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**COMPASSION:
A CRUCIAL INGREDIENT IN LEARNING**

by

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INTRODUCTION

Compassion is one of the unique human characteristics planted in him at creation. The Bible tells us that God created man in his own image. The word image referring to internal qualities, this means that human beings are endowed with God's compassionate nature. Truly enough, this socio-ethical behavior, although not in its highest level because of sin, has ever been reflected in the natural world, mostly in people's relationship with their fellow humans. In such compassionate relationships, people are able to tend to the needs of others.

Nevertheless, many people's needs remain unmet. We are living in a world that is pleasure seeking. A world in which people "run to and fro", having very little time to stop and talk to people- almost no time to listen well or to pay attention to the needs of other people. Time is filled by fast movements in every situation. The motto is: "Be fast-talk fast, walk fast, eat fast, listen fast". Many teachers have no time to spend with students, needy students in particular. Countless administrators have no time to counsel with their employees. In general, in many walks of life, a large number of individuals are left on their own in adverse situations because others would not take time to come to their aid.

The greatest solution to this problem lies in people's realization of the need for compassion, and their willingness to let the hidden compassionate disposition they possess be nurtured. When this disposition of theirs gets full strength to come on the outside, the people will find that they can readily make time to stand by their fellow people who are in need. The spirit of compassion itself will give them wisdom in doing so. What a relief to those who will be helped by them!

In this paper, compassion in the general sense is defined as an inner force that moves a person for a kind act; and whenever the discussions deal specifically with Christian compassion, they hold the view of Dr. Muganda's definition of the term. He says that compassion is "showing God's love by letting it flow naturally to others" (Muganda et al. 3).

Compassion, especially a Christian one, is very crucial in current education, which is becoming impersonalized very fast. Recently, all secondary schools in Ethiopia have been required to teach by using plasma television. Both students and teachers are to sit in front of the screen with eyes and ears fixed on what is being said by a human image. The struggle to catch-up with the speed of a non-responsive image is a tough one. No question can be asked; in fact, no interaction or discussion of any kind is carried out between the teacher and the students. It is a one-way flow of instruction. Very soon, even students in elementary schools will be required to use computer and television to learn-out of human touch.

However, for learning to take place effectively, it is very important that there should be a positive relationship and interaction between students and their teachers. Where there is no positive relationship between teachers and students, teaching will be impersonalized, and so, dull and unfruitful. It is assumed that compassion, Christian or

It is assumed that compassion, Christian or non-Christian, enables a teacher to establish a positive relationship with his students. Once a loving relationship is established through the teacher's compassionate behavior, teaching any kind of concept becomes easy.

When this fact is examined closely, it is found out that students also find it easy to assimilate what they learn in such a positive relationship; and once truth (knowledge) is assimilated by the students, it enables them to cope well with life's challenges (of environmental, emotional, social, physical and/or intellectual nature). This is a great aspect of the fulfillment of individuals' needs, which, of course, contributes immensely to the well-being of society as a whole.

From the discussion above, it is inferred that compassion is indispensable to "meet human needs" in the real sense of the phrase. No wonder then that attention is being called towards this valuable human trait. Specifically dealing with the issue of learning, compassion is found to be a major feature facilitating the realization of the overall objectives of learning, which are being equipped to help self and others in areas of different needs and being open to external help. Accordingly, this paper expounds this fact by showing how teachers and other school authorities need to incorporate compassion in their teaching and dealings with students so that learning becomes an effective and a profitable experience for the students. It is hoped that all who go through the following discussions will gain an understanding of this truth and the fact that Christ like compassionate service also contributes to the development of faith in the true source of compassion, Christ in the life of those who receive the service

I. COMPASSION: THE SCRIPTURAL MANDATE

The Bible is full of divine compassion and stories of people showing compassion towards their fellow human beings. As Jesus went around teaching, preaching, and healing, He saw multitudes who were faint and "scattered abroad" and had compassion on them (Matthew 9:36). He was able to relieve the multitude of their burden. In His compassion, Jesus raised the dead, cleansed the lepers, made the lame walk, and opened the eyes of the blind and ears of the deaf (MacCarty 37). Moved by compassion, He fed the crowd, and the crowd followed him (Matthew 15:32).

After the man possessed by unclean spirits was freed when Jesus Christ ordered the spirits to come out of him, the man witnessed about the compassion and mercy done for him; and people believed him and flocked to Jesus (Mark 5:1-20).

In spite of His suffering a shameful death on the cross by human hands, Jesus continued to exercise His compassion towards humanity; He prayed, "' Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing' (Luke 23:34) . . . And through it all, His compassion and mercy for them deepened, for God is love (1 John 4:9)" (MacCarty 37). "But He, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: Yea, many a time turned He His anger away; and did not stir up all His wrath" (Psalms 78:38).

To put more emphasis on a compassionate loving relationship between one another, Jesus said, "In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40). It is a must for Christians to demonstrate Christ-like compassion in their relationship with one another and with others outside the faith (Matthew 5:47-48).

Although parable, a Samaritan who was named a good Samaritan after his kind deed, came across a victim at the point of death, had compassion on him, "bound up his wounds", and cared for him because he counted him as his neighbor (Luke 10:30-37).

Even Pharaoh's daughter, a heathen, had compassion on baby Moses, a Hebrew male who was menaced by the death decree of her father (Exodus 2:6). Her compassion served God's purpose for the Israelites.

According to Peter, compassion is being of one mind, loving one another as brothers, and being pitiful and courteous (1 Peter 3:8).

As the Bible is written to serve Christians as a guideline for life, they are obliged to live by the examples of compassion and the urges and the commands to be compassionate recorded in it (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

II. COMPASSION: ELLEN G. WHITE MODEL

Ellen G. White was a strong believer in a compassionate work for others. According to her, the kindness and love expressed in good deeds bring happiness and satisfaction to the receiver of the compassionate service and mental and physical health to the person who renders the service. She goes on to say that "kindly words simply spoken, little attention simply bestowed, will sweep away the clouds of temptation and doubt that gather over the soul. The true heart-expression of Christ-like sympathy, given in simplicity, has power to open the door of hearts that need the simple, delicate touch of the spirit of Christ" (Evangelism 483).

Speaking about doing good to others, E.G. White made the following strong points:

... Every ray of light shed upon others will be reflected upon our own hearts. Every kind and sympathizing word spoken to the sorrowful, every act to relieve the oppressed, and every gift to supply the necessities of our fellow beings, given or done with an eye to God's glory, will result in blessings to the giver. Those who are thus working obeying a law of heaven will receive the approval of God. The pleasure of doing good to others imparts a glow to the feeling which flashes through the nerves, quickens the circulation of the blood, and induces mental and physical health (Testimonies 4: 56).

In many of her writings, White indicates that Jesus' compassion is to be reproduced in the life of Christians. Referring to the lesson Christ gave to His disciples in words and in deeds, she points out that "He taught them honesty, forbearance, mercy

and compassion, enjoining upon them to love not only those who loved them, but those who hated them, who treated them despitefully" (Fundamentals 177).

She admonishes people whose heads and hands are busy accumulating riches while God's work and humanity are suffering. Prosperity and riches are lent to humanity by God. Every Christian needs to recognize that the "giver is greater than the gift" (Testimonies 4: 82). She advises that we should emulate Christ's dealings with others, manifesting His compassion. She specifies Christ's behavior, which we should copy: "Compassion beamed from His countenance, and His conduct was characterized by grace, humility, truth and love" (Fundamentals 170).

E.G White advises that we have to have a positive influence on the life of other people. "Our life is worse than a failure if we go through life without having way-marks of love and compassion. God will not work with a harsh, stubborn, loveless man. Such a man spoils the pattern that Christ desires His workers to reveal to the world. God's workers, in whatever line of service they are engaged, are to bring into their efforts the goodness and benevolence and love of Christ..." (White, Evangelism 629).

In general White also calls the attention of every Christian to Christ's absolute lesson of unselfishness, because any work of assistance rendered to others with a selfish motive is not in accordance to the law of service.

III. COMPASSION: THE SECULAR CONCEPT

A wide range of compassionate activities is carried out by the secular world for the well-being of society. Feeding the hungry, helping the aged, helping the sick, and dealing with problems of wars and natural disasters are all becoming the prime goal of today's world. It is, however, essential to assess these activities in light of the overall concept of secular compassion.

A. Philosophy

In one secular concept, compassion is believed to be an ultimate genuine loving kindness (Schakian and Sachakian 49). However, as per Taylor's lecture the term secular implies carnal mindedness: as such, it is "temporal, living for the present", hoping nothing for eternity (Taylor). This means the loving kindness supported by this secular concept of compassion doesn't give the person who receives (and, of course, who gives) the compassionate treatment a promise of eternal and perfectly blissful existence and prepare him for it.

Another secular concept of life in general considers the most important aspect of life to be fulfilling one's own instinctual desires. According to this philosophy, success in life is attained when instincts are given full expression, instead of repression (Sahakian and Sahakian 50). This concept stands for self-service whereby the individual strives to have his demands met even at the expense of others. So, this concept of life does not encourage compassionate attitude towards others.

B. Psychologies

Compassion, in the first secular concept mentioned under A above, as in E.G. White model, is for the best or well-being of others. In both learning is thought to be enhanced. Compassion demonstrated to a person induces happiness and appreciation, which are emotional reactions, and emotion and motivation are part of the many factors that influence learning. A happy child will learn better and faster while a frustrated child will not learn well. However, the secular concept still fails to address a person's feeling of emptiness arising from unfulfilled spiritual needs.

C. Sociologies

The secular concept of compassion is infused into the life of the society through the expansion of humanitarian activities intended to be equivalent to Christian charity. Schwarz (421) calls such undertaking "the social gospel". Here again the humanitarian activities lack comprehensiveness because they neglect the spiritual aspect of human needs.

Until recently, character formation had been part of the curriculum in many parts of the world. Nowadays, however, as Kelly has observed well, the goal of education has become merely human and materialistic, focusing on the development of specialized knowledge and techniques. The spirit of good citizenship has replaced character formation, spiritual elements, and morality (532).

This observation shows that there is almost no room for compassion in learning conducted in secular sphere. This latest goal of secular education does not invite teachers to teach compassion to their students by treating them compassionately.

IV. COMPASSION IN THE CLASS ROOM

For learning to take place effectively, the classroom must have an environment conducive to learning. Learning is enhanced in a classroom where a compassionate spirit is manifested.

A. Manifestation of Compassion

Compassion manifests itself in various ways:

1. Love

Compassion is a loving relationship. Allen suggests that establishing a loving relationship with others is very important in helping us to render an effective and efficient service, be it teaching, preaching or otherwise:

Train your mind in strong, impartial, and gentle thought; train your heart in purity and compassion; train your tongue to silence and to true and stainless speech; so shall you enter the way of holiness and peace, and shall ultimately realize the immortal love. So living without seeking to convert, you will convince; without

arguing, you will teach; not cherishing ambition, the wise will find you out; and without striving to gain men's opinions, you will subdue their hearts. For love is all-conquering, all-powerful; and the thoughts, and deeds, and words of love can never perish (66 - 67).

These statements of Allen show that the Christian teacher can extend compassion to his students through gestures of love, even unuttered ones; and in so doing he wins their will.

2. Taking a personal interest for the well-being of others

Because of being busy, teachers face shortage of time to be helpful to their students. They teach given subjects in given periods. But that is not all they need to do. They need to look more into the hearts of their students and put some extra time to help them out with their problems.

A story is recorded by Jones about a sales agent who won attentions of many clients. People flocked to him as if he had been the only agent in the whole city of San Diego. The reason as she pointed out was that the man never walked away from his clients' office or home with his paycheck. He lingered around and asked them if there were any other problems he could help tackle. He treated each client as his own family member (73).

Teachers and school administrators should not just pass by their students and employees. The least they can do is greeting them. Unhappy faces, a tired walk, an angry look- all have stories to tell. So, teachers and school administrators would show compassion if they stop and ask, "What can I help you?"

3. Showing right direction

In a school system, it is very important that students be instructed correctly in effective and efficient skills of study. If teachers don't devote themselves to give students this instruction, students' precious time and energy will be wasted, and needless failures will be experienced by them. Many who are struggling in the wrong way can be directed to opt for the correct way, and can experience success.

4. Inspiration for service

"The true attitude of service is a softening agent that works on the hardest of hearts and situations". In this sense compassion is a manifestation of selfless service to someone even if it is life risking (Jones 251).

As Jones points out, President Eleanor Roosevelt of U.S.A used to send a paycheck of 75 US Dollars every month on the personal account of a needy girl studying in a certain school. When this lady completed her study and got employed, she supported

25 students out of her own personal account. This shows an act of compassion breeding compassion (129).

The Christian teacher is expected to show such selfless motive for service.

5. Defense

The term defense means avoiding harassment. It means calling for a fair treatment (attention). Demonstrating a compassionate defense requires a good amount of knowledge about the person being defended.

Jesus defended the lady who was accused of adultery. He let the trembling lady go in peace. Jesus knew that the accusers, scribes and Pharisees, were faultfinders (John 8:3-7). He knew them and their intentions, and He knew her also very well. He did not say what she did was okay, neither did she try to justify that her conduct was correct. After saving her from the stones of the accusers, He taught her not to continue committing sin. This was a post-defense reproof, a commonly constructive and acceptable discipline (Jones 259).

Teachers should likewise be well acquainted with their students to know when and how to protect them from the unpleasant effects of accusation and when to combine the defense with profitable reproof.

6. Forgiveness

Forgiveness is giving up of resentment against an offender. This may be difficult for non-Christian teachers because they don't understand God's forgiveness and mercy for them. Forgiveness includes considering school children and employees as God's creatures for whom Jesus died on the cross to forgive. They are "sinners to be changed. Fools to be corrected". Their performances may not be perfect, but still they are students and staff who are God's greatest gifts. It is only a Christian compassionate teacher or leader who realizes that these are persons to be trained until changes into Christ likeness of character is effected in them by the power of the Holy Spirit (Jones 268 - 278).

B. Conditions that demand compassion

Due to its limitation, this paper doesn't discuss all worldwide conditions that require compassion. Today the world is flooded with numerous compassion demanding situations (Kim 17). Few of these conditions are discussed below.

1. Violations of regulations calling for discipline

The purpose of discipline is to prepare children for self-government, self-reliance and self-control; so they must be trained, warned and helped to understand that everything natural and man-made is under law and that violation of or disobedience to law will lead to harm and loss (White, Education 287).

In the face of violation of school's rules and regulations, compassion needs to be demonstrated as follows (Education 287-294):

- a. The wrong doer should be reproved gently and kindly to help him see his faults. The reproof may be an oral warning.
- b. That the wrong doer's self- respect must be preserved. He/she should not be publicly reproved, neither should his fault be publicized. He may receive a written warning in the presence of his guardian or parent.
- c. Error has to be put clearly, patiently, and gently before the wrong doer. The measure to be taken next must be discussed or agreed upon during first oral and written warnings.
- d. Disciplinary measure is to be just and reasonable. Upon repetition of violation, what was agreed upon (may be a second written warning) during previous action must be implemented.
- e. No faultfinding endeavors must be made- no wait in hide to catch the violator; instead a preventive measure should be taken to save the children from troubles.
- f. All possible efforts must be made to bring reformation in the wrong doer to avoid dismissal.
- g. When a point of stubborn resistance to change is reached by the offender, he and his parents are to be asked to withdraw from the school. The point of stubborn resistance to change is manifested by continuous violation in spite of previous measures.

Choices are being made every moment everywhere. Compassionately, God wants us to make choices that would be for our best. The compassionate disciplinary measures taken by teachers help students to make such choices.

2. Fear of low grades or academic failure

Many school children are scared of academic failures. Some, especially non-Christians, think academic failure is a failure in life as a whole, and they go to the extent of taking their lives. These need encouragement and guidance and should be helped to see that academic failure is not failure in life in general. They need to be counseled, comforted and helped to discover their talents. Helping such individuals to get training in the area of their interest and strong talent is crucial. Such help boosts their courage and moral, assisting them to look at life more realistically.

C. Primary influence of compassion on the learner

According to Burrell, (20-21) by attending to the needs of people (social, physical, mental, emotional or spiritual) as it is in the pastoral leadership, a significant co-operation either to learn or to do a work is assured.

In an atmosphere of compassion the following healthy attitudes are possible to exist among students:

1. A teacher's and/ or an administrator's compassionate behavior is recognized as an assurance of helpfulness.
2. A strong desire to cooperate in sustaining the loving relationship with the teacher is created.
3. Fear is removed from the heart or mind of the learner. Fear is usually imminent in a learner before the manifestation of compassion, or before closeness is established.
4. Co-operation to interact openly and intentionally becomes possible.

D. Compassion and maintaining rules and practicing fairness

Compassion implies attendance to the best interest of peoples' needs with the aim to give comfort, security, satisfaction and success.

Rules are made in schools to help students govern themselves and live comfortably with themselves, with other students, and with the adults of the school community. For the sake of implementing rules without difficulty, it is advisable to involve students' representatives and faculty members in the making of rules. Rules framed by well-chosen group representatives and well oriented to all concerned are easy to implement (Klausmeier 236).

Fairness implies impartiality in regard to making and applying the rules. . Compassion, on the other hand, is the gentleness and love with which framed rules are implemented in the face of violation. Dealing with violations with compassion helps students to keep rules out of love and understanding instead of fear. This makes the maintenance of rules and practicing fairness possible and easy.

Indicating the importance of possessing Christ-like compassion, Jones writes, "For once we lose our compassion, we lose our souls. When the heart stops beating, the whole body dies." A Christian compassion keeps the school, the society, the church, and the nation alive- active and supportive (248).

E. Compassion and justice

Compassion demands mercy and refraining from the enforcement of rules and laws. Justice, on the other hand, demands the enforcement of rules and administration of punishment for violations. God is compassionate and just. In His loving compassion, He forgave sinful man. He did not let him die. Instead, Christ died on the cross on behalf of humanity.

Compassion does not do away with justice; but promotes gentleness, kindness, mercy and love in dealing with violations. The spirit of prophecy is clear on this issue: "Every true teacher will feel that should he err at all, it is better to err on the side of mercy than on the side of severity". This does not mean letting everything loose because of compassion, neither does it mean killing the offender in respect for rules (White, Education 294).

F. Compassion's relationship to assessment and grading students

As stated earlier compassion in general is socio-ethical by nature. Selfless service to the needy of society is recognized as a valuable behavior. On the other hand, education has to contribute to the development and well-being of society. Ruiz says, "If this nation is to survive, the schools should help implement such purpose as the attainment of self-sufficiency in the prime necessities of life, raising of the standard of living of the people, moral regeneration, and re-dedication to the values that invigorate democracy" (24). This statement tells us that for education to make an impact on the society, it has to be planned to address the needs of the community. Whether educational process meets social needs or not must be verified by continuous assessment.

Ruiz states that traits like emotional stability, tolerance, and study habits are difficult to measure. He also mentions that the progress made in such area can be determined by comparing initial ability with the resultant ability after teaching (29).

Being an implicit concept, compassion is difficult to grade, because it is an inner quality that should flow out or should be demonstrated spontaneously (naturally). It is more of something learned from the life of a teacher or leader.

However, students can be required to respond to the following adoption of Mithimbo's questionnaire (13:13/226), and they can be graded accordingly.

1. Do you feel that your teacher's compassionate behavior helped you become a church member?
a) Yes _____ b) No _____
2. Do you feel that your teacher's compassionate behavior helped you to love him and his subject (s)?
a) Yes _____ b) No _____
3. Do you feel that you learned that your life is in God's watch care every moment because of your teacher's compassion toward you?
a) Yes _____ b) No _____
4. Do you feel you learned that you are God's creature because your teacher treated you so?
a) Yes _____ b) No _____
5. Do you feel that you learned from your compassionate teacher that the troubles of this world, including yours will be over when Jesus comes to this earth?

- a) Yes _____ b) No _____
6. Suppose you have been proven guilty of violating one of the school's rules, which one of the two options helps you the most to learn? Mark (✓)
- 6.1 a) Public defense _____
b) Public rebuke _____
- 6.2 a) Pre-defense reprimand _____
b) Post-defense reprimand _____

V. COMPASSION AND THE CHRISTIAN TEACHER

The Christian teacher keeps himself close to God through a life of prayer, Bible study, and meditation. In all his dealings with students, he recognizes Christ present in the classroom as an honored guest (White, Fundamentals 66).

Christianity, whether in classroom or in a leadership position, is a life of fellowship with Christ.

God intended that as people learned increasingly more about His character through a personal relationship with Him, their perception of truth would sharpen, and their understanding of the realities of the universe and their own identities would become increasingly enlightened. Thus, the closer they would draw to God and the more intimately they knew Him, the clearer they would understand those realities that would give content to creative self-expression (MacCarty 46).

God is always revealing himself to us so we will believe him, believe that he is good, and believe he loves us and has our best interests at heart. Faith is trusting in the God of creation and provision, trusting what he has said, and living our lives according to his words (Neff, et al. 196).

A. Manifestation of Christianity

The following attitudes and behaviors are fruits of the above mentioned faith, which are manifested in the life of the Christian teacher and/or leader (Neff et al., 1989; Fowler, 1981):

1. Trusting in God's saving grace
2. Participating actively in doing good for others
3. Showing willingness to turn thoughts and life to Christ
4. Believing that God loves and cares
5. Being obedient to the working of the Holy Spirit through the conscience. (As a result, he allows his life to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.)
6. Maintaining inner peace or peaceful life, even in the face of threat (e.g. Daniel and his friends)
7. Being able to look beyond the "world of sight"
8. Loving others

As a result of the manifestation of the above attitudes and behaviors, courtesy, kindness, and compassion are manifested in the classroom and anywhere the teacher performs his duty as a Christian teacher. What a beautiful picture of a life governed by faith.

The compassion of the Christian teacher is not dormant. Rather, being active, it accomplishes the following tasks.

B. Teaching attitudes and values

Compassion is a useful tool for teaching pro-social and pro-moral attitudes and values in schools. Even in secular schools immorality and antisocial behaviors are unacceptable. "Attitudes and values are among the most vital outcomes learned in school, for they are important in determining how individuals react to situations and also what they seek in life" (Klausmeyer 382).

Compassion as a precursor of a loving relationship helps students develop healthy attitudes and identify or choose some moral and pro-social values.

1. Attitudes

The following attitudes are likely to develop in students in a compassionate atmosphere:

- a. Liking the teacher
- b. Linking his subject
- c. Liking the school
- d. Liking school administration
- e. Showing courtesy to the teaching staff and administration
- f. Forgiving mistakes

These and many other attitudes can be learned through the observation of (a) compassionate teacher(s) and/or leader(s)

2. Values

The following values are likely to be identified or to be preferred by students in a compassionate atmosphere:

- a. Loving relationship with others
- b. Respect for others as creature in God's image
- c. Forgiveness
- d. Experiencing success
- e. Knowledge of self
- f. Knowledge of reality

Once values are identified, they "grow through learning, and learning progresses along value lines". "When values are modeled with integrity and consistency by significant others [such as Christian teachers]", they are easily accepted by the learner (Hilde 140; Stefani 40).

These attitudes and values help students to co-exist peacefully with other members of their society and to be of use to the whole community.

C. Teaching by witnessing in words and in life example

Compassion can be taught or shared in various ways:-

Neff and his group suggest three levels of communication by which gospel truth can be shared (637-638):

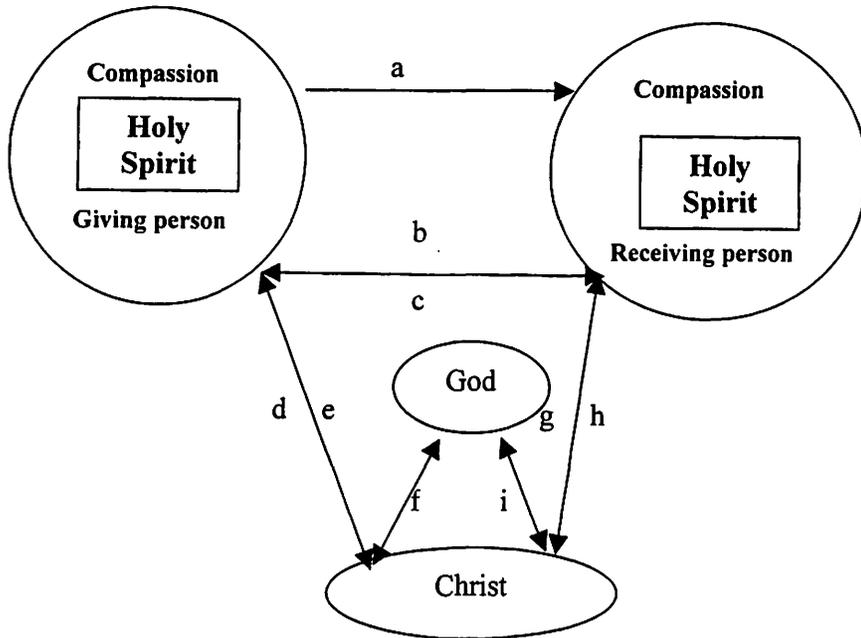
1. "Proclamational": - By this method, facts and truth can be stated. It is information passing or theoretical teaching in which knowledge and experiences are proclaimed or witnessed.
 - 1.1 A person witnessing can explain salvation using such texts as: "For the wage of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).
 - 1.2 "The man freed from unclean spirits witnessed the compassion shown towards him by Jesus" (Mark 5:1-20).
2. "Relational": - This is sharing gospel truth or facts by creating a deep relationship through soul-searching discussion. It is an interest arousing communication carried out with an individual, showing him a better life experience or better future than what he is experiencing.
 - 2.1 The Samaritan woman at Jacob's well and Jesus (John 4:6-42)
 - 2.2 Zachaeus the tax collector and Jesus (Luke 19:10)
3. "Incarnational": - Here, the person witnessing shares gospel truth or facts through his life (actions and overall behavior). This is actually practicing the gospel truth. It is demonstrating the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). It is being loving, meek, temperate, forgiving, and merciful. Relational and incarnational are the most appropriate methods for teaching compassion.

When students learn compassion and set out to practice it, they, in turn, become helpful to others.

D. Pointing to Christ as an ultimate source of compassion

The Christian teacher/leader aims in his activities to lead the persons who come in contact with him to Christ, the ultimate source of compassion.

Compassionate Communication Illustrated



Legend

- One way flow of communication
- ↔ Two ways flow of communication

Explanation of the figure

- a. Compassionate service rendered by compassion giving person.
- b. Feedback, response from compassion receiver goes to the person who gave the service.
- c. Compassion giving person refers the recipient to the source of his compassion, Jesus.
- d. Compassion giving person makes an intercessory prayer with the prompting of the indwelling Holy Spirit, asking Jesus to help the recipients see that it is Christ to be glorified in his compassionate service.
- e. Jesus communicates back hearing compassion giver's intercessory prayer.
- f. Christ and God communicate about the compassion giver.
- g. Compassion receiver, through the power of Holy Spirit, learns that the compassion he received originally came from Christ.
- h. Christ recognizes the compassion receiving person and communicates to him that God is the ultimate source of compassion.
- i. Christ the Son and God the Father communicate about the compassion recipient.

The figure illustrates that a true Christian teacher points his students to the source of compassion, truth, wisdom and knowledge (White, Education 74).

Our compassionate behavior should point people to Christ.

E. Teaching principles

The Christian teacher, in addition to working towards professional success, also strives to teach the principles of truthfulness, obedience, integrity, and purity of life (White, Education 29). The Christian teacher's ministry is also directed to prepare students for unselfish service. Christ came to serve, not to be served. If this principle is taught through the life of the Christian teacher, it will uplift the society.

F. Bringing restoration of God's image in students

One purpose of education is to enable students to reach and realize their maximum potential. This is a special concern of Christian educators who resent man's fall and strive to reverse the situation.

Man was created in the image of God. Sin brought corruption on this nature. The corruption came upon man because of his wrong choice. Taylor's lecture indicated that this corruption was "deformation", which was brought by "conforming" to sin. It is the work of the Christian teacher to "reform" that God-likeness through his "transformational" teaching (Taylor 4). The Christian teacher effects a transformational teaching through a compassionate approach. His compassionate behavior and complementary verbal lesson imprint in the mind of his students the fact that it is right and pleasing to God that they treat their fellow people with compassion (Ephesians 4:32) and that neglecting this is sin (James 4:17).

The Christian teacher is called to teach that there is a reward in obedience to the divine law. The reward is the eternal life, which is available to every one that believes in God. It is also the responsibility of the Christian teacher to instill in the minds of his students that there is penalty to a wrong conduct (disobedience to the divine law). This penalty is eternal destruction (White, Fundamental 484,500).

When students gain knowledge of the benefit of right full living to human beings and its pleasing effect to God, they yield themselves to it.

VI. INTEGRATING COMPASSION INTO LEARNING AND CHRISTIAN LIFE

To integrate is to blend or to put together. Although the earlier discussion shows how compassion is tied with learning, this section provides a clearer and more precise explanation of the issue and adds a related discussion on how compassion works towards building and in a Christian life.

A. Learning /Knowing

Sire points out that learning, as the transformation of heart, mind, and being is a change that comes to man from outside (84, cf. Taylor 5). He further states that "the most important issues of life are knowing the good and doing the good" (97).

As compassion is demonstrated to the student by the Christian teacher, this external influence helps the student to appreciate the good communicated by the compassionate behavior, emulate the behavior itself, and lead a life in favor of the appreciated good. This way, compassion, as a facilitator of learning, becomes an essential element in changing the life of the learner.

Sire also believes that knowing (learning) and doing are inseparable concepts and points out that there is a direct relationship between believing and knowing. Thus he concludes, "If we know we do. If we do not do, we do not know; in fact, we do not even believe"(113). Compassion shown to the learner induces him to trust his teacher and so accept his teaching with a zealous and open mind, conduct any necessary investigation positively, and, eventually apply what he has learnt in life.

Christ is the source of knowledge and wisdom (Colossians 2:3). The Bible commentary explains this verse as follows:

"Christ is the treasure house of divine wisdom and knowledge... To those who receive Him, He gives truth in fullness. Other teachers have given partial and obscure glimmerings of knowledge, but in Christ, the living Word, resides the essential knowledge" (Nichol et al. 200).

Compassion, by leading the learner to Christ, gives him access to this knowledge, which is comprehensive and gives deep insight.

B. Faith

Faith is trusting in God/ Christ as the source of life, (Genesis 2:7; John 14:6) and as the source of knowledge and wisdom (Colossians 2:3; 1 Corinthians 1: 22, 24).

Hilde, describing the atmosphere that would bring about for integration of faith and learning, has recorded the following thoughts:

The ideal climate for learning is further described as one in which the learner is 'yoked' with Christ. Think of it! He is the Guide, the working Partner. He is the ideal Roommate; the study Mate. One who would lead every student to success. It is only when the principles of faith and confidence in Christ take over, when the learner is motivated by love and is dedicated to service, that the pressures of education can be replaced by the joy of learning. The school must contribute to such setting, to such an

attitude. It must foster those principles that give the learner the true motives for learning (135).

Such faith is instilled in the learner as he learns how Christ's compassion for fallen creatures, including him, was revealed on the cross as is reflected in the compassionate behavior of the Christian teacher. This is a great aspect of the integration of compassion into Christianity since faith is an essential element of Christianity.

C. Life

Genesis 2:7 reads, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul."

God's purpose in creating man was that man lives forever. Man was to grow richer and happier, developing higher in knowledge about God and His truth. Man was also created with the power of choice. By making wrong choice, he broke his relationship with God (MacCarty, 1979, P. 47).

Christ, the restorer and sustainer of life came to earth to give life eternal and life rich and abundant (John 10:10). Thus, Christ's life, imparted to humanity at creation and restoration, must be integrated into the academic programs of our schools.

Compassion, as an action or a desire for the best of others, implies a positive loving relationship. Positive relationship, in turn, encourages having good attitudes toward the compassion demonstrating person. This reasoning leads us to conclude that the recipient of the compassionate service will like what the service giver does, and will respect what he says.

In an Adventist school, teachers, guards, bus drivers, secretaries, finance officers, administrators and even physical plants should have a welcoming spirit to the students. Students tend to catch fast and tenaciously stay with what they see in action than what they hear. They need to be made feel at home. Teachers and school administrators must show a compassionate attention to the physical, mental, social and spiritual needs of the students.

In regard to the need of welcoming school atmosphere, Hilde writes, "The school can have an atmosphere that is described variously as one of acceptance, yet of hard work; joyous, yet serious; one of love, yet of order; one of accountability, yet comfort; and one in which the challenges are great, yet where the opportunities for success are many" (Hilde 137).

In such an environment, the student enjoys a foretaste of the rich and abundant life made available by Christianity, as he is graced with compassion, which provides him with a welcoming school atmosphere balancing the different aspect of life that Hilde describes above. Obviously, the teacher also is blessed by

this life as he practices compassion and so communicates the goodness of the Author of his faith to his student.

VII. FACILITATING INTEGRATIVE PRACTICE OF COMPASSION

Attitudes and values identified and learned in a school must be practiced by students so that they are internalized, fixed, and made ready to be used effectively in the community or society.

Compassion as a valuable behavior can be practiced in school in the following ways:

1. **Role-playing**

To properly instill this desirable behavior in the minds of the young people, their teachers need to organize them into role-playing for dramatization.

2. **Group demonstration**

2.1 Helping old people

Students should be provided by the school to practice a desired behavior or attitude in the school community. Behaviors like respect for others, honesty and respect for the properties within the school community are to be practiced. When students are organized into groups and guided by their teachers to practice some components of compassion, implementation and application becomes easy (Klausmeier 380-381). For example students may be given an opportunity to repair leaking roofs for the aged.

2.2 Helping weak students

In a school community, there are poor students, slow learning students, students experiencing adjustment problem (rebellious), and students with problems of different natures. Other students can be given opportunities to cooperate with teachers or concerned persons in the school to guide and help the weak students to grow as intelligent, civilized, moral human beings (Kelly 500). For example, academically strong students can assist the weak ones.

2.3 Mass- media Criticism

Students can be assigned to watch television, listen to the radio, read a newspaper and identify a value and criticize or discuss in favor or against the identified value or attitude.

3. **Encouraging independent attitude cultivation**

Preparing young ones for self-government is one of the purposes why schools are operated. When children are trusted, they want to remain trustworthy. For example, giving examinations without supervision will encourage an attitude of trustworthiness.

4. Case study

A group of students can be organized to study a desirable behavior of a student and make decision. The group that conducts the case study can directly benefit from the study. It is also likely that the report on the outcome of the case-study will benefit those who hear the report (Downing 332).

5. How to help students practice Compassion.

- 5.1. Identify a financially poor student; Find out his utmost need area (clothing, exercise books, soaps, etc.), and then provide.
- 5.2. Call a well- behaved student and commend his behavior. Visit his home to appreciate the parents or guardians.
- 5.3. Render a service of visitations, counseling, helping and praying for students having health problem.
- 5.4. Invite students for Christmas and/or Passover parties; feed them and give them some gifts relevant to the occasion.
- 5.5. Call a rebellious student, ask him how much happy he will be if people stronger than he are rebellious towards him, ask him if he would respect rebellious people or gentle ones, and trying to convince him of his need to be helped, ask him if he is willing to let you help him.

These five points are just few suggestions to tickle minds to come up with many more ways of encouraging students to practice compassion.

VIII Conclusions

Compassion is a concept "without perceptible instance" but made perceptible through the demonstration of a loving and kind act that promotes others' well-being (Klausmeier 275). The compassionate act usually triggers/stimulates a positive response by the recipient of the compassionate treatment. The fact that compassion is communicated through demonstration makes it learnable, whereas the positive response resulting thereby makes it a gateway for the internalization of other things learnt in its presence. Thus it plays a crucial role in learning.

This great significance of compassion in learning calls for giving teachers encouragement to consistently practice it in their relationship with their students. However, all those who will give the encouragement must have a firm grasp of this importance of compassion in learning before they take any step.

Administrators in Christian schools and concerned church authorities should give special attention to the fact that the Christian teacher brings his students into the knowledge storehouse and the love of the Most High by extending compassion to them unconditionally, yet in truth. However, it has been shown that a non-Christian teacher, in addition to limiting the scope of compassion, finds it difficult to exercise compassion in an offending circumstance.

This fact should alert administrators to make sure that all teachers have given their life to Christ. Thus, they have to work for the conversion of non-Christian teachers who happen to be working in the institutions by treating them kindly. One way of demonstrating kindness is taking time to socialize with the non-Christian teachers and thereby show them the love and transforming power of God by witnessing to them in words and action. All Christian teachers also should be encouraged to do likewise. In this effort, a personal testimony of conversion is very effective.

At the same time, enough attention should also be given to help the Christian teachers to deepen their personal relationship with Christ, the source of every good thing including compassion. Organizing a prayer partners' fellowship for them will help tremendously.

From the perspective of this paper's discussion, the need for providing teachers with spiritual supports that help them have an intimate relationship with Christ is to enable them receive God's blessings and pass them on to their students. In 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, Paul writes, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God." This shows that teachers can extend comprehensive and transforming compassion to their students only when they themselves receive it from the source, "the Father of compassion". In other words, teachers can't give what they themselves don't have.

Yes, compassion has a heart softening and a convincing influence on the learner; to enhance his learning; but this influence is experienced to the full when the compassion he is receiving is a Christian one. This is because the learner will be touched more by the compassion when he recognizes it as genuine, coming from the true source. So, he also will develop trust towards all other accompanying lessons (knowledge) taught to him. The eternal perspective of the extended compassion also makes the learner consider worthy what ever is taught with it, and so readily internalize it. Such is the fulfillment of the goal of learning through compassion.

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