

## **SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION AS ADVOCATED BY ADVENT HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **Premises**

Seventh-day Adventist, within the context of basic beliefs, acknowledge that-

- God is the creator and Sustainer of the entire universe-animate and inanimate
- God created perfect human beings in his own image with power to think, to choose, and to do.
- God is the source of all that is true, good and beautiful, and has chosen to reveal himself to humankind.
- Humans, by their own choice, rebelled against God and fell into a state of sin that has separated them from God and each other, affecting the entire planet and plunging it into the cosmic conflict between good and evil. In spite of this, the world and human beings still reveal, albeit dimly, the goodness and beauty of their original condition.
- The Godhead met the problem of sin through the plan of redemption. This plan aims to restore human beings to God's image and the universe back to its original state of perfection, love, and harmony.
- God invites us to choose his plan of restoration and to relate to this world creatively and responsibly until He intervenes in history to bring about the new heavens and the new earth that is promised in his word.

### **Philosophy**

The Seventh-day Adventist philosophy of education is Christ-centred.

Adventists believe that, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, God's character and purposes can be understood as revealed in the Bible, in Jesus Christ and in nature. 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 behaviour 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 time dimensions spans 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 other peoples 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.

### **Aim and Mission**

Adventist education prepares students for a useful and joy-filled life, fostering friendship with God, whole-person development, Bible-based values, and selfless service in accordance with the Seventh-day Adventist mission to the world.

### **The uniqueness of Adventist Education**

- 1. Its unifying mission.** Adventist schools have common mission and purpose: to communicate to all peoples the everlasting gospel of God's love as revealed in the life, death, and resurrection, and high priestly ministry of Jesus Christ and to restore human beings in their nature.
- 2. Its whole-person development within a framework of faith.** Adventist education is located in its wholistic framework-the harmonious balance between the spiritual, mental, social, physical and moral dimensions of learning.
- 3. Its faith perspective.** Adventists hold that truth is absolute and unchanging, and the reference point of knowledge is God. Hence "if you listen to the words of God and search for understanding and knowledge,

you will be given wisdom and discernment; because this only come from the Lord”

- 4. Its academic excellence.** Embracing a faith perspective does not undermine academic excellence. The Christian doctrine that God created humans in his image (Genesis 1:26) includes the idea that God has shared with human beings His creativity, and implies that they possess a capacity for rationality. The goal of honouring their creator and Redeemer mean that Christians are held to a higher standard than secular educators and researchers.
- 5. Its emphasis on moral and ethical issues.** Adventist education’s core values demand student outcomes that are broader and deeper than simply attaining academic excellence. Character development, integrity, knowing and practicing right from wrong are critical to Christian living and preparation for God’s kingdom.  
“The greatest want of the world is the want of men-men who will not be bought or sold; men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not ea to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall.”
- 6. Its emphasis on service as a vital component of academic life.** In an Adventist school, curriculum does not stand alone. It goes hand in hand with unselfish service to God and humanity. Students are encouraged to serve while still in school, with many provided opportunities for international relief efforts and for local community service.
- 7. Is enduring anchor is God.** Students who pass through Adventist portals of education learn that God is the sure and certain anchor in life. They discover that the strongest and most reliable currency in life is not gold or silver, not dollar or euro, but an unshakable, enduring trust in God and responsibility to Him. They learn to “trust in the Lord with all thine heart and they lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct the paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6 KJV).

## **Agencies of Education**

**Home**

The home is society's primary and most basic educational agency. Parents are the first and most influential teachers and have the responsibility to reflect God's character to their children. Moreover, the whole setting shapes the values, attitude and worldview of the young. The church and the school, along with society's other educational agencies, build on and supplement the work of the home. It is imperative that the home, in turn, supports the educational work of the school.

### **Local Church**

The local church also has a major assignment in the lifelong educational enterprise. The congregation as a community of faith provides an atmosphere of acceptance and love in which it discipled those within its sphere of influence in a personal faith in Jesus Christ and in a growing understanding of the word of God. This understanding includes both an intellectual aspect and a life of conformity to God's will.

### **School**

All levels of Adventist schooling build on the foundation laid on the home and in the church. The Christian teacher functions in the classroom as God's minister in the plan of redemption. The greatest need of students is to accept Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour and commit to a life of Christian values and service. The formal and non-formal curricula help students reach their potential for spiritual, mental, physical, social, and vocational development. Preparing students for a life of service to their family, church, and the larger community is a primary aim of the school.

### **World Church**

The world Church at all levels has oversight responsibility for the healthy functioning of learning in all three of the above venues, including lifelong learning. With reference to the school as an educational agency, its functions are ideally accomplished by institutions established by the Church for that purpose. The Church at large should make every effort to ensure that all Adventist children and youth have the opportunity to attend an Adventist educational institution. Realizing, however, that a large percentage of the church youth are not enrolled in Adventist schools, the world Church must find

ways to achieve the goals of Adventist education through alternative means (e.g. after-school church-based instruction)

## **The Role of Advent Hill Primary School**

### **Key Components**

#### **The Student**

As a child of God, the student is the primary focus of the entire educational effort and should be loved and accepted. The purpose of Adventist education is to help students reach their highest potential and to fulfil God's purpose for their lives. Student outcomes constitute a significant guiding criterion in assessing the health and effectiveness of the school.

#### **The Teacher**

The teacher holds a central place of importance. Ideally, the teacher should be both committed Adventist Christian and an exemplary role model of the Christian graces and professional competences.

#### **Knowledge**

All learning is grounded on faith in a certain set of presuppositions or world view. The Christian worldview recognizes a supernatural as well as natural order. Adventists define knowledge more broadly than that which is just intellectual or scientific. True knowledge encompasses cognitive, experimental, emotional, relational, intuitive, and spiritual elements. An acquisition of true knowledge leads to understanding, which is manifested in wisdom and appropriate action.

#### **Curriculum**

The curriculum will promote academic excellence and will include a core of general studies needed for responsible citizenship in a given culture along with spiritual insights that inform Christian living and build for community. Such citizenship includes appreciation for the Christian heritage, concern for social justice, and stewardship of the environment. A balanced curriculum will address the major developmental needs in the spiritual, intellectual, physical, social, emotional, and vocational realms. All areas of study will be examined

from the perspective of the biblical world view within the context of the Great Controversy theme, as it promotes the integration of faith and learning.

### **Instruction**

The instructional program of the classroom places appropriate emphasis on all forms of true knowledge, purposefully integrating faith and learning. Instructional methodology will actively engage the needs and abilities of each student, giving opportunity to put what is learnt into practice, and be appropriate to the discipline and to the culture.

### **Discipline**

Discipline in a Christian school is built upon the need to restore the image of God in each student and recognizes the freedom of the will and the work of the Holy Spirit. Discipline-not to be confused with punishment-seeks the development of self- control. In redemptive discipline, the student's will and intelligence are engaged.

### **School Life**

A blended emphasis of worship, study, labour, and recreation, and relationships will characterize the total learning environment, with careful attention given to balance. The school community will be pervaded by joyful spirituality, a spirit of cooperation, and respect for the diversity of individuals and cultures.

### **Assessment**

The Adventist school gives clear evidence that it subscribes to an Adventist philosophy of education. Such evidence is found in the written curriculum, in teaching and learning activity, in the school, and by the testimony of students, employees, and the community at large. Assessment of individuals is redemptive in nature and always seeks God's high ideal of excellence.

## **Responsibilities and Outcomes**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has made a commitment to provide a broad education and spiritual formation for its children, youth, and young

adults within the context of the Christian worldview. The Church extends this same opportunity to other children and youth of the community who share similar values and ideas. Adventist education seeks to maintain academic excellence in all teaching and learning activities.

## **Primary Schools**

The Adventist primary school offers students:

- 1) A climate in which they can understand God's will, commit their lives to him, and experience the joy of helping others;
- 2) An organized program leading towards spiritual, physical, mental, social, and emotional development;

A basic core of skills and knowledge for everyday living appropriate to their age;

A wholesome appreciation and respect for the home, the church, the school, the community.

### ***Students completing the primary level at Adventist school should-***

- *Have had the opportunity to commit their lives to God through conversion, baptism, service, and a desire to do God's will in every area of living.*
- *Demonstrate competence in thinking, communication and quantitative skills, along with other academic areas foundational to schooling at the secondary level.*
- *Manifest interpersonal skills and emotional growth necessary for health relationships with their peers, family, and community.*
- *Know and practice basic principles of health and balanced living, including a wise use of time and entertainment media.*
- *Develop an appreciation for the dignity of labour along with a general awareness of career options appropriate to their interests and God-given abilities*

## **Lifelong learning**

Education goes beyond formal schooling. Lifelong learning should meet the needs of both professionals and non-professionals. (1) Among professional responsibilities are opportunities for continuing education for certification and career enrichment for educators, clergy, business and healthcare personnel, and others. (2) In the non-professional realm, opportunities exist for programs

in such areas as local church leadership, family life, personal development, spirituality, Christian growth, and service to the church and community. Programs need to be developed that utilize both traditional teaching techniques and extension learning through media technology. Formal schooling combines with the other agencies of education in preparing the student “for the joy of service in this world and the higher joy of the wider service in the world to come.”