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EQUIPPING TEACHERS FOR BIBLICAL INTEGRATION
AT THE KING'S ACADEMY IN FLORENCE,
SOUTH CAROLINA

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Kelly Nathaniel Hayes
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APPROVAL SHEET

EQUIPPING TEACHERS FOR BIBLICAL INTEGRATION
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Kelly Nathaniel Hayes

Read and Approved by:

Danny R. Bowen (Faculty Supervisor)

Kevin Jones

Date _____

I dedicate this project to the students at The King's Academy. As you learn, learn Christ.

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PREFACE

I am thankful to be a part of an educational team at The King’s Academy that is invested in teaching from and toward a Christian worldview. This team understands that biblical integration is a form of discipleship that illuminates the Person of God.

I am grateful to those in my life who have practiced and modeled an integrated view of the world. My friends, pastors, mentors, and teachers who have made costly decisions based on the value of God and who have shaped their lives around the character of God have illustrated the end goal of true biblical integration.

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has provided a wonderful context and excellent support to me as I have developed this project. I am especially indebted to Drs. Joe Crider, Danny Bowen, and Kevin Jones. Dr. Crider offered consistent encouragement that started before I enrolled at Southern. His heart for people to rightly see and respond to God in all things motivates me. There could be no better supervisor than Dr. Bowen. His mix of thoughtful engagement, immense knowledge, gospel-rooted passion, and lightning speed made it a joy to work with him. Dr. Jones is, in many ways, the teacher that I hope to one day be. His call—”theory to practice!” is inspiring.

Finally, I am deeply appreciative of the constant support of Jessica – my wife. She has thought with me. She has asked good questions. She has shared ideas. She has been a consistent, good example. Most significantly, she has consistently made clear that she desires that our lives be built on and toward the realities of God.

Kelly Hayes

Florence, South Carolina

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The overarching goal of The King’s Academy is to create an atmosphere where “hearts and minds are coming fully alive in Christ.” In order to accomplish this goal, each teacher is tasked with engaging subjects and students from and toward a Christian worldview. This task is called biblical integration.¹ James Estep communicates this idea: “Education that glorifies God is God centered, viewing every subject and decision with him ultimately in mind.”² This mindset requires that teachers understand how their subjects illuminate the characteristics, concepts, and evidences of God. Psalm 19 makes clear that creation declares the glory of God. All that is has been created and, therefore, should magnify the Maker. Therefore, teachers at The King’s Academy must actively and consistently work to be integrators of biblical teaching, worldview, and thinking. In the words of Karl G. D. Bailey, “Christian educators, in order to be worthy of their name, must judge—and even redeem and reconstruct—their pedagogy by the criteria of Christian principles and practice.”³ This project aimed to equip instructors to understand and practice that redemption and reconstruction successfully at The King’s Academy.

¹In some literature, *biblical integration* may be called “the integration of faith and learning.” While these terms may be used interchangeably, this project primarily uses the phrase *biblical integration* because that is the terminology employed at The King’s Academy.

²James R. Estep, “Toward a Theologically Informed Approach to Education,” in *A Theology for Christian Education*, by James R. Estep, Michael J. Anthony, and Gregg R. Allison (Nashville: B & H, 2008), 265.

³Karl G. D. Bailey, “Faith-Learning Integration, Critical Thinking Skills, and Student Development in Christian Education,” *Journal of Research on Christian Education* 21 (August 2012): 153.

Context

The King's Academy was founded in 1989, with the goal of providing quality, Christ-centered education to attendees.⁴ The school has grown and developed over the course of its lifespan, but has never wavered in its purpose. Today, from K4 to the 12th grade, it is paramount that “the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the authority of the Bible are applied to all areas of the curriculum.”⁵ This aim influences teaching in the classroom along with sports, the arts, and other extra-curricular activities. The educational experience at The King's Academy is intended to be Christian in every facet.

Quality biblical education is the shared goal of all the staff and faculty. There is a strong sense of mission among those who invest their time teaching and serving at The King's Academy. However, passion does not automatically equate to excellence. Passion must be informed, empowered, and exercised to be successful. Intention must meet effective action. As a result of the following developments, the school is in a particularly strong position to continue taking needed steps in enhancing the Christian education available at The King's Academy by improving biblical integration in the high school.

A New Paradigm for Bible Classes

The 2015-2016 school year marked the beginning of a shift in how the subject of Bible was taught at The King's Academy. For the first time in the school's history, full-time Bible teachers were hired to construct curriculum and teach in the high school. A four-year scope and sequence of Bible courses was planned, and the expectations of students were raised concerning engagement with the Bible. This new way of teaching Bible showed that Christian education remained a priority at the school.

⁴The King's Academy, “History of the King's Academy,” accessed September 25, 2016, <http://tkaflorence.com/index.php/about-tka-menu-toplevel/history-menu-abouttka>.

⁵The King's Academy, “School Profile 2016-2017,” accessed September 25, 2016, http://tkaflorence.com/Documents/PDF/TKA_School_Profile_20162017.pdf.

The high school classes were designed to be both academic and devotional so that the students would be put in position to grow in knowledge and love of God. Students were taught to understand the overall story of the Bible and to recognize their place within God's plan. They were given tools to enhance their own study of the Bible. In addition, they began to engage in sessions focused on ethics and culture, worldview and Christian thought, and ways to directly put their faith into action.

A New Resource for Biblical Integration

The hiring of full-time Bible teachers for the high school provided more than just improved classes for the students. These teachers have been able to serve as content area experts in Bible to the benefit of the staff as a whole. Many high school teachers have turned to the Bible instructors for help in discussions with students related to ethics, skepticism, Bible study skills, personal choices, and more.

With support from the Bible teachers, many other teachers have been able to more confidently engage in discipleship and mentorship with the students. The Bible teachers continue to be able to offer support and assistance to the faculty and staff as they seek to teach and lead according to a biblical worldview in every subject and area.

A New System for Chapel

In February 2016, the weekly chapel service for the middle and high schools was drastically retooled. Rather than simply having a "typical" church service, the chapel was adjusted to include movement between multiple stations rather than remaining in one location for the whole event. Each group would rotate among musical worship, a time of teaching or testimony, and small group discussions.

This new system has been a success. It has allowed for a more complete relationship between students and teachers. Each small group is led by a team of teachers, but the station is not designed as a teaching time. Instead, it is a discussion between more mature siblings (the teachers) and younger siblings (the students) in the faith. Students

and staff have the opportunity to walk and grow side by side. These conversations have encouraged Christian students to see the teachers as more than just academic leaders, but as fellow believers. It has also allowed unbelieving students to engage, question, and observe in a safe and helpful fashion.

A Renewed Incarnational Emphasis

A new Head of School began his tenure at The King's Academy the summer before the 2016-2017 school year. Under his leadership, there has been a renewed focus on spending relationship-building time with the students. Among other suggestions, he has advocated for teachers eating lunch with the students on a regular basis. This suggestion has reinforced the call to live from the reality that the gospel is as relational as it is informational.

The teachers and staff have been encouraged to engage the students in a way that demonstrates genuine care beyond the classroom or course content and beyond structured activities. Teachers are being actively called to teach more than their subjects, including kindness, forgiveness, faithfulness, joy, and much more through daily modeling. While individual teachers live out this goal in differing ways and to different degrees, they have all been engaged with the goal.

Rationale

As the Lead Bible Teacher for the high school, I see a significant opportunity to make a difference beyond my classroom. All teachers must be equipped to effectively point students to God, his glory, and a proper response to Him. Teaching in this way should not lead to distraction or to the detriment of their content area, but should enhance and deepen their role as Christian educators. All teachers do not need to be Bible teachers, but all teachers in Christian schools must be biblical integrators. This task is what makes education Christian by nature.

The recent developments in Bible teaching, chapel, and relational emphasis, put the school in position to capitalize on these steps toward increased biblical integration. Next, teachers were introduced to philosophical and practical tools and given opportunities to develop their skills. They received training in this essential element of their work in order to better accomplish the school's mission.

Teachers were introduced to methods designed to help them accurately and faithfully magnify God in their subjects. C. S. Lewis spoke to this goal: "Every bush (could we but perceive it) is a Burning Bush."⁶ In addition, the fact that students should encounter an incarnational education, which is observed in the attitudes, actions, and words of the teacher, was explored. Biblical integration is both show and tell.

While challenging, there is direct biblical precedent for both informational and incarnational teaching. In Romans 15:18, Paul shared that God worked to bring the lost to obedience by what Paul said and did. His words and his example were together means of teaching and leading.⁷ Similarly, in 1 Peter 5:3, Peter called church leaders to lead by example rather than just through a position of authority.⁸ Biblical education is most effective when it is more than mere words or information.

This multi-dimensional education cannot come about without intention, training, and practice. The King's Academy is committed to biblical integration, and this training tool used to grow in success in this area. The resources for integration were enhanced and the emphasis on integration has become more fully developed. Each teacher is required to practice biblical integration and there is now more sufficient definition, supervision, and support. While there was a lack of understanding and agreement concerning the nature and aim of integration, concrete steps have been taken

⁶Devin Brown, *A Life Observed: A Spiritual Biography of C. S. Lewis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 34.

⁷Barclay Moon Newman and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Romans* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1973), 280.

⁸Robert G. Gromacki, *New Testament Survey* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974), 357.

to resolve this issue. Teachers are no longer ill-equipped to practice biblical integration at a high level.

This is a new chapter in the high school at The King's Academy regarding biblical integration and, therefore, successful Christian education. The faculty is more equipped to succeed in advancing toward a thoughtful and incarnational biblical integration. A cohesive design that contains information, training, examples, and exercises was necessary to move forward. This project provided that framework in a helpful, challenging, and accessible fashion.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip high school teachers for biblical integration at The King's Academy in Florence, South Carolina.

Goals

This project was completed upon the accomplishment of three goals. These goals are listed as follows:

1. The first goal was to assess the current understanding and practice of biblical integration among high school teachers at The King's Academy.⁹
2. The second goal was to develop a curricular resource and training for communicating the purpose and process of biblical integration.
3. The third goal was to increase knowledge by implementing a training for teachers that focused on the practice of biblical integration.

Research Methodology

To succeed, this project had to meet three goals. The first goal was to assess the understanding and practice of biblical integration among high school teachers at The King's Academy. This goal was measured by three means: a questionnaire administered

⁹This goal was accomplished in large part through the Advanced Research project completed under the direction of Michael Wilder as a part of Applied Empirical Research (course 80950—Summer 2016).

to high school teachers returning from the 2015-2016 school year, an interview of the high school principal, and a content analysis of the biblical integration recorded in a randomly selected week of lesson plans from the 2015-2016 school year.¹⁰ This goal was considered successfully met when a census of returning teachers completed the questionnaire, the high school principal was interviewed, and the content analysis was complete.¹¹

The second goal was to develop a curricular resource and training for communicating the key elements of biblical integration to teachers at The King's Academy. This resource covered the theological and worldview foundations of biblical integration, the role of the teacher in biblical integration, and practical steps to succeed in biblical integration. Teachers were given access to vital information on the central philosophical and practical issues related to faithful Christian education. The resource also included an interactive element where teachers were challenged to engage with the content through critical thinking and application. This goal was measured by application and acceptance of the "Alternative Model" of Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) for the Christian Philosophy of Education (CPoE) requirement for teacher certification.¹² This goal was considered successfully met when this resource and

¹⁰See appendix 1 for research instruments. All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.

¹¹This portion of the project was successfully completed under the direction of Michael Wilder during Applied Empirical Research (80950). See appendix 2 to view findings.

¹²Association of Christian Schools International, "Certification, Application, and Christian Philosophy of Education FAQs," 2016, accessed October 15, 2016, <https://www.acsi.org/professional-development/certification/certification-application-and-christian-philosophy-of-education-faqs>:

The alternative model for the Christian Philosophy of Education requirement is a more flexible approach for schools to utilize for their faculty and administration. This unique approach may be especially appropriate for an online school, international school, or any school who wishes to use the expertise of a staff member or guest lecturer to present material in lieu of the video presentations. In order to have an approved Alternative CPoE, a school must design and submit a plan that provides a similar amount of material and covers both the Christian philosophy and biblical integration components. The school may choose to include any of the current video/book/writing requirements as a part of their alternative model or have completely different requirements. The plan and checklist

plan were approved by the ACSI. The curriculum design was deemed suitable and was accepted by the ACSI.

The third goal was to increase the teachers' knowledge for better understanding and practice of biblical integration by implementing a training for teachers that focused on the practice of biblical integration. This goal was measured by re-administering the questionnaire and interview that were completed as part of the assessment phase. The goal was considered successfully met when the scores demonstrated improvement as indicated by an independent *t*-test and when the principal communicated recognition of improvement in the follow-up interview.

Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

The following definitions of key terms will be used in the ministry project:

Biblical integration. Biblical integration is the core task of Christian education. Robert Harris explains that it aims to “illuminate academic content so that the Christian student or faculty member will understand how to process and hold that content”¹³ considering the realities expressed in Scripture. Biblical integration does not entail warping or adjusting facts and ideas to fit within Christian orthodoxy.¹⁴ Rather, theories, ideas, and systems should be weighed and tested thoughtfully according to biblical truth. This kind of examination requires the instructor to interact with scholarship, public conversation, and the nature of students with the goal of revealing truths about God, his world, and mankind's role as his creation.

must be submitted to the ACSI Academic Services department for approval. The school may be required to add missing components, if necessary, before final approval is granted. This model has a fee associated with it for the approval process. The school checklist will be filed with the ACSI Certification department and be good for 5 years.

¹³Robert Harris, *Faithful Mind, Thoughtful Faith: Integrating Faith and Learning* (Tustin, CA: VirtualSalt, 2014), 6-7.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 21.

Christian education. J. L. Seymour introduces Christian education as “the intentional and organized efforts to teach the Christian faith, its methods of reflection and action and lifestyle.”¹⁵ In other words, Christian education is discipleship. Within the context of a Christian school, John Blanchard writes that the goal is that “children are rooted and grounded in the Lord Jesus Christ and his Word. Young hearts are prepared to respond to the challenge of complete dedication of life, talents, and resources to the cause of Christ.”¹⁶

High school. This term refers to the ninth through twelfth grades. The King’s Academy is currently in the process of moving away from using the term “Upper School” to describe these grades. Therefore, in this paper, the two terms may be used interchangeably.

Incarnational teaching. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Church* describes the incarnation of Christ: “The eternal Son of God took flesh from His human mother and that the historical Christ is at once both fully God and fully man.”¹⁷ God entered into humanity and disclosed his identity in a personal and hands-on fashion. Mankind was able to see God in close proximity. Incarnational teachers seek to demonstrate the character of God through actions and attitudes, in addition to words. Just as God showed Himself through the work of Christ, incarnational teachers seek to allow Him to show Himself through the working of the Holy Spirit. Blanchard explains that this is accomplished when teachers “are not only in doctrinal agreement with the sponsoring Christians but also demonstrate a vital and attractive growth in the Christian life.”¹⁸

¹⁵J. L. Seymour, “Christian Education,” in *Dictionary of Christianity in America*, ed. Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1990).

¹⁶John F. Blanchard, Jr., “The Christian School,” in *Baker’s Dictionary of Practical Theology*, ed. Ralph G. Turnbull (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1967), 443.

¹⁷F. L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 830.

¹⁸Blanchard, “The Christian School,” 448.

Three delimitations were placed on this project to ensure integrity and feasibility. First, while The King's Academy is made up of elementary, middle, and high school students, this project was directed only at the high school faculty. There may be transferability toward the other grades, but the educational experience in high school is unique for both the teacher and student. This project was designed to have the highest impact at the high school level. Second, the curricular resource and plan was completed in a way that is acceptable to the ACSI. That accrediting group has certain standards concerning what is and is not acceptable as part of an alternative checklist for completing the CPoE requirement. Since The King's Academy is accredited by ACSI, nothing was included in the curricular resource that is outside of those boundaries. Finally, this program was primarily focused on the role of the classroom teacher rather than on parents, church, or other influencers.

Two limitations also applied to this project. First, due to a high percentage of faculty turnover at The King's Academy, some information gathering tools, such as interviews and questionnaires, could be appropriately applied only to the remaining population. In other words, as teachers and staff left, so did some ability to capture some helpful data. In addition, turnover limited the ability to evaluate the success of the training process to some degree because some instructors present for the assessment stage of the project were not present once the project had been completed. However, as past trends demonstrated, enough of the teachers and staff remained to have healthy volume of response.

Another limitation existed regarding the content analysis conducted during the assessment stage of this project. This was a limitation of incomplete information. Information was gathered as a part of the case study assessing biblical integration at The King's Academy using the approved rubric to grade the content as entered on each lesson plan. However, there was no way to know if the quality of that biblical integration plan corresponded with what was intended. In addition, it was not possible to see if the

biblical integration indicated on each lesson plan was carried out or, if it was, to what level of competency. The lesson plan was a snapshot of intention rather than a picture of actuality and the quality of the snapshot itself did not necessarily reflect practice. This limitation was mitigated by the fact that the training encouraged teachers to emphasize integration of the course as a whole rather than focusing on individual lessons.

Conclusion

As a Christian school, The King's Academy must offer truly Christian education. Instructors must be equipped to teach every subject from a biblical perspective that leads toward a right response to God. Every teacher must understand the role of example and model; calling as Paul did to "follow my example as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Cor 11:1).¹⁹ Learning to live out the role of a biblically integrated teacher requires an investment, but it will always be worthwhile. T. S. Eliot said, "When the Christian faith is not only felt, but thought, it has practical results which may be inconvenient."²⁰ Though inconvenience of adjustment and stretching was felt during the training, it has already begun to give way to the rewards of faithful service to Christ and his kingdom.

¹⁹Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are from the New International Version.

²⁰T. S. Eliot, *Christianity and Culture* (1940; repr., n.p.: Eliot Press, 2013), 6, Kindle.

CHAPTER 2

THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR BIBLICAL INTEGRATION

Education is an essential task of the Christian community, but what kind of education is pleasing to the Lord? Teachers are to build others up by explaining God's gracious initiative in reaching out to mankind, and urging a response of loving obedience.¹ Jesus Himself is the perfect example of an effective teacher.² In this chapter, the case is made that effective teachers follow Christ's example and leadership.

While Jesus was called "master" or "rabbi" by Matthew, Mark, and John, the word *epistates* was used by Luke. *Epistates* means "schoolmaster," which would have been a term more familiar outside of the Jewish community.³ The Great Commission concludes with the Schoolmaster's command to make disciples by "teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matt 28:20). John F. Blanchard expounds on this passage explaining, "The ministry of the Christian school must begin with the saving gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ but it dare not stop there."⁴ How should the Christian educator proceed with and from the gospel? Following the example of Christ, teachers must show God as the answer to life's fundamental worldview questions (Prov 1:7),

¹David L. Turner, "Teach, Teacher," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 757.

²Jan H. Nylund, "Teacher," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry, Logos electronic ed. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2016), n.p.

³Robert Stagg, "Rabbi," in *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, ed. Chad Brand, Charles Draper, and Archie England (Nashville: Holman Bible, 2003), 1360.

⁴John F. Blanchard, Jr., "The Christian School," in *Baker's Dictionary of Practical Theology*, ed. Ralph G. Turnbull (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1967), 443.

highlight the preeminence and power of Christ as He holds all things together (Col 1:15-17), and amplify God’s two messengers: his world and his Word (Ps 19).

The Teacher’s Pastoral Role

Education is an intentional attempt to control, direct, or manage learning to attain a specific outcome.⁵ Teachers spend a great deal of time designing broad curricula and individual lesson plans that aim at desired outcomes. They want students to know how to read, solve, know, and communicate effectively. However, the Christian educator must keep the most important outcome in mind always, which need are teachers most dedicated to meeting?

The need is not rooted in knowledge or skill alone. The deepest and most lasting need for all people is right relationship with Christ. The apostle John said that this relationship with God is the definition of eternal life (John 17:3). Therefore, as George Knight writes, Christian educators, regardless of subject, should strive “to educate people in the light of their greatest need—Jesus.”⁶ Some may object by saying that this portrays Christian teachers as if they were pastors. However, in a very real sense, Christian school teachers are pastors. Knight explains,

The major difference between the roles of pastors and teachers in our day has to do with the current division of labor. In twenty-first-century society, the Christian teacher may be seen as one who pastors in a “school” context, while the pastor is one who teaches in the “larger religious community.” It should and must consciously be realized that their function is essentially the same, even though by today’s definitions they are in charge of different divisions of the Lord’s vineyard.⁷

⁵George R. Knight, *Philosophy & Education: An Introduction in Christian Perspective*, 4th ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2006), 10.

⁶Ibid., 281.

⁷Ibid., 211.

The word “pastor” means “shepherd,” and refers to the activity of shepherding souls.⁸ The duty of the pastor is to build up Christ’s body and counter false teaching.⁹ All Christian educators must be involved in these practices daily. Their flocks may sit at desks rather than in pews, but teachers are shepherds nonetheless.

Since the identity of the teacher is pastoral, the practice of teaching must take on pastoral aims. To deny the Christian leadership of the teacher is to forfeit what makes Christian education Christian. For example, the Christian biology teacher is a Christian teacher before a science teacher. In that vein, the teacher knows that all lesson content is also spiritual. All things are from, through, and for Christ (Rom 11:36). All math equations, literary themes, and historical events declare his glory and must be taught accordingly. The goal of this chapter is to provide a biblical, theological, and philosophical foundation for the role of the educator as pastor through the practice of biblical integration.

The Master Teacher

To live into their role as pastoral educators, Christian school teachers should look to the ultimate practical theologian, integrator, and educator—the Messiah. Christ is the ultimate teacher and He identified Himself as the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6). Each of these elements are essential parts of education. Students seek the way—they want to know what is best, and right, and good. They seek truth—they want to know what is actual and real. They also desire life—each wants to find meaning, purpose, and value. How can true education exist without being built from and toward Christ-centered theology? It cannot. People can search, but the only way to answer is to turn to the Lord. Paul explains that God has orchestrated all of life “so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us” (Acts 17:27).

⁸F. L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1237.

⁹Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, “Pastor,” in *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 1618.

The integrating teacher points to the Way, Truth, and Life in every way possible. This kind of instructor is devoted to teaching all things in a way that shows the characteristics and character of God. The habit for too long has been to teach truth apart from the Truth, which has led to a rationalism that, for instance, is more committed to the idea that man cannot rise from the dead than to the idea that God can do anything He pleases. The foundational presupposition of rationalism cannot do what the presupposition of the Christian God can: offer a credible and miraculous Christ.¹⁰

Therefore, the task of biblical integration, or building from and toward God in all things, is the necessary task of the Christian educator. “The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word” (Heb 1:3). Learners must learn Christ who sustains all. Also, they must learn Him in full connection to and context of his world. It follows then that instructors of any things must teach the One who sustains all things in everything. Biblical integration is the task the teacher takes up to help the student here. This integration advances learning beyond Sunday school or the simple accumulation of knowledge.

Jesus declared that his role on earth was as a teacher when He said, “The reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth” (John 18:37). Christian educators carry this same goal—testifying to the Truth by teaching truths. Teachers should examine the Master Teacher and learn from his message, means, and methods. The Bible describes three ways in which the Son of Man came: “the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10: 45); “the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19: 10); and “the Son of Man has come eating and drinking” (Luke 7: 34).¹¹ The Servant offered Good News through the means

¹⁰Francis Schaeffer, *The Francis A. Schaeffer Trilogy: Three Essential Books in One Volume* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1990), 53.

¹¹Tim Chester, *A Meal with Jesus: Discovering Grace, Community, and Mission around the Table* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 12.

of relationships. In Him, rational, behavioral, and relational truths were united with eternal effect.

Jesus' three roles of Way, Truth, and Life are often communicated in another way. He led the way as King, told the truth as Prophet, and shepherded people toward life as Priest.¹² He was no mere theological technician who had settled for communicating concepts of truth. He was a passionate and caring teacher—a good teacher (Mark 10:17). He was invested in a ministry of synergism that united rational, behavioral, and relational elements.¹³ He was an axiological, epistemological, and metaphysical instructor. The teacher who brings these elements together follows the example of Christ as teacher. As follower of Christ, the Christian educator must serve as prophet, priest, and king to their classes, teaching others to think, value, and do what pleases the Father. William Yount explains, “It should be no surprise, then, that the Master Teacher reflected the Triad in His own teaching ministry. God created us in His Image—thinker, feeler, doer—and Jesus reflected that triadic perspective in His life and work as Prophet, Priest, and King.”¹⁴

Theologian John Frame is known for a similar tri-perspectival approach to theology.¹⁵ He recommends looking at knowledge from normative, situational, and existential perspectives. These perspectives can align with epistemology, metaphysics, and axiology. Both Yount and Frame provide corresponding frameworks that include three significant questions of philosophy—what is real? what is truth? what is valuable?¹⁶

¹²Yount offers a short but helpful summary of the teacher's role as prophet, priest, and king. William Yount, “The Teacher as Minister,” in *Called to Teach: An Introduction to the Ministry of Teaching* (Nashville: B & H, 1999), 223-31.

¹³*Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁴William Yount, *Created to Learn: A Christian Teacher's Introduction to Educational Psychology*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: B & H, 2010), locs. 9221-23, Kindle.

¹⁵John Frame, “A Primer on Perspectivalism,” rev. 2008, June 6, 2012, accessed December 31, 2016, <http://frame-poythress.org/a-primer-on-perspectivalism-revised-2008/>.

¹⁶Yount, *Created to Learn*, locs. 1078-83.

Christ is real. Christ is truth. Christ is ultimately valuable. The following section provides a scriptural basis for biblical integration by expounding on how teachers can embrace their roles as prophets, priests, and kings. In representing Jesus to students in these ways, teachers embrace their pastoral role and faithfully follow Christ.

The Teacher's Prophetic Role

A prophet is one who speaks for God. God can speak to a prophet in any way He deems suitable, but regardless of the means through which God speaks, He wants “his prophets to receive his message and the people to remember what he [has] said.”¹⁷ Prophets are the Lord’s mouthpiece. Since Christians have God’s message in the Bible, Christian teachers are called to share those truths. God has spoken. No special gift beyond the Bible and the Holy Spirit is required for speaking truth confidently. As Easton explains, the Old Testament even tells of “schools of prophets” where students could choose to go and learn “to preach pure morality and the heart-felt worship of Jehovah, and to act along and co-ordinately with the priesthood and monarchy in guiding the state aright and checking all attempts at illegality and tyranny.”¹⁸ The role of prophet was complementary to kings and priests, but it was one that a believer could choose to take up. The New Testament explains that a prophet has the responsibility to edify and encourage believers.¹⁹ It could be accurately said that a prophet is one who shares the Way, Truth, and Life. This sharing is a necessary role of all Christian educators.

One of the great tools that one must employ in the pastoral role of prophet, that all Christian teachers hold, is a right worldview. Jeff Myers and David A. Noebel state

¹⁷Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., “Prophet, Prophetess, Prophecy,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 644-45.

¹⁸M. G. Easton, *Easton's Bible Dictionary*, Logos electronic ed. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1893), n.p.

¹⁹Aaron C. Fenlason, “Prophets,” in *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, Lexham Bible Reference Series, ed. Douglas Mangum, Logos electronic ed. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2014), n.p.

that a worldview is “a pattern of ideas, beliefs, convictions, and habits that help us make sense of God, the world, and our relationship to God and the world.”²⁰ A worldview built upon a proper orientation toward and understanding of God as the foundation and goal of reality will affect the practice of teaching. It allows the prophet to speak for God through science, English, physical education, and all other course content. Worldview is the reason for specifically Christian schools.

Christian schools are established, Knight explain, because Christians hold to “a different set of philosophic foundations and educational boundaries from those of the larger culture.”²¹ A different set of foundations necessitates different educational constructs. Worldview commitments affect teaching because they set the foundation and aim of knowledge and learning. In other words, the school that embraces the Christian worldview allows teachers to function as prophets.

From Prime Reality to Life-Orienting Commitments

The concept of worldview is intimately related to the goal of developing a redemptive theology of teaching. A worldview is a commitment²² and the Christian worldview is a commitment to seeing reality as the God of the Bible presents it. James Sire offers eight basic questions that provide the foundation of a Christian worldview:

1. What is prime reality—the really real?
2. What is the nature of external reality, that is, the world around us?
3. What is a human being?
4. What happens to a person at death?
5. Why is it possible to know anything at all?
6. How do we know what is right and wrong?
7. What is the meaning of human history?

²⁰Jeff Myers and David A. Noebel, *Understanding the Times* (Manitou Springs, CO: Summit Ministries, 2015), 6.

²¹Knight, *Philosophy & Education*, 35.

²²James Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog* (Westmont, IL: IVP, 2009), 20.

8. What personal, life-orienting core commitments are consistent with this worldview?²³

According to Sire, a worldview is a “spiritual orientation more than it is a matter of the mind alone.”²⁴ Before focusing on seeing the world correctly, one must open his eyes to the foundational reality of the Person of God. Right orientation toward God is the prerequisite for gaining understanding. Psalm 111:10 says, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise.” God’s Word is clear that wisdom starts and ends with Him. One who fears Him is on the path of wisdom. One who does not cannot grasp reality. Proverbs 9:10 clarifies, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” Understanding is directly equated to fearing and revering God. Roger White clarifies the definition of the “fear of the Lord”:

The book of Proverbs affirms the fear of the Lord as the beginning of knowledge and wisdom. Here the fear of the Lord means a healthy reverence for God, not servile terror. It moves individuals from being exclusively self-referenced in their understanding to increasingly seeing all things and especially one’s life journey oriented in and around God. . . . This is a whole-hearted, whole-being response. Having such a deferential posture toward God and an accompanying intellectual modesty are core elements in the pilgrimage of life and learning.²⁵

Proverbs 1:7 shares this idea in a particularly helpful way: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.” The contrast here between knowledge and foolishness provides a good starting point for examining God as the foundation of everything. This passage provides a framework for examining the theme of wisdom and knowledge as found throughout Scripture. The following is a biblical survey launched from and toward the content of Proverbs 1:7. It seeks to engage with James Sire’s eight worldview questions from a broadly biblical

²³Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 22-23.

²⁴Ibid., 20.

²⁵Roger White, “Orienting to Truth North,” in *Mapping Out Curriculum in Your Church: Cartography for Christian Pilgrims*, ed. James Estep, Roger White, and Karen Estep (Nashville: B & H, 2012), locs. 560-66, Kindle.

perspective with the foundational theme of Proverbs 1:7—the fear of the Lord is beginning of knowledge.

Proverbs 1:7 and Sire’s Worldview Questions

The first seven verses in the book of Proverbs should naturally catch the eye of the teacher. The opening lines declare the intent—learning wisdom that leads to success in life.²⁶ While many may claim to hold the keys to wisdom, the Proverbs are not untested ideas from an unreliable source. This wisdom is connected to Solomon. The key concepts of Israel’s wisest king (1 Kgs 3:12) are available to the reader, whether immature or wise, to come and grow. The only group excluded from learning is the fool who will not listen.²⁷

The author claims that the understanding and application of Proverbs’ content will lead to flourishing. This is a guidebook that leads to wisdom, discipline, success, righteousness, justice, equity, knowledge, and discernment. This biblical content is applied to all of life. Duane Garrett explains, “By this book, one can learn the principles that determine success or failure in the major arenas of human activity, including business, personal relationships, family life, and community life.”²⁸ Christian educators daily invest in preparing students to be successful in these areas and would be wise to listen. As Solomon says, only a fool would reject what Scripture offers here.

God Is the Foundation

Proverbs 1:7 contains the final line of Solomon’s introductory statements, but shares the starting point for knowledge—fear of the Lord. If one does not treat God rightly,

²⁶Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, The New American Commentary, vol. 14 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 67.

²⁷Tremper Longman III, *Proverbs*, in vol. 5 of *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*, ed. John H. Walton (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 471.

²⁸Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, 67.

it does not matter how well he handles any other area of life. Without a right view of God, there is no opportunity for true flourishing in any area. God is the blessing that functions as the foundation of all other blessings.²⁹ To answer Sire's first question, He is the prime reality.

This verse offers a logical argument for how to live life well. Essentially, wisdom leads to successful living and successful living is rightly revering the Lord.³⁰ For example, success in business is handling work in ways that honor God. Success in relationships is loving God by loving others. Godliness is a key in understanding wisdom—every success is built upon success in relationship with God. For what benefit is there in gaining the world but losing one's soul? (Mark 8:36).

Teachers who give the students everything other than Christ are, in sum, giving them nothing. In Colossians 1:28, Paul said of Christ, "He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ." How does one warn and teach with all wisdom? This is only accomplished by proclaiming Christ. How does one present others as mature in Christ? This is only done by proclaiming Him. God is the starting point of wisdom and knowledge. Educators must start at the beginning by acknowledging God as the foundation and inviting students to choose to do the same.

To emphasize God as the foundation of all knowledge is not to say that all who do not honor God know nothing. It is to say that they do not see the "big picture."³¹ Tremper Longman uses the example of sailing. One may know how to sail, but not know

²⁹Richard J. Clifford, *Proverbs: A Commentary*, The Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 34.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Tremper Longman III, *Proverbs*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 101.

the One who made the winds and seas. If he did, he might respond differently.³² Note how the disciples responded when they understood Jesus' identity as Lord of wind and wave. They truly began to fear Him as God. Being terrified, they asked one another, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!" (Matt 8:27). Reverence was a needed part of their discipleship process. They grasped Christ as prime reality and saw that the world He had made was an arena for his glory. They began to see Him as the power beneath the water and atmosphere. They had previously mastered sailing, but they were ignorant as to Christ being the power behind the mighty winds that moved their fishing vessels.

God Is the Source

Not only is God the foundation of wisdom, He is also the source of wise living. Proverbs 1:1-7 is clear that wisdom puts the individual in a position to succeed in life and godliness.³³ However, this wisdom is only present and active through the power of God. Second Peter 1:2-3 says that grace and peace are abundantly available through the knowledge of God and that it is his power that gives everything needed for a godly life. There is a clear connection here between knowledge and wise living. There is no wisdom from God without knowing Him. Bruce Waltke writes, "Wisdom is inseparable from knowledge."³⁴ Godly life is only possible "through knowledge of Him who called us by his own glory and goodness" (2 Pet 1:3). In other words, the beginning of knowledge is knowledge of God.

True knowledge of God will shape the way a person thinks and lives. When grasped, fear of the Lord is more than mental assent. Knowledge becomes wisdom when

³²Longman, *Proverbs*, 101.

³³Clifford, *Proverbs*, 36.

³⁴Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 77.

it is enacted. Proverbs speaks of folly as the opposite of wisdom. Folly is more than just ignorance, but ungodly action.³⁵ Waltke explains, “A person could memorize the book of Proverbs and still lack wisdom if it did not affect his heart, which informs behavior.”³⁶ Fear of God is important—it is knowledge that alters behavior. One who knows the power of a speeding car does not walk into the street without looking first. There is respect for the weight of a moving vehicle. Similarly, one who knows the power of the mighty God does not live without considering the weight of his will and ways. Tremper Longman III expounds,

Only fools would not be afraid of a being who has the power of life and death over them. Such persons do not understand their place in the cosmos and thus do not know how to act in the world. All other wisdom builds on this point, and there is no wisdom without it.³⁷

In acknowledging that humans must know their place, Longman speaks to Sire’s third question—“What is a human being?”³⁸ Wisdom tells the created to live well in light of the Creator. In Matthew 10:28, Jesus stated this idea by saying, “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” Fearing the Lord must be informed by the recognition of his power to destroy, but there is another side to revering Him. Believers should be in awe of Him because He is also “able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us” (Eph 3:20). Wisdom recognizes what He can do for and in people as well. A person created in God’s image (Gen 1:27) can be conformed to it as well (Rom 8:29).

³⁵Clifford, *Proverbs*, 35.

³⁶Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs*, 77.

³⁷Longman, *Proverbs*, 104.

³⁸Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 22.

God is an unlimited source for limited man, so it is appropriate to ask with Sire, “What happens to a person at death?”³⁹ Mark 10 includes the story of a man who had lived a morally exemplary life by society’s standards. However, apart from God, there was no eternal life for him (Mark 10:27). He was unwise because he was unwilling to give up his earthly wealth to gain eternal riches (Mark 10:22). The beginning of knowledge is to understand that there is no life or godliness without God on this earth or beyond it. In Philippians 2:13, Paul explained, “It is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.” Sanctification and salvation are both accomplished by his strength. He is the power source for wise living and mankind is eternally reliant on Him for that power.

God Is the Substance

Sire’s fifth question is, “Why is it possible to know anything at all?”⁴⁰ Simply put, humans can know God because He has made Himself known (Rom 10:20). Hebrews 1:1-2 says, “In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe.” He is a God who desires to know people and to be known by them (Gal 4:9).

God’s relational identity is innately connected to the goal of the Christian educator. Teachers aim to practice their pastoral role by pointing students to the God who wants to be known. It is only in God, who is the source of power, that students can find success in life and godliness. Teachers want students to thrive through knowing God and living into God’s good, perfect, and pleasing will (Rom 12:2). Jesus said that his people are like branches and He is like the vine (John 15:5). Nothing is possible apart from Him,

³⁹Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 22.

⁴⁰Ibid.

which includes all knowledge. Knowing Him is a prerequisite to knowing anything else fully. Christian teachers must recognize this in all their teaching.

Sire's sixth question seeks to identify moral foundations—how does one know what is right and wrong? This question is an extension of his fifth question and the answer is related as well. Knowing what is right is tied up in knowing the God who is right. Jesus explained morality in these terms by summing up the Law in two commands: love God with everything and love others as self (Matt 22:36-40). Ethics are defined in terms of relationship. Those who love God do right.

Roland E. Murphy states that the intention of the book of Proverbs is clearly communicated: "To pass on traditional wisdom with a strong religious orientation. . . . The message can be summarized: Wisdom brings life."⁴¹ However, his assessment of the book's intention, while true, may not be deep enough. Wisdom does bring life, but that life is in God alone. Wisdom is only accessible through Him. Christ holds the words of life, so where else can one turn? (John 6:68). Or again, what does a man gain if he owns the world but loses his soul? (Mark 8:36).

Paul calls believers to set their minds on things above because Christ is life (Col 3:1, 4). There is no life apart from Him. He is the foundation and He is the source, but He is also the substance. Perhaps rather than saying only wisdom brings life, one might say that wisdom is only in God who is life. Moral choices are a function of a relationship with God, are possible because of God, and aim toward Him and his glory.

God Is the Goal

God is more than a means to an end—He is the end. He is the aim and reward of believers. Those who fear and love Him see Him as their ultimate desire. There can be no perfection or satisfaction without Him. Those who would be satisfied in eternal paradise

⁴¹Roland E. Murphy, *Wisdom Literature: Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Canticles, Ecclesiastes, and Esther*, The Forms of Old Testament Literature 13 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 53.

apart from his presence have not been converted by the gospel.⁴² This idea is clearly visible in Proverbs 1:7 in that Yahweh is the name of God used here. The passage is clear in expressing relationship. Longman writes, “There is no knowledge apart from a proper attitude and relationship to Yahweh.”⁴³

To use the Tetragrammaton is to use the Lord’s covenant name,⁴⁴ which demonstrates the strong relational connection to the God of the Torah. The God of wisdom in the Proverbs is the covenant God of the Exodus as well.

The call to fear Yahweh is connected to his work and care for his people. Sire asks, “What is the meaning of human history?”⁴⁵ in question 7. The answer is relationship with God. Jesus said in John 17:3 that knowing Him is eternal life. Wisdom is relational and wisdom is relationship. The Proverbs are designed to help people live rightly with and before their Lord. Relationship with God is the eternal role that humans were made for and wisdom guides what that relationship should look like.

Solomon offers a contrast in Proverbs 1:7. He shows that the opposite of fearing God is despising wisdom and discipline, which is demonstrative of a relationship problem. Those who fear God recognize how much they do not know compared to Him. To admit that the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of man is not admission of defeat or confession of envy. It should be content for Christian worship—the wise God leads his people. He is on their side (1 Cor 1:25).

⁴²John Piper, *God Is the Gospel: Meditations on God’s Love as the Gift of Himself* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005), 47.

⁴³Longman, *Proverbs*, 100.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 101.

⁴⁵Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 23.

God Is the Example

The final question Sire asks is, “What personal, life-orienting core commitments are consistent with this worldview?”⁴⁶ Solomon was known as Israel’s wisest king and his role in sharing Proverbs was as a teacher.⁴⁷ He chose to spend a major portion of his efforts educating others to fear God—to embrace wisdom. In conjunction, God is the epitome of wisdom and He elected to teach people to wisely fear Him. Therefore, Christian teachers should have the core commitment of enacting wisdom by teaching others to be wise as well. In Proverbs, Solomon taught on purity, ethics, money, work ethic, relationships, and much more, but he did not stray from his theme of wisdom.

Wise teachers work to make wise students. In this sense, biblical integration is wisdom enacted. Can a teacher really teach anything without the beginning of knowledge? No. Teaching must not be informational without being relational as well. If a teacher is to help students live wisely, he must also teach wisely.

Jesus, the greatest teacher, said that the wise listen to his words and put them into practice (Matt 7:24). He said that these people build their homes on the rock. Wise teachers must build on the rock and must encourage students to do the same. The fear of the Lord should be an essential element of every course, unit, and lesson.

Christian education exists to help students listen to the Lord and practice what He has said. It is an investment in helping students be hearers and doers of the Word (Jas 1:22). This type of teaching is a great and pastoral work of wisdom. Understanding that leads to action is what biblical integration is all about and it is an urgent task—time must not be wasted. Psalm 90:12 can teach teachers to make the most of each opportunity by saying, “Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.” The beginning and heart of wisdom are alike in that God takes the first place in both.

⁴⁶Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 23.

⁴⁷James E. Smith, *The Wisdom Literature and Psalms*, Old Testament Survey Series (Joplin, MO: College Press Pub. Co., 1996), Pr.

The Teacher's Priestly Role

The prophetic role of the teacher focuses on truth. It is a rationally and epistemologically driven office. The role of priest is connected, but different. The priest marries the magnificent and metaphysical with the apparent and the relational. Priests represent the mighty God to lowly people and lowly people to the mighty God.⁴⁸ Knight explains that this priestly role is especially important because

the Christian view holds, in opposition to most social theorists, that humanity is not able to solve its own problems, no matter how it manipulates its educational and social environment. The Bible holds that God will intervene in human history a second time to save humanity from itself. That insight, along with a more rounded view of social problems and the condition of human nature, must be taken into consideration in both evaluating educational theories and in seeking to develop a Christian perspective.⁴⁹

As priests, teachers bring worldview truths to bear on real life issues. The teacher can be an effective prophet by applying the true Christian perspective in a priestly fashion. Educators must not investigate or communicate only either the transcendent or the immanent. They are involved in both because their role is priestly. Wise and priestly rhetoric has enhanced the power and resonance of worldview teaching throughout history for many great teachers, including Old Testament prophets.⁵⁰ In the New Testament, Paul continues this priestly tradition by pointing believers to the great High Priest. John Barry suggests that, in Colossians, Paul helps the church grasp that

God has done what the law, and 'Wisdom,' could not do: sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, to achieve reconciliation, he dealt with sin on the cross, so that the life which the law had sought to give, the true life of God's people, might be brought to expression in those who, through faith and baptism, belong to Jesus Christ.⁵¹

⁴⁸John T. Swann, "Priest," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, n.p.

⁴⁹Knight, *Philosophy & Education*, 142.

⁵⁰Billy K. Smith and Franklin S. Page, *Amos, Obadiah, Jonah*, The New American Commentary, vol. 19B (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 30-31.

⁵¹N. T. Wright, *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians and to Philemon*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 39-40.

Colossians 1:15-17

Colossians 1:15-20 is a beautiful poem and a powerful theological decree. Engaging heart and mind, Paul wrote to this young church from prison to tell them “to make Christ the center.”⁵² Jesus is the Firstborn and Maker, the Connector and Sustainer. He is Lord, whether people choose to honor Him appropriately or not.

All things in, by, and for Him (Col 1:16). Jesus is the designer and the maker of all things. He is the architect of the visible and invisible. He is the means and end of all things. Colossians 1:16 clearly demonstrates the perfect wisdom of Christ. In fact, Paul directly and purposefully echoes and clarifies the wisdom literature of Proverbs 3:19-20, which says, “By wisdom the Lord laid the earth’s foundations, by understanding he set the heavens in place; by his knowledge the watery depths were divided, and the clouds let drop the dew.” The syntax of Colossians 1:16 is parallel to that of Proverbs 3:19-20 and, as C. John Collins writes, matches the “divine intellectual attributes of wisdom, understanding, and discernment” to Christ.⁵³ He is the wisdom that makes the universe make sense. Further, his wisdom holds all things together. Teresa Okure explains,

He is the ground of being of all creatures in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whatever their rank, file or status. All things were created not only in him, but for him. The entire creation belongs to him. . . . Creation originates from God and is executed through and for the Son. He is or exists before this creation without exception, and thus ranks before it, as its irreplaceable ground of being or head, understood as source.⁵⁴

Beyond being the source, Jesus is the end. According to Richard Melick, the literal meaning of “for Him” is “unto Him,” which communicates, “Jesus is the goal of

⁵²John D. Barry, *Colossians: Being Like Jesus*, Not Your Average Bible Study (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2014), 21.

⁵³C. John Collins, “Colossians 1, 17 ‘Hold Together’: A Co-Opted Term,” *Biblica* 95, no. 1 (2014): 84.

⁵⁴Teresa Okure, “‘In Him All Things Hold Together’: A Missiological Reading of Colossians 1:15-20,” *International Review of Mission* 91, no. 360 (January 2002): 67.

all creation. Everything exists to display his glory, and ultimately he will be glorified in his creation.”⁵⁵ All things that are exist because of Him.

He is before all things and all things hold together in Him (Col 1:17). Paul continues by turning the focus to Christ’s preexistence and sustaining power.⁵⁶ Yes, He is the beginning and end, but He is more than that. He is primary and wholly independent of creation. Melick clarifies, “Since for the ancients priority in time often meant priority of person, this argument not only stresses Jesus’ role in creating but also gives him a prominent position with respect to creation.”⁵⁷ Paul’s means of stressing Christ’s prominence is a return to the Proverbs. The apostle deepened the words of anthropomorphized Wisdom by connecting them to Christ Himself in Proverbs 8:23-25:

I was formed long ages ago, at the very beginning, when the world came to be. When there were no watery depths, I was given birth, when there were no springs overflowing with water; before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given birth.

Christ is the wisdom that is before all things.⁵⁸ Before the mountainous foundations of the earth, there was Jesus. Before the life-giving waters of the world, there was Jesus. But He is not done with the universe. While He was first, He is not finished.

More than just the catalyst for creation, Christ is the engine that keeps it running. It is his power that keeps all things existing and ordered. He has not left or forgotten the work of his hands. He works to sustain and maintain the universe daily.⁵⁹

⁵⁵Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, The New American Commentary, vol. 32 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1991), 218.

⁵⁶Karl Braune, *Colossians: A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, ed. John Peter Lange, trans. Karl Braune (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 22.

⁵⁷Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, 220.

⁵⁸Collins, “Colossians 1, 17,” 84.

⁵⁹Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, 220.

The realities of his identity and activity inform and invite the educator to point to his power and presence through all things. Richard Mouw elaborates,

Jesus Christ is holding all things together. His integrative mission is a reality even where his authority is not acknowledged. God's intentions for the original creation have not been abandoned. Nor have those intentions been frustrated by the fragmentary features of contemporary life. We can proceed in the confidence that "he shines in all that's fair," even when we do not know exactly how to account for the glimpses of light that we encounter in the darkness.⁶⁰

Colossians 1:15-17 on Cosmology, Metaphysics, and Relationship

Paul's message to the Colossians came at a crucial time because, as Max Anders says, he was likely battling "a clever company of false teachers who sought to replace the Colossians' enthusiastic devotion to Christ with only a mild approval of him."⁶¹ This challenge is powerful and persuasive. It was as if they were saying, "Do not deny Christ or forget him, but do not make Him too prominent in your thinking either." They taught that Jesus could be powerful, but not preeminent.⁶² First-century Colossian Christians were experiencing a challenge to their newly found Christian worldview. According to Douglas Moo, they were "perhaps being tempted to find coherence by pursuing other religious options in their context. In response, Paul wants them to understand that things make sense only when Christ is kept at the center."⁶³

Teachers today face the same kinds of worldview struggles. There are myriad theories for where things came from and what they are for. For millennia, the central nature of God in role and identity has been indispensable for faithful biblical integrators. He is to be loved completely, discussed constantly, and shared copiously (Deut 6:4-9).

⁶⁰Richard J. Mouw, "'In Him All Things Hold Together': Why God Cares about Ancient Chinese Vases," *Crux* 49, no. 3 (September 2013): 9-10.

⁶¹Max Anders, *Galatians-Colossians*, Holman New Testament Commentary, vol. 8 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 282.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 282-83.

⁶³Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 126.

Teachers do not bring the Lord to the center because He has been there all along, but are responsible to notice, affirm, and highlight his presence there. This is their priestly role.

Paul taught this way by singing Colossians 1:15-17:

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

This song likely predates Paul's letter, but was chosen by the apostle to be included because it accurately communicates Christ's relationship to cosmology and metaphysics. Colossians 1:15-17 presents unique material that is central to the Christian's understanding of the universe. Some elements within the refrain are wholly New Testament ideas. In fact, the Old Testament does not speak to God's invisibility or use the term "hold together" concerning the role of God.⁶⁴ However, Paul (Rom 1:20; 1 Tim 1:17), along with John (John 1:18, 4:12) and the author of Hebrews (Heb 11:27), highlights these important cosmological and metaphysical realities.

Cosmology is the "study of the universe as an ordered whole."⁶⁵ Christianity's cosmology is Christ. Per Jerry Sumney's commentary, Jesus is "the highest being in the cosmos not only because he lived before anything came into being but also because all came into existence through him and continues to exist through his power."⁶⁶ This song in Colossians 1 echoes Paul's consistent message that Christ is Creator and Sustainer of all things (Acts 17:24-29; Rom 11:36). This same song should reverberate in the minds and mouths of teachers today. It is the song that students are learning to sing. Since Christ is the cosmological foundation, to teach about anything without regard to Christ is like

⁶⁴Collins, "Colossians 1, 17," 86.

⁶⁵Alan Cairns, *Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Greenville, SC: Ambassador Emerald International, 2002), s.v. "cosmology."

⁶⁶Jerry L. Sumney, *Colossians: A Commentary*, The New Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 16.

teaching about human life without reference to conception or birth, or the sustaining actions of the heart or lungs.

Working in conjunction with Christ as cosmological foundation is the reality that He is also the solution to life's metaphysical questions. Cairns writes that metaphysics is "the branch of philosophy that seeks to discover or establish, by means of reason, a general theory of the universe and man's place in it."⁶⁷ Metaphysics deals with reasons for how the universe fits together and how mankind fits within it. These types of questions are woven throughout every subject taught in secondary school.

When Paul says that Christ is the "image" of God, he was bringing to mind "likenesses placed on coins, portraits, and for statues."⁶⁸ Jesus showed the world exactly who God is. He perfectly represented God to the people. In other words, He executed his priestly role perfectly. However, He also demonstrated that He is Lord over all—"Not only is Jesus the perfect picture of God, but he also holds the highest rank in the universe."⁶⁹ Calling Him the "firstborn" is meant to show his rank as most honored, most important, and most prioritized. He is the key figure over all creation.

In Colossians 1:15-17, the identity of Jesus answers the metaphysical questions of the whole universe. He is over all. Everything was created and is sustained through Him. All things are for Him. The whole universe holds together in Him.

The false teaching Paul addressed in Colossae may have been syncretism, mysticism, Gnosticism, Judaism, or angelic worship.⁷⁰ There are many possibilities, but all are attempts at answering key metaphysical questions. Sumney explains that along with reiterating the gospel, Paul presented this song about Christ to the Colossian church

⁶⁷Cairns, *Dictionary of Theological Terms*, s.v. "metaphysics."

⁶⁸Anders, *Galatians-Colossians*, 282-83.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Sumney, *Colossians*, 10-11.

to “convince them that the other teaching offers them no spiritual benefit that they do not already possess in Christ.”⁷¹

Knight writes that metaphysics “essentially represents the speculative and synthesizing activities of philosophy, and it provides the theoretical framework that allows scientists and other scholars to create worldviews and develop hypotheses that can be tested according to their basic assumptions.”⁷² Everyone, whether they recognize it or not, has a framework of understanding through which they interpret the world. In this passage, Paul made it clear that Christ Himself is the ultimate framework. Douglas Moo sums up the key idea: “What holds the universe together is not an idea or a virtue, but a person: the resurrected Christ. Without him, electrons would not continue to circle nuclei, gravity would cease to work, the planets would not stay in their orbits.”⁷³

Christian educators must never forget that the meaning of life is the Author of Life. Moo writes, “He is the instrument, goal, and sustaining power of the universe.”⁷⁴ This little hymn is one of the most significant passages describing the Person of Christ.⁷⁵ It shows not only who the Lord is, but who all of humanity is in relationship to Him.

He sustains, maintains, orders, and owns. Therefore, no person has existence or identity apart from Christ. All people were made to serve Him and all are his dependents.⁷⁶ The Greek ἐν αὐτῷ (in Him) is a locative descriptor. Constantine Campbell states, “All

⁷¹Sumney, *Colossians*, 12

⁷²Knight, *Philosophy & Education*, 16-17.

⁷³Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 125-26.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 63.

⁷⁵Wright, *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 64.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 73.

things hold together in the realm or domain of Christ.”⁷⁷ Humanity and all that humans see and know exists only in Christ. Sumney explains that, clearly, the fact that “the whole cosmos and all the beings in it are continually dependent on him for their very existence”⁷⁸ should have an impact on the content and purpose of education. This is especially true since Jesus’ work is not only a past event, but a current reality. Yes, God has made, but He also currently sustains. Moo writes, “The universe owes its continuing coherence to Christ.”⁷⁹

In Colossians 1:20, Paul speaks about Christ, the ultimate metaphysical answer, seeking reconciliation with all people and things. Since the answer to life’s metaphysical questions is a Person, relationship with that Person is essential. Therefore, the priestly role of the teacher flows directly from the prophetic. It is not enough to share truth with students without leading them to a right response. Paul called the Colossian church to make Christ the center⁸⁰ and he was pleading with them to elevate Jesus in their lives to the place He already occupies the universe at large.

The integrating teacher is a redemptive and reconciling teacher. This kind of teacher allows all course content to herald the ambassador’s call—come back to God (2 Cor 5:20). The goal of the priestly teacher is to represent God to the students through every piece of information, every question, and every discovery. All things are held together in Him. He is before all things. He is meant to be first and foremost. The teacher who embraces the role of priest makes academic curriculum an instrument through which to play the song Paul sang to the Colossians.

⁷⁷Constantine R. Campbell, *Colossians and Philemon: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013), 13.

⁷⁸Sumney, *Colossians*, 70.

⁷⁹Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 125.

⁸⁰Barry, *Colossians*, 21.

The Teacher's Kingly Role

John T. Swann shares that in the Old Testament, “The priesthood and monarchy were inexorably connected. It was the king’s duty to enforce and uphold the covenantal obligations, and the priesthood’s instruction was vital to that duty.”⁸¹ The same is true concerning the roles of Christian teachers in the classroom today. The priestly teacher pictures and points to Christ and his glory. The kingly teacher calls students to value and follow that glorious Christ. The teacher must be a good leader—a king who wields power and leadership for the benefit of the class’s citizens.

Two fields of educational philosophy undergird the kingly teacher’s role—epistemology and axiology. Norman Geisler introduces epistemology as “the discipline that deals with theory of knowledge.”⁸² Epistemology is concerned with how people can know things—what is true and what is truth?

Empiricism is a framework which holds that knowledge can be gained through the senses.⁸³ Empiricism is related to science in that it focuses on what can be seen, heard, smelled, tasted, and felt. Theologians refer to this kind of knowledge as general revelation. It is widely available to all who will pay attention. Empiricism is a major intellectual force today and has been for millennia. George Knight explains,

Empirical knowledge is built into the very nature of human experience. Individuals may walk out of doors on a spring day and see the beauty of the landscape, hear the song of a bird, feel the warm rays of the sun, and smell the fragrance of the blossoms. They “know” that it is spring because of the messages received through their senses. This knowledge is composed of ideas formed in accordance with observed data. Sensory knowing among humans is immediate and universal, and in many ways it forms the basis for much of our knowledge.⁸⁴

⁸¹Swann, “Priest.”

⁸²Norman L. Geisler, “Epistemology,” in *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 215.

⁸³Knight, *Philosophy & Education*, 22.

⁸⁴Ibid.

In addition to empiricism, Christians must understand the role of direct revelation in grasping truth. J. I. Packer declares that Christianity “rests on revelation: nobody would know the truth about God, or be able to relate to him in a personal way, had not God first acted to make himself known.”⁸⁵ What God has specifically and directly shared through his Scripture is known as special revelation. Knight speaks to this as well:

Revealed knowledge has been of prime importance in the field of religion. It differs from all other sources of knowledge by presupposing a transcendent supernatural reality that breaks into the natural order. Revelation is God’s communication concerning the divine will. Believers in revelation hold that this form of knowledge has the distinct advantage of being an omniscient source of information that is not obtainable through other epistemological methods. The truth gained through this source is believed to be absolute and uncontaminated.⁸⁶

Thankfully, God has chosen to speak to mankind through both special and general revelation. However, his message is not only focused on information, but on transformation. God cares that his people know and value Him. Just as epistemology is about knowing, axiology is about valuing.

What is of value? What is most desirable? What is worth pursuing? Axiology interacts with some of these questions. People are motivated by what they value and different value systems create different views of the good life.⁸⁷ When people view wealth, comfort, relationship, power, or reputation as ultimately valuable, that will direct their lives to pursue those things. Personal axiology is what drives choices, goals, dreams, habits, and visions of success.

These two fields of philosophy are important to the kingly role of the teacher. Kings must lead from and toward real truth and value if they are to be successful leaders. For example, epistemology will affect curricular development in the Christian school

⁸⁵J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1993).

⁸⁶Knight, *Philosophy & Education*, 23.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 28.

because of the presupposition of the existence of God and authority of the Bible.⁸⁸

Axiology is similarly important in the teacher's kingly role. Knight writes that the actions and attitudes of teachers "constantly instruct groups of highly impressionable young people who assimilate and imitate their teachers' value structures to a significant extent."⁸⁹ What the teacher loves and hates, values and disregards, will impact citizens of the class.

Psalm 19

Psalm 19 is a magnificent poem that speaks directly to Christian epistemology and axiology. C. S. Lewis called it "the greatest poem in the Psalter and one of the greatest lyrics in the world."⁹⁰ It is beautiful and bountiful—lifting the reader's mind to see and sing with the psalmist. The psalm can be divided into three complimentary parts. Verses 1-6 focus on God's general revelation in creation, verses 7-10 point out God's special revelation in his Law, and verses 11-14 focus on the response of the servant.⁹¹

The heavens declare (vv. 1-6). All that has been created shouts the glory of God. Every person experiences the language of creation. John Calvin describes the work of creation:

The heavens have a common language to teach all men without distinction, nor is there any thing but their own carelessness to hinder even those who are most strange to each other, and who live in the most distant parts of the world, from profiting, as it were, at the mouth of the same teacher.⁹²

If people truly paid attention to the voice of creation, they would learn the reality and magnificence of the Lord. Even one day beneath the sky, or one night under the stars,

⁸⁸Knight, *Philosophy & Education*, 26-27.

⁸⁹Ibid., 29.

⁹⁰C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (Orlando: Harcourt, 1958), 63.

⁹¹Nancy Declaisse-Walford, Rolf A. Jacobson, and Beth Laneel Tanner, *The Book of Psalms*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 203.

⁹²John Calvin and James Anderson, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 1:312.

should be enough to for all people to clearly hear the teacher’s testimony.⁹³ However, people do not all pay attention.

While nature shouts God’s praise, James Smith explains one issue: “The message of the heavenly bodies is real, but it is inarticulate.”⁹⁴ The heavens do not speak with words in the ways humans do. They make their case powerfully, but they do not make their case in human language.⁹⁵

The Law gives life (vv. 7-10). Calvin spoke also to the unique need for God’s Law: “While the heavens bear witness concerning God, their testimony does not lead men so far as that thereby they learn truly to fear him, and acquire a well-grounded knowledge of him; it serves only to render them inexcusable.”⁹⁶ The Word of God is a more direct and clear messenger of God. It is not present in the same way as creation, but it is a more wonderful gift.

James Smith describes the Law of God as perfect: “Flawless, without defect or error; a guide which can neither mislead nor fail. . . . Like food for the hungry, the law can refresh and restore the soul.”⁹⁷ While nature can reveal man’s need, Scripture can meet that need. This is not to say that they are at odds; rather, the Word of God works in partnership with creation.

The Law has four effects on those who obey it—revival for the soul, wisdom for the simple, joy for the heart, and light for the eyes.⁹⁸ God’s Word provides the

⁹³Calvin and Anderson, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 1:310.

⁹⁴Smith, *The Wisdom Literature and Psalms*, Ps 19:3.

⁹⁵Robert G. Bratcher and William David Reburn, *A Translator’s Handbook on the Book of Psalms*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1991), 190.

⁹⁶Calvin and Anderson, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 1:317.

⁹⁷Smith, *The Wisdom Literature and Psalms*, Ps 19:7.

⁹⁸Bratcher and Reburn, *A Translator’s Handbook on the Book of Psalms*, 193.

powerful wisdom that comes from fearing the Lord. The Word, in conjunction with the world, brings life.

Wisdom is knowing and pleasing God (vv. 11-14). The way in which people access real life is through relationship with God Himself. Creation and Scripture point those who will listen toward the Person of God. When awe meets law and the reality of God is encountered, the attentive person turns to God for help. The awesomeness of God invites man to come and bring his weakness to the Lord for help.⁹⁹

In Psalm 19:14, the psalmist ends his song by asking that God would turn his words and thoughts from foolishness to wisdom. He wants his life to bring pleasure to the Lord.¹⁰⁰ His experience in God's world and God's Word has transformed him. The knowledge that he has gained has changed his aims. Upon seeing and knowing God, he now values Him most.

Psalm 19 on Epistemology and Axiology

Psalm 19 flows from epistemology to axiology in such a seamless fashion that it could be used as an exemplar of biblical integration. The world speaks truth and then the Word speaks truth. There is a marriage between the scientific observation of the heavens and the devotional investigation of the Bible. These actions do not lead to knowledge alone, but naturally flow into a response of worship—ascribing worth to God. The Christian educator functions in a kingly role, much like David in Psalm 19, by helping students pay attention to reality and respond rightly.

Gerstenberger identifies that axiological and epistemological intention of Psalm 19: “Adoration of Yahweh and meditative prayer encouraged the discovery of

⁹⁹Smith, *The Wisdom Literature and Psalms*, Ps 19:12-13.

¹⁰⁰Bratcher and Reyburn, *A Translator's Handbook, on the Book of Psalms*, 196.

individual identity within the community of faith.”¹⁰¹ This same goal is held by Christian educators. Teachers aim to allow God’s world and God’s Word to shape the individual. The realities of God, displayed in verses 1-10, demand the personal response displayed in verses 11-14. The truth, or epistemology, motivates valuing, or axiology. This kind of impact is the reason for Christian education.

The way that truth leads value is apparent in Psalm 19. During the first part of the psalm, which highlights God’s glory in creation, the Hebrew word for God is *El*. However, the name *Yahweh* is used in the next part of the psalm as it speaks of God’s Law. Robert Good explains that *El* is a “generic word for ‘god’ in the ancient Semitic languages,”¹⁰² but, as Mark Powell writes, *Yahweh* is “the most important name for God in the Hebrew Bible.”¹⁰³ It is the Tetragrammaton that, as was mentioned previously, is God’s covenant name. The use of *Yahweh* denotes personal relationship. Therefore, it should be noted that Psalm 19 moves from speaking of “the God” to “my God.” The truth about his glory and invisible attributes is made clear by creation (Rom 1:20). Creation tells about Him. However, in his Word, He speaks for Himself. Nancy Declaisse-Walford challenges readers:

Just imagine, after all, what kind of a god Israel would have worshipped if all they knew of God had had to deduce from earthquakes and floods; predators and prey; sun, rain and seasons. In creation, the Creator comes to us hidden, wearing nature as a mask. In the word, the Lord (*Yahweh*) comes to us personally. Here, we meet a God who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, showing faithfulness to the thousandth generation.¹⁰⁴

There is no way for teachers to rightly exercise their kingly roles of leading their classes without looking to the King of kings. Biblical integration is made possible

¹⁰¹Erhard S. Gerstnerberger, *Psalms*, pt. 1, *The Forms of Old Testament Literature*, vol. 14 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 103.

¹⁰²Robert M. Good, “El,” in *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary*, ed. Mark Allan Powell, rev. ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 2011), 228.

¹⁰³Mark Allan Powell, “Yahweh,” in *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary*, 1118.

¹⁰⁴Declaisse-Walford, Jacobson, and Tanner, *The Book of Psalms*, 213.

by grounding truth on the empirical knowledge of the world and the revealed knowledge of the Word. In the world, God’s greatness is apparent. In the Word, it is articulated. A biblical epistemology will lead to biblical axiology. Teachers show students what to love and value as they share knowledge. Psalm 19 brings the marriage of empirical and moral truth to the forefront. It binds general and special revelation together. Biblical integrators do the same.

Conclusion

William Yount writes, “Pastor-teachers are shepherds who nurture their flocks, feed their flocks, protect their flocks. Pastor-teachers are also instructors who train, prepare, and equip the sheep of the Lord.”¹⁰⁵ Christian teachers are pastors and they have a serious responsibility. Yount explains that there is a dangerous tendency to slide into “teaching subjects more than teaching students.”¹⁰⁶ It is important for teachers to see students as their *mathetes*, which is the Greek word for apprentices or disciples.¹⁰⁷ The pastoral role of the educator is to teach the heart, head, and hands to know and honor God in all things. This means serving in a prophetic, priestly, and kingly fashion for the good of the student and the glory of God.

¹⁰⁵Yount, *Called to Teach*, 228.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 229.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

THE THEORETICAL, PRACTICAL, AND HISTORICAL BASIS FOR BIBLICAL INTEGRATION

Speaking to teachers, Christian education authority Howard Hendricks issued the challenge, “Wake up to the realization that each day you can give the Lord of your life even greater control over your being.”¹ In addition, in his foreword to Mark Eckel’s *The Whole Truth*, worldview expert Chuck Colson called Eckel’s biblical integration strategies “a great weapon in training young minds to engage the culture with discernment and a well-grounded biblical view of life.”² The following chapter is designed to help committed Christian educators awaken to a passion to give God greater control of their teaching through the skillful wielding of the weapon of biblical integration. Biblical integration is the necessary reconstruction of educational connections that have been artificially severed. Speaking of marriage and divorce, Jesus said, “What God has joined together, let no one separate” (Mark 10:9). The educational culture has divorced Christianity from learning in many areas and in many ways. This chapter assists educators by making the case for reconciliation and addressing key areas to be reunited—heart and mind, general and special revelation, word and deed.

What Makes Education Distinctly Christian?

Christian schooling is not a new phenomenon. God-centered education has been a priority for the Lord’s people for millennia. After rescuing the Israelites from Egypt, God called his people to keep his commands on their hearts and lips (Deut 6:6-9).

¹Howard Hendricks, *Teaching to Change Lives* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 1987), 25.

²Chuck Colson, foreword to *The Whole Truth: Classroom Strategies for Biblical Integration*, by Mark Eckel (Maitland, FL: Xulon, 2003), vi.

He told parents to impress his commands and characteristics on their children, to weave them into every conversation, and to connect them to life at home and in the community. Throughout the ages, educational practice has changed in many ways, but Christians still see the importance of a distinctly Christian education. Believers still want to write God's character and commands onto and into every area of life. In current time and contemporary school culture, there is need for a robust practice of biblical integration.

In 1957, Donald Oppewal, education professor at Calvin College, championed the need for biblical integration by saying that all courses taught at a Christian school should be “required to show their credentials before being allowed into a curriculum which dares to call itself Christian. . . . They will be admitted only insofar as they are able to be used as an avenue of revelation.”³ He went on to say that to teach any content apart from pointing to the Person and glory of God is to engage in “riotous teaching” and the selling of “our distinctive educational birthright for a mess of pottage.”⁴ Educators called to teach in Christian schools are called to Christ-centered instruction. To practice anything else is to make an unworthy exchange.

The conversation advanced further as the aim of integration continued to be clarified when, in 1968, Francis Schaeffer got to the heart of integrated thinking:

True education means thinking by associating across various disciplines, not just being highly qualified in one field, as a technician might be. I suppose that no discipline has tended to think in a more fragmented fashion than the orthodox or evangelical theology of today.⁵

He noticed that even in institutions holding to Christian values, Christianity had been removed, or had removed itself, from much of academic discussion. This separation is what Oppewal said causes Christian educators’ “repeated insistence upon the

³Donald Oppewal, “Toward a Distinctive Curriculum for Christian Education,” *Reformed Journal* 7, no. 8 (September 1957): 24.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Francis Schaeffer, *The Francis A. Schaeffer Trilogy: Three Essential Books in One Volume*. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1990), 12.

distinctiveness of Christian education” to become a lie.⁶ Truly Christian education requires transdisciplinary engagement of theological nature and substance.

More recently, George Knight notes the continuation of this trend of disengagement: “All too often, Christian education has not been deliberately built upon a distinctive Christian philosophy. As a result, many Christian schools have tended to offer something less than Christian education and have thereby frustrated the purpose of their existence.”⁷ The key to overcoming this frustration is the practice of coherent and cogent biblical integration.

Like Christian schools, the local church is also currently struggling in her efforts to educate young people effectively.⁸ The goal of mentioning these educational struggles is not to diminish the role and value of the local church, but to partner with her and serve her in the important pastoral role of teaching. One representative area of weakness is Sunday school. Todd Hillard, Britt Beemer, and Ken Ham write that in a 2009 survey of the effects of Sunday school it was discovered, “Sunday school is actually more likely to be detrimental to the spiritual and moral health of our children.”⁹ That statement is stunning, but the survey research of 1,000 young people in their 20s bears out that those who regularly attended Sunday school in middle and high school are

- more likely NOT to believe that all the accounts/stories in the Bible are true/accurate.
- more likely to doubt the Bible because it was written by men.
- more likely to doubt the Bible because it was not translated correctly.
- more likely to defend that abortion should continue to be legal.
- more likely to defend premarital sex.
- more likely to accept that gay marriage and abortion should be legal . . .
- more likely to view the Church as hypocritical.

⁶Oppewal, “Toward a Distinctive Curriculum,” 21.

⁷George R. Knight, *Philosophy & Education: An Introduction in Christian Perspective*, 4th ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2006), 165.

⁸Todd Hillard, Britt Beemer, and Ken Ham, *Already Gone: Why Your Kids Will Quit Church and What You Can Do to Stop It* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2009), locs. 420-22, Kindle.

⁹Ibid., locs. 397-400.

- much more likely to have become anti-church through the years.
- more likely to believe that good people don't need to go to church.¹⁰

How can it be that consistent Christian education of teens is not bearing, but instead, killing fruit? Hillard, Beemer, and Ham share, “The numbers indicate that Sunday school actually didn't do anything to help them develop a Christian worldview. . . . As shocking as this sounds, the reality we have to face is that Sunday school clearly harmed the spiritual growth of the kids.”¹¹ Clearly, Bible knowledge is not the same as biblical worldview thinking.

John Frame defines theology as “the application of Scripture, by persons, to all areas of life.”¹² He goes on to say that the goal of teaching is “to bring spiritual health to its hearers.”¹³ Christian school educators have the opportunity to help develop Christian worldview thinking in young people by teaching them to apply Scripture to all areas of life. This can be done effectively because school teachers are already speaking to many of the most significant areas of life.

The timing of primary, middle, and secondary education is also a key element. This a time of identity and cognitive development. This time of life is more crucial in worldview formation than the years devoted to higher education. Christian colleges often cannot effectively impact students to overcome a non-integrated secondary education. Beemer, a Christian leader and expert in consumer behavior, writes of the value of Christian colleges: “If parents knew the truth, they would, in most instances, probably put their money somewhere else.”¹⁴ He goes on to share that numerous studies show negligible impact of Christian colleges on students knowing, loving, and following God.

¹⁰Hillard, Beemer, and Ham, *Already Gone*, locs. 404-10.

¹¹*Ibid.*, locs. 435-37.

¹²John Frame, *John Frame's Selected Shorter Writings* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2015), 2:69.

¹³*Ibid.*, 2:70.

¹⁴Hillard, Beemer, and Ham, *Already Gone*, locs. 1097-98.

The conclusion he presents is, “If we are going to stop the epidemic, it needs to happen in the Church and in the home during the elementary, middle school, and high school years.”¹⁵

The key to overcoming this frustration, in the church and school, is the practice of coherent and cogent biblical integration. This interconnected teaching will lead to right thinking—deep understanding that all things are built on the foundational reality of God and that all things exist for the glory of God. This integration is the essential element to Christian education. There can be no Christian education without recognizing the centrality of Christ in all things because He is central and supreme in all things. John Piper makes the case that this truth is foundational to Christian educational identity:

Christ not only made and owns the world, he not only holds everything together by the word of his power, but he also created it and sustains it to display his beauty and his worth and greatness so that those whom he created in his image will know him and treasure him above all things, and in that treasuring of him above all that he has made, manifest his supreme value in the universe. . . . All things not only belong to Christ, but all things display Christ. Human beings exist to magnify his worth in the world. Our worth consists of our capacity to consciously make much of his worth.¹⁶

A Class Is a Worldview Tool

Since all things are from, for, and to Him, educators must teach all things as from, for, and to Him. This does not mean that every class becomes a Bible class. Instead, each course is restored to its intended purpose—teaching content to magnify the Lord. The worldview survey textbook *Understanding the Times* by Jeff Myers and David A. Noebel is an enduring example of what integration can look like in a number of content areas.¹⁷ This book is recognized by evangelical leaders as one of the finest tools

¹⁵Hillard, Beemer, and Ham, *Already Gone*, locs. 1102-3.

¹⁶John Piper, *Think: The Life of the Mind and the Love of God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), locs. 2623-34, Kindle.

¹⁷Jeff Myers and David A. Noebel, *Understanding the Times: A Survey of Competing Worldviews* (Manitou Springs, CO: Summit Ministries, 2015).

available in helping students think Christianly.¹⁸ How does this text accomplish this task so effectively? Rather than replacing course content with Christian content, it investigates theology, philosophy, ethics, biology, psychology, sociology, law, politics, economics, and history from a variety of worldviews. These subjects are “ten ways of looking at the world,”¹⁹ and by examining each of them from a variety of vantage points, the superiority and validity of Christianity is made apparent. In other words, by reuniting these ten crucial subjects with the Christian worldview, right thinking results. The truth and value of Christian thinking is magnified by the way the book presents the contrasting commitments of other major ways of thinking.

Each course taught in a Christian school is a kind of magnifying glass that zooms in on a particular area. That area is investigated and understood so that the students can learn to know, worship, and love God more fully. For example, a biology course zooms in on the study of life and this must, in turn, put the focus on the Author of life. *Understanding the Times* has been praised since its first edition because it “provides fair and accurate exposition of thinkers so that they might speak for themselves, and it then proceeds to unpack their systems for the high-school and/or college student to consider in his or her own mind.”²⁰ What Myers and Noebel accomplish in their book is the same thing that every Christian educator is striving to accomplish in their classrooms and curricula. The teacher presents the content with the goal of allowing the students to apprehend the reality, magnificence, and care of the Lord. This teaching methodology is not an overbearing indoctrination, but an invitation to honest acceptance of God and his

¹⁸Summit, “Hear What the Experts Are Saying,” accessed February 11, 2017, <http://understandingthetimes.com/testimonials/>.

¹⁹James Thornton, “Controlling Culture Currents,” *New American* 31 (December 2015): 29.

²⁰John S. Reist, Jr., “Understanding the Times: The Story of the Biblical Christian, Marxist/Leninist, and Secular Humanist Worldviews,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 38, no. 1 (March 1995): 139.

ways. Teachers must walk with students through the process of learning God as they learn their subjects.

Joshua Reichard proposes that integrating teachers coach students through the steps of conflict, creativity, and commitment: “The conflict stage occurs in a faith-affirming environment where students are free to ask difficult questions and wrestle with difficult problems.”²¹ There must be space for students to be honest and open. Like a swimming instructor, a teacher needs to let the students work, but with the confidence that they will never be in danger of drowning. Teachers are not called to answer or explain away every hard question for the students. In fact, they may not fully understand the issues either. However, in the same way that swimming instructors do not hold students up every time they try to swim a lap, teachers provide a safe place for students to struggle with information, commitments, outcomes, and ideas. This safe struggle leads to growth in strength, ability, and confidence.

The creativity stage comes next. In this area, teachers offer opportunity for students to work through the conflict. However, the teacher is not disengaged in this activity. Reichard explains that, here, the teacher must facilitate “the exploration of beliefs and values, but at the same time, reinforce the distinctions between the Christian faith and ‘society at large.’”²² The swimming instructor does not leave the student to flail in the water, nor does he carry the student across the water. Instead, he sets an example or encourages the student to employ specific techniques in helpful ways.

Success in the creativity stage leads to the final stage: commitment. By allowing students to ask questions and work to find solutions in a safe and supported environment, the teacher is offering opportunities for students to discover the superiority and value of Christianity for themselves. They are developing their own Christian identity. Concerning

²¹Joshua D. Reichard, “From Indoctrination to Initiation: A Non-Coercive Approach to Faith-Learning Integration,” *Journal of Education & Christian Belief* 17, no. 2 (October 2013): 292.

²²Ibid.

these three steps, Reichard concludes, “Initiation allows students to struggle with their faith, but then immediately to formulate solutions and apply it to life and learning.”²³

Biblically integrated teaching is about much more than information. It is about a journey. The teacher is building the curriculum on worldview commitments and leading students toward those commitments. Teachers work with their students in engaging and exploring, noticing and negotiating, inviting conversation and seeking illumination. The purpose of the journey is not to indoctrinate students into Christianity by creating theological connections, but to help them see and wrestle with the interconnectivity that already exists.

With gentleness and respect, teachers revere Christ and gently help students discover answers for the hope within them (1 Pet 3:15). In the learning environment, Christian thinking trumps Christian knowing. Rather than indoctrination, biblical integration should be an invitation to, an explanation of, an ongoing conversation about, and a demonstration of Christianity.

Biblical Integration Is Unique

In an increasingly diverse culture, numerous worldviews and ideologies claim to be the way, truth, and life. Myers and Noebel write,

If you look in the religion section of a bookstore you’ll see books on Christianity and Islam, of course, but also on Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, Hinduism, Vedantism, Jainism, Shintoism, and many others. Each religion attempts to explain what the world is like and how we should live.²⁴

There is an increasing interest in secular and naturalistic worldviews. The journey of trying to grow in understanding the world can be undertaken through any number of presuppositional roads, but there is only one accurate worldview. In Matthew 7, Jesus explained to his listeners that there are bad roads, false teachers, counterfeit disciples, and weak foundations. Christian educators have the chance to cultivate true disciples by leading

²³Reichard, “From Indoctrination to Initiation,” 293.

²⁴Myers and Noebel, *Understanding the Times*, 7.

them on the narrow road and building on the rock. Along with being a meaningful opportunity, teaching is a significant responsibility that must be taken up with seriousness and thoughtfulness.

Kevin D. Miller, Professor of Communication at Huntington University, tells of a personal experience as an instructor that is helpful in working through what makes distinctly biblical integration unique. While moving toward tenure at his university, he was required to write a “faith-learning integration” paper. While this is a normal practice in many Christian educational institutions, he wondered how he should think of a Muslim professor who was his counterpart at an Islamic school integrating non-Christian faith and learning:

Should I hope he succeeds brilliantly, or that he fundamentally fails since his frame of reference is ultimately heretical and flawed? If we both succeed, what do the efforts tell us about exercise of integration of faith and learning and the disciplinary truths of the world we are able to fit conceptually into our respective metaphysic convictions?²⁵

Miller found the solution to his questions in the example and identity of Christ. Jesus did not coerce people into believing, but worked through “the skillful drawing out and maturing of knowledge in the student.”²⁶ Biblical integration is not only bringing truth from the outside in, but also from the inside out. Jesus is Lord. He is Savior. He is Creator. These are facts. Christianity is not an ingredient to be added in, but a very present flavor and aroma that should be drawn out. The reality that religious facts are challenged does not reduce their truthfulness. This is the where the difference between Christian and Islamic integration must be noted.

A Christian teacher is not beholden to his ability to bring theology into any topic. God already ordained that He should be glorified by that idea, object, or phenomenon. Any intelligent person can force the synthesis of two ideas. This forced

²⁵Kevin D. Miller, “Reframing the Faith-Learning Relationship: Bonhoeffer and an Incarnational Alternative to the Integration Model,” *Christian Scholar’s Review* 43, no. 2 (Winter 2014): 132.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 133.

relationship occurs not only with various religious faiths built on the supernatural, but with those committed to a naturalistic worldview as well. However, Christian worldview integration is not synthetic but paradigmatic.²⁷ It is not about adding one thing to another, but understanding truth by truth: observing the connections God has made. The general revelation of God's world is designed as connected to the special revelation of God's Word. Teachers do not need to invent connections because they already exist.

Bradley McKoy, a physics professor at Asuza Pacific University, explains that a class should engage in "theologically informed reflection on academic disciplines and, reciprocally, reflection on theology and faith practice in light of discipline-specific learning."²⁸ The Christian physics teacher brings theology to bear on science, but also brings a scientific understanding to his theology. The theology deepens the science and the science deepens the theology. Oppewal explains by saying that if a young child and an experienced physicist observe a thunderstorm, they both see the heavens declaring the glory of God through the same event (Ps 19:1). However, their experiences are vastly different:

The physicist sees God in the workings of the thunderstorm, while the child experiences only light, noise, and dampness. The child's vision of God's power and might is hampered by his lack of insight into the pattern, the system, the structure of weather. To the extent that he sees and experiences no laws or is aware of no pattern, he knows not God in general revelation.²⁹

Biblical integration must be practiced to grow students from worshipping the God of light and noise into students worshipping the God of weather. As they learn Christ's world, they will better learn Christ and their love and awe will be deepened. Consider the experience of the disciples in Matthew 8. Jesus spoke to the storm and brought calm to the tempest (v. 26). The disciples responded with awe and fear, saying,

²⁷James R. Estep, "What Makes Education Christian?" in *A Theology for Christian Education*, by James R. Estep, Michael J. Anthony, and Gregg R. Allison (Nashville: B & H, 2008), 34.

²⁸Bradley K. McCoy, "Developing a Program-Level Faith Integration Curriculum: A Case Study from Physics," *Christian Higher Education* 13, no. 5 (December 2014): 340-41.

²⁹Oppewal, "Toward a Distinctive Curriculum," 23.

“What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!” (v. 37; Mark 4:41). Their amazement for God was enhanced because of their fisherman’s knowledge of waters and winds. Their knowledge of the general revelation enhanced the power they saw in Christ’s command. In the same way, Peter responded with worship and recognition of his own sin when Jesus performed the miracle of providing an unbelievable catch of fish in Luke 5:8. Peter knew about catching fish and his expertise in that area enhanced his awe at the power of Jesus.

Therefore, the superiority of Christian education and biblical integration does not exist because Christian teachers are better instructors than others. It does not exist because of better academic content or a more passionate zeal for the needs of society. It exists because the God of Christianity is superior.³⁰ He is real, and He desires to be known.

Understanding Biblical Integration

John Piper is widely considered “one of the most important pastor theologians of our time.”³¹ He has been a pastoral, missional, and theological leader for the evangelical church for decades. While trained at seminary and the university, it was high school geometry and advanced biology that awakened his “love for right thinking.”³² The skills that have borne much fruit in his life, and for the life of the church, were born in high school science and math.

Spiritual development is the task of all Christian educators regardless of academic discipline because all reality points to the God who made and maintains it. James R. Nichols, professor and chair of the Department of Biology at Abilene Christian University, affirms the teacher’s role in discipleship:

³⁰Estep, “What Makes Education Christian?,” 34.

³¹Crossway Books, “The Collected Works of John Piper,” accessed December 7, 2016, <https://www.crossway.org/books/the-collected-works-of-john-piper-honly/>.

³²John Piper and D. A. Carson, *The Pastor as Scholar and the Scholar as Pastor: Reflections on Life and Ministry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 27.

As a Christian academic, regardless of my academic discipline, I am in the business of spiritual formation and soul care with my students. It is not sufficient for me to be simply a biology professor. It is not sufficient for me to be simply an educator, even an effective educator. Somehow I must include aspects of my instruction, guidance, and mentoring that surpass the academic discipline and reach into the eternal, even if only in a barely perceptible amount.³³

Nichols is describing the task of biblical integration. As Kenneth Badley points out, there is currently some disagreement concerning the identity and practice of biblical integration because its “component words—faith, learning, and integration—all carry several potential meanings.”³⁴ Perry L. Glanzer, a professor in Baylor University’s School of Education, believes that the language of integration should be discarded in favor of terms like the “creation and redemption of scholarship.”³⁵ These new terms emphasize “the broad, positive theological work in which Christian academics should engage.”³⁶ The goal here is not to fight a semantic battle, but to point out that the true nature of biblical integration is redemptive and constructive. Karl Bailey clarifies that the call of Christian educators is to “redeem and reconstruct” their teaching in light of the truths of Christianity.³⁷ Therefore, biblical integration should be seen as the unification of truths. It is the restoration of relationship between heart and mind, special revelation and general revelation, and word and deed. It is a tearing down of the artificial divisions, which starts with the bringing together of the heart and mind.

³³James R. Nichols, “The Science Professor as Pastor,” *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 64, no. 4 (December 2012): 251.

³⁴Kenneth Rea Badley, “Clarifying ‘Faith-Learning Integration’: Essentially Contested Concepts and the Concept-Conception Distinction,” *Journal of Education and Christian Belief* Spring 13, no. 1 (April 2009): 7.

³⁵Perry L. Glanzer, “Why We Should Discard ‘the Integration of Faith and Learning’: Rarticulating the Mission of the Christian Scholar,” *Journal of Education & Christian Belief* 12, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 43.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 45.

³⁷Karl G. D. Bailey, “Faith-Learning Integration, Critical Thinking Skills, and Student Development in Christian Education,” *Journal of Research on Christian Education* 21, no. 2 (August 2012): 153.

Heart and Mind (The Aim)

Worldview expert Nancy Pearcey communicates, “The first step in forming a Christian worldview is to overcome this sharp divide between ‘heart’ and ‘brain.’”³⁸ In current culture, facts and values have been separated in an unnatural fashion so that the truth of the gospel has been relegated to the realm of personal opinion and perspective rather than being considered an objective truth claim. Pearcey continues, “God is not just the Savior of souls, He is also the Lord of creation. One way we acknowledge His Lordship is by interpreting every aspect of creation in light of His truth.”³⁹ This reuniting of truth with truth—facts with values—is one part of what makes education truly Christian. Intellectual growth without spiritual growth is an unworthy goal for the Christian teacher.

The goal of knowledge and learning, like all other things, is to aid in loving God with the heart, soul, mind, and strength (Luke 10:27). As the mind is tuned and turned toward the truth, a right response to the God of truth is required. Engagement with the mind should lead to the bowing of the heart. Pearcey writes, “The renewal of our minds comes about only through the submission of our whole selves to the Lordship of Christ.”⁴⁰ Every interaction, in and out of the classroom, is a chance to highlight the Lord and appeal to submission. This is discipleship. Therefore, Christian teachers are, by nature, engaged in the discipleship process.

Timothy Paul Jones defines discipleship as “a personal and intentional process in which one or more Christians guide unbelievers or less mature believers to embrace and apply the gospel in every part of their lives.”⁴¹ While this is the purpose of discipleship, there has been discussion in recent years concerning the target of

³⁸Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005), 20.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 24.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 26.

⁴¹Timothy Paul Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2011), 17.

discipleship. Should it be tilted toward the heart or mind? In his review of Christian philosopher James K. A. Smith's *Cultural Liturgy* series, David S. Morlan notes that Smith makes the case that "the center of gravity in the human person is much lower than the mind; it is in the bowels. . . . The individual is won or lost in the lower pre-cognitive emotional center of the person, and, more importantly, the world already knows this."⁴²

However, Pearcey points out that many young people are turning from their faith because they have not been provided with the "intellectual resources" needed to interact with the ideologies challenging faith today.⁴³

While there are differences in perspective, there is no need to create a false dichotomy between the two aims. Discipleship should target the head and heart to the mutual benefit of both. It is possible that the two are more connected than most realize and that those who are able to impact both are the most effective disciplers. C. S. Lewis is an example of one who married mind and heart as he "combined what almost everybody today assumes are mutually exclusive: rationalism and poetry, cool logic and warm feeling, disciplined prose and free imagination."⁴⁴ If Piper is a good example of the importance of integrated learning, Lewis is a picture of integrated teaching.

The Greatest Commandment is to love God fully and well (Matt 22:37-38). It is not a call to know much about Him. However, love and awe are deepened through knowing. Piper makes this argument:

Right thinking about God exists to serve right feelings for God. Logic exists for the sake of love. Reasoning exists for the sake of rejoicing. Doctrine exists for the sake of delight. Reflection about God exists for the sake of affection for God. The head is meant to serve the heart.⁴⁵

⁴²David S. Morlan, review of *Cultural Liturgies Series*, by James K. A. Smith, *Bulletin of Ecclesial Theology* 3, no. 1 (June 2016): 3.

⁴³Pearcey, *Total Truth*, 32.

⁴⁴Piper and Carson, *The Pastor as Scholar*, 34.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 50.

The Christian educator then is always aiming for the heart, but often through the avenue of the mind. There should be no battle between the two. Instead, the teacher's struggle is to wrestle with how to implement this integration clearly and consistently.

General and Special (The Content)

While engaging the heart and mind, the teacher is also highlighting connection between general and special revelation. In order to understand biblical integration, one must grasp what elements are being integrated, or united, together. The *how* is often dependent on the *what*. Two of the elements joined in biblical integration are general revelation and special revelation.

Charles Ryrie describes general revelation by saying that it “includes all that God has revealed in the world around us, including man.”⁴⁶ Therefore, every subject taught in school is an investigation into God's general revelation. Even though non-Christian instructors may not know it, all teachers are trying to help students understand what God has made. Science shines light on his world. Math highlights his order. History is his story. This world exists because God spoke it into being. The universe is his word in power. All that exists does so because He said so, which includes humanity itself.

What is man? Author and professor N. D. Wilson responds, “Words. Magic words. Words spoken by the Infinite, words so potent, spoken by One so potent that they have weight and mass and flavor. They are real. They have taken on flesh and dwelt among us. They are us.”⁴⁷

What is this world? Mankind and man's world are made of the same materials. Wilson continues, “We stand on a spoken stage. The spinning kind. The round kind. The moist kind. The kind of stage with beetles and laughter and babies and dirt and snow and

⁴⁶Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth* (Chicago: Moody, 1999), 31.

⁴⁷N. D. Wilson, *Notes from the Tilt-a-Whirl: Wide-Eyed Wonder in God's Spoken World* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2009), loc. 382, Kindle.

fresh-cut cedar.”⁴⁸ God breathed out the commands that made the world (Gen 1:3), the essence of life into Adam’s nostrils (Gen 2:7), and the power for eternal life in his Scriptures (2 Tim 3:16). Therefore, Christians should see biblical integration as the uniting of the spoken world of God with the spoken Word of God. This unification is an important aspect of what makes Christian education Christian.

Zachary Eswine states, “As Creator/Redeemer, God preaches to us by verbal (special revelation) and non-verbal (general revelation) means.”⁴⁹ Christian educators are tasked with bringing these elements together so that students see and hear God clearly. Pastors often lean into special revelation and away from general revelation because it seems less innately theological.⁵⁰ Similarly, many educators lean away from Scripture because it can seem more devotional and less academic. However, if the goal of education is discipleship, both forms of God’s communication must be investigated. Jared Longshore explains,

God is the One who has written His law on the heart of humanity. He is the One who has created this world, ordered its events, and breathed out His holy Scriptures. Therefore, since the divine moral governor of the world has communicated to moral beings, those moral beings have an obligation, a duty, to attend to that revelation. Thus the very nature of revelation requires a spiritual life of study or heeding of the Word of God.⁵¹

This study of God’s Word and world will, as Longshore notes, “Motivate joy and delight in the spiritual life.”⁵² Both general and special revelation contribute to the ability to find this joy in knowing God better. John Peter Lange explains that general revelation is “the foundation on which the special rests.”⁵³ God spoke his Word into this

⁴⁸Wilson, *Notes from the Tilt-a-Whirl*, loc. 387.

⁴⁹Zachary W. Eswine, “Creation and Sermon: The Role of General Revelation in Biblical Preaching,” *Presbyterion* 33, no. 1 (2007): 4

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 3.

⁵¹Jared R. Longshore, “Doctrine according to Godliness: The Spiritual Purpose of John L. Dagg’s *Manuel of Theology*,” *The Founders Journal* 96 (Spring 2014): 12.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 13.

⁵³John Peter Lange et al., *Genesis: A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures* (Bellingham, WA:

world. Christ was born on earth. The Holy Spirit convicts and comforts people made of flesh and blood. The general is the atmosphere into which the Word is spoken. However, while the general is foundational, the special is needed. James Hoffmeier explains, “The revelation of God that is apprehended by looking at the expanse of the heavens, or any part of God's creation, is limited to providing veiled information about God, but not what is necessary to know God in any intimate or salvific sense.”⁵⁴

General revelation communicates much about Him, but does not initiate relationship with God. Therefore, there is a need for the special. The conscience and the outside world can teach about God, but no other source can compare to God’s Word.⁵⁵ It is clear and direct. It informs, instructs, and corrects in ways that general revelation is not able to do. The Christian educator brings together special and general revelation to develop knowledge of God that leads to joy in a deeper relationship with Him. This is an essential element of biblical integration. It is what makes biblical integration truly biblical.

Word and Deed (The Means)

Teachers target the heart through the mind and reunite the spoken world and holy Word by the means of words as well as deeds. These two avenues of instruction could be called, as noted by Elizabeth Sites, “The Infusion of Faith in Pedagogy and The Demonstration of Faith in Relationships.”⁵⁶ In other words, the Christian educator speaks and models the unity of faith with scholarship—teachers must show and tell.

The dual method of word and deed demonstrates the presence and power of God in a way that delivers a robust vision of the good life. Classroom lessons alone are

Logos Bible Software, 2008), 46-47.

⁵⁴James K. Hoffmeier, “‘The Heavens Declare the Glory of God’: The Limits of General Revelation,” *Trinity Journal* 21, no.1 (Spring 2000): 20.

⁵⁵Longshore, “Doctrine according to Godliness,” 12.

⁵⁶Elizabeth C. Sites et al., “A Phenomenology of the Integration of Faith and Learning,” *Journal of Psychology & Theology* 37, no. 1 (2009): 33.

not enough. Morlan makes the case that “cultural forces . . . function as a sort of liturgy and direct what we actually worship. The world offers embodied practices that shape our desires and provide a compelling vision of what the good life is.”⁵⁷ It is the task of the teacher to do more than pass on knowledge, but to invite students into a cultural liturgy of truth through relationship.

The world appeals to students through experience—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16). It calls them to engage in actions, thoughts, and attitudes that promise satisfaction. This experience is illustrated by the parable of the Lost Son in Luke 15. The son leaves what he knows to be true and right in search of experiencing what he expects will be more satisfying. When the world left him bankrupt and starving, he came to his senses and turned for home. Morlan identifies the son’s experience as his pivotal moment: “That was the transition that led to repentance and reconciliation.”⁵⁸ He had done more than hear his father’s words throughout his life, but had experienced a relationship with him.

Robert Webber sums up his experience with instruction that comes from word divorced from deed when he writes, “Christianity was no longer a power to be experienced but a system to be defended.”⁵⁹ He understood that Christianity is about more than a system of thinking, but a God to be known. Discipleship is something learned through more than just words, but through practice. Matthew Ward points to “practices that are caught, not taught, practices that must be repeated until habitualized, practices that demonstrate the church as a counter-culture.”⁶⁰ These practices are transmitted through people. They are to be passed from teacher to student.

⁵⁷Morlan, review of *Cultural Liturgies Series*, 3.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 10.

⁵⁹Matthew Ward, “Kingdom Worship: James K. A. Smith, Robert Webber and Western Civilization,” *Bulletin of Ecclesial Theology* 3, no. 1 (June 2016): 130.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 132.

It is at the intersection of truth and action that word meets deed. In relationship with the students, teachers are to model true Christlikeness and engage the students in that lifestyle. Kenneth Badley confirms, “The character and attitudes of teachers and professors offer another obvious venue for faith-learning integration.”⁶¹ Students must see the truth and value of Christianity in the lives of their instructors. Without works, they will have reason to believe that faith is dead (Jas 2). The life of the teacher is to illustrate and complement the lessons taught in the classroom. In this way, the students will not only know the *what* and *why* of Christianity, but also the *how*.

Conclusion

John Piper writes, “The mind is supposed to be engaged in seeing reality for what it is, and awakening the heart to love God for all that he is.”⁶² The goal of biblical integration is to engage students in seeing things the way they really are. By reuniting heart with mind, general with special revelation, and word with deed, instructors will be able to successfully disciple students. They will share in Piper’s goal as they help their pupils

think rightly and deeply about the Word and the world with a view to seeing the greatness of God and his works (especially the work of Christ) so that the affections of our hearts might rest on a true foundation and God might be honored by how we feel toward him and by the behaviors that flow from this heart.⁶³

Speaking to teachers, Hendricks makes the case for the arduous work of truly Christian education: “God wants to use you as his catalyst—and as you let him transform and renew your thinking, you’ll be ready for his use.”⁶⁴ God can do mighty things through the teacher who will yield the classroom to Him. However, this task is not easy. Hendricks continues with the challenge, “Are we willing to pay the price for development? There is, after all, a cost involved. Effective teaching isn’t available at any bargain basement

⁶¹Badley, “Clarifying ‘Faith-Learning Integration,’” 8.

⁶²Piper and Carson, *The Pastor as Scholar*, 52.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Hendricks, *Teaching to Change Lives*, 130.

sale.”⁶⁵ Reuniting what the world and the field of education has long divided is a challenge. The work is hard and the cost is high. However, the reward is worth it as teachers train their pupils to pursue a life where they request in harmony with David, “May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer” (Ps 19:14).

⁶⁵Hendricks, *Teaching to Change Lives*, 130.

CHAPTER 4

ELEMENTS OF THE MINISTRY RESEARCH PROJECT

This project was designed to evaluate and improve the practice of biblical integration at The King’s Academy. Building on a previously accomplished case study, a curricular resource was developed which culminated in the approval of an alternate Christian Philosophy of Education by the Association of Christian Schools International in the summer of 2017. The biblical integration training described in the alternate plan was enacted between August and October of 2017, through the *Every Bush Is Burning* biblical integration training program. At the conclusion of the training, a questionnaire was administered.

The project had three goals: (1) assess the understanding and practice of biblical integration among high school teachers at The King’s Academy; (2) develop a curricular resource and training for communicating the key elements of biblical integration to teachers at The King’s Academy; and (3) increase the teachers’ knowledge for better understanding and practice of biblical integration by implementing a training for teachers that focused on the practice of biblical integration.

Goal 1: Assessment

Before developing a curricular resource or developing a training for teachers, it was necessary to examine the understanding and practice of biblical integration within the upper school at The King’s Academy.¹ A case study was completed in the summer of 2016, to ascertain the state of understanding and practice as a part of *Applied Empirical*

¹“Upper school” and “high school” are used interchangeably to describe the high school, grades 9-12.

Research (AER) taught by Michael Wilder.² While completed before the start of the formal project, this research was used as the foundational basis for completing goal 1. All data used in the assessment phase was collected in the AER case study.

What Do Teachers Understand Biblical Integration to Be?

The data acquired using the online questionnaire showed great diversity in the responses concerning the definition of biblical integration. Teachers were given an opportunity to share what they understood biblical integration to be in short-answer form. No two answers were alike, although some themes did emerge. Several discussed relating or applying biblical truths to their lessons. Others mentioned weaving biblical truths into the content or encouraging personal relationship with God. It seems likely that the use of the term “biblical integration” caused some to lean toward relating this task with God’s Word specifically, more than a God-centered worldview generally. A small number of respondents defined biblical integration as an overall approach to the subject from the perspective of a Christian worldview.

What Is the Level of Teacher Confidence in Ability to Do Biblical Integration?

The diversity in defining biblical integration is not surprising since 79.6 percent of respondents reported that they had no formal training in biblical integration, which means that the vast majority had not been trained as to what biblical integration is, what it should look like, or how it is accomplished in any formal fashion. Some even reported that the school provided no help in equipping for biblical integration. However, others share that informal training was made available in some areas. Some teachers said that

²This goal was accomplished in large part through the Advanced Research project completed under the direction of Michael Wilder as a part of Applied Empirical Research (course 80950—Summer, 2016). This case study required the use of qualitative research methods: a questionnaire, an interview, and content analysis. Each method was chosen to collect specific descriptive data for the purpose of revealing the current understanding and practice of biblical integration at The King’s Academy.

examples and Bible passages had been given to them for help. Books on the topic were made available and conferences were recommended. Two of the teachers reported attending one of those conferences. In addition, a short in-service training was given to new teachers during the 2015-2016 school year.

A tighter range of responses occurred with the statement, “I am satisfied with the training in biblical integration I have received at The King’s Academy.” No teachers agreed strongly or disagreed strongly, but instead landed closer to the center of the Likert scale.

Table 1. “I am satisfied with my training”

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
0%	23.1%	15.4%	46.2%	15.4%	0%

While the responses were heavier on the side of agreement, it may be telling that only 15.4 percent conveyed unequivocal satisfaction with their training. However, table 2 shows that most teachers agreed, to some degree, that they were confident in their abilities to practice biblical integration.

Table 2. “I am confident in my abilities”

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
0%	15.4%	0%	38.5%	38.5%	7.7%

The number of teachers that strongly agreed that they could do this necessary part of their job is very low. The need for improved integration is clearly demonstrated in the fact that only 7.7 percent of teachers are very confident about their ability to teach their subject in a biblically-integrated manner.

What Are the Current Practices in Training Teachers for Biblical Integration?

The upper school principal at The King's Academy,³ who was invested in biblical integration, was interviewed as a part of the AER project to determine how teachers are trained and how effective the process is. This interview provided needed information on practices, goals, and perceived effectiveness. In addition, the open-ended nature of the questions allowed for a broad range of responses that provided a rich and colorful description of biblical integration processes at The King's Academy.

The major ways of assessing the practice, regularity, and quality of biblical integration were reviewing lesson plans and performing occasional in-class observations. These methods were subjective and often dealt in incomplete information. Lesson plans provide only a skeleton of the overall experience and observations offer a snapshot in time.

Training opportunities in biblical integration were limited. Most teachers could attend one half-hour session each year. The scope of the training was not developmental or individualized, and the school's resources to provide examples or questions were limited. Clearly, improvement was needed. The administrator who was interviewed elaborated on the situation:

I think that people have a preconceived notion that because it's a school, we're Christian teachers, some of our curriculum is strictly Christian, that we do a great job of biblical integration. But I don't believe that that's true. I think that it has to be more intentional. And I think that people need to really understand what it is. And I don't think we've done a great job of that so far.

At this point, the school understood itself to be minimally effective and in need of growth. This administrator was clear that one early step should be to make the teachers aware of exactly what biblical integration is, what it looks like, and why it is so important. The teaching staff is currently not aware or equipped to be successful. Further, teachers are busy with many important tasks, and practicing biblical integration effectively requires

³The principal served until the end of the 2016-2017 school year and is now working out of state at a different school.

a higher level of work and engagement. A cohesive vision of integration that could be carried out was needed.

The struggles with biblical integration at the King’s Academy were clear, but the view of the administration in August 2016, was that the school was trending in the right direction. Administrators and staff were beginning to understand that biblical integration is a priority, which made it the perfect time for this project to be implemented. This administrator was not shy in saying biblical integration is essential for The King’s Academy:

I think there are a lot of Christian schools in the world that are Christian in name, but it’s my heart’s desire for Christian school to truly have a Christian philosophy. And if we’re not . . . using Christian curriculum, and having biblical integration, and having those types of discussion, and developing students that have a biblical worldview then we’re really not a Christian school. So I think it’s foundational. I think it’s essential. I mean, we’re not who we are if we don’t do it—not who we say we are.

What Is the Quality of Biblical Integration as Demonstrated in Lesson Plans?

The AER case study employed a content analysis of lesson plans submitted at The King’s Academy.⁴ There were two major takeaways from this examination. First, lesson plans did not demonstrate that teachers had a strong ability to handle Scripture well. Basic exegetical and hermeneutic skills appeared to be lacking when the lesson plans were reviewed. The second observation was that teachers of the humanities were often more effective in integration than those who taught science or math. Perhaps the minimal training that teachers received lent itself more to history and language than calculus and physics.

Implications of the Assessment

Every area of the AER case study demonstrated significant room to grow in biblical integration. The questionnaire showed genuine passion for Christian teaching and

⁴See appendix 4.

desire to succeed in it, which is a strong starting point, but development is needed. The most pressing and obvious step would be to improve training. The fact that many of the teachers expressed the definition of biblical integration differently shows that they are not in full agreement about what they are attempting to accomplish. Along with greater agreement, enhanced training would improve ability and confidence.

The interview portion of the study confirmed the findings of the questionnaire. The need for understanding, aim, and skill development was clearly articulated there. However, the content analysis provided the most direct input on what areas need attention. The teachers need support in the use of Scripture, application of worldview, and in practical methods of integration. By the numbers, there is greatest overall weakness in handling, understanding, and applying Scripture.

There was also a noticeable divide in the quality of integration between language or humanities courses and science and math courses. The humanities courses generally scored higher in biblical integration, which may be because Bible is taught, and thought of, as a humanities subject. Training is needed, therefore, to explain that biblical integration is not as much about Bible knowledge as it is about worldview thinking. This understanding can revolutionize the way one thinks. For example, when the potential impact of the Christian worldview was initially grasped by C. S. Lewis, it impacted his thinking and teaching in ways that affected the rest of his life.⁵

Goal 2: Developing a Curricular Resource and Training

After evaluating the state of biblical integration at The King's Academy, the next step was to construct an appropriate curriculum to meet the identified needs. This type of training fits well within the professional development aims prescribed by the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). Since ACSI is the accreditor of

⁵Devin Brown, *A Life Observed: A Spiritual Biography of C. S. Lewis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 139.

The King’s Academy, it was logical to design a program that they could evaluate as acceptable to meet continuing education requirements. One such requirement is the “Christian Philosophy of Education” (CPoE) assignment that all teachers and administrators must complete in order to renew their initial professional certification. The most recent introduction to that requirement states,

One core value of ACSI is to have teachers who are equipped to integrate Scripture, model Christlike values, and be prepared to answer students’ questions from a solid foundation of scriptural principles. Teachers bring the truth of God’s word into the study of all subject areas and help students find their way in a world that seems confusing or even conflicting at times. . . . For all these reasons, teachers need to understand students and the place of faith in Christian education as well as how to integrate biblical truth into the overall curriculum planning and daily instruction. One way to accomplish that is to read, study, and develop a Christian Philosophy of Education.⁶

ACSI has designed and assigned the CPoE for the purpose of enhancing the understanding and practice of biblical integration. However, the CPoE is not a one-size-fits-all requirement. While a general set of tasks can be completed in accomplishing the CPoE, each school has the opportunity to create its own customized “Alternative Model.”⁷ The school creates a checklist of activities that is appropriate for helping teachers develop a strong biblical foundation for their work as Christian educators. Once the checklist is designed, it is sent to ACSI for review. Upon approval, the school is able to implement the Alternative Model for five years before needing to renew their request.

The curricular resource and training that was developed for this project was approved on June 19, 2017, as an alternative CPoE. The following is a description of the elements within CPoE.

⁶Association of Christian Schools International, “2016 ACSI Christian Philosophy of Education Requirement,” accessed August 19, 2017, [https://www.acsi.org/Documents/Professional%20Development/Certification/2016%20CPoE%20Checklist%20\(2\).pdf](https://www.acsi.org/Documents/Professional%20Development/Certification/2016%20CPoE%20Checklist%20(2).pdf).

⁷Association of Christian Schools International, “Certification, Application, and Christian Philosophy of Education FAQs,” accessed August 19, 2017, <https://www.acsi.org/professional-development/certification/certification-application-and-christian-philosophy-of-education-faqs#CPoE2>.

First Half

Just like the standard CPoE assigned by ACSI, the checklist has two distinct halves. The first is more theoretical and philosophical so that teachers have strong base to build their practice upon. All teachers who had not yet renewed their teaching certification would be required to complete this portion of the CPoE. The second half is more practical and devoted to skill development. All teachers at The King's Academy were required to complete this part of the CPoE during a two-day training event. Each half has five distinct elements.

Introduction to distinctly Christian education. This introduction was a one-hour presentation on the need for and identity of Christian education. Christian schools cannot be successful without having an accurate vision of success. Therefore, this information needed to be presented as an orientation for the rest of the training.

The training began with an interactive activity in which teachers attempted to match universities with their mottos. The point was to show that many historic universities set out with explicitly Christian aims, but shifted their goals over time. While the mottos have remained unaltered, many schools have changed their stance from supporting Christianity to questioning it, or even promoting skepticism toward the faith. Likewise, though The King's Academy has an explicitly Christian mission noted on paper, if it is not enacted, the school is not truly educating Christianly.

Further, it was discussed that adding prayer, chapel, or Bible classes to a school does not make the education offered there distinctly Christian either. If that were the case, students could attend a public school and then attend a Bible class for an hour after their school day ended and receive an education deemed Christian. Rather than being accomplished by adding onto the school programming, Christian education happens when every subject is taught from a Christian worldview. This teaching happens through the practice of biblical integration.

Jerry Bridges defines ungodliness as “living one’s everyday life with little or no thought of God, or of God’s will, or of God’s glory, or of one’s dependence on God.”⁸ Biblical integration is the antithesis of ungodliness. It brings God, thought of God, God’s will, God’s glory, and dependence on God into the classroom. The definition given for biblical integration was

Biblical integration is teaching all things with active recognition of God’s character, nature, and work. It is teaching from and toward the reality and glory of God. It is not creating biblical connections, but noting, investigating, and celebrating the connections that already exist through Christ.

A shortened version was also given to the teachers so that they could remember it easily: “Biblical integration is teaching from and toward the glory of God.” All people were made for the Lord’s glory. All created things were likewise designed for that purpose. Therefore, teachers have a great opportunity to show God’s glory to students in all subject matter.

Reading 1 and paper 1. The next element on the checklist was an assigned reading. Teachers were assigned to read part 1 of *Every Bush Is Burning: A Practical Theology for Biblical Integration*.⁹ That book was created by adapting chapters 2 and 3 of this project and combining them with the curriculum that was subsequently developed. Part 1 of *Every Bush Is Burning* is taken from the biblical and theological foundations that were researched for this project.

Upon completing this assigned reading, teachers were to write a two-page paper answering the question, “What is the pastoral role of the teacher?” This question is explored in this part of the book by engaging with Proverbs 1:7, Colossians 1:15-17, and Psalm 19.

⁸Jerry Bridges, *Respectable Sins: Confronting the Sins We Tolerate* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2007), 54.

⁹This book was written and designed for this project and includes foundational information as well as the training materials. Kelly Hayes, *Every Bush Is Burning: A Practical Theology for Biblical Integration* (n.p.: CreateSpace, 2017).

Reading 2 and paper 2. Part 2 of *Every Bush Is Burning* was required as the next part of the CPoE. This portion of the book focuses on the theoretical and practical foundations of biblical integration. Teachers were required to read part 2 and write a two-page paper in response in regard to, “What makes Christian education Christian?” They were introduced to important barriers to effective Christian teaching and ways to overcome them through recognizing and embracing connections between heart and mind, general and special revelation, and word and deed.

Reading 3. In conjunction with *Every Bush Is Burning*, teachers were asked to choose another book to read from a list of six options. Those six books were divided into two categories—the theory of Christian education and the ministry of Christian education. Choosing from these options offered the teachers flexibility to learn more about an area that they were passionate about or in which perceived themselves to have a greater need.

Second Half

The second portion of the checklist was devoted to improving the practice of biblical integration. Teachers attended a six-hour training which would help them start to become incarnational intentional instigators.¹⁰ Teachers who had already completed their CPoE, were still asked to attend this training and would earn one Continuing Education Unit (CEU) upon completion.

Session 1: The Incarnational Teacher. This two-hour session was designed to help develop a healthy view of teaching based on the character and work of Christ. The description of this portion of the course which I wrote, as approved by ACSI, says,

Become a teacher who embodies Christ by taking the form of a servant. Learn to show love to students by knowing them and showing them the Good News. This

¹⁰All training content available in appendix 5, “Curriculum Articles.”

type of worldview living is a foundational component effective worldview teaching. Biblical integration starts with Christ-like love.¹¹

At the end of this session, participants designed a “Servant Teacher Job Description.” This short assignment created opportunity to investigate the role and work of Christ as the ultimate servant and teacher. With the Lord in view, teachers would re-wrote their own job descriptions with a servant-teacher focus.

Session 2: The Intentional Teacher. This two-hour session was designed to help teachers know how to handle Scripture faithfully and plan their courses effectively. The description from the CPoE checklists is as follows:

Learn to intentionally plan your courses and units from and toward the glory and reality of God. Grow in your ability to design and assess biblically integrated courses and rightly handle Scripture. This is hands-on help in doing efficient, effective, and faithful integration.¹²

The assignment at the close of this session was for each teacher to create an integrated syllabus for a course that they taught. Special attention was paid to moving biblical integration out of the null curriculum in the course description.

Session 3: The Instigating Teacher. This final two-hour session helped teachers design healthy worldview conflict for their classroom. They learned to bring non-Christian ideas and ideals into contrast with what Christianity teaches so that students could be challenged and strengthened while within the Christian school environment. The course goals stated,

Learn to stretch and strengthen students by revealing conflict between the Christian worldview and other ways of looking at life. You will discover how to invite them into the fray within the safety of the classroom so that they can struggle and apprehend the truth by recognizing and appropriating it for themselves. Learn to go beyond giving answers to helping students get them for themselves.¹³

¹¹See appendix 6, “Alternative CPoE Checklist.”

¹²See appendix 6.

¹³Ibid.

The final project in this session was for teachers to consider what worldview conflict might exist in their subject area. They designed specific “course conflict questions” to make sure that those ideas would arise in class.

Goal 3: Increase Knowledge by Implementing a Training for Teachers

With the curriculum designed and approved, the next step was to put it into practice. The curriculum was implemented in two distinct opportunities environments.

ACSI PD Forum

During the ACSI Professional Development Forum, which took place on October 12-13, 2017, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, the first implementation took place in a three-session track on biblical integration. This conference was one week before the training would take place at The King’s Academy, allowing for a meaningful dress rehearsal of sorts.

Attendance was high in each of the three sessions with many educators returning to participate in all three. The sessions were 75 minutes long with a significant portion of the time devoted to interactive learning activities such as discussion and practice.

The King’s Academy Teacher Training

On October 19-20, 2017, the second implementation took place—a six-hour training called “Every Bush Is Burning” at The King’s Academy. This training was the major implementation element of this project. Over the two days, teachers learned to become “incarnational intentional instigators.”

On October 19, 2017, three hours were allotted for this program. Therefore, participants completed training 1 and half of training 2. The next day, training 2 and training 3 were completed.

Post-Training Questionnaire

Upon completing all three sessions, a census of all the high school teachers who had attended the event in its entirety were given the same questionnaire that was used the previous year. Upon gathering these results, it was possible to gauge the effectiveness of this training for high school teachers at The King's Academy.

The results of this survey show significant improvement concerning a unified understanding of the nature and meaning of biblical integration, satisfaction with training in this area, and perceived preparedness to effectively practice it. Some of the pre-training research questions have been employed to demonstrate the effect of the project on high school teachers at The King's Academy.

What do teachers understand biblical integration to be now? There was great diversity in the responses given concerning the definition of biblical integration on the initial questionnaire. In the first questionnaire, no two answers were alike, but in the second survey, 8 of 15 teachers defined biblical integration using the same phrase—teaching from and toward the glory of God. That number represents over half of the teachers who took the survey. There was a significant departure from definitions focused on relating and applying biblical truth to specific lessons. Instead, teachers conveyed that biblical integration was related to a broader course design than individual lessons. In addition, teaching biblical worldview or Christian truth was mentioned more than teaching the Bible in the context of other classes.

With greater consistency concerning what biblical integration is, the school is in a better position to practice it effectively. There has been significant improvement in agreement on definition. With the same aims in mind, teachers now understand better what they are looking to accomplish. Ambiguity has been diminished.

What is the level of teacher satisfaction and confidence now? Upon completing the formal training, there was a statistically significant improvement ($t_{(26)} = 4.32, p = .0001$) in satisfaction in the training that The King's Academy provided

concerning biblical integration. Table 3 compares teachers' responses to the statement, "I am satisfied with the training in biblical integration I have received at The King's Academy," pre and post training.

Table 3. "I am satisfied with my training"—comparison

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
Pre	0%	23.1%	15.4%	46.2%	15.4%	0%
Post	0%	0%	0%	13.3%	33.3%	53.3%

The most striking measure of improvement is in the "strongly agree" area. While no high school teachers indicated strong satisfaction before the training, more than half were highly satisfied after completing the training program. Another significant change is that over one-third of teachers did not agree that they were at all satisfied with their training before going through the "Every Bush Is Burning" program. However, afterward, no teachers indicated that they were unsatisfied.

Table 4 shows that over 93 percent are confident in their abilities to practice biblical integration after the training. While the results may appear to indicate improvement, the survey showed no statistically significant difference ($t_{(26)} = 1.30, p = .1032$) in teacher confidence.

Table 4. "I am confident in my abilities"—comparison

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
Pre	0%	15.4%	0%	38.5%	38.5%	7.7%
Post	0%	0%	6.7%	33.3%	40%	20%

There are a number of possible explanations for the lack of evidence for improvement, however, based on the fact that only 23.1 percent of teachers had any formal training related to biblical integration before this training, it is likely that some teachers may have overestimated their own abilities. Biblical integration is recognized as an

essential task in Christian education, so some teachers may have confused experience with ability.

The other research questions used in the assessment phase are no longer directly applicable because the training implemented in this project has replaced much of the previous system concerning training teachers in integration. The “Every Bush Is Burning” training will be a major part of the ongoing effort to onboard new teachers and refresh experienced ones at The King’s Academy. In addition, with a shift in methodology, over time, effective biblical integration will no longer be directly assessed based on individual lesson plans. Rather, overall course design, unit planning, assessments, and conflict questions will be emphasized. Teachers will continue to input integration goals in their daily lesson plans, but they will be based on larger, continuing goals.

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT EVALUATION

The previous chapter explained the processes through which teachers at The King’s Academy were equipped for biblical integration. The aim of this chapter is to evaluate the project and reflect on the experience. The evaluation aims to weigh the results of the project against the stated goals. Notable strengths, weaknesses, and future adjustments are noted here. The close of this chapter includes brief theological and personal reflections.

Evaluation of the Purpose

“The mission of The King’s Academy is to produce academic, social and physical excellence through a program where minds and hearts are coming fully alive in Christ.”¹ All curricular and co-curricular activities must be evaluated as either working toward or against this stated mission. The practice of biblical integration leverages all academic content toward the school’s stated mission and, therefore, is a necessary task. The school exists as an entity of Christian education. The purpose of this project—equipping teachers for biblical integration—is helpful in growing the school in faithfulness toward its own identity and stated mission. An evaluation of quantitative and qualitative data demonstrates that this purpose was accomplished.

Evaluation of the Goals

The first goal of the project was to describe the situation regarding biblical integration as it was before the training—the needs, weaknesses, and related issues were

¹The King’s Academy, “The Mission of TKA,” accessed October 25, 2017, <http://www.tkaflorence.com/index.php/about-tka-menu-toplevel/missionoftka-menu-abouttka>

assessed. Assessment was necessary in evaluating where to go next. The situation needed to be understood in order to plot a course toward improvement. A broad and accurate view was acquired through accessing qualitative and quantitative data through a teacher survey, an interview with the administrator overseeing integration, and a content analysis of lesson plans.

The second goal was to prescribe solutions to those struggles and provide a resource for greater understanding and skill. This goal was accomplished through the development of a curricular resource and training for communicating the purpose and process of biblical integration. After needs were described, solutions were prescribed. The training that was developed was approved by ACSI as an alternative CPoE program, which shows that it meets this recognized accreditor's standards for a core credentialing requirement.

The final goal was to enhance teacher understanding and performance through training and practice. The implementation of a training for teachers that focused on the practice of biblical integration was an excellent way of equipping teachers in the school setting so that teachers could apprehend and apply that information appropriately. Qualitative and quantitative data compiled through a questionnaire administered to teachers shows significant improvement in some areas. An interview with the Head of School who attended the training also provided helpful feedback.

The questionnaire results were clear in indicating greater consistency in defining biblical integration. Over half of the teachers defined biblical integration in a nearly identical way. The Head of School also indicated that the "Every Bush Is Burning" training helped clarify a definition and vision of integration for the school that could be helpful for years to come.

Teachers shared on the questionnaire that they were more satisfied with their training on the topic of biblical integration²; however, the results did not show statistically significant improvement in confidence in practicing integration.³ It is likely that improved instrumentation in the questionnaire could have added clarity to these results. For example, it may have been helpful to ask several questions about the same topic with slight variations. This type of questioning could have given a fuller representation of the facts and more usable data. The fact that teachers were clearly more satisfied with the training would seem to indicate that they feel better trained. However, their recognition of improved training does not carry over to a measure of improved confidence.

Qualitative data indicates that this tension exists because the teachers were confident in accomplishing integration as they understood it at the time. They did not know what they did not know. The post-training interview with the Head of School was enlightening in this regard. He shared that he had been familiar with models of biblical integration in the past that were cumbersome and overly time-consuming, but the “Every Bush is Burning” training helped him understand a more effective and efficient model. In the past, he was aware of lesson-based integration that needed to be custom-built for each day’s instruction. However, upon being taught to design integration with the whole course in mind by using the syllabus, unit-planning, and conflict questions, he understood that there was a better way. A particular example of integrating the sport of cross country by using the question, “Why do we run?” was especially impactful. The high school cross country team had experienced a season’s worth of quality biblical integration that was generated from that singular question. There was no need to try to generate new

²There was a statistically significant difference ($t_{(26)} = 4.32, p = .0001$) in satisfaction in the training on biblical integration that The King’s Academy provided.

³The survey showed no statistically significant difference ($t_{(26)} = 1.30, p = .1032$) in teacher confidence.

connections for each practice when one strong area of integration could be explored for a significant period of time. While the head of school had previously been confident in his abilities, he was unaware of some of the best ways to use them.

This new vision of whole-course integration struck a chord with teachers at the ACSI PD Forum as well. Educators were excited about moving biblical integration directly into the syllabi and creating healthy conflict within the course. Many had never thought about starting integration at the level of course design so that students would see the integration aims from the start. One attendee stated, “This is not so much increasing the distance as it is changing the direction of the race.” She was enthusiastic about seeing that a Christian school could be active in aligning courses with discipleship purposes without sacrificing academic quality.

Goal 3 of this project was to improve teacher understanding and practice, and confidence is only one measure of this. Adjusted course descriptions in syllabi provide additional qualitative data. The following adjusted course description from Math 7 is representative of progress made. The italicized portion was added during a practical component of the training.

This course will focus on mathematical concepts that are foundational for success in Algebra 1. Course will cover algebraic expressions, integers, algebraic equations, decimals, fractions, ratios, proportions, percentages, linear and non-linear functions. *Math is created by God and has been given to us for the purpose of thinking logically, reasoning, solving problems, creating order out of chaos, discovering the potential dangers, understanding and describing the way math appears in creation, and allowing us to view things with a new perspective on how math is used in real life.*⁴

This course description provides a picture of the enhanced worldview thinking that teachers acquired. Next are some course objectives that were added to English 4 Honors as a result of the training:

God’s Word is filled with literary devices; studying literary devices with various pieces of literature not only gives us a better understanding of those works, but also of God’s Word

⁴Tammy Moreau, “Math 7 Course Description Draft, 2017.” This description was constructed with the help of several other middle and high school math teachers.

History shapes our world. Everything we do is because of the history before us. God's history is important for Christians. The paths that the Israelites took still impact our way of thinking today. We tend to wander from God, even when he knows that His way is best. Learning about others' history helps us to better understand their culture and decisions.

Researching new things helps us to understand more about our world and our culture. An understanding of these things helps us to be better equipped to share the gospel. The goal is to be able to relate to different people.⁵

Reading course descriptions and objectives like these demonstrate improved understanding and practice of biblical integration.

In light of these results, each of the three goals was accomplished. An assessment was completed, and the collected data was measurable. The curriculum was developed and approved by the ACSI. The training was implemented and outcomes were measured through a survey. The results of that survey indicated significant improvement in teacher satisfaction in the training they received. Qualitative information indicates that understanding and practice were enhanced as well. In sum, the project's individual goals were accomplished successfully.

Strengths of the Project

The project had at least four major strengths. First, the project brought unity to the school concerning the definition, importance, and goal of biblical integration. Teachers and staff were able to agree that biblical integration is teaching from and toward the glory of God. With this definition in mind, the school could work on shaping their courses appropriately. This definition assisted in helping some teachers, especially in math and science, enhance their vision for integration. Teachers were able to grasp the central role of integration in their work and this definition invigorated them. This information fanned the flames of their passion for loving Christ and his people through Christian education.

The project's next strength was the manageable framework provided in the training. When teachers were introduced to course-based integration, rather than lesson-

⁵Ashley Nolette, "English 4 Honors Syllabus Draft, 2017."

based, they felt relieved and empowered. The amount of work required to put integration together in a piecemeal fashion is extreme. Many teachers felt exhausted from using that model. The ideas they could integrate into their syllabi and units on the front end removed some of the frustration that they had felt in the past. Further, many were intrigued by the concept of integrating assessments to help train students and ensure quality integration at the same time.

At The King's Academy, teachers were most excited about designing an integrated syllabus with their department. After viewing an example of an integrated syllabus, many were highly invested in working together with a team to develop integrated course designs. Some would have been glad to spend the next several hours working on this activity because they recognized its importance in their ability to accomplish their mission within the Christian school. The light had come on.

Third, the investment of time in teaching teachers about how to properly read and use Scripture was valuable. The discussion concerning biblical interpretation was lively. Many teachers were not aware of some crucial elements of exegesis and hermeneutics. As they were introduced to some of the more common mistakes made when reading the Bible, some struggled because these habits were ingrained in their thinking and practice. However, this training was an excellent starting point. Teachers saw some serious issues related to biblical interpretation and acquired tools to begin to practice it faithfully. They grasped that biblical integration could only be as effective as biblical interpretation.

Finally, the attitude of encouragement was a strength of the project. Rather than pointing out issues and struggles, much of the discussion focused on improvement and development. Some instructors were glad to see that biblical integration was relational as much as informational. The idea of the teacher as a servant was challenging to teachers and staff. Students can often be difficult and, at times, they view the teacher as a servant in unhealthy ways. However, after examining the life and work of Christ as the ultimate

servant, teachers became excited about the chance to emulate Him as they serve the students. They recognized the opportunity in setting an example and loving through service.

The idea of intentionally introducing worldview conflict was another encouraging area. Many teachers have seen students graduate or leave the Christian school context without being able to interact with non-Christian ideas that are prevalent in culture. In Christian culture, teachers are sometimes worried that their students may not even be aware of many of critical worldview issues. The training gave teachers ideas on creating opportunity to help students know what to expect in the larger world, and strengthen them to stand firm.

The administration was also encouraged by the attitude behind the project. In fact, the Head of School offered each department the opportunity to take a half-day off from teaching to continue working on their integrated syllabi, unit plans, and conflict questions.

Weaknesses of the Project

The post-training questionnaire did not show statistically significant improvement in the teachers' confidence in implementing integration. As mentioned, this is likely because teachers did not have a rich understanding of biblical integration before the training and, therefore, were overconfident in their abilities. Enhanced methods of assessment could have helped in this area. One option would have been to ask the same type of question in multiple ways before and after the training. Multiple queries into confidence would have allowed for triangulation and improvement of accuracy. Another possibility would have been to simply add a question to the post-training survey that asked, "Are you more confident of your ability to practice biblical integration?" or "To what degree has this training affected your confidence in your ability to practice biblical integration?" Thankfully, qualitative data was collected along with quantitative to show improvement.

Three other significant difficulties created weaknesses in implementing this project—staff turnover, the timing of the training within the school year, and the time constraints of teacher workdays. The fact that many members of the staff and faculty at The King’s Academy change regularly limited the ability to assess development. For example, since many teachers were new in 2017, it was not possible to employ a paired *t*-test when examining survey results. The amount of turnover also has an effect on long-term training. Teachers are just learning the culture, practices, and information needed to be successful when they move on to something else, which means that the biblical integration training implemented this year will likely be needed again every year.

The fact that this training on biblical integration was scheduled for October caused some difficulty as well. A large component of the program has to do with course design, but it is hard to adjust the design of a class that it is currently in progress. Some of the changes that teachers want to make will not be fully implemented until the beginning of the next school year. It may have been better to offer this training at the end of the year to prepare teachers for the upcoming year. Another option would be to offer it during the in-service week in August. Offering the training in August would allow teachers to make needed adjustments before beginning their courses for the year.

Finally, the “Every Bush Is Burning” training would be more effective if it were offered incrementally. Training 1 and training 2 flowed together well, but time was needed before moving on to training 3. The amount of effort required in developing an integrated syllabus is too great and time-consuming to be followed by more substantial work in other areas. Teachers were not fully prepared to move into training 3 when it was offered. Ideally, the first two trainings could be offered in August, as mentioned, and training 3 could be offered later in the school year.

What I Would Do Differently

As reported, the implementation of the training went well, and the results are encouraging. Teachers are better equipped to accomplish the mission of the school.

However, some elements I would do differently if I conducted this project again. Most practically, I would make adjustments to the instrumentation used to collect quantitative data. The questionnaire did not show statistically significant improvement in one area, and I think that is avoidable.

In addition, reflecting on the project as a whole has brought to light more foundational questions and ideas regarding the foundations of Christian education, administrative processes, and the cross-cultural location of integration. I want to look more fully into these three areas in order to make the training the best it would be. In fact, it is likely that I will investigate these in order to develop a follow-up event for teachers and staff who completed the training conducted as a part of this project.

Foundations

Much has been written on biblical integration that deals with what it is, why it is important, and how to accomplish it. However, it is apparent that continuing work is required to examine the philosophical underpinnings of the practice. Biblical integration is vital to truly Christian education, but that confidence leads me to look for areas to strengthen the foundations. For example, a great deal of integration strategy rests on Francis Schaeffer's corrective concerning a two-story view of reality.⁶ With his views as support, many educators seek to use biblical integration as a means of teaching the Christian worldview and as a means of understanding all of life.⁷ I agree with this kind of teaching and consider it to be healthy, but that does not mean that further investigation is not warranted. Sometimes, it can be good to visit the doctor for a check-up. This does not imply sickness, but is wise to preserve health.

⁶Bryan Smith, "Biblical Integration: Pitfalls and Promise," accessed September 28, 2017, <http://www.bjupress.com/images/pdfs/bible-integration.pdf>, 1.

⁷Ibid., 2

Schaeffer was undoubtedly a major force behind worldview education. Barry Hankins points out that, while many Christians were isolating from the culture, “Schaeffer spoke a message of cultural and intellectual engagement that was unlike anything most college-age young people had heard, and it was invigorating.”⁸ This manner of integrated thinking motivated many Christians to pursue teaching and scholarship. That, in turn, resulted in a push for worldview-integrated education that continues even today. However, Schaeffer has never been without critique—some of it healthy. Jack Rogers notes that Schaeffer believed that “nature and the Bible are both systems which cross-reference so that we may enjoy a complete system of knowledge.”⁹ However, the Bible does not claim that creation and Scripture come together to form a complete system of knowledge. Scripture does speak to special and general revelations as conduits for knowledge, but never as a complete system. If the foundations of biblical integration are based on ideas that are not completely sound, more investigation is warranted.

Christian education is on a largely good path, but more development is needed. To illustrate, long before there were advances in medicine related to germs and microbiology, there was an understanding that disease was often related to a problem in the blood. This right knowledge led to unhealthy practices like bloodletting. It is not enough for Christian educators to be on the right road. Educators want to have healthy practice, which takes hard work and continued investigation.

In some cases, the field of Christian education may have sacrificed healthy inquiry at the altar of pragmatism. It is clear that biblical integration, as it is practiced in many schools today, is having positive results. However, the fact it is working well in some ways and in some areas, does not free educators from the responsibility of improving

⁸Barry Hankins, “‘I’m Just Making a Point’: Francis Schaeffer and the Irony of Faithful Christian Scholarship,” *Fides et Historia* 39, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2007): 18.

⁹Jack Rogers, “Francis Schaeffer: The Promise and the Problem,” *The Reformed Journal* 27, no. 5 (May 1977): 15.

and growing. For example, I wonder if there has been too much emphasis on Western tradition, vocational goals, and modern school methods. Is biblical integration being used, at times, as a way to massage cultural idols into Christian educational practice? I love schools and the structure that they provide. Yet, these loves should not keep educators from asking hard questions.

The vision for education has shifted and swayed wildly in the recent past.¹⁰ In the United States, it has been largely shaped and determined by non-Christian leaders and schools. Should Christian educators be willing to uncritically accept the heritage of education that has been handed to them, or do they have a deeper calling? The effective practice of biblical integration, as is often practiced today, is based on the assumption of segregating subjects and disintegrating disciplines.

In integrating the biblical worldview with science, one may quickly question, “Shouldn’t history be integrated as well?” After all, there is no science apart from the history of science. In teaching about origins in a biology class, there is also instruction in history, anthropology, family, vocation, and more. Biblical integration appears to lead to wide interdisciplinarity. As A. A. Hodge said in 1886, “All truth in all spheres is organically one and vitally inseparable.”¹¹ There are no separate truths, but only elements of the whole. Just as there is only one, singular “fruit of the Spirit” (Gal 5:22-23), which is comprised of love, joy, peace, patience, and more, there is only one, singular truth. Every true thing is a part of the larger whole. If this understanding were to impact teaching more, then multi-subject integration may become normative practice across subjects and disciplines, and biblical integration may be helped considerably.

¹⁰Louis Menand’s *The Marketplace of Ideas* contains evidence. For example, Charles William Eliot, president of Harvard University, eliminated all required undergraduate courses other than first-year English and a foreign language requirement in 1899. Near the same time, there were no grades or exams at Harvard Law School. Louis Menand, *The Marketplace of Ideas: Reform and Resistance in the American University* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2010), locs. 401-20, Kindle.

¹¹A. A. Hodge, “Appendix: A. A. Hodge on the Future of Public Education (1886),” in *Perspectives on Your Child’s Education: 4 Views*, ed. Timothy Paul Jones (Nashville: B & H, 2009), 124.

Examples of this type education are beginning to rise in popularity and acceptance. One that has caught my interest is the INTensive Study of Integrated Global History and Theology (INSIGHT). This is one-year, college-level curriculum is

a cross-disciplinary academic program designed specifically for those who want an integrated understanding of philosophy, science, world religions, culture, and faith in the global context. Starting from the beginning of history, students study each of these subjects in the time period they developed, providing the foundation for any course of further study they might pursue.¹²

Students completely engage in subjects ranging from sociology and history to Bible and English. Each of these courses is taught as a part of the larger whole so that requirements for each course are completed in conjunction with the requirements for other courses. This structure is integrated by nature and, therefore, is fertile soil for engaging with worldview topics over a broad range of time, space, and material. What might it look like if biblical integration were more integrated with disciplinary integration?

Administration and Implementation

It is important to keep in mind the ultimate aim of Christian education—discipleship. Are Christian schools seeing discipleship as the primary, and most important aim? Leland Ryken writes, “In one important way, a Christian student’s calling is the same as it is for a Christian in *any* situation of life. It’s central focus is the individual’s relationship with God.”¹³ He continues, “There is no division of life into sacred and secular. For the Christian, *all* of life is sacred.”¹⁴ In light of this reality, are schools hiring people with discipleship most firmly in mind? Are they choosing candidates based on their desire and potential to help students grow close to Christ? Are they fully explaining

¹²Insight, “What Is Insight?,” accessed September 28, 2017, <http://www.yearofinsight.org/index.php/about/overview/what-is-insight/>.

¹³Leland Ryken, “The Student’s Calling,” in *Liberal Arts for the Christian Life*, ed. Jeffrey C. Davis and Philip G. Ryken (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 16.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 17.

that spiritual growth is the primary aim of their institutions when posting job opening and meeting with candidates?

Recently, my school hired a new teacher who had never heard of biblical integration until his first day on the job. He was hired without even hearing about this essential part of the school mission. He knew that he was applying at a Christian school, but did not know what it meant to practice Christian education. Upon discovering a biblical integration requirement, he was intimidated, confused, and unsure of where to start. This experience is likely not an unusual pattern at many Christian schools, but it should be a rarity.

In many cases, effective biblical integration starts with hiring practices. If teachers think that they have signed on to teach history or math instead of using those subjects to teach Christ, they are out of alignment with the goals of the school. It is imperative to clearly articulate the school's expectations concerning the central nature of biblical integration in planning, practice, example, and attitude.

Discipleship is central. It is no coincidence that Deuteronomy 6:4-9 is a call to tie reminders of discipleship priority on hands and heads, and write them on doorframes and gates. In the same way, school leaders must place the mission of distinctly Christian education in clear view—painted on walls, posted on websites, mailed and emailed, spoken and sung. The staff should be reminded regularly. The students should be told directly. Parents should be engaged and challenged to keep this in mind.

Biblical Integration as Ministering Cross-Culturally

Teachers, more than ever, need to recognize that educational ministry is cross-cultural. There may have never been a wider gap between the lives of teachers and their students. In many ways, young people are not a part of the same culture as their parents. They are growing up in a world radically different than that of their parents. The changes wrought by the internet, smartphones, travel advances, cameras, larger chain stores, and

globalization are significant. Lingenfelter and Mayers define cross-cultural ministry as “any ministry in which one interacts with people who have grown up learning values and lifestyle patterns that are different from one’s own.”¹⁵

There are significant cultural differences between generations; however, these differences may not always be generally expected. One example relates to perceptions of young people. Millennials, sometimes called “Generation Me,” are thought by some to be entitled and self-absorbed, but this may be a misunderstanding of that generation’s aim at a well-balanced life.¹⁶ Older generations may place a higher value on work than those who are young, but that does not mean that either group innately values it properly.

Biblical integration must be practiced with cross-cultural sensitivity. Some of the weaknesses in education, including Christian education, stem from treating school ministry as if it is fundamentally the same as it was a generation ago. The world is different, students are different, and their homes and parents are different. This means engagement with them must be different as well.

One major difference across generations is that older people tend to be more religious than those who are younger.¹⁷ Among the young, Bible knowledge and biblical literacy are often limited.¹⁸ Access to varying views, including those from an anti-Christian perspective, is easy. Respect for religious authority or truth is often diminished.

¹⁵Sherwood C. Lingenfelter and Marvin K. Mayers, *Ministering Cross-Culturally: A Model for Effective Personal Relationships* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016), locs. 78-88, Kindle.

¹⁶Uracha Chatrakul, Na Ayudhya, and Janet Smithson, “Entitled or Misunderstood? Towards the Repositioning of the Sense of Entitlement Concept in the Generational Difference Debate,” *Community, Work & Family* 19, no. 2 (April 2016): 213-26.

¹⁷Vern L. Bengtson et al., “Does Religiousness Increase with Age? Age Changes and Generational Differences over 35 Years,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 54, no. 2 (May 2015): 364.

¹⁸Josh McDowell, *Beyond Belief to Convictions* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2002), 9.

Teachers could easily fall into the trap of creating biblically-integrated material that would be wonderfully effective with other adults—those who are most like them. However, teachers are not educating adults. Therefore, biblical integration needs to be positioned as a part of cross-cultural ministry work. A number of books and articles are written about the uniqueness of youth culture, the forces impacting, and where it might lead.¹⁹ Many of these books focus on discipleship. These ideals need to be brought more fully to bear on the work being done on biblical integration.

Theological Reflections

Proverbs 1:7 declares that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Biblical integration is a means of journeying toward that healthy fear. Proverbs 2:1-5 explains the process:

My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding—indeed, if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.

The Christian educator is listening to the Lord, storing his commands, and working to understand. The biblical integrator is calling out for insight and searching for true understanding. The quest for a truly Christian educational experience is like pursuing hidden treasure. The process may be long and the travels may be challenging, but the end is worth it—the fear of the Lord and the knowledge of God. Colossian 1:15-17 makes clear that all things hold together in Christ. This is an eternal truth. However, the journey of the teacher is to discover, note, and celebrate the connections that exist in Him.

I have come to see that the artificial divide between sacred and secular is wider and deeper than I previously would have thought. Bringing up the idea of distinctly

¹⁹Some of these include Kara Powell, Jake Mulder, and Brad Griffen, *Growing Young* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016); Andrew Root, *Bonhoeffer as Youth Worker* by (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014); John Stonestreet and Brett Kunkle, *A Practical Guide to Culture* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2017); Chap Clark, *Hurt 2.0* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011).

Christian education to Christian friends has sometimes been met with skepticism. The church in this culture seems to think in terms of vocational education, liberal education, and Christian education as if they are separate entities. The thesis I proposed in chapter 2—the teacher has a pastoral role—is not readily accepted in many arenas. There continues to be a line between discipleship and education in the minds of many believers. It is necessary for Christian leaders to point to distinctly Christian education as something real, worthwhile, and desirable—true, good, and beautiful.

Psalm 19 shows God’s world and God’s Word as married messengers of God. Biblical integration is a project in seeing and showing the world as it is. The aim in that is seeing and showing God for who He is. I am more convinced than ever that Christian education is valuable, but I am also more convinced that it is often misunderstood.

Personal Reflections

Throughout the completion of this project I have grown in my understanding of the value of education. More specifically, I have come to see the central role of education in the mission of God. Paul wrote that the church exists because “the manifold wisdom of God should be made known . . . according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph 3:10). Henry Sell explains the educational role of the church:

One of the great functions of the church is to teach men how to worship God; to do this they must have right thoughts about God. . . . Men must be led in their worship by a proper exposition of the Scriptures, by prayer and by praise. Men not only need to be urged to be true to their consciences, but their consciences need to be informed.²⁰

Christian education is a product of God’s church. The church is an educational institution and teachers, along with parents, pastors, and other believers, have been chosen

²⁰Henry Thorne Sell, *Studies in Early Church History* (Willow Grove, PA: Woodlawn Electronic, 1998), n.p.

by God to educate—teaching others to obey everything Christ commanded (Matt 28:20). This is a high and serious calling.

It is necessary to take teaching and educational methodology more seriously. It is a tragedy that some sound theologians are poor teachers. It is improper that Sunday School classes are packed with people, but are void of quality education. It is inappropriate for Christian schools to be unable to express their Christian beliefs well through the content. My eyes have been opened to the need for the church to press into its educational role more fully and faithfully.

Conclusion

This project was an exciting journey. When I began the initial research, I was unaware of much of the world that I was going to encounter. The world of Christian education is diverse and its needs are wide-ranging. Interacting with the biblical and theological content of chapter 2 was simultaneously inspiring and discouraging. It was wonderful to see clarity in God’s Word, but frustrating to see the confusion, lack of passion, or idolatry that is apparent in many areas of Christian education. Chapter 3 was exciting for me. Diving into the diverse creative projects, learning activities, and instructional practices in education and discipleship was eye-opening.

I am glad to have been able to publish much of my work on Amazon for others to read and use. Positive reviews and comments have been an encouragement to press on. Further, the training at the ACSI PD Forum showed that there was hunger for this kind of work outside of my local context. I hope to offer the “Every Bush Is Burning” training again at my school and elsewhere. While I am glad to have finished this stage of study, I look forward to more. I pray that this project will be used to equip Christian schools for greater fidelity, and that it will serve as a springboard for me to continue to encourage and assist the educational aims of the church in the future.

APPENDIX 1

BIBLICAL INTEGRATION RUBRIC

<i>criteria</i>	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
CATEGORY 1: Scripture SCORE _____	Not present	Referenced, weak connection	Appropriate, accurate application	Applied Foundationally to understanding of topic at hand
CATEGORY 2: Worldview Implications or Applications SCORE _____	Not present	Limited, minimal	Moderate connection to the Christian life	Engaged thoughtfully with the Christian life
CATEGORY 3: Connection to Lesson Content SCORE _____	Not connected, separated, tacked on	Minimal, weak connection	Moderate connection	Naturally and fully connected with topic

AVG. SCORE _____/4

- 1= INSUFFICIENT
- 2= NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
- 3= SUFFICIENT
- 4= PROFICIENT

Requirements from TKA administration:

Biblical integration- should be written for each lesson. BI should be more than just a scripture reference. Thought provoking questions should be asked. Leading students to see the world as Christ sees it and what His purposes are for all humanity.

APPENDIX 2
QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Please describe what you understand biblical integration to be.

2. Have you had any formal training in biblical integration?
Mark only one oval.
 Yes
 No
3. Please describe the ways that the King's Academy has equipped you for biblical integration.

4. I am satisfied with the training in biblical integration I have received at the King's Academy.
Mark only one oval.
 Strongly Disagree
 Disagree
 Disagree Somewhat
 Agree Somewhat
 Agree
 Strongly Agree
5. I am confident in my ability to effectively practice biblical integration.
Mark only one oval.
 Strongly Disagree
 Disagree
 Disagree Somewhat
 Agree Somewhat
 Agree
 Strongly Agree

Interview Questions

1. Describe the method for ensuring effective biblical integration in teaching at the King's Academy.
 - a. Is there a formalized or systematic plan in place?
 - b. What is the plan for teachers to grow in biblical integration from year to year?

2. Describe the process for training new teachers in biblical integration?
 - a. Is this the ideal training process? Are there changes that you would like to see?
 - b. At what point are teachers fully equipped? How is this assessed?

3. Describe how effective do you perceive biblical integration training to be at the King's Academy.
 - a. Are there specific barriers to effectiveness?
 - b. Do you think the school is trending in a particular direction concerning effectiveness?

APPENDIX 3

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Barbara Osterrieder, Upper School Principal,
The King's Academy, Florence, South Carolina
August 2, 2016

KH: Thanks for agreeing to participate in this interview. I would like to record this interview using video technology, but I need your consent to do so. Do I have your permission for me to record a video of this interview?

BO: Yes, you do.

KH: Thank you. I would also like to remind you that you are free to opt out of any question or stop the interview at any time. Okay, let's get into it. I'm just going to ask some open-ended questions and feel free to respond with whatever you think is appropriate. So the first question is... or the first ask is... Describe the method for ensuring effective biblical integration in teaching at the King's Academy.

BO: At this point in time, what we're able to do is monitor lesson plans and then we have observations...

KH: Is there a formalized or systematic plan for how you look at the lesson plans or do the observations to that end?

BO: No.

KH: Okay. And is there anything in place to kind of help teachers grow in how they grow in biblical integration from year to year or over time?

BO: We have sent teachers to Bob Jones – different conferences that they have help on biblical worldview and biblical integration. So that's where they have gotten the "formal training." We've had one training session here at the school. I think it was about a half hour or so during our in-service last year. And then during some staff meetings, when teachers came back from the Bob Jones conferences they talked about and presented what they had learned

KH: So passing on what they learned (yes) themselves to the rest of the staff. (Mhmm) Alright. Can you describe the process for training new teachers in biblical integration?

BO: Probably what we will do is have Sandy Hill (the one that did the presentation last year) and probably during the beginning of the school year sometime – I was going to say during the in-service – but I don't if we'll have time to do it then. But very early in the school year – maybe have her repeat that presentation to anyone who wants to hear it again or to new teachers who haven't heard it before.

KH: Okay. And is this what is view as the ideal training process? Or are there any specific changes that you would like to see in how new teachers are trained in biblical integration?

BO: I would say absolutely not – it's not ideal. I believe that we're just at the very infancy stages. I think that people have a preconceived notion that because it's a school, we're Christian teachers, some of our curriculum is strictly Christian, that we do a great job of biblical integration. But I don't believe that that's true. I think that it has to be more intentional. And I think that people need to really understand what it is. And I don't think we've done a great job of that so far. I mean this is just my third year here and it was evident to me at the very beginning that it wasn't where it needed to be. So we're just at this point evaluating what we need to do. We talked about, just a couple minutes ago, about biblical worldview. We're all Christians. We all claim to have a personal relationship with Christ, but do we all have a biblical worldview? To what degree do we have a biblical worldview. And so I think that that would be good self-awareness for people. We say that we want our students to have a biblical worldview, but if we're not modeling it, if parents aren't modeling it, the world certainly is not modeling it, then the kids aren't going to see it. I just think that we need to understand where we are at and work on that as individuals, as teachers, before the kids. And then learn the head knowledge of, "How do I teach this?" Especially, if it's not something that you have. You have to make a deliberate decision – do I want to have a biblical worldview? Do I want to grow my biblical worldview? And then how am I going to do that? And then how am I going to share what I know with the students?

KH: At what point in the process does the school look at teachers as being fully equipped in this area? Or is there an assessment to determine if a teacher is being successful, or equipped even, to be successful in biblical integration?

BO: We don't have anything formally right now to evaluate that. I think we're focusing on the folks who are going to be doing the evaluations. You know, the lead teachers, the directors, division directors, the administrators. Like I said, I think it's just such a low-level, infancy stage of this that we don't have any of the tools in place that we need. And I even know that we know exactly what tools we need to have in place yet to evaluate that.

KH: Can you describe how effective you perceive biblical integration training to be here at the King's Academy with what's in place?

BO: I would say it's minimally effective just because we haven't had enough of it. We don't have any way to really assess it yet. Now when I say we don't have anything formal for the lesson plans or what not, I think I emailed you, and I don't remember what the details on that were, but we're not looking for just a Bible verse or a Bible story. What we're looking for is a way for the teacher to describe to the student the character of God, his creation, mankind, God's purpose, our purpose, and moral order. And so those are the five elements that we look for in biblical integration. I think pretty much everything could be categorized into one of those five. Or it's obviously going to bleed over into other of those. But until we really get into the nitty-gritty of teaching it, and sometimes we teach by what it's not. I think the Bob Jones model has three different levels or four different levels of BI. I'd say at the most our teachers are probably at level one and two just because they're not aware. SO making them aware is the first point.

KH: Along with awareness and just growing the general understanding of biblical integration, can you think of any other specific barriers to effectiveness in biblical

integration here at TKA? Is there anything besides that or is that the main thing?

BO: I would say that a barrier could be that it's going to be work. It's going to take a lot of effort because you're not only learning the academic material and presenting in a way that's done with excellence and creating assessments and everything else that goes with it that all schools should be doing. But a Christian schools has then the added responsibility of biblical integration. So now the teacher has to learn their biblical worldview, understand what is it about that lesson that I can draw a connection to God, to mankind, to moral order, to purpose, to his creation... so it's almost like two lessons in one. And so I think the barrier is going to be, people are going to realize it's a lot of work. And there could be some resistance to that depending upon how we want it to manifest itself in a lesson plan. Is it going to be a totally different? Is a lesson plan going to look totally different? Are we going to expect biblical integration every day of the week? It can't just be spontaneous. It has to be intentional or you could just miss a lot of really great opportunities. I think that it's going to impact the curriculum that we use moving forward. While we can have great teaching moments by teaching "this is what the world teaches and why is not biblical," I think for the most part we're going to have to be very careful about our adoption of curriculum and how the world has rewritten history and the examples that are going to be in there and the underlying philosophy in it. My estimation would be that moving forward, we would only be purchasing, for the most part, Christian materials. Because otherwise, it's just going to a constant battle. Or maybe not. That's not my final decision.

KH: Do you think that the school is trending in a particular direction concerning effectiveness in BI and in BI training? Is it staying even, getting better, or worse?

BO: I can't speak to the past. I mean the school has been in existence – this will be our twenty-seventh school year and this will be only be my third. But I would say that, probably last year, we turned the page and we are going to be heading toward a more intentional biblical integration. I think that it's going to be a top-down decision. I mean, you're always going to have teachers that are more spiritual than others – different backgrounds, different educations, preparation, things like that. But I think that if the administration sets the standards and says, "This is our expectation and we're willing to work with you wherever you're at. If you're brand new teacher and you haven't come from a Christian college background, or you don't have any training. We're fine with you being here (indicating a low-level), but the expectation is that over the years, you're going to be up here (indicating a higher level)." So I think that's the responsibility of administration just to make sure that it's implemented.

KH: Do you have any final thoughts – things that you think should be known about the situation with BI? Anything interesting, intriguing, or unusual?

BO: I think there are a lot of Christian schools in the world that are Christian in name, but it's my heart's desire for Christian school to truly have a Christian philosophy. And if we're not number one using Christian curriculum and having biblical integration and having those types of discussion and developing students that have a biblical worldview then we're really not a Christian school. So I think it's foundational. I think it's essential. I mean, we're not who we are if we don't do it – not who we say we are.

KH: Thank you very much for taking the time to share.

BO: You're very welcome.

APPENDIX 4

SUMMARY OF APPLIED EMPIRICAL RESEARCH FINDINGS

Lesson Plan Data and Analysis

What is the quality of biblical integration as demonstrated in lesson plans?

This question was answered by means of a content analysis of biblical integration from lesson plans. A week from the 2015-2016 school year was randomly selected and the lesson plans from that week were analyzed. This analysis employed a rubric designed to measure the quality of the biblical integration according the standards expected at the King's Academy. The lowest score possible was 1.0 and the highest was 4.0. The use of Scripture, worldview implications/applications, and connection to the lesson were each rated individually and then averaged together for a total score.

As a whole, the upper school scored a mean of 1.76 and, while the connection to the lesson was the highest scoring area, there was not extreme differentiation between the categories. The weakest area had to do with the use of Scripture itself. This skill is lagging, to some degree, behind engaging with biblical principles and connecting them to the lesson content.

Table A1. Mean integration scores

	Scripture	Worldview	Connection	Overall
All Courses	1.51	1.88	1.89	1.76

While the averages are telling, they do not tell the whole story. For example, language courses scored relatively highly overall. Both Spanish and English classes were above average. However, they scored highly in different areas.

Table A2. Spanish and English course comparison

	Scripture	Worldview	Connection	Overall
Spanish Courses	2.67	3.00	1.33	2.33
English Courses	1.62	2.76	2.93	2.43

Spanish scored high in the areas of Scripture and worldview, but lower in connection. English scored particularly high in worldview and connection, but lower in Scripture. Undoubtedly, there is great diversity in the strengths and needs of teachers. There may also be innate challenges related to particular subjects and disciplines.

A divide related to subject was especially pronounced when looking at science and math subjects against the humanities. The subjects related to humanities generally scored higher than those in science or math.

Table A3. Science and English course comparison

	Scripture	Worldview	Connection	Overall
Science Courses	1.1	1.28	1.18	1.19
English Courses	1.62	2.76	2.93	2.43

Not only did the humanities courses score higher than science or math, they generally scored on the upper end of the comparative spectrum overall, whereas the STEM courses were found on the lower scoring end. This is true across teachers and classes. Therefore, it should be noted that there is some real difference in how the disciplines are being planned, understood, and taught. However, while more apparent in certain areas, all the disciplines taught in the upper school demonstrated a need for improvement. There may be more success in some areas, but the quality in all areas calls for improvement.

Implications

Every area of this case study demonstrated that there is significant room to grow in biblical integration. The questionnaire showed genuine passion for Christian teaching and desire to succeed in it, which is a strong starting point, but development is needed. The most pressing and obvious step would be to improve training. The fact that

many of the teachers expressed the definition of biblical integration differently shows that they are not in full agreement about what they are attempting to accomplish. Along with greater agreement, enhanced training would improve ability and confidence.

The interview portion of the study confirmed the findings of the questionnaire. The need for understanding, aim, and skill development was clearly articulated there. However, the content analysis provided the most direct input on what areas need attention. It is clear that the teachers need support in the use of Scripture, application of worldview, and in practical methods of integration. By the numbers, there is greatest overall weakness in handling, understanding, and applying Scripture.

There was also a noticeable divide in the quality of integration between language or humanities courses and science and math courses. The humanities courses generally scored higher in biblical integration. This may be because Bible is taught, and thought of, as a humanities subject. Training is needed, therefore, to explain that biblical integration is not as much about Bible knowledge as it is about worldview thinking. This understanding can revolutionize the way one thinks. When it was initially grasped by C. S. Lewis, for example, it impacted his thinking and teaching in ways that affected the rest of his life.¹

¹Devin Brown, *A Life Observed: A Spiritual Biography of C. S. Lewis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 139.

APPENDIX 5
CURRICULUM ARTICLES

The following articles were created to be used as a component of the *Every Bush is Burning* training. After building a foundation for biblical integration in Parts 1 & 2, this section of the book is intended to help educators put their understanding into practice.

Teachers will learn to grow into incarnational, intentional instigators—leaders who demonstrate the reality of the Christian faith through their lives, and help their students grow in worldview thinking.

The *Every Bush is Burning* training will help teachers learn how to model, plan, and carry out biblical integration in their classrooms.

Instructions

If you are using this book as a part of the Every Bush Is Burning interactive training, stop reading here. But you should have the book handy when attending the training. You will need it.

If you are using this book apart for the formal training event, read on.

01: Starting with Honesty

There are few knives that cut a Christian educator like seeing students turn from the Christian faith after graduating. It is painful and worrisome. Why does this kind of transition seem so common? Nancy Pearcey relays a story about a young man who “lost [his] faith at an evangelical college.”¹ This student wanted to know how the Christian faith was related to the academic content taught in the college classroom. However, the instructors taught their material just like any secular school would. Math was just math. History was only history. Instructors did not offer a robust biblical worldview in these classes. Pearcey says that this story “reflects an all-too-common pattern today.”²

While Christian teachers often believe what C. S. Lewis articulated by saying, “Every bush (could we but perceive it) is a Burning Bush,”³ without biblical integration, students are not equipped to see and understand God’s glory and purpose for his world. How many students are rejecting the Person and plan of Christ because we are not effectively practicing biblical integration? Many. And I am confident that the number is much higher than just those who have turned fully or thoughtfully from the faith. Many are not rejecting as much as they are disconnecting. And this is equally tragic. Drift can also lead to drowning.

Pearcey tells of another individual who had not engaged thoughtfully with worldview questions. Instead, she had isolated in order to keep herself safe. She did not study and weigh other truth claims and ways of life. Therefore, Pearcey shares, “Because she had never studied their ideas, she had no grid to recognize and reject them.”⁴ Her lack

¹Nancy Pearcey, *Finding Truth: 5 Principles for Unmasking Atheism, Secularism, and Other God Substitutes* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2015), 21.

²*Ibid.*, 22.

³C. S. Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer* (Orlando: Harcourt, 1963), 75.

⁴Pearcey, *Finding Truth*, 53.

of interaction and understanding had allowed her to unknowingly inject non-Christian ideas and values into her life. She was turning away without even knowing it.

Craig Groeschel wrote a book entitled, *The Christian Atheist: Believing in God but Living as If He Doesn't Exist*. The subtitle offers the definition of a term that is embodied in many Christian schools. Christian Atheism can be rightly seen as the direct opposite of biblical integration. It is compartmentalized thinking that leads to compartmentalized living. The question needs to be asked, “Are students embracing Christian Atheism because of the outside culture, or are they being taught this way in our schools?”

We need to begin with an honest assessment of our practices. Could it be that our lack of integration leads to rejection and disconnection? Are we “protecting” our students now at the cost of their futures? Are our classrooms the natural habitat of Christian atheists?

Discussion Questions

- What do you think motivates young people to reject Christianity today?
- What is the difference between rejection and disconnection?
- What dangers might be associated with isolating and protecting students from other worldviews?
- Where do you notice Christian Atheism practiced in teaching and learning?

02: A Vision of Success

My goal is to equip you to be incarnational, intentional instigators so that you can come close to your students with a plan to break the spell of compartmentalized living and thinking. John Frame defines *theology* as “the application of the Word of God, by persons, to every area of life.”⁵ Christian teachers must be theologians in the sense that we are applying God’s Word to our academic areas. And we must help our students to become theologians as well. The teacher who embraces Frame’s definition of theology will embrace biblical integration.

⁵John Frame, *John Frame’s Selected Shorter Writings* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2015), 2:61.

Biblical integration is teaching students to reconcile God's Word and world by recognizing that all things are from and for Him. In order to teach in this fashion, instructors must be incarnational (representing Christ to students), intentional (thoughtfully planning course material for students), and instigating (creating healthy conflict between the Christian and non-Christian worldviews). Successful integrators are incarnational, intentional instigators. We are to set the example by modeling an integrated life, set the table by designing courses for purposeful worldview engagement, and set the fight by showing the incompatibility of certain presuppositions and conclusions.

This kind of teaching will affect the students and, through their lives, the culture at large. The King's College in New York City makes their priorities for cultural impact clear in their mission statement which says:

Through its commitment to the truths of Christianity and a biblical worldview, The King's College seeks to transform society by preparing students for careers in which they help to shape and eventually to lead strategic public and private institutions, and by supporting faculty members as they directly engage culture through writing and speaking publicly on critical issues.⁶

Likewise, the Christian Thinkers Society exists, according to their mission statement, "to reach a new demographic and demonstrate why Christianity makes sense, is enriching to life, and why it is essential for the betterment of society."⁷ Like the Christian Thinkers Society, Christian teachers are striving to show God and his ways as true, good, and beautiful. How is this accomplished in the classroom setting? Through incarnational, intentional instigating.

Christian educators are interested in much more than passing on knowledge. What does a student gain if he gets all the knowledge in the world but loses his soul? (Mark 8:36). To teach any content apart from its worldview implications is to choose to leave God out of that area. Can we be comfortable with picking and choosing where to

⁶The Kings' College, "About King's," accessed May 12, 2017, <https://www.tkc.edu/about-kings/>.

⁷Christian Thinkers, accessed May 12, 2017, <http://christianthinkers.com/>.

insert God into his own kingdom and creation? Of course not. If you are a Christian educator, you are a theologian. That means applying the Word to your area in example, academic direction, and discussion.

Discussion Questions

- What do you think it looks like to apply God's Word to your area/subject?
- Where are you naturally strong or weak in the school setting—Modeling the faith incarnationally? Planning integration intentionally? Instigating worldview conflict regularly?
- Are you committed to biblical integration as your highest purpose as a teacher? What are the obstacles to doing so?

Training 1: The Incarnational Teacher

Become a teacher who embodies Christ by taking the form of a servant. Learn to show love to students by knowing them and showing them the Good News. This type of worldview living is a foundational component of effective worldview teaching. Biblical integration starts with Christ-like love.

03: Understanding Incarnation

The Oxford Dictionary of the Church describes the incarnation of Christ by saying, “The eternal Son of God took flesh from His human mother . . . the historical Christ is at once both fully God and fully man.”⁸ In Christ, God entered into humanity and disclosed his identity in a personal and hands-on fashion. Mankind was able to see God in close proximity.

Incarnational teachers seek to demonstrate the character of God through actions and attitudes, in addition to words. Just as God showed Himself through the work of Christ, incarnational teachers seek to allow Him to show Himself through the working of the Holy Spirit. God came into our world, and, as incarnational teachers, we enter the world of the students.

⁸F. L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), s.v. “incarnation of Christ.”

The word “incarnation” literally means “enfleshment” or “embodiment.”⁹ The idea is God with skin on. The body of Christ is now in a position to live into the mission of God by embodying the Good News. Charles Ryrie explained the incarnational model of ministry,

Just as God performed His great work in the world through the incarnation of Christ, so now He continues that work through Christians in whom Christ is continually incarnated. Just as God was in Christ coming to the rescue of the world, so now Christ is in believers to continue His work.¹⁰

How do we continue in his work? Jesus came to serve rather than to be served (Mark 10:45). This means that if we are to represent Christ to students, we must follow his example by being their servants. Paul was clear that those who give themselves for others in costly service are following the example of Christ.¹¹ But what does it look like to serve in the school setting?

According to David Wheeler, those who are able to share Christ *informationally* and live those biblical truths *incarnationally* are able to demonstrate a compelling and holistic gospel.¹² Jesus said that his followers would be recognized by how they love (John 13:35). Peter ties words and deeds together saying,

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. (1 Pet 3:15b-16)

Teachers must not only be ready to share the reasons for their faith, they must also demonstrate its reality through gentleness and respect. The presentation of information through incarnation paints such a clear picture of the living God that those who speak against believers are ashamed. John gives the reason for this, saying, “No one

⁹C. Stephen Evans, *Pocket Dictionary of Apologetics & Philosophy of Religion* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 59.

¹⁰Charles C. Ryrie, *Dr. Ryrie’s Articles* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 120.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 121.

¹²David Wheeler, “Incarnational Apologetics,” in *The Popular Encyclopedia of Apologetics*, ed. Ed Hindson and Ergun Caner (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2008), 51.

has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us” (1 John 4:12).

When Christians live their faith by loving, God is clearly seen for who He really is. His love is fully expressed. And we long to see Him fully expressed in the classroom.

Every day, students should encounter the full expression of God’s love. Those who do not yet know the Lord should experience truth married to such gentleness and respect that their Christ-less worldview is put to shame. This is how we hope to serve them. We must strive to be the complete picture of God’s love with skin on.

Discussion Questions

- Do your students see you as their servant? Why or why not?
- Does your service to students demonstrate that God has radically changed your life? Is it evidence of the reality of the Good News?
- Do your interactions with students demonstrate the full expression of God’s love?

04: Reenacting the Gospel

Paul and Timothy loved the disciples in Thessalonica so much that they “were delighted to share . . . not only the gospel of God but [their] lives as well” (1 Thess 2:8). They gave much more than information. They gave themselves. They showed the gospel through their lives. Trevin Wax points to the importance of the teacher as an interactive model to students by explaining,

Disciple-making is accomplished by modelers, not just messengers. We develop not merely through cognitive transfer, but also through witnessing the lives and choices of other disciples we encounter on our way. . . . The teachers who make the biggest difference on our lives are those who not only give us knowledge but who know us well enough to speak truth into the specifics of our lives, to give counsel from their vast experience and biblical storehouse.¹³

Modeling, by all teachers and staff, is necessary because students see as well as hear. If a Christian school emphasizes loving others in Bible classes, but winning and

¹³Trevin Wax, “The Revenge of Analog Discipleship,” accessed May 13, 2017, <http://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/trevinwax/2017/05/11/the-revenge-of-analog-discipleship/>.

achieving at all costs in sports and academics, there will be a disconnect.¹⁴ The students need to see and recognize the Good News in our lives as they hear and interact with it in their own.

Jesus stated that the greatest love is laying down one's life for a friend (John 15:13). Therefore, we should show our students love by laying down our lives for them. In Philippians 2, Paul points to Jesus as our example of how to do this:

- 1) He didn't cling to his status. He didn't allow his God-ness to keep Him from us. Instead, He used his high stature to lift us up.
- 2) He entered our world. Jesus didn't speak to us from afar. Instead, He stooped down and squeezed his God-ness into a human form.
- 3) He humbled Himself to the position of a servant. As mentioned previously, the One who has every right to be served chose to be our servant.
- 4) He gave up his life. There was no limit to his willingness to serve. There was no gift too big or sacrifice too costly.

What was the result of the Messiah's incarnational love? God was glorified. Everything that Jesus did was "to the glory of the Father" (Phil 2:11). The glory of God is the definition of success. If God is glorified in your class, you are doing what you were called to do.

How do we glorify the Father like Christ did? By giving up status, entering our students' world, becoming their servants, and laying down our lives for them. We are to reenact the gospel before their eyes and in their lives.

Discussion Questions

- What does it look like to share our lives with our students? Are you doing that?
- In what ways do you enter your students' world instead of loving them from your own?
- Do you see yourself as a servant to your students? What are the primary ways in which you serve them?

¹⁴Gloria Goris Stronks and Doug Blomberg, eds., "A Vision with a Task: Christian School for Responsive Discipleship," accessed May 13, 2017, <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/education/news/publications/monoweb/vision/pdf.htm>, 28.

Practical Tip: Choose Some to Love All

In *The Lost Art of Disciple Making*, LeRoy Eims said, “Whoever is thinking about or is now involved in a ministry of making disciples (Matt 28:19) should think soberly about... selection.”¹⁵ It is not possible to be close with a hundred students. Jesus was compassionate to the masses and taught the crowd, but He was friends with Lazarus, Martha, and Mary. And He discipled just twelve men. However, his method changed the world.

Eims continued, “He had two things in mind in the training of the Twelve. One, that they would be of help to Him then and there in carrying out His mission. Two, that they would carry on after He was gone.”¹⁶ These are two things to keep in mind as you teach. Who can you pour into so that they will assist your work and so that they will carry it on after your class is over?

- Who can you select to intentionally disciple this year? How can you go about investing in them?

Training 2: The Intentional Teacher

Learn to intentionally plan your courses and units from and toward the glory and reality of God. Grow in your ability to design and assess biblically integrated courses and rightly handle Scripture. This is hands-on help in doing efficient, effective, and faithful integration.

05: The Bible and Biblical Integration

Since teachers have a pastoral role, we must know how to handle the Bible. In Isaiah 66:2, God says that He is pleased with those who are humble and tremble before his Word. In Hebrews 4:12, God’s Word is described as sharper than a two-edged sword. It pierces and penetrates to the deepest parts. Teachers must employ Scripture in biblical integration. To do otherwise is like performing surgery without a scalpel. The Word of

¹⁵LeRoy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 29.

¹⁶Ibid., 34.

God is the only way to make the needed cut. However, because of its great power, it must be used properly.

Why has God given teachers such a sharp sword? Again, Hebrews 4:12 explains that it is to judge thoughts and attitudes of the heart. But the Word does more than cut—it heals and saves. The disciples recognized this in John 6:68, saying to Jesus, “Lord, to whom should we go? You have the words that give eternal life.” In light of the slicing and saving power of the words of God, John Piper challenges: “Give yourself to this word so that your words become the word of God for others and reveal to them their own spiritual condition. Then in the wound of the word, pour the balm of the word.”¹⁷ This is the task of the integrating teacher. There is no use in looking to transform lives by any other means. Albert Mohler contends, “The Word will have to do the work, or the work will not be done.”¹⁸ Just as the words of God brought life and form to the universe, so Scripture transforms the world today. Therefore, teachers must have a strong commitment to the Word and a powerful ability to properly employ it.

In 2 Timothy 2:14-16, Paul connects the workman approved by God to the one who handles the Word of truth correctly. He also contrasts those who employ the Word with those who engage in godless chatter. A lesson that is uninformed by the Word of God, even in the confines of a Christian school or church, is godless chatter. In the same way, teachings that use Scripture out of context or incorrectly, are godless as well. There can be no biblical integration without the proper use of the Bible itself.

Discussion Questions

- What does “The Word will have to do the work,” mean in practice?
- How and when do you use the Bible in your class? In planning? In prayer? As the basis for discussion? Other?

¹⁷John Piper, “Pierced by the Word of God,” October 3, 2001, accessed May 13, 2017, <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/pierced-by-the-word-of-god>.

¹⁸R. Albert Mohler, quoted in S. Craig Sanders, “From the Seminaries: Mohler on the Reformation at SBTS Convocation; Midwestern Launches in-the-field M.Div.,” *Baptist Press*, February 15, 2017, accessed May 13, 2017, <http://www.bpnews.net/48340>.

- What kind of reaction does “godless chatter” cause in you? Is unintegrated teaching really godless chatter?

06: How to Handle Our Weapon— What Not to Do

Many Christians, even those who have been reading the Bible for a long time, struggle to understand it correctly. There are many bad habits and misconceptions built into church culture that lead committed readers off track. For example, perhaps you can recall someone in a Bible study saying something along the lines of, “To me, this passage means...” or “God spoke to me through this passage by saying...” While it is important to look for meaning and to hear God’s voice, we need to make sure that we are not trying to put our words into his mouth. He can speak for Himself. Andy Naselli explains, “When people interpret the Bible, even though they may have the best motives in the world, they can still read their ideas into the Bible rather than draw out what the author originally intended.”¹⁹

Our culture celebrates individualism and employs postmodernism. These forces lead Christians to think that the Bible can mean something “to me” that it doesn’t mean to others. However, this is not the case.

When we read, we should want to find the one true meaning of the text. And there is only one. That meaning is the message that the author was trying to convey in the first place. We are not trying to find a special message that specifically applies to us or our circumstances (that mistake is called “personalizing,”) or discover an ethical lesson in every passage (that mistake is called “moralizing,”) Here is an example of how we might go wrong in these ways.

Personalizing and moralizing are both found in how some people commonly interpret Matthew 14:22-33. Perhaps you have heard someone read the story of Jesus and Peter walking on water and equate the boat to a “comfort zone,,” or made the message

¹⁹Andrew David Naselli, *How to Understand and Apply the New Testament: Twelve Steps from Exegesis to Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2017), 3.

about “keeping your eyes on Jesus.” They might say that Jesus calling Peter out of the boat is an example of how He calls us out on the “water” in our lives, or that we need to keep our eyes on Him through the storms of life. The idea is that this story is an allegory of us and our circumstances. However, this is not an accurate reading. How do we know that?

First, we see that we are not meant to imitate Peter here. The passage is descriptive rather than prescriptive. Upon seeing Jesus on the water, the disciples cried out in fear. Jesus responded by reassuring them. However, Peter did not take Him at his word, but tested Him. Instead of listening to Christ, Peter then told Jesus what to do. Jesus gracefully agreed, but the reason that Jesus called Peter out of the boat was because Peter instructed Him to do so. And, once on the water, the reason Peter began to doubt was because of fear of wind and wave. It was likely not because he looked away from Christ since the passage does not even speak to that. As Peter sank, he cried out for help and Jesus rescued him.

Second, this passage is not about comfort zones or keeping our eyes on Jesus, but about the awesome power and kindness of Christ. He can walk on water. He can cause others to do that too. He can save those who are sinking. And in the end, the disciples worship Him and declare that He is the Son of God. If we are distracted into the personalized message that we should get out of our comfort zone or the moralized message of ignoring the storm to look to Him, we will miss the real message of the passage—Jesus is the Son of God and He is worthy of worship.

So what are we meant to look for as we read? Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart explain, “The aim of a good interpretation is simple: to get at the ‘plain meaning of the text,’ the author’s intended meaning.”²⁰ This aim will help us to read the Bible to

²⁰Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 22.

discover the meaning that the Holy Spirit inspired the author to communicate. And isn't that better than any other message we could hope to receive?

Discussion Questions

- Why is the temptation to moralize and personalize our readings so strong? What causes us to read Scripture this (incorrect) way?
- What is the difference between a prescriptive and a descriptive passage in the Bible?

07: How to Handle Our Weapon – What to Do

How do we get to the author's intended meaning when we read the Bible? I suggest we start with common sense to carefully look for context, characters, and consistency.

Careful reading. Hearing what the author said in his time and context is called "exegesis," and Andy Naselli says, "Exegesis is simply careful reading."²¹ Many mistakes come from rushed or careless reading. Many misinterpretations could be avoided if we slowed down to notice the text and to notice our biases. Fee and Stuart tell us that the key exegesis "to learn to read the text carefully and to ask the right questions of the text."²²

Context. The first question to ask is about context. Fee and Stuart share the key truth that, "A text cannot mean what it could never have meant for its original readers/hearers."²³ We need to try to understand Isaiah the way the people in his day would have. We need to try to grasp Mark's telling of the Good News in the way that his original audience would have.

For example, in Philippians 4:13, Paul said, "I can do all things through him who gives me strength." What would the Philippian church have heard him saying?

²¹Naselli, *How to Understand and Apply the New Testament*, 1.

²²Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible*, 30.

²³*Ibid.*, 34.

Would they have heard him say, “I can do anything—like breathe underwater—though him who gives me strength.”? No. The verses leading up to this show us the context. There Paul is talking about his ability to be content in any situation. Therefore, we see that Paul is saying that he can be content, through the power of Christ, in any situation.

Characters. Our next key task is to remember that, while the whole Bible is for us, it was not originally written to us. Therefore, we need to understand who the characters are in the text. We need to know who is speaking and who is being spoken to. For example, in 2 Timothy 4:13, Paul gives the command to bring him his cloak. Thankfully, we know he isn’t talking to us, so we don’t have to invest in a trip to Troas to find his clothes. That is an obvious and silly example, but there are times when we mess this up. Think about Jeremiah 29:11. In this passage, God tells about the good and prosperous plans he has for “you.” But who is the “you” in Jeremiah 29:11? Certainly, this was not addressed to all the high school graduates that receive mugs with this verse printed on it. God is talking to an ancient people that is entering exile. He is telling them to invest in their exilic community. He wants them to build homes and families there. And after a time, he will bring them back to Israel.

In the classroom, it is up to the teacher to show the students what faithful reading looks like. The Bible does teach that God is good and has wonderful plans for us as his people. However, we must be careful not to stretch verses by making them about us when the Holy Spirit intended them to be about others. While the instructor may rightly understand the wide biblical truth that God does have good plans for us as his people, we need to intentionally model correct patterns of study for students who may soak up what we intentionally and unintentionally teach.

Consistency. Finally, read the Bible with the rest of the Bible as your commentary. God does not change. He does not contradict Himself. This helps us understand what we are reading. For instance, when Ecclesiastes says that everything is

meaningless, should we believe that? Well, the Bible does say that. But we know from God's consistent character and message that life matters. Life can feel meaningless at times. And the one who lives without God is truly living a meaningless life.

Not everything in the Bible is prescribed. Thankfully, much is only described. In addition, not everything in the Bible is universal. Jesus does not call everyone to bathe in order to be healed. He does not want mud applied to every blind eye. It is important that we read the Bible with the rest of it in mind. This will help us stay on track.

Practical help. I propose reading in three steps—information, understanding, and action.²⁴

- 1) Information: What does this passage say? Sum it up in your own words.
- 2) Understanding: What does it mean? Why does it matter? What does it say about God? What universal principles can be found here?
- 3) Action: What should I think, do, or be in response?

08: Integration Helps Teacher and Student

While some instructors struggle with the idea of integration because they worry about the time or focus it will take from their instruction, if done with intentionality, Bradley McCoy, a physics professor at Azusa Pacific University, found that “no reduction of... content at all was necessary in order to implement the faith integration curriculum.”²⁵ Indeed, it is possible that the students could be more engaged and invested in course content because they clearly see the application of the course content in their lives.

²⁴Mark Strauss recommends these four questions: (1) Where is this passage in the larger story of Scripture? (2) What is the author's purpose in light of the passage's genre and historical and literary context? (3) How does this passage inform our understanding of the nature of God and his purpose for the world? (4) What does this passage teach us about who we ought to be (attitudes and character) and what we ought to do (goals and actions) as those seeking to reflect the nature and purpose of God? Mark L. Strauss, *How to Read the Bible in Changing Times: Understanding and Applying God's Word Today* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 78-79, Kindle.

²⁵Bradley K. McCoy, “Developing a Program-Level Faith Integration Curriculum: A Case Study from Physics,” *Christian Higher Education* 13 (December 2014): 348.

We have all heard the dreaded question from our students, “Why do I need to learn this? Why is it important?” They want to know why ancient history or the parts of a flower should matter to them. Biblical integration answers that question in the most satisfying way possible. It does not sidestep the students’ true core question of “What’s in this for me?” by pointing to Christ. Biblical integration points to God as the ultimate reward and satisfaction. This allows for a deep connection between the student and the subject. It also engenders partnership between the students and the teacher because they are on a quest together. They are seeking the glorious unifying factor in all things—the Lord Himself.

In addition, teachers can remain enthusiastic about the often-difficult task of teaching when they understand that they are disciple-makers. Instructors can get frustrated when the job is understood as piles of grading, daily discipline struggles, and hectic schedules. Integration allows the teacher to access the deeper purpose to which they were called.

However, even if academic content must be sacrificed from time to time, teachers must remain committed to their first calling—distinctively Christian education. Can excellent non-Christian education be considered a success for followers of Jesus? Not in the Christian school context. We must never sacrifice the Eternal for the passing or the Author for the book.

But while integration is necessary, it is not easy. The curator of BiblicalIntegration.com points out some of the main reasons that teachers may not want to write biblically integrated lesson plans:

- It takes too long.
- They don’t know what to integrate.
- It’s too hard (there’s no easy format).
- It’s one more thing to do, it’s an add-on.²⁶

²⁶Biblical Integration, “Lesson Plan Worksheet,” accessed May 19, 2017, <http://biblicalintegration.com/write-a-lesson-plan/>.

If integration is a time-consuming, confusing, difficult add-on, it can be very frustrating. Teachers are busy and don't have time for extra assignments. The goal here is to help you create quality biblical integration that is time-friendly, clear, and central to your class.

Discussion Questions

- Do you view biblical integration as a struggle or a privilege? Is it an add-on or is it a driving force in your teaching?
- What are the greatest barriers to your ability to practice excellent biblical integration?

09: Purposeful Course Design

James Estep says that curriculum is the “educational manifestation of the mission and vision” of a teaching organization.²⁷ What we plan to teach shows us what we care about. This means that we can look at our syllabi to see what drives us. At the start of the year, the syllabus is like a treasure map—it plots the course to success. The problem is that many Christian teachers are not plotting a course that aligns with what Christian schools see as true success. The curriculum, Estep continues, is a “tangible representation and incarnation of our educational philosophy.”²⁸ Do our syllabi align with our educational philosophy? To find out, we must look at our syllabus to find the null curriculum, the foundation, and the aim.

Null curriculum. The biggest decision that a teacher makes when developing a course is what not to teach. There is far too much in any subject to be covered even in a multi-year sequence at the secondary school level. Null curriculum is what the teacher has chosen to leave out and this is always the majority of information.²⁹ So what gets left out? And how do we decide what will not be included?

²⁷James Estep, *Mapping Out Curriculum in Your Church* (Nashville: B & H, 2012), locs. 124-26, Kindle.

²⁸Ibid., locs. 250-52.

²⁹Ibid., locs. 279-81.

Foundation. No course exists in a vacuum. Every presupposition in the syllabus is built on something. Teachers must identify the foundation of the course in order to determine how to teach it well. What ideas, assumptions, truths, theories, ideologies, or other factors determine the make-up of this class? As a Bible teacher, my courses are undeniably shaped by the fact that I believe that there is a God, and that He has spoken. In the same way, every history course is shaped by views on God's work throughout time. Every science class is built on ideas and understandings. We often take these for granted, but that is a mistake.

Aim. Finally, the direction that the course is pointing must be considered. What does it equip the students to know or do? And why does it point them that way? In other words, we need to know the purpose of our classes.

Discussion Activity: Examining a Syllabus

The following is the course description from a high school speech class at my school. Jeffrey Prussia is the (legendary) teacher of this class and he has graciously allowed us access to his syllabus for use in this work.

*Speech is a course designed to teach students effective Speech Communication. Students will study responsible and ethical communication. Students will learn how to articulate through delivering different types of speeches such as persuasive, demonstration, informative, oratory speeches, interviews and how to debate in parliamentary procedure.*³⁰

- Identify the foundation and aim of this course. What is it built on? Why does it aim toward?
- Now read the altered course description below. Identify the foundation and aim of this course. What is it built on? Why does it aim toward?

Speech is a course designed to teach students effective Speech Communication. Since speech is a powerful gift that reflects God's glory (Gen 1:3), a potentially dangerous weapon (Jas 3:5-6), a means through which we know the Lord (Gen 2:16-17), and an avenue for praise (Psalm 19:14), students will study responsible and ethical communication. Since the Good News is a message that must be shared (Rom 10:14) with people who see it as foolishness (1 Cor 1:18), students will learn how to articulate through delivering different types of speeches such as persuasive (Acts 17:17),

³⁰Jeff Prussia, "High School Speech (syllabus, The King's Academy, 2016-2017).

demonstration, informative (1 Cor 12), oratory speeches (Matt 5), interviews (Luke 1:1-4) and how to debate in parliamentary procedure.

- What can we expect to be different about these two courses?
- What is different concerning the two courses' null curriculum?
- Is it ever appropriate for biblical integration to be a part of the null curriculum?

10: It's Not an Add-On When It's in the DNA

Starting with an integrated syllabus is key to executing an integrated course.

When you start by making biblical integration part of the ingrained identity of the class, it will naturally appear throughout. When a student looks at the syllabus, they may ask themselves, "What is this class all about?" You and your students can be on the same page with a well-developed syllabus. And as you can see from the previous example, you don't need to discard your old syllabi to practice integration. Instead, you can thoughtfully adapt them to make them what they are meant to be.

Once the syllabus has removed biblical integration from the null curriculum and placed it front-and-center, you can start to wrestle with the foundations and aims of the course more fully. This means asking questions. For the course description of our speech class, we might ask questions like:

- Where did speech come from? Why did God give it? What is its purpose?
- What dangers are associated with speech? Why must speech be ethical and responsible?
- What role does speech play in relationship? How does God speak to us? Why did God entrust us with the spoken message of Good News?

Instead of writing lesson plans and then integrating them after they are made, teachers should have the course's essential questions in mind when they develop the course. Gloria Goris Stronks and Doug Blomberg explain, "An integrally Christian curriculum cannot be developed by adding a spiritual veneer to so-called factual subject matter. The curriculum must find its coherence throughout as responsiveness to God

speaking to us in Christ, creation, and Scripture...”³¹ The biblical integration, especially the core group of questions, is the design of the class.

So once the teacher designs the syllabus and identifies some key questions, the next step is mapping, or unit-planning, with those questions in mind. Mapping out instruction for a semester or year is a widely-accepted best-practice for staying on target and on time.³² Major questions might be recurring or they may be associated with certain units during the year. When we are aware of the questions and when they should be brought up, we can create structured and unstructured time for engagement. It is a good idea for all instructors to build opportunities for students to think deeply about these questions, wrestle with ideas, and be creative in their responses. These moments can be some of the most rewarding for teachers.³³ And they are some of the most important for students.

Worldview expert Jeremiah Johnston emphasizes the importance of working through life’s big questions, saying, “After ten years of serving as the teaching pastor of a mega church, I noticed we had sincere Christians attending church services weekly, listening to sermon after sermon, and yet they still did not possess the confidence to answer the tough questions being asked about Christianity.”³⁴ Questions are key in Christian education.

When the syllabus is designed with integration in mind, and when the major questions are foundationally included in each unit of the course, there is very little work

³¹Stronks and Blomberg, “A Vision with a Task,” 109.

³²Cindi Banse, “Purposeful Success for the School Year,” *Math by Design* 9 no. 1 (August 2013): n.p.

³³James Schwartz, “Rise to the Challenge,” *Math by Design* 10, no. 2 (January 2015): n.p.

³⁴Christian Thinkers, “The Unanswered Tour,” accessed May 12, 2017, <http://christianthinkers.com/unanswered/>.

involved in writing individually integrated lessons. Integration is already in the course's DNA.

Discussion Activity: Lesson Planning

The textbook for our speech class is *Speech: Communication Matters* by McCutcheon, Schaffer, and Wycoff. The first chapter includes the following learning objectives:³⁵

1. Identify and analyze the ethical and social responsibilities of communicators.
2. Identify the components of the communication process and their functions.
3. Explain the importance of effective communication skills in personal, professional, and social contexts.
4. Recognize your audience as an important element in building responsible communication skills.
5. Realize the importance and impact of both verbal and nonverbal communication.

Earlier, we noted that we might ask the questions, “Where did speech come from? Why did God give it? What is its purpose?” in our course. This set of questions can help us easily identify some great content to wrestle with in our first chapter. In fact, we don't even have to change the lesson objectives to make this chapter fully integrated.

When we “identify and analyze the ethical and social responsibilities of communicators,”

(Objective 1) we will see that:

- we are responsible to God concerning our communication because He gave it to us
- God gave the ethical and social responsibility to represent Him well through speech
- the purpose of speech is, in large part, relationship and truth.

We can take those concepts as far as we deem appropriate in each class.

- Our task is to identify how our over-arching integration questions (below) can be used in conjunction with Objectives 2-5 (above) from Chapter One of our speech textbook.
- Where did speech come from? Why did God give it? What is its purpose?
 - What dangers are associated with speech? Why must speech be ethical and responsible?

³⁵Randall McCutcheon, James Schaffer, and Joseph Wycoff, *Speech: Communication Matters* (Chicago: National Textbook Company, 2001), 3.

- What role does speech play in relationship? How does God speak to us? Why did God entrust us with the spoken message of Good News?

NOTE: This strategy not only works with chapter/unit objectives, but also with vocabulary and concepts. The first chapter of *Speech: Communication Matters* has a vocabulary list that includes these terms: *Ethics, Sender, Message, Receiver, Communication Barrier, Written Communication, Oral (or verbal) communication, Nonverbal communication, Symbol, Logical Appeal, Emotional Appeal, Ethical (personal) Appeal*, and more. I can envision biblical integration centered around these words and ideas.

11: Assessment and Biblical Integration

We have talked about syllabus design and unit planning, but how can we make sure that the biblical integration makes it into every lesson? The answer here is simple—assessment. In every course there are important tests, papers, quizzes, projects, or other graded assignments. If the syllabus lays out biblical integration goals, and if units are planned with integration in mind, then the course assignments must assess biblical integration.

Assessments do two important things for the teacher concerning biblical integration. First, they almost guarantee that the teacher will practice biblical integration. If the syllabus has established biblical integration as a goal and if the assessments will test the students' understanding of the integration, the teacher is motivated to integrate in every lesson. Second, assessing biblical integration allows teachers to see if they are truly being successful in biblical integration. If the assessments demonstrate understanding and growth, the teacher can be confident of success in integration. These assessments also show teachers areas to improve or adjust.

Look again at our adapted speech course description and try to identify areas of biblical integration that could be assessed:

Speech is a course designed to teach students effective Speech Communication. Since speech is a powerful gift that reflects God's glory (Gen 1:3), a potentially dangerous weapon (Jas 3:5-6), a means through which we know the Lord (Gen 2:16-17), and an avenue for praise (Psalm 19:14), students will study responsible and ethical communication. Since the Good News is a message that must be shared (Rom 10:14) with people who see it as foolishness (1 Cor 1:18), students will learn how to articulate through delivering different types of speeches such as persuasive (Acts 17:17), demonstration, informative (1 Cor 12), oratory speeches (Matt 5), interviews (Luke 1:1-4) and how to debate in parliamentary procedure.

The students might be expected to understand that 1) speech is a gift from God, 2) it is a powerful tool that can be used for good or evil, 3) God has spoken to us and directed us, 4) we can use our speech to please God, 5) God cares about our speech, 6) the gospel is communicated through speech, and 7) different kinds of speech can be used to advance God’s kingdom. There are certainly even more ideas that could be drawn out for the students to grasp. And it should be clear that each of these seven areas that could be assessed are only starting points. For example, if 1) speech is a gift from God, He may desire that we utilize that gift in specific ways. So, what are some ways that God wants us to use our speech?

These types of questions are excellent for assessment. They are biblical and clear. They are practical and worldview-focused. They are challenging and directing.

The truth is simple—we assess what we deem as most important in our classes. If we prioritize biblical integration in our assessments, we will prioritize it in our courses. Carnegie Mellon University’s Eberly Center, points out that learning objectives (how the student should think and what the student needs to know) should correspond with assessments (tasks that measure how they think and if they know) and instructional strategies (activities that help students think and know).³⁶ Alignment is key. If Christian schools say they prioritize biblical integration, but do not assess it, the alignment is off.

Discussion Activity: Assessment Design

An ongoing project is one excellent way to engage in integration assessment.³⁷

Consider again our speech class. An example of an ongoing project would be to tie each type of speech throughout the year around the theme of sharing the Good News.

For example:

³⁶Carnegie Mellon University, “Whys & Hows of Assessment: Alignment,” accessed May 19, 2017, <http://www.cmu.edu/teaching/assessment/basics/alignment.html>.

³⁷Donovan Graham, *Teaching Redemptively: Bringing Grace and Truth into Your Classroom* (Colorado Springs: Purposeful Design, 2009), 215.

- Assignment 1: Prepare and give an informative speech about the Person and work of Christ.
- Assignment 2: Perform an interview to discover someone's personal religious beliefs.
- Assignment 3: Prepare and give a persuasive speech in response to the questions/struggles discovered in the interview.
- Assignment 4: Deliver an oratory speech telling your personal faith story.
- Assignment 5: Engage in a debate on key worldview issues.

Note that that this kind of integration can be planned from the outset of the year. If you integrate assignments/assessments, your course will be more easily integrated throughout.

If you were teaching this speech class, how might you create another sequence of assessments to be used throughout the year? These might be about God's communication to us through Scripture, the need for healthy communication (encouragement, pure speech, honesty, etc.), the importance of non-verbal communication and God's non-verbal communication to us through nature, the use of speech communication to build up the church, or other topics related to our course's central questions.

Training 3: The Instigating Teacher

Learn to stretch and strengthen students by revealing conflict between the Christian worldview and other ways of looking at life. You will discover how to invite them into the fray within the safety of the classroom so that they can struggle and apprehend the truth by recognizing and appropriating it for themselves. Learn to go beyond giving answers to helping students get them for themselves.

12: Healthy Conflict and the Teacher as Trainer

We are living in a constantly changing culture. Technology and media have made ideas more accessible. Advertising has made ideas more compelling. Materialism thrives. Individualism reigns. Every voice has been given a megaphone and many anti-Christian voices are speaking most convincingly. For example, a University of Kentucky

study in 2017 conducted research that showed that up to 26% of Americans are atheists.³⁸ This is a drastic rise from the results of previous studies.

Like the wider culture, the church has not been immune to the effects of worldview conflict. Cultural engagement expert and public theologian Owen Strachan identifies the predominant worldview of young people as, “Narcissistic Optimistic Deism.”³⁹ Even within the church, many are clearly embracing a view of life that is self-absorbed and self-satisfying.

These ideas are already in conflict with the Christian worldview. The battle of ideas is already raging. Teachers need to understand that students fight it now. It will not wait until they reach “the real world.” As teachers, we want to invite non-Christian ideas into our classroom so that we can help the students wrestle with them while they have our support. We want the conflict to happen here where we have home-field advantage. We need to help our students learn to think critically now so that they will have that skill to use throughout life. Brooke Hempell, senior vice president of research for Barna Group, says,

The call for the Church, and its teachers and thinkers, is to help Christians dissect popular beliefs before allowing them to settle in their own ideology. . . . Informed thinking is essential to developing and maintaining a healthy biblical worldview and faith as well as being able to have productive dialogue with those who espouse other beliefs.⁴⁰

Students must struggle with ideas before settling into them. They will be strengthened by working to think through real and important questions. Just like athletes train and lift in the weight room to prepare for a game or season, students can benefit

³⁸Will M. Gervais and Maxine B. Najle, “How Many Atheists Are There?” January 23, 2017, accessed May 19, 2017, <https://osf.io/preprints/psyarxiv/edzda>.

³⁹Owen Strachan, *The Colson Way: Loving Your Neighbor and Living with Faith in a Hostile World* (Nashville: Nelson, 2015), 120.

⁴⁰Jeff Myers, “Research by Barna and Summit: Postmodernism and Secularism Influence Today’s Christians,” May 16, 2017, accessed May 19, 2017, <https://www.summit.org/resources/articles/research-barna-summit-postmodernism-secularism-influence-todays-christians/>.

from strenuous worldview exercise. They need to become strong so that they can succeed in the battles of ideas.

To be successful as a biblical integrator, the teacher cannot just give answers. Offering biblical solutions, instead of having the students wrestle for them, would be like a coach lifting the weights for his team. It might be easier in the moment, but it does not prepare them for life. The teacher's role is to know how to help the students grow stronger in a healthy way. The trainer keeps track of the weight being lifted. He adds weight and prescribes repetitions at the right time and in the right way. The healthy difficulty of exercise in the weight room builds strength for the contest. Righteous wrestling with ideas in the classroom should function in the same way. In the end, this work will result in strong students who are ready for the tough questions of the world.

Discussion Questions

- What dangers might result from isolating students from other ideas/worldviews rather than helping them to wrestle with them?
- What is an example of how you have been able to train students to struggle well with other ideas? Was your experience positive? What could have made it even better?

Discussion Activity: Starting to Wrestle

What questions/assignments might help students struggle with the following facts in the setting of our speech class?

In a recent Barna survey of those who attend church at least once per month and consider their faith as very important to their life, it was observed that even practicing Christians are not worldview-thinking Christians.

- 20% strongly agree that “Meaning and purpose comes from working hard to earn as much as possible so you can make the most of life.”⁴¹
- 19% strongly agree that “No one can know for certain what meaning and purpose there is to life”

⁴¹Myers, “Research by Barna and Summit.”

13: Essential Conflict Questions

Christian schooling expert Doug Blomberg makes the case that, “Schools should evidence that education is ultimately not about information, but transformation, about discipling rather than disciplines...”⁴² Education is meant to mature students into young people who are critically thinking and accurately judging according to the Word of God. One of the most important avenues of helping students grow is worldview conflict. Craig Hazen, founder of Biola University’s M.A. in Christian Apologetics, points out, “Doubts are everywhere. Almost all of us have them. And when not properly addressed, they can be spiritually disastrous.”⁴³

It is not helpful for Christian schools to encourage students to follow Christ without giving them the opportunity to see the superiority of the Christian worldview in every arena. We want to encourage students to have faith, but faith must be understood as “holding firmly to and acting on what you have good reason to think is true, in the face of difficulties.”⁴⁴ Faith is not blind trust. It is not belief without foundation. We must help students apprehend the good reason behind the Christian faith. Then, we must help them hold to that good reason when challenges arise. How do we accomplish this? Often, conflict is the answer. Blomberg and Stronks point out,

Too often, in Christian schools as well, we start with material that has been cleansed of its uncertainties and ambiguities, its connection with rich real-life contexts. We “clean up” life for pedagogical purposes—perhaps too often, sterilize it. We think our task as teachers is to determine the logical structure of knowledge and then to transmit this to our students, rather than to take their hands and lead them as together we explore creation.⁴⁵

⁴²Doug Blomberg, *Wisdom and Curriculum: Christian Schooling after Postmodernity* (Sioux Center, IA: Dordt College Press, 2007), 178.

⁴³Craig Hazen and Larry Barnett, “Young People Are Indeed Leaving the Church,” *Biola Magazine*, Fall 2016, accessed May 20, 2017, <http://magazine.biola.edu/article/16-fall/young-people-are-indeed-leaving-the-church/>.

⁴⁴David Marshall, “The Marriage of Faith and Reason,” in *True Reason: Confronting the Irrationality of the New Atheism*, ed. Tom Gilson and Carson Weitnauer (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2013), 139.

⁴⁵Stronks and Blomberg, “A Vision with a Task,” 115.

Life is complex. We do students no favors by trying to simplify the world for them because then we are removing them from what life is really like. Again, we see the importance of key questions—essential questions. Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins clarify what these look like,

These questions are not answerable with finality in a single lesson or a brief sentence—and that's the point. Their aim is to stimulate thought, to provoke inquiry, and to spark more questions, including thoughtful student questions, not just pat answers. They are provocative and generative. By tackling such questions, learners are engaged in *uncovering* the depth and richness of a topic that might otherwise be obscured by simply *covering* it.⁴⁶

Students need their curiosity to be provoked. Their minds need to be stimulated. They need to be put in a position to engage the process by asking questions of their own. Think of how this might work in a history class that is looking at World War II. Wouldn't this be an excellent time for the students to wrestle with questions around God's goodness and sovereignty? In Daniel 4, we can see the Bible teach that "the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes." In fact, this statement is repeated multiple times in that chapter. So, how do we deal with Hitler? How could a good God want to put Hitler in charge of a nation? Or does the fact that Hitler did gain power show that God is not as in control as the Bible teaches?

Now, as a Christian teacher, I am sure that your mind is working as you use your more developed experience, theology, and knowledge to answer these questions. However, that is not the point. The point is to encourage the students to wrestle. Giving them our answers deprives them of the process. They don't need a cleaned-up history class. They need a place to struggle and be strengthened through their own journey.

Discussion Activity: Step into the Shoes of the Student

Imagine that you are now a student in the speech class that we have been using as an example. You have been placed in a group, and received the following assignment:

⁴⁶Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins, "Chapter 1: What Makes a Question Essential?" accessed May 20, 2017, <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/109004/chapters/What-Makes-a-Question-Essential%A2.aspx>.

- Read Daniel 3:1-18 and take special note of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's impromptu speech in verses 16-18.
- As a group, put yourselves in the shoes of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Imagine that the king had just addressed you in anger (verses 13-15). Then create an impromptu speech like they did to answer the king. Tell him why you will not be bowing down to his idol. (Note: you cannot copy their speech directly.)
- After you have presented, we will have a discussion about the importance of impromptu speeches from 1 Peter 3:15-16.

14: Designing Conflict Questions and Strategies

In each course, there are many worldview questions that will be naturally central or recurring. They will connect to the material and they will arise throughout. This gives the students time to look at them in different contexts from a variety of angles. Developing these questions is, after the syllabus, the most crucial element in integration preparation.

Remember, we want to develop biblically integrated courses. We do not want a group of unrelated integrated lessons. Just like academic content develops and builds over the year or term, so does the biblical integration. Bradley McCoy provides an example. He has worked to develop integration in some of his science classes based on the identity of a Christian scientist. Scientists are often portrayed as arrogant or mad in popular culture, so he has designed questions that bring those preconceptions about character into conflict. Concerning arrogance, he might prompt,

Often when scientists are portrayed in movies or other forms of popular culture, they are characterized as being arrogant. Why might scientists appear this way to the general public? Is arrogance in fact a common trait of scientists? If so, what makes scientists prone to this bad trait and what steps can we take to avoid arrogance?⁴⁷

Here McCoy has chosen to focus on character development for integration. This theme is then connected to several character-related issues that scientists are known for. He then asks questions that encourage the students to wrestle with these ideas themselves. They must investigate why scientists are often not thought of as examples of

⁴⁷McCoy, "Developing a Program-Level Faith nitegration Curriculum," 347.

Christian behavior. And they must chart a course so that they can truly live into their role as Christians who do science.

It is helpful for teachers to identify areas of conflict related to their course and organize conflict questions and sub-questions to guide integration for the whole year. We can take the questions that were designed to show the aim and foundation of our speech course (part of the syllabus design) and develop them further by adding sub-questions.

These might look like:

- Where did speech come from? Why did God give it? What is its purpose?
 - Do we have a responsibility to use speech as God intended?
 - Do we view speech as a gift? Are we thankful?
- What dangers are associated with speech? Why must speech be ethical and responsible?
 - Can speech be damaging to others? If so, how?
 - Can speech be damaging to self? If so, how?
- What role does speech play in relationship? How does God speak to us? Why did God entrust us with the spoken message of Good News?
 - Do we listen to God speaking to us through the Bible?
 - Are we able to articulate the Good News well to others?

There are three main questions here and each has two corresponding sub-questions. This is likely enough to provide a basis for excellent integration throughout an entire year. We might even be able to address many of these questions in each unit of the class from a little bit of a different angle.

Questions provide a skeleton which will support biblical integration. Once questions have been developed for a course, the teacher needs to have some ideas on how to use those questions well. We need to ask them in appropriately challenging ways. We want the students to have to engage deeply with each issue. Here are some strategic ideas:

We might expose our class to some non-Christian ideas and ask, “In what ways does this go against the Christian worldview?” The goal is for them to grow in the skill of identifying worldview conflict. Another option is to present an idea or argument and ask

students to “listen for the cracks.”⁴⁸ In other words, we want them to critically examine an argument to see if it holds water. We could also ask the students to identify where an idea would lead if it were allowed to be fully accepted. Or we can engage in more direct conflict by playing Devil’s advocate. There are numerous options. It is up to the teacher to determine which strategies will work as a part of their course.

15: You Are the System

The teacher is the engine that makes biblical integration work. There is no other structure or curricular system that can replace example, passion and relationship that the teacher provides. When a teacher thinks biblically and shows care for the students, the effect is powerful. Apologist Lee Strobel calls this kind of connection “conversational apologetics” and describes it by saying, “It’s a relationship. It’s creating a safe place where people in a friendship can talk, over time, about the issues they have. The obstacles, intellectually; the sticking points, spiritually.”⁴⁹ The pastoral role of the teacher cannot be overstated.

We must truly care for our students. We must love them more than our subject area. We must spend time with them. We must share with them. We must desire to serve them. We are more than their professional educators. We are brothers and sisters to those who know Christ. And we are missionaries to our students who are lost. We are mentors to those with open eyes. We are much more than just academic teachers and technicians. In a passionate plea for pastors to love well, John Piper asks,

Is there professional praying? Professional trusting in God’s promises? Professional weeping over souls? Professional musing on the depths of revelation? Professional rejoicing in truth? Professional praising God’s name? Professional treasuring the riches of Christ? Professional walking by the Spirit? Professional exercise of

⁴⁸Dan Egeler, “Raising Daniels in a Secular Babylon,” *Christian School Comment* 48, no. 1 (2016/2017): n.p.

⁴⁹Wade Bearden, “Show, Don’t Prove: An Interview with *The Case for Christ*’s Lee Strobel,” April 6, 2017, accessed May 20, 2017, <https://christandpopculture.com/show-dont-prove-interview-case-christs-lee-strobel/>.

spiritual gifts? Professional dealing with demons? Professional pleading with backsliders? Professional perseverance in a hard marriage? Professional playing with children? Professional courage in the face of persecution? Professional patience with everyone?⁵⁰

Let us be men and women who pray and trust, weep and consider, praise and treasure, plead and persevere, play and show patience. Our students need us. They need biblical integration. And they need to see it consistently and compassionately displayed in us.

⁵⁰John Piper, *Brothers, We Are Not Professionals: A Plea to Pastors for Radical Ministry* (Nashville: B & H, 2013), ix-x.

APPENDIX 6

ALTERNATIVE CPOE

First Half: Christian Philosophy of Education

Attend: Intro to Truly Christian Education (1 hr)

Reading 1: *Every Bush is Burning* by Kelly Hayes (Part 1 - Biblical and Theological Foundations) and one of the books listed below.**

Write: Paper on “What is the pastoral role of the teacher?” (2 pages)

Reading 2: *Every Bush is Burning* by Kelly Hayes (Part 2 - Theoretical and Practical Foundations)

Write: Paper on “What makes Christian education Christian?” (2 pages)

**Choose one of the following books in either category to read in conjunction with *Every Bush is Burning*:

On the Theory of Christian Education:

- *Philosophy & Education*. George R. Knight, 2006 (4th ed.)
- *Teaching Redemptively*. Donovan Graham, 2009 (2nd ed.)

On the Ministry of Christian Education:

- *Called to Teach*. William Yount, 1999
- *Virtuous Minds*. Philip Dow, 2013
- *Teaching to Change Lives*. Howard Hendricks, 1987

Second Half: Biblical Integration

Attend: Every Bush is Burning - interactive BI training (6hrs)

***Session 1: The Incarnational Teacher**

Become a teacher who embodies Christ by taking the form of a servant. Learn to show love to students by knowing them and showing them the Good News. This type of worldview living is a foundational component effective worldview teaching. Biblical integration starts with Christ-like love.

Create: Servant Teacher Job Description

***Session 2: The Intentional Teacher**

Learn to intentionally plan your courses and units from and toward the glory and reality of God. Grow in your ability to design and assess biblically integrated courses and rightly handle Scripture. This is hands-on help in doing efficient, effective, and faithful integration.

Create: Integrated Syllabus

***Session 3: The Instigating Teacher**

Learn to stretch and strengthen students by revealing conflict between the Christian worldview and other ways of looking at life. You will discover how to invite them into the fray within the safety of the classroom so that they can struggle and apprehend the truth by recognizing and appropriating it for themselves. Learn to go beyond giving answers to helping students get them for themselves.

Create: Course Conflict Questions

Complete: Personal Assessment Survey to help determine next steps for growing as an effective integrator.

	FIRST HALF	SECOND HALF
Completed by		
Completed on		
Verified by (print name)		
Position		
Signature		

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ABSTRACT

EQUIPPING TEACHERS FOR BIBLICAL INTEGRATION AT THE KING'S ACADEMY IN FLORENCE, SOUTH CAROLINA

Kelly Nathaniel Hayes, D.Ed.Min.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Danny R. Bowen

This project constructs a system of learning and training through which teachers at the King's Academy grow in their understanding and practice of biblical integration. Chapter 1 describes the context and need for this project. Chapter 2 engages with the theological and biblical resources that inform this work, while chapter 3 delves into the theoretical and practical elements related to this topic. Chapter 4 explains the developments related to planning and implementing the project itself, which includes the writing of the curricular resource as well as delivering the workshop trainings. Chapter 5 contains a detailed assessment of the project. Each element is evaluated through the rubric of the initial goals of the project. Overall, through this work, the King's Academy will be better positioned for ongoing education that is innately Christian.

VITA

Kelly Nathaniel Hayes

EDUCATIONAL

B.S., Liberty University, 2008
M.A., Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009
Th.M., Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013
M.R.E., Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

Distance Education Instructor, Hutchinson Community College, 2010-2011
Affiliate Faculty, Grace Bible College, 2013-
Lead Bible Teacher, The King's Academy, Florence, South Carolina, 2015-

MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT

Youth and Worship Leader, Staunton River Community Church, Brookneal, Virginia, 2007-2008
Worship and Music Intern, Hebron Baptist Church, Dacula, Georgia, 2008
Student and Worship Pastor, Real Life Fellowship, Chester, Virginia, 2009-2015

PUBLICATIONS

The Lesser Light to Rule the Night. Charleston, SC: CreateSpace Independent, 2014.

ORGANIZATIONS

The Evangelical Theological Society