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How much Philosophy of Adventist Education is in Adventist Theological Education?

A Critical Appreciation and Analysis of Adventist Theological Education in Europe

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
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APPROVAL

This dissertation was accepted on 18 February 2026 and meets the required content and formal criteria.

The dissertation committee has read and approved this work.

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[1] https://www.grammarly.com [accessed 2025-12-22]
[2] https://www.deepl.com/de/translator [accessed 2025-12-22]
[3] https://notebooklm.google [accessed 2025-12-22]
[4] https://claude.ai [accessed 2026-04-30]

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates whether the philosophical foundations of Adventist Education (AE) effectively permeate the structure, content, and methodology of programs of Adventist Theological Education (ATE) designed to train future pastors.

The literature review reveals a significant imbalance: while the history of AE is well documented, there is a notable gap in the literature linking the philosophy of AE specifically to theological education. Drawing on the writings of Ellen White and structured according to the Frankena Model, the study defines the core pillars of AE as the restoration of the Divine image in man, the harmonious development of physical, mental, and spiritual powers, and preparation for joyful service in this world and the hereafter.

Using a qualitative empirical approach based on Grounded Theory, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 deans of Adventist theological institutions across Europe. The findings uncover that European deans have a strong personal commitment to AE ideals, such as fostering independent thinkers and prioritising character development.

However, several systemic tensions and gaps were also identified:

- A dichotomy of models – institutions are forced into the "University Model" (academic accreditation) instead of a "Seminary Model" (pastoral formation)
- A lack of professional pedagogical training for theological faculty and leadership training for deans
- Evidence of a strong influence of North American curricular patterns and other adopted curricula without sufficient contextualization for European needs

The dissertation concludes with practical recommendations for global church administration, institutional leadership, and individual faculty members. Key proposals include developing an "ATE Manifesto" to guide future reform, creating size-appropriate accreditation standards, and implementing an integrative, outcome-oriented curriculum that moves students from mere "knowledge about God" to an experiential "knowledge of God".

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAA = Adventist Accrediting Association
AE = Adventist Education
ATE = Adventist Theological Education
EASTRS = European Adventist Society of Theology and Religious Studies
ETTC = European Theology Teachers´ Conferences
IBMTE = International Board of Ministerial and Theological Education
JAE = The Journal of Adventist Education
ICETE = The International Council of Evangelical Theological Education
NIV = The Holy Bible, New International Version, used by permission

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Point of Depart

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a Protestant movement (Melton 2016b; Shattuck 2018b) that emerged from the so-called *Adventist* or *Millerite* movement in the mid-19th century (van Bemmelen 2015). Its prominent figure was William Miller, a farmer and Baptist lay preacher (Shattuck 2018a) preached the imminent return of Jesus. What modestly grew out of the debris of the *Great Disappointment* (Melton 2016a), the disastrous shock that Jesus did not return as anticipated in 1844 eventually evolved into a worldwide church. In the middle of the 2020s, the Seventh-day Adventist Church operated in more than 210 countries and counted about 23.7 million members (Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research 2025b). This lists the Seventh-day Adventist Church among the world´s ten largest international religious organisations, as van Bemmelen (2015) describes in the *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Religious Practices*. He summarises the influence of the Seventh-day Adventist Church:

> Although in many countries Adventists constitute a relatively small percentage of the population, worldwide they have made significant contributions in the areas of health and medical care, education, humanitarian relief, religious liberty, and other fields. While working for the betterment of humanity in the present, Adventists believe that it is God alone who can and will ultimately solve the world's ills through the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. For this reason, preaching the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ is their highest priority.

As this dissertation was written in the context of the PhD program in Educational Leadership in International Theological Education of Columbia International University, Korntal, my focus was on the educational contributions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Hardly ten years after the official founding of the church in 1863 (Melton 2016b), the young church sponsored the first Adventist school in Battle Creek, Michigan (Greenleaf 2015:4) in 1872. Since then, a global educational network developed, with (the last official numbers available at the moment of the composition of this research being from the end of 2024): 10.381 schools and a total enrolment of 2.330.104 students (Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research 2024). Talking about their educational achievements, "Seventh-day Adventists boast a world-wide developing education system" (Jackman 2014) that is "the second largest church-operated network of schools in the world" (Greenleaf 2015:4). It is "second only in size to the Roman Catholic parochial schools" (Kido 2010). Even non-Adventist authors speak in one breath of the Adventist and Catholic educational efforts (Lantinga, Glanzer & Carpenter 2014:313).

When reading through the issues of the main channel of conversation concerning Adventist Education*, The Journal of Adventist Education*[5] *(*JAE*),* it becomes evident that Adventist Education is not understood as a categorical term but means something generic and genuine, as Guy (2002:4) describes:

> "Adventist education" is not simply schooling that is initiated, supported, and controlled by the Seventh-day Adventist community of faith; it is an education that communicates the Adventist heritage of belief, values, and spirit—the Adventist story, the Adventist view of reality, the Adventist way of life, the Adventist sense of mission.

As with any education (Frankena 1965b), there is also a guiding philosophy behind Adventist Education. Writing about this philosophy, different authors charge it with the task of being spiritual (Bietz 2002), redemptive (Knight 2010a, 2010b, 2010c), holistic (Taylor V 2014), and numerous other qualities, as discussed in Chapter 2, fi-

[5] https://www.journalofadventisteducation.org/en [accessed 2025-12-21]

nally linking it with “the denomination’s apocalyptic mission to the world” (Beardsley-Hardy 2017:11), giving it the touch of “uniqueness” (Dulan 2010). All these descriptions of Adventist Education are not personal contributions by the authors mentioned above to an ever-growing understanding of education within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They are more of a summary of their individual perceptions of Adventist Education, as described by one of the church's co-founders, Ellen White. She is introduced later, along with an explanation of the vital role she has played and continues to play in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Adventist Education is grounded in what she said and wrote, as well as in the biblically informed vision she articulated for education. A cursory first glimpse at Adventist Education reveals a high claim: “True education means more than the pursual of a certain course of study”, she stated. “It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man.” (White [1903] 2014:8). Out of the nature of the doctoral program of this dissertation, the question emerges if the salient qualities of the philosophy of Adventist Education also permeate *Adventist Theological Education?* Is Adventist Theological Education concerned to be *more* than “a certain course of study”? Following the reasoning of Guy (2002:4) in the quotation above, we ask: Is Adventist Theological Education only a categorical description, meaning that it is a kind of theological education initiated, supported, and controlled by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, filled with its doctrines, and therefore called *Adventist* Theological Education? Likewise, this could be the case with *Catholic*, *Protestant*, or *Evangelical* Theological Education. Is the fact of who provides theological education the central element of differentiation, or is there a more profound distinction? Is there also an educational

philosophy sui generis of a given denomination that is saturating its respective theological education? Applying this to the Adventist Church, we ask: does the philosophy of Adventist Education – – exert a discernible influence on Adventist Theological Education by moulding its objectives, structure, content, and method? In other words, does the philosophy of Adventist Education give Adventist Theological Education a distinguishing quality beyond an Adventist dogmatic identity?

My particular interest in this question is rooted in my current professional responsibilities: I am a guest teacher at the Theological Seminary in Austria [6] and an administrator in the leadership of the Seventh-day Church of Austria. As the latter, I am part of the team that closely attends to the development of theological education in our territory. The fact that the church administration commissioned me to enrol in the Leadership in Theological Education program, and that it covers all costs, demonstrates the leadership's keen interest in fostering Adventist Theological Education in Austria.

Because *Columbia International University, Korntal,* is an Evangelical institution that offers its Doctor of Philosophy program as the German branch of Columbia International University [7] I had the chance to look beyond my immediate context and outside the box of the Seventh-Day Adventist theological education. That contributes a precious asset because it broadened my understanding of theological education per se and opened my eyes to the fascinating discussion about the why, what, and how of theological education in the Christian world in general and in the Evan-

[6] www.bogenhofen.at [accessed 2025-12-21]
[7] www.ciu.edu [accessed 2025-12-21]

gelical world in particular that could bring inspiring impulses into a similar discussion in the Adventist Church.

1.2 Research Relevance

There are several reasons this question of the liaison between the philosophy of Adventist Education (AE) and Adventist Theological Education (ATE) warrants study. Although numerous Adventist writers regard AE as special and unique, the literature on AE is markedly imbalanced. As presented in Chapter 2, many books cover in detail and depth the history of AE, of which *In Passion for the World* by Greenleaf (2005) is the most recent, detailed, and comprehensive of all. Looking for a thorough discussion of the philosophy of AE and its practical application in the Adventist educational system at all levels, the air becomes already relatively thin. In the long uninterrupted line of journals covering AE beginning at the end of the 19th century until today, briefly described in Chapter 2, numerous mostly short articles either summarise AE in a nutshell (e.g. Rasi 1995) or single out one aspect that is treated in detail, and a particular context (e.g. Butler 1998). However, apart from numerous books on education written by the co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Ellen White, there is only one author, George Knight, to be found far and wide who writes intensively on AE, especially from a philosophical point of view (Knight 2016a). While this is very helpful in understanding and structuring the philosophy of AE, he stays in general terms. Turning to my particular interest in theological education, no one seems to be discussing the connection between the philosophy of AE and ATE.

Although The Journal of Adventist Education ([s a]) claims to target Adventist teachers, educators, and educational administrators at the elementary, secondary,

and tertiary (college/university) levels worldwide, it places heavy emphasis on the elementary and secondary levels. Only occasionally are there articles concerning tertiary or higher education, but hardly ever the realm of theological education – except for a few articles presenting interesting details of its historical development (Valentine 2014; Knight 2008; Greenleaf 2008). While the wide range of articles dealing with different aspects of AE could and should be applied to ATE, there is no trace of such an endeavour in the JAE. Widening the range of research in the literature at large still does not yield a rich harvest of books or articles linking the philosophy of AE with ATE, or even touching ATE at all: only some older dissertations try to contextualise ATE in the South Pacific Islands (Currie 1977) and India (Ponniah 1986) and one article about ATE in the third millennium (NG 1998). Therefore, the question of the (missing) link between the philosophy of AE and ATE reveals a void that needed to be filled. Either the discussion about what ATE is and how AE should define its objectives, structure, content, and methods has been conducted behind closed doors and has left nearly no publicly visible traces over the last 25 years, or there has been no discussion of it at all.

The *European Adventist Society of Theology and Religious Studies* (EASTRS) is an association of European Adventist theologians (primarily teachers). They gather in a biennial rhythm at so-called *European Theology Teachers´ Conferences* (ETTC).[8] Looking at its webpage[9], there is no indication of discussion of ATE's raison d´être, nor of any document written about ATE. One goal of this dissertation is to contribute to this discussion or ignite it. The second one is to propose suggestions for de-

[8] http://www.eastrs.org/about-eastrs/committee-members-2/ [accessed 2025-12-21]
[9] http://www.eastrs.org [accessed 2025-12-21]

veloping and improving Adventist Theological Education based on the research results.

It is also worth noting that the Adventist Accrediting Association (AAA) explicitly examines whether AE is implemented in Adventist educational institutions. One of the criteria it is looking for is the congruence with the Adventist educational philosophy, as articulated in the educational philosophy statement. (Adventist Accrediting Association 2019:III-7). Specifically, regarding ATE, it is asking for a "statement of mission for the pastoral and theological education programs" that needs to be intentionally linked to the institutional mission and must be "evidenced in the program of studies" (:III-34). However, despite the AAA's concern with achieving congruence between AE and ATE, the handbook does not provide criteria to help members of an accrediting team assess this congruence. Only some hints are included in two areas that are to be examined within the pastoral and theological education (spiritual development of the students and their involvement in "evangelistic and nurturing activities"). In contrast, the other areas primarily address student and faculty qualifications and quality management. Maybe this lack of clarity and detail in describing how AE should be implemented in ATE is part of the problem, "that there is confusion regarding the pastoral office," as Alaña Huapaya (2020:41–42) states, discerning an "insufficient understanding of the role of the pastor from a biblical and theological perspective" as "one of the main causes of this situation." It seems that the necessary groundwork has not yet been done to sketch a vision of Adventist theological education that explicitly seeks to implement the philosophy of AE in its objectives, structure, content, and methods. Providing this groundwork is the task of this dissertation.

At the end of 2024, there were 22.224 (Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research 2025b:1) active ordained ministers leading the Seventh-day Adventist Church with nearly 101.000 local churches and more than 74.000 companies (groups of Adventists in a pre-church status) and a total membership of almost 23.000.000. A study published in 2013 (Dudley & Cincala 2013:5) revealed that 92% of ministers, before becoming local pastors and, in some cases, leaders at different regional, continental, and global levels of administration, *pass through up to 14 years of ATE*. Pausing reflectively on this fact, it is more than astonishing – if not unbelievable – that in more than 150 years of the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, there is so little discussion to discern in publications about how its theological education should look! Only in the most recent (second) edition of the *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Ministerial and Theological Education* (International Board of Ministerial and Theological Education 2017:9–12) the essential qualities of a Seventh-day Adventist minister are described along with the basic expected outcomes for the entry-level ministry degree (:17–23). This relatively young organisational body within the educational department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is described in Chapter 2.

Looking at the big picture, it seems that Colvin (1986:14) is right in stating:

> From the beginning we Seventh-day Adventists have been a pragmatic, impatient people. We have wanted to learn this morning in order to help this afternoon. We have seen (and continue to see) every moment as fraught with eternal consequences. […] And when gathered in worship we are likely to sing, “Work, for the night is coming.” In short, we have wanted everything—and especially our education—practical, timely and brief.

With Epperson (1996:22), we could ask: Is it "possible to be so 'devoted' that we do not internalize the truths that we believe, much less practice the lessons that we teach?".

Directly linked to the need of the church for properly trained pastoral personnel is the following observation that is included in the invitation to the 2019 meeting of the *European Adventist Society of Theology and Religious Studies*:

> In a changing world, it is normal for pastoral ministry to evolve. However, not only expectations regarding the profile of pastors are changing, but also in some respects, pastoral ministry is losing momentum, quantitatively through a loss of vocations, and qualitatively through a decline in pastoral recognition both within the Church by members and within society by authorities or contemporaries. Moreover, many pastors wonder about the meaning of their mission and the role that is fundamentally theirs (Monet [2018] 23.05.2018).

As an administrator in the leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Austria, I must admit that this challenge is valid. In the German-speaking countries, Austria, Germany and Switzerland, especially regarding the "loss of vocations", already pose a real challenge. In a few years, many active pastors will retire, and the current student numbers will fall far short of the yearly need for new pastors.

The invitation letter to the teacher's convention 2019 continues with a call for papers from participants addressing these challenges "from the diverse angles of the theological field," thereby answering the question: "What biblical, historical, and theological springs can revive the meaning of ministry?" Thus, the different disciplines are invited to share their wisdom and bring fresh insight to the situation, which is certainly not wrong, but may not go far enough. The most compelling question, from my perspective, appears at the end of the paragraph: "How is theological training serving the ministry and in tune with current needs?" This opens a window that allows us to say it differently: Could it be that theological training, *out of tune*

with current needs, is not serving ministry but maybe even hindering it? Could it be that theological education itself is part of the problem of the loss of momentum of pastoral ministry because of how it tries to attract new students, how the program is structured, and how content and methods are chosen? Could it be that not only pastoral ministry but also the institutions that prepare pastors for ministry need to recalibrate their vision, mission, and practice?

The report of the convention of European theological teachers at Collonges (Bruin 2019) from April 24th to 28th, 2019, lists several presentations that address the challenges in the modern European pastoral world. They were published in the EASTRS Journal *Spes Christiana* [10]*,* volume 31 [11]. My curious question – whether theological education was discussed at this convention as part of the solution or as part of the problem in addressing the challenges of pastoral ministry – must be answered with No. However, the already cited article by Alaña Huapaya (2020) *A Theology of Pastoral Ministry from an Adventist Perspective* is both exciting and challenging, offering valuable insights for recalibrating the pastoral role. However, unfortunately, he does not charge ATE with the task of scrutinising its educational goals to refocus the objectives, structure, content, and methods of theological programs. It seems that the European Teachers of ATE are well aware of the current challenges pastors face, but they avoid discussing ATE's role in these challenges and potential ways to address them through ATE reform.

Interweaving AE's philosophy deeper throughout ATE's objectives, structure, content, and methods will mark a turning point toward a fresh start and the begin-

[10] http://www.eastrs.org/spes-christiana [2025-12-21]
[11] http://www.eastrs.org/spes-christiana-volume-31-issue-1-june-2020 [2025-12-21]

ning of healing for both ATE's identity and the pastoral ministry. There is a fascinating example in the Evangelical world of how such a renewal could start. In 1983, the *International Council for Evangelical Theological Education* [12], the highest global agency representing Evangelical theological education, published the so-called *ICETE Manifesto* [13] that honestly words the perceived need for renewal in Evangelical theological education and confesses "how far short evangelical theological education often falls with respect to such renewal" (International Council for Evangelical Theological Education 2002). It does not confine its analysis to lamentation; rather, it identifies 12 areas for growth. The ICETE Academy began offering "certified professional training for theological educators wherever they are in the world." In 2022, the *ICETE Manifesto II* was published (International Council for Evangelical Theological Education 2022), deepening the thorough examination and development of evangelical theological education. A similar earnest and self-critical discussion about ATE's why, what, and how is not visible. I define this void as the empirical unknown that this thesis aimed to explore.

Summarising the different aspects of significance, these are the reasons that make this research necessary:

1. In the lack of literature on what the philosophy of AE could do to ATE in shaping its objectives (goals), structure (curriculum) and content (courses), and method (the actual teaching), this dissertation summarises AE and derived possible and necessary applications to ATE. The broad-ranging discussion of theological education in the Evangelical world (Cannell 2006; International

[12] https://icete.info (accessed 2025-10-23)
[13] https://icete.info/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/ICETE-Manifesto.pdf (accessed 2025-10-23),

Council for Evangelical Theological Education [s.a.]; Ott 2016) served as a point of reference for the validity of this dissertation's conclusions.

2. Asking the deans of European Adventist theological institutions for their understanding of AE and how this understanding affects their program, I looked for different fostering and debilitating factors influencing the objectives, structure, content, and method of their programs, thus finding reasons for the status quo. Knowing why we stand where we stand provided the necessary foundation to ask if the program offered is Fit for purpose (Ott 2015), – provided that the purpose itself is clear and has passed the exam of *fitness of its purpose*.

1.3 Research Context

We now turn to the question: with which disciplines this research was in dialogue? The three areas – education, leadership, and management of theological education – covered in the doctoral program “Leadership in Theological Education” already pointed to relevant directions: the question of Philosophy of Education is a core concern in the Educational Sciences. I therefore analysed the philosophy of AE following the model of Frankena (1965b) and Plueddemann (2009) in Chapter 4, after a thorough review of the available literature on AE in Chapter 3. The prominent authors we met on this journey were Ellen White ([1903] 2014) and George Knight (2016a). However, before delving into the philosophy of AE, I put on the historian's glasses and, in Chapter 2 at least in broad strokes, described the history of AE, thereby helping to familiarise readers with its development within its historical context. This is necessary to understand its current state, given the challenges and fluctuations over nearly 150 years. Before proceeding, I briefly presented an up-to-date

overview of the literature on the history of AE, focusing on Greenleaf's (2005) most recent and comprehensive book. In this historical overview of AE, I described key aspects of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's organisational structure and introduced Ellen White. She is unquestionably the most salient Adventist personality to date. Therefore, in Chapters 2.1, there is an introduction to the nature and structure of the Seventh-day Adventist church and an explanation of Ellen White's role within it.

In another part of Chapter 2, we turned to ATE. Theological education is a subfield of broader education that bridges education and theology. Considering the findings of Christian literature on theological education in general, this bridge leads into a minefield of fierce debate centring around what we do when we do *Theology* (Farley [1983] 2001). Subsequently, the question arises of what should be done in theological education (see Ott 2016:137–198, who summarizes the discussion and drafts a theology of theological education). The second part of Chapter 2 began with steps analogous to those in the first: a literature review on the history of ATE, followed by a brief sketch of the actual history. Trying to spot traces of an Adventist discussion about the nature of theological education or let alone the application of the philosophy of AE in ATE, resulted in the presumption that Adventist theological educators seem to shy away from the minefield mentioned above by not discussing it at all – or if they do, at least not openly. Few Adventist writers dare to enter this area like Kis (2007:123), trying “to find the possible causes of the disconnectedness between beliefs and practices”. I then described the main characteristics of an ATE that is firmly grounded in the philosophy of AE. This provided the basis for the empirical part of this dissertation.

1.4 Research Design

1.4.1 ***The Question of the Research***

This research followed the direction of this question: Is ATE only a categorical term, or does the philosophy of AE permeate a distinguishing quality to the *what* and *how* of ATE? In other words, does the philosophy of AE inspire and mould ATE education and if yes, how and to what extent?

However, this is not yet precise enough: although there is an official statement of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 2024-2025:223–225) about its understanding of the philosophy of AE, this cannot be taken as a given fact that is equally understood by everybody. Therefore, I asked: What is the AE understanding of the deans of Adventist theological institutions? How far is it in difference or congruence with the findings of our study done in the literature? How does this understanding inform the objectives, structure, content, and methods of the respective theological program? What influences help or hinder the implementation of AE´s philosophy in ATE?

1.4.2 ***The Object of Research***

I addressed this question by interviewing as many deans of European Adventist theological institutions as were willing to participate, asking for their understanding of AE and how they implemented it in their programs. I aimed to determine whether this educational philosophy aligns with or diverges from the findings on AE in our literature review.

1.4.3 ***The Method of the Research***

Digging through the literature, I used descriptive and summarising methods to present the findings and look for the logical and philosophical structure proposed by

Frankena (1965a). For the qualitative empirical analysis of the interviews, I followed the *Grounded Theory method* as developed by Strauss & Corbin (1997) using the software MAXQDA[14] as digital help.

When presenting the findings, I employed the three-step *See – Judge – Act* method developed by the Belgian Cardinal Joseph Cardijn, 1882-1967 (caritas europa s a). The Austrian theologian Stephanie Klein (2005) explained these steps in detail in the context of practical theological work. While I am aware that some use this triad as a moulding structure for their whole dissertation, I only used it as a frame for the qualitative part of this dissertation: the *"See"* section summarizes the highlights of the qualitative interviews after transcribing and coding, the *"Judge"* chapter houses the discussion of the findings and in *"Act"* I presented my observations as commendations, recommendations and possible future fields of study and research.

1.5 **Limitations and Delimitations**

A specific historical overview of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in relation to the development of AE and ATE is necessary to understand the essence and purpose of AE. Nevertheless, this dissertation does not aim for historical depth; the broad availability of literature on the history of AE and easily accessible original material, such as committee minutes, statements, and similar sources, created a temptation to delve deeper. However, this would have led to a detour obscuring the main objective: determining the impact of AE's philosophy on ATE. Therefore, I limited historical excursions to the utmost minimum.

[14] www.maxqda.de [accessed 2025-12-22]

Turning to the literature on AE, I narrowed the focus as well. I mainly worked with some original chapters by Ellen White (e.g.[1903] 2014) describing the core of the understanding of AE and the book of George Knight (2016a), *Education for Eternity*, which up to now is the only one dealing extensively with the philosophy of AE[15]. While providing an overview of the literature on AE, I only summarised it briefly. I immersed myself as deeply as necessary into literature about the history and meaning of AE to get a thorough understanding of the philosophy of AE to begin a serious conversation on eye-level with theological educators.

Concerning the empirical part of this dissertation, some constraints limited the range of the research:

As the data for this research was obtained through interviews, I had to identify interview partners from Adventist theological institutions, of which more than 70 exist worldwide. One person cannot travel worldwide to interview all the deans of Adventist theological institutions due to financial and time constraints. As the interviews were scheduled in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, all were conducted via Zoom and limited to European institutions willing to participate.

1.6 Assumptions and Presuppositions

Asking about the effectiveness of theological teachers Lamport (2010:37) concludes that the answer is not so much to be sought in what teachers *do* than in what they *understand*, how they "comprehend the subject and value human learning." Our assumption in this research is that anything a teacher does – in his role as a teacher – ultimately comes out of his understanding:

[15] We will use the online edition of this book (Knight 2010a; Knight 2010b; Knight 2010c)

> Educational philosophy is the foundation from which one's educational psychology springs. In other words, one's most robustly held beliefs about the nature and purpose of education manifests itself in how teaching and learning is fashioned. Furthermore, one's most strongly held assertions about educational psychology invariably display themselves in educational practice. (:39)

Coon (1996:7) points in the same direction, stating that classroom teachers' performance is determined by their prior view of the student's nature. If a teacher views his students as fundamentally good, he will help them acquire factual information. However, viewing human nature as inherently evil will alter the priority: the first concern will be the student's supernatural transformation of character. Being an Adventist writer Coon consequently concludes: "For committed Seventh-day Adventist teachers, character transformation is of primary concern." While we would pen this more cautiously and realistically, exchanging "is" with "should be", the reason for this primary concern is philosophical and inspired by metaphysical assumptions, with which is dealt later. As I have already specified above in presenting the research design, I cannot assume a common understanding of the philosophy of AE. Still, I took it for granted that all Adventist theological educators have a personal version of it that ultimately informs their teaching.

1.7 Knowledge-Constituting Interests

It should be clear from what I have written so far that I have a strong interest in a successful pastoral ministry. As this is an academic paper, I must define a successful pastoral ministry. Pastoral success cannot be measured by the pastor alone. To describe it, we need to see pastors in the context of the church they serve. Success then shifts from a personal level to that of the accomplishment of a common goal: Is the pastor able to lead his church to see its mission, to understand that it only exists for this mission, and is he able to help the church actually to accomplish it

(Shaw 2014:20)? The Seventh-day Adventist Church (Seventh-day Adventist Church 2015:4) has worded its mission as

> […] to call all people to become disciples of Jesus Christ, to proclaim the everlasting gospel embraced in the three angels' messages [Revelation 14:6–12], and to prepare the world for Christ´s soon return.

Comparing this ideal with reality within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, I discern a significant gap. As the theological seminary prepares future pastors, the question of how it can change the status quo is a burning issue. I am part of the leadership team responsible for hiring new pastors and addressing the challenges faced by those already in ministry. Due to the non-congregational structure of the Adventist Church, a central administration employs all pastors, assigns them to districts with several churches, and determines when to make changes, thereby forcing pastors to relocate. Amid all this, many leadership qualities are necessary or require development. The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Austria is a small field with nearly 4.500 members, 60 churches, and 9 groups.[16]

The current administrative structure, which encompasses a union of all churches, also makes it highly accessible to them. When problems arise between pastors and members, they quickly escalate to the church leadership. Very often, the issues are rooted in pastors' weak performance in areas that at least some should have been addressed already in seminary. Ellen White ([1894] 2018:174) tellingly penned: "What is neglected in this training process is likely to remain undone." My interest in this thesis is to fan the flames of occasional discussion about ATE's objectives, structure, content, and method into a burning desire to bring it to its best by linking it more closely to its philosophical source and applying necessary changes.

[16] Numbers from October 2025

Looking back on my professional life, I have observed a marked difference in learning outcomes when I participated in training sessions that used teaching and learning methods beyond those I encountered in my theological education. In addition to those experiences, the Leadership in Theological Education program courses at Columbia International University in Korntal profoundly inspired me. They provided me with theoretical knowledge and practical skills that significantly transformed the content and methods of the course I teach at the Bogenhofen Theological Seminary, thereby improving the learning experience, student feedback, and the impact on students' lives. Therefore, because of the experience, how powerful it can be to start with the right questions and to dare to lecture less but teach differently in activating deeper instead of surface learning.

The last knowledge-constituting interest is the most personal and the most dangerous. My theological education took place between 1987 and 1992. Immediately after finishing, I began working as a pastor. The transition from a relatively passive listener in lectures to life in a church was significant and challenging. It felt like being a suckling, needing to learn from scratch what is essential. From the first day of my ministry, I encountered challenges my theological education had not prepared me to face. At that time, Austria's internship system was underdeveloped; even if it had been stronger, there would have been few connections between what I learned and ministry practice. Because my parents had not raised me to look for excuses for my failures, I blamed myself for them. For a long time, a deep feeling of incompetence overshadowed my life. Being an autodidact helped me learn many things, but it was not without blood, sweat, and tears. Only after many years did I begin to question the kind of theological "education" I had undergone, of which perhaps

90% did not contribute usefully to the reality awaiting me when I entered the ministry. As I described in the previous paragraph, different approaches to theological education can significantly enhance the transition of what students learn into professional life. In the Evangelical world, numerous resources are available to help renew theological education. Therefore, there is hope. I wrote this thesis to identify areas where things run smoothly and others where change is necessary. The danger I mentioned in the first sentence of this paragraph lies in the trap of oversizing the frustration I felt about my theological education almost forty years ago, projecting my experience with an outdated theological education into the present situation. This is a point I was particularly mindful of and cautious about. The following controllers helped to prevent my frustration from biasing the results or the way I evaluated the data:

(1) Listening attentively and carefully to what my interview partners told me, I asked myself constantly if I read something in the transcript that was not there. Following the rules of Grounded Theory closely helped to avoid this trap.

(2) Checking my evaluation with my supervisors also helped to enlarge the scope of my attention.

(3) Being prudent in the wording of my evaluation, following the counsel of Paul that on this side of eternity, we only know in part.

(4) Being kind instead of harsh by evaluating the data while being honest about the facts will build a better base for Adventist theological educators to work with this dissertation's material.

1.8 Definition of terms

I have used the term “philosophy of Adventist Education” frequently so far and should define what I understand by “philosophy of education.” Following William Frankena (1965a) I draw the frame of a philosophy of education broader than Lamport (2010:37), who, when talking about the “innate and explicit conceptions of educational philosophy, psychology, and practice”, sees psychology and practice rightly coming out of the educational philosophy. Frankena, however, goes beyond that and provides a logical structure for philosophy. I presented it in detail in Chapter 4, so this is only a summary. Frankena brings together the metaphysical, epistemological, and axiological assumptions (the worldview), the ultimate purpose, the respective educational goals, the rationale for and choice of methods, and concrete conclusions about the practice of education.

When discussing ATE, I see far more than a specific academic course of study. Lamport (2010:48), challenges common narrow views of theological education:

> “Theological education is neither”; it is not “theological” unless it is [sic] considers the nature of its mission to be ultimately Ministerial [sic]; and it is not “education” unless it takes seriously the learner as focal point of the process.

Findings from the literature on the nucleus of AE underscore these two pillars of theological education. Taking these two aspects seriously, I define Adventist theological education in this dissertation as pastoral formation, equipping students to lead and to train church members to live as faithful disciples of Christ, who take their part in God´s mission to call people into his kingdom and to prepare for the coming of Christ. When one of the two – either the ministry or the person of the learner – is lost out of sight, ATE could be no more than a categorical term. There is the danger that Adventists copy the program's structure from elsewhere and fill it

with Adventist dogma, thereby reducing it to "indoctrination instead of education," as Beach (1989:24) wrote, speaking of the pitfalls for a Christian University – meaning also Adventist universities – any educational institution should say, like Paul (Phil 3:12), “We count ourselves not to have apprehended, but we press toward the mark of the high calling.” To find out how this pressing or striving for the journey of excellence – the motto of Adventist Education [17] – is incarnated in ATE is the question of this research within the limitations mentioned above.

In using the term academic throughout this dissertation, a necessary distinction must be made. My own theological education was completed at an institution that, while denominationally grounded, followed a purely university-oriented model in which theoretical knowledge held the centre and practical formation played a marginal role — and where, at best, practice appeared as a theoretical subject rather than a lived dimension of learning. This experience informs, but does not determine, the perspective taken here.

My concern is not to argue against academic rigour, but to advocate for a different kind of academic formation — one analogous to the model of the *Fachhochschule*, or University of Applied Sciences, which has proven highly effective in the Austrian and broader European educational context. Such institutions are fully academic in their standards and intellectual demands yet deliberately integrate theory and practice as equally constitutive elements of the educational process. Students do not merely study about a profession; they are formed *for* and *within* it. Applied to ATE, this would mean an institution that is academically serious *and* practi-

[17] https://adventisteducation.org [accessed 2025-12-21]

cally formative in equal measure — neither sacrificing intellectual depth for pragmatic relevance, nor burying pastoral formation under layers of purely cognitive output.

Where this dissertation critiques existing models of ATE, it does so from this standpoint: not opposition to the academic, but advocacy for an academically rigorous and practically integrative model of theological formation.

1.9 Editorial Remarks

In this dissertation, numerous works by Ellen White are be used. When citing Ellen White's Books, there is a special requirement. The online PDF versions are edited versions of the original books and contain two page-numbering systems. The page numbers of the digital and current editions alternate between the upper-left and upper-right corners. The numbering of the original edition is indicated in grey square brackets, e.g., [131], and may appear anywhere on a page, in the margins next to the text. It indicates the starting point of the respective page in the original. These two numbering systems have their right. In the EGW APP or on https://egwwritings.org, the texts are displayed independently of paper size constraints and therefore use the original pagination at the end of any given paragraph in the following form: {3T 131. 1}. *3T* is the book code for *Testimonies to the Church, Volume 3*, then there are the page number and the paragraph. Where possible, I used either scans of original articles as references or PDF versions of currently available books. When citing from PDF books, I used the reprint's pagination rather than the original numbering, as it is easier for readers to locate a specific passage in the PDF file.

When referring to other authors, rather than citing them as "Smith" or "Butler," I presented them – where appropriate and helpful – in their full names, along with brief information about their denominational background.

British English was chosen as the language for writing and proofreading this dissertation. In accordance with the recognised citation rules for academic literature, all quotations were left in their original form. Because many of the quotations are taken from American literature, this results in apparent inconsistencies in spelling.

In citing sources and compiling the bibliography, this dissertation follows the Harvard citation style as prescribed by Columbia International University, Korntal (CIU Korntal), adhering to the rules set out in the handbook for citation (CIU Korntal 2026).

1.10 Research Ethics

This study complies with the guidelines of Columbia International University, Columbia (SC), USA, and Columbia International University, Korntal/Germany. Furthermore, this study adheres to the Research on Human Subjects guidelines, which were relevant in the empirical research section, where the personal rights of the interview partners needed to be protected.

1.11 Summary and Perspective

In this first Chapter, the context of this research was described: Adventist theological education in Europe. The problem's relevance was defined, and the research question was formulated: *Does the philosophy of AE inspire, and mould ATE education, and if so, how and to what extent?* The research object was outlined as the understanding and experiences of deans of Adventist theological institutions. The research method was introduced, drawing on the Grounded Theory Method, qualita-

tive content analysis, and the *See – Judge – Act* triad to present the findings. The study's limitations were acknowledged by focusing on ATE in Europe. Underlying assumptions and presuppositions were identified, the knowledge-constituting interests revealed, and essential terms defined. Some editorial remarks and the acknowledgement of Columbia International University's ethical guidelines were at the end of this first Chapter.

We conclude with a brief outline of the structure of this thesis. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 traces the historical development of AE. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the literature on the philosophy of AE. Chapter 4 examines the essence of AE´s philosophy, presenting it through the Frankena model. Chapter 5 describes the research process; Chapter 6 presents the results; Chapter 7 discusses the results; and, finally, Chapter 8, offers commendations and recommendations and possible areas for future research. Chapter 9 concludes this dissertation.

In the Appendix, the reader can find another detailed chapter on the development of the curriculum for the “Master in Pastoral Ministry” program, developed by the Intereuropean Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I had the privilege of being part of the team that designed it and applied the principles highlighted in this dissertation, which provided the theoretical background for the necessary groundwork.

2 THE HISTORY OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION

2.1 Introduction to the Seventh-day Adventist Church

As the philosophy of Adventist education (AE) can be understood only in the context of the development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, I expand the brief introduction to this Christian movement presented in Chapter 1.1.

2.1.1 Beliefs and Structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

The Seventh-day Adventist church was organised in 1863 and "chose the name `Seventh-day Adventists´ to concisely express the heart of their faith" (van Bemmelen 2015), *Adventist* because of the conviction that the promise of the second Advent of Jesus Christ is still valid. *Seventh-day* refers to the conviction that the Sabbath, as the seventh day of the week, is still the divinely ordained day of rest and should be honoured by humanity.

Along with these two, there are several other distinguishing beliefs in the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the bible: the state of death, the nature of hell, the heavenly sanctuary, and the prophetic ministry of Ellen White. The Seventh-day Adventist Church tries to balance its doctrinal singularity with many endeavours …

> … in the areas of health and medical care, education, humanitarian relief, religious liberty, and other fields […] working for the betterment of humanity in the present" (van Bemmelen 2015).

In terms of organisation, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is headed by the General Conference [18] that is "coordinating the global ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and is responsible for the spiritual and developmental plans of the

[18] See https://www.adventist.org/en/world-church [accessed 2025-12-21]. A video summarises in less than a minute the structure of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church.

church around the world" (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists [s a]). From the perspective of Seventh-day Adventist church members, the structure is organised in ever-widening circles: each member is a member of a local church; a certain number of regional churches form Conferences; several Conferences are connected to Unions; and the Unions belong to Divisions. There are 13 Divisions worldwide operating as administrative entities of the General Conference. This brief explanation should clarify the terms used in the organisation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Constituencies elect the leadership of the church at any level and serve for terms. The local church elects, for terms of one or two years, its elders and responsible persons for different ministries (except the pastor, who is usually employed and sent by the administration of the Conference). All churches in a Conference send delegates to elect the Conference-level leadership for a four-year term. Delegates from Conferences elect the responsible persons at the Union level, and representatives from all levels meet every five years to elect world leadership at the General Conference and Division level. This worldwide meeting is called the General Conference in Session. Between sessions of the General Conference, the General Conference Executive Committee is the highest body responsible in the church, chaired by the president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 2024-2025, 2022).

2.1.2 Understanding the Role of Ellen G. White in the Seventh Adventist Church

Although Ellen White is listed among the 100 most significant Americans of all time (Frail 2014), her primary influence is undoubtedly within the Seventh-day Church. The Non-Adventist world may be unaware that all of the above-mentioned Seventh-day Adventist contributions to "the betterment of humanity" (van Bemmelen 2015)

are ultimately inspired and promoted by the writings that flowed out of the untiring pen of Ellen White.

She grew up as Ellen Harmon in a very pious Methodist family that became part of the Millerite movement. She experienced the Great Disappointment and remained with one of the small groups that continued to believe after the Advent movement collapsed in 1844. In this group, she met James White, whom she married in 1846 (Melton 2016c). While she didn´t play a dominant role in the development of the beliefs in the following years, the main pillars of the Adventist faith were developed by various people (Jemison 1955:108–110), she played a formative role in drawing the attention of the young church to the topic of mission, health and education (Krause 2019). Together with her husband, she shaped the Seventh-day Adventist Church during its constitution and growth like no one else. Ellen White provided thought, counsel, and inspiration by writing and speaking. James White was highly gifted in organisation, business and leadership, and was the initiator of several important institutions and ministries of the Seventh-day Adventist Church: the publishing house, medical institutions, educational institutions, and the organisation of the church were begun by James White (Ellen G. White® Estate [s a])

Seventh-day Adventists believe in spiritual gifts and consider the writings of Ellen White as a manifestation of the prophetic gift and therefore as inspired (Froom 1971:101–102). At the same time, her writings are not seen on the same level as the bible; consequently, they are not “an addition to the canon of Sacred Scriptures” (Biblical Research Institute of The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 1982). On the contrary, everything she wrote is under the judgment of the

Bible. Ellen White herself considers her writings to be “a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light” (White 1903:15).

It is important not to underestimate the depth and influence of her input, which has been and remains an inspiration to many. However, in my experience, there is no consensus on how to interpret her writings. Looking back on conversations at all levels of our church, with lay members, pastors, and administrators, in Austria and beyond, I found a broad range of interpretations. Some try to answer any question with a quotation from Ellen White, and, at the opposite extreme, those who consider her writings merely edifying literature. At her times, the ideal Ellen White painted in any subject she covered, and the reality was wide apart, which often gave her voice an exhorting and warning tone. At the beginning of the 21st century, we still hear this voice and tone in her vision of godly education, and we must compare what we read with what we live. The task of most prophets in biblical times was not so much to predict the future as to address pressing social and personal issues, which often elicited adverse reactions from those concerned. So, apart from a scholar’s point of view and scientific distance, there is always a personal string attached that may explain some resentment that could surface when the reader of her writings detects gaps between the way things are and how they should be. The long time span from then to today also raises hermeneutical questions (Akers 1989:10): which elements are spoken into particular times and specific situations, and which elements are timeless? To meet this challenge, I will attend to context as far as possible and necessary and seek the guiding principles behind the mere words. Finishing this short introduction, it is interesting to observe that the book

Education (White [1903] 2014) is listed on *Goodreads*[19] and has already received approximately 330 ratings and many reviews, of which some indeed were not written by Seventh-day Adventists. One reviewer stated: “This was better than I expected. After all, how could a book written in 1903 have any bearing on education in 2016? Shockingly more than I thought.” (Goodreads [s a]).

Writing about her ministry and role will not be sufficient to explain the enduring influence of Ellen White on the Seventh-day Adventist Church to this day. To grasp the reasons for the great appreciation most Adventists have for Ellen White, it will be necessary to read at least some passages in original wording and tone, which we will do when dealing with the philosophy of AE.

2.2 A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventist Education

2.2.1 An Overview of the Literature Describing the History of AE

Providing a brief history of the development of AE requires a similarly limited panoramic overview, which will necessarily be blurred by omissions, as in the introduction to the Seventh-day Advent Church and to the role of its cofounder, Ellen White. Here is an overview of the literature: Some books are biographies of key figures for AE (Neff 1964; Gish & Christman 2005; Knight 1983; Valentine 2005). Hodgen (1978) assembled a wide range of critical primary documents concerning AE, Cadwallader (1975), Olsen (1926:331–344; 585-598; 637-650) Vande Vere (1972), and Vande Vere (1975) cover early parts of the development of AE. The most recent and comprehensive history of AE is authored by Greenleaf (2005) *In Passion For The World* (:25). The same author squeezed the content of this 560-page volume into a short

[19] https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/7124459-education [accessed 2025-12-21]

article *Timeline for Seventh-day Adventist Education* (Greenleaf 2015). These two will be the primary sources of the following outline.

2.2.2 The Development of the Seventh-day Adventist Educational Network

Hardly ten years after its official founding in 1863, the young church sponsored the first Adventist school in Battle Creek, Michigan (:4), in 1872. The first college, also located in Battle Creek, was established in 1874. The first article about "Proper Education" flew out of the pen of Ellen White, published in *The Health Reformer* in six instalments (White 1872; for the complete article see White [1875] 2017:128–153). Many others should follow, accompanying the shaky and humble beginnings of AE. The implementation of the principles "was sometimes clumsy and characterized by debate over organisation, identity and purpose" (Greenleaf 2005:15). It was a time of "learning by trial and too much error" (:34), illustrating the fundamental need for wise, competent, spiritual and visionary leadership of educational institutions. Already in 1872, the Battle Creek College closed for one year because a conflict between staff and students escalated to such an extent that a senior staff member was physically assaulted. Reopening a year later, the situation ameliorated, especially under the leadership of William Warren Prescott (Valentine 1982; Valentine 2005).

In 1887, the church leadership created the office of Secretary of Education, under the direction of William Prescott in addition to his duties as president of the Battle Creek College (Greenleaf 2015:4). In 1901, the College was moved to Berrien Springs, Michigan, where it reopened under the name of Emmanuel Missionary College, the forerunner of the Andrews University (the name change was voted in

1957, implemented 1959, General Conference Committee 1957:866), today the flagship university of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In 1900, there were already several Schools and Colleges in North America, including a nursing school, as well as schools in Europe (Denmark 1883, Germany 1899), Australia (1888 in Melbourne, 1897 Avondale), and the first Adventist college outside the United States opened in South Africa (1893). Schools were also started in South America (Argentina 1893, Brazil 1894) (Greenleaf 2015:4–5). The first two decades of the 20th century saw the proliferation of Adventist schools worldwide. Wherever the busy Adventist missionaries entered a new field, they "were prone to set up printing presses, emphasize health care, and if possible, offer some level of education" (Greenleaf 2005:15). "By 1920", so Greenleaf (2005:15), "every major field around the world" would operate "its own school to train church employees, thus education became the primary factor in denominational self-perpetuation." Albeit "young and somewhat faltering" in 1920, a worldwide Adventist system of education existed.

In 1911, the national accrediting association rated the College of Medical Evangelists (today, Loma Linda University, the leading Adventist medical university) with a "C". That experience sparked a long "denominational debate about secular accreditation" (Greenleaf 2015:6), which eventually yielded to the inevitable: graduates needed a recognised certificate. On the one hand, it was necessary to meet national standards for employee qualification in certain areas. On the other hand, although the need for professionally trained Adventist personnel across various spheres of activity (administration, business, publishing, health care, food production, education) was enormous, the church could not employ all its students. There-

fore, they needed to be prepared also for employment outside the church. The deep suspicion toward governmental accreditation is rooted in the Adventist conviction that state and church should operate strictly separate. An official governmental accreditation could erode the church's independence and threaten its identity. On the other hand, there was a need to comply with the general standards for the outcomes of professional degrees, thereby allowing graduates to work outside the Adventist Church (Greenleaf 2005:322, 2008:33). Eventually, it became clear that those two could be combined. Although by then, this was primarily a North American issue, it eventually evolved into a global challenge, including in ATE, as we will see. In 1929, a denominational accrediting program was established, initially in the hope that it would pre-empt the need for regional governmental academic accreditation. Still, as this hope did not come to fruition (Greenleaf 2005:310), the *Adventist Accrediting Association*[20] can today only issue accreditation within the denomination (and its range is limited to secondary and tertiary education). As Greenleaf (2008) illustrates in the article “Who is in charge?”, there is an ongoing tension between the desire of administrative and denominational control of the educational system by the world church leadership on the one hand and the academic institutions operated by lower and local levels of Seventh-day Adventist administrative entities on the other. I will return to this tension in the next Chapter, when I present the history of ATE. To understand the self-perception of the AAA, here is a short statement of its purpose:

> Like other accrediting bodies, the Adventist Accrediting Association (AAA) evaluates conformity to threshold standards of academic quality. But because Adventist education is based on a broad definition of holistic education in the context of

[20] https://adventistaccreditingassociation.org/ [accessed 2025-12-21]

> a redemptive goal, the AAA also evaluates evidence that the school is achieving success in the spiritual domain and that it is truly "Adventist" (Beardsley-Hardy 2008:16).

Flying over the timeline, we mark salient events or dates with general importance to the development of AE. In 1937, the second and last (!) world council for Adventist Educators was conducted, two years later, *The Journal of True Education*[21] began publication, changing its name in 1967 to *The Journal of Adventist Education*[22] (Greenleaf 2015:8). This journal is still today the primary medium for Seventh-day Adventist Education. The years after World War II saw growth in both quantity and quality. The College of Medical Evangelists became the first Adventist institution to grant a PhD (medical sciences) in 1958. In 1961, the name was changed to Loma Linda University (:8–9), today a leading medical institution, well-known for its contributions in heart surgery, specialised in heart transplants for children. In 1968, under the leadership of Siegfried Horn, Adventists entered into the field of archaeology (:9). Still today, there are a good number of projects run either by or with significant contributions of Adventists (Geraty 2021). In 1972, the first doctoral program (Doctor of Ministry) was offered at Andrews University (Greenleaf 2015:9). After World War II, the number of educational institutions and student enrolment in the global Adventist educational network was rising constantly to a total of 10.363 schools from primary to university level (numbers from the end of 2024). With 2.457.694 students enrolled (Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research 2025a:95), the Seventh-day Adventist educational network is "the second largest church-operated network of schools in the world" (Greenleaf 2015:4). It is "second only in size

[21] All issues available at https://adventistdigitallibrary.org/adl-405075/journal-adventist-education [accessed 2025-12-21] unto 1968.

[22] https://jae.adventist.org [accessed 2025-12-21]

to the Roman Catholic parochial schools" (Kido 2010), even non Adventist authors speak in one breath of the Adventist and Catholic educational efforts (Lantinga, Glanzer & Carpenter 2014:313).

2.3 A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventist Theological Education

2.3.1 An Overview of the Literature Describing the History of ATE

To speak of a "body" of literature dealing with ATE in general, or of its history in detail, does not reflect reality. Compared with the numerous books written about Adventist educators and AE, the body of literature on ATE in general is very small. After extensive research, only a handful of sources on the history of ATE were identified. There are some pages in the already mentioned book, *In Passion for the World* (Greenleaf 2005) and some articles: one with a short, but comprehensive historical overview of ATE (Campbell 2007), another dealing with some aspects (Greenleaf 2008); another two articles highlighting the development of internship for beginners in the ministry as complementary to ATE (Williams 2001a, 2001b) with interesting insight about the assumed limits of theological education; still another deals with the tension between good academic practice and the practical aspects of pastoral formation, promoting "toward an integrated whole" (Becerra 1993). A quite recent article (House & Robertson 2010) describes a well-designed, field-based theological education at Avondale School, Australia. In addition to that, there are some passages from the pen of Ellen White, dealing with the specific challenges of pastoral education at the beginning of the Seventh-day Adventist church (White [1889] 2017). These sources are the basis for the following overview.

2.3.2 The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Theological Education

Because the speed of the rapidly growing Adventist church was not in pace with the growth of its educational system, let alone its endeavours for ministerial training, the desperately needed ministers were in the majority converts from other denominations, who "considered their ordination as still valid" (Campbell 2007:20). Especially before the official organisation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1863, the movement suffered under the threat of impostors and pastors, who departed from faith, but still had access to the pulpit as a result of a missing ministerial credential system (:20). Initially, clergy proliferation was achieved through the mentoring of younger workers by more experienced ministers. That this did not always work smoothly is illustrated by a paragraph in the above-mentioned series of articles by Ellen White *Proper education,* now in Volume 3 of the series *Testimonies for the church:*

> Young men should not enter upon the work of explaining the Scriptures and lecturing upon the prophecies when they do not have a knowledge of the important Bible truths they try to explain to others. They may be deficient in the common branches of education and therefore fail to do the amount of good they could do if they had had the advantages of a good school. Ignorance will not increase the humility or spirituality of any professed follower of Christ. The truths of the divine word can be best appreciated by an intellectual Christian. Christ can be best glorified by those who serve Him intelligently. The great object of education is to enable us to use the powers which God has given us in such a manner as will best represent the religion of the Bible and promote the glory of God (White [1875] 2017:153).

It became more and more evident that "zeal alone was not enough to qualify a person to preach" and "too many Adventist ministers lacked the professionalism which the public associated with men of cloth" (Greenleaf 2005:53). Not one "of the contemporary Adventist schools offered anything in the way of systematic theological study" (Valentine 2005:73). So short meetings and assemblies were started with a

broad range of biblical and general – or even rudimentary matters – as “penmanship, English grammar, rhetoric and `elocution´”, trying to redress the problem “that many Adventist preachers were deficient in good judgment.” (Greenleaf 2005:53).

With the Start of Battle Creek College in the 1880s, there was the first possibility for ministers to get a classical education, “supplemented by Bible institutes and on-the-job training with a more experienced minister” (Campbell 2007:20), but this still didn´t meet the growing standards of education. Ellen White, comparing the formation of the pastor with the learning of a trade or profession as a merchant, carpenter, farmer or lawyer, calls that someone who “may be a preacher” must “also be fitted to act as a pastor” and that there is a “demand for an intelligent, educated ministry” (White [1889] 2017:483). She even urged:

> We would that there were strong young men, rooted and grounded in the faith, who had such a living connection with God that they could, if so counseled by our leading brethren, enter the higher colleges in our land, where they would have a wider field for study and observation. Association with different classes of minds, an acquaintance with the workings and results of popular methods of education, and a knowledge of theology as taught in the leading institutions of learning would be of great value to such workers, preparing them to labor for the educated classes and to meet the prevailing errors of our time (:535).

In the same year, 1889, there was the first attempt to offer an exclusive curriculum, a Ministers Bible School, on the campus of Battle Creek College (Greenleaf 2015:4), a heart project of William Warren Prescott, who was the college president at the time (Valentine 2005:73). Unfortunately, the project had a very bumpy start and no bright future. The aftermath of the great theological conflict of 1888 thrust Seventh-day Adventist administrators and ministers into a contentious debate over justification by faith. There were also disagreements over the target group for the Ministry Bible School (the emphasis was on pastors already in the field rather than

those to be placed), as well as differences in fund allocation. All of this combined to mar the experiment, resulting in its termination in 1896. Other Adventist schools trained new ministers but paid no attention to those "who were employed and needed professional upgrading. It took another forty years until a formal seminary began" (Greenleaf 2005:56–57). All this led to the pitiful situation that, as "a group, ministers were probably the least educated of any denominational professional workers" (Greenleaf 2008:34), with primarily only undergraduate education. In 1913, the General Conference recognised the necessity of recommending that ministerial licenses should be restricted to men who had at least finished a minimum of twelve grades of school (Greenleaf 2005:343).

In 1919, Arthur Daniells, at the time already long-serving president of the General Conference, expressed great concern at a Bible Conference with many Bible teachers present, that ministerial graduates were so "poorly prepared for what the gruelling task of ministry often entailed." He reminded those educators that they "had a responsibility to not only theoretically train future pastors but prepare them for the actual life of the ministry." Although plans were laid at that time as a result of this appeal to change the situation and start a graduate school for Adventist ministerial students, they didn´t materialise to a larger extent for another 15 years (Campbell 2007:21). Until 1930, unlike "many established Christian denominations, the Seventh-day Adventist Church […] did not generally have a trained clergy" (Kaiser 2019:23).

Finally, in 1934, a program of advanced studies for ministers was established after years of unsuccessful attempts to align ministerial education with the needs perceived by the church administration at the General Conference level. The long tug-

ging between administrators and educators rested on the assumption – from the perspective of the administrators – that the "denomination had an inherent right to shape and direct the education of its clergy." Three years later, the program turned into a freestanding seminary. "The Advanced Bible School" was under direct supervision of the General Conference (Greenleaf 2008:34), and it was renamed "Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary" three years later (Greenleaf 2005:345). In 1953, the General Conference voted (at that time limited to North America) the "Master's degree as the standard academic preparation for ministers" (Greenleaf 2015:8; General Conference Committee 1953:1320–1325).

Sometime later, the tugging about the ownership of tertiary (graduate) theological education reemerged. The net impact of this decades-long development was to remove ministerial education from the jurisdiction of the colleges and place it under the control of the General Conference (Greenleaf 2008:34–35). At the end of the 20th century, some colleges on the union level challenged this by offering a master's degree independently of the supervision by the General Conference or its regional divisions. This led to the creation of a new agency, the already mentioned International Board of Ministerial and Theological Education (IBMTE) in 1998, that should have regional branches in every division, with the division boards of ministerial education linking the IBMTE and the AAA (Greenleaf 2005:504, 2008:35). In most parts of the world, this was eventually implemented except for North America, where a fervid debate began about a question that was, at its core, not so much about theological philosophy but administrative control (Greenleaf 2008:35), what inspired Greenleaf to remind his readers:

> But it is helpful to remember that irrespective of how independent tertiary schools desire to be, or the division or union to which they are responsible, they retain an identity as Seventh-day Adventist institutions, which implies an accountability to and connection with the global church (:37).

This disconnection between the administration and the seminary remains evident to this day. According to my personal experience, the tension is still following the caving line of an academic university model, opposed to the seminary model as an institution to train ministers, as aptly described by Becerra (1993:76). He solicits an integrated whole between a strong intellectual training and the training of pastoral skills, rather than getting caught in an either-or play:

> Integrated theological education is academic, is practical, and is spiritual at the same time. If rightly applied, it will be simultaneously a learning by precepts and learning by experience. The student will be trained to be like Christ, while studying seriously the Word of God and learning how to do the work of the ministry (:79).

The IBMTE mentioned above, established by the world church´s administration, has so far published two editions of the *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist ministerial and theological education* (International Board of Ministerial and Theological Education 2001, 2017) in which it tries to bridge the gap between the two models – at least in theory. On the practical side, there are also recent endeavours, such as an Adventist theological seminary (Avondale, Australia) that intentionally bridged the gulf between academic knowledge by developing a field-based, supervised theological education. Using the action-reflection-action model, students identify a wide range of practical aspects of the ministry to engage with. Experienced pastors supervise them and reflect their practical experience in class, thus going through a holistic ministry formation (House & Robertson 2010).

As this example demonstrates, formal education can do much to better prepare pastors for their future ministry. However, a few years will never suffice to prepare

for any challenge in a pastor's lifetime. Walt Williams (2001b:22), at that time responsible for the internship program of the North American Division, observed:

> There is a natural distance between the ministry that is taught in the classroom and that which is experienced in the field. This distance may become alarmingly large when almost all the formal pastoral training in the Church is left to college and seminary faculties. Even the best education frequently leaves college and seminary graduates unprepared for the challenges they face.

Instead of calling for a deep reformation of theological education, he points to the successful model of mentoring pastors at the beginning of their ministry. As noted above, a particular model of internship was the sole form of preparation for new pastors in the denomination's early years. Alongside the ups and downs of the development of pastoral formation, what is now called an internship has undergone a long journey to its current form. While this is an interesting and vital complementary element of ATE, we will not dwell on it further, as our primary focus is on formal ATE and how it can be enriched by the principles of AE, to which we now turn.

3 THE PHILOSOPHY OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION IN LITERATURE

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 An Overview of the Literature covering the Philosophy of AE

As this paper is not merely a literature review, the examination of the available material must respect boundaries. This necessitates limiting the scope of sources and, by reasonable logic, determining what will come into focus and what will remain outside immediate attention. To understand this challenge, I provide an overview of the possible sources.

Original material: minutes, declarations, statements …

Parallel to the establishment and growth of Adventist educational endeavours a steadily expanding number of historic documents piled up, most of them nowadays available online on the website of the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church.[23] If my task was to work on original material like minutes, declarations reports, correspondence, statements and so on, there would be a sheer endless field of occupation, in which however, we can´t enter except for some salient documents worth to be mentioned for readers who will use the "Available at …" information in the bibliography to see some documents in the original form. A good number of these documents are also compiled in the book *School Bells & Gospel Trumpets: A Documentary History of Seventh-Day Adventist Education in North America,* edited by Hodgen (1978).

[23] https://documents.adventistarchives.org [accessed 2025-12-21]

AE in Adventist journals

Because the World Wide Web and its easy-to-access information platforms were still a century away, journals had to be the messengers of news, information, inspiration, instruction, exhortation, and exchange. From 1897 to the present, there has been an uninterrupted line of journals dedicated to Adventist Education. *The Christian Educator*[24] (1897-1899), *The Advocate of Christian Education*[25] (1898-1905), *The Bible Training School*[26] (1902-1919), *The Educational Messenger*[27] (1905-1926), *Christian Education*[28] (from 1909 to 1915, from 1915-1922 under the name *Christian educator,* from 1922-1938 under the name *Home and School)*, *The Journal of True Education*[29] (1939-1967), then its name was changed to *The Journal of Adventist Education*[30] (1967-). Taken together, these journals cover a broad range of education-related topics; therefore, their use should be limited by judiciously selecting relevant parameters.

A good number of articles were published in more than one place: Many articles in the JAE were first presented as papers at the international "faith and learning" seminaries that were held almost yearly around the world until 2009, organised by the Institute for Christian Teaching[31] that provides on its website a complete list of all the papers. Very few articles also enter the realm of theological education, most of them published in the Ministry Magazine (2025), an international Journal for Pas-

[24] https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/EDU [accessed 2025-12-21]
[25] https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/ADV [accessed 2025-12-21]
[26] https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/BTS [accessed 2025-12-21]
[27] https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/EM [accessed 2025-12-21]
[28] https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/CE [accessed 2025-12-21]
[29] https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/JTE [accessed 2025-12-21]
[30] https://jae.adventist.org/en/archives [accessed 2025-12-21] – This archive starts with 1978, so 10 years are not available online
[31] http://christintheclassroom.org [accessed 2025-12-22]

tors published monthly by the Seventh-day Adventist Church since 1928 (House & Robertson 2010; Williams 2001a, 2001b; Bell, Dudley & Tilstra 2005).

AE in Christian Journals

Leaving the world of Adventist literature and turning to articles in the broader library of Christian education, and looking for papers on the philosophy of AE or even ATE, the results turn out to be meagre, but one article catches special attention: Jackman (2014) in "Assessing the Practicality and Relevance of Adventist Educational Philosophy in a Contemporary Education Paradigm". We will look at its content shortly.

AE in Dissertations

Looking for dissertations working at least in part on the philosophy of AE, there are several. Here follows a list of potential sources of thought for our topic; some of them even take ATE into account.

Currie (1977) *Strategies for Seventh-day Adventist Theological Education in the South Pacific Islands, 1894-1900*, Vyhmeister (1978) *Implications of Selected Curricular Determinants for Seventh-day Adventist Graduate Theological Education in the South American Division*, Ponniah (1986) *The concept of contextualization and its implications for the Seventh-day Adventist theological education in India*, Dela Cruz (1988) *Preparation and Practice of Ministry : a Study of Seventh-day Adventist Ministerial Education in the Philippines*; Caviness (2000) *Educational Brain Research as Compared with E.G. White's Counsels to Educators*, and Snorrason (2005) *Aims of Education in the Writings of Ellen White.*

Books on AE

Turning finally to books, it turned out that, except for Ellen White, only a few authors undertake the task of writing extensively about the philosophy of AE. In some of the volumes already mentioned on the history of AE, its philosophy is also considered, as in Greenleaf's monumental work In Passion for the World (2005). Moore (1976), in *Adventist education at the crossroads,* expresses concern that most Adventist schools had departed from several pillars of the original philosophy. This provoked a defence by Hilde (1980) in *Showdown: Can S.D.A. Education pass the Test?* In "*How to kill Adventist education (and how to give it a fighting chance!)"* Anderson (2009) addresses the existential challenges of AE in the context of North American church schools. Bietz & Pawluk (2012), in *Seventh-day Adventist higher education in North America: Theological perspectives and current issues*, although written within the specific North American higher education system, provide valuable contributions to the understanding of theology and philosophy of AE. The current leading figure in writing about AE is, without question, George Knight, professor emeritus of church history at Andrews University, a historian, author, speaker, and educator (Valentine & Whidden 2014). There could be listed several dozen books and articles he wrote, for the task of analysing the philosophy of AE we can limit our attention to only a few: His application of the comprehensive presentation of *Philosophy & education: An introduction in Christian perspective* (Knight 2006) to AE in *Educating for eternity: A Seventh-Day Adventist philosophy of education* (Knight 2016b). Before going in print as a book, this volume appeared in a three-part series in *The Journal of Adventist Education* (Knight 2010a, 2010b, 2010c). Because these articles are available online in the journal's archive, I will use them as

references, making it easy for readers to consult the sources. Another book that sheds light on the topic is *Myths in Adventism: An Interpretive Study of Ellen White, Education, and Related Issues* (Knight [1999] 2009), as well as several other articles.

Ellen White's writings on Education

The most original source for the philosophy of AE is Ellen White's writings. As described above, Ellen White wrote numerous articles, sermons, and speeches for various occasions, as well as thousands of letters. Some of these – I take here only those in consideration with a very close connection to the subject of education – were already collected into books during her lifetime under her supervision, (White [1894] 2018, [1897] 2017, [1903] 2014, [1913] 2017). Others were compiled into books after she died in 1915 from prior unpublished material, or maybe a new assembly of thought lines (White [1923] 2017a, [1977] 2017a, [1977] 2017b, [1981] 2017). As the Harvard citation method at this point exposes one of its most significant weaknesses, I have assembled a table that helps to get an overview:

The writings of Ellen White that are most relevant to the topic of education		
Written and supervised by the author		
Title	Year	Additional Information
Proper Education	1872	Article in 6 parts, also published in *Testimonies for the church* (White [1875] 2017)
Christian Education	1874	Compilation
Special Testimonies on Education	1897	Compilation
A Spiritual Education for Teachers	1902	Article in the journal *Advocate of Christian Education* (White 1902), not published in any other book
Education	1903	Book with some compiled material, articles, and also original text, intended for general distribution
Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students	1913	Compilation of additional material complementary to the book *Education* targeting Seventh-Day Adventist readers (White [1913] 2017:iii)

Table 1: Ellen White's writings on education published during her lifetime

Posthumously published material		
Title	Year	Additional Information
Fundamentals of Christian Education	1923	Compilation, reprint of *Proper Education,* and other material already printed before, with only a few new materials
Mind, Character, and Personality Volume 1	1977	Compilation
Mind, Character, and Personality Volume 2	1977	Compilation
Peter's Counsel to Parents	1981	Compilation with a lot of previously unpublished material

Table 2: Ellen White's writings on education published posthumously

3.1.2 Strategy of the Literature Research

Turning now to the strategy for addressing this vast body of literature, I discern the need to introduce filters to sharpen the focus. My ultimate interest is the extent to which the philosophy of AE influences ATE, as evidenced by interviews with deans of Adventist theological education in Europe. I therefore need a specific set of aspects I can look for – keywords and key concepts, or, in empirical research parlance, codes and categories – that will provide a template for this analysis. These codes and the results of this first step will also inform the development of relevant questions for qualitative interviews with deans of Adventist theological seminaries in Europe. I will ask for their understanding of AE and compare it with the findings in the literature.

When Adventists write about AE, they rarely offer original insights that could contribute to an ever-growing shared vision and understanding of AE. What they do is rather a reflection, a meditation, a discussion, an application, or a summary of what flew out of the prophetic pen of one of the pioneers and cofounders of the Adventist Church, Ellen White. It is part of the vocation of prophets to explain reality, read the signs of the times, help to understand God´s mysteries and point to the

necessary direction of action (1 Chr 12:32; Am 3:7). True to that task, especially in the first Chapter of her book *Education* titled *"Source and Aim of True Education",* Ellen White ([1903] 2014) sketches what even nearly 120 years later still rightly can be called the nucleus of the philosophy of AE. Interestingly, she never discussed Adventist education but rather *true* or *proper* education. We will return to this interesting fact later. We will begin our review of the literature with the writings of Ellen White.

We will then turn to a category of literature that, by its nature, delves into deeper levels of research. I identified several dissertations that cover AE, at least as a subtopic, and will summarise the chapters that provide a comprehensive list of aspects of AE's principles. Two of the dissertations focus on ATE.

Articles appearing in *The Journal of Adventist Education (JAE)* represent the lowest level of our sources in the literature. This statement should not be understood as a judgment of their quality; rather, it reflects the nature of the JAE as a widely circulated, primarily inspirational journal. As the target group comprises practising educators at all levels of education in the Adventist world and beyond, it does not purport to contribute to the scientific discussion by publishing highly theoretical academic material. Although most articles are peer-reviewed, they are usually relatively short (2-5 pages). Recognising that the JAE remains the leading publication on developments in the Adventist world of education, I will not exclude it from our research. However, we should keep in mind that, particularly given the comprehensive presentation of all elements of AE's philosophy, these articles will fall short. What can be found there will instead reflect the perception of AE among specific individuals. Concentrating on articles that list several different aspects, in contrast to

those who work on only one detail and in a particular context, will reduce the choice of articles to a digestible number. After rummaging through the online archive available of JAE, it is interesting and maybe not coincidental that mainly the directors of the Seventh-day Adventist educational department at the highest level – at the General Conference – use their editorial space to address the topic of AE in general terms. Because the editorials are even shorter than the other articles, they provide only a first glimpse of what influential Adventist educational leaders considered most remarkable about the principles of AE. In addition, we will review articles from other journals.

Finally, there is George Knight, who has written on AE in depth and in a philosophical way like no other. His analysis of Ellen White's writings will help bring AE into the structured form of the Frankena Model introduced in Chapter 4.

3.2 The Origin of the Philosophy of AE - the Writings of Ellen White

> The only philosophy of education we have as Seventh-day Adventists is that which is based on the principles originally presented by Ellen White. We have no other philosophy upon which to base Seventh-day Adventist education. We could develop such a philosophy, but we have not. And what would be the purpose of doing so unless there could be found some inherent weakness with the philosophy that we already have (Tucker 2001:171)?

The following analysis of the first Chapter of the book *Education* by Ellen White ([1903] 2014:8–12) will help to understand his point.

3.2.1 Source and Aim of True Education

> Our ideas of education take too narrow and too low a range. There is need of a broader scope, a higher aim. True education means more than the pursual of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come (:8).

Beginning her outline of “true education,” White draws the reader's attention to a meta-level beyond curriculum and practical considerations. A dual “whole” is introduced: the first “whole” focuses on the “harmonious development” of all dimensions of a human being; the second “whole” extends the scope of education from this life to the life to come. In addition, she specifies that preparation for both lives entails preparing the student for the “joy of service”. Applying this to AE, we find three indispensable foundations that answer the question of *what is to be done* in *which range of time* and *what for*.

By expanding the range of education beyond earthly boundaries and stretching it into eternity, it is only logical that White now turns to God as the “source of such an education”:

> The source of such an education is brought to view in these words of Holy Writ, pointing to the Infinite One: In Him “are hid all the treasures of wisdom.” Colossians 2:3. “He hath counsel and understanding.” Job 12:13.
> The world has had its great teachers, men of giant intellect and extensive research, men whose utterances have stimulated thought and opened to view vast fields of knowledge; and these men have been honored as guides and benefactors of their race; but there is One who stands higher than they. We can trace the line of the world’s teachers as far back as human records extend; but the Light was before them. As the moon and the stars of our solar system shine by the reflected light of the sun, so, as far as their teaching is true, do the world’s great thinkers reflect the rays of the Sun of Righteousness. Every gleam of thought, every flash of the intellect, is from the Light of the world (:8).

At that point she starts an interaction – to which she will return repeatedly when writing about education – with the term “higher education”, making an allusion to the classical or traditional understanding of “higher education” at her time, with which she was at odds – and would probably be today – because following her reasoning the secular “higher education” did not aim high enough:

> In these days much is said concerning the nature and importance of “higher education.” The true “higher education” is that imparted by Him with whom “is wis-

> dom and strength" (Job 12:13), out of whose mouth "cometh knowledge and understanding." Proverbs 2:6. White ([1903] 2014:8).

Ellen White presents God as the source of "all true knowledge [1] and real development [2]". First, God is the ultimate source of truth:

> In a knowledge of God all true knowledge and real development have their source. Wherever we turn, in the physical, the mental, or the spiritual realm; in whatever we behold, apart from the blight of sin, this knowledge is revealed. Whatever line of investigation we pursue, with a sincere purpose to arrive at truth, we are brought in touch with the unseen, mighty Intelligence that is working in and through all (:9).

Secondly, God is also the highest teacher, the highest educator: "The mind of man is brought into communion with the mind of God, the finite with the Infinite", and in "this communion is found the highest education" with an effect on "body and mind and soul" that "is beyond estimate." (:9).

Applying this to AE, we find that one of its ultimate goals, "**To know God**", enters the realm of the development of *spirituality* as the main educational goal that superordinates all others. As with all other aspects of this first chapter, White will then write (and had at least in part already written before) in detail on the different aspects. Couching it in a picture, what she does in this chapter is like mounting hooks on a wall and then tying cords to them, which she will eventually twine longer and longer. We take the term spirituality – that only appears here in substance but not actual term – to illustrate this shortly: In a speech she addressed to teachers in August 1901 in Healdsburg, California (White 1902:33–34), she warns not to lose the "very things" that "value most – a knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, and of that life which measures with the life of God", which is the "A B C of spirituality, the A B C of devotion, of self-sacrifice. The science of education is to love God, and to keep his commandments." Ending her speech, she appeals: "[…] in

love and the fear of God learn the A B C of spirituality. […] The purpose of education is to glorify God." Or, as she penned it elsewhere: "To comprehend and enjoy God is the highest exercise of the powers of man." (White [1961] 2010:61).

Turning back to the *Source and Aim of True Education*, we stop at a point where the eye of an attentive reader indeed spotted the short disclaimer White included in the last citation above: "[…] in whatever we behold, *apart from the blight of sin* [emphasis added], this knowledge is revealed." Our approach to the ultimate source of knowledge is limited due to the fallen nature of man. A philosophy of education must address fundamental questions concerning the *nature of God and the nature of man.* Consequently, she continues (White [1903] 2014:9):

> In order to understand what is comprehended in the work of education, we need to consider both the nature of man and the purpose of God in creating him. We need to consider also the change in man's condition through the coming in of a knowledge of evil, and God's plan for still fulfilling His glorious purpose in the education of the human race.

Following this outline, she then describes (:9–10) Adam, the first human being standing as representative for humanity, was created in the likeness to his maker with a high and glorious future, that would have let him ever more fully fulfil "the object of his creation" and to "more and more fully reflect the Creator´s glory", if he had "remained loyal to God". But through his "sin the divine likeness was marred", he became "subject to death. Yet the race was not left without hope." The loving God had devised the "plan of salvation" and "a life of probation was granted" and this way back provides the most essential dynamic with regard of the goal of education in the context of fallen humanity:

> To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind, and soul,

> that the divine purpose in his creation might be realized—this was to be the work of redemption. This is the object of education, the great object of life (:10).

To restore in man the image of his maker, this phrase, as the ultimate goal of AE, is cited repeatedly when Adventists write about education (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 2024-2025:299–300; Dulan 2003:3). We see how closely White ties redemption to education as an object of life, a topic to which she later dedicates a whole chapter (White [1903] 2014:19–21), concluding:

> 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´ (:20).

This identification of education with redemption finds a resonant echo in contemporary mission theology. If education and redemption are one, and if God is understood – as *missio Dei* theology affirms – as missionary in His very nature rather than merely in His actions, then mission is not only the *purpose* of theological education but its very *foundation*. The church's educational endeavour participates in the *missio Dei* itself (Bosch 1991).

Starting on that foundation, she describes the consequences and results of a learning and loving relationship with Christ, because **love** "is the basis of true education". Only by obeying the "first and great commandment" and by loving God with all thy heart, soul, strength, and mind ", the highest development of every power" will be the consequence, and thus "the image of God [in man] is to be restored."

While explaining the second commandment, she returns to the concept of **service,** serving "God and serving our fellow men." This service is at the same time a blessing to others and "the greatest blessing to ourselves." "Unselfishness", she continues, "underlies all true development", and "through unselfish service we re-

ceive the highest culture of every faculty." While we do this increasingly, "we become partakers of the divine nature. We are fitted for heaven, for we receive heaven into our hearts." (White [1903] 2014:10).

In the following paragraph, she delves deeper into this, addressing God as the designer and creator and thus the **ultimate source of knowledge.** And although this earth is "marred and defiled by sin", **nature** "still speaks of her creator", yet, "these revelations are partial and imperfect", and fallen man has "weakened powers and restricted vision" hence without the revelation of God as given in His written word, "we are incapable of interpreting aright." (:10–11). At this point, the **Holy Scriptures** come again into the picture:

> The Holy Scriptures are the perfect standard of truth, and as such should be given the highest place in education. To obtain an education worthy of the name, we must receive a knowledge of God, the Creator, and of Christ, the Redeemer, as they are revealed in the sacred word.

Summarising all this, she unfolds a vision of what true education will accomplish:

> Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do. The men in whom this power is developed are the men who bear responsibilities, who are leaders in enterprise, and who influence character. It is the work of true education to develop this power, to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought. Instead of confining their study to that which men have said or written, let students be directed to the sources of truth, to the vast fields opened for research in nature and revelation. Let them contemplate the great facts of duty and destiny, and the mind will expand and strengthen. Instead of educated weaklings, institutions of learning may send forth men strong to think and to act, men who are masters and not slaves of circumstances, men who possess breadth of mind, clearness of thought, and the courage of their convictions.
>
> Such an education provides more than mental discipline; it provides more than physical training. It strengthens the character, so that truth and uprightness are not sacrificed to selfish desire or worldly ambition. It fortifies the mind against evil. Instead of some master passion becoming a power to destroy, every motive and desire are brought into conformity to the great principles of right. As the perfection of His character is dwelt upon, the mind is renewed, and the soul is re-created in the image of God.

In these two paragraphs, a wide range of direction signs is condensed, pointing to various goals of true education. We find here the concepts of learning to think independently, responsibility, influence, exemplarity, leadership, a principle-oriented life, the power to act, resilience in the face of obstacles, breadth of mind, clarity of thought, character development, self-control, and real freedom.

The question that follows: “What education can be higher than this? (:12) culminates her line of argument, explaining her biblically based vision of “higher education”. She continues:

> Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God’s ideal for His children. Godliness—godlikeness—is the goal to be reached. Before the student there is opened a path of continual progress. He has an object to achieve, a standard to attain, that includes everything good, and pure, and noble.

To avoid misunderstandings, we shortly pause on one thought of this paragraph and ask: What does she mean by “godlikeness”? Speaking of godlikeness, she refers to the restoration of the image of God in man. Elsewhere, she will explain in allusion to Mt 5:48 ESV “You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect”, “as God is perfect in his sphere, so we are to be perfect in ours.” (White [1894] 2018:177).

Closing this Chapter, she shortly turns to the human agencies engaged in the work of education (White [1903] 2014:12):

> He who co-operates with the divine purpose in imparting to the youth a knowledge of God, and molding the character into harmony with His, does a high and noble work. As he awakens a desire to reach God’s ideal, he presents an education that is as high as heaven and as broad as the universe; an education that cannot be completed in this life, but that will be continued in the life to come; an education that secures to the successful student his passport from the preparatory school of earth to the higher grade, the school above.

Later, she refers to the “true teacher” because he participates in the “highest aim” (:20) as “a co-worker of Christ, a laborer together with God” (:21).

In this last paragraph of the Chapter she encloses life-long learning, gives an interesting outlook in the world to come and indicates also a specific approach to teaching: the students we see in this vison of education play a very active part in the educational process, visible in the fact that “a desire” shall be awakened in them to follow the path before them, a path that nobody can go for them, they have to take every step themselves. The repeated wording of “let them” (*let* them be directed, *let* them contemplate) and the challenge to train youth to be thinkers and not mere reflectors of other men´s thought clearly advocates a guiding teaching style in contrast to a patronising one.

3.2.2 Conclusion

In the first Chapter of her book *Education*, Ellen White condensed her vision of a Bible-based philosophy, which she believed was a blueprint for *true* education. She presented a comprehensive outline of the topics she will cover in the following chapters and in other books, in length and detail. Although we can find most elements of a philosophy of education in her work, she does not present them in an analytical, structured form. This will be the task in Chapter 4.

3.3 AE in Dissertations

In the following, we present dissertations on AE from various perspectives. I focus on how the authors describe the main elements of AE.

3.3.1 Linda Caviness

Caviness (2000:219–321), writing about *Educational brain research as compared with E.G. White's counsels to educators,* sees the following primary goals of AE:

- Knowledge of God
- Redemption and restoration of the image of God in humanity
- Power of choice and human will

- Character development
- Service to humankind

In her research, she also describes the following factors as essential influences on the success of education:

- Harmonious development
- Amusement and Recreation
- Work and practical functions
- Health habits
- Parental influence
- Teacher influence and characteristics

3.3.2 Erling Snorrason

Snorrason (2005), working on *Aims of Education in the Writings of Ellen White,* describes as "ultimate aims of education" (:178–233):

- Conversion
- Restoration of the image of God
  - The image of God – Freedom of choice
  - The image of God – Dignity
  - The image of God – Individuality
  - The image of God – Character of love
- The development of all the powers
  - Harmonious development
  - The physical powers
  - The spiritual powers
- Preparation for joyful service
  - Types of service
  - Physical preparation for service
  - Intellectual and mental preparation for service
  - Moral and spiritual preparation for service

This is a very useful categorisation of the themes treated in the fundamental first Chapter *Source and Aim of True Education,* of the book *Education* by Ellen White ([1903] 2014). While Snorrason, in his description of AE, remains general, consistent with the focus of his dissertation, the following thesis introduces ATE.

3.3.3 Nancy Vyhmeister

Vyhmeister (1978) wrote about theological education: *Implications of selected curricular determinants for Seventh-day Adventist graduate theological education in the South American Division*. She drafts a "Seventh-day Adventist philosophy of ministerial education" in which she shortly summarises (:37–43) the need for ministerial training as described by Ellen White and, then specifies components of theological education that can be found in her writings: Two areas are to be covered: practical knowledge and truths of the Scripture.

- Bible study
- Common branches (general education, especially mastery of the native language)
- History (to study the dealings of God with the nations of the earth)
- Speech and voice culture
- Physiology (basic knowledge of the body, health aspects)
- Good manners
- Psychology (White didn´t use this word, but put it this way: "knowledge of human nature and a study of the human mind", White 1882)
- Practical labour
- Practical church work

She closes with some methodological suggestions she found in the writings of Ellen White: The study should not be too long; there should be no centralization of ministerial education; only the best ministers (Ellen White often used minister as a synonym for pastors) should be called to be teachers; students should put into immediate use what they have learned; after finishing their study the young minister should be apprenticed to an experienced minister; the minister should never cease to learn.

3.3.4 Melchizedek Ponniah

Although Ponniah (1986), in "*The concept of contextualization and its implications for the Seventh-day Adventist theological education in India"*, he does not focus on

AE, his dissertation is worthy of mention. He deplores the “tragic” fact that many of the Seventh-day Adventist educational institutions worldwide “have reproduced American patterns insofar as curricula, affiliations, and even faculties are concerned” (:96).

Because this challenge is common across Christian theological education, I will return to it in Chapter 7.5, where I will discuss it in dialogue with other theological educators.

3.3.5 Crisolito Vasquez Dela Cruz

In *Preparation and practice of ministry: a study of Seventh-day Adventist ministerial education in the Philippines,* Dela Cruz (1988) also summarises Ellen White's writings on education, with the aim of identifying principles of educational practice. Although she “did not write a prescribed curriculum model for the training of ministers” (:21), he discerns “four areas of knowledge and skills related to ministerial training”:

1. Biblical/theological knowledge:

   Ministers who would labour effectively for the salvation of souls must be Bible students and men of prayer. It is a sin to be neglectful of the study of the Word while attempting to teach it to others. (White [1915] 2017:85)

2. Knowledge of the "common branches" or general education courses:

   History, physiology and hygiene, speech and writing, psychology, and bookkeeping.

3. Skills related to the minister's role and function:

   Educator or trainer, administrator, pastor or shepherd and soul winner

4. Skills related to practical duties of everyday life:

Each should acquire a knowledge of some branch of manual labor by which, if need be, he may obtain a livelihood. This is essential, not only as a safeguard

> against the vicissitudes of life, but from its bearing upon physical, mental, and moral development. Even if it were certain that one would never need to resort to manual labor for support, still he should be taught to work. Without physical exercise no one can have a sound constitution and vigorous health; and the discipline of well-regulated labor is no less essential to the securing of a strong, active mind and a noble character (White [1913] 2017:248).

Among the practical skills that future ministers might learn, she names agriculture, baking, bookbinding, carpentry, cooking, painting, and printing (:248–252).

Area 4 in this list appears outdated today, at least in some parts of Europe, where most of the mentioned skills can be used for earning money only if one has learnt the profession and has a certificate to prove it. However, her emphasis here is clearly on the holistic aspect of education, which includes valuable manual labour rather than sports, thereby edifying the body.

3.3.6 Alexander Currie

Writing on *Strategies for Seventh-day Adventist theological education in the South Pacific Islands*, Currie (1977:201–207) analyses explicitly the writings of Ellen White for everything that could shed light on the why, what and how of ATE. He then incorporates his findings into a conceptual model for a theological education curriculum. This is of particular interest to this study because, in the AE literature, it is one of the few documents that places AE in dialogue with ATE and attempts to apply its principles to a theological education curriculum model that could be considered genuinely Adventist.

Here is a screenshot of the original work, presenting an overview of the concept assembled by Currie (1977:201):

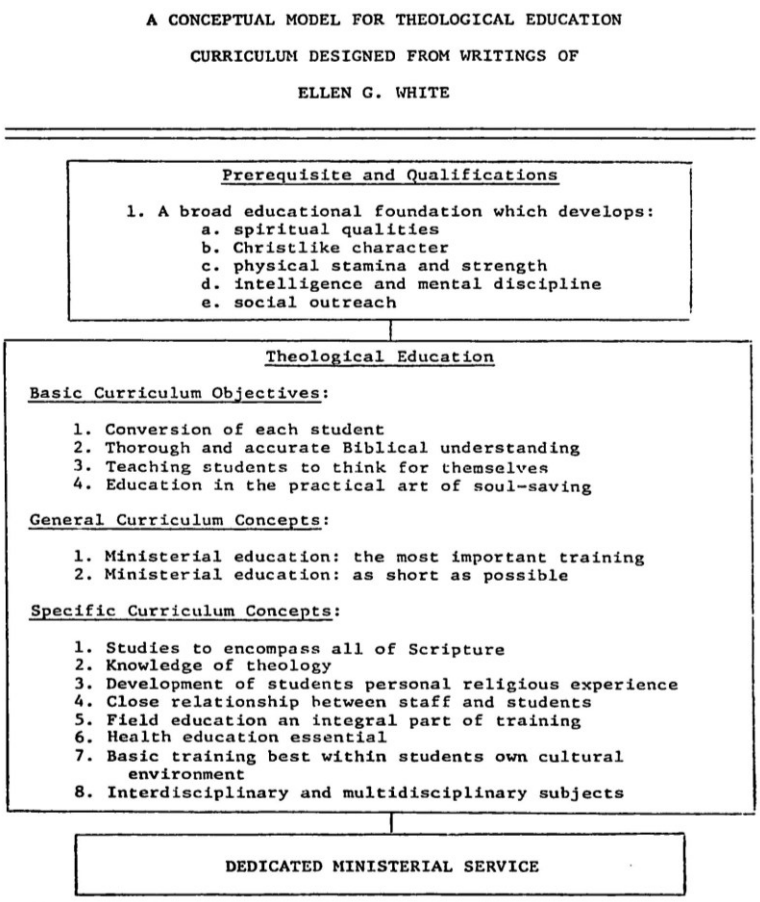


Figure 1: Currie´s concept for a Seventh-day Adventist theological education curriculum

I highly commend Currie for being among the few who are attempting to sketch a concept of ATE. Unfortunately, he does not explain the rationale for the structure of his model, so I cautiously ask whether the conversion of each student would be better placed in the “prerequisites and qualifications” section, since spiritual qualities and a Christlike character can only grow in a person who has experienced a genuine conversion. Considering point three in the “basic curriculum objectives”, the ability of students to think for themselves seems to be a necessary outcome of intelligence and mental discipline (d) in the first section. I will not further examine the details of Currie´s model, but take it as an example of how higher educational goals should dominate the structure of a study to prevent it from becoming too fragmented or too content-oriented, sometimes at the cost of leaving the learner out of sight. In

Currie´s sketch of a concept for ATE, the person and the learner's character are in focus; to a certain extent, the ministry – the vocational part – is visible. Even without presenting further details, Currie´s concept of a curriculum of Adventist theology based on writings of Ellen White shows next to no similarity with the typical silo style of theological disciplines of Biblical Languages, Biblical Theology, Systematic Theology, Historical Theology, and Practical Theology.

3.3.7 Critical Observation Concerning an Official Philosophy of ATE

It is interesting to note that, at the time Currie was writing, he deplored that no official document identifying "aims, objectives, purposes and philosophy for theological education" could be provided by the General Conference's Department of Education (:208). It still took more than 20 years for the International Board of Ministerial and Theological Education to be founded in 1998 (see Chapter 2.3.2) and three more years for the first edition of the *"Handbook of Seventh-Day Adventist Ministerial and Theological Education"* (International Board of Ministerial and Theological Education 2001) to appear in which the formation of the Adventist pastor is described in a rudimentary manner. Only the 2017 (International Board of Ministerial and Theological Education 2017) addresses in detail aspects of ministerial formation, including the essential qualities of the pastor, the sequence of formation and expected outcomes.

3.3.8 Conclusion

In this Chapter, we presented a brief overview of the results of four dissertations that address AE, two of which provide detailed analyses of ATE. Unfortunately, these dissertations seem to find no echo anywhere in the literature about AE, let

alone in ATE. Is it the fate of well-written dissertations to get lost in archives and stay unnoticed by those who actually could profit from them?

3.4 AE in Journal Literature

As noted in the strategy for exploring the literature on AE, we now turn to journal articles, beginning with those published in the JAE.

3.4.1 Articles in the Journal of Adventist Education

Those who write about the philosophy of AE covering more than a single aspect are e.g. Humberto Rasi (1995:3) and George Akers (1995:9–11), both global directors of the Seventh-Day Adventist educational department, at the publication date of the articles, as their personal summary of AE does not surface anything new, we present some thoughts written by another global director of the educational department, Dulan (2003:3), who pairs AE with the adjective "distinctive":

> [...] the distinctive characteristics of Adventist education, derived from the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White, point to the redemptive aim of true education—to restore human beings into the image of their Maker—mentally, socially, spiritually, and physically. Our church exists to prepare individuals for God's kingdom, and education is a crucial process through which this preparation occurs. Should this vision of mission be lost, there would be no reason for our schools to exist.

Five years later, he describes the depth of the influence of AE (Dulan 2008:11):

> Academic goals, curricula, hiring policies for faculty and staff, admissions criteria for students, on-campus religious and secular activities, student-life services and activities, student conduct requirements, dormitory facilities, and other co-curricular functions are centered in the Adventist educational philosophy. Foods served in the cafeteria, groups and organizations allowed to form on campus, and the like are evaluated on the basis of the church's philosophy of education.

This is an interesting claim, closely linked to the research question. I will explore if this is true for ATE. Writing about *The Uniqueness of Adventist Education* Dulan (2010:4–5) asks: "What makes Adventist education so stable, so unique?", listing as

reasons e.g. its ***unifying mission*** (… of proclaiming the everlasting gospel and "to restore human beings into the image of their Maker"); its emphasis on ***whole-person development within a framework of faith*** ("the uniqueness of Adventist education is located in its holistic framework—the harmonious balance between the spiritual, mental, social, physical, and moral dimensions of learning)"; its emphasis on ***moral and ethical values*** ("Excellence surpasses mere academic achievement: Character development, integrity, knowing and practicing right from wrong are critical to Christian living and preparation for God´s kingdom)"; and its emphasis on ***service as a vital component auf academic life.***

3.4.2 Critical Observation Concerning the Stated Uniqueness of AE

I pause for a moment and try to adopt the perspective of a non-Adventist Christian educator who, after reading to this point, may have stumbled over the claim that AE is *unique*. The question arises: which of the principles mentioned so far go beyond genuine and authentic Christian education? It seems that this question should be considered more deeply to avoid a form of elitism, boasting of unique elements that appear to be common ground in Christian education, at least in one that is true to its name. Interestingly, some 20 years before the article of Dulan (2010) titled *The Uniqueness of Adventist Education*, Fowler (1989:24–26), at that time director of education for the Southern Asia Division in India, observed with a warning voice:

> Seventh-day Adventists often define education as a harmonious development of the physical, mental, and spiritual faculties. We not only take pride in this definition, but also tend to assert that it was originated by and is unique to us. This is simply not true. The definition of a balanced concept of education did not begin with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is as old as the human quest for knowledge.

He clarifies that already Socrates promoted "the balanced development of the hand, the head and the heart", a concept that is still living on in humanism. Living in

India, Fowler illustrates that the triad of body, mind, and soul is also present in at least some eastern philosophies, concluding that we should:

> […] dismiss the notion that the Seventh-Day Adventist definition of education as the harmonious development of the essential three areas of human experience is something original or unique.

What is sometimes used to prove the uniqueness of AE thus turns out, at least on the surface, to be not even exclusively Christian. Only by digging deeper and asking the "How?" question do we find a more distinctive element. It is not the *goal* that is "proclaimed […] by every humpty-dumpty in the history and practice of education" but what, according to Fowler (1989:25), gives a unique touch "to the Seventh-Day Adventist concept of education is the *means* by which the ultimate balance and complete development can be achieved […]." He then contrasts the means of different educational philosophies with those of AE and identifies Jesus as the integrating factor of AE. Jesus as Creator and Liberator is the creative source of all knowledge and wisdom and also the liberating solution from "superstition, fear, hunger, injustice, social oppression, and above all, sin." (:26). So rather than hoping that a *liberal education* could solve the problems of this world, Adventists …

> […] stress a *liberating* [emphasis in the original] education: liberating the body from the clutches of sin through our health message, liberating the mind from the limitations of human perception and bias through a study of the science of redemption, and liberating the spirit from the preoccupations of everyday life through our emphasis on sanctification and witness.

The Adventist emphasis on health and education, in connection with the harmonious and holistic development of a person, appears to be unique within the Christian world. However, the concept of Christ as creator and liberator at the heart of education will certainly sound too familiar to qualify as uniquely Adventist. Fowler concludes with the provocative thought that even Adventist schools must first demon-

strate that they actually implement what they claim to be unique to Adventist education.

Looking into the history of AE, it is notable that the emphasis on Adventist Education, let alone its uniqueness, is a relatively recent phenomenon. When Ellen White began to write on education, she never referred to it as Adventist or denominational and only very rarely as Christian, but preferred the term “true education” (White [1903] 2014:8) instead, …

> […] meaning that the early Adventist educators conceived of these educational ideals as possessing general value for all education and not just for the denomination. They thought in themselves and in some cases were clearly recognized as educational reformers (Bietz & Pawluk 2012:23).

Looking back at this literature overview so far, I note that no journal on education published by Seventh-day Adventists from 1889 to 1967 included the distinctive term “Adventist” in its title. From 1939 to 1967, the only surviving journal was titled *The Journal of True Education.* The last issue carrying this name was in the summer of 1967. This was a rather unusual edition, with 52 pages rather than the standard 32, featuring a somewhat “airy” atmosphere: many pictures and advertisements, with little text.[32] The following issue (October & November 1967)[33] was published under the name *The Journal of Adventist Education*. The content and layout were similar to those of the previously standard 32-page editions, except that the name was changed. Unfortunately, I couldn´t find a single word on the reasoning for the name change in the entire issue, leaving the rationale for the change unclear.

[32] http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/JTE/JTE19670601-V29-05.pdf [accessed 2025-12-21]

[33] http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/JTE/JTE19671001-V30-01.pdf [accessed 2025-12-21]

Turning back to other possible aspects of the uniqueness of AE, two thought-provoking articles by George Knight (Knight 2007a, 2007b) come into the picture. He goes back to the roots of Seventh-day Adventist history. In the late 1840s and early 1850s, the small Sabbatarian group of Adventists believed that the time of probation had closed in 1844 and that their mission at that time was to encourage those who had not lost faith in the soon coming of Christ and to prepare together for his return. They saw no need for education, not even for marriage. They had no vision beyond waiting and preparing, not for a mission, nor for education.

> To put it bluntly the earliest Sabbatarian Adventists were not only anti-educational, they were also anti-mission. THEY LACKED VISION [emphasis in the original]. From that perspective, we need to ask how this profoundly shortsighted handful of people would in the next century and half develop the most far-flung unified mission outreach program and the most extensive unified educational system in the history of Protestantism (Knight 2007a:6).

To answer that question, Knight turns to a particular passage in the book of Revelation. A leader of the young Adventist movement applied this passage to their specific situation. Because of his influence, the emerging church developed a much broader vision of its purpose. It was Joseph Bates (1792 – 1872), one of the early Adventist pioneers and among the first to discover the truth about the biblical Sabbath (Knight 2004). He identified the *little book* in Rev 10:2, 8 with the book of Daniel that first gave the Adventist movement sweet hope: “It was in my mouth sweet as honey and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.” Rev 10:10. The experience of the shattered Millerite movement exactly mirrored these words: How sweet was the hope of the returning Christ that they had based primarily on the book of Daniel, and how bitter the disappointment was when Jesus did not come. However, immediately after this bitter experience, the text in Rev 10:11 reads “he

said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before [or 'to'] many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." Seeing that after the bitter disappointment of 1844 there was still a task to accomplish, the small group of remnants of Millerism eventually discovered its vocation and mission: to preach the everlasting gospel "unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people". The wording of Rev 14:6 echoes Rev 10:11 and provides content to it. Reading Rev 14:7, "Bates easily recognised that that passage referred directly to the Sabbath commandment of the Decalogue." (Knight 2007a:8). Bates continued to read Rev 14:12, describing the kind of believers shortly before the return of Jesus. "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." One piece after the other found its place in the big picture. The small group of believers discovered the apocalyptic vision of the Seventh-day Adventists and caught fire.

> *The point […] must be made […] that Seventh-day Adventism has never seen itself as merely another denomination. Rather, from its very inception, it has viewed itself as a movement of prophecy with a mission to all the world* [italics in the original] (:8).

This apocalyptic vision and the increasing sense of belonging to a divine plan converted an anti-mission people into a mission-driven movement and an anti-educational people into one strongly committed to education (:8). It is not accidental that the first Adventist missionary was sent overseas in the same year (1874) as the first college was founded (:9). Now, conscious of a "worldwide mission responsibility," the leaders felt a growing need to educate not only preachers but also editors, writers, teachers, doctors, nurses, and many others.

But, as Knight (2007b) strongly emphasised in the second article, the apocalyptic vision was insufficient. An education that only explains the message to be delivered and trains people to proclaim it is inadequate. The message to the world has to change the messenger first. Knight (2007b:6) cites Ellen White ([1903] 2014:8):

> Our ideas of education take too narrow and too low a range. There is need of a broader scope, a higher aim. True education means more than the pursual of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come.

Knight (2007b:7) concludes that when Christian educators fail to emphasise the redemptive purpose of their schools, those institutions become unnecessary, and that, without an apocalyptic vision, Adventist education may be Christian but lacks both its Adventist identity and a reason to exist.

We return to the point that Ellen White never used the term "Adventist education" and offered no basis for boasting about the educational philosophy she described. She never focused on the alleged uniqueness of her writing; instead, she provided glimpses of what she frequently called *proper* or *true* education, as we have seen above. This vision of true education is not something anyone – including the Seventh-day Adventist Church – could claim as their own and be proud of. By contrast, it is a goal to attain. All educational efforts will be sequential, approaching the goal but never fully reaching it. We conclude that the term "uniqueness" in connection with AE should not be used to avoid an elitist connotation, as if it were a trophy. The term "uniqueness" carries the odour of competition. But the task ahead is not to be better, best, or unique in education, but to strive for *true* education of which God is the only source and not a church.

3.4.3 Ferdinand Regalado

When Ferdinand Regalado, professor of Old Testament Studies, presented at the 27th Faith and Learning Seminar a paper titled *Hebrew thought: Its implications for Adventist education* (Regalado 2000), he taught at the Adventist University of the Philippines, later also at the Adventist University in Montemorelos, Mexico (Ministry Magazine). In contrast to the summarising style we encountered in the articles presented so far, Regalado brings AE into dialogue with Hebrew thought. He appeals for a renewed understanding of Hebrew thought, because this could have "a number of crucial implications to Adventist philosophy of education" (Regalado 2000:206). The three themes he then presents provide inspiring insights into essential concepts in the philosophy of AE.

Starting with "*The wholistic thought of the Hebrews",* Regalado turns the attention to the fact that the Hebrew word for "work" in many places is translated as "worship", concluding that for the Hebrews, the work of study is worship. When teachers and students alike understood this and acted it out, there would be no place for intellectual dishonesty or mediocrity. When work and worship are essentially the same, there is no room for an artificial separation between the spiritual and the secular. To work means to give glory to God by living a God-given vocation, whether it is a farmer, a herdsman, a teacher, or a scribe (:207). Consequently, in the Hebrew worldview, everything is God-centred. "The totality of existence embraces the whole way of life.", he continues (:208), challenging "to find the divine in the commonplace." The Hebrew concept of wholeness also embraces human life, seeing the "soul" as the whole person. Therefore, every human being is called to ""love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your

strength." Dt 6:5 NIV. The goal of life – and therefore the main goal for education – is to become *mensch,* "a Yiddish word for one who has his *total life* put together in an exemplary way", explains Regalado (2000:209) citing Wilson (1983:131).

Regalado (2000:212) then turns to the *Concrete and dynamic thinking of the Hebrew people:* "For the Hebrews […] truth is something to do and not only to think, something to live out, to apply, and not just theorize.", he states and concludes that the ultimate important thing in the educational process "is the godly and Christian life of a teacher that effects changes in the students' lives." Thus, education in Hebrew thought was not concerned with the storage of theoretical and abstract principles but with being useful and with meeting the challenges and needs of this world. Knowing and doing were separately bound together, and learning was life (:213). Even the word "love", in present times commonly understood as a feeling, in Hebrew thought means "to be useful or beneficial or helpful" (:214). Hebrews are pragmatic people; they do not want to think about truth but experience it: "knowing the truth means doing and living it." Regarding AE, he concludes that practical education should never be neglected within the curriculum. In the words of Ellen White ([1923] 2017a:429), the cultivation of soil and other lines of manual labour will fit students …

> … to take hold of any line of work in the fields to which they shall be called. No work will be more effectual than that done by those who, having obtained an education in practical life, go forth prepared to instruct as they have been instructed.

Finishing with the *Hebraic concept of group or community,* Regalado (2000:216), explains that the individual was included in a corporate personality with mutual re-

sponsibility and accountability towards all its members (:218). Applying this to AE, he states:

> Moreover, the concept of solidarity and mutual responsibility implies that our pursuit of learning is not an individual work but a collective and corporate one. The true meaning of education can only be found by the members of the community in their relationship to each other.

About education, the Hebrews imagined teacher and students to be a family, suggesting that a healthy relation between students and teachers is profoundly essential "because the teacher can be an effective living textbook" (:220).

Although all the aspects treated in his article are core elements of AE and are described in detail by Ellen White, Regalado unfortunately refrains from engaging with those elements of Hebrew in relation to Adventist thought, except for brief citations to Ellen White. It seems that he tried to add something new, as it wasn´t already there; instead, he could have inspired and deepened the Adventist understanding by his research.

3.4.4 Gustavo Gregorutti

Gus Gregorutti, an Adventist scholar of leadership and higher education (Andrews University) in *Adventist higher education in the 21st century: Trends and review of its purposes* (Gregorutti 2016), analyses current challenges of higher education in general as well as in the Adventist church. The one that seems to bother him most, ironically, concerns a very challenging side effect of the rapid growth of Adventist education: the increased need for teaching personnel cannot be met by Adventist teachers alone. Gregorutti critically asks: Why do universities offer programs without the proper Adventist personnel? Answering his own question, he observes that new programs may have helped schools enrol more students and become more competitive in a highly competitive market. But with the rising percentage of non-

Adventist teachers (and students) the identification with the core pillars of AE is decreasing. After summarising the essentials of AE, he cites Ellen White ([1903] 2014:20–21):

> To aid the student in comprehending these principles, and in entering into that relation with Christ which will make them a controlling power in the life, should be the teacher's first effort and his constant aim.

… and concludes that there is no AE without Christian professors, or the whole system will fail (Gregorutti 2016:392): "The Adventist University must strive for its identity because this is its call."

3.4.5 Marc Jackman

We end this review on the perception of AE in journals with one of the very few articles that was not published in an Adventist publication but in the *Journal of Research on Christian Education* by Marc Jackman (2014), at that time working at the Centre for Education Programs at the University of Trinidad & Tobago. The title of his paper is: *Assessing the Practicality and Relevance of Adventist Educational Philosophy in a Contemporary Education Paradigm,* and he does this by listing the following ten tenets of contemporary educational philosophy:

- The practical application of learning
- Authentic learning
- Student-centred pedagogy
- Differentiated Instruction
- Collaborative learning
- Critical thinking
- Innovation and creativity
- Character- or values-based learning
- Service learning
- Lifelong learning ideation

Comparing the understanding of these principles as described in contemporary educational literature with the respective knowledge in AE, he concludes: "Adventist

educational philosophy appears to measure up and even go beyond the demands of contemporary education." (:321), mainly because: "The object of Adventist educational philosophy also goes beyond the scope of this life to preparation for the life that is to come." (:322). In this vein, "the work of education and the work of redemption are one" (White [1903] 2014:20).

3.4.6 Conclusion

In the JAE, we primarily find directors of the General Conference's global educational department writing about the principles and philosophy of AE. One of them strongly emphasised AE to be "unique", a claim that I explored critically. The three articles outside the JAE added some interesting elements.

4 A PHILOSOPHY OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST EDUCATION

I will now summarise the only existing, comprehensive and structured philosophy of Seventh-Day Adventist Education, written by George Knight (2016a). Before its publication as a book, this was a three-part series of articles in the *JAE* under the title *Redemptive Education Part I-III: A Philosophic Foundation* (Knight 2010a, 2010b, 2010c). To facilitate the reader's access to the original thought, I will use these articles as a reference, as they are available online.

4.1 Why is there a Need for a Philosophy of Education?

Illustrating the need for philosophy of education Knight (2010a:5) – with a twinkle in the eye – presents what he calls KNIGHT´S LAW: "It is impossible to arrive at your destination unless you know where you are going." However, he well stresses the point that *goals* are not enough for really attaining worthwhile ends, as he demonstrated earlier in his provoking and at least in view of the title even shocking article "*Adolf Hitler and Ellen White 'Agree' on the Purposes of Education"* (Knight 2002), a similar article appeared with a likewise provoking title "*The devil takes a look at Adventist education"* already a year before in an Non-Adventist Journal (Knight 2001). According to Knight (2002:4), "Hitler was one of the 20th century´s most influential philosophers of education." There are obvious parallels in educational goals between Adolf Hitler and Ellen White. They both emphasise physical health as basis for educational effort; they agree on the importance of mental abilities and on the salient role of character education; both underline the necessity of training the will power and the "joy of service" (White) respectively "responsibility" (Hitler) (:5). I could easily bring more parallels, but take the shortcut to the point (:7): Below the

level of good sounding words and practices we need to look for the underlying philosophy.

Philosophy, so Knight (1991:5), is the "most useful of all subjects", because it challenges us to ask the right questions. Quoting Ellen White ([1913] 2017:44) he warns that by "a misconception of the true nature and object of education, many have been led into serious and even fatal errors."

4.2 Basic Questions of a Philosophy of Education Proposed by Knight

Philosophy provides answers to three questions of fundamental importance (summarizing Knight 2010a:6–13):

(1) What is ultimately real? – The ***metaphysical*** question(s)

Enclosed in this are *cosmological* questions: How did the universe come into existence and develop, and does it have any purpose?

The following questions are theological*: Is there a* God? Or several gods? What are the characteristics of God? Why does evil exist? If God exists, how does he relate to humans?

There are also *anthropological* questions: What is the relation between mind and body? Does the mind depend on the body or the body on the mind? What is the nature of man? Is man born good, evil, or morally neutral? Does man have free will?

Finally, the *ontological* questions: what is the nature of existence, and what does it mean for anything to exist?

How educators answer these questions will determine their educational approach: It is of far-reaching importance how a teacher sees a student: As a naked ape (Morris [1967] 2005) or a child of God?

(2) What is true and how do we know? – The ***epistemological*** question

Can reality be known, and if so, how? What are the sources of knowledge?

Empiricism is knowledge obtained by human senses. While sensory data undoubtedly exists, its availability is constrained by the influence of the human mind in its collection and interpretation.

Revelation is a source of knowledge that presupposes a supernatural reality – an assumption most scientists do not share – and, therefore, reject revelation as a source of knowledge. Those who believe in revelation, however, face similar challenges to those in empiricism; the human factor in interpreting revelation can distort it.

Authority is a source of knowledge that is accepted as accurate because experts have penned it or tradition has sanctified it over time. Although we often rely on such claims due to the inability to know everything firsthand, authoritative knowledge can be (and frequently has been) distorted by wrong assumptions.

Rationalists will claim *reason* to be necessary to put order into the material collected, e.g., with the senses. As it is true for all other sources, systems of logic also depend totally on the premises on which they are built.

Intuition, as a source of knowledge, may sometimes initiate discoveries but needs to be controlled by other means of knowing.

At this point Knight (2010a:10) pauses to a point to a metaphysical-epistemological dilemma:

> It is impossible to make statements about reality without first adopting a theory for arriving at truth. On the other hand, a theory of truth cannot be developed without first having a concept of reality. We are caught in a web of circularity.

This dilemma implies that virtually everyone needs faith in their basic philosophical assumptions. One cannot choose to believe but should strive to make the best possible choice about what to believe.

(3) What is of value? – The ***axiological*** question

Values are the consequential product of the answers to metaphysical and epistemological questions. The two main branches of axiology are *ethics* and *aesthetics*. Ethics tries to answer the question: What is right or wrong? Or, more practically, how should I behave? Aesthetics is about the question of beauty and taste: What is beautiful, and what should I like?

Before allowing Knight to answer these questions based on the Adventist understanding of the Bible, on the one hand, and Ellen White's writings on education, on the other, I will present a possible structure for articulating a philosophy.

4.3 A Model for the Structure of Seventh-Day Adventist Philosophy

In this Chapter, a structural model for any philosophy by William Frankena (1965a) is introduced and will be applied to AE.

4.3.1 The Frankena Model for a Philosophy of Education[34]

William Klaas Frankena is renowned as one "of the most important figures in moral philosophy in the mid-twentieth century" (Darwall & Loeb 1995a), known for the clarity and analytical depth of his work, as well as for organising philosophical problems and their theoretical approaches in ways that yielded new insights. He "also seriously engaged philosophy of education and religious ethics" (Darwall & Loeb 1995b:95–96).

[34] I became acquainted with Frankena through Enns (2019:6).

Summarising two articles by Frankena on the philosophy of education, Noaparast (2015:1) describes the synthesising work of Frankena concerning different philosophical approaches:

> According to Frankena […], there have been three types of philosophizing called speculative, normative, and analytical. In the speculative activity, one attempts to combine scientific findings with the results of moral, aesthetic, and religious experiences to present a picture of the world and humans' position in it in a way that it provides a meaning for human life. In the normative activity, the aim is to determine goals, norms, and standards for human personal and social behavior to orient human beings' actions. Finally, in analytical or critical activity, the aim is to analyse and explore the concepts, assumptions, and methods used by philosophers, scientists, and ordinary people.

In the introduction to the book *Philosophy of Education,* Frankena (1965a:7), adapting considerations of Mill ([1843] 1882:Book VI, chapter V and XII), suggests that "a philosophy of practical art like education" will list definitions of the outcomes aspired to by the educational process: "abilities, habits, states, or traits". In company with Plato and Aristotle, he calls them "excellences" (Frankena 1965a:5). To achieve these excellences in the lives of the students, there will be "a number of practical precepts of what should be done and how it should be done" (:7). If an educational approach claims to be philosophical, it then will have to provide "a line of *reasoning* [emphasis in the original] to justify these practical conclusions" by appealing "to the facts of psychology, sociology and the science of education". Behind the desired outcomes in the form of excellences, there has also to be a rational, meaning "statements of basic ends or principles of ethics and social thought", which will find their justification in "empirical and other premises about human nature, life, and the world" (:8).

The following diagram presents a merger of the three different activities of philosophy – speculative, normative, and analytical – as presented in the citation

above and the terms he used in the introduction of "*Philosophy of Education*" (:7–10):

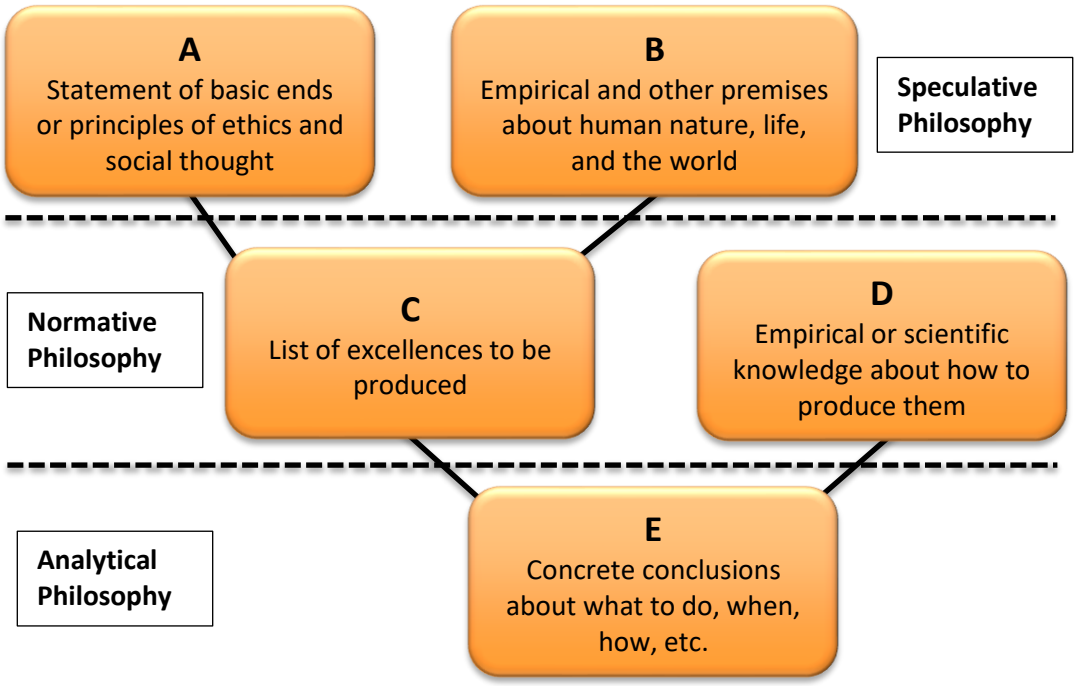


Figure 2: The Frankena model of educational philosophy, adapted and arranged by the researcher

Frankena then groups A, B, and C as one part, representing a "comparatively philosophical and theoretical line of reasoning" that derives the goals of education – the excellences – that are to be cultivated. The conclusions of the first part are the premises of the second part, the more empirical, "scientific and practical line of reasoning" in which C appears again, and D and E provide the practical contribution (:8–9).

Inspired by Plueddemann (2009:149), who applied this model to leadership, I sharpen the picture in the second diagram as shown in Figure 3. For logical reasons, I slightly changed the structure by switching the letters A and B. The *ultimate purpose* is now labelled B and the worldview A because the ultimate purpose of education is necessarily derived from the underlying worldview. The arrows show dependencies more clearly than lines alone. As Knight (2010a:10) notes in the metaphysical-epistemological dilemma, the different elements are so closely inter-

twined, interdependent, and interpenetrating that they constantly inspire one another. "The interrelationship among theology, theory and practice is cyclical (Plueddemann 2009:171–172), theology influences theory, which influences practice, which influences again theology and so on.

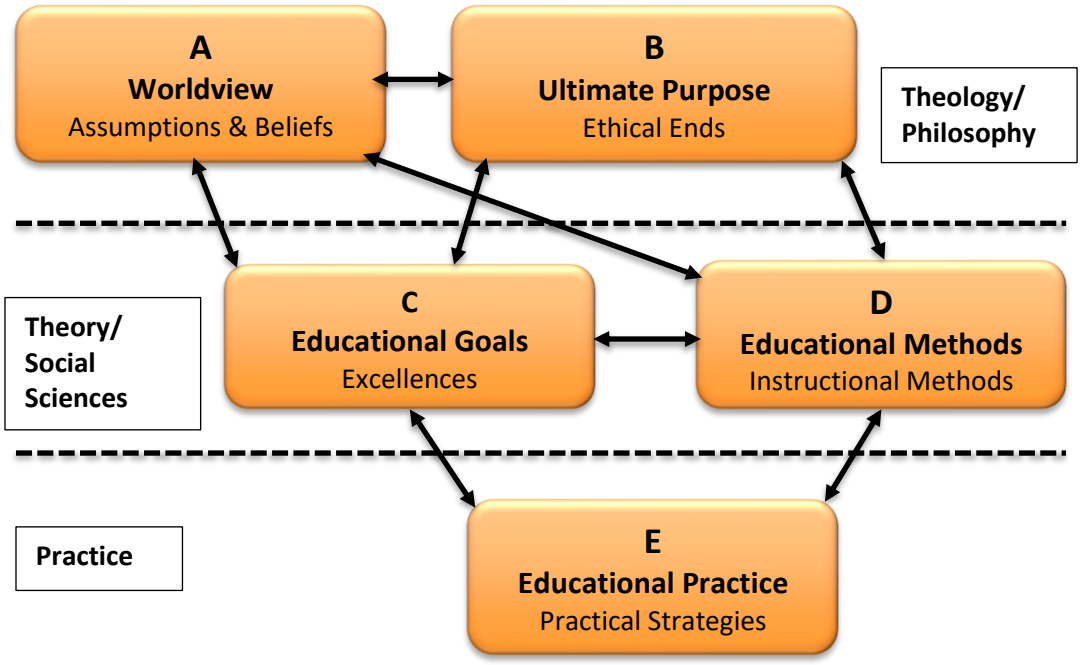


Figure 3: The Frankena model adapted by Plueddemann and rearranged by the researcher

This model appears logical and straightforward, thereby facilitating understanding of the essential elements of a comprehensive philosophy of education. I will use it to fill in the actual parts of the philosophy of AE as described by Knight, based on the Bible and Ellen White's writings.

4.3.2 Applying the Frankena Model to the Philosophy of AE

After the general description of the necessary philosophical questions, I have summarised in Chapter 4.2, Knight (2010a:12–16) applied them to AE, giving the theological answers to the questions of metaphysics, epistemology and axiology. In the Frankena Model, they appear in the worldview section.

A – WORLDVIEW

Metaphysical Assumptions

Key questions*: What is ultimately real? How did the universe come into existence, and for what purpose? What is the nature of man, and what for do nature and man exist?*

Knight summarises the metaphysical assumptions that Seventh-day Adventists derive from their understanding of the Bible. The official and complete version of the *Fundamental Beliefs* is published online [35] The following list is the exact wording of Knight (2010a:15) and constitutes the foundation of the Seventh-day Adventist worldview:

The biblical framework of reality as understood in AE

- The existence of the living God, the Creator.
- The creation by God of a perfect world and universe.
- Humanity's creation in the image of God as His responsible agents on earth.
- The "invention" of sin by Lucifer, who forgot his own creatureliness and sought to put himself in the place of God.
- The spread of sin to the earth by Lucifer, resulting in the Fall of humanity and the partial loss of God's image.
- The conflict or Great Controversy between Christ and Satan over the character of God and His law of love, which runs throughout earthly history.
- The inability of human beings, without divine aid, to change their own nature, overcome their inherent sinfulness, or restore the lost image of God within themselves.
- The initiative of God for humanity's salvation and its restoration to its original state through the incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and heavenly ministry of Jesus Christ.
- The revelation of God's character in the life and teachings of Christ, which provides the foundation for Christian ethics.
- The activity of the Holy Spirit in the plan for restoring God's image in fallen humanity and His work in the calling out of the community of believers, the Church.

[35] https://adventist.org/beliefs#official-beliefs [accessed 2025-12-21]

- The command of Christ for the Church to be socially active in the interim between His first and second advents.
- The return of Christ at the end of earthly history to put an end to sin and solve the problems that human social action could not eradicate.
- The eventual restoration of the earth and its faithful inhabitants to the Edenic condition.

As most of these concepts should be familiar to a Christian educator, I refrain from providing detailed explanations. Beyond the conviction that there is a God who is the creator of everything, the core assumption underlying AE's primary goal concerns the nature of man: because of sin, we have lost our likeness to the image of God. As Ellen White ([1903] 2014:10) specifies, through "sin the divine likeness was marred", man´s physical powers weakened, his mental capacity lessened, his spiritual vision dimmed, and he became subject to death. With the plan of salvation, God has provided a way back to the original state:

> To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind, and soul, that the divine purpose in his creation might be realized—this was to be the work of redemption. This is the object of education, the great object of life.

This, however, is not done by a magic touch nor in a moment; it is the work of a lifetime. Understanding this basal assumption, it is easy to discern as well why the restoration of the image of God in man is the primary goal of AE, as also why salvation and education share the same emphasis to the extent that, according to Ellen White, true education and salvation are two words for the same process.

Epistemological Assumptions

Key questions: *Can reality be known, and if so, how? What are the sources of knowledge?*

Again, we list the summary of the Adventist answers to these questions as provided by Knight (2010a:16–17):

The biblical framework of the source of knowledge, as understood in AE

- Humans exist in a supernatural universe in which the infinite Creator God has revealed Himself [in the Bible] to finite minds on a level they can comprehend in at least a limited fashion.
- Human beings were created in the image of God, and even though fallen, are capable of rational thought.
- Communication with other intelligent beings (people and God) is possible despite humanity's inherent limitations and the inadequacies of human language.
- The God who cared enough to reveal Himself to people also cared enough to protect the essence of that revelation as it was transmitted through succeeding generations.
- Human beings can make sufficiently correct interpretations of the Bible through the guidance of the Holy Spirit to arrive at valid truth.
- Seventh-day Adventists believe that the Bible teaches that the prophetic gift will be in the church until the Second Advent (Ephesians 4:8, 11-13) and that Christians are not to reject the claims of those who believe they have the prophetic gift, but to test their teachings by the testimony of the Bible (see 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21; Matthew 7:15-20; 1 John 4:1, 2).
- Having done that testing, the Seventh-day Adventist Church early concluded that Ellen G. White had a valid gift of revelatory prophecy for the Adventist community that would help it to be faithful to biblical principles during the period before the Second Advent. That gift was not intended to replace the Bible or to introduce new doctrines, but to help God's people understand and apply God's Word as revealed in the Bible.

At his point Knight (2010a:18) adds these important epistemological observations:

- From the biblical perspective, all truth is God's truth, since truth finds its source in God as the Creator and Originator.
- There is a Great Controversy underway in the area of epistemology, just as there is a similar tension in nature. The forces of evil are continually seeking to undermine the Bible, distort human reasoning, and convince people to rely on their own inadequate fallen selves in their search for truth. The epistemological conflict is of crucial importance because misdirection in this area will shift every other human endeavour off-centre.
- There are absolute Truths in the universe, but fallen humans can gain only a relative or imperfect grasp of those absolutes.
- The Bible is not concerned with abstract truth. It depicts truth in relation to life. Knowing, in the fullest biblical sense, means applying perceived knowledge to one's daily life.
- The various sources of knowledge available to the Christian are complementary. Thus, while all sources can and should be used by the Christian, each one should be evaluated in the light of the biblical pattern.
- The acceptance of a Christian epistemology cannot be separated from the acceptance of a Christian metaphysics, and vice versa.

From an epistemological perspective, Knight explains that Seventh-day Adventists recognise that the human capacity to grasp reality and perceive truth is limited. Consistent with their metaphysical understanding, Adventists seek supernatural guidance to perceive reality accurately. They believe the Bible to be a source of God's revelation. Nature is also a source of God´s revelation and of the Holy Spirit, who endows chosen people with wisdom and the prophetic gift. Adventists believe that Ellen White had that prophetic gift and used it to provide the church with a deeper understanding of biblical truth.

Axiological Foundations

Key questions: *What is right? What is beautiful?*

Talking about axiology, Knight (2010a:18–20) did not include a condensed list of the different aspects, as was the case with the metaphysical and epistemological assumptions. Therefore, this summary is in my own words:

The biblical framework of ethics as understood in AE:

- Applying the assumptions of biblical metaphysics and epistemology frames the biblical perception of what is “normal” or considered “good or evil” in this world, which is often in direct contradiction to the beliefs of other worldviews.
- The character of God as a God of love is the example of what is good in this world:
  - Love is giving rather than receiving.
  - Love works for the good of others, even those considered enemies.
  - Love leads to joyful service.
- Christian ethics primarily focus on loving action and only secondarily on what to avoid.
- Christian growth does not come from what one does not or avoids, but rather because of what we do day by day.
- Christian ethics are internal more than external: out of our thoughts and motifs come our words and deeds.
- Only a converted Christian in a constant relationship with Jesus will experience this.
- Created in the image of God, the Christian can choose to do good or evil.
- Christian ethics are the basis for a life in fullness.

- Christian ethic is redemptive and restorative, enabling people to regain the wholeness for which they were created.

The biblical framework of aesthetics as understood in AE:

- God created function and beauty; he is the source of all beauty.
- The fallen human nature also distorted the aesthetic realm.
- Because by beholding we are changed, it matters what "we read, see, hear or touch". Aesthetics has a direct impact on ethics.
- Whatever is beautiful will contribute to restoring a right relationship to God, to other people, to our own selves and the environment in which we live; what obstructs this is evil and ugly.

In sum, we note that AE is a highly practical discipline, emphasising that knowledge is valuable only when it gives rise to congruent actions. As the mind is influenced by everything that crosses the threshold of attention, AE is concerned about the impact of sensations on our mind and is aware of the close link between aesthetics and ethics.

B – ULTIMATE PURPOSE

I will now list what I conceive as the "ultimate purpose" of AE: Taking the essence of the analysis of the visionary sketch of education by Ellen White, as described in Chapter 3.2.1 "Source and Aim of True Education" EGW, we see four areas, following a similar structure as Snorrason (2005:178–233):

- To know and glorify God
- To restore the image of God in man
- To develop body, mind, and soul harmoniously
- To prepare for joyful service in this world and the world to come

These four main goals will now serve as the areas in which we list the educational goals, the "excellences to be produced" (Frankena 1965a:7).

C – EDUCATIONAL GOALS

C
Educational Goals
Excellences

Higher[36] Educational Goals

The educational goals must describe in detail the areas to be targeted to achieve the ultimate goals. I summarise what can be drawn out of the first Chapter of the book "*Education"* (White [1903] 2014:8–12) and allocate the different goals to the respective areas within the four main goals of the ultimate purpose. To facilitate this, I merged Ellen White´s reflection, published in 1903, with the technical capabilities of 2020, using MAXQDA[37] software to analyse the text and code it, grouping the individual codings into categories. This software proved very useful for getting a logically structured summary.

Following the reasoning of Tucker (2001:171) that the philosophy of AE is deeply rooted in Ellen White's writings and that there is no need to develop a new one, I tried to stay as close to the original wording as possible. I refrained from abstract or condensed paraphrasing, allowing the original words to express their indwelling beauty and vigour. This will also help readers familiar with Ellen White's writings recognise the elements more easily.

Men and women in the process of true education will …

- **… learn to know and glorify God**
  - Acknowledge God as the ultimate source of knowledge
  - Understand the Bible as the Word of God
  - Accept the Bible as the perfect standard of truth
  - Learn to bring the human mind into communion with God´s mind as a means for the highest education
  - Learn to love God with the whole strength, mind, and heart, which consequently leads to the development of every power

[36] An explanation for the choice of this term will be given in the next subchapter.
[37] https://www.maxqda.com/de/ [accessed 2025-12-21]

- **… experience the restoration of the image of God in their lives**
  - Desire to reach God´s ideal
  - Learn to live as a being created in the image of God, endowed with power akin to that of the creator. That means to …
    - Develop individuality
    - Learn to bear responsibilities
    - Learn to be a leader
    - Learn to influence the character [of others]
    - Learn to be men and women strong to think and to act
    - Learn to be masters, not slaves of circumstances

- **… develop all their powers**
  - Understand education as the harmonious development of the physical, mental, and spiritual powers
  - Understand education as more than mental discipline and physical training, but a strengthening of the character
  - Develop a strong character that stands for truth and uprightness instead of sacrificing it to selfish desire or worldly ambition
  - Train to be thinkers and not mere reflectors of other men's thoughts
  - Bring every motive and desire into conformity with the great principles of right instead of some master passion becoming a power to destroy
  - Contemplate the great facts of duty and destiny to expand and strengthen the mind
  - Develop breadth of mind, clearness of thought, and the courage of convictions
  - Understand that education cannot be completed in this life but will be continued in the life to come
  - Invest themselves in the preparatory school of earth as the passport to the higher grade, the school above

- **… be prepared for joyful service**
  - Respond to the call of the law of love to devote body, mind, and soul to the service of God and our fellow men
  - Understand that through service, we receive the highest culture of every faculty and become more and more fully partakers of the divine nature
  - Understand that through service, we are fitted for heaven, for we receive heaven into our hearts
  - Experience the joy that service, while making us a blessing to others, brings the greatest blessing to ourselves

An Important Parenthesis

As this dissertation aims to explore the extent to which the philosophy of AE influences ATE, we state that at this point, we are precisely at the intersection between the philosophy of AE and its application to ATE. Until here, this chapter summoned

the core of AE in the first three areas of the Frankena model: The driving worldview with its assumptions and beliefs (A), the ultimate purpose describing the ethical ends (B), and the educational goals listing the desired excellences to be produced in the learners (C). Now, our focus is on how this is translated into educational methods (D) and educational practice (E), including practical strategies, within the framework of ATE.

To highlight the pivotal point and localise it in the model, we take a new look at it:

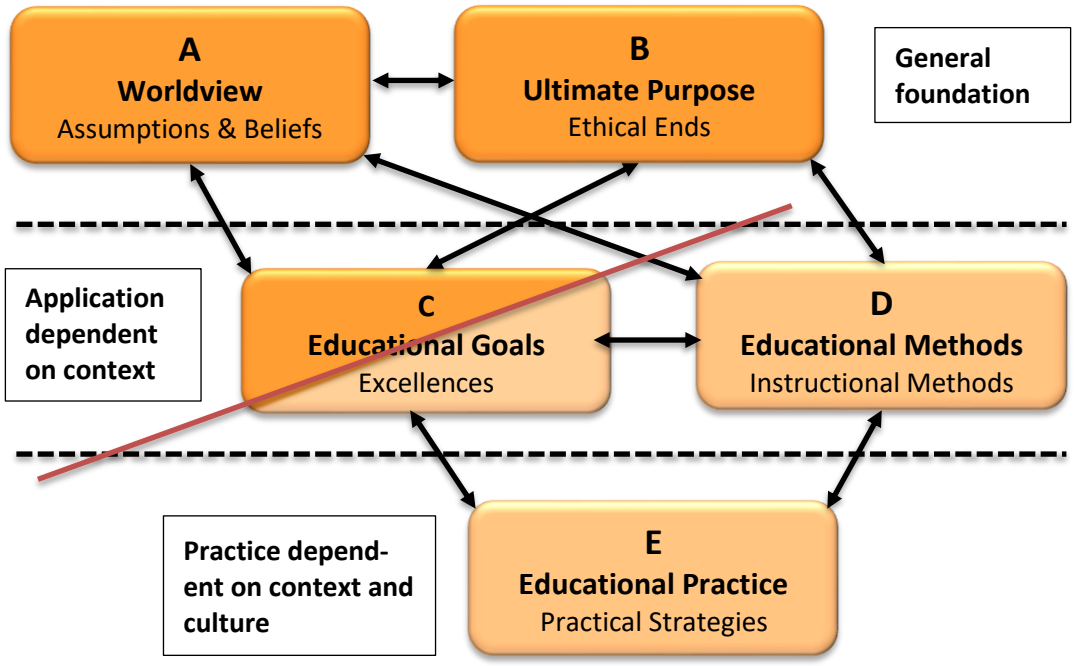


Figure 4: The Frankena model with pivotal line added by the researcher

The worldview (A) and the ultimate purpose (B) serve as the general foundation and are universally valid and applicable to every learner. They both align with the educational goals and identified excellences (C) that, to a certain extent, may be generally applicable to all learners. Therefore, I referred to them as *higher* educational goals. However, the learner's context – age, cultural setting, gender, and, most importantly, the desired type of education – will have a significant influence on the educational goals. Even the *higher* educational goals need to match the particular

context of the learners: Some of the excellences to be produced in an eight-year-old schoolboy will be the same as for a high school student or a doctorate candidate, the actual extent of the excellence that can be achieved, however, will differ widely, as will the methods chosen to produce them. Character formation will look different for an eighth grader than for a doctoral student. The same can be said of service preparation, which will be translated differently depending on age and the type of study. As Adventist educational goals embrace the whole being and the whole existence possible to man, no level of education can excuse itself not to cover the higher educational goals, either by entrusting it entirely to earlier levels of education (e.g. parental, primary, or secondary education) or sacrificing them by merely concentrating on the content of courses without apparent connection to an overall logical structure in the curriculum that is true to the philosophy of AE.

Taking the challenge seriously that true "education means more than the pursual of a certain course of study" (White [1903] 2014:8), the educational goals for every learner in any state of his or her education need to balance two focal points: the *higher* educational goals and *specific* goals meeting the respective needs of a particular course of study. In a serious application of the philosophy of AE, these two levels must always be intertwined; they cannot be independent. If they are disconnected, the "more" of true education will be lost. An education that does not aim high enough and contents itself merely "to a certain course of study", consequently fails to qualify as true higher education. When, at the end of the first Chapter of her book "*Education",* Ellen White ([1903] 2014:12) asks, "What education can be higher than this?" she has something else in mind than the definition of higher education that nowadays means postsecondary or tertiary education leading to an aca-

demic degree. Beyond the surely necessary and proper structural classification in primary, secondary, and tertiary education, White´s vision of true higher education applies to *every* level of education. The criterion for an education to be considered higher within the framework of the philosophy of AE is how the "more" of true education is realised in a particular course of study. The above-listed ultimate goals (see "B – Ultimate Purpose", page 86) can help to define the core of this "more" of true education as the essence of AE:

- To know and glorify God
- To restore the image of God in man
- To develop body, mind, and soul harmoniously
- To prepare for joyful service in this world and the world to come

In every course of study, level of education, and vocational training context, *higher* educational goals must be translated into the specific context. Looking into tertiary education, this leads to an essential foundational task for those designing curricula and courses of vocational and professional education: They need to undertake this task with the higher goals in mind that aim to draw the learners closer to God, restore his image in them, develop all levels of their being harmoniously and prepare them for joyful service in this world and the world to come within the parameters of their profession.

Whether a student aims to become a teacher, a pastor, a medical doctor, or a technical engineer, the overall success of their education cannot be measured solely by excellence in their respective profession, regardless of their character. Knight (2010b:35) uses the following diagram to illustrate his summary of the aims of AE:

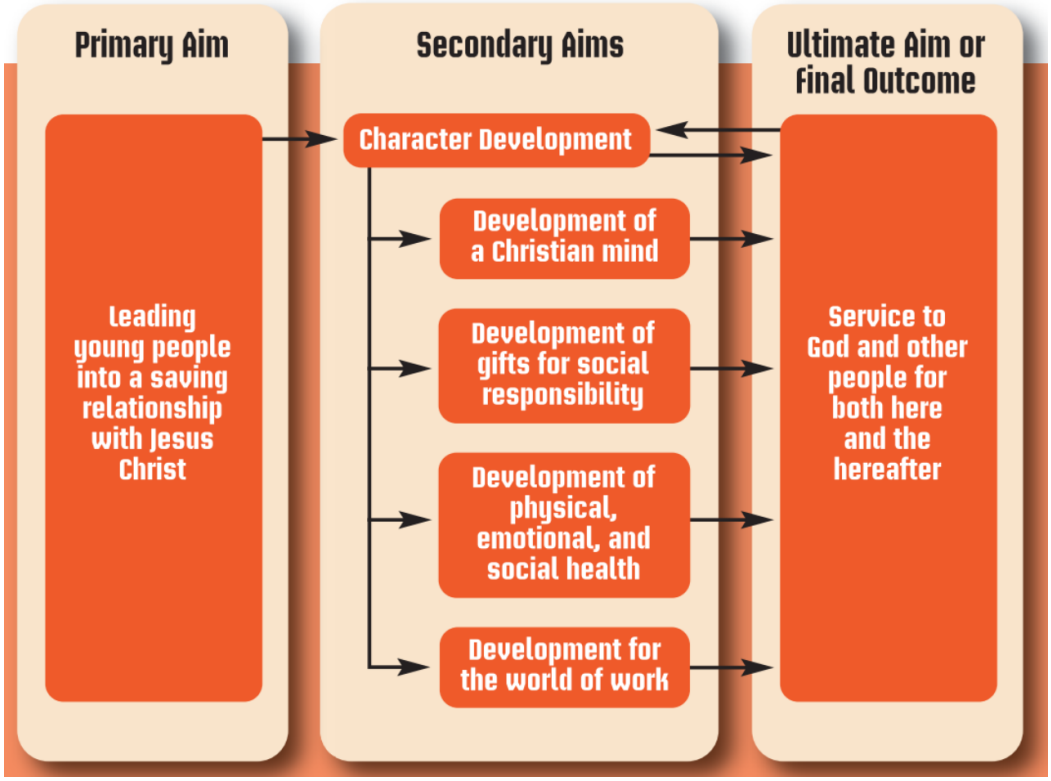


Figure 5: Knight´s model of the aims of AE

The wording of this model appears strongly influenced by the perspective of an educator observing young people. Considering that education is a lifelong process, these aims remain valid for all ages, professions, and individuals. And the vocational part of education, the development of the world of work, the actual profession, is only one part of a much larger picture.

Looking back at the place where Ellen White ([1903] 2014:20) closely links this vision of *higher* education with the work of redemption, exclaiming that in "the highest sense, the work of education and the work of redemption are one" (:20), she consequently penned:

> The true teacher is not satisfied with second-rate work. He is not satisfied with directing his students to a standard lower than the highest which it is possible for them to attain. He cannot be content with imparting to them only technical knowledge, with making them merely clever accountants, skillful artisans, suc-

> cessful tradesmen. It is his ambition to inspire them with principles of truth, obedience, honor, integrity, and purity—principles that will make them a positive force for the stability and uplifting of society. He desires them, above all else, to learn life's great lesson of unselfish service.
> These principles become a living power to shape the character, through the acquaintance of the soul with Christ, through an acceptance of His wisdom as the guide, His power as the strength, of heart and life. This union formed, the student has found the Source of wisdom. He has within his reach the power to realize in himself his noblest ideals. The opportunities of the highest education for life in this world are his. And in the training here gained, he is entering upon that course which embraces eternity.

In the first Chapter of the book *Counsels to parents, teachers and students* (White [1913] 2017:14) she defines higher education as "an experimental knowledge of the plan of salvation […] secured by earnest and diligent study of the Scriptures."

> Such an education will renew the mind and transform the character, restoring the image of God in the soul. It will fortify the mind against the deceptive whisperings of the adversary, and enable us to understand the voice of God. It will teach the learner to become a co-worker with Jesus Christ, to dispel the moral darkness about him, and bring light and knowledge to men. It is the simplicity of true godliness—our passport from the preparatory school of earth to the higher school above.

We can now understand those rather harsh words of Knight mentioned above (2007b:7), warning Christian educators not to neglect "emphasizing the redemptive role of their schools"; otherwise, they would "make their schools both unimportant and unnecessary."

Educational Goals for Adventist Theological Education

Turning now to educational goals for ATE, I observed that few Seventh-day Adventist theological educators write about applying the *higher educational goals* of the philosophy of AE to ATE. The prominent exception to this observation seems to be in the *Handbook of Seventh-Day Adventist Ministerial and Theological Education,* the official document of the International Board of Ministerial and Theological Education (2017). Compared with the first edition of this Handbook in 2001, the iden-

tity of the theological student and the stated learning outcomes come into sharper focus. What hardly covers a page in the first edition (International Board of Ministerial and Theological Education 2001:48–49) is not only explained in more detail (International Board of Ministerial and Theological Education 2017:9–10), but also translated into essential expected outcomes for the entry-level ministerial degree (:14–23). However, neither the structure nor the wording of this document makes any reference to the principles of AE.

The groundwork for coherently adapting AE's philosophy to ATE remains to be done. Even George Knight, who wrote extensively on AE from various perspectives: theological, historical and philosophical, gives only general guidelines for the application of the philosophy of AE in his three-part series *Redemptive Education* (Knight 2010a, 2010b, 2010c), later published as a whole in the book *Educating for Eternity: A Seventh-day Adventist philosophy of education* (Knight 2016a). Again, we turn to Ellen White's writings to identify signposts of the critical educational goals she considered essential to the pastoral ministry in her day.

This will not be an easy task and must be done prudently. As outlined in Chapter 2.3, the history of AE had a very bumpy start. The writings of Ellen White on education had, first of all, the goal of helping the young church understand the sacred and holistic task of Bible-based education. In addition, when Ellen White wrote about education, she generally envisioned every learner within her conception of redemptive education. She only occasionally focused on the details of a particular course of study. In Ellen White´s vision of the true Christian church, every member is a disciple of Christ, a missionary, and a soul-winner, may he or she be a pastor, a medical doctor, an accountant, or a nurse. “Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of

God as a missionary," she penned (White [1925] 2017:19), underlining that "God expects personal service from everyone to whom He has intrusted [sic] a knowledge of the truth for this time." While not "all can go as missionaries to foreign lands, […] all can be missionaries in their families and neighborhoods." Trying to find counsel for ATE in the writings of Ellen White, we are advised to wear glasses of carefulness so as not to confuse her general descriptions of AE as descriptions of ATE. On the other hand, what is true for AE is also accurate for ATE. If ATE fails to serve the above-listed higher educational goals, it loses the right to be called *Adventist* theological education. The research question of this dissertation looks precisely into this area: How much of the philosophy of Adventist Education is in today´s Adventist Theological Education in Europe?

Like any other educational branch within AE, ATE must also adopt higher educational goals in the actual course of study. This will consequently lead to differentiated content, given the profession's context, which the education prepares graduates for. Although Ellen White promotes general biblical literacy for every believer, the pastor needs to go deeper into that realm and be able to teach others to gain that knowledge of Scripture. Every believer should be able to lead people to Christ, but the pastor needs to be an expert in this area and be able to train others to be soul-winners. Every believer is called to the joy of service, but the way of service will differ for a medical doctor or a pastor.

In addition, the pastor has the role of teaching others to serve; his expertise is not limited to service as an expert himself but also extends to training others. Illustrating this point, Ellen White recounted the story of an overseer who, instead of ensuring that the men under his supervision fulfilled their tasks, was himself digging

a trench, with the twelve men standing above watching him work. The enterprise owner dismissed this overseer because he had neglected the task “to keep the twelve men at work.” Likewise, the …

> […] minister should not feel that it is his duty to do all the talking and all the laboring and all the praying; but he should make it a part of his work to educate workers in every church. Let different ones take turns in leading the meetings, and in giving Bible readings, and in so doing you will be calling into use the talents which God has given you, and at the same time educating workers White 1888:696, par.7.

Considering how closely Ellen White weaves redemption and education, the pastor, ministering the redemptive gospel message to people, can´t exclude himself from the work of education. To put it another way, when the goals of redemption and the goals of education are essentially the same, believers, as they grow in education, will likewise *grow* in redemption, and the pastor comes into this picture as a gardener, a teacher, and a trainer.

These explanations of how a pastor should mould his ministry serve as the basis for what should be taught in ATE. Ellen White never addressed the concept of ATE in any length or detail, but, like pieces of a puzzle, she provided many elements to build a blessed and prosperous ministry. Because theological education entails pastoral formation that prepares the future pastor for fruitful ministry the higher educational goals concern the learner´s person and character. The descriptions of ministry in Ellen White's writings provide the basis for the specific practical aspects of ministerial training. To facilitate the study of the different pieces of the puzzle and to put them into a big picture, various generations of trustees of the Ellen White Estate, the institution administering the written legacy of Ellen White, published several compilations: *Testimonies to ministers and gospel workers* (White [1915] 2017),

Pastoral ministry (White [1995] 2017), and to a certain extent also *Evangelism* (White [1946] 2014) and *Ministry to the cities* (White [2012] 2017).

The most helpful tool to get a quick and comprehensive overview of what Ellen White wrote about "characteristics desired in ministers" can be found in volume 2 of the *"Comprehensive Index to the writings of Ellen G. White"* (Board of trustees of the Ellen G. White Estate 1962:1734–1737)[38]. There is a list of about 100 qualities that should be developed in the minister. Although only in alphabetical order, this collection of aspects not only provides a valuable overview of the pastor's profile but also vividly illustrates the need for the above-listed higher-education goals of AE to be included in ATE to achieve such excellence. Trying to subsume the items into topics, we end up with quite the same clusters as Vyhmeister (1978:27–34), understanding now how she proceeded to get them:

- Bible study
- Common branches (general education, especially mastery of the native language)
- History (to study the dealings of God with the nations of the earth)
- Speech and voice culture
- Physiology (basic knowledge of the body, health aspects)
- Good manners
- Psychology (White didn´t use this word, but put it this way: "knowledge of human nature and a study of the human mind", White 1882)
- Practical labour
- Practical church work

While this may suffice for now, we now turn to the question of what consequences all this should have for the design of an ATE curriculum.

[38] There is a very useful online version of this index: https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/11161.2176121#176191 [accessed 2025-12-21]. True to the volume's title and purpose, every item is linked to the original passage in Ellen White's writings, making it easy to see the whole picture while also allowing detailed examination.

Curriculum Considerations

Again, George Knight ponders this question, at least in general terms. After he presents "*A Philosophic Foundation"* in the first part of "*Redemptive Education"* (Knight 2010a:4–21), with which we have already dealt intensively, he summarises Ellen White´s philosophy of education (Knight 2010b:22–28) in the second part of the series "*Implications of Philosophy for Adventist Education."*

He then writes extensively (:28–37) about the role of the teacher in the aims of AE, seeing teaching as a form of ministry and describing the Adventist teacher as an agent of redemption who necessarily needs qualifications that are in harmony with the philosophy of AE. As described above, according to Ellen White, it could also be said the other way round, namely, the ministry being a form of teaching: The minister should humbly learn of Christ to become a "true teacher" (White [1901] 2017:78). Teaching is an essential part of ministry.

In the third part, he adds further implications with the crucial question: What knowledge is most worth? (Knight 2010c:39–41), thus entering the area of curriculum. He begins with a thought of Spencer ([1911] 2002:8), a leading social Darwinist, asking: "Before there can be a rational *curriculum*, we must settle which things it most concerns us to know …" Looking into the original text of Spencer ([1911] 2002:9–10), it is striking to observe that he defines the question "How to live?" as the essential question:

> Not how to live in the mere material sense only, but in the widest sense. The general problem which comprehends every special problem is—the right ruling of conduct in all directions under all circumstances. In what way to treat the body; in what way to treat the mind; in what way to manage our affairs; in what way to bring up a family; in what way to behave as a citizen; in what way to utilize those sources of happiness which nature supplies—how to use all our faculties to the greatest advantage of ourselves and others—how to live completely?

> And this being the great thing needful for us to learn, is, by consequence, the great thing which education has to teach. To prepare us for complete living is the function which education has to discharge; and the only rational mode of judging of an educational course is to judge in what degree it discharges such function.

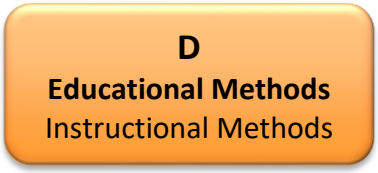
Spencer, as a Darwinist, classifies those activities as most important that directly minister to self-preservation (:11). Neither Knight nor any other Christian educator would endorse that goal based on naturalistic metaphysics and epistemology. However, Spencer's fundamental questions are essential to all forms of education, highly pertinent, and to the point. Picking up Spencer's line of thought, Knight underlines that it "is crucial that Adventists understand the rationale for the curriculum in their institutions of learning" Knight (2010c:40) emphasises: "Authentic and viable curricula must be developed out of, and must be consistent with, a school's metaphysical, epistemological, and axiological bases." Therefore, a genuine Adventist curriculum can´t be a "readjustment or an adaptation of the secular curriculum or larger society." As "Biblical Christianity is unique," the "curricular stance of Adventist education will be unique."

Knight (2010c:40) adds another critical ingredient to curriculum considerations: it requires a pattern that holds the curriculum together. Many curricula suffer from "the lack of an integrated principle." There is such a flood of knowledge "from which nothing follows." "We live in a world", he adds, "that has so fragmented knowledge that it is difficult to see how our various realms of expertise relate to the whole." For Adventist educators, the question should be straightforward: what knowledge is most worth? However, they do not only face the challenge "to *find* the pattern of knowledge in relation to its centre, but rather to *apply* what they know." He concludes (:41):

> The challenge confronting the curriculum developer in an Adventist school is to move beyond a curricular view focused on the bits and pieces, and to find a way to clearly and purposefully integrate the details of knowledge into the biblical framework. […]
>
> As a result, the curriculum of the Christian school must be seen as a unified whole, rather than as a fragmented and rather loosely connected assortment of topics. Once that viewpoint is recognized, education will have taken a major step forward in creating an atmosphere in which the "Christian mind" can develop—an educational context in which young people can be taught to think "Christianly" about every aspect of reality.

However, he analyses the problem skilfully, pointing out that even Adventist schools imitate "secular patterns to which they add chapel services, religion classes, and a religious ´atmosphere`" (Knight 2010b:23), citing Ditmanson, Hong & Quanbeck (1960:iii) who observed this in a Lutheran context. Knight (2010c:41), seeing a vast difference existing "between education in which devotional exercises and the study of Scripture have a place" and now referring to the reasoning of Gaeblein (1962:3–4), an education in which the "Christianity of the Bible […] is the matrix of the whole program or, to change the figure, the bed in which the river of teaching and learning flows." At this point, we cross the line that loosely separates educational goals articulated in a coherent curriculum from the next area of the Frankena model: educational *methods*. Because the way the Bible is used within a curriculum is the litmus test for whether the biblical philosophy of, in our case, Adventist education, is taken seriously, we now turn to this most essential aspect.

D – EDUCATIONAL METHODS



When we examine the last two areas of the Frankena Model – educational methods and educational practice – the boundary between them is blurred. As methods never work in theory but only in practice, it is difficult to tell where the method ends and practice begins. In ad-

dressing educational methods, we remain at a meta-level, focusing primarily on the question that every Adventist (and every Christian) institution providing theological education must answer: Do we only convey content about the Bible, thereby risking mere indoctrination of students? Or is it our intent to help the students mould their whole life according to the way of thinking provided by the Bible?

Again, I take some of the reasoning of Knight (2010c:41): "The Bible is not the whole of knowledge", he argues, but provides …

> … a frame of reference within which to study and interpret all topics. Whether that framework is the view of evolutionary naturalism, the Greek and Roman classics, the biblical worldview, or some other perspective makes a great deal of difference. An Adventist school is Christian only when it teaches all subjects from the perspective of God's Word.

In many standard curricular designs, Knight observes that the Bible is treated as just one topic among many, and each subject is studied within its own speciality and tradition. He also discerns another extreme that aims to make the Bible the whole curriculum, which also misses the point (:42). While the Bible sets a framework for interpreting every subject and challenges the learner to engage with every topic through biblical principles, it is not a textbook "for all areas that students need to understand." However, it certainly *is* a textbook …

> … in the science of salvation and a source of inspired information concerning both the orderliness and the abnormality of our present world, even though it never claims to be a sufficient authority in all areas of possible truth.

The Bible should be a leaven, permeating the whole school program (:43) and applied so that students can experience being restored to the image of God or become the kind of person God means them to be. At this point, Knight returns to the holistic vision of the philosophy of AE as penned by Ellen White, emphasizing that the whole person must be developed: "the physical, social, spiritual, and vocational

as well as the mental needs of each student" (:47). He then complains that traditional education – based on Greek idealism – limits its focus almost exclusively on the mental, thus committing "miseducation" by ignoring physical development and preparation for useful vocations.

Writing about all this, Knight has general education in view. However, this certainly also concerns theological education. Theological educators may approach those challenging questions with relative ease, assuming that, because of the nature of their field of expertise, the Bible, they are safe from succumbing to the temptation not to engage sufficiently with the biblical text. But this could be dangerously shortsighted. The crux of theological education that is true to the principles of AE lies in answering the question of *how* the Bible is used. It may seem that the Bible is at the centre of all theological education. Looking into the curricula of Adventist theological institutions as far as they are available online, most of them don´t stand out with an integrative structure of the curriculum but seem to have copied and pasted the traditional silo style of the curriculum with compartmentalization in the different disciplines of biblical, historical, systematic and practical theology, leading inescapably into fragmentation with no visible "big picture." Upon random review of course descriptions, everything seems to be centred on the Bible. The problem is that knowing a great deal *about* the Bible is not sufficient. All the historical, semantic, structural, etc., facts may be interesting, but mere intellectual facts neither change character nor prepare for the joy of service in the ministry. In the first chapter of her book "*Education"*, Ellen White repeatedly emphasises the need to grow in *the knowledge of God* (White [1903] 2014:9,11). She is undoubtedly intentional in her choice of prepositions. Knowledge *about* God is not the same as

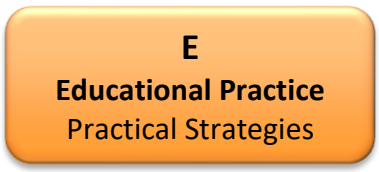
knowledge *of* God. Likewise, knowledge *about* the Bible can never replace the knowledge *of* the Bible. In other words, a knowledge of the Bible that does not lead to an intimate knowledge of God misses the point. Considering the whole reasoning of Ellen White´s thought (:11), knowing the Bible and knowing God are essentially the same:

> The Holy Scriptures are the perfect standard of truth, and as such should be given the highest place in education. To obtain an education worthy of the name, we must receive a knowledge of God, the Creator, and of Christ, the Redeemer, as they are revealed in the sacred word.

Therefore, studying the Bible is not so much about learning facts about it but about meeting its author and knowing him. All the desired excellences come out of that: the power to think and act, the capability to bear responsibilities, leadership, an influential character, independent thinkers instead of reflectors of other men´s thought, and being masters, not slaves of circumstances, having breadth of mind, clearness of thought and the courage of one´s conviction. Asking Adventist theological educators whether this is produced in the lives of their students as a result of how they approach the Bible, they might discover that, all too often, their course of study is limited to a merely cognitive, mental approach.

This leads us to the last section in the Frankena Model and to the question: What does a theological education look like that produces these spiritual and practical qualities in the life of a theology student and enables him or her, at the same time, as a future pastor, to lead others into this experience?

E – EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE



What kind of educational practice will bring forth the higher educational, spiritual, and vocational

goals of theological education that take the philosophy of AE seriously? Looking back on what has been said above, it seems clear that educational practice methods must be driven by the worldview (not every method that could work will stand, e.g., the ethical test). There should also be a clear understanding of the teacher´s role and responsibilities, and a judicious selection of methods to guide students in achieving the stated educational goals. The picture of the guide is intentionally chosen. As mentioned above, AE's ultimate purpose and educational goals place the learner's character, even their ultimate fate, at the centre of educational endeavours. The content is only a means, but no end in itself. There is a significant difference between lecturing about the Bible and articulating doctrinal convictions, on the one hand, and seeking biblical/theological wisdom, advice, and direction in addressing human challenges that encompass the development of the whole being, on the other. As theology students typically prepare to pastor churches, it is not enough that they pursue the restoration of the image of God within them; they also need to be able to lead others in this process.

So, the teacher´s role is not limited to providing knowledge. He is also – and undoubtedly the more important part – a guide for a specific time in the lifelong learning journey of the (young) people entrusted to his care. As a sage *and* guide, the teacher will not be content with his students repeating correctly what he tells them. He will be concerned that they learn to think independently of him, to reflect on all dimensions of life with God, and to apply this in practical life. While this holds for all levels of education, it is especially true in theological education.

In the literature on ATE, these crucial and fundamental aspects are not always clearly defined. How else could it be explained that there is next to zero literature

about the *how* of ATE? While many articles cover different aspects of *faith and learning, character education,* and similar topics (Knight 1998; Maloon 1998; Boyatt 1998; Madson 1999; Scriven 2002; Taylor V 2014) either in general terms or for primary and secondary schools, even for high schools, references to ATE in *The Journal of Adventist Education* are rare, if not missing at all. Reflecting on my conversations with theological professors, I found that they are very concerned with cramming as much content as possible into their courses because "there is so much students have to know!" When the conversations turned to character education as one of the most salient goals of education, it seems that they see either other levels of the educational process (parents, primary and secondary education) to be responsible for that, or there is the assumption that character education will happen automatically by dealing with all that *has to be known*. But as I have already emphasised above, knowing *what* is not the same as knowing *how*, and it is often far from being done. If we take seriously what we have discovered in these descriptions of true education, the emphasis is clear: If the knowing does not translate into being, it is useless. What is true for the student is even more relevant for the teacher, who, in addition to his role as sage and guide, must be an example and model of what his students need to develop.

For the final time in this literature review, we return to the book *Education* of Ellen White and seek her advice regarding the teacher and the practical methods to be used. We will see that these two topics are closely linked. Starting Chapter 26 of *Education,* "Methods of Teaching" (White [1903] 2014:178–184), she complains that for ages, "students have spent their time laboriously crowding the mind with knowledge, very little of which could be utilized" (:178). According to her, this kind

of education tends to discourage independent thought, producing an inability to distinguish truth from error because the student sacrifices the power to reason and judge for himself by taxing his memory faculties to the utmost. As a cure for this educational disease, she cites Isaiah 1:18: “Come now and let us reason together!” (KJV), stating that our reasoning powers were given by God to be exercised. Learning from his word and depending upon God, individually thinking through all areas of life with him, brings the wisdom to refuse evil and choose the good (:179). If the order in which she presented the different elements is a hint of how to weigh their importance, then her primary concern is educational methods that foster independent thinking.

The term “individual” in connection with the student’s dependence upon God, in contrast to reliance upon a human teacher, serves as a bridge to the following topic: “In all true teaching, the personal element is essential.” (:179), refining her reasoning by emphasising the model of Christ as a teacher who “dealt with men individually”. He often chose personal contact, even in one-to-one settings, not limiting his teaching to traditional constraints of age, race, or gender, but rather seeking an impressive heart, an open mind, and a receptive spirit. Instead of concentrating on weaknesses, he “discerned the possibilities in every human being.” “The same personal interest,” she insists, and “the same individual development, are needed in educational work today.” Summarizing this, she states: “The true educator, keeping in view what his pupils may become, […] will take a personal interest in each pupil and will seek to develop all his powers.” To condense her thought, we see it as another essential **method of true education to treat every student as an individual and help him or her to develop all powers.**

She then turns to the necessity and power of application:

> Upon this, far more than upon genius or talent, does success depend. Without application, the most brilliant talents avail little, while with rightly directed effort, persons of very ordinary natural abilities have accomplished wonders. And genius, at whose achievements we marvel, is almost invariably united with untiring, concentrated effort (:179–180).

This item is closely linked to the first aspect: The most effective method for teaching students to think independently and avoid rote learning is to have them **apply their knowledge.**

Students tend "to restrict their study to certain lines, for which they have a natural liking." While "natural aptitudes indicate the direction of the lifework" and should be cultivated carefully, "a well-balanced character and efficient work in any line depend" on **methods that foster a "symmetrical development" and an "all-round training"** (:180).

Turning now to the teacher, she challenges him or her to **use simple and effective methods of teaching, explaining broadly by illustration**, making "every explanation plain and clear" (:180).

She illustrates the need for enthusiasm with a dialogue between a famous actor and the archbishop of Canterbury. The latter wonders how actors affect their audience "so powerfully by speaking of things imaginary, while ministers of the gospel often affect theirs so little by speaking of things real." The actor answers:

> "… permit me to say that the reason is plain: It lies in the power of enthusiasm. We on the stage speak of things imaginary as if they were real, and you in the pulpit speak of things real as if they were imaginary."
> The teacher in his work is dealing with things real, and he should speak of them with all the force and enthusiasm which a knowledge of their reality and importance can inspire.

A teacher who is **enthusiastic about what he is about to teach** is in sharp contrast to someone who delivers boring lectures that seem remote from everyday life.

In the next section, White jumps into the middle of an ongoing discussion about aligning goals, content, and methods. The following statement by White could efficiently serve to summarise what *constructive alignment* is about, as presented in detail and elaborately by Biggs & Tang (2011):

> Every teacher should see to it that his work tends to definite results. Before attempting to teach a subject, he should have a distinct plan in mind, and should know just what he desires to accomplish. He should not rest satisfied with the presentation of any subject until the student understands the principle involved, perceives its truth, and is able to state clearly what he has learned (White [1903] 2014:180).

We summarise this as the need for clearly stated learning outcomes and, consequently, an aligned choice of content and presentation methods.

White then turns to a foundational aspect of education: "… before taking up the higher branches of study, let them master the lower." (:180–181). What seems self-evident prompts her to elaborate on the meaning of adopting a holistic approach to education. Starting with students who deal with higher mathematics but "are incapable of keeping simple accounts," she also deplores that many "study elocution with a view to acquiring the graces of oratory when they are unable to read in an intelligible and impressive manner" and "fail in the composition and spelling of an ordinary letter." Out of my classroom experience as a teacher, I must admit that there is nothing new under the sun. Perhaps the problem for most students today is not so much a challenge in reading aloud and oral pronunciation, but rather in mastering grammar and style in writing. In today's highly digital world, with extensive written communication, it is a clear disadvantage when leaders cannot write correctly. They will reduce their effectiveness because the content and manner of delivery constitute the total message. Therefore, White insists that a "thorough knowledge

of the essentials of education should be not only the condition of admission to a higher course, but the constant test for continuance and advancement." She further argues that objectives more significant than mere technical knowledge should be pursued. Taking language as an example, she emphasises that "the ability to write and speak one's mother tongue with ease and accuracy" surpasses "the acquirement of foreign languages, living or dead" (:181). We summarise this aspect as **the need to focus on educational basics, even in higher education**.

True to her claim of a holistic view of education, she even enlarges the example of the study of language to "a higher point of view" that can´t be achieved by mere training and knowledge of grammatical rules. However, for her, this higher kind of language study, "to a great deal, is bound up life´s weal or woe." (:181) because the "chief requisite of language" is to "be pure and kind and true". We observe her delving into the depths of this matter, linking it to culture and character. As "are the thoughts, such will be the expression." Although the best school for that kind of education should be the home, the school needs to compensate for what often is neglected at home, and "it devolves on the teacher to aid his pupils in forming right habits of speech." This means discouraging habits "of backbiting, gossip, ungenerous criticism." The teacher should spare no pains to impress …

> … upon the students the fact that this habit reveals a lack of culture and refinement and of true goodness of heart; it unfits one both for the society of the truly cultured and refined in this world and for association with the holy ones of heaven.

She adds some other companions to the unholy gang, namely "those meaningless phrases and expletives that border on profanity," "the deceptive compliments, the evasions of truth, the exaggerations, the misrepresentations in trade," "the sly innu-

endo" and "hasty, impatient speech," easily excused with "I was off my guard, and I did not really mean what I said." (:182). Fading into sermon style, she exclaims: "Oh, the hearts that are broken, the friends estranged, the lives wrecked, by the harsh, hasty words of those who might have brought help and healing!" (:183). To summarise, **proper education must be attentive to fostering the development of a character capable of building a noble culture, which, more than anywhere else, will be evident in how ministers speak.**

Turning to a qualification "most essential," she calls "self-forgetfulness which imparts to life such an unconscious grace." Although there is a need for "appreciation, sympathy, and encouragement" towards the student, at the same time, "care should be taken not to foster in them a love of praise." These "graces of character" can´t be developed by "arbitrary law or rule" but dwell "in the atmosphere of the pure, the noble and true." Here, we see an allusion to the comportment of the teacher, who will leave a great impression on his students because "wherever there is purity of heart and nobleness of character, it will be revealed in purity and nobleness of action and of speech." (:183). What the student should learn, the teacher has to model. We conclude that **teachers must model a character of humble self-forgetfulness and a pure, noble, and genuine spirit.**

As "with language, so with every other study; it may be so conducted that it will tend to the strengthening and upbuilding of character." Adding another example, she brings the study of history into the picture that rather than presenting "a record of the rise and fall of kings" and listing stories "of "ambition and greed, of deception, cruelty and bloodshed," should enable students to learn "in the light of God's word, the causes that govern the rise and fall of kingdoms." (:184). They should dis-

cern “how the true prosperity of nations has been bound up with an acceptance of the divine principles” and how, although the advocates often were hated and killed, they triumphed through their sacrifices. This will contribute to the development of a comprehensive view of life:

> It will help the youth to understand something of its relations and dependencies, how wonderfully we are bound together in the great brotherhood of society and nations, and to how great an extent the oppression or degradation of one member means loss to all (:184).

In short, the teacher´s method should help the student connect divine principles with the reality of historical life: life yesterday, life today, and the personal dimension of the student’s everyday life.

Closing this summary of the main practical aspects of AE as described by Ellen White, we return to our observation at the beginning that the person and character of the teacher and his methods must and will work together. As teachers mainly do AE in an institutional setting, the degree to which they impersonate the above-listed principles, which have been summarized in bold, will add to the extent to which the given institution is doing education along the lines of the philosophy of AE. The wise selection of new teachers and a continuous process of reflection on the principles of AE, undertaken by the teaching staff and leading to the refinement of the educational process in every aspect, will ensure an ever-increasing quality of education that can truly be called AE. Although Ellen White's counsel is described in general terms, it can and must be applied at any level of education and, therefore, serves as a measure of ATE.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented the philosophy of AE in an adapted model of Frankena (1965a). There were two primary sources of information: a three-part series by Knight (2010a; Knight 2010b, 2010c) and the writings of Ellen White, especially her book titled "*Education"* (White [1903] 2014). As the first part of the Frankena model, we described the underlying Adventist worldview (A), summarising the metaphysical, epistemological, and axiological foundations of the ultimate purpose of AE (B), which Ellen White described as to know God (1) so intimately that God, through this relation, can restore his image (2) in man. This will be visible in a harmonious development of the whole person (3) in all its dimensions for a joyful service in this world and the world to come (4). Under these four headings, we listed educational goals (C), which Ellen White provided as detailed descriptions of AE. We called them the higher educational goals and stated that every educational endeavour, from primary through tertiary education, must include these higher goals of AE to be rightly called Adventist. Depending on the course of study, these goals will materialise in accordance with the requirements of the respective professional and vocational perspectives. However, they require a standard base that differs only in extent and method, which must be adapted to the different phases of lifelong learning. We then listed the clusters of educational goals for ATE, as discernible from more than 100 desired characteristics of ministers, as articulated in Ellen White's writings. After some curriculum considerations, we turned to the educational methods section (D) of the Frankena model. Because of the blurred boundary between educational methods and practice (E), the fifth part of the model, which treats educational methods, we adopted a meta-level approach, asking for the

place of the Bible in ATE. Although it may seem strange to question this in a field ostensibly dedicated to studying the Bible, we distinguished between knowledge *of* the Bible and knowledge *about* the Bible. If the latter is achieved, it will be evident in the development and manifestation of the higher educational goals (part C) in students' lives. In the last section of the Frankena model, we listed some principles of educational practice (E) as described in the writings of Ellen White, underlining the paramount influence of the teacher's character and his wise choice of methods when dealing with his students.

We end this Chapter with the official summary of the philosophy of AE provided by Department of Education, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (2001:2–3):

> The Seventh-day Adventist philosophy of education is Christ-centered. Adventists believe that, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, God's character and purposes can be understood as revealed in nature, the Bible, and Jesus Christ. The distinctive characteristics of Adventist education derived from the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White point to the redemptive aim of true education: to restore human beings into the image of their Maker.
>
> Seventh-day Adventists believe that God is infinitely loving, wise, and powerful. He relates to human beings on a personal level, presenting His character as the ultimate norm for human conduct and His grace as the means of restoration.
>
> Adventists recognize, however, that human motives, thinking, and behavior have fallen short of God's ideal. Education in its broadest sense is a means of restoring human beings to their original relationship with God. Working together, homes, schools, and churches cooperate with divine agencies in preparing learners for responsible citizenship in this world and in the world to come.
>
> Adventist education imparts more than academic knowledge. It fosters a balanced development of the whole person—spiritually, intellectually, physically and socially. Its dimensions span eternity. It seeks to develop a life of faith in God and respect for the dignity of all human beings; to build character akin to that of the Creator; to nurture thinkers rather than mere reflectors of others' thoughts; to promote loving service rather than selfish ambition; to ensure maximum development of each individual's potential; and to embrace all that is true, good, and beautiful.

5 THE RESEARCH PROCESS

5.1 Introduction to Empirical Research

Empirical research follows three methodological steps, which we will describe in detail in this Chapter. According to Hug & Poscheschnik (2015:81–85) these three steps are collection, processing, and evaluation. We will begin by restating the research question, explaining why we chose qualitative rather than quantitative methods, and then proceed chronologically through the entire research process.

5.2 The Research Question

As the title of this dissertation indicates, the research examines how the philosophy of Adventist education shapes Adventist theological education in Europe. Adding more detail to the main question, I will ask:

- How do deans of Adventist theological institutions describe their philosophy of education?
- What do they do to implement the philosophy of Adventist education in their program?
- How far is this philosophy of education different from or congruent with the findings about AE of our literature study?
- What do the deans of Adventist theological institutions consider to be of help or hindrance in their task to lead a program and a faculty in the context of Adventist education?

5.3 Field of Research and Justification of the Method

Placing Theological Education within the scientific world, it clearly falls within the humanities and arts rather than the natural sciences. In the humanities, human perception plays a very dominant role. In **Theology,** God should be the centre. Yet, whatever is done in, and declared and believed as theology, is hugely influenced by human factors. The broad range of Christian denominations illustrates this.

Education, too, is a field heavily influenced by human factors. Answers to essential questions will define how education is conducted and its effects: Who is the teacher, who is the student, what is the goal of education, and what is the best way to achieve it? Every part of education is informed by a basic understanding of the nature and purpose of education and of the nature of human life and learning (Lamport 2010:37; Coon 1996:7). In other words, educational practice arises from the educational philosophy of those responsible for it. This educational philosophy of a theological educator will necessarily be influenced by his worldview, which is built on his theological understanding, forming a never-ending circle of interdependence. In theological education, there is a much closer link between content, educational assumptions, and practice than in other fields of study. Linking a domain so fluid, preliminary, and heavily influenced by human perception and limitations, as theology to education, which is equally heavily shaped by human understanding, clearly indicates that we don´t enter an area of plain facts, numbers, or mathematically discernible patterns. Neither theology nor education is a given fact. Turning to the receiving end of teaching, e.g., Siebert (2005:32) describes learning as an autopoietic, self-directed, self-willed, and obstinate constructivist process. Although learning requires information, suggestions, feedback, and learning aids, it cannot be determined from the outside (i.e., by the teacher). The mental system (the learner) decides what it can and wants to process. Both in theology and in education – the latter an interplay of teaching and learning – we face phenomena for which constructivism offers a conducive framework, with its basic assumption that, given the information we receive, we construct a picture of reality, of truth. The

reason for this is mainly that we look into the world through a tiny window, and we discern only an excerpt.

Applying this to theological education, it could be described as a specific social reality, which e.g. Flick, Kardorff & Steinke (2004:6–7) understand "as the result of meanings and contexts jointly created in social interaction. Both are interpreted by the participants in concrete situations within the framework of their subjective relevance horizons." This is an ongoing process creating constantly "a shared world" that can be made visible by observation and "subsequent sequential text analyses." As in every society meaning exists that can be described "in terms of ideal types" this allows to "explain individual and collective attitudes and actions." Although this "reality is created interactively and becomes meaningful subjectively […] it becomes effective by collective and individual instances of interpretation." Therefore, dialogic communication takes a predominant role, making visible "a perspective-influenced reconstruction of the social construction of reality."

As this thesis's research question concerns the extent of AE in ATE, we are in the domain of philosophy and understanding. Qualitative methods are best suited to capturing phenomena in this realm; quantitative methods are less valuable.

To discern the influence of the AE philosophy on ATE, we must engage in dialogue with those responsible for ATE and ask how they understand the philosophy of AE and how they implement it in their programs. The proper means will be qualitative research.

5.4 Definition of Qualitative Research

Strauss & Corbin (2003:10–11), who developed the grounded theory, defined qualitative research as "any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by sta-

tistical procedures or other means of quantification." The following definition goes into more detail:

> Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln 2018:43).

In this definition, all the necessary elements of qualitative research are present: the researcher is the **observer** who enters **a specific situation in the world.** There will be different **activities** or **practices for data collection**. Noteworthy is the remark: "These practices transform the world." Interestingly, the ongoing research could affect the data collection process. Additionally, the interest underlying the research question already establishes a framework that will influence the interview responses. In other words, in contrast to quantitative research, the observer's role is less objective and must be carefully considered.

5.5 The Role of the Observer/Researcher

According to Hatch (2002:34) the researcher should unpack his or her metaphysical assumptions, articulate ontological and epistemological beliefs, and then choose appropriate qualitative approaches. Also Biesta & Burbules (2003:2) argue:

> […] that philosophical reflection is needed first and foremost because it can help us unravel questions about the *ownership* of knowledge and about the *authority* of educational research and educational researchers in relation to the judgments of educational practitioners [emphasis in the original].

In Chapter 1.6, I have described some meta-level assumptions about educational philosophy that I reflected in the introduction of the current chapter in connection

with theological education. In the literature part, I described the philosophy of AE, including its metaphysical, epistemological, and axiological baselines. I hereby declare that I share AE's baselines and the ultimate and detailed goals regarding my understanding of education. The core result of this literature review is AE's list of educational objectives, as presented in the chapter "Higher Educational Goals," beginning on page 87.

However, when interviewing the deans of Adventist theological institutions in Europe, it is crucial that I not appear to endorse the above description of AE. The research aims to examine how they understand AE and apply that understanding in their programs, but not to advocate for *my* knowledge of AE. As there “needs to be adequate room for discovery and allowance for unanticipated events” (Yin 2011:19), the researcher's presence must be as unobtrusive as possible. I am fully aware of the facts described by Farley ([1983] 2001:141), who concisely observes that in “the framework, mentality, and even sociology of the scholarly guilds, any person is an outsider to most of them, and outsiders are unqualified by definition to comment on the state of disciplines other than their own.” Consequently, the roles in my conversations with the deans of Adventist theological institutions are clearly defined: The dean is the expert on whatever peculiarity of Adventist Education is present in the programs of his institution.

At the same time, it is illusory to think that the interviewer, as a person, had no influence. First, there is the dimension of social interaction between two individuals, which involves numerous psychological and emotional responses. Second, asking questions about the impact of AE's philosophy on the respective theological program will initiate a process of reflection that may accompany positive or negative

feelings. Also, my emotions and thoughts as a researcher will affect the process. Hays & Singh (2012:137–144) plead for a very active self-reflection – *researcher reflexivity* – on the researcher's side. This will help the reader not only grasp the phenomenon under investigation but also follow the development of the research itself, of which the researcher's thoughts and feelings, along with his reactions and interpretations, are part. Reflexivity "of the researcher becomes a lens into the research itself" (:137).

> […] reflexivity turns the focus on both the researcher and the research act as part of the social world being investigated, and therefore it involves a dialectic between the researcher, the research process and the research product (Punch & O'Donoghue 2003:77).

Closely connected to this is *subjectivity* as the " researcher's internal understanding of the phenomenon" (Hays & Singh 2012:145). The philosopher Husserl would add that a phenomenon's subjective perception must be distinguished from the actual phenomenon, calling the subjective perception *Abschattung* (Haefliger 1992:129). Luhmann, a German sociologist and renowned thinker in systems theory, takes a similar line of thought, emphasising the need to draw a distinction (Luhmann 2002:73) between system and environment. In research, the researcher needs to distinguish himself from the system and never forget that he sees only part of it and necessarily has blind spots (:146). Hays & Singh (2012:145) nevertheless conclude that subjectivity is necessary for a more intimate understanding of the phenomenon in contrast to a distant perspective. At the same time, the "researcher's subjectivity paves the road for a study's outcome." The researcher must acknowledge that he cannot " truly document the participants' lived experiences of a phenomenon." To reduce the adverse effects of subjectivity, the researcher should approach his

study more with curiosity than with expertise (:146; Legard, Keegan & Ward 2010:142), make sure that he gets feedback from others (supervisors as well as interviewees), and use methods of continuing reworking on data as is typical in grounded theory.

5.6 The Place of Data Collection (the Choice of the Sample)

"Qualitative research is a **situated** activity that **locates** the observer **in the world**. [emphasis added]" (Denzin & Lincoln 2018:43). From the person of the observer, we now turn to the place where the material for the research will be collected. I have already identified the deans of Adventist theological institutions as experts on the activities within their respective institutions. The Adventist Accreditation Association website lists more than 100 Adventist Colleges and Universities worldwide. Although not all offer theological education, even those that do must be reduced to a manageable number. As explained in Chapter 1.5, which addresses the delimitations of this research, I will focus on the deans of European seminaries. Across the three Divisions (the Euro-Asia Division, ESD; the Inter-European Division, EUD; and the Trans-European Division, TED), there are theoretically 14 interview partners; 10 have agreed to participate in the research. Of the 14 possible interview partners, 10 theological institutions across the three European divisions agreed to participate in this research. At least two deans from each of the three divisions contributed. The table below lists all of them, their locations, their divisions, their web addresses [all accessed on 2025-12-21], and whether the dean of each institution agreed to participate in this research.

Name of institution	Country	Division	Website	Interview
Zaoksky Adventist University	RU	ESD	www.zau.ru	Yes
Ukrainian Adventist Center of Higher Education	UA	ESD	www.ugi.edu.ua	Yes
Adventus University Cernica	RO	EUD	www.uadventus.ro	Yes
Bogenhofen Seminary	AT	EUD	www.bogenhofen.at	Yes
Collonges Adventist University	FR	EUD	www.campusadvent-iste.edu	Yes
Czecho-Slovakian Union Adventist Theological Institute	CZ/SK	EUD	www.ati.casd.cz	No
Friedensau Adventist University	DE	EUD	www.thh-friedensau.de	Yes
Italian Adventist University Villa Aurora	IT	EUD	www.villaaurora.it	No
Sagunto Adventist College	ES	EUD	campusadventista.es	Yes
Adriatic Union College	HR	TED	www.atvu.org	Yes
Belgrade Theological Seminary	RS	TED	www.tfb.edu.rs	Yes
Hungarian Adventist Theological College	HU	TED	www.atf.hu	No
Newbold College of Higher Education	GB	TED	www.newbold.ac.uk	Yes
Polish College of Theology & Humanities	PL	TED	www.wsth.pl	No

Table 3: List of Theological Institutions in the ESD, EUD, TED

These deans were leading theological institutions from a small size – half a dozen full-time students and another handful of part-time students, with three full-time teachers and some external teachers – to what in Europe counts as a big institution, with about 100 students and seven full-time teachers, plus “many” external teachers. They were all male and, at the time of the interview, ranged in age from 41 to 58 years; some were relatively new in their deanship, while others had held this responsibility for up to 18 years. Although all of them agreed to be cited, if necessary, I will not list them here to ensure their voices and concerns are heard without potential bias toward any institution. Instead, I will use P (for Interview ***P***artner) and the numbers 1-10 to differentiate them. Only one interview partner explicitly asked me to cite him on a given matter; I will comply with his request. To facilitate traceability of the comments, I will also add the cited paragraph number, e.g., P5 (:25). The section numbering was generated by MAXQDA software.

5.7 Collecting Data

"Qualitative research consists of a **set of** interpretive, **material practices that make the world visible**. [emphasis added]", continue Denzin & Lincoln (2018:43). The world that should be made visible is the understanding of AE of the deans of Adventist theological institutions. Then, a set of practices is needed to produce material that makes this world visible, at least to some extent. Being realistic about the nature of data that can be collected may help avoid overestimating or oversizing its importance.

5.7.1 Being Aware of the Imperfection of Data Collection

No dean can provide a comprehensive overview of the reality of the world in which he lives and works. Therefore, it is necessary to reduce "the world" to explore by relativising the "the" into "a certain aspect" that is of utmost interest in answering the research question. In the citation, at the beginning of paragraph 5.7, I intentionally did not emphasise "interpretive" along with the others because collecting and interpreting material are two process steps. Admittedly, they are very closely intertwined.

Given its basic assumption that an educational philosophy ultimately informs every educational program, the research question renders a seemingly simple data-collection process into a tricky psychological endeavour. As already mentioned, the observer should not interfere with, manipulate, or bias the interview. However, the simple fact that he asks a question that has to do with the big idea of the theological program and links it to AE, thus imposing a denominational coloured measure on it, may bring forth some questions that will influence and affect the answers given, like: "Why does he ask this question? What does he mean by AE? Is some-

thing wrong with our program? What does he want to hear? …" Depending on the situation and the person, someone could read an allegation in the question. Although this will be barely visible, it could affect the interviewee's emotional state. Therefore, when conducting interviews, I must remember that what is said and recorded will be only a small part of what is occurring within the respective institution. In addition, an interview is not static. Two humans in conversation interact and affect one another. Before the interview begins, the request for it and a description of the main topic to be addressed will prompt critical reflection among the interviewees.

5.7.2 The Process of Data Collection

I will describe the data collection process chronologically and list the planned steps. To help me, as an "outsider," to contact these deans, I requested a letter of recommendation from the responsible administrative entity. In the Seventh-day Adventist church structure, this is the educational department director and the leadership at the Division level. As theological institutions in Europe are organised into three divisions, I first asked the leadership of the region to which I belong, the Inter-European Division (EUD), for a letter of recommendation indicating their interest in this research and requesting that the dean of the relevant institution participate. My request was positively answered. Marius Munteanu, the person responsible for the educational department at the Inter-European Division, wrote a letter to all EUD deans and forwarded it to the educational directors in the other two European divisions. They, in turn, sent it to the deans in their region. In total, 10 of the 14 possi-

ble interview partners responded positively.[39] The text of the invitation is attached in Appendix 13.

5.7.3 Background Information about the Interviews

All interviews were conducted via Zoom and recorded in November and December 2020. The interviews lasted between 1.5 and 2 hours. No major technical problems occurred; only some passages were challenging to understand when my voice and the interview partner's voice overlapped.

After greeting the interview partner, I briefly introduced myself, explaining who I am and what I do, why I am interested in theological education, and describing the doctoral program in which I am enrolled. Then I started asking the questions, following, in most cases, my interview outline. Two interview partners asked me to send them the questions in advance; the others heard them only during the interview.

Each interview partner received the transcript of their conversation and testified that it accurately reflected what they remembered saying.

5.7.4 Declaration of Informed Consent – Research Ethics

As in any research, especially qualitative research, ethical considerations must be addressed. The most important is the principle of fully informed consent, meaning that …

> […] participants in research should know exactly what they are letting themselves in for, what will happen to them during the research, and what will happen to the data they provide after the research is completed. They should be made aware of this before research on them starts and they should be given the option to withdraw from the research at any time and usually, if they request it,

[39] Actually, no one denied actively to be part of this research, the four missing just didn´t answer at all.

> any data that have been collected from them will be returned or destroyed. All of this happens well before the data are analyzed (Gibbs & Flick 2007:8).

This is important because qualitative research – as in our case with the deans of theological institutions – produces data that is very personal and individual (:8) and cannot be anonymised by statistical methods. The interview participants expressed their opinions, convictions, and, in some cases, fears and challenges. This constitutes sensitive data that may be traced back to the individual and could cause harm if not used in accordance with the interviewee's consent. I had to ensure that the data was used exactly as agreed with the interviewee. To this end, I designed a consent form, which is attached as Appendix 13.2.

Although all 10 interview partners agreed to be quoted by name, it was ultimately unnecessary to include their names in the results. I decided to quote only by name if the interviewee explicitly requested “Please quote me on this!” Asking for the risks the interview partners may experience, I consider the risk not to be greater than minimal risk, meaning that the “probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life” (Columbia International University 2020:6). This assumption is based on the fact that a dean representing a theological institution regularly has to justify the program he is responsible for. Prospective students will ask critical questions; those already studying will ask even more; colleagues will frequently discuss the program; and, periodically, the accrediting association will appear, demanding answers to many more questions than can be covered in a single interview within a limited time frame.

Turning to the potential benefits of this research, the interviews can serve as a starting point for reflection. The research results and recommendations may help to rethink and recalibrate theological education in the respective institutions.

As most interviews will be conducted within the European Union, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) will be followed. The respective form is in the same part of the appendix.

I completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program) course on research ethics.

5.7.5 Interview outline

I have already mentioned that requesting an interview about one´s perception of AE in relation to educational practice in teaching theology will prompt reflection among the deans who agree to be interviewed. As I was interested in the content of this reflection process, I used one-on-one interviews with open-ended questions, also known as semi-structured interviews, because they allow participants …

> […] to voice their experiences unconstrained by any perspectives of the researcher or past research findings. An open-ended response to a question allows the participant to create the options for responding […] without being forced into response possibilities (Creswell 2012:218).

Semi-structured means that, in contrast to an informal conversation, the researcher oversees the interview, sets time constraints, arrives with guiding questions, and records it. However, as a researcher, I try to be open to following the lead of the interviewees and probing into areas they bring in (Hatch 2002:94).

One function ”of qualitative analysis is to find patterns and produce explanations.” (Gibbs & Flick 2007:4). Two contrasting logics of explanation can be used for this: *Induction* or *Deduction*. Although these two terms foreshadow the subsequent

phases of data processing and interpretation, I introduce them now to explain the choice of semi-structured interviews.

"Induction is the generation and justification of a general explanation based on the accumulation of lots of particular, but similar, circumstances", while *deduction* explains a particular situation "by deduction from a general statement about the circumstances" (:4–5). Deans of Adventist theological seminaries will face many particular yet similar circumstances. Therefore, the semi-structured interview style is inductive, with only a very loose guideline provided by the researcher, leaving room for personal convictions, beliefs, doubts, and new ideas.

The interview outline is provided in Appendix 13.3. Following the steps as described by Przyborski & Wohlrab-Sahr (2014:74–75) and Reinders (2011:99–101) the open introductory question should stimulate the flow of words, making it easy for the interviewees to tell their story or opinion, in our case, memories of experiences connected with one´s theological education. The questions served as a rough guideline for the interview. Following the principles of grounded theory, which I will explain later, some questions were slightly revised after a critical reflection on the ongoing interview experience and process.

5.8 Processing Data

5.8.1 Transcribing Data

After the interviews had finished, the collected data needed to be processed. First, the recorded audio or video files were transcribed into text. I followed the generally established rules of transcription as they are explained in several guidelines for qualitative research, e.g. Kuckartz & Rädiker (2019:41–49). I used transcription soft-

ware to save time; nevertheless, substantial manual work remained. The transcribed text was sent to the interview partners for verification of accuracy.

5.8.2 Coding Data – Grounded Theory

> In empirical research, data on their own are not considered of much use per se. They assume significance only when used within descriptions, explanations or generalisations. *Descriptions* answer the question—what is happening? Or they can be more historical in orientation and answer the question—what has happened? *Explanations* answer the question—why is this happening?—and this 'why' generally tends to be answered in terms of a cause. *Generalisations* are the answer to 'why' questions which also utilise causes, but here the explanation always goes beyond a particular setting: for example, not why does X happen in this particular classroom but does it happen in all classrooms and if so is there an underlying and common cause Y [emphasis in the original] (Usher 1996:10)?

After transcription, the data had to be analysed. As already mentioned, I used the method of *grounded theory* developed by Strauss & Corbin (2003). The method is summarised below.

One of the requisite skills of a "grounded theorist" is the "ability to step back and critically analyze situations" (:7). As "the ability to recognize the tendency toward bias" is another skill of the grounded theorist, I must also reflect on my role in the interview, finally taking all notes and redesigning or refining the interview.

The core process of grounded theory is called *coding.* The term is defined as the "analytic processes through which data are fractured, conceptualized, and integrated to form theory" (:3). Coding is the smallest element in the theory, like a brick. Working line by line through the transcribed text of an interview (called microanalysis, see :57), "concepts are identified, and their properties and dimensions are discovered in data" (:101); some of those concepts may be subcategories of others. Identifying these concepts is called *open coding*. It is an abstracting process: "Data are broken down into discrete incidents, ideas, events, and acts and are then given a name that represents or stands for these" (:105). Some of them may be as-

pects of similar ideas and can then be grouped into categories. Patterns seem to appear, some questions can be answered, and new ones will appear (:55).

The next phase is called *axial coding.* This "is the act of relating categories to subcategories", looking at "how categories crosscut and link" (:124). This process helps to answer questions about why, where, when, how, and with what results (:127), ultimately helping to understand "What is going on here?" (:130). The process of finding the *core category* is called *selected coding* (Böhm 2004:273).

Documenting observations and revising the interview after this is part of grounded theory. It intends to prevent a biased, superficial treatment of data. In contrast, the final theory should be firmly grounded in well-analysed data.

> Although we do not create data, we create theory out of data. If we do it correctly, then we are not speaking for our participants but rather are enabling them to speak in voices that are clearly understood and representative. Our theories, however incomplete, provide a common language (set of concepts) through which research participants, professionals, and others can come together to discuss ideas and find solutions to problems (Strauss & Corbin 2003:56).

Open and axial coding were conducted again using MAXQDA.

5.9 Evaluating Data Quality

5.9.1 Reflection on Scientific Quality Criteria

The guiding quality criteria of natural scientific research – objectivity, reliability, and validity – don´t have the same relevance in qualitative research as in quantitative research. Instead, there are adaptations of those or additional criteria, as summarised by Mandal (2018) and (Mayring 2015:123–129).

As already noted in the discussion of subjectivity above, the first criterion – objectivity – is hardly realistic because the researcher is necessarily part of the re-

search, thereby introducing a subjective element. As a remedy for this, some introduce reflexivity as the researcher's onus (Henwood & Pidgeon 1992:106).

Turning to the second criterion – reliability – at least in the context of the interviews, it cannot be achieved because it is impossible to repeat the "measurement" under the same conditions a second time (Mandal 2018:591–592). A possible alternative criterion is *the importance of fitting* (Henwood & Pidgeon 1992:105), meaning a sound categorisation that fits the data well. Another quality criterion is *documentation*, e.g., keeping a reflexive journal that tracks what is done and why across all phases of the research, as well as …

> […] reflecting upon values and assumptions, and writing memoranda and definitions for categories, researchers should also document such things as initial concerns and how these may change, sampling decisions, hunches about the quality of the data gathered, and observations about the context of data generation (:106).

Finally, given the validity and generalisability considerations, the research findings within the interview framework are valid for the sample but not for Adventist theological education more broadly. Still, I will identify patterns that can serve as a basis for reflection for deans of other Adventist institutions not included in the study, who can ask themselves how they would have answered. Thus, the findings could be applied "in contexts similar to the context in which they were first derived" (:108). This criterion is called *transferability*.

5.9.2 Use of Languages in Data Collection

Of the ten interviews conducted for this study, eight were carried out entirely in English, which served as the common academic working language between the researcher and the participants. Two interviews required a live interpreter due to language barriers. Squires (2009:278) distinguishes between the roles of translator and

interpreter in cross-language qualitative research, noting that interpreters provide oral translation services during an interaction between parties who do not share a common language, and that failure to address the methodological implications of interpreter use can reduce the trustworthiness of qualitative data. The following account addresses the key methodological considerations she identifies.

The first interview requiring interpretation was conducted via Zoom with a dean based in Spain. Interpretation from English into Spanish and back was provided by an Austrian Seventh-day Adventist pastor who is a native Spanish speaker and holds an academic background. He was not present in the same location as the interviewee. Prior to the interview, he was provided with the interview questions, which ensured familiarity with the subject matter and terminology – a practice Squires (2009:280) recommends as part of a methodologically sound cross-language research design.

The second interview, requiring interpretation, was conducted via Zoom with a dean based in Russia. The interpreter was a colleague and fellow lecturer at the dean's institution, himself a native Russian speaker with an evident familiarity with the subject matter of theological education. Unlike the first interpreter, he had not seen the interview questions in advance. Both the dean and his colleague were present in the same room, while I, as the researcher, participated remotely. The interpreter's contextual knowledge of the field may be considered a qualification for the task, as it enabled him to render terminology related to Adventist theological education with greater precision than a general interpreter might have achieved. At the same time, such familiarity also carries the risk that an interpreter's own understanding of a topic may subtly shape the framing of questions or responses – a dy-

namic Squires (2009:279) identifies as a potential influence on data when the interpreter functions as a producer of meaning rather than a neutral conduit.
In the first case, the interpreter was personally known to the researcher through shared professional and denominational networks, which provided a degree of contextual competence regarding Adventist theological education. In the second case, the interpreter was a colleague of the dean and was not personally known to the researcher prior to the interview. Neither interpreter, however, underwent formal credential verification, and no independent backtranslation was conducted to validate the accuracy of the interpreted data. In accordance with Squires (2009:280) recommendation that the use of interpreters be acknowledged as a potential limitation, it is noted here that their presence in these two interviews may have affected the precision and nuance of the data collected.

The analysis of all ten interviews was conducted by the researcher in English. It should further be noted that none of the interview partners was a native English speaker; therefore, quotes reproduced in this dissertation may exhibit limited English proficiency. The same is true for me as the researcher. For reasons of originality, no attempt was made to edit the content of the conversations.

5.10 Method of Presenting the Research Results: *See – Judge – Act*

After analysing the transcribed interviews, the task will be to display the results, discuss them, and derive practical recommendations. I will follow the practical theology method developed by the Belgian Cardinal Joseph Cardijn, 1882-1967 (caritas europa s a), to accomplish these three steps. Cardijn was deeply engaged in Christian social work and founded the Young Christian Workers, an organisation still active. The movement uses the triad *See – Judge – Act* to organise its work.

The following explanation is a summary of a comprehensive application of the three-step method *See – Judge – Act* as a method of practical theology, written by the Austrian theologian Stephanie Klein (2005:73).

> The first step is an unbiased, unprejudiced, and accurate perception of life's reality. One should put aside one's views and theories about life. People [researchers] should form their picture of life through research and interviews.

However, this *seeing* can never be merely a distant, technical observation: looking closely at and perceiving even the simplest everyday activities "already means mindful and respectful attention to people's lives, even in their simplicity and brokenness." (:73) This experience already holds the potential to effect change in the one shown this mindfulness. Because, according to Guerre & Zinty (1960:83) explaining the first step further, it …

> […] is a side of the mystery of man that he cannot contemplate the lives of his fellow men without participation, except he would be a monster. His mind and his heart are seized by it. In this look of participation, the person expresses and forms himself.

This is very helpful for understanding and correctly estimating the interviewer's role and influence. As already reflected above, the interviewer should not impose anything on the interviewee. Being an attentive listener and trying to understand what the other person is saying leads to a mutually shared experience. Thus, "to see" as the first step of the method encompasses not only the presentation of results but is already present in the interview.

The second step, *to judge*, could easily be misunderstood. It does not mean "normative judgment but understanding, reflecting, comparing and interpreting the experiences and knowledge gained." (Klein 2005:75). I will therefore discuss the findings alongside the discoveries from Chapters 2-4.

Finally, *to act* reveals the method's purposefulness. It is not only about knowledge and insights but primarily about changing the reality of life. This change happens through concrete action. Cardijn described the goal: "Every day´s life should be made bigger and more beautiful." (Cardijn [s a]:45). Stephanie Klein (2005:77) summarizes:

> The interviews and reflections on one's own life and others' lives shape personality and faith, lead to new insights, set impulses for action, and change the realities of the investigators' and interviewees' lives.

Following the third step of the method, I will present action impulses through commendations and recommendations, as well as potential future areas for study and research.

To avoid confusion, it is necessary to state that the triad *See – Judge – Act* can be used as an approach throughout an entire dissertation. However, I will integrate grounded theory principles, applying the three steps only to the empirical component.

5.11 Conclusion

This section outlined the approach to empirical research examining the influence of AE on ATE. The choice of a qualitative approach was justified, and the whole process of collecting and processing data according to the principles of grounded theory was explained. Finally, the three-step method of practical theology, *See – Judge – Act*, was briefly described and will guide my analysis of the research results.

6 RESEARCH RESULTS – WHAT DO WE *SEE*?

Following the principles of the first step of the *See – Judge – Act* method, I now summarise the interviews after they had been transcribed, coded and categorised. While aware of my influential presence in the interviews and of a particular subjectivity in the analysis, I will present the findings without judgment or comment. A critical reflection of my role as a researcher will follow at the beginning of Chapter 7.

6.1 Introduction to the Categories of Codes

The interviews conducted for this study followed a semi-structured format, guided by a predefined set of questions. As a result, the coding system developed during the analysis largely reflects the structure and sequence of those questions rather than emerging freely from entirely open-ended data. The analysis therefore takes the form of a thematic synthesis of responses within each predefined area of inquiry. For this reason, the frequency counts and the distribution of codes across interview partners, as displayed in the Code-Matrix-Browser, do not carry significant analytical meaning in themselves — a higher or lower number of codings reflects primarily the length and depth of a given response rather than a meaningful pattern of association between themes. The substantive findings and their interpretation are developed in the text that follows. A full overview of the coding system, including the distribution of codes across all ten interview partners (P1–P10), is provided in Appendix 3, for the sake of transparency and completeness.

The following table provides an overview of the nine main categories that emerged from the coding process, mapped against all ten interview partners (P1–P10).

Category	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
Impressive teachers	11	16	10	4	7	6	10	9	10	4
AE in the curriculum	24	16	9	13	10	6	1		5	3
Faculty development	7	46	12	1	3	5	2	2	6	
Philosophy of other teachers		10	6	8	1	1	3		1	
Personal philosophy as teacher		15	8	3	4	12	9	1	5	4
Big idea behind curriculum		11	8		13	2	2	12	2	
Elements of the philosophy of AE	17	6	11	11	5	3	12	6	5	4
What makes AE Adventist?		7	4	11	4		2	3		
General items and out of the box	3	8	7	4	4	10	2	1	3	3
Total	62	135	75	55	51	45	43	34	37	18

Table 4: Code-Matrix-Browser — Overview of all nine main categories

The categories broadly follow the structure of the interview questions, which accounts for the relatively even thematic distribution across participants. The matrix displays the number of codings per category per participant and illustrates both the thematic consistency across the interviews and notable differences in coding frequency between individual participants.

The nine main categories are: *Impressive teachers; AE in the curriculum; Faculty development; Philosophy of other teachers; Personal philosophy as teacher; Big idea behind curriculum; Elements of the philosophy of AE; What makes AE Adventist?; and General items and out of the box.* The last category served as a collection point for significant statements that did not fit neatly into the other categories but were too substantial to discard.

The category *Impressive teachers* is represented across all ten interview partners with a relatively even distribution, indicating that the qualities and characteristics of effective theological teachers were a consistently prominent theme throughout the data. Similarly, *AE in the curriculum and Elements of the philosophy of AE* appear across nearly all interviews, reflecting the central focus of the research question on the presence of AE philosophy in ATE.

The most notable outlier in the matrix is P2, whose coding density in the category Faculty development (46 codings) far exceeds that of any other participant. This concentration reflects the complexity of faculty development as experienced in P2's institutional context — marked by structural challenges such as time constraints, the dean's limited authority as primus inter pares, and the difficulty of fostering a shared educational vision among a highly independent academic faculty. Faculty development evidently emerged as a topic of significant personal weight and institutional concern for P2.

The categories *What makes AE Adventist?* and *General items and out of the box* show a sparser and more uneven distribution across participants, suggesting that these themes emerged more selectively depending on the individual context and priorities of each interview partner.

P1 shows a somewhat smaller overall coding density in most categories, which is consistent with the fact that this was the first interview conducted in the study and tended to be more exploratory in character. P10 similarly yielded fewer codings overall, attributable in part to the use of a live interpreter, as discussed in chapter 5.9.2, and to the fact that the interview concluded earlier than anticipated.

6.2 Thematic Analysis of the Interviews

Following the interview outline, this section summarises the answers to the interview's central questions.

6.2.1 Which Teachers Impressed You the Most and Why?

This warm-up question should help reflect the impact of good or not-so-good teachers that the deans experienced. As this question was designed to lay the groundwork for the next question, I will summarise it by highlighting the most frequently mentioned aspects.

The most impressive teachers focused on the students, for example, challenging them to think for themselves or being warm and welcoming. They wanted the best for the students, took time for personal conversation, treated them with respect, and considered their students more important than the information they had to deliver.

They were also impressed by teachers who were skilled and enthusiastic in their fields, as well as by genuine experts who imparted knowledge and wisdom.

Spiritual teachers and “real-life teachers” also had a lasting impact, as they embodied the teachings they imparted. A coherence between what they taught and what they were could be seen in class and daily life, making them compelling examples as missionaries, preachers, and even in family life. Those teachers were also able to bring in personal experience.

Some interview partners also mentioned teachers who left a negative impression by falling short of the excellence discussed above: they had little contact with students, presented their topics in a showy manner, were preoccupied with other matters, or just did their job.

This warm-up question was used to bridge to the term 'philosophy' in the context of teaching.

6.2.2 What Philosophy Could Have Led Those Impressive Teachers?

Although the title of this subchapter is central to the second question, I rarely use this exact wording; I first explain how I define the term "philosophy". For this, I used a summary of the definition in Chapter 1.8, phrased as follows: When a teacher enters a classroom, he has already answered several philosophical questions. For example: Who am I as a teacher? Who are you as a student? How does the process of learning function? What content will I present and why? Where do I want to go? Where do I want to bring the students, and what method will I use to get them there? The answers to these questions will come from the teacher's personal worldview – his concept of humankind (in German, we use the word “Menschenbild” for this), his ideas about teaching and learning, and so on. The summary of all the answers to these questions is what I mean by philosophy of education.

Some of my interview partners initially answered this question reluctantly. “I […] hesitate to project a philosophy of education” into the actions of a teacher experienced long ago, so “I am not sure about their philosophy,” said one (P5:56). Another had the impression that …

> […] much of this is done so unconsciously […], many things we do, we do not do them because we have thought through these things very exactly. It is more like we take some things for granted or other things just come out of our personality. […] Personality plays a strong role and also limitations of personality (P3:51-54).

A similar observation came from P7, stating that “not all of them were equally successful because they were different people with different skills […] that´s what they were, they couldn´t help it (P7:19).”

P2 first wondered whether his teachers had different educational philosophies. Reflecting on experiences with various teachers, however, he concluded that they held different philosophies depending on how they regarded the student, the "Menschenbild" they had, and where they wanted their students to develop. One of his teachers sought to develop students who would defend the Adventist faith and biblical teachings, and his teaching reflected this. Another of his former professors saw himself with the students in an arena of salvation, not only talking about Christ but also experiencing him, with his teaching reflecting this aspect of his worldview (P2:26-27).

P3 described one of his former teachers as impressive because he had a visionary perspective of education that could be experienced in how he taught: For him, education was "to be broad, was to be opening our eyes. It was a kind of exploration of the unknown together. And he was the first explorer, and we would follow him in this exploration." (P3:64)

At this point, I introduce one of the deans by name, who explicitly asked me to cite him on a matter we discussed at that place in the interview. His name is Victor Armenteros, and at that time, he was the new dean of the Adventist Theological Seminary in Sagunto, Spain. In addition to a PhD in Semitic philology and another in Theology, he holds an MA in Education. During his academic life, he had the privilege to enter different educational worlds with diverse philosophical backgrounds. His observation goes beyond the question of the individual philosophy of the teachers he experienced to some general patterns he discerned while studying on other continents and in various institutions:

> In my first years [studying Adventist Theology in Europe], my impression of theology was very much on apologetics – defending the Christian faith against other religions – and also very much based on mores. When I went to South America, I realised there was another approach, more based on the writings of Ellen White, having more of the mission in focus and the transformation of the individual. When I spent study time at non-Adventist educational institutions in the last few years, there was an apparent alignment with the historical-critical method (Armenteros:22).

When asked to describe the difference between the South American and European understanding of education, Victor Armenteros explained that, in his view, "the South Americans took Ellen White by word and the Europeans did not." Although Adventists in Europe knew Ellen White and her writings, there was also a powerful cultural influence from Lutheran and Calvinistic history "that overwhelmed the influence of Ellen White in our church" and not only in our church but also in its "institutions and theological education." These historical movements "neutralised Ellen White´s writings." (Armenteros:28-29). The many European languages contributed to the fragmentation that the Adventist Church in South America, with only two languages, did not face. This facilitated the implementation of general structures and programs. Armenteros concluded that Europe is typically considered part of the First World, and South America is part of the Third World. In matters of faith, however, it would be the other way round (Armenteros:31). According to Armenteros´ observations, South America has a more practical way of seeing things, and Europe has a more theoretical way. Ideally, both approaches should be balanced (:37).

6.2.3 How Would You Describe Your Philosophy of Education?

With this question, I found myself in a rich field of interesting answers. Looking beyond the current question to the next one – asking what education needs to be called truly Adventist – I want to rest shortly on the relationship between the two. The answers to both questions reveal that they cannot be sharply distinguished, as

there is significant overlap. However, the order of the questions in the interview chronology is crucial. Had I asked first for the main elements of Adventist education and only afterwards asked how my interview partners would describe their philosophy, this could have pressured them to conform to what they had just said. Their answers could have been limited to "declared knowledge" rather than personal conviction. Although I am not sure I had this in mind when I designed the interview outline, this question order proved very useful in helping the deans respond freely to an open-ended question, thereby opening an inductive pathway to highly personal aspects of their vision of education.

The answers given to the question at hand can be assigned to three categories:

Emphasis 1: Self-understanding as a teacher

Emphasis 2: Exploring the "big picture"

Emphasis 3: Challenging students to grow

EMPHASIS 1: SELF-UNDERSTANDING AS A TEACHER

Discussing his personal philosophy of education, one of my interview partners opened a document containing a personal mission statement in 12 chapters, and for him, teaching required being spiritually prepared and enthusiastic about the subject. He perceived the classroom not only as a place of knowledge but also of sanctification, a place "where students could be converted," making the "process [of teaching] a holy profession" that causes the teacher to tremble (P2:31). Describing his role as a teacher he said: "I would like the students to be my companions on an adventure […] Let us climb together. Let us study together." He was also unequivocal on what he didn't want to do (:35): raising disciples – or producing copies – of himself.

P3 (:69-70) similarly saw himself (looking back at the beginnings of his teaching career): “It [teaching] was first of all a learning experience […] together with the students. […] I was a learner as much as they were.” And P5 (:72): “I am accompanying somebody who goes along with the students, to work with them on the path of a holistic learning process!”

To do this successfully, P5 (:66) recognised the need for a holistic view of the student and the teacher. Besides teaching methods or pedagogy, what counted most for him was the relationship with the student, which needed a solid foundation consisting of “a correspondence between what I believe and what I teach. […] I teach more with what I am than what I say.” “I am responsible for giving an example of a good Christian.” (P5:31). In the same vein, underlined P9 (:33), there needs to be a good example that the gospel can change persons, so the students would “take it seriously.”

P10 (:49-50) cited a saying in his country: “Education is what remains after having forgotten what you have studied.” Therefore, for him, the most essential element of education was the interaction and relationship between students and teachers. Teachers needed to be “open and sincere with the students,” sharing their worries, thoughts, and ideas. Students would appreciate this; thus, a foundation could be built to understand that teachers and students alike are ministers and servants of God.

For P6 (:13), sincerity was also crucial. He wanted to talk to his students “not in binary terms (zero/one)” but to “give them all the nuances in between.” This sincerity is also honesty in admitting that you don't have the final answer.

EMPHASIS 2: EXPLORING THE "BIG PICTURE"

From the honest exploration of the small details – the nuances – we now turn to the subsequent emphasis that opens the view from the detail to the "big picture." To discern it, P2 (:31) postulated the need to see things with "fresh eyes." Inviting his students to take this fresh look, he would follow the counsel of Ellen White ([1903] 2014:148–149):

> The student should learn to view the world as a whole and to see the relation of its parts. He should gain a knowledge of its grand central theme, of God's original purpose for the world, of the rise of the great controversy [between good and evil], and of the work of redemption.

For P4 (:37), the close link between education and redemption was the basis for the institution he led. For him, that meant the word of God had to be conceived as such rather than interpreted in historical-critical or allegorical terms. For this to happen, a mind of innovation would be needed to contextualise the word of God, bridge it to our modern world, and adopt and apply its principles "in a good scientific manner."

Again, P2 (:31) used "true life" questions to "actualise and personalise" scripture. Students should be brought into the situation of the writer of the biblical text and understand what this meant for them (:32). According to P7 (:60-61), to prevent fragmentation, it would be necessary not only to disassemble parts of the Bible – for example, studying the Pentateuch – but to show its place in the bigger picture. He illustrated this with a picture of a device that needed to be disassembled before the eyes of those watching, so they could see its different parts, understand how they are related, and then reassemble it. Those who watched would then know what it was for, how it worked, and how to use and repair it. P10 (:33), pointing in

the same direction, sought to help his students understand the situation of ancient people and apply this knowledge to their own circumstances.

EMPHASIS 3: CHALLENGING STUDENTS TO GROW

… grow in critical thinking:

For P3 (:75), his role as a teacher was not just to be a "professor" but rather to inspire, even sometimes to provoke the students to learn to ask questions, "be serious about research," and "find reasons for their faith that are well argued."

P5 (:66-70) illustrated his understanding of teaching and learning thus: "I do not consider my students" to be "cups, and I have to fill those cups with my knowledge," as if he owned all the knowledge and had to pass it on to his students. The students had already acquired knowledge before and should use their abilities and study to build new knowledge, "that may differ from mine." If the latter were the case, the goal would nevertheless have been achieved. Ideally, the teachers' reflections would have stimulated students' thinking. He introduced the term "critical thinking" at this point. Given that so much knowledge is now accessible with one click, he could not see his task as "to fill up their minds with so much information," but rather as helping them deal with this information by critically analysing it. Thus, they should learn to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information, and between helpful and useless information. This would make them responsible for themselves, being "actors of their own training." P9 (:32) described this responsibility not as providing knowledge but as giving tools, so that the student may independently search for and find answers.

P6 (:14), comparing the classroom with a laboratory, invited his students to experiment. He challenged them to criticise him as a teacher using arguments, thus

training them to think critically. For some students, this would be a huge challenge; they “suddenly wake up in the classroom.” He saw his role as equipping them with what was necessary to dig into the material so they could reach their own conclusions. For him, there was no divide between academia and faith. He wanted to produce students who are thinkers, not just parrots (:31), students who have a high-quality knowledge of God and experience his word (:24). The motivation to do so was inspired by a thought of Ellen White ([1905] 2017:280): “A knowledge of God is the foundation of all true education and all true service.” Another guiding picture was a quote by David Cline, former president of the Society of Biblical Literature, which he paraphrased as “We don’t teach languages, we teach students; we don´t teach modules, we teach students.” (:31). After finishing their studies, they should be able to decide and conclude by themselves. Therefore, he considered his role to be that of an instructor and leader rather than a lecturer and “spiritual adviser” who, for example, takes time to pray with the students (:55).

… grow in personal and spiritual life

With the last quote, a new aspect comes into focus. For P2 (:34), showing personal interest in the students' lives was necessary. For this, class time alone would not be sufficient; flexibility was needed to maintain contact outside the classroom, including inviting students into the home. He encouraged students to strive for excellence “in all parts, not only in academia, but also in your spiritual relationship as well in your personal relationships, even when it comes to sports and how you do things.” (28).

P7 (:26) described his role as a teacher as one of seeing the student as a person. This included understanding who the person was and where the student came

from, and learning about their natural talents, God-given abilities, and capabilities. Beyond that, the student's background also needed to be considered, as well as the kind of influence under which he or she had been. This task, so he admitted (:32-33) would be highly demanding. Teachers could do it the easy way: give their lecture, leave class, and leave the students to do whatever they can. However, his understanding of his responsibility as a teacher could be summarised as follows: “You never leave your students; you are always with them.”

P9 (34-35) also emphasised the importance of private conversation and personal prayer. He knew these could make a difference not only for that given day but also for eternal life. Even in class, he discussed things that concerned students’ lives “to show that the Lord has a place in whatever we do.”

… grow in character

What was said in the last three paragraphs provides the necessary foundation for character education, which we discussed in depth in the interview with P7, who explained in detail how this topic was addressed in his institution. According to his experience (:27), it was crucial to diagnose the positive traits of the students as well as the weak ones. These observations shaped his overall approach to the student and informed his selection of lecture content. So, in class – even while teaching the Pentateuch or Old Testament prophets – he tried to address the issues he noticed by interacting with the students, highlighting their strengths and helping them realise their weaknesses. Not being aware of one´s weaknesses would be a considerable obstacle to growth (:28). Many students came from dysfunctional homes (:29), bearing burdens that affected their performance. The first task was to make them realise who they were and encourage them to grow and change. Although this of-

ten was not easy, “once they start, they can grow.” Students (:71) should “not go through the entire process untouched,” just getting some intellectual knowledge. Still, he and his colleagues wanted to see” positive change in their character and personality,” “unlocking their hidden potential.” This “complete development” (:30) would be paramount while preparing pastors for the ministry. Looking back on his own experience, P7 (:31) noted that few men tried to help him understand who he was or address his weaknesses. Later on, when reading the principles of education as described by Ellen White, he discovered a completely different approach that inspired him and his colleagues to change the dominant goal in their institution, precisely not just change – there could be wrong ways of change, too – but in terms of improvements in growth in Christian values. An approach like this could only be offered to students in the full-time on-campus program. Consequently, only such students were granted diplomas qualifying them to serve as pastors.

… growing simultaneously in academics and the relationship with God

For P6 (:30), intellectual, spiritual, and experiential things must be related. As he didn´t want to teach theology but theologians, the student's life needed to be influenced by the study itself, beyond its mere content. What students encounter during their studies should prompt them to question their ideas and beliefs, helping them become better persons with a broader worldview, a deeper relationship with God, and a better relationship with others. This, so P6 (:26) stressed, was the biblical meaning of “knowledge” that was much more experimental than intellectual:

> We try to pass the message to our students that this intellectual should be in the ministry of their spirituality, the spirituality of other people, and the well-being of other people. The spiritual aspect of our ministry contributes to the mental and even physical well-being of the people we serve (:28).

Some aspects of the interview with P7 ignited my particular interest: the fact that he tried to link his students' challenges to the content of courses, the fact that he tried to lead his students differently than he had experienced, and the question of what character education looked like practically after he stressed its necessity.

6.2.4 What Makes Adventist Education Adventist?

As a prelude to the question about the elements of AE, I asked some of my interview partners what AE needed to be genuinely called 'Adventist'. I am well aware of the dangers of singling out AE too much, and I openly shared with my interview partners that Ellen White never used the expression “Adventist education” but instead adopted a more general approach, usually speaking of “true education” (see Chapter 3.4.2, p. 66). Although my question elicited interesting responses, including some critical ones, I had to repeat and clarify it in several interviews. It turned out that this question was less fruitful than others.

CRITICAL REMARKS CONCERNING ADVENTIST EDUCATION

Being asked about the philosophy of AE P3 (:99) answered: “What is Adventist education? Hopefully, […] the best kind of Christian education that you can find. Hopefully.” Reflecting on the term philosophy of AE, he (:90) explained that there indeed was “something like Adventist philosophy of education, because everything that Adventists have ever thought and claimed about good education” would be Adventist education. “The only question is: Does it really make such a big difference?” He didn´t respond to his question because, he reasoned (:91), a factual answer could only be given by comparing many education systems and cross-checking the various philosophies to see their impact.

P5 (:115-119) hesitated to use the philosophy of AE in an elitist way with the questionable goal of preparing “Adventist soldiers”. He wanted to contribute that his students develop as Christ´s disciples but “would not have the pride to say that only us as Adventists can do that.” Even when talking about the holistic concept of AE, embracing the intellectual, physical, and spiritual element in connection with discipleship as the core of AE, he “would have some difficulties to say that only we as Adventists own that.”

For P7 (:48-51), there was the official Adventist philosophy of education on the one side and the actual people engaged in the educational process on the other. They would have diverse backgrounds and be influenced by their cultures, thereby shaping their understanding of the Adventist philosophy of education. Being an Adventist institution would not guarantee an outcome in tune with AE. A shared perspective on biblical values and worldviews would be necessary.

P3 (:66) observed that “in our Adventist tradition, we have excellent concepts that we have not always applied.”

> Adventists do what they do, not just by chance. […] We do things because of certain convictions and certain other influences, factors that have made us precisely to do things that way. But I do not think that Ellen White´s philosophy of education and today's Adventist´s educational praxis is really completely consistent or congruent. And nobody would expect this. I think, first of all […] there is a big time gap and […] education worldwide is so diverse (:92-93).

For P4 (:41), “the development of our educational institutions was faster than our development of the Adventist thoughts of education.” He said there was insufficient reflection “on why we do it the way we do it.” Therefore, other influences like capitalism or neo-liberalism would also mould the institutions and structures, which sometimes are endangered by losing themselves in administration rather than con-

centrating on the students (:69). Now would be a crucial time to rethink our educational structures, especially for theological education. Writing descriptively about AE as George Knight would not be enough (:47).

WHAT DOES ADVENTIST EDUCATION NEED TO BE TRULY ADVENTIST?

Turning now to the answers to this question, P2 (:43) observed that AE is mainly determined by the content and the biblical understanding of God, man, and salvation. Also, Adventists see salvation and education as closely linked together – a point that was also emphasised by P4 (:52) – and putting the person as a whole in the centre of education (P2:46-47):

> I think the philosophy of Adventism education is based on the Adventist worldview, which is a very satisfying worldview as it would talk to all our desires. All our senses, which God has given us, would be filled and fulfilled by what education will do. Education will help us to see and experience this worldview, so education […], if you like, is a part of our salvation, of sanctification. Education will never end. It is more than facts and information. […] It is the view of man and the growth of man in all his or her capacities [that] should make Adventist education special.

When discussing Adventist identity, P5 (:105-107) used a different term. He explained that this identity could not be reduced to Adventist doctrines. Although they represent a large part of it, they would be complemented by Adventist ethics, lifestyle, and a holistic view of man.

6.2.5 Elements of Adventist Education

Despite some of my interview partners' reservations about boasting about AE, almost all had clear ideas about what AE should entail. This chapter presents the main themes covered in the interviews.

HOLISTIC EDUCATION

To nine of my ten interview partners, "holistic education" came to mind when asked about the salient elements of AE. "All spheres – body, brain everything" (P1:49), "a person as a whole" (P2:46), "education involves the whole being" (P9:39). "It is not only our intellect that has to be trained. It is the body, […] our emotions. It is even social, relationships." (P3:106). P4 (:53) enlarged the picture by declaring AE holistic and integral, developing the individual's character.

P5 (76-84) described an effort and explained how, at his institution, holistic education was applied to the syllabus and structured courses. Teachers had to assign the objectives of the lesson to three categories labelled (1) "to know," (2) "to know to do," and (3) "to know to be." This approach, he continued, was essential for theology because "we prepare pastors" who will be engaged in the church end "need to incarnate theological biblical thinking." In the holistic approach, "the spiritual should be the highest" and "the criterion in developing students´ intellectual, emotional, and physical powers" (P6:37).

For P7 (:51-54), Adventist education was unique, not because of its holistic approach; instead, he saw this in the Adventist worldview grounded in the sola scriptura principle. His "greatest discovery" was to realise that there was no dualism, theology on the one, education on the other side, but those two described the same process:

> Everything we do needs to develop our students in all areas of their acting. They need to […] achieve excellence in theological understanding […] in which scripture is the ultimate authority for everything […] and also in their practical lives.

Reflecting the praxis of holistic education in his institution critically, P3 (113-116) took physical education as an example to illustrate that talking about the necessity of physical training is sometimes easier than finding sound practice:

> How do you force mature students, who are grown-ups, to do certain things we think to be important for a well-rounded personality – can you force them if they don't want it? […] Ideally, Adventist schools should have this holistic approach, including sports every day. Not necessarily competition sports […] but doing something nice with the body. Now, in practice, no single school will do this, having an hour of sport every day, for various reasons. But that would be important. […] In reality, we rationalise and leave it to the responsibility of the individual. We have this ethos, but we do not enforce it.

Taking spirituality as another example, he reasoned that some schools worldwide required attendance at chapel meetings. Attendance at his institution would be meagre because it was not enforced. He detected a dilemma: "We could enforce it, but then, by enforcing it, we may contradict our ethos of believing in a holistic development." So, although trying to apply these principles, in practice, "we narrow this down to principles and goodwill," ending up with something resembling general Christian education on the college level, even secular education.

P8 (:51) explained that, at his institution, students receive support to develop their physical skills and understand principles of healthy living. Regularly, physicians visited the school to present the latest findings in public health, including research on tobacco, alcohol, and nutrition, among other topics. "We believe we can serve God and our fellow men better if you are healthy! And if this is already the case, why not learn to be healthier?"

CHRIST-CENTRED EDUCATION CHANGING CHARACTER

P1 (:49) described that at his institution, students were not only taught to be good professionals but also to be good Christians who had received Jesus Christ as their

saviour and had a relationship with him. This would embrace the whole being, form character, train in Christian thinking (:139), and foster professionalism, following the example of Christ, who was perfect in all spheres of life. The ultimate goal would be to serve God and people in this life and the next.

P3 was concerned about the “being”, meaning the “orientation you have towards yourself and to other people” (:169). He considered this kind of education less of an academic matter at his institution. Unlike state universities, Adventist theological seminaries are very small and offer opportunities for personal encounters between teachers and students, making "a big difference." "People know their professors," and as professors, all serve students, give feedback, and also "discuss issues of personal development with students" (:158). This has to be done carefully and slowly, challenging students to think beyond their horizons; unfortunately, not every student would benefit (:171).

P4 (:53) also emphasised that AE needed to develop the individual's character, given its holistic, integral approach.

Turning to practical aspects of character education, P6 (:91) observed that although his institution offered high-quality online education, students greatly missed campus life. At the time of the interview, this institution was in a pandemic lockdown. Campus life was part of their spirituality, character development, and holistic education. In addition to that extracurricular aspect of character education, P6 (:45-46) describes how the classroom complements this effort. They challenge the worldview of their students by taking them into a deep understanding of the Bible that will change how they see things and affect their spirituality:

> That is very important for their spirituality, for the knowledge of God is the most important in developing their character. I expect that the proper knowledge of God will influence their character in terms of incorporating God's moral values that will lead to godly practice.

P7 (:69-71) described what character education looked like in practice at his institution. First, for a student who aspires to work as a pastor one day, studying on campus and being fully engaged in campus life would be compulsory. "We want to […] know who you are. What are your strengths?" The team there also wanted to detect weaknesses, "not to misuse or abuse those weaknesses, but to help you to grow." They tried to help their students overcome personality challenges and improve. Students should not "go through the entire process untouched," getting merely "some intellectual knowledge." They wanted to see positive change in their character and personality" by "unlocking their hidden potential."

P8 (:41) used very similar words to describe character building as the most critical task at his institution:

> It is not important for us, primarily, that students gain some head knowledge and know some Bible verses by heart. We want that they become Christians of heart, that they love Jesus, that they live Christian lives, and that they are concerned about people who do not know Christ.

Asked how this was accomplished, P8 (:43-44) described various ways: First, their expectations of the students were not limited to learning, passing tests, and final exams to earn the diploma. Daily morning and evening worship services, as well as daily prayer meetings, were another aspect. Teachers and students live on campus and intentionally live together, trying to be friends. Students would be involved in practical duties and outreach activities to practice Christianity daily, "rubbing shoulders with each other." Secondly, they tried to present all modules in a Christ-centred way so that students would better understand Jesus. "We observe these young

people, and when they come out of this institution, they are really mature Christians.” Going deeper into aspects of character building, P8 (:49-50) mentioned respectful interaction with older adults and helping the poor, which were part of practical outreach activities, such as assisting refugees. Ultimately, knowledge should not be an end in itself; instead, students should become practical Christians who live out what they learn.

P9 (:39-42) openly admitted that his focus had changed over the years, and only recently he realised that “character comes before right doctrine” because “character is essential to professional excellence.” Therefore, he was interested in the spiritual transformation of the student, providing tools, knowledge, and opportunities so that, at the end of the four years, they might love God and be “really serious with God.” This would be the soil from which a productive and fruitful ministry could grow. “Those educated in an Adventist manner,” he added (:48), to be valuable persons, “they have to understand that no matter how interesting they think or perform, they have to be relevant, helpful and practical as well.” However, this (:75-77) is not a mechanical process that will result from the classroom. This needed care. Care for the professors and the students. That means being an example, even when playing football with them: “I am doing it in a way that no matter what happens in the field, I will never lose my temper.” For P9, character education was a holistic endeavour, encompassing the food served in the cafeteria, the class assignments they completed, which incorporated practical components, praying with students as a teacher, and demonstrating that students' spirituality mattered more than the teacher's knowledge.

LEARNING TO SERVE

Turning to service, it seems so central to theological education in some European institutions that they even include it in their mottos, such as “Learn to serve,” “Teach to serve,” or “Study, serve, and inspire.” “And the ultimate or final result of this education should be to serve God and the people in this life and also in the future life,” stressed P1 (:139).

P3 (173-175) exclaimed that this would be “the whole purpose of studying theology anyway.” “We do […] do not train people […] to be philosophers or something, we train them to be pastors, missionaries […] or church planters.”

For P8 (:54-55), service is closely linked to mission. Sharing Christ with others and helping people means embracing Christ wholeheartedly.

P10 (:42-43) also underlined that the primary goal of their curriculum is to teach students to serve people and churches.

PRODUCING INDEPENDENT THINKERS

For P2, another aspect of AE in theological education would be to “make them individual thinkers within the context of the whole view of God. And in dependence of God – not independence of God – to help them to develop and grow.” (:49). Students should learn to think deeply (:51).

According to P4 (:49) Adventism tends to get trapped in “conductivism”, meaning that people are told” how to do things” and with which methods”, instead of “leading them to elaborate themselves.”

P6 (:39) explained:

> "To produce independent thinkers, that should be the outcome of the Adventist Education." When I say independent, I mean thinkers with integrity whose first and foremost goal in life is to fulfil God's will."

DEVELOPING ALL CAPACITIES

P2 (49) added another aspect: AE should "lead the student to enfold all his capacities as well as his abilities to the glory of God."

> Adventist education needs to see the person where he would go, where he would stand in a year from now. It is a visionary education, you know, where the teachers are challenged to have the vision which the student might not have of himself or herself to detect it. In fact, it is a human centred education and a lot about who your student is and what he needs.

P7 (:56) added that according to his understanding, the Adventist philosophy of education aimed to achieve:

> … that student´s faith in God should be clearer, stronger, deeper, wider at the end of this process then before. […] they should have a clearer understanding also of themselves, who they are, what are the areas that they need to improve and so on, and also their understanding of the world, other people as well.

P10 (:49-50) cited a thoughtful proverb: "Education is what remains after what you forget when you studied". Therefore, at his institution, one of the most significant parts of education was the interaction process and the relationship between students and teachers. To be successful and helpful, a lot depended on …

> … how much teachers are open and sincere with the students. They can share with students their worries, their thoughts, ideas, and students appreciate it. And it helps to build the foundation for understanding who teachers are, who students are and who teachers are as ministers and servants of God.

PRACTICAL TRAINING

Another vital aspect of AE in the curriculum was the link between theory and practice. P1 (79-88) and P10 (11-17), whose institutions had a good number of churches nearby, explained that they asked the best pastors in the area to take one student and let them experience church work every weekend, from Friday to Sunday. This

begins in the program's first year, making the student part of the church and a helper to the pastor, while gathering experience in preaching, missionary work, attending church board meetings, and participating in evangelistic campaigns. Over the years, students would be involved in all aspects of church life, serving as deacons and working with children, youth, and other age groups. Upon completing the fourth year of study, students would already be young pastors, having gained a realistic perspective on ministry.

P6 (:46) described another method to bring students into contact with real-life matters: they would invite experienced pastors into the classroom and let them challenge students with current issues troubling churches, such as “teenage pregnancy, abuse in the family, sexual and marriage issues.” Debates would be organised in class, with one student assigned to defend a perspective on an issue and another to present the opposing view. By doing this, the students' worldview and understanding of spirituality would be challenged.

> … very often students come with very romantic ideas about studying theology with us, but they end up in a very real world. We have a student at the moment […] [who] said, ‘Why all these things we talk, teach and learn [here] are not on disposal for every single church member,` [showing] how good that was for him, for his spiritual life, for his marriage, for his family life, for his practical ministry and spirituality as well.

6.2.6 The Big Idea Behind the Curriculum

When I asked my interview partners what they considered the central idea behind their respective curricula, several critical remarks regarding the content and structure of specific curricula emerged.

P3 (:183) stated that all the main elements of AE should have a strong influence on the curriculum. Often, however, teachers tended to fill their courses with the content they had, handed down by tradition, resulting in an "inherited curriculum”

(:113). P7 (:59) sided with this critique by noting that "we did not invent theology," but instead followed established theological curricula from around the world, including both Adventist and non-Adventist curricula.

Although a module system was installed at his institution some time ago in an attempt to answer the Bologna Process's requirement that those modules needed to be interdisciplinary, P3 (:129-133) complained that no synthesis was nevertheless emerging: The historian would still teach history, and the biblical scholar would still study "biblical scholar stuff."

P2 added (:71) that AE will only be implemented “when the teacher has this vision.” P7 (:60) sided with this argument by underlining that the curriculum may have everything in it. However, the extent to which this would be successful depended strongly on the lecturers and professors. P1 (: 59) also shifted the focus from the curriculum to the teacher. It was a misconception to think that a “very good curriculum […] automatically will change the character of the student, and they will be like Jesus.” He summarised: “Not curriculum is the first point in this question, but the educated spiritual teacher.” P2 (:135) put it bluntly:

> How do you change a school? […] You do not change a school by regulations; you change the school by having different teachers. […] This sounds very hard, but [you] will not change any school by just telling them what to do; you need to have the people […] doing it.

P5 (:141) agrees that a committee will not decide the skills a student will develop, but rather, “it depends on the teachers you hire and the way they conduct their classes.” While it is true that looking …

> … at a program and the curriculum and syllabus, you have quite a precise idea of the philosophy behind it, but […] [you won´t] get the whole picture. [There is a difference between] the outside view and the reality of what is happening in the classroom and the relationship with the students and what the teacher says and

> the way he says it that cannot appear on the course description: […] two teachers could have the same course description and what will happen in the classroom and in the interaction with the students will be totally different.

Apart from those critical remarks, some interview partners sketched the big picture they discerned as inspiration for the curriculum: P2 (:51+55) emphasised that at his institution, "We want students to grow; we want them to be! What is it worth if you do things and you cannot stand behind them?" Knowing and learning should lead to "that great goal of love", "to serve diligently, pray diligently, and think deeply." Students should learn to be "honest and truthful to scripture" and "how scripture can influence people and how you can do this to help scripture to influence other people." Furthermore, they "should think theologically," meaning they "can grasp theological contexts coming from biblical theology" and transform this to think along biblical principles and values. Students should "get all the tools and the toolbox to be a pastor."

P5 (:177-183) presented a thought-through guiding document of the institution with the motto "To teach to serve!" with five core values:

"(1) Authentically Adventist, (2) Biblically Anchored, (3) Resolutely Spiritual, (4) Profoundly Human, and (5) Targeting Academic Excellence."

(1) "In our curriculum [...] we want to assume and to create a fresh and relevant view of Adventism."

(2) Students needed to study the Bible to become biblical experts.

(3) To reach beyond mere religious studies, a spiritual experience is the core of these values, with spiritual activities in and outside the classroom. Although "God is God and is much bigger than we ever can understand, my faith, my personal belief in this God, is a postulate that changes the whole construction on it."

> (4) Students are not just numbers, [...] they are unique people, each one of them. And they need to remain unique people, and we need to help them view more and develop their knowing, thinking, doing, and being, according to their own calling and, hopefully, the material we share, the classes they will have, and the character-building they will pass through during their studies will help them to become what God wants them to be, not what we as institution want them to become.

(5) Finally, Academic Excellence: encouraging students to do their best.

For P6 (:41), "the big idea behind it is to connect spiritual, mental, experiential, and intellectual into one picture."

6.2.7 Influences shaping the curriculum

P1 (:100) observed the danger that teachers could be so absorbed in their work that they didn´t realise what needed to change. AAA (the Adventist Accreditation Association) would point to these areas. In addition to that (:91), as the dean of the theological department, he proactively sought feedback from the Union president about current challenges that should shape the program, making changes accordingly. But in grosso modo, “we cannot change very much” the curriculum “because we have it from Andrews [university] and other institutions […] and are not the first in this question” because the program already existed for many years.

For P2 (:104), one significant factor influencing the program is teachers' educational backgrounds. The more universities he attended, the broader his horizon.

P4 (:76-86) considered his institution conservative and mission-oriented, upholding the importance of Ellen White, an Adventist identity, and a combination of theoretical and practical aspects. At the time of the interview, the process of governmental accreditation had started. The primary effect of this accreditation would be to enhance the program's scientific excellence. This would not hinder students' practical development; according to P4, it was even more beneficial than some of

his AAA experiences. He remembered a conversation with a member of AAA (not in Europe) who did not understand that competencies needed to be applied to "the curriculum and the whole process of education."

Regarding influences on the curriculum, P5 (:147-149) noted that, in our context, most seminaries are, or need to be, accredited by the government and AAA, thereby forcing them into a university model. An alternative model is the seminary, like the Catholic understanding of priestly training. Although deeply theological, it would be different from the university model.

> Somehow, we are sitting between two chairs […]. We want to have the chair of university excellence and recognition. So, we need to have all the courses […] taught in famous theological universities, but […] we are not preparing theologians. We are preparing pastors – seminary part – and want to be practical. […] I think that this kind of tension that exists between these two views is beneficial and fruitful. […] When we talk about constructing a curriculum, these two visions – to be academically excellent – […] is not always easy to conjugate with [that] we want to prepare the pastors as we feel they are needed in the field today.

Deploring that, from his perspective, the Adventist church was relatively poor in profound, systematic theology because "we are more oriented toward a doctrinal dogmatic" (151-153), he still saw the chance to build tunnels between the disciplines. For example, teaching practical theology allowed him to explore biblical, systematic, and historical aspects. Given that "the task we ask" (161) is so broad, theological institutions also needed to equip pastors to render God's words relevant for today, to develop skills in technical matters, and to integrate being, doing, and theological training. A short moment, P5 (:211) dreamt of what Bonhoeffer did in Finkenwalde, a seminary-type of pastoral training strongly built on spiritual communion (see Bethge 1970:639–661). However, today´s realities would be different, as would the expectations of the church. The AAA ensured that the training was

conducted in a university-style format, even recommending that they seek state recognition and establish agreements with other universities.

P6 (:52-54) considered the influence of governmental accreditation and AAA to be highly beneficial to the institution; the two complement each other. The state focused less on the content of the courses and more on the overall quality of education, teachers' efficiency, students' satisfaction, and whether the promises made to students were kept. The student was in the centre of the inspection. Students should learn to be critical thinkers, to be able to analyse and solve complex theological issues, and to be a thinking individual (:49). The AAA concentrated – not entirely but mainly on the teachers, how they reflect Adventist identity, what and how they teach, and how the continuing education process worked (:55):

> What is our philosophy of education? How do we teach? What are our dreams? What are our aims? How do we do our continual professional development? How do we develop ourselves further and educate ourselves further?

P9 (:50-58) explained the government's influence on the curriculum, noting that his institution was state-accredited and "had to comply with several areas that were imposed, including courses." On the content level, the school was free to fill it within the Adventist context, but there was an external influence on the curriculum. However, there was sufficient flexibility to add courses with typical Adventist content, such as "Daniel," "Revelation," and "Ellen White" or "Philosophy of Education." Looking at his curriculum, P9 was "amazed to see that it is balanced in terms of percentage of theoretical and practical classes," while admitting that "even the practical classes are not that practical" because most of them presented a theoretical approach to the practice. Very few took place "in the field" or were hands-on projects. State recognition, however (:112), was a demanding and time-consuming process.

P10 (:51-62) considered the influence of state recognition at his university to add value to the program and benefit the students because it required some basic knowledge about the country and a prosperous life and provided the basis for continuing studies in other universities and branches. State recognition also influenced the teaching style (:84) by limiting lecturing to 1/3 of the workload, leaving time for students' work, which had to be addressed in complementary seminars; the teacher would serve only as a moderator in the remaining two-thirds of the course. They also began (:4-5) “looking for options and the connection between the programs and the needs of the fields.”

6.2.8 Faculty Development – Positive Aspects

At this point, the conversation in some interviews turned to faculty development. I was interested in how the dean ensured that the other faculty members shared his vision of AE or developed a shared view and practice. We begin with positive remarks about the topic before moving on to critical perspectives.

P1 (:69-71) had specific conversations with the teachers, ensuring that all courses were presented with a Christocentric focus. Once a year, all teachers have a special meeting to develop their skills. External specialists are invited to this. To ensure variety, breadth, and practical experience, the faculty at the institution was supported by numerous external teachers already serving in practical fields, such as pastors, youth leaders, or presidents (:108).

P2 (:93) would be more reluctant to invite external speakers, believing that faculty development should be conducted internally. Although he saw this primarily as the dean's task, he identified several reasons why it didn´t work at his institution (these reasons will be explained later). Besides trying to develop an already existing

faculty, he saw (:97-99) the hiring process of professors as far too easy. There should be a rigorous screening process at the outset, requiring teaching aspirants to read Ellen White's Education and to submit a 10-page summary outlining their philosophy of education. They must know what is essential from the beginning because you can´t teach an old dog new tricks.

In this context, P3 (:129) considered it worthwhile to ask his colleagues to write down their respective teaching philosophies.

At the P4 institution (:96-98), younger teachers were mentored by older teachers to develop a vision and understanding of Adventist identity.

The institution of P8 (:92) was developing a questionnaire for alumni to assess their experiences as pastors and solicit feedback on how the program could be improved. As faculty, they shared a vision to help young people grow into mature Christians and pastors (:84) and regularly discussed how they achieved that goal, where they failed, and how to improve (:85).

P9 (:82) recalled that the last time the curriculum was tested for congruence with AE was four or five years ago. But he felt the need to sit down, relax, and, without any pressure, restart the process and try to improve. One area for improvement is to better support professors, as appreciation would positively influence their interactions with students.

6.2.9 Faculty Development – Challenging Aspects

One of the most significant challenges that deans of European theological institutions face is time, both in their personal time as deans and in its impact on faculty work.

Often, so P1 (:100), they were too busy to make any changes. P2 (88;93;139) perceived the challenge that faculty members were engaged in so many things at their institution, not only teaching, and that everyone had to find a way to survive. As a result, they would not take time to review their orientation systematically (:83), limiting faculty reunions to mere business meetings (:97). Without being intentional in spending more time preparing classes trying to bring in their vision of AE, faculty members tended to do the things “always the same way” resulting in a shifting focus from the student to the material (:121). If they had time to reflect, they needed to ask themselves how they put AE into practice in their classes and to adjust the content of their teaching, given that the student body would be different from that in years past. Being not thoughtful enough was the most significant hindrance (:110). However, the teacher's academic background would also have a considerable influence; the more diverse institutions one has experienced, the broader one's perspective. For that reason, he observed that some were focusing primarily on academic excellence rather than implementing the full range of AE elements.

On a personal level, P2 (:93) saw it as his primary task to continually work on the vision, which would require at least 50% of his time. In reality, however, he was the one teaching the most. As he had observed in other institutions, the dean should teach fewer courses than other faculty members. In the same vein, P9 (:111-112) had only recently succeeded in reducing the number of hours the dean spent in class because teaching the same amount as the others and serving as dean was “extremely tiresome.” Even after that, he still had not touched everything. P3 (:22-25) used a third of his time for “dean´s stuff,” but his workload had only been reduced by 25% while being dean. P6 dreamt humorously to reduce “papyrology”, meaning

administrative time spent on plenty of paperwork, filling out forms and writing reports, things that come along with state recognition. P9 (:83-83) also lamented the time spent on accreditation, which cannibalised other activities.

One major challenge in training and developing the other faculty members is the relationship among them. As P2 (:124) put it, he considered himself not to be their boss, although he was. After giving examples of how difficult it was for him "to guide" his colleagues, let alone to read a book together, he summarised his position as "one of them," indicating that he was not taken seriously when attempting to develop the faculty. P3 (:185-192) bluntly said that after being dean for five years, he was happy to hand it over the next year to someone else:

> Because to lead a bunch of theologians is really, really difficult. Theologians, I love them all. We are all brothers, well, friends with most [of them, but] academic theologians, they are the kind of people who are very convinced of their methods, their perspectives, and in the end, the position they hold. Now to work with these kinds of people [in] committees is obviously not so easy. They are specialists in their line. And they have been called to do this job that they are doing because of their qualifications.

Because the group was highly diverse on some topics, change was possible only when there was a strong consensus. He also emphasised that the main problem was the relationship within a small group of teachers, with no strong hierarchy, making it difficult for the dean to "oppose them in public and make a major argument." He saw himself in a different situation than deans in the USA, who were, in fact, only deans and, as such, perhaps taught one course, but mainly were managers with executive authority and even a budget – none of which would be the case here. "Here you are ´primus inter pares`; perhaps you are even less, you're the secretary in reality […] trying to coordinate activities.

At the end of the interview, all of a sudden, without being asked, because the question about faculty development was not on the table at that moment, P5 (:221) explained that the staff, the faculty, the teacher's team – they were people "with their histories, with their backgrounds and their personal views and values and we have to do with it." In a church-school context, you couldn´t change people easily. Even when they didn´t share the vision, you could make suggestions, but they had a salary and a contract, and sometimes you could only wait for them to retire.

P9 (:105) hinted that he had only taken on the role of dean because the administration would otherwise have been in a complicated situation.

6.2.10 Interesting insights – unexpected findings

In this section, I will present the findings that were not directly linked to the questions I asked, but that nevertheless offered deep, sometimes surprising insights into the reality of a dean´s life.

NOT PREPARED TO BE A TEACHER OR DEAN

At the beginning of the interview, when I asked each dean to summarise his academic career, P2 (:5-6) admitted that throughout his education, he had never been taught how to teach. What he knew about it was due to self-study:

> I thought it is always good to know what you are doing and not just to bring information to the forefront and let them know what you know […] and think you know. But it is also important to reflect on the method of how to do this.

When turning to the first question of the interview, which teachers impressed him the most and why, P2 (:9) combined his answer with the remark he had just made about the lack of training as a teacher. He underlined that for him, it was undoubtedly the teachers who, by setting examples, gave an impression of what you could do when you had to teach.

Also, at the beginning of the interview, P3 (:13-14) surprised me with similar observations that he saw himself somehow "thrown into being a theological educator." It seemed to him that, generally, people were thrown into it:

> We do not really develop people who have a philosophy of theological education, but who are, [e.g.], interested in systematic theology […] and then somehow you get this responsibility, and there you go.

He added that few people were trained in these lines, particularly in Europe. Therefore, someone would be asked to do it whenever needed, without extensive formal introductions. In the United States, perhaps at Andrews University (the Adventist flagship University, especially in theological education), he considered it distinct because there were "general concentrations" addressing the question, "What is theological education good for in the first place?"

P5 (203-207) also stated that the faculty received very little formal training at his institution, neither from internal nor from external sources, particularly regarding the pillars of Adventist Education. Yes, he spent time with his colleagues, discussing curriculum, course descriptions, reading assignments, teaching methods, and so on, but all this was on an informal level.

SHOULD ANDREWS UNIVERSITY BE SO INFLUENTIAL?

The Andrews University mentioned above came into a critical focus of P4 (:110-112), who doubted the tendency to be healthy to focus all theological development on Andrews University. Andrews was unable to deliver the variety of approaches required in different contexts. Its curriculum was not easily implemented in Europe, and its professional titles were sometimes not accepted. Limiting the view on Andrews would limit other institutions' ability to develop in their respective contexts.

DEALING WITH CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

"We are between many fires," explained P5 (:227-231), "the wishes of the students and what they are willing to live as the educational experience while being here in seminary." In addition, there was the staff's vision, which "may differ according to each teacher," as well as the local school project, mission values, and so on. Also, the values and the willingness of the conference (the administrative level responsible for the seminary within the Adventist church structure) had to be considered. Unfortunately, its committees made decisions, sometimes based on distant and unrealistic perceptions of the institution. It seemed that, in the minds of some administrators, the school was still the same as it had been 30 or 40 years ago when they attended it. "They imagine that it is still running the same way. But a school is a living being and has evolved." Consequently, projects were proposed that were far from touching reality. P5 referred to this challenge as another "fire" the school had to address.

P3 (:139) complained that he was "quite lonely" as a theological educator. Instead of helpful feedback, he received only a critique to "have more practical subjects." However, a decision on change was required at another level.

Thinking back to his personal experience as a young pastor starting as an "intern" (the first years as a pastor should be part of the pastoral education and are called "internship"), P6 (:18-19) recalled that he received no "proper practical instruction" when he entered the ministry. He learned as he worked; he learned from his mistakes. Church members, elders, and deacons were accommodating and helpful. Regarding church administration, however (:13), he experienced conflict; they were

unable to share a broader vision, although they (:13) "recognised that educated people are a great asset." In his ministry as a teacher, he was convinced that:

> …to produce independent thinkers, that should be the outcome of the Adventist education. When I say independent, I mean thinkers with integrity whose first and foremost goal in life is to fulfil God's will. This could be very dangerous for people in power. For people who are more ambitious than capable.

Unfortunately, the mentoring that should be at the core of internships still did not function in some regions where pastors from his institution began serving, resulting in numerous problems. The administration tended to blame the seminary rather than take its responsibilities seriously.

On the positive side (:60-70), he experienced a change in another area in which the school was serving, where past rumours labelling the seminary "liberal" eventually gave way to an acknowledgement of the school's efforts to develop "an excellent calibre of pastors for effective service." The respective administration commended them for "some fantastic examples, including practical and creative students already involved pastorally in the life of the churches," as examples of "resilience, innovation, and development." The "school´s critical role in transforming the lives of the students, in producing outstanding scholarship", and developing "practical skills for ministers" was deeply appreciated. This was expressed in a letter from the church administration of the given area cited by P6 during the interview.

THE DIGNITY AND BURDEN OF A SMALL INSTITUTION

P3 (8-9) noted that European theological institutions were relatively small, with some struggling to survive.

Conversely, P2 (:16) noted that smallness could be beautiful in the context of a small-group learning experience, which differed significantly from large classes at prominent universities.

On the downside, as noted in P7 (:101), the institution's small size imposed financial restraints that hindered its ability to employ more full-time lecturers. As a result, a heavy workload and time-consuming tasks were placed on a few individuals.

6.3 Conclusion

This Chapter presented the core of the interviews in a very condensed form. Starting with a general reflection on a philosophy of education, they shared their vision and offered insights into various aspects of their respective institutions. They described the influences that shaped their curriculum, the challenges they faced in working with their colleagues, and other burdens of the dean's role.

As the task was only to *see* the results, the next chapter will *judge*, reflect on and discuss them.

7 *JUDGE* – DISCUSSION OF THE SUMMARY OF THE INTERVIEWS

Having presented the core of the interviews, we now proceed to the analytical part, discussing the major themes that emerged. Before proceeding, I include a personal reflection on the research process and the results presented in Chapter 6.

7.1 Personal Reflection

Although the researcher is not the creator of the data, he nevertheless plays a crucial and sometimes delicate role, requiring awareness of the limits of qualitative research. Therefore, it is necessary to reflect on my role as a researcher, the original intent of this dissertation, and whether the interview results may support generalisations.

7.1.1 Reflection on my Role as Researcher

The longer I work with the data collection results, the more I understand why experts of the Grounded Theory urge researchers to be aware of their impact on the process. As the researcher, I certainly influenced the data collected: first, by choosing the questions; second, by deciding how to code the interviews; and third, by categorising the codes into themes. Although I had no control over what my interview partners said, nor did I change their words, the three influences mentioned are subjective. Having Niklas Luhmann's (2002:146) warning in mind, I must remember that my summary of the interviews represents my perspective, with its limitations and blind spots, but not reality itself. Perhaps this is why Hays & Singh (2012:145) in *Qualitative Inquiry in Clinical and Educational Settings* avoid the term “reality” and opt for “phenomenon” instead, emphasising that subjectivity is essential for an inti-

mate understanding. Still, the researcher's subjectivity will also shape a study's outcome.

7.1.2 Reflection on the Intent of this Dissertation

After summarising the interviews, it is also necessary to critically scrutinise the original intent of this dissertation to appreciate and analyse Adventist Theological Education in Europe. Although the research was done in Europe, it is impossible to claim that the summary of my interview partners' thoughts and statements can be generalised to represent the reality of ATE in Europe. According to Scott & Usher (1996:10) generalisations "have traditionally been considered the highest level of research and very often as what research should always strive for." I doubt that the synopsis of the opinions of the deans I interviewed is anything more than a collage of the thoughts of ten heads of theological departments. Given the challenges some of them expressed in creating a shared vision, even within the small team of theological educators at their specific theological seminary, we cannot equate their vision with that of the whole institution. Enlarging the picture to include the tensions some of them reported between their theological institution and the higher-level administration representing the field the institution serves makes it more complex and even less likely that the interview results represent more than fragments of a larger whole that cannot be displayed comprehensively here.

However, even if this study can´t claim to provide a comprehensive picture of ATE in Europe, the deans nevertheless bring in various aspects that can be placed in a larger context, not only of ATE but also beyond denominational borders.

7.1.3 Critical appreciation of the interviews

Looking back at the interviews with modern “chiefs” who, as deans of institutions that prepare future pastors, are charged with understanding the times and knowing what the church should do (cf. 1 Chr 12;33), a lot of the discussion ahead written in this chapter will overlap with how they described the elements of AE and the big idea behind the curriculum. In both chapter 6.2.5 *Elements of Adventist Education* and 6.2.6 *The Big Idea Behind the Curriculum,* they paint a broad scope of ATE as holistic, Christ-centred, character-changing, leading to service and producing independent thinkers who develop all their capacities and receive practical training. Putting everything they said together, they address what the literature above discusses about the nature of theology, as well as what Ellen White outlined as the pillars of AE, as described in Chapter 4, "A Philosophy of Seventh-Day Adventist Education." They worded it individually, embedded in their context and experiences.

At this point, it is time to commend their deep reflection on AE in ATE. They brought their personal convictions about AE, yet no one mentioned everything. The broad range only becomes apparent when all the interviews are put together. Although the synopsis of their thoughts cannot be taken as the Adventist understanding of AE in ATE in Europe, another possible conclusion would be premature: an interview partner's failure to mention a particular detail doesn´t prove that it was unimportant to him. Further issues would likely have surfaced if the interview had been more extensive or if different questions had been asked. Rather than jumping to premature conclusions about the content and scope of my interview partners' answers, the commendable aspect lies less in the content of their responses than in the fact that most interviewees demonstrated thorough reflection on AE. In their

circumstances, they shape ATE according to their understanding of AE, despite challenges from occasionally self-willed colleagues, biased administrative stakeholders at higher levels, and accreditation agencies, both inside and outside the church, who demand numerous papers and often complicate the task of being dean.

It turned out that there was broad treasure in the areas where they voiced concerns, difficulties, tensions and challenges. Most of these topics were only mentioned in the margins of the interviews and were unexpected and even surprising.

7.1.4 Personal Reflection on the Atmosphere During the Interviews

It was exciting to enter the first interview after months of reviewing the literature, formulating the research question, and developing the interview outline. Until then, "the deans of Adventist theological institutions" occurred several times in my dissertation as an anonymous body of unknown individuals. Now, the first face showed up, a person in flesh and blood, and the explanation of Stephanie Klein (2005) about the necessity to lay aside my perceptions of the reality of theological institutions, while, at the same time, not being able to stay distant proved to be true. I entered – at least a little bit – into a reality that I had only imagined beforehand based on my observations and personal experiences, the latter of which was already more than three decades old. As a pastor, listening is an essential part of my work. When those deans were talking to me about the ups and downs of their responsibilities, some even confiding personal matters to me, theological education, in my perception, shifted from a technical term into a lived reality embodied by those men with whom I spent hours in deep conversation.

I knew only three of the ten deans before the interviews, but the atmosphere of all of them was friendly, occasionally surprisingly open, and welcoming. Most

seemed happy and eager to share their vision, burdens, and challenges. After the first two or three interviews, I realised they had told me about several aspects of their reality that I had no clue about. By doing so, they provided me with facts and materials that went beyond my immediate research interest. I consider this information to be of profound importance to the overall picture.

Looking back to my inner perception of theological education before and after the interviews, these ten conversations helped me become more empathetic. Eventually, I felt compelled to see my role in this research differently. When I began writing this dissertation, I could describe myself as someone who, because of my own experience and limited observations, became a disappointed and critical analyst seeking to demonstrate that Adventist theological education could be much better if it incorporated more of the Adventist philosophy of education. After hours spent examining the realities of the deans' everyday lives, I aim to bring their voices to the stage and share their vision, concerns, and challenges, along with an appeal to further integrate AE's philosophy into ATE.

I want to take this opportunity to thank them from the bottom of my heart for their time, zeal, vision, and openness to sharing their experiences with me. You have enriched my understanding of ATE, provided many insights, and made this dissertation possible.

7.2 Introduction to the *Judge* Section

Referring to Chapter 5.10, starting on page 132*, Judging* is the second step of the *See – Judge – Act* method I use to present and discuss the topics that emerged during the interviews. Citing again Stephanie Klein (2005:75), this step does not mean

“normative judgment, but understanding, reflecting, comparing, and interpreting the experiences and knowledge gained.”

In doing so, I will apply Ellen White's advice to broaden students' horizons. In 1889, roughly 15 years after the young Seventh-day Adventist Church recognised the need to establish an educational system, White ([1889] 2017:535) advised sending students to higher colleges (non-Adventist) to “have a wider field for study and observation.” She encouraged associating “with different classes of minds” to get acquainted “with the workings and results of popular methods of education, and a knowledge of theology as taught in the leading institutions of learning.” I had not yet read this advice when I enrolled in the Doctor of Leadership in Theological Education program at Columbia International University in Korntal in the spring of 2016. I, therefore, had no idea that I was following it. Now, a good dozen courses later, thousands of pages in books and articles read, and hundreds of pages in papers written, I highly and thankfully treasure the wisdom in this counsel. Thinking beyond denominational borders was inspiring, both widening my horizons and deepening my appreciation for my own spiritual and educational roots. The program at Columbia International University in Korntal bridges the two areas White mentioned – education and theology – by seeking the best approach to theological education in a multicultural and diverse world.

Applying this principle of looking beyond the denominational horizon to the reflection and discussion of the interview topics, we will move beyond the occasional glances into the broader Christian educational world that have been done so far. To put it into a picture, we will set up a circle of tables and invite experts in theological education to join this reflection and discussion. The starting point will be the topics

that emerged in the interviews, serving as a springboard for a broader debate within theological education.

To limit the number of participants in this discussion, we will focus mainly on the Protestant world – and, not exclusively but with a strong emphasis – on the Evangelical part. The reason for this is twofold: First, although the Seventh-day Adventist Church is independent and autonomous, it shares similar roots with the Evangelical movement and has significant themes in common with it in terms of theological and self-understanding, as well as a similar understanding of practical responsibility regarding service to the world (Patrick 1995). Second, Columbia International University in Korntal, which primarily serves Evangelical denominations and initiatives, is affiliated with the European Council for Theological Education, a member of the *International Council for Evangelical Theological Education*[40]. Corollary: The *Leadership in Theological Education* program concentrated – not exclusively but mainly – on Evangelical theological education.

Many authors address theological education in the evangelical world, which may inspire Adventist theological educators. I list some of the most inspiring. Unfortunately, it will not be possible to comprehensively display their contributions to the ongoing discussion about theological education in the Christian world. I refer the interested reader to the books of Robert Ferris (1990) *Renewal in Theological Education,* Linda Cannell (2006) *Theological Education Matters: Leadership Education for the Church*, Steven Hardy (2016) *Excellence in Theological Education,* and Bernhard Ott (2016) *Understanding and Developing Theological Education.*

[40] https://icete.info [accessed 205-12-21]

Now that the table is set, I will focus on the main topics from the interviews, present them, and invite both Adventist and non-Adventist thinkers and writers to participate in the discussion.

7.3 Does a Theology Teacher Need a Philosophy of Education?

Imagining a room with a big round table, I would first invite Ellen White and George Knight to take a seat. The first takes a seat due to her foundational role in establishing and inspiring AE from the beginning; the second, because he is the Adventist educator and writer who most extensively elaborates on Ellen White's writings on education. I will invite others to present and share their voices at moments when their contributions are particularly relevant to specific topics.

The fundamental question in the interviews concerned the philosophy of education. When asked what philosophy could have guided the teachers of my interview partners, three hesitated to assume that a conscientious philosophy of education did. “I am not sure about their philosophy.” (P5:56), P3 (:51-54) concluded that “much […] is done […] unconsciously” and “personality plays a strong role and also limitations of personality”, sided by P7 reasoning that “not all of them were equally successful because they were different people with different skills […] that´s what they were, they couldn´t help it (P7:19).” On the other side, P2 (:97-99) e.g., advised that potential theology teachers should not quickly be hired, but a candidate should sketch his philosophy of education first.

To begin the discussion, I would ask the people seated around the table: ***Does a theology professor need a philosophy of education?***

First, I would address Ellen White as the most senior voice in the room. To avoid “a misconception of the true nature and object of education” (White [1913]

2017:44) and the danger that teachers merely lead “their students over the same track that they themselves have trod” (White [1923] 2017a:471), she would refer to the first chapter of her book *Education* (White [1903] 2014:8–12) underlining that true education needs a high aim; its broad scope encompasses the holistic development of the whole person and not only this but also eternal life and needs to prepare the student for joyful service in this world and the world to come. She would emphasise that true education grows from knowledge of God and a friend-like communion with the heavenly Father. Teachers need to understand the nature of fallen man, and the ultimate purpose of education is the same as that of salvation: to restore the image of his creator in man. Addressing the teacher directly, she would stress the necessity of constant self-improvement and urge the teacher to “spare no pains to reach the highest standard of excellence.” All that he desires his pupils to become, “he will himself strive to be.”

George Knight, the Seventh-day Adventist author who wrote most extensively on the philosophy of education, would add that educational goals alone will not suffice. Giving a provocative example, he would state that, at first glance, Adolf Hitler and Ellen White might agree on some goals of education, such as discipline and service (Knight 2002:4–11). However, the foundational philosophical questions could not be answered in any more different ways: How did the universe come into existence and develop? And does it have any purpose? Is there a God? If yes, how does he relate to man? What is the nature of man? What does it mean to exist? What is the purpose of existence? (See chapter 4.2 beginning on page 76).

How educators answer these questions will determine their educational approach: It is of far-reaching importance how a teacher sees a student: As a naked ape (Morris [1967] 2005) or a child of God?

Linking the term “excellence” used by Ellen White and the hint of George Knight to look deeper than good-looking goals, Steven Hardy would speak up. He served as a missionary educator for several decades in Africa, South America, the United Kingdom, and the United States. He is an educational consultant to the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education and the author of numerous articles and books, including *Excellence in Theological Education* (Hardy 2016). He would say that “the point is not simply to achieve a goal: it is to achieve the right goals.” Excellence would involve “quality of character and right processes, as well as having the right objectives“ (:25). Extending the discussions to theological education, Hardy would emphasise that a program could successfully bring “every student to graduation.” However, “if they were trained in the wrong things, so they can´t minister effectively, there´s not much excellence in a program.” (:27). Excellence happens when we …

> […] assess our quality by knowing where we were supposed to be going and why, and then by reviewing the values and processes that helped us by God's grace, to get to where we are now. How well have we responded to the needs of our context, given our goals and purposes? Did we accomplish what we intended? Are we satisfied with the processes we have been using to accomplish our goals? Can we say that what we actually did that which is good? How effectively have we used the resources that God has entrusted to us to do the task that He has given us to do? Knowing the answers to these kinds of questions helps us to affirm whether or not our leadership training institution is excellent, not only in the eyes of God, but before many others (:32).

A sentence by the renowned communication expert Watzlawick (1967:49) “One cannot not communicate” could be reformulated in the realm of (theological) edu-

cation: *a teacher cannot not educate*. Bringing this axiom into connection with educational philosophy, teachers cannot educate without having consciously or unconsciously answered the question of how they perceive their role, how they view the learner, what they understand by education, and what they aim to achieve with it.

P3 (:51-54) reasoned that many aspects of a teacher's educational behaviour can be unconscious and strongly influenced by the teacher´s personality and character. Therefore, the intentional reflection of educational approaches, convictions and practices is of utmost importance. P7 (:31;71) admitted that his approach to students changed completely after he read the principles of education in Ellen White´s writings. As a result, teaching became highly demanding. Rather than lecturing, he became interested in helping his students develop Christian values (:32-34). With his colleagues, he strives to ensure that no student completes the educational process “untouched”, receiving only intellectual knowledge. On the contrary, they seek a positive character change that helps unlock their students' hidden potential (:71) and regularly meet as faculty to reflect on their students' progress. When I asked P2 about his philosophy of education, he opened a document containing his 12-point mission statement (P2:29-31). What he told me demonstrated deep personal reflection on educational principles and an intense study of Ellen White´s writings on education. His counsel seems wise that a new theological teacher should not only be hired too quickly, but those responsible for the screening process should also have an eye on the philosophy of education of the aspirant, asking him, e.g. to read Ellen White´s book on education and write a summary with personal reflection (:97).

Looking again at the figure based on the elements of a philosophy described by Frankena (1965b:7–10), the permeating influence of one´s educational philosophy

across all aspects of the educational process becomes apparent (see also chapter 4.3, pages 78ff).

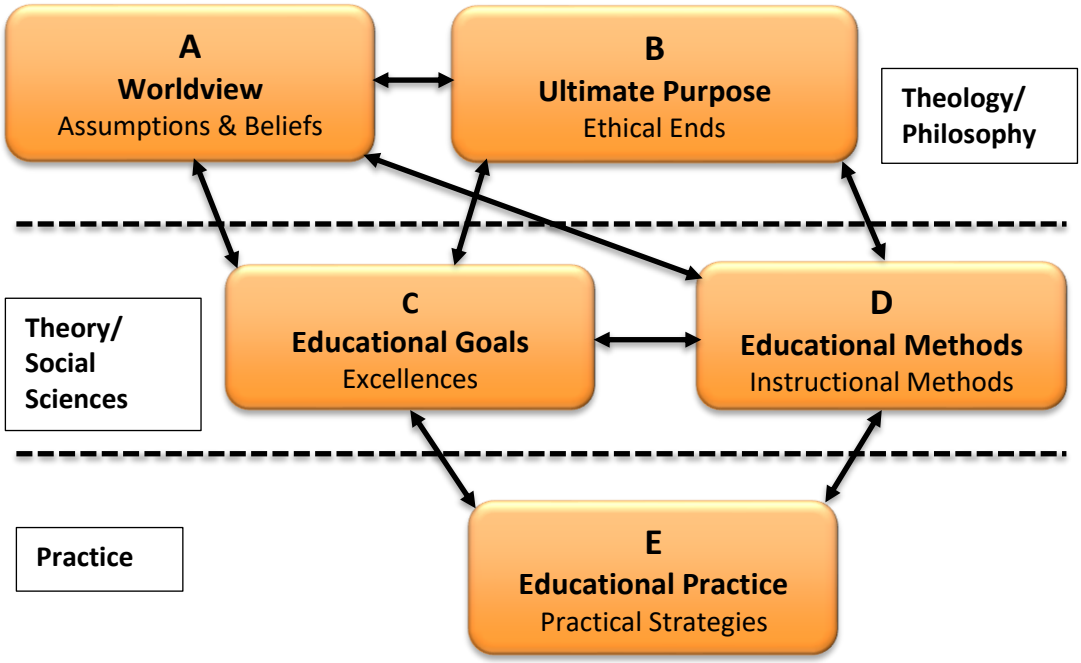


Figure 6: The dynamic of an educational philosophy based on Frankena

If a new teacher's philosophy differs significantly from the institution's, problems are likely to arise. At this point, George Knight (2010c:41) would add that, sadly, many Adventist institutions have "a fragmented and rather loosely connected assortment of topics" because they have copied and pasted "secular patterns to which they add chapel services, religion classes, and a religious ´atmosphere`" (Knight 2010b:23).

Ensuring that a new teacher has a sound philosophy of AE is not enough; the entire institution should intentionally develop its philosophy of education. Two limiting factors to this development emerged in the interviews: the need to comply with governmental requirements and the challenge of leading "a bunch of theologians," as P3 (:185-192) phrased it, which appears to intensify as a school lies further west.

Knowing where all the interview partners came from, I made this observation: that, due to the anonymisation process, it cannot be seen in the interview summaries.

Even developing a shared vision for Adventist education and based on that, a vision for ATE as an institution, is not the end. Some interview partners implied that they were in tension with the higher levels of the school's administration. Conducting the essential work of articulating a shared vision on every level – teacher, faculty, institution, and church administration – would help to achieve clarity and unity.

7.4 The big picture

Addressing again all those gathered around the table and those waiting to take a seat because they had not yet participated in the discussion, I introduce the following question: **Assuming that the recommendation to discuss a shared vision of Adventist theological education and its philosophical roots at all levels of ATE stakeholders is taken up, what should be at the centre of this vision?**

The interviews addressed this topic by asking, „What is the big idea behind your curriculum?" (see chapter 6.2.6, pages 159ff). Surprisingly, half of the deans began with critical remarks about the curriculum's significance and influence, partly because no institution had the opportunity to create a curriculum from scratch but had to deal with tradition and accreditation requirements, some of which were not only church-internal but also governmental. The topic of "curriculum" will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter 7.6.

Another significant concern was about the teachers. No matter how integrated and well thought through the curriculum might be, it would not automatically change students' characters so that they would become like Jesus, as P1 (:59)

phrased it. He emphasised that the educated, spiritual teacher would be more important than the curriculum. Or P2 (:135), who put it rather bluntly, that you must change the teachers if you want to change a school. That five out of ten deans of Adventist theological institutions in Europe appear to have reservations about their colleagues' participation in the “big picture” underscores the need to discuss this big picture regularly and to develop a shared vision of how the philosophy of AE informs ATE. Returning to the question above and putting it into a shorter version, we now start the discussion: **What is theological education about?**

7.4.1 What is the Centre of Theology?

At this moment, I ask Edward Farley to take a seat at our virtual round table. Farley (1929-2014) served for over 30 years as a professor of systematic theology at Vanderbilt University (The Christian Century). He not only taught theology, but also challenged theology in a groundbreaking way, especially in *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education* (Farley [1983] 2001). Following the discussion so far, he would link the question about the core topic of theological education to the underlying question of the correct definition of theology. Farley distinguishes theologia as the actual knowledge of God, which produces a theology of wisdom, from theology as a discipline or science with a body of teaching and specific methods of instruction. Genuine *theologia*, as knowledge *of* God, leads to a theological understanding. Theological understanding means aligning our way of thinking with God´s thoughts.

Ellen White would heartily agree (see a first glimpse of this in Chapter 4.3.2, Section D): In the first chapter of her book Education, she repeatedly emphasises the need to grow in *knowledge of God* (White [1903] 2014:9,11). Her choice of preposi-

tion is intentional: Knowledge *about* God differs from knowledge *of* God. Likewise, knowledge about the Bible can never replace the knowledge *of* the Bible. In other words, a knowledge of the Bible that does not lead to an intimate knowledge of God misses the point. Knowing the Bible and knowing God for Ellen White are essentially the same and much more than a purely intellectual knowledge, but rather a holistic experience growing out of communion with God (:9) :

> In a knowledge of God all true knowledge and real development have their source. Wherever we turn, in the physical, the mental, or the spiritual realm; in whatever we behold, apart from the blight of sin, this knowledge is revealed. Whatever line of investigation we pursue, with a sincere purpose to arrive at truth, we are brought in touch with the unseen, mighty Intelligence that is working in and through all. The mind of man is brought into communion with the mind of God, the finite with the Infinite. The effect of such communion on body and mind and soul is beyond estimate.

Next, I want to invite Miroslav Kis (1942-2016) to the table. For several decades, he was the most prominent Adventist voice in ethics, serving as professor of Christian Ethics and Philosophy at the leading Adventist educational institution, Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan (McChesney 2016). He is the author of one of the rare documents penned by an Adventist writer that critically examines the impact of theology on life. In the article *Theology and Life: Attending to the Gap* (Kis 2007) he starts with a short but concise definition: “Theology happens when the church seeks to know God and his truth” (:123). Theologians, consequently, are to “nurture the church´s identity and safeguard the deposit of truth given to her in trust” and “confront new questions with appropriate answers, new lies with eternal truth, and new challenges with up-to-date and relevant responses.” However, this is not enough to prove theology to be relevant:

> Why *do* we do theology? Is it for the sake of truth alone, for the sake of tradition, or is it also for the sake of enriching and ennobling human character and life?

> What difference *do* we theologians make in growth in grace, in struggle against sin, and in the life and ministry of the church? How indispensable *is* the work of a theologian in making the Word of God relevant and transforming [all emphasis in the original] (:123)?

Kis discerns an emerging gap "between theology and human life, between beliefs and practices". As a reason for this disconnect, he identifies the fundamental problem of human sin, encompassing the breadth of vices and bad habits, and human finiteness in knowing the consequences of our actions or decisions. This, so Kis, divides into three layers: (A) ignorance and knowledge, (B) knowledge and action, and (C) action and character.

Addressing (A), Kis argues that theology is responsible for combating ignorance by providing knowledge. However, she often fails to remain faithful to her vocation to answer the concrete needs of the church and this world by seeking truth and knowledge as ends in themselves, by becoming absorbed in sophisticated theological debates and controversies, and by employing theological jargon remote from everyday life. Knowledge in the Bible, however, so emphasises Kis, although believers are not meant to be "ignorant lunatics," is more than an intellectual or cognitive task; it is, rather, the practical knowledge of God and trust in him as a father. *Knowing* in biblical terms means *doing what one knows*: "The meaning of Scripture is the application," he cites John Frame (1987:67). Theology should not seek to find abstract use in itself but explain the biblical message entirely and clearly, thus providing the base for its application (:125).

Bridging knowledge and action (B) can also be tricky for theology. On the one side, Kis (:126) underlines that it is very appropriate not to hasten to an application of a text that may read something that does not hit its original intention and mean-

ing. On the other hand, the approaches of systematic theology to the Bible have surfaced concepts that tend to further the gulf between theory and practice, “rather than bridging it.” In some Christian traditions´ theology, the sacramental understanding of rituals as effective in themselves (ex opera operato) may lead to an attitude of “feeling less concerned about lifestyle issues. However, sins happen on the level of actions, which need cleansing and forgiveness.” In other traditions, so Kis, “justification overshadows sanctification,” and emphasizing that God has paid the price of our sin may easily make grace “as expensive for him, but cheap to the sinner.” Fear of legalism and the disjunction between God´s law and love may also enlarge the gap between knowledge and action. Theology needs to destroy the unbiblical dichotomy of God´s law and love.

Finally, Kis assigns theology the task of bridging the gap between knowing, doing, and being, or, in other words, knowledge, action, and character (C). Because “*thinking* and *acting* impact the human *being* [italics in the original] […] thinking determines the inner mood and the self-concept” and inspires actions that “impact character because repeated actions form habits and repeated habits create virtues or vices.” (:127). Theologians must avoid looking at the text from an intellectual distance and thus "assuming a superior posture vis-à-vis the text. Understanding implies standing under the Word.”

> As Theologians focus on their work by asking, “What did these words mean?" followed by "What does this mean for us today?”, they cannot limit the definition of the word "means" to a theoretical, cognitive, or epistemological sense. Rather, theologians must discipline themselves and ask, 'What should I do now, given this information? What shall my readers do now, given this truth?'

Having heard Miroslav Kis's thoughts, I believe they must be integrated into educational endeavours. True theology, as is true education, is more than an academic

discipline. Students need to learn how to translate God´s way of thinking and being into every dimension of life. A good example of how this can be done in the context of a theological seminary is given by Perry Shaw (2014). He has written several books and articles on theological education while serving as a theology professor in the Middle East from 1990 to 2019 (Langham Publishing 2025). While teaching at the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary in Lebanon, he led the complete restructuring and redesign of the curriculum. The main endeavour was to move teaching and learning to not only biblical-theological aspects (1), teaching their students to do exegesis of the biblical text, but adding a historical-theological dimension (2), helping the students to do exegesis of the church, and a sociological-cultural perspective (3), training the students to do exegesis of culture, and finally the personal-ministerial (4) area, leading students to do exegesis of self (and others).

In an earlier chapter (4.3.2 starting p. 81), we observed Knight (2010c:42) using the term 'textbook' in connection with the Bible, limiting its scope to encompass not every truth in the world, but rather providing structural frameworks for understanding God´s purpose for humanity and the world. Therefore, this textbook aims to develop in the student a worldview that enables them to understand life and everything in the world from a divine perspective. The idea of the Bible as the primary textbook for intellectual and practical growth is of utmost concern to Ellen White. Repeatedly, she returned to this, pleading (White [1913] 2017:340–341):

> The Holy Scriptures were the essential study in the schools of the prophets, and they should hold the first place in every educational system, for the foundation of all right education is a knowledge of God. Used as a textbook in our schools, the Bible will do for mind and morals what cannot be done by books of science and philosophy. As a book to discipline and strengthen the intellect, to ennoble, purify, and refine the character, it is without a rival.
> God cares for us as intelligent beings, and He has given us His word as a lamp to

> our feet and a light to our path. Its teachings have a vital bearing upon our prosperity in all the relations of life. Even in our temporal affairs it will be a wiser guide than any other counselor. Its divine instruction points the only way to true success. There is no social position, no phase of human experience, for which the study of the Bible is not an essential preparation.

Again, she emphasises the importance of biblical knowledge, which leads to knowledge *of* God. At this point, we hear the warning voice of a German Catholic educator. Klaus Mertes (2009:38–40) categorised two ways of what he calls religious discourse: The *primary discourse* happens in prayer, worship, song, confession, and acts of benevolence; Ellen White would call the latter joyful service. Taking this thought further, it is the primary discourse that leads both the teacher and the student into the presence of God, enabling them to know him and to be modelled after the divine ideal. While the primary discourse is accessible only to those in a relationship with God and who genuinely believe in him, believers and non-believers can participate in the secondary discourse, which discusses God from an "objective" distance, explores worship, and discusses faith. Mertes adds that the primary discourse cannot be graded, which I consider a hint as to why religious and theological education tends to remain within the secure waters of the secondary discourse. Because providing facts about the Bible, about God, about faith, and doctrines is so much easier to handle, to present, and to talk about. Finally, all of this can be readily assessed in graded exams.

While both discourses have their place in education, Mertes warns against expecting the secondary discourse to produce what the primary discourse alone can bring forth: faith and godliness. When the primary discourse is omitted, it can´t be replaced with the secondary discourse.

Looking at the passage above, where Ellen White ([1913] 2017:340–341) describes the results that flow from the proper use of the Bible as a textbook; her reasoning is similar to Mertens' emphasis on the primary discourse.

To enrich the discussion, Miroslav Volf is invited to join. A professor of systematics at Yale University (Yale Center for Faith and Culture 2014), he is not only known as a theological bridge-builder for peace, as seen in his book *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Volf 1996). He is also known for thought-provoking videos, podcasts, books, and articles on the content and task of Theology, like *For the Life of the World: Theology that Makes a Difference* (Volf & Croasmun 2019). In a podcast (Biola University 2019), he states that he views the theologian's role as to …

> … stand in the fissures—the cracks of human life—helping to mend and tie and heal the fractures that characterize that life, directing humanity back to its telos—its animating purpose and ultimate goal.

In the article *Dancing for God: Challenges Facing Theological Education Today,* Volf (2005) singles out “the place of God in doing theology” as the primary challenge in theological education. He reminds theologians that the “main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing. And the main thing for theology is God.” (:199). And the primary goal of theology is “to foster love of God—creator, redeemer, and consummator of the world, the source of all truth, goodness, and beauty.” (:200). Unfortunately, he critically observes, that someone examining theologians and theological schools hardly would guess that their primary concern would be with God. Also, an honest scrutiny of the work for God as done in church administration and church life, in the best case, will reveal that we “make references to God” and claim to be guided by him. Still, “we use God to achieve our own ecclesiastical or political ends

rather than aligning these ends with the purposes of the Master of the Universe." As a cure, he proposes "a revolution of trust and revolution of love", making God the object of our faith and love, not just to profess that God is the object of our trust and love. (:202–203). This appears to be quite close to Ellen White´s concern about knowledge *of* God, which contrasts with mere knowledge *about* God.

I conclude this part of the conversation with a term that emerged in several courses in Columbia International University's doctoral program in Korntal: the *theologically reflective practitioner*. It seems to be a handy paraphrase of *theologia* as the theology of wisdom. *Theological* means the ability to connect with God and to understand his thinking and perspective, while fully aware that we can gain only a small glimpse of them. *Reflective* means bringing our human thoughts about ourselves, others, and the situations we experience into dialogue with God, resulting in practical wisdom – being a practitioner – knowing what to do and making it happen. A biblical example for such a mindset is described in 1 Chr 12:32 NIV, presenting 200 chiefs "who understood the times and knew what Israel had to do."

7.4.2 What Do We Do When We Teach Theology?

Although the elements of AE should have a decisive impact on ATE, tradition still prevailed, P3 (:183) complained, resulting in an "inherited curriculum" (:113) that was inconsistent and disintegrative; teachers tended to work with blinkers and were too focused on their content (:129-133). "We didn´t invent theology", remarked P7 (:59); therefore, curricula followed established patterns. P1 (:100), too, voiced concerns that teachers tended to lose the big picture. However, regarding the further development and reorganisation of the curriculum, he saw very little room for manoeuvre. As being "not the first in this question", they had to follow the

requirements of Andrews University and others (:91). P5 (:147-149) remarked that most theological institutions needed to be accredited by AAA, or even by the government, forcing them into the university model, although a seminary model for real pastoral training could be more beneficial in many cases. Again, his to-the-point description of the problem:

> Somehow, we are sitting between two chairs […]. We want to have the chair of university excellence and recognition. So, we need to have all the courses […] taught in famous theological universities, but […] we are not preparing theologians. We are preparing pastors – seminary part – and want to be practical. […] I think that this kind of tension that exists between these two views is beneficial and fruitful. […] When we talk about constructing a curriculum, these two visions – to be academically excellent – […] are not always easy to conjugate with [that] we want to prepare the pastors as we feel they are needed in the field today.

As the task that is asked of a pastor was so broad, theological institutions needed to prepare the pastors to be experts in rendering God's words relevant for today, providing skills in technical matters, and combining being, doing, and theological training (:161). This made him dream of a seminar like the one Dietrich Bonhoeffer led in Finkenwalde (:211). But it was a fact that the Adventist Accreditation Agency imposed the university style.

These explanations address different areas that the question can be summarised as: What do we do when we teach theology? Setting up the table for this discussion, we note that little Adventist literature addresses theological instruction. Indeed, George Knight could contribute, although he is more of a generalist than an expert in theological education. But interpreting the philosophy of Adventist Education as described by Ellen White, Knight has clearly shown how tight the connection should be between the philosophy of an education and its implementation in any given course of study, inspiring its ultimate goal by providing a coherent collection

of courses (structure of curriculum), concentrating each course on what is worth knowing about the ultimate goals, and finally using methods appropriate to the future context, as well as the person of the student in good pedagogical practice (see more of that in detail in Chapter 4).

We find several experts in theological education writing about these topics, most of whom are outside the Adventist world. Some describe the problem; others work on solutions. Historically, those diagnosing deficiencies in theological education were the first, whereas those providing a cure were more recent. Joszef Szilvasi (1994), then a theology teacher at the Hungarian Adventist Seminary, presented a paper at the International Faith and Learning Seminar about the process of establishing ministerial training in Hungary. Referring to Richard Muller (1991:10–11), at that time professor of historical theology at Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan, he cites one of the critics of the dominant model of theological education:

> Theology suffers from a lack of direction and loss of unity among its subdisciplines. Exegesis and theological system, in particular, do not seem to function as part of a larger interpretative unity. This is, moreover, a problem that is not confined to students. The problem exists also among professionals, trained in the disciplines and charged with the task of teaching theology. We teach at a high level of sophistication, frequently with little or no concern for the way in which our subject contributes to the work of our colleagues or how the work of the entire theological faculty fits together into a greater whole for the service of Christian ministry.

A similar line of critique takes Mark Lamport (2010:48), who served as a graduate professor at Evangelical theological schools both in North America as well as Europe, when he complained that “theological education is neither” explaining that if it were theological, it would consider ”the nature of its mission to be ultimately

Ministerial" and if it were real education, it needed to take "seriously the learner as focal point of the process".

One of the basic concern of those criticizing theological education has to do with the structure of the curriculum, which in many places follows the pattern Friedrich Schleiermacher introduced to save theology´s place in the university, when, in the aftermath of the enlightenment, science became the new self-understanding of universities, as described by Farley ([1983] 2001:83). With the introduction of a threefold pattern (biblical theology, dogmatic theology, historical theology) that with the addition of practical theology eventually evolved into a fourfold one, Schleiermacher introduced an encyclopaedic kind of study as preparation for clerical responsibilities and thus affirmed theology as a valid faculty of the German university (:130). Schleiermacher claimed that theology was a science. However, as Farley criticises, this objective scientific approach didn´t harmonize with the Christian heritage, which imbued theology with piety and the Christian life with a sense of connection to a supernatural God. With the rise of independent sciences within theology, Farley sees it dispersed into a multiplicity of disciplines, thus losing its unity (:88). Farley´s critique of the fourfold pattern, the silo-style of the curriculum, points to the consequential fragmentation that always tends to disperse "into a great many subspecialties which have lost contact with the disciplines of the pattern itself" (:142). In the previous section, we have already seen in which direction Farley points as a cure, appealing for a recovery of *theologia*. He brings to view the ancient Greek concept of culture *paideia, s*eeing education as the cultivation of human beings in *areté* or virtue, a concept prevalent in the writings of the apostle Paul, see also *After you believe: Why Christian character matters* by Wright (2010). Education, as

paideia, was guided by the question: Which type of education leads to *areté*? *Theologia*, as Farley notes, goes beyond the sole focus on areté, seeking "a sapiential knowledge engendered by grace and divine self-disclosure," which cultivates the virtues of character. In contrast to that, the underlying concept of the fourfold pattern can´t do this:

> The view that education (the course of studies) means the exposure to sciences or realms of scholarship tends to promote a technological view of education. Education as mere scholarly learning is not a process affecting and shaping the human under an ideal, but grasping the methods and contents of a plurality of regions of scholarship (Farley [1983] 2001:152–153).

The emphasis on character development that flows from an experimental knowledge of God, as described in AE's philosophy, aligns with Farley's.

At this moment, I imagine Israel Ramos raising his hand. At the time he wrote the article *Religious and Secular Influences on the Religious Development of the Philosophy of Adventist Higher Education* (Ramos 2024), he was the Executive Director of the Centre for Adventist Ministry to Public University Students (CAMPUS) at Michigan State University. He would observe that Ellen White´s philosophy of education was a polemical response to the development of "higher education" in the 19th century.[41] This development, he would describe, was heavily influenced by German pedagogies, philosophies and theologies, promoted by a quartet of Göttingen university graduates (Edward Everett, George Ticknor, Joseph Cogswell, and George Bancroft) at the beginning and Johns Hopkins in the late 19th century. To address the tension between religious fidelity and scientific advancement, three distinct approaches have been adopted in the United States' higher education sector. Cornell

[41] In the first chapter of the book *Education*, she uses *higher education* as a leitmotif to develop her sketch of *true education* (White [1903] 2014:8–12).

University, Harvard, Columbia, and Johns Hopkins opted to keep the two separate. The University of Michigan, a Christian college in its early stages, tried to merge both. Led by William Rainey Harper, a third model was proposed, which tolerated…

> … the tension between faith and science in hopes of ultimate alignment, the University of Chicago envisioned secular education embracing religion by making it credible through a higher critical hermeneutic that explained supernatural narratives in the Bible through scientific methods or disregarded them altogether. For Harper, Christianity was weak and needed science to strengthen it through establishing a research university. Science was to be the savior of the church, and higher criticism was the means of salvation (:5).

Ellen White, as the most influential voice of AE at that time, Ramos continues (:6), believed that Adventism presented a unique and "complete system of truth", with not only "doctrinal clarity but also health, lifestyle, culture, and educational reform." In a certain way, "her philosophy of education was a direct polemic against the culture at the Universities of Chicago and Michigan" (those two were in her closest context) and others in a broader context. For Ellen White, "much of the education given" was "a perversion of the name" and required an Adventist perspective to provide a counterinfluence (White [1903] 2014:174). The siècle-long struggle since the days of Aristotle with the question of what the purpose of education should be – a useful life, virtue, or higher knowledge – she countered by presenting a model of harmonious development of all three:

> Her understanding of the uniqueness of Adventist theology spilled into her philosophy of education, merging the two. Because for Ellen White, education and redemption were one and the same, Adventists did not just have a philosophy, but a conceptual construct for a theology of education.

Ramos concludes with the challenging remark that evidence suggests Adventist church and education administrators, from then to now, have continued to misunderstand her educational perspective, despite their best efforts to comprehend and heed her advice on higher education (Ramos 2024:9).

Introducing Robert Ferris to the circle of persons discussing this topic, we would meet a professor emeritus of Columbia International University, the mother institution of Columbia International University in Korntal. In *Renewal in Theological Education: Strategies for Change*, Ferris (1990) traces the long pursuit of renewal in Evangelical theological education, as it developed at the level of accrediting associations, eventually leading to a milestone paper that is known as the "*ICETE Manifesto*" (International Council for Evangelical Theological Education 2002). In this manifesto on the renewal of Evangelical theological education, the International Council of Evangelical Theological Education, the network of worldwide accrediting associations of Evangelical theological education, addressed the flaws and shortcomings of Evangelical theological education as they were discerned at the moment of the draft of the paper in 1984, reedited in wording in 2002. Twenty years later, the "*ICETE Manifesto II*" was published (International Council for Evangelical Theological Education 2022). The following presents the **"Executive Summary**" of this document (:3–5):

> **Executive Summary**
>
> Building on the rich traditions of Christian theology and theological education, while at the same time aware of the opportunities and challenges ahead of us, we submit in 'bold humility' the following call and commitments. We seek to realize this vision for theological education in dependence upon the creative power of the Spirit, inspired by God's immeasurable love, and devoted to Christ's matchless glory.
>
> **Part 1. Foundations: The purpose and the task of theological education**
>
> *Theological education is called and committed to the inspiration and authority of the Bible, as the normative text of the Christian faith. This shapes the purpose, content and form of theological education.*

1. The purpose: Committed to God and his mission *(missio Dei)*
   Theological education is called and committed to delivering educational programmes that are 'fit for purpose' by serving God's mission (missio Dei).

2. The content: Committed to biblical foundations
   Theological education is called and committed to the Bible as the normative foundation for the articulation of theology.

3. The form: Committed to a biblically rooted pedagogy
   Theological education is called and committed to a pedagogy that reflects a biblical understanding of teaching and learning.

Part 2. Contexts: Theological education in local and global contexts

Theological education is called and committed to theologizing in concrete local contexts and in conversation with the global church. This shapes contexts, conversations and articulations of theological education.

4. Contexts: Doing theology in various contexts
   Theological education is committed to doing theology in specific contexts by addressing the questions, challenges and needs that arise from the various contexts.

5. Conversations: Doing theology in global dialogue and partnership
   Theological education is called and committed to doing theology in conversation with the global church, which embraces different geographic regions, cultures, traditions and denominations.

6. Articulations: Providing theological education that is relevant in ever-changing religious environments
   Theological education is called and committed to articulate theologies that address the burning questions that religious pluralism, religious fundamentalism, and secularism pose to the church.

Part 3. Processes: Designing and delivering teaching/learning processes that are 'fit for purpose'

Theological education is committed to providing formal and non-formal educational opportunities that are 'fit for purpose', enabling people to live a life in accordance with God's vision and mission in church, mission and society. This requires outcome-oriented curricula, integrative learning processes, and appropriate quality assurance provisions.

7. Outcome-oriented curricula: Designing programmes that are 'fit for purpose'
   Theological education is called and committed to designing curricula that are intentionally guided by learning objectives defined in collaboration with stakeholders.

8. Integrative learning: Providing holistic learning processes in community
   Theological education is called and committed to facilitating integrative learning processes that include action and reflection, individuality and community, rationality and spirituality, knowledge and character, wisdom and innovation, educating the entire person.

9. Quality assurance: Becoming learning organizations
   Theological education is called and committed to excellence and continuously assessing the achievement of desired outcomes, thus becoming a learning organization.

Part 4. Scope: Theological education for all spheres of life

Theological education is committed 'to make sense of the whole of life by reference to God', and to enable men and women 'to be agents of transformation, so that the whole of life may reflect God's intentions'. This extends the scope of theological education beyond the realm of the sacred into all spheres of life: the private, the professional and the public.

10. Private sphere: Transforming individual lives and households
    Theological education is called and committed to educating the whole person for the whole life. Therefore, theological education has a spiritual centre, focussing on the transformation of men and women in relation to God in a way that affects their immediate environment.

11. Professional sphere: Providing applied theology for all occupational domains
    Theological education is called and committed to providing theological reflection on relevant topics for men and women in all occupations. This means that theological education must address challenges and issues of the church and beyond the church's internal agenda.

12. Public sphere: Contributing to the 'shalom' of society
    Theological education is called and committed to contributing to the flourishing of life in all spheres of society according to the biblical mandate to 'seek the Shalom of the city' (Jer 29:7).

Part 5. Institutions: Providing leadership and organizational structures that are 'fit for purpose'

Theological education is committed to providing the institutional and organizational structures that enable and promote viable educational opportunities

adapted to the educational goals and formats. This requires leadership with head, hands and heart.

13. Head: Moving into the future through strategic leadership
    Theological education is called and committed to intentionally and strategically providing the best possible educational programmes for the various leadership needs in mission, ministry and marketplace.

14. Hands: Providing suitable and affordable structures through organizational leadership
    Theological education is called and committed to providing the appropriate organizational structures for the realization of its strategic goals.

15. Heart: Shaping institutional cultures that promote learning
    Theological education is called and committed to cultivating organizational culture that promotes learning.

Comparing the two versions of the ICETE Manifesto reveals an interesting shift in tone and structure. The first version of the manifest listed 12 areas of concern in no identifiable order or structure, as I presented in a critical acclaim, along with a German translation of the Manifesto as a partial fulfilment of the course “Theological and Pedagogical Foundations of Theological Education” (Fichtberger 2018). The Manifesto II changed the strong, self-critical, even self-accusing tone of the first version (it contains seven occurrences of the phrase “we are at fault ") to an affirmative one, displaying what evangelical theological education stands for. The number of topics rose to 15, and the structure is clear and logical. In addition to the *Executive Summary*, Manifesto II provides a more detailed explanation of each of the 15 issues.

A similar document within the Adventist world or theological education is absent, as is an open discussion of renewal in Adventist theological education. However, some articles treat different aspects of the Manifesto, some of which we have already mentioned. Due to the Manifesto's broad scope, it addresses several topics

that also emerged in conversations with my interview partners. In the following, I will discuss overlapping themes with prominent Evangelical authors who have addressed different concerns of the Manifesto, and, where such input exists, complement their reflections with those of Adventist authors.

7.5 Contextualisation, Colonisation and "One size fits all"

This chapter addresses problems associated with the global structure and pattern for theological education provided by accrediting associations.

7.5.1 The Need for Contextualisation

> We do not understand theology as content defined once and for all, but as a process of ongoing interaction between the normative Word of God and the concrete contexts and life situations in the sense of 'critical contextualizations'. (International Council for Evangelical Theological Education 2022:12)

This quote is preceded by the idea that theological education is not "ahistorical but rooted in particular cultures and contexts." At the end of the paragraph, theological education is charged with being context-sensitive to different cultural forms of thinking and learning. The final thoughts declare that the dominance of English needs to be overcome, meaning that theology should be articulated in indigenous languages and contextually relevant languages (:13). In the first Manifesto (International Council for Evangelical Theological Education 2002:7) the matter of contextualisation is the heading topic and contains the following confession:

> We are at fault that our curricula so often appear either to have been imported whole from abroad, or to have been handed down unaltered from the past. The selection of courses for the curriculum, and the content of every course in the curriculum, must be specifically suited to the context of service.

Examining the literature on theological education reveals that several authors lament that its objectives, structure, content, and methods often fail to align with real-life experiences. "Are seminaries educating students for Christian ministry in

the world as it is or the world as it was?" asked e.g. Samuel Escobar (2005:143–157), an Evangelical theologian, born in Peru, who served and taught in South and North America as well as in Europe.[42] Instead of a factory-style education concentrating on measurable results, he sees the primary goal of theological education in spiritual formation as a process that takes place inside a person:

> Theological education must become itself a form of ministry, a way of making available the means of grace God has provided for the continuous growth of God´s people toward the goal of becoming Christ-like persons.

More recently, some theological educators, all of whom are engaged in the ICETE network, asked themselves: How do we know we are effective in our work? What is the impact of theological education on the church and society? At an international consultation in Turkey in 2015, they sought to offer a critical response to these fundamental questions. The results were published in the book *Is It Working? Researching Context to Improve Curriculum,* edited by Stuart Brooking (2018a), executive director of Overseas Council Australia, which works to fund and encourage theological education in the Majority World (:151). This book not only publishes some of the papers presented at that consultation, but describes the results of a "research driven curriculum revision" (Brooking 2018b:2). The rationale and method of this revision were developed by Rupen Das, research professor at Tyndale University College and Seminary in Toronto and National Director of the Canadian Bible Society (Brooking 2018a:151). His book, *Connecting Curriculum with Context* (Das 2015), explains the process of assessing the effectiveness of the connection between curriculum and context. In short, he distinguishes between two levels of evaluating the efficacy of theological training: the first focuses on whether learning

[42] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_Escobar

took place, which can be assessed through tests, exams, assignments, and so on, everything that can be captured on the radar screen of grades. In other words, at this level, after the teacher's input, the student's learning process focuses on the immediate output in the seminary. The second level, however, goes beyond that, looking for signs "whether what was learned was actually used" (:42), because "learning is not an end in itself but is for a purpose." To assess whether the stated or unstated purpose of theological education meets the needs of the context, it is necessary to examine the outcomes of theological education, which will be evident in how the graduate applies what has been learned in the seminary. Ultimately, the *impact* of these actions, embodied and materialised in the pastor's behaviour and leadership on the church and society, is the real indicator of an effective theological education curriculum.

Figure 7: From input to impact, inspired by Das

The symbol of the flash interrupting the line in the above figure indicates that educational institutions – not just theological ones – tend to focus on the first three steps of the overall picture. Das's booklet helps bridge this gap. In just 70 pages, he provides all the necessary elements to understand the terms and process and includes some forms for practical use. This book is undoubtedly of great help in any attempt to renew theological education.

In the above mentioned collection of the 2015 ICETE convention the reader finds four actual examples of such attempts to measure the impact of Evangelical theological institutions (Centeno 2018; Dharamraj 2018; Motsi & Heaton 2018; Sena-

nayake 2018) along with some further biblical, theoretical and practical foundations (Wright 2018; Cunningham 2018a; Das 2018; Chrispal 2018), and also thought provoking observations on burning issues in the area of desired change in theological education (Haddad 2018; Mazuk 2018; Cunningham 2018b; Oxenham 2018b; Shaw 2018; Sendek 2018). One article out of the last category catches the attention because of its prudent and wise approach to the topic of assessing the *impact* of theological education: Marvin Oxenham (2018b:121), General Secretary of the European Evangelical Accrediting Association (EEAA) and lecturer in theological education at the London School of Theology, warns to overestimate the ability to assess the impact of theological education on society, because "society" as a field to observe is so vast and the factors influencing its "improving" are so many that it will be challenging to trace back societal changes merely to the impact of theological education. He also warns not to be caught in the trap of "a modernistic view based on a mechanistic ontology of reality operating in the background", assuming that with the right curriculum, "we will always get the right results in society. In a fallen world, it may not be so simple." Although he agrees that assessing only resources, inputs, and outputs is insufficient, evaluating the societal impact could be excessive. He proposes assessing the effects on competencies as a middle ground. On one of the websites he is responsible for[43], he published *A (draft) Manifesto for character and virtue in theological education*, placing them at the heart of the desired competencies of the graduates of theological education (Oxenham 2018a).

[43] https://charactereducation.blog [accessed 2025-12-21]

Adding an Adventist voice to the discussion on the need for contextualisation, Gideon T. NG (1998) speaks up. A good decade before he became the executive secretary of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist church, he wrote one of the rare articles on ATE titled *Adventist Theological Education in the Third Millennium,* in which he addressed the tension between seminary and church constituencies as "not always cordial" (NG 1998:7–8), although the seminary should serve "its constituencies, which in turn support the seminary in partnership." He would cite Donald Messer (1995:51), an American Methodist author and theologian, urging the church and the seminary to stop the blaming game, the church criticising the failure of the seminary to prepare students by teaching the wrong courses and being too theoretical; the seminary firing back by lamenting the poor quality of students coming from the churches and that it was impossible to make silk purses out of sows ´ears. NG (1998:8) advocates a balanced partnership of theory and practice, viewing the dichotomy of the two as concomitant with the tension between the seminary and the church. Inviting another giant of ethics and theology to the round table, Richard Niebuhr ([1956] 1977:128) proposes situating theological education within the activities of the church´s life. NG (1998:9–17) then describes six characteristics of the ideal Seventh-day Adventist seminary:

1. faithful to the Bible and the inspired writings of Ellen G. White
2. focused on mission
3. committed to scholarship
4. relevant to reality
5. sensitive to change
6. dedicated to spirituality

While the first three may be particularly dear to many ATE institutions, the last three may be challenging. NG (1998:13) identifies insulation from the contexts, cultures, and realities in which people live and to which graduates go as one of the greatest enemies of theological education. Facing dramatic changes in the world, the seminary cannot afford to be paralysed by them but must use technological means to advance its mission and adapt its curriculum to new challenges. In the final characteristic, NG (1998:15) adds another element that also fits within Chapter 7.4.1 on the centre of theology, warning theological institutions not to produce graduates with swollen heads but empty hearts.

In closing this chapter, it seems that schools with several churches nearby are advantaged, because they can get their students to participate in church life while studying. Only two of my interview partners had a significant number of churches in the surrounding area of their institution, which allowed them to do so.

7.5.2 Theological Colonisation

A secondary theme in the discussion of contextualisation concerns the question of a modern form of colonisation, a problem that is not foreign to theological education. Enrique Fernández (2014:342), at the time director of contextual studies in an Evangelical distance-learning program in Costa Rica, argues that theological education needs "to avoid the blind adoption of programs and curricula that serve in one context but are foreign to others." With this, we turn to the dominance of Western models of education, which are often used to model educational institutions in the rest of the world, also referred to as the Majority world. We have already identified several enduring elements that trace back to Schleiermacher's time and persist in the present-day German university model. There are undoubtedly many more influ-

ences on theological education in the Western world than the university model alone, as Linda Cannell (2006), an expert in theological education in North American institutions, explains. Speaking of a Western model, maybe generalises something that does not exist in pure form, because there are probably many models of Western education. However, as an expert in church growth, Christian Schwarz (2000:20) points out, the higher the academic exigencies in theological education in a region, the lower the church growth rate. This inverse relationship is both disturbing and challenging. Indeed, it is not only a question of geography but also of vision, structure, content, and educational methods. Andrew Kirk (1997:29), at the time dean of the Department of Mission at Selly Oak College, England, is one of those who, rather harshly, penned the critique that "the Western world poses the greatest contemporary missionary challenge to the church". Twelve years later (Kirk 2009:22), he still writes about the "Western captivity" of theology. But the tradition of doing theology modelled by Western academic institutions is no longer an adequate answer "to the spiritual, intellectual and social challenges of our times." He especially deplores the fact that Western theology often separates theology from practice, tends to specialisation that fosters compartmentalization and because of its high academic requirements it has become also highly professionalised, creating a guild of theologians that – as the Adventist author Kis (2007) could add – often is very remote to every-day´s life and the church.

At this point, we briefly return to Ponniah's (1986) dissertation, which addressed the contextualisation of Seventh-day Adventist theological education in India. He observed that reproducing American curricula, affiliations, and even faculties often had detrimental effects. In some regions of the world, graduates knew more about

the contexts of Western countries whose theological educational patterns were being replicated than about their own country. Some of them became even “more proficient in English than in their native tongue” and were “often prone to emigrate to the USA whenever the opportunity arose”, citing Schantz (1983:690). This kind of “copy and paste” shaped the nature of both the mission and the church, which are perceived as “American”. In Ellen White's writings, Ponniah found several references to the need to contextualise both the church's work and theological education. “Habits and customs are different here from what they are in America”, she wrote in 1886 concerning England. Therefore, a “a different mold” must be “put upon the work here in these kingdoms, and there must be a power from the God of heaven to inspire you to work in a different way” (White [1946] 2014:375). Later (White [1923] 2017b:179) – originally 1895 – she adds:

> The people of every country have their own peculiar, distinctive characteristics, and it is necessary that men should be wise in order that they may know how to adapt themselves to the peculiar ideas of the people, and so introduce the truth that they may do them good. They must be able to understand and meet their wants.

Turning to education, her observations flow into a similar advice (White [1913] 2017:427):

> No exact pattern can be given for the establishment of schools in new fields. The climate, the surroundings, the condition of the country, and the means at hand with which to work must all bear a part in shaping the work.

A little below, she stresses that no school should be taken as a pattern for a new one, even in the same country. Taking all this seriously, Ponniah (1986:148–149) sketched an exciting outline of a contextual construct for Adventist theological education in India.

A similar observation of Western dominance on curriculum, literature and methods is the result of research done by Orwenyo Sammy (2014), who examined the role of theological training in pastoral ministry within the Seventh-day Church through a case study of the theological seminary at the Adventist University of Africa. He also makes a strong appeal for an adapted curriculum that takes into consideration the immediate context of theological education.

The question of contextualisation only recently came into focus for the Seventh-day Adventist Church (Wogu 2019:149). A church that sees its task as preaching the everlasting Gospel to all nations, tribes, tongues, and peoples (see also Chapter 3.4.2) necessarily needs to engage in the art of contextualisation, especially in theological education. During the interviews for this dissertation, the strong influence of Andrews University, the Adventist flagship University, on the rest of the world, especially in theological education, occasionally surfaced. P1 (:91) directly linked the limits to adapt the curriculum of theological education in his country to the stronghold of Andrews University. P4 (:110-112) openly voiced a critique that all theological development depended on Andrews University. As detailed in Chapter 6.2.10, he considered Andrews University unable to deliver the variety of approaches required across different contexts. The common practice in Adventist theological education of viewing the world through the lens of Andrews University would limit other institutions' ability to develop within their respective contexts.

Although there may well be a strong influence of Andrews University worldwide – as noted by some interview partners – the danger of North American colonisation in Europe regarding ATE nevertheless seems rather minor. As European societies have a strong interest in education in general, ATE in Europe sees several influenc-

ing factors not only from its inner ecclesial framework but also in comparison with other denominational models of theological education or even secular education. As it is said that "small is beautiful", ATE in Europe could even claim to be unique and offer theological education that naturally differs from big universities, not only in numbers, but also in style and method.

7.5.3 One Size Fits All?

In addition to the strong influence of Andrews University, the Adventist Accrediting Association also shapes local theological institutions. We have already discussed that all theological institutions seeking accreditation must adopt a university model, regardless of their size or location (see Chapters 6.2.7 and 7.4.2). While writing a paper for the course *Program Evaluation* at Columbia International University in Korntal (Fichtberger 2018, 2022) I looked deeper into the "*Accreditation Handbook of the Adventist Accreditation Association*" (Adventist Accrediting Association 2019). Although it offers two forms – Form A with 12 areas of study and Form B with only 7 – the two aren't targeting different sizes or types of institutions. The shorter one is for "well-established institutions" that have "developed a strong record of delivering quality and focused Seventh-day Adventist education over an extended period" (:I-10). Other criteria for the short form include the continuous improvement of educational and management processes, adequate financial support, a robust governance structure, and a specified percentage of Adventist faculty and students.

Compared with, for example, North American Adventist academic institutions, European Adventist academic institutions are relatively small, with theological departments comprising 6 to 100 students, as explained in Chapter 6.1.1. Typically, theological departments are not the only department and often a relatively small

part of an institution. However, even when all departments are considered together, this does not constitute a large educational institution that easily meets the criteria for the shorter form of accreditation. The larger an institution is, the more likely it is to meet the criteria and the less work it will have with accreditation. This field certainly needs further research.

It should be noted that the critique of accreditation requirements offered here is not a rejection of academic standards as such. As outlined in chapter 1.8, the concern is rather to advocate for a model that is academically rigorous *and* practically integrative — along the lines of the University of Applied Sciences — rather than one that equates academic quality exclusively with theoretical cognitive output.

7.6 Special Challenges for Deans

In the context of external influence and the challenge of being part of small institutions, we have already investigated two areas of Chapter 6.2.10, where unexpected issues surfaced during the interviews. In the next two subchapters, we will briefly cover the other topics and the challenge of faculty development, as explained in Chapter 6.2.9.

7.6.1 Where Do Teachers Learn to Teach?

Three of my interview partners complained – without being asked – that they never had any formal training in teaching. Could it be that Colvin´s (1986:14) observation in 1987 that there was only a minimum of work in teacher education is still true today, especially in theological education? Where and how do theological teachers learn the craft of teaching? As most theology students are already in their twenties, teachers need to understand how adults learn. And considering the ongoing discussion in the larger academic educational world about the need to teach competen-

cies, to move from lecturing to training, from being a “sage on the stage to a guide on the side” (see Fichtberger Juni 2016) – how can all of this be implemented in theological education? Maybe large and well-funded universities can afford to train their teachers in all this; the small size of European theological institutions, however, often resembles a fight for survival with no time to reflect on the philosophy of education and its practical implications. As described in Chapter 4.3.1, these questions are closely connected to the teacher's philosophy of education, as articulated in Frankena´s model of philosophy. Again, we hear the voice of Steven Hardy (2016:51–66) asking (:53):

> Whose theological training program or institution is it? The fundamental question of governance relates to issues of ownership. Whose school is this? With whom do we share our concerns and tell our stories? Who makes the rules that we need to follow? And who helps us to make sure that we continue to be and do what was intended?

He specifies (:55): „The real owners of a leadership training institution are those who benefit from its program.“ The question of ownership is not about power or authority over the institution, but about responsibility for it. Unfortunately, some of my interview partners described the responsible conferences or unions as being a source of trouble rather than help (P5:227-231; P6:13), another felt rather lonely without receiving constructive critique (P3:139), and another one only accepted being dean because otherwise the administration would have been in a challenging situation (P9:105).

Comparing my own experiences as a church administrator with similar situations in other countries, it seems that church administrators are often challenged to help theological institutions with financial matters. Administrators also complain about the quality of graduates entering the churches and criticise the academic process

for failing to deliver better results. Even if they feel a sense of ownership, they lack the knowledge to establish a theological institution or train teachers. Accrediting is strongly developed in the Adventist academic world, but AAA does not create or train teachers. Currently, I discern no entity responsible for preparing and training theology teachers in Europe´s Adventist institutions in the terms above.

7.6.2 It´s Hard to Lead a Bunch of Theologians

It could be that some administrators face the same challenge as one of the deans laconically described (P3:185-192):

> Because to lead a bunch of theologians is really, really difficult. Theologians, I love them all. We are all brothers, well, friends with most [of them, but] academic theologians, they are the kind of people who are very convinced of their methods, their perspectives, and in the end, the position they hold. Now, to work with these kinds of people is obviously not so easy. They are specialists in their line.

With the size of the faculty being tiny, he felt himself to be ´primus inter pares`; however, most of the time, he found himself in the role of a secretary rather than a leader. All this contributed to finding relief in the prospect that someone else would soon take over the burden of being dean. P2 (:124) also had trouble guiding his colleagues; P5 (:221), in the same vein, could only wait for some of them to retire. These examples illustrate that dealing with teachers is not easy. Perhaps it´s a significant danger for a teacher to fall into the pit of becoming too accustomed to always "explaining the world" to others. And indeed, they are experts and specialists. If deans face such challenges, administrators at a higher level will have even greater difficulty influencing or developing a theological institution, as they are neither experts in theological realms nor trained to work with teachers. Even after Hardy´s conclusion about who the institution's real owner is, hard facts complicate change and development, if not altogether make them unlikely. Regarding the structure of

the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, the division level is the best place to initiate initiatives to develop theological institutions and their staff.

7.7 Different Perspectives on the Curriculum

As the primary supervisor of this dissertation is an expert in the realm of development of theological education, the virtual round table discussion between authors through citations in their written work occasionally blends with real-life debate. While discussing the first draft of the *Judge* section, Bernhard Ott drew my attention to the term “curriculum,” which appeared to be understood in a particular way by my interview partners.

After being asked, „What is the big idea behind your curriculum?” (see chapter 6.2.6, pages 159ff), half of the deans began with critical remarks about the curriculum's significance and influence – thus creating a certain distance between the written description of the courses and actual classroom life. It appears they understood the term "curriculum" in this question only as a teaching plan or a list of courses. Bernhard Ott (2016:283–284), in *Understanding and Developing Theological Education*, pleads for a wider understanding of the term. Etymologically, it is derived from the Latin verb *currere,* meaning running, racing, cycling or laps. Instead of focusing on merely the different steps of the cycle of a study …

> […] it may refer to the structure of an entire course of study, an entire educational path. In this wider sense, curriculum refers not only to a list of courses offered, but to all the various components that go into making a structured educational experience. This includes: learning goals, content, methods, situations, strategies, and evaluation. […] It includes all measures undertaken during the course of an educational experience to achieve the educational goals.

In the German edition of Wikipedia, a curriculum is defined as a plan of a teaching program *based on a theory of teaching and learning* (Wikipedia 2025). Perry Shaw

(2014), author of *Transforming Theological Education - A Practical Handbook for Integrative Learning* would join our virtual exchange and explain that he would add a framework to the curriculum of a theological institution taking into view the needs of the churches, the challenges coming from culture and context, and a clear vision of the ideal graduate who will be able to have an impact on church and context. Also, the teacher's personality and educational approach need to be part of the whole picture. The making of a curriculum, therefore, is a complex process that aims to move beyond merely listing courses divided into silos of intellectual disciplines. It seeks to create an integrative vision of learning that prepares future leaders to advance the kingdom of God in their specific context.

Let us take a new look at the Frankena model of Philosophy:

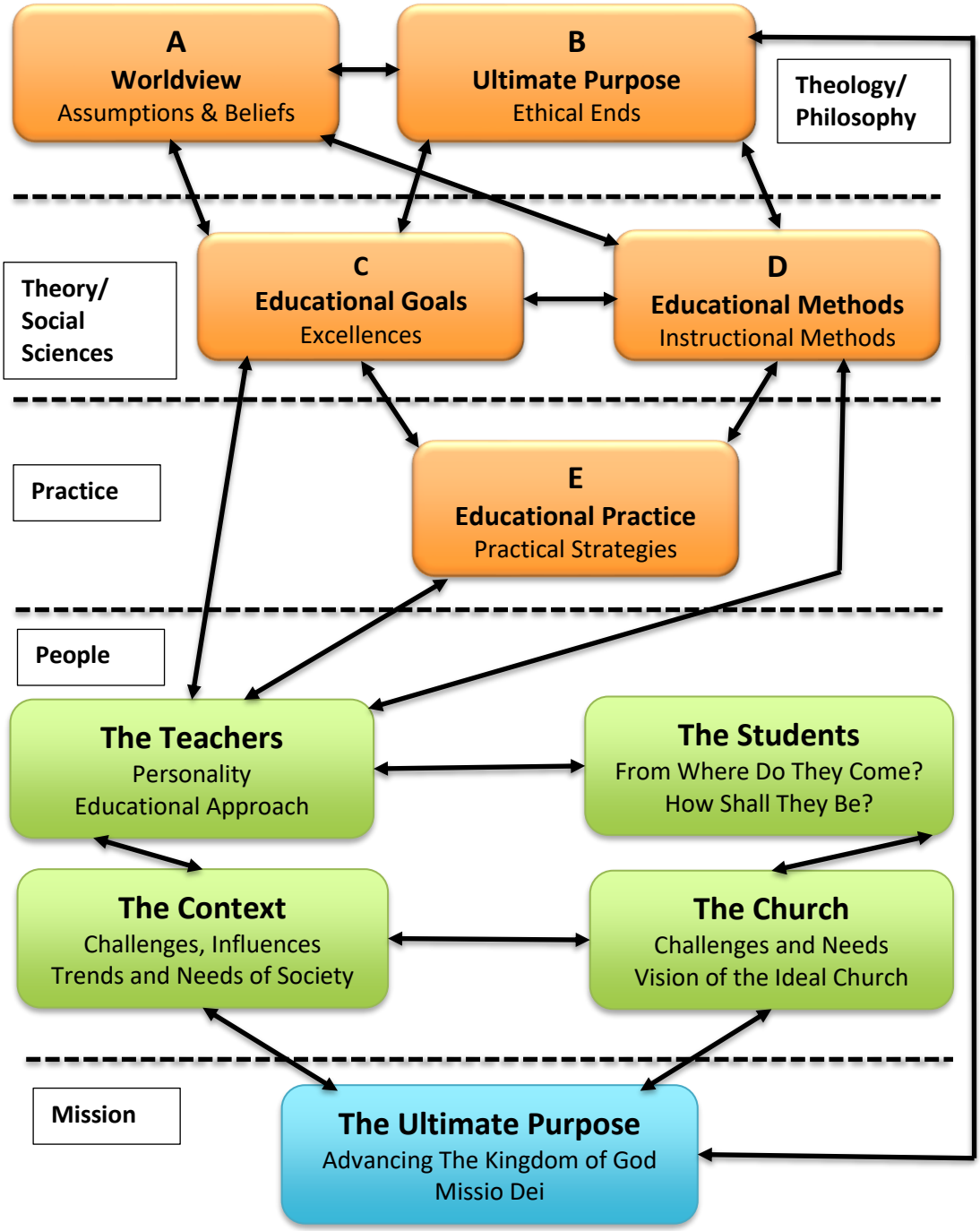


Figure 8: An integrative view of the curriculum

To illustrate the paramount picture of a curriculum and the intertwined dynamics of all its elements, more elements were added to the model, the green fields and the blue one, to highlight the pivotal importance of the teacher in this process. When some of the interview partners voiced concerns that the best curriculum (as a list of

courses) doesn´t help when teachers aren't in tune with it, they touched on a grave and important matter. Given the holistic, paramount view of an integrative curriculum described above, which is more than a list of courses, teachers are the most vital component of a comprehensive curriculum because they bring it to life. By admitting that they observed a discrepancy between what was written on paper and what was done in class, the deans touched on a very sensible point: When the written, explicit curriculum, values, and goals of an institution fade into the background of a school's everyday life, the *hidden* curriculum takes over. Perry Shaw (2014:81) put it that way: “the hidden curriculum overrides the explicit curriculum”. When the two conflict, “the message learned will likely be embedded within the hidden curriculum, not that taught in the explicit curriculum.” Sadly, he would add, the hidden curriculum often trains students oppositely to that which is taught in the explicit curriculum and written in purpose statements.

Shaw (2014:84) identifies several factors that nurture hidden curricula: a flawed conception of knowledge as merely an accumulation of information and of learning as conforming to teachers' expectations. Citing Manfred Kohl, founder of World Vision Germany, pastor, theologian and Ambassador for Overseas Council International, an organisation that assists theological institutions, primarily in the non-Western world, he would lament another problem: “90% of what we do in the seminary is looking backwards” (Kohl 2010). Shaw would invite Graham Standish (2005:12), the Executive Director of Samaritan Counselling, Guidance, and Consulting in Sewickley, Pennsylvania, and the author of numerous books, to the conversation. He would describe his experience while trying to get spiritual formation in a theological seminary: “The problem was that my seminary studies emphasized stud-

ying and speculating about God." Once, another pastor confided to him that he "came out of seminary knowing how to exegete a passage", but with "no idea how to help a person struggling to find a sense of purpose or to feel God's love." Instead of limiting "critical thinking" to "the comparison and analysis of academic texts", Shaw (2014:84) suggests, as a remedy for the problem of an overly academic approach to ministry, the concept of "the reflective practitioner" developed by Donald Schön (2016). A theological institution should lead the students to be *theological reflective practitioners*", by training "them to analyse, synthesise and evaluate theoretical academic material in the light of practical life situations, and vice versa" (Shaw 2014:84).

Shaw (:85) warns against other pitfalls the hidden curriculum could provoke: "a knowledge-centred arrogance in students" as if only they, as the truly educated, could rightly understand the Scriptures, consequently "viewing the simple faith of many believers with disdain." The hidden curriculum could destroy the priesthood of all believers by creating a new priestly hierarchy with "academics at the top, followed by the graduates, and with the average Christian in need of the sacerdotal interpretative work of others."

The firm control of course syllabi by the professors is another concern (:86), which limits or even hinders creativity. Predetermined problems would be dealt with artificially within a ritual-like, defined setting. Because many curricula and syllabi didn´t connect with students' lives, graduates would bring the same life-detached style into congregations. In addition to that, too many seminaries would take a "one size fits all" approach to theological education, with so little flexibility in teaching styles or student choice within the program and course requirements, ig-

noring the individuality of students and their God-given talents and gifts, by forcing them into a uniformity that, in the long run, fits nobody.

As in many secular schools, so Shaw (:87) critically discerns another poisonous herb of the hidden curriculum, also theological seminaries tend to "throw individuals into academic competition with one another"; most assignments would be done solitary and individually, leading to interpersonal distance instead of closeness; grading would foster a hierarchy of worth, nurture competition and an ungodly attitude – to which we could add that it is in contradiction to biblical virtues and a discipleship spirit.

Shaw ends his thorough dissection of the hidden curriculum with a powerful but often neglected influence:

> One of the most subtle but influential elements of the hidden curriculum is the culture and structure of the school as a whole. The relationship between the administration, the faculty, the staff and the students communicates potent messages about the nature of Christian leadership and community. Where administrators are distant and authoritarian, students will follow this model, ignoring any classroom instruction about the importance of team leadership. If unresolved interpersonal conflicts exist within the school, students will not take seriously lessons that urge the centrality of reconciliation and peacemaking in the leadership of Christian faith communities. Where "important" members of faculty do minimal preparation and teach the same material year after year, students quickly pick up the message that once you have reached a position of status, you no longer need to grow as a leader.

In addition to the strong influence of the hidden curriculum, Shaw also points to the "null curriculum". Elliot Eisner (1933-2014), a giant of education and curriculum reform at the Standford Graduate School of Education [44], explained in detail the seemingly paradoxical need to explore a curriculum that – due to its absence – doesn´t exist (Eisner 1994:97–107), however, "what schools do not teach may be as im-

[44] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elliot_Eisner

portant as what they do teach" (:97). Applying Eisner´s reflections on theological education, Shaw (2014:88–89) recognizes that no school can teach everything, however:

> … the material we include or exclude, the topics that are emphasized or underplayed" – all this communicates a powerful message to our students as to what is or is not important for Christian life and ministry. For example, in most seminaries the priority is given to biblical, theological and historical studies, while courses addressing spiritual formation and prayer are absent from the curricula, or at best play only a minor role, as though these are peripheral issues unworthy of serious theological reflection and careful training.

The topic of the hidden curriculum would catch the attention of Artur Stele (1998), then dean and president of the Russian Zaokski Adventist Theological Seminary, and later, for many years, vice president at the world headquarters of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist.[45] In an article titled *The hidden curriculum in an Adventist College: The case of the Zaokski Seminary,* he tells the story of a visit by Kenneth Howkins, one of the "prominent Protestant scholars of England" (:336) to Zaokski Seminary. After several weeks there, the visitor was asked for his impression of the Seminary. Stele received a rather lengthy response with commendations and recommendations; the latter focused exclusively on the concern about the hidden curriculum that Howkins perceived while visiting this Adventist institution. This led to a thorough process of reflection and renewal of the values that thrive in everyday life at Zaokski Seminary. To the visitor, the seminary's stated values appeared inconsistent with those hidden beneath the surface. This feedback from the external person initiated an enriching process for this Adventist theological institution. It seems to be of great help to engage in dialogue with people beyond denomina-

[45] https://gc.adventist.org/about-us/governance/leadership [accessed 2025-21-21]

tional boundaries. If this is not possible in person, it can be accomplished by reading their valuable contributions to theological education.

This chapter focused mainly, and in a critical tone, on the analysis of perspectives on the curriculum. The leading voice in the above discussion, Perry Shaw, in the book *Transforming Theological Education,* not only deplores problems, but as promised in the subtitle – *A Practical Handbook for Integrative Learning* – provides a hands-on manual and tutorial with many practical examples and easy-to-follow guidance on how to create an integrative curriculum.

Much of this was considered when a team of theological teachers and administrators from across the Inter-European Division designed a new master´s program, "Pastoral Ministry," which began in 2022. The process of the genesis of this curriculum and the written part is in Appendix 1: The Genesis of a Curriculum, p. 249ff.

7.8 Conclusion

We conclude Chapter 7, the second step of the *See – Judge – Act* triad, with the observation that it could address only some of the many topics that emerged during the interviews.

At the beginning, I reflected on my role as a researcher and questioned the claim that could be inferred from the dissertation's title: that it sought to generalise about Adventist theological education in Europe. And I gave critical appreciation to the interview partners.

Then, rather than discussing every detail of the interviews, it focused on foundational questions, such as the importance of reflecting thoroughly on one's institutional and personal philosophy of education. We sought the big picture, asking about the centre of theology and what teachers do when teaching theology. We ex-

amined the two versions of the remarkable ICETE Manifesto, which sketch a vision for evangelical theological education. We examined one of its topics, namely, the influence of Andrews University on theological education, which also arose during the interviews. The next part addressed two challenges some of the interview partners expressed: first, that there had been no training helping them to become teachers; second, that in the context of small institutions, it seems to be hard “to lead a bunch of theologians”, revealing that there is also no formation for deans in leadership. Finally, we reflected on the concept of an integrative curriculum, while acknowledging the differences among the expressed, hidden, and null curricula.

In all this, as we sat around a virtual table, contributors from various times, places, and denominations were invited to share their thoughts, observations, practices, and convictions.

8 *Act*: Commendations and Recommendations

The attentive observer may have noticed that, in the *judge* section, summaries of the various perspectives on the discussions, with practical outlooks, were missing. This is intentional and follows the logic of the three steps: *See – Judge – Act*, reserving practical implications to the third part of the triad: *Act*. Consequently, I will now present practical implications and recommendations, starting with commendations for my interview partners.

As I limit citations in this chapter to short echoes to passages in earlier chapters of this dissertation, I will refrain from pointing to the exact source again.

8.1 Commendations for the Deans of Adventist Theological Institutions

The comparison between Chapter 6 (Research Results – The Voice of the Deans) and Chapter 4 (A Philosophy of Seventh-Day Adventist Education) reveals a remarkable consistency between the philosophical ideals of Adventist Education (AE) and the articulated vision of the interviewed deans.

Chapter 4 established the comprehensive philosophical framework of AE (based on the Bible and Ellen White's writings) using the Frankena model (Worldview, Ultimate Purpose, Educational Goals, Methods, and Practice). The ultimate purpose encompasses restoring the image of God in man, promoting holistic development, and preparing individuals for joyful service.

The commendations below highlight the most interesting, inspiring, and remarkable aspects of the deans' reflections, particularly those that align with the ideals articulated in the philosophical foundations of AE.

8.1.1 Unified Commitment to Foundational AE Philosophy

I highly commend the deans for articulating a vision of theological education that strongly aligns with the **Ultimate Purpose and Higher Educational Goals** defined in the philosophy of AE:

HOLISTIC APPROACH

Nine out of ten deans identified **holistic education** as a salient element of AE. This directly reflects the core philosophical goal to promote the harmonious development of physical, mental, and spiritual powers. Some institutions operationalise this by structuring courses around "to know, to be, and to know to do," ensuring that the spiritual dimension is the highest criterion.

REDEMPTIVE FOCUS

Deans emphasised that theological education should centre on **Christ, salvation, and sanctification**. This commitment mirrors the philosophical assertion that the ultimate object of education and the work of redemption are one: **to restore in man the image of his Maker**. As one dean stated, education "is a part of our salvation, of sanctification".

SERVICE AS LEARNING OUTCOME

Multiple deans stressed that **learning to serve** ("to serve God and the people in this life and also in the future life") is the "whole purpose of studying theology anyway" This underscores the fulfilment of the AE goal of preparing for **joyful service.**

8.1.2 Prioritisation of Character and Personal Transformation

It is highly inspiring that the deans placed the student's personal development and spiritual integrity above mere academic achievement, focusing on the quality of the graduate's *being*.

FOCUS ON THE STUDENT'S "BEING"

Deans emphasised that the core goal is "to see positive change in their **character and personality**" and to foster students' spiritual transformation. One dean noted that character building is paramount, especially for future pastors, since they should "become Christians of heart". This commitment to *being* reflects the axiological foundations of AE, where the development of strong character, integrity, and self-control is an essential goal.

PERSONALISED APPROACH

Recognising the student as an "individual" on a lifelong journey, deans described taking a personal interest in the student, diagnosing strengths and weaknesses, and actively trying to "unlock their hidden potential". This individualised development is a key principle of true education.

8.1.3 Advocating for Independent, Critical Thinking

The deans demonstrated remarkable dedication to fostering intellectual maturity that aligns precisely with a key philosophical dictum of AE (Educational Goals C).

PRODUCING THINKERS, NOT REFLECTORS

Deans actively sought to train students to be **"independent thinkers"**, challenging them to question and criticise. This ambition directly fulfils the vision "to train the youth to be **thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought**".

THE CLASSROOM AS A LABORATORY

One dean described the classroom as a **"laboratory"** in which students are invited to experiment and to learn to formulate arguments, training them to analyse and solve complex theological issues. This methodology moves beyond passive learning and rote memorisation, promoting the use of reasoning powers.

8.1.4 Recognition of the Teacher as the Essential Curriculum

It is profound that the deans recognised the teaching faculty, rather than the printed curriculum, as the most critical factor in achieving philosophical goals (Educational Practice E).

MODELLING INTEGRITY

Deans understood that as a teacher, **“I teach more with what I am than what I say**". Teachers are called to be compelling examples of the transforming power of the gospel and model sincerity and enthusiasm. This echoes the principle that the teacher must model the character they wish their students to attain.

TEACHING AS AN ADVENTURE

Describing the teacher's role as being a **"companion on an adventure" and a co-learner** ("I was a learner as much as they were") demonstrates an inspiring humility and dedication to collaborative intellectual and spiritual exploration, essential characteristics of the guiding style advocated by the philosophy of AE.

8.1.5 Intentionality Regarding Practical Relevance

The deans' focus on linking academic study to practical, real-world ministry demonstrates a crucial step toward achieving the mission-oriented outcome.

FIELD-BASED EXPERIENCE

Two institutions with proximity to churches actively engaged students in field-based, supervised training from their first year, enabling them to gain a "realistic perspective on ministry".

CONTEXTUAL RELEVANCE:

Another dean insisted on preparing pastors who were equipped to face contemporary issues like abuse, (crisis-)pregnancy, and marriage challenges. This focus on becoming **theologically reflective practitioners** who address present-day needs is essential for practical ministerial training.

8.1.6 Conclusion

Overall, the deans' responses indicate that despite facing significant internal and external challenges (e.g., lack of time for curriculum reflection, difficulty leading specialised theologians, and dealing with conflicting accreditation/administration demands), they actively strive to maintain and implement a sophisticated and holistic vision of theological education rooted in Adventist philosophical principles. This conscious striving for congruence is genuinely remarkable and worthy of commendation.

Again, I point to a disclaimer we touched on above: This orchestrated song of commendations weaves the voices of *all* the deans into a choir. In some passages, most were singing; in others, they reserved a solo for only one among them. Only by bringing together all their voices can the full spectrum of AE be addressed. However, as the interviews were conducted one-to-one, it was my role as a researcher to combine the audio tracks into a whole, much like a director. Had there been a

chance to bring them all together, the contributions of the others would probably have been inspiring for every single one of them, too.

8.2 Recommendations to Different Stakeholders of ATE

Let us turn from the visionary and harmonious sound of Adventist educational philosophy, carried by lofty ideals, to the dean´s everyday life, full of challenges and construction sites, as is also apparent in the interviews.

The following recommendations address these topics concisely and offer possible approaches. They are derived from the critical analysis and discussion in Chapter 7 *Judge*, and from the curriculum design rationale in Appendix 1. This chapter will be the climax of this dissertation. It aims to inspire processes that will harmonise the structure, content, and methodology of ATE more closely with the philosophy of AE. Such processes will consider what is already good, conduct an honest examination of what can be improved, and strive for a bold renewal and development of ATE so that it can better serve its mission. The recommendations encompass stakeholders for ATE at all levels and are tailored to the respective level of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. To facilitate quick understanding of individual recommendations, detailed descriptions in lengthy paragraphs have been avoided in favour of a tabular presentation.

8.3 Practical Recommendations for Adventist Theological Education

8.3.1 Overarching Level: Global Church Administration (GC/DIVISION/IBMTE/AAA)

Recommendations at this level address systemic issues of vision, governance, resources, and accreditation for ATE.

Recommendation	Supporting Rationale and Action
Develop a Foundational Philosophy Document (ATE Manifesto)	Initiate an earnest, self-critical, and public discussion regarding the why, what, and how of ATE to counteract the current void of published debate on the subject. One outcome of this discussion could be a **foundational document** outlining a vision for ATE, intentionally aligning its objectives, structure, content, and methodology with the Philosophy of AE, similar to the ICETE Manifesto II. Cf. Chapter 7.4.2
Clarify and Strengthen AAA Congruence Criteria	The Adventist Accrediting Association (AAA) shall explicitly provide a **set of criteria** to help institutions judge the congruence between the philosophy of AE and ATE. The Handbook currently lacks sufficient detail on how AE should be implemented in ATE beyond hints about spiritual development. Clear measures are needed to determine if the program is "Fit for purpose". Cf. Chapter 1.2
Evaluate Impact (Beyond Output)	Accreditation (AAA/IBMTE) shall require institutions to evaluate their long-term **impact** (on the church and society) and not merely their immediate output (grades/graduation). Cf. Chapter 7.5.1
Mandate Contextualisation	Address the problem of contextualisation by limiting the dominance of a single model (e.g. Andrews University) by encouraging regional entities (including administrators and experienced pastors) to adapt ATE objectives, structure, content, and methods to the **specific habits, needs and challenges** of their region. Cf. Chapter 7.5.1
Strategically Bridge University and Seminary Models	Intentionally address the inherent tension between the need for academic excellence (University Model) and holistic pastoral formation (Seminary Model). Cf. Chapter 7.4.2 True ATE that aims to form theologically reflective, hands-on pastors must integrate the **higher educational goals** of AE (to know God, restore God's image, holistic development, joyful service) across all subjects. Various approaches to pastoral formation shall be possible. Cf. Chapter Cf. Chapter 7.4.1; 4.3.2
Add Alternatives to the Existing One-size-fits-all Accreditation Handbook	An **adapted accreditation process** shall be developed to meet the needs of institutions whose pastoral formation differs from the university model. Small theological institutions shall not be compelled to adopt the university model through a one-size-fits-all accreditation system. Even if a small institution adopts a university model, accreditation shall consider its size and provide an adapted version of the accreditation process and handbook to prevent it from being suffocated by excessive paperwork or requirements. For example, the rapidly growing

Recommendation	Supporting Rationale and Action
	digitalisation of literature should be taken into account, and the requirements for large physical libraries reconsidered. Cf. Chapter 7.5.3
Invest in Dedicated Faculty and Dean Formation	Establish a specific entity or program responsible for the preparation and **professional training of theology teachers** in educational philosophy, pedagogy, and organisation. Furthermore, provide **leadership training** for deans, recognising that they often feel unqualified or overwhelmed by administrative demands and the challenge of leading a team of academic theologians. Cf. Chapter 7.5.3
Foster Constructive Partnership with Educational Institutions	Administrators (Conference/Union level) shall e**ngage in dialogue** with seminaries to define a shared vision. They shall serve as a source of help and provide constructive critique. Cf. Chapter 6.2.10

Table 5: Recommendations for the overarching level: Global Church Administration (GC/EUD/IBMTE/AAA)

8.3.2 Institutional Level: Seminary/Faculty Leadership

Recommendations at this level focus on implementing strategic changes in curriculum, institutional culture, and faculty expectations.

Recommendation	Supporting Rationale and Action
Adopt an Integrative, Outcome-Oriented Curriculum Design	Move decisively away from the fragmented, "silo-style" curriculum that often leads to disintegration. Design curricula using **backwards design**, starting with the desired **impact** on the church and society. The structure must answer fundamental questions: **What is the ideal church? What are the contextual challenges? What does the ideal graduate know, how shall he be, what can he do?** Cf. Chapter 11
Mandate and Model Philosophical Self-Reflection	The dean shall actively foster a **shared vision** of AE application among faculty members. Institutes shall intentionally reflect on processes and encourage professors to document their **personal philosophy of education**, ensuring that teaching practices align with AE principles and move beyond inherited curricula. Cf. Chapter 7.3
Guard Against the Hidden Curriculum	Be acutely aware that the **hidden curriculum** (the institutional culture and atmosphere) often overrides the explicit curriculum. Ensure the school's culture, including faculty and administrative relationships, models the values of service and reconciliation. Unresolved interpersonal conflicts among staff will undermine classroom instruction. Cf. Chapter 7.7
Integrate Practical Experience from Year One	Ensure the curriculum moves beyond mere *theory about practice*. Utilise **field-based, supervised theological education** and internships that

Recommendation	Supporting Rationale and Action
	begin early. This helps students connect theory (theoria) with practice (praxis), providing a **realistic perspective** on ministry. Cf. Chapter 11.1

Table 6: Recommendations for the institutional level: Seminary/Faculty Leadership

8.3.3 Leadership Level: Deans and Campus Administrators

Recommendations at this level focus on the dean's specific challenges in management, faculty relations, and institutional development.

Recommendation	Supporting Rationale and Action
Prioritise Strategic Leadership Over Administration	Deans shall have the opportunity and strive to manage their workload strategically by delegating administrative tasks ("papyrology") where possible and reducing their teaching load. **Deans shall strive to be leaders, not merely "secretaries" or chief administrators** who are overwhelmed by administrative demands. Cf. Chapter7.6.2
Model Philosophical Self-Reflection and Vision	The dean shall consciously and constantly model a **reflective practice** by articulating and reviewing the institution's commitment to AE. This modelling is vital, as educational success is rooted in the teacher's personal understanding and character. Cf. Chapter 7.3;7.4.1; 7.4.2
Implement Outcome and Impact Assessment	Proactively seek **external feedback** (impact assessment) from the field and alumni to calibrate the curriculum, ensuring the program is "fit for purpose" for current ministry needs. Use tools such as alumni questionnaires to gather feedback on whether learning translates into effective outcomes in practice. Cf. Chapter 7.5.1

Table 7: Leadership Level: Deans and Campus Administrators

8.3.4 Teacher/Faculty Level: Individual Faculty Member

Recommendations at this level focus on the professor's role, instructional methods, and their engagement with students.

Recommendation	Supporting Rationale and Action
Embody the Teaching Philosophy (Teacher as Example)	Recognise that as a teacher, **"I teach more with what I am than what I say"**. The teacher's conduct, character, sincerity, and enthusiasm are paramount, demonstrating the transforming power of the Gospel. Teachers are called to model a character of humble **self-forgetfulness**. Cf. Chapter 7.3;7.4.1; 7.4.2; 7.6.1
Shift Focus to Primary Discourse: Knowledge *of* God	Faculty should view students as individuals being transformed and train them to be **theologically reflective practitioners**, analysing theoretical material (theoria) in light of practical life situations (praxis) to foster responsible life practices. Cf. Chapter 7.4.1

Recommendation	Supporting Rationale and Action
Foster Critical, Independent Thinking & Moral Character	Challenge students to be **"thinkers and not mere reflectors of other men's thoughts"**. Use instructional methods that provoke questioning and debate, as well as practical exercises to cultivate breadth of mind, clearness of thought, and courage of convictions. Cf. Chapter 7.7
Employ Pedagogical Excellence and Constructive Alignment	Move away from lectures. Taking andragogy seriously, the student should be active even in class, with the teacher serving as a guide on the side rather than a sage on the stage. Teachers shall have a **clear plan** before teaching, ensuring that learning outcomes are clear and that content and methods are aligned to achieve those outcomes (constructive alignment). Teachers may need assistance in adapting their teaching approach. This help could come from higher levels (AAA, BMTE, Division). Cf. Chapter 11.2

Table 8: Leadership Level: Teachers and Faculty Members

We could describe the overall task of ATE not as an academic library where students merely collect and categorize books (knowledge about God/Bible), but as a **spiritual journey** (holistic development and service) where the theological teacher acts as a personal guide, training the student to apply knowledge through rigorous practice, shaping character (being) and resulting action (doing) that lasts for eternity.

8.3.5 Conclusion

These recommendations for various stakeholders in ATE are neither an exhaustive account of all possible reforms needed in Adventist theological education nor intended to suggest that the areas of reform mentioned are entirely neglected. Instead, it is a summary of the most important findings that emerged after the presentation of the interview results and their discussion. There are two most pressing problems to highlight:

1. **The missing discussion of how the philosophy of AE should mould ATE today.** Every level of ATE should engage in this discussion. Although a document alone will not change anything, an explicit written commitment to

where the educational journey of ATE should lead can serve as an orientation for all levels and provide a blueprint for reform in ATE.

2. **The missing support for deans and teachers in ATE.** Many of them are lonely and subject to strong expectations from accreditation agencies, administrators, churches, and students. But they lack guidance on how to lead as a dean, how to teach adults in the 21st century, and how to be a guide on the side rather than a sage on the stage. This research has revealed that neither the AAA nor IBMTE nor the theological teachers' conventions appear to have this in focus. There is a strong need for a support system for ATE personnel.

8.4 Fields of Future Research

The two highlights mentioned in the previous subchapter present a vast field of future research. Yet, research alone will not be enough. Taking the first into consideration: A dialogue in the world of ATE certainly needs to be inspired by the results of similar research as was done in this dissertation – maybe in other parts of the world, too – but it has also to be broadly discussed, deeply reflected. The current state and practice of theological education in Adventist institutions warrant constructive evaluation in light of this discussion. A significant amount of work needs to be done at various levels and by multiple individuals. This will only occur with an earnest desire for change, reformation, and adaptation of ATE to the current challenges posed by struggling globalisation, the dissolution of former strong alliances, fractured societies, alternative facts, digital bubbles, and artificial intelligence. All these challenges have a tremendous impact on people. ATE needs to address that, and the philosophy of AE will still provide a reliable orientation and inspiration for

how ATE can, better than ever, be tailored to train and equip men and women to be theologically reflective, joyful servants to a world in deep need.

Looking at the second highlight of the last chapter, the missing support for teachers and deans, we find a similar situation that this will need research as groundwork, but many practical endeavours built on it.

Just when this dissertation was about to cross the finishing line, a new German book was published: *"Bildungsreligion Christentum - Biblisch-theologische und konfessionsspezifische Perspektiven"* (Schröder & Woppowa 2025). This collection of articles presents Christianity as a religion of education from various confessional perspectives, including an Adventist one. Roland Fischer and Alexander Schulze, the first at that time rector of the institution and the second dean of the theological department[46], authored the article *"Lehren und Lernen aus Sicht der Siebenten-Tags-Adventisten (Teaching and Learning in a Seventh-day Adventist Perspective)"* (Fischer & Schulze 2025). They develop a broad overview of all Adventist educational endeavours with emphasis on Germany. Similar to our findings in the literature on the history of AE, they noted that, initially, Adventist educators pursued educational and pedagogical reform. But then and also now, in many cases, state-defined curricula were implemented to the detriment of the holistic ideal. They raise another concern: although Adventist education is theologically grounded, it has mainly developed from pragmatic considerations, resulting in inconsistent or even contradictory educational principles and an Adventist theological system that has not been applied coherently across all areas of education (:236). Unfortunately,

[46] https://www.thh-friedensau.de/hochschule/mitarbeiter/?bereich=FB_Theologie#mitarbeitende [accessed 2025-12-22]

they don´t specify the type of inconsistency or contradiction they discern. In contrast to their observation, Tucker (2001:171) claims that Seventh-day Adventist education rests solely on the educational philosophy articulated by Ellen White, and that no alternative philosophy has been developed, nor was there a compelling reason to do so unless that foundation proved inadequate. When Ellen White´s book on education was published in 1903, it likely presented a more sophisticated and elaborated philosophy of Adventist education than any other book at the time could do for Adventist Theology. Perhaps Fischer & Schulze (2025:236) had this in mind when writing that the theological system of Seventh-day Adventists had since developed and was not consistently applied across all areas of the educational system. As a result, they see the need for the Adventist Church to continually reflect on its educational philosophy and practice in light of Adventist theology.

Taking into consideration how closely Ellen White ([1903] 2014:20) links the theological concept of redemption to education – “In the highest sense the work of education and the work of redemption are one” – could it be that the other way round could be helpful? The educational framework as a model for envisioning the practical aspects of sanctification could help prevent the confusion that often arises when theologians discuss salvation using terms such as justification, sanctification, imputed righteousness, and imparted righteousness. That Ellen White makes the two terms education and redemption, and consequently the concepts behind them, interchangeable, leads Fischer & Schulze (2025:222) to fear that this could be understood synergistically. If we took secular academic education as model, where students efforts are graded in an often rigid system, where egoistic ambition seems to be a necessary to succeed, where some skills and capabilities are pushed to the

maximum and others left completely dormant, where only the best and strongest subsist on the way to excellency, and in turn many fail and don´t survive in the competitive arena of educational games, this kind of education would rightly seem synergistic, should it parallel redemption. This is precisely what Ellen White aims at when she polemicises against higher education and contrasts it with true education, which has higher goals than mere academic excellence, but rather equips learners for a fulfilled and serving life in this world and for the exciting tasks of higher service in the eternal world. The one who begins the way of true education, which is equivalent to redemption, is not called a student or learner but a disciple of the humble rabbi Jesus. Initially, he chose twelve disciples and trained them holistically to use all their powers to serve those who are left aside, the broken, the sick, the small and overlooked, as well as those who seem to live on the brighter side of earth but still need to inscribe themselves in the true university of higher education. Jesus commissioned his disciples to bring everyone on earth to be disciples as well. In essence, redemption, mission, and education converge in discipleship. Theology, missiology and all other -ologies must serve true education, which is following Christ as a disciple. While this dissertation described the philosophical foundation for how this should influence ATE, further work is needed to translate these principles into the everyday practice of ATE and to develop and reform it to be ever closer to true educational discipleship.

9 CONCLUSION AND FINAL SUMMARY

This dissertation sought to answer the question "*How much Philosophy of Adventist Education (AE) is in Adventist Theological Education?"* by doing *"A Critical Appreciation and Analysis of Adventist Theological Education (ATE) in Europe."*

Drawing on historical context, philosophical analysis, and empirical data collected from theological leaders in Europe, this study explored whether ATE functions merely as a categorical term (a theological school supported by the Adventist Church) or whether the core philosophical ideals of AE permeate and shape its objectives, structure, content, and methodology.

9.1 Foundations and Philosophy of Adventist Education (Chapters 2–4)

The initial chapters established the foundational context. The Seventh-day Adventist Church, originating in the mid-19th century, operates the second-largest church-operated educational system globally. Chapter 2 sketched the history of AE in general and of ATE in particular. Chapter 3 presented a literature review of AE and ATE. A significant observation emerged from these two chapters: there is a substantial body of literature on the history of AE. However, few authors address the philosophy of AE, and even fewer attempt to inspire or apply it to ATE. Those with a critical eye lament the habit of copying and pasting from other institutions rather than striving to have AE permeate ATE.

The Seventh-Day Adventist educational enterprise is deeply rooted in the writings and vision of co-founder Ellen White. In Chapter 4, her writings about the philosophy of AE were systematically articulated using the Frankena Model, demonstrating that AE is grounded in a specific worldview encompassing metaphysical, epistemological, and axiological commitments.

1. **Metaphysics**
   The foundational belief posits a Creator God, the Great Controversy between Christ and Satan, and the creation of humanity in the Divine image, which was subsequently marred by sin.
2. **Ultimate Purpose**
   The core object of AE is therefore redemptive: to restore in man the image of his Maker, promoting the harmonious development of the physical, mental, and spiritual powers, and preparing individuals for joyful service in this world and the world to come. In the highest sense, the work of education and the work of redemption are considered one.
3. **Educational Goals and Methods**
   These foundational beliefs necessitate educational goals (excellences) that prioritise character transformation, producing independent thinkers rather than mere reflectors, and pedagogical methods that foster knowledge of God (primary discourse) rather than merely knowledge about God (secondary discourse/cognitive facts).

This philosophical structure served as the benchmark against which the practical realities of ATE in Europe were measured.

9.2 Empirical Findings and Critical Discussion (Chapters 5–7)

The middle section conducted the empirical research phase, utilising the practical theology triad: *See – Judge – Act*. Qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with ten deans of Adventist theological institutions across the three European Divisions.

9.2.1 The Voice of the Deans (SEE)

The research results revealed a strong, personally articulated commitment among the deans to the ideals of AE, confirming that ATE is, for these leaders, much more than a categorical term. They consistently defined their educational philosophies around core AE principles:

- **Holistic Education**
  Recognised universally as central, balancing spiritual, mental, and physical development.

- **Character Transformation**
  Prioritised as paramount, often achieved through personalised attention and spiritual guidance, ensuring students do not complete the process "untouched".
- **Teacher as part of the Curriculum**
  The belief that the teacher's spiritual character and commitment are more crucial than the curriculum structure alone, emphasising that one teaches "more with what I am than what I say".
- **Practicality and Service**
  Acknowledged service as the ultimate purpose of studying theology and prioritised linking theory to praxis, in some cases through field-based training from the first year.

9.2.2 The Tensions and Gaps (JUDGE)

The discussion phase (Chapter 7) critically evaluated these findings against institutional challenges, highlighting key areas of systemic tension:

1. The Dichotomy of Models

   A persistent tension exists between the philosophical mandate for holistic, formation-focused Seminary Model education and the external pressures **from governmental accreditation and the Adventist Accrediting Association to conform** to a University Model focused on academic excellence and measurable cognitive output. One drew the picture to be caught "between two chairs," struggling to reconcile the academic standards required for recognition with the practical formation required for ministry. As discussed in chapter 1.8, this dissertation does not oppose academic rigour but argues for a constructive balance between the two poles. The Seminary Model, as understood here, is not a retreat from academic standards into mere pragmatism — it is rather an academically serious *and* practically integrative model of formation, analogous to the University of Applied Sciences (*Fachhochschule*), where theoretical depth and practical competence are understood as mutually reinforcing rather than competing demands. The goal is not less academy, but a different kind of academy — one that forms students *for* and *within* ministry, not merely *about* it.
2. Lack of Systemic Formation

   A crucial finding was the pervasive lack of formal professional training in educational philosophy or pedagogy among theological faculty; some deans admitted

they were "thrown into being a theological educator". This deficiency exacerbates the difficulty of leading and developing faculty members (“it´s hard to lead a bunch of theologians") and hinders the collective implementation of AE principles.

3. Curriculum Fragmentation

   Despite the vision for integration, curricula often remain **entrenched in inherited "silo styles" (e.g., separating biblical, systematic, and practical theology), resulting in** fragmentation rather than an integrative structure.

4. The Hidden Curriculum

   The study highlighted the pervasive influence of the hidden curriculum – the unspoken values and practices of the institution – which often supersedes the explicit philosophical goals outlined in program documents, prioritising competition or academic arrogance over humble service and character development.

9.3 Commendations and Recommendations - *ACT* (Chapter 8)

The concluding section shifted to the actionable component of the triad, providing commendations and concrete recommendations for renewal.

The deans were highly commended for their intentional efforts to embody AE's philosophical ideals despite the complex systemic challenges they face. Their dedication to personalised student development, character formation, and the fostering of critical, independent thinking was aligned with AE's ultimate goals.

The recommendations targeted systemic change across all stakeholder levels:

Stakeholder Level	Key Recommendations (ACT)
Global Administration (GC/EUD/AAA/IBMTE)	Initiate a public discussion to develop a foundational **ATE Manifesto** outlining a renewed vision for ATE. **Create alternative, size-appropriate accreditation models** to accommodate the needs and holistic goals of smaller European institutions, mitigating administrative burdens ("papyrology"). **Invest in dedicated professional formation** for theology faculty and deans.
Institutional Leadership	Adopt an **integrative, outcome-oriented curriculum design** using backwards design, starting with the desired impact on the church and society. Intentionally bridge

	the theory-practice gap by integrating practical, field-based experience from the start.
Individual Faculty Member	Embody the teaching philosophy, recognising the t**eacher as an example**. Shift the instructional focus toward **knowledge *of* God** (the primary discourse) through methods that foster deep reflection and character development.

9.4 Impulses for Theological Education in General

Many of the abovementioned recommendations could offer helpful insights not only to ATE but to Theological Education in general. The following shortlist of pillars of the philosophy of AE and learnings from the research may serve as a point of reflection for any other denominational approach to Theological Education. In Chapter 7 – *JUDGE – Discussion of the Summary of the Interviews,* numerous authors discussed the research results, most of them from the evangelical world. Their contributions seldom merely demonstrate exemplary expertise and excellence in theological education; instead, they seek to address problems and inspire reformation. Maybe the Adventist perspective on educational philosophy could serve as a tool for calibrating foundational approaches to theological education. The challenges that emerged during the interviews, along with potential remedies, could also enrich the reflective process.

1. Focus the Transformative and Redemptive Purpose

The core principle of Adventist Education (AE) emphasises that the ultimate goal of education is not merely intellectual advancement but profound personal transformation.

- **Holistic Development:** Theological education must pursue the **harmonious development of the whole person**, balancing the physical, mental, spiritual, and social powers.
- **Restoration of Character:** The purpose of education is fundamentally redemptive, aiming to **restore the image of the Creator in humanity**. This implies that the program must prioritise character transformation and spiritual maturity above purely academic achievement, ensuring students do not complete the process "untouched" by positive change.
- **Eternal Perspective and Service Preparation:** True education is expansive, providing preparation for joyful service in this world and simultaneously **for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come**.

2. Shifting Epistemology and Curriculum Focus

The findings reveal that theological education often falls into the trap of fragmentation and intellectualism, issues widely observed beyond the Adventist context.

- **Knowledge *of* God vs. Knowledge *About* God:** Educational methods must intentionally focus on fostering **knowledge *of* God** (primary discourse), which arises from intimate communion and experience, rather than solely relying on imparting cognitive facts or theoretical concepts (knowledge about God, secondary discourse). Intellectual knowledge alone does not change character or prepare for service.
- **Integrative Curriculum Design:** Institutions should actively move away from the **fragmented "silo-style"** curriculum, where theological disciplines lose coherence. Instead, the curriculum should adopt an integrative approach fo-

cused on *theologia* (theology as wisdom) to counter the feeling that specialised knowledge is disconnected.

- **Theologically Reflective Practitioners:** The curriculum must strive to train students to be **"theologically reflective practitioners,"** capable of applying theoretical knowledge (*theoria*) to practical life situations (*praxis*). This requires challenging students to be **independent thinkers**, rather than mere "reflectors of other men's thoughts".
- **Bible as the Central Textbook:** The Holy Scriptures must hold the first place in the educational system and be utilised as a source of knowledge of God, disciplining the intellect and refining character, rather than merely being used as a source of facts.

3. Emphasising the Role of the Teacher and Institutional Culture

The dissertation highlighted that the success of theological education depends less on formal curricular documents and more on instructors' integrity and approach.

- **The Teacher as the Core Curriculum:** The teacher's conduct, character, sincerity, and enthusiasm are paramount, as **"I teach more with what I am than what I say"**. Teachers must model the character they wish their students to achieve.
- **Confronting the Hidden Curriculum:** Theological schools must be acutely aware of the **"hidden curriculum"** – the institutional culture and unspoken values – which often overrides stated goals, potentially fostering knowledge-centred arrogance or unhealthy competition.

- **Individualised Pedagogical Approach:** Teachers must treat students as individuals, taking personal interest in them, diagnosing their strengths and weaknesses, and helping them "unlock their hidden potential".
- **Professional Formation for Faculty:** There is a widespread need to support teachers who have **"no formal training in teaching"** adult learners. Faculty development should focus not only on academic expertise but also on educational philosophy and pedagogical excellence.

4. Need for Contextual Sensitivity and Impact Assessment

To ensure relevance, theological education must look outward toward its intended impact on the church and society.

- **Contextualization:** Programs must resist **to** the habit of merely importing or copying curricula without critically adapting them to the specific habits, needs, and cultural characteristics of the local context.
- **Bridging Institutional Models:** Theological institutions must consciously address the inevitable **tension between the "University Model"** (driven by academic excellence and external accreditation) and the necessary **"Seminary Model"** (focused on holistic pastoral formation).
- **Evaluating Impact:** Program evaluation should extend beyond measuring immediate outputs (grades, completion rates) to assess **long-term outcomes and actual impact** on the effectiveness of graduates in ministry and society.

In many of these respects, the discussion of the problems in this dissertation benefited from the expertise and reflection of educators at evangelical theological insti-

tutions. The unique contribution from the Adventist side could be a comprehensive philosophy of true education, rather than merely a denominational one, even though this dissertation frequently addressed Ellen White´s true Education as an Adventist. With the distress admitted by some of the deans that they missed being prepared for their work as teachers, let alone as deans, this dissertation touched not only a need in ATE, but in theological education in general. This topic is rarely addressed in the theological education literature consulted for this work, whether Adventist or non-Adventist. This also points to an unexplored territory awaiting research.

9.5 Final summary

In summary, this research confirmed that while the philosophical ideal of AE remains robustly held and personally articulated by ATE leadership in Europe, its systemic implementation is continuously challenged by conflicting accreditation requirements, administrative burdens, and a deficit in dedicated pedagogical and leadership training. The path forward requires intentional public dialogue, systemic structural reform, and dedicated investment in the personnel responsible for translating the philosophy of redemption and holistic education into the daily reality of theological training.

The ultimate task of ATE is not merely to function as an academic library of facts about God, but also as a spiritual journey of discipleship with Christ. The teacher acts as a personal guide, training the student to translate knowledge into responsible life practice (*knowing*) that shapes character (*being*) and results in joyful missionary service (*doing*) for the glory of God and the benefit of the world.

10 APPENDIX 1: THE GENESIS OF A CURRICULUM

From November 2020 to May 2021, the Inter-European Division (EUD) asked a team of six people to design a new master's program with a strong emphasis on practical aspects and an integrative curriculum. The members of this team were (in brackets their professional responsibility at that time): Barna Magyarosi (Executive Secretary of the EUD), Daniel Bosqued (President of Sagunto Adventist College in Spain, Theology teacher, New Testament), Laszlo Szabo (Lecturer of Mission Studies and Intercultural Studies at Friedensau University), Marius Munteanu (Director of the Education Department of the EUD), Oliver Fichtberger (Executive Secretary of the Austrian Union of Churches) and Ruben Abreu (President of the Franco-Belgian Union).

As Barna Magyarosi, who chaired the team, is one of the supervisors of this dissertation, he considered the literature review fundamental to the design of a new theological curriculum. He thus invited me to join this committee. The new *MA Pastoral Ministry* started in September 2022 at Friedensau University.[47]

The following two chapters explain the rationale of the two main emphases, "practice" and "integrative curriculum", that formed the framework of the considerations. However, these two chapters were not included in the final draft of the considerations for the new master´s program. Although some of the guiding frameworks are mentioned in the draft and at least one figure reappears there, the focus is on applying the frameworks and addressing the guiding questions for building an integrative curriculum.

[47] https://www.thh-friedensau.de/en/overview-of-our-study-programs/theology/masters-in-pastoral-ministry [accessed 2025-12-22]

10.1 The Tension Between Theory and Practice

Only a few European Adventist theological institutions are in populated areas that allow them to integrate academic studies with practical work in nearby churches (see “PRACTICAL TRAINING” in Chapter 6.2.5). If this is not the case, practical training in the classroom faces the challenge to be “not so practical at all” (P9:50-58), as it often is merely theory about practice.

This warrants a closer examination of the tension between theory and practice. In his monumental and comprehensive book, *Understanding and Developing Theological Education*, Ott (2016) spans the bow from the historical traditions of theological education to the battle of reforms and renewals in theological education; contributes a draft of a theology of theological education; proposes a balanced understanding of theory and practice; enters into a thorough explanation about curriculum development in theological education; adds the essentials of quality management in theological education, and finally describes the task of leadership in theological education that he defines as to lead with head, hand and heart. Bernhard Ott has been involved in theological education for more than 40 years. As the head of the European Evangelical Accrediting Association, he also contributes to the endeavours of the ICETE and was the dean of Columbia International University in Korntal, where he remains engaged, with a focus on its doctoral program. He is also the primary supervisor of this dissertation.

Turning to the question of the relationship between theory and practice, Ott (2016:202) first notes that the two terms are not found in the Bible but have their roots in Greek thought. On the surface, the predominance of cognitive knowledge in the academic world appears to honour Aristotle, who prioritised theoretical

thought over practice and regarded the soul as superior to the body. Therefore, mental work, contemplation, philosophy, and theory had the highest significance. However, Ott delves deeper and opens a window onto interesting details in Aristotle's worldview, which can balance the concepts of theory and practice on one side and, on the other, help construct a holistic curriculum. Aristotle distinguished three fundamental disciplines of human thought and action: ***theoria***, the domain of knowledge, where he places thought and reason; ***praxis***, the sphere of virtuous and moral responsibility, which manifests itself in actions; and ***poiesis***, the ability to make something (:203).

This understanding of praxis means more than merely being able to handle matters; it also entails the wisdom to lead one´s life ethically. Then, life practice is „no longer about merely products and techniques but about a way of life, virtues, wisdom and ethics." This kind of *praxis* also influences the way of studying – it can be done "in an ethically responsible way, virtuously, wisely—or not." (:205). „*Theoria* and *poiesis*—are encompassed within the term *praxis*." Applying this to the theological education, he (:206) concludes:

> „This means that theological education must have as its goal the training of practitioners, not merely theoreticians. Thought and action are both required. Both *theoria* and *poiesis* are to be seen as responsible life practice. Such practitioners know that there is no *theoria* without corresponding *poiesis*, and that there is no *poiesis* without *theoria* behind it. They will, therefore, keep thought and action in relationship with one another, so that each informs, stimulates, and corrects the other. In this way *theoria* as well as *poiesis-praxis* will be understood within the context of a wise and responsible way of life within society."

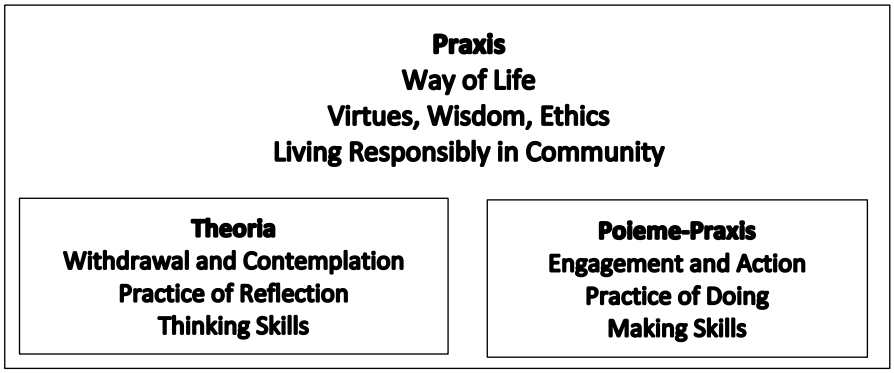


Figure 9: Praxis framing theoria and poieme according to Ott

This integrative view of praxis, *theoria*, and poiesis is the basis on which Ott then sketches a draft of integrative theological education. Speaking of an *integrative curriculum*, we understand it as a theological educational structure that moves beyond the traditional compartmentalised silo structure toward a holistic and balanced model, following the lines of reasoning presented by Ott. A similar contribution comes from Steven Hardy (2016), a former missionary educator in Ethiopia, Brazil, Mozambique, South Africa, the UK and the USA who also worked with ICETE. With "*Excellence in Theological Education",* he delivers another book in the ICETE series that points to solutions rather than diagnosis. In the following chapter, I will present briefly the concept of the two books that seem to be the most useful in the practical task of designing an integrative curriculum, because these considerations are the basis for the practical part of

10.2 Towards an Integrative Curriculum

LeRoy Ford has dedicated his life to teaching and curriculum design, particularly in North America, the Middle East, and Asia. His biography[48] demonstrates a strong interest and expertise in these realms, as well as creative ways to present even his books using a cartoon-writing technique combined with elaborate diagrams and

[48] https://www.biola.edu/talbot/ce20/database/leroy-ford [accessed 2025-12-22]

easy-to-understand yet deep-thinking reasoning. In his book *A Curriculum Design Manual for Theological Education: A Learning Outcomes Focus* (Ford [1991] 2002), he uses a concept that in general education is called *backwards design,* as described, e.g. in *Understanding by Design* (Wiggins & McTighe 2008) or the similar idea of *constructive alignment* as described for university level in *Teaching for Quality Learning at University* (Biggs & Tang 2011).

The best way to introduce this concept is through a cartoon by Ford ([1991] 2002:85). In contrast to this illustration of what happens without an integrative curriculum design, he proposes the following organising principle (:84): Somebody – learns – something – in some way – for some purpose – within a given cultural setting. More than fifteen years later Jessy Jaison (2017), a theological educator and academic administrator, who mainly worked in India, summarised the concept of Ford in the following way (:24):

Figure 10: Teaching targets? - Illustration by Ford

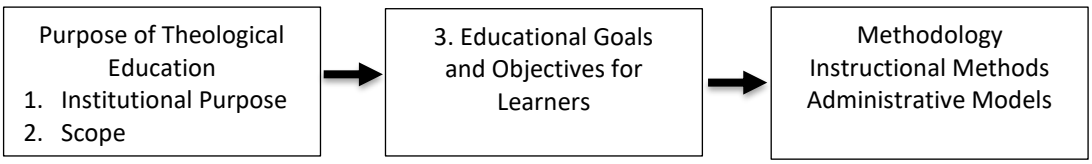


Figure 11: Ford´s curriculum design process summarised by Jaison

Working on this as a base, she proposes this interesting diagram of the whole process, based on the idea of Webber (2011:14):

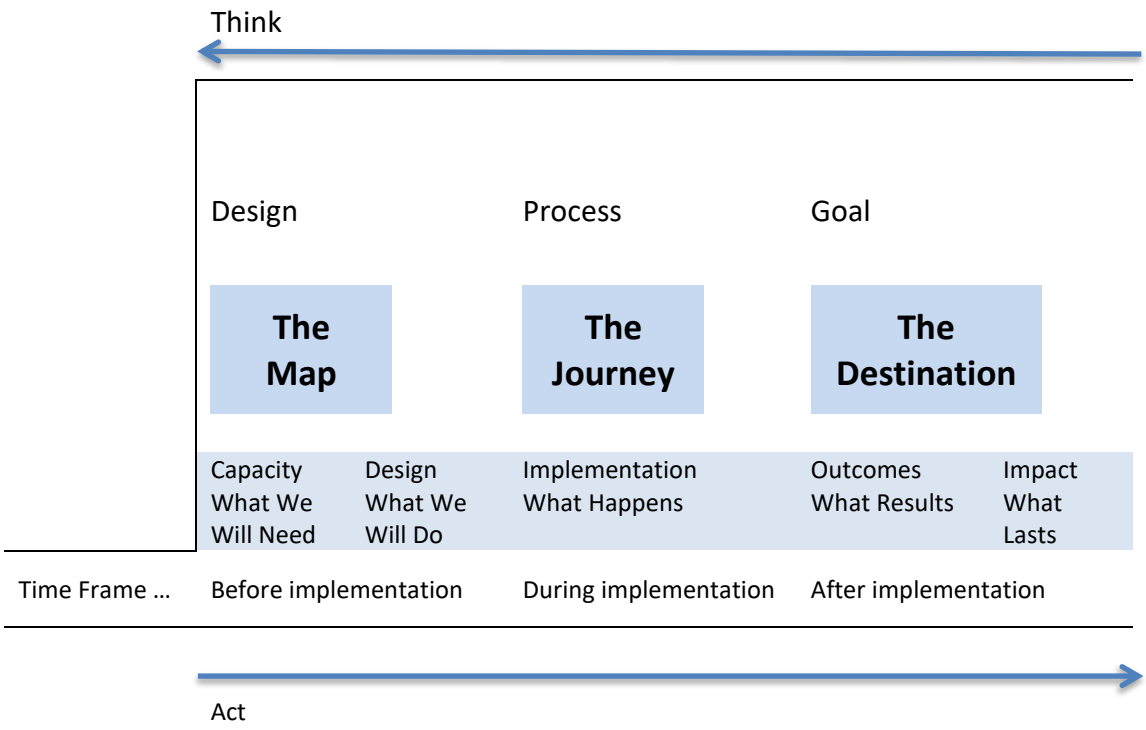


Figure 12: Curriculum design process illustrated by Webber/Jaison

We see here what *backwards design* means: Thinking from the goal backwards. And if all elements of the educational process point to that end with structure, content and methods aligned to reach the learning outcomes, Biggs & Tang (2011) would speak of *constructive alignment,* adding to the picture the fact that learners construct their learning, blending what they already know with new information, and should advance to ever higher and more complex levels of understanding and application. The teacher's task is to align the entire process with the desired outcomes and to serve as a guide throughout the construction process.

Although there are many other interesting details to explore in those books, we switch to another dedicated educator in theological education, who has put into practice all this reform at the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary[49]: Perry Shaw. He is a professor of Christian Education and a renowned curriculum and faculty consult-

[49] https://abtslebanon.org [accessed 2025-12-22]

ant to schools and ministries worldwide. As he described in his book, "*Transforming Theological Education: A Practical Handbook for Integrative Learning"* (Shaw 2014), he approached the topic from the perspective of an educator, rather than that of a theologian. He was somewhat disillusioned with the world of theological education because of an observed "irrelevance of most ministerial training programs" (Shaw 2014:vii). As an educator, he perceived faculty members as "bound to traditional and generally ineffective instructional approaches." Probably he would agree with Ellen White ([1923] 2017a:471), who, speaking of some teachers, deplored: "Many of them are leading their students over the same track that they themselves have trod. They think this the only right way." Fortunately, neither of the two gets lost in criticism. Both offer solutions to improve, as described by Ellen White in Chapter D – Educational Methods above and by Perry Shaw in his book on the transformation of theological education. He provides substantial insight into deep learning, multidimensional learning, non-traditional learning methods, and the dangers of ignoring the hidden and null curricula, after describing the renewal of the curriculum at the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary. The guiding questions for the renewal process were …

Question 1: What is the Ideal Church in Our Context?

Shaw (2014:21–22) proposes to ask how the ideal church in a particular context looks and to bring this in line with the vision and mission of the theological education. To this end, pastors, church members, faculty members, and students should be engaged.

Question 2: What are the Contextual Challenges?

The same group of people should also examine the internal and external challenges the church faces. Shaw (2014:22) insists: “Unless these challenges are clearly understood and in some way brought into our curricular considerations, we can lay little claim to having a meaningful theological education.”

Question 3: What Might an Ideal Christian Leader Look Like?

This third central curricular question (:23–24) seeks to outline the characteristics required of graduates to guide their churches through the challenges described in question 2. As a subset of the main question, Shaw proposes the following: What does the future pastor need to know?

- Which thinking skills are necessary in the context in which he or she is going to serve?
- What does he need to be able to continue to grow and learn in the years to come?
- What kind of character and attitude is needed in the leader, so others will follow?
- What sort of skills are necessary so that the gospel can be incarnated in word and deed by the pastor as a leader of his church, and those led?

Before demonstrating how all this was done in the theological institution he was responsible for, Shaw (2014:24) concluded:

> A thoroughgoing reflection of these questions provides the theological institution with a clearer picture of its long-term purpose, and this can become the foundation for designing a curriculum that is contextually meaningful.

These questions and reflections informed the design of the EUD Master's in Pastoral Ministry program. The next chapter presents the entire document, detailing the fundamental analysis of the current state, the contextual challenges, and the vision of an ideal church and an ideal Christian leader. It is in its original form except for some typographical and minor stylistic corrections. Because the audience required

to approve it did not have the whole theoretical background outlined in this dissertation, some elements and figures will recur, having been presented in greater detail in previous chapters.

10.3 Considerations for the new MA Curriculum "Pastoral Ministry" [50]

Draft of the EUD Master Program "Pastoral Ministry" as developed by Barna Magyarosi, Daniel Bosqued, Laszlo Szabo, Marius Munteanu, Oliver Fichtberger and Ruben Abreu November 2020 – May 2021.

10.3.1 Introduction

When students enter the MA program, they will experience the dynamic of its curriculum for a limited time. Various questions must be considered to align with the curriculum and equip them to serve the church in a manner that enables it to fulfil its mission. This can be illustrated like this:

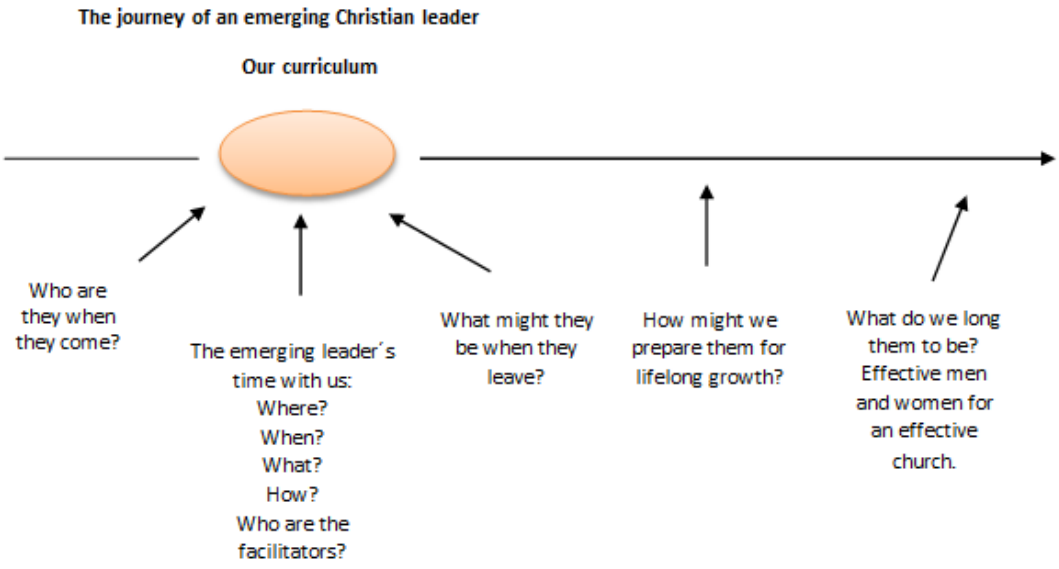


Figure 13: The journey of a Christian leader (Shaw 2014:21)

[50] This (from here to the end of chapter 11) is the text presented to the EUD Executive Committee, which, as a result, approved the program. The draft was slightly edited for expression.

The ultimate goal of theological education encompasses not only the student but also the impact they have on the church, which effectively fulfils its mission. Clarity about what it means to be an effective church and its mission will help to design the educational program, following a process called backwards design (Wiggins & McTighe 2008). Applying that to theological education, the whole process goes through these steps (adapted from Webber 2011:14):

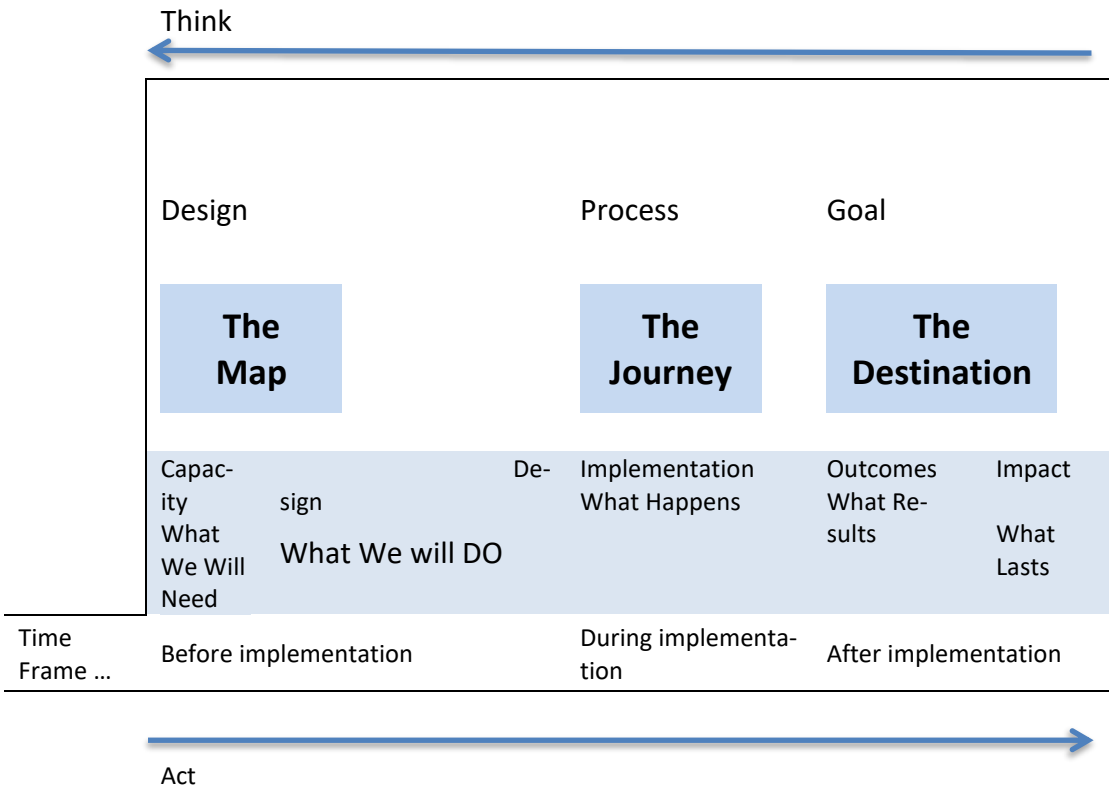


Figure 14: The planning process of a curriculum

After defining the desired impact, we can then determine what results or outcomes it needs – what the future pastors need to know, what they must be, and what we see them do – that will facilitate that impact.

10.3.2 What is the ideal church in our context?

What does an ideal church look like? A church that serves the purpose to live out in word and deed the everlasting gospel and prepares for the coming Lord? Answers

to this question need to be adjusted to the local context in which the students are likely to serve.

AN IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER – THE TENSION BETWEEN "ALREADY" AND "NOT YET"

Trying to define the ideal church and the ideal graduate of a theological program may leave the impression of being overly idealistic in describing an unrealistic church and overloading the theological program with utopic expectations, as if a two-year MA program could solve all the problems and "produce" pastors who are fit to face any challenge.

We must acknowledge that in this world, we will always live in the tension between what "already" is, and the "not yet". Although Christ has done everything to save us, we are still on the path to grasp salvation in an ever-deeper measure, both in understanding and in consequential practice. Therefore, we must always expect "a mix of sinfulness and redemption in our personal lives" (Shaw 2014:21) and also in our churches.

This, however, should not hinder us from drawing a picture of the ideal to which we strive with the help of God. As George Knight (2010a:5) once worded with a twinkle in the eye as KNIGHT´S LAW: "It is impossible to arrive at your destination unless you know where you are going." All of this must be kept in mind when considering the description of the ideal church.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE IDEAL EFFECTIVE CHURCH

The following is written from the perspective of the results that a graduate of the EUD MA program will effectuate. What he or she knows, who he or she is, and what

he or she does will consequently influence what the church knows, is, and does. In describing the various aspects of an ideal church's vision, the holistic approach of knowing, being, and doing serves as a guiding structure.

In addition to that, the four ultimate goals of true education, as penned by Ellen White ([1903] 2014:8–12) seem to be not only describing the main emphasis of the educational process but also what it means to be a true church, thus providing a framework for pastoral ministry:

Men and women in the ideal church will …

- … know and glorify God
- … experience the restoration of the image of God in man
- … develop all their powers (body, mind, soul harmoniously)
- … engage in joyful service for the world

Enriched and encouraged by the pastor, the church members will …

… know and glorify God …

knowing

- … by understanding the bible as the Word of God
- … by accepting it as the guideline for how to live in the way God intended life to be

being

- … by being children of God who develop an ever-deepening friendship with him
- … by loving God with all strength, mind, and heart

doing

- … by worshipping God personally and in communion in a meaningful way
- … by testifying to the people within their reach, the power of God in a relevant way

… experience the restoration of the image of God in their lives

knowing

- … by understanding that God only wants the best for them
- … by understanding that being created in the image of God means to be endowed with power akin to that of the creator

This godly power manifested in the lives of men and women, they will …

being

- … be ready to bear responsibility
- … be aware of the influence of what they think, say, and do on others
- … learn to be masters, not slaves of circumstances

doing

- … develop the power to think individually and act accordingly
- … engage in a meaningful and constructive dialogue with the people around them about the restoring power of God and his plan for humanity

… develop all their powers

knowing

- … by understanding the holistic design of man and the necessity to develop the physical, mental, and spiritual powers
- … by understanding that being a child of God means being inscribed in a life-long school of character

being

- … by being diligent students of the bible and learn from it not only intellectual truth but also how to use it as a textbook for their lives
- … by being willing to discover and develop their spiritual gifts and God-given faculties

doing

- … by learning to be individual thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men´s thoughts
- … by developing a character that stands for truth and uprightness instead of sacrificing it to selfish desire
- … by learning to live according to godly principles instead of being a slave to passions
- … by developing breadth of mind, clearness of thought, and the courage of convictions

… engage in joyful service for the world

knowing

- … by understanding the mission of the church and each of its members to serve the people in their reach, by preaching the everlasting Gospel and serving their needs

being

- … by experiencing the joy that service, while making them a blessing to others, brings the greatest blessing to themselves

doing

- … by actively mingling with people, wanting their best, serving their needs, and asking them to follow Jesus

10.3.3 Intended Impact of the Program

- The church members develop a healthy SDA identity.
- The church members regard the Bible as relevant.
- Church members are well-trained and use their Spiritual Gifts.
- The church is a loving and caring community (a Christ-like church).
- The church is focused on mission (outward-minded).
- The trust of members in the Church's leadership is strengthened.
- Personal and corporate worship is a priority and has meaning for the church.
- The church is sharing the Gospel.
- The church accesses new territories.
- The church maintains a meaningful and constructive dialogue with society.
- The church serves and can address the needs of society.
- The church members express their spirituality through a dedicated, joyful service.

10.3.4 Internal and External Challenges to the Church

Above, we described in detail how we envision the ideal church. However, the present situation, which serves as the starting point for future graduates in their ministry, is often far from ideal. The purpose of this MA program is to equip pastors to facilitate a process that moves churches from their current reality towards a more ideal situation.

Because we do not function as an ideal church, the new curriculum must account for the challenges of our current European context from both internal and external perspectives.

INTERNAL CHALLENGES

A. Secular influence

Declining spirituality

- decrease in spiritual life/disciplines
- decline in attendance at the worship service
- wrong concept of salvation in the full range from cheap grace to legalism
- inadequate or poor hermeneutics
- limited concept of church
- spiritual abuse
- tendency to please people rather than God

Growing consumerism

- lack of commitment
- less interest in serving, growing expectation to be served
- decline in active participation in church life and worship – spectatorship
- too busy for church

Character issues

- exclusiveness
- selfishness
- individualism – competition rather than cooperation
- exclusiveness and possessiveness
- lack of authenticity

Relational tensions

- lack of trust
- poor conflict-resolution abilities
- disunity
- Criticising is mistaken for critical thinking

Declining interest in church offers

- Traditional ways of doing church are less and less attractive

B. Church health issues

- **Program orientation** – programs still play an essential role in Adventist identity, but they no longer provide the expected spiritual support.
- **Gender gap** – we are losing men
- **Growing proportion of the elderly** – need for counselling and care
- **Growing number of mixed marriages** – decreasing proportion of men in the church, women cannot always find a partner within the church
- **Low flexibility** – old traditional churches refuse to adapt to the new situation, and are resistant to change
- **Cultural diversity** in local churches
- **Challenging church forms** – a growing number of small churches and patchwork churches

C. Mission and Ministry

A less and less attractive image of pastoral ministry

- lack of role models
- deficiencies in theological education
- support system for pastors needs to be strengthened
- growing frustration about the mission
- crisis of methods: old methods do not work
- lack of creativity in finding new ways of mission

D. Leadership challenges

- a less and less attractive image of pastoral ministry
- decline in trust in leadership
- poor preparation for leadership roles
- some tend to control or be overprotective
- insecure leaders feel easily threatened

5. Future challenges

We must anticipate predictable future needs:

- **Losses** – many churches will die because with the dying of the baby boomers' generation, the current core of the church will decrease tremendously
- **Missionary challenges** – The SDA church needs a restart in Europe. Mission 2.0
- **Coming financial crisis** – The SDA church will not be able to run its life and mission based on institutions. We need alternative models (small group ministry)

EXTERNAL CHALLENGES

- economic pressure
- governments issue more and more laws in conflict with biblical values
- mainstream media is more and more critical towards religion, even ridiculing it
- mission and evangelism are ostracised even by other denominations

10.3.5 The Profile of The Ideal Graduate

Leading to an ideal as high as the one described above from a status quo as challenging as the one described above may seem overwhelming. We will now outline the characteristics pastors should possess to help the church navigate these challenges and achieve its mission.

ANOTHER DISCLAIMER: "NOT THAT I HAVE ALREADY REACHED IT …"

Turning to the men and women who will help move from reality to the ideal, it is necessary to readdress the disclaimer above regarding the ideal church. It is unrealistic to expect all these characteristics in every single student. It should rather be understood as the picture of an ideal in which we want the students to grow. We must also recognise that a two-year theological training program will not solely develop all those characteristics in students. They already have a history of growth and will continue to grow throughout their lives; they also need to be prepared for lifelong learning.

In describing the profile of the ideal graduate, we take a holistic perspective. Although closely intertwined, the three aspects of cognitive (knowing), affective (being) and behavioural (doing) skills help to categorise the profile of the ideal graduate.

They are formulated as long-term outcome descriptors that will serve as the basis for both self- and external assessment. Students should reflect on their changing self-perceptions at least three times within these two years of study.

DESCRIPTION OF THE IDEAL GRADUATE

The EUD MA Program in Pastoral Ministry exists to help Seventh-day Adventist churches in Europe grow into authentic and appealing communities of faith that reflect God's character, proclaim His love, and soon return, engaging in selfless service for those within their reach.

Therefore, we seek to equip dedicated men and women for effective service who are characterised by …

Cognitively - a mind committed to reflective practice …

… able to interpret Christian life and ministry through the multiple lenses of applied biblical knowledge, character development, church leadership and missional approach.

To this end, graduates of the EUD Master Program of Pastoral Ministry should have:

- A sound knowledge of the content of the Scriptures and the writings of Ellen White and of the way the various pieces fit together. (BA)
- A clear understanding of Adventist Christian doctrines and their historical development. (BA)
- A personal theological reflection of these doctrines in contextual application. (MA)
- An understanding of the nature and impact of culture, and the ability to evaluate culture in light of a genuine Adventist Christian worldview. (MA)
- A basic understanding of the social sciences (psychology, sociology, cultural anthropology, politics) and of how these impact theological reflection and the practice of ministry. (BA/MA)
- A critical understanding of the psychological and spiritual processes by which people grow in personal and corporate settings. (MA)
- The ability to interpret key ministerial issues through multiple lenses: Christian leadership, church planting and church growth, the teaching ministry of

the church, Christian nurture and discipleship, Christian counselling, and preaching. (MA)
- The ability to explain the structure and function of the Seventh-day Adventist Church locally and worldwide and help church members participate in and support the organised church with their time, example, influence and finances. (BA/MA)

Affectively - a heart of love for God and others …

… able to be examples of maturing faith in relationship with God, and in a commitment to reconciled relationships and restored communities

To this end, graduates of the EUD Master Program should commit to:

- God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit; God's Word; the message, organisation and fellowship of the Seventh-day Adventist Church; participation in God's redemptive mission; Church principles. BA
- A vital, daily relationship with Jesus Christ, seen in the discipline of regular practices of worship, spiritual renewal, and personal growth, and reflected in the growing evidence of the fruit of the Spirit. (BA/MA)
- Honour all persons as created in the image of God by appreciating the diversity of cultures, ethnicities, and traditions within the church. (BA/MA)
- Know and develop their gifts, passions, and calling in ministry. (BA/MA)
- A heart of servant leadership that embraces both humility and sober confidence in the calling and direction of God, including the willingness and ability to evaluate their spiritual development and practices, noting areas of strength and weakness, and seeking lifelong learning and growth in personal life and Christian leadership (a teachable spirit). (MA)
- Accountable relationships focused on spiritual growth. (BA/MA)
- Stewardship of time, body and finances for effective ministry, including order, discipline, faithfulness, integrity in ministry responsibilities, and wise balance in relationships with God, family, church and society. (BA/MA)

Behaviourally, hands of Servant Leadership for the empowering of God's People

… able to equip faithful men and women in the church for effective service

To this end, graduates of the EUD Master Program should have the ability to:

- Create a leadership environment that is characterised by missional strategic vision and direction, team leadership, redemptive action, and empowerment. (MA)
- Gather and assess demographic, social, economic, and cultural information to inform a process of planning and development in a particular ministry context. (MA)

- Nurture, mentor, and train others at both an individual and group level through discipleship, small-group ministry, and/or formal teaching and preaching contexts. (MA)
- Study, teach and preach the Scriptures inductively and synthetically, as a basis for responding to contemporary life questions. (BA/MA)
- Train others who can train others in holistic Christian growth (2 Tim 2:2). (MA)
- Give a clear, personal witness of Jesus Christ and the gospel message to various categories of hearers, ready to defend the faith with gentleness and respect. (BA)
- Counsel others in the resolution of life issues and discern when to refer counselees to health professionals for psychological or physical care. (MA)
- Understand and employ effective procedures to achieve conflict resolution and the redemptive discipleship/discipline of church members. (BA/MA)
- Mentor church members in their understanding of working together with God in practical steps of character transformation. (MA)
- Speak, read, and write clearly in their respective language and have a working level of English for access to global theological resources and continuing education. (BA/MA)

10.3.6 BA – Prerequisites and MA Learning Outcomes

The structure follows the three dynamics of Christian church life, which are also the three dynamics of pastoral work. **Reach up – Reach in – Reach out**

Figure 15: Reach UP - Reach In - Reach Out

SPIRITUALITY - RELATIONSHIP TO GOD AND RELATIONSHIP TO SELF (REACH UP)

a. Solid biblical knowledge

Explain and value the Bible as the Word of God and the reliable record of God's acts in history and an infallible revelation of his will for our spiritual experience, doctrinal beliefs, and character development. (BA/MA)

b. Personal spirituality

Engage in a personal, regular, systematic program of spiritually enriching reading, reflection and prayer to facilitate biblical spirituality and maturation. (BA/MA)

c. Clear identity - who am I?

Being able to relate to her/himself, self-reflection. What are my talents, and where are my limits? Demonstrate balanced emotional, spiritual, and social stability and maturity grounded in the wholeness of one's mind, body, and spirit, and evidenced in humility, balanced judgment and personal conduct and integrity. (BA/MA)

d. Personal development

Plan and carry out ongoing nurture of self and family, including appropriate rest, recreation and peer support, self-management, time management, future concepts and goals (BA/MA)

e. Healthy views of humans

Show respect for the dignity of every human being and stand against discrimination in all its forms. (MA)

RELATIONSHIP TO THE CHURCH (REACH IN) - STUDENTS CAN

a. Apply a biblical concept of ecclesiology, church development, evangelism and mission

Express a theology of evangelism and nurture, based on the biblical models of the church and its mission and apply it in the relevant cultural context. (MA)

b. Analyse the present situation and make the right decisions for the development of their local churches

Understand methods and strategies for revitalising a church and reactivating inactive members. (MA)

c. Plan processes for empowerment and multiplication

Articulate and lead members to understand the correlations between emotional and spiritual well-being, and how God works in the discipling process of the whole person. (MA)

d. Describe, evaluate and communicate the impact of solid biblical theology

Be an example of sound theological thinking, inspiring both proclamation and conduct, and train the church members in theological thinking and subsequent attitude and behaviour; model a non-violent communication style and help the church to develop conflict resolution abilities. (MA)

e. Develop lay leadership in all appropriate aspects of local church life and growth

Inspire and train individuals to discover their spiritual gifts, strategically connecting the church to the community's life through holistic ministry. (MA)

f. Apply the Seventh-day Adventist vision of education

Engage in the work of discipling and retaining members of all ages, including the support and promotion of Adventist education. (BA/MA)

g. Communicate at work in a cross-cultural environment

Know and evidence a valuing and application of the principles of cross-cultural relations. (MA)

Relationship to society (Reach out) - students will be able to

a. Analyse and understand secular society

Identify the characteristics, needs and specific challenges of present European secular societies and explain the teachings of the Bible as expressed in the fundamental Beliefs of the SDA Church in culturally appropriate terms. (MA)

b. Formulate specific questions and areas of interest for missionary service and social ministry

Lead the church in assessing the community and developing ministries tailored to its needs. (MA)

c. Evaluate and defend their position in a highly critical environment

Develop emotional resilience despite opposition and answer in a biblically appropriate way, engaging in dialogue rather than elitism. (MA)

d. Plan ways to present Christian values and processes of healing

Outline, explain and model the principles of healthful living for people within the culture in which they will minister. (MA)

e. Demonstrate worshipping competence

Observe, plan, conduct, and critique relevant and effective worship in various settings with diverse groups, including church plants, small groups, and non-traditional worship contexts. (MA)

f. Engage in service

Implement plans, motivate others, and integrate them to accomplish tasks. (MA)

10.3.7 Plan of Modules, Courses and Credits

The arrangement of the modules below follows the structure required for the program to be accredited under German government regulations.

Prerequisites

a) Academic Research Methods

b) Tutorial: Academic Writing Skills

1. **Biblical studies** (10 ECTS)
    a. Biblical studies OT (Seminar) – 3 ECTS
    b. Biblical studies NT (Seminar) – 3 ECTS
    c. Apocalyptic literature (Daniel and Revelation) – 4 ECTS
2. **Theological studies** (10 ECTS)
    a. Integrative Biblical theology – 4 ECTS
    b. Hermeneutics – 3 ECTS
    c. Methods and principles of Theology – 3 ECTS
3. **History and theology of mission** (10 ECTS)
    a. History of mission – 3 ECTS
    b. Biblical theology of mission – 4 ECTS
    c. History of Adventist mission – 3 ECTS
4. **Church and society** (10 ECTS)
    a. Worldviews, cultures, and ministry – 3 ECTS
    b. Contemporary trends in religion and secularism – 2 ECTS
    c. Biblical ethics – 3 ECTS
    d. Advanced homiletics – 2 ECTS
5. **Adventist theology in a changing historical context** (10 ECTS)
    a. Apologetics – 2 ECTS
    b. Development and Current Trends of SDA theology – 4 ECTS
    c. Faith and Science – 2 ECTS
    d. Public Relations and Religious Liberty – 2 ECTS
6. **Spirituality and discipleship** (10 ECTS)
    a. Biblical and personal spirituality – 3 ECTS
    b. Leadership and character development – 2 ECTS
    c. Discipleship – 3 ECTS
    d. Small group ministry – 2 ECTS
7. **Mission** (10 ECTS)
    a. Church development – 4 ECTS
    b. Evangelism - contemporary Christian communication – 2 ECTS
    c. Church planting – 2 ECTS
    d. Ministry in a media-shaped world – 2 ECTS

8. **Church dynamics** (11 ECTS)
    a. Change leadership – 3 ECTS
    b. Pastoral care and counselling – 3 ECTS
    c. Interpersonal relationships and conflict management – 3 ECTS
    d. Personal and congregational worship – 2 ECTS
9. **Church and context analysis – research methods** (9 ECTS)
    a. Seminar: Research for decision makers-church and context analysis– 3 ECTS
    b. *Introduction to empirics* – 3 ECTS
    c. *Elective A.: Quantitative and qualitative research approach* – 3 ECTS
    d. *Elective B.: Contemporary history and inter-church relationships* – 3 ECTS
10. **Electives or Research Module** (10 ECTS)
    a. Religious studies (ex., Introduction to Islam) – 2 ECTS
    b. Church history (ex., History of Protestant Churches) – 2 ECTS
    c. Social sciences – 3 ECTS
    e. Counselling (Prepare Enrich) – 3 ECTS
11. **Master's project or thesis** (20 ECTS)

10.3.8 Module Descriptions

1. Biblical studies

    a. Biblical studies OT (Seminar)

    This seminar will develop a model for examining contemporary societal issues in depth and engaging them in dialogue with relevant OT texts, enabling students to see how everyday challenges can be addressed through biblical solutions. Issues at the forefront of societal concerns, such as globalisation, climate change, racial discrimination, gender issues, consumerism, economic volatility, personal finances, migration, social pressure, governance, anxiety, and others, will be examined in light of OT biblical principles pertinent to these issues.

    b. Biblical studies NT (Seminar)

    This seminar will develop a model for examining contemporary social issues more closely and bringing them into dialogue with relevant NT texts, enabling students to see how everyday challenges can find biblical answers. Issues at the forefront of societal concerns, such as globalisation, climate change, racial discrimination, gender issues, consumerism, economic volatility, personal finances, migration, social pressure, governance, anxiety, and others, will be examined in light of NT biblical principles pertinent to these issues.

c. Apocalyptic literature (Daniel and Revelation)

This course will address critical issues in the Adventist interpretation of the books of Daniel and Revelation, analysing the main challenges raised by recent scholarship to deepen understanding of biblical apocalyptic prophecies and equip students to engage respectfully with alternative interpretations.

2. Theological studies

a. Integrative Biblical Theology

The primary objective of this course is to integrate foundational biblical-theological themes from the Old and New Testaments and to reveal how they converge to form a unified narrative from Genesis to Revelation. While OT Theology and NT Theology classes typically examine particular central theological motifs within their specific contexts, this course will take it one step further by weaving together the threads of major biblical-theological themes, enabling students to see the big picture of the cosmic conflict as it unfolds throughout the entire Bible.

b. Hermeneutics

This course builds on a previous survey of the main schools of biblical interpretation throughout history with an emphasis on contemporary approaches. It examines how philosophical and theological presuppositions shape individuals' mindsets and the life of the church. It outlines the importance of sound principles of biblical interpretation from an Adventist perspective. It aims to develop a balanced hermeneutical vision rooted in the biblical text, thereby avoiding common exegetical fallacies.

c. Methods and Principles of Theology

The goal of this class is to help students develop an informed understanding of the importance of sound methods in theological study. To achieve this, the instructor will adopt an applied approach to class presentations by highlighting the general and particular principles of theological research, applicable to the study of Biblical Spirituality in general, and how these methods and principles will impact the Personal spirituality of the theologian in particular. So, the integration of Doing Theology with Being a Theologian is the final aim of this course. The Scripture will be the ultimate point of reference in both defining and assessing the adequacy of theological method.

3. History and theology of mission

a. Biblical theology of mission

The fresh challenges of the twenty-first century require the church to work harder to bring theology, structure, strategy, and methodology for mission into closer harmony. In this course, students investigate and discuss the biblical foundations and major models of mission theology, with particular emphasis on the mission commissions of Jesus. Students will reflect on and work through the question of how present praxis can be evaluated in light of the biblical mandate for mission,

aiming to achieve a trustworthy understanding of mission despite a changing societal context.

b. History of Christian mission

The development of Christian mission cannot be studied in isolation from its particular historical, ecumenical, and religious contexts. The course provides a comprehensive overview of the historical phases of mission from the earliest days of Christianity, including an examination of various paradigms and approaches. Students will be challenged to reflect on and understand the various historical factors and influences that shape the development and content of Christian mission. Participants will evaluate and understand how contradictions and ambivalence emerged in the interpretation of the church's missionary mandate and how these also shaped the historical development of the Christian church.

c. History of Adventist mission

The course highlights the different phases of the Adventist mission's history, tracing the movement from its inception in the USA, where the church emerged from the interest in the Second Advent of Jesus Christ in the mid-19th century. Students will analyse and evaluate different missionary approaches within their historical, social, and church contexts, and compare their outcomes. Special attention will be given to recent global and local strategies and concepts, enabling participants to understand and evaluate emerging trends and diverse perspectives.

4. Church and society

a. Worldviews, cultures, and ministry

The course facilitates understanding of worldview presuppositions, beginning with a biblical perspective on the distinction between personal conviction and absolute Truth. Recognising that cross-cultural ministry is challenging, the course provides definitions of culture and worldview, as well as the visible and invisible aspects of cultural dynamics. Students will also develop skills to communicate effectively in their own and other cultures, using new languages, adapting to cultural norms, beliefs, and values, and practising relevant intercultural communication. By integrating elements of biblical contextualization, students will develop the ability to identify cultural concepts and understand how the Word of God can be applied within a specific cultural context.

b. Mission in the light of contemporary trends in religion and secularism (seminar)

The Adventist mission is facing the most severe test of its history in contemporary European societies. The seminar facilitates understanding of current trends in society and religion, with a particular focus on secularisation, changes in religiosity, and postmodernism. The goal of the seminar is to help students analyse and understand the sociocultural diversity as the context of the Adventist mission. Observing the attitudes, orientations, values, lifestyles, goals, and social backgrounds of specific target groups will provide additional guidance for strategic planning to fulfil the missionary mandate.

c. Biblical Ethics: an Adventist perspective

The course presents a biblical model of ethics in a postmodern context, and also analyses ethical theories and various ethical systems from theological and philosophical perspectives. The goal of the course is to help students distinguish major approaches to ethical reasoning and to develop a framework for Adventist values and ethical principles. The aim is to enable the student to apply this to contemporary dilemmas and make God-respecting decisions.

d. Advanced Homiletics

The course builds on previously learned preaching theology, applying various strategies for developing a sermon. The class presents innovative and contextualised expositional models that help students evaluate and improve their creative language and delivery practices for effective preaching. Students should be able to identify the congregation's needs and develop a relevant preaching plan. The class also provides an opportunity to acquire critical peer- and self-assessment skills.

5. Adventist theology in a changing historical context

a. Apologetics

This course is designed to enhance students' skills in making a case for the claims of the Christian faith as they relate to various world religions, philosophies, and other systems of belief. It will equip students to give reasons for their faith, enabling them to share Christ in a convincing and winsome way.

b. Development and Current Trends of SDA Theology

This course will focus on the study of the origin and development of the distinctive doctrines of the Adventist Church, such as the sanctuary and the atonement of sin, the intercessory ministry of Christ, the Sabbath, the covenants, conditional immortality, creation, some particular aspects of Christology and justification by faith, perfectionism, and other issues in Adventist theology challenging Fundamental Beliefs.

c. Faith and Science

The course explores the interaction between biblical creation and competing theories regarding the origin and development of life. It analyses current scientific theories and evaluates their scientific support, consistency, and theological implications. The discussion encompasses concepts such as geological time, uniformitarianism and catastrophism, fossil records, fixity and change, and the idea of design in nature.

d. Public Relations and Religious Liberty

The course facilitates understanding of the distinctiveness and significance of religious freedom for human relations and mission development. It analyses the theological, historical, and jurisprudential foundations of the Free Exercise Clause. Students will learn the most important mechanisms for the protection and promotion of international human rights, how to detect violations of religious

rights or beliefs, how to respond to such threats, and how to manage conflicts between religious communities. They will also acquire knowledge of how to maintain a constructive and consistent dialogue with state authorities and develop negotiation skills to end and prevent religious discrimination and persecution.

6. Spirituality and discipleship

   a. Biblical and personal spirituality

   The course fosters a comprehensive understanding of spiritual growth through biblical, historical, and experiential perspectives, guided by the Holy Spirit. It explores Bible-based spiritual disciplines as a guide to addressing historical and contemporary expressions of spirituality and as a means of fostering the Christian faith in believers' lives. It aims to cultivate a Christ-like life by reflecting on one´s personal spiritual experience, assessing areas of strength and growth, and supporting others in their spiritual journey.

   b. Leadership and Character Development

   The course focuses on understanding the nature of character and its critical role in both the personal life of a Christian and pastoral leadership. Students will gain a comprehensive understanding of biblical character, as articulated in the writings of E. G. White and in relevant contemporary scholarship, recognising that the primary goal of the Christian life is to reflect God's character. Students will also be able to discern concrete behaviours related to different character dimensions. The course will illustrate how character traits (being) are developed and strengthened, and how they impact the pastor's role as a leader (knowing and doing). The course also aims to model character development and to enhance it in the lives of others.

   c. Discipleship

   The course explores the biblical concept of discipleship and its development in the Christian church and Adventist history. It instructs students in the theology and indispensable practices of personal and collective formation and discipleship, identifies cultural challenges to discipleship, and provides ways to address them effectively. The students will examine current praxis and various discipleship strategies to develop practical concepts for the discipling process. This will enable students to help people discern their callings, discover their spiritual gifts for ministry, and be trained accordingly.

   d. Small group ministry

   The course examines the growing importance of small group ministry within the Adventist mission in the European context. The course offers not only a solid theological background for the topic but also allows students to reflect on didactic challenges in training others and on issues of practical implementation. Finally, students should be able to develop their leadership training plan for their particular congregation, reflect on challenges and establish and run a well-designed coaching system to support small group leaders, and to integrate small groups and mini groups in the church life as a supporting and complementary part of the life and body of the local congregation.

7. Mission

   a. Church development

   In this course, students will study how foundational biblical and sociological principles can be applied and how they contribute to the healthy growth (vitality) of local congregations in their particular cultural context. The end goal is to enable students to design a supportive context for making disciples, to develop understanding and skills for mobilising believers in their gifts, and to lead churches to become healthy, serving and growing communities. Beyond their theoretical and theological preparation, students have the opportunity, through various forms of case studies (study tours), to observe the complexity, analyse the key elements, and understand the leading principles of church development, church planting, and evangelism.

   b. Evangelism – contemporary Christian communication

   During this course, participants reflect on how basic biblical principles for evangelism can be applied in the modern world to fulfil the church's mission and commission. Beyond the study of general and strategic issues, students will also reflect on specific challenges, including evangelism in urban and rural contexts, cross-cultural ministry, the conversion process, local congregation-based evangelism, and mission for targeted groups. The guiding principles in the study of evangelism are grounded in a holistic approach that conveys the gospel through words, images, and actions, with particular emphasis on follow-up and discipleship.

   c. Church planting

   The course offers a comprehensive overview of church planting from both biblical and contemporary perspectives, starting with a biblical foundation, examining personal attitudes and qualifications, and exploring the cultural implications. It presents the profile of a church planter, anticipating various stages of the process, culminating in the establishment and ongoing development of the new church.

   d. Ministry in a media-shaped world

   The course promotes an understanding of how media affect individuals' lives and society's development, as well as their influence on the everyday reality of Adventist congregations. Media communication shapes us mentally, socially, emotionally and spiritually. Students will learn how pastors can use media wisely, differentiate among the values, messages, and meanings, and utilise them as a channel for the effective proclamation of the gospel.

8. Church dynamics

   a. Change leadership

   The course encompasses a broad range of theoretical and practical aspects of leadership, including the laws, tools, and methods employed in the art of leadership, grounded in biblical principles and values. It focuses on concrete ways to

apply theoretical knowledge, enabling students to identify and develop a complex set of leadership skills that prepare them to become future leaders of the church and its institutions. Among other things, the students learn the principles of strategic thinking, of personal and organisational change, as well as methods of coaching and mentoring. They develop leadership strategies to make optimal decisions and to manage change responsibly and effectively.

b. Pastoral care and counselling

This course examines the pastor's role in caregiving within a church context. It addresses basic pastoral care and counselling for individuals, families, and communities, considering both the Biblical perspective and theories of pastoral care. The students will acquire skills in sensitive caregiving, develop strategies for pastoral care in crises in light of pastoral theological expression, and organise caring ministries within the congregation.

c. Interpersonal relationships and conflict management

This course provides the students with principles of interpersonal dialogue and conflict management in a diversity of contexts (societal and church). It gives a clearer understanding of the nature and source of conflict, highlights the key role of communication in conflict management, and raises awareness of the use of power in interpersonal conflicts. The class helps students improve their ability to manage personal and interpersonal emotions. By outlining models of communication and systematic action plans, the students will be assisted in developing solutions to interpersonal communication challenges.

d. Personal and congregational worship

This course examines worship within the SDA church, giving special attention to the pastor´s responsibility in its corporate expression. A theology of worship, consistent with the Bible and participants' needs, will be articulated through biblical analysis at both the congregational and personal levels. Attention will also be given to the church's role in worship. The course challenges students to imagine, plan, train, and lead a variety of worship experiences, maximising the use of music, media, and member involvement.

9. Church and context analysis – research methods

a. Seminar: Research for decision makers-church and context analysis

The course aims to highlight the necessity of conducting contextual and congregational analyses and to provide basic tools for both. Pastors need to interpret the results of empirical studies, understand their congregation and the surrounding community, and base their ministry design on evidence.

b. Introduction to empirics

The course introduces methods employed in empirical research. Basic topics are research design and statistics. The primary goal of the course is to provide pastors with analytical tools that will help them ask and answer research questions independently.

c. Elective A: Quantitative and qualitative research approach
d. Elective B: Contemporary history and inter-church relationships

10. Electives or Research Module

    a. Religious studies (ex., Introduction to Islam)

    b. Church history (ex., History of Protestant Churches)

    c. Social sciences

    d. Marriage counselling

11. Master's project or thesis (20 ECTS)

10.3.9 Conclusion

This first appendix presents the curriculum design for a **Master's in Pastoral Ministry** program developed in the EUD and offered at Friedensau University. In making the committee followed the orientation for an integrated curriculum as presented by Shaw (2014) and applied the principles of AE, at least in design and on paper. The philosophy of AE must radiate beyond the written word into the persons of the teachers and the methods used. A study on how this is done could be a future research topic.

11 APPENDIX 2: CHARACTERISTICS DESIRED IN MINISTERS

This is the facsimile of the four pages listing the "Characteristics desired in minister" in the topical index to the writings of Ellen White (Board of trustees of the Ellen G. White Estate 1962:1734–1737):

1. **Aged (veteran)—*Cont.***
neglected—*Cont.*
not privileged to display unholy passion 2SM 222
pressed by infirmities 2SM 222
rest periods needed by 2SM 226
sustentation fund needed to care for 7T 294-5
testimony of, will help and bless church LS 428
See also Aged gospel worker
2. **Alone**
are not equal to task of: evangelizing the world MM 248
warning great cities AA 158
warning world MM 331
are not to: do all work for God GW 197 (ChS 69)
fulfill gospel commission AA 110 (ChS 11-2)
give light to world CT 468 (Ev 519-20); 2T 122 (ChS 20)
cannot do work of whole church Ev 113
cannot fully meet world's need CT 468 (Ev 519-20); 2T 122 (ChS 20)
dissemination of truth is not to be confined to a few ChS 68
work of church is not to be left to GW 200
work of saving souls does not depend on DA 822
3. **Characteristics desired in** EW 97-104
ability in word and doctrine 1T 648
ability to: administer simple remedies for relieving suffering MM 253
answer inquiries on Bible subjects Ev 438
conduct God's work WM 124
do more than present arguments for faith 2T 151
do more than present theory of truth 4T 527
endure privation 1T 130 (1TT 35)
give reasons for SDA faith 1T 648
preach before small congregation as well as large 3T 322 (GW 320)
present health reform in its simplicity MM 242
present SDA faith intelligently 2T 343
prosecute their work TM 415
read Bible without mispronouncing words CT 539 (GW 71)
read correctly 2T 556
read Scriptures without hesitation, miscalling words, or jumbling them together 4T 406
speak acceptably in public 2T 556
speak clearly and distinctly CM 71
watch and care for souls 6T 302
ability to quote: Scriptures correctly from memory GW 105; 2T 342, 501; 3T 465
Scriptures readily 2T 343
acquaintance with: evidences of SDA faith 2T 342
principles of health reform MM 239
actions characterized by true Christian politeness 3T 460, 466
activity and zeal 3T 217
adaptation to circumstances 4T 261
adornment of Christ's doctrine CH 634
advancement in mental culture 3T 465
aspiration to perfection of Christian character 3T 461
assurance of that which he affirms 1SM 158
attitude in harmony with truths he proclaims GW 172
attitude that does not disgust beholder 1T 648 (Ev 145)
benevolence 2T 518
that is natural 2T 548
blameless deportment 2T 568-9
blameless reputation 5T 598 (2TT 239)
breadth of mind 5T 252
broader ideas 6T 302
burden for people 2T 544
business tact 1T 441-2
calm contemplation 3T 217
calm justice as Christian executive 4T 269
calmness in meeting opposition 3T 426
capability in his work GW 95
carefulness AA 394-5
in conduct and manners GW 172-4; MM 146-7
certainty and decision in proclaiming truth Ev 169
cheerful temper 3T 466 (Ev 147)
cheerfulness Ev 644; GW 132, 450; 4T 320
circumspection in: deportment GW 17
thought and conversation 2T 568
word and act Ev 174
cleanliness 1T 446
clear and strong ideas 2T 337
clear mind centered on saving souls 4T 265 (Ev 656)
compassion TM 153
consecration GW 111-6 (ChS 227); 3T 558; 4T 371-83; TM 145
at home, in family, and in church 4T 344
entire 3T 210; 5T 528
unreserved, to Christ's service AA 365-6 (GW 339)
consideration 4T 262
consistency GW 144
constant growth in knowledge of God TM 144
constant reliance on God 2T 502
constant watchfulness 2T 706
conversation free from all slang phrases Ev 644
conversion Ev 643; 1T 379; 2T 334, 336; 3T 556; TM 143
daily 2T 516
such as Paul had 4T 446
thorough Ev 680
converting power of grace to stand in day of God 5T 135 (2TT 30)
courage GW 39 (ChS 235), 2T 150-2
in his work 2T 151
indomitable 2BC 1034; 5T 299
moral 4T 262
of Elijah PK 142
tried 4T 270
courtesy Ev 640; EW 102-3; GW 172; 2T 568; 3T 322-3; TM 150
Christian 4T 262
exemplary 5T 160
true 3T 466; TM 156
cultivated mind 4T 412
deep love for souls 5T 165
deep movings of Spirit TM 171

Figure 16: White: Characteristics desired in ministers - 1

devotion GW 124; 1T 442; 3T 217; TM 145
in his work 1T 467
to God's cause 1T 469; 2T 545
dignity 3T 554
holy 6T 414
humble, as preacher of truth 1T 472
quiet Ev 640; GW 172
diligence in: business 2T 550
business transactions 2T 498
diligent industry 3T 498-9
discrimination 3T 411
distrust of self TM 145
divine wisdom to know how to approach people 4T 536
earnest prayer 1T 468; 4T 265
earnestness GW 143-4; 2T 664; 4T 536
deep 4T 396 (1TT 527)
in his work 2T 335, 504, 649; 4T 442; 8T 17
in teaching TM 176
in work of presenting truth 9T 149
economy of time 3T 234-5
education in med. miss. lines MM 239
efficiency GW 92-5
elevated standard in intelligence TM 194
elevation in thought and conversation 2T 568
endowment of Spirit in preaching 2T 344
endowment with spirit of Christ 2T 337
energy GW 39 (ChS 235), 111 (ChS 227); 2T 150, 339, 504, 549; 3T 553, 558
enduring 2T 502
in his work 1T 467; 4T 442
without rashness 2T 504
entire surrender to God 2SM 201-2
entire transformation 2T 516
fairness Ev 172
faith GW 33; 3T 217
genuine, with meekness and love 5T 228
indomitable 2BC 1034; 5T 299
perfect GW 260
that works by love and purifies soul 4T 527
faithfulness AA 394-5
in sounding warnings to people Te 273
familiarity with: Bible arguments 2T 556
practical lessons of Bible 5T 251
prophecies 5T 251
strong points of SDA position 2T 500
fasting and prayerful effort 4T 400 (1TT 531)
fearlessness in: bearing God's message GW 150
declaring whole counsel of God 5T 160
preaching God's word AA 394
feelings of tenderness 3T 466
firm stand for the right MM 90
firmness 3T 556
in declaring whole counsel of God 5T 160
fitness for worthy enterprises 6T 412 (GW 64)
forbearance 1T 383; 2T 568
forgetfulness of self GW 16
friendliness Ev 143-4
in everyday life 3T 466
fuller comprehension of plan of salvation 1SM 157
godliness 1T 442
godly authority with meekness Ev 640; GW 172
good generalship Ev 357
good reputation 4T 407 (GW 439)
good sound sense 3T 466 (Ev 147)
grace Ev 640
great moral powers 3T 187 (1TT 322)
growth in: grace 4T 269; 5T 528; TM 160
knowledge of truth 4T 269
habits of mental activity GW 193
hard study 1T 468
health of body 3T 466 (Ev 147)
heart filled with pity and love 3T 187 (1TT 323)
heart of tender affection and sincere love for his flock 3T 186 (1TT 322)
heart that is: aglow with tender compassion and earnest love 3T 187 (1TT 322)
softened and subdued by vivid sense of Christ's sacrifice 5T 159
touched with genuine fervor of love of Christ 5T 158
heart true as steel 4T 448
heavenly anointing TM 338
high aim TM 194
holiness 1T 446; 2T 556, 614; 4T 379
in life 2T 552
holy deportment rebuking vain and frothy professors 1T 434
holy influence EW 103
humbleness of mind 3T 237
humility EW 102-3; 3T 556; 5T 263; 6T 57 (Ev 124; GW 405)
in eminent degree GW 142
sitting as fitting garment upon him 5T 165
illumination by Spirit COL 130-1
industry GW 111 (ChS 227); 2T 498-9, 550; 3T 234-5, 553
infusion of Spirit 2SM 152
integrity GW 111 (ChS 227); 3T 553; 4T 448
in official duties GW 141
strong 4T 270
intellect LS 277
cultivated 2T 503
intellectual power to do right work 4T 320
intelligence GW 111 (ChS 227); 3T 553
on question of temperance Te 245
intelligent understanding of truth 4T 407 (GW 439)
intense love for soul 2T 337
James 3:17 imprinted on tablets of his soul 5T 175
judgment EW 102
kind spirit EW 103
kindness EW 102-3; 3T 323, 422; 4T 262, 486 (1TT 565)
exemplary 5T 160
knowledge and skill for practical duties of everyday life Ed 221
knowledge of: disease and its causes Ev 547
God's word 2T 556
how to economize CG 135-6
how to give simple treatments to the sick 9T 172 (CH 397; ChS 134; 3TT 370)

Figure 17: White: Characteristics desired in ministers - 2

3. **Characteristics desired in—*Cont.***
knowledge of—*Cont.*
how to labor intelligently as med. miss. evangelists 9T 172 (CH 397; ChS 134; 3TT 370)
how to minister to the sick Ev 547; MM 250 (Ev 520)
how to wear gospel shoes Ev 174
how to work to best advantage 1T 647
science of Christ's prayer in John 17 8T 239 (2TT 243)
when to speak and when to keep silent 2T 557
labor uncontaminated by applause 5T 263
life 1T 469
lips charged with Spirit's power 3TT 439
long-suffering 2T 568
love 2T 568; 3T 422; 4T 486 (1TT 565)
love for: discipline 2T 614
order Ev 115; 1T 649
love of Christ AA 515
love of God burning on altar of his heart 5T 166
love of God living in his heart 4T 317 (Ev 320)
loving tenderness 3T 422
manners rightly representing truth GW 174
meek and peaceable spirit 3T 556
meekness 2T 568; 5T 160
of deportment 3T 237
melting love in his heart while laboring for souls 3T 434
mental discipline 3T 466 (Ev 147)
moral independence 5T 263
moral power 3T 556
to do right 4T 320
movements regulated by Spirit 3T 241
much of God's grace Ev 638
order 1T 446
in highest sense 2T 707
patience in: dealing with minds 4T 262
meeting opposition 3T 426
patient reasoning EW 98
perseverance GW 39 (ChS 235); 2T 150, 500, 549, 644
decided, in his work 1T 467
in efforts to help brethren 3T 187 (1TT 323)
under difficulties 3T 556-7
piety GW 132; 4T 320, 379
deep EW 103
pity 2T 568; 3T 323; TM 156
for poor sinners 4T 268
pleasant face reflecting love 3T 422
pleasantness Ev 172
power in tone of voice, look, and words 3T 32
preparation for med. miss. work MM 253
proficiency in: grammar and language TM 194
reading and writing TM 194
proper attitude toward med. miss. work 6T 299-301 (WM 121)
prudence GW 95
purity EW 103; 2T 614
of heart and life 2T 552; 3T 241 (GW 130)
reasoning from cause to effect MM 307
refinement 1T 648 (Ev 145)
in highest sense 2T 707
in manners Ev 640; GW 172; 1T 415 (1TT 163)
without affectation 2T 503
refusal to excuse or palliate evil PK 141
resolute refusal to exalt self AA 278 (Ev 44, 135)
respect in teaching TM 176
reverence 2SM 313
impressive, for God PP 580
in teaching TM 176
sanctification 2T 556; 6T 412 (GW 64)
by truths he preaches GW 142; 2T 552; 4T 315
of heart and life 2T 335
sanctified influence 3T 234
sanctifying influence of truth 3T 237
self-abasement 2T 516
self-control 2T 511; 3T 556
in meeting opposition 3T 426
true GW 145
self-culture 2T 500
self-denial 2SM 193; 3T 556
practical 3T 256 (1TT 331)
self-discipline 3T 421, 559
self-examination GW 275-6; 1T 433-4, 468; 3T 421
daily 4T 371
self-improvement Ev 207
self-knowledge 2T 511
to guard him from falling into temptation 2T 517
self-sacrifice 2SM 193; 1T 442-3; 6T 412 (GW 64)
exemplary 2T 545
separation from all business of improper nature Ev 632
simplicity 3T 554
greater 4T 446
sobriety 2T 568
sociability Ev 143-4; GW 193 (ChS 122; Ev 436-7, 483; ML 233; WM 91)
social qualities GW 338
sound judgment EW 98; 1T 209 (GW 437)
soundness of principle 5T 133 (2TT 27)
spirit of: endurance to suffer for Christ 3T 48
sacrifice 2T 549, 709-10; 3T 256 (1TT 331)
self-denial 2T 151, 549, 709-10
spiritual muscle 4T 262
steadfastness in integrity 4T 448
stimulation of holy zeal 5T 299
strength enough to deny self GW 337
strict regard for rules of propriety 1T 381
strong nerves 3T 466 (Ev 147)
sympathy 3T 422
for poor sinners 4T 268
tact GW 111 (ChS 227); 3T 553; 6T 302
in their work TM 415; WM 124
tactfulness GW 117-20
tender compassion for the tempted, afflicted, and despondent 3T 229
tenderheartedness 3T 323; TM 153, 156
thorough preparation and training 2T 341
thorough reformation in themselves TM 145
thorough transformation 3T 415

Figure 18: White: Characteristics desired in ministers - 3

thoroughness GW 367-71
in business transactions 2T 498 (Ev 646)
thought GW 95; 3T 217
trained mind 3T 241
transformation of character TM 143
true moral courage 5T 252
true tenderness of heart TM 150
understanding and appreciation of humanity's needs 6T 302
understanding of: physiology and hygiene 6T 302
reasons of SDA faith 1T 648
undivided and unselfish interest in God's cause and work 2T 516
undying love for souls 2T 151, 646 (GW 342)
untiring patience and perseverance LS 195
uprightness through varied trials of life 3T 553
well balanced by religious principles 5T 528
wisdom in dealing with minds 4T 262
in his efforts 8T 17
wise and watchful discipline 3T 422
zeal 1T 469; 2T 339
fervent 2T 337
in his work GW 95; 2T 151, 649; 4T 442
unabated, in his work LS 195
untiring, in his work 2T 504

4. Children of

allowed to do as they pleased 2T 627
are most neglected children in some cases GW 206 (AH 354)
best qualified to judge of his piety 5T 161 (AH 354)
boy of, who did as he pleased 2T 624
corrupt and proverb of reproach 1T 235
failure to discipline 2T 627
message of Christ re MH 42-3 (Ev 580)
nature of, should not be animalized by flesh food CD 399; MM 281
need to be properly instructed in God's word 4T 398 (AH 358; GW 212; 1TT 528)
Satan zealously works to ensnare AH 357
should be trained to habits of industry 2T 624
should set fitting example of neat and becoming dress GW 450
some have very expensive, to provide for 1T 376
training of AH 353
unruly AH 356
wayward son of, appeal to AH 357-8
who did as they pleased 2T 621

5. Classes of

able: applause endangers 3T 185-6 (1TT 321)
approbation is loved by some 3T 185 (1TT 321)
no greater honor than to be accepted by God as AA 328
required for work in these last days of peril 1T 648
should learn to labor without excitement of applause 3T 186 (1TT 321)
why work of, often produces little good GW 196 (ChS 69)
able and holy, today there is a great scarcity of AA 328
able preachers among, should not be burdened with business matters Ev 91-2
should not be tied up at centers of influence LS 422-3
able to talk, many persons always ready to flatter and praise 4T 376
acting as pub. house agent in New York State 1T 688
advocating truth, Satan watches to get advantage of 3T 220 (Ev 165)
against whom Satan and his angels will be arrayed 2T 515
attended by angels AA 527; 2T 514
attending board and council meetings GW 451
battling for: right, God and angels help 1T 467
truth contend with devils 1T 624
building church should seek advice, counsel, and co-operation of members CS 262
burdened with sense of greatness of God's work AA 327
called of God will be given tact, skill, and understanding Ev 686
Christ teaches uneducated, to carry His truth to others 4T 377
connected with sanitariums, essential qualifications of 7T 75 (CH 293)
connected with SDA schools can succeed in revealing truths of third angel's message MM 263
consecrated AA 359-71
considering it a privilege to counsel with their brethren 1T 444
dependent on hospitality of other people should make themselves useful and helpful 3T 211
devoted, who will have no lack of temporal things 4BC 1180
who will see fruit of their labors AA 278 (Ev 44)
diverted from urgent work in field to settle some church trial 5T 615-6 (2TT 259)
doing: colporteur work 6T 321 (CM 44; 2TT 540)
good work, caution against too much transferring of Ev 690
personal work can accomplish tenfold more than pulpit preacher 9T 124
dying from cancer, comfort for 2SM 255
earnest, God's cause needs 3T 423
entering new fields may find it necessary to sell publications 1T 688
exerting commanding influence for good GW 111 (ChS 227)
warning against attachment to 6BC 1086
favorite, do not copy example of Ev 630
feeding God's flock must first eat of bread of heaven TM 340
feeling that he does not receive due honor 5T 159
finding: church members at variance should call halt Ev 638
harvest of souls wherever they labor ChS 67
it necessary to engage in debate 1T 624 (CD 188; Ev 165; GW 380)

Figure 19: White: Characteristics desired in ministers - 4

12 Appendix 3: Overview of the Coding System (Code-Matrix-Browser, MAXQDA)

The following tables present the full coding system developed during the analysis of the ten interviews, displayed by means of the Code-Matrix-Browser in MAXQDA.

The first table provides an overview of the nine main categories with the number of codings per interview partner (P1–P10). The subsequent tables show the individual subcodes within each main category. For a methodological note on the interpretation of these tables, see Chapter 6.1.

Category	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
Impressive teachers	**11**	**16**	**10**	**4**	**7**	**6**	**10**	**9**	**10**	**4**
AE in the curriculum	**24**	**16**	**9**	**13**	**10**	**6**	**1**		**5**	**3**
Faculty development	**7**	**46**	**12**	**1**	**3**	**5**	**2**	**2**	**6**	
Philosophy of other teachers		**10**	**6**	**8**	**1**	**1**	**3**		**1**	
Personal philosophy as teacher		**15**	**8**	**3**	**4**	**12**	**9**	**1**	**5**	**4**
Big idea behind curriculum		**11**	**8**		**13**	**2**	**2**	**12**	**2**	
Elements of the philosophy of AE	**17**	**6**	**11**	**11**	**5**	**3**	**12**	**6**	**5**	**4**
What makes AE Adventist?		**7**	**4**	**11**	**4**		**2**	**3**		
General items and out of the box	**3**	**8**	**7**	**4**	**4**	**10**	**2**	**1**	**3**	**3**
Total	**62**	**135**	**75**	**55**	**51**	**45**	**43**	**34**	**37**	**18**

Table 9: Code-Matrix-Browser — Overview of all nine main categories (number of codings per participant)

Category	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
Impressive teachers	**11**	**16**	**10**	**4**	**7**	**6**	**10**	**9**	**10**	**4**
Characteristics of exemplary teachers		1	2		1	1	1	2	1	1
Non-impressive teachers		2	1		1		1	1	1	
True to the Bible										3

Category	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
Teachers with focus on student		7	3			4	4	1	1	
Spiritual teachers	5	2			1		3		1	
Real life teachers – not only in class	5	1			1				1	

Table 10: Code-Matrix-Browser — "Impressive teachers"

Category	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
AE in the curriculum	**24**	**16**	**9**	**13**	**10**	**6**	**1**		**5**	**3**
Need to contemporize / not mechanical									2	
Critical remarks / University vs. seminary					5					
Character education / Spiritual master plan			3			3				
AE basically present but could be more		1	1	3						
AE only in curriculum if teacher has vision		6			1		1			
Philosophy of AE in every class & beyond		5	1	1	1					
Curriculum: not the most important thing	4	2			1				1	
Influencing levels (accreditation, Triple A)	7	1		9	1	2			1	2
Curriculum: Practical Theology	7		3			1				1

Table 11: Code-Matrix-Browser — "AE in the curriculum"

Category	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
Faculty development	**7**	**46**	**12**	**1**	**3**	**5**	**2**	**2**	**6**	
Dean with reluctance / Invest in faculty								1	2	
Alumni survey / Work as a team						1	2	1		
Dean needs time (incl. busyness)	2	13	3			3			3	

Category	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
Challenge: dean not taken seriously		1	4		2					
Help for faculty growth (person-centered)		5						1		
Need for new faculty / hiring process		7								
Tried to develop faculty – did not work		6								
No systematic focus / unbalanced academic		3								
Teachers urged: lens of Christ + salvation	4									

Table 12:Code-Matrix-Browser — "Faculty development"

Category	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
Philosophy of other teachers		**10**	**6**	**8**	**1**	**1**	**3**		**1**	
European vs. South American style				7						
Do teachers really have a philosophy?		1	2		1		2		1	
Philosophy depends on view of students		7					1			
Teachers who are together with students		1								
Apologetic vs. mission and transformation				1						
'Let us learn together'						1				

Table 13: Code-Matrix-Browser — "Philosophy of other teachers"

Category	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
Personal philosophy as teacher		**15**	**8**	**3**	**4**	**12**	**9**	**1**	**5**	**4**
Holistic / student-centered approach		1		1		6	6		1	1
Encouraging students to think differently			2		1	4		1		
Harmony between belief and teaching					2				3	2

Category	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
Being a companion on the adventure of learning		1	2		1	1				
Opening eyes for the big picture / grand theme		1	3				1			
Actualizing and personalizing scripture		1								2
Coaching students in character growth		1					8		1	
No-Gos (not producing copies / disciples of Jesus)		2								
Various personal reflections		7	1	2		1			1	1

Table 14: Code-Matrix-Browser — "Personal philosophy as teacher"

Category	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
Big idea behind curriculum		**11**	**8**		**13**	**2**	**2**	**12**	**2**	
Three elements (Systematic / Practical / Bible)								10		
Five elements (P5´s framework)					13					
Learn to think theologically / practically		5								
Holistic education / produce able pastors						2		1	1	
How to measure program success			2							
Silos / module system / inherited curriculum			6					1		
Help students grow / get toolbox for ministry		4								
Program length / influenced by state							2		1	
Dreams / big goals / love and service		2							1	

Table 15: Code-Matrix-Browser — "Big idea behind curriculum"

Category	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
Elements of the philosophy of AE	**17**	**6**	**11**	**11**	**5**	**3**	**12**	**6**	**5**	**4**
AE – good concept, not always applied			4	6						
Individual thinkers in dependence of God		2		1		1				
Human / student centered		1				2			1	2
Character education / likeness of Christ	2		1	1	1		5	3	3	
Redemption through Christ / relationship	5		1					1		
Professionalism / excellency	3			1						
Holistic education	1	1	4	2	3	1	4	1	1	
Learn to serve	4		1		1					1
Mission / preparing for second coming								1		1

Table 16: Code-Matrix-Browser — "Elements of the philosophy of AE"

Category	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
What makes AE Adventist?		**7**	**4**	**11**	**4**		**2**	**3**		
Not enough reflection on AE – developed too fast				8						
Close link between education and salvation		2		2						
Adventist faith / identity		1			2			2		
Adventist worldview / brings God into picture		2	1							
AE = hopefully best Christian education			1							
Does AE really make a difference?			2							
Background and culture influence philosophy							2			
Biblical understanding / mainly content		1		1				1		
Not to be used in an elitarian way					2					

Table 17: Code-Matrix-Browser — "What makes AE Adventist?"

Category	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
General items and out of the box	**3**	**8**	**7**	**4**	**4**	**10**	**2**	**1**	**3**	**3**
Institutions in Europe rather small		3	2							
Not trained to be a teacher		2	2		2					
Challenges with church administration						5			1	
Good, educated pastors may be 'dangerous'						3				
Fighting bad reputation						2				
Adventist schools need clear identity / Andrews				3						
Allusion to conservative-liberal	3									
Challenges to schools / ATE criticized but lonely			2		2					
Dreams / Education is what remains / study abroad				1				1	2	2

Table 18: Code-Matrix-Browser — "General items and out of the box"

13 Appendix 4: Administrative Documents of the Research

13.1 Invitation Letter to the Deans

Dear Dr. XYZ!

I am a doctoral student at the Columbia International University in Korntal (https://awm-korntal.eu), an evangelical institution, where I am writing a dissertation for a PhD in Education. The name of the program is "Leadership in Theological Education".

As I am serving as Executive Secretary for the Austrian Union, I am aware of the crucial role of pastors in our church, and I am interested in seeing theological education as a part of the process that equips our pastors for their ministry the best way possible.

Pairing my keen interest in theological education with the rediscovery of the pillars of the philosophy of Adventist Education ignited the idea for the research I want to conduct: What are the driving factors in Adventist theological education? Are its objectives, structure, content, and methods inspired and moulded by the philosophy of Adventist education?

A consistent part of my research is to interview deans of Adventist theological institutions from the ESD, EUD and TED. This is the reason why I am respectfully inviting you to participate in this study. My questions will focus on what I have already described as my research question: What do you understand by Adventist Education and if you consider it to be more than a categorial term, how is your understanding reflected in your program of theological education?

Therefore, I kindly ask you to be my interview partner sometimes in autumn/winter 2020/2021, for only 60 to 90 minutes. If you agree, we will choose a convenient date together and decide if we meet in person or via Skype or Zoom.

The interview will be recorded and conducted according to scientific criteria. You will be asked to give your written consent for me to know whether I can quote what you said in my dissertation or you prefer to stay anonymous.

I hope that you answer positively. If you have any further questions, I am happy to answer them via phone or e-mail.

Kind regards,

Oliver Fichtberger, PhD Candidate

+ 43 676 833 22 206
o.fichtberger@adventisten.at

13.2 Consent Form and Data Protection

CONSENT FORM

Interview

For participants of the research about the influence of the philosophy of Adventist education on Adventist theological education.

I, _____, have been informed about the research to be undertaken by Oliver Fichtberger for his thesis at the European School for Culture and Theology[51], (affiliated with the Columbia International University, CIU).

I understand that the purpose of the research is to analyse with help of interviews how deans of Adventist theological institutions describe their philosophy of Adventist education and how this is reflected in the programs they are responsible for.

Data will be used for research purposes for a thesis towards a Doctor of Philosophy in Education.

Basic information about the interview:

- The interview will take 60 to 90 minutes.
- The interview will be recorded, and a transcript will be produced.
- I will be sent the transcript and given the opportunity to correct any factual errors.
- The transcript of the interview will be analysed by Oliver Fichtberger as research investigator.
- The access to the interview transcript will be limited to Oliver Fichtberger and academic colleagues and researchers with whom he might collaborate as part of the research process.
- Any summary interview content, or direct quotations from the interview, that are made available through academic publication or other academic outlets will be treated according to what you consent in the Quotation Agreement.
- The actual recording will be stored securely.
- Any variation of the conditions above will only occur with your further explicit approval.

[51] At the time of the Interview, this was the official name for the institution that is now called Columbia International University, Korntal.

Quotation Agreement:

I also understand that my words may be quoted directly. With regards to being quoted, please initial next to any of the statements that you agree with:

Please select one option:

- ☐ I want to be named in this research, so that my contribution to this research can be acknowledged. Quotes of me shall appear with my name.
- ☐ I do not want my name to appear in this research. All information in this respect must be anonymous.

All or part of the content of your interview may be used

- in academic papers, policy papers or news articles
- on a website and in other media that the researcher may produce such as spoken presentations
- in an archive of the project as noted above

By signing this form, I agree that:

1. I am voluntarily taking part in this project. I understand that I do not have to take part, and I can stop the interview at any time.
2. The transcribed interview or extracts from it may be used as described above.
3. I do not expect to receive any benefit or payment for my participation.
4. I can request a copy of the transcript of my interview and may make edits I feel necessary to ensure the effectiveness of any agreement made about confidentiality.
5. I have been able to ask any questions I might have, and I understand that I am free to contact the researcher with any questions I may have in the future.

_____
Printed name

_____ _____
Participants Signature Date

_____ _____
Researchers Signature Date

Declaration of consent
to collect and process personal data
for research purposes

A. Project Outline

12. Project:

Research project as part of the dissertation towards a Doctor of Philosophy in Education

13. Description of the Research Project:

The research aims to explore the influence of the philosophy of Adventist education on Adventist theological education by interviewing deans of Adventist theological institutions in Europe about their understanding of Adventist education and how this influences objectives, structure, content and method of their theological program

14. Institution and Supervision:

The researcher is supervised by two professors at the European School of Culture and Theology[52]: Dr. Bernhard Ott, main supervisor, Dr. Thomas Kröck, methodical supervisor and as external supervisor with Adventist background: Dr. Barna Magyarosi, executive secretary of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Inter-European Division

15. Interviewer:

Oliver Fichtberger, M. Th., PhD cand.

16. Date of Interview:

_____

17. Category of personal data:

Name, address, telephone number, e-mail, age, marital status, date of birth, children, and as special category religious and philosophic beliefs which will be recorded in either video or audio

18. Purpose of the project

The data will be used for an analysis of the influence of the philosophy of Adventist education on Adventist theological education; the dissertation will be available in public libraries and may also be reported in scientific and academic journals

[52] See footnote 49.

B. Legal Information according to GDPR

1. **Legal Basis**
   Oliver Fichtberger processes your personal data based on your consent in accordance with Art. 6 Para. 1 S. 1 lit. (a) GDPR. If special categories of personal data are affected, Oliver Fichtberger processes the personal data collected from you based on your consent in accordance with Art. 9 Para. 2 lit. (a) GDPR.

2. **Recipients of the data**
   The transcript of the interview will be analysed by Oliver Fichtberger and access to it will be limited to the three persons named in Section A, 3. Quotations will be used according to your choice in the section "Quotation agreement".

3. **Duration of data storage**
   Data will be used for the analysis during the dissertation process and then securely archived.

4. **Your rights**
   Within the framework of the legal requirements, you are entitled to ask Oliver Fichtberger

   - for a confirmation whether your personal data is processed by Oliver Fichtberger
   - information about this data and the circumstances of the processing
   - correction if this data is incorrect
   - deletion, as far as there is no justification for the processing and there is no longer any obligation to store it,
   - restriction of processing in special statutory cases and
   - transmission of your personal data—insofar as you have provided it—to you or a third party in a structured, common, and machine-readable format.

   In addition, you have the right to revoke your consent to Oliver Fichtberger at any time, with the result that the processing of your personal data, in accordance with your declaration of revocation, will make it inadmissible for the future. However, this does not affect the lawfulness of processing based on consent before its withdrawal.

5. **No automated individual decision-making, including profiling**
   Your personal data will not be processed for the purpose of automated decision making (including profiling) pursuant to Art. 22 para. 1 and para. 4 GDPR.

6. **GDPR authority**
   Finally, we inform you that you have the right to place a complaint at GDPR authority in Germany, Baden Württemberg:

Der Landesbeauftragte für den Datenschutz und die Informationsfreiheit Baden-Württemberg
Postfach 10 29 32, 70025 Stuttgart
Königstraße 10a, 70173 Stuttgart
Tel.: 0711/61 55 41 – 0
Fax: 0711/61 55 41 – 15
E-Mail: poststelle@lfdi.bwl.de
Internet: https://www.baden-wuerttemberg.datenschutz.de

I hereby consent that the personal data of my person collected within the scope of the research project described above in the form of original recordings of the interview and its transcript may be used by Oliver Fichtberger. If I specify or have specified special categories of personal data, these are included in the declaration of consent.

Your consent is voluntary. You can refuse your consent without incurring any disadvantages.

_____
Printed name

_____ _____
Participants Signature Date

_____ _____
Researchers Signature Date

C. Definitions

- 'Personal data' means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person (‘data subject’); an identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person.
- 'Special categories of personal data' according Art. 9 Para 1 GDPR is any information revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious

or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership, and the processing of genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person, data concerning health or data concerning a natural person's sex life or sexual orientation.

- 'Processing' means any operation or set of operations which is performed on personal data or on sets of personal data, whether or not by automated means, such as collection, recording, organization, structuring, storage, adaptation or alteration, retrieval, consultation, use, disclosure by transmission, dissemination or otherwise making available, alignment or combination, restriction, erasure or destruction.

13.3 The Interview Questions

Theme	Primary question	Additional question
Warming up	Please describe your personal academic history!	
AE as Personal Experience	**Looking back at what you have experienced—what kind of understanding could you see in the approach of your teachers? What philosophy of education can you discern?** *Everything a teacher does in his teachings (choice of objectives, content, method of delivery, attitude towards the student …) roots in his philosophical understanding of the nature of education, of learning and of the student and of his own role.*	Looking back on your personal experience as a student and learner—how would you describe your encounters with the philosophy of Adventist education?
Personal Philosophy of Education	How would you describe your personal philosophy about the nature of education and the learner and the process of learning?	
Current curriculum	What is the philosophy behind your current curriculum?	What are the reasons for the structure of your current curriculum? What are the main big ideas behind your current curriculum?
Philosophy of AE	As Adventist church we boast to have a characteristic philosophy of education and use the two words "Adventist Education" not only for our educational system	AE is a very commonly used expression in the Adventist church. It stands for a philosophy of education with a distinguishing quality. How

Theme	Primary question	Additional question
	but also for our philosophy of education. What is your personal understanding of the philosophy of AE?	would you personally explain it? Four most important categories of AE: • Deep and sound spirituality—restore the image of God in man • Character education • Holistic education: Body, mind, soul: Knowing, being and doing • Practical preparation for joyful service for this world and the world to come
Goals of AE	What major goals do you discern in AE?	See also list of "higher educational goals", 87f
Application of AE in the program	Suppose that I am a potential student and I read the visionary Chapter 1 in the book Education of Ellen White and now I ask you, where in your program of study I will find the principles of AE reflected? As a faculty, is the philosophy of AE a point of reference for the objectives, structure, content, and method of your program or are there other influences that have greater impact? What do you consider the greatest hindrance in implementing Adventist education?	How is your philosophy of AE reflected in objectives, structure (curriculum—choice and interplay of courses), content (choice of what is covered in the different courses) and method (how the content is taught) in your program? How do you care for a consistent understanding and implementation of AE within the faculty?
Ending question	Coming to an end of our conversation, is there anything you would like to add to that we have already talked about?	
Feedback question	Do you have any suggestions about these interviews?	Are there topics we should explore that I have not asked about?

14 LITERATURE

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