

## Great Expectations

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Key quote: "Any vision of the output of our educational system must lead to the development of redeemed individuals whose lives are built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ."

As June arrives each year, we prepare to say goodbye - to the students we teach who are moving to the next grade, or to other classes, and to students who are graduating. Perhaps the question each teacher asks is Are they ready? Are they ready for the world? Are they ready for grade seven math? Are they ready for university? Are they ready for Jesus to come?

Browsing the internet, I came across the expectations that the Catholic educational system in Ontario holds for its graduates. I was impressed by the list:



The Catholic educational system in Ontario seeks to ensure that each graduate is:

- a discerning believer
- an effective communicator
- a reflective and creative thinker
- a self-directed, responsible, lifelong learner
- a collaborative family member
- and a responsible citizen

The Graduate Expectations document expands on each of the above, describing what each of the expectations means in a practical sense, as interpreted by the Catholic spiritual community. The integration of faith with life is a strong thread that runs through the entire vision.

As Seventh-day Adventists, do we have a common vision for what our education system will produce? If parents, teachers, church members, students, and colleges have different expectations, it can lead to challenges. If parents are interested in simply having their children be doctors and lawyers, if teachers want students to be excellent, excited learners, if church members want students to be tailor-made for the offices of the church, if students want to get high enough grades to gain access to lucrative careers, and if colleges are looking for well-rounded individuals, confusion will be the result unless efforts are made to prioritize and integrate the various conflicting desires.

Proverbs 29:18 says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish," and the less-known corollary to that proverb is "Where there is more than one vision, there is division, and the people still perish." In True Education, Ellen White reminds us that education and redemption are one, for they have the same

foundation, Jesus Christ. Any vision of the output of our educational system must lead to the development of redeemed individuals whose lives are built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ.

I believe that each student who graduates from the Seventh-day Adventist educational system should be expected to:

- Experience a vibrant, living, relationship with God
- Practise grace with others
- Lead a purposeful life of selfless service
- Make Spirit-led decisions
- Demonstrate a commitment to excellence in their careers
- Be self-disciplined
- Live a lifestyle that indicates one is living in expectancy of Jesus' second coming
- Demonstrate stewardship with time, talents, and treasure
- Recognize and communicate the great controversy
- Express clear confidence in the love of God
- Lead balanced lives - spiritually, intellectually, physically, and socially

This is really just a beginning - and one that I hope inspires teachers, administrators, and stakeholders of Adventist schools across the country to examine what we are doing, and the results of our efforts. As parents, teachers, students, staff, church members, church board members, administrators, and conference officials, we can work together to achieve a clear picture of the characteristics that describe this worthy goal - young men and women being transformed daily into the image of Christ.

"Can two walk together unless they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3) No. So, let us come together, and agree, so we can walk together and work together to achieve restoration, through God's power, in the young men and women with whom we come in contact. When we work together toward the same objective, it will come to pass, for the Master Teacher has promised "if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 18:19)

Let's make every effort to help our students be ready. Our work is one that requires careful planning and dedicated effort - for every moment, we are building characters for eternity.

### **References:**

- *The Holy Bible*, King James Version.
- White, Ellen G. *True Education*, page 21.
- [Seventh-day Adventist Education Philosophy Statement](#)
- [Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations](#)