

**CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATION OF FAITH AND LEARNING IN THE ERA OF
MASSIFICATION AND GLOBALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

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Hudson E. Kibuuka, D.Ed

Eastern Africa Division

Education Director

Introduction

Michael Gibbons, Secretary-General of the Association of Commonwealth Universities, gives four reasons for changes in the field of education and learning in addition to the eradication of poverty. One of these reasons is the massification of higher education by allowing more people access to systems of higher education, (Gibbons 1998: 2, 38, 39, 59). Hitherto, access to higher education, particularly university education, was fairly restricted partly due to available facilities but also due to certain ideologies espoused at the time. The other three reasons are the need for relevant learning programs and course content, the change in focus to vocational education and the need for universities to be more accountable to the supporting societies. Although these changes may be manifested in different ways in the different education systems, they nevertheless affect Adventist Education. It is not the intention of this lecture to discuss all these reasons but it suffices to say that we are continually seeing more demand for higher education as result of the expanding provision of education at the lower level as well as the growth in Church membership particularly in the developing world. Likewise, there is more need for relevancy of education so that the learners are prepared for a life of service as creators of employment rather than seekers. This is in line with what Ellen G. White says that education should prepare the learners to be thinkers and not mere reflectors of other peoples' thoughts, (White 2000: 12). We are also focussing more attention to vocational education because of its apparent value to the youth and

demands for more accountability to the supporting constituencies are becoming more pronounced than before. Trends in the global world affect all sectors of education including Seventh-day Adventist education.

When we think of globalisation speed in communication and information transfer comes into our minds and we are reminded of economic linkages, free trade and open markets, and the world becoming smaller - the Global Village concept. Other descriptions given to the word include modernisation, westernisation and homogenisation. Some of these have led to protests against the phenomenon as some cultures resist the intrusion of more dominant cultures (Currie 2001: 4). Currie quotes Gorbachev as having stated that “globalisation is a given but American globalisation is a mistake” as way of stressing this resistance. For purposes of this lecture the description of globalisation given by Gibbons, as the result of the processes of imitation, adaptation, and diffusion of solutions to problems of different kinds which may be new technologies, organisational forms or modes of working, is used (Gibbons 2001: 2). In this description imitation is defined as the result of (usually conscious) following one way as a model. Adaptation is defined as the slow unconscious modification of individual or collective behaviour in adjusting to cultural surroundings. Diffusion is defined as the transmission of the features of another culture in a non-violent manner.

This description implies that globalisation engenders spread, internationally, of more or less continuous waves of innovation and enhances competition. It also implies the “rightward shift” which is a systematic shift, in the complex political thinking, that results in the gradual disappearance of the more centralised institutional control. It leaves industries and universities to work out their strategies of survival, (Gibbons 2001: 3).

The terms massification and globalisation have entered the arena of education with a lot of influence from economic and political arenas and exert remarkable influence on the delivery of education. These phenomena are visible even in education provided by the Seventh-day Adventist Church and they pose a challenge to the role of integration of faith and learning. Generally,

universities and industry are affected by similar changes. The Seventh-day Adventist Church does not operate in isolation. It operates within the same economic and political environments and yet it has a specific philosophy guiding its educational endeavours.

This lecture seeks to highlight some of the challenges brought about by massification of higher education as related to the integration of faith and learning. The following are some of the questions that often come into mind:

- Can integration of faith and learning take place effectively in this era of massification and globalisation?
- How can the Church ensure that the core values of Adventist Education are maintained?
- Who is ultimately responsible for ensuring that integration of faith and learning takes place?
- Will massification and globalisation have a major impact on Adventist Education? If so, what sort of impact?
- How will the Church cope with the challenges of massification and globalisation?

Background

Historically, Christian colleges have favoured, inter alia, small size as one of their identifying characteristics, (Guthrie 1992: 5). Seventh-day Adventist institutions have not been an exception to this characteristic. To this day the largest Seventh-day Adventist institution is Shamyook University in South Korea with just about 5,500 students. This is even bigger than the oldest institution run by the Church - Andrews University. However, even with that enrolment this is still much smaller when compared with the public institutions even in developing countries whose enrolment can be up to 30,000 students at times or even more.

Massification implies opening the gates of the institutions for more students as defined above. It may also imply the multiplication of higher educational institutions. This has already taken place

in the Church and continues to take place. In the last five years, the number of Seventh-day Adventist institutions has almost doubled in number around the world. This trend notwithstanding, the gap between the growth of the church versus the growth in the number of educational institutions has continued to enlarge indicating the need for expanding the educational facilities further. Massification, therefore, is mainly necessitated by the demand for education more than anything else.

On the other hand, as a result of the world becoming a global village the issue of globalisation has become an important one for education providers. Strydom (2001: 1) quotes Murobe as seeing globalisation not so much as an option for African and other developing countries but as an imperative. The church, therefore, is not spared from these contemporary trends. Although the initial emphasis for globalisation was based on economics and financial markets, education has recently joined in it could not be expected to remain behind as it influences most of the other sectors of life as well as being itself influenced by the trends which determine the world view and the resultant trends.

The great commission, “Go into all the world...” in Matthew 28:18 implies massification and globalisation. Going into ALL the world from the Middle East where Christ left the disciples could not be done without going global and the results were increases in numbers just as witnessed in Acts 2: 47 and 4: 4 which was the beginning of “massification” of the early Christian church in fulfilment of the great commission.

Relationship between Massification and Globalisation

Massification, described as allowing more to access higher education, is uniquely related to globalisation in that as the world becomes a global village the greater the need for higher education. The World Bank report of Task Force on Higher Education and Society states that “...the proportion who do want to graduate to higher education (and from) is increasing substantially, as globalisation makes skilled workers more valuable and the international market

for ideas, top faculty, and promising students continues to develop”, (The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank 2000: 27). This statement accentuates the relationship between massification and globalisation.

This is not a strange phenomenon to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The practice of ‘from every where to everywhere’ is becoming more and more practised in the recruitment of, particularly educational personnel. As a result, there are more young people desiring higher education so that they may be competitive in the global market both within and without the Church. The two phenomena, although not exactly the same are therefore not strange to Adventist Education and are likely to be more prominent in the coming years hence the relevance of the questions posed above. Massification appears to be a natural and a necessary outgrowth a system of education as the members of the church continue to grow through evangelism and by natural propagation and as the church continues to emphasize its worldwide nature. This is enhanced by the demand from outside the Church as the public realises the benefit of a value filled education system.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church General Conference sessions which are attended by representation from the entire globe is a vivid example of the global nature of the church. The sessions allow many participants to observe the need for higher education as they participate in highly organised meetings which require a high level of personal preparation to be able to handle such matters for the church. In this way, the church has probably practised globalisation much longer than many other organisations which are approaching it from an economic point of view.

The challenges of Massification and Globalisation

The main challenge all this poses to Adventist Education is to remain focussed to its mission of providing wholistic education. Often when massification occurs in form of expansion either in number of students or number of institutions, it is accompanied by challenges of not only physical infrastructure, but also quality and relevancy. Quality, for Seventh-day Adventist education, is not

only academic quality but also includes spiritual quality which is an integral and important part of the philosophy of Adventist Education emphasizing the restoration of human beings to their original image when created by their maker. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has always believed that “true education is more than pursuing a certain course of study. It has to do with the whole person, and with the whole period of existence possible to human beings. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers” (White 2000: 9). This is in keeping with the church belief that the education of the Israelites included all their habits of life, (White 2000: 29). Quality, therefore, in its true sense, would imply all that the Church believes to constitute true education - the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual (White 2000: 9), helping students to reach their potential for spiritual, mental, physical, social and vocational development. It is more than mere cognitive development.

Similarly, globalisation poses a challenge of relevancy in that it includes imitation, adaptation and diffusion. It is not uncommon to find more of imitation but less of adaptation and diffusion. This does not only occur as far as systems of academic programs are concerned but may also affect the area of integration of faith and learning. For example, when recognition is sought from the relevant government bodies for recognition and/or accreditation it can be tempting that compromises be made so as to meet the growing need and pressure for more education - massification. The process of adaptation, inter alia, can also lead to precarious elements that are on the borderline of faith filled education and culturally sensitive education.

Massification and the resulting increases in student enrollment inevitably calls for additional teachers and other non teaching staff, among other things. These have a great influence on the lives of students in an educational institution. Yet with students having paid for their education they do expect to receive their money's worth. Anything less than that would be inviting trouble from the students most of whom, may have come as a result of massification and may not be concerned with the mission and principles of the Institution and integration of faith and learning. Besides the challenge of academic preparation of the personnel, their preparation in terms of integrating faith and learning poses an additional challenge. Calls for academic freedom begin to

be voiced by some. This may not only end with teachers but administrators and even boards of trustees may be in the same rut. Holmes (1975: 75) states that trustees may come from similar backgrounds, successful professionals and businessmen, properly respected for their accomplishments and well equipped to handle financial investments and for planning for institutional expansion but may be novices in educational matters and for that matter, the integration of faith and learning.

An additional challenge that comes as a result of massification and globalisation is competition. While not all competition does produce negative results, it is a challenge to contend with during the current period. Gibbons (2000: 1, 9 & 14) identifies two types of competition - static competition and dynamic competition. He describes static competition as one where universities are forced to compete in terms of standard "offerings" - courses for students, salaries for staff which restricts the direction of change to incremental innovation, reduces diversity, and tends to preserve existing hierarchies among institutions, (Gibbons 2000: 14). On the other hand Gibbons (2000: 1, 14) talks of dynamic competition which he describes as the process that links globalisation to knowledge production, underpinning the conditions for each university's long term performance and collaboration with competitors.

There is much to gain in dynamic competition unlike in static competition. However, as Gibbons (2000: 14) states, by and large universities have responded to increasing competition by following the rules of static competition. In the Church, therefore, we find most institutions, particularly in the developing world offering the same courses within themselves as well as similar to those already offered by state/public universities and therefore find it very difficult to compete. They compete for teachers, students, funds and support (Gibbons 2001: 8). A possible solution for this would be to adopt dynamic competition which will put the universities at the cutting edge. This can be done without compromising the integration of faith and learning. As a matter of fact, the integration of faith and learning could put Christian universities at the cutting edge. Society, perverted as it may appear to be, still desires moral and faithful graduates who are able to produce results. I, therefore, believe that integration of faith and learning is important for us in order to be

able to compete dynamically.

Some Suggestions

The challenges of massification and globalisation may appear mundane but they are apt to impact the Seventh-day Adventist Education system greatly in more than one ways but more specifically in terms of the mission of the system.

The following are suggestions for consideration by all who are involved in Adventist Education as they steer the system to greater heights.

1. The Mission

The mission of an institution, usually presented in the form of a mission statement, defines the central *raison d'être* (reason for existence) of the institution. First and foremost all stakeholders should ensure that they are fully acquainted and have internalised the mission and philosophy of Seventh-day Adventist Education. The Lord instructed that the commandments should be written upon the heart, Deuteronomy 6:6, which means internalising them. This does not take place in a single process. It requires constant and consistent reminders. There should be agreement among the various stakeholders as to the mission and philosophy that drives them. Contradictions within the system are fertile ground for derailment from the right track. Sessions of faculty retreats and faculty and staff meetings should be used for this purpose as all educational issues begin with mission and philosophy which should be based on a Biblical world view. Divergent views on the mission and philosophy of Adventist education in an institution would lead not only to misunderstandings among the personnel but also to derailment of the reason for existence.

2. Leadership and Management

Another critical area is that of leadership and management both at the educational institution as well as the entire Church organisation. It is more than rhetoric that no institution can rise above the qualities of its leadership. This is true of spirituality as it is true in other areas of educational qualities and yet leadership is a very complex phenomenon. Kingsley (1992: 67) quotes Ian Chapman as having said that “if you want to change the world, invest in creating leaders”. How true this statement is when applied to Seventh-day Adventist education and its leadership. These are people who can influence the functioning and thinking of the church as a result of influencing the minds and attitudes of their students whom they have for long periods of time before eventually ushering them to the world and the church as leaders at various levels. A lot of efforts and resources should be put into the creation of leadership. In trying to make leadership contextual as Kingsley (1992: 68) contends, in this era of massification and globalisation, it becomes even more important to keep in mind that the context of a Christian institution is first of all Christianity. In the chapter on leadership in Testimonies to the Church volume three White (1872 - 1875: 497) says that man (referring to all human beings) can make his circumstances, but circumstances should never make the man. Man should seize circumstances as his instruments with which to work. He should master circumstances, but should never allow circumstances to master him. I believe this should be true even during the present era because God has given human beings the power to master their circumstances if they choose to do so.

3. The Teachers

The third important area is that of the teachers. While the work of leadership is important, the leader cannot be effective in an educational institution without the teachers. The teacher is the key to the climate of learning, (Holmes 1975: 82). Sandin (1992: 48,49) states that while academic qualifications and excellent scholarship are indispensable, they are not enough. He continues to say that acceptance of the institutional statement of faith or educational philosophy and conformity to campus and professional lifestyle are essential for a Christian institution. This may

raise questions of academic freedom. However, academic freedom, as understood by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, in the faith-community universities has some faith related limitations. It is freedom with responsibility and individual freedom operates within the context of the community otherwise the community and the individual will both lose their identity according to Fowler (2001: 4). Identity of Christian institutions is of paramount importance during the era of massification and globalisation. It is a necessary and important ingredient of differentiation which is yet another result of massification - the demand for greater diversity of graduates, (The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank 2000: 32). When identity is lost there is no more reason for existence. Yet globalisation in terms of homogenisation can easily lead to such loss of identity.

The work of the Christian teacher is to transform humanity from its perversion to Christlikeness and great is the responsibility of those who take upon themselves the guidance of the human soul, (White 2000: 48, 49 & 174). This is the uniqueness of Adventist Education. This work can only be adequately accomplished with dependence on the Master teacher Jesus Christ which is a special identifying mark in itself. The teacher is, therefore, a representative of Christ who came to this world to restore knowledge and to set aside the false teaching by which God had been misrepresented, (White 2000: 48). By manifesting the nature of God's law of love, Christ showed that in obedience to its principles is involved the happiness of everyone. This is the essence of freedom with responsibility operating within a framework of the community of Christian faith.

In addition, the principles and habits of the teacher should be considered of greater importance than even his literary qualifications. If the teacher is a sincere Christian, he will feel the necessity of having an equal interest in the physical, mental, moral, and spiritual education of his scholars. In order to exert the right influence the teacher should have perfect self control, and should have a heart richly imbued with love for students, which will be seen in the looks, words, and all acts (White 1977: 189).

4. Other Resources Planning

Massification and globalisation can bring additional resources but they can also exert pressure on some of the existing resources. Additional resources may come as a result of additional income due to the more students seeking places for education. However, strategic planners know that all aspects of an organisation should be considered for maximum results. This emphasises the need for prudent and visionary planning. From economics point of view, Gibbons (2001: 6) argues that as a result of static competition and because the levels of resources available to the different players vary, in part because of differences in their propensity to expand market share, the largest firms continue to lead because they have access to largest resources. In universities, the possible results are that the students that have less support and are less motivated intellectually move to the “less good” universities leaving them over time systematically weakened, according to Gibbons (2001: 10). The same may be extended to the teachers as well.

Competitors are varied in this era. They include the well established universities found in most countries of the world, the upcoming open universities, virtual universities and distance learning modes of educational delivery. This emphasizes the need not only for prudent but also strategic planning. It is a Biblical principle - “For which of you when he wants to build a tower does not first sit down and calculate the cost...? Otherwise, when he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish all who observe it will begin to ridicule saying ‘that man began to build and was not able to finish’” Luke 14:28-30. The implication of these trends is adequate and proper planning within the ambit of faith and learning while at the same time endeavouring to cooperate with one another.

Conclusion

Massification and globalisation are here to stay. We are part of them willfully or otherwise. Some of their effects are inescapable. While there is some positive that comes from these trends, there are also some challenges that need to be watched. One obvious consequence is collaboration

versus competition. There is need for more collaboration among Seventh-day Adventist institutions of higher learning if they are to face the challenges that come as a result of globalisation and massification. This kind of collaboration as opposed to competition would strengthen their position as well as assist them to achieve their goals by giving them a competitive advantage. This should be seen as a good outcome of globalisation and is most essential in developing countries particularly given the fewer resources available. It will ensure that resources, including human resources are utilised to the maximum and shared with and among the more and less privileged. They will also learn from each other. The converse is also true that globalisation can bring about the widening of the gap between the more and less privileged as the qualified individuals in the less privileged areas look for opportunities and are taken up by the more privileged ones.

The World Bank report, (The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank 2000: 35) also mentions the need for specialisation becoming more important whereby institutions of higher learning should provide opportunities for in-depth study to prepare competitive graduates. This should not be done at the expense of offering general education courses which provide a solid foundation for life-long learning and for specialisation. There could also be specialisation between the courses of different institutions. By so doing the scramble for students will be reduced as they will choose the institutions that provides the speciality they are interested in. This will be a form of dynamic competition instead of static competition.

This would require adequate consultation which is enhanced by some of the results of globalisation - improved speed of communication. In addition, educational leadership should meet more often to discuss the details of bringing this about and ensuring that all institutions are kept on course. Suspicion and rivalry among Seventh-day Adventist institutions only creates fertile ground for strife during which integration of faith and learning is compromised.

The trust and confidence that the public currently has in Seventh-day Adventist Education should not be taken for granted. It takes a lot of effort and time to build trust but it can easily be eroded

by compromises. Faith and learning should never be compromised because it is what has given Adventist education the value and trust it has.

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