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CHRISTIAN VALUES:
A KEY COMPONENT IN ADVENTIST TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS

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Introduction

This essay proposes that teaching values and inculcating in students a desire for quality, can be accomplished in the Technology programs of Adventist secondary schools through the Integration of Faith and Learning. This integration can be accomplished by making Ethics a key component in the Technology programs of these schools. The rationalization for such a proposal is rooted in the fact that education to the Christian is more than an accumulation of knowledge or preparation for a career or vocation.

The goal of Christian education is to train its recipients for all life, which includes life on this earth and life in the "earth-made-new". It is a training that transcends the boundary of this life and reaches into eternity. This fact is supported by Ellen White in her book Education when she states that "True education means more than the pursual of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole man. It 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."[1]

It is therefore necessary for individuals who are prepared in academia in Adventist schools as well as those who are trained for a skilled career, to possess certain values which will govern all of their decisions. One method of achieving this goal is through integrating faith and learning.

The teaching of values is of fundamental importance since the students who have been recipients of a Christian education, on leaving these institutions of learning, are expected to enter the world, and live exemplary lives. The values taught are expected to permeate their lives in the home, the church, and the society in general. Robert Pazmino states that "Values are generally defined

as conceptions to which worth, interest, and goodness have been attributed."[2]   These are desirable attributes for the Christian.

For the purposes of this paper, the teaching of values is concerned mainly with ethics and aesthetics. Again Pazmino states that, "Ethics is the study of moral principles and practices...... Aesthetics is the study of beauty and the creative dimensions in life. For the Christian, aesthetics is based upon the fact that God created a world of beauty; this implies a personal responsibility to both appreciate and create beauty."[3]   In addition, George Knight states, "Ethical theory is concerned with providing right values as the foundation for right actions."[4]

A distinction is being made between ethics in general and Christian ethics in particular. As far as ethics is concerned, a student can make a decision based upon values, but the goal of Christian education would be for its students to make decisions and live their lives based upon Christian values, as they are expected to be representatives of Christ.

This distinction is based upon the understanding that Christians would not only make decisions which would demonstrate respect and love for their fellowman, but they would make decisions which reflect a desire to honor and glorify God, our heavenly Father.   This is viewed as one's Christian and moral responsibility.

Ethics, particularly Christian ethics, should be viewed as vital to the Technology program in Adventist schools, as our desire is to educate students for life and service in this world as well as for occupancy in the world to come. As a result, we need to train them to "think Christianly". According to Harry Blamires.... "The Christian mind should be recognized for what it is: something different, something distinctive, something with depth, hardness, solidity; a pleasure to fight with and a joy to be beaten by."[5]

Blamires convincingly asserts the need for a distinction between the "secular mind" and the "Christian mind". He points out that the Christian's conception of truth is a result of one's

orientation and interpretation of life and one's existence. He states that, "For the Christian, truth is supernaturally grounded: it is not manufactured within nature."[6]

He further states that, "Secularism asserts the opinionated self as the only judge of truth. Christianity imposes the given divine revelation as the final touchstone of truth."[7] This suggests that Christian education should equip its students with the ability and need to view truth and life differently from the non-christian or secular person. The student's interpretation of truth accepts God through His Word, the Bible, as the final authority.

The Christian of necessity would make all decisions fully aware of the eternal ramifications; situations would be viewed from an eternal perspective. Success and failure to the student of Christian education would therefore not be limited to outcomes for this life only, but would instead be viewed towards obtaining eternal success - salvation at Christ's second coming.

Integration of faith and learning is of vital importance to Technology, because this is an area of study which incorporates all disciplines. It includes the Natural and Social Sciences, Humanities, Business, Arts, Education and of necessity, Religion for the Christian perspective. This therefore means that all students can benefit from this exposure; those choosing to continue a career or training in an area of technology, as well as those who choose other areas of study. These students will enter the world of work as individuals who have internalized Christian values.

Technology, as a general education course, can therefore serve a two-fold purpose: to train students for technology and for the general world of work, while instilling values necessary for Christian living in society.

The general attitude to work and decision-making of students in Adventist technology classes should of necessity be different from the individual who has not been exposed to such training. The students of this Christian education should incorporate their

special and specialized training into their general lifestyle and decision-making.

Owing to the ongoing development of developing countries, many students with training in areas of technology eventually obtain employment in areas where they offer their skills and/or services to members of the general public. The ethical training and guidance to which they have been exposed in schools, become their guide to setting and maintaining high standards in their work.

The realization of this goal to integrate faith and values into technology programs would of necessity begin with the teacher. A technology teacher should be concerned with influencing students through real-life illustrations which are shared with them when examples are cited. It should also be noted that this influence has a dynamic impact as the teacher engages in modeling as personal examples are related based upon experience.

In this regard, Brian B. Houliston states that "The Christian technology teacher has unlimited opportunities to develop within his students attitudes of honesty, diligence, reliability and respect if he recognizes the potential available to him in the creativity of young minds. The one-on-one contact which he has with students affords him opportunities other teachers do not have."[8] Further support is found in Barry Hill's statement that "Teacher modeling always has the potential to add depth and meaning to the whole valuing process."[9] He also emphasizes that "Teachers impart values by modeling qualities such as sympathy, a well-ordered classroom and laboratory, and quality in their own work."[10]

These statements imply the dynamic role of the Technology program and its teacher. It is evident that a sound foundation in ethical training not only has an indelible impact which is limited to areas in technology, but an impact which affects other areas of study - Humanities, Sciences, Education, Arts and Business, as alluded to earlier.

There is of course one problem which will be addressed in an attempt to make this integration most effective. One such problem

is the idea of dualism. Walsh and Middleton (1984) define dualism as "...a split-vision world view. It separates reality into two fundamentally distinct categories....."[11]

The purpose of avoiding dualism in Christian thought and practice in education, is evident in the fact that Christian education needs to train students to acquire practices which demonstrate the ability to harmonize all aspects of life and living. This education should equip students with practices which encourage them to consider the impact their decisions would have on their entire being - `body, soul and spirit' and their impact upon others.

If students are encouraged either through the approach used in the classroom or through culture to compartmentalize knowledge as separate and distinct from practices in life, there would obviously be problems when one has to apply knowledge or transfer knowledge for problem-solving purposes. Learning for the Christian needs to be applied as the situation demands.

Benefits of Integrating Using Ethics

Integration using ethics, would encourage students to make decisions in relationship with values which, if effectively taught, would be accepted and practised. Such decisions would be made based upon what is expected from a Christian as God's representative. Following are some of the benefits which can accrue from this integration:

1. Positive School Culture

Students taking Technology classes at an Adventist school are exposed to, and develop a sub-culture which should be peculiar to Adventism, as we Seventh-Day Adventist Christians consider ourselves to be "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation and a peculiar people". (1 Peter 2:9). It is therefore necessary that we possess and exhibit character traits exemplary of Christians.

The role of ethics as a major component in the integration of faith and learning is one which can be used to culture genuine ambassadors for Christ and His Cause; that of saving men and women. This sub-culture should be effective in influencing students in developing a desire to glorify God in all that they do as they are prepared for life and service.

2. Worldview

Resulting from exposure to the sub-culture mentioned, is the development of an Adventist worldview, which would encourage students to view God as a loving Creator and Sustainer of the world. Such a world view would assist students in realizing their responsibility to represent God at all times. This (worldview) would have to dominate students' relationship and responsibility to God and to their fellowman.

Arthur Holmes articulates well when he states, "A worldview that ties our thinking together and gives direction to what we do is not simply a theoretical system of value-neutral propositions, but a valuational orientation to life. It expresses what we hope as well as what we think; it says what we hope as well as what we desire."[12] We want our students to demonstrate in their lives that they love God and desire to represent Him at all times.

3. Training

The Biblical injunction to "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old he would not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6), becomes a desirable outcome from a successful Technology program. As stated earlier, a concentration on ethics and aesthetics in technology programs would result in the "harmonious development" of mind, heart and hand.

Commenting on training up a child, Ellen White states, "In order to attain this object, the physical, mental, moral, and religious education of children must have attention."[13] The result of a rounded education is an individual prepared for this life and

for the future life. In fact, she further suggests that the education which is started here will not be completed in this life; it will continue throughout all eternity, never reaching completion. This suggests that there is no limit to a `rounded, harmonious education', which can be accomplished by integrating faith and learning in Technology programs.

4. Civic Responsibility

Teaching values in Technology programs provides an opportunity to teach students their civic and moral responsibility as Christian citizens. Students need to be taught and encouraged to be law abiding. The importance of rules for the workshop can be emphasized, while reinforcing the importance of the laws of the land and more importantly, God's Laws.

Today, students often seem to act and relate in a manner which suggests that there is little or no respect for the property of others, the environment or their country. Teachers of Technology have a unique opportunity in directly contributing to students' acquiring the needed skills with regard to citizenship. They need to be reminded of the respect due to others and their property. As students are expected to follow shop rules and demonstrate care for the school's equipment, their civic responsibility may be emphasized.

The teacher may use this as an opportunity to encourage discussion and reinforce the importance of laws, why they should be enforced and the benefits which are likely to be derived from conducting one's life in harmony with established laws, whether given by the teacher, the Church, the country or by God.

In addition to the benefits listed above, the proposed emphasis on Christian values should produce students who have developed certain positive character. Following are some of the objectives of Technology programs, taken from the S.D.A Industrial Arts Curriculum.

Accuracy

Being accurate and precise is a quality which is vital to producing products and providing services of high standards. While striving for and encouraging accuracy, students should be reminded of Jesus's command which states, "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:48) This perfection should not be limited only to its spiritual application and interpretation, but should incorporate a desire to strive for excellence in all of our undertakings.

Appreciation of worthwhileness of work

Sin has changed man's concept of work, and instead of being a pleasure as it was in the beginning, work has become a burdensome task for mankind. This change has led mankind to seek devices which would remove some of the labor associated with work. The developments in technology which we enjoy today are direct results of numerous hours of sacrifice and hard work. When God finished His work, it was not burdensome, but instead, a pleasure. He was therefore able to view His Creation and say "It is very good". Likewise, as His representatives, we should instill in our students the need to produce a product or offer a service with such quality that the product or service can be described as good; one with which God can be pleased because it is the individual's best.

Cleanliness

"Cleanliness is next to Godliness." This maxim indicates students' need to be reminded of their responsibility to be orderly, neat and organized in an effort to maintain cleanliness in the shop and in their environment of learning, play or dwelling. As this practice becomes a habit, students should find it natural to have a place for everything, thus returning tools, material, etc. to their respective places after use. Students would therefore be encouraged to view cleaning up as part of the production of a product or of offering a service.

"We who profess to believe the truth must make manifest to the world that the principles of truth and righteousness do not make people coarse, rough, untidy and disorderly. When we look at God's creation we see order."[14] Children can therefore learn by precept and example to keep things in a tidy and an orderly manner.

Competence and self-esteem

Students need to be encouraged to be as efficient as is possible in all that they do. Instilling this value would therefore mean that they will seek to master skills and tasks. This mastery would also assist in developing a high self-esteem, as students realize competence and take pride in their performances. These values can be further encouraged as teachers give praise for jobs well done, and encourage students to continue to perform well, and even to improve. There is also satisfaction and taking pride in a job well-done to increase competence and self-esteem.

Co-operation

This value is addressed as students are given tasks or problem-solving assignments which require group participation and co-operation. They are here given the opportunity to work together as they learn from and respect each other's opinions, differences and approaches to various situations. Working together would provide opportunities for students to look at things from another's perspective and consider other possible options. Such activities encourage co-operation with their fellowmen and with God in executing His purposes for our lives and His commission to spread His love to all mankind.

Creativity

This allows students to use their imaginative capacities and be original in creating designs or developing techniques applicable to problem solving. There is also the inherent potential to encourage students, to encourage planning as they may be required

to design a product, plan the sequence of activities/procedures, make a listing of materials, etc.

These activities would also provide experience in planning needed strategies to problem solving. Students would be required to think through a problem and propose possible solutions. This practice can become useful when students are posed with real-life problems which the individual may consider to be unique.

Honesty and integrity

Many problems in vocations in technology arise due to dishonest practices. The range of problems is wide including over-charging for a job and delaying to complete the job in an attempt to justify a higher price.

A Christian student, tradesman or worker would not exhibit such undesirable traits of character, nor practice "eye service". There would not be the practice of working only when the teacher, supervisor, customer or someone in authority is observing. Instead, there would be an honest use of time and materials as one thinks of a responsibility to God - to be a good steward, including accepting just reward for one's labor or services.

"God wants men (and women) in His service, under His banner, to be strictly honest, unimpeachable in character.... Those who realize their dependence upon God will feel that they must be honest with their fellow men, and, above all, they must be honest with God, from whom comes all the blessings of life."[15]

Included in this achievement is honesty and integrity related to obtaining unauthorized photocopying and the pirating of computer. Technology students would usually be interacting with computer technology on a regular basis, and would therefore need to examine ethical principles which are expected to govern their decisions related to this matter. As stated by Barry Hill in discussing values, he states that "One legal application (for teachers modeling values) centers on teachers' observation of

copyright laws. Their own habits and attitudes about student copying demonstrate values about the privacy of information."[16]

Resourcefulness

Resourcefulness is related to creativity, but encompasses more. A resourceful person is one who would not only use what is available, but one who shows skill in adapting to suit the need or situation. The resourceful individual would develop ways to achieve a goal or an end product by exploring a variety of ideas, methods, etc.

Stewardship of time and materials

Our world is filled with young people who seem ill-directed and unemployed. Cultivating habits which encourage the wise use of time avoids the problems which result from laziness and mischievous behaviors. Students need to be aware of the need to make the optimum use of their time as it is one of the talents for which we shall have to give God a strict account. As Christians, these youth can be protected from the encouragement to be indolent and lawless, through the wise use of time. According to Ellen White, "Where there is an abundance of idleness, Satan works with his temptations to spoil life and character.[17]

There is also the need to teach principles which will govern students' stewardship of resources. Christian education ought to be one of the vehicles through which citizens are taught and encouraged to utilize available resources. As a result, careful thought would be given to product design, in an effort to avoid material waste. There would also be careful consideration given to material selection to ensure that the material used for construction is suitable to produce an end product which would satisfactorily serve its desired purpose.

Importance of labor

The desire to work is often a means of providing exercise while also providing a source of income through employment. According to Ellen White, "Those who are not compelled to labor, frequently do not have sufficient active exercise for physical health. Young men, for want of having their minds and hands employed in active labor, acquire habits of indolence, and frequently obtain what is most to be dreaded, a street education, lounging about stores, smoking, drinking and playing cards."[18]

Conclusion

Making Christian values a key component in Technology programs of Adventist schools would result in training individuals for life. Students would be trained to think and act in a manner which would glorify God and provide a faithful, dependable and honest service to their fellowmen.

The resulting program offers individuals an opportunity to be trained in such a manner that they would not allow circumstances to dictate their course of action or decision-making. It is one which would encourage them to choose to represent Christ based upon their Christian conviction. Such a program offers the harmonious development of the physical through providing exercise; the mental by requiring thought necessary for problem-solving skills; values for thinking and making decisions from a Christian perspective; and the spiritual dimensions of the human as one thinks of preparation for the life to come.

This proposal is reinforced by Ellen White when she makes reference to a true education as one which develops the physical, mental and spiritual dimensions of the human being. About this quality education she states, "Such an education provides more than mental discipline; it provides more than physical training. It disciplines the character, so that truth and uprightness are not sacrificed to selfish desire or worldly ambition. It fortifies the mind against evil. Instead of some master passion becoming a power

to destroy, every motive and desire are brought into conformity to the great principles of right."[19]

Teaching Christian values as a major component in Technology programs in Adventist schools, can be derived the link to the integration of faith and learning in these programs. This emphasis on values should produce a change in students' attitude and general approach to life.

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3.Ibid, pp.90,91.

4.George Knight, Philosophy And Education: An Introduction In Christian Perspective (Andrews University Press, Berrien Springs, MI 49103, 1989),p.30.

5.Harry Blamires,The Christian Mind: How Should A Christian Think? (Servant Books, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1978), p.80.

6.Ibid, p.106

7.Ibid, p.107

8.Brian Houliston, Technology Education: A Vital Point of Faith and Living,(Christ In The Classroom Series, Vol. 5, 1991), pp. 17-32.

9.Barry Hill and Barry Plane, Teaching Values in Industrial Technology and Computer Studies (Journal of Adventist Education, Vol.56, No.2, Dec.1993/Jan.1994) p.36

10.Ibid, p.33

11.Brian J. Walsh and J. Richard Middleton, The Transforming Vision, (InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL 60515, 1984), p.95.

12.Arthur F. Holmes, <u>The Idea Of A Christian College</u>
(William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan,
1994), p.31.

13.Ellen G. White, <u>Fundamentals of Christian Education</u>
(Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1923), p.15.

14.Ellen G. White, <u>Child Guidance</u> (Southern Publishing
Association, Nashville, Tennessee, 1954) p.110

15.Ibid, p.152

16.Barry Hill and Barry Plane, <u>Teaching Values in Industrial
Technology and Computer Studies</u> (The Journal of Adventist
Education, Vol.56, No.2, Dec.1993/Jan.1994) p.36

17.Ellen G. White, <u>Fundamentals of Christian Education</u>,
p.123.

18.Ibid, p.35.

19.White, <u>Education</u>, p.18