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**ADVENTIST DISTINCTIVES:
INITIATING TEACHERS INTO ADVENTIST SCHOOLS
IN AUSTRALIA**

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ADVENTIST DISTINCTIVES: INITIATING TEACHERS INTO ADVENTIST SCHOOLS AUSTRALIA

INTRODUCTION

Not all teachers who enter the teaching profession with Adventist Schools Australia have attended Avondale College or another Adventist tertiary institution. Some novice teachers will be graduates from local universities close to their home location. Some of these will be Adventist, but there is a growing number of non-Adventist teachers who have been employed on a twelve-month contract (and for some, extended beyond the twelve months). Besides graduates, there are also teachers who have taught in the government sector or in various Christian schools. These teachers may be Adventist or non-Adventist. There are also Adventist teachers who have returned from the 'mission field' (a diminishing number of these, however) and are entering the Adventist Schools Australia field either for the first time or returning after a significant break.

Adventist Schools Australia runs a program which has become known as 'Adventist Distinctives'. It is held near the beginning of each year for these teachers who are new to the Adventist Education system. The program is designed to help answer some of the questions that these teachers have. Typical questions are: Why does the Seventh-day Adventist church run an education system? What is special about it? Is Adventist Education different from state school education? Is Adventist Education different from other Christian Education? If so, what contributes to the difference? What does the new teacher need to know to support the philosophy and goals of the school? What might this look like in practice?

BACKGROUND: THE SUBJECT 'THE PHILOSOPHY OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION'

Students who pursue their teacher training at Avondale College, the Seventh-day Adventist's tertiary institution in Australia, complete a class called 'The Philosophy of Christian Education' in the fourth year of their course. This subject is designed to help them refine their worldview and to have a framework to support their teaching when they enter the classroom the following year as the novice teacher.

The subject synopsis for ED343.2, the current 'Philosophy of Christian Education', provides this overview:

"A consideration of selected philosophies and related issues relevant to Christians in the teaching ministry. This subject emphasizes the practical implications of adopting a Christian philosophy, particularly in Christian schools." (Avondale College, Faculty of Education, 2007)

The purpose of the subject is described as

"This subject gives important reinforcement to the key principles and perspectives of teaching and learning which provide motivation and foundation for excellence in Christian teaching. Christian commitment and understandings are emphasized as the means for providing effective service for others. At the conclusion of this subject students will have been encouraged to value the distinctive contribution which Christian teachers can make as a result of their Christian philosophy and perspectives. They will gain insights and inspiration that will enhance personal practice as professional Christian educators." (Avondale College, Faculty of Education, 2007)

The students consider four Foundations of Christian Education; Biblical, Theological, Philosophical and Historical. They then look at the Goal of Christian Education and Purpose for an Adventist School. Other topics that are included are: Theories of Education; The Role of the Christian Teacher; Pastoral Care; The Role of the Student; Curricular Considerations; Methodical Considerations; Social function of Christian Education and Entering the Profession. The subject which is eleven weeks in duration is delivered in the face-to-face format. Students are expected to spend a total of ten hours per week at lectures, tutorials, clinical and other placements, studying and completing assignments.

For many years previously, the subject had been based almost exclusively on the book, Education (White, 1903). In the early 1990's, with the rapidly expanding range of literature on Christian Education, other sources were also added and during the classes students compared and contrasted a variety of educational philosophies and explored the practical implications of each of these for Christian Education. The topics covered in the subject included The Making of a Worldview; Issues in Philosophy; Philosophy of Christian Education: Worldviews such as Secularism, Neo-panteism, Humanism, Idealism, Realism, Pragmatism and Existentialism with comparisons to our Biblical worldview; Biblical perspectives on the 'Nature of Man', 'In the Image of God'; Pervading the Secular Curriculum with the Christian Ethic; Indoctrination verses the Biblical Mandate to Instruct and Nurture, and Redemptive Discipline. (Avondale College, Faculty of Education, 1993)

Because their teacher training includes 'Philosophy of Christian Education', it is assumed that teachers newly-graduated from Avondale understand why they are teaching in an Adventist school and will understand the purpose of that school. However, as has been noted in the Introduction, not all newly-employed teachers have been trained at Avondale. In fact, not all newly-employed teachers are Adventist. Some process is needed to ensure that all teachers have this understanding. Hence, the Adventist Distinctives program.

BACKGROUND OF THE ADVENTIST DISTINCTIVES PROGRAM

Participation in the Adventist Distinctives program is an employment requirement for any teacher who has not been trained at an Adventist institution. The program has undergone significant change over the years and continues to be developed to accommodate changing clientele. In its original form, the teacher (an Adventist) was required to read certain books relating to Christian Education, followed by the submission of a written report on the books. It was expected that this would be completed in their first year of employment. When one considers the stresses faced by a new teacher, apart from being a novice, that is – new location to move to and navigate around, new accommodation to find and move into, new school to find and become familiar with, new curriculum to comprehend, new classes to prepare, new faculty and staff to become acquainted with, new students to meet and prepare suitable lessons for etc, it is little wonder that this program was not successful. Most often, it was not completed – or just not started.

In order to achieve a higher level of compliance, Dr Don Roy who was working with the South Pacific Division Curriculum Unit at the time, devised a new 'Adventist Distinctives' program. The new 'Adventist Distinctives' consisted of six modules. Each module involved reading a selected section of text which was not too lengthy and then writing a considered response to a series of questions. The participants could work from paper copy, a CD, or work via the internet. Again, the plan was for the program to be completed in the first year of employment. This approach was launched during the mid 1990's and was supported by the Education Departments of both Union Conferences – Trans-Australian Union Conference (TAUC) and the Trans-Tasman Union Conference (TTUC). The program was run and monitored by Dr Roy at the Curriculum Unit. It continued in that format for several years after the restructuring of the South Pacific Division and the amalgamation of the conferences in Australia into the Australian Union Conference (AUC) in 2000. The Curriculum Unit was also moved to the AUC at this time. However, there continued to be few new teachers who completed the program satisfactorily and in good time due to the continuing pressures as described above. *Another* new approach had to be developed.

It was decided to run a seminar-type program in each of the nine conferences of the AUC where new teachers who had not been trained at an Adventist institution were joining the system. The first series of these seminars was run in 2003 by Dr Roy. The program ran for one day or, in some cases, a Thursday evening session for dinner and the introduction, followed by the remainder of the program on the Friday. By this time, Adventist Schools Australia had adopted the 'Towards Wholeness' document (Roy, 2003) as its statement of Special Character and the day's program was based on this document. The program format included presentation,

lecture and discussion time. Participation and questioning by the attendees were integral to the program. The local Director of Education was involved in the day's program. Since 2004, both Curriculum Officers of the Curriculum Unit have been involved in the presentations. The program has been slightly modified and further refined with each presentation. A workbook based on 'Towards Wholeness' was developed and was used for two years.

Participants are assured that their time and participation are valued. They are informed that they will receive a Professional Development certificate because of our belief that the program is important and is part of their professional growth as teachers in Adventist schools. When participants are informed of the history of the program, they unanimously agree that the interactive seminar in which they have been involved is far preferable to the assignment-type requirement completed in isolation and most express appreciation for the information and the openness in discussing their questions.

SYSTEM CHALLENGES AND NEEDS

There are some current and future challenges and needs that impact on Adventist Education and which, in turn, impact on the Adventist Distinctives program. These are worth spending a few paragraphs considering.

Challenge 1: Teacher supply. One of the biggest challenges that we are facing as a system world-wide is ensuring that we have Adventist teachers in Adventist Schools and that we are able to source Adventist teachers for the growing demands of the system. General Conference statistics for December 31 2006 (GC Archives, retrieved Feb 1, 2008) indicate that of the 75,183 teachers in our primary and secondary schools, worker training institutes and tertiary institutions 52,326 were Adventist. That calculates as 69.59%. Statistics for the previous year show 77.4% of the teaching cohort was Adventist. That is a drop of nearly 8% in one year! To quote Dr Rasi from the first day of our seminar: "No Adventist teachers – no Adventist Education" (Rasi 2008). When we apply that formula to our current statistics, Adventist Education is only 69.59% Adventist. How long can we tolerate this situation? Can a school be authentically Adventist if the teachers are not Adventist? Beardsley (2008) quoted from C.S. Lewis "*Nothing which was not in the teachers can flow from them into the pupils.*" In the article, *The Heart of a Teacher*, Palmer (1997) says "*we teach who we are*". It would seem that the answer to the last question regarding the authenticity of an Adventist school without Adventist teachers is 'No'.

"A simple premise ... good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher. Identity and integrity have as much to do with our shadows and limits, our wounds

and fears, as with our strengths and potentials.” (Palmer, 1997). It doesn't matter how good or thorough the Adventist Distinctives program is – it doesn't matter how 'Adventist' the other contributing elements of the school community are - if the teachers are not committed, practicing Adventists the students will discern the lack of authenticity. 'Adventist' Education will not be truly Adventist.

Challenge 2: School growth. In Australia, our larger schools are thriving and our smaller schools are struggling and closing. Of the four schools that closed at the end of the 2007 school year, all teachers were deployed in other Adventist schools. Conference Administrators and Directors of Education have been reluctant to cap the growth of schools to allow time for the supply of Adventist teachers to catch up. Challenge 1 and Challenge 2 are closely intertwined.

Challenge 3: Re-vision our teachers. Knight (2008) noted that the average age of the Adventist church membership in North America is 58. Australia probably has a similar situation. That will be reflected in an aging (and possibly, tiring) teacher workforce. The need for consistent and planned professional development in relevant areas must be emphasized to all teachers. Fortunately, requirements for teacher registration are changing and many of the Institutes of Teaching in the various states insist on a certain number of hours of professional development over a specified time period. Even more important is finding some way to re-vision, re-enthuse and re-challenge our teachers with their true mission. They are called to ministry not appointed to a job.

Challenge 4: Reposition Bible. When there is an interruption to the school program and a class needs to be dropped or shortened, which class is most likely to suffer? All too often it is the Bible lesson that is sacrificed, particularly in the secondary setting. Bible classes need to be repositioned as the core subject. When the allocation of subjects and teachers is being considered, special thought needs to be given to who will be teaching Bible. Considerations need to be made concerning teacher competence and passion not just the need to fill a teaching load. We need to ensure that the structure of the Bible curriculum is meeting the needs of the students at their various levels and that there are sufficient resources for the teachers. Teachers need to see the centrality of Bible and thoroughly prepare their lessons in such a way that they are 'teaching from the overflow' and not just relying on their prior knowledge and worksheets.

Challenge 5: Values. The Federal Government of Australia has mandated that all schools must teach nine values (Appendix 1). There must be evidence of these in both planning and practice. There must be community consultation as to how these are to be implemented in the local school. In the past, Adventist schools have marketed themselves as providers of 'values-based education'. Now, every school in Australia could say the

same thing. We need to identify our points of differentiation. Values within the Adventist school need to be based on our relationships with God, with our fellow man and with the environment. Adventist teachers have a built-in opportunity in Bible lessons to emphasize values.

It is incumbent upon each school to identify the core values they want to promote. They need to decide how these values will be caught and taught. The teachers should identify which whole school activities are appropriate to promote these values in their setting. Administration must commit to supporting the teachers with resources and with whole school activities. Teachers plan how they will teach the values in their classrooms and how they will demonstrate them in their lives. As with any change, all personnel involved must be prepared to evaluate the program and modify it as necessary. Some things will work well while others will need to be changed. It must be recognized that teaching Biblical values is an on-going process and it is a long-term program. In teaching values, we must uphold the character of Jesus. (Christian, 2003)

ADVENTIST DISTINCTIVES - CURRENT PRACTICE

The Adventist Distinctives program continues to be run by the National Office of Adventist Schools Australia in conjunction with the various conferences. The program is a requirement and is described in the ASA Handbook and therefore has policy status. In some cases, the local conference Director of Education plans the day with ASA personnel attending and presenting various components of the program. In other conferences, the local Director of Education supports the program which is almost totally presented by the ASA personnel. In these cases, the local Director of Education plans the local venue and catering, takes the welcome and worship and contributes to the module on 'History of Adventist Education' providing the local perspective. We have promised ourselves that we will avoid the 'Adventist cringe' and be very open about who we are and what we stand for. The current program still has a one-day seminar / discussion format with modules supported by PowerPoint presentations.

Beginning in 2007, some conferences have requested a follow-up day mid-year particularly for questions, sharing of observations and experiences about what happens in an Adventist school and for reflection. The focus has also moved from Christian Education to focus on Adventist Education. Questions to be considered include: Is an Adventist school different? How? What is it that makes the difference between Christian Education and Adventist Education? What is expected of the teacher? We have also become more intentional in sharing our distinctive Adventist doctrines. This change was made following recommendations by the Directors of Education. It was felt that the program should be more detailed in presenting our doctrinal position.

It has become our practice, following the welcome and worship, to ask participants about their expectations of the day. By the end of the day, what do they want to know that they don't already know? What questions do they have that they would like to have answered during the day? On every occasion, participants want to know about the Adventist church, its background and its beliefs. They want to know about our education system and they want to know what we expect of them as teachers in an Adventist school. By keeping the presentations relatively informal and non-threatening, it is hoped that the participants will be comfortable to ask any questions that they might have about Adventists. Realizing that a lot of information will be presented during the day and participants may suffer from information overload, a variety of printed material is included in a participant's pack so that they can refer to it at a later date. The following items are in the current pack:

- 'Towards Wholeness' – ASA Statement of Special Character
- 'Who are Seventh-day Adventists?' Definition from *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*
- Orange booklet with simple line drawings "About the Seventh-day Adventists"
- 'Keys to Happiness' – modern version of 'Steps to Christ'
- Fundamental beliefs – Church Manual Chapter 3
- Booklet – 'Your Friends, the Seventh-day Adventists' by Ken McFarland
- Booklet – 'What do you hope for?' (SPD Adventist Media Network)
- SPD Vision statement – *To know, experience and share our hope in Jesus Christ*
- SDA Church Logo - with explanation and Bible texts
- Set of Perspectives – 21 topical issues viewed from the Adventist perspective (SPD AMN)
- Brochure – Life's Vital Questions (AUC Resource Centre)
- Suggestions for further reading
- Stationery items – exercise book and ASA pen

The current program is built around a series of six modules. The topics have emerged as the program has undergone modification and from the suggestions made by the Education Directors. It is our aim that we will have a range of modules to select from to suit the needs of each group in the different locations. The current modules include the following:

1. The History and Purpose of Adventist Education
 - a. History of early Adventist Education in the US
 - b. Establishment of Avondale and Adventist Education in Australia
 - c. Statistics – then and now
 - d. Structure – with pictures of Directors – GC, SPD, AUC and local conference
 - e. Local perspectives from local Education Director
 - f. Identifying the Aims of Adventist Education – redemption and service.
 - g. The Church logo says it all – Bible-based, Christ-centred, Service-oriented, Kingdom-driven (Rasi, 2008)

- h. SPD Vision statement – *To know, experience and share our hope in Jesus Christ through Adventist Education*
 - i. The Head / Heart / Hand concept – knowledge about God and how God relates to us, how we relate to God, how we relate to (and can serve) others.
2. Exploring Worldviews This presentation explores the 'big' questions that are commonly asked when looking at worldviews and challenges the participants to define their own worldviews. During the presentation, the Adventist worldview is described.
 3. History and Structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
 - a. Identify roots through Protestant Revolution, Millerite movement
 - b. Establishment of denomination in 1863
 - c. Early church pioneers
 - d. Early focus of the church – publishing, health, religious liberty
 - e. Organisational structure (with pictures of headquarters)
 - f. Some statistics – General Conference, South Pacific Division, Australian Union Conference
 4. What We Believe – in language that even I can understand! The 28 fundamentals in easy-to-understand language. This presentation is based on the books released by Pacific Press in 2006 and 2007 for children to help them understand our beliefs. Each slide identifies a belief, includes a Bible text and a brief summary of the belief. It is stated that the purpose of this module is to inform the participants of our doctrinal stand, not to convince them. It is not a theological discourse or debate but an informational session.
 5. Discussion: Working in groups, the participants identify appropriate responses to a set of school and classroom scenarios in which various aspects of our faith are challenged.
 3. Practical Implications for Adventist Education

'Special Character' is a term that we use to define the distinctiveness of Adventist Education. It should impact all aspects of the school program and should infuse all we do. 'Special Character' could be defined as the overall evidence of the integration of faith, values and learning. This is another module that looks at practical aspects of what the teacher will be facing in the classroom and in the school program.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE WHEN FAITH, VALUES AND LEARNING ARE INTEGRATED?

Module 6, as listed above, investigates practical implications of how integration is going to look in the classroom and also how this will impact the whole school program. The Integration of Faith and Learning is not a new concept. As a younger teacher, I remember my classroom being visited by an inspector. Comments he made

indicated that he was looking for evidence of this integration and he asked where the Christian word was in my classes' spelling list. That seemed to be a fairly superficial and added-on concept. Perhaps he did not understand the concept fully at that time either. Similar experiences reported by other teachers over many years led to a cynicism amongst the teaching ranks regarding a 'tacked-on' Special Character. We now understand that the distinctiveness of Adventist Education, its Special Character, needs to be infused into all areas of the school's operation. It needs to be intentional and planned.

Principals and teachers often ask for ideas as to how their schools can better portray the Special Character of Adventist Education. Our team at the Australian Union Conference often discusses ideas about this and we have had some workgroup times with the personnel from the South Pacific Division Education Department. Just how does the Statement of Special Character translate into practical terms? What does it look like in a school? Jointly, we are developing a set of statements that can be used as indicators of the Special Character of an Adventist education institution. It will be a document that can be used by schools as the basis for discussions in meetings such as staff meetings and school councils allowing the personnel to audit their current practice. The document would also provide some strategies for enhancing Special Character (the evidence that faith, values and learning are being integrated). Links will be provided on the Adventist Schools Australia website for examples of good practice. Administrators and teachers want realistic, practical examples of what they can be doing. It has been theoretical for long enough. It needs to be made practical.

The charts that are included as Appendix 3 are an attempt to arrange some of the suggestions we have developed into a matrix of Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom: 1973) and the Multiple Intelligences (Gardner: 1983). It must be noted that the statements on the charts are but a small portion of the whole picture. There are many more that could be added and no doubt, those listed will be refined in time. Evidence of Special Character – the Integration of Faith, Values and Learning in all aspects of the school – will involve, but not be limited to, these statements. Adventist Education has always stressed the importance of the home, the church and the school working together. These components contribute to the school community and to the process of integrating faith, values and learning.

ELEMENTS OR COMPONENTS OF A SCHOOL COMMUNITY

The idea of building community is a cultural or sociological concept. Holmes (1987:81) discusses school as community. He uses the word "college", but for the purposes of this discussion, "school" has been substituted. *"The Christian [school] is of course a community of faith as well as learning, but the two are not disconnected; rather they are to be integrated so that faith gives direction and meaning to learning."*

In *Introducing Christian Education: Foundations for the twenty-first century*, Benson (2001:16) states:

“The philosophical foundations of Christian education are derived from systematic theology, which in turn emerges from biblical theology.” To tie these statements together for our context, we have schools, sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, developing into communities of faith and learning which are based on the distinctive theology of the church. We have Adventist Education.

There are many elements within the school that contribute to the total learning of the students. Each of these contributes in some way to the whole learning process. Some of the events that occur are planned. It is important the planning is deliberate and that the *“Bible-based, Christ-centred, service-oriented and kingdom-directed”* focus be maintained (Rasi 2008). Some learning is not planned. It is either incidental or ‘serendipitous’ (Roy, 2008) or what is commonly known as “teachable moments”.

Roy’s (2008) model of ‘School as a Community of Faith’ is a good representation of this concept. It is included as Appendix 2. In his model, Roy identifies many elements within the school community that can contribute to developing and strengthening the school community. God’s revelation through the Bible is the Master Story or meta-narrative upon which the whole concept is based. From this Master story flow our assumptions and beliefs. These assumptions and beliefs help define our worldview which in turn, will determine how the school interprets these elements. In each of the elements we will see evidence of the worldview. This determines the ‘Special Character’ of the school. This shows the practical evidence of how faith, values and learning have been integrated. Some elements that Roy identifies are:

- Beliefs and understandings
- Stories and traditions
- Worship, ceremony and ritual
- Language, metaphors and symbols
- Ethos, values and mores
- Buildings, decor and facilities
- Uniforms, crests, mottos and identifying symbols
- Rules, regulations and procedures
- Teacher / staff models

All of these provide a background for the formal learning environment consisting of emotional, physical, relational and intellectual spaces. Each component impacts and interacts with the other components.

Superimposed on all and infusing each of these areas is the spiritual connection which must affect all aspects of the school’s program. From this Community of Faith will emerge students who have received a balanced

education and who have a heart for discipleship and service. For a more detailed description of the above model, check 'Ministry of Teaching' website and the *TEACH: Journal of Christian Education, April, 2008*

So...WHERE TO FROM HERE?

The National Office of Adventist Schools Australia will continue to provide the Adventist Distinctives program, being very clear about our distinctive doctrines but also identifying doctrines that we hold in common with other Christian denominations. A key focus is the centrality of the cross as depicted in the church logo. In some sessions, participants have been surprised to learn that we are so much like other Christian denominations. Some have been surprised to learn that we are Christian! We believe that the 'Adventist Distinctives' program is vitally important in the orientation of new teachers. The program must continue to be developed and be shaped to meet the changing needs of the system. There are some recommendations that may reinforce and support the development and effectiveness of the program.

Recommendation 1: Up to this point in time, most of the Adventist Distinctive programs that have been run have been for new teachers only. If we genuinely accept that the integration of faith, values and learning is important and impacts all areas of the school's program, consideration must be given to including other school personnel who have contact with the students and who contribute to the students' learning, either formally or informally. After all, learning is not confined to the classroom. Any person who has contact with the students contributes to the students' learning in some way. All new school personnel, both teaching and non-teaching, should be involved in the program.

Recommendation 2: The Adventist Distinctives program has been well received and the participants have expressed appreciation for having their questions answered openly and honestly and for having misconceptions cleared. Considering that the original intention was to substitute for the subject 'Philosophy of Christian Education' the one day seminar really does not provide enough time to gain the depth of understanding required. Perhaps it would be more effective if the program were to run over two days at the beginning of the year plus a day at the beginning of Term 3 for reinforcement and reflection, making a total of three days.

Recommendation 3: Although the concept of integrating faith, values and learning has been around for many years, questions are frequently asked as to what it is going to actually be like and look like in practice. Education Directors ask these question as well as principals and teachers. The topic needs to be a regular item on the agenda of Education Forums where the Education Directors can share ideas and reinforce the concept in their own minds. We, at the Adventist Schools Australia national office, need to be more intentional in

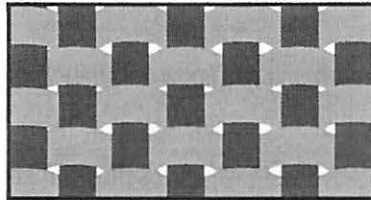
providing focussed in-services for the Directors of Education. It would be valuable to develop a section on the website where examples of good practice can be stored and accessed. Leadership will then be better prepared to assist principals and teachers. The information then needs to flow to the principals at their meetings and so on through the system.

Recommendation 4: It would be useful to explore creative ways to present 'Special Character' so that it is seen as valued and important. *"What we value we will talk about and we will display"* (Weslake, 2003). Strengthening the Special Character focus of the Education Audit will also signal that we are really serious about Adventist schools demonstrating how they are authentically Adventist.

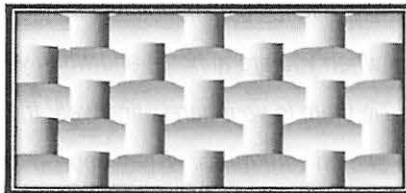
CONCLUSION

Palmer (1997) sees teachers as the weavers of a fabric. *"Good teachers ... are able to weave a complex web of connections between themselves, their subjects, and their students, so that students learn to weave a world for themselves... The connections made by good teachers are held not in their methods but in their hearts meaning heart in the ancient sense, the place where intellect and emotion and spirit and will converge in the human self."* I would like to extend the analogy to apply to integrating faith, values and learning.

Consider education as a fabric. It is made up of threads which, when woven together, form a unique material. The particular blend of the different threads – each made up of individual fibres – will determine the appearance of the final fabric. The way that fibres within the threads are used in the warp and weft of the weave will give a peculiar and unique fabric. Individual fibres within the threads contribute to the uniqueness of the fabric. Some will enhance. Some will weaken but all play a part in the final outcome. The way that a school chooses to tailor the fabric to best fit the needs of its locale and clientele will result in an individual garment. The students who attend that school will be imprinted with the weave of the fabric, impacted by each contributing fibre.



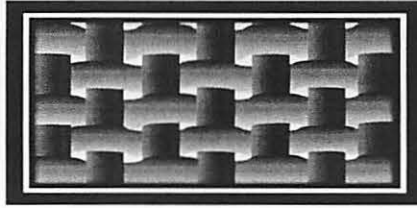
Now consider Christian education. Add to each thread a connection with God. Each contributing fibre within the threads is aware of and practises a divine connection. This added dimension has an impact on all threads used in the production of – a glow - to each thread within the weave. How the fabric is enriched! Processes are fair. People



are valued. They feel understood, accepted, respected and included. Relationships are established. Community is nurtured. Lives are impacted for Eternity.

Further consider Adventist education. We build on the basics of educational best practice plus the characteristics that distinguish Christian education. To the weave is now added the distinctiveness of the Adventist worldview. Recognition of God's special day, the Sabbath; the urgency of the nearness of Jesus' soon return; hope for the future; connections with church

features all add to the unique recognized as made in the image fellowship with Him and (White, 1903) and to the other



family world-wide, and other special fabric. Each contributing fibre is of God for the divine purpose of contributing to a life of service to God fibres. Each fibre views and values the

others as made in God's image. Special fibres contribute to and support the lustre of the weave. How rich this fabric! How strong the weave! As before, each school will tailor the fabric to best suit its locale and school community. However, it is the common traits of the fabric used by each school that makes up the Special Character of Adventist education.

In reality, the fabric is only as strong as its weakest fibre. Each of us is one of the fibres in this awesome fabric, Adventist Education. The cloth is weakened or strengthened by our involvement and contribution. How vital it is that each of us maintains our daily connection with God and focuses on the goal that we have of restoring the image of our Creator (White, 1903) in each of our students! We need to maintain that daily connection so we can know what God is like and thus are able to recognize the image as we see it being restored in our students.

There is a common saying "*They won't care how much you know until they know how much you care*". What we remember most about our teachers is the way that they treated us not so much the content that they taught. The more that I have been involved in running the Adventist Distinctives program and developing the statements of ways to enhance Special Character, the more I have become convinced of the central role of the teacher. The influence of an authentic Adventist teacher knows no boundaries. What pins it all together is passion for Jesus and people in the heart of the teacher.

Deuteronomy 6:5-9 NLT "*And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, and when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your foreheads as reminders. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*" When applied to the school setting, Deuteronomy 6:5-9 sounds like a valuable formula for integrating faith, values and learning.



VALUES FOR AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLING

Care and Compassion

Care for self and others

Doing Your Best

Seek to accomplish something worthy and admirable, try hard, pursue excellence

Fair Go

Pursue and protect the common good where all people are treated fairly for a just society

Freedom

Enjoy all the rights and privileges of Australian citizenship free from unnecessary interference or control, and stand up for the rights of others

Honesty and Trustworthiness

Be honest, sincere and seek the truth

Integrity

Act in accordance with principles of moral and ethical conduct, ensure consistency between words and deeds

Respect

Treat others with consideration and regard, respect another person's point of view

Responsibility

Be accountable for one's own actions, resolve differences in constructive, non-violent and peaceful ways, contribute to society and to civic life, take care of the environment

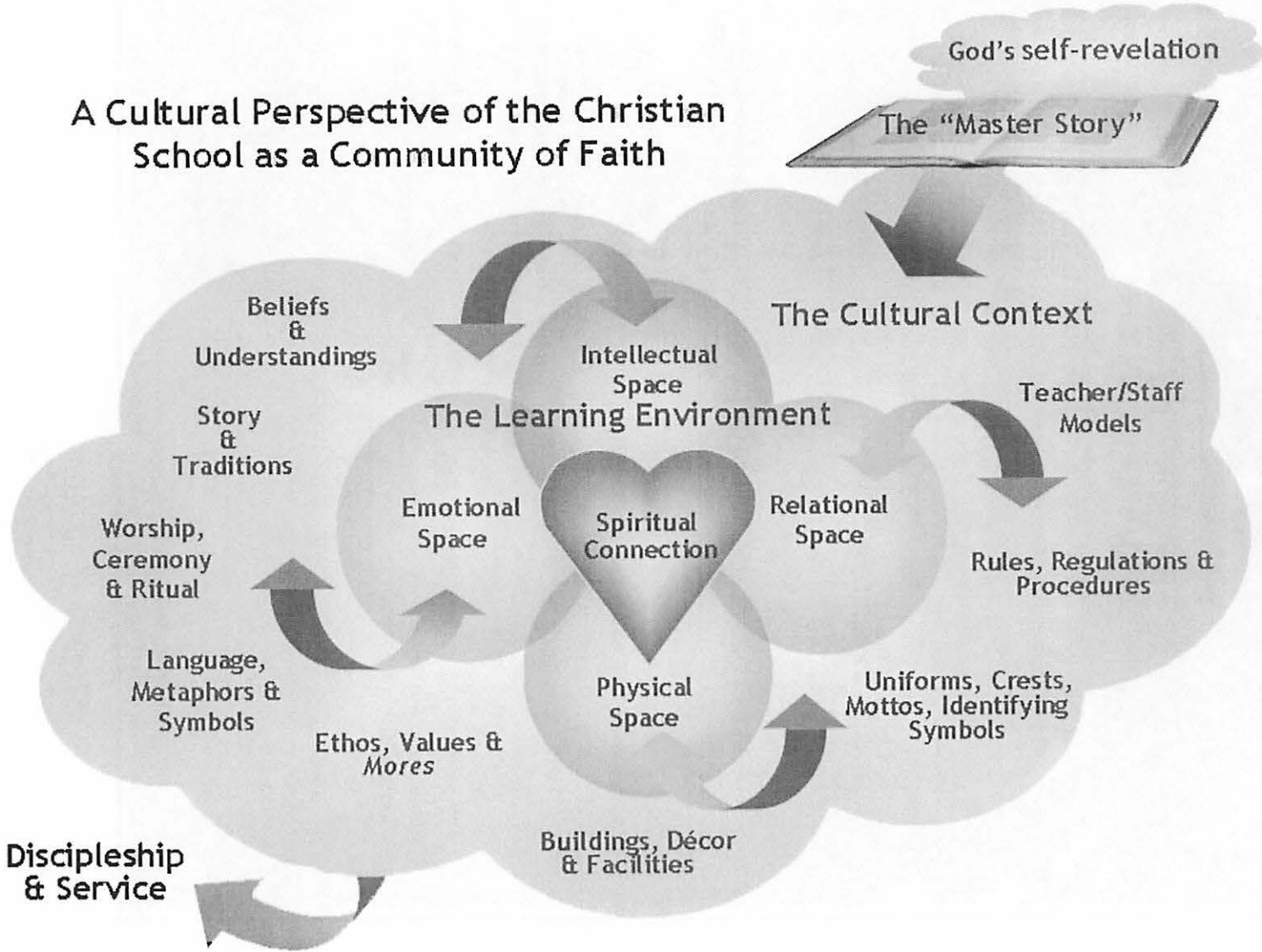
Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion

Be aware of others and their cultures, accept diversity within a democratic society, being included and including others

CHARACTER IS DESTINY

— George Eliot

A Cultural Perspective of the Christian School as a Community of Faith



STATEMENT MATRIX (USING BLOOMS TAXONOMY AND MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES)

TOPIC: Some statements to identify, clarify and enhance the Special Character of Adventist Schools

PAGE 1	REMEMBER	UNDERSTAND	APPLY	ANALYSE	EVALUATE	DESIGN
WORD	1.1 Stakeholders are able to recall the Vision, Mission and Values Statements that have been adopted by the school.	1.2 (a) The school's philosophical statements are prominently displayed and are shared and understood by all stakeholders. 1.2 (b) The school has a tradition of awards and acknowledgements that reports on attributes that are valued by the school community.	1.3 (a) School administration has a credible strategy for sharing and implementing their vision. 1.3 (b) Communication is frequent, open, non-confrontational, warm and friendly at all times. 1.3 (c) Teachers include statements identifying a connection with God when displaying student work.	1.4 Desired school values are identified, agreed on by staff and written into a values statement. Strategies are put in place for how these values will be caught, taught and acknowledged.	1.5 (a) There is a process in place to ensure that the values that have been identified are aligned with the beliefs and practices of the school. 1.5 (b) Communication is respectful regardless of gender, occupation, socio-economic standing and academic achievement.	1.6 (a) The school's philosophical statements are discussed and reviewed in school meetings (council, staff etc) and are the basis of what informs and drives the school's planning and marketing. 1.6 (b) The school's annual magazine or publication shows evidence of the special features and values of the school.
MATHS & LOGIC	2.1 Stakeholders are able to list ways in which their school differs from other schools.	2.2 School community members are able to compare and contrast elements that demonstrate a connection with God within the school with elements in other schools.	2.3 The selection of subjects and the time allocated for each reflect the school's commitment to providing a balanced education and ensuring 'Bible' retains the status of being a core subject.	2.4 Curriculum documentation reflects intentional progressive development in spiritual formation, academic, physical, social and emotional learning from K – 12.	2.5 The School Curriculum Scope and Sequence shows evidence of the pathway from the school's philosophy to Special Character teaching and learning.	2.6 Class projects are designed so that the product can be used to display desired messages or information
SPACE & VISION	3.1 (a) School signage clearly identifies the school as an Adventist institution and provides clear, informative and easy-to-follow directions. 3.1 (b) The foyer is welcoming, bright and clearly displays icons and messages of special character.	3.2 The walls of the school corridors are used to display a variety of materials which express the special identity of the school.	3.3 Symbolic items – crests, logos, names for sporting houses etc – illustrate aspects of desirable characteristics.	3.4 Promotional material is balanced, of high integrity, promising only that which can be delivered and relying on the quality of product and service.	3.5 (a) Visual symbols – logos, crests, mottos, icons, items on display – are consistent with the values of the school.	3.6 (a) Choices that are made for emblems or themes are given careful consideration to ensure they are consistent with the values of the school 3.6 (b) Marketing material is developed which is consistent with the school's values and which portrays the school's ethos.

PAGE 2	REMEMBER	UNDERSTAND	APPLY	ANALYSE	EVALUATE	DESIGN
BODY	4.1 Good personal health habits and hygiene are supported by the school's facilities – sufficient bubblers, toilets, showers, provision of shade etc	4.2 Staff members are proactive in promoting healthy eating habits – fresh fruit and vegetables; low salt, sugar and fat; fresh water.	4.3 (a) The school has policies relating to acceptable foods at school functions. 4.3 (b) The school canteen models healthy foods in line with school policy.	4.4 The school has policies and procedures which address medical issues – diabetes, asthma, anaphylactic reactions, first aid training etc	4.5 The school is proactive in promoting Sun Smart procedures – wearing of hats; use of sunscreen; shaded areas for eating and play; shaded trees on property.	4.6 (a) The Health curriculum promotes the benefits of good nutrition, regular exercise, water, sunshine, temperance, fresh air, sufficient rest and trust in God. (NEW START) 4.6 (b) The formal Physical Education program is designed to provide opportunities for students to engage in many physical activities and develop a variety of skills.
MUSIC	5.1 Music is viewed as having the capacity to either enhance or detract from the desired goals of a particular event.	5.2 The music performed at school (in worship activities, presentations etc) is consistent with the values of the school.	5.3 Students are encouraged to participate in musical events in a variety of settings.	5.4 Worship leaders (both staff and student) distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate music for the various settings (eg school camps, formal presentations, chapels etc)	5.5 Worship music is selected in response to well informed criteria that reflect musical balance.	5.6 A school song or theme which reflects the values that are upheld in the school. has been developed and adopted.
PEOPLE	6.1 (a) Staff members positively articulate a lifestyle which is consistent with that upheld by the church and is based on a sound rationale. 6.1(b) Respect for diversity is evident and the school is open to the enrichment of diverse cultures.	6.2 (a) Teachers interact with their students, are supportive of student learning and are committed to student well-being. 6.2 (b) Staff relates well to students through being warm, friendly, caring, trustworthy, affirming and respectful.	6.3 (a) Language is used to positively affirm the image of the school and to develop trust and respect that comprise good relationships. 6.3 (b) The school community functions in a complementary relationship with the families, the church and other schools in the area.	6.4 (a) Policies are just, compassionate, respectful and non-discriminatory being transparent and consistent with the school's values. 6.4 (b) Staff members feel supported and valued by colleagues, administration, local churches and families.	6.5 (a) Students feel confident that they can find a staff member who will be supportive in times of illness, stress or emotional difficulties. 6.5 (b) All stakeholders feel accepted, affirmed and appreciated.	6.6 (a) School identifies and documents a student profile stating the expected outcomes for a student finishing at the school. 6.6 (b) The school has a plan for systematically teaching social competencies such as relationship skills, teamwork and leadership skills across the curriculum.

PAGE 3	REMEMBER	UNDERSTAND	APPLY	ANALYSE	EVALUATE	DESIGN
SELF	7.1 (a) All school community members feel proud to be associated with the school 7.1 (b) School uniform is used to promote the identity of the school and its links with Adventist Education.	7.2 Staff demonstrates emotional intelligence through their emotional control, awareness, empathy and personal motivation.	7.3 (a) Staff exemplify high ethical ideals and virtues such as integrity, justice and courage in their moral character. 7.3 (b) Teachers are what they teach through applying theory, and through being loving, authentic and consistent.	7.4 (a) Teachers show a love of learning, high abstract thinking, and ability to reflect on and evaluate the quality of their own thinking. 7.4 (b) Students feel that they are significant to the teachers and feel that it is a privilege to belong to the community.	7.5 (a) Students have time to share their connection with God both formally and informally. 7.5 (b) Opportunities are provided for students to have quiet time and reflect of their personal answers to the big questions of life ie worldview formation.	7.6 (a)The school has a resilience program in which students are taught how to build self-worth, resist peer pressure, avoid at-risk behavior and make good life choices. 7.6 (b) Discipline is redemptive in nature – engaging the will and intelligence of students in developing self-control, making values-based decisions and taking responsibility for their own actions.
ENVIRON- MENTAL	8.1 All facilities and grounds are safe, well maintained and kept clean and tidy.	8.2 Each classroom is clean and organized, well resourced, suitably lit and ventilated and contains furniture appropriate to the size and activities of the occupants.	8.3 (a) Classroom displays promote student achievement and reflect Seventh-day Adventist values and worldview. 8.3 (b) School policies, OH&S procedures etc provide regular monitoring to ensure a safe environment.	8.4 (a) Use of technology is monitored to ensure appropriate and timely application by all. 8.4 (b) Extra-curricular activities are planned that will broaden student experiences and provide time to appreciate God's great outdoors.	8.5 (a) All school community members feel safe at school. 8.5 (b) There is a welcoming, cooperative learning environment where the dignity of each person is respected and students are encouraged to express themselves.	8.6 The administration engages in strategic planning with annualized plans including one for scheduled maintenance.
SPIRITUAL	9.1 (a) Students, teachers and chaplains are involved in a variety of worship and service activities and describe their experiences to others. 9.1 (b) Students are able to state values which have been demonstrated by Bible characters.	9.2 (a) School administration reviews qualifications to ensure that at least some chaplains and staff have counseling skills. 9.2 (b) Rituals, customs and ceremonies are used deliberately in worships, chapels and assemblies to portray key school values.	9.3 (a) Opportunities are provided for the school community to meet together for various purposes eg worship, celebration, personal and professional development, making memories. 9.3 (b) Staff members express their spirituality in sensing God's presence, their connection with God, and their desire to serve God.	9.4 (a) Chaplains and administration draw non-Adventist students and families into school and church life in a variety of ways. 9.4 (b) Teachers are prepared to interrupt planned lessons to follow through on 'teachable moments' that spontaneously allow emphasis on Special Character.	9.5 (a) Opportunities are provided for students to be involved in a variety of service activities in the school, in the community and beyond. 9.5 (b) Bible classes are relevant, engaging and participatory involving a wide range of activities.	9.6 (a) Students are motivated to be of service in day-to-day school life in both structured and spontaneous activities. 9.6 (b) Schools have clearly defined spiritual goals for their students. 9.6 (c) Schools have a plan to further the spiritual formation of their students.

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