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Faith-Learning Integration: An Overview

By William Hasker

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There is a gap in the literature on faith-learning integration. On the one hand there are broad, general, “worldviewish” discussions, presenting in a global fashion the challenge of integration.¹ On the other hand there are a great many studies featuring particular disciplines and smaller areas within those disciplines—as exemplified by many articles published in the *Christian Scholar’s Review*. What is lacking, however, is a systematic mapping of the area in between—of the general ways in which the worldview issues connect with the particular concerns of various disciplines. It is as though your neighborhood map store had a selection of globes and also an assortment of street guides for various nearby cities, but nothing in between—no maps of the interstate highway system, for instance. This essay aims to map some of that intervening territory.

Is such a map needed? I suspect that a map of this kind may be found useful, perhaps especially by scholars² who are beginning to wrestle with the question. What does and should faith-learning integration mean for *my* discipline? What is offered here is a way of approaching that question which is more detailed, and therefore more readily applicable, than the worldview studies, yet broader and more general than articles limited to a particular discipline. We shall discuss in order the nature of integration, the necessity for integration, strategies for integration, and dimensions of integration.

What Is Faith-Learning Integration?

Faith-learning integration may be briefly described as *a scholarly project whose goal is to ascertain and to develop integral relationships which exist between the Christian faith and human knowledge, particularly as expressed in the various academic disciplines*. Here the terms *faith* and *knowledge* are taken quite broadly; in speaking of “the Christian faith” we are focusing on the *cognitive content* of faith, without excluding or minimizing the all-important dimensions of trust and commitment.

In this essay, William Hasker attempts to map the territory between broadly global and narrowly disciplinary discussions of the integration of faith and learning. After discussing the nature of and necessity for such integration, he evaluates several strategies for integration. He concludes by outlining dimensions of faith-learning integration in both the theoretical and applied disciplines. Mr. Hasker teaches philosophy at Huntington College.

Integration is concerned with *integral* relationships between faith and knowledge, the relationships which *inherently exist* between the content of the faith and the subject-matter of this or that discipline; such connections do not have to be invented or manufactured. But they do need to be *ascertained* and *developed*; unless this is done faith and knowledge may appear to be, and for practical purposes may be in fact, alien and unrelated to each other. Finally, faith-learning integration is especially concerned with the *disciplines* into which our knowledge is organized; the same concerns of subject-matter and methodology which lead to the distinction of disciplines also dictate that, initially at least, faith-learning integration is best pursued at the level of particular academic disciplines.

Our understanding of what faith-learning integration is may be assisted by a recognition of what it is not. *Faith-learning integration is not the cultivation of personal Christian living on the part of the faculty member.* Few things are as important in determining a faculty member's influence upon students as her or his personal spiritual and ethical life. But of course, the importance of personal spiritual development is not limited or specific to Christian scholars and teachers; it should equally concern Christian executives, Christian housewives, and Christian bricklayers. Faith-learning integration, on the other hand, is a specifically *scholarly* task; it is a specific responsibility of Christians who are engaged in the work of teaching and scholarship, and if (as often happens) they fail to perform this task it will not be done at all.

Faith-learning integration does not mean using academic disciplines as a source of illustrations for spiritual truths. An example of such use is found in an article explaining how teaching in a Christian day school differs from teaching in the public schools: "Two and two is always four. . . and God is always the same; you can depend on Him."³ We would not disagree with what is being said here, though we might wonder whether saying it in this way is an effective teaching strategy. But it is clear that this example does not involve an "integral relationship" between the Christian faith and the discipline of mathematics; it is not an example of faith-learning integration. (Nor is such integration achieved by using "Christian" examples in the story problems.) If we as faculty members are disposed to use our disciplines for illustrative purposes our efforts will undoubtedly be more sophisticated than this, and there is nothing to criticize in finding useful

¹ Representative works along this line include Harry Blamires, *The Christian Mind: How Should a Christian Think?* (Ann Arbor: Servant Books, 1978); Arthur F. Holmes, *Contours of a World View* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983); Brian J. Walsh and J. Richard Middleton, *The Transforming Vision: Shaping a Christian World View* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 1984); and Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Reason Within the Bounds of Religion* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976).

² I use "scholars" as a general term to include practitioners of all of the academic disciplines, while recognizing that some Christian academics prefer to designate themselves as scientists or artists or in some other way.

³ Cited by David L. Wolfe, "The Line of Demarcation Between Integration and Pseudo-Integration" (hereafter cited as "Demarcation"), in Harold Heie and David L. Wolfe, eds., *The Reality of Christian Learning: Strategies for Faith-Discipline Integration* (hereafter, *Reality*), (Grand Rapids: Christian University Press, 1987), p. 4.

illustrations from whatever source. But the point remains: The illustrative use of disciplinary materials in this way is not faith-learning integration.

Faith-learning integration is not a public relations program designed to convince constituents of the Christian character of an institution. The commitment that a college and its faculty make to the integration of learning with the Christian faith is properly seen as part of the broader commitment to serve Christ in every aspect of life. But the desire to exploit faith-learning integration in order to gain recognition as a "truly Christian" college carries with it dangers and possible distortions. Heavy use of the rhetoric of faith-learning integration does not guarantee that such integration is actually occurring, nor does it ensure that a college or its members will exemplify the highest Christian ideals in other respects. And it does not provide a guarantee that views which are antecedently favored by constituents on various points of contention will be affirmed and supported by faculty as a result of faith-learning activities. Above all, faith-learning integration is not a "quick fix" which instantly transforms a college into a model Christian community and its students and faculty into ideal Christian individuals. The integration of faith and learning is *hard scholarly work*. Like other scholarly work, it takes much time and effort to produce significant achievement. Much of it involves basic research, and immediate, highly visible results cannot be guaranteed. The commitment to do and to support such work is, we believe, one mark of a college which seeks to be in earnest about its Christian profession. But if the commitment to faith-learning integration is dominated by the desire to "prove something" about the institution, the effort is likely to be distorted or undermined.

Why Is Faith-Learning Integration Necessary?

Why exactly is faith-learning integration necessary? As we explore this question, it will help us also to get a better grasp of the nature of the task.

Integration or unitary truth? David Wolfe points out that some Christians object to the very word "integration," because it seems to "presuppose a denial that truth is already one."⁴ In a certain sense, this objection is justified. It is not as though there are two completely distinct and unrelated aspects of reality—say, Christianity and biochemistry—and it is up to us to create or invent a relationship between them. There is rather a *single* reality, *all* of which is created by God and under his dominion, and all of which we as his children and image-bearers must seek to understand. And for the mature Christian scholar it is, ideally, not a question of having on the one hand one's Christian faith, and on the other one's scholarly discipline, and needing to set up some kind of connection between them. Rather, one's scholarly thinking should *already* be permeated by Christian attitudes and beliefs, by Christian ways of seeing God's world—and, conversely, one's Christian vision of God's world should be already informed with the best insights gleaned from scholarly activity. In such a situation, one is not confronted

⁴"Demarcation," p. 4.

with the task of "integrating" two more or less separate and disjoint bodies of knowledge and belief; rather, there is a unitary vision of truth.

And yet there is ample justification for speaking of "integration." First of all, though there is a unity of truth there is nevertheless a *diversity in our ways of knowing* that makes the unity of truth a difficult and demanding achievement for us humans. The way of knowing in biochemistry is through experiment and theorizing, while in theology we know truth by grasping and responding to God's revelation. Corresponding to these diverse ways of knowing there is a diversity in the ways of *speaking*, of asking and answering questions; this diversity is sometimes expressed by saying that we have here different "language-games." This diversity in ways of knowing and speaking provides a perennial challenge for the Christian scholar, and sets many traps for the student who would ignore it; those who would know God by the methods of the natural sciences and those who would understand scientific matters through scriptural revelation share a common record of ill-success. So as a matter of fact we as human knowers *are* confronted by diverse and apparently unconnected bodies of knowledge achieved through different means; it is precisely and only by "integrating" such diverse bodies of knowledge that the vision of a unity of truth is gained.

Yet another reason why a process of integration is necessary is found in the *actual situation in the various academic disciplines*. It hardly needs pointing out that the leadership of the academic disciplines is not in the hands of those who share the vision that "all truth is God's truth." While many Christian colleges provide a good undergraduate education and some offer limited graduate study, leadership in the various academic fields is vested in "prestige" graduate programs at leading secular universities.⁵ Christian faculty members, having been trained in such institutions, have typically received little or no guidance in relating their graduate training to their Christian faith. As they begin their professional careers, then, they are *in fact* confronted with two "separate and disjoint bodies of knowledge and belief," simply because the graduate program has not assisted, and may have actively discouraged, the establishment of connections between them. Under these circumstances, to object to talk of "integration" is simply to deny the realities of the situation.

⁵ My remarks in this section suggested to one referee the image of "a small band of faithful Christians holding off the united hordes of heathen." Clearly such an image is a caricature; for one thing, neither among Christians nor among non-Christians is there the kind of unity it suggests. And some disciplines and subdisciplines are fairly open to Christian insights, or at least to insights reflecting Christian concerns. (In philosophy, for instance, this is true of the philosophy of religion and, to a lesser extent, of ethics; the philosophy of mind, on the other hand, tends to be dominated by a doctrinaire materialism.) But this caricature, like all caricatures, does contain a grain of truth: as Nathan Hatch has remarked, "Among contemporary intellectuals, the sway of secularism reigns virtually unchallenged, and its attack against the Christian faith remains heavy and sustained" ("Evangelical Colleges and the Challenge of Christian Thinking," in Joel Carpenter and Kenneth Shipps, eds., *Making Higher Education Christian* (Grand Rapids: Christian University Press, 1987), p. 158).

The Theological Necessity for Integration. The necessity for integrating faith and discipline is first of all *theological*; it stems from the very nature of Christian faith itself. The Christian prays, "Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." There is not a secular world and a sacred world, but a single world created by God and a single, unitary, truth which is known to God. To compartmentalize one's faith in one part of one's mind, one's scholarly discipline in another part, and to put one's business and civic concerns in yet other compartments is in effect to deny God's lordship over all of life. To do this brings several very real dangers. At a minimum, the failure to integrate means that one will lack the enrichment of an overall, unifying perspective by which to connect, unify, and comprehend all of what is known and experienced. It is also likely to mean that, in various respects, one will accept without question positions, viewpoints, and methods which are in serious tension or outright conflict with one's faith. The divided thinking which results can be a source of considerable discomfort for a reflective individual, and in some cases may even undermine one's faith. It also contributes to the impression, which in our day is extremely widespread, that Christian faith is essentially a purely private matter which has no bearing on the day-to-day business of life. To love God with all our minds requires that we try to think in a single, unified pattern all the truth he has enabled us to grasp.

The Educational Necessity for Integration. For the Christian college, faith-learning integration is not only a theological but an *educational* necessity. It is necessary for the reason that education cannot be carried out in the most effective way without some broad framework of common assumptions which structure and motivate the curriculum. Every educator must at some point confront the questions: What is most important to learn, and to what end is it learned? If there are no answers to this, the educational enterprise becomes pointless and ineffective.⁶ To the extent that there are answers, and the answers are operative in the actual shaping of the educational program, coherent and successful education becomes more possible.

This does not imply that the most effective education is one which is controlled by rigid dogma, with alternative views excluded from consideration. Christian colleges generally recognize, both in theory and in practice, that good education occurs as students are challenged by a wide variety of conflicting views. It is arguable that a Christian college with a commitment to faith-learning integration is in an especially strong position to encourage vigorous inquiry among its students. Energetic discussion is most likely to occur when the issues *really matter* to students and faculty, and they are far more likely to matter

⁶ "When a youngster like Lincoln sought to educate himself, the immediately available obvious things for him to learn were the Bible, Shakespeare and Euclid. Was he really worse off than those who try to find their way through the technical smorgasbord of the current school system, with its utter inability to distinguish between important and unimportant in any way other than by the demands of the market?" (Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987, p. 59.)

to those who hold deep-rooted beliefs which can be challenged, opposed, or perhaps supported by materials covered in a course.⁷

Strategies for Integration

Given that the task of integration is inescapable, how can it be carried out? In this section we shall consider various *strategies* for integration, strategies which differ in their assessment of the existing relationships between the disciplines and the Christian faith, and therefore also in their understanding of what must be done in order for a Christian scholar to pursue the disciplines with integrity. Following David L. Wolfe and Ronald R. Nelson, we shall term these the *compatibilist*, the *transformationist*, and the *reconstructionist* strategies.⁸

According to the *compatibilist* strategy, "the integrity of both faith and discipline are in large measure presupposed . . . [and] [t]he scholar's task is one of showing how . . . shared assumptions and concerns can be profitably linked."⁹ As is evident from this, the compatibilist does not recognize any deep, fundamental tension between the assumptions and procedures of her discipline and the Christian faith. She feels comfortable and "at home" both in her faith and in her scholarship; her aim is to demonstrate and exhibit the unity between them which already exists, at least potentially. As she practices her discipline she may (or again she may not) direct her studies in ways that are motivated by specifically Christian concerns. But she feels no need to challenge the underlying assumptions on which the study of her discipline normally proceeds. Since her faith and her discipline are already compatible, her task is simply to exhibit, to exemplify in practice, and to enjoy the compatibility which already exists.

The scholar who follows the *transformationist* strategy finds the relationship between his faith and his discipline to be somewhat more problematic than does the compatibilist. He does, to be sure, find some basic validity and integrity in the discipline as it is currently constituted. But he also finds the discipline to be lacking in insights and perspectives which are vital to him as a Christian. The proper response, then, is to recognize that there is "some legitimate insight in the disciplinary assumptions to begin with," and to go on from there to "remake or *transform* his discipline into one with a Christian orientation."¹⁰

Finally there is the *reconstructionist* strategy. The reconstructionist, even more than the transformationist, finds a fundamental tension between the assumptions and claims of the existing, secular disciplines and those of the Christian faith. Indeed, he finds that the existing disciplines are so deeply permeated

⁷ cf. Allan Bloom: "[R]elativism has extinguished the real motive of education, the search for a good life." (*The Closing of the American Mind*, p. 34.)

⁸ In this section we are heavily indebted to Wolfe, "Demarcation," and to Ronald R. Nelson, "Faith-Discipline Integration: Compatibilist, Reconstructionist and Transformationalist Strategies" (hereafter, "Strategies"), both in *Reality*. It would seem that Nelson originated this classification of integrative strategies.

⁹ "Strategies," p. 320.

¹⁰ Wolfe, "Demarcation," p. 7 (emphasis in original).

with anti-Christian assumptions of secularism, rationalism, and naturalism that he has no choice but to reject them and to begin at the beginning in a "radical reconstruction of the disciplines on . . . fully biblical foundations."¹¹ The reconstructed disciplines may still be called biology, geology, psychology, or philosophy. But they are all the same *new* disciplines with their own, distinctively Christian foundations, methodologies, and communities of inquirers; they are quite distinct from the biology, geology, psychology, and philosophy practiced by secular scholars and also by Christian scholars of compatibilist or transformationist persuasion.¹²

Comments on the Strategies. Now that we have the three strategies before us, how shall we assess them? One point which should already be clear is that the thoroughgoing reconstructionist stands at a greater distance from both the compatibilist and the transformationist than they stand from each other. Wolfe, indeed, claims that reconstructionism is not really faith-learning integration, on the grounds that this strategy "collapses the two-sided nature of the integrative process into a one-sided collection of Christian insights without systematic relevance to an academic discipline."¹³ But this seems mistaken; the reconstructionist, to be sure, is no longer collaborating with the practitioners of the existing secular

¹¹ Nelson, "Strategies," p. 325 (emphasis added).

¹² I am indebted to Arthur Holmes for raising the question of how the strategies for integration elaborated here correlate with H. Richard Niebuhr's typology of stances on the relationship of Christ and culture (see his *Christ and Culture* [New York: Harper, 1951]). It is clear that our "transformationist" strategy is a straightforward application to the academic arena of Niebuhr's category of "Christ the Transformer of Culture." And on the other hand, if the adherents of the "Christ Against Culture" stance apply themselves to academic pursuits at all, this could be expected to take the form of a "reconstructionist" approach to faith-learning integration.

"Compatibilism" seems to correlate with two of Niebuhr's types: "Christ Above Culture," and "the Christ of Culture." Upon reflection, this fact highlights two distinct ways in which one can be a compatibilist: One can maintain Christ and the Gospel as genuinely transcendent above the domain of the academic discipline, or on the other hand one can assimilate the Christian message to the content of the existing discipline (e.g., by equating salvation to psychosocial maturation).

This leaves the last, and perhaps the most problematic, of Niebuhr's types, namely, "Christ and Culture in Paradox." Niebuhr's description of this type is hardly crystal clear. But it would be safe to say that this type involves an *unresolved tension* between Christ and culture—a tension in which the claims of Christ and the culture are perceived as somewhat conflicting, yet both possessing validity, so that neither can be rejected outright. In principle, it would seem that such a tension could be resolved in several different ways: the tension could be dissolved by the discovery of deeper, underlying agreements (compatibilism); the culture could be transformed so as to be more closely conformed to the demands of Christ (transformationism); or it could become apparent that the conflict between the two is so deep and fundamental that mutual rejection is the only possible outcome (reconstructionism). Perhaps, then, "Christ and culture in paradox" can best be taken as a portrayal of the state of mind of the perplexed Christian scholar as she first sets out on the path of faith-learning integration!

¹³ Wolfe, "Demarcation," p. 8.

academic discipline, but he still must contend with the plurality of *ways of knowing* as well as with the *distinctive subject-matter* of his reconstructed discipline.¹⁴ Furthermore, it is hard to see how one could rule out in principle the possibility that a Christian scholar might find a particular discipline to be so thoroughly unsound and permeated with anti-Christian assumptions that there is no acceptable response other than total rejection. And as we know, some Christian scholars have in fact reached that conclusion. They may be mistaken, and it may be that their own efforts at creating alternative disciplines are not especially successful or impressive. But if this is so, it should be possible to demonstrate it by evidence and argument; there is no need to prejudge the matter by ruling out reconstructionism in advance.

It may prove illuminating to view these three integrative strategies as attempting to respond to different kinds of questions about the relationship between Christianity and scholarship. The compatibilist, for example, is responding to the question, "Why would a Christian want to get involved with *that*?" asked about a particular discipline. Such questions are in fact often asked by Christians who are suspicious of scholarship, and sometimes also by secular scholars who suspect that a Christian practicing their discipline will twist and distort it into something it is not. (One might say they suspect all Christian scholars of being reconstructionists!) To such questions the compatibilist replies by showing that there are excellent reasons for a Christian to practice, and *not* to twist or distort, the discipline, because of inherent commonalities between the discipline and the faith. To quote Wolfe: "*Genuine integration occurs when an assumption or concern can be shown to be internally shared by (integral to) both the Judaeo-Christian vision and an academic discipline.*"¹⁵

The transformationist, as we have seen, approaches his discipline with a somewhat different perspective. Committed by choice, training and calling to a particular discipline, he nevertheless finds it seriously lacking in certain ways as viewed from a Christian perspective. His question is, "How can this discipline be *changed* so as to correct what I as a Christian find to be its errors, and to supplement what I find to be lacking in its vision of truth?" He need not deny the compatibilist's contention that there are genuine commonalities between the faith and the discipline, yet he sees the need for a transformation of the discipline in order to correct what he perceives as serious flaws. (The compatibilist, if she admits that there are flaws in her discipline, will typically see them as the product of a "partial viewpoint" on reality taken by the discipline; the need is for this partial viewpoint to be placed into the context of a fuller vision of Christian truth, not for the discipline itself to be transformed.)

¹⁴ If the reconstructionist were to draw the content of his discipline exclusively from biblical and theological sources, Wolfe's comment would be justified. But this they typically do not do.

¹⁵ Wolfe, "Demarcation," p. 5 (emphasis in original). This is Wolfe's *general* definition of faith-learning integration; it obviously has a strong compatibilist flavor, though Wolfe does count transformationism as genuine integration.

242 The reconstructionist has yet another agenda. He has, to be sure, asked himself why a Christian would want to be involved with the existing, secular discipline, and his answer is: "For no good reason!" The existing discipline is beyond help. Yet, there is still the subject-matter of the discipline which cannot be ignored—subject-matter of which a Christian account is needed. So he asks himself, "How *can* one think Christianly about politics (or geology, or economics)?" And the answer is found in the reconstructed discipline.

It may further be pointed out that the various strategies, while distinct in their basic assumptions, need not be sharply separated in practice. One might, for instance, undertake to "reform" certain assumptions or procedures in one's discipline which one takes to be disharmonious with Christian truth, without going as far in this direction as a thoroughgoing transformationism would require. Or, one might conclude that a particular school or movement within one's discipline is to be thoroughly rejected (thus in effect agreeing with the reconstructionist about that school or movement), while regarding other schools either as compatible with one's faith or at least as affording insights which should be incorporated into a transformed discipline. (One might be a reconstructionist about behaviorism but a transformationist about cognitive psychology.) And even reconstructionists seldom manage to free themselves from dependence on all aspects of the secular disciplines they have rejected. (Creation Science advocates are still dependent on many aspects of standard biology, for example.) So the three strategies may better be viewed as three points on a continuum, than as three mutually exclusive alternatives. Nevertheless, these strategies can provide a valuable framework for the Christian scholar approaching a specific discipline with the objective of faith-learning integration.

It may be helpful to consider an example which illustrates these considerations. In recent issues of the *Christian Scholar's Review* several scholars have addressed the deconstructionist movement in literary criticism and philosophy. This is a movement which in its principal representatives (e.g., Foucault, Derrida) is clearly non-Christian and even anti-Christian, yet it has drawn a considerable range of responses. The stance of David Lyle Jeffrey and Roger Lundin is one of almost complete rejection.¹⁶ Patricia A. Ward, on the other hand, sees more possibilities for constructive dialogue between Christians and deconstructionists,¹⁷ and more recently James H. Olthuis, Merold Westphal, Gary J. Percesepe, and John D. Caputo all view deconstruction as affording important resources for Christian scholars, including insights which elsewhere are either unavailable or suppressed.¹⁸ I shall not presume to pronounce as to which is the "best" or "most

¹⁶ David Lyle Jeffrey, "Caveat Lector: Structuralism, Deconstruction, and Ideology," *CSR* XVII:4, pp. 436-448; Roger Lundin, "The Cult and Culture of Interpretation," *CSR* XIX:4, pp. 363-387. It should perhaps be said that neither of these scholars simply repudiates deconstruction because it is "unchristian" or "unbiblical"; rather, they criticize deconstruction in the light of what they take to be an older, and deeper, hermeneutical tradition.

¹⁷ Patricia A. Ward, "Worldly Readers and Writerly Texts," *CSR* XVII:4, pp. 425-435.

¹⁸ James H. Olthuis, "A Cold and Comfortless Hermeneutic or a Warm and Trembling

correct" Christian response to this movement; that question is still unresolved. But the range of responses does illustrate different "strategies" for approaching this important contemporary movement.¹⁹

Dimensions of Faith-Learning Integration

Suppose that a Christian scholar is convinced of the necessity of faith-learning integration, and of the need to devote significant resources of time and energy to this aspect of the scholarly task. Suppose, also, that she has formed at least a general idea concerning the relationship between the Christian faith and her discipline as it presently exists, and along with this a conception of the integrative strategy to be followed. How then shall she proceed? What exactly is to be done, in order to make faith-learning integration a reality? In this section we chart some *dimensions of integration*—that is, some basic *kinds of questions* which the scholar concerned with faith-learning integration may need to address.²⁰

Theoretical and Applied Disciplines. At this point I believe it is important to affirm an explicit acceptance of *integrative pluralism*—of the view that there is not one mandatory pattern for integration but rather a variety of approaches each of which may yield valuable results when properly applied. As Wolfe says:

Perhaps some disciplines lend themselves to one approach better than another. Perhaps the personality of the investigator is an important factor in the particular insights that are generated. In any case it must not be thought that one and only one approach is possible.²¹

As Wolfe suggests, there may be a number of factors which are relevant to determining the best approach for a particular scholar to use at a particular time.

Hermeneutic: A Conversation with John D. Caputo," *CSR* XIX:4, pp. 345-362; Merold Westphal, "The Ostrich and the Boogeyman: Placing Postmodernism," *CSR* XX:2, pp. 114-117; Gary J. Percesepe, "The Unbearable Lightness of Being Postmodern," *CSR* XX:2, pp. 118-135; John D. Caputo, "Hermeneutics and Faith: A Response to Professor Olthuis," *CSR* XX:2, pp. 164-170; James H. Olthuis, "Undecidability and the Im/Possibility of Faith: Continuing the Conversation with Professor Caputo," *CSR* XX:2, pp. 171-173.

¹⁹ Additional examples may be found in more recent issues of the *CSR*. Thus, the symposium on Central American Development in XX:3 contrasts the compatibilism of Howard Wiarda, who finds that he can carry out his Christian values and commitments through "mainstream" political science, with the transformationism of Roland Hoksbergen and (especially) James C. Dekker, both of whom wish for more specifically and overtly Christian solutions to the problems of Central America. And the symposium on evolution in XXI:1 pits Alvin Plantinga's (and Pattle Pun's) strongly transformationist views against the compatibilist or mildly transformationist approaches of Howard Van Till and Ernan McMullin. In the light of these and other examples, it may not be too much to say that the question of compatibilism vs. transformationism is one of the most important general issues confronting Christian scholarship at the present time.

²⁰ Although we have included reconstructionism as a possible strategy for integration, it will be evident that these questions are more suitable to the compatibilist and transformationist strategies. A reconstructionist would say that if we as Christian scholars ask these questions about the existing disciplines, the conclusion we should reach is that we should abandon those disciplines and join him in his project of radical reconstruction.

²¹ Wolfe, "Demarcation," p. 10.

One quite significant factor would seem to be the *distinction between theoretical and applied disciplines*. Clearly there is such a distinction, though it is not absolutely clear-cut: Even the most "theoretical" disciplines typically claim that there is something of a practical nature (above and beyond the "doing" (e.g., of history or philosophy) involved in the discipline itself) that one can do better as a result of having studied the discipline. And on the other hand, if the "applied" subject does not have a body of theory on which practice is based it can hardly justify itself as a discipline within the college curriculum. But the distinction is clearly seen in the *criteria by which students are evaluated*. A history major, for example, is better able to do all manner of things as a result of having studied history—practice law, for example, or serve in government, or administer a college. (If you doubt this, just ask your favorite historian!) But a graduating history major is not evaluated by her ability to do any of these things, but rather by her knowledge of history. The voice performance major, on the other hand, is expected to know a good deal of theory and music history, but his program has been a failure if he knows all this but just can't sing at all well. One discipline aims primarily at teaching its students to *know* something, the other at teaching them to *do* something.

The reason this distinction is relevant here is that the typical issues for faith-discipline integration tend to be different for theoretical and applied disciplines. The probing questions concerning epistemological and metaphysical "foundations" are less likely to seem pressing for the applied disciplines—and on the other hand, as we shall see, these disciplines typically raise questions of their own which are not present, or not as pressing, for the theoretical disciplines. Let us see how this is so.

Dimensions of Integration in the Theoretical Disciplines. In the theoretical disciplines four major dimensions of integration can be identified, as follows:

1. *World-view Foundations:* Here the question to be asked is, What fundamental insights and convictions, derivable from the Christian world-view, are relevant to the discipline? The "insights and convictions" which are pertinent here may be found in the Scriptures, in commentaries and books of theology, in books written specifically about the Christian world-view, and in other sources. The conviction that the earth, the heavens, and everything in them were created by God and pronounced good by him is surely relevant to the Christian's study of the natural sciences. The doctrine that man is created in the image of God, and the insight that humans are fallen, sinful creatures are both highly relevant to the human sciences. And so on.

2. *Disciplinary Foundations:* Here the scholar considers the foundational assumptions—methodological, epistemological, and ontological—which are stated or presupposed as the basis of his discipline, and asks whether any of them are particularly significant or problematic from the standpoint of the Christian faith. This significance may be either harmonious with the faith, as is the natural scientist's assumption that the physical world has an orderly structure which is mind-independent yet accessible to investigation, or in conflict with the faith, like

the assumption made by some psychologists that human behavior is entirely the product of environmental conditioning. In either case, the scholar's task is first to identify the foundational belief, then to subject it to scrutiny and determine its relationship to the Christian world-view. If it turns out that a particular assumption is both fundamental to the discipline and inimical to Christian belief, the scholar may find himself impelled in the direction of disciplinary transformation. One difficulty in this dimension of the integrative task is that all disciplines are not equally explicit about their fundamental assumptions; sometimes a good deal of digging is required. Help in this task may be found in discussions of the methodology and the philosophy of the various disciplines, as well as in work done by other Christian scholars on faith-discipline integration.

3. *Disciplinary Practice*: Here we are concerned with issues which arise in the day-to-day practice of one's discipline—of "doing one's job" as an historian, physicist, philosopher, etc. The historian may ask himself what aspects of history are of special interest to Christians, and also whether those aspects have been treated adequately by others, or whether valuable knowledge and insights may emerge from his own fresh study of those topics. The philosopher considers which questions in his field are of concern specifically to Christians, and how the existing, available answers to those questions comport with his Christian faith. The physicist might reflect concerning the relationship between various cosmological theories and the doctrine of creation. And so on. Resources for this dimension of integration are found primarily within the discipline itself, as well as in one's own understanding of the Christian world-view and in the writings of other Christian scholars.

4. *World-view Contribution*: In this dimension of integration we ask, what specific contribution does this discipline make to the Christian vision of reality? How does it enable us to understand God, and his world, and our fellow human beings differently than if the insights of the discipline were not available? What insights, projects, and activities does the discipline make possible? In short, what difference does the discipline make for Christians who are not its students and practitioners? The resources for this dimension of integration are found in the discipline itself, as refined through the examination called for in the other three dimensions, as well as in the scholar's grasp on the overall scheme of things to which the discipline is asked to contribute.

This last dimension, world-view contribution, is the one which has been least emphasized in the literature on faith-learning integration, so it may be worthwhile saying a few things in defense of its inclusion. First of all, this dimension emphasizes that *the ultimate aim of faith-learning integration is not merely to complete the integrative task within each separate discipline, but to enhance our overall vision of reality in the light of Christ*. It is not enough if the sociologist, the biologist, the literary scholar and the economist each has worked out how things stand in relation to the faith with respect to her own discipline, but there is no broader integration of the results of these labors. Our aim must be integral Christian scholarship, not only within each discipline but reaching across disciplinary

boundaries. The unity of God's truth demands no less. Second, this dimension emphasizes that *elaborating the overall Christian world-view is a common responsibility of the entire faculty*. If this world-view is to play a significant role in the educational process, it must be *communicated* to students, and if it is to be communicated it must be *shared* among faculty as a common possession. For each of us simply to "do her own thing" in her own classroom with her own discipline, and leave the students to put the pieces together, will not get the job done. Thirdly, this dimension helps to *demonstrate the relevance of integration* even to disciplines which sometimes tend to be only minimally involved in other dimensions of integrative activities. Consider, for example, mathematics. One will probably have some difficulty finding in the Scriptures principles which are specifically relevant to mathematical research. The mathematician can deny, with some plausibility, that his Christian faith makes or ought to make a substantive difference to the way he conducts his study of the field: there is no "Christian mathematics"; the problems and methodologies of mathematics are the same for believer and non-believer. There may be dispute as to whether or not Christians have a stake in some particular position on the foundations of mathematics. But the foundations of mathematics is a primary concern for only a rather small percentage of mathematicians and for virtually no undergraduate students, so that the topic would seem to have at best limited relevance. But when we turn to the theme of world-view contribution, the picture changes dramatically. What contribution does the discipline of mathematics make to our understanding of the nature of the world God has created? What is the significance of the fact that so many processes in the world can be given precise mathematical description? (Consider the differences in the way nature is viewed by those who have absorbed the lessons of the mathematical natural sciences, from the purely poetic and mystical view sometimes taken by those who are ignorant of those sciences.) What, on the other hand, is the significance of the fact that some events and processes seem to defy mathematical analysis? It is hard to believe that there is nothing to be said on these topics, or that Christian mathematicians will be unable to say it. These questions do not, to be sure, belong to the discipline of mathematics as narrowly defined. But that is just the point of the question of world-view contribution: not to remain confined within a narrow definition of the discipline, but to explore and exhibit its relevance to the broader understanding to which it contributes. This indeed would seem to be an inescapable concern for Christian liberal arts education, and indicates once again the close connection between the ideal of a comprehensive, unifying perspective on "the way things are" and the vision of reality which derives from faith.²²

Dimensions of Integration in the Applied Disciplines. As we turn from the "theoretical" to the "applied" disciplines, it is well to remind ourselves once again that

²² According to Allan Bloom, the very idea of a comprehensive world-view is in American culture dependent on the idea of the Bible as a "total book": "[W]ithout the book, even the idea of the order of the whole is lost" (*The Closing of the American Mind*, p. 58).

the various disciplines in the curriculum do not all fit neatly into one category or the other. Most disciplines have both theoretical and applied aspects, and so also with the integrative dimensions: A discipline which would be classified as "theoretical" may have practical applications which require the Christian scholar to give consideration to one or more of the integrative dimensions associated with the applied disciplines, or vice versa. But with this caution in mind, we now consider the dimensions of integration for the applied disciplines, of which again there are four:

1. *Theory Applied to Practice*: As has been noted already, each applied discipline has a basis of theory on which practice is based, whether that theory is internal to the discipline (such as music theory) or "borrowed" from one of the theoretical disciplines (as education uses psychology). In principle, then, all of the same sorts of questions can arise concerning the theoretical components of applied disciplines, as arise concerning the theoretical disciplines. These questions may, however, seem less urgent for the applied disciplines, in view of their primarily practical orientation. But there is another kind of question about theory which is specific to the applied disciplines: What are the implications and results when this theory is put into practice? Consider for example the behavioristic school in psychology. From a theoretical standpoint, questions are often raised about the foundational assumptions of this approach—its mechanistic view of man, its determinism, its implicit materialism, its denial of human freedom and dignity, and so on. The educator and applied psychologist, however, may feel that they can use behaviorism as a practical tool without getting into such questions; their concern is not with behaviorism as the "ultimate truth" about human beings, but simply with whether or not it works. But for them, a quite different question arises: What are the effects in practice of using behavior modification, for example, as one's primary method of discipline in the elementary classroom? And how do those effects coincide or conflict with one's ultimate objectives as a Christian educator? Whatever the answer to this is (and no answer is prejudged here), the question places the theory of behaviorism in a light which would be unavailable apart from its practical use in education.

2. *Ethics and Values*: Whenever one is concerned with practice, with action, then ethics and values must play a role. And so the Christian educator, the "trainer" in an applied discipline, must ask himself, What am I offering to my students by way of ethical guidance concerning the practice into which I am initiating them? The assumption, common in secular education, that one simply equips students with neutral tools or skills which are to be used purely according to their personal whims and desires, is just not acceptable in a Christian education. One can't guarantee that guidance will be accepted and followed, but it is irresponsible not to offer it. Such guidance will include "professional ethics," where relevant, but it will go well beyond these often rather narrowly defined codes of professional conduct to include consideration of the ultimate objectives for which certain things are done, as well as of the implications of various ways of meeting those objectives. In economics, for example, it is necessary to reflect

on what the purposes of the economic system ought to be, and on various ways of fulfilling those purposes—are the human needs of the poor, for instance, better met by encouraging private enterprise, or by creating public welfare programs or by some mix of these strategies?

3. *Attitudes*: Whenever service is performed, especially service done directly for human beings, it makes a tremendous difference in what *spirit or attitude* the service is done. We have all experienced that one physician leaves us feeling calm and hopeful while another, perhaps equally skillful on a technical level, leaves us uneasy and anxious. Perhaps the two doctors are equally dedicated to providing the very best care for the patient's welfare. But one of them succeeded, as the other did not, in communicating that dedication to us through a manner and an attitude which assured us that our needs were understood and that everything was being done to restore us to health. We know, too, the difference which our own attitude and treatment of students makes to how things go in our classes. In applied subjects, then, we need to lead students to reflect on the attitudes with which they will serve; this is a concrete application of our concern with ethics and values. Of course we also need to instill in them, by example and precept, the best Christian attitudes and spirit of service.²³

4. *Contribution to the Kingdom of God*. If the ultimate goal of Christian study and theorizing is the elaboration of the Christian world-view, the ultimate goal of Christian practice is to build the Kingdom of God, in order that "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." How does our "doing" in the applied disciplines contribute to this? In a sense this also is a continuation of the concern with ethics and values, but it places those questions in a larger arena, the arena of God's total purposes for us his creatures. We may ask, with Nicholas Wolterstorff, how a particular form of activity contributes to *shalom*, to the good and satisfying human life under God's rule which he intends and desires for us.²⁴ And the answer to this question is of vital concern as we seek to integrate these activities, and the disciplines which instruct us in them, with the faith and the love we know in Christ.

Conclusion

This then is the challenge and the task of faith-learning integration. It is a challenge to which we as Christian scholars and teachers have committed ourselves in virtue of our calling. It is an area in which we do not have pre-packaged answers waiting to be taken up and proclaimed; rather, we must find our own answers in collaboration with Christian scholars everywhere.

²³ One referee questioned whether attitudes are really an instance of integration as here defined. I would concede that the general definition of integration is slanted towards the theoretical disciplines. But if one considers integration in relation to applied disciplines, one must also consider the relationship between the Christian faith and the *way* in which the application is carried out, and this surely includes attitudes.

²⁴ See Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Until Justice and Peace Embrace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982).