



# THE IMPORTANCE OF *Education*

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SEMINAR  
JULY 23-25, 2021



Copyright © 2021  
by SDARM Education Department

---

Illustrations: Adobe Stock

---

**Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement**  
**5240 HollinsRoad**  
**Roanoke, Virginia 24019 U.S.A**

E-mail: **[info@sdarm.org](mailto:info@sdarm.org)**

Web: **<https://www.sdarm.org>**

Social Media: **[sdarmchurch](#)**



# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DEFINED

PR. NATHAN TYLER

When I first started working for our church, I went to work at the headquarters for the Southeast U.S. Field, which at that time was located next to our local church in Nashville, Tennessee. Now, if you turn right out of the church parking lot and follow Old Hickory Boulevard, a few traffic lights down, you'll find yourself in a place called Madison. It's about four miles east of the church. Madison is now a Nashville suburb of some 40,000 people, but it used to be just a small collection of farms and properties along the Cumberland River.

Well it's been over a century ago now, that a steamboat came up the river and stopped there at Madison. Two

pioneering Adventist educators walked down the plank and climbed up the riverbank to inspect one of those farms. They hoped to establish an educational institution, which would be very different to the established norms but which would be a spectacle to the world and a model of Christian education. Those two men were supported by an important lady named Ellen White who was also on the steamboat that day.

She looked at that property rundown and neglected as it was and said, this is God's beautiful farm, and sure enough Madison College did become a spectacle and a model for education, which is still being studied and talked about today.

We'll come back again to the story of Madison College, but now, to the point of our presentation today, we want to explore the definition of Christian education. Education, as we know is the process of receiving instruction. It's learning something for some purpose.

Now for the Christian education is defined by Jesus in his Great Commission where he said go and teach, or make disciples, of all nations. In Matthew 28:19 those who will follow him become his disciples. That is Christian education in a nutshell. Directing and teaching people to follow Jesus. But what does it mean to follow Jesus? In order to define Christian education we need to understand God's intention for us.

And so today, let's look at God's plan for education, how it relates to every aspect of our being, and why true Christian education is important for the church today. When Jesus came and He was born here on the earth He demonstrated God's ideal for every person by the way He lived. Luke Chapter 2 tells us in verse 52 that as he grew up Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man. The gospel writer here mentions these things because each of them are important. Wisdom is mental development, stature means physical development, and favor with God and man indicates spiritual development and a focus on serving others.

Now, what does God want for

the Christian who follows Jesus? 1 Thessalonians 5:23 says, "and the Very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." When the apostle prayed for the believers, he was thinking about the well-being of the entire person, spirit, soul and body. This means that God is interested in our physical, mental, and spiritual development. This is why when He explains what he wants from us He says, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.

In the very first paragraph of the book *Education*, as it, introduces the subject of Christian education, we find this definition, "Our ideas of Education take too narrow and too low, a range. There is need of a broader scope, a higher aim. True education means more than to pursue 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 a 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."

This paragraph is so profound that the rest of the book is really just an explanation of these seven sentences, and this has been our definition of

education as Adventists for nearly a century and a half. When we think about education, when we plan for education, when we create educational programs, when we provide for the education of our own children as parents, we need to consider the whole person.

And with this definition of education in front of us, how can we be sure that we will have success in our educational endeavors? In *Patriarchs and Prophets* we read "He who created man has provided for his development in body and mind and soul. Hence, real success in education depends upon the fidelity with which men carry out the Creator's plan."

So if we're going to have success, it will depend on how well we understand and how well we follow God's plan. Let's look a little closer then at how God designed education. For each aspect of the person, physical, mental, and spiritual.

To look at how God provided for our physical education and development all we need to do is look at how He arranged the first home. Genesis 2:15 says, "and the Lord God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." This Garden of Eden was supposed to be the way every person was to live. I know that after sin Adam and Eve had to leave that Garden, but you know, that was never supposed to happen. In fact, their children were supposed to go out and establish other little Eden's all over the Earth.

The book *Education* comments on this Eden model: "the system of education instituted at the beginning of the world was to be a model for man throughout all time. As an illustration of its principles a model school was established in Eden. The home of our first parents, the Garden of Eden was the schoolroom, nature was the lesson book. The Creator Himself was the instructor, and the parents of the human family were the students."

Seventh-Day Adventists were counseled to provide opportunities for physical labor in their educational institutions. In fact, the first thing they should set up was the garden environment. Notice this from *Testimonies*, volume 6: "Working the soil is one of the best kinds of employment, calling the muscles into action and resting the mind. Study in agricultural lines should be the A B and C of the education given in our schools. This is the very first work that should be entered upon. Our school should not depend upon imported produce for grain and vegetables and the fruits so essential to health. Our youth need an education in felling trees. These and tilling the soil as well as in literary lines. Daily systematic labor should constitute a part of the education of youth."

There's something that happens when you learn to work with your hands. The book *Education* tells us this "practical work and independent thought rightly performed, it tends to develop that practical wisdom, which we call common

sense. It develops ability to plan and execute and strengthens courage and variance and calls for the exercise of tact and skill.”

I have heard that you can't teach common sense, but that's not quite true. By giving students the opportunity to work with their hands and solve real life, practical problems, they can actually develop common sense. And this is so important that another testimony comments saying this, "If schools had been established upon the plan we have mentioned there would not now be so many unbalanced minds" (3T p.153).

This is why Madison College was established on a farm. The first thing they did was to develop Industries, which eventually grew to include a vegetable farm, orchards, a dairy, a bakery, a health food factory, and a sanitarium. Students would study in the morning and work in these industries in the afternoon. This meant they were gaining real world experience and also at the same time working to support their own way through college.

In a statement about Madison College written in 1908, the Spirit of Prophecy said, "the school at Madison, not only educates in a knowledge of the scriptures, but it gives a practical training that fits the student to go forth as a self-supporting missionary to the field to which he has been called. In his student days, he has taught how to build simply

and substantially. How to cultivate the land and care for the injured. This training for medical missionary work is one of the grandest objects for which any school can be established. If many more in other schools were receiving a similar training, we as a people would become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. The message would quickly be carried to every country and souls now in darkness would be brought to the light. The time is soon coming when God's people because of persecution will be scattered in many countries. Those who have received an all-round education will have the advantage where they are. The Lord reveals divine wisdom in thus leading His people to the training of all their faculties and capabilities for the work of disseminating truth" (*Manuscript Release*, vol. 5, 280).

I find this statement fascinating because it reveals, what the missionary of the future will need to be like. And that they're going to need an all-around education, including practical knowledge and physical capability to build and repair things, to grow food, and care for the sick and injured. God's people have been slow to follow all this advice on practical education, seems like it's too simple yet too revolutionary for us to trust. This is what God wants us to do.

But there's more because we must develop the mind in Christian education as well. We usually think of God's work for us in spiritual terms, but what He does for

our mind is important to look at. The new covenant promise in Hebrews 8:10 "for this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel. After those days, saith the Lord. I will put my laws into their mind and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God and they shall be to me a people."

What power is in the word? Hebrews 4:12 says "for the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword piercing, even to the dividing asunder of Soul and Spirit and of joints and Marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

In recent years I have discovered what I call the Google problem. Now I've used several of the early internet search engines including Altavista and Yahoo, if you're old enough to remember them, and it was always a struggle to find what you were looking for. But then a little company called Google came along and change search forever. Here's what they did. They created an algorithm that aims to find what you want and present it to you within the top three search results. So even if there are millions of documents returned by most searches people started finding what they wanted easily. But now with such a resource in the palm of your hand, something strange starts happening to your brain. You stop remembering things and your brain starts expecting that answers will come quickly and easily. But the Bible is not like that. The Bible requires digging, not browsing.

Matthew 13:44 says, "again the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field. The which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth, and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field."

Now, this is talking about surrendering all, but it applies as much to the principle that the truth does not lay on the surface, but is there to be found by those who will study diligently, who will dig for it. Success in life requires a lot of effort toward a constant goal. It requires you not to get distracted by everything that comes along people's minds. Today we are not as geared for that, and so we need to rescue our minds and the minds of our children by exercising our minds on deep and difficult problems.

Bible study requires this kind of focus. It requires us to search as it says, in Isaiah 28, verse 10, "for precept, must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line, upon line line, upon line here, a little, and there, a little," It takes effort as it says in Romans. There's always more to discover, "oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways. Ways past finding out." And on this *Christ Object Lessons* comments saying, "Sharp, clear perceptions of truth will never be the reward of indolence. No earthly blessing can be obtained without earnest, patient, persevering effort. It is essential for old and young not only to read God's word, but to study it with

whole hearted earnestness praying and searching for truth as for hidden treasure." So Bible study is not just about finding information as you search for answers. As you wrestle with hard questions you are rewiring your brain.

In *Messages to Young People* we find a couple of statements along this line: "the grand subjects upon which the Bible treats, the dignified Simplicity of its inspired utterances the elevated themes, which it presents to the mind, the light sharp and clear from the Throne of God, enlightening, the understanding will the powers of the mind to an extent that can scarcely be comprehended and never fully explained."

That's pages 254 and 255. And it says, the Bible is not just a collection of spiritual teachings but by deep study it enhances our mental ability. "The mind will enlarge if it is employed in tracing out the relation of the subjects of the Bible comparing scripture with scripture and spiritual things with spiritual." That's page, 262.

Down at Madison College there were no sports fields. There was no entertainment as such, but students had time to study the Bible, to pray, to meditate, and to engage in activities which were beneficial. This prepared them for the responsibilities of real life, wherever life would take them.

So just to recap here, we want a Bible based curriculum, searching the word, mental discipline and freedom from the

distractions of entertainment. Now, as we nurture the physical and the mental development, there is that third aspect of education to consider, the spiritual nature.

Psalm 51:6 says "behold thou desirest truth in the inward parts and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom." God wants his word to be such a part of us that it becomes part of our life.

Look at this council to parents and other educators in Deuteronomy 6:5-7. "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. And with all thy might and these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house. And when thou walkest, by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

Now, as we feast on God's Word, what does the Holy Spirit do? 2 Corinthians 3:18 says, "but we all with open face beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the spirit of the Lord." So the Holy Spirit takes God's Word and actually transforms us. Our nature changes into the same image as that which we are studying. *Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students* tells us "Many are the benefits derived from feasting on his word which is represented by him as his flesh and blood his spirit



and life. By partaking of this word, our spiritual strength is increased. We grow in Grace and in a knowledge of the truth. Habits of self-control are formed and strengthened. The infirmities of childhood fretfulness, willfulness, selfishness, hasty words, passionate acts, disappear and in their place are developed the graces of Christian manhood and womanhood."

How does the Holy Spirit achieve this through the Word of God? If we look deeper this statement from *The Desire of Ages* tells us more: "as they feed upon his word, they find that it is spirit and life. The word destroys the natural earthly nature, and imparts a new life in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit comes to the soul as a comforter by the transforming agency of His grace. The image of God is reproduced in the disciple. He becomes a new creature." So as we study the truth, it has the capacity to transform our nature.

And this is what education is about. It is not just about information. It's about an experience. It's about receiving the truth. So the study of the truth is more than just filling your mind with those facts. It's about developing that experience and Jesus said "therefore whosoever, heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock." And the Spirit of Prophecy declares this, "the highest education will be that which will teach our children and youth the science of Christianity. That will give them an experimental knowledge of God's

ways and impart to them the lessons which Christ gave to his disciples of the paternal character of God." This means both knowing and doing. It's not just information, but having an experimental knowledge. Actually doing what we read and experiencing changes in our life.

So in order for us to start on this journey, what do we need to be willing to do? John 7:17 says, "if any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself." If we are willing to obey God as He said, if any man will do His will and we surrender to what He reveals to us, then we will really know the truth.

Therefore, what is the goal of true education? It must be to know the truth and live the truth. The apostle wrote "for this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory. To be strengthened with might, by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ May dwell in your hearts by faith. That you being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth and length and depth and height and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God."

God wants us to be filled with His fullness and to know His love. This means He wants us to become like Him. Quoting

from the book *Education* again: "Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's ideal for his children. Godliness, God likeness, is the goal to be reached."

You see as we develop knowledge of the great truths of the Bible, we come into touch with the eternal. John 17:3 says and "this is life eternal that they might know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." How do we respond to this? Knowledge is knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ. As we get to know him something happens as it says in 1 John 4:19, "we love him because he first loved us."

When we know that God loves us, we love Him back. Does this remind you of the two great commandments? "And Jesus answered him. The first of all the Commandments is hear O Israel. The Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely, this, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."

Love is the principle from which true education draws its basis and motivation. The book *Education* again says "love, the basis of creation and of redemption is the basis of true education. The law of love calls for the devotion of body mind, and soul to the service of God and our fellow

men, and this service while making us a blessing to others, brings the greatest blessing to ourselves. Unselfishness underlies all true development. Through unselfish service we receive the highest quality culture of every faculty. More and more fully do we become partakers of the divine nature. We are fitted for heaven, for we receive heaven into our hearts."

This is why Jesus taught differently. This is why he was different. He was full of love. He loved to serve people. He loved people and when we become like that, we are ready for heaven. When we love God and we love to serve others.

And this is why the students from Madison College were very different. They went all over the world, establishing missions work serving the needs of others, growing the church and all the while supporting themselves in doing it. They were self supporting workers.

So just to recap, education, encompasses, physical, mental, and spiritual development. When we learn to love God, and how to serve Him, with all our powers, and all our talents, and we learn to love our fellow human beings, then we are prepared to serve the Lord as he intended. And we're prepared to fulfill that Great Commission to go and make disciples of all nations.

What is lacking the most in today's world? The book *Education* says, in the very well-known statement, "The greatest

want of the world is the one to have men. Men who will not be bought, or sold men. Who in their inmost, souls are true and honest. Men who do not fear to call sin by its right name. Men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole. Men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall."

You may recognize this well-known statement but it continues. "But such a character is not the result of accident. It is not due to special favors or endowments of Providence. Noble character is the result of self discipline, of the subjection of the lower to the higher nature, the surrender of self for the service of love to God and man."

And in 1905, the book *Ministry of Healing* stated this: "The world needs today what it needed 1,900 years ago, a revelation Christ. A great work of Reform is demanded and it is only through the grace of Christ that the work of restoration, physical, mental, and spiritual can be accomplished."

You can see here that the world needs a restoration of the physical, mental, and spiritual. So, people need this work of Christian education to be extended to them as well. And so, what are we waiting for? *Education* says this "with such an army of workers as our youth rightly trained might furnish how soon the message of a crucified risen and soon-coming savior, might be carried to the whole world. How soon might come the

end of suffering and sorrow and sin."

We certainly need an army of youth today. You know what, the youth are longing to do something for God. Now's the time for education to have a greater place in our work as a church. The Spirit of Prophecy says, "now as never before we need to understand the true science of education. If we fail to understand this we shall never have a place in the kingdom of God." This is quite a serious statement. Even though it was written many years ago, I think it's still true. God's people need to take another look and ask ourselves: Do we understand the true science of *Education*?

This has to be done before we can fulfill the commission of Jesus. The Spirit of Prophecy says, "before we can carry the message of present truth in all its fullness to other countries, we must first break, every yoke. We must come into the line of true education. Walking in the wisdom of God and not in the wisdom of the world. God calls for Messengers who will be true reformers. We must educate. Educate to prepare a people who will understand the message and then give the message to the world." This is our work today and I'm excited about what God can do when we catch the vision of what is possible, when we work in the way that he is asked us to do.

One day when I drove down the street where the old Madison College used to be I noticed a historical marker. It was

put there to commemorate the history of the college and while that plaque is all that's left of the college at Madison Tennessee, the principles of Madison live on in the hearts of those who choose to understand them. Now, you might want to read the story for yourself. If so pick up this book, *God's Beautiful Farm*, and for more on the philosophy of education take a look at *Studies in Christian Education* by E. A. Sutherland. He was one of the founders of Madison College in North America. You can contact Reformation Herald and the in the Pacific we have both of these in stock here at our book shop in Sydney.

And so what is Christian education? It is the development of the whole person. It is an experience in spiritual things, and in practical things, which enables us to be as useful as possible to the the people around us and most importantly prepares us to take our place in the heavenly home.

And it is my hope that we may personally develop and grow in this type of education. And as a church make better efforts to provide such an education for our children and our youth.

On behalf of the General Conference Education Department, thank you for watching and may God richly bless you.

A photograph of a family of four sitting on the grass under a large, leafy tree. The father is on the left, the mother is on the right, and two children are in the middle. They are all looking at a book held by the father. The scene is bright and green, suggesting a sunny day in a park or forest.

# THE NEED FOR EDUCATIONAL REFORM

PR. DAVID ZIC

I am so grateful that God has given us the opportunity to be able to discuss the work of Education Once more. When we think about the work of Education, we have to understand that all true knowledge. All true wisdom comes from God, the wise man writes in Proverbs Chapter 2 Verse 6 that the lord giveth wisdom out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

We as a people have been called to a Great Commission, God's final Remnant. People have been called to give the final message of warning in this world. Are we prepared to give this message? John the Baptist who likewise had been called to prepare the way for the Lord needed. A work of Education, prior to being able

to do that work in sermons and talks volume 1 page. 394, it says that "John the Baptist received a training for his lifework. Not in the schools of the rabbi's, but in the wilderness alone with God and His word, he was prepared to give the final message of warning. He was educated so that he could give that message of warning."

I wish I truly wish that as the general conference education director, I could stand in front of you today and say that we were living up to their responsibilities that God had given to us in our Search with regards to the work of Education. But I cannot do that. We are not using correctly the opportunities that God has given to us in the great work of education. We have

been abdicating our responsibility to the world, giving our children, to Babylon to be educated, and then wondering why they are turning into Babylonians. Not investing the necessary resources, to be sure that our children will be educated to the honor and glory of God.

How can we give the final message of warning if we ourselves are not preparing this generation to give that message. In the book, Education, on page 14 it says, "in a knowledge of God all true knowledge and real development, have their source." Do we not understand that God has given us a privilege to be involved in the work of education? But he asks us to live up to the Privileges that he is giving to us. I wish that I could give you this pleasant message today about how there's this work of education, and that we do the work of education. But we're not doing that work.

A work that we know that we must do. Parents, the work of education begins at home. Are you abdicating your responsibility to somebody else? The work of Education begins right there in your home. What strengthens the family strengthened Society. The school can never replace the home. The church likewise cannot replace the spiritual instruction that you are supposed to give at home. The church can complement this work, but true spirituality will begin at home, not at church.

Likewise education begins at home. When your children, go to their

educational institution, those institutions should only be a compliment to the education that is taking place in the home. To abdicate. this responsibility is to make sure that our children will not receive the proper education to be prepared to give the final message of warning. Remember that it said John the Baptist learned from God's Word, the truth. Every other education is a compliment to the work that you will do in your homes.

Then the church having Invested in its families and strengthening its families is able to once more contribute to the success of the children of those families by investing in the work of education.

The pandemic that we had in these last few years was a terrible thing and it brought great strain to the church. But it did reveal the importance of home education, because many schools closed, and now children were staying at home and being educated from home and their parents now had to be involved in their education. Parents who until now have been minimally involved in their children's education, just basically sending them off to somebody else to be educated, were realizing that their children need to be educated at home. If anything, this pandemic did help the work of education, revealing, the importance of education at home.

Prior to the pandemic, in the United States of America about 5.4 percent of households were involved in home

education of some form. Last year, in 2020, it was 11.1% That means 1 out of 10 children were now being educated full time at home. This number will increase and grow.

We as a church have a responsibility to support our families in their work and we are only beginning to do this. I want to thank God that the brethren at the General Conference Council have invested the resources necessary to begin the production of our curriculum. So that we as a church could support our parents in the work that they are doing at home by providing them with educational materials that will always bring honor and glory to God first.

You know, it really doesn't matter what subject you're teaching. You still must honor and glorify God first. The math teacher may say, well I'm teaching math. But in math, you are honoring and glorifying our Creator. Every subject begins with a understanding that true wisdom begins with the Lord. Preparing a curriculum that our parents can use is something that I am so thankful the brethren of this current administration have prioritized. It is something that is important, and we need your help. We need your support to make sure that this curriculum project will reach its conclusion, so that parents everywhere will be able to see that they can be the directors of their children's education. So their children will be prepared to give the final message of warning in this

world. In Testimonies, volume 8 page 305 the pen of inspiration says, that through educational processes [Satan] is the mastermind in the confederacy of evil. It says that through educational processes, he is doing all in his power to obscure Heavens light. Are we going to use the materials of this world or will we use those things that are based upon the inspired word of God?

Are we sacrificing our children to pagan gods by sending them to the institutions of this world to be educated? We're sending them to Babylon and then wondering why they are turning into little Babylonians. We as a church must invest in the work so that our children will be prepared to give this final message of warning to the world. In Isaiah chapter 55 verse 2 it says, wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread and your labor for that which does not satisfy? If not, why would we send our children to the institutions of this world without giving them the preparation that was necessary in order for them to face the attack?

That foundational and fundamental education it is necessary for our church to provide not only in one place, not only in one language, but in every language that we have the opportunity to do so, and in every place. I'm blessed right now to be recording this message in a place that we call Mariah Heights. It's out here in rural northern California. And when this place was purchased in the 1950s, they

dedicated it to the work of education. When I see everything that has been done for God's educational work in this place I am so amazingly thankful to Him. We have an elementary school here. The majority of the students of that school are not even from our church. But their parents send them to receive a Christian education based upon God's Word. It has become a missionary outpost of our church with a missionary school right here on this property where young people come and give their time to be educated, so that they know that whatever career they take, they will be able to share the final message of warning with this world. I think God for everything that he has done in this place and yet, do you know what? I know the Lord wants so much more.

He says, to me, David, what is being done on that property is only the beginning of the work that is supposed to take place in your location. The same work needs to occur everywhere. Our church needs to invest in schools. This is not an expense, my brother and sisters. It is not an expense, it is an investment. Every single penny that was invested in this place is now being returned. The local church in this area has been blessed through the educational work that is being done.

That same blessing should be yours. It should be ours in every place. Everywhere investments need to be made so that parents can be supported in this work of Education. If you are saying to yourself,

Oh, Brother David, it's too expensive to do this, then understand that it is more expensive to try to rescue all of these children that we have lost because we have not supported families in the work of a education.

We are doing this in some places and those places are seeing the benefits and the rewards. I had the opportunity to share the gospel at a school in Brazil to do morning worship with the students. At that school it was amazing to see how the work of education has been such an asset and a benefit to the church.

I've seen the same in other places and wherever the investment in the work of education has taken place the blessing returns to the church has been amazing. My dear brothers and sisters, in your place, it is possible. The Lord will open the way if you will make the investment in the work of education. I call on you to do this work. Not because I want it, but because the Lord desires of us to invest in this very important work that has been set before us. Not only in elementary education, but in the preparation of our youth to be missionaries regardless of what career field they enter in.

In *The Great Controversy*, on page 69, it speaks about the model that the Waldenses used. A model used to great success. "While the Waldenses regarded the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom they were not blind to the importance of a contact with the world, a knowledge of men and of active life



in expanding the mind and quickening the perceptions. From their schools in the mountains, some of the youth were sent to institutions of learning in the cities of France or Italy, where there was a more extended field for study sought and observation than in their native Alps. The youth sent forth were exposed to temptation. They witnessed vice they encountered Satan's wily agents who urged upon them the most subtle heresies, and there was dangerous deceptions. But their education from childhood had been of a character to prepare them for all of this."

Did they know that they were going to have to go out into the world? Yes. But they were prepared by the work of education that had been done at home and with the support of their their community, which was their Church. Right now, this is the work that we need to be engaging in. That work of supporting our families, so they can educate their children, and supporting our youth by providing opportunities for them to be firmly grounded in the truth.

Just recently, right here on this campus that I'm recording this from here, we have Plymouth Leadership College. And we had a program that just concluded. For some of the young people who came there, I was not sure if they were going to be able to finish this program. The program was hard. The program was very intense. At the end of the program, I myself knew that these students are not

fully prepared, but I knew that they had the information necessary to be able to know how to resist the temptations of Satan and that they now knew where to look and that they had been exposed to scripture in a way that they could have the answer to every question that they are going to be tempted with. They were exposed to the one source of all truth that they can come back to again and again. Regardless of what questions Satan places before them.

The church has a responsibility to have these institutions in place. The Lord is calling you to support this work of education. Once a year we collect an offering for the Education Department's endowment fund. Once a year, we have this work of education placed before us. I wonder if you will support the work that is going to make it possible for us to have these institutions everywhere. That work of education has been placed before all of us. Parents, the support of the educational work is this support to your own family.

Young people know that the support of the educational work is done so that you will be able to have those institutions available to you. Those who already have their children grown understand that the work of supporting the work of education is still your work, because it strengthens your church, it strengthens your community.

God desires us to fulfill the plan of educational reform. We are not to send

our children out into this world until they have received a firm foundation in the truth. Moses made mistakes, but Moses was able to recognize and learn because of the foundation that he received in his early years from his mother. You and I are to make possible this for every single one of God's children. None should be left without the support of this church with regards to their education. Let every mother and father know that they're being supported in the work of educating their children.

I invite you to enter into this important important work. The pen of inspiration in volume 6 of the *Testimonies*, page 135, says the Lord has called us out from the world that we may be Witnesses for his truth, and all through our ranks, young men and women should be trained for positions of usefulness and influence.

And so I leave you with the words that the Apostle Paul left to the young minister in Timothy 2:1-2: "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

That truth, which has been committed to you, that truth which has been committed to our church, the Lord desires us to commit that to the next generation. I invite you to be part of this fundamental reformation of the work of education. Amen.



# THE ELEMENTARY YEARS

SR. NANCY FOUNTAIN

Hello everyone, my name is Nancy Fountain. I live in Northern California and I work at Whispering Pines Christian School, which is our church school, and I've been working there for over 20 years now. Today I'm excited to share with you about the importance of the elementary years.

We have all gone through these years ourselves and without a doubt, we can say that they have been key to the impact of how our lives are now whether it was a good experience or maybe not so good of an experience. We carry what we were given when we were children into our adulthood. Our childhood is gone now and we were not in control of it. Our parents or guardians were the ones

that controlled what we did and how we spent our time. But what we are in control of now is the childhood of our children. Whether it's our own children, whether it's church children, school children, our families children, even our neighbors children, we all have some influence to a greater degree or smaller degree with children. And what is it that we will pass along? Will these children thank us when they are adults, because they do grow up. They don't stay little forever. Or will they resent us for mistakes that we've made in the past?

If it were up to us alone we would probably fail miserably. But with God's help He shows us the way. He thinks

about each child that is born. He loves each child that is born and He wants each child to know

Him and to love him. He wants them to be saved from this sinful world. And the best most amazing part of this is that he gives us the adults the privilege to be part of this work. What an amazing privilege that is. But it's also a great responsibility

In the Bible we have many examples of how instructions were given how to bring up children. We see the example of Samuel. We also have the example of John the Baptist. We have the best example of all, which is Jesus. And I want to take that example and I want to elaborate a little bit on that. So we read in Luke chapter 2, verse 52 "and Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and with man." The Bible doesn't tell us much of Jesus early years, but it tells us everything we need to know of how Jesus grew up and this is a pattern for us to follow of how we can facilitate the best and the highest education for our own children.

He grew in stature. So this refers to the physical aspect of his growing. He was dependent on his mother and his father for most of this. And so, what should we learn from this? We should also give everything we need to our children for proper growth things such as cleanliness, which is very important to growing up healthy. It's very difficult for a child to learn or to be around an environment

that is that is filthy, or that is cluttered. We know that children do not learn in this way. We also should teach them or show them how to eat healthy and you may think this is not important, but I can tell you from experience that when a child comes to school and hasn't eaten properly we can tell. It's a big change, learning becomes difficult and frustrating. They can't seem to concentrate or learn well. So healthy eating and teaching them to be healthy and to love healthy foods is something that is important. But of course we ourselves have to show by example.

Another thing that is important is also exercise. Exercise is very important for good development. Children need to move and they naturally want to. Do they love to move? Put them outside and you see children run. I mean you try to keep up with a two-year-old and it's pretty impossible. They're just going all over the place and so children like to do that and this is one of the things that we face in our world. Now children are behind screens for many many hours and that decreases their growth and it decreases their mobility. And ultimately it actually makes them not as happy as children that grow. We have a 400 acre property here in the school and it's so fascinating to see the children when they're outside and they're running around. They look so free and so happy. And so this is important, especially like I say, in our world now because there's so much that takes the attention of just natural running and

moving. So this is something and I know that Jesus also spent His time outside in nature and in doing good to others.

So that's the next step that I want to talk about, is He increased in wisdom. It doesn't say knowledge, it says, wisdom. So I looked up in the dictionary and wisdom means the quality of having experience, knowledge and good judgment. So three things. Wisdom is the quality of having experience knowledge and good judgment. So not only did he have knowledge that he had experienced and he also had good judgment and he grew in those things day by day. And this is what our pattern is. It's important to give our children knowledge and they should learn to read. They should learn to write. They should learn arithmetic. But that's not all. There's much more to education.

A proper education or higher education that the knowledge we need to guide them through the experiences that they will have. Yes, it's important to give our children knowledge but that's not all. We need to guide them through the experiences that they will have. Whether it's maybe observing an animal, maybe an egg in a nest and they're observing it. Maybe it's an interaction with somebody. They're gaining these these experiences. And it's very important for us to be there along the way to guide them through them, because they form ideas and they come to conclusions with the experiences they encounter. And this is how they

formed their judgments. And how later on, they will react to any situation that they go through.

And for sure they'll have questions and this is where it's our opportunity to point them to our Creator and show them that everything they do that God is there with them and God guides them and leads them. So it's not for us to take away these experiences, but to help them to be able to share God's Word, and to share Jesus with them. So guiding them through these experiences is very important and it will help them to form their own judgment and their own ideas.

The next way that He increased was, and I really like this because it says not only with God, but he also increased with men. He grew spiritually with God. And this is something that maybe we really need to think about. We think children don't, maybe they can't have an experience, but they can have experiences when they're little with God. And they can learn to pray and talk to Him in many ways. And so, this is something that he and increased in. He learned through the scriptures. He learned of his existence of why he was in this world.

He learned. Imagine, Jesus, the Creator who was there from the beginning, Now, as a child, is learning, all the things that happened and why He's there. He learned about His mission to come to this world and His love that he had for us to be able to die for our sins. Shouldn't we

teach our children through scriptures as well? Shouldn't we teach them that they are here or we are here for a purpose as well. We are created for a higher, nobler existence, then what we now live. It's something greater that God has for us. This time here in this world is just a time of preparation and this is something that they should find for themselves and we should guide them through. So, they will be able to understand why they are here.

He grew socially as well. It says in favor with men. We are to be of service to our neighbors and this way we can find favor with man. We can say He served their needs and He had compassion on people. He spoke to them and he took care of them and was there for them.

Even with the doctors of the law when He spoke to them, He didn't enter into controversy but yet He opened the Scriptures and ask questions in such a way where they wanted to know more. And they said, who is this boy? Who is this? That didn't study in our schools. Who is he? They were intrigued by Him. And they wanted to know more. So he increased in favor with them.

It's important for us to be of service. Nobody can dislike you when you've done something good for them. It's very difficult. So for us to be able to serve others, we should be able to teach our children this and in that way, like I said, we will find favor with men as well. So children are very important because they

are the future, right? We decline and they increase.

Sometimes, we don't think on children. We get so busy with our lives and with grown-up things that we have to do that, we forget that they need to be cared for. They need to be nurtured. The

disciples had this thought. Imagine the disciples who walked with Jesus thought that Jesus should not be bothered by the children. He had Important things to do. But when Jesus saw it, he was greatly displeased. And he said unto them, we read in, Mark 10:14 "Let the children come unto me and do not forbid them for of such, is the kingdom of God. I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God, as a little child, will by no means enter it. And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and he blessed them." What a great privilege to be blessed by Jesus himself.

These mothers, these parents, and even children themselves, they sought the best place to go to. They sought the best person to look for. They look for Jesus and he did not disappoint them. He said let the little children come to me. He wants each one to go to him and like I said, it is our privilege to take them to him.

So these Elementary years from as early as five to about 12 or 13 years are very important in a child's life. It is where they form where they grow in so many ways. There's no other time that they grow

more than the first, say, 12 years of their life. Aristotle said give me a child till he is 7, and I will show you the man.

Children grow so much, so quickly. They grow in stature, I mean they shoot up very, very quickly. They grow in wisdom, they grow in knowledge. They grow in experience. And with us they grow in spirituality with God. And so it's very important that we share with them Jesus. They will absorb everything that we have to give them. It's very important for us at this time, to take them to Jesus, and this should be our primary objective because we can take them to church.

Every week and we can make them follow all the rules and all the regulations that we said before then. But these children one day will be grown. We don't think about that, but they will be grown, and what will be left that we have passed on to them? What legacy will we have to give them to pass on to them because when we don't teach them about Jesus, we're teaching just a religion without Jesus. And that can be traumatic and as they grow older. They will have problems because this is not the way Jesus wants. Jesus wants us to love him and to know him as the most important thing of all.

I sincerely hope that we can take our children to Jesus to know him and to love him. Like I said, one day, they will grow up and we will be gone. Most likely, we will be gone, but they will know where to go to find everything that they need. If they

have a relationship with Him and they know God when they are young, when they are older, they will know where to find everything the Bible says. This is the most famous verse in relationship. With children, it says, train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is older, he will not depart from it. So let us train up our children to know Him and to know Him that was crucified. Amen.



# THE IMPORTANCE OF ACADEMIC EDUCATION

MARCELO DE ARAÚJO SILVA

It is vital to mark the boundaries between human and divine wisdom. Making this distinction prevents us from incurring any error by drawing wrong conclusions that could lead us astray from the One who is the trustworthy Source of knowledge. When we talk about higher education, we cannot forget that all knowledge originates in God. On this, Ellen G. White wrote:

We can trace the line of the world's great teachers as far back as human records extend; but the Light was before them [...] Every gem of thought, every flash of the intellect, is from the Light of the world. In these days we hear much about "higher education." The true "higher education" is

that imparted by Him "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."<sup>1</sup>

The great religious sages of the past only reached the greatness we know today because they understood that all knowledge has its origin in God. Therefore, the university-level student only achieves his excellence when he recognizes his dependence on God to obtain intellectual achievement. Others are honored and admired for academic achievements but do not recognize God as the Source of what they have learned. They give themselves the glory for the results of their research. Such men usurp God by accepting the recognition that is not their due.



## In the Old Testament

In Israel's day, preparation for higher education began at home. Through the influence of the parents, children had their first contact with the true Source of all wisdom. Later, the prophet Samuel founded the schools of the prophets. The priority was character building and deepening the relationship with God. In this educational environment, thoughts would be brought into harmony with God's will, creating a bridge between heaven and schools. The basis of educational practice was the Word of God. This academic structure resulted in a generation of children who excelled even in captivity in strange lands.

It was no accident that the king of Babylon chose Daniel, Hananiah, Misael, and Azariah. The biblical account records the attributes of those who would occupy important positions in the Babylonian kingdom. The requirements were: to be young and without physical defect, of good appearance, cultured, intelligent, who mastered the various fields of knowledge, and to serve in the king's palace. They were to be instructed in the language and literature of the Babylonians (Daniel 1:3-4). From the moment they were set apart to serve the kingdom, the lives of these God-fearing youth began to shine.

We must remember that Daniel and his friends stood out in their generation. The school they attended brought together

elite students from the Babylonian kingdom. About this, the inspired pen wrote:

At the court of Babylon were gathered representatives from all lands, men of the highest talent, men the most richly endowed with natural gifts, and possessed of the broadest culture that the world could bestow; yet among them all, the Hebrew youth were without a peer [...] but their learning did not come by chance. They obtained their knowledge by the faithful use of their powers, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. They placed themselves in connection with the Source of all wisdom, making the knowledge of God the foundation of their education.<sup>2</sup>

These Hebrew youth perfectly maintained the balance between knowledge of God and secular knowledge. The Lord introduced Daniel and his companions among the sages of Babylon that, in due time, the light of the true God might shine in that heathen nation. But we cannot overlook the fact that the means God used to bring these youth before the king was the faithful use of their faculties in all matters of wisdom and intelligence, on which the king tested them. We see that when the vast fields of human knowledge conform to proper higher education under divine guidance, it becomes an effective means of conveying the light of truth to those who do not know it.

## In the New Testament

What enables a man to interact with various cultures is the knowledge he has about them. In this sense, Paul was the most competent of the apostles. A Roman citizen by birth, he was a Jew by descent, and was educated in Jerusalem by the most eminent rabbis of his time. His teachers regarded him as an up-and-coming youth, and high hopes were cherished for him as an able and zealous defender of the ancient faith.<sup>3</sup>

The title of Roman citizen gave Paul complete freedom to move and express himself in all Roman jurisdictions. Through descent and rabbinical education, he had free access to the entire Jewish community. However, these were not the only qualifications held by this servant of God. Paul was privileged to live in Tarsus, a renowned city in Asia Minor and a renowned university center.<sup>4</sup> This influenced Paul's education, which is evidenced by how often his name appears as an arguer for Hellenistic philosophies (Acts 9:29). In this regard, the inspiration comments:

Among those who encountered Paul in the market place were "certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoics;" but they, and all others who came in contact with him, soon saw that he had a store of knowledge even greater than their own. His intellectual power commanded the respect of the learned; while his earnest, logical

reasoning and the power of his oratory held the attention of all in the audience. His hearers recognized the fact that he was no novice, but was able to meet all classes with convincing arguments in support of the doctrines he taught. Thus the apostle stood undaunted, meeting his opposers on their own ground, matching logic with logic, philosophy with philosophy, eloquence with eloquence.<sup>5</sup>

In this context, we can identify Paul as an educated man able to move between the three worlds: the Jewish, the Roman, and the Hellenistic. As a Jew, he disputed in synagogues; as a Roman citizen, he could deftly argue the laws of Rome before Roman officials; as a citizen of Tarsus, he could converse effectively on the issues of the Hellenistic world.

## In the Protestant Reformation

For several centuries, despite constant persecution against Christians, the truth was not kept hidden. All who could contact the Waldensian work had the opportunity to know the Scriptures and the sin-pardoning Savior. However intense the efforts made by the Waldensians, there was still much to be done. It was on this occasion that the Lord inspired servants of academic formation to lead the most daring reformatory process the world had ever known. When the Bible was closed to the uneducated classes, there were signs of a dawn dawning in many places. In this

context, a young Englishman appears in the fourteenth century who would come to be considered “the morning star of the Reformation.” The servant of the Lord said:

Wycliffe received a liberal education [...] He was noted at college for his fervent piety as well as for his remarkable talents and sound scholarship. In his thirst for knowledge he sought to become acquainted with every branch of learning. He was educated in the scholastic philosophy, in the canons of the church, and in the civil law, especially that of his own country [...] While he could wield the weapons drawn from the word of God, he had acquired the intellectual discipline of the schools, and he understood the tactics of the schoolmen. The power of his genius and the extent and thoroughness of his knowledge commanded the respect of both friends and foes. His adherents saw with satisfaction that their champion stood foremost among the leading minds of the nation; and his enemies were prevented from casting contempt upon the cause of reform by exposing the ignorance or weakness of its supporter. <sup>6</sup>

Wycliffe was pastor of the Lutterworth parish church and professor of theology at Oxford. He preached the Word of God in the university hall, receiving at the time the title of “Doctor of the Gospel”. But the most significant work in Wycliffe’s life was the translation of the Scriptures into the

English language. At Lutterworth, in the year 1384, while ministering communion, he fell stricken with paralysis and died shortly after.<sup>7</sup>

Wycliffe’s death did not stop the work of Reformation from continuing. Through his writings, John Huss was led to denounce many errors of Catholicism, becoming yet another higher education reformer to make efforts in favor of the work of God. Huss studied at the local school and then at the University of Prague, where he became a professor and later rector of the university. It was not long before he saw more clearly the true character of the papacy and denounced the pride, ambition, and corruption of the hierarchy.

For some time, Huss remained alone in his work until he joined Jerome. Unlike him, Jerome did not come from a low-income family, and through his parents’ funding, he managed to pursue a bachelor’s degree at the University of Prague. Visiting Oxford University, he read and accepted Wycliffe’s writings. Subsequently, he was at the University of Paris, where he obtained a master’s degree. Jerome had a brilliant genius, eloquence, and knowledge – gifts that won popular favor.<sup>8</sup> With the work of both, the message of salvation in Christ spread quickly.

In this succession of academically educated heroes, Martin Luther deserves to be highlighted. He began his academic career as a law student. It was

his father's dream. However, after facing a storm during which a friend almost died after being struck by lightning, Luther decided to change course. At the monastery, his mentor realized that he was skilled with words and encouraged him to pursue a doctorate in theology. Both his sermons and his classes were very well attended.

Luther's learning was fundamental to the development of the work of the Reformation. As he mastered the biblical languages, he translated the New Testament into German in three months. He later completed his work translating the Old Testament. This monumental work served as the basis for structuring and unifying the modern German language. However, the most significant impact of Luther's ministry was through his writings. All this was only possible because of his dependence on God's grace and the years dedicated to his studies.

Such examples are not found in the Bible only. They abound in every record of human progress. The Vaudois and the Huguenots, Wycliffe and Huss, Jerome and Luther, Tyndale and Knox, Zinzendorf and Wesley, with multitudes of others, have witnessed to the power of God's word against human power and policy in support of evil. These are the world's true nobility. This is its royal line. In this line the youth of today are called to take their places.<sup>9</sup>

## In the present day

As in the past, today's Church suffers from philosophical attacks that gradually affect the flock, leading many to question our way of life and doctrines. Furthermore, we are tempted to close ourselves off in the "Reform universe". Therefore, we have difficulties dialoguing with people from other cultures and values. Ignoring these challenges can prevent the Church from fulfilling its mission.

The discussion about higher education should help the Church to confront the ethical distortions that have compromised our faith. As a church, we need to invest in training our workers to be intellectually prepared to face the many pitfalls that the enemy brings to the Church in the last days. On this subject, inspiration tells us:

It is not wise to be constantly expending means to open untried fields while so little is done to prepare workers to occupy them [...] We would that there were strong young men, rooted and grounded in the faith, who had such a living connection with God that they could, if so counseled by our leading brethren, enter the higher colleges in our land, where they would have a wider field for study and observation. Association with different classes of minds, an acquaintance with the workings and results of popular methods of education, and a knowledge of theology as taught in the leading

institutions of learning would be of great value to such workers, preparing them to labor for the educated classes and to meet the prevailing errors of our time. Such was the method pursued by the ancient Waldenses; and, if true to God, our youth, like theirs, might do a good work, even while gaining their education, in sowing the seeds of truth in other minds [...] We see the need of encouraging higher ideas of education and of employing more trained men in the ministry.<sup>10</sup>

The inspired text states that association with diverse perspectives is of great value to those who wish to work on behalf of the literate classes. In 1891, there was an educational convention in Harbor Heights, USA. On that occasion, Ellen proposed:

These things I tried to present at Harbor Heights [at an educational convention in 1891]. Those who have the spirit of God, who have the truth wrought into their very being, should be encouraged to enter colleges, and live the truth, as Daniel and Paul did. Each one should study to see what is the best way to get the truth into the school, that the light may shine forth. Let them show that they respect all the rules and regulations of the school. The leaven will begin to work; for we can depend much more upon the power of God manifested in the lives of his children than upon any words that can be spoken. But they should also tell inquirers, in as simple language as they can, of the simple Bible doctrines.<sup>11</sup>

Taking this information into account, we hope to make clear the Spirit of Prophecy's position regarding the importance of academic training.

## Conclusion

The consecration of God's children has always been fundamental to guide the lives of men used to illuminate the world shrouded in darkness. However, it is undeniable that, at crucial moments in the history of His people, God fulfilled His purpose through men and women qualified by academic training.

Biblical and historical records reveal that God has always used intellectual men who skillfully presented the truth. They gave shine to the evangelical doctrine, which stimulated and inspired their followers.

It was not chance that led these and other Spirit-imbued servants to advocate the truth before kings, princes, and courts. Such examples are intended to leave us the following lesson for this generation and future ones: God never ignored the importance of higher education. If, in some cases, it served as a stumbling block to the cause of God, the problem was never at the Source of knowledge, but in the disrespectful attitude that some had when they did not use their scholarship to serve God.

## References:

- <sup>1</sup> WHITE, Ellen. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 465.
- <sup>2</sup> WHITE, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 485
- <sup>3</sup> WHITE, Ellen. *The Acts of the apostles*, p. 62.
- <sup>4</sup> BUCKLAND, *Dicionário Bíblico Universal*
- <sup>5</sup> WHITE, Ellen. *The Acts of the apostles*, p. 130.
- <sup>6</sup> WHITE, Ellen. *The Great Controversy*, p. 80.
- <sup>7</sup> WHITE, Ellen. *The Great Controversy*, p. 92.
- <sup>8</sup> WHITE, Ellen. *The Great Controversy*, p.102.
- <sup>9</sup> WHITE, Ellen. *Education*, p. 254.
- <sup>10</sup> WHITE, Ellen. *Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, p. 228.
- <sup>11</sup> WHITE, Ellen. *Selected Messages*, vol. 3, p. 233.



