

Institute for Christian Teaching
Education Department of Seventh-day Adventists

PASTORAL EXPECTATIONS OF A CHRISTIAN ACADEMIC DEAN

by

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Prepared for the
Faith and Learning Seminar
held in Singapore
August 1989

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INTRODUCTION

During the last decade there has been a major emphasis through accrediting bodies to determine what the mission of each school is. Much of the preliminary preparation for an evaluation is spent determining this and describing it.

After determining the school's mission other questions follow such as; how does each teacher in his/her class and school activities endeavor to propagate this mission? What role does the administrative organization play? It is taken for granted that if there is such a mission, an overriding purpose for existence, every class and every teacher should make it prominent.

Holmes (1989, pp.9, 45) states that many schools should be really classed as "multiversities" not universities because there is no one goal unifying all educational goals. To him the "Christian college is distinctive in that the Christian faith can touch the entire range of life and learning to which a liberal education exposes students." Note, he states it can touch all of life implying that some Christian colleges do not.

This one overriding unifying purpose is sometimes called the "World View". To accomplish this goal requires that it become an integral part of the total school's program. It should be so integrated that there is no aspect of the school's program where it is ignored. This includes programs, classes, teachers, school plant and administration. In a Christian school, faith in God would be the overriding "flavour" of the school. To state it again there should be an integration of faith and learning in every aspect of the school.

Among Christians a type of dualism has set in. Religion is alright for Church but is not necessary in the rest of life. Church meetings are attended but when one leaves the doors of the Church no more thought is given to the religious implications of one's words or actions. One's religion should permeate all of life or it is hardly worthwhile. Walsh and Middleton (1984) quote Jim Wallis asking, "Why do churches not live up to their confession? There is little evidence in the way Christians live to support the claim the kingdom of heaven is at hand." To him man was made in the image of God and that image should be evident 24 hours a day, 365 1/4 days a year.

One reason for the bypassing of faith and learning is

the idea that science has all the answers or at least can find them. Science seems to take precedence and the faith part is either ignored or forgotten. One would think though, that a school which claims to be Christian would exhibit integration of faith and learning. However, Holmes (1989 p.45,46) states that in many cases "faith and learning interact rather than integrate and often this interaction becomes indoctrination".

The integration of faith and learning must be a very personal thing. No one can experience or practice it for another. One cannot help though making a judgment as to what the world view or philosophy of life another person has. One's stated philosophy of life may not always coincide with the view others receive. That is true also of schools. The stated mission of the school may not be the same as the perceived mission of the school. The statement, "Your actions speak so loud, I cannot hear what you say" is a good example and more truth than we would sometimes like to admit.

An illustration of the practice of faith and learning may prove useful. The Christian, by taking the name Christian, declares that his whole inspiration in life comes from Christ and that all he does will be tempered with the thought that "I am Christ's". What this means then, is that the whole life should reveal the "Christlikeness" within. This should be the goal of not only the Seventh-day Adventist administrator and teacher but of all members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The name of the Seventh-day Adventist Church also indicates a belief in the soon coming of Jesus. When faith and learning interact this belief can be recognized as a part of the person and it will influence his whole life. Each will be seen as doing "all to the glory of God (I Corinthians 10:31).

What we say and do will lead others to making conclusions about us whether we like it or not. To think that we are not revealing our philosophy of life by our words and actions is only fooling ourselves. As an example, Sayers (1987 p. xiv) states, "This book proves nothing either way about my religious opinions, for the very sufficient reason that they are not so much as mentioned." While this statement must be accepted as true it ignores the fact that readers of the book are influenced by what is perceived to be the author's beliefs.

It is interesting to note that no matter what Sayers may say, L'Engle (Sayers, 1987 p. xvi) in writing the introduction to the book recognizes the fact that regardless of whether the author thinks her beliefs are stated "they do not have to be mentioned in order to be apparent". One cannot completely hide what he is or what he believes for it will permeate his whole existence.

Most information printed on the integration of faith

and learning focuses upon seeing that the mission of the school is part of each subject area in the school. This emphasis is well placed. However, it is the author's opinion that real integration of faith and learning does not stop at the exit door of the classroom. Just as the student is expected to understand how his faith can influence his learning, one who is not a student is also expected to live his faith. It is within this context this paper is written. How does the academic dean integrate his faith while fulfilling his responsibilities? This paper follows somewhat the same path of thinking as did Segovia (1988) in his paper.

Gaebelein (1968) speaks of the search for truth. This truth which he speaks is the truth reflecting God in every phase of the school's program. The emphasis of his message is that each course in school should reflect faith in God. This author however, does not think that integration of faith and learning needs to be only in the classroom. To allocate such a topic to only the classroom again brings a dichotomy in life. Most of life does not take place in the classroom. Therefore, in the opinion of the author, an integration of one's faith with his total life experience should be evident.

Just as the professor in the classroom assists the students in their search for truth, the administrators of the school are to help the teachers find and develop ways of revealing that truth to make it a living truth. Just as the teacher is a facilitator in the education of the youth, the administrator is a facilitator in the growth of the teacher.

In connection with a seminar on the integration of faith and learning, Segovia (1988) wrote on the topic of "Leadership" in school administration focusing upon the whole administration and its part in promoting the school's mission. Griffiths (1988) did the same but focused upon the professor or teacher in the institution.

This paper also, cannot cover all aspects of the school program. The author then, has chosen to study how one particular administrator of a college can portray a person who has integrated his faith with his learning and thus shows he is living in expectation of the Lord's soon coming. How do the actions and words of the academic dean reveal he has "got it all together" spiritually?

The amount of influence an academic dean has is closely related to the size of the institution. In a small college the Dean's influence is possibly greater. Much of the Dean's influence is in the areas of faculty guidance, supporting academic standards and policies, acting as an intermediary between teacher and higher authority and dealing with conflict. Additional areas of responsibility for the dean includes promoting faculty growth and acting as a "change agent" when change appears to be necessary for more efficient learning. Also included is human resource management, being conscious of the human needs of the

faculty as expressed by Maslow (1954) and MacGregor (1960). As a leader, others often reveal personal problems to him. He then becomes a "keeper of confidence".

It is obvious to the reader that a person in the position of academic dean must have qualities and abilities in many areas. To connect all of these areas and subgroups of these areas to methods by which the dean may reveal true integration of faith and learning would require a book length article. Not even all the pastoral aspects of the dean's responsibilities can be thoroughly covered. Therefore, this study focuses on two aspects of the office of the Dean. How do the attitudes of the Dean affect his administration? What methods did Christ use in dealing with people that can be effectively used by the Dean to insure that the world vision of the school is met?

As the author sees it, in a large part the integration of faith and learning on the part of the academic dean has to do with relationships. These relationships help expand or restrict the teacher in his role as a facilitator to the students in their search for truth.

INTEGRATED BELIEFS REVEALED IN ATTITUDES

It is difficult to determine levels of influence on a campus by comparing administrators. It is reasonable to assume that the one who has the greatest place of influence and who can set the tone for the whole college campus is the president. Following closely behind would be the one in the office of the academic dean. The dean's responsibilities places him/her in a position of chairperson or member of almost all functioning committees. Thus the dean is also in a position in which his thinking and attitudes can help set the tone of the college.

Attitudes

A general discussion of attitudes will be given first followed by a section identifying specific areas in which attitudes play a very important part such as; how does the dean look at his/her job? What role does administrative style play? How does the Dean deal with enforcement of policy or academic standards? How does the dean deal with conflict? Following this discussion Christ's methods of dealing with people will be summarized.

Attitudes have a greater effect than one may realize. Holmes (1975 p. 47) stresses that the "attitude of the teacher or student is the initial and perhaps the most salient point of contact with the Christian faith". A teacher's attitude in turn is greatly influenced by the Dean's attitudes. This again reminds one of the importance of what we do. Jesus tells us we are justified or condemned

by our words (Matthew 12:37) and we are rewarded according to our works (Matthew 25). What we say and do are outgrowths of our philosophy of life and reveal the real person.

Just how does an academic dean face his job? The attitudes with which one approaches a task largely determines the direction and final outcome. The outcome will be different if the dean approaches his job with the idea "love your enemies" (Matt. 5:44) then if he approaches it with other words of Christ, "come unto me all ye that labour and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). How do we look upon the faculty and students, as enemies or someone whom we can help? That outlook determines what we do and possibly why we do some things the way we do.

The Dean's Perception of His Job

The Dean's office is a position of authority. Those who are in a position of little or no authority view authority from their past experiences. Such past experiences leads them to either fear authority or to look upon it with doubt if those experiences have not been good. To most, authority can at times be frightening. Of this the Dean needs to be aware. It is very evident to those working with one in authority whether that person is in that position of authority for the right reasons or not. The concept Christ endeavored to get across to His disciples is the pattern those in authority need to follow.

Christ's pattern bases authority on the idea of service, to be a servant. Instead of to serve, too many take a position of authority because they want to be served. Christ's conclusion was if one wants to be chief he should first be a servant (Matthew 20:27; Mark 10:44).

It should be pointed out that God has given talents to each of us. These talents we are responsible to use. One talent could be administration. Mrs. E. G. White (1948, p. 249) recognized the need for administrators who had all the qualifications which would help them function from a position indicating a person who has integrated his faith and learning.

At this time God's cause is in need of men and women who possess rare qualifications and good administrative powers; men and women who will make patient, thorough investigation of the needs of the work in various fields; those who have a large capacity for work; those who possess warm kind hearts, cool heads, sound senses, and unbiased judgment; those who are sanctified by the Spirit of God and can fearlessly say No or Yea and amen to propositions; those who have strong convictions, clear understanding, and pure sympathetic hearts, those who practice the words, "All ye are brethren".

This statement could serve as a summary of the type of administration needed in the schools.

Administrative Style

The Dean is in a position of a leader because of his office. Whether he functions as a real leader depends upon his leadership abilities. Administrative styles are usually pictured as a continuum from authoritarian to democratic. They range from a situation in which the Dean makes all the decisions and announces them to the other extreme where he makes no decisions but leaves them all up to the group. At one end only one person is involved in decision-making while at the other end that person takes a laissez-faire attitude. Neither extreme can be considered the ideal. Most administrators will function somewhere between the two extremes and it is likely that the method used will vary with the item at hand.

Is the Dean willing to accept ideas and suggestions or does he have a closed mind? A wise man listens to advice regardless from whom it comes (Proverbs 12:15). A Dean is in a unique position where he can benefit from the counsel of individuals at all levels. Listen to advice and accept instruction the wise man tells us (Proverbs 19:20).

The Dean and Conflict

Conflict resolution is a major responsibility of all administrators. How a problem is cared for determines whether it will be solved, postponed, diminished, ignored or increased. Many models of conflict resolution appear in books on administration (Jandt 1973; Griffeths 1959; Nye 1973). None of these methods proposed recognize the possible intervention by God. In dealing with conflict one's real philosophy of life becomes very evident.

The question as to why there are conflicts can easily be understood when we realize that no two persons are alike. Paul in Romans (Chapter 12) stresses that fact by comparing individuals to the parts of the body. Each is different and has a different function but all work for the fulfillment of the mission. The "World View" is the same for each part.

Conflict can be looked upon much the same as trials for a conflict can be a trial to an administrator. God has promised trials to all of us (II Timothy 3:12). Over 60 statements by Mrs. E. G. White appear in the Index to the Writings of Mrs. E. G. White focusing upon how trials can actually be good for a person. James (Chapter 1:2) tells us to consider trials a joy because they increase our faith. They give opportunity to model Christ. The same Jesus who said we are to be happy when persecuted (Matthew 5:10) also said making peace would bring happiness (Matthew 5:9). Bringing faculty members together, mediating disputes is doing the work of Christ.

Avoidance of trials is impossible. How difficulties

are resolved has much to do with the attitude of the dean. The less personal a problem is seen, the more readily it can be rectified. Methods Jesus used in teaching are also useful in the resolution of conflict. Since the methods will be given later, they will not be mentioned here.

The Dean as Guardian of Standards

The Academic Dean often finds himself in an unpleasant position when attempts to circumvent or bend policies are made. Many reasons for such attempts can be given. The Dean's position holds him responsible to uphold policy. He is in a sense the guardian of academic standards. To uphold such standards can make the Dean very unpopular with the ones attempting to bypass standards. How will an integrated Dean respond to such pressure?

One of the most vivid examples of this type of situation is that of Moses. Of the many instances in his life, the one describing his reaction to the golden calf experience may be best (Exodus 32). Moses pled with God to forgive the people but it was not to ignore the sin. After pleading with God, Moses set about to administer discipline in a manner that the children of Israel would remember. He condemned the wrong but did not ignore it. The Dean must at times take a stand. Of course the way the stand is taken will affect the end results. He cannot approve of lowering standards in order to accommodate certain individuals. How the Dean responds reveals what he thinks of the totality of life. Again, the methods used by Jesus, discussed in the next section, provide a pattern to consider. At times like this God's plea to Israel (Isaiah 1:18) to come and reason together is a step in the right direction and could help to avoid a later challenge of being unfair or partial.

CHRIST'S METHODS IN DEALING WITH PEOPLE

In all areas of the Dean's responsibilities, Christ's methods can be used. I know of no one whose faith and learning were so integrated as was that found in Jesus. What was there about Christ that led the soldiers to report "Never man spake like this man" (John 7:46). Many reasons can be given which would today, if followed, increase the usefulness of one in authority. A consistent prayer life helped make the difference.

Practice what one preaches is a constant rule followed by Jesus. The "Golden Rule given by Jesus tells us to treat others as we ourselves wish to be treated. We do not like to be shamed so we will not shame others. Even though He knew Judas was a thief and that he would betray Him Jesus treated him with courtesy trying to quietly awaken the desire for reformation. The author remembers working

with one academic dean who always complained about how much work he had to do as a means of encouraging the teachers to submit grades on time. The faculty all knew that his grades were among the last to come in every grading period and as far as his work went, he was seldom in his office. No one would accept his counsel because he did not do what he expected of others.

Personal work works. It is questionable whether Jesus would have made such an impact upon the life of Nicodemus (John 3) had He not been willing to talk on a one-to-one basis. Jesus gave deference to the man's feelings whether we call those feelings pride or not. The Dean in carrying out some of the disagreeable tasks connected with his office will, if he accepts Christ's pattern, care for sensitive items on a personal basis. Making public personal mistakes rarely serve to draw one closer to Christ.

Avoid an attitude of condemnations. Although by Jewish law the woman taken in adultery should have been stoned, Jesus recognized she had learned her lesson. He simply told her, "I don't condemn you, go and sin no more" (John 8:3). More often than not the one who is in the wrong knows it. Therefore, there is usually no need to glorify that wrong by harping on it. "It was wrong, we both recognize that. It will not be repeated. Let me help you find a solution to it next time before it becomes a problem." Taking this attitude can save a teacher from becoming too discouraged.

Avoid arguments as much as possible. When Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well He refused to be drawn into argument with her but spoke of that which would arouse her interest (John 4). Arguments can arise from misunderstandings or from one who feels threatened. One can win the argument but lose a friend. A cooling off period is a good technique to use. Listening and refusing to argue gives the ajitated person time to get hold of himself. In a sense it gives one time to regain his composure and thus "save face".

Talking on the level of the listener helped Jesus get His points across. The parable of the sower could be readily understood by all (Matthew 13). Presenting ideas and programs should be done in such a manner that each one's abilities and questions are cared for. At times all this means is to allow certain ones to help in the planning process. This includes matching abilities to responsibilities.

Have concern for all, even those who we know will probably reject our counsel. The rich young ruler turned away from Jesus but the Scripture state that "Jesus loved him" (Mark 8:21). This is one of the severest tests of a Dean who has integrated his faith and learning. To return good for evil is not in human nature but it is in the nature of one who has Christ ruling in his life.

Do not be afraid to condemn sin. Jesus condemned sin

but he did not nag the sinner. As soon as a person recognized he was in the wrong Jesus was ready to forgive. The story of the paralytic found in Mark the second chapter illustrates this. By forgiving we indicate sin has been recognized. Jesus indicated to Judas that He knew Judas was plotting. He did this in such a way that the rest of the disciples were not aware of what He was talking about. His goal was to save the sinner. Even the prophet Nathan said to David "Thou are the man".

Do not discriminate. To Jesus, the rich or poor, Jew or Greek were individuals and children of God. He was not influenced by the person's position. This brought the condemnation of the Jews that He ate with sinners (Luke 15:2). It was not the person's culture nor his social standing but the need of a saviour that made Jesus treat all alike. He had created man, therefore all were his sons and daughters and He loves them as such. The Dean's tasks all lead to getting the job done well, and as efficiently as possible. This he does by providing growing experiences for all. The decision as to who receives is determined by need not personality.

Refuse to retaliate. When unjustly treated in the Garden of Gethsemane and at His trials, Jesus could have easily punished His persecutors but refused to. He had taught that God was the judge. Had Jesus retaliated He would have been casting judgment. The Dean may be tempted at times to take revenge. God says, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay" (Romans 12:19). It is possible that all the information is not available to the Dean. To retaliate is the mark of a small man who wishes to usurp the position of judge from God.

Use the Scriptures as guide. The three major temptations of Jesus near the beginning of His ministry were successfully overcome because Jesus knew what God's word said (Luke 4). Knowing the Bible refers to more than just knowing the story or facts. It implies knowing the principles presented. These principles have become such a part of a person that to know him would be to know much of what the Bible says.

SUMMARY

If asked "To whom is the academic dean accountable?", the answer would usually be "He is accountable to himself and his convictions, next to the students and then the teachers. In a Christian college accountability takes on new meaning because all that is "Christian" now becomes the guide for action.

A Christian is first accountable to God. This implies then, the person is acquainted with Him. One who calls

himself Christian is immediately describing himself. Whether others view him as such depends upon their personal conception of what a Christian is. When one identifies himself further as a Seventh-day Adventist Christian the definition becomes more specific. The Seventh-day Adventist Christian dean is telling the world that he is a Christian, that he accepts the seventh day as God's prescribed day of worship and that he is waiting and living expectantly for the Lord's return.

If that is true, one would expect these beliefs to be known by how the person conducts himself. Does he live as though Christ is the most important person in his life and do the actions portray one looking for Jesus' return? These beliefs will "flavour" all his words and activities. Perplexities and trials of all kinds will be met differently than they would by a non-Christian. The pattern of behaviour is Christ. As one studies Christ's life he will become more like Him and the message embedded in his actions will be clear.

No matter what the problem, the dean who has integrated his faith and learning will recognize that God is still in control. God has said through Paul that He can take any event and turn it to our own good (Rom. 8:28). Knowing this will help the dean to realize that he is not alone. As long as he has taken the Lord into confidence and asked for His guidance, events that happen may not be to his liking but he can bear with it.

The Gospel will become a part of the Christian Dean's total experience.

The Lord will give you success in this work, for the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, when it is interwoven with the practical life, when it is lived and practiced. The union of Christlike work for the body and Christlike work for the soul is the true interpretation of the gospel (White, n.d., p.15).

That in one brief quotation describes one who lives his religion. His faith and learning has saturated his practice. There is no doubt as to what he believes and where he stands.

"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him." (James 1:5)

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