

# Teacher, Help Me!

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The number of Adventist schools is growing tremendously. Governments and nations appreciate the rich moral philosophy that Adventist education offers, especially in such challenging times.

At the tertiary level, many of the students who enroll know exactly what they want. They know that we promote a vegetarian diet on our campuses, that we have a dress code, that we abhor academic dishonesty, and that we seek to integrate faith and learning in everything we do. However, many of them find it difficult to liberate

themselves from the clutches of popular culture and preconceived ideas about life and salvation.

Like these students, Peter knew what he wanted (Matthew 14:28). When he saw Jesus walking on the Sea of Galilee, he desired to go to Him. Of course, Peter saw the major barrier—the deep, raging waters. Yet, getting to Jesus was more important to him than any risk of drowning.

At Jesus' invitation, Peter stepped out in faith. But he took his eyes off Jesus and looked back toward the disciples in the boat. Terrified by the mighty wind and huge waves, Peter began to sink (Matthew 14:30). He knew he could not help himself—but he knew Someone who could save him. No wonder he cried, "Lord, save me!" (KJV). And the Bible says, "Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him" (verse 31, NKJV).

Many of the students on our campuses are like Peter. In a bid to meet Jesus, they obtain our admissions forms, pass the required tests, attend our rigorous interviews and orientation programs, and pay the admissions fees. Some of them are able to adapt successfully to our program, while for others, the rigors of academics and our lifestyle rules batter them, just as the terrible wind struck Peter. For them, it is difficult to come to grips with our frequent worships (morning, afternoon, evening, during classes, etc.), style of teaching (integration of faith and learning), diet (vegetarian meals), rules (no smoking or drinking, required chapel attendance, etc.), and our tuition and fees. Though they may not seem to be shouting, "Lord, save me," as Peter did, they just as surely need support from the faculty, staff, administrators, and work supervisors on our campuses.

Jesus did not allow Peter to drown, even though he might have deserved it. He had begged Jesus to let him walk on the water, and he became proud of how well he was doing. But, despite this, the Bible says, Jesus "immediately" came and rescued Peter. What good news to know that Jesus saves us even when we do not deserve it!

How well are we doing to help students on our campuses to develop a loving relationship with Jesus? Jesus knew the difficulties Peter had to encounter in order to get to Him. Because He was aware that the terrible wind would blow, He was ready to help Peter and to save him. Likewise, we must make adequate preparation to help our students physically, socially, mentally, and spiritually.

As Seventh-day Adventist teachers, we need the power of the Holy Spirit

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in our lives in order to successfully carry out the responsibility that God has given to us, especially as we approach the end of this world's history. This is an enormous challenge—so who can possibly qualify? The answer is found in Psalm 24:4, "Those who have clean hands and pure hearts; who do not lift up their souls to what is false, or swear deceitfully" (NRSV). Every one of us should examine ourselves to see if our lives fulfill this requirement. We need to pray that God will give us a humble, consecrated spirit and help us witness to the work of grace in our own hearts (2 Chronicles 7:14; Isaiah 57:15; James 4:6).

Our students, like Peter, are eager to meet Jesus. They have stepped out in faith by registering at our schools; seeking a knowledge of the Master, as well as a quality education. To help them achieve these objectives, much is required of us.

Each of us, as Seventh-day Adventist teachers and administrators, must learn lessons of love, humility, faithfulness, trust, obedience, and tolerance from the Master Teacher. We can achieve nothing through our own power and cleverness. Relying on the power of the One who has called us is the only way we can gain the desired results.

We are accountable for every student who comes to our schools. We must seek daily, in everything we do, to help them appreciate the love of Jesus Christ for them. It's time that we got to know students well enough to sense when they are sinking academically, socially, physically, or spiritually. A gentle, timely intervention can help save a soul that would otherwise have been lost forever.

The Bible says that Peter cried out, and immediately Jesus came to his rescue. Just as Jesus is ever alert to save us, we must be alert to understand the type of help our students need and the best way to assist them. Sometimes, "punitive" measures may be the most appropriate way of helping. In every case, "the object of discipline is to train [young people] for self-government. . . . The true object of reproof is gained only when wrongdoers are led to see their fault and the will is enlisted for its correction. When this is accomplished, point them to the source of pardon and power. Seek to preserve their self-respect and to inspire them with courage and hope." Remember the Golden Rule, "Do to others as you would have them do to you."

"In this time of special danger for the young, temptations surround them on every hand. Every school should

be a 'city of refuge,' a place where tempted youth may be dealt with patiently and wisely. Teachers who understand their responsibilities will separate from their own hearts and lives everything that would prevent them from dealing successfully with the wilful and disobedient. Love and tenderness, patience and self-control will at all times be the law of their speech. Mercy and compassion will be blended with justice. . . .

"The divine Teacher bears with the erring through all their perversity. His love does not grow cold. His efforts to win them do not cease" (*True Education*, pp. 183, 184). We must ever seek to model the love of God to our students, as we strive to help them acquire both intellectual and spiritual power. <sup>12</sup>

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