

The Devil Takes a Look at Adventist Education

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I hold in my hand one of the most influential books of the twentieth century. Its philosophy changed the face of world history.

Its author believed in a soon-coming millennium. Beyond that, he didn't smoke, drink alcoholic beverages, or eat flesh foods. He sounds like a very nice man.

Our author also had a fascination with the philosophy of education. In fact, his educational philosophy, being far from esoteric, impacted the world second to none in the twentieth century.

It is to that philosophy that I now turn. A first point to note is our author's emphasis on physical health. "The individual's education," we read, "has to focus upon and to promote first of all physical health; for . . . a healthy, vigorous spirit will be found only in a healthy body."¹ I can agree with that. So does Ellen White. "The health," she penned, "should be as faithfully guarded as the character. A knowledge of physiology and hygiene should be the basis of all educational effort."²

A second point that our author makes is that the training of the mental abilities is important.³ What educator could disagree with that?

Thirdly, he notes that character education stands near the very top of the hierarchy of educational values. As he puts it, "besides physical training," education must "put the greatest emphasis on the training of the character."⁴ That certainly sounds like something Ellen White could have written. For example, in the book *Education* she wrote that "character building is the most important work ever entrusted to human beings."⁵

Please note that our author thus far has set forth the three-fold education so dear to the heart of Adventist educators—the physical, the

mental, and the spiritual or moral. The book *Education* makes that same point when it states that “true education . . . has to do with the whole being. . . . It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers.”⁶

The parallels don’t stop with the three-fold education of the whole person. Our famous book goes on to note that “of highest importance is the training of will power and determination, as well as the cultivation of joy in taking responsibility.”⁷ That little quote lists two high points in Ellen White’s philosophy of education. First, the importance of the will, which she calls the “governing power in the nature of man.”⁸ And second, “joy in taking responsibility,” which she calls the “joy of service in this world and . . . the higher joy of wider service in the world to come.” It is no accident that the first and last pages of *Education* explicitly highlight the joy of service.⁹

Our author goes on to note (1) that education is a lifelong experience, (2) that it should develop “courage for confession,” and (3) that it should be made available to all children, even to those from poor families.¹⁰ Those ideals are all close to the heart of Christian education’s ideals.

Also important to the philosophy of education for our author is the fact that education must be useful. As he put it, “youthful brains must in general not be burdened with things 95 per cent of which it [sic] does not need and therefore forgets again.”¹¹ Ellen White repeatedly set forth a similar argument in her campaigns against the dominance of the “pagan” classics of Greece and Rome in the curriculum.

Our author also uplifted the importance of manual labor. “We wish,” he wrote, “at a time when millions of us are living without understanding the real importance of manual labor, to teach . . . through the institution of labor service, that manual labor does not degrade or dishonor but rather does honor to everyone who performs it faithfully and conscientiously, as does any other work.”¹² In pursuance of that ideal, he suggested that all young people of both sexes and of all economic backgrounds should be introduced to manual labor.¹³ Such ideas, of course, were also set forth by Ellen White, who repeatedly highlighted manual labor and indicated that “the youth should be led to see the true dignity of labor.”¹⁴

Lastly, our author had a great deal to say about the role of human

nature in education, a topic that stands at the absolute center of a Christian approach to education. That central topic is discussed at some length below.

In the meantime, I need to introduce our insightful mystery author. Please remember that he was a lacto-ovo vegetarian, didn't smoke, didn't drink,¹⁵ and that he believed in a millennium. He also believed in resurrection. That is evident from the dedication page of his famous book. That page was written on October 16, 1924, from the "prison of the fortress" at "Landsberg on the Lech." It expressed a firm belief in the resurrection of the German people, in spite of the abortive revolution of the previous year. It was signed Adolf Hitler. The book was entitled *Mein Kampf*. Its philosophy cost the lives of between 30 and 40 million people and changed the shape of history.¹⁶

On the surface, the educational ideals of Adolf Hitler and Ellen White have many similarities. But below the surface is a world of difference.

Hitler, for example, valued physical health because it made better soldiers, better killers. For him, character meant mindless obedience so that any order would be carried out, even to the cold-blooded murder of innocent men, women, and children. Will power meant the ability to do the distasteful if ordered to do so. I once read about the training of a certain group of SS officers. They were each given a beautiful German Shepherd puppy to raise. They were to sleep with it, eat with it, and play with it. The final exam was for the young man to kill that "best friend" with his own hands. There is character! There is will power of the sort Hitler needed to conquer the world.

Joy in taking responsibility meant joyfully giving one's life for the Fatherland, while manual labor was important in the building of airplanes, tanks, and other war material. Hitler's millennium, of course, was the Thousand Year Reich. And his idea of the resurrection was the resurrection of the German Fatherland, which was destined to rule the world.

The moral of the story: We need to read deeper than mere words and practices to unlock the philosophy of any given author. It is the underlying philosophy that provides meaning and shape to a person's words and methods.

If I were the devil I would encourage Adventist educators to read at the surface level. I would help them forget the importance of the underlying categories of metaphysics, epistemology, and axiology that provide the all-important interpretive framework. I would lead them to overlook the fact that people can utilize the same words and programs while having opposite meanings and purposes. I would get them to read at the level of mere words rather than at the level of the meaning that helps them interpret the true import of the words.

And when it comes to the educational philosophy of the Bible and Ellen White, I would urge them to ignore it. But even more deceptively, *If I were the devil I would get Adventists to take the ideas of Ellen White out of their historic and literary contexts and encourage them to seek to implement her counsel in a wooden, inflexible, and mindless manner.* Furthermore, I would do everything I could to get them off on hobby horses and an unbalanced approach to Ellen White's counsel. I would encourage them, as she would say, to take her "strongest expressions and without bringing in or making any account of the circumstances under which the cautions and warnings are given, make them of force in every case."¹⁷ By such an approach I could do a great deal to destroy her influence in the church and its educational system.

Of course, if I were the devil I would have a lot of other "helpful" ideas for Adventist educators. But before turning to those ideas, we need to examine the question of why Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, and Ellen White thought that education was so important.

One of the first measures taken by successful revolutionary governments is to place all educational agencies under the direct control of the state. George S. Counts helps us grasp the significance of such maneuvering when he writes that

to shape educational policy is to guard the path that leads from the present to the future. . . . Throughout the centuries since special educational agencies were first established, the strategic position of the school has been appreciated by kings, emperors, and popes, by rebels, reformers, and prophets. Hence, among those opposing forces found in all complex societies, a struggle for the control of schools is always evi-

dent. Every group or sect endeavors to pass on to its own children and to the children of others that culture which it happens to esteem; and every privileged class seeks to perpetuate its favored position in society by means of education.¹⁸

In short, education is important in every society because all youth must pass through some type of educational experience before they are ready to take over the society's responsible positions. The future of any society is therefore determined by its current youth and the nature of their education. Counts pointed out that revolutionary bodies will possess no more permanence than the small bodies of idealists who conceived them if the children of the next generation cannot be persuaded to move in new directions.¹⁹ It is for that reason that such diverse people as Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Martin Luther, Horace Mann, and Ellen White set forth educational programs that included both formal schooling and extra-schooling aspects.

Thus the perennial struggle in every society over the power to educate the next generation. At the bottom of each individual educational struggle is a philosophy of life that is viewed as important. And that philosophy dictates the educational goals deemed essential for the young by any given group.

There is no more important educational issue than aims, purposes, and goals. Hitler and Stalin had very definite understandings on the goals of education. So did Ellen White. "By a misconception of the true nature and object of education," she wrote, "many have been led into serious and even fatal errors. Such a mistake is made" when an educational system has the wrong aims and purposes.²⁰ When she speaks of "fatal errors" she means eternally fatal. That implication becomes clearer as we examine her understanding of the most important aim of education.

Some Other Devilish Concerns

Thus if I were the devil I would do my very best to confuse Adventist educators on the aims, purposes, and goals of education.

In short, I would seek to confound their philosophy of education.

To accomplish my purposes I would carry out several lines of attack. *First, if I were the devil I would get educators to downplay the importance of educational philosophy.* I would steer them away from a serious evaluation of the metaphysical, epistemological, and axiological foundations of their belief system and the implications of those foundations for educational practice. And if I couldn't get Adventist educators to neglect the philosophy of education altogether, I would at least encourage them to make the study of educational philosophy as academic and esoteric as possible and thereby render it useless. By that tactic I could give the impression that its study is a waste of time.

The devil in most institutions has had a field day with the philosophy of education. In many universities this most basic of all studies has all but ceased to exist. And what is the situation within Adventism? The denomination supports a large number of theologians, biblical scholars, and church historians. And in the field of education it has its share of curriculum experts, technology gurus, and other educational specialists. But how many people does Adventism have employed full time or even most of the time on the philosophy of Adventist education and its sister discipline, history of Adventist education? My guess is that for at least the last 15 years the number is zero. Philosophy of education is something to which we tend to give lip service. But when it comes right down to budgets and positions, the target is practice, methods, curriculum, and psychological foundations, all too often without the benefit or adequate philosophical undergirding or exacting philosophical critiques on whether a particular practice or approach or theory is even worth implementing from the point of view of Adventist educational philosophy. In short, in most places, including Adventism, serious philosophy of education has fallen on hard times. If I were the devil I would be more than happy with that circumstance.

If I were the devil, I would do my best to get Adventist educators to confuse a philosophy of schooling with a philosophy of education. I would get them to think in terms of institutions rather than the education of all Adventist young people. I would get them to sink all their money into schools which serve considerably less than one half of the Adventist young people, while neglecting or feeling no responsibility for the

majority of the church's youth. That is a stumblingstone Hitler was careful to avoid.

I would get Adventist educators focused on building buildings, counting pupils and FTEs, and fixating on institutions. By that one stroke I could cut the potential effectiveness of Adventist education by more than half.

Institutionalism is one of the diseases of the age, and Adventism is far from exempt. Who is responsible for the education of students who do not attend Adventist elementary, secondary, and tertiary institutions? Where are the creative efforts (and dollars) for released-time instruction, for experiments in after-school education, for collegiate dormitories on selected secular campuses that offer room, board, fellowship, and even "philosophy" credits for religion courses parallel to the programs pioneered by the Baptists, Methodists, and others? How long will we settle for half a mission? For how long will we confuse schooling with education, institutions with our full responsibility as Adventist educators?

If I were the devil, I would expand upon the myth of the sacred and the secular. I would do all I could to destroy the effective implementation of a healthy integration of faith, learning, and practice. I would encourage teachers to separate their fields of specialty from the great framework of the biblical worldview that provides meaning to the bits and pieces of knowledge in every field. I would do everything I could to keep teachers from thinking Christianly and from teaching their students to do so. Of course, I wouldn't mind it if people gave plenty of lip service to integration of faith, learning, and practice, just so long as they didn't bring their theory into contact with their classroom practice.

If I were the devil, I would do all I could to get good teachers out of the classroom. I wouldn't care what tactic I used. But I would probably pay them as little as possible or else "promote" them to a "higher" level. Perhaps it was no accident that it was a professor of education who discovered the "Peter Principle." The Peter Principle states that "in a hierarchy every employee tends to rise to his level of incompetence."²¹ The Peter Principle is rooted in the idea that whatever society considers a promotion is actually better. Thus, accordingly, a good teacher should be promoted to a principalship. Of course, poor teachers will have to remain

in the classroom, since they have already reached their level of incompetence. Likewise with principals. If they are incompetent, they tend to remain as principals, but if they are successful, they can rise to a superintendency, where they may find their level of incompetence. The process removes a lot of good talent from the classroom to other areas of education, where it is often less effective. The drain will probably continue because the scale of social and financial rewards is structured to sustain it.

But if I were the devil, I would remove as much talent from the classroom as possible. I would put as many good teachers as I could behind administrative desks, cover them with paper, and inundate them with committees. In the process, I would get Adventist educators to confuse the categories of status (a worldly perspective) with calling (a divine perspective). I would get people to think of administration as being “higher” than teaching, when, in fact, the biblical view of administration is one of service, the facilitation of classroom practice.

The reason, if I were the devil, that I would seek to get as many effective Adventist teachers as possible out of the classroom, is that the classroom is that part of the institution where the bulk of directed learning takes place; it is the place where an institution’s philosophy is most intensely transmitted to the upcoming generation. To lower the quality of the classroom environment would be my goal.

As important as administration, buildings, equipment, curriculum, libraries, and methods are, they are all secondary in importance to good classroom teaching. Those items are not the goal, but are instrumental in reaching it. Study after study across the decades has indicated that the school factor of greatest influence is the quality of the teacher. The teacher is not a mere purveyor of information, but a role model, a caring person, an inspirer of vision, and many other things that are central to Christian education.²²

Thus if I were the devil, I would seek not only to “promote” as many excellent teachers out of the classroom as possible, I would seek also to replace teachers wherever possible with machines, computers, or other impersonal agents for passing on information. In fact, I would justify the existence of formal schooling on the basis of knowledge trans-

mission rather than on the basis of the more important issues related to the affective realm. The main thing would be to keep the most important issues of life out of focus.

Having said what I have about teachers, it is also important to note that *if I were the devil, I would not neglect the administrators*. In fact, given the reality that administrators have a strategic role in every system, I would do my best to get them off center in as many areas as possible. More particularly, I would (1) encourage them to overlook the importance of carefully screening new teachers for philosophic congruence with Adventist educational philosophy, (2) get them to major in the minor aspects of education, and (3) help them become confused on educational purpose.

The Purpose of Adventist Education

Confusion of educational purpose, of course, would be a primary tactic, if I were the devil. I would encourage educators to think that the purpose of education is the transmission of information; the development of social responsibility; the development of physical, emotional, or social health; preparation for the world of work; or even character development or the creation of a Christian mind. All of those are worthy objectives. As long as I could get people to focus on one or more of them as of central importance, I might just be able to win the battle.

In particular, I would do everything I could to get educators to “skip over” that little passage at the beginning of the book *Education* where Ellen White lays out the purpose of Christian education. Building on the biblical model of Eden to Eden restored, Ellen White writes that if we desire “to understand what is comprehended in the work of education, we need to consider” four things: “[1] the value of man and [2] the purpose of God in creating him. . . . [3] The change in man’s condition through the coming in of a knowledge of good and evil, and [4] God’s plan for still fulfilling His glorious purpose in the education of the human race.”²³

She continues by beginning to flesh out the core of her philosophy of education by refining those four points. First, in reflecting on 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 as humans ever “more fully” reflected “the glory of the creator.” To that end, humans were endowed with capacities capable of almost infinite development.²⁴

“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.”²⁵

Those three points were foundational to Ellen White’s philosophy of education, but it is the fourth point that is absolutely crucial. It is her fourth point that fully expresses the primary purpose of education for Ellen White. 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.²⁶

Ellen White returns to that theme in the fourth chapter of *Education* where she points out that every individual is the scene of a microcosmic great controversy between good and evil, having a desire for goodness but also having a “bent to evil.” She goes on to note that the student “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?”²⁷

She further remarks that

in the highest sense the work of education and the work of redemption are one. . . . 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.²⁸

Without being technically a philosopher of education, Ellen White hit the pivot point of educational philosophy when she placed the human problem at the very center of the educational enterprise. Illustrative of that truth is Paul Nash's *Models of Man: Explorations in the Western Educational Tradition* (1968) and *The Educated Man: Studies in the History of Educational Thought* (1965), which Nash developed in conjunction with two other authors.²⁹ Both books demonstrate the centrality of views of philosophical anthropology or human nature to all educational philosophies. Exemplifying that viewpoint are such chapter titles as "The Planned Man: Skinner," "The Reflective Man: Dewey," "The Communal Man: Marx," "The Natural Man: Rousseau," and "The Existential Man: Buber." I was so impressed with Nash's approach that soon after I had completed writing *Philosophy and Education: An Introduction in Christian Perspective* in 1979, I almost filed it and started over with what I believed would be a more insightful book on the philosophy of education built upon the foundation of philosophical and theological anthropology. To the best of my knowledge, no one has yet attempted a synthesized, systematic approach to educational philosophy from the perspective of varying views of the nature and needs of human beings. By the way, Adolf Hitler had no problem with the anthropological approach to education. For him the purpose of education was to develop the master race.

It doesn't take much thought to place Ellen White in Nash's framework. The title for his chapter on her would be "The Redeemed Man: White" ("Redeemed Person" for modern readers). The problem of sin along with redemption and restoration dominates her approach to education. Thus no Adventist with the slightest knowledge of Ellen White or the book *Education* is surprised by the equating of education with redemption. To them that equation sets forth the core of what education is all about. They have no difficulty with the primary function of education being the

introduction of young people to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ and with a secondary purpose being the development of the *imago Dei* in each child in its mental, physical, and spiritual aspects. Such an educational purpose, of course, naturally implies that the primary function of the teacher is that of being a pastor or minister to his or her children within the setting of the classroom.

While such understandings are commonplace among Adventists, I have found some resistance to them among educators from other branches of the church. For example, some years ago, while lecturing to the leaders of evangelical tertiary education in Australia, I was somewhat taken aback by a reaction to education as redemption and to the teacher as having a ministerial role. That was the lecture on which I thought I would have the least misunderstanding in dealing with that largely Calvinist group. Instead, it was the topic some failed to comprehend and argued against. I was caught off guard.

I had a similar experience in lecturing last September to conservative Lutheran educators in Norway. Of the several subjects I presented to them in each of my four lecture series across the country, the topic that was most problematic was the redemptive aspect of education and the pastoral role of the teacher. Once again I was caught by surprise. Coming from my Adventist context I was astonished that the obvious didn't seem so obvious to them.

What I am driving at in these illustrations is the fact that what seems so obvious to Adventist educators—that education and redemption are one—may be the most unique contribution of Adventism to the world of educational philosophy. That thought is backed up to some extent by my comparative study in nineteenth-century Christian educational philosophy undertaken back in the early 1980s. In that study I found parallels to nearly all of Ellen White's major educational concepts in other writers, but not for her highlighting of redemption and the restoration of the image of God as the central function of education. If Ellen White has any original insights in the area of education, it just may be her emphasis on education related to redemption and the *imago Dei*.

I should note in all fairness that my researches were not comprehensive. Nor am I of the school that believes that it is the unique that is

important or that there must of necessity be anything unique in Ellen White's writings. But what I am impressed with is the absence of the redemptive and *imago Dei* motifs from philosophies of Christian educators where I had expected to find them at the very forefront. Of course, the nineteenth-century lack of documentary evidence on the subject matches up nicely with the lack of understanding on the topic I have experienced among several other Christian educators during the past two decades.

With the realization in mind of an Adventist contribution to Christian education in this area, for several years I had intended to develop a book for the evangelical market on the topic, entitled *Redemptive Education*.

To me that phrase captures the essence of what Adventist education is all about. It not only flags Adventist education as Christian and as being founded on the centrality of God and the Bible, but it explicitly sets forth the primary task of Christian education.

But it does more than that, it implies the problem that all humans have faced since Eden—the problem of sin. Any adequate theory of education must deal with the sin problem. That came to my attention during my “intermission” from Adventism. By 1969 I had become disillusioned with both my lack of perfection and the lack of perfection in the church. As a result, I turned in my ministerial credentials and fully intended to leave both Adventism and Christianity for the agnosticism in which I had been raised.

My problem at that time was that I needed to retool, since all of my academic degrees were in theology. I quite naturally turned to the study of philosophy since I was still looking for the meaning of life. My special field of interest turned out to be the philosophy of education. And the area of my dissertation happened to be philosophies of revolution, since I still wanted to make the world a better place in which to live.

By the early seventies I was up to my ears in revolutionary philosophy. And I found many of the ideas not only challenging but enchanting. I was quite enamored with those forms of socialism and Marxism that suggested that the truly revolutionary society, the truly good society, would be one in which individuals contributed what they were able to the common good and withdrew only what they needed. I was impressed also

with the social reconstructionism of George S. Counts with his *Dare the School Build a New Social Order?* and the more contemporary Paulo Freire with his truly revolutionary *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

I was nearing the point of being somewhat of a revolutionary myself. After all, I had been filling my mind with revolutionary ideas for a number of years. I only had one problem. If the revolutionary programs and strategies that I had been studying were correct, why had none of them worked? After all, there had been ample time. Many of those theories had been around for decades and some for centuries. Yet not once did they meet the expectations of either theorists or practicing revolutionaries. Freire and others might talk of educating the peasants on the way to achieve a workers' utopia, but the result historically had always been the rise of a new class of oppressors who merely replaced those who had been dispossessed of their power.

My conclusion regarding the abortive results of one revolution after another throughout history was that the revolutionary philosophies had an inadequate understanding of both human nature and the nature of sin.

With that very revelation, unbeknown to me at the time, I had taken my first intellectual step back to Christianity. I had also taken my first step back toward Ellen White's philosophy of education. I was wrestling in my life with bedrock issues from which I could not escape. Philosophy and theology for me have never been mere academic exercises. To the contrary, they have been existential interactions with stubborn facts from which I have not been able to escape. Some of those stubborn facts lay at the very foundation of any adequate philosophy of life or philosophy of education.

All philosophies must of necessity deal with the problem of evil and how to overcome it. But the biblical perspective is the only one that provides either an adequate diagnosis or a sufficient solution to the deepest problems that we face as human beings. The Eden-to-Eden pattern in the Bible is crucial to any adequate understanding of education. The Bible's view of a high creation of humanity in Genesis, its picturing of the disharmony of the world as being due to rebellious, personal sin rather than to some mindless evil, and its central organizing feature of God's multiplicity

of attempts to reach out and restore fallen humanity to its previous condition all stand at the very foundation of a Christian philosophy of education. Ellen White builds her educational philosophy upon that biblical pattern. And in the process of setting forth that philosophy, as might be expected, she expounds upon educational implications not made explicit in the Bible.

The educational philosophy advocated by Ellen White and the one implied in the Bible puts the needs of the student at the very focal point of the educational endeavor. As I wrote in one place, “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.”³⁰

Central to a Christian understanding of education is the concept of the *imago Dei*, that Adam and Eve were created in God’s image (Gen. 1:27). At the fall, the image was fractured and grossly distorted, but not destroyed (Gen. 9:6; 1 Cor. 11:7; Jms. 3:9). As John Calvin put it, a “residue” of the image continued to exist in humanity after the fall, “some sparks still gleam” in the “degenerate nature.”³¹ Thus human beings are neither completely good nor totally evil, but a complexity of good and evil.

Behaviorist B. F. Skinner has helped us discover the rat-like side of human nature, and such humanistic psychologists as Carl Rogers have captured glimmers of godlike potential in each human, but only those two perspectives in proper relationship to each other begin to give us an adequate picture of the individuals we work with as teachers, individuals with both ratlike and godlike potential. Blaise Pascal caught that complexity when he noted that “man is neither angel nor brute.” He also pointed out that

it is dangerous to make man see too clearly his equality with the brutes without showing him his greatness. It is also dangerous to make him see his greatness too clearly, apart from his vileness. It is still more dangerous to leave him in ignorance of both. . . . Man must not think that he is on a level either with the brutes or with the angels, nor must he be ignorant of both sides of his nature; but he must know both.³²

It is that anthropological complexity, set forth in both the Bible and

Ellen White's writings, that educators must deal with. Every student is the site of a great controversy between good and evil on the microcosmic level. It is humanity's lostness and potential that provide the primary purpose of Adventist education. The greatest need of each individual is to become "unlost." And just as Jesus came "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10, KJV), so does modern education in its ministry of reconciliation.

When I first began teaching I heard repeatedly that character development was what Adventist education was all about. But I soon had to reject that position for a more basic purpose. C. B. Eavey reflects that deeper purpose when he writes 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 be perfect, without the new birth there is no man of God."³³ In other words, true character can develop only in the born-again Christian. Character development outside of that experience may be good humanism or even good pharisaism, but it is not congruent with the Christian model.

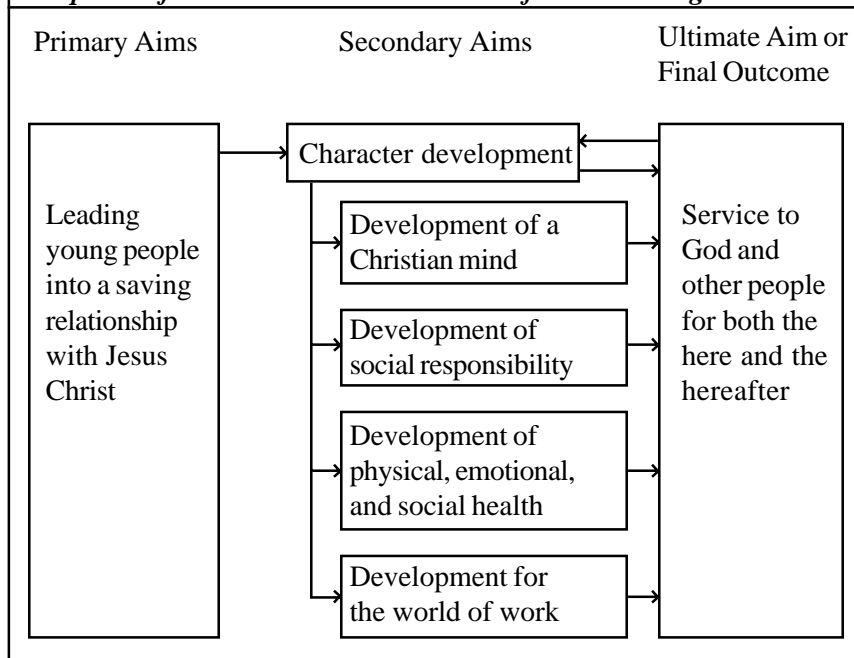
Ellen White raised the same point as Eavey when she wrote that "education, culture, the exercise of the will, human effort, all have their proper sphere, but here they are powerless. They may produce an outward correctness of behavior, but they cannot change the heart; they cannot purify the springs of life. There must be a power working from within, a new life from above before men can be changed from sin to holiness. That power is Christ."³⁴ With that truth in mind it is not difficult to see why she claimed that the primary purpose of Adventist education is to help individuals find Christ as Saviour and Lord.

Flowing from that primary aim is what might be thought of as the secondary aims of Christian education: (1) character development, (2) the development of a Christian mind, (3) the development of social responsibility, (4) the development of physical, emotional, and social health, and (5) development for the world of work.

The primary and secondary aims of Adventist education naturally lead to what might be considered the ultimate aim of Adventist education: service to God and other people for both the here and hereafter.³⁵

The various aims of education are portrayed in table 1.

Table 1
Purposes of Christian Education that Inform Teaching



SOURCE: Adapted from George R. Knight, *Philosophy and Education: An Introduction in Christian Perspective*, 3d. ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 203.

All of those aims at the primary, secondary, and ultimate levels are genuinely important. But they reflect a progression that is of crucial importance. *If I were the devil, I would do all that I could to get Adventist educators to focus on the secondary and ultimate aims while neglecting the primary.* If I were the devil, I would have nothing against any forms of humanistic development and humanistic service. As long as edu-

cational activity is founded upon human betterment apart from a vital connection to Christ it would suit my purpose nicely, since there can be no adequate development of the *imago Dei* in individuals unless they have first experienced education as redemption.

Notes

1. Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1939), 613.
2. Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1952), 195.
3. A. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 613.
4. *Ibid.*, 623. Cf. 613.
5. E. G. White, *Education*, 225.
6. *Ibid.*, 13.
7. A. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 623. Cf. 625, 613.
8. Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, n.d.), 47.
9. E. G. White, *Education*, 13, 309.
10. A. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 615, 625, 692.
11. *Ibid.*, 626.
12. A. Hitler, cited in George Frederick Kneller, *The educational philosophy of national socialism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1941), 164, 165.
13. *Ibid.*, 165.
14. E. G. White, *Education*, 214, 215.
15. Janet Barkas, *The vegetable passion* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975), 105-131.
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25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*, 15-16.
27. *Ibid.*, 29.
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29. Paul Nash, *Models of man: Explorations in the western educational tradition* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1968); Paul Nash, Andreas M. Kazamias, and Henry J. Perkinson, *The educated man: Studies in the history of educational thought* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1965).
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31. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian religion*, book 2, chap. 2: 12.
32. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, numbers 358, 418.
33. C. B. Eavey, "Aims and Objectives of Christian Education," in J. Edward Hakes, ed., *An introduction to evangelical Christian education* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1964), 62.
34. E. G. White, *Steps to Christ*, 18.

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