

VEGETARIANISM IN ADVENTIST HOME ECONOMICS CLASSES: AN EXAMINATION OF THE ISSUES.

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I. The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Vegetarianism

a. Introduction

The Seventh-day Adventist Church originated in the United States in the mid-nineteenth century. It grew out of a religious revival which spread through the United States in the early 1800s. The Church now has a membership of nearly nine million and claims to operate the second largest denominational school system in the world. Three characteristics distinguish Adventism from mainline Protestantism; the practice of worshipping on Saturday rather than Sunday, the doctrine of an investigative pre-advent judgment, the belief that Ellen White, one of the founders of the Church, was a prophetess and an emphasis on health which includes a vegetarian diet.

George Knight (1989) a professor at Andrews University, an Adventist institution, proposes that in the past, conservatives in the Adventist Church created 'landmarks' or 'precious fundamental doctrines' which formed the basis of their faith and without which they believed their faith would be destroyed. Some of these beliefs are not biblical and are given undue emphasis by their proponents. Knight (1989) claims that some Adventists have attempted to use White's writing to support these landmarks and assert that if these fundamentals fall from favour, both the standing of Ellen White within the Church and the acceptance of the specialness of Adventism also suffers.

Some observers of the Adventist Church believe that the Church has been unable to critically analyse itself. Fritz Guy (1981), an Adventist scholar asserts that the Church must be willing to be critical about itself or risk being unproductive. He believes many Adventists have failed to be critical either because they haven't thought to ask questions, they are not interested in questioning or they are afraid to ask questions. Guy feels that this lack of critical thinking results in the Church being ineffective in achieving its mission to spread the Gospel because 'present truths' are left undiscovered and only 'former truths' can be proclaimed. Truth, he states, is essential to Christianity and relies on taking account of all the evidence, in so doing, 'the truth to which the church is committed is clarified, not diminished' (Guy, 1981, p.12). Guy (1981) asserts that the Church needs to be 'open to the possibility of alternative views within the basic consensus of the community of faith' (p.13).

Godfrey (1993) too believes that the Church needs to use alternative forms of thought and action. According to Godfrey, an ex-Adventist educator, the Seventh-day Adventist Church needs to be more democratic in its operations and principles. He believes that Adventists may be perceived as 'dogmatic' and 'isolationist' in their views. Furthermore, he asserts that the Adventist Church needs to be aware of practical concerns and to address these concerns (pp. 3, 4). Godfrey (1991) also argues that there is a large gap in beliefs and practices between the Adventist leadership and Adventist scholars (p. 8).

Vegetarianism has become an Adventist 'landmark' based on narrow biblical interpretations and belief in an appropriate conservative

Adventist lifestyle which has not received critical debate. During the past century Adventist educators have ensured that the teaching of vegetarianism found a secure place in the curricula of Adventist schools. This has assisted in the promotion of vegetarianism to the prestige of an Adventist 'landmark'.

b. Defining Vegetarianism

A dictionary definition of a vegetarian is 'one who on moral principle or from personal preference lives on vegetable food (refusing meat, fish, etc.), or maintains that vegetable and farinaceous substances constitute the only proper food for man' (The Macquarie Dictionary, 1981, p. 1922). Currently many Adventists describe themselves as vegetarian but admit to eating meat regularly, albeit infrequently (see Rule, 1995).

c. Adventist Attitudes Toward Meat

Teacher and parent responses to a 1994 questionnaire survey administered by the one of the researchers (Rule, 1995) revealed that while vegetarianism is becoming more popular in western society it seems that vegetarianism is declining in the Adventist Church. Furthermore, while there are many possible reasons for people being vegetarian (Rule, 1995, pp. 114-118), these tend to differ for Adventist and non-Adventist vegetarians. According to a study entitled Vegetarianism and the Consumer: An Analysis of Consumer Attitudes and Behaviour (1994) the main reasons for people following the vegetarian diet in non-Adventist circles involves concern for 'animal husbandry practices', 'moral concern' and 'taste preference'. These reasons contrast with those of parents in Rule's (1995) survey for whom 'health' and 'religion' were the most cited reasons.

In the past, some Adventists saw vegetarianism as a sign of religious commitment or dedication. According to the 1994 survey meat eating is presently perceived by Seventh-day Adventists as more 'acceptable' than

in the past decades. While the church policy of vegetarianism is endorsed to the extent of the exclusion of meat from Church functions and institutions the membership seems to be experiencing some confusion over vegetarianism. Confusion exists in the definition of vegetarianism, the reasons for following a vegetarian diet and whether or not it is a matter of importance.

The uncertainties experienced by Adventists with respect to meat are evident in the lengths to which some go to replicate the taste of meat, to imitate the appearance of meat and to even give vegetarian dishes names associated with meat, for example, Gluten Steak and Mock Fish. The survey of Adventist parents (Rule, 1995) indicated that while the majority ate meat, a percentage preferred that meat be excluded from the curriculum of Adventist schools. This apparent contradiction of what is appropriate at home but not at school is further evidence of the confusion presently experienced by some Adventists over vegetarianism.

d. Justification for Vegetarianism in Adventist Schools

Some students at Adventist schools are unsure of why meat is excluded from the curriculum. It appears that some home economics teachers are also unsure of the reasons or the correctness of the policy. Most of the teachers surveyed (Rule, 1995) stated that a number of students ask questions regarding the reasons for the exclusion of information regarding the handling and preparation of meat from the home economics curriculum. One teacher who had difficulties in handling the situation

asked if the researcher had any suggestions of how to answer the persistent questions of her students on the issue. She complained that in her classes students ask to include meat in home economics classes 'every week, and this is presently driving [her] up the wall, because no matter what [she] says, they will still ask!' (Rule, 1995).

The survey indicated that many Adventists have accepted vegetarianism because it is 'healthier' but did not explain how or why. Experience in discovering why Adventists think a vegetarian diet is 'healthier' most often reveals that it was heard somewhere that vegetarians live longer and have less illness. Few Adventists could cite any scientific or medical evidence to support an argument for vegetarianism. The fact that people decide to cease eating meat, a considerable change to diet and lifestyle, on the basis that a vegetarian diet is healthier suggests that considerable emphasis is placed on health. One would think that such commitment to health would apply to other dietary practices and habits, that is, deep fried foods, concentrated simple carbohydrates, snacking, junk foods, and foods with high sodium content. However, it appears from survey responses that these foods are not regarded as negatively as meat. It would appear that there is a particular prejudice about meat. The fact that an increasing

proportion of Adventists are eating meat may be evidence that some Adventists are questioning the harm caused by a meat diet. The reduced concern regarding the harm of meat is summed up by the possibly exaggerated response: 'It seems that Adventists no longer consider the issue to be of any importance' (Rule, 1995). Yet Seventh-day Adventist educators have not moved to lessen the dependence on vegetarianism in the Adventist school curriculum.

Adventist home economics teachers are promoting vegetarianism 'because it is healthier'. While some teachers use the Bible and the Adventist prophetess White to reinforce their arguments, other teachers believe that these two Adventist authorities cannot or should not be used to argue the case for or against vegetarianism. In answering student questions on why meat is not included in the curriculum teachers generally state that it is a Church policy based on health reasons. For example one respondent wrote; 'As the teacher's standard reply I say our school has a health policy/principle where we promote teaching the most healthful food choices therefore we do not cook meat' (Rule, 1995). Several teachers commented that they use scientific evidence that meat is unhealthy because it can cause disease. One teacher commented that the argument for vegetarianism has changed in recent years from one based on White's teaching to one based on health principles.

e. Vegetarianism as Ideology

The beginning of vegetarianism in the Adventist Church is understandable in the context of the society in which the Church began.

The Second Great Awakening created a spiritual environment from which a number of religious reforms sprang, some of these groups held among other beliefs that a healthy body and mind was a necessity for a healthy religious life. The vegetarian movement was not restricted to Adventists, instead it was, along with the temperance movement, a popular reform. The vegetarian diet was beneficial to early Adventists in that it forced them to eat a much greater range of foods. Unsafe selection, storage and handling of meat during this period also meant that a decrease or elimination of meat from the diet would have reduced risks to health. Notwithstanding that several theories on the harm of meat eating which were proposed in the nineteenth century were unscientific people nevertheless were influenced to practice vegetarianism.

Religion faced attacks from several quarters in the second half of the nineteenth century. Deism, evolution and biblical criticism were confronted by Christians in different ways. While some were able to adapt their religious beliefs in relation to new knowledge or theories, others rejected religion altogether or upheld their beliefs rejecting the new knowledge. Knight (1989) claims that Adventists were part of

the fundamentalist groups that upheld their beliefs and rejected the new knowledge. He believes that Adventists have been unable to critically analyse themselves. Godfrey (1993) writes that the Adventist church today has the habit of not confronting issues and not being able to adapt to societal change. Attempts to unmask ideological attitudes held by some Adventists toward meat has the potential to create powerful, emotional and divisive reactions. The discussion is an example of an emotional level argument in which even sensible, logical arguments will not persuade people to inspect their personal attitudes or opinions. This was illustrated by the hostile responses of some parents to the suggestion of meat being incorporated into the home economics curriculum. One teacher wrote that the 'inclusion of meat in the Adventist education program would 'rock the board' in the eyes of the Church/education hierarchy and condemn us in the eyes of the more traditional element in the Church (vocal minority and pain in the neck!)'.

Moral and value tags have been applied by conservative Seventh-day Adventists to vegetarianism. This is evident from statements from teacher-respondents who pointed out that students who eat meat feel guilty and inferior to vegetarians. Furthermore, teachers reported an attitude of 'salvation by vegetarianism' present in Adventist schools. One teacher commented that vegetarianism has been seen as a 'requirement for heavenly entrance'.

f. Vegetarianism as Indoctrination

In most Adventist schools meat is prohibited in much the same way as dancing, alcohol, gambling, and some literature and music. These elements of society are not acceptable even in moderation. Arguments against these elements are on moral, health and spiritual grounds. Substances or practices which are addictive are shunned, along with practices which may lead the individual to dwell on the 'world'. Alcohol and nicotine are seen as harmful to the individual and are therefore treated in schools as substances to be avoided. These substances have been repeatedly shown to have detrimental effects on users. Meat, on the other hand, has not been shown by scientific studies to be comparable in effect to alcohol or nicotine. The arguments used against meat by some Adventists could be used against food items such as sugar, butter, salt, chocolate, eggs and milk. While it would be justified in arguing for their use in moderation, it would be nonsensical to recommend their exclusion.

Arguments for vegetarianism on the basis of it being a healthier option are formed on several grounds. Studies which show that Adventists (of whom a substantial number are vegetarians) generally live longer and have less illness are used to 'prove' that meat is harmful. Given that Adventists usually get adequate amounts of exercise, sleep, and water and do not smoke or drink alcohol it is unreasonable to attribute their health and longevity simply to the avoidance of meat. A relevant point

often ignored in this debate is the fact that vegetarians often eat more fruit, vegetables, nuts and grains than non-vegetarians and that the increased consumption of these foods is probably of more importance than the actual exclusion of meat from the diet. The claim is often made that meat contains fat. This fact is used to substantiate their

belief that meat is unhealthy. The fact that vegetarian dishes can contain the same if not more fat than a meal including meat is ignored in the debates.

Animal diseases capable of being transmitted to humans, excretory products which remain in the animals' bloodstream and chemical substances or preservatives used in feed are also issues which are used to support the claim that the vegetarian diet is healthier. The possible presence in meat of disease-bearing organisms, excretory products and chemical substances or preservatives are valid concerns about meat as food. Similar concerns could be applied to a wide range of foods, most of which are not similarly rejected. Given that there is legislation to control the slaughter and handling of meat before it is used by consumers this threat is minimised. Even if meat does pose a greater threat than other foods approved by Adventists the fact that so many Adventists are using meat demands that students are taught how to handle it. Several teachers were quite explicit about this responsibility.

The Adventist membership has been instructed for over a century through Church sermons, literature, schools and other programs that the vegetarian diet is the ideal diet. The repeated message to Adventists that vegetarianism is the only appropriate diet, has created a mindset which members are generally not prepared to question. Adventists have accepted vegetarianism on the basis that it is healthier.

The Adventist Church grew out of a movement which was based on the estimation of the time of Christ's second coming. The sole purpose in life for many early Adventists was to prepare themselves and make known the gospel in order for Christ to be able to return. Since its beginnings, the Church has had to deal with a section of the membership who have concentrated on trying to make themselves perfect in order to be saved. Self-sanctification, is not a doctrine of the Church and yet vegetarianism has been seen by some Adventists as necessary to gain 'salvation'.

The Church has also emphasised to its constituency that a healthy body is required to prepare for the pre-Advent Investigative Judgment, the only unique doctrine held by Seventh-day Adventists. Adventists are a judgment orientated people in belief and attitude. As an element of the Adventist judgment message vegetarianism has been interwoven into the very fabric of Adventism.

In short, the prestige that vegetarianism has gained in the mindset of some Adventists is not appropriate according to Adventist scholars, Adventist beliefs nor a less dogmatic interpretation of White's writings. Vegetarianism has become a classic example of what George Knight titles a 'landmark'. It has been, to many Adventists, a 'precious fundamental doctrine' which has been over-emphasised yet its acceptance for salvation or the Christian lifestyle is not required according to biblical argument. People have attempted to use White's writings to bolster their argument for vegetarianism. Vegetarianism as a long-held Adventist belief has been confused with Biblical doctrine.

II. Assessment of Present Policy using Habermas' Theory of Cognitive Interests

a. Introduction

The German philosopher, Jurgen Habermas, developed a theory of cognitive interests with their associated systems of action. A cognitive interest is a fundamental orientation which informs a

particular kind of action. A 'system of action' refers to the system people use to think, form knowledge and act. Habermas identifies three basic cognitive interests: technical, practical and emancipatory.

These interests constitute the three types of science by which knowledge is generated and organised in our society. These three ways of knowing are empirical-analytic, historical-hermeneutic and critical' (Grundy, 1991, p. 10).

An examination of the policy of exclusion of meat from the curriculum in Adventist schools can be analysed using the principles of Habermas' philosophy.

b. Domination by the Technical Interest

According to Habermas (1971, p. 82), technical action is concerned with controlling the environment in order to achieve predetermined goals. Put succinctly, the technical interest is: a fundamental interest in controlling the environment through rule-following action based upon empirically grounded laws' (Grundy, 1991, p. 12; italics in original).

The policy of exclusion of meat from the curriculum in Adventist schools reveals technical thought and action. The Adventist school system has changed dramatically since its formation but has not changed on the vegetarian issue even though the needs and beliefs of its students have changed. Instead, teaching is reproductive in that it maintains past practices related to meat, reproducing the thought and practices of the past century. That this has not received greater attention or debate is typical of the technical interest characterised by lack of questioning. The theory that to be healthy one needs to

follow guidelines, of which vegetarianism is one, is also technical as it ignores other possibilities and relies on rule following.

The Adventist school curricula has changed gradually through the years making education more useful to those wanting career advantages. In the past, the study of non-Christian literature and the teaching of the theory of evolution were two aspects of contemporary education which were excluded from the curricula of the Adventist education system. However, in response to the needs of students the Adventist school system adapted to changing society by including these aspects in the curriculum. While the Adventist curriculum has changed in some regards, it has refused to address the issue of meat in the curriculum, even though Adventist thought and practice in regard to meat has changed. This attitude is technical (controlling) in that the rights and needs of students who eat meat are ignored. It supports inequality and undemocratic practices. Students cannot be fully self-determined and reflective on the issue of vegetarianism when meat is not treated as a food. Their views on meat are shaped and students who eat meat at home experience confusion over the concept of meat as food.

By stating that meat is to be excluded from the curriculum regardless of the situation, the school system and church administrators are further enforcing a dogmatic standpoint on the issue and denying teachers the opportunity to exercise professional judgment. Teachers are required to present a curriculum to students which may be against their better judgment. This has the effect of de-skilling teachers and turning them into classroom managers; further evidence of the technical interest at work.

c. Disregard of the Practical Interest

Grundy (1991, pp. 14, 15) summarises Habermas' practical or communicative interest;

the practical interest . . . generates subjective rather than objective knowledge . . . This interest could be defined in the following way: the practical interest is a fundamental interest in understanding the environment through interaction based upon a consensual interpretation of meaning. The key concepts associated with the practical cognitive interest are understanding and interaction. . . . A curriculum informed by a practical interest is not a means-end curriculum by which an educational outcome is produced through the action of a teacher upon a group of objectified pupils. Rather, curriculum design is regarded as a process through which pupil and teacher interact in order to make meaning of the world. (*italics in original*).

The present practice within Adventist education in regard to meat in the curriculum disregards the communicative implications to students by

ignoring the meanings attached to food choices. While each Adventist home economics teacher may address the issue differently it is apparent that some are not even aware of any inconsistency or unfairness in the present practice. Using Baldwin's (1989) example of communicative examination of an issue, vegetarianism should be studied by examining the historical development of vegetarianism in the Adventist Church, the development of the official stance of the Adventist Church and personal views of the membership and the rationalisation of those views. Consequences of the viewpoints assumed would be open to scrutiny. Teacher responses to the survey indicated that vegetarianism is not treated in a practical, communicative sense. Open, undistorted discussion necessary to practical, communicative action on the issue is encouraged by only a few teachers and is not permissible according to Church policy.

Several teachers in answer to the 1994 survey stated that students need to be taught the vegetarian diet because it is the best diet. However they also believed that people's choices should be respected. By stating that the vegetarian diet is the 'best diet', these teachers infer that people who eat a vegetarian diet have made the best choice, that they are better in some way to people who choose otherwise. The views and practices of meat eaters are therefore 'respected' but seen as inferior. This encourages inequality due to the structure of the curriculum ignoring the diets chosen by a substantial number of the students. Students who eat meat have the right to be taught how to buy, prepare, store, cook and present the food they eat. By ignoring the rights of these students inequality is exacerbated.

The communicative interest is concerned with 'making meaning' with the objective of understanding what is 'good' and for the best of all those involved. In promoting the vegetarian diet as the only good diet some vegetarians feel that they are superior. This is suggested by teacher-respondents who reported that students who eat meat feel guilty or inferior. This 'caste system' is disadvantageous for both groups. One teacher also commented that the present practice tends to be an isolating factor for Adventist students in society.

By Adventist schools treating meat in the same way as alcohol and nicotine, it is implied that meat eating is equally harmful. The experience of eating meat at home while it is forbidden at school is confusing to children. This is not congruent with White's belief or home economics philosophy that the home and school should reinforce each other.

The practical interest requires that curriculum content be relevant to students and adaptable to the changing needs of the students. These aspects of the communicative interest are not applied in Adventist home

economics classes. The communicative interest would be served by

allowing teachers to use judgment to choose what should be taught and how it should be taught rather than imposed policies based on hierarchical administrative structures.

d. Disregard of the Emancipatory Interest

Grundy (1991, p.19) explains that 'the emancipatory interest is concerned with empowerment, that is, the ability of individuals and groups to take control of their own lives in autonomous and responsible ways. The emancipatory cognitive interest could be defined as follows: a fundamental interest in emancipation and empowerment to engage in autonomous action arising out of authentic, critical insights into the social construction of human society' (italics in original).

The emancipatory interest uses ideology critique and democratic principles in its aim to ensure that people are free to be autonomous, responsible and critical. Vegetarianism in the Adventist Church has become an ideology which has not been unmasked. It has become a 'landmark' that has been taught to members by means of subtle indoctrination.

III. Conclusion

a. Arguments for maintaining the present policy

The common arguments in support of the status quo are, first, the inclusion of meat in the school curriculum would represent action counter to the official Adventist position; second, meat education would lead to loss of the school system's 'uniqueness'; third, stress would be created for teachers who find themselves confronted with uncertainties of how to deal with the change; and finally that this change has the potential to produce severe anxiety to many Church members due to the abandonment of an Adventist tradition.

Adventist schools present an education similar to other schools. They remain unique in several ways. The daily presentation of biblical teachings flavoured with Adventist interpretations, a conservative selection of literature and texts, the absence of high-level competition in sport, and the elimination from the school program of any connection with gambling, dancing or substances such as caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine set Adventist schools apart from the norm. By presenting a curriculum excluding meat, Adventist home economics classes provide an education which is not available elsewhere. Parents who are vegetarians have the opportunity to send their children to a school which endorses their beliefs. Adventist students who are vegetarian often find the sight or smell of meat repulsive let alone actually preparing or cooking meat in home economics classes. In New Zealand Adventist schools are now funded by the Government and are accredited on the basis that they do not change the unique qualities of

their schools. To change school policy by allowing meat education in Adventist schools would clearly remove one of the characteristics that make Adventist schools different.

School 'uniqueness' is the reason for existence of any specialised system. What should contribute to school 'uniqueness' is a question of value. Whether the upholding of the vegetarian diet is a quality of the school system which is worth preserving (at the risk of harming those who would benefit from meat education) in order to maintain difference is a question of value. Those people who value the schools' promotion of vegetarianism, according to the parent survey, are those

who are strict vegetarians. To impose the wishes of this minority group on others would be undemocratic. The parent survey revealed that the stricter vegetarians are also those who are most outspoken. Any attempt to introduce meat education to Adventist schools would find obstructions from this group.

On the other hand, the claim of many Adventists that their school system will lose its uniqueness has little basis. The fact that many parents to whom the vegetarian principles appear to be irrelevant send their children to Adventist schools is evidence of the doubtful nature of this claim. The particular quality of Adventist education is the result of a number of factors which include the homogeneity of the participants with respect to their attitudes toward spirituality, education and lifestyle generally.

b. Implications

The Church policy of endorsing the exclusion of meat in Adventist educational institutions has resulted in a diminished capacity to meet the goals of Adventist education and home economics. Adventist administrators and teachers have dealt with this issue in a manner that has failed to consider the deeper implications of the policy. Adventist home economics teachers are inhibited in developing their students to the fullest extent of their abilities. Adventists claim that the purpose of education is to assist the individual student to grow mentally, physically, socially and spirituality. Progress toward this aim is limited when teachers are inhibited in the manner in which they can present the various aspects of curricula issues. The development of students' faith, the main purpose of the Adventist education system, is something which is internalised and personal rather than taught or imposed on students. Development of faith could be enhanced by encouraging students to be self-critical, self-determined and self-integrated.

The present practice of excluding meat from the home economics curriculum prevents students from gaining the technical skills they need. Two goals of home economics are overlooked, that is, to prepare students for everyday life and to improve well-being. At present, many

students leave Adventist schools with little or no knowledge of how to buy, store, prepare, cook or present meat. Meat is a highly perishable food. Students should know how to store meat and how long it can be kept before it becomes a safety hazard. Students should know the different cuts of meat so that they can be aware of which ones are considered quality cuts. Students should be made aware of how to prepare and cook meat so that it is not only safe for consumption but is appetising. Students wishing to go into a food industry as a career are also disadvantaged by their lack of knowledge and skills about meat.

An understanding of the origins, philosophy and practices of home economics, Seventh-day Adventism, and Seventh-day Adventist education has the potential to guide the home economics teacher's decision making process with respect to the question of 'What shall I teach regarding vegetarianism?' There are advantages and disadvantages for the present system of abstaining from teaching meat education. Teachers who feel they are not fulfilling their obligations to students by total rejection of meat as food may find themselves in an untenable situation with their personal convictions opposed to the requirements of the job.

In teaching about meat in opposition to Church policy they would face the threat of dismissal (see Ballis, 1992; Godfrey, 1996). Moreover some home economics teachers would be anxious about the thought of equipping themselves to take on additional content areas. To the individual there would be personal conflict for all those involved who

are vegetarians, including home economics teachers, administrators, parents and students. Teaching about meat in Adventist schools has the potential to create significant emotional stress.

To force or impose meat education on vegetarian students contradicts the aim of education and the philosophy of home economics to enable students to be self-determined and to be improved by the educational process. To force or impose vegetarianism on meat eating students has the same effect. To meet the needs of students a compromise is required. As every situation is different teachers need to assess their situation and make an informed decision on what would be best in their case. This situational analysis must take place while keeping in mind the teacher's responsibility to the Church, school administration, parents, students, their philosophy of home economics and their own religious belief structure.

A change in policy would rest with Church administrators. If the prohibition were lifted, change in home economics classes would depend upon the individual teacher. With the dietary habits assessed and opinions openly discussed, teachers should take account of possible options. Practical meat cookery in Adventist schools would be opposed by a number of school administrations, parents and teachers. But the theory of meat education in a unit of work could be an elective to

students and teachers. If home economics teachers feel they are unable to present the units of theory or practice of meat education to students they could invite qualified people to be guest speakers, demonstrators or supervisors.

Emphasis in home economics classes on cruelty to animals, concern for the high energy requirements of the meat diet, and concern for the environment may be further promoted as reasons for following a vegetarian diet. These factors have been neglected by Adventists.

Teacher preparation would have to be reassessed. Avondale College, the Adventist training institution for Australasian teachers would need to prepare teachers to approach education in the preparation and handling of meat and to be able to assess new school environments and make appropriate decisions. This would not only enable them to teach in Adventist schools with greater skills, knowledge and attitudes to meat but it would also provide Avondale students with further options for employment other than in Adventist schools.

Adventist beliefs and practices concerning vegetarianism reveal technical thought and action. An interest in the communicative and emancipatory issues resulting from endorsement of the vegetarian diet is not clearly evident. Adventist administrators and teachers have dealt with this issue in a technical manner and have failed to consider the deeper implications of the policy. Adventist home economics teachers are inhibited in developing in students a range of technical, communicative and emancipatory skills, knowledge, and attitudes.

The exclusion of meat from the school curriculum may be viewed as undemocratic, dogmatic and reinforcing an isolationist standpoint. The curriculum selected should reflect the needs of the students. There is no compelling reason to endorse the present practice of absolute vegetarianism. However, neither is there a compelling reason to take the opposite stance and insist on the inclusion of the full range of foods as defined by Australian society.

The issue of vegetarianism to Seventh-day Adventist and the way it is interpreted in their educational institutions is more than a curriculum issue - it is an issue for the entire Church and home economics

teachers have a particular interest in initiating and contributing to the system-wide debate which should be undertaken as a matter of urgency.

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