

The Academy Principalship Today

By William G. White, Jr.

In 1967 C. L. Jaqua studied the principalship of Seventh-day Adventist academies in the continental United States for his doctoral dissertation at the University of Southern California. In the spring of 1980 the author conducted a modified replication of his study for a dissertation at Northeast Louisiana University. The purposes of the study were (1) to determine and analyze the status of the principalship with respect to a number of personal and professional characteristics, professional and academic preparation, profes-

The author has served as vice-principal of Andrews Academy, Berrien Springs, Michigan, and as instructor in administration, Northeast Louisiana University, Monroe, Louisiana.

sional experience and status, duties and use of time, and opinions on selected issues; (2) to determine changes that have occurred in the status of the principalship since Jaqua's study; and (3) to compare some of the personal and professional

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characteristics of SDA principals to those included in the 1977 study of the senior high school principalship by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NAASP).

Personal Characteristics

Seventy-two (90 percent) of the 80 principals responded to the questionnaire in time to be included in the study. Slightly more than 96 percent of the principals were men, and 92 percent were white. More than three-fourths of them administered schools with grades 9-12 only; more than half of the schools represented in the study had enrollments of 215 or less. The median age of principals increased from 42.6 years in 1967 to 45.5 years in 1980.

Participation of principals in church lay positions remained fairly constant (with nearly 85 percent serving as local elders), but there were major shifts in the number who were either licensed or ordained ministers. The number of licensed ministers declined from 36 percent to 26 percent, and the number of ordained ministers declined from 54 percent to 32 percent. Nearly three-fourths of the licensed ministers and slightly more than half of the ordained minister-principals in 1980 were licensed or ordained during or after their first principalship. Thus, the practice of conferring ministerial status on academy principals, though generally diminished, continued.

Academic and Professional Preparation

Principals were better prepared for their responsibilities than was the case in 1967,

The demands on the principal's time are very heavy.

with respect to those holding advanced degrees (see Table 1). Since 1967 the percentage of those with Master's degrees decreased from 82 percent to 79 percent, those with specialist degrees increased from none to 3 percent, and those with doctorates increased from 3 percent to 12 percent. The 1980 principals, however, were not as well prepared in terms of the number who held Master's degrees in education and the

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number with graduate majors in educational administration. More than one-third of those with Master's degrees had them in fields other than education, primarily in religion and the humanities. While nearly 74 percent reported graduate majors in education, the percentage of those with majors in educational administration in their highest degree declined from 62 percent to 44 percent.

The 1980 principals reported having taken a variety of graduate education courses. Respondents ranked the following courses as the most helpful in the principalship: personnel administration, internship/field experience, supervision of instruction, school law, psychology of adolescence, educational psychology, school finance/business management, administrative theory, and secondary school curriculum. The ranking revealed several shifts in the perceived importance of graduate education courses since 1967. In general, 1980 principals placed greater value on courses directly related to

school administration and less value on courses in such areas as educational psychology, counseling, and philosophy of education.

SDA colleges and universities did not appear to play a major role in the graduate training of academy principals. Of those with graduate degrees, less than one-third had earned their highest degree at SDA institutions.

During the period from 1967 to 1980 the number of principals with State administrative certification increased from 12 percent to 22 percent, but more than half had no type of State certification. Unfortunately, the number holding the SDA Administrator's Certificate declined from 73 percent to 68

percent (see Table 2). Although 32 percent of the principals did not have the Administrator's Certificate, only 3 percent thought requirements for the certificate were excessive.

Professional Experience and Status

Principals in 1980 had both more years of professional experience and a greater variety of experiences prior to their first academy principalships. They reported a mean number of 14.7 years of experience in education prior to their first principalships, compared to 10.6 in 1967. At the same time, the median age of principals at their initial appointment to the principalship rose from 35.2 years to 37.

TABLE 1
Percent of principals reporting highest degree earned at various institutions

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Bachelor's</i>	<i>Master's</i>	<i>Specialist</i>	<i>Doctor's</i>
SDA				
Andrews University	1.4	18.0	NA	0
Loma Linda University	0	1.4	1.4	NA
Pacific Union College	1.4	4.2	NA	NA
Union College	2.8	NA	NA	NA
Walla Walla College	0	5.6	NA	NA
Other Private	0	6.9	0	1.4
Public	0	43.0	1.4	11.1
TOTAL	5.6	79.1	2.8	12.5

TABLE 2
1980 and 1967 principals reporting highest SDA certification

<i>Certificate</i>	<i>1980</i>		<i>1967</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Teaching			18	27.3
Conditional	1	1.4		
Standard	4	5.6		
Professional	17	23.6		
Administrators	49	68.0	48	72.7
No Certification	1	1.4	0	0.0
TOTAL	72	100.0	66	100.0

These figures, coupled with the increase in the median age of 1980 respondents, may indicate that a number of those appointed to the principalship did not initially plan a career in school administration.

Prior to their first principalships, nearly three-fourths of the 1980 respondents had been academy teachers, 47 percent were academy assistant principals, 32 percent were elementary teachers, 25 percent were elementary principals, 25 percent were junior-academy principals, and 22 percent were academy residence-hall deans. Major shifts since 1967 included an increase from 15 to 47 percent in the number who had been assistant principals, and a decrease from 35 percent to 22 percent in those who had served as residence-hall deans. The percentage of former elementary principals rose from 17 percent to 25 percent, and the percentage of former junior-academy principals declined from 38 percent to 25 percent.

The most direct route to the academy principalship in 1980 was the academy assistant principalship.

There were also increases in the number of principals who had worked in public educational institutions. Eleven percent had held administrative positions at the building or district level.

There were substantial shifts in the positions held by the principals immediately prior to their first principalships. The number who were academy residence-hall deans immediately prior to their first principalship declined from 15 percent in 1967 to 3

percent in 1980. Those who had been academy business managers or treasurers fell from 8 percent to 1 percent.

For many years the junior-academy principalship was thought to be the most direct route to the academy principalship. This was true in 1967, when 23 percent of academy principals came directly from junior-academy principalships. However, in 1980 only 11 percent came from that position. By 1980 the academy assistant principalship had become the most direct route to the principalship. Thirty-one percent of the principals had been promoted from the assistant principalship, compared to 15 percent in 1967.

An alarming aspect of the professional experience of 1980 principals was the number of academy principalships held and the number of years in the academy principalship. More than 65 percent of the 1980 respondents were serving in their first principalships. Only 15 percent had held more than two principalships. While the Jaqua study did not report the number of principalships held by 1967 respondents, it did report that the median number of years in the academy principalship was 5. The median number of years in the principalship of 1980 principals declined to 4 with a mean of 6.5 years. This median of four years in the principalship was less than half of that reported by participants in the 1977 NASSP study. The 1980 SDA principals reported a median of 3 years in their current positions, with only 37 percent having served 4 or more years in their current position.

Professional Status

Fifty-one percent of 1980

principals reported that there were written, detailed job descriptions for their positions. In identifying sources of practical support for their authority, 40 percent of the principals indicated that they received the most support from the chairman of the board. More than 30 percent found the greatest support in board policies, and 14 percent found such support in the local conference superintendent of schools. Nearly 81 percent reported that they were the only member of the board to administer or implement board policies.

The principals participated in a variety of professional growth activities.

The principals' membership in professional organizations and participation in various professional growth activities were also of interest. More than 83 percent of the principals were members of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, compared to 58 percent in 1967. Twenty-six percent of the 1980 group, compared to 2 percent in 1967, were members of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Membership in three groups declined substantially between 1967 and 1980. The number belonging to the American Association of School Administrators fell from 52 percent to 15 percent. Membership in State secondary principals' associations declined from 41 to 19 percent. And only 1 percent reported membership in the National Education Association, compared to 27 percent 13 years earlier.

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Religious Potential

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ents are usually aware that most of what settles into a young person's mind can be identified more in terms of feelings, attitudes, and perceptions than in rational conceptualization. In general I find my students more ready to express their emotions about certain things than to explain or analyze those things intellectually. After a test covering a unit of study, facts and details are quickly forgotten; only impressions remain. Is this a failing or deficiency? I think not. First, it is more of a *human* characteristic than an exclusively youthful tendency; second, feelings and attitudes are *conditioned* or *modified* by the process of intellectual analysis and instruction. These are both learning domains and may be employed to complement each other for balanced growth.

The practical outcome of this is that although emotional expression may predominate among students, the teacher's job is *not* just to be there, "loving" the students, imparting nice feelings, and creating good vibrations. Perceptions, attitudes, and feelings must have a firm base, or they will be as easily molded by evil as by good. That firm base must derive to a large degree from intellectual understanding. The Master Teacher, Jesus, not only went around showing genuine love and kindness; He also spent a great deal of time teaching the truth and exposing error in a decidedly intellectual (though not snobbish or complicated) manner.

Max Rafferty, in his analysis of the Summerhill experiment, wrote: "The aim of education is to give young people the intellectual tools which the race over the centuries has found indispensable in the pursuit of

truth." The goal, he says, "is the equipping of the individual with the arsenal he will need throughout life in his combat against the forces of error. Happiness is a byproduct of education, not its be-all and end-all. Education does not guarantee happiness. It merely enables one to be more discriminating in its quest."²

It is possible, of course, to make that quest dull and boring by overintellectualization, ignoring the affective learning area. The feelings and emotions of students are not antagonistic to intellectual growth. Our students, like ourselves, are *feeling* people, emotional human beings. Feelings may be wrongly founded or expressed, but the solution is not to crush feelings.

The right defense against false sentiments is to inculcate just sentiments. By starving the sensibility of our pupils we only make them easier prey to the propagandist when he comes. For famished nature will be avenged and a hard heart is no infallible protection against a soft head.³

The emotional and intellectual sensitivity of young people is the very opportunity and challenge the Christian teacher needs. There is immeasurable *spiritual* potential to be derived from this sensitivity. To deny this potential because of youthful fault or folly is to yield the potential to the adversary of souls.

The application to classroom teaching is expressed in a grandiose but challenging way by Rafferty:

The educator should approach his class not as the chemist appraises his retorts nor the astronomer his nebulae but rather as the conductor confronts his symphony orchestra. . . . There is a mingling of moods, an elusive interplay of spiritual counterpoint implicit in the teaching process which marks the closest human approach to the phenomenon of symbiosis. In its highest form it approximates creation. . . . We must train our teachers as a sculptor is trained, not a physicist. They must think like poets, not like statisticians. For they are dealing not with things like

the chemists, nor with bodies like the physicians, not yet with minds alone like the psychologists. To them is reserved the splendid privilege of fashioning and nurturing those coruscating and iridescent entities called personalities, transient as glancing sunbeams but more lasting than the granite of our hills. It is at once the most precious and most dangerous duty entrusted by mankind to men.⁴

FOOTNOTES

¹ Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1958), Book 1, p. 318. (Italics supplied.)

² Max Rafferty, in *Summerhill: For and Against* (New York: Hart Publishing Co., Inc., 1970), pp. 10-25.

³ C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947), p. 9.

⁴ Rafferty, *Op. cit.*

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Less than half of the principals reported membership in the Association of SDA Educators, which was established in 1970 to serve as an umbrella group for various SDA educational associations. It was impossible to determine if more than half of the principals really did not belong to any SDA professional organization, or whether they did not understand that the group(s) to which they belonged were part of the association.

Professional Growth Activities

The 1980 principals participated in a variety of professional growth activities. Between 1975 and 1980 more than half attended SDA educational meetings, took professional courses, participated in special conferences or workshops, attended national educational meetings (e.g., NASSP), and presented educational talks to civic or professional groups. In terms of regularity of reading and the perceived importance of professional journals, 1980 principals relied most heavily on the *NASSP Bulletin*, *Phi Delta Kappan*, *THE JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION*, *Educational Leadership*, and *Educa-*

tion Digest. More than half reported that they regularly read *Education Digest*, *THE JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION*, and the *NASSP Bulletin*.

Use of Time

The 1980 principals devoted an average of 56 hours each week to their professional duties; 1967 principals devoted 60 hours weekly to their jobs. Forty percent of the 1980 respondents regularly taught an average of 6.6 hours weekly. Forty-five percent of the 1967 group regularly taught 6.4 hours a week.

SDA colleges and universities did not appear to play a major role in the graduate training of academy principals.

Principals were asked to rank nine administrative areas in terms of time usage—both optimal and actual. The responses are presented in Table 3. The 1980 respondents showed an understanding of their role as instructional leader, but recognized that they spent more time on the day-to-day operation of the school program. Principals reported that the conditions that prevented them from using their time most advantageously were: (1) time taken up by administrative detail, (2) inadequate financial resources, (3) lack of administrative or supervisory assistants, and (4) too few teachers.

Conclusions

1. Principals in 1980 were better prepared for the academy principalship than the 1967 principals with respect to the number holding advanced degrees and the number with State administrative certification.

2. Principals in 1980 were less well prepared for the acad-

emy principalship than 1967 principals with respect to the number with Master's degrees in education, the number with graduate majors in educational administration, and the number holding the SDA Administrator's Certificate.

3. Principals in 1980 had had more years of experience and a greater variety of professional experiences prior to their initial appointment to the principalship than had 1967 principals.

4. The most direct route to the academy principalship in 1980 was the academy assistant principalship.

5. The brief tenure in office of principals was a more serious problem in 1980 than in 1967.

6. The professional status of principals was weakened by a lack of written, detailed job descriptions and a lack of reliance on conference superintendents of schools.

7. Compared to 1967 principals, 1980 principals' mem-

bership in professional organizations and professional growth activities seemed to be at reasonable levels.

8. The Association of SDA Educators did not appear to be an important association to the principals.

9. Principals recognized that they were not using their time as they thought they should.

10. The factors that prevented principals from using their time as they thought most efficient were factors over which they had little or no control.

Author's Recommendations

1. Principals should be required to have the SDA Administrator's Certificate at the time of their initial appointment to the principalship. The certificate should specify that the administrator have a Master's degree in education, preferably in educational administration.

TABLE 3
1980 and 1967 principals' ranking of time allocation to various areas of responsibility

Area of Responsibility	1980		1967	
	Do Spend Time	Should Spend Time	Do Spend Time	Should Spend Time
Program Development	5	1	5	1
Personnel	3	2	3	4
School Management	1	3	1	3
Student Activities	4	4	6	6
Student Behavior	2	6	2	2
Board/Community	6	8	4	5
General/Union/Local Conference Offices of Education	7	9	NA	NA
Professional Development	9	5	NA	NA
Planning	8	7	NA	NA
Student Recruitment	NA	NA	8	7
Teaching	NA	NA	7	8

2. The assistant principalship should be recognized as the best pool of candidates for the principalship.

3. The decreasing tenure in office of academy principals deserves the immediate attention of denominational education officials.

4. Local conferences should establish K-12 school systems with centralized administrative control vested in the superintendent of schools.

5. The Association of SDA Educators should be developed into a viable professional organization that could benefit principals as well as other professional educators in the SDA school system.

6. The junior-academy principalship deserves further study.

Careers by Proxy

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difficult day . . .

As an executive secretary, Finnie has traveled around the world to monetary conferences in assisting her employers with their duties. I could have been a secretary. Instead I became a teacher and taught office procedures to Finnie in college. Her efficiency, demonstrated even in school days, is a cause of satisfaction to me, her former teacher.

Bob, at age ten, was enthusiastic and eager to share with his class the news about impending motherhood for his cat. His interest in life and its preservation has continued, as he has chosen medicine as his career. I remember a relative strongly urging me to become a doctor. I could have done so. Instead I have helped several doctors on the road to usefulness. My choice was better, for me.

As the guest of a former student, I was impressed with her talent in homemaking. In addition to being a good cook,

Louise is artistic and skilled with a needle—even tailoring suits for her husband. In the course of our visit, she told me I was the one who first taught her how to use a purchased pattern, back in seventh grade. Moreover, I had convinced her that school was fun, so she had not dropped out when the going was rough. Her ability in home economics far outshines mine. I marvel now that I dared to teach sewing at all.

Reading in the *Review* of workers answering mission calls, Jim's name caught my eye. He was leaving to be business manager of an important overseas college. He will be a good one—responsible, accurate, honest, caring. Could I fill an office like that? Hardly! But I taught Jim his first bookkeeping lesson, back in high school. Having earned my way in school by working in the college business office, there were times when I was tempted to make that work my goal rather than a means to the goal of teaching. I could not do both. I chose teaching. But Jim fulfills that other dream.

"You know," said my piano teacher long ago, "you could become a music teacher. Have you ever thought of that?" Whatever spark of talent she observed in me never became a flame. Although I have taught a little simple music to children in the classroom, Stella, another of my students, did go on to become a music teacher. Her talent was more than a stray spark, and it has made me glad.

Sometimes, when teaching newswriting in college, I wondered what it would be like to make a career of writing. But the classroom took so much time, Harrison had to do it for me. From our amateur efforts at editing the college paper, he has gone on to earn a professional degree in journalism and now makes his living as an editor. I am proud of him.

Many of my students have become teachers, too, since it is in teacher-training that most of my recent years have been spent. One, Shirani, recently earned her doctoral degree in education. I am so glad she could build on the training we gave and go far beyond—fulfilling another dream for me.

And what of Dilani, Pervaiz, Akhtar, and others who are currently students? Only the coming years can tell what rewards of satisfaction their careers may bring to the teachers who work with them now. Truly, teaching can fulfill *all* your dreams!

A Bruised Rod and a Smoking Flax

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to himself. And Edmond was only one of many who must find the care and concern that they deserve from Christian teachers.

Mr. Nelson walked into the conference room and faced his staff. After several teachers prayed for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the discussion began. Some of Edmond's teachers felt very strongly that his influence was most detrimental and that he must leave. Others felt that he needed more understanding and wanted to help him somehow.

Dismissing himself from the meeting, Mr. Nelson went to his office and telephoned his wife. After some discussion, he returned to the meeting. A decision had been made—Edmond would stay—on probation. However, he would leave the dormitory and would have a home with Mr. and Mrs. Nelson. The boy needed a father image.

When considering troubled students, it is important to remember the story Jesus told of the prodigal son. This young man chose to leave his father's home. He voluntarily went to a far country, but his father