though our sample size was small, findings were still congruent with those of Li and Hung and indicated a positive correlation between school image and parent loyalty.<sup>16</sup>

### Marketing Strategies

Respondents were given the choice of an online or physical questionnaire to complete. The questionnaire began with an informed-consent form, which discussed the purpose of the study. Throughout the questionnaire, prompts asked participants to respond on a Likert scale between *strongly agree* and *disagree*. Questions in the Qualtrics survey (adapted from Li & Hung) related to marketing were as follows:

1. The school environment is safe.
2. Teachers generally care for their students.
3. The school uses mass media such as newspapers or television or holds activities such as graduation ceremonies or sports meets to let others know more about the school.
4. The school holds exhibitions or performances of students and invites parents or people living in the neighborhood to join.

Nine Likert scale questions evaluated ASH marketing strategies and parent loyalty using additional open-ended questions adapted for each group. All Likert scale

questions were adapted from Li and Hung.<sup>17</sup> Figure 1 shows the aggregate data to the four questions related to marketing by 16 participants for a total of 64 selected responses. As demonstrated in Figure 1, 85.9 percent (N = 55) of the selections were positive (either *somewhat agree* or *strongly agree*).

The results of this marketing analysis demonstrated that those affiliated with ASH agreed with the methods used to recruit and spread the word about the school. However, contrary to the survey respondents' beliefs that current tactics are successful, enrollment at ASH contradicts this. The school has seen declining enrollment for several years as it competes with public and private schools in the area. While the results demonstrate that parents have a high level of parent loyalty, their loyalty has not yet resulted in their actively promoting the school or recruiting students.

Although the data in Figure 1 is aggregate, it depicts the level of agreement by all 16 respondents with the school's fall 2020 marketing strategies. The only option receiving strongly disagree pertained to the use of mass media, newspapers, and school exhibits to spread the word about the school. One hundred percent of respondents strongly or somewhat agreed that the school was safe and the teachers cared for their students. This is great content that should be shared with the public but currently is not. Results showed that community outreach received mixed reviews by respondents. One survey question addressed the use of mass media. The respondents' selections varied from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

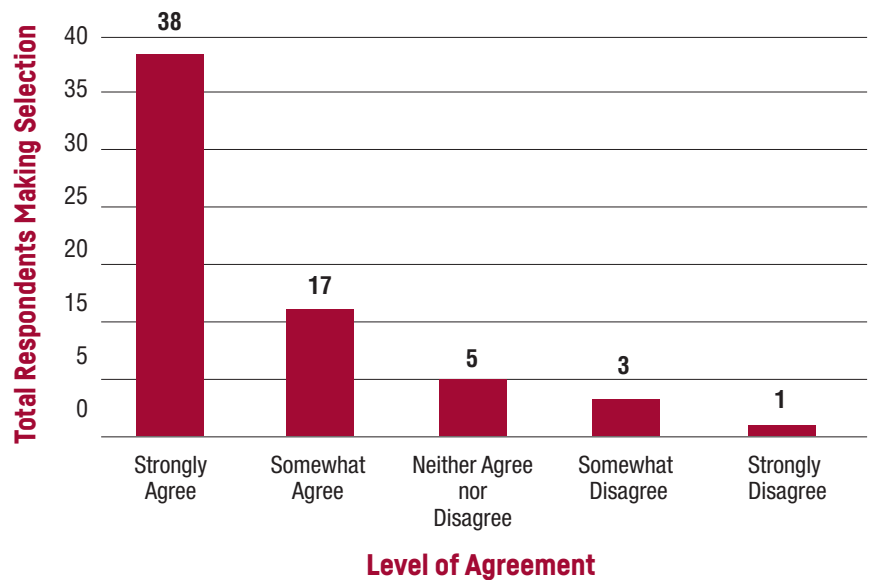
### Parent Loyalty

According to Li and Hung, parent loyalty is a term that describes the parents' unwavering commitment to re-enroll their child at a particular institution in the future.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, loyal parents, as influential advocates, provide positive word-of-mouth encouragement to other parents to enroll their children in the institution. Parent loyalty is also based on the parents' overall perception of the school, known as "school image." Of the questions in the survey, only those

about parent loyalty were considered for evaluation. The following questions in the Qualtrics survey (adapted from Li & Hung) relate to parent loyalty:

1. If I have an elementary child, I plan to re-enroll my child at the same school next academic year.
2. When my child is entering or enrolling in an elementary school, this school will be my first choice.
3. When my relatives or friends need information about school, I will voluntarily recommend this school.
4. I will encourage my relatives or friends to let their children attend this school.
5. When talking about school with my relatives or

**Figure 1. Aggregate data to the Four Questions Related to Marketing by 16 Participants for a Total of 64**



friends, I will praise this school voluntarily.

Figure 2 indicates that ASH parents had a high percentage of loyalty and positive school image. As shown, more than 55 percent (N = 7) of parents agreed to take action to demonstrate their loyalty. Similar to the findings in the marketing strategies in Figure 1, the declining enrollment strongly contradicts the results. More research is needed to extrapolate why parents with high loyalty and positive school image have not encouraged more parents to enroll their children in ASH. One stakeholder who identifies as a parent and church member consistently responded *somewhat disagree* or *neither agree nor disagree*. This particular stakeholder's insight could provide more clarity on what the school could do to increase their parent loyalty.

### Implications

Two implications emerged from the evaluation. First, ASH should strategically deliver cost-effective marketing initiatives to inform the community of why the school is an important fixture in the area. This is an opportunity to expand beyond basic marketing venues such as mass media and the newspaper and focus on other marketing strategies. The second implication is to invite parents to act upon their parent loyalty and a positive school image to actively recruit based on their personal experiences. The parents have a powerful tool, word-of-mouth. Used effectively, this can help promote and expand the enrollment goals of ASH.<sup>19</sup> ASH can build on incentive and referral opportunities for parents that enlist new students. The parents will be more likely to support their school if incentives (e.g., receiving a tuition benefit through a referral program) are used to encourage them to spread the word.

### Future Research and Limitations

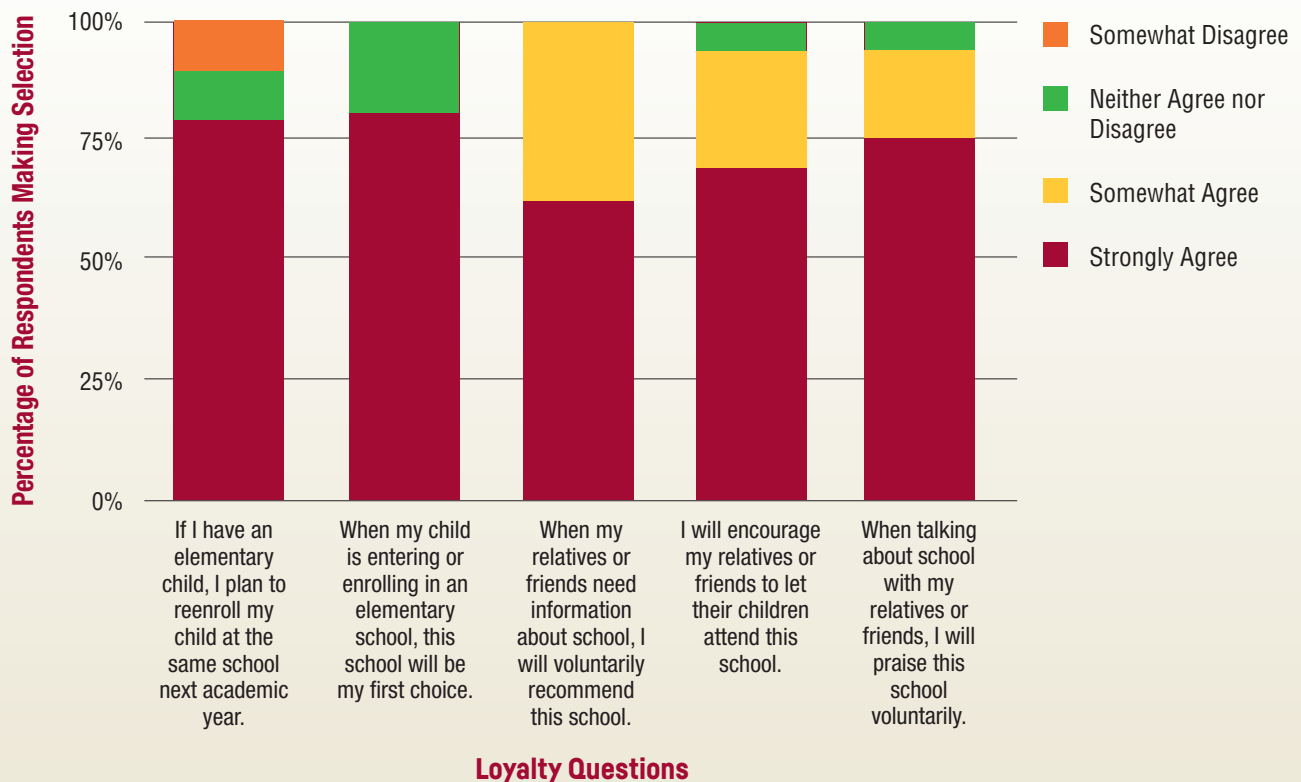
There were several limitations to this study. One of the study's limitations was a lack of comparison between ASH and other surrounding private schools

in the impact of marketing and school image. The comparison would provide a picture of similarities and differences for effective marketing and influences for school image. A second limitation was the inability to survey parents who chose to withdraw their student(s) from ASH or who did not participate in the survey. Gaining their insight would have been ideal for formulating recommendations better. A third limitation was the sample size and response rate of this evaluation. Another limitation stemmed from the nature of the questions. While the Likert scale allowed individuals to select a level of agreement to the statements, it did not provide details to explain the reasoning for their selection. Despite these limitations, the information collected can help ASH develop an action plan.

### Action Plan

Thayer et al. recommend each "school develops a comprehensive marketing and public relations plan."<sup>20</sup> There should be cooperation between teachers, principals, and the pastor to foster and meet individual needs relating to learning, administration, and faith. Furthermore, there needs to be an accurate database

Figure 2. Breakdown of Responses to Loyalty Questions



of all Adventist homes in the community to make communication easier for relevant parties. And lastly, schools should focus on sharing the values and uniqueness of Adventist education to highlight their essential attributes among the educational landscape.

Organizations such as Grace Works, Christian Education Matters, and School Growth offer their services for a fee to assist schools in developing and implementing school marketing plans.<sup>21</sup> The Northern California Conference has chosen to employ a marketing specialist, Carol Nash, to educate school leaders about the marketing cycle and assist schools through the process. Additionally, Nash sends out a weekly e-mail highlighting a marketing action. An archive of

the marketing tasks, organized by month, is available in the Marketing Corner under “Ongoing Tasks” of the Northern California Conference’s education website.<sup>22</sup> Three common themes emerged from reviewing these programs, and these serve as the foundation for any marketing action plan: Create a marketing team, gather and review data, and communicate.

1. *Create a marketing team.* The first phase of the action plan is to create a marketing team. Building a team will ensure shared responsibility for the implemented marketing efforts. Anderson and Thayer et al. promote the need for collaboration between schools and churches.<sup>23</sup> The team should consist of the principal and various school stakeholders such as board members, parents, pastors, church members, and community members. Nash recommends recruiting a “cheerleader” to serve as a team member—someone who is excited about the school but is not directly affiliated with academic outcomes. An arrangement such as this allows the cheerleader to praise the school’s initiatives without appearing to be bragging.<sup>24</sup>

2. *Gather and review data.* Phase two is to gather and review data. While surveys provide one format for data collection, other methods (e.g., focus groups, interviews, and informal communication) may also be utilized. At first, the data should focus on retaining students by developing loyal families. Then, the school

**Acknowledging parent feedback is vital in developing an ongoing marketing cycle that encourages parental participation. The results from the ASH surveys indicated high loyalty among parents with children enrolled at ASH during the 2020-2021 academic year.**

can shift to recruiting new students primarily through the word-of-mouth recommendations of loyal families and constituents. Acknowledging parent feedback is vital in developing an ongoing marketing cycle that encourages parental participation. The results from the ASH surveys indicated high loyalty among parents with children enrolled at ASH during the 2020-2021 academic year (Figure 2). During this phase of the marketing cycle, the team and school board can review the school’s identity (i.e., the school’s mission and vision statements) to strengthen and clarify the school’s image. In addition to a mission statement, ASH could consider identifying the core values of the school that can be promoted through the various communication

platforms to provide clear and memorable information. By asking what parents, the targeted consumer, want, the school board can then compare the parents’ wishes with the school’s mission and resources to prioritize the ongoing development of a school-wide improvement plan that will meet the needs of the students and their families both now and in the future.<sup>25</sup>

Though the sample size was small, a yield of more than 60 percent of ASH’s families were considered in this study. Our findings revealed that the ASH parents felt the school was safe and provided caring teachers. Overall, the parents identified themselves as loyal to the school; however, their loyalty had not yet translated into the positive promotions of the school associated with increased enrollment. It is recommended that the school board initiate a referral award to provide a financial incentive to families who recruit new students. For example, a school could offer a free month of tuition for recruiting a new student who enrolls and stays for the school year. The incentive is applied to the final tuition payment of the school year.

3. *Communicate.* The marketing team must create opportunities to communicate who they are (i.e., their mission and values) and how ASH meets the needs of students and their families (i.e., teaching religious beliefs in a safe environment with caring teachers). The marketing team should emphasize the importance of sharing the school’s story. At the same time, the “cheer-

leader” inspires parents, pastors, church members, and community members to promote current information and thus provide free word-of-mouth advertising.<sup>26</sup> When creating publications for the website, social media posts, newsletters, radio ads, and other forms of mass communication, the messaging should be consistent. Including a call to action with the communication is also vital to initiate inquiries.<sup>27</sup>

## Conclusion

Based on the results of the surveys, the evaluators made three main recommendations for ASH. The first was to create a marketing team to share the responsibility for growing the school. Second, ASH should initiate a recruiting scholarship to inspire loyal parents to promote the school. And third, ASH should create a system for tracking results to generate data to drive future decisions. Small Adventist schools seeking to evaluate their marketing strategies can begin by going through a similar process using data-driven decision-making to improve marketing efforts. Progress must be clearly communicated, results need to be tracked to generate additional data, and the process repeated year after year to meet the expanding needs of a vibrant and growing school.

After completing the study, the evaluation team learned that the enrollment of ASH has increased during the pandemic; however, the cause of this is beyond the scope of the study. Future evaluators may seek to determine if the COVID-19 pandemic attributed to an increase in enrollment. ✍

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*This article has been peer-reviewed.*

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Jacqueline  
Galloway-Blake

## The ABC'S of Growing a Church School

**A**ccentuate the positive. Every school has strong points.

*Activate* alumni. Contact them regularly with the school newsletter, and send thank-you cards for donations received.

*Add* positive messages about the school to the weekly church bulletin.

*Advertise* your school events succinctly using the school answering-machine message and social media.

*Approach* the neighbors surrounding the school. Invite them to events, and give them holiday gifts.

*Arrange* professional development for teachers. As teachers grow and improve, so does the school.

*Ask* God for direction and vision. He has both in abundance.

**B**eautify the grounds of the school. Well-kept lawns and flowerbeds provide effective advertising.

*Become* a community of kindness. Smile and treat all students with equity and parents with respect. People who feel accepted, wanted, and celebrated will spread that good word.

*Begin* a school vegetable garden. Give away the produce to neighbors and/or sell it. Use the money to benefit student tuition and other needs.

*Bless* prospective needy students by finding sponsors to help with tuition costs.

*Boost* your outdoor school signage so that it gives the best impression and provides adequate information.

*Bridge* the gap between parents and your school by conducting anonymous exit surveys. Discover why they withdrew their children, and then address those issues.

*Brighten* the lives of the elderly and shut-ins with visits or mailings from students. Community service promotes school visibility and benefits both students and recipients.

*Broaden* the school's media presence by establishing a strong online presence with an up-to-date school website and postings on Facebook, Instagram, etc.

*Build* a database of former students. Keep in touch with them. Make personal calls to pray with them and ask how the school can assist their academic journey, whether they are former or returning students.

**C**aroling at Christmastime by teachers and students can create goodwill; use this opportunity to leave brochures about your school with neighbors.\*

*Celebrate* the birthdays of community and church members' school-age children, targeting those who do not attend the church school, with an annual "everybody's birthday party" or similar event when you give away enrollment information.

*Claim* biblical promises for an increased enrollment, and cooperate with the One who multiplies!

*Compose* PowerPoint presentations and newsletters monthly for all supporting churches and constituents, and share them with conference superintendent of education and union director of education.

*Confirm* that the school board has a building-maintenance committee that makes arrangements to keep the school clean and in good repair. An attractive building attracts prospective students and gives a positive impression to the community.

*Contact* your community newspaper and cable TV station to request free or reduced-price advertising and to share exciting events happening at the school.

*Conduct* a kindergarten round-up in the spring and an enrollment rally in the summer.

*Create* partnerships with homeschooling families.

*Cultivate* relationships with returning students by sending thinking-of-you cards during the summer months. ✍️

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\*Be sure to check ordinances regarding noise regulations and permits to distribute flyers.

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Tammy Shilling



Heather Verhelle



Julia Johnson

## Online Vocal-health Education Program for **TEACHERS**

**A**s a speech-language pathologist practicing for almost 30 years, I [TS] use my voice daily to interact, communicate, and treat my clients. Through years of continuous voice use, I never encountered weakness, pain, or fatigue related to my voice. But approximately seven years ago, I began teaching in higher education, and I immediately noticed throat dryness, increased throat pain, and difficulty projecting my voice.

Teachers use their voices daily as the primary mechanism for their occupation, and the symptoms I experienced are common. Several risk factors for developing voice disorders include speaking in a noisy environment and unfavorable work conditions such as temperature changes and dry air, inefficient breathing and phonation, stress, and muscle tension.<sup>1</sup> A functional voice disorder occurs when vocal quality, pitch, and loudness do not meet daily needs. It can result



from improper or inefficient use of the vocal mechanism when the person's physical structure is typical (due to fatigue or muscle tension) or when physical changes are present in the vocal mechanism (as the result of edema, nodules, or structural changes).<sup>2</sup>

Teachers report that vocal problems are harmful to their physical and emotional health and contribute to



absenteeism and poor job performance.<sup>3</sup> Da Costa, et al.<sup>4</sup> randomly selected 237 K-12 teachers in North Carolina to answer questions about their personal voice health and barriers to care. Results indicated that 22 percent of the teachers were currently hoarse, 58 percent had experienced hoarseness, 23 percent had missed work due to hoarseness, 32.6 percent had sought professional help, and 30 percent believed that hoarseness was common for teachers. Fewer than half were aware of voice therapy or believed that a professional could help.

Research has shown that educating teachers on risk factors, breathing techniques, adequate vocal rest, and achieving adequate resonance improves their quality of life. (See Sidebar 1 for recommendations regarding good practice.) Aparecida et al.<sup>5</sup> found that teachers were highly interested in learning how to improve their voices, but that only a fraction of teachers sought help for their vocal disorders.

Research on the effectiveness of vocal-health pro-

grams with teachers found improved voice awareness and quality of life<sup>6</sup> and fewer reported episodes of vocal problems.<sup>7</sup> Pomaville, Tekerlek, and Radford<sup>8</sup> examined behavioral changes in teachers who completed a vocal-health education program. Participants reported a decrease in vocal fatigue when they received more education on the effects of hydration, caffeine, alcohol intake, responses to larynx irritation, and voice overuse. Recent studies have been conducted in the United States and internationally, including Belgium,<sup>9</sup> Brazil,<sup>10</sup> Kuwait, and Jordan.<sup>11</sup>

Even though there is substantiated evidence of the prevalence and risk for voice disorders among teachers, vocal-health education is not generally included in training for educators. Realizing the tremendous benefits of such programs for teachers, the School of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, U.S.A., decided to contribute its expertise to this growing area of interest so that more teachers can enjoy prolonged

### Sidebar 1. Tips for Teachers to Protect Their Voices

The requirements for teaching during the pandemic have increased opportunities for vocal strain. Speaking through masks, projecting the voice across six feet of distance or more, or having to record multiple lessons for virtual teaching can all lead to overuse of the vocal system. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) offers several tips that might be helpful to teachers:

**Practice healthy habits.** Drink lots of water; avoid substances that dehydrate the body (e.g., alcohol and tobacco); avoid shouting and throat clearing; and don't try to talk over loud noise or push your voice when you are sick. Prioritizing good vocal hygiene can prevent long-term or permanent damage to your voice.

**Use a microphone.** If you are teaching in person, using a microphone as part of a personal-amplification system can reduce the need to project more forcefully due to masks muffling sound and because of added physical distance. Microphones also remind teachers that they don't need to talk loudly. If you are teaching virtually, you can use a microphone that plugs into your computer's USB port (or a headset with a built-in microphone).

**Take breaks.** Give your voice an opportunity to rest as much as you can. Ideally, this will happen with brief breaks throughout the day, even if just for a few minutes between sub-

jects (or classes). If that isn't possible, strive for a quiet lunch break and some downtime after the end of the school day.

**Reduce noise.** If you are teaching in person, arrange your classroom in a way that fosters a quieter environment. If you are teaching online, use a room free of noise from appliances and other people, encourage good communication habits among students (such as speaking one at a time), and use helpful video-platform features such as the "mute" button to eliminate loud student chatter and cross-talk. All of this can reduce the need to constantly raise your voice.

**Heed the warning signs—and seek help.** Many teachers have lost their voice at some point, but signs of a more serious problem include unfamiliar or prolonged discomfort when talking or singing; hoarseness for more than two weeks; a breathy, rough, or scratchy-sounding voice; and frequent coughing or throat clearing. If you experience any of these signs, seek help from a speech-language pathologist.

**For more information, visit <http://www.asha.org/public>.**

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Adapted and reproduced with permission from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA): <https://www.asha.org/news/2020/asha-offers-tips-for-teachers-to-protect-their-voices-this-school-year/>.

vocal health throughout their teaching careers.

In order to provide a vocal-health education program readily available to teachers, two graduate students at the university, Julia Johnson and Heather Verhelle, assisted in the design and development of an online self-paced vocal-health education course using the Adventist Learning Community platform. The course aims to provide preventative measures to help teachers care for their voices and develop healthy voice-use strategies so they can thrive in their careers and improve their quality of life.

### **Creating the Vocal-health Education Course**

Previous research methods were examined in detail to create a vocal-health education program for K-12 teachers. Successful methods included indirect training (lectures about vocal function, taking care of one's voice, and risk factors) and direct training (personal training with practical exercises). Vocal-health education programs in the literature include various teaching methods and content such as demonstration videos, self-report checklists and questionnaires, lectures, proper breath-support techniques for voice production, as well as resonance and vocal-efficiency techniques.<sup>12</sup>

An online, self-paced course was developed to reach a large audience of teachers. The course "Voice Awareness for Teachers: When Something Goes Wrong With Your Voice" can be accessed by anyone who creates a free account with the Adventist Learning Community (link for the course: <https://www.adventistlearningcommunity.com/courses/voice-awareness-for-teachers-when-something-goes-wrong-with-your-voice-a-pr>). The course consists of nine modules:

1. Voice Awareness for Teachers
2. Anatomy of the Larynx
3. The Larynx in Action
4. Vocal Nodules and Vocal Fatigue
5. At-risk Vocal Behaviors
6. How Do I Know Something Is Wrong With My Voice? What Do I Do About It?
7. Vocal Health Education

**Approximately 90 percent of the participants found the course "very effective" or "extremely effective," and more than 80 percent of the participants reported that their knowledge about how the voice works and vocal health significantly increased after completing the course.**

8. Resonant Voice

9. Conclusion

Each module includes learning outcomes, an introduction, PowerPoint slides with audio voiceover, short videos, assigned readings, interactive quizzes, self-assessments, and additional learning activities and learning materials (PDF format). Throughout the course, participants are given strategies to reflect and self-assess their vocal use and techniques in classroom teaching to improve care for and efficient use of their voice. A certificate upon completion with an earned 0.5 CEUs is provided for all participants.

### **Participant Feedback**

A small group of K-12 teachers, speech-language pathologists, speech-language-pathology graduate students, and student teachers have completed the course. Participants rated the effectiveness of the course on a five-point Likert scale. Results revealed that approximately 90 percent of the participants found the course "very effective" or "extremely effective," and more than 80 percent of the participants reported that their knowledge about how the voice works and vocal health significantly increased after completing the course.

Qualitative open-ended questions allowed participants to provide additional feedback and suggestions for the course. When asked what resources provided in the course were most beneficial, several participants reported "videos and handouts," "anatomy and physiology of the larynx," "at-risk behaviors and resources to incorporate good vocal hygiene," and "videos that demonstrated breathing and voice techniques." Participants were also asked which classroom and voice techniques they would most likely implement to complete the course. A few of the responses included:

- "voice exercises,"
- "hydration and warm-ups,"
- "using the resonant voice when teaching,"
- "using alternative methods rather than my voice to get my students' attention,"
- "warm-ups and forward facial posture,"
- "listen to my body and my voice,"

- “incorporate frequent vocal rest breaks during the day,”
- “group activities and less lecture.”

### Discussion

This course was designed and developed during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the feedback and suggestions provided by the initial participants who completed the course have informed course revisions. Future research will explore the impact of virtual teaching on the voice. There is a need to examine differences between remote and in-person teaching with the frequency of voice use, loudness, strain, effort, and vocal fatigue. It is also necessary to understand whether different vocal-health techniques are needed for remote teaching than in-person classroom teaching.

The School of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Andrews University has a strategic plan to promote vocal-health education. The benefits of vocal-health education directly affect an educator’s teaching abilities, physical health, and social and emotional well-being. It seeks to support Adventist education by assisting teachers as occupational voice users and their ability to make a positive difference in the quality of their own lives and professionally as they impact the quality of their students’ lives. ✍

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Scott R. Ward



# Church Schools as Centers of Influence in the Community:

## K-12 Education as Evangelism

For the past decade or more, many Seventh-day Adventist churches in North America, Europe and some other parts of the world have struggled to succeed with traditional public evangelistic events. The denomination employed these approaches from its beginnings to the mid-20th century, resulting in many churches being planted and established. Over the past few years, I have thought, written, and taught about this topic in my seminary classes and seminars for pastors and church members. One of the critical factors that has led to this decline is quite evident—the current culture in these places is nothing like the culture when the Adventist Church began. And yet, many Adventist churches continue conducting evangelism efforts as if it were. Furthermore, just as culture has changed dramatically over the past century and a half, it will continue to change until the end of time. Learning to adjust and adapt continuously is necessary if the church wishes to reach surrounding communities.

### Adventist Cultural Context

As a culture changes, so do people's thoughts and reactions—as noted in the shift from modernism to postmodernism, and more recently, the change from postmodernism to the thoughts and ideas currently shaping the world. While there is a place for tradition, there must also be room to share long-loved beliefs in ways that people can relate to and understand. Just as Jesus talked about the sower and the seed to the farmers around Him, we, as followers of Jesus, must pay attention to the stories happening around us. And, in doing so, we must help people living these stories to understand how the gospel intersects with daily living and can transform their lives, just as it did in Jesus' day. To be effective in our efforts, we must be relevant.

The Seventh-day Adventist denomination had its origins in America during a time known as the Second Great Awakening.<sup>1</sup> During that time, the country was alive with the gospel. Preachers stood on every street corner, and revivals took place in churches every

night. Many youth and young adults, filled with a love for Jesus, began studying their Bibles in earnest and making tremendous sacrifices to share what they were learning.<sup>2</sup> Through the leading of the Holy Spirit and visions from God, they discovered in the Bible new and distinctive understandings of some doctrines that shed a brighter light on the character of God. Some of these focused on the sanctuary message, the three angels' messages of Revelation 14, the second coming of Jesus, and the state of the dead along with heightened awareness of the role and blessings of health reform and proper education.

The beliefs and teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination began to develop during subsequent years, and they were written down, organized, published, and shared broadly. However, early church pioneers did not record the context in which these fundamental beliefs developed, and as a result, did not capture the culture of on-fire gospel preaching and passionate love for Christ. And, unfortunately, the culture of spirituality and religious fervor in society did not persist.

The culture of the 21st century in America, Europe, and some other parts of the world is very secular. In other locations, a variety of religions are attracting growing numbers of believers. Often, these societies are either indifferent or antagonistic toward Christianity and the gospel.<sup>3</sup> Today, people in these lands are no longer living through a great awakening of Christianity where most people are on fire for Jesus or are biblically literate. The soil in which the sower is trying to plant has changed. Rather than sowing seeds of doctrine in a soil rich with the gospel, they are trying to sow them in the hard and rocky soil of secularism and/or other flourishing religions. Because of this, teaching Seventh-day Adventist beliefs as they were taught during our denomination's founding years has proved challenging. Legalism has developed as one result. When I was a child, it seemed that lists of behaviors of what to do and what not to do were very common, and teaching how to have a relationship with Jesus was somewhat new. When I was a youth and young adult, Morris Venden and others were just

**The culture of the 21st century in America, Europe, and some other parts of the world today is very secular. In other locations, a variety of religions are attracting growing numbers of believers. Often, these societies are either indifferent or antagonistic toward Christianity and the gospel.**

beginning to preach righteousness by faith rather than by works.<sup>4</sup> This was quite a shake-up for many Adventists then, although much more commonplace now.

The presentation of and approach to teaching the three angels' messages is one example of an Adventist teaching that needs to be updated. When I ask Adventist preachers to describe the message of the first angel of Revelation 14, they usually say, "Fear God and give Him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come" (vs. 7, NIV).<sup>5</sup> This is partially correct but entirely skips the first part of the message found in Revelation 14:6, which is about proclaiming the everlasting gospel to every tribe, tongue, and people. The context of the first angel's mes-

sage is primarily about spreading the gospel, which includes respect (fear) for God and joy about His coming judgment because of the liberation from sin and the ending of a sinful world that comes with it. When we include that concept, along with the principles of the rest of the New Testament, we can achieve an even fuller understanding of the message.

As I have contemplated this persistent omission of the first part of the message, the only logical explanation I can come up with is that founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church may have skimmed over this part because it was already known and understood in their culture.<sup>6</sup> But it is not well known in the secular culture in which a significant part of the church exists today, so we must put it back into the message in order to effectively reach those cultures. We must be culturally relevant with our evangelistic endeavors in order to reach people and to truly give them the best opportunity to accept Jesus. Hitting closer to home, survey research shows that we lose too many of our own Adventist children from our churches. It's not just the world at large—we even struggle to share the gospel and to convert our own youth.<sup>7</sup>

### **Church Schools as Centers for Discipleship and Evangelism**

How can we develop a gospel culture where we can

lovingly disciple our church's children as well as people from our communities into a personal relationship with Jesus? This is where our church's schools can play a powerful role. Our schools must be campuses that provide a loving gospel subculture for our children and can be centers of gospel evangelism for our communities, as well. Where we once tried to reach our communities directly from our churches, now our churches can also reach our communities by

about churches and schools collaborating in ministry, my observations and recommendations are summarized below as a four-step process.

### **The Collaborative Ministry Database**

Over the past four years I have worked to develop a four-step process for helping pastors to understand the enormous potential of partnering with Adventist education and the role they can play in collaborating with teachers and educational administrators to make our schools thriving centers of discipleship, outreach, and evangelism to the community.<sup>9</sup> It is important for educators to understand this concept and the resource introduced here so that educators and pastors can more effectively work together.

#### ***Step 1 – Invite the Pastor to School***

Both educators and pastors must work together to cultivate and build positive relationships between the church and school. Educators can create a welcoming atmosphere that encourages pastors to show up at the school regularly and to participate in activities.<sup>10</sup> When the pastor reaches out and finds that he or she can develop caring and supportive relationships with the principal, faculty, staff, and students by simply showing up, it quickly becomes evident that the church school is an effective place for discipleship. It may be to share meals and conversations, participate in work bees, teach baptismal classes, or be a spiritual companion and

mentor for faculty, staff, and students.

As pastors learn more about the life of the school, they will naturally see the importance of being supportive at school board and committee meetings, more frequently verbalizing support for the school, and sharing good reports about the school with the congregation.

As the pastor's involvement increases, he or she will be more excited to make sure that church members know and understand the tremendous bene-

working through our schools. Where humanitarian outreach activities used to be hosted at our churches, now they can be hosted at our schools, as well.<sup>8</sup>

There are already some schools using variations of this approach with great success, and many other schools would do well to follow their example by following the four steps outlined in this article. Drawing on my experience working as a church school-based youth pastor for 20 years, and in my current work consulting with thriving schools as a professor teaching



fits of Adventist education and talk about the in-depth studies<sup>11</sup> that provide evidence of these benefits. Simply living life together throughout the school week and seizing teachable moments to speak a word for God is the beginning of the discipleship process as outlined by the Shema—to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength . . . [and impress these commandments] on your children” (Deuteronomy 6:5, 7).

### ***Step 2 – Collaborate With the Pastor***

Educators and pastors can work together to teach students how to get involved in community outreach. These activities can be humanitarian or more overtly spiritual in nature. They might include local park or highway cleanup, homeless ministry, shut-in visitation with the pastor or an elder, or being a partner in giving Bible studies. Another activity is going door-to-door in the community around the school, spreading God’s love through sharing simple holiday greetings and baked goods, taking prayer requests, volunteering to help needy neighbors with yard clean up or other chores, or engaging in outreach to immigrant groups in the community.<sup>12</sup> These are all excellent ways to let your community know you care.

It’s all about breaking out of the fortress mentality and being the hands and feet of Jesus in the world around us. When pastors, teachers, and other caring adults engage in outreach activities together with students, it builds these kinds of activities into the children’s lifestyles and becomes a vital part of their worldview.

### ***Step 3 – Team Up in Outreach Evangelism***

Educators and pastors can team up in outreach evangelism based at the school by inviting the community to experience welcoming events and opportunities that Ellen White refers to as “acts of disinterested kindness.”<sup>13</sup> These are events without a “hook.” That means there is no catch at the end—we just want to help people where they are in life for the sake of helping them. This can include hosting cook-

**Once the community members become engaged and interested in the spiritual gatherings offered at the school, the next step is to invite them to events hosted at the church where they can be embraced by the church community at large.**

ing schools and financial peace seminars at the school and at the church. In most cases, a school campus provides a more welcoming environment for secular people from the community to come and get to know us than for them to come to the church—especially for non-Adventist Christians and non-Christian families who may be sending their children to our schools. Other on-campus activities to which you can invite your school neighbors include gym nights, softball games, craft fairs, bake sales, and spaghetti dinners, or even a 5K charity run benefiting a local community non-profit.

### ***Step 4 – Create Worship Experiences to Nurture Relationships***

Educators and pastors can collaborate to create spiritual worship experiences that nurture relationships. These events or experiences, co-hosted by the educators and pastors, can take place at the school. Newfound friends within the community can be invited to participate in these events as part of the discipleship process. Hosting a worship experience on-campus is an effective way to take the next step in your relationship with those who are now familiar with the school campus and comfortable being there. As the relationship between the school and community deepens, newcomers will be more interested in learning about what motivates those who attend or lead out in education and worship services.


These worship experiences can happen any night of the week or on weekends. In some instances, a youth- or family-oriented church plant may be worth considering. Always move forward carefully with the leading of the Holy Spirit. Once the community members become engaged and interested in the spiritual gatherings offered at the school, the next step is to invite them to events hosted at the church where they can be embraced by the church community at large. By engaging in these four steps, the school and local church will help to fulfill the global strategic plan of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, “I will go!”<sup>14</sup>

A companion article to this one in *The Journal of Adventist Education*® will be published in *Ministry* for pastors. But teachers and principals need to have a vi-



sion for collaboration with the local church and make the pastor welcome and empowered to carry out his or her part, especially in the transition during Step 4. It's sacred teamwork in which students are an integral part.

These four steps are detailed at <https://www.andrews.edu/collabmin>, and the activities they entail work together to help the young people at our churches and schools to see and experience how to get involved in open and welcoming forms of friendship and evangelism that will help develop an outreach orientation in their own lives that can last a lifetime and empower them to become fruitful disciples of Jesus themselves.<sup>15</sup>

There is nothing more helpful in a person's discipleship journey than getting involved in helping others in their journey, thus more fully implanting and growing young people into the body of Christ "being rooted and established in love . . . filled to the measure of all the fullness of God" (Ephesians 3:19). 

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*This article has been peer-reviewed.*

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5. All Scripture references in this article are quoted from the *New International Version* of the Bible. *Holy Bible, New International Version*®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

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8. For a visual illustration of this concept, see the video entitled "Pastors and Educators Working Together: Helping Your Church School Thrive" at the top of the page at <http://collabrativeministry.org>.

9. For the complete four-step database, along with additional topic links, see "How to Get Involved" at <https://www.andrews.edu/collabmin/>.

10. For more ideas, see the following articles: Jiří Moskala, "The Church School: Where Churches and Schools Collaborate in Mission," *The Journal of Adventist Education* (April-June 2018): 4-8: <https://circle.adventist.org/files/jae/en/jae201880020405.pdf>; Kathleen Beagles and Gavin Anthony, "Building Bridges: A Teacher and a Pastor Dialogue About Discipleship," *ibid.* (Summer 2012): 4-7: <https://circle.adventist.org/files/jae/en/jae201274050404.pdf>; Stuart Tyner, "25 Ways Pastors Can Support Their School," *ibid.* (December 1997/January 1998): 30-33: <https://circle.adventist.org/files/jae/en/jae199760023004.pdf>.

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Gordon Atkins

L. James Gibson, Ronny Nalin, and Humberto M. Rasi, eds. *Design and Catastrophe: 51 Scientists Explore Evidence in Nature* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 2021). ISBN: 9781940980305 [Print]. 240 pages [Hardback], US\$24.99.

**D***esign and Catastrophe: 51 Scientists Explore Evidence in Nature* is primarily an easy, not too technical, read of 51 short essays, each three to four pages in length. Neither the title of this book nor the introduction claims to definitively prove origins by a Designer or of Noah's flood described in Genesis. Instead, the authors provide insights into how they personally see evidence of Design and or catastrophe through the lens of their specialties as scientific researchers. As the introduction states, "The scientists who have contributed to this book have found in their experience that the biblical perspective illuminates what we see in nature" (xi). Together, these 51 essays illustrate that some of the data from science challenge some aspects of a completely naturalistic interpretation of origins, and that same data set can be reasonably interpreted as evidence of the biblical account of Design and catastrophe and restoration.

The text, divided into nine parts, is not arranged by discipline but by roughly following the historical accounts of the early portion of Genesis. For this review, these nine parts are categorized into three groups. The first group of essays encompasses the physics and chemistry of origins. Most of the essays uncover the fine-tuning of the universe and our planet, the wonders of water that is so abundant on our earth, and the difficulty of random arrangements of atoms as a mechanism for forming complex biomolecules, including the origin of DNA and its role in life. In most of these essays, the topics that the authors encounter in their research lead them to a supernatural Designer,



and how through strictly naturalistic laws, the relations and complexities are far too improbable to have occurred by chance. The authors usually provide counterarguments from naturalistic perspectives followed with why the fundamental laws of physics and chemistry support their conviction of the existence of a Designer.

The second group of essays deals with biological topics such as the origin of life and the diversity and complexity of life, including aspects of human life and emotion. These are slightly different from the first group and are very personal. They describe the complexity of the systems with which the authors work and describe their admiration of their beauty and complexity. Most of these essays do not present counterarguments from evolutionary biology. Instead, the authors reflect how their study moves them toward a thoughtful Creator rather than an unguided process of chance. A few of the essays in this group do, in fact,

deal with alternative naturalist arguments (see “Our Spectacular Skeletons” by Liliana Endo-Munoz and “Cooperation, Empathy, and Altruism in Nature” by Noemí Durán as examples). The authors explore those arguments and describe how they see a simpler explanation by Design. I understand the limit of three to four pages per author, but that limitation, I think, has a drawback. Given more space, some of the biological topics (and others) could reach into the counterarguments from naturalistic worldview in their explanations and reasoning. However, this does not diminish the arguments of beauty and appreciation of biological complexity that these authors share.

The last group of essays deals with geology and paleontology. The authors share their interest in geological phenomena, which they feel are not easily explained by traditional long-age uniformitarian processes. They provide compelling questions about widespread turbidity currents, sedimentary layers, and mega breccias, to name a few. Each author concludes that a biblical interpretation of a major catastrophe outlined in Genesis seems more consistent with many of these findings.

The apparent age of the Earth using various dating techniques is not dealt with directly and remains one of the topics that requires more intense study and discussion. I really appreciated the essay “Respecting God’s Word, God’s World, and People in God’s Image” by Ben Clausen, especially in light of all the unrest in today’s society, as scientists, educators, and theologians strive together to investigate how we have come to be living in this moment of history.

The concluding essay titled “Brokenness, Hope, and Restoration” by David N. Mbungu nicely points out that the biblical worldview of origins is the only view that provides meaning to life and hope for the beyond. As with many of the essays, I appreciated the personal flavor of the presentation of this last chapter.

Since these essays reflect personal expressions of belief, I was glad that there was a short bibliographic segment for each contributor. I wish that the biographies (and the references cited) were included with each essay and not located in a separate section at the back of the book. I found myself constantly flipping back and forth as I read. The bibliographies and references are important pieces in understanding the personal nature of these essays.

Who can benefit from reading this book? Teachers at all levels can quickly gain insights from these topical essays and include them in their lessons and lectures. Many of the chapters can easily be adapted as a worship thought for personal contemplation or for sharing in the classroom. This book should be added

to college students’ required reading list.

Those who already include a Creator in their worldview will be encouraged and possibly find new reasons to hold onto their faith, especially if they are feeling pressured by popular contrary beliefs. Pastors and laypeople could find this a valuable resource as they study with non-Christians or those struggling with the relationship between the Genesis account and what they commonly hear from evolutionism. This work will not, nor was it intended to, unequivocally convince an atheist or wholly naturalistic evolutionary scientist to give up on his or her view of origins. However, this book might be insightful to anyone (students included) who is unsatisfied with the improbabilities that arise from a purely naturalistic view of the origins of our universe and life, and who are searching for a reason for human existence.

In my concluding remarks, I need to point out that as I started this review, I glanced through the list of contributing authors and was gratified to see the names of several of my former students during my tenure at Andrews University and a long list of others whose lectures and presentations I have attended at various conferences, including some with whom I have had important conversations about many of these topics. One could thus argue that my review is somewhat biased. At some level, this is probably true. However, knowing many of the contributors also gives me an increased level of respect for the scientific merits of their research careers beyond what is briefly mentioned in their short essays and bibliography, and thus a deeper appreciation of their personal perspectives presented in the book.

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a horrible turn, and we have no power to stop it—it may even knock us down or throw us off balance. At such difficult times, we must permit ourselves to go through the process of mourning loss and experiencing feelings of discomfort. We must acknowledge our limitations as human beings living in a sinful world and accept the grace that only God can give (2 Corinthians 12:9). Individuals who take time to process difficult, traumatic experiences are better able to withstand difficulties in the future.<sup>7</sup>

### 3. Stay connected.

Find ways to connect with others, collaborate, and share the load despite the circumstances. Social-distancing practices were necessary during the pandemic; however, this led to increased social isolation. These past two years have been difficult for almost everyone, especially older adults and at-risk populations.<sup>8</sup> Many of us have lost loved ones due to the pandemic and have been unable to grieve the loss in traditional ways, such as gathering in person with family and friends to mourn, comfort, and support one another. Some lost jobs, and as a result, were unable to maintain homes, pay tuition, or keep up with health insurance and daily living expenses. Some schools closed, while others switched to hybrid models of instruction, and, in the midst of it all, everyone struggled to find ways to stay connected.

To thrive, we need connections to other people. Journalist Tracy Brower interviewed Jeanie Stewart, a consultant at the NeuroLeadership Institute in New York, who observed that our sense of connection and belonging is deeply tied to the degree to which we identify with a group: “Being surrounded by other human beings doesn’t guarantee a sense of belonging.

Belonging has to do with identification as a member of a group and the higher quality interactions which come from that. It’s the interactions over time which are supportive of us as full, authentic human beings.”<sup>9</sup> As individuals navigating this challenging period of history, building and maintaining connections within our homes, schools, places of work, and worship are essential to our survival.

### 4. Be adaptable, flexible, and open-minded.

Almost every day, we hear statements and questions about when things will go back to normal. From the ominous “Times have changed” to the optimistic “This is the new normal!” many people wonder if life will ever go back to the way it was before COVID-19.<sup>10</sup> The world has changed. The Greek philosopher Herac-

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litus said, “Change is the only constant in life.”<sup>11</sup> But, before Heraclitus, King Solomon reflected on seasons of change: “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.” He proceeded to catalog these seasons of change—birth and death; planting and uprooting; building and tearing down; peace and war (Ecclesiastes 3:1-11). The apostle James challenged us to acknowledge that our lives are vapor; we do not know what the future holds. He wrote, “Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes” (see James 4:13-15). Change is inevitable. In our individual lives, we must learn to adapt and be open to it to survive and make a difference in our homes, places of work, and places of worship.

### 5. Express gratitude.

Ultimately, find ways to express gratitude each day. Intentionally find something to be grateful for, no matter how small. Research shows that gratitude changes the brain over time by generating more activity in the medial prefrontal cortex, the decision-making area of the brain. Gratitude also has a physiological impact on heart and mental health; it stimulates lower blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, and cortisol; promotes better sleep, and much more.<sup>12</sup> We are encouraged to give thanks in all things (Psalm 118; Philippians 4:6, 7). God has promised, “beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair” (see Isaiah 61:1-3). When life is sour and unpredictable, it may seem counterintuitive to express gratitude, but there is power in reflecting on the positive as we face the negative. The psalmist David said, “When hard pressed, I cried to the Lord; he brought me to a spacious place. The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid” (Psalm 118:5, 6). Amid very dismal circumstances, we can experience confidence and calm in the presence of our anchor, Jesus Christ.

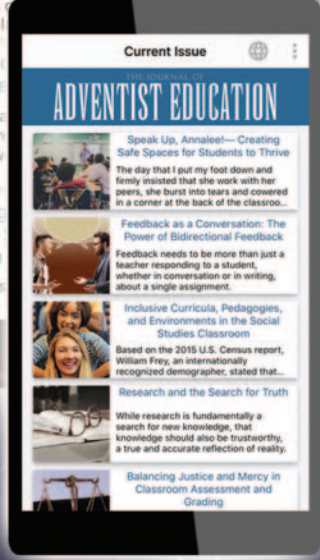
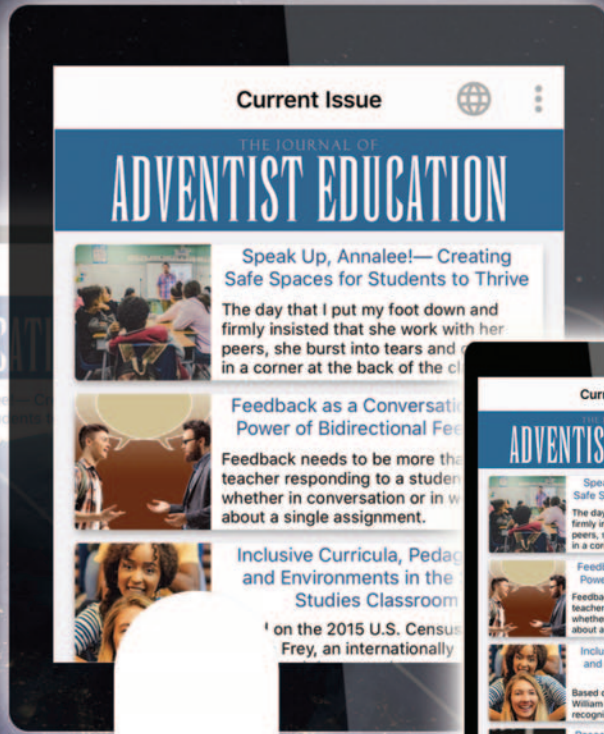
We hope the articles in this issue inspire you and stimulate ideas for improving instruction, nurturing spiritual growth in your schools, and connecting with the communities in which your schools exist. Above all, may you find ways to encourage your soul as you navigate this difficult time through anchoring in Jesus Christ, experiencing solid connections with others, and celebrating with expressions of gratitude for the many gifts God has provided.

### Recommended citation:

**Faith-Ann McGarrell**, “Curveballs and Lemonade: Surviving Change in Difficult Times,” *The Journal of Adventist Education* 83:3 (2021): 3, 45, 46.

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