



International Journal for Faith Integration

Volume 2

June 2021

Number 1

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Barbara J. Fisher

Retired senior lecturer, School of Education, Avondale College of Higher Education,
Cooranbang, New South Wales, Australia.

Recommended citation:

Fisher, B. J. (2021). Integration of Faith and Learning: An Incidental Approach? *International Journal for Faith Integration*, 2(1), 10-23. Retrieved from https://ijfi.org/vol2no1/Integration_of_Faith

The *International Journal for Faith Integration (IJFI)* is an open access journal published by the Institute for Faith Integration at Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria. This article was accepted for publication in *IJFI* after completion of a double-blind peer review process. For more information, please contact ijfi@babcock.edu.ng

Integration of Faith and Learning: An Incidental or Intentional Approach?

Barbara J. Fisher

Retired senior lecturer at the School of Education at Avondale University College, Cooranbang, New South Wales, Australia

ABSTRACT

In recent decades the 'Integration of Faith and Learning' (IFL) concept, and its application have prompted research, dialogue and deliberation amongst SDA academics, researchers and educators (Akers & Moon, 1980a; Korniejczuk, 1994; Nwosu, 1999; Rasi, 2013; Roy, 2001; Taylor, 2012). It is the IFL concept that makes Christian education unique. Yet, despite all the research and information available about IFL the author has discovered that an 'Intentional' or an 'Incidental' approach to integrating faith and learning in the Christian classroom is still a topic of discussion and debate among teachers. Therefore, in this article the author proposes that both 'Incidental' and 'Intentional' IFL approaches are complementary and indispensable if a balanced and realistic engagement with Christian education is to be experienced by the students. The application of this thesis in the elementary school setting is then discussed and practical suggestions for its implementation outlined and explored.

Introduction

The first-grade class listened attentively as the Christian teacher read 1 Thessalonians 4:17 (NIV). "After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever." The children had been learning about space travel and the teacher wanted to 'Intentionally' turn the children's thoughts to consider and ponder what heavenly space travel will be like at the second coming of Jesus. A lively and energetic class discussion concerning the Bible text's implications had everyone actively contributing except Samuel, a discerning and lively six-year-old. He had been sitting quietly and thoughtfully throughout the discussion of being "caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air". Suddenly he raised his hand. In a very solemn and serious voice, Samuel queried: "What happens if you are frightened of heights?" As Christian teachers, we can smile at Samuel's creative insights but what a perfect God-given opportunity for an 'Incidental' faith learning moment. This scenario, the author argues, exemplifies how teachers can 'Intentionally' plan for faith and integration and because of student questions, comments and observations, also realise 'Incidental' IFL opportunities in the same lesson.

In recent decades the 'Integration of Faith and Learning' (IFL) concept, and its application ('Intentional' and/or 'Incidental'), have prompted research, dialogue and deliberation amongst Seventh-day Adventist academics, researchers and educators (Akers & Moon, 1980a; Korniejczuk & Kijai, 1994; Nwosu, 1999; Rasi, 2013; Roy, 2001; Taylor, 2012). For more than 50 years non-Seventh-day Adventist scholars have been suggesting that Christian education and

the integration of faith and learning is what makes Christian education unique and decidedly different from secular education (Hegland, 1954); (Trueblood, 1959); (Gaebelein, 1968); (Chadwick, 1982); (Heie & Wolfe, 1987); (Holmes, 1987). Interestingly, White contended that the work of “education and redemption are one” (1952, p. 30), and that, “The students in our schools and all our youth should be given an education that will strengthen them in the faith” (1905, para. 2). From these statements, it would appear that Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) education was provided with a head start regarding the understanding of the concept of IFL and its importance in SDA schools.

More recently though, IFL has been promoted worldwide in SDA educational institutions through the seminars entitled: *Christ in the Classroom* (Rasi, 1988-2009). These seminars required participating SDA teachers to research and present papers promoting IFL in their academic discipline and its application in the SDA school setting. Yet, according to Nwosu (1999), Burton and Nwosu (2003), and Beardsley (2009), the application and acceptance of IFL still appear to be quite varied across the worldwide SDA school system. (Korniejczuk and Kijai 1994, p. 79) comments that, “Some emphasize faith and diminish learning; others accentuate learning and relegate faith to an isolated corner of the curriculum”. (Crenshaw 2013 p. ii) research reveals that the educators in her study were eager to intentionally integrate of faith and learning in their classrooms, “though some revealed that they struggled to articulate how they would do it”.

Effective Faith and Learning Integration

(Akers and Moon 1980a, p.16) ask teachers to consider the following question: “Who’s ‘on center stage’ in my classroom: God or man? (Am I merely a humanist, who is involved with a man at work in his world, or a theist, studying God at work in *His* world?)”. All education and teachers are worldview focused and driven. Edlin (2014, p. i.) further points out:

There is no neutrality in education. That is, all education is inescapably philosophically committed (i.e., religious) as it seeks to nurture students in a manner consistent with the beliefs, reality, and practices of its key stakeholders and curriculum designers.

Palmer (1998) and Crenshaw (2013) comment that, “educators teach who they are and what they believe” (p. 262). So, (Harris, 2004, p.5) reminds teachers that effective IFL is dependent on Christian teachers having “a thorough, accurate and carefully thought through understanding of the Bible, together with a good knowledge of how academic knowledge claims are made and the worldviews underlying these claims”. Effective IFL, comments (Akers, 1993, p.8), is “more than laminating a religious perspective onto traditional secular subject matter”. (Taylor, 2000, p.423) reminds Christian teachers that effective IFL requires “a foundational understanding of Christian education, a personal commitment to think and teach Christianly, and concentrated effort to move forward, by the grace of God”. (Crenshaw, 2013, p.16) further contends that, “Christianity in relation to learning must not be understood as a bonus or an add-on but as a worldview that challenges other competing worldviews such as secularism or naturalism”, while (Harris, 2004, p.140) maintains that a biblical-Christian worldview underpins all effective IFL because:

The Christian worldview, as a Christ-centered ‘theory of everything,’ begins with a proper understanding of the Bible and extends through philosophical exploration into a conceptual

scheme that encompasses all knowledge and all life. This worldview is distinctively different from those of naturalism and postmodernism.

Therefore, as (Fisher, 2010, p.3) points out, if Christian teachers are able to articulate a personal worldview they will be “consciously aware of its influence on their teaching methods, choice of curriculum and their interactions with students” and there will be observable evidence of IFL distinctiveness and effectiveness in their classrooms.

A Personal Reflection

An appreciation of the problems educators revealed in Crenshaw’s (2013) research really resonated with the author because of her struggles as a Christian teacher to intentionally and effectively apply IFL in the classroom. Back in the late 1960s, the author was a young graduate elementary SDA teacher placed in a SDA school for her first teaching appointment. Until studying elementary teacher training at Avondale College of Higher Education, the majority of the author’s educational experiences had been in government schools. During her study at Avondale College of Higher Education, she had learnt that her Christian classroom needed to be different from the local government school because of the Christian school ethos. But, what did this look like in the elementary classroom? Because of no previous personal Christian education experience prior to her Avondale College of Higher Education, the author, as a young teacher, daily struggled to apply her newly acquired IFL knowledge in the classroom.

The author knew the content she was required to teach in her Christian classroom because of the government curriculum, but she needed to answer the question: Why and how would a Christian teacher teach this content? Once the author started to analyse the required government curriculum, she was astounded to discover that inadvertently and unconsciously she could promote a conflicting and non-Christian worldview in her SDA classroom. Because all academic knowledge has an underlying worldview, she discovered it was imperative to have a conscious awareness of her personal faith, beliefs, and worldview to be able to detect any conflicting worldviews evidenced in the government curriculum. Her constant challenge was succinctly articulated in (Colossians 2:8 NIV): “See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.”

So, effective Christian education requires an approach to education that presents no dichotomy between the sacred and secular domains. Dichotomy of learning occurs, the author discovered, when faith experiences and learning are relegated to different spheres (Taylor, 2000). Interestingly, instructions regarding daily living, with no separation between the secular and sacred, were given to the Children of Israel in Old Testament times (Deuteronomy 6:6-9). However, this group of people repeatedly chose to revert to and embrace a pagan lifestyle. So, Moses had to repeat his counsel concerning the false dichotomy of the secular and sacred. He said:

Fix these words of mine [God] in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when

you get up. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.
(Deuteronomy 11:18-20 NIV)

These inspired words delineated, for the author, the importance of being aware of a worldview approach that encompassed both the sacred and secular spheres of life.

According to (Stonestreet, 2016, p.1), “A holistically Christian education is an education with Christian goals, with a Christian vision, with Christian pedagogy, and with a Christian understanding of who it is that we’re actually teaching”. A Christian worldview pragmatically and effectively applied in her classroom now became the studied goal of the author. Consequently, she set about to create a distinctly different classroom from that which she had experienced in her schooling.

But to add conviction and authenticity to her teaching, the author understood that a Christian teacher needed to model her beliefs and be able to truthfully explain them to her students. (Gaebelein, 1968, p.37) notes that it is the teacher’s influence that “conditions the world view of the pupil”. The influence of a kind, caring, and committed Christian teacher is immeasurable (Akers, 1993). So, unless the author consistently demonstrated a personal daily, dynamic relationship with Jesus, then her preparation for and application of IFL in the Christian classroom became just hollow words and interactions.

Incidental or Intentional Christian IFL Strategies

Because of the author’s outlined struggles to apply IFL in her classroom, the application and understanding of IFL became a life-long passion. During her eleven years teaching elementary students in Australia and New Zealand, and thirty years training elementary pre-service teachers at Avondale College of Higher Education (Australia), the author’s goal was to make IFL user-friendly and accessible.

The author has proposed that there are two conceptual IFL Strategies, ‘Incidental’ and ‘Intentional’ that can effectively and practically be applied in the Christian elementary classroom setting. From research literature (e.g., Nwosu, 1999), and personal experience, the author noted that it appears that some teachers utilized just one of the IFL Strategies. However, the author will argue that both ‘Intentional’ and ‘Incidental’ IFL strategies are necessary in the elementary classroom if a genuine approach to IFL is to be realized. In the next section of the article, the author will share original IFL approaches she created, developed and initiated in an attempt to effectively and intentionally teach IFL in her classroom.

The ‘Incidental’ IFL Christian Strategies Defined and Employed

‘Incidental’ IFL has been defined by the author as: happenings and events arising from unplanned spontaneous question/s, comment or observation regarding faith, values, and belief that can be made by either the teacher or the students inside or outside the Christian classroom.

The following scenario is one example of ‘Incidental’ IFL that occurred when the author’s class was outdoors in the school garden. Five-year-old Lee, involved in the class activity of weeding

the school garden, turned to her five-year-old classmate working beside her, and stated in exasperation, “We can blame Eve for having to do this! And don’t be deceived, that is a weed!” Her classmate just stared in amazement, totally mystified by Lee’s comments and observations! This teachable moment is what the author has termed ‘Incidental’ IFL because it happened spontaneously and was unplanned.

One Christian teacher told the author that ‘Incidental’ IFL was the most natural and effective method of implementing IFL in his classroom. (Korniejczuk, 1998, p.6) states that many teachers regard planned IFL as contrived and artificial. They believe that sporadic and ‘Incidental’ IFL provides authentic faith-learning encounters for their students. These teachers rely on the students to create spontaneous IFL moments. If a sporadic or incidental encounter is the only IFL approach used in the classroom, then the author contends that it could appear that IFL is merely tacked-on. Akers (1993), reminds teachers that, “This creates a dualism, created by the school itself, that sends a strong signal to youth about the place of religion”.

The ‘Intentional’ IFL Strategy Defined and Explored

The ‘Intentional’ IFL Strategy, in this article, will refer to two IFL application approaches identified as the ‘Formal Curriculum’ and the ‘Hidden Curriculum’. The first application approach, the ‘Formal Curriculum’, the author contends, is planned for and entails deliberate classroom interactions, questions, comments, and observations involving the teacher and the student. The author proposes that ‘Intentional’ IFL is not only confined to the classroom. Rather, it can extend to activities outside the classroom such as, organized extra-curricular activities and interactions, sporting activities, campus surroundings and buildings, teacher and student and parent and teacher interactions. This second ‘Intentional’ IFL approach is referred to by the author as the ‘Hidden Curriculum’.

‘Intentional’ IFL Christian Strategies in the Formal Curriculum

After trial and error, the author developed her own classroom ideas for ‘Intentional’ IFL in the Formal Curriculum. (Rasi 2013) recent descriptive definition of effective and applied IFL really resonated with the author because he, Rasi (2013), had succinctly explained the process she found to be very helpful when implementing ‘Intentional’ IFL in her classroom. The author has taken the liberty to divide Rasi’s statement into a two-step process, namely, *Planning* and *Implementation*, because that was how she intentionally applied IFL in her classroom. The two steps are summarized briefly below, followed by a description of some of the author’s experiences, and the strategies she used in applying these steps in her classroom.

Step 1: Planning

As explained by (Rasi, 2013, p.1), “*Teachers integrating faith and values with teaching and learning approach their subjects from a biblical-Christian worldview perspective, discovering in their subject matter the themes and issues that naturally allow for an explicit connection to be made between the curricular content, on the one hand, and the Christian faith, beliefs, and values on the other*”.

In Step 1, therefore, Christian teachers actively look for faith themes, issues and explicit connections in the subject matter that naturally connect with the chosen lesson content. The

collected information surrounding themes, issues and explicit connections is then used as the basis for planning the classroom ‘Intentional’ IFL Strategies.

Step 2: Implementation

(Rasi, 2013, p.1) continues, “Teachers highlight these connections in their course plans, lectures, course assignments, class discussions, thought questions in examinations, and other learning experiences, with the goal of leading their students to develop their own Bible-based view of knowledge, values, life’s purpose and destiny”.

In short, Step 2 involves Christian teachers applying the planned explicit faith, belief, or values themes in the classroom.

Planning: As the author applied the planning step of ‘Intentional’ IFL in her classroom, she developed God-descriptors for each subject syllabus. This was one attempt to place God at the centre of all knowledge and subject matter: God-centric. This constant reminder, the author considered, would help her to choose, organise and implement ‘Intentional’ IFL Strategies that would help her to create a God-centred classroom. (Liftin, 2004, p.84) further expands on the author’s idea by stating that: “Jesus Christ is the only One who can serve as the centerpiece of an entire curriculum, the One to whom we must relate everything and without whom no fact, no theory, no subject matter can be fully grasped and appreciated”. (While Poe, 2004, p.27) reminds teachers that, “Faith cuts across all disciplines, even though all disciplines do not cut across one another”.

The author’s God-descriptors are listed in Table 1. Each elementary school subject has been assigned a specific God-descriptor to explain the reason for its inclusion in her God-centered classroom.

Table 1. School Subject and God-descriptors

SUBJECT	GOD-DESCRIPTOR
BIBLE	God’s Amazing Love Story
CREATIVE ARTS	God, the Creative Artist
GEOGRAPHY	God’s Landscapes & People
HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION	God’s Living Temple
HISTORY	God’s Epic Cosmic Story
LANGUAGE ARTS	God’s Communication Strategies
LITERATURE	God’s Message
MATHEMATICS	God’s Order and Design
SCIENCE	God Behind the Seen
MUSIC	God’s Audible Harmony

The second strategy the author developed for the planning step involved a description of the ‘Intentional’ IFL goals she wanted in her classroom. The following Bible texts provided her with

reasons to build her ‘Intentional’ IFL Strategies on a Bible-based, Christian worldview. The author’s Christian classroom approach would be:

- God centred: John 3:16-17; Col 2:2
- Bible focussed: 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12
- Holy Spirit inspired: John 16:13
- Missional: Matthew 28:19-20
- Redemptive: Ephesians 2:8-10
- Restorative: I Corinthians 15:49
- Relational: John 4:1-25
- Discerning: 1 Timothy 4:1
- Inclusive: Galatians 3:28
- Character forming: 2 Timothy 3:15
- Intellectually appropriate: 1 Peter 3:15
- Content relevant: Luke 2:41-42
- Values evident: 1 Corinthians 13
- Service-oriented: John 13:34-35
- Heavenly framed: John 14:1-3

Implementation: Having resolved the planning stage of ‘Intentional’ IFL in the classroom, the author then needed to implement Rasi’s (2013) second step of the process. But how did teachers intentionally teach IFL from a biblical-Christian worldview perspective when they were required to teach from a mandated government curriculum? It became evident that the author knew what she was required to teach because it was all outlined in the syllabus. She was also aware that she needed to understand the reason for the government outlined topics in the syllabus, but most importantly, she needed to acknowledge why and how a Christian worldview would influence and guide her teaching of these skills, themes, and topics. (Van Dyk, 2000, p.87) reminds teachers that, “a worldview controls what you believe not only about the big picture, but also about subject matter, about children, and about the purposes of your efforts in the classroom”.

The best way to resolve this challenging issue, the author learned, was to daily ask herself the following questions as she prepared her lessons. This also helped to prevent the author from unconsciously promoting a worldview with which she disagreed. The questions she asked were as follows:

1. Why has this information/skill/topic been included in the government syllabus?
2. What is the underlying philosophy of this government syllabus?
3. How does my Christian worldview and God’s perspective relate to this mandated information/skill/topic?
4. Why am I teaching this information/skill/topic in an SDA classroom?

Once these questions had been answered, the author felt more confident in her ability to prepare a lesson plan that promoted a Christian worldview through activities chosen, values emphasised, and appropriate content. ‘Intentional’ IFL Strategies for the elementary knowledge subjects, e.g.,

History and Geography, the author discovered, become quite evident and achievable. Teaching elementary skill subjects, e.g., Mathematics and Spelling, from a Christian worldview, on the other hand, was a challenge for the author. However, she identified honesty, truthfulness, reliability, care, and discernment as some examples of the essential Christian values that could be appropriately discussed and communicated throughout the Spelling, Language Arts, and Mathematics lessons.

Contemporary Christian teachers have access to a wide variety of available resources that were unavailable when the author was a young teacher. Today, resources can be found on the internet, in Christian book shops, at conferences, and through research articles that can assist and aid Christian teachers in the application of 'Intentional' IFL Strategies in their Christian classroom. For example: Akers and Moon (1980b), Taylor (2000), Van Brummelen (2009) and Roller (2013) have all documented a variety of practical strategies and ideas that can assist Christian teachers to intentionally apply IFL in specific academic subjects across the curriculum. Akers and Moon (1980b) suggest practical ideas for integrating faith across the curriculum. (Taylor, 2000, p.3) classifies his list of IFL Strategies as "contextual, illustrative, conceptual and experimental". He discusses each strategy in a very practical manner and provides ideas regarding their classroom application. In the article, *Twenty-One Methods of Biblical Faith-Learning Integration*, (Roller, 2013, p.29) has delineated "twenty-one methods of biblical faith-learning integration... as natural, intentional, or strategic". Roller's (2013) article is aimed at the tertiary education sector, but he presents ideas that are applicable for any classroom e.g., classroom prayer, devotionals, class reflections, etc., Van Brummelen's (2009) *Walking with God in the classroom: Christian approaches to teaching and learning* can provide some valuable pedagogical ideas and insights for the classroom teacher.

An area of 'Intentional' IFL that is noticeably lacking in the research literature, the author has noted, involves biblical literacy's role in elementary Christian education. If students are to develop a plausible Christian worldview and discover the dynamic nature of God's Word, then they need to regularly interact with the Bible so that the Living Word of God can speak to them and teach them (Castle, 1993). Many decades ago, White (1943) wrote that Bible Study provides the highest form of mental stimulation because the student is in touch "with the thoughts of the Infinite" (p. 124). Jeynes' (2009) research has shown that in the Christian classroom Bible study can provide students with intellectual as well as spiritual benefit. Jeynes further found that students with the highest level of biblical literacy ranked the highest in academic achievement and displayed the best behaviour of the three groups in the cohort. Interestingly, those with the lowest level of biblical literacy had the lowest academic scores and the worst behaviour of the three groups. Because of these significant academic results, the author suggests that Jeyne's research needs more recognition and acknowledgement in Christian elementary schools.

Because of the acknowledged benefits of Bible study in the classroom, the author created a program that uses interactive age-specific strategies for introducing beginner readers to biblical literacy (Fisher, 2014). The author discovered that she could introduce her five and six-year-old students to biblical literacy in the Bible lesson using the same skills used to teach early literacy acquisition in the Language Arts subject. In teaching age-appropriate biblical literacy skills to elementary-aged students, positive interactions with and love of the Bible is the goal. As a result of using this Bible reading approach in the elementary classroom one non-Christian parent contacted the author to discuss which version of the Bible she should buy for her son as he had requested one for his birthday.

On another occasion, an uncle of a five-year-old student, from a different denomination, saw his nephew reading a Bible at home. At first, he thought his nephew was just pretending to read, but on closer inspection discovered his nephew was actually reading the words all by himself despite him being only five years of age. The surprised uncle came and visited the author and requested he spend a day observing the classroom, students, and teacher. At the end of the observation day, the uncle commented that he was about to commence a Christian school in another state and asked could he use what he had observed as a blue-print for his new school? From this experience, the author learnt to never underestimate the power of God's Written Word in the classroom, the lives of the students, and the formal curriculum.

Intentional' IFL Christian Strategies in the Hidden Curriculum

The 'Hidden Curriculum' can be intentionally planned as illustrated in Table 2 below. The author acknowledges that these are only a sample of what Christian teachers can and are including in their school's 'Hidden Intentional' IFL Strategies. It is important to note, however, that whatever happens in a school on a daily basis is either endorsing or invalidating 'Intentional' Christian IFL in the school.

Table 2. 'Intentional' ILF Strategies evidenced in the School's 'Hidden Curriculum'

School Zone	Intentional Hidden Curriculum
1. Campus, Buildings and Garden	
1a. Campus Entrance	Appropriate school signage indicating a SDA School. Neat and tidy school campus.
1b. Entrance Foyer	The school motto and aims displayed appropriately, a bulletin board to display Christian artwork completed by the students, paintings by Christian artists, e.g. Phil McKay https://www.philmckay.com/ to showcase the schools Christian worldview.
1c. School Buildings Exterior	Bible story graphics, Bible verse, or Bible values painted on the walls in the school playground to remind the children while they are playing outside that this is God's school.
1d. Class Garden	A class garden is an opportunity for children to experience and intentionally engage with and care for God's second book: Nature. Object lessons explaining God's love for even the smallest creature along with many faith analogies can be discovered in this natural environment.

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1e. Library	Books that promote a Christian Worldview, Faith Heroes, SDA Church History, Christian Heritage, Christian Values, Missionary Biographies, Bible Stories, and God in Nature are all a silent witness of the school's Christian ethos.
1f. School Corridors	A Bible text in the school corridor helps to remind the children that the school is intentionally Christian. It is a constant visual reminder to all who walk by that this is a faith-based learning environment.
1g. School Grounds	Neatly kept gardens, rubbish removed and a tidy campus bear witness to a God of order.
1h. Staff Attire	Staff appropriately dressed for work indicates that they recognize their role as a visual representative of Jesus in the classroom.
2. Sport Facilities	
2a. Physical Education class	The values of sportsmanship rather than competition are encouraged because of a Christian ethos.
2b. Sport	To compete against their own achievements, rather than competing to be the best in the group, is a worthy goal for all students in a Christian school sporting event and/or individual sporting activity.
3. The Classroom	
3a. Textbooks	To identify the underlying worldview of a class textbook is vitally important so conflicting messages are not conveyed in the classroom.
3b. Wall Displays	By displaying a Christian motto or Bible verse in the front of the classroom, the children are reminded that this is a Christian classroom, and when visitors come to the classroom they will know that this classroom has an 'Intentional' Christian approach to learning.
3bc. Bulletin Board	A Bulletin Board can be a constant visual reminder of the worldview theme being studied.
3d. Nature Corner	A nature corner can encourage participatory discovery about God's second book.
3e. Personal Bibles	Encourage every child to have their own Bible or ensure a class set is available.
3f. Quiet Space	Create a quiet area with cushions, mats, etc., so children can sit and quietly read, pray, play Bible games, or read a large Family Bible.
3g. Prayer Box	Children can place prayer requests in the box that is prayed over by the teacher at least once a week.
3h. Classroom Management	Redemptive discipline rather than punitive discipline seeks to achieve the best faith-based results towards Christian

	discipleship.
3i. Teacher Demeanor	A happy teacher is a positive Christian advertisement in a Christian school.
4. Extra-curricular	
4a. Community Service Projects	Selfless service to others and engaging in social justice issues are important aspects of a Christian worldview. For example: prepare ‘Thank You’ cards or organise a ‘Thank You’ party for the Janitor, School Secretary, Principal, Gardener; collect food to distribute to the disadvantaged families in the community; clean up the litter on the roadside near the school; pray for overseas missionaries; share random acts of kindness; make get-well cards for the children in the local hospital.
4b. School Concert/Performance	A school concert can portray a Christian message to the audience.
4c. School Band/Choir	Musical group activities can assist students to feel part of a Christian outreach group that has similar goals and principles.
4d. Church Worship Programs	Providing church worship programs for SDA churches can demonstrate what is happening at the school while sharing the school’s ethos and worldview.

Conclusion

The classroom scenario, as recounted in the introduction of this article, illustrates how ‘Intentional’ and ‘Incidental’ IFL can occur in the lesson, but the ‘Intentional’ learning had to happen first before the ‘Incidental’ learning could be initiated by the class. Therefore, the author proposes that perhaps the ‘Intentional’ IFL approach should precede the ‘Incidental’. That is, the teacher should proactively seek effective means to transmit the subject area within a biblical-Christian worldview, utilizing corresponding faith-nurturing strategies. Then, while following this ‘Intentional’ approach, be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit through student comment and questions and maximize the serendipitous ‘Incidental’ faith-affirming encounters that may transpire.

(Naugle, n.d., p.2) challenges Christian teachers with the following thought: “The question isn’t whether or not faith is integrated with learning. Faith is always integrated with learning. Rather the real question is which faith is integrated with learning”. Effective ‘Intentional’ IFL, the author discovered:

- is noticeably God-centric;
- offers an inquiry-based approach while providing an induction into the Christian faith traditions;
- promotes the foundational concept that God’s Word contains the ultimate truth;
- gives students an opportunity to be immersed in the Christian worldview, while at the same time seeing it modeled and applied.

- provides a learning environment where each student has the opportunity to discern right from wrong, truth from error and fact from opinion;
- encourages students in autonomous decision making and personal worldview discovery;
- is intentional and systematic in approach;
- encompasses more than an academic understanding; and
- needs to be ‘Intentional’ and planned since IFL is much more than just random and ‘Incidental’ IFL encounters.

To teach an ‘Intentional’ Faith and Learning Approach, both intentionally and incidentally across the curriculum, the author contends, is the Christian teacher’s mandate, BUT, teachers need to remember that:

- Within SDA educational institutions, it is feasible that some students may not choose to espouse the teacher’s faith traditions;
- Decisions and choices made by individual students are not controlled by the teacher;
- It is the SDA teacher’s responsibility to be a disseminator of a Christian worldview, while simultaneously reminding herself that a worldview is an individual and personal matter; and
- “The final objective of teacher implementation of IFL is student integration”, but “integration needs to take place in the mind and lives of students to be completely fulfilled” because, “student perception, attitude, and participation in integration of faith and learning are essential” (Korniejczuk, 1994, p. 140-141).

Finally, (White, 1952, p.19) offers encouragement to Christian teachers by saying that:

He who co-operates with the divine purpose in imparting to the youth a knowledge of God, and moulding the character into harmony with His, does a high and noble work... an education that secures to the successful student his passport from the preparatory school of earth to the higher grade, the school above.

This quotation is the goal of Christian education, and it is the prayer of the author that recounting her IFL experiences will be of benefit to teachers as they endeavor to lead students to experience a loving God who longs to dwell with His children. She hopes that Christian education will not be taught from a dualistic, non-Christian worldview perspective, but rather as an intentional approach that includes the ‘Incidental’ as well as the planned ‘Intentional’ faith-based experiences across the Formal and Informal Christian Curriculum.

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Barbara J. Fisher recently retired as a Senior Lecturer in the School of Education at Avondale College of Higher Education, Australia, has researched and lectured in literacy and Religious Education (Elementary Curriculum) for 30 years. She has presented teacher IFL seminars in Australia, Mexico, Ukraine and South Pacific. She has studied and taught in schools in Australia, New Zealand, and USA. Barbara is passionate about faith based education and her book, *Developing a Faith-based Education. A Teacher's Manual*, has been translated into Spanish and Russian, and is currently being translated into Romanian.