

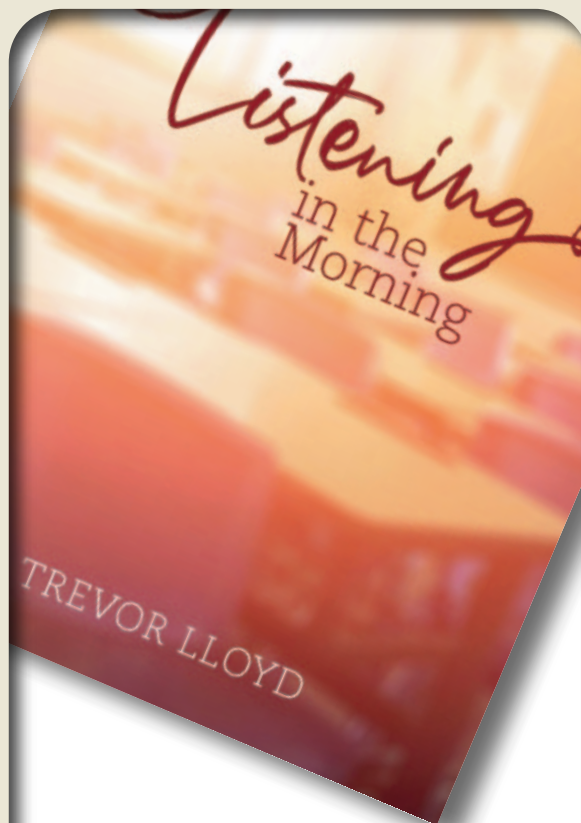


Thula Norton Lambert

In this collection of 80 devotional readings, Trevor Lloyd has skillfully interwoven the stories of biblical heroes along with the stories of Seventh-day Adventist education pioneers. Educators can gain fresh insights from the lives of familiar Bible characters such as Elijah, Jacob, Samson, and David to inspire change both in their personal and professional lives. Gleaning from Jacob's encounter in the wilderness, every classroom can become, as Lloyd aptly describes, a "house of God and a gateway to heaven" (p. 90).

Lloyd also chronicles the experiences of well-known Adventist education pioneers, including Ellen White, Goodloe Harper Bell, W. C. G. Murdoch, and Arthur Spaulding, alongside educators such as Robert Parr, Fernando and Ana Stahl, as well as Denton and Florence Rebok. They planted the seeds of education in far-flung mission fields. These stories provide the reader with a timely reminder of the humble beginnings of Adventist schooling 150 years ago and its ongoing rich heritage.

The book's stated purpose is to help staff at Adventist schools, colleges, and universities rise to the challenge, in this time of crisis, of faithfully maintaining



**Trevor Lloyd,
*Listening in the Morning:
Devotional Readings for Teachers***

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Available from Amazon

the heritage of a century and a half of Bible-based Adventist teaching and learning.

Each entry concludes with discussion questions addressing relevant education issues, best practices, or educational theories. The theories and approaches of Maria Montessori, John Frederick Oberlin, Jean Piaget, and Jerome Bruner are presented in a way that encourages the reader to explore further his or her compatibility with the plan for wholistic educa-

tion as outlined in the book *Education*.

The readings are set in a variety of cultural settings and cover an array of topics. Entries can be read as standalone readings or can be read consecutively over several days. For example, school leaders can explore topics such as the importance of crafting a mission statement, servant leadership, or the overall design and plan for Adventist education. The book also includes topics of an interpersonal nature, such as dealing with resentment and bitterness among staff. Other topics specific to teaching and learning are also presented, including building rapport with students, alternate approaches to schooling, and the importance of manual labor in the curriculum.

The book also includes stories that contain more overtly, deeply spiritual themes such as waiting quietly on God, God's answers to prayer, Christ's sacrifice, and Christian service. Much like the Master Teacher Himself, the author skillfully uses stories and discussion questions, taking readers much beyond the initial story and inviting them to engage in a thoughtful examination of their values and practices.

Lloyd seamlessly integrates fictional stories and allegories to encourage reflection and call attention to universal values. The story of The Ring of Gyges, set in ancient Greece, points readers to Jesus' selfless sacrifice. In the tale of "John Pettigrew's Mirror," the characters all see themselves reflected in a new light. Lloyd's use of this tale parallels the view of writer and educator Parker Palmer, for whom good teaching emerges from teachers' identity and integrity, their *inwardness*.

Lloyd's use of fiction occurs throughout the book. The French medieval tale of Gudule is used to introduce a discussion on resentment and bitterness among staff at church schools. Lloyd includes a scene from John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* to symbolize the Christian's assurance of salvation in Christ. By including fictional stories in this manner, Lloyd demonstrates, perhaps unintentionally, a method for introducing fictional works into the curriculum.

In addition to such stories, Lloyd draws on his own rich personal experience as an educator to inspire readers through his use of personal anecdotes. Entries such as "Hope That Begets Hope," "Two Pastors, Two Daughters," and "Princess at the Gate" inspire hope, compassion, gratitude, and contentment.

Entries also address larger philosophical issues. The author echoes pre-eminent Adventist historian George Knight, who has also urged Adventist educators to engage in ongoing evaluation to ensure that their practices remain aligned with the original plan for education. *Listening in the Morning* fills a void at a moment where Adventist institutions in many areas of the world are facing unique challenges.

Published during the year marking the 150th anniversary of the founding of the first official Adventist school, this book is highly relevant to the challenges faced by modern Adventist educators. In addition to the issue of maintaining the unique character and mission of Adventist education, Lloyd addresses issues such as improving the Bible curriculum for non-Adventist students and retaining Adventist youth in the church.

The entry entitled "A Day of Small Beginnings" recounts the providential meeting between Edson White and Goodloe Harper Bell, the first salaried Adventist

teacher, and the humble beginnings of Adventist education. Lloyd concludes this reading by asking, "*What safeguards and checks might be put in place to ensure that the objectives of Adventist education are not pushed out of sight?*" He offers an answer to this fundamental question several entries later in the chapter entitled "China Follows 'The Blueprint'"—the story of how Denton Rebok, pioneer educator and missionary to China, consulted "the blueprint" for Adventist education.

Listening in the Morning is original, inclusive, and engaging. It is the first devotional book written specifically for Adventist educators that uses this combination of personal biography, Bible stories, fictional tales, and Ellen White's writings to discuss larger issues in Adventist education. There is something for everyone—from novice to more-experienced teachers and school leaders.

I highly recommend *Listening in the Morning* as a devotional book for educators. It is well-documented, using a combination of internal references or footnotes at the end of each chapter. A few well-placed illustrations would have perhaps made the book more visually appealing. The author also recounts several secondhand anecdotes from memory in cases where sources cannot be referenced; however, these observations do not detract from the overall message: God has been speaking to Adventist educators over the past 150 years. The essential question is: Are we still listening? 🍃

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