

Institute for Christian Teaching
Education Department of Seventh-day Adventists

**INTEGRATING FAITH IN THE PERI-CURRICULAR PRACTICES
OF AN ADVENTIST INSTITUTION OF HIGHER LEARNING**

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Introduction

When I entered the 9th grade at a Seventh-day Adventist academy I seriously applied myself to my studies. As a result, at the end of the first term, I ended up with straight A's, and at the top of my class. But, when I compared my grades with those of my fellow classmates, I discovered that the next highest grade point average was a "C." Since I was merely interested in being "number one" in class, I decided that I really did not have to study *that* faithfully. Consequently, there was a steady and marked decline in my grades, even though I still managed to retain first place. Unfortunately, in the competitive environment of that Adventist school, I ended up "proud of my mediocrity"!¹

How could this have occurred in a school that was set up to teach the virtues and values of Christian character? Yes, I had faithfully gone to Bible classes, where we studied about the *sacrificial* life of Jesus Christ. And yes, I had even attended chapels, and worships, where further instruction was given on what it means to be a *humble* Christian. What had therefore "gone wrong"?

As can be observed from the research on the history of the integration of faith and learning,² there has been an ever-increasing interest by reflective Christian educators concerning how to practically and successfully incorporate faith into the variety of subjects taught in the classroom. A growing body of literature is now becoming available to teachers interested in seeking ways of stimulating students to think Christianly about every course, from Accounting through Zoology.

However, it is becoming more and more apparent that a similar emphasis now needs to be placed on integrating faith into everything that happens in an educational institution outside of the classroom, since these experiences also have a profound impact, indeed an indelible influence, on the learner. The purpose of this reflective essay will therefore be to make a constructive critique of

¹Now before I make a critique of that situation, allow me to share a few general personal observations. As I reflect on the decades spent in Adventist educational institutions, from elementary through secondary school, college and graduate studies, both as student and as teacher, I can honestly praise God for the innumerable blessings, and incalculable character-building opportunities afforded at these "schools of the prophets." In fact, had I not (as a student) been blessed with committed, caring, Christ-centered teachers and administrators, and later (as a lecturer) with dedicated and supportive colleagues, I honestly do not believe that I would be *where* I am now (i.e., sharing the Gospel as a missionary to Zimbabwe), or more importantly *who* I am today (i.e., a born-again believer in a personal relationship with my Savior, Jesus Christ).

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

these “peri-curricular” practices, to propose recommendations as to how to facilitate this faith integration, together with certain evaluation strategies to assess the effectiveness of this integration.³

Due to space limitations, only a few representative issues will be selected for consideration.

Definitions

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

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

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

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

Extra-Curricular – Practices and policies of the institution that, though unintended, do convey specific values to students; this concept also includes all sanctioned activities participated in by students, either on or off campus, which are not part of the officially planned non-classroom curriculum; this includes things such as television programs viewed, student clubs, etc.

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

Theo-Philosophical Basis

Excellent seminal essays on the scriptural foundations for the integration of faith and learning have provided adequate evidence that faith integration by Christian educators is not merely a fully legitimate enterprise, but it is clearly an indispensable task incumbent upon any Christian educational

³This essay does not seek to ignore or deemphasize the indispensability of integrating faith into the classroom. Rather, it seeks to focus on, and encourage a similar integration of faith into all the other practices of the entire institution.

institution.⁴ From his study of Deuteronomy 6:4-9, a pivotal passage on religious education, John Wesley Taylor has concluded that, with the Word of God as the source, a loving and committed Christian teacher is to comprehensively, holistically, and diligently utilize prime moments to get students to focus on God in such a way that they will develop spiritually, mentally, physically, and socially.⁵

Just as Jesus matured in an integrated manner, “in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:52),⁶ so the Adventist system of education is to be comprehensive and all-inclusive. Ellen White noted that “true education,”

has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world, and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come.⁷

While most current studies appropriately emphasize the indispensability of incorporating Christian thinking into course content, and classroom instruction,⁸ there is the distinct danger that this well-meant focus may become so all-consuming that peri-curricular practices will be ignored and even forgotten. As veteran faith and learning specialist, Arthur Holmes cautioned: “A Christian liberal arts education cannot be impounded in classrooms and libraries, but *must extend itself into the extracurricular.*”⁹ In basic agreement, George Akers noted: “Nurturing faith in *every aspect of*

⁴See, for example, John Wesley Taylor V, “A Biblical Foundation for the Integration of Faith and Learning,” Unpublished paper presented at the 27th International Faith and Learning Seminar, Mission College, Muak Lek, Thailand, 3-15 December 2000; Arthur F. Holmes, *The Idea of a Christian College*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), 13-22; C. Garland Dulan, “Essentials of the Adventist Philosophy of Education,” Unpublished paper presented at the 27th International Faith and Learning Seminar, Mission College, Muak Lek, Thailand, 3-15 December 2000.

⁵John Wesley Taylor, “A Biblical Foundation for the Integration of Faith and Learning,” 5-7.

⁶Unless otherwise stated, all quotations are from the New King James Version (NKJV).

⁷Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1903), 13.

⁸See, for example, the essays in the 26 volume series *Christ in the Classroom: Adventist Approaches to the Integration of Faith and Learning* (Silver Spring, MD: Institute for Christian Teaching, Education Department, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1991-2000); also see the special issue of *The Journal of Adventist Education* 56:2 (December 1993/January 1994), dealing with the integration of faith and learning.

⁹Holmes, *The Idea of a Christian College*, 84 (emphasis added).

the program is everybody's business at a Christian school, if the place is to be effective."¹⁰ In White's words: "A Christian influence should pervade our schools."¹¹ Indeed, "compartmentalization has no place on the Christian campus."¹²

Similarly, in its "Total Commitment Document" the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists focuses beyond the classroom, and calls for affirming unambiguously in "campus life the beliefs, practices, and world view" of the Adventist church. Furthermore, it stresses the need to maintain an "overall campus environment which ensures opportunities" for encounters that will produce "men and women who are well-balanced spiritually, mentally, physically, and socially."¹³ As Holmes noted: "*All of life* with its culture and its learning must be penetrated with Christian perspectives, if Jesus Christ is to be Lord of all."¹⁴

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

Pre-Curricular

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

Faculty Selection. Consider the matter of employment procedures. For example, when it comes to the selection of teaching faculty, too many institutions seem to ask basically only one two-pronged question: Is the person a Seventh-day Adventist "in good and regular standing," with an

¹⁰George Akers, "Nurturing Faith in the Christian School," *The Journal of Adventist Education* 56:2 (December 1993/January 1994): 5 (emphasis added).

¹¹Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1923), 473.

¹²Holmes, *The Idea of a Christian College*, 84.

¹³Appendix A – "Total Commitment Document," *Christ in the Classroom: Adventist Approaches to the Integration of Faith and Learning*, vol. 23 (Silver Spring, MD: Institute for Christian Teaching, Education Department, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1999), 383.

¹⁴Holmes, *The Idea of a Christian College*, 22 (emphasis added).

advanced or terminal degree in the area of need?" Such a uni-dimensional approach, however, mistakenly ignores the holistic philosophy and core objectives of Adventist education.¹⁵

Just as Paul charged Timothy to "be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim 4:12), so Ellen White notes that "in order that the teacher may accomplish the object of his work, he should be a living embodiment of truth."¹⁶ In fact, she declares that "a pure life, the results of sound principles and right habits, should therefore be regarded as his most essential qualification."¹⁷

If, as White indicates, "the habits and principles of a teacher should be considered of even *greater* importance than his literary qualifications,"¹⁸ then, in order to appropriately staff Adventist institutions, a radically different approach ought to be adopted. Once it has been established that the prospective employee is an SDA, a careful screening process needs to be undertaken. This would include both a comprehensive questionnaire to be completed by the applicant, as well as similar questionnaires and letters of recommendation from various reliable supervisors, subordinates, and colleagues concerning the individual. While a personal statement of educational philosophy and overall teaching objectives from the applicant may be somewhat enlightening, questions such as the following would appear more relevant in light of the indispensability of the integration of faith and learning: (a) What posts have you actively held in your church during the past 3-5 years? (b) What are your specific spiritual gifts, and in what forms of ministry have you utilized them over the past 3-5 years? (c) What kinds of community activity and/or service have you been involved with over the past 3-5 years? (d) What kinds of personal health/exercise programs have you been following for the past 3-5 years? (e) Itemize the various professional organizations you have been an active member of, as well as all the scholarly presentations made and refereed journal articles published during the past 3-5 years. (f) List all your graduate degrees, indicating the area of concentration for

¹⁵Also, the basic worldview behind this type of faculty selection can become rather evident when a new faculty member is being introduced to the university or college community. I remember with some embarrassment being introduced to the student assembly by an administrator at the institution I was joining. He simply systematically enumerated the various graduate degrees I had completed, and then ended his introduction by basically saying: "We employ only the best at this university!" The focus was totally on academics to the exclusion of virtually all other factors.

¹⁶Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students Regarding Christian Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1913), 31.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 19 (emphasis added).

each. (Obviously, other questions, appropriate to the objectives of each individual institution, could be added as needed).

With information such as the above, the institution will be much more likely to employ faculty who are supportive of its overall educational aims. However, this type of procedure cannot necessarily guarantee that the employee will remain committed to such a holistic approach. Thus, in the employment contract, there needs to be clearly-stated faculty promotion/retention/dismissal procedures, in order to safeguard the integrity of the educational enterprise. In other words, on a regular annual basis, there must be a fair and objective student, peer, immediate supervisor, and administrative evaluation, as well as a self-assessment in order to ascertain whether or not that faculty member still subscribes in belief and practice to the educational philosophy of the institution.¹⁹

Obviously, in order to promote the successful integration of faith in the entire campus, procedures similar to the above need to be appropriately carried out in connection with the recruitment and continued employment of administrators, and all other staff.²⁰

Student Recruitment. Earlier this year, as Public Relations Officer at Solusi University, I was working on the production of a new attractive brochure, aimed at prospective students. Inside were to be three “Solusi Success Stories”— personal accounts of alumni: a founder/president of a bank, a general manager of an airline, and a medical director of a large city hospital. But, as I reflected on the “success” stories I was compiling, I began to realize that, by means of these accounts, I was subtly suggesting that “material possessions” and “managerial positions” were the substance of success. Indeed, even as a committed Adventist theologian, I had unsuspectingly been sucked into the web of worldly values. Is it really power or prestige, positions or possessions that form the true measure of success for a Bible-believing Christian? Would it not be more congruent with the institution’s overall philosophy, to rather showcase stories of alumni who have made a

¹⁹I am personally aware of cases in which religion/theology teachers employed at Adventist educational institutions began to believe and even propagate theological perspectives contrary to the biblical positions espoused by the SDA Church. While some were dismissed from teaching, others were retained, but merely moved into different departments on the same campus, the latter action reflecting a distorted, compartmentalized view that Bible teachers can have a negative spiritual impact on students only if they are actually teaching religion/theology courses.

²⁰This recommended process ties in well with the document for integrating faith and learning from the Education Department, part of which states: “Special attention is given to the selection of administrators, faculty, [and] staff . . . who will create an environment that affirms and fosters faith development toward maturity;” “Factors in the Integration of Faith and Learning,” Unpublished paper, Institute for Christian Teaching, Education Department, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, MD, 1. Even the composition of the Board of Trustees, or University Council, is vital in this process of faith integration, since crucial decisions about personnel selection, and the running of the institution are often made by them.

tremendous impact on the community and/or the church as a result of their self-sacrificial service? In brief then, even brochures, and for that matter all promotional materials, must properly portray the holistic worldview of the institution, so as not to adopt worldly standards to attract students.

Other pre-curricular practices, such as a faculty/staff wellness program, the maximal size of individual classes, and even the type of meal payment plan,²¹ all of which impact the integration of faith on campus, need to also be carefully structured so as to facilitate a holistic worldview.

Co-Curricular Activities

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

Business Office. To some extent, it seems that the spiritual atmosphere on a campus is often directly related to the perceptions of students (and even faculty and other staff, for that matter) as to how they are treated vis-a-vis financial matters. While efficiency and accounting ability are expected of any business office staff, the issues that frequently assume gigantic proportions in interpersonal relationships, are such simple Christian graces as courtesy, friendliness, helpfulness, non-self-justifying apologies for mistakes made, and the willingness to genuinely listen to a student's concerns (even if no human solution seems readily available).

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

²¹I know of at least one Adventist educational institution where the vast majority of students live in on-campus dormitories, but which has a so-called "pay-as-you-eat" meal plan. In order to register, students do not need to pay anything for meals ahead of time. As a result, several problems have arisen. In some cases students ended up malnourished, and/or literally begging for food from faculty homes. In other cases wealthier students have become abusive of poorer ones.

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

There is, for instance the tension between the evangelistic thrust and the readiness of an [*sic*] captured audience of a mixed multitude of students, especially in mission schools, who are required to attend religious meetings conducted as Christian worship. Such tension is heightened in boarding schools where worship attendance frequently becomes a fertile ground for infractions, a matter of negotiation and bargain [*sic*] for minimum participation, a cause for some to depart from [the] dormitory as well as the school. . . . There is tension among worship participants on [*sic*] perceiving worship as an extra-curricular duty, a presentation like a lecture that requires scholarly preparation rather than an offering of love and gratitude.²²

Much of this unhealthy tension can be significantly reduced by an open administration that works in close cooperation with the campus chaplain, the theology faculty (if any), and the minister of religion of the student association.²³ For instance, rather than requiring that all students must attend a traditional worship service in the sanctuary, wise administrators could provide an entire plethora of attractive spiritually-enriching alternatives. Options could include small-group settings, resulting in greater personal involvement in worship; relevant, contemporary topics presented in a captivating manner, from a Scripture-based perspective; a multi-sensory approach to worship, including the use of multi-media; a systematic study of a topic, so as to provide steady spiritual growth; and a singalong-praise-testimony format, as a less formal worship style. While providing such a variety of choices will doubtless require additional efforts in record-keeping, the spiritual benefits of an enhanced worship experience clearly outweigh any such mundane concerns.

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

²²Oliver K. S. Koh, “Worship and School Life,” *Christ in the Classroom: Adventist Approaches to the Integration of Faith and Learning*, vol. 21 (Silver Spring, MD: Institute for Christian Teaching, Education Department, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1998), 168.

²³It is possible to have a highly successful chapel/worship program, as can be seen from the experience of a Christian college in the USA, where graduating students, in their exit questionnaire, consistently rate the convocation exercises of their institution as the most significant aspect of their educational experience. In the case of this college, leaders put forth extraordinary efforts to provide the best programs possible for this part of their overall educational strategy.

appropriate places (e.g., in recreation areas, lounges, etc.), and by the promotion and utilization of visual media programs (e.g., overheads, slides, TV, videos, etc.) which uphold and inculcate values congruent with the philosophical objectives of the institution. In addition, this Christian perspective can be strengthened by operating a well-supervised work program (with committed Christian supervisors), by selecting and training committed student spiritual mentors, by having a greater variety of outreach ministries (so as to provide opportunities of service for differing personalities, temperaments, interests, and spiritual gifts), by enlisting more faculty to participate in faculty home evenings (when faculty invite students over for food and fellowship), by encouraging all employees to eat in the cafeteria with students at least once per week (to socialize with them on their “turf”),²⁴ and by conducting weekend revival retreats, and wilderness survival programs.

From the way that an institution operates its new student orientation program, through its student retention procedures,²⁵ as well as in the manner in which it conducts its graduation exercises, every co-curricular aspect of campus life must reflect the holistic philosophy of Adventist education.

Extra-Curricular Experiences

Since it appears that on many campuses there are a host of non-classroom activities which are officially sanctioned by the institution that, perhaps though unintended, do convey specific values to students, this section will go into greater depth on these issues, as they relate to faith integration.

Quantitative Reports. Even a cursory reading of the Bible indicates that on various occasions records were taken of the growth and development of God’s people.²⁶ Unquestioningly, record-keeping is useful in order to assess improvement and progress. However, there is a dangerous downside to this numbers emphasis – pride in human achievement.²⁷ This haughty attitude is quintessentially epitomized in Nebuchadnezzar’s braggadocio: “Is not this great Babylon that I have

²⁴At the end of a meal in the cafeteria a student once asked me this rhetorical question: “Pastor, where do you think you have the greatest [personal] influence – in the classroom or at the table?”

²⁵Rather than merely giving repeated warnings to students whose grades have put them on academic probation, at least one Adventist tertiary institution has established a “Scholastic Study Lab” which these students are required to attend, and where they can receive assistance with their studies. This is a more redemptive approach, which has resulted in success for many students.

²⁶See, for example, the emphasis in the book of Numbers, especially chapters 1 and 2, the numbers of the exiles returning from Babylon (Ezra 2), and the thousands converted in the early church (Acts 2:40-47).

²⁷See, for example, David’s numbering of Israel (1 Chron 21).

built for a royal dwelling by *my* mighty power and for the honor of *my* majesty?” (Dan 4:30, emphasis added). The result? With the swiftness of an eagle he was reduced from a boast to a beast!

Thus, while it is a recognized fact that there is a place for financial figures, quantitative analyses, and numerical records, is it really necessary to elevate statistical reports to the “number one” position, as so often done? The *number* of new students enrolled; the *number* of courses being offered; the *number* of books in the library; the *number* of faculty with doctorates; the *number* of computers in the lab; the *number* of graduates; even the *number* of baptisms! This fixation on figures conveys the impression that quantity is of considerable consequence. Yet, when overemphasized in this way, it may reflect a secular value system that ignores qualitative development.²⁸ In view of the fact that a holistic education seeks to promote Christian values such as commitment, quality, excellence, self-sacrificial service, and humility, would it not be more congruent with this goal to thus reassess the entire concept of “success,” and then report things in such a way as to enhance a faith-based perspective?²⁹

Instead of a Dean’s List (which emphasizes only academic achievement), why not establish a “President’s List,” which seeks to recognize all students who model a consistent and harmonious development of all the basic values and objectives of the institutions? Quality growth can also be assessed by means of pre- and post-tests, improved community relations, the overall tone and general content of student publications, the growth and success of the work program, improved methods and results in student retention, the vibrancy and spontaneity of voluntary spiritual activities initiated and conducted by students,³⁰ the growth of spiritual mentoring programs, the improved health awareness and wellness practices of students and employees, student and employee involvement in optional community and church-related activities, the quality and relevance of scholarly faculty publications, the state of the institutional loyalty of administrators, faculty, staff, students, and even alumni, the exit reflections of students, as to the perceived quality and value of their educational experience,

²⁸It might be instructive to note here that only eight persons were saved in the ark (1 Pet 3:20; cf. Gen 7:13), and that Jesus Himself warned: “Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are *many* who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are *few* who find it” (Matt 7:13b, 14, emphasis added).

²⁹In an apparent attempt to focus more on quality than quantity, at least one Adventist congregation has stopped announcing the number of baptisms. Instead, they do report how many Bible studies are being conducted, the natural result of which is baptisms. They seem to be thus more focused on the process and quality of spiritual growth rather than merely on numbers.

³⁰At one institution students initiated and conducted voluntary (i.e., not for “worship credit”) 6am prayer groups, a Friday evening personal testimony service (prior to vespers), and a Wednesday evening outdoor Bible study session.

especially peri-curricular practices, and the selection of “Alumni of the Year,”³¹ who live exemplary lives that are “Bible-based, Christ-centered, service-oriented, and kingdom-directed.”³²

In brief, the focus should not be facts and figures, but rather an integrated and comprehensive perspective of the development of dedicated students who seek to serve the community and the Lord.

Lifestyle Consistency. While others have dealt with this issue of modeling more in depth,³³ the purpose of this section is rather to reemphasize this, from the perspective of consistency and integrity, together with a couple of relevant examples.

Living as a committed Christian, the apostle Paul could say: “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ” (1 Cor 11:1). Indeed, as Ellen White indicated, “one example is worth more than many precepts,”³⁴ and it “will preach louder than words.”³⁵ If this is so, then administrators, faculty, and staff must seek to practice what they preach.

Consider, for example, the case of an SDA educational institution that, while permitting only a vegetarian diet in the cafeteria, raises beef cattle as one of its main sources of income from its farm. When students realized this, they quickly charged the institution with being hypocritical. Paul Brantley aptly remarks: “Students readily detect faith that is phony and discontinuous rather than integrated. They know when our deeds fail to match our creeds.”³⁶ Thus, while the “Total Commitment Document” calls “the faculty and staff to a consistency of life-style,”³⁷ unfortunately, there is sometimes a “tension between creeds and deeds, between believing and living.”³⁸

³¹A study of Jesus’ parable of the talents (Matt 25:14-30) shows that it is right to appropriately recognize those who have diligently utilized their God-given gifts. As seen in the next section on “Lifestyle Consistency” proper modeling is vital in the Christian life as well.

³²Humberto M. Rasi, “Worldviews, Contemporary Culture, and Adventist Education,” Paper presented at the 27th International Faith and Learning Seminar, Mission College, Muak Lek, Thailand, 3-15 December 2000, 12.

³³See, for example, Alexandru Breja, “Teaching Through Example: A Biblical Perspective,” *Christ in the Classroom: Adventist Approaches to the Integration of Faith and Learning*, vol. 21 (Silver Spring, MD: Institute for Christian Teaching, Education Department, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1998).

³⁴Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1942), 149.

³⁵Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Stewardship* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1940), 41.

³⁶Paul S. Brantley, “From Athens to Jerusalem and Points Beyond: The Continuing Search for an Integrated Faith,” *Journal of Research on Christian Education* 3:1 (Spring 1994): 10.

³⁷“Total Commitment Document,” 383.

³⁸Koh, 168.

A similar health-related anomaly becomes apparent when there is a public promotion of a vegetarian diet as being the best, and yet the practice is one of providing meat at official faculty/staff socials, both on and off campus. Recognizing that, “faculty modeling is a primary force in motivating students to adopt new behaviors and a key factor in implementing programs promoting wholeness,”³⁹ and aware that “students tend to fashion their lives more according to what the teacher does, than by what is said,”⁴⁰ it would be prudent for institutions to foster a more consistent pattern relating to dietary practices, as well as all other areas.⁴¹ For, as Taylor aptly remarks: “If we want our students to become authentic Christians, then we as educators must set the pace, thinking and living Christianly.”⁴² Put simply: “Spirituality is more easily caught than taught.”⁴³

Entertainment Practices. Mass media is an overwhelmingly powerful social institution. In fact, as Delyse Steyn notes: “Television is the most dominant medium and its marriage with rock ‘n roll in the music video are significant forces that both in style and content, reflect the spirit of the age, which therefore need to be understood in terms of influence on thinking and feeling.”⁴⁴ Others, such as Australian graphics designer Daniel Sheehy, have been more direct, pointing out specific problems. Sheehy “stated that film techniques distort reality, overload the nervous system, and force subliminal acceptance of actors’ values (51 percent of whom condoned adultery, 80 percent favored homosexuality, and 97 percent were pro-abortion, one study showed).”⁴⁵ In a similar vein, lamenting the wave of decadence on television, James Sire identifies the moral views of the modern media: “Happiness is associated with money, sex and power. . . . Fathers are weak and bumbling. . . . People

³⁹Beverly J. Buckles, “Promoting Wholeness Programs in Health-Related Graduate Education,” *Christ in the Classroom: Adventist Approaches to the Integration of Faith and Learning*, vol. 19 (Silver Spring, MD: Institute for Christian Teaching, Education Department, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1997), 25.

⁴⁰John Wesley Taylor V, “Instructional Strategies for the Integration of Faith and Learning,” Unpublished paper presented at the 27th International Faith and Learning Seminar, Mission College, Muak Lek, Thailand, 3-15 December 2000.

⁴¹This would include things such as the music that employees play and listen to, the TV and video programs they watch, the diet they practice both at home as well as away from home, and the manner in which they observe the seventh-day Sabbath.

⁴²*Ibid.*

⁴³Koh, 179.

⁴⁴Delyse Steyn, “Thinking Christianly in a Media-Dominated Society,” *Christ in the Classroom: Adventist Approaches to the Integration of Faith and Learning*, vol. 7 (Silver Spring, MD: Institute for Christian Teaching, Education Department, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1993), 275.

⁴⁵Brian E. Strayer, “Adventists & Movies: A Century of Change,” *Dialogue* 5:1 (1993): 14.

are depicted in morally compromised situations as if they were the norm.”⁴⁶ Then he warns: “When decadent morality is portrayed as normal, this morality seeps into the consciousness of viewers,”⁴⁷ and their moral powers are “unwittingly eroded.”⁴⁸

A study of Scripture shows that there are certain basic principles regarding what believers should permit into their minds. The classic passage is found in Philippians 4:8: “Whatever things are true, . . . noble, . . . just, . . . pure, . . . lovely, . . . of good report, . . . praiseworthy – meditate on these things.” The same sentiment is reiterated in Colossians 3:2 (KJV): “Set your affections on things above.” Or, as the Psalmist prays: “Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, and revive me in Your way” (Ps 119:37). For, “I will set nothing wicked before my eyes” (Ps 101:3).

With so much evidence demonstrating the serious negative effects of much of the average television programming, the Christian campus will need to be especially vigilant as it attempts to educate its students concerning this all-pervasive medium. Hopefully, courses such as Film Evaluation, and Christian Ethics will provide principles and criteria that students can use in determining which videos or TV programs to watch. Steyn appropriately notes:

If education is to be redemptive, and its focus is on the restoration of the image of God in man, then a study of the mass media must be given a place in the curriculum . . . [since] it has assumed the role of the priesthood in the secular society and must therefore be counterbalanced with a Christian perspective on reality and truth. Its portrayal of salvation is not redemptive but rather it is essentially damning in terms of its functional and pragmatic utilitarianism and relativism.⁴⁹

Thus, in addition to specific classroom instruction, the leadership of the institution itself needs to establish clear, practical, morally-sound guidelines for the selection of TV programs, videos, etc., that are to be shown on campus. Also, all educators must guard against the lure of a mere “lip service,” such as offering a prayer before the showing of a morally questionable video.⁵⁰

⁴⁶James W. Sire, *Discipleship of the Mind: Learning to Love God in the Ways We Think* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 175-176. While Sire is here speaking specifically about sitcoms, these moral problems can be seen in most other entertainment-oriented programs as well.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 176.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*

⁴⁹Steyn, 287.

⁵⁰I remember once going to a Saturday night movie shown at an Adventist university. Before the screening of this violence-filled, obscene-language, sexually-explicit “R”-rated video, the coordinator had a public prayer for the Lord’s blessing!

While it is biblically correct for an institution to determine that only that which is morally uplifting and congruent with its mission will be permitted to be shown on campus, it must move beyond merely bemoaning the moral evils of the modern media. In fact, whenever something bad is removed, *something better* must be substituted. Thus, it would be prudent to follow the lead of the various Christian thinkers who recommend that activities such as the following be utilized as positive alternatives to the time spent watching TV: Reading character-building books, exercising, doing good deeds, informal discussions and debates, listening to uplifting music, learning to play a musical instrument, writing letters, participating in a work program, joining a singing group, etc.⁵¹

While the focus of the above discussion has been mainly on the dangers of the misuse of TV and videos, the same concerns and cautions could be noted about other types of entertainment frequently permitted on Adventist campuses, certain elements of which could easily erode basic biblical ethics. This includes issues such as the uncritical use of the internet, the permissive attitude towards music, especially MTV,⁵² and the indiscriminating selection and production of dramatic presentations.⁵³ Educators ought to encourage committed Adventist musicians to compose, direct and perform music that is socially and spiritually uplifting; also they must challenge dedicated playwrights to write and produce character-enhancing plays, so that students will learn how to think Christianly even in this extra-curricular area of entertainment. As Holmes put it: "We need an

⁵¹See Strayer, (14), who refers to books by Lonnie Melashenko and Tim Crosby, and Joe Wheeler, where they suggest some of the ideas mentioned above, as well as things such as playing games, painting, baking bread, working on a hobby, family dinner discussion, raising pets, and having family worship.

⁵²Music television (MTV), as well as rock music in general, is becoming universally accepted; yet, most of it promotes anti-biblical values. Concerning the power of music, Morris Taylor notes: "It can be demonstrated that music may enter a person's brain quite directly without necessarily going through the cerebrum. Since music may be perceived through the subliminal portion of the brain, it does influence and condition behavior whether we are consciously aware of the music or not;" Morris L Taylor, "Choosing Music in a Christian College," *Christ in the Classroom: Adventist Approaches to the Integration of Faith and Learning*, vol. 1 (Silver Spring, MD: Institute for Christian Teaching, Education Department, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1991), 289-290. Among his many suggestions, Taylor (297-303) states that good music must include: technical excellence, cultural expression, an appropriate wedding of text and music, the portrayal of moral good as attractive, emotional expression balanced by intellectual control, positive associational factors, serious intent, a balance of repertoire, a worldview that positively confirms Christian values, and be consonant with the institutions' objectives.

⁵³Besides the obvious concerns about pride and self-glorification (which are temptations in many activities and areas of life), some of the other dangers of the uncritical use of drama include, portraying the drinking of alcoholic beverages as an acceptable way to drown out sorrow or to forget problems, sexually compromising actions and suggestive statements, the promotion of ethically dubious actions, such as using deception in difficult situations in such a way as to imply that it is perfectly justifiable and morally right to lie at times. For more on this, see Ron du Preez, "A Holocaust of Deception: Lying to Save Life and Biblical Morality," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 9 (1998).

integrated spirituality.”⁵⁴ Thus, instead of unconsciously conforming to current cultural practices, educational institutions must make a concerted effort to be catalysts in the transformation of society.

Recreational Activities. Without a doubt, the issue of sports and games⁵⁵ has been one of the most contentious in Adventist educational circles. This has primarily been due to concerns over the matter of rivalry and competition.⁵⁶ While it is to be recognized that a spirit of rivalry⁵⁷ can arise in many situations (including physical education classes, as well as all other classes), concern regarding extra-curricular sports will be addressed in this paper, because these competitive activities are virtually always conducted without any consideration of the values being transmitted to the students.

Addressing the issue of rivalry, Paul says that those who engage in “measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise” (2 Cor 10:12). In her classic on the principles of true education, Ellen White spoke pointedly about sports:

Some of the most popular amusements, such as [American]⁵⁸ football and boxing, have become schools of brutality. They are developing the same characteristics as did the games of Rome. The love of *dominion*, the *pride* in mere *brute force*, the *reckless disregard of life*, are exerting upon the youth a power to *demoralize* that is appalling. Other athletic games, though not so brutalizing, are scarcely less objectionable, because of the *love of pleasure* and

⁵⁴ Arthur F. Holmes, “What About Student Integration?” *Journal of Research on Christian Education* 3:1 (Spring 1994): 4.

⁵⁵ The terms “sports and games” are being used here to refer to activities such as soccer, basketball, tennis, or even table/board games such as monopoly, chess, etc. In this essay, sports and games are being distinguished from “solo exercise” activities, which includes things such as swimming, jogging, gardening, strolling, or jigsaw puzzles.

⁵⁶ See, for example, Walter S. Hamerslough, “Physical Education and Sport from a Christian Perspective,” *Christ in the Classroom: Adventist Approaches to the Integration of Faith and Learning*, vol. 10 (Silver Spring, MD: Institute for Christian Teaching, Education Department, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1994); P. Wayne Miller, “Team Sports in Adventist Education: Another Look,” *Christ in the Classroom: Adventist Approaches to the Integration of Faith and Learning*, vol. 19 (Silver Spring, MD: Institute for Christian Teaching, Education Department, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1997); Bruce G. Peifer, “Seventh-day Adventist Intercollegiate Competition: A North American Perspective,” *Christ in the Classroom: Adventist Approaches to the Integration of Faith and Learning*, vol. 19 (Silver Spring, MD: Institute for Christian Teaching, Education Department, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1997); Thomas A. Davis, “Incident on a Sunday Afternoon,” *Adventist Review*, 26 November 1981, 8, 9; David C. Nieman, “Do Sports Belong in SDA Schools?” *Ministry*, August 1988, 4-9.

⁵⁷ Some might attempt to differentiate between “rivalry” and “competition.” However, according to the *Random House Dictionary*, the *New Webster’s Dictionary*, and the *American Heritage Dictionary*, these terms are synonymous. Thus, they will be used interchangeably in the essay.

⁵⁸ The word “American” was intentionally added, since this was the type of “football” Ellen White was referring to. This does not mean that soccer (known as “football” in many parts of the world), does not come under this condemnation, as can be seen in the fourth sentence of this quotation.

excitement, thus fostering a *distaste for useful labor*, a disposition to shun practical duties and responsibilities and its tranquil enjoyments. *Thus the door is opened to dissipation and lawlessness, with their terrible results.*⁵⁹

While other modern writers have likewise noted negative aspects of competitive sports,⁶⁰ it appears as though there are seven basic problems with these activities:

- (a) *Vengeance Promotion*: a basically selfish attitude is fostered;
- (b) *Violence Glorification*: an aggressive spirit is encouraged;
- (c) *Viscera Magnification*: uncontrolled emotionalistic reactions are portrayed as normal;
- (d) *Vacuum Usurpation*: the emptiness of a godless soul finds a pseudo-fulfillment in sports;
- (e) *Victor Adoration*: sports stars are elevated to a godlike status, and hero-worship abounds;
- (f) *Vanity Formation*: those who are successful, easily become self-centered and proud;
- (g) *Value Transmutation*: biblical norms, such as love and truthfulness, are ignored, while “hatred” (of the opponent) and “deception” (of the rival), are promoted as actions that are “good;”

If Christian education is to facilitate the development of biblical values in every aspect of campus life, including sports and games, then these activities must exemplify the following aspects:

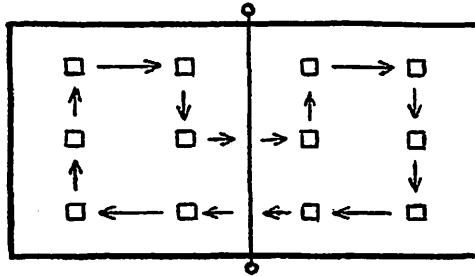
- (a) *Christ-centered*: the self-sacrificial, humble attitude of Jesus needs to be imitated;
- (b) *Character-building*: positive virtues, such as kindness, and honesty ought to be fostered;
- (c) *Cooperative*: a community-oriented concern may be promoted through genuine teamwork;
- (d) *Compassionate*: the concepts of love, and mercy must be held up for emulation;
- (e) *Controlled*: emotional control and self-discipline should be positively encouraged;
- (f) *Complementary*: recreation needs to be seen as only one aspect of a balanced lifestyle;
- (g) *Confessional*: every sport or game must provide opportunities for participants (and even spectators) to genuinely focus on God and His goodness.

In order to implement these essential principles, it will be necessary to creatively alter one or more of the basic rules of every sports activity. For example, the competitive element of basketball can be effectively neutralized by simply swopping one or two different players from one team to the other at the end of the first three quarters; in this way everyone will get to play on both “sides” throughout the game, yet they will actually constitute one “team.” In volleyball, team members normally rotate on the side of the court where a new person on that team is to serve the

⁵⁹White, *Education*, 210 (emphasis added).

⁶⁰See, for example even such pro-competitive writers as, Hamerslough, 214; and Peifer, 251.

ball. But, in order to remove the basic competitive element of the game, teams need to “intra-rotate,” only when the server is changed on one side of the court, as indicated in the following diagram:



Similar changes can be made to the rules of many, if not most, other games. In brief, the major factors to consider when rules are being modified, are as follows:

- (a) *Time*: set reasonable time limits for the completion of the game;⁶¹
- (b) *Target*: have a goal to which the players must work, such as 15 points in volleyball;
- (c) *Technique*: teach players to play by the basic rules of the modified game;
- (d) *Tactics*: encourage participants to master the skills needed to play the game well;
- (e) *Talent*: promote the development of individual talents;
- (f) *Teamwork*: all players in the game form one large team, against inanimate targets;
- (g) *Testimony*: find creative, innovative ways of getting students to regularly share the positive lessons learned as a result of playing the game.

This manner of approaching sports will assist students in putting into practice the specific biblical injunctions that call for a cooperative, self-sacrificial attitude on the part of the Christian: “Through love serve one another” (Gal 5:13); thus, “bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal 6:2). As White noted: “In *true education* the selfish ambition, the greed for power, the disregard for the rights and needs of humanity, that are the curse of our world, find a counterinfluence.”⁶² All educators are thus challenged to provide “true education” for all students.

Whether it be student clubs, student officer elections, international food fairs, heritage days (to celebrate cultural diversity), “fashion” shows, or any other sanctioned extra-curricular activity,

⁶¹This is especially so for table/board games, such as the modified game of monopoly, called “Co-opoly. While the major aim in monopoly is to accumulate as much wealth as possible, even bankrupting other players in the process, the rules of Co-opoly seek to promote and inculcate the Christian values of compassion, community concern, self-sacrificial service, other-centeredness, a Christ-centered striving for excellence, etc.

⁶²Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1954), 293 (emphasis added).

institutional leaders need to seriously heed the following divine warning: “See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ” (Col 2:8 NIV). Students must be challenged and encouraged to think Christianly, even in the activities not planned or directly run by the institution.

Post-Curricular Procedures.

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

In fact, a recent proposal by the General Conference Education Department directors, maintains that one of the characteristics of a successful Adventist tertiary institution is that it assists students “in obtaining suitable employment after graduation, seeks their input for future planning, and cultivates their support through regular alumni activities.”⁶³ This assistance in finding employment could be done through providing appropriate letters of recommendation, through making contacts with vocationally-established alumni, or through special seminars that teach students how to write up their own resumes, and to search for employment in a tight job market, even role-playing the interview process.

Once students have graduated, the institution can continue to positively affect their lives by means of an active alumni association. To keep former students connected to their alma mater, each institution needs to promote and plan for an annual alumni weekend, during which a variety of activities can be held, which cater to the spiritual, physical, mental, and social needs of people. For instance, there can be continuing education mini-seminars, special banquets, inspirational speakers, and even a “fun run” or a “walk talk” (exercising while socializing with former classmates).

Also, contact with alumni can be maintained through the official public relations newsletters, or news magazines, with a specific section devoted to alumni affairs. Besides general news of campus happenings, articles in these publications can include book reviews of current and former lectures, as well as thought-provoking, holistically-oriented articles (some even written by alumni) that are relevant to the needs of the working world. Finally, to enhance alumni loyalty, their input should be tapped for future planning, their expertise could be utilized in networking with current

⁶³“Characteristics of a Successful Seventh-day Adventist College or University,” Unpublished proposal adopted by the Education Department directors, attending the World Education Advisory, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, MD, April 1996 (revised March 1997).

students planning on graduating and seeking employment, and their resources could be solicited for special projects.⁶⁴

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

Commencement Challenges

The “final” message to a graduating class is called a “commencement address,” since they will soon be commencing a major new part of their lives. Similarly, this last section is labeled “Commencement Challenges,” rather than “Conclusions,” since it is hoped that the ideas presented here will become a solemn summons to “commence” a more holistic integration of faith into all the procedures, programs, plans, and practices of every Adventist educational institution.

Taylor states: “In order to *effectively* integrate faith and learning, Christian educators must bring the hidden curriculum to the surface.”⁶⁵ To the degree that this has been accomplished here, and to the extent that this paper has challenged all educators, especially institutional leaders, to continue to conscientiously engage in this exercise, this essay will have been successful.

From staff appointments through sports activities, from the music we promote to the movies we permit, we ought to forsake all futile efforts to simply sanitize the secular; instead we need to redirect all resources to the holistic integration of faith in all peri-curricular practices for the sake of the eternal destiny of our students. If we do this diligently, both in the classroom as well as in all the other activities of the institution, we will be putting into practice the basic principle enunciated by Jesus, when He said: “These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others” (Matt 23:23b RSV). In other words, in our overall thinking, planning, and action, we must dedicate ourselves to the task of creating a holistic strategy that will seek to develop in all of our students a life that is totally committed to self-sacrificial service for the glory of God.

⁶⁴For example, at least one Adventist tertiary institution has a “Committee of 100” (which is now probably twice that figure), consisting of committed alumni, who on a regular annual basis provide financial assistance to the institution for special projects that they select to be involved in.

⁶⁵John Wesley Taylor, “Instructional Strategies for the Integration of Faith and Learning, 4 (emphasis added).