

INTEGRATION OF FAITH AND VALUES
IN GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

By

Lisa M. Beardsley
beardsleyl@gc.adventist.org
Department of Education
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
Silver Spring, 20904 MD, USA

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Characteristics of Graduate and Professional Education

There is general agreement on the length, purpose, and broad characteristics of graduate and professional education.¹ Whereas undergraduate education results in mastery of a discipline, graduate education builds on that foundation to apply knowledge, solve problems, and contribute to new knowledge. Some undergraduate degrees lead to the practice of a profession (e.g., nursing) but the emphasis of this paper is on those professional degrees beyond the first (or bachelors) degree. Furthermore, in this paper, the term “graduate education” is used broadly to include both academic and professional degrees beyond the first degree. An academic master’s degree (MA, MS, MPhil) is at least one year of full-time study and professional master’s degrees (MBA, MSW) are

¹ MA/MS/MSc: A first graduate degree, representing the equivalent of at least one academic year of full-time post-baccalaureate study, or its equivalent in depth and quality. The distinctions between M.A. and M.S. are similar to those between B.A. and B.S. Some M.A. and M.S. degrees are merely continuations at a higher level of undergraduate work without basic change in character. Others emphasize some research that may lead to doctoral work.

MBA, MSW, MDiv, etc.: Professional degrees requiring up to two years of full-time study. Extensive undergraduate preparation in the field may reduce the length of study to one year.

MPhil, PhD, DPhil, ThD: The standard research-oriented degree which indicates that the recipient has done, and is prepared to do, original research in a major discipline. The PhD usually requires three years or more of postgraduate work or an equivalent period of part-time study and consists mainly of a supervised research project and completion of an externally-examined original research thesis or project.

Edd, PsyD, MD, JD, DMin, DrPH etc: Degrees with emphasis on professional knowledge. These degrees normally require three or more years of prescribed postgraduate work and are designed to prepare persons for a specific profession. Some undergraduate programs prepare for direct entry into employment (e.g., nursing) and other programs are offered at both undergraduate and graduate levels (e.g. engineering, business management, ministry). Others are primarily or solely graduate in nature (e.g., medicine, dentistry). In the U.S., all professional programs at the doctoral level presuppose a background preparation in liberal or general education.

usually two years of full-time study to include an internship or clinical practicum. The PhD is at least three years of full-time study and requires evidence of the ability to add new knowledge to the discipline through publication of a dissertation or article in a peer-reviewed journal. Professional education (MD, DDS, JD) is usually at least three years of full-time study and typically includes training in clinical or practice. In North America medicine and dentistry require four years of post-baccalaureate education whereas it is around 6 years of postsecondary education elsewhere. Some degrees require passing a national licensure examination before the degree is awarded, while others professions require a degree from an accredited institution to be eligible to sit for licensure or certification examinations leading to the independent practice of that profession and membership in a professional guild. Professional degrees emphasize the application of knowledge to novel situations (e.g., providing appropriate medical or dental care to a patient or interpreting case law in representing a client in a court of law).

Relevance of the Bible to Graduate Education

Consensus about common features breaks down on the point of whether religious and biblical education should be part of graduate or professional education. This is even true in Adventist higher education. “That’s general education, and general education belongs to undergraduate education” is one reason given to exclude it. In “Why the study of religion belongs in Adventist graduate programs,”² Gerald Winslow counters with three reasons in support of including the formal study of religion in graduate education:

² Winslow, G. R. (2006). Why the study of religion belongs in Adventist graduate programs. *Journal of Adventist Education*, 68, pp. 27-32.

1. Graduate education presents students with an important opportunity and stimulus for spiritual growth and maturation.
2. The inclusion of religious studies helps to ensure the balanced education of the whole person.
3. Graduate education that includes the study of religion is intellectually superior.

On this third point, Ellen White has very definite counsel: “There is nothing more calculated to energize the mind and strengthen the intellect than the study of the Word of God³.” “One sentence of Scripture is of more value than ten thousand of man’s ideas or arguments.⁴” “As a means of intellectual training, the Bible is more effective than any other book, or all other books combined....No other study can impart such mental power as does the effort to grasp the stupendous truths of revelation.”⁵ It is clear that she considers the study of the Bible itself to have an elevating effect on intellectual development.

Winslow reflects on the medical curriculum at Loma Linda University that contains seven required courses in religion (14 quarter credits) to include biblical studies, ethics, and courses related to promoting wholeness (e.g., Wholeness for Physicians), in keeping with the University motto “to make man whole.” All of these courses have a religion course prefix indicating that the courses are under the oversight of the School of Religion and faculty who have doctorates in theology, religious education, biblical studies, and related disciplines. The courses may be team-taught by other faculty (e.g.

³ White, E. G. *Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students*, (1913), p. 460.

⁴ White, E. G. (1902). *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 7, p. 71

⁵ White, E. G. (1903). *Education*, p. 13.

physicians co-teach *Orientation to Religion and Medicine* in the first year) but the course “belongs” to the School of Religion.

I taught in the *Orientation to Religion and Medicine* course for six years in which students studied passages from the Bible on Christ and his healing ministry. During each class session, faculty members (alternately a physician and a religion faculty member) shared with students their own spiritual journey. Usually a physician brought in a patient who shared his or her spiritual journey and described how physicians supported (or more often, failed to support) them in that journey during their illness. Finally, students reflected on and discussed the biblical passage, the presentations, and their own evolving identity as physicians who avowedly are continuing the healing ministry of Jesus Christ.

Shouldn't ALL courses—whether accounting or public health--integrate faith and learning as germane to the discipline? Common approaches to integration includes starting class with prayer, sharing a devotional thought, or pointing out what the Bible says about a particular point under discussion. Such integration is the result of the spiritual convictions and commitment of the faculty member who has a degree in the primary discipline (accounting or public health) rather than in theology or biblical studies. When the individual does not have an advanced degree in the field of theology, the “faith perspective” is that of a lay person. As devout as he or she may be, the accounting teacher integrates faith as an accountant and not as a theologian. As far as the discipline of religion is concerned, this would not meet expectations for faculty qualifications at the tertiary level, which is that a teacher has a degree in the discipline taught at least one level higher than that of the students taught (i.e., a masters degree for teaching undergraduate and an earned doctorate to teach graduate students).

Certainly students benefit from the integration of faith by a specialist in the area under study (accounting or public health). The integration of faith and learning happens most naturally under the skillful eye of dedicated, godly faculty members. But students benefit in another way when taught by someone with a degree in religion, theology, or biblical studies. A school of nursing would not accept a professor of religion teaching nursing skills even though the professor might have taken care of his or her children when they had the flu or a tummy bug. Advanced expertise and education is needed to teach nursing in a school of nursing, regardless of knowledge gained through personal experience. Likewise, faculty with advanced training in religion can teach at a higher level of academic rigor than can someone outside the discipline. Such rigor enriches the learning experience at the graduate level.

For these reasons, Loma Linda University now requires that every graduate program include at least three credits of religion for each year of full-time study. Even an 18-quarter credit certificate program must include at least one graduate-level religion course. Two-year master's degrees must include 6 credits, and since the PhD degree is a minimum of three years of full-time study, 9 credits are required. Furthermore, the credits must be at the graduate level so that prior theological and religious knowledge is expanded in light of new learning and a maturing identity in the discipline whether that is as a scientist or dentist⁶.

Loma Linda University is leading the way in making the study of religion part of graduate and professional education. In a survey of 80 graduate programs in 2003, Winslow⁷ found that only five required religion courses with a religion prefix,

⁶ Winslow, G. R. (2006), pp. 27-28.

⁷ Ibid.

representing 6 percent of all graduate programs. Of these programs one was in music ministry and the other was church administration. When he expanded the analysis to include courses with titles like “Faith and Learning” that had disciplinary prefixes other than religion, the number of programs only increased to 18 percent.

Although not formally surveyed, Winslow⁸ shows the weakness of the following arguments proffered for excluding the study of religion at the graduate level:

1. Our students have already studied enough religion.
2. Required religion courses will make our graduate programs unattractive.
3. We can integrate religion in our programs without requiring formal courses.

The first reason for excluding the study of religion in graduate programs is based on an assumption that all graduate students have attended Adventist colleges and have completed 24 quarter credits of required religion courses at the undergraduate level, or 18 and sometimes only 16 if they had attended Adventist secondary school.

However, as evident in Tables 1 and 2, there has been a steady decline in Adventist enrolment from 2000 to 2007, from 46% to 40% for all levels combined, and from 75% to 57% at the tertiary level. The percentage at the graduate level is unknown. These data show that the assumption that students have already studied enough religion at the secondary or undergraduate level is an increasingly tenuous one.

⁸ Ibid, p. 29.

Table 1. Percentage of Adventist Enrolment at All Levels, 2000 to 2007.

	2000	2004	2005	2006	2007
Primary	46%	43%	43%	40%	40%
Secondary	43%	43%	38%	37%	34%
Worker Training	80%	52%	51%	48%	47%
Tertiary	75%	66%	62%	60%	57%

Table 2. Total enrollment 2007

	2007
Adventist	584,369 (39.5%)
Non-Adventist	894,767 (60.5%)
Total	1,479,136

There is no evidence that including religious education in graduate or professional education will make it unattractive. As for the point about student learning outcomes, it is true that accrediting bodies are emphasizing the need to demonstrate evidence of educational effectiveness. However, it is an alignment of inputs (such as courses), processes and outcomes that all together make a case for success in achieving the goals of Adventist education. Outcomes alone, in the absence of any inputs and processes is not credible education either. More will be said about non-coursework approaches later.

How to Include the Bible in Graduate and Professional Education

Study of the Bible can be straight-forward (e.g. Romans or topical courses such as God and suffering) or biblical values can be integrated in with other content material (e.g., Epistemology in Religion and Science, History and Philosophy of Science, Comparative Science/Social Science ethics and the Bible, Biblical Financial ethics/Bible and Finance). Whether taught (or co-taught) by a faculty member with a degree in biblical studies, at the graduate level there should be evidence of transformational reflection on faith and sound theological thinking. This should also be evident in a thesis or dissertation chapter to deliberately integrate faith with the topic/question/thesis. A compulsory non-credit inter-disciplinary seminar can also provide a forum to explore the inter-relationship between faith and specific disciplines. Learning outcomes should demonstrate evidence of Adventist character through an intellectual quality in which the unique biblically-based Adventist worldview is basic to the entire academic endeavor.

Role modelling of biblical principles by the faculty member, such as through profession of faith and demonstration of integrity and fairness, is also persuasive as to the relevance of biblical values to life. But who are the role models? The data show two simultaneous demographic changes: a decline in both the percentage of Adventist students and Adventist teachers (Table 3). The slight increase in the percentage for tertiary teachers in 2007 is likely to be spurious because of apparent incomplete data reported for that year.

Table 3. Percentage of Adventist Teachers at All Levels, 2000 to 2007.

	2000	2004	2005	2006	2007
Primary	81.5	80.8	78.6	66.5	68.8
Secondary	79.4	74.7	75.7	72.9	72.1
Worker Training	85.2	76.7	72.6	77.6	77.0
Tertiary	82.0	78.9	75.6	73.3	77.6 ⁹
Total	82.0	78.5	75.6	69.6	71.0

It goes without saying that faculty must have appropriate qualifications to teach in their respective disciplines. But they need more than that. There must be a good fit between the values of faculty and that of the school. The teachers at a university are the key to the transmission of values, as C. S. Lewis observed:

“This very obvious fact—that each generation is taught by an earlier generation—must be kept very firmly in mind....The moment we forget this we begin to talk nonsense about education....None can give to another what he does not possess himself. No generation can bequeath to its successor what it has not got. You may frame the syllabus as you please. If we are skeptical, we shall teach only skepticism to our pupils, if fools only folly, if vulgar only vulgarity, if saints sanctity, if heroes heroism. Education is only the most fully conscious of the channels whereby each generation influences the next.... Nothing which was not in the teachers can flow from them into the pupils. We shall all admit that a man who knows no Greek himself cannot teach Greek to his form: but it is equally

⁹ It appears that there was an under-reporting of about 2000 tertiary teachers in 2007 (6192 SDA teachers out of a total of 7971) as compared to 2006 (7152 SDA teachers out of a total of 9745 teachers). Data for 2008 are not yet available.

certain that a man whose mind was formed in a period of cynicism and disillusion, cannot teach hope or fortitude”.¹⁰

It is not the buildings, required chapel attendance, or the vegetarian food that makes Adventist education Adventist. While relevant, it is not even the policies or historical roots. Adventist education becomes a reality through the day-by-day mentoring of committed church members who share their faith and not just their passion for a particular area of study. For this reason, the Adventist Accrediting Association is concerned about the increasing number of faculty who have another (or no) faith-- from 18 percent in 2000 to nearly a quarter of all tertiary faculty in 2007. This increase parallels an upturn in the percentage of non-Adventist students who are enrolled in our colleges and universities: from 25 percent to 43 percent as of 2007. Without faculty members who are thoroughly committed to Adventism, who will pass on the faith to the next generation?

Integrating Bible Study in Research Degrees

How might Bible study be part of a research degree where there are no required courses at all? A taskforce¹¹ identified criteria for Adventist institutions of higher learning that offer research degrees such as whatever the discipline of study, the research should be consistent with the role of Scripture within Adventism and yet be genuinely

¹⁰ Lewis, C.S. On the Transmission of Christianity,” *God in the Dock*, p. 116.

¹¹ On March 30, 2008, the Board of the Adventist Accrediting Association voted to establish a Research Degrees Taskforce to propose suitable criteria for review of research degrees. Membership includes Lisa Beardsley, chair; Daniel Duda, TED Education Director; John Fowler, Associate Director, GC; Emilio Garcia-Marenko, Andrews University; Vivienne Watts, Avondale College; K. O. Ogunwenmo, Babcock University; Laurence Turner, Newbold College. The Taskforce at its meeting on the campus of Newbold College, February 25-26, 2009 and continued work by email thereafter. The AAA Board received the report as a first reading on April 1, 2009.

open to new insights which might modify previous positions. Rather than a narrow focus on a unidimensional aspect, the research should integrate Adventist faith and learning at the highest level. The fundamental and distinctive character of Adventist faith and a biblical worldview should be intentional in all topics. Research topics might address development of the whole person (mental, physical, social and spiritual development in educational research), nurture of strong family bonds/ties (sociology), life-style issues such as vegetarian diet and abstinence from alcohol and tobacco (public health; science), biblical standards as the basis of long-lasting truth and worldview (in areas like evolution, world history, marriage and family studies, etc.) and standards and values compatible with biblical principles. The research should demonstrate critical reflection on how an Adventist worldview informs a particular discipline, yet at the same time show unequivocally that Adventism's demand that students not merely be reflectors of others' thoughts translates into research which is genuinely creative and original. There should be measurable evidence of rootedness in Adventist values and beliefs that permeates all academic activities, ranging from theological reflection in doctoral theses/dissertations, to projects or capstone reports to proposals to resolve problems and challenges, to enriching the church and society through well-thought and designed programs or projects.

Clinical training and internships provide yet another venue for meaningful integration of faith and learning. Opportunities for service to others exist at the institution (e.g. mentoring undergraduates) and beyond (e.g. short-term work for ADRA or mission clinics). How the service is provided also matters (e.g., praying with patients, reflecting on Scripture in counseling a client) and is an opportunity for students to demonstrate the relevance of biblical principles with practice.

Co-curriculum and Spiritual Master Plan

Programs that nurture faith (devotionals, worship services, mission trips, required religion courses) are all part of the spiritual master plan that every school should have. Some pull back from the task of trying to measure the spiritual domain, believing that schools cannot possibly be accountable for student choices. They rationalize that since God gave humans free choice, who are we to question the choice of a student, especially that of a mature adult? The fact that some students will use their power of choice in undesirable ways, or that the spiritual domain might be difficult to measure does not excuse accountability or intentionality in the task of building faith. Adventist education builds on students' prior learning and experiences in spiritual life as well as in academics. Spiritual growth and development can be measured and quantified using the same principles of measurement that are used to evaluate other learning, for example through pre-and post-tests and by assessing the impact of interventions against benchmarks over a period of time.

The amount of time and exposure that graduate students have to the co-curriculum and in contact with non-teaching mentors is less than for undergraduate students for a number of reasons. First, graduate students are expected to spend more time in independent study, typically three hours of independent study versus two hours for every hour in class that is expected at the undergraduate level. Graduate students in part-time or off-campus programs live and work off-campus and have families of their own. They are less likely to live in university residence halls. For these reasons, graduate students do not participate as much in the co-curricular activities that are part of campus life and the plan for wholistic education. How can Adventist campuses provide relevant co-

curricular activities for graduate students? What would be appropriate for their level of maturity? This is an area for future development and study. To stimulate that discussion, case study 2 outlines some of the issues in the role of the co-curriculum and campus Spiritual Master Plan for graduate students.

Summary

This paper has outlined benefits of including formal coursework and research in religious and biblical studies in graduate and professional education. The coursework may be biblical studies taught by faculty with advanced degrees in theology/biblical studies, and integration of faith and learning by faculty in the respective disciplines. Indicators of successful integration include evidence of transformational reflection on faith and professional identity in research products such as theses and dissertations, and in application and practice of the discipline. The key role of committed Seventh-day Adventist faculty to mentor students and model faith in life and the profession is highlighted. The need for appropriate co-curricular activities and graduate student-specific components of the campus Spiritual Master Plan have also been identified as areas for future development.

Case Study 1: The Spiritual School

The visiting team of the Adventist Accrediting Association recommended that a school known as “The Spiritual School” expand religion requirements to the graduate programs they had recently started. When the next visiting team returned five years later, the team found evidence of intentional integration of elements of faith in existing courses in graduate programs. Except for the graduate program in religion, however, there were no required graduate-level religion courses with a religion prefix, taught by faculty members with doctoral preparation in religion.

Minutes of the meetings of Academic Affairs showed discussion had taken place regarding the integration of faith in graduate programs and even of requiring graduate courses in religion. However, it was decided faculty members would be encouraged to do it in the courses they already taught. Existing courses were tweaked. No new courses were added.

Furthermore, the Spiritual Master Plan for the school also did not include specific goals or outcomes for graduate students.

The visiting team encouraged the Graduate Council to continue discussions of including formal coursework in religion in all graduate programs in order to enhance achievement of institution’s statement of Guiding Principles for Graduate Programs in its graduate catalog, namely that “Previous knowledge and understandings are expanded, reconsidered, and synthesized in light of new learning; and accepted practices undergo the rigor of thoughtful analysis.”

At the exit interview, an institutional representative indicated that it was not fair to recommend the institution require religion courses in the graduate programs in the absence of a specific requirement in the accreditation standards of the Adventist Accrediting Association to do so.

Discussion:

1. Since we belong to the “priesthood of believers,”¹² dedicated faculty can integrate faith and learning in their discipline at the graduate level. Separate religion courses would only increase the cost and length of graduate programs and make Adventist programs uncompetitive without adding value. Agree? Disagree? Why?
2. Would you support the addition of a minimum number of required religion courses as criteria for review by the Adventist Accrediting Association (see next page)?

What would you change?

¹² 1 Peter 2: 5, 9

Proposed Required Religion Course Requirements¹³ as AAA Criteria for Review

Undergraduate¹⁴ <p>Every teacher is encouraged to integrate faith with the discipline in all courses. Three semester (four quarter) credits of religion courses are required for each year of full-time study for a minimum of 12 semester (18 quarter) credits for a four-year degree or 3 semester (4 quarter credits) for every 32 semester (48 quarter credits). Half of the credits must biblical studies.</p> <p>Faculty qualifications: All courses must be taught by a member of the religion/theology department who has a minimum of a master's degree in the discipline or a master's degree and 12 semester (18 quarter) graduate credits in theology/religion.</p>
Graduate^{15, 16} <p>Every teacher is encouraged to integrate faith with the discipline in all courses. Two semester (three quarter) credits of graduate-level religion courses are required for each year of full-time study (or the equivalent). At least one course must be biblical studies.</p> <p>Faculty qualifications: All courses must be taught by a member of the religion/theology department who preferably has an earned doctoral degree in the discipline or a masters degree and 18 semester (27 quarter) graduate credits in theology/religion. These required courses may introduce new material at a graduate level or examine previous knowledge and attitudes so that understanding is reconsidered and synthesized in light of new learning and accepted practices undergo the rigor of thoughtful analysis. Team-taught courses in which disciplinary knowledge is combined with religion/theology are acceptable (e.g., business ethics, religion and medicine) but the prefix and primary oversight must come from the religion/theology department.</p>

3. What might be an appropriate requirement for research-based masters and doctoral degrees that have no formal coursework at all?

¹³ For a discussion of the tension between academics and the role of the Bible see Knight, G. R. (2008). The missiological roots of Adventist higher education and the ongoing tension between Adventist mission and academic vision. *Journal of Adventist Education*, 70(4), 20-28.

¹⁴ Greg King indicates reasons to teach religion courses in undergraduate programs are to evangelize, develop biblical literacy and transform lives. King, G. A. (2006). Should Adventist colleges require religion classes? *Journal of Adventist Education*, 68(3), 22-26.

¹⁵ See graduate religion requirements of Loma Linda University
<http://www.llu.edu/llu/handbook/facultyhandbook/School-SR.pdf>

¹⁶ Research degrees where there is no coursework should show how the intent of this requirement is achieved.

Case Study 2. Sandwich Education

A visiting team of the Adventist Accrediting Association conducted a focused site visit to four off-campus sites of a university. Three of the sites were at least two-hours drive from the main campus. The university started offering extension and off-campus programs in 1998 at the associates and baccalaureate level. Two years ago it began to offer graduate business and education degrees in the evenings. Thirty-two percent (1,800) of the University's total enrolment (5,600) are enrolled at the off-campus sites.

Faculty members from the main campus drove to the off-campus locations to teach. About one-third of the teachers however, were contract teachers living in the cities where the off-campus locations were. A few of the contract teachers were not Adventist.

When the team visited the sites, they observed that many of the students were coming to class directly from their place of employment. Some came in uniforms, others in business attire, and both men and women wore jewelry. The students were mature, many had families of their own, and about half were not members of the SDA Church.

Students at one site reported visiting the main campus only once, for general orientation. None reported attending church services on campus, or any of the social activities that were offered in the evenings or week-ends on the main campus. They did report appreciating the ability to work, live at home, and further their education part-time and in the evenings. The majority indicated they would attend a social held at their off-campus site, although some of the mothers said they would prefer to spend the weekend evenings with their children and family since they have little time with them.

Inspection of the University Spiritual Master Plan showed that it was designed for residential undergraduate students who participated in dormitory worships, campus church services, and organized programming of a spiritual nature.

The visiting team recommended that the University:

- a) separate the items referring to professional development (which belongs to the curriculum) from spiritual formation;
- b) identify benchmarks and outcome indicators for all; and
- c) continue with their efforts to develop a comprehensive Spiritual Master Plan and ensure that it includes a section on or addresses in an integrated manner the spiritual needs of students at off-campus extension sites, with emphasis on the development of intentional elements that target students of all faith traditions. This should be reflected in the overall University Strategic Plan and its financial commitments. The success of the agreed plans should be evaluated regularly, with annual reports given to the Board.

Discussion: What benchmarks and outcomes should be included in the University Spiritual Master Plan for the off-campus graduate students?

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