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INTEGRATING FAITH IN THE PRE- POST- & CO-CURRICULAR PRACTICES OF AN ADVENTIST CAMPUS

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Introduction

It was the very first general assembly of the academic year; all the students were there, together with *all* the new faculty members, including my wife and me; soon it was time for introductions; and, I vividly recall, with some embarrassment, the personal introduction made by a top-level administrator. Intentionally, he systematically enumerated the various graduate degrees I had earned, and then ended his introduction by basically saying: "We employ only the best at this university!" What message did the students get? That the most important reason, indeed the *only* real reason, for employing me as a Seventh-day Adventist was the "advanced" terminal degree work I had completed! The focus was totally on academics, on what I had achieved in my university studies, to the total exclusion of virtually all other aspects of life–the social, the professional, the ecclesiastical, the humanitarian, the relational, the physical, the spiritual, etc. A uni-dimensional approach had been taken, rather than a holistic perspective.

Observation of the history of the integration of faith and learning,[1] shows that there has been an ever-increasing interest by reflective Christian educators concerning how to practically and successfully incorporate faith into the variety of subjects taught in the classroom. A growing body of literature is now becoming available to teachers interested in seeking ways of stimulating students to think Christianly about every course, from Accounting through Zoology. Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) educators have been blessed with an abundance of thoughtful and innovative articles, produced by participants at International Faith and Learning Seminars conducted by the Education Department of the SDA Church, and published in the multi-volume series: *Christ in the Classroom: Adventist Approaches to the Integration of Faith and Learning.*

However, it is becoming increasingly apparent that a similar balanced emphasis needs to be placed on integrating faith into everything that happens in an educational institution *outside* of the classroom as well, since these experiences also have a profound

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[1]See, for example, Raquel I. Korniejczuk, and Paul S. Brantley, "From Creeds to Deeds: Teacher Integration of Faith and Learning in the Classroom," *The Journal of Adventist Education* 56:2 (December 1993/January 1994): 9-14; Ken Badley, "The Faith/Learning Movement in Christian Higher Education: Slogan or Substance," *Journal of Research on Christian Education* 3:1 (Spring 1994): 13-33.

impact, indeed an indelible influence, on the learner. The purpose of this reflective essay will therefore be to make a constructive critique of some of these "peri-curricular" practices, to propose recommendations as to how to facilitate this faith integration, together with certain evaluation strategies to assess the effectiveness of this integration.

It bears repeating, that this presentation does not seek to ignore, minimize, or deemphasize the indispensability of the need to intentionally integrate faith into every element of the classroom. Rather, this essay seeks to focus on, and encourage a similar integration of spiritual values into all the other practices of the entire educational institution. Due to time and space limitations, only a few representative peri-curricular issues will be selected for consideration below.

Definitions

Since terms are still somewhat "fluid" in this relatively new area of faith integration, and since for pedagogical purposes there seems to be a need to differentiate between various aspects of the so-called "hidden" curriculum, it will be necessary to clearly identify how certain terms will be used in this paper, unless they are part of a direct quotation from another source.

Peri-Curricular – All the non-classroom activities, practices, and experiences at an Adventist educational institution that have a bearing or impact on the education of the student while attending school, as well as all the alumni-related interactions between the institution and its former students.

Pre-Curricular – Actions and procedures, such as the criteria and selection process of administrators, faculty, and staff, which directly or indirectly affect the practicability of integrating faith into the actual intended instructional curriculum.

Co-Curricular – Programs and opportunities planned by the institution as an intentional part of the overall educational experience to be gained by the student outside of the classroom; this includes chapels, outreach ministries, etc.

Extra-Curricular – Practices and policies of the institution that, though unintended, do convey specific values to students; this concept also includes all sanctioned activities participated in by students, either on or off campus, which are not

part of the officially planned non-classroom curriculum; this includes things such as television programs viewed, student clubs, recreational activities, entertainment practices, etc. (These aspects of campus life will be discussed in a subsequent essay titled, "Instilling Christian Values into the Extra-Curricular Activities of an Adventist Educational Institution").

Post-Curricular – Strategies of the institution to actively remain in contact with alumni so as to involve them in continuing education opportunities, getting these alumni to network with current students, etc.

Theo-Philosophical Basis

Excellent seminal essays on the scriptural foundations for the integration of faith and learning have provided adequate evidence that faith integration by Christian educators is not merely a fully legitimate enterprise, but it is clearly an indispensable task incumbent upon any Christian educational institution.[2] From his study of Deuteronomy 6:4-9, a pivotal passage on religious education, John Wesley Taylor has concluded that, with the Word of God as the source, a loving and committed Christian teacher is to comprehensively, holistically, and diligently utilize prime moments to get students to focus on God, so that they will develop spiritually, mentally, physically, and socially.[3]

Just as Jesus matured in an integrated manner, "in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52),[4] so the Adventist system of education is to be comprehensive and all-inclusive. Ellen White noted that "true education,"

> has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual

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[2]See, for example, John Wesley Taylor V, "A Biblical Foundation for the Integration of Faith and Learning," Unpublished paper presented at the 27th International Faith and Learning Seminar, Mission College, Muak Lek, Thailand, 3-15 December 2000; Arthur F. Holmes, *The Idea of a Christian College*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), 13-22; C. Garland Dulan, "Essentials of the Adventist Philosophy of Education," Unpublished paper presented at the 27th International Faith and Learning Seminar, Mission College, Muak Lek, Thailand, 3-15 December 2000; David S. Dockery, "Integrating Faith and Learning: An Unapologetic Case for Christian Higher Education," *Faith & Mission* 18:1 (Fall 2000): 44-56.

[3]Taylor, "A Biblical Foundation for the Integration of Faith and Learning," 5-7.

[4]Unless otherwise stated, all quotations are from the New King James Version (NKJV).

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.[5]

While most current studies appropriately emphasize the indispensability of incorporating Christian thinking into course content, and classroom instruction,[6] there is the distinct danger that this well-meant focus may become so all-consuming that peri-curricular practices will be ignored and even forgotten. As veteran faith and learning specialist, Arthur Holmes cautioned: "A Christian liberal arts education cannot be impounded in classrooms and libraries, but *must extend itself into the extracurricular.*"[7] In basic agreement, George Akers noted: "Nurturing faith in *every aspect* of the program is everybody's business at a Christian school, if the place is to be effective."[8] In White's words: "A Christian influence should pervade our schools."[9] Indeed, as Holmes observed, "compartmentalization has no place on the Christian campus."[10]

Similarly, in its "Total Commitment Document" the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists focuses beyond the classroom, and calls for affirming unambiguously in "campus life the beliefs, practices, and world view" of the Adventist church. Furthermore, it stresses the need to maintain an "overall campus environment which ensures opportunities" for encounters that will produce "men and women who are

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[5] Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1903), 13.

[6] See, for example, the essays in the 27 volume series *Christ in the Classroom: Adventist Approaches to the Integration of Faith and Learning* (Silver Spring, MD: Institute for Christian Teaching, Education Department, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1991-2001); see also the following articles in the special issue of *The Journal of Adventist Education* 56:2 (December 1993/January 1994), dealing with the integration of faith and learning: George Akers, "Nurturing Faith in the Christian School," 4-8; Raquel I. Korniejczuk, and Paul S. Brantley, "From Creeds to Deeds: Teacher Integration of Faith and Learning in the Classroom," 9-14; Gail Taylor Rice, "Good Adventist Schools–Making a Difference," 15-20; Charleen Kurth-Wright, "Making Faith a Part of Your Daily Schedule," 21-23; Rebecca D. Becker, "Can There Be Faith in the Language-Arts Classroom?" 24-28; Patrick B. Morrison, "The Religion Classroom: Life-Giving or Lethargic?" 29-31; Barry Hill and Barry Plane, "Teaching Values in Industrial Technology and Computer Studies," 33-36; Gary Land, "Integrating Faith and History," 41-45.

[7] Holmes, *The Idea of a Christian College*, 84 (emphasis added).

[8] Akers, 5 (emphasis added).

[9] Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1923), 473.

[10] Holmes, *The Idea of a Christian College*, 84.

well-balanced spiritually, mentally, physically, and socially."[11] As Holmes noted: "*All of life* with its culture and its learning must be penetrated with Christian perspectives, if Jesus Christ is to be Lord of all."[12]

In view of the fact that peri-curricular activities are so crucial for the successful education of the student, this paper will consider how Adventist institutions can harness, effectively utilize, transform, strengthen, or as needed, even develop new strategies in the pre-, post-, and co-curricular aspects of the overall educational program.

Pre-Curricular

Though perhaps unintentionally overlooked, there are several aspects of the organizational structure and operational procedures of an educational institution that directly or otherwise impact the life of students before they set foot on campus, or even before they enter the classroom.

For example, about 30 years ago a task force on spiritual development on campus, made the following incisive comments in this regard:

> The tone of administration, hiring policy and wage scale, the behavior of trustees, the conduct of faculty meetings, the form of student government, student aid and student housing, the attitudes of comptroller [i.e., the business manager] and registrar, of gardener and dietitian–these shape the spiritual life. . . . Degree requirements, the nomenclature and character of degrees in themselves, catalogue statements, organization of the curriculum, the types of tests and examinations, the grading system, the facility of the library, the content and rationale of field education, indeed the manner in which a professor enters or leaves a classroom, even the way in which he [or she] asks and answers a question or makes an assignment–*all* these shape the *spiritual life.*[13]

Faculty Selection. Consider, for example, the matter of employment procedures. When it comes to the selection of teaching faculty, too many institutions

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[11]Appendix A – "Total Commitment Document," *Christ in the Classroom: Adventist Approaches to the Integration of Faith and Learning*, vol. 23 (Silver Spring, MD: Institute for Christian Teaching, Education Department, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1999), 383.

[12]Holmes, *The Idea of a Christian College*, 22 (emphasis added).

[13]David E. Babin, Lewis A. Briner, Paul W. Hoon, W. Robert Martin, Terry Smith, Eugene I. Van Antwerp, and Paul J. Whitney, *Voyage, Vision, Venture: A Task Force on Spiritual Development* (Dayton, OH: American Association of Theological Schools, 1972), 27.

seem to ask basically a single two-pronged question: Is the person a Seventh-day Adventist "in good and regular standing," with an advanced or terminal degree in the area of need? Such a narrowly-focused approach, however, mistakenly ignores the holistic philosophy and core objectives of Adventist education.

Just as Paul charged Timothy to "be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim 4:12), so Ellen White notes that "in order that the teacher may accomplish the object of his work, he should be a living embodiment of truth."[14] In fact, she declares that "a pure life, the results of sound principles and right habits, should therefore be regarded as his *most essential qualification.*"[15]

If, as White indicates, "the habits and principles of a teacher should be considered of even *greater* importance than his literary qualifications,"[16] then, in order to appropriately staff Adventist institutions, a radically different approach ought to be adopted. Once it has been established that the prospective employee is a committed Seventh-day Adventist,[17] a careful screening process needs to be undertaken. This would include both a comprehensive questionnaire to be completed by the applicant, as well as similar questionnaires and letters of recommendation from various reliable supervisors, subordinates, and colleagues concerning the individual. While an expression of faithfulness to the biblical beliefs and practices of the SDA Church, a pledge of loyalty to legitimate leadership, as well as a personal statement of educational philosophy and overall teaching objectives from the applicant will be valuable and even enlightening, questions such as the following would appear more relevant in light of the indispensability of the integration of faith and learning:

(a) What posts have you actively held in your church during the past 3-5 years?

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[14]Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students Regarding Christian Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1913), 31.

[15]Ibid. (emphasis added).

[16]White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 19 (emphasis added).

[17]Obviously, in a situation in which a non-SDA faculty must be employed (and hopefully, for only a very brief period), the questions and criteria need to be appropriately moderated.

(b) What are your specific spiritual gifts, and in what forms of ministry have you utilized them over the past 3-5 years?

(c) What kinds of community activity and/or service have you been involved with over the past 3-5 years?

(d) What kinds of personal physical health and/or exercise programs have you been following for the past 3-5 years?

(e) Itemize the various professional organizations you have been an active member of, as well as all the scholarly presentations made and refereed journal articles published during the past 3-5 years.

(f) List all your graduate degrees, indicating the area of concentration for each.[18]

Obviously, other questions, appropriate to the objectives of each individual institution, could be added as needed. With information such as the above, the institution will be much more likely to employ faculty who are supportive of its overall educational aims.

In addition, all new teaching faculty need to participate in a carefully structured orientation program. Following a basic initiation seminar, faculty should spend some significant time in reading, studying, reflecting, and discussing the relevant assigned materials,[19] what it means to integrate faith into their specific disciplines, into individual courses, and even into daily lecture plans. This can be accomplished through a two- or three-hour weekly seminar, facilitated by trained administrators and other experienced faculty.

However, this type of employment procedure and orientation strategy cannot necessarily guarantee that the employee will remain committed to such a holistic approach. Thus, in the employment contract, there needs to be clearly-stated faculty promotion/retention/dismissal procedures, in order to safeguard the integrity of the educational enterprise. In other words, on a regular (perhaps, annual) basis, there must be a fair and objective student, peer, immediate supervisor, and administrative evaluation, as well as a self-assessment in order to ascertain whether or not that faculty member still

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[18]The specific order of these questions does not deny the need for formal education; however, this intentionally formulated sequence is in line with the above Ellen White quote that shows that, for Christian education, the habits and principles of a teacher should be regarded more vital than educational qualifications.

[19]See, for example, Arthur F. Holmes, *All Truth Is God's Truth* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977).

subscribes in belief and practice to the educational philosophy of the institution. Incidentally, I am personally aware of cases in which religion teachers employed at Adventist educational institutions began to believe and even propagate theological perspectives contrary to the biblical positions espoused by the Adventist Church. While some were eventually dismissed from teaching, others were retained, but merely moved into different departments on the same campus, the latter action perhaps unintentionally reflecting an apparently distorted, compartmentalized view that teachers can have a negative spiritual impact on students only if they are actually teaching Bible, religion, and/or theology courses.

Undoubtedly, in order to promote the successful integration of faith on the entire campus, procedures similar to the above need to be appropriately carried out in connection with the recruitment and continued employment of administrators, and all other staff. This recommended process coincides well with a document on integrating faith and learning from the General Conference Education Department, part of which states: "Special attention is given to the selection of administrators, faculty, [and] staff...who will create an environment that affirms and fosters faith development toward maturity."[20] Even the composition of the Board of Trustees, or University Council, is vital in this process of faith integration, since crucial decisions about personnel selection, and the running of the institution are often made by them.

Student Recruitment. At a university where I assisted as Public Relations Officer, I was working on the production of a new attractive brochure, aimed at prospective students. Inside were to be three so-called "Success Stories"–personal accounts of alumni: a founder/president of a bank, a general manager of an airline, and a medical director of a large city hospital. But, as I reflected on the "success" stories which I was compiling, I began to realize that, by means of these accounts, I was subtly suggesting that "material possessions" and "managerial positions" were the sum and substance of success. Indeed, even as a committed biblical theologian and ethicist, I had unsuspectingly been sucked into the web of worldly values. Is it really power or prestige,

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[20]"Factors in the Integration of Faith and Learning," Unpublished paper, Institute for Christian Teaching, Education Department, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, MD, 1.

positions or possessions that form the true standard of success for a Bible-believing Christian? Would it not be more congruent with the institution's overall philosophy to rather showcase stories of alumni who have made an indelible impact on the community and/or the church as a result of their consistent life of self-sacrificial service?

Mimicking secular institutions, some Adventist colleges have attempted to attract students by means of offering "athletic scholarships." Back in 1988, it was noted that at least "one college supports a varsity team as an academy recruitment tool."[21] Approaches such as these are rather disconcerting, especially in view of the lack of social concern of youth who attend SDA schools. This growing "blind spot" of communal consciousness may indicate that Adventist schools have been weak "in instilling concerns for social justice and world peace" in its students.[22] Thus, instead of using the ephemeral glamor of athletics to lure learners, I believe that it would be more in line with SDA educational philosophy to develop and provide "humanitarian scholarships"–a financial assistance program for prospective students who have an established record of significant participation in social concerns, and who will then be mentored through continuous involvement in humanitarian activities, such as disaster relief efforts, development programs (e.g., as operated by ADRA), and to work with orphanages, prisons, hospices, HIV/AIDS patients, etc. This type of recruitment program would fulfill part of the "Core Concepts of Adventist Educational Philosophy," in that it would be promoting "school programs [which] foster activities that alleviate human needs."[23]

In brief then, all promotional materials, indeed every recruitment endeavor, must properly portray the holistic world view of the institution, so as not to adopt secular standards simply to attract students. Other pre-curricular practices, such as a

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[21]Myron Widmer, "Interscholastic Sports and Competition," *Adventist Review*, 13 October 1988, 10.

[22]Roger L. Dudley, *Why Our Teenagers Leave the Church: Personal Stories from a 10-Year Study* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000), 155-156. See also, Edwin I. Hernandez, "A Call for the Renewal of Adventism's Communal Consciousness," Unpublished paper presented at the 1st International Conference on the Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy of Education, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, USA, 7-9 April 2001, 10.

[23]See Humberto M. Rasi, "Core Concepts of Adventist Educational Philosophy," Unpublished document received at the 27th International Faith and Learning Seminar, Mission College, Muak Lek, Thailand, 3-15 December 2000.

faculty/staff/student wellness program, the maximal size of individual classes, and even the type of meal payment plan,[24] all of which impact the integration of faith on campus, also need to be carefully structured so as to facilitate a holistic Adventist Christian educational philosophy.

Co-Curricular Activities

Basically all Adventist tertiary institutions provide intentionally structured programs as part of the overall educational experience to be gained by the student outside of the classroom. Since these co-curricular activities are specifically aimed at being faith-affirming and character-enhancing, only selected aspects of some matters will be considered here, with suggestions for improvement.

Business Office. To some extent, it seems that the spiritual atmosphere on a campus is often directly related to the perceptions of students (and even faculty and other staff, for that matter) as to how they are treated vis-a-vis financial matters.[25]

Allow me to illustrate this, by means of a *very* personal story: "If I had some dynamite, I'd blow up this building!" I muttered under my breath as I walked out of the administration building, after a harrowing three days of trying to trudge through the swamps of the registration process. Yes, the institution I was attending was proverbial for its tedious and "character-building" registration system. In fact, we used to basically say: "If you can survive registration here, you will make it through your studies!"[26] Several years later, I had the opportunity of spending some time on this campus again–and there had been a drastic change–for the better. In fact, I heard such positive comments about

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[24]I know of at least one Adventist educational institution where the vast majority of students live in on-campus dormitories, but which has a so-called "pay-as-you-eat" meal plan. In order to register at the beginning of the term, students do not need to pay anything for meals ahead of time. As a result, several problems have arisen. In some cases students ended up malnourished, and/or literally begging for food from faculty homes. In other cases wealthier students have become abusive of poorer ones.

[25]Sadly, the manner in which the business office mistreated faculty at one institution, appears as a primary reason that most (i.e., more than a dozen) of its expatriate population wanted to leave at the end of an academic year.

[26]Incidentally, as soon as those sentiments entered my brain, the words of a Scripture song, based on Isaiah 55:7 (KJV) came to mind: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." I heeded the inspired counsel, and that administration building is still there to this day.

the student financial services, that I decided to investigate further: Friendly personnel set up appointments for assistance so no one needed to wait in long lines; to provide greater and more convenient services, the offices were open throughout lunch times (and workers rotated lunch schedules); students could register on the web; they could check their accounts anytime, to see if financial aid payments had arrived; the aim of the student financial services, I was informed, was "to have happy customers."[27]

While efficiency and accounting ability are expected of any business office staff, the issues that frequently assume gigantic proportions in interpersonal relationships, are such simple Christian graces as courtesy, friendliness, helpfulness, non-self-justifying apologies for mistakes made, timely correction of such errors, and the willingness to genuinely listen to student or employee concerns (even if no human solution seems readily available).

In order to achieve this, all prospective business office personnel need to undergo a screening process similar to the one outlined above for faculty selection. Just as for faculty, business office personnel must participate in an initiation seminar, an orientation program, and an annual evaluation. Also, concerted, ongoing in-service training seminars in interpersonal skills, need to be conducted for these workers. However, once it becomes clear that an employee continues to have a detrimental influence on the spirituality of the campus, due process needs to be followed in replacing that worker. While it will obviously be impossible to please everybody all of the time, when students in general (and all other members of the institutional family) are basically satisfied with the way they are being treated by the business office staff, there will be a definite improvement in the spiritual tone of the institution.

In addition to the above, how can the business office actively contribute to a positive spiritual atmosphere on campus? The following true story, from an SDA college campus, provides one example:

A student who was hoping to graduate was having financial difficulties. Despite his best efforts, he was unable to meet the commitments he had made with the business

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[27]In fact, I went through the entire year's student-produced newspaper, and failed to find even one negative comment about the student financial services.

office. The administrative committee eventually decided that, unless he produced the needed cash by a certain date, he would not be allowed to write final exams, and thus not graduate. On the day that final exams began, he went to visit the academic dean's office. While reflecting on the setback he was having, the telephone rang–it was the business manager, who was away attending some meetings. He asked the academic dean to locate that needy student (who was at that moment right there in the dean's office, unbeknown to the business manager), to give him some great news: he could write his exams. What had happened? While away on this trip, the business manager had raised sufficient funds to cover all of the amount owed by the student! This was Christianity in action: While the "law" of the finance office was upheld, the business manager showed "grace" by personally raising the money for the needy student.

Institutional Leadership. The document describing the "Characteristics of a Successful Seventh-day Adventist College or University,"[28] contains the following statement regarding faculty and staff: "It has a professionally qualified faculty and staff committed to the Seventh-day Adventist message, mission, and lifestyle, and to the education of young men and women for a useful life 'in this world and in the world to come.'"[29] Interestingly, though listed *before* the requirements for faculty and staff, the distinguishing characteristics of the "administration" of such a tertiary institution contain no mention whatsoever of the leadership having to be "professionally qualified" as well as having to be "committed to the Seventh-day Adventist message, mission, and lifestyle."[30] Since the successful integration of faith in any institution is often directly

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[28]"Characteristics of a Successful Seventh-day Adventist College or University," a 2-page document adopted by the Education Department directors attending the World Education Advisory at the General Conference Headquarters, Silver Spring, MD, USA, April 1996 (Revised March 1997).

[29]The rest of the statement reads: "The institution implements an initiation program for new faculty; promotion in academic rank follows a clear process; and grievance procedures are followed fairly."

[30]The complete section on "administration" reads: "Its administrative team implements the philosophy and mission of the institution; fulfills the expectations of the board and the constituency; provides job descriptions and committee assignments that foster responsibility and accountability; carries out a non-discriminatory policy in the recruitment of staff and students within the framework of Adventist beliefs; promotes professional growth among faculty, staff, and students; and carefully plans for the future development of the institution," ibid.

affected by its leadership, one would hope that this omission is a mere oversight, and that all administrators would be held to an even higher standard than faculty and staff.

Furthermore, anyone being considered for a leadership position at an Adventist educational facility must have a broad-based and intimate understanding of the SDA philosophy of education, a working knowledge of how to practically implement these principles, as well as an established record of successful, spiritually-enhancing administrative experience. Also, just as for faculty, all administrators must participate in an initiation seminar, an orientation program, and a regular, full annual evaluation.

More important than anything else, administrators must be people of prayer. In addition to their personal prayer life, this attitude of communion with the divine and total dependence on God's guidance should pervade their offices, their methods of operation, their committee meetings, and even their relationships with other office staff. Personally, I have been blessed by godly leaders who have invited me to kneel with them after discussing concerns. However, there is the distinct danger that administrators, after dealing *unjustly* with employees, may be tempted to prostitute prayer, by trying to get staff to pray with them, while ignoring the real problems.

While there are undoubtedly many other indispensable traits of a good leader, the following four will be mentioned briefly, since they can contribute markedly to an improved spiritual atmosphere on any campus. An administrator must be:

(a) Transparent: i.e., willing to openly share accurate, relevant information with all staff, faculty, and administrators; to be non-defensive when probing questions are raised; and, to exhibit and foster a climate of trust among all employees.

(b) Truthful: i.e., willing to kindly confront issues, sharing the facts as they are; to stand for principle regardless of results; even to frankly apologize when wrong.

(c) Trustworthy: i.e., to be people whose word can be relied upon; ones who fairly apply policies to all employees, regardless of rank, color, nationality, employment status, familial relationship, "financial status of the institution," etc.

(d) Team-Conscious: i.e., to operate as a genuine facilitative leader, who really listens to the concerns, complaints, and suggestions of the faculty, staff, and students.

Though aimed specifically at theological education, Robert Banks' comments regarding the importance of interpersonal relationships applies to leadership at all educational institutions: "There should be opportunities for [faculty,] staff and administrators to have common meals, jointly as well as separately, and to meet in small work-station or generic groups for discussion and prayer."[31]

Though a lot more could be said on this vital, yet sensitive issue, the statement made earlier bears repeating here: "The tone of administration, hiring policy and wage scale, the behavior of trustees, the conduct of faculty meetings,... [even] the attitudes of comptroller and registrar.... all these shape the spiritual life"[32] of any educational institution!

Worship Attendance. Note the somewhat disconcerting comments of two students, as they reflect on worship attendance at the Adventist college they attended:

> The required worship services made me resentful, with a negative attitude toward the church overall. At least one of my friends has even left the church for good because of this, and others are very unsure and upset.[33]

> My experience with this Christian college has been very positive, especially because I wasn't forced to go to worships. I did choose to attend regularly and found them much more of a blessing without being forced.[34]

The issue of "required" worships and mandatory chapel attendance has long been a matter of debate and dissension on Adventist campuses. In an earlier faith and learning seminar, Oliver Koh starkly pointed out some of the tensions resulting from this issue:

> There is, for instance the tension between the evangelistic thrust and the readiness of an [sic] captured audience of a mixed multitude of students, especially in mission schools, who are required to attend religious meetings conducted as Christian worship. Such tension is heightened in boarding schools where worship attendance frequently becomes a fertile ground for infractions, a matter of

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[31]Robert Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 207.

[32]Babin, et al, 27.

[33]Roger L. Dudley, "Understanding the Spiritual Development and the Faith Experience of College and University Students on Christian Campuses," *Journal of Research on Christian Education* 8:1 (Spring 1999): 5.

[34]Ibid.

negotiation and bargain [*sic*] for minimum participation, a cause for some to depart from [the] dormitory as well as the school.... There is tension among worship participants on [*sic*] perceiving worship as an extra-curricular duty, a presentation like a lecture that requires scholarly preparation rather than an offering of love and gratitude.[35]

In a thought-provoking article on "required worships," in which he traces the historical development of Christian tertiary institutions in the USA, Warren Johns challenges educators with the following probing questions:

What would happen to higher education if you made attendance at all your classes and labs totally optional, including examinations? Is the requiring of certain standards incompatible with intellectual growth? If not, then why can't standards in the religious sphere be compatible with spiritual growth?[36]

But then, what about the matter of "freedom of choice," especially as it relates to the matter of Christianity? Johns rightly reminds us that any student who enrolls at an SDA campus, enters into a contractual agreement with that institution–an agreement to "participate in the total program of Adventist education, including worship services."[37] Obviously, these students must be carefully instructed as to the meaning and implications of their contractual agreement before they sign up, so that they are can make an informed commitment. Thus, there is really no compulsion, since that student has already exercised freedom of choice in joining that particular college or university.

Much of this unhealthy tension connected with compulsory convocations can be significantly reduced by an open administration that works in close cooperation with the campus chaplain, the theology faculty (if any), and the minister of religion of the student association. For instance, rather than requiring that all students must attend a "traditional" worship service in the sanctuary, wise administrators could provide an entire plethora of attractive, spiritually-enriching alternatives. While avoiding long, loud, legalistic, and lethargic chapels, options could include small-group settings, resulting in greater personal

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[35]Oliver K. S. Koh, "Worship and School Life," *Christ in the Classroom: Adventist Approaches to the Integration of Faith and Learning,* vol. 21 (Silver Spring, MD: Institute for Christian Teaching, Education Department, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1998), 168.

[36]Warren H. Johns, "Should Chapel Be Required?" *Adventists Affirm* (Spring 1989): 44.

[37]Ibid., 45.

involvement in worship; relevant, contemporary topics presented in a captivating manner, from a Scripture-based perspective; a multi-sensory approach to worship, including the use of multi-media; a systematic study of a subject, so as to provide steady spiritual growth; and a singalong-praise-testimony format, as a less formal "user-friendly" worship style. While providing such a variety of choices will doubtless require additional efforts in "record-keeping," the spiritual benefits of an enhanced worship experience clearly outweigh any such mundane matters. It must be noted however, that all of the above alternatives are advocated, only in addition to the incontrovertibly essential regular collective worship experience, which among other things fosters a sense of community, etc. And, it *is* possible to have a highly successful chapel/worship program, as can be seen from the experience of a Christian college in the USA, where graduating students, in their exit questionnaire, consistently rated the convocation exercises of their institution as the most significant aspect of their educational experience. In the case of this college, leaders put forth extraordinary efforts to provide the best programs possible for this part of their overall educational strategy.

True, mandatory worships can never compel anyone to become a Christian, since becoming a disciple of Jesus is always a free choice. However, required religious convocations do provide an environment in which spiritual concepts can be planted and take root, with the possibility of a later fruitful harvest.[38] Should worship attendance at SDA campuses no longer be required as an integral component of Adventist education? As Johns says: "God forbid that such should ever happen."[39]

In order to further encourage this intentional promotion of faith, campuses can include facilities such as a prayer garden, a prayer chapel, quiet spots of natural beauty on campus, and by strategically-arranged park benches that provide places for quiet reflection. This faith perspective can also be enhanced by the selection and piping in of spiritually-uplifting background music in appropriate places (e.g., in recreation areas,

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[38]Ibid.

[39]Ibid. The issue of requiring faculty, staff, and administrators to attend convocations needs to be addressed. While it seems important for there to be a mandatory, communal, weekly gathering of the entire institutional family, rather than requiring them to also attend dormitory worships, employees should be encouraged and motivated to have regular family worships in order to spiritually strengthen their families, as well as to provide a model for students.

lounges, etc.), and by the promotion and utilization of visual media programs (e.g., overheads, slides, TV, videos, etc.) which uphold and inculcate values congruent with the philosophical objectives of the institution. In addition, this Christian perspective can be strengthened by operating a well-supervised work program (with committed Christian supervisors), by selecting and training committed student spiritual mentors, by having a greater variety of outreach ministries (so as to provide opportunities for evangelistic and/or humanitarian community service for differing personalities, temperaments, interests, and spiritual gifts), by enlisting more faculty to participate in faculty home evenings (when faculty invite students over for food and fellowship), by conducting weekend revival retreats, and wilderness survival programs, and by encouraging all employees to eat in the cafeteria with students at least once per week in order to socialize with them on their "turf."[40]

Institutional Standards. Virtually all Adventist educators are painfully aware that our institutions are increasingly being inundated by a cascade of questions concerning lifestyle issues–challenges ranging from substance abuse, to sexual behavior, to Sabbath observance. Whether it be make-up, meat-eating, mini-skirts, movies, or music, the matter of lowering our standards keeps raising its ugly head on campuses all over the globe. While the great majority of Adventist youth (from 74 up to 93 percent) researched in the North American context agree with the Adventist standards on tobacco, illegal drugs, alcohol, sexual purity, Sabbath keeping, and modest appearance, there is also quite unanimous disagreement (from 33 down to 16 percent) with the prohibitions of ornamental jewelry, rock music, movie theater attendance, and dancing.[41]

To some degree the most visible standard that is constantly being challenged on many campuses is the issue of "jewelry." While some institutions have simply acquiesced on this matter, others have held firmly to the "old traditional standard." At least one current student handbook plainly states that "bracelets, necklaces, chains, earrings,

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[40]At the end of a meal in the cafeteria a student once asked me this rhetorical question: "Pastor, where do you think you have the greatest [personal] influence – in the classroom or at the table?"

[41]See Dudley, *Why Our Teenagers Leave the Church*, 40; cf. Hernandez, 6.

ornamental or engagement rings are *unacceptable;*"[42] and that, "persistent refusal to adhere to the University standards of dress, including the wearing of jewelry,"[43] may result in "dismissal or suspension from the University."[44] Moreover, the disciplinary procedures note: "When the expectations outlined in this handbook are consistently ignored, the student has voluntarily placed him/herself under consideration for disciplinary action. The student has made a free choice, and will live with the natural consequences of that choice."[45] Despite these clear regulations, a recent prolonged visit on that campus has made it crystal clear to me that even this institution is facing formidable challenges in this area from students and even some staff members. What can be done on this controversial question of adornment?

Admittedly, there are some who believe that SDA schools should be more "open" and "accepting" and should "keep up with the times," meaning we should relax our position on jewelry. Indeed, one social scientist says that "it seems almost certain" that the prohibition of ornamental jewelry "will not hold in the near future of the church."[46] In fact, a volume published in the year 2001 on SDA lifestyle issues, warns that "if we continue taking a hard-line, unbending stand regarding less morally defined issues such as jewelry, . . . we can expect to continue seeing them [i.e., the youth] leave our church, many of them never to return."[47] While such dire predictions may sound dismally perplexing, amazingly, carefully researched historical trends prove precisely the opposite! Adventist sociologist Edwin Hernandez notes:

> Recent research shows that as mainline denominations relaxed their traditional observance of the Sabbath and other time-consuming practices, members were deprived of the benefits of belonging to such a religion–the distinctive sense of

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[42]See *Student Handbook: 2000-2001*, [Anonymous SDA University], 25 (double emphasis original).

[43]Ibid., 27.

[44]Ibid., 26.

[45]Ibid., 27.

[46]Dudley, *Why Our Teenagers Leave the Church*, 41.

[47]Keavin Hayden, *Lifestyles of the Remnant* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2001), 125; see also, 56-74.

identity and communal belonging. This situation led to a continuing precipitous pattern of membership decline. Between 1960 and 1990, the following mainline denominations had significant membership decline: [United] Methodists–39 percent; [United] Presbyterians–34 percent; United Church of Christ–48 percent; and Episcopalians–46 percent.[48]

"Will relaxing the standards in order to make them more reasonable and palatable–thus less costly–to modern sensibilities lead to a more vibrant faith?" asks Hernandez. He correctly concludes that, based on the considerable evidence from the study of other denominations that have done this, the results of lowering standards are indeed "devastating."[49]

Therefore, in view of the fact that there has been no systematic means of considering the issue of standards,[50] I have a dream that the day will come when biblical scholars, systematic theologians, Scripture-based ethicists, educational philosophers, social scientists, trained teachers, dedicated administrators, soul-winning pastors, loyal laity, concerned parents, and committed youth of the Adventist Church will assemble for the worthy task of "'consciously crafting a biblically viable set of standards and values,'"[51] that will provide this Christian community with Scripturally-sound, Christ-centered, clear, consistent, compassionate, yet correctly contextualized ways of confronting the constant challenges of contemporary culture.

In the interim, it might be well for every educational enterprise to establish meaningful methods of getting students and staff to prayerfully participate in a Scripture-based, Savior-centered, salvation-oriented, study of SDA standards. This could culminate in a specific summons to make a total lifestyle commitment to "do all to the glory of God"

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[48]Hernandez, 7-8. He was referring to the work of Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 152. In his overview of Presbyterians, as an example of this declining membership trend, Hernandez (p. 8) specifically refers to the issue of "dress codes" as one area they relaxed in an attempt to promote so-called "openness" and "freedom of conscience."

[49]Ibid., 7.

[50]George R. Knight, "Amish, Methodists, Adventists and Changing Standards and Values: A Historical Perspective," in *Perspectives on Values*, ed. V. Bailey Gillespie (Riverside, CA: La Sierra University Press, 1993), 205-206, quoted in Hernandez, 3.

[51]Ibid.

(1 Cor 10:31). Employees especially, must be committed to appropriately modeling these standards. Moreover, as noted above in connection with "required worships," those who choose to attend an Adventist college or university, are not being deprived of any freedom, because of the requirements of institutional standards. They have made a contractual agreement to abide by the policies of the school that they attend.[52]

Historically, when Adventism has been confronted with various cultural concerns, it has adopted essentially three different approaches:[53]

(a) "Condemnation": We have made public pronouncements *against* certain societally-acceptable practices, such as the statement made at the 2000 General Conference Session (held in Toronto, Canada) regarding the evils of gambling;[54] or, as in our historic biblical stand against the use of alcoholic beverages.

(b) "Conversion": We have positively promoted the benefits of a vegetarian diet, proving convincingly that God's edenic plan supersedes the consumption of "the flesh of dead animals,"[55] as Ellen White put it; moreover, our campaign against the cancer-causing tobacco habit has resulted in major positive changes in even the public policy of more than one country.[56] And, finally:

(c) "Conformity": Yes, in some areas we have, whether consciously or not, chosen to actually "conform" to certain aspects of modern culture. For instance, in

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[52]Non-SDA students who claim that their "religion" requires that they wear jewelry contrary to institutional policy, do have options, such as: conformity to the standard, considering changing their religious beliefs, finding another school to enroll at, etc.

[53]These views are essentially the same as those outlined in Roger L. Dudley, *The World: Love It or Leave It?* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1986). Much of the following is from another presentation: Ron du Preez, "Seventh-day Adventist Schools and Standards: A Response," a reaction to "A Call for the Renewal of Adventism's Communal Consciousness," by Edwin I. Hernandez, at the 1ˢᵗ International Conference on the Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy of Education, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, USA, 7-9 April 2001.

[54]See, for example, the report titled "Church Session Statement Attacks Gambling as 'Anti-Christian,'" as sent out on the Adventist News Network, 6 July 2000; available from: adventistnews@lists.gc.adventist.org

[55]See, for example, Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Diet and Foods* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1938), 383, 388, where White uses this phrase.

[56]For example, the public warnings of the Surgeon General of the United States of America, and the leading health minister of Britain, were to a major degree a result of SDA attempts to educate people about the dangers of tobacco.

contradistinction to certain religious communities, such as the Amish, that isolate themselves so as to avoid so-called "contamination" with modern society, Adventists have at times been in the forefront in the use of modern media, such as satellite evangelism,[57] in order to take the gospel to the ends of the earth.[58]

However, certain cautions need to be sounded here: In our efforts to confront the perennial problem of denominational standards, Adventism must carefully avoid the temptation of a conscienceless conformity to contemporary cultural norms in a frenzied, but futile, effort to retain its members, especially its youth; similarly, Adventism should studiously resist the seductive lure of adopting a fortress mentality of tenaciously clinging to obsolete obligations based on nineteenth-century societal practices, while categorically condemning any aspect of so-called "modern culture," in a misdirected bid to be a "peculiar people" (1 Pet 2:9 KJV). Instead, by means of prayerful Bible study, we must be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit, so as to live as a "people who belong to God" (1 Pet 2:9 NIrV), a covenant community that seeks to remain faithful to Scripture, yet with a culturally-relevant approach to life. And, we have nothing to fear from this approach; for, as Ellen White aptly stated: "No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation."[59]

To conclude this issue of adornment, consider the following personal experience: Her name was Val; she was not a Seventh-day Adventist, but showed an interest in our beliefs. I decided to say nothing about the earrings she was wearing, but instead gave her a copy of the New Testament, and encouraged her to read the Word on a regular basis. Within a short while I noticed that the earrings had come off. So, I asked her why she had quit wearing them. She basically responded: "I was reading the Bible, and found out that a Christian woman's beauty is to be an inward adornment, not external; so I took off my earrings." Focus on the *Bible*, not the baubles, had brought about a behavioral change.

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[57]For example, the "ACTS 2000" satellite program beamed worldwide from Ghana.

[58]See also, Humberto M. Rasi, "Adventists Face Culture: Should We Love or Hate the World?" A paper presented at the 27th International Faith and Learning Seminar, Mission College, Muak Lek, Thailand, 3-15 December 2000, 7-9.

[59]Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Writers and Editors* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1946), 35.

Indeed, we must put more emphasis on *Jesus* than on jewelry; we must spend more time uplifting *Christ* than condemning condoms, coffee, coke, and even cake, if we are to win the battle for biblical values and scriptural standards!

From the way that an institution operates its new student orientation program, its student retention procedures,[60] its dormitory regulations,[61] and its meal plans, through to the manner in which it conducts its graduation exercises, every co-curricular aspect of campus life must reflect the holistic philosophy of Adventist education.

Post-Curricular Procedures

Since post-curricular procedures is more of an "appendix" to the entire educational program, only a few suggestions will be made as to how this aspect can enhance the integration of faith for former students, and how they can affect current students.

A recent proposal by the General Conference Education Department directors, maintains that one of the characteristics of a successful Adventist tertiary institution is that it assists students "in obtaining suitable employment after graduation, seeks their input for future planning, and cultivates their support through regular alumni activities."[62] This assistance in finding employment could be done through providing appropriate letters of recommendation, through making contacts with vocationally-established alumni, or through special seminars that teach students how to write their own resumes, and how to search for employment in a tight job market, even role-playing the interview process.

Once students have graduated, the institution can continue to positively affect their lives by means of an active alumni association. To keep former students connected to their alma mater, each institution needs to promote and plan for an annual alumni weekend, during which a variety of activities can be held, which cater to the spiritual,

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[60]Rather than merely giving repeated warnings to students whose grades have put them on academic probation, or simply suspending or dismissing them, at least one Adventist tertiary institution has established a "Scholastic Study Lab" which these students are required to attend, and where they can receive assistance with their studies. This is a more redemptive approach, which has resulted in success for many students.

[61]See Donald W. Murray, *Called to a Ministry of Caring: A Residence Hall Perspective* (Silver Spring, MD: Department of Education, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2000).

[62]"Characteristics of a Successful Seventh-day Adventist College or University."

physical, mental, and social needs of people. For instance, there can be continuing education mini-seminars, special banquets, inspirational speakers, and even a "fun run" or a "walk talk" (exercising while socializing with former classmates).

Also, contact with alumni can be maintained through the official public relations newsletters, or news magazines, with a specific section devoted to alumni affairs. Besides general news of campus happenings, articles in these publications can include reviews of books by current and former lecturers, as well as thought-provoking, holistically-oriented articles (some even written by alumni) that are relevant to the needs of the working world. Finally, to enhance alumni loyalty, their input should be tapped for future planning, their expertise utilized in networking with current students planning on graduating and seeking employment, and their resources solicited for special projects. For example, at least one Adventist tertiary institution has a "Committee of 100" (which is now probably twice that figure), consisting of committed alumni and others, who on a regular annual basis provide financial assistance to the institution for special projects that they select to be involved in.

Thus, whether through news magazines or networking, through seminars, soliciting cash or seeking their counsel, institutions have the responsibility of continuing to positively impact former students in a way that will foster their growth in thinking Christianly about all of life even after they have left the campus.

Conclusion

From administrative appointments through alumni activities, from adornment regulations to attendance requirements, we must avoid all attempts to acquiesce to or accommodate ourselves to secular standards. Rather, based upon biblical beliefs, we need to pursue the holistic integration of faith in all peri-curricular practices for the sake of all of our students. If we do this diligently, both in the classroom as well as in all peri-curricular activities, we will be putting into practice the principle enunciated by Jesus, when He said: "These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others" (Matt 23:23b RSV). In other words, in our thinking, planning, and action, we must dedicate ourselves to the task of creating a holistic strategy that will develop in all our students a life totally committed to self-sacrificial service for the glory of God.