

General Conference
Seventh-day Adventist Church
West-Central Africa Division
Department of Education



Christian Education Day—March 23, 2019

Dear fellow believers,

On behalf of the President and the entire Administration of the West-Central Africa Division of Seventh-day Adventists, we greet you in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ whose imminent return we await with much longing. As it has been the custom of the church, we spend a whole Sabbath every year reflecting on Christian education. For us Seventh-day Adventists, the culmination of every educational endeavor is to ensure that we are educating for eternity. This year 2019, the Sabbath earmarked for the Christian Education Day is March 23, and the West-Central Africa Division will spend the Sabbath reflecting on how to get *Every Adventist Child, Everywhere, In School*.

The activities of the Sabbath are planned as follows:

Friday Night: Vespers

Saturday Morning: Divine Service Sermon

Saturday Afternoon: Group Discussions

We plead that every local church (and educational institution where possible) dedicates the Sabbath to the specified activities so that the Division can have a harmonized awareness of and prepare itself accordingly for the task ahead.

May the Lord bless us all.

Amen

©2019 by **The Team**,
WAD Education Department

Friday Night—March 22, 2019

Vespers: IT'S TIME TO RAISE AN ARMY OF YOUTH

Key Text: Psalm 127: 3-5

“Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one’s youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their opponents in court.”

As we approach the closing of the Earth’s history, the enemy has been attempting with greater energy and success to weaken the Remnant Church by luring it into minoring on majors and majoring on minors. And one of the aspects of the church’s live wire that has been a main target is the education ministry, particularly the basic education during which the character of the children is expected to be formed.

In the West-Central Division of the Church, basic education suffers the greatest harm as it is not only inadequate in terms of number of schools in comparison to the number of school-going children, but especially the lack of Adventist teachers. On the average, we presently count only one Adventist teacher for every five non-Adventist teachers in primary and junior secondary schools. This means that even our children who are in our schools are not receiving Adventist education, because their role models—the teachers—do neither believe nor live by the Adventist message.

Additionally, most of the Adventist teachers in our schools are very poorly paid. This makes those among them who are qualified to leave our schools for “greener pastures.” But as they leave our schools, our children are left at the mercy of either unqualified teachers or those who do not know the Way our children should go. And the end result is a youth in the church that is willing to abide by the Church’s lifestyle and Commission but has no solid character formation that is required.

No wonder there seems to be an growing conflict between what is preached in the church and what is observed in the daily life of church members today. The enemy seems to have succeeded in making most of the members to have the form of godliness while denying the power thereof (2Tim. 3:1-5). Indeed the cry of the Spirit of Prophecy for an army of youth rightly trained is probably sounding today much louder than in the past. If our children could have their character formed through true Adventist education, the Gospel will spread more rapidly, the latter rain will be poured soonest, and the Lord’s coming will be hastened.

“With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior might be carried to the whole world! How soon might the end come,—the end of suffering and sorrow and sin! How soon, in place of a possession here, with its blight of sin and pain, our children

might receive their inheritance where "the righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever"; where "the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick," and "the voice of weeping shall be no more heard."--"E. G. White, *Counsels to Teachers, Parents, and Students*," p. 555.

But despite the successful schemes of the devil, it is not too late for the Church to reverse the situation. The church can rise up and train its own children the way the should go. The Church can decide to sacrifice for its present and future army of youth who are ready to die for that for which they live—an army of youth that will be bought neither nor sold.; children and young people who will represent their Savior both in words and actions, and who will not compromise the divine standards, no matter the cost.

This is the time, more than ever before, for the Church to invest heavily in her Children's education. If she will survive the impending tempest spewed out of the mouth of the dragon and the host of his allies, she must now bring forth and up children of her kind—children who truly have the patience of the saints, keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus. Though she may not take worldly weapons to fight her enemies, she would need children who will not renounce their faith in times of trial, children who will not betray her mission and identity, children who will rather blow the trumpet in the midst of tribulation to announce the arrival of the King of Kings and Lord of lords.

The time has come for the Church to look back, examine and see how many generations of her children that have not benefitted from Adventist education, begin to measure the effect of such a deficiency, and resolve to offer to younger generations better opportunities of knowing the Lord in words and actions.

Prayer Session:

1. For the Church to see that evangelism without education is like planting without ploughing
2. For the church to design ways and means to ensuring that every one of her children receives basic education in Adventist schools
3. For wealthy church members to invest in supporting the church to put up basic schools for all the children
4. For the church to sponsor young people to study education so the Church can have true Adventist teachers in her schools.

NB: *These same prayer points may be repeated on Sabbath before or after the sermon.*

Saturday Morning—March 23, 2019

Divine Service:

Hymn of Meditation: 612

SERMON: LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME TO ME

Key Text: Matthew 19: 14

“Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.’”

Today March 23, 2019, the Seventh-day Church worldwide reflects deeply on Christian education and its impact of finishing God’s work in preparation for the imminent return of the Redeemer of the world—Jesus Christ. The accomplishment of the Gospel commission by the End-Time Remnant Church will be aided by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as on the Day of Pentecost, but in greater proportion. This outpouring of the Holy Spirit will be particularly characterized by the fulfillment of the prophecy recorded in Joel 2:28—“*And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.*”

We must acknowledge that a lot of various views have been held about the meaning of this verse; many have even taken this verse to mean that spontaneous giftedness (without formal education) shall be apportioned to the church whereby everybody will be empowered to do everything to finish God’s work.

No wonder today we have many so-called prophets and apostles who thus proclaimed themselves and attracted thousands—yea, millions of followers, even though these men and women display no know knowledge of God, and many of whom have no preparation to knowing what God’s work entails. Many have therefore sacrificed the importance of true education, that is, acquisition of God-inspired and Christ-centered knowledge, on the altar of revelation and prophetic fulfillment.

But the Everlasting Gospel clearly goes beyond the old men’s dreams and youth’s prophecy and visions to reveal that children must be made ready for the Lord even before they would prophesy, have visions, or dream. Unfortunately, even our evangelistic endeavors hardly target children. We are often focused on evangelizing the youth and adult, probably with the hope that they would come along with their young siblings or children, respectively.

However, Jesus insists that children should be allowed to come to Him, “*...for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these*” (Matt. 19: 14).

- How do these children come to Jesus?
- How do they encounter their Savior at such a tender age?—an age when they would not comprehend the mysteries, sophistries, theologies, and meaning of sin, the Cross, repentance, justification, sanctification, and redemption.

The Lord has not left His Church in suspense on such a crucial matter as how to allow Children to come to Him, especially that “the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” That is why He commands us, even today, to “*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it*” (Prov. 22: 6).

We allow children to come to Jesus by training them the way they should go. And how do we train them? The Lord explains elsewhere by commanding us to impress His commandments on our children (Deut. 6: 7).

This requires a two-stage process:

- first we must impress the commandment upon ourselves, because we cannot give what we do not have. The Bible states that these commandments “are to be *on your hearts...Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates*” (Deut. 6: 6-9; *emphasis supplied*). The message here is crystal clear: before we can train up the children and impress God’s commandment on them, we must know and live the commandments.
- The second aspect of the process is to impress the commandments on the children. Impressing the commandments upon the minds of children requires much more than involving them in family and church religious and spiritual activities. It means, most profoundly, *equipping them with holistic tools to enable them encounter the Lord personally*. They must therefore be numerate and literate. They must go to school.
- All the children must be grow with the ability to hear God’s voice through personal meditation on His word.
- They must grow with the ability to observe nature and be able to connect with the Creative and Sustaining Hand behind the purposeful wonders thereof.
- Children must grow with a mind that can navigate through the increasing complexity of their surroundings and be able to comprehend, assess, analyze, evaluate, and decide the way to go with neither compulsion nor blindness.

And so when the Bible enjoins us to “know the truth and the truth shall set you free” (John 8: 32), it is referring to holistic truth which is both arts and science, physical and metaphysical, temporal and eternal, material and immaterial, visible and invisible, past, present, and future. And so that truth cannot be grasped merely through the singing of hymns, reciting of psalms or prayers, sessions of fasting and mountain retreats.

The truth Jesus points out here is holistic, all-encompassing. It is not only about the spiritual realms, but also about mathematics, languages, biology, chemistry, philosophy, technology, religion, geography, History, and all the host of subjects the Lord would have us study. The care for His creation requires the knowledge of the rules and

regulations that govern it, and humans have been made in God's image purposely to learn, know, and manage His creation on earth as He would.

Denying a child of true education is no less sinful than equating that child with animals and plants that were made to live by instinct and would therefore render no account to their Maker. True education first of all requires the unlocking of the brain paths of thinking and acting. The Lord Himself has wired our brain in such a way that we can connect with Him through the Written Word as well as the Book of Nature. We must learn how to read and observe; how to discern and appropriately interpret the signs of the time.

This is what makes true education both *imperative* and *indispensable for success in the present world and in the new world to come*. And the Spirit of Prophecy emphasizes this fact as it declares that "in the highest sense the work of education and the work of redemption are one, for in education, as in redemption, 'other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ'" (White, *Education*, p. 30). Nothing should be allowed to be an impediment to basic education. It is sinful to think and believe that it is not possible to provide basic education to all children. Since we profess that nothing is impossible to our God (Matt. 19: 26), we must consequently and practically believe that it is possible for all our children to receive true basic education in Adventist schools if and only if we see or understand the need and have the will. After all, don't we say—and rightly so—that "we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us"(Phil 4: 13)?

Let us understand clearly that sending our children to school is not always synonymous with providing them with education, because not all schools provide education. While it can be assumed that all schools provide literacy and numeracy, these two without the purpose of being tools or paths to knowing God would result, at best, in learnedness, not in Education.

This is why Adventist or Christian families and churches cannot be satisfied with having their children merely going to any school. Public and some private (including faith-based) schools strive only to provide learnedness; hardly do they care about integrating *Faith and Learning*, *Faith and Teaching*, or *Faith and Living*. Their major concern is to train children and youth to become successful in this transient world, regardless of what their destiny would eventually be.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church, being the visible part of End-Time Remnant Church of Christ, has been called to prepare the End-Time generations of the world for the soon return of the Lord. Her work primarily revolves on training the children the way they should go—the way that would let them come to Christ, and when they grow they will not forsake the way, but rather prophecy and have visions—even becoming wiser than their teachers (Psalm 119: 99-101); and when they grow old, their flame will keep burning thereby "dreaming dreams." Yes, "those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint" (Isa 40: 31).

“LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME TO ME,” says Jesus. Let us not send His children to be trained in Babylon or worldly schools with the hope that when they grow old they will come back to the way they should go. Let us not expose their character formation to the corrupting and corroding philosophies of this world, because it will be difficult to bring them back when they are old.

The church today is suffering from many unconverted men and women at all levels of church life, because they grew up feeding on a mixture of divine and worldly standards. This unfortunate trend has resulted over the years from Adventist children attending non-Adventist schools where they are taught, among other things, that God does not exist, that man evolved from lower animals, that life has been on earth for millions of years. Then on Friday night and Sabbath morning, they are taught the opposite. With such an ambivalent or confused mind, our children are growing to become the main enemies of the church because we failed to offer them what would make them true members of the Remnant Church.

Moreover, the church must remember that children generally believe their teachers more than their parents and pastors, because it is believed that the former pave their path to earthly success which is the sole purpose of worldly learnedness. Our children are becoming what their schools tell them much more than what the Church thinks is instilling in them.

- Let us therefore no longer sacrifice God’s Children’s education on the altar of lack of money while a lot of expenses are regularly made on things that have no eternal value.
- Let us remember that God is not so homeless that we should hide behind the excuse of building Him a Church to the detriment of providing schools for His children.
- God is not allergic to children that we cannot use Church Buildings as classrooms to educate His little ones.
- God does not value sparsely-used magnificent Church buildings more than simple buildings where His little children would be prepared every day for a meaningful life here and hereafter.
- Let us therefore not send His children to the world for training, because the world would, at best, offer them learnedness—not education. The world itself with its institutions is suffering from lack of true education. Its emphasis on mere learnedness has resulted into producing clever devils (Duke of Wellington) rather than moral intellectuals. The holistic decline of discipline, morality, love, peace, and even genuine prosperity is a direct result of preferring learnedness over education.
- This is why Jesus insists that the children should be allowed to come to Him while they are still little. **AND ADVENTIST EDUCATION IS THE PATH FOR CHILDREN TO THE LORD.**

Let us therefore endeavor to send every child, everywhere, in school.

Amen.

Saturday afternoon—March 23, 2019

Discussion Theme:

SENDING EVERY ADVENTIST CHILD, EVERYWHERE, TO SCHOOL

The objective of this discussion is to gather as much information as possible on local-realities-based strategies to improve the Adventist education system so as to make it available to every child, especially Adventist children.

Every local church is therefore entreated to form the following five discussion groups and ensure that each group submits a written report at the end of the discussion. Then the Church clerk will compute the reports as presented by each group and forward them to the Conference/Mission secretary who will also gather them into folder and send it to the Union's executive secretary and copy the Union's education director. The Union will finally forward the reports to the WAD Education Department. Eventually the raw-data reports from local churches will be analyzed to identify critical strategies which will be sent back to the local churches for adapted and contextualized implementation.

Discussion groups:

- Group 1: Youth (that is, unmarried men and women between 19 and 35 years of age)
- Group 2: Very Young Parents (that is, those with the oldest child aged between 0 and 12)
- Group 3: Young parents (that is, those with the oldest child aged between 13 and 18)
- Group 4: Grown parents (that is, those with the oldest child aged 19 or older)
- Group 5: Church Leaders (that is, all church board members)

Discussion Questions:

1. How many Adventist schools do you think are needed in your locality? Briefly give a reason for each number suggested.
2. What are the main reasons Adventist children do not attend Adventist schools in your locality?
3. How can your church raise money to create a school (if you don't have one), or add a school (if you have one or more)?
4. How can you use your church building as a school and your learned church members as volunteers to help school drop-outs or those who never had the chance of going to school, at least for them to be literate and numerate?

NB:

- Answers to questions should be concise, preferably in single words, or short phrases, and in bullet format.
- There should be a minimum of one and a maximum of three answers to each question.
- The reports should reach the Division latest April 5, 2019.

Report from each group must use the following format:

__Name of the Church and Union: e.g., Malejor SDA Church, SGUC

__Discussion Group: e.g., Very Young Parents

__Group Members: e.g. 20 Females and 15 Males

__ANSWERS:

1.

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____

2.

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____

3.

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____

4.

- _____
- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____