

ENDTIME ISSUES NEWSLETTER No. 136

“EDUCATION FOR THE ENDTIME”

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Retired Professor of Theology, Andrews University

Greetings from Hong Kong where I am speaking for four days, from August 26-29. The weather is oppressively hot and humid. For the first time in my life my short sleeve shirt has been totally soaked with sweat. You could not see one inch of dry cloth.

The instructions found in Ezekiel 44:18 offered me a needed relief: “The priest shall wear no garment that causes him to sweat.” The reading of this text made it possible for me to remove my jacket without offending the sensitivities of our believers. Thank God for His counsel and enabling strength to survive this unusual hot humid weather. I still have two more days of sweating lecturing before me, before going home to enjoy the coolness of my basement office.

THE MEETING WITH THEOLOGICAL FACULTY OF THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

On Friday August 26, a six members Adventist delegation accompanied me to the Divinity School of the Chinese University of Hong Kong for a fellowship luncheon with the theological faculty. This was for me an unforgettable experience.

It was a real pleasure to meet and dialogue with the faculty of the Divinity School. I presented a complimentary copy of my dissertation *FROM SABBATH TO SUNDAY* to the Director of the Divinity School, Prof. Lung-Kwong Lo. He is a brilliant scholar who holds half a dozen of academic degrees, including a Ph. D., in New Testament from a British University. He has authored a dozen of major books, including a commentary on Romans.

While sipping Chinese tea (brownish looking warm water), he asked me to share with his faculty members a brief summary of my research on the change of the Sabbath. It took me about 30 minutes to give a synopsis of my research. When I concluded my speech, Prof. Lo said: “This sound very interesting. I wish you had come a week later. You

could have shared all this information with our seminary students who are registering today.” Then he asked me to let him know when I will be free to spend a few days lecturing at their Divinity School of the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

It is unusual for a Divinity School to be part of a State University. But, we were told that the Divinity School has been set up within the Chinese University of Hong Kong to train ministers of different Protestant denominations. Several major Protestant denominations support the Divinity School, which functions as an independent institution within the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

We were invited to join the faculty for lunch at their international restaurant. After the meal Prof. Lo took us for a tour of their library, which is the most impressive library I have ever seen in my life. The library has over two million books, including several my publications. I was surprised to find my books in their library, including the Chinese edition of my book *WOMEN IN THE CHURCH*, which has been translated by the Theological Lutheran Seminary in Taiwan. Over 80% of the books are in English. The ground floor has a dozen major hallway with over 200 computers and other electronic equipment for students to use in their research. I have never seen a library so profusely equipped with the latest digital technology.

Our Chinese Union secretary told me: “Sam, this is a PREACH seminar (usually conducted by *Ministry* for clergymen) Chinese style. “ Rather than speaking to ministers in a neutral place, we were invited to dialogue with seminary professors in their own faculty lounge. The outcome was evident. The professors showed a keen interest for the mission and message of our Adventist church. The six Adventist church leaders who accompanied me, were jubilant and thankful to God for the opportunity granted us to introduce our message and mission to leading biblical scholars in Hong Kong. I look forward to a future opportunity to lecture for a few days at this impressive Divinity School.

LECTURE ON “EDUCATION FOR THE ENDTIME”

One of my assignments given me, was to speak at the faculty of our Hong Kong Adventist College on Monday August 29. The college is

located less than one hour away from the city of Hong Kong, in a most picturesque place. The peaceful setting of the college stands in stark contrast with the congestion of the city, where over 7 million people live jammed together like sardines in small flats of high rise buildings. I was told that the average apartment is less than 400 square feet. The living space is so small that most people cannot afford to invite their friends for a meal at their home

Considering that our total membership in Hong Kong consists of only 4000 members, it is hard to believe that our church is able to operate such a nice college with over 500 students. The answer lies in the fact that 80 percent of the students are non-Adventists. The college enjoys a good reputation in the community. The high ratio of non-Adventist of students, does not seem to pose any serious problem. All the students are expected to take Bible classes and attend the chapel programs.

The President of the College, Prof. Daniel Chua, asked me to speak at their faculty retreat on the theme of “Education for the Endtime.” I found the topic very appealing and relevant, especially since in Hong Kong, as in most countries, schools open at this time of the year. I reflected on this topic and wrote down my thoughts during three sleepless nights, when my biological clock kept me awake. The 12 hours of time-zone difference between Michigan and Hong Kong, was too much for an immediate transition.

While jotting down a few reflections on characteristics and challenges of Endtime Education, I felt that this short essay could benefit thousand of Adventist teachers, facing at this time of the year the challenge of a new school year. Having taught 26 years at Andrews University and 6 years overseas, I am reminded of the need at the beginning of each school year to recapture the vision of Christian education and renew one’s commitment to the teaching ministry.

If you feel that the following reflections on “Education for The Endtime” could benefit some teachers that you know, feel free to share it with them. Our teachers face an undaunted task of teaching academic

subjects from a biblical, not humanistic perspective. Helping students to see the outworking of God's design in all the subjects that they teach, it takes divine wisdom and grace. Let us remember our teachers in our prayers.

UPCOMING WEEKEND SEMINARS

As a service to our subscribers, I am listing the date and the location of the upcoming seminars for the month of September 2005. During the month of September I will speak at four major rallies in London, England. It is always a privilege and pleasure for me to minister to our fellow believers in England. The reception and response is always very encouraging. I wish to extend my personal, warm invitation to all who are able to attend one of the following rallies.

SEPTEMBER 9-10: LONDON – MILTON KEYNES AND WEST BLETCHLEY SDA CHURCHES

Location of Milton Keynes SDA Church: 1 Veryan Place Fishermead, Milton Keynes, Bucks MK6 2SP, England.

Location of West Bletchley SDA Church: 3 Porchester Close, Whaddon Way Bletchley, Milton Keynes, MK3 6BH, England.

For information about the meeting at both churches, call Pastor Colin Stewart at 01908 673 979 or 0795 693 1469.

SEPTEMBER 14 : LONDON –WILLESDEN SDA CHURCH

Location: 361 High Road, Willesden, London, NW10 2JD.

This will be a special Wednesday evening rally on September 14.

For information call Pastor Steve McKenzie at 020 8558 9216 or 07958571074.

SEPTEMBER 16-17: LONDON - LUTON SDA CHURCH

Location: Hightown Methodist Church, 100 Pomfret Avenue, Luton, LU2 OGL, England

For information call Pastor Andrew Leonce at 01582 413 948 or 0797 1218101

SEPTEMBER 21: READING CENTRAL SDA CHURCH

Location: 2 Tilehurst Road, Nr Russell Street, Reading, Berks. RG1 7TN

This will be a special Wednesday evening rally on September 21.
For information call Pastor Everett Picart at 01189 755 110

SEPTEMBER 23-24: LONDON-PECKHAM SDA CHURCH

Location: 149-159 Ivydale Road, Nunhead, Peckham, London SE15 3DX.

For information call Pastor Wilfred Blake at 020 8325 3794

TOSHIBA LAP TOP COMPUTERS FOR ADVENTISTS

At the request of many Adventists who bought over 1000 HITACHI projectors at a substantially discounted price, I approached the TOSHIBA corporation of North America, asking for a special discount on two of their professional lap tops models, called TECRA. You will be pleased to learn that after considerable negotiations, TOSHIBA has agreed to offer a substantial discount to our Seventh-day Adventist members, pastors, teachers, and students.

To be able to receive a substantial discount, I had to commit myself to purchase 1000 TOSHIBA lap tops by the end of this year. This should not be a problem, because after posting the announcement about the negotiations with TOSHIBA in the last newsletter, I received many messages from subscribers expressing interest to purchase a TOSHIBA TECRA at a discounted price.

In choosing TOSHIBA lap tops I relied on experts advice, because I have been a MAC user for the past 25 years. Several independent sources have confirmed to me that TOSHIBA manufactures among the best lap tops in the market. They are known for style, performance, and durability.

TOSHIBA markets two kinds of lap tops. A cheaper model for the general consumer and a more expensive model for professional people. The consumer model is called SATELLITE, and is sold at COSCO, BEST BUY, CIRCUIT CITY, etc. I decided against this consumer model because our pastors, teachers, students and Adventist professionals deserve a faster, more reliable, and better equipped lap top.

The professional model of TOSHIBA is called TECRA. It is engineered for reliability and longevity. It comes in different configurations. To simplify my task and your choice, I have asked TOSHIBA to configure two basic models, one slightly cheaper than the other.

THE ECONOMICAL MODEL is called TECRA A5 and sells for \$995.00, instead of the regular price \$1259.00.

THE MORE EXPENSIVE MODEL is called TECRA SE and sells for \$1285.00, instead of the regular price of \$1674.00.

The difference between the two models is rather small, because I wanted both models to be configured to meet the demands of a pastor, teacher, student, or business people. Both of them have fast processors, extra internal memory, CD and DVD burners, wireless network connection, extra bright monitors, etc.

To keep this announcement short, I am placing all the technical information at my website. You can access the TOSHIBA lap top file simply by clicking here <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/Toshiba/Notebooks.html> If you cannot surf the web, feel free to call us at 269-471-2915 or email us a message at <sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com>. We will be glad to give you all the information and take your order by phone.

The usual delivery times is about two weeks, because each TOSHIBA lap top is customized in China and shipped directly from China to the end user. But you do not have to wait for two weeks. We can ship your TECRA lap top on the same day we receive your order, because we keep an ample supply of both models right here at home.

I have done my best to help our members and workers to purchase two outstanding TOSHIBA lap top, at the lowest possible price. Your personal effort to inform your friends about this unique offer is greatly appreciated. By helping me to reach my quota, we can ensure that TOSHIBA will continue to offer us in the future the special discounted price.

SPECIAL OFFER ON HITACHI PROJECTORS

Few moments ago, while I was putting the finishing touches on this newsletter, I received a call from an HITACHI marketing manager, offering me to buy 50 HITACHI CP-X430 HIGH RESOLUTION, HIGH DEFINITION, 2500 lumens, for only \$1795.00 each. I could hardly refuse such an offer, because this is an extraordinary projector that was sold to our churches before the GC session for \$2700.00. For the GC the price was reduced to \$2000.00 and now to only \$1795.00. The catch is that I had to buy 50 of them.

If your church is looking for an extra bright projector at a real bargain price, this is an incredible opportunity. You might be interested to know that I take this HITACHI CP-X430 with me around the world. Last week I used it in Hong Kong and for the next two weeks I will be using it in London, England.

I love this projector for three reasons. First, it is light, weighing only 9 pounds. It comes in a nice carrying case with the electrical cables for all types of electricities. Second, it throws a bright, sharp picture, filling a 12' screen even in a very lighted environment. Third, in addition to the VGA port for the standard connection to a computer, it also has a DVI port that makes it possible to link the projector to a digital high definition signal from a cable or computer. It is an ideal projector for a church of 400-500 members. It comes with the standard HITACHI three years warranty.

At this time I do have a few remaining HITACHI projectors which I bought at the very special GC OFFER. They are as follows:

Two HITACHI CP-X445 High Resolution 3200 lumens, wireless, with 4 speakers, networking, etc., at \$2595.00, instead of \$3200.00.

One HITACHI CP-X1250, High Resolution, 4500 lumens, wireless, shift lens, 4 interchangeable lenses, etc., for only \$4200.00, instead of \$4900.00.

Feel free to take advantage of these special offers by contacting us by email or phone (269) 471-2915 or (269) 978-6878. We will ship you immediately any of the projectors we have in stock.

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR AN EXCELLENT REMOTE FOR YOUR POWER POINT PRESENTATIONS?

If you are looking for an outstanding Remote for your Power-Point presentations, you will be pleased to know HONEYWELL has just come out with the smallest and most powerful remote in the market. You can view it at <http://www.powerremote.com/>

The size of the transmitter is smaller than a credit card. You can stick it inside the palm of your hand and nobody can see it. The operating distance between the remote and the receiver is officially 150 feet. But I tested the remote in an open environment, and the radio signal can go up to 400 feet of distance. IT IS INCREDIBLE! The transmitter has three button: forward, backward, and laser.

The brand new model is hard to find in the market, but I signed a contract with HONEYWELL to distribute it to our churches and schools. By buying 50 units at a time, I can offer this incredible remote for only \$120.00, postage paid. To order a remote, call us at (269) 978-6878 or (269) 471-2915 or email us your order at sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com

DOES YOUR CHURCH OR SCHOOL NEED A SCREEN?

If your church/school is looking for a screen, the DA-LITE SCREEN COMPANY, the largest manufacture of screens in the world, has agreed to offer their line of screens at a about 30% discount price. To find the screen that you need, visit the DA-LITE SCREEN COMPANY website at <http://www.da.lite.com>. You will see hundreds of models of screens with their respective prices. Once you find the screen that you need, give us the model number by phone (269) 471-2915 or email your request [<sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com>](mailto:sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com) We will forward your order immediately to DA-LITE that will ship the screen directly to your address. It is as simple as that.

SPECIAL OFFER ON ALL MY DVD/CD-ROM RECORDINGS

At this time we are offering the complete FOUR ALBUMS package of all my recordings for only \$100.00, postage paid, instead of the regular price of \$400.00. Here is a brief description of each album.

The FIRST ALBUM contains FIVE DVD DISKS with 10 live PowerPoint lectures of my SABBATH/ADVENT seminars. They were taped few months ago by a TV crew at Andrews University. In these lectures I share the discoveries I made at Vatican libraries in Rome on the change of the Sabbath. These are the popular lectures which I present every weekend in different parts of the world and now you can enjoy them in your home and share them with your friends.

The SECOND ALBUM consists of two CD-ROM disks. The first disk contains all my 17 books and over 200 articles, for a total of over 7000 pages of research that I have produced during the past 30 years of biblical investigation. With the Global Acrobat search engine you can find immediately what I have written on any given text or topic. The second disk contains all my popular PowerPoint seminars presentations. Each lecture consists of about 100 PowerPoint slides, for a total of 2000 slides. The text explaining each slide is provided separately and can be printed when needed. This makes it possible for any person to use and modify my lectures.

The THIRD ALBUM consists of two MP3-AUDIO DISKS that can be played on computers with CD drives, DVD players, MP3 players, newer CD players, and iPod. The disks contain 22 popular lectures on Marriage, Music, Temperance, Dress, Sabbath, Second Advent, and others. You can listen to them while driving or working.

The FOURTH ALBUM consists of one DVD disk with the two hours interview done on 3ABN on my latest book *THE PASSION OF CHRIST IN SCRIPTURE AND HISTORY*. In the interview I show that Gibson's movie on THE PASSION is a strict Catholic film that in a subtle and deceptive way promotes fundamental Catholic heresies. More important still, this recording will help you appreciate more fully

the Passion of Christ as His passionate love to redeem us from the penalty (Gal 3:13) and the power of sin (Titus 2:14) through His sacrificial death.

The special offer for ALL THE FOUR ALBUMS is ONLY \$100.00, postage paid, instead of the regular price of \$400.00. You can order this package in three ways:

EMAIL: The First Way to order is via email. Just email us your home address and your credit card number, with the expiration date. Our email address is: sbacchiocchi@biblicalpherspectives.com. We will process the credit card and mail you immediately the package of the four albums.

PHONE: The Second Way to order is by phone. Simply call us directly at Biblical Perspectives. Our two phone numbers are (269) 978-6878 or (269) 471-2915. We will be glad to take your order by phone and process it immediately. Please call us between 8:00 a. m. and 10:00 p. m. EST, not in the middle of the night.

REGULAR MAIL: The Third Way to order is by mail. Simply mail your personal check to: BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES, 4990 Appian Way, Berrien Springs, Michigan 4990, USA. We guarantee to process your order immediately.

EDUCATION FOR THE ENDTIME

Samuele Bacchiocchi, Ph. D.

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A new school year has begun in many parts of the world. Million of students from the elementary to the graduate level, are making their way back to school. In many Christian schools teachers have been invited to attend a retreat to recapture the vision of Christian education and to renew their commitment to their teaching ministry.

The question that comes to mind at the beginning of a new school year is: What makes education Christian? Is there a real difference between the teaching done in public schools and the teaching given in

Christian schools? In terms of subject matter the difference can be relative. The books used for such courses as Psychology, Sociology, Biology, Chemistry, Business Administration, History, Computer science, and etc., are often the same in public as in Christian schools. Surprisingly, the text books used in Christian schools to teach such subjects as “Psychology,” are often written by secular humanists who discount the presence of sin and the influence of divine grace on human behavior.

It appears to me that what makes the teaching of any subject “Christian,” is not necessarily the text books used in the classroom, or the name of the school, but the Christian perspective and spirituality that a teacher brings to the subject he/she teaches. Teachers who have embraced the biblical teaching that God has created us perfectly, He has redeemed us completely, and He will soon restore us ultimately, will bring such perspective to any subject they teach. Whether the subject is chemistry or computer science, Christian teachers will help students to see the out-working of God in their disciplines.

THE IMPACT OF HUMANISTIC EDUCATION

To appreciate the importance of Christian education, one only needs to consider the impact that the largely humanistic education has had in Western European countries. During the past half century, humanistic teachers have taught their students that human life and destiny is controlled, not by God, but by human resources, economic policies, and political programs. In other words, man is the master of his own destiny. Humanity possesses the economic resources and scientific knowledge to construct a better tomorrow.

The belief in human ability to create a better future is, to use Brunner’s expression, “an illegitimate child of Christianity,” since it grew out of the Christian faith in a better future to be established by the Coming of the Lord. The difference between the two obviously lies in the means used for achieving a better future, namely, human resources versus divine intervention into human history.

The impact of the humanistic education can be seen today in Western European countries, where the churches are empty and places of entertainment like stadiums or beaches are full. People seek for pleasure and profit, rather than for the presence and peace of God.

In his recent speeches the new Pope Benedict XVI has described Western Europe as a godless society controlled by the “Tyranny of Relativism.” The difference between right and wrong no longer exists. Moral values are relative, largely dependent upon subjective feelings, rather than the normative authority of the Bible.

Benedict XVI sees himself as a man called by God at such a time as this to re-christianize the secular Western society. Few days ago at the World Youth Congress in Koln, Germany, Benedict XVI challenged the Catholic youth to plant again the Christian faith in their respective countries.

What the pope fails to realize is that the “Tyranny of Relativism” that controls the Western society today, has largely been fostered by Catholic moral teachings, based on ecclesiastical traditions, rather than Biblical moral imperatives. By claiming the authority to reduce the temporal punishment for sins committed, the Catholic church has fostered the relativistic mentality that no matter what sins people commit, they can always count on the Catholic church to reduce their punishment in this present life and/or in Purgatory. Such teaching contributes to moral relativism, since it makes salvation a *dispensation* of the church, rather than a *disposition* of the believer.

Revival of the Sunday Eucharist

Benedict XVI intends to meet the challenge of the godlessness and moral relativism of the Western society, by reviving the meaning and relevance of the Catholic sacraments, especially the Sunday Eucharistic celebration. Since his election, he has emphasized several times the centrality of the Sunday Eucharist.

In his fiery sermon delivered on Sunday, May 29, at the close of the “Sunday Eucharistic Congress” held in Bari, Italy, Benedict XVI said: “This Eucharistic congress, which comes to a close today, intended to present Sunday again as a ‘weekly Easter,’ expression of the identity of the Christian community and center of its life and mission.” He continued explaining that Christians need “to be nourished with the Eucharistic bread . . . in order to find the necessary energy for the journey to be undertaken.”

For Benedict XVI the educational program of the Catholic Church is largely based on its sacramental theology. He believes that it is imperative to teach the youth about the meaning and efficacy of the sacraments, in order to counteract the skepticism and moral relativism of the Western society. The problem with this strategy is that in the course of time rituals lose their meaning and become empty formalities which do not meet the mental and spiritual needs of people.

By contrast our Seventh-day Adventists find the basis of the educational goals in the prophetic and moral teachings of the Scripture. Young people are to be trained to meet the challenge of moral relativism, skepticism, secularism, and materialism, by understanding the prophetic significance of the time in which we live and by showing through their life and witness how to live godly lives in the midst of a secularly minded society.

For the sake of clarity and brevity I will focus on what I view as three major components of our Adventist Endtime education.

1) ADVENT CENTERED EDUCATION

The Adventist philosophy of education stems from the belief embedded in our church name “Adventist.” Our name expresses our belief that we live at the time of the End, when Christ will soon come to bring this present order to an end and establish a New Earth where sin, suffering, and death will be no more.

Our Adventist Endtime perspective poses a unique challenge to Adventist educators. Teachers are called, on the one hand, to train our students to become the best possible doctors, scientists, teachers, musicians, preachers, administrators, while at the same constantly reminding them that they should never make their academic attainments or professional goals the ultimate reality for which to live. Our ultimate goal should always be “to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming” (2 Pet 3:11-12). Peter reminds us that as Advent believers we are called to “set your hope fully upon the grace that is coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 1:13).

It is a most difficult challenge, on the one hand, to teach students academic subjects, motivating them to get good grades and to earn a degree, while, on the other hand, constantly reminding them that the most important thing in their life is to prepare themselves for the coming of Christ.

Two Dangers to Avoid

An Advent centered education poses two dangers: overexcitement and indifference. Teachers can make young students so excited at the thought of Christ's imminent Coming that they gave up all efforts to study hard to attain their professional goals. On several occasions students have asked me if it was wise for them to invest so much time and money to earn a degree, if Christ is coming soon. Some have never finished their education, because they feel that their degree is not going to help them when Jesus comes. They prefer to go out in the field and work in whatever ministerial job offered to them, rather than studying hard to complete their pastoral training.

This thinking existed already in apostolic times. Paul had to admonish the Thessalonian Christians, who had become so "quickly shaken in mind [and] excited" to the point of having stopped working, to become sober and go back to work "to earn their own living" (2 Thess 2:2; 3:12), or we might say today, to go back to school and finish your training.

Believing that Christ's coming is near, does not mean that we must relax our scholastic preparation or business endeavors. In the parable of the talents the nobleman, Christ, commissions his servants saying: "Trade with these till I come" (Luke 19:13). The servants whom the Lord commends at His Coming are those who have waited for Him by doing business with the talents entrusted to them. As Christian we must study and work hard, not in spite of the expectation of Christ's imminent Return, but because of it.

The second danger is to become so involved in our academic or business pursuits, that we become neglectful, or even indifferent toward Christ's Coming. I have known students who were so concerned about getting good grades, that they chose to spend the Sabbath studying for

their final exams, rather than going to church. This problem is aggravated by the prevailing perception that getting good grades is the key to success. After all good grades will determine whether a student will be admitted into a prestigious university.

An Advent-centered education must avoid the two dangers of *overexcitement* on the one hand and *indifference* on the other hand. Students should not become so *excited* about the nearness of Christ's coming, to write off their need to study hard to succeed academically or professionally. On the other hand, students should not become so engrossed in their study or work, to become *indifferent* toward Christ's coming. Teachers play an important role in helping students maintain the delicate balance between the pursuit of academic excellent, and their spiritual preparation for Christ's soon coming.

LIFESTYLE CENTERED EDUCATION

Historically Adventist education has paid special attention to such lifestyle issues like drinking, smoking, wearing of jewelry or revealing clothes, and certain forms of entertainment like rock music, dancing and movies. The Student Handbook spelled out what was expected of students in these areas.

In my college days at Newbold College and then at Andrews University, I recall students being disciplined for being caught drinking, smoking, wearing of jewelry, or going out to night clubs. If they persisted in their wrong doing, they would eventually be expelled from school. The conviction has been that Christian education should teach students not only academic subjects, but also how to live as worthy representatives of Christ.

The Adventist focus on lifestyle derives from the belief in Christ's soon-Return. "Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness!" (2 Pet 3:11). If we plan to live in the "new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2 Pet 3:13), then we must seek by the power of the Holy Spirit to live as citizens of God's Kingdom in this present life.

A Relaxation of Adventist Lifestyle Standards

In recent years lifestyle standards have been relaxed. Drinking alcoholic beverages or smoking pot in dormitories is not uncommon. Some students have reported to me that in some dormitories one can smell marijuana while walking along the corridors. A survey published in *Adventist Review* on October 29, 1987 indicates that 58 percent of Adventist youth are experimenting with alcohol and 17 percent of Adventist College students are habitual drinkers. Most likely the percentage has increased during the past 20 years, as indicated by the Counseling Centers that have been set up in our campuses to help students with drinking problems.

The dress code has also been relaxed. It is no longer uncommon to see young ladies and young men on campus wearing rings, ear rings, necklaces, bracelets, or revealing clothes that leave little to the imagination. Incidentally, the wearing of jewelry is not longer a female problem. Male students sometimes exceeds their female counterparts in adorning their bodies. Rock music is also tolerated, as long as it is not so loud to disturbs those who want to study.

In reflecting on Adventist education for the Endtime, we cannot ignore these lifestyle issues. We need to recognize that what Adventist teachers teach in their classroom and what Adventist pastors preach in their churches, largely influence the moral values of our students and members. We cannot blame our students or our church members for drinking, smoking, wearing, or watching what is wrong, if we as teachers and preachers do not help them to see the Biblical reasons for doing what is right.

Sincere but Sincerely Wrong

There are many sincere young people and adults who are sincerely doing what is wrong. They sincerely believe that they can consume a moderate amount of alcohol and drugs as long as they do not become addicted. They sincerely believe that they can wear different kinds of jewelry as long as it is not too gaudy or too expensive. They sincerely believe that there is nothing wrong in premarital sex as long as they love their partner. They sincerely believe that they can watch violent or sex-

filled movies as long as they do not become emotionally involved. They sincerely believe that they can listen to rock music as long as the beat is not too strong or the words are not too profane. They sincerely believe that they can divorce their marital partner if they no longer find fulfillment in their relationship.

One wonders, How can so many Christians be sincere and yet be sincerely wrong on vital aspects of Christian living? It would seem to me that part of the problem is a lack of understanding of the Gospel's claims on our daily lives. The prevailing concern of Christian schools and churches today is to teach people how to become Christians, rather how to follow Jesus in their lifestyle. There seems to be a reluctance to teach young and older people how the acceptance of the Gospel affects the way we eat, drink, dress, adorn, and amuse ourselves. The result is, to use the words of Hosea, that "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hos 4:6).

Fear of Legalism

Perhaps it is the fear of being labeled as "legalists" that has kept many Adventist teachers and preachers from addressing some of the specific aspects of Christian living. There is a fear that such teaching can cause a sense of guilt and insecurity in the minds of those students or members who do not live up to God's expectations. To avoid troubling consciences, many teachers and preachers prefer to dwell on the "doing and dying" of Jesus, or to put differently, on His unconditional love and forgiveness. The message seems to be: "You do not need to feel insecure about your salvation because Christ has done it all. He accepts you no matter how you live or what you drink, wear, watch, or listen to. Just trust in His doing and dying for you and you are saved." This message is misleading. The good news of the Gospel is that *Jesus accepts us as we are* but He will also *empower us to become what we ought be*. When Jesus comes into our life, He transforms us from inside out.

Recently I had a pleasant conversation with a pastor who told me why he was reluctant to invite me for a weekend seminar. He felt that I dwell too-much on lifestyle issues. His commitment is to preach the Gospel and the saving grace of God. But the question is: What is the

Gospel? Is it not the Good News that Christ has sacrificed His life to pay the *penalty of our sins* and to enable us to overcome the *power of sin in our lives*. Ultimately the Power of the Gospel is best seen in transformed lifestyles.

In my PowerPoint seminars on the Sabbath, Second Advent, and Christian Lifestyle, I do discuss how to live in the joyful expectancy of a soon-coming Savior. But, my approach is confessional, not confrontational. I do not use the pulpit to point the finger of accusation to anyone, but simply to share the principles of Christian living I have discovered in the study of the Word of God. My intent is not to condemn anyone, but to help fellow believers to understand and experience more fully the principles that God has revealed.

To be faithful to the Biblical mandate, we must teach our students and members not only how to profess their faith and love for Christ but also how to practice such faith and love in their daily living. This is the reason that has motivated me to during the past 30 years to write several books dealing with such aspects of Christian life style as Sabbathkeeping, marriage, music, drinking, and dress. During the past years of teaching and preaching around the world, countless times I have seen radical changes in the lifestyle of people who became convinced by Scripture and convicted by the Holy Spirit that certain habits or actions were wrong. There are many sincere young people and adults who want to know how to live according to the principles that God has revealed in the Bible. They appreciate when a teacher, a preacher, or a fellow Christian takes time to show them from the Bible and from personal example how to live the Christian life.

The Need to Deepen Moral Convictions

The challenge that Christian educators face today is to deepen the moral convictions of young and older people. It is only when people strongly believe that certain actions are morally wrong, that they will feel compelled to resist the social pressure to do them. Unfortunately, much of the morality taught today in public schools and churches, is largely based on social or biological ethics, rather than on biblical ethics.

Take, for example, the problem of alcohol consumption. The

tendency today is to view alcohol dependency primarily as a *sickness* rather than as a *sin* problem. The underlying assumption seems to be that teachers and preachers should move away from viewing the drinking of alcoholic beverages as essentially “a deliberate sin.” Instead they should view alcoholism more as a *medical* than as a *moral* problem.

Alcoholism has been reduced to the status of sickness for which the individual is not responsible. We are fast becoming a “no fault” society—a society where no one is willing to assume responsibility or blame for anything he does. We have no fault insurance and no fault divorces, so why not also no fault alcoholism, no fault drug or sex addiction, no fault gambling, etc. By labeling such actions as a disease we absolve the wrongdoers of all responsibility and guilt. This is essential if we are going to have a ‘no fault’ society.

Teachers need to inform their students about the harmful effect of alcoholic beverages to their health, self-image, family, and society. But will this information provide a compelling motivation to remain or become abstinent? Will the simple knowledge of the harmful effects of alcohol adequately convince and convict young and older people to be teetotalers? In my view education alone is not enough. It takes more. It takes not merely *biological ethics* but primarily *Biblical ethics*. *It is only when a Christian recognizes that drinking is not only a bad habit that can harm one’s health, but also a transgression of a God-given principle to ensure our health and holiness, that he or she will feel compelled to abstain from intoxicating substances.*

Educating young and older people regarding the physio-social effects of alcohol will not substantially reduce the drinking problem either in the church or in the society as a whole. The reason for this is the fallen human nature described by Paul with these words: “For I do not do what I want but I do the very thing I hate. . . . Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” (Rom 7:15, 24). The long and sad experience of the human race teaches us that for the sake of immediate pleasure, human beings will persist in doing what they know will eventually destroy not only their well-being but also that of society.

The Christian Way of Freedom

The Christian way of freedom is found in seeking to *serve God*

rather than *to serve self*, in seeking to know and to do the will of God rather than to gratify and preserve our lifestyle. Our present life is a meaningless and unfulfilling existence until it finds its meaning and fulfillment in God.

The good news of the Gospel is that God has provided us with a way to find meaning and fulfillment in Him, by accepting His forgiveness for our past sins and His power to live in the present according to the principles of His Word. This was, as Paul explains, the purpose of Christ's coming into this world "in the likeness of sinful flesh . . . in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (Rom 8:3, 4).

This means that educators must define their position on lifestyle issues by listening first to what God has to say about it in His Word, and then to what scientific research tells us in such areas. Our convictions must be based primarily on *Biblical ethics*, not merely on *biological ethics*. Our life must be guided by the positive principles and admonitions given to us by God in His Word.

SPIRIT-FILLED EDUCATION

Quality endtime education can only be imparted through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. When Zerubbabel faced formidable task of rebuilding the Temple, the Lord reassured him through the prophet Zechariah saying: "This [is] the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts." (Zech 4:6).

Teachers today face a similar formidable task of building a strong academic, moral, and spiritual foundation in the life of their students. Young people often come to class today brainwashed by what Benedict XVI rightly calls "the tyranny of relativism." For many of them there are no moral absolutes. The distinction between right and wrong is often blurred, being determined by what people like or dislike.

During my 32 years of teaching I have seen a gradual change in the attitude of the students toward the moral standards of the church.

Many students today come to class today with their own set of values that have been shaped by our secular and hedonistic culture. How can Christian teachers succeed in radically changing the thinking and living of their students? The answer is to be found in Zechariah's reassuring promise: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts." (Zech 4:6). It is reassuring to know that Christian teachers can count on the enabling power of the Holy Spirit to fulfil their mission to mold the mind of their students.

A vital function of the Holy Spirit is to guide us into "all truth" (John 16:3) and to "convince the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment" (John 16:8). Teachers must be receptive to the working of the Holy Spirit in their lives, both in seeking to understand "truths" and in imparting truthful knowledge to the students. Knowledge and wisdom are gifts of the Spirit. "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit" (1 Cor 12:8).

Christian teachers needs to begin each day and each class seeking the enlightenment and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Divine guidance is needed both in preparing the lecture and in delivering with clarity and conviction. Christian teachers need to pray that their words will appeal to the mind and touch the heart of their students. Students can tell if a teacher is a spiritual person, seeking to impart knowledge through the enabling power of the Spirit, or if a teacher relies exclusively on his knowledge and skills. Often the spirituality of a teacher has far greater lasting impact on the future life of the students than his/her erudition.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins

After delivering His famous prophetic discourse recorded in Matthew 24, Christ proceeded to illustrate how to live in the expectancy of His coming by using three parables. The first is the parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt 25:1-13). All the Ten Virgins fell asleep while waiting for the Bridegroom, but when the Bridegroom came five of them discovered that they had no oil left in their lamps. They are referred to as the foolish virgins.

We may ask: Why were the five foolish virgins unprepared to

meet Christ, the Bridegroom, at His Coming? How did they run out of oil? Did they leave the church and went back to their worldly lifestyle? Apparently this was not the case, because they are called “virgins.” They were “foolish” yes, but “virgins.” In the Bible “virginity” represents purity, integrity, uprightness. This suggests that there was nothing morally wrong in the life of the foolish virgins. They were church members, teachers, or pastors in good moral standing.

How then did they run out of oil? Since the oil represents the Holy Spirit, the foolish virgins failed to fill their lives daily with the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. They may have reached a point in their lives when they no longer felt the need to seek daily the guidance and strengthening power of the Holy Spirit. They may have felt that they had all the resources needed to succeed in their life and profession.

The more successful we become as teachers, preachers, doctors, builders, mechanics, businessmen, etc., the more tempted we are to become independent from God. When we feel that we have the intellectual or financial resources that we need, we are tempted to run our own life independent from God. After all we have all what it takes to succeed.

In many ways here lies the essential difference between the life of a genuine Christian (wise virgins) and that of a nominal Christian (foolish virgins) or an unbeliever. A genuine Christian lives a life of constant dependency upon God. A nominal Christian lives a life of independence from God.

Dependent or Independent Christians?

Are we dependant or independent Christians? Do we sometime feel self-sufficient like the foolish virgins? Do we feel that we have all the necessary financial, intellectual, professional resources to resolve our problems? Do we feel, as teachers, that we can manage our classes by ourselves without seeking God’s help? Do we find it humiliating to kneel before God each day or to pray before each class, asking for the enabling power of His Spirit?

I believe that if ever there was a time when we need to seek the

enabling power of the Holy Spirit, such time is today, when we are called to live in a selfish, impatient, unkind, immoral, intemperate, secularly minded society. Every day we as teachers, and especially our students, are tempted and pressured to conform to the world in eating and drinking, dressing, entertainment, Sabbathkeeping, divorcing and remarrying, sexual permissiveness.

Today more than ever before we need to ask daily for the enabling power of God's Spirit. We need to ask the power of His Spirit as we begin each day, saying: God help me today to live sober, upright and holy life. Help me through Thy Spirit to be pleasant toward my students and the people I met, to be diligent in my work, and to be truthful in my speaking.

We also need to ask the power of His Spirit as we go through the day and we are confronted with unexpected situations that may cause us to lose our patience and become hostile toward students or people who blame every body except themselves for their failures. Let us pause for a moment and ask God for the special assistance of His Spirit. When you find that you are again in control of a situation that seemed difficult or out of control, pause again to thank God for strength received.

In researching biblical teachings on vital areas of our Christian faith, I have often been confronted with problematic texts, whose meaning puzzled me. I would consult all the available resources, but still I was unsure about the meaning of the text. In that moment I sensed the need to pause, and pray that God would open my mind so that I could understand the true meaning of His Word. Surprisingly, what was puzzling to me soon became clear. At that moment I sensed the need to thank God for help received.

As we live by the power of the Spirit we become more and more like One we are expecting, because as the Scripture tells us, "We all are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit" (2 Cor 3:18).

Conclusion

The preceding reflections on Adventist endtime education have

reminded us of the unprecedented challenge faced by educators, whether they be parents in the home, teachers in the classroom, or preachers in the church. We face the challenge of helping students and members in general, to maintain the delicate balance between the pursuit of academic excellence or of professional success, on the one hand, and the spiritual preparation for Christ's soon coming, on the other hand.

As Christian educators, we face the challenge to be faithful to the Biblical mandate to teach our students and members not only how to profess their faith and love for Christ but also how to practice such faith and love in a secularly minded and perverse society. We face the challenge to deepen the moral convictions of young and older people, because it is only when people strongly believe that certain actions are morally wrong, that they will feel compelled to resist the social pressure to do them.

The challenges of endtime education are formidable. But it is reassuring to know that Christian teachers can count on the enabling power of the Holy Spirit to fulfil their mission to mold the mind of their students. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." (Zech 4:6).