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# **CONVEYING CHRISTIAN VALUES THROUGH TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET)**

by

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## Introduction

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has been in the past, today and will remain in the future one of the most debated subjects in all countries of the world. Among the several reasons for this observation is the close intuitive link between technical and vocational education and technological development. Globally, there is evidence of strong relationship between a country's technological might and its economic potentials such that most economically advanced countries are also those with high technological capabilities and living standards.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), a system of training for skills in occupational areas for productive living the world over is predicated upon the theorems proposed by Prosser and Quigley (1949). These theorems have had a substantial influence on the administration of vocational education and are still as useful today as they were when they were first developed. The principles specify minimum standards below which effective technical and vocational education cannot be offered.

With reference to the opportunities for the integration of faith and learning by teachers, subjects falling under the purview of vocational education are generally but erroneously considered "stony ground". However, since all truth, in whatever form, is God's truth (Holmes, 1987), no ground is stony ground. What is true though is not all subjects lend themselves to the same level of integration of faith and learning (Rasi, 2009). Therefore, themes that lend themselves quite readily to an integrational approach can be found in every discipline. They may be located by examining course goals and objectives, unit titles, and lists of core concept and key terms. Taylor (ud)

explains that once the teacher has identified specific themes embedded in the course content to be taught, he then can seek to examine these concepts from a distinctively Christian perspective. Such an analysis would endeavour to view a particular theme in the light of the great controversy between good and evil, and of the gospel commission. It would seek to understand the relationship of this theme with the character of God and His plan for man and for the universe. This will help students to discover spiritual insights and foster Christian attitudes and convictions.

It should be realized therefore, that the farthest reaches of any subject still lie within the realm of God's truth, hence, educational programmes in our institutions must be revelation based, doctrinally correct and philosophically coherent. If technical and vocational education and training contributes to and is relevant to human development and happiness, then how can Christian values be integrated in teaching vocational subjects? This essay will attempt to answer this question using workable illustrations.

### **Objective**

The purpose of this essay is to present the two most common methods for teaching vocational subjects and do lend themselves to conveying the seven Christian values of industry, honesty, excellence, trustworthiness, obedience, cooperation and responsibility, the focus of this paper. Furthermore, a detail procedure for carrying out instruction using these methods for the purpose of teaching these values is presented. This, it is hoped, will provide vocational teachers the necessary guide needed to assist

them in their preparation to each and guide their students as they develop their own Bible based view of knowledge.

### **Concept and Application of Integration of Faith and Learning**

Although the phrase “Integration of Faith and Learning” is barely half a century old, its underpinning principles and aims are firmly rooted in the plan of redemption “conceived before the foundations of the world.” Christian scholars have captured the meaning and intent of Integration of Faith and Learning (IFL). According to Gaebelein (1968), it is to integrate a school or college in all its parts: curriculum, student’s activities, administration and every thing else in the word of God. Rasi (2009) says integration of faith and learning is a deliberate and systematic process of approaching the entire educational enterprise both curricular and co-curricular from a Christian perspective. Ikonne (2002) refers to it as the total immersion of every college activity curricular and extra curricular in the word of God. Integration of faith and learning can further be understood as a practical process of transmitting Biblical faith and values through appropriate educational programmes and activities in a purposeful and systematic manner. In practical terms, Ikonne identified four helpful steps to include:

- i. Identify the Biblical faith/value to be transmitted.
- ii. Identify appropriate educational programme and activity for transmission.
- iii. Effect transmission.
- iv. Evaluate the effect of transmission and adjust if necessary.

It can be inferred therefore, that the work of integrating faith and learning involves and requires all that man would ever experience to be based on and be influenced by biblical perspective.

The concept and practice of Integration of Faith and Learning dates back to the very first school after creation. In that school, according to White (2003),

The Garden of Eden was the school room, nature was the lesson book, the Creator Himself was the instructor, and the parents of the human family were the students...Endowed with high mental and spiritual gifts, Adam and Eve were made not only to discern the wonders of the visible universe, but comprehend moral responsibilities and obligations. God's glory in the heavens, the innumerable worlds in their revolutions, the balancing of the clouds, the mysteries of light and sound, of day and night all were objects of study by the pupils of earth's first school. (p.16-17)

This statement according to Ikonne (2002) implies that all the "learning of our first parents was geared towards increasing their faith. "God himself being their instructor desired them to explore the limitless treasures and vast domains of creation. By this they might wonder in awe the greatness of their Maker. In other words, leaning and faith were intended to be integrated and enhanced in the first school environment.

Today, the aim of integration of faith and learning in Seventh-day Adventist setting according to Rasi (2009) is to ensure that students, by the time they leave school under the influence of Christian teachers, "will have freely internalized biblical values and a view of knowledge, life and destiny that is Bible based, Christ centered, service oriented and kingdom directed." Although Holmes (1987) rightly observed that integration of faith and learning is an ideal never to be accomplished by anyone but

God Himself, much can be achieved when we make a lifelong and deliberate process of integration of faith and learning our goal. This will require the dedication and commitment of the institution, administration, teachers and students. As the Christian teacher manages the learning environment, faith must be exercised through an endeavour to see the fullness of life from God's perspective. Furthermore, faith implies a commitment to grow in knowledge (I Peter 3:18). It is not sufficient to merely stand in the truth. One must walk progressively in the truth (Ps. 86:11; 3 John 4).

### **Mission and Vision of Technical and Vocational Education and Training**

Mission, according to Dejong in Geraty (ud), describes our future, where we wish to go, what we want to become and the impact we wish to make on students. Consequently, a mission focuses on the values, customs and traditions that a college wishes to pass on for the kind of world we wish to shape. What then is the mission and vision of vocational education and training?

White (2003) declares that "God is the source of all true knowledge" and that "true education is the harmonious development of the physical, mental and spiritual powers." This articulates an inspired vision for education and it provides a foundation for a philosophy of Adventist Christian Education, albeit technical and vocational education. Furthermore, Holmes (1987) asserts that the Biblical concept of creation imparts sanctity to all realms of nature and to human history and culture. Consequently, for the Christian, neither nature, history nor any form of knowledge is self – originating, self – operating, self-sustaining or self-explanatory. For all truth is from God. We therefore approach the works of God, probe their mysteries, and harness their potentialities with humility but boldness as well.

Derived from the Bible and Ellen G. White, a philosophy of education points to the true aim of education: "to restore human beings into the image of their Maker". Therefore, Adventist education should aim at preparing people for useful and joy filled lives, fostering friendship with God, whole person development, Bible based values, and selfless service in according with the church's mission to the world. Accordingly, Coupland (1999) has noted that Adventist educators are doing much in an attempt to fulfil the essence of this vision by promoting concepts of holism, balance, and integration. The understanding often given to holism is education that addresses all the three dimensions of body, mind and soul; and balance, education that should strive to address all three dimensions in equal manner, while integration is understood to mean that the curriculum should include, physical, mental and spiritual content.

An educational philosophy that is holistic addressing mind, body and soul equips the individual with intellectual/mental, social/moral and vocational/physical skills and competencies needed for proper adjustment and continuous adaptation in our complex and ever – changing world. This type of education trains its recipients for all life, which includes life on this earth and life in the "earth made new". It is a training that transcends the boundary of this life and reaches into eternity.

Supporting this assertion, Ellen White said that it "is the harmonious development of the physical, mental and the spiritual powers... preparing the student for joy of service in this world and for higher joy of wider service in the world to come".

In his book *The Idea of a Christian College*, Holmes (1987) outlines what look for in someone who passes through and has the marks of Christian education. The marks of an educated man, Holmes maintains, include:

- a. Spiritual virtues. An unreserved commitment to God and His purposes for us in this world, a confidence in the gospel, and a self giving devotion – these which the apostle calls faith, hope, and love. They bring to the life of the mind purposefulness, expectation humility.
- b. Moral virtues. Qualities of character like love and fairness, the courage of ones convictions, a thorough-going integrity, and a commitment to justice and love in every area of life.
- c. Intellectual virtues. Breadth of understanding, openness to new ideas, intellectual honesty about other views and about the problems in one's own, analytic and critical skills, not just powers of communication but grace and eloquence therein.
- d. Ability to say the right thing in the right way at the right time – not only in business reports, sermons, and obituaries, but also in family life, in Constructive conversation, inn meeting strangers. A wisdom that gets down to basic principles, spotting assumptions and seeing what they entail, seeing what is right and good and true, making sound decision accordingly.

Our institutions may be far from achieving these lofty objectives, this underscores the fact that integration of faith and learning does not come about in a moment; it is not an event rather it is a process requiring foundational understanding of Christian Educations, a personal commitment to think and teach Christianly, and concentrated effort to move forward, by the grace of God.

### **Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)**

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is defined as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life (UNESCO/ILO, 2002). It is further understood to be:

- i. an integral part of general education



- ii. a means of preparing for occupational fields and for effective participation in the world of work;
- iii. an aspect of lifelong learning and a preparation for responsible citizenship;
- iv. an instrument for promoting environmentally sound sustainable development;
- v. a method of alleviating poverty.

The terms technical and vocational educational jointly used or synonymously to mean education geared towards skill acquisitions for employment. Earlier, UNESCO (1999) viewed technical and vocational education and training as an integral component of lifelong learning playing a crucial role in helping individuals and countries achieve a culture of peace, environmentally sound and sustainable development, social cohesion and international citizenship.

Although it is universally accepted and recognized that technical and vocational education and training is an effective instrument for equipping men and women with skills, knowledge and attitudes for useful and productive living, however, it has been looked upon by the society and many educators as a soft option hardly worthy of high position on the school program. The perception of many being that it is a program only suitable for those students less likely to succeed in the academic subjects.

Giving insights into the life activities of Jesus Christ, White (2003:) says that:

Christ came to demonstrate the value of the divine principles by revealing their power for the regeneration of humanity. He came to teach how these principles are to be developed and applied ... Born amidst surroundings the rudest, sharing a peasants home, a peasant's fare, a craftsmen occupation... Jesus followed the divine plan of education". His education was gained directly from the heaven appointed sources; from useful work, from the study of scriptures and nature, and from the experiences of

life – God’s lesson books, full of instruction to all who bring to them the willing hand, the seeing eye, and the understanding heart. (p.51-52).

There is a vital connection that exists between the practical aspects of life and the development of a balanced Christian faith. Explaining this vital connection, White (2003: 214) affirms that “at creation, labour was appointed as a blessing. It meant development, power, and happiness. The changed condition of the earth through the curse of sin has brought a change in the condition of labour; yet though now attended with anxiety, weariness, and pain, it is still a source of happiness and development... its discipline places a check on self indulgence, and promotes industry, purity and firmness. Thus it becomes a part of God’s great plan for our recovery from the fall”.

Curriculum development and implementation in technical and vocational education is generally guided by certain principles and theories propounded by Prosser and Quigley (1948). These principles have been applied in vocational education by many countries including the USA, Britain, Canada, and Germany. They include:

1. The training environment is the working environment itself or a replica of the working environment.
2. The training jobs are carried out in the same way as in the occupation itself.
3. The trainee is trained specifically in the manipulative habits and thinking habits required in the occupation itself.
4. The training helps the trainee to capitalize his/her interests and abilities to the highest possible degree.
5. The training is given to those who need it, want it, and are able to benefit from it.
6. Adequate repetitive training in experience from the occupation enables right habits of doing and thinking to the degree necessary for employment.
7. The instructor is himself a master of the skills and knowledge he/she teaches.
8. Training is carried out to the extent where it gives the trainee a productive ability with which he can secure or hold employment.

9. The effective establishment of process habits in any learner will be secured in proportion as the training is given on actual jobs and not on exercise or pseudo jobs.
10. The content of the training which is taught, is obtained from the masters of the occupation.
11. Training should be oriented to the manpower needs of the community.
12. Vocational education will render efficient social services in proportion as it meets the specific training needs of any group at the time that they need it and in such a way that they can most effectively profit by the instruction.
13. The administration of vocational education will be efficient in proportion as it is elastic and fluid rather than rigid and standardized. (Prosser, 1949).

Although Prosser and Quigley may have been influenced by their worldview, their work in the area of vocational education has universal appeal to institutions including sectarian institutions whose objective is preparing men and women for productive living and happiness. It behoves on Christian vocational educators to “strengthen the crooked paths” as we seek to mould the hearts and minds of the young people entrusted to us.

### **Christian Values**

People's values are their beliefs and ideas about what is important in their lives. The values we consider important affects our decisions and consequent behaviour. For the Christian, God is the source of Christian values, the word of God is explicit: “He has shown you O man, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8) Christian values in essence are God's purposes for His creation and contributes to the formation of Christian character.

Guptil and Johnson (2008) made an extensive list of 87 Christian values that covers Religion, Ethics, Bible, Individual, Relational Temperal and Health (REBIRTH). However, seven of these values (Industry, Honesty, Excellence, Trustworthiness,

Obedience, Cooperation and Responsibility) will be the subject of focus in this paper. The emphasis of vocational education on good character formation in preparing young people for the challenges of the future can be strongly supported by adopting and adapting the teaching of core Christian values. These values which are important in vocational education and have solid biblical foundations and in the spirit of prophecy are presented in the table below.

SN	Values	Definition/Description	Scriptural Text	EGW Comment
1.	Industry	An industrious person is one who perseveres, is hardworking, diligent, enterprising, resourceful, self discipline, and takes initiatives.	Prov. 12:24 Diligent hands will rule but laziness ends in slave labour. Prov. 22:29. Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will serve before kings...	The persevering and industrious are not only happy themselves, but they contribute largely to the happiness of others. Competence and comfort are not ordinarily attained except at the price of earnest industry. 5T 180.
2.	Honesty	Giving the correct idea or impression, keeping one's word, honouring your commitments, doing your assignment and being real and genuine.	Ex. 20:16. You shall not give false witness against your neighbour. Ps 25:21. May integrity and uprightness protect me.	Life's best things – simplicity, honesty, truthfulness, purity, unsullied integrity, cannot be bought or sold, they are as free as to the ignorant as to the educated, to the black man as to the white man, to the humble as to the king upon his throne. 7T28
3.	Excellence	Striving to do your best and keep on improving	How well He does everything. Mark 7:37	God's people must strive to reach the very highest standard of excellence. 7T127
4.	Trustworthiness	Doing what is right even when it might be	LK 16:10 He that is faithful in that	Mutual love and confidence must be

		easier to do something else. Confidentiality, dependable, and stable	which is least, is faithful also in much.	encouraged and strengthened in the members of the church. Let all, in the fear of God and with love to their brethren, close their ears to gossip and censure. 5T610
5.	Obedience	Following instructions, loyalty, conformance, submissive.	Eph.6:1 Children obey your parents in the Lord for this is right.	The loyalty of the soul is alone of value in the sight of God 5T73. The path of obedience to God is the path of virtue, of health and happiness. LS 270.
6.	Cooperation	Happily doing my part. Teamwork, partnership, synergy, community, collaboration.	Is 41:6. They helped everyone his neighbour...2Cor. 6:1 We are labourers together with God...	Cooperation should be the spirit of the schoolroom, the law of its life. The teacher who gains the cooperation of his pupils secures an invaluable aim in maintaining order. ED 286.
7.	Responsibility	Faithfully doing assigned job, setting a good example. Pursuit of excellence.	Prov. 28:20 A faithful man will be richly blessed.	All may be certain that faithfulness in little things is the evidence of fitness for greater responsibilities. ED61. It is the faithfulness, the loyalty to God, the loving service, that wins the divine approval and in the day of God...will be commended.COL361

## **Teaching Christian Values through Vocational Education and Training**

How does a Christian vocational education teacher approach the teaching of Christian values? Although many vocational teaching techniques can be used, there are two major and commonly used methods of teaching technical and vocational education that lend themselves effectively to the teaching of Christian values. These are, (i) demonstration and, (ii) project method.

The vocational education teacher has a golden opportunity to accomplish the integration of Christian values with technical and vocational education by responding to the demand of society for career preparation in occupations. This demand is an open door to the integration of faith in the training laboratory, classroom and anywhere the opportunity avails itself. This is supported by Gabelein (1968) who said that the root of integrating Christianity into every subject is through the Christian worldview of the teacher. The teacher's concept about everything will be expressed in the classroom in one way or another. For no man teaches out of philosophical vacuum. Christian teachers therefore, can be catalyst in helping their students formulate a worldview that includes the biblical concept of nature, mankind and history. The teacher is the link between the learner and what is to be learned. For him to make the teaching, learning process effective there is the constant need to employ a variety of teaching methods of presenting learning experiences.

How are teachers to integrate faith and learning in vocational education? Rasi (2009) outlined general principles that also have direct impact in teaching vocational subjects. He says that teachers are to approach their subjects from a biblical Christian worldview discovering in the subject matter the themes and issues that naturally allow

for an explicit connection between the curricular content, on the one hand, and the Christian faith, beliefs and value on the other. Teachers highlight these connections in their course plans, lectures, student assignments, class discussions, thought questions, in examinations, and other learning experiences, with the goal of leading the students to develop their own Bible-based view of knowledge, values, life's purpose destiny.

Furthermore, Rasi (2009) says vocational teachers can be guided by the following rules as they contemplate preparing to teach their subjects from the biblical perspective:

1. Become thoroughly familiar with the content of your course so as to be able to identify, in advance, key issues or themes that lend themselves to connecting faith, meaning, values, and learning.
2. Ensure that learning outcomes are clear and measurable. List the knowledge, attitudes, skills as well as the beliefs and values that you expect your students to acquire during the course.
3. Select carefully the textbooks and assigned readings for the course, ensuring that they provide a platform and an opportunity to address key issues and themes that demand reflection and a personal response.
4. Outline for the students a rationale for offering this particular subject at a Christian Institution, connecting the course objectives with institutional mission.
5. State, at the beginning of the course, the presupposition or assumptions that you bring to the study of the subject. These may be outlined as your world view statement.
6. Whatever the topic, once you have covered the relevant facts/data move on to concepts and then to meaning and values. You are interested not only in approaching the subject from a biblical – Christian perspective, but also in the insights that the subjects provides to illuminate faith and beliefs.
7. Make class assignments, projects, essay questions, and laboratory experiments that require students to connect biblical values with the subject matter.
8. Creativity provides space, without apologies, for spiritual dimension in your class.
9. Make yourself available to you students in order to continue the dialogue and the questioning after class, in your office or in other quieting setting.

As teachers take advantage of the above guide to prepare, the table below specifies the detailed steps to take and shows the values expected to be reinforced.

<b>Method/Values Promoted</b>	<b>Definition/Concept Clarification</b>	<b>Procedure for Carrying out the Method</b>
<p>Demonstration</p> <p><b>Values</b>  <i>Excellence</i>  <i>Industry</i>  <i>Responsibility</i>  <i>Obedience</i>  <i>Cooperation</i></p>	<p>It is an instructional method used by instructors for introducing new skills to the learner. Commonly used in those educational experiences that relates to (a) how it works, (b) how it is done, (c) what makes it work, (d) what happens in a process, and (e) techniques for doing.</p> <p>Demonstration involves telling, showing, questioning, testing and application.</p>	<p><b>Preparation.</b> Before carrying out a demonstration,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Be very clear in your mind what you will demonstrate and how this will promote the successful realization of the lesson objectives.</li> <li>ii. All machines, equipments, tools, drawing charts e.t.c. necessary for the demonstration should be well arranged and kept in good condition.</li> <li>iii. Students observing the demo should be physically comfortable and be able to observe the instruction demo.</li> <li>iv. All sources of distraction should be removed.</li> <li>v. Full explanation of what the teacher is demonstrating should always be given.</li> <li>vi. The demo should be slow enough to enable the students to grasp the skill inherent in the procedures. There should be intervals for questions and answers involving both the teacher and students.</li> </ol> <p><b>Presentation steps.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Before beginning the demo, explain to the students what you are about to demonstrate, and possibly relate it to what they already know or have done.</li> <li>ii. Begin and follow your steps by step prepared plan doing so slowly enough that the learners do not miss key points.</li> </ol>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>iii. As the demo progresses, essential technical information relevant to the demo should be given as brief as possible.</li> <li>iv. After each part or a major step of the demo ask questions to determine whether the demo is understood and to emphasize key steps.</li> <li>v. Emphasis on safety procedures should be adopted and taught along side other technical information during the demo.</li> <li>vi. As a follow-up to the demonstration, provide opportunity for the student to apply what has been learnt.</li> </ul>
<b>Project Method</b>  <b>Values</b> <i>Excellence</i> <i>Industry</i> <i>Responsibility</i> <i>Obedience</i> <i>Cooperation</i> <i>Respect</i> <i>Trustworthiness</i>	Teaching strategy for providing realistic educational-industrial experience, involving planning, organizing and executing the project. Project can be assigned to individual or group.	<b>Procedure</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Group the students into manageable number (3 – 5 per group).</li> <li>2. Decide what approach to adopt in assigning the project to the students. Either you provide the project or the students/groups decide what project with your supervision and input.</li> <li>3. Give the groups sufficient time to work out the details of their plan to carry out the project. The detail will include meetings to be held, responsibilities assigned to members of the group, materials, procedures, tools and equipment to be used, dead lines, etc.</li> <li>4. The instructor guides and provides assistance where necessary, and ensuring adherence to group schedules, policies, and community spirit.</li> </ol>

The role of vocational education in the integration of faith and learning is one which can be used to culture genuine ambassadors for Christ and His cause, that of saving

men and women, this sub-culture would be effective in influencing students in developing a desire to glorify God in all that they do as they prepare for life and service. Resulting from exposure of the sub-culture mentioned is the development of Adventist world view, which would encourage students to view God as a loving Creator and Sustainer of the world.

This sub-culture can be sustained by a lifelong commitment of the teacher because integration is an ongoing process that will require the rest of one's life. This implies that applying integration of faith and learning to vocational education requires the total commitment and dedication of Adventist educators to God and to their work of imparting knowledge. The help teachers give to students to acquire skills, attitude, habits of thought and qualities of character that will enable them to understand their jobs, perform them efficiently and with satisfaction, is a job that teachers must pray for guidance and continuously strive to present the Truth.

## **Conclusion**

The concept of work, productive living and happiness originates from God. To be productive and happy and contributing to the development of the society is the basis of the philosophical foundations of vocational education. Core Christian attitudes and values of faith supports the realization of vocational education objectives. This paper has attempted to establish the fact that vocational education subjects generally considered stony ground has great opportunities and potential for integration of faith and learning. Specific methods for teaching Christian values through vocational education and a 'how to use' these methods in integrating faith and learning are outlined. Therefore, understanding how to apply these methods of teaching in

teaching Christian values will make vocational education programs holistic, enhancing its potential to transform the “head, the heart and the hand.”

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