

In Support of All

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I stood in front of a public school grade 7–9 Math class of 30 students. We were working with algebraic concepts. All of a sudden Nya, one of my students, interrupted the class with an announcement. “Mrs. Warman, you are God’s wife aren’t you?” All of a sudden the whole class went quiet waiting for my reply. “Well, ah, you know what I mean, don’t you?” She stammered. “Oh yes, like me, a daughter. Yes that’s right, God’s daughter!” Once again this young lady was trying to confirm my belief system.



In every junior high public school class that I taught in, my students took the time to ask what my spiritual belief system was. Usually those questions were asked the first day of class and then the students would sit back and watch how I lived my life both inside the classroom and within the community. They watched how I handled the difficult situations. Working in high needs inner city schools provided lots of those moments. I had a student who begged to live in my classroom rather than to return home to parents addicted to crack cocaine. I kept food and drink in my classroom for those students who did not understand what it was like to sit down to a family meal. I watched for physical and emotional abuse symptoms. I tried my best to help those students understand just how special they were to me as I attempted to network them with help. Sometimes that even meant letting a refugee child talk about watching his best friend’s leg get blown off by a grenade they had been playing with. Life was not easy for many of my students. They watched to see how I would react.

But it was those moments when my students came to me individually and asked me to pray for their problems, that was really meaningful. Those prayers were sent up to protect wallets that had gone missing, to calm anxious minds just before tests and many other important issues for junior high students. It was so rewarding to see the smiles on their faces when they realized that God does answer prayers.

I have long held the belief that our public schools are a local mission field that also deserves to have Christian teachers working there. As much as I prayed my way through each teaching day, I felt the lack of support from my Seventh-day Adventist church. All I really wanted from my church was spiritual support as I worked against the powers of darkness. There were times that I worked with students who expressed excitement at being Satan’s future wives. I took the time to scrub Voodoo curses off some of my students’ desks. I knew very well that evil was alive and well. I also knew that God was and is more powerful. It was that moment when young Scott came up to me and said, “Why did you continue to believe in me? All my other teachers have given up on me.” It was the perfect moment to let him know that God would never give up on him either. Our Seventh-day Adventist teachers who work in public school truly are working in a mission field.

What I envision for Seventh-day Adventist public school teachers is that a day be set aside at the yearly Seventh-day Adventist Teachers' Convention planned for the spiritual needs of all Adventist teachers within our church. It would be a day when all would benefit from praying and encouraging each other. It would be a day when Adventist public school teachers would feel supported from our local church and conference. Meanwhile, Adventist public school teachers could share new concepts being introduced within their workplace. This also could be a day that CAT~net could be advertised as a networking support system for all Adventist teachers. It would be a day when the Educational Administration would be able to greet and learn names of those in our "local mission field". The benefits of sharing together could be a very enriching time!

Our local churches welcomed me with open arms when I signed an Adventist educational contract to teach and lead out in our local church school. The church upheld me in prayer and support. The Educational Department of our local Conference set aside two weeks in the year to pray for my school. It was very refreshing and spiritually nourishing to have that kind of support. I believe that our Adventist public school teachers equally need that kind of upholding before God. I would encourage you to personally reach out and prayerfully support them.