

# CONTINUING EDUCATION



## Integrating Learning, Faith, and Practice in Christian Education

### Part I

By George H. Akers and Robert D. Moon

**T**he single most important concern of Christian schools should be the integration of learning, faith, and practice in every aspect of the curriculum. This involves a great deal more than just giving lip service to the blending of religion with other disciplines. It must be more than merely a lofty statement in the student handbook. The curriculum must provide opportunities for students and teachers to *practice* Christian witness-

ing and outreach *together*. The accomplishment of this goal requires completely dedicated Christian teachers who communicate harmonious spoken living messages about the gospel.

**GOAL:** The purpose of this study is to understand better the meaning of, need for, and process of integrating learning, faith, and practice in every aspect of Christian education.

**TERMINOLOGY:** Throughout this unit ILFP will be used to represent Integrate, Integrating, or Integration of Learning, Faith, and Practice.

**OBJECTIVES:** When you have completed this unit, you should be better able to:

1. Give a scriptural basis for the integration of learning, faith, and practice.
2. Use the Bible to identify important themes or concepts that should be taught as part of Christian education.

\* Approved by the North American Division Office of Education for 0.5 Continuing Education Units Credit or 5 Contact Hours.

George Akers is the assistant dean, School of Graduate Studies; director of the Ed.D. Program; and professor of religious education at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Robert Moon is the director of Institutional Research and coordinator for curriculum, instruction, and supervision at Andrews University.

3. Relate the integration of learning, faith, and practice to the doctrines of the great controversy, redemption through Christ, God's commandment of love, the abundant life, and the gospel commission.
4. Give examples of ways the school can provide opportunity for student involvement in Christian service.
5. Describe how the formal curriculum, the informal curriculum, and the hidden curriculum differ from one another.
6. Identify commonly taught concepts in the formal secular curriculum that are contrary to Christian principles.
7. Use the Bible to identify selected instructional methods appropriate for Christian schools.
8. Illustrate how vicarious experience can be used in different subjects to develop values and attitudes.
9. Show the relationship of ILFP to the principle of instructional consistency.
10. Describe how the principle of moving from the concrete to the abstract can be used to assist in developing beliefs and values from a message.
11. Describe the ways in which the teacher's example and methods affect the ILFP.
12. Discuss the relationship of humanism, relative values, theism, and absolute values to the ILFP.

**ORGANIZATION:** This instructional unit is divided into three major sections entitled: (1) Urgent Needs and Critical Issues; (2) What Is ILFP and What Makes It Work? and (3) ILFP in All the Curriculum. The first half of this unit will include the first two sections mentioned above with selected illustrations of ILFP. The second half, appearing in the Summer, 1980, issue of the *JOURNAL*, will briefly review Part I and then systematically present examples of ways to integrate learning, faith, and practice in major areas of the curriculum. Thought questions, suggested external reading, special assignments, and selected principles of instruction that others have found useful in ILFP are used throughout the unit. To get the most from this study, answer the questions, do the extra reading and the assignments, and plan ways to use the selected principles of instruction to integrating learning, faith,

and practice with your students. We pray that every teacher who completes this unit will do so not just to fulfill a requirement, but to become a better gospel teacher as well.

### Urgent Needs and Critical Issues

#### Teachers Led by the Spirit

Are you one of God's teachers? Inspiration tells us, "the Lord will accept as teachers only those who will be gospel teachers" (*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 527), and we can meet this challenge as God grants us wisdom and help. We are offered the following assurance: "If any of you falls short in wisdom, he should ask God for it and it will be given him, for God is a generous giver who neither refuses nor reproaches anyone" (James 1:5, N.E.B.).\*

Christian teachers should help their students to understand this promise and should challenge them to put it into practice. If we studied together in a seminar how to integrate learning, faith, and practice, we would begin by praying for the Holy Spirit to aid us in understanding His Word and in properly applying what we studied. Such an approach creates an atmosphere for success. Before you read farther, you may wish to ask God for special help and wisdom to integrate Christian faith and practice into learning.

For a school to become infused by God's Spirit so there will be a complete integration of learning, faith, and practice requires teachers who put spiritual priorities first and are sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. A salient example of what happens when a faculty reverses priorities occurred at our first Adventist college. A genuine revival came to the campus of old Battle Creek College. The teachers, preoccupied with academic rigor, insisted, "We've got to get back to the books, back to our lesson plans. We have too many units to cover before the end of the year; we just can't afford this interruption." Mrs. White wrote one of her strongest testimonies about this attitude. In contemporary terms, her message was: "The Holy Spirit paid you the highest honor by coming to your campus. You could have throttled back and happily turned that time over to let Him do His work. But you were so concerned that the students would get carried away, that they never had a chance to get on board!" She considered it one of the darkest chapters of Battle Creek College. The faculty were so secular in their priorities that they had forgotten to make first things first.

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### The Source Makes a Difference

A fifth-grade teacher was hired by a school that lacked the Bible study helps currently available. The only reference works this teacher had were the Bible and *Patriarchs and Prophets*. So, daily, he took his students through the chapters of the Old Testament, with complementary reading from *Patriarchs and Prophets*. Vigorous discussions arose as they read aloud together. These discussions led to the students writing one-page thought papers for the teacher, some of which were shared with the class. The discussions continued outside school hours as well—on the bus and in their homes. At one of the school board meetings the bus driver said, "I can't figure it out. I have been driving a bus here for eleven years. This year these students, instead of the usual joking and horsing around, are talking and debating about matters brought up in their Bible class. They even talk with me about it. What in the world is going on here?"

A doctor, whose daughter was in this class, responded, "You know, I've been on a different side of the situation, and I too have been wondering. I have observed a dramatic transformation in my 11-year-old daughter, who has suddenly been 'turned on' to spiritual things and is beginning to see life in its larger significance. I have concluded it's because she's involved in inspired literature."

When young people study the Bible, they plug into the creative energy that called the worlds into existence. That Word begets power and imparts life (see *Education*, p. 126). It has a dynamic, transforming, refining, and ennobling influence.

Ellen White never intended that the Bible should be just another subject in the curriculum. It was to predominate and infuse all other subjects. A major issue in Christian education today is whether the Bible is the integrating core or just one more liberal-arts offering (our version of moral philosophy in the "humanities" carried over from the medieval university). Is the Bible simply placed alongside English, math, science, social studies, and vocational and fine arts in the general studies package?

### Wisdom From God

The Holy Scriptures are the perfect standard of truth, and as such should be given the highest place in education.—*Education*, p. 17.

It is the word of God alone that gives to us an authentic account of the creation of our world. This word is to be the chief study in our schools.—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 536.

The word is the great lesson book for the students in our schools.—*Ibid.*, p. 390.

The word of God should have a place—the first place—in every system of education. As an educating power, it is of

more value than the writings of all the philosophers of all ages.—*Ibid.*, p. 542.

The youth are in need of educators who will keep the principles of the word of God ever before them. If teachers will make Bible precepts their textbook, they will have greater influence over the youth. They will be learners, having a living connection with God.—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 430. (Italics supplied.)

There must be schools established upon the principles, and controlled by the precepts, of God's word. Another spirit must be in our schools, to animate and sanctify every branch of education. . . . We may see the Spirit of the Lord diffused as in the schools of the prophets, and every object partake of a divine consecration. Science will then be, as she was to Daniel, the handmaid of religion; and every effort, from first to last, will tend to the salvation of man, soul, body, and spirit, and the glory of God through Christ.—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 99. (Italics supplied.) See also page 516.

The natural and the spiritual are to be combined in the studies in our schools.—*Ibid.*, p. 375.

Christ is the greatest Teacher this world ever knew, and it is not the pleasure of the Lord Jesus that the subjects of His kingdom, for whom He died, shall be educated in such a way that they will be led to place the wisdom of men in the forefront, and delegate to the wisdom of God, as revealed in His holy word, a place in the rear.—*Ibid.*, p. 328.

Jesus and His love should be interwoven with all the education given, as the very best knowledge the students can have. . . . Bring the Prince of life into every plan, every organization. You cannot have too much of Jesus or of Scripture history in your school.—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 587.

The teacher who has a right understanding of the work of true education, will not think it sufficient now and then to make casual reference to Christ. With his own heart warm with the love of God, he will constantly uplift the Man of Calvary. His own soul imbued with the Spirit of God, he will seek to fasten the attention of the students upon the pattern, Christ Jesus, the chiefest among ten thousand, the One altogether lovely.—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 526.

### Making the Bible the Textbook for Each Course

One message persists as an unmistakable theme in the Ellen White writings on Christian education: Focus on essentials for the building of strong Christian character and the production of competent evangelists (lay and professional) for the finishing of God's work on earth—and be sure that the whole process is well grounded in the Word of God.

Ellen White often speaks about the use of the Bible as the chief source of study in our schools. The context of these prevalent statements clearly indicates that Mrs. White means the Bible to be the controlling influence of the school, through all the educational experiences of the student. This does not mean, however, that the Bible is to be the only textbook ever used. Nowhere in the Inspired Writings have the authors discovered a mandate for such a narrow view of curricular sources in Adventist education. The Bible is not declared to be the sole reference text for chemistry, for computer programming, or whatever. Wherever possible, the underlying Biblical principles are to be highlighted and connections with ultimate spiritual realities made.

Allusions to and illustrations from Scripture indicate that the teacher—both in and out of the classroom—has accepted the Bible as his personal guide. The sincere and prudent employment of Biblical referencing in a teacher's professional and personal life can be a dynamic and credible statement to students about a teacher's personal commitment. This combination illustrates the hidden curriculum of the school. This natural application of the Bible gives a faculty great influence and power with students, and constitutes the real purpose of Christian education.

#### The Bible as a Source for Instruction and Curriculum

The Bible has much to say that should affect both what we should teach (curriculum) and how we should teach (instruction). This section briefly illustrates some passages of Scripture that contain information about how or what we should teach as well as how to make an assignment.

Following are a few scriptural concepts that have implications concerning what should be taught:

1. *Apply knowledge and principles to evaluate and distinguish what is good.* "But test everything; hold fast what is good" (1 Thess. 5:21, R.S.V.). "By all means use your judgment, and hold on to whatever is good" (Phillips).<sup>†</sup> "Try hard to show yourself worthy of God's approval, as a labourer who need not be ashamed, driving a straight furrow, in your proclamation of the truth" (2 Tim. 2:15, N.E.B.).
2. *Develop noble thought.* "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (Phil. 4:8, R.S.V.).
3. *Develop good work habits.* "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might" (Eccl. 9:10).
4. *Understand and maintain principles that lead to good health.* "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body" (1 Cor. 6:19, 20, R.S.V.). "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (chap. 10:31, R.S.V.).
5. *Apply Christian understanding to living*

<sup>†</sup> Bible texts in this article credited to Phillips are from J. B. Phillips: *The New Testament in Modern English*. Revised Edition. © J. B. Phillips 1958, 1960, 1972. Used by permission of Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc.

victoriously. (See Matthew 5 and 6, Romans 7 and 8, and the book of James.)

6. *Share the knowledge of God with others.* "Be always ready with your defence whenever you are called to account for the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15, N.E.B.).

7. *Demonstrate love for others, as well as for oneself, based on an understanding of God's love* (Matt. 25:31-46).

8. *Develop one's abilities to the maximum potential.* (See Matt. 25:14-20.)

Following are some illustrations from Scripture that suggest methods of teaching:

1. *Draw lessons from stories and illustrations as Christ did in His teaching.* (For scriptural reference, study a number of Christ's parables.)
2. *Teach on a one-to-one basis.* (For example, see the stories of Nicodemus and Zacchaeus.)
3. *Be sensitive and alert to the special needs of individuals.* (Read the story of the widow who touched Christ's garment, and stories of how He related to children.)
4. *Encourage students to work together.* Christ sent His disciples out two by two (see Mark 6:7). A study of the journeys of Paul and other apostles usually shows they worked in groups of twos or more.
5. *Use audio-visual techniques.* (Read about the tabernacle in the wilderness, Jeremiah breaking new jars, and Ezekiel lying on his side.)

#### Confrontation at Conservative Christian College, U.S.A.

As you know, there is considerable debate today in Christian education. Much of that debate is within the laity, some of whom are concerned that Christian education per se, doesn't really exist. There is a group who feel that the church school system has actually been masquerading, that what is called Christian education is, in reality, only a good secular education with ecclesiastical window dressing—with tacked-on worships, tacked-on Bible classes, tacked-on chapels, revival weeks, and weekend services. The lay members feel that essentially Christian education is just a good private/public schooling with religious modifications. Critics charge that all subjects are taught just as they would be in any good public school, except that in the Christian school you have "the good guys up front" and maybe a more select student group. They maintain that church schools are just providing good private education in a *religious environment*—that it's the social impact of the religious climate (everyone is Christian) that makes all the difference. Many laymen—and a new group of professionals in churches of all denominations—are beginning to raise the question, "Is this enough?"



A penetrating article in a recent issue of *Christianity Today* discussed the problem under the title, "You Can't Always Tell a School by Its Label." Take the case of "Conservative College, U.S.A." (actual name withheld). This is a small Midwestern, Christian liberal-arts college that, except for its theology, could easily be an Adventist school—very conservative in its Christian standards and campus life style. The teaching of Bible is mandated in the core curriculum (comprising about 10 percent of the total credits required for graduation, about the same as for other liberal-arts Christian schools).

One spring the departments were giving the Undergraduate Record Exam and the Graduate Record Exam to find out how well their students were doing after sixteen years of education, and to see whether the seniors were ready for graduate school and what their strengths and weaknesses were. Since the Bible department never participates in such national examinations, the faculty thought, Could we not devise a test to find out whether our seniors really have mastered the great ideas in the Bible? They developed a very simple test consisting of one or two questions, and gave it to their student theologians—the young men who were in the pre-seminary curriculum—as well as to their seniors who were not majoring in Bible.

The question for the embryo preachers was: "Using your Bible, indicate how you would lead a person to Jesus Christ." The question they gave to the general student group was: "Using your Bible, identify and document the great themes of the gospel." The Bible faculty expected that anyone who had spent sixteen years in a Christian school should be well able to handle either question. The results of the test were a confrontation with reality when the faculty discovered that both groups of students had random bits and pieces of information from the Bible, and could give many proof texts and recite religious catch phrases that they had been given. They could also quote Bonhoeffer, Barth, and Buber and some of the other great theologians. But when it came to the great concepts of the gospel and how to use the Bible to witness—when it came to being powerful in the Word of God and in knowing how to use it as their sword—they were strangely silent.

These test results created an awful moment of truth for the whole faculty, not just the Bible department. Their students were being tested on the *raison d'être* of the institution. Understandably, the faculty searched their souls, asking, "What has been happening in our school? Why has there not been the understanding and personal application of Bible concepts that we assumed would take place in our students?"

It was an agonizing moment of truth for the faculty. They finally concluded that something was secularizing their young people during the process of getting a Christian education. The faculty first examined the curriculum and then turned their attention to their teaching methods. And they found the problem: Bible was being taught only in the Bible department, and that, they realized, was not enough. Their students were neither getting a Christian world view nor learning how to "think Christian." They concluded that their campus was split—divided between the sacred and secular—and their students were getting a distorted view of reality. These students were being spiritually undermined *right in their classes*. After much study and prayer, the teachers, as a group, petitioned the dean to require that every syllabus show how, in any given course, the Bible could be consistently utilized to present a Christian world view. Each syllabus had to detail how the subject would be used to discover, understand, and glorify God. Moreover, the faculty added a new component in the checklist for the annual professional evaluation: they authorized the administration to evaluate their effectiveness as Christian teachers in that larger spiritual framework.

A recent letter from the dean of that college credits this experience as a turning point in the history of the institution—the year the faculty became truly committed to making the school a faith-nurturing establishment, a producer of Christian evangelists rather than just respectably well-educated professionals for society in general. Many other evangelical schools noted the episode with more than casual interest, for the problem was familiar to them as well.

However, many of these schools are still asking themselves, "Do we have the kind of vision and singleness of purpose to attempt such a campus-wide reorientation and turnaround? Do we believe in the *power of the Word* deeply enough to build on it and to let it do its work with our students? What is to be our curricular seedbed: *the Book*, or the 'great books'?"

Obviously this issue exists not just at the college level. The secularization problem is at every level in Christian education: elementary, secondary, and graduate school, regardless of denominational sponsorship. This instructional unit will examine the problem of secularization closely and show how *each* teacher in the school can function as a *Bible* teacher.

#### Indoctrination About Indoctrination

Have you been indoctrinated into believing it is wrong to indoctrinate—that you should just present the facts in an unbiased way and not attempt to influence the youth in their choices?

Do you believe that man's rational mind, unaided, will make the right choice for him? If you answer affirmatively, you are a product of the secular humanistic approach to learning. What type of government does man's reason lead to? Examine closely the rule-by-reason debacle during the French Revolution (the Reign of Terror), the genocides of Nazi Germany, the pogroms of Communism, and the slaughter in Indochina. We have a mandate from the Bible to indoctrinate in the right manner (naturally Biblical indoctrination does not include brainwashing, coercion, or violence). Christian indoctrination places a high value on critical thinking. "Test everything; hold fast what is good" (1 Thess. 5:21, R.S.V.). It points people to God and His Book as a source of wisdom.

Putting religious snippets and pictures on the bulletin board in your classroom is a part of the total religious environment. But what happens after the bell rings is vastly more important. The question is, Do you divide your classtime, saying, in essence, "The first five minutes we will have religious devotions and the next forty minutes we will study this subject just as it would be studied in any secular school"? That's a time barrier. It doesn't make much difference how religious the ritual, if, when it is over, the class is thoroughly secular, naturalistic, or humanistic for the remaining time. You have effected a dichotomy: a separation between learning, faith, and practice. We must recognize that a good environment—even with "the good guys up front"—is not enough. When some young people graduate from a Christian academy and go to a State college, they find to their surprise that their favorite professor is a full-blown agnostic or atheist who is gracious, kind, loving, helpful, and altogether supportive. And the Christian young person, in confusion, says, "I always thought that only Christians possessed these 'fruits of the spirit.'" Perhaps many of the people from his years in Christian schools were tense and unhappy, always finding fault, and disciplining him in a negative way. What a crisis this sets up in later life when "the good guys up front" turn out to be atheists or agnostics who are more personable and understanding than were his Christian teachers. For a young person, this can be a devastating revelation. It is not enough for Christian teachers to be just "the good guys up front," saving their Christian witness for outside the classroom. In order to make the school truly Christian, a deeply spiritual atmosphere must pervade every aspect of the student's school experience. Sometime in the future, our students will assess our *total impact* as Christian teachers. How will we fare when that memory test comes to them?

In Part II we will be talking about futurism as a curricular theme in SDA education, in view of the ordeal facing Christians who are obedient to Christ through the great time of trouble just ahead. In that awful hour, how tragic will be the fate of false shepherds—including teachers—who have betrayed sacred trusts. For the Christian teacher, this is a sobering thought.

### What Is ILFP and What Makes It Work?

Surely the Bible must be the primary source for our initial understanding of the integration of learning, faith, and practice. "The unfolding of thy words gives light" (Ps. 119:130, R.S.V.).

Unfortunately, the commonly used phrase "the integration of faith and learning" can lead some to focus on the integration of spiritual knowledge with secular knowledge, neglecting the added dimension that practice supplies.

This phrase, *The Integration of Learning, Faith, and Practice*, has a scriptural base in Romans 10:17 and James 2:26. Romans 10:17 states: "We conclude that faith is awakened by the message, and the message that awakens it comes through the word of Christ" (N.E.B.). James 2:26 indicates: "As the body is dead when there is no breath left in it, so faith divorced from deeds is lifeless as a corpse" (N.E.B.).

Visually, this can be summarized as follows:

Message → Faith → Works

or

Learning → Faith → Practice

The importance of the relation of faith or belief to action is often overlooked, with the result that our instruction about Christian living becomes ivory-tower theory.

The relationship between learning, faith, and practice is consistent with the taxonomy of the affective domain (Krathwohl, 1968) developed as a result of studying the ways people acquire beliefs and values. The five levels of the affective domain are:

1. Receiving
2. Responding
3. Valuing
4. Organizing
5. Characterization of a value or a value complex through living.

An analysis of these five levels shows the first, *acquiring*, to correspond to the scriptural concept of the message. The middle three, *responding*, *valuing*, and *organizing*, relate to the scriptural concept of developing belief or faith, while the fifth, *characterization*, corresponds to the transformation of the belief (faith) into action (works).

We cannot simply give a message (step 1, *providing the message so it can be received*) and expect that it will be automatically transformed

into practice. The devil believes and trembles (James 2:19), but does not live a Christian life. Teaching values in such a way that they will most likely be transformed into a life style requires the use of steps 2, 3, and 4.

Step 2 indicates that opportunity must be given each individual to respond to the message, such as through a discussion. Through this process of clarification the meaning of the message becomes clearer, and the individual places a value (step 3) upon the message, either by rejecting or by accepting it. If he accepts the message, he may require further interaction with others to help him determine how the new value relates to those previously held. Finally, the acceptance of the new value results in readjusting, or even rejecting, old values so that the new values become a part of his total value system (step 4).

Step 5, the transformation of the value into a life style, still remains. While the conviction that brings this transformation is the work of the Holy Spirit (John 16:7-13), the person must be provided with opportunity to demonstrate this transformation in Christian actions.

Values are often incompletely understood until they are practiced. *This makes it important to find ways for students to put Christian values to work in the school setting.* Failure to do this can result in a curriculum that is teaching only theoretical Christian beliefs. Until essential values are better understood through practice, the Christian will find it difficult to develop a more complete set of Christian beliefs and resulting life style.

Trying to help students develop Christian values without providing opportunity for them to practice these values can be compared to a person alone on a desert island who takes a correspondence course on love. The theory may be effectively presented, but until he has the opportunity to apply the message about love to his relationship with others, he can never fully understand the concept.

Another analogy of teaching values without opportunities for practice is teaching a swimming course, using a textbook with written theory and pictures of the strokes and having students discuss and demonstrate the strokes on the side of the pool but never getting into the water. Then, for the final examination, these students who have never been in the water are required to jump into the deep end of the pool and swim to the opposite end. Those who succeed pass the course; the remainder drown.

These analogies help us to understand better the concept of developing Christian character and the text found in James 2:26, "Faith divorced from deeds is lifeless as a corpse" (N.E.B.). For Christian schools and educators to

be truly successful, plans must be made for all aspects of the integration of learning, faith, and practice.

#### The Bible Message: the Source of Christian Belief

An analysis of how to apply instructional principles to Christian education is limited until essential beliefs are identified.

For the Christian, the ultimate expression of beliefs and practices (the *message*) is found in the teaching and life of Jesus Christ as described in the Bible. In this context we are going to examine five beliefs because of their importance to what and how we teach. These five beliefs are that:

1. There is a conflict between Christ and Satan, between good and evil.
2. There is redeeming power through Christ.
3. God's commandments are based upon love.
4. Christian living is positive.
5. We have a commission to spread the good news.

Leading questions and illustrations will be given to stimulate your thinking about ways of integrating these beliefs into the classroom.

*Conflict between Christ and Satan.* The conflict between Christ and Satan is graphically illustrated in the temptations of Christ in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-11). The specific nature of the great controversy becomes a central focus when Satan offers to give Christ everything in this world if He will but bow down to recognize him. In each of the temptations, Christ uses Scripture to overcome Satan successfully.

Many issues related to the great controversy should affect almost every area of a Christian curriculum. Develop concepts about the great controversy that should be included in your classes.

Classes in world history consider events from the time of Babylon to the present. In these classes students usually study individuals who molded the modern world by their teachings or actions. Among these are: Socrates, Genghis Khan, Napoleon, Alexander the Great, Hitler, Marx and Lenin, Milton, Rousseau, Voltaire, Kant, Dewey, and Darwin. Who had the greatest impact on history? Do these classes study Jesus Christ, His teachings, and His impact on history? Recently this question was asked of a number of persons who graduated from Christian academies and colleges. Less than one in five who had taken a world history class studied seriously the historical influence of Jesus Christ.

Christian teachers should, with their students, consider ethical issues related to the great controversy. Is the golden rule practical in business? What are the results of selfishness in terms of



pollution? Is there such a thing as an unreasonable profit? What are the implications of genetic "engineering"? Should we liquidate the retarded so they won't reproduce, as was done in Nazi Germany? Every Christian school should be encouraging students to examine these questions. Christian education seeks help from divine revelation in finding answers to these questions.

*Redemption is a free gift from God.* Many young people are overwhelmed by what they believe to be God's requirements for Christians—the standard seems unattainable. Of course, without God's help, this is true. How often do you talk with your students about the gift of redemption and the role God's Spirit plays in helping us be successful Christians? Are you thinking now, Well, that's fine for Bible class, but how does this relate to my particular discipline? Teachers must remember that there is not only a *spoken* message but also a *living* message.

A teacher's life can communicate the hope to be found through the gift of Jesus Christ and the power of His Spirit. He can witness to students about the personal victories he has gained as a result of praying for and receiving the power of God's Spirit in his life. Witnessing encompasses more than what happens in front of the class; it also involves situations in the teacher's office and home, on campus, and on the ball field.

The concepts of redemption through Christ, and the available power to overcome evil through God's Spirit are clearly presented in the Gospels and in the writings of Paul (e.g., John 3:16; Eph. 2:8-10).

Christians sometimes fail to understand that a successful Christian life is achieved only through asking and receiving God's power to overcome evil. Paul, at a high point in his Christian experience, recognized the infinite distance between his best efforts and the demands of God's holy law. In Romans 7:24 and 25, he wrote:

Miserable creature that I am, who is there to rescue me out of this body doomed to death? God alone, through Jesus Christ our Lord! Thanks be to God! In a word then, I myself, subject to God's law as a rational being, am yet, in my unspiritual nature, a slave to the law of sin (N.E.B.).

After recognizing that man is helpless on his own to overcome sin, Paul goes on to assure us that receiving God's Spirit can lead to a victorious Christian life (chap. 8:9-11).

Can a teacher consciously plan to have this message of *assurance in Christ* permeate his or her teaching? This message of assurance needs to be presented in many ways, both in a teacher's life and in his teaching.

Has the humanistic idea that man must make it on his own contributed to a teacher's saying, "Don't help Johnny. He must get it on his own"? Such an attitude not only reinforces the idea of

man's individual sufficiency but often prevents Johnny from getting the help he needs, and keeps other students from experiencing the joy of helping their peers.

*Positive living.* Everything that Christ asks of a Christian results in his ultimate well being, and consequently, a happier life. The Christian life is uplifting and positive. Christ indicated, "I have come that men may have life, and may have it in all its fullness" (John 10:10, N.E.B.). This teaching is extremely important because Christians often approach their religion in terms of what they *don't* do. In reality, it is the many things that Christians do that make them happier and that should be stressed in Christian education. It is important to replace evil with good, as illustrated in Christ's parable of the man cleansed of an unclean spirit (Luke 11:24-26).

As teachers, we must convey excitement concerning the abundant Christian life when we teach about: the Christian family; good food and healthful living; providential guidance; wholesome recreation; the joy of service; enjoying the design and beauty of God's creation; Christian fellowship; the Sabbath rest; peace of mind; self-worth in Christ; a clear conscience; faith in God's promises; enjoying uplifting art, music, and literature; creating or performing art, music, or literature for God's glory; and victorious living through Christ.

*God's commandments of love.* The best summary of Christian belief that leads to positive living is Christ's "new" commandments to:

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind." That is the greatest commandment. It comes first. The second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' Everything in the Law and the prophets hangs on these two commandments" (Matt. 22:37-40, N.E.B.).

Christian education and character development center upon this ideal. To love God is to love His character of love. To love one's neighbor as oneself implies, first of all, *appropriate self-love*, including an understanding of and respect for oneself. In that context, love for one's neighbor becomes truly meaningful. These commandments also help the student understand the worth of every individual, showing how every person is his neighbor. The purpose of Christian education is to provide knowledge within the context of a value system based upon *love*. Christian teachers should be experts in loving people (especially students).

The effect of God's law of love in the Christian life is illustrated in the story of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), and again in the judgment scene, where Christ indicates: "I assure you that whatever you did for the humblest of my brothers you did for me" (Matt. 25:40, Phil-



lips). To the Christian motivated by love, education is a preparation for service, as well as for eternal life.

*Let's share the good news!* When an individual finds something that is really great, the first thing that he does is to share what he has found with those he loves. If the gospel brings the Christian the happiest and best way of living and he loves his fellow man, surely he will want to share it with all the world. When born-again Christians share the good news, their spoken and living messages combine to witness with consistency and excitement.

### Transforming the Message Into Faith

We cannot assume that just because the message is presented, it will automatically be transferred into faith and, further, that faith will be transformed into practice. This section considers some of the ways to help transform the message into faith. When a person first hears a message, it is often unclear. Interactive discussion with others can assist the clarification process. In order for interaction to be effective, a person must hear the same gospel from the spoken word as he perceives in the lives of the Christians with whom he interacts.

*Values clarification: a mixed bag.* Something should be said at this point about values clarification and its relationship to ILFP. The integration of learning, faith, and practice is foundational to Christian education and involves much more than values clarification. The integration of learning, faith, and practice has been a basic philosophic concept since the early beginnings of our church, as evidenced by many Spirit of Prophecy references. A warning should be sounded about values clarification: Most of the values clarification extant today is based on humanistic relativism, which asserts that values come from within people and that values are pragmatically derived from within society. The foundation of values clarification is existential philosophy. Its premise is on the humanistic conviction that man is the measure of all things. This philosophy assumes that man can rationally determine what is best for him, and, given enough time, his basic goodness will see him through. It implies that man is perfectable through education. Really now, if that is true, who needs the Bible? Or God? The values clarification that emerges from "I think" or "I feel" is vastly different from values clarification that emerges from a "Thus saith the Lord."

Sometimes Christian teachers talk about values clarification as if they can borrow the procedures the secularists and humanists employ and use them "as is" in Christian education to help our youth find themselves. This process is

based on the assumption that all values are relative, that they change from age to age, with each society and culture having its own values. In essence this philosophy implies that there are no moral absolutes. Although Seventh-day Adventist educators are indeed involved in values clarification, ours is from a distinctly Christian point of view. Young people must be taught to bring every subject up to the conscious level and examine its assumptions and subterranean presuppositions, deciding either "That's not Christian" or "That is Christian." They must learn to extract the religious implications of a given philosophy—to be able to discuss the key issues and then act on their Christian convictions. Seventh-day Adventist teachers are *deeply* involved in values clarification, but their involvement in it must be based on Biblical revelation, not on internal discovery.

The chart below indicates the standard values-clarification approach, with the special adaptation (see step 5) recommended to adapt it to Christian purposes.

#### Values Clarification for the SDA Educator

1. What is the underlying issue here?
2. What response options are open?
3. What are the consequences of each option?
4. What values are represented in these options?
5. Which of these values are *Christian*, checked against criteria of:
  - a. Holy Scriptures
  - b. Ellen White's counsels
  - c. Official church counsels (when available)
6. Which value shall I prize and act upon?
7. Conclusion: Option . . . selected.

Classroom instruction can use to advantage the principle of moving from the concrete to the abstract to help bridge the gap between the presentation of the message and the formation of belief or faith.

#### Moving From the Concrete to the Abstract

It is usually best to move from concrete examples and illustrations to generalizations and abstractions. If generalizations are stated first, then they should be quickly followed by concrete examples. Studies of human growth and learning indicate that in learning, children must first deal with concrete ideas and objects. Only as they become more mature can they deal with formalized reasoning, generalization, and abstraction.

The principle of moving from the concrete to the abstract can be used in any class or situation where a story or illustration is appropriate. For example, instead of merely telling a story in

Bible class, the teacher should encourage a lively discussion. Thus her students, rather than just acquiring facts, can begin to solidify their beliefs about the principles illustrated.

#### Transforming Faith Into Action

We now come to a critical transition. It is not enough for a person to give simply verbal assent to a value. The final test is whether he believes it so much that he is willing to live it. While the major motivation to live in accordance with Christian faith comes from the Holy Spirit, teachers can help by encouraging students to express their faith *in action*. *Teachers should participate with them in such witnessing activities.* Christian schools and educators should be alert to many opportunities that are available for students to practice Christian living.

An effective way of helping begin this transition is for a teacher to use the principle of *vicarious experience*, allowing a person to participate vicariously in others' practice of Christian beliefs. Often this can initiate the process that leads a person to practice the belief himself. "By beholding we become changed."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 355.

Teachers often complain about the difficulty of making instruction as exciting as TV programs or the movies. However, if one understands the attractions of the media, then he can shape instruction, using the same principle that makes TV and movies exciting. This principle can be summarized as follows:

*The principle of vicarious experience.* When a person sees, reads, or listens to characterizations of human experience, he experiences, to a greater or lesser extent, the emotions related to those experiences. He identifies with one or more of the characters and personally relates to the attitudes, beliefs, and values portrayed in the experience.

Effective use of the principle of vicarious experience makes the teacher a skilled storyteller and often helps his students acquire this ability as well. For students with a history teacher who effectively uses this principle, the subject becomes a sequence of exciting stories. Students not only learn about the historical events but also come to understand better the emotions, motives, and beliefs of those who made history. In Christian schools, then, history becomes the drama of the great controversy.

Social studies classes thus become involved in the application of laws, learning how law is used to protect the innocent or convict the guilty. Students gain insight into where laws have been effective, and where they have been ineffective. Often students can be given academic credit for finding and presenting stories that illustrate a

principle being considered.

To meet Christian objectives effectively, the illustrations must be meaningful to the students and must present uplifting experiences. Students who have problems may benefit from selecting stories of famous people who overcame similar problems.

This principle of vicarious experience can be incorporated into almost any class where dramatization, the study of biographies, or other stories about human experience are appropriate. While it is especially effective in poetry, literature, music, and history, it can also be used in science and mathematics through biographies of individuals who made major contributions to these fields. The selected biographies of Christians can describe their feelings and emotions as they sought to understand God better, particularly during their conversion to Christ. Reading their biographies makes it possible for the student to experience the frustrations, the breakthroughs, the elations, and the spiritual awareness of a Christian scientist as he seeks to understand God better through the study of science, and brings to mind Einstein's famous line "God does not play dice with the universe."

By reading about scientists whose research directed them to seek ways to help mankind, the student can vicariously experience the joy of the researcher who discovers a new cure or vaccine that can benefit the human race. This is a way of vicariously experiencing the joy of Christian service.

In contrast, it is possible to experience the remorse of an individual whose discovery later came to be misused, to the detriment of mankind. A well-known example is Dr. Alfred Nobel, the developer of nitroglycerin and dynamite. He was so conscience-stricken over their destructive use that he set up a fund from the profits of these items to promote the use of science for the benefit of mankind (the Nobel prize).

In a Bible class vicarious experience can occur when a student has an opportunity to share a witnessing experience. Through his testimony the class can vicariously experience both the difficulties and the joys of witnessing and share in the excitement a new convert experiences. Also, having students testify as to what Christ means to them may encourage others to take the same step and commit their lives to Christ.

Open-ended stories can be used to teach vicarious decision making. In using this technique the teacher presents a story or issue where some form of moral decision must be made. At this point, the students can be asked to write an ending, indicating the type of decision they feel should be made and why. Students can then

present their decisions, and the class can discuss what they consider the best decision to be.

Is there an inner-city mission near your school? Sometimes it is helpful for students to take field trips to see the results of sin and to observe the redeeming service of the mission in the lives of those who accept God. This experience can present a stark contrast to the type of sin so many may have observed in motion pictures or TV, where sin is often portrayed as glamorous and without consequences. This experience may serve as an impetus for student involvement in inner-city work, such as conducting branch Sabbath schools, Story Hours, and tutoring programs.

In the affective domain, vicarious experience can be similar in its effect to analogous practice in the cognitive domain. To some extent, vicarious experience calls forth the same thought processes and emotions the students would have if they were actually participating in that behavior. When Christ spoke of the relationship between hate and murder, between lust and adultery, He brought into focus the relationship between one's thoughts and one's behavior. In other words, the prerequisite to action is thought, which is often triggered by attitudes, beliefs, emotions, or feelings. The dictum that we become changed by beholding, and the admonition to think only on those things that are positive, beautiful, and virtuous, take on new meaning when vicarious experience is considered.

In summary: Effective use of the principle of vicarious experience means that the teacher will select illustrations with which the student can easily identify. After presenting the story, or having several students present it, the teacher uses the story as a springboard for discussing issues and values.

*Live it—you'll like it!* While vicarious experience can be a powerful technique to encourage people to begin living a Christian life, it is not enough. Christian schools must provide ample opportunities for actual experiences of Christian service. Following is an example of a program developed by Christian teachers and their students in one of our schools. This program has had a profound effect on the lives of many outside the school as well as on the students and faculty.

This school developed a program whereby the practice of Christian living has been incorporated into its curriculum in a variety of ways, including a course on being a teacher's aide. In this course students from the seventh and eighth grades help teachers with younger students. Teachers have commented that this experience has helped students think about their example to younger students and has helped them experi-

ence the joy of communicating what they have learned to others who need help. Positive changes have been observed in the attitude and appearance of some young people participating in this program.

One unique and exciting form of Christian experience resulting from this program is a class called Christian witnessing. At first the class did not have a name; it began when a few of the young people got together with one of the teachers and decided that they wanted to have a minicourse with the object of helping others. The young people chose the name, developed the guidelines for the course, and performed all the organizing and record-keeping activities.

When the course first met, there were only four students. They began by doing various things for other people, including helping elderly neighbors. They also visited various individuals who needed encouragement. They developed a rule that stated that they would not accept any pay for their services. The excitement of these young people was contagious, resulting in the class becoming so large it was difficult for all of them to go places at one time. In a brain storming session with their teacher, the students decided they would devote most of the class period to making and sending get-well cards, sympathy cards, or other cards of encouragement to individuals they felt might benefit from such interest. The class also decided they would raise all the money for the materials to make the cards and to buy the stamps. They elected a secretary and a treasurer to keep track of the activities, and together they cooperatively structured the entire program.

Cards are sent to individuals whose names are taken from lists in newspapers, such as obituaries, hospital admissions lists, or from stories about people who have had some unfortunate experience. Additional names are provided by students and faculty.

The work of this card project has been organized on an assembly-line basis with students assigned to artwork, addressing, fund raising, follow-up, et cetera. The Christian witnessing class has grown and so has their project; sometimes more than a hundred cards are sent in a single day, and during the most recent quarter (at the time this article was written), the class sent more than two thousand cards. In addition to this project, the class was also involved in a number of other Christian outreach activities.

Some students have taken this nine-week class as many as seven times, and it is not unusual for a student to take the class three or four times while he is in the seventh and eighth grades.

You may ask, "Well, what is the result of all this?" The teachers have observed many posi-



tive changes in these young people as they have become more concerned about others. Teachers have noticed improved handwriting and better English usage. The class is now receiving from two to ten responses a day from those who appreciate what is being done.

The idea of minicourses, such as Christian Witnessing, stemmed from the concern of a seventh- and eighth-grade math teacher because some of her students did not like mathematics; consequently, she felt limited in ways she could relate to them while teaching only mathematics. She chose an informal course on macramé to become more involved with her students. A number of the girls became very interested in macramé, and as they worked they began to talk about many things. Subsequently, the class size increased and included boys. Through the help of this teacher, many students began experiencing success in macramé that they had not had in mathematics. Because of the interaction with this teacher, they also began to work harder at achieving in math.

This informal class led the teacher and her students to discuss how they could have more "fun" classes. Eventually the curriculum was reorganized so that all the basic classes—Bible, math, language arts, social studies—were completed by noon. After lunch, students could choose from a variety of miniclasses, including various aspects of physical education (one of these classes had to be taken three out of four quarters), gardening, macramé, crocheting, knitting, rug making, quilt making, gourmet cooking, home repair, small-motor repair, bell choirs, other types of music activities, photography, plumbing, electricity, and Christian witnessing.

Young people in this school have become so interested in their classes that attendance problems are almost nonexistent. As class members and teachers tell about needy people, students often volunteer to help. Recently one rather flamboyant young man privately asked the teacher if, as part of his outside requirements, he might read to an old lady who was becoming blind. The teacher said that as this young man began spending at least an hour a week reading to the woman from the *Review*, the Bible, or the Sabbath school lesson, he began to change in positive ways. Later the young man discovered that he was spending more time than he planned. He indicated, "Well, since I'm just on my way home and I will be goofing off anyway . . . She really appreciates my coming."

We could write a book about the wonderful responses these young people have received. Many of these responses have encouraged the students to be continually aware of their Christian example. One man who was waiting to have

open-heart surgery recorded a cassette with a beautiful allegory describing what it meant to him to have a card of encouragement. None of the students knew who had written the card, because all cards are signed from "The Christian Witnessing Class." When students first learned that the man was going to have an open-heart surgery, they had prayer in many of their classes for him. Concern for his condition after the surgery was so great that the teacher had to limit phone calls to the hospital.

Some of the students organized a fund to buy a plant for the heart patient and drew names to see who would deliver it. When the two young men delivered the plant, the man said, "I know who you are; you are from the Christian witnessing class."

When in surprise they asked how he knew, he said, "I could tell by the way you look." He told the young people that before he received their card, he had been so discouraged that he wasn't even sure he wanted to live. The card had made a profound difference in his attitude toward the open-heart surgery. Since his recovery, students have visited his wife and children, and a warm friendship has developed.

Recently the class heard from a man whose wife had just died. The card had been an encouragement to him, and he asked whether some of the young people would please write again. Three of the young girls from one of the classes wrote to this man, who then sent a beautiful response to each of them, indicating a desire to become better acquainted with the young people.

Class members have become involved in visiting or writing people with terminal illnesses. The response of those individuals who died in Christ has given these young people an experience that most would never have had elsewhere. They have received letters indicating how important it is to know that fellow Christians are caring and praying for someone in need.

The above example of the special curriculum

developed in one school and the Christian witnessing class illustrates the concept of a *total* involvement by a school and its teachers in the integration of learning, faith, and practice. Although these teachers integrate a Christian message in their formal classes, they also interact with students, thus demonstrating positive living messages. Interest has now spread from the seventh and eighth grades to the fifth and sixth grades. Faculty and students are studying how more grades can become involved in this exciting program. Who knows, this might work its way up into college level, too. The principle is foundational: all students need practice in their religious learning; college students could also benefit from such experiences.

#### Living Messages

When a message is transformed into Christian action, the result is a new, living message. Thus, we have completed the cycle that began with the message, transforming it into faith and transforming that faith into Christian living. Little spoken doctrine may be needed to transform a life if this doctrine is accompanied by living examples and the power of the Holy Spirit.

One summer while attending graduate school in Arizona, I took my little girl to a new Sabbath school. I was shocked to see, with the kindergarten children, a 30-year-old man attempting to sing the songs, do the finger plays, and take part in the program. My first response was one of extreme pity. However, as I watched this man each week as he came with his aged mother, he appeared to be one of the happiest individuals I had ever seen. With his very limited vocabulary he expressed his complete love and trust for Jesus, who was going to do for him something he could not do for himself. He seemed to realize that he was not like other people, but that Jesus would eventually make this all right. As the summer progressed, I realized that as a result of the loving example of his mother and other Christians, he had perceived a message. This message, through the power of the Holy Spirit, transformed him into a radiant example of God's power of love. Rather than pitying this mongoloid man, I grew to admire his simple faith. For the many people who came in contact with him, he was a beautiful living message of Christian love and faith. As we study this example, we see both the power of the living message on those who associate with this mongoloid and the resulting power of the message expressed through his transformed life.

Unfortunately, living messages can be a power for evil as well as for good. This contrast and the awesome responsibilities teachers and parents have to convey positive living messages are

beautifully conveyed in the following poem:

#### Children Learn What They Live‡

If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.  
 If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.  
 If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy.  
 If a child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilty.  
 If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.  
 If a child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence.  
 If a child lives with praise, he learns to appreciate.  
 If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice.  
 If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith.  
 If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.  
 If a child lives with acceptance and friendship,  
 he learns to find love in the world.

*Teachers provide both spoken and living messages.* Schools that are serious about involving the integration of learning, faith, and practice in the curriculum must examine every aspect of their program, including their methods of teacher recruitment. The authors are acquainted with a number of confederated Christian colleges in America that follow an interesting teacher recruitment program. The prospective teacher is first scouted by the department. Members of the department invite him to campus for a group interview, with this opener: "We know you have your doctorate in [whatever] and that you've successfully taught high school [or junior college]. So we're not going to ask you about your academic credentials. We've investigated all that. What we would like to know is, Do you know the Lord? Do you feel you have a vibrant Christian experience? Tell us about your devotional life, your prayer life. Have you ever won a soul to Christ? What is your philosophy of education? Do you see yourself as a youth evangelist? A special kind of minister of our church, stationed on our campus in the teaching ministry? Do you really see yourself, then, in a prophetic role, not merely a professional role? We would like to know your teaching methods to help accomplish the spiritual mission of our institution. How will your subject be taught differently here than it would be by any public school teacher at a State school?"

"What do you do outside the classroom to make Christ magnetic and irresistibly attractive so young people want to accept Him into their lives?" Some teachers, we were informed, came in confidently, but had to end the interview. They just weren't prepared for that line of inquiry.

A church school teacher was about to begin his day's work when the conference president un-

‡ By Dorothy Law Nolte. Copyright 1963 by the John Philip Co. Used by permission. Copies of the poem are available from the John Philip Co., 1076 Florence Way, Campbell, California 95008.

expectedly dropped in on him. The children were still coming in as he walked in the door. The adults had a quiet moment together, and then the president quietly asked, "Jim, what will you do today that could not be done just as well by any good, committed public school teacher?"

The teacher reported, "I was dizzy, stunned. I don't know how I got through that day. I was reeling from the import of that question. I began looking at all the things I had been doing and I asked myself, Could I indeed be replaced by a good, committed public school teacher who loves his subject and who loves young people? That conference president had asked me the most significant question ever directed to me as a Christian teacher. As a result, I've made some real changes in my teaching."

#### Avoiding Mixed Messages

Since there can be both spoken and living messages in the integration of learning, faith, and practice, there is the possibility that these messages will not be the same. Surely inconsistency—and hypocrisy—turn young people off more than anything else. Such inconsistencies occur not only because of differences between the spoken and living message but also because of inconsistencies within the instructional process. Thus teachers must plan instruction so that their messages and instructional techniques are consistent. To accomplish this, study should be given to the relationship between curriculum and instruction, and teachers should carefully examine their instructional plans to be sure they are consistent.

*The integration of curriculum and instruction.* It is impossible to separate curriculum (what is taught) and instruction (how something is taught), for *by the way one teaches, something is taught*. Thus the teacher's example and method of instruction contribute or detract from the integration of learning, faith, and practice.

Not long ago two ministerial students prepared to take a final test. One, feeling confused about one of the teacher's statements, asked the other student for help. The student responded, "He was sort of vague on that. I'm not sure I understand either." The teacher, overhearing what had happened, checked the particular question and found that the first student, indeed, did not comprehend the meaning. However, the other student, as evidenced by his test paper, understood perfectly. The professor wondered what was happening and began to reflect on what he was doing. He finally realized that because he was grading on the curve, he had established a learning environment that required some students to do poorly in order for others to do well. Consequently, he was teaching his ministerial

students, who should have been learning to share and serve, to withhold information and not to be helpful. This is just one example of how the methods teachers choose can teach values—in this case, negative ones.

In integrating learning, faith, and practice, as in other crucial activity, failing to plan is, in effect, planning to fail. In the ILFP no element can be left to chance, especially practice. Teachers cannot just hope that their students will have opportunity to put into practice the Christian insights gained; they must actually plan and program the whole learning sequence to involve practice. So, if the teacher is really serious about this, surely the Bible class above all others deserves an accompanying planned laboratory.

*The principle of instructional consistency.* The terminal behavior described in the instructional objective, the behavior for which instructional cues are provided (through both spoken and living message), and the behavior evaluated *must all be the same behavior!*

Violation of the principle of instructional consistency results in frustration and decreased learning and is viewed by many students as a form of hypocrisy, especially when teachers are dealing with spiritual values. When we say our class or school objectives include the development of certain moral or spiritual behavior but we fail to provide instruction or practice in these areas, what does this say about our "hidden curriculum"? Do we thus imply to our students that we really don't mean what we say about Christian development? Do we imply that we lack the courage to step out in this long-neglected aspect of true education, or that we really don't know how to accomplish this objective? Which ever, this sort of dichotomy is perceived by thinking students as a form of hypocrisy.

#### Wrap-up

Let's examine what may be some criticisms of the integration of learning, faith, and practice. Some may feel that the moment religion is permitted to become integrated with learning, learning is diminished so that it has lost its toughness and its integrity and no longer constitutes a good, solid education. On the basis of that kind of thinking, some Christian teachers honestly believe that they must teach religion and other subjects separately in order to keep learning "respectable." The simple philosophic rebuttal says no subject is insignificant or value-neutral. The only significance anything has is its *ultimate* significance. Our Christian view of reality defines that ultimate significance as an eternal one, for we see education as a preparation for the next life. Consequently, all ultimate questions become religious questions. Instead of de-



meaning subject matter by introducing the religious dimension—making the connections between the seen and the unseen—teachers actually elevate the discipline to its highest level of significance. Confidence in that truism is a mark of the Christian teacher.

### ILFP: Inventory for the Christian Teacher

1. Realizing that my students will within five or ten years probably forget 95 percent of what I have been trying to teach them, have I conceptualized what *must be overtaught* in order to ensure the residual 5 percent I hope will remain with them for life? Does this 5 percent have a spiritual dimension?
2. Have I identified the basic philosophic-theologic themes that undergird my academic discipline, lifted them to the conscious level with my students, and dealt with them from both natural and supernatural aspects? (Presuppositional thinking, with spiritual focus.)
3. Do I see myself as a priestly-prophetic type of teacher whose mission is to give *spiritual* meaning to life with the younger generation? Do I see teaching as my vehicle for youth evangelism—realizing that I must use my subject field as a bridge to God? (Basic attitude: "Students, what is this telling us about our heavenly Father?")
4. After the opening prayer (or devotional thought), how much "air time" do I give God? Is there an artificial partition between the sacred and the secular in my class that offers my students a fractured, disunified view of reality? (Do I thus imply, "You can keep God in His place and avoid overly complicating your life, just like we do here in the school"?)
5. Regarding faith:
  - a. How often do I give my public, personal witness that God has been good to me, has answered prayer, and has wonderfully involved Himself in my life, and/or family? (Message: "You too can trust God.")
  - b. Do I really see the potential of my students, believing simply and sincerely that none of them is beyond God's *miracle-working* capability?
6. Do I organize my assignments and exploit discussions to lead students into *their own* integration of learning, faith, and practice in connection with my course? (Education is the responsibility of *both* sides of the desk.)
7. Do I really believe in the *supernatural* as a dominant, ever-present reality? Do I live and teach in reference to it, and discuss it comfortably with my students? (Or am I awkward and ill at ease in that realm—a stranger to that domain? Could students interpret that silence as my personal statement about God and His involvement in our world?)
8. Who's "on center stage" in my classroom: God or man? (Am I merely a humanist, who

is involved with man at work in his world, or a theist, studying God at work in *His* world?)

9. Am I so immersed in Scripture that it is the automatic source of my illustrations?
10. Do I honestly believe that integrating learning, faith, and practice is the fullest expression of academic respectability—lifting my subject matter to its highest level of ultimate significance—or do I see this integration as an academic distortion of sorts?
11. Regarding practice: Do I recognize that all our dealings together in God's community of faith here on earth constitute our laboratory in brotherly love, in preparation for the society of heaven? Or do I preside over the devil's ideal way of life (competition, self-service: "Look out for Number One!") to the exclusion of God's ideal way of life (cooperation, unselfish service: "In honour preferring one another . . .")? To what extent am I subliminally reinforcing social Darwinism (the law of the jungle, applied to society)?
12. If the faculty of my school were to get really serious and excited about the matter of *practice* as a crucial element in the curriculum for developing Christians and propose to allocate *significant time blocks in the school day or week* to provide for our students, would this proposal get my vote of approval—or would I consider it an extra-curricular activity that would interfere with the real business of a school? Would I prefer to relegate the proposal somewhere to the periphery?
13. Regarding practice: Do I only talk about Christian witness and outreach, or do I actually *join* my students in some organized and ongoing evangelistic endeavor that touches our community and country for God? What kind of teaching model do I give my students in this respect? Am I truly a "gospel teacher"?

As you review your answers to this inventory, you may recognize that you have been neglecting this most important dimension of your campus youth ministry. Perhaps you are now prepared to rethink the whole matter, review your commitment to God's plan for Christian education, and make some "midcourse correctional maneuvers" (to use space terminology). We suggest that you talk it over with the Lord; He will guide you in using your academic specialty to help your students discover Him; you will see how you may be "instant in season, out of season" in teaching students about the unseen (the real) world, and the ultimate realities of life: then you will be able to lead your students in active, Christian outreach.

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### Looking Ahead

In Part I, we have considered concepts, issues, and problems connected with the integration of learning, faith, and practice in Christian education, discussed their relationship to basic instructional theory, and dealt in a very general way with the curriculum. In Part II, which will appear in the Summer, 1980, issue of the JOURNAL, we'll recap this overview, further study faith nurture and the informal curriculum, and examine by subjects the perspectives and methodologies appropriate to the major academic disciplines—including Bible. (Faith and practice need to be integrated into the learning experiences of the Bible class as much as any other, perhaps even more so!)

(Part II of this article will appear in the Summer, 1980, issue of the JOURNAL.)

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