

Taking the “fear factor” out of Faith Integration: Four main “entry points”

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Abstract

Some academic fields seem more suited to faith integration (FI) than others. The difficult task of analyzing computer science or calculus through a Christian worldview may cause some professors to be timid about FI. This article helps allay some of the anxiety related to FI by providing four “entry points”: the integration of foundations, pedagogies, practices, and perspectives. Professors of any discipline will readily identify with at least one of these “entry points;” and they may push themselves to branch into the other approaches as well.

Key words: faith integration; pedagogy; worldview

A math professor recently described how faith integration induces a “fear factor” for him:

I teach calculus, and there’s not much in the Bible about the subject. I feel like I’d be taking verses out of context if I tried to apply them to math, so I just keep coming back to a few verses about how God is constant, and true.¹

This colleague is not the only one who worries that his discipline is not disposed toward robust integration with the Christian worldview. A professor at a school of business brought up a similar concern: “Often the faith integration component in our classes just ends up being the same set of ethical principles: Honor your contracts; model servant-leadership; treat people ethically.”

The sentiments above indicate that professors may feel dissatisfied with shallow attempts of faith integration (FI). They want to push themselves to discover deeper ways in which Christianity informs their academic disciplines. On the other hand, such comments from these professors also suggest that they have found some legitimate ways that the Bible relates to their field. Is there a way for them to leverage the biblical concepts they have already identified?

It seems professors of some disciplines have an easier time doing faith integration than those in other fields. Gaebel (1968) observed math is the hardest subject to integrate with faith, whereas literature and the arts are the easiest. More recently, Kaul et al.’s (2017) secondary analysis of responses from 2074 faculty at 55 CCCU institutions found

that “religion and philosophy instructors are the most likely to integrate faith into their teaching, and professors specializing in computer science, math, and engineering were the least likely” (p. 172).² That said, numerous professors of STEM have paved the way for integrating basic biblical concepts (about the nature of God and His creation) with the physical sciences (Brabenec, 1977; Granville, 1976; Howell & Bradley, 2011; Kallenberg, 2013; MacKay, 1965; Nickel, 2012; Owens, 1983; Pollard, 1961). These thinkers have discovered a niche within the field of faith integration to which their field is best suited.

I suggest that much of the timidity professors have about faith integration can be cleared up if we distinguish between different *types* of integration and determine which of these is most ripe for further exploration within a specific discipline. Fields such as business naturally lend themselves to biblical *practices* like generosity³ and servant leadership⁴. Other fields, such as philosophy, intersect with many *perspectives* in the Bible, regarding the nature of truth and goodness. On the other hand, fields like chemistry and physics may not have theoretical concepts or practical applications that intersect richly with the Bible’s narrative (when exegeted carefully); but the very ability to study these fields may be possible due to some *foundational* truths we find in scripture, such as God’s constancy and orderliness⁵. And regardless of our discipline, there are biblical concepts that inform our *pedagogies*.

Table 1 below shows how the various entry points to faith integration can be placed in four major categories. Note

that the first two types (foundations and pedagogies) deal with biblical truths that are not particularly contested within evangelicalism and can be applied in any discipline across the university. The last two types (practices and perspectives) are far more contested and complex and must be worked out at the level of the specific discipline.

The various entry points to faith integration can be placed into four major categories:

1. Integrating foundations
2. Integrating pedagogies
3. Integrating practices
4. Integrating perspectives

This article discusses all four types of integration above, and gives practical steps professors can take to create learning outcomes in each of these four areas. But first, a clear definition of “faith integration” must be given.

Defining faith integration

Integratus means “to make whole.” In the evangelical tradition, what needs to be “made whole” are the “two books”⁶ which teach us truth:

1. the truths we discover through secular academic pursuits (also called the “study of nature”, through the use of rational thought and empirical research); and
2. the truths we discover through God’s Word.

The first set of truths are often called “general revelation” because, as Psalm 19:1-6 indicates, God has revealed some general truths about Himself through nature. The second set of truths, which is given through Scripture, is called “specific revelation” because God specifically revealed aspects of His character through His Word (Psalm 19:7-14) – especially as He revealed himself through Jesus Christ.⁷ Therefore, Gangel’s (1978) definition of FI is suitable. He says faith integration is “the teaching of all subjects as part of the total truth of God, thereby enabling the students to see the unity of natural and special revelation” (p. 30).

Type 1: Integrating Foundations

Scholars of faith integration have consistently noted that at the most foundational level, academia is only possible because “all truth is God’s truth” (Holmes, 1983; cf. Gaebelein, 1954, p. 21). These principles ring true across the disciplines (the word university means “one truth”). Art, biology, and chemistry (and the rest of the disciplines) reflect a God who loves creativity, and who deserves glory. Such biblical concepts regarding the nature of God, humanity, and creation are fairly plain – and are ripe for application to any

discipline. I refer to this line of inquiry as the integration of faith and foundations.

The integration of foundations has two typical approaches:

1. Discovering the foundations: Defending the Christian worldview as an approach that promotes and even engenders academic studies
2. Unifying the foundations: Discovering how God’s two books, nature and scripture, teach a unified message

Discovering the foundations

At the most basic level, faith integration is about discovering the way in which the Judeo-Christian worldview lays a foundation for academic pursuits: In the past century, scholars have noted four major ways that biblical Christianity makes truth-seeking possible: 1) the rejection of fate; 2) the rejection of dualism; 3) the concept of truth; and 4) the concept of constancy.⁸

Rejection of fate provides a foundation

Some of the world’s religions, including atheism, have no clear impetus for improving the world. Classical Hinduism expressly teaches that people should accept their fate and should not improve themselves or the situations of others. In contrast, the Judeo-Christian worldview lays the foundation for involvement in agricultural progress, advancements in healthcare, innovations in transportation, etc., because Christianity teaches that humans are commanded to “subdue” the earth. This command in Genesis 1:28 is often referred to as the “cultural mandate.” Christians interpret this command to mean that we are to overcome obstacles by solving them. Rather than dismiss problems as “fate”, and rather than “just pray” about obstacles, Christians have “subdued” those problems through hard work and study (Nehrbass, 2016b, pp. 61-69).

Rejection of dualism provides a foundation

Some worldviews devalue the physical universe. For example, one major form of Buddhism teaches that suffering is not real. Other mystics (and some Christian sects) do not encourage studying or improving the physical world because they see heaven (or Nirvana) as the only “real” world worth putting any effort into. In contrast, the orthodox Christian worldview lays a foundation for studying the physical universe because it finds the universe (as God’s creation) as “good,”⁹ and therefore, worthwhile of study (Gangel, 2002; Gaebelein, 1980; Holmes, 1975, 2001; D’Souza, 2008).

The concept of truth provides a foundation

Postmodernism rejects the notion of absolute truth, as do many non-Western cultures. Such worldviews tend to value harmony over truth-seeking, because claiming something as true necessarily means other positions are false. In some cases, the desire for harmony over truth can impede academic progress, because the discovery of knowledge requires taking a position, arguing it, discovering the errors, and correcting any irrational positions. The Christian worldview lays the foundation for philosophy and mathematics because Christianity teaches the law of non-contradiction (something cannot be both true and false).¹⁰

The concept of constancy provides a foundation

The Christian worldview lays a foundation for the scientific method because it assumes the universe follows consistent rules, as it reflects God's constancy. Marsch (2018) argues that scientists are "methodological Christians" because they presuppose the Christian concept of constancy:

It is assumed that practitioners of science must dismiss Christianity and embrace methodological naturalism. But I think (knowing many will disagree) that all scientists embrace what I call methodological Christianity. When one sees the universe aright, then science is possible. The incommunicable attributes of God suggest uniformity in nature, for if God is characterized by his infinities, then the laws of nature have some regularity across space and time. (p. 240)

The concept of glory, awe and wonder

Christians glorify their creator. This sense of awe regarding creation has compelled them to engage in various intellectual pursuits, from the composition of music and other arts to the study of mathematics and the physical universe, and the study of God's crowning creation: humankind (Bradley and Howell, 2019, p. 157).

Table 1 below summarizes four major ways the Christian worldview makes the pursuit of scholarly knowledge possible.

Table 1: Four ways the Christian Worldview makes academia possible

Worldview concept	What it teaches	How it makes academia possible
Rejection of fate	Christianity teaches we do	We can discover the causes and solutions to social,

	not have to accept problems as our fate- we can solve them.	environmental, agricultural and health problems.
Rejection of dualism	Christianity teaches that suffering is real, that this earth matters, and that we have a responsibility to make it better.	Christians value the pursuit of knowledge in the areas of medicine, political science, ethics, history, art, psychology, and so on, because this world matters.
The concept of truth	Christianity teaches that truth is discoverable and rational; falsehood must be defeated.	Philosophy, based on the laws of logic, has made tremendous contributions in the fields of ethics and "natural theology" (proving God's existence through rational thought). The judicial system is based on the concept that truth can be discovered or reasoned.
The concept of constancy	Christianity teaches that God is constant, and the universe follows constant rules.	We can formulate laws of physics, chemistry, and mathematics, because we believe that data we find through empirical study is (more or less) true throughout time and throughout the universe.
The concept of glory	Christianity teaches that creation points to God's glory.	We are attracted to glory, awe and wonder, as we engage in the arts and in exploration of the natural world and its "laws."

Applying the "discovering foundations" model

Professors should consider the following questions:

1. How do secular thinkers in your discipline argue that your subject must be studied apart from religious beliefs? *For example, secular aviation professors do not want their students to say "God is my co-pilot."*
2. How do the four Christian worldview concepts from Table 2 provide a basis for your academic field? *Example: The Christian aviator may say that*

his conviction that humans have dominion over creation is a basis for engaging in flight.

3. What is an outcome you would want to see in one of your classes, that would demonstrate students understand how the Christian worldview facilitates the study of their subject?

Unifying the Foundations

Whereas “discovering the foundations” (discussed above) involves demonstrating how basic assumptions in the Christian worldview make academic pursuits *possible*, there is a second way to do the “integration of foundations.” Discover the “Unity of the foundations.” This approach involves discovering whether God’s two books, nature and scripture, teach a unified message. And if so, what is the message?

The concept of a “unified message” has intrigued philosophers for 2500 years and was popularized recently with Stephen Hawking’s (2006) search for a “theory of everything.” Modern (pre-1950) philosophers were consumed with the pursuit for a “unified field of knowledge” – some basic concepts that could be a sort of “key” to all knowledge (Kaku, 2021). Christian thinkers have certainly picked up on this concept and have maintained that basic truths about God – revealed both through study of the physical universe and through the study of scripture – are the key to this “theory of everything.”

The most basic component of this pursuit for the “unified field of knowledge” is the source of timeless truths, like the laws of logic and mathematics. As early as Plato, theists have tried to understand the way in which natural laws (which seem to be eternal) teach a “unified message” about eternity. Are the laws of the universe eternally true, because they are located in God’s very nature? Or are the laws of nature contingent truths (i.e., could the speed of light have been anything God wanted it to be; and could 2+2 have been five, if God made it so)? Or are even the “laws” we take to be true for our universe nothing more than social constructs – and we could have arrived at wholly different “laws” if our culture had developed differently?

Further, if mathematical laws are true apart from human existence (i.e., they are not social constructs), and in fact are true regardless of whether matter ever existed, then they must belong to the realm of “ideas” rather than the realm of matter. If that’s the case, *why* does the universe – made up of physical matter – obey something from the (eternal) world of ideas? This points to the mystery of the relationship between the eternal and the created. *What unifies these two worlds?*

The laws of mathematics seem to be true for all times, in all places, and cannot be broken. That is, they are eternal, omnipresent, and omnipotent—characteristics we only ascribe to God. Many scientists within the Christian tradition, including Augustine and Galileo, believed the timeless truths we find in the natural world have the same “message” or “meta-narrative” that we find in scripture, *because God is the author of the laws of nature, and is the author of scripture.*

Bradley and Howell (2019) suggest that one of the reasons scientists take such delight in discovering the eternal truths of mathematics is that in doing so, they are apprehending the eternal and truthful character of God (p. 157).

What is the unified message?

The message of both of God’s books (scripture and nature) is essentially that a God who is ordered¹¹ and beautiful¹² purposefully designed a universe that reflects these characteristics, so that we would glorify Him. For decades, secular physicists have understood that the universe expanded from a beginning point and will eventually collapse due to entropy. This notion that the universe has a beginning (the so-called Big Bang), and an end, correlates with scripture’s teaching that God created the universe and will bring it to an end¹³. Romans 1:18-31 teaches this two-book theory, that anyone who gazes on the universe can tell it was created.

Poythress (2006, 2015) explains that as we discover through mathematics and science that the universe is beautiful and orderly, we learn the same message we find in scripture: That the Creator is beautiful¹⁴ and orderly¹⁵. As the formulators of the Intelligent Design (ID) theory have argued, nature may not tell us much about specific attributes of the universe’s Creator, but biology does teach us the same message as scripture: The universe has been designed with purpose¹⁶ (Johnson, 1991; Behe, 2006). Similarly, Collins (2006), who helped map the human DNA sequence, made the case that the orderliness, complexity and individuality of DNA teach us the same message as scripture: that our Triune God is creative, complex, and personal¹⁷.

Additionally, as ID scholars have noted, if the Earth were any further or closer to the sun, if the earth were larger, or smaller, or on a different axis, and so on, life would not be possible. The fact that the universe “works” – that life is sustained at all, echoes the message of Col. 1:7 that “In him all things hold together” (NIV).

As Jonathan Edwards put it, “All beauty to be found throughout the whole creation is but a reflection of the diffused beams of that being, who hat an infinite fullness of brightness and glory” (Edwards, 1989, p. 550).

Table 2 below summarizes the “unified message.”

Table 2: The “unity of foundations”

The message from scripture	The message from “nature”	Examples of a “unified” message within academia
God is ordered.	Creation is ordered.	The laws of nature are ordered because they come from a God of order.
God is beautiful.	Creation is beautiful.	Art and music are enjoyable because we are designed by a beautiful God who enjoys beauty.
God is purposeful.	Creation is designed with purpose.	The cell is purposeful because it is authored by a purposeful, complex, and personal God.

Applying the “unity” of foundations model:

Professors should consider the questions below:

1. What is an example of a foundational “law” that is widely accepted in your discipline? *For example, a widely accepted “law” in physics is the law of entropy: The universe is slowing down.*
2. What is a foundational concept in the Christian worldview that coheres with the concept you wrote above? *To continue the example of entropy: God created a finite universe that will ultimately come to an end.*¹⁸
3. What is a learning outcome that assesses students’ understanding of how foundational truths in scripture cohere with foundational concepts in your academic discipline? *To conclude the example of the Christian aviator- a course outcome may be “Students will describe how aviation fulfills the biblical command to subdue and enjoy the earth.”*

Type 2: Integrating Pedagogies

The integration of faith and pedagogy has been done by asking questions in two main categories:

1. Pedagogical purposes: What is the nature and purpose of Christian Higher Education?

2. Pedagogical postures: How does Christianity inform the way university staff and faculty relate to students?

Pedagogical purposes

What business does the Church have with the teaching of liberal arts, fine arts, and sciences at the college level? There has been much debate on this subject, but evangelicals generally aim at what Badley (1994) called “perspectival integration” (p. 27): the formation of a coherent Christian worldview. Arthur Holmes’ (1975) contended that the purpose of Christian education is to “cultivate the creative and active integration of faith and culture” (p. 6). That is, the purpose is to help students live in a way that aligns with their Christian beliefs. Word and deed must match. But what would such integration look like? One’s answer to this question reveals how one integrates faith with the purposes of pedagogy. Some pedagogical purposes from scripture include the following:

1. Teaching students to obey all Jesus has commanded¹⁹;
2. Inviting students to glorify God and enjoy Him²⁰;
3. Helping students discover their vocation as a way of carrying out the “cultural mandate” (to fill the earth and enjoy/subdue it²¹; and,
4. Equipping students to obey the Greatest Commandment, to love God and others.²²

Number three above aligns well with the current popular sentiment that college is about career preparation (“Harris Poll”, 2019). However, Christian college students’ sense of “vocation” is nuanced, as they balance pragmatic concerns, a sense of purpose, and self-actualization (Phillips, 2011).

Yet the other three purposes above are more about character formation. Carpenter and Shipps (2019), for example, argue that the purpose is to train students to embrace justice, simplicity and sacrifice. Smith and Smith (2011) believe that effective Christian education can be seen insofar as students are practicing the spiritual disciplines (Smith & Smith, 2011).

If integration is about making people more like Jesus, it must involve more than just the curriculum in the classroom. Wolterstorff (2002) agreed that Christian education should lead to a way of living, not just a way of thinking. In fact, the Christian college experience integrates faith and learning through service projects, and community life standards (Benne, 2002, p. 148). In fact, a growing body of literature discusses the value of “service-learning” (Lewing, 2019).

Applying the “purposes” of pedagogy

Professors should consider the questions below:

1. Why do you want to integrate the Christian Worldview with the teaching of your academic discipline?
2. Your discipline may have practical purposes (discussed in Type 3, below)- but how would you write a learning outcome that captures the purposes of teaching the discipline? *For example, an anthropology course might have the outcome: "Students will critique ethnocentrism."*
3. How can your overall pedagogical purpose for integrating faith (that you wrote in question 1 above) relate to the purpose of the discipline, which you answered in question 2 above? An example may be, *"The purpose of teaching anthropology is to help students love others, as they discover that all humans bear the image of God."*

Pedagogical postures

Forty percent of Christian professors (n=2309) said that their faith does not influence their teaching methods (Smith, 2018, p. 145). In fact, in a compilation of nearly 300 books and articles on integration of faith and learning, I noted that very few resources discuss how Christianity impacts the way we design learning activities and assessments (Nehrbass, nd).

Yet, Smith (2018) argues, faith informs not just the *what* and *why*, but the *how* (p. 68). He developed a three-fold plan for our pedagogical postures:

- 1: See anew (question your discipline's approach to pedagogy):
- 2: Choose engagement (should you do more than just lecture?); and,
- 3: Reshape practice (ask how a Christian approach to teaching impacts your timing and use of space).

Elsewhere, Sullivan (2018) used a Christian worldview to analyze the implications of making "academic judgements" (such as passing or failing students, or peer reviewing articles). Critiquing academic work is fundamentally about the search for truth (p. 86). Our motivation for passing judgement on students' (or our peers') work must be to encourage them in focusing on whatever is true.²³ Yet Sullivan warns that when it comes to "judging" academic work, "reliance on bureaucracy and proceduralism, and overbearing surveillance" do not promote the sort of spiritual growth that Christian academics should aim for (p. 104).

Other Christian educationists have suggested that faith integration is modeled in the way professors relate to students outside of class (Weeks & Isaak, 2012, p. 63). For example, Marmon (2008) encourages professors to apply the virtue of hospitality, with professors as the hosts, and students as the guests. Korniejczuk (1994) averred that "the most important manifestation of faith-learning integration is the daily life of the Christian teacher" (p. 4). For this "silent witness" to be efficacious, though, the Christian teacher must model distinctly Christian characteristics, such as a passion for Jesus Christ.²⁴

Additionally, Dockery (2008) conceptualizes the Christian college's pedagogy as a "faithful community." He uses Romans 12 to develop a list of building blocks that contribute to such a community: loving with a Christlike love, exercising discernment and patience, welcoming difference, living in peace, bearing each other's burdens (pp. 95-97).

In fact, there is a large body of work on Jesus' pedagogy (Horne, 1920; Branch, 2013; Wayment, 2009). To give one example, Rhoades and Nehrbass (2021) have shown that Jesus used experiential learning in the sending out of the 70, to both challenge and leverage cultural values and mental models held by the disciples.

Also, biblical concepts of diligence and honesty shape our course design. For example, courses which are "aligned" with objectives ensure that the professor's plans will come to fruition. There are many examples of diligence in scripture (for example Joseph made plans to mitigate the famine and stuck to the plan²⁵). As Ecclesiastes 9:10 says, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might (ESV). Second, it is only honest (and therefore best practice) for professors to have lectures, readings, assessments, and other course activities that align with the stated objectives of the course. To use class time or assessments in ways that do not align with these outcomes would be inconsistent, or duplicitous. Prov. 12:22 warns against such dishonesty. "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who act faithfully are his delight" (ESV). Courses which are "aligned" with objectives can be delightful to God (and to the students).

Applying the "postures" of pedagogy

Professors should consider the following question regarding the postures of pedagogy:

1. How do you create a community of faith in your classroom?
2. What characteristics of Jesus do you model as a professor, and what aspects do you most need to improve?

3. How can you expressly point out to students that your course design is informed by your faith?

Type 3: Integrating Practices

For some disciplines, the practical application of the subject matter is most fitting for integration with the Christian worldview. Of course, many academic programs teach practical skills which are not directly discussed in the Bible: Nursing students learn to give injections and business students learn management strategies.

Note that while *foundations* and *pedagogy* provide entry points for the integration of faith with academia in general, the *practical* applications and *theoretical* perspectives of each discipline require a more individualized- focus. For example, biblical ethics of holiness²⁶ and justice²⁷ impact the field of business differently than they do the field of nursing (Cafferky, 2015; Steele & Monroe, 2020).

The integration of practices can be divided into two main areas, which I will discuss below.

1. Biblical Practices: How can the practice of my discipline be shaped by biblical concepts?
2. Furthering the Kingdom: How can the insights of my discipline facilitate the Great Commission?

Biblical Practices

The practical aspect of FI falls into two categories: stewardship, and ethics.

Stewardship

A church in Huntington Beach, California, has a number of stained glass windows that contain familiar Bible scenes. But a careful eye will find modern machinery in one of the scenes. This is not syncretism, it is sovereignty: The founders of the church in the coastal city recognized that their work in the local industries was a way of obeying God's command to take the earth and "subdue/enjoy"²⁸ it.

Most academic pursuits provide ways for us to manipulate nature in some way so we can enjoy it more: We learn how to mine ore more efficiently to make stronger metals; we take dominion over the rules of physics to build safer planes; we automate manufacturing so it can be more cost-effective.

A key part of this dominion over creation involves our stewardship of the world's resources²⁹ (including humans, animals and the rest of nature). The sciences have many

practical applications that can be described as "stewardship" of God's creation. We learn how to improve fertilizers to decrease hunger in impoverished regions; we discover processes for abating erosion and pollution; we find ways to produce cleaner energy; we search for cures to diseases (see Chappell, 2019, p.166).

Ethics and Values

Because the Bible was not written to specifically address business management techniques or health care practices, such occupational-oriented degree programs tend to draw on a bank of general Christian ethics when it comes to FI. In fact, the fields of business, leadership and nursing are some of the most well-integrated disciplines, when it comes to the application of basic biblical ethics. For example, Mearse (2021) applied the biblical ethic of stewardship to business; Erisman and Daniels (2013) suggested that management practices evaluate how workers evidence the fruits of the spirit; Stansbury (2018) says that technology in business should promote *shalom*. Wong (2019) also believes that businesspeople are co-creators with God who "seek the welfare of the city"³⁰ as they cultivate *shalom* (p. 294).

Justice is also an important value that connects the Christian faith to academia. Hill (2018) believes that justice³¹ is a motivator for affirmative action. Grudem (2018) explains that systemic justice ensures that the state punishes wrongdoing, while encouraging a posture of forgiveness from those wronged.

In fact, certain fields in academia are on shaky ground without the foundations of a Christian worldview. For example, the social sciences often refer to human rights. But as Marsden (1997) points out:

If one believes that our species is no more than what has so far evolved, there is hardly a convincing basis for treating all people as having equal rights or for special concerns for the weak and the disadvantaged. Christian theism, on the other hand, at least provides grounds for supporting the moral intuitions that many academics share. (p. 87)

And in nursing, the biblical ethic of compassion³² has been seen as the motivator for the caregiver's bond with his patients (Truex, 1992). Shelly and Miller (2006) draw on the biblical ethics of hope and *shalom* as a foundation for the practice of nursing.

Some classes raise specific ethical issues that Christians must address. For example, a class on genetic engineering requires the students to develop Christian approaches to genetic screening, gene therapy and genetic counselling

(Deane-Drummond, 2006; Shannon, 1999). These ethical issues can be highly enigmatic, and simple biblical precepts like “treat people with kindness”³³ will not satisfy. To become fluent in this type of faith integration, it is necessary to study the biblical worldview, especially biblical ethics. Resources abound in this field, but a good starting point is Grudem (2018).

Note that applying ethics to academic disciplines does not make the content *distinctly* Christian (Marsden, 1997, p. 69). Secular thinkers and people of other faiths may arrive at some similar conclusions regarding the ethics of a certain discipline. But this does not detract from the point that reflecting on an academic discipline from the perspective of the Christian faith will naturally raise ethical issues.

Applying the integration of ethical practices

Professors should consider the following questions, regarding the integration of ethical practices:

1. What is one main value held widely across your discipline? *For example, the visual arts value beauty.*
2. What is a biblical value that supports this ethical value held in your discipline? *Example: Exodus 35:25-35 highly values workmanship and skillfulness.*
3. What is a biblical value that *challenges* this ethical value held in your discipline? *For example, the Bible warns against “graven images”³⁴ and against adorning oneself with beauty.³⁵*
4. What is a learning outcome where you can assess students’ learning in relation to the biblical ethics of your academic discipline? *For example: “Art students will evaluate approaches toward the creation and enjoyment of beauty from a biblical perspective.”*

Furthering the Kingdom

Another way to do the integration of practice is to ask how best practices in the discipline can grow the kingdom of God. For example, sociology informed the church growth movement of the 20th century, as professors of missions considered social factors that contribute to church growth (Wagner, 1978). Best practices in statistics have also been used to understand church growth (Bialek, 2018). Elsewhere, Nehrbass (2016a, 2021) has noted how missiologists integrated theology with fields like agriculture, anthropology, communication studies, counseling, economics, education, epistemology, history,

medicine, philosophy, public health – all for the purpose of aiding cross-cultural discipleship.

Applying the purpose of “furthering the kingdom”

Professors should consider the following questions regarding the “kingdom” integration model:

1. What is a way that your discipline benefits the world? *For example, architecture programs enable graduates to design useful, affordable and attractive buildings.*
2. What is a way that the benefits of your discipline can also benefit the Church’s “kingdom efforts?” *In the example above, architects can design culturally acceptable church buildings in the Middle East that are safe and affordable.*
3. What is a scriptural passage that compels Christians to get involved in these “kingdom efforts?” *In the example above, the professor may appeal to building projects in Nehemiah or 1 Chron 28.*
4. What is a learning outcome that assesses students’ abilities to apply their discipline to “Kingdom efforts?” *To complete the example above, “Students will apply the biblical value of majesty (1 Chron 29:11) to the practice of architecture.”*

Type 4: Integrating Perspectives

The integration of perspectives is difficult in part because it can be so elusive: Some academic fields, like mechanical engineering or speech therapy, may have some general *foundations* or *ethical principles* (discussed in types 1 and 3 above) but do not immediately have theoretical perspectives that clearly intersect with the Bible. On the other hand, some academic fields like philosophy or political science abound with perspectives that either align with or strongly challenge the Christian worldview.

Additionally, the worldview perspectives are not necessarily applicable in the same way to all disciplines. Christian psychologists may discover that the doctrine of the Trinity informs perspectives in their discipline in one way (Jackson, 2017), whereas Christian political scientists may find different ramifications of the Trinity in their field (Artis, 2019).

The integration of perspectives can be divided into two lines of inquiry:

1. Using theology to critique Academic Perspectives:
How does Christian theology inform or confront

the common theories and perspectives in my discipline?

2. Using academia to critique evangelical perspectives: How do the common theories and perspectives in my discipline help me understand aspects of Christian theology better?

Using theology to critique Academic Perspectives

Often Christian scholars look at how secular ideas must be corrected, based on the Christian perspective. For example, an environmental scientist might ask, How does the nature of the Trinity confront, inform, or cohere with secular scholarship on conservation? (Wilkinson, 2003). Or how does a Christian view of God's providence in history challenge Marxist or atheistic lenses of history (Marsden & Roberts, 1975)?

This type of integration can be controversial. The Bible has much to say about concepts related to politics and economics, but what is the biblical perspective on private property and the free market? Grudem and Asmus (2013) and Richards (2009) have argued that the Bible's vision of flourishing can be attained through free market capitalism, whereas Claiborne (2016) sees Christianity as inimical to these principles. Yoder (1959) believed that government was not part of God's plan before the Fall, whereas Van Til (1959) believed that the institution of government reflects God's plan for ruling in an orderly fashion. Christian scholars will always be debating these questions within the purview of FI.

Granted, the "correction of perspectives" model of integration is difficult because in order to avoid triteness, it requires a great deal of reflective research, requiring one to be an expert in her own academic field, while also being highly conversant with systematic theology. Poythress (2006, 2015), for example, has a Ph.D. in mathematics from Harvard as well as four advanced theological degrees, and is well situated to discuss how Christ is the redeemer of science. However, rather than exonerate the rest of us from getting involved in this level of faith integration, such an advanced level of scholarship should inspire us to think more deeply about how our disciplines are related to the Christian worldview.

But the Bible is a big book! How would one even begin to compile a list of theological perspectives to integrate with his own discipline? Dockery (2008, pp. 79-82) suggests professors start with Paul's approach among the scholars in Athens.³⁶ The Greeks were very advanced in political science, philosophy, and geometry; yet they had an altar to an unknown God. Paul encouraged them to know some specific principles about this unknown God, in order that

they will correct some misconceptions that were widely held in the city:

1. God is creator of the universe (Acts 17:14),
2. God is the sustainer of the universe (Acts 17:25),
3. God is the ruler of all nations (Acts 17:26),
4. God is the father of all humans (Acts 17:26-28); and
5. God will judge all humans (Acts 17:31).

Not all academic disciplines will readily connect with all five points above, but they may connect to at least one of them. For example, those who are involved in social work may find their work is nearly impossible without an appeal to the notion of the "unity of humankind" which is argued in point 4 above. Obviously, the field of international relations may have a more solid foundation if one understands point 3 above. Points 1 and 2 connect best with the natural sciences, as I discussed in Part 1 "Discovering the foundations."

Applying the use of "theology to critique Academic Perspectives"

Professors should consider the following questions, regarding the "critique of academia" model of faith integration:

1. What is a perspective that is widely held in your discipline, which contradicts biblical perspectives? *An example from anthropology would be environmental determinism, which teaches that cultural features evolve based on environmental factors. The Bible teaches that humans bear God's image and are fallen; so cultural features reflect not only the environment, but God's character (and human corruption of God's character).*
2. What biblical passage do you have in mind, which contracts this widely held perspective in your discipline? *The passage in the example above would be Gen. 1:26-27.*
3. What is a learning outcome that assesses students' abilities to evaluate perspectives that are widely held in your academic discipline in light of biblical perspectives? *In the example above, a course outcome would be, "Students will evaluate environmental determinism in light of the biblical concept of image-bearing."*

Using academia to critique evangelical perspectives

Can we really learn about theology from the world? We often see the Bible as the sole authority for theological knowledge. What can the sciences, humanities and fine arts teach us about our relationship with God?

One discipline that has been very receptive to how the world's knowledge can inform our theology is the field of intercultural studies. For example, an emphasis in sub-Saharan Africa on "power encounters" caused evangelical missiologists to realize that we live in a world that is affected by spiritual warfare. And ideals of honor and shame in East Asia have led missiologists to understand the way in which Jesus was dishonored to restore our position of honor with the Father (Wu, 2013). As Walls (2002) noted, the cross-cultural process has kept Christian theology vibrant. Additionally, as evangelicals have had a reduced influence in the political world, they are becoming more accepting of the early American notions of pluralism in public life.

Applying "Academia's Influence on Evangelical Perspectives"

Professors should consider the following questions, regarding the "academic influence" model:

1. What is an insight from your academic discipline that has challenged evangelical sensibilities? *For example, recent insights from sexuality and gender studies have challenged traditional notions of binary gender identity, and the notion that people can change their sexual orientation.*
2. What is way in which that secular insight can provide a positive influence on evangelicalism? *In the example above, evangelicals may concede that, while scripture proscribes sex outside of heterosexual marriage (Heb 13:4), people's sexual orientations and gender identities are complex.*

Summary

This article discussed four types of faith integration that scholars have used. Each type has two approaches. Table 3 below summarizes these approaches.

Table 3: Summary of types of faith integration

Type of faith integration	Approach
Integrating foundations	Discovering foundations
	Unifying foundations
Integrating pedagogies	Purposes of pedagogy
	Postures of pedagogy
Integrating practices	Biblical practices
	Furthering the kingdom
Integrating perspectives	Using theology to critique academic perspectives
	Using theology to critique evangelical perspectives

This rich array of "entry points" into FI may help allay professors' anxiety about connecting their faith with their academic disciplines. Professors can begin by finding the "entry point" that is best suited for their own field. As they become more fluent with that model, they may attempt some of the other types of FI.

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³¹ Ecc 3:17; Pro 21:5; Heb 10:30

³² Lam 3:22-23; 1 Pet 3:8

³³ 1 Cor 13:4; Eph 4:32.

³⁴ Exo 20:4-5

³⁵ Pro 31:30; 1 Tim 2:9

³⁶ Act 17:14-31

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¹ Num 23:19; Heb 6:18, 13:8

² The specific question was, "Does your personal theological tradition influence the following areas of your teaching: course objectives...foundations...motivations...ethics...teaching approach" (Glazner, Rine and Davignon, 2013).

³ Pro 11:25; 2 Cor 9:7, 11

⁴ Mat 20:26; Mar 9:35

⁵ 1 Cor 14:33.

⁶ The "two books" epistemology comes from Origen, and was later described by Francis Bacon in his 1607 book *The advancement of learning*.

⁷ Col 1:15-20

⁸ Mal 3:6; Heb 13:8

⁹ Gen 1:31

¹⁰ Psa 119:160; Pro 12:12, 16:13, 30:5; Rom 1:18

¹¹ Jer. 31:35, 33:25; 1 Cor 14:40

¹² Psa 27:4

¹³ 2 Pet. 3:10

¹⁴ Psa 27:4

¹⁵ Jer. 31:35, 33:25; 1 Cor 14:40

¹⁶ Gen 1:1; Isa 44:24; 48:13; Joh 1:3; Rom 1:20

¹⁷ Psa 8:3-4

¹⁸ Mat 24:5-28; Rev 21:1-27

¹⁹ Mat 28:19-20

²⁰ 1 Cor 10:31

²¹ Gen 1:28, 2:15

²² Mat 22:37-40

²³ Php 4:4-8

²⁴ Matt10:37; John 8:42

²⁵ Gen 47:13-27

²⁶ Exo 15:11; Mat 5:48; Rom 6:22, 12:1; Heb 12:14

²⁷ Isa 1:17; Mic 6:8; Zec 7:9

²⁸ Gen 1:28

²⁹ Gen 2:15; Deut 25:4; Psa 115:16; Pro 12:10

³⁰ Jer 29:7