

# Integrating Faith and Learning

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# Sending Children to a Christian College

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There are lots of simple answers that I could give to the question—“Why Christian Parents Should Send Their Sons and Daughters to Christian Schools?” . . . but the one point I’d like to really leave with you tonight is this: *I think Christian parents ought to be concerned about Christian education at all levels!*

Tonight we are going to talk particularly about the college level, because Christian colleges are capable of doing some specific things that no other institution in our society can possibly accomplish. The church can’t do them, the home can’t do them, and certainly secular institutions, public or private, are not capable of doing what you as a serious Christian college and university can do.

Some research which we have conducted over the past couple of years indicates that in the United States of America there are at least two hundred and fifty to two hundred and seventy-five thousand Christian young men and women who begin their college career at a secular institution, that’s each year! The United Negro College Fund uses a phrase in advertising in the East Coast which says, “A mind is a terrible thing to waste.” I wish, I pray, and I hope that the Christian community would take seriously that idea when we think about the hundreds of thousands of Christian students whose minds are being shaped at secular institutions.

I should, perhaps, just say some things about what I think a Christian college ideally ought to do. Very simply. I believe that the purpose of a Christian college is to equip the saints to minister to society as educated Christians. Dr. Akers sent me a statement describing Seventh-day Adventist philosophy of higher education. I hope that you are working diligently to implement this in your

institutions, trying to make this real so that your constituents, your parents, and others would see that you have something which is unique. That’s right, something which is *one of a kind!* There were several definitions and phrases in this little document which jumped out at me as I studied it. Listen to this, and if you haven’t looked at this lately, you might like to go back and look at it:

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*Education aims at a systematic development of the whole person, his capabilities and character through instruction, study and activity and it involves the acquisition of knowledge and skills.*

It’s a good definition of education. When I encourage my son or daughter as a Christian parent to enroll in the school, I ought really to ask myself whether something as important as the systematic development of the whole person ought to be entrusted to people who have a value structure which is different than mine. You can see which side of the answer that I am going to come down on.

In your particular situation with your constituency, your parents are asking undoubtedly, “Why a Seventh-day Adventist institution?” I hope that your constituents ask that question, and I hope that you give them good answers. It was estimated over the dinner table tonight that probably 50 per cent of Seventh-day Adventist young people are educated in institutions outside of your particular system. I think you should be concerned about that. You should try to have more parents answer the question in a positive way.

Seventh-day Adventist institutions (and I am reading from your own statement of philosophy) “. . . accept as one of their functions the exposure of the oncoming generation to the ideals and the culture of their constituencies. The predominant influences shaping the lifestyle, and . . .” I would certainly hope “. . . the academic and scientific work of an Adventist college campus are the teachings of the Bible, the counsels of Ellen G. White and the preponderate concepts of the faculty, of the student body and the supporting constituency.” There is *nowhere* else that Seventh-day Adventist young people, there’s nowhere else that evangelical Christian young people can go, to get that kind of an education other than in an institution like this. In effect, your church is saying to its young people that “The ideals and the practices and the lifestyle of this college or university indicate what we have found to be of value. . .” and we want you to experience them in the setting of this college so that you will have a fair basis for making intelligent decisions with respect to the

standards by which you will order your own lives. Mind shaping, life shaping, that's what Christian education is about. For me as a parent, and I am sure for most other Christian parents, there is no other place that we can go to get what you have to offer because you are a unique institution.

In the society in which we live today we are overwhelmed with data; there is a great deal of expanding knowledge and it's our responsibility to help young men and young women deal with that mass of data, to interpret it, to analyze it, to bring it into a framework of understanding so that the value structures which grow out of our commitment to Christ of the scriptures can be made real. In many ways, I believe that the benefits of the liberal arts tradition today reside within the Christian college movement. There really isn't much consideration given in most quarters to those values which are held important and which are worked with in a diligent way in the Christian college community.

. . . A good Christian college ought to enable its students to communicate clearly. It ought to teach them to inquire accurately and with integrity. It ought to teach them to evaluate wisely, to test the spirits of the age, and it ought to teach them to understand in an integrated fashion to see life, whole man, God and society, the church and appropriate relationships. The thing that a Christian education ought to do is to enable young people and all of us to see life, to envision it religiously, because life is a spiritual and religious matter.

. . . I am very unapologetic of the fact that I believe that the Christian college is a very special and rare thing. I believe that Christian colleges are sustained by caring people, by very special people such as constituents, and a very special category and kind of faculty member. Several years ago I attended a conference for trustees and college presidents at Michigan State University, and one of the speakers opened his presentation by saying, "Who would care if your college didn't open next year?" I trust that there are an awful lot of

your constituents who would care. Unfortunately, there are lots of colleges that can't identify a group of people who would really care or who really do care, and that's a sorry state. George Kneller and his *Foundations of Philosophy* raises this question for faculty members, specifically, "What would be the loss to the world if your department were phased out in a budget cut next year?"

I believe there would be a tremendous loss to the Christian community if Christian colleges were no longer possible in this country and I tell parents that. I think there would be a tremendous loss to the Christian church if we didn't have the kind of educational foundation that you can provide. But I do believe that you, as a Christian scholar and as a learner and faculty member, ought to really look at your daily work and your daily tasks and attempt to decide whether or not, if you weren't here next year, your particular field would lose something as far as Christian perspective is concerned. Would students be able to go to the college or university down the street and get essentially the same thing? I think not. But as you examine that question, if you should come to the conclusion that there would be no great loss, then I hope that you with your colleagues will really begin to struggle in new ways with what it means to be a Christian scholar, teacher, or learner in a Christian academic community.

A Christian family who has to answer the question which is posed in our program tonight faces a lot of choices today. If one is to attend a local secular university or perhaps a well-endowed private college, the cost of the education might be similar to the investment in a compact car. In most Christian colleges today, if one is to room and board, the investment is much more similar to the cost of a luxury car of the finest import if you consider the total four years. The basic problem with that choice is this—that Christian higher education should not be looked upon as a luxury, and neither should we let it be considered a luxury. It's an absolute necessity. What you are capable of doing for and with students is an absolute

necessity if we want to promulgate mind-shaping worldview development that is distinctly Christian, comprehensive, and academically sound.

Christian colleges should be incubators of Christian thought and perspective in all areas of life; they ought to be stimulators of service to the Christian church and to the secular community, and they also ought to be provocative of Christian truth and reality. That's a big order, but it's not a luxury. It's not a luxury if we're serious about the commands of scripture to subdue the earth and to manage it as Christ's representatives.

For me, the question has been answered in terms of the teaching of the scripture, particularly the Old Testament concepts of nurture found in Deuteronomy 5 and 6. The comprehensive nature of the teaching tasks that God gives to us in relationship to our children is such that it takes all of the time and energy that I and Christian teachers and Christian ministers and those who work in the church have. The response to that Biblical injunction of Moses to teach and talk to my children about essential philosophic worldview Biblical concepts takes more time and energy than most of us have. We need your help to do it and you become a necessity rather than a luxury.

In our national research we have constantly run into the idea that Christian colleges cost more. Well, they don't really cost more, our costs will match any secular university; it's just a matter of who pays the bill. The cost is usually disbursed among the taxpayers in the case of public institutions, and we don't experience that in such a direct way. But I do believe that, in the future, average families are going to have to make choices between bigger and littler cars, longer and shorter vacations, and bigger and littler boats. Many of the luxuries that we have schooled ourselves into thinking are necessities are going to be weighed in our value structure as we come to the question. "Where are we going to send our children to school?"

Recently the senior editor of *Christianity Today* asked me if I would write an article on the financial

crisis in Christian colleges, and I told them I wouldn't do it because I don't believe the financial crisis in Christian higher education is a real statement of the problem. The crisis is one of understanding within the Christian community—understanding what Christian colleges are and should be; and I must add at this point I do think that within our own ranks there is some lack of understanding of what our tremendous potential is right within our own faculty ranks. The genius of Christian higher education, of Christian scholarship, and of teaching by a Christian educating community hasn't been communicated adequately by us. Consequently, in many circles, the priceless benefit of a truly Christian education has been misunderstood or even ignored by the Christian community.

I mentioned the figure a while ago of two hundred and fifty to two hundred and seventy-five thousand Christian students who begin their career at a secular institution each year. Some of the research which we did as a follow-up brought to mind another startling fact. Probably 95 per cent of that large body of people never gave us, Christian colleges that is, a first or second thought. The basic reason which stood out according to our samples is that they had no idea of what we're capable of doing as a serious academic Christian community. We haven't communicated that; we haven't communicated our own genius.

In an article last spring in the *Evangelical Newsletter* Steven Board, who is an editor of *Eternity*, reviews the vim and vigor of certain campus ministries such as the Navigators, Campus Crusade, Inter-varsity, and local churches that have been particularly successful around large university communities. Important as these ministries are, and as successful as they may be in some cases in evangelism, they aren't equipped to provide the academic nurture from a Christian perspective. They don't provide the kind of stimulation that a Christian college community can provide if that college community is serious about the development of world and life view and of a value structure consonant with the faith within its students. Mr.

Board, in his article, summarizes the weaknesses of evangelical witness on the secular campus by saying this:

*Christian faculty at the most prestigious universities are sparse and they tend to be in engineering and in science rather than liberal arts. Too rarely has a strong Christian critique of the university been forthcoming from any of these groups. Christianity rarely confronts humanism head-on, consequently, evangelicals come across as mystics without much to say to the greater academic culture.*

A Christian college should, in its academic objectives, be energized to confront secular humanism head-on and right on. Our students have to be capable of doing this because they are going to live with it all the rest of the days of their lives. If we don't equip them to test the spirits, to analyze in that way, we will have failed them as Christian scholars. Mr. Board, however, concludes this article with these startling words, and this goes back to communicating what we are really all about: "At any rate, Christian parents still wonder where to send their kids and my advice is, send them to the big universities. They will find lots of Christians there; avoid the small secular or pseudo-religious colleges." I agree with that.

"The University of Illinois," Mr. Board says, "has perhaps 2,500 evangelical Christians" and enrollment of about 50,000. "That's more than the student body at Moody and equal to the students at Wheaton."

I find that extremely startling coming from an evangelical leader. Certainly the pseudo-religious college or the lukewarm Christian college is not going to receive my recommendation either. But the fact that a group of Christians attend a large secular institution which is built on assumptions related to man and society, which are essentially humanistic, the fact that there is a small group of Christians there who might gather for Bible study and fellowship, does not make that the kind of academic enterprise that will really shape the world and life view, and shape the minds of young Christians so that their thought patterns are guided and directed by their basic Christian commitments.

In the Christian college community

all the resources of the community are pledged and committed to develop and to see life and reality in the wholeness made possible because of what Christ has done for us and has revealed to us in the scriptures. The foundation of a Christian higher education is a full and deepened Biblical perspective. It's a philosophical awareness that all truth is God's truth and it's a historic perspective which enables one to cope with the fact that God is working through history and through His Creation. In our educational theory it's a realization that we treat our subject and education differently if we recognize him or her as being created in the image of God and renewed by the mind of Christ. Those foundations cannot be implemented in a comprehensive academic way in any kind of other institution than the kind which is represented here tonight.

I am going to sketch out for just a moment what I believe to be some other Biblical foundations for a Christian college, for a Christian education; and I hope you will keep asking yourself the question whether or not this kind of foundation can be developed and implemented in any other atmosphere than the kind in which you work.

In my mind God's creation is the foundation, the beginning, it's the end, it's the subject, and it's the object of Christian education. How we look at God's creation and what we do with it and how we understand our fellow image-bearers and ourselves, how we look at God's world, and how we develop an understanding of His world are the most essential components of an education which is inwardly Christian. Christian higher education ought to be committed to change and reform, and we ought not to be afraid of it because change and reform is basic to the Christian life and Christian commitment. The Holy Spirit works in the life of the redeemed Christians to sanctify them and to perfect them in every good work, and this means a whole change of being. Educated Christians should be lead to desire to use the redeeming power of Jesus Christ, to change the hell-bent direction of our society, and to change the direction of decay and the

confusion and degradation which surrounds us.

Obviously, we need change and reform in society today. We have to remind ourselves continually that Jesus Christ is still the King of Creation and our lives have to breathe this. We have to communicate this to our students. I, as a consumer of what you have to offer, expect you to breathe this in your educational philosophy, in all of your courses, and all of your work. This is my Father's world and I have a task to do in it. That's what I want to shape our efforts here. Christian education involves the investigation of all of God's world and His Word. We investigate, as educated Christians, man in God's world; and we investigate God's world which has been spoiled by sin. We attempt to develop a perspective to place things in proper order knowing that there is something better prepared for us now and for eternity.

... The scriptures are crystal clear about what happens when we leave God out of education and in 90 per cent of the education in this country He is not only illegal. He is not welcome. In Romans 1 we are instructed as to what happens when God is ignored and man is centralized in education. This is what happens when the focus of worship becomes the creature rather than the Creator. The Word of God says this: "Although they had knowledge of God they failed to render Him praise and thanks and instead they indulged their useless speculations until their stupid minds were all in the dark, claimed to be wise, they played the fool. They even altered the glory of God into images, and therefore God gave them up in agreement with their inner cravings to such impurities as dishonored their own bodies because they altered God's truth into falsehood and they worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator who is blessed forever." It couldn't be more direct.

Our institutions exist because enough of our constituents, because the church, the denominations, and individual Christians want and are willing to support institutions where knowledge begins with God rather than with man. I am often asked the

question, "What do you think is the future of the Christian college?"

I am asked it by congressmen, by news people, a lot of people that I talk to in Washington and my answer is rather stock.

It's this: The more serious they are about being Christians in their academic pursuits, in student life, and in their ministry to their constituents, the stronger they will be, and I have no real concern about their futures. But the institutions which mute their distinctives or the institutions which fail to develop their distinctives are the ones that either now, or in the next couple of decades, are going to have a hard time distinguishing themselves from the other institution down the street, and will cost one-third or one-quarter of what they cost, and will have a difficult time.

One's educational philosophy has to be undergirded by one's Biblical commitment and one's faith commitments. In a Christian college we band together to experience the joy of working with others who have the same understanding of reality—that is one which places God at the center—and we band together to study God's world, His Word, His biology, His astronomy, His literature, His mathematics, music and all the rest. And your job is twice as difficult as the job of a faculty member at a comparable secular institution. I know that.

Secular institutions don't spend much time talking about basic assumptions, about philosophy, about history and all of the academic disciplines anyway and they certainly don't talk about the integration of faith and learning. So integration of faith and learning is something we have to do together as an institution. I hate to say that it is something extra because I think it's at the center of what we do; but together as colleagues, brothers and sisters in Christ, we have to get together, really come to grips with what it means to be distinctive. It may mean that the Biology department will ask the Biblical Studies department to spend some time with them. It might mean that the Biblical Studies department might ask the Natural Sciences department to spend some time with them so that together we can develop perspectives.

Let me just review with you so that you certainly don't think I misunderstand the magnitude of your task. What I am really expecting when I recommend you, and when I send you my sons and daughters, is demanding something very special when I talk about integrated Christian education. The cost of being a disciple, being a learner in this area, is very very high, and I am impressed with the demands that your administration and parents like me place on you. We want you to be competent in your discipline. Anything done in the name of Christ must be first rate and, as Elton Trueblood once said, "Pious shoddy is still shoddy." College faculties tend to underrate themselves—we're small, we're second rate, and that's not true. In my work I have read dozens of accreditation reports, almost always written by secular educators, and they almost invariably express surprise and amazement at the quality of the Christian college, faculty members, their academic background and their capabilities; and I see that in my travels. We have a little false humility, I guess. . . .

Quality is required in the name of Christ. Christian education is for life. It's for the life of the man. It's for a life lived here and now in the demanding complexities of this educated society. It's a life of faith. It's a life within the church and it's also a life lived in this world. That's what we are shaping our students to grapple with, in a different and a better way than we did. I like the Phillips translation of Romans 12 when he says, "Don't let the world press you into its mold but be rather transformed by the renewing of your minds."

Why should a Christian parent send his son or daughter or encourage them to attend a Christian college? I think that that's a good part of the answer. Christian education is a serious, necessary, rewarding business. I pray that God will bless you and your efforts to reshape minds, your disciplines, your work, your scholarship, and I pray that you will have the strength and courage to continue what you have begun. With St. Augustine we are building bricks for the city of God.

# On the Frontier of Scientific Instruction

Dwain L. Ford

The apostle Paul in his admonition to the church recorded in Romans 12 included specific counsel to teachers. After pointing out that the ability to teach was one of the gifts given to certain individuals in church he gave this injunction: "If you are a teacher, do a good job of teaching" (LNT Rom 12:7).

To do a good job as a Christian teacher includes the integration of faith and learning and is indeed a complex, difficult, and rewarding task. There have been numerous attempts to clarify what a Christian education is and the nature of the responsibilities of the Christian teacher.

## Some Approaches to Integration

Frank E. Gaebelein in his book, *The Pattern of God's Truth*, declares that "The Christian school that believes all truth to be God's truth and that is serious about making Christ and the Bible integral to its curriculum must give up the concept of a completely separate Bible department. Instead it must seek and develop devoted Christian teachers who, along with their competency in mathematics, sciences, languages, or social studies are able to give instruction in Bible" (Gaebelein, 1977, pp. 48, 49).

In his book entitled, *The Idea of a Christian College*, Arthur F. Holmes describes a Christian teacher as "a catalyst and guide, one who has struggled and is struggling with similar questions and knows some of the pertinent materials and procedures" (Holmes, 1975, p. 48). He believes that the students "need to be exposed to the frontiers of learning where problems are still not fully formulated and knowledge is exploding and where by the very nature of things indoctrination is impossible" (Holmes, p. 48). For him,

*"Integration (of faith and learning) is concerned not so much with attack and*

*defense as with the positive contributions of human learning to an understanding of faith and to the development of a Christian world-view and with the positive contribution of Christian faith to all the arts and sciences of man" (Holmes, p. 48).*

Instead of having moral value judgments tacked on the end of a recital of facts he recommends that "an evaluative process can run all the way through the structures of a course in the development of recurrent themes, in its assumptions and methods and emphasis" (Holmes, p. 54). He illustrates his concept of an integrated program by three concentric circles: Holmes also believes that a teacher in a Christian college should put greater emphasis on ethics and the philosophical foundations of the subjects rather than confining the study to a mere factual recital. His illustration above implies that a Bible-centered philosophy ties all other areas of study together into one integrated whole.

Richard H. Bube, renowned scientist from Stanford University, has given us added insights in his book, *The Human Quest*, with a new look at science and Christian faith. He reminds us that,

*We sometimes lose sight of the possibility of true description of the same event or phenomenon on several different levels. When this happens, we conclude that a description on one level excludes or invalidates descriptions on other levels. Since what is really needed for a coherent and ultimate understanding of the nature of reality is a description on all levels, the neglect of description on some levels can only diminish our total understanding.*

*It is possible to describe reality on several levels corresponding to the physical sciences, biology, psychology, sociology, and theology (Bube, 1971, p. 30). A complete description is needed on every level for a complete understanding.*

*Because descriptions on every level are valid and meaningful, it is neither*

*proper nor necessary to exclude descriptions on some levels. The theologian need not exclude the description in terms of physics and chemistry out of fear that such a mechanistic description would invalidate his theological description. Nor need the scientist exclude the description on the theological level out of fear that such a mystical description would do violence to his experimental data (Bube, p. 35).*

From Bube's viewpoint, any teacher who fails to point out implications on the broader spiritual levels is failing to communicate the fullest, most accurate picture of truth.

Kenneth Irving Brown in his book entitled, *Substance and Spirit in Education*, describes his concepts of the responsibilities of a Christian teacher in a fashion parallel to that of Bube.

Brown summarizes his position in the following way:

*There are four languages for the classroom: The language of factual analysis; the language of appreciation that speaks to both the mind and the heart, when facts are mingled with wonder and set forth in a larger relational context; the language of symbolism, which by the very act of concealing adds beauty to the discovery; and the language of dedication, wherein the teacher's final loyalty finds inevitably its expression (Brown, 1961, p. 92).*

Many teachers restrict their communication primarily to the language of factual analysis with only occasional limited use of the language of appreciation. The extent to which the language

of symbolism is utilized may appropriately vary from class to class but its creative use will provide enrichment to any course. For a course to contribute to one's Christian education to the extent God desires it to, the teacher must utilize effectively the language of dedication in both its verbal and/or its non-verbal forms.

I am thankful for the clarity of instruction we have received from Ellen G. White regarding the nature of Christian education and the responsibilities of Christian teachers. Her definitions imply a complete integration of faith and learning with eternal consequences:

*It (education) is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come (ED p. 13).*

*To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind and soul, that the divine purpose in his creation might be realized—this was the work of redemption. This is the object of education, the great object of life (ED pp. 15, 16).*

### General Responsibilities of Christian Teachers

A review of her counsels lead one to the conclusion that the responsibilities of a science or mathematics teacher are the same in most respects as those of other teachers. A partial list of those held in common with other Christian educators are as follows:

#### 1. Be a model Christian.

*The teacher must be what he desires his pupils to become (FE p. 58).*

*The teacher can gain the respect of his pupils in no other way than by revealing in his own character the principles he seeks to teach them. Only as he does this in his daily association with them can he have a permanent influence over them for good (ED p. 277).*

#### 2. Reflect the character of Christ.

*This is the secret of power over your pupils. Reflect Him (ED p. 282).*

*Christ was the greatest educator this world has ever known (ED p. 85).*

*The greatest teachers are those who are most patient, most kind (CT p. 269).*

3. Communicate confidence in God's revelation to man.

*Since God is the source of all true knowledge, it is the first object of education to direct the minds to His own revelation of Himself . . . Nature still speaks of her creator. Yet these revelations are partial and imperfect . . . The Holy Scriptures are the perfect standard of truth and as such should be given first place in education (ED pp. 16, 17).*

4. Communicate concern for Biblical standards of moral behavior by individuals and corporations in relation to society and the environment.

*Connected with God every instructor will exert an influence to lead his pupils to study God's word and to obey His law (5T p. 29).*

5. Pray with students and teach them to pray.

*Your long speeches on education in the sciences are painful to the angels of God, who are constantly and intensely active in seeking to call the thoughts and affections to heavenly things . . . Devote a portion of the time you consume in long addresses to personal labor for the youth who need your help. Teach them the claims of God are upon them; pray with them (5T p. 589).*

6. Lead your students to Christ.

*Do not feel that your work as teachers is done unless you can lead your scholars to faith in Jesus and love for Him. Let the love of Christ pervade your own souls, and then you will unconsciously teach it to others. When you as instructors commit yourselves unreservedly to Jesus, for Him to lead, to guide, to control, you will not fail. Teaching your students to be Christians is the greatest work before you. Go to God: He hears and answers prayer. Put from you questionings, doubts and unbelief. Let no harshness come into your teaching. Be not too exacting, but cultivate tender sympathy and love. Be cheerful. Do not scold, do not censure too severely: be firm, be broad, be Christ-like, pitiful, courteous (5T p. 590).*

*Eternal interests should be the great theme of teachers and students . . . The teachers need to be sanctified through the truth, and the all-important thing should be the conversion of their students. The object of the great teacher is the restoration of the image of God in the soul and every teacher in our schools should work in harmony with this purpose (FE p. 436).*

7. Aid students in developing a sense of mission and a concept of the shortness of time.

*Teach them that life's true aim is not to secure the greatest possible gain for themselves, but to honor their maker in*

*doing their part of the world's work, and lending a helpful hand to those weaker and more ignorant (ED pp. 221, 222).*

8. Communicate an appreciation for the worth or potential of each individual.

*He will take a personal interest in each pupil, and will seek to develop all his powers (ED p. 232).*

*The teacher should carefully study the disposition and character of his pupils, that he may adapt his teaching to their particular needs (CT p. 231).*

*With the dull pupil he should bear patiently, not censuring his ignorance, but improving every opportunity to give him encouragement. With the sensitive, nervous pupils he should deal very tenderly (ED p. 292).*

9. Teach for thoughtful mastery of vital truths.

*Teachers should lead students to think and clearly understand the truths for themselves. It is not enough for the teacher to explain or for the student to believe; inquiry must be awakened, and the student must be drawn out to state the truth in his own language, thus making it evident that he sees its force and makes the application. By painstaking effort the vital truths should thus be impressed upon the mind. This may be a slow process; but it is of more value than rushing over important subjects without due consideration (6T p. 154).*

### Specific Responsibilities of Adventist Science Teachers

Let us now focus our attention specifically on some of the responsibilities and opportunities unique to science teachers who assume their responsibility for integration of faith and learning.

1. Teach science so as to prepare individuals for last day events.

*A knowledge of science of all kinds is power, and it is in the purpose of God that advanced science shall be taught in our schools as a preparation for the work that is to precede the closing scenes of earth's history (FE p. 186).*

*In the grand work of education, instruction in the sciences is not to be of an inferior character, but that knowledge must be considered of first importance which will fit a people to stand in the great day of God's preparation (6T p. 152).*

2. Teach science as a stepping stone toward eternity.

*Unless the knowledge of science is a stepping stone to the attainment of the*

highest purposes, it is worthless. The education that does not furnish knowledge as enduring as eternity is of no purpose (FE p. 192).

3. Teach science as an aid to understand God.

*Those who take the written word as their guide will find in science an aid to understand God (PP p. 116).*

*As he (the student) goes on from truth to truth, obtaining clearer and brighter views of the wonderful laws of science and nature, he becomes enraptured with the amazing exhibitions of God's love to man. He sees with intelligent eyes the perfection, knowledge and wisdom of God stretching beyond into infinity (AT p. 414).*

*He who placed the pearls in the*

*ocean and the amethyst and chrysolite among the rocks, is a lover of the beautiful (CT p. 54).*

4. Foster the development of an appreciation for the creative genius and sustaining power of God.

Chapter on "Teaching from Nature" (CT pp. 185-190)

Chapter on "God in Nature" (ED pp. 99-112)

Chapter on "Lessons from Nature" (CT pp. 54-55)

*The hand that sustains the world in space, the hand that holds in their orderly arrangement and tireless activity all things throughout the universe of God, is the hand that was nailed to the cross for us (ED p. 132).*

We need the Holy Spirit to transform us in character and guide us in our understanding.

Sometimes the expectations for Christian teachers almost overwhelm us but remember:

*When teachers seek with all their heart to bring true principles into the work of education, angels of God will be present to make impressions upon the heart and mind (FE p. 519).*

Thus with Christ as our model: with the Holy Spirit as our instructor, our guide, our efficiency, and power: and with the angels as our teaching assistants, let us move forward to fully integrate faith and learning at Andrews University.

## The Farther Reaches of the Social Sciences

Marion Merchant

In his book *The Human Quest*,<sup>2</sup> Richard Bube asserts "that every phenomenon that exists in the world can in principle" be described on many different levels, each level of which may be exhaustive yet come far short of a complete description. In illustration, he uses the statement "I love you" with six different levels of meaning related to it: the letters of the words, the sounds of those letters, the combination of those letters or sounds into the three words, the ordering of the words into a meaningful sentence, then the personal experience of this declaration to or by another person, and, finally, the ultimate meaning of the statement itself.

The writer's way of thinking of these different levels is as the framework of an outline for a theme or talk: roman numerals for the general, inclusive statements followed by capital letters, arabic numbers, lower case letters, numbers and letters in parentheses and then further set into double and even triple parentheses indicating narrower and narrower subdivisions of the topic—the lower and lowest levels of mean-

ing. Much of our thinking about any subject, religion included, is in the lower ranges of the possible meanings—in the range of the letters and numbers in single and double parentheses. Few people think in wholes or in broad abstractions. The consequence, of course, is that their worlds of thought and experience are greatly diminished from what is possible. "Many of us remain unaware of the larger dimensions of reality because we are occupied only with those things nearer at hand or most evident" states Henry Seifert in his book, *Reality and Ecstasy*. "To the extent that we do not pursue the most important and basic questions of all [at the highest levels of meaning, or ultimate reality,] we are isolated from reality and imprisoned in immediacies."<sup>3</sup>

The difference that the larger world of thought makes to a person is described also by Seifert.

*... the whole and the ultimate ... provide a more comprehensive view of reality. This equips us with a more adequate range of knowledge. To ignore*

*the transcendent dimension is to perpetuate comparative ignorance and mediocrity. Disastrous consequences follow action informed by only part of the data.<sup>4</sup>*

An illustration of this is found in an article from *The American Scholar* of Summer, 1976. It was entitled "Social Science: The Public Disenchantment." The article consisted of responses from a number of prominent social scientists reacting to the following criticism of social science by a writer in the *New York Times Magazine*:

*... social scientists pushed to the fore claiming that, with proper support, they*



could end urban decay, eradicate poverty, ease racial and ethnic tensions, reduce crime, control the economy, shore up the breakdown of the family, and accomplish much else besides. As is now known, they were able to do none of these things.<sup>1</sup>

One of the respondents, Harry G. Johnson, professor of economics at the University of Chicago, explained that *the social sciences have lost prestige because they have claimed to be able to deliver more than they can possibly deliver. And worse, the claim has been based on a very superficial understanding of the nature of a social system, and on a consistent refusal to understand the basic constraints on social possibilities imposed by the over-all limitation of economic resources and the manifold defects of the human social being as an instrument from which to forge the ideal society.*<sup>2</sup>

Martin Mayer, author, referred to "natural academic tendencies toward artificiality." In more specific terms, he wrote:

*The vice of the social scientist is that unless somebody gives him a narrowly delimited target he will concentrate his efforts not on what is really happening but on what somebody else has written about it. The working tools that the various social sciences have developed—the sample survey, multivariate analysis, and probability criteria—are regarded as rather dull inside as well as outside the profession. The information derived from the use of such tools rarely illustrates (let alone demonstrates) the "laws of human behavior" which are the proprietary mysteries. Especially, then, among the keepers of the keys—university teachers—the temptation is always to impose theory on the outside world rather than to test hypothesis by observation or experiment.<sup>3</sup>*

Daniel P. Moynihan, quoted from the 1968-69 report of the Social Science Research Council: "The difficulty we as a nation face in solving our problem is not will but knowledge. We want to eliminate poverty, crime, drug addiction and abuse; we want to improve education and strengthen family life, but we do not know how."<sup>4</sup> As Seifert puts it (by way of an explanation).

*When they do not take into account large sections of reality, scientists are not being scientific enough. Attempting to solve comprehensive problems on this partial basis is like trying to find one's way from Reno to Rome with only a road map of Iowa.<sup>5</sup>*

This is not to deny, of course, that social scientists have made many useful contributions, available in classroom

textbooks as well as other sources, to understanding people. There is abundant evidence, however, that it is not sufficient, first of all in its scope but also in its dissemination as well as carryover into practice. There is more—much more—to understanding people than the social scientists have discovered or possibly can discover by only human methods of obtaining knowledge. Human knowledge can never adequately apprehend personal or ultimate meaning and reality. To restrict one's classroom teaching to only that which is in the textbook or what one reads in professional journals, then, is to limit the student's understanding of social science. In more general terms, it is to limit considerably his understanding of people from what it could be were the farther reaches of the subject to be considered. As far as reality is concerned in its broader dimensions and even in more limited areas the student remains relatively uneducated.

#### Religion as the Farther Reaches of a Subject

The farthest reaches of any subject—ultimate meaning or ultimate reality—lie within the realm of religion and, specifically, revelation. This is manifestly true in the social sciences where the goal, for one reason or another, is the understanding of people. Therefore, bringing Jesus Christ and the Christian world view to whatever degree into the social science classroom has added significance beyond that objective as an end in itself or for justifying high-priced education in a Christian university. (This is not to say, however, that familiarizing the student with Jesus Christ and the Christian world view is not the most important reason for bringing these into the classroom.) The fact that the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Christian world view (and of course they are basically the same) are truth—in Seifert's terms "that which corresponds with reality"—it follows that these are part of the farther reaches of social science and therefore higher level meaning and ultimate reality, the most important part of the subject in terms of a more adequate and a more comprehensive understanding of people. It, then, is the richest contribution which a teacher can make to the education of the student as far as a

particular subject in the social science area is concerned.

#### Farther Reaches of the Social Services

In the search for understanding people, the farther reaches of the study should include something of the same as humanistic psychology describes as its ultimate goal:

*... a complete description of what it means to be alive as a human being [including] ... an inventory of man's native endowment, his potentialities of feeling, thought, and action: ... the range and variety of experience possible to him; and his meaningful place in the universe.<sup>6</sup>*

Revelation, of course, goes much farther in this description than humanistic psychology can ever go and gives a far more exalted description of what human beings were created to be and the place they were intended to occupy in the universe. It is an exhilarating experience to think of human beings in these terms and a brand new experience this teacher has found for almost everyone taking the class Psychology and Religion in which some time is spent on the subject. Unfortunately, it seems that Adventist religious thinking and teaching rarely touches on this subject. For those who do think about it at higher levels of meaning, however, it is intellectual and spiritual excitement at a peak and the acquisition of a view of human beings that transforms one's whole perspective of them and of himself and life as well.

A few scientific facts along with statements from the Spirit of Prophecy will give some idea of this vastly expanded view of human beings considerably beyond that which social science alone can provide.

Let us begin with the question of man's "meaningful place in the universe." The earth is approximately one-millionth the size of the sun. The sun, in turn, is among some one hundred billion stars comprising the galaxy of which it is a part. That galaxy, however, is but one of thousands of millions of other galaxies in the universe. Thus the earth itself is only an infinitesimal part of it. Was, then, the intended place of human beings who live on this planet of comparable importance in the universe? Several statements from Ellen White imply that they were created for one of the highest places

in the hierarchy of all created beings. Some of these follow: "Human beings were a new and distinct order."<sup>11</sup> "Next to the angelic beings, the human family, formed in the image of God, are the noblest of His created works."<sup>12</sup> "Man was the crowning act of the creation of God . . . designed to be a counterpart of God."<sup>13</sup> "Man [was] created for fellowship with God."<sup>14</sup> (Try absorbing these statements at their highest level of meaning!)

The number of estimated atoms comprising the universe has been set at ten followed by one hundred zeros. But the number of estimated possible interconnections and patterns of the ten billion (a conservative estimate among those that have been made) neurons in the brain is ten followed by eight hundred zeros.<sup>15</sup> These interconnections and patterns are the basis of mental activity. As this teacher often tells students: The brain was made to function for eternity. In the light of that information, the statement in *Education* that "In every human being Jesus saw infinite possibilities"<sup>16</sup> takes on further dimensions.

Another significant statement from Ellen White is that human beings were made for a higher, holier state of enjoyment than anything this earth can afford.<sup>17</sup> One of the present doctoral students in religious education, a man with a rare grasp of this subject, expressed it this way:

*The dictum of Scripture that man was created in the image of God brings to view a true insight not only into the purpose of his existence, but also into the nature of his potential. He was created a godlike being that he might live his life in a godlike way. He was endowed at the epoch of his creation with a divine potential, a potential which, because divine, is unlimited . . . In short, the purpose of God in human existence requires an eternity for fulfillment, an eternity of man's progressive conformity to God's infinitely exalted ideal for man, an eternity of development of his inherited potential . . .*<sup>18</sup>

One is reminded of the familiar statement: "Higher than the highest human thought can reach [Bube's highest level of meaning and certainly beyond the levels of thinking of most people] is God's ideal for His children."<sup>19</sup> ("Ideal", of course implies that which is possible.)

Imagine the lifelong difference in a

student's perception and understanding of people—himself and others—and the meaning of life as well were this the framework for his studies in the social sciences! One student exclaimed during study of the subject, "I'll never look down on a human being again!" What contribution this perspective alone could make toward solving society's problems!

Further significant understanding of people comes from the statement in *Desire of Ages* that the law of life for earth and heaven and the entire universe is self-renouncing love.<sup>20</sup> Ashley Montagu, the well-known social anthropologist, stated in an article entitled "A Scientist Looks at Love", published in *Phi Delta Kappan* in May of 1970:

*Scientists are discovering at this very moment that to live as if to live and love were one is the only way of life for human beings, because, indeed, this is the way of life which the innate nature of man demands. We are discovering that the highest ideals of man spring from man's own nature, and that the highest of these innately based ideals is the one that must enliven and inform all his other ideals, namely, love.<sup>21</sup>*

Increasingly, professionals in a number of different fields are becoming aware of this ultimate truth and also the consequences of the violation of this universal law of relationships. Syndicated columnist, Dr. David Goodman, made this observation some years ago:

*Behind the world of appearances with all its ideological clash and conflict, its moral fault and moral firmness, its grabbing and getting, its giving and serving, its desperate longings and total despairs, the discerning eye perceives the eternal struggle between love and hate. When there's enough love in the world, life can sustain itself. When the amount of hate exceeds the amount of love, life sinks.<sup>22</sup>*

Such glimpses into ultimate reality are obviously of the utmost importance in the understanding of people.

If education in its best sense is a training and preparation for all of life, then a teacher must make the subject matter not merely an acquaintance with a particular field or the means toward professional expertise in it but, more, a significant contribution to the student's view of life and the way he will live that life as a professional as well as a private citizen. This will involve a reach into the farther dimensions of the subject. The importance of this larger view is described by Seifert:

*In a larger perspective we respond less easily to mere impulse and desire. Awareness of our full environment makes a difference. Involvement in improvement becomes a more demanding priority. A life saturated in ultimacy can be better motivated for a heroic prophetic thrust beyond existing social arrangements. We act against poverty, for example, not because it is messy regarding human life but because it is rebellious against the central developmental thrust of the universe.<sup>23</sup>*

#### Some Ways of Teaching the Farther Reaches

Now a bit about ways of bringing Jesus Christ and the Christian world view into the classroom. First of all, it is the writer's conviction that doing this in a natural un-self-conscious or uncontrived way, the teacher must be as at home in his thinking about this area as he is in his subject-area specialty. When this is the case and the teacher's mind is open to the influence of the Holy Spirit, the integration of faith and learning will occur with growing frequency and self-evident appropriateness. Courses may well begin with a discussion of the limitations of humanly-acquired knowledge and the tentativeness and part of all that is true on the subject which textbook knowledge is. In other instances, particular points made in the textbook may suggest related religious principles.

Robert Fadeley of the Behavioral Science department is a master at integrating faith and learning and does so in part, by emphasizing the most important points of a course, comparing and/or contrasting these with related Biblical principles. In some instances, he directs discussion toward the ultimate consequent effects of behavior governed by un-Biblical principles. (He finds so much excitement and meaningfulness in exploring these spiritual dimensions of a subject that it was no problem, he says, to turn down a far more lucrative job in a secular institution last year.)

If teachers find this an exhilarating experience, so will students and particularly those who are the more intellectual. Several years ago one of these intellectual young men, a senior, expressed his disappointment to this teacher that so few faculty were integrating religion into their courses. "That's what a lot of us come here hoping to get," he asserted.

Adventist teachers need to be reminded again and again that "true education has to do with the whole period of existence possible to man."<sup>24</sup> This can be related to the farthest reaches of almost any subject (if not all), its highest level of meaning, and the ultimate reality of life itself. What could be more exciting to teach than this, or a greater challenge!

<sup>21</sup> Maslow, Abraham Harold. *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*. New York: The Viking Press, 1972.

<sup>22</sup> Bube, Richard H.. *The Human Quest*. Waco, Texas: Word Books, Publisher, 1971. pp. 30, 32.

<sup>23</sup> Seifert, Harvey. *Reality and Ecstasy, A Religion for the 21st Century*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974. p. 31.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 68.

<sup>5</sup> ————. "Social Science: The Public Disenchantment." *The American Scholar*, Summer, 1976. p. 335.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 341.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. 345.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p. 349.

<sup>9</sup> Seifert, op. cit., p. 31.

<sup>10</sup> Bugental, James F. T.. *Challenges of Humanistic Psychology*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967. p. 7.

<sup>11</sup> Nichol, Francis D. (ed). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 1. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1953. p. 1081.

<sup>12</sup> White, Ellen Gould. *The Ministry of Healing*. Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1909. p. 397.

<sup>13</sup> White, Ellen. *My Life Today*. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1952. p. 126.

<sup>14</sup> White, Ellen G.. *Education*. Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1903. p. 122.

<sup>15</sup> Buzan, Tony. *Use Both Sides of Your Brain*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1974. p. 16.

<sup>16</sup> White, *Education*, p. 80.

<sup>17</sup> White, Ellen G.. *Testimonies for the Church*. Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1882, p. 343.

<sup>18</sup> Booth, Walter M.. "Some Principles of Biblical Theism as a Basis for Educational Philosophy; Some Applications." An unpublished paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the course Ed 616, 1975. pp. 10, 12.

<sup>19</sup> White, *Education*, p. 18.

<sup>20</sup> White, Ellen G.. *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1940. pp. 20, 21.

<sup>21</sup> Montagu, Ashley. "A Scientist Looks at Love." *Phi Delta Kappan*, May, 1970, p. 467.

<sup>22</sup> Goodman, Dr. David. "Love Can Build Strong Families, Better World." (This column appeared in *The Kalamazoo Gazette* some years ago. Date is unknown.)

<sup>23</sup> Seifert, op. cit., p. 69.

<sup>24</sup> White, *Education*, p. 13.

# The Christ-centered Religion Classroom

Daniel Augsburger

It may seem that it should be taken for granted that all religion classes will be Christ-centered by their very nature. How can a Christian talk about religion without talking about Christ? How can he discuss the Bible without making references to Christ?

But you know that religion classes are not automatically Christ-centered. You can remember those Bible classes that were accurate in history, learned in languages, profound in philosophy, stimulating in theology, but from which Christ seemed to be absent. We, Bible teachers, know that also. Sometimes I leave a class with a feeling of intense frustration. I came so short of what I had planned and prepared for. That's when I get down on my knees when I return to my office and beg the Lord to give me what I lacked.

I remember once after a class in Biblical backgrounds telling myself: Daniel, an atheist could have said everything you said today! How bad I felt! How I prayed for that power that would have given life to my class. It had not been a bad class, technically. The homework had been done. I had used my little knowledge of Biblical languages to clarify some of the pass-

ages we had used. To the best of my ability, I had tried to draw a picture of the times when the incidents we were discussing took place. Ancient history, ancient culture, ancient literature, had contributed to the lecture and the discussions. Nobody had fallen asleep or yawned conspicuously: yet I felt we had chiseled a beautiful frame but that the center was empty. An atheist could have said much of what I had taught. The atheist could have chiseled the frame, but only a Christian could fill the center.

It is possible to teach a religion class in a very humanistic manner. One can attempt to use all the resources of linguistics, history, and culture to enlighten the ancient Biblical books. The Bible can be considered like all great books of literature, with much appreciation but with a detachment that allows a cold, objective evaluation. Its message can be regarded on the same level as all other religious viewpoints, with equal sympathy and equal criticism.

I can think of a certain class on the prophets where we were just as bound to the study of vocabulary as in one class on Cervantes I took at the University of Michigan. That professor was

famous—or infamous—because he spent all his time on small and smaller matters of philological interest. How disappointing to ignore the philosophical insights, the humor, the narrative power of Cervantes to waste our time on the dry consideration of the etymologies of rare words.

It is not my purpose to say that the study of Biblical languages is useless. I feel that one of the greatest thrills of my life, and still is, is reading the New Testament in the original Greek and I regret that the M. Div. program is such that I have never developed enough fluency to do the same for the Hebrew Old Testament.

The study of ancient cultures, the knowledge of history has helped me immensely in seeing better the significance of the Biblical text and the issues that it raises. I would never do without the help I derive from my classes in Old Testament and New Testament Archeology; but all that knowledge does not in itself provide for a Christ-centered religion class.

#### The Dogmatic Approach

Now some may think that I could have improved my class by making it emphatically dogmatic. I could have tried to impress upon the minds of my students the folly of the conclusion of the "liberals," as we call them and attempted to grind into their thinking the idea that the Bible is true and that it can defy any challenge. This device to anchor students in the truth and in the church is very laudable. Keeping young Christians from the destructive influence of a negative rationalism is a sound motive. Attempting to provide a student in a Christian college with ways of winning others to our trust in the Bible is worthwhile. But is a dogmatic class a Christ-centered class? I doubt it.

In fact I have discovered that too often teachers who follow that dogmatic approach tend to leave the student ignorant of the conflicts that rage in the religious world. In their effort to protect the student they build a very fragile foundation that includes as much ignorance as truth, and which is likely to crumble when he leaves the sheltered halls of the Christian college and moves into the world. I still remember a class in the Teachings of Jesus taught by a devout Christian. In that class we never were given any hint of some of the questions that can be raised and we were not provided with any help to answer questions. I do not believe that such a class was what we expect when we speak of a Christ-centered religion class.

Beside the humanistic and the dogmatic approaches we can consider the devotional approach. There, the teacher turns into a preacher and the class is made up of a sequence of sermonettes on topics of devotion, doctrine, morality, etc. This betrays at times a lack of preparation, but I am sure that some teachers feel that the old *lectio* and *contemplatio* of the Medieval monks is the best way to help students grow in

their Christian experience. As a rule such disjointed teaching makes little impression upon the students and leaves them totally perplexed about how to prepare for examinations. It is that kind of Bible teaching that quickly destroys the credibility and respectability of religion classes. It is because too many students have been led to believe that religion classes should be easy times of devotion, of religious cosmetic, that they resent being required to furnish the same effort in religion classes as in their other classes.

What do we mean by a Christ-centered religion class? Do we think of a greater emphasis on the Gospels than on the prophets? Do we want the New Testament to receive much more emphasis than the Old? Is a Christ-centered religion class one where an effort is made to find our Lord everywhere in type and antitype, in promise and fulfillment?

What do we mean by a Christ-centered religion class? I believe that it is a class that fosters a personal relationship with the living Christ. And this, my friends, is not accomplished merely by revamping our class outlines or revising our reading list, or changing the type of our examinations. If we want to have Christ-centered religion classes, we must be Christ-centered. If we want Christ-centered religion classes we must derive our life from Christ's life, we must receive our ideas from the source of all wisdom. We must be transformed by the renewing of our minds. To teach Christ-centered religion classes, we must not only know about Christ, but we must know Him personally.

#### Maintaining the Eternal Connection

Therefore, our success as religion teachers does not primarily depend upon the number of our degrees, or on the name of the university where we acquired them, but upon a continuing sharing of the life of the Lord. As we attempt to place Christ at the center of our classes we must remember that Jesus promised His disciples that the Comforter would bring back to their minds what Jesus had taught, that He would lead them into additional truths, that He would give us what belongs to Christ. To teach Christ-centered religion classes calls, then, for Spirit-filled lives.

A Christ-centered religion class is also a church-centered class, for the church is the body of Christ. As religion teachers, we must show toward the church the same regard as we show toward Christ. We cannot use class time for cheap shots at the church leaders or its members. We cannot try to build our egos by talking as if we had all the answers to the problems of the church. On the other hand, if we really believe that the church is the body of Christ we will not slumber in our ivory towers when worldly forces threaten it, or when some may try to use it for personal advantage. We will care for the church because it is the body of Jesus and we will be seeking eagerly the power of the Spirit that makes the church grow.

#### Communication Is the Key

As I look back at that frustrating class I mentioned awhile ago, I realize that in my eagerness to be sure to have all the information necessary, I cut short my time of communion with the Lord; and as I talked I realized that the fountain of living water was not flowing as freely as it should have. No learning can replace the influence of the Holy Spirit. No theory of salvation can match the experience of having the assurance of being a child of the King. It is always a temptation for a teacher to want to draw from his fount of knowledge, to use his notes so much that his words are as dry as the sand on the beach. A Christ-centered class is a class where the best possible human preparation is watered by the life-giving stream from heaven that comes from a communion with God.

We must remember that the real spiritual insights do not come from encyclopedias, but from God Himself. Jesus told Peter that His confession of faith did not come out of His earthly nature, from flesh and blood, but from the Father in Heaven. (Mt. 16:17). In another place Jesus said: "I thank you, O Father, because you have hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes—No man knows the Father, save the Son and no man knows the Son except the one to whom the Son reveals Himself." (Mt. 11:25-26). This experience of finding God is not a once-in-a-lifetime thing. It must be a way of teaching in our classes. But that cannot take place

if the world interferes with the communication.

This personal experience makes possible a different relationship with the students. Ellen White states that "the beauty of Christ's countenance, the loveliness of his character, above all the love expressed in look and in tone, drew to Him all who were not hardened in unbelief." (DA 254). Or elsewhere: "He spoke as one familiar with heaven, conscious of His relationship to God yet recognizing His unity with every member of the human family." (Ibid.)

This personal experience renders one able to give the students a proper perspective on values. Talents, time, opportunities can be presented in their true dimension, as fraught with eternal consequences. A Christ-centered class makes Christ so real that all human aspirations are shaped by that vision.

#### Eternal Values Paramount

In a Christ-centered religion class, all human values are judged in the light of Christ's values. Our love for material things, our ambitions, our desire to become great, our striving for the first place are judged by Christ's humility and self-denial. The way we use our fellow men, the way we readily take advantage of those who know less than we do or who are weak, the way we crush others by our thoughtlessness and our lack of courtesy appear into the dazzling light of God's judgment. Phony claims of love for God and love for man, empty words of thankfulness and praise, meaningless tokenism, all these come into sharp focus when the teacher receives his light from heaven. The ideas and motives that our society worships and which we unconsciously tend to serve are exposed by the light of the Word of God. Orthodoxy stops being a sterile set of assertions and becomes a light that enlightens our world.

It is in that setting that the revision of the class outline can take place. I was deeply impressed by the talk of the Dean of the Baptist College of Grand Rapids this year in faculty meeting. I realized that my teaching of divine truth did not always illumine enough the problems of the daily life of our students, and afterwards I made a systematic effort to connect my teaching with real situations on our campus. The school paper was frequently referred

to. Again and again we saw how Jesus spoke to our school, to our students. How animated our class discussions became. We were talking theology, but it was live theology. It led people to ask for prayer. At that point all the resources of language, history, and culture took a new significance for the students, for the gospels were speaking not only to people in general, but to themselves and they were eager to receive all the help that scholarship can give to him who searches the Word.

Thus a Christ-centered class can be scholarly and spiritual at the same time.

This perspective on the scripture cannot be obtained in a state college. It is the Pearl of Great Price which it is our privilege to help our students to discover, the Hidden Treasure where we can lead those who come to our campus. If we truly do what we can do in Christ-centered religion classes we can justify our urging parents to spend the cost of Christian education.

This leaves me with a couple of very delicate questions. How can we distinguish between the life-giving authority that characterized Jesus' teaching from the mind-warping dogmatic tone of many religious teachers? Jesus Himself gives us the example to follow—when the rich young ruler came to Him. He involved him in the thought process. When the scribe asked "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus did not answer by a tirade against racism, by an eloquent speech on rights and equality, but He involved the man in finding the solution to the problem that he faced. We speak in philosophy of Socrates' intellectual midwifery, but we must not forget that Jesus knew how to use questions just as skillfully as Socrates. In other terms, a Christ-centered religion class is also a student-centered class. The teacher cannot have his eyes glued to his notes, but, as Jesus did, he must look at the people, he must interact with them, he must become small that they may grow.

#### Truth in Today's World

The last question is closely related to the preceding one and has to do with the problem of sharing with the student information on religious views other than his own. Should we completely shelter students in Christian colleges from intellectual currents that may threaten their faith? Ellen White says that Jesus had nothing to do with the

subjects of dissention among the Jews. It was His work to present the truth. I think that this gives the solution to the problem. It is interesting to contrast the Talmud approach to divorce with Christ's. The rabbis centered on human disagreements. They contrasted the teachings of different wise men, but did not lead their students to the source of knowledge. God's teaching was obscured by human ideas. Jesus, on the contrary, led his listeners to the fount of all knowledge. In a Christ-centered religion class we cannot ignore the questions and issues with which our society grapples, but we cannot meet them merely with human reason. We must turn to the Word of revelation.

#### A Challenge

To conclude I'd like to read a few lines of the book *Education* which I believe summarize the goal of Christ-centered religion classes:

*Through Christ had been communicated every ray of divine light that had ever reached our fallen world. It was He who had spoken through every one that throughout the ages had declared God's word to men. Of Him all the excellences manifest in the earth's greatest and noblest souls were reflections. The purity and beneficence of Joseph, the faith and meekness and long-suffering of Moses, the steadfastness of Elisha, the noble integrity and firmness of Daniel, the ardor and self-sacrifice of Paul, the mental and spiritual power manifest in all these men, and in all others who had ever dwelt on the earth, were but gleams from the shining of His glory. In Him was found the perfect ideal.*

*To reveal this ideal as the only true standard for attainment; to show what every human being might become, what, through the indwelling of humanity by divinity, all who received Him would become—for this, Christ came to the world. He came to show how men are to be trained as befits the sons of God; how on earth they are to practice the principles and to live the life of heaven. (Ed 73-74).*

What a challenge to those of us who teach religion! What a challenge to all of us who teach at Andrews! To show "how on earth people are to practice the principles and to live the life of heaven." May God help us to do that so that our campus will live in 1977-78 the life of heaven.

# Presenting Christ In the Humanities

Morris L. Taylor

Teachers in the humanities area need to be able to cope with the challenges of contemporary society. The humanities teacher frequently faces indifference and sometimes outright hostility. Today's youth undoubtedly reflect the attitudes of their parents, peers, and pastors.

The study of the humanities should contribute a vital portion of the young Christian's education. These subjects enhance our God-given love for the beautiful, sharpen the spiritual perceptions and increase the student's sensitivity to human needs.

Place Christ in the center of a circle. Around the circumference are timely points. Each numeral from I to XII radiates from the center, Christ.

## Christ-centered Christians

The character of the teacher is based upon a firm commitment to Christ. Daily desiring to grow in grace, the Christian teacher exhibits the fruits of the Spirit in all professional relationships. In classroom and counseling situations, he or she strives to be fair, honest, sincere, and kind.

The personality of the dedicated teacher reflects a close relationship to Christ, the Master Teacher. Students like to feel comfortable. The approachable teacher is caring without becoming nosy; friendly without becoming familiar; firm without becoming domineering; and confident without becoming proud. A cheerful optimism pervades this teacher's classroom.

*The untiring patience, the sensitive perceptiveness, the fearless confrontation, the sympathetic kindness,—all of these and more Jesus bids us, His teacher-ministers, to show forth. Like Peter, we must see clearly at last His call to us: "A student is not greater than his teacher. A servant is not above his master. The student shares his teacher's fate. The servant shares his master's."*

must patiently deal with student's weaknesses and continually encourage each student's best qualities. The teacher should answer questions honestly without belittling the student. Because of the longer period of Christian growth, the teacher is expected to exhibit greater patience and self-control in sensitive classroom situations than the students.

The caring teacher considers the needs of the students above personal needs. Accept the scholars as they are and lead them into growth experiences. A sense of humility before Christ will lead the educator to deal sympathetically with struggling students. Do not overlook defects, but faithfully correct wrong in such a manner that the one reproved will still be your friend.<sup>3</sup>

## Christ-centered Communion

There is a place for worship activities in the humanities classroom of a church-related college. It is desirable for teachers to differ in their approach. Some may pray with students at the beginning of each class period, while others may pray only before examinations. Either students or the teacher may pray on special occasions such as the illness of a class member, during the Week of Prayer, or before a senior recital.

Sharing in a spontaneous, casual setting is often more effective than sharing in a planned, formal setting. Contacts with students in a hallway, on the recreation field, or in the home are very meaningful in the sharing of Christian lifestyles.

## Christ-centered Competition

Christian teachers feel the responsibility to excel. It is never appropriate to hide behind piety to excuse poor workmanship. Personal communion with God through His Word and through prayer strengthens the mind making it possible to consider the great themes related to the study of the humanities.

Consider this challenge given by Ellen White to both young men and women:

*Many have felt, "Well, it doesn't matter if we are not so particular to become thoroughly educated," and a lower standard of knowledge has been accepted. And now when suitable men are wanted to fill various positions of trust, they are rare; when women are wanted with well balanced minds, with*

## Christ-centered Conduct

The most effective teaching is by example. Christ said, "I have given you an example that you should do as I have done."<sup>2</sup> What a tremendous ideal! By the grace of God the teacher is enabled to make strides towards this goal.

The teacher's relationship to the class is important. The successful leader adapts his methods to the group. He also relates to the individual personalities of the members of the group. While treating each student on a personal basis, the teacher shows no favoritism in the classroom. A small to medium-sized class proves a great advantage to the goals of the teacher of humanities.

The subject matter in the humanities area often involves personal preferences and engenders strong reactions. This presents the class leader with numerous opportunities to listen attentively to student opinion and ideas. The teacher

*not a cheap style of education fitting them for any position of trust, they are not easily found. What is worth doing at all, is worth doing well. While religion should be the pervading element in every school, it will not lead to cheapening of literary attainments. While a religious atmosphere should pervade the school, diffusing its influence, it will make all who are truly Christians feel more deeply their need of thorough knowledge, that they may make the best use of the faculties that God has bestowed upon them.<sup>4</sup>*

While teachers are striving with their pupils for excellence, it is important to choose reasonable goals and to place a correct estimate upon God-given abilities. The apostle Paul advises, "Don't cherish exaggerated ideas of yourself or of your importance, but try to have a sane estimate of your capabilities by the light of the faith that God has given to you all."<sup>5</sup> And Christ made it clear in the parable of the talents that not all are equally gifted, but rather that all are equally responsible.<sup>6</sup>

Christians involved in the pursuit of excellence in the arts need to be aware of the potentially bad results of competition. Rivalry for the first place may lead to the fruits of the flesh which include enmity, jealousy, selfishness, and envy.<sup>7</sup> The Spirit of God leads to a loving concern that each person has the opportunity to reach optimum growth.

Professor H. B. Hannum calls attention to the motive behind performance in one humanities area in his article entitled, "Rivalry—A Dangerous Motive!"

*Often, musical performances are judged by the wrong standards. A musical performance is not to glorify self, to show off technique, to gratify the selfish wishes of parents or teachers. A performance should be judged not on such matters as technical brilliance, difficulty of the music, but on artistic values and aesthetic appeal. This, of course, will involve technical matters, which are always subordinate to artistic values. Neither is the value of a concert to be measured in the fee that is paid to the performer, but in the quality of the music and the artistry of the performance.*

*It is unfortunate that the pressures of non-artistic values and commercialized influences are even affecting some of the programs in our own institutions. The contest, rivalry, prizes, entertaining factors, status seeking, and unworthy motives at times seem to offer a more attractive appeal to our human nature:*

### Christ-centered Classrooms

Obviously the teacher himself or herself does the most to create the atmosphere of the classroom. The enthusiasm of the instructor for the subject is contagious. Yet, it is important to remember that the student is the focus of attention. The sensitive teacher considers the feedback from the students and tries to serve their needs.

The physical environment of the classroom is more important than many instructors realize. While the university provides good classrooms with temperature control, adequate lighting and proper ventilation, it is important for the teacher to add thoughtful consideration for the comfort of the class. An orderly and pleasing room provides a good learning situation.

Fortunate is the teacher who can add something of his or her own personality to the teaching environment. Administrators should encourage teachers to participate in the planning and decorating of the areas which they use in the educative process. A modest budget should be provided for annual changes or additions. Welcome is the new trend providing for educational specifications to be developed through departmental meetings for the use of professional planners and architects.

### Christ-centered Choices

In planning activities for the class, a Christian teacher has the privilege of choosing assignments that will enrich the students spiritually as well as meeting the specific academic requirements. Care should be exercised in the selection of literary works, art monuments and musical compositions for study. It is not enough that critics laud a masterpiece for its aesthetic and cultural merits. There should be some qualities in each work studied that would benefit the young Christian. Furthermore, to avoid offending the conscience of a sensitive youth, it may be necessary to plan an occasional alternative assignment. Students usually appreciate the teacher who takes the time to explain the reason for the study of certain materials.

In addition to the factual emphasis the humanities teacher should adopt goals which include concepts and values. The syllabus might include: (1) creative self-expressions for the happiness of the individual, (2) concepts for

the development of character, (3) practical ideas useful in many career areas, (4) ideas helpful in reaching people with the gospel, (5) understandings that promote meaningful interpersonal relationships, and (6) principles upon which to base value judgments. Many in the academic world have given up trying to achieve these goals in the classroom. It is precisely in these areas that the Christian teacher can make a valuable contribution. Through the power of prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit the Seventh-day Adventist teacher can transcend the normal limitations of the subject matter.<sup>8</sup>

### Christ-centered Curricula

In the selection of textbooks, additional readings, laboratory assignments and study topics, the teacher has an opportunity to exhibit mature judgment. A Christian world view should dominate this material. Christian principles should be upheld rather than scorned.

The collegiate and graduate classroom is the place to discuss important issues which face our church and our world in the area of art, foreign cultures, literature, music and philosophy. Various viewpoints should be expressed and acknowledged. However, it is the privilege of the humanities professor to guide less experienced Christians in finding a set of values. Usually it is helpful for the teacher to express a personal view or a satisfactory conclusion, even if it is a tentative one. Where God has given us insights bearing on important issues, the discussion leader should present these as authoritative. The discussion of controversial issues should generally be confined to the area of the professor's competency and to topics related to the humanities class.

Ellen White encourages the search for truth, yet she cautions against exposure to all ideas.

*Teachers should lead students to think, and clearly to understand the truth for themselves. It is not enough for the teacher to explain or for the student to believe; inquiry must be awakened, and the student must be drawn out to state the truth in his own language, thus making it evident that he sees its force and makes the application."*

And the balancing statement warns:

*The youth should not be suffered to learn good and evil indiscriminately, with the idea that at some future time the good will predominate, and evil lose its influence. The evil will increase faster than the good. It is possible that the evil they have learned may be eradicated after many years; but who will venture this? Time is short."*

### Christ-centered Correlations

The subjects comprising the humanities area are rich in opportunities for the presentation and discussion of spiritual concepts. Indeed, the teacher can focus upon materials that create significant openings for a discussion of moral and ethical issues. Good questions, and meaningful illustrations may serve as springboards for thought-stimulating experiences.

The arts are capable of expressing almost every facet of life. Despite some strong sentiment to the contrary, individual Christians are strongly affected by the art, music, and literature to which they are exposed. Both present and future actions are influenced by the stimuli received through the senses.

It is important to separate as much as possible taste and principle. A high degree of cultural sophistication cannot be an accurate guide to moral worth; nor are simple expressions to be shunned as ignoble. The Christian educator realizes a dual duty. It is the teacher's first task to influence the selection of good arts in the moral sense. It is the second privilege to expand the student's perceptions to comprehend more complex artistic expressions.<sup>12</sup>

### Christ-centered Currents

New trends in the arts keep the humanities teacher alert. An Adventist scholar constantly weighs everything new in the light of Christian principles. In a sense, this provides an early warning system against trends that would harm the church and its youth. Remember also that the professor has to be flexible enough to adopt good ideas and adapt them to the present.

There is a necessity of keeping pace with up-to-date methods, fresh materials and new artistic creations. We must be able to understand contemporary viewpoints and to communicate with the "now generation". The gospel is always adaptable to present human needs.

### Christ-centered Creativity

Seventh-day Adventists emphasize the creator role of Christ. When we exercise our prerogatives of limited creativity, Christ influences the artistic productions of those who claim His name. They are infused with faith in God's plan of redemption, with hope of salvation and life eternal and with love for God and mankind.

A sanctified imagination clothes the greatest themes in majestic and gripping terms. In his recent book which relates the creative impulse to Christianity, Bruce Lockerbie states:

*The world sorely needs Christians who believe every word they sing, every word they speak, every word they write because they believe the Word to be true. But it will not be enough merely to announce our faith. We must also redeem the rhetoric of the gospel from the sloppiness and sham of expression in which it too often appears, even in the hands of earnest Christians.*

*Too few Christians aspiring to proclaim the mystery, to make known the message of the Word, have taken time to study their craft and make certain of the gift.<sup>13</sup>*

The world-view of the Christian artist will shine through consciously or unconsciously. Would it be more appropriate, therefore, to emphasize Milton's poems rather than Shakespeare's plays; the cantatas of J. S. Bach instead of the operas of G. F. Handel; or the Biblical paintings of Rembrandt in preference to the sensuous court paintings of Rubens? In an undergraduate course it is possible to obtain similar technical and artistic insights from Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms* rather than studying the same composer's *Rite of Spring*; but what a world of difference in the subject matter and the effect upon the nervous system.

### Christ-centered Careers

The Christian has the highest motivation for professional achievement: Christ is the center of his career. Students are attracted to the teacher who is excited about his profession, while the dissatisfied teacher comes across as bored. Christian contentment is a great asset in any classroom.

College students are concerned about their future. They ask penetrating questions regarding job opportunities, potential Christian witness in their chosen field and satisfactions or re-

wards. Youth want to be assured that God can use them. Among their frequent queries are: (1) Will this career enable me to earn a living for me and my family? (2) What can my profession do to benefit humanity? (3) Will I be happy? (4) Will the pursuit of this career help to hasten the coming of Christ? (5) Can a Christian keep his or her faith and become a literary critic, a translator at the United Nations, a successful painter or sculptor, an opera singer, a humanities professor on the faculty of a state university, or a free-lance writer? Students look to their teachers as advisors and confidants.

### Christ-centered Completeness

Students read the total person of their professor. Such details as family life, physical health, attitudes towards school discipline, and many other areas are noticed. Therefore, it is important for the teacher to project a balanced view of life. It is an awesome responsibility.

Teachers are really performers. Our classroom is a stage where students view life. The sincerity or the hypocrisy of the actor is evident. As the facts of the plot fade, the concepts linger; but the values which cross the footlights last forever.

A noble character for an Adventist youth is not obtained by chance. Young men and women need the highest earthly education.

*The knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ expressed in character is the very highest education.<sup>14</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Gerald F. Colvin, "Jesus Christ—Master Teacher," *Journal of Adventist Education*, Volume 36, Number 2 (December, 1973 - January, 1974).

<sup>2</sup> (John 13:15 KJV).

<sup>3</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 420.

<sup>4</sup> Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 117-119.

<sup>5</sup> (Romans 12:9, Phillips Translation).

<sup>6</sup> (Matthew 25:14, 30).

<sup>7</sup> (Galatians 5:19-21, RSV).

<sup>8</sup> H. B. Hanson, "Rivalry—A Dangerous Motive," *Journal of Adventist Education*, Volume 30, Number 2 (December, 1967 - January, 1968).

<sup>9</sup> Neal C. Wilson, "Christian Education in a Time of Change," *Journal of Adventist Education*, Volume 32, Number 1 (October-November, 1969).

<sup>10</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 154.

<sup>11</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 301.

<sup>12</sup> In the new Bible lesson designed for the tenth grade, Quarter II, Lesson 16: "Music: Blessing or Curse," the author of this paper has written at greater length on this topic. There is a chart and explanation which might be helpful. An in-depth study of this topic is given by D. Paul Hamel in his recently published book entitled, *Ellen White and Music, Background and Principles*, published by the Review and Herald Publishing Association in 1976.

<sup>13</sup> D. Bruce Lockerbie, *The Liberating Word: Art and the Mystery of the Gospel*, (Grand Rapids, 1974), p. 73.

<sup>14</sup> Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Parents and Teachers and Students*, p. 37.