

Institute for Christian Teaching
Education Department of Seventh-day Adventists

**CONVEYING CHRISTIAN FAITH AND VALUES
THROUGH AN ADVENTIST SCHOOL IN UKRAINE**

by

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This essay is an attempt to summarize the 9-year experience of the Adventist school in Kiev and to formulate the conveying of Christian faith and values through the Adventist school in the Ukraine. The essay may be used by administrators and founders in other Ukrainian towns and in the territory of the former USSR.

“If we want to bring up a person in virtue, we have to polish him at an early age. And if anybody wants to move forward in wisdom, he must be open for it in the first years of the life, when he is still full of diligence, intellect is complaisant and memory is strong”

Yan Amos Comenius, 1592-1670, The Great Didactics

I.1 The strong and weak sides of the educational system in the former USSR, its traditions and heritage.

Positive Aspects

I.1.1. Good physical structure: The schools were always situated in separate specially planned buildings on large plots, were furnished, replenished with visual aids and equipment (film projectors, diasopes, film viewing devices etc.), the libraries were well-funded. Large amounts of scientific films and literature were produced for school purposes.

I.1.2. The school upheld the high value of knowledge: It was prestigious and fashionable to know and read much, to be a comprehensively erudite person. The school demanded much knowledge of each subject, therefore pupils had a broad range of knowledge.

I.1.3. Study at school was obligatory for all children. There were no children who did not have nine years of schooling.

I.1.4. Many institutes, besides school and parents, were involved in raising the children: The Pioneer and Komsomol organizations, various clubs, circles, children's sport clubs, tourist stations, commissions on youth affairs, district children's police rooms. Because of these organizations and activities children were busy all the time, knew much and could travel and see much.

Negative Aspects

I.1.5 Atheistic education. The education at all schools was extremely materialistic and atheistic. Those who believed in God, were called backward and uneducated. The Bible was totally inaccessible to the population. The consequences of atheistic education gradually resulted in an ideological decomposition of the society. Faithlessness in ideals and moral norms resulted.

I.1.6 Strongly ideological process of education and upbringing. Because conveying the teaching of humanities was conducted based on communist ideals, the historical developments were distorted and given according to a certain point of view. Under the slogan of internationalism there was a destruction of national cultures of the peoples of the USSR.

I.1.7. Teachers were given strict lesson plans from which they could not deviate. The lessons were standard.

I.2 Specific features of the educational and pedagogical process in the post-Soviet Ukraine.

1.2.1. Ideological and moral.

Consequences of atheistic education are especially visible after the collapse of the former Soviet Union. People have lost moral reference points, permissiveness and anarchy dominates in the society, many crimes and other social problems have reached unprecedented levels (larceny, murder, prostitution, drug addiction, children's homelessness), and some social crimes, such as larceny, became commonplace in the government.

Many children have lost any interest to study since they understand that honors and diplomas can be bought for money.

Children began to read less, many spend time at the TV and computer. Because TV now shows low-standard films, mainly American productions, promoting sex, violence and murder children quickly become savage, aggressive and immoral.

At the same time there have been many changes during last 12 years in our society which have resulted in the stratification of a society not only with respect to socioeconomic status, but also in outlook.

Since in Ukraine religious freedom was proclaimed and the population has had an opportunity to read the Bible, a significant amount of people have become believers. Wishing to live by the principles of the Bible, believers also wish to bring up their children as Christians. For this reason, conditions should be present both in the family and in the educational system.

1.2.2. Alternative system of education (possibility to create private schools).

In the former Soviet Union all schools were state-run. In 1991, when Ukraine became an independent state and new laws on education were accepted, the opportunity to create private schools arose. Now all general educational institutions in Ukraine can be divided into 3 classes depending on the form of ownership: state, municipal' and private. Thereby the founders of a private school can be both legal and physical entities. Thus, until now churches have no official opportunity to establish general educational schools.

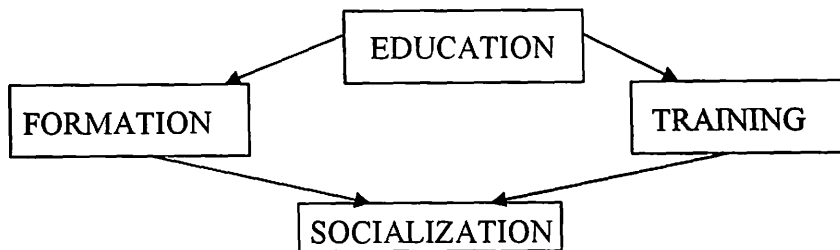
The comprehensive schools today, there are many problems in student relations. Mockery, cruelty and abuse are the norm. Pupils drink, smoke, use drugs, and become sexually active at a young age. Christian parents consider it very undesirable to allow their children to attend school with the children of parents who do not share their beliefs and perspective. In order for their children to study among fellow believers, parents agree to accompany children through all the city and to pay for education which at the nearby school children could receive free of charge.

An atmosphere of goodwill, benevolence, love and respect to the children reigns at schools which bring up children on Christian principles. Such schools bring a big benefit to all society as they bring up fair, decent, well-educated children who will adhere to those principles on which they are brought up from childhood during all their lives.

Wishing to show the advantages of Christian, and in particular, the Adventist educational system, the "Morning Star" school was founded. It has two legal founders the Adventist agency of the Relief and Development (ADRA) in Ukraine, and also the All-Ukrainian Charity fund "Better Life" which was founded by Adventists.

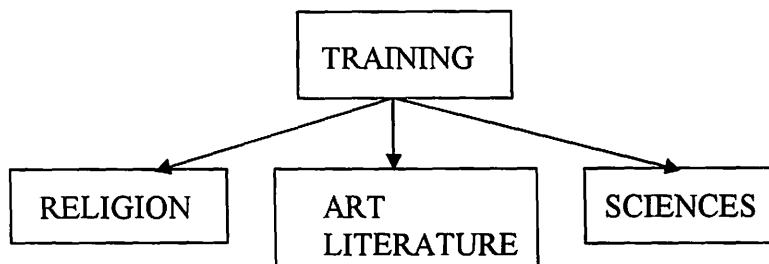
I.3 Educational and pedagogical tasks of the “Morning Star” Adventist School in Ukraine in view of Christian values.

The word "education" comes from the Greek word "to form", i.e. the giving of form, embodiment. The word of the teacher makes an action, is embodied and is materialized. Schematically, education can be presented as follows:

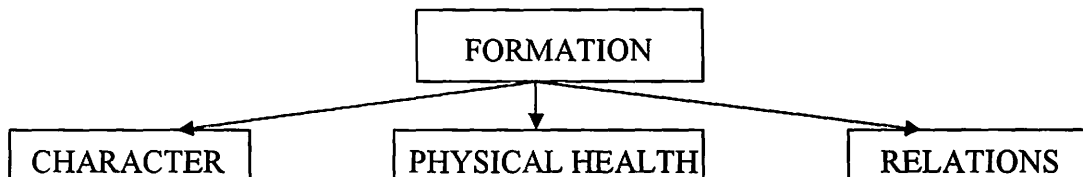


The formation and training of children result in their socialization. Through formation and training we help the children integrate in society, and function well in it.

The training can schematically be presented as consisting of three main components:



The formation deals with the development of character traits and can schematically be presented in the following way:



The basic concept, that is the image of God’s Kingdom as is central to the teaching of Christ, determines the essence of the Christian school. At Christian schools the discussion and preparation of children is conducted so, that they will grow spiritually and become the citizens of a heavenly Kingdom.

The preparation of children for becoming citizens of God’s Kingdom implies certain tasks that need to be accomplished in education.

- 1) To become a part of an empire means to believe (*Mt. 3:2* “Turn away from your sins,” he said, “because the Kingdom of heaven is near!”). The Christian school should proclaim the necessity to obey an appeal of God to repentance and obedience, to encourage pupils to devote themselves to Jesus Christ, to conduct a Christian way of life, to serve God and neighbours. **(the spiritual task)**
- 2) To promote the development of intellectual, creative and other abilities of pupils, that:
 - a) show the uniqueness and huge potential of Divine Creation, despite the fall of man;

- b) induce learning to follow in the way intended by God, using all talents granted for service to God and neighbours. **(the intellectual task)**
- 3) Citizens of God's Kingdom are members of Christ's Body (Eph.#4:1-16). The Christian school must be as a training platform where children study collaboratively. Christian teachers should study and comprehend the doctrine of Christ to apply various aspects of this teaching to real-life situations together with pupils. The classroom should become a laboratory where children practically master the precept of love. **(the practical task)**
 - 4) At school there should be the discipline necessary for study. (*Heb. 12:11 "When we are punished, it seems to us at the time something to make us sad, not glad. Later, however, those who have been disciplined by such punishment reap the peaceful reward of a righteous life"*). **(the formative-disciplinary task)**
 - 5) The Christian school itself should be a symbol of God's Kingdom in the world.

Understanding socialization as the final goal of education we have to ask ourselves: "How can knowledge help human beings in society?" We teach freshman pupils. "But what image should a freshman pupil have?" "What should he be like?" "What should he be able to do?" We have to think globally, keeping in mind that our home country is Heaven.

Learning process should go through humble subordination to the Lord. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Never rely on what you think you know" (Prov. 3:5 GNB). The aim of Christian discipline and education is to reveal God's principles to people and help them to use these principles to obey God. It applies to the law of gravitation and the law of air resistance when constructing airplanes as well as to linguistic rules when writing an essay. Pupils can explore how God's principles of justice and goodness are used in economics or how God's principle of love and faithfulness are used in personal relations and in marriage.

School education is defined as "a system of complex, planned, organized, systematic, purposive, deliberative and intentional learning experiences, which in concept bring about behavioral changes in the person" [13].

Before defining the goals and the subjects of each school we have to answer a set of important questions [7]:

1. Why should we teach? – Christ gave us an order to teach creatively.
2. What results should we expect? – Love, morality, theological stability, and service combine to forge the goal of Christian teaching.
3. Who mediates Christian teaching? – No other kind of teaching furnishes a divine enabler like the Holy Spirit.
4. How should we teach? – Christian teachers develop as they creatively manage motivation, time, content, space, and participation.
5. Whom should we teach? For the Christian teachers, students come in a variety of packages composed of natural men and two kinds of spiritual men.

Christian school is trying to solve the following objectives:

1. To clarify fundamentals, structure and meaning of Christian ways of thinking. How can we apply Bible knowledge today?
2. To promote development of intellectual, creative and other abilities of pupils which leads to the strengthening of the idea of the uniqueness and the great potential of God's creatures, original sin. Secondly it induces pupils to walk in the Lord's way, using all gifts for serving Him and neighbors.

3. To give pupils the opportunity to understand how to live on the basis of Christian principles in order to consciously come to a Christian understanding and make a personal or public decision based on biblical principles as well set valuable goals and give practical recommendations in relation to Christian discipline.
4. To encourage pupils to devote themselves to Jesus Christ, to live a Christian life and to serve the Lord and people.

Thus, the purpose of the Morning Star School is to help children enter the real world, so that they can find their place in the world using their gifts and talents. Therefore it is necessary to put before itself an image, which we want to generate in children, that the knowledge contributed in a new level of thinking, socialization.

The educational level has to be very high, but education must be not limited only to books [1]. The teachers have to bring up children for God, to tell them that they are made in the Creator's image and that Jesus is an example that they have to follow. It is important that every teacher cherish reasonable principles and doctrines, because it is the light that has to reflect on the course of all the pupils lives. Our lessons have to correspond to the time we live in, and our spiritual admonitions have to be given in correspondence with messages sent by God.

The school has to be like a family, where every pupil can receive special help from teachers the same as family members get help at home. It is necessary to spread tenderness, compassion, unity and love.

The purposes and tasks of the school are:

- To give a high knowledge level in correspondence with God's Word, help a child develop comprehensively;
- to impart knowledge about God as Creator and Source of life;
- to encourage the spirituality and the perception of God's constant closeness;
- to create conditions promoting the development of a Christian character;
- to educate the student in the laws of health.

Each time when the teacher conducts a lesson or communicates with children, his or her purpose is to show them what is truly divine and to influence their life so that they will reflected this Truth. The witness about Christ is more than use of verses from the Bible. Our life is the most important part of our witness to children. *(2 Cor. 3:2,3 "You yourselves are the letter we have, written on our hearts for everyone to know and read. It is clear that Christ himself wrote this letter and sent it by us. It is written, not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, and not on the stone tablets but on the human hearts.")*

The best sermon for small schoolchildren is a word, acts, a manner of behavior, a character trait of the teacher. Sharp and inquisitive children not only notice everything, but then copy the instructor. Knowing it, we teachers, should think constantly: "And how do I live? What do children see in me?" In order for our training and education to be successful, the teacher should remember that he or she is Christ's letter, communicating His teaching through his or her life.

II. Methods and forms to convey Christian faith and values through the school.

Teachers of Christian schools have a wonderful opportunity to guide children, whom God has entrusted to them, for personal communication with God and to promote the formation of His character in children. This is not easy, but we always can get inspiration and power from

a wonderful source. Christ invited us to come to Him and learn from Him. He is the best teacher. So the Christian teacher has the same goals as Jesus Christ had. Of course, no one can achieve the same level of mastery as Christ had but by imitating God's actions in our ministry we can grow both as teachers and as Christians. And this is a good example for pupils to grow qualitatively in their learning process and in their cognition of God.

II.1 Curriculum component

Bible lessons

Bible study especially is important in an Adventist school. Pupils have to fix in their minds and be convinced of God's truth. Their attention should be directed toward Holy Scripture, and not toward human opinions. We have to explore God's Word deeper and wider than all other books, because it is the greatest hand book and foundation for any education. Thus our children have to be taught using truth included in this Book, despite the habits and character features they had before. However, a lot of biblical truths are not understandable to people, because the treasures of truth are covered by the rubbish of human wisdom and traditions. [1]

The Bible lessons are conducted according to the special curriculum, worked out for children of different grades. The author Elena Yakovenko is a third generation Adventist, who lives in Kiev, a third generation teacher with great experience. We also use other Christian literature and magazines. Younger children from primary school become acquainted with Bible stories and the life of Jesus Christ in simple demonstrative form, Felts are used in the lessons. Children in secondary school investigate the Holy Scripture in the lessons. We teach all children to analyse on their own the Bible stories, the acts of heroes, to make conclusions and to use it in their lives.

Bible lessons are structured as discussions and debates of different topics according to the age of a child in such a way that they don't give a ready-made solutions and advice at once, but make children to think in order for them to find the solution by themselves and acceptable behavioral models. And only at the end of the lesson a teacher leads pupils to the correct answer which is given by the Holy Spirit.

As a result of such education children are learning constantly to make vital decisions consciously, comparing them with norms and recommendations of Holy Scripture. Usually pupils can explain motives of their behavior and give reasons for their deeds.

Integration of the syllabus and Bible

Integration is the vital connection between the contents of training, management and the ideals of God's truth [9]. How do we achieve this unity? There are two ways that we try to use: Through the teacher and through the subject. In this section we shall consider the second way, and in section 2.3 we shall talk about the teacher.

Considering educational subjects from the point of view of integration, it is possible to divide them into three groups: natural sciences (mathematics, physics, astronomy, chemistry, biology, geography, humanities (history, literature [Ukrainian and foreign]) and art (music, fine arts, hand labour).

Though the school is compelled to work under the state programs authorized by the Ministry of Education and science, there is a task for each teacher whenever possible to do integration of the curriculum with the Bible. The task is complex enough, since there are no materials that exist for this purpose in the Ukraine. So it depends much on the desire, qualification and devotion of the teacher. The school tries to help each teacher by providing

literature on integration (for example scientific publications of creationists [15]-[17]), with videofilms, interesting illustrative material, crossword puzzles, quizzes on Christian subjects, training teachers in seminars at the International Association of Christian schools (see section 2.3) and other methods.

Sometimes it is news for the teachers that many known scientists, whose discoveries and laws we studied at schools of the USSR were Christians (e.g., Pascal, Gauss, Galilees, Newton, Pythagoras, Darwin, Pavlov). Acquaintance with their biography and statements gives the teacher rich material for reflection. All teachers have studied at institutes scientists' work in the field of pedagogy, (e.g., Yan Kamenskiy etc.). Only upon coming to our school do they find out that they were Christians and that the force of their work consists in a Christian outlook.

In the arts block, music is the subject, that expresses best the spirit of Christianity. Investigating the Bible we see that it penetrates the Bible and plays a leading role in eternity (10). When we use it in conjunction with adoration, it appears that music is important for the preparation the heart to perceive the truly Divine. We need to use music for improvement of the soul (11).

The music teacher includes in the program study and listening the music of such Christian composers, as Bach, Handel, Mendelssohn, Frank and Schumann and also learning Psalms, which children then often perform on feasts, parties and other school events.

In view of the fact that the integration of biblical principles and school subjects is a very difficult and diligent process, the ACSI has found a special committee for this purpose. All ACSI school-members send in suggestions, themes and lessons drafts to that committee. The committee analyzes, sorts and groups the teachers' drafts according to different subjects. Afterwards, general drafts on various subject will be delivered to the Ministry of Education for approval. And only after that will it be possible to publish this systematic work as documents and distribute them over to schools to help them to conduct integrated lessons.

“After school” program group

Every Friday during the second part of the day we conduct the set of activities, directed to the conveying of Christian values in the pupil's life with the aid of quizzes, plays, sketches, reading the Bible, drawing on the themes of Bible stories, singing songs, learning by heart the verses from Bible, etc.

On other days children also have the opportunity to read independently or to listen to Christian stories, the children's Bible, or to be engaged in craft projects based on biblical themes.

At the school there is a constant exhibit of children compositions, which contain mostly Bible themes. The exhibit is systematically renewed with new works. Among compositions one can find paintings, appliques, compositions out of clay and natural components. In the process of making compositions teachers successfully combine the art skills of children with spiritual education. Often collectively created works appear at the exhibit, which were done by several pupils or by a whole class. This develops friendliness and friendship in children, the ability to work in a team and respect opinions of their classmates.

II.2 Formative component

The level of moral purity in the school indicates its goodness. Virtue, mental abilities and righteousness of pupils, not the number of children – is the source of joy and gratitude in school [1]. For that purpose the school conducts educational work in several ways.

Morning chapel time

The activity of the “Morning Star” School is constructed in such a way that children receive God’s blessings since the morning, before the lessons, during chapel time. It consists of two parts: the informational and the spiritual.

The informational part includes various announcements and information regarding the school life. The spiritual part may be in the form of narrating a Bible story or small story from classic literature with an edifying character, the reading of verses which glorify the Lord, plays, puppet show or singing Christian songs.

We try to have chapel time done by a variety of teachers, not the same one every day, and we involve children as well.

On Mondays and Fridays all children of the school chapel time, and on the other days primary and secondary school conduct chapel time separately to accommodate their age and level.

Formative lessons

On basis of knowledge received from the Bible lessons, pupils discuss the problem situations, that arise in class. The conversations and discussions are directed toward the personal development of each child or correction of negative character traits of some schoolchildren or there are themes, that concerns the entire class, (e.g., friendliness, mutual aid).

We also try to ensure that formative lessons are not separated from real life, and that knowledge received at school would be harmoniously integrated with surroundings. We help them to make right conscious choices in various life situations.

The teachers collect articles from newspapers concerning different situations involving children and teenagers, and then on the formative lessons at the secondary school the curator discusses those articles with the children, and they then analyze them from a Christian perspective.

Conducting the holidays, subject months, etc.

In order to give students a well-rounded education, various subject months are dedicated to subjects such as natural history, Ukrainian language and literature, mathematics, English, history and dramatic art. During the month children extend their knowledge in the subject, and also fulfill the tasks in which school subjects are integrated with Bible truth.

September is natural history month. At that time children make various items from natural materials, and then the school exhibit involving all grades is arranged. Both individual articles of pupils and compositions of the all classes are shown there. At the end of the month the holiday is conducted when the classes present their works: performing skits connected with the topic of the work, give riddles on the topic of nature, fruits, vegetables and read verses.

Various quizzes and contests on nature are conducted at the school during natural history month. The tasks are worked out for various ages separately. Some children prepare the theses about animals and plants which are recorded in “The Red Book”, interesting facts about condition of forests, seas, rivers and nature as a whole. These little research projects are presented either at chapel or at a special fixed time.

Another month of Ukrainian literature is carried out in secondary school together with the month of reading in primary school. The children prepare the verses, fables, perform the skits in costumes from classic Ukrainian literature. Pupils can perform a fable as a puppet-show. All the children usually enjoy these performances.

During math month teachers conduct math Olympics, prepare various non-typical math problems, quizzes, tasks. Marks for the solving each task according to its complexity are given.

Children choose the tasks according to their ability and having solved them collect the marks. The winners are reviewed and announced at the end of the week.

Contests and quizzes about history of Ukraine, ancient Kiev Russia and other states and also about the sights of Kiev were conducted during the month of history.

At the end each subject week or month the rewarding of winners is conducted. They are presented with diplomas or little gifts.

The script for every special school program is created on a Christian base. It involves staging Bible stories or sketches connected with Christian way of life, reading Christian verses or singing songs and psalms.

Out-of-school activities

We try to connect out-of-class activities with our Christian objectives. We often conduct field trips to Kyiv and nearby cities. We take the students on many excursions (e.g., to museums of natural sciences, history, bread, of the outstanding Ukrainian poets or writers, planetarium). Sometimes we visit children's performances at Christian (Baptist) theatre, which are made at a high professional level.

We pay great attention to **how** the activity is spent, how the teacher invests soul and skill in these out-of class activities, what methods have used and whether everything is done «in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, thanking through Him the God and Father ».

As the whole atmosphere at the school make the children affable and friendly they communicate with pleasure not only with each other but also with others outside the school: meet at the church, go for a visit, invite others to their birthdays parties.

Children who left the school (mainly for financial reasons) come on a visit for a long time, visit school parties and offer school activities, continue to be friends with their former classmates.

One of the extracurricular activities is the annual participation of our school in the Festival of Gifts (school Olympics) for Christian schools, conducted by the Association of Christian Schools International. The Christian schools from the territory of the former USSR take part in this Olympics. The participation in such Olympics gives an opportunity for children to meet with children from other Christian schools, to make new friends, to give the sense of unity in views and outlooks, to estimate their strength and abilities in comparison with other children. Taking into consideration that the amount of children in all Christian schools is not large, the participation in Olympics is important for them, in order that they do not feel themselves isolated and separated. More than 160 participants from 11 schools in 2001 and more than 200 participants from 20 Christian schools in 2002 took place in such Olympics. Children are eager to participate in such Olympics, and prepared for it during the entire school year.

The Olympics Organizational Committee, which consists of the teachers-Christians from various schools, prepare the tasks for various age groups of children in each kind of competition. The children choose in advance the participation in not more than in 7 kinds of competitions, a wide choice of which is available. The block of academic disciplines – biblical, mathematics, languages (Russian, Ukrainian, English), and other school subjects, the art block – fine arts, modelling, photography, articles; sport block – participation in competitions on various kinds of sports (running, jumping, table tennis, throwing) are presented there.

On the first day there is a solemn opening of the Olympics: it is a real holiday, where each school makes its own presentation – musical, dramatized, in costumes.

On the second and third days all kinds of competitions take place. On the last day there is the summing up of the results, the rewarding of the winners and the solemn closing of the Olympics.

In 2001 each of our school's participants won prizes in not less than 3 of the 7 kinds of competitions, and one pupil of the 1st grade became a silver medalist of the Olympics according to the sum points in all competitions.

In 2002 the children also performed successfully and each one won a prize in 1 to 7 kinds of competition. One of our pupil of the 2nd grade pupils got a title of "the best athlete the Olympics".

The Olympics became a real holiday in children's life.

II.3 Personnel Component

Image of the Christian teacher

The teacher always renders an influence on the student – either a positive influence or a negative one. The teacher is first of all a person with a clear purpose capable to self-transformation. If the teacher does not know, where he or she goes, how be led others? «The teacher influences eternity, he never can precisely say where his influence comes to an end.» [10].

«Usually the result is not seen at once, but appears in some time. That is why patience is the special clothes in a wardrobe of the teacher.» Similar to the farmer, he spreads seeds harvest the crop later.

The teacher exists for the schoolchildren, not for administration, not for the colleagues and not for the founders, though, undoubtedly, he has certain obligations to these groups. He or she teaches more than the subject, he trains the persons. If the schoolboy has not learned, the teacher has not taught. The highest appointment of the teacher is the pouring out of his or her life, as from a cup, on the schoolchildren. Teachers live to minister to their student. [9].

A direct consequence of fruitful job of the teacher is readiness of the schoolboy for further training and for life. The values, belief and preferences of the teacher are transferred to the pupils with surprising force [8].

Talents, that are developed and devoted to God are necessary to carry out this task. It requires people who can work with the meekness of Christ, having hidden in Him their self. *2 Tim. 2:15 "Do your best to win full approval in God's sight, as a worker who is not ashamed of his work, one who correctly teaches the message of God's truth."*

It requires unselfish, devoted, faithful teachers, moved by God's love. Having the hearts called with tenderness, they will care about pupil's health and happiness and help them master vitally important spheres of knowledge. All teachers should have a close connection with God and the perfect knowledge of His Word, so that they can incorporate Divine wisdom and knowledge in practical preparation of learning for eternal life. It is necessary not only to have knowledge of the truth, but also to be the executors the Word of God. The principle "it is written" should to be expressed in their words and deeds. Nobody has the right to work at our schools, if he or she does not have the experience of obedience to God's Word [4].

The Morning Star School realizes the great importance of the teacher's role in forming a Christian character in children. Nevertheless, the school has experienced great difficulty in hiring qualified personnel. Because Seventh-day Adventist evangelism in the territory of the former USSR began in 1990, there is no tradition of Christian pedagogy. The number of the Adventists teachers in Kiev is very limited, and their professional level in many cases leaves

much to be desired. For this reason, the school employs both Christian teachers as well as teachers who are professionally very well-prepared, but have had little or no acquaintance with the Bible.

Bible study with non-believing teachers

Before initiating non-Christian teachers at school, the director acquaints them of Christian education through an orientation to the school and finds out their general relation to religion. Atheists cannot work at school. If the candidate has a positive attitude toward religion, the condition of working at the school is participating in Bible study, which director conducts individually with 1-3 teachers. The first themes of the study are devoted to the uniqueness of the Bible and its difference from other books. Following this is the theme «The origin of evil», further study of the first 11 chapters of the Bible, and then prophecies of the Bible, the plan of redemption and other themes. In addition to the Bible, the «New life» and «1 + 1» Bible study courses are used together with other Adventist literature. In this way missionary work among the teachers is conducted. At these meetings and during the working hours it becomes clear how willing the teachers are to accept the gospel message.

Non-believing teachers in our school are also invited to evangelical programs and seminars, conducted by local city churches, to the festive programs and public worship service (e.g., Christmas, Easter, Harvest Day).

The Adventist teachers communicate with non-believing teachers, give them literature on interesting topics. During the discussion of the problems and troubling matters of non-believing teachers, Adventists demonstrate how these problems can be resolved on the basis of the Holy Scripture.

The school has had encouraging experiences, since the unbelieving teachers, having studied the Holy Scriptures open their hearts to God sincerely. Their outlook and the objectives change, and these teachers are transformed.

Prayers

At the moment official prayers at schools with children are forbidden by the legislation of Ukraine. However the employees of the school begin the working day with a prayer together. The prayer is dedicated to both the common problems of the school, and for problems of individual teachers and children. Within day, if there is a special need, the teachers can again unite for a prayer.

A special school Prayer book is kept, where various school needs and needs of colleagues, for which Adventist teachers pray are registered. Here are also surnames of children and often also parents, who require a special intercessory prayer. A date is marked, when a request or a need has been given and then a date when the answer to the prayer has been received.

Before the lunch both children and teacher offer a silent prayer.

Membership in the Association of Christian Schools International

For many years the school has been a member of the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). Both the director and the teachers regularly take part in conferences and seminars conducted by this organization. As ACSI has worked for more than 10 years in the territory of Counsel of Independent States (CIS) already, they know well the needs and problems of Christian schools here.

For the teachers and directors in separate programs the lectures are conducted by both foreign and national lecturers. There are seminars, practical lessons, round tables - exchange of experience between more and less skilled directors and teachers, and films are shown. ACSI provides participants with printed materials on themes from the presentations or

copies of useful material, interesting books on Christian pedagogy, and on integration of educational subjects with the Bible. The separate seminars for teachers are conducted on the integration of the Bible and educational subjects.

Conducting seminars for teachers

The school is interested in fostering improvement in the professional skills of the teachers in areas such as psychology and Christian pedagogy.

In the 2002-03 school year we conducted the following seminars for our teachers: «Art of communication», «Seven laws of pedagogy», and “Conflict management”.

The seminar «Art of communication» had the objective of giving teachers an idea of four types of the people, showing these types in biblical heroes, showing the strong and weak sides of each type, and the most effective way of dialoguing between different types of people.

The videoseminar «Seven laws of pedagogy» acquainted the teachers with the laws of pedagogy on Christian bases. It was especially useful for the new nonbelieving teachers.

The lectures on conflict management gave the opportunity to classify difficult people, to understand their latent motives and desires, and to solve the conflicts in the possible way.

Pastor job at the school.

A chaplain was included in the Board of Trustees in the 2002-03 school year. He was appointed by the Kiev mission of the SDA church. The chaplain is engaged in spiritual activities of the school. He gives short devotionals at meetings of the teachers, says a prayer of a blessing at the school parties, advises the personnel on spiritual matters, gives spiritual help to the parents, and also schoolchildren as individuals and also to the entire class (e.g. conducting a talk on any spiritual theme).

II.4 Weaknesses of the school

- The absence of the appropriate physical premises to organize the complete school. “Morning Star” School leases a location measuring 420 sq. m.. The rent agreement is short-term – for a term of 3 years. Every third year the school asks to prolong the term, but there is no guarantee the agreement will be prolonged and the rent payment will be not increased.
- As the consequence of this the school only has the license for a primary school. We cannot obtain the license for a secondary school because of the absence of enough classrooms and laboratories for physics, biology, chemistry, computer science classes.
- Insufficient equipment: we have old, second-hand desks and furniture; we have no computers and other necessary office equipment, and no TV with video-recorder.
- The significant personnel problems. The number of the Adventist teachers in Kiev is very limited.

II.5 Challenges of the school

- Churches are not permitted to establish schools of general education
- It is not officially permitted to conduct religious activities at schools.

II.6 Strengths of the school

- At the moment our school is the only one officially registered with a license in Kyiv, where education is conducted with a Christian foundation.
- The quality of the curriculum at the elementary level is very high.
- The formative process and attitude to children are solidly based on a Christian foundation; that is the principal difference with governmental schools.

III. Conclusion. Plans. Development and prospects.

The founders and organizers of the school have the aim of glorifying the Lord and showing the advantage of the Adventist system of education in Ukraine by connecting the strong elements of the curriculum components (level, methods of teaching, etc), whose traditions we had in the USSR and the best of the Adventist system of education and its formative component.

We have the following plans for it:

- 1) To purchase the building and construct the school according to a modern plan.
- 2) To modernize our equipment in order to conduct the educational process on the high level, and also to integrate the Adventist healthy style of life as deeply as possible at the school.
- 3) To train the school staff to achieve a common aim, a united vision and shared plans.
- 4) To work out integrative curriculums.
- 5) To work out the formative process, taking into consideration the best experience from other countries.

We pray the Lord will give us wisdom to know what to do, the strength to do it, and the skill to do it well.

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