

**Faith-based teaching is not only to be displayed on desks or walls; it is to be exemplified in our daily-life experiences.**

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One of my former schools was up for accreditation. Wired in everyone's head was this message: "Make sure you can prove to the accrediting team that you are integrating faith and learning." As vice-principal and registrar, I took the time to ensure that all my records were up-to-date. I knew every student by name and number. I knew the vision and the mission of my school. The day of the much-anticipated visit came, and L. Herbert Fletcher, then Director of Education for the Inter-American Division chose to interview me.

Instead of a formal interview, we talked mainly about my professional growth. When Director Fletcher got up to leave, he looked me in the eye and asked, "What evidence of your faith will students and their parents find when they come in this office?"

Silence filled the room. Finally, I pointed to some faith-based posters I had mounted on the walls. The sage gently placed his hand on the Holy Bible that was on my desk. Suddenly I felt that I had failed the open-book test because I had forgotten to open the Book! This experience has taught me many invaluable lessons. Let's examine three.

The first one is this: **Faith-based teaching is not only to be displayed on desks and walls; it is to be exemplified in our daily-life experiences.** It then becomes an outgrowth similar to fruits on a well nurtured tree. In retrospect, I had put that Bible on my desk for the wrong reason: to impress the accrediting committee. Had I put it there as a witness—a genuine symbol of my faith in its power to change lives, I would have remembered to refer to it. Yes, the posters were relevant; but they were secondary to the scriptures.

History often repeats itself. Recently I was again involved in helping to prepare my school, Greaves Adventist Academy, for accreditation. During the team's visit, I was using a non-teaching period to prepare a class activity. In the midst of my preparation, Dennis Marshall, Director of Education for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada, approached me and asked if he could speak with me for a few minutes. I welcomed him and offered him a seat. After Dr. Marshall left, I shouldn't have, but I glanced at my Bible. The thirty-one sheets of paper I was working with had completely covered it! Thank God, today the Bible on my desk is not a tool to impress, but a reminder of its power to transform lives, build characters, and inspire hope.

The second lesson is that **a mere emotional commitment to integrate faith and learning is futile.** Unless the desire is substantiated by the working of the Holy Spirit in the life of each teacher, no lasting change can be effected. There ought to be a synergistic connection of heart and soul which is transmitted from the lessons to the pupils. 1Peter 3:15 is empowering: "...sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."

What an awesome message! It tells us that we should always be ready to take our students—many of whom have not yet made a personal commitment to Jesus—to the word of God and show them the reason our faith is anchored in Him. We know that it is the ever-present word of God that will transform them into the image of God; therefore, our intentions must be deliberate. Like skilled archers we must release the bow at that certain point where the arrow will hit its intended target. Any failure on our part will derail our Christ-given mandate.

Here's the third one: **As Seventh-day Adventist educators we are called to be faithful guardians of the children God has placed in our care.** We can make several personal applications from this. We are unfaithful when we merely follow a routine. Through the grace of God, we must be responsible and creative. We must be wise in all things. Let us put our focus on generating and improving—not on copying and pasting. We must be committed to the tasks of feeding the lambs and the sheep (John 21: 15-17), and making disciples of them (Matt. 28: 19). Let us be equipped with the tools our students can hone and use to ultimately make them students of the School of Heaven.

Finally, when Christ came as a babe to this Earth to vindicate the character of God and teach us the way back to Him, there was no room in the inn. Each day as you and I face our students, let us make room for the Master Teacher. It's a great step in our inspiring journey to excellence.

### **Resources**

- All scripture references are from the New King James Version.