

Philosophy of Education

by Robby Raney

The purpose of Adventist education is to prepare young people for life on this earth, and help them develop a relationship with God that will endure through eternity. I believe God has called me to be a teacher at a Seventh-day Adventist school, where I can use music, Bible, and history to inspire and equip my students to reach these goals.

My ultimate success would be to see each of my students standing at the Tree of Life in Heaven. Until then, I want to help and encourage them as they grow to become active members of their community and their church. With God's help, I will present them with the information and teach them the skills necessary to work for God, in whatever capacity he calls them.

For years I have heard pastors, teachers, and administrators bemoan the fact that young people are leaving the Adventist church, and leaving God altogether. I have seen many people take different approaches to this problem, but the two that have grounded me the most were giving me ownership and a history.

For me, ownership began early in my college experience when I was invited to join the Adoration worship committee at the Collegedale Seventh-day Adventist church. While serving on this committee, I have been mentored by two generations of musicians, pastors, and church members in the planning and purpose of worship services. Each member has an equal voice, and we work together to plan the services. I want to provide a similar experience for my students.

Ownership has been a fairly recent acquisition to my life, but since childhood I have known the history of the Adventist church. As I have grown and matured, my understanding of the miracle of our existence has become clearer. After the disappointment of 1844, there should have been no "Adventists" left in the world. But from the scores of the disappointed rose God's remnant church. I feel called to pass the torch on to the next generation of students.

I truly believe that history, religion, and music (and the other fine arts) are interconnected. A history class is more complete when themes of the Great Controversy are included. A Bible class is more trustworthy when historical context is understood. Fine art, then, is our response to what we know and understand. A choral ensemble cannot excel without the conductor knowing *and teaching* the historical and religious contexts of the piece, and how they relate to life today.

I want my students to leave my classroom with a relationship with God that has been strengthened and tempered by an understanding of the content that I taught, and with an understanding of why it is important for them.

revised April 2016