

CHRISTIAN SCHOLARS FORMATION SERIES | VOLUME 1

THE OUTRAGEOUS IDEA of the MISSIONAL PROFESSOR INTERNATIONAL EDITION

Paul M. Gould

with D. Keith Campbell, Li Ma, Omar Montero,
Granville W. Pillar, Osam E. Temple
and Bee-Lan C. Wang

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**The Outrageous Idea of the
Missional Professor International Edition**

Christian Scholars Formation Series

Edited by D. Keith Campbell

in cooperation with the Society of Christian Scholars
and the Department of Theological Concerns
of the World Evangelical Alliance

Volume I

Vol 1 Paul M. Gould et al.: The Outrageous Idea of the Missional Professor International Edition.



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To Sang and Louis,
Missional professors on the way . . .
Friends to a family in need . . .

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Preface to the U.S. Edition

This book has been the result of almost 20 years of campus ministry experience, the last 10 working directly with university professors. As one of the leading cultural shaping institutions in the world, I'm convinced that the university is an incredibly strategic mission field for the gospel. I believe God cares about the ideas and the people that live and work in the academy as well as the students who arrive each year to study. While I myself have now crossed the divide from campus minister to professor, my passion remains to see the resources of the whole campus leveraged and taken to the whole world under the banner of Christ. It is for this reason that I write this book. My hope and prayer is that God will use it to encourage, challenge, and inspire a new movement of professors within the university who passionately connect all that they are and do to the glorious riches of the gospel.

Paul M. Gould
Fort Worth, Texas
August 15, 2014

Preface to the International Edition

I (Keith) first read *The Outrageous Idea of the Missional Professor* in 2016. Before even turning its last page, two things were clear to me: Paul wrote *Outrageous* for U.S. professors who serve in the U.S., but it needed an international audience. So, I devised a plan to internationalize it. I first contacted Paul in July 2016 to ask if he might be interested in a team of scholars from around the world internationalizing *Outrageous*. We Skyped a few weeks later, I pitched the idea to Paul, he readily agreed to help make it happen, and the project was officially started. There was, however, an important hurdle to jump, the publisher. It was indeed a high hurdle to jump, as we asked them to offer *Outrageous* freely to scholars around the world; after all, publishers understandably need to generate profits to survive. Given this request, we would certainly have understood if the publisher outright rejected the project. But they did not! On August 11, 2016, Paul contacted Wipf & Stock Publishers and asked them for permission to internationalize *Outrageous*. A beautiful and exciting several-week conversation ensued, wherein Wipf & Stock graciously gave the World Evangelical Alliance the rights to publish *Outrageous* for an in-

ternational audience. We deeply thank Owner and Managing Editor Jim Tedrick at Wipf & Stock for his gracious and sacrificial support for this work.

With Paul and Wipf & Stock on board, I (Keith) turned my attention to gathering the following team of scholars from around the world, a team who loves Jesus with both heart *and* mind, who understands the influence of the university, and who truly inculcates the outrageous idea to serve the university as missional professors: Dr. Li Ma (China); Omar Montero, PhD Candidate (Columbia, Argentina); Dr. Granville Pillar (Hungary, U.K., Australia); Dr. Osam Edim Temple (Nigeria); and Dr. Bee-Lan Wang (Malaysia, China, U.S.). The project is truly a labor of love, as these scholars receive no royalties for this book. I pray that Christian faculty around the world will benefit from their sacrifices.

We (Paul, Li, Omar, Granville, Osam, Bee-Lan, and Keith) have long understood the need for Christian professors worldwide to serve missionally *as professors*. And we have long been acquainted with, encouraged by, and have learned from the organic movement of Christian professors emerging locally in nearly every region of the world. Though we desire for *Outrageous* to serve these professors and this movement, we know that it is not the final say on this outrageous idea to be a missional professor. In fact, since our target audience is so broad, *Outrageous* has inevitable weaknesses, culturally, conceptually, missionally, and the list could go on. A book from one, specific locale will never be internationalized enough to meet the needs of every professor in every place worldwide. Therefore, we pray that Christian scholars in India, Mexico, Thailand, New Zealand, Niger, Latvia and every other country will build on this work by writing (either corporately or independently) their own ideas about the outrageous idea of being a missional professor. Not only will professors in their own countries benefit from this, but professors from the West, the East, and everywhere in between will also benefit from it.

Paul Gould

Li Ma

Omar Montero

Granville Pillar

Osam Edim Temple

Bee-Lan Wang

D. Keith Campbell

January 28, 2019

Acknowledgments for the U.S. Edition

This book would never have come to be without the example, as a young Christian and college student, of those older in the faith who loved, disciplined, challenged, and called me to live for something greater than self. Thanks to Rick Jones, Mark Brown, Mike Erre, Roger Hershey, and Stan Wallace. I thank those students with whom I've had the privilege, in turn, to disciple as a campus minister—Andrew Chapin, Baron Luechauer, Greg Thompson, David Clady, and many more. I'm grateful for my years as a campus minister with CRU (formerly Campus Crusade for Christ) and specifically, for the ten years serving with Faculty Commons, the faculty ministry of CRU.

Many thanks to *Cultural Encounters* for permission to include portions of my essay “The Consequences of (Some) Ideas: A Review Essay of James Davison Hunter’s *To Change the World*” within chapter 7. Thanks also to *Christian Higher Education*, for permission to include a modified version of my “An Essay on Academic Disciplines, Faithfulness, and the Christian Scholar” as chapter 8.

Thanks to Rich McGee, Bill Hager, David Dehuff, Ceil Wilson, Steve Pogue, Corey Miller, and Brad Fulton who all read selected chapters and offered helpful feedback. I give a special thanks to Rick Wade who read and edited the entire manuscript fixing many grammatical and typographical errors. Finally, I thank my loving wife Ethel and our children—Austin, Madeleine, Travis, and Joshua. I write this with the hope that our family will be a missional family and that each of your children will live missional lives in whatever context the Lord calls you to in the future.

Acknowledgments for the International Edition

Alongside of Paul’s appreciation in his “Acknowledgements for the U.S. Edition,” We (Li, Omar, Granville, Osam, Bee-Lan, and Keith) also express appreciation to Jim Tedrick and Wipf & Stock for kindly granting us the rights to produce this international edition for Society of Christian Scholars members and for Professor Thomas K. Johnson and the World Evangelical Alliance for agreeing to publish it. Also sincere thanks to Jeff Foster, PhD Student (Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary), for his help in editing the final manuscript and for arranging the bibliography.

Christian Scholars Formation Series

The Outrageous Idea of the Missional Professor: International Edition is the inaugural volume in the Christian Scholars Formation Series (CSFS; edited by D. Keith Campbell), which focuses on the intersection of the philosophy of integration and the discipline of spiritual formation. Integration is concerned with how the Christian faith relates to every aspect of a scholar's particular vocation (e.g., teaching, research, writing, and administrative duties). Spiritual formation is the ongoing transformation of the believer, by the power of the Holy Spirit, into an increasingly faithful disciple of Jesus Christ for God's glory and for the sake of the world. Many Christian scholars focus only on spiritual formation and rarely exhibit any thorough understanding of integration. Because of this tendency to separate spiritual formation from integration, CSFS converges these two fields via devotional, missional, and practical works written by and for teams of international and interdisciplinary scholars. The purpose of CSFS is to help scholars think and act holistically about their respective disciplines as they dialogue with, and engage, every sector of their institutions for Christ.

Introduction: The Outrageous Idea

In 1997, George Marsden wrote an important book that documents how attempts to integrate one's faith with one's scholarship are perceived in the North American secular university (and by some Christian scholars) as outrageous, perceptions that easily transcend today's geographical borders.¹ The idea is that it is ludicrous, inappropriate, and even absurd to blend the personal/private/subjective beliefs of a religious academic with the public/openly accessible/objective truths and knowledge of the scholarly enterprise. Marsden expertly argued that there is a place for distinctively Christian views within the secular academy. I concur. Today, though the idea of Christian scholarship in some cultures (e.g., North America and Sub-Saharan African) is not as outrageous as it was when Marsden wrote, it is still indeed considered outrageous in many contexts (e.g., China).

Today, what is truly the outrageous idea in all contexts is that of a *missional* professor. I shall use the term "missional" to describe a specific posture or identity of the Christian professor: missional professors are those who consciously do their work and live their lives as part of God's story and God's mission (the *missio dei*) without dichotomizing the sacred and the secular (a sentiment I unpack throughout the rest of this book); and I shall use the word "professor" interchangeably with all other faculty positions (e.g., associate professors, assistant professors, lecturers, etc.), while realizing that in most countries the terms have significantly different meanings and implications.

As Christopher Wright states, "God himself has a mission . . . And as part of that divine mission, God has called into existence a people to participate with God in the accomplishment of that mission. All *our* mission flows from the prior mission of God."² The God of the Bible is a God on a mission to seek and save the lost, to redeem and restore all of creation. Motivated by love, the Father sent Jesus into the world as an atoning sacrifice for sin (1 John 4:9–10). Jesus is a *sent-one*. So too are Jesus' followers: "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you" (John 20:21). As Christians, we are called to be witnesses for Christ (Acts 1:8), pointing others to Jesus as the only hope in this sin-shattered, shalom-violated world.

¹ George Marsden, *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*.

² Wright, *The Mission of God's People*, 24.

The central outrageous idea of this book, encapsulated in the phrase “missional professor,” is that God wants to use Christian professors as *professors* to reach others (colleagues, administrators, students), play a role in transforming academia, and meet the needs of the world. I will flesh this idea out in more detail in the pages to follow, but first a word on the notion of being a *faithful* follower of Christ as a professor.

What does faithfulness to God look like in this day and age for a Christian professor? Is it regular church attendance? Tithing? Consistent Bible reading and prayer? All of these activities are good and ought to be part of the faithful Christian life of a professor, but they don't get to the heart of the matter. This is why the idea of a *faithful* professor doesn't sound as outrageous as does the idea of a *missional* professor. These two concepts are often seen as distinct. But actually, they are the same thing. Most Christian professors deeply desire to be faithful to Christ in their vocation, but, due to a lack of understanding and vision, and in some places due to external restrictions that suppress Christianity, many Christian professors have not discovered how to locate their work and their lives firmly within the context of God's great story as articulated in the Bible. And those Christian professors who are living missional lives within the academy undoubtedly could use encouragement and a fresh challenge to “excel still more” (1 Thess 4:10, NASB).

The problem isn't entirely internal to the Christian scholar. Consider Stanley Fish. In his book *Save the World on Your Own Time*, he argues that the idea of a missional professor is ludicrous and inappropriate:

Remember always what a university is for—the transmission of knowledge and the conferring of analytical skills—and resist the temptation to inflate the importance of what goes on in its precincts . . . Of course one is free to prefer other purposes to the purposes appropriate to the academy, but one is not free to employ the academy's machinery and resources in the service of those other purposes. If what you really want to do is preach, or organize political rallies, or work for world peace, or minister to the poor and homeless, or counsel troubled youths, you should either engage in those activities after hours and on weekends, or, if part-time is not enough time, you should resign from the academy.³

In Fish's view, the only legitimate role for the professor within the secular university is one of teaching and research, devoid of any moral, religious, or political values or ideologies. I disagree. The idea that a professor leaves her values and convictions behind when entering the pristine

³ Fish, *Save the World on Your Own Time*, 79, 81.

halls of academia is an illusion! There is no such thing as “value neutral” scholarship. Everyone, whether they like it or not, approaches the academic enterprise with a host of presuppositions, values, and religious (or anti-religious) commitments that are applied—whether consciously and explicitly or unconsciously and implicitly—in the process of teaching, research, administration, and policy making. In this book, however, I am not trying to convince the Fishes of the world. Instead, my intended audience is Christian professors working within the secular academy. A secondary audience is those Christian professors working within Christian universities and colleges, all of whom interact with their broader academic discipline and with their Christian and non-Christian colleagues working in secular institutions.

To be a missional professor in the secular university, great *courage* is required because of the pressures within the academic community toward conformity in terms of educational goals, norms, practices, foundational assumptions, and lifestyle. The call to be self-consciously “on mission” within the university requires a boldness in some locales, first of all, simply to identify openly as a Christian scholar and, in all locales, it requires a boldness to be different—to engage in the scholarly enterprise with one eye toward Biblical truth and the other toward a lost and needy world. That kind of boldness will come with the conviction that the full-orbed gospel is exactly what all men and women—the caretakers of creation—need for their redemption.

Moreover, the presence of missional professors within the secular academy is *startling*. Missional professors draw people to themselves, and through themselves to Christ. The subtext of a missional professor’s life is not, “Look how great I am,” or, “Look how impressive my CV is.” Instead it is, “Look how great Christ is.” Such a life lived in secular academia is truly startling and refreshing. The presence of one missional professor within the secular university causes eyebrows to lift, heads to turn, hearts to awaken, consciences to become convicted, and lives to be challenged.

I fear, however, that in many parts of the world such a professor is *unusual*, even rare or dangerous, for reasons that I will explain in a moment. If I am right, if there is only a scattering of missional professors, then the Christian voice and witness within the secular university is weak, and genuine transformation of academic cultures and the culture at large will not take place. Those Christian professors who are missional can be written off as an anomaly and largely ignored. Sure, we will win skirmishes. Debates and articles against the latest claims of Richard Dawkins and Stephen Hawking can satisfy the already convinced. Perhaps we

will see a few new converts. But institutional change, where the Biblical worldview is seen as a viable option and the Christian voice within the academy is clear and articulate, will not take place and Christian witness and influence will be stifled. The idea, as well as the embodiment of the idea of a missional professor, is outrageous.

I long for a day when the idea of a missional professor is no longer outrageous. What would the secular university look like if missional professors were commonplace? Instead of being an anomaly, easily explained away, the presence of a movement of missional professors around the world and across academic disciplines would truly be revolutionary. I write this book as an invitation and challenge for Christian professors everywhere and in every discipline to join the revolution.

Isn't it Enough Just to be a Christian and a Professor?

Imagine the apostle Paul visiting South Korea in the twenty-first century. Further, imagine that he has been commissioned by the church to examine the status of Christianity within the Korean professoriate. What would he find? Perhaps he would write something like the following letter:

Paul, a “sent-one”—sent by Jesus Christ and God the Father. To the church, the pillar and foundation of the truth (1 Tim 3:15) in Korea:

The spirit of Korean academia is alive and well, just as it was in my day. The amount of knowledge that the university has amassed is amazing. What an incredible God we serve. The God of the Big Bang! The God of Augustine! The God of Confucius! The God of Mahatma Ghandhi! The God of drones, robots, and spaceships! Wherever the gospel has taken root, learning has followed. Many of the great discoveries over the centuries were made by Christian scholars who were guided by the conviction that God has created an orderly world. Christians now teach and lead and serve within the many great institutions of learning in the land. Praise be to God! Not surprisingly, I have also found idols within the university and the hearts of those who work there, just as I did in Athens (see Acts 17:16). They are not as obvious (not carved in stone at any rate), but they are still present. I shall now summarize my findings (forgive the staleness of my writing style, I've been out of practice for a couple thousand years and am still learning some of the new language).

Christian professors are present in secular universities in Korea—teaching undergraduate and graduate courses, conducting high-quality research, and serving on policy-making committees. Moreover, Christian professors are not confined to religion and theology departments but are

found in every academic discipline—from the theoretical to the practical, the sciences to the humanities. Wherever learning is taking place, Christians and Christianity can be found. This brings my heart great joy as I recall my speech in the Areopagus in which I stated, “in him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). I was quoting a Greek poet to make the point that God is the answer to life’s fundamental questions. So, it makes sense to me that Christianity and Christians would be found in each academic discipline, since all knowledge somehow points to our great God.

I have found that many Christian professors in the secular academy view themselves as distinctively and self-consciously Christian. They desire to bring honor to God. They faithfully attend church and raise their families to know Christ. They serve in the church choir and in their children’s Sunday school classroom, and participate in a small group within their church. At work, they desire to be, and often are, respected and competent practitioners of their guilds. They teach well and make time for students (or at least faithfully hold office hours). They read and sometimes write articles or books that draw connections between their faith and their own academic discipline. They participate in scholarly conferences as members of good standing, and many participate in distinctively Christian scholarly societies as well. They are men and women of character, Christ-like to be sure in moral conviction and practice. There is much to rejoice in as we consider the presence and conviction of many Christian professors within secular academia.

But why does the church, “the pillar and foundation of the truth” (1 Tim 3:15) not commission Christian professors into service? The university is an incredibly important mission field. Ideas are discussed and advanced by professors, and these ideas are often hostile toward Christianity (see my second letter to the Corinthians chapter 10 for more on the importance of ideas). Millions of students and fellow professors study and work at the university each year; many are lost and in need of the Savior. Technologies are being developed in the university that could be used to meet the many needs of the world. Christian professors are strategically placed in one of the most important institutions in your society to be a witness for Christ. But, sadly, there seems to be this great divide between the “secular” and the “sacred”—a divide unfamiliar in my day and age. The result is that many, though certainly not all, Christian professors have disconnected their jobs (or large parts of their jobs) from their Christianity, no longer measuring their lives in terms of the *progress of the gospel*. And the church supports this split when they don’t affirm and intrinsically value the calling of Christian professors as professors. My heart breaks.

May Christian professors have the heart of Jesus, who, after looking at the harassed and helpless crowds, had compassion on them and prayed for the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into the harvest field (Matt

9:36–38). I end this report with my last words to the church in Rome: “Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him—to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen” (Rom 16:25–27).

What can we learn from this imaginative exercise? If the findings of this imaginary letter are at all close to the actual state of affairs with respect to Christian professors (and graduate students) within the secular academy (in Korea and beyond), and I submit that it is, then there is much to rejoice over and some challenges to consider. The main challenge before us is to live a fully integrated life where work and play, church and family, head and heart, and hands all work together to serve God and humanity under the banner of the gospel. In short, Christian professors ought to be missional professors.

I offer three reasons to justify my claim that we are falling short in this area.⁴ First, *many twenty-first century Christians scarcely see the world from a distinctively Christian perspective*. Instead, our natural patterns of thought, imbibed since we were born and shaped in secular undergraduate and graduate universities, are those informed by the prevailing and pervasive worldviews of our respective contemporary cultures, be they traditional, scientific, postmodern, or materialistic, etc. Hence, we need to constantly remind ourselves of the biblical worldview. It is not second nature.

Second, *the human heart is rebellious and deceitful*. From personal experience, it seems that the propensity of the human heart is to turn toward self. Good intentions, over time, and if we are not careful, turn into ways to advance self-serving agendas; the desire to live faithfully for Christ, over time, and if we are not careful, diminishes and needs to be constantly fed or it will be replaced with a desire for self-aggrandizement or self-fulfillment, and so on.

Finally, *while experts within their own particular fields of study, Christian professors often need additional education when it comes to matters theological and philosophical*. A missional professor needs to be competent, even well versed, in such matters. When this is not the case, the result is a patchwork attempt to integrate one’s faith with one’s scholarly work and an inability to fit the pieces of one’s life into God’s larger story.

⁴ Thanks to Nicholas Wolterstorff for helpful comments regarding the first and third reason. See Wolterstorff, *Reason within the Bounds of Religion*, 107–8.

Faithfulness to Christ in this day and age requires savvy, humility, intention, and the community of believers, both within and outside the academy. It requires that we live our lives pursuing God's purposes. That task is difficult for most Christians and doubly so for academics who live and breathe within an academic structure that encourages self-promotion and personal accomplishment. May we together as Christian scholars seek to live our lives for the glory of God and the love of man. The result will be revolutionary.

A Spiritual Revolution

In his book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*,⁵ Thomas Kuhn describes the history of science in terms of eras of relatively ordinary and regular scientific activities punctuated by paradigm-changing episodes of scientific revolution. A scientific paradigm is "overthrown" when it can no longer accommodate new discoveries which appear as anomalies under its framework. For example, the Ptolemaic paradigm of the universe was overthrown by the heliocentric paradigm; phlogiston theory was abandoned with the discovery of oxygen; caloric theories of heat were replaced with kinetic theories; and so on. A chain reaction is the result; our view of the world changes, our way of doing things changes, and the world itself changes. Some may disagree with Kuhn's linear view of the history of thought, but the fact remains that a change in our way of viewing the world results in profound changes of our behavior that in turn affect the world in dramatic ways.

I believe that there is a revolution afoot today that is global in scope and has the power to change both individual lives as well as society. It is the revolution of the human heart brought on by faith in Jesus. The tendency of the human heart is toward self and idolatry. And the only cure for this human condition is Christ. Our world is a world of violence, injustice, and strife. And the only hope for this world is a Saviour who redeems and restores. Jesus has called his followers to join with him as agents of change. Imagine a movement of missional professors within every academic discipline and on every secular college and university in the world.

Such a state of affairs would cause, in Kuhn's terminology, a "crisis" of belief—with respect to the stories that have dominated the academy and the cultures of the world: naturalism, theism, scientific materialism, pantheism, polytheism, spiritism, deconstructionism, and postmodernism.

⁵ Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.

Evolutionary explanations for religious belief would appear as they are: ad hoc attempts to avoid a godly explanation for any aspect of reality. Postmodernism (in its most extreme articulation) would be revealed as an unlivable and desperate attempt to find meaning in a world that is meaningless apart from God. The appeal to pantheistic, polytheistic, or animistic values in many cultures of the world would equally be frustrating, as people face the challenge of appeasing a multiplicity of angry gods or of living in a meaningless universe as opposed to one under the control of a sovereign Creator God who is also a personal, eternal, and loving father.

The presence of a movement of missional professors would cause non-believing professors and students (and society in general) to examine their own beliefs and hearts in light of the gospel of Christ. Listen to the story told by British scholar C. S. Lewis of how God moved into his life:

No sooner had I entered the English School than I went to George Gordon's discussion class. And there I made a new friend. The very first words he spoke marked him out from the ten or twelve others who were present; a man after my own heart . . . His name was Nevill Coghill. I soon had the shock of discovering that he—clearly the most intelligent and best-informed man in that class—was a Christian and a thoroughgoing supernaturalist . . . Barfield was beginning to overthrow my chronological snobbery; Coghill gave it another blow . . .

These disturbing factors in Coghill ranged themselves with a wider disturbance which was now threatening my whole earlier outlook. All the books were beginning to turn against me . . . George MacDonald had done more to me than any other writer; of course it was a pity he had that [infatuation with] Christianity . . . [G. K.] Chesterton had more sense than all the other moderns put together; bating, of course, his Christianity. Johnson was one of the few authors whom I felt I could trust utterly; curiously enough, he had the same kink . . . On the other hand, those writers who did not suffer from religion and with whom in theory my sympathy ought to have been complete—Shaw and Wells and Mill and Gibbon and Voltaire—all seemed a little thin. . . There seemed to be no depth in them. They were too simple. The roughness and density of life did not appear in their books.⁶

Lewis goes on to describe how everywhere he turned God was pursuing, even haunting, him. The most riveting books were written by Christians

⁶ Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 212–14.

or those not beholden to atheism. The Christians he met were not unlearned; rather they were fellow students and professors at prestigious institutions of learning, such as Oxford and Cambridge.

Eventually, there were too many anomalies to his naturalistic atheism, and Lewis was forced into a crisis of belief:

All over the board my pieces were in the most disadvantageous positions. Soon I could no longer cherish even the illusion that the initiative lay with me. My Adversary began to make His final moves.⁷

Finally, in the quiet of his own room at Magdalen College, in 1929, Lewis bent his knee and surrendered his will to God.

It is instructive that Lewis's own crisis of belief was brought to a head as he was confronted (and confounded) at every turn by faithful Christians and the profundity of the Christian worldview. Christians had a depth and settledness that caused him to question his own sense of security. Christianity had the ring of truth to it in a way that revealed the shallowness of his atheism. Lewis's life was forever changed and the world is different because of it.

The university is one of the most important and influential institutions in our world. As professors, you play an important role in shaping the lives and thoughts of the world's future business leaders, educators, entertainers, and writers. As Christian professors, God has called you to be witnesses for Christ, bringing your expertise and your biblical lenses to bear on the needs of the world, pointing students, administrators and colleagues to Christ, and involving others in the only revolution that will truly transform a person and society, the revolution of the human heart brought on by Jesus Christ and the consequent paradigm shift with respect to how we view history, the physical environment, and current social problems. Some of you are already living missional lives as professors and need encouragement to "excel still more" (1 Thess 4:10, NASB). Many aren't living missionally and need a clear vision of such a life and role models to lead the way. We all need God's grace and mercy as we try to follow Christ faithfully. Will you join with God and others in this spiritual revolution of Jesus? On the pages to follow, we will consider what such a life looks like.

⁷ Ibid., 216.

Questions for Personal Reflection or Group Discussion

- 1) Do you agree or disagree with Gould that the idea of a missional professor is outrageous—startling and unusual—within the secular university? Why or why not?
- 2) Discuss the central outrageous idea of this book: God wants to use professors *as professors* to reach others, play a role in transforming academia, and meet the needs of the world. What aspect of this central idea is the most challenging to you? Which is most exciting to you?
- 3) Consider Stanley Fish's quote. Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?
- 4) Gould states that being a missional professor requires great courage. Why? He also states that the presence of missional professors in the university is rare. Do you agree or disagree? Can you point to any examples of missional professors that have been a source of encouragement to you?
- 5) Discuss the fictional letter from the apostle Paul. Do you think this letter is at all close to the truth with respect to Christian professors, the university, and the contemporary church? Why or why not?
- 6) Gould argues that the main challenge for Christian professors today is to live a fully integrated life. Do you struggle with living such a life as a Christian professor? How so? What has been helpful to you?
- 7) How is the revolution of Jesus different than other revolutions?
- 8) Share your story of how you came to Christ. What was the role of Christians in your journey? What was the role of Christian academics in your journey?

I

LOCATING YOUR STORY WITHIN GOD'S STORY

“Ivan Illich was once asked what is the most revolutionary way to change society. Is it violent revolution or is it gradual reform? He gave a careful answer. Neither. If you want to change society, then you must tell an alternative story.”⁸

Have you ever wondered why we are so drawn to stories? Not just kids, but young and old alike? One reason is that stories invite participation. We are created for drama. I believe God made us to live a dramatic—a significant and storied—life. This is why we are drawn to story. Stories pull us out of ourselves and into a larger universe—stretching our imagination and awakening within us a desire for greatness.

Another reason we are drawn to stories is that they reveal things about people. Stories help us get to know each other. They reveal something about the storyteller. Think about it: when two people go on a first date, they don't pull out a list of facts (or CV's) and begin to share them with each other, do they? No, they tell stories to get to know each other. Stories reveal things to us and about us in a way that nothing else can.⁹

Stories are important. The Bible is the greatest story ever told. In fact, it is *the* story, the one true story about our world. And like any good story, it invites us to participation and it reveals. The Bible invites us to locate our lives and find meaning and purpose within its overarching story. And the Bible reveals a loving, powerful, good God and a God-bathed world.

Act 1 in the biblical story begins with God and his creative activity. He creates a habitat and then he inhabits the habitat with creatures small and great including one being—man—created in the image of God himself. Act 2 is the fall of man. Man tries to live life apart from God and the results are truly catastrophic. In acts 3 and 4 we learn of God's rescue mission to redeem and restore all of creation. This is the great story of God: creation, fall, redemption, and restoration.

⁸ Quote from Costello, *Streets of Hope: finding God in St. Kilda*, 145.

⁹ Thanks to my friend Mike Erre for these two points about the importance of story. See his *Why the Bible Matters*.

But the biblical story isn't the only story competing for your allegiance and inviting your participation. In some parts of the world, especially in the Caribbean, among many Native Americans, and throughout countries in Africa, animism—the religious belief that all living creatures, all physical objects, and every place possess distinct spiritual essence—is a dominant story. Voodoo is a persuasive story in Haiti; Marxism, scientific materialism, and Confucianism in China, Islam (especially) in North Africa and the Middle East; and cyclicism (the never-ending story of life and death), deterministic pantheism, the concepts of “luck” when one receives a good outcome and “fate” when one receives a bad outcome in many Eastern cultures; and the list goes on.

Two dominant stories especially in academic culture throughout the world are what the philosopher Alvin Plantinga calls *perennial naturalism* and *creative anti-realism*.¹⁰ Perennial naturalism is the grand story of the scientific worldview. In this story, there is no non-natural reality, the fundamental problem in life is one of ignorance, and the way to “salvation,” usually understood as mastery over nature, is through progress, a progress made possible by means of technology and science. All of reality can be understood, and will one day be unified, through science (M-theory, according to the latest suggestion), and our lives (even though determined) need to somehow be made meaningful in a cold, purposeless universe. Creative anti-realism is just the story of postmodernism (at its most extreme). In this story, humankind's fundamental problem is oppression, and “salvation” is found in self-expression. There is no one overarching story that explains and unifies all of reality; instead there are little “stories” or “narratives” that give meaning to various individuals or groups of individuals.¹¹

Each story competes for our allegiance. Each story invites participation. Each story invites us to locate our lives and find meaning within its purview. It's easy, if we are not careful, to confess allegiance to the biblical story all the while participating in a different story. For example, when a seasoned Haitian Christian was asked what percent of a particular village was Christian, he replied, “This village is 75% Christian; but 100% Vodoo!”¹² To be missional, we must first seek to understand the prevalent

¹⁰ Plantinga, “When Faith and Reason Clash,” 16.

¹¹ Opitz and Melleby summarise the main story-line of perennial naturalism and creative anti-realism respectively in terms of three main acts: matter-ignorance-progress, and culture-oppression-expression in *The Outrageous Idea of Academic Faithfulness*, 61–2.

¹² As told by Keith Campbell.

“stories” that motivate our students and colleagues. In this chapter we’ll explore in greater depth the biblical story and draw out some implications for Christian scholars and Christian scholarship in light of this great story of God.

Creation: The God Who is There and Acts

Recall that the first scene in the biblical story is creation. The biblical drama begins with five important words that shape all that follows: “In the beginning God created” (Gen 1:1). The first thing God does is create a *place*: “the heavens and the earth.” But God didn’t stop there. Next, he creates nature, and to top it all off he creates a *people*: “God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Gen 1:27).¹³ And finally, God gave his people a *purpose*: “God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground’” (Gen 1:28). As God beheld his work, he proclaimed it good: “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good” (Gen 1:31).

In this opening scene of the biblical story, we learn about God and people. There is one God, not many gods, as some of the other creation stories from this time teach. God is before/apart from creation (i.e., God is transcendent), and the creator of all reality distinct from himself. In fact, the phrase “heaven and earth” is meant by the biblical writer to encompass all reality distinct from God: God alone is creator; all else is creature. Thus, God is sovereign: everything depends on God and God doesn’t depend on anything. God alone exists *a se* (is self-existent); everything else exists *ab alio* (through another). Further, we learn in Scripture that this creator God is not absent from the world; rather his presence fills the universe. We live in a God-bathed universe (i.e., God is immanent). As Paul proclaims in Acts, “For in him we live and move and have our being” (17:28). Finally, God is orderly and purposeful (not capricious, random). Listen to the poetic cadence, repeated over and over in the creation account in Genesis: “And God said” . . . “and there was” . . . “God saw that it was good.” God has called into being an ordered world—a world full of promise, potentiality, purpose, and design. As Augustine cries out when

¹³ More fully, man was created on the sixth day, after the earth (i.e., the “place”) was populated with plants and animals in order to make it suitable for human life.

considering a newborn infant, “you give distinct form to all things and by your law impose order on everything.”¹⁴

As we read the creation account in Genesis chapter one, we settle into this rhythmic cadence until we arrive in verse 26 at day six. The rhythmic cadence is broken: “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness’ (1:26). Something new is taking place, something unique. Plants and animals were made “according to their kinds,” but God made humans according to his own kind (his likeness or image). We are like God, and on earth we represent God. As C. S. Lewis once stated, “there are no *ordinary* people.”¹⁵ Because we are created in God’s image, each person has great dignity. Each human being is literally priceless, so beyond worth that a monetary value cannot be placed on him or her.

Moreover, God created people for a twofold purpose (as seen in Gen 1:28): (1) to protect what has been given, and (2) to be fruitful and multiply. This two-fold purpose only makes sense in light of the fact that people are created in God’s image. Why are we to protect what has been given? Answer: as God’s image bearers, our rule over the earth should parallel or reflect God’s rule over us. Our part in the creation story is to care for the earth and all that is in it: its people, its cultures, its environment, and its animals. We are called by God to be stewards of the created order in ways that embody God’s own care and delight in the created order. Why are we to be fruitful and multiply? Does God just want us to multiply like rabbits for the sake of numbers? No, it is because we alone are image bearers. We alone reflect the *glory* of God, and God wants *his glory* to be multiplied. As we fulfill this God-given purpose and reflect his glory, we extend the image of God, and hence his glory, throughout all the earth. As North American pastor and theologian John Piper states, “Missions exists because worship doesn’t.”¹⁶ Part of our God-given purpose in life is to extend the reach of worshipers throughout all of creation, so that all people give God glory.

It is important to understand that the first humans did not come into the world flawed. Rather, the first humans originally experienced life as it was meant to be. The Garden of Eden was literally a garden of delights. The biblical word for this wholeness that God intends for us is *shalom*. As Cornelius Plantinga states,

¹⁴ Augustine, *Confessions*, 10.

¹⁵ Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*, 46.

¹⁶ John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad!* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1993), 11.

Shalom means *universal flourishing, wholeness, and delight*—a rich state of affairs in which natural needs are satisfied and natural gifts fruitfully employed, a state of affairs that inspires joyful wonder as its Creator and Savior opens doors and welcomes the creatures in whom he delights. Shalom, in other words, *is the way things ought to be* (italics added).¹⁷

We were created to flourish. God wants us to function properly. And the creation account gives us a picture of what human flourishing—shalom—looks like: intimacy with God and harmony with self, others, and the created order as we live out our God-given purposes.¹⁸

God is there and God acts. This creation account is incredibly subversive with respect to the other dominant stories of the world. Naturalism tells us that there is no God and that man is the product of blind evolutionary forces. Postmodernism, or creative anti-realism, says there is no ready-made world; there is no way things are supposed to be, or if there is, we can't know it. Scientific materialism tells us that man is swept along by the inevitable forces of economic history. Fatalistic religions tell us that we have no control whatsoever over this life or the next. Perennial naturalism proclaims that “progress” is the answer to life's problems. Such views present a God-absented world.

What are the implications of the creation story for the Christian scholar? First, because God is creator of all things, all things (including all things known) point to and illuminate the divine. And since knowledge of God is an intrinsic good, in fact the noblest, greatest good of all, then knowledge is intrinsically good and worthwhile as well. As John Henry Newman, writing in 1873 states:

God “has so implicated Himself with [the creation], and taken it into His very bosom, by His presence in it, His providence over it, His impressions upon it, and His influence through it, that we cannot truly or fully contemplate it without in some aspects contemplating Him.”¹⁹

As a scholar, patiently look for these connections between the object of your study and God. As a scientist, look for the hand of God in the molecule, in the laws of motion, in the rhythm of a hummingbird's flutter. In literature, listen for the voice of God through the texts. How does Jane Austin's Mr. Darcy reflect the heart of God? What does Dante's *Inferno* or

¹⁷ Plantinga, *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be*, 10.

¹⁸ Even in ancient China, a similar ideal of harmony between heaven, nature, and humanity persisted, where “heaven” refers to the highest deity.

¹⁹ Newman, *The Idea of a University*, 51.

The Divine Comedy teach us about the justice of God? How might “the Way” in Daoism relate to the Christian theology of general revelation? In what ways does Fyodor Dostoevsky’s *The Brothers Karamzov* help us better understand theological debates about human free will? Maybe the connections aren’t always so obvious, but they are there. Go find them and then proclaim them in ways appropriate to your discipline.

Since all knowledge can illuminate the divine, it follows that the pursuit of knowledge is intrinsically worthwhile and valuable. In today’s market-driven cultures, the university is struggling to justify its existence in any terms other than productivity, efficiency, and usefulness.²⁰ But if the pursuit of theoretical knowledge is justified solely based on perceived material, economic, or practical benefits, then large parts of the university (most notably the humanities) will continue to struggle to justify their existence. In the biblical account and its shalomic view that all reality is rightly ordered, aesthetic, theoretical *and* (so-called) practical knowledge are all intrinsically valuable—illuminating the divine and fulfilling human purposes.²¹

Second, since God is the creator, human life is inherently religious and communal. We have been created by God to respond to him, to love him, to worship him, to delight in him and to enjoy him. Thus, at its core, human life is inherently *religious*. All of human life is lived in response to God in either communion or rebellion. Further, as image-bearers of the triune God, we are essentially *communal*, a fact that Western scholars in particular frequently overlook. We were created to live in community with God and with others, a fact that Eastern Christians, who live in a culture that emphasizes personal responsibilities toward the group more than rugged individualism, understand well. Recall Genesis 1:31: all that God made was proclaimed “very good.” But then, in Genesis chapter 2, we find these startling words: “It is not good for man to be alone” (2:18). Think about this for a moment. Adam had the Garden of Eden; he had a guilt-free, shameless relationship with the God of the universe, yet he

²⁰ This state of affairs is well documented in Donoghue, *The Last Professor*.

²¹ Wolterstorff, *Reason within the Bounds of Religion*, 126–27, asks, “Could it be that [theoretical knowledge] is itself a good thing? Could it be that it is itself a dimension of shalom, a component in human fulfillment? . . . I find it impossible to answer no to this question. To me it seems evident that understanding, comprehension, knowledge, constitutes a fulfillment of our created nature . . . I want to say that a theoretical comprehension of ourselves and of the reality in the midst of which we live—of its unifying structure and its explanatory principles—is a component in the shalom God meant for us. Where knowledge is absent, life is withered.”

was lonely. The point is this. We need each other. It is not just, "Jesus is my personal friend and I don't need anyone else." Don't let your ability to thrive on solitude as a scholar result in isolation both inside and outside the academy.²² We need the community to thrive; it is how we have been hardwired.

Third, since our students are created in God's image, as professors, we should view our students as "co-creators" or "co-regents" who bear the image of God and not simply as repositories of our knowledge. We need to use teaching methods that recognize their God-given capacities to understand, to analyze, to engage in problem-solving, to undertake critical thinking, and to create. This can be complicated, as there seems to be almost a unspoken law that teachers will teach in the same ways that they were taught. This is also complicated for another reason; in some societies the authorities dictate course content, and the need to cover that content often eats up valuable class time. But Christian professors are image bearers, and we can be creative! We can fulfill our mandate to be fruitful and multiply by using teaching methods that enable our students to flourish and to exercise the image of God that is innate within them.²³

The final implication is related to the second: since humans are inherently religious, there is no such thing as neutrality. Recall Paul's speech to the Areopagus in Acts 17. His entry point with the Athenians was his observation that they were very religious. We can rephrase this statement by observing that in the university, there is no such thing as neutrality. Every discipline has its own control beliefs, faith presuppositions, and axioms (we'll talk more about this in chapter 8). Part of our job as scholars is to understand and expose the faith commitments of each academic discipline so that we can advocate an alternative picture of reality (where needed) based on the biblical vision of reality.

The Fall: Violation of Shalom

Act 2 of the biblical story is the fall of humanity. Things are no longer the way they are supposed to be. Shalom has been violated. Sin, suffering and death have entered the world. It doesn't take much to convince us that

²² Donoghue talks about the "scholarly personality" of an academic in which the capacity to thrive on solitude is essential to professional survival in academia. See *The Last Professor*, 19.

²³ For example, see Stephen S. Wang's "doubly active learning" in the use of technology to design his mathematics courses. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XQztwuqNAKU> and <http://math.rice.edu/~sw45/Math101FallvsSpring.pdf>.

something is not right. When we come face to face with evil—embodied either in a terrorist detonating a car bomb in a crowded shopping district or in a garment factory catching fire and dozens of trapped workers burning to death—we have this sense in our gut that this isn't the way the world is supposed to be. Daily we read of wars, famine, disease, disaster, injustice, slavery, genocide, rape, and murder. Time spent researching a topic doesn't always bear fruit (e.g., in the form of a publishable article). The prestigious position or hoped-for research money doesn't materialize. Marriages struggle. Friendships grow cold. Children rebel. Our own hearts are often far from God. This is not the way the world is supposed to be. So, what exactly happened?

As Genesis chapter three opens, the question facing the first couple is, will they fulfill the purpose for which they were made? The answer is a resounding 'no'. God tells Adam and Eve that they should not eat of one tree and that doing so results in death. The scene introduces another character, Satan, in the form of a snake. Satan's strategy is to deceive Adam and Eve by first undercutting God's authority ("You will not surely die," Gen 3:4) and then God's goodness ("For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil," Gen 3:5). Adam and Eve decide to try to meet their needs in their own way, instead of following God, and "fall" from the shalom state of wholeness, delight, and grace. Because of sin, people no longer enjoy relationship with God, but rather are alienated from him; because of sin, people no longer enjoy harmony with others, but experience strife and murder; because of sin, people no longer enjoy harmony with the created order, but encounter disasters and dangers at every turn. Because of Adam and Eve's original sin, all of humanity is damaged, born into the world in a state of alienation from God and others. Sin defiles every inch of creation. It corrupts our inner lives, our relationships, our work and play, even our rest. We are no longer whole because of the wickedness in our hearts and the injustice of our actions.

There are at least two implications related to the fall for the Christian scholar. First, the received role of the academic is a fallen role; not fallen completely, but nonetheless fallen.²⁴ Just as the businessperson does not enter into the profession and uncritically play the received role of the businessperson, so too the Christian academic ought not to enter the academy and uncritically play the received role of the academic. As Nicholas Wolterstorff states, "To serve God faithfully and to serve humanity effectively, one has to critique the received role and do what one can to

²⁴ Wolterstorff, *Educating for Shalom*, 272.

alter the script.”²⁵ There is no aspect of the university untainted by the fallenness of humanity. The values, norms, and culture of an academic department or discipline are shaped by fallen humans and thus by the dominant stories they embody.

Second, people tend to deny culpable sin and thus misdiagnose the core human problem and solution. In the world, evil is real and has real effects, i.e., bad things that happen to people. But sin, understood as an affront to a holy God, is rarely acknowledged. Hence, the solution to humanity's problems can be found in education and technology (according to the naturalistic story) or in expression and giving voice to individual causes (in the postmodern story), in rituals to appease some deities (according to the polytheistic story) or even in detachment and union with the cosmos (according to eastern pantheism) instead of in repentance and trust in a holy yet gracious and personal God. Without culpable sin, there is no need for a Saviour. Without an understanding of shalom in terms of a relationship with God (as well as its other dimensions), there is no need to seek forgiveness and restoration. As Christian scholars, we can help, in winsome and appropriate ways, to show how the strife, dissent, pluralism, and, in some places, outright institutional evil so characteristic of the academy is ultimately due to the humanity's fallenness against a personal God.

Redemption: The Coming of the King

From Genesis 12 to Revelation 20, we read about a God on a rescue mission to redeem the enslaved, to save the lost. God calls Abraham to be a blessing to all nations (Gen 12:1–3). Sub-themes and individual scenes in God's redemptive story include the Exodus, the nation of Israel, the giving of the Law, monarchy, exile and return, and the prophets. Each event and sub-theme within the Old Testament weaves together a tapestry of the sovereignty and grace of God in the life of his people and sets the stage for the climax of God's rescue mission. The climax is the coming of Christ. In the incarnation, God himself takes on a human nature and enters the created order. Think about this for a moment. It would be like the author of a book taking on the nature of one of its characters and entering into the story—Lewis going to Narnia (as a talking animal, surely), Tolkien going to Middle Earth (as a Hobbit, undoubtedly), or Achebe going to Umuofia (as Okonkwo) in *Things Fall Apart*.

²⁵ Ibid.

Motivated by love, God sends Jesus: “This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world” (1 John 4:9a). The good news is that people can be redeemed and shalom can be restored through forgiveness of sins in Christ. “God . . . sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1 John 4:10). Humanity (and ultimately all of creation) is redeemed from all the consequences of sin: death, alienation, disintegration, and slavery to his passions. This is how love invaded our planet. This is how the revolution of the human heart began. And this is the great revolution in which God invites our participation.

Further, from Jesus’ opening words (in Matt 4:17–19) to his last words (in Acts 1:8), the progress of the gospel, this good news about the Kingdom of God, was foremost on his mind. God’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 12, that through him and his descendants all the nations of the earth would be blessed, finds its fulfillment in Christ. The mechanism, the thing that makes the gospel work, is the death and resurrection of Christ. As Paul states in 1 Corinthians 15:17, “And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.” After his work on earth was done, Jesus went back to the Father, promising to send a helper, the Holy Spirit, who will give his followers power to proclaim the good news to others (see John 14:26 and Acts 1:8). Thus Jesus inaugurates the present age by commissioning his followers as “sent ones” as well: “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (John 20:21). Jesus will return to finish what he has started; the Kingdom in all its fullness will one day be revealed.

Christians today find themselves living “between the times” of the first and second coming of Christ. This period is sometimes called “the last days” (2 Tim 3:1) and is also called “the age of the spirit” and “the church age.” Moreover, it is the intersection of two ages—the present age and the age to come (both talked about in Matt 12:32). The Kingdom of God is already among us, but it is not yet fully consummated. The question naturally arises, why the delay? Why didn’t Jesus inaugurate his Kingdom in all its fullness and power at his first coming? Or, why doesn’t Jesus return sooner and perfect the Kingdom? The answer is that God has deliberately delayed the return of Jesus so that more people have the chance to hear the gospel and repent before it is too late. In short, we live in an age of *gospel proclamation*. The followers of Jesus, as apprentices of Jesus, regardless of where on Earth they live, proclaim the good news of the forgiveness of sins in Christ to the world and embody the message in life and action.²⁶ We have been redeemed to be a witness for Christ, to

²⁶ For a good discussion of the overarching story of Scripture, see Roberts, *God’s Big*

flourish in light of our nature, to embrace the scandal of grace. The question before us then is this: Is it possible to be a faithful follower of Jesus without thinking about or living out one's life in terms of advancing the gospel? The answer is no. Part of our task as Christian scholars is to join with God in the process of redeeming souls and, together with the church, ushering in, shalom and blessing to all the earth.

There are at least two implications for the Christian scholar with respect to the redemption of Christ. First, Jesus' mission must be ours as well. Just as Jesus was sent by the Father, so too we are sent by the Son. Jesus' mission of seeking and saving the lost (Luke 19:10) and of healing the sick and bringing justice to the oppressed (Luke 4:17–21) must be our mission as well. Jesus commanded as much before he ascended to heaven (Matt 28:19). As the philosopher Greg Ganssle states, "It is not enough to integrate Christian *beliefs* with our research, we must integrate all that God calls us to in terms of his redemptive Christian *mission* with all we do as scholars and teachers."²⁷ In short, we must live missional lives. Whenever Christ is denied or shalom is violated, the mission of God's people is called for. Thus, missional living is not just about going on a "mission trip" with a church (however important this may be). For professors, the university context is front and center as a mission field, a place where people are in need of redemption and where ideas are taught that either further or hinder the progress of the gospel.

Secondly, we must never lose sight of the fact that we need the gospel as much as the lost do. Prior to conversion, our greatest need is the gospel. Once converted, our greatest need is still the gospel. Consider the great truth that "it is by grace you have been saved, through faith" found in Ephesians 2:8. What is interesting is that Paul was writing to believers, not unbelievers. The gospel is not just the way to enter the Kingdom of God; it is also the way of growth and grace in the Kingdom of God. As American pastor and theologian Tim Keller states,

The gospel is not just the "ABCs" but the "A-to-Z" of the Christian life. The gospel is the way that anything is renewed and transformed by Christ—whether a heart, a relationship, a church, or a community. All our problems come from a lack of orientation to the gospel. Put positively, the gospel transforms our hearts, our thinking and our approach to absolutely everything. The gospel of justifying faith means that while Christians are, in themselves still sinful and sinning, yet in Christ, in God's sight, they are

Picture. According to Roberts, believers today live within the "Proclaimed Kingdom."

²⁷ Quoted in Gould, "The Fully Integrated Life of the Christian Scholar," 39.

accepted and righteous. So we can say that we are more wicked than we ever dared believe, but more loved and accepted in Christ than we ever dared hope—at the very same time.²⁸

Restoration: The Making of all Things New

The climactic vision of the Bible found in Revelation 21 and 22 pulls together all the plotlines and sub-themes found in both the Old and New Testament: all things are renewed/reconciled in Christ (Eph 1:9–10; Col 1:19–20); there will be a renewed heaven and earth (2 Pet 3:13, Rev 21:1); and mankind will once again experience perfect intimacy with God and each other (Rev 21:3–4). God will bring heaven—his presence—to earth. And we will delight in God. Mankind has gone from a garden (the garden of delights) to a city (Jerusalem). Shalom in all of its dimensions will be fully restored. We will (once again) experience life as it is meant to be—intimacy with God and harmony with self, others, and the created order as we eternally live out the purpose for which we were created. This great story, full of promise, intrigue, real violence, and real heroes, ends with all things made new:

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” (Rev 21:3–5)

One final implication for the Christian scholar in light of the restoration of all things is this. Since humanity’s chief end is shalom (in all its dimensions), the activities of the Christian scholar find further justification in terms of their contribution to the cause of shalom. If part of shalom is being rightly related to reality—possessing true knowledge about God, self, and the world—then the pursuit of all knowledge, both theoretical and practical, is justified and worthwhile. Both kinds of knowledge are important and should be pursued as part of our vocation as Christian scholars in service to God and people.

²⁸ Keller, *Paul’s Letter to the Galatians*, 2.

Entering God's Story

As Author, the triune God invites us to join his story. This is why a self-centered life built on the pursuit of prestige, success, money, or power will leave us unfulfilled. When Jesus said we must lose ourselves for his sake in order to find life (Matt 16:25), he was recounting what the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have been doing for eternity. A life built on self-interest, self-advancement, and self-preservation is a life contrary to our God-given nature. We were not meant to function with everything and everyone revolving around us. As Tim Keller states, “self-centeredness destroys the fabric of what God has made.”²⁹ We were made to join in to his story, his drama, his dance: “The whole dance, or drama, or pattern of this three-Personal life is to be played out in each one of us: or (putting it the other way round) each one of us has got to enter that pattern, take his place in that dance. There is no other way to the happiness for which we were made.”³⁰ God is inviting us to this eternal dance as we locate our lives within the great story of God in the Bible. I close this chapter with two practical steps we can take toward finding our places in God's story.

First, our response to God begins with *faith*. Faith allows us to enter into the story, right now in the twenty-first century (we'll discuss the virtue of faith in chapter 6). The Bible presents us with an alternative reality—a story of the world that is subversive, running counter to the stories we imbibe from the world. Faith requires that we step into the story. Faith requires that we act. Faith requires that we join the dance, entering a trust-relationship with the triune God. In doing so, we find out that the story itself is self-validating and self-reinforcing. In fact, Jesus argued as much in John 8:31: “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” We must step into it and personally participate in it in order to see its truth most clearly.

Second, we are to follow Jesus. His standard invitation in the New Testament is “follow me.” To follow Jesus is to step into the big story of God, to make the story of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration our story as well. It is to make Jesus' mission our mission. It is to reorient and restructure our lives to be consistent with the ways of Jesus. It is to live a life of brokenness and humility, broken as Jesus was broken, humble as Jesus is humble, and to allow the grace of God, the music of the gospel, to flow from within our souls to a lost world.

²⁹ Keller, *The Reason for God*, 227.

³⁰ Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 176.

Being a missional professor is not just about “getting the missionary job done.” It is first and foremost about being a certain kind of person. As Christopher Wright states, “If our mission is to share good news [in all its dimensions], we need to be good news people. If we preach a gospel of transformation, we need to show some evidence of what transformation looks like . . . The biblical word . . . ‘holiness’ . . . is as much a part of our missional identity as of our personal sanctification.”³¹ In short, we need to become whole people. We need to integrate all that we are and do as Christians with all that we are and do as university professors. The gospel is not just something to believe, it is also something to obey. In the next chapter, we will consider what kind of person we ought to be. As we shall see, the Bible is passionately concerned about the character of God’s people and their commitment to the God whose mission they are called to share.

Questions for Personal Reflection or Group Discussion

- 1) Think of your favorite story. Why are you drawn to the story? How does the story invite participation? What does the story reveal about the storyteller?
- 2) Gould suggests that there are many stories battling for your allegiance (postmodernism, naturalism, etc.). Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not? What is the dominant story of your academic discipline?
- 3) Discuss the implications for Christian scholarship in light of the Doctrine of Creation. Do you agree that all truths discovered somehow point back and illuminate the divine? What might this look like in your academic discipline?
- 4) What is the “received role” of the university professor? In what ways is this received role good and useful? In what ways is it fallen and in need of correction?
- 5) Gould states that the university is a mission field. Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?
- 6) Do you agree that you need the gospel as much as the non-believer? How is the gospel not just the “ABC” but the “A-to-Z” of the Christian life?
- 7) How can you more fully enter the story of God as a university professor?

³¹ Wright, *The Mission of God’s People*, 29–30.

2

A VISION FOR WHOLENESS

“Nowhere can the mind’s eye find anything more dazzling or more obscure than in man; it can focus on nothing more awe-inspiring, more complex, more mysterious, or more infinite. There is one spectacle greater than the sea: That is the sky; there is one spectacle greater than the sky: That is the interior of the soul.”—Victor Hugo³²

“The most important [commandment] . . . is this: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” —Jesus (Mark 12:29–31)

Since ancient times, people have tried to make sense of the fact that we live in a uni-verse. Philosophers seek to provide a metaphysical account of why there is unity among so much diversity—the age-old problem of the one and the many. Scientists have long been searching for a unification theory, hoping to find one fundamental law of physics that can unify and explain all the diverse phenomenon of this world. Artists seek aesthetic unity when painting or sculpting. In relationships, humanity seeks a kind of unity or harmony with each other, even while it often remains elusive. In our own lives, we hope to unite our thinking, feelings, and will under some overarching purpose. In short, we long for unity. And this is as it should be given the reality of God.

I suggest that we long for unity because we have been created for such wholeness by the perfectly united triune God. And it is this divine unity that is the pattern for all lesser unities:

The Christian doctrine of God thus contains an assertion about the nature of unity. It asserts that all the actual unities of our earthly experience, from the unity of the hydrogen atom to the unity of a work of art, of the human self, or of a human society, are imperfect instances of what unity truly is. We may find in them analogies to that true unity, and learn from them something of what perfect unity must be. But perfect unity itself is to be found only in God, and it is through the revelation of God in Christ that we find the unity of God to be of such a kind as to cast light upon all lesser unities.³³

³² Hugo, *Les Misérables*, 219.

³³ Hodgson, *The Doctrine of the Trinity*, 96.

We long for a kind of wholeness—a flourishing in light of our natures—yet our longings reveal that we haven’t attained it. But as C. S. Lewis reminds us, “God gives what He has, not what He has not: He gives the happiness that there is, not the happiness that is not.”³⁴ Thus, wholeness of spirit, hermetically sealed compartmentalisation, or disintegration—becoming more human or less human—are humanity’s only options. A life directed toward wholeness is a life of flourishing, delight, and integrity. A life bent toward compartmentalisation or disintegration is one of misery, emptiness, and the loss of self. In this chapter, I want to awaken within you the desire for wholeness. I want to convince you that there is a high cost to a compartmentalized or disintegrated life. To put it another way, faithfulness to Christ in the academy involves becoming whole, becoming people of integrity, integrating all that we are as scholars with all that we are as Christians. And as it turns out, we become whole “by the way,” not by mapping out a strategy for wholeness but by looking to Jesus and our greatest joy, hope, love, and happiness.

The Contemporary Challenge to Wholeness

Hollow at its core, the impulse of modern humanity is toward fragmentation. Without a secure identity, we fill our lives with things or activities, hoping to find significance and satisfaction. Often one dimension of our lives runs in one direction, another in a radically different direction. Many dimensions are inconsistent with each other. As a result, our strengths and flexibilities, our disciplines and freedoms are at cross-purposes, and we are left yearning for more.

In his classic novel of academic life in post-war Britain, *Lucky Jim*, Kingsley Amis humorously illustrates the challenge to wholeness within the university.³⁵ Jim Dixon has landed a lectureship within the history department of a provincial university in northern Britain. He is (at best) ambiguous about the job. When describing to a friend how he became a medievalist, Jim admits,

the reason why I’m a medievalist . . . is that the medieval papers were a soft option in the Leicester course, so I specialized in them. Then when I applied for the job here, I naturally made a big point of that, because it looked better to seem interested in something specific. It’s why I got the job instead of that clever boy from Oxford who mucked himself up at the inter-

³⁴ Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, 47.

³⁵ Amis, *Lucky Jim*.

view by chewing the fat about modern theories of interpretation. But I never guessed I'd be landed with all the medieval stuff and nothing but medieval stuff.³⁶

Jim feels like a fraud as a teacher; students waste his time and he theirs. Still, as bored as Jim is with the topic of medieval history, the job does pay the bills. Problems begin for Jim early in his academic appointment, however, when he fails to make a good impression within the department. Worried about his future prospects, Jim realises he must win the approval of his superior, Professor Welch, who is portrayed as an absent-minded, vain, and practically incompetent man and scholar: "No other professor in Great Britain . . . set such store by being called Professor."³⁷

One way to improve his standing with the department is to get a scholarly article published (can you relate?). Yet Jim is revolted by the protocol and pieties of the academic life. As Welch inquires about the title to Jim's article he had submitted for publishing, Jim privately muses before answering:

It was a perfect title, in that it crystallized the article's niggling mindlessness, its funeral parade of yawn-enforcing facts, the pseudo-light it threw upon non-problems. Dixon had read, or begun to read, dozens like it, but his own seemed worse than most in its air of being convinced of its own usefulness and significance. 'In considering this strangely neglected topic,' it began. This what neglected topic? This strangely what topic? This strangely neglected what? . . . 'Let's see,' he echoed in a pretended effort of memory: 'oh yes; *The Economic Influence of the Developments in Shipbuilding Techniques, 1450 to 1485*.'³⁸

The note of self-accusation in this passage is important and is comically illustrated in the novel through Jim's mental or sometimes physical expressions of rebellion through the pulling of grotesque faces when he thinks he is unobserved. (Some of my favorite moments in the novel include these: When asked by a student if he had a minute, Jim stops and turns, but not before "first making his shot-in-the-back face."³⁹ When Welch was reviewing some work Jim had done for him he notices Jim gyrating and asks, "What are you doing now?" with an effect of suspicion." The author's description brings a smile to my face every time I read it: "In

³⁶ Ibid., 33.

³⁷ Ibid., 1.

³⁸ Ibid., 14–15.

³⁹ Ibid., 27.

point of fact, Dixon had got his hands behind his back now and was gesturing with them. ‘I was just . . .’ he stammered.”⁴⁰)

As the novel continues, Jim is torn in many directions. In a desire to keep his job, the job that he really hates, he seeks to please Welch at all costs. This results in Jim attending a weekend of music and the arts at Welch’s house, in which Jim meets a beautiful girl, Christine, who is dating Welch’s pompous son Bertrand. Out of a sense of duty, Jim feels compelled to remain faithful to his girlfriend, Margaret, a fellow lecturer at the university who had recently attempted suicide, instead of pursuing Christine. The story culminates in Jim delivering a lecture (all in an attempt to please Welch) on “Merrie England,” and in his drunkenness mocking Welch and everything else that he hates. The next day Jim is fired.

I will not ruin the rest of the story for you, but I recommend it as a funny (and at times all too close to home) portrait of university life. What Amis so cleverly illustrated in his story is the truth that often the aims and purposes of the university, the culture at large, colleagues, friends, and the individual person are in conflict. Without an overriding purpose or identity, our lives can quickly spin out of control. Sometimes, by luck things might turn out all right in the short-term (as it does in fact for lucky Jim), but without a place to stand, or a story to locate our lives within, wholeness in life will remain elusive.

As a Christian within this cultural milieu, complete devotion to Christ is (to say the least) a challenge. It is easy to be pulled, unaware of the rip-tide, into the polluted waters of self-sufficiency, self-accomplishment, and self-promotion. In short, it is easy to become disintegrated, giving glory to God with our lips but betraying ourselves with our lives. If we have not allowed the gospel to penetrate every aspect of our being, it is easy for our core identity to become divided, following a cornucopia of lesser loves. The result is personal corruption and a muted witness.

So how can we find wholeness? C. S. Lewis simply states the answer: “out of ourselves, into Christ, we must go.”⁴¹ In looking to Christ, we are not losing our self; we are finding our real self. As Jesus said, “For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it” (Matt 16:25). Are you convinced that Jesus is your greatest need? Do you run to Jesus for satisfaction? One of the beautiful things about Jesus is that he is always restoring us in the deepest parts of our soul—

⁴⁰ Ibid., 175.

⁴¹ Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 224.

making us whole, bringing us “Zoe, the new life,”⁴² that can only be found in him. As we allow Jesus to penetrate every fiber of our being, as his Spirit reveals our brokenness and need for a Saviour, we are led to the cross and find life and meaning and purpose and happiness and wholeness. But we find it “along the way” as we look to Christ. In his last words of the masterful work, *Mere Christianity*, Lewis puts an exclamation point on the contemporary challenge to wholeness and the solution: “Look for yourself, and you will find in the long run only hatred, loneliness, despair, rage, ruin, and decay. But look for Christ and you will find Him, and with Him everything else thrown in.”⁴³

Jesus our Greatest Need

The greatest need of the world is not to eliminate poverty, or to halt injustice, or to end all wars. Undoubtedly, these are all great needs that should occupy our time and energies individually and corporately. But our greatest need is Jesus. We need new life. We need a new heart. We are sin-shattered, shalom-violated people full of misplaced and misdirected worship and in need of a Saviour. Our greatest need is Christ on a cross. We need Christ at the center of our lives. We need to dethrone all the lesser gods of self—all insatiable idols—and allow Christ his rightful place on the throne of our hearts. Ultimately, wholeness is about worship. When our worship is divided, it destroys us; it breaks us down and leads to disintegration. But when all of our affections and energies are centered on God, all of our misspent and misdirected worship finds its true target. Jesus is our great worship leader who leads us to the Father and transforms our hearts by his grace. May we be able to sing with the Sons of Korah, “As they make music they will sing, ‘All my fountains are in you’” (Ps 87:7).

A beautiful thing about Jesus is that he is always exposing and restoring our core identity. Recall the story of the rich young ruler. He runs up to Jesus and asks, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life” (Luke 18:18)? In response, Jesus first inquires of this man’s measure of righteousness. Jesus states, “You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother’” (Luke 18:20). The young man’s response is immediate. “All these I have kept since I was a boy” (Luke 18:21). Yet even the young man knew that something was missing, for

⁴² Ibid., 221.

⁴³ Ibid., 227.

otherwise he would not have come to Jesus in the first place. Jesus next speaks to the young man's point of need, "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasures in heaven. Then come, follow me" (Luke 18:22). The word translated "lack" (Greek: *leipo*) means to be deficient in something that ought to be present. What was it that was deficient in the young man's heart? Jesus was exposing the young man's core identity.⁴⁴ For in challenging the rich young man to sell everything, Jesus was asking him to give up his wealthy lifestyle, his influence, his position, even his family, and then, to "come, follow me." Jesus was inviting the rich young man to become his disciple—to find his core identity in Christ—and sadly it was too much for the young man. "When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was a man of great wealth" (Luke 18:23). The issue for this young man wasn't one of outward morality. Outward conformity to a moral code is a misdiagnosis of our greatest need. Rather the issue for the young man was one of worship. He worshipped created things instead of the Creator, violating the first commandment to worship God alone (Exod 20:3).

The lesson for us is that there is a price to pay on the path toward wholeness. The rich young man was unwilling to pay it; he was unwilling to surrender his lesser gods in order to find satisfaction and wholeness in Christ. As a result, the Kingdom of God and the wholeness offered was shut out for him. Yet the call of Christ to follow—"to clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom 13:14)—is also a promise that as we seek we shall surely find, to our hearts delight.

Jesus our Highest Good

Jesus is our greatest need. He is also our highest good. In fact, being our greatest need and highest good are really two sides of the same coin. For our greatest need is the wholeness that can only be found in Christ and our highest good, that which makes us most whole, is to know and love Jesus. It is helpful to consider Jesus as our highest good so that we do not merely seek the Lord because he is useful, but also because he is beautiful.

A consistent theme of many great thinkers is mankind's need and desire to attain his highest good and knowledge of the Ultimate. For example, followers of Gautama Buddha try to achieve Nirvana, the state of en-

⁴⁴ Thanks to Greg Gannse for bringing to my attention the idea of "core identity" and its role in our spiritual formation. For a nice discussion by Greg on this topic, see his, "Bringing Jesus into Core Identity."

lightenment that enables them to transcend the cycles of birth and rebirth. In Plato's *Laws* the Athenian states, "the highest things [are] . . . to know the gods rightly and to live accordingly."⁴⁵ In Epictetus's *Discourses* we learn, "for unless we act in a proper and orderly manner, and conformably to the nature and constitution of each thing, we shall never attain our true end . . . and nature ends [for us] in contemplation and understanding."⁴⁶ The theme of finding rest and fulfillment in God is found throughout Augustine's great spiritual biography, *Confessions*: "When I seek for you, My God, my quest is for the happy life."⁴⁷ So too Anselm: "I was created so that I might see you, but I have not yet done what I was created to do."⁴⁸ And Aquinas: "The final felicity of man consists only in the contemplation of God."⁴⁹ The reformer John Calvin, in his masterful *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, states man's end as follows: "The final goal of the blessed life, moreover, rests in the knowledge of God."⁵⁰ As we saw in chapter two, a person's life can only be made sense of in reference to God: God is Creator, people are creatures. Thus, as the apostle Paul proclaims, "For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen" (Rom 11:36).

C. S. Lewis does a great job summarising the insight of Scripture as well as these great thinkers of Western culture as he states, "God wills our good, and our good is to love Him (with that responsive love proper to creatures) and to love Him we must know Him: and if we know Him, we shall in fact fall on our faces."⁵¹ So, God wills our good, and our good is to love Him, and to love Him is to know Him.

As academics, it might be easier to *think* after the things of God—to engage God cognitively with our minds—than to *love* God with our hearts. So, what are the ways in which we love Jesus? For, as J. Sidlow Baxter points out, the way in which we love him determines the *degree* to which we love him, and the degree to which we find ultimate wholeness in life.⁵² Baxter discusses four ways in which we love Jesus that are worthy of our consideration as we journey toward wholeness and satisfaction in him.⁵³

⁴⁵ Plato, *Laws*, 888b4–6.

⁴⁶ Epictetus, *Discourses*, 1.6.1.

⁴⁷ Augustine, *Confessions*, 196.

⁴⁸ Anselm, *Proslogion*, 79.

⁴⁹ Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3.37.

⁵⁰ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1.5.1, trans. by Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960).

⁵¹ Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, 46.

⁵² Baxter, *Going Deeper*, 111.

⁵³ *Ibid.* See 111–22 for the discussion to follow.

First, we start by loving Jesus *gratefully*. When we consider what Christ has done for us—taking on a human nature, dying on a cross as our sin-bearer, rescuing us from condemnation and corruption—our natural response begins to express itself in exclamations of gratitude. As we see in 1 John 4:19, our love is a love of gratitude to God for what he has done for us: “We love because he first loved us.”

As we mature in our Christian life we learn to love Jesus *reciprocally*. For Jesus has come that we might have a relationship *with* him. “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, *I will come in and eat with him, and he with me*” (Rev 3:20, italics added). Jesus is a present reality in our lives, the “Contemporary of every generation,”⁵⁴ indeed of every person, who shares in our every experience and is a “refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble” (Ps 46:1).

As we go deeper in our love of God, we love Him *adoringly*. Baxter explains: “By this we mean loving Him, not merely because of what He has done for us, or because of what He now means to us, but because of *what He is in Himself*.”⁵⁵ When we consider Jesus for who he is—the self-existent second member of the triune God, the loving Savior who humbled himself and took on a human nature, the brilliant Christ “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col 2:3)—we see that “Christ is the most transcendently loveable Object upon which [the human heart] can spend itself.”⁵⁶ Many hymns of old from around the world are filled with rapturous expressions of the adoration of Christ because of who he is in himself. Take the hymn “Jesus, I am Resting, Jesus” written by Irish hymnist Jean Sophie Pigott in 1876:

Jesus I am resting, resting
In the joy of what Thou art.
I am finding out the greatness
Of Thy loving heart.
Thou hast bid me gaze upon Thee,
And Thy beauty fills my soul,
For by Thy transforming power
Thou hast made me whole.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Ibid., 108–9.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 115.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Quoted in *ibid.*, 116.

Notice the connection between adoring love of Jesus and being made whole. As Augustine famously cries out, “You stir man to take pleasure in praising you, because you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.”⁵⁸ Are you captivated by the beauty and brilliance of Jesus Christ? Does the reality of God and his greatness move you to praise and awe and worship and adoration? May it be so! As the Psalmist cries out when considering God: “Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise” (Ps 145:3).

Yet, according to Baxter, we can go further than loving Jesus gratefully, reciprocally, and adoringly by loving Him *absorbingly*. “Adoration is a worshipful contemplation of Christ, and complacent delight in Him; but it is not active appropriation or absorption.”⁵⁹ Absorbing love is finding our satisfaction in rich, deep, and abiding communion with Christ. A life characterised by an absorbing love of Christ is a God-centered life. It is a life that has determined to live in light of the reality and love of God. Knowing God. Loving God. Becoming whole. This is what we need and our highest good. And the gospel, the good news, is that such a life is available to us in Christ.

Wholeness Within the Multiversity

The university, like modern humanity, is hollow at its core. Loosed from its theological centre, the university is constantly seeking out ways to justify its existence. Thus, it is no surprise that often the aims of the university and the Christian faith are at cross-purposes. In such an environment, the Christian scholar is tempted toward one of two extremes: adoption or rejection. The Christian scholar might simply adopt the foundations, values, and ethos of the academy, believing them to be consistent with Christianity. Or, alternatively, the Christian scholar might reject the foundations, values, and ethos of the academy as antithetical to Christianity and seek coherence by compartmentalising Christianity from the academic life. Neither adoption nor rejection will do. Neither is required. It is possible to integrate faith and scholarship. Wholeness within the fragmented multiversity is possible, but not easy. It will require authentic commitment to Christ and the conviction that the gospel is relevant to all of life.

It is time to be more concrete. What does wholeness look like in this day and age for the Christian scholar? How do we integrate or unite all

⁵⁸ Augustine, *Confessions*, 3.

⁵⁹ Baxter, *Going Deeper*, 120.

that we are as Christians and scholars into a blended whole? J. P. Moreland and Francis Beckwith helpfully distinguish two kinds of integration: *conceptual* and *personal*. In conceptual integration, “our theological beliefs, especially those derived from careful study of the Bible, are blended and unified with important, reasonable ideas from our [academic discipline] into a coherent, intellectually satisfying Christian worldview.”⁶⁰ We will look at such conceptual integration in chapter 8. As we shall see, it is hard to separate conceptual integration from personal integration. In personal integration, “we seek to live a unified life, a life in which we are the same in public as we are in private, a life in which the various aspects of our personality are consistent with each other and conducive to a life of human flourishing as a disciple of Jesus.”⁶¹ In short, we are after an all-of-life view of discipleship unto Christ, where Christ is Lord of work and play, the sacred and the secular, of faith and scholarship, of teaching and service, of our individual character and our social relations, and so on.

In an earlier book, I suggested that faithfulness to Christ, and thus the matter of integration, is best understood at the level of the person (and not merely at the conceptual level). I offered the following picture of a fully integrated life for the Christian scholar:

A Christian scholar is integrating [one’s] faith with [one’s] scholarship when [they] [are] engaged in either explicit Christian research or latent Christian research (the mind), while seeking God with all [one’s] being (the soul), which flows into worship of God and pursuit of people through [one’s] scholarly work and life (mission: redeeming the soul and mind).⁶²

While I still think this picture is in the main correct, I would now fill it in a bit. Specifically, I would add a social component to acknowledge the fact that we are by nature communal beings meant to live out our calling in community. Further, I would make more explicit our call to be Christ-like in character and our “end” or “telos” as Christians and scholars. Knowing and loving God, being a certain sort of person, experiencing life as God intended, flourishing in light of our nature, and completing the work God has called us to do (Eph 2:10), give hue and depth to the fabric of faithfulness we are painting with our lives.

⁶⁰ Moreland and Beckwith, “Series Preface,” 9.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁶² Gould, “The Two Tasks Introduced,” 40.

C. S. Lewis offers a helpful picture of wholeness when discussing the three parts to morality.⁶³ He asks us to consider a fleet of ships. In order for the fleet to be successful, three things need to be taken into account. First, each individual ship needs to be seaworthy. Second, there needs to be fair play and harmony between each ship. Finally, each ship needs to be rightly aimed at its final destination or end. Lewis employs the analogy to make a point about morality; I will employ the analogy to make a point about wholeness. First, wholeness in Christ must take into account each of us, as individuals, being rightly ordered on the “inside.” That is, all of our beliefs, emotions, and volitions ought to be rightly ordered with respect to Christ, and our core identity must be “follower of Christ.” Second, wholeness must take into account being rightly related to others; that is, we ought to live in harmonious relations with fellow travelers and engage in fair play with all as agents of justice.

Finally, wholeness must take into account being rightly ordered with respect to our end. God invites us to locate our lives within his story. God invites us to join him in his mission to redeem and restore humanity and all of creation. It is tempting to cash out faithfulness to Christ in terms of outward morality only—living in harmony and fairness with others. The rich young man in Luke 18 was quick to point out that he was rightly ordered with respect to others. But as Jesus made clear, wholeness (and faithfulness) to Christ is a matter of the heart, head, and hands (we’ll discuss what such wholeness looks like intellectually and morally in chapters 5 and 6).

It is important to state plainly: As Christians, our core identity is not primarily centred on what we *do*, but who we *are*. At the core, Christians are “sinners saved by grace called by God for a great purpose.” As I said at the end of chapter 2, being a missional professor is about being a certain kind of person: a good news person, a whole (authentic) person, a person who lives and loves and has his or her being in Christ and his purposes. It was never God’s desire for Christian professors to float within the waters of the modern university alone on a rickety raft. He has given us a sure helper (the Holy Spirit), fellow travelers, and a mission. As you mature in Christ, as your raft is crafted into a beautiful, seaworthy ship and joined with other ships also headed in the same direction, students, colleagues, and administrators will take notice. Lord willing they will reach for a line.

The Gospel is big enough to cover all of life. In this chapter, we’ve considered what it would look like for the gospel to touch Christian scholars at the core of their being. Many questions remain: How would

⁶³ Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 69–75.

this animate the way they teach? How would this affect how they view their research? How would this characterise their approach to service within their departments and universities? How would they view their students, colleagues, and administration? How would they balance home life, marriage, kids, and play? In the chapters to come, we will get to these questions and many more. Before we do that, one more topic needs to be addressed: why is the university so important anyhow? It is to this topic that we next turn.

Questions for Personal Reflection or Group Discussion

- 1) How are modern humans fragmented? Do you agree that we long to be whole people? In what ways do you struggle with disintegration? In what ways does the academy contribute to disintegration?
- 2) Do you resonate with Lucky Jim in the story by Kingsley Amis? In what way? How is this fictional story true to life?
- 3) How is wholeness found “along the way” as we look to Christ? How does looking to self only bring, in the long run, hatred, loneliness, despair, rage, ruin, and decay?
- 4) In what ways do you identify with the rich young ruler from Luke chapter 18? How are wholeness and worship connected? Why is it important to understand that Jesus is our greatest need?
- 5) How is Jesus as our highest good related to Jesus as our greatest need?
- 6) How can you grow in loving Jesus gratefully, reciprocally, adoringly, and absorbingly? Which way of loving God is easiest for you? Which is most difficult?
- 7) Do you struggle more with conceptual or personal integration? What do you think of Gould’s definition of a fully integrated life for the Christian scholar? Would you add anything?
- 8) What difference does it make practically if your core identity is centered on *who* you are (or better, *whose* you are), instead of *what* you do? What are some practical steps you can take to find your worth and identity in Christ?

3

GRASPING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE UNIVERSITY

“The gas chambers of Auschwitz, Treblinka, and Maidanek were ultimately prepared not in some Ministry or other in Berlin, but rather at the desks and in the lecture halls of nihilistic scientists and philosophers.”—Victor Frankl⁶⁴

“For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.”—2 Cor 5:15–14

There are some that would challenge the propriety of the missional vision within the university context. Rather, as professors, your job is simply to teach and do research, free from any ideologies whether political, moral, or religious. Recall Stanley Fish:

Remember always what a university is for—the transmission of knowledge and the conferring of analytical skills—and resist the temptation to inflate the importance of what goes on in its precincts . . . Of course one is free to prefer other purposes to the purposes appropriate to the academy, but one is not free to employ the academy’s machinery and resources in the service of those other purposes. If what you really want to do is preach, or organize political rallies, or work for world peace, or minister to the poor and homeless, or counsel troubled youths, you should either engage in those activities after hours and on weekends, or, if part-time is not enough time, you should resign from the academy . . . and take up work that speaks directly to the problems you feel compelled to address.⁶⁵

Elsewhere Fish says:

The view I am offering of higher education is properly called deflationary; it takes the air out of some inflated balloons. It denies to teaching the moral and philosophical pretensions that lead practitioners to envision themselves as agents of change or as the designers of a “transformative experience.”⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Frankl, *The Doctor and the Soul*, xxviii.

⁶⁵ Fish, *Save the World on Your Own Time*, 79, 81.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 53.

On Fish's vision of the university—let's call it the *Deflationary View*—each of you, as specialists within some domain of knowledge, are like factory workers: makers of *parts* of things. If you teach a writing course, your job is to teach writing to students, nothing more, nothing less. If you are a literature professor, you are to teach about literature; e.g., poetry is to be learned *about*, but to learn *from* it would be out of bounds because now you are imparting subjective values and biased ideologies into a text, an embarrassing betrayal of the cardinal virtue of the academy on this view—the virtue of objectivity. Your job (as told by Fish) is to expose students to bodies of knowledge (note: not values) and to give them skills in analysing such knowledge. What you manifestly are not to do is to help shape students character or ideology or views about transcendent yet subjective notions such as religion or ultimate purposes, or telling them how they ought to act in the world.

There is another view about the purposes of the university—let's call it the *Traditional View*—which states that the university is about the making of something, but not merely the making of *parts* of things. Specifically, the thing being made in the university, according to Wendell Berry, is *humanity* itself. Listen to Berry in a little known essay (perhaps because it is buried in a book on home economics!) entitled “The Loss of the University”:

Underlying the idea of a university—the bringing together, the combining into one, of all the disciplines—is the idea that good work and good citizenship are the inevitable by-products of the making of a good—that is, a fully developed—human being.⁶⁷

The university is about human flourishing, not only intellectually but morally and spiritually too. So on the Traditional View, which was the dominant view until around 1930, the university is about developing students into fully functioning members of the human species. It is about teaching people to live well, and knowledge is available to give content to what this should look like. As such, the role and task of the academic is to not only to impart knowledge of a specific discipline to a student but also to impart some of *themselves and their values* within their teaching and research.

So, we have two competing views of the purpose of the university, and, hence, the purpose of the scholar. On the one hand, as professors we are training highly skilled barbarians who are able to perform certain

⁶⁷ Berry, “The Loss of the University,” 77.

tasks. On the other, we are cultivating humanity itself, helping people to live well. I say the Traditional View is the correct view and should not have been abandoned. It was largely abandoned because scientific naturalism and postmodernism have become the dominant worldviews or stories that shape most universities and cultures today. And by and large these worldviews do not have the intellectual resources to cultivate a life of moral and intellectual virtue. It is little wonder that the modern university and modern humanity are fragmented and hollow at the core.

The reality is that the university is shaping humanity, whether acknowledged or not. As embodied beings, teachers cannot help but impart something of themselves within their teaching and research. So too with students; they cannot help but be shaped by those who teach them in the classroom, the lab, and in books. As David Hoekema observes, “whether consciously or unconsciously, whether systematically or haphazardly, [professors] serve as moral guides to students. Many professors would deny if asked that this has anything to do with their responsibilities . . . But it is a role that all faculty members do in fact occupy.”⁶⁸ Add to this the social pressures, the beer, and the party atmosphere so prevalent on many university campuses worldwide, and the human longing for purpose and meaning, and it becomes clear that the university plays a significant role in shaping humanity.

The question is, what kind of humanity? Barbarians at the gate or flourishing humans? As C. S. Lewis reminds us, in the end there are only two kinds of human persons: “Those who say to God, ‘Thy will be done,’ and those to whom God says, in the end, ‘Thy will be done.’”⁶⁹ This fact helps us to understand the importance of the university as a mission field. For we will be most truly and fully human when we find redemption and restoration in Christ. It is important to grasp the significance of the university as a mission field for at least three reasons: first, the future leaders of the world come through the university; second, the university functions as the mind of any culture; and finally, the research accomplished within the university has awesome potential to change human life in profound ways—consider gene editing, cloning, deconstructionism, nuclear energy, the Green Revolution, and self-driving vehicles! All these reasons have implications for the progress of the gospel and for human flourishing.

⁶⁸ Hoekema, “The Unacknowledged Ethicists on Campuses,” para. 4.

⁶⁹ Lewis, *The Great Divorce*, 75.

The University and the Future Leaders of the World

As I woke up that morning, there was no way I could have known the importance and horror of the events that were to take place. I was a first year seminary student living in Los Angeles. Our second child was not even two months old. I was going through my usual morning routine, preparing to leave for school, when the phone rang. My wife's father told us to turn on the television. The images that met us on that September day are forever stamped into my mind: planes flying into the Twin Towers, buildings collapsing, people falling from the sky, Manhattan in chaos, the country on lock-down. In the days to follow, as the horrors of September 11, 2001, unfolded, we learned of a new enemy, al-Qaeda, and a new face of evil, Osama bin Laden.

During times of crisis, it is always reasonable to ask, how did we arrive at this juncture? Could this tragedy have been avoided? Politicians and pundits typically frame answers to such questions in geopolitical and/or military terms: a democratic Middle East would have held militant Islamicists at bay; more stringent border security would have caught the would-be hijackers; a more aggressive military presence (even if cloak and dagger) in Afghanistan would have foreseen the terrorist plot. As important as these answers may be, there is a more fundamental question about the leaders of such organisations: How did Osama bin Laden become the freedom fighter of Allah? How did this affluent, educated Saudi become so determined to kill those he considered infidels?

He was not always so. As a young man, Osama bin Laden was described by those who knew him as shy and respectful to others.⁷⁰ It was assumed that he would continue on in the family business after graduation from the university where he majored in business management. But while at the university bin Laden's life was set on a new path as he listened to the passionate lectures of the Palestinian-born Islamic scholar Abdallah Azzam. Bin Laden became deeply religious. He had found his purpose through the influence of one university professor. *Time* magazine, as cited in the McCarthy article, declared shortly after 9/11,

Things might have turned out differently for Osama bin Laden—and for the citizens of southern Manhattan—if the tall, thin, soft-spoken 44-year-old

⁷⁰ Thanks to Daryl McCarthy, Vice President of Academic Programs and Strategy with Forum of Christian Leaders (European Leadership Forum) for doing the research summarized in this paragraph and the next. See McCarthy, "Hearts and Minds Transformed."

hadn't been born rich, or if he'd been born rich but not a second-rank Saudi. It might have been a different story if, while studying engineering at college, the young man had drawn a different teacher for Islamic Studies rather than the charismatic Palestinian lecturer who fired his religious fervor.⁷¹

Stories of professorial influence on young hearts and minds (for good or evil) can undoubtedly be multiplied: Socrates and Plato, Plato and Aristotle, St. Ambrose and young Augustine, the brilliant Cambridge professor Isaac Milner and young William Wilberforce, and the community of Christian professors at Oxford and young C.S. Lewis. There are many less dramatic but no less real stories of impact by professors on future leaders in all segments of society. University professors influence the lives of their young students—some for good, others for evil—and since virtually all future leaders of our world come through the doors of the university, university professors play a key role in shaping our world.

Let me state this point another way to put it into perspective. In the United States of America there are roughly 317 million people. Of that 317 million, around 1.5 million are currently teaching the 21.6 million students (that is, future leaders in education, law, business, government, entertainment, etc.) in that nation's universities. So university professors make up 1/2 of 1 percent of the U.S. population (.47 percent), yet they touch virtually every aspect of society. This reality should cause us to ponder the significance of our calling as professors. The university is a centre of cultural influence, and professors are the permanent fixtures of the university, the Archimedean lever that can move the world. Living a missional life as a university professor can have a profound impact on students, colleagues, institutions, disciplines—and ultimately the world—as those who pass through the doors of the university are confronted with a well-integrated life lived under the lordship of Christ. As professors seek joy and delight in “the things of the gospel,”⁷² in pursuing truth through their research and teaching, and as professors proclaim a bril-

⁷¹ Quoted by McCarthy, *ibid*, 1.

⁷² The quote is from Jonathan Edwards, the saintly scholar/pastor/university president who longed to find all his joy and delight in beholding Christ. The full quote is as follows: “The sweetest joys and delights I have experienced have not been those that have arisen from a hope of my own good estate; but in a direct view of the glorious things of the gospel. When I enjoy this sweetness, it seems to carry me above the thoughts of my own safe estate.” In Edwards, *Resolutions of a Saintly Scholar*, 22.

liant and beautiful Christ through word and deed, lives will be changed and God will be glorified.

The University and the Contemporary Mind

On September 13, 1980, Lebanese ambassador and Christian statesman Charles Malik (1906–1987) joined Billy Graham and 10,000 others for the dedication of the new Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College in the United States. With passion and prophetic vision, Malik implored evangelical Christians to engage in two great tasks: “that of saving the soul and saving the mind.”⁷³ Malik warned, “The problem is not only to win souls but to save minds. If you win the whole world and lose the mind of the world, you will soon discover you have not won the world. Indeed it may turn out that you have actually lost the world.”⁷⁴ Malik understood that the heart cannot receive what the mind cannot entertain, and thus a key component in reaching our world for Christ must include helping people to think in ways which are consistent with the biblical view of reality. Christianity hovers dangerously close to irrelevance if the life of the mind is neglected inside the church and the truth of Christianity is not defended winsomely and rigorously outside the church.

But for the university, Malik has a special challenge. He realized that as the university goes, so goes the world:

All the preaching in the world, and all the loving care of even the best parents between whom there are no problems whatever, will amount to little, if not to nothing, so long as what the children are exposed to day in and day out for fifteen to twenty years in the school and university virtually cancels out, morally and spiritually, what they hear and see and learn at home and in the church. Therefore the problem of the school and university is the most critical problem afflicting Western civilization.⁷⁵

The university, according to Malik, is one of the most influential institutions in the world today; it “determines the course of events and the destiny of man;”⁷⁶ it “literally dominates the world;”⁷⁷ and it “reflects the mind of contemporary culture.”⁷⁸ Historian Mark Noll, who was present

⁷³ Malik, “The Two Tasks,” 64.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁷⁶ Malik, *A Christian Critique*, 25.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁷⁸ Malik, “The Two Tasks,” 62.

at Malik's 1980 address concurs: "the great institutions of higher learning...culture function as the *mind* of...culture."⁷⁹ The reason, Noll writes, is that they "define what is important . . . specify procedures to be respected . . . set agendas for analyzing practical problems . . . provide vocabularies for dealing with the perennial Great Issues," and "produce books that get read . . . and influence thinking around the world."⁸⁰ In short, the university sets the agenda for what is worth pursuing and what is plausibly true.

Think of culture as a river.⁸¹ Whatever happens upstream has a great effect on what happens downstream. Upstream, we find all the culture-shaping institutions such as media, the arts, government, and the university. Downstream, we find consumers of culture. The upstream institutions dramatically shape the values and beliefs of those downstream. They serve to make some notions appear plausible and worthy of consideration and others implausible. As James Davison Hunter points out, "the work of world-making and world-changing are, by and large, the work of elites: gatekeepers who provide creative direction and management within spheres of social life."⁸² The university in general and professors in particular are the gate-keepers of ideas, influencing directly or indirectly all aspects of thought and life in our world. In short, the university is a key culture-shaping institution in nearly every culture around the world, an institution that we are called to influence.

One practical way that Christian scholars, as insiders within this culture-shaping institution, can help make Christianity (and Christ) plausible is to engage what Timothy Keller calls *defeater beliefs* to Christianity. A defeater belief is any belief A, that if true rules out or defeats the truth of some other belief B. Each culture has a set of defeater beliefs for Christianity, and if we don't engage those beliefs Christianity will not get a hearing (or a fair hearing). Think of defeater beliefs as the dangerous current

⁷⁹ Noll, *The Scandal*, 51.

⁸⁰ Ibid. D. G. Hart questions whether the university should be given the mantle as the functional "mind" of Western culture due to the pervasive trivialization of knowledge that has taken place within the modern university so shaped by economic and utilitarian pressures. Yet his point is not so much that the university doesn't function as the mind of Western culture, but rather that it does a poor job of *cultivating* the mind. I concur, yet this does not negate the fact that the university (for better or worse) does *shape* the Western mindset. See Hart, "What's So Special about the University, Anyway?"

⁸¹ I'm indebted to Greg Ganssle for this mental picture of culture and culture change. See his "Making the Gospel Connection."

⁸² Hunter, *To Change the World*, 41.

or the whitewater rapids of the river—a current that will lead us into dangerous places if we are not careful.

In most African countries, major defeater beliefs include arguments that (1) Christianity is the “white man’s” religion; (2) Africans had their own religions and ways of worship prior to the advent of Christianity; (3) that the West used Christianity to colonize Africa; (4) Islam is closer to the African culture than Christianity is; and (5) traditional African beliefs explain the world better. In many Asian countries, major defeater beliefs are that (1) Christianity, similar to many sentiments in Africa, is the “white man’s” religion, serving as part of the “capitalist-imperialist plot” or as the “opiate of the masses” and that (2) Christianity is a faith for the weak because it promotes self-sacrifice and self-denial; so it is an outdated faith not fitting for today’s competitive world. Keller lists seven defeater beliefs in the West—beliefs that extend to countries significantly influenced by the West and especially to universities—⁸³that roughly boil down to these four: (1) the God of the Bible is a moral monster; (2) the problem of pain and hell is incompatible with a worship-worthy God; (3) miracles are impossible, irrational, or just plain unnecessary; and (4) there is no one true religion. Such complaints are also frequently found in other parts of the world. What are some of those defeater beliefs in your culture?

Part of our task as Christian scholars within the university is to be diagnosticians, identifying concepts or widely held beliefs that undermine receptivity to the gospel, and to be rehabilitators, reviving underappreciated key concepts that could lead towards greater receptivity to the gospel (we’ll think more about this topic in chapter 8).⁸⁴

Malik’s words are as jarring today as they were in 1980: “Wake up, my friends, wake up: the great universities control the mind of the world.”⁸⁵

The University and the Needs of the World

After the devastating earthquake struck Haiti in January 2010, clean water was difficult to find. In many villages, the children as a result suffered the gamut of physical maladies: from coughs, runny noses, and chronic diarrhea to debilitating diseases and death.. Without electricity, water purification systems were useless, if they worked at all. When mechanical engineering professor Marc Compere (Embry-Riddle Aeronautical Uni-

⁸³ Keller, *The Reason for God*, Chaps. 1–7.

⁸⁴ Ganssle, “Making the Gospel Connection,” 6–16.

⁸⁵ Malik, “The Two Tasks,” 65.

versity) heard about the need for clean water, he brought together some of his students, built a solar-powered water purification unit, and in the summer of 2010 together with his students went to Haiti to install the new purifier.⁸⁶ In 1950, as South Korean soldier, Dr. Kim Chin-kyung (now a professor of economics), lay dying on a North Korean battlefield wounded from shrapnel, he promised God, “if I survive, I will return the love to my enemies.” Dr. Kim survived the ordeal! In 2010, nearly 60 years later, Geoffrey Cain, a correspondent for *The Christian Science Monitor*, tells the story of how Dr. Kim followed through on his dying oath:

Dr. Kim has kept his promise – but in a way that has dropped the jaws of even the most hard-headed naysayers. He’s the founder of the first privately funded university in communist North Korea, the Pyongyang University of Science and Technology (PUST), a \$35 million graduate school in the capital, Pyongyang, expected to start classes in April [2010].⁸⁷

Real world needs. Professors and students working together to make a difference. What a powerful picture.

We are considering the significance of the university as it relates to the progress of the gospel. This third reason is perhaps the easiest to grasp: within the university there are resources (intellectual and economic) for meeting the needs of the world. Want to find a cure for a disease? Look to the university. Want to improve distribution processes in manufacturing (and add value to the economy)? Look to the university. Want to figure out how to utilise alternative fuels (including coconut oil⁸⁸)? Look to the university. Need to develop portable clean-water technology? Look to the university. Want to develop a spaceship that can send humans to Mars? Look to the university. Want to understand the political environment in the Middle East? Look to the university.

The picture is familiar. As members of an elite culture-shaping institution of the world, university professors are called upon to impart

⁸⁶ Circelli, “Embry-Riddle’s Project Haiti helps bring clean water to those in need,” para. 5. “Project Haiti” has continued to provide solar-powered clean water to Haiti for the past four years as well. For project updates, see <https://sites.google.com/site/comperem/home/project-haiti>.

⁸⁷ Geoffrey Cain, “Former Prisoner of North Korea Builds University for his Former Captors” (<https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Making-a-difference/2010/0216/Former-prisoner-of-North-Korea-builds-university-for-his-former-captors>).

⁸⁸ For the story of how mechanical engineering professor Walter Bradley (Baylor University) is working to bring electricity to the nation of Papua New Guinea by using coconut oil, see his “A Christian Professor in the Secular Academy,” 123–125.

knowledge, to develop new technologies, to solve world hunger, to explore new frontiers, and to help us understand our past and how it influences the future. One wonders, given enough time and money, if there is anything that the university cannot do, any problem that it cannot solve, any need that it cannot meet. One wonders if the university, along with its knowledge and expertise, is society's surrogate Savior!

Let wonderment pass. While in itself, the university will never meet our highest need (Jesus), the reality is the university can meet real needs in the world, and this reality is something that Christian professors can happily embrace. In fact, as agents of shalom, we find within the Christian tradition the motive for meeting needs; it is part of the missional life that God has called us to as we join with him to bring redemption and restoration to all. It was this missional mindset that guided Professor Compere to bring solar-powered technology to Haiti and that guided Professor Kim to create a university in North Korea. And the "love of Christ" (2 Cor 5:14) is indeed a powerful motive for meeting needs. As Christians embody the heart of God, the needs of the poor, the oppressed, and the downcast cannot help but weigh heavily. And the desire to meet these physical (and spiritual) needs becomes a powerful incentive in conducting research under the banner of Christ. We need not fall into a false dichotomy here. Jesus is concerned with meeting people's physical *and* spiritual needs, and he calls university professors to join with him in this mission.

Jesus Christ and the University

Is it possible to serve Christ faithfully within the university? Yes, most certainly! If Jesus is the sovereign Lord of all, then "there is nothing in our lives that should not and cannot be brought under this rule of God."⁸⁹ There is no sacred/secular split. No Sunday/Monday Christianity. The reality (contra Fish) is that none of our time is our own; it is all God's. In considering the significance of the university, we begin to see what a faithful life might look like. It involves loving students and colleagues and pointing them to Jesus. It involves being good diagnosticians and rehabilitators of ideas and thought patterns, paying attention to the receptivity to the gospel within the university setting and culture at large. It involves moving out of the so-called ivory towers and meeting needs—across the aisle, across the street, across the world—wherever the gospel has not taken root. All of it "compelled by the love of Christ" (2 Cor 5:14)

⁸⁹ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 97.

and not merely for ego or another line on a Curriculum Vitae. I believe that university professors truly are a powerful 0.5 percent of our global population, an Archimedean lever that can move the world. Together, let's dare to dream of ways that God can use us to be agents of shalom.

Throw this Book Down!

In 1850, Harriet Beecher Stowe was a thirty-nine year old, little known writer living in Brunswick, Maine (United States). Late that year, Harriet received a letter from her sister-in-law, Mrs. Edward Beecher, who along with her husband was highly involved in the movement to abolish slavery. Mrs. Beecher was incensed at the passing of a fundamentally pro-slavery law, the so-called Compromise of 1850. Realising that the abolitionist cause was losing ground politically, she turned to drama, and to "Hattie" (as Harriet was known to her family): "If I could use a pen as you can, I would write something that will make this whole nation feel what an accursed thing slavery is."⁹⁰ As the story goes, Harriet Beecher Stowe, on reading these words, rose to her feet, crumpled the letter in one hand, and vowed passionately, "I will write something . . . I will if I live."⁹¹ The result was her first novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which became an instant bestseller and galvanised the anti slavery movement by fueling the debate that eventually led to the abolition of slavery in the United States.⁹²

I write this book to elicit a similar response from you. As you consider the plight of the lost and the opportunity before you, I hope and pray that you will take this book and throw it on the ground (it's a bit hard to crumple!) and vow passionately, "I will live for Christ, come what may as a professor. I will find my identity and hope in Christ and point others to Christ through my teaching, relating, institutional service, and research for the glory of God and the sake of the lost." Just make sure you pick up the book again and continue reading. Together, let's take a look at what a missional life looks like in the context of university.

⁹⁰ Douglas, "Introduction," 8.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Indeed, Lincoln greeted Stowe in 1863 as "the little lady who made this big war." Ibid., 19.

Questions for Personal Reflection or Group Discussion

- 1) How has the Deflationary View of the university shaped your role as a professor?
- 2) What does it mean when Berry says that the university, traditionally, is about making humanity? How does this connect to the gospel?
- 3) Do you agree or disagree that the university shapes humanity? Why or why not? Do you agree or disagree with the claim by Hoekema that professors, whether consciously or unconsciously, serve as moral guides to students?
- 4) How does the university function as the mind of your local culture?
- 5) What are some defeater beliefs to Christianity within your own academic discipline? What are the scholarly and popular level responses to these defeater beliefs? Can you think of any other prevalent defeater beliefs than the ones listed in this section?
- 6) What physical needs of the world does your academic discipline address? Share examples of ways you can apply the resources and knowledge gained within your discipline to meet the needs of the world.
- 7) Are you convinced that the university in general and professors in particular exert an incredible influence in the world? Do you see that you are part of the powerful 0,5 percent? How does knowing this fact spur you to action as a Christian?

4

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR AND THE MIND

“Only in rational creatures is there found a likeness of God which counts as an image . . . As far as a likeness of the divine nature is concerned, rational creatures seem somehow to attain a representation of [that] type in virtue of imitating God not only in this, that he is and lives, but especially in this, that he understands.”—Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia. Q. 93 a. 6

“Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”—Col 2:2–3

In 1963, theologian Harry Blamires lamented, “In contradistinction to the secular mind, no vital Christian mind plays fruitfully, as a coherent and recognizable influence, upon our social, political, or cultural life . . . There is no Christian Mind . . . one must admit that there is no packed contemporary field of discourse in which writers are reflecting christianly on the modern world and modern man.”⁹³ Historian Mark Noll began his scathing 1994 critique of the state of Christian learning with these jarring words: “The scandal of the evangelical mind is that there is not much of an evangelical mind.”⁹⁴ Aiming at a more popular audience, sociologist Os Guinness argued (also in 1994) that Christians are more concerned with their bodies than with the development of their minds: “Evangelical anti-intellectualism is both a scandal and a sin. It is a scandal in the sense of being an offense and a stumbling block that needlessly hinders serious people from considering the Christian faith and coming to Christ. It is a sin because it is a refusal, contrary to the first of Jesus’ two great commandments, to love the Lord our God with our minds.”⁹⁵ Likewise, philosopher J. P. Moreland opined in 1997, “Judged by the Scriptures, church history, and common sense, it is clear that something has gone wrong with our modern understanding of the value of reason and intellectual development for individual discipleship and corporate church life.”⁹⁶ Something has gone wrong. By and large, Christians do not possess intel-

⁹³ Blamires, *The Christian Mind*, 4, 7.

⁹⁴ Noll, *The Scandal*, 3.

⁹⁵ Guinness, *Fit Bodies, Fat Minds*, 10–11.

⁹⁶ Moreland, *Love Your God with All Your Mind*, 14.

lectual virtue, nor are they equipped to think Christianly about the perennial questions of life, and the result, as we shall see, is tragic. Christian scholars are not immune to this anti-intellectualism—which often takes the form of intellectual lethargy or lack of rigorousness—when it comes to matters of faith. We often relegate the central teachings of historic Christianity to the privatised realm of subjective belief disconnected from our scholarly life or view Christianity as yet another knowledge tradition to be approached from a disengaged posture where the intellectual stimulation of asking questions, having intellectual dialogs, and engaging in the quest for clarity are ends in themselves.

In this chapter, we shall consider the Christian mind by reflecting on its importance and how as scholars we can cultivate it.

The Importance of the Christian Mind

The summer of 1993 was coming to an end. I had spent months working at a sports camp rock climbing, leading kids down Class IV whitewater rapids, spelunking, and more. I was young, strong, and cocky. And I was visiting my future wife, Ethel, in Rockport, Texas. We were sailing in the bay, enjoying a peaceful and beautiful August morning, when the front sail broke. Ethel, who had grown up sailing, started the long process of tacking back to shore using only the mainsail. At this point, our telling of the story diverges a bit; but since I'm telling it, you get my version. I thought to myself, "it is hot, and we are moving slow." So, I leaned over to Ethel and said, "Why don't we take turns sailing and swimming next to the boat so that we can stay cool?" Ethel, surely incorrectly, remembers me suggesting this as a kind of dare. So, like the young and brash woman she was, Ethel immediately jumped into the water, without a life jacket, and began to swim next to the boat in which I was now captain.

What we didn't factor in was the reality of the ocean current. It was immediately obvious that the boat was moving faster than we were previously aware. Before I knew it, Ethel was fifteen meters away from the boat. I tried to turn the boat around, but because of the wind and the current, I could not do it. Then she was thirty meters away. I started to panic. I, who was king of all things outdoors, couldn't turn the lousy boat around. The current was winning. Then she was sixty meters away and the boat was moving out of the bay and into the gulf. Then she was three hundred meters away. Then she was a blip on the horizon. Then she was gone, and I was sailing into the Gulf of Mexico. I was terrified. I had just drowned the woman of my dreams. And I was powerless to change it.

Thankfully, she didn't die that day. In God's providence, someone on land spied my little sailboat heading out into dangerous waters and jumped in a motorboat to investigate. Meanwhile, my Texan sweetheart had the wherewithal to swim to a nearby crab trap and hang on to the buoy to await rescue. Eventually we were rescued. That night, for the first time, I professed my love for Ethel.

I share our somewhat embarrassing story for this reason. There are cultural currents that can take your boat into harmful directions if you are not aware of them, if you live an unexamined and uncritical life. Specifically, there are numerous false ideas prevalent in our culture today that many of us have unknowingly accepted. We have entered the dangerous waters of anti-intellectualism, and, because of that, Christianity is often viewed as irrelevant and Christians are often spiritually malnourished and deformed. Two false ideas in particular are paramount.

The first is going to sound shocking, but I worry that many of us believe it. It is the idea that *Jesus is simple-minded*. "Surely," you protest, "I don't think of Jesus as silly. I worship him as Lord!" Fair enough. Let me switch the language. I worry that many of us don't think that Jesus possesses intellectual virtue to speak into all matters of reality. Sure, we give Jesus spiritual and moral authority in our lives, but when it comes to matters intellectual, Jesus isn't in on the conversation. As Dallas Willard recognises, "Our commitment to Jesus can stand on no other foundation than a recognition that he is the one who knows the truth about our lives and our universe. It is not possible to trust Jesus, or anyone else, in matters where we do not believe him to be competent."⁹⁷ We faithfully attend church, go to Christian concerts, listen to Christian radio, watch Christian programming via the web, and have devotions with our families. Yet we defer to science, favourite politicians, or popular T.V. stars, but not Jesus, to feed our minds. As a result, Christianity has been marginalised, relegated to the sidelines and backwaters of culture, and all too often of the academy as well. Christianity is simply dismissed by many secular scholars as delusional, wishful thinking. Jesus is simple-minded. And so are those who follow him.

The primary reason for this shift is that we no longer view Jesus as someone who possesses intellectual authority to speak on matters of reality. But this understanding of Jesus is in direct contradiction to the biblical witness. In the Gospel of John we learn that Jesus is the divine Logos, where the Logos is understood as the rational ordering principle of the universe (John 1:1–3). In Colossians, Paul proclaims that in Christ "are hid-

⁹⁷ Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 94.

den all treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (2:3). In Hebrews we learn that Jesus “is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word” (1:3). In short, Jesus possesses intellectual virtue and authority to speak on *all* matters.

This is good news. Our children don’t need to leave their brains at the door to be Christians. As Christian scholars, we can unite all that we know within our own academic disciplines with the truths of Scripture without fear of contradiction. As discussed in chapter 2, this conviction is grounded in the doctrine of creation: since God is the creator of all distinct reality, it follows that all truths discovered (all knowledge gained) point to and illuminate the divine. As you study the laws of nature, ask, what can we learn about the God of these laws? As we study the mountain lion, ask, what can we learn about the God of the mountain lion? As we study literature, or art, or history, or philosophy, ask, how can we see the hand of God in the world, or how can we hear the voice of God in the text?

Yes, we follow a beautiful Christ. As our Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer, Jesus is beautiful. But he is also brilliant. As Willard aptly puts it, “He is the smartest man who ever lived.”⁹⁸ As we worship this brilliant and beautiful Christ, we will introduce the world to a Saviour who is trustworthy to be followed in all aspects of life. And we will cease to be irrelevant.

The second false idea we must be wary of is the notion that religious claims in general, and Christian claims specifically, are not knowledge claims. Christianity is often wrongly understood to be a mere faith tradition, and any ideas advanced are to be accepted as an act of blind faith. The result of such thinking should be obvious. People are given the right to lead, act in public, and accomplish important tasks on the basis of knowledge. I give my surgeon permission to tighten up my oft-dislocated shoulder because he possesses the knowledge and competence to fix it. As professors, we are given the opportunity to teach in the university because we have spent years gaining and extending knowledge about a particular subject. We give people the right to fix our car, our teeth, our plumbing, our computer, our taxes, and more, because we take them to be in possession of the relevant body of knowledge. If Christianity is viewed as a subjective set of privatised beliefs, it will never be taken seriously in the marketplace of ideas. The Christian faith will be relegated to the margins of society, and the gospel will not get a fair hearing.

As the Presbyterian Bible scholar J. Gresham Machen prophetically stated in the early twentieth century:

⁹⁸ Ibid., 95.

We may preach with all the fervor of a reformer, and yet succeed only in winning a straggler here and there, if we permit the whole collective thought of the nation or world to be controlled by ideas which, by the resistless force of logic, prevent Christianity from being regarded as anything more than a harmless delusion.⁹⁹

The secular academy, and thus the broader culture, is beholden to the false idea that all knowledge, or at least the best knowledge, comes from the deliverances of science. Such a mindset is called scientism; it is narrow and betrays a low view of humanity. In contrast, Proverbs 1:1-7 uses several different Hebrew words to describe knowledge, wisdom and understanding, and provides a rich and multifaceted view of human intellectual capacities. A proper Christian response is not to retreat to some non-cognitive realm, but rather to note that human beings, having been created in the image of God, possess awesome intellectual capabilities encompassing far more than positivistic empiricism gives us credit for! Indeed, “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction” (Proverbs 1:7; ESV). Professor Godfrey Ozumba, a Christian scholar and African philosopher, rightly rejects this scientism. According to him, “Often...society’s problem is that the educational curriculum is lopsided. We seem to have been carried away by the achievements of science and technology that the development of the spiritual dimension of curriculum seems very much neglected. There must be a healthy balance between the physical and spiritual components of the curriculum.”¹⁰⁰ According to the Bible, the possession of knowledge—especially but not limited to, religious and moral knowledge—is essential for human flourishing. As we cultivate a Christian mind, there is knowledge and wisdom to be found in Scripture (Ps 119), in the natural world (Isa 28:23–29), and from the arts, literature, and sciences (Isa 19:11–13; Dan 2:12–13; 5:7). Knowledge is so important to a life well lived that God categorically asserts in Hosea 4:6 that “my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest for me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children” (ESV).¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Machen, “Christianity and Culture,” 7.

¹⁰⁰ G. O Ozumba and Jonathan O Chimakonam, *Njikọka Amaka: Further Discussions on the Philosophy of Integrative Humanism: A Contribution to African and Intercultural Philosophies* (Calabar Nigeria: 3rd Logic Option Publishing, 2014), 100.

¹⁰¹ For a survey of key biblical passages on the importance of knowledge in the Christian life, see Moreland, *Love Your God with All Your Mind*, 60–67.

False ideas such as positivistic empiricism and relativism must be rejected as we “take captive every thought and make it obedient to Christ” (2 Cor 10:5). As we cultivate a Christian mind, we will begin to view Jesus as brilliant, possessing intellectual virtue to speak on all matters of reality, and Christianity as a knowledge tradition, where its claims are about the nature of reality and not merely reports of the subjective beliefs and desires of its followers. In doing so, Christians will cease being irrelevant and the gospel will get a fair hearing.

Cultivation of a Christian mind will also keep us from spiritual deformity, the opposite of spiritual wholeness. In one of the most important texts ever written about spiritual transformation, the apostle Paul puts the mind front and center:

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Rom 12:1–2)

Change begins in the mind, that faculty of the soul that contains reason, thoughts, emotions, values, desires, and beliefs, all of which are essential to our behaviour and character formation. As Francis Schaeffer put it in his classic *How Should We Then Live?*, “People are unique in the inner life of the mind—what they are in their thought world determines how they act . . . The results of their thought world flow through their fingers or from their tongues into the external world.”¹⁰² I would simply add: “and the results of their thoughts and actions, in turn, inform and shape their character.” We are complex, embodied souls making our way on this ball of iron within the vast space-time universe, pulled in various (and sometimes opposite) directions by our will, emotions, and thinking who long for our loves and our lives to be properly ordered in accordance with their worth. We long for wholeness. As Christians, we want to be transformed into the image of Christ and to experience life the way it was meant to be experienced. Thus, we cannot afford to neglect the mind, for in doing so we cut ourselves off from God’s plan for spiritual transformation.

The mind is important. We are not brutes driven by our base appetites alone. We are rational beings created by a rational God who unites our head and heart for his glory and to serve his own ends. We must reject

¹⁰² Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live?*, 19. Compare Moreland’s claim that “Beliefs are the rails upon which our lives run,” in *Love Your God with All Your Mind*, 86.

anti-intellectualism, proclaim and pursue a brilliant and beautiful Christ, and reject a shallow and naïve scientism that neglects or denies religious and moral sources of knowledge. And in loving God with our minds, we will cease being culturally irrelevant and spiritual deformed. What then is the Christian mind, and how can we cultivate it?

Cultivating the Christian Mind

We are after a life of wholeness and human flourishing, and it is time to ask, what does such a life look like, specifically related to the Christian mind? In 2 Peter 1:5, Peter exhorts believers to develop excellence or virtue (*arête*), and to do so because they have been called by (or to) God's own glory and excellence (*arête*, 2 Peter 1:3).¹⁰³ Our call is to be a certain kind of person—a virtuous person—and this calling is grounded in the excellent/virtuous character of God. We are called to grow to become more and more like God, in Whose image we have been made. As apprentices of Jesus, we follow in his steps. Like Christ, we too ought to be intellectually and morally virtuous. In doing so, we will become the kind of people of which it can be truly said that “Christ is formed in you” (Gal 4:19).

According to J. P. Moreland, a virtue is “a skill, a habit, an ingrained disposition to act, think, or feel in certain ways. Virtues are those good parts of one's character that make a person excellent at life in general.”¹⁰⁴ In the remainder of this chapter, we'll consider seven intellectual virtues and explore how we can cultivate each within the context of our academic vocation. The seven intellectual virtues to be discussed, following the taxonomy provided by Philip Dow in his book *Virtuous Minds*, are intellectual courage, intellectual carefulness, intellectual tenacity, intellectual fair-mindedness, intellectual curiosity, intellectual honesty, and intellectual humility. In understanding each of these virtues, you will have a clear picture at which to aim your efforts at cultivating a Christian mind.

Intellectual Courage

Generally, when we think of courage, images come to mind of soldiers valiantly running into battle, or firefighters rushing into a burning building, or believers refusing to recant as they stand on a beach waiting to be beheaded or shot.¹⁰⁵ We typically don't think of the lonely scholar sitting at

¹⁰³ See Köstenberger, *Excellence*, 43–44.

¹⁰⁴ Moreland, *Love Your God with All Your Mind*, 121.

¹⁰⁵ These examples are from Dow, *Virtuous Minds*, 27.

his desk reading and writing as the paradigm of courage. Yet, the reality is that faithfulness to Christ in the academy requires the virtue of intellectual courage in order to pursue, embody, and stand for truth while avoiding accommodationism on the one hand and dogmatism on the other.

On the one hand, in most parts of the world there is incredible pressure to sacrifice our Christian integrity in order to maintain academic respectability. Currently, secularism (either in its naturalistic or postmodern garb) is the dominant worldview within most of the world's universities. It is clear that secularism is at odds with biblical Christianity, yet Christian scholars often feel incredible pressure to reject traditional Christian doctrines in favor of currently accepted views consistent with secularism's hegemony that unwittingly undermine the plausibility of the gospel. Examples include the abandonment of belief in the historical reality of Adam and Eve, the rejection of human body and soul dualism, and the drive for total acceptance of homosexuality. My present concern is not with the truth or falsity of the traditional view, but the readiness, sometimes eagerness, with which such views are abandoned. As Moreland notes, while not infallible,

[s]till, we should be very careful and reluctant to revise what the Church has held for centuries, especially when two factors are present: (1) there is an intellectually robust defense of the traditional view currently available; (2) there is politically correct pressure suddenly to "find" that the Bible all along taught what our secular friends and peers tell us it should teach if we are going to be culturally and academically respectable.¹⁰⁶

Often, the average person in the church looks to Christian academics as spokespersons for Christianity, and when we are quick to reject traditional views of the church, understandably we are looked upon with suspicion. New Testament scholar Andreas Köstenberger suggests that some key questions to ask ourselves are, "Whose approval really matters? . . . Whom are we really trying to please?"¹⁰⁷ If at the end of the day the sober truth requires us to correct our understanding of traditional Christian doctrines, then so be it. Christianity can handle it. But intellectual courage requires of us that we examine our own heart and motivation for adopting a particular view that happens to be the reigning paradigm: Is God's approval preeminent in your life? Is your theoretical exploration constrained by the authority of Scripture?

¹⁰⁶ Moreland, "Afterword," 235. See also Trueman, *The Real Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*.

¹⁰⁷ Köstenberger, *Excellence*, 109.

Faithfulness to Christ will require intellectual courage in the face of the temptation to accommodationism. It will also require intellectual courage in the face of the all-too-often simplistic and dogmatic thinking promulgated within the anti-intellectualist climate that too often pervades the church. Nuance and fine-grained distinctions are not the friends of dogmatism. In our God-given desire to be members of good standing within the church, we must resist the temptation to make secondary matters of first importance, nonessential matters essential, and legalistic righteousness a substitute for gospel-centered living and grace-filled relationships.

Intellectual Carefulness

Another intellectual virtue that is becoming increasingly rare in our fast-paced, image-driven world is the virtue of intellectual carefulness. We are inundated with information, yet knowledge and wisdom remain elusive. Anyone can tweet, blog, post a status update on Facebook, and edit Wikipedia, giving the illusion that in doing so one is dispensing knowledge. More times than not, however, one is simply dishing triviality, opinion, or folly disguised as wisdom, all in less than 140 characters.

Contrast this with the apostle Paul's speech in Athens. Paul begins his speech by affirming the religious impulse of the Greeks: "Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and *looked carefully* at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with the inscription: To an unknown god. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you" (Acts 17:22–23, emphasis added). The phrase "looked carefully" denotes meticulous, intentional observations; Paul had done his homework. He had carefully examined the culture he sought to reach with the gospel, and as a result he was able to confidently stand before the most learned men of the day and proclaim the true God. Paul possessed the intellectual virtue of carefulness, which in no small part contributed to his effectiveness as an evangelist.

Cultivating the virtue of intellectual carefulness requires the decision (and courage) to slow down within the fast-paced university setting. As Charles Malik observed years ago, in the university,

both students and professors, are in a hurry. They must get somewhere! God knows where! They cannot rest where they are! "Be still, and know that I am God," that they hardly know . . . The deadline must be met, the manuscript must be completed, the dissertation must be revised, the meeting must be attended, the appointment must be kept, the news must be followed, the development must be watched, the latest literature must be

mastered, their anxieties about their position and their future must be allayed—and therefore they can give you only five minutes! And even in these five minutes their mind is not on you.¹⁰⁸

Given the frenetic pace of the university, there is pressure to get things done, and the temptation in research is to examine the evidence superficially and, based on such an examination, to make a hasty judgment.¹⁰⁹ Regarding the truths of faith, the temptation is to maintain a superficial level of understanding and to fail to carefully make connections between the details of our academic discipline and the details of our faith. This will have serious negative repercussions in the form of defective scholarship and the dishonoring of Christ's name.

Intellectual Tenacity

I am constantly amazed as I teach philosophy how difficult it is for many students to craft and sustain a complex string of ideas into an argument. Often, students do not possess the ability to make distinctions, to see a knotty intellectual problem through to the end, or to patiently and methodically dig deep into an assigned topic for any sustained period of time. These students lack the virtue of intellectual tenacity. But surely, you say, if the virtue of intellectual tenacity is to be found anywhere, it will be among academics! To complete a PhD requires hard work. It requires perseverance, diligence, endurance, constancy, and patience. Moreover, to obtain tenure one's research must not only be voluminous but novel—cutting edge and recognised as such. Or, in some places, the the governing authorities mandate that an academic department must produce a certain number of PhDs per year, making it challenging for the Christian professor to maintain long-term tenacity. I agree; it requires great intellectual tenacity in order to survive and thrive as a scholar. My worry cuts in a slightly different direction.

Tenacity—intellectual or otherwise—can have a downside. Like all the intellectual virtues, tenacious thinking can be harmful if aimed at selfish ends. If the ultimate aim is to seek the good, the true, and the beautiful under the banner of Christ, then a tenacious intellectual character is virtuous and praiseworthy. But in today's highly competitive university setting, intellectual tenacity can be employed by the *sensuous mind*—a mind

¹⁰⁸ Malik, *A Christian Critique*, 80.

¹⁰⁹ As Alexander Solzhenitsyn put it, intellectual hastiness results in “hasty, immature, superficial, and misleading judgments,” quoted in Dow, *Virtuous Minds*, 36. For more on “intellectual hastiness” see *ibid.*, 36–38.

ruled by and devoted to the flesh (see Eph 2:1–3)—to merely advance one’s career and feed one’s ego, often leaving a wake of painful and broken relationships along the path towards academic success and prestige. Not surprisingly, then, the sensuous mind, whether in the life of a Christian scholar or not, is a *separated* mind: “He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow” (Col 2:19).¹¹⁰ As philosopher Richard Davis puts it, “Competition and comparison . . . is such a deadly spiritual cancer; it severs connection to the Head and cuts off one’s spiritual air supply.”¹¹¹ Let’s tenaciously pursue Christ and our research projects for his glory instead of our own.

Intellectual Fair-Mindedness

There is a surprising dearth of intellectual diversity in the modern university. The presence of liberal and secular thought is so pervasive that monolithic groupthink and close-mindedness are common, and there is noticeable pressure to conform to the status quo or to remain silent.¹¹² In this context, it is easy for we Christian scholars to feel defensive and to resort to caricatures of the liberal, secular, atheistic, even demonic left. In doing so, however, we risk being close-minded ourselves.

The virtue of intellectual fair-mindedness requires that we willingly listen in an even-handed way to those with whom we disagree.¹¹³ We need to strive to understand another’s position and to resist erecting simplistic straw man arguments against our opponents which in turn are quickly (and often smugly) refuted. Perhaps the worry is that being open to another’s viewpoint in a fair-minded way leads to relativism. Or, perhaps the worry is that such fair-mindedness is not possible given our psychological biases. Neither worry is legitimate. Being fair-minded is consistent with the belief that there is an objective truth to be found. Further, one can be psychologically biased and maintain rational objectivity. Our biases do not stand as an insurmountable wall between our minds and the objective

¹¹⁰ Davis, “Christian Philosophy: For Whose Sake?”

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹¹² The so-called secularization of the U.S. university is well documented by, e.g., Marsden in *The Soul of the University*, Reuben in *The Making of the Modern University*, and Summerville in *The Decline of the Secular University*. But see also Neil Gross and Solon Simmons, “The Religious Convictions of College and University Professors,” where recent studies show that the professorate is not as secular as is often supposed.

¹¹³ Dow, *Virtuous Minds*, 49.

world.¹¹⁴ Being fair-minded is one application of the golden rule: we would want others to treat us and the views we hold with fairness and charity, and we should do likewise in return. As a result of this “convicted civility,” as Professor Richard Mouw frequently calls it, there might be the added benefit of winning the respect of one’s opponents.

Intellectual Curiosity

Aristotle begins *The Metaphysics* with the claim that “all men desire to know.” While true, this desire has largely been suppressed in most cultures around the world.¹¹⁵ In the place of intellectual curiosity we find, more often than not, apathy. For example, while teaching philosophy as a graduate student at Purdue University, I witnessed, semester after semester, atheist and agnostic students moving from unbelief/lack of belief to belief in God after an examination of the evidence. This change was also met with a shrug of the shoulders: “So what? God exists.” What accounts for this lack of awe and wonder and curiosity that so characterizes our day and age? How can belief in God—the perpetual novelty—elicit such apathy from students?

One reason is that we have lost a vision for the dramatic life. All too often, we live vicariously through others, depending on movies or books or sporting events to find meaning and happiness. And the result of this vicarious living is apathy and a lack of genuine curiosity. For us, locating our lives within the great story of God requires that we live the dramatic life to which we have been called. No one else can do it for us.

How can we cultivate the intellectual virtue of curiosity? I offer three suggestions. First, never stop asking the question why. From the mundane to the splendid, all of creation is infused, even if cracked by the fall, with the grandeur of God. Let your questions serve to awaken your latent curiosity. Second, read broadly. If you are in the humanities, read something from the sciences. If you are in the sciences, read something from the humanities. In all cases, read good literature and expose yourself to the classics in both Western and Eastern cultures. Mortimer Adler’s *The Great Books Of The Western World* is a good place to start for Western culture while Wm. Theodore de Bary’s *Nobility and Civility: Asian Ideals of Lead-*

¹¹⁴ For more on psychological bias and rational objectivity, see Moreland, *Kingdom Triangle*, 78–80.

¹¹⁵ For more on how the human longing for truth is suppressed today, see my *Cultural Apologetics: Renewing the Christian Voice, Conscience, and Imagination* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2019), chapter 5.

ership and the Common Good is a good place to start for Oriental culture¹¹⁶ The literary works of Chinua Achebe, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Nadine Gordimer and Ben Okri, to mention a few, are excellent doorways to understanding the African culture while the works of Gabriel García Márquez, Pablo Neruda, Mario Vargas Llosa, Juan Carlos Onetti, Jorge Luis Borges, Julio Cortazar, and Isabel Allende provide vistas on Latin American culture. Finally, seek to make connections between the discoveries you are making in these new domains and your area of academic specialty, and ultimately to God.

Intellectual Honesty

By the summer of 2011, Diederik Stapel was a successful social psychologist and dean of Tilburg University's School of Social and Behavioral Sciences in the Netherlands. That spring, Stapel had published several widely publicised articles that, in effect, told the world what they wanted to hear about human nature. The problem was that Stapel had manufactured the data to support his desired conclusions. When asked to show his experimental results, he was unable to do so and confessed to the deceit. As university authorities began to dig into his past, the depth of Stapel's academic fraud, perpetrated over a decade and at two universities, is stunning: he had committed fraud in at least fifty-five of his papers, as well as in ten PhD dissertations written by his students. In a 2012 interview with *The New York Times*, when asked why he did it, Stapel replied, "It was a quest for aesthetics, for beauty—instead of the truth."¹¹⁷ He was driven by a lifelong desire for elegance which led him to concoct results academic journals found attractive. Stapel was intellectually dishonest, and his career and life are now in shambles as a result.

In situations like Stapel's, I'm reminded of Proverbs 10:9: "The man of integrity walks securely, but he who takes crooked paths will be found out." It never pays in the long run to deceive others or ourselves. As followers of Christ, we must strive to communicate the truth with integrity, to resist the temptation to overstate our case, and to seek to build trust with others by consistently acting in an intellectually honest way. In doing so we demonstrate to the world that our identity is not found in our accomplishments but in Christ Jesus who has set us free with the truth (John 8:32).

¹¹⁶ For recent works that focus specifically on China, see Ma and Li, *Surviving the State, Remaking the Church*; and Ma, *The Chinese Exodus*.

¹¹⁷ Bhattacharjee, "The Mind of a Con Man," para 18.

Intellectual Humility

Intellectual humility is one of the most important of the intellectual virtues. It is the glue that binds the others together, and it is essential for Christlikeness. However, a lack of humility—pride—is one of the most frequent charges against intellectuals. As the apostle Paul put it, often we are smart, proud, and loveless: “knowledge puffs up, but love builds up” (1 Cor 8:1). John Piper explains,

Knowledge is susceptible to pride because it is the result of getting, not giving. Knowledge is a possession. It is something we have attained. So we are prone to boast about it. Love, on the other hand, is the act of giving, not getting. Love is not an attainment or an acquisition. It moves outward. It shares . . . It builds up the faith of others rather than the ego of the lover.¹¹⁸

So, how can we avoid being smart, proud, and unloving? In short, how can we cultivate the intellectual virtue of humility?

It begins with the realisation that God, and not man, has pride of place in being and knowledge, and he hates human pride (Proverbs 6:17). As God is the creator, all knowledge is in a sense a *gift* from God to man. God creates the conditions necessary for knowledge: that which can be known is created by God; that which knows, likewise, is created by God. Further, humility involves an *accurate assessment* of the capacities and limitations of our mind in comparison to the perfectly rational, all-knowing God. We are finite and fallible knowers, and this realisation should cause us to pause when tempted to think we have discovered the last word on any given topic. Finally, we become intellectually humble as we realise God’s purpose for scholarship: it is not about building our egos, but is to be used in the service of God and man. As Piper states,

All thinking—all learning, all education, all schooling, formal or informal, simple or sophisticated—exists for the love of God and the love of man. It exists to help us know God more so that we may treasure him more. It exists to bring as much good to other people as we can.¹¹⁹

In our pursuit of knowledge for its own sake and for the sake of others we will cultivate the intellectual virtue of humility and exercise charity to all.

¹¹⁸ Piper, *Think*, 158–59.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 167.

From Discussion to Action

Is Jesus relevant to academia? Undoubtedly, many would argue that Jesus has little or no relevance to the academy.¹²⁰ For the Christian, however, the answer must be that Jesus bears significantly on the academy.

What should be obvious is that in its current mode, the university is incomplete and inadequate. In fact, scholarship in its normal mode, “without being receptive to an authoritative divine challenge stemming from divine love commands, leaves humans in a discussion mode, short of an obedience mode under divine authority.”¹²¹ That is, scholarship carried out in the discussion mode consists of endless conversations, debates, arguments, circles, and twists and turns, with little action, little change, and little movement toward faithful obedience to Christ for the love of God and the good of man.

In reality, I think important work is going on in the academy and in the academic journals. Truth is being sought and, Lord willing, found. Discoveries are being made that will make the world a little bit better. What is needed, and what is lacking according to philosopher Paul Moser, is the “movement *beyond* discussion” to action. Hence, when brought to bear on the university, Jesus overturns our conference tables, and pushes us out of our offices and into the world as his faithful ambassadors. In calling Christian scholars to faithful obedience beyond the mere discussion and acquisition of truth, “he thereby cleanses the temple of [the university] and turns over our self-crediting tables of mere [academic] discussion. He pronounces judgment on this long-standing self-made temple, in genuine love for its

¹²⁰ In the discipline of philosophy, for example, philosophers David Chalmers and David Borget recently conducted a survey that targeted 1,972 American philosophy faculty members from 99 different institutions to determine the actual beliefs of philosophers on perennial topics within the discipline. See “What Do Philosophers Believe?” Of the 931 who replied, 72.8 percent considered themselves atheists, while only 14.6 percent considered themselves theists. In my experience, many of these atheist philosophers think Jesus has no place in philosophy. For those atheists who do allow Jesus a seat at the table—perhaps as a moral teacher or exemplar—still, my guess is they are wary of him and his followers. Just recall Quentin Smith’s 2001 essay published in the journal *Philo* where he laments how the “secularization of mainstream academia began to quickly unravel upon the publication of Plantinga’s influential book on realist theism, *God and Other Minds*, in 1967.” In “The Metaphilosophy of Naturalism,” 197.

¹²¹ Moser, “Introduction: Jesus and Philosophy,” 17. Moser is here talking specifically about philosophy, but I think his central point can easily apply to scholarship in general as it is currently practiced in the academy.

wayward builders.”¹²² This is an interesting thought. In this sense, I think Moser is right: Jesus is concerned with exposing the rank idolatry in our midst, and to the extent that we scholars make the pursuit of the novel idea (disconnected from its divine source), or career, or status ultimate in our lives, we fall into a kind of false worship. This temptation to live for self instead of something greater is a temptation in which Christian scholars are not immune. Jesus indeed will cleanse this temple.

So, part of what it means to be a Christian scholar is to give Jesus supremacy in the realm of ideas and our way of life. Jesus is the font of all wisdom and knowledge. As such, Jesus is brilliant. But Jesus is more. He is the Saviour, and as such he demands our lives. What this means for the Christian scholar is that our thinking and our living must be understood in light of the gospel. Does this make a difference to the scholarly life? It makes all the difference.

In the next chapter, we'll continue our exploration of faithfulness for the Christian scholar by considering the Christian heart.

Questions for Personal Reflection or Group Discussion

- 1) Do you think the introductory quotes by Blamires, Noll, Guinness, and Moreland are accurate? Would you agree that the church suffers from anti-intellectualism?
- 2) Why is it important to view Jesus as trustworthy to speak on matters of reality? Could said that Jesus is both beautiful and brilliant. Discuss.
- 3) Why is it important to view Christianity as a knowledge tradition and not a mere faith tradition?
- 4) What role does the mind play in the process of spiritual formation?
- 5) Do you think it is odd to suggest that scholars might not be intellectually virtuous? Can you think of an example of a scholar who is intellectually virtuous? Can you think of a scholar who is not?
- 6) Of the seven intellectual virtues discussed, which one is most difficult for you to cultivate? Why? Practically speaking, what are some steps you can take to cultivate this virtue in your own life?
- 7) Would Jesus “cleanse the temple” within your academic discipline? In what way is the normal mode of operation within your discipline the discussion mode? How can you help push your own involvement within the discipline toward the obedience mode?

¹²² Ibid., 17–18.

5

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR AND THE HEART

“To be virtuous is to live up to the divine standard for human life. Or better, it is to embody that standard, to display it in one’s conduct.”—James Spiegel¹²³

“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.”—2 Pet 1:3

The cultures of the world are sick. Daily we read of human trafficking, riots, bombings, murder, genocide, war, rape, and more. The problem runs deeper than the daily violations of shalom that occur when humans harm one another in various ways. Arguably people today are no worse and no better than those who have come before. The main difference between the contemporary setting and earlier ones is not in terms of a lack of virtue but a lack of the *knowledge* of virtue. As Peter Kreeft puts it,

We are stronger in the knowledge of nature, but weaker in the knowledge of goodness. We know more about what is less than ourselves but less about what is more than ourselves. When we act morally, we are better than our philosophy. Our ancestors were worse than theirs. Their problem was not living up to their principles. Ours is not having any.¹²⁴

Kreeft argues that we are a weak culture—able to engage in *discussion* of ethical theory with the best, adept at playing intellectual ping-pong and sharing views, but unable to *change* ourselves, unable to “conform the soul to reality” through the pursuit of “knowledge, self-discipline, and virtue.”¹²⁵

The university, as a microcosm of the larger culture, is no better (or worse). To cite but a few recent examples: Tihomir Petrov, a California State Northridge professor of mathematics, faces two misdemeanor charges for allegedly urinating on the office door of a colleague;¹²⁶ Igor

¹²³ Spiegel, *How to be Good in a World Gone Bad*, 15.

¹²⁴ Kreeft, *Back to Virtue*, 25.

¹²⁵ Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*, 77.

¹²⁶ Lopez, “Professor accused of urinating on colleague’s door.”

Sorkin, adjunct professor of economics at various colleges in New York City, was busted for allegedly sending nude photos to and arranging for a tryst with an undercover cop posing as a teenage girl;¹²⁷ Shen Yang, formerly a Peking University professor of literature, faces investigations into the 1998 rape of his student, Gao Yan, which ended in Mrs. Gao's suicide shortly after the alleged crime;¹²⁸ and Paul Prosperino, a Hazard Community and Technical College professor in Kentucky who taught economics and computer science, pleaded guilty and was sentenced to ten years in prison for drug dealing after being caught with two thousand pills and thirty loaded guns and cash in his apartment.¹²⁹ I could go on: academic fraud, scandalous affairs, violence, racism, biases, angry outbursts, territorial disputes, and more. All the same problems we find in the larger culture are present in the university.

Our culture is sick because our spiritual centre, that spiritual organ Scripture calls the “heart,” is sick. Our illness is hereditary. It is called “Original Sin,” and the remedy begins with Jesus. Jesus came to establish a new kingdom, a kingdom that threatens the kingdom of this world. To enter Jesus’ kingdom, we must abandon our old allegiances. The challenge for Christians is to maintain full allegiance to Christ in the face of the temptation of idolatry.

The world threatens to press us into its mold (Rom 12:1–2). If we want to *live* like Christ in this fallen world, we must *be* like Christ. In this chapter we’ll consider the Christian heart. More specifically, we will explore what a morally virtuous life might look like for the Christian scholar in the context of the university. I will begin by sharing my struggle with academic idolatry.

Confessions of a Christian Scholar on Purpose

I stumbled into the academy through a back door. In 1997, Ethel and I joined an international university ministry. Both of us had become Christians through this ministry as undergraduate students and had a growing desire to see other students come to know Jesus. Our first assignment with Campus Crusade was at my alma mater, Miami University.

¹²⁷ Carrega-Woodby, “Teen Tryst.”

¹²⁸ Javier C. Hernández, “China’s #MeToo: How a 20-Year-Old Rape Case Became a Rallying Cry” (<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/09/world/asia/china-metoo-gao-yan.html>). Accessed April 9, 2019.

¹²⁹ Ritchie, “Former College Professor gets 10 years.”

Early on, I began to notice a few things about myself. First, in evangelism I tended to seek out intellectuals and loved engaging them and their ideas as I sought to communicate the great truths of the gospel. Moreover, I noticed that students were becoming increasingly biblically illiterate as well as hostile to the gospel. In the classroom, Christianity was marginalised or openly ridiculed, and I noticed as I walked the dorms and talked to students that the credibility of the gospel was decreasing. This was a curious state of affairs to me; after all, I reasoned, truth is on our side. Second, I noticed within me a growing passion for knowledge. I wanted to learn about God, the self, and the world. And I wanted to learn how to defend and communicate the truth about these things to a lost and hungry world. As a young Campus Crusade staff, however, my role was best described as that of a generalist. That is, I was called upon to do a lot of things—disciple students, lead Bible studies, give talks at weekly meetings—that didn’t require years and years of specialized training to perform. I was developing the ability to do many things (and do them well) but not specialising in any one particular task or role. Since my role was as a generalist, I didn’t have much time to pursue my newfound passion for knowledge. So I pushed it away; I shoved it under the surface.

Like shoving a beach ball under water, my passion for knowledge didn’t remain under the surface. I couldn’t suppress it for long. For the first few years on campus, the “beach ball” would surface, and I’d shove it under, only to have it resurface. Finally, by the third year I decided I’d better test the beach ball. I asked myself, “How does this passion for knowledge fit into my calling as a missionary?” I developed an apologetics course, taught it to students, and learned a few things about myself (I had the ability to understand and communicate difficult material) as well as about students (they had a desire to learn and a need to know). I read books, I sought counsel from friends, and I allowed the beach ball to stay afloat, asking God how I was to understand this newfound passion.

Also during this third year on staff with Campus Crusade, there were two events that God used to place me on the path to becoming a scholar. The first took place one night as I was leading a Bible study on the Gospel of Luke. In Luke, there are a number of places where the author pauses to note Jesus’s purposeful walk toward the cross. In Luke 13:32 we find one of those pauses. Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees about Herod. He says, “Go tell that fox [referring to Herod], I will drive out demons and heal people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal” (see also Luke 9:51 and 18:31–34). As we discussed this passage, one of the students ventured, “I bet Jesus was pretty passionate when he said this.” He was right. Jesus probably was passionate. God the Father had sent Je-

sus to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10), and what I realised as we talked that night was that Jesus was passionate in light of his *goal*, i.e., his purpose. It dawned on me then that I would be most passionate about the things of God when I too discovered the unique purpose for which God had created me. I realised that the newfound passion for knowledge was part of God's plan for me. God had created me with certain passions and gifts, and these pointed to the unique contribution or purpose for which I was made. That night, as we quietly studied the gospel of Luke, God was working in my life, revealing his perfect plan for me. One part of the track toward academia had been laid.

The other part of the track toward academia was put in place a few months later. I was still testing the beach ball. I was still seeking counsel from trusted friends and reading a good bit of theology and philosophy. Summer had arrived and I was in Virginia Beach on a mission trip, sharing the gospel, discipling students, and teaching apologetics. In the course of a conversation with someone that summer, a quote from the famous runner Eric Liddell, portrayed in the movie *The Chariots of Fire*, was brought to my attention: "I believe God made me for a purpose, but he also made me fast. And when I run I feel His pleasure." I remember asking: "What is it that when I do it, I feel His pleasure?" The answer was very clear. It was sharing the gospel in the context of the life of the mind. This was the second track God laid to put me on the path to becoming a scholar. God was saying, "You need to be a niche player in my kingdom. I have called you to become a scholar so that you can reach out to and work with one of the most influential groups in the world today: university students and professors." God had revealed part of his purpose for me, part of my story within his story. I stopped pushing the beach ball under.

Nine months later we switched to the faculty ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ, called Faculty Commons, and I began a formal education. I first went to Talbot School of Theology and cut my teeth in philosophy and theology. From there God took me to Purdue University where I finished a PhD in philosophy in the spring of 2010.

Sharing the early part of my story is easy. What I share next is more difficult.

God had revealed to me part of my purpose in life. He had revealed my specific God-given mission in light of the gospel. But somewhere along the journey, as I pursued first an MA and then a PhD in philosophy, as I saw success in speaking, in writing, and in ministry, my life shifted from being about "Thy Kingdom Come" to being about "My Kingdom Come." As I began to live and move and have my being within a universi-

ty setting that thrives on merit and the impressiveness of one's resume, I fell right into line; I was pressed into its mold. Sure, I could say all the right words—"It is all about God"—and I would do many good things, spiritual things even. But if I was honest with myself (and painfully, now with you), it was often more about me than about God. "Look at me! Look at how great I am! Look at how smart I am!"

The first four years after the completion of my PhD were tough. I did not initially seek a job within the academy. I believed that I could be best used as a leader in a ministry to faculty. But it was hard. I had to fall in love with Jesus again. I began to wrestle with God: are you calling me to be a professor, a pastor, or a parachurch leader? About two years into this period of time, I realized that my skills and passions would be served best as a university professor. So I went on the job market, thinking (in my humble opinion) that the job search would be fairly easy. Wrong. I came up empty my first year: a couple of short lists, one campus visit, no offers. But I was convinced that I belonged. We looked at the need for Christian professors overseas and decided to pursue teaching overseas. We sold our home, by faith, in June of 2013. We waited for a university to offer a contract. "Surely God agrees with me; I belong in the university. Surely he wouldn't waste my gifts and talents in some non-academic job," I reasoned. But the overseas teaching contract never materialised.

We were homeless, with four kids, and I had no idea where to turn. I began to wrestle with God in the waiting. We were living on the second floor of some dear friends' home in West Lafayette, Indiana. Thankfully, I was still employed with Campus Crusade, but clearly my time with them was running out. I needed to make a move. As Charles Dickens put it in another context, this time of waiting and wrestling was "the best of times and the worst of times."

God began to gently challenge me: "Am I enough? What if you never landed a job in academia; would you be OK with that? What if you never accomplished a noteworthy thing again in your life? What if you were a nobody in the world of philosophy? Would I be enough for you?" And in those moments, as I listened to the Lord and examined my own heart, I realised that the answer to those questions was often "no." In short, I had become an idolater, seeking my own personal success. God was not enough.

I simply couldn't languish forever—life doesn't stop even in the waiting—yet I believed that God was calling me to academia and that ultimately there was a job somewhere. God's Spirit ministered to me, especially as I read the Psalms. "My eyes are ever on the Lord, for only he will release my feet from the snare" (Ps 25:15). I believed that I was in a God-

imposed snare and my job was to look to him, and to trust. Thankfully, after six months of languishing, at the last minute, God provided a full-time teaching position in philosophy within the course of three weeks. I was invited to interview with Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary the second week in December 2013, and on January 1, 2014, my family and I arrived on campus. I am most thankful to God. I have also learned within the depth of my being that God is enough. May I never forget.

What about you? Is God enough? What if you never publish another noteworthy paper or book again? Is God enough? What if you never make it to a more prestigious university? Is God enough for you? If the answers to these questions or many more like it is “no,” then you too have fallen into idolatry.

What is an idol? Here’s what Tim Keller says in his book *Counterfeit Gods*:

It is anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give.¹³⁰

He goes on:

A counterfeit god is anything so central and essential to your life that, should you lose it, your life would feel hardly worth living. An idol has such a controlling position in your heart that you spend most of your passion and energy, your emotional and financial resources, on it without a second thought . . . An idol is whatever you look at and say, in your heart of hearts, “If I have that, then I’ll feel my life has meaning, then I’ll know I have value, then I’ll feel significant and secure.”¹³¹

I’m an idolater. There you have it, my confession. Thankfully, by God’s grace I am a recovering idolater. Lord willing, as I daily learn to trust in God’s goodness and faithfulness, I will grow to become more like God and be motivated more and more by the things of God instead of my own agenda and projects. I share this story hoping that you will be both challenged and encouraged by it: challenged to consider God’s call on your own life and your own struggle with idolatry; encouraged as you reflect on the fact that God calls imperfect people like you and me to participate in his spiritual revolution. As Tim Keller has said, the gospel tells us that

¹³⁰ Keller, *Counterfeit Gods*, xvii.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, xviii.

we are more wicked than we ever dared believe, but at the same time more loved and accepted than we ever dared hope.

God wants us to have rightly ordered loves (which lead to rightly ordered lives). Jesus and his glorious gospel are the only things big enough to satisfy our deepest, eternal longings both now and forever. Therefore, we need to grasp the incalculable greatness of Jesus Christ first. As pastor Tullian Tchividjian puts it, “seeing [Jesus] for all that he is will ultimately be the only way we can overcome our temptations to idolatry.”¹³² In finding my identity in Christ, I am free to pursue the things of God, including scholarship, for His glory. This truth is liberating. I have nothing to prove or protect and can joyfully engage in the work of my Master.

Part of the glory of the gospel is that there is, in Christ, a life-changing power. The cure extends beyond salvation (glorious in itself). We can become morally virtuous. We can be different than the world. Not by merely trying harder or engaging in some kind of self-salvation/sanctification plan, but by turning to Jesus, admitting our need, and (in partnership with God) doing the hard heart work necessary to root out our idols and reorder our lives. While a gift from God, becoming virtuous is not something received passively and automatically. As Kreeft puts it, “Being saintly is our response to being saved. We cannot do either without God, but he will not do either without us.”¹³³ Jesus is our example. As followers of Jesus who aspire to act from virtue as he did, it is wise to understand key Christian virtues more fully. Three great and abiding virtues that we must cultivate are faith, hope, and love.¹³⁴ It is to these virtues that we now turn.

Cultivating Moral Virtue

Faith

That God values faith there can be little doubt: Abraham was deemed righteous because he put his faith in God (Gen 15:6); Jesus told the disciples that faith as small as a mustard seed could move a mountain (Matt 17:20–21); Paul states that it is through faith that one is saved (Eph 2:8); and the author of Hebrews says that it is impossible to please God with-

¹³² Tchividjian, *Jesus + Nothing = Everything*, 63.

¹³³ Kreeft, *Back to Virtue*, 67.

¹³⁴ Traditionally, these three virtues are called the “theological virtues.” Together with the four “cardinal virtues” of justice, wisdom, courage, and moderation, we have our classic list of seven virtues.

out faith (Heb 11:6). Popular atheist creeds presume that faith is irrational, arbitrary, and a kind of wishful thinking; sincere spiritual seekers encourage each other to embrace the “mystery” of faith, take a blind leap, and hope for the best. Christians often equate faith with subjective, personal belief, in contrast to knowledge which is objective and publically accessible. Indeed, there can be little doubt that our contemporary culture is deeply confused about faith.

It is time that we take a fresh look at the virtue of faith. What is faith? It is a kind of entrusting of oneself; thus, faith in God should be understood as *entrusting oneself to God*.¹³⁵ It is not merely intellectual, although there is an intellectual component. It is not merely trust, although it includes an existential component. Faith in God is not contrary to reason, or above reason, or identical to reason, but rather it is tightly related to and in concert with reason. Faith is cognitively grounded in sufficient evidence; hence, it is eminently reasonable. But importantly, as philosopher Paul Moser points out, faith exceeds intellectual assent since it is “life-involving” and not just “mind-involving.”¹³⁶

Importantly, entrusting ourselves to God includes our willingly counting on God as our *authoritative Lord*.¹³⁷ This involves the daily denial of self in order to live to God and God’s ways. Seriously consider these words of Jesus: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23). Notice that self-denial is to be a daily practice; it is “to live hour by hour for God’s Kingdom.”¹³⁸ Such unselfish love of God and others requires faith, an all out commitment to allow God to be God in our lives.

There are many opportunities to practise self-denial as a professor: being available to talk with students after class, even when tired and ready to go home; writing a last minute letter of recommendation for a student, setting aside precious research time; serving on a faculty committee when no one else will; reading a colleague’s work instead of getting to your own; hours of lonely preparation to make lectures sing, even as students grunt and complain and seem uninterested in class. The invitation to self-denial is a call to radical kingdom living, lived through faith by the power of the indwelling Spirit and the resurrected power of Jesus. It also leads to greater freedom as you function the way God intended in service to God and man.

¹³⁵ Moser, “Faith,” 14.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 23.

¹³⁸ Moreland, *Kingdom Triangle*, 146.

Hope

As finite beings, we cannot help but hope. Our life is not full and complete. All our desires are not satisfied. But we long for that day. We hope to fall in love. We hope to get our research published. We hope to get the grant. We hope to have permanent job contracts. We hope our kids turn out all right. Hope is as ubiquitous as it is human. But what is it? And more to the point, how does it contribute to human flourishing and virtue?

As a moment's reflection on the above examples indicate, we can speak of hoping well or poorly. How we hope reveals what we think life is all about and what we think will make us happy. If our ultimate hope is in the outcome of a sporting event, a job, or a relationship, such hope is idolatrous, seeking ultimate fulfillment in things that cannot fully satisfy. Our hope, ultimately, must be directed toward a worthy object, an object that will make us fully happy. Not surprisingly, the goal of Christian hope is God. We hope well when we "long for the destiny of union with God as our complete happiness, and for God's help in attaining this destiny."¹³⁹

Placing our hope in God enables us to "run in such a way as to get the prize" (1 Cor 9:24). The end goal isn't one more research publication or book, as important as this is, but union with God. The end goal is not tenure, as important as that is, but eternal life. The end goal is not prestige and accolades but fullness of life, understood in terms of virtue and the pursuit of God. We can (and should) be hopeful in these worldly activities (research, promotion, prestige, etc.), but we must pursue them, not as things that will be ultimately fulfilling, but as part of our calling to faithfully serve Christ.¹⁴⁰ As C. S. Lewis eloquently states, "Aim at Heaven and you will get earth 'thrown in': aim at earth and you will get neither."¹⁴¹ What a radical posture in the highly competitive and merit-based university! A missional life will truly be outrageous and a living challenge to those who hope poorly, seeking ultimate fulfillment in things never meant to fully satisfy.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Mattison, "Hope," 112.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 118–19.

¹⁴¹ Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 134.

¹⁴² Compare Lewis again: "Most people, if they had really learned to look into their own hearts, would know that they do want, and want acutely, something that cannot be had in this world. There are all sorts of things in this world that offer to give it to you, but they never quite keep their promise." Ibid., 135.

Love

When considering the contemporary university, it is not a stretch to conclude that love is at best a dispensable virtue or at worst a liability within the academy. If there is any whiff of love in the air, as far as many professors are concerned, it most likely is related to the love of research or the love of the pursuit of the great idea or the monumental breakthrough. Professors are cold, calculating centres of rationality. Right? Well, no. But there is a kernel of truth to the stereotype. The problem isn't that we should love people instead of our research. Far from it. I love research, and probably so do you. The simple truth is that our loves are often wrongly ordered, and thus our lives are unbalanced.

That the created order includes an "order of loves" is confirmed by common sense.¹⁴³ We would deem it wrong if person X arrived on his wedding day with bland indifference yet was constantly filled with joy and delight each time his team won a cricket match. In the great commandment (Matt 22:37–39), Jesus tells us *what* we are to love and *how* we are to love. We are to love God, our neighbour, ourselves (by implication), and creation in the proper order. In doing so, we will flourish as God intended, both as human beings (in general) and as scholars (in particular).

This last point is important. While love is a general moral obligation of all Christians, the cultivation of the virtue of love impacts our scholarly life as well.¹⁴⁴ In writing, we can practise love by giving our interlocutor(s) the benefit of the doubt, resisting the temptation to overplay our hand, and refusing to engage in *ad hominem* attacks. In teaching, we must exercise love in the classroom by resisting the urge to slam students when they say stupid or obviously incorrect things, and by providing an appropriate window into our own life so that students can learn from a genuine person and not a mere talking head. In grading, we can exercise love by offering both positive and negative feedback and, perhaps counter-intuitively, refusing to give students a better grade than their work merits. In serving, we can seek the well-being of others (and the university), going out of our way to be a blessing to all.

The love that is distinctive of Christianity is *agape* love. It is a kind of love that is selfless and unconditional. It is not a feeling. It is not a sentiment. Rather, it is a "state of the will which we have naturally about our-

¹⁴³ Taliaferro, "Love," 174.

¹⁴⁴ Köstenberger, *Excellence*, 223. The practical tips discussed in this paragraph are from Köstenberger's discussion on pages 227–28.

selves, and must learn to have about other people.”¹⁴⁵ It is acting in such a way that results in the good for the other person. It is a kind of love that is sadly lacking within the modern university. How can we cultivate the virtue of Christian love? Crucially, progress in this virtue or any other is developed through the regular practice of the spiritual disciplines such as fasting, study, silence, solitude, frugality, worship, prayer, and meditation.¹⁴⁶ But beginning is even easier: “Do not waste time bothering whether you ‘love’ your neighbour; act as if you did. As soon as we do this we find one of the great secrets. When you are behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love him.”¹⁴⁷

Are you ready to more fully enter the story of God? Are you ready to turn away from self and toward Jesus as your only hope and highest good? Do you want to grow in godly character? If so, then turn up the volume, listen to the music of the gospel, and join the dance.

Turning up the Music of the Gospel

My friend Keith Johnson, the director of theological education for an international university ministry, provides one of my favorite pictures of the gospel-centered life. The illustration is as follows:

Imagine yourself in a large house in which those who are deaf and those who can hear are living together. In one of the rooms, you see a guy sitting in a chair and listening to the music on his [iPhone]. Rhythmically, he’s tapping his foot, drumming his thighs, jutting his chin out, [and] swaying to the beat . . . His entire body moves in response to what his ears are hearing. . . .

A few minutes later, one of the deaf persons enters the room. Seeing the guy listening to the music and impersonating [a rock star], he thinks, that looks like fun. I think I’ll try that. So he sits down next to him and begins to imitate him. Awkwardly at first, he tries drumming his thighs, jutting his chin out, and swaying to the music just like the guy with the [iPhone]. With a little practice he begins to catch onto it. . . .

After a while, a third person enters the room and watches the scene. What does he see? Two people apparently doing the same thing, apparently listening to the same thing. Is there a difference? Absolutely. The first guy hears the music and his actions are a natural response to the music’s

¹⁴⁵ Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 129.

¹⁴⁶ See for example, Moreland and Issler, *The Lost Virtue of Happiness*, chaps. 2–5.

¹⁴⁷ Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 131.

rhythm and melody. The second guy is merely imitating the outward acts. Being deaf, he's not listening to anything.¹⁴⁸

Johnson points out that there is an important spiritual parallel in this illustration. The dance represents our external behavior, while the music represents the grace of the gospel. It is easy, if we fail to constantly pay attention to the state of our souls, to go through the motions of the Christian life—the dance steps—and not hear the music of the gospel. God's grace is abundantly and readily available to all who ask. In order to become virtuous, we can't just focus on the dance steps. We must begin by reorienting our hearts toward Christ, lest we succumb to mere external moralism. As you read Scripture, first ask how it exposes our brokenness and points us to a Savior. That's the gospel. Then, ask how we are to live in light of the gospel (the dance). We were meant to dance. But to dance the way God intended, we need to turn up the music of the gospel. My hope is that the previous two chapters will have functioned as amplifiers into your life.

We've considered the Christian mind and heart; we've explored the nature of idolatry; and we've seen the beauty and sufficiency of the gospel. In the next two chapters, we'll consider the dance as it relates to missional living within a local campus setting and within an academic discipline.

Questions for Personal Reflection or Group Discussion

- 1) Discuss your own calling to become a university professor. What were some of the significant milestones along the way? How has the university pressed you into its mold? How has Christ made you different? Where do you struggle with idolatry as a scholar?
- 2) What are you passionate about? How do your gifts and passions fit into God's calling in your life? Are you ever tempted to take something that is good and God-given—your passions—and make them ultimate? How so?
- 3) What are some of the common idols within academia? How can you avoid falling into idolatry in these areas? Do you relate to Gould's struggle with idolatry in the academy?
- 4) Do you agree that seeing Jesus for all that he is will ultimately be the only way to overcome the temptation to idolatry?

¹⁴⁸ See Johnson, "Hearing the Music of the Gospel," 1.

- 5) Have you been operating with a confused view of faith? What is biblical faith? How are biblical faith and self-denial related? How can you daily practice self-denial in your vocation as a professor?
- 6) How do you struggle with misplaced hope? How does placing your hope in God transform your everyday activities as a professor?
- 7) Do you agree that the stereotypical professor is not characterised by love? If so, why is this? How can you exercise Christian love to your colleagues and students?
- 8) Do you struggle with reducing Christianity to “dance steps”? How has God been turning up the music of the gospel in your life lately? What difference would it make if you approached Scripture by asking how it exposes brokenness and points to a Saviour?

6

ON REACHING THE CAMPUS

“From this day to the ending of the World,
... we in it shall be remembered
... we band of brothers.”—*Henry V*, William Shakespeare¹⁴⁹

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witness in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”—Jesus (Acts 1:8)

The outrageous idea of this book is that God wants to use Christian professors as *professors* to reach others (colleagues, administrators, students), play a role in transforming the academy and their respective disciplines, and meet the needs of the world. We’ve looked at the great story of God; we’ve considered the significance of the university as a mission field; and we’ve explored what wholeness might look like within the university setting for the Christian professor. In this last section, I want to explore critical aspects of missional living in more detail. The questions I will consider include: What might a vibrant movement of missional professors look like in a local university setting (present chapter)? How ought we to think about scholarship in light of Christianity (chapter 8)? How can professors leverage the God-given resources of the university and take them to the world (epilogue)?

A Community of Brothers and Sisters

There is something about coming together for a cause greater than ourselves that inspires and moves the human soul. We’ve been created to live in the company of others for a cause much greater than ourselves. Listen to the language of *togetherness* as Paul beautifully expresses the dramatic life to which we are called: “For *we* are God’s workmanship [literally, works of art], created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for *us* to do” (Eph 2:10, italics added). Doing good works, living and loving as whole people, shoulder-to-shoulder. That is *how* we embrace the mission of God.

¹⁴⁹ From the front cover of Ambrose, *Band of Brothers*.

We find embedded within God's plan to redeem and restore all of creation an incarnational impulse. God became man to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10), and Jesus goes back to the Father and sends the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8) who takes up residence in his followers. As witnesses for Christ, in a very real way we become the gospel as we incarnate Christ in our lives and action. As works of art fashioned in the image of God, we literally become "little Jesuses" to the people around us, embodying the gospel and pointing others to the One in whom there is life and light. Alan Hirsch speaks of "the Conspiracy of Little Jesus" and God's desire to "fill the world [with an] actively Christlike (redemptive) presence in every neighbourhood and every sphere of life."¹⁵⁰

What would a missional movement look like on a university campus? First, the group must come together around the missional imperative of partnering with God in his mission to redeem humanity and restore shalom to all of creation. A faculty community that aims at mission will engage in activities that contribute to individual growth (book studies, Bible studies, prayer meetings, discipleship, and so on), since this is a *means* to do mission. But if a faculty community comes together centred only on fellowship, encouragement, and a Bible or book study—all good things in themselves—it will never end up being missional. All too often faculty fellowships eventually fizzle due to lack of attendance, energy, and vision. As Hirsch states, "By planting the flag outside the walls and boundaries of the church [think: faculty fellowship] . . . the church [faculty fellowship] discovers itself by rallying to it—this is mission."¹⁵¹

Second, you can't have a missional movement without missional professors. That is, we need to examine our own hearts and ask the hard questions of ourselves: Have I firmly located my life within the mission of God? Is the confession "Jesus is Lord" my central confession in all that I do, think, and say? Is Christ my core identity? This doesn't mean we all need to be perfect Christians, for there are none. Rather, I am suggesting that we seek to live as gospel-centered Christians who embrace the scandal of grace and the majesty and glory of Christ as our only hope, means, and method for life.

I suggest that a missional movement of professors¹⁵² will embody at least six characteristics:

¹⁵⁰ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 114.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 236.

¹⁵² Or professors *and* students; there are a number of contexts where it is better to be together and a number of contexts where it is not.

- connecting the lost to Jesus
- life-transforming discipleship
- multiplying leaders and resources
- engaging the university holistically and dialogically
- impacting the world
- transforming academic disciplines (next chapter)

Let us consider each of these characteristics of a missional movement in detail, and consider the implications both individually and corporately in our teaching and relating as professors.

Connecting the Lost to Jesus

I received the following email from a student while teaching at a secular university. I'll call her Jenny:

I was just wondering if you would have anything comforting to say to someone who was happily raised a Christian but then got really interested in anthropology and religion, decided to major in them, learned a whole bunch of interesting stuff, and then experienced much disillusionment, confusion, and depression in response to all the knowledge. . . . What if I need to believe in some kind of ultimate reality, some kind of perfection behind all the chaos in the world, some kind of transcendent power or force or whatever you want to call it because I cannot live with the idea of being utterly alone in both life and death, but I realize there might not be one right answer and if everyone in the world is searching for meaning in different ways and each claim they have found it, how could there be a universal meaning? . . . Nothing makes sense to me and I don't know if it is ever going to. I am completely lost.

I emailed Jenny back, assured her that there were answers and invited her to get together to talk. When we met, I was able to share the gospel and answer for the first time many of her objections to Christianity that she had learned through her religion and anthropology classes.

After meeting with Jenny, I called one of my friends, Emily, who works for the local campus ministry, and asked her to follow up with Jenny. Within twenty minutes of my meeting with Jenny, there was an email from another Christian on campus inviting her to get together. Jenny began to meet weekly with Emily to study the Bible. A few weeks later, I received the following email from Jenny:

You know the drawing you showed me where Christ is either on the outside of the circle, knocking at the door, or on the inside, on the throne? Well, I finally decided to go for it and invited Christ into my life a couple of nights ago. I was really nervous about it and thought that I probably should make some life changes first, but Emily said God loves us no matter what, and I shouldn't worry about trying to shape up before asking him into my life, and the first priority should be to have Jesus in our hearts, and then He will help us make life changes, should we need to. Plus it says in Ephesians (I think) that so no one can boast, good works alone can't get us into heaven. It takes faith, and God's grace gets us into heaven. I think that's so beautiful, and I feel so blessed, because I'm such a screw up and God will still accept me in spite of that if I have faith. Well thank you for your help, I really appreciate it!

There are so many students (and colleagues) like Jenny—searching for truth, aware in some vague way that something is not right, and looking to you to point them in the right direction. Imagine a campus on which Christian professors actively seek ways to share their faith with students and colleagues and then connect them to the larger Christian community. What potential for impact!

How do we connect the lost to Jesus in a way that is appropriate to the context of the university? Thinking about Jenny's story and how she came to faith will be instructive for us. The important thing to note is that *evangelism is a process*. Given the prevalence and proximity of many competing religions and defeater beliefs to Christianity, the general apathy of students and professors, the dearth of critical thinking skills, and the abundance of idols in the human heart, many people in our world today hold beliefs that prevent them from embracing the gospel.

The process of evangelism begins with *me*: do I believe that a person is lost without Christ? Jenny was already there; she knew she was lost and that there must be something more to life than just the booming and buzzing reality of the physical universe. Her soul longed for more. She was ready to respond to Jesus. But not everyone who is lost is ready to respond to Jesus.

The next step in this process is to join with God in removing the obstacles that prevent a person from embracing the gospel. For Jenny, she had faulty beliefs that needed to be addressed. For all, there are idols of the heart that need to be exposed. Jenny realized that her worldview was deeply unsatisfying. She hoped for a story that was alive and that understood her. She wondered if Christianity might be that story, and quickly learned that it was in fact true and satisfying. But she first needed to see Christianity as plausible before she could respond to the gospel.

C. S. Lewis wisely notes, “the ancient man approached God (or even the gods) as the accused person approaches his judge. For the modern man the roles are reversed: He is the judge: God is in the dock.”¹⁵³ This seems right. At the end of history man will be in the dock, but in our day and age it is in fact God who is in the dock. The accused is Jesus. In fact, Jesus is on trial in every human heart. The accuser is Satan. The defense attorney is the Holy Spirit (note: not us). We are the witnesses. In the process of drawing someone to Christ, the Holy Spirit calls a whole series of witnesses to defend Jesus. Occasionally we will be called to be expert witnesses, but in all cases we are to be faithful witnesses. We are to be prepared to give an answer for the hope within (1 Pet 3:15) when called upon and to actively partake in the mission of God. So, when engaging someone with the gospel, it is not for us to know if we are the first or hundredth person to share Christ. You might have the privilege of being the last witness (that is, leading a person to Christ) or not. In Jenny’s case, I was the second to last witness. I suspect that in the classroom, we will generally not be the last witness for Christ, but we will be a witness nonetheless (notice in Acts 1:8 Jesus says “you *will* be my witnesses” not “you *might* be my witnesses”).

The final step in the evangelistic process is to explain the gospel message and seek a response. Jenny was not immediately ready to respond to the gospel, so my job then was one of remaining in the relationship and further connecting her to other Christians who could help her in her journey. Once Jenny had time to process the gospel with Emily, she was ready to respond, and Emily rightly exhorted her to make a decision for Christ.

Understanding that evangelism is a process should free us up in our teaching and relating within the university. We do not need to cancel class once a semester to hold a revival meeting. We do not need to pass out gospel tracts at departmental meetings (in fact, please don’t do that). Rather, we can embody Christ in our words and action, trust in the Holy Spirit, and actively expect that God is drawing others to himself and will use us in the process.

Practically speaking, what does it mean for a professor to connect the lost to Jesus? Professors have sustained access to, and influence on, two primary people groups, students and colleagues. In the next two sections, I focus primarily on students, though some of the principles can be creatively applied to colleagues. More specifically, here I ask what does it mean to connect lost students to Jesus in the classroom.

¹⁵³ Lewis, *God in the Dock*, 244.

Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, it means not merely viewing your teaching as a means to an end. The classroom lectern is not a pulpit. Rather, your teaching should flow out of a sense of calling. It is your real job. You are not moonlighting at teaching (or research; we'll talk about that in the next chapter), so that you can get to the real work of evangelism.¹⁵⁴ Rather, your mission flows out of your calling. To separate the "secular" (your teaching) from the "sacred" (your faith) is to be dishonest. It is a movement away from wholeness. C. S. Lewis, referring to the importance of honesty and integrity in teaching for the Christian professor, wrote, "[A] Christian should not take money for supplying one thing (culture) [let's say: teaching] and use the opportunity thus gained to supply a quite different thing (homiletics and apologetics) [let's say: evangelism]. That is stealing."¹⁵⁵ As Romanowski and McCarthy note, "We don't have to bring Jesus into the classroom. He's already there."¹⁵⁶ Your job is to be faithful in all things.

The flip side, of course, is that you will be a better teacher if you bring all that you are and all that you know—including your Christianity—to the classroom. As cited in Romanowski and McCarthy, Parker Palmer states clearly and succinctly the principles of good teaching: "good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher."¹⁵⁷ That is, you ought to allow your core identity as a Christ-follower to shape the content, method, and means of your teaching. In most cases, it is a good idea to identify as a Christian. Many professors (especially those not teaching in 'closed' countries) find this easiest to do on the first day of class each semester when it is appropriate to share a bit about one's personal life. These simple "faith professions" often have a profound influence on students. Students have come back (even years later) and reported to former professors that these simple "faith professions" and the subsequent life lived out in front of the classroom (without another word about Christ) played a role in their coming to Christ. It is, however, also important to make connections between the material in the classroom and the gospel. This might not always be obvious, but if all truth somehow illuminates the divine, then somewhere, somehow, there is a gospel connection to be made. Imagine

¹⁵⁴ Romanowski and McCarthy, *Teaching in a Distant Classroom*, 15.

¹⁵⁵ Lewis, *Christian Reflections*, 221. Thanks to Romanowski and McCarthy for pointing me to this quote from Lewis. The quote and the brackets are from their *Teaching in a Distant Classroom*, 14.

¹⁵⁶ Romanowski and McCarthy, *Teaching in a Distant Classroom*, 26.

¹⁵⁷ Palmer, *The Courage to Teach*, 10, as cited in Romanowski and McCarthy, *Teaching in a Distant Classroom*, 30.

if every Christian professor were simply asking the question: how does my subject matter connect to the gospel? My guess is that there would be many fruitful (and not forced) lines of discussion that could be opened.

Jesus is described in Scripture as (among other things) a teacher. Michael Romanowski and Teri McCarthy, in a book written for Christian professors teaching overseas, suggests we ought to ask the question, “How would Jesus teach?” if we want to gain insight into what it means to teach Christianly.¹⁵⁸ As Romanowski and McCarthy note, “Jesus used language that was familiar to his students and created visuals from their everyday lives. . . . [He] used things around him (known and familiar) to explain new concepts.”¹⁵⁹ He challenged his listeners to apply his teachings, teachings that he faithfully modeled before them all. “[He] built relationships with his students. . . . [he] was a servant. . . . [He] prayed for his students.”¹⁶⁰ Simply put, he loved his students by giving himself away.

How outrageous! But how beautiful! There are many examples of Christian professors who teach in the secular university and embody the life, methods, and teaching of Jesus in the classroom. Take Professor Ken Elzinga as an example. He is the Robert C. Taylor Professor of Economics at the University of Virginia where he has taught since 1967. His personal teaching philosophy, posted on his web page, states, “I endeavor to apply [the picture of Jesus as a servant] to my teaching; if I want best to lead a class of students, I should be willing to serve them. My authority as a teacher is linked to my willingness to serve my students.”¹⁶¹ What does this service to students look like for Professor Elzinga?¹⁶² It involves praying *with* and *for* his students; regularly inviting them into his home; viewing office hours as an opportunity to serve and share the gospel instead of a necessary evil; and being prepared for the classroom lecture. And students take notice. Professor Elzinga admits that often students (many who are not Christians) make up some excuse about economics and come to his office in the hopes that he will pray for them. What a powerful example of the paradox of a teacher who leads by serving.

Similarly, Professor Godfrey Ozumba, who serves in the Philosophy Department at the University of Calabar in Nigeria as Dean of Arts and who has contributed significantly to African philosophy, personally mentored generations of students, giving of his valuable time over and above what the univer-

¹⁵⁸ Romanowski and McCarthy, *Teaching in a Distant Classroom*, 93.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 96, 98, 100.

¹⁶¹ Elzinga, “The Academy and Jesus,” 31.

¹⁶² See *ibid.*, 31–35, for details on the activities described in this paragraph.

sity required, resulting in scores of students and colleagues coming to Christ. In China, Professor He Guanghu in Renmin University's department of Religious Studies is well known for modeling Christian scholarship and intellectual integrity to a younger generation of Christian scholars. In a hierarchical Chinese society, Professor He, going against cultural norms, treated his doctoral students as equals; and he frequently inconvenienced himself to care for his students' personal needs. Hundreds of Professor He's students, even long after graduation, still consider him a personal friend.

Heather Holleman, adjunct professor of English at Penn State University, shares how service under the banner of Christ can be inconvenient:

I receive a desperate email from one of my best students. He's applying to this great new program, but the deadline's been changed to *tomorrow*. He has no choice but to beg his professors to write last minute recommendations.

It's a ridiculous inconvenience. It's exam week here. I'm grading papers, posting grades, and barely keeping my head above the water. Not only is the recommendation due now, but I have to *stop everything*, drive across town to my office to pick up the appropriate letterhead, write the narrative, and then arrange to meet the student to drop off the forms. What makes this one student's life so precious, so important, that I would bother to do what I do not have time for? I bundle up in my coat and scarf, pull on my gloves and boots, and brave the ice.

As I drive, it's as if God has a message for me about the beauty of the ridiculously inconvenient. God, after all, takes on the inconvenience of flesh, and if I think about it, Christmas and Easter are both actually a celebrations of the most radical inconvenience. A student needing a recommendation seems a small thing, really . . .

I'm smiling as I race into the English department. It's because the student is precious—profoundly so—and why wouldn't I go to extraordinary lengths to help him move forward in the direction of his dreams? What makes my time more valuable than his? . . .

The life of faith in the academy means I learn to embrace inconvenience. The inconvenient things often usher in the magnificent, the life-changing, and the divine. I felt myself transforming into the type of woman I want to be as I drove back home. I did a ridiculously inconvenient thing for someone, and I knew it was a sacrifice worth making.¹⁶³

The truth is, being a servant of others is inconvenient. It does get in the way of our projects, our plans, and our schedule. But herein lies the prob-

¹⁶³ Holleman, "The Inconvenient." See Holleman, "Go Early," in "Grander Story," 145–56. See also Campbell's review of Hove and Holleman, "A Grander Story: An Invitation to Christian Professors."

lem as Professor Holleman correctly points out: it is not our time, our plans; it is all God's. Part of the freedom that Christ brings us when we truly find our identity in Christ is the freedom to set aside our own goals and agendas, to trust in God and his timing, and to join with him in service to others as we connect the lost to Jesus. Is it radically inconvenient? Yes. Is it outrageous? Yes. It is the missional life God has called us to as his servants.

Life-Transforming Discipleship

As I shared in chapter 6, I became a Christian through a university ministry. I was immediately plugged into a discipleship group and began to meet regularly with a more mature Christian who discipled me in the ways of Jesus. As a new believer, I met weekly with Rick, an upper-class student, who was, in turn, discipled by Mark, a campus staff worker. Rick loved and guided me, prayed for me, taught me the Bible, and took me out to share my faith. After Rick graduated, I began to be discipled by Mark. Mark loved and guided me, prayed for me, taught me the Bible, and took me out to share my faith. Eventually, I began to disciple younger students. I loved and guided them, prayed for them, taught them the Bible, and took them out to share their faith. My life was transformed by the intentional investment of others who guided me toward maturity in Christ. Lord willing, those I in turn discipled have also been transformed by my intentional investment toward their maturity in Christ.

The biblical principle at work here is called spiritual multiplication and is summarised by Paul in 2 Timothy 2:2: "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others." Four spiritual generations are represented in this verse: Paul, the "me" who gives the first instruction; Timothy, who is Paul's "dear son" (2 Tim 1:2) in the faith; the "reliable men" to whom Timothy is told to entrust Paul's teaching; and the "others" who would carry that teaching forward.¹⁶⁴ Paul is expressing God's master plan to reach the world, and it is as simple as it is brilliant: train disciples to win and train others to win and train. This was Jesus' strategy, and it has not changed. As the missiologist Robert Coleman states,

Jesus was a realist. He fully realized the fickleness of depraved human nature as well as the satanic forces of this world amassed against humanity, and in this knowledge he based his evangelism on a plan that would meet the need

¹⁶⁴ Hershey and Weimer, *The Finishers*, 223.

... Jesus individually could not possibly give [the multitude] the personal care they needed. His only hope was to get leaders inspired by his life who would do it for him ... Though he did what he could to help the multitudes, he had to devote himself primarily to a few men, rather than the masses, so that the masses could at last be saved. This was the genius of his strategy.¹⁶⁵

We must, if we want to be faithful followers of Jesus, intentionally invest in others. Your calling as a professor provides unique opportunities and challenges.

Many students today are deeply spiritual.¹⁶⁶ For those students who are Christian, there is an opportunity for you to intentionally invest in their spiritual lives. As a professor, you exert an incredible influence on others, and can use this influence in appropriate ways to guide those entrusted to you toward a deeper walk with Jesus. I use the word “entrusted” deliberately. Begin to view your roster of students from God’s perspective; they are in your classroom, and not another’s, for a reason. Some students need to simply be exposed to a professor who knows and loves Jesus. Others might be placed by God in your classroom or lab as an opportunity for you to give a deeper, more intentional investment. Sensitivity to the Spirit is essential, as is openness to his leading. If you are working with graduate students who are also Christian, consider, by faith, moving beyond your academic responsibilities toward shepherding their hearts and minds unto service for Christ. To refuse to consider the possibility that God might be calling you to disciple some of your students, or even younger Christian colleagues, is to neglect God’s plan for world evangelism; it is to cease being missional.¹⁶⁷

Granted, there are unique challenges as well. Given the inherent power structure between students and professors, especially in many authoritarian cultures where students will often defer to a scholars’ message only because they are in a position of authority, one must be careful not to abuse or overstep. Again, sensitivity to the Spirit is key, as is openness

¹⁶⁵ Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 35–6.

¹⁶⁶ See Nash and Bradley, “The Different Spiritualities of the Students We Teach,” for a survey of the main spiritual narratives of students today.

¹⁶⁷ Larry Braskamp examines the beliefs and practices of today’s university students and reports that over half of the college students surveyed “report that their professors never offered them any opportunities to discuss the meaning and purpose of life, and nearly half were dissatisfied because their college experiences did not provide them with any ‘opportunities for religious/spiritual reflection.’” See Braskamp, “The Religious and Spiritual Journeys of College Students,” 130–31.

to God's leading. You are not called to disciple every Christian student that comes through your classroom or research lab. This would be as impractical as it is unrealistic. But there will be those that God brings into your life in which you, and you alone, can play a special role *because* you are a professor. I am simply urging openness to the possibility.

Imagine if every Christian professor was discipling at least one student (graduate or undergraduate), colleague, or administrator on campus. Lives would be transformed. The gospel would go forward. Spiritual multiplication would be happening. I realise this particular aspect of missional living might very well be the most difficult for you; indeed, discipleship is one of the most significant elements missing in the body of Christ. But God calls us to be different. Jesus leads the way here as elsewhere—intentionally (and sacrificially) investing in our lives for our well-being and maturity. We follow the lead of another. We are “everyday missionaries” who live life on mission where God has placed us.¹⁶⁸ And that place is the university. Now go and make disciples (Matt 28:19–20).¹⁶⁹

Multiplying Leaders and Resources

During my six years as a PhD student at Purdue University, I also worked as a campus minister with Faculty Commons, the faculty ministry of CRU. The faculty group at Purdue has a long and rich history, but by the time I arrived on campus it had grown stagnant. There were (and still are) many Christian professors, but there was nothing like a missional movement. There was one Bible/book study that met fairly regularly each semester, but that was about it. There was no ownership of the group, and there was no university-wide community of Christian professors and graduate students. Yet all the resources to reach the campus were present, lying dormant, ready to be unleashed.

¹⁶⁸ Willis and Coe, *Life on Mission*, chap. 1.

¹⁶⁹ There is a popular sentiment among some Christian leaders that, since the Koine Greek word for “go” in Matthew 28:19 is a participle, then it should not be translated as an imperative; rather, “go” should be translated “As you are going, make disciples.” This is a misunderstanding of the so-called “Attendant Circumstance Participle,” a common mistake among novices of Greek grammar. I will not spell out the details here but will only mention that when a Koine Greek writer uses a participle in a particular way, then that participle takes on the mood of the main verb. In Matthew 28:19, the participle “go” takes on the mood of the imperative “make.” Thus, in agreement with nearly all leading translations, Jesus’ Great Commission is, indeed, an imperative: Go! (see Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basis*, 640–45 for an excellent explanation).

I knew that I could not and should not do it alone. Thus, I formed a leadership team composed of three professors. The idea was that they would own and give leadership to the faculty group. The first year we took small steps. We twice ran an ad in the student newspaper, signed by many of the Christian professors and administrators, inviting students to consider the truth and beauty of Christianity;¹⁷⁰ we had a monthly large group meeting in a nice banquet room on campus with a catered lunch and invited speaker; we continued the weekly Bible study; and we added one campus-wide outreach to our annual schedule, a spring symposium that would be attractive to non-believing professors, students, and community members (in the early days of the symposium, we brought in a C. S. Lewis scholar, a popular Christian apologist, and a leading New Testament scholar). Momentum began to build, a corporate identity took shape, and evangelism and discipleship was taking place as God's people joined together in a cause greater than themselves.

My friend and colleague Corey Miller, also on staff with Faculty Commons, took over the faculty ministry at Purdue after I left in 2010. Corey has taken the ministry to new heights about which I could have only dreamed. He has successfully continued to multiply leaders and resources. Over the past few years, the faculty group has turned the corner from "ministry" to "mission" and lives are being transformed. In addition to the monthly Christian Faculty Forums (where professors present on some topic that integrates their faith and discipline), there are a number of weekly "R and D" (reading and discussion) groups available for faculty and graduate students whether believer, skeptic, or seeker, including a special study for visiting Chinese scholars,¹⁷¹ a monthly prayer meeting, and an annual missions trip to Berlin where students and faculty minister together to the lost, equip believers, and seek to assist in the development of a Berlin faculty ministry.¹⁷²

Faculty are engaged in evangelistic outreach around campus, and participate in open forums, dorm discussions (called "stump the professor"), and large Christian gatherings. The faculty ministry spearheads the largest annual outreach event of the Purdue/greater Lafayette area, known as The Symposium, which has grown to be an international event involv-

¹⁷⁰ The ads can be seen at <http://purduecfsn.com/resources/exponent-ads/>.

¹⁷¹ Recent topics include a study of C. S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity*, academic integration, human persons and ethics, miracles and modern science, morality and economics, and the gospel in action, all led by a different faculty or staff member.

¹⁷² To see all the current and past activities of the Purdue Faculty and Staff Network, see <http://purduecfsn.com>.

ing a leadership team representing multiple campus ministries with sponsorship from nearly three dozen businesses, churches, and campus ministries who raise tens of thousands of dollars each year to cover the expenses of the event. On February 1, 2013, the group hosted a debate between Christian philosopher William Lane Craig (Talbot School of Theology) and atheist philosopher Alex Rosenberg (Duke University) that drew an audience of fourteen thousand live or live stream viewers from over sixty countries. Over a hundred thousand people have viewed the video of the debate, and a book based on the debate has been published as well.¹⁷³ The 2014 symposium was on the theme of human sex trafficking and attracted an international audience as well, featuring top leaders on pornography (including an ex-porn star), human sex trafficking (including an ex-sex slave), and ethics.¹⁷⁴ At the beginning of each annual symposium, Christian professors take the stage, one after another, and make a short statement of their faith in Christ. This all happens in less than five minutes, but it is a powerful and moving testimony of God's worship worthiness as these brilliant scholars stand before thousands and proclaim their faith in Jesus as Lord.¹⁷⁵

What has been taking place at Purdue University over the past few years is amazing. God's spirit is moving as the people of God step out in faith, working together for a cause greater than themselves. A key ingredient in this growing missional movement has been the cultivation and multiplication of leaders and resources organised around the gospel and the centrality of Christ. May it be so on every university!

Engaging the University Holistically and Dialogically

A missional movement of professors should engage with the university as a whole, and on its own terms. While evangelism, discipleship, and multiplication are essential characteristics in engaging universities for Christ, they are incomplete. A number of Christian professors meeting in small groups around the world already practice these three characteristics. These groups discuss how to connect lost students and colleagues to Jesus, how they might disciple them, and strategies for multiplying leaders and resources. The strategies they use to engage the university via

¹⁷³ For the video of the debate, see <http://www.symposiachristi.com/debate/>; the book is Miller and Gould, *Is Faith in God Reasonable?*

¹⁷⁴ The 2014 Symposium can be seen at <http://www.symposiachristi.com>.

¹⁷⁵ To see the "Professors Who Are Confessors" video of the 2012 symposium, see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A08bRrQk808>.

these characteristics, and the questions they ask about them are usually framed almost exclusively within a Christian philosophical framework.

Let me give an example. A group of eight Christian professors begin meeting in at a university in Malaysia. They pray together, encourage one another, read scripture, and often invite others to join them. In their discussions, because of their desire to see people transformed, they strategize on how they can reach their students and colleagues for Christ. The models that emerge from these discussions usually include various means by which to live out evangelism, discipleship, and multiplication. Some in the group, for example, decide to form a small group of students to mentor, others start a discipleship group in their home with colleagues, while still others propose a plan for inviting faculty members to local Churches.

While not disparaging this model, because these strategies certainly play an influential role in university engagement, Sri Lankan scholar Vinoth Ramachandra (Secretary for Dialogue & Social Engagement, International Fellowship of Evangelical Students) and Terry Halliday have, for many years, advocated for a different model, what Ramachandra calls an “incarnational and dialogical model of university engagement.”¹⁷⁶ In this model, Christian scholars labor to discover the questions that the university is already asking. What issues are already important to university students and faculty members? And then the believing scholar humbly dialogues with students and faculty members about these questions and issues from a Christian perspective. But the dialogue is genuine; as a true dialogue, it is a two way street. The believing scholar sincerely listens and learns from the dialogue.

For example, Ramachandra suggests how this might look. Christian professors go out from their small groups and join, for example, the Astronomy Society or the Buddhist Society, attend faculty workshops on particular topics, befriend non-believing colleagues and discover the questions *they are asking* and the conversations that *they are having*—conversations that do not necessarily originate from a Christian philosophical framework. Then, through kind and patient dialogue, Christian professors thoughtfully and intelligently redirect these conversations into more Christlike trajectories, persuasively influence the research agenda for a given academic department, or strive to implement Christlike university policies. But this is only one side of the dialogue. On the other side, Christian professors bring the university’s questions and conversations back to their Christian small groups and are changed by them. This requires, as Ramachandra sagely notes, both boldly speaking and humbly listening.

¹⁷⁶ For a succinct summary of Ramachandra’s model, see his excellent YouTube video on the topic: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3kIQ-FRu7r8>.

In essence, to engage the university holistically and dialogically, the believing professor, as the Society of Christian Scholars suggests, must seek to engage all of the following: students, colleagues, their institution as a whole, and academic disciplines.¹⁷⁷

Impacting the World

Part of our God-given mandate is to be “world-changers.” As James Davison Hunter states in his excellent book on world-change, “To be Christian, is to be obliged to engage the world, pursuing God’s restorative purposes over all of life, individual and corporate, public and private. This is the mandate of creation,”¹⁷⁸ a mandate that Jesus (Matthew 28:16–20) and Luke (Acts 1:8) emphasized.

Christian professors from every city and town around the world share this obligation. Until the mid twentieth century, when most people heard the word “missionary,” what came to mind was a Western Christian crossing geographical borders to serve Christ internationally. Thankfully, this (false) perception has changed. Missionaries from the dawn of Christianity have gone out from nearly every region on Earth. Missiologist Timothy Tennant describes it like this: Christian mission is not a “West reaches the rest” endeavor (and it never was) but one that is “from everywhere to everywhere.” In other words, Christian professors in Africa, Asia, the Americas, the Pacific, and Eastern and Western Europe should strategically pray about how to impact the world beyond their own institutions.

For some professors, especially for those who serve in Christian saturated locales, this will mean that they prayerfully consider seeking an academic post in a country or region different than their own. You can accomplish this in several ways. You could seek short-term placements, perhaps during a sabbatical. Or, some may have the opportunity to move abroad.¹⁷⁹ For others, who choose to impact the world, this requires concerted effort to think about how to have a global influence while still continuing to serve locally. You can achieve this by building relationships with international students and colleagues, by publishing in international journals, and/or by mentoring junior scholars abroad¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ See www.SocietyofChristianScholars.org, and www.universityresources.org.

¹⁷⁸ Hunter, *To Change the World*, 4.

¹⁷⁹ Join the Society of Christian Scholars (www.SocietyofChristianScholars.org), where a job board is offered, to learn of opportunities to serve internationally.

¹⁸⁰ For opportunities to serve as a mentor to other professors, join the Society of Christian Scholars (*ibid.*).

Christian professors—especially given their strategic placement in society, given their specialized training, and because they usually have immediate respect when they cross borders—stand in a unique position to impact the world for Christ in strategic and influential ways. Scholars should not narrowly relegate the missionary calling to a special office that excludes professors. There is ample room, and immense need, at the missiological table for academics to impact the world beyond their own local institution.

Questions for Personal Reflection or Group Discussion

- 1) Do you agree with Gould's claim that we were created to live for a cause greater than ourselves, lived out in the company of others? What might this look like in the university? In the church? In the community?
- 2) How do you share your faith in the context of the university? What have you found helpful? What is most difficult for you? Does thinking about evangelism as a process help?
- 3) How does your subject matter connect with the gospel? How can you creatively make those connections in the context of the classroom?
- 4) Have you ever been inconvenienced by a student, colleague, or administrator? How did you respond? How might the gospel influence your response?
- 5) Have you ever been discipled? How did this transform your life? Have you ever discipled someone else? Describe your experience. Is there anyone in your life right now that God is calling you to disciple?
- 6) What are some ways you can lead within your own Christian faculty group? What step of faith is God asking you to make this year? How can you involve others in the mission of God on your campus? What resources are currently available but lying dormant on your campus?
- 7) If there is not a Christian faculty group on your campus, has God equipped you to form one?
- 8) How can you be faithfully present in the classroom, your department, and the university as a witness for Christ? How will being faithfully present help make the world a little bit better?

7

ON TRANSFORMING AN ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE

“The prayer of the scientist ...: Lord, grant that my discovery may increase knowledge and help other men. Failing that, Lord, grant that it will not lead to man’s destruction. Failing that, Lord, grant that my article in *Brain* be published before the destruction takes place.”¹⁸¹

“You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we would like to know what they mean.”—Acts 17:20

We’ve been exploring the question of faithfulness within the context of the university. In the last chapter we considered the marks of a missional movement. In this chapter we’ll consider the question of faithfulness from the perspective of one’s academic discipline, specifically considering the topic of academic integration. While there are a number of attempts in the literature to explain academic integration, there are few clear models to emulate. The challenge of providing a helpful model of academic integration is further compounded by the fact that the scholarly life differs greatly across academic disciplines, increasing the difficulty of prescribing a universal approach to the integration of faith and scholarship. A new approach, from the vantage point of the missional imperative, is needed. In this chapter, I’ll attempt to spell out such a model of academic integration by exploring the anatomy of an academic discipline.

The Christian Scholar and Mission of God

A Christian scholar can find several reasons to integrate faith and scholarship. Because truth is a unity, compartmentalisation of one’s faith commitments and one’s scholarly discipline is effectively denying God’s lordship over all of life.¹⁸² Vocational integrity requires that Christian scholars allow their faith to inform their scholarship.¹⁸³ God has called

¹⁸¹ Walker Percy, *Love in the Ruins*, 7–8.

¹⁸² Hasker, “Faith-learning integration.”

¹⁸³ Hughes, *The Vocation of a Christian Scholar*.

Christians to excellence in all activities of life, including scholarship.¹⁸⁴ Jesus Christ provides the foundation, motive, and sustenance for learning.¹⁸⁵ For these reasons, the integration of faith and scholarship is a vital function of a Christian academic.

The above reasons gain greater meaning and significance within the larger framework of God's story as articulated in the Bible. Drawing on this grand narrative of Scripture can help Christian scholars develop a more robust model of faithfulness. In my opinion, it is a failure to fully appreciate the biblical narrative that has produced many disparate and truncated views of the integration of faith and scholarship.¹⁸⁶ Although these authors address the topic of integrating faith and scholarship, by failing to clearly define academic disciplines and/or place such integration within the grand narrative of Scripture, they overlook a key component of faithfulness.

That key component is the missional impulse that runs throughout Scripture. Consequently, we will be guided by this missional impulse in developing a model of faithfulness. The missional calling does not dichotomize the sacred and the secular. God's mission includes all of creation. Under the Lordship of Christ, worship and work, prayer and conversation with friends, and all of life are divinely ordained activities that can bring honor and glory to Christ. Thus, part of the scholar's task is to think biblically about how to connect research, teaching, and service in the academy to the progress of the gospel in all of its dimensions, bringing shalom and blessing to all the earth.

To integrate faith and scholarship, Christian scholars would be wise (1) to value the intrinsic good of academic pursuits (see below), (2) to pursue research that engages their—and, given the current need for interdisciplinary pursuits, other—academic disciplines, and at the same time (3) engages the needs of the world. By taking this approach, scholars can provide the world with a plausible view of the gospel, and their research can be directed toward meeting tangible needs, both physical and spiritual. Thus, any model of faithfulness within the university or an academic discipline must consider the missional calling of the Christian scholar. A key question, then, is this: How does the Christian scholar,

¹⁸⁴ Köstenberger, *Excellence*.

¹⁸⁵ Noll, *Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind*.

¹⁸⁶ Examples include Claerbaut, *Faith and Learning at the Edge*; Harris, *The Integration of Faith and Learning*; Hughes, *The Vocation of a Christian Scholar*; Marsden, *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*; Mellichamp, *Ministering in the Secular University*; and Poe, *Christianity in the Academy*.

guided by the missional imperative, faithfully serve Christ within an academic discipline? An answer to that question depends on one's definition of an academic discipline.

What is an Academic Discipline?

The language of “transforming the disciplines” is fairly commonplace among Christian scholars.¹⁸⁷ Although a worthy goal, it should *not* be the primary aim of the Christian scholar. Rather, faithfulness or authentic Christian commitment ought to be the primary aim. As a result of this commitment, an academic discipline will be transformed so that it is more open to the things of God. The primary question for Christian scholars, then, is not, “How do we transform our academic discipline?” but rather, “How do we faithfully live for Christ within our academic discipline?” An answer to either question, however, necessitates understanding the definition of an academic discipline.

Views on how an academic discipline can be understood generally correspond to ways that the notion of scholarship itself is understood. One prominent view, perhaps *the* dominant view of scholarship in the world today is that it is the end result of an objective, unbiased cognitive process of discovery. According to this *naïve factualism* perspective, one engages in the scholarly process by leaving behind one's biases, prejudices, and values in order to focus only on the facts that are available to be discovered. Another view of scholarship, prominent of late, argues that there are no objective facts to be discovered—there is no ready-made world. Hence, scholarship is the imposing of a perspective on ordinary experience. According to this *social constructivist* view, scholars engage in research as human beings with various background beliefs, prejudices, values, and practices that inform the process and influence the product of the scholarly enterprise. These two views of scholarship also can be applied to the way in which academic disciplines are defined, each with its own merits and shortcomings. Considering each view in some detail may prove helpful in charting an alternative understanding of an academic discipline, a view I call *perspectival factualism*.

¹⁸⁷ See for example, Carson, *Christ and Culture Revisited*, and Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*.

Naïve Factualism

Naïve factualism as a view of scholarship finds self-conscious expression in Francis Bacon's *New Organon* and his discussion of the "idols of the mind"—that is, the various biases that prevent humans from being wholly rational agents.¹⁸⁸ Bacon's view is that scholars must eliminate these biases in order to conduct scientific research. From this perspective, an academic discipline is best viewed as a bounded collection of objective facts about a particular subject. For example, the academic discipline of physics is composed of the set of facts about elementary particles and atoms and how they interact; the discipline of biology is comprised of a set of facts about living organisms; the discipline of philosophy is a set of facts about the world and its structure; and so on. The scholar is a separate entity, distinct from the academic discipline. He or she engages in various practices with respect to the set of facts as an objective, dispassionate scholar who studies, critiques, and adds to the set of facts through discovery. From this viewpoint, the integration of faith and scholarship equates to bringing the set of facts from the academic discipline into conformity with the set of facts that comprise a Christian worldview. Thus, authentic Christian commitment for the Christian scholar is in terms of the cognitive content of one's teaching, research, and writing. Scripture plays a normative role, but only in terms of cognitive content, and usually in terms of foundational principles. For example, theologian Al Wolters has noted:

If it is true that all scholarly disciplines are shaped to a significant extent by foundational assumptions, and that those assumptions at bottom involve religious choices, then the normative bearing of Scripture on the academic disciplines . . . is primarily a matter of letting Scripture guide our choice of foundational assumptions.¹⁸⁹

Wolters assumes that an academic discipline is composed solely of facts, and that Scripture's primary role for the scholar is in terms of supplying the correct foundations for theorising. The integrative task amounts to substituting secular assumptions at the foundations of the discipline with biblically informed assumptions and arguing for their superiority. Hence, faith and scholarship integration is reduced to "checking" the relationships among facts. If a fact from the Christian "book" contradicts a fact from the discipline's "book," then it is the fact from the discipline's

¹⁸⁸ Bacon, *New Organon*.

¹⁸⁹ Wolters, "No Longer Queen," 60.

“book” that needs to be rejected or modified by the Christian scholar to bring it into consistency with Christianity.

There is much about this view of the academic disciplines that resonates. Each academic discipline has a body of knowledge that is studied, critiqued, and applied to practical problems. Authentic Christian commitment indeed requires that Christian scholars allow their belief-content to inform their theorising. But naïve factualism has its limits. First, it is not clear that the collection of facts that distinguish one academic discipline from another are clearly defined or that various facts necessarily belong to one set rather than another. Recent debates about whether or not intelligent design is considered science or philosophy or religion are illustrative. This debate assumes that there is an essence to science or philosophy or religion when in actuality, from the vantage point of the history of ideas, the set of facts belonging to each group has been fluid. From an historical perspective, many academic disciplines are relatively new. New subdisciplines continue to develop as human knowledge progresses (witness, for example, the new field of study *biomimetics* which combines biology and engineering).¹⁹⁰

Naïve factualism omits critical elements that seem intimately connected to the academic discipline—namely, values, character, individual and collective narratives, and sets of practices and beliefs that form the culture of the academic discipline. By treating the academic discipline as a collection of facts and its practitioners as objective, dispassionate researchers, many aspects of the academic enterprise and its interplay in accessing and interpreting facts are ignored. Moreover, for the Christian scholar, authentic commitment is more than assent to the correct set of facts. Specifically, the Christian scholar is called by God to be a witness and an agent, and to give evidence of God’s work of redemption and renewal within the academic discipline.¹⁹¹ As Nicholas Wolterstorff has emphasised, the activities of the Christian scholar must contribute to the cause of “justice-in-shalom.”¹⁹² Such a contribution suggests a more robust understanding of an academic discipline and an awareness of other fruitful connections between faith and scholarship.

¹⁹⁰ For a helpful discussion on the origin and development of the academic disciplines, see Lloyd, *Disciplines in the Making*. For a helpful discussion of the problem of how to define or demarcate science from non-science, see Laudan, “The Demise of the Demarcation Problem,” and Menuge, “Against Methodological Materialism.”

¹⁹¹ See Wolterstorff, *Reason within the Bounds of Religion*.

¹⁹² Wolterstorff, *Educating for Shalom*.

Social Constructivism

The social constructivist view of scholarship finds self-conscious expression in the words of Nietzsche who stated, “There are no facts, only interpretations,”¹⁹³ and more recently Derrida who, when speaking of propositions, noted, “the absence of a transcendental signified extends the domain and the play of significations infinitely.”¹⁹⁴ According to this view of scholarship, an academic discipline is best understood as an ongoing enterprise in which scholars take their place around a set of problems or phenomena to be studied from a particular perspective in which there is no universal truth. Because there is no objective world, the scholar or group of scholars is invited to find meaning and purpose within a particular narrative. From a social constructivist perspective, it is not possible to engage in scholarship without being influenced by one’s background beliefs, prejudgments, values, and practices that inform and shape the process as well as the end result of the scholarly enterprise. Thus, the academy is a vast constellation of interests contending for power, and an academic discipline is a social practice from a variety of perspectives, none of which are universally valid or binding.

Within this framework, faithfulness to Christ as scholars is understood primarily in terms of right living. The Christian scholar is expected to embody the values and virtues of Christ, such as love, humility, and wisdom; integration occurs as the Christian scholar grows to maturity in Christ and others are brought into and find meaning within the Christian scholarly community. Scripture has no transcendent import for the university or the life of the mind in general, but is a source of meaning, nourishment, and value for the Christian community of which the scholar is a part.

There is much to commend in the social constructivist view. The failure of the Enlightenment project points to the myth of unbiased, wholly objective rationality. The claim that humans are fundamentally embodied and cannot separate value judgments, background beliefs, and cultural norms from the scholarly enterprise also resonates. These observations are important epistemological points. They do not, however, justify the further metaphysical claim that there is no objective reality or ready-made world.

¹⁹³ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 267.

¹⁹⁴ Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, 280.

Perspectival Factualism

Contra social constructivism, the actual practices of most scholars in the academy suggest that there is a ready-made world. Thus, the scholarly task is fundamentally one of discovery, not world-making. *Contra* naïve factualism, the actual practices of most scholars in the academy suggest that learning and discovery are not disembodied activities of merely rational agents. Thus, the scholarly task is fundamentally social and perspectival. Perspectival factualism incorporates these insights in what I believe is a more accurate understanding of how an academic discipline is identified and defined. Academic disciplines are indeed factual. But the scholarly enterprise is one approached from a variety of perspectives each of which provides unique cognitive access to the phenomenon to be studied or the problem to be solved. As Wolterstorff has argued, individual narrative identities “enable, rather than obstruct, access to dimensions of reality.”¹⁹⁵ The advantage of this perspective for the Christian scholar is that, because scholarship is inherently social and perspectival, it can be argued that various narrative identities, including a distinctly Christian perspective, ought to be welcomed within each academic discipline.

Such an understanding of the scholarly enterprise finds justification from within the Christian worldview. As Mark Noll argues,

the particularity at the center of Christianity justifies a rooted, perspectival understanding of truth that embraces unabashedly the crucial significance of all other particularities of time, place, cultural value, and social location . . . [as well as a] confidence in the possibility of universal truth.¹⁹⁶

Shorn of both naturalistic and postmodern baggage, this understanding of the notion of scholarship and an academic discipline provides a perspective that is both congruent with the actual understanding and practices of many scholars and fruitful enough to guide the Christian scholar in the integrative task. Perspectival factualism also offers support for the contention that faithfulness to Christ will transform an academic discipline.

Often the integration of faith and scholarship is advanced among Christian scholars as a foolproof method for transforming an academic discipline. Transformation of the academic discipline is the goal. Various strategies for faith and scholarship integration are identified, each with

¹⁹⁵ Wolterstorff, *Educating for Shalom*, 239.

¹⁹⁶ Noll, *Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind*, 58.

merits and shortcomings. Some strategies for integration are argued to be superior, and a resultant course of action is prescribed so that an academic discipline will be transformed. I suggest that the goal of transformation is noble but misplaced. Instead, the goal ought to be faithfulness to Christ, and a possible by-product will be the transformation of a discipline.

To illustrate, William Hasker has asserted there are three approaches for how to engage an academic discipline as a Christian scholar.¹⁹⁷ The *compatibilist strategy* presupposes the actual harmony of the Christian faith with an academic discipline and seeks to demonstrate how such assumptions can be profitably shared. The *transformationist strategy* finds some basic validity and integrity between the Christian faith and the academic discipline, as well as some areas of discord that need to be changed. The *reconstructionist strategy* finds a fundamental tension between the assumptions and claims of an existing academic discipline and the Christian faith and seeks to completely reconstruct a discipline from its foundation.

Given perspectival factualism and a missional approach to faith and scholarship integration, I find merit for adopting a transformationist vision (not strategy) as the likely outcome of faithfulness to Christ within the academy. In a fallen world, the idea that any existent academic discipline would or could ever achieve complete compatibility with the theory and ideal practices of the Christian scholar or the Christian community of scholars is absurd. Pluralism in the academy is a reality; hence, the compatibilist vision is not possible.¹⁹⁸ Yet a reconstructionist vision is equally unrealistic and even unnecessary. There is much within an academic discipline that the Christian scholar can affirm. The belief that all people are created in the image of God, the doctrine of common grace, and personal experience testify to the fact that non-Christians can and often do find the truth on any particular matter. In addition, there are many assumptions employed within an academic discipline that are not explicitly Christian, yet can be embraced by the Christian scholar. The Christian can provide a unique grounding for these assumptions (e.g., the uniformity of nature or the assumption that rationality is possible), whereas other scholars within an academic discipline might not be able to justify why such assumptions are valid.

Thus, the transformationist vision seems to be a middle view between two extremes. The Christian scholar can affirm that which can be af-

¹⁹⁷ Hasker, "Faith-learning integration: An Overview."

¹⁹⁸ See Wolterstorff, *Educating for Shalom*, 214–15.

firmed, confront that which needs to be confronted, and address ideas that are antithetical to Scripture that may be held by others in the discipline. Given perspectival factualism, this transformative vision is not understood merely in terms of the integration of the subject matter of a discipline with the cognitive content of the Christian faith. As I will outline in the next section, an academic discipline is composed of much more, and the “much more” provides many additional points of gospel connection for the Christian scholar.

The Anatomy of an Academic Discipline

An academic discipline is comprised of four components (see Figure 1). At the foundation are guiding principles (1) which inform the discipline’s guiding methodology (2) which, in turn, informs how scholars approach the data set (3). These combined components help give shape to the guiding narrative—the individual and collective narratives of the discipline (4).

Guiding Principles

Guiding principles are variously called “control beliefs,”¹⁹⁹ “background beliefs,”²⁰⁰ “core values,”²⁰¹ “faith presuppositions,”²⁰² and “feasibility assumptions.”²⁰³ I define a guiding principle as *a belief held by a scholar that operates as a constraint on theory acceptance and a signpost for theory discovery*. Actual guiding principles within a particular academic discipline include beliefs about the logical or aesthetic structure of a theory, beliefs about the entities that can comprise a theory, beliefs about how the world operates, and so on. According to Wolterstorff,

[Guiding principles] function in two ways. Because we hold them we are led to *reject* certain sorts of theories—some because they are inconsistent with those beliefs; others because, though consistent with our [guiding principles], they do not comport well with those beliefs. On the other hand [guiding principles] also lead us to *devise* theories. We want theories that are

¹⁹⁹ Wolterstorff, *Reason within the Bounds of Religion*; Wolterstorff, *Educating for Shalom*.

²⁰⁰ Marsden, *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*.

²⁰¹ Poe, *Christianity in the Academy*.

²⁰² Edlin, “Keeping the Faith.”

²⁰³ Menuge, “Against Methodological Materialism.”

consistent with our [guiding principles]. Or, to put it more stringently, we want theories that comport as well as possible with those beliefs.²⁰⁴

I suggest that within each academic discipline there are various guiding principles that are well accepted within the discipline and form the culture of the discipline.²⁰⁵ When pressed to justify why a belief functions as a guiding principle within an academic discipline, the scholar is often without an answer. It is possible, indeed likely, that some of the guiding principles held by a scholarly community are inconsistent or contradictory. Often, for the Christian seeking admittance into the scholarly community, the acceptance of the guiding principles of an academic discipline occurs during their training period as a graduate student and with little reflection on whether or not these beliefs comport with the Christian faith.

Many of the dominant guiding principles within the academy are not difficult to identify. For example, much of contemporary science is guided by verificationism (an epistemological principle that only sentences which are empirically verifiable are useful), functionalism and materialism (metaphysical principles that there is no actual teleology to be found in nature), and a fact-value dichotomy (which entails that scholarship ought to be “value-free”). Examples of such principles in operation within science are abundant. William Lane Craig has asserted that virtually the whole of twentieth century physics has been derailed by the defective epistemology of verificationism.²⁰⁶ The materialist and functionalist assumptions of Darwinian evolution within the biological literature have become a *sine qua non* of legitimate scientific theorizing. Add to this the vocal polemic of the New Atheists such as Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, and Daniel Dennett, and there are numerous examples of all of these principles at work in contemporary science.²⁰⁷

Other principles, perhaps more prevalent in the humanities, include skepticism (an epistemological principle that there is no, or limited domains of, knowledge), anti-realism (a metaphysical principle that there is no ready-made world), and the ethical imperative of tolerance. Many of these principles can be seen in Fish’s claim that any political, moral, or religious issue must be “academicised” for it to become a legitimate field of study within the academy:

²⁰⁴ Wolterstorff, *Reason within the Bounds of Religion*, 68.

²⁰⁵ See also Ecklund, *Science vs. Religion*.

²⁰⁶ Craig, “Concluding Thoughts on the Two Tasks of the Christian Scholar.”

²⁰⁷ See Dawkins, *The God Delusion*; Harris, *The End of Faith*; and Dennett, *Breaking the Spell*.

The name I give to this process whereby politically explosive issues [or moral or religious issues] are made into subjects of intellectual inquiry is “academicizing.” To academicize a topic is to detach it from the context of its real world urgency, where there is a vote to be taken or an agenda to be embraced, and insert it into a context of academic urgency, where there is an account to be offered or an analysis to be performed.²⁰⁸

In other words, it is possible to learn *about* morality, literature, or about how various people think about these issues, but what we cannot do, what does not belong in the academy, is to learn *from* them or to discover the truth about them in a way that demands an existential response. For, given the fact/value dichotomy, there is no truth of the matter when it comes to moral, political, or religious issues; there is only opinion and belief. Thus, one is expected to *tolerate* different opinions on such things since there is no truth of the matter.²⁰⁹

An important lesson about the lack of neutrality in the university has emerged from this discussion. Neutrality is a myth. As Wolters has argued, “All scholarly disciplines are shaped to a significant extent by foundational assumptions, and . . . those assumptions at bottom involve religious choices.”²¹⁰ Thus, every subject emanates from a set of guiding principles that need to be identified and critiqued as necessary components of discovering the truth.²¹¹ This critique of assumptions is what in fact allows for the possibility of a foundation for learning in the academy that is both distinctly Christian and viewed as legitimate.

A Guiding Methodology

The methodology a scholar employs is informed by the guiding principles held within the discipline. For example, the materialism that dominates much of contemporary science has led to the postulation of methodological naturalism as the proper approach to true science, wherein science must proceed *as if* nature is all there is. God’s creative activity can be invoked in seeking to understand nature, but at that point the scientist has taken off her lab coat and ceased doing science. Part of the motivation for

²⁰⁸ Fish, *Save the World on Your Own Time*, 27.

²⁰⁹ Although such guiding principles as skepticism, anti-realism, and the ethical imperative of tolerance are most prominent within the humanities, they can be found in the sciences as well. See, for example, the anti-realism articulated in Hawking and Mlodinow, *The Grand Design*.

²¹⁰ Wolters, “No Longer Queen,” 60.

²¹¹ Edlin, “Keeping the Faith.”

methodological naturalism is the belief that such an approach will allow science to unproblematically proceed free from religious bias or metaphysical dogma. Yet such a view is unrealistic, as there is no such thing as neutrality in methodology either. Perhaps science in particular and learning in general would be better served if scholars wore their religious and metaphysical principles on their sleeves, since they employ them at every level of the scholarly process.

A Data Set

The data set of an academic discipline encompasses the specific domain of knowledge that is studied. In biology, it is living cells. In mathematics, it is numbers and their relations. In the social sciences, it is human behaviour reduced to measurable proxies. The data set itself may or may not be explicitly religious or have explicit religious implications. It is important to note that Christian scholars do not arrive at their data set any differently than their non-Christian colleagues. In the same manner as other scholars, Christian scholars make observations and reflect on the world around them as they accumulate their data. However, even when considering a discipline's data set, there is no such thing as neutrality. Consider the debate within philosophy over the nature of causation. What is the *paradigm case*, or perfect example, of causation that is accepted as the data set to be analysed? Since at least the time of the philosopher Hume, it has been the white billiard ball impacting other billiard balls. Thus, an analysis of causation will be in terms of how one physical object affects another physical object. But prior to the modern era, the paradigm case of causation was not the relation between two physical objects but rather mental or agent causation. Contemporary discussions of causation typically proceed under the assumption that there is only one kind of causation to be analysed, event causation; the presence of this assumption is due to the fact that even the data set of a discipline is shaped by its guiding principles and methodologies.

A Guiding Narrative

The guiding narrative of a discipline includes the history of a particular culture's mindset (e.g., the Western mindset or the Eastern mindset) as well as the specific history of the discipline; it includes the various theories held at various times (historical and contemporary) and the individual scholars (historical and contemporary) who develop, analyse, and defend them. Take the Western mindset as an example. In Western

philosophy there are notable scholars such as Thales, Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, Hume, Locke, Berkeley, Hegel, Husserl, Sartre, Plantinga, Chomsky, Searle, and myriads of lesser-known figures. There is Platonism, Aristotelianism, Scholasticism, Empiricism, Rationalism, and many other philosophies. In astronomy, there is the geocentric model of Ptolemy and the heliocentric model of Copernicus; in physics, scholars have argued for absolute Newtonian space and time as well as Einsteinian relativity; in mathematics, thinkers such as Pythagoras, Euclid, Cantor, Gödel, Carnap, and Tarski have advocated Logicism, Formalism, Intuitionism, and more. Each academic discipline has a history, a narrative full of intrigue, sub-plot, climax, paradigm shift, honest toil and ill-gotten gain. These individual narratives as well as the collective narrative of the discipline provide many points of contact for a missionary encounter.

Missional Connections Within an Academic Discipline

The missional imperative suggests that part of the Christian scholarly task is to seek to make gospel connections within the academic disciplines. The goal is not a conversion of academic disciplines to correspond to a distinctly Christian perspective. Rather, Christian scholars should be principled pluralists in the academy—allowing, even encouraging various perspectives to compete in the marketplace of ideas for the mantle of truth. Such a posture requires the conviction that ultimately truth is found within a Christian view of reality. It also requires intellectual humility as we admit our finitude and fallenness in theory construction and evaluation.

Thus far, I have argued that an academic discipline is best understood as a book of facts accessed from a variety of perspectives. I have described the anatomy of an academic discipline in terms of a four-layered triangle (Figure 1). In this final section I will identify some of the missional crossroads that can be discerned at each level of the academic discipline, thus providing a truly holistic account of faith and scholarship integration. By highlighting examples of faithfulness in research, teaching, and service by Christian scholars, I hope to demonstrate the viability and possible applications of the model developed in this chapter.

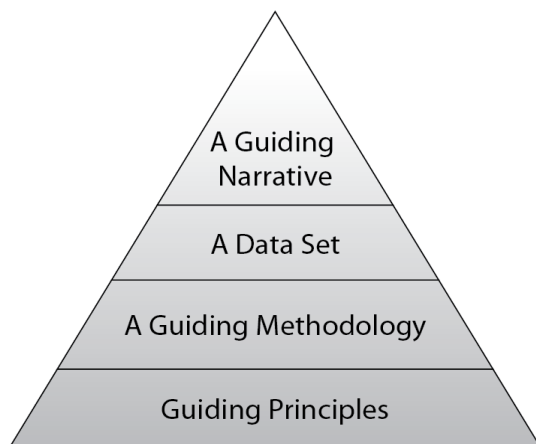


Figure 1: **The Anatomy of an Academic Discipline**

Guiding Principles and the Christian Scholar

There are both a negative and a positive aspect to a missional encounter at the foundation of an academic discipline. According to Poe, “the first responsibility of a Christian scholar to his or her discipline is to offer the discipline a critique of its prevailing [guiding principles].”²¹² A major task of the Christian scholar is to uncover the guiding principles that inform his or her academic discipline. There will be much that a Christian scholar can affirm about a particular discipline’s guiding principles. However, there will be much that needs confrontation as well, and these provide an opportunity for missional engagement in the classroom, departmental hallways, and in research.

The responsibility of critical engagement with a particular discipline is an important and necessary task of the Christian scholar within the academy. However, although it might be the Christian scholar’s first responsibility, it is not the only responsibility. There is also the scholar’s contribution to knowledge. This contribution is best understood within the context of a larger kingdom and a more comprehensive framework of reality. This larger context informs the Christian’s guiding principles. As Poe has noted, “Faith intersects an academic discipline at the point where it asks its most fundamental questions . . . Faith intersects where a

²¹² Poe, *Christianity in the Academy*, 173.

discipline establishes its core values, upon whatever basis they are founded.”²¹³ Wolterstorff asserted a similar view two decades earlier:

The Christian scholar ought to allow the belief-content of his authentic Christian commitment to function as control within his devising and weighing of theories. For he like everyone else ought to seek consistency, wholeness, and integrity in the body of his beliefs and commitments.²¹⁴

Plantinga, speaking to scientists, likewise argued that “a Christian academic and scientific community ought to pursue science in its own way, *starting from* and taking for granted what we know as Christians.”²¹⁵

What are the guiding principles that a Christian scholar ought to employ? Noll’s suggestion is a good place to start: the reality of Jesus Christ is foundational to the “rationale, means, methods, paradigms, and telos”²¹⁶ of the Christian scholarly enterprise. According to Noll, the creeds about Christ are foundational to Christian scholarship. Christ is the source and telos of all things, including all truths that can be discovered.

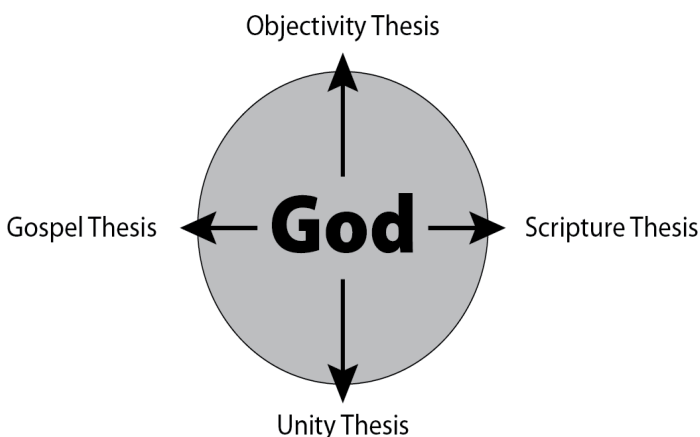


Figure 2: **God** provides the grounding for each guiding principle

²¹³ Ibid., 138.

²¹⁴ Wolterstorff, *Reason within the Bounds of Religion*, 76.

²¹⁵ Plantinga, “Methodological Naturalism,” 144.

²¹⁶ Noll, *Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind*, 148–49.

I propose to extend Noll's point by suggesting four principles that can serve as guides for the Christian scholar, grounded more broadly in the character and actions of the triune God, as follows (see Figure 2).

- Unity Thesis: All truth is connected and unified.
- Objectivity Thesis: There is a mind independent reality that we can discover.
- Scripture Thesis: Scripture makes knowledge claims about the nature of God, the world, and the self.
- Gospel Thesis: Humanity's greatest need is the gospel.

Many in the academy, not only Christians, affirm belief in a mind-independent world (Objectivity Thesis) and the unity of truth (Unity Thesis). But it is the reality of God that provides a sufficient grounding for these two theses. As the creator of all reality distinct from himself, God is the source of both the unity and diversity in nature. Further, as creator, all knowledge points to the divine. There is no area of inquiry that needs to be hermetically sealed off from another. Science and religion, faith and reason do not inherently compete. Since there is a unity to all things known, grounded in the triune creator God, the Christian scholar finds justification for Plantinga's claim that all one knows should be used in trying to understand a given phenomenon.

Regarding the Scripture Thesis, God has revealed Himself to humanity propositionally and narratively through Scripture. Hence, the Bible is an authoritative source of knowledge that Christians ought to allow to guide research and constrain theory formation. However, scriptural guidance of research does not entail that Christian scholarship always needs to be explicitly so. As I have noted elsewhere, Christian scholarship also can be purely vocational or implicitly Christian, meaning that the guiding principles of Christian scholarship are operative but function more as the architecture of thought.²¹⁷

Finally, the Gospel Thesis also finds its justification in the nature and activity of God. The true story of humankind begins with creation and ends with the new creation. In this fallen world, humanity's greatest need is to find redemption through Christ. Indeed, all of creation "has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth" (Rom 8:22) to be redeemed and restored. In love, God sent his Son to redeem and restore humankind and the world. God called his followers to participate in this mission to redeem and restore all of creation. This reality, encapsulated in the Gos-

²¹⁷ Gould, "The Two Tasks Introduced."

pel Thesis, informs the posture of the scholarly enterprise for the Christian. This thesis helps the Christian scholar to see that scholarship is both an end in itself (that is, the pursuit of knowledge is an intrinsic good in no need of further justification) and a means to an end (that is, scholarship justifies itself in terms of meeting the physical and spiritual needs of others). Further, the Gospel Thesis affects the kind of research in which Christian scholars might choose to engage, perhaps pursuing research programs that seem most pressing in terms of the progress of the gospel and ushering in shalom.²¹⁸

Guiding Methodologies and the Christian Scholar

Sometimes, a Christian's methodology might be different than a non-Christian's methodology. For example, Christians ought not to be beholden to methodological naturalism when engaging in science or in scholarship in general. Sometimes, Christian scholars can and should engage in research as such as long as they allow the evidence to speak for itself. There is no reason for the Christian scholar to stipulate at the front end of inquiry that "only naturalistic explanations" are allowed. A guiding methodology that is supported by the four principles just elucidated is what philosopher Angus Menuge has labeled *methodological realism*. Menuge stated, "the antidote [to methodological naturalism] is a return to intellectually honest vulnerability to the truth about reality, whether it supports our expectations or not, in other words, a return to [methodological realism]."²¹⁹ The idea is that the world is ours to discover and interpret, but not to be dogmatically anticipated.

The Christian scholar, guided by the Scripture Thesis, must wrestle with his or her understanding of God's interaction in the world. After creating the world, does God intervene in the natural world both redemptively and creatively, or just redemptively? What is the role of secondary causes in a world created by God? The theological doctrines of creation, divine providence, and the place of chance in a world created and sustained by God will inform the Christian scholar's methodology. What should be obvious is that there is room for disagreement among Christians. Further, no guiding methodology remains above critique.

²¹⁸ See for example, Walter Bradley's discussion of designing and building bridges in remote locations in Africa and his study of how to use coconuts to produce electricity in Papua New Guinea, both projects motivated out of a Christian concern to meet the needs of others. Bradley, "A Christian Professor in the Secular Academy."

²¹⁹ Menuge, "Against Methodological Materialism," 393.

Faithfulness to Christ requires that Christian scholars be students of theology and allow their theology to inform their methodology.²²⁰

Data and the Christian Scholar

Christian scholars approach the data set of a discipline from a distinctively Christian perspective. This perspective gives the Christian scholar a unique cognitive access point to reality. The Christian scholar will see things that others may not see. Guided by the four principles I have outlined, the Christian scholar will find motivation for further investigation, a foundation from which to ask critical questions, and a framework in which to interpret the data.

The conviction that God created the world in such a way that human cognition can apprehend it will fuel further discovery. For example, it is widely documented that, historically, Christianity led to the rise of modern science.²²¹ Belief in the uniformity of nature, the rationality of humankind, and the comprehensibility of the universe are truths brought to the data set of science, not truths deduced *from* the data set. One eminent scientist speaks of the “unreasonable efficacy of mathematics in the natural sciences.”²²² The Christian scholar will not be surprised that the world is significantly describable in the language of mathematics, for the world is created with order and purpose by a divine mind. As Plantinga has argued, there is deep concord between Christianity and the conclusions of mathematics and science.²²³ This deep concord can be expected within all the academic disciplines, given the reality of God as creator. The Christian scholar is pursuing God’s thoughts when engaging the data of the discipline, which can inspire hope, perseverance, and confidence that there is truth to be found.

The Christian scholar may also have a different set of questions and concerns than others, with the result that the Christian scholar may approach the data set differently. Poe has emphasised asking critical questions in exploring the implications of the data for theory construction.²²⁴ In asking critical questions, one’s faith commitments play a key role. Ex-

²²⁰ For helpful discussions of various models of God’s interaction with the natural world, including the resultant methodologies for the Christian scholar, see Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies*, and Rau, *Mapping the Origins Debate*.

²²¹ For example, see Stark, *For the Glory of God*.

²²² Wigner, “The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics in the Natural Sciences.”

²²³ Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies*.

²²⁴ Poe, *Christianity in the Academy*.

amples of critical questions Christian scholars could ask from a faith perspective can easily be supplied—in political science: what is the role of forgiveness in international relations?; in English: what accounts for objective meaning in the text?; in computer science: what are the limits of artificial intelligence, given the physicality of computers?; in sociology: what are the causes of urban poverty and how can faith based NGOs help? Insightful questions from a Christian perspective help to advance understanding of the data set and can push students and colleagues to recognize error in their own ways of thinking.

Finally, a Christian perspective influences one's interpretation of the data. For example, Niels Bohr became a Hindu and interpreted the data of quantum mechanics from that perspective. According to Bohr, the world only appears to be real, and in actuality the world is constructed by observers. Alternatively, the Christian may hold that the wave-particle phenomenon is not so surprising in a world created by a triune God.²²⁵ Hence, the discoveries and principles of quantum mechanics provide evidence in favour of Christianity. If the Christian scholar believes there is no place for chance in the world, the discoveries of quantum mechanics will be interpreted either deterministically or from an anti-realist view. If the Christian scholar believes there is a place for chance in a world created by God, the discoveries of quantum mechanics will likely be interpreted indeterministically and realistically. The guiding principles adopted by scholars influence how the data set is interpreted, and the Christian is within his or her epistemic rights to bring Christianity to bear in theory construction.

The Guiding Narrative and the Christian Scholar

Because an academic discipline is composed of individual scholars and the narratives in which they find meaning, another important aspect of the missional encounter for Christian scholars is that they are called to be witnesses to their colleagues, administrators, and students within the university. Being a faithful witness includes, when appropriate, gospel proclamation, as well as Christlikeness in moral character and being a member of good standing in the academic community. Missional opportunities are ever present, many of which can be naturally integrated into the normal activities of the academic life. The examples of Professors Ken Elzinga, Godfrey Ozumba, He Guanghu, and Heather Holleman from chapter 7 and Marc Compere from chapter 4 are illustrative.

²²⁵ This example is from *ibid.*

The narrative aspect of an academic discipline also points to a rich source of guidance and community for the Christian scholar. Within each academic discipline there undoubtedly is a strain of Christian thinking as well as practitioners, both historical and contemporary, who can serve as guides and mentors for young Christian scholars. The existence and vibrancy of many Christian scholarly societies today provide a rich source of community, guidance, and resources for both seasoned and less-experienced Christian scholars. This alternative community, based on a shared Christian vision of life and dependent on the grace of God, can serve as a powerful and attractive witness to the contemporary secular university. Faithfulness as Christian scholars not only entails concern for the product of scholarship but also for those who create and consume the product.

Conclusion

The approach to faith-scholarship integration advocated in this chapter is not a “Jesus is the right answer to every question” approach to faith and scholarship integration. Rather, faithfulness to Christ requires that the Christian scholar live a missional life in academia by seeking a missionary encounter within each level of his or her academic discipline. In this chapter, I have outlined what such an encounter might entail. Within academia, the desirable result is the transformation of academic disciplines so that the gospel will get a fair hearing and lives will be changed. Beyond the walls of the academy, the desirable result of such faithfulness is the translation of ideas into tools that bring justice to the oppressed, nourishment to the poor, and shalom in all areas of life. As Wolterstorff has stated, “One’s following of Christ . . . ought to be actualized by taking up in decisively ultimate fashion God’s call to share in the task of being witness, agent, and evidence of the coming of his kingdom.”²²⁶ May it be so.

Questions for Personal Reflection or Group Discussion

- 1) What models of academic integration, if any, have you found most helpful?
- 2) What do you think of Gould’s suggestion that Christian scholars would be wise to pursue research that engages both their academ-

²²⁶ Wolterstorff, *Reason within the Bounds of Religion*, 74.

- ic discipline and the needs of the world? Can you share examples of this from within your own discipline?
- 3) Which view of scholarship, naïve factualism or social constructivism, best characterises your academic discipline? How does this received view of scholarship and your discipline affect the way you approach your scholarly work?
 - 4) What are some of the guiding principles within your academic discipline? Guiding methodologies? What is your primary data set? What are some of the significant narratives within your academic discipline?
 - 5) Discuss some of the missional connections between your research and teaching and each aspect of your academic discipline.
 - 6) Discuss Gould's suggested four guiding principles—unity thesis, objectivity thesis, Scripture thesis, and gospel thesis. How would adopting these four guiding principles change the way you engage in scholarship? Can you think of additional principles that could be added to the list?
 - 7) Who are some of your mentors (historical or contemporary) within your academic discipline? How have they helped you in your work as a Christian scholar?
 - 8) In what ways might your own academic discipline be transformed as you and other Christians faithfully live out your calling?

8

EPILOGUE

The Whole Campus to the Whole World²²⁷

On September 12, 1962, U.S. President John F. Kennedy gave an inspiring address at Rice University on the space effort. In his speech, he announced his famous moonwalk vision:

We choose to go to the moon. We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win, and the others, too.²²⁸

When President Kennedy made his bold announcement, there were no solutions to the problems that lay ahead: new materials needed to be discovered, scientists needed to be hired and trained, new technologies needed to be developed, and funding needed to be approved by the U.S. Congress. Still, Kennedy's moonwalk vision acted as a catalyst—a powerful vision of the future that inspired a nation and triggered unified action. And we all know the result of this powerful vision: America sent men to the moon before the end of the decade. It is my hope that this book, and the vision for missional living set forth within, will similarly serve as a catalyst—a powerful vision of faithfulness unto Christ within the contemporary university.

In his speech, President Kennedy modelled for us a key discipline to missional living and missional movements: he led from the *future*. Today, we look back on the events of the 1960s as inevitable. But it was not always so. Kennedy offered a compelling vision of the future that galva-

²²⁷ The phrase “the whole campus to the whole world” is a motto I’ve embraced, along with my fellow Faculty Commons staff, for years in campus ministry. I love the phrase for what it highlights: the strategic nature of the university campus for reaching the whole world. It seems only fitting that I title the epilogue with this phrase, which also serves as a lasting tribute of my indebtedness to Faculty Commons and the many years of service with this fine faculty ministry.

²²⁸ Kennedy, “Address at Rice University.”

nised a nation, which in turn “created” the preferred future. Leading from the future—placing yourself in a preferred future and then taking steps, not in order to get there someday, but as if you are there, or almost there, *now*. Interestingly, this is the perspective of the kingdom of God we find in the New Testament. As Alan Hirsch states:

In saying that the future (eschatological) kingdom of God is already present in our midst, we are called to act in the knowledge that it is already here *now* and yet will be completed *then*. And so we are drawn up into God’s future for the world. This “now” and “not yet” tension of the kingdom defines our reality and keeps us moving, growing, and adopting.²²⁹

As we enter into the great story of God, we are reminded that one day all things will be made right again. One day people from every tribe and tongue and nation will sit around the throne of God in worship (Rev 7:9). One day justice will be fully realised. Yet this future reality is with us now as well; God’s kingdom is here, it is *already*, even if not *fully*, consummated.

Who are the missional professors of the future?

The Missional Professors of the future will be both persons of deep spirituality and outstanding scholarship. They will be men and women of character, humble and caring, and at the same time excellent in teaching, policy making, and research. They will be unique in many ways: peacemakers and transformational leaders. They will be prayerful and never give up any opportunity to present the message of Christ. Although they are in the university, it will be obvious that the source of their peace and character is not from the university. What gives them confidence to establish their stamp and presence on the campus is their spirituality. They know that ultimately their promotion, contracts, publications and acceptability come from God. Therefore they are able to face their challenges with peace of mind. They are able to understand and respond to the alienation of students, the loneliness of colleagues, the anxiety of staff and the emptiness that pervades the academia. They are able to deal with these because their values are from a kingdom that transcends the commercialism and power struggles that characterize the world around them.

²²⁹ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 234.

What is the distinctive character of the missional professor? It is not just excellence in teaching and research. It is not just their commitment to service. After all there are many atheists who do these things and even more. What is distinctive is in their attempt to incarnate Jesus in the academia. It is in the building of bridges between the spiritual and the physical. It is in the integration of faith and scholarship and in the demonstration of a unique type of scholarship, characterised by intellect, love, and humility. Non-Christian professors are applauded for brilliance and intellectual breakthroughs; they may be eccentric, cold, and cantankerous; it does not matter. But missional professors are different. They cannot afford to be eccentric because they carry the image of God. They go beyond mere display of brilliance and breakthroughs and engage their society in the realm of values. They do so because they carry deep within their hearts another kingdom. They are able to enjoy peace that is beyond understanding. Missional professors are citizens of the world and relate with a family that is spread in all corners of the earth. They are global in vision, knowing that they have a master who has commanded them to extend the Godly kingdom here on earth. In our multicultural world the professor has to be far more creative than ever before. To reach out to students from other cultures, missional professors may enter in and out of other worldviews to deliver their message. They will also have to devise various means to communicate the gospel under these circumstances. In doing so, they will have to go out of their way to demonstrate the virtues of agape.

Are there such academics who are excellent scholars, a unifying force in the university, global figures, and real human beings? Are there such scholars that are comfortable with students from all over the world and relate with them in love and see them as creations of a loving heavenly father? Are there such scholars who pray earnestly for their universities and mentor students and colleagues to find purpose in life? Are there scholars that can rise to the occasion and speak fearlessly on ethical issues and religious freedoms? Are there such scholars that are influential across disciplines and unabashedly promote the Christian worldview? Are there such scholars that are citizens of the world who would seek to leave their universities in North America to serve in Asia, or leave their universities in Africa to serve in Europe or from Europe to Australia and contribute to Christian scholarship all over the world? Such scholars are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. When such scholars multiply around the world, then the idea of a missional professor will no longer be outrageous.

The subtext beneath the primary text of this book is simple: out of ourselves and into Christ we must go. As we consider the outrageous idea of a missional professor (chapter 1), the call is to deny self and follow Christ. As we consider the Christian story as the true story of the world (chapter 2), the call is to submit to the Author of life and find life. As we consider the human longing for wholeness (chapter 3), the answer is to find it “along the way” in Christ. As we consider the significance of the university (chapter 4), the charge is to lead in this strategic mission field. As we consider the importance of the Christian mind (chapter 5), the charge is to see Jesus as brilliant (and beautiful). As we consider the Christian heart (chapter 6), the charge is to allow God’s scalpel to cut out idols as we find our identity in Christ. As we consider reaching the campus (chapter 7), the charge is to band together with others. As we consider the integration of faith and scholarship (chapter 8), the charge is to connect all we know with the God who knew it first. Let’s take the whole campus—students, professors, administrators, and ideas—to the whole world for the sake of Christ. That is the goal.

Pick up the cross and follow Jesus into his story. His story is more wonderful, fulfilling, adventurous, dramatic, dangerous, scandalous, comedic, tragic, magical, painful, and satisfying than you could ever imagine. It is the best story and we are in it—real live characters with a real mission. And it matters. The story is for real. We play for keeps.

Would you be willing to sow seeds in the difficult mission field that is the modern university, many seeds that will be harvested by a future generation? Are you willing to measure your life in terms of the progress of the gospel instead of the number of bullet points on your Curriculum Vitae? Give your life away. Spend it. Lord willing, along the way and after we have gone, lives will be changed, the lost will be found, and others will be blessed.

- Drink your wine.
- Laugh from your gut.
- Burden your moments with thankfulness.
- Be as empty as you can be when the clock winds down.
- Spend your life.
- And if time is a river, may you leave a wake.²³⁰

Now is the time. Throw this book down and begin the adventure.

²³⁰ Wilson, *Death by Living*, 117.

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The outrageous idea of this book is that God wants to use professors as professors to reach others, transform the academy, and meet the needs of the world. God is on a mission to redeem and restore this fallen world, and as members of one of the most influential institutions in society, Christian professors in the university play an important role in that mission. Becoming a missional professor will require a clear vision of God's heart for the lost as well as humankind's purpose and calling under the banner of Christ, an understanding of the significance of the university as a cultural shaping institution and mission field, and a desire for Christian wholeness in a fragmented world. This idea is outrageous because many Christian professors struggle to live missionally and need a clear vision of such a life as well as role models to lead the way. Many professors already living missional lives need encouragement to "excel still more" (1 Thess 4:10). We all need God's grace and mercy as we try to faithfully follow Christ within the university.

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