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IMPLEMENTING THE INTEGRATION OF FAITH AND LEARNING
ON THE COLLEGE CAMPUS--A DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL

by

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**INTRODUCTION: ADVENTIST EDUCATION: IS IT A DYING
INSTITUTION?**

All human institutions appear to have a life cycle; they are born, they thrive or do not thrive for a period of time, and they die. Some institutions outlast others. However, once the purpose is served, once they are no longer relevant, once their importance is sufficiently diminished, the institution dies. Fortunately, in some instances its death can be staved off by a rebirth which recreates its original mission or gives it a renewed purpose.

The Seventh-day Adventist educational system is such an institution. Although some might argue that it is not of human origin, it is, nonetheless, in crisis--perhaps even in danger of institutional death. Theodore H. White, a highly acclaimed American reportorial writer, commented on the death of the old Collier's magazine:

As we approached the cliff's edge, we also offered what I thought was the best collection of stories, mysteries, self-improvement pieces and narrative reporting of any mass magazine--but no particular vision of the world. And so we were doomed to perish.¹

The position of Seventh-day Adventist schools today can be compared to Collier's situation then. They offer

enlarged curricula, have better buildings and facilities with more professionally prepared teachers./ However, these same teachers often have no particular vision of the world.

The purpose of this paper is (1) to explore reasons for the problems encountered, (2) to develop a rationale for the continuation of the Adventist school system and (3) to propose one model for implementing change and recovery at the tertiary level.

THE SCHOOLS OF THE PROPHETS.

Adventist schools lay claim to being the modern heirs to the legacy of the Schools of the Prophets described in Old Testament scriptures. The purpose of these schools was to train teachers and prophetic leaders for Israel. By the time of Jesus' birth the Schools of the Prophets had been replaced by the educational system of the Hebraic clergy which was provided in temple and synagogue. These latter institutions were not well fitted to train the Son of God for His mission on earth; they offered only their own unique interpretation of scripture with emphasis on the coming greatness of the temporal kingdom of Israel. We are told that God instructed the parents of Jesus to train him at home rather than at the feet of the pretentious

religious leaders. He was taught to work in Joseph's carpenter shop, to read and study scripture by his mother and to interpret them by God himself. Early Seventh-day Adventists wanted that kind of education for the youth of their newly formed church organization. What was begun by G. H. Bell in 1872 in a little one-room school in Michigan has spread throughout the world field. The schools have prospered through the guidance of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. In some countries, it is now possible for a Seventh-day Adventist child to be educated from pre-school through the doctorate level in Adventist schools. Although that statement sounds impressive, the truth is that the school system seems to be in trouble.

You can hear about the difficulties being encountered in almost any meeting where groups of Adventists are discussing why school enrollments are falling short of the mark. The most frequently heard comment is that the schools must "go back to the blueprint." This would seem to indicate that many people feel the schools should return to some imagined point in their past to regain their former position of influence in the church.

MODERN SCHOOLS OF THE PROPHETS

Although today Adventist schools offer a more balanced academic program, an increased number of curricula, and larger, better-equipped facilities they appear to have lost relevance for many of today's church members. Sometimes the reasons given to urge sending young people to church schools appear shallow, inconsequential or (even) untrue. Some of the sense of immediacy felt in the early days of the church's history has vanished and the schools often appear to have "no particular vision of the world." It would be easy for the pessimist to declare that the Adventist schools are "doomed to perish" like other organizations which have outlived their mission and usefulness.

Seventh-day Adventist parents and educators do not give up so easily. In an attempt to recapture the dream a number of "separated" or alternative schools have developed, especially in North America. Some parents try to emulate the example of Mary and Joseph and conduct a home school for their children. Often these individualized attempts at education are successful. However, not every parent is capable of or has the temperament to instruct his/her children.

In some countries such alternative education is simply not recognized or is clearly illegal.

There are also several institutionalized alternatives to the mainstream schools. Some very disciplined efforts have been made to establish schools that go back to the purported blueprint. The most radical of these believe that every subject--mathematics, chemistry, physics, accounting, history, literature, etc.--can be taught using only the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy; and, they can be commended for the creativity of their approach. However, while living in the twentieth century, they give the students nineteenth century behavior models to follow. Modern scholarship is usually ignored, denied, or even described as Satanic in origin unless it supports their particular point of view.

There are, of course, more moderate self-supporting institutions where carefully selected textbooks and resource materials are used in addition to the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy writings. Heavy emphasis is placed on the "specifics" of Spirit of Prophecy counsel and much modern scholarship is regarded as unimportant, if not evil.

Most of these schools are parts of rural communities of church members who believe in the immediacy of the second coming of Jesus with sincere intensity. The schools themselves can usually be

found near health care institutions where all students and most teachers are required to "labor" in the field or hospital part of each day. Teachers work at sacrificial wages and with great dedication.

Why then do these separated schools remain in the minority? Why are they not adopted as the general church model for its educational system? No certain answer can be given but perhaps the "head in the sand" approach to modern scholarship is a major reason. Such an attitude is simply not acceptable to the majority of the church leadership and knowledgeable educators.

The solution to the dilemma must lie within the mainstream schools of the denomination. The problems here are serious. In the worst case scenario, it appears that religion and academics are often separated into two different domains. The teachers are sometimes heard to declare that teaching the Bible is not their job; their task is to teach a particular academic discipline. They claim they are hired to "teach" and not to "preach." In some cases the teachers view their teaching in the Adventist school as "just another job." This attitude is especially prevalent in secondary schools, colleges and universities. They see themselves as academicians first and as Seventh-day Adventist Christians only secondarily. In situations

and disciplines where they are expected to consider the biblical position, the topic is often approached from a disputative viewpoint. The foolishness of the time spent with one of the more common ongoing arguments heard in biology was pointed out by H. M. S. Richards.

Some seem to feel they have solved the riddle of creation by pushing it back a billion or a hundred billion years to the past--it doesn't matter which, because nobody has any idea of how much a billion is anyway...But this sort of thing solves nothing. Whether six billion or six million or six thousand years ago, nothing can originate nothing. Existence cannot come from non-existence. Every effect must have an adequate cause.² In other words, creation must have a Creator.

Here Richards does not imply a long time period for earth's history; rather he points out the foolishness of focusing on argument over forthright presentation of the facts.

DEVELOPING A SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST WORLD VIEW.

Many Seventh-day Adventists have never heard of a world view, let alone a Seventh-day Adventist World View. If you were to ask the average church member, perhaps even the average teacher, you might receive a listing of the cardinal church doctrines, which, while they are true, do not constitute a world view. According to Brian Walsh and Richard Middleton,

"World views...are not systems of thought, like theologies or philosophies. Rather, world views are perceptual frameworks. They are ways of seeing."⁴

Our world view determines our values. It helps us interpret the world around us...A world view, then, provides a model of the world which guides its adherents in the world.⁵

A world view, modeled by Christian teachers, which can assist students in making life choices resulting in personal salvation, which directs students to live a life of service for others in Christ's name and which views all races and all cultures with equality could be an adequate basis for the continued existence of an Adventist educational system. John Fowler⁶ posits seven constructs of a world view for Seventh-day Adventists. They are: (1) God is the ultimate reality, (2) God has revealed Himself to man, (3) God created man in His own image, (4) Sin has marred God's creation, (5) God is engaged in a controversy with Satan, (6) God has taken the initiative to restore man through redemptive activity of Christ and (7) God has guaranteed and will bring about ultimate restoration.

MODELING A CHRISTIAN WORLD VIEW.

Many church members consider the denomination's schools too expensive or too strict or they think that the larger public schools have much more to offer in terms of curriculum and facilities. There is one factor, however, that should be present in Seventh-day Adventist schools which is not available elsewhere,

i.e. Christian teachers who effectively model the Christian's responses to living. Modeling, correctly understood and practiced may be the best reason for the continuation of the denominational educational program. Modeling by teachers is so critical to successful teaching that its effectiveness is now recognized by many educators and its consideration is an integral part of the teacher training programs offered in colleges and universities. Thomas Good and Jere Brophy point out:

However, teachers also socialize their students through modeling. That is, they shape the values, attitudes, and behavioral standards that their students adopt. Students' ideas about appropriate and inappropriate behavior and about how they should look upon themselves and others are affected by what they see when they observe their teachers.³

Some of the behaviors and attitudes which students learn by observing teachers are (1) logical thinking, (2) problem solving, (3) curiosity about their world, (4) the joys of learning for its own sake, (5) honesty, (6) rational self-control, and (7) respect for others. The students will also assimilate the world view of the teacher, whatever it is. Although each of these factors listed is important, assimilation of the underlying philosophy and vision of the world emphatically point out the importance of teachers in a Christ-centered educational program.

INTEGRATION OF FAITH AND LEARNING; DESIGN FOR RECOVERY.

The phrase "Integration of Faith and Learning" has been used so often and spoken of so glibly in recent years that its meaning occasionally becomes obscured. The following definition is given by Humberto Rasi:

Integration of Faith and Learning (IFL): A deliberate and systematic process of approaching the entire educational enterprise from a biblical perspective and with Christian objectives, so as to ensure that students will leave school having freely internalized a Christ-centered, service-oriented, and kingdom-directed view of knowledge, life and destiny.

The integration of faith and learning does not mean the layering of biblical illustration onto academic classwork, the dilution of academic standards with preaching nor just beginning each class with prayer. It means that the teacher's life is so imbued with the Christ-centered world view that it is evident in every aspect of living, including the academic discipline.

The integration of faith and learning as contrasted with the ordinary concept of biblical illustration and moralizing in academic disciplines can be imaged by two pieces of fabric. The illustrative layering/moralizing compares with a printed fabric. The faith and learning union is like a cloth with a beautiful pattern woven into the very warp of the material.

What, then, is needed to integrate the teaching process with a growth of faith? Suggested below are five levels in the teaching/learning continuum where positive changes can be made.

1. The individual teacher needs more than a knowledge of the specific doctrines of Adventism. There must be an intimate experience with and a daily revival of relationship with God. This means taking time for personal Bible study and prayer in addition to regular family and public worship. During that private time the teacher should follow self-directed study of the Bible⁸ or, alternatively, planned readings from commentaries such as the Conflict of the Ages series.⁹ Although it may be difficult to allocate the time and find the privacy needed, arrangements can usually be made with the family's help and careful time management. (If the "begats" get in the way, scan them but continue reading.)

2. The academic discipline must be reevaluated as often as necessary in the light of the teacher's growing personal knowledge of scriptures and awareness of modern scholarship in the field. The philosophical basis for the discipline should be written and used to guide the teacher as each topic is developed.

3. A course outline should be updated each time a course is taught. Teachers should adjust methodologies and approaches frequently enough to ensure that the

material has a fresh and enthusiastic appeal. The outline must include a stated course philosophy which should be based upon the teacher's world view and an understanding of current research scholarship.

4. Lesson plans should present all topics with honesty in terms of scholarship and with careful comparisons and contrasts made whenever there is an apparent conflict between it and the clear statements of the Bible. Questions could be proposed by the teacher which might lead the students carefully to reason from cause to effect and help them to evaluate sources (book, experiment, opinion, etc.) as well as the biblical statement. The instructor's confidence in the Scriptures should be evident.

5. Although testing is often spoken of as a "learning device" it is more often thought of as a contest between the teacher and student. It is, however, an excellent way to assist the student in bringing together conflicting ideas between modern scholarship and the Adventist Christian's world view. Essay questions can be used to hone the students analytic and synthetic skills.

Students often do not understand how to go about answering such questions. They much prefer just to regurgitate what was given by the teacher in class lectures. However, there are ways good teaching can help the student even here. (a) Practice constructing

answers to essay questions in class. Write an essay type question on the board; accept and record all suggestions responses from the students; then have the students (as a group) sort out the responses and form them into a coherent answer to the question posed. (b) Give the class four or five essay questions before the test and tell them that their examination will include two of them. Let them discuss them with you and among themselves, let them ask questions to clarify their responses, and suggest that they practice writing out the answers before coming to the test. (Of course, they would not be expected to bring the preformed answers to the test for copying unless the teacher had a special purpose in this exercise.)

IMPLEMENTING THE PROCESS OF RECOVERY IN YOUR SCHOOL

If we accept the premise that conscious implementation of the integration of faith and learning will begin the process of recovery in Adventist education, then we can say that developing and implementing a model for the integration of faith and learning in your school should positively affect the climate in your school. This paper proposes the following:

1. Conduct a one or two session in-service on faith and learning. Include a discussion of world views, a proposed Adventist world view and what the

integration of faith and learning really means in terms of the classroom teacher in an academic discipline.

2. Appoint a committee of teachers to modify the suggested world view (if desired by the teachers) and to develop a philosophical approach to faith and learning integration. (Actually, the learning/faith interface includes more than just the classroom situation and so all the staff could be included in this process.) Provide each member of the committee with some basic reading on the subject. Walsh and Middleton¹⁰ and Holmes¹¹ would provide a good introduction to the topic. Library materials or a special bibliography¹² of papers should be made available for reference. After the committee report is completed, present it to the entire staff for approval and acceptance.

3. Appoint academic discipline study groups (or quality circles for non-academic areas) whose task it is to (a) articulate a working philosophy for their area, (b) develop an IFL instrument relative to their assignment, and (c) use this instrument for intra-disciplinary (or intra-circle) evaluations. Such a process will take time. The administration needs to allow time in the schedule for its accomplishment and to monitor the activity periodically.

4. A post-session review at the end of the school year should look at the progress made in each area. In academic disciplines the individual departments could be asked to illustrate lessons or approaches which they feel have been successful during the year. Other areas (farm, industry, dormitories and extra curricular programs) should also prepare a report. It might be possible to offer a departmental "reward" to those areas most effective in implementing the process, i.e. special equipment or library materials, for example.

5. The administration needs to develop an instrument designed to measure the success of the IFL program over time. The evaluation instrument should be used short-term (at the end of each school year), medium-term (one year after leaving school) and long-term (five years after leaving school).

6. New teachers and staff members should have a special introduction to integration of faith and learning each year prior to the arrival of returning staff members. The regular pre-session should also include a review of the IFL concept and a discussion of the successes and failures of the integration program. The input of individual staff members is very important; taking the staff suggestions seriously is even more critical. A heuristic approach to the various IFL activities would presuppose that modifications might be made in the various documents,

such as the departmental philosophies and evaluation instruments as well as the statement of the world view, if needed.

CONCLUSION.

This paper has examined the problem of the diminished influence of the Adventist educational system and the need for a coherent Adventist Christian world view to serve as a foundation for the endangered school system. A process was suggested for bringing that world view into play in integrating biblical concepts within academic disciplines at the tertiary level.

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²Kenneth W. Wilson, ed., Walking Through Your Bible with H. M. S. Richards, (Mountain View CA: Pacific Press, 1983), p. 13.

³Thomas L. Good and Jere E. Brophy, Looking in Classrooms (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), p. 133.

⁴Brian J. Walsh and Richard J. Middleton, The Transforming Vision; Shaping a World View (Downers Grove IL: Intervarsity Press, 1984), p. 17.

⁵Walsh and Middleton, p. 32.

⁶John M. Fowler, "The Making of a World View," Paper presented at the Faith and Learning Seminar, Institute for Christian Teaching, Singapore, August, 1989, pp. 14-26.

⁷Humberto Rasi, "Diagram 1. Relationship Between World View, Philosophy, and Education," Presented at the Faith and Learning Seminar, Institute for Christian Teaching, Singapore, August, 1989, unpagged.

⁸There are several alternative approaches toward spacing out Bible reading over a year's time. One method used for several years has been to read three chapters daily except Sabbath when five chapters are read. Recently the One Year Bible (Wheaton IL: Tyndale House) has been published in several different Bible versions. It is arranged by date with portions of the Old and New Testaments, Psalms and Proverbs to be read each day. Another method is to follow the readings suggested in Walking Through Your Bible with H. M. S. Richards (above). These are numbered (not dated) for daily readings and bring together the texts relating to a single event or person, i.e. the lives of kings and the prophesies given them through the prophets.

⁹Sometimes called the Character Classics, these are the five volumes of commentaries on the story of the Bible by Ellen G. White: Patriarchs and Prophets, Prophets and Kings, Desire of Ages, Acts of the

Apostles, and The Great Controversy (Mountain View CA: Pacific Press, date varies).

¹⁰Walsh and Middleton, see above.

¹¹Arthur F. Holmes, The Idea of a Christian College. (Grand Rapids MI: William B. Erdmans Publishing, 1975).

¹²Bibliography is given in Dialogue, 1, No. 1, 1989, p. 35.

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