

Institute for Christian Teaching
Education Department of Seventh-day Adventists

THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM
IN AN ADVENTIST COLLEGE: THE CASE
OF ZAOKSKI SEMINARY

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Introduction

Although it is generally accepted that the educational process includes much more than simply the academic curriculum, nevertheless the danger of neglecting other important aspects of the educational process remains. As J. G. Priestley correctly stated it:

The tendency to use `curriculum` as if it were a synonym for `education` has crept up on us so slowly that we have hardly noticed it. It is one of those small bewitchments of the language which may appear trivial but can have wide-ranging consequences. Curriculum is one half of the educational process: the other half is the people concerned in that process.¹

Two factors helped me personally to become aware of this problem at Zaokski Theological Seminary.

1. Recently one of the prominent Protestant scholars from England visited Russia and spent several weeks at ZTS communicating with the teachers and students. After his visit I asked him what he thought about our academic program at ZTS. In response to this question he sent me a long letter commending the program. He also stated that it is very good that our Church and the Seminary pays serious attention to teaching the doctrines. However, he was very much concerned as he stated "with the hidden curriculum of the institution." In his letter Dr. Kenneth G. Howkins pointed out that to have a good academic curriculum is not enough. And he stated several facts that he could observe during his stay at the Seminary that made it obvious to him that there seems to be a discrepancy between what some professors teach and what they do.
2. A certain visiting professor was teaching a group of students some psychological techniques that could be used in working with the church members. Some of the suggestions obviously could not be used not only in the SDA Church but in any other Christian Church. A panel discussion was organized. One of the professors of the Seminary very powerfully defended the Christian view. The opponent had to acknowledge that some of his ideas he could not defend. It was very obvious that the visiting professor "lost his case." However, the majority of students supported the visiting professor. The students saw the power of arguments presented against the views of the visiting professor but they did not like the way the truth was defended.

¹ J. G. Priestley, "Towards Finding the Hidden Curriculum: A Consideration of the Spiritual Dimension of Experience in Curriculum Planning," *British Journal of Religious Education* 8/1 (1985), 117.

These two factors made it obvious to me that it is really not enough to have the best academic curriculum or the best arguments. Something else is missing. This helped me to understand the statement made by Clark Power and Lawrence Kohlberg: “No matter what principles we may preach, the hidden curriculum of the school operates as the real curriculum for values education”² and this hidden curriculum “is more powerful than any formal curriculum we can name.”³

Thus, the main goal of this essay is an attempt to present a basis for the hidden curriculum of Zaokiski Theological Seminary and to study its impact upon the formal and informal curricula.

In order to reach this goal four steps will be undertaken:

1. A brief overview of the major components of an educational process will be given.
2. The relationship between the different curricula will be suggested.
3. The foundation of the hidden curriculum of Zaokski Seminary will be presented.
4. The impact of the hidden curriculum upon the formal and informal curricula will be suggested.

A Brief Overview of the Major Components of an Educational Process

If education is much more than just an academic program what components does it really contain? It has been correctly pointed out that education consist of at least three big components:

1. The formal curriculum
2. The informal curriculum
3. The hidden curriculum

The Formal Curriculum

The formal curriculum includes all the activities in the classroom: academic programs, syllabus etc..

The Informal Curriculum

The informal curriculum includes activities outside the classroom. As Frank E. Gaebelein has stated:

² Clark Power and Lawrence Kohlberg, “Moral Development: Transforming the Hidden Curriculum,” *Curriculum Review*, Sept/Oct, 1986.

³ Ibid.

The day has long passed, if indeed it was ever present, when learning meant only what went on in the classroom and nothing more. The whole kaleidoscope of activities- clubs and hobbies, literary and debating societies, publications, dramatics, orchestras, bands, and choirs, and last, but very far from least, athletics- these too are part of educational experience.⁴

We may add to this list worships, morning and evening devotionals, weeks of prayer, physical work, trips, excursions, etc.

The Hidden Curriculum

Elizabeth Vallance pointed out that the discovery was made -

That schools are teaching more than they claim to teach, that they are doing it systematically, and doing it well. A pervasive hidden curriculum has been discovered in operation. The functions of this hidden curriculum have been variously identified as the inculcation of values, political socialization, training in obedience and docility, the perpetuation of traditional class structure - functions that may be characterized generally as social control.⁵

The hidden curriculum has been defined as “those aspects of schooling other than the intentional curriculum, that seem to produce changes in student values, perceptions, and behaviors.”⁶ Thus, the hidden curriculum stands for values education. It becomes a vehicle for the transmission of values.⁷ Hidden curriculum is a powerful tool that can produce negative effects as well as positive effects. It includes the school environment; teachers attitude toward

⁴ Frank E. Gaebelein, The Pattern of God’s Truth: The Integration of Faith and Learning (Chicago: Moody Press, 1968), 85-86.

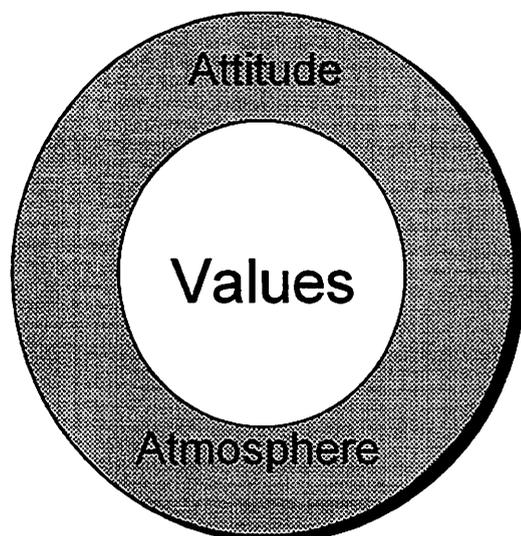
⁵ Elizabeth Vallance, “Hiding the Hidden Curriculum: An Interpretation of the Language of Justification in Nineteenth-Century Educational Reform” in The Hidden Curriculum and Moral Education: Deception or Discovery?, ed. By Henry Giroux and David Purpel (Berkeley, CA: MrCutrhan Publishing Corporation, 1983), 9. On pages 10-11, Vallance states that it is quit difficult to define the hidden curriculum. A number of labels have been attached to it: “unstudied curriculum,” the “covert” or “latent” curriculum, the “nonacademic outcomes of schooling,” the “by-products of schooling,” the “residue of schooling,” or simply “what schooling does to people.” Vallance suggests three dimensions “along which these various labels may be read: (1) Hidden curriculum can refer to any of the *contexts* of schooling, including the student-teacher interaction unit, classroom structure, the whole organizational pattern of the educational establishment as a microcosm of the social value system. (2) Hidden curriculum can bear on a number of *processes* operating in or through schools, including values acquisition, socialization, maintenance of class structure. (3) Hidden curriculum can embrace differing *degrees of intentionality* and depth of hiddenness as perceived by the investigator, ranging from incidental and quite unintended by-products of curricular arrangements to outcomes more deeply embedded in the historical social function of education.”

⁶ Allan A. Glatthorn, Curriculum Leadership (Glenview, ILL: Scott, Foresman), 20.

⁷ Anne-Marie Kennedy, “The Hidden Curriculum: God’s Chariot of Fire?” Unpublished paper, New Bold College, August 1991: 6.

the institution (its mission and goals), attitude toward the subject they are teaching, attitude toward the students, attitude toward the colleagues, attitude toward the administration, attitude toward the Church, attitude toward the Christian values, attitude toward God. It also includes the relationships among students, between the administration and the students, etc. Another important element of the hidden curriculum is the atmosphere in the classroom, in the cafeteria, on the campus.

All of these aspects of the hidden curriculum are driven by the values that are cherished by the institution. This could be presented in the following figure.



Hidden Curriculum

Thus, the primary goal of the hidden curriculum is to advocate values and even influence a change in values which is a complex process. As Marisa Crawford and Graham Rossiter pointed out:

a change in values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, aesthetic sensitivity, etc., is a very complex internal process that is not fully open to scrutiny. Because of this complexity, there is a natural degree of uncertainty in discerning the relationship between teaching interventions and personal learning. It is more obscure and unpredictable than the links between educational interventions and cognitive learning /skills. This is not to suggest that teachers cannot or should not educate for personal learning. Teachers can *hope* to catalyze personal learning, they should not be unrealistic about what might be achieved, recognizing that the classroom does not have any monopoly on personal learning.⁸

⁸ Marisa Crawford and Graham Rossiter, "School Education and the Spiritual Development of Adolescents: An Australian Perspective" in Education, Spirituality and the Whole Child, ed. by Ron Best (London: Cassell, 1996), 312.

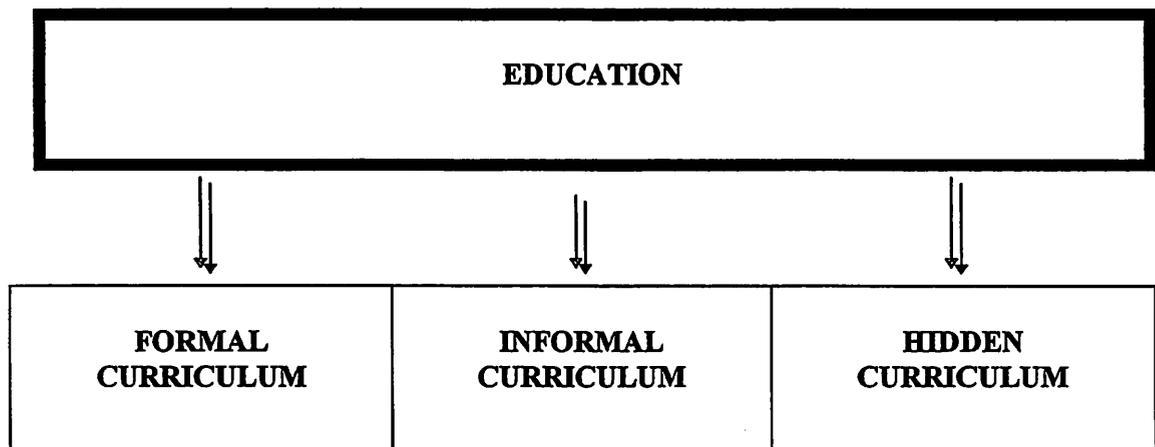
Thus, we may summarize that there seems to be an agreement that the educational process consist of at least these three curricula: formal, informal and the hidden. However, the question remains what kind of a relationship exist between these three parts. What role should be given to the hidden curriculum in this process. Should the educators be in the business of hiding the hidden curriculum or should they encourage a process of raising consciousness toward the hidden curriculum?

Relationship Among the Different Curricula

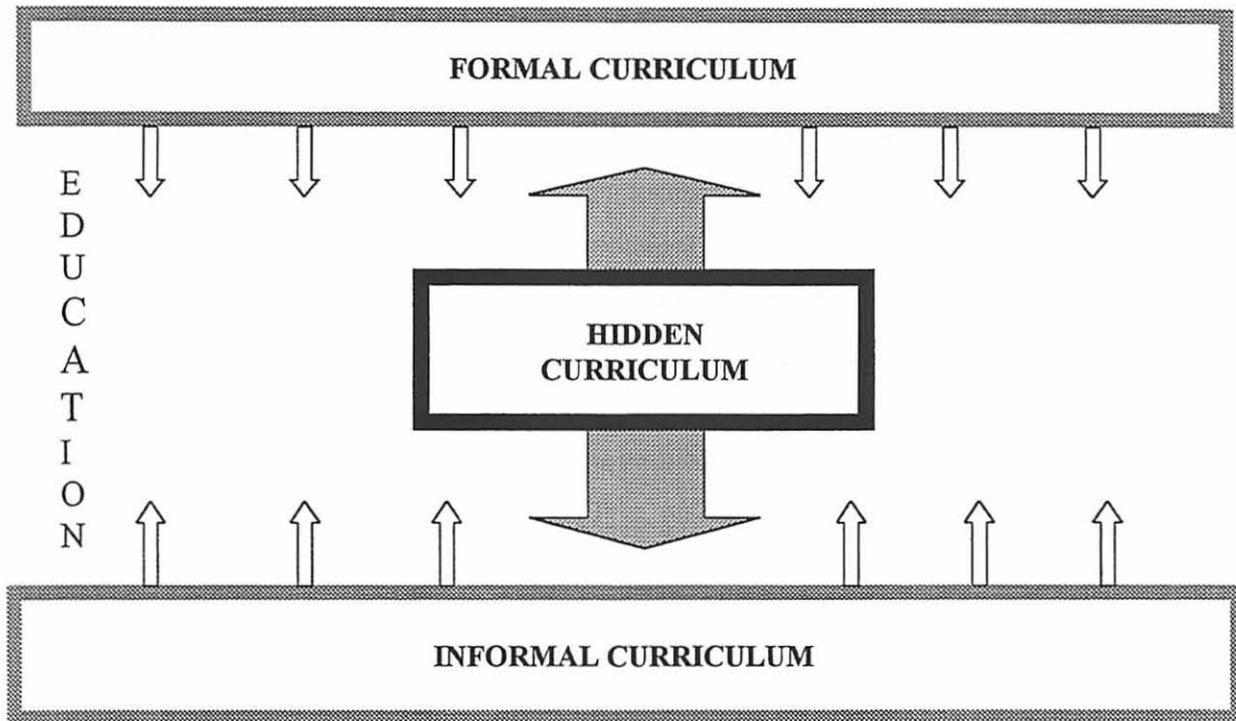
There are at least two possibilities for how the different curricula can relate with each other:

1. All parts are quite independent.

Here the formal, informal and the hidden curricula are quit independent. There is no dialog between them.



2. The second possibility demonstrates that there is a close relationship between the three curricula.



This model suggests that there needs to be a dynamic process which keeps the dialog between the three areas of the education, by which the hidden curriculum becomes the heart or the engine of the whole process. This becomes even more important if one speaks of a Christian education. The values should inspire all the aspects of a campus life. The values should even shape the formal and informal curriculum. George F. Kneller states that “values abound everywhere in education; they are involved in every aspect of school practice; they are basic to all matters of choice and decision-making.”⁹ George R. Knight goes in the same direction by pointing out that “axiology, like metaphysics and epistemology, stands at the very foundation of the educational process.”¹⁰ Consequently, all the curricula including the formal one should be concerned with teaching values. Thomas Lickona suggests that “there is a new awareness that the academic curriculum has been a sleeping giant in values education.”¹¹

⁹ George F. Kneller, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1971), 26.

¹⁰ George R. Knight, *Issues and Alternatives in Educational Philosophy* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1989), 29.

¹¹ Thomas Lickona, *Education for Character: How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility* (New York: Bantam Books, 1992), 162. Lickona, 20, points out ten reasons why “at the threshold of the twenty-first century” schools should teach moral values:

1. There is a clear and urgent need.
2. Transmitting values is and always has been the work of civilization.

He continues: "But the academic curriculum is the chief business of schooling. We would be wasting a great opportunity if we failed to use that curriculum as a vehicle for developing values and ethical awareness."¹² One could paraphrase Knight's statement: "the classroom is an axiological theater in which teachers cannot hide their hidden curricula."¹³

The same could be stated regarding the informal curriculum. There is also a potential for promoting values. As Arthur Holmes pointed out:

Values are also assimilated and lessons learned in extracurricular activities, whether journalistic, athletic, political, or religious. Each can make its own contribution and afford opportunities for growth. Unfortunately, they can also be educationally counterproductive if they are conducted in unthinking and irresponsible ways.¹⁴

Hence the hidden curriculum (values) which influences both the formal and the hidden curricula becomes the driving force for the educational process.

Spiritualization as the development and application of higher-order values, such as fairness, compassion and respect, is not a luxury, but is a prerequisite for all other forms of progress. Such a process of spiritualizing the whole of education is vital for the twenty-first century.¹⁵

This process could be called the disclosure of the hidden curriculum. But since it is "a very complex internal process that is not fully open to scrutiny" it remains at least partially a hidden one. Thus we may summarize that the educator should be involved in the disclosure of at least those parts of the hidden curriculum that are open for a disclosure. At the same time one should raise consciousness of those parts that are not fully open to the examination

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3. The school's role as moral educator becomes even more vital at a time when millions of children get little moral teaching from their parents and when value-centered influences such as church or temple are also absent from their lives.
 4. There is common ethical ground even in our value-conflicted society.
 5. Democracies have a special need for moral education, because democracy is government by the people themselves.
 6. There is no such thing as value-free education.
 7. The great questions facing both the individual person and the human race are moral questions.
 8. There is broad-based, growing support for values education in the schools.
 9. An unabashed commitment to moral education is essential if we are to attract and keep good teachers.
 10. Values education is a doable job.

¹² Ibid., 162-163.

¹³ Knight, *ibid.*, states: "The classroom is an axiological theater in which teachers cannot hide their moral selves."

¹⁴ Arthur F. Holmes, *The Idea of a Christian College* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 84.

¹⁵ Roger Prentice, "The Spirit of Education: A Model for the Twenty-First Century" in *Education, Spirituality and the Whole Child*, ed. by Ron Best (London: Cassell, 1996), 330.

process. Jane Martin observes the following in regards to the consciousness raising of the hidden curriculum:

A program of consciousness raising would aim at such simple yet not at all obvious learning states as realizing that a given setting has a hidden curriculum, knowing what that hidden curriculum is, knowing which practices of the setting are responsible for the various learning states of its hidden curriculum, and understanding the significance of these learning states for one's own life and for the larger society.¹⁶

The Hidden Curriculum of Zaokski Seminary

Since the hidden curriculum as it was presented above stands for values education it is important to find out what values are cherished by the institution. The hidden curriculum of an educational institution can be positive or negative. It can be harmless or harmful. "If a hidden curriculum is harmless, what we do with it will not matter very much."¹⁷ However if we find that it is harmful - "when it instills beliefs, attitudes, values, or patterns of behavior which are undesirable"¹⁸ - than it takes on urgency. "There can be no doubt that when the hidden curriculum we find contains harmful learning states, we must try to root them out. But this is sometimes easier said than done."¹⁹ Thus it becomes obvious that an educational institution should take on an active role in forming attitudes and values. Promoting positive values will be a better way than to root out negative ones. It is not enough just to speak about values in general terms. We need to be as clear as possible. George M. Marsden correctly states:

Nobody, of course, can be against values. That is just the problem, however. Every institution claims to stress values. The term by itself is vacuous. Everyone can endorse it because it has no clear meaning. Church-related institutions that affirm continuity with their religious heritage by talking of their emphasis on values are saying almost nothing²⁰

Thus, the main goal of an educational institution will be to take an active role in not just finding the hidden curriculum but in forming it.

¹⁶ Jane Martin, "What Should We Do with a Hidden Curriculum When We Find One?" in *The Hidden Curriculum and Moral Education: Deception or Discovery?*, ed. By Henry Giroux and David Purpel (Berkeley, CA: MrCutrhan Publishing Corporation, 1983), 137.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 133.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ George M. Marsden, *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 104.

The first step toward the forming of an hidden curriculum would be the development of a concrete list of values of Zaokski Seminary. But who is going to decide what attitudes and values an educational institution should foster:

- Students?
- Teachers?
- Supportive staff?
- Administration?
- Board members?

I would like to suggest that the decision regarding the values of an institution has to be worked out in a dialog among all of those mentioned above taking in to consideration the Mission Statement of the institution.

In the case of Zaokski Theological Seminary, all of the parties involved have prepared a list of values that they believe should be fostered at the institution.

List of Values as Suggested by Teachers:

1. Honesty/Integrity
2. Responsibility
3. Spirituality/Personal Relationship with God
4. Brotherly Kindness
5. Understanding of the Culture/ Broad Minded
6. Sincerity
7. Tolerance
8. Professionalism
9. Justice
10. Sympathy

List of Values as Suggested by the Supportive Staff:

1. Honesty/Integrity
2. Love
3. Spirituality
4. Patience
5. Mutual Understanding/Kindness
6. Thoroughness
7. Tactfulness
8. Thrift/Economy
9. Faithfulness
10. Devoted

List of Values as Suggested by Students:

1. Professionalism
2. Brotherly Kindness/Respect
3. Understanding of the Importance of the Personal Growth

4. Ability to Apply Received Knowledge
5. Self-discipline
6. Love and Acceptance of the Bible as the Word of God
7. Personal Relationship with God
8. Humility
9. Openness/Open Minded
10. To be Consistent in Words and Deeds

List of Values as Suggested by the Board of Trustees:

1. Personal Relationship with God
2. Devoted to the Church
3. Respectful
4. Acceptance of the Total Authority of the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy
5. Diligence/Industry
6. Responsibility
7. Openness to the Needs of Society
8. Devoted to Family
9. Sacrificial Spirit
10. Honesty

Taking in to consideration all these suggestions the following final list can be presented:

1. Honesty/Integrity
2. Responsibility
3. Spirituality/Personal Relationship with God
4. Love/Brotherly Kindness/Respect/Tactfulness/Mutual Understanding/Sympathy
5. Acceptance of the Total Authority of the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy/ Love and Acceptance of the Bible as the Word of God
6. Devoted to the Church
7. Professionalism
8. Understanding of the Culture/ Broad Minded/Openness/Open Minded
9. Understanding of the Importance of the Personal Growth
10. Ability to Apply Received Knowledge
11. Self-discipline
12. Sincerity
13. Tolerance
14. Patience
15. Devoted to Family
16. Diligence/Industry
17. Thoroughness
18. Openness to the Needs of Society
19. Sacrificial Spirit
20. Humility
21. Faithfulness
22. Justice
23. Thrift/Economy
24. To Be Consistent in Words and Deeds

This list of suggested values will be actually the foundation of the hidden curriculum of Zaoski Theological Seminary.

The Impact of the Hidden Curriculum Upon
the Formal and Informal Curricula

Now it becomes important to study how the values relate to all areas of the educational process.

Determining how those values relate to the rest of what one affirms and learns is, among other things, serious intellectual business. If that business is neglected in Christian undergraduate education then students are being short-changed and will be little prepared to relate their faith to the rest of their lives.²¹

Now, after the list of values has been worked out the faculty will study ways the cherished values could be implemented in the formal curriculum. In regards to the relationship between the hidden curriculum and the formal one Martin states: "Just as a curriculum proper can be nonacademic, so a hidden curriculum can consist of what normally would be considered academic learning, be it learning of addition facts, scientific theories, or French."²²

There needs to be a harmony between the formal curriculum and the hidden curriculum. If there will be no harmony between the curricula students will get contradictory messages. As Benson R. Snyder correctly pointed out: "Each student figures out what is actually expected as opposed to what is formally required."²³ Thus, a harmony between the curricula must be worked out. A constant dialogue must be encouraged. "The context and content of the formal curriculum, as well as the hidden curriculum, must be the subject of a searching dialogue if higher education is to have any relevance at all in the coming decades."²⁴

A study also needs to be undertaken on how the hidden curriculum will affect the informal curriculum of the Seminary. What kind of activities could be planned that would help the students to see the attractiveness of the cherished values? At the beginning of each school year the administration and the faculty will select several values that will be emphasized in a special

²¹ Marsden, 105.

²² Martin, 124.

²³ Benson R. Snyder, The Hidden Curriculum (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), 9. Snyder, 27, continues: "If one treats the two curricula as separate, with little or no influence on each other, if one ignores the efforts of students to manage them simultaneously (just as they attempt to respond to the pressures from faculty and from peers, as they try to make social and academic distinctions and judgments), a very simple, trivial model of education may emerge; motivation becomes equated with 'not being lazy,' learning with conformity to formal, required tasks."

²⁴ Ibid., 200.

way during the year. These chosen values will be the main emphasis for the weeks of prayer and other extracurricular activities.

The administration and faculty needs to study ways to create needed opportunities for transmitting values.

However, one should keep in mind that implementing value education in the formal and informal curricula is not enough. There will always be a part of a hidden curriculum that can not be implemented in the formal or informal ones. Even by introducing the process of a disclosure of a hidden curriculum there will be always a tension between what can be planned and intended and what can not be planned. Otherwise the hidden curriculum would stop being hidden.

“We need to ask how values are transmitted. Young people assimilate them more from example than precept, more from their peers than from their elders, and more by being involved than by spectators.”²⁵ Holmes correctly observes that “the climate of a community helps create attitudes and impart values.”²⁶ He continues: “A community, be it family or church or college, is perhaps the single most powerful influence in shaping a person’s values. It is therefore of major importance that we shape that community well.”²⁷ In the same direction goes Lickona by suggesting some ways of fostering values education: “Other important methods of values education – the teacher’s role as model and mentor, building a moral community.”²⁸

The hidden curriculum is not only a list of values but also the ways these values could be understood, made attractive and lived by.

Conclusion

The educational process consists of at least three curricula: the formal, informal and hidden one. All of them are involved in promoting values. However, the engine of values education is in the hidden curriculum. Thus, it becomes a primary goal of an institution to develop a hidden curriculum as far as it is possible to develop. Since it is a hidden one, there

²⁵ Holmes, 82.

²⁶ Ibid., 84.

²⁷ Ibid., 85. See also M. A. Warner, „Headteacher’s Perceptions of Their Role in Spiritual Education: Some Empirical Data and a Discussion“ in Education, Spirituality and the Whole Child, ed. By Ron Best (London: Cassell, 1996), 222: „The head of a school has an enormous responsibility for creating an environment which enables children and young people to understand the spiritual side of their nature. Education can damage or awake children’s natural awareness of the spiritual within themselves.“

will be always a tension between what is possible to plan and to do and what is impossible and could be only hoped for.

A positive change in values occurs as a result of the work of the Holy Spirit. The educators are called to cooperate with the Spirit of God, remembering that the best way to promote values is through example.

“Not the cry,
but the flight of the wild duck,
leads the flock to fly and follow.”

Chinese proverb

²⁸ Lickona, 162.