

## The Costs of Christian Education

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Belief in Christian Education is an unwritten tenant of our faith as Seventh-day Adventists. We support it and plan for it as a regular part of our lives. We intend for our children to be blessed as the beneficiaries of a good Christian Education.



Perhaps the greatest challenge to Christian Education is the cost associated with providing it. This is true for high school and especially true for college education. I have sat with the parents of prospective students destined for a boarding academy or CUC on a number of occasions. Invariably they wrestle with how they will manage the economics of sending their children to school. Sometimes they are just not sure where the money will come from. These musings give me an opportunity to share my own experience with them about how I fared personally with the cost of Christian Education.

I was raised in a non-Adventist home. I had already graduated from the local high school and was enrolled in a local college when I was introduced to the Seventh-day Adventist Message and accepted Jesus into my personal life. The local Pastor suggested that I consider attending college at CUC in Alberta, rather than continuing in a secular college program.

A good friend of mine with whom I shared all my high school years, wanted me to attend Memorial University in St. John's. As part of the decision process, I compared the cost of the two respective institutions. CUC was charging about five times as much for tuition as was Memorial.

I wondered how I might meet the costs of attending CUC. This was a concern especially since I would have no earthly help from my non-Adventist parents.

After praying about this matter for a time, I decided to go to CUC on faith. I discovered that there were a number of ways by which the cost of my education could be born. I started by getting a job on campus. I eventually became the life guard at the Physical Education complex which provided a portion of the monies needed. In reading the handbook at the time (cir. 1978), I found that there were a number of discounts or funds a person could either receive or apply for. In addition, the provision was made for out-of-province students to receive one free trip home per year.

Of course there was the option of applying for a student loan/grant from my home province, but I decided

I would try to avoid this route if possible. I came to the inevitable conclusion that I would have to earn the balance of money needed by working during the summer. Some students were working summers in the saw mills, others were working on the fishing boats in B.C. The Lord impressed me that I should become a literature evangelist for the summer months.

I am not a particularly brave person in regard to door-to-door selling but I was encouraged to give it a try by the fact that I would be involved in a ministry. To my pleasant surprise, it turned out to be a wonderful experience and the Lord blessed me beyond my wildest dreams. Each summer I was able to sell enough literature to cover the balance of my tuition needs.

When I graduated from CUC in the Spring of 1982, I went to the Student Finance department to settle up my account. The school wrote me a cheque for \$2000 for the overpayments I had made during the year.

Upon returning home, I met my high school friend who had recently graduated from Memorial University. He informed me that he had accumulated a debt of about \$12,000.

While the costs of a Christian Education are indeed substantial, I believe that if we do our part in extending the energy, God will provide the opportunity for us to receive the Christian Education that we need.