



Section VII

BEST PRACTICES FOR PASTORS AND EDUCATORS

The following represents a summary of “best practices” for pastors and educators who foster support for Adventist education:

1. **Passionately promote Adventist education with actions and words:** The role of the pastor and educator in projecting a clear picture for the congregation regarding the value and importance of Adventist elementary education is one vital to the continuance of the Adventist elementary educational system. In addition to verbally communicating the worth of Adventist education, pastors and educators should understand God’s plan to use them in inspiring church members and parents regarding the role the church school plays in the redemption of their children. What the pastor and educator promote with passion usually flourishes. What they give little attention to usually fades away into nonexistence.
2. **Use positional and personal influence to establish a climate of support for Adventist education:** It is of vital importance that pastors recognize the potential influence they possess to foster support for the church school by virtue of their pastoral position as well as their ability to relate to others and win their confidence. Pastors have been called by God to lead the church and all its ministries. It is the pastor, therefore, who is most able to present the church school as the “crown jewel” of all church ministries. When pastors place such a high priority on the value of the local school it will have a significant influence on church members and parents.
3. **Viewing the local Adventist school as an evangelistic center for children and viewing each child as a prospective candidate for redemption:** Pastors and educators must view the church school as an evangelistic center aimed at bringing the children and youth into a deeper understanding of God and His intended purpose for their lives. Several of the pastors interviewed for this document commented on the benefit they received from the school by providing them with opportunities for child and youth evangelism on an annual basis. It is vitally important that local pastors and educators view each child in the church school as a prospective candidate for redemption.



The local church school creates a natural forum for pastors and teachers to be used by the Holy Spirit in the work of redemption for children, youth and the parents of non-Adventist children enrolled in the school program.

4. **Pastors are the connecting link between the home, the church and the school:** While the home is the primary institution concerned with the spiritual and emotional growth of each child, the local Adventist church school is recognized as a viable source to supplement the work of spiritual growth and nurture provided by the parents. The local church pastors will play a significant role as a connecting link between the home, the church and the school as well. Since the pastor identifies directly with each of these institutions he/she is able to encourage the strengthening of relationships between each of them both publicly and privately.
5. **Pastors view their role in relating with the head teacher/principal as one of support and encouragement:** In researching this project the 12 pastors interviewed clearly identified their role as being one of support and encouragement. Words like “friend”, “supporter”, “encourager” and “counselor” were often used to articulate the pastor’s relationship with the school personnel. Most pastors stated emphatically that it was not their prerogative to make decisions for the school, but rather to advise and be supportive of those who were responsible for decision-making. The local pastor, while responsible to monitor all ministries of the church, must do so from the position of an encourager and friend. If the local pastor is perceived by the congregation to be making school related decisions, it will be detrimental to both the pastor and the one responsible for the leadership of the school.
6. **By virtue of position, the pastor establishes and maintains trust and unity between the church and school boards:** For the church and school to work harmoniously in support of each other the local pastor must serve as a connecting link between the two groups. Working as a liaison between both groups, the local church pastor is able to keep each entity informed regarding the needs, actions and decisions of the other. Therefore, the local church pastor is the key person in establishing and maintaining a climate of trust and unity between the church (represented by the church board) and the school (represented by the school board). By virtue of position, the local pastor is able to keep the channels of communication between both entities ones of openness and mutual respect.
7. **Pastors and educators value the school as a vehicle for the work of redemption through the building of relationships with children and their parents:** When teachers and pastors collaborate in implementing an intentional strategy for pastoral visitation during the school day they will discover the rewards for the time and energy expended.



The greatest rewards will often come as a by-product of the personal relationships the pastor forms with the children and youth of the school. Several pastors identified the “blessing” they had received from leading students to make a commitment to Christ and the positive affirmation they had received from the parents of children who had become their friends. While the pastor recognizes the direct benefit of viewing the school as a natural place for the work of evangelism, he/she will also experience less direct benefits that positively impact the ministry of the church in future years.

8. **Pastors and educators project a high level of support for the school and church by giving lavishly of their time to be present at school and church related events:** The amount of time spent at school by the pastors participating in this study was considered by them to be vital to building relationships with students, showing support to the teaching staff, and modeling their deep passion for Adventist education to church members. While teachers, by virtue of the demands of their teaching ministry, are not able to give as much time to the church program, it is important that they be present and visible on a regular basis on Sabbath and for church related programs. A pastor’s presence at the local church school and a teacher’s presence at the church are key factors in projecting support. As was noted by the words of one pastor, “church members notice if I am at the school.” The same can be said when a teacher is at church.
9. **Pastors and educators are to be actively involved in recruiting children for the school:** When pastors and educators visit prospective homes together it sends a clear message of a unity of purpose to the parents and church members. In addition, the pastor plays a vital role in assuring funding for needy students. The pastors participating in this research were unanimous in articulating their desire to do whatever needed to be done to assure that every child desiring an Adventist education would be given that opportunity. While pastors presented differing views on their level of involvement in recruitment and fund raising, all agreed that they were actively involved in both activities. While teachers may be less able to raise funds for financially needy students they should still lend their support to do what they can as well as lead out in a prayer initiative in the matter of recruiting students and acquiring funds for those needing assistance.
10. **Pastors and educators should value each other and their ministries:** At a time in this world’s history when the evil one is on a mission to destroy the work of the school and church, God’s pastors and educators must come together for the purpose of encouraging and supporting one another. When God’s pastors and educators pray for and encourage each other God will honor those prayers and pour His Spirit out in



abundance. For this to happen, pastors and educators must be intentional in building time in their busy schedules to meet with each other and pray. 2 Chronicles 7:14 says, “If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” It is time we do what our Father has told us we must do and do it intentionally. If we don’t, the evil one will crowd out these moments of heavenly communion and replace them with the busy things of life.

