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**FAITH AND LEARNING:
THE APPROACHES OF THREE INFLUENTIAL
ADVENTIST ENGLISH TEACHERS**

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Introduction

The history of Seventh-day Adventist college English teaching in North America has yet to be written.¹ If and when such a history is written, however, it seems clear that three teachers will dominate the pages devoted to the post-World War Two era: J. Paul Stauffer, Otilie Stafford, and John O. Waller. The influence of these teachers has been immense—the result of their personalities, standards, vision, and dedication to Adventist education. At present, fifty percent of the English teachers in the eleven North American Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities offering degrees in English have been students of one or more of these three teachers.² Even though all three of the teachers are now retired or semi-retired, their influence persists in the legacy passed along to these former students who are now teaching others.

Former students fondly remember the three professors. "Paul Stauffer influenced my life more than any other teacher and friend," noted one ("Memories of a Great Teacher: J. Paul Stauffer" 2). Former students, writing about Stafford for *Adventist Heritage*, emphasize that "many students credit Stafford with being their most influential teacher" (Blackie and Norcliffe 45). When students of Waller reminisce about his classes, usually they point to his memorable in-class readings of poems as unforgettable and transforming in how they have come to view good literature (Jones Gray). These teachers' excellence has been recognized in concrete ways, also. Pacific Union College recently named the English Department building after Paul Stauffer. The Otilie Stafford Poetry Collection at Atlantic Union College composes hundreds of volumes related to modern poetry, housed in a special room of the library. Waller's former colleagues and students plan to honor him with a special lectureship and scholarship program as well as with a named room in the soon-to-be remodeled Nethery Hall at Andrews University.

During most of their teaching careers, the phrase "integration of faith and learning" had not yet become well-known in Seventh-day Adventist educational circles. Regardless, all three teachers inevitably faced the issue of relating their Christian commitment to their professional careers. What should be the emphasis of the college curriculum for Christian students? Should the curriculum be organized around some sort of Christian approach to the learning? What is the place of English studies in the Christian life? What reading selections are appropriate? How explicit should the teacher be in revealing his or her Christian commitment in the classroom? Is the teacher's Christian example the most important determining influence on students? An examination of the teaching practices and professional writings of these three professors from the perspective of what Arthur Holmes has called "The Worldview Approach" illuminates the reasons for their successes and underscores the challenges of integrating faith and learning for Seventh-day Adventist English teachers.

Worldview as a Perspective for Evaluation

In his book, *The Idea of a Christian College*, Arthur Holmes sketches four approaches to the integration of faith and learning: "The Attitudinal Approach" (47-50); "The Ethical Approach" (50-52); "The Foundational Approach" (52-57); and "The World View Approach" (57-60). Although Holmes does not specifically chart a hierarchy for his four categories, his descriptions suggest that "The World View Approach" is the most ideal approach in that the teacher with a well-thought-out worldview will, in essence, display the attributes and traits noted for the other three approaches in their approaches to their disciplines (58). Holmes' "World View Approach" thus provides a perspective from which to evaluate these three Seventh-day Adventist English professors in relationship to the integration of faith and learning.

James W. Sire's book, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog*, suggests helpful corollary information about worldview, which Sire defines as "a set of presuppositions . . . which we hold . . . about the basic makeup of our world" (16). Sire insists that these "presuppositions" (a person's worldview) form the basic "framework" within which each person deals with life (16). He goes ahead to note that a person's answers to seven questions are basic to defining anyone's worldview. Those questions have to do with the natures of "prime reality," "external reality," humanity, death, knowledge, "right and wrong," and "human history" (17-18). For Arthur Holmes, "The Worldview Approach" results in the "most embracing contact between Christianity and human learning, one that is "all-encompassing" (57). He rejects the notion that the faculty of a university can take an objective approach and can remain "neutral" while presenting a variety of worldviews. Such an approach results in an emphasis "on the parts rather than the whole" and "a fragmented view of life that lacks overall meaning," "an intellectual polytheism" that is as much "a worldview as is Christian theism" (57). In contrast, Holmes sees the Christian worldview as providing an excellent source for integration because it is "holistic" while at the same time "exploratory," somewhat "pluralistic," and "confessional" (58-59). The person with a well-conceived "Christian worldview . . . looks without, at life and thought in other departments and disciplines, in order to see these other things from the standpoint of revelation and as an interrelated whole" (59). As Sire observes, "everyone has a worldview" (16). Thus, inevitably, the Christian worldview of any teacher shows itself to some degree to students. The essential difference among Stauffer, Stafford, and Waller is the extent to which their worldviews became a conscious and articulate basis for their professional careers and their classroom practices.

The Teacher as Example: J. Paul Stauffer

J. Paul Stauffer graduated from Pacific Union College (B.A. 1941; M.A. 1944) and Harvard University (Ph. D. 1952). His college teaching career centered on the West Coast, first at Pacific Union College, from 1942-1964, chairing the English Department from 1955-1964, and, then, later at Loma Linda University and what is now La Sierra University, where, as Graduate Dean for both campuses, he occasionally taught courses in English from 1964-1978.

One former student praises Stauffer as a teacher who possessed "a cultivated intellect

[and] dispassionate mind'" ("Memories" 1). Another student remembers Stauffer as the "epitome of the educated 'Renaissance man'" ("Memories" 2). His elegant presence, his well-modulated voice, his controlled manner, his unruffled handling of student concerns, his wide reading—all contributed to his achieving an almost heroic stature among his students ("Memories" 2). The fact that someone as talented as he had chosen to use his Harvard degree at a small Seventh-day Adventist college made it clear that he was a committed Christian. In classes, Stauffer expected his students to think for themselves, requiring students to read, analyze and comment on poems in class, eschewing the lecture method, questioning and probing student comments in an attempt to get students to think.

This high value on clear thinking and respect for learning mirrors the Arthur Holmes description of Christian teachers included in his sketch of "The Attitudinal Approach" to the integration of faith and learning. Such teachers, says Holmes, realize that "in God's creation every area of life and learning is related to the wisdom and power of God" (47). In particular, notes Holmes, for such teachers, "required general education courses must present not narrow specializations in isolation from each other but ideas that stretch the mind, open up historical perspective, enlarge windows on the world, and reveal the creative impact of Christian faith and thought" (50).

For Paul Stauffer the general studies reform of the Pacific Union College curriculum in the 1950s was perhaps his most important, consistent attempt to integrate faith and learning (E-mail 4 June 1999).³ He notes that the central "text" for this reform movement was the well-known Ellen White quotation from the book *Education* about thinking: "Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do. . . . It is the work of true education to develop this power, to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thoughts" (17).⁴ Stauffer remembers how the faculty involved in setting up the new curriculum on specifically "Adventist" grounds consciously reacted against those in the Seventh-day Adventist Church who "cared only about the role of the college as indoctrinator" and whose "statement of purposes for the college were not very much different than they would have been for a junior camp, essentially ignoring the role of the college in fostering intellectual growth." He notes that after a three-year leave to study at Harvard (1946-1949), he returned to Pacific Union College to find the faculty deeply involved in discussions about curriculum, related "to the ideals of education elaborated by Ellen White and to curricular innovation in other institutions." He expresses his surprise at finding that the faculty were well acquainted with the book *General Education in a Free Society*, the influential study carried out at Harvard under the influence of James B. Conant, but a work which Stauffer "knew nothing about despite . . . [his] recent experience at Harvard," where Conant was the president. Stauffer became the chair of the sub-committee on general studies and worked with other members to create "a program that was 'distinctively Adventist.'"

Using Ellen White as a foundation for emphasis on thinking as a basis for the reform, the Pacific Union College faculty intended to develop "'intellectual Christians,'" partially as a result of their own feelings of inadequacy as some of them had gone to non-Adventist universities for doctoral study and found themselves "in competition with others whose undergraduate education had been much more demanding . . ." They wanted to "develop programs with more intellectual rigor than had been typical of many of the courses offered in the past."⁵ They also

believed that Ellen White's writings indicated the need to see all experience holistically and to "emphasize the inter-relatedness" of all the disciplines (Benedict 3). The resultant general studies curriculum emphasized "four divisions of learning" and four core class sequences, all interdisciplinary to some extent: "Introduction to Scientific Thought, Problems of Man and His Society, Introduction to Western Arts, and Biblical Philosophy." In principle, certainly, these interdisciplinary courses broke down the usual barriers created by traditional learning boundaries, moving towards Arthur Holmes' goal for general education courses, noted in his discussion of the "Attitudinal Approach," as those classes which "must present not narrow specializations in isolation from each other, but ideas that stretch the mind . . ." (50).⁶

What is most interesting about Stauffer's reminiscence about his part in this general education reform effort is his candidness about how the deliberately "Adventist" purpose of the curriculum revision was not really carried over into the classroom itself in a concerted, well-thought-out manner, even though the basic premise of the reform was to emphasize thinking, as supported by Ellen White counsel. Stauffer's words on this matter echo almost exactly Arthur Holmes' description of the "Attitudinal Approach" to the integration of faith and learning, in which the teacher's example is most important. "From the teacher," says Holmes, "the alluring contours of a Christian mind begin to emerge" (50). Stauffer notes similarly:

I am not sure we [the PUC faculty] ever articulated clearly what we meant by that [distinctly Adventist curriculum] or explicitly how we expected to accomplish it. I think it meant that teachers, themselves devoted to the faith and highly competent in their fields, would by their own Adventist commitment teach their students in a way that would function as a model of the integration of faith and learning (though in those days we did not use that phrase).

In the context of the times, Stauffer goes ahead to indicate, the faculty and students were engaged in a consistent program of worships, chapels, vespers, and Sabbath activities that emphasized "a distinctive sense of community" as a "community of faith in the pursuit of both spiritual and intellectual goals." Evidently, the faculty assumed that such campus-wide faith activities did not require conscious reinforcement with consistent and well-thought-out efforts to connect learning and faith in the classroom beyond the teacher's example.

On the other hand, inevitably literature teachers deal with historical and philosophical questions as they and their students approach texts in the classroom. And, more importantly for the Christian English teacher in a Christian classroom, theology must also surface as a part of these discussions. Arthur Holmes underscores how Christian humanities teachers must wrestle with such questions because of their disciplines' content as he describes the "The Foundational Approach" to the integration of faith and learning. It appears, however, that for Paul Stauffer, such aspects of the literature curriculum were less carefully planned than has been the case for Otilie Stafford and John Waller. Stauffer notes, for example, that when thinking about his career in relationship to the integration of faith and learning, "my first reaction, thinking only of my functioning in English courses, was that I never gave really serious and organized thought to accomplishing that integration" (E-mail 4 June 1999). This is not to say that he did not provide careful and thoughtful descriptions of the philosophical and historical contexts within which writers and artists produced their works. The Introduction to Western Arts general education course, for example, was organized completely around historical, philosophical and aesthetic

movements. As one who took this course and numerous others from him and who later team-taught interdisciplinary courses with him, I can verify that Stauffer thoroughly understood and emphasized these contexts, but evidently he did not go into the classroom with the purpose of explicitly tying these contexts to theology, preferring to believe that the students would be able to make these connections themselves or to raise questions only when the curriculum provided obvious occasions. As a Victorian specialist, he notes, for example, that his "interest in English poetry of the latter half of the nineteenth century" provided regular opportunities "to consider with students the challenges to faith that resulted from Darwinism." But he concludes that he is not sure that such "consideration contributed to the integration of faith and learning . . ." (E-mail 4 June 1999). As noted earlier, even the general studies reform, built specifically on an "Adventist" basis, did not include any specific and carefully-thought-out attempt to carry a careful plan about integration into the classroom. Although Stauffer seems apologetic about his role in relationship to the conscious integration of faith and learning (he calls himself a "horrible example") (E-mail 17 May 1999), apparently he has some reservations about any approach to such integration, whether the emphasis is on the teacher as Christian example (his approach) or, beyond that, on a curriculum built around a carefully-constructed integration (E-mail 4 June 1999).

Language Facility as the Core: Otilie Stafford

Otilie Stafford has been identified with New England, graduating from Atlantic Union College with her B.A. in 1941 and returning to AUC in 1951, after teaching a few years at an academy in Arizona and at what is now Southern Adventist University. Stafford's M.A. (1948) and Ph.D. (1960) are both from Boston University. Stafford chaired the English Department at AUC from 1962-1989. At AUC now for almost 50 years of teaching, although now partially retired, she continues to teach courses on a regular basis. Possessed of a charismatic personality, Stafford has long been known as a "challenging" teacher. "Although students are sometimes intimidated initially by the work load and Stafford's tough reputation, they quickly learn to appreciate her classes, in which open discussion of important issues is consistently encouraged" (Blackie and Norcliffe 45).

Otilie Stafford, similar to Paul Stauffer, has consistently emphasized the importance of thinking to Christian education. Like Stauffer, in her classes she expects students to analyze, interpret and question, "pushing" students "to be more honest and less glib in . . . reactions to class reading" (Wendth 10). In her 1981 article, "Do We Hold Learning in Contempt?" Stafford decries the state of SDA college students who "find it almost impossible to follow the logical development of thought, even in material written for popular reading To think through a problem and to express it in coherent and well-developed paragraphs is agony for them" (5). She attacks "Adventist" defenses of "ignorance-knowledge being full of error, evil, and various seductions. Some of our students sincerely believe that if they leave their minds empty, God will put whatever needs to be known into them. Not one of the early leaders in Adventist education would have agreed with that theory" (42). She goes ahead to plead for "creative thinkers and problem-solvers" (42) and sketches some suggestions for parents and teachers that will help the situation (43). Similarly, in her 1993 article, "The Questing Imagination," first delivered as a

commencement address at Canadian Union College, Stafford argues that "resilience of the mind and its ability to venture into new and (for the individual at any rate, unexplored) territories is a central concern of education" (6). She notes that the "educated person learns to live with . . . change" brought on by "knowledge and experience," and "learns how to welcome the unsettling of ideas and the shattering of visions . . ." (6). She emphasizes that development of the person is the key to education and cites Alfred North Whitehead, for whom "transmission of knowledge was not the role of education, but the transformation of the mind and the lives of students and of their societies" (7). Responding to her citation by *Change* magazine as "as one of only 280 educators across the United States to be honored by the Association for Higher Education and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching," Stafford commented again on her educational emphasis on thinking and ideas as transforming experiences:

To see the face of a student who has grasped an idea that changes her view of life, or that illuminates an area that was clouded, is enough of a reward to carry a discouraged teacher through weeks of drudgery. To feel the excitement of a discussion discovering new combinations of facts and ideas and opening up whole new areas for exploration is enough to carry one through a semester, or a year, or even a decade. To be a part of a world where the quality of mind matters is a joy. To see young people or adults reentering college being changed by such a world is an act of grace. (Brand 18-19)

Ottilie Stafford, similar to Paul Stauffer, has also consistently played a major role in various general education reform movements during almost 50 years as a faculty member at Atlantic Union College. Never one to feel bound by disciplinary borders, Stafford has consistently called for courses which relate learning in one field to learning in other fields. In particular, she helped spearhead the general studies cross-disciplinary courses called Program II throughout the late 1960s and the 1970s. Again, in the late 1980s, she chaired the committee that reformed general studies at Atlantic Union College and led out in designing more interdisciplinary courses, one entitled Human Values which centers on philosophical issues raised by the study of literature and art, and another titled Four New England Times and Places, which studies how history, literature, music and other disciplines can be tied to geographical contexts (E-mail 15 June 1999).

Ottilie Stafford has been lauded by a former student as one for whom "ideas like 'academics' and 'integrity' were part of the ethical fibers of her very being, and we [students] were expected to feel—and perform—likewise" (Wendth 10). In fact, in comparison with Paul Stauffer and John Waller, Ottilie Stafford has gone further than the other two in her *conscious* commitment to emphasize ethics in her professional career. In this way, she has clearly shown the elements of what Arthur Holmes has categorized as the most effective handling of the so-called "The Ethical Approach" to the integration of faith and learning, in which "an evaluative process can run through the structure of a course, in the selection of topics, in the assumptions stated at the outset, in assigned readings and papers" (51).

Stafford has consistently insisted on the importance of carrying over what is learned in the English classroom to how lives are lived. As one student has noted, "Stafford seemed much more interested in how we were growing than in the facts we were learning . . ." (Wendth 10). In her introductory chapter, "At the Center of Development," for *Language Matters: Notes Toward an English Program*, Stafford pinpoints the importance of language study in relationship to

character and moral development. "For although language development can take place without moral development (and does in an unfortunately large number of individuals), the reverse is not possible" (10). She insists that a person's "ability to make conscious and consistent moral and ethical decisions, to govern his life by values which he has understood for himself, and to make operative the regulating principle of love in his actions is affected by his capacity for thought, which is in turn determined by his language development" (10). It is no wonder, then, that Stafford ties her whole response to questions about integrating faith and learning to the ethical dimensions of life. To her, "what one learns becomes the basis for how one lives" (Letter 2 June 1999) Given her commitment to moral development, then, it comes as no surprise to learn that Stafford has been willing to venture beyond the boundaries of the traditional English curriculum to teach an honors ethics course on a regular basis, a course that she anchors in the reading of important works which touch directly on ethical issues and a course that she enjoys teaching as much or more than any other course she teaches. (E-mail 15 June 1999)

Stafford has also apparently been more overt than Paul Stauffer in her attempts to tie the inevitable historical and philosophical aspects of literary study to theological issues. "It is difficult," she says, "for me not to break forth into sermons when teaching literature. I probably do it far too much, and not just in teaching Biblical Literature" (Letter 2 June 1999). It would be a mistake, however, to take Stafford's reference to "sermons" too literally, however. Eight different summers I have been privileged to sit in her classes as an auditor and co-teacher in the American Literature on Location program. When she talks about "sermons," she is intending something far more expansive than the traditional Seventh-day Adventist sermon heard in church on Sabbath. As she notes, "I find it impossible, for example, to teach Shakespeare without talking about the vision of the good society in Shakespeare's plays." She goes ahead carefully to indicate that she does not "think that the main purposes of literary study are didactic, but merely that literature . . . grounds us in the precise," and "if that precise experience has religious implications, well and good. If not, well and good" (Letter 2 June 1999). Apparently, then, she takes advantage of each opportunity to show connections to theological foundations when the literary texts provide firm basis for such opportunities. If the text does not show a firm basis for such discussions, she will not drag theological issues into the discussion.

Of course, her long and highly successful teaching of Biblical Literature no doubt contributes to her reputation as one who regularly deals with foundational issues, including theological questions, in the classroom. She would, however, be the first to admit that some of the most troublesome responses to that course come from theology majors who prefer to study the Bible for belief and doctrinal issues only, apart from philosophical, historical, and aesthetic contexts, a student reaction for which she has little patience.⁷

The central pillar in Stafford's integration of faith and learning for the discipline of English rests in her concept of the role of language facility for the Seventh-day Adventist Christian, which she argues in the introductory overview chapter she wrote for *Language Matters: Some Notes Toward an English Program*, a Seventh-day Adventist team-written book, published in 1978, in response to general concerns raised at the North American Division Higher Education Council meetings held in 1976 at Andrews University. One of the questions the book attempts to answer is: "How does the teaching of English fit into the unique purpose of Adventist education" (Wehtje 5)? Stafford's chapter, "The Center of Development," attempts a theoretical

answer to the question.

Stafford begins her response with a quotation from Ellen White's book *Education*:
 More important than the acquirement of foreign languages, living or dead, is the ability to write and speak one's mother tongue with ease and accuracy; but no training gained through a knowledge of grammatical rules can compare in importance with the study of language from a higher point of view. With this study, to a great degree, is bound up life's weal or woe. (234)

Stafford then emphasizes that character and moral development are intricately tied to language development, since "language and thought are inextricably intertwined" (10). The "Christian is dependent upon his ability to understand, to think through implications in action, to understand consequences of action, and to direct his life toward that good which he can imagine and desire because he has language ability" (10). For Christians, "language development" and "development of moral understanding are seen as simultaneous" (10). The Bible is unquestionably the "center of Christian education," but at the same time also at "the center is the study of that subject which makes possible all understanding, thought, decision, and expression of belief—the study of the English language for those who speak English" (10).⁸

Having established the importance of English study for English-speaking Christians, Stafford then gives attention to how English should be taught. Again, she keeps language as the central, unifying basis for the curriculum. She deplores the compartmentalization of the discipline into grammar, composition, and literature, instead insisting that "language facility" is the core of the discipline, around which "cluster logic, grammar, composition, literature, speech—every activity that relates to language growth and the consequent growth of intellect" (12). She then charts three main levels of language study: the utilitarian, the metaphoric, and the symbolic. With the utilitarian comes a necessary emphasis on being "able to communicate observation and thought in logical and clear language structures" (13). Such language facility is necessary to contribute to the "well-being of the whole society" and (quoting Northrup Frye) "distinguish its [society's] temporary conventions from the laws of God and man . . ." (14).

Addressing the metaphoric use of language, Stafford notes that language on this "deeper level" affects "the emotions as well as the mind, and [is] closely linked to personality development . . ." (14). She emphasizes "that metaphor is the basis of most Biblical statement" and, as such, forms the foundation for a person's "commitment to Christian belief . . ." (14). Language facility with metaphor is grounded in "the study of poetry" and "other forms of creative writing," those forms which historically have been the center of literature courses (15). She insists that teachers "who feel comfortable teaching grammar, but do not like poetry, ought not to be in Christian English classrooms, for they will limit the ability of their students to experience and to express the feelings and thoughts that are at the center of Christian experience" (15).

An even deeper level of language facility than the metaphoric, however, is the symbolic. Says Stafford, "There is something that lies deep in the human nature that recognizes symbols as a way of getting at the central meanings of life" (15). She cites the Book of Revelation as an example of the richness of "symbolic structures" which allow us "to understand much more than theological statements could express" (15). "The adult and critical reader" comes to see how the symbolic uses of language function most completely and deeply through the study of such

literature (15-16).

Throughout her essay, Stafford emphasizes her Christian Seventh-day Adventist world view which sees language facility as essential to spiritual growth. She summarizes as follows: The English program the Christian teacher directs should center in the language development of the individual, with work in the basic structures of language, oral and written composition, and rich and varied selections of literature, with much emphasis on poetry and other metaphoric forms. The teacher needs a knowledge of psychology and of the structures of language, as well as a discriminating knowledge of literature and the ability to relate it to personal experience. (16)

Perhaps it is not surprising, given Stafford's commitment to precision in language, that she stoutly resists a label like "the integration of faith and learning." She expresses concern that such a phrase is "likely to mean whatever the speaker's prejudices want it to mean, and to be used for the purpose of political pressure . . .". She fears battles in which each side "claims 'sole possession of the truth.'" But she goes ahead to explain the relationship of faith and learning in her own way:

I believe that the individual of faith relates all the areas of life to her beliefs. Whether teacher or student. So the question seems to me to be not how one integrates faith and learning, but how one's learning is a central and organizing element in one's life. My desired relationship is between knowledge and commitment, or how for the person of faith, what one learns becomes the basis for how one lives. I suppose that is a kind of integration of faith and learning, but I don't think it's what most people mean when they use the phrase. (Letter 2 June 1999)⁹

Whether one calls it integration of faith and learning or a "relationship . . . between knowledge and commitment," Stafford's career has demonstrated an unusual example of how "a person of faith" can make "learning a central and organizing element in one's life."

Moral Criticism as an Answer: John Waller¹⁰

John Waller has been largely identified with the Midwest, even though he grew up and was educated in California, attending what is now La Sierra university for two years before finishing his undergraduate degree at San Diego State University in 1941. He completed his M.A (1949) and Ph.D.(1954) at the University of Southern California. This West Coast context continued as Waller taught at Walla Walla College (1952-1960), but he then began a long stint in Michigan at Andrews University (1960-1987), during which time he chaired the department for 16 years, building the world-wide Seventh-day Adventist Church reputation for the graduate and undergraduate programs in English.

Although Waller generally approached classes with a full sheaf of lecture notes and was less comfortable with open class discussion than either Paul Stauffer or Otilie Stafford, students could not help but be impressed with the thoroughness and thoughtfulness of his preparation and his carefully phrased responses to their questions. (Moncrieff) The fact that Waller had established himself as the preeminent literary research scholar teaching in SDA colleges also had no little effect on some of his students as they attempted to provide for class assignments materials that would not disappoint him (Moncrieff). Waller, also, has been remembered as a

man of high ethics and integrity, one who has been particularly concerned about treating students fairly. When it comes to questions of conscience about literary selections, for example, he has always encouraged that students be provided with alternatives. "At all levels," he writes, "I would try to respect the conscience of my students, not forcing upon them material which they might feel sincere scruples against reading Thus a student with honest scruples against reading any fiction of any sort might do equivalent nonfiction reading. A church advocating religious freedom could hardly do less of its own members" ("Contextual Study" 23).

Although Waller has concentrated most of his efforts on literary scholarship, he has also spoken and written about the importance of thinking for Adventist higher education in general. In an unpublished manuscript, "Encouragement of Critical Thinking in S.D.A. College Classes," dated 1961, stemming from a panel discussion at Andrews University on the "Evaluation of Student Performance," Waller notes that in working "with SDA college students, there has been nothing they've appeared to need more than practice in forming opinions of their own and defending those opinions in clear, logical discourse" (1). He compares his teaching of Adventist students in Seventh-day Adventist colleges to his teaching of non-Adventist students in two non-Adventist colleges and suggests "that SDA students are observably less interested in thinking for themselves than non-Adventist students are" (1). Waller notes that he has found such a lack of thinking particularly noticeable "when the teacher attempts the discussion method," although he admits to some lack of adeptness in initiating discussion (1). In the same document, Waller blames the lack of thinking among some Adventist students on their comparatively sheltered lives in academy dormitories that prevent students from even seeing "a daily newspaper" and, thus, having sufficient world awareness about which to write. He also notes the Adventist tendency towards an "authoritarian approach to knowledge of all kinds," depending overly on "a relatively few books . . . to find the answer to nearly all questions that arise" (3), resulting in a lack of openness to more than one answer or to students' discovering their "own answers" (4). Waller bemoans the "largely negative approach" which Adventist education has taken, in that it has prided itself on all the things it does not teach, such as "evolution," "fiction," and "fables," rather than developing into an education that at its best it could be "a dynamic Christian philosophy capable of transforming all branches of learning into a thrilling testimony to the power of God . . ." (4). Waller ends his paper on critical thinking with a plea for Adventist teachers to emphasize "thought-content" in writing, to assign reading that will "challenge students to discussion," and "to make more use of discussion methods" (6-7). Teachers should "welcome the questions [of students] as opportunities for discussion or challenges for every class member to get busy and search out the answers for himself" (7). The challenge is to take "the risk . . . of trying to develop in our students the ability to question and talk back to man-written books without at the same time becoming doubters of God's book" (7).

Waller showed Holmes' "Attitudinal Approach" in more ways than in his commitment to clear thinking and writing, however. When former students discuss Waller as a teacher, they usually emphasize how effectively he read poetry out loud. His Milton class, for example, was heavily dependent on his oral reading of the great Christian epics: *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. Not only did his readings underscore for students the importance of sound in the aesthetics of poetry, but also his willingness to show emotion, including moments when his voice would break or tears would come to his eyes while reading passages about Christ as redeemer

from sin and death, communicated to his students the depth of his Christian commitment in ways that doctrinal discussions could not have accomplished (Jones Gray).

Of the three Seventh-day Adventist Christian English teachers, Waller has probably been the most relentlessly historical in his professional career, particularly in his scholarly research writing. Almost all of his publications are approached from the historical perspective to literary study. His dissertation, "The American Civil War and Some English Men of Letters, 1860-1865: Carlyle, Mill, Ruskin, Arnold, Kingsley, Hughes, Trollope, Thackeray, and Dickens," began a direction that would continue throughout his career with such titles as "Charles Kingsley and the American Civil War," and "Ruskin on Slavery," culminating in his biographical/historical book-length study of Tennyson's close relationships to the Lushingtons, entitled *A Circle of Friends: The Tennysons and Lushingtons of Park House*. It is interesting to notice, also, how often in these historical studies, Waller's Christian beliefs led to connecting theological concerns with historical/literary issues, as in such publications as "Christ's Second Coming: Christina Rossetti and the Premillennialist William Dodsworth," "A Composite Anglo-Catholic Concept of the Novel, 1841-1868," "The *Methodist Quarterly Review* and Fiction, 1818-1900," "Doctor Arnold's Sermons and Matthew Arnold's 'Ruby Chapel,' and "Matthew and Thomas Arnold: Soteriology," as well as in the important "peculiarly Adventist" titles like "Uriah Smith's Small Epic: 'The Warning Voice of Time and Prophecy,'" "George Washington Rine: The Early Education and Literary Ideals of a Master English Teacher," "A Contextual Study of Ellen G. White's Counsel Concerning Fiction," and "Some Roots" (his chapter about early Adventist English teachers in *Language Matters*). Waller would not have been comfortable with those researchers described by George Marsden, who, "even at church-related schools . . . insist that it is inappropriate to relate their Christianity to their scholarship" (7).

Given Waller's almost obsessive interest in things historical, then, as well as his commitment to Christian beliefs, the two of which were often tied together in his literary research, it is not surprising that his classroom practices also revealed the Arthur Holmes "Foundational" integration of content matter with history, philosophy and theology. Former students testify to such an approach in his graduate-level literary criticism course which he taught for nearly 30 years at Andrews University (Jones-Gray). And in a most revealing unpublished article (originally delivered to a gathering of Adventist college English teachers in 1965), "Some Eclectically Garnered Reflections Concerning the Moral Criticism of Prose Fiction," Waller discloses some of his own teaching approaches to presenting literature in such a way that connections are made between the historical and the theological. He suggests that in the college Adventist English classroom, a sample work of fiction might be approached by sketching out to the class the "gradually altering moral assumptions of prose fiction over the last three centuries" (21). He would encourage students to respond to the "moral order" presented in the fictional work as compared to the various historical developmental phases for the fictional handling of moral order. He believes that approaching a work of fiction in this way "would keep the exercise free from becoming at once a narrow quarrel with SDA dogma; but if we are truly SDA's, as I assume we are, our SDA sensibilities will be present actively influencing our perceptions and our judgments" (21-22). Like Stafford, however, he is concerned to emphasize that the purely theological should not dominate literary study, for "criticism which is very self-consciously theological, very disposed to engage in rigid, systematic comparing of the truth claims of

literature with various neatly-formulated points of dogma, is likely to defeat its own purpose" (19).

Indeed, Waller's conscious and well-thought-out Christian Seventh-day Adventist world view approach to the integration of faith and learning can be seen most clearly in his attention to the study of literature as a part of the English discipline. Without question, Waller's concern with how Christians should study literature resulted from nearly one hundred years of controversy regarding whether or not Seventh-day Adventists should read fiction. That controversy centered on how to interpret certain statements of Ellen White which seemed to indicate a "blanket" condemnation of fiction reading. Before Waller, Adventist literature teachers in North America had attempted to answer White's condemnation of fiction in various ways, ranging from L. W. Cobb's support of this ban by his suggestion that English students should not read primary works of fiction but could read about such works in secondary sources to Harry Tippet's and Paul Gibbs' attempts to argue on practical grounds that the form of fiction is not evil in itself and that works of literature in any literary genre must be judged by their content and not their form. Gibbs even went so far as to assert that White may have included fictional materials in her collection entitled *Sabbath Readings for the Home Circle*.¹¹ Perhaps Waller was spurred to his exhaustive research on this collection by Gibbs' encouragement, since Gibbs was chair of the English Department at Andrews when Waller joined the faculty in 1960. Regardless, what Waller set out to do was to search out the sources for the various stories and readings included in the White volume. The results of his research were described in his highly-influential paper, "A Contextual Study of Ellen G. White's Counsel on Fiction," read first to North American Seventh-day Adventist English teachers in session at La Sierra College in 1965.¹² In this paper, Waller first establishes the religious context for White's comments, with special emphasis on the Methodist perspective, noting that statements condemning fiction, many of them in terms similar to those used by Ellen White, were perennial in American religious culture up through the middle of the 19th century (3-8). Waller then describes how the language of "addiction" was often used in such condemnations, just as White herself had used such terms (10-12), before enlarging on the problem of what White may have meant by fiction when she used the term, emphasizing that the very imprecision of the term fiction has contributed to difficulty in understanding her condemnations (13-16).

Waller concludes his paper by describing the results of his research into the sources for the collection of materials issued as *Sabbath Readings for the Home Circle*. He "painstakingly examined one hundred ninety-four stories" attempting to identify their authorship or the original source for publication (17). He notes that a few were from "well-known fiction writers of their day, including Harriet Beecher Stowe and Hans Christian Anderson . . ." (17). He was not very successful in identifying the authors of the other stories, since most of them were originally published anonymously, although he was able to tie down the original publications in which they appeared. In total, he was able to conclude that ninety-nine stories came from upwards of seventy-one different magazines, "several of which were known primarily as fiction magazines" (17-18). Since White herself included fictional materials in this edited collection, Waller argues, then her seemingly blanket condemnation of the genre cannot be read as such at all. Instead, he suggests, readers and teachers might well use her model for selection of reading material—a process which involved her in reading literally hundreds of possible selections for her book,

including in the final collection only those that passed her test of inclusion on moral and spiritual grounds rather than on whether they were fact or fiction (18, 21-22). Waller, however, always careful in drawing conclusions, cautions his colleagues to be very conservative in how they react to his insights about White and fiction, insisting that teachers act responsibly in relationship to the age and maturity of their students (22-23).

Waller's study continued the liberation of North American Seventh-day Adventist literature teachers from a constant defensive position in relationship to literature courses. It made possible a conservative inclusion in English courses of modern fiction and drama, approached on their own merits with critical judgment. It also led Waller himself to a more global consideration of the place of literature in the life of the Seventh day-Adventist Christian. In his paper, "Some Eclectically Garnered Reflections Concerning the Moral Criticism of Prose Fiction," also first presented in 1965 to the gathering of English teachers at La Sierra College, Waller used many of the materials he had reviewed for his paper on Ellen White and fiction to form a foundation for his unifying vision of how fiction (and, by implication, all literature) figures in the Christian experience.¹³ Although this paper has not received the attention of his other paper on fiction, this ambitious attempt at wrestling with a moral criticism of literature provides crucial evidence in understanding how completely Waller's worldview had become linked to his role as English professor.

In this paper, Waller bemoans the inadequacy of Seventh-day Adventist teachers in handling fiction because their education has excluded any serious handling of this genre (2), and emphasizes that "truth" is often an appropriate consideration in interpreting fiction, even though many Seventh-day Adventists still associate fiction with untruth (3). After enlarging on the differences between popular and serious fiction (5-6), Waller emphasizes that the serious fiction writer is presenting "not merely a representation of experience, but a judgment about experience" (8-9). Such an approach by a writer is best described "not as an act of creation, but of discovery" (8-9). And such discovery about life experiences means that "the novel is inextricably involved in moral issues" (12). The serious fiction writer, moreover, "wishes most intensely for you and me to agree with his world view, to adopt his values for our own" (13). As readers of serious fiction, Christian teachers and students, says Waller, must guard against overly identifying with fictional characters, for they must approach such reading without losing "the protective value of criticism" (15-16) and must wrestle with the moral effects of what they are reading (16-17). Waller emphasizes that this moral criticism of reading cannot displace aesthetic concerns but that for the Christian the two must function side by side (17-18).

Waller ends his paper by applying the principles he has been discussing to the Seventh-day Adventist English classroom. It is here that his worldview becomes most specific in its link to his profession as a teacher of literature. In order to encourage students to evaluate literature within the context of their Christian values, Waller suggests that a sample work of fiction be approached first by asking "each student [to] write out a paragraph stating what truth claims he thinks the story as a whole implies and upon what evidence he things [sic] so" (20). The writing assignment, then, serves as a foundation for class discussion which attempts to evaluate the story's "truth claims" in relationship to other story types of its time as described by literary historians (21). In essence, what Waller is asking his students to do is to examine the worldview presented in the story. His list of questions is revealing: "Is our story typical or better (richer and

more subtle) than . . . its contemporaries? Does it postulate some kind of responsible moral order? If not, is its amorality or immorality, obtrusive or kept in the background" (21-22)? He emphasizes the need of students to understand such tendencies as "sentimentality," as well as such worldview concepts as "naturalism" and "existentialism" if they are to adequately judge modern fiction (22).

After again emphasizing both the difficulty and challenge of encouraging Christian students to practice moral criticism in relationship to their reading, Waller ends his discussion with a statement of vision regarding "the possibility of a scholarly SDA literary criticism" (23-25). This, he says, cannot "be the work of one man" but, instead, must be a collective undertaking, one that can make "Adventist literary study . . . a distinguished profession" (25). Waller's plea here is the clearest indication from any of the three professors of the need to allow worldview to permeate one's professional scholarly activities within the English discipline. It is ironic that the plea has fallen mostly on deaf ears within the profession of Seventh-day Adventist English teachers, for Waller's successful defense of the inclusion of selected fiction in literature courses at Seventh-day Adventist schools has tended to make the majority of Seventh-day Adventist English teachers feel that there is no longer any need to wrestle publicly with fundamental questions of how their Christian worldview affects their scholarly and professional lives, resulting in their research and professional activities centering on questions that have little explicit connection with their Christian beliefs.¹⁴

In the late 1970s, in response to an administrative request of all teachers at Andrews University, Waller penned a specific response about his approach to the integration of faith and learning—a response that seems clearly to have been written under some duress and haste and says as much about the administrative pressure to respond as it does about faith and learning.¹⁵ One can see behind Waller's two-page response on the integration of faith and learning his distaste with the required task, particularly in light of his long career in which his faith had so much influenced his research and theoretical writing, a linkage about which the administration should already have had plenty of information in their files. In the two-page paper, Waller emphasizes first that literature and writing courses at Andrews University inevitably deal with "values, either specifically religious or broadly moral" (1). For a Christian teacher, then, teaching Christian students, such courses provide an opportunity for "sharing of Christian faith" (1). But he clearly feels offended by the administrative request, perhaps sharing some of Otilie Stafford's concerns about the politicizing of the phrase "faith and learning," for he goes ahead to argue that if faith and learning

are truly integrated, they will scarcely be detachable at all. Furthermore, since these delicate balances come daily and hourly as answers to prayer, they are often fleeting and evanescent things that can lose much of their essence if one attempts to describe them out of their context. To turn away one's eyes from the ineffable living experience, reducing it to "technique" set down on a report and taken credit for, seems to risk depreciating, even trivializing, it. These divinely given enablings can be as slight, and precious, as a tone of voice, a subtle pacing, in the oral reading of a poem—a welling up of feeling, a conveying of reverence. They are emphatically not something that "I do," but something God does through me, and they are seldom the same thing any two times. (1)

Waller also notes that his written report may well be untrue—something made up for the

occasion "in response to some sort of administrative fiat . . ." (1-2). He adds, somewhat sarcastically, that the truth of his report really depends on "matters of faith in one another. If you have faith in my integrity, you will believe I'm telling the truth as I see it, and have experienced it. But if you really have that kind of faith in me, why are you requiring me to make this kind of report at all" (2)? He returns, however, to his theme about a seamless integration that will result in spontaneous, God-given moments for the teacher, by saying "I have never marked a single lesson plan, 'Say so and so here, to integrate faith and learning in such and such a way.' If other teachers can do so, and make it sound unforced and sincere, I'm glad for them. No doubt, God works in different ways through different persons. Whatever I'm able to do, I must do under momentary inspiration" (2). Although in a sense Waller's stance in the paper seems reminiscent of that taken by Paul Stauffer—that is, the teacher as example of living faith enters the classroom and makes linkages as the content or the occasion demands without careful forethought—there is a slight difference in that Waller had worked out and articulated a rather careful theory of how Christians must evaluate literature from a moral perspective, and that theory, no doubt, provided a basis for the "spontaneous, God-given moments."

Conclusion

Although the careers of the three teachers were mostly over prior to Seventh-day Adventist educators showing any widespread interest in how to integrate faith and learning in the classroom, the three Adventist teachers of English, Paul Stauffer, Otilie Stafford, and John Waller, wrestled with problems of how their Christian commitment could or should best show itself in their professional lives, just as young Seventh-day Adventist English teachers today must also address such issues. They came to slightly different answers. Paul Stauffer believed that an Adventist perspective could best be shown in a curriculum based on Ellen White counsel, emphasizing a holistic approach through its interdisciplinary nature and stimulating student thinking for oneself. The teacher should provide an example of the well-led Christian life. The "distinctive Adventist" aspects of the curriculum are carried into the classroom by the teacher's attitude and willingness to explicitly tie discussion or lecture to the Christian worldview only when the course content justifies such a link or when students raise questions. He made little conscious attempt to create courses and class periods that consistently and explicitly expressed his worldview.

Otilie Stafford, by contrast, though resisting the label of integrating faith with learning, provided a conscious and convincing Christian theory for her professional life as an English teacher. She put language study at the center of the English curriculum, tying increased language facility with increased precision in Christian thinking and understanding, while also emphasizing that literature study should include ample emphasis on encounters with metaphor and symbol, those poetic uses of language which, for her, are the basis for Christian commitment. This holistic view of language and Christianity showed itself in Stafford's emphasis on the "transforming" experience of education and in her concern that students live better Christian lives as a result of their English studies.

John Waller centered his career more narrowly on literary research and the place of

literature study in Seventh-day Adventist Christian education. His deep feelings about his Christian beliefs revealed themselves through his moving oral reading of poetry in class. His historical research led him to provide new understandings for Adventists of how fiction might be approached. In particular, his willingness to emphasize a moral criticism of modern literature provided Seventh-day Adventist colleagues and students with a way of evaluating truth claims and worldviews in relationship to their own Christian perspectives. His concerns about his faith came through strongly in his protest against reporting to the administration about how he integrated faith and learning in the classroom, however. For Waller, that integration for the person of faith comes in a seamless manner and "God-given moments" which, at least in his case, could not be simplified and reduced to an administrative document used for who knows what purpose.

Which approach was best? Such a question really cannot be answered with any assurance. What is clear is that each teacher chose the way that seemed best to him or her during the times and contexts in which they taught. Stafford and Waller were more thorough in their conscious articulation of the religious and faith-dimension premises for their approaches to the curriculum and the classroom. On the other hand, Stauffer is probably right when he says that "a deliberately calculated and overt plan for accomplishing the integration may work with some students and not at all with others" and that much "depends on the example and character of the teacher" (E-mail 4 June 1999). What is certain is that students of all three professors owe their own present allegiance to the Christian worldview at least partially to the efforts of these three teachers and that when these former students discuss why they have become what they have become, the discussions usually center on these teachers as formative influences.

Endnotes

¹ John Waller has written about some early Adventist English educators in his essay "Some Roots." (See "Works Cited" pages at the end of this paper.) English teaching in North America includes emphasis on three related areas: the English language (including grammar and usage), composition/writing, and literature.

² This percentage is based on a count from the *1998 Seventh-day Adventist Church Yearbook*.

³ All the content and quotes from Stauffer in this paragraph and the following two paragraphs come from the same E-mail 4 June 1999.

⁴ As one who was a student at Pacific Union College during the years that the "reformed" general studies courses were still in effect, I can verify that the Ellen White quotation became a sort of mission statement of the school during this time period, often quoted in classes or chapels.

⁵ It is interesting that Stauffer later seemed to lose some of his enthusiasm for clear thinking and reasoning as being the key element in Christian experience. His review of C. S. Lewis' *Christian Reflections*, published under the title "A Reasoning Christian" nearly two decades after the general studies reform at PUC, ends with these words: "Yet I put down *Christian Reflections* with a touch of nostalgia, a vague feeling of disappointment And to many older ones [readers] his [Lewis'] obvious faith that sweet reasonableness can lead us to the solutions we require may stir up more than a little envy" (64).

⁶ The courses themselves were a mixed success, the results mostly dependent on how the teachers caught the vision for the program or how comfortable they felt working across disciplines. When most of the originators of the program left by the middle of the 1960s, the "reformed" general studies program was soon replaced by more traditional approaches.

⁷ I sat as an auditor in her class on Literature of the English Bible in the early 1980s when she was a guest teacher at Andrews University and observed some interchanges with theology majors.

⁸ Stafford means here that the development of language facility with one's first language is key, regardless of what that language is.

⁹ All the quotations in this paragraph are from the same Letter 2 June 1999.

¹⁰ Waller's ill health has made it impossible for any direct questioning regarding faith and learning.

¹¹ Cobb's "Help on Literary Problems," Tippet's "A Review of Some Principles in Dealing with Fiction and Imaginative Forms in Our Schools," and Gibbs' "Literature in Adventist Schools" can be found in an anthology developed by Robert Dunn, entitled *Seventh-day Adventists on Literature*. Unfortunately, this volume, primarily printed for a specific course at Loma Linda University in the mid-70s, has not received very wide circulation and has long been out of print.

¹² A version of Waller's essay also appears in Robert Dunn's anthology. Waller was very cautious about publishing his findings in the 1960s. The paper's influence was the result of presentations at various venues, including several SDA college/university campuses. I have chosen to use the most complete and earliest version of the paper which is a part of the collection

of the James White Library Adventist Heritage Center.

¹³ Waller never published this paper, although some of its ideas are contained in a shorterpaper entitled “Fiction, Critical Theory, and a Graduate Criticism Course,” delivered in 1971 to the North American Division Committee on the Teaching of Literature. This paper is included in Robert Dunn’s anthology. The end result of the NAD Committee was the “Guide to the Teaching of Literature in Seventh-day Adventist Schools,” published as a brief pamphlet by the Department of Education, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. This “Guide” was one of Waller’s crowning achievements in getting the SDA Church to officially accept the study of literature, including fiction, as inevitable and even beneficial.

¹⁴ There are some important exceptions. Robert Dunn at La Sierra University has given continuous attention to the interface of religion and literature, has published on such topics, and has long been one of the compilers of the annual bibliography included in *Christianity and Literature*. Other SDA English teachers have participated in and produced papers related to the Seminars on the Integration of Faith and Learning, regularly sponsored by the Education Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Perhaps the most important concerted effort by North American Seventh-day Adventist English teachers to provide an “Adventist” scholarly approach to the English discipline is contained in *Language Matters: Notes Toward and English Program*, issued in 1978 (see “Works Cited” for a complete entry), but this volume was a global explanation of the English discipline (or language arts), with only one chapter, by Robert Dunn, specifically about literature. It is important to remember, however, that Otilie Stafford was the originator of the idea for such a book and rallied the other SDA English teachers to this cause at the 1976 meeting of the North American Division Higher Education Council held at Andrews University.

¹⁵ The typescript for this undated and untitled document is contained in John Waller’s faculty file in the English Dept. at Andrews University. My memory is that we faculty members were required to submit such reports in the fall of 1978. It should be remembered that this was also the time period in which the General Conference leaders were concerned about getting academics to subscribe to certain philosophical statements, perhaps in an attempt to search out any evidences of unorthodoxy. Doubtless, Waller’s response was somewhat conditioned by the general reaction among academics to such administrative pressures that smacked of tests of faith.

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