A Strategy for the Formation of a Shared Vision Among the Churches of North Dallas to Address the Challenge of Secondary Education

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ABSTRACT

A STRATEGY FOR THE FORMATION OF A SHARED VISION AMONG THE CHURCHES OF NORTH DALLAS TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

by

Paul A. Hunt

Adviser: Zebron Ncube
Problem

For over forty years, the North Dallas area of the Texas Conference has been unable to create a viable, long-term solution for providing high school education. Without a shared vision for Christian education amongst the North Dallas churches, further decline is expected, as the present model of education is unsustainable.

Method

The development of a strategy and process for the formation of a shared, biblical vision of Christian education will be explored to address the challenge of providing a sustainable system of education.
Results

The development and execution of a strategy for the formation of a shared, biblical vision for education resulted in collaboration between Union, Conference the local area churches in the investment and creation of the North Dallas Adventist Academy, a new K-12 school. This has led to increased support and participation from area churches and a current enrollment of one hundred and seventy-six students.

Conclusions

Although the Adventist church is growing in North America, our schools are declining. Success hinges on our willingness to capture a biblical, God-honoring shared vision for the future of education, and develop new methodologies and processes to foster vibrant partnerships and participation. The following pages describe the formation of such a vision and the partnerships, processes and challenges to lead and navigate, diverse contextual realities in a shifting social environment.
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A Project Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Paul A. Hunt
June 2011
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A project dissertation presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Ministry

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

For over forty years, the North Dallas area of the Texas Conference has not had a viable, long-term solution for providing high school education. Presently, the only option for families needing secondary education is the Richardson Adventist School, located within the Richardson Seventh-day Adventist church facility. The school has, to date, thrived in an environment where many Seventh-day Adventist church schools have either cut back to fewer grade levels, or closed altogether. However, enrollment growth has generated ‘quality’ and ‘space’ challenges, which negatively impact education being delivered due to issues of overcrowding. Additionally, being by far the largest ministry of the church, in terms of facility usage and the proportion of the church finances the educational program demands, consequently, the ability of the church to focus on its broader mission of Matt 28, has been significantly limited.

Importantly, without a shared vision for Christian education among the churches in the North Dallas region, the burden for providing high school education across this broad geographical area will remain a tenuous, single, rather than multiple-church issue.

Statement of the Task

The task of this project is to develop a strategy for the formation of a shared vision among the North Dallas churches to collectively address the challenges of
providing secondary Seventh-day Adventist education.

**Justification for the Project**

This project seeks to address the critical need for denominational education in the North Dallas area of the Texas Conference, where for approximately forty years, provision for secondary education has not been met either consistently or collectively among area churches.

Approximately 70 percent of the students serviced at the Richardson Adventist School (RAS), come from a combination of surrounding area churches and overseas applications, while around 30 percent are from the local Richardson church community. However, in terms of overall support and tangible, fiscal participation the Richardson church is by far the largest contributor to the school budget and operating overhead. This scenario places the burden for providing education across a broad geographical area with multiple churches on a single church entity. Importantly, the present model is ultimately unsustainable, due to its mono-dependent rather than interdependent nature.

Critically, the Richardson church leadership is concerned that the current arrangement impacts their ability to address the growth and nurture needs of its local membership, due to the challenges of a shared facility and significant fiscal commitments.

In an attempt to grapple with the problem of providing a sustainable system of education for North Dallas, the value of this project lies in the creation of a process to foster participation in a shared biblical vision of education for the North Dallas churches. It is also hoped that the failures and successes described in this project will prove
valuable to conferences across North America where similar challenges to support Christian, Adventist education exist.

**Delimitations**

This project is limited in scope to the North Dallas Metroplex area of the Texas Conference and the challenge to create a viable system of support for education. However, it is hoped that the lessons learned in prosecuting this project will prove beneficial to areas and church communities in North America faced with the challenge to provide a system of broad area support for denominational education.

**Description of the Project Process**

Theological reflection will form a significant part of the process in four distinct areas:

1. A theology of ecclesiology, looking particularly at the interconnectedness of area and world churches as part of a larger, dynamic movement.

2. A theology of Christian education, which unearths its biblical legitimacy, and continued currency in contemporary contexts.

3. A theology of stewardship interpreted as shared responsibility for Christian education—churches embracing the burden for the education of its young people.

4. A theology of shared vision, looking particularly at biblical themes that speak to a corporate or communal role (if any), in ‘vision creation’.

The project will focus on a creating a strategy (or process), for the formation of a biblically authentic vision of education that can be shared and broadly adopted among the churches of North Dallas.
A review of leadership literature addressing this arena will be conducted. The goal of this review is to discover ideas and concepts that are can be adopted or avoided in an attempt to facilitate a process for creating support for a biblical vision of education, contextually relevant to the geographical area of this study.

The practical nature of the project will demand interaction with and support from denominational leadership at various levels. In working towards a shared vision for education it is assumed that dialogue with local church leaders and pastors, the Texas Conference officers and Union representatives will be necessary. These interactions will form part of the overall process in creating an environment of inclusion towards establishing a strategy for a shared vision for Christian education. This project will be completed by January 2011.

**Expectations from This Project**

This project will provide a framework for developing and eliciting participation in a vision for Adventist secondary education within the North Dallas area. This project will enhance an understanding of the role pastoral leaders play in vision formation, its development and transmission. It is hoped that this project will unearth possible strategies for creating urgency among pastoral and local church leadership to address the educational needs of their constituents. The project will provide a framework to positively impact participation among area church membership in Christian, Seventh-day Adventist education. This project will provide opportunities to deepen my theoretical and practical understanding of leadership, particularly as it relates to vision. This project will provide a blueprint for continued opportunities for personal growth, spiritual maturity, and an abiding commitment towards transformational leadership in the local
and World Church. It is my sincere hope that this project will prove valuable in support of education within the world church and provide the environment for ongoing personal reflection and transformation—not only as a leader in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but as a husband and father.

**Outline of the Project**

1. Chapter one sets out the purpose of the project, the justification for the project, delimitations of the project, and the proposed methodology.

2. Chapter two lays a biblical foundation towards a theology of vision with particular emphasis on Christian education. Four distinct areas are covered: a theology of ecclesiology, a theology of Christian education, a theology of stewardship, and a theology of shared vision.

3. Chapter three discusses vision literature (within the last two decades) within the business and Christian arenas, providing a historical backdrop of leadership thought, to grapple with some of the complexities surrounding leadership and vision. It examines vision building for Christian education, concluding with a review of common myths and mistakes surrounding vision.

4. Chapter four discusses the educational realities and challenges in North Dallas. It evaluates the educational landscape in conjunction with the cultural and social context of local church leaders, area pastors, and the local conference.

5. Chapter five addresses the realities of creating a shared vision for Christian education, the process employed, relationships, and impact of implementation.

6. Chapter six provides a summary, report, evaluation, and recommendations.
CHAPTER 2

TOWARDS A BIBLICAL VISION FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Introduction

Before launching into a ‘theological reflection’ towards a theology of vision for Christian education it is worthwhile to briefly define what is meant by the term “theology” in the context of Christian education and the major aim of this chapter. The word “theology” is derived from two Greek words (1) ‘theos,’ meaning ‘God’, and (2) the suffix, ‘-ology’ from the Greek, ‘logos’ meaning ‘word’, ‘reason’, ‘discourse’, or ‘study’. Therefore, “theology” can be said to carry the basic meaning of ‘the study of God’ and themes related to the ‘word of God’ (the Bible), encompassing issues related to Christian faith and the church.

The following theological reflection grapples with biblical paradigms for understanding Christian education within four distinct but related themes: (1) the church, (ecclesiology), (2) Christian education, (3) stewardship, and (4) the notion of shared vision. Using the bible as its primary source material in a limited review of scripture, this chapter attempts to weave together these four themes towards a coherent, organic, theology of vision for Christian education.

Ecclesiology

The word ‘ecclesiology’ is a mid-19th century term derived from the Greek root
ekklēsia carrying the basic meaning of ‘assembly’ or ‘church’. Upon reviewing the biblical data it becomes apparent that the church is a divine idea or invention, intimately connected to and founded upon the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The church is termed the “body of Christ” (Eph 1:22-23; Rom 7:4). The apostle Paul alludes to the special bond of intimacy associated with marriage as of divine origin, connected to Christ and His church—known as “the mystery of God.”¹ It is Christ who sustains the church.² Important to the ‘blood-ties’ between Christ and His church is her dynamic and universal relevance to all peoples, bringing the idea of ‘unity’ as integral to one's understanding of church.³ Scripture also demonstrates that the church transcend culture, ethnicity, and gender⁴ and is the only instrument on earth through which “the manifold wisdom of God” is revealed, not just to humanity, but to the entire universe.⁵ The doctrine of the ecclesia (or the Church)⁶ must also be understood from scripture to

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¹Eph 5:25 draws clear parallels between the marriage relationship and Christ’s sacrificial love for the church; “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” Similarly in Eph 5:31-32 the marital relationship is used as an illustration of Christ’s love—representing the relationship between Christ and His church.

²Eph 5:29 Christ sustains his church: “For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church.”

³In John 17:21, Jesus expresses His wish for unity among His followers—a term used interchangeably with the ‘church’—Jesus prays for the unity of the church on two significant levels: (1) asking the Father to keep believers united to each other, and (2) that the church remains connected to the Father just as He [Jesus] is united with the father. See also 1 Cor 1:10; Ps 133.

⁴OT and NT examples of cultural, ethnic, and social status and gender distinctions being irrelevant are: (1) Genesis 12:3, “and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. And 1 Cor 12:12-13: “For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves (or servants; Greek bondservants) or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit” (ESV).

⁵Eph 3:10, “so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.”

physically and conceptually transcend place or location. The “body of Christ” represents those who believe and not any particular, earthly (physical), property, or space. Charles Hodge suggests that the “idea, or nature of the Church; its attributes; its prerogatives; its organization,” should be understood as a tangible reality if we are to develop a holistic ecclesiology. However, it should not be assumed that such views have always been widely held. John Derby very early lamented that “the church is in ruins,” while still a successful Anglican priest in Ireland. Disenchanted with organized religion, Derby was convinced that the denominations of his day, as a whole, had lost their way. This was a view communicated in his pamphlet, *The Nature and Unity of the Church of Christ* (1828).

Modern theologians such as Stanley Hauerwas addressed ecclesiology in more optimistic yet socially pragmatic terms. In his lifelong attempt to meld ideas of

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7 1 Cor 1:21, “For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.” 1 Pet 2:7, “So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.”

8 Here are just two examples which can be used to illustrate the nature of church beyond physical place: 1. 1 Cor 16:19, “The churches of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house.” Gatherings of believers occurred in various places, and often in secret during her persecution. The “church” therefore, could meet anywhere: houses, caves, forests, or other structures where a gathering of the church (the bride of Christ) would meet. 2. Gal 1:13, “For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it.” Paul traveled in order to arrest ‘individuals’ those who were believers in Christ who constituted the aberration Paul was trying to irradiate. Thus, the ‘church’ was not confined to ‘spaces’ or ‘places’ where worship could be conducted, as ‘locale’ did not embody the Christian movement, which was thought to pose a threat to Judaism.


11 Ibid., 99.

ecclesiology with glaring social challenges, Hauerwas argues for authentic applications of biblical truth—unfiltered through cultural lens. The perspective “that the church does not have a social ethic, but rather is a social ethic”\textsuperscript{13} speaks to the idea of a community beyond any specific congregation or denomination, reaching into secular society as much for it’s own good as the good of others.

Commenting on Mission in Karl Barth’s Ecclesiology, Wessel Bently also suggests that the church “stretches beyond the boundaries of denominationalism or sectarianism. The Church must be a people. In other words a community.”\textsuperscript{14}

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has long embraced a biblical understanding of the Christian church and its ‘glocal’ (global-local), nature. This certainly encompasses the idea of the church as community. According to Ellen G. White, the church is “the only object on which He [Christ] bestows His supreme regard”\textsuperscript{15} and completely dependent on Christ for her existence.\textsuperscript{16} Therefore, to understand the significance of a theology of ecclesiology we must first embrace Jesus and His mission as the foundation upon which the church is built.

As Christ’s redemptive agency on earth, the church is the ‘womb’ from which our notions of Christian education have emerged. The local Seventh-day Adventist church is an expression of a shared, biblical faith and devotion to Christ that spans the entire world.


This is demonstrated by the fact that “the Adventist presence manifests itself in nearly every country of the globe.”\textsuperscript{17} This global presence has necessitated, at times, radical organization and re-organization. However, it is interesting to note that the Seventh-day Adventist movement began “aggressively anti-organizational, but today it is the most highly structured church in the history of Christianity.”\textsuperscript{18} Be that as it may, the theological and missional understanding that continues to fuel a passion and vision for Christian education.\textsuperscript{19}

The Seventh-day Adventist understanding of Christian education is seen as an integral part of its gospel mission to the world. Adventists have always connected Christian education to matters of salvation with particular emphasis on the restoration of the image of God. “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.”\textsuperscript{20} In defining education, White provides an important perspective, “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.”\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{17}Seventh-day Adventist World Church website, http://www.adventist.org/world_church/index.html.en (accessed November 17, 2009).

\textsuperscript{18}George R. Knight and Gerald Wheeler, \textit{Organizing to Beat the Devil: The Development of Adventist Church Structure} (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2001), 1.

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid.; Seventh-day Adventist World Church website.

\textsuperscript{20}Ellen G. White, \textit{Education} (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1982), 4.

\textsuperscript{21}Ibid.
Covenantal issues expressed in Deut 6\textsuperscript{22} and redemptive motifs seen in Ps 34\textsuperscript{23} suggest that ecclesiology and education are embedded. These basic contours undergird the idea that vision, (a divinely inspired picture of a preferred future) includes a perspective on issues of Christian education.

Can an understanding of ecclesiology serve to foster environments where pastoral leaders can unite in support of Christian education? “If pastors are serious about salvation, then Christian education should also be seen as a means to that end.”\textsuperscript{24}

\textbf{A Theology of Christian Education}

There are a number of Old and New Testament references suggesting that religious instruction is a divine mandate extending from ancient biblical times to the present. A review of passages relating to the theme of education and specifically the education of the young will reveals the primary goal to be salvation. We will perlustrate a number of these key biblical references that address the systematic education of young people before grappling with questions of the legitimacy and relevance of Christian education in the North Dallas context.

\textsuperscript{22}A unique relationship existed between God and Israel. They had entered into a covenant with Yahweh (Deut 29:13). Yahweh was their father (32;6). Israel must therefore love and not merely fear him (6:5). “And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statues, which I command you this day for your good.” See James E. Smith, The Pentateuch, 2nd ed. (Joplin, MO: College press, 1993), Dt 31m34.

\textsuperscript{23}Gratitude is the dominant theme in Ps 30m34. Yahweh watches over the righteous. He is attentive to their cries for help. “The face of Yahweh”—the manifestation of his presence—is against evildoers. The Lord is near those who have a contrite heart (34:19-20). The righteous are not exempt from afflictions; but Yahweh sees them through each trial. He preserves the “bones,” i.e., their whole being. O one of his bones would be broken (John 19:36). See James E. Smith, The Wisdom Literature and Psalms (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1996), Ps 34.

\textsuperscript{24}Dr. Zebron Ncube, discussing the theological and practical basis for Christian education, Berrien Springs, Michigan, November 2009. Used with permission.
In Deut 6:7-9 (ESV) God commands that His law be taught diligently by Israelite adults to their children. This instruction was to encompass every aspect and activity of his or her existence.

7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

This all-encompassing activity is evident in Deut 6:2, where a perpetual transmission of information, demonstrated by the phrase “you and your son and your son’s son” not be neglected. Although this passage is well known for being one of the first instances where God explicitly commands adults to ‘teach’ their children—a closer reading of the first two verses provides additional contextual reinforcement.

1 Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the rules that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, 2 that you may fear the LORD your God, you and your son and your son’s son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long (Deut 6:1-2).

Moses points out in the first verse that what he is about to share, is in fact of divine origin—suggesting that this principle was taught to him personally by God. Moses is now to teach these same divine values to the Israelite nation—who in turn are charged to teach their children. One might ask, why the transmission of their divine history was so critical as to warrant a command?

According to the message from God, survival and longevity in their new inheritance depended upon their strict obedience. In time their fidelity would lead to

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25 Deut 6:2, “that your days may be long. . . .”
the creation of a teaching \((o\breve{a}d\breve{f}y\ yada)\) tradition.\(^{26}\) Later in the book of Deuteronomy we come across similar statements embellishing earlier instructions and admonitions: “You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise” (Deut 11:19).

The “command” to teach was clearly intentional and could not be construed as an addendum to the messages given through Moses. R. Jamieson and A. R. Fausset provide additional insight when specifically addressing instruction to the young:

A further provision was made for the earnest inculcation of them \((the\ statutes)\) on the minds of the young by a system of parental training, which was designed to associate religion with all the most familiar and oft-recurring scenes of domestic life. It is probable that Moses used the phraseology in De 6:7 merely in a figurative way, to signify assiduous, earnest, and frequent instruction.\(^{27}\)

There are at least three generations alluded to in this mandate.\(^{28}\) However, commenting on this passage, Adam Clark attempts to give even broader significance to religious instruction as a national responsibility: “Be careful and exact in teaching thy children; and aim, as by whetting, to sharpen them, and put an edge upon them. Teach them to thy

\(^{26}\)It is probable that the teaching tradition \((o\breve{a}d\breve{f}y\ yada)\) began at a time when only a few written copies of the whole law existed, and the people had it read to them only at the feasts of tabernacles. Therefore, God appointed them, at least for the present, to write some select sentences of the law, that were most weighty and comprehensive, upon their \textit{walls}, or in \textit{scrolls} of parchment to be worn about their wrists; It is widely believed that phylacteries came into existence through such practices. See Adam Clark, \textit{Adam Clark’s Commentary on the Bible} (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 1983).


\(^{28}\)“Deuteronomy 6:2,” \textit{Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible} (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 1983), 1:752. Clark suggests that five generations appear to be mentioned above: 1. Fathers; 2. Their children; 3. The generation to come; 4. And their children; 5. And their children. They were never to lose sight of their history throughout all their generations.
children, not only those of thy own body” (say the Jews) “but all those that are anyway under thy care and tuition.”

Again, as touched upon earlier, this responsibility may have signaled the beginnings of a system of education that would become more formally established as the Israelite nation became settled. Apparently, an all-encompassing, bridging of secular and religious life is at least part of the intent for establishing generational teaching.

Perhaps in an attempt to normalize a spiritual worldview in the new nation, God addresses the human tendency to compartmentalize our temporal and religious existence, our ideas and actions, in order to position them for individual and national success. Clark reinforces this idea, stating: “Whoever fears God will endeavor to bring up his children in the way of righteousness, that they also may fear God, and that pure and undefiled religion may be preserved in his family through all its generations, not only in word, but in practice also.”

Also, poetic portions of scripture further support the idea of an accepted tradition of teaching amongst the Israelites: “Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD” (Ps 34:11). Particular note must be made of these beautifully crafted declarations of God’s activity throughout Jewish history, interwoven with admonitions to teach succeeding generations: “He commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments” (Ps 78:5-7; see also Ps 132:12).

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30. Ibid.
The wisdom literature of the Bible supports similar principles, “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it” (Prov 22:6). This reference can be viewed as a summary of Solomon’s wisdom on educating children and a possible indication of an accepted responsibility within Jewish culture.

In summary, a review of Old Testament passages relating to the theme of education and specifically the education of the young reveals the primary goal to be salvation. The first and most enduring educators were to be parents, tasked with keeping the image of God and His actions in their national history in constant view. Parents still remain a central, consistent force within contemporary, Christian education. This is perhaps best demonstrated by the fact that parents (rather than children), are the primary ‘customers’ of Christian education. Their exercise of choice, commitment and ongoing sacrifice converts into a substantial, emotional and financial investment to place their children in an environment where an ethical, moral and spiritual formwork for faith and action exists.

The fundamental premise for Christian education in the New Testament is perhaps best expressed in Col 2:3: “In whom [Christ] are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” The idea that Jesus was himself educated in the fashion mandated in the Old Testament is underlined in Luke 2:52 in that “Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”

From the scriptural examples referred to, a framework emerges for establishing the centrality of Christian education – encapsulated in three theological realities: (1) the
fallen condition of mankind, \(^{31}\) (2) the restoration of man, \(^{32}\) and (3) a divine vision for the destiny of humanity. \(^{33}\) Early in the development of the Seventh-day Adventist church emphasis was placed on Christian education. According to George Akers, Ellen White’s “able articulation of the role of Christian education as a prime vehicle for the transmission of religious values and purpose constitutes a profound theology of Christian education.”\(^{34}\) This basic underpinning has enabled a consistent focus on the development and practice of Christian education\(^{35}\) and educational excellence for more than a hundred years. \(^{36}\) “Adventist education is unique because of its commitment to educating the whole person. Thus, in addition to spiritual growth, cognitive and physical development is also regarded as essential to a well-rounded education.”\(^{37}\)

Currently, the Seventh-day Adventist educational program includes almost 7,600 schools, colleges, and universities, and over 80,000 teachers servicing 1,545,000

\(^{31}\) For example, Rom 3:23, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

\(^{32}\) Titus 2:12, “training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.”

\(^{33}\) The Great Commission of Matt 28:19 and 1 Cor 12:28 lend weight. See also John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, (or for this is how God loved the world) that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.


\(^{35}\) White, Education, 16. “Since God is the source of all true knowledge, it is . . . the first object of education to direct our minds to His own revelation [the biblical record] of Himself.”


students. Adventists could not have reached this landmark without a strong sense of stewardship. This brings us to the matter of stewardship as the cornerstone in carrying out the mission of the church through Christian education.

**A Theology of Stewardship for Christian Education**

Before discussing the biblical meaning of stewardship as the cornerstone of Christian education, we will briefly define the word as it is most commonly understood. In the English language ‘steward’ or ‘stewardship’ are words that date back before the 12th century. A steward was one employed usually in a large household or estate to manage domestic concerns, which might include the supervision of servants, collection of rents, and keeping of accounts. Stewards did not own the estate, business, or assets but were responsible for managing them and conducting their responsibilities with diligence to warrant the owner’s total confidence. We come across the first instance of the word *stewardship* in Gen 15:2; however, the principle of stewardship can be noticed much earlier in Gen 1:26: “And God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.’”

The use of the word “*dominion*” denotes the idea of jurisdiction and governance. In addition, the context of the verse provides two noteworthy ideas: (1) the intent of the

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Godhead to create humankind “in our image, after our likeness” and (2) the management of the planet, “let them have dominion.” These ideas are explicitly stated in verse 28: “And God blessed them. And God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’”

The phrase “subdue it and have dominion over” compounds the idea that the first humans were tasked with the supervision and care of not just all-living creatures but the ecology also. Gen 2:15 introduces some additional dynamics to the role of steward that are echoed later in the Old Testament. “The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.” Here, the care of the garden appears to be a primary task. However a more succinct picture exists, clearing-up any doubt as to the global and comprehensive nature of human stewardship. “You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet” (Ps 8:6) and later “The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to man” (Ps 115:16).

In the NT Jesus employs the now culturally familiar imagery of stewardship as a vehicle to transport kingdom principles to His hearers. In Matt 20:1-16, Jesus teaches the nature of grace and the “the kingdom of heaven”—that God is generous and His perspective infinitely more expansive. In Luke 12:42, stewardship is used in illustrating the fact that integrity and honesty in temporal issues are an indication of trustworthiness in eternal. Warren Wiersbe elicits the apostle Paul’s image and role of the steward as a “servant who manages everything for his master, but who himself owns nothing. Joseph was a chief steward in Potiphar’s household (Gen. 39). The church is the ‘household of faith’ (Gal. 6:10; Matt. 13:52), and the ministers are stewards who share God’s wealth
with the family.”

These NT examples of stewardship are valuable in at least two ways: (1) They sharply illustrate moral and ethical nuances not overtly addressed in the OT, and (2) they alert us to a number of dangers in overlooking the wider significance of stewardship.

We are challenged today in our post-industrial, non-agrarian, and increasingly urban, cultural milieu with the limited view that stewardship chiefly concerns issues of giving and managing money. One of the dangers of over-simplification or redacting stewardship to simply, ‘giving money’ lies perhaps in the temptation to avoid more costly relational claims and personal investments such as our diligence, commitment and time.

In a similar vein, donating a proportion of one’s income may be interpreted to mean that we have earned complete autonomy to use our remaining finances in any way we please. It is perhaps far easier in contemporary western culture to make such trade-offs between God and finances. In such scenarios, ‘giving’ absolves any further commitment or responsibility. Another danger in misunderstanding stewardship is forgetting the relationship between stewardship and grace. A steward does not own what he or she manages. Similarly, grace is something we receive but do not possess independently. It is given as a free gift, yet it is to be managed and extended to others.

With faulty or incomplete ideas of stewardship and grace, it is easy to transition

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41In addition to passages such as Luke 16.


43OT and NT ideas on stewardship, grace, and giving include: Deut 5:10; Prov 11:24; Rom 5:17; 1 Cor 2:12.
from appropriate responses of gratitude—intrinsic to the idea of ‘stewardship’ to more self-centered traits of personal ‘ownership’. In secular and religious pursuits such limited ideas promote highly individualistic thinking and action opposed to the ideals of grace and stewardship. In keeping with the basic, biblical ideas previously expressed, stewardship involves more than the judicious management of economic wealth and extends to encompass the stewardship (or management) of religious, moral, and spiritual assets. Christian education as a stewardship issue is a case in point here.

Educational stewardship was first established when the divine mandate was given to the people of God to educate their young. Deut 6:2 implicitly states that a perpetual transmission of religious information was critical to the survival and prosperity of successive generations. There is no indication in either the OT or the NT record that the religious, moral, and ethical education of young people would later become irrelevant to communities of faith. On the contrary, the need to address: (1) the fallen condition of man (2) God’s restoration of man and (3) the eternal destiny of mankind is perhaps more relevant today than at any other time in history. Christian education in its proximate (social) and eternal (spiritual) dimensions is not ancillary to our relationship with God, but part of His explicitly stated will.

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44 The idea of perpetuity is demonstrated by the phrase: “you and your son and your son’s son.”

45 For example, Rom 3:23, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

46 Titus 2:12, “training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.”

47 John 3:16 “For God so loved the world (or For this is how God loved the world), that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

48 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it (Prov 22:6).
In conclusion, stewardship is a principle embedded in the earliest portions of scripture, and begins with personally embracing the reality that everything comes from God, and has been given to mankind to enjoy, preserve and administer by exercising faithful oversight. Just as the earth and all its resources were given freely to humanity, the gifts of God extend beyond extrinsic, material assets to embrace beliefs, principles, and ideas that encompass a care and concern for people—especially the vulnerable.49

Education is a necessary, theologically sound, andbiblically mandated cause that requires a communal approach for its realization. The burden for providing Christian education in any given community or region must logically and ethically become a shared responsibility in order to create a sustainable system, where adequate resources are available. This has been the historical reality of Seventh-day Adventist education, making the reach and effectiveness of its educational system extensive. The Seventh-day Adventist educational program includes almost 7,600 schools, colleges and universities, and over 80,000 teachers servicing 1,545,000 students.50

**Shared Vision: A Biblical View**

In this final section we examine the biblical record to establish any basis for a shared, corporate, or communal vision.

The term *vision* is encountered in various forms in the Old Testament. It is not uncommon for the distinctions between vision, dream or trance to become difficult to

49See Deut 15:11; 24:14, addressing obligations to the poor and needy in the provision of sustenance and fair treatment.

succinctly define. This complexity is reflected in the biblical vocabulary of ‘vision’.

The first occurrence of ‘vision’ appears in Gen 15:1, “the word of the Lord came to Abraham in a vision.” Here, the word vision is used to express the mechanism or means God chooses to make His word known. This basic intent is one that can be identified elsewhere in the OT (Num 12:6; 24:4; 24:16). God appears to communicate by means of ‘vision’ in order to reveal His will. However, an exact definition still remains illusive. Looking at other terms used in conjunction with vision may add some useful insight, for example, “word of the Lord” (Gen 15:1; 1 Sam 3:1), “dream” (Num 12:6; Job 20:8; 33:15; Isa 29:7), “trance” (Num 24:4; Acts 11:5), “knowledge of the most high” (Num 24:16). These connected terms provide additional context and offer some interesting nuances. Apparently, God’s ‘word’ or ‘knowledge’ can be delivered via dream, trance, and vision or directly to the intended recipient. Regardless of the method of delivery, what is clear is that God seeks to communicate with His people.

The word vision takes on a dual role as either the means or mode of communication and possibly the message itself. Take for example Num 12:6, “I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a “dream.” Here the term vision is used interchangeably with dream. Another key biblical statement that stressed the importance of God’s revealed will or vision is found in Prov 29:18, “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” In later references vision is used as

D. R. W. Wood and I. Howard Marshall, New Bible Dictionary, 3rd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), s.v. “vision.” Heb. ḥāzôn comes from a root we get a number of closely related definitions throughout the OT, which include: to look, behold, used to describe the beholding of a vision by the seer while in an ecstatic state (Isa 1:1; Ezek 12:27); while the word marâ, from the ordinary root ‘to see’, means vision as a means of revelation (Num 12:6; 1 Sam 3:15). The NT uses two words in this connection: horama (Acts 9:10, 12; 10:3, 17, 19) and optasia (Luke 1:22; Acts 26:19; 2 Cor 12:1). They signify ‘appearance’ or ‘vision’. The emphasis here seems to be upon the ecstatic nature of the experience, and the revelatory character of the knowledge, which came to the biblical prophets and seers.
a vehicle for communicating very specific, messages indirectly—through intermediaries. For example, God speaks to the young Samuel regarding an issue of grave importance to his mentor, Eli. The vision concerned Gods’ displeasure with Eli for his failure to constrain his unruly sons, who were desecrating the sanctuary services. We learn that “Samuel feared to show Eli the vision” (1 Sam 3:15). Another example is the prophet Nathan who is given a message through vision for King David regarding the building of the sanctuary (2 Sam 7:1-5). In these examples we learn that both youth and adult can serve as divine intermediaries through the reception of ‘vision’—a notion supported elsewhere in scripture.52

There are two distinct features that emerge so far: (1) God communicates his will either directly to the individual concerned or (2) indirectly, through an intermediary as was the case with the prophet Nathan on sanctuary issues or when he confronts King David with divinely revealed information, “according to all this vision” (2 Sam 7:17; 1 Chr 17:15). Again, a distinction is not made between the ‘medium’ and the ‘message’. There is only one instance of apparent departure where God gives his own statement on the fact:

Hear now my words: if there be a prophet among you, I Jehovah will make myself known unto him in a vision, I will speak with him in a dream. 7 My servant Moses is not so; he is faithful in all my house: 8 with him will I speak mouth to mouth, even manifestly, and not in dark speeches; and the form of Jehovah shall he behold (Num 12:6-8).

Even with the special circumstances surrounding God’s prerogative to communicate with Moses, the same vision principles are still at work: God reveals his will in the form of

52An example is Joel 2:28: “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.”
displeasure, judgments or future plans for His people, either through a specially selected individual or directly to the person(s) concerned. What becomes important is not the mechanism of communication but what God has to say.

God’s vision was not always understood, welcomed or seen as positive, especially when it concerned the spiritual state of the nation (Ezek 7:13; 12:22-24). In relation to specific messages of national significance, Isaiah lamented, “a grievous vision is declared unto me” (Isa 1:1; 21:2; 22:1; 22:5). He was the only biblical writer to use the phrase, “valley of vision” an expression of the nations’ dire, moral and religious condition.

The source of vision although overwhelmingly credited to God (see Num 24:16) can have at least one other place. God addresses this source directly: “And the LORD said to me: The prophets are prophesying lies in my name. I did not send them, nor did I command them or speak to them. They are prophesying to you a lying vision, worthless divination, and the deceit of their own minds” (Jer 14:14).

In this instance, prophets are accused of using God’s name to promote their personal ideas and agendas to the troubled nation (a similar condition can be identified in Ezek 13:7). God views any alternate source as “a lying vision” and “worthless divination.” The messages are declared false because God states: “I did not send them, nor did I command them or speak to them.” They were clearly uninspired. Ezekiel had express orders to prophesy against the prophets of Israel; so they called themselves, as if none but they had been worthy of the name of Israel’s prophets, who were indeed Israel’s deceivers.Matthew Henry, “Ezekiel 13:1–9,” Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 1362. The condition of Israel’s
God’s favor without exercising faith or demonstrating repentance. “They pretend to have a commission from God, whereas he never sent them. Mathew Henry comments, “They thrust themselves into the prophetic office, without warrant from him who is the Lord God of the holy prophets. . . .”  

In summary, vision emerges as a means of communicating God’s unique perspective. Vision is therefore, God sent, God given, and God spoken, a dynamic that is pivotal in arriving at a theology of shared vision. Vision conveys God’s stand against the moral and spiritual condition of humanity generally and particularly amongst His people. Importantly, vision speaks to what should and could be. It encapsulates His desire for both their proximate and ultimate future and therefore it becomes apparent that vision encompasses the personal, relational and soteriological potential of man.

Shared Vision

In Scripture it is God’s prerogative to withdraw his vision. “The law is no more; her prophets also find no vision from the LORD” (Lam 2:9). People may seek divine insight (vision) but a broken relationship between God and His people may prevent them from receiving it or God from giving it (Ezek 7:26). God therefore gives or removes vision, and in doing so may permit a false or concocted vision to thrive (Ezek 12:22-24).

Interestingly, the idea of ‘shared vision’ becomes visible in at least two examples where a singular vision of divine origin was revealed to one or more persons. In Dan 2:19, a ‘secret’ God-given dream of the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, was divinely

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spiritual, moral, economic, and national security was in disarray during the time of Jeremiah. False prophets were distorting God’s message through Jeremiah.

revealed to Daniel. In Acts 9:10-18, similarly, two unconnected individuals received visions that were from one divine source and intrinsically connected. Nevertheless, caution should be exercised in attempting to establish a pattern here; as such examples are uncommon in scripture. However it is noteworthy that both cases portray God as the giver and revealer of vision—a notion discussed earlier.55

In conclusion, the idea of ‘shared vision’ between divinity and humanity (as a melding of divine and human ideas), is not one supported by Scripture. Scripturally speaking, all true vision is from God.56 While God’s vision is supported by infinite knowledge of the past, present, and future, man’s foresight is proximate and severely limited to his knowledge, beliefs and imagination. The biblical evidence suggesting any human involvement in determining either direction or fate—whether personal or corporate, has not been found in this study. On the contrary, we learn that vision is simultaneously the vehicle and expression of God’s ongoing desire to communicate His directives and direct humanity towards a preferred future.

God’s ultimate vision for humanity was formed before the existence of the human race—and one in which He asks humanity to participate.57 Vision from a biblical viewpoint is therefore not to be taken as an alternate or optional view of reality, but as reality itself—proximate, universal, and ultimate.

55 The source of vision from this biblical survey is overwhelmingly credited to God. See, for example, Num 24:16.


57 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation of John 13:8).
A shared vision as presented in scripture embraces the idea of humanity sharing in divine perspectives and directives through God’s initiation via the communication of His will. It may involve past, present, and future perspectives but tends towards the future restoration and prosperity of God’s people. Jer 29:11 perhaps conveys the essence of God’s ultimate, relational intent and further, highlights the contextual basis for vision: “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” It is this forward focus toward a divinely, predetermined ‘end’ that speaks to the condition and innate need of fallen humanity that a biblical understanding of shared vision addresses. Vision simultaneously presents a reassurance of God’s concern and a challenge to personal and corporate faith and action.

**A Shared Vision for Christian Education**

A shared vision for Christian education addresses three pragmatic, theological realities: (1) the condition of man, 58 (2) the desire of God to address the proximate condition of humanity, 59 and (3) God’s passion to impact the ultimate and eternal destiny of mankind. 60 The secondary goal of Christian education is to lay a foundation for life and service. 61 Christian education develops a cohesive, organic, and philosophical worldview, with eternal salvation as its primary goal.

58Rom 3:23, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

59Titus 2:12, “training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.”

60John 3:16, “For God so loved the world (or For this is how God loved the world) that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

61See Eph 2:10, “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for *good works*, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (italics mine).
This focal area of the [Seventh-day Adventist] church’s mission has necessitated and facilitated the development of a dynamic, global presence. It is this theological understanding in the Adventist movement—driven by a commitment to the risen Christ that continues to fuel a passion and vision for Christian education.\textsuperscript{62}

The theological and eschatological viewpoint of Adventism has shaped its organizational structure.\textsuperscript{63} The Seventh-day Adventist perspective on Christian education is an integral part of its gospel mission to the world that embraces the ideal of facilitating human wholeness on many social issues including Christian education. The early development of the Seventh-day Adventist church as a movement placed a consistent and concerted emphasis on the importance of education. It is believed that Ellen White’s “able articulation of the role of Christian education as a prime vehicle for the transmission of religious values and purpose constitutes a profound theology of Christian education.”\textsuperscript{64}

It is interesting to note a renewed interest and urgency in Adventist education among K-12 and higher education teachers and leaders. This is related to consistent, enrollment decline, over the past few decades.\textsuperscript{65} This will be discussed at length in

\textsuperscript{62}Seventh-day Adventist World Church website.

\textsuperscript{63}The main theological pillar undergirding Adventist church structure is eschatology. Mission is an outgrowth of eschatology since Adventism believes that the message of the three angels must be preached to the entire world before the end of time. In Adventism, mission (evangelism) and church organization are not separate issues but are united, with organization providing the delivery system for effective mission.” Knight, \textit{Organizing for Mission}, 47.

\textsuperscript{64}Akers, “The Role of SDA Education, 3.

\textsuperscript{65}La Sierra’s School of Education hosted the National Summit on Adventist Education, October 2010, for K-12 and higher education teachers and leaders, designed to address the crises of educational decline. See http://www.lasierra.edu/index.php?id=3544 (accessed June 2011).
chapter 4, in looking at the “Educational Landscape in National Perspective.”

Summary

Vision is an expression of God’s will. It encapsulates His desired outcome in our interests. This suggests that God has a particular viewpoint on our unique ministry context. The disparity seen between the biblical vision to educate the young (established earlier in this chapter) and the status quo that has existed in North Dallas for approximately forty years creates legitimacy and urgency of this project.

This study therefore, attempts to facilitate a process where tangible support of the biblical vision to educate can be achieved within the geographical area of this project. The desired outcome is shared responsibility for providing denominational, high school education in North Texas.

In summary, a number of important realities emerge from this biblical survey of shared vision:

1. Vision comes from God; it is not human-made or human-inspired.
2. The biblical idea of vision is not a collaborative effort between God and humanity. In this sense, ‘a shared vision’ begins with embracing the reality of God’s supreme omniscience.
3. God reveals His will for individuals, communities, and nations through giving vision.
4. Vision involves God inviting humanity into His purposes.
5. Vision is a tangible picture of a future reality determined by God.
6. Vision is a relational process involving the interconnection between God, people, faith, and action.
In summary, there is an important distinction that should be made between vision and the necessary contextual adaptations, such as strategy, plans, and processes that are necessary toward its realization. Methodology should not be confused with vision. While plans and methods can be adapted contextually whenever necessary, clarity is essential on what is to be achieved. Vision concerns the ‘what’ of leadership, and as such must be biblically sound. If a vision has divine origins, the underlying goal or ultimate intent does not alter in relation to social trends, cultural shifts, or group consensus. Just as the basic needs of humanity (redemptive grace, forgiveness, salvation, belonging, and divine purpose) have maintained perpetual currency, so does the character of biblical vision. This feature of vision, perhaps more than any other is the defining difference between in biblical and secular arenas.

It is important therefore, to recognize that a ‘shared vision for Christian education’ is essentially not a new idea, but the outgrowth of a theology of ecclesiology, a theology of stewardship, and a biblical theology of Christian education. A ‘shared vision for Christian education’ as the basis of this project thesis is part of an ongoing commitment to establish a pre-existing, divine mandate within the context of the North Dallas area of Texas. This will necessitate plans, processes, and methodologies that are perhaps innovative and uniquely suited to the context.

This study is essentially a local expression of a global commitment to ensure that an activity critical to the survival and prosperity of present and successive generations, not be neglected (Deut 6:2-7). Importantly, “Adventist education should seek to achieve a goal far greater than superior academics . . . to establish in our children a personal relationship with Jesus Christ so that they may be life-long Seventh-day Adventist
witnesses for Him.” A ‘shared vision’ suggests that communities of faith work together towards God’s desire for their youth, in making this vision reality.

66 Shane Anderson, How to Kill Adventist Education: And How to Give It a Fighting Chance (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2009), 22.
CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW ON BUILDING A SHARED VISION FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

"I would give all the wealth of the world, and all the deeds of all the heroes, for one true vision."
—Henry David Thoreau

Introduction

This literature review will examine material that focuses on a shared vision for Christian education. In addressing this topic, at least three assumptions have been drawn which shape the following discussion and review:

1. Vision is an activity that falls within the arena of leadership praxis.

2. The idea of a ‘shared’ vision suggests interaction and communication within a broader group or community where convergent and divergent ideas, values, and ideals exist surrounding what vision is and the role of leadership in defining it.

3. In framing this discussion the presupposition has been adopted; that leadership (as a relational activity) is the cradle in which vision is most often communicated and actualized. Therefore, this review seeks to frame these findings through the conceptual premise that pastoral leadership occurs in the lived reality of social, contextual, and conceptual presuppositions about what leadership is and what leaders are expected to do.

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In order to grapple with some of the complexities surrounding leadership and vision, we will begin by a limited review of leadership literature in an attempt to grasp a basic, working definition of leadership. Second, we will explore vision in business and religious leadership contexts on order to establish the necessary backdrop for a selected, review of contemporary material that addresses a process for building consensus towards a shared vision of Christian education.

This chapter will conclude by highlighting some important distinctions between secular and religious thinking on the source and purpose of vision, before looking finally at some common vision myths and mistakes.

**Leadership: A Historical Backdrop**

Leadership has become an increasingly attractive word that continues to carry legendary and mythical significance. Nevertheless, it has been difficult to clearly define, as there has been a traditional and classic tendency to confuse leadership with management and a failure to recognize the fundamental differences and areas where convergence becomes inevitable.

When the words ‘manage’ and ‘lead’ are looked up in the etymological dictionary, these words have very different origins. *Manage*, as well as *management* and *manager*, are derived from the root word ‘*manus*’, meaning ‘the hand’. (The words ‘command’ and ‘demand’ come from that same root.) On the other hand, the words ‘leadership’, ‘lead’, and ‘leader’ shares the common root word ‘to go’. *Merriam-Webster Unabridged* suggests that leadership is “to guide on a way show by going with

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2Focusing on the past two decades—material between the 1990s and 2010.
or in advance of.” The implied meaning is that leadership, at its root, is about ‘guiding’ therefore, the idea of momentum is central to the notion of leadership.

In traditional management literature, the functions of management are frequently described as planning, directing, organizing, staffing, compliance, and control. Management is much more about implementation and the systems, practices, and controls that facilitate compliance and the execution of initiatives. Leadership, in practical terms, is about creating the reality in which management becomes essential. Leadership is concerned with guiding an organization towards a future destination. Management addresses the methodology (or processes) necessary to reach a destination predetermined by leadership. Strictly speaking, leadership does not address the more coercive, compliance-orientated issues which management tends to tackle.  

Leadership has increased in popularity and become a much-discussed topic; yet, a succinct definition has remained elusive. Nevertheless, leadership is seen as a complex process having multiple dimensions. In 1978, James Burns commented that “leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth.” Although public interest has grown, in the serious study of leadership it has been contended that “there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are leadership theories—and there are almost as many theories of leadership as there are psychologists working in the field.”

3 Adapted from http://leadershipchallenge.typepad.com/leadership_challenge/2009/01/the-origins-of-leadership.html


Northhouse concurs with a number of prominent leadership scholars that “research findings on leadership . . ., provide a picture of a process that is far more sophisticated and complex than the often-simplistic view presented in some of the popular books on leadership.”

Conceptual confusion and ambiguity in defining leadership has existed for some time. Bernard and Ruth Bass collected and analyzed 4,725 studies of leadership going back to 1910, listing approximately 189 pages of references in his handbook. Stogdill concluded, “The endless accumulation of empirical data has not produced an integrated understanding of leadership.” Additionally, in the past fifty years there have been as many as sixty five different classification systems developed to define dimensions of leadership. There are no known societies in existence that do not have leadership in some area of their social and cultural life.

In searching for a comprehensive definition of leadership, reviewing the commonly available literature and delving into the more scholastic offerings, one may be tempted to conclude as did Bennis and Nanus in 1985, that the “available books on leadership are often as majestically useless as they are pretentious.” This opinion stems largely from the fact that many books claiming ‘leadership’ as its focus often address

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management paradigms, and the associated tasks. Another pattern seen in many (so-called), leadership texts is a failure to clearly define and address leadership in any other context than business and sports.

Although leadership has proved notoriously difficult to succinctly define, it is universally recognized as a vital human activity. Importantly, “even in the absence of universal agreement . . . most leadership scholars probably would agree, in principal, that leadership can be defined as the nature of the influencing process—and its resultant outcomes.”

Perhaps more succinctly and theologically palatable is the notion that “authentic leadership is the creation of empowered followers in pursuit of moral purposes, leading to moral outcomes that are guided by moral means.”

Although tempting, it should not be assumed that leadership is understood or practiced with uniformity across North America or the globe. For example, “The greater the socioeconomic injustices in a society, the more distorted the realities of leadership—its powers, morality, and effectiveness.” Dynamic cultural and social forces shape one's perceptions, expectations, and interactions with leaders.

In the development of leadership concepts and praxis during the industrial age, traditional leadership scholars focused largely on ‘traits’ of leadership—such as personality, goal attainment or a leader’s capacity to manage resources and people. The visible aspects of leadership—empirical elements most susceptible to statistical


13 Ibid.

manipulation were often the sole focus. While this approach may have allowed scholars to feel a level of confidence—as their theories utilized the most advanced, scientific methods of that time, what resulted was an excessive emphasis on the ‘content’ of leadership. The process of leadership—a dynamic and complex interchange between leaders and followers (now recognized by contemporary scholars as central to understanding it’s nature), was largely missed or deemed unimportant.

The ‘results orientation’ of early leadership research was an integral part of the empirically dominated, industrial period. However, it is surprising to discover similar ideas and concepts about leadership evident in what is now considered the postindustrial era.

**Longevity of Past Leadership Theories**

Many popular theories of leadership in existence today have their origin in earlier concepts and ideas. These range from ‘heroic’ or ‘great man’ theories popular in the 1890s through the earlier part of the last century to ‘group theory’ in the 1930-1940s, traits theory; 1940-1950s, and behaviorist and situational theories in the 1960s and 1970s. It is tempting to assume that during the 1980-1990s and into the new, postindustrial, millennium that our understanding and practice of leadership have advanced far beyond conceptually ‘primitive’ times. According to Rost, such notions are naïve at best and egotistical at worst. In reality, “There were more scholars and practitioners who thought

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16 This is an almost exclusive focus on what a leader needs to know—knowledge a leader must have about a company, organization or community in order to be influential within it, as opposed to understanding the essence, role, and place of leadership.
of leadership as group facilitation in the 1980s than there were in the 1930s. . . . The great man theory of leadership was as strong in 1990 as it was in 1890.”17 This is surprising, considering the inherently sexist ideas promoted by some of these theories.

Looking at the political process as it relates to presidential elections reveals more than residual traces of “great man” and “heroic” ideas of leadership prevalent in the 1890s. Like it or not, “they are part of our mythology, the folklore that people use to make sense out of life . . . , putting top officials into a collective unit, and having one person in charge are how people have made sense of the word (leader).”18 Although such “notions of leadership are simplistic at first glance, . . . the nature of mythology is to reduce complex realities into simple explanations.”18 There is great irony in the idea that much of what has been offered as ‘new’ in mainstream, leadership literature can be accurately identified as a regurgitation of industrialist leadership thought.

Another consideration is the source of most contemporary, leadership literature and its influence on the practice of leadership in other arenas. During the past couple of decades much of the popular leadership texts have come from business sector academicians and practitioners.19 It is not difficult to imagine, great-man or trait theories having some impact on the church community, perhaps shaping expectations placed on pastoral leaders in much the same way that broader society places expectations on business leaders and public servants. The degree to which pastoral leaders may be

17 Rost, Leadership for the 21st Century, 19.
18 Ibid., 98.
19 Ibid., 1-2. It is not unusual to find great man or woman and trait theories of leadership in common existence. The idea of one person directing others, such as a coach, committee chairperson, team manager, have been popular notions of leadership since the 1900s and became even more popular in the 1980s.
adopting similar ideas and methods in their practice of church leadership may prove a worthwhile study. At any rate, this may be a significant consideration in vision discussions as most often (as we will discuss further on), pastoral leaders are largely seen as primarily responsible for facilitating, communicating, and executing vision.

Pastoral leadership, although characteristically different in its emphasis and practice from other forms of leadership, still occurs in the lived reality of conceptual presuppositions about who leaders are and what they (are supposed to) do. Ultimately, the most prevalent and generally held views of leadership will influence whether the leader and the vision they communicate is adopted and supported or resisted and discarded. Importantly, this literature review posits that ideas about leadership do not come out of thin air. They form part of the lived reality of church members and society as a whole.

**Vision and Leadership in the Contemporary Christian Church**

Christian leadership literature tends to fall into two basic camps. The first and most prolific category emphasizes the nature of Christian leadership, focusing primarily on the qualities and character traits of spiritual leaders. These authors emphasize the inner life and personal qualities of especially, pastoral leaders. The importance of grappling with questions of purpose, calling, and destiny are also common themes.

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The second group more directly addresses issues of leadership praxis.  

Specifically, tasks related to people and resource management. Administration and management are highlighted as the tangible, measurable, indices by which pastoral leadership tends to follow the expectations of religious, denominational leaders, and local church membership. There are qualitative and quantitative tensions that arise as leadership success in the church can be measured or viewed in very different ways.

Seventh-day Adventist conference leadership may typically assess pastoral effectiveness in the local church by focusing on tithe receipts, baptisms, and membership trends. Conversely, local church leaders may look at relational aspects of pastoral leaders, such as the ability to nurture a congregation, or the theological and participatory growth he or she can affect within the membership. The capacity of the pastor to ideate with local church leaders and ‘create’ a compelling vision for the future can be a significant index of competent leadership.

These qualitative and quantitative functions call for a variety of divergent skills, experience and natural abilities that may never have been encountered by the pastor in any of his or her formal training or reflect the actual reality of church members with previous pastors. However, unrealistic and impractical, broad expectations of pastoral leaders exist and form part of the leadership landscape. Importantly, are there clear

distinctions between secular and religious leadership thinking and practice? Right or wrong, pastoral leaders are usually tasked with the primary responsibility for developing and communicating vision.

The extraordinary number of leadership titles over the past two decades, coupled with a global reach and recognition, justify some specific attention and analysis of two, highly visible and influential church leaders and authors. Bill Hybels has authored or co-authored over twenty best-selling books, many of which are leadership texts.22 Hybels speaks around the world on leadership issues primarily to Christian leaders. However, the yearly convened ‘Leadership Summit’ attracts both business and church leaders alike, numbering up to 7,000 people in attendance at the Chicago site—and has grown to an additional 60,000 connected via satellite for the annual two-day, Global Leadership Conference.23 Hybels promotes the idea that leadership within the local church is vital to the effectiveness of the church in wider society. In this regard he posits, “The local church is the hope of the world.”24 Specifically addressing the topic of vision, Hybels suggests:

Somebody has to stand up in front of that group of people and say, “Hey gang, there is a better future out there. We’re here. The future God has for us is out there, and I believe that in His power and by His strength, we can move there!” That’s what


24Bill Hybels, Courageous Leadership (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 33.
vision casting is. It is absolutely critical toward helping a church reach its redemptive potential, and every leader has to learn how to do it.\textsuperscript{25}

According to this statement, the pastor-leaders’ role is less facilitative and more directive where vision creation and communication is concerned. This view tends to harmonize with influential business leaders such as Lee Iococa who will be discussed later.

The second author and leader, John Maxwell, is an internationally respected leadership expert and speaker within the for-profit and non-profit sectors. Having sold more than 18 million books, Maxwell is perhaps the most recognized name in business leadership. He has regularly addressed Fortune 500 companies, foreign governments, the National Football League, the United States Military Academy at West Point, and the United Nations. He is emphatic about the centrality of leadership, stating in his earliest leadership texts that “everything rises and falls on leadership.”\textsuperscript{26}

Maxwell’s overt use of secular leaders in his texts as examples of effective leadership-practice creates some tension and paradox. While he targets the for-profit sector and presents largely to business audiences, like Hybels, Maxwell’s reach encompasses many Christian leaders. The tendency is to ‘crossover’ in their presentations making delineation between thinking and praxis in the business sector synonymous or a preferred rout for church leaders.

Author and researcher, Jim Collins provides some insightful and surprising commentary derived from his extensive research on the distinctions identified between


the practices of good versus great businesses. In his 2005 monograph, Collins states emphatically that “we must reject the idea—well intentioned, but dead wrong—that the primary path to greatness in the social sectors is to become “‘more like a business’”27 Collins suggests that non-profits such as churches should not blindly assume that adopting business practices is a pathway to success. Non-profit organizations have unique organizational power structures and objectives that make them not just different, but often require greater skill to lead.

Hybels openly admits some inability to articulate a clear distinction between leadership in the business sector and the church.28 Perhaps as a consequence, his discussion of vision and leadership tends to be somewhat anemic on biblical rationale to support his ideas. More often, the tasks of leadership, its measurement, and analysis, tend to follow a business model than a biblical one.

Although not inherently negative, this is an important consideration given the fact that the target audiences for his leadership summits (conferences, books, DVDs, and CDs) are pastors and supporting church leadership. Apart from a cursory glance at Rom 12:8, which emphasizes “diligence” in the practice of leadership, there are no specifically mentioned ‘biblical’ or ‘Christian’ traits in his treatment of church leadership. We are forced to ask, whether much of the advice proffered could readily apply to any person involved in leadership, in any organization? Does this negate the idea of a biblical and spiritual approach to leadership?


28Willow Creek Leadership Summit 2006, Team Edition on DVD, “When Business Thinking Fails the Church: An Interview with Jim Collins, 5B.
The *Maxwell Leadership Bible* stands-out in providing examples of biblical leadership providing modern interpretations and lessons for church leaders. Maxwell’s commentary also establishes a basis for the idea that good (for-profit), business leadership practice emanates from principles found in the ancient, biblical narrative. Importantly, vision is a topic that finds extensive treatment.\(^\text{29}\)

Postmodern thinking has tended to devalue Christian leadership, suggesting that church leaders should aspire to become more ‘businesslike’ in their practice of leadership.\(^\text{30}\) However, Maxwell’s Leadership Bible and Collins research challenges the idea that businesses are inherently superior in the arena of leadership. Maxwell manages to unearth and transpose principles of leadership from the biblical text that are universally applicable.\(^\text{31}\) Such research forces us to rethink the idea that the for-profit sector possesses unique leadership principles worthy of emulation.

In summary, if the future of the church “rests primarily in the hands of its leaders”\(^\text{32}\) greater diligence must be exercised in learning and employing leadership principles that correlate with a sound biblical understanding of leadership, contextualized to church organizational structure. Divine inspiration, spiritual insight, and the role of the Holy Spirit in providing vision (as discussed in chapter 2), do not generally find


\(^{31}\)See Maxwell, *The Maxwell Leadership Bible*, “Meeting 21st-century challenges by using the time-tested and irrefutable principles of leadership that God has shown us in the Bible” (publishers’ notes).

expression among Christian authors or may become infrequent during church board ‘visioning meetings. In this respect, the Maxwell Leadership Bible stands out as an exception.\textsuperscript{33}

Finally, it is useful to briefly reflect on leadership as it is practiced in secular and religious organizations. The absence of distinctly Christian leadership methodologies and praxis may owe much of its existence to the often multi-layered and legislative nature of church organization. Navigating the relationships and power structures in churches is often not as straightforward as those found in businesses. One of the major differences is that the executive structure tends to streamline decisions in corporations and thereby position them for greater efficiency. In this respect, the business world shows greater diligence in leadership praxis by placing an acute focus on managing towards results. Generally speaking, the church—due in part to organizational complexity, a lack of clarity about its objectives, complacency and inattentiveness in developing goals and internal accountability—has suffered from mediocrity and, worst of all, irrelevance.

**A Limited Review of Vision Literature**

It was not until the early to mid 1990s that the term \textit{vision} began to emerge as an increasingly popular idea.\textsuperscript{34} “Major corporations started searching for leaders who could inspire personnel and investors with a compelling vision of the future.”\textsuperscript{35} Everything

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{33} Maxwell, \textit{The Maxwell Leadership Bible}, 73; Exod 6:2-3.
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\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 9.
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from advertising to politics revolved around some articulation of vision—a preferred future towards which, organizations could direct their sights, resources, and passions. However, vision was not a term used widely by business management, scholars, or practitioners. In 1994, *Fortune* magazine highlighted GMs former CEO, Jack Smith, who revealed that *vision* was one of his key priorities. In a delineation of leadership roles among successful CEOs, top executives, and managers in corporations all over the world, ‘*visionary*’ was increasingly seen as an essential quality of effective leaders.

The notion of a visionary leader has inevitably surfaced as an important success characteristic for various types of businesses. In the book *Built to Last* James Collins and Jerry Porras examine the history of thirty-six companies dating back to the 1920s. They demonstrate that companies capable of enduring market volatility and the capacity to adapt to different social contexts, yet thrive over the long haul, did so by establishing and maintaining their *vision*. “In a visionary company, the core values need no rationale or external justification. Nor do they sway with the trends and fads of the day. Nor even do they shift in response to changing market conditions.”

Another commentator put it this way, “Having a clear vision is about knowing what your goal or objective is in any given conversation or project.”

The awakening of the for-profit sector to the importance of vision, understood as a preferred and imagined future has become increasingly commonplace. One

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36 A. Taylor III, “GMs $11,000,000,000 Turnaround,” *Fortune*, October 17, 1994, 54-56.


commentator describes it in this way: “In essence, it’s about being vision driven. In other words . . . the process or “rebirth.” It is a kind of dream: without a dream there cannot be any lasting excitement. It is through a clear vision that you will be able to experience a quantum leap, an “escape to a higher order.” Vision captures the idea that a future reality can and should be sought:

To choose a direction an executive must first develop a mental image of a possible and desirable future state of the organization. This image, which we call a vision, may be a vague as a dream or as precise as a goal or mission statement. The crucial point is that a vision articulates a view of a realistic, credible, attractive future for the organization, a condition that is better in some important ways than what now exists.  

Vision has become a delineator of successful business leaders and business culture as a whole. James Kouses and Barry Posner advance a model of leadership based around Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership. In a discussion of the leader’s responsibilities the charge to *inspire a shared vision*, bring some important distinctions and tensions between vision as it is understood and practiced within secular and church institutions. The following statement highlights this point:

Leaders passionately believe that they can make a difference. They envision the future, creating an ideal and unique image of what the organization can become. Through their magnetism and quiet persuasion, leaders enlist others in their dreams. They breathe life into their visions and get people to see exciting possibilities for the future.  

Leaders *believe, envision, and create* an ideal towards which their organizations can advance. Through their personal *magnetism* and capacity to persuade this is done—in

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41. Ibid., 50.

order to “breathe life into their visions.” This presents an anthropocentric model of leadership, where a leaders’ personal ideas, magnetism, and capacity to persuade become the hinge upon which an organization can move. Such descriptions approximate to ‘trait’ and ‘behaviorist’ notions of leadership where the focus is placed on intrinsic, leadership behaviors and qualities. The heavy use of adjectives that highlight the most positive and virtuous human attributes is one of the core incompatibilities between a secular notion of leadership and the Theo-centric leadership model presented in the Bible.

Another obvious difficulty in exploring (secular) leadership literature in attempting to establish an understanding of vision is its incongruence with the biblical claim for the origin and purpose of vision. From a business perspective, vision is a vital leadership task. Leaders are required to be visionary as a necessity to achieve basic business objectives of greater profitability and increased market share, on which their survival depends.

Business academicians and authors such as John Kotter, identify exemplary business leaders in their research to demonstrate the centrality of vision and the role of the leader in creating it. Lee Iacocca is an example of a visionary leader who painted a bold new vision of what Chrysler could and should be. “It was a vision of a competitive and profitable firm that produced much higher quality products . . . and was strong enough to survive.”

Vision in Contemporary Christian Literature

There are two important books by contemporary Christian authors that

specifically address vision from a theocentric viewpoint. The first is Visioneering by Andy Stanley and second, George Barna’s The Power of Vision. Both actively engage the Bible in a discussion of the source of vision and the role of leadership. A struggle develops between a corporate, top-down approach and that of employing inclusive, participatory leadership methods in creating vision. On a whole, the treatment of vision for church leadership is couched in Theocentric terms. Leighton Ford’s Transforming Leadership manages to draw from prominent leadership scholars. However, Ford still maintains a highly, biblical approach, often citing biblical examples when discussing leadership qualities and activities. In doing so he creates a bridge between common leadership praxis and the unique religious context of the church.

There is an appropriate parable that may offer some insight to the church regarding leadership, based on Luke 16:1-9. Jesus speaks about an unjust steward. After relating the parable, Christ said, “The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light” (v. 8). That is, worldly men of perception and diligence often display more passion and earnestness in serving themselves—(chiefly in pursuit of wealth), than men and women called to serve in spiritual leadership capacities. However, there is growing diligence in creating greater profit margins and better products and services, to the disadvantaged in society. This presents a serious challenge for those in religious leadership to exercise their talents, abilities, and resources for what is

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undoubtedly a higher (and eternal) purpose.

In summary, the contemporary Christian church may have adopted a more anthropomorphic practice of leadership. This finds expression in the expectations of church members and administrative (conference) leadership towards pastoral leaders. Christians in general and church leaders in particular must come to view themselves as having a more participatory role with the risen Christ in His church, rather than routinely adopting practices that approximate closer to more primitive leadership models.47 While it is healthy to adopt an open attitude towards leadership wisdom within contemporary culture, church leaders should not seek to simply approximate to it but to grapple with how these ideas meld within the church context, culture, and Scripture.

The Rise of Spirituality in Contemporary Secular Leadership

Another dynamic that deserves a brief analysis is a new spirituality emergent in secular leadership circles. There has been an integral relationship to the rise of visionary leadership and workplace spirituality. In an article entitled “Visionary Leadership,” business writer, Corrine McLaughlin, speaks of the innate qualities of visionary leaders who “embody a sense of personal integrity, and radiate a sense of energy, vitality and will.” She goes on to say, “Will is standing in a spiritual state of being. Will is a spiritual attribute, which allows a leader to stand for something.”48

47 “Great Man” and “Trait” theories of leadership emerged early in western development were based on the belief that leaders are exceptional people, born with innate qualities, destined to lead. The use of ‘man’ was intentional since until the latter part of the twentieth century leadership was thought of as a concept, which is primarily male, military, and Western. See Rost, Leadership for the 21st Century, 97-99.

Attempting to advance a more structured, theoretical framework for spirituality in business, Louis W. Fry, in an article entitled, “Toward a theory of spiritual leadership,” asserts that “the accelerating call for spirituality in the workplace, describe the universal need for spiritual survival through calling and membership and distinguish between religion and spirituality.”\textsuperscript{49} This seemingly nebulous description of spirituality is nonetheless potent as it suggests a merging of spiritual values with business objectives. In arguing for a “generic definition of God” a foundation is created upon which humanistic, theistic and pantheistic descriptions of deity can be placed. This wide, inclusive approach attempts to appeal to the broadest possible workplace audience, in an attempt to create and accepting a “love-led” environment\textsuperscript{50}

In summary, perhaps the most jarring objective of workplace-spirituality is its attempt to establish a social, organizational culture for profit, based on altruistic love. Leaders and followers develop care, concern, and appreciation for both self and others, thereby producing a sense of membership where employees can feel understood and appreciated.\textsuperscript{51}

What makes Fry’s statement surprising is its close approximation to the social and communal ideals of the church. The underlying objective is designed strategically to boost productivity, but does so by focusing on making leaders and followers committed to the organization.\textsuperscript{52} This may serve to illustrate that increasingly, the defining


\textsuperscript{50}Ibid., 694.

\textsuperscript{51}Ibid., 695.

\textsuperscript{52}Ibid., 694.
difference between churches and businesses, as organizations will largely become issues
of intent and not just content. However, the impetus for altruistic love, acceptance, and
belonging in the NT church was and still is, the salvation found in Jesus Christ.

The prominent leadership author and teacher Robert Greenleaf stands-out from
other leadership authors in his courage to bring the ideals of social consciousness into the
corporate consciousness long before it was popular. His comments on vision are still
worth examining, as no doubt, Greenleaf has contributed to how vision has been framed
and understood for at least the past four decades. Greenleaf coined such phrases
as “know the unknowable” and “foresee the unforeseeable” in addressing the importance
of vision, servant leadership, and servant-companies. 53

These ideas, however inspiring, do not find solid biblical footing or relevance to
the church context if we are to remain rooted in our understanding and methodologies. In
order to be fair in assessing such statements it should be remembered that Greenleaf’s
primary audience was business sector leaders and managers. However, his core idea of
servant leadership 54 clearly resonates with Matt 20:26. Jesus admonishes His disciples to
abandon the typical behavior of gentile leaders who abuse their authority and “lord it over
them” (Matt 20:25 ESV) saying, “It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be
great among you must be your servant” (v. 26). Comments such as “intuit the gap”
(between what exists and what can be), are inspiring words about the importance of
vision, but are not explicitly rooted in biblical analysis.

53 Robert Greenleaf, Leadership and Foresight: On Becoming a Servant Leader (New York:

54 See Robert Greenleaf, Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and
The future (or vision), as Greenleaf saw it, was not something one necessarily prayed for or consulted God about but was “out there,” something we create by our own talents and efforts. The role of business leaders in Greenleaf’s opinion was to create compelling visions (or dreams), which fully exploited the people-potential of the organization: “Far too many of our contemporary institutions do not have an adequate dream, an imaginative concept that will raise people’s sights close to where they have the potential to be.”

This interpretation of visionary leaders and companies, although creative, is nonetheless classically humanistic and widespread within business circles. Conversely, an earlier biblical survey of vision yielded that the true source of vision is theocentric, and require divine intervention to be fully realized.

Greenleaf brought noble ideas to the business world but difficult ones to execute within the leadership paradigm of the church. Although contributing much to the cannon of leadership literature, unlike authors such as John Maxwell, Leighton Ford, or George Barna, who managed to find the common ground between the spiritual leadership and leadership praxis, Greenleaf did not address the main thrust of this literature review, which sets out to examine material that focuses on vision in general and a “shared vision for Christian education” in particular, along with the processes for achieving it.

Nevertheless, as businesses approximate to Greenleaf’s vision of organizations driven by principles of servanthood, church leaders can no longer be content to claim

\[^{55}\text{Robert K Greenleaf, }\textit{The Leadership Crisis: A Message for College and University Faculty} \text{ (Indianapolis, IN: The Robert K Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership, 1985), 8.}\]

\[^{56}\text{Greenleaf, }\textit{Servant Leadership}.\]
‘service’ as a mark of distinction or highlight the noble cause of the NT church.

The very existence of the theories and approaches reviewed here, such as ‘work-place-spirituality’, may speak directly to the belief (or actual fact), that many have concluded that the Christian church has failed to address society’s innate need for meaning, purpose, connection, and community.

In summary, there are difficulties in assessing vision in secular, leadership literature. One such challenge is that we find no compatible, consensus on what vision is, or where it comes from. We arrive at a gaping void in business literature where, on the one hand, vision is recognized as highly important—but on the other, it is devoid of a divine source outside of personal insight, intuition, or group consensus. Understandably, a Christian worldview is neither validated nor recognized as America has become increasingly pluralistic.

Rather than being dismissive and suspicious of every new idea, methods, and concepts from the businesses arena, faith based leaders can still examine the general field of leadership for what can be learned. However, non-profits should resist the temptation of assuming that employing business practices will automatically lead to success. Non-profit entities have distinct and often unique organizational structures with objectives that are divergent from those of businesses and require alternate methods and processes.

**Vision Building for Christian Education**

Leadership literature that specifically addresses the process of creating a ‘shared vision’ with particular emphasis on ‘Christian education’ was not an area widely addressed. Publications that touched on ‘vision’ and ‘education’ fell into two basic categories. The first were publications that shared a pre-existing, theological position
with its readership or target audience for a viewpoint (often termed *vision*) of Christian education.

Boojamra’s *Foundations for Orthodox Christian Education* and *Critical Perspectives on Christian Education* by Jeff Astley and Leslie J. Francis⁵⁷ are useful in defining religious education and grappling with the theological position and purpose for Christian education. However, the word ‘vision’ was often used reflectively to explain the Christian experience and viewpoint rather than pointing to a future orientated picture of what Christian education could or should become.

Thomas Groome’s *Christian Religious Education*⁵⁸ has become an important text in Christian education circles since its first printing in 1980. He addresses among other topics an intentional integration of Christian mission with religious education to create a vision for effective modern Christian education. Although an insightful text, no attempt is made to address a framework for ‘creating a shared vision’ for education.

Immersed in the world of religious education, Roman Catholic priest, Theodore Hesburgh, former President of the University of Notre Dame, understood the need for vision in the field of education when he stated, “The very essence of leadership is that you have to have a vision.”⁵⁹ Similarly, “A Handbook for Seminary Presidents” by

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⁵⁹Theodore Hesburgh served as Notre Dame’s President for 35 years (1952-87). He supervised dramatic growth, as well as a transition to coeducation in 1972. He holds the Guinness Book of World Records title for “Most Honorary Degrees,” having been awarded 150. http://nd.edu/aboutnd/former-presidents/hesburgh/ (accessed November 16, 2010).
Granville D. Lewis and Lovett H. Weems\textsuperscript{60} looks at the need for insight and forward thinking. Speaking on the topic of socially and ethically responsible education, Greenleaf understood that the state of education was inadequate, suggesting “a growing disquiet about the gap between what we need and what we now have in education.”\textsuperscript{61}

These authors demonstrate a focus on the purpose of Christian education as a kingdom orientated endeavor, but make no attempt to grapple with a strategy or process for eliciting support for faith-based education within a geographical local or otherwise.

Shane Anderson, in his delineation of Adventist education, forcefully addresses its demise, citing causes and presents a way forward towards its restoration. Reference to a process of vision creation, development, or dissemination was not made.

**Summary**

In reviewing the treatment of vision in business and religious leadership literature,\textsuperscript{62} material that specifically addressed a process for building consensus towards a shared vision for Christian education and encouraging support was not found. Although vision has become an increasingly popular topic and an expectation of leaders within for-profit and not-for-profit sectors, important distinctions between secular and religious thinking on the source and purpose of vision were not specifically addressed.

While being transformational for those involved in the educational experience the broader religious community must unite around specific beliefs, values, and ideas—in


\textsuperscript{61}Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 163.

\textsuperscript{62}Specifically the past two decades—material between the 1990s and the present.
support of Christian education. Local areas around North America, such as North Dallas, must begin to dialogue about education. Greater clarity is needed about the role education plays in their faith community.

**Vision: Common Myths and Misunderstandings**

In a biblical survey of *vision*, a number of unique characteristics become evident when contrasted with popular notions. Due to the practical and conceptual confusion that exists between these secular and biblical ideas, it may be useful to briefly outline five common myths and misunderstandings that have surfaced while encountering these various lines of thought. In doing so we will draw upon a number of divergent sources.

1. *God gives vision so that we (the church) can impact our communities.* Although this idea seems to promote a worthwhile ideal, it also tends to paint a utilitarian picture of God. The truth is that God does not actually ‘need’ us in order for His will to be realized. He invites us to join Him where He is at work in the world so that we can share in His concerns and be drawn away from our self-centeredness. The focus is placed on a relationship where we are loved and valued by God and He is loved and valued by us for *who* He is. God loves us in spite of our innate frailties—and not for what we can offer Him, but because of *who* He is. Vision must therefore, be understood as primarily relational. Joining God in His work is part of His plan for the heart transformation of His people.

2. *“If a vision is from God, it will avoid risk and not place the church in danger.”* Moving toward a future reality that does not exist is part of what makes vision

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so appealing. Simultaneously, vision involves change beyond our understanding and control—often eliciting fear of the unknown and fear of failure. A new reality defined by God will likely take us beyond areas of comfort and safety. God’s call to the Bible’s patriarchs necessitated journeys that were potentially perilous. The Red Sea crossing and military exploits of the young Israelite nation involved personal and national challenges with numerous risks of failure and potential peril. “We tend to seek things that are comfortable, but God is not restricted by our fears. He sees beyond our current limitations and is constantly leading us to grow.”

God calls us into unsafe and uncertain situations.

Vision inevitably exposes us primarily in the way we think. However, risk and failure are not alleviated by the security we feel from familiar places, conditions, ideas, or actions. Often notions of safety are derived from the false notion that avoidance of risk equals safety. In reality these are simply perceptions with no basis in fact. Maintaining the status quo possesses more potential danger to the continued existence of a church (or any other organization), than embarking on a faith journey with God.

3. “Vision and goals are basically the same thing.” It is important to differentiate between a vision and a goal. Vision concerns the specific, long-term destination of a church or organization. It is the future reality determined by God in his limitless knowledge. Goals on the other hand are about the intermediate milestones towards achieving a vision. Vision concerns the ultimate and future destination of people and organizations. Goals address the proximate steps along the way toward fulfilling the vision. Vision is the reason a journey is being taken while goals are strategic devices

towards the vision to measure and determine the progress being made and keep people engaged in the process.

4. “Vision and strategy are the same.” Vision is not to be confused with strategy. Although vision is conceptual, it is also a very specific picture of a church’s future reality. Vision addresses the ‘what’ of leadership; such as, What are we ultimately here to do? On the other hand, strategy involves the ‘how’ of leadership. It addresses the specific plans and methodologies designed to achieve the vision. Vision is about why an organization exists and where it is going; strategy is how it sets about aligning its resources and activities to achieve the vision. Fundamentally, without vision, there is no need for strategy. Methodology should, also, not be confused with vision. While methods can and should be adapted and changed contextually when necessary, ‘vision’ concerns what is to be achieved, and must be clear and unchanged. This perhaps more than any other feature is the major difference between a biblical understanding of vision and other more secular notions.

5. “Vision results from the creativity, insight, and agreement of church leaders.” The Bible states that the source of all true vision is God. The content and agenda of vision are also His. Creative input and consensus between church leaders and members involve methodology and implementation of the vision after it is received. This is an increasingly challenging idea for the post-modern mind as we often seek to understand and control our environment. Vision is not always fully understood or initially embraced. If vision is from God it is not the result of a collaborative consensus between leaders and

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members, as this would place us within His knowledge of all things; a God-given vision is not the result of collaborative consensus, but should ultimately result in consensus.\(^6\)

Some distinctive characteristics that come from a biblical survey of vision are:

1. Vision comes from God. It is not human-made or human-inspired.
2. Vision is a picture of a future reality determined by God.
3. Vision is a form of divine revelation, as such, it is *phenomena* and cannot be rationalized or conceptualized without embracing the reality of its origin.
4. In imparting vision, God reveals His plan(s) for persons, groups, communities, and nations—seeking to align their passions, abilities, and actions towards its fulfillment.
5. Vision is relational. It involves God inviting humanity into His purposes.\(^7\)
6. Vision requires *faith* and *action* in order to be recognized and realized.
7. A ‘*shared vision*’ is a commitment to place God’s desired future above personal, economic, national, or cultural agendas. It is sharing in the desires of God.
8. Seeking God’s vision is a relational and spiritual imperative *requiring* a willingness to listen and see it actualized, once revealed.
9. There is a distinction between religious and secular conceptions of vision and the leadership practices that can be employed.


\(^7\)Moses at the burning bush was challenged to accept God’s invitation into His plan to rescue the Israelites.
In Summary

The ideas and misconceptions surrounding vision addressed in this last section are a response to personal encounters for more than fifteen years with church leaders at various levels of the organization. Often, highly intelligent church members, pastors, and administrators, in attempting to make sense of their role as leaders and provide direction for the local church, conference, or organization, have a tendency to inject secular paradigms (they are more familiar with), into the spiritual context of leadership. Leading within the organization is difficult (and potentially dangerous), especially when the only point of reference for many leaders is exposure to business management or corporate leadership. Vision is just one area where there is need for clarity and coherency in church leadership. However, the challenges with arriving at a coherent understanding highlight perhaps broader issues.

There is a need for a biblically authentic theology of leadership praxis that can be encountered not just in seminary, but also more generally within our learning institutions. If leadership is important to the denomination, we must take greater responsibility for its nurture. Leadership should be adapted, taught, and encouraged at all levels. Finally, we must resist the overwhelming temptation, “well intentioned, but dead wrong” that the church needs to become “more like a business”\(^68\) if it is to be successful.

\(^{68}\)Collins, Good to Great and the Social Sectors, 1.
CHAPTER 4

EDUCATIONAL REALITIES AND CHALLENGES

IN NORTH DALLAS

The Educational Landscape

For over forty years, the North Dallas area of the Texas Conference has struggled to establish a sustainable system of Adventist high school education. Dallas is the fourth largest metro area in the United States with the fastest growing population. Over one million people have moved into the Dallas/Fort Worth area since 2000.\(^1\) Within this area of rapid growth, Adventist high school education has struggled to find stable footing. In contrast, evangelism and church growth have thrived in this region of the Texas Conference.

Part of the longstanding dilemma to create a sustainable system of high school education may stem from the absence of strategic plans for education at both the conference and local church levels. Currently, no documentation exists within the Conference, or its Board of Education, specifically addressing the educational needs of the burgeoning Dallas metroplex or other major metropolitan areas. Consequently, no

\(^1\)Les Christie, “The booming Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area added more residents during the past decade than any other city in the United States. According to Census Bureau figures, the population of the sprawling Texas metro area grew by about 1.3 million people, or 25%, between April 1, 2000, and July 1, 2009.” June 22, 2010, NEW YORK, www.CNNMoney.com (accessed February 14, 2011).
known efforts have been made to coordinate educational resources\(^2\) into a coherent and sustainable system of education.\(^3\) The term ‘system’ is used here to describe a cohesive relationship between elementary, middle, and high school to create a viable partnership towards high school education.

**Church Growth and Educational Decline**

A simple analysis of K-12 student enrollment between 2000-2009 reveals an uneven pattern of growth and decline. This is especially noticeable between 2002-2004, the lowest enrollment period being 2006. Although enrollment figures for 2007-2009 show a gradual increase, enrollment in 2009 did not manage to equal levels experienced almost a decade before in 2000.

Paradoxically, over the same ten-year period the Texas Conference experienced significant membership growth.

![Texas School Enrollment 2000-2009](image)

Figure 1. Texas school enrollment 2000-2009.

\(^2\)The term “Educational Resources” is understood to include the Conference, Education Department, local churches, pastors, church facilities, and other educational personnel.

\(^3\)The Texas Conference Education Department was unable to furnish written documentation or verbally articulate any strategic plans for education. Neither could they provide demographic data such as the number of school age children within the Texas Conference—information necessary for the formulation of basic strategic plans.
While membership growth between 2000-2009 shows a steady increase, averaging around a thousand additions each year, Conference-wide K-12 enrollment experienced some years of decline over this same period.

This review of enrollment and membership data, although admittedly basic, highlights that the relationship between education and evangelism growth within the same region and over the same time period is unpredictable. Church and baptism growth shows an incline in Texas while Adventist education shows periods of decline and small gains marked by instability. While it is not the focus of this study to evaluate the obvious disparity, it is difficult to avoid at least a cursory glance at the paradox between evangelistic and educational initiatives and outcomes within the same conference. Perhaps most startling is the fact that steady evangelistic investment and the resulting membership growth over a ten-year period has not significantly impacted school enrollment by either reversing or stabilizing it.
One of the most important studies on the condition of education within the Texas Conference was conducted by a specially commissioned, “Blue-Ribbon Task Force on Education” (BRITE). This task force was assembled in 2003 in an attempt to grapple with declining enrollment and waning parental support of Adventist schools. Comprising of educators, pastors, and laypersons, BRITE was commissioned to specifically investigate educational challenges within the Texas Conference and make recommendations to the Conference Executive Committee.\(^4\)

In BRITE’s February 18, 2005 report entitled; “Preliminary Recommendations,” it was noted that enrollment growth, compared to membership growth was in decline. Less than 25 percent of eligible Adventist children attended Adventist schools.\(^5\) The report also stressed that if new financial investment was to be attracted to education at the local level, “a fresh vision with wide appeal” was necessary.\(^6\) In short, a “shared vision” for Adventist education was considered an essential first-step towards combating educational decline. The report also highlighted a number of other factors that further compounded educational decline across the conference. These included;

1. Divergent priorities between churches: pastors differed in their level of support and public promotion of Christian education,

2. Constituent churches were in disputes over financial contributions with some dropping out altogether.

\(^4\)BRITE Preliminary Recommendations, February 18, 2005.

\(^5\)Ibid., 4.

\(^6\)Ibid., 8.
3. Members and constituent churches were “gaming” the constituency system to suit self-interest.

Finally, with no more than 25% of the eligible children in the Texas Conference attending denominational schools, and of the remaining, non-participating 75% only 18% seriously considering it, the educational landscape was particularly discouraging.

The BRITE reports have highlighted significant educational challenges and presented recommendations to the Texas Conference Executive Committee. However, it has yet to be seen when and where the committee’s work will be formulated into action plans and executed.

In summary, a lack of shared educational vision has resulted in a patchwork of disconnected area schools, an atmosphere of competition and the duplication of grades. Poor financial support has forced schools to appeal to local congregations for the most basic classroom supplies which in-turn engender questions about the quality of the educational product being delivered. In this context, confidence in Adventist education is at best placed on probation and at worst, being eroded.

When local conferences and their education departments are uninformed about their educational market place, there is no objective basis for understanding the scope of the educational challenge. Consequently, a convincing argument for financial investment and the patronage of potential families has not emerged. Texas may mirror

7BRITE Preliminary Recommendations, February 18, 2005, 10.

8This regards the ability of the conference to provide basic statistical information including the age, grade-level, and church affiliation of the children in the conference.
trends seen in more comprehensive studies of faith-based schools across North America, especially in urban centers.

**Educational Landscape in National Perspective**

In a study conducted by the White House Domestic Policy Council, it was reported that “the number of faith-based urban schools that had closed-down from 2000 to 2006 is comparable to the size of the entire Los Angeles Unified School District, the second largest public school district in the Nation.”

Looking more closely at the actual percentage of school closures between major, faith-based, educational providers in the United States, The National Center for Education Statistics reported a 13% closure for Lutheran schools, 28% for Baptist schools, and 39% for Seventh-day Adventist schools. To put these closures into sharp perspective, between 2000 and 2006, there were 71 urban Seventh-day Adventist schools closed, representing a loss of 3,898 students. This broader context may provide a reference-point for membership and school enrollment trends in the NAD, and particularly within the local context of this study.

While the local and national data discussed here is not presented as conclusive evidence of a collapse in Adventist education, or that membership growth in Texas or elsewhere has had no material impact on school enrollment, it does offer insight into at

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least two stark educational realities. First, support for faith-based education is declining as traditional customers for this product are choosing other providers for the educational needs of their children. Second, Adventist schools throughout North America, particularly in urban or metropolitan centers, are declining despite evangelistic gains and positive church growth.

In summary, school enrollment levels stand in vivid contrast to membership growth trends in the Texas Conference. Although the past decade has seen large accessions in church membership, educational growth trends over a similar period reveal a decline, especially between 2003 and 2006. Positive growth however, did emerge in 2007 and has been slowly, but steadily inclining, although still below levels reached during 2000.

Local Financial Realities

The Richardson Adventist School (RAS) has operated within the Richardson Seventh-day Adventist Church facility for over twenty years. It became an increasingly popular option for families in North Dallas wanting an Adventist education, especially at the middle and high school levels. While there are a small number of elementary and junior academy schools within the North Dallas area to choose from,¹² RAS had developed a significant reputation and impact within the local Adventist community, spanning twenty-five years. RAS has been a stable provider of middle and upper school

¹²Schools in the N. Dallas Metroplex area include: Dallas Junior Academy, Miller Adventist School, and recently opened Garland Elementary School (2008). Outside of the N. Dallas metroplex are a number of Adventist school options in more rural areas, where distance would present a serious commuting challenge or necessitate a move. These include: Burleson Adventist School, Burton Adventist Academy, Cleburne Adventist Christian School, Desoto Adventist Christian School, Fort-Worth Adventist Junior Academy, Chisholm Trail Academy, Joshua Adventist Multi-Grade School, and Keene Adventist Elementary.
grades for the past decade. During this time there have been seven school principals and seven school Board Chairs with an average longevity of 3.5 years in these respective positions.

The financial stability of the school can be largely attributed to the high level of support received from the Richardson Adventist Church. In the forty-eight year trajectory of the church, the inception of the school in the early 1980s remained a major focus. The school is by far the largest ministry of the church in terms of facility usage, the level of financial subsidy, and overall sacrificial giving.

However, until 2006, the local church leaders had no clear understanding of the financial realities of operating RAS or a grasp of the actual level of financial support provided to the school. This support encompassed such items as utilities, worthy-student funds, direct donations, and the annual subsidy allocated to the school from the church budget. Once this analysis was conducted, these leaders were alarmed at the actual cost of education. Table 1 provides a snapshot of actual support given 2006-2007.13

Financial support for RAS included subsidies from a number of constituent or supporting churches. Once Richardson church leaders became aware of their actual level of support, contributions from other churches were put into perspective and a firmer

13The data in Table 1. was first compiled and calculated in 2006 to provide church leadership with their first full assessment of the true cost associated with operating the Richardson Adventist School. (Data taken from 2006 financial and operational records.)
grasp of the operational realities became apparent. Financial analysis created the basis for a clearer understanding of the financial realities of supporting a high school, which was largely absent up to this point. The relationship between what other churches contributed as a percentage of the operating budget revealed the true impact that constituency churches had on the operational capacity of RAS. Table 2 utilizes data from the 2006-2007 school year.

Table 1. RAS school expenditure, 2006-2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Richardson Seventh-day Adventist Church</th>
<th>School Expenditure Snap-Shot 2006-2007 School Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual School Subsidy</td>
<td>$60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Donations</td>
<td>$72,126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New School Fund</td>
<td>$11,475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worthy Student Fund</td>
<td>$22,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utility Costs</td>
<td>$32,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Annual Cost</td>
<td>197,641</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Financial support for RAS, 2006-2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constituent Churches</th>
<th>Annual Subsidy ($)</th>
<th>% of RAS Budget ($624,425)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Richardson Church</td>
<td>$60,000</td>
<td>9.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosaic SDA Church</td>
<td>$13,200</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas Brazilian</td>
<td>$3,300</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In reality, the level of financial support provided by constituent partners was not significant enough to influence the school's operational capacity positively or negatively. Subsequent dialogue among Richardson leaders began to center on a number of issues including whether constituent church contributions should continue to justify the lower tuition rates, board membership, and voting privileges they were afforded. The Richardson board also reasoned that if area support were to be removed, the survival of the school would not be in any immediate jeopardy.

The uncomfortable truth for these leaders was grasping that RAS operated as an area-wide-high school where North Dallas churches constituted approximately 70 percent of the annual enrollment, while the financial burden was disproportionately shouldered by the Richardson church, representing only 25-30 percent of the student body. Enrollment analysis of a typical school year (2006-2007), showed that out of the total registration of 135 students, only 41 were from the Richardson church, representing around 30 percent of the student body (a figure representing only 35 percent of the eligible students in the Richardson church). Richardson operated a school that was largely underutilized by its membership and although RAS was supported by a number of area churches, the burden of the operational expense and administrative responsibilities was clearly shouldered by the Richardson church. This disproportionate burden for educating the broader Adventist community of N. Dallas was increasingly seen as both ethically wrong and fiscally unsustainable as the school population, operational budget, and need for development increased.

14 For consistency, the 2006-2007 school year is being used as a reference-point. Figures provided by current NDAA Principal, Ms. Melonie Wolf.
Leadership: It’s Cultural and Social Context

The school thrived in an environment where “in many areas, Seventh-day Adventist education faces declining enrollment, financial problems, and difficulty in finding qualified Adventist educators for certain disciplines.”¹⁵ The need for broader, area-wide participation had not emerged as an urgent issue until Richardson church leaders were forced to address the needs of a rapidly expanding congregation and school population.¹⁶ Tensions between church and school administrations increased in line with ministry expansion. Importantly, these challenges elevated the demand for clear direction and strategic planning from church leaders. Significantly, it brought to the surface a number of acute difficulties, especially with the long-serving leaders.¹⁷

Church Leadership Awakening

The “awakening” of the local leaders highlights their alarm over the actual level of support provided by the church to the school vs. their substantiated perceptions. As the demands of both school and church began to impact the physical plant a financial analysis was compiled by the pastoral office and presented to the leaders.¹⁸ This report revealed that actual contributions to the school were more than 300 percent higher than previously thought. Prior to this analysis, no clear understanding existed of the


¹⁶The need to access more of the facility (such as the sanctuary), grew substantially. Usage issues became further compounded by the church’s expanding membership and services, leading to increased use of the educational wing. This created scheduling challenges, budgetary increases, and maintenance costs.

¹⁷The term “church leadership” or “church leaders” refers particularly to the church elders.

operational expenses for running and maintaining the physical plant. In addition, the true level of giving to the school along with allocated funds had not been calculated. Following the initial shock these figures created, strong feelings began to emerge on both sides.

The school felt that the church was obligated to provide greater financial support and plan towards the purchase and development of a larger facility. Church leaders were concerned that the proverbial “tail was wagging the dog” and property development or purchase should not simply be triggered by the demands of the school or its administrative leaders. In addition, it was felt that the church’s ability to focus on its broader mission of Matt 28, was being limited by financial and facility obligations to the school. It was argued that the church was the ‘reason the school existed’ so it was of primary importance to ensure that the church be positioned to maintain its growth trajectory. Ensuring that the church retained its essence and not become the ‘host’ in a parasitical relationship was voiced as a major concern.

A workable synthesis of these two arguments was at the core of both camps but remained elusive as school and church administrations became polarized in their opinions. The church as the founding body and parent organization did have an obligation to the school. This included providing leadership and support and working to formulate strategic plans towards its future development. The school, on the other hand, was obligated to engage with the vision and values of the church. Their futures were inextricably intertwined, making the church-school relationship symbiotic.

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19See appendix A—“Richardson SDA Church Growth Report 2001-2009.”
Local Leadership Culture

Part of the local leadership culture of the church included a longstanding absence of strategic planning. Although capable of formulating strategic direction, no formally written plans for the future direction of the church existed. While many discussions over the physical needs of the church ensued, very little was done to formulate action plans in order to solve these challenges. The general attitude of leaders was typically to wait for other, more motivated laypersons and pastoral leaders to provide ideas and suggest initiatives. This would involve compiling relevant research and demographic data, organizing leadership retreats, inviting facilitators, and arranging visits to prospective properties. The role adopted by these longstanding leaders was generally non-participatory in the research and assessment stage, until broader discussion in board and business meetings became imminent. At such junctures proposals were either suppressed or dismantled before the church board could consider them or the church-at-large had opportunity to weigh their merits.

Such maneuvers were seen as necessary in the interests of protecting the church. However, the problems of overcrowding were increasing in the absence of solutions. While ‘protection of the church’ was a laudable objective, with each year that passed without resolution or direction from church leaders, the needs of a burgeoning school and expanding church congregation created an atmosphere of growing resentment, distrust, and lost confidence. The gradual loss of leadership credibility would eventually undermine their ability to influence the broader membership.

Entitlement and status were particularly strong notions among the more mature leaders. In this particular socio-cultural context, the idea that having invested time,
effort, and resources during the earlier years of the church, entitled them to almost perpetual positions of leadership. Therefore, the prerogatives of positional leadership such as ‘vote’ and ‘voice’ were considered earned and therefore expected.\textsuperscript{20} Leaders who led in the 1980s-1990s were often still in office during the 2000s.\textsuperscript{21} They considered themselves the gatekeepers and custodians of the church. However laudable, these ideas were not tempered with the notion that (ref. \textit{Church Manual}) church leadership is not a \textit{right} we are owed but a \textit{privilege} we are given.

References were frequently made to the size of the congregation as the ‘third largest’ in the Texas Conference. Another touchstone was the ‘no-debt’ status of the church, as no mortgage existed on the current church facility. While these are certainly not objectionable landmarks for any faith community, they are not a church’s’ primary objectives and cannot become an indices for success. When such values develop into focal points, it raises questions such as: What is a leader’s role as a spiritual custodian and why does the church exist?

Part of this dynamic may indicate the degree to which personal, cultural, social, and economic values were being projected into the church leadership context. It may also reveal an inability to transcend pervasive, cultural attitudes towards property ownership, social status, and success. Diligent leadership necessitated a detailed understanding of the fiscal, social, and spiritual condition of the church.\textsuperscript{22} However,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{20}The words ‘vote’ and ‘voice’ are used to illustrate the voting and speaking rights that board membership carry, not afforded to regular members.
\item \textsuperscript{21}Most of the elders over fifty years old had been in that position for more than a decade; some had served for more than twenty or thirty years. (Richardson Church records)
\item \textsuperscript{22}See for example, Rom 12:8, “Lead with all diligence.”
\end{itemize}
studies of this nature were never conducted.

The narrow focus on socio-economic status and financial security (of the more mature leaders), was a sincere attempt on their part to protect what they deemed as valuable. Although this position of “protectionism” clearly threatened the future growth of the church (which had exceeded the seating and parking capacity of the facility), and school (which was severely limited and began to experience decline at the upper grade levels), they were fearful of the necessary changes (such as property purchase or renovation), that would advance the growth of the church and school. When issues of faith and ‘God’s leading were discussed, it was genuinely challenging for them to believe that God would want them placed in a position where risk was possible.

**The Church-School Disconnect**

The church had initiated the creation of the school twenty-five years before investing considerable resources evidenced by numerous fund-raising efforts, building, and maintaining an education wing and enrolling at least two to three generations of their children. These actions indicate emotional investment, and raise the question, How did the church and school end-up in such a confrontational and antagonistic posture?

The school was the largest ministry in terms of facility usage and the proportion of the church finances the educational program demanded. This was irrefutable as budget allocations confirmed it. Consequently, school supporters argued that RAS was vital to the continued growth of the church. The actual evidence to support their argument was absent. Nonetheless, there were legitimate needs and a crossroads for the future of the

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23 It may be informative to review budgeted and other income to the school in table 1, “Richardson Seventh-day Adventist Church School Expenditure Snap-Shot 2006-2007 School Year,” 5.
church and school had been reached. People became increasingly impatient with the church leaders, as solutions to the challenges went unanswered and unresolved.

In order to grapple with the relational dynamics between the church and school the following statements reflect the culmination of four years personal involvement and numerous hours of discussion with many concerned individuals regarding the church and school disconnect:

1. Although monthly school updates were shared at church board meetings, leaders largely failed in their responsibility to develop and maintain a working relationship with the school administration.

2. Most older leaders no longer had school-aged children and seemed to no longer empathize with the urgency felt by parents anxious to create the best scenario for their children.

3. Some leaders had chosen not to enroll their children at the church school and had no tangible connection to the school

4. Most board members had never interacted with the school or visited a classroom (although over $60,000.00 was allocated and more donated to the school annually).

5. The view was expressed that the school ‘owed the church’ for continued support. However, the reality was that the ‘owners’ were not diligent stewards, having no realistic grasp of what it cost them to financially support the school or the value of Adventist education.

6. The school was seen as an ever-increasing drain on resources with little tangible benefit.
7. The school wanted more autonomy over the shared space and limit the church’s use of classrooms—often for security purposes.

8. There was a tendency for school staff to see the education wing of the church as separate and distinct from the church and its programs. This was unrealistic due to the fact that it was a dual-usage facility.

**Methodology and Implementation**

The methodology of this project is derived principally from a theological underpinning of the importance and centrality of a God inspired vision. What follows is a narrative based on hands-on observation and experience with the Richardson Church, the school, and its constituent entities. The processes are outlined accompanied by an analysis of data that was necessarily wide-ranging in scope—spanning four key partnerships. Each partner’s reality possessed a unique data set, ranging from statistical records at the Board of Education to local school enrollment and the indebtedness of the area churches. Implementation of a feasible strategy required contextual sensitivity, anchored to a range of objective facts drawn from this data.

The focus of this project was to develop a strategy for the formation (or adoption) of a shared vision in support of denominational education. The geographical context was the North Dallas area of the Texas Conference. The core objective was to create an effective process to communicate a biblical vision for support of education by the four critical partners.

**Four Partners, Four Realities**

Integral to developing a strategy for the formation of a shared vision among the
North Dallas churches, was the need to recognize and define four important partnerships: The Richardson Church, Richardson Adventist School, local area pastors (and their churches), and the Texas Conference leaders. Although within the same geographical area, belonging to the same church organization and sharing the same fundamental beliefs and faith traditions, each partner had a different reality, unique to their context. A simple, factual examination of each reality, devoid of emotive commentary was the basis for creating a strategy for communicating the vision for education:

**Richardson Church Reality**

Richardson church hosts the Richardson Adventist School where 70 percent of the students serviced come from surrounding area churches, while 30 percent are from the Richardson Church. Enrollment from Richardson has reached a plateau. Richardson was by far the largest contributor to the school. Consequently, Richardson carried the burden for providing education across a broad geographical area. This has created a fiscally unsustainable position, as the Richardson Church experiences membership growth and increases in associated ministry expenses. The need for greater participation in the educational program from key partners is critical to the future of education in the North Dallas area.

**Richardson Adventist School (RAS) Reality**

RAS operates out of the Richardson church campus, a three-acre property, in the education wing of the facility. The education wing was being unitized beyond its intended capacity. The church occupied this wing for five-days per week, ten months of the year, while the church used the rooms for Sabbath School and training events, and a
Sunday church rented the entire facility each Sunday. Both the school and church cannot fully realize their growth potential due to space constraints and usage limitations due to scheduling. Middle and high school enrollment is limited by a lack of upper grade amenities: science lab, gym, fields, and student common areas.

Local Area Reality: Pastors and Participating Churches

Between 2001-2009, a period eight years, I was able to observe the pattern adopted by most local churches and pastors in distancing from direct financial support or affiliation with the Richardson Adventist School. Although the student body was representative of the area, families choosing to enroll students would rarely receive tuition assistance from their local church. Many of the families I encountered were bewildered by this attitude. Often, when participation in education was desired or necessary, it resulted in both parents and churches ‘gaming’ the system.

Members of area churches would apply to become Richardson church members while they still attended their home church. The membership transfer was done to access the additional discount afforded Richardson members as a matter of fairness and an incentive. Richardson members, by far, carried the greatest burden for financing the school. There were pastors who would actually suggest such moral duplicity in response to appeals for tuition assistance from their own parishioners.

Area churches had the option of joining the school board without having to contribute immediately. Board membership would provide speaking and voting rights. In addition, membership gave churches the benefit of affording their members a tuition discount. The process was extremely relaxed, and stress was placed instead on fostering participation in school affairs. It was not uncommon, however, for churches to calculate
the cost of being part of the constituency versus giving a smaller subsidy directly to their members. The focus on saving usually very small amounts of money took greater priority over supporting and participating in the area ministry of Christian education.

More legitimate challenges also existed at the local church level. Some were experiencing the financial difficulties created by the economic downturn at the time. Consequently, pastors and church leaders were reluctant to champion giving to external projects or initiatives.

Many churches had mortgage debt or other operational costs. However, the cyclical nature of the national economy did not account for other attitudes and behaviors that limited area participation. With the exception of just a few churches, there was a poor record of participation in Christian education among Dallas area churches. Since the inception of this project, the situation has notably improved, as will be discussed more fully in chapter 5.

The Texas Conference Reality

Written guidelines for participation in Adventist education have not been part of the pastoral leadership landscape in the Texas Conference. While support of Adventist schools is verbally encouraged, at the time of writing, conference leaders have largely missed the opportunity to provide written expectations for pastoral involvement in education. This oversight or reluctance has tended to encourage ambiguity and nonchalance about its importance. The opportunity to lead in this instance was lost.

Although it was very encouraging when conference leaders began to actively initiate meetings with area pastors regarding this particular project, championing a shared vision for Christian education in North Dallas was daunting. This was largely because
pastoral support of education, at any level, was not officially required. A condition that may account for the absence of formal, strategic plans for the development of education in Texas in general, and high school education in the North Dallas area in particular.

Implementing the Vision

The following outline details the process adopted to initiate and pursue the vision.

Project Process Outline

1. *Presentation of the ‘Vision’ for Christian Education in N. Dallas*
   
   a. Sharing the vision with the Union President (Max Trevinio)

   b. Sharing the vision with the Conference President (Leighton Holley) and Conference Secretary (Doug Kilcher)

2. *Review Leadership Feedback*

   a. Grapple with the contextual landscape of administrative leadership

   b. Understand policy ramifications and constraints

   c. Give contextual shaping to the vision without losing the essential core

3. *Spiritual Preparation of Church Leadership and Membership*

   a. Church Leadership discussion(s)

   b. Sermons encompassing prayer and hearing God’s voice.\(^{24}\)

   c. Create awareness of the vision—the challenge to educate

\(^{24}\)For sermons examples see appendix B.
4. Present Vision to Local Church Leadership
   
a. The Need for Christian Education

b. 1-2 weeks of leading congregation to pray about the vision

c. Anticipate and appreciate the inherent challenges in receiving the vision

d. Listen carefully to feedback (Resist arguing or justify the vision)

5. Communicate/Cast Vision to Local Pastors—Under Conference Endorsement
   
a. Conference leadership arranges meeting(s)

b. Feedback is processed with conference leaders

c. Create contextually relevant presentations for pastors to share

d. Create contextually relevant, strategic plan(s) for area participation

Strategic and Contextual Considerations

A number of contextual realities had to be processed in relation to their potential impact on each other. This was necessary to create strategic plans to engage each of the four partners: Richardson church, Richardson Adventist School, the N. Dallas pastors, and the Texas Conference. The following is a brief summary and analysis of the most significant contextual realities.

Contextual Realities in Summary

The first contextual challenge revolved around discussions about the correct location for the school. This issue had stymied progress for many years. Most churches felt that their people would only participate if the location were ideal. This substantiated belief created an impasse as each pastor and church felt that a location nearest him or her
was the ideal. Families were already making a commitment to send their children to an Adventist school; therefore, the real challenge was not one of ‘location’ but of ‘accessibility’. A facility was needed that could be accessed from numerous locations and multiple routes.

Another contextual barrier to participation was the perception that RAS belonged to the Richardson church and was therefore Richardson’s responsibility. This issue was unearthed as a contradiction in practical terms. The fact was that 70 percent of the school comprised of young people from area churches. In reality, pastors and their churches were daunted by the possibility of having to assume a level of fiscal responsibility for what was a large vision. It was difficult for area leaders to grasp ‘what’ was being proposed due to the perceived magnitude of ‘how’ the vision could be accomplished.

Concretizing the Vision

Ideation can be daunting as a group activity without some attachment to a tangible, physical reality—one that is seen and understood. Attempts to foster discussion around possible ways that a system of high school education for N. Dallas could be created were unfruitful. It became apparent that a focal point was necessary for the vision to become more than an idea. A tangible, physical asset would serve as the focal point for ‘real-world’ discussions and planning towards area participation.25

Funding the Vision

The financial participation of the conference was critical on at least two levels:

First, a substantial, financial contribution to the vision would indication to the area
churches and pastors that the conference believed in and was committed to the vision.
Area participation would not be forthcoming, as the conference was not seen to be
contributing.

Second, I made the argument to the leaders of the Texas Conference that as a
local representative, I would have no credibility to ask for funding for the vision if they
(as the property deed holders) could not demonstrate the commitment necessary to
financially support the vision. The conference, however, had a policy of not contributing
funds to local church initiatives. In its history, the Texas Conference had not provided
cash investment to a locally driven project. The conference administrators recognized the
legitimacy of the project and demonstrated confidence in the vision, pledging $500,000
towards the new facility.

Local Area Pastors

On December 4, 2007, at 10 a.m. a Dallas Area Pastor’s Meeting was conducted
at the Richardson SDA Church. The meeting was a follow-up to the Tuesday, October
30, 2007 gathering at Dallas 1st Church. At this meeting pastors agreed to share with
their boards and congregations the vision for a possible seven to twelve grade area high
school located at Centennial Blvd.

In the preceding weeks, many local pastors were able to walk through the
proposed Centennial Blvd. property and confirm two important factors:

1. The property was both geographically accessible.

2. The property possessed the potential for development into a high school.

At this meeting it was shared that the Texas Conference pledged $500,000.00 towards a
high school facility for the North Texas region to be operated by the area churches.\textsuperscript{26}

As lead-pastor for the vision, I was tasked with providing data on the following:

1. The proposed school site (Centennial Blvd)
2. Create a presentation that could be used by pastors to share the vision.
3. Provide positive points of Seventh-day Adventist education—in a way that would help to develop consensus among the respective congregations and boards.

The vision was presented to the Richardson congregation on Sabbath, December 8, 2007. It received a high level of support and excitement. Pledges in support of the school purchase began to steadily come.\textsuperscript{27}

The Unexpected

After the initial success of $1.3 million pledged towards the project, and the supporting presentation and data was sent out to the local pastors, the conference contacted each area church to collate their level of financial participation to the vision. The following table details the financial information of area churches, including (1) their level of debt, (2) tithe capacity, and (3) pledges of financial support towards the proposed facility.

The reluctance from area pastors and their church leaders to contribute was extremely disappointing considering the unanimous vote by the area pastors in a prior meeting. Many churches had mortgage debt or significant operational costs. The data presented in the above chart was outlined in a letter from the conference president.

\textsuperscript{26}See appendix A, “December 4, 2007 Area Pastor’s Meeting, Richardson SDA Church, 10 a.m.”

\textsuperscript{27}See appendix A, “Vision for Excellence Brochure, February 2008.”
Table 3. Financial data of area churches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area Churches (19)</th>
<th>07 Tithe</th>
<th>Church Debt</th>
<th>Pledge to Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Richardson Spanish</td>
<td>$192,876</td>
<td>$457,931</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairview Mosaic</td>
<td>$299,607</td>
<td>$1,400,000</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frisco Crosswalk Church Plant</td>
<td>$93,930</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plano Spanish Church Plant</td>
<td>$202,305</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$2,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas Brazilian</td>
<td>$384,990</td>
<td>$1,238,521</td>
<td>$2,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas First</td>
<td>$431,089</td>
<td>$144,315</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas New Life</td>
<td>$82,496</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irving Lighthouse Brazilian</td>
<td>$451,297</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas International</td>
<td>$61,795</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garland English</td>
<td>$232,468</td>
<td>$322,104</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garland Spanish</td>
<td>$298,252</td>
<td>$728,848</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irving Spanish Emmanuel</td>
<td>$51,341</td>
<td>$456,187</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas Spanish North</td>
<td>$146,430</td>
<td>$196,026</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas Spanish Love</td>
<td>$69,281</td>
<td>$353,718</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irving English</td>
<td>$85,509</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Las Colinas</td>
<td>$62,683</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denton</td>
<td>$136,294</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewisville</td>
<td>$156,123</td>
<td>$338,572</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Elm Spanish</td>
<td>$78,170</td>
<td>$129,483</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,516,936</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,765,705</strong></td>
<td><strong>$31,400</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

distributed to the entire congregation. \(^{28}\) Although $31,400 was pledged, less than $5,000 was actually honored.

Faith Challenge

Poor response from the area churches created a very serious challenge to the area vision for a facility, and for me personally as senior pastor of the Richardson church. Prior to this news, in presenting the vision to the leaders of the church, I communicated

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\(^{28}\)See appendix A, “President’s Letter, February 13, 2008.”
two points regarding how we (as a church) should move ahead with the project. This was communicated in a leadership update on November 8, 2007.  

1. “We cannot and should not carry the burden for high school education alone.”
2. “There must be collaboration between the area churches and involvement from the Texas Conference.”

These were valid points that I fully believed when making them. However, the landscape had since altered. In the conference president’s letter (which was shared openly with the church body), he suggested that despite the lack of area participation, the Richardson church should move ahead—assuming responsibility for the entire acquisition of the property. The process so far had been successful, now there was a personal and corporate dimension to the president’s suggestion:

1. The reality was that the ‘alliance’ between area churches to provide support was failing—at least in the aspect of making a financial commitment.
2. If the project was to move ahead it would be necessary for me to change position on the two main points (above), and potentially lose leadership credibility.

One of the first leadership books I had read more than twenty years ago was *The One Minute Manager*.  

The allegory of the ‘One Minute Manager’ was a vehicle for presenting a cluster of leadership techniques for working with and valuing people. One of the ways to show value for people is being respectful enough to communicate openly and honestly. Although in this situation, I was staring down the barrel of having to back- 

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pedal on something rather significant that I said earlier, it was important for me to grasp that the issue was not about my losing face, it was still essentially about leading people. In particular, it was about the young people that would be impacted by the vision for a school facility that could effectively service the N. Dallas area. This now hinged on my willingness to show courage, and be transparent about the new reality facing the project. To achieve this, there was a three-stage process that was necessary to work through the newly altered landscape:

1. Speak to the church leaders—making them aware of the new situation. Providing them with the president’s letter outlining the situation and giving my position.

2. Speak to the church-at-large, letting them have the letter and providing them with the opportunity to vote against or in favor of moving ahead.

   In the first discussion with the leaders, the majority was positive and appreciated my openness—there were just a few (out of 15) who became particularly agitated, fearful, and dissentious. This was partly due to the enormity of the project and what they felt was a foolhardy move to assume responsibility.

   Another challenge was the difficulty for them to reconcile that integrity in leadership can be at once, “moral, and philosophical” but must also be practical.\footnote{Joseph L. Badaracco and Richard R. Ellsworth, \textit{Leadership and the Quest for Integrity} (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1991), 4.} When tough decisions need to be made, leaders must be prepared to make them and stand by the results. When the situation was explained to the congregation, along with the facts contained in the conference president’s letter, a mid-course correction was seen as
necessary and the response of the congregation was a unanimous vote in favor of moving ahead with the vision.

**Summary**

A number of challenges affected the educational landscape in North Dallas:

Enrollment trends were not significantly impacted by the membership growth experienced across the conference. With the absence of written, strategic plans within the education department, and recommendations from studies, such as the BRITE Report, not yet acted upon, educational development was being left behind.

In the absence of demographic data, the education department had no objective statistical basis for understanding the true scope of their enrollment opportunities. Neither was there a rational basis for creating a strategy to service potential customers. Similarly, conference leaders gave verbal encouragement to support denominational education, but clear, written expectations for pastoral participation did not exist. Consequently, the absence of a framework of support for education may have created the resulting in a patchwork of disconnected and poorly supported area schools. Paradoxically, implementation of the project occurred within these contextual realities.

Momentum for the project began by engaging Union and Conference leaders,

32 See p. 2-3 in chap. 1.

33 At the time of this writing, no plans or documentation exists at the Texas Conference, or its Board of Education to addresses the educational needs of the burgeoning Dallas metroplex or other major metropolitan areas within the Conference. This was addressed more extensively on pages 1-5 of this chapter.

34 This regards the ability of the conference to provide basic statistical information including the age, grade-level, and church affiliation of the children in the conference.
followed by meetings with the pastors and conference officers who encouraged local pastors to engage their members and participate in the project. We now turn to chapter five for an analysis of the results of implementation.
CHAPTER 5

REALITIES OF CREATING A SHARED VISION
FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Education: A North Texas Urgent Need

A shared vision for Christian education is the outgrowth of four theological realities: ecclesiology, stewardship, Christian education, and vision. Adventists have long connected Christian education to issues of salvation and the restoration of the image of God. Education as an integral part of the church’s gospel mission to the world demonstrates a unique vision and an embedded connection between ecclesiology and education. However, the Adventist educational system could not have attained its global reach without a sound theology of stewardship.

A theology of stewardship is a principle embedded in the earliest portions of scripture. It involves more than the judicious management of economic wealth but extends to encompass the stewardship (or management) of religious, moral, and spiritual assets. Christian education is such an asset. It is a stewardship issue because it encompasses a care for people—especially the most vulnerable.¹

¹See Deut 15:11; 24:14 and Exod 22:22, addressing obligations to the poor and needy in the provision of sustenance and fair treatment including the care for widows and children.
Educational stewardship was established when God gave the mandate to the people of God to educate their young.²

A theology of vision encompasses the idea of humanity sharing in divine directives through God’s initiation, via the communication of His will. A shared vision for Christian education addresses three pragmatic, theological realities: (1) the condition of man,³ (2) the desire of God to address the proximate condition humanity,⁴ and (3) God’s passion to impact the ultimate and eternal destiny of mankind.⁵

Christian education lays a foundation for life and service,⁶ developing a cohesive, organic, and philosophical worldview, with eternal salvation as its primary goal. This area of the Seventh-day Adventist church’s mission has necessitated and facilitated the development of a dynamic, global presence.

Importantly, education requires a communal approach for its realization. The burden for providing quality, Christian education in any given community or region must logically and ethically become a shared responsibility in order to create a resourced and sustainable system.

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²The idea of perpetuity is demonstrated by the phrase, “you and your son and your son’s son” (Deut 6:2) implicitly enforces the idea of a perpetual transmission of religious information.

³Rom 3:23, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

⁴Titus 2:12, “training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.”

⁵John 3:16, “For God so loved the world (or For this is how God loved the world) that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

⁶See Eph 2:10, “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (emphasis mine).
Four Partners: Four Realities

The project focused on a strategy for communicating a vision for Christian high school education that could be shared by four critical partners:

1. The Richardson Church—the founding organization that started the school over twenty-five years ago.

2. The Richardson Adventist School—this entity had grown significantly beyond the capacity of the existing church building, and in fiscal and administrative complexity.

3. Local area pastors (and their churches). This comprised of around nineteen churches, a small number with smaller schools, servicing lower grades and student volumes. Children from these churches constituted 70 percent of the Richardson School student body.

4. Administration: The Texas Conference and SW Union. Both entities worked together to provide financial resources (the ‘revolving’ fund), for local church projects.

A Four-Step Process

The process for communicating the vision of shared responsibility for facilitating Christian education utilized the following four steps:

1. **Identification of key partnerships**: Assessing the critical partners needed to authorize, support and realize the vision.

2. **Contextualizing the Vision**: Analysis of the unique circumstances, including the needs and limitations of each partner.

3. **Communicating the Vision**: Presenting the vision in a manner that was relevant to each partner—addressing the issues that were distinct to each.
4. **Creating a strategy for fostering participation**: Formulating a way that partners could participate that was commensurate to their resources and unique leadership circumstances.

The need to understand and define the respective realities of the four key partners was extremely important for two reasons: First, to contextualize the message in a way that made it easy for them to recognize the relevance and importance of the vision, and secondly to develop a strategy that would make their cooperation and participation possible.

Between stages 3 and 4 of the process, the greatest challenge became acutely evident when area churches could not participate (substantially), in funding the project. There were two options available: (1) to abandon the project and not purchase and develop the property, or (2) move ahead and assume full responsibility for the property and debt service.

This was particularly disturbing as the intent of the project was to create a ‘shared vision’ which would also necessitate shared responsibility for acquiring the property and operating the school. Although the vision was communicated and a strategy for participation was successful at the conference, Richardson Church, and school, it was adopted and voted, only in principle by area pastors—full participation in the funding phase failed at the area church level.

This initial failure however, led to a careful re-evaluation of the local area context.

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7 See chapter 4.
and the subsequent writing of a North Texas Education Strategy, which proved successful.

**A North Texas Education Strategy**

Contextualization was a key component in the initial phase of the project. This was equally true with formulating the North Texas Education Strategy. This second attempt at area-wide participation (a key objective of the initial phase of the vision) was far more successful. The proposal presented three objectives:

1. Create a viable way to service the real-estate debt of $2.1 million. The initial fund-drive (outlined further in Phase 1), created a pool of funds that serviced the mortgage for over a year of operation. After this year, there was a change in pastoral leadership and loss of momentum for this aspect of the project. The North Texas Education Strategy proposed a way forward to service the debt.

2. Realize the immanent growth opportunities at NDAA. Identify where grades can be expanded with additional classes and needed services such as ‘early-childhood’ can be offered.

3. Create a workable platform for area churches to participate in education. Addressing the barriers (perceived or real), that limit or exclude broader participation in NDAA.

The proposal was processed in the same way as the initial phase of the project: First by being presented to the conference officers for their feedback and input. It was successfully adopted by the executive officers and presented by the conference president to the area pastors for their support. Following support of the area pastors it was
presented to the NDAA school board and Richardson Church for ratification.⁸

The “North Texas Education Proposal” was the second and final phase of making the shared vision for Christian education a reality for the North Dallas area.

What was the crucial difference? The North Texas Education Strategy offered a mechanism for participation that was more fiscally realistic for the area participants than the approach adopted in the initial phase. Instead of requiring ‘direct’ subsidies to the school (a more linear and rational approach), the new proposal offered an opportunity for a dynamic that was not considered initially.

The emotional connection to the support of Christian education was a missing element to the way the vision was communicated. People (and churches) tended to give towards their values. This re-evaluation led to an important discovery.⁹

There was on the one hand, a willingness among pastors to champion students, and on the other hand, a reluctance to champion mortgage debt as this placed them in an uncomfortable position with their churches. Similarly, there was a greater willingness among churches to sponsor students than give to debt. The emotional connection with recipients (children) of Adventist education was a far more powerful motivator for participation.

**Vision: The Impact of Implementation**

The core objective of a “strategy for the formation of a shared vision among the

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⁹The core elements of the proposal removed the privileged status of the parent church, provided the academy with administrative autonomy, created a three-year process that would enable the academy to assume full fiscal independence and equal accountability to all area church partners.
churches of North Dallas to address the challenge of secondary education” was achieved in two distinct phases. Each phase represents two major aspects of the vision: (1) funding and acquisition of physical asset, and (2) development of pastoral and area church support structure.

The first phase required a more linear, choleric approach, commensurate with the tasks of negotiating the purchase, funding the project and renovation of the facility into a Pre-K-12 grade facility.

The second phase necessitated the extensive dialogue and more contextual analysis than previously envisioned. The development of a system of support required both a relational and analytical approach. The critical highlights of each phase are outlined below.

**Phase 1**

The physical and tangible aspects of the vision were accomplished during this first phase of the vision and include:

1. The unprecedented, financial contribution to the vision of $500,000.00 from the Texas Conference. This initial endorsement was a crucial factor in securing further funding for the project.

2. The matching donation of $500,000.00 in support of the vision—in direct response to the lead donation made by the Texas Conference.

3. Authorization from the SW Union ‘Revolving Fund’ for $2.25 million, made

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10 The idea of ‘Emotional Intelligence’ was important in understanding the reasons for limited participation and then contextualizing an approach to meet those barriers. Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence, Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* (New York: Bantam, 2006).
possible by the financial support and commitment of the Texas Conference.

4. Validation, support, and pledges from members of the Richardson Church.

5. Purchase and renovation of the ten acre property into a K-12 facility within four months.

6. Opening of the newly organized entity; North Dallas Adventist Academy, August, for the 2008-2009 school year.\textsuperscript{11}

\textbf{Phase 2}

This second phase represented the development of local area support for education, and a significant shift in the relationship between the school and area churches:

1. Increase in pastoral and church participation beginning late 2010.

2. Equal treatment of area churches in relation to school fees and board membership—affected by removing the privileged status of the founding church.\textsuperscript{12}

3. Broader participation from area pastors on school board.

4. Pastoral endorsement and promotion of enrollment at local churches.

5. Local churches participate financially by providing a subsidy for each student.

This made actual enrollment the basis for local church contributions, removing the common practice among school constituencies of requiring churches to contribute a

\textsuperscript{11}See appendix B.

\textsuperscript{12}The Richardson Seventh-day Adventist Church initially founded the Richardson Adventist School which effectively became a new entity in August 2008 with the launch of the North Dallas Adventist Academy at the Centennial Blvd. site in Richardson, Texas.
specific dollar amount related to the operational costs, regardless of the number of families attending from that congregation.

**The Results**

1. Authorization given from the South Western Union to finance $2.25m towards pledged funds to purchase the ten-acre facility and renovate it into an academy campus.

2. The property was purchased for $3.25m in May 2008

3. Renovation into an upper and lower campus


**The First Year of Operation**

A. Limited initial participation within the constituency

B. Debt service was regular and uninterrupted

C. School enrollment steadily increased

D. Full academy accreditation was awarded by the NAD Education Department

**The Second Year of Operation**

E. A proposal was written to broaden area participation—accepted by conference and local pastors.

F. A greater willingness was seen amongst pastors to champion students and cooperation amongst church leaders to sponsor students. (This will be

13See appendix B, South West Union Record, December 2008, “Celebrate.”
highlighted in chapter five, where a significant turn in events created the basis for greater participation during the 2010-11 school year.)

G. Increase in student enrollment for the past three years (2008-2011).\textsuperscript{14}

Enrollment growth between 2007-2011\textsuperscript{15} represents the last school year at RAS as a junior academy and the three subsequent enrollment years of the project with RAS becoming NDAA (see figure 3). Over this period a growth rate of approximately 23 percent was experienced.

These local enrollment figures have impacted growth trends within the conference as a whole. Figure 4 presents the enrollment totals for the Texas Conference over the same period just prior to establishing the new school and the three subsequent years. 18.2 percent of the conference enrollment growth was directly impacted by growth experienced between 2010 and 2011 at NDAA.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{NDAA_School_Enrollment_Growth_2008-2011.png}
\caption{NDAA school enrollment growth, 2008-2011.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{14}Taken from opening reports: October 2008-2009. See chart “Texas Conference Enrollment” Board of Education.

\textsuperscript{15}Enrollment figures are taken from the opening October reports.
In summary, the educational landscape of North Dallas was significantly altered by this project process, which specifically addressed:

1. The unique contextual realities of four partnerships; between the Union and Texas Conference administrations, local area churches and pastors, the former ‘Richardson Adventist School’ now renamed; North Dallas Adventist Academy (NDAA), and the founding, Richardson Seventh-day Adventist Church (RSDAC).

2. Concretizing the vision around a physical property (Centennial Blvd), possessing two unique characteristics that were critical to the logistic realities of broad area support: firstly, it was a geographically accessible location, with multiple routes and access to public transportation, and secondly, potential for future development into a fully accredited, academy campus—with capacity to accommodate future expansion of enrollment and academic programming.

3. Funding the vision, initiated by fiscal participation of the Texas Conference.
Conclusion

The task of the project was to “create a strategy for the formation of a shared vision among the churches of North Dallas to address the challenge of denominational, secondary education”. The project spanned a three-year period and was successful, despite being fraught with challenges and setbacks. Perseverance resulted in effectively changing the trend of non-participation in education amongst area churches.

Pursuing this project enabled greater insight into the challenges associated with our schooling system, essential partnerships, and capacity to inspire confidence amongst constituents and deliver a credible, educational product. When research for this project unearthed that evangelistic investment and growth within the Conference bore no correlation to enrollment in our schools, a number of questions arose: Where does the disconnect exist between church growth and enrollment growth? Why are longstanding members and newly converted families making other choices for the educational needs of their children? Importantly, does this reality in the Texas Conference highlight similar trends across the NAD? These important questions may deserve further study.

Finally, the urgency and challenge of this project revolved around educational decline, on the one hand, and the need for unity around a vision for supporting education on the other. It was recognition that although Adventism is growing in North America, our schools are declining. Ultimately, long-term survival may hinge on our willingness to recognize that a ‘shared vision for Christian education’ is part of an ongoing commitment to navigate the new challenges and opportunities of a changing social environment—to follow a divine mandate.
It is my sincere desire that God places a burden for our young people at the center of the denomination and regenerates His inspired gift of our system of education.
CHAPTER 6

KEY LESSONS, SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

Key Lesson

One of the most significant lessons to emerge from the experience of this project is for leaders (at all levels) to embrace the idea and reality of a divinely shared vision. This is not simply accepting the idea or theory that God gives vision, but permitting oneself to be open to receive such a revelation of his will. God can and will speak in a way that directly addresses our personal life and ministry context. It is God who ignites passion, creates urgency in our hearts and inspires us with ideas that stimulate our creativity. Without His vision, it is possible to lead His church.

The following lessons have emerged from the project research and implementation experience.

Other Lessons Learned During the Project Process

1. Partners are essential in prosecuting vision. Throughout the entire project, at the union, conference, and local levels, building relationships of trust and respect was pivotal to the momentum and success of the project. This is not a utilitarian view of relationships, but one that highlights the value of those around us. People should not be seen simply in terms of the ‘positions’ they hold or skills they offer but as recipients of
God’s grace and not objects to be used. Even if our cause is noble, people come first. Perhaps more than at any other time I have grasped the experiential truth that leadership is a relational activity. Leadership also demands openness and vulnerability—and both carry an element of risk that cannot be avoided if leaders are to be effective.

2. Pastors are primarily leaders not managers. In the church, the functions of pastoral administration are often seen as the essential core of leadership rather than a function or skill. Perhaps the confusion exists largely because the person conducting these functions is usually acting in the official capacity of ‘church leader’ or ‘pastor’. There are certainly important and necessary activities that maintain the operational functionality of the church, but they must not to be mistaken for leadership. This scenario is similar to boarding an aircraft in which the service is outstanding. The experience of that flight is a good and enjoyable one, and the staff exceed expectations. However, if that same plane lands in the wrong destination, we would consider the pilot and airline company incompetent. In reality, you would have experienced, outstanding management and simultaneously, terrible leadership. Although some operational crossover may be inevitable, leadership and management are clearly not the same.

3. Leadership concerns where the church should be headed—the critical direction and destination. The challenge is that many good pastors may fully believe they are leading, but function largely as managers and show no deep conviction and passion about ‘where’ the church should be going. Consequently, they display very little courage in their leadership, especially when their ideas and competence are challenged. Visionary leadership inspires personal courage.
4. Pastors are called to be visioneers. ‘Visioneering’ captures an ancient biblical concept that for a leader to be authentic, they must grasp a vivid picture of a future reality inspired by God. This is important because the vital direction of church is the ‘business’ of leadership. In the church, a leader must acquire this direction from God, rather than create one from personal agendas or group consensus. The corporate version of vision is useful in highlighting some key differences. When a leader (president or CEO), examines the business marketplace, identifies new opportunities or creates demand by generating innovative services and products, this kind of vision is driven by the desire for a larger market share and greater profitability.

Spiritual leaders embark on a process of discovery because they are committed to knowing and following God’s will and serving His people. In this sense pastoral leaders are visioneers and should therefore, be conversant in the practice of visioneering—grasping a tangible picture of a possible, future reality, determined by God.

5. Leaders create opportunities for transformation. Leaders have a sacred responsibility to create opportunities in the lives of those they have the privilege of serving. Prior to my appointment as associate and shortly after becoming the senior pastor of the Richardson church in 2001, I possessed no interest, passion or inclination towards Christian education. Remarkably, without a personal reference-point (as I had not attended Adventist schools until college), or any external encouragement, inexplicably, I began to develop a burning passion for the young people in the school and began to see the numerous educational inadequacies that the young were experiencing as

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185 This is discussed at length in chapter 2.
a result of space and resource deficiencies maintained by a lack of vision. It was difficult to reconcile the yawning disparity between the noble ideals of our church, the resources in North Dallas and the inescapable reality that we were failing our young people. Importantly, leaders do not simply, “strike while the iron is hot,” they make the “iron hot” by striking. 186 Therefore, leaders create opportunities for transformation and learn to exacerbate the tension and contradiction that often exists between our knowledge, verbal profession, and inaction. Importantly, pastoral leadership must seek to strategically position the local organization into circumstances that makes it possible for people (who are often desperately inactive and unfulfilled), to do something significant. Faith should always be authenticated in the crucible of action and leaders seek to create such opportunities.

6. Dollars follow values. People give towards what they value. Often when they are able to connect their investment (in education) with something tangible and visible, (such as a young person in their church), it is far easier to give their support. In the context of this project, it was not until a strategy was created that helped local area pastors connect the idea of financial contribution to education, directly to the young people within their churches that they were willing to promote NDAA to their congregations. Asking church members to financially support the principle or ideal of Christian education can become abstract and difficult in the current social climate, where many parents have not experienced Christian education. Finding ways to ‘personify’ giving in a way they could connect with and see each Sabbath (local young people), made all the difference.

186 Kinetic energy (heat) is created by vibration caused by force or “striking.”
7. Never underestimate the value of following through with vision. The Texas Conference had a policy of not directly contributing funds to local church initiatives. The revolving fund, operated by the SW Union was available and the preferred process. However, for the first time in their history, they offered $500,000 towards the vision. A week later, after touring the proposed facility (a site that God had led me to visit and pray about for almost two years), I asked a prospective donor if they would consider giving to the vision. The first question asked was, “How much is the conference giving”? When I said confidently, $500,000 they replied, “I’ll match it.” Had I not persisted (although being discouraged more than once), in asking the conference to give to the vision, the additional half a million dollars may not have materialized. The lesson in persistence; when following a God-given vision, never be afraid to ‘ask’ and follow-through.

Summary

The past four years of this project have provided remarkable opportunities for personal reflection and growth. The project research has also deepened my theoretical and practical understanding of leadership, particularly as it relates to vision, leadership and education. Grappling with the challenges of shaping a platform for area-wide participation in education, providing adequate space for future campus development, and enrollment growth were all significant milestones.

However, while the project was successful, providing a framework for developing and eliciting participation in a vision for Adventist secondary education within North Dallas, it came at significant, personal cost, both to my family and myself. It is perhaps appropriate to provide some insight into what many have seen as ‘an unusual burden for Christian education.’
Having grown up in Europe, with limited access to a Seventh-day Adventist education, I possessed no first-hand exposure to our educational system until later in life, when attending Newbold College and Andrews University, both as an adult. Further, God saw fit to export me from London to an area in North America where attempts at collaboration on education had not fared well for over four decades. With my background, I am fully convicted that only God could place such a strong desire within me to see our schools succeed and young lives changed as a result.

Although the actual project took almost four years to complete, the total investment was a journey of almost ten years, beginning with my first day sitting alone in my office as the sole pastor of the Richardson Church. That day has been indelibly etched into my life. It was September 11, 2001.

For most of my life, as far back as I can remember, I have nursed a passion to prepare for a cause or task for which I had no rationale, except strong sense that God’s hand was in my life. Winston S. Churchill perhaps articulates this well when he said, “There comes a precious moment in all of our lives when we are tapped on the shoulder and offered the opportunity to do something very special that is unique to us and our abilities, what a tragedy it would be if we are not ready or willing.”

Recommendations

The following recommendations have emerged from serving in North America for the past decade. Eight years as senior pastor of the Richardson Seventh-day Adventist Church, leading in establishing the North Dallas Adventist Academy project, and at the time of writing, church planter of the Acts|Two Church in Plano, Texas.
1. The traditional support system for Adventist schools (local church constituency) is no longer effective. There is a need for re-evaluation, restructuring, and creation of new methods and approaches that can be applied to various contexts across the NAD. This may necessitate a ‘best practices’ rather than a one-method-fits-all approach.

2. Guidelines for pastoral support of education should be clear. Such guidelines should be standardized and centralized throughout the NAD. Pastors are denominational workers, recognized as the “gate keepers” of our school system, and are expected to support education, yet have no official authority or responsibility for schools. There is great disparity between conferences and unions over the role of pastors in supporting education. Clear guidelines that delineate basic expectations for the pastoral support of education should be created. Such guidelines can be referred to and adapted contextually within unions and conferences.

3. The church in North America must ignite a new awareness of the purpose and importance of the Adventist educational system. The reason for Adventist education should be consistently taught in our schools and colleges if we are serious about continuing its legacy.187

4. The biblical principles of leadership should be taught throughout our educational system. These principles are already identified and discussed in secular circles. If we are serious about leadership development we should not wait until

187 During my college years I cannot point to one class on the subject. The majority of the more than twenty pastors in the N. Dallas area verbalized little understanding or belief in its importance. Many could not make the connection between our educational system and evangelism.
5. The Adventist church in North America must be prepared to fully adopt the biblical idea of leadership and create a faithful theology of biblical leadership. The tendency within our church is to confuse management with leadership.

6. Fellowship is as important as leadership. Those who follow have a duty of responsibility to their leaders, just as leaders are rightly expected to be responsible to those they lead. Followers are participants in the vision process, not passive consumers.

7. It is essential for pastoral leaders to teach members how to hear and obey God’s voice. Churches must be taught and encouraged to unite around vision. Casting vision from the pulpit before this is done, where followership is absent, only creates greater challenges.

8. There must be more denominational writing on developing ways to support a biblical vision of Christian education. Very little literature exists that addresses a process for eliciting support for Christian education.

**Conclusion**

This project began with a vision for the area-wide support of Christian education among a diverse collection of churches in North Dallas. The local context clearly exposed the need for such support; yet the unity, commitment, and will necessary were initially absent. The theological reflection not only unearthed the idea that God is deeply concerned with the spiritual and temporal education of the young, but highlighted the fact that this particular project was a local expression and part of a global, educational

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188 This would include the biblical principles of ‘calling and purpose’, ‘spiritual formation’, and ‘visioneering’.
commitment of our church. What emerged was the need for an authentic theology of
leadership, for which the church must take greater responsibility to develop and teach.

The literature review highlighted broad confusion over the definition of
leadership as a relational process and consequently the role of leaders. What also became
evident was a disparity between secular and biblical notions of vision. The literature
review revealed that there was no consistency among scholars and commentators in
defining vision or agreement on its origin.

Pursuing this project enabled greater insight into the challenges associated with
our schooling system: The critical breakdown in the model of constituent support, loss of
confidence in the educational product being delivered and shifting priorities of pastors
and the congregations they lead. Research also unearthed that although Texas has
experienced significant evangelistic growth, there was no detectable correlation to school
enrollment. The school population was shrinking while conference membership was
rapidly growing.

The importance of this project lies in the strong possibility that trends witnessed
in North Dallas may be indicative of the decline experienced in other metropolitan areas
of North America.

Educational decline may also point to a fundamental failure of leaders to
understand and orientate today’s church to the importance of Adventist education in
meeting the challenges of the 21st century.

Adventist school administrators are not taught to be leaders, they are taught to
function as managers within the denominational educational system. Consequently, there
is little innovation, reinterpretation and re-invention to address 21st century needs.
The truth is that the world has shifted and so has the priorities, values, and attitudes of church, but our approaches and methods have largely remained stagnant. When pastors are uninformed about our educational identity and reluctant to support our schools, it is a strong indication that something has gone terribly awry.

Another value of this project is the successful application of a process for developing support around the biblical vision of Christian education. The literature review revealed that very little has been documented about developing educational support within a geographical area. The approach taken was to identify the pivotal partnerships and understand their challenges and contextual realities. This formed the basis for creating a workable process that was flexible enough to adapt or correct.

A ‘shared vision for Christian education’ is the outgrowth of a theology of ecclesiology, stewardship, vision and a biblical theology of Christian education. The denominational lineage of our system of education is consistent with a biblical worldview and seeks to achieve not just high academic standards but to establish a personal relationship with Jesus Christ in the children exposed to its influence.\textsuperscript{189}

In facing the challenges of declining enrollment, pastoral disengagement, and member apathy towards Adventist schools, we must resist the overwhelming temptation, “well intentioned, but dead wrong” that the church needs to become “more like a business”\textsuperscript{190} if it is to be successful. We purport to have a system of spiritual education. Therefore, as the research in this project suggests, biblically authentic approaches must be adopted and given contextual relevance.

\textsuperscript{189}Shane Anderson, \textit{How to Kill Adventist Education}, 22.

\textsuperscript{190}Collins, \textit{Good to Great and the Social Sectors}, 1.
Although an absence of written, strategic plans for the development of education in the conference is lamentable, and the recommendations from educational studies (BRITE Report) have not been acted upon, the remedy is not for the church to function more like businesses. Diligence is clearly needed, which is not an attribute of business but a biblical principle of excellence. The issues surrounding the project speak more to an absence of clear direction. Such direction comes from grasping an inspired and God honoring vision.

It is important to note that implementation of the project occurred within the negative contextual realities mentioned above, yet the outcomes were positive. The project spanned a three-year period and was successful:

1. Authorization was given from the South Western Union to finance $2.25 million towards pledged funds to purchase the ten-acre facility and renovate it into an academy campus. The property was purchased for $3.25 million in May 2008.
2. Renovation into an upper and lower campus
3. School opened for the August 2008-2009 school year
4. Creation of a new identity, “North Dallas Adventist Academy” (NDAA)
5. Increased participation from N Dallas area churches
6. School enrollment steadily increased
7. Full academy accreditation was awarded by the NAD
8. A proposal was written to broaden area participation accepted by conference and local pastors
9. Greater willingness was seen among pastors to champion students and cooperation among church leaders to sponsor students
10. Increase in student enrollment for the past three years (2008-2011)\textsuperscript{191}

11. A growth rate of approximately 23 percent was experienced

12. Local enrollment figures have impacted growth trends within the conference as a whole—conference enrollment growth of 18.2 percent was directly impacted by growth experienced between 2010 and 2011 at NDAA.

The larger context of the project concerns the capacity to lead at least four level: (1) leading self, (2) leading a congregation, (3) leading other leaders (including other pastors), and (4) educational leadership. This is not in the conventional sense of administrative proficiency in the delivery of education to the end-user, but leading the cause of education in our denomination. While we are growing evangelistically, enrollment into our schools across North America is declining. Within the church we are losing a generation of young Adventists, the very same group ‘eco-boomers’ that have become our leading missional focus in North America.\textsuperscript{192} The process that was involved to successfully accomplish the vision included a personal ability to lead, to articulate a vision, build relationships, analyze challenges, and understand the context. Pursuing this project enabled greater insight into the challenges associated with our schooling system.

This I believe, points to a fundamental failure of leaders (across the board) to ‘re-invent’ and calibrate to the challenges before us in a shifting culture. When pastors are uninformed about our educational identity and reluctant to support our schools, something has clearly gone wrong. It is my sincere desire that God places a burden for

\textsuperscript{191}Taken from opening reports: October 2008-2009. See chart “Texas Conference Enrollment” Board of Education.

\textsuperscript{192}The work of Dr. Michael Cauley with ‘eco-boomers’ in the Texas Conference is particularly relevant to the project.
our young people at the center of the denomination and regenerates the inspired gift of our system of education.

Although Adventism is growing in North America, our schools are declining and survival may hinge on our capacity to navigate the new challenges and opportunities of a changing social environment—especially within the church.

It is my sincere desire that God places a burden for our young people at the center of the denomination and regenerates the inspired gift of our system of education.
APPENDIX A

VISION FORMATION PROCESS

What does RAS cost RSDAC?

Richardson Church - Annual School Expenditures
2006-07 School Year

Donations $72,126
New School $11,475
Worthy Student Fund $22,040
RAS Subsidy $60,000
Utilities $32,000

Total: $197,640
RICHARDSON CHURCH
GROWTH REPORT

2001 - 2009

May 19, 2009

Pr. Paul Hunt
Growth 2001-2009
Over the past eight years, growth, both numerically and qualitatively has characterized Richardson Church and school. Attendance growth has increased from a weekly average of 415 to around 650 in our 9:00 and 11:30 am Sabbath services.¹ This growth in attendance has impacted us in many positive ways, ranging from launching a new church-plant in 2007, (Crosswalk Fellowship). Hosting the live Amazing Facts-3ABN satellite broadcast; “Amazing Adventure,” which was downlinked world-wide to 2,350 sites in over 89 countries. A sign of spiritual growth and church participation was further indicated by more that $1m in tithe during 2007-8. In addition, our most recent acquisition, has firmly established a K-12, fully accredited academy program in North Dallas, for the first time (North Dallas Adventist Academy), opening on a new, ten acre, $3.5m campus in August 2008. We thank God for His blessings. Today, Richardson is still a fast moving, culturally diverse entity, one of the top three churches in the Texas Conference.

Dynamic Growth 2009-11
With growth however, comes increasing complexity, and the need for greater diligence, intentionality and spiritual leadership. Churches that survive and thrive in times of uncertainty become increasingly adaptive, sensitive and courageous in their faith. The need to adapt to changing circumstances requires leaders, at all levels, who are willing to assume responsibility and create an environment where honesty is valued, and new ideas and initiatives are welcome. In such environments, failure is understood as a natural part of the necessary process for achieving long-term success. This is a pattern, readily seen in the lives of the major biblical narratives and the characters at the center of them.²

¹ See diagrams in appendix
² Noah, Moses, Joseph, Jacob, Isaac, David...
Growth Challenges and Solutions

Some of our most vital ministries have grown significantly over the past few years and are now facing some natural and precarious challenges of growth. Critically, these key areas are being negatively impacted by space constraints. I would like to highlight a number of major challenges in some detail and focus on some possible solutions.

1. Adult Sabbath School Division
   1.1. Presently, there are around five large adult classes, averaging 100 adults in the same (sanctuary) space.
   1.2. Teachers struggle to keep the attention of their class members due to high noise levels.
   1.3. Complaints have been lodged stating that people cannot hear / concentrate during adult S.S. class times.

2. Church Congestion
   2.1. The Sabbath School phase of our weekly service is the most congested period with 1st and 2nd service attendees effectively occupy the same space (between services).
   2.2. This creates parking issues as generally, limited parking is available at this time. The net-result is that many regular and prospective attendees have become discouraged from attending services.

3. Pathfinders & Adventurers
   3.1. There are particular strains on Adventurer and Pathfinder ministries. These areas are growing rapidly. They now struggle to find space on Sunday, as our Richardson site is utilized seven days a week, including renters on Sunday.

4. Service Quality & Participation
   4.1. The ability to provide high quality, in key areas of church life is vital for the continued growth of the church. These areas include; teaching ministries, (S.S. & other programs), baptismal classes, corporate worship services, children’s teens and young adult ministries.

In summary, these areas are central to not just maintaining our current level of membership engagement, but critically, broadening our base of financial support, which is especially important with regard to the K-12 program and associated financial commitments. We are reminded that, “…whatever stops growing, starts dying”.

Pr. Paul Hunt
Richardson Church Report, Page 3
Growth Phase
Although Richardson has developed a reputation for being overcrowded and difficult to find parking, it is still seen as a favorable and preferable place to worship, participate and grow. Richardson’s profile as a church is growing, along with school enrollment. We are in the process of a ‘natural’ growth phase that has come about partly, as a ‘natural’ outcome of our most recent efforts in evangelism³ and education.

Critical Solutions
One of the main motivators for developing support towards the effort to purchase, renovate and operate 302 Centennial Blvd, was made both publicly and in a February 23, 2008 statement published in a church-wide letter regarding the vote to move forward:

- Opportunity to expand youth programs such as Pathfinders and Adventurers
- Space for unique young adult programming including sporting activities
- Capacity for church and area-wide events

It was also suggested at the meeting that the entire church/school may eventually move to the new site - lowering overheads and building the emotional and psychological connection between the major donor church and school⁴.

Phased Growth Proposal (Church)
Commence planning and scheduling for utilization of the Centennial Blvd. Property, for:

1. Pathfinder and Adventurer programs
2. Sabbath Service programming - including S.S. Classes
3. Church events or activities that would benefit from utilizing R2

Facility Usage
Single purpose rooms and facilities are always the ideal. However, to go this route at this time would pose difficulties to the programs and critical growth of the church at this time. In reality it is more expensive for any church with a central mission to reach and impact lives for Christ to have facilities inaccessible during nights, weekends or holidays throughout the year.

Considering the level of financial support, of the Richardson church this asset cannot be restricted from church use - when ministries must be nurtured, lives impacted and out-reach conducted. Ultimately, the health of the church and it’s impact on the community is why we are here. Therefore, the growth of the “church-school” is contingent upon the health of the primary, supporting church as a whole. This is a pattern seen especially in the Texas Conference.

³ Includes: Jesus Loves Jeans: 35 baptized, endeavors to promote school and church within community with initiatives such as "FireProof" and Financial Peace classes as a precursor to Fall Evangelism.

⁴ See handout: ‘Church Letter February 23, 2008’
Phased Growth (Church & School)

Consolidation of church and school campuses is a logical step both operationally and fiscally. It affords the opportunity to leverages equity in the current Richardson church facility to develop both church and school programs, while strengthening the vital bond for substantial and continued financial support of the academy. This strategy positions both church and school for growth in the burgeoning stages of the new academy.
This eight year report is the culmination of a wonderful and blessed opportunity to positively impact the Richardson church. It also represents a pastoral tenure of eight years, against the Adventist norm, where God has greatly developed and nurtured my family and I.

I especially want to thank you personally Elder Holley for the faith you showed in my ability and capacity as a leader eight years ago. I especially appreciated your support, encouragement and prayers as I led-out in impacting the trajectory of education in N. Dallas.

Thank you, and may God continue to bless you and Betty-lynne

Warmest Christian Regards

Pastor Paul, Petronella and Family
A House Divided

Richardson SDA Church - Sabbath May 5th 2007

SR: Matthew 12:25
TS: Unity (around a biblical vision) is the true secret of our strength

Matthew 12:25
And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:

“And Jesus knew their thoughts...”

The Pharisees accused Jesus of using the power of the devil to work miracles.

They do not deny that a miracle took place, the attribute the source of power for that miracle to “the prince of demons” satan.

They use the word: beelzebub or - beelzeboul = “master of the house” chief of spirits, another title for satan.

Jesus describes a condition -
“...Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.”

Application
I marvel some times at how well the world employs measures and methods of Biblical proportions. They employ biblical wisdom (often unaware), in order to succeed:

Illustration

The European Union [children of mammon...] have banded the countries of Europe together to form a stronger economic alliance than they could have had had they remained alone. They understood they were weaker as individuals, but stronger in unity. Hence, the “European Union.”

The only time the church will find itself in a hopeless, impractical and implausible situation is when we are divided against ourselves.

That’s another way of describing a church that is not unified - a dysfunctional church - an un-biblical community...
John 13:34* A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

John 13:35* By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

The NT is replete with incessant pleas to live united:

Joh 15:12* This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

Joh 15:17* These things I command you, that ye love one another.

Rom 12:10* Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

Rom 13:8* Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

Here’s what I want you to hear in this sermon:

Unity is something that cannot be faked: “And Jesus knew their thoughts...”

Unity is NOT optional

Unity requires intentionality, effort and yes, time in planning

Unity is about building relationships - stepping outside of your “safe boundaries”

If you consider yourself a follower of Christ- you need to know some harsh truths:

The church is not here for you.

The church is here for the world.

You are here for the each other.

Jesus did not die to make you into a sanctified consumer, observer or critic.

He died to make you united with me and alive for a desperately needy world

The church cannot fulfill its mission unless we are UNITED.

God forbid that we should become a group of haplessly detached, disjointed individuals,

living for our own gratification.

Illustration (Disunity) Screen…

Disunity makes life difficult, awkward; intolerable, unbearable, unendurable; exasperating, maddening, infuriating.
**Close: Call to Unity**

Today, I call each of us to commit to participate in efforts to unite together…
To begin to think and pray about our future together – and why God has seen fit to call us together here.

Allow God to speak in the coming weeks, through your devotional time and family prayer

Pray for your leaders as we embark on a journey to know and obey God’s voice

Hold us accountable…

Unity means reaching out to someone else,

Unity is reflected in our values, [especially in our finances, planning…]

TS: Unity (around a biblical vision) is the true secret of our strength

As we move forward together, partner in pray for unity

**Special prayer for Unity in this church...**
Col. 2:8 “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit.”

For the people that Paul was addressing, this was a very important and timely warning... (Illustrate...)

The apostle addresses the issue of a dangerous philosophy. What is “philosophy”?

**Philosophy**: way of understanding reality, and existence, it refers to the way we think, and this can determine what we believe – Although we don’t think consciously about philosophy is at the foundation of all our ideas and actions...

We’ve bee talking a lot about education chiefly because Richardson operates a school out of this building for at least five days a week for ten or more months.

Does education have a philosophy?

Yes, quite definitely. At the foundation of all educational systems throughout the ages is a central philosophy.

Illustrate

The Egyptians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, the Romans, the British, and Americans all had philosophies that still speak today. In fact, we have inherited much of our degree system from the Greeks, who in turn took it from the ancient Egyptians...

The power of philosophical teachings is that it has shaped nations, governments, and movements.

Abraham Lincoln said;
“The philosophy of the classroom is the philosophy of the government in the next generation.”

Nearly 100 years before Lincoln, George Washington said:
“True religion affords government its surest support. The future of this nation depends on the Christian training of the youth. It is impossible to govern without the Bible.”

For this reason, schools and textbooks of the postcolonial period were strongly Bible oriented. That has changed drastically today.

Dr. Lloyd T. Anderson, Covina, California:
“We make a mistake when we say that the Pilgrims came to America to seek religious freedom. To a certain extent they had this in Holland. It would be more accurate to say that they came to America seeking an opportunity to give to their children the kind of religious education that was impossible in either England or Holland.”

So what is the Philosophy of the Christian Education?

It is essentially, to teach our young to know Jesus personally. The effect of doing this well, is that they adopt a path in life that God can bless. It’s an unmistakable command:

Deut 6:7-9
“You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

Psalms 127:3 Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.
In Jeremiah 10:2 we read;

"Learn not the way of the heathen..." (those who have no vital connection with God)

Psalm 119:11 states,

"Thy word have I hide in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."

Education has a relatively, short window:

The children in our congregation(s) have been placed under our influence for just a short time. Through primary - kindergarten years into middle and high-school, we have a limited amount of time in which to nurture and groom them for excellence.

The SDA System of Education is no Accident:

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America operates a system of elementary and secondary education that began in 1872.

The unique philosophy of Christian education is based on the Scriptures. Ellen G. White contributed much to our understanding of the true purpose for education. In the book ‘Education’ Ch. 1, we are challenged to have a far higher view of the true intent for 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."

Children and youth have been entrusted to our the education system for spiritual nurture and educational excellence.
The primary aim of Seventh-day Adventist education is to provide opportunity for students to accept Christ as their Savior, to allow the Holy Spirit to transform their lives, and to fulfill the commission of preaching the gospel to all the world.

The education program is predicated on the belief that each student is unique and of inestimable value, and on the importance of the development of the whole person. Students are educated to:

- Accept service as a way of life
- Demonstrate a commitment to excellence in all their endeavors
- Be sensitive to the needs of others in the home and wider society
- Become active members and leaders in the church – locally and globally.

**Is our system of education an accident?**

The Adventist Church operates the largest educational systems in the world - through a world-wide network of schools colleges and universities such as Loma Linda whose Medical Center is at the forefront of cutting edge treatments such as the innovative Proton Accelerator for cancer treatment.

Education within the Seventh-day Adventist Church is experiencing substantial growth. A system that has more than 6,350 primary schools, colleges and universities in 145 countries.

**So Why Christian Education?**

The stark contrast between the secular (public education) and Christian education can be seen in the following, opposing philosophies which are all around us-and the possible ramifications:

Secular education is **humanistic**: teaches us to be man-centered; to love and to exalt self

**Christian Education: is God-centered**, teaches us to love God with all the heart, mind, soul, and body. (Matthew 22:37-39; 6:33)
Secular education promotes **secularism**: to be earthly-minded - to reject religious faith and convictions as essential or important.

**Christian Education**: teaches us to be **heavenly minded**, that is, to understand our world in the light of Scripture - and to apply those principles to every facet of life.

Secular education promotes **materialism**: to work for earthly gain, material possessions, and mere human achievements. (This can also be passed on by our values as parents)

**Christian Education**: teaches us to **labor for eternal riches** as taught by Christ in Matthew 6:24-34, Luke 12:15, and John 6:27.

Secular education teaches us to live “**fulfilled**” lives for the here and now: thats **temporalism** - Christian Education teaches us to look on eternal values as the most important - in view of our ultimate accountability to God. (Romans 14:11-12)

**Secular education** teaches us to be **free of restraints**, to ‘do your own thing’ accept the idea of ‘situational ethics’ - this is the philosophy of **permissivism**.

**Christian Education**: helps to develop self-control; to live a disciplined life according to the Bible under the control of the Holy Spirit. (II Cor. 10:5; Phil. 4:8; Titus 2:11-14; Eph. 6:18; Gal. 5:15-17, 22-24)
Secular education teaches us to reject absolutes and to believe that there is no fixed truth, only that truth must be discovered through reason and experience that’s relativism.

Christian Education: teaches us to embrace the absolutes and the unchanging truth of the Word of God and to relate all knowledge to its revelation. (Jh 17:17; II Tim. 3:14-17).

As the apostle stated:

It is not only important to think in terms of adequate facilities, but to place greater emphasis on a program of excellence that will help to groom leaders of tomorrow. This should encompass:

- excellence: spiritual development
- excellence: academics
- excellence: instruction and staff
- excellence: character development
- excellence: leadership development
- excellence: career learning opportunities

So you may be asking; “where in Adventism is this kind of educational excellence happening?” Here are just two significant examples: Screen Video

**SIFE “Students In Free Exercise”**

SIFE is a competition between the business departments of the best universities around the world. On October 15th 2007, in NY City, the SDA University, La Sierra won first place!

La Sierra University’s Students In Free Enterprise team has won the SIFE World Cup for the second time in six years. LSU was judged to be the top presenting team in the 2007 SIFE international competition in New York City, held October 10-12.
Once again, our top quality group of SIFE students and set the pace for the world," says Johnny Thomas, dean of La Sierra University's School of Business. "Teams from the rest of the world stepped up, but our excellent students responded to the challenge."

College students from across the globe came to America for the 27th Annual Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) competition at the New York Hilton October 10th - 12th to determine this year's World Cup winner. The world's best business students from 45 nations participated. La Sierra University represented the U.S. after besting higher profile universities such as the University of Arizona at the national competition this past May in Dallas.

**Jamaica: School Tops Thousands in Technology Competition Again**

Charged with finding real world solutions to real world problems, students from Seventh-day Adventist-owned Northern Caribbean University (NCU) rose to the challenge for the second time. The group beat out 4,000 other registrants in the region's Microsoft Imagine Cup technology competition for students. Under the theme of "Imagine a world where technology enables a better education for all," the team has designed a software program to close the gaps in distance education.

**Appeal:**

We have an opportunity to honor God with excellence. As we seek God's will for our youth, pray for a solution to the over crowded conditions in our school. God is opening doors that your leaders are carefully considering – as we can no longer support a program of academic and spiritual excellence in the present facilities.
Support us in prayer and get involved in any of the opportunities available to help the school program or sponsor a worthy student.
North Texas Pastor’s Meeting

December 4th 2007, Dallas Area Pastor’s Meeting
Richardson SDA Church, 10 am.

This meeting was a follow-up to the Tuesday, October 30th, 2007 gathering at Dallas 1st Church. At this meeting pastors agreed to share with their boards and congregations a vision for a possible 7th-12th grade, area high school located at Centennial Blvd.

Overview:

• In the preceding weeks to this meeting, many local pastors were able to walk through the Centennial Blvd site and confirm that it was both geographically accessible and possessed the potential for development into a high school where a program of excellence could thrive.

• Elder Holley shared that the Texas Conference would pledge $500,000.00 towards a high school facility for the North Texas region operated by the area churches.

• Pastor Paul Hunt was tasked with providing data about the Centennial site and positive aspects of Seventh-day Adventist education in general - in a way that would help to develop consensus amongst the respective congregations and church boards. This was done and emailed to the pastors.

• On Thursday, the vision for an area high school was shared with a potential donor (member of Richardson), who agreed to match the $500,000.00 pledged offered by the Texas Conference.

• The vision was presented to the Richardson congregation and received a high level of support and excitement. Pledges are steadily coming in to support the purchase of the school.
December 4th, Meeting Details:

- Elder Holley led out in worship focused on importance of protecting and nurturing children and young people in our congregations and the responsibility the whole church to provide access to Christian education to its young.

- Pastor Paul gave a brief update Centennial property and the Richardson Church leadership's commitment to support a high school on the proposed site.

Discussion:

I. Elder Holley asked pastors specifically, what their churches (leadership) were willing to commit tangibly (or financially) towards (a) the purchase of the property and (b) the operating of the school.

II. Although many confirmed that they had shared the presentation with their congregations and/or leadership, they had not reached specific conclusions about how they would support the idea.

III. Whilst continued support for the initiative was expressed, additional time and data was requested regarding the purchase price, projected operating expenses and student intake to bring before their leadership and congregations.

IV. Michael LaSage (RAS principal), will provide written outline of high school program of excellence and update on RAS milestones and achievements to area pastors.

Meeting Outcomes:

Richardson Church Board vote on the two major facets of high school education:
1) Elder Holley asked pastors specifically, what their churches (leadership) were willing to commit tangibly (or financially) towards (a) the purchase of the property and (b) the operating of the school.

2) **Purchase**: 40% of the purchase price, up to $1,000,000.00 (this figure includes matching donor’s $500,000.00 pledge)

3) **Operations**: 40% of annual operations, up to a limit of $200,000.00

4) Pastor Paul tasked with providing further details: projections for high school purchase and operations.

5) Unanimous decision to move forward with purchase of the Centennial Rd property.

6) President shared that the Texas Conference will begin negotiations with the property

7) Elder Holley told the pastors that he expected them to copy him on any board/business meeting minutes outlining the level of support each churches would give towards (a) the **purchase** of the property and (b) the **operating** of the school.
A Shared Vision

Addressing the Challenge of Centralized High School Education

In North Dallas

RAS Constituency Stats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th># Students</th>
<th>Total #</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
<th>Constituent?</th>
<th># On Aid</th>
<th>$ Aid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Baptist Dallas</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>41.00%</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>$13,209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garland Spanish</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>$7,740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosaic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$1,540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancaster Spanish</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>3.30%</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$2,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zion</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canyon East Spanish</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garland-DeSoto</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>2.17%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairview</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>1.40%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creekside Fellowship</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>1.40%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas Plan</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>1.40%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Rock Creek</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>1.40%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasant Grove Spanish</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>1.40%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bethel - AJI</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calvary</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas North Spanish</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas West Spanish</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garland Community</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love Field</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Spanish</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasant Grove</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$5,660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richardson Spanish</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Prairie Spanish</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown/Don't Say</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>17.40%</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Includes 3 BEXS students here</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL # ATTENDING: 142
Additional Aid in House: 13
TOTAL Expected: 195
Constituent #: 92 - 57.70%
Non-Constituent #: 50 - 42.30%
Students Receiving Aid: 0 - 0%
Includes 3 BEXS students here

P4417090 - C485608990253A5 Aug 22, 07

139
Participating Churches
Solicited Funds: Worthy Student

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participating Church</th>
<th># of Donors</th>
<th>$ Total Pledged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Richardson</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>$20,145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosaic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazilian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figsures compiled as of October 2, 2007

What does RAS cost RSDAC?

Richardson Church - Annual School Expenditures
2006-07 School Year

Total: $197,640
The Problem

• The school has managed to thrive in an environment where most Seventh-day Adventist church schools have either had to cut back to fewer grade levels, or closed altogether.

The Need

• Critical need for the creation of a shared vision for quality, denominational education

• An accessible location with potential for further development
A Centralized System

Accessible Location
Possible Location

Possible Location
Answers to some frequently asked questions...

- Where is the new high-school located?
The new facility is located on the corner of Centennial Blvd. and Greenville Ave. in Richardson, not far from Hwy 75, approximately three miles from Dart Rail.
- Will the entire school be moving there?
The new site will serve the area of greatest need which is our upper grade program, (7th-12th). However, this facility will serve as a resource to our young people across the age/grade spectrum.
- Will any attention be placed on the lower-school program?
Absolutely! Remember, our focus is on delivering quality Christian education across the board.
- What’s the total start-up cost?
Property (approx. 10 acres) $3.25m + renovations $250k = $3.5m
- How will this vision benefit both upper and lower schools?
With almost half of our existing school population (7-12 grades) moving to the new site we have an exciting opportunity to (a) increase enrollment in both lower and upper grade programs, serving even more families, (b) more effectively address security issues, (c) tailor-fit physical improvements at each site to best suit the grades being served. We are well positioned to equip this generation of Christian leaders!
- When will the school open?
The site will open in time for the new academic school year, August 2008-09. This aggressive time-line reflects the fact that there is really no good reason to wait!
For more information call 972-231-5254

Pre-K – 8
Richardson Adventist School
1201 W. Beltline Rd
Richardson, TX 75081

7-12
N. Texas Academy of Excellence
302 Centennial Blvd.
Richardson, TX 75081

Building a Vision of Excellence

Why should I pledge?

Even if you have no school-aged children or home-school, here are a few reasons why it’s important to pledge:
1. Pledging is a tangible way of expressing your commitment to your church family and our vision.
2. Pledging enables your leadership to plan and budget effectively towards the success of this venture - we want to avoid long-term debt.
3. By supporting this vision for equipping young people and families, you affirm that God has positioned Richardson to be leaders in education; it’s who we are!

How much should I pledge?

Not everyone can give the same, but we can all commit equally...
It is important for everyone to participate. Whatever your circumstances permit to participating at some level. All members are encouraged to give according to their situation. Having a plan to give systematically will ensure great success. Take a look at the following examples based on 4-5 family pledges for 12 months:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLEDGE PLAN</th>
<th>Option 1</th>
<th>Option 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>$75</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td>$400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yearly</td>
<td>$2,400</td>
<td>$4,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHURCH TOTAL</td>
<td>$1,330,000</td>
<td>$2,660,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remember that pledge amounts are in addition to normal church giving...

Next Steps:
1. Pray for this endeavor, asking God how you should support this vision.
2. Make a point of attending and participating constructively in meetings.
3. Take ownership of the vision, speaking positively and encouraging all involved.

Stay tuned for more information about how and when to make your pledges.

Why is this vision so important?

God has positioned Richardson to be leaders in education; it’s who we are!

Education Building
Richardson church has been a successful leader in education for more than two decades. Christian education is what we do; it’s who we are!

Administrative Building & Chapel
The future of Richardson as a vibrant, attractive and growing church depends on our willingness to accept our identity - embracing, nurturing and attracting young people and young families.

Sanctuary/Chapel
Having the capacity to provide a Christ-centered, nurturing environment, where young people can be groomed into tomorrow’s leaders is an incredible opportunity!

A Bigger Vision...
Looking beyond what we see today and imagining future possibilities is vitally important for our church. With God we have an opportunity to do some marvelous things. Your personal influence, sacrifice and faith are much needed. Are you ready?
February 13, 2008

Elder Paul Hunt
Richardson Church Members
Texas Conference

Dear Elder Hunt and Richardson Church:

What an excellent business meeting it was my privilege to witness Sabbath evening, January 26. What a wonderful vote of unity to support the school academy purchase process on the basis of 70% Richardson and 30% area churches. There was not one dissenting vote.

This is a wonderful beginning, but this formula may not work. Not because of unwillingness on the part of the other churches or their pastors, but because of raw limitation of ability. Please let me explain.

The following is the response of the churches closest to Richardson:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church</th>
<th>07 Tithe</th>
<th>Church Debt</th>
<th>Pledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Richardson Spanish</td>
<td>$192,876</td>
<td>$457,931</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairview Mosaic</td>
<td>$299,607</td>
<td>$1,400,000</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frisco Crosswalk Church Plant</td>
<td>$93,930</td>
<td>No Church Home</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plano Spanish Church Plant</td>
<td>$202,305</td>
<td>No Church Home</td>
<td>$200 per month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas Brazilian</td>
<td>$384,990</td>
<td>$1,238,521</td>
<td>$200 per month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas First</td>
<td>$431,089</td>
<td>$144,315</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas New Life</td>
<td>$82,496</td>
<td>No Church Home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irving Lighthouse Brazilian</td>
<td></td>
<td>$451,297</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Plan to do something in the future—can’t now)

There are other churches that have not yet responded, such as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church</th>
<th>07 Tithe</th>
<th>Church Home</th>
<th>Pledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dallas International</td>
<td>$61,795</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garland English</td>
<td>$232,468</td>
<td>$322,104</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garland Spanish</td>
<td>$298,252</td>
<td>$728,848</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irving Spanish Emmanuel</td>
<td>$51,341</td>
<td>$456,187</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas Spanish North</td>
<td>$146,430</td>
<td>$196,026</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas Spanish Love</td>
<td>$69,281</td>
<td>$353,718</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Paul Hunt and the Richardson Church  
February 13, 2008  
Page 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church</th>
<th>07 Tithe</th>
<th>Church Debt</th>
<th>Pledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irving English</td>
<td>$85,509</td>
<td>No debt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Las Colinas</td>
<td>$62,683</td>
<td>No Church Home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denton</td>
<td>$136,294</td>
<td>No Debt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewisville</td>
<td>$156,123</td>
<td>$338,572</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Elm Spanish</td>
<td>$78,170</td>
<td>$129,483</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some of these churches may come on board with time, but someone has to lead. It is Richardson English Church that has been positioned and blessed by God to provide that leadership. Richardson English had a 2007 tithe of $987,367 and is blessed to have no current debt. Only Richardson English is positioned to purchase this property and develop this new academy. We have no day academy in the Conference that is not anchored by a major church. The fact is the stronger the other area churches become, the more they will be a part of Christian education.

If Richardson English buys the property, one consideration might be asking the few churches committed to making a contribution if they would be willing to contribute their funds toward start-up cost for the academy, and let Richardson be the sole owner of the capital investment by purchase. This would leave you open to develop as you please without the hassle of getting agreements from 20-plus different churches. Who knows, you may find it in your interest to eventually move the whole school there or even your church home. There is certainly plenty of parking.

The Texas Conference’s $500,000 is committed to starting a 12-grade academy at this location because it will service so many churches from all directions. The Conference has never before offered such an amount. It may not be able to do so again, or at least not for a long time. This is in the face of our immense project developing a new youth camp. Please do not let this opportunity pass you by.

God will bless your faith; give Him a chance. I am praying for you.

Your brother in Christ,

Leighton R. Holley

[Signature]

President

c  Conference Officers
Leadership Update, November 8, 2007

From: Pastor Paul <rsdac@sbcglobal.net>
Date: November 8, 2007 12:15:25 AM CST
To: pastorhunt@att.net

Subject: Leadership Update
Reply-To: rsdac@sbcglobal.net

Dear Church Board and Elders,

I want to take this opportunity to update you on some recent events.

This past week, I met with our conference president and local area pastors to discuss how high-school education could be advanced in North Texas. This was a follow-up meeting to one where I was tasked with bringing consensus amongst the area pastors, around a facility for an area high school.

Between these two meetings, the Richardson elders and myself met with Leighton Holly (Texas Conference President) and Doug Kilcher (Executive Secretary), about what the Texas Conference would give 'financially' towards the purchase of a high-school property (located at the SW corner of Centennial Blvd. and Greenville Ave - three miles from our current church location). The site has two buildings in the range of 20,000sq/ft sitting on approximately ten acres and costing $4m. The response was not very encouraging. Although they expressed support for education, importantly, the meeting concluded with nothing pledged towards education. However, this past week, the conference president spoke to a room full of Dallas area pastors pledging $500,000.00 towards a high school facility for the area. This amount has never been pledged in the history of the Texas Conference. I'm not particularly concerned with the exact reasons for the turn-around, but I do know that God had His hand in it.

This past Friday afternoon, as I walked the property praying for direction, I became strongly impressed that we should move forward quickly and confidently. By late afternoon I was led to a donor who, after walking the property with me pledged to match the $500,000.00 offered by the Texas Conference. I cannot think of a clearer signal that God could have given for us to move forward in faith. Just two weeks ago we had nothing! Today there is $1000,000.00 towards an area high-school facility. I was impressed to consider how, in the fastest growing areas of North America, where immense wealth exists, could no God-honoring program to groom our youth for excellence exist?

That Friday night, I felt under strong conviction to preach about Christian education, addressing the "forty years" the North Texas/Dallas area has spent "wandering" in regard to high-school education. Ideally, I would have preferred to have a board and elders meeting to update you all before addressing the recent, rapid events as is my usual
practice. However, I was under 'conviction' late Friday night to speak to the issue(s) of education and relate how the hand of God changed the conference's position and swiftly brought a large matching donation. I have learnt long ago to follow that voice. In future however, I may be making some 'midnight calls' to the elders. Another facet of what God impressed upon me that night was that this decades old problem will not be solved by more conjecture, discussion or further analysis. Although this certainly has its place, it will now be prayer, unity, a sense of commitment to the families and youth in our region and courageous faith-action, that will bring this long period of sterility to an end. Understand that there will always be unanswered questions and room for doubt as we move forward, but we can neither sit and wait for ideal conditions, or for some 'perfect' facility to reveal itself. If you want to sail the seas, you must leave the safety of the harbor.

Uncertainty is a permanent part of the leadership landscape. It never goes away, which is what makes faith so vital. However, in spite of uncertainties, it's possible to be absolutely clear on where we are going. Here are a few vital issues we have clarity on:

1. **The legitimacy of the challenge:** This is a legitimate and long overdue need. It has great importance to the future survival of the Lord's work in Texas.
2. **The Richardson church cannot 'go-it-alone':** We cannot and should not carry the burden for High-school education alone. It is not a wise or sustainable position. There must be collaboration between the churches and conference involvement.
3. **The High-School location must be 'workable':** This means that the location should be 'accessible' from a number of locales. The idea of an 'ideal' location or facility has caused much stagnation in the past. Considering the dispersed nature of our Adventist population, the quest for an 'Ideal' location, is an impractical one. At least for now, we must strive for accessibility. Over forty years of local history has taught us that an 'ideal' location either cannot be found or agreed upon. The good news is that many of concerned area pastors have viewed the property and see it as a 'workable' solution because the location is accessible. This is a critical step to moving forward.
4. **We are not alone:** Cooperation amongst the pastors is a vital key to moving forward. Every pastor present at the meeting with the president expressed their willingness to share the vision of an area high-school with their congregations. The Dallas area pastors will be preaching a similar message to the one I shared this past Sabbath, in their respective churches to illicit support for operating a high school.
5. **Richardson must lead:** As the largest congregation in North Texas, we must play a significant role to bring about a God honoring legacy of educational of excellence to North Texas.
6. **Although we can't always be certain we can be clear:** There is real power in knowing that although we can't be certain on every detail, we can be clear about the direction we are heading. God will continue to open doors only if we are courageous enough to walk through them. Remember that every time God's
7. people were to move forward in obedience to His will, they were required to commit to a time of prayer and introspection.

We need $3 million more to be in a good shape for the 2008-09 school year. Please don't let the figure terrify you. Remember, a week ago we had basically nothing to speak of and today we have $1 million specifically towards the area of our greatest need; a high school.

If you have the desire, as I do, to see this vision realized, and I'm not just talking about the acquisition of a building, but a program designed to groom our youth for excellence, join me as leaders of this local, spiritual organization in committing to a personal time of soul searching, prayer and confession.

Thank you for your prayers, positive communication and support as we focus our energies on moving 'heaven and earth' to see that we have a high-school facility, where a program of excellence can impact young lives here and for eternity.

In His Service,

Pastor Paul
Investing in People for Eternity

This email was sent by rsdac@sbcglobal.net
Richardson Seventh-day Adventist Church | 1201 W Beltline Road | Richardson | TX | 75080
APPENDIX B

EDUCATION Presentations and sermons

North Texas Education Proposal

Prepared for: Texas Conference Officers
Prepared by: Paul Hunt, [Pastor Acts|Two SDA Church]
Orton Varona, [Board Chair, North Dallas Adventist Academy]

December 2010
Proposal number: 1
Introduction

Three Objectives

1. Create a viable way to service the real estate debt: 2.1m
2. Realize the immanent growth opportunities at NDAA
3. Create a workable platform for N. Dallas area pastors and churches to participate in education

Integral to the educational landscape of North Texas are four important realities amongst the four key players in Adventist education: the Richardson church, North Dallas Adventist Academy, the Local Area Pastors and churches, and the Texas Conference. A simple, factual examination of each reality, devoid of emotive commentary will act as the basis for creating a feasible and sustainable plan for debt service and development.

Four Partners, Four Realities

1. Richardson Church Reality:
   - Tithe: 11% decrease (approx. $100,000.00)
   - Debt Service: Inconsistent pattern in servicing 21K debt for the past 12+ months.
   - Capacity: monthly average - 15-18 percent of the 21K commitment.\(^1\)
   - Proposed 20 percent of tithe to be contributed towards education unrealistic given financial climate
   - Enrollment: Richardson church enrollment has effectively plateaued at NDAA

2. North Dallas Adventist Academy Reality
   - Managed through transition year (under full academy status), with significant staffing and budgetary adjustments
   - Currently, operating a balanced budget at 168 students
   - Early Childhood - Potential to grow Pre-K - K program exponentially
   - Elementary School - Classrooms at capacity (waiting list)
   - Middle School - Classrooms at capacity
   - High School - Fully endorsed staff, curriculum requirements met and expanded offerings provided, enrollment below physical capacity
   - School Facilities: The 10 acre property provides adequate land to comfortably accommodate 350 students
     - Elementary Building: currently utilized beyond intended capacity
     - Middle & High School Building: All rooms utilized
     - Growth Potential: Inability to fully realize growth opportunities due to non-development of property
     - Upper Grade Enrollment: Further middle and high school enrolment is limited by a lack of upper grade amenities: science lab, gym and student, common areas.

\(^1\) Calculation derived from a 12 month average minus extraordinary donations.
3. Local Area Reality: Participating Churches

- Area churches are facing financial difficulties, economic challenges of members affecting debt obligations
- Tithes receipts as a basis for contributions to education are unrealistic as they do not reflect available funds
- Willingness amongst pastors to champion students - unwillingness to champion mortgage debt
- Willingness amongst churches to sponsor students - unwillingness to contribute to mortgage debt
- Sharp increase in pastoral and church participation achieved with recent NDAA board and pastoral initiative:
  1. Pastors endorse NDAA academy, worked with local churches to provide $100.00 subsidy for each child
  2. Limited, matching funds of $100 scholarships received from NDAA
- Result: increased student enrollment - Richardson Sp (7), Crosswalk (4) and Garland Faith (5)

4. Texas Conference Reality

- Under present circumstances the Texas Conference is servicing over 60 percent of the revolving fund debt
- To date, there is no viable plan for either debt relief or a transfer of debt obligation

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CrossWalk Church Subsidy Monthly: $400.00 - Student Assistance for 11 students: $1,100.00
Mosaic Church Subsidy Monthly: $500.00 - Student Assistance for 3 students: $300.00
Acts Two Church Monthly Subsidy: $600.00 p/m
Lancaster Church Monthly Subsidy: $260.00 p/m
Richardson Sp Student Assistance for 7 students: $700.00
Spring Valley Sp Student Assistance for 4 students: $400.00

These represent additional students to those already enrolled from these churches.
Solution

Service existing debt by realizing enrollment potential

1. Develop path towards rapid, increased enrollment (Exhibit 1)
   (a) Create a workable platform for area pastors and churches to formally participate in education
   I. Pastoral attendance at NDAA board meetings (70% attendance goal)
   II. Pastors actively endorse, promote and encourage enrollment “Send Students”
   III. Local churches provide subsidy for each student (current $100.00 per child)
   IV. Local churches to contribute a 5% subsidy of church operating budget
   (b) Formal Enrollment Growth Plan
   (c) Introduce plan to Increase physical capacity of school (Exhibit 3)

2. Debt Service Plan (Exhibit 2)
   (a) Three year 50% mortgage relief
   (b) Debt transition from RSOAC to NDAA
   (c) NDAA 100% debt service by 2014
   (d) Richardson church maintains current level of support in following areas:
      - Annual subsidy of 109K
      - Area support of $100.00 per student subsidy

3. NDAA Led Capital Campaign (Exhibit 3)
   (a) Autonomy for NDAA Administration:
      - Develop capital campaign criteria
      - Development and management of the campus
   (b) NDAA Governed directly by Texas Conference Board of Education
      - Facilitate necessary amendments to NDAA Constitution

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*Conference to establish and communicate expectations to pastors regarding the support of NDAA, Christian education.*

North Texas Education Proposal 3


**Exhibit 1.**

**Enrollment Growth Catalyst**

Fall 2011 expanded early childhood program, increased elementary student capacity, increased SEVIS retention

Fall 2012 additional portable elementary classrooms, developed ball fields, increased high school enrollment

Fall 2013 new gym building functional with the addition of six high school classrooms, increased high school enrollment

Fall 2014 renovated elementary building, expanded music programs and athletic programs

Fall 2015 renovated early childhood development building

**Exhibit 2.**

**Debt Service Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Growth Rate</th>
<th>18%</th>
<th>15%</th>
<th>15%</th>
<th>10%</th>
<th>10%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
<td>Fall 2013</td>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollments</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year-end Net Balance *</td>
<td>Break-even</td>
<td>$67,600</td>
<td>$135,000</td>
<td>$212,625</td>
<td>$272,138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDAA Debt Service Contribution</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>$36,000</td>
<td>$60,000</td>
<td>$84,000</td>
<td>$252,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSDAC Debt Service Contribution</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>$84,000</td>
<td>$60,000</td>
<td>$36,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Annual Debt Service</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>$120,000</td>
<td>$120,000</td>
<td>$120,000</td>
<td>$252,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Net monthly income calculated at $225 per student, average gross income $450 per student

**Exhibit 3.**

**5.2m Capital Campaign**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capital Uses</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Program</td>
<td>$200,000 Phase 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport Fields</td>
<td>$200,000 Phase 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gym + 6 Class Rooms</td>
<td>$1,800,000 Phase 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library + 6 Class Rooms</td>
<td>$800,000 Phase 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Music Center</td>
<td>$2,200,000 Phase 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1 Cost</td>
<td>$2,200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2 Cost</td>
<td>$800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 3 Cost</td>
<td>$2,200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cost</td>
<td>$5,200,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Summary

This proposal provides a factual and contextual basis to address three critical issues facing the future of Christian Adventist education in North Texas:

1. Servicing the real-estate debt of $2.1m
2. Leveraging the imminent growth opportunities at NDAA
3. Establishing a realistic platform for North Dallas pastors and churches to participate in education

To date, the issues of debt service, expanded school enrollment, campus development and area involvement have not been approached holistically. However, a factual analysis suggests that successful debt service is contingent upon the rapid development of enrollment, NDAA campus expansion and the involvement of area pastors and churches with realistic objectives.

This proposal provides specific solutions to increase debt service contributions, (presently estimated to be around 15-18%) to 50%, whilst building a three year platform for rapid enrollment growth towards the goal of 100% debt service by 2014. It outlines a simple and attainable goal for local pastors and churches to support education by providing students with a $100 subsidy and 5% of the church operating budget. Central to realizing rapid development of these objectives is the need for North Dallas Adventist Academy administration to function autonomously.

Fundamentally, this proposal represents a passion to see Adventist education thrive and young lives impacted eternally. It comes as a measured response and intimate association with the development of K-12 education in North Texas. It is our sincere belief that the continued success of K-12 education in this region hinges on a sober approach to the actual conditions facing the Richardson church, North Dallas Adventist Academy, the local Area Pastors and churches, and the Texas Conference. It is our hope that the facts and solutions presented in this document will foster both serious dialogue and tangible action to a secure future for K-12 education in North Texas.

Respectfully In His Service

Paul Hunt, Pastor Acts|Two SDA Church

Orton Varona, NDAA Chair

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8 This excludes extraordinary giving which does not reflect true giving patterns and a sustainable trend.
A Brief History...

For over forty years, numerous attempts to open a high school in the rapidly growing North Dallas area have been unsuccessful. Committees were formed, architectural plans prepared, demographic studies conducted and numerous properties were evaluated but the dream never materialized. In frustration, many simply resigned themselves to the belief that “it would never happen in my lifetime.” Finally, the right combination of passionate, innovative and generous people along with the discovery of an easily renovated and well situated property ignited the creation of the NORTH DALLAS ADVENTIST ACADEMY (NDAA).

The current move was initiated by Pastor Paul Hunt, a gifted leader whose interest in educational excellence and quality facilities predates his sojourn at the Richardson Seventh Day Adventist Church. Several years ago although busy with church duties as the senior pastor of the Richardson church, he began an extensive search for an acceptable property. Recently a highly suitable parcel was located just 1.8 miles from the Richardson SDA Church and School at 302 Centennial Boulevard in Richardson, Texas. In addition to being an easily accessible location, the 10 acre site had two existing buildings totaling 20,000 square feet, a 350 seat sanctuary and over 300 parking spaces. An unexpected bonus significantly increasing the property value is a nearby, major construction development planned by the local Richardson authority.

The Texas Conference of Seventh Day Adventists has long recognized the need for a high school in the North Dallas area, and decided to support the project with a generous pledge of $500,000 which was quickly matched by an anonymous donor. With initial pledges totaling $1,000,000 the fire was ignited. With a steady flow of pledges, the Richardson Church has overwhelmingly supported the new academy project and in just a few months time, the NDAA was born.

The doors open for the first day of school on August 12 for the 2008-2009 academic year. The mission for the North Dallas Adventist Academy is simply to be “a benchmark institution that equips young people to strive for academic, spiritual and moral excellence as they prepare to be the leaders of tomorrow.”

Susan Rinker, 2008
Celebrate!

North Dallas Adventist Academy—"For everything there is a season..." and it's time to celebrate! After 40 years of longing for an academy in the North Dallas area, on Sunday, August 10, 2008 the Richardson church opened the doors for the inaugural ribbon-cutting ceremony of the North Dallas Adventist Academy. This new school is a 7-12 upper-grade campus on 10 acres—part of a two-campus school system situated just minutes apart in the Dallas Metroplex.

Paul Hunt, Pastor of the Richardson church, and the one whose leadership was largely responsible for making this whole project come together, explained how we arrived at this historic juncture, and he offered a prayer of dedication. His theme was “With God, all things are possible.” He spoke of the high price tag that dropped precipitously during negotiations, the unprecedented pledge from the Texas conference of $500,000, the donor that matched that pledge, and the major cash injection by the City of Richardson for property development in the surrounding area that bolstered the value of the purchase. He thanked the congregation for determination to move forward in faith to support the project, and their many generous pledges that continue to flow in. Orton Varona, the new NDAA school board chairman, employed his construction management expertise to renovate the two buildings totaling 20,000 square feet into a high-end, educational facility in less than four months. God blessed this venture in many remarkable ways.

NDAA is fully operational and excited about the future. God has led us to this place and we remain confident and faithful that NDAA will become the benchmark academy in the North Dallas area for providing academic excellence, while encouraging spiritual and moral leadership to the leaders of tomorrow. ★

Susan K. Rinker


Anderson, Shane. How to Kill Adventist Education: And How to Give It a Fighting Chance. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2009.


Taylor III. “GMs $11,000,000,000 Turnaround.” Fortune, 17 October 1994, 54-56.


VITA

Paul A. Hunt

806 Rivergrove Rd, Allen, Texas, 75002. pastorhunt@att.net

Place of Birth: London, England

Experience:

Church Planter, Texas Conference, Plano Acts|Two Company, TX, 2010 - Present
• Planted Acts|Two Church, a multi-cultural church in the Dallas metroplex
• Core Group: 15, Attendance at inception: 35, Current average: 120

Pastor, Texas Conference, Garland SDA Church, TX, 2010-2011
• Pastored the Garland Seventh-day Adventist Church - while establishing plant
• Created a “Strategic Growth Analysis” for leadership

Senior Pastor, Texas Conference, Richardson SDA Church, TX, 2001-2009
• Longest tenured senior pastor in Richardson Church’s history
• Initiated the search, purchase and renovation of a ten acre, $3.5m, campus
• Lead pastor in establishing North Dallas Adventist Academy, (NDAA) which opened Aug 2008 and received full, K-12 NAD accreditation in Nov 2009
• Church attendance grew from 415 to 650 (capacity)
• Membership increased from 450 to 708
• Baptized 150

Education

DMin. Leadership, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, USA
M.A. Religion, Systematic Theology, Andrews University, Newbold Campus
Post Graduate Certificate of Church Growth, Newbold College
B.A. Hons, Biblical and Pastoral Studies, Newbold College, England