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Integration of Faith and Learning: Fundamental Concepts and the Mission of Adventist Higher Education

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Overview of the Concept of Integration in the Curriculum

One of the three criteria that Tyler (1949) thought should be considered as a guide to organizing learning experiences is integration. According to him, "integration refers to the horizontal relationship of curriculum experiences" (p. 86), and these experiences should be organized in such a way as to help students formulate an increasingly unified view, and to behave accordingly.

In 1985, Oppewal described the school curriculum as a "curious mixture of the old and the new, with contenders always jostling for a more prominent place in the school day" (p. 20). The problem of education was how to harmonize this cacophonic symphony. This harmonization is accomplished through integration. "Without this integration, the curriculum will be nothing more than a dumping ground for unrelated facts" (Wilson, 1991, p. 59).

Boyer (1990) presented the task of a university professor described in four areas: discovery, application, teaching and integration. Integration is understood as the connections and insights drawn from discrete facts and findings, which brings multi-disciplinary to the pursuit of learning.

Although the idea of integration has been clearly stated by educators in the last half of the 20th Century, there are not clear evidences of changes needed in curriculum and teaching to reach the ideal presented by many authors.

Historical Overview of the Concept of Integration of Faith and Learning

While secular education is looking for an integration factor, Christian education already has it: God and the Bible (Gaebelain, 1968). The problem of Christian education is the application of integration of God and the Bible with curriculum (Gaebelain, 1968, p. 11).

From its beginning, Christianity has integrated faith with secular knowledge. The Jewish and Hebraic system of education in the synagogue incorporated Greek and Roman ideas of education. Thus, during the Middle Ages, the Reformation, and Colonization of America, educational institutions emphasized theology as the main subject, and other disciplines only facilitated human understanding of faith. According to De Jong (1990), "this traditional integration of faith and learning was all but destroyed after World War II" (p. 88). Secularism, humanism, and pluralism pervaded society and even the *raison d'etre* of church-related institutions was placed under question.

Ostensibly, it is the integration of faith and learning that distinguishes the Christian university from the public university counterpart (Wilhoit, 1987). In reality, however, the lines between faith and learning are often blurred in Christian institutions. Some emphasize faith and diminish learning; others accentuate learning, and diminish.

In spite of the ambiguous relationship between faith and knowledge, there is consensus among Christians that Christianity has vitally important implications for every area of thought. In a secular, materialistic age, it is not easy to develop a Christian worldview.

The phrase 'integration of faith and learning' is widely used in religious educational circles. Sometimes used as a slogan, its meaning tends to be distorted, diffused, or ambiguous.

Anthony (2001) presents the need to analyze the multi-disciplinary of Christian education. "Its foundation is biblical studies and theology, but it seeks to integrate them with knowledge that is gleaned from the social sciences: education, sociology, and psychology" (p. 13).

In discussions on how the Christian perspective embraces reality, and more specifically, education, not everyone uses the term integration of faith and learning. Some speak of worldviews, others prefer talking about the Christian mind, or a Christian mission, and a fourth group accepts the use of integration of faith and learning.

Christian Mind

Blamires (1963) distinguished the secular mind from the Christian mind, when he stated, "To think secularly is to think within a frame of reference bounded by the limits of our life on earth... To think Christianly is to accept all things with the mind as related, directly or indirectly, to man's eternal destiny as the redeemed and chosen child of God" (p. 44). To him, the Christian mind is the prerequisite of Christian thinking. And Christian thinking is the prerequisite of Christian action.

Blamires' ideas in *The Christian mind* were later fostered in *Recovering the Christian mind* (1988). Barclay (1985) stated that Blamires definition of the Christian mind is too theoretical, and concluded that this is the reason why there is no Christian mind. Barclay's definition of the Christian mind was more biblically oriented. He noted: "By a Christian mind I believe the Bible means a Christian outlook that controls our life and our thinking" (p. 15).

Sire (1990) stated that "the Christian mind does not begin with a worldview, not even the Christian worldview. It begins with an attitude. Granted that attitude is rooted in the Christian worldview" (p. 15). The attitude to which he is referring is Jesus' attitude: humility. According to Sire, the Christian mind can be reached by being disciples of Jesus, and by approaching knowledge, culture, and history from a Christian perspective.

Hughes (2003) in *Faithful learning and the Christian scholarly vocation* went beyond the intellectual inquiry to reach a faith commitment. "Can we genuinely live out of our faith commitments? Put in another way, is it possible to use the faith commitments of our colleges and universities as the foundation for academic growth and maturity?" (p. 4).

Christian Worldview

One of the clearest approaches to a Christian worldview was presented by Walsh and Middleton (1984). After analyzing the definition of a worldview and how to achieve a Christian and biblical worldview, they explained the relationship between a worldview and academic discipline or scholarship. For them, a worldview is a pre-theoretical view of the totality of reality based upon faith or beliefs, because all theoretical analysis occurs in the context of a philosophical paradigm. This worldview determines the philosophical paradigm that supports the academic discipline. Any academic discipline takes on an aspect of reality, whereas the philosophical paradigm takes on the totality of reality (pp. 169-172).

Diekema (2000) based upon Walsh and Middleton (1984), Monsma (1994) and Pope John Paul (1990) presented a list of the aspects of a Christian worldview which should guide all Christian thought: "a) belief in a sovereign, Creator God, b) belief in human beings as fallen, image-bearers of God, c) belief in a moral order in the world, d) belief in the Bible as the revealed Word of God, e) belief in Jesus Christ as the God-man, f) belief in human beings as servants of Jesus Christ, g) belief in the revelation of God through the active pursuit of truth in human knowledge and understanding, h) belief in the Holy Spirit of God in the world" (p. 60).

Sire (1990) supported that a worldview analysis provides three bases for integration: a) "a worldview analysis allows one to discover and examine the underlying presuppositions of every academic theory and every discipline" (p. 155), b) "a worldview analysis allows Christians to identify the biblical presuppositions that can undergird proper scholarship", c) "A worldview analysis provides the basis for interdisciplinary studies. Real questions we need to ask and answer about God, human beings and the universe are not going to be answered exhaustively by any one

academic discipline" (pp. 156, 157). In the book *Naming the elephant: Worldview as a concept*, Sire (2004) reviews his earlier treatment of worldview as intellectual answers to a systematic set of questions to consider the possibilities of how philosophical perspectives are formed to be a way of life and a pattern of behavior.

Christian Mission

The history of American Christian schools and universities shows the struggle with secularization and recovery of the schools' distinctive mission. As expressed by Ringenberg (1984):

A Christian college is a community of Christian believers, both teachers and students, who are dedicated to the search for an understanding of the divine Creator, the universe that he has created, and the role that each creature should fill his universe. The titles of the specific courses may not differ from those in a secular college. What does differ dramatically, however, is the attitude with which Christian scholars approach their areas of investigation. For Christian learners, all truth is God's truth, and the pursuit of it is a spiritual quest to understand God better. (pp. 215, 216)

De Jong (1990) diagnosed the situation of contemporary church-related colleges, analyzing how they lost the *raison d'etre*, and how they can recover their mission. Thus "the total college experience is a process of putting knowledge and skills into the context of a value system, articulating that knowledge, those skills, and the value system into the students' visions of themselves and their world. The result is a fulfilling life, one in which continued openness and enlargement are enjoyed throughout life" (p. 141).

Integration of Faith and Learning

Gaebelein (1968) stressed that "Christian education can achieve integration into the allembracing truth of God" (p. 8). He analyzed three components in the integration. The first component is the teacher. Regarding the process teachers go through in carrying out the integration, Gaebelain said,

when [the teacher] became a Christian through regeneration, he did not instantaneously receive a completely developed worldview; rather it was implanted in germ or in embryo. Just as there are believers who exhibit little growth..., so there are others who, when it comes to the development of a consistent frame of reference, remain comparative infants. On the other hand, there are some who do grow. To expect achievement of this kind from all Christian teachers is obviously impossible. But it is not only possible but also quite reasonable to expect of Christian teachers a worldview intelligently understood and held with conviction. (pp. 43, 44)

A second element of Gaebelain's book is that of subject integration. He expressed that there are some subjects which are more difficult to integrate than others. The hardest is Mathematics, with Literature and History ranking as the most easy and natural.

As the third vital element in integration, Gaebelain targeted the school atmosphere, an atmosphere that extends beyond the classroom. This includes all extracurricular activities, namely cultural programs, band, choir, athletics, student discipline, chapels and even brochures that promote Christian education.

Hasker (1992) defines integration of faith and learning as a scholarship task, a responsibility of Christian scholars involved in teaching and the academy. It is a heavy task that requires basic research and visible results are not easily seen.

Based on her research, Nwosu (1999) classified integration of faith and learning in three groups: a) intellectual definitions that incorporated Christian thinking and the balance between secular and spiritual worlds, b) life style definitions that involve a concept of wholeness of life, c) definitions related to the concept of discipleship of Christ.

Integration of Faith and Learning in Subject Areas

The relationship between the subject and the individual during integration was discussed by the St. Olaf College Self Study Committee (1956). The Committee explained that the more personal sciences are closer to humankind than the abstract sciences, because they assumed that the person is a believing, worshiping, loving, acting, knowing, and creative creature of God. Therefore, they ranked the sciences from the closest to the farthest to the human being and God: Theology, Philosophy, Literature, Fine Arts, History. Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Logic, Language, Mathematics (p. 115).

C. Stephen Evans (2003) discusses that Christian faith has "an impact on any aspect of scholarship, from the choice of topics to investigate, to consideration of what counts as evidence, to thinking about how new knowledge should be used. Christianity may bear in a substantive

manner on any academic discipline, though the frequency with which this occurs will vary from field to field and within a field according to the type of question being considered" (p. 40). Thus, he presents a "relevance continuum" from the less relevant to the more relevant: Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Human Sciences, History, Literature and the Arts, Philosophy and Theology (p. 40).

Integration vs Pseudointegration

Sometimes integration of faith and learning is defined by contrast: what it is and what it is not. Heie and Wolfe (1987) distinguished between integration and pseudointegration. The difference between authentic integration and pseudointegration resides in that the former emphasizes "integral sharing" between the Judaeo-Christian vision and the discipline, whereas the latter focuses only on "integral commonalities". Wolfe's (1987) definition on integration emphasizes the processs of integration of faith and learning. Integration is "more about *the process of how truth is grasped* than it is about the ultimate unity of all God's truth" (p. 5, italics his).

Hodges (1994) described that sometimes integration of faith and learning is artificial and unpleasant because the task is hard and claimant.

Integration as Reintegration

Holmes (1999) presented at least three reasons to use the term reintegration instead of integration. "We would do better to call it reintegration because the problem is not that we deal with two unrelated things... but we need to reintegrate a union that was broken apart in the course of history" (p. 161). The second reason is that "most of us come to college as compartmentalized thinkers, with our Christian experience and belief in one compartment and our knowledge of the sciences and humanities in another. We tend to be dualistic in our thinking. But compartmentalized minds need to be reintegrated because that is not the way God intended us to be" (p. 161). Finally, his third argument is based on history. Integration has become a cliché in Christian college circles over the last twenty or thirty years, but it has actually been in operation for centuries. The reintegration "calls for interdisciplinary thinking in which theology is a leading voice in the dialogue between the disciplines; it calls for worldview thinking across the curriculum and it calls for worshipful learning. Education is a sacred calling" (p. 167).

Integration as a Deliberate Process

Rasi (1993) provided a definition of integration of faith and learning, pointing out the process and the intentionality of the process.

Integration of faith and learning is a deliberate and systematic process of approaching the entire educational enterprise from a biblical perspective. Its aim is to ensure that students under the influence of Christian teachers and by the time they leave school will have internalized biblical values and a view of knowledge, life, and destiny that is Christ-centered, service-oriented, and kingdom-directed. (p. 10)

In 2005, the working definition of Rasi stated that

the integration of faith and learning is a deliberate and systematic process of approaching the entire educational enterprise—both curricular and co-curricular—from a Christian perspective. In a Seventh-day Adventist setting, its aim is to ensure that students, by the time they leave school, will have freely internalized biblical values and a view of knowledge, life, and destiny that is Bible-based, Christ-centered, service-oriented, and kingdom-directed.

Teachers interested in faith/learning integration approach their subjects from a biblical-Christian worldview perspective, discovering in the subject matter the themes and issues that naturally allow for an explicit connection between the curricular content, on the one hand, and the Christian faith, beliefs, and values on the other. Teachers highlight these connections in their course plans, lectures, student assignments, class discussions, thought questions in examinations, and other learning experiences, with the goal of leading their students to develop their own Bible-based view of knowledge, values, life's purpose and destiny.

Educational administrators interested in fostering faith/learning integration set in motion an on-going, campus-wide plan that involves both faculty and staff in selecting the beliefs and values that the institution wishes to convey to the students--based on the institutional statement of mission and vision--assigning responsibilities, providing the necessary resources, engaging all curricular and co-curricular activities, assessing the effectiveness of the plan, and making the necessary adjustments. This unified plan helps administrators to support initiatives and programs that foster the transmission of those beliefs and values and also to de-emphasize or discard those activities that are counter-productive.

Integration of Faith and Learning at the Beginning of the XXI Century

The end of the 20th Century and the beginning of the 21th Century shows a shift in the emphasis of the concept of integration of faith and learning and its implementation on Christian education. This change is shown in at least three ways: a) From an emphasis on thinking only to an emphasis on thinking and doing, b) from an emphasis on what the teacher is doing in integration of faith and learning to a more comprehensive approach with the involvement of students, c) from an emphasis on philosophical writings on Christian education to research-based descriptions of different models for higher education and the strengths of parochial institutions.

Emphasis on Thinking and Doing

Holmes (2001) presents four recurrent emphases that describe the soul of the Christian academy: "a) the usefulness of liberal arts as preparation for service to both church and society, b) the unity of truth, c) contemplative learning, and d) the care of the soul (what we call moral and spiritual formation)" (p. 2).

Emphasis on the Involvement of Students in Integration of Faith and Learning

Holmes (1994) stressed the role of the student in the integration of faith and learning. The problem of lack of integration of faith by students relies on the lack of appropriation of James Fowler' stages of faith development. In 1999, Holmes identifies the distinctive contributions of the Christian college: "the shaping of character, the integration of faith and learning, and the worth of liberal learning as preparation for service" (p. 155). These three contributions rely not only on teachers and administrators, but on students themselves.

Based on Steven Garber's book (1996), Holmes (2001) declares that Christian students and graduates should integrate belief and behavior. This integration requires "convictions (a worldview sufficient for life's questions and verses); character (a mentor who incarnates that worldview); and community (living out that worldview in company with mutually committed and stimulating people)" (p. 112). Then, according to Holmes (2001), professors are responsible for students' lack of appropriation of faith, since they place more emphases on research than mentoring. This emphasis on reaching high levels of specialty during the time when students are developing their own worldview has a negative effect on their beliefs and behavior.

Then, Holmes (2001) stresses that student formation must be intentional. "It depends in large measure on the caring mentor who befriends a student, takes interest in his spiritual life as well as his social and extracurricular activities..., who recognizes the student's strengths and weaknesses as well as his gifts, who models work as service and believes that who we are is more important than what we do" (p. 117).

Emphasis on Diverse Models for Christian Higher Education

Benne (2001) developed a model based on Hughes and Adrian (1997) that described a fourfold typology of religiously affiliated institutions: orthodox, critical-mass, intentionally pluralist and accidentally pluralistic. This typology takes into consideration the following elements: vision, public relevance of the vision, public rhetoric, requirement for membership, relevance of the department of theology, religion or theology required courses, attendance to worship service, lifestyle, support from the church and government. This typology describes four models of affiliate institutions according to their commitment of the elements mentioned before.

Dockery (cited in Poe, 2004) distinguished colleges in four ways: a) private college that operates independently of any external body founded with a religious purpose but with few remaining elements of Christian commitments. b) Bible college that has a narrowly defined mission and purpose to prepare students for church-related vocations. c) Church related college that acknowledges its Christian heritage openly, closely linking its identity to the sponsoring denomination. d) Christian liberal arts college with strong cultural ties with the sponsoring denominations or constituencies. Its approach to education is grounded in a Christian worldview and supports an educational enterprise based on integration of faith and learning, and faith and living.

Heie (cited in Poe, 2004) developed a model that addressed only to the cognitive dimension of religious knowledge. He proposed three positions: a) truncation, b) coexistence, and c) integration. The truncation position denies the existence of one of the two spheres of knowledge: secular or religious. For instance, a private college that has become secularized may concentrate on academic disciplinary knowledge, relegating religious knowledge to the private lives, or a Bible college does not deal with academic subjects that are not related to ministry. The coexistence position proposes that the secular and the religious knowledge are viable and legitimate, but they merely coexist at the institution. No attempt is made to explore the possibility of connections between religious knowledge and academic disciplinary knowledge. The integration position sees secular knowledge and religious knowledge as two sides of one coin.

Lyon and Beaty (1999) offer an evolutionary model for understanding the attitude toward religion in religious and secular schools. Their model described three stages of a Christian college from the most religious commitment to the secularization.

The first stage is the "old time Christian College" that embraces religious schools with a curriculum intentionally designated to integrate faith and learning.

The second stage is the "two spheres approach" that encompasses Christian schools that when confronted with the modern secular research university and its dominance in the realm of higher education, decides to "remain loyal to its religious heritage in matters of doctrine while belonging to the academic guild in matters of knowledge deemed legitimate by the academe" (p. 41).

The third stage, called "full secularization", includes colleges that include research, teaching and application in such a way that religion has no place.

Liftin's (2004) proposal describes two models, two ways of developing Christian education, not taking into consideration those models that include secularization as an option. The models are the "umbrella model" and the "systemic model". "Umbrella institutions seek to provide a Christian umbrella under which a variety of voices can thrive... All [voices] are welcomed under the umbrella so long as they can at least support the broad educational mission of the school. The institution has made room for them; they are asked only to make room for the institution" (p. 15). Systemic institutions have a mission that permeates everything they do, giving internal consistency to teaching, scholarship, student life, administration and community relationship. According to Liftin, the systemic model, is what is called Christian university.

Emphasis on Research-based Descriptions of Parochial Higher Education

Several recent studies have taken a denominational approach to understanding the place of faith in higher education. *Models for Christian higher education* of Hughes and Adrian (1997) describe Christian higher education of seven major faith traditions: Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, Mennonite, Evangelical/Interdenominational, Wesleyan/Holiness, and Baptist and Restorationist. By defining Christian higher education in terms of parochialism and sectarianism, this approach may succeed in isolating the very things that are unique for the tradition, but those treats may not be the essence of Christianity.

Benne (2001), based upon Hughes and Adrian, identified the more relevant strategies to maintain faith in religious higher education institutions. They are: a) people that believe that Christianity is relevant for university life, b) accountability of persons that hold the beliefs, c) selection of administrators, teachers, personnel, and students that are committed to live the beliefs, and d) leadership that sustains practices that favor the development of faith. Among these practices are worship services, spiritual formation for students, and clear vision that reach all the educational enterprise.

Continuing with his earlier work, Hughes (2003) summarizes several parochial models of higher education:

1. The Reformed Church model that integrates faith and learning around a distinctly Christian worldview. Academic freedom and genuine interaction with pluralism and diversity appear in the framework of this Reformed worldview.

2. The Anabaptist/Mennonite model has more to do with holistic living than cognition, and more to do with ethics that intellect. They support the abandon of self in the interest of others, and to abandon nationalism for world citizenship. They emphasize humility and the willingness to admit that they could be wrong.

3. Although diverse by the variety of religious orders, the Roman Catholic model stresses the sacramental principle that the natural world and even elements of human culture can serve as vehicles to reach human beings with the grace of God. Other characteristics of the Catholic tradition are the universality of the Catholic faith, understanding the Catholic university as a bridge among people. They consider the communitarian nature of redemption.

4. The Lutheran model maintains human finitude. They insist that Christians live in a paradox, the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of God, and they are free to take both, the secular world and the kingdom of God, seriously.

5. The Baptist model encompasses a variety of points of view. But in spite of its diversity, these institutions seem to live in two worlds-the world higher education and the world of the Christian faith. Baptist universities promote faith and Baptist culture, they offer to the families a better life and social status for their children.

Schaefer Riley (2005), in her book God on the Quad: How religious colleges and the missionary generation are changing America, interviewed students, administrators, faculty and alumni of schools that have strong religious affiliations in order to learn why students have chosen the school; how the curriculum differs from secular schools; what is life outside the classroom like;

and how these colleges affect students' post-graduation choices. Jewish, Catholic, Baptist, Mormon, and interdenominational institutions were surveyed. Besides the touching stories that comprise the book, the Schaefer describes that students choose to study at these schools, and are challenged intellectually to deepen their faith in an environment that values both the life of the spirit and the life of the mind. Faculty and administrators devote enormous efforts to forming the intellectual and moral character of students.

Implications for the Seventh - day Adventist education

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has been actively involved in promoting integration of faith and learning within its educational system. The changes described above have influenced the way SDA institutions of higher education have developed during the last decades, how the concept of integration of faith and learning is understood, and the identification of the challenges of Adventist higher education.

The global report and recommendations of the General Conference Commission on Higher Education (2003) that worked between 2000 and 2003 recommended the following for immediate implementation (beginning 2004): a) to strengthen the understanding of the Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy, b) to involve all faculty in integration of faith, learning and life, c) to resolve the duplication of programs. The Commission recommended for further study (beginning 2005) a) the growing percentage of non Adventist students and faculty in Adventist institutions, b) the financing of SDA higher education, c) the guidance of SDA students attending non SDA higher educational institutions, d) the establishment of new institutions and programs in compliance with the SDA accrediting regulations, e) compliance with recommendations and policies, and conflict of faith.

It is evident that there is a tension between a development of a SDA model for higher education that is feasible today with the opening of the SDA system to reach different needs perceived by educators, church administrators and members. In solving this tension, the SDA system of education will decide the importance of integration of faith and learning and the mission of an Adventist institution of higher education.

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