

## **TEACHING HISTORY FROM A BIBLICAL INTEGRATION PERSPECTIVE IN AN ADVENTIST HIGH SCHOOL IN ROMANIA**

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### **Abstract**

Adventist education's approach to history is conducted from a biblical perspective. Teachers and students studying history recognize that most historical narratives include philosophies and beliefs antagonistic to the biblical worldview. This research was conducted in an Adventist high school in Romania. The primary objective of the research is to improve history teaching through a clearer biblical perspective, with the cosmic conflict between good and evil serving as an important reference framework. The study was designed using a qualitative methodological perspective, employing a case study design with an action-research component to understand the investigated phenomenon, interpret its significance, and develop a substantial theoretical approximation of the analyzed reality. Qualitative data collection techniques included focus groups, observation, targeted testimonies, and semi-structured interviews. Tools such as anecdotal records and interview guides were employed. Results show that the teacher's knowledge of biblical foundation of the topics and its relationship with values drawn from the Bible are crucial to intentionally guide students in their journey to build their own worldview. Active teaching strategies and a stimulating learning environment foster critical thinking

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from a biblical perspective. In conclusion, integrating faith into history teaching requires careful planning of didactic strategies and an in-depth understanding of historical facts analyzed from a biblical perspective. The application of this research represented a process of growth and improvement in the pedagogical practice of the history teacher, particularly through the implementation of faith integration. This study provides an important foundation for future research aimed at optimizing the integration of faith in history teaching.

### **Keywords**

History, faith integration, Bible, teaching

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Adventist Educational System emphasizes faith in God, promoting Christian character, human dignity, and academic excellence (White, 1903). This emphasis is reflected in the concept of “faith integration” (FI), where religious principles are interwoven into the curriculum. Adventist schools in Romania, in particular, experience a unique educational context. As the country transitions from communism to democracy and European Union membership, its educational landscape undergoes significant reforms (Sîrbu, 2013). Religious education in Adventist schools focuses on instructing students in accordance with biblical values and teachings as presented by the Adventist Church. According to Adventist principles, this education encompasses, among other aspects, Bible studies, Christian morality, health, and lifestyle. The objective is not only to enhance academic knowledge but also to foster students’ character and spirituality (Pyun, 2014).

This gap is particularly related to the application of the Adventist biblical worldview in curriculum and pedagogy, as not all Adventist teachers in Adventist schools have participated in Adventist school-based programs or formal programs offered by the University of Montemorelos to

reinforce the biblical worldview, and the number of those who have participated is insufficient to create an educational system that is applicable in all Adventist schools. Existing research by Brewer (2015), Korniejczuk (1994), Taylor (2001) and Trye et al. (2019) provides valuable frameworks for faith integration (FI). However, a comprehensive analysis of faith integration practices in Adventist schools in Romania is lacking.

This study aims to improve the principal investigator's teaching practice in integrating faith into the subject of history. To accomplish this goal, the following objectives were established and applied to the principal investigator's history teaching practice in an Adventist high school:

1. Explore how the faith perspective is integrated into history teaching in an Adventist high school in Romania, identify key aspects of this approach, and evaluate its implementation.
2. Investigate teachers and students' perceptions of the effectiveness of faith integration in history teaching to understand its impact on the educational process and students' personal development.

Develop a practical resource for Adventist educators and researchers, including case studies, strategies, and examples of best practices to support the implementation of faith integration in history education.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

This educational philosophy is based on the idea that education is not only an intellectual process, but also a transformative one, designed to shape character and prepare students for a life based on ethical principles and biblical values (Rasi & Dolio, 2000; White, 1903). In history teaching, faith integration offers a unique perspective by providing a

biblical framework of historical events and linking historical events to Christian values such as justice, compassion, and social responsibility. It gives students the tools to reflect critically on the past and to apply universal ethical principles to the present.

Adventist education finds its foundation in the Bible, regarded as a revelatory source of universal truths. This model promotes a Christ-centered vision, connecting the entire educational process with spiritual ideals. According to Rasi (1993), this approach seeks to integrate knowledge, service, and spirituality into a coherent worldview. White (1903) emphasizes that education is not limited to the accumulation of knowledge but also involves character formation, providing students with moral and spiritual guidance. In history teaching, these principles are integrated by examining historical events from a biblical perspective, enabling students to identify moral lessons and relevant ethical implications. For instance, social reforms, armed conflicts, and human rights movements can be analyzed through the lens of Christian values such as compassion, justice, and reconciliation, underscoring the importance of these principles in personal and community life (Appiah & Wa-Mbaleka, 2015; Taylor & Brewer, 2014).

A central element of Adventist education is the deliberate integration of faith into the teaching process. Korniejczuk (1994) developed a staged model that outlines how teachers can incorporate biblical principles into the curriculum. The stages include awareness, planning, implementation, and evaluation, targeting for systematic and well-structured integration. In history teaching, this involves identifying relevant biblical themes and designing activities that encourage reflection on Christian values. Mighty (2023) emphasizes that a well-defined conceptual framework facilitates the effective application of integration strategies, ensuring

consistency between educational objectives and spiritual values. Additionally, the configurative model proposed by Trye et al. (2019) and the 4MAT methodology developed by Taylor (2001) and Brewer (2015) provide clear strategies for connecting historical theory with biblical principles. Through these methodologies, teachers can design lessons that foster critical thinking and help students understand the connection between the past and Christian values.

The educational environment plays a crucial role in the success of faith integration. Krumm (2018) emphasizes the importance of a positive emotional environment that fosters learning and reflection. In the context of history teaching, this involves not only a climate of respect and collaboration but also the use of modern technologies to facilitate learning. Taylor (2001) argues that digital tools and interactive methods can make historical content more relevant and engaging for contemporary students. However, implementing these strategies can encounter challenges, particularly in the multicultural context of Adventist education. Arego et al. (2014) found in Tanzania that a lack of understanding of Adventist educational principles among some school leaders and teachers limited the effectiveness of integration. This underscores the need for ongoing teacher training and active involvement of school leaders to promote a clear vision of educational objectives.

Although the benefits of faith integration are evident, there are significant challenges. Appiah and Wa-Mbaleka (2015) observed that in Ghana, the disconnect between physical and virtual educational experiences reduced the effectiveness of faith integration. Similarly, Arego et al. (2014) reported that the lack of parental and community leader involvement negatively impacted the implementation of holistic education in Adventist schools in Tanzania. To overcome these obstacles, the literature suggests practical

solutions. First, ongoing teacher training is essential to provide educators with the skills and resources needed to implement effective integration strategies (Mighty, 2023). Second, assessment tools are necessary to measure the impact of faith integration on students, ensuring continuous improvements in the educational process. Third, fostering a culture of collaboration among teachers, school leaders, parents, and the community is crucial to support a shared vision of holistic education. Teaching history from a biblical integration perspective in Adventist high schools in Romania offers a valuable opportunity to combine academic education with moral and spiritual development. This model not only promotes an understanding of historical events but also encourages ethical reflection and the development of responsible citizens. However, its success depends on deliberate planning, institutional support, and the active involvement of the educational community.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research questions**

This study explored the integration of a faith-based perspective in the teaching of history in an Adventist high school in Romania. The research was guided by the following key questions:

1. What are the experiences of integrating faith in history teaching used by the three history co-researchers from the Adventist schools in Romania where they teach?
2. What practices did the history co-researchers use before participating in the faith integration training for their classes?
3. What are the perspectives of the teachers during the training regarding the integration of faith in teaching Romanian history lessons?

4. How does the training and understanding of my experiences as a co-researcher contribute to improving my practice of integrating faith as a teacher of Romanian history?
5. How is the implementation of faith in teaching and learning history highlighted throughout the process?
6. How does a training plan for implementing faith integration in history teaching contribute to improving the reality in an Adventist school in Romania?
7. How do the results of this research contribute to improving the action plan for faith integration for history teachers in Adventist schools in Romania?

## **Research design**

To comprehensively explore the multifaceted nature of this research topic, I worked from a qualitative methodological perspective, with an experiential epistemic focus connected to the premises of interpretive and socio-constructivist paradigms.

A single-case study design with a practical action-research component was employed. In this specific context, the framework connecting the phenomenon of faith integration to the teaching practices of history at Dr. Lind Theoretical High School in Campenita was identified and analyzed. Adopting a dual-paradigm approach, this study generated knowledge based on the interests and needs of secondary-level history teachers. The aim was to initiate community-driven actions and develop a vision for the future, to improve the quality of practice in this field (Alvarado & García, 2008). Events were interpreted, and the underlying perspectives were revealed. The collected data were reassessed through the lens of faith integration in educational practice.

The case study methodology, particularly suited to contexts with unique characteristics, was employed to explore the dynamics of a specific group and identify potential pathways for social transformation. The research adhered to a procedural framework based on ontological, epistemological, and methodological coherence (Piñero Martin et al., 2020). The study encompassed exploratory, narrative, and interpretive phases. The action-research component within the methodological framework integrated theory and practice to address pressing issues and generate new knowledge (Piñero Martin et al., 2020). Beyond its methodological value, the action-research component significantly contributed to expanding activities and promoting integration within the studied reality. This design aimed to strengthen collaborative relationships among co-researchers (Erro-Garcés & Alfaro-Tanco, 2020).

Highlighting the aforementioned points, this research employed a practical action-research design (Creswell, 2012), a strategy recognized for addressing social challenges (Kindon et al., 2007). Given the dynamic and complex nature of contemporary contexts, particularly in education, action research provides a valuable methodology. This approach involves identifying a specific situation as the focal point of the study and implementing interventions to produce positive change. It requires the development of well-founded methods that significantly contribute to transformative outcomes (Kindon et al., 2007).

The action-research component of this study was grounded in Sagor's (2000) postulates, emphasizing specific stages. Initially, the research approach, purpose, and research questions were defined. Subsequently, theoretical frameworks were articulated through a review of specialized literature and observations. This was followed by data collection through testimonials. The final stage involved

reflection, dissemination of findings, and implementation of improvements.

In the implementation of the action plan, the need for training was identified as a crucial factor in fostering change and transformation (Ayala Carabajo, 2008; Piñero Martin et al., 2020), following Joyce and Showers' (2002) model. The theoretical foundations of training emphasized the deliberate integration of faith (Korniejczuk, 1994) and active learning strategies (Taylor, 2001). A positive emotional climate and supportive learning environments were deemed essential for promoting virtuous practices (Krumm, 2018).

The initial action plan was carried out in seven stages. The first phase took place between July and November 2020, during which eleven Zoom meetings were held with Dr. Raquel Bouvet de Korniejczuk and co-researchers from the fields of music, language, and geography to introduce the concept of faith integration, deepen the theoretical framework, and review relevant literature. In the final stage of this period, Dr. Marcos Enrique Flores González, a specialist in qualitative research, joined the team and contributed to the development of the research project during subsequent Zoom meetings held between April and July 2021.

The second phase of implementing the action plan comprised thirteen sessions of Zoom meetings focused on refining the research methodology.

Focusing on refining the research methodology, starting in January 2022, the initial plan included the collection of specific testimonies from co-researchers, which marked the third phase of the project.

The fourth phase took place between January and May 2022, during which seventeen training sessions were scheduled via Zoom to plan, model, and implement micro-classes that integrated faith components. These micro-classes

followed the guidelines developed by Dr. Raquel Bouvet de Korniejczuk (Appendix) and Dr. Marcos Enrique Flores González. Each training session concluded with a reflection exchange among the co-trainers. Additionally, training and regulation activities were conducted by an interdisciplinary group of co-researchers from various fields of knowledge, including language, geography, and music.

The fifth phase was planned to be conducted in person at Adventus University, Cernica, in July 2022. Ten micro-class sessions (two for each co-researcher) were scheduled. This phase involved reviewing the micro-class plans with Dr. Raquel Bouvet de Korniejczuk, alongside self-reflection and observation of co-researchers' participation.

The sixth phase of the initial plan took place between August and November 2022, involving scheduled lessons with students from the co-investigated schools. This phase included the review of lesson plans, observations, and self-reflection facilitated by Dr. Raquel Bouvet de Korniejczuk. Each co-investigator was required to conduct over thirty observations and twenty self-reflections. During this phase, one co-researcher requested four additional micro-classes, which were observed both physically and virtually.

In the seventh phase of this plan, each co-researcher delivered twenty faith-integrated lessons within their area of expertise. These lessons were designed according to the guidelines developed by Dr. Raquel Bouvet de Korniejczuk and Dr. Marcos Enrique Flores González, reviewed, and then implemented in classroom teaching. One of the three co-researchers participated physically in the lessons, preparing observation sheets accompanied by self-reflection forms.

In conclusion, the analysis of each methodological procedure contributed to improving critical thinking skills (Kemmis et al., 2014). This required a strong focus on

dialectical, dialogical, and reflexive truth throughout the research process (Piñero Martin et al., 2020).

## **Data collection**

This study used focused testimonies and experience journals to investigate the participants' experiences regarding a particular phenomenon. Focused testimonies, also known as focus interviews, are a qualitative methodology that facilitates an in-depth examination of individual perspectives, often uncovering rich and nuanced complexities related to prior experiences. This methodological approach is particularly effective in the pre-formation phase of the research, as it helps to collect in-depth data regarding participants' prior engagements with the topic. In the later stages of the training process, experience journals are used, allowing participants to recount their experiences in real-time, thus providing researchers with authentic and detailed information. These methodologies are an integral part of a broader range of innovative elicitation techniques that enhance the rigor of qualitative research.

Focused testimony is an example of a qualitative interview technique that probes deeply into participants' accounts, providing rich data that can elucidate embedded narratives and emotional responses (Kahlke et al., 2024). This methodological approach is particularly important in education for healthcare professionals, as understanding lived experiences can shed light on complex issues and promote the co-production of knowledge between researchers and participants (Kelly & Brown, 2024).

Experience journals allow participants to document their experiences as they unfold, providing an authentic real-time account of their interactions with the examined phenomenon (Kahlke et al., 2024). These journals have the ability to

capture the evolving nature of participants' experiences, offering a dynamic and detailed perspective that complements the static essence of focused testimony (Bloom et al., 2024).

The use of focused testimony and experience journals is congruent with other qualitative methodologies, such as semi-structured interviews and focus groups, which similarly strive to encapsulate lived experiences and personal narratives (Bloom et al., 2024; Leira-Castiñeira, 2023). Together, these methods contribute to a holistic understanding of participants' experiences, allowing researchers to examine the socio-political and emotional contexts influencing these experiences (Leira-Castiñeira, 2023).

While focused testimonies and experience journals provide valuable insights, they also raise challenges, such as ensuring participants' comfort and protecting confidentiality. Researchers must judiciously navigate these ethical considerations to cultivate an inclusive and respectful research environment (Smyth et al., 2024).

## **Techniques of processing, analysis, and interpretation**

For the analysis of qualitative samples (data), the GLATER model was used for systematizing and interpreting data through content analysis (González de Flores & Hernández Gil, 2011; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Piñero Martin et al., 2020). This model facilitated the organization and interpretation of data based on codes, descriptions, categories, and interpretations. Codes were assigned, and the data were classified according to themes with the greatest significance and conceptual weight. Meanings were assigned to human actions through comprehensive interpretation. The chosen model incorporates both evidencing and legitimizing techniques, demonstrating its adaptability in

the field. The interpretation of findings through conclusions was based on the research results, theoretical foundations, and researchers' interpretations. To meet the criteria for credibility and convergence of findings, the triangulation technique was used (González de Flores & Hernández Gil, 2011; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Piñero Martin et al., 2020).

## **Participants**

The participants in the study, called co-researchers, were history teachers from three Adventist schools. Two of these schools were located in southern Romania and one in the central-northern part of Romania. The approach with them allowed me to make a diagnosis and thus answer the research question that aimed to explore how the history teachers from the institution where the project was implemented integrated faith into their teaching and learning processes before training. The criteria that these history teachers had to meet were as follows: a diploma and at least five years of teaching experience. It should be noted that the training included teachers from other subjects, not only history. It is also important to note that after the pre-training and training phase, two of the history co-researchers dropped out of the research, so the study continued with the main history researcher and co-researchers from other subjects. The co-researchers from the other subjects were music, geography, and Romanian language. Following the practical purpose of the research, the objective was to improve and strengthen the teaching practices of the teachers (Creswell, 2012), so the active participation of the main researcher as a history teacher in the training was essential. Using established methodologies, twenty sessions were held in the history classes of third and sixth-grade students at

Dr. Lind Theoretical High School, with the ongoing collaboration of co-researcher teachers from the mentioned disciplines. Although the students did not participate directly in the study, parental/guardian consent was obtained for the application of the learning from training in the classroom sessions. It should be noted that the participation of co-researchers from the other subjects significantly contributed to the proposed study.

### **Ethical considerations**

In this research, solid methods were used, and clear evidence was presented to support the findings. Detailing each stage of the methodology provides a solid foundation for the legitimacy of the findings, in accordance with Tolley et al. (2016). Methodological transparency was a priority in the study. The stages of the process were described in detail, and access to raw data was provided, which allowed for the replication of the study and verification of the results, thus promoting confidence in the outcomes, as suggested by Tolley et al. (2016). The participants' identities were kept confidential throughout the study. The research adhered to ethical principles and did not compromise ethical integrity. The Ethics Committee of Montemorelos University approved the research proposal. Permission was obtained from the Department of Education of the Romanian Union to conduct the study in schools and with the selected teachers. Additionally, permission was requested and received from the principals of the participating schools. Informed consent was obtained from the involved teachers. Data collection was risk-free for the co-researchers. All professionals reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

## RESULTS

Regarding the results, the principal co-researcher presented how faith integration was implemented in teaching classes in the pre-training stage, during training, and post-training. In the pre-training stage, the first two questions asked at the beginning of the research were answered: What are the experiences of integrating faith in history teaching used by the three history co-researchers from the Adventist schools in Romania where they teach? What practices did the history co-researchers use before participating in the faith integration training for their classes? The technique applied for this moment focused on the testimony applied to the co-researchers.

In this pre-instructional phase, the three co-researchers in the field of history used creative pedagogical strategies to connect faith-based learning with history education, using methods that engage students. These include playful strategies, such as the use of biblical stories or games, which help connect faith with students' daily lives, capturing their attention and interest. These methods are fundamental to integrating religious values into the educational process, as they support the development of a reflective framework in which students can analyze historical content in light of faith (Knight, 2006). These methods are also essential for enriching the learning process and developing students' moral character (White, 1903).

One of the most valuable strategies for integrating faith into the educational process is to compare historical events with current history, encouraging students to reflect on the relationship between the past and the present through the lens of the Bible and Christianity. This method facilitates a deeper understanding of historical contexts, promoting moral and spiritual values. For example, biblical characters

and events can be used to help students connect history with core Christian values. Robert described this process as follows: “Integrating faith into the subjects we teach, focusing on the Bible, guiding students toward Christ and service: biblical teaching can be adapted to many areas!” (CIF: ISL-1-FcMC). By analyzing historical events, students can identify positive and negative patterns, reflecting on biblical principles to imitate or avoid (Knight, 2006). Examining significant events in the world and Romanian history through the lens of Christianity allows students to understand moral lessons and their impact on everyday life (Holmes, 1987; White, 1903).

Studying history and analyzing the actions of relevant figures from Romanian history allows for the assessment of biblical values and principles, providing students with valuable lessons that they can integrate into their daily lives, thus contributing to the development of their faith. This method promotes deep reflection on the challenges and difficulties that historical figures faced, highlighting how they overcame obstacles. Analyzing their successes and mistakes helps identify practical lessons by comparing their intentions and actions with biblical moral principles (Kaak, 2016). Using an integrated approach, students can reflect on the impact of historical decisions, learning to apply Christian principles in their own lives (Leka, 2023). For example, William described this approach as “a Bible-based, Christ-centered, service-oriented, and Kingdom-led way of life. Rhythm and systematization” (Cif: IFF-2-RslVEfh). These perspectives are supported by research that highlights the importance of integrating religious values into education, not only to promote knowledge but also to support the development of a strong moral character (Dulaney et al., 2015). Through such strategies, students are encouraged to connect history with religious values and appreciate

their relevance in everyday life (Muhith, 2020). The study of history and the analysis of the actions of relevant figures in Romanian history allow for the evaluation of biblical values and principles applied, drawing valuable lessons that can be integrated into everyday life and supporting the development of students' faith.

Reflecting on the challenges and successes of historical figures provides an educational framework that promotes moral and spiritual analysis. In a similar context, the use of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic strategies in teaching history has been shown to be effective in increasing student engagement and improving their understanding (Mahmudi et al., 2024).

By applying religious values-based integration methods, students can develop strong moral character and reflect more deeply on the relevance of the past in the modern context (Weintraub & Naveh, 2020). William stated that such an approach can be summarized as “a Bible-based, Christ-centered, service-oriented, and Kingdom-led way of life. Rhythm and systematization” (Cif: IFF-2-RsIVEfh). In addition, the development of religious values-based educational modules can facilitate the teaching and learning process by providing students with opportunities for moral and spiritual reflection, which is supported by the success of values-based initiatives in the educational process (Fadli & Sudrajat, 2020).

The integration process has proven to be complex, requiring a reflective and critical approach to assess the adequacy of the proposed strategies in the educational context (Bosch et al., 2015). An alternative method of integrating faith into history is to connect biblical texts with the history of Romania, providing an enriching perspective on Christian values. Studying the influence of Christianity on Romanian culture today allows for a detailed analysis of the

values associated with national identity, positioning the Bible as a privileged source for the analysis of history (Weintraub & Naveh, 2020). This approach not only avoids superficial connections between the Bible and historical content, but also supports the use of the Bible as an authentic source for understanding past, present, and future history. In addition, recognizing God as the sovereign of history allows students to extract biblical principles and values applicable to everyday life, strengthening their moral and spiritual perspectives (Fadli & Sudrajat, 2020).

During the training process, the principal co-researcher worked in collaboration with the three co-researchers in the field of history and three other co-researchers in the fields of music, geography and Romanian language and literature. However, at the beginning of this phase the three co-researchers from the field of history dropped out of the study and for the continuation of the study the principal co-researcher worked with the other co-researchers from the other fields mentioned above. Thus, in this second phase, the following interrogative questions were addressed based on an understanding of the evidence highlighted in the matrix above: 1. What are the perspectives of teachers during the training on the integration of faith in the teaching of Romanian history lessons? 2. How does my training and understanding of my experiences as a co-researcher contribute to improving my faith integration practice as a teacher of Romanian history?

The training provided teachers with the opportunity to refine and deepen their understanding of how to effectively integrate faith. They learned to make explicit connections between biblical events and historical periods, using biblical principles as a foundation for analyzing historical events.

During the training, the researchers discovered the importance of establishing a strong connection between

biblical events and Romanian history, highlighting the relevance of interpreting historical events from a biblical perspective. This approach provides students with the opportunity to understand the moral and spiritual significance of the past, with an impact on their daily lives. For example, Diana noted: “...because of sin, there are wars... we must be on the side of good” (Cif: IDR-5-AdlSHcEB). Historical analysis from a faith perspective requires deep spiritual discernment, supported by comparative biblical studies and critical analyses of historical events. This method aligns with the research of Bosch and his colleagues, which suggests that integrating faith into history teaching promotes interdisciplinary understanding and ethical reflection (Bosch et al., 2015). For example, Andreea stated: “World War II is the result of a larger conflict between Christ and Satan. Much violence occurred during the war... and this was a consequence of the fall into sin. The Holocaust was certainly a consequence of the Fall” (Cif: IOS-4-AdlSHcEB). Smith (2017) emphasizes the importance of integrating a biblical perspective into historical analysis, noting that this not only provides students with knowledge but also equips them with moral tools to better understand the complexity of historical events. Thus, through deep reasoning and the deliberate integration of faith, students and researchers can arrive at a holistic understanding of history. The training highlighted that to support a deep understanding of history through the lens of faith, having a solid biblical foundation is not enough; teachers must adopt effective teaching strategies.

These strategies allow students to build an integrated biblical view of historical knowledge. Andreea emphasized the use of the “many heads at once” method, emphasizing collaboration as a central element for deep learning (Cif: IOS-4-Acrto). Selecting and evaluating relevant biblical

sources, along with adapting teaching strategies to stimulate critical reflection, are imperative. For example, Diana emphasized the importance of presenting biblical symbols, such as the figure in Daniel chapter 2 (Cif: IDR-5-AsEI). In addition, the use of relevant questions with biblical content was considered an effective method to engage students in meaningful discussions (Cif: IDR-5-AsEI). These observations align with Kaak's (2016) research, which emphasizes that strategies based on the explicit integration of faith can develop critical thinking and the application of biblical principles in historical contexts. Furthermore, Mahmudi et al. (2024) advocate the use of visual and collaborative methods to help students better understand the connections between historical events and biblical values. These approaches increase student engagement and foster integrative understanding (Mahmudi et al., 2024).

Creating a supportive learning environment is also crucial, as it supports the development of students' deep thinking and biblical discernment. Such environments promote a deeper understanding of Christian values and moral principles. For example, Diana noted, "I appreciate that the teacher used examples from her personal life" (Cif: IDR-5-RzoA). Similarly, Andreea emphasized the use of innovative methods, such as the "thinking hat" method, to encourage educational progress, emphasizing the importance of a positive and inclusive educational climate (Cif: IOS-4-RzoA). Collectively, these strategies encourage a holistic approach to teaching history, integrating faith in ways that are meaningful, reflective, and engaging for students.

Recent research suggests that integrating religious values into teaching strategies can improve student inclusion and participation, contributing to the development of more diverse and tolerant learning communities (Pradana et al., 2023). Creating such an environment also requires a

strategic approach from teachers, including careful planning of educational materials and collaboration with religious communities to support inclusion and interfaith dialogue (Singha & Singha, 2023). These methods help to cultivate respect and diversity, which are essential for holistic, values-oriented education.

In this phase of training, the principal co-researcher went through a training process to learn how to teach history with a focus on faith integration. His approach was improved, teaching methods were diversified and those methods that were most interactive were used, and the co-researchers observations during classroom observations helped the principal co-researcher to improve his pedagogical practice and to present historical events to students from the perspective of the great controversy between Christ and Satan, thus realizing the process of faith integration, which was the focus of the research.

In the third stage, also known as the post-training stage, the following questions are asked: How is the implementation of faith in teaching and learning history highlighted throughout the process? How does a training plan for implementing faith integration in history teaching contribute to improving the reality in an Adventist school in Romania? How do the results of this research contribute to improving the action plan for faith integration for history teachers in Adventist schools in Romania?

From the post-training analyses, it was found that some achievements in teaching history with a focus on faith integration include incorporating biblical foundations into historical analysis, promoting critical thinking, promoting ethical values, and diversifying teaching strategies. These methods are essential for developing a holistic understanding of history and connecting historical events to Christian values. However, opportunities for improvement were

identified, such as increasing student engagement and strengthening reflection and self-assessment activities. For example, the principal co-researcher, Oana stated: “Moreover, integrating accreditation was not so easy. In this lesson, I managed to implement what I had proposed in the lesson plan. I managed to integrate and highlight the pillars proposed in the lesson plan. I also managed to emphasize the principle proposed in the planning” (Cif: IIP-3-CeP). A crucial aspect of integrating faith into history teaching is the study of history through the biblical account of creation, the impact of the fall into sin on history, the significance of Christ’s death for history, and the vision of how history will unfold in God’s renewed world. These biblical elements provide a holistic perspective on both the past and the future.

Wills (2016) explores the hagiographic function of certain biblical stories, which are considered models of moral and spiritual life, even if they were initially perceived as legendary. Similarly, Grassie (2010) suggests reinterpreting these stories from a modern perspective, emphasizing their relevance to contemporary values. These interpretations support the idea that teaching history in a biblical framework not only provides a deeper understanding of events but also creates a basis for moral and personal reflection. Analyzing historical events narrated in the Bible, correlated with reflections on personal reality and contemporary Romanian society, allows for the extraction of lessons applicable to life. Thus, the integration of faith transcends the study of history, transforming it into a life experience. For example, Andreea emphasized the principle of collaboration and the common good, stating: “Show the difference between how people and God understand collaboration and the common good. Emphasize the principle of love.... The students were embarrassed at first, but then they asked

deep questions...” (Cif: IOS-4-CeIdIH). Hege (2014) proposes a theological reflection on historical narratives, emphasizing their integration into history lessons to foster dialogue between science and faith. This approach creates a space for open and respectful dialogue, encouraging the development of personal and collective convictions and shaping a vision of the world and destiny. Buchardt (2020) examines the role of biblical criticism in promoting education as a space for intercultural and interreligious dialogue, while Budnukaeku (2024) highlights the interdisciplinary relevance of biblical narratives and scientific perspectives. Thus, biblical values become a relevant historical source for understanding the contemporary world and faith-based education.

At the end of this post-training phase, the principal co-researcher was able to find that the way she now approaches the integration of faith in history is completely different and improved, with an accent on faith integration. Also, another finding of the principal co-researcher was that she is able to integrate faith more naturally and homogeneously with the topics of the lessons taught. The results of this research showed that by going through some steps of implementing faith integration, the principal co-researcher pedagogical practice has improved and teaching history with faith integration can be realized in an Adventist school in Romania.

To our knowledge, this study was the first research on the integration of faith in history in an Adventist school in Romania. Adventist history teachers in Adventist schools in Romania can therefore take ideas from the results and apply them in their own practice. Likewise, those who would like to implement faith integration should also go through a step-by-step training process as presented in this study. It opens new perspectives for the training of other history

teachers and application in more Adventist schools in Romania, so that the practice of other teachers can be improved and so that history can be taught in Adventist schools on biblical principles.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

Integrating faith into history teaching is a complex approach that requires careful planning, innovative teaching strategies, and a deep understanding of the relationship between religion and education. The analysis highlights the variety of methods employed by teachers in Adventist schools in Romania to emphasize biblical values in teaching history. For example, using biblical stories to connect historical events with moral teachings reflects Knight's (2006) perspectives, which argue that Christian education should promote ethical and spiritual reflection. This approach not only helps students understand historical events from a moral perspective but also contributes to developing an integrated view of life, blending academic knowledge with character building. Creative strategies such as interactive storytelling and educational games have proven essential in increasing student engagement. Studies indicate that the use of visual materials, including biblical representations, significantly impacts the understanding of historical content. White (1903) emphasizes that such visual representations facilitate connections between biblical knowledge and students' personal experiences, offering a deeper context. Complementing this method, critical reflections on historical figures play a significant role. Recent research, such as Kaak's (2016), highlights that analyzing the moral decisions of historical characters can support ethical character development, encouraging students to think critically and apply these lessons to their lives. This integrated approach

not only enriches the learning experience but also contributes to fostering an ethical and spiritual perspective on history.

The results highlight significant challenges in the process of integrating faith into education. The necessity for developing better-structured teaching strategies and strengthening reflection and self-evaluation is emphasized by Bosch et al. (2015), who point out the complexity of implementing these methods in multicultural educational contexts. However, beyond these difficulties, a particularly valuable aspect is the opportunity provided to students to analyze historical events from a biblical perspective. This approach enables them not only to understand historical facts but also to grasp the spiritual and moral impact of history on the present, contributing to the formation of an integrated worldview and the development of critical thinking rooted in ethical values.

Teacher training was a central element in the process of integrating faith, emphasizing the necessity of clear connections between biblical events and the historical context. For example, analyzing the symbols from the book of Daniel provided a valuable opportunity to explore themes such as divine justice and moral responsibility. This approach not only supports historical understanding but also encourages ethical and spiritual reflection, strengthening the link between biblical knowledge and educational content. The method aligns with the findings of Fadli and Sudrajat (2020), who argue that religious values provide an authentic and profound framework for teaching history, offering students an integrated perspective on historical events and their moral impact.

In conclusion, the results highlight the importance of using an integrated approach that connects faith with the teaching of history, promoting ethical and spiritual

reflection. This integration not only provides students with a deeper perspective on historical events but also contributes to the development of a strong moral character, an essential goal of Christian education. However, further research is needed to identify and refine the most effective implementation strategies, particularly in diverse and multicultural educational settings, to ensure the relevance and applicability of this educational model across various contexts.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Integrating faith into history teaching represents an innovative educational approach that combines spiritual and moral perspectives with historical learning, providing a holistic framework for students' development. Creative strategies, such as visual analysis, biblical storytelling, and comparing historical events with Christian values, foster deep connections between the past and present. These methods not only support the process of historical learning but also contribute to the development of strong moral character, helping students internalize spiritual values and principles applicable to everyday life (Knight, 2006; White, 1903). Additionally, analyzing historical events through the lens of the Bible stimulates reflective and critical thinking, offering an ethical and moral framework for interpreting history (Dulaney et al., 2015; Weintraub & Naveh, 2020). This holistic educational approach creates unique opportunities for students to connect historical knowledge with a profound understanding of spiritual and moral values.

However, the process of integrating faith into teaching history involves challenges that require a reflective and critical approach from teachers. Selecting appropriate materials and teaching strategies is essential to avoid superficial

interpretations or trivial connections between faith and history. Research indicates that authentic integration of faith demands rigorous planning and deep engagement from educators to ensure a meaningful connection between spirituality and educational content (Kaak, 2016; Leka, 2023). This responsible approach not only supports the relevance of teaching materials but also facilitates a deeper understanding of spiritual values in a historical context, thereby contributing to truly transformative education.

Therefore, teachers must continue exploring methods that support a holistic understanding of history. Studying the past from a biblical perspective offers students an integrative model for understanding the relevance of moral and spiritual principles in the modern world. The development of educational modules based on religious values significantly contributes to promoting a values-centered education, capable of supporting not only historical knowledge but also personal and moral development (Fadli & Sudrajat, 2020; Pradana et al., 2023).

Integrating faith into history teaching requires careful planning of instructional strategies, and balancing biblical values with historical content. This process represents an opportunity for the continuous improvement of teachers' pedagogical practices, emphasizing a progressive and deliberate approach to educational development. Research suggests the implementation of extended micro-teaching sessions during the initial training phase, before application at advanced levels, as well as close collaboration between teachers and co-researchers. Observations from these collaborations play a crucial role in refining teaching methodologies.

Thus, integrating faith into historical education facilitates connections between the past and contemporary moral principles, providing a framework for ethical and

spiritual reflection. This approach not only enhances teachers' adaptability to the demands of an integrative curriculum—requiring advanced pedagogical skills and a profound understanding of religious values (Kaak, 2016; Leka, 2023)—but also supports the development of strong moral character and critical thinking among students, thereby improving the quality of the educational experience (Fadli & Sudrajat, 2020; Weintraub & Naveh, 2020).

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## APPENDICES

### A Class Planning Guide

#### Planning Guide with a Focus on Integration of Faith and Learning

Teacher's Name: Ionela Penciu

Group: 6th Grade Class

Lesson Topic: Napoleon I and the Spread of French Revolution Ideas in Europe

Unit: Towards a New Society

Level: High School

#### First Step: Focus on Integration of Faith

1. Identify the main idea used to approach knowledge from God's perspective based upon one or more biblical principles that uphold the entire subject and/or the current unit. This central idea is the answer to an essential question that awakens student curiosity to discover God on the topic and foster the commitment to live according to His will.

Napoleonic France is nothing but a reflection of the fact that in this world of sin, selfishness is at the base of all events, and this is only a reflection of the selfishness of evil, to always subdue the conscience and bring suffering to mankind. Napoleon's desire to create a great empire, as Charles the Great had done in the past, brought France back under absolutist authority.

Essential questions: For which events do the people we interacted with, those who influenced us negatively or those who influenced us positively remain in our memory? What are the reasons is Christ in the

memory of Christianity, of every man (personally), of the universe, and before all the worlds that have not fallen into sin?

**2. Define a biblical perspective.** Find content connections for the topic with one or more of the following biblical concepts: CREATION (God, Creator, and Sustainer); FALL (consequences of sin in the world and human beings, expressed in The Great Controversy); REDEMPTION (the plan of salvation and the payment of sin on the cross); RENOVATION (promise of the restoration of all creation to the original perfection). You can develop connections by using biblical texts or biblical stories.

At the beginning, God created a perfect government system, where He is the ruler. After the fall, all forms of government in history represented the government of Satan, who declared that God's government was unjust, arbitrary or selfish, and proposed another form of government. History shows that the charges brought against God's government have existed and will exist in all forms of government inspired by Satan in this sinful world. (Revelation 12:7-9). Christ came to this world to redeem human beings and nature. The teaching of history from a biblical perspective encompasses a redemptive approach, that invites to freely set God as the governor of the countries and the personal life. The blessed hope is the promised made by God to offer in a near future new heavens and new earth, with a perfect, loving, government ruled by Him.

### **3. Analyze class content from a biblical perspective**

a. By analyzing the course program and textbooks, identify content and activities in harmony or discrepancy with the biblical perspective. In case of discrepancy, decide on your teaching approach: uncover the error or replace divergent content with content aligned to the Bible.

**Agreement:** Napoleon's rise is presented as driven by selfish ambitions and lack of self-control, especially before the other great powers.

**Disagreement:** The textbook presents the historical events in France with all the consequences of the king's authority only.

b. If applicable, identify consequent content from the Adventist educational philosophy that is not included in secular course programs and textbooks.

Textbooks do not present the fact that God proposed the best form of government, based on the principle of love, which will be restored at the end of the history of this earth.

## **Second Step: Expected Learning Outcomes**

1. **Define learning outcomes with a biblical worldview.** A learning outcome is the expected learning by the end of the class. This learning includes knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values drawn from the Bible.

Revelation 11:2-11. Let us summarize the prophecy. This prophecy shows how in the history of the French people was fulfilled at that time, and how during the French Revolution, by law, God was rejected, Bibles were burned in the Paris marketplace and the people adopted other laws contrary to the laws of God. A prostitute was chosen to incarnate the goddess of reason, the days of the week were changed, and the people were encouraged to disobey any of God's principles.

**Expected knowledge:** God wants the principle of his government to be applied in all areas of life.

**Expected abilities:** to understand in the Bible the real reasons behind any form of warfare.

**Expected attitudes:** to seek in the Word of God what are the reasons why certain events in history or in their lives happen.

a. Chose a principle/value to be taught through the class content. A particular principle, value, or habit may be developed in several classes, providing practice until it is incorporated into the students' lives.

**Principle:** all government is based on certain principles. For example, one of them is love

**Value:** loyalty. This is a value that shows personal convictions in the context of the great battle between Christ and Satan.

**Habits:** study the Word of God to understand the purpose of each person in the Plan of Salvation.

b. Describe how you will intentionally model the class learning outcomes in your life.

The moment I discovered the correlation between the historical events: the action of Napoleon I to arrest Pope Pius VI in 1798 and the fulfillment of the prophecy of 1260 years of papal supremacy, which had begun in the year 538, made me see more clearly the plan of God in

which he will be victorious, and if this prophecy is fulfilled, how much more the historical events that we will live, should not worry me anymore, because I know and trust that God will be with me and give me strength to overcome them and at the same time keep my faith in Him. Knowing that the events of the history of this earth have been revealed through prophecy and anyone who wants to understand them, gives me peace and confidence in a God who has not abandoned mankind.

c. Describe how you will organize the physical and emotional environment of the class to foster meaningful learning.

With an attitude of kindness, accepting that everyone has something important to say and do, both inside and outside the classroom.

d. Describe how you will foster students' critical thinking. You may use learning activities addressed to the highest levels of Bloom's taxonomy.

Using the 4MAT model developed by Bernice McCarthy. This is a learning system that combines learning styles with the four-step learning process. This model is structured around four main types of activities, each corresponding to a different learning style and to a specific stage of the educational process: concrete experience, observation and conceptualization, active experimentation and transfer and integration. The 4MAT model ensures a balance between theory and practice, responding to the different needs of learners and maximizing the effectiveness of the learning process.

2. **Define how to evaluate values, habits, biblical foundations, and other learning outcomes.**

I will evaluate the students' worldviews by observing each student reactions throughout the lesson.

### **Third Step: Planning Class Sequence**

Describe how you will organize your class (motivation, information, application, evaluation):

1. **Motivation:** I will do it through a quote said by Napoleon I. I'll play the quote for you, you'll read it and I'll ask you if you can guess: Who said this quote and why?

"My true glory is not in winning 40 battles. What will remain forever is my Civil Code."

- After you give your opinion, I will tell you that this code was created over several years and included modernization reforms in the economy, justice and education. This code model was also used by Romania to create the country's first Civil Code.

I ask myself the following questions:

1. From which events do the people we interacted with remain in our memory? Those that influenced us negatively or those that influenced us positively?

2. For what work is Christ in the memory of Christendom, of every man (personally), of the universe, and before all the worlds who has not fallen into sin?

I announce the title of the lesson

2. **Information:** I will do this through the Organization of Information method.

- Students will read, in 2 groups, paragraphs 8.1; 8.2 and 8.3 on page 78 of the manual and then organize the information according to the following criteria:

1. Driver:

2. Rival states:

3. Events:

4. Territories conquered and subordinated:

Revelation 11:2-11. Let us summarize the prophecy. This prophecy shows how in the history of the French people it was fulfilled and how during the French Revolution, God was rejected by the law, bibles were burned in the market of Paris and the people adopted other laws contrary to the laws of God. A prostitute was chosen to incarnate the goddess of reason, the days of the week were changed and people were encouraged to disobey any of God's principles. The moment I discovered the correlation between the historical events: Napoleon I's action to arrest the Pope Pius VI in 1798 and the fulfillment of the prophecy of 1260 years of papal supremacy, which had begun in the year 538, made me see more clearly God's plan in which He will be victorious, and if this prophecy is fulfilled, how much more the historical events that we will live, should not worry me anymore, because I know and trust that God will be with me and my will give me strength to overcome

them and at the same time keep my faith in Him. Knowing that the events of the history of this earth have been revealed through prophecy and anyone who wants to understand them, gives me peace and confidence in a God who has not abandoned mankind.

3. **Application:** students will work, in groups on those they worked on and on the Information part, from p. 79, of the textbook, exercise 2 where they will respond to the requirements to show from historical sources A, C and D the authoritarian character of Napoleon I and from images B and E give their opinion on what the images conveyed about Napoleon I's aspirations. Also based on image E, students will be asked to identify elements that convey the idea of a representative of God on earth and argue why this idea is a characteristic of Satan.

I will present the two essential questions designed above to reflect and share personal opinions.

#### 4. **Evaluation:**

I will use two reflective questions:

a. Based on the lesson, Table A on page 79, and Map B, make a sentence to tell what Napoleonic Europe was like from the perspective of a Frenchman, a Briton, or an Italian of your choice.

b. Is the sentence you chose, depending on the nation it represents, valid today, or would it be different today?

a. Use active learning strategies:

The active learning strategies used in this class are essential questions, collaborative work, analysis of document historical documents based upon the Biblia

b. Identify how you will use essential questions about the class content to awaken students' interest in knowing God.

The essential questions will be included in the application stage of the class.

c. Describe how you will converge students' attention and focus on faith.

After reading Revelation 11:2-11, students will summarize the prophecy. This prophecy shows how in the history of the French people it was fulfilled and how during the French Revolution, God was rejected by the law, bibles were burned in the square of Paris and the people

adopted other laws contrary to the laws of God. A prostitute was chosen to incarnate the goddess of reason, the days of the week were changed and people were encouraged to disobey any of God's principles.

d. Identify what the students will do to develop their critical thinking to foster a biblical worldview or practice values.

By organizing the class according to the cycle of learning –motivation, information, application and evaluation, and with the use of essential questions and collaborative discussions, students will reflect on their personal worldview based upon the Biblical teachings.

#### **Fourth Step: Evaluation and Reflection**

a. Describe how students will reflect upon learning about biblical principles/values.

Students will reflect on this class's biblical principles through the activities of the 4MAT information stage, through the answers and questions asked.

b. Describe how you will reflect upon the implementation of the IFL focus of the class.

I will reflect upon the implementation of the IFL focus by comparing this planned class with the actual development of the class, identifying areas for improvement. I will analyze the different worldview perceptions of the students, and develop new strategies to foster faith for each one of them.

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**Declaration of Interests**

The authors declare that they have no financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work presented in this article.