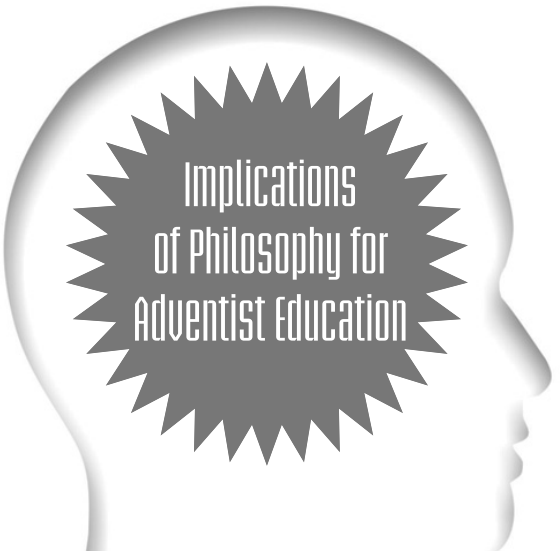
Redemptive Education Part II



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By George R. Knight

Approved for 0.5 Continuing Education Units*

This article is the second of a three-part continuing education course on the philosophy of Adventist education. The first article dealt with the importance of the topic; described the basic shape of philosophy in terms of reality (metaphysics), truth (epistemology) and ethical and aesthetic values (axiology); provided a biblical approach to each of those philosophic issues; and pointed out the importance of that philosophic worldview in shaping an Adventist approach to education.

While the first installment of this series on "Redemptive Education" laid the philosophic basis for a genuinely Adventist schooling, Part II will begin to develop the implications of that philosophy for educational practice, especially in regard to the needs of the student, the function of the teacher, and the aims of Adventist education. The final article will focus on the philosophic implications for the curriculum, along with their impact on teaching methodologies and the social function of the Adventist school.

A more complete discussion of many of the topics covered in this article may be found in the author's Philosophy and Education: An Introduction in Christian Perspective, *4th ed. (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 2006) and* Myths in Adventism: An Interpretive Study of Ellen White, Education, and Related Issues *(Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1985, 2010).*

The need to implement a biblical/Christian/Adventist philosophy in Seventh-day Adventist schools ought to be obvious. But all too often that synthesis is not evident in the schools themselves or in the practice of the professional educators who operate them. Addressing that point in the context of Lutheran education, one of the principal speakers at a meeting of the Association of Lutheran College Faculties observed that the denomination's American colleges "operated according to no distinctive Lutheran or even Christian philosophy of education, but had simply imitated secular patterns to which they had added chapel services, religion classes, and a religious 'atmosphere.'"[1]

That observation, unfortunately, also describes a number of Adventist schools. All too often, Adventist education has not intentionally been built upon a distinctively Adventist philosophy. As a result, many of the church's schools have offered something less than Adventist education and have thereby failed to achieve the purpose for which they were established.

Philosopher Gordon Clark once noted that what goes by the name of Christian education is sometimes a program of "pagan education with a chocolate coating of Christianity." He added that it is the pill, not the coating, that works.[2] Adventist education tends to suffer from this problem as well. Adventist educators and the institutions they serve need to conduct a thorough and ongoing examination, evaluation, and correction of their educational practices to ensure that they align with the church's basic philosophic beliefs. These articles will help you flesh out a basis for that ongoing evaluation and orientation.[3]

While this article focuses on Adventist education in the school, much of its content can be applied within the framework of the home and church since parents and church workers are also educators. The home, the church, and the school all deal with the same children, who have

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the same nature and needs in the several different venues of their education. Furthermore, the home and church have a curriculum, a teaching style, and social function akin to that of the school. There is a great need for parents, church workers, and professional educators to gain greater insight into the interdependent nature of their educative functions and to develop effective ways to communicate and reinforce one another's work. A collaboration between the Adventist teacher in the school and Adventist teachers in the home and church is important because *Adventist education is more than Adventist schooling*. The home, church, and school are entrusted with the responsibility of working with the most valuable things on earth, God's children, and ideally each is founded upon the same principles. Having said that, I need to point out that the educative categories that I will be dealing with in the following pages are consciously tied to schooling rather than to the wider realm of education. However, the same principles are important within the various educative contexts.

The Nature of the Student and the Goals of Adventist Education

The Heart of Ellen White's Educational Philosophy

In defining the goals of Adventist education, Ellen White's opening pages in *Education* are as good a place to start as anywhere. One of the most perceptive and important paragraphs in the book is found on the second page. "In order to understand what is comprehended in the work of education," she writes, "we need to consider both [1] the nature of man and [2] the purpose of God in creating him. We need to consider also [3] the change in man's condition through the coming in of a knowledge of evil, and [4] God's plan for still fulfilling His glorious purpose in the education of the human race."[4]

She fleshes out the core of her philosophy of education by refining those four points in the next few paragraphs. First, in reflecting upon human nature, she emphasizes that Adam was created in the image of God—physically, mentally, and spiritually. Second, she highlights the purpose of God in creating human beings as one of constant growth so they would ever "more fully" reflect "the glory of the Creator." To that end, God endowed human beings with capacities that were capable of almost infinite development.

"But," thirdly, she notes in discussing the entrance of sin, "by disobedience this was forfeited. Through sin the divine likeness was marred, and well-nigh obliterated. Man's physical powers were weakened, his mental capacity was lessened, his spiritual vision dimmed."

While those three points are foundational to Ellen White's philosophy of education, it is her fourth and last point that is absolutely crucial and that, for her, fully expresses the primary purpose of education. She notes that, in spite of its rebellion and Fall, "the race was not left without hope. By infinite love and mercy the plan of salvation had been devised, and a life of probation was granted. To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind, and soul, that the divine purpose in his creation might be realized—this was to be the work of redemption. This is the object of education, the great object of life."[5]

Ellen White returns to that theme in the fourth chapter of *Education*, where she describes each person's life as the scene of a microcosmic great controversy between good and evil, and every human being as having a desire for goodness but also possessing a "bent to evil." Building upon her earlier insight that God's image is not totally obliterated in fallen humanity, she notes that every human being "receives some ray of divine light. Not only intellectual but spiritual power, a perception of right, a desire for goodness, exists in every heart. But against these principles there is struggling an antagonistic power." As the heritage of the Edenic Fall there is within each person's nature an evil force which "unaided, he cannot resist. To withstand this force, to attain that ideal which in his inmost soul he accepts as alone worthy, he can find help in but one power. That power is Christ. Co-operation with that power is man's greatest need. In all educational effort should not this co-operation be the highest aim?"[6]

On the next page, she develops this point a bit more, writing that "in the highest sense the work of education and the work of redemption are one, for in education, as in redemption, 'other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus'. . . . To aid the student in comprehending these principles, and in entering into that relation with Christ which will make them a controlling power in the life, should be the teacher's first effort and his constant aim. The teacher who accepts this aim is in truth a co-worker with Christ, a laborer together with God."[7]

Although she had no formal training as a philosopher, Ellen White hit the pivot point of educational philosophy when she placed the human problem of sin at the very center of the educational enterprise. Illustrative of that in-

sight is Paul Nash's *Models of Man: Explorations in the Western Educational Tradition* and *The Educated Man: Studies in the History of Educational Thought*, which Nash developed in conjunction with two other authors.[8] Both books demonstrate the centrality of views of philosophical anthropology or human nature to all educational philosophies. Exemplifying that point are such chapter titles as "The Planned Man: Skinner," "The Reflective Man: Dewey," "The Communal Man: Marx," and "The Natural Man: Rousseau." Even though the focal point of education ought to be the needs of students, to my knowledge, no one has yet published a synthesized, systematic approach to educational philosophy from the perspective of varying views of the nature and needs of human beings.

It's not difficult to insert Ellen White's philosophy in Nash's framework. The title for his chapter on her would be "The Redeemed Man: Ellen White" ("Redeemed Person" for modern readers). The problem of sin and its cure—redemption and restoration—dominate her approach to education.

That same emphasis, of course, is found in the very framework of Scripture, which begins with humans being created in the image of God with infinite potential, continues with the Fall and the entrance of sin, and moves on to God's great redemptive plan as He seeks through a multitude of agencies to rescue humans from their predicament and to restore them to their lost estate. That sequence represents the plan of the Bible, in which its first two (Genesis 1, 2) and last two chapters (Revelation 21, 22) depict a perfect world. The third chapter from the beginning (Genesis 3) presents the entrance of sin, and the third chapter from the end (Revelation 20) focuses on sin's final destruction. In between, from Genesis 4 through Revelation 19, the Bible sets forth God's plan for redeeming and restoring the fallen race.

Although all these points represent basic Christian doctrine, surprisingly enough, they have too often escaped significant treatment by Christian philosophers of education. In fact, I know of no book that gives them the same centrality as Ellen White's *Education*. Allan Hart Jahsmann's *What's Lutheran in Education?* comes closest, noting in one essay the same basic points as Ellen White and concluding with the dictum that "the first concern of Lutheran education must always be the leading of a people to a conviction of sin and a personal faith in Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God."[9] Unfortunately, Jahsmann's insights on the Fall and the restoration of God's image are not widely represented in evangelical educational theory. But, as noted above, these concepts stand at the very center of Ellen White's understanding of education and are implied in the Bible. It was with those teachings in mind that I wrote some years ago that "*the nature, condition, and needs of the student provide the focal point for Christian educational philosophy and direct educators toward the goals of Christian education*."[10]

Before moving away from the big picture of Ellen White's understanding of educational philosophy, we need to examine one other statement. *Education*'s very first paragraph presents another foundational pillar in her approach to education. "Our ideas of education," we read, "take too narrow and too low a range. There is need of a broader scope, a higher aim. True education means more than the pursual of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come."[11]

The key word in that paragraph is *whole*, a word she uses with two dimensions. First, Adventist education must emphasize the "whole" or entire period of human existence. Thus it is not merely focused on helping students learn how to earn a living or become cultured by the standards of the present world. Those aims may be worthy and important, but they are not sufficient. The realm of eternity and preparation for it must also come under the purview of any Adventist education worthy of church support. On the other hand, some pious but misdirected individuals might be tempted to make heaven the focus of education while neglecting the present realm and preparation for the world of work and participation in human society. Ellen White asserted that neither extreme is correct. Rather, preparation for both the earthly and the eternal worlds must be included in Adventist education and placed in proper relationship to each other.

The second aspect of wholeness in the above paragraph is the imperative to develop the entire person. Adventist education needs to aim at developing all aspects of human beings rather than focusing merely on the intellectual, the spiritual, the physical, the social, or the vocational. In short, the goal of Adventist education is to develop whole persons for the whole period of existence open to them in both this world and the world to come. In that sense it transcends the

possibilities of secular education, as well as many forms of Christian education, and, unfortunately, some so-called Adventist education.

One other key word in *Education*'s opening paragraph is *service* ("the joy of service in this world and . . . the higher joy of wider service in the world to come"). It should be noted that the centrality of service is not only featured in the book's first page, but also on the last, which points out: "In our life here, earthly, sin-restricted though it is, the greatest joy and the highest education are in service. And in the future state, untrammeled by the limitations of sinful humanity, it is in service that our greatest joy and our highest education will be found."[12]

That emphasis on service should come as no surprise to any reader of the Bible. Jesus more than once told His disciples that the very essence of Christian character was love for and service to others. Such characteristics, of course, are not natural human traits. "Normal" people are more concerned with their own needs and being served than they are in a life of service to others. The Christian alternative outlook and set of values does not come about naturally. Rather the Bible speaks of it as a transformation of the mind and heart (Romans 12:2). And Paul appeals to us to let Christ's mind be our mind, pointing out that even though Christ was God, He came as a servant (Philippians 2:5-7).

In our brief overview of the key concepts of Ellen White's understanding of education, three items stand out:

- Proper education is, in essence, redemption.
- Education must aim at the preparation of the whole person and the whole period of existence possible for human beings.
- The joy of service stands at the very heart of the educative process.

Those concepts are not only central to education but also to life itself. Thus they must inform any genuine approach to Adventist educational theory and practice.

Additional Observations Regarding Human Nature

Jim Wilhoit points out that the biblical "view of human nature has no parallel in secular theories of education and is [therefore] the main obstacle to the Christian's adopting any such theory wholesale."[13] For that reason, I need to re-emphasize the truth that the elements of an Adventist approach to education must always be consciously developed in the light of human need and the human condition. We will return to the goals of Adventist education when we examine the work of the teacher. But before moving to that topic, we need to scrutinize several aspects of human nature that are of importance to Adventist education.

First is the confused status in which educators and students find themselves. On the one hand are negative perspectives on human nature. In that realm is the dictum of 17th-century philosopher Thomas Hobbes, who insightfully observed that human life is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."[14] And then there are such leading lights as 20th-century psychologist B. F. Skinner and 18th-century theologian Jonathan Edwards. The first claimed that people have neither freedom nor dignity,[15] while the second in his most famous sermon pictured humans as loathsome insects suspended over the pit of hell by an angry God.[16] Also, consider the view of biologist Desmond Morris, who wrote that "there are one hundred and ninety-three living species of monkeys and apes. One hundred and ninety-two of them are covered with hair." His point was that human beings comprise the exception in that they are in essence "naked apes."[17]

But are they? Holding a contrary view about human nature, the Enlightenment scholars developed the doctrine of the infinite perfectibility of humanity and the essential goodness and dignity of humans. Such modern psychologists as Carl Rogers affirmed that perspective, advocating learning theories built upon the assumption that leaving children "free" enough in a learning environment will cause their natural goodness to assert itself.[18]

So what are we to believe as educators? What is the basic nature of our students? Animal or a bit of divinity? Good or evil? The short answer is "all of the above."

Moving beyond our emotional response to Darwinism, it is difficult to deny that human beings are animals. We share much with the animal world, from structural similarities in our physical bodies to our digestive and respiratory processes. Furthermore, we participate in many of the same activities. Both people and dogs, for example, enjoy riding in automobiles, eating good food, and having their heads rubbed affectionately. Clearly, we share a great deal with our canine (and other animal) friends.

The point that needs to be emphasized, however, is not that people are animals but that they are *more* than animals. What does that mean? Jewish philosopher Abraham Heschel noted that "the animality of man we can grasp with a fair degree of clarity. The perplexity begins when we attempt to make clear what is meant by the *humanity* of man."[19]

Social theorist E. F. Schumacher wrote that humans share much with the mineral realm, since both people and minerals consist of mat-

ter; that humans have more in common with the plant world than the material realm, since both plants and people have life in addition to a mineral base; and that humans have even more yet in common with the animal world, since both people and animals have consciousness as well as life and a mineral base. But, observed Schumacher, only humans have reflective self-awareness. Animals undoubtedly think, he claimed, but humanity's uniqueness is people's self-conscious awareness of their own thinking. Schumacher pointed out that we can learn a lot about humans by studying them at the mineral, plant, and animal levels—"in fact, everything can be learned about [them] *except that which makes [them] human*."[20] For that essential insight, we noted earlier, we need to go to the Bible, in which Genesis describes essential human nature as being created in the image and likeness of the divine (Genesis 1:26, 27), although that image that has been "well-nigh obliterated" by the Fall (Genesis 3).[21]

The question that we as Christian educators need to face is how to deal with the complexities of human nature. One thing we need to recognize is that no one lives up to his or her full potential as God's image bearer. In fact, many exist at subhuman levels—at the mineral level through death, at the vegetable level through paralyzing and brain-destroying accident, or at the animal level through living primarily to satisfy their appetites and passions.

Few, of course, choose to live at the mineral or vegetable stages, but many opt for the animal level. The proverb that "every man has his price" is no idle jest. It is based upon experience and observation. Think about it for a moment. If I offered you $5 to commit a one-time-only indecent or dishonest act that would never be exposed, you would probably refuse. But if I offered you $500, you might begin to think about it. By the time I got to $50,000, I would have many takers. And even the die-hards would begin to waver as the offer rose to $5 million and then $50 million.

Behavioral psychologists have discovered that animal behavior can be controlled through rewards and punishments. In other words, animals do not have freedom of choice; their needs and environment control them. Through rewards and punishments people can train an animal to do anything on command that it is capable of—including starving itself to death.

The question that has divided psychologists, educators, philosophers, and theologians is, "Can human beings be trained to do anything they are capable of?" Regarding those who live at the animal level, the answer is a definite Yes. Like animals, people who operate at the level of their appetites and passions can be controlled by rewards and punishments.

Unfortunately, most people live most of their lives at the level of their "animalness." This fact underlies the apparent validity of behaviorism's claim that human beings are not free and that a person's behavior can be shaped to any desired pattern if the controller has enough time and sufficient knowledge of that individual and his or her environment.

But the crucial point for educators to remember is that their students can rise above the animal level of existence. They can do so because they are uniquely related to God and because He has given them both self-awareness and the aid that Christ supplies through the Holy Spirit.

Since people bear the image of God, they can reason from cause to effect and make responsible, spiritually guided decisions. Their freedom of choice is not absolute in the sense that they are autonomous and can live without God. But it is genuine in that they can either choose Jesus Christ as Lord and live by His principles, or choose Satan as master and be subject to the law of sin and death (see Romans 6:12-23).

The Adventist educator functions in a school full of young people in the midst of an identity crisis that impacts their lives simultaneously at several levels. One of the most important issues they face is choosing whether to live primarily at the level of their animal propensities or rise to their divine possibilities. Closely related are choices between good and evil. It doesn't help matters that educators themselves are also involved in a daily ongoing struggle over the same issues.

But the great truth of the gospel is that each person can become fully human through a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. That fact is a central pillar in an education whose primary purpose is helping people achieve a restored relationship with God, that sees every person as a child of God, and that seeks to help each student develop to his or her highest potential. Ellen White forcefully pointed out the infinite and eternal possibilities inherent in every person when she wrote that "higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's ideal for His children. Godliness—godlikeness—is the goal to be reached."[22] To transform that ideal from potentiality to actuality is the function of Adventist education in the home, school, and church.

A second aspect of human nature that affects Adventist education is closely related to the first: In the time that has elapsed since the Fall, the problems of the human race have not

changed. Throughout history, human beings have been affected by the struggle between the forces of good and evil. Ever since the introduction of sin, there have been two basic categories of human beings—those who are still in revolt, and those who have accepted Christ as Savior. Most schools and classrooms contain students from both orientations. Sensitivity to that fact is vital to Adventist educators since they must deal daily with the complex interaction between the two types of students.

Tied to the recognition of the two types of human beings is the fact that the underlying principles of the great controversy between good and evil have remained constant despite changes in the particulars of the human predicament over time. Thus, people today face the same basic temptations and challenges that confronted Moses, David, and Paul. It is because of the unchanging nature of the human problem through both time and space (geographical location) that the Scriptures are timeless and communicate a universal message to all people. The Bible is a vital resource in education because it addresses the heart of the problem of sin and its solution—issues that all persons in every educational institution must face every day.

A third aspect of human nature that must be considered in the Adventist school is the tension between the individual and the group. On the one hand, the Christian educator must recognize and respect the individuality, uniqueness, and personal worth of each person. Throughout His life, Jesus revealed His regard for the individuality and worth of persons. His relationship both with His disciples and with the population at large contrasted with the mentality of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and even the disciples, who tended to see "others" in terms of "the herd." As it seeks to relate education to the learner, a distinctively Christian philosophy can never lose sight of the importance of human individuality.

A proper respect for individuality does not, however, negate the importance of the group. Paul, in writing to the Corinthians concerning spiritual gifts, uplifted the value of the social whole as well as the unique value of each person (1 Corinthians 12:12-31). He wrote that the body (social group) will be healthy when the importance and uniqueness of its individual members are respected. That holds true for educational institutions as well as for churches. The wholesome classroom, from that perspective, is not one of unlimited individualism, but rather one in which respect for individuality is balanced with respect for the needs of the group.

A final significant point about human nature is that the whole person is important to God. We touched upon that topic earlier in dealing with Ellen White's emphasis on wholeness in education. But we need to expand upon it. Traditional education elevated the mental dimension of students above the physical, while some modern approaches have done just the opposite. Yet others have focused on the spiritual. But whatever affects one part of a human being will eventually affect the whole. Balance among the spiritual, social, physical, and mental aspects of a person is the ideal as illustrated in the development of Jesus (Luke 2:52). Part of humanity's present dilemma is that since the Fall, people have suffered from a lack of health and balance in each of these areas as well as in their interrelationship. As a result, part of the educative function of redemption is to restore people to health in each of those aspects and in their total beings. Restoration of God's image, therefore, has social, spiritual, mental, and physical ramifications, as does education. Such an understanding will have a definite impact on curriculum choices.

Christian educators, understanding the complexity of students, realize that each one is a candidate for God's kingdom and deserves the very best education that can be offered. Christian educators see beneath the veneer of outward conduct to get at the core of the human problem—sin, separation from the life and character of God. In its fullest sense, Christian education is redemption, restoration, and reconciliation. As a result, each Adventist school must seek to achieve a balance between the social, spiritual, mental, and physical aspects of each student in all of its activities and through its total program. The purpose and goal of Adventist education is the restoration of the image of God in each student and the reconciliation of students with God, their fellow students, their own selves, and the natural world. Those insights take us to the role of the Adventist teacher.

The Role of the Teacher and the Aims of Adventist Education

Within the school, the teacher is the key element in educational success for he or she is the person who communicates the curriculum to the student. The best way to ensure better educational results is not improved facilities, better methods, or a more adequate curriculum, as important as those items are, but to hire and retain quality teachers. Elton Trueblood spoke to that point when he remarked that "if there is any one conclusion on which there is conspicuous agreement in our current philosophy of education it

concerns the supreme importance of the good teacher. It is easy to envisage a good college with poor buildings, but it is not possible to envisage a good college with poor teachers."[23] The same, of course, holds true of elementary and secondary schools. Trueblood wrote in another connection that "it is better to have brilliant teaching in shacks than to have sloppy teaching in palaces."[24]

Some years ago, James Coleman's massive study of American schools empirically supported those observations. He found that the school factors with the greatest influence on achievement (independent of family background) were the teacher's characteristics, not facilities or curriculum.[25] Employing quality teachers is also the primary element in improving the spiritual impact of an educational program. Roger Dudley, in his study of Adventist academy students in the United States, found that "*no other factor was as strongly related to teen-age rejection of religion as was the religious sincerity of their academy teachers*."[26]

If quality teachers are the crucial factor for success in a school system that aims merely at preparing people for living and working on this earth, how much more important in an education that is preparing young people for eternity! With that thought in mind, it is of the utmost importance that Adventist parents, teachers, administrators, and school boards understand the ministry of teaching, how that ministry facilitates a school's reaching its goals, and the essential qualifications of those called to undertake the awesome task of shaping the next generation.

Teaching Is a Form of Ministry

Since education and redemption are one,[27] Adventist teaching by definition is a form of Christian ministry and a pastoral function. The New Testament clearly defines teaching as a divine calling (Ephesians 4:11; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Romans 12:6-8). Furthermore, the Scriptures do not separate the functions of teaching and pastoring. On the contrary, Paul wrote to Timothy that a bishop (pastor) must be "an apt teacher" (1 Timothy 3:2).[28] In writing to the Ephesians that "some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers" (Ephesians 4:11), Paul used a Greek construction that indicates that the same person holds both the office of pastor and teacher. F. F. Bruce, in commenting on this passage, has remarked that "the two terms 'pastors (shepherds) and teachers' denote one and the same class of men."[29] By contrast, Scripture lists the other gifts separately. The significance of this point is that we cannot divide these two gifts if they are to remain functional. Pastors must not only care for the souls of their flock, but also teach by precept and example both to individuals and the corporate body of the church. Teachers, likewise, must not merely transmit truth but also commit themselves to caring for the individuals under their tutelage. Thus, Christian teachers function in a pastoral role to their students.

The major difference between the roles of pastors and teachers in our day has to do with the current division of labor. In 21st-century society, the Christian teacher may be seen as one who pastors in a "school" context, while the pastor is one who teaches in the "larger religious community." It is important to remember that their function is essentially the same, even though by today's definitions they have charge of different divisions of the Lord's vineyard.

Teaching young people is not only a pastoral function but also one of the most effective forms of ministry, since it reaches the entire population while at its most impressionable age. Reformer Martin Luther recognized that fact when he wrote that "if I had to give up preaching and my other duties, there is no office I would rather have than that of school-teacher. For I know that next to the [pastoral] ministry it is the most useful, greatest, and best; and I am not sure which of the two is to be preferred. For it is hard to make old dogs docile and old rogues pious, yet that is what the ministry works at, and must work at, in great part, in vain; but young trees . . . are more easily bent and trained. Therefore let it be considered one of the highest virtues on earth faithfully to train the children of others, which duty but very few parents attend to themselves."[30]

The clearest and fullest integration of the gift of teacher-pastor appeared in the ministry of Christ. One of the terms by which people most often addressed Him was "Master." The actual meaning of the word is "Teacher." Christ may be seen as the best example of teaching in terms of both methodology and meaningful interpersonal relationships. A study of the Gospels from the perspective of Christ as teacher will contribute a great deal to our understanding of ideal Christian instruction.

We will examine Christ's teaching methodology in a subsequent section. But here we will study the relationship aspect of His teaching ministry, an especially important topic since good relationships stand at the very center of successful teaching. Several statements from Ellen White offer insight into this topic.

Part of the reason for the success of Christ's ministry was that people knew that He really cared. For example, we read that "in His work

as a public teacher, Christ never lost sight of the children. . . . His presence never repelled them. His large heart of love could comprehend their trials and necessities, and find happiness in their simple joys; and He took them in His arms and blessed them."[31] Children are quite perceptive. They can tell after talking to an adult whether that person is just listening to their "small" joys and concerns to be polite or feels genuine interest—if he or she really cares. How many times have we as parents or teachers listened to our children, nodded our heads, and then sent them off to play without having the slightest idea what they were trying to communicate? An excellent way to alienate children is to let them feel that grown-ups are more concerned with "important" adult thoughts than with their well-being. Ellen White has suggested that even if teachers have limited literary qualifications, if they really care for their students, realize the magnitude of their task, and have a willingness to improve, they will succeed.[32] At the very heart of Christ's teaching ministry was the caring relationship.

That relationship in His case exuded a spirit of confidence regarding the possibilities of each life. Thus, even though "Christ was a faithful reprover," in "every human being, however fallen, He beheld a son of God, one who might be restored to the privilege of his divine relationship. . . . Looking upon men in their suffering and degradation, Christ perceived ground for hope where appeared only despair and ruin. Wherever there existed a sense of need, there He saw opportunity for uplifting. Souls tempted, defeated, feeling themselves lost, ready to perish, He met, not with denunciation, but with blessing. . . .

"In every human being He discerned infinite possibilities. He saw men as they might be, transfigured by His grace. . . . Looking upon them with hope, He inspired hope. Meeting them with confidence, He inspired trust. Revealing in Himself man's true ideal, He awakened, for its attainment, both desire and faith. In His presence souls despised and fallen realized that they still were men, and they longed to prove themselves worthy of His regard. In many a heart that seemed dead to all things holy, were awakened new impulses. To many a despairing one there opened the possibility of a new life. Christ bound men to His heart by the ties of love and devotion."[33]

That quotation highlights the very spirit of Christ's teaching ministry that made Him such a force for good in the lives of those He taught. The statement itself contains the ultimate challenge for teachers, parents, and everyone else who works with human beings. To see infinite possibilities in every person, to see hope in the hopeless, takes an infusion of God's grace. But it is the key to good teaching. The alternative is to look upon people with hopelessness and thereby inspire hopelessness.

Psychologist Arthur Combs cites several research studies that indicate that good teachers can be clearly distinguished from poor ones on the basis of what they believe about people.[34] In a similar vein, William Glasser, the psychiatrist who developed "reality therapy," believes that failures in both school and life find their roots in two related problems—the failure to love and the failure to achieve self-worth.[35] We develop our self-worth from our perceptions of what others think of us. When parents and teachers constantly give messages that children are stupid, delinquent, and hopeless, they are shaping these young people's sense of self-worth, which the youth will act out in daily living.

Fortunately, the self-fulfilling prophecy also works in the positive direction. Earl Pullias and James Young note that "when people are asked to describe the teacher that did the most for them, again and again they mention a teacher, often the only one in their experience, who believed in them, who saw their special talents, not only what they were but even more what they wanted to be and could be. And they began to learn not only in the area of their special interest but in many others." As such, a teacher is an inspirer of vision.[36]

On the other hand, Christ's ability to see the potential in each person did not entail a blindness to human limitations. Within the biblical framework, no one has every talent, even though each has some. At times students need definite guidance into areas where their personalities and natural gifts will make them most effective. So it was in Christ's ministry. He knew the special needs and potentials of Peter, John, and Andrew and guided them accordingly.

While the caring relationship was central to Christ's teaching ministry, that relationship was carefully balanced in daily practice. Thus Ellen White writes that "He showed consistency without obstinacy, benevolence without weakness, tenderness and sympathy without sentimentalism. He was highly social, yet He possessed a reserve that discouraged any familiarity. His temperance never led to bigotry or austerity. He was not conformed to the world, yet He was attentive to the wants of the least among men."[37]

Adventist teachers and others concerned with the church's education system will gain much through a study of Christ as master teacher. Such study will also put them in direct contact with the aims and goals of Christian education.

The Primary Aim of Education and the Adventist Teacher as an Agent of Redemption

We have already noted that from both the Bible and Ellen White's perspective that the greatest human need is to get into a right relationship with God. Said in another way, human lostness provides the purpose of Christian education. The greatest human need is to become "unlost." Thus Jesus claimed that He came "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10, KJV). Such seeking and saving is the theme of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation.

Luke 15, which records the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son, is especially pertinent as we think about the role of the Christian teacher. The teacher, from the perspective of that chapter, is someone who seeks out and attempts to help those lost and caught in the web of sin, whether they are like (1) the sheep (those who know they are lost but do not know how to get home); (2) the coin and older son (those who do not have enough spiritual sense to realize their own lostness); or (3) the younger son (those who know they are lost and know how to get home, but do not want to return until their rebellion has run its course). Lostness has many varieties, all of which are exhibited in each school and classroom. But both rebels and Pharisees and all the other types of human beings have one common need—to get "unlost." Thus, it is little wonder that Christ identified the core of His mission as seeking and saving the lost (Luke 19:10).

To those passages may be added Jesus' experience with the ungrateful and inhospitable Samaritans when they refused to provide Him with a place to stay because they perceived He was on His way to Jerusalem. On that occasion, James and John were incensed with the ingratitude of the Samaritans and sought Jesus' permission to call down fire from heaven to destroy them. Jesus responded that "the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke 9:51-56, KJV).

The primary goal of Christ's life and of Christian education can also be found in the keynote verse of the Gospel of Matthew, which predicted that Mary would bear a son who would "save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). The same thought is brought out by John's Gospel, which claims that "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him" (John 3:16, 17).

Adventist teachers are God's agents in the plan of redemption and reconciliation. Like Christ, their primary function is "to seek and to save that which was lost." They must be willing to work in the spirit of Christ, so that their students can be brought into harmony with God through the sacrifice of Jesus and be restored to God's image.

Teaching is much more than transmitting information and filling students' heads with knowledge. It is more than preparing them for the world of work. The primary function of the Christian teacher is to relate to the Master Teacher in such a way that he or she becomes God's agent in the redemptive plan.

Edwin Rian caught that point when he noted that most writers in educational philosophy, regardless of their philosophical and religious perspectives, "agree on considering the problem of 'sin and death,' which is the problem of man, according to Pauline and Reformed Protestant theology, as irrelevant to the questions of the aims and process of education." Such a position, he indicated, cannot help producing "miseducation and frustration for the individual and for the community." From the perspective of humanity's predicament, Rian uplifted "*education as conversion*."[38] Herbert Welch, president of Ohio Wesleyan University early in the 20th century, made the same point when he claimed that "to win its students from sin to righteousness is . . . the highest achievement of a Christian college."[39]

Christian education is the only education that can meet humanity's deepest needs, because only Christian educators understand the core of the human problem. The redemptive aim of Christian education is what makes it Christian. The primary aim of Christian education in the school, the home, and the church is to lead people into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. That restored relationship heals the principal alienation in Genesis 3—that between humans and God. And the healing of the God/human relationship sets the stage for the removal of humanity's other basic alienations. Thus, education is a part of God's great plan of redemption or atonement. Its role is to help bring people back to at-one-ness with God, other people, one's own self, and the natural world. The whole message of the Bible points forward to the day when the work of restoration will be complete and the Edenic condition will be restored in the realm of nature because of the healing of humanity's manifold lostness (Revelation 21, 22; Isaiah 11:6-9; 35).

The essence of the Fall was human beings' decision to place themselves rather than God at

the center of their lives. Redemption reinstates God as the focal point of personal existence. It is a dynamic experience called by many names, including conversion and new birth. The Bible also refers to it as the obtaining of a new heart and mind. Paul vividly described the experience when he claimed that the Christian is one who has had his or her entire way of thinking and living transformed (Romans 12:2). The Greek word he used for *transformation* is "metamorphosis," the term we use in English to indicate the change that takes place when a caterpillar becomes a butterfly. It is a radical change that involves a discontinuity with the past and a new beginning. Carlyle B. Haynes caught the central nature of the experience when he wrote that "the Christian life is not any modification of the old life; it is not any qualification of it, any development of it, not any progression of it, any culture or refinement or education of it. It is not built on the old life at all. It does not grow from it. It is entirely another life—a new life altogether. It is the actual life of Jesus Christ Himself in my flesh."[40]

The student's greatest need, then, is for a spiritual rebirth that places God at the center of daily existence. Paul noted that such renewal is a daily experience (1 Corinthians 15:31), and Jesus taught that the Holy Spirit accomplishes the transformation (John 3:5, 6). Christian education is thus impossible without the dynamic power of the Holy Spirit.

Ellen White wrote that the "all-important thing" in education "should be the conversion of . . . students, that they may have a new heart and life. The object of the Great Teacher is the restoration of the image of God in the soul, and every teacher in our schools should work in harmony with this purpose."[41] Adventist education can build upon the foundation of the new birth experience to achieve its other aims and purposes. But if it fails at this foundational and primary point, it has failed entirely.

Some Secondary Aims of Adventist Education

The healing of humanity's alienation from God sets the stage for treating its other basic alienations and thereby helps to define the secondary purposes of education. We have repeatedly noted that education is a part of God's great plan of redemption or atonement; that education's role is to help bring people back to at-oneness with God, their fellow humans, their own selves, and the natural world. Within that context, the focal point of Christian teaching is the healing of broken relationships between individuals and God. This, in turn, prepares the way for Christian education to accomplish its secondary purposes, such as character development, the acquisition of knowledge, job preparation, and the nurturing of students socially, emotionally, and physically.

Character development is certainly a major goal of Adventist education. Ellen White noted that character determines destiny for both this life and the one to come and that "character building is the most important work ever entrusted to human beings."[42] C. B. Eavey related character development to the fundamental purpose of education when he stated that "the foundational aim in Christian education is the bringing of the individual to Christ for salvation. Before a man of God can be perfected, there must be a man of God to perfect; without the new birth there is no man of God."[43] In other words, true character can develop only in the born-again Christian. When we equate the primary objective of Christian education—to bring students into relationship with Christ—with such theological concepts as conversion, new birth, and justification, it follows that character development, as a secondary aim, must be synonymous with sanctification and Christian growth in grace.

Such an equation is exactly what we find in the writings of Ellen White. "The great work of parents and teachers," she penned, "is character building—seeking to restore the image of Christ in those placed under their care. A knowledge of the sciences sinks into insignificance beside this great aim; but all true education may be made to help in the development of a righteous character. The formation of character is the work of a lifetime, and it is for eternity."[44]

Character development and sanctification are essentially two names for the same process. Educators and theologians have, unfortunately, developed different vocabularies to describe the same process. At this point, it is important to remember that the concept of Christian character development is antithetical to the humanistic view, which implies merely a refinement of the natural, unrenewed person. Christian character development never occurs outside of the conversion experience or apart from Christ and the agency of the Holy Spirit (Philippians 2:12, 13; John 15:1-17). Only the dynamic power of the Holy Spirit can develop the image of God in the individual and reproduce the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—in the life of each student (Galatians 5:22-24). Hans LaRondelle has indicated that at least part of the restoration process occurs as we behold the "attractive loveliness of Christ's character." Through

that experience we assimilate His image.[45] Thus it is imperative that every phase of Adventist education—the character of the teacher, the curriculum, the methods of discipline, and every other aspect—reflects Christ.

Jesus Christ is the beginning, the middle, and the end of Adventist education. The Holy Spirit seeks to implant the likeness of Christ's character in each of us as educators and in our children and students. The Spirit uses parents, teachers, and other educators as agents or mediators of salvation. But each person must continuously surrender the will to God's infilling power and then follow the directions of the Holy Spirit in his or her life. Character development is an act of God's grace just as much as justification. Because of its vital role, the science of character development should form a central pillar in the preparation of teachers, parents, and others in positions of educational influence.

Adventist education obviously has other, secondary, goals such as the acquisition of knowledge and preparation for the world of work, but such goals sink into "insignificance" when compared to the redemptive work of education, which relates to conversion and character development.[46] After all, "what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Matthew 16:26, KJV).

Beyond character development, another secondary goal of Christian education is the development of a Christian mind. While that task does involve the transmission of information, it is far broader than that. It means helping students gain a way of viewing reality and organizing knowledge within the framework of the Christian worldview. Gene Garrick pointed out the secondary importance of knowledge acquisition when he wrote that "there can be no truly Christian mind without the new birth since spiritual truth is apprehended and applied spiritually (1 Corinthians 2:1-16)."[47]

We will return to the discussion of developing the Christian mind at greater length in the section on curriculum. But before leaving the topic, it is important to point out that a Christian never views gaining knowledge—even biblical or Christian knowledge—as an end in itself. In acquiring knowledge and in developing a Christian mind, Christian teachers must never lose sight of their ultimate goal for their students: more effective service to both God and their fellow beings. Thus knowledge, from a Christian perspective, is instrumental rather than an end in itself.

Another secondary aim of Adventist education is to maximize physical and emotional health. Ellen White wrote that: "since the mind and the soul find expression through the body, both mental and spiritual vigor are in great degree dependent upon physical strength and activity; whatever promotes physical health, promotes the development of a strong mind and a well-balanced character. Without health no one can as distinctly understand or as completely fulfill his obligations to himself, to his fellow beings, or to his Creator. Therefore the health should be as faithfully guarded as the character. A knowledge of physiology and hygiene should be the basis of all educational effort."[48]

Because human beings are not merely spiritual, or mental, or physical machines but wholistic creations in which imbalance in one aspect of their nature affects the whole, it is also crucial that the educational system promote emotional health. After all, angry, depressed individuals cannot relate to either God or their fellow human beings in a functional manner. Just as the Fall fractured God's image spiritually, socially, mentally, and physically, so must education aim at restoring health and wholeness in each of those areas and their interrelationship with one another.

A final secondary aim of Adventist education is to prepare students for the world of work, a topic on which Ellen White had a great deal to say. From her perspective, useful labor is a blessing to both the individual and the community and "a part of God's great plan for our recovery from the Fall."[49] Career preparation, however, like every other aspect of the Christian life, cannot be separated from the issues of the new birth, character development, the development of a Christian mind, the achievement of physical and mental well-being, and the development of a sense of social responsibility. The Christian life is a unit, and each aspect of it interacts with the others and the total person. Thus, Adventist teachers will encourage their students to view even so-called secular occupations within the context of an individual's wider vocation as a servant of God and humankind. That idea brings us to the ultimate and final goal of Adventist education.

The Ultimate Aim of Adventist Education

The life of Jesus was one of service for humanity. He came to our planet to give Himself for the betterment of others. Thus, His followers have the same function, and the ultimate end (i.e., final outcome) of education is to prepare students for that task. Along that line, Herbert Welch concluded that "education for its own sake is as bad as art for art's sake; but culture held in trust to empower one better to serve one's fellow men, the wise for the igno-

rant, the strong for the weak," is education's highest aim. "The Christian character," he postulated, "which does not find expression in service is scarcely worthy of the name."[50]

Ellen White agreed. Beginning and ending her classic *Education* with the "joy" of service, she considered it the "highest education."[51] "The true teacher," she noted, "is not satisfied with second-rate work. He is not satisfied with directing his students to a standard lower than the highest which it is possible for them to attain. He cannot be content with imparting to them only technical knowledge, with making them merely clever accountants, skillful artisans, successful tradesmen. It is his ambition to inspire them with principles of truth, obedience, honor, integrity, and purity—principles that will make them a positive force for the stability and uplifting of society. He desires them, above all else, to learn life's great lesson of unselfish service."[52]

Figure 1[53] (page 35) indicates that conversion, character development, acquiring a mature Christian mind and good health, and occupational preparation are not ends in themselves. Each is, instead, an essential element in a person's preparation for service to humanity as part of God's plan to heal the alienation between people that developed at the Fall. The essence of Christian love and of the Christlike character is service to others.

Teachers should help their students realize that most people have gotten their educational priorities backward. We hear the following sentiments: "Society owes me a good living because of all the years I spent getting an education." "I deserve the benefits of the good life because of what I have accomplished." Even those who claim to be Christians often make—or at least imply—such sentiments. Unfortunately, these ideas represent the antithesis of the ultimate aim of Christianity.

It is morally wrong for people to use the benefits of society's gift of education for self-aggrandizement. George S. Counts wrote from a humanistic perspective that "at every turn the social obligation which the advantages of a college education impose must be stressed: too often have we preached the monetary value of a college education; too widely have we bred the conviction that the training is advantageous because it enables the individual to get ahead; too insidiously have we spread the doctrine that the college opens up avenues to the exploitation of less capable men. Higher education involves higher responsibility . . . ; this cardinal truth must be impressed upon every recipient of its advantages. In season and out of season, social service, and not individual advancement, must be the motif of college training."[54] If Counts from his secular perspective saw that fact so clearly, then the committed Christian should recognize it even more distinctly.

The message of the parable of the talents is that the greater a person's natural endowments and his or her opportunities for their development, the more responsibility he or she has to represent Christ in faithful service to those with mental, spiritual, social, emotional, or physical needs (Matthew 25:14-30).

The Christian teacher has the responsibility not only to teach the ideal of service, but also to model it. Thus, a major task of Christian education is to "help students unwrap their God-given gifts" so that they can find their place in service to others.[55]

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that Christian service is a response to God's love rather than an altruistic humanitarianism that still allows people to congratulate themselves for their personal goodness and sacrifice. The Christian's gratitude to God for salvation inspires him or her to become a channel of God's love by participating in His ministry of reconciliation.

In one sense, as we note in Figure 1, character development lays the foundation for service. But such service also helps to develop character (thus the two-way arrow between character development and service). As a result, the two work in tandem, each contributing to the other. It is a truism that character development cannot occur without service, but it is equally true that character leads to service.

Teachers should seek to instill in their students the conviction that Christian service is not something that begins after graduation or when they are older. Rather, it is an integral part of a Christian's life from the time of conversion. Teachers in the church, home, and school need to provide their students with opportunities for serving others both inside and outside of their religious communities. In short, a crucial function of Christian teaching is to help students not only internalize God's love but also to externalize it. Teachers, as agents of redemption, need to help their students discover their personal roles in God's plan of reconciliation and restoration.

Qualifications of the Adventist Teacher

Because of the centrality of the teacher to the educational process, it is absolutely essential that teachers be in harmony with the philosophy and goals of the schools for which they teach. With that in mind, Frank Gaebelein

wrote that there can be "no Christian education without Christian teachers."[56] It is just as true that *there can be no Adventist education without Adventist teachers.* That is true because of the distinctive doctrinal understandings and apocalyptic mission that set Adventism apart from other Christian perspectives and must inform the content of Adventist education.

The selection of qualified teachers and consecrated school employees is of crucial importance, given their powerful role in the educational process. Along that line, Ellen White stressed that "in selecting teachers we should use every precaution, knowing that this is as solemn a matter as the selecting of persons for the ministry.

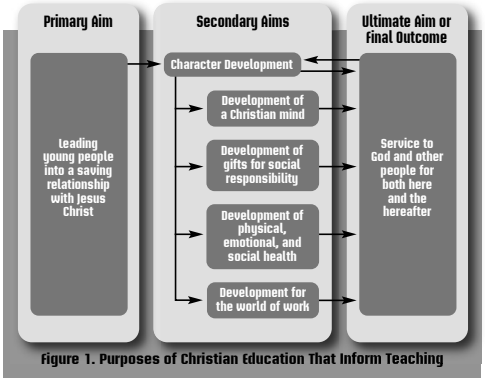

Figure 1. Purposes of Christian Education That Inform Teaching

. . . The very best talent that can be secured is needed to educate and mold the minds of the young and to carry on successfully the many lines of work that will need to be done by the teacher in our . . . schools."[57] No one wants to hire underqualified physicians, lawyers, or airplane pilots, even if they are "cheaper." Why should there be a blind spot in hiring qualified teachers—individuals who work with the most valuable entities on earth, the future generation?

First in importance among the qualifications is the spiritual. That is true because the essence of the human problem is sin or a spiritual disorientation from God. It is sin, as we noted earlier, that is at the root of all the other alienations and disorientations that are so destructive both to individuals and societies. The Bible teaches that humanity in its "natural" condition is suffering from a form of spiritual death (Genesis 3), and that the greatest need of people is a spiritual rebirth (John 3:3, 5). C. B. Eavey has written that "only one who has been made a new creature in Christ can mediate to others God's grace or nurture others in that grace." As a result, those who minister in Christian education "must have in themselves the life of Christ and be possessed by the Spirit of God. Christian education is no matter of mere human activity but one of individuals meeting God in Christ."[58]

Ellen White expands upon that idea when she writes that "it is only life that can beget life. He alone has life who is connected with the Source of life, and only such can be a channel of life. In order that the teacher may accomplish the object of his work, he should be a living embodiment of truth, a living channel through which wisdom and life may flow. A pure life, the result of sound principles and right habits, should therefore be regarded as his most essential qualification."[59]

Thus, qualification number one for Adventist teachers is that they have a personal saving relationship with Jesus. If their spiritual life is in harmony with God's revealed will, they will have a reverence for the sacred, and their daily example will be one from which their students can profit.

A second qualification relates to their mental capabilities and development. "While right principles and correct habits are of first importance among the qualifications of the teacher," Ellen White wrote, "it is indispensable that he should have a thorough knowledge of the sciences. With uprightness of character, high literary acquirements should be combined."[60]

But Adventist teachers must not only be well versed in the general knowledge of their culture. They must also have a grasp of the truths of Scripture and be able to communicate the subjects they teach in the context of the Christian and Adventist worldview. They should be individuals who can lead their students beyond the narrow realm of their field of study by relating each course to the ultimate meaning of human existence.

A third area of development underlying the qualification of Adventist teachers is the social. The social relationships of Christ with His "pupils" in the Gospels make an interesting and profitable study. He did not seek to isolate Himself from those He was teaching. Rather, He mixed with them and engaged in their social events.

Ellen White has written that "the true teacher can impart to his pupils few gifts so valuable as the gift of his own companionship. . . . To strengthen the tie of sympathy between teacher and student there are few means that

count so much as pleasant association together outside the schoolroom."[61] On another occasion, she suggested that if teachers "would gather the children close to them, and show that they love them, and would manifest an interest in all their efforts, and even in their sports, sometimes even being a child among children, they would make the children very happy, and would gain their love and win their confidence. And the children would sooner respect and love . . . [their] authority."[62] To a large extent, the relationship between teacher and student outside the classroom colors and conditions the one inside it.

A fourth sphere of teacher qualification is good physical, mental, and emotional health. Without balanced health, it is well-nigh impossible to maintain a sunny disposition and even temper that reflect the image of Christ.

Christian teachers must strive for the continual improvement of their personal qualifications. That is the same as the goal that they seek for their students—a restoration of the image of God physically, mentally, spiritually, and socially. That balance, as it is found in the life of Christ, will form the basis for their professional activity. Because teaching is the art of loving God's children, Adventist teachers should have a desire to let God make them the most effective "lovers" possible.

Said in another way, an overall qualification of Christian teachers is to be a good model or example of what they want their students to be in every aspect of their lives. It is almost impossible to overestimate the power of a teacher as an example for either good or evil. Pullias and Young note that "being an example arises out of the very nature of teaching" and that "being a model is a part of teaching that no teacher can escape."[63] Ellen White highlights the facts that "the teacher should be himself what he wishes his students to become" and that "in His life, Christ's words had perfect illustration and support. . . . It was this that gave His teaching . . . power."[64]

What has been said about the qualifications of teachers also applies to other employees in an Adventist school. They, too, make a significant impact on students and thus need to be not only spiritual leaders but also healthy and balanced in every way. Teachers are only one part of an effective, integrated educational team.

This second installment in the philosophy of Adventist education has examined, from the perspective of a biblical philosophy, the nature of the student, the role of the teacher, and the aims of Adventist education. The final installment will develop an Adventist approach to curriculum, explore the implications of a biblical perspective for teaching methodology, and discuss the social role of Adventist education in the context of the great controversy between good and evil.

POINTS TO PONDER

- In what specific ways will the Adventist view of human nature shape Christian education?
- In what ways does the Bible's teaching on human nature "demand" that Christian education be different from other philosophies of education?
- In what ways is Christian teaching a form of ministry?
- How does the ministry function affect a teacher's aims?
- In what ways does the view of teaching as ministry enrich our understanding of the importance of Adventist education?
- In your own words, describe the purpose(s) of Adventist education.
- What are the implications of that/those purpose(s) for you personally as a teacher?

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