FOSTERING RESEARCH IN A CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY:

A PARADIGM SHIFT FOR ADVENTIST HIGHER EDUCATION

IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC ISLANDS

by

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Introduction

Adventist education has flourished since its inception in North America in 1872 to a global system with schools in over 140 countries, more than 100 of which are institutions of higher education (Dulan, 2008). Fostering research, scholarship and contextually relevant knowledge is an important part of the role of a Christian university. Complex change in the South Pacific Islands (migration, culture change, climate change, globalisation, HIV epidemic) gives rise to the need for new knowledge critically contextualised to the dynamic social and cultural context. Without such knowledge, Adventist higher education in non-Western contexts such as the South Pacific Islands will be limited in its ability to contribute to the transformation of society through the application of Christian values and beliefs.

This paper proposes a paradigm shift for research (with a particular emphasis on social science research) in Adventist higher education in the South Pacific Islands. The particular focus is on Pacific Adventist University, the only Adventist university in the South Pacific; although the points made have relevance for higher education in other settings, particularly in other non-Western, developing nation contexts where Christian universities are to be found. The discussion addresses the reasons to change from the status quo, namely the need for contextualised knowledge, for increasing academic quality, sustainability of the university system and to effectively advance the mission of the church. The final section discusses three aspects of research (research rationale, research focus and research management) whereby Biblical principles and Christian values can be conveyed to achieve the integration of 'Adventist faith and learning at the highest level' ("AAA Criteria for Review of Research Degrees," April 1 2009).

South Pacific Islands Context

Oceania, the 'sea of islands' (Hau'ofa, 1994), is a place of rich cultural diversity and rapid social and cultural change. Papua New Guinea (PNG) alone has more than 800 indigenous languages (20% of the world's languages). Including over 25 nation-states, Oceania is further sub-divided into Polynesia, Melanesia and Micronesia, representing the distinctions and connections between the peoples, cultures and places of the region. Borofsky (2004, p.41) writes that the Pacific 'offers one of the most, if not the most, regionally condensed historical time-lines of the global changes that have taken place in

recent millennia – from human settlement to European contact to colonialism to postcolonialism.'

Pacific Adventist University and South Pacific Islands Higher Education

Churches have been 'a major source of education from kindergarten to university' in the Pacific (Crocombe, 2008, p.212). Following the pattern whereby churches were largely responsible for the early establishment of institutions of higher education in the Pacific, to train pastors and missionary teachers (Baba, 1997), Pacific Adventist College was established in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, by the South Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and opened in 1984 to offer advanced training at degree level for Pacific Islanders in a 'familiar setting' that was 'tailored to their needs' (Tarburton, 2005, p.7), preparing them for leadership and service. In 1997 the institution gained university status with the passing of the Pacific Adventist University Act in Papua New Guinea.

Pacific Adventist University (PAU) is a regional institution primarily serving two Unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific - Papua New Guinea Union Mission and Trans-Pacific Union Mission (TPUM encompasses the nations of Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Tonga, Samoa, Kiribati, Tuvalu and Niue); Australia and New Zealand constituencies in the South Pacific Division are seen to be served by Australian-based Avondale College.

In 25 years, the institution has experienced continued growth in infrastructure, enrolments, staff and academic programmes. The largest enrolment to date of 570 students was witnessed in 2008. There are currently 6 academic schools (School of Business, School of Health Sciences, School of Theology, School of Science and Technology, School of Arts and Humanities, School of Education) offering 6 undergraduate Bachelor degrees (Bachelor of Business Studies, Bachelor of Nursing, Bachelor of Theology, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Education Secondary) and from 2010 there will be 5 postgraduate qualifications, 3 of which are research degrees (Bachelor of Science (Hons), Master of Philosophy, Master of Theology, Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry and Postgraduate Diploma in Pastoral Ministry).

The first postgraduate level programme, a coursework Master of Arts (Theology), delivered in intensive mode, started in 2000. At the time of writing there had been 18

graduates from the MA programme. The third cohort beginning in 2007 enrolled in a full-time residential Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry programme consisting of both taught subjects and, for the first time, a research thesis. The rationale for these changes included[1]:

1. To prevent a slide into regionalism and to maintain PAU as a *Pacific-wide institution*;
2. To introduce a *specialised MA* determined by the needs of the field;
3. To develop *Pacific-based research*;
4. To *develop the church's human resources*;
5. To become a *feeder institution for Avondale College's new PhD.*

Affiliation between PAU and the two other tertiary institutions in the South Pacific Islands, Sonoma Adventist College (Rabaul, PNG) and Fulton College (Fiji) has recently transpired, following the recommendation of the South Pacific Division initiated Tertiary Education Commission which resolved that 'academic integration be regarded as the first step in rationalising tertiary education in the Pacific, in the recognition that there are more substantial efficiencies to be gained in respect to human, financial and asset resources which can only be realised with full integration' (South Pacific Division Commission on Tertiary Training in the Pacific Summary of the Commission Proceedings 2007).

PAU's vision statement is 'to be the BEST provider of quality tertiary Christian education in the Pacific Islands' - and this will be achieved by being **B**iblically sound, **E**ducationally valid, **S**piritually challenging and **T**echnologically relevant. The mission of PAU is to 'prepare graduates who are equipped and willing to serve their community, their country, their church and their God.' There are 5 focus areas in the 2007-2011 Strategic Plan, the first of which is *Research-based knowledge delivery*. The objective of this focus area is to encourage excellence in knowledge delivery and research capability, aiming to promote: Excellence in student learning; Research and development activities; and Excellence in teaching.

The Status Quo: Compelling Reasons for a Paradigm Shift

Notwithstanding the direction set by the current strategic plan of Pacific Adventist University, and the incremental changes which have taken place in the last 18 months at

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[1] These reasons are taken from the Proposal for a MA in Pastoral Ministry in the School of Theology, dated 10th June 2006, prepared by the then Dean of the School of Theology, Dr David Tasker, and presented to the PAU Council.

PAU (including the establishment of a Research and Ethics Committee, the adoption of an overarching Research Policy, new research degrees starting in 2010 and externally funded faculty research projects), attention has not generally been given to the university's role in contributing new knowledge and developing research capacity in higher education in the South Pacific Islands. An external Research Capacity Assessment conducted in 2008 by an AusAID programme on Universities in PNG, identified some gaps and challenges in research capacity at PAU which included:

> ... external environmental factors, institutional motivation and capacity as well as institutional and research performance. The university faces an absence of: a university-wide research strategic plan; incentives specific to research engagement and performance; mechanisms for providing mentoring and training in research skills for academic staff; access to electronic research databases; and an internal database for recording and monitoring research activities, collaborations and publications. Other areas such as external research funding, quality appraisal of research, low rate of research publication and dissemination and the limited number of academic staff engaged in research also requires attention. Pacific Adventist University demonstrates the ability to address many of these challenges and issues; however PAU may require support at various levels to deal with these challenges in the short and long term. (King, 2008, p.6)

The following section postulates the reasons why the status quo is inadequate, explaining the need to transform the paradigm of higher education in the South Pacific Islands towards fostering research as a means for integrating faith and learning. The discussion is organised along the following lines: the need for contextualised knowledge; academic quality; the role of research in sustaining the university system; and advancing the mission of the church through knowledge-building and human resource development in the church and the wider society.

Knowledge Contextualisation

A lack of contextualisation has been a perennial issue since the beginning of formal education in the Pacific (Helu-Thaman, 2001), an issue which can be addressed by fostering research to create contextually relevant knowledge. Much knowledge taught in Universities in the Pacific is derived within a Western cultural framework. One would be hard pressed, for example, to find psychology research, curriculum, and texts based within a Pacific cultural framework. Yet studies on motivation carried out in a predominantly individualist cultural context may not have the same validity for people who operate within a communal

cultural context where intrinsic and extrinsic factors have different degrees of influence on thinking and behaviour. Likewise, mainstream business management texts do not address the kinds of challenges raised by *wantokism* or tribal warfare for business and public service management? Borofsky (2004) states that marginalisation of the Pacific, because of its lack of economic and cultural 'usefulness' to the Western world, has in turn been 'reproduced in the academic sphere' so that the Pacific's intellectual potential is under tapped. From a Biblical perspective:

> any proclaimed truth about humankind cannot really be the truth unless the perspective of all humankind is included. By excluding important members of humanity from their research and teaching, Christian scholars show that they value these less; they reduce the humanity of – they "dehumanise" – some of those made in God's image. (Schmidt, 1987, p.272)

Dorovolomo, Koya et al. (2008, p.213) observe that 'lack of rigour and ignorance' inevitably results 'in Pacific educators and systems passively receiving pre-digested curriculum and assessment products from outside, usually from developed countries.' While this may be of little consequence in disciplinary fields such as mathematics or computer science, in the social sciences the implications are far reaching. Taufe'ulungaki (2001, p.18) asserts that 'the incongruence between Pacific core values and those underpinning imported development and educational paradigms are in large measure responsible for much of the turmoil the Pacific is now experiencing at every level of its societies.' One only needs to turn their attention to ethnic conflicts in the Pacific, public health issues, the rise of law and order issues, and corruption at various levels of society. Although it is useful for students in the Pacific to be proficient with 'global' knowledge, failure to assist students to effectively interface indigenous cultural concepts with global knowledge (Qalo, 2004), in the absence of integration of this from a Biblical worldview, lends itself to an education with unintentional negative consequences.

Hiebert (1985) identifies three interacting principles clarifying the relationship between the gospel and culture, that are useful for clarifying issues of cultural contextualisation in Christian scholarship (see also Niebuhr, 1951). The first principle he explicates is that the gospel does not equate with culture; it is *outside of culture*. If we assume that culture and the gospel are one in the same then cultural superiority arises and we are likely to require those in another culture to adopt our culture in order to be a

Christian. In scholarship, Western ideas and practices are assumed normal and therefore not 'cultural' – while Pacific ideas and practices are seen as "other" and "exotic" or, at worse, as irrevocably "heathen". Second, the gospel can only be experienced by, and communicated to, humanity *through culture* – using symbols, language and cultural forms. As such, Christian scholarship can be legitimately developed from within any ethnic/cultural framework - whether a Western or Pacific cultural framework. Finally, the gospel speaks *to culture*, thus it is transformational and changes culture; again, Western and non-Western cultures alike will be transformed by the gospel. Extending the notion and process of 'critical contextualisation' (Hiebert, 1985) beyond that of cross-cultural ministry, research may be seen as form of critical contextualisation – where ideas and practices are first understood and then analysed from a Biblical perspective. This makes the gospel more clearly communicable and powerfully transformational for Western cultures and non-Western cultures alike, as Truth transforms core cultural values and the interconnection between peoples, cultural ideas and practices.

As the only Adventist university in the South Pacific Region, PAU is yet to fully capitalise on its unique position to take the lead to foster research, contributing new knowledge that conveys Christian values and Biblical principles contextualised and relevant to the Pacific region.

Academic Quality

Recognising the research-teaching nexus, fostering research enhances academic quality at all levels of the university. The functions of the university, as stated in Section 5 (b) of the PAU Act, include: 'to provide for research into all branches of learning and to assist its practical application.' This legal mandate implies the provision of research degrees and faculty research as a core activity of the university so research results can be applied in various domains.

Developing research degrees and building the capacity to supervise student research in a range of areas is integral to academic quality. The addition of a *research* thesis in the MA programme emerged as a strength and important milestone for the university and students alike in an internal review of postgraduate studies at PAU conducted in early 2009. A faculty member involved in the MA programme reflected that research is "not the easiest

way, but it is the best way". In a similar vein, a graduate of the earlier MA (without the research component) made the following comment about the weaknesses of the MA programme: "It would have been more beneficial had we done a course on research and research writing. I have received an MA but that does not prepare me for doctoral studies." These comments resonate with the findings of a study in the UK (Lindsay, Breen, & Jenkins, 2002, p.324) which clearly demonstrated that 'student perceptions of 'quality' postgraduate pedagogy incorporate a requirement for courses to be, at least in part, research based, and taught by staff with current knowledge of research in the discipline.' Quality, research based postgraduate programmes often define the quality and development of a university as a whole.

A further aspect of academic quality and integrity relates to the role of academia as the "conscience and critic of society." While decisions about programme offerings, curriculum or delivery will sometimes be driven by pragmatic concerns – such as the needs of the field or economic profitability – academic concerns are sometimes at the forefront. Universities both respond to industry and workforce demands and contribute research and knowledge to lead change in thinking and practice. Pursing academic concerns ensures that Universities both lead and respond to the broader context. Unaisi (2008, p.207), a Pacific educationist, states: 'Universities have a long standing tradition... about the celebration of excellence and wisdom... Universities are places of possibilities and hope. They are places for dreaming, visioning, imagining and re-imagining of new ideas to shape destinies of individuals, groups and nations'. Fostering research through both postgraduate research degrees and faculty research is foundational to ensuring increasing academic quality in the university.

Sustainability of the University

A research emphasis in the university contributes to the sustainability of the university system. There are contextual challenges in PNG which impact tertiary sector function and sustainability. While universal basic education has been achieved in other Pacific nations, currently, about one third of the youth population in PNG will never attend school (National Youth Commission, 2007) - and in 2006 PNG 'spent the world's second lowest amount on tertiary education' (www.nationmaster.com; cited in Crocombe, 2008, p.213). Fostering research is a mechanism for dealing with the issue facing PAU and other

universities – that of sourcing suitably qualified teachers. To be more specific, faculty who have research Masters and PhDs are needed to work in the university system. Providing research degrees at postgraduate level at the university is a means by which the pool of possibilities for fulfilling staffing requirements is expanded and enhanced. Furthermore, competent postgraduate students working as tutors or Graduate Teaching Assistants provides experience for potential future lecturers while relieving senior academic staff to work on research. This system for the allocation of work responsibilities is yet to be implemented at PAU.

Moreover, creating a strong research culture in a university makes it an attractive option for senior academics, with good research track records, who can teach at the postgraduate level and supervise student research in their field of expertise, in turn contributing to the sustainability of the institution.

Finally, moving attention from human resources to financial resources, external research funding, accessed by faculty undertaking research, brings funding into the university. What is more, external research funds present the opportunity to provide sponsorship for Master's students which is part of the capacity building requirement of many research funders in the Pacific (see, for example, the National AIDS Council Research Guidelines). In summary, fostering research will enhance university sustainability.

Mission of the Church

Fostering research is important in the South Pacific to effectively accomplish the mission of the church and to address the needs of the broader society in the South Pacific Islands. The growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in PNG from the 1960s has been described as "explosive" at around 7%, with the majority of the church membership for the South Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church being in PNG; this growth is attributed to factors related to the institution, national context, culture, satellite programmes and the Holy Spirit (Lopa, 2003). The audit of the PAU School of Theology undertaken by the Board of Ministerial and Theological Education (BMTE) of the South Pacific Division in August 2008, reiterated this with the recommendation that 'the MA program with its research emphasis, in light of the growth of the Church and the

consequential future educational demands, be communicated, maintained, actively supported, and further developed.'

Research degrees in higher education provide upgrading opportunities to develop the church's *human resources*, preparing workers to take up key leadership positions within the church system[2]. A research degree is effective in developing high level skills in analysis and problem solving. Beyond the church, social issues and development priorities across the Pacific also require human resource development. AusAID has initiated a focus on strengthening the university sector in PNG, stating, 'the nation's future economic, social, and political development depends on the quality of higher education... to address workforce development needs as well as performing other roles such as knowledge-making, nation-building, and regional development.'

Pacific "Christian" Research

Having established the need for the paradigm shift, this section takes the discussion a step further, expounding how Biblical principles and Christian values inform, and are conveyed through, three aspects of research with application to higher education in the South Pacific Islands context - research rationale, research focus, and research management.

Research Rationale

There is a no more compelling reason for the pursuit of scholarship than the realisation that God is the ultimate source of knowledge, that 'all truth is God's truth, wherever it be found' (Holmes, 1987, p.17). Since from a Biblical perspective there is no basis for dualism or gnosticism, the separation of matter and mind or of faith and reason (Holmes, 1987), it follows that a Christian worldview legitimately informs research in all disciplines, not just in religion, theology or ministry. Holmes warns:

> ... Gnosticism keeps the Christian from cultural involvement, from artistic appreciation and creativity, from political and social action, and it generates a misdirected fear of science and philosophy and human learning. It produces needless tensions between faith and culture, a defensive attitude and sometimes even outright anti-intellectualism. (Holmes, 1987, p.14)

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[2] This point was emphasised by PNGUM administrators in two meetings in November 2008 and February 2009.

10

Anchoring research endeavour in an all-knowing God and Biblical principles, imparts confidence to the Christian researcher, to venture into unchartered terrain in academia.

Acceptance of God as the source of knowledge is also an acceptance that our human knowing is incomplete; it is in a perpetual state of becoming. Research is a process of "re-searching" requiring an openness to newly revealed truth to achieve what Jacobsen and Jacobsen (2004) call a flow between faith-informed scholarship on the one hand, and academically shaped faith on the other. Meyer (1997, p.89) proposes that 'newly emerging or "marginal" voices' in higher education 'bring a fresh angle of vision; they who were formerly objects of writing now write as subjects who illumine previously invisible, hidden, silenced truths.' In Biblical perspective, the dividing walls of hostility (Ephesians 2:14) which have historically excluded people according to gender, race or ethnicity from scholarship have no place; the Christian university is a place where unity in Christ is more meaningful because of our diversity. Considering the origins and ends of knowledge, Palmer (1993, p.8) explains that 'the act of knowing is an act of love' since the origin of knowledge *is* love (1 John 4:8): 'Knowledge that springs from love will implicate us in the web of life; it will wrap the knower and the known in compassion, in a bond of awesome responsibility as well as transforming joy; it will call us to involvement, mutuality, accountability' (Palmer, 1993, p.9). Through research and scholarship we can enter into 'genuine dialogue' among those from different perspectives, facilitating 'cognitive access to certain aspects of reality' (Wolterstorff, 2004, p.238).

Poelstra (2009, p.65) warns that 'rather than being motivated by a spiritual telos, some students (and faculty) are driven by neurotic needs for achievement.' Although it might seem far from the grindstone that ubiquitously plagues the day to day routine of higher education, there is a theological mandate for knowledge-building, speaking directly to our action of knowledge-seeking and the practical implications of knowledge application. 'The joy of learning and discovery in a climate of freedom, and responding to the God-given quest for truth are not only positive motivators for engaging in intellectual discovery, they are a responsibility for believing Christians' (Galusha, Luxton, McVay, & Rasi, 2004, p.2). Christian research, therefore, is not that which is motivated by shallowness – the mundane pressures of fulfilling institutional requirements for research activity, or the esteem which is conferred for letters behind a name and a lengthy publication list. Rather, Christian research

is motivated by knowing the Origin of knowledge, as we love mercy, act justly and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8).

What might a Christian rationale practically imply for fostering research in a Christian university? One consideration is the need to explicitly and intentionally make statements about the basis for Christian scholarship in research policy (such as a Code of Research Practice). Further, it is important, if this is to be part of the paradigm shift, for ongoing dialogue and reflection to occur amongst postgraduate research students, faculty and administrators in recognition that the integration of faith and learning is a process, and a life-long process at that - 'an intellectual activity that goes on as long as we keep learning anything at all' (Holmes, 1987, p.48). This can be achieved through colloquia focusing on the implications of the integration of faith and learning for research.

Research Focus

The specific research focus – the topic, hypothesis, research questions and theoretical frameworks - is another dimension distinguishing Christian research. As established earlier, there are certain issues facing the church in the South Pacific that, while resonating with phenomena experienced in other parts of the world, require context specific knowledge and solutions in order that the gospel be communicated in deeply transforming ways. What is considered as priority for study is guided by the needs of the church and the society, as interpreted from a Christian perspective.

It is here that we can appreciate the particular role a Christian university has in fostering research. There is no guarantee that research priorities arising from a Christian perspective, no less an Adventist perspective, will be given priority and support - including financial, human resource and institutional supports – in a non-Christian university context. The topics of investigation of the Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry theses at PAU are important to the mission of the church in the South Pacific context and go some way to addressing the need for inclusive curriculum in Christian higher education, which considers knowledge from Western as well as other cultural contexts (Schmidt, 1987):

- The Role of Teachers in Addressing Student Occult Sub-cultures in a PNG Secondary School: A Case Study (by Unia Kaise Api)

- Effective Bible Teaching in Rural Areas in Solomon Islands: A Study at Jones Adventist College (by Bevan Tutuo)
- The Role of an Adventist Professionals' Association in Evangelism to Support the Mission of the SDA Church in Port Moresby (by Reuben Akia)
- Risk of HIV amongst Rural SDA Women in Eastern Highlands Province, PNG (by Nellie Hamura-Oa)
- The Leadership Perceptions and Practices of Selected Vanuatu Seventh-day Adventist Pastors (by Ericson Restuetune)

As these topics illustrate, the choice of research topics may be clearly influenced by a Christian viewpoint. In another sense, Christian scholarship is also that which applies critical analysis based on a Biblical worldview to the gambit of existing knowledge. This could include, for example, a meta-analysis of research studies or review of existing literature where the studies/literature are not premised on a Christian worldview; but the theoretical framework for analysis of the research and the literature is informed by a Biblical worldview.

In the South Pacific context, an engagement with indigenous Pacific cultural knowledge is particularly needed. Compared to naturalism's strong influence on Western scientific epistemological assumptions, traditional and emerging indigenous Pacific scholarship is more commonly influenced by pantheistic assumptions. Christians and non-Christians alike in the Pacific context face negotiation of cultural context – whether in teaching, pastoral ministry, business, or health work. Advancing knowledge of cultural context, deciphering the points of congruency between cultural ideas and practices and a Biblical worldview, better prepares Pacific/indigenous graduates for the reality; but it also adds to the global pool of knowledge which can benefit humanity more generally. For example, an Adventist church programme aimed at fostering youth resilience in the church and community has used the Circle of Courage http://www.signsofthetimes.org.au/archives/2005/may/0505article4.shtm retrieved 27 July 2009), a model which integrates 'Native American philosophies of child-rearing, the heritage of early pioneers in education and youth work, and contemporary resilience research' (http://www.circleofcouragenz.org/ retrieved 27 July 2009). Similarly, expressions of humility in Pacific cultural context gives insight for improving human services practice in

13

other cultural contexts (Mafile'o, 2004) and is, arguably, more reflective of Biblical principles than what is commonplace in mainstream Western human service practice.

A Biblical worldview therefore serves as a basis for philosophical assumptions and as a filter for the selection of theoretical frameworks/concepts/ideas, ultimately shaping our actions and practice in knowledge-building (research) and the application of knowledge. This is demonstrated in figure 1 below:

This would mean, for example, that a social science researcher would reject the philosophical assumption of mainstream postmodern theorists, that there is no absolute truth, which is clearly inconsistent with a Christian worldview (Harris, 2004). At the same time, Christian scholarship and practice in the social sciences can be honed with a critical postmodern analysis of power (Allan, Pease, & Briskman, 2003; Margolin, 1997; Pease, 2002), assisting the researcher to conceptualise the application of selfless service in the human services – what actual impact is the service provision having on the recipients? To what extent do the service recipients get to participate in determining the type of service provided? A church, for instance, might decide that it should serve the needs of the community, however, without consideration of the perspective of the community, the church runs the risk of merely doing something that does not create change for that community and rather, sets up a relationship between the church and community characterised by dependency instead of transformation. In contrast, Jesus served to meet the need of the recipient, not the need of the giver. Further, how can we apply the

approach of Jesus to challenge the structures of power which disadvantage certain sectors of society? Taking these examples further, research which is contextualised to the South Pacific context, would need to focus on how power is understood in a Pacific cultural context. Leadership in Pacific communities is usually framed as "big man leadership" (skills) and "chiefly leadership" (inheritance) (McLeod, 2007); how then do churches interface with the community taking these cultural notions of leadership into account? Research into such topics from a Christian worldview drawing on theories presented in the social sciences more generally, both adds knowledge for more effective ministry in a Pacific cultural context and contributes valuable knowledge in academia and practice. A Christian worldview dynamically interacts broadly at the level of ideas and action in research, giving shape to topics, theories and methods of investigation.

Research Management

Christian values are reflected in the way research is managed. Returning to Palmer's (1993) position, if the origin of knowledge is love, then the ends of knowledge – and the journey to ends – are love in action. It is commonplace for ethical issues to arise in the research process. Research management from a Christian perspective adheres to the highest of ethical principles, acknowledging that there are both universal ethics and those that are particular to a specific setting. Guidelines on Pacific health research identify 'relationship conduct' as integral to ethical practice from Pacific perspectives; this includes: respect, cultural competency, meaningful engagement, reciprocity, utility, rights, balance, protection, capacity building and participation (Health Research Council of New Zealand, 2003, p.2). Managing research from a Christian value base impacts all aspects of the research process - the research collaborations which are established, the way research teams are constructed, how difficulties are dealt with during the research process.

A Christian worldview also compels researchers to be principled in managing the dissemination and application of new knowledge. In many cases, especially where individuals are sponsored to complete a research degree, church resources are used to undertake research. Stewardship principles apply to research management; if resources have been spent to develop new knowledge there is a responsibility to disseminate research results to benefit the church and humanity, thus ensuring a service element to the research

process. In principled, Christian research management, the dissemination and application of research must be intentional, and given time and resourcing at the outset.

In science and technology, a breakthrough in knowledge can equally be applied to good or bad ends. In addition to knowledge, Christian researchers seek wisdom for the application of knowledge, which is founded in relationship with God (Fowler, 2009). Proverbs 4:6-7 compels the Christian researcher to 'get wisdom' because it is 'supreme' and through this get understanding; and we can gain wisdom through God since 'God alone knows the way to wisdom, He knows the exact place to find it' (Job 28:28).

Conclusion

Adventist higher education in the South Pacific Islands faces a double challenge. Like Christian scholarship in any part of the world, Adventist higher education institutions must rise to the challenge of integrating faith and learning if it is to be a worthwhile endeavour at all. A further challenge is presented for higher education in non-Western contexts such as the South Pacific Islands since much knowledge is developed within a Western cultural setting; Christian scholarship also needs to be critically contextualised (Hiebert, 1985) to the cultural setting to be most effective in non-Western settings.

As PAU faces the next wave of growth - in student numbers, the level of academic offerings and the extent to which faculty contribute to new knowledge - fostering Pacific Christian research and scholarship must be a cornerstone of this growth. Doing so will meet the need for contextualised knowledge, academic quality, sustainability and to effectively advance the mission of the church. Fostering research that is both Christian and contextualised to the Pacific can be achieved by way of research rationale, the focus of research and management of research. While Biblical beliefs and Christian values can be achieved in coursework higher education programmes, in the Pacific context the inclusion of research-based postgraduate degrees and faculty research takes the integration of faith and learning to a deeper level, with wider impact for the student, the church and society at large. In this sense, fostering research enables a university to more fully adhere to the counsel of the pioneer of Adventist education, Ellen G White (1903, p.17), to be more than 'mere reflectors' of other's thought.

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