



Integrating Faith & Learning

Jesus in Your Classroom

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Hebrews 11:1

Heart, Mind, Soul

“Love the Lord your God
with all your heart
and with all your soul
and with all your mind”
(Matthew 22:37).

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Introduction

- What is integration? Why integrate?
- What are the goals of integration?

What Is Integration?

According to English professor Dr. Robert A. Harris, integration is vital to the Christian university: "A key focus of a Christian university is the integration of faith with learning and living in its teaching and scholarship. Faith, heart, soul, and intellect must function synergistically to empower students fully" (Harris par. 1).

Why integrate faith , learning, & life?

- Inspire Christian college students to reach their fullest intellectual potential.
- Develop whole heads & hearts.
- Understand faith & reason in terms of Christian epistemology: theory & philosophy of truth & knowledge.
- Understand Christian scholarship in various fields.
- Develop sound academic scholarship practices.
- Deepen walks with Jesus Christ.
- Prepare students for workplaces & graduate studies.
- Challenge students to critique ideologies with informed Christian skepticism.
- Sow seeds of truth & love for eternity.

What happens if we don't?

- Heads & hearts divided.
- Scholarship isolated from real spiritual journeys.
- Tendency to pooh-pooh Christian historical record as conjectural & subjective.
- Whatever "makes sense" in dominant discourse is acceptable.
- Walking away from personal confession of sin & the gift of salvation offered by Jesus Christ.

What Integration Is Not

- NOT integrating only doctrine and learning.
- NOT confusing doctrine with living faith. Faith requires knowledge of doctrine but isn't confined to knowledge. In *Mere Christianity*, C. S. Lewis points out that robots can recite doctrine. Beep beep!
- NOT darting away from hard questions.
- NOT presenting a palatable version of "lite" Christianity in obeisance to trends in scholarship.
- NOT "straddling the fence."
- NOT compartmentalizing Christian faith, limiting it to the realm of emotions, relationships, & family life.

“Fence Straddling”

- Compromises truth with low-salt or “lite” Christianity; may also undermine integrity.
- May cause “paralysis,” self-defeat, inability to achieve goals because the paths or goals themselves are contradictory: Think of a person tied to two horses running in opposite directions.
- Lukewarm Laodiceans weren’t so hot (or cold) with God (Revelation 3:16).

A Worldview Approach

Dr. Robert Harris discusses how “Christian faith in relation to learning must be understood not as just an ‘added bonus’ or appended item to standard scholarship from a secular worldview, but instead as a more comprehensive and more rational epistemology than, say naturalism or materialism. Christianity, as a knowledge structure, is a standard of truth, providing an objectively critical approach for making corrective assessments in scholarship and intellectual work. In other words, Christianity should be an anchor and a touchstone for the analysis of culture and political structures rather than merely a point of view or another source of commentary on morals and manners” (Harris par. 3).

Reference: Harris, Robert A. “Integration of Faith & Learning.”
19 August 2006. <www.virtualsalt.com>

Eternal Remedy: Connection to Jesus

A simple exercise!
Evaluate some ideas
that are present in American culture.
To what extent are they subtly present yet prevalent?
To what extent are they obviously present?

“Always be prepared to give an answer
to everyone who asks you to give
the reason for the hope
that you have” (1 Peter 3:15).

Epistemology: The Way, the Truth, the Life

- True or False? Christianity, Judaism, and Islam share similar stories (creation, flood story, Abraham, Moses), so they “borrowed” from each other. God speaks through all world religions.
- True or False? Christianity is the only faith tradition with historically verifiable (specific & accurate) prophecies.
- True or False? Christianity is ultimately teleological: “How do you know the Word of God is true?” “Because the Bible says so.”

John 14:6

The Way, the Truth, the Life

- True or False? Christianity represses natural urges & causes neuroses; it's the great malady of (post)modern civilization.
- True or False? Christianity is a philosophy-based faith tradition like other world religions. You find God by piecing together the narratives and literatures of world religions. You find just as much wisdom, if not more, through this inclusive approach.
- True or False? Translations of the Bible are culturally biased, so don't read translations of the Bible as God's infallible, inspired Word.

John 14: 6

The Way, the Truth, the Life

- True or False? Darwinian theory (the fittest survive, natural selection) makes more sense in this dog-eat-dog world. There are dogs, and there are those whom dogs eat! When you die, the maggots get you, but who cares then? You're dead.
- True or False? Christianity is a nice story, and Jesus was a good teacher, but the Bible teaches false hope in an afterlife that hasn't been proven to exist. It's a socio-political Western conspiracy to sedate & colonize large groups of people.
- True or False? Whether God exists or not is irrelevant. What matters is the meaning you construct out of the string of random events in life. Life itself is a random event. Life arose out of a soup of organic molecules struck by lightning.

John 14: 6

The Way, the Truth, the Life

- True or False? God is love, so any person who loves is therefore a Christian.
- True or False? Christianity provides good social & ethical principles for keeping peace among groups of people and raising families. Therefore, the practical moral guidelines of Christianity are what's useful; the "supernatural" stuff is fanatical.
- True or False? Going to church regularly, holding a degree from a Christian college, and having family members who are missionaries and pastoral leaders make me a good Christian citizen.

Eternal Remedy: Connection to Jesus

Another simple exercise!

Try these questions.

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Life: Personal Connection to Jesus

- Is your Christian faith **YOURS**? If not, whose is it -- Church? Family? School? Are your Christian identity & Christian walk *personal*?
- We need to eat nutritious food to live. Are you "feeding" on God's Word? What anchors your faith in spite of up-and-down emotions and life's vicissitudes?
- Who or what quandaries (abuse, wounds, idols, anger "zones," PK circumstances) currently hurt or hinder your progress? How do you turn them into challenges that strengthen your faith?
- Gray zone test: What are you **NOT** willing to give up for the sake of Jesus? Those little gray zones can cause spiritual gangrene!
- What's helping your spiritual growth?

Christian Intellectuals: Stewardship & Scholarship

- Do you think your scholarship integrates Christian faith? How?
- How well do you know the works of top Christian scholars in your field?
- Do you think your Christian beliefs are reflected in your scholarship & personal lifestyle (relationships, choices, attitudes)?
- Are there areas in your life (scholarly, personal, other) where you can grow in Christ?
- What other questions are relevant to Christian stewardship & scholarship? Social responsibility?

Jesus in Your Classroom

- Visible Signs: Read the Word. Pray in class.
- Include published Christian scholarship.
- Convey sincere Christian convictions.
- Relate material to Christianity. Be explicit.
- Ask hard questions. Ask real questions.
- Go to scripture for answers.
- Assign projects that provide a structure for students to explore Christian faith in relation to course materials, such as an essay, a notebook, interview, or journal.

Visualizing Worldviews

When presenting abstract concepts such as Naturalism, Postmodernism, or Existentialism, talk in pictures, like Jesus: "I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world" (Matt. 13:35). Include real-world applications and examples; what would happen if everyone embraced Naturalism with great seriousness? What are the consequences of American materialism? What are the ways in which the **"what's in it for me," "winning is everything,"** and **"carpe diem"** attitudes permeate our culture?

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Integrating Faith, Learning, & LIFE

- Bring in real-life object lessons, use personal anecdotes, current events.
- Relate reason to faith & faith to reason. Present apologetics & evidence illuminating the intellectual “reasonable-ness” of Christianity whenever relevant.
- Discuss messages in popular culture and consequences of predominant life-style choices in films, television, social activities, consumerism.
- Pray out loud in class.
- Sincerity is key: Phony is baloney! 😊

Vanguard's Faith Confession

- We believe
- The Bible to be the inspired and only infallible and authoritative Word of God.
- That there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

We believe . . .

- In the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal, future return to this earth in power and glory to rule over the nations.
- That the only means of being cleansed from sin is through repentance and faith in the precious blood of Christ.

We believe . . .

- That regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential for personal salvation.
- That the redemptive work of Christ on the cross provides healing of the human body in answer to believing prayer.

We believe . . .

- That the baptism in the Holy Spirit, according to Acts 2:4, is given to believers who ask for it.
- In the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a holy life.
- In the resurrection of both the saved and the lost, the one to everlasting life and the other to everlasting damnation.

Beware of SPAM, Baloney, & False Prophets!

- "... Having a form of godliness but denying its power" (2 Timothy 3:5).
- "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than Christ" (Col. 2:8).
- "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Matt 7:21-23).

Quotations to Consider

- “We can think of our faith as a beautiful musical composition, full of rich harmonies and intricate counterpoint; if we take out one or two parts, we may still recognize the melody even if the fullness has been diminished. Some works of literature are like this – thin versions of the complex Christian song. Other works may use some similar notes but add other, discordant passages. To evaluate what we read, we need to ask, ‘How well does this work resonate with my Christianity?’ ” (Gallagher & Lundin 118).

Quotations to Consider

- “I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else” (C. S. Lewis).
- “It may be hard for an egg to turn into a bird: it would be a jolly sight harder for it to learn to fly while remaining an egg. We are like eggs at present. And you cannot go on indefinitely being just an ordinary, decent egg. We must be hatched or go bad” (C. S. Lewis).

Scripture Quotations

- “Faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life . . . ” (Titus 1:2).
- “And be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind . . . ” (Romans 12:2).
- “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5).

Scripture Quotations

- “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-29).

Scripture Quotations

- “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind . . .” (Matt. 22:37a).
- “Love your neighbor as yourself . . .” (Matt 22:37b).

Salvation through Jesus

- For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).



Confessing Jesus as Christ

- “ ‘The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,’ that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved” (Romans 10:8-10).

Readings & Resources

- CCCU's *Compilation of Integration Resources*
<http://www.cccu.org/resourcecenter/parentCatID.215/resourcecenter.asp>
- *Integration of Faith & Learning*
by Dr. Robert Harris @ www.virtualsalt.com
- *Eyes of Faith Series*, HarperSanFrancisco
by Susan Gallagher & Roger Lundin

Additional Resources

Compiled by Dr. Daven Kari

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