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### Teaching Was A Major Consideration In the Apostolic Church

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# Memory, Meaning & Faith

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April 14, 2010

## Teaching Was A Major Consideration In The Apostolic Church



*Teaching was a major consideration in the apostolic church. Paul, Peter, John, and Jude all wrote about false teachers (both Judaizers and Gnostics) warning believers to beware of heretical teachings. James echoed the teachings of Jesus by cautioning teachers of their great responsibility: 'Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly' (3:1).*

*Paul added to the portrait of instruction in the early church by his directions to Titus, his pastoral assistant stationed on Crete. Apparently Judaistic teachers were persuading some Christians to depart from the truth. Titus was told to 'teach what is in accord with sound doctrine' (2:1). Paul then specified various groups in the church needing instruction. He also outlined what was to be taught to those groups. . . . The ability to teach was required in pastoral leadership. Paul gave both Timothy and Titus lists of qualifications of a bishop or pastor. One of the major differences in the qualities required in a pastor and those of a deacon was the ability to teach (1 Tim. 3:2). When Paul listed the four gifted leaders for the churches in Ephesian 4:11, he identified one of the four as pastor-teacher. These church leaders had responsibility to equip believers for their ministries. This meant helping them 'grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ' (2 Pet. 3:18). The teaching ministry of the church has always been an integral part of God's plan for spreading the gospel and changing lives. Paul's closing words to Timothy capture this concept: 'The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others: (2 Tim. 2:2).*

James E. Reed & Ronnie Prevost, *A History of Christian Education*, (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1993), 73-74, emphasis supplied.

### Questions

- If teaching is to be a major consideration in the church today, how is pastoral leadership being trained to do it


effectively?

- How do local churches today go about preparing “reliable men [and women] who will also be qualified to teach others”?
- What ministries within the local church today intentionally help each member “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”?

Posted by [Kathy Beagles](#) on April 14, 2010 in [Church History](#), [Missions and Ministry](#), [Quotable](#) | [Permalink](#)

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## Comments

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I can think of any part of the NT that is concerned with pedagogical method or teaching teachers to teach. It seems like Paul was more concerned with getting the message into the hands of those who were already capable.

On the other hand, an argument from silence doesn't tell us much about what might have been going on in the early church. If teaching was a priority (and the above quote demonstrates it was), we can well assume that it would have become necessary early on to develop teachers rather than relying on existing skills.

But the question is, if the NT doesn't promote a particular pedagogical method, is there such a thing as a biblical way to train teachers?

Posted by: [David Hamstra](#) | [April 14, 2010 at 02:57 PM](#)

Interesting points, David. Certainly the gift of teaching is referred to in the New Testament. But you are right, in that real methods or principles of teaching have to be brought out rather inductively, from the way and manner in which Christ is described as teaching. There are some general, broad principles in the Bible. But on the whole it seems as though the discipline of teaching is considered as part of the natural revelation that the Bible assumes we can come to good insights into if we properly apply ourselves to studying it.

Posted by: [Nicholas Miller](#) | [April 16, 2010 at 09:59 PM](#)

And, don't forget that teaching is a gift of the Spirit. So, the Spirit will doubtless guide this inductive study. Is there a clear methodology for being hospitable? Or for prophesying? Or for preaching, for that matter? Or for helping?

Posted by: [Kathy Beagles](#) | [April 16, 2010 at 10:51 PM](#)

Kathy—thanks for reminding us of the great commission to GO and TEACH. I agree this requires preaching and so much more. And I agree this commission is ultimately the churches, not just that schools job. But of course, the school is part of the church. Teaching and training ourselves and others requires more of a focus on LEARNING.

And we can learn much about learning from professionals in education. I will never forget while teaching at a public university in Ohio, when a secular colleague—a 35 year veteran teacher—reminded me, “talking is not the same as teaching.” Her 1 second comment was based on years of teaching teachers. She changed my paradigm. I liked writing and talking, words, but I needed to get better at evaluating the learning of those I was paid to teach.

So discipleship for me is ultimately about learning.

Once we get that in mind, the options for Adventist Education become amazingly broad, rich and diverse. Adventist education can take place regardless of the presence or even the quality of local Adventist schools. Don't get me wrong--I am very thankful for the Adventist schools, and now spend most of my time helping their leaders. Plus, my children go to two wonderful Adventist schools and sometime a weep for joy at what I see those teachers do in my kids' lives. I am deeply in debt to Adventist schools. But I agree with Kathy—the church still has the primary duty in this area, regardless of the presence or even the quality of a local Adventist school.

Posted by: [Duane Covrig](#) | [April 19, 2010 at 11:33 AM](#)

Adventist education—or better, learning that prepares us for His coming Advent—is about resourcing and enriching the lives of all those to be better followers and leaders with Christ.

And when learning becomes the focus, we can see many WAYS and CHOICES for Advent learning.

I remember someone close to me that was in public high school taking five Adventist correspondence courses (Amazing Facts, Faith for Today, etc...) just to supplement his Bible and Adventist theology knowledge. I know another couple who watches as much 3ABN and Hope channels as possible to stay connected to Adventist learning. I know another who likes to buy Adventist books that come out each month (I estimated Adventist publish 20 or more books a month in English alone). Another relative involves his children in Pathfinders.

My point is to invite us to see learning, Adventist Education, as multifaceted and that ultimately, especially with the birth of the internet, even more dynamic than we have thought.

This creates a challenge for the church. We need to keep empowering members to take ownership of their own learning and at the same time encourage them to pick an area of the commission they need to keep fueling (funding and staffing). Here are just a few:

- 1) Church resources—sermons, evangelistic meetings, ministry options for embedded learning (which is growing in popularity especially for young adults)
- 2) Home Education—parents and families getting together to pray, play, share recipes, do missions, guide young marriages, and to take care of aging parents.
- 3) Adventist media—internet, TV, radio,
- 4) Adventist literature—magazines, books, correspondence courses, etc.
- 5) Sabbath School—to me this is the most important “hour of power” for most young
- 6) CampMeeting and Camp—wow, this is a powerful week people can
- 7) Pathfinders
- 8) Adventist Schools

And the list can go on and should go on...secular campus ministry, blogging, social networking, etc.

So, thanks Kathy. We can believe that the Holy Spirit, who is committed to guiding us into all truth, will only pour out more opportunities for learning.

What a great time to be a Adventist...and a learner.

Posted by: Duane Covrig | [April 19, 2010 at 11:35 AM](#)

Education is a progressive discovery of our own ignorance.

Posted by: [English taobao](#) | [January 24, 2011 at 10:12 PM](#)

English taobao: That is very true. Just as sanctification is a progressive discovery of our own unlikeness to Christ.

Posted by: [Kathy Beagles](#) | [January 25, 2011 at 06:27 AM](#)

The book of James almost seems to contradict the Gospel as it is often interpreted as expressing that our works need to prove our faith. It is when we receive the Gospel that we understand that it is the Faith of Christ and the Works of the Spirit that James is referring to. In this light we may understand when we read James 3:1 from the original language, "Do not become a multitude of teachers my brethren, who have understood that we inflict upon ourselves great judgment", that if we who think ourselves to be teachers, having only the fruit of our human will and means, are utilizing tongues that produce only deadly poison. If we are teachers then we are accountable for what we teach and subject to judgment. However, if it is the Spirit who through us teaches we are the Gospel revelation and are not under judgment.

Pretty much what Kathy said!


Posted by: David de la Vega | [January 28, 2011 at 07:36 PM](#)

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