

Biblical Integration in the Disciplines of Kinesiology and Allied Health

Faculty Integration Paper

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The mission of Cedarville University is to be a Christ-centered learning community equipping students for lifelong leadership and service through an education marked by excellence and grounded in biblical truth. This mission statement is printed in a frame on my desk so that I am reminded of it often as I seek, by God's enabling, to play a role in fulfilling that mission.

Intricately related to the mission statement of Cedarville University is the model this Christ-centered college follows for Biblical integration in Christian higher education. This model is the Biblical foundation view. In this model, Biblical investigation and interpretation provide the material for theological synthesis. Biblical theology then serves as a catalyst for knowledge and for engaging all disciplines and fields (Lee, 2014).

In this paper, I will first seek to articulate this Biblical worldview, which provides a foundation of truth for my academic work in approaching the disciplines of Kinesiology and Allied Health. In the second section, I will attempt to show the correlation between Scripture and the disciplines of Kinesiology and Allied Health. The third section will include a summary of my commitment to Christian higher education. In the final sections, I will demonstrate the relationship between faith and practice in my teaching and lifestyle and my goals and objectives for communicating these beliefs in the classroom. Throughout the paper, I will illustrate how I seek, by God's grace and enabling, to be a Christ-centered teacher and learner within the Department of Kinesiology and Allied Health at Cedarville University.

## **1. Biblical Worldview**

I believe that the integration of faith, learning and life in the disciplines of Kinesiology and Allied Health must be approached from the foundation of a Biblical worldview. This foundation begins with an understanding of God as the one, true God, eternally existing as three Persons

who are all equally God: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Deuteronomy 6:4 makes it clear that there is one God only. “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.”

A foundational faith is also one that is focused on the person and work of Jesus Christ (Koessler, 2003). I believe that Jesus is the second Person of the Triune God, co-equal and co-existent with God the Father. In the incarnation, Jesus took on all of the essential characteristics of humanity (John 1:14; Philippians 2:7-8; Hebrews 2:14), except that He was without sin (Isaiah 53:9; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5). I firmly hold to the bedrock truths about Jesus Christ that are the essentials of a Biblical worldview: the doctrines of the virgin birth, the deity of Christ, substitutionary atonement, and the resurrection and return of Christ (Cornman, 2003).

I also understand the Bible to be the infallible, inerrant Word of God, which has been inspired by God and is God’s written revelation to man (2 Timothy 3:16). In 2 Peter 1:20-21, we read that “no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” I understand that the whole Bible is inspired by God, in that the Holy Spirit gave the words of the Scriptures to those writers whom He chose to be the channels of His revelation, and that the original documents of the Bible are without error.

Another fundamental doctrine of a Biblical worldview is that God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, the One who created the universe out of nothing. “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). “By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible” (Hebrews 11:3). Furthermore, God created the earth to be inhabited (Isaiah 45:18). The Word of God

declares that human beings were created by God in His image and likeness. “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27).

Finally, a Biblical worldview encompasses the doctrine of the fall of man. I understand from the Scriptures that, because of Adam’s sin of disobedience to God (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:6-7), Adam fell from his original innocence and communion with God and his nature became guilty and corrupted. This corruption of human nature has been transmitted to the entire race of man (apart from Jesus Christ) and every child of Adam is born into the world with a sinful nature (Romans 5:12, 16, and 19). I also understand that, because of this inherently sinful nature, human beings cannot have a relationship with God by their own initiative. This relationship can come only through Jesus Christ and is wholly the work of God by grace, not on the basis of human merit or works (John 14:6; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-9, Titus 3:4-5).

I believe that all those who come to God through Christ Jesus receive spiritual birth and are adopted by God the Father as part of His family. To all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God - children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God (John 1:12; 3:3; Galatians 4:5). We have been reconciled to God through Jesus Christ (Romans 5:10-11; 2 Corinthians 5:18).

## **2. The Correlation between Scripture and the Disciplines of Kinesiology and Allied Health**

The essential doctrines of the Biblical worldview and numerous passages of Scripture correlate very closely with the disciplines of Kinesiology and Allied Health.

Created in His image: The doctrine that human beings were created by God in His image and likeness is highly relevant to the human sciences (Hasker, 1992) and, thus, to the disciplines of Kinesiology and Allied Health. The Psalmist, David, captured the precious nature of human life: “For you formed my inmost parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well” (Psalm 139:13-14). In Psalm 139, David reflects on the greatness of our Creator God and the value He places on every human life.

Doctrine of Preservation: The doctrine of Preservation holds that God is the providential sustainer of all life. “...And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Colossians 1:17). God’s active role in sustaining life provides further evidence of the worth and significance of His creation (Johnson & Morris, 2012).

Doctrine of the Fall: The doctrine of the fall of man and the insight that humans are fallen, sinful creatures are also relevant to the human sciences (Hasker, 1992), particularly to the fields of Allied Health and Athletic Training. Students majoring in these clinical disciplines will be providing care to individuals who experience sickness, injury and pain as a consequence of the fall.

In Him we live and move and have our being: In the beginning, God gave the first man and woman the tasks to be fruitful and multiply, to fill the earth and subdue it, and to work and keep the Garden of Eden (Genesis 1:28; 2:15). The body was designed with movement as both a primary purpose and as a primary need (Johnson & Morris, 2012).

In the midst of the idols in the city of Athens, the apostle Paul spoke to the men of Athens of “the God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, [who] does

not live in temples made by man” (Acts 17:24), of the One who “gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.” (Acts 17:25). Paul declared that “In Him we live and move and have our being.” (Acts 17:28). All our earthly life is meant to be lived out in the person of Jesus Christ (Walton, 2015). God is sovereign over all our movement and activity. The Greek word for move is ‘*kineo*’, which means “to move, set in motion...to move oneself or be moved”. In Acts 17:28, the word refers to the general activity of the human being (Vine’s Greek New Testament Dictionary). From this Greek word ‘*kineo*’ comes the English word ‘kinesiology’, the study of human movement.

The body – a temple: The theme of the temple and the glory that the temple brings to God is evident throughout the Bible. First Kings 8 describes the dedication of the temple by Solomon, in all its splendor and grandeur. The glory of the Lord filled the temple in a cloud (1 Kings 8:11). When Jesus came to the earth, the temple was in a Person, fully God and fully man. In John 1:14, John proclaimed that “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” Jesus declared that He was greater than the magnificent temple building. In John 2:19, He said, “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up (referring to His body).” On the cross, when Jesus gave up His Spirit, “at that moment, the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom” (Matthew 27:51).

Before Jesus left the earth, He promised His followers that the Father would send the Holy Spirit, the Helper who would be with them and teach them all things (John 14:26). In 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Paul proclaims, “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a

price. So glorify God in your body.” We have stewardship responsibilities to faithfully manage this temple, the body that God has given us, in ways that bring honor and glory to Him.

Caleb is an Old Testament character whose life is an excellent example of stewardship, both spiritually and physically. Caleb wholly followed the Lord His God. At the age of 85 years old, he was still as strong then as he was 45 years earlier when Moses sent him to spy out the land (Joshua 14:6-12).

Reasonable worship: In Romans 12:1-2, Paul appeals to believers “to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” For the follower of Christ, care of the body is worship. Acknowledging that God owns the rights to our body and moving to a place of surrender, obedience, and availability is daily, costly, reasonable worship – the only logical, rational response to God, in view of His great mercies (Bush & Tewell, 2015).

### **3. Commitment to Christian Higher Education**

First and foremost in my commitment to Christian higher education is the commitment to my calling as a child of God. “Calling is the truth that God calls us to himself so decisively that everything we are, everything we do, and everything we have is invested with a special devotion and dynamism lived out as a response to his summons and service.” (Guinness, 2003).

In obedience to God, I have also sought to follow His leading with regard to a vocation. God has given me passions for teaching, mentoring, and discipling. The environment of Christian higher education provides fertile soil for these investments in the lives of students.

My commitment to Christian higher education is also grounded in my view of the Word of God. I understand the Bible to be the final authority for life and practice. “For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12). The Holy Scriptures are able to make us “wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:15). All Scripture “is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). My commitment to Christian higher education is intricately connected to a commitment to seek the Word of God for direction and instruction so that I will be thoroughly equipped to fulfill my vocational responsibilities in the Christian college setting.

I am committed to deepening my understanding of Biblical integration through conferences, workshops, and personal study, and to apply Biblical integration in greater depth in each of the courses I teach. I appreciate the definition of integration by Hasker (1992) as “a scholarly project whose goal is to ascertain and develop integral relationships which exist between the Christian faith and human knowledge, particularly as expressed in the various academic disciplines.” Thus, Biblical integration involves discovering the connections between the truth found in our disciplines and the truth presented in God’s Word, relationships which exist inherently, but need to be ascertained and developed (Hasker, 1992; Holmes, 1993; Lee, 2014). Biblical integration emphasizes the life-changing applications of knowledge (Estes, 2006).

#### **4. Relationship between Faith and Practice in Teaching and Lifestyle**

Starting points for considering the relationship between faith and practice in teaching and lifestyle: Dockery (2008) asserts that the starting point for thinking about the integration of faith



and practice in teaching is the words of Jesus in the Great Commandment: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself (from Matthew 22:36-40).

Jesus calls us to a wholehearted devotion to God with every aspect of our being. As we love God with our minds in distinctively Christian thinking, we will think differently about how we live and love, worship and serve, work, learn, and teach (Glanzer, 2012). Thinking with the mind of Christ results in culture-engaging living (Dockery, 2008; Moreland, 1997). As a faculty member in a Christian higher education learning community, I am challenged to take every thought captive to Christ and to love God with all my mind. Dockery (2008) suggests that the starting point of loving God with our minds points to a unity of knowledge, a seamless whole in Christian institutions.

In addition to Jesus' Great Commandment, a second Biblical starting point for the integration of faith and practice in teaching and lifestyle is the wisdom literature of the Hebrew Scriptures. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge..." (Proverbs 1:7). "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!" (Psalm 111:10). "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding." (Job 28:28). A beginning point for thinking, learning, teaching and scholarship in Christian higher education is a reverential fear of the Lord (Dockery, 2008).

Another starting point for speaking of the relationship between faith and practice is a discussion of the subject of truth. Truth may be defined as the sum total of reality known to the God who is all-knowing (Estes, 2006). The Bible is a sub-set totally contained within the truth set. In Psalm 119:160, the Psalmist declares, "The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous

rules endures forever.” God has revealed Himself and His truth through special revelation, that is, through Christ and through the Bible (Ryrie, 1972).

Also contained within the truth set is the sub-set of knowledge that has been obtained from general revelation and acquired through human discovery. God has revealed Himself and His truth to all humans through nature and natural science, through history, and through His providential dealings with man (Ryrie, 1972). The boundary of this sub-set is expanding as God enables scholars to discover new knowledge in their disciplines.

The remaining part of the truth set is mystery, those aspects of truth which God has not yet made known to humans.

Augustine (in Poe, 1996) stated that that every true and good Christian should understand that wherever we find truth it is the Lord’s. Kuyper (1998) declared, “There is not one square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry ‘Mine!’”.

Limitations in relating faith and practice: In seeking to integrate Biblical and theological principles in my practice of teaching, three limitations will constrain my human efforts. The first limitation is finiteness in the content of what we can know and in our ability to comprehend the truth that God has revealed (Estes, 2006). In our finiteness, we also struggle with fatigue, with limitations in study habits and with limited powers of concentration (Holmes, 1993). Secondly, we are limited by fragmentation. Truth in the Word of God and outside the Word is typically presented as fragments (jigsaw pieces) that must be constructed into meaningful combinations to create a coherent picture (Estes, 2006). A final limitation is our fallenness. As a result of the fall,

the human mind is now corrupted and may distort and misconstrue what has been revealed (Estes, 2006; Holmes, 1993).

Recognizing the limitations of finiteness, fragmentation and fallenness, as a Christian scholar I will seek God's revealed truth and I will attempt to link the aspects of truth in a coherent whole.

Principles guiding the integration of faith and practice in teaching: Several principles guide the process of integration of faith and learning. The first principle is a pursuit of truth through both special revelation (within the Bible) and general revelation (outside the Bible). A second principle is the use of critical thinking to discern whether truth claims belong to the truth set. Furthermore, the process of integration involves articulating how pieces of truth link together and resisting the temptation to tamper with the pieces. Integration examines all things, conserves that which is demonstrated to be truth, and continues to probe the mysteries of God's truth. The process of integration must also be carried out in a spirit of humility and with integrity. Finally, integration values the whole above the parts (Estes, 2006). The human mind as created by God "is not content with fragmentary knowledge, but tends constantly to rise from facts to laws, from laws to higher laws, and from these to the highest generalizations possible" (Orr, 1989).

Relationship between faith and lifestyle: I am challenged by Dockery's (2008) assertion that in loving God with our minds, education will involve much more than passing on content to our students. It will also mean shaping character, helping young men and women to develop a greater understanding of God, His creation and grace, and humanity's place of privilege and responsibility in our Father's world (Dockery, 2008; Glanzer, 2012). I desire to be an example of godly character and to be used by the Lord to positively influence the lives of students and my colleagues at Cedarville University. Although I frequently fail to be a Christ-like example, I

daily commit to abide in Christ, to be devoted to prayer, to study the Scriptures, to be filled with the Spirit, to guard my tongue and speak the truth in love, to renew my mind, and to bring every thought captive to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in order to serve and edify others. I desire to bring glory to God in all that I do.

## **5. Goals and Objectives for Integrating Biblical Truth in the Classroom**

The disciplines of Kinesiology and Allied Health are broad and encompass both the applied and theoretical aspects of the study of the human body and human movement. As I seek to integrate a Biblical worldview in the courses I teach, I desire to reflect on the following questions which have been adapted from a list of questions by Eckel (2003) in his book “The Whole Truth: Classroom Strategies for Biblical Integration”:

- a) Do I intentionally plan to teach every unit and lesson ‘Christianly’? How will I accomplish this goal?
- b) Does what I believe affect how I teach? How?
- c) How can I make the Biblical worldview more explicit in my discussion of \_\_\_\_\_?
- d) What activities do we often participate in that reflect our humanness but that we may not immediately connect to our Lord (such as eating or physical activity)?

My goals and objectives for integrating Biblical truth in the classroom relate to the following areas that are particularly relevant for the disciplines of Kinesiology and Allied Health.

Fearfully and wonderfully made: Psalm 139 emphasizes the Biblical truths that God is Creator and Sovereign Lord and that He values every human life. When David reflected on the complexity and unity of the human body, he praised God that he was “fearfully and wonderfully

made” and that his works were wonderful (Psalm 139:13-14). These verses not only proclaim the wonder of the human body, but that every life is purposeful from beginning to end.

I am blessed to teach courses which involve study of the anatomy and physiology of the human body, including the complex and intricate organs, tissues and cells comprising each system. In these courses, my objective and prayer is for students to continually be in awe of God’s creation of the human body as they delve in-depth into its systems and structures, and that they will be able to declare with greater conviction that every human being is fearfully and wonderfully made and that God has a plan and purpose for every life.

Resources which present the anatomy and physiology of the systems from the viewpoint of intelligent design (Gillen, 2001; Gillen, Sherwin, & Knowles, 2001; Answers in Genesis) have been valuable for providing a distinct Creationist approach to the study of the human body. With the help of these resources, my objective is to emphasize the repeating patterns and themes in the study of all the systems of the body which provide powerful evidence for a Divine Designer. These themes include: a) the direct relationship between structure and function; b) the role of homeostasis for precise functioning; c) the interdependence between body parts; and d) the triple concepts of order, organization and integration (Gillen et al., 2001).

When we study the different systems, my goal is to highlight the immensity of the numbers of cells and connections in the human body. For example, there are 75-100 trillion cells in the human body, including over 100 billion nerve cells and 100 trillion synapses, 30 trillion red blood cells, and 1 million nephrons within each kidney. Together, our finite minds try to grasp how the fist-sized heart can beat 100,000 times and pump 2,000 gallons of blood through 60,000

miles of blood vessels each day. These massive numbers reflect the intricate design of the human body that glorifies the Creator and reminds us that we serve an awesome God.

Another goal in the study of anatomy and physiology is to emphasize the detail and complexity of the human body that point to a Divine Designer. When we learn about the constant flow of life in bone tissue through the ongoing activity of the osteoblasts (“bone makers”) and the osteoclasts (“bone breakers”), I share with the students how billions of these cells labor diligently inside us at all times, replacing averaged bone. When we are young, 100 percent of all the bone in our body is replaced each year. Our jawbone as a four-year-old will not contain a single remnant of our jawbone when we were three years old. Yet, due to the wisdom of bone’s DNA, the shape of the jawbone will stay exactly the same, only become larger! (Yancey & Brand, 1980). In our study of the anatomy of the wrist and hand, I love to share how our index finger “points to God”, in that seven specific muscles control the movements of the index finger alone.

In two courses I teach within the Department of Kinesiology and Allied Health, “Anatomy and Physiology for the Physical Educator” and “Structural Kinesiology”, students complete two reflection papers over the duration of the course. Depending on the course, they will select an anatomical structure or physiological function, or a region of the body studied in class, which prompted a sense of awe for the Creator and the intricate, deliberate design of the human body. The objective of the paper is for students to reflect on the following questions:

- a) What aspects of God’s character are reflected through the anatomical design of this region?
- b) How does an understanding of the anatomy or physiology of this region of the body promote a greater sense of appreciation for the truth that we are made fearfully and wonderfully?

- c) What Scriptures come to mind when you consider the anatomy and physiology of this region of the body?

Stewardship of the body: In our department's general education course, Physical Activity and the Christian Life (PACL), and the major-specific course, Nutrition, we study the Scriptures for a Biblical perspective on the concept of stewardship in general and the care of the body in particular. A steward may be defined as "someone entrusted with another's wealth or property and charged with the responsibility of managing it in the owner's best interests (Patterson, 1987). The Bible teaches that the believer's body is owned by God and is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). John 14:15-17 and Romans 8:9 teach that the Holy Spirit lives with believers and is in them. God's ownership makes us stewards of our bodies and the Spirit's residence within us gives greater significance to our roles as stewards (Johnson & Morris, 2012).

God has given us the responsibility to be faithful stewards of our very lives, and thus of our bodies, and He provides the grace to accomplish these tasks. Stewardship of our body should be grounded in knowledge of God and the values of discipline, moderation and wisdom. When we are faithful and wise in the care of our bodies, we will be physically prepared for the work God calls us to do (Johnson & Morris, 2012).

My objective in PACL is for students to understand that "how we treat our bodies is a question of stewardship before it is a question of health, comfort, enjoyment or pleasure". (Thomas, 2011). Our earlier fathers of the faith, the Puritan writers, emphasized that how we care for our body as a whole is a way of honoring and loving God, and that discipline in the physical aspects of our body can foster spiritual disciplines that help us grow in godliness (Thomas, 2011).

Although I often fall short in my stewardship responsibilities, my goal is to teach and model stewardship to the students I encounter in PACL and in our Department majors.

Human movement: God fashioned the human body with 206 bones and over 600 skeletal muscles to produce movement. At the beginning of each of the courses I teach which focus on human movement (Biomechanics, Physical Activity and the Christian Life, and Structural Kinesiology), my goal is to reflect on the truths that God has designed us to move and that it is in Christ that all of our movements take place (Acts 17:28). God uses the physical body to accomplish the work He has given us to do. (Genesis 1:26-27; Ephesians 2:10).

Natural order and laws of the universe: Biomechanics, one of the courses I teach in the Department of Kinesiology and Allied Health, is a sub-discipline of Kinesiology. In this course, we study Newton's three Laws of Motion and the Law of Gravitational Acceleration, which provide the foundation for the study of biomechanics. We also apply trigonometric functions to mathematical problem-solving. One of my objectives is to emphasize to students that the consistent functioning of the laws of nature and the fact that so many processes in the world can be given precise mathematical description are reflections of God's faithful and orderly governance of the universe (Hasker, 1992).

Nurturing compassion for all people: Many students in the Department of Kinesiology and Allied Health are preparing for future careers which involve service to the public – in the fitness industry, with athletic teams, in clinics and hospitals, and in the community. When I first began practicing physical therapy and was providing a public service, one of the greatest challenges early in my career was working closely with people who were very different from me. These differences manifested in culture, language, socio-economic status, education, vocation,



worldviews and lifestyle choices. I realized very quickly that I needed a daily supply of God's unconditional love flowing through me in order to genuinely love each client He brought to me, to avoid judgment, and to serve them with compassion and excellence. As God gave me a deeper love for people from all walks of life, I was blessed to develop rewarding relationships with these clients.

At Cedarville University, I have an opportunity to interact with students, particularly those for whom I am an advisor, who sense a calling to a service profession. My goal is to encourage them and, by God's enabling, be an example to them, as they seek to develop attitudes of compassion and unconditional love for others.

Mentoring future leaders in exercise science, physical and health education and the health professions: Both in the classroom and individually, my goal is to mentor students to promote integration of their faith in their future career fields and growth in character and leadership. Their lives challenge me as well, as I seek to grow in Christian character and humble, servant leadership.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, by God's grace and enabling, I desire to fulfill the mission of Cedarville University to equip students for lifelong leadership and service through an education marked by excellence and grounded in biblical truth. I study the Word of God and seek to obey and apply it in Christian character development, so that I may be a Christ-centered example to those around me. I also seek to apply Biblical investigation and interpretation and theological synthesis as a means for engaging with excellence the disciplines of Kinesiology and Allied Health.

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