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**FOSTERING THE ADVENTIST ETHOS IN A UNIVERSITY CAMPUS:
AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE**

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INTRODUCTION

Public universities in Africa are experiencing traumas and tremors due to the deterioration of moral values. There is a widespread cry that many university students in public universities are not living up to the expectations of their parents and members of society and this is causing a lot of concern. Peter Aringo, (1990) former Minister of Education in Kenya once said that students are getting increasingly involved in drug-taking. He cites the consequences of this habit as violence and indiscipline.

This observation is quite alarming in that these young people are portrayed as being a threat and danger to themselves and to the entire society, not only now but in the future as well. Lack of Christian values and morals has been accounted for the behaviour of these young people.

Enderbrock (1955 p. 9) has noted that "No matter what other educational advantages a student may enjoy, if his attitude and convictions with respect to values and morals have been ill formed, he/she is on the high road of trouble."

Many Africans feel that education imparted in public universities lacks a sound moral judgement. (Getui M, 1990 p. 71) It focuses mainly on the cognitive development and neglects the character development of the student. Franklin Roosevelt has said that to educate a person in mind and not in morals results in menace to society.

Many parents have realized that secular education has failed to prepare their children to be responsible citizens in their societies. As a consequence, more and more parents in Kenya are sending their children to Christian institutions such as the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton, where they believe that their children will receive true education that will develop their character and their intellectual knowledge. Unfortunately Christian universities are few and very expensive. Therefore, students who so far have access to such universities are those who can afford to pay the school fees regardless of their church affiliations.

The University of Eastern Africa, for instance, has admitted many students who are not Adventists. As a consequence, the non-Adventist students are exerting tremendous influence on the Adventist students to conform to their values and practice.

As Lingenfelter, S (1993 p.21) puts it: "Christian students cannot live apart from societal environment, their values and norms are intertwined with those of their social environment."

Because of the influence of non-Adventist students on the Adventist students, the University of Eastern Africa is at risk of experiencing a rampant deterioration of the Adventist values and ethics.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the strategies and practices that administrators and teachers can use to foster the Adventist ethos in a Christian University campus. The University of Eastern Africa, Baraton (UEAB) will be used as the case study and hopefully the outcome of the study can benefit Christian educators.

HISTORY and MISSION of UEAB

The University of Eastern Africa, Baraton is a Seventh-day Adventist institution located in the Republic of Kenya in East Africa. It was established in 1981. This University is the largest Seventh-day Adventist institution on the continent of Africa. It has about 900 students. UEAB is a fully accredited University which was chartered by the Government of the Republic of Kenya on March 28, 1991. It is also accredited by the Association of Adventist Schools and Colleges.

The University sees as its mission the advancement of the teaching and people-reaching ministry of Jesus Christ such as would facilitate the proper mental, spiritual, physical, and social development of its students. Conscious of its commitment to reach and enrich the many youth who

enter into its portals with the Gospel truth and grace, the University has adopted a Christian philosophy that is stated as follows: " As a Seventh-day Adventist institution of higher learning, the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton sees its mission as the advancement of quality education and people-reaching ministry of Jesus Christ such as would facilitate the proper mental, spiritual, physical, and social development of its faculty, staff, students, and administrators alike".

This institution's mission is designed to restore God's values in the student and prepare them for the present life and for the life to come.

UEAB: A CASE STUDY

The University of Eastern Africa, Baraton (UEAB), being a Seventh-day Adventist institution, fosters the usual daily vesper meetings, as well as the weekly Sabbath school and divine service. Students attend these meetings regularly and on time. But when one carefully observes the students going to church, one notices that the majority of students have neither Bibles nor song books. During the divine service, most students sit passively waiting for the service to end. For many students, going to church is more of routine than the fellowship with God.

In August 1996 students at UEAB staged a two-day strike. They boycotted classes and destroyed some property on campus. What students claimed sparked off the strike does not appear to have been the real cause of the strike and the subsequent lawlessness.. The real problem was that students felt that they were being subjected to "strict Adventist regulations" such as

- (a) daily worship
- (b) strict observance of sabbath by avoiding activities which are not in harmony with sabbath observance such as:

- (1) listening to secular music and radio programs
- (2) participating in, or watching, sport functions and secular games
- (3) studying for classes or reading secular materials
- (4) engaging in everyday activities such as laundry, etc

Analyzing the 900 strong student body, one finds that 51% are not Seventh-day Adventists. It is reported that of the remaining 49% there is evidently quite a portion of nominal Adventists. This makes the non-Adventist orientation quite strong. If one couples to this problem of a strong non-Adventist orientation on campus the fact that the community around the campus is basically non-Adventist, and that the University does not have a church building (the Auditorium is used as a church) or other external symbols of a Christian presence, then the task of Christian witnessing becomes difficult.

Looking at the 60-strong faculty members, less than 15% did their primary, secondary, and University studies in an Adventist institution. Those who did not do their studies in SDA institutions are good Adventists but they have not been exposed to the Adventist philosophy of education. Some of these therefore teach as they were taught in public institutions. Some faculty do not know how to relate their teaching to the statement of Mission of the University, especially the intergration of the spiritual aspect, in their teaching. Some even believe that the University should deal only with the intellect and the church pastor should deal with the spiritual development of students.

Academic considerations and research are becoming more important than the total development of the student. The mission statement is not often and sufficiently embodied in the academic programs of the University. The writing of a statement of philosophy is important but it is of little value if faculty are unable to translate the concept into practice.

Commenting on some schools that do not put the statement of philosophy into action, Hilde, (1980 p. 30) said:

"Identifying the philosophy and objectives is an important function in beginning to build a Seventh-day Adventist school. When this task is neglected, our effort is aimless, uncertainty prevails, and the value of our educational system is legitimately challenged by onlookers. When on the other hand, we face this task together and accomplish it through prayerful study and research we have the right to be confident that we are making progress in the building of SDA school. And we have reason to believe that in that school the secret and hidden wisdom of God will be revealed."

If UEAB fails to put into practice its mission, then it will be moving into the direction of secular universities, and it may be producing students who do not reflect the Adventist values. In his keynote address at the 1992 Annual Council, Robert Folkenberg, General Conference President, remarked that

"the Lord has not called us to operate institutions large or small whose services can be delivered just as effectively by similar secular institutions."

He added that every element of the entire church organization needs to evaluate its activities, its priorities, and products in the light of our unique, God given mission.

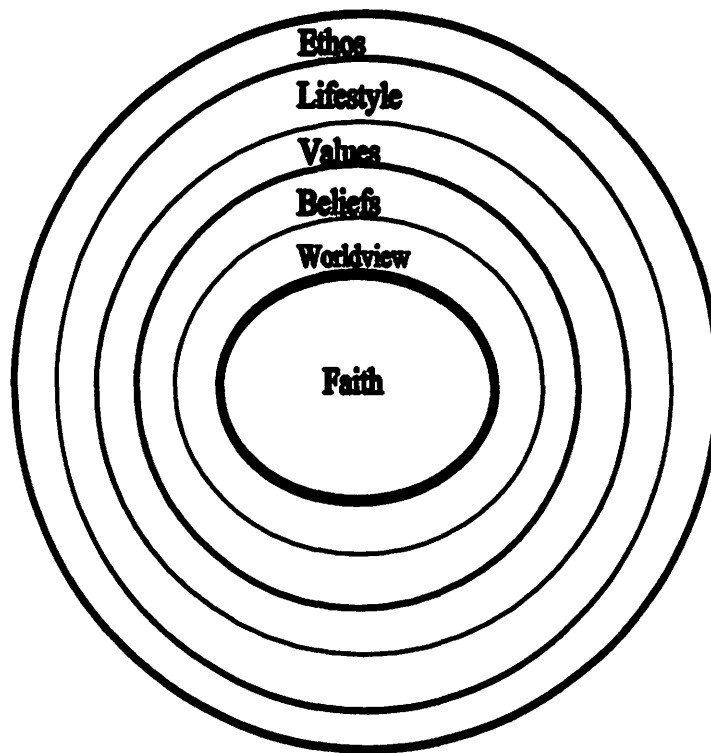
The mission and goal statement of an Adventist university must reflect the reason for institution's existence and must be more than mere words on paper. They must be seen and felt throughout the entire ethos of the university. But what is "ethos"? Ethos is a Greek word which means customs or conduct.

A J De Jong (1990 p 155) defines ethos "as the sum total of all values, traditions, attitudes which together function in a unique balance and proportions of that particular institution. It is the ethos which creates the workplace for faculty members, administrators and students". If the ethos are the

one that create the workplace of faculty, administrators, and students, in an adventist university, christian faith should then be the core of each member of the university worldview.

Faith is an essential factor in Christian life. According to Humberto Rasi "It is faith that brings coherence to all the bits and pieces that make up our life and provide unity and meaning to what we do and what we are. It is this faith that has the power to sustain us in an imperfect fallen world. Faith is intimately connected with and serves as the core of each individual's worldview. This fundamental framework through which we view life and the world is, in turn the basis of our beliefs, that determine our values and guide our behaviour ".

Rasi, H. diagrams these concepts as follows:



UEAB has not given up its Christian vocation and point of reference to become like a public

University but one can see the conjunction of Adventist Christianity and learning rather than their integration.

There is, obviously, a parallel relationship between Christian faith and learning and this does not encourage the fostering of Adventist ethos.

FACULTY'S AND STUDENTS, VIEWS OF ADVENTIST ETHOS

The writer conducted an informal interview with ten UEAB faculty members with the purpose of getting their views on Adventist ethos. The following is a summary of what they perceive as Adventist ethos:

1. Belief that God's character is the basis of Adventist values.
2. Adherence to the Christian moral code as spelt out in the ten commandments.
3. Emphasis of equality of humanity without regard to race, gender, ethnicity, religion and social status.
4. Belief in morality in the area of eating, drinking, and dress.
5. Belief in the individual's body being the temple of the Holy Spirit thus necessitating avoidance of narcotic drugs and stimulating beverages.

The students were also asked what their views were of the Adventist ethos. The researcher met with 30 students selected at random and asked them to give their views of the Adventist ethos.

The following is a summary of what they perceive to be the Adventist ethos.

- (1) Rigidity
- (2) Legalism
- (3) Lack of flexibility in accommodating other churches

- (4) Modesty
- (5) Temperance (no meat in the cafeteria).
- (7) Ethnocentrism.

From the students' responses one can see that either they have a misconception of the Adventist ethos or the University has not instilled in them the Adventist values. It is unfortunate that some of the respondents who will graduate soon, seem not to know the values of a Seventh-day Adventist University.

If one compares the faculty's and the students' views of the Adventist ethos, one sees that they are diametrically opposed. The problem here may be the failure by the faculty to bring the philosophy of the University into the daily experience of the students'.

I believe that if there was intensive interaction between faculty, administrators, and students in co-curricular activities especially on the spiritual dimension, the students, views of the Adventist ethos might have been different. There is no other factor that binds the University together or transmits the University unique mission than the University ethos.

De Jong (1990 p.146) observes that

"Excellence at a church related college means having faculty members, administrators and other staff members surround the students with a care attitude, spending time with the students and sharing ideas, personalities, values and faith, always encouraging those students, making demands upon them, implementing them, cajoling them but always loving them."

Adventist values such as love, integrity, honesty, modesty humility etc, should be inherent in the total education of students. The Adventist ethos may be manifested on campus if each

member of the University community treats one another with dignity and when each member of the University believes that his/her true identity lies in belonging to Christ rather than to a church, or to an ethnic group.

If Adventist institutions could live up to the vision of Adventist education that has been so well articulated by Ellen G. White, Adventist institutions would be models of true Christian values.

ADVENTIST PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION AND Mrs WHITE'S VIEWS ON ADVENTIST ETHOS

E G White's views on Adventist ethos are reflected in her vision of a Christian education in her book Education (1923 pp 14,15). In the passage that summarizes her entire philosophy of Education, she points out that if we are to comprehend the meaning and goal of education, we will have to understand four things about man: (1) his original nature (2) the purpose of God in creating him (3) the change that took place in the human condition at the fall and (4) God's plan for yet fulfilling His purpose in the education of the human race.

Even though man sinned, God did not turn his back on him in his hopeless condition; He still intended to fulfil His purpose for the human race by restoring His image in man through the plan of salvation. Therefore E G White's view indicated that the primary purpose of education is to lead students to God for redemption. Knight (1980 p 171) in reference to E G White's writing on the redemption part of education has said:

"Christian ethic is redemptive and restorative. In the fall man became alienated from God, his fellow men, himself, and his physical environment. The role of the ethical life is to allow man to live in such away as to restore these relationships and to bring man into the position of wholeness for which he was created.... In addition, and perhaps most importantly the ethical

implications of the loving character of God are directly related to the character building role of christian education. This is central to christian education since one of its foremost tasks is to help the student develop a Christlike life."

In her vision of Christian education E.G White wrote that the all-important thing in education should be the conversion of the students. It is upon the foundation of the new birth experience that Christian education can proceed with its other aims and purposes. If it fails in this foundational and primary purpose, it will have failed entirely. It is imperative that every phase of Christian education, the character of the teacher, the curriculum, the methods of discipline, and every other aspect reflect Christ.

To reflect Christ's character suggests purity, integrity, and all virtues in a positive interpretation of His perfect law and, further, that the underlying principle of all these virtues is understood to be love.

In summary E G White's view on Adventist ethos is that it is based on Christ.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHRISTIAN VALUES AND AFRICAN VALUES

African notions of morality and ethics have not been fully studied, and many books either do not mention them or do so in passing.

Idowu (1962 p 236) is one of the few exceptions who devoted a whole chapter of his book to the question of God and moral values among the Yoruba. What he wrote about the Yoruba beliefs applies to most African societies. In his book, Idowu (1962) argues that for the Yoruba, moral values derive from the nature of God Himself, who they consider to be the "Pure King", one clothed in white, who dwells above and is the essentially white object, white material without pattern

(entirely white). Character ("Iwa") is the essence of Yoruba ethics, and upon it depends even the life of a person. So people say, "Gentle character it is which enables the rope of life to stay unbroken." In other words, it is good character that is man's guard.

In the African societies, good character shows itself in the following ways: chastity before marriage, faithfulness during marriage, hospitality; generosity, kindness; justice, truth and rectitude as essential virtues; avoiding stealing; avoiding falsehood; protecting the poor, the weak especially women and children, giving honour and respect to older people and avoiding hypocrisy. These values may look like Christian values though there is a difference. The difference between African values and Christian values as Mbiti (1969 p 213) puts it is that

"it is more societal than spiritual; it is a morality of conduct rather than of being. This is what one might call dynamic ethics rather than 'static ethics for it defines what a person does rather than what he is. Conversely, a person is what he is, because of what he does, rather than he does what he does, because of what he is."

Let me illustrate by an example what Mbiti (1969) is saying. In the African culture, for example, kindness is not a virtue unless someone is kind; murder is not evil until someone kills another person in his community. Man is not by nature either good or bad except in terms of what he does or does not do.

African values and Christian values have the same aim or goal which is character development. One cannot foster Christian ethos in an institution of higher learning in Africa without relying on African values that African students seem to appreciate more than Christian values.

African students who attend Adventist schools expect to see Christian values in action because as it has been said earlier, morality in the African tradition is societal not spiritual. If an institution is preaching love, then love has to be put in action. If integrity is preached, then the

integrity has to be seen.

If we educators want our students' especially African students, to adopt the Adventist ethics, we have to practise what we preach. Rules and regulations of an institution alone cannot foster the Adventist values' instead they create negative attitudes towards them.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FOSTERING ADVENTIST ETHOS IN A UNIVERSITY

CAMPUS

ADMINISTRATION

The administration of an Adventist institution of higher learning should identify and promote values that are unique to the Seventh-day Adventists.

Since administrators are the primary preservers of the Adventist values inherent in the university, they should mould behaviour and values that are congruent with the mission of the institution. This role modelling is important because it allows faculty and students an opportunity to observe specific behaviour from which they can develop desired values. Administrators should promote unity within the University community by encouraging faculty and students to pray together and to engage in discussions about issues such as maintenance of Christian standards. They should also find ways of mixing with faculty and students in order to build trust in an institution. Christ should be the foundation of their decision making. Values such as humility, honesty, transparency should be evident in their lives.

FACULTY

Recruitment of faculty should be out of commitment and not necessarily out of need. These

faculty members should be well qualified Adventist professionals who are well acquainted with the basic philosophy of the Seventy-day Adventist education and priorities and who can influence their students towards responsible ethical and moral behaviour. Committed faculty are crucial in fostering Adventist ethos as they impart these values in day-to-day activities.

Interaction between faculty and students outside the classroom is imperative in order to foster the Adventist ethos in students.

According to DeJung (1990 p 145) "Faculty members at a church related college ought not to hide their specialities, they cannot fulfill their obligation to students by simply imparting information and developing skills, but rather by interacting as total persons with total persons of the students."

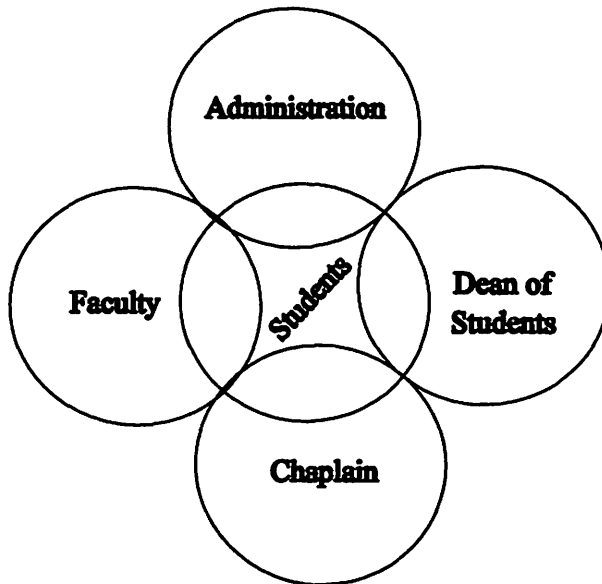
Faculty in an Adventist university are not there only to develop the brain but also the Christian character in students. Students should see that their teachers have great interest in their character development.

CHAPLAIN

As Enrique Becerra in his lecture during the 19th International Faith and Learning Seminar at Spicer Memorial College in India, said, the chaplain's major responsibility is to foster relationship between students parents and other members of the university community. The Chaplain should be seen as the spiritual leader but should never be seen as an administrator. The chaplain and his assistants should energetically foster the religious services, religious standards, religious principles that permeate secular activities.

Administrators, the chaplain, and faculty members should work hand in hand in order to contribute positively to the students' character formation which is the most important goal of the Adventist university.

These relationships can be diagrammed as follows:



As it is said in the Adventist Review of May 25, 1995 p. 12 . Every department of the university should promote on campus ethos that fosters a genuine faith in Jesus Christ, an ardent hope of His second advent, and an intelligent belief in the scriptures. If everything else is done right and fail in this, their failure is complete."

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

Instructional objectives should reflect the mission statement of the university. Every course taken should embody at least one facet of the mission statement.

Seminars on integration of faith and learning should be organized on campus at least once a year so that faculty can see how the notion of correlating truth with individual courses leads to integration of biblical values with the institution's ethos.

ADMISSION OF STUDENTS

Adventist ethos is eroded when the majority of students in an institution are not Adventists. This is the case with UEAB. Seventh-day-Adventist universities should be a haven of refuge to the Adventist Christian student. Every Adventist student coming to an Adventist university is entitled to a strong "majority" christian reinforcement in his/her daily life coming from the institution itself so that the institution's most important objective of staging the occasions when and where the Holy Spirit can find a ready and receptive audience, can be readily achieved.

In the case of UEAB, in order to increase the Adventist students enrolment, the University should consider subsidizing the school fees of the Seventh-day Adventist in order to make Christian education available and affordable to them. The University should also consider to mount a publicity program that will advertise the uniqueness of Adventist education with a view to drawing committed Christian students and outstanding Adventist students in every area. In addition to that, all students admitted at UEAB should sign a commitment form whereby students and their parents or sponsors reaffirm their commitment to comply with the university rules and regulations and that any violations of the rules and regulations will be dealt with.

STUDENT SOCIAL and SPIRITUAL LIFE

Administration and faculty should seek closer bonds with students especially in co-curricular activities. The University should focus on the following in order to foster Adventist ethos on campus:

1. The University should intensify in-reach programs on behalf of non-Adventist students and

establish contact with their families.

2. Strengthen the training and in-servicing of residence halls
3. Establish prayer fraternity among Adventist and non Adventist students.
4. Encourage Adventist students to lead in spiritual activities so as to influence non Adventist students.
5. Establish a spiritual counselling service to help students and faculty in their spiritual growth.
6. Promote values and cultures that are in harmony with Christian values.
7. Organize sabbath school classes according to majors in order to strengthen sabbath school lessons with various disciplines.

CONCLUSION

I have shown in this paper how Adventist ethos can be fostered in a university campus, using the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton as a case study. Christian educators can indeed develop students who are morally good in a corrupt world. Christian educators must work hard to develop students who are like Christ, indwelt by the Holy Spirit and empowered by Him. Such students will be alive to the responsibilities of extending God's word wherever they are. The Hindu man who said to the Christian "The time when we see Christ in you we shall join you" made a profound and telling statement. This is a challenge to all Adventist educators.

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