

INSTITUTE FOR CHRISTIAN TEACHING  
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INTEGRATION OF FAITH AND LEARNING  
IN A SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CONTEXT -  
A POST-MODERN PERSPECTIVE.

by

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Integration of faith and learning in a SDA context -  
a post-modern perspective

It is the intention of this paper to evaluate current thinking in Christian education about the integration of faith and learning from a Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) perspective within a post-modern paradigm. Essentially it is believed that the definition of 'faith' may be a key difference between the SDA concept and that of other Christian educators. The motivation for this paper is as follows:

- 1 the concept originated within evangelical thinking and it is therefore important to evaluate it from a Seventh-day Adventist perspective (SDA), especially with reference to SDA assumptions and a Biblical explanation of faith. There are other important issues that are particularly SDA oriented, such as the source of authority for educational principles viz. the OT, the NT, scriptural, and/or E G White;
- 2 the concept 'learning' needs also to be examined from a Biblical perspective if the perspective of the Seventh-day Adventist church is to follow closely a Biblical perspective rather than learning theories that are based on secular, humanistic assumptions. At least these learning theories need to be evaluated from a biblical perspective if one is to be consistent and follow through with the whole concept of the integration of faith and learning;
- 3 the purpose of Seventh-day Adventist education must be specifically permeated with the 'blessed hope' which includes both the idea of redemption and of the imminent Second Coming of the Saviour. These aspects should give a specific orientation to the mission of Seventh-day Adventist education which may or may not be found within the thinking of Christian educators of other persuasions.

The purposes of integrating learning with one's faith differ significantly and appear to be as follows:

- 1 for church growth
- 2 for retention of members
- 3 induction of SDA values to maintain the church and its standards
- 4 to market Christian education by paying lip-service to a 'truly Christian' college to convince the constituents of the Christian character of an institution
- 5 a 'quick-fix' which will instantly transform a college into a model Christian community
- 6 the cultivation of personal Christian living on the part of the staff member
- 7 the production of ideal, perfect Christian individuals
- 8 using academic disciplines as a source of illustrations for spiritual truths
- 9 chocolate coating on secular thinking
- 10 to prove something about the institution
- 11 to develop a Christian way of thinking i.e. an integral relationship between the Christian faith and an academic discipline
- 12 to prevent secular drift
- 13 an insulated, even elitist idea of the uniqueness of the institution because of its philosophy
- 14 to develop the ability to discern truth versus error
- 15 to provide a coherent, unifying Biblical approach to knowledge in order that deeper, richer, broader insights about truth, reality and meaning may be attained

The goals identified above suggest that a faith-learning integration approach may not necessarily be positive in an educational sense. Some of them smack of indoctrination. The possibility of hidden agendas as suggested above, should serve to alert the educator to the need for criteria by which the difference between genuine integration and pseudo-integration can be established as well as the formulation of an educational philosophy that is based on biblical principles.

The title of Dudley's book 'Valuegenesis: faith in the balance' suggests that this is a critical time in Seventh-day Adventist education (as well as in the other SDA institutions), which gives credence to this study:

"Valuegenesis is a project which explores how faith is developed and how commitment is learned";  
 "What valuegenesis discovered can provide the basis for new approaches, new dialogues, and new ways to help youth find their Saviour" (1992:viii,ix).

Either the project 'Valuegenesis' was an affirmation of the success of the Seventh-day Adventist educational system or it was a revelation of its problems. Hopefully it was both. The prospect suggested by Dudley that the 'church could still be on the brink of losing a whole generation' is worthy of serious concern (1992:269). Is the \$8 billion spent on SDA education in the 1990's a worthwhile investment in terms of meeting the expectations of church members, viz. providing quality academic training as well as spiritual development for the new generation of church leaders, and for transmitting Adventist culture and values; protection from undesirable teachings and influences; winning young people for the Lord" (Dudley; 1992:vii).

The context therefore is that at a time in which there are economic difficulties as well as a decline in commitment to religion and to service, the relevance of the SDA educational system is being called into question. This is particularly significant to a discussion of the integration of faith and learning because of the expectations inherent within this concept that education will serve to consolidate the church by providing committed graduates. The following statement on the value of the valuegenesis data is important:

"The winning, holding and training of our youth comprise the heartbeat of the church, and its future may well depend on how well we utilize these findings. Let us move ahead in an attempt to catch a glimpse of this unique portrait of Seventh-day Adventist youth as they are seen questing after God and building a personal, vibrant, life-giving faith" (1992:17).

Is this the SDA meaning of the integration of faith and learning? Some of the issues to be addressed are theological by nature. The author acknowledges that this will of necessity be an exposure of her own philosophy of life as an Seventh-day Adventist. Hopefully, the reader will not be side-tracked but rather there will be an openness to the current issues for the sake of pursuing the truth and establishing those principles that both inform the philosophy of life of an educator as well as the values of the educational system.

Inherent in the post-modern perspective are challenges to traditional approaches to the pursuit of truth and knowledge which the Christian educator should pay attention to for an understanding of the concept, 'the integration of faith and learning'.

#### Post-modern perspective

If we are living in a post-modern world, then it is important to establish the characteristics of this 'world' in order that its influence on, Christian education, the integration of faith and learning as well as on the concepts of faith, learning and integration, can be ascertained. Knight suggests that one of the challenges that Seventh-day Adventist's face is the relevance of their own particular perspective of the world in which they live with reference to their standards, i.e. have they come to grips with modernity? (which is now post-modernity!) (1990:2). McLeod proposes that even though Christian academics may 'disparage postmodernism' that all academics are working in their specific disciplines within the thinking of postmodernism (1992:275). With hindsight it becomes apparent that the cultural and intellectual atmosphere of each age influenced Christian thinking so that the influence of postmodernism on Christian thinking currently must be considered. If the Christian worldview is to essentially provide the Christian scholar with a coherent, unified and insightful (even prophetic) view of the world, then awareness of the age in which one lives is an important consideration. Then an integration of faith and learning will be actualised in a sensitivity to the thinking of the postmodern world but with a particular approach to

learning and the development of and reinforcement of a faith. This faith needs to be placed in the God of the Christian worldview. It includes a commitment to sharing this faith as a basis for living a meaningful life within the postmodern world in which there is great skepticism about absolutes including absolute Truth.

One of the problems with postmodernism for the Christian academic is that it is 'rooted in a set of philosophical influences that run contrary' to the philosophical positions held by most evangelicals on the nature of theorizing (McLeod; 1992:275). Inherently, its presuppositions appear to undermine the objectivity of for example, the gospel as absolute truth because of its acceptance of everyone's and anyone's beliefs (McLeod; 1992:275). Therefore it is necessary to investigate the postmodern approach versus the evangelical approach to theorizing.

The post-modern approach to knowledge

McLeod suggests that in the post-modern world, all one has is phenomena, i.e. that which is experienced and therefore no noumena. Because rationality is believed to be a cultural artifact, skepticism, irrationalism and relativism characterize secular thinking. Therefore truth as a possible objective view of the phenomena of the world becomes ridiculous as there is actually no 'world-in-itself' to describe so that postmodern man talks of that which 'is interesting' rather than of truth and that if there is truth, we actually do not have access to it (McLeod; 1992:276.277). Therefore one's theories are not a set of facts that correspond to truth which exists independently of the theory advocated, but that it is one's theories that shape the facts that substantiate the theory and therefore one's version of the truth. Reality is also formed by means of the theories and perceptions one holds. This makes way for multi-realism. Substantiation of one's theory is also in congruence with one's thinking by the scholars within one's discipline i.e. what is in vogue. The test of a theory has become one of time - the fact that no other theory (or new insights) has replaced a current theory is believed to be the test of truthfulness. The problems of not being able to stand back from one's historical situation to view the truthfulness of one's theory over time leaves the scholar negative about the truthfulness of that untried theory. This can be illustrated by looking at various disciplines to see how they have been influenced by this type of approach.

In literature, post-modernism is the denial of the 'fixity of the text' as well as the authority of the author over the interpreter (Himmelfarb; 1992:12). In philosophy it is the denial of the 'fixity of language' and of any reality or truth about that reality (ibid.). In law it is the denial of the 'fixity of the constitution' and of the authority of the founders of the same, that is, the legitimacy of the law (ibid.) History is believed to be a factual account of the events of the past. However, the contemporary historian proposes that 'history takes place in the mind of the historian'. There are facts but the facts are essentially that because of what the historian thinks and the context in which he constructs the past, allowing even for the possibility of 'creating' facts. Therefore the assumption here is that there is no 'theory-neutral' starting point for epistemology (McLeod; 1992:279,280). History is therefore not an attempt to aspire to a fixed, total or absolute truth about the past. The reality of the past is not denied but rather there is a recognition of the reality that this account of the past is an interpretation; that is, historical accounts are a version of someone's present which may reflect the culture, one's race and gender and many other variables. Theology is also influenced by postmodernistic thinking. Tracy sets up the criteria of 'adequacy to experience' as an approach to determining truth about meaningfulness which illustrates the perspective of truth being embedded in a theory, a way of seeing the world, a story that some will agree with while others will simultaneously disagree.

Therefore truth is 'theory conditioned' which McLeod terms 'multi-world realism' in which there is no 'theory-neutral' truth so that there can not be Truth with a capital T i.e. something which is objectively True (McLeod; 1992:281). Therefore facts, truths, values are not found, but made. In contrast to this McLeod suggests that the 'common sense realist' approaches

Truth from the assumption that it is a 'single, objective story' (1992:281). However, he suggests that this approach actually 'falls short of telling the whole story' because of the belief that the story can be told simply in terms of Truth in a situation where the 'multi-world realist' entertains many possible schemes and various worlds. The assumption reflected here is that there is no way to tell which is the True world and that there is no reason for there being a single True world description (as there is no noumenal world) as there are multiple worlds that have been created by human beings (McLeod; 1992:283).

A real question arises, what about a Christian approach to education in which there is an emphasis on Truth as an absolute to which the Christian has exclusive rights, within this postmodernistic thinking? There is therefore a challenge to the very core of Christian education especially when it comes to the integration of faith and learning using the Bible as Truth in a universal, absolute sense. What about the method of interpretation and the establishment of doctrines? What is the basis of systematic theology? Was it a response to a scientific method of establishing truth and which is now called into question along with scientific method?

Besides the issues inherent in the post-modernist movement there are other important issues to consider. Firstly, what is faith?. What is learning? What does it mean to integrate these two concepts? Do they reflect two separate worlds as ways of thinking? Does the concept integration of faith and learning reflect a positivistic approach to the world in which there was an emphasis on acquiring objective truth with the ultimate degeneration into scientism as a dogma in which many misplaced their faith? Is it therefore a theory that is to be relegated to a place in the history of christian educational thinking or does it offer a valid, reasonable approach within the postmodern world?

#### Knowing and believing

The Christian's approach to knowing about his/her world is actually unique and has definite implications for the way in which his/her life is lived. Therefore the relationship between faith and reason, and Christianity and knowledge is an important consideration. To many there is a polarity between a rational versus an emotional or mystical (faith) approach. Those who take the rational approach tend to emphasize that what they believe about Christianity is more important than what they do or how they feel so that they tend to be conservative, orthodox, legalistic and lay great emphasis on the right doctrines to the detriment of a compassionate relationship with others (Miethe; 1987:12). The others who subscribe to a more emotional approach may be either liberal or conservative. The conservative is aware of the historical basis of a Christian faith, but remains unaware of the obligation to grow and mature leading to meaningful evangelism. He/she may over personalize this approach so that God must be on hand to 'pop' miracles to maintain their faith in a selfish demonstration of need. The antithesis of this would lead to believing that problems originate from a weakness in faith. To the liberal Christian faith remains something that one cannot prove as it is a personal faith but what does matter is one's treatment of one's neighbour. An extreme version of this may ironically render the essence of one's Christian faith powerless as it tends to humanism and the social gospel (Miethe; 1987:12):

There are 3 kinds of truth, subjective, objective and revelation. What one knows is ones own truth, what is still to be known in terms of God is truth, God's truth and it is through revelation (general and special) that God makes known this truth to man. All three aspects of truth are important. One can express knowledge in terms of concepts as well as in metaphors. Ironically much of what we know (and believe in) comes from others as we are limited in knowing as a result of having proved it for ourselves. We accept it 'by faith'. We also act on 'truths'. However, it is possible to believe in something but which remains intellectual assent and does not result in action.

Ironically it is in the idea of service that one's faith is enhanced. The valuegenesis project identified the fact that involvement with others assists in the building of a more mature faith.

## Faith

There are a number of issues relevant to an understanding of the concept 'faith' in the context of the integration of faith and learning. Firstly, there is the tension within the shift towards a post-modern paradigm and secondly, the variety of definitions of faith has been instrumental in the development of various churches and religious systems as well as dogma, each with differing concepts of faith.

The emphasis on a scientific approach to knowledge to provide objective, empirically observed truth has to a large extent undermined any other approach especially any one which alludes to faith, especially with reference to Christian faith. This appears to many as so simple-minded and unreasonable in comparison with the first approach. Ironically, the post-modern age is a reaction to scientism, to positivism, to reductionism, with a consequent restoration of experience as an essential element of knowing and yet this does not mean a return to faith as in that of Christianity. Within a pluralistic world, there are many possible bases for one's faith and a mere call to accept the Christian basis without providing a reason for such a hope will not be convincing enough for the non-Christian or even for the rational Christian. All religions believe that they have truth that is personally and subjectively verifiable. Even within the SDA church the different interpretations of righteousness by faith and the relationship between faith and works is an issue. Historically, the 1888 Minneapolis General Conference highlighted the differences between the views of Jones and Waggoner and Mrs White, with that of other leaders in the church. These various streams of thinking are still obvious within the SDA church, with each one claiming to be the Biblical interpretation of the concept.

Jesus chided his listeners for having 'little faith' which meant a lack of thinking as well as one's thought being 'controlled by something else' and in this case it was because of worry which is essentially the 'absence of thought' (Lloyd-Jones as quoted by Miethe; 1987:21). It is more than a matter of how much faith one has. It is more than a personal mystical experience. To base one's claim to truth on an individual subjective experience which is essentially unknowable except to the one who knows, is contrary to the whole revelation of the scriptures. It therefore has to do with the foundation of one's faith or that which one places one's faith in.

Fundamental to this is the use of the Bible as authority, as a source of truth, as well as the ability to reason in developing insight, understanding and acquiring knowledge in order to live wisely. Faith is therefore more fundamental than blindness, ignorance, simplemindedness (Miethe; 1987:16). In 1 Peter 3:15, there is an emphasis on being able to provide an intelligent reason for one's faith because it is this that essentially directs or orients one's life. An important inference is that without intelligent reasons for one's beliefs, life is merely an existence without direction and therefore somewhat futile. Subjective truth is not adequate as a foundation for one's orientation.

The Hebrew word for faith refers to the nature of an exclusive, personal relationship between God and man as a response to what God means in all aspects of one's life. It includes the ideas of knowledge, obedience to God and fear (Ps 76:22, Deut 6:5, Is.43:10, Ex 14:31) (Rice; 1991:13). According to the Greek roots of faith there are two essential aspects that must be considered, viz. that it refers to trust and acceptance of a belief in the heart of the Bible, that is the facts about Jesus as Lord and Saviour and secondly, to the intellectual content as revealed as a truth by which one lives one's life (Miethe; 1987:19). Stott explains faith as a 'reasoning trust' which 'reckons thoughtfully and confidently upon the trustworthiness of God' (as quoted by Miethe; 1987:20). Faith also refers to the contents of belief. Essentially therefore there is ironically, within the idea of faith, the concept of evidence and of proof. E G White states:

"God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are all established by testimony that

appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. Yet God has never removed the possibility of doubt. Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration. Those who wish to doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith" (18:105).

There is a tension between doubt and trust as faith has to overcome the possibility of doubt. Hebrews 11:1 as translated in the New International Version suggests 'Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see'. Ironically it may be that we are blind and can not see while others can, and therefore in sharing and witnessing we are exposed to the reality and to evidence upon which to make our beliefs certain. Service enhances faith. Essentially therefore faith has a propositional element, i.e. in a God, in the actions of God, in His word. A proposition is that which is believed to be true and therefore valid in terms of belief which gives rise to action. C S Lewis proposes that faith is 'assent to a proposition which we think so overwhelmingly probable that there is a psychological exclusion of doubt although not a logical exclusion of dispute' (as quoted by Miethe; 1987:21). This does not mean that truth is something that one has but that there is a lifelong pursuit of truth with a constant examination and reexamination of the evidence. That is, truth is an approach, something one does and something one is. Thus faith becomes an attitude towards life which is both rational and practical and which advances in terms of the growth of knowledge, but the knowledge sought after is that which substantiates one's faith. It provides a confidence as well as an orientation so that that which matters becomes increasingly clear. It is also a desire to live out the will of God as evidenced in His word. Paul emphasizes the idea of absolute committal to God in whom there is total dependence. John's version of faith is involved with a renunciation of the world and is an act or gift from God. Faith is involved in the perception of truth and knowledge is a 'constitutive element in genuine faith (Rice; 1991:15,16). Faith is not to be considered as a source of merit (then it would be works). It is not faith that establishes the validity of the object of faith, but is an accepting trust of what God has done in Christ as the only source of salvation (Acts 4:12). Essentially therefore, there is reference here to the concept of 'justification and righteousness by faith' as well as to a lifelong process of sanctification.

In order to understand the ramifications of various approaches to this concept, I will attempt to highlight four possibilities which will then serve as a basis for the identification of a biblical understanding of the concept. One of the assumptions of this paper is that the definition of the concept of the integration of faith and learning has been largely a neo-evangelical one. The purpose of this exercise is to establish valid reasons for a re-definition of the integration of faith and learning based on the differences in the understanding of the righteousness by faith concept between the SDA's and the popular evangelical view. A further significant implication is the possible differences between the contemporary SDA viewpoint (which may lean towards the popular evangelical viewpoint and which therefore accommodated the latter's definition of IFL ideas uncritically) and the biblical perspective. This is believed to be very important especially with reference to the statement by Dudley that there needs to be a return to a perspective based on grace rather than on legalism in the church, home and school. The implications therefore seem to be wrapped up in an understanding of the good news, the first and second covenant. Therefore the four viewpoints are as follows:

- \* the Roman Catholic
- \* the popular evangelical view
- \* the contemporary SDA view
- \* a scriptural and E G White viewpoint.

The Roman Catholic view versus New Testament justification

1 The church administers the sacrament for the purpose of justification. Pious exercises are required.

2 Not all receive the benefit of Christ's death. Only those to whom the merits of his passion is communicated through the sacraments of the church.

3 The believer is not united to Christ through faith but God gradually infuses the soul with an inherent righteousness that is merited. Therefore there is always a nagging 'if' until death.

4 The grace of God requires first a preparation or disposition which is then followed by Justification itself. Therefore there is a preparation (as listed in the Trent chapters VI and VII) that the sinner must do before justification.

5 The Catholic view encourages doubt and fear:

"Each one, when he regards himself, and his own weakness and indisposition, may have fear and apprehension touching his own grace; seeing that no one can know with a certainty of faith, which can not be subject to error, that he has obtained the grace of God" (from Trent chapters as quoted by Wieland; 1989:136).

6 The Catholic view does not see that the fallen human race 'in Adam' is also 'in Christ' by virtue of His sacrifice.

7 Therefore justification is not by faith alone. Justification 'makes righteous' by virtue of the fact that it is infused, inherent and meritorious.

The above viewpoint should be compared with the New Testament perspective.

1 Justification is by faith in Christ alone. The Holy Spirit is instrumental in this, not the church or hierarchy.

2 The one just act of grace by Jesus Christ, which was a response to the one offence of Adam resulted in the free gift to all for justification of the whole world.

3 There is no iota of merit within the believer. Righteousness is in Christ alone and this is received by the believer through faith. 4 Man has no part whatsoever in his justification and therefore can do nothing in preparation for it. All the believer has to do is to receive, accept, believe, appreciate the finished work of Christ and 'stop hindering this dynamic faith to work obedience by love' (Wieland; 1989:136).

5 The good news is that the gift of grace is all-sufficient and therefore encourages complete confidence in this gift.

6 If there is a stop to resistance all will be drawn to Christ who has died the second death for all. No one need suffer for his sins unless 'he disbelieves and rejects' what Christ has done for him.

7 It is by faith alone that one is saved.

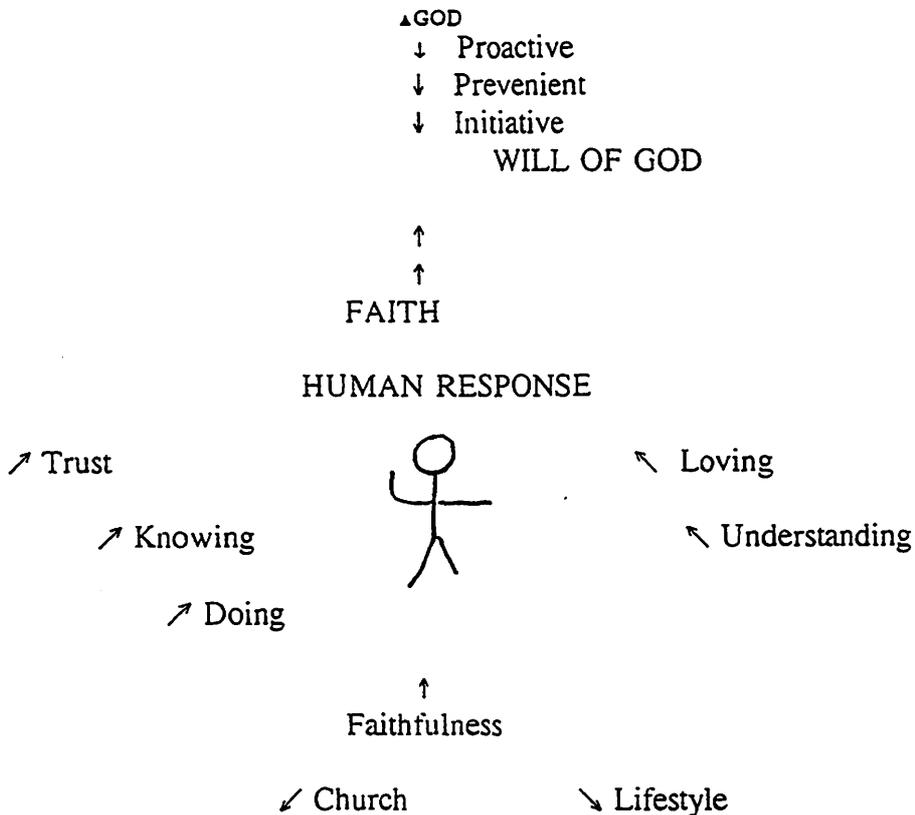
In a comparison between the neo-evangelical and Biblical viewpoints the main differences lie in the focus of faith. In the Biblical one it begins with the revelation of the love of God at the cross (1 Cor 2:1-5) and the appeal is to a love response in gratitude to this fact. The justification through Christ is offered to all and there is a consistent drawing by the Holy Spirit towards this substitution. True acceptance is real faith. The focus in the evangelical approach is egocentric. It begins with man's need for eternal security. In this approach, faith is 'trust' in the sense of grasping for personal assurance of personal security in salvation. The belief in the natural immortality of the soul distorts the ideas of righteousness by faith. The offer of salvation is there as it has been provided for, but Christ does not do anything until this is accepted. Therefore the emphasis lies on the initiative of man for his salvation. The acceptance of Christ is what has to be done to appease an angry God. The Biblical view reveals faith as a deep heart appreciation for God's sacrificial love and there is constraint within the believer to act according to the principle of self-denying love. The motivation is not fear, reward or egocentric. The motivation lies in a faith that works, that is a response in obedience to the realisation of the gift of salvation for all.

What is apparent is the self-centred orientation in the understanding of the concept of 'faith' and justification which is not upheld in the Biblical and White approach, viz. that faith is the means of satisfying personal insecurity and that Christ does not do anything for you until you accept Him (at this time there is justification) so that it is all dependent on your own initiative in making an angry God into a friend and that you will be outside of the 'family' until then. Therefore there is a judicial act of accounting by God so that an unrighteous man while still unrighteous is declared righteous while 'he continues in sinful motivation' (Wieland; 1977:6).

Therefore personal assurance of salvation is the prime motivation in life in contrast to securing the honour and vindication of Christ in the closing stages of the great controversy so that Christ can receive His reward.

There is an important tension between a claim that 'I am saved' from a spiritual pride point of view and that of the security based in a comparison between one's sinfulness and the glory of Christ's righteousness which only can bring assurance and ironically, victory over all sin. It is the unified efforts of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit that enables the believer to overcome as Christ did. This is the essence of the good news of salvation in contrast to attempts to maintain the Christian life by observing many rules which emphasizes the difficulties of remaining a Christian. There is a great emphasis on the idea that it is hard to be saved and easy to be lost which is in contradiction with the Biblical idea that it just the opposite in which the emphasis is on the idea that all were justified at Christ's death.

A self-centred orientation towards the second coming and going to heaven infers a desire for reward and possible escape from the problems of this world rather than participation in a full vindication of God and precipitating by means of a living faith that works, the end to world-wide suffering. The emphasis on faith and works rather than a faith that works, i.e. that we truly believe which results in a faith that works so that righteousness or living according to the will of God rather than one's own interpretation of God's will, becomes the focus of the Christian. Sin is not just unacceptable conduct, or the breaking of a taboo, within the popular Christian community, it is rather 'whatsoever is not of faith'. Repentance in the evangelical perspective is seen as an unpleasant duty so that there are negative connotations to the ideas of reconciliation and restoration. The Biblical perspective presents repentance as a satisfying, happy experience especially when the reality of the truth that Christ bore our guilt and identified with us completely is brought home.



The above diagram is an attempt to conceptualize the role of faith in the life of the Christian.

Faith and practice are part of the same coin and practicing the Christian faith according to the New Testament suggests two aspects, viz. the worship of God and teaching others by bringing them to a knowledge of God and/or leading them on to Christian maturity (Miethe; 1987:18). The gospel commission is a response for all Christians, to 'go and make disciples' which includes both the front and back doors of the church. Being able to defend one's faith, to witness of one's faith suggests knowing the truth and being able to explain that which has made one free. An 'ignorant Christian' and an 'uncompassionate Christian' are paradoxes in terminology.

An important concept is that faith is not present until a person acts on his/her beliefs because they are believed to be faithful and true. There is a cognitive dimension of faith which includes the idea of knowing and that which is true. It is imperative that the concept of learning should be understood in a Biblical context as well. Much of contemporary learning theory comes from humanistic and behavioristic theories which do not share the same view of man with the Bible.

### Learning

Learning is often limited to the acquisition of knowledge and is detached from a belief-system. A linear idea of the acquisition of knowledge before the application of that knowledge, tends to ignore the essence of the integration of faith and learning. Often that application is left to either the hidden curriculum or to informal situations where life becomes the 'best' teacher. The concept of learning has developmental aspects but it is possible for the learner at whatever chronological or developmental stage, to apply the principles learned to his/her life. Learning is essentially an attitude towards knowledge, the ability to apply knowledge, to work with knowledge, to solve problems, and the ability to discern between truth and error. It has strong ethical overtones. Subject matter needs to be viewed as a vehicle for learning for life and the development of beliefs as reasoned and responsible, by which one lives one's life. This presupposes that the knowledge which facilitates this is worthy of investigation and judgment.

Learning, as defined psychologically and scientifically tends to be limited by the particular assumptions of that perspective or theory to each one's own definition of man. A further problem with many of the learning theories is their hierarchical nature e.g. Bloom's taxonomy where the one aspect precedes the next. This is believed to be restrictive. Learning means much more than accomplishing one thing before another, e.g. learning the facts then the concepts and then the values implied. All knowledge has ethical implications.

There is one particular element that the Biblical concept of learning emphasizes that is not given due consideration in these approaches to learning which should therefore serve to determine whether or not the theory is valid or incomplete. Within the Biblical concept of learning no reference is made to the brain but rather to the heart and the mind with a greater emphasis on the heart than the mind (Beechick; 1982:14). A scientific study of the brain allowed the scientists to map the areas of the brain according to function (or be establishing which areas was malfunctioning!), e.g. reading, memory of place etc. but some people whose reading area had been damaged still learned to read with the implications that there is besides a material brain, an immaterial mind. The point is that there are mysteries that cannot be explained if the approach is merely a mechanical, deterministic or scientific one. The body-soul or body-mind question is an ancient one and a recognition of the role of the immaterial side of man, the mind, and the person, are important aspects within learning theories (Beechick; 1982:20). This includes the will, the determination of a person and understanding which are not possible to locate within the person. Therefore besides learning from man himself, it is also necessary to learn from the Creator of man whose Word is His communication to man in the form of revelation. Therefore besides scientific investigation, knowledge about learning needs to be gleaned from biblical principles. It is important to get to the 'heart' of the matter.

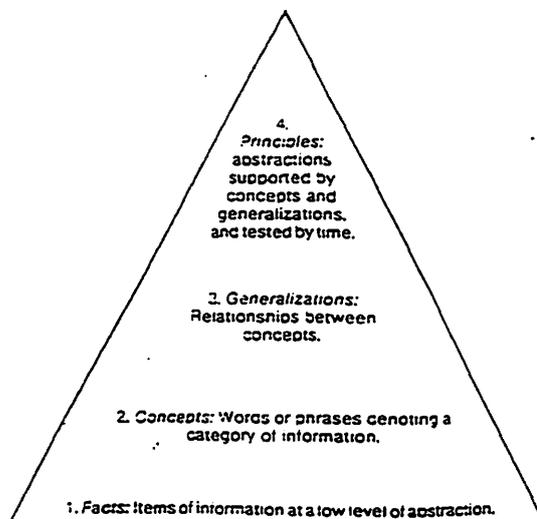
Delitzsch (1855) concluded on the basis of the usage of the word 'heart' over 800 times in the Bible that it must play a central role in 'spirit-soul'

activities and affections (Beechick; 1982:35). This view is contrary both to scientific and current thinking. A paraphrase of his conclusion is as follows:

"If it can be proved that the heart and the brain 'talk' to each other, that would explain the spiritual importance that Scripture gives to the heart. He had in mind the nervous character of the heart rather than its muscular character. His idea was that an impression could begin in the brain, which would stimulate the heart. The heart in turn, would react upon the brain, adding emotion to the impression. From brain, to heart, to brain. He thought this provided only a partial explanation because it accounted only for emotion and not for will and thought... (as quoted by Beechick; 1982:37).

Experiments done by the Laceys suggest that the heart does have something physically to do with motivation, will and learning and that the response of the autonomic nervous system as a unit when the brain sees a 'red light' is not necessarily as traditionally believed (Beechick; 1982:39). From a physical, spiritual, emotional and moral perspective, the heart is involved in that which is good, evil, belief and unbelief, loving and hating (Beechick; 1982:44). The heart is also involved in motivation, in the thoughts, in knowing and in meditation and considering. Beechick uses the model of Wilson, Robeck and Michael to portray the complexity of cognitive and motivational learning. The starting point offered is that of discipline. This includes the ability to apply oneself (self-discipline) to the task of learning as well as the idea of learning to allay fears (Beechick; 1982:57). Self-discipline is something that is learned and is the ability to deal with freedom. Learning something worthwhile is a reward in itself and motivates further learning so that learning builds self-discipline. A disciplined person lives increasingly according to the reality principle where rewards may even be delayed (even far off in the future). Teaching and disciplining have to do with the heart and conscience (versus conditioning) and the ultimate choice is the prerogative of the learner. Heart-set is an important concept. One teaches to influence the 'heart-set' of the learner.

On the level of information learning, facts are essential as well as the importance of the memory. Some of the facts learned are of eternal importance e.g. God is love. Beyond the level of facts, is the level on which relationships are perceived and understanding becomes important. A base of information is necessary for the mind to conceptualize. Personal discoveries are made about patterns, about differences and similarities. An understanding of the concept actually enables the learner to gather more information to expand his/her knowledge. Process and content are important aspects of learning. Fundamental to learning is the learner him/herself. The organisation and method of the teacher may be totally adequate and yet the learner may not learn. However, organisation and method may contribute to raising the level of learning in terms of abstraction and principles. The following diagram suggests that working from the top down involves deductive reasoning while inductive reasoning is working from the bottom up. If the teacher starts at the abstraction level and teaches a principle, this principle may remain a fact in the sense that it was not processed personally by the student. To make a difference in one's beliefs, the learner must apply the principle established personally, on a higher level of thinking, in his/her thinking (Beechick; 1982:103). Therefore working both up and down through the various levels involves the student in thinking from one point to another. There may however, be times in which the teacher must explain to all.



Wisdom is the goal of learning, that is the ability to apply knowledge, to make judgments based on knowledge and the responsibility to use the knowledge acquired in a meaningful way. Beechick suggests that heart-set and learning merge into wisdom (1982:62). Proverbs 9:9 suggests that it is possible to get wiser because of instruction (an increase in learning). Interestingly enough, there is a movement from the knowing level (cognitive) to the heart level in terms of understanding as evidenced in a 'life response' or 'life application'. For this to occur both the head and the heart need to be involved (Beechick; 1982:69). Knowing about the dangers of drugs or smoking does not necessarily mean a commitment to not using either. Learning suggests an underlying purpose of the learner. Ultimately it is the heart-set that makes for lifestyle changes. Essentially one's heart-set determines what is learned, i.e. what knowledge is believed to be important. Therefore knowledge may lead to wisdom or to foolishness.

Ideas about the concept of creativity tend to set logic, and consciousness against elusive ideas like intuition, collective unconscious and unconscious as if there is a 'heart' aspect to learning in terms of 'intense passion' by the creator (Beechick; 1982:84). Creativity implies reflection, encounter (as in complete absorption), making order out of chaos and solving problems. Emotional and intellectual absorption (discipline) appear to be implicated in the creative experience and the ideas that come to man seem to come from the mind and the heart (Beechick; 1982:86, 95). Marzano has an integrative concept of learning which somewhat reflects the idea of the involvement of the heart as well as the mind in learning in his various dimensions of learning.

Ultimately, only the knowledge that takes the Biblical truth into consideration is worthwhile as a foundation for one's world view by which one lives one's life. Therefore integration is an essential aspect of Christian education.

#### Integration

The use of the word 'truth' denotes integration and unification and the use of the adjective 'Christian' also denotes a coherent approach to knowledge because of the underlying assumption that God created all and that all of this is to be understood in terms of the assumption that God is truth. Therefore to find some relationship between one's Christian faith and one's scholarly discipline seems to be somewhat artificial. The rub lies in the fact that so much of knowledge has been constructed using assumptions that have ignored the assumptions enunciated above. Wolfe proposes that integration is more about the 'process of how truth is grasped' than about the fact that God's truth is ultimately unified (1987:5). A consideration of the construction of knowledge emphasizes that not all the questions or answers about reality have been considered in the formulation of the knowledge of that discipline. The assumptions and worldview of the investigator as well as the methods used presuppose that there will be gaps in the understanding and that only God has a complete and comprehensive view of reality. Therefore the nature of human inquiry which constitutes the academic disciplines suggests that only parts of reality are dealt with at a given time. It may even be that over time, these theories and discoveries are actually superseded by other ideas so that essentially there was a misinterpretation of the truth. Scholarly thinking should actually be permeated with Christian attitudes and beliefs and one's scholarly insight should attribute to a Christian approach the very best of scholarship.

Integration suggests that in spite of the diverse ways of knowing, that there can be a unified approach. Another important consideration is that most Christian teachers have been educated in secular thinking so that they are actually confronted with a disjointed body of knowledge when it comes to what they actually believe in terms of their Christian faith as well as in their presentation of academic knowledge (Hasker; 1992:237).

#### Pseudo-integration

Whenever there is a relationship between the academic discipline and the Christian faith which is not integral to either, then the disciplines are

being used for apologetic, illustrative, devotional purposes rather than paying attention to the assumptions, methods and issues with which the discipline is concerned (Wolfe; 1987:3,4). This is mere chocolate coating or an external manifestation of something that must be inherent, i.e. to the truth of knowledge. Knowledge that is unsuitable for living a life of faith is actually irrelevant, as it is foolishness. It is not a public relations gimmick nor employing church members as lecturers.  
The integration of faith and learning

Hasker defines faith-learning integration as "... a scholarly project whose goal is to ascertain and to develop integral relationships which exist between the Christian faith and human knowledge, particularly as expressed in the various academic disciplines" (1992:234). It is a recognition of and commitment to a very different perspective of knowledge and revelation. It is a commitment by the employees of the institution to serve Christ in every aspect of life. It involves 'hard scholarly work' by the employees (Hasker; 1982:236). It is actually a theological matter, in that one cannot compartmentalize one's knowledge, one's mind and one's faith. A failure to integrate results in a lack of the enrichment found in an 'overall, unifying perspective' which connects and unifies all that is known and experienced. To not discern between that which is not in tune with one's perspective could ultimately result in an undermining of one's beliefs. One's beliefs need to have a consistency between practice and belief as evidenced in everyday living. It is impossible to believe in Christianity and then live as if God did not exist.

Faith-learning integration is an educational necessity in that the curriculum reflects the underlying assumptions of the educators. The reasons why certain courses are taught, and the goals of the institution all reflect a particular worldview. This does not invite indoctrination or the approach that all alternate views are to be excluded, but educationally, students need to be encouraged to personally filter constructed knowledge through their own worldview to ensure that the acquired knowledge will make a contribution to living a wise and meaningful life. Ironically, it should be in the Christian College that the most vigorous inquiry occurs as well as vibrant meaningful discussion, because of the fact that there is a source of truth, viz. the Bible that provides a frame of reference as well as the criteria for evaluation of truth versus error and wisdom versus foolishness. Miethé suggests that 'Christian truth is more than a logical exercise, its content demands a way of life' (1987:31).

The idea of 'disciple' connotes 'to learn', to learn from one's source of truth and to develop a relationship with that foundation of faith. Therefore in both thought and action, there is a thread of the total fabric of faith and learning. Therefore the application of what is learned is essentially the growth of faith. Intelligent faith sets one free in the sense that by following the counsel of Jesus who is the Truth, one can know what is really real, really true and what is really meaningful. Reliance on experiential knowledge only is shaky especially in times when circumstances demand a more substantial faith that is certain in spite of all uncertainty. Ironically, it is because of the assumption that the Bible is God's word and therefore the Source of truth, that is possible to truly integrate one's learning as substantial, truthful and meaningful because it is against the Bible that both one's subjective reflections and objective observations need to be tested. Without the unity that the biblical perspective provides, there can only be what the post-modern era is concerned about, that is fragmented incoherent theories subject to falsification because they are not true nor irrefutable. The neglect by scientific method of subjectivity in its pursuit of objective truth, has led to a denial of the reality of the inner man who only is capable of subjectivity which is an important aspect of both faith and learning. Integration based on a biblical investigation of knowledge allows for a coherent, unified approach which includes an objectivist, subjectivist and revelationist approach, i.e. one which is essentially integrated. Having a philosophy of life suggests that one has reflected on one's life and has attempted to find meaning for its various parts so that one's beliefs and values are tied together to provide a sense of direction amidst the polyvalence of the contemporary world. Education is an attempt to find the

great principles within the Bible by which to live a life faithful to God's intentions for human beings.

#### Strategies for integration

There are four dimensions of integration, viz.

- \* the worldview foundation - which Christian insights and convictions are relevant to the discipline, i.e. which of those advocated by the Bible, e.g. that man is made in the image of God, yet fallen and that God created all;
- \* disciplinary foundations - the basic assumptions (epistemological, metaphysical, methodological) of the discipline are evaluated from a Christian perspective in order that the compatibility between the two can be established. The degree of compatibility will determine whether or not there is a need for transformation or reconstruction and/or discussions with other Christian scholars;
- \* disciplinary practice - the Christian scholar establishes which aspects of the discipline are important for a Christian;
- \* worldview contribution - basically, the task of the Christian is to broaden his/her perspective of reality, of God and His world and human beings. Therefore any insights from any discipline which can make such a contribution need to be examined (Hasker 1992:245).

"... the ultimate aim of faith-learning integration is not merely to complete the integrative task within each separate discipline, but to enhance our overall vision of reality in the light of Christ... Our aim must be integral Christian scholarship, not only within each discipline but reaching across disciplinary boundaries. The unity of God's truth demands no less. Second, this dimension emphasizes that elaborating the overall Christian worldview is a common responsibility of the entire faculty" (1992:245,146).

Wolfe and Nelson offer three strategies, viz. the compatibilist, transformationalist and reconstructionist:

- 1 Compatibilist - to a large extent there is a presupposed integrity between faith and discipline so that the assumptions are essentially compatible with that of the Christian faith. Therefore there is no real need to make any links but to rather exemplify the compatibility;
- 2 Transformationist - because there are insights and perspectives within the discipline which are not necessarily congruent with that of Christianity, it may be necessary to reorient or transform the discipline from a Christian perspective;
- 3 Reconstructionist - the assumptions of the discipline are essentially secular and therefore there is an inherent tension between that discipline and the Christian faith which may even mean a total rejection of the discipline itself in favour of a reconstructed discipline (1987:320).

It may be necessary to apply all three strategies as a Christian scholar in order that one's discipline as presented in a Christian context, can be compatible with one's faith (Hasker; 1992:242). The implications of this for the Christian teacher is that a fair amount of time and energy needs to be put into evaluating the assumptions of theories and wherever there is incompatibility, research from a Christian perspective to reconstruct and/or transform that theory (or search for research done by Christian scholars in the specific discipline) needs to take place. There is also the need for communicating and sharing discoveries so that all Christian scholars can integrate faith and learning. The question of integration should also differ between the applied and theoretical disciplines.

### The Christian mind

In human beings it is the mind that is capable of providing orientation. An important aspect of the concept of faith is the role of worship and service. Essentially, it is an act of worship that 'enfolds our mental processes' (Miethe; 1987:39). Therefore discipleship infers the renewal and transformation of the mind in that there is a constant testing of the data presented to the recipient by the mind in terms of reaffirming the will of God and the truth as perceived within a worldview. Therefore error is constantly sifted out in favour of that which is worthwhile and that which matters. A framework is needed for this exercise and this should consist of a biblically constructed knowledge structure.

Barclay suggests:

"Having a Christian mind is therefore no small thing. It is part of the first and greatest commandment... and it comes in a place in the whole scheme of Christian salvation which makes it crucial to both Christian conduct and Christian character as well as to Christian thought... This needs emphasis at the present time, because the current culture of the Western world is tending to put feelings so much before thinking that it has in some circles become hard to defend Christian thinking at all" (as quoted by Miethe; 1987:16,17).

Therefore the acquisition and filtering of knowledge leads to the development of a way of seeing and a way of living. It is essential to the development of a Christian character and the growth of understanding.

Therefore it is not just subjects that are taught, it is also the subject matter and the manner of presentation that are important. A course in the philosophy of SDA education can provide reasons for believing as one does as well as an opportunity for evaluating the beliefs of others and the basis of their worldviews so that indirectly there is more evidence for believing the way one does. It can provide opportunities for strengthening one's Christianity as time is taken to acquire knowledge about why one believes as one does. Ultimately, unless we know and then act on what we know, we do not know in the Biblical sense. This is the responsibility of knowledge. We come to know what we believe when we put our beliefs into action. If we do not do, then actually we do not know. Therefore the idea that there is no difference between the sacred and the secular is not accurate. Knowing requires that one is able to distinguish between that which is wisdom and that which is foolishness. This means that the ability to discern morally which was a gift along with life to Adam and Eve which the forfeited when they chose to become independent of God, can be restored. The task of the disciple of Christ is to 'disciple' (discipline) the mind (Sire; 1990:118). The Christian mind begins with an attitude, that is towards God and naturally orients itself towards the development of knowledge about God for the purpose of obedience to God's will. To live according to God's will presupposes living a wise life. What we do with what we know is what Christian living is all about (Sire:1990:96).

E G White states it as follows:

"All things come from God... that we possess nothing, can offer nothing in value, in work, in faith, which we have not first received of God... Man's houses, his personal acquisitions, whatever is valuable or brilliant is God's own endowment. It is all His gift to be returned back to God in helping to cultivate the heart of man... He has done only that which duty ever required of him... Faith is rendering to God the intellectual powers, abandonment of the mind and will to God, and making Christ the only door to enter into the kingdom of heaven" (1979:24,25)

**Conclusion**

It is believed that there is a difference between the SDA concept of faith and that of the evangelical definition. The kingdom of God on earth is dependent on disciples. It is through these disciples that the world becomes acquainted with God as Creator and Redeemer. Therefore whatever they learn needs to make a difference in their lives. Their faithfulness and faith that works are evidence of this acceptance of God's will for their lives. The fruit of a surrendered life to Christ is evidence that knowing leads to action in a life of obedience rather than that it is merited or dependent on the amount of and quality of faith of the believer.

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