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# MARTIN LUTHER AND EDUCATION

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Education played a crucial role in the Protestant Reformation enabling it to grow and thrive. Even earlier efforts at religious reform, such as the Waldenses and the Hussites, recognized the value of education in transmitting religious values. The Seventh-day Adventist Church, in a similar way, builds upon this Reformation heritage by continuing in this rich spirit of reform that is closely aligned with and transmitted through education. With an educational system that spans the globe and has almost two million students,[1] the Seventh-day Adventist Church maintains one of the largest religious educational systems in the world. This Adventist system, as with many other aspects of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, is a beneficiary to a Protestant legacy of education with deep roots that can be credited to Martin Luther and the Reformation.

Martin Luther transformed the world, especially Western culture, by writing his *Ninety-Five Theses*. He also changed expectations about what an ideal government is and, in turn, this had implications for the definition of what a good citizen should be also. Through this process, Luther drastically altered all levels of education. Most governments today provide education and ensure the right of education for all citizens.[2] These rights are very much a part of Luther's enduring legacy. As R. Wald Holder writes, "Part of the story of the Reformation is a story of the foundation of schools."[3] This chapter explores why Luther developed this educational perspective and what his views of education were that have impacted Protestants, including Adventists.

1 "The General Conference Education Team," Department of Education, Seventh-day Adventist Church, http://education.gc.adventist.org/about.html.

2 John Witte Jr., "The Lutheran Reformation and Its Impact on Legal Culture," in *Protestantism After 500 Years*, ed. Thomas Albert Howard and Mark A. Noll (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 69.

3 R. Ward Holder, *Crisis and Renewal: The Era of the Reformations* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2009).

## 1. Medieval Foundations for Education

Martin Luther was born at a time when the educational system was not well-coordinated and was unavailable to most. Education consisted of a mix of cathedral, parish, monastic, and palace schools, along with universities that emerged just prior to Luther's time.[4] These schools did not provide general education for all children but rather trained students for certain careers, generally in the government or the church. Monastic schools, for example, existed primarily to provide religious education and literacy for novice monks and nuns. Occasionally monasteries provided education for laity, but that was rare and generally viewed as a distraction from their primary focus. Instead, they trained monks, who, in turn, often became instructors in the newly developing universities.[5] The universities formed during the late medieval period were modeled upon Islamic universities[6] and gradually replaced the cathedral schools. These universities produced a rich flowering of intellectual achievement, but only for the privileged few. Universities were too expensive, inaccessible to most, and had little impact on regular clergy.[7]

The education provided by these schools was also inconsistent. Many schools failed to provide even basic literacy. Children at parish schools, for example, were frequently taught only memorized prayers rather than even how to read, and the teacher (generally the local priest) was not necessarily literate either.[8] Cathedral schools could be excellent schools, and some of the most gifted intellectuals of the medieval period attended them, but the content and quality depended almost entirely on the master.[9] Even though schools and universities were tasked with producing an educated clergy, the evidence indicates that the education for most clergy was generally neglected.[10]

4 John J. Contreni, "Schools, Cathedral," *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. Joseph R. Strayer (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988), 11:59–63.

5 Charles W. Jones, "Schools, Monastic," *Dictionary of the Middle Ages* 11:72–78.

6 James E. Reed and Ronnie Prevost, *A History of Christian Education* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 1993).

7 Justo L. González, *The History of Theological Education* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2015). This was still a problem in 1527 after the Reformation.

8 Ibid., 53.

9 Contreni, "Schools, Cathedral," 11:59–63.

10 Jones, "Schools, Monastic," 11:72–78.

With such a low level of education among clergy, it is therefore not surprising that it was not highly valued among the laity. The late medieval period went through a rapid expansion of capitalism, and many in Germany saw education as a waste of time as children were needed on the farms.[11] In the preface to Luther's *Small Catechism*, he reacts to the generally poor state of education and condemns the lack of knowledge on the part of the clergy.[12] The main focus of "A Sermon on Keeping Children in School" is to encourage parents to educate their children instead of hurrying them into the workforce. Luther states, "Common people appear to be quite indifferent to the matter of maintaining the schools. I see them withdrawing their children from instruction and turning them to the making of a living and to caring for their bellies."[13] Against this background of apathy towards education, Luther posted his *Ninety-Five Theses*.

## 2. The Reformers as Educators

Martin Luther, along with most other Protestant reformers, was university educated. Not only did they benefit from a university education, but also many like Luther, a monk as well as a professor at the University of Wittenberg, were career teachers.[14] The Augustinians—Luther's monastic group—were known for producing theology professors.[15] Augustine's theology played a key role in the formation of Luther's thinking, including educational reform. As a professor, Luther had a reputation for being a meticulous and thorough professor who carefully prepared his lectures.[16] Even in the midst of the conflict following his dissemination of the *Ninety-Five Theses*, Luther continued his role as a university professor.

As Christian reformers and professors, Luther and his co-reformer Philip Melanchthon recognized the importance of education as a mechanism for

[11] Charles M. Jacobs, "Introduction to A Sermon on Keeping Children in School," in *The Christian in Society 3*, by Martin Luther, vol. 46 of *Luther's Works*, ed. Robert Schultz III (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1966), 209. *Luther's Works* is hereafter abbreviated as *LW*.

[12] Kevin P. Emmert, "Luther's Small Catechism," in *Encyclopedia of Christian Education*, ed. George Thomas Kurian and Mark A. Lamport (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 2:770, 771.

[13] *LW* 44:219.

[14] González, *History of Theological Education*, 69–77.

[15] Scott H. Hendrix, *Martin Luther: Visionary Reformer* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015), 34.

[16] Ibid., 39.

implementing lasting values and changes. Additionally, both valued it and saw the need for universal Protestant education. In a religion that focused on the need to return to Bible-based doctrine, logically, its adherents needed to be able to read the Bible. As Melanchthon noted, God wrote the Ten Commandments Himself for others to read; therefore, it followed that His believers needed the ability to read and understand the Bible.[17] They also recognized that Protestants needed a deep understanding of their faith and the biblical evidence supporting Protestant beliefs to withstand the arguments of the Catholic Church.[18]

Thus, Luther wrote extensively about the need to establish parish schools supported by the government. A tour of churches and schools in 1527 brought further impetus for reforms by ensuring that basic education was given to as many Protestants as possible, including all clergy. During the trip, Melanchthon was horrified to discover that many of the priests and monks, who had accepted Protestantism, still did not have any significant understanding of Protestant doctrine. Some of the priests and teachers could not even read.[19] As a result, Melanchthon wrote *Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors in Electoral Saxony*.[20] The reforms that he and Luther encouraged were so instrumental in developing a German educational system that, in the wake of the Reformation, Melanchthon received the moniker "Educator of Germany."[21]

Melanchthon indeed deserves much of the credit for many of these educational efforts. Luther was a firm advocate of Melanchthon's efforts at reform and supported these endeavors through a series of pamphlets: "To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools" (1524) and "A Sermon on Keeping Children in School" (1530).[22] In 1529, he wrote two catechisms with a specific educational purpose: *Small Catechism* and *Large Catechism*. The *Small Catechism* was written as training material for both home and school. Together, both catechisms

[17] González, *History of Theological Education*, 72.

[18] Ibid., 74.

[19] Ibid., 73.

[20] The authorship of *Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors in Electoral Saxony* is disputed, but Melanchthon is generally believed to be the primary author.

[21] Charlotte Methuen, "Luther's Life," in *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology*, ed. Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel, and L'ubomír Batka (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 18.

[22] D. Schulz, "Martin Luther's Influence," in *Harper's Encyclopedia of Religious Education*, ed. Iris V. Cully and Kendig Brubaker Cully (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1990), 388; Reed and Prevost, *History of Christian Education*.

were meant to ensure a basic knowledge of Christian beliefs for children and adults.[23] The *Small Catechism* proved incredibly popular at the time and remains popular among Lutherans.[24]

Luther and Melanchthon's education ideals were profoundly influenced by humanism as well as Protestant theology.[25] When Luther began his career at the University of Wittenberg, scholasticism was the predominant philosophy in education. Those educators who differed in their philosophy, such as humanists, were pressured to conform to scholasticism.[26] Early in his career, recognizing the deficiencies of scholasticism, Luther was attracted to humanism. Although how he initially became interested in humanism is unknown,[27] it is clear that he appreciated the worth of the writings of humanist Faber Stapulensis and Erasmus's *New Testament*.[28] Although Luther never became a true humanist himself[29] (he adopted parts of humanism that resonated with his worldview and rejected the rest), his humanist philosophy, along with his biblical worldview, impacted his views. Protestant and Adventist educational practices were influenced by Luther's views, especially in regard to theological training.

One way humanism shaped Luther's view of education was in the area of teaching methods, particularly for children. As revealed by the *Catechisms*, Luther believed that education must be more than rote memorization. Instead, he advocated that all church members should think deeply and understand their beliefs.[30] Furthermore, education should awaken an interest in learning.[31] As a consequence, his *Small Catechism* was written in a question-and-answer format[32] that made it easy for children to remember and to reflect questions children might ask. His catechisms were written in

[23] Emmert, "Luther's Small Catechism," 2:770, 771.

[24] Schulz, "Martin Luther's Influence," 388.

[25] Alister E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*, 4th ed. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 56.

[26] Robert Rosin, "Humanism, Luther, and the Wittenberg Reformation," in *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology*, 93, 94.

[27] Ibid., 96.

[28] Ibid., 99.

[29] Ibid., 101; McGrath, *Reformation Thought*, 54, 55.

[30] Gerald Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 5.

[31] Schulz, "Martin Luther's Influence," 388.

[32] Emmert, "Luther's Small Catechism," 2:770, 771.

German rather than Latin in order to be as widely read and understood as possible.[33] Additionally, he concurred with humanists that education should be presented to children in small components that they could easily be grasped and built upon.[34] Teaching methods should be adapted to the age and abilities of the students. In fact, education should be made enjoyable for children to learn and not be harsh and demanding. Most of these pedagogical methods now seem logical, but at the time, these were radical ideas and not embraced by the majority of society except for a few humanists, like Erasmus.[35]

Luther and the Reformation also changed the focus as to *who* should be taught. Luther's belief in the priesthood of all believers had significant implications for who was to be educated. During the medieval period, boys intended for the priesthood and government positions[36] or who came from wealthy families were educated. Boys from lower classes or not intended for careers that required the ability to read were not generally educated. Luther argued that every child with the ability to do so should have at least a basic education in order to be able to read the Bible.[37] In "A Sermon on Keeping Children in School," Luther urged parents to educate their children, even if in the end they worked in a career that did not require education, as it would prepare them for service to God and enable them to explain their beliefs.

More radically, Luther also pushed for girls to receive an education. Girls were not generally viewed as worthy of an education.[38] Only girls from a few rich and/or noble families could afford to hire a tutor for their daughters. Like monks, nuns, who generally also came from wealthy families, were, according to their charters, to be educated. Of course, as with monks, education was the ideal and not necessarily the norm. One Italian proverb is representative of the predominant attitude about female educa-

[33] McGrath, *Reformation Thought*, 245.

[34] Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 5; Schulz, "Martin Luther's Influence," 388.

[35] González, *History of Theological Education*, 66-68.

[36] Luther's father, a pious miner and owner of foundries, wanted Luther to become a lawyer.

[37] Jeff Mallinson, "Lutheran Church Christian Education," *Encyclopedia of Christian Education* 2:768, 769.

[38] Although nuns were supposed to be taught to read and write, evidence indicates that this was unevenly applied.

tion. It states, "'A girl should be taught to sew and not to read, unless one wishes to make a nun of her.'"[39]

If, as Luther contended, all Christians were priests, then all Christians from across all social classes, and including both boys and girls, must be able to read in order to understand the Bible. Although Luther still viewed wives as subordinate to their husbands, he recognized the importance of both fathers and mothers in the educating of their children. To this end, Luther encouraged each parish to establish a school for boys and another for girls and to provide a female teacher financially supported by the parish.[40]

After centuries of neglecting female education, Luther's emphasis on education for both genders did not bring immediate results. Nevertheless, between the efforts of the Reformation, as well as the Catholic Counter-Reformation, there was an increase in female literacy. In England, a study shows, female literacy rose from 2 percent just prior to the Reformation in 1500 to 9 percent by 1600 after the Reformation and expanded to 32 percent by 1700. The literacy rate also increased among men from 10 percent in 1500 to almost 40 percent by 1700. Thus, the Reformation encouraged widespread education, particularly in northern Europe where Protestantism was dominant, in contrast to southern Europe where Catholicism remained dominant.[41]

In order to obtain an education, Luther originally emphasized the importance of the home as the primary religious training ground.[42] In his view, parents had a duty to educate their children in basic Christian tenets. He argued that one of the worst sins for parents was to neglect educating their children, and he suggested that it might lead to eternal damnation.[43] However, when he wrote the *Catechisms*, Luther recognized that many parents were uneducated and not able to train effectively their own children. As Luther saw the results that came from a lack of education, he supported education funded by the government through taxes to be available to all children and indicated that a basic compulsory education for children would be the ideal.[44] His view that the government, rather than the church,

[39] T. L. Jarman, *Landmarks in the History of Education* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1952), 123, quoted in Reed and Prevost, *History of Christian Education*,159.

[40] Martin Luther, preface to *The Ordinance of a Common Chest* (*LW* 45:188, 189).

[41] Allan C. Ornstein, Daniel U. Levine, Gerald L. Gutek, and David E. Vocke, *Foundations of Education*, 11th ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2011), 85, 86.

[42] Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 5; Jeffrey P. Greenman, "Luther's Catechisms," *Encyclopedia of Christian Education* 2:769, 770.

[43] Martin Luther, *A Sermon on Keeping Children in School* (*LW* 46:243).

[44] Ibid.

should organize education was due in part to his conflict with Catholic religious authorities and the support that he received from civil authorities.[45] In *To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools*, Luther argued that if governments spent money on weapons and infrastructure, then they surely could spend an equal amount on the far more important task of educating its citizens.[46] Additionally, the rich and noble had a spiritual obligation to financially support impoverished children.[47] At that time, there was no separation between church and state; thus, public schools supported by the local government were focused on religious indoctrination, fulfilling Luther's ideal. Despite some resistance due to monetary concerns, the number of local schools grew substantially, and at least an elementary education and basic literacy became the norm.[48]

Luther's impact upon educational reform extended not only to who was educated, but it also changed what was studied. Luther's emphasis upon *sola scriptura* required a greater emphasis on the study of Greek and Hebrew instead of Latin, the dominant academic language at that time.[49] Melanchthon, a brilliant scholar and professor of Greek,[50] had a crucial influence in encouraging the study of biblical languages for clergy. In order to understand the Bible and develop a correct interpretation of it, Melanchthon believed the Bible should not be studied through a Latin translation that both Melanchthon and Luther recognized contained many translation errors.[51]

The humanist emphasis of *ad fontes*, or the need to return to the earliest possible source, meant a corresponding emphasis upon reading the Bible in the original languages.[52] In addition, the Bible should be translated from these original languages into the *lingua franca* of the people. To that end, Lu-

[45] Martin Luther, *On War against the Turks* (*LW* 46:187). This view is also expressed in Martin Luther, *To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools* (*LW* 45).

[46] Martin Luther, *To the Councilmen*, 350.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 200.

[49] Luther did not, however, argue that Latin should be removed from the curriculum, as it still remained a common language for scholars and government officials to communicate in, but rather that Greek and Hebrew be added to it.

[50] Hendrix, *Martin Luther: Visionary Reformer*, 75–77.

[51] González, *History of Theological Education*, 72.

[52] Rosin, "Humanism, Luther, and the Wittenberg Reformation," 96; McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*, 35–58.

ther translated the Bible while in confinement in Wartburg Castle. In turn, education should also take place in the *lingua franca* so that all would have an opportunity to receive an education.[53] Influenced by humanists, such as Erasmus, Luther advocated for a broader curriculum that not only focused on the classical languages and the Bible but also included the liberal arts, in particular history, literature, rhetoric, moral philosophy, and mathematics.[54] The curriculum at the University of Wittenberg shifted under the guidance of Melanchthon to reflect this view. For clergy, education went from being recommended for clergy to being mandatory for ordination.[55]

Luther also advocated for changes in how students should be taught. From his own childhood and early educational experience, Luther cited three incidents of harsh punishment: a caning by his mother,[56] a whipping by his father,[57] and a caning at school. These experiences probably affected his views of discipline.[58] In this respect he was in good company with Erasmus and Augustine, who pondered if fear of punishment actually made people behave even worse.[59] In *To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools,* Luther compared schools where students were beaten for not learning lessons as a "hell and purgatory" and contrasted them to schools where children can "study with pleasure and in play."[60] Furthermore, he also advised parents to "avoid all cruelty lest he shake the child's faith in him."[61] This is not to say that Luther did not believe in discipline, even corporal discipline, as he also extolled the virtues of teachers for disciplining their students.[62] Instead, Luther advocated a more humane view of discipline. Although not completely successful at changing the harsh punishment that had become engrained in society as a part of teaching, Luther sought to alter the system of discipline to a kinder

[53] Martin Luther, *To the Councilmen*, 347–378.

[54] Schulz, "Martin Luther's Influence," 388; González, *History of Theological Education*, 66–74; Rosin, "Humanism, Luther, and the Wittenberg Reformation," 91–104.

[55] González, *History of Theological Education*, 74.

[56] Martin Luther, *Table Talk*, *LW* 54:235.

[57] Ibid., 157.

[58] Roland Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1950), 23.

[59] Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 38.

[60] Luther, *To the Councilmen*, 369.

[61] Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 37.

[62] Martin Luther, *Lectures on Galatians 1535, Chapters 1–4*, *LW* 26:417; Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 180–182.

mation, "even the idea of mission" was absent.[4] Twentieth-century mission historians (including Kenneth S. Latourette, Stephen C. Neill, J. Herbert Kane, Ralph Winter, and Ruth Tucker) perpetuated this claim that the Reformers were indifferent to mission.

Yet, there is some evidence in Luther's writings that challenges this negative assumption about mission on the part of Luther and other Reformers. For instance, in his commentary on Zech 10:9, Luther describes what missiologists call the centrifugal force of mission (i.e., the scattering of missionaries among unbelievers):[5]

> They will be scattered among the nations ... they will be sent by God among the nations as preachers and thus draw many people to themselves and through themselves to Christ.... "They shall remember Me in far countries ... they shall preach and teach of Me, and thus they shall be increased and shall convert many others to Me."[6]

In Luther's metaphorical interpretation of Zech 12:6, he not only points to the global scope of mission but also to the power for its accomplishment: "The Christians shall also, through the Word, harvest much fruit among all the Gentiles and shall convert and save many.... The fire of the Holy Spirit ... shall devour the Gentiles ... and prepare a place everywhere for the Gospel and the kingdom of Christ."[7]

Luther also had a grasp of the integration of ministry (internal) and mission (external). In his explanation of the Lord's Prayer (1529), Luther writes,

> We pray ... *that all this may be realized in us* and that God's name may be praised through his holy Word and our Christian lives ... *that it may gain recognition and followers among other people and advance with power throughout the world.*
>
> God's kingdom comes to us ... through the Word and faith, and ... through the final revelation. Now, we pray for both of these, *that it may come to those who are not yet in it, and that it may come by daily growth here and in eternal life hereafter to us who have attained it.* All this is simply to say: "Dear Father, ... *give us thy Word, that the Gospel may be sincerely*

[4] Gustav Warneck, *Outline of a History of Protestant Mission from the Reformation to the Present Time*, ed. George Robson (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1901), 8, 9.

[5] Ingemar Öberg, *Luther and World Mission: A Historical and Systematic Study*, trans. Dean Apel (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 2007), 123.

[6] Martin Luther, *Lectures on the Minor Prophets 3: Zechariah*, vol. 20 of *Luther's Works*, ed. Hilton C. Oswald (St. Louis: Concordia, 1973), 305, 306, quoted in Öberg, *Luther and World Mission*, 123 (emphasis added).

[7] Luther, *Minor Prophets 3*, 20:326, quoted in Öberg, *Luther and World Mission*, 123.

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26 Robert Rosin, "Humanism, Luther, and the Wittenberg Reformation," in *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology*, 93, 94.

27 Ibid., 96.

28 Ibid., 99.

29 Ibid., 101; McGrath, *Reformation Thought*, 54, 55.

30 Gerald Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 5.

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should organize education was due in part to his conflict with Catholic religious authorities and the support that he received from civil authorities.[45] In *To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools*, Luther argued that if governments spent money on weapons and infrastructure, then they surely could spend an equal amount on the far more important task of educating its citizens.[46] Additionally, the rich and noble had a spiritual obligation to financially support impoverished children.[47] At that time, there was no separation between church and state; thus, public schools supported by the local government were focused on religious indoctrination, fulfilling Luther's ideal. Despite some resistance due to monetary concerns, the number of local schools grew substantially, and at least an elementary education and basic literacy became the norm.[48]

Luther's impact upon educational reform extended not only to who was educated, but it also changed what was studied. Luther's emphasis upon *sola scriptura* required a greater emphasis on the study of Greek and Hebrew instead of Latin, the dominant academic language at that time.[49] Melanchthon, a brilliant scholar and professor of Greek,[50] had a crucial influence in encouraging the study of biblical languages for clergy. In order to understand the Bible and develop a correct interpretation of it, Melanchthon believed the Bible should not be studied through a Latin translation that both Melanchthon and Luther recognized contained many translation errors.[51]

The humanist emphasis of *ad fontes*, or the need to return to the earliest possible source, meant a corresponding emphasis upon reading the Bible in the original languages.[52] In addition, the Bible should be translated from these original languages into the *lingua franca* of the people. To that end, Lu-

[45] Martin Luther, *On War against the Turks* (*LW* 46:187). This view is also expressed in Martin Luther, *To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools* (*LW* 45).

[46] Martin Luther, *To the Councilmen*, 350.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 200.

[49] Luther did not, however, argue that Latin should be removed from the curriculum, as it still remained a common language for scholars and government officials to communicate in, but rather that Greek and Hebrew be added to it.

[50] Hendrix, *Martin Luther: Visionary Reformer*, 75–77.

[51] González, *History of Theological Education*, 72.

[52] Rosin, "Humanism, Luther, and the Wittenberg Reformation," 96; McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*, 35–58.

ther translated the Bible while in confinement in Wartburg Castle. In turn, education should also take place in the *lingua franca* so that all would have an opportunity to receive an education.[53] Influenced by humanists, such as Erasmus, Luther advocated for a broader curriculum that not only focused on the classical languages and the Bible but also included the liberal arts, in particular history, literature, rhetoric, moral philosophy, and mathematics.[54] The curriculum at the University of Wittenberg shifted under the guidance of Melanchthon to reflect this view. For clergy, education went from being recommended for clergy to being mandatory for ordination.[55]

Luther also advocated for changes in how students should be taught. From his own childhood and early educational experience, Luther cited three incidents of harsh punishment: a caning by his mother,[56] a whipping by his father,[57] and a caning at school. These experiences probably affected his views of discipline.[58] In this respect he was in good company with Erasmus and Augustine, who pondered if fear of punishment actually made people behave even worse.[59] In *To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools,* Luther compared schools where students were beaten for not learning lessons as a "hell and purgatory" and contrasted them to schools where children can "study with pleasure and in play."[60] Furthermore, he also advised parents to "avoid all cruelty lest he shake the child's faith in him."[61] This is not to say that Luther did not believe in discipline, even corporal discipline, as he also extolled the virtues of teachers for disciplining their students.[62] Instead, Luther advocated a more humane view of discipline. Although not completely successful at changing the harsh punishment that had become engrained in society as a part of teaching, Luther sought to alter the system of discipline to a kinder

[53] Martin Luther, *To the Councilmen*, 347–378.

[54] Schulz, "Martin Luther's Influence," 388; González, *History of Theological Education*, 66–74; Rosin, "Humanism, Luther, and the Wittenberg Reformation," 91–104.

[55] González, *History of Theological Education*, 74.

[56] Martin Luther, *Table Talk*, *LW* 54:235.

[57] Ibid., 157.

[58] Roland Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1950), 23.

[59] Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 38.

[60] Luther, *To the Councilmen*, 369.

[61] Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 37.

[62] Martin Luther, *Lectures on Galatians 1535, Chapters 1–4*, *LW* 26:417; Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 180–182.

and gentler system "in such a way that the rod is accompanied by the apple" and "all children are to be treated with equal love."[63]

## 3. Legacy for Adventist Education

Most Adventist schools, whether they recognize it or not, are the beneficiaries of the Reformation and its emphasis upon education. A glance at the theology program of most Adventist universities reveals Luther's influence upon them. The fact that most theology students are required to master the basics of Greek and Hebrew are some of the obvious evidences of Luther's educational legacy.

Adventist education was one of the last major organizational developments in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.[64] Initial attempts to develop an Adventist educational system resulted in modeling conventional forms of the day, particularly a focus on rote memorization and the study of the Latin classics. A major revolution occurred during the 1890s, particularly with the 1892 Harbor Springs Convention, when a broad philosophy of Adventist education was articulated that included the removal of Latin classics and making the Bible the center of the curriculum.[65] Adventists readily embraced and adapted the Sunday School movement, that became a vigorous Sabbath School, as another avenue of providing religious instruction for children.[66]

In many ways, Adventist education is the continuation of educational initiatives made by Martin Luther and other Reformers, particularly Melanchthon. Ellen G. White, who articulated as early as 1872 her views about education eventually paved the way for an Adventist system that resonated closely with Luther on educational issues.[67] Like Luther, she argued that

[63] Luther, *Table Talk*, 235.

[64] For a survey of the history of Adventist education, see Floyd L. Greenleaf, *In Passion for the World: A History of Seventh-day Adventist Education* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2005).

[65] George R. Knight, "Harbor Springs, Michigan," *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., ed. Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2014), 856.

[66] "Sabbath School," in *The Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, rev. ed., Seventh-day Adventist Commentary Reference Series (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1996), 2:508–510.

[67] Her original 1872 statement can be found in Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 3:131–160. For a concise overview, see Her-

education was not merely for pecuniary gain or work skills or even academic knowledge, but its primary focus should be spiritual instruction and knowledge of God.[68] Although Ellen White's support led to the creation of the Adventist educational system, she, too, saw the home as the foundation of spiritual education.[69]

Pedagogically, Ellen White's views also closely matched Luther's. She viewed education as more than mere rote memorization in that "the work of true education" is "to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thoughts."[70] Discipline, she argued, should be strict but redemptive and not harsh.[71] Furthermore, students needed to have adequate resources in order to study. Every Adventist school and even the attached libraries owe their existence in part to Luther who greatly supported libraries.[72]

## 4. Conclusion

Martin Luther would see much in common with the Seventh-day Adventist system and philosophy of education. Adventist education is primarily religious education with an emphasis in the liberal arts and study of original sources, especially the Bible. Adventists support the belief of the priesthood of all believers and that means that all children deserve an education that begins on this earth, focuses on the development of character, and ultimately leads to a better understanding of the Bible and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The Reformation left a legacy that endures today through Seventh-day Adventist education.

bert E. Douglass, "Education, Ellen G. White's Role in Adventist," in *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, 794-796.

[68] Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1952), 13.

[69] Ibid., 275–286.

[70] Ibid., 17.

[71] Ibid., 287–297.

[72] Luther regarded libraries so essential to good education that he devotes a major portion of his *To the Councilmen* in how to properly set up libraries. See also Mallinson, "Lutheran Church Christian Education," 2:768, 769; Luther, *To the Councilmen*, 373-377.