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Something Better

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Something Better

I first became aware of Dr. Thomas Geraty when I was attending Andrews University and the *AU Student Movement* did a story on him and his role as chairman of the Education Department. What stood out for me in the story was the picture of him on a ladder, painting the exterior of one of the buildings on campus.



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The article shared that he had the philosophy that it was important for all—students and faculty—to engage in manual labor, something he did for the university every week.

Later, I had the privilege of taking a class from him—Fundamentals of Education. I don't remember everything he said in that class, but I *DO* remember that he said there would be this question on the final exam: What is the watchword of education? The answer to that question is found in Ellen White's little book, *Education*, p. 296.

She writes: "Something better' is the watchword of education, the law of all true living. Whatever Christ asks us to renounce, He offers in its stead something better. Often the youth cherish objects, pursuits, and pleasures that may not appear to be evil, but that fall short of the highest good. They divert the life from its noblest aim. Arbitrary measures or direct denunciation may not avail in leading

these youth to relinquish that which they hold dear. Let them be directed to something better than display, ambition, or self-indulgence. Bring them in contact with truer beauty, with loftier principles, and with nobler lives. Lead them to behold the One 'altogether lovely.' When once the gaze is fixed upon Him, the life finds its center. The enthusiasm, the generous devotion, the passionate ardor of the youth find here their true object. Duty becomes a delight and sacrifice a pleasure. To honor Christ, to become like Him, to work for Him, is the life's highest ambition and its greatest joy."

In writing this editorial, I stumbled upon a bio for Dr. Geraty found in the *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists* and learned more about him than I ever had before. You might enjoy reading the entire article found at <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=48DG> where you

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will find more detail of the very personal sacrifices that he and his wife, Hazel, made in pursuing the educational mission of the Adventist Church.

The bio concludes with this:

“Thomas Geraty was widely known and respected for his passionate commitment to the ideals of Adventist education and the practical ways that he found to put these into practice in the Church’s schools and colleges. His mission service was given in two very difficult fields of service where sensitive cross-cultural understanding and communication were critical. His educational leadership in China during the communist revolution helped ensure the continuance of the Church’s educational program during a politically disruptive period. His contribution to the development and strengthening of accreditation policy frameworks and to the establishment of graduate programs at Andrews University provided a strengthened, enduring foundation for the development of Adventist education. Later, at Andrews University, he played an important role in helping launch the institution’s first doctoral study programs in education.”

The Adventist educational system was founded and built by giants of which Tom Geraty was only one. But even larger than these personalities are the educational principles that they expounded and lived their lives by. As we celebrate Adventist education in this month’s *Lake Union Herald*, let’s remember the grand experiment of



Courtesy of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Archives

▲ Thomas Geraty

Adventist education that so many have committed to and sacrificed to build. You might even pull out that little book, *Education*, and see what other good things it has to say. ■

Ken Denslow is president of the Lake Union Conference.