

The Social Function of Adventist Education

George R. Knight

Based on a Chapter from *Educating for Eternity: A Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy of Education* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 2016). Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

Introduction

Education holds a strategic position in every society because all youth must pass through some type of educational experience to prepare them to fill society’s responsible positions. The future of any society will be shaped by its current youth. The social function of the Adventist school has both a conservative and a revolutionary aspect. The commingling of those two roles empowers the developing student to be in the world but not of the world.

The Strategic Role of Education

- Education holds a strategic position in every society.
- All youth must pass through some type of educational experience to prepare them to fill society’s responsible positions.
- The future of any society will be shaped by its current youth, and the direction they will take that society will to a large extent be determined by their education.
- The control of educational institutions and the content to be taught in those institutions has been a perennial social issue.

Adventist Education’s Conservative and Revolutionary Roles

- Adventist education is conservative in the sense that it seeks to transmit the unchanging truths of the Bible across time.
- Adventist education is revolutionary as a change agent of a righteous God in a sinful world.
- It seeks change through broad social acts such as feeding the poor (Matthew 25:31–46) and making the earth a better place to live through social reform and changing the *status quo* on the individual level.
- However, the only real and final solution to the sin problem as pictured in the Bible is the Second Advent (Revelation 14:6-12; 14-20; 21:1-4).

Adventist Education as an Agent for Change

- The life of Jesus as portrayed in the Bible can best be seen as modeling change rather than conservatism.
- Jesus was the Reformer of reformers and calls his followers to become change agents in His ongoing mission.
- The function of the Adventist school is to educate the youth of the church for service to God and their neighbors, rather than to train them for self-service through the acquisition of a “good job” and a comfortable income.

Conclusion

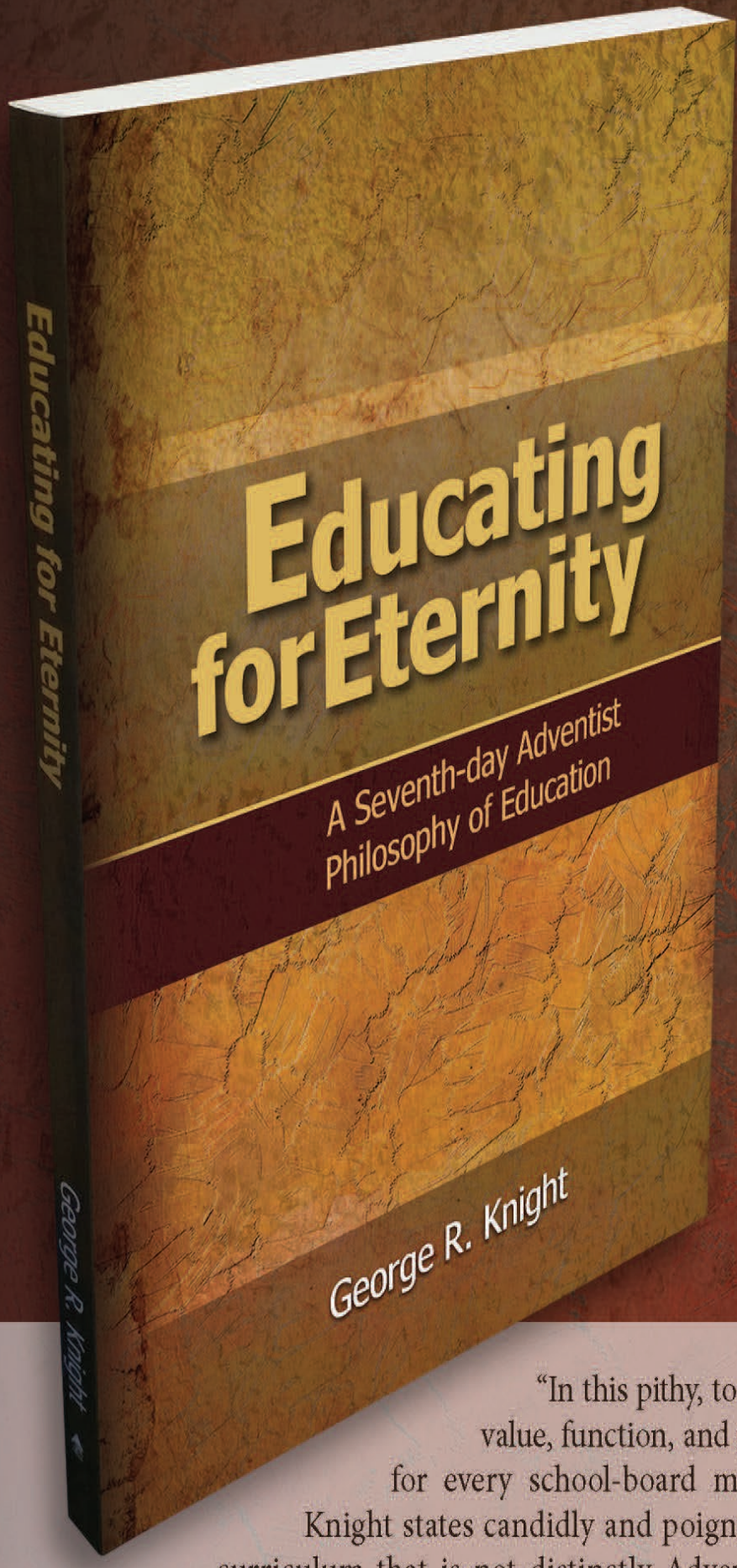
Adventist schools can be seen as a staging ground for Christian activism and missionary work. It provides, ideally, not only the knowledge underlying the evangelistic imperative of the church but also practical, guided activities in the larger community that ensure that students develop the skills necessary to meet people with the message of Jesus and to perform their individual roles in the context of God’s church on earth.

Acknowledgment

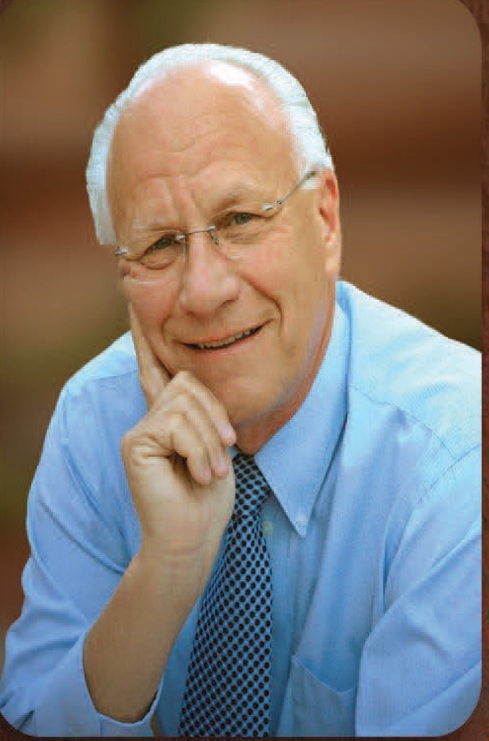
*This article originally appeared as a chapter in George R. Knight’s most recent publication *Educating for Eternity: A Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy of Education* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 2016). Reprinted by permission of the publisher. See also the review of the book in the Book Review section.

References

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3. Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1952), 271.
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A Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy of Education
George R. Knight



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2016 • 164 pp.
ISBN: 978-1-940980-12-6
\$ 14.99
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