

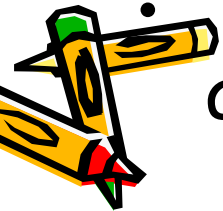
**PROCLAIMING TRUTH IN AN
ARTIFICIAL WORLD:
EMBRACING AUTHENTICITY
AND INTEGRITY IN BIBLE
EDUCATION**

By Rev Dr Roy Musasiwa



INTRODUCTION

- Salutations and gratitude for being invited to be part of such an important conference.
- I thank the organizers for the important, fascinating and engaging topic assigned to me: "Proclaiming truth in an artificial world: embracing authenticity and integrity in bible education"
- The topic juxtaposes the AI of "artificial intelligence" (representing the artificial world) with the AI of "authenticity and integrity" in Bible Education.
- The assigned topic is pertinent to my heart as it should be to all of us.



INTRODUCTION

I intend to tackle the topic in the following manner:

- Definition of key terms
- The modern world of artificial intelligence - its dangers and opportunities
- **Proposals for ensuring authenticity and integrity in bible education which include -**
- Closing remarks

Along the way I will be posing some questions for reflection

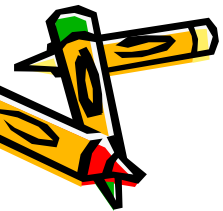


SOME KEY TERMS DEFINED



Authenticity is a rich term.

- Being authentic means being genuine or real - the opposite of being false, copied or artificial.
 - Imagine the embarrassment of bank teller informing you that the the \$100 you intend to deposit is not genuine even though on the surface it looks real.
 - One of Jesus' biggest problems with the Pharisees is how they created a false appearance of spirituality.
- Authenticity also talks about being true to one's true nature or beliefs
 - At Caesarea Philippi Jesus would not live on a borrowed identity.

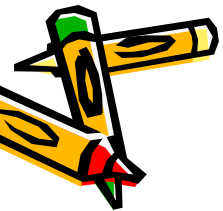


SOME KEY TERMS DEFINED



Integrity has a relationship with authenticity.

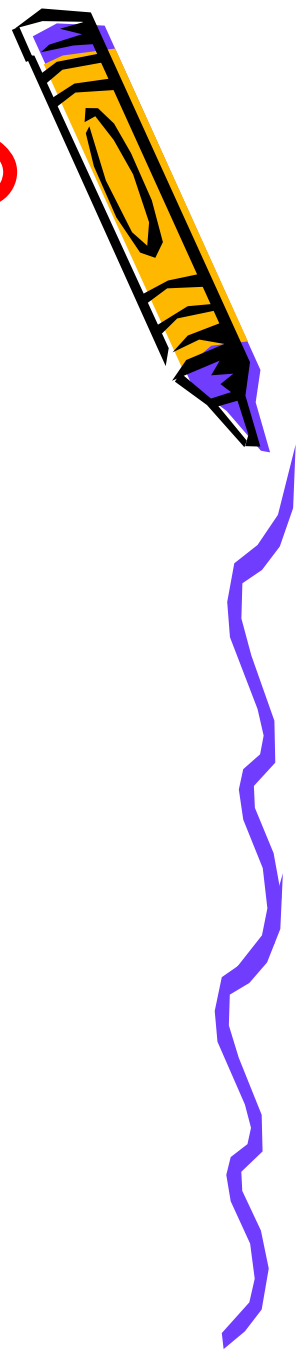
- From integer: = a number that is not a fraction; a whole number
 - Hence integrity is about wholeness; being who you are in private, in public, at home and at work
- It is also associated with the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness:
- Synonyms include uprightness, having moral principle(s), being ethical, righteousness, virtue, sincerity, truthfulness, trustworthiness,



SOME KEY TERMS DEFINED

Artificial world:

- Dictionary defines "artificial" as objects, materials, or processes that do not occur naturally and are created by human beings.
- Some connotations of "artificial"
 - That which is made in imitation of a natural product, like artificial flowers
 - a substitute for something natural - like , artificial limbs, or artificial teeth etc.



THE MODERN WORLD OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE -DANGERS AND OPPORTUNITIES

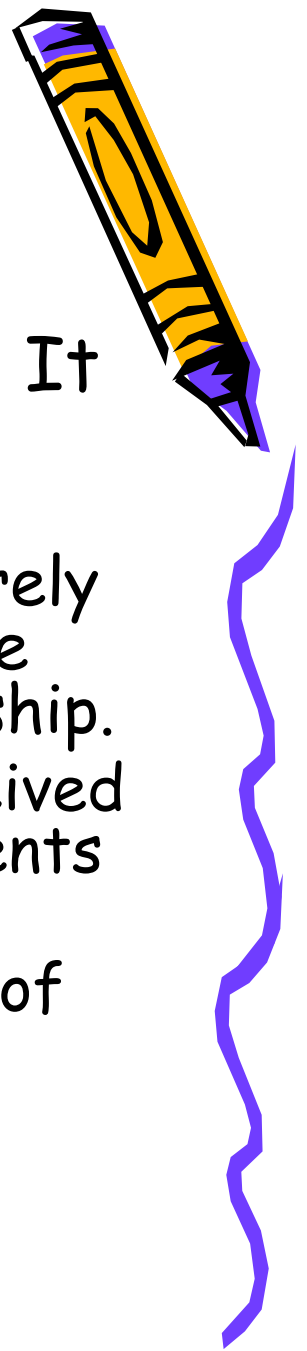
- Question: Does our definition of "artificial intelligence" mean that we must reject artificial intelligence?
- Answer: Not necessarily. It just means:
 - AI must not be glorified and taken as panacea to human problems. "Whatever your heart clings to and relies on is your god".
 - AI can be a useful tool to the extent that we do not allow it to subvert our God-given values.
 - It must be used with extreme caution considering its many dangers.



THE MODERN WORLD OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE -DANGERS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Dangers of AI in theological education: It can

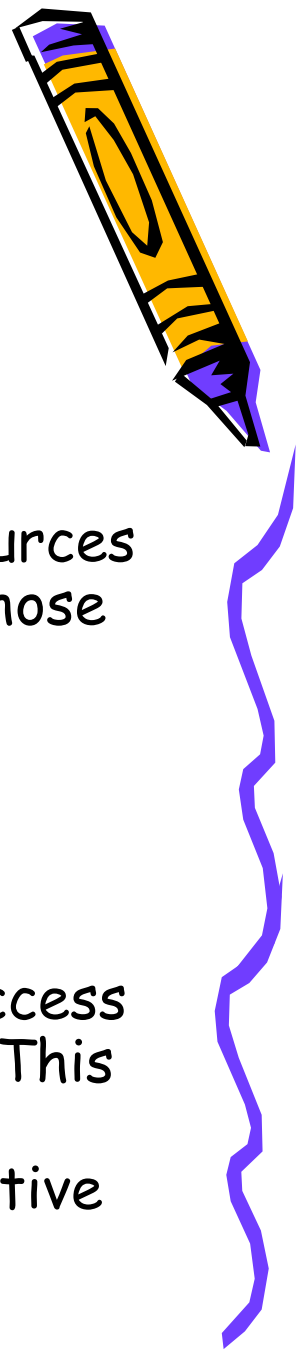
- Become a substitute for hard work and a promotion of academic laziness. Some may rely on AI instead of engaging directly with the Scriptures and robust theological scholarship.
- Deceive. For example Lecturers can be deceived into awarding first class marks for assignments produced in seconds by AI.
- Become a subtle vehicle for the infiltration of unbiblical values such relativism and the promotion of same-sex relationship
- Facilitate doctrinal distortion.



THE MODERN WORLD OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE -DANGERS AND OPPORTUNITIES

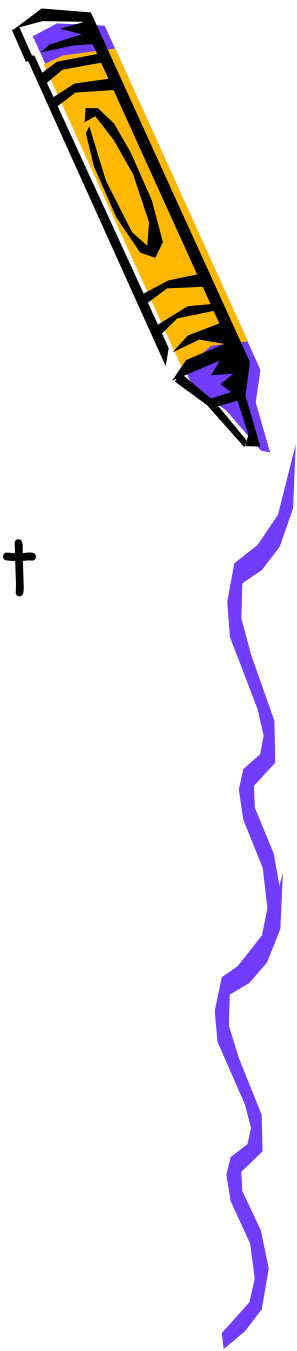
Potential Advantages of AI in Bible education (if used with caution)

- Accessibility of information - making Bible resources more accessible to a wider audience, including those who do not have the means of acquiring all the necessary books. This could potentially increase biblical literacy and expose more people to the foundational truths of the Scriptures.
- Time saving. AI can free up some time for more valuable academic activities by providing easy access to what, who and where questions of the Bible.. This can also free up educators to focus on deeper discussion, mentoring, and fostering transformative spiritual growth.



FOR RELECTION

In Bible Education how can we benefit from artificial intelligence without succumbing to its many dangers?



PROPOSALS FOR ENSURING AUTHENTICITY AND INTEGRITY IN BIBLE EDUCATION

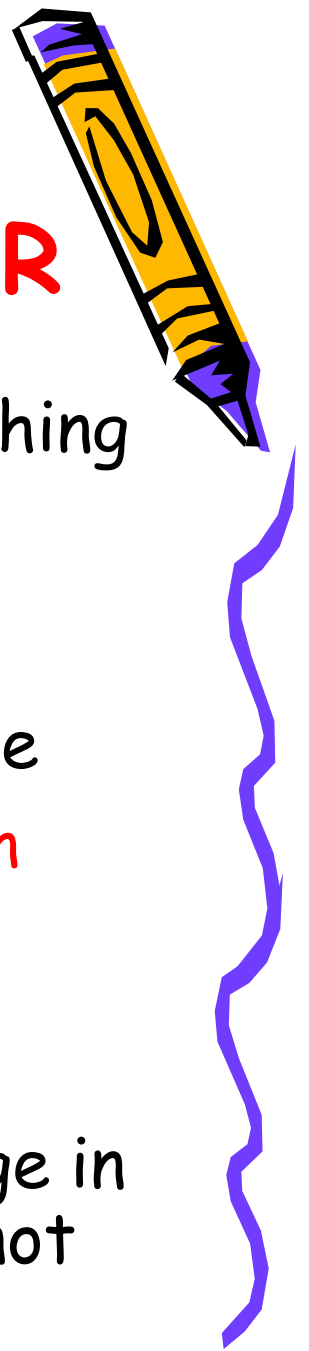


The rest of this presentation focuses on the following proposals for ensuring authenticity and integrity in Bible education

1. The authenticity and integrity of the educator
2. Some lessons from Bloom's taxonomy
3. Taking full advantage of the three modes of education
4. Towards ensuring identity, integrity and involvement in theological education

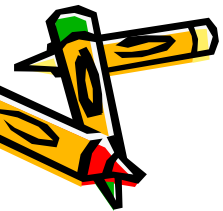


THE AUTHENTICITY AND INTEGRITY OF THE EDUCATOR



- John Maxwell often observes that "everything stands or falls on leadership". This is very much true of those of us who are Bible educators.
- A transformational leader must be someone who:
 - Knows the way
 - Shows the way and
 - Goes the way
- The unbalanced concern for head knowledge in received Western educational system cannot take us beyond the artificial world.

A balanced concern
for the HEAD, the
HANDS and the
HEART

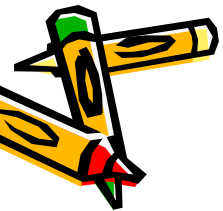


FOR REFLECTION



Paul says: "Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Cor 11:1).

In the light of this, discuss the importance of the authenticity and integrity of the Bible educator in shaping the future of students.



SOME LESSONS FROM BLOOM'S TAXONOMY



- The "education" system that mainly rewards "information recall" is vulnerable to AI abuse and must be radically reviewed.
- Bloom's taxonomy can assist us to go beyond information processing - and hence beyond AI.
- Bloom's taxonomy allows educators to vary the complexity of tasks and questions, thereby providing appropriate challenges for students at different cognitive levels.
- For those who may not be familiar with it, the Bloom taxonomy ranges from lower to higher order skills:



BLOOM'S TAXONOMY



- **Remembering**: the ability to recall or recognize information from memory.
- **Understanding** - involves the comprehension and explaining of information.
- **Applying** - the ability to use learned knowledge and concepts in new situations or contexts.
- **Analyzing** - the ability to breaking down information or concepts into their constituent parts and examining the relationships between them.
- **Evaluating** - the ability to weigh evidence, consider alternatives, and form judgments based on established criteria.
- **Creating** - the ability to generate new ideas, products, or solutions. Creating is the highest level of cognitive skill in Bloom's taxonomy.



BLOOM'S TAXONOMY



- Bloom's taxonomy emphasizes the development of higher-order thinking skills, which are vital in preparing students for real-world challenges and professional contexts.
 - By intentionally integrating higher-level cognitive activities into their teaching, educators can enhance students' critical thinking, problem-solving, and analytical abilities.
 - This focus on higher-order thinking promotes deeper learning and equips students with skills that are highly valued in their future careers.
- This also minimizes AI doing the work that students should be doing by themselves.



FOR REFLECTION



How useful do you find Bloom's taxonomy in ensuring that Bible education goes beyond "information processing" (remembering and reproducing facts to pass exams)

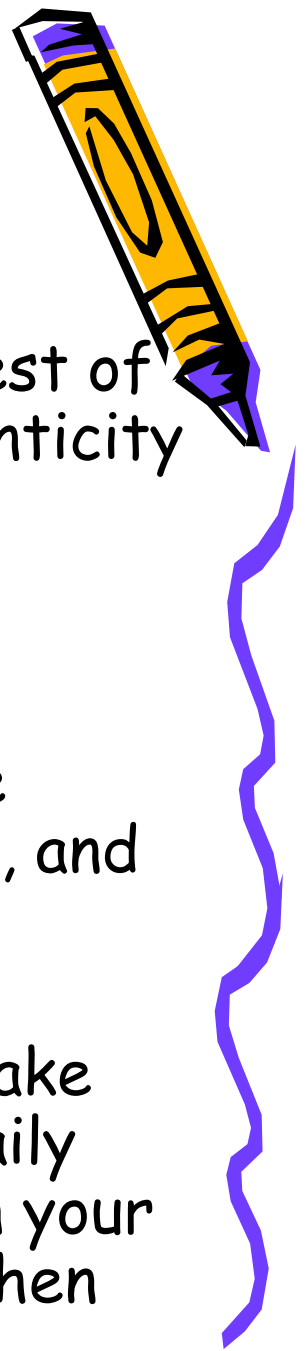


UTILIZING THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF EDUCATION

Education happens on three dimensions the best of each of which should be used to ensure authenticity and integrity in Bible education.

Dimension 1: Informal education

- This refers to the learning that takes place through everyday experiences, interactions, and exposure to the world around us.
- Deuteronomy 6:4-9 provides an example of informal learning, whereby parents are to take advantage of teachable moments in their daily lives. "You shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise."



THREE DIMENSIONS OF EDUCATION

Informal education (cont'd)

- For Bible educators, tapping into this dimension can involve:
 - Encouraging learners to apply biblical principles and teachings to their daily lives and experiences.
 - Facilitating discussions and reflections on how the Bible relates to current events, personal challenges, and cultural contexts.
 - Providing opportunities for learners to share their own stories, perspectives, and interpretations of biblical passages.



THREE DIMENSIONS OF EDUCATION

Dimension 2: Non-formal Education

Non-formal education encompasses organized learning activities that take place outside the formal classroom setting. Bible educators can utilize this dimension by:

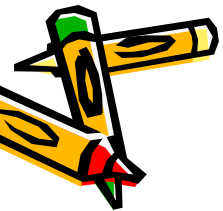
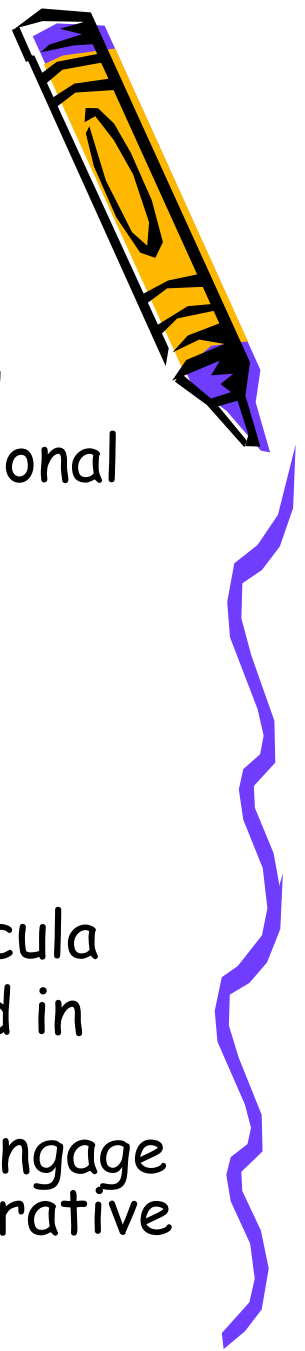
- Organizing small group Bible studies, retreats, or community outreach programs that allow for more interactive and experiential learning.
- Inviting guest speakers, experts, or community leaders to share their insights and experience.
- Organizing debates on pertinent issues of the day



THREE DIMENSIONS OF EDUCATION

Dimension 3 Formal education

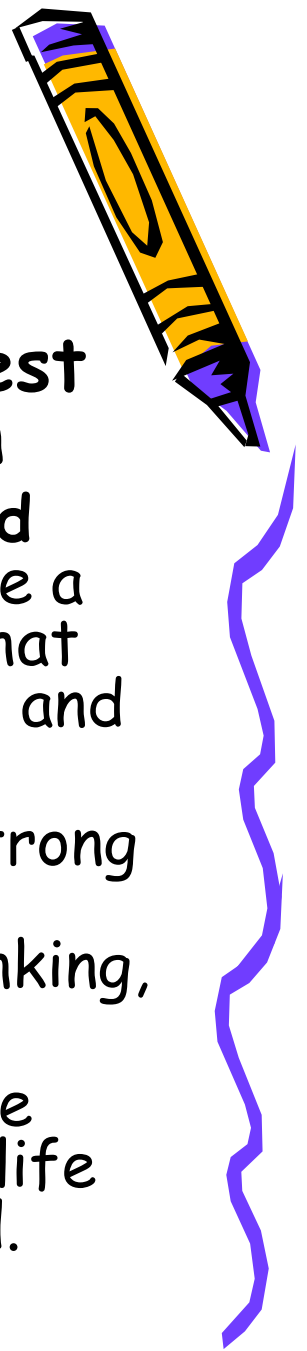
- Refers to the structured, curriculum-based learning that typically takes place in educational institutions.
- This is the inherited information processing education system that is heavy on syllabus coverage and the passing of exams.
- For Bible education, this dimension can be leveraged by:
 - Developing well-designed, relevant curricula
 - Ensuring that the curriculum is grounded in sound biblical scholarship.
 - Providing opportunities for learners to engage in critical analysis, research, and collaborative learning within the formal setting.



THREE DIMENSIONS OF EDUCATION

Non-formal education: utilizing the best of both informal and formal education

- By integrating the strengths of informal and formal education Bible educators can create a holistic and authentic learning experience that fosters a deeper understanding, application, and ownership of biblical principles.
- This approach can help learners develop a strong foundation in biblical knowledge, while also encouraging personal reflection, critical thinking, and practical application of the teachings.
- Ultimately, the goal should be connecting the timeless truths of Scripture with everyday life and the pressing issues of the modern world.



THREE DIMENSIONS OF EDUCATION

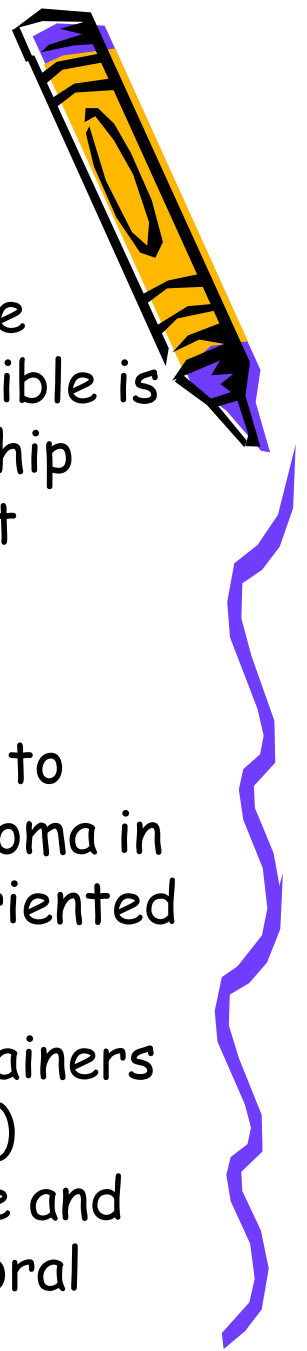
DTC experience in integrating informal and formal Bible education

- For us formal education is a necessity imposed by accreditation requirements and the need for our students to find self-supporting employment on completion.
- However our education is not complete without including significant elements of non-formal education with the following being outstanding examples:
 - Every day begins with a chapel service where students practice various ministry skills



THREE DIMENSIONS OF EDUCATION

- The 2 hour Thursday extended chapel service encompasses (a) Koinonia groups where the Bible is applied to contextual realities and (b) a worship service in different styles and with different speakers
- A third year of supervised placements
- During the 3rd year students are encouraged to take block courses for the award of the Diploma in Pastoral Studies which is less examination-oriented than the formal education.
- The college also formed and sponsors the Trainers of Pastors Association of Zimbabwe (TOPAZ) which offers one year Foundation Certificate and second year of Advanced Certificate in Pastoral Ministry.



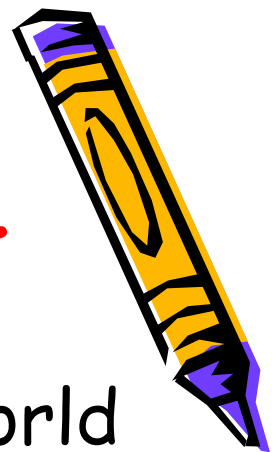
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How effectively is your institution utilizing all three dimensions to ensure authenticity and integrity in Bible education?

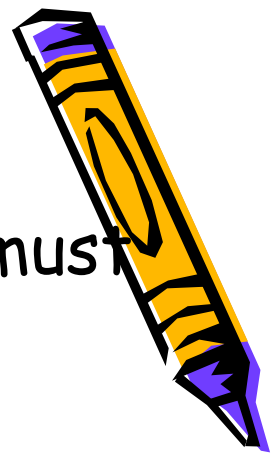


IDENTITY, INTEGRITY AND INVOLVEMENT IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

- Jesus spoke of our influence in the world in terms of salt and light
- What do SALT and LIGHT have in common? I suggest 3 qualities:
 - Identity
 - Integrity
 - Involvement
- Just as a stool needs all its 3 legs to stand, our witness needs those 3 qualities in order to be transformative



OUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST



- Salt must always remain as salt, and light must always remain as light in order to be effective.
- Salt and light stand for our identity arising from our vital relationship with the Lord - our supernatural nature.
- 1 Pet 2:9 is a strong expression of our Christian identity.
 - A chosen people
 - A royal priesthood
 - A holy nation
 - God's special possession
- Our faith in Him must define who we are and shape our worldview.

**We are called to
be in the world but
we are not of the
world**



OUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST



- Our identity has serious implications for our transformative mission in the world
 - It must give us boldness and confidence. Christians have no need to feel intimidated by surrounding culture, to feel inferior and apologetic.
 - Our identity defines our ultimate purpose (and therefore significance): "proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."
 - Makes our walk of integrity imperative, as God's work can only succeed when done God's way.
- Without maintaining our vital relationship with God we lose our saltiness and cannot change the world.



OUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST



- Like Jesus we must refuse to live on borrowed identity (Ref to Jesus at Caesarea Philippi)
- While our relationship with God gives us our PRIMARY identity, we have other secondary identities of varying degrees of importance and duration.
- However none of our secondary identities must supersede our primary identity as children of God
 - Hence we cannot be racists or tribalists
 - We cannot be classicists
 - Our political preferences cannot eclipse our relationships with fellow believers
 - In short we must be a "perculiar people", not conforming to world standards

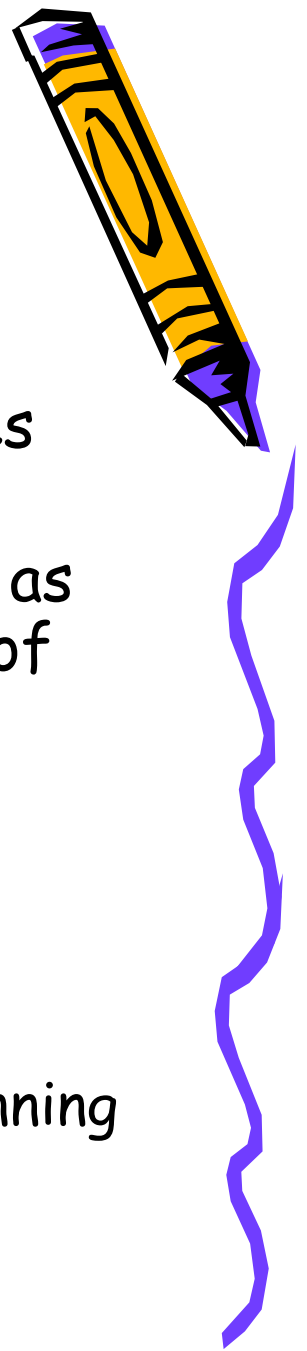


FOR REFLECTION

Given the importance of our identity, how do we build it into our Bible education?



INTEGRITY: CHARACTER THAT MAKES US DISTINCT FROM THE WORLD



- Salt and light stand for the integrity that goes with our relationship with the Lord.
- Integrity is the cornerstone of our character as Christian business people. It is the alignment of our actions with our beliefs and values.
- A person of integrity adheres to a godly value system in ALL areas of life, public and private (from integer = whole).
- The Bible teaches a lot about integrity
 - Job 2:3: Blameless, upright, fearing God & shunning evil
 - Ex 18:21: Capable, fear God, trustworthy, hate dishonest gain (corruption)



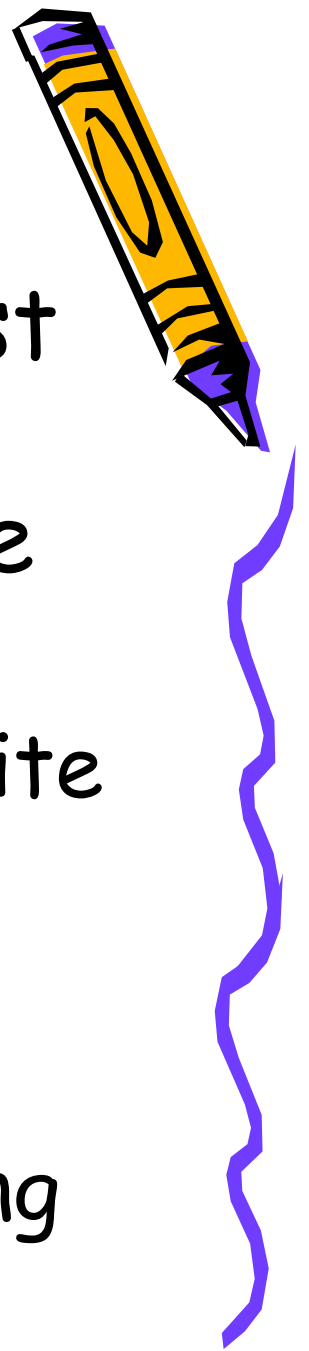
INTEGRITY....



- Proverbs 22:1: "A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold"
- Ps 37:25: "I have never seen the righteous forsaken, or their children begging bread"
- In the light of this imperative we must engage in **values-based education** in a world of information super-highway where false values and false consciousness become all too inviting.



FOR REFLECTION



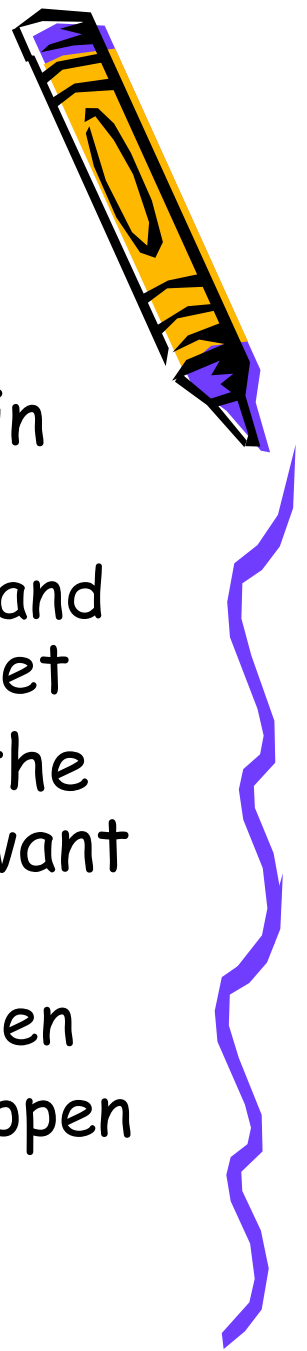
How can our Bible Schools assist students to reflect Christ's character in the following three areas?

- In relationships with the opposite sex
- In our attitude to money and other possessions
- In the area of humility (shunning pride)



INVOLVEMENT WHICH SEEKS TO TRANSFORM THE WORLD

- Salt and light must always be involved in order to be useful
 - Salt must not remain in the saltshaker, and neither should light be put under a basket
- When it comes to involvement which of the following three kinds of people do you want to be?
 - Group 1: The few who make things happen
 - Group 2: The many who watch things happen
 - Group 3: The majority who have no idea what's happening



INVOLVEMENT



There are two important observations about kingdom involvement

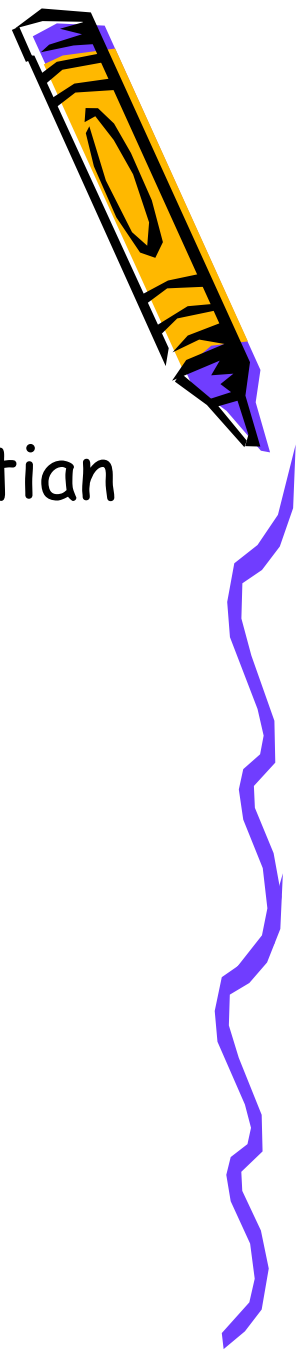
1. Involvement is a necessity

- As demonstrated by Jesus who in John 4:34 declared: "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work."
- As demonstrated by Paul who in Acts 20:24 declared: "I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace."
- Significant ministry involvement must therefore be a pre-requisite for graduation

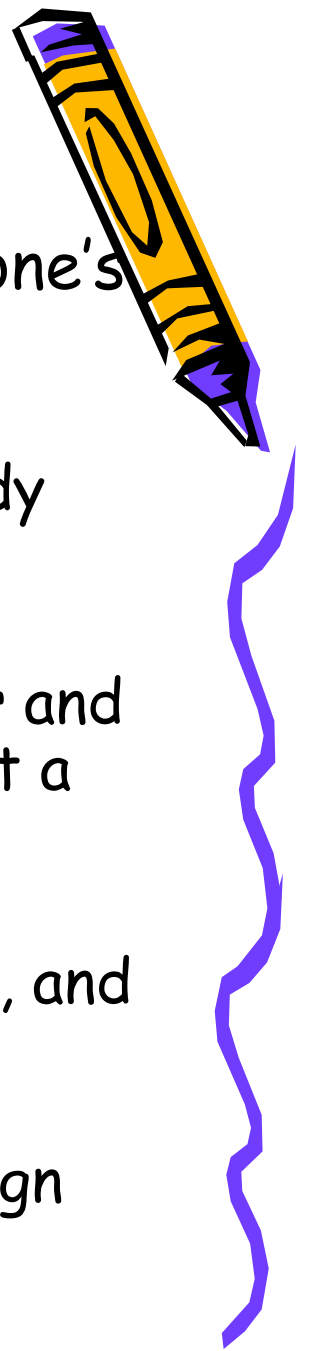


INVOLVEMENT

2. Involvement must be authentic
 - This is well explained by Pastor Rick Warren who teaches about every Christian having a unique SHAPE for service
 - Spiritual gifts
 - Heart
 - Abilities
 - Personality
 - Experiences



INVOLVEMENT



- Authentic involvement must correspond to one's shape.
 - 1 Cor 12 likens Christian service to the functioning of the different parts of the body with no need for inferiority or superiority complex.
 - A quote often attributed to American author and lecturer, Anais Nin says "We must not expect a fish to climb a tree"
 - The quote encourages us to recognize that people have different strengths, weaknesses, and natural inclinations. We must avoid unfair comparisons and to instead focus on helping individuals develop and thrive in ways that align with their unique potential.

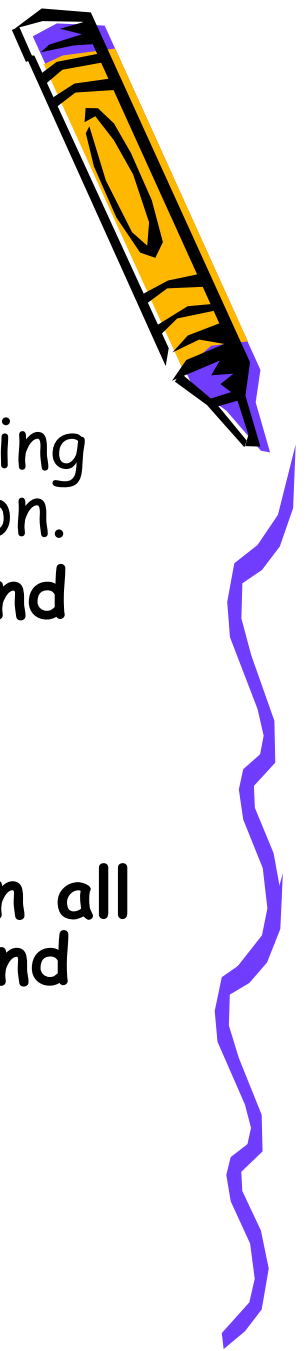


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How can we ensure that our students graduate after acquiring practical ministry skills instead of just having theological knowledge unrelated to the practical realities of ministry?



CONCLUDING PERSPECTIVES



1. We can indeed overcome the negative effects of the artificial world by embracing authenticity and integrity in Bible Education.
2. This must begin with the authenticity and integrity of the educator
3. We can use what is valuable in Bloom's taxonomy
4. Our theological education must happen on all three levels: the informal, non-formal and formal levels
5. Our values-based education must be concerned with identity, integrity and involvement



NOW THAT YOU KNOW THESE THINGS



You shall be blessed if you do them

John 13:17

