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**EFFICIENCY: A CRUCIAL INGREDIENT IN THE
SUCCESS OF AN ADVENTIST COLLEGE**

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INTRODUCTION

King Josiah] said: “ Go up to Hilkiah the high priest and have him get ready the money that has been brought into the temple of the Lord, which the doorkeepers have collected from the people. Have them entrust it to the men appointed to supervise the work on the temple. And have these men pay the workers who repair the temple of the Lord -the carpenters, the builders, and the masons. Also have them purchase timber and dressed stone to repair the temple. But, *they need not account for the money entrusted to them, because they are acting faithfully [with complete honesty]* (II Kings 22: 4-7).

What a wonderful testimony! Is not this contrary to the SDA auditing system? Nevertheless, this is a living example of an authentic integration of faith in daily life; it is faith in action. Honesty, that necessary Christian value, showed through these servants of God.

Maphosa (1994) stated that “one of the major challenges of leaders in Adventist institutions of higher learning is to identify and model the values that undergird their administration as Christians and to cultivate them to the extent that they permeate their interactions with the entire institution” (p. 158). We would like to suggest that one of these key values is “EFFICIENCY”.

What is efficiency? How does efficiency relate to integration of faith and learning? Why is efficiency a crucial ingredient for the success of an Adventist College, particularly in some African developing countries?

This paper endeavors to answer these questions. Consequently, the purpose of this essay is threefold. First, it intends to present different understandings and views on the concept of “*efficiency*”. Then, a discussion on the place of efficiency in integrating faith and Christian values in a school will follow. Finally, an evaluative look on efficiency in Adventist colleges will be taken.

VIEWS ON EFFICIENCY

Definitions

A certain car broke down. The driver made several fruitless attempts to repair it, but it was all trial and error. Then unexpectedly, the car inventor passed by. Hearing the sound of the engine, he directly went to fix a specific bolt. The problem was immediately solved. Just for fun,

he asked the driver for a huge amount of money. To the puzzled driver who was wondering why he was asked that much money for a too short time of repair, the car inventor replied, "that is what we call *"efficiency"*, *I RIGHTLY fixed the RIGHT bolt*".

Two important concepts generally related to organization success and productivity are those of *"effective"* and *"efficient"* production. Effective production is the process that produces the desired results and efficient production reflects achieving output or outcomes with a minimum of inputs or resources (Koontz & Wehrich, 1990; Shoderbeck, Cosier & Aplin, 1991).

According to Drucker (1974), efficiency is concerned with doing things right. Effectiveness is doing the right things" (p.45). In his view, effectiveness asks the question, "which of the products really produce extraordinary economic results," while efficiency deals with the question, "How do we do this or that better?"

Mintzberg (1989) believes that the criterion of efficiency dictates that choice of alternative that produces the largest result for the given application of resources. In other words, to be efficient means, "to get the most growth, the happiest employees, and the highest quality products. Efficiency means the greatest benefits for the cost.... Efficiency is [therefore] a logical goal of every organization" (p.331).

Meggison, Mosley, and Pietri (1992) define an efficient administrator, as one who achieves higher outputs (results and performance) relative to the inputs (labor, materials money, machines, personnel, and time) needed to achieve them. An administrator who can minimize the cost of the resources used to attain the desired outputs is considered as efficient. Conversely, the manager who maximizes outputs for a given amount of inputs is efficient. Efficiency, then, is the administrator's ability to get things done correctly in the sense of doing things right.

According to Fulmer (1983), an efficient organization involves the best grouping of people and processes for prevention or reduction of waste. An efficient organization exists when the most productive interrelationships of its parts are established. That is probably the reason why Northcraft and Neale (1990) assert that efficiency is one of the reasons why people come together in organizations.

Relationships between efficiency and effectiveness.

Authors differ about the degree and direction of relationships between efficiency and effectiveness. Some consider efficiency and effectiveness as two complementary concepts in productive organizations. They explain that an organization can be effective (that is, providing a highly desired good or service or reaching the organizational goals and objectives) without doing so efficiently. Or another organization may succeed in producing a good or service very efficiently (that is, with the minimal cost) only to find that no customer wants it (ineffectiveness). They conclude that since efficiency and effectiveness are critical to the survival of an organization, maintaining a healthy balance between them is an important challenge in running an organization. It is important to get the job done (effectiveness) and not to waste limited resources (efficiency) (Koontz & Wehrich, 1990; Northcraft & Neale, 1990).

Others consider effectiveness as an encompassing concept. They argue that efficiency refers to doing better what is being done and suggest that an organization, which is effective in other ways, will be more effective if it is also efficient. Thus, efficiency is an effectiveness criterion, which measures the organization's use of scarce resources. Efficiency is, therefore, the narrower concept since it is related to a limited characteristic of effectiveness (Drucker, 1974; Brinkerhoff & Dressler, 1990).

A third position is that of considering efficiency as the broad concept. In this view, an efficient organization is consequently effective, since, here, efficiency means doing the right things right or achieving the organizational goals at the lowest cost (Duncan, 1989; Wren, 1994).

This paper was not meant to defend one view or another in the debate above. Each position holds useful inputs and ideas. Suffice to know that the operational definition of efficiency that undergirds this essay is borrowed from Emerson, the father of efficiency. Emerson (quoted by Duncan, 1989) states that:

“Efficiency is attained when *the right thing* is done in the *right manner* by the *right employees at the right place in the right time* (p. 36, underlining provided).

Efficiency and integration of faith in Adventist schools

How does efficiency relate to integration of faith and learning? This question is legitimate particularly if one takes into account the common understanding of the term “efficiency”.

However, when efficiency is understood according to the operational definition above-mentioned, it becomes the foundation of any authentic integration of faith and learning in an Adventist school or college. As E.G. White (1952) writes, “The true teacher [and school leader in truly Adventist education] should not be satisfied with second-rate work.... He cannot be content with imparting to students only technical knowledge, with making them merely clever accountants, skillful artisans, successful tradesmen” (p. 29). In truly Adventist education, the perfection of God’s character is dwelt upon, the mind is renewed, and the soul is re-created in the image of God.

Adventist educators do the right thing right (that is, they are efficient) when they “aid the students in comprehending the principles of the character of God, and in entering into that relation with Christ which will make them a controlling power in the life... The teacher who accepts this aim is in truth a co-worker with Christ, a laborer together with God” (p. 30)

Apparently, there is no true Adventist education without efficient Adventist educator. In fact, “God wants the teachers of [Adventist] schools to be efficient (White, 1953, p. 119). Elsewhere, she asserts, “The schoolroom is not a place for surface work. No teacher who is satisfied with superficial knowledge will attain a high degree of efficiency” (White, 1942, p. 229)

In short, the work of genuine Adventist education and the work of integrating faith and learning are one, and only efficient Adventist educators (that is educators who know the ultimate goal of true education and strive to reach it) integrate faith and learning.

EVALUATIVE LOOK ON EFFICIENCY IN ADVENTIST COLLEGE

The main question to be addressed, at this point, is, “Are Adventist colleges efficient?” In other words, “is the right thing done in the right manner by the right persons at the right places in the right time in Adventist colleges?”

To answer this question, a deep and comprehensive assessment of Adventist colleges endeavors is necessary. This is not the purpose here. This paper seeks only to provide a tentative

set of questions that may help examine efficiency in an Adventist college.

Doing the right thing

“What is the right thing” an Adventist college should strive to do? The concept of “*right thing*” implies at least a statement of mission and a set of ethical values.

A statement of mission

The mission of a school is the overall purpose for the school’s existence, its reason for being. It also implies goals and objectives that the school endeavors to accomplish. The following questions may help in assessing the fulfillment of the school mission:

- Are there a well-defined and written statement of mission and framed school goals?
- Are the school’s mission, goals and objectives well communicated to all school stakeholders (parents, faculty, students, school board members)?
- Are school stakeholders impregnated with that *raison d’être* of the school to the extent that it has become for them a pleasure to promote it?
- What should the school look like? How should the products of the school be? Are we reaching that objective? In other words, does the ideal “ought to be” match the reality “What is”?

The statement of a school’s philosophy provides a framework within which the academic, physical, social, and the spiritual concepts of the total school program fit. The school mission is therefore a foundation stone for the school. How does a school leader help the faculty, parents, and students interpret, understand, and apply it consistently?

Eager (1993) suggested seven ways to help bring this about, i.e. cause it to take place. These are practical implementation procedures of helping the total school family understand and practice the school philosophy or mission:

- . Review the school’s philosophy at the first faculty meeting each school year;
- . Expect everyone in the school to uphold the philosophy and support it against opponent.
- . Live and practice the philosophy consistently every day.

- . Develop goals and objectives related to the philosophy each year within each department or sub-unit of the school.
- . Develop individual professional goals related to the philosophy each year.
- . Schedule, if possible a meeting with parents each registration day. Present to them the philosophy of the school. First, help them understand the reasons why they choose to Bring their children to that school; second, explain the school's focus for student developments, and third, open their minds to the ways planned to help students to grow spiritually.
- . Schedule a meeting with the students early in the school year. Present the school's philosophy to them. First explain why they are at that school. Second, help them understand that their goals and the school's goals for them are the same. Third, that they are important to each school administrator and to every faculty member; and fourth, show them how two young people getting to know each other is like getting to know God, and a whole person development includes both.

Can our Adventist colleges stand that test? If yes, then, they are efficient, because they will be doing the right thing, in fulfilling their mission.

A set of ethical values.

Since the ultimate goal of Christian education is a Christlike character, a restoration of God's image in the person, there are moral values that lead to such development.

That values are essential to successful schools seems self-evident. Values shape and inform thinking while serving as guides to action. Values influence behaviors.

Values are fundamental to the aims of Adventist education. These values are either expressed openly or hidden. In any case, it is seldom that perfect congruence exists between espoused values and those values by which one lives. The challenge for a Christian education is to match "our walk with our talk". Hart and Bredeson (1996) even affirm that "if you want to see what a school leader values, watch what he or she does" (p.249). According to these thinkers, leadership behavior over time is a much more accurate measure of school leader's actual values than are mission statements, slogans and talks.

In that endeavor to do the right thing as far as Christian values are concerned in our Adventist colleges, one should ask such questions as:

- Are there values expressed in the college? Are they Christian?
- Are those values communicated with behavior or with words only given the fact that real values are seen in deeds and actions?

At this point, it is important to be always aware of the fact that being called an “Adventist College” does not make a college Adventist. In some Adventist schools, it is not rare to notice a blatant lack of fairness, integrity, humility, and honesty. Christian values are sometimes giving way to worldly ones: selfishness, partiality. E.G. White (1968) cogently writes, “As a people, we are not doing one twentieth part of the good we might, because selfishness prevails to a large extent” (p.40)

- Are we willing to objectively assess our real system of values and amend it, if necessary?

In fact, there is no Christian College without Christian values daily lived, and “it is the degree of moral power pervading a school that is the test of prosperity. It is the virtue and piety of the people composing our schools, not their numbers, that should be a source of joy and thankfulness” (White, 1968, p. 143).

In summary, efficient and successful Adventist colleges are those full of purposeful and productive people who know their *raison d’être*. Geraty1 (1994) answers the question, “What makes an Adventist College Adventist?” in these words, “Its unique mission”. Often, that mission, and values stemming from it, is not well understood. Then time is wasted. In order to ascertain if God’s work through our colleges is efficient, productive, teachers and administrators need to continually ask themselves the following questions:

- What is our school mission, goals and objectives? What do we value most?
- Do we reach our goals?
- What are our strengths? Our weaknesses?
- How can our action match our mission, goals and objectives, and our values?

Kaufman and Herman (1991) suggest that leaders in inefficient schools need to create a better future through rethinking, restructuring and revitalizing their educational endeavors, that is through a development of strategic plans. It should then be the Christian educator’s aim to prepare every youth under his care to be a blessing to the world. This goal should never be lost sight of.

In the right manner

The SDA philosophy of education considers students in our schools as “children of God” and teachers are “servants of God”. Then as E.G. White (1968) advises,

“ The teacher should ever conduct himself as a Christian gentleman... He shall forget self and feel a deep interest in the success and prosperity of his students and realizing that they are God’s property and that he must render an account for his influence upon their minds and character” (p.69).

She adds,

“Our colleges should stand higher in moral tone than any other college... If [school leaders and] teachers do their work in the fear of God, working with the spirit of Christ for the salvation of the souls of the students, God will crown their effort with success” (p.41).

Doing the right thing in the right manner involves also all stakeholders not only teachers. To assess the right manner, one may ask the following questions related to school governance and administration, policies, and Christian behavior.

Governance

Questions on governance and administration of an efficient Adventist college might be:

- How well is the overall management of the school? Is honesty, integrity prevailing or rather mismanagement, embezzlement?
- And the relationship among school leaders, faculty, students, parents, school board members characterized by cooperation, a caring service, courtesy, diligence, forbearance, humility, kindness, modeling example, modesty, respect, tact, obedience, truth, unity, faithfulness, discipline?
- Is a more open climate prevailing in the college?
- Are school leaders modeling Christ’s servant leadership in telling their subordinate, “But I am among you as one who serves”? E.G. White (194) rightly affirms, “Teachers [and school administrators] can gain efficiency only by working as Christ worked” (p. 263).

Administration

- Do school administrators develop an efficient communication network that enhances openness?
- Does a feeling of mutual trust exist among personnel members and between school administrators and employees?
- Are workers well informed about all that affects them?

Policies

- Are policies, rules, reward system, values, philosophy and mission brought to their attention?
- Are these policies worldly or Christianly sound?
- Given the limited or scarce financial resources, are unnecessary expenditures avoided? Are all involved in such an endeavor?
- Are school board members willing to change some policies which have become way out to justify embezzlement?

Christian behavior

- Have not we lost sight of the fact that the work we are engaged in is God's work? Then do we truly seek counsel of God first? Do we truly submit our will to God's will?
- Do we avoid to be self-serving but develop a Christian altruism?
- How do we apply Jesus' principle of "letting nothing be wasted?" (Jn 6:12)
- Does the school administration promote an impartial treatment of staff and students?
- Does our behavior show that we continually remember that our first and greatest concern is the educational welfare of God's sons and daughters, these students attending the school?

Though this questioning is not exhaustive, it constitutes a start at assessing how a college is doing the right thing *in the right manner*. E.G.White (1968) advises that "As co-laborers with Christ, with so favorable opportunities to impart the knowledge of God, our teachers [and school administrators] should labor as if inspired from above... Our youth may [then] be won to Christ by your holy demeanor, your devotion, your Christlike walk" (p.71) She adds that: "The workers in

our colleges should manifest a zeal and earnestness proportionate to the value of the prize at stake - the souls of their students, the approval of God, the eternal life, and the joys of the redeemed” (1968, p.70)

By the right persons

Mediocrity cannot yield efficiency. Competence, that is, knowledge, skills, and commitment, constitutes an important asset if someone longs for efficiency.

God is constantly searching for workers in various branches of Christian enterprise. But, in the Scriptures, God is frequently represented as searching for a man of a certain type. Consider the following quotes that show how difficult it is to find good people:

“The Lord has sought out for Himself, a man after His own heart” (I Sam.13:14).

“I searched for a man... who should... stand in the gap before Me for the land” (Ezekiel 22:30).

“I looked, and behold, there is no man” (Jer.4:25).

The Scriptures attest that when God does discover a man who conforms to His spiritual requirements, who is willing to pay the full price of discipleship, He uses him to the limit, despite his patent shortcomings. Such men were Moses, Gideon, and David, Martin Luther, Miller, the Whites, and a host of others.

Obviously, God’s work, schools and colleges included, has a crucial need of God-anointed and God- mastered men and women. The persons called as school leaders and teachers should be those who recognize their divine calling to help students (these children of God) prepare for God’s kingdom. E.G. White (1942) justly wrote:

“ Let everyone who [works in God’s vineyard] write in his heart, the words: I am working for time and for eternity; and I am accountable to God for the motives that prompt me to action” (pp. 258,259).

The running of an Adventist college involves a board, an administrative team, and a faculty and staff body. The following questions may help examine if right persons are working at the right place. The questions are partially based on the ”Characteristics of a successful SDA college or university” as developed by Humberto Rasi (1998).

School board

- Is the school board truly representative of and accountable to the constituency?
- Are its members knowledgeable?
- Are board members politics - free, i.e. appoint administrators, faculty, and staff without any partiality, nepotism, regionalism, or chauvinism?
- How do they relate to faculty and staff members? Do they genuinely assist them?
- Are the institutional policies they develop timely or obsolete?

School administration

- Are school administrators genuine spiritual leaders, that is, men or women easy of approach, totally without personal vanity, perfectly honest, transparently sincere; men and women of vision, discipline, wisdom, decision, courage, and humility?
- Is the administrative team free of factionalism?
- Does it foster the philosophy, mission, and objectives of the board and the institution? Is it fulfilling the expectations of the board and the constituency?
- Does it provide job descriptions that foster responsibility and accountability.
- Is a non-discriminatory policy carried out in the recruitment of staff and students?
- Is the emphasis on a Christian servant leadership?

Faculty and staff

- Are faculty members qualified and committed to the SDA message?
- Do faculty and staff members receive job descriptions that fit their qualifications?
- Are they working in unity?
- Are they genuine in their spiritual life; free from hypocrisy?
- Are they aware of what promotes spirituality, namely,
 - * Feeding on uplifting mind/heart nourishment
 - * Living a genuine commitment to Christ
 - * Being dedicated to serving and representing Him aright

- * Training the mind to think about spiritual things
- * Fostering characteristics that help develop a character like Christ's
- * Acting as Jesus did
- * Communicating spiritually
- * Encouraging spirituality in others (Eager, 1993).

In order to have the right persons doing God's work in our Adventist colleges, it is important that the hiring system be led by the Spirit of God. It is not rare to see nominating committees beginning with prayers and yet be led by selfishness, tribalism, racism, and nepotism. The results are then disastrous: "The wrong persons are hired to the detriment of the right persons."

At the right place

Adventist colleges, particularly in developing countries, undergo several constraints such as constricting economy heightened accreditation standards, multiplying state mandate, and continually rising cost of higher education. The cost is going up faster than the ability of students and their families to pay for it. And yet, the Adventist youth longing for Christian education is constantly increasing in number.

At this point, a dilemma arises. On the one hand, more young people are in need of a genuine Adventist education, which they can only receive in Adventist colleges. This implies the establishment of more colleges in different countries given the cost involved in going to study in foreign countries. On the other hand, that multiplicity of colleges disperses both human and financial resources and, thus gives way to mediocrity. In some places, there is even an additional threat to Adventist higher education: the presence of non-Adventist institutions offering excellent education, conveniently located, and relatively inexpensive, that is, offering a seemingly more efficient education program.

It is then appropriate to have a close look at such a situation. Such a look might deal with planning and coordination, and location of Adventist colleges. The following questions help sharpen our focus on our ability to meet student needs.

Planning and coordination

- Is the Adventist college system appropriately organized so as to serve all our youth?
- Has the establishment of an Adventist college in a specific place resulted in a conflicting relationship with nearby Adventist colleges?
- Is there always some agreement reached with nearby Adventist colleges before a new institution is founded?

Location

- Is our institution located in an appropriate place that allows it to offer a cost-effective Christian education for a constituency large enough?
- What portion of our Adventist youth are served due to the establishment of the college at that specific place?

E.G. White (1950) wrote, "God desires that educational centers be established in different countries where students may be educated in the practical branches of knowledge and in Bible truth" (p.137). To what extent can this counsel be put into practice in the Adventist College system without hindering its efficiency?

In the right time

"In the right time" implies promptness, appropriateness, and timeliness. As Moore (1976) states, "We must make sure we know exactly what is needed for our youth and go on to fill that need with integrity, courage, and selfishness" (p. 13). In this endeavor, we should want people "to see our schools the head and not the tail" (p. 15) in every thing we do. The following questions might help have a close look at this aspect.

- Does the Adventist higher education take into account its changing market and demand?
- Are students feeling that the courses we offer are appropriate their needs? In fact, if our youth feel that they can find courses appropriate to their actual needs in a non-Adventist school, they will go there. The best deterrent to this trend is the Adventist school which offers a unique, balanced program and takes into account the positive changes our society is undergoing.

CONCLUSION

This paper intended first, to examine different understandings of the concept “*efficiency*”. The following formula from Emerson seemed to summarize the concept best: “*Efficiency is attained when the right thing is done in the right manner by the right employees at the right place in the right time.*” Understood this way, efficiency implies dealing with people and not with robotics. Therefore an Adventist college cannot be efficient if material considerations take the first place in that school.

With that understanding of the concept “*efficiency*,” efficient Adventist colleges are those integrating faith in all school endeavors. These are colleges for which God is the Great customer, and in which He delights because students, His children, are fully prepared for His kingdom.

In our Adventist College, are we

- Doing the right thing?
- In the right manner?
- With the right persons?
- At the right place?
- In the right time?

If we are, then our school realizes God’s calling. It is efficient.

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