The Distinctive Integration of Faith and Learning at Cedarville University

Intro and General History of Education

Harvard Business Professor, Clayton Christensen, predicted in the Spring of 2014 that "as many as half of the more than 4000 universities and colleges may fail in the next 15 years."[1] He suggested this was the product of new innovation in the field such as online courses that will revolutionize how higher education is done and wipe out the institutions that cannot keep up with the changes. David Warren, President of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, was somewhat less pessimistic, "There will clearly be some institutions that won't make it and there will be some institutions that will be stronger because of going through these difficult steps."[2] Nonetheless, his statement was not very reassuring. The future looks bleak for private institutions in particular that do not have government treasuries to bankroll them when they start to run into the red. How accurate this prediction will be is a question for those who live one hundred years from now. What impact the changes in higher education are having on Christian colleges and universities is one we need to address now. Perhaps some historical context is helpful.

Higher education began in America with a decidedly religious flavor. George Marsden and James T. Burchaell examined the story of the origins of America's colleges and universities

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[1] Michael McDonald, "Small U.S. Colleges Battle Death Spiral as Enrollment Drops," *Bloomberg* (April 24, 2014), http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-04-14/small-u-s-colleges-battle-death-spiral-as-enrollment-drops.html.

[2] Ibid.

and found that "in their rush to conform to the demands of modernity in a post-Christian world," however, "American Christians sacrificed both relevance and identity."[3] In many cases, the historic religious roots of institutions became something to be downplayed or ignored, because they came to be seen as inimical to academic freedom and, ultimately, to higher learning. Much of this was due to the embracing of German thought regarding the modern university, but as both men have articulated, it was not quite so simple. In fact, those most deeply connected to the religious roots of institutions were often instrumental in removing their influence. In the midst of this declension, however, there remained vital catalysts to counteract the secularization of institutions.

Without recounting the entire history of American higher education, most institutions started as Bible colleges or denominational institutions to prepare individuals for domestic ministry or international missions. Those institutions often evolved to include a liberal arts grounding and training for prospective teachers. Most continued this process of development and became full-fledged liberal arts institutions. Others went further, adding professional programs as well. The development of these schools differed depending on a number of factors such as the prevailing mindset of the founding denomination and the influence of various presidents and key faculty.

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[3] Stephen R. Haynes, ed., *Professing in the Postmodern Academy* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2002), p. xi; James T. Burtchaell, *The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities From Their Christian Churches* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1998); George M. Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

In the 19th century, German higher criticism impacted Bible colleges and seminaries and played a role in secularizing even religious studies. With these new methodologies and assumptions driving higher education in Europe—and American institutions seeking the prestige those institutions were gaining—the process of moving away from religious foundations only accelerated.

Marsden and Burtchaell have both shown, however, that well-intentioned Christian leaders in many of these institutions were major players in the process of secularization.[4] Burtchaell's work has been described as more pessimistic than Marsden's, but both historians chronicle a declension thesis.[5] As Americans looked more and more to European academia as the standard, it became apparent that some of the country's institutions of higher learning lacked intellectual quality. The response of some denominational leaders did not inspire confidence that their colleges could compete. In an attempt to increase the reputation of schools, some boards began to reduce the number of ministers in their midst. Presidents responded in kind, seeking to distance themselves and their institutions from their denominational antecedents. Faculty became more and more focused on the standards of their guilds and less and less on the teachings of their churches. With the growing influence of positivism, faculty found it harder and harder to publish and gain recognition in their fields apart from following the new

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[4] Stephen Haynes agrees. Haynes, *Professing in the Postmodern Academy,* p. 10.

[5] Robert Benne, *Quality with Soul: How Six Premier Colleges and Universities Keep Faith with Their Religious* Traditions (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2001), p. 3-8; David L. McKenna, *Christ-Centered Higher Education: Memory, Meaning, and Momentum for the Twenty-First Century* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012), p. 28; Douglas Jacobsen and Rhonda Hustedt Jacobsen, *No Longer Visible: Religion in University Education* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 21.

guidelines for what constituted evidence of original work. Faith was dislodged as a source of truth and increasingly played a diminished role in scholarship and teaching. Not surprisingly in this environment, colleges and universities began to focus more on academic attainments in hiring than church affiliation. These same institutions marketed themselves differently than they had in the past, emphasizing a generic Christian—rather than a specific denominational—foundation. Over time, even these signifiers were abandoned for emphases related to moral character or values. While campus ministries often continued, they were increasingly separated from the academic sphere, made voluntary, or marginalized as extracurricular activities among many others available to interested students. Both Burtchaell and Marsden found a similar process, agreeing that often the leaders and faculty involved in this evolution believed that they were preserving the Christian emphasis of the university, gaining the respect of broader academia, and positioning their schools favorably for the future. Eventually it became apparent, however, that increasingly academicians had no place in their classroom for knowledge found outside the empirical process.[6]

In evaluating these developments, Francis Schaeffer narrowed the advance of autonomous man down to a change in premises. In his 1968 book, *The God Who Is There,* Schaeffer warned, "We must not forget that historic Christianity stands on a basis of antithesis. Without it historic Christianity is meaningless. …The basic thesis is that God objectively exists in contrast (in antithesis) to his not existing. Which of these two are the reality, changes everything in the

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[6] James Tunstead Burtchaell, "The Decline and Fall of the Christian College (I), *First* Things (April 1991): 1-33, http://www.firstthings.com/article/1991/04/002-the-decline-and-fall-of-the-christian-college#print; James Tunstead Burtchaell, "The Decline and Fall of the Christian College (II), *First* Things (May 1991): 30-38, http://www.firstthings.com/article/1991/05/004-the-decline-and-fall-of-the-christian-college-ii.

area of knowledge and morals and in the whole of life."[7] In the later Middle Ages, the

Scholastics began to operate on the basis of pagan assumptions, they had already abandoned

the thesis/antithesis approach that Schaeffer argued is the foundation of Christian thought.

Humanism continued this autonomous method of finding truth. Schaeffer continued,

"Humanism in the larger, more inclusive sense is the system whereby men and women,

beginning absolutely by themselves, try rationally to build out from themselves, having only

Man as their integration point, to find all knowledge, meaning and value."[8] This new approach

to truth left men without a unified system of thought capable of explaining all of reality and

leaving men skeptics. Modern man has been influenced by Hegel, according to Schaeffer, and

pursues truth using the dialectical approach. Thesis is met by antithesis, and instead of one

having to be true and the other false, both are reconciled to develop a synthesis. "The

conclusion is that all possible positions are relativized, and leads to the concept that truth is to

be sought in synthesis rather than antithesis."[9] The assumptions of this approach to finding

truth are the same as those that drive Enlightenment thought and that of the modern

university today. Man is autonomous and what truth can be discovered is found through the

use of his logic.

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[7] Francis A. Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There,* 30th Anniversary Edition, with introduction by James. W. Sire (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 28.
   [8] Ibid., 29.
   [9] Ibid., 34.

Epistemological Assumptions

Schaeffer was influenced in his thinking about worldview by Abraham Kuyper, the Victorian Era educator who founded Free University in Amsterdam and turn of the century Prime Minister of the Netherlands. In his inaugural address for the Free University, he noted, "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: Mine!"[10] Kuyper argued that unregenerate man and regenerate man interacted with information differently. They start with different presuppositions that provide for different understandings of what is reasonable and compelling. Kuyper critiqued the modernist idea that unregenerate man approaches learning from a neutral position, suggesting instead that he simply has a different, and flawed, set of presuppositions or "set of antecedent assumptions that condition all thinking and acting."[11] As Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen put it, "There is no such thing as an 'immaculate perception.'"[12] Kuyper argued this created an "antithesis" between regenerate and unregenerate man, a term Schaeffer later used as the basis of his Christian epistemology. Cornelius Van Till, a proponent of Kuyper's system, furthered his influence in America and was seen as an opponent of B.B. Warfield in the debate between Fideism and Evidentialism. Van Til contended that he was actually bringing Kuyper's and Warfield's thinking together by arguing that the unregenerate man has no basis for asserting the reality of human reason due to his failure to recognize the God who created

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[10] Abraham Kuyper, "Sphere Sovereignty," in *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader,* ed. James D. Bratt (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 488 in David Naugle, "Introduction to Kuyper's Thought," The Kuyperian, accessed October 20, 2016, http://kuyperian.blogspot.com/2004/08/introduction-to-kuypers-thought.html.
[11] Ibid.
[12] David Dockery and Gregory Alan Thornbury, *Shaping Christian Worldview: The Foundations of Christian Higher Education* (Nashville: B & H Pub. Group, 2002), 22.

reason. Chance does not produce a foundation for human reason, so the non-Christian is not

being consistent in her epistemological system because she cannot provide a basis for pointing

to rationalism. Nonetheless, Princeton, where the debate germinated, split as a result. While

Schaeffer embraced presuppositionalism as much of American Evangelicalism has since, he also

believed man's reason was an important tool for providing arguments for the faith and for

helping those who do not know Christ see their need for Him. The testimonies of Josh

McDowell and C.S. Lewis as only two examples note the value of rational arguments. Van Til

and Schaeffer were careful not to assert that the Christian faith relied upon those rational

arguments, however. As J. S. Halsey noted of Van Til's foundation, "Accept the Scriptures as

the Word of God based solely upon the Bible's own self-attestation and thereby gain coherence

and meaning to life, or continue to assume the ultimacy of the human reason and thereby lose

all coherence and meaning to life."[13] "There is then a difference between the reasons for our

faith and the *cause* of our faith. The Holy Spirit imparts faith (Phil. 1:29). Yet the apostolic

precedent and command is to seek to persuade with argument (Acts 16; I Peter 3:15)."[14] This

last quote might be categorized as manifesting a "rational presuppositionalist" position. Such a

person might have been Carl F. H. Henry, but even he is noted as telling his students, "There are

two kinds of presuppositionalists: those that admit it and those who don't."[15] D.A. Carson

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[13] Jim S. Halsey, *For Such a Time As This: An Introduction to the Reformed Apologetic of Cornelius Van Til* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1976), 96.

[14] Gregg Strawbridge, "Defending the Lion: Presuppositionalism or a Classical Approach, Must We Choose?," Reformation Resources of All Saints Presbyterian Church, accessed October 20, 2016, http://www.wordmp3.com/reformationresources.

[15] Andy Naselli, "Carson on Presuppositional vs. Evidentialist Apologetics," Andy Naselli Thoughts on Theology, accessed October 20, 2016, http://andynaselli.com/carson-on-presuppositional-vs-evidentialist-apologetics.

makes the point in his book, *The Gagging of God,* that an evidentialist position was compelling while modernity held sway, but with the advent of postmodernity, it has lost its influence. Alvin Plantinga has attempted to address the concern with evidentialism by posturing that belief in God is "properly basic," meaning it requires no evidence. Plantinga argues that people believe in many things in life without proof. Carson notes that while Plantinga has provided a **means** for belief in God that is warranted, it does not **compel** belief in God and Carson is concerned that it provides further basis for postmodern relativism. Other critics have suggested that Plantinga's position makes one's belief in Christianity irrational, thus preventing it from being attacked by rational means. This might be likened to Kierkegaard's "leap of faith," which does not have a proper foundation in God's Special Revelation. Daniel Taylor, in his book *The Myth of Certainty,* asks "Does this mean the radical pluralist is right?" His response, "Not necessarily. My inability to know any absolute[—]absolutely does not prove such things do not exist, only that my limited knowledge of them is not grounds for certainty."[16] In short, he argues that Scripture does not afford us the ability to know absolutes, so we cannot have certainty. This position creates skeptics, or what C. S. Lewis called "Men without chests." Taylor does not rule out commitment to God, however, which he says for him is based in "*the use of memory, the experience of community,* and *the exercise of perseverance.*"[17] In the end, Taylor is certain that commitment to God is worth the risk of being wrong. Stanley Grenz, Brian McLaren, Dave Tomlinson, and a host of others have articulated a variety of deconstructionist theories for why humans cannot hold on to propositional truth from Scripture with certainty.

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[16] Daniel Taylor, *The Myth of Certainty: The Reflective Christian and the Risk of Commitment* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 92.

[17] Ibid., 100.

They have embraced these postmodern arguments for a variety of reasons including an acceptance of language theories that suggest meaning in the text can only be constructed by the reader, that objective truth somehow undermines relationship, and that the fallen nature of man limits his ability to properly understand texts. Grenz does not believe "inspiration can serve as the foundation for biblical authority."[18] McLaren attacks propositional truth extensively noting, "God doesn't say, 'Seek for absolute, objective, propositional truth,' but rather, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.'"[19] Indeed, He does say the latter, but McLaren seems to miss that such a sentence is, in fact, a truth of propositional nature. In his book, Carson argues that pluralism, particularly that fostered by many postmodern approaches to texts, "gags" God by preventing Him from communicating effectively to mankind. "If God's self-disclosure in words is coextensive with the Bible, then the canon must be understood as establishing a principle of authority (as it has been understood through most of the church's history). …Postmodernism as a whole is characterized by astonishing hubris, by a focus on the self that is awesomely God-defying."[20] Instead, Carson heralds John Frame's work which notes that extrabiblical data is valuable in apologetics, but does not provide an independent authority to which Scripture must measure up. In short, Evangelical Christians hold to two key presuppositions: 1) God exists; and 2) the God that exists has revealed Himself through the revelation we call the Bible. Implicit in that latter presupposition is that the God who communicated to mankind through His Word can in fact communicate effectively His truth, in spite of our fallenness. In addition, we learn from His Word that he is rational, communicates

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[18] Dockery, *Shaping Christian Worldview,* 29.

[19] Brian McLaren and Tony Campolo, *Adventures in Missing the Point: How the Culture-Controlled Church Neutered the Gospel* (EL Cajon, CA: EmergentYS, 2003) 245.

[20] D.A. Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1996), 131 and 133.

rationally, and has endowed mankind with the ability to think. Kevin Vanhoozer notes that

"postmodernity's approach to literary criticism, which renders the author's voice 'undecidable

and indecipherable,' has undermined biblical authority."[21] Carl Henry "placed the doctrine of

revelation at the epistemological center of evangelical theology."[22] David Dockery "argues that

based on plenary inspiration of the Bible, the Bible is true and normative."[23] In short, one's

position on Scripture is vital to providing a starting point for worldview thinking and the

integration of faith and learning.

History of Integrative Thought

The epistemological and theological foundations of Christianity are important to the faith, but

find expression in their integration and application. The first author to use the phrase

"integration of faith and learning' was Frank Gaebelein in his book *The Pattern of God's Truth*

published in 1954. The next major author to pick up on the term was Arthur Holmes in his well

known *The Idea of a Christian College,* published in 1975. Holmes argued for the integration of

faith and learning because, he said, "we live in a secular society that compartmentalizes religion

and treats it as peripheral or even irrelevant to large areas of life and thought."[24] Holmes

argued the Christian college should be an "arm of the church, which entails evangelistic,

missionary, and humanitarian responsibilities in addition to academic goals."[25] Sidney

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[21] Dockery, *Shaping Christian Worldview,* 31.
[22] Ibid., 25.
[23] Ibid., 27.
[24] Arthur F. Holmes, *The Idea of a Christian College,* Revised Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1987), 9.
[25] Darrin Thomas, "The History of the Integration of Faith and Learning," *Catalyst* 6 (December 2011): 21.

Greidanus sought to help solidify the Biblical foundation for integration in an article published in 1982. Greidanus argued for four hermeneutical considerations when doing scholarship: 1) there can be no real conflict between the Bible and creation since God is responsible for each, 2) John Calvin noted "the Scriptures are like spectacles that enable us to view reality aright," 3) Biblical authors must be understood in the context of their own historical and cultural environments, and 4) "the Bible is written in non-scientific language."[26] Greidanus sought to prevent a dualistic approach to scholarship where the Bible had no impact and a Biblicism that makes the Bible a scientific textbook. "The Bible calls us to faith and to the living out of our faith in everything we do, including our scientific work."[27] Greidanus argued that the "Bible enables us to see reality, the world out there, clearly and correctly." The Bible also provides "norms that guide the Christian scholar."[28]

The same year, Nicholas Wolterstorff gave a convocation speech at Wheaton College where he outlined several stages of Christian institutions of higher learning. Stage 1 colleges focus on piety and evangelism. Stage 2 colleges have engaged in robust integration across the disciplines. These schools have exposed their students to culture and encouraged them to interact with it. This phase is largely one of intellectual engagement. While this stage is a step forward, Wolterstorff suggests the need to move into the next stage. Stage III colleges, he says, will focus on society. "The social world in which we find ourselves is desperately in need of re-formation."[29] To Wolterstorff, the Christian college should be about reforming society as a

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[26] Sidney Greidanus, "The Use of the Bible in Christian Scholarship," *Christian Scholars Review* 11 (1982): 140-41.

[27] Ibid., 144.

[28] Ibid., 146.

[29] Nicholas Wolterstorff, "The Mission of the Christian College at the End of the 20th Century," *The Reformed Journal* 33 (June 1983): 17.

means of bringing in the Kingdom of God. His vision of society is rather precise and debatable,

but he is suggesting that the integration of faith and learning extends beyond the classroom.

Thomas Askew proposed a somewhat similar progression for Christian colleges in a collection of

essays edited by Joel Carpenter and Kenneth W. Shipps.[30] He suggested that the first phase is

one that is fairly insular and focused on the church. The second finds the college gaining

standing within higher education and becoming more institutionalized. The final phase is one

of professionalization and academic development. Askew's essay, however, was found in a

collection of essays written in the late 1980s that frequently expressed concern about

theologically conservative institutions indoctrinating rather than educating and failing to

jettison their fundamentalist past. As such, integration for some meant not just a particular

practice or action, but a particular theological perspective.

The 1990s brought more of this critique. Mark Noll, in his scathing *The Scandal of the*

Evangelical Mind, argued that fundamentalism encouraged anti-intellectualism that thwarted

the development of a truly Christian mind at colleges with a dispensationalist theological

foundation.   It also focused on the supernatural, thereby lessening focus on the natural world.

Noll includes a discourse on why a literal, six-day creationist position is anti-intellectual. "…If

the consensus of modern scientists, who devote their lives to looking at the data of the physical

world, is that humans have existed on the planet for a long time, it is foolish for biblical

interpreters to say that 'the Bible teaches' the recent creation of human beings."[31] In short,

scientific data can trump Biblical teaching. Noll has been critical of conservative Evangelicals for

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[30] Joel A. Carpenter and Kenneth W. Shipps, *Making Education Christian: The History and Mission of Evangelical Colleges in America* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. 1987).
[31] Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1994), 207.

their "literal hermeneutic, for a 'scientific' approach to the verses of Scripture that was molded

by eighteenth-century Enlightenment, for keen preoccupation with the doctrine of biblical

inerrancy, and for fascination with details of the apocalypse."[32] These are the attributes that

Noll finds scandalous. While there are nuggets of truth in what he argues, he, like Timothy

Smith and Nathan Hatch in Carpenter and Shipps volume, believes that a belief in an inerrant

view of Scripture and a literal hermeneutic are antithetical to the integration of faith and

learning.

Other authors of the 1990s sought to focus on generalized principles that most could adhere to

in the area of integration. James Sire encouraged Christian professors to pursue a distinctively

Christian approach to their fields. Arthur Holmes noted that biblical ethics can and should

direct Christian scholarship. "Values," he asserted, "are inherent not only in what is taught, but

also in how it is taught."[33] William Hasker exhorted Christians that to "compartmentalize one's

faith in one part of one's mind, one's scholarly discipline in another part, and to put one's

business and civic concerns in yet other compartment is in effect to deny God's lordship over all

of life."[34] He then proposed three approaches to integration. The first he termed

"compatibilist" and finds no conflict between the assumptions of a discipline and the Christian

faith. The second, called "transformationist," finds the relationship between the two more

problematic. The discipline is not entirely antithetical to Scriptural truth, but there are certain

insights that the Bible can bring to the field that are necessary. Finally, the "reconstructionist"

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[32] Ibid., 243.

[33] Arthur Holmes, *Shaping Character: Moral Education in the Christian College* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1991), 5.

[34] William Hasker, "Faith-Learning Integration: An Overview," *Christian Scholars Review* 21 (March 1992), 233.

approach finds that the foundational principles or processes of a field are in direct opposition to the Bible. As a result, such an integrationist approach demands wholesale reconstruction from the underlying principles up. In these approaches, Hasker provided helpful categories for evaluating different fields and starting places for over integration.

For historians, George Marsden is a critical name in the discussion of integration, so much so that he is named as one of the "Evangelical Mafia" in the field. Marsden's consideration of this important topic extends well beyond his own academic field, however, in the publication of his book *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship.* In this important work, Marsden makes the case for integration. In previous work in his field, he focused on integration in the field of history. In this book, he continues his encouragement of Christian integration by noting that every professor brings a certain set of "control beliefs" (a term he borrowed from Nicholas Wolterstorff) to academic scholarship. Knowing what these are helps in critiquing, for example, a Marxist historian. Marsden suggests that for the Christian, Biblical truth might serve as a control belief that helps to guide her in her evaluation of the past. Since the Academy is open to a variety of viewpoints, all of which are beholden to different sets of control beliefs, the Christian perspective ought to be welcomed to the table as well. Marsden makes the point, however, that Christian academics must be willing to accept and abide by the rules of the guild in their fields otherwise. This one seemingly innocuous concession has elicited quite a bit of response, as has Marsden's overall argument of the Christian being just one voice around the table. Advocates note that at least the Christian has a voice in this scenario and the university is once again opened up the potential impact of hearing Biblical truth, though presented only as

it impacts academic scholarship. Otherwise, or as the case appears to be now, there is no room

for Christian thought at all. Critics are less sanguine about this thesis.   Some argue he has given

up too much.   The notion that Christianity is just one voice among many suggests it is on an

equal playing field with all other worldviews, when clearly Christians reject that notion.   Are we

then compromising to take such an approach?   Marsden does note in his book that Christians

must "keep in mind that ultimately there is an inherent 'offense' in the Gospel."[35] So, he is not

unmindful of the potential for compromise. I believe he mitigates it in his own mind in two

ways. First, he would argue that it is better to get a voice at the table rather than not to have a

voice. Second, how much compromise is really taking place recognizing how seldom Biblical

truth will be publicly articulated in this setting. Nonetheless, there are some compelling

problems. Herbert Schlossberg argues that this approach is ultimately seeking "respectability"

in academia and that should not be our goal. Our goal should be consistency with God's Word

and distinctiveness. If those attributes prevent Christians from gaining recognition within the

guild, so be it. More damning, a non-Christian named Bruce Kuklick wonders what Christians

have actually added to the discussion within the field of history. This is a critique of the

question of how much a Christian can abide by the rules of the guild and still provide a Christian

voice.   "If Christian convictions lend no such insight," Kuklick argues, "if they are not cashed

out, they are worthless."[36] It is a convicting point. If we have nothing distinctive to offer, why

should he care? Kuklick's co-editor in the work from which I quoted is D. G. Hart, formerly at

Westminster Seminary in CA, but now at Hillsdale. Hart wonders what Christians have to offer

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[35] George M. Marsden, *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 57.

[36] Bruce Kuklick and D. G. Hart, *Religious Advocacy and American History* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1997), 59.

the field and suggests that perhaps they should "be thinking about alternative practices and structures for producing a Christian mind, one that reinforces rather than undermine[s] Christian thinking."[37]   Hart was more clear in a presentation at a Conference on Faith and History meeting years ago when he suggested Christians give up on the notion of integration entirely. When Christians preach, they can use the Word of God. When Christians write history, they should stick to the rules of the guild. In short, he is arguing for two realms: the spiritual and the secular. Douglas Sloan, in a book entitled *Faith and Knowledge,* called this approach "the two-realm theory of truth."

> This is the view that on the one side there are the truths of knowledge as these are given predominantly by science and discursive, empirical reasons. On the other side are the truths of faith, religious experience, morality, meaning, and value. The latter are seen as grounded not in knowledge but variously in feeling, ethical action, communal convention, folk tradition, or unfathomable mystical experience. [38]

Clearly this denies the viability of the integration of faith and learning.

Integration in the Field of History: A Case Study

I want to beg your indulgence a bit further here in my own field and present to you a viewpoint that I heard last week at a meeting of the Conference on Faith and History. This organization has long been the "Christian" version of a professional society within the field of history. It long required that members believe in the Bible as God's special revelation and in Jesus as His Son.

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[37] Ibid., 153.

[38] Douglas Sloan, *Faith and Knowledge: Mainline Protestantism and American Higher Education* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), p. ix.

Those minimal requirements were dropped a few years ago to allow membership to simply

those "exploring the relationship between the Christian faith and history."[39] Leaving that point

without critique, the organization's new president recently published a book entitled *Christian*

Historiography: Five Rival Versions from Baylor Press. I should note that this man, Jay Green,

is a friend of mine since my early days in the profession and I have had many encouraging

conversations with him over the years. In the book, which was a focus of a session at the

conference, he outlines five ways that Christian historians have integrated faith and the field.

First, there are those historians who want "to take religion seriously" within their academic

work. This might impact how they view the role of religion in the past or cause them to focus

on religious history topics. Second, and probably the most common expression of Christian

integration in the field, are those who recognize the impact of the Christian worldview on how

they view the past.   Here the influence of Abraham Kuyper discussed earlier is seen in the field

of history. This approach operates on the fundamental belief that the Christian worldview

allows a Christian historian to see the past differently than his secular counterpart. Third, for

some Christians, integration simply means that the Bible provides ethical standards that can be

used to evaluate the past. Christian values are used, in this approach, to learn usable lessons

from the past. Fourth, and more common in an earlier era, are those historians who seek to

use history as a tool in apologetics. For those who hold to inerrancy, Green notes, it "becomes

necessary to verify and defend the historicity of all events recorded in the Bible."[40] For others

however, it is simply a quest for providing the historical evidence for a rational and historically

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[39] About CFH, Conference on Faith and History, accessed October 20, 2016, http://www.faithandhistory.org/about-cfh/.

[40] Jay Green, *Christian Historiography: Five Rival Versions* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2015), 100.

based faith. Finally, the most derided approach in the field is known as "providential" history.

This is often seen in evangelical churches across the country, in homeschool curriculum, and in

polemical treatises. The purpose here is to denote what God was doing in some time period in

the past. This is often seen in writing about the Founding Fathers and what they envisioned for

America. The point of such pieces is often to call Americans back to a better era or a more

biblical understanding of how our country should function.

Green critiques each of these five approaches. The focus on religion in history is fine, but does

not provide for a distinctive approach, he argues. He finds little compelling in the worldview

approach because after a generation of historians using this approach, there has been

produced little that is noteworthy. This is why Kuklick questions the value of the concept of

integration in the field and I think this plays a part in why Hart has given up on the concept

altogether.   Green takes exception to using the past to make ethical judgments for two

reasons. First, he questions the validity of such an approach because historians are always

limited in what can be known about a past event and he laments the way he has seen Christians

moralize about present day issues in light of their critique of the past. Second, he takes issue

with the utilitarian element that this approach presupposes, arguing that History is valuable

beyond its usefulness.   Green also critiques the use of history as an apologetic for similar

reasons and for the reason that I noted earlier (that somehow the "misguided" position on

inerrancy demands proof). Finally, Green is hardly able to hide his disdain for providential

history because of how it has been used by groups like the Moral Majority for political ends

with which he disagrees, how it represents poor historical methodology, and most importantly

how it represents a presumption on the part of the writer that he or she can understand what God is doing in a particular event.

I cannot disagree with Green in many of his critiques. The first approach does offer very little that is novel and the worldview approach has, as he said, not provided much "that is demonstrably Christian."[41] I see the problems with focusing on moral judgments and on apologetics, though I do not think that either approach is morally wrong. They have their place, though they might not be the driving motivation behind an academic historian's approach to her work. The providential approach is problematic largely because of Green's good critique that Christians are not equipped to identify what God is doing outside of His Biblical revelation. Such attempts go directly against the teaching of the Bible and Christians should be very wary of presuming upon God's intentions. Nonetheless, I disagree with the means of his critique in several places. I will focus on one for the purposes of elucidating my main point in this essay. He is right that the Christian historians of the last generation have produced little that is "demonstrably Christian." He believes it is because we must be subject to the standards of the guild and those standards prohibit the overt impact of Biblical truth on the historical product. This is why many historians writing on this topic have argued for Christian or providential history as acceptable for Christian audiences, but technical or scientific history is what should be produced in secular and academic settings. This line of thinking is what produces Hart's viewpoint of two realms. Their approach reminds me, however to heed the 1963 critique of Henry Blamires of the Christian Mind in academia, or the lack thereof, "...Christians in the

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[41] Ibid., 49.

modern world accept, for the purpose of mental activity, a frame of reference constructed by the secular mind and a set of criteria reflecting secular evaluations."[42] My colleague and friend, Rick Tison, has ably argued that the historians Green refers to here, largely part of or influenced by the Evangelical Mafia, have embraced an Enlightenment approach to history. It is no wonder they have not produced much that is "demonstrably Christian." Nonetheless, each is quite willing to critique conservative Evangelicalism as based on naïve Baconian common sense realism, dispensational theology that emphasizes inerrancy and a literal hermeneutic, and anti-intellectualism that devalues academic inquiry. These influences result in support of intellectually defunct positions on creation, for example, that they argue reduce the respectability that all Christians have within academia. For these historians, and others like them, where their control beliefs kick in is different from conservative Evangelicals. Putting a finger on what exactly creates the difference is difficult. I have spent most of my career trying to elucidate the issue and do not pretend to have the problem resolved. Nonetheless, I think from this presentation, you know what my arguments are. At least part of the difference lies in the question of the inerrancy of God's Word and how we as Christians approach it as a result. That critical difference comes up time and time again in the conversations about integration of faith and learning. David Dockery, George H. Guthrie, and others have done excellent work on integration, but have been reticent to focus on this key distinctive. Guthrie noted in a chapter of a book edited by Dockery that he wanted to focus on biblical authority rather than on the "various positions on the nature of revelation or the inspiration and infallibility of Scripture."[43]

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[42] Harry Blamires, *The Christian Mind: How Should a Christian Think?* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1963), 4.

[43] Dockery, *Shaping Christian Worldview,* 24.

That is good if you want to write a book that will offend the least amount of people, but as Green has inadvertently pointed out in the field of history, what has the muddling of this important biblical attribute wrought? So, inerrancy is a key distinctive. I also believe that the distinction lies in how control beliefs are utilized. For Marsden and Noll, general revelation can trump Special Revelation. While I recognize the problem of being too broad in this critique, I do believe Scripture makes it clear that there is to be a hierarchy in our epistemology. When the result of empirical methodology clearly runs counter to Biblical Truth, it must give way to the Word of God. The definitions of "clearly" and "counter" are important there, but this is an axiom that must be in the forefront of the minds of Christian scholars who seek to integrate faith and learning. Can we, as with the Scholastics, learn from pagan sources? Yes, but we ought to avoid straining to find a nugget of truth there if it is already demonstrably present in Biblical writing or elsewhere, lest we be influenced negatively in our immersion. The best preventative medicine in this case, is immersing ourselves in God's Word. In some sense, Christian scholars must ask themselves whether they wish to follow the standards of the guild, or the standards of the Word of God. Finally, I again thank Dr. Tison, for helping me think through a final critique. He noted that too often Christian scholars separate themselves from the church in their academic pursuits. Whether it is hubris about their own achievements, embarrassment about the state of the church itself, or simply a failure to recognize how the Christian institution of higher learning is to be an arm of the church, Christian scholars need to remind themselves in humility of God's plan for the church. Christian scholars can be an important support for the purposes of the church. C. S. Lewis once wrote 'that Christians have an important ministry of engaging the broader world of ideas on behalf of our brothers and

sisters in the church, to stand in the gap for them, offering well-conceived reflections on reality from the Christian point of view."[44] Let us be about pursuing that end.

For Green, the solution is not entirely clear. He concludes his book with a reference to historian, Arthur Link, who noted that though he is a Christian, he found little evidence of his faith in his own work. Link suggested that Christian historians simply "chronicle" the past.[45] Green seems sympathetic. In his presidential address, Green talked about the failures of contemporary Evangelicalism, his embarrassment with their political activity, and his questioning of whether the term meant anything anymore. If it does, he noted, he is not sure he wants to be part of it. I understand his angst, but is defaulting to the two realms approach the only option? Let me suggest to you in my conclusion there is another way.

Conclusion

Let me close by connecting back to my opening comments. Schools will close. Those that remain will have tightened up their understanding of their identity and made it clear to external constituents. In short, we here at CU need to focus on what makes us distinctive. To that end, let me highlight what I believe makes integration at Cedarville distinctive. I start with some valuable directions from George Guthrie, Professor of Bible at Union University. He provides four helpful applications of the enterprise of integrating faith and learning:

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[44] Ibid., 39.
[45] Green, *Christian Historiography,* 163.

1. We must work out a clear understanding concerning how the authority of Scripture relates to our tasks of doing academic disciplines.
2. We must make a distinction between the authority of Scripture and our own interpretations of Scripture.
3. We must embrace the presuppositions of the guild critically, analyzing them in light of biblical authority.
4. We must work with integrity and excellence, and bear witness gracefully.[46]

I would add the following addendum:

1. We must be willing to allow our position on inerrancy and a more literal hermeneutic to distinctively impact our scholarly activity.
2. We must maintain the Scriptural pattern of superseding human scholarship with Biblical Truth when they are in conflict.
3. We must seek to support the purposes of the church in all of our endeavors.

It is in these applications, that Cedarville University faculty can leave a distinctive legacy in Christian higher education. While we may disagree with our brothers in Christ on the topic of integration, let us be grace-filled and gracious. May we not be like some of those I have discussed in this essay and denigrate those with whom we disagree. Let us be faithful to II Cor. 10:5, "We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ." This is not a small task, and it will not always be easy. Brad Green, also at Union, reminds us "If Jesus meant what he said when he said the greatest commandment is to love God with our minds (Matt. 22:37), then, like the rest of the life of discipleship, it is a task that will take work…"[47] Often we talk about engaging culture and transforming culture. These are important goals, but Green is right to question whether such uses of our scholarship ought to be ultimate goals. "Our prime motive," Duane Litfin has noted, "must be *obedience* to Jesus Christ."[48]   Let me close with a thought from Karen Longman,

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[46] Dockery, *Shaping Christian Worldview,* p. 37-39.
[47] Ibid., 73.
[48] Duane Litfin, *Conceiving the Christian College* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2004), 57.

Professor of Education at Azusa Pacific, "The brighter our distinctiveness shines as thoughtful

Christian institutions, the more we'll have to offer to a world that is searching for truth and

spiritual vitality."[49]

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[49] David S. Dockery and David P. Gushee, editors, *The Future of Christian Higher Education* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1999), 41.