

T H E

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# THE COLORFUL HISTORY of an Adventist Metaphor

**D**uring the 1988-1989 academic year, the Andrews University alumni magazine *Focus* published a list of terms called “Adventese,” indicating the extent to which Adventists used everyday English with subcultural meanings. The *Adventist Review* revised and lengthened the list in 1993 to about 470 terms, declaring that church members had developed their own vocabulary. Most words were names of people, places, or institutions, but the list also included ordinary terms with special meaning for Adventists. Appearing on both the *Focus* and the *Adventist Review* lists was *the blueprint*.<sup>1</sup>

## **Blueprint: From Its Technical Origin to Adventist Literature**

*Blueprint* is a 19th-century term that emerged from Sir John Herschel’s experiments with light-sensitive ferric compounds. Two major applications were blue photographs, called cyanotypes; and technical plans for construction and engineering, first with white lines on a blue ground, and later with blue lines on a white ground.<sup>2</sup> Technical plans were referred to as *blue prints*

and *blue-prints*, and finally *blueprints*. Before 1900, technical blueprints were being used extensively throughout the United States.<sup>3</sup> Over time, the term developed into a metaphor, meaning a detailed plan, a pattern or set of rules to achieve an objective, or a body of experience that becomes a model for future activity.

This article traces the journey of *blue print/blueprint* from Herschel’s experiments into the Adventist lexicon as it appeared in denominational periodicals in the United States and Australasia. Except for the two years that she spent in Europe, these two regions were where Ellen White, the author of Adventist educational philosophy, lived and exerted a sustained presence in church development. Official church publications in these locations reveal the public debate about the *blueprint*, but not what writers said privately or in correspondence. The most prominent forums where the term *blueprint* appeared were the *Review and Herald* (1850 on; since 1978 called the *Adventist Review*), *The Youth’s Instructor* (1852-1970), the *Journal of True Education* (1939-1967) and its forerunners, *The Christian Educator* (1897-1899), *Christian Education* (1909-1915), *Christian Educator* (1915-1922), and *Home and School* (1922-1938). In the South Pacific, the *Australasian Record*, established in 1898, was the important periodical.

References to *blue print/blueprint* appeared in the Adventist media shortly before 1900. Early examples in *The Christian Educator* referred to both cyanotypes applied to nature study, and to building plans.<sup>4</sup> At that time, Adventists were launching their elementary education program. Given Ellen White’s emphasis upon nature as revealing God’s presence and His creative power, the use of blue prints in nature study caught on well. Early 20th-century articles in *The Youth’s Instructor* and *Christian Education* also promoted the use of blue prints in nature classes.<sup>5</sup>

The figurative use of *blueprint* among Adventists began at least as early as 1917.<sup>6</sup> From this point on, references in Adventist media to cyanotypes dwindled, finally disappearing altogether. Eventually, when the word appeared, it was either a metaphor or a reference to construction plans.

Authors and editors tended to use *blueprint* in keeping with the purpose of the journal for which they were writing. Accordingly, it was in the *Review and Herald* that the term received its greatest variety of applications. Writers often referred to God’s *blueprint* for human lives, but over time their usage extended

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to every aspect of Seventh-day Adventist life and organization. By deliberately connecting the term *blueprint* to Ellen White's writings, authors established the Spirit of Prophecy as the basic meaning of the term.<sup>7</sup> Also of importance was the recognition that some writers gave to Scripture as the *original blueprint* from which all other *blueprints* were derived.

Significantly, Ellen White never used *blueprint* in her writings, most likely because it had not yet become an accepted figure of speech in formal usage. After her death, editors in the Ellen G. White Estate inserted *blueprint* in topical compilations of her writings, and when updating the vocabulary in one of her books, they substituted *blueprint* for another word she had originally used.<sup>8</sup> The implication of the absence of the term *blueprint* in Ellen White's works is crucial: *When authors attach the word to her writings, it represents interpretative meanings that they, not she, applied.* It is only natural that these interpretations would vary.

Ellen White's writings are not the only ones that Adventists have tagged as a *blueprint*. Lawrence E. C. Joers, A. L. Bietz, Merlin L. Neff, and J. H. Meier all published books advertised as *blueprints* of one kind or another.<sup>9</sup>

## Howell, Wilcox, and Reynolds and the *Blueprint* for Education

Adventists eventually tied the term *blueprint* more closely to education than any other church activity. Two persons were prominent in this development. As General Conference secretary of education from 1918 to 1930, Warren E. Howell lost few opportunities to tell Adventist educators that their careers and schools were to align with Ellen White's counsel. A colleague remarked that during his tenure as associate editor and editor of the denomination's education journal, Howell issued ringing "appeals that we forsake not the blueprint of Christian education which had been given the people of God through the instruction received in the Spirit of prophecy."<sup>10</sup>

Actually, as an editor, Howell used the term *blueprint* sparingly, but he proclaimed the idea profusely. Especially telling were his six presentations at the denomination's first global education conference in 1923 at Colorado Springs, Colorado. While liberally seasoning his remarks with reminders about the evangelistic purposes of Adventist education, he also warned against the dangers that higher education, accreditation, and graduate study in secular institutions posed for the church's schools.<sup>11</sup>

In 1930, Howell left education for other duties in the General Conference, but not before cautioning that modernism and kindred trends were insidious threats to Adventist education. At the same time, he admitted that at least some post-baccalaureate study was necessary for college faculty, as was accreditation, given the need for higher education to systematize preparation for various professions. For support, he relied on Ellen White's advice that the College of Medical Evangelists (Loma Linda, California) should meet all requirements to validate its program. And he asserted that "we have toiled for more than fifty years to build Seventh-day Adventist schools after the divine blue print."<sup>12</sup>

Ironically, Howell's earlier interpretations of Ellen White's instruction about Adventist education were vehement arguments against the very things he now conceded were necessary. This turnaround helped set the stage for animated debate about accreditation in the 1930s. The issue climaxed at the 1936 General Conference session with a vote to allow all Adventist colleges in North America to apply for approval by regional accrediting bodies.

Although Howell kept a low profile in education after 1930, he consistently maintained that accreditation did not violate Ellen White's counsel. But however convincingly he explained his change in position, he failed to persuade F. M. Wilcox, long-time editor of the *Review and Herald*. In 1935, Wilcox exhorted schools to be "loyal in closely following the blue print," warning that graduate study and accreditation undermined their Adventist



Ellen G. White

identity. Again, he warned delegates to the 1936 General Conference session about the dangers that "standardizing agencies" brought to religious education, especially Adventist schools.

After 1936, Wilcox recognized that accreditation was a reality and an apparent necessity in Adventist education, but between 1938 and 1953, he frequently reiterated his apprehensions, characterizing accreditation and graduate study by Adventists in secular institutions as modernism and intellectualism that would lead to the demise of spirituality in Adventist schools. "Only by frequent review of the educational blueprint of Christian education in the writings of Mrs. White . . . can we maintain our integrity and hold our schools to their high and holy objective," he repeated verbatim in several warnings.<sup>13</sup>

Howell had promoted student labor and manual training as important features of the so-called *blueprint*, but for both himself and Wilcox, the *blueprint* was above all else a spiritual mat-

ter, a philosophy of redemptive education. To restore God's image in lost human beings was to be the supreme identifying characteristic of denominational schools.

Although Howell's early interpretation of the *blueprint* opposed accreditation and post-baccalaureate studies, by 1930 he had established a denominational accrediting system and formulated ideas for a Seventh-day Adventist graduate school, intending with both initiatives to protect the character of Adventist education. By contrast, Wilcox's concept of redemptive education left the impression that the *blueprint* juxtaposed accreditation and intellectual achievement against spirituality. In his view, intellectualism was incompatible with Adventist education.

But a younger generation was at work to reconcile these elements. The leading spokesman was Keld J. Reynolds, history professor and academic dean of La Sierra College (Riverside, California), who became an associate director of the General Conference Department of Education in 1946.

"Adventists are rightly concerned about following the blueprint of Christian education," he wrote in *The Journal of True Education* in 1948. "We mean a distinctive philosophy," he continued, adding that "Christian education as we interpret it is closely related to redemption, having as its first objective to restore in man the image of his Maker." Noting that Adventist schools had developed according to dif-

fering organizational patterns in the United States and Australia, he stated that "Almost any national system of education which leaves the conscience free, permits the employment of consecrated Adventist teachers and the inclusion of Bible in, or in addition to, the curriculum, can be made to fit the blueprint of Christian education."<sup>14</sup>

Reynolds' statements thus defined *blueprint* as a philosophy that breathed through instruction to permeate the atmosphere of denominational campuses. Howell and Wilcox had also stressed redemption as the bedrock issue of Adventist education, but along with other educational leaders, they took for granted that agriculture, student labor, and manual training were part of the *blueprint*.

Following the creation of the General Conference Department of Education in 1901 came the articulation of elementary, secondary, and tertiary education programs. In 1910, Adventist educators met to establish the church's first systematic curriculum.<sup>15</sup> By assigning specific class credit to student labor and manual training, and determining how much of this credit applied to graduation requirements, they established

new policies for Adventist education.

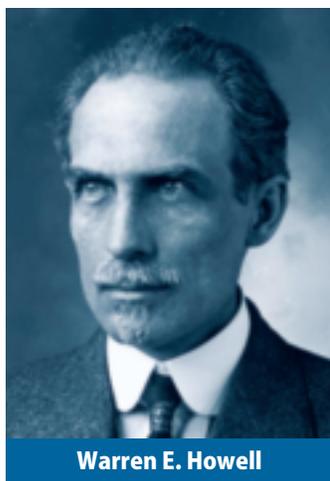
Until this time, Adventist schools had been individually responsible for student labor and manual training, but the 1910 meeting legitimized these features as denominational policy, thereby fulfilling one of Ellen White's goals. By then, it was apparent that Adventist educators felt strongly enough about the issue to regard it as an identifying feature of denominational education.

That vocational opportunities had been widely implemented was evident in Howell's articles in the *Review* after his visits to two colleges in 1940. Commending them for following the *blueprint*, he emphasized not only effective administration and a spiritual atmosphere, but student labor and industrial activity as well.<sup>16</sup> In the same year, Howell also wrote that academy principals maintained the *blueprint* when they updated the church's secondary curricula by affirming Bible study as central, and continuing with student labor opportunities and vocational and industrial classes, making certain that all such activity was appropriate for each campus.<sup>17</sup>

In defining the *blueprint* as a philosophy, Reynolds did not deny the importance of the typical work-study curriculum, but he sensed that Adventist education must adapt its basic principles to changing circumstances. Howell had seen that the level of professional education was rising

and that White's advice to the College of Medical Evangelists logically applied to other professions that were critical to the church, such as teaching and nursing. The outcome was universal accreditation for Adventist education. Reynolds projected these conclusions to higher levels of academic performance and a broader range of degrees that required deeper study. The graduate education feared by Wilcox and visualized by Howell was becoming a distinct possibility.

The school of advanced studies inaugurated in 1934, which eventually became the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan, represented only a partial fulfillment of Howell's expectations. The wider breadth of academic activity that he envisioned materialized when Emmanuel Missionary College and the College of Medical Evangelists reorganized into universities and offered graduate study in a variety of fields. E. D. Dick, who had had a long career in both denominational schools and church administration, assured church members in 1957 that graduate schools were in keeping with the traditional ideals of denominational education.<sup>18</sup> Speaking at the Andrews University commencement two and a half years later, *Review and*



Warren E. Howell



Francis McClellan Wilcox

*Herald* Editor F. D. Nichol delivered what may be regarded as the keynote address for the era of the Adventist university.

Graduate schools differ from colleges, he said, in that they “attempt . . . to enlarge the borders of human knowledge.” Claiming that Christianity had too long been on the defensive about its teachings, he challenged the Adventist university to educate students to combat flawed reasoning in modern thought. “[L]et us teach our university students the proper use of the skeptical faculty. God gave us that faculty to protect us against the plausible delusions of the devil.” Few, if any, had more vigorously applied Ellen White’s often-quoted dictum that Adventist education should prepare students to think for themselves rather than to reflect other people’s thoughts.<sup>19</sup>

Reynolds had helped lead the way to this point in Adventist education. In 1950, he had published a serialized history of Adventist education in the *Review and Herald*, concluding with a cover article that traced denominational philosophy of education from its beginning to Ellen White’s book *Education*. He called upon Adventists to reject popular educational philosophies, such as John Dewey’s pragmatism, in favor of a genuinely Christian, biblically based philosophy, “inseparable” from Creation, the fall of humankind, and the plan of redemption. Any church, he declared, that follows this philosophy follows the *blueprint* of Christian education.<sup>20</sup>



Keld J. Reynolds

In a time line of Adventist education, Reynolds traced events from 1853 to 1903, ending with the publication of *Education*, which he called the “major blueprint” for the church’s global network of schools.<sup>21</sup> Already, he had begun a series of eight articles, “Straight From the Blueprint,” consisting of outlines treating nearly every imaginable aspect of Adventist education and supporting each detail with a direct quote from Ellen White’s writings.<sup>22</sup> Following the thought progression of *Education*, which states unequivocally that the ultimate purpose of education is to restore the image of God in humanity,<sup>23</sup> Reynolds first focused on the spiritual character of the Christian teacher and the biblically grounded philosophy from which the structure of Adventist education rose. Only then did he proceed to the tools of implementation, such as curriculum and discipline.

Reynolds’ writing left little doubt where Adventist education stood. He demonstrated that one could quote from Ellen White to support any detail in denominational education, but at the same time, no one could mistake his central point: Christian education emerges from a philosophy that seeks to transform sinful human character and restore humans to their rightful

place as redeemed children of God. The details are the tools showing how to go about this task. Thus, *fundamental philosophy provides the purpose for Adventist schools, and their purpose defines their identity.*

### Conflict About the *Blueprint*

Reynolds, *et al.* had touched a sensitive nerve. While Adventists generally agreed that education was to be an experience of spiritual growth, they commonly cited Ellen White’s statement about harmonious development of the mental, physical, and spiritual powers as the best definition of the *blueprint*.<sup>24</sup> For those who quoted the statement in this manner, the spiritual was a given, but dependent upon the physical and the mental. Looming large in their thinking was an ideal that included small rural schools, a labor program that required everyone, including teachers, to work, and a stress on practical knowledge rather than scholarly excellence as an end in itself. Ellen White had, indeed, advocated all of these ideas.

Those subscribing to the view that this was the correct interpretation of the *blueprint* had reason for concern. In the United States, during the three decades following World War II, regulatory legislation, more stringent child labor laws and fair labor standards, and technological advances created difficulties for Adventist colleges and secondary schools. It had become much more difficult to operate profitable school industries with student employees available only part-time for nine months of the year. Due to the rising costs of modernization, keener competition, and decreased demand for their products, many Adventist schools closed their farms and industries. Urban growth swallowed up some rural campuses. As enrollments grew, institutions lost their intimate character. Many Adventists alleged that the church’s schools were “not following the blueprint.”

This debate went international. In Australasia, it peaked in the 1970s. A. G. Stewart, an early 20th-century student at Avondale College and later a missionary to the Pacific Islands, recalled that the Australian school was regarded as a *blueprint* for a global education system.<sup>25</sup> When a new school in Australia added agricultural science to the routine curriculum, the *Australasian Record* publicized it as “A School With a Blue-Print.”<sup>26</sup> A Carmel College faculty member put to rest all doubt that the study of agriculture was still alive and well among Adventists by reporting that the Western Australian Education Department had approved his institution’s agricultural program.<sup>27</sup>

The *Record* regularly featured schools throughout Australasia



A. G. Stewart

with agricultural programs or industrial enterprises. Two examples were Betikama Adventist High School on Guadalcanal that began a successful copper industry in 1976,<sup>28</sup> and a farm at Pengana School in Tasmania, which yielded abundant crops of foodstuffs. Writers declared that these schools followed the *blueprint*.

“We need have no fear for the future of our Christian schools, provided of course that we endeavour to move back into the blueprint of education as so graciously given by God to the Adventist Church through the counsel of Ellen G. White,” one author observed about the Pengana School.<sup>29</sup> In 1978, a year-long series of articles in the *Record* extolled the virtues of rural life, declaring that a trend was underway: Adventists were moving to the country and establishing small schools according to the *blueprint*.<sup>30</sup> Avondale College implemented an “Avondale College Blueprint,” a plan encouraging all faculty and students to work daily in school agriculture or community projects.<sup>31</sup>

Discussions in Australasia said little or nothing about redemptive education but portrayed student labor and the study of agriculture as fulfillments of the *blueprint*. While these elements had also been prominent in the United States, American definitions of *blueprint* emphasized the spiritual character of education more strongly. A clash of ideas in Adventese was in the making, helped on by the economic and social issues plaguing the United States after World War II.

Adventist schools both benefitted and suffered from the climate of the societies in which they operated. They had been growing bigger but more expensive. Instead of depending on institutionally provided jobs to pay for their education, college students relied on grants or loans from public monies, with the latter leaving them heavily in debt. With increasing frequency, students also brought to their campuses preferences in dress and entertainment that challenged traditional Adventist standards. For many church members, Adventist colleges and secondary schools appeared progressively less like the ideal they perceived in Ellen White’s writings.

Reacting to these trends, Raymond S. Moore wrote *Adventist Education at the Crossroads* in 1976. His ideas were not new to Adventism. In the 1950s, he had written triumphant articles as well as a book about miracles and progress at Japan Missionary College. While president of that institution, he had instituted dramatic change based on Ellen White’s *Education. The Youth’s Instructor* observed that Moore’s story “revealed how God’s hand is strong toward those who follow His blueprint.”<sup>32</sup>



Walton J. Brown

Moore’s proposals dealt with the format of education, primarily at the college level, but were also applicable to secondary and elementary schools. He suggested that a student work-study program would cure the ills of Adventist schools and recommended reducing enrollments to about 400 in order to require every student to participate in a work program. He advocated reduction of teaching loads to allow teachers to supervise student labor, shortening the daily curriculum to four hours of class time with four more hours for labor, and adding a third block of four hours for Bible study and religious activity.

In Moore’s plan, older students would assume some of the academic instruction relinquished by teachers when they supervised labor. He urged all schools to relocate in the country but at the same time recommended that school leaders take advantage of urban businesses by negotiating agreements with them to employ students. If schools encountered accreditation problems, they

should request status as experimental institutions. Although Moore avoided the term *blueprint*, he told readers that he drew his solutions from the “Scriptures and the writings of Ellen G. White.”<sup>33</sup>

Adventist educational leaders thought Moore’s ideas were radical. However, some church leaders believed that the time had arrived for Adventist education to align better with the *blueprint* as they interpreted it. Introductory statements in *Crossroads* by two General

Conference vice presidents fell short of an endorsement but challenged educators to use Moore’s book to inspire reform.

In keeping with this sentiment, E. H. J. Steed, head of the denomination’s temperance program, alleged in 1976 that institutional troubles were the result of digressions from the Heaven-sent plan that should guide denominational policies. “If operated according to the divine blueprint, Seventh-day Adventist institutions will avoid much of the criticism leveled against institutions today,” he wrote, also asking if it was not time “to step into the breach with the divine blueprint?”<sup>34</sup> Although Steed aimed most of his darts at the denominational health-care system, he also targeted education.

Adventist educators began to respond, not calling critics by name, but answering their charges. In a two-part feature in the *Review*, Walton J. Brown, then General Conference director of education, discussed change in denominational schools, the size of Adventist schools, career training, faith-sharing, and the quality of school plants. Adventist education “may be even closer to the ‘blueprint’ than that which was offered many years ago,” he asserted.<sup>35</sup>

Two years later, in 1980, Reuben Hilde, an associate director



E. H. J. Steed

in the General Conference Department of Education, published *Showdown: Can SDA Education Pass the Test?*, a critique that squarely addressed the issue of the *blueprint*.<sup>36</sup> Hilde was not easy on Adventist schools, admitting that educators needed to plan better curricula and improve financial support, but his primary message was this: Restoration, redemption, and renewal “summarize the fundamental purpose of our schools.” He urged educators to study all traditions in light of the principle of restoring God’s image in sinful humans.<sup>37</sup>

In a lengthy interview with the *Adventist Review* editors in 1984, three church education leaders discussed both the nature and traditions of Adventist education, including the *blueprint*. The common element in Adventist education, they concluded, was commitment to God’s service, rather than specific requirements for content and practice.<sup>38</sup>

The debate precipitated a mixed and sometimes passionate reaction from the Adventist public, but the discussion subsided after 1985, when George Knight’s *Myths in Adventism* decried popular use of the term *blueprint*, calling this idea a myth that portrays Ellen White as an inflexible prophet. Citing her writings, he demonstrated that no single pattern for all denominational schools ever existed.<sup>39</sup>

## Conclusion

Even though the high-pitched debate over the *blueprint* of Adventist education may have subsided after Knight’s book appeared, the notion itself persisted, partly because the term had achieved its own niche in Adventese. So what does the Adventist experience with *blueprint* teach us?

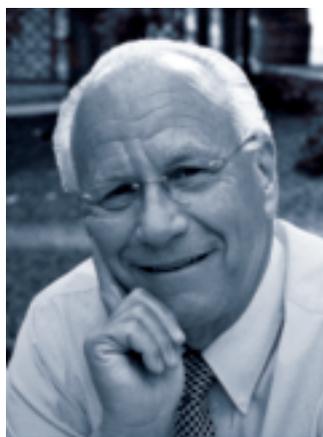
Decades of usage show that writers and speakers have often used the term without defining it; they have simply declared, with no explanation, that a given institution or person followed (or failed to follow) the *blueprint*. These vague allusions have left readers to interpret the *blueprint* according to their own definitions. When referring to everything, *blueprint* means nothing.

At the other end of the spectrum has been the narrow application of *blueprint*—student labor, for example—in a manner to suggest that one specific aspect of education constitutes the *entire blueprint*. Both extremes confuse the issue.

It is instructive to remember that the many references to the *blueprint* of education reveal that most writers were creating an emphasis rather than a dichotomy. Those who believed that the *blueprint* meant small, rural schools did not deny that Adventist education was also to be redemptive, and neither did those who argued that the *blueprint* was primarily a philosophy



Reuben Hilde



George R. Knight

of redemptive education deny that country living and student labor were beneficial and part of Ellen White’s instruction.

To a degree, both emphases emerged from Adventist politics. Avondale School for Christian Workers was founded as an official denominational institution, which meant that that implementation of Ellen White’s advice became denominational policy in Australasia. In contrast, the network of so-called self-supporting institutions in the southern United States, which White encouraged as the American version of the Australian model, operated under private control. Because of White’s backing, those in self-supporting schools found it easy to think that their institutions replicated what they called the *blueprint* better than denominational schools.

But Ellen White’s advocacy of the Southern self-supporting schools of her time did not mean that she rejected denominational education. Shortly before embarking for Australia, she

told a mother that God in His providence had established Adventist schools and that her daughter was far better off on a denominational campus where a spiritual atmosphere existed than she would be elsewhere.<sup>40</sup> White also donated the proceeds from the sale of her book, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, to help relieve the debts of Adventist schools. She supported *both* the denominational and the extra-denominational education of

her time, but protagonists of each model have often claimed to implement the *blueprint* more closely. Sometimes their rhetoric has reached highly charged levels.

Knight argued that the common application of *blueprint* to describe Ellen White’s counsel about education distorts her intentions because it implies a single design for all Adventist schools.<sup>41</sup> Hilde pointed out that *blueprint* has also suffered from misleading and judgmental use. An example of Knight’s and Hilde’s complaints is the assertion that Adventist schools must be small and rural, otherwise they *cannot* conform to the *blueprint*. Knight documented that Ellen White did not set forth a single plan for all Adventist schools, while Hilde added that she also called for schools in cities for students who were unable to attend institutions in the country.<sup>42</sup>

While admitting that he agreed with some criticisms of denominational schools, Hilde declared that some of the most serious damage to Adventist education came from church leaders who focused on a single point in education, supporting it with copious citations from Ellen White, which produced an imbalanced expectation of what schools are to accomplish. Misp-

plied concepts relating to the *blueprint* have “hardened into an inflexible mold,” he declared. “[T]he phrase ‘getting back to the blueprint’ has a righteous sound and appears undebatable, but in reality it can be, and has been, very misleading.”<sup>43</sup>

Ellen White’s statements regarding school size prompted Moore’s recommendation to cap enrollment at low levels. To implement this suggestion would have required Adventists to at least double, if not triple the number of their colleges in North America alone, incurring heavy costs for land and construction. Financial integrity of institutions, spending denominational money wisely, and providing educational opportunities for *all* Adventist students were also principles that Ellen White espoused. Thus, Hilde advocated larger schools as the more cost-effective way of providing education for all Adventist youth who wished to attend.

Critics have sometimes said that principles never change, and therefore, Ellen White’s counsel means exactly the same thing today as it did when she wrote it. Frequently combined with such statements are judgmental comparisons and criticism of denominational schools, or allegations that institutional difficulties are divine punishments for failure to follow the *blueprint*.

Such thinking is dangerous. That is not to say educators never make bad decisions, but categorizing calamity as divine judgment overlooks the fact that in a sinful world, educational problems can originate from a variety of causes over which Adventist schools have little control. They have experienced restrictions and expropriation by authoritarian governments, financial dislocations resulting from out-of-control economies, and demographic shifts that change constituencies. These conditions have produced a variety of problems, ranging from threats to Adventist identity to closure. Operating a school by Adventist principles in the highly regulated and socially conscious 21st century is not the same task as in a *laissez faire* United States during the 1880s and 1890s. The ideals endure, but innovative educators must find ways to fulfill Ellen White’s advice in contemporary ways that are appropriate to the environment in which their schools function.

The *blueprint* debate reveals much about Adventists’ understanding of prophetic inspiration. When discussing the critics who believed that changes in the Adventist health-care industry contradicted the *blueprint*, F. D. Nichol pointed out that “inspiration also sets down the principle that time and place must be considered in applying divine counsel.” A General Conference vice president, W. J. Hackett, also warned Adventists not to forget that inspired counsel “is of two basic types. The first is . . . timeless. . . . The second . . . applies these principles to specific areas at specific times.”<sup>44</sup>

Adventist education began with the ideal that the small, simple, and rural were necessary conditions to maintain spiritual identity. Church growth and changing environments have challenged that premise. Scrutinizing their philosophy, Adventist educators came to understand Ellen White’s advice to mean that the spiritual/redemptive formed the defining center of ed-

ucation, based upon principles that do not change but which can function in a modern world where the large, complex, and urban are the norm. In essence, the debate about *blueprint* revolves around this issue—defining what is central and permanent in contrast to what is conditional and adaptable.

If we choose to call Ellen White’s instruction about education *the blueprint*, the breadth of her understanding of education dictates that we must define the term clearly enough to ensure meaningful discourse. The apt metaphor that appeared in *Adventese* a century ago has lost much of its meaning because writers and speakers have too often twisted it to suit their purposes. Sometimes it has become a weapon to separate supposed educational goats from supposed sheep. For some, it has been a kind of imprimatur to authenticate a given program, institution, or even a person as “traditionally Adventist.” As the early experience of Warren Howell demonstrated, notwithstanding their sincerity and authority, speakers and writers have sometimes forced *blueprint* to mean what they want it to mean, rather than what a balanced definition should encompass.

The debate about *blueprint* will continue, but as we better understand its history and the principles God has given for the operation of Adventist schools, we will improve our understanding of the issue, which will result in enlightened conversation and more responsible decision making. ✍

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*This article has been peer reviewed.*

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6. William J. Eckerle, "Unions Charge," *Educational Messenger* (June/July 1917):26-28 (the *Educational Messenger* was a publication of Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska); Roger Warren, "What Did You See in Your Vision?" *The Youth's Instructor* (August 14, 1917):3, 4.

7. This summary is based on a survey of articles printed by the *Review and Herald* and *Adventist Review* from the 1920s through the 1990s.

8. Chapter 30 of *The Publishing Ministry* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1983) is entitled "ABC—Spiritual Blueprint." The preface to *Evangelism* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1946) states that the book constitutes a *blueprint* for evangelism. In *Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1911), page 28, Ellen White wrote that "The gospel commission is the great missionary charter of Christ's kingdom." In *Unlikely Leaders* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 2010), an updated and abridged version of *Acts of the Apostles*, pages 12 and 13, the same sentence reads "missionary blueprint."

9. For example, advertisements for Joers' *God Is My Captain* in *Review and Herald* (November 15, 1945), page 22; Bietz' *The Know-How of Christian Living in The Youth's Instructor* (November 20, 1951), page 20; Neff's *Give Us Peace in Review and Herald* (October 18, 1945), page 21; and Meiers' *What Catholics and Protestants Should Know* in *The Youth's Instructor* (February 12, 1957), page 20.

10. E. D. Dick, "W. E. Howell" (obituary), *Review and Herald* (July 29, 1943):19.

11. Howell's presentations appeared in *Proceedings of the Educational and Missionary Volunteer Departments of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in World Convention* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1923). For his keynote address, see "God's Way in Education," *Review and Herald* (July 12, 1923), pages 5-8.

12. W. E. Howell, "Educational Report to General Conference," *Review and Herald* (June 2, 1930):57-60.

13. Wilcox's articles, which appeared in the *Review and Herald*: "Christian Versus Secular Education" (October 24, 1935), 3-7; "Two Kinds of Paths" (June 1, 1936), pages 65-69; "Safeguarding Our Schools and Teachers" (September 1, 1938), pages 2, 6; a series of four articles, "Worldly Education" (October 21, 1943), pages 2, 10; (October 28, 1943), page 29; (November 4, 1943), pages 2, 8, 9; (November 11, 1943), pages 2, 10, 11; "Alarming Trends in the Educational World" (September 21, 1944), pages 1-3; "Danger of Worldly Education" (August 2, 1945), pages 3, 4; a four-part series, "Christian Education" (August 7, 1947), pages 4, 5; (August 14, 1947), pages 3, 4; (August 21, 1947) pages 4, 5; (August 28, 1947), pages 6, 14; "The Ancient Landmark—The Only Safe Guides" (May 5, 1949), pages 20, 21; "A Personal Appreciation" (April 13, 1950), page 6; and "Forsaking Sound Doctrine," Part I (April 19, 1951), pages 13-15, and Part II (April 26, 1951), pages 12, 13.

14. Keld J. Reynolds, "Concerning Blueprint Reading—An Editorial," *Journal of True Education* (June 1948):5.

15. See "The Convention," *Christian Education* (October 1910), pages 26-28. For a discussion of the issues, see Charles C. Lewis, "Should the Industries Be Taught in the Colleges?" *ibid.* (September 1909); pages 21, 22; "Editorial," *ibid.* (December 1909), pages 15, 16; C. A. Russell, "Should the Manumetal Arts Be Eligible to College Credit?" *Christian Educator* (March 1917), page 198 (*manumetal* was a term writers and speakers of the time used to describe manual and mental activity in formal education); and O. J. Graf, "Keeping the Balance in Christian Education," *ibid.* (May 1917), pages 262-265. Nearly all the February 1918 issue of *Christian Educator* was devoted to agriculture and farming on Adventist campuses.

16. W. E. Howell, "A Visit to Southern Junior College," *Review and Herald* (July 4, 1940):21, 22; \_\_\_\_\_, "A Visit to Emmanuel Missionary College," *ibid.* (December 12, 1940):20.

17. \_\_\_\_\_, "A Notable Gathering of Educators," *Review and Herald* (December 19, 1940):21, 22.

18. E. D. Dick, "Provisions for Graduate Study," *ibid.* (October 24, 1957):3-5.

19. Nichol's address, "Higher Education—Bane or Blessing?" appeared in

three parts in *ibid.* (August 11, 1960), pages 3 and 4; (August 18, 1960), pages 4 and 5; and (August 25, 1960), pages 4 and 5.

20. Reynolds' articles appeared in *ibid.*: "The Beginnings of Our Educational Work" (August 10, 1950), pages 6 and 7; "When Our Educational Program Began to Take Shape" (August 17, 1950), pages 6-8; "We Venture to Establish a College" (August 31, 1950), pages 8 to 10; "Lengthening the Cords and Strengthening the Stakes" (September 7, 1950), pages 10 and 11; "Our Educational Defense Against a Worldly Philosophy" (September 14, 1950), pages 1, 10.

21. Keld J. Reynolds, "First Fifty Years of Adventist Education," *ibid.* (December 17, 1953):18, 19.

22. "Straight From the Blueprint," *Journal of True Education* (October 1953):5, 6; (December 1953):16-18, 28; (February 1954):12-15, 28; (April 1954):12-14, 31; (October 1954):11-13, 30; (December 1954):9-11, 30; (February 1955):16-19; (October 1955):11-14, 26.

23. Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1903), pp. 15, 16.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

25. A. G. Stewart, "The Spirit of Prophecy as It Relates to the Church in Australasia," *Australasian Record* (March 10, 1955):11, 12.

26. E. A. Boehm, "A School With a Blue-Print," *ibid.* (July 15, 1974):8, 9.

27. David Crawford, "Carmel—College in the Country," *ibid.* (October 21, 1974):12.

28. D. Steley, "Betikama Copper Breaks Barriers," *ibid.* (March 19, 1979):5.

29. E. H. Winter, "Progress at Pengana," *ibid.* (September 10, 1979):5.

30. The articles were signed only by "Carol." See "Country Schools," *ibid.* (March 13, 1978):11. Twenty-five articles, "Country Chronicles," appeared in *ibid.* (January-December 1978).

31. Desley Scott, "Volunteer Missionaries to Avondale," *ibid.* (July 10, 1978):1.

32. "Grace Notes," *The Youth's Instructor* (February 16, 1954):2; and Vinston E. Adams, "Following the Book at J.M.C.," *ibid.* (March 10, 1953):12, 13, 18, 21. See also Moore's articles: "The Mizuno Story," two parts, *ibid.*, (February 16, 1954), pages 3 and 4; and (February 23, 1954):7, 21, 22; \_\_\_\_\_, "Japan Missionary College," *Review and Herald* (February 12, 1953), page 15; \_\_\_\_\_, "Providence in Japan," *Journal of True Education* (February 1954), pages 16 and 17; and Raymond S. Moore, *Mitchibiki* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1956).

33. Raymond S. Moore, *Adventist Education at the Crossroads* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1976):11. The Hewitt Research Center held the copyright to Moore's book.

34. E. H. J. Steed, "Meeting the Institutional Crisis," *Review and Herald* (April 1, 1976):14.

35. See Walton J. Brown's two-part explanation: "Changing Patterns in Seventh-day Adventist Education," *ibid.* (April 20, 1978), pages 4 and 5; and "One Eye on the Blueprint," *ibid.* (April 27, 1978), pages 5 and 6.

36. Reuben Hilde, *Showdown: Can SDA Education Pass the Test?* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1980).

37. *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 86.

38. "The Three-Legged Stool," *Adventist Review* (March 29, 1984):3-8. Educators interviewed were Charles R. Taylor, General Conference director of education; Frederick R. Stephan, North American Division (NAD) director of education, K-12; and Robert L. Reynolds, executive secretary of the NAD Board of Higher Education.

39. George R. Knight, *Myths in Adventism* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1985), pp. 16-25. His first chapter, "The Myth of the Inflexible Prophet," appeared in revised form with the same title in the *Adventist Review* (April 3, 1986), pages 14 and 15.

40. Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to the Church* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1948), vol. 5, pp. 505-507.

41. Knight, *Myths*, op cit., p. 18.

42. Hilde, *Showdown*, op cit., p. 136.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

44. F. D. Nichol, "Why Our Sanitariums Evolved Into Hospitals," *Review and Herald* (January 23, 1964):5, 6; W. J. Hackett, "Inspiration in a Changing World," *ibid.* (February 12, 1970):4-6.