

**Institute for Christian Teaching
Education Department of Seventh-day Adventists**

**A STRATEGY FOR THE TRANSMISSION
OF CHRISTIAN BELIEFS AND VALUES TO STUDENTS:
THE CASE OF
THE UKRAINIAN COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES**

by

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Introduction

The history of Seventh-day Adventism in the Ukraine today spans 120 years. During this time there have been many attempts to found educational establishments. These schools have provided the opportunity to the children of believers to get a good education in a Christian family. All of this time our brothers and sisters have dreamt and prayed for the opening of an educational establishment, which could become a missionary center for our youth in the Ukraine.

In 2002 the College was granted Accreditation by the Ministry of Education and Science in the Ukraine in the faculties of Finances, Management of External Economic Affairs, English Language and Literature. These faculties have been certified to award Bachelor degrees and licenses for teaching.

In June 2003 we held the first graduation course and 49 Bachelors in three faculties specialties 6.050100 Finances, 6.050206 Management of External Economic Affairs, 6.030502 English Language and Literature.

In June 2003 the College had 96 graduates (52 Bachelors and 44 Masters). They have received certificates of State qualification.

The UCAS is a higher establishment of the Ukrainian UNION, and is located in the territory of the Central mission in the Ukrainian Union Conference (SDA Euro-Asia Division) all of the administrative employees, and almost all of the teachers and the staff are SDA members.

So, the UCAS is the first Adventist educational institution in the Ukraine to receive State Accreditation. We consider it a good example of God's blessing in the post-Soviet territory.

At present there are some 700 students studying not only from all regions of the Ukraine but also from the other countries of the GUS. The uniqueness of our institute is that in spite of most of the students coming from Adventist families, about 30 percent are non-believing students or students from other denominations such as the Orthodox Church. This gives us a broad field to working.

Christian education focuses on the formation of Christian character. Given the Lordship of Jesus Christ in every aspect of our lives (Col. 3:17; 1 Cor. 10:31), we need educational programs to teach our young people to think christianly and to be consistently Christian in all the aspects of their lives. Such integration of faith and learning remains "the distinctive task"¹ of the Christian school.

The Ukraine is a country that is situated on the borders of many western European country such as Hungary, Slovakia, Poland as well as others. The influence of secularized modern Europe is very powerful in our country as well. Not all there who claim to be Christians really embrace the perspective of the Bible.

The aim of this paper is to reveal a strategy for conveying Christian beliefs and values to the secularized students in UCAS. We will devote space not only to the *why*, but also to the *how*, balancing both the conceptual and the applied dimensions.

The Philosophy of Education and the Concept of the UCAC

Having an Educational establishment, the Seventh-day Adventist Christian Church has displayed both sensitivity and the ability to react to the development of social trends in carrying out its mission in accordance with the spirit of times. The education of youth is one of the leading missionary forces and so it acquires a unique place. Knight concurs:

"Why do we have Seventh-day Adventist schools? Why do Adventists spend millions of dollars each year to support approximately five thousand schools around the world when free education is often available? The answers to such questions are necessarily linked to the purpose of Adventist education. If Adventist schools serve a sufficiently distinctive and important purpose, the achievement of that purpose is worth their costs."²

The activities of the UCAS are influenced by the mission and objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The mission and objectives are embodied in the educational program and general activities of the establishment. The objectives and tasks of higher education in the Seventh-day Adventist Christian Church are founded on a manifold theological vision of the role of mankind in the world. The tenants of this vision are the following:

1. **The nature of God.** Seventh-day Adventists believe that God as the Creator sustains the world and all creation and is the source of all knowledge. God is so real and good as His creation is real and good (Gen. 1:31). God is severing and transcendent as He creates and condescends to enter into this created world but is still above creation. God is immanent and loving as He condescends to create through love (Gen. 2:16-18; 3:8; 1 John 4:8-10). God is personal.
2. **The nature of man.** Man has been created in the image of God for communion with God. He has been endowed with harmonious physical, mental, spiritual and social capacities. Man who is made in God's image comes from a divinely and intentionally created origin and maintains a distinct relationship with his Creator God (Gen. 1:26-27). Outside of this relationship humanity would cease to be.³
3. **Education as the restoration of God's image.** As the result of sin, the world has undergone irreversible changes. However, in His love God has made a plan of redemption so that His image may be restored in

mankind so that the individual may be prepared for personal communion with God for all eternity.

Ellen White perceived man as a creation of God, who was in a fallen, sinful state and had strong propensities toward evil. "Such an education provides more than mental discipline; it provides more than physical training. It strengthens the character, so that truth and uprightness are not sacrificed to selfish desire or worldly ambition. It fortifies the mind against evil. Instead of some master passion becoming a power to destroy, every motive and desire are brought into conformity to the great principles of right. As the perfection of His character is dwelt upon, the mind is renewed, and the soul is re-created in the image of God."⁴ This was the basic underlying assumption in Ellen White's thoughts on education.

In a theological context of education is considered as a significant factor in redemption including the mutual relationship between God and the individual and man's obligation to serve humanity through an acquired profession. The Christian perspective aims to lead the student into a saving relationship with Christ. White stated: "the work of education and the work of redemption are one"⁵ All education is to promote the all-round development of a personality.

The Bible approach

Christian teachers can integrate faith, values, and learning in their disciplines using the Bible as a framework. Ellen White often spoke about the use of the Bible as the chief source of study in our schools. This does not mean, however, that the Bible is to be the only textbook ever used; the Bible should not be declared to be the sole reference text for chemistry, for computer programming, or whatever. Whenever possible, the underlying Biblical principles are to be highlighted and connections with ultimate spiritual realities made. Mrs. White said, "The teacher who has a right understanding of the work of true education, will not think it sufficient now

and then to make casual reference to Christ. With his own heart warm with the love of God, he will constantly uplift the Man of Calvary, His own soul imbued with the Spirit of God; he will seek to fasten the attention of the students upon the pattern, Christ Jesus, the chiefest among ten thousand, the One altogether lovely.⁶

From this context seven beliefs are posited: (1) God is ultimate reality (Gen. 1:1; Acts 17:28), (2) Truth and knowledge are revealed through nature and the Word of God (Ps. 19:1; Heb. 4:12), (3) God created humankind in His image (Gen. 1:27), (4) Humanity sinned and God's creation was marred (Gen. 2:17; 3:8-19), (5) Through Christ there is redemption and restoration (John 3:16; Eph. 2:8-10), (6) God will restore his creation creating new heavens and earth (Is. 65:17), (7) We are commissioned to spread the Gospel (Mark 16:15). These principles can help the teachers as a reference for planning and integrating the curriculum from a Biblical perspective.⁷

The need for developing the students' spiritual gifts:

Many students who enter our colleges to prepare to work for Christian service have a prior understanding about spiritual gifts. In spite of this the Christian teacher should help them to develop their talents and abilities in the light of Rom. 12, 1 Cor. 12-14, and Eph. 4. As says Mohanraj Israel: "One of the key responsibilities of colleges is to help students in this crucial area of their lives."⁸

In the midst of academic pursuits and vocational preparation, it is imperative that we help our students to sit down and take stock of their spiritual gifts. The Holy Spirit distributes the gifts (1Cor. 11; 12), and believers must discover them and develop them.

Mission and major objectives:

The UCAS sets the following goals to train well-educated, people of high morals, fond of intellectual and physical work, and willing to serve the Lord and mankind through their acquired professions. It suggests that the Bible provides the unity and harmony in the development of a Christ-like character. Therefore, our mission and major objective is as Rasi⁹ defines the integration of faith and learning:

"A deliberate and systematic process of approaching an entire educational enterprise from a Biblical perspective. Its aim is to ensure that, under the influence of Christian teachers and by the time they leave the school students, will have freely internalized Biblical values and a view of knowledge, life, and destiny that is Christ-centered, service-oriented, and kingdom-directed."

Helping the students to understand these truths and to accept the solution provided by Divine Providence on their behalf was, according to Ellen White, the mission of Christian education.¹⁰

The Concept of educational activities at the College

Providing a loving environment is one way that we can be more effective in reaching young people for Christ. Young people need a loving environment in order to flourish. Ideally, a young person needs a Christian home, where parents are in love each other and love their children and their children sense that love.

According to this the major principles of the College activities and Christian family are God, family, native countries and nation. The concept of the UCAS activities mentions that sticking to ethical norms of behavior, respectful and tolerant attitudes to people of different cultures and world outlook make up the main principles of professional training.

The concept has introduced and implemented the following educational principles:

- Unity in the educational and teaching processes
- Forming a national consciousness and dignity among students
- A harmonious development of the mental and physical aspects of the personalities of students and teachers
- The priority of moral education on the basis of major Christian and humane values
- The combination of the individual and group aspects of a social personality
- Democracy and humanism in education

The concept is embodied by its major functions:

- Missionary
- Educational
- Creative, which is realized through conditions for research work among the teachers and students
- Scholastic
- Charitable, including privileges for students from poor families, looking for additional funds

We understand that if we want to be more effective in reaching young people for Jesus Christ and passing on our values to the next generation, we must live out that truth in their presence. We must teach the young people within our circles of influence, not only the "what's" but the "why's" of that Faith. When that happens, it is very likely that the young people will assimilate the Christian Faith. If we want to be more effective in reaching young people for Christ, we must model what sharing our faith looks like.

Actions which UCAS College conducts with the object of development and education

One of the challenges our Church faces is the need to develop an effective secular campus ministry program to meet the spiritual and intellectual needs of those studying at public colleges and universities around the world.

As the author of the article, "A New Look at Secular Campus Ministry" says, some Adventist pastors unfortunately feel intimidated by the secular colleges and universities. They think they can have no impact on campus. Yet we are commissioned to go into all the world, including the academic world. In order to approach a campus with confidence, we must understand several philosophical and theological values.

Academic and Christian values

The teachers and the employees at the UCAS are considered the main bearers of spiritual and moral values. The teachers are usually active members of the church and church boards. They set an example for the students in their personal lives, in faith and active service to the church and to the community.

The faculty members of the UCAS teach their classes from the Christian perspective, achieving moral and spiritual goals. In addition, the teachers touch on moral and spiritual questions. There is a good tradition that the teachers invite the students to their homes for Sabbath lunch almost weekly. The teachers are frequently invited to meetings with the public, in churches, in schools, or in the recording of telecasts.

The administration and the teachers try to emphasize moral and ethic lessons, and underline the importance of independent work and honest behaviour. The principle of honesty is constantly mentioned during tests or in individual tasks. To avoid disturbing this principle, teachers improve the system of tests, and conduct discussions with the students on the topic. The rules are explained to students in order to reveal the problem of cheating and the punishment for that.

Student life: communicating faith through life

An active work in spiritual programs is carried out at the UCAS with the help of the department of student affairs. It promotes spiritual growth and a strengthening of faith. This includes viewing of spiritual programs, evenings of spiritual music, Christian drama, the Biblical club 'The Bereans', and various other clubs, where each student has an opportunity to become a member and an opportunity for self-expression.

Effective ministry for secularized students, as Samir Selmanovich writes, "doesn't just offer answers, it offers mysteries. It's a far-reaching ministry not merely a search for correct theological formulations. It's a search for truth and beauty and a search for a way of effectively introducing such beauty".¹¹

Every morning, services in the chapel are held. The morning services change regularly with the purpose of finding the most interesting and adequate forms. On Wednesday, an hour of morning fellowship is held, when moral, esthetic, psychological and spiritual issues are raised, which are the most urgent for the youth. The students receive professional recommendations and answers to their questions. As a rule, specialists in their spheres conduct such meetings.

To enhance our credibility we want the Bible to be more like a scientific textbook, a meticulously written, aseptic paper, a kind of legal, prescriptive code book. But what we have in fact in the Bible is a patchwork, a marvelously woven composite of complex, down-to-earth, divine-human interaction, which has as one of its central messages: God comes to us not as an object to be studied; He comes into and through the stuff of our particular lives.¹²

For secularized students, there is no such thing as an abstract truth. Truth does not exist apart from a person or a community. This is affirmed in the teaching of Jesus who said, "I am the truth," and in the teachings of

the New Testament that God's Church is the embodiment of Jesus Christ (John 14:1-7, 1 Cor. 12:27; 1 Pet. 2:4-12). Truth to them must be made incarnate to be communicated.

Jesus clearly approved of this approach. He repeatedly asked his followers to judge who has the truth on the basis of their fruits (Matt. 7:15-23, John 15:5-8; 17:6-26). But the only truth that can actually be communicated to post-moderns and secularized students is the one that is embodied in the life of a believer and in the life of a community of faith.

Spiritual formation through worship and service

1. Weeks of prayer:

Prayerfully search for God's guidance to open doors of opportunity in contacting Adventist and faculty to begin functioning as a core unit of fellowship. Chances are you will find them in some of the most unusual places. The point is to find them and get them involved.

Quarterly, the College organizes a week of prayer. Especially for this purpose, experienced pastors are invited. During the week, they conduct several services, and daily they counsel everyone who wishes to be. The dates of these weeks of prayer are reserved in the academic calendar. Before them, special preparations are carried out.

As a rule, these services attract the special interests of the students and the attendance at the services during the week of prayer is very high. The students actively participate in the services through music, prayers, and Scripture readings.

Some people may be hiding their faith for one reason or another, but they may still be able to play some kind of contact or even leadership role. Perhaps they are waiting for you to seek them out where they are and show them that they are not alone and that it's OK to be a committed

Christian on their campus. They just have to know that you're there, and more importantly, that you're there for them.

2. Service in the Church and involvement in evangelistic work:

A Christian library for the district inhabitants is run from the campus out into its territory. Many teachers and are participating work in it. They also conduct meetings in prison the town of (Gostomel), and weekly Evangelism meetings at a boarding school (the town of Nove Zalissyia) for children of different ages. The district Evangelism campaign, participated in by a foreign or a Ukrainian Evangelist, takes place twice a year. The students take active part in them. The work starts with preparing the place, the home Christian library, social services, and personal Christian examples. After that the participants invite people to visit the Evangelist meetings.

During summer holidays the majority of the students together with the teachers take part in camp meetings in the various Ukrainian Conferences. The purpose of such meetings is to involve young people in a deep study of the Scriptures and to reveal the advantages of studying at the Ukrainian College of Arts and Sciences.

On our campus we've used evangelistic videos, brochures of upcoming videos meetings and other announcements procedures to invite students to events. We've also offered to give away gifts and other literature about our ministry.

3. Service learning

Together with the Red Cross members of the UCAS, conduct social welfare programs people to meet their physical and spiritual needs. They also study the Bible with anyone who wishes. Annually, the students participate in a number of activities such as cleaning neighboring streets, and doing other works coordinated by the local authorities.

The College annually holds 'An Open-doors day'. The aim of this is to inform church members of the policy and philosophy of the establishment. Special excursions around the territory of the College are offered, together with explanatory lectures and music programs. As a rule, the College is overpopulated on such days.

Approaches to the educational work

"It always seems, to those who love us that we are good; instead of realizing, that we love because those who love us are good". L. Tolstoy

The educational process may take two basic directions:

1. The principle of reaction to an undesirable occurred situation.
2. The principle of active interaction with the students.

The education based on the principle of reaction, depends on the behaviour of youth and is focused on punishment for wrong-doing.

The education based on the principle of active dialogue basically depends on the needs of youth and is focused on close attention to their main needs, and the very first and main need of each person of any age is a need for unconditional love, acceptance and respect. It is a basis of the Heavenly character. This principle should not only be declared, but lived by us.

Our attitude to youth should not be 'from top to down'. The young generation requires our management and instruction, instead of simply our instructions and reactions to their behaviour.

The successful education of youth is necessarily active; is based on a deep respect for their persons and an unconditional love to them, irrespective of their behaviour.

Treating to them with respect and love, with understanding and acceptance, at the same time we should not forget that they should bear

the responsibility for their own choices and acts. In the work of the trainer, it is very important to separate wrong-doing from the person. Respecting a young person, we can safely express our attitude to his uncooperative wrong-doing and put precise limits to his wrongful actions, thus not insulting and humiliating of his person. "We should study their characters and temperaments, learning perfectly their weaknesses, and strengthening the opposite traits of character."¹³

If parents, tutors, trainers select the priority way of dialogue, constantly updating children's acts (youth), then all the attention will be concentrated to their behaviour and our reaction to it by punishment, and not at all on their spiritual needs. For this reason there later are sad consequences - youth have concerns, feelings of depression, inferiority, rebellion, anger and all this is expressed by destructive behaviour. "Christ came into the world to bring all power and authority into subjection to Himself, but He did not claim obedience through the strength of argument or the voice of command; He went about doing good and teaching His followers the things which belonged to their peace".¹⁴

The reaction to misbehaviors apparently works initially, but it is necessary to see the complete picture of the life of the young generation. This initial reaction is much easier for us and parents, tutors, trainers, because there is less effort: I have told him and he has done it without any problems. In fact, there are only two opinions: mine and the wrong opinion. This method works, but it is short sighted. We want to be good today, but it is necessary that it will always be good for them in life. In fact, the educational process is not a momentary profit, but a long-term perspective and its purpose is not simply obedient behaviour, but the establishment of the high values in the souls of youth. All our efforts in education have the one purpose - to prepare the youth for an attitude of responsibility and to skillfully act correctly in an adult life.

"The educators of youth should maintain perfect self-control. To destroy one's influence over a human soul through impatience, or in order to maintain undue dignity and supremacy, is a terrible mistake, for it may be the means of losing that soul for Christ. The minds of youth may become so warped by injudicious management that the injury done may never be entirely overcome. The religion of Christ should have a controlling influence on the education and training of the young. The Saviour's example of self-denial, universal kindness, and long-suffering love is a rebuke to impatient ministers and teachers."¹⁵

Now parents, trainers, and tutors are offered a precise choice between two directions:

- One of them persistently recommends approaching children from the position of reaction to concrete behaviour (an authoritarian method);
- Another is to see the sacred purpose in understanding the vital needs of the younger generation, showing them love and respect, showing the precise limits of good and evil, allowing them to bear the responsibility for their choices, spreading high spiritual and universal values in their showers (an authoritative method).

If we choose the first direction - we shall spread our values by force and we shall cause thus rejection.

Having chosen the second direction for the educational process of our students, based on the Christian-Biblical approach the UCAS can become a powerful missionary center where many will become young men.

The problems of current importance in the process of education

Entering into walls of the UCAS youth brings with them those principles themselves which have been incorporated in families. Sometimes there are problems concerning rules of residency and discipline.

One of the problems is an unwillingness on the part of the students to study here because they have been compelled to attend our high school by their parents; some other parents have sent their

children study at the UCAS as the children have become uncontrollable at home; the third group - wish to live here far from parents, but with their own rules. Many have grown up in disharmonious families, incomplete families, families with alcoholics, families with an authoritative or a connivance method of education, or families in which violence takes place. As a rule, a child in such a family has been exposed to various kinds of reproof of its person trials, much pains and injury and as a result has become deformed; or here has been physical, spiritual, sexual or emotional violence or two kinds of reviling: active and passive.

The results of reviling:

- **Physical** - rough behaviour, cruelty, problems with accuracy, order and personal hygiene;
- **Spiritual** – an unwillingness to receive spiritual wealth, an abhorrence of God and the church, aggression against God and faithful members;
- **Sexual** – an inability to form any healthy attitudes towards the opposite sex, permissiveness, a fast change of interests, violation of the elementary rules of ethics;
- **Emotional** - not skilful in controlling ones by own feelings, the insult of peers as well as other persons, misunderstanding of others, isolation.

Therefore, such qualities, as render attentiveness, sincere interest, understanding, acceptance of them as they are as well as a display of unconditional love to them have a huge influence in educational work. However, this process will be erroneous and harmful if we do not set healthy limits indicating the consequences. If we just set limits without pointing out consequences to them, they will not be limits but fences with holes in

them. On the one hand our attitudes should be based on love and understanding, and on the other hand on firmness and consequence. This is the Heavenly principle of education and salvation.

Our youth well know, that they have the certain right of freedom of choice and clearly defend this right, but have not yet learned that they must bear the responsibility for that choice, instead of their parents, teachers, trainers. Here is the essence of the conflict. There are problems with the attitudes of our colleges, concerning duties and administration.

With the God's blessing, we shall go forward in educational process, forming in our students internal, fundamental values of life and developing their personal responsibilities in the fear of God.

Planned activities with the purpose of development and education.

The present-day demands of our youth spirituality, morals, knowledge, speed of thinking, mobility, constant progress for normal functioning. Therefore, the goal of educational work is also carrying out activities in various directions.

For example, for the development of creative abilities there are the concert-greetings: «Day of Knowledge», «Paints of Autumn», «the Debut of the First-year Students», «the International Day of the Student», the International Women's Day», a meeting with the graduating classes, the Easter concert, «Evening of Talents», a series of works «on batik».

In order to familiarize the students with culture and spirituality, meetings on religious subjects, students trips to boarding schools with a missionary purpose, work with the missionary library, trips to the museums of Kiev, excursions are also offered for meetings with musical collectives, evenings of poetry, meetings with interesting people.

Conversations about a healthy way of life, about the problems of alcoholism, smoking and drug addictions are offered. On the campus of the

UCAS is the athletics department.

Conferences, forums, seminars, and discussions about the mutual relations of the different sexes, about love, family and the future also take place.

The work of counseling is a great, responsible, routine work, which is not limited by time and salary; it is a work of the heart in which the God lives. And it must be under based on the principle written down in Sacred Scriptures: "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"¹⁶

In addition, the Lord has given us further recommendations through the Spirit of Prophecy: "You should be honorable in all your labor, and close up your work in a manner that will bear the inspection of God. Scorn to slight any job. Be faithful in that which is least."¹⁷

Conclusion

Educational work with students aims at raising cultural level of a future graduator. He or she should act in conditions of humane governing, to raise cultural and spiritual values through student-teacher dialogue and cooperation. It is worth saying, that educational work in UCAS combines spiritual, moral, national, legal, aesthetic, labor, physical, ecological, economical, sex and gender development. Their bases are science, humanity, differentiation, democracy, cooperation, voluntarism, individual approach, and generational concession.

Before entering the College, every applicant studies and accepts the rules of Christian conduct and communication. We can speak about considerable success in student culture, and positive professional and life values. The College councils and chair meetings systematically consider the issues of organization and results of the labour. Still, all the educational work claims for improving, and plans – for realizing.

The UCAS gives an opportunity to each student to get experience in improving important and blessed Ministry. We have plans for the future to enrich the Missionary experience through spiritual concert programs, practical courses, and seminars.

¹ Arthur F. Holmes. *The idea of Christian college*. (Revised edition. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Erdmann, 1987), 8.

² G. Knight. *Myths in Adventism*. (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Association), 47.

³ Geoffrey Wainwright. *Doxology, the praise of God in worship, doctrine and life*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 16.

⁴ Ellen G. White. *Education*. (Mountain View, California, Pacific Press, 1903), 18.

⁵ *Ibid*, 30.

⁶ Ellen G. White. *Fundamentals of Christian Education*. (Nashville, Ten.; Southern Pub. Assn, 1923), 526.

⁷ M. Colon. *Course development plan on the integration of faith, values, and learning*. (Silver Spring, MD: Institute for Christian Teaching, 1993), 7.

⁸ Mohanraj Israel. *Learning by experience: a practical training program for ministerial students of Spicer memorial college*. (November 3-15, 1996), 37.

⁹ H.M. Rasi, *Worldviews, contemporary culture and Adventist education*. A paper presented at Faith and Learning Seminar, Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska, 1.

¹⁰ Ellen G. White. *Education*. (Pacific Press, Mountain View, California, 1903), 13.

¹¹ S. Selmanovich. *Pastoring on postmodern frontline*, Pacific Press. GC of SDA .Vol. 74, № 9.

¹² McLaren Brian. "Honey, I woke Up in a Different Universe!: Confessions of Postmodern Pastor". Mars Hill Review, No 15, Fall 1999, 35-36.

¹³ Ellen G. White. *Closing Labors at Fresno*. RH, July 10, 1888 par. 6.

¹⁴ Ellen G. White. *Testimonies for the church*. 4 Vols. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Publishing Association, 1948, 138.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 419.

¹⁶ 2 Tim. 2:15.

¹⁷ Ellen G. White. *Testimonies for the church*. 2 Vols. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Publishing Association, 1948, 84.