THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR:

SOME ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL ISSUES

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INTRODUCTION

Since its rise as an apocalyptic/eschatological movement in the mid-nineteenth century, the Seventh-day Adventist church has experienced a constant tension between its vision of mission and the necessary activities to establish and perpetuate its body as a people and organization. Especially marked has been its ambivalence in the area of education, which George Knight observes, was the last major phase to be developed in its early evolution.1

After the great disappointment and the seeming delay in Christ's return, several persons regarded it as obvious that provisions needed to be made to give shape and identity to the work and mission of this denomination. Of course, there were always some who initially objected to the education of the youth. Yet, later when it was conceded that there was a need for preparing workers to carry the "work" forward, others objected strongly to the then existent "classical" curriculum, whose influence tended to a mainly secular orientation. An effort was made to adopt the curriculum to the needs of the church. As education developed in the United States, the church was faced with issues of licenture, academic recognition for its graduates, and the accreditation of its tertiary schools. Again, strong fervent voices were raised against these processes. In fact, even to the present there are among the Advent family those who see any education that calls for the validation or legal certification of its graduates at

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given levels as contrary to the guidance given this church. There is yet a deep-seated feeling that the more academically prepared our faculties have become, the less earnest and orthodox have they been in teaching and modeling the spirit, ethos, and life-style of this church.

Conversely, certain demands made by professionals in various areas of service, regarding the need to upgrade, to be professionally current (even moonlighting to do so); for greater financial compensation, for a sympathetic understanding of academic autonomy, and an apparent unwillingness by some to enter as vigorously into the activities of regular church life have created a lack of confidence in a significant body of our constituencies. One major indicator of this failed confidence is a loss of enrollments in our schools, over the last seven to ten years, and the initiating of competing self-supporting (?) colleges to "show-up" the parent system.

This paper will seek to identify some of the factors that have affected the evolution of Protestant Christian higher education professionals in reshaping their world-view from a biblical theistic one, to one more secular and humanistic; we will also consider its impact on colleges such as ours. It will further seek to make us aware of the subtle shifts that lead to a confusion of purpose and the implications for Seventh-day Adventist teachers who wish to continue true to the mission and objectives of Seventh-day Adventist Colleges that retain, in their statements of philosophy and mission, the shaping vision that gave them birth.
THE ORIGINS OF PROFESSIONALISM

The modern use of the idea of "profession" has been variously applied to such a number of occupations and crafts and given such selective emphases, that one is hard pressed, if unaware of the context, to identify with precision what is meant. Such imprecision comes in part from the "efforts of many persons and groups to secure for themselves the values clustering around [the term] by simply preempting the title." Values of increased prestige and honor, not to mention remuneration, that have become interlinked with the idea of a professional.

In general, the term has come to refer to "full-time involvement in a given occupation from which one earns a living and a certain quality that characterizes the performance of that occupation." The term is used also to project involvement in a respectful specialty that may "elicit" confidence in the one performing the service or fulfilling the role.

While such are the current associations which are part of the cluster of meaning of the word, to pursue the issue of a Biblical ethic for the Seventh-day Adventist professional as a matter of the integration of faith and practice, one needs to refer to the roots of the professions.

The original use of the word profession is rooted in the work of the religious orders during the 13th and 14th century in Europe. Hoitenga defines the confessional nature of the term by noting: "In this religious sense the term persists in current usage in Catholic Orders, as well as throughout the Christian churches generally, both
when office-bearers profess their adherence to the Christian faith and a life of service to the Christian community, and when each member professes his personal faith "before God and his people." So 'profession' signifies a lifelong commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ and to service in his kingdom.5 During that earlier period, monks and nuns dedicated themselves to perform certain "essential services" for the people, supported by spiritual donations from the laity. Such service was not restricted to the purely religious; for in that age, life was not divided into religious and secular. The orders, functioning as international institutions "transcended local customs and advanced Christian civilization throughout the Western world."6 As George Schurr's pithy statement attests, "A professional was one pledged to uphold a value that defined a way of life."7 These professionals, working from their bases in the monasteries and nunneries, became the protectors, transmitters, and encouragers of culture and education. As Campbell further notes, "art and learning were protected and encouraged; and interest in learning was fused with a commitment to service. The cultural synthesis which was championed by the medieval Roman Catholic Church united what we might now call the sacred and secular realms of experience."8 Society was thus served in its varied needs for educators, artists, legal experts, political advisors, medical personnel, as well as leaders, theologians, and priests.9

In a world where all of life was seen and understood as directed by God, the disciplines of law and medicine, as well as theology became, in the universities, the paramount specialties, and the province of
professionals. These three, as distinct from the technical vocations of the guilds, came to be regarded as the unique professions. These traditional professions, one may readily observe "mediates man's relations to God, man's relation to man and state, and man's relations to his biological environment."¹⁰

In time, artists and certain military figures were added to the roster. Whereas the earliest professional were in the religious orders, by the 16th century persons who had not taken specific religious vows also came to be part of the fraternity of professionals. Yet they shared the common values of the Christian society they were living in, and its influence shaped both the conception and practice of the new professionals.¹¹

Campbell identifies some eight characteristics that in time came to characterize the ideal professional: 1. Engagement in a social service that was essential and unique; 2. A high degree of knowledge, presupposing a liberal background in the arts and sciences; 3. Ability to apply the special body of knowledge as well as practice; 5. Recognition and affirmation of ethical behavior, usually embodied in a code; 6. Self-disciplined and accepting of personal responsibility for actions and decisions; 7. Commitment to communal interest more than self-interest; 8. More concerned with services rendered than with financial rewards.¹²

To reflect on this list of criteria is to recognize that a professional was indeed influenced and shaped by certain values that came to identify the Christian leader of the New Testament period.¹³
The idea of the professional with a Christian world view and a sense of Biblical vocation was transplanted with some modifications to the colonies when higher education came to America via British Puritans, in the first half of the seventeenth century. Mark Noll makes the point that the Puritans deserve better treatment than they are normally accorded for they were "the only significant group of theologically conservative Protestants in American history who attempted both a Christian and an academic reconstruction of formal thought. Their colleges, of which seventeenth-century Harvard was most representative, were the most self-conscious practitioners of the integration of faith, life, and learning in the history of Christian higher education in America." In a recent address to Harvard graduates, Derek Bok corroborates Noll's assessment by reminding his audience of its heritage as an ethical force as late as the early nineteenth century: "In fulfilling such weighty responsibilities, educators of the period placed great store in the study of philosophy. Its teachings had several purposes: to integrate all knowledge into a coherent, intelligible whole; to reconcile religion and science (or at least to prevent science from undermining religion); and to discover moral precepts that could be forcefully conveyed to students for application in their personal and professional lives. The effort to impart these moral laws and impress them on the behavior of students pervaded the entire life of the college. During chapel services, presidential addresses, and other ceremonial occasions, students were constantly urged to live god-fearing, upright lives."
The "capstone" of the college experience at Harvard then was a one-year course in moral philosophy (ethics), often taught by the college president. This course was intended to pull together all the strands of learning and experiences that had been part of the life of the student and to arrange them into a systematic body of knowledge. Subjects explored and subsumed under this course in "mental science" would later become such separate disciplines as psychology, philosophy, religion, political science, sociology, anthropology, economics and legal affairs. The purpose of such a course, in Noll's words, was to provide final Christian integration for the college career, and final exhortations concerning the kind of citizenship good Christians should practice.

During the period leading up to the Revolutionary War, and its aftermath in the early nineteenth century, the ideas of the conservative European Enlightenment and that of the Scottish philosophical perspective known as Common Sense Realism, came to be embraced by American educators seeking to counter Hume's speculative view of reality. They felt that Hume's infidel thought would undercut the accepted view of reality and make such terms as liberty and justice meaningless. In the process of doing battle and seeking alternative explanations, these educators seemed to have accepted the concept that fundamental reality was "matter in motion," and that fundamental truth depended on "human apprehension." The resulting shift in concept was to prove the beginning of the end for a Christian epistemology. For this new coalition of educational thought was restating Christian morality in a scientific form without appealing to the special
revelation of scripture or to the authoritative traditions of the church. Norman Fiering has recently observed, "Almost without notice in the tumult of the times, however, a great change had taken place in Christian thinking and in the goals of Christian higher education. Puritans had grounded their thinking in special revelation and had worked hard to turn special revelation into a framework for all learning. The educators of the new United States grounded their thinking in the Enlightenment and worked to give special revelation a place within that framework."

With the development and expansion of the United States after the Revolutionary War, fomented in part by the scientific revolution in academia, the growth of cities under the impact of the Industrial Revolution, the plurality of values and backgrounds resulting from the various ethnic immigrants that came over in waves, "the old ways of developing character fell into disfavor. The great courses on moral philosophy gradually disappeared as the antebellum philosopher presidents gave way to the entrepreneurial leaders who built the modern research universities." By World War I, Bok adds, "institutions of learning could no longer even claim to represent an important source of moral guidance for society."22

With the appearance of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, and the effective promotional work of his disciple, Herbert Spencer, Darwinism came to provide a non-Christian explanation for all of life. This marriage of evolutionary thought with the technology of the new science shook the Christian educational community; for the scientific base that had once seemed to affirm the reality of God's world was now the tool
of agnosticism.23

While the church-related colleges struggled to pursue modern higher education and still remain true to a confessional faith, the rapid growth of the new specialties in the premier universities led to the adoption of a new paradigm of the faculty member. Specialization and technical ability defined the new professional, who no longer spoke to society as moral leader and defender of public faith, but who received acclaim as an expert in one of the new disciplines, now having a separate existence because of the collapse of moral philosophy. Bok's insightful comment sums it up best: "As scientific and scholarly distinction came to determine the academic status of the university, the practice of looking at the personal character of candidates for faculty appointment fell into disuse."24

The ethical impact of the new attitude, President Bok adds, was that in the university discipline "ebbed away", gradually, faculty jettisoned their responsibility for the training of character, and the concept of in loco parentis was declared an "ancient fiction." Furthermore, the liberalization affected students chiefly by inducing them "to become less dogmatic, more inclined to question the precepts of parents and church, more tolerant of differing perspectives and points of view."25 The termite of philosophical and ethical pluralism had come to inhabit the edifice of higher education while the faculty promoted a clinical approach to knowledge and skills, leaving students to blunder through to their own beliefs and commitments.
From what we have noted, to this point it is quite evident that in our times the professions have become secular by intention and self-definition. As a kind of modern inclusive summary definition Cogan suggests the following: "A profession is a vocation whose practice is founded upon an understanding of the theoretical structure of some department of learning or science, and upon the abilities accompanying such understanding. This understanding and these abilities are applied to the vital practical affairs of man. The practices of the profession are modified by knowledge of a generalized nature and by the accumulated wisdom and experience of mankind, which serve to correct the errors of specialization. The profession, serving the vital needs of man, considers its first ethical imperative to be altruistic service to the client." Many would regard such an evolution as a very good thing, because it has freed the professions from "clerical domination." But having severed themselves from their religious roots, the professions have left themselves without a significant fabric of "shared values concerning meaning and purpose."

A look at what has occurred in the medical profession in the West, especially the United States, is quite revealing and representative of the replacement of transcendent norms for self-centered humanistic ones. The first code of medical ethics of the American Medical Association described its ethics as resting on the basis of "religion and morality." The code looked to the example of previous physicians of eminence whose conduct "adorned the profession by their learning and piety." Such exemplars saw sacrificial service to society, regardless
of personal dangers, as superior to "considerations of personal advancement" because a sense of ethical obligations overrode other selfish considerations.28

The above code adopted in 1847 was soon under attack by liberals in the profession. In a publication dated 1883, less than forty years later, these later doctors saw ethics proceeding from hidden springs of action, involving "instincts and impulses, as well as the reason and judgment of the individual;" to these every man is his "own rightful sovereign, and an uninvited intrusion into which by others he has a right to regard and resent as 'impertinence.'" The desire of members to have a code reflective of the ideals of the first document was regarded as a childish, immature attitude, dependent on a paternalistic form of unwanted innovation.29

By 1957, a little over a century later, the preamble reflected no reference to ethics, the norms are no longer called laws but are merely standards by which a physician "may determine the propriety of his conduct in his relationship with patients, with colleagues, with member of allied professions, and with the public."30

Jensen and Hellegers in their study, "Conceptual Foundations for an Ethics of Medical Care," observe right at the beginning of their article written some 17 years (1974) later: "Medical ethics is currently in a muddle. Many questions are asked, but few answers are offered. Many anxieties are aired, but few are assuaged. Worst of all, diversity of subjects discussed and the variety of arguments propounded makes one wonder whether there is any proper subject matter or proper methodology deserving the name 'medical ethics.'"31 While
noting that past codes were based on ethical theories of virtue and
duty, their lack of current effectiveness lead these authors to propose
a new theory labeled, "The common good." It is quite obvious that
such a proposal only serves to highlight the shift to humanistic and
sociologically determined norms as the basis for defining what is
normal to the professional.

As was pointed out earlier in Cogan's definition, the professional
is no longer conscious of his vocational roots in a world of
transcendent values.

In today's world to be a professional includes, among other
factors, technical competence applied in a somewhat impersonal manner,
yet resulting in large sums of money for the practitioner; although
sometimes distrusted, he retains high status; and newer vocations
usually seek to attain such a recognition as a means to prestige and
honor. In doing so, to be recognized as professional, the level and
precision of education is usually elevated, a code of ethics is
adopted, procedures for accrediting individual practitioners are
developed, and the group usually establishes self-defining group norms
and identity.

One significant development associated, especially with the later
professions, is a shift from the older concept of an independent, self-
regulating practitioner to that of a more institutionalized
organizational corpus whose aims include the desire for the "security
of salary and benefits provided by an organization." Hence one of
the defining criteria to distinguish between an amateur and a
professional is in fact to be paid for services. This is preeminently

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seen in the areas of the arts and sports. This concern has led many "professionals" in other lines to seek work with corporations, associations, and other institutions. In the United States, federal, state and local governments are the largest employers of professionals.34

Several significant developments have surfaced as a result of these historical realities. Increasingly, professionals are in an adversarial role with management or administration. Such a stance, perhaps a reflex complement to the behavior of trade unions, leads to confrontations based on self-interest and power plays. Whereas the independent practitioner prided himself in his integrity and good name to maintain his profession, the current pattern for institutional workers is to be less responsible in dealing with clients. A further consequence of such institutionalization is an increasing depersonalization and dehumanization of practice and relationships. Herbert Stroup, in reviewing certain modern trends among professionals observed: "For one thing, many have noticed that professionalism, far from developing individual capacities and bringing personal fulfillment, has often brought about the depersonalization of the person. The expert becomes an expert by becoming, to a surprisingly great degree, cut off from the general flow of human experience and by magnifying certain aspects of general living while dwarfing the meaning of many others. He becomes truly a 'slave' or an abject dependent upon the corps of professionals who constitute for him the 'church' of his existence in which ultimate meaning for him is revealed."35

Dr. George Schurr recalls how he once tried to appeal to the
conscience of a tenured group of faculty by asking them what was their obligation as educators. Let me quote his words to make the point: "That turned out to be a terrible mistake, for none saw themselves as educators. Instead, they were chemists or linguists, historians or physicists, philosophers or mathematicians, economists or psychologists. There was not an educator in the lot. By their definition, educators had Ed.D.'s and specialized in how to teach."36

Two other factors are mentioned by Stroup that are worth considering in this context because they have affected the institutions of higher learning: 1) colleges and universities have not been totally successful in integrating professional education with general education, and 2) where licensing by examinations has been the governmental mode of insuring minimal competence, the universities have "abrogated to a large extent some of the essential aspects of professional training, such as the ethical stability of practitioners and the problem of suitable personal motivation for recruits, and dwelt at length on the techniques of the field of practice and the knowledge necessary to pass the licensing examinations."37

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS: IMPLICATIONS

The existence of a "dissociation of sensibility "in the world, as well as among many in christian education, the result, in part, of an evolved secular humanism, being given preeminence in the shaping of the views and philosophy held by professionals, alerts us to the need, as Seventh-day Adventist christian educators, to be conscious of what our personal life assumptions are. Several educators and religious
thinkers have recognized that one's worldview influences the way one approaches his subject matter or discipline, and the emphases and inferences that are drawn. The ascendancy of the application of the scientific method, whose methodology is reductionist, considering a person's wide range of intellectual pursuits, necessitates a constant mental alertness to the possible subversion of valid Christian assumptions about reality. Given the limited range of graduate programs the church can afford most professors in our colleges and universities have been trained in centers where the prevailing attitude is to divorce the consideration of the relationship of one's profession to questions of ultimate meaning and purpose within a transcendental frame of values. The Seventh-day Adventist professional in keeping with the church's view of man as one integrated being whose life must be considered *en toto* needs to take time to understand and learn to teach his students how to make his professional existence an integral part of his life.

By simply propounding a discipline's naturalistic or humanistic frame of reference without the larger context of the world of ideas and what other disciplines such as philosophy and theology, have to contribute to the total awareness of the person, we could be training professional technocrats rather than thoughtful mature persons able to apply their art or skill, and its theory, to the needs of the total person.

The Seventh-day Adventist professor needs to be proudly conscious and confident of the validity of a professional having a worldview to unify thought, practice, and life; as Arthur Holmes has indicated: to
define the good life and find hope and meaning to it; to guide thought and to guide action. He also needs to be aware, as Nicholas Wolterstorff has ably demonstrated, that persons carry around in their minds data beliefs and control beliefs which may be scientific theories or religious beliefs that definitely influence the evaluation, selection, and construction of theories. The legitimacy of the Christian taking his christocentric worldview and using it as a basis for the formulation of theories, or for research, is nothing to be apologetic about, as long as it is a well-informed system that may be reasonably established and is admitted up front.

Having said the above, we must further suggest that being so it is incumbent on Seventh-day Adventist teachers to witness to the reality of God and Christ through their disciplines, their life-styles, and the character of the questions and research they sponsor in their classrooms. If such a teacher recognizes that for the Christian his profession is a divine vocation, then service and the good of society will be preeminent conditions in the practice of his or her calling. Such service in its most comprehensive aspects need to be subject to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and practiced for the salvation and nurture of those who providence places at our feet for training and education.
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Intimately related to this first cause of confusion is another factor: the widespread use of "profession" to refer to three dissimilar concepts. The word is employed to indicate:

a) An occupation differentiated from other occupations
b) A formal vocational association
c) A licensed vocation

An additional but much less critical source of perplexity was found in the common use of "professional" meaning "salaried," in contrast to "amateur" meaning "unsalaried."


A comparison of the Hippocratic oath as sworn to by the Greek and as adopted and adapted by the early Christians will clearly demonstrate the differing religious foci and how these affected this code. (See Reiser, Dyck and Curran, eds. Ethics in Medicine: Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Concerns, [Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1977], pp. 5, 10).

Hippocratic Oath - I swear by Apollo Physician, by Asclepius, by Health, by Panacea and by all the gods and goddesses, making them my witnesses, that I will carry out, according to my ability and judgment, this oath and this indenture. To hold my teacher in this art equal to my own parents; to make him partner in my livelihood; when he is in need of money to share mine with him; to consider his family as my own brothers, and to teach them this art, if they want
to learn it, without fee or indenture; to impart precept oral
instruction, and all other instruction to my own sons, the sons of
my teacher, and to indentured pupils who have taken the physician's
oath, but to nobody else. I will use treatment to help the sick
according to my ability and judgment, but never with a view to
injury and wrong-doing. Neither will I administer a poison to
anybody when asked to do so, nor will I suggest such a course.
Similarly I will not give to a woman a pessary to cause abortion.
But I will keep pure and holy both my life and my art."

Medieval Version - Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus
Christ, who is blessed for ever and ever; I lie not.

I will bring no stain upon the learning of the medical art. Nei-
ther will I give poison to anybody though asked to do so, nor will
I suggest such a plan. Similarly I will not give treatment to
women to cause abortion, treatment neither from above nor from
below. But I will teach this art, to those who require to learn
it, without grudging and without an indenture. I will use treat-
ment to help the sick according to my ability and judgment. And in
purity and in holiness will I guard my art. Into whatsoever houses
I enter, I will do so the help the sick, keeping myself free from
all wrongdoing, intentional or unintentional, tending to death or
to injury, and form fornication with bond or free, man or woman.
Whatsoever in the course of practice I see or hear (or outside my
practice in social intercourse) that ought not to be published
abroad, I will not divulge, but consider such things to be holy
secrets. Now if I keep this oath and break it not, may God be my
helper in my life and art, and may I be honoured among all men for
all time. If I keep faith, well, but if I forswear myself may the
opposite befall me."

9. Ibid.


Such a concept might help explain the value, status, privilege, and
power that have accrued to profession.


12. Ibid., pp. 21-25.

4:12; 3:2-7; 4:13, 15; 2 Tim. 2:15, NIV; 1 Pet. 5:2-4.

14. Rudolph, Frederick. The American College and University: A His-

15. Ringenberg, William C. The Christian College: A History of Protes-
tant Higher Education in America, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B.


18. Ibid.


Norman Fiering in Moral Philosophy at Seventeenth Century Harvard, summarizes the synthesis of one phase of the period's philosophic development as follows: "Henry More's Enchiridion Ethicum offered a secularized theory of the sources of virtue that closely paralleled the Puritan belief that the holy life is won and sustained not only by an illuminated intellect but by a unique combination of will or affections and divine grace." p. 242.

20. Ibid., p. 12.


25. Ibid.


29. Ibid., pp. 33-35.

30. Ibid., p. 38.

31. Ibid., p. 129.

32. Ibid., p. 130.


34. Ibid.

Note: Cogan's observation regarding "specialism" may be viewed as a well-intended hope that still is awaiting serious consideration.


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