

**Institute for Christian Teaching
Education Department of Seventh-day Adventists**

**CHALLENGES OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION
IN THE NORTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION (NSD):
AN ADMINISTRATOR'S OPPORTUNITY FOR
INTEGRATING FAITH AND LEARNING**

by

Phoon, Chek Yat, Ph.D.

**644-07 Institute for Christian Teaching
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904 USA**

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Introduction

James P Wind, President of the Alban Institute, wrote an article entitled, “Asking the Big Questions”¹ in which he was asking questions regarding Christianity and its relevance in churches and congregations in the 21st century. He asks:

“So, what are the big questions? Are we questioning the pervasive individualism and self-idolatry of our consumer cultures? Do we challenge the hegemony of the marketplace fundamentalism in our lives? . . . Are we asking these questions in our congregations? Or do we avoid them at all costs? . . .

“ . . . Deep challenging, and ongoing questioning that unmask the assumptions and motivations that lie behind our actions; prophetic opposition to policies, practices, traditions, and beliefs that are out of alignment with the core values we espouse; and tragicomic hope that can look our failure, complicity, and wrongdoing in the eye and still believe that a new creation will emerge—these are moral pillars that need to be retrieved if our country [meaning USA] and our congregations are to fulfill their vocations in a time of national and global chaos, terror, and despair. Neither our nation nor our congregations will automatically turn to these pillars. Rather official and unofficial leaders who embody these capacities must emerge and wake up our people and our institutions.”²

Although Wind is stating the phenomena that may occur within the context of the denominational and congregational setting, Adventist educators are not exempt from this dilemma, because they do probably know that their “deep challenging, and ongoing questionings will unmask the assumption and motivations that lie behind their actions.” The same kind of mindset and behavior swept by the undercurrent of being known as “loyal” and sustainer of the status quo may cause them to be like the ostrich with its head in the sand. Their “tragicomic hope” will be that such questions will hopefully not surface at the next round of evaluations. They might try to provide a glowing report of the institution and state that everything was “cool and dandy” by manipulating some statistics of conversion, but they know the reality was otherwise. Correctly stated, if our educational institutions and administrators will not have the moral fiber to wake up and ask similar “big” questions and do something about them, we will still have the same ambivalence.

The Purpose of the Study

Hence, the purpose of this paper is to explore the challenges that Adventist education faces in the Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD), and how these can be opportunities for the administrator to integrate faith and learning in this century.

Some Related “Big” Questions on the Adventist Education

Firstly, what is Adventist education? Why do we have Adventist educational institutions when they are so costly to operate? What are their goals, objectives, and mission? What is the philosophy behind it all? Why should Adventist educational institutions need to exist amidst drastic changing trends and almost destructive forces that continue to bombard on their walls and at great cost? One may defend: “It is obvious, isn’t? We have had these institutions for the last 100 years and more, and shouldn’t that be enough reason for Adventist education to exist today? See what our graduates have done and without these institutions where would they be today?” Then, why did the General Conference Department of Education convene the first conference on the Philosophy of Seventh-day Adventist Education from April 7-9, 2001 at Andrews University?³ It is not that the church has no philosophy nor mission on education, but probably those of us who propound this philosophy may be incongruent to its existence and application. Making deliberate application of the philosophy will inevitably give the direction to the mission of the institution under our administration’s care.

Is Adventist education worth it? If so, why is there a seemingly lack of support of it evidenced by declined enrollment? Particularly, why are not all Adventist members sending their children to Adventist institutions in many parts of the NSD? We have heard of wonderful conversion stories, but we also heard of the politicking found in Adventist institutions and power struggles to the chagrin of supportive parents. Is the Adventist educational institution truly a Christian school or is it by name only? What are the minimum criteria that such schools must have in order to be termed truly Adventist Christian schools? Are there excellent Adventist educational institutions? What are the criteria to determine that the school has achieved excellence? What kinds of teachers, and the percentage of such teachers, make up a true Adventist institution? What proportion of Adventist to non-Adventist’s students will make such an institution change its nature and mission? These are pertinent questions, and there might be more questions than answers, but fundamentally speaking, unless the administrator embraces the Adventist education philosophy that is endorsed by the denomination, there will be no anchor for any integration of faith and learning.

The Administrator's Tasks in Integrating Faith and Learning

The key personnel in any Adventist educational institution for integration is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the Principal or President.⁴ It will be his or her primary task to create the culture and ethos of the institution where integration of faith and learning takes place. It will also be his or her work in making the “right” selection of a teaching team who will be significant players in the mission for integration. With his or her administrative team, deliberate plans to put strategic actions in place so that each student will be mentored and that provision will be made to support groups created throughout the educational community.⁵ The impact for a total integration of faith with the lives in the community lies in the hands of the administrator, his or her administrative teams and their faculty. There may be incidental integration by some teachers, but if total integration is to occur, it is the inevitable vocation of the Principal or President of the school. If integration fails, it is the failure of the administrator to inculcate such a culture.

Poe identifies the problem with higher Christian education by quoting Proverbs 29:18, “without vision, people perish.”⁶ He further says:

“The academy holds on to the traditions and terminology [the cliché] of the church, but it has separated itself from its ecclesiastical foundations. The form and tradition remain, but without purpose [philosophy or mission and hence not vision as well]. With purpose, the academy (or any other institution, from a business to a government agency) drifts along through the inertia of tradition. Without vision, however, functionality no longer has a relationship to value. . .”⁷

There are also many other challenges that confront the administrators. One of them is the challenge of trends. Too often administrators are concerned about the challenges of trends and forget that without a governing philosophy and mission “integration will leave schools devoid of identity and powerless to form the character of the students,” as Poe says.⁸ Unless the administrator stands firmly maintaining the philosophy and mission as he deals with such challenges, integration of faith and learning may fall by the wayside. During the days of the pioneers of Adventist education, change had been turned into opportunities. Greenleaf says:

“Change was already in the air. Even as Ellen White wrote, thoughtful people were scrutinizing many aspects of education. Her vision for schooling also diverged from the norm because, above all else, it was to point students to the Cross by providing them with a better understanding of Heaven’s plan to restore fallen human beings to their original Edenic state and inspire them to accept God’s saving grace. Making education redemptive provided a spiritual rationale for the changes that Adventists sought to implement and, given their belief in the soon return of Jesus.

It supplied an urgency for reform. This philosophical and theological emphasis made Adventist education distinctive in the reform milieu of the 19th century.”⁹

Similarly, it can be so if the administrator seizes these changing trends as opportunities like the pioneers did.

The Changing Trends in Adventist Education

The trends of education in world in this century, whether it be Christian or secular, will affect and effect Adventist education. Adventist educational institutions cannot be divorced from society at large. The world of post-9-11 attack on Americans, post-Iraq invasion, post-Asian tsunami, post-hurricane Katrina, post-SARS and amidst the Avian Flu, is the world of the 21st Century. It is an extremely unstable world. We have heard of more earthquakes, floods, heat waves, volcanic eruptions, tsunami, plus man-made disasters such as terrorism and wars in this first few years of the turn of the century. In proportion, these negative occurrences are more than any other centuries. Due to the increase of crimes, old laws are to be reinterpreted and additional laws are added so that punishment hopefully will fit the crime. Such phenomena are causing changes and these changes are very rapid. With such a backdrop, trends in education are also changing fast. Let’s see how each of the challenges of changing trends can be an opportunity for integration of faith and learning by the administrator.

Trend No. 1: Increased Cost

The Administrator’s Challenge

The cost of education will be higher than most educational institutional can bear. Inflation, devaluation, and bankruptcy will not be buzz words but the reality that has to be faced by all educational leaders. Twenty years ago, two educational leaders (a president of a college and a board chairman) wrote for *The Journal of Adventist Education* on the “Future of SDA Higher Education”, and revenue was stated as an inevitable fact.¹⁰ Educational administrators today, cannot but admit that to balance the budget has occupied most of their energies as they administer their institutions. With the exception of educational institutions in Korea and two institutions in Taiwan (Taipei Adventist American School [TAAS]¹¹ and Taipei Adventist Preparatory Academy [TAPA]), all educational institutions in the NSD territories face an uphill road at this time. However, TAAS and TAPA, and the Korean

schools might face such a crunch in the near future.

The aftermath of wars and the rise healthcare cost due to not only pandemics, but other health related problems, are driving costs up, and educational cost is of no exception. Hirsch states succinctly that church subsidies on the whole may not have kept up increased costs, and even philanthropic giving may not be sufficient to maintain the operating costs because they are also on the decline. Many of the institutions do not have endowment monies to serve as cushion for difficult times.¹²

The giving power of Adventist families may be a reflection of the giving power of the society and vice versa. When society is hard hit by economic recession, Adventist parents will also be affected. Generally speaking, Adventist schools in the NSD may not be really expensive, but in comparison with government sponsored institutions, they are certainly so.

Gary Marx says that “Understanding will grow that sustained poverty is expensive, deliberating and unsettling.”¹³ More and more administrators have come to the realization that education should be profit making in order to be sustainable, but there will always be a need for sacrifices. For educators to enter into the profession, especially Adventist education, it will demand that kind of sacrifice. Someone has said, “If I need to suffer, I rather suffer in comfort.” This is a value that a postmodernistic professionals will utter. So the attraction of a higher paying teaching institution may get its first harvest of some teachers. Will there be enough well qualified teaching professionals willing to come into the mission work of teaching?¹⁴

Further, for students to be able work all their way through school will be a remote possibility today. Comparing the cost of tuition fees in schools in NSD, Southern Asia Pacific Division (SSD)¹⁵ and schools in the US, we will notice that the fees at Sahmyook University in South Korea will be comparatively lower than Andrews University in the US, or other universities/colleges in the US or in the first world countries. But in comparison with Mission College in Thailand and the Adventist University of the Philippines in SSD, the cost of these latter two will no doubt be lower. It does not mean that these educational institutions will not face the financial crunch because the students in these institutions will come from even lower income areas, but the cost of education will continue to rise. This will be a perennial challenge to educational administrators of all levels today. Further, Mission College will face a greater challenge because many of the students from low income

areas are supported from 100% to about 80% of the total cost of their education by Southeast Asia Union Mission, and when the support dries out (the pressure is already on), then what? This calls for faith and sacrifice as there is apparently no other way, unless there are profit-making enterprises that supplement the operating budgets.

Another problem is: Adding to the chagrin to some parents when they find their local Adventist schools accepted more non-SDA students and even employed more non-SDA teachers just to balance the books, pertinent questions begin to be asked. What is the mission of these Adventist institutions? Is it worth while to invest their children's lives in such schools where they can find no apparent differences between them and other non-Adventist institutions? Further, these private or public non-Adventist institutions may have better facilities and at a lower cost for their children to attend.

Board members of a Foundation have expressed frustration towards an institution recently, especially when they see neither change nor progress in the institution they are supporting. This may result in their commitment to work on increasing their financial support to the institution. After all, they said, "Why work so hard to provide the gift when you know you are just pouring it into a bottomless pit and you can expect the same old lame promise year in year out." When philanthropic funds are scarce and the Foundation Board members are discouraged, it is not good news.

The Administrator's Opportunity

Financial resources may be scarce, but opportunity of Christian stewardship and philanthropy are not dead. Giving to missions is never a thing of the past unless the institution has lost its mission purpose and focus. This is evidenced by the two institutions in Taiwan: TAAS and TAPA are mission schools because the percentage of Seventh-day Adventist students are practically nil, but their mission foci are clear. They are providing Seventh-day Adventist American education to all non-Adventists with the hope that the students will eventually transfer to Adventist colleges abroad where if the schools do not exist, the students will not have that advantage. Many of the TAAS students become students of TAPA. TAPA in turn tries to transfer their students to Adventist colleges and universities in the US. Griggs International Academy (GIA) curricula are used in TAPA and GIA awards the high school diploma, which is approved by the State of Maryland, USA, to the graduates. All teachers of both schools are Seventh-day Adventists. Further, these two institutions

return tithes to the Taiwan Adventist Conference based upon the gross revenue. Robert Christianson, Principal and Business Manager of TAPA, says that the optimum number of students will be about 400. With a mission focus and a committed Christian stewardship plan, these two schools in Taiwan are financially stable.

The Adventist Korean's paradigm where the Sahmyook Food Factory, provided financial resources to assist in Adventist education and the Sahmyook SDA Language Institute¹⁶ supports all mission enterprises may be a good model to follow, but it has taken years for this to occur. It also needs a big church membership to be able to sustain it. Right now, Korean Union Conference has over 200,000 members, but it is not true in other union fields of NSD. They have a very strong mission focus and clear leadership by all administrators who meet at least 3 to 4 times a year to share ideas and fellowship.

However, it cannot be said of other educational institutions in other unions or mission fields. It is imperative for these other unions and mission fields to look at other sources of assistance while making long range plans to create similar financial generating enterprises. One of the sources is the alumni, friends of alumni, and members at large. Cultivating friendships and having a development plan is important for the administrators. At present, not all of the educational institutions have a good endowment plan nor an alumni Foundation. It has been said, "If the administrator does not know how to raise 'funds', it will be no 'fun' to be an administrator." Firstly the administrator must know how to ask for financial support from the board and constituency before venturing out to ask for assistance from the alumni and public. It will be the work of the administrator to model faith and sacrifice before his faculty and board members, so that they too will be encouraged to model faith and sacrifice to support the institution financially.

Another important task is the opportunity to develop relationships with business folks around. This is also a major task for administrators if they want to get revenue for the non-fee paying students by getting them to work for these businesses. So the work of the administrators is not only to attend board meetings to get the board members support of the institution financially, but to be out where the businesses and people are to network with them. There is much paper work to be done, but there is even a greater work to be done outside those piles before the desk of the administrators. If the administrator wants to see integration he or she needs funds and priorities have to be set for it to happen.

Trend No. 2: Decline of Enrollment

The Administrator's Challenge

School enrollment will be on the decline. For example, Sahmyook University had an enrollment of 5337, 5001 and 4891 in 2005, 2006 and 2007 respectively. The student population of Taiwan Adventist College dropped from 240 to 80 from 2003-2007. Much of this is due to the decrease of population growth. Thirty years ago, Singapore employed the slogan to control population growth, "Boy or girl, two is enough." Similar slogans based upon this adage are also the buzz words in countries in the NSD territories. Gary Marx in Future-Focused Leadership states: "For the first time in history, the old will outnumber the young."¹⁷ This is due to two factors. (1) There is a decline of enrollment of the young and (2) An increase of older people who want to go back to schools. Further, people tend to live longer thanks to the advancement of knowledge of health and science. One of the interesting phenomena is that many educated couples rather live without children than to have children to interfere with their career advancements. Even if they do, they will have a small family. Careful family planning is the education provided by national family life promotion. The Adventist community is a reflection of the community at large, and that results in the decline of enrollment of Adventist school age students at all levels.

The Administrator's Opportunity

Population growth has been reduced in many of the countries of the NSD territory and the challenge of enrollment is nevertheless a reality. However, in Korea, in quite a few of the schools where non-Adventist schools have closed down, there is a waiting list on enrollment in the schools. The closing of these non-Adventist schools have provided Adventist schools in Korea, the school age students, even though general population growth has decreased across the country. The attraction is also due to the fact that the leadership has provided a meaning and attractive environment for the students and the teachers in these schools are known to be caring and Christian. Further, the administrators have responded to the public the needs even before they occur. In other words, the administrator who is proactive, will be one step ahead of the game. The introduction of the English immersion program is an attractive draw, and the Korean institutions have tapped the rich human

resources which are available among the community of believers around the world besides their own constituencies. The administrators have a global perspective without forgetting their national loyalty.

Trend No. 3: Older Students

The Administrator's Challenge

As stated in Trend No. 2 above, there will be older students in schools in comparison with younger ones due the decline of college age students. The kind of student bodies due to this trend is also a great divide in certain areas. For example, the more developed countries in the NSD territories might see an increase of older students and who may be interested in lifelong learning, but on the other hand, in the underdeveloped or developing countries, institutions may still see a rise of younger students as in the case of Mongolia. There is a problem resulting in this as many of these students may not be able to afford the tuition. These students will expect to have the chance to work their way through schools. This is like the pioneering days of the church when the students attending schools were given the opportunity to have work education, especially "manual labor". Will they be able to do it today? Probably not! It is not only the lack of funds, but institutions are located in urban areas where only asphalt jungles exist. Hence, these constitute challenges for Adventist administrators to consider. Working out this trend may be regular classes from morning to evening may have to be adapted to evening or a lifelong learning program to cater to adult learners.

Marx says:

"Demand will grow for school and community based adult and career education, community college and four-year college and university programs, and other opportunities for lifelong learning."¹⁸

The Administrators' Opportunity

Both Hong Kong Adventist College and Taiwan Adventist have tried to develop classes at churches or towns where there are demands for college education. However, this drains the manpower resources which are already stretched beyond their limits on the campuses because of the small size of the teaching faculty. But it is still an opportunity for the administrator not only to look for ways to market the college program, but truly show what integration of faith with life really means because the sharing of care and concern over

the faculty's personal growth and development will be sermons in shoes. It is not only the students whom the administrator must pay attention to but to his or her faculty and staff who have put their stakes with him or her. The journey will be a lonely one if the administrator does not have a loyal committed team behind the task he or she shoulders.

Trend No. 4: Urbanization

The Administrator's Challenge

Urbanization will continue and it has been noted by the early 21st century, 50% of the world will be urbanized. Joseph Chamie, chief of the United Nations Population Division, said in 2002:

“We can't stop urbanization. It is going to continue. We project it to be increasing throughout the 21st century. We have to adjust to it.”¹⁹

Chengdu, in the Sichuan Province of China, has become identified by the Chinese government as an “IT mega city” that would be developed further like Shanghai and Beijing. The principal of the Gateway English Language School said that one of the major streets with all the shopping malls and boutiques was merely a small little lane five years ago, but today it is comparable with the Oxford Street in London, Hollywood Boulevard in Los Angeles, Nathan Road in Hong Kong, or Orchard Road in Singapore. Tsueng Kwan O was a small fishing village near Hong Kong Adventist College, but today it is a town with an subway station, a bus terminal, a mall and multi-million dollars condominiums all around on the reclaim land from the sea.

This surge of urbanization not only causes the rural areas becoming towns or cities, but causes all the educational institutions to improve their physical plants at high cost. At times such development takes precedent over the development of human resources such as faculty development and upgrading. This challenge confronts the administrators to weigh out the decision—“it is the chicken or the egg dilemma!”

The problem with the application “manual labor” concept has been alluded above because of the kinds of students who will appear in the schools. With the rise of urbanization, the “manual labor” concept of philosophy of work, which seemingly was an integral part of the philosophy of Adventist education has become another reason why it will difficult to implement.

With urbanization, there will great changes in mindsets and attitudes especially towards the

postmodernistic worldview. The trend will be discussed in more detail in Trend No. 7.

The Administrator's Opportunity

The rise of urbanization has made life rather easy and things are acquired instantly. It has created a host of other challenges for the administrators of Adventist schools as mentioned above, because the mindsets and behaviors of students tend to take after a post-modernistic worldview. However, the opportunity for the administrators is also great because there will be no religious overtone in the mindset of the students, and thus a genuine demonstration of what Christ does through the life of a transformed Christian will be a great witness, and will demonstrate a true integration of life and faith. If the administrators can create an ethos together with their teaching staff, the impact will be immeasurable.

Although the philosophy of work concept may not be acquired through “manual labor” in the fields because of the asphalt jungle, it should not stop the administrators and faculties to work together with the students in civic work that will impact the community around the educational institution. There are other creative “manual labor” in substitution to growing corn or rice or vegetables such carpentry, electrical and electronic enterprises, constructions, hair-dressing, dress-making, etc. Further, social projects that benefit the community at large, will make Christianity in shoes, the best sermons preached. The integration of faith and learning through curriculum change which was initiated from September to December, 1998 at the Universidad de Montemorelos, Mexico, is a model that has taken “manual labor” and other aspects of the philosophy and mission of Adventist education to the public and resulted in a new kind of graduates.²⁰

Trend No. 5: Search for Personal Meaning

The Administrator's Challenge

An aspect of the world of 21st century is that we will see more and more folks looking into religions for their sense of emptiness due the lack of spirituality. But many more are seeking spirituality or some sort of spiritual experience without wanting to affiliate with any religious organization. They may construe that all organized religions are business enterprises, for example, a religious educational institution's bottom-line is not necessarily the lives and future of the students, but money or a great monument or edifice. Marx calls it the search for personal meaning. He states:

“Greater numbers of people will seek personal meaning in their lives in response to an intense, high-tech, always-on, fast-moving society.”²¹

I would like to suggest a self-evaluation for all administrators here. When visitors come to our offices or educational institutions, what do you want to show them first? Isn't it most of the time the new buildings or the newly renovated classrooms? Or, do we introduce to them the new teacher who may apparently be an unknown figure in that school community, but has shown a great caring spirit for a child? Or identify to the guest the student who has been helping another new student. The ethos of the school that most administrators long for is a vibrant, happy and spiritual environment where relationships stand paramount in comparison to all other enterprises in the institution. The human touch cannot be replaced by new architecture no matter how modern or advanced it may be.

The Administrator's Opportunity

Creating an environment where love, care, and vibrant genuine Christianity will be the work of the administrators if they want to have true integration of faith and learning because it will be the ethos that has been manifested in the lives of the leaders of the institution that the integration of the faith in Christ can be felt and experienced. Congruency between what the administrator says and what the administrator is cannot be merely professed, but lived. Living by faith is the demonstration of the integration of life and faith. Communication is another key component magnifying opportunity. Christians are the best people who help in filling the void in the lives of those looking for personal meaning of life. Hence, it is a great opportunity for the administrator in leading his team of committed Christian faculty to provide that to the community within and without.

Trend No. 6: Demand for “International Learning”

The Administrator's Challenge

Dennis Littky and Samantha Grabelle in the book, entitled, *The Big Picture: Education is Everyone's Business* brought out what they termed as the “real goals of education”:

“Be lifelong learners; be passionate; be ready to take risks; be able to problem-solve and think critically; be able to look at things differently; be able to work independently and with others; be creative; care and want to give back to their community; persevere; have integrity and self-respect; have moral courage; be able to use the world around them well; speak well, write well, read well, and work well with numbers; and truly enjoy their life and their work.”²²

On expanding on the idea, they said:

“I want students to learn to use resources around them. I want them to read something or see something they are interested in and follow up on it. I want them to have an idea and then get on the phone and call people they can talk to about it, or pick up a book and read more about it, or sit down and write about. When I imagine one of my students as an adult, I imagine a person who is a thinker and a doer, and who follows his or her passions. I see an adult who is strong enough to stand up and speak for what he or she wants and believes, and who cares about himself or herself and the world. Someone who understands himself or herself, and understands learning. Creativity, passion, courage and perseverance are the personal qualities I want to see in my graduates. I want them to come upon things they’ve seen every day and look at them in a whole new way. I want them to feel good about themselves and be good, honest people in the way they live their lives. And, catchphrase or not, I want my students to score high on the ‘tests of emotional IQ’ that life will inevitably throw at them over and over again.”²³

This goal of education parallels a trend that is increasing more relevant and cuts across all ages and that is learning which is life-long. Learning that is not merely content oriented, but based and focused on the soft skills such as trust, relationships, and communications. Twelve years ago, while attending the Association of Private Schools in Malaysia, I heard the dean of the technical training and education arm of the mobile phone company called Motorola University gave a plea to all academics. He said that Motorola University needed from the academic institutions not graduates who are expert merely in the hard skills such as technical sciences or engineering, but those who were well-trained in the softer skills such as how to relate to people and get along with others and how to communicate well. The rest they could still acquire in his university when they were employed. Gary Marz called this trend, “International Learning.” He says:

“As nations vie for understanding and respect in an interdependent world, international learning, including skills, will become basic. . . A subtrend to this will be: To earn respect in an interdependent world, nations will be expected to demonstrate their reliability and tolerance.”²⁴

The Administrators’ Opportunity

It is rather significant for the administrators to note that education is not merely the transmission of the following traditional 3Rs and their related skills: Reading, writing and arithmetic, but the 3Rs of relationship, respect and responsibility. It is the work of the administrators to instill these by their modeling. The faith of Jesus invites administrators to

demonstrate these learning in their daily lives. Unless the administrator knows his or her mission and is consistent, the impact will never be felt. The opportunity which is golden can be lost.

Trend No. 7: Postmodernism

The Administrator's Challenge

Another trend is the shift of values among in the Adventist institutions due to the influx of non-Adventist students. Not only that, but the shift of values also occurred in some Adventist families. The values place on Adventist education is lower than years ago. This is no doubt the phenomenon of the postmodernistic age. However, the influx of different cultural groups in the educational community, where in the past the institution had a more homogenous group of students, may also be a contributor. Again, Malcolm observed 20 plus years ago:

“. . . For one thing, there is a greater variety in ethnic and cultural backgrounds, in standards of dress, diet, entertainment, worship attendance, and even theology than was characteristics in the past. As a result, schools find it more difficult to satisfy their constituencies, which creates uncertainty and criticism.”²⁵

This shift is inevitable if the church continues to be a worldwide community. In Northern Asia-Pacific Division, the composition of membership in Korea, Japan, China and Mongolia will inevitably affect the culture and ethos of the colleges and university. On the other hand, it is a profound responsibility of every Adventist scholastic community to be relevant to the diverse constituencies. Therefore, the key question is, “Can an institution still be truly an Adventist educational institution in this growing diverse secular trend?”

The Administrator's Opportunity

John Dewey, in first half of the 20th century, said: “Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.”²⁶ Ellen White had already said:

“In this lower school of earth we are to learn the lessons that will prepare us to enter the higher school, where our education will continue under the personal instruction of Christ. Then He will open to us the meaning of His word. Shall we not, in the few days of probation remaining to us, act like men and women who are seeking for life in the kingdom of God, even an eternity of bliss? We cannot afford to miss the privilege of seeing Christ face to face and of hearing from His lips the story of redemption.”²⁷

She further says:

“Those who have the Spirit of Christ will see all men through the eyes of divine compassion. No matter what may be the social position, no matter what his wealth or how high his education, if a man is in Christ, he will not be unkind, uncourteous, hard-hearted, and merciless. Since every soul is entirely dependent upon God for every blessing he enjoys, how patient, how merciful, we should be to every creature. God looked upon man in his lost condition, in his degradation and guilt, and paid the same price for the ransom of the poor and the outcast that he paid to ransom the rich with all his intrusted talents. There is no respect of persons with God. All are candidates for heaven. . . .”²⁸

It is a great opportunity for administrators to look at each student as a candidate for heaven. God is asking all Adventist administrators, who truly want to integrate faith with learning, to be a little more human and provide a positive school climate where each student can be seen as a person with the opportunity for change and growth. Students may not be the problems. The problems lie in what they have learned and experience either at home or in the society at large. When a different environment is created where positive experiences are the norms, students will more likely choose this path.

Summary and Conclusion

The world of the 21st century is definitely a very challenging world. What is beneficial for the last century may not be pertinent to the present. It is indeed a challenging time to continue to provide an Adventist education. As chosen administrators and guardians of Adventist education, it is a time of challenges and opportunities. The 8 changing trends that affect Adventist education, which may be challenging threats or opportunities for administrators, will depend on the administrators on what they want to see. The 7 trends are:

1. Increase cost to provide Adventist education
2. Decline in enrollment
3. Demand for education of older students
4. Increment of urbanized territories will cause increased cost and other related issues
5. Search for personal meaning by the students.
6. Demand for international learning and non-traditional contents
7. Increase of non-Adventist students and even Adventist students with post-modernistic worldviews.

Each of these trends provide an opportunity for administrators to truly integrate their faith and learning to the entire school’s community in a covert manner. In summary,

1. Maintain the philosophy of Adventist education and be mission driven. The integration of faith and learning will inevitably follow.
2. Provide the ethos and let it inculcate the school culture and atmosphere. What the school will be, is largely what the administrator is!
3. Make the right selection of faculty who share in vision, mission, and philosophy and ensure that continual development for these selected faculty is in place.
4. Provide a caring and mentoring environment for all.
5. Provide the entire educational community with support groups to continue their growth and care.
6. Be where the communities are; sourcing their help to finance the school. Every president or principal should be a fund raiser so that he or she will have fun in being the administrator. A transliterated Chinese sarcastic slogan states, “No money no talk” is inevitably a reality to be scaled.
7. Think of creatively together with his or her team to explore other ways to fulfill the “manual labor” goals in the philosophy of work.
8. Meet and work with community businesses and leaders to open a way for the students to find employment to support themselves through schools.
9. Set up enterprises, endowments and foundations to support the institution..
10. Bring the school to where the people are and yet provide development plans to care for the faculty who have worked hand in glove with him or her.
11. Consider every student as a candidate for heaven, and he or she must be handled with the utmost care and concern.
12. Keep the “big picture” of your roles in mind and deliberately seize the positive aspects of these changing trends to become opportunities to accomplish your mission.

Is the provision of an Adventist education still worth it amidst all these changing trends? Echoing Dulan²⁹, it is worth it when administrators place value on Adventist education as the bottom line—not money, not security, not even of the challenges of changing trends. These are only added opportunities for Adventist education to occur and continue.

¹ James P. Wind, “Asking the Big Questions”, *Congregations*, Winter 2006, p. 5.

² *Ibid.*

³ The adapted document from the First International Conference on Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy of Education: is now found in the *General Conference Working Policy, 2005-2006*, FE05-10, pp. 227-234.

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- ⁴ Melissa Morriss-Olson quoted the study of E. E. Chaffee on the “interpretive” strategy of improving educational institutions as the “quality of presidential leadership.” She said, “Survey respondents frequently use words like ‘visionary,’ ‘risk-taker,’ ‘change agent,’ ‘people-oriented,’ ‘entrepreneurial,’ and ‘good communicator’ to describe the leaders who oversaw their institutions during the 1980s”. Survival Strategies for Christian Colleges and Universities,” (Washington, DC: The Coalition for Christian Colleges and Universities, n.d.), p. 73.
- ⁵ Raquel Korniejczuk, “Integration of Faith and Learning: Fundamental Concepts and Mission of Adventist Higher Education”, unpublished manuscript; presented at the 35th International Seminar on Integration of Faith and Learning, Hong Kong Adventist College, March 11-23, 2007, pp.3-4.
- ⁶ Harry Lee Poe, *Christianity in the Academy*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), p. 53.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 55.
- ⁸ *Ibid.* p. 61.
- ⁹ Floyd Greenleaf, “A Commentary on Purpose, Principle, and Change in Adventist Education, Part II”, *The Journal of Adventist Education*, October/November 2006, p. 5.
- ¹⁰ Charles B Hirsch, “The Future of SDA Higher Education: A Board Chairman’s Perspective,” *The Journal of Adventist Education*, Vol. 47, No. 2, December 1984-January 1985, pp. 9-10; D. Malcolm Maxwell, “The Future of SDA Higher Education: A North American College President’s Perspective,” *The Journal of Adventist Education*, Vol. 47, No. 5, Summer 1985, pp. 11-12.
- ¹¹ The former name of this school is Yang Ming Shan Christian School.
- ¹² Maxwell, “The Future of SDA Higher Education: A North American College President’s Perspective,” p. 11.
- ¹³ Gary Marx, *Sixteen Trends: Their Profound Impact on our Future*, (Alexandria, VA: Educational Research Service) p. 281.
- ¹⁴ This is not to say that there are no teachers who are mission-minded or are not willing to make any sacrifices. Otherwise, this will be a direct insult to those who are not teaching in Adventist schools at present. Many of these are making sacrifices in other ways. However, in Adventist schools, the challenge to get teachers is an inevitable fact.
- ¹⁵ These Divisions were at one time belonging to one, known as the Asia-Pacific Division with headquarters in Singapore. It was divided into two in 1997.
- ¹⁶ In 2006, the Sahmyook SDA Language Institute, has provided finances to build the 1000 Missionary training center in the Philippines and also invested US\$300,000 to start the Mongolia Mission Field (MMF) Sahmyook SDA Language Institute in Ulaan Bataar, Mongolia.
- ¹⁷ Gary Marx, *Future-Focused Leadership: Preparing Schools, Students, and Communities for Tomorrow’s Realities*, (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2006) p. 48.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 53.
- ¹⁹ This quote was by Joseph Chamie, chief of the United Nations Population Division quoted by Joan Lowry, Scripps Howard News Service, in the article entitled “World City Dwellers to Outnumber Rural: Milestone has been Millennium in Making” in *World News*, Monday, April 8, 2002.
- ²⁰ The Universidad de Montemorelos’ experience was shared by Dr Raquel de Korniejczuk, Vice-rector of Academics at the 35th International Seminar on the Integration of Faith and Learning, Hong Kong Adventist College, March 11-22, 2007. The presentation was titled, “Faith and Learning at Institutional Level: An Integrative Approach, the Experience of the University of Montemorelos”, pp. 1-12.
- ²¹ Marx, *Sixteen Trends*, pp. 271-279.
- ²² Dennis Littky and Samantha Grabelle, *The Big Picture: Education is Everyone’s Business* (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum, 2004), p. 1.
- ²³ Dennis Littky and Samantha Grabelle, *The Big Picture*, pp. 1-2..
- ²⁴ Marx, *Sixteen Trends*, p. 249.
- ²⁵ Maxwell, “The Future of SDA Higher Education: A North American College President’s Perspective,” p. 11.
- ²⁶ Quoted by Dennis Littky and Samantha Grabelle, *The Big Picture: Education is Everyone’s Business*, p. xviii.
- ²⁷ Ellen G. White, *In Heavenly Places*, (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1967), p. 33.
- ²⁸ Ellen G White, “Blessed is he that Considereth the Poor”, *The Signs of the Times*, June 20, 1892, paragraph 2.
- ²⁹ Garland Dulan, “Is Adventist Education Worth It?”, *The Journal of Adventist Education*, February/March 2004, pp. 3, 46.