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Conveying Christian Values To Adolescents in Adventist Schools

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INTRODUCTION

The 20th Century has seen an unprecedented crisis in value structures. We educators, are all concerned by the crisis in values and the way values are taught, or not taught to adolescents. They are looking for practical, usable christian ethics and attitudes to help them bring the children in their care to responsible adulthood. Children are wrestling with issues of faith, values, and lifestyle practices. The fact is that children are human. They do not respond simply in a passive way as plants do to their environment; they react. They need to consider the educationnal basis of teaching by thinking about the relationship between human knowledge, child development, learning and society with its various aims and values. Schools teach knowledge but student is always in need of experience to face the challenge of life. Seventh-day Adventist schools are expected "to provide quality academic training, to serve as a major avenue for spiritual development and for transmitting Adventist culture and all values, to protect young students from teachings and influences they consider undesirable."¹ Adventist educators must find ways to convey Christian values to adolescents in Adventist schools, to develop the mind and mold and discipline the character.

The Crisis in Values

The teens are a trying period for parents and educators in general. The years from thirteen to nineteen are called "The Teen-Age" because the numbers end in "teen" but the years from thirteen to fifteen are the hardest. These are the years when our children stop out of childhood into youth- when they are neither young enough to understand. They live in a world of their own, the world of "knowing it all", while their parents stand by and worry about their attitudes and behavior.

Many of the problems of adolescents are due to the way in which they are treated by other people." Children are educated so that they become docile, gentle, obedient, submissive and dependent".² And in some societies, it is customary to treat adolescents partly as if they were children and partly as if they were grown up with the result that they do not know where they belong or how they are meant to behave. Frustration at this time is often caused by the attitude of the parents who fail to recognize that their child is growing up and refuse to give him the independence which he/her needs. Some parents who are disappointed that their child is growing away from them, try to interfere with his /her relationships with other people and make him /her feel unhappy or guilty about his /her new friendships.

Most adolescents are idealistic and desire to feel that they are of some use in the world. They feel the need to find a purpose in life and often become very interested in religion. At the same time, they tend to become critical of the religion beliefs in which they have been brought. Thus at the time when they are most in need of a firm belief, they often begin to experience religious doubts. At this stage, a personal world view begins to take its contours. This generates tension between the adolescent's search for individuality and autonomy. Conflicts occur caused by rules imposed from outside. The extent to which the individual is successful in dealing with the problems and adjusting to the changes that arise at adolescence will depend a great deal of his family background. He needs the security which comes from knowing that his parents are fond of him, and at the same time he needs to be given as much independence as can safely be allowed him. The adolescents question devotion and doubt; and this situation is supported by psychologists such as Lawrence Kohlberg. Consider, his influential theory of moral development, a theory that underlines some modern curricula for moral and value education in public schools. Kohlberg³ contented that children develop morality as their thinking proceeds through a sequence of stages from (1) a

"preconventional" morality of pure self interest, to (2) a "conventional" morality concerned with gaining others approval, or doing one's duty to (3) a some "mature" people, a "post conventional" morality of self chosen principles.

Moral reasoning is based on universal principles of justice and fairness and is intrinsically grounded in the individual's own conscience. The adolescent begins to assert ability to choose especially in lifestyle and also to consciously appropriate the religious faith and symbols. An adolescent is a human being, a person, reflexive and thinking being. He asks questions such as what and why and how. He seeks to understand.

Justification of the crisis in values

Valuegenesis⁴ provides an omnibus portrait of Adventist youth, documenting, and evaluating the current condition of their faith, their values, their loyalty to adventism and how each of these is reflected in their behaviors. In addition Valuegenesis takes an in-depth look at the three major institutions responsible for educating youth: Families, congregations, and schools. The surveys of parents, pastors, and teachers and principals provides descriptive portraits of these three institutions and identify the dynamics within families, congregations and schools that promote faith maturity.

The results had shown that Adventist success in nurturing, faith maturity occurs among both boys and girls and across racial/ethnic categories. But across grades 7-12, a high percentages of 70% of 6th to 9th or (12th) grade Adventist youth are also deeply committed to Adventism.

Adventist youth display considerable higher denominational loyalty than do maintain Protestant youth. However, room for improvement on matters of loyalty to Adventist is evident. However, there is a great risk, a loss of 30 percent. And losing the 30 percent of youth who do not display high denominational loyalty or losing even half that number, would have serious consequences for the church.

On the two important religious outcome of faith maturity and denominational loyalty, Adventist youth appear relatively strong. Both measures show notable room for improvement most markedly in the case of faith maturity. The remainder of this report concerns how faith maturity and denominational loyalty can be increased with implications for what families, churches, and schools can do.

Children should be so educated that their minds will be united with the minds of their parents and teachers and so instructed that they can see the propriety of heeding their counsel. Then, when they go forth from the guiding hand of those educators their characters will not be like the reed trembling in the wind. But, few parents realize that their children are what their example and discipline have made them and that they are responsible for the characters their children develop. Many parents plead that they have so much to do that they have no time to improve their minds, to educate their children for practical life, or to teach them how they may become lambs of Christ's fold. Some parents neglect to reflect and study and pray earnestly to God for Wisdom and divine aid to train their children that they may develop characters that God will approve. Many fathers and mothers allow their children to form wrong habits and to follow their own inclination and fail to impress upon their minds the danger of their doing this, and the necessity of their being controlled by principle.

The most important task of educators is to prepare adolescents for eternity without neglecting excellent academic achievement. Consecrated teachers at all level of schooling influence adolescents who come to school with the values displayed in the home and the community. But what do we mean by values?

Defining Values

To Stommen⁵,

"Values are ideas people have about the "good life" and about what life means. They are ideas we use to tell whether we like something or not, whether it is important or unimportant to us whether we are frightened of or feel good about an object and event a course of action, or a person. We hold that all values come from the one fundamental ideas, good and evil. Our Concept of good and evil is the basis we use to rank everything else including all other values, beliefs, abstract, ideas like truth scientific theories or all evil. There are mixtures of good and evil in any combination of circumstances involving interaction between ourselves and eternal reality".

Values do not exist in isolation but are reflected in the judgments and claims we make. Values are private, they are freely chosen by anyone who wants to so choose. Values are not things but standards of conducts, beauty, efficiency, or worth that we try to live up to. They are estimates of worth or merit that we place on various aspects of are experience.

Project Affirmation writers define values as a preferred quality or action. In a general sense, it refers to what is good, desirable, or worthwhile. In a religious sense, what we value indicates what we see as being in balance with, in harmony with and central (core) to the expressed will of God. A value is a construct that might be illustrated by Sabbath-keeping, health living, honesty, and faithfulness.

Types of values

The general study of values is known as axiology one branch of philosophy. There are different types of values and as a rule, a study of values centers around three main issues⁶:

1. Whether values are objective or subjective, that is impersonal or personal.
2. Whether values are changing or constant and
3. Whether there are hierarchies of values.

A. Objective and Subjective Values

1. Objective values exist regardless of man's personal feelings and desires. They are cosmic in character and may be regarded as realities deriving from beauty for example are by this concept ontological reality and possess intrinsic value.
2. Subjective Values, on the other hand, are relative to personal desire which confers value on the object considered. To value something, means to deserve it. We believe it is good because we desire it. Subjective values are referred to as instrumental because they are instruments or means use to obtain certain desirable satisfactions.

The question of values deals with notions of what a person or a society conceives of as being good or preferable. But values may also be considered either absolute/eternal or variable/changing.

B. Absolute and Changing Values

1. Absolute values are constant. They derive from the character of the world and are a reflection of reality itself. They do not alter or change from society, and in their essence, they remain constant for all time. What is wrong for us today was wrong also for our predecessors a thousand years ago.
2. Changing values, on the contrary, are like to be responses to man's immediate needs. Unlike absolute values, they arise in the source of man's daily experience. They are generally more social than individual. They are arrived at imperially and tested publicly in order to gain the approval of an informed group.

C. Hierarchy of Values

Many people believe in a permanent hierarchy of values but this depends on their general philosophy. Some philosophers adhere to a more or less fixed value structure, which extols the things of the spirit above those of matter. They rank religious values highly because such values help man to become one with the spiritual order.

The subject of values is long and intriguing especially in our days where specialist are striving to establish them logically and scientifically. But axiology deals also with Ethics and Aesthetics.

1. Ethics

Ethics is the philosophical study of moral values and conduct or behaviour. An ethical system may be related closely to religion. There are two types of ethical theory: Institutionism and naturalism. Institutionalism states that moral values are apprehended directly and naturalism is the view that moral values derive from and are determined by man's needs interests and desires.

2. Aesthetics

Axiology is concerned with aesthetics which is the study of values in the realm of beauty and art. Aesthetic values are harder to assess than moral values because they are often more personal and subjective and because they relate to imagination and creativity.

In the first part of this research we examine the crisis of values within the three main institutions responsible for education: families, congregations, and schools. Recent report has shown the evidence of this crisis. And after some ponetial considerations about the meaning of important terms such as: Value, axiology, the types of values, we assume that the transmission of values in the Adventist schools is of primary necessity. Education is the development of capacities that are valuable, not pernicious; and it is with education in this narrower, but more frequent sense that we shall here alone be concerned. Education is a practical science which seeks knowledge of what to do in the teaching situation. Adventist educators must seek to establish educational environment, and practices that are in harmony with their basic beliefs, principles, standards, rules, mission, and philosophy. Ways must be found to conveying values to adolescents in the Adventist schools.

II. Teaching Values in Adventist Schools

Humberto Rasi⁷ points out that the declining role of family and the church in transmitting Christian values places very year a larger responsibility on the Christian schools. So it is prior for Adventist educational institution to convey values to adolescents. And curriculum integration, school discipline, classroom management, the work programme, the co-curricular activities and role modeling are ways through which this transmission can be made.

Curriculum Integration

Christian values and faith can be integrated with academic learning. Barry Hill⁸ states us; that, “Adventist secondary subject framework should be a statement of values and principles that guide curriculum development. The values and principles in such a document should be derived from Adventist educational philosophy, which tells us what is real, true, and good.

The standards setting process by ensuring that all student have access to a solid academic curriculum because moral education is a natural by-product of a good curriculum, schools can contribute to the moral education of the adolescents. Values must be grounded in the core discipline an be specific enough to ensure the development of a common core curriculum. In addition to being academic and subject-based, a good set of standards or values should also outline the essential knowledge and skills that a all students are to learn in each subject area. Such values (or standards) would guarantee that all students, regardless of background or neighborhood are exposed to a common core of learning. In addition teachers would know clearly what their students learned the year before in order to avoid reteaching previously covered material. Somewhere in the curriculum, the students should be exposed to ethics, to social problems, to aesthetics, and other areas of values and to the logical structure of value judgment. Standards must focus on academics. Improving students academic performance should be the central mission of all our educational arrangements and forging argument around the academic content of the curriculum and our expectations for the adolescents in the essential first step. But there are some who would rather have standards on values focus on social and behavioral issues than on academics.

B. School Discipline

The root word of discipline is the Latin word discara which means "to learn". The word disciple comes from the same root . A disciple follows a teacher in order to learn from him or her. Transferring this idea to the classroom, students learn to behave by watching and imitating the teacher. The purpose of discipline is to create an orderly environment so that learning can take place and also to teach self-control. But, that goes beyond auto-discipline to conversion and God-control.

Schools have a role to play in helping adolescent (or students) develop compassion, honesty, self-discipline, or other traits essential to good behaviour and strong character. Researchers found that educators who see lives shaped by the power of a Christian school climate believe that Adventist schools do make a difference. Our schools have been established that in them the youth, may learn to obey God, and His law, and become fitted for science. Rules for the conduct of those who attend are necessary and action in harmony with these regulations is require of all students. The school discipline must supplement the home training, and simplicity and godliness maintained. In order to attain this object, the physical, mental moral and religious

education of adolescent must have attention. Students have an intelligent will to be directed to control all their powers and to be taught self-control, and to move from reason and principle. In the Christian school teachers, must give special attention to the culture of the weaker facilities, that all the powers may be brought into exercise and carried forward from one degree of strength to another, that the mind may attain due proportion. Adolescents should be taught to respect experienced judgment, to be guided by their teachers, so educated that their mind will be united with the minds, of their teachers, and so instructed to see the property of heeding their counsel, so that their character will not be the reed trembling in the wind. To maintain proper discipline and yet exercise pitying love and tenderness for the souls of those under his care the teacher needs a constant supply of the wisdom and grace of God.

Teens must experience consequences for their behavior. They must experience positive consequences for positive, responsible behavior and negative consequences for inappropriate irresponsible behavior. These consequences must be consistent and fair not based on how the educator is feeling. If teacher clearly states to teenager that he is working to help him become a responsible, independent person, he can then feel the teacher is for him, not against him. Such a positive attitude will greatly improve the relationship between the teacher and the adolescent.

Educators will not forget that they are four types of discipline.

1. The first is an authoritarian approach. The student is kept totally under control by the educator. He is offered no love, eye contact, physical contact or focused attention.
2. The second type of discipline is the authoritative method. This method based on unconditional love, offers the child a lot of direction and correction when needed. He also receives emotional nurturing.
3. Permissiveness is the third disciplining method. It offers the child love, attention and support, but absolutely no direction. The teacher who uses this method just goes along with whatever the child decides, never correcting him or offering him overarching guidance.
4. The fourth method of dealing with is not to deal with him at all - it is pure neglect the worst way to educate children.

The discipline method must be reevaluated. Ask you self, as a teacher, if you are giving the adolescent the loving attention and positive direction that he needs. It is critical for the all - around development of the child that he be made aware on a daily basis of you love for him.

C. Classroom Management

Management has to do with the control of resources and processes in a production operation. Good management requires that the resources are used in the most efficient way possible and that a high quality of product is maintained. In school and at class teacher level, this means that teachers must be able to exercise efficient management over their students, the resources at their disposal, and the various programmes of learning that are going on in each subject, to ensure that learning proceeds efficiently and that desirable standards of output are maintained. The teacher as manager, must know, whenever the process is not working efficiently or is in danger of breaking down how to correct whatever is going wrong without disturbing more than the part immediately involved. With experience, he will learn to anticipate trouble and to take appropriate action to prevent it.

Classroom Management calls upon a number of skills; some of them are technical and others related to personal relations. The teacher needs to develop them all and know how and when to apply them. Management skills needed by the teachers can be conceived as follows:

- * Planning the programme of learning and teaching for the adolescents
- * Decision making concerning resources, teaching strategies and discipline
- * Organizing routine matters and students' learning activities
- * Coordinating learning in the classroom with learning from other sources
- * Communicating with students and parents
- * Influencing other teachers who share in the education of the students
- * Evaluating the effectiveness of the work done or accomplished.

These steps, may be not exhaustive can be of great benefits.

D. Work Programme

Values are also communicated to adolescents in Adventist schools through the work programme. The exercise that teaches the hand to be useful and trains to the

adolescents to bear to their share of life's burdens give physical strength and develop every faculty. God appointed work as a blessing and only the diligent worker find the true glory and joy of life. Brain and muscle must be in balance if health and vigor are to be maintained. In the Adventist schools, we need more teachers and more talents to educate the students in various lines that many persons may go from this place willing and able to carry to others the values and knowledge which they have received and acquired. Many adolescents will come to school who desire a training in industrial lines including: the keeping of accounts, carpenter, and everything that is comprehended in farming. The teaching of black smithing, painting, shoemaking, cooking, baking, laundering, mending, printing, etc. Cottages and buildings essential to the school work are to be erected by the students themselves. Every power at our command is to be brought into these training work, that students may go out equipped for the duties of practical life.

The school must be used as the Lord's farm. There is an unseen power constantly at work in man's behalf to feed and to clothe him. The parable of the seed as studied in the daily experience of teacher and student is to reveal that God is at work in nature, and it is to make plain the things of the kingdom of heaven. The God of nature is perpetually at work. Nature is to be our great lesson book. God will surely bless all who seek to bless others. The school is to be so conducted that teachers and students will be continually gaining in power through the faithful use of the talents given to them...By consecrating all our given abilities to Him who has the first right to them, we may make precious advances in every thing that is worthy of our attention.

E. Co-Curricular Activities

Adventist schools endeavour to provide more than just academics, the physical, the social, the cultural, and of course the spiritual must be taken into account. Administrators and teachers with the involvement of mature students, have signed a rich programme of activities that are congruent with and supportive of the Adventist philosophy of education. In this programme which seeks the holistic development of students are included, social, cultural, recreational, artistic, and missionary activities (clubs, exhibitions, recitals, excursions, tours, labour, sports, athletics, service, outreach).

Friendship, marriage, and family, work done by students and teachers together and recreation, political involvement and social action, art technology, spiritual life and church activities, all these call for understanding and right values. They require judgment about ethical and aesthetics values or political and economical goods always in relation to that highest end which is to glorify God with heart, mind and strength.

As Penniecook⁹ (1996) states areas for integration of faith are:

1. Physical environment including: Physical plants, pure air, contact with nature; suitable for meditation, opportunities for manual labor, evangelistic activities, service, chapels in residence halls, church building in a central location.
2. Aesthetic elements such as: Use of Christian symbols, ornaments (texts, decorations, posters) invite the divine presence, Christian music filling the environment.
3. Social atmosphere: inspiring mutual confidence, affirmation of faith between teachers and students, courtesy, kindness and respect cultivated in interpersonal relationships, group and individual activity, recreation.

The religious dimension of life is lived in and through the reflective life, the valuing and the responsible activity in which we engage. But no teacher can do acceptable work who does not bear in mind his own deficiencies or his strength. The best way for Adventist educators to convey values to adolescents in Adventist schools is to be a living example "in word, in conversation, in charity in spirit, in faith, in purity"(I Timothy 4:12).

F. Role Modeling

The habits and principles of a teacher are of greater importance than his literary qualifications. He must feel the necessity to have a balanced interest in the physical, mental, spiritual experimental, and social education of his students. To exert the right influence a teacher must have perfect control over himself and his own heart should be richly imbued with love for him. By the time adolescents come to school, they have lived several years in a home and have been deeply influenced by the values of the family and the community. But they are still establishing their own personal values and can therefore be influenced by consecrated teachers at all levels of schooling.

Ellen G. White¹⁰ says: "Teachers in Adventist schools have a heavy responsibility to bear. They must be in words and character what they wish their students to become: men and women that fear God and work righteousness. They will not only educate them in the sciences, but will train them to have moral independence, to work for Jesus, and to take up burdens in His cause".

Children are most apt to respond to the value system that their teachers live and less likely respond to what is told to them. Educators need to model the same choices and behaviours that they want students to carry out. No student can ever do what he or she has never seen. By using the same skills, and making positive choices, we show students that real people use particular strategies and what they work.

Examples of this kind are many and the following can be helpful:

When students say something derogatory, teachers often take it personally and fight back with sarcasm and removal. In doing so, they validate the very behavior they are trying to change in the student. It is better to respond in the same manner that you want the student to do when the student is angry: "I do not like it when you make fun on me but I can understand that you might be angry. Let us talk later and see if we can work it out".

Teaching students the meaning of values means helping them to find humanity within themselves so that they can care about others. Educators must take the lead in finding more constructive ways to respond to adolescents. Lindquist¹¹ states that "We must advocate more constructive ways to respond to children before they are beyond our reach. For, children learn what they live. In other words, children's behavior cannot be understood without they have been born in a world that we adults have created." When conflicts occur, the key is to come up with a response that models respect for the offender while critically examining his or her behavior the response must demonstrate that the teacher values feelings and differentiates between the emotion and reasoned response.

Hill suggests to change students behavior by exposing them to a contrasting behavior daily in people they admire. Chances are they do not see it at home or in the neighborhood.

Another way to change students behavior is to teach them how to make more

effective choices.

Once students have additional skills, they need to know when to use them and how to choose among them. Every time a student breaks a rule or misbehaves, he or she should be offered both fairly limits and significant choices. Firm limits show students that we mean business about what we will and will not accept. They need significant choices to practice the skill of choosing and feel that they are in control of their lives, the more the students believe they can make real choices that affects their lives, the more they may feel capable of selecting good alternatives.

Campbell¹² does not know who wrote the following poem but it is a most appropriate ending to this section.

A Little Fellow Follows Me

A careful man I want to be
A little fellow follows me;
I do not dare to go astray,
For fear he'll go the self-same way.

I cannot once escape his eyes;
Whate'er he sees me do, he tries
Like me he says he's going to be-
The little fellow who follows me.

He thinks that I am good and fine-
Believes in every word of mine;
The base in me he must not see-
The little fellow who follows me

I must remember as I go,
Through summer's sun and winter's snow,
I am building for the years that be,
For that little chap who follows me!

III- Anticipated Benefits

As a result of the education acquired in the seventh-day adventist schools, the students produced by these institutions will benefit the following blessings in addition to the positive traits displayed in this paper.

A- Blessing of Reading

A good way to teach a student is to develop in him the love for reading. Reading offers much that is valuable to. There is a wealth of good literature that cultivates and expands the mind. Yet, there is also a flood of evil literature often in most attractive guise but damaging to mind and morals. The tales of wild adventure and of moral laxness whether fact or fiction are unfit for behavior because they create a distaste for a noble, honest, and pure lifestyle and hinder the development of a union with Christ.

B- Blessing of Exercise

Exercise is not merely an option, it is essential to maintain optimal health both physical and mental. Useful activity tends to prosperity; inactivity and laziness tend to Adversity (Prov. 6:6-13; 4:23). God prescribed activity for the first man and woman, care for their garden home in the open air (Gen 2:5,15; 3:19).

Christ himself set an example of physical activity. For most of his life, he was engaged in manual labor as a carpenter and during his ministry he worked the roads of Palestine.

C- Blessing of Sunlight

Light is essential to life (Gen. 1:3). It powers the process that produces the nutrients that nourish and energize our body and that releases the oxygen we must have to live. Sunshine promotes health and healing.

D- Blessing of Water

drinking six to eight glasses of pure water a day would aid in maintaining efficient happy well-being. Another important function of water is its use for cleanliness and the relaxation it affords.

E- Blessing of Fresh-Air

An environment of impure air, in or outside of the home, causes the blood to carry less oxygen than is required for the optimal function of every cell. This tends to make a person alert and responsive. It is therefore important to do everything possible to secure a generous supply of fresh air daily.

F- Blessing of Temperate, Drug-free, Stimulant-Free living

The wise adolescent will abstain from all that is harmful, using in moderation only that which is good. True Christians Beholding Christ will continually glorify God with their bodies, realizing that they are his prized possessions, bought with his precious blood. Whatever weakens our reason, impairs the tenderness of our conscience, obscures our sense of God, decreases the strength and authority of our mind over our body, that thing is wrong however innocent it may be in itself.

G. Blessing of Rest

Proper rest is essential for health of body and mind. Periods of rest provide much needed quietness for communion with God. Rest is more than sleeping and ceasing our regular work. It involves the way we spend our leisure time.

H- Blessing of a Loving Atmosphere

Spiritual values imparted to young children will stay with them over the years. And, an interesting fact about learning is that the atmosphere surrounding the learning experience plays a great part in how well the information is received and retained. Children who are taught in a loving atmosphere not only remember about the messages but usually can tell you something about the person and the location involved. Focused

attention in a loving atmosphere develop self-esteem which is extremely important to the overall well-being of the student. You just cannot give too much positive loving attention. And, of course, a happy confident child is more than receptive to his educators' spiritual values. If the student knows that he is loved, he is sure to want to follow your example throughout his life because of his respect for you. So, teachers must be very careful to be good models in every area of their life not just the spiritual area.

Conclusion

This study shows that Adventist schools have an important role to play to convey values to adolescents. Each educator working in these schools builds students character and restores in them the balanced image of God. Seventh-day Adventist secondary school teachers must integrate their faith in their teaching/learning process so that he should and must consciously realized that "Teaching, as said Knight¹³, is much more than the passing on of information and stuffing students heads full of knowledge". It is more than helping them for the world of work. Teachers must remember that in this sense, teaching is relating to the Master Teacher in such a way that we, as teachers become agents in the great plan of redemption. Finally Seventh-day Adventist educators, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. (Philippians 4:8).

Endnotes

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