Christ in the Classroom: Adventist Approaches to the Integration of Faith and Learning

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CONTENTS

Preface ........................................................................................................... VI

About the Institute for Christian Teaching ................................................... IX

Subject Index to the Essays ......................................................................... XI

Jimmy Jiamah V. Adil, Jr., Instilling Christian Virtues in Advising Student Researchers ................................................................. 1

Robert Bikash Bairagee, The Selection and Implementation of Co-curricular Activities in an Adventist School ............................................................ 17

Virginie P. Baloyo, The Odyssey and the Migrant Workers’ Experience: A Fresh look at an Ancient Saga ................................................................. 35

Edison Butera, Teaching Entrepreneurship in Christian Perspective .......... 53

Elainie Coetzee, A Study of Students’ Philosophies of Life with a View to Introducing Bible-based Christian Philosophy ..................................................... 69

Samuel O. Dada, Integrating Biblical Values in Teaching Financial Management ........................................................................................................... 89

Daniel M. Dangana, Conveying Christian Values through Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) ......................................................... 107

Job Dcndapati, “Singing the Lord’s Song in a Strange Land”: The challenge of Integrating Christian Values in Schools in a Non-Christian Environment ................................................................................. 127

Daniel R. Du Plooy, Positive Psychology: An Adventist Evaluation ............. 149

Oluburmi Idowu, Communicative Strategies in the Decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount: Implications for Language Teaching in a Christian College or University ........................................................................... 169
Moses V. Kibirango, Customer Relationship Management: A Christian Perspective .................................................................................................................. 187

Davenia Lea, A Model Assessment Plan for the Nurturance and Measurement of Future Teacher’s Spiritual Dispositions .............................................................. 205

Tracie Mafie'o, Fostering Research in a Christian University: A Paradigm Shift for Adventist Higher Education in the South Pacific Islands ........................................... 227

Ben A. Maguad, Managing for Quality in Higher Education: A Biblical Perspective .......................................................................................................................... 245

Stanley Nangoy, Integrating Biblical Values into the Teaching of Human Resources Management (HRM) .............................................................................................. 265

Boon-Chai Ng, Christian Ethics and the Christian Engineer: A Study of Responsibility ..................................................................................................................... 285

Kanelecni C. Kennedy Nwangwa, The Integration of Selected Adventist Beliefs and Values in the Administration of an Adventist Secondary School .................................................................................................................. 303

Dorcas A. Odunaike, Biblical Insights into Legal Ethics ................................................................................................................................................................. 323

Dorothy Onyango, Conveying Christian Values through Diet: A case for vegetarians ......................................................................................................................... 343

John Per-umal, A Christian Approach to the Environment: What Adventist Schools, Colleges, and Universities Can Do ........................................................................... 363

Jacqueline Demetillo Guerra - Polancos, Biblical Implications for Nursing Theory, Research, and Practice ................................................................................................. 381

Marie-Anne Razafiarivony, Assessing and Nurturing an Organizational Adventist Culture that Conveys Christian Beliefs and Values in an Educational Institution .................................................................................................................. 399

IV
WoiSock So, The GRS Model: A Guide for Nursing Students to Be Effective in Providing Spiritual Care ............................................................... 419

David Soputra, The Role of Faculty in Nurturing and Mentoring Students in an Adventist Secondary School ........................................ 441

Nola Tudu, Understanding Worldviews and Conveying Biblical Beliefs and Values in Teaching Sacred Literature of the World .......... 461

Carmelita Troy, Case Studies in Accounting Fraud: What Would Jesus Do? Integrating Ethics and Values in Accounting Courses .......... 479

Supplement

Lisa M. Beardsley, Integration of Faith and Values in Graduate and Professional Education ......................................................... 501

Lisa M. Beardsley, Issues and Trends in Adventist Education Worldwide .............................................................. 519

Arthur V. Chadwick, A Modern Framework for Earth Sciences in a Christian Context .............................................................. 543

John M. Fowler, The Adventist World-View: A Ground to Stand, A Life to Live - I .............................................................. 555

John M. Fowler, The Adventist World-View: A Ground to Stand, A Life to Live - II .............................................................. 561
MANAGING FOR QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

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MANAGING FOR QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION:
A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

Quality is a complex concept. Its meaning varies with different people and organizations. For example, a common notion of quality is that it is synonymous with superiority or excellence (Evans and Lindsay, 1999). It is something that is intuitively understood but almost impossible to communicate to others (Foster, 2007). This view is referred to as the transcendent definition of quality. You may not be able to define it precisely but “you know it when you see it” (Pirsig, 1974, p. 185). Another definition of quality puts it as a function of a specific, measurable variable. This product-based approach views quality as the presence or absence of a particular desired attribute. The greater the amount of a desired attribute possessed by a product or service, the better the quality.

The manufacturing-based approach defines quality as conformance to a set of requirements or specifications and “making it right the first time” (Crosby, 1979, p. 15). Any deviation, hence, from these requirements or specifications implies lack of quality. According to the user-based approach, quality “lies in the eyes of the beholder” (Garvin, 1988, p. 43), a definition which is highly subjective. This definition states that the quality of a product or service depends on its ability to satisfy the preferences of individual consumers. The last approach - the value-based approach - defines quality in terms of cost and price. A quality product or service is one that “performs or conforms” at an acceptable cost or price. In light of the different definitions stated and described above, Bergquist (1995, p. 43) proposed the following comprehensive definition of quality with respect to higher education:

*Quality is the extent to which an institution successfully directs adequate and appropriate resources to the accomplishment of its mission-related outcomes and that its programs make a significant and positive difference in the lives of people*