

# THE DYNAMICS OF EDUCATIONAL EXPANSION

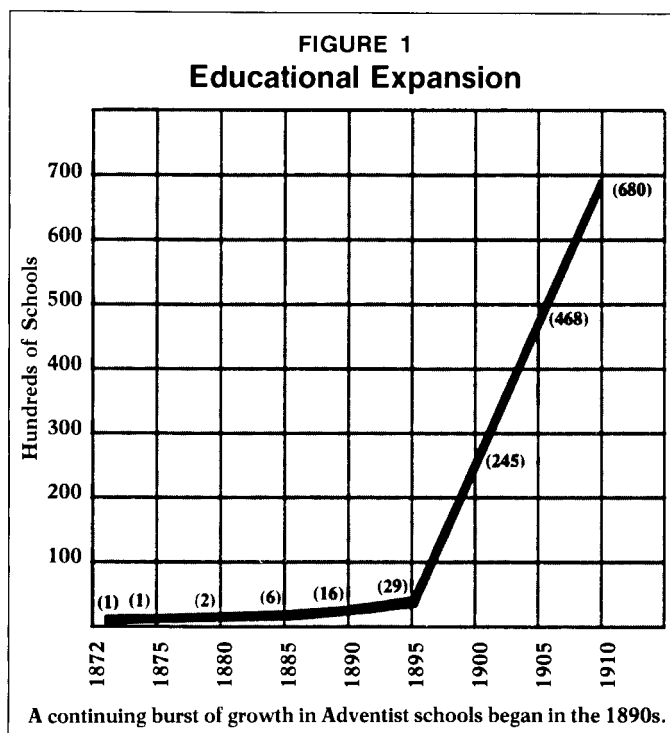
## *A Lesson From Adventist History*

BY GEORGE R. KNIGHT

Concerning church schools," summarized C. C. Lewis in 1888, "it was the unanimous opinion that great care should be exercised in starting out. A poor Seventh-day Adventist school would be about the poorest thing in the world." This statement was part of Lewis' report to the church of the first Adventist teachers' convention. Adventists, he pointed out, were not willing to support Christian schools with either their sympathies or their means.<sup>1</sup> The essence of the Adventist attitude toward Christian education 44 years after the Great Disappointment can be captured in two words—*caution and apathy*.

To Adventists living in 1990, it may seem that Christian education has been central to their church from its inception. However, that is far from the truth. Formal education, in fact, was the last major institutional development within the denomination. It was preceded by the establishment of the publishing work in 1849, centralized church organization in 1863, and the health-care program in 1866. By way of contrast, the Adventist Church established its first school in 1872 and did not have an extensive elementary system until nearly 1900, despite the fact that as early as 1881 the General Conference had recommended the widespread establishment of schools.<sup>2</sup>

In 1890 the Seventh-day Adventist Church had six elementary schools, five secondary schools, and two institutions that presumptuously bore the name "college." On the other hand, by 1900 the church could list 220 elementary schools and a worldwide system composed of 25 secondary schools and colleges. That this shift in educa-



tional thinking was not a temporary fad is indicated by Figure 1.

The change in Adventist attitudes toward education in the 1890s did not reverse itself. By 1930 the denomination was sponsoring 1,977 elementary schools and 201 higher schools. In 1988 the church had a worldwide system of 4,301 elementary schools, 775 secondary schools, and 83 colleges and universities.

With these facts in mind, we are led to inquire into the reasons for the transformation of the church's educational mentality in the 1890s. Two major answers were developing in the late 1880s.

### **Spiritual Revival**

The first stimulus flowed out of the 1888 General Conference session, with its emphasis on the centrality of salvation through faith in Jesus. Even though the "new" emphasis was largely rejected by the leaders attending the session, it was destined for wide acceptance in the early 1890s due to the teaching and preaching of A. T. Jones, E. J. Waggoner, and Ellen White. These leaders preached and taught in the late 1880s and early 1890s at camp meetings, workers' gatherings, and in local churches across the United States.<sup>3</sup>

Of greatest importance for the future of Adventist education, however, were the ministerial institutes held during the post-1888 winters, under the direction of W. W. Prescott, leader of the General Conference educational work. These institutes were aimed especially at enlightening the denomination's clergy about the centrality of righteousness by faith to Adventism's teaching and mission.<sup>4</sup>

Early in 1891 Prescott decided to provide a similar

institute for Adventist educators. This crucial meeting took place in Harbor Springs, Michigan, during July and August 1891. W. C. White described the meetings in terms of spiritual revival, stressing the emphasis on spontaneous personal testimonies. He noted that each day began with A. T. Jones's expositions of the book of Romans. Mrs. White also spoke on such topics as the necessity of a personal relationship with Christ, the need for a spiritual revival among the educators attending the convention, and the centrality of the Christian message to education.<sup>5</sup>

Prescott proclaimed to the 1893 General Conference session that Harbor Springs had marked the turning point in Adventist education. "While the general purpose up to that time," he claimed, "has [*sic*] been to have a religious element in our schools, yet since that institute, as never before, our work has been *practically* [rather than theoretically] upon that basis, showing itself in courses of study and plans of work as it had not previously."<sup>6</sup>

Before Harbor Springs, the teaching of Bible had held a minor place in Adventist education. However, the convention adopted a recommendation calling for four years of Bible study for students in Adventist colleges. Specifically, the delegates decided that "the Bible as a whole

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***Church educational health is directly related to spiritual identity and a sense of mission.***

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should be studied as the gospel of Christ from first to last; and in which it should be made to appear that all the doctrines held by Seventh-day Adventists were simply the gospel of Christ rightly understood."<sup>7</sup> The convention also recommended the teaching of history from the perspective of the biblical worldview.

The Christocentric revival in the church's theology had led to spiritual revival in its educational program, accompanied by a clearer vision of its purpose. As a direct result, noted Prescott, "during the last two years there has been more growth in the educational work than in the 17 years preceding that time."<sup>8</sup>

Ellen White sailed for Australia three months after the close of the institute. She took with her a heightened awareness of the possibilities of Christian education and of the implications of the gospel for education. While in Australia she would have an

unequaled opportunity to influence the development of the Avondale School for Christian Workers along the lines of the principles enunciated at Harbor Springs.

Australia did not have conservative Adventist educators like those in the United States, who were having a difficult time deciding to commit themselves wholeheartedly to the Harbor Springs ideal. The Australian school, which emphasized the spiritual and had a service orientation, would develop into a model school under the direction of its reforming founders.<sup>9</sup>

Out of the Avondale experience, which can be viewed as an extension of Harbor Springs, flowed a constant stream of letters and articles on Christian education from the pen of Ellen White. These writings, along with the publication of *Christian Education* in 1893 and *Special Testimonies on Education* in 1897, helped guide the development of existing Adventist schools and generated a pervasive awareness among Adventist leaders and members of the importance of Christian education.

Ellen White's counsel on elementary education during the mid-nineties was particularly important to the spread of Adventist education. School attendance was required in Australia. Because of this, she wrote to W. C. White in May 1897: "In this country parents are compelled to send their

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children to school. Therefore in localities where there is a church, *schools should be established, if there are no more than six children to attend.*"<sup>10</sup>

Counsel such as this was read by reformers in America, including Edward Sutherland and Percy Magan, who immediately began to push for the rapid development of an Adventist elementary system. Years later, Sutherland, who had been converted to the relevance of the Spirit of Prophecy counsels at Harbor Springs, recalled with some exaggeration that "Magan, Miss DeGraw, and myself [*sic*] practically at the end of every week would pick up a teacher and go out and establish three schools before Monday morning."<sup>11</sup>

Under the leadership of Sutherland, Magan, and Ellen White before the turn of the century and Frederick Griggs afterward, the Adventist elementary movement continued to accelerate.<sup>12</sup> The writings and personal influence of these leaders moved local congregations to establish an ever-larger number of schools.

The elementary school movement also stimulated expansion in the church's secondary and higher education. This occurred in part because of the increased need for Adventist elementary teachers, but, more importantly, it resulted from the belief that every Adventist young person should have a Christian education.

Minneapolis, with its stress on Christ's righteousness, Harbor Springs, Avondale, and the elementary school movement were not unrelated. Each event led to the next, and resulted in vigor and growth throughout the system. On one hand, spiritual revival led to a greater awareness of the need for and potential of Christ-centered education. On the other hand, developing a more distinctively Christian education increased the demand for the product. Between 1888 and 1900 this dynamic process

helped transform the Adventist attitude toward church-sponsored schools.

### **Mission Explosion**

A second major stimulus to the expansion of Adventist education in the 1890s was the unprecedented growth of the denomination's mission program. Like the spiritual revival that it paralleled, the mission explosion developed from events of the late 1880s.

It is important to realize from the outset that the mission enthusiasm of the 1890s was not restricted to the Adventist Church. Sydney Ahlstrom, a leading student of American church history, has noted that "the closing two decades of the nineteenth century witnessed the climactic phase of the foreign missions movement in American Protestantism."<sup>13</sup>

One of the main stimulants of this interest was the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, which grew out of an appeal by Dwight L. Moody in 1886 for college students to devote their lives to mission service. One hundred took their stand. This number increased to 2,200 in 1887, and within a few years many thousands of young people had pledged their lives to mission service. Their motto was "The evangelization of the world in this generation." This stimulated, according to Ernest R.

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## ***Formal education was the last major institutional development within the denomination.***

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Sandeen, "the greatest demonstration of missionary interest ever known in the United States."<sup>14</sup> As a result, Protestant Americans began to see such places as India, Africa, China, and Japan as their spiritual provinces.

The foremost educational result of this mission thrust was the rise of the missionary college and Bible institute movement among American evangelicals. The aim of these schools was to quickly prepare large numbers of workers to staff mission outposts both at home and overseas. The schools focused on practical training and Bible knowledge, while avoiding academic degrees and rigorous intellectual training. They did not try to replace regular colleges, but sought to provide "gap-men" who could stand between the ordained minister and the ordinary layman. The first of these schools was established in 1883 as the Missionary Training College for Home and Foreign Missionaries and Evangelists

(now called Nyack College).<sup>15</sup>

Events within the Seventh-day Adventist Church paralleled both the mission explosion of evangelical Protestantism and its educational extension. Signs of new life in Adventist missions began to surface in the mid-1880s. In 1886 *Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists*—a book that did much to promote a missionary spirit among Adventists—was published in Basel, Switzerland.

Three years later S. N. Haskell began a two-year itinerary around the world, during which he surveyed the possibilities for opening mission work in various places. By 1890 the stage was set for what Richard Schwarz has called the era of "Mission Advance" in the Adventist denomination.<sup>16</sup>

That advance was fueled by an eschatological excitement that has never been duplicated in Adventist history. Beginning with the Blair Sunday Rest Bill in 1888, the next seven years saw a rash of national Sunday bills and the aggressive persecution of Adventists for Sunday desecration in several states as well as in England, Switzerland, South Africa, and other nations.

Jones, Waggoner, Prescott, and Ellen White tied these developments to righteousness by faith as they preached the three angels' messages of Revelation 14 with new vigor and

insight. Roy McGarrell, chairperson of the Religion Department at Caribbean Union College, demonstrated that this important combination of Adventist doctrines empowered the dynamic thrust of Adventist missions throughout the world in the 1890s.<sup>17</sup>

In 1880 Adventists had only eight missions and five evangelistic workers outside the United States. In 1890 they still had only eight missions, even though the number of workers had risen to 56. By 1900, however, the number of missions had risen to 42, and the number of evangelistic mission workers to 481.

The last decade of the 19th century initiated an accelerating trend that remained unabated throughout the first 30 years of the 20th century. By 1930 the church was supporting 8,479 evangelistic workers outside North America, representing 270 missions. This outreach had transformed the very nature of Adventism.<sup>18</sup>

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Mission outreach had a direct effect on the expansion of Seventh-day Adventist schooling. The denomination looked to its schools to supply workers for its rapidly expanding

worldwide work, just as the evangelical expansion of missions had stimulated the Bible institute, and the missionary college movement to train large numbers of missionaries in a short period of time.

John Harvey Kellogg, who appears to have been the Adventist in closest touch with evangelical educational ideas,<sup>19</sup> was probably the first to develop a missionary school within the denomination. He established the Sanitarium Training School for Medical Missionaries in 1889, followed by the American Medical Missionary College in 1895.

Meanwhile, the Avondale School for Christian Workers (1894), the training schools stimulated by E. A. Sutherland and Percy Magan, and the Adventist missionary colleges, such as Washington Missionary and Emmanuel Missionary colleges, soon were dotting the Adventist landscape—all of them similar in method and purpose to the schools spawned by the evangelical mission movement.

Mission expansion affected Adventist educational expansion in at least two identifiable ways. First, it greatly increased the number of schools and students in North America, since most of the denomination's early workers came from the United States. Second, Adventists began to establish schools around the world so that workers could be trained in their home fields. By 1900, therefore, not only had Adventist educational institutions greatly expanded in number, but the system also had been internationalized.



college,

The magnitude of this whole process  
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# RECLAIMING THE VISION OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION

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we consciously seek to achieve a healthy ethnic and gender balance because only together do we reflect God's image. We aim to be a community that challenges and supports the dream fulfillment of the broadest possible spectrum of people. Our Human Relations Statement is under continual review.

## Strengthen the Sense of Community

6. We need to strengthen both the sense and reality of community on campus. At AUC the building of a new campus center helps to make certain that the academic and nonacademic components of campus life are seen as integrally interlocked. As Boyer says:

The college of quality remains a place where the curricular and co-curricular are viewed as having a relationship to each other. At a time when social bonds are tenuous, students, during their collegiate years, should discover the reality of their dependency on each other. They must understand what it means to share and sustain traditions. Community must be built.<sup>9</sup>

## Plan the Religious Component

7. Just as our physical and academic environments need planning, so, too, does the religious component of our lives. After all, that is what really sets us apart from our non-Adventist competition. At AUC, therefore, the entire campus family has been developing a spiritual master plan that coordinates the resources currently available.

However, it goes beyond that to enhance this vital ingredient to the successful accomplishment of our mission. This plan includes chapels, worships, weekend services, special events and weeks, religion and ethics classes, general studies classes, friend-to-friend initiatives, community services, prayer life, world missions, counseling, nurture, and much more.

Franklin Roosevelt is said to have believed that to educate a [person] in mind and not in morals results in a menace to society.

As Adventist educators we have much to offer American higher education. However, if we expect to have an impact, we must get our own house in order. We have no time to lose. Without concerted and studied effort now our problems could easily worsen.

Since an individual leader's impact

on his or her institution, let alone on the church or on the nation, can take a while, that is all the more reason to determine to do our utmost without delay.

## No Time to Lose

In that respect, we can be inspired by a story President John F. Kennedy told (and President Bok has retold) about the French General Louis Lyautey. When Lyautey took command in North Africa, he surveyed the desolate landscape and declared that it was necessary to plant trees. When his aide objected that a tree would take a hundred years to reach full growth, Lyautey replied, "In that case, there is no time to lose. We must begin to plant this afternoon."<sup>10</sup> □

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*Dr. Lawrence T. Geraty is President of Atlantic Union College, South Lancaster, Massachusetts.*

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> Robin Wilson, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (January 3, 1990), p. A1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. A28.

<sup>3</sup> From Boyer's remarks to Institute for Educational Management, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., August 7, 1989.

<sup>4</sup> New York: Harper & Row, 1987.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Published in pamphlet form in 1973.

<sup>7</sup> Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1903).

<sup>8</sup> In a speech to Institute for Educational Management, Harvard, August 5, 1989.

<sup>9</sup> Ernest L. Boyer, *College: The Undergraduate Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), p. 195.

<sup>10</sup> Derek Bok in IEM speech, Harvard, August 5, 1989.

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ess was compounded by unprecedented institutional development during the 1890s. Besides churches and schools, Adventists developed hospitals, publishing houses, and eventually (to a lesser extent) health food factories in the United States and overseas. Thus the schools were called upon to supply ever larger numbers of institutional workers, in addition to evangelistic workers.

We need to recognize that, from its inception, 19th-century Adventist education was inextricably connected with foreign missions. For example, both the opening of the church's first college and the sending of its first mis-

sionary took place in 1874. This was no coincidence. The stated purpose of Battle Creek College was to train for mission service at home and in foreign fields.<sup>20</sup> The first great motivation for Adventist schooling had been rooted in mission. The same was true in the 1890s of the second great thrust of Adventist education.

Thus the spread of Adventist education during the 1890s was directly related to (1) the spiritual revival of theology, and (2) an enlarged vision of the church's mission to the world.

It is important to note that these were positive motivators. Negative motivators—such as the need to escape from incipient Darwinism and religious skepticism—played a minor role. *Both then and now, Adventist education at its best stands for something of great importance, rather than representing an escape from the non-Christian world.*

*We may conclude that the health of Adventist education depends upon its ability to maintain its spiritual identity and sense of mission. Without these distinctive qualities it loses its reason for being. With them it will continue to be a dynamic force in a world in need of redemptive healing.* □

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*Dr. George R. Knight is Professor of Church History at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. He formerly served as Professor of Educational Foundations at the university, and has written or edited several books on Adventist education.*

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<sup>1</sup> C. C. Lewis, "Report of Teachers' Institute," *Review and Herald* (September 4, 1888), p. 573.

<sup>2</sup> "The General Conference: Business Proceedings," *Review and Herald* (December 13, 1881), p. 376.

<sup>3</sup> For more information on the 1888 meetings, see George R. Knight, *From 1888 to Apostasy: The Case of A. T. Jones* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1987); Idem, *Angry Saints: Tensions and Possibilities in the Adventist Struggle Over Righteousness by Faith* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1989).

<sup>4</sup> Gilbert M. Valentine, "Controversy: A Stimulus in Theological Education," *Adventist Review* (November 3, 1988), pp. 11, 12.

<sup>5</sup> W. C. White to E. R. Jones, July 28, 1891; for the most complete treatment of the Harbor Springs convention, see Craig S. Willis, "Harbor Springs Institute of 1891: A Turning Point in Our Educational Conceptions," term paper, Andrews University, 1979.

<sup>6</sup> W. W. Prescott, "Report of the Educational Secretary," *Daily Bulletin of the General Conference* (February 23, 1893), p. 350.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 357.

<sup>9</sup> See Milton Hook, "The Avondale School and Adventist Educational Goals, 1894-1900," Ed.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1978.

<sup>10</sup> Ellen G. White to W. C. White, May 5, 1897; cf. Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1949), vol. 6, pp. 198, 199. (Italics supplied.)

<sup>11</sup> E. A. Sutherland, "Chapel Talk Before the

Medical Students at Los Angeles," December 14, 1949; E. A. Sutherland, tape recording of autobiographical address presented at the College of Medical Evangelists, 1946.

<sup>12</sup> For Sutherland's contribution, see Warren Sydney Ashworth, "Edward Alexander Sutherland and Seventh-day Adventist Educational Reform: The Denominational Years, 1890-1904," Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1986, pp. 141-160. For that of Griggs, see Arnold Colin Reve, "Frederick Griggs: Seventh-day Adventist Educator and Administrator," Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1984, passim.

<sup>13</sup> Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), p. 864.

<sup>14</sup> John R. Mott, "Report of the Executive Committee," in *Student Mission Power: Report of the First International Convention of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, Held at Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A., February 26, 27, 28 and March 1, 1891* (Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library Pubs., 1979), p. 21-23; Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1978), p. 183.

<sup>15</sup> See S. A. Witmer, *The Bible College Story: Education With Dimension* (Manhasset, N.Y.: Channel Press, 1962), pp. 35-37; Sandeen, pp. 181-183; G. R. Knight, "Early Adventists and Education: Attitudes and Context," in G. R. Knight, ed., *Early Adventist Educators* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1983), pp. 7, 8. A similar Bible school movement was also developing in the holiness churches during the 1890s. See Charles Edwin Jones, *Perfectionist Persuasion* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1974), pp. 52, 54, 62ff.

<sup>16</sup> R. W. Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1979), p. 214.

<sup>17</sup> Roy Israel McGarrell, "The Historical Development of Seventh-day Adventist Eschatology, 1884-1895," Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1989, pp. 277-283.

<sup>18</sup> *SDA Encyclopedia*, rev. ed., p. 917.

<sup>19</sup> See Knight, *Early Adventist Educators*, p. 8.

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, G. I. Butler, "What Use Shall We Make of Our School?" *Review and Herald* (July 21, 1874), p. 45.

## EFFECTIVE TEACHING TECHNIQUES FOR COLLEGE CLASSES

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sorry, but we do not have time to pursue that matter further just now. Perhaps we can return to it later."

### Let the Class Answer One Another's Questions

Adult students have often acquired in-depth information about a variety of topics. If encouraged to share their knowledge, they can enrich the class discussion. Call on those students who are knowledgeable about various subjects to share their expertise with the class. Be careful, however, that the tone of the discussion not become condescending or critical toward those who are less informed.

### Plan Good Questions

In addition to preparing subject matter, select some thought-pro-

voking questions to throw out to the class. This will encourage learning through active participation, and keep students involved and interested.

### Encourage Students to Personalize the Lesson Content

Questions should not be strictly theoretical or factual. Ask your students to make applications, based on their own experience and reading. In a Bible class you might ask, for example: "How would you have felt if you were Nicodemus?" or "What would you have thought if Jesus had asked you that question?"

### Make the Information Practical

College students want information that will help them attain their personal goals. Accordingly, look for ways to apply the principles of the topic to daily life and to the students' future professions.

### Use Closure

Closure is one of the most effective teaching tools—and according to many experts, one of the most neglected. One way to achieve closure, ask class members to talk about the learning experience they have just completed. To get them started, you might hand out slips of paper that begin:

"What was the most valuable thing you learned today?" or

"One thing I will do differently as a result of this class is..." or

"Based on what we did in class today, next week I want to learn more about..."

You can also ask them to share the responses with a neighbor or a small group. Verbalizing important concepts from the class discussion helps to reinforce the principles in their thinking.

### Conclusion

Dr. C survived his early failures and disappointments as a college teacher. He worked as hard on his method of teaching as on his material, and went on to become an outstanding teacher. Since he began to follow suggestions like the ones listed above, he has come to enjoy his teaching more. His students are more responsive and enthusiastic, and they are achieving a broader and deeper understanding of the topics discussed in class.

Recently Dr. C received a letter from a former student who enrolled at an Ivy League university. The student said that he initially doubted his ability to compete with graduates from elite colleges. But he soon found his undergraduate education at a small Adventist college was not a disadvantage at all. "In the classes I had from you and

a number of other professors," he wrote, "I developed a love of learning. I also received the study skills and information I needed to do well here."

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*Dr. Gail T. Rice is Associate Professor of Educational Foundations and Research in the School of Education at Loma Linda University, Riverside, California.*

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

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<sup>2</sup> Malcolm Knowles, *The Modern Practice of Adult Education* (Chicago: Association Press, 1980), pp. 12-30.

<sup>3</sup> Robert M. Gagne and Marcy Perkins Driscoll, *Essentials of Learning for Instruction* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1988), pp. 26-32.

<sup>4</sup> Jeffrey S. Turner and Donald B. Helms, *Lifespan Development* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1987), pp. 317, 435.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas L. Good and Jere E. Brophy, *Looking in Classrooms* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), p. 493.

<sup>6</sup> Kevin Ryan and James M. Cooper, *Those Who Can, Teach* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1988), p. 468.

## HOW DOES ADVENTIST EDUCATION AFFECT YOUTH ATTITUDES?

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some that I will fail to pass, and it bothers me thinking about it."

"My parents couldn't pay the academy bill, and they, almost crying, had to take me out. I have been going to church schools all my life and I wanted to finish in a church school."

"I would like to attend academy but with my dad and five kids it's just too expensive."

These are just a sample. As a church we have done a great deal with worthy student funds, but we need to do more. Would that we could put a Christian education within the grasp of every teenager who really wants it. As a church, we must seize this challenge to educational and financial leadership.

This article has offered some glimpses from the first year of a study that can help us redesign our approaches to religious education. With the succeeding years of research, the information should point toward some positive solutions. Working together as educators, parents, pastors, and church leaders we must find ways to keep more of our precious youth