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**Integration Statement**

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## Christian Worldview

### Introduction

A worldview is a filter that we use to understand the world and our place in that world. Harris states “A worldview is a set of assumptions, or presuppositions, that are generally unconsciously held but affect how we think and live” (Harris, 2006, p. 20). Our presuppositions frame our worldview and therefore are foundational to understand what we really believe. Nash (1992) describes a presupposition as “beliefs we accept without support from other beliefs or arguments or evidence” (p. 21).

Phillips, Brown, & Stonestreet (2008) further describe a worldview as guiding every human being, reflected in values and behavior, evidenced in culture, and passed on to the next generation. (p. 3-22) The values and behavior (worldview) of the professor are passed on to the student in many different ways—through what is taught, critiqued, stated, expressed in opinions, praised, or even what is omitted—but also how the class is conducted, students treated, curriculum organized, assignments graded, encouragement given, or even confrontation and discipline.

The extraordinary influence of a professor on the student is likely why scripture states in James 3:1 “Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness” (ESV). The responsibility of a teacher is greater because of their ability to shape and mold a student in the way the professor thinks and believes. Therefore, my worldview is important for both my own understanding and continual improvement, but for the University to understand and assess.

Our worldview should be shaped and continually re-shaped by the only source of truth that we have—God. There are different sources (such as the natural world God created, the person of Christ) to build our worldview on God’s truth but none more important than God’s word given to us through men inspired by God. “All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” 2 Timothy 3:16 (ESV). The Holy Spirit is the agent required to reveal God’s worldview to the believer. “And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual” 1 Corinthians 2:13 (ESV).

Another useful way to describe our worldview was discussed by Nielson (2008) who used Aristotle’s categories of classical rhetoric to describe the areas that influence our worldview: **logos** – what we believe (or disbelieve) and hold to be true (or false); **ethos** – our values and what we hold to be good (or evil) and right (or wrong); **pathos** – our affections and what we love (or hate) and desire (or repulse) (p. 71). Therefore, my worldview about God, man, truth, knowledge, reality, purpose in life, ethics, values, morality and motivation are all foci to consider. A biblical worldview is “...a perspective that sees everything through the ‘glasses’ of scripture (Phillips, Brown, & Stonestreet, 2008).

### My Testimony

While I was in College I deconstructed my parent's faith and reconstructed each belief and doctrine to make it mine. It was actually the study of science (natural revelation) that led me to believe there must be a creator, thus God exists. Boot (2005) describes this process using logic statements: If the world is intelligible, then God exists; since the world is intelligible, therefore God exists (p. 120).

God revealed Himself to me through His wonderful works in the sky above (Psalm 19:1), the earth below (Psalm 8:1), and in our own human body (Psalm 139:14). God also revealed Himself to me through His word both in scripture and Christ (John 1:1 and 2 Timothy 3:16). Finally, there was the important element of faith in what I read, saw, and understood – illumined by God through His Holy Spirit (Romans 10:17 and Ephesians 2:8). From His word, I understood by faith that my relationship with God was broken by sin, that He desired to restore that relationship, that His son Jesus was the Christ-messiah who paid the penalty for my sin, enabling me to have a new relationship with God based on the work of the cross – I believed and continue to believe in the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

My approach to this integration paper is not to describe all the doctrines of the Bible—as held personally or by Cedarville University. I will discuss the listed doctrines and attempt to show how they build my worldview and how they relate in general to teaching at a Christian University, and specifically how they are incorporated into my teaching topic of business. These presuppositions are foundational to my worldview.

### Belief and Presupposition Concerning God

“Ultimately all worldviews are making some sort of decision on whether God exists...” (Sire, 2006, p. 33). Based on God's revelation to me, my studies and learning these are my presuppositions about God: He exists and is transcendent, creator, relational, communicative, personal and the source of all knowledge and wisdom. (and so much more)

- He exists and is self-existent (not created) – Genesis 1:1; Exodus 3:14.
- He is spirit and transcendent (separate and above all) – John 4:24; Psalm 97:9
- He is creator and sustainer – Acts 17:24; John 1:3; Colossians 1:17
- He is relational – Matthew 28:19; Romans 5:8; John 15:5; James 4:8
- He communicates – 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:1-2
- He is personal – Psalm 103:13-14; Luke 11:2-4; Romans 8:15; Jeremiah 29:12-13
- He is the source of all knowledge & wisdom – Proverbs 2:6; James 3:17; Colossians 2:2

(Evans & Coder, 1974; Grudem, 1994)

There are many more attributes of God that could be discussed such as His omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, eternity, immutability, love, mercy, grace, holiness, righteousness, justice, Trinitarian nature, perfection, truthfulness, faithfulness, long-suffering, goodness, peacefulness, beauty, and glorious nature. The attributes of God that reflect how he

relates to us are important for us to exemplify in how we deal with human beings in the workplace and day-to-day living. As followers of Christ, then our nature should reflect God's nature since we are now new creatures (Ephesians 4:24; Colossian 3:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17). The fruit of the Spirit is described in Galatians 5:22-23 as: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, and faithfulness" (ESV).

#### Integration of my belief concerning God into my courses

The International Business course (BUS 3910) is a venue for discussions about God's redemptive goal for all nations. Using Business As Mission (BAM) for several lectures incorporating the view that God desires a relationship with all people groups. Also, the fruit of the Spirit in how we treat our neighbor (other nations) is an important concept. The Strategic Management course (MGMT 4510) is a venue for discussions about considering the outcomes of decisions and how information is gathered—reflecting God's attributes of truthfulness, love, and goodness.

#### Belief and Presupposition Concerning Creation

The heavens and earth were created by God—specifically Christ, the second person of the trinity. This creation was accomplished *ex nihilo* (out of nothing Hebrews 11:3) as God spoke creation into existence in 6 literal days. God created a literal Adam and Eve, who chose to disobey and reject God's relationship, causing the earth to be cursed. Today creation reflects a "broken" world and one day, God will destroy the earth and create a new heaven and earth. Most importantly God created man in His own image (*imago dei*) which means that all men must "suppress" the truth that

- God—Christ created the heavens and earth (Genesis 1:1; John 1:3).
  - God spoke and it was (Genesis 1:3; Hebrews 11:3)
  - God created out of nothingness (Hebrews 11:3)
  - God created in 6 literal days (Genesis 1:5, 31; Genesis 2:1)
  - God created the world to display His glory and majesty (Rev 4:11)
  - God created a literal Adam and Eve (Genesis 2:7,22; Luke 3:38; I Timothy 2:14)
  - God created man in His own image (Genesis 1:26-27)
  - God cursed creation (Genesis 3:17-19; Romans 8:19-22)
  - God will destroy the earth (2 Peter 3:10-12; Revelation 11:18)
  - God will create a new earth and heaven (Isaiah 65:17; Revelation 21:1)
- (Grudem, 1994)

The presupposition concerning creation by God leads to my worldview that I am not here by accident—that God has a plan, purpose, and design for the world and me. The wonder, complexity, beauty, symmetry, asymmetry, life based on a common DNA language of 4 proteins, infinite wisdom, knowledge, design, hugeness of the universe, galaxies and stars all point to God the creator. This leads directly to believing in God and then asking the question— who is God? Who is Man? These two questions form the foundation of any worldview.

### Integration of my belief concerning Creation into my courses

The International Business (BUS 3910) is where I declare the wonder of God's creative power with one of my devotionals. I also discuss that God created the beauty and diversity of the heavens and earth, but also the people groups that inhabit the earth. The diversity of culture expressed through the creativity of man in food, clothing, arts, languages, music, etc. reveal the source of all creativity—God. The Strategic Management course (MGMT 4510) does not have any direct concepts, but does include devotionals about the source of wisdom and creativity of man in the many ways that firms are able to compete successfully in the market.

### Belief and Presupposition Concerning Man

God created man to glorify Him, to subdue and cultivate the earth, to enjoy a volitional relationship with God, and created in God's image (*imago dei*). but man rejected the terms of this relationship, resulting in banishment from God's presence and Eden. God eternally condemned this rebellion causing all subsequent humans to be born in sin, totally depraved—as in Adam we are all unified in sin—condemned to eternal hell. The earth was also cursed and now work was difficult and required exhaustion to exist. But the grace and mercy of God provided a way to restore this relationship – to commune again with God through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross—once, for all who believe in Him. True sons of God—followers of Christ continue to struggle with sin, although righteous in Christ, still in the process of sanctification—struggling with sin and the old man.

- Man created to glorify God and for God's own glory (Isaiah 43:7,21; Colossians 1:16; I Corinthians 10:31; Revelation 4:11)
  - God created male and female (distinctly different yet same and equally valuable, but different roles) (Genesis 1:27, 2:18; Proverbs 31; I Corinthians 11:3)
  - Man created to subdue and cultivate the earth (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15)
  - Man created to commune with and love God (Leviticus 26:12; Deuteronomy 6:5)
  - Man created in God's image (Genesis 1:26-27, 9:6; Colossians 3:10)
  - Man rebelled and sinned against God (Genesis 3, 6:10, Isaiah 53:6)
  - Man condemned to die eternally (Romans 5:12; I Corinthians 15:22)
  - The earth cursed because of man (Genesis 3:17-19)
  - God provided in Christ a substitutionary atonement (John 3:16, Colossians 2:13)
  - True believers, followers of Christ struggle with sin (Romans 6,7, & 8; I John 1:9)
  - True believers, followers of Christ grow in a process of sanctification (John 17:17; 2 Peter 3:18; I Thessalonians 3:12)
- (Evans & Coder, 1974; Grudem, 1994)

### Integration of my belief concerning Man into my courses

The International Business course (BUS 3910) addresses concerns about man's fallen nature in the area of corruption and bribery. There is an ethics lecture and also an ethics paper to address the correct biblical approach to ethical dilemmas. There are also lectures on moral relativity and cultural relativity where I use D.A. Carson's book

and Niebuhr classifying the approaches of believers to the world around us. The Strategic Management course (MGMT 4510) also has an ethics lecture in which we discuss the approach to gathering competitive intelligence. The students also have an ethics paper to discuss the biblical perspective on an ethical dilemma.

### Belief and Presupposition Concerning Epistemology

To begin a discussion on epistemology my ontological viewpoint is necessary. Ontology is our view of reality and being. Epistemology is our theory of knowledge—the origin and certainty of knowledge (Sire, 2006, p. 30). My ontological belief is that God is real, but exists both in and out of my physical reality – thus God is transcendent but knowable. I also believe that I exist and am real (born to live eternally) and that the heavens and the earth, and all therein are real—as well as those things I cannot see such as angels, evil spirits, or God that are written about in the Bible. How I know my ontology is through my epistemology—what can be known is both real through my senses, and real (but invisible) through my mind and spirit. Our foundational ways of knowing are sense knowledge (empirical), reasoned knowledge (rational), and metaphysical knowledge (spirit). God created these ways of knowing and understanding for all mankind. First, I will consider the ontological propositions for knowledge and truth.

- God is real and exists (Exodus 33:22; Jeremiah 10:10; Matthew 11:27)
- Man is real and exists (Genesis 1:26; 2:7; Hebrews 2:7)
- The world (heavens and earth) are real and exist (Deuteronomy 10:14)
- Invisible things are real and exist (Colossians 1:16)
- Absolute truth exists and is from God (Proverbs 2:6, 9-11, 23:23, Psalm 25:5, 86:11, 119:160; John 8:32, 14:6, 16:13, 17:17)

Other authors have stated that there are three types of knowledge, procedural knowledge, acquaintance knowledge, and propositional knowledge. Business has all three types of knowledge. The following discussion is about propositional knowledge. Next, I will consider the epistemological propositions for what can be known through the spirit and mind.

- God and the ways of God can be known through the spirit by those in the spirit (John 4:24; Romans 8:16; I Corinthians 2:14)
- God can be known through nature even by those who are not in the spirit (Psalm 19:1-6; Romans 1:21-25)
- God and the ways of God can be known through His Word—The Bible (Romans 10:17; 2 Peter 1:20; 2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- God and the ways of God can be known through His Son Jesus the Christ (John 1:1; John 14:6; Romans 16:26; Hebrews 1:3)
- God and the ways of God can be known through our minds using the Bible and the Spirit (Luke 10:27; Romans 8:6; I Corinthians 2:16; Hebrews 8:10)

- God can be known through man's consciousness of right and wrong because of the imprinted image of God and by the conviction of the Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:26-27; Romans 1:28; 2:14-16; John 16:8-11)
- God has not revealed everything for He is God, but everything that we need is revealed (Job 11:7; Isaiah 55:8; Romans 11:33-36; Psalm 19:7-9; Hebrews 1:2; I Peter 1:19-21)
- Man and man's ways can be known and understood through God's Word – man is both made in God's image yet fallen in nature (Psalm 53:1; Isaiah 64:6; Matthew 15:19; Mark 7:21-23; Romans 3:10, 23; Ephesians 2:3; Ephesians 4:22-32)
- Man can be deceived and even self-deceived about what He knows (Proverbs 16:2; Proverbs 21:2; Jeremiah 17:9; Colossians 2:8)
- Man is finite and cannot understand or know all truth (Proverbs 3:19-20; I Corinthians 1:18-31)

Finally, what is most important about knowledge, wisdom and truth—is that we fear and love God—all the rest by comparison is foolishness.

- Beginning of knowledge is the fear of the LORD (Proverbs 1:7)
- Wisdom of this world is foolishness (Proverbs 14:12; Matthew 11:25; I Corinthians 3:19-21)
- Wisdom from above is defined (James 3:13-17)

### Business Research and Epistemology

However, we live in the world and need to be a light/salt to it, and to earn a living/with a career, thus we need to answer also about other truth statements and ways of knowing truth. The following discussion is more about procedural knowledge than propositional knowledge.

How we humans know and understand the world (other than the metaphysical) around us are through use of our senses using rational and empirical methods. God created man with a mind to analyze, classify, critique, explore through the use of his senses. What can be known and understood to be true can be tested and can be thought through rationally. Plato rejected sense because he felt it was limited and that God created rational universal ideas (FORMS) that constituted knowledge. He felt that knowledge is deduced from observing representations or particulars—a top down approach—understand the finite in terms of the infinite. Aristotle did not reject sense knowledge because he believed it related to Plato's Universal ideas—knowledge is both Universal and particular. Knowledge can be induced by observing particulars that infer the Universal ideas (Philosophy Professor, n.d.).

Empiricism espouses that concepts are learned through observation but propositions connecting concepts are known through reason (a priori)—thus bringing together both our senses and our minds to comprehend knowledge and truth. A reminder that I have stated earlier that I do not believe that all knowledge must be observable or rational—that God's

knowledge and truth are often sources outside of the senses and mind—but that the source of knowing truth can also be through observation and rational thinking. I reject Locke’s position that knowledge comes only from senses and that there is no innate pre-wiring of the mind (so called “Tabula Rasa”). I also reject Hume’s position that all ideas are derived from the senses and that nothing can really be known. I also reject certain points of Positivism, but acknowledge that positivism is useful and has been a predominant way of knowing. I also reject Relativism which states that truth and knowledge are self-defined and not absolute. However, relativism is useful when it comes to understanding certain truths about how many behaves and acts in a business world. Meaning, that based on the unique set of circumstances, the appropriate “truth” for how a firm might succeed varies (it is relative) and is not bound by absolutes (other than positive cash flow is required).

I find that Logical Empiricism is closer to my way of understanding the world, with a dab of Constructionism and Relativism thrown-in. Let me explain further. Logical Empiricism holds that all meaningful statements can be confirmed by observation and experiment. I disagree where this view holds that metaphysical theories are meaningless. Logical Empiricism theoretically holds that scientists discover truth about the world (empiricism) while the philosophers keep the rules (logic or rational thought). Here I would differ from the importance of philosophers, but would adhere to the need for rational thought. This does preclude Emotivism in the areas of the arts where truth propositions are experientially verifiable. As discussed earlier, my view is that there is truth that comes by the Spirit and could be more emotive than rational and observable –delving into the realms of faith and belief in things not seen. So one does not preclude the other (meaning empirical/rational vs. spiritual understanding). Our senses can be fooled as well as our minds, which leads us the dilemma of what to trust—but now I am back to the things of God are known by the Spirit of God in us. So although I believe truth and knowledge can be discovered and determined outside of scripture, they should never “trump” scripture.

In studying the social sciences, specifically business topics, researchers use the Logical Empiricist approach. (lately this has changed to more Relativistic and Constructionist approaches – some of which are fair to consider for business, but as a foundation, rather concerning). Logical Empiricism is a synthesis of rationalist and Positivist thinking. Truth comes from *a priori* deductions from broader empirically derived theories (hypothesis generating) or *a posteriori* confirmations by observations from empirical testing (hypothesis confirming) (Tebes, 2005).

The problem with studying social sciences and business is man. Man varies in attitudes and in actions momentarily—one minute angry at the world and likely to do something irrational, or the next moment totally happy at the sales win of a million-dollar contract. This causes the business researcher to have to use probabilities for facts - “truth” rather than repeatable scientific experiments—such as a titration to determine the unknown quantity of a

chemical—which is accurate and repeatable time and time again. On the other hand, social sciences research can show trends and probabilities, but not any sort of certainty every time.

Further complicating business research is the complexity of factors that determine outcomes. The multivariate nature of these independent factors means that the researcher can never prove that if a company does X, Y, and Z, then the outcome will be C. In fact, most research requires the use of statistical modeling software, to understand the complexities of the relationships. Lastly, there are many variables studied that are not observable phenomena, but rather are made up of other observations or truth statements that make up that phenomenon. So what makes up a successful business person? Is there a set of truth statements that will result in a successful business person? It is difficult to answer this except in probabilities, but even then the outliers in business often make the greatest success stories. So truth in business research is difficult at best to understand. We can make truth statements about the sinful result of cheating, lying and stealing with regards to eternity. We can even declare that most often this will lead to demise, but not always. There are successful business people who conduct business by cheating, lying and stealing—at least success as determined by man's standards of profit or money. So when we teach our student's about how to understand and find truth in business principles, there are only probabilities and trends.

So what of Constructivism? Where "organizations are multidimensional, socially constructed realities where different aspects can coexist in complementary, conflicting, hence paradoxical ways" (Morgan, 2011, p. 467). Constructionism declares that knowledge is constructed rather than innate or passively absorbed? This view of truth is that it is invented not discovered (Fox, 2001). Is there any truth to this claim? I believe there is some limited use for this viewpoint in understanding how man acquires knowledge over time. Business knowledge is often invented—such as the truth of certain Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. Certainly God is all knowing and is aware of such pronouncements, but they are not "discovered" but rather are man's construction of truth or declarations about truth. Constructivism is an offshoot of Naturalism, which holds that knowledge is established through meanings attached to the phenomena studied. Validity is internally established and is subjective (Krauss, 2005). Many business studies are the result of qualitative or case study which involve these conceptual approaches to truth. So what type of "truth" is there in a qualitative study? The subject matter of business is often too complex and riddled with subjective thinking by both the researcher and the people responding to questions to know really what factors are involved. Only God would have such comprehension and wisdom—but He is not revealing that to us—it is not in the domain of man's full comprehension. Yet qualitative research has produced good insights, theories and heuristics to guide others. Therefore, it is a possible to understand and gain knowledge through more qualitative methods—such as Constructivism, but with much do caution as truth in other spheres are not constructed but absolute. Relativism is also at times a useful tool to study business. With regard to organizational behavior, relativism is "open to multiple ways of engaging the fundamental complexity, recognizing that the different views can be combined, integrated, or

used dialectically for a multiple of different ends” (Morgan, 211, p. 467). Although I do not espouse a relativistic view of truth statements previously discussed, I do see the reality that there is “more than one way to skin a cat” when it comes to business processes, business models, and ways to succeed in an ever-changing marketplace. The foundations of human interactions still remain solidly found in God’s word and absolute truth.

I prepared this table during my doctoral assignments which summarizes nicely the different views of how we know what we know to be true (sans the Biblical viewpoint).

	Positivism	Logical Empiricism	Falsification	Constructivism
<b>Philosophical History</b>	Epicurus, Lucretius Gassendi, Bacon Locke, Hume	Positivist + Rationalists: Socrates, Plato, Aristotle	See Logical Empiricism	Aristotle, Kant, Dewey, Vygotsky
<b>Key Figures</b>	Comte	Schlick, Carnap, Neurath	Popper	Piaget, von Glaserfeld, Kuhn
<b>Epistemology</b>	Science to Discover Truths in Existence	Objectivism	Objectivism	Knowledge is Created not Discovered
<b>Knowledge</b>	By Observation only -> Truth Statements	By Observation -> Logic -> Truth Statements	By Hypotheti co-deductive- >Falsification->Truth Statement	By Defining Meaning to Statements -> Multiple Truths
<b>Reality</b>	Objective, no Values, Infallible	Objective, no Values, Infallible	Objective, no Values, Infallible	Is Constructed and has Values, is Fallible
<b>Reasoning</b>	Deductive	Mix	Mix	Inductive
<b>Application</b>	Pure Research	Mix	Mix	Applied Research
<b>Objectives</b>	Exploratory, Descriptive	Exploratory, Descriptive	Exploratory, Descriptive	Correlational, Explanatory
<b>Inquiry Mode</b>	Quantitative Scientific Method Replication is KEY	Quantitative Scientific Method Replication is KEY	Quantitative Scientific Method Replication is KEY	Qualitative No One-type Fits ALL No Replication
<b>Business Discipline</b>	None	Accounting, Finance, IS	All	Strategy, Management, Marketing
<b>Problems</b>	Uniformitarianism	Verifiability	Always doubt validity of Hypothesis	Solipsism
<b>Academic Contribution</b>	Scientific Method applied to Social Science	Brought Philosophy into Scientific realm	Null Hypothesis	Social Science Research Paradigm

Business research, to establish the truth in answering will “X” affect “Y”, will use a combination of Empiricism, Logic, Constructivism, and Relativism—however all must be underpinned (or sometimes trumped) by the foundational propositions of wisdom and understanding provided by God.

The truths about man and God have clear underpinnings to business—that man is made in God’s image, common grace given to all men, our fallen nature, need for relationships, desire to serve, and the most critical need of man for redemption. These are not normally researched in an empirical sense, but certainly form the foundations of a Christian worldview and of God’s truth as it relates to the business world. These follow later.

#### Integration of my belief concerning Epistemology into my courses

I do not overtly focus on aspects of knowledge in my two courses. Certainly, in Strategic Management (MGMT 4510) I discuss “assertions” and “hypotheses” that need to be tested through implementation of a strategy.

#### Belief and Presupposition of Morality and Ethics

My major presupposition is that absolute right and wrong exist and the originator of this is God. However, man is not ignorant of this morality because it is known both by special revelation in God’s word and by man’s heart/conscious written there when he was created in God’s image. But, man is fallen and a slave to sin (if unregenerate) and subject to sin (if a believer) and can rebel and thus able to suppress the truth. The most important guide to morality and ethics is found in scriptures since this is how God has spoken to us of His character and our need to be like Him. Therefore, the belief in absolute moral right and wrong presupposes there is a God who sets these standards. Our obedience to God’s standard is expected.

- Absolute right and wrong come from God (Genesis 2:17; Exodus 20:1-17; Matthew 5-7; Matthew 22:37-39)
- Right and wrong can be known by man but only fully adhered to by those no longer slaves to sin (redeemed) (Romans 1-2, 6:20, 8:12-17; 1 Corinthians 2:11-14, 2 Timothy 3:16)
- Man is to obey God - His moral absolutes and commands (Genesis 2:16-17; 1 Kings 2:3; Romans 6:16; Hebrews 11:8; 2 John 1:6)

Ethical dilemmas arise where two moral imperatives conflict. A simple example might be whether to obey God or man. God commands us to obey Him, but also authorities over us, when these conflict what should be done? When faced with this type of dilemma, Geisler and Douglass (2007) support a hierarchical order of responsibility—even though morals are absolute, which they call “the greater good approach” (p.45). The authors use Matthew 5:19, 23:23; John 15:13, 19:11 to defend their position that moral laws are not of equal weight. The authors use the following order, which I found helpful (pp.45-46).

- Love God more than people (Matthew 22:36-38)
- Love people more than things
- Love others more than self
- Obey God over government

How should I engage our world/business, that does not agree with my Christian worldview nor my belief that there is a God who has decreed absolute moral standards? One way discussed in Chewing's (1989) compilation called *Biblical Principles & Business – The Foundations* is to appeal to the world's natural revelation and the imprint from birth of God's image (*imago dei*). In this book, a chapter author, Richard B. Gaffin emphasizes that there is not a viable natural law foundation for ethics. Common grace varies widely in humanity and nations, but can be a restraint (whether by the Holy Spirit or by man's image) but never genuine obedience or adherence to God. The author describes the restraint as both external and internal. "There is an inward dynamism to common grace; it is a positive restraint that enlists the person—the will, desires, emotions as well as intellect. And it is genuine mercy; it restrains and ameliorates sin and it effects in unbelievers and so makes them a means of blessing and good to themselves and others" (Gaffin, 1989, p. 149). I agree with the authors conclusion "Apart from the acceptance, in faith, of God's special saving revelation in Christ and His inscripturated Word, a true and reliable understanding of general revelation is permanently excluded. Nor can there be a genuine ethics, business or otherwise, that is not living, in Christ, *coram Deo*" (p. 152).

Geilser (1989) in the same compendium is more pragmatic in his recommendation to use natural law to appeal to the world for what amounts to our Christian ethic. The author discusses how John Calvin stated the natural law that is written in man's mind is clear enough to condemn him, but not enough for salvation. As quoted from John Calvin, there "is imprinted on their hearts a discrimination and judgment, by which they distinguish between justice and injustice, honesty and dishonesty" (p. 159). Geisler (1989) goes on to argue that believers cannot appeal to the business world to abide by a Christian worldview, but can appeal to the natural revelation, the image of God imprinted on all men. The author goes on to explain that the natural law impressed inwardly on the heart, readily available, is also seen in man's reactions. "That explains why our best understanding of the natural law comes not from seeing our actions but from observing our reactions. This is true because we know the moral law instinctively" (p. 165). Man does not always practice what he preaches, but certainly wants others to be held to a high moral standard when dealing with them.

Geisler (1989) using C.S. Lewis' cataloging of natural laws, lists these: the law of general beneficence, special beneficence, duties to parents, elders, ancestors, duties to children and posterity, law of justice, good faith, veracity, mercy and magnanimity (pp. 166-167). We who believe in God and His absolute law, can appeal to these natural laws in discourses about how a certain decision or business is transacted, thereby maintaining a Christian ethic. Of course there will also be times, when our Christian ethic will result in our disagreeing with a business decision, resulting in a certain level of disunity even potentially hazarding our employment. However, this is not to be avoided, rather if done gently and correctly a testimony—a true light and salt to the world of business. (Matthew 5:13-16; Matthew 7:12; Luke 7:12; Romans 2:14-15)

### Integration of my belief concerning Morality into my courses

As mentioned in the section on my belief about Man, the International Business course (BUS 3910) has several lectures focusing on moral and cultural relativism. Moral relativism is a worldly solution that often intertwines with cultural relativism. I also discuss whether cultures can reflect more or less of a Christian world view—yes, they do and thus cultures are not without moral value judgments. In Strategic Management (MGMT 4510) there is not a discussion on moral relativism, but perhaps indirectly so as the morality of how we gather industrial and competitor information—what is legal vs. what is ethical is a key concern. There is an absolute right or wrong, discerning this in difficult ethical dilemmas is where we need God's wisdom.

### Correlations between Scripture and Business Management

Management theory and studies were founded on the disciplines of Psychology, Sociology, Economics, Trade, and Ethics. There are three broad paradigms of management theory, the classical school (more scientific, rational), the behavioral school (more humanistic), the systems school (a combo of scientific and humanistic) (Wren & Bedeian, 2009). Vestiges of each of these schools continue in the research and practice of management today. These foundations are strongly naturalistic, humanistic or postmodern—although not always antagonistic to a Christian worldview (as discussed previously in the positive effect of natural revelation), but often lacking in an appropriate motivation or theoretical foundation and practice of a biblical perspective. Here, Christian management professors need to step in and provide the basis for understanding human behavior and ethics in business by emphasizing what I have discussed in the previous pages.

Correlations (as in the title of this section) are relationships that are related, and as such, only when natural revelation has identified and aligned with biblical knowledge and understanding are there correlations. Unfortunately, business principles held widely by academics or practitioners do not acknowledge their source—God, nor do they adhere to them because of a proper motivation (selfless) unless their image of God is still functioning (it can be suppressed). But notwithstanding, I will examine some of the commonalities between the business discipline and a Christian worldview.

The list previously provided by C.S. Lewis in Geisler's (1989, pp. 166-167 [verses mine]) book is a good starting point. Many businesses and business leaders/owners might exhibit these traits as they can be part of our common (based on the image of God) understanding on how to treat others.

- General Beneficence (Matthew 25:40; Proverbs 3:27; Galatians 2:10)
- Specific Beneficence (Deuteronomy 15:11; Proverbs 25:21; 1 John 3:17)
- Duties to Parents, Elders, Ancestors (Exodus 20:12; Leviticus 19:32; I Timothy 5:4,8; Ephesians 6:2)
- Duties to Children and Posterity (Psalm 22:6, 30; Ephesians 6:4; Titus 2:4)

- The Law of Justice (Psalm 106:3; Leviticus 19:15; Isaiah 1:17; Micah 6:8)
- The Law of Good Faith and Veracity (Leviticus 19:35-36; Deuteronomy 25:13-16; Proverbs 11:1,3, 16:11, 20:10; 22:28; Ephesians 4:15, 25, 5:9)
- The Law of Mercy (Micah 6:8; Matthew 5:7, 9:13; Hebrews 4:16; Ephesians 2:4-7)
- The Law of Magnanimity (Exodus 34:6-7; Mark 12:31)

Beyond this list there are many verses that would apply to the business world because it is a social construct—made up of men. However, the practice of business could be easily summed up in “you shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:39; Mark 12:31). If every decision, action, thought, strategy, priority was to love our neighbor, very little else would be needed to motivate a proper biblical and Christian worldview in the workplace.

Here is a non-exhaustive list of important verses that deal with our application of biblical principles to the business world—specifically the management discipline.

- Be a servant rather than desire power to control (Matthew 20:25-28; I Peter 4:10)
- Love is key, not any other motivation (Matthew 22:39; I Corinthians 13)
- Do not showing partiality (2 Chronicles 19:6-7; Proverbs 28:21; James 2:1, 8-9)
- Do not steal (Exodus 20:15; Ephesians 4:28)
- Do not lie (Exodus 20:16; Proverbs 12:22, 19:9)
- Do not love the world or money (Matthew 6:19-21; Luke 16:13; Hebrews 13:5-6; I John 2:15-17; I Timothy 6:10)
- Be compassionate and kind (Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:12-13)
- Be obedient to regulations and government (Romans 13:1-7; Titus 3:1; I Peter 2:13-16)
- Be fair/just in all business relationships (Leviticus 25:17; Deuteronomy 25:4; Proverbs 11:1-3, 31:9; Isaiah 33:14-17; Luke 10:7)
- Consider the poor (Proverbs 19:17, 22:9; I John 3:17-18; James 2:16-17)
- Work is meaningful and can be done as worship to God (Genesis 1:28-30, 2:15; Ephesians 6:5-8; Colossians 3:23)
- Work as an end/workaholics is not appropriate (Proverbs 23:4; Matthew 16:26; Mark 8:36; Luke 9:25)

An important issue that I have not discussed is the mandate in scripture to evangelize the world and how this might occur in a business setting (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15). I would not want to “rob” my employer of time in lengthy discussions of sports, religion or politics. But as I would have short conversations about any of those topics, I believe it is natural and appropriate to do so for brief periods of time. However, during times away from the office, whether traveling, playing softball, or lunch, are good times to engage in a lengthy dialogue

with colleagues about the hope that is within me (1 Peter 3:15). Our silent testimony in the business setting should be the quality of our work, our behavior and attitudes (Matthew 5:16; I Corinthians 10:31; 2 Timothy 2:24-26; 2 Thessalonians 3:11, 4:11-12; Ephesians 4:1-3; Philippians 1:27; I Peter 2:12, 3:4)

Other important concepts that integrate God's word and knowledge into the business framework are topics such as: ownership of property, productivity, employment, commercial transactions, profit, money, borrowing and lending, attitudes of the heart and world poverty (Grudem, *Business for the Glory of God*, 2003). Grudem's (2003) defense of property ownership (foundational to the principle of capitalism and earning money off of property—both tangible and intangible) starts with the commandment from Exodus 20:15 "You shall not steal". This verse informs us that property can be and is owned without condemnation. Stewardship is the key. We are given or able to acquire property by God's good hand and thus we are stewards of what He has given us (Matthew 25:14-30, I Peter 4:10). Christian business people should also seek to be productive (Genesis 1:28, Colossians 3:23). We should treat others fairly, particularly those who are subordinate to us, whom we employ (Leviticus 19:13; Proverbs 11:1-3; Luke 6:31; James 5:4; Colossians 4:1). It is evident that commercial transactions existed during biblical times, and that God did not condemn this social construct, but that these transactions should be fairly conducted and not done in oppression (Deuteronomy 24:14-15; Leviticus 19:13; Romans 4:4; 1 Timothy 5:18).

#### [Integration of my belief concerning Money & Poverty into my courses](#)

Money is an issue that we discuss in the Strategic Management course (MGMT 4510). Money—the love of money—is what drives most businesses and their employees. Unfortunately, this has also been my personal Achilles heel which I have struggled with all my life and even some currently. Money *per se* is not the issue, it is the love and pursuit of money that creates an idol in our lives (I Timothy 6:10). This is a devotion that I give every semester to my students. I have a lecture also on profit—is it moral to make a profit? This topic is very relevant to business students which are confronted with the concept of "greed" of businesses either as a temptation, or as a critique. God's word again can be used to understand the believer's response to greed (Exodus 20:17; Proverbs 23:4; Luke 12:15; Ephesians 5:3).

Poverty is a global and local issue. The poor are always among us and need to be treated fairly and even generously. In the International Business course (BUS 3910) I cover how the best solutions for poverty are giving the poor a way to make their own wages by wisely lending or giving them funds/items which will allow them to generate income. God's word is full of exhortations on how to treat the poor (Deuteronomy 15:7-8, 11; Leviticus 19:10, 23:22; Psalm 112:9; Proverbs 29:7, 31:20; Galatians 2:10; I John 3:17)

## Christian Higher Education Belief and Commitment

I teach at a Christian university (in part) because God opened a path to Cedarville University in 2007, as an adjunct professor, after returning from a four-year European expat assignment, and then again in 2010 with an invitation to teach full-time.

Teaching is a convergence of a number of passions for me. My life-long love of learning, studying and reading; my desire to mentor, pass-on, and advise young people; my need to continue to grow in Christ, my love of missions—all of these—converge into a role of teaching at a higher education institution.

Why a Christian institution? While I do believe that a certain number of Christian students can and will find success in secular institutions—most need to continue to mature in Christ at a Christ-centered university. I personally enjoy and prefer the ability to teach all the precepts of God as well as the business skills necessary for success at a Christian university. In addition, the times of counseling and praying in my office are unhindered and are a source of great joy.

A short apologetic discourse on Christian higher education follows. As I have discussed in the previous sections, absolute knowledge and truth are the domain of God. He has given us various means to know and understand truth, knowledge and wisdom—through His Son, His Word, His universe/world. Thus, complete understanding of a matter, discerning the truth requires an integration of various ways of knowing—logic, rational, sensory, and spiritual.

Secular higher education is going to at best ignore the spiritual and moral truths, if not refute them as coming from God. This lack of holistic understanding undermines the appropriate value put on truth propositions. Values give meaning to truth/knowledge and although secular universities may adhere to some universal natural laws/revelation (human imprinted with a conscious (image of God), these institutions are normally antagonistic to a Christian worldview. So a Christian university, holding to a biblical worldview, inerrancy of scripture through divine inspiration, the absolute moral law of God, is going to teach the appropriate values from God for all propositional statements and even at some level, acquisition of skill knowledge. (Romans 12:2)

## Relationship between Faith and Practice

### My Brief Teaching Philosophy

#### What I Believe about Students

Students at Cedarville University are the most wonderful bundle of energy, creativity, idealism, fresh thinking, curiosity, searching, compassion and kindness, all packaged within a growing Christian walk and worldview. All students, as with humanity, are born with “*imago dei*”, the image of God. This means that they have the very image of God reflected in who they

are and how they act. However, something terrible happened long ago to cause mankind to become a fallen creature. Man chose to rebel against God. This conflicted situation, of a sinful nature, yet made in the image of God, whether born again or not, informs my understanding and interaction with students.

Students are also in process of maturing and becoming independent thinkers. They are for the first time on their own, making decisions and learning at an accelerated rate about choices and their consequences. On the one hand, they need to be free to explore their own path and education, on the other hand, they still need guidance and encouragement.

Students are intrinsically or extrinsically motivated. Some students come to University already as searchers and learners, while others are still awakening their intrinsic motivators. Most students are still fixated on extrinsic motivators, such as grades, awards, accomplishments and pats on the back. My approach with my courses is to provide extrinsic feedback and also to cultivate intrinsic reasons for approaching the subject matter.

#### Student Motivation and Learning Styles

I believe that students have different learning styles and often are adept at more than one type. There are several popular classifications of learning styles. One such scheme describes visual, auditory, read/write or kinesthetic. I attempt to include graphs, charts, pictures, videos for visual learners. I have class discussions and group work that assist the auditory learners. Those who learn best with reading and writing, the textbook and assignments provide ample opportunity. Finally, kinesthetic learners are helped with case studies and other real life interactions. Another classification is simply active or passive learning.

My teaching approach is to provide a number of different ways to stimulate learning. This helps the students with only one style of learning and the students with more than one. The brain requires interaction with information to synthesize and eventually recall it to mind. These hooks are created with active learning, where the student has formed synapse pathways with the new information from previous experiences, emotions or sensory stimuli.

#### My Pedagogy/Andragogy

My teaching style is a combination of lecture, interactive question/discussions and application with assignments. These are used to understand basic definitions and principles for the course. I require group work to encourage peer learning and improve teamwork skills. I firmly believe that students must eventually go beyond this level of understanding to be able to synthesize the information and apply it. My courses utilize case studies or business modeling assignments so students learn to analyze and put principles actively to use. Communication is a key life skill and thus student presentations are an important component of my course requirements.

My Christian world view and daily walk with God are foundational to my teaching. These are evident through intentional Biblical integration in certain sections of the course or

through spontaneous class discussions. I start every class period with a verse from Psalms or Proverbs to use as an illustration of a past struggle or success in my private and business life. My role as a teacher is to open the eyes of the student who is seeing dimly, nudge the one who are slightly off course, or block a student who is headed in a dangerous direction. I believe that my role is also to encourage and guide the students in the pursuit of their life goals.

#### Application in the Workplace

Although this has been covered in other sections prior to this, I will briefly restate some of my beliefs. Work can be worship if we use a biblical approach/motivation as we perform our duties. God calls us to be responsible, honest, diligent, creative, kind, compassionate, faithful, without guile, not giving or accepting bribes, not stealing, nor coveting as we interact with others and complete our business tasks. The fruit of the Spirit is a useful list also: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). Wherein there is a conflict or ethical dilemma posed by the business, we are responsible to push back describing our disagreement with management or others in a gentle manner (Proverbs 15:1, 4; 25:15). We are also to submit to our bosses, even the mean ones (I Peter 2:18) to exemplify Christ.

#### Goals and Objectives in Communicating these in the Classroom

The principles found in God's word regarding human relationships and our relationship to Go are intertwined throughout the lectures spontaneously. I also build purposeful assignments and lectures on ethics, morality, and cultural relativity. My goal and objective in threading a Christian worldview, biblical truths with business topics, is to focus the student on Gods viewpoint on relationships, attitudes, and actions.

#### Examples of Integration in International Business (see also PPT files)

I have two main sections dedicated to biblical integration. First, I have a section on Business As Mission (BAM) with an emphasis that this could be more broadly adopted in any business—not just overseas. BAM has a dual bottom-line approach—for profit/sustainability and for kingdom purposes. The kingdom objectives can vary from providing jobs to those who are disadvantaged, to conducting non-mandatory Bible studies. The students are required to consider BAM principles as they launch a restaurant chain into another country.

Second, I have a section on Ethics—specifically global business issues such as bribery and corruption. Here the lines can be very blurry. For instance, what do you do when you are in a foreign country and have certain building regulations that must be followed? Well, of course follow them. However, if the fire inspection crew comes to you and says, we will not sign the yearly fire inspection unless you provide a bribe, what do you do? If you do not do this, then you also will have a liability with other tenants in the building, you will also have no insurance coverage. These types of dilemmas are discussed in class, and also with at least one assignment.

I also have a lecture on moral and cultural relativism. We discuss if a Christian can critique a culture—most say no, but in fact we can based on variations of faulty worldviews. We discuss Niebuhr’s classic on the different Christian approaches to engaging the world: Christ Against culture; Christ Of culture, Christ Above culture, Christ and culture in synthesis, paradox, and Christ the transformer of culture. The students also engage in discussion around moral and nonmoral lists of cultural preferences. For instance, is it a moral issue for 12 year olds to work, where it is legal (say Pakistan). This brings a lively debate to be sure.

#### Examples of Integration in Strategic Management (see also PPT files)

I have one main section on ethics in Strategic Management. Here, I lecture and we discuss the ethics of obtaining inside information on competitor’s price lists, dumpster diving, and many other techniques that I have observed. There is also an assignment for the students to address an ethical dilemma with their boss requiring them to change some forecast numbers on a spreadsheet, which seems inappropriate. The students are to argue both sides: to change, then not to change and use two Bible verses to defend the position. Finally, they describe their own position and decision regarding the dilemma. Later, I share with them what I actually did.

#### Student Evaluations regarding Biblical Integration

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- “I loved having the short devotional before every class. It really encouraged me and focused me for the class.”
- “Professor Sterkenburg provided the best practical biblical integration into business I have experienced. The ‘Business as Mission’ focus was my favorite part of the class. The food was awesome. Enjoyed Sterkenburg’s reading from Psalms and Proverbs and then giving spiels about them.”

The following table summarizes Q5 on the student evaluations using the median:

<b>Q5: Integrates scriptural &amp; theological principles in a way that is not strained or artificial</b>	<b>Sterk</b>	<b>SBA</b>	<b>CU</b>
MGMT 4510 Sp15 - 01	4.8	4.4	4.5
MGMT 4510 Sp15 - 02	5.0	4.4	4.5
BUS 3910 Sp15 - 01	4.7	4.4	4.5
MGMT 4510 Fa15 - 01	4.5	4.4	4.5
BUS 3910 Fa15 - 01	4.7	4.4	4.5
BUS 3910 Fa15 - 02	4.5	4.4	4.5

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