

## 24E CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION IS UNIQUE

### CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IS DIFFERENT

Christian higher education is by nature different, and should clearly look different from our secular counterpart.

Christian faculty are aware that

- We want to please the Lord, not men, in all our actions.
- Our activities must be done in love.
- Most of our students are our brothers and sisters in Christ. We are fellow-learners and fellow-disciples.
- Education is more than conveying facts. It involves concept development, skill development, character development, and spiritual growth.
- We desire to see every student come to know Christ and to grow in Him.
- We seek to produce excellent engineers. We must be rigorous, but not mean, in our courses.
- We must model engineering professionalism and living as Christian adults.
- We are free to, and encouraged to, discuss the integration of faith and our engineering disciplines wherever appropriate.
- We need to approach education humbly, not showing off our knowledge, not bullying the students, but admitting what we don't know. We must apologize if we misjudge or improperly grade a student.
- We realize that we employ God-given creativity to address problems in a fallen world.
- Our best approach to teaching includes classroom interaction, some individual attention, and hands-on activities.

Christian education exists -

- for discipleship
- for responsible action [1]
- for *shalom* [2]
- for commitment
- for witness

### INTEGRATION OF FAITH AND LEARNING IN CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITIES

A hallmark of CCCU institutions is the “integration of faith and learning.” While the concept is an ideal fit for Christian universities and is welcomed by all, it isn't necessarily easy to implement. For a new faculty member “integration” may seem like an overwhelming concept.

Unless he or she attended a Christian college for their undergraduate education they have never seen it implemented. Graduate education is overwhelmingly “secular” in its approach. “Integration” may seem more difficult in a field like engineering, where almost everything is objective. Many CCCU schools devote a portion of the first year preparation to introduce the concept.

The need for “integration” arises from these sources:

1. Originally, higher education in America was primarily based in Christian truth and often emphasized the development of educated pastors (Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Dartmouth, Rutgers, Columbia,...). By the late 1800’s most of these schools were no longer evangelical.
2. In the non-Christian institution there is either an absence of spiritual input to education or an outright hostility against Christianity. Not only is there no faith integration, but often there is no intellectual integration at all. “We live in a secular society that compartmentalizes religion and treats it as peripheral or even irrelevant to large areas of life and thought.” [3]

*As information increases, specialists lose the sense of a bigger framework that gives meaning to the narrow subdivisions of knowledge that they carve out for themselves. Is it too radical to claim that the deterioration of universities around the world into tuition (or diploma) factories, churning out professionals unable to communicate with one another the fruits of their training, is due not only to the fragmenting of industrialization, but also to the loss of a shared vision of a creation sustained by, and responsible to, One beyond our self-contained systems? [4]*

3. In the Christian community, many believers have become “two-pot” thinkers (recall chapter 8), specifically and artificially dividing “sacred” and “secular” categories. Instead, Christ must be Lord of all.

Walton Padelford has discussed two models of Christian higher education based on observations by Foley: the “environmental model” (emphasis on Bible study and prayer with students) and the “core concept model,” where Christian truth impacts everything that is taught. [5] In reality, we need both.

*The late theologian Francis Schaeffer made the same distinction some thirty years ago when he said that most Christian higher education consists of paying for some very expensive morning prayers. What he meant was that the Christian faith was something tacked onto higher education; something added like an illusion of piety or an environment. The lecture hall and the classroom was largely unaffected by the Christian faith. [6]*

Various definitions of faith- learning integration have been presented:

*The integration of faith and learning is the deliberate and systematic process of approaching the entire educational enterprise-both curricular and co-curricular from a Christian perspective...Teachers highlight these connections in their course plans, lectures, student assignments, class discussions, thought questions in examinations, and other learning*

*experiences, with the goal of leading their students to develop their own Bible-based view of knowledge, values, life's purpose and destiny. [7]*

*Faith-learning integration may be briefly described as a scholarly project whose goal is to ascertain and to develop integral relationships which exist between the Christian faith and human knowledge, particularly as expressed in the various academic disciplines. [8]*

*Integration has been defined by Gaebelien as the bringing together of parts of the whole, i.e., God's truth and every aspect of Education. Every aspect of Education is regarded as part of the truth and all truth is God's truth (Sire). Heie and Wolfe stated that all integration is based on the notion of integral commonality, or the sharing of concepts and concerns by the areas to be placed within a single vision. They emphasize that genuine integration occurs when an assumption or concern can be shown to be internally shared by both the Judeo-Christian vision and an academic discipline. [9]*

*[T]he integration of faith and learning [IFL] is about maintaining the wholeness or connection between learning new information and seeing a corresponding change in behavior because of this new information. It begins with a dialog with the goal of consensus, which affects a person worldview. IFL has to do with transmitting one's faith (supernatural or natural revelation) to others, which causes a change in their behavior... From the Christian perspective, the IFL has to do with bringing God into the classroom in a way that provides the evidence students need to come to Christ or grow in Christ. [10]*

*[F]aith integration is defined as the process whereby Christian scholars seek 1) to situate their embedded faith in an informed understanding of church history and evangelical theology, 2) to engage in two-way critical assessment of their faith and the truth claims of other academic disciplines, and 3) to express their faith in personal piety and responsible service to society and the Body of Christ. [11]*

## Value of Integration

J.P. Moreland writes-

*Often, Christian scholars express the spiritual aspect of integration in terms of doxology: The Christian integrator holds to and teaches the same beliefs about his/her subject matter that non-Christians accept but goes on to add praise to God for the subject matter. Thus, the Christian biologist simply asserts the views widely accepted in the discipline but makes sure that class closes with a word of praise to God for the beauty and complexity of the living world...*

*[Beyond that,] integration has as its spiritual aim the intellectual goal of structuring the mind so a person can see things as they really are and strengthening the belief structure that ought to inform the individual and corporate life of discipleship unto Jesus...*

*If a culture reaches the point where Christian claims are not even part of its plausibility structure, fewer and fewer people will be able to entertain the possibility that they might be true. Whatever stragglers do come to faith in such a context would do so on the basis of felt needs alone and the genuineness of such conversions would be questionable to say the least. And*

*believers will not make much progress in the spiritual life because they will not have the depth of conviction or the integrated noetic structure necessary for such progress. This is why integration is so crucial to spirituality. It can create a plausibility structure in a person's mind, favorable conditions as [J. Gresham] Machen put it, so Christian ideas can be entertained by that person. [12]*

*Teaching at a Christian college is expected to mean that one is exploring the issue of what difference Christianity makes to one's academic discipline and the way it might help shape the lives of one's students. Thus CCCU schools have attacked the dualism between matters of faith (explicit Bible teaching and doctrine) and academic work, a dualism that was a significant factor in making mainline Protestant colleges susceptible to drift into secularism through most of the curriculum even while they kept a Christian option on the side. [13]*

*To compartmentalize one's faith in one part of one's mind, one's scholarly discipline in another part, and to put ones' business and civic concerns in yet other compartments is to deny God's lordship over all life...To love God with all our minds requires that we try to think in a single, unified pattern all the truth He has enabled us to grasp. [14]*

*"All of reality was called into existence and meaning by God and therefore can be re-associated with God. True integration is re-association with God," suggests Richard Chewning. [15]*

*Integration is concerned not so much with attack and defense as with the positive contributions of human learning to an understanding of the faith and to the development of a Christian worldview, and with the positive contribution of the Christian faith to all the arts and sciences. Certainly learning has contributed from all fields to the church's understanding and propagation of its faith, from the early church to the present day, and the Christian college can contribute signally in that way. But it must also grasp what is not as often recognized, that faith affects learning far more deeply than learning affects faith. [16]*

*Why integrate faith, learning, and life? Goals could include to:*

- Inspire Christian college students to reach their fullest intellectual potential.*
- Develop whole heads & hearts.*
- Understand faith & reason in terms of Christian epistemology: theory & philosophy of truth & knowledge.*
- Understand Christian scholarship in various fields.*
- Develop sound academic scholarship practices.*
- Deepen walks with Jesus Christ.*
- Prepare students for workplaces & graduate studies.*
- Challenge students to critique ideologies with informed Christian skepticism.*

- *Sow seeds of truth & love for eternity.* [17]

Ken Gangel suggested:

*The faculty must understand:*

- 1) how a Biblical understanding of God influences their discipline,*
- 2) how their subject depends on and informs other subjects and*
- 3) how a correct understanding of their area influences a Christian perspective on life.*

*If each faculty member would communicate that kind of interconnectedness, students could come away from their education with a better understanding of how their world fits together from a Christian point of view.* [18]

“Integration” could take place in multiple settings:

- Classroom lectures (This is considered ideal.)
- Classroom devotionals
- Homework assignments
- Chapels
- Guest speakers
- Seminars
- Projects

Badley identifies various paradigms for integration: [19]

- Looking for points in common (intersection)
- Looking for points in opposition
- Looking for points for dialogue
- Examining everything from a faith perspective

Practices [20]

*"Generally speaking, faith intersects an academic discipline at the point where it asks its most fundamental questions. Faith intersects where a discipline appropriates its most fundamental assumptions, from whatever source they may come. Faith intersects at the point where a discipline adopts a philosophical position to guide it or to provide a structure for its theories, data, and explorations. Faith intersects where a discipline establishes its core values, upon whatever basis they are founded. One could argue that faith is the fundamental basis for all human knowledge, without which rationalism and empiricism could not function."* [21]

Wolfe notes that true integration requires the person to be “inside” the discipline, deeply aware of the assumptions, concerns, and methodologies of the particular discipline. [22]

Daniel Estes [23] looks at three levels of integration, all of them necessary for a complete approach:

1. Integration of Scripture and knowledge
2. Integration of a Christian worldview and one's discipline
3. Integration of faith, learning, and life-changing applications

In addition, he suggests, there are three primary limitations in integration:

- Finiteness – a limit to our ability to know and to learn
- Fragmentation – our information is not necessarily connected; we need to link the material together
- Fallenness- a human tendency to distort and to misunderstand

Harold Heie, an early leader in faith-knowledge integration, emphasized that we need to distinguish between attempts at analogies and character development and focus on true intersection of the discipline and Christian basics. Genuine integration occurs when an assumption or concern in Christian knowledge can be integrally related to an assumption or concern in an academic discipline. [24]

Richard Chewning set forth four propositions regarding integration: [25]

- 1. Integration requires the help of the Holy Spirit.*
- 2. The mind of Christ is available to those whom He calls into teaching.*
- 3. Integration requires cooperation between the Christian and the Holy Spirit. These first three propositions serve as the foundation upon which the fourth proposition rests.*
- 4. There are varieties of 'styles' by which integration may take place ...There is no "particular way" or one way to achieve integration.*

## Approaches to Integration of Faith and Learning

### 1. Emphasis on Attitude and Motivation

Arthur Holmes suggested that "a positive, inquiring attitude and a persistent discipline of time and ability express the value I find in learning because of my theology and my Christian commitment...The first task of integration is at the personal level of attitude and motivation." [26] The faculty must model a love of learning along with a love for God. Christian education can be an act of love, worship, and stewardship that is not found elsewhere. [27] Students need to realize early in their academics that real learning takes effort, but that effort is worth it.

### 2. Emphasis on Scripture

Read through books of the Bible several times looking for all possible areas that intersect your discipline (business, music, engineering, counseling, ...). Richard Chewning, author of *Business through the Eyes of Faith* [28] described his journey:

*How did I start? I plead with Christ in prayer. I begged Him to help me. And then a "light" came on in my mind. It was His Word that He wanted to use as "yeast" in my work so I suddenly*

*realized I must start with the Scripture. Then I specifically asked Him to “show me,” as I read His Word, what parts of it applied directly to “business” and “economics.” I began my search. Verse by verse, paragraph by paragraph, chapter by chapter, and book by book I studied the Bible with but one question in my mind, “Does this particular part of His Word apply to my work?” Hundreds and hundreds of verses began to come out of the pages demanding to be seen as truly relevant to the study of business and economics. [29]*

### 3. Emphasis on Theology

What does Christian theology say about your discipline?

*When biblical doctrines are included as an important aspect of the teaching ministry of a particular church, those in-depth examinations of particular biblical subjects provide an opportunity for the Holy Spirit to expand the mind of a person seeking to assimilate and integrate God’s Word into their “world / lifeview.” [30]*

How might the wisdom literature of Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes impact a discipline?

*Job addresses the universal and multitudinous questions that arise in the presence of “evil” and “suffering” in a world created by a loving God. Ecclesiastes casts life’s experiences into a pessimistic frame of reference, wrapped up in the expression, “vanity of vanities.” It concludes that all is vanity when God is left out of the picture, and everything makes perfect sense when God is at the center of one’s world/life-view. Proverbs on the other hand is optimistic in its outlook when one is prudent and wise and follows God’s instructions. It is, for the most part, full of pithy statements regarding what is right and what is prudent. [31]*

### 4. Emphasis on Integrative Questions

Harold Heie has suggested that key questions open up discussion in areas of faith-learning integration:

*Provide students with ...opportunity to deal with questions that arise in their experience of trying to live well...Provide opportunity for students to deal with “integrative questions” pertinent to their academic disciplinary specialization, starting in their first year and proceeding through their senior year in more sophisticated and nuanced ways. [32]*

We might ask:

- How has your discipline shaped your view of God?
- How does your discipline contribute to God’s holistic plan of redemption?
- How do you love God and your neighbor through the practices of your discipline?

For example,

*ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY: Should Christians embrace the “technological imperative” (if something “can” be done, that is sufficient reason to do it)?*

*ENGINEERING: Will the “product” or “services” of the vocation I am preparing for foster God’s redemptive purposes for Creation? [33]*

## 5. Emphasis on Worldviews

Understand worldviews and how they impact a discipline or profession. “All education is rooted in a worldview and all education nurtures students in that worldview,” says Brian Walsh. [34]

*The most embracing contact between Christianity and human learning is the all-encompassing world and life view. The Christian faith enables us to see all things in relationship to God as their Creator, Redeemer, and Lord, and from this central focus an integrating worldview emerges. The contemporary university tends to concentrate on the parts rather than the whole and to come away with a fragmented view of life that lacks overall meaning. Arnold Nash calls this tendency “intellectual polytheism,” to underscore that it is as much a commitment to a worldview as is Christian theism. [35]*

*(A)ll of knowledge is encompassed within larger theological categories such as creation, general revelation, the image of God in humans, and the unity of objective truth. Among Christian undergraduate institutions, this is the most prominent model for integration, and it has produced many excellent studies, including the Through the Eyes of Faith textbook series sponsored by the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities. [36]*

“What fundamental insights and convictions, derivable from the Christian world-view are relevant to the discipline?” [37]

On the other hand, we might ask, “What specific contribution does this discipline make to the Christian view of reality?” [38]

“Focus on the Christian worldview. Emphasize the failings in scientism, naturalism, and moral relativism.” [39]

## 6. Emphasis on Presuppositions-

What are the “foundational assumptions-methodological, epistemological, and ontological-which are stated or presumed” as the basis of the discipline? [40] Are any of these particularly significant or problematic from a Christian standpoint?

Examine the basic assumptions of your discipline in the light of Biblical truth. (Holmes) [41]

*(O)ne must understand basic beliefs about the character of God, the origin and nature of humankind, and the purpose of life. Drawing from this knowledge, one can ask a few key questions. What view of humankind does this academic discipline assume? How then does that either conform to or conflict with a biblical perspective? What view of God is underpinning this academic content? What view of the origin of life and the afterlife does this content imply? How does this content define “the good life”? How does this content either fit into the Christian metanarrative of creation-fall-redemption-consummation or conflict with it? What biblical stories or principles would be important to consider as examples or counterexamples related to this content? What makes this content different from a Christian perspective? [42]*

What are the major issues in your discipline? What Biblical approaches might address these?

## 7. Emphasis on Foundations

What is the foundation of your discipline? How does it point to God's design?

In the natural sciences:

*(N)ature is contingent on God. There is no intrinsic necessity that it exist or that it be the way it is. If it is God's creation, it is contingent on God, and the scientist can no longer operate on an a priori basis but must be more empirical if he is to find out how nature does in fact behave. The result, according to (Michael) Foster, was the growth of Renaissance science. [43]*

## 8. Emphasis on Ethics

How should the faculty prepare the students for the ethical issues they will face in the discipline? [44]

*(T)he moral questions being raised in the public arena need to be wrestled with under the "lens" of Scripture. The moral issues that flow out of cloning, "external to the womb" embryo development, genetic engineering, and other "technically oriented" problems cry out for those who teach the "sciences" in our Christian colleges and universities to step forward and lead the Christian community through the labyrinth of ethical confusion. [45]*

"Focus on ethics. Begin with God's character, principles, virtues, and wisdom. Investigate integrity, justice, and ethics in the discipline. What does ethical conduct and justice mean within your discipline?" [46]

*In addressing ethical issues, three questions are essential if we are to integrate Christian principles into ethical discussion.*

- 1. What are the facts in the case, including contributing causes and possible consequences? Here the relevant sciences are important.*
- 2. What middle-level concepts are involved? What are the purposes God intended for this area of human activity? Here theology and philosophy come into play.*
- 3. What policy or action is called for in this kind of case or situation? How can we pursue proper purposes with justice and with love for all those involved? Here all the above considerations and disciplines come into play. [47]*

## 9. Emphasis on Character formation

Note the importance of ethics in the profession, not simply information. Emphasize development of character traits. In addition, focus on modeling Christian character in teaching your discipline.

*James K. A. Smith has recently reawakened and advanced the argument that Christian education must be a formational as opposed to a merely informational enterprise... Augustine too understood the centrality of the affective dimension in ethics as a matter of "rightly ordered love." As Steven Garber notes, Augustine also saw the end of education as character formation ("a way of life"). [48]*

The authors encourage the use of stories, mentors, and specific commissioning/blessing experiences for graduates.

#### 10. Emphasis on Practice

“What are the implications and results” when the theory of the discipline is put into practice? [49]

If the end result is service to others, “In what spirit or attitude is the service done?” [50]

What Biblical principles apply to one’s practice? Faculty should emphasize servanthood through the discipline.

How does our participation in the discipline contribute to the expansion of the Kingdom of God, including God’s shalom and human flourishing? [51]

Emphasize love of neighbor and human flourishing through the profession. Explore the redemptive impact of faith on culture.

*Whenever we relieve human or animal suffering through our vocations, we are partially ameliorating sin’s terrible effects...Service learning projects can be especially useful in (applied science) disciplines if students are taught that by helping others they are acting as “little Christs” in service to their neighbor. [52]*

#### 11. Emphasis on Vocation and the Theology of Work

David Leonard writes:

*Given that the successful completion of a college degree ideally results in students acquiring a job in their area of emphasis, it follows that Christian universities and colleges should also be passionately instilling in students a biblical vision for their future careers. The scriptures clearly emphasize the value and dignity of work... One of the reasons our vocations glorify God is because they serve the common good, causing us to fulfill the role of agents of God’s grace in the lives of believers and non-believers alike. To the degree that people are made aware of this role, it provides the occasion for them to express gratitude for God’s loving providence over his creation... As part of their commitment to the integration of faith and learning, Christian institutions of higher education might consider developing orientation courses for first-year students, designed to inculcate in freshman a biblical understanding of God’s purpose for work. [53]*

#### 12. Emphasis on Test Cases and Apologetics

How do findings in this discipline point to the reality of God and truth of the Scripture? Chewning and Haak write:

*A) case pedagogy can be used to help students identify (1) what they believe, (2) why they believe it, and most importantly... (3) how to biblically defend their beliefs – their world/life-view. The case focuses on an issue <for the course referenced, a problem in management.>*

*Faculty, of course, may choose cases from any academic discipline to help build a Christian (biblically enlightened) world/life-view...*

*Apologetics, the formal biblical defense of one's world / life-view on a particular matter, is not a better form of integration than other forms, but it is a better training tool than many other methods. This is so because it brings into the open the application of specific biblical principles and truths where they can be examined and discussed – specific biblical passages are brought forth and used to defend the explicit position taken on an ethical / moral issue. [54]*

### 13. Emphasis on the Biblical “Grand Story” Model

Look for the impact of the Biblical history model on your discipline- What does creation, the fall, and redemption-restoration have to do with your field of study? [55]

Place the emphasis on our place in God's grand story. Christian students need to clearly understand their identity in Christ in order to begin all reasoning from that position.

In addition, look at reversing the effects of the fall through one's discipline- Making life what God intended.

*“In the... view, represented by Francis Bacon, learning has just instrumental worth: knowledge is power to remedy in part the human condition caused by the fall. Bacon criticizes learning for self-aggrandizement and learning devoted to expanding the dominion of a nation; he advocates rather its use to ameliorate the human condition, in working for economic improvement, and for peace. I think we need both views. Both, I think, are implicit in the biblical mandate to do and make use of the arts and sciences. So if you can find no other connection between faith and learning in your particular field, do it for the glory of God! Use it for the betterment of the human condition!” [56]*

The goal is redeeming not only brokenness in the world but also within the discipline itself.

### 14. Emphasis on “Incarnational involvement”

In skills-based courses help students navigate the difficult parts by coming alongside of them: “incarnational involvement.” [57]

Perry Glanzer has suggested these types of integration: [58]

- Focus on worldview.
- Focus on the narrative, the drama of history- creation, fall, redemption, restoration.  
Where does our discipline fit within the narrative? How can we help to reverse the effects of the fall?
- Focus on ethics.
- Focus on practice: prayer, relevant scriptures, practice for the profession.
- Focus on modeling the truth, living the story. Emphasize service and servant-leadership.
- Combination of all or several of these.

Kelly Liebengood has stated: [59]

1. Christian revelation is foundational. We need a robust understanding of the human condition
2. We need a deep understanding of our discipline- critical paradigms and theories
3. Study with particular concepts and questions in view- What is the nature and impact of thinking, knowledge, freedom, growth, sin, obstacles, and purpose?
4. Ask some questions of our discipline – What are its assumptions about people, human growth, interpretation of data, suffering...?
5. Will human beings flourish if simply given the right information? What are we taught to seek and to desire?
6. How does our discipline contribute to the reconciliation of all things?
7. How does our discipline relate to the stewardship of God's creation?
8. How can we participate with Christ in our discipline, pointing to and reflecting Christ to the world?

Liebengood suggests the following: [60]

1. Integration is more than moralizing and encouraging service. It is more than studying Christian topics or themes.
2. Faith is not a body of knowledge about spiritual things, a sphere of knowledge, but rather a way of knowing, a lens through which to see God's creation. Christian revelation is foundational.
3. We need to understand our discipline from the position of faith. We need to be radical, that is analyzing and critiquing the roots of our discipline. What are the fundamental assumptions of our discipline? (Are they Biblical?)
4. Ask- What does our discipline say about the nature of people, reconciliation, stewardship, participation with Christ in the world, problems and solutions, human flourishing?
5. Truth must be embodied. Show the character of Christ. Think rightly and relate with love. Exhibit credibility, with hospitality and charity.

Liebengood encourages a multi-layered approach to faith integration for faculty: [61]

1. Begin with personal growth and development.
2. Help students pay attention to God. Get beyond the distractions, including those introduced in your program.
3. Integrate Christian practices into the classroom and educational experience.
4. Stress Christian principles and values in your teaching (love, justice, integrity ,...)
5. Stress Christian vocation and virtue ethics. (How does the narrative of scripture impact my place in the world, and how do I align with what the triune God is up to in this world?)

Lee notes what Integration Is Not: [62]

- *NOT integrating only doctrine and learning.*

- *NOT confusing doctrine with living faith. Faith requires knowledge of doctrine but isn't confined to*

*knowledge. In Mere Christianity, C. S. Lewis points out that robots can recite doctrine. (Beep beep!)*

- *NOT darting away from hard questions.*

- *NOT presenting a palatable version of "lite" Christianity in obeisance to trends in scholarship.*

- *NOT "straddling the fence."*

- *NOT compartmentalizing Christian faith, limiting it to the realm of emotions, relationships, & family life.*

Ken Gangel looks at how the faculty can approach integration: [63]

1. *Know the scriptures intimately.*

2. *Study the culture diligently.*

3. *Analyze events and issues theologically.*

*Qs: 1) Does the Bible speak to this issue?*

- 2) *Are there general Christian principles which apply?*

- 3) *Have Christian scholars, past or present, dealt with this issue?*

- 4) *Does this position or theory defy absolute standards of morality or value?*

- 5) *Is the Holy Spirit leading me to a definitive viewpoint on this matter?*

## TWO MODELS OF CHRISTIAN HIGHER ED

Duane Litfin describes two different institutional approaches to higher education:

The "Umbrella" Model [64]

*Umbrella institutions seek to provide a Christian 'umbrella' or canopy under which a variety of voices can thrive. Typically a certain 'critical mass' represents the voice of a sponsoring Christian tradition, so that sponsoring voice remains a privileged one. But the institution will nonetheless demonstrate genuine diversity. Some campus voices may be unhesitatingly secular, others open but searching, while still others may represent competing religious perspectives. Yet all are welcome under the umbrella so long as they can at least support the broad educational mission of the school...Yet many non-Christian voices, groups, and activities can also be found, and the institution makes a genuine effort to keep the campus hospitable to them. The result is a relatively non-sectarian environment that can encourage rigorous Christian thinking even while serving as a venue where that thinking can engage other ideas in full.*

Examples of Umbrella Institutions: University of Notre Dame, Valparaiso University

The “Systemic” Model [65]

*Systemic institutions reach for more, but in another sense settle for less. As the name suggests, they seek to make Christian thinking systemic throughout the institution, root, branch, and leaf. Their curriculum is typically all-encompassing. Their goal is to engage any and all ideas from every perspective, but they attempt to do so from a particular intellectual location, that of the sponsoring Christian tradition...What is true of the critical mass in the Umbrella model is to be true of all the scholars in the Systemic model. They seek to live and work as Christians. . . . with the Umbrella model Christian ideas are not only allowed on campus, they are encouraged; they may even enjoy a privileged position. But with the Systemic model, these ideas are the institution's raison d'être.*

Examples of Systemic Institutions: CCCU schools

## EXAMPLE INSTITUTIONS

### LE TOURNEAU UNIVERSITY

Motto: “Every workplace, every nation”

Vision:

Claiming every workplace in every nation as our mission field, LeTourneau University graduates are professionals of ingenuity and Christ-like character who see life's work as a holy calling with eternal impact.

Mission:

LeTourneau University is a comprehensive institution of Christian higher education where educators engage learners to nurture Christian virtue, to develop competency and ingenuity in their professional fields, to integrate faith and work, and to serve the local and global community.

Values:

We value working together as a Christ-centered community of living faith. Everything we do is integrated into and flows out of our service to God in Jesus Christ as we work cooperatively to achieve common goals.

We value integrity, honesty, and trust that reflect the person of Jesus Christ in all we do.

We value the professional and spiritual growth of every individual; faculty, staff, and students. We desire to see all individuals growing into maturity, exhibited by a satisfying, rewarding, joyful, and effective life of servant-leadership.

We value providing an outstanding world-class educational experience for our students that represents an exceptional educational value and return on investment.

We value the creativity and ingenuity of faculty, staff, and students who are innovative and prudent risk takers.

Goals:

LeTourneau University educates students who:

- Demonstrate competency and ingenuity in their professional fields
- Integrate Christian faith and work: understanding their vocation within the triune God's grand story of redemption revealed in Scripture
- Engage the local and global community

LeTourneau University is an educational community that:

- Fosters an engaging environment conducive to teaching and learning
- Cultivates Christian virtue
- Contributes to the enrichment and service of the local and global community

Mission (Engineering):

The mission of the School of Engineering and Engineering Technology is to serve God and humanity by preparing students, through example, to become servant-leaders of Christ-like and ingenuity who impact the world through the engineering profession.

Educational philosophy:

LeTourneau University is committed to educational studies within the framework of a Christian theistic view of the world, of man, and of man's culture in the light of Biblical and natural revelation. Such a view sees no dichotomy in truth, affirms that Biblical revelation and scientific inquiry are complementary rather than contradictory, and requires a recognition of a personal God revealed both in nature and in the person of Jesus Christ, His Son. Thus, all truth is regarded as God-given and is considered sacred. It should be pursued with diligence and received with humility.

For several years LeTourneau University tied its curriculum to a set of Christian Leadership Distinctives:

1. Discovering Purpose  
Students should seek to discover God's design and purpose in all dimensions of their lives.  
Students should seek to fulfill and glorify God's design for them.
2. Grounding Values  
Students should be well-grounded in the Scripture, the Christian faith, and our common Christian heritage.

- Students should know, practice, and articulate the Christian faith and Christian ethics.
3. Broadening knowledge  
Students should be broadly educated in foundational concepts which enhance life and learning for success in the global community.  
Students should communicate, integrate, and use their knowledge of foundational concepts from the perspective of the Christian worldview.
  4. Deepening Skills  
Students should be proficient in at least one specialized field of study.  
Students should integrate, apply, and communicate knowledge of their field, including appropriate technologies, from a Christian worldview.
  5. Collaborating Service  
Students should have the knowledge necessary for effective participation in communities.  
Students should practice interpersonal and collaborative skills as responsible members of their communities.

## **JOHN BROWN UNIVERSITY**

Motto: “Christ over all”

Mission:

John Brown University provides Christ-centered education that prepares people to honor God and serve others by developing their intellectual, spiritual and professional lives. JBU’s mission is summarized in its two historic mottos: Christ over all, and Head, Heart and Hand.

Vision:

A Christ-centered, interdenominational university that leads the nation in integrating faith and learning, fostering holistic spiritual formation, promoting pragmatic liberal arts education, and preparing people to follow Christ’s call to serve others in all areas of life.

Values:

Christ-centered. We pray and worship together as a community; we submit to God’s truth and authority as expressed faithfully through His inspired Scriptures; we seek to restrain evil and to promote good through our work and service; and we educate students to serve Christ and His Kingdom because we are followers of Jesus Christ, the incarnate and visible person of the triune God.

Pursuit of Learning. We educate students to seek, and exemplify ourselves, a globally-aware, holistic, curious and lifelong pursuit of learning because God created the world good and it is part of our worship of God to learn as much as we can about Him and His world.

People. We make decisions that benefit students; we extend hospitality to strangers; we recognize the God-given gifts of our colleagues; we act and treat each other with integrity; we respectfully engage and encourage a variety of differences among people; we nourish

relationships; and we study and learn in community because God has created people in His image.

Service. We listen and learn from others, recognize and meet their needs and engage and create cultures to imagine new opportunities for people to flourish because God has called us to love our neighbor.

Stewardship. We strive to be wise stewards of our time, talents, and financial and natural resources because this world belongs to God.

Excellence. We seek to do all things well and then strive to do them better because God calls us to do all things in honor of Him.

Educational philosophy:

The Core Curriculum's education for a lifetime is tri-fold: knowledge of facts, reflection on that knowledge, and practical application of that knowledge... the Core aids students in applying that knowledge and understanding to all dimensions of their lives: intellectual, cultural, physical, spiritual, emotional.

Goals: (JBU Engineering handbook, 1985)

The faculty has expressed its purpose as sending forth graduates

- whose lives reflect the love of Christ
- who possess intellectual integrity and an enthusiasm for continuing self-development
- who are eager and able to perform a share of the world's ideas
- who make worthy contributions to their communities.

## **CALVIN UNIVERSITY**

Motto: "Think deeply, act justly, live wholeheartedly as Christ's agents of renewal in the world."

Layers of learning- liberal arts core

### **EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES Calvin Engineering**

1. individuals who are firmly grounded in the basic principles and skills in engineering, mathematics, science, and the humanities, for correct, perceptive, and sensitive problem assessment at a level appropriate for both entry level work in industry and in graduate school;
2. designers who are able to creatively bring a project from problem statement to final design while realizing the interdisciplinary and interdependent character of the engineering profession; and
3. servants whose Christian faith leads them to an engineering career of action and involvement, to personal piety, integrity, and social responsibility.

## **DORDT UNIVERSITY**

Motto: “Soli Deo Gloria” (Glory to God Alone)

### Mission:

As an institution of higher education committed to the Reformed Christian perspective, Dordt equips students, alumni, and the broader community to work effectively toward Christ-centered renewal in all aspects of contemporary life.

### Vision:

An education that is Christian not merely in the sense that devotional exercises are appended to the ordinary work of the college, but in the larger and deeper sense that all the class work, all of the students' intellectual, emotional, and imaginative activities shall be permeated with the spirit and teaching of Christianity.

Dordt College outlines four specific areas of curricular content/curricular organization: [66]

#### 1. Religious Orientation

The curriculum should be rooted in the Word of God and infused with a Reformational worldview to reflect the fact that all of creation is related to God as its Creator, Redeemer, and Lord.

#### 2. Creational Structure

The curriculum should be organized into a balanced cohesive whole of complementary academic programs to faithfully reflect the diversity and coherence of reality.

#### 3. Creational Development

The curriculum should reflect and promote knowledge of the dynamic unfolding of creation, and it should highlight the various aspects of human responsibility and involvement in this process.

#### 4. Contemporary Response

The curriculum should help students convert their insights and competencies into committed action. It should enable them to translate the results of theoretical investigation into faithful response to God and practical Christian service to their neighbor.

Dordt College, following Kuyper's thought, emphasizes a “modality structure” to assist our thinking about the “law-character of creation.” The approach looks at fifteen modal aspects in an ordered list: [67]

Faith/Love/Juridical/Aesthetic/Economic/Social/Lingual/Historical/Logical/Psychic (feelings)/Biotic/Physical/Kinematic (motion)/Spatial/Numerical

*Each aspect in the list above depends upon and builds upon the aspects below it. Upon consideration, you will realize that the higher aspects have associated with them mainly normative laws whereas the lower aspects, mainly natural laws. (The last six are especially strongly associated with natural laws.)*

*Interestingly, if you compare Dordt's engineering curriculum to that of a state university, you will find much more emphasis on the lower modal aspects in the engineering curriculum at state universities. Those aspects are less controversial since they are dominated by the natural laws. But, if the neo-Calvinists are right—if everything functions in all aspects—then an engineering education at a state university is lopsided in its heavy emphasis on natural laws. It only takes a little taste of real life to understand that having a certain design that “works” in the sense of consistency with natural laws is not good enough. An engineer also has to engender the confidence of others in order to get the design into production and into the world. Engineering is a multifaceted task.*

#### Christian Curriculum:

Van Gaalen describes how Dordt faculty have applied four “coordinates” to curricular development: “religious orientation (worldview), creational structure (preparation for industry and graduate school), creational development (unfolding - historical and philosophical roots), and contemporary response.” [68]

*Contemporary response includes*

- a. Perseverance. The enthusiasm, and perseverance required to complete the full, bachelor degree, engineering program, in the face of weak high school preparation and/or cultural forces that tend to cause typical freshman engineering students to quit engineering.*
- b. Holism. A general, broad, and holistic education that actively thwarts the traditional technical-humanities dichotomy, meaningfully unifies all aspects of the curriculum, and starts the student on a path of life-long, self-initiated learning, whether in engineering design, the humanities, the natural sciences, or the social sciences.*
- c. Gospel. A sensitivity to the need for redeeming technology, i.e., bringing the redemptive healing and direction of the Gospel to this increasingly important area of modern life.*
- d. Distortions. A sensitivity to current problems associated with technology such as the already mentioned technical-humanities dichotomy, the enslavement of technology to economics, the dehumanization of many work environments by inappropriate technology, technophilia: the faith that technological development is always good and will solve humanity's problems, and technophobia: the fear that technology is an autonomous and evil force that will destroy humanity.*
- e. Normativity. A dedication to the concept of “appropriate” or “responsible” technology supported by an awareness of current environmental/ecological problems and founded on the biblical principles of Christian stewardship.*

## **CEDARVILLE UNIVERSITY**

Motto: *Pro Corona et Foedere Christi* (“For the Crown and Covenant of Christ”)

Mission:

Cedarville University transforms lives through excellent education and intentional discipleship in submission to biblical authority.

Vision:

For the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus Christ

Core Values:

- Love for God
- Love for Others
- Integrity in Conduct
- Excellence in Effort

“It is impossible to rightly view creation without rightly viewing the Creator. At Cedarville, you will find a campus-wide commitment to growing together in our knowledge of the Father. Through coursework that is built on a biblical base and a community that cares deeply, your passion and ability for discovering answers to elaborate questions will only increase.”

## **LE TOURNEAU IS UNIQUE**

While there are now many quality engineering programs at Christian colleges, the program the authors know best is where we worked for over forty years each, LeTourneau University (Longview, Texas).

I was asked many times by parents and prospective students, “In a few words, what’s unique about Engineering at LeTourneau?” I would summarize the program there in four key points:

Engineering at LeTourneau is

- (1) intentionally Christ-centered. As a non-denominational institution, its focus is on Christ the Lord and what we hold in common concerning His life and Kingdom.
- (2) specifically practical (“hands-on” design)
- (3) heavily built on interactions with faculty, and
- (4) an outgrowth of the vision and legacy of the Christian businessman-inventor R.G. LeTourneau.

Unlike other engineering programs which grew out of a liberal arts college, Letourneau’s program grew out of a training program for welders and mechanics at his heavy equipment plant.

The campus itself was originally an army hospital (Harmon General Hospital). That's certainly unique.

R.G.'s philosophy of education combined strong academics with practical experience. The institute originally taught electricity, mechanics, and welding. It later added liberal arts majors to become regionally accredited as a college.

Points (2) and (3) actually flow out of the Christian worldview: We value serving God and people with the materials and physical laws of this world that He created. (There is no sacred/secular dichotomy.) We are made in God's image and therefore value the relational, mentoring, form of education. "The core identity of the institution has always been technical, applied, and Christian." [69]

Similarly, in his book *The Fabric of Faithfulness* [70] Steven Garber explores the essential elements of a life-transforming college experience. What is there about a Christian education that will enable a student to keep the idealism of the college years? How can graduates avoid being trapped by the lure of money and power a few years into their careers? Garber suggests that those who he met whose faith truly impacted their work had all developed the following: (1) character, from core beliefs and a worldview sufficient for the challenges of this world, (2) conviction, a linking of character to behavior, largely from learning from a teacher who lived out that worldview, and (3) community, friendships with others who share those convictions.

That resonated with me. This is the non-academic part of what faculty try to do there under the Lord's power. Labs, class projects, senior designs, and stand-up reports, all with faculty mentoring all play a part. The unique, 4-year on-ground education experienced by LeTourneau engineering students is what makes the program special, and what specifically prepares students for lives where faith informs work, to the glory of God.

In addition, LeTourneau is the only CCCU schools to offer a range of both engineering and engineering technology programs. It was the first of the distinctly evangelical colleges to receive ABET accreditation for its engineering program (in 1979). In 2018 the percentage of students enrolled in STEM programs was 79 per cent (actually higher than Cal poly or MIT). [71]

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

Christian higher education has a two-fold purpose: (1) to provide an alternative to education which is strictly man-centered and built upon a naturalistic worldview and (2) to offer hope in terms of an education based on truth and human flourishing, built on a Biblical worldview.

*[C. S.] Lewis [in The Abolition of Man] analyzed the new education by going directly to its basic and most destructive assumptions. Those were: first, that all values are creations of man; and second, that man therefore owes no allegiance to any values but those that he makes or chooses for himself. In Lewis' view, that was a metaphysical statement, not an educational one. He pointed out that the new education was thus more than a new method of teaching, it was a new world-view and a new definition of man. [72]*

Charles Adams recognized the problem of the “two cultures” (science vs. humanities) in higher education and proposed Christian engineering education as the solution since it

- Overcomes facts/values dualism
- Respects the Creator/creature distinction
- Reflects the self-insufficiency of creation, and
- Demonstrates unity in diversity. [73]

Gordon Smith wrote:

*The mind is renewed by truth. Classrooms and libraries are ideal places in which to respond to the apostolic injunction that we take every thought captive for Christ. Spiritual formation, therefore, includes study. It is not just something that complements or accompanies study. The discipline of study is an essential component of spiritual formation. Rigorous intellectual exercise is good for the soul. Few things are as redemptive as the honest exploration of truth.* [74]

Richard Chewning emphasized the true Christian education impacted all aspects of the heart: mind, affections, and will.

*It is easy to comprehend that as one's true knowledge of God increases, his or her ontological presuppositions regarding the origin of the universe, and all of the accompanying thoughts about God's design and purpose for the universe will begin to be leavened and thereby changed. For example, stewardship, as a calling from God, can begin to take hold. Charity and caring for one's neighbor may take on a new meaning. Or one might suddenly realize that their affections ...are being altered.* [75]

Christian higher education is concerned with vocation, including skills necessary for work, AND with creative and critical thinking AND with character formation AND with spiritual formation.

Derek Schuurman emphasizes the Christian worldview approach to Christian education and adds:

*We need to recognize that students are not just “brains on a stick” (to borrow a phrase from Jamie Smith). We must recognize the importance of the heart and the need for spiritual formation. Spiritual formation can be defined as “The process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others.” This is something suggested in the mission statements of many Christian schools and colleges. In a spiritual formation project led by Syd Hielema at Redeemer University College, several ideas were explored to encourage spiritual formation in the classroom. Among these were ideas such as practicing hospitality in the classroom, encouraging virtues such as respect and wonder and a longing for shalom, and cultivating a collegial ethos among the faculty. Faculty were encouraged to make connections between different classes and co-curricular activities. Faculty and staff were encouraged to worship alongside students in chapel, to disciple them in learning communities, and to get to know them through judicious conversations outside the classroom. Faculty can also explore ways to encourage students to develop spiritual and intellectual disciplines and provide opportunities for students to experience reverence and awe.* [76]

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