

The book cover features a central title box with a light green background and a dark green border. The title is written in a large, gold, serif font. Below the title, the subtitle is in a smaller, gold, serif font. The cover is framed by a wide, dark green border with a repeating pattern of gold leaves and crosses. The left side of the cover has a vertical strip with a green and gold checkered pattern. The bottom section of the cover has a dark green background with a repeating pattern of gold leaves and crosses, and a central box with a gold background and a dark green border containing the editors' names.

CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

FAITH, TEACHING, AND LEARNING IN
THE EVANGELICAL TRADITION

EDITED BY **DAVID S. DOCKERY**
AND **CHRISTOPHER W. MORGAN**

“Christian Higher Education, skillfully edited by David Dockery and Chris Morgan, is a work both magisterial and invitational, welcoming the reader into a deeper understanding of the history, need, nature, and purposes of Christian higher education and the implications for the student and broader society. It will serve as a great encouragement and guide for all those interested in the holistic formation of a new generation.”

Cherie Harder, President, The Trinity Forum

“In passion, vision, and lifelong commitment to bring theologically sound, biblically faithful, and culturally relevant thinking to bear on Christian education, David Dockery has few peers. In this volume, Dockery, Chris Morgan, and colleagues sound a clarion call to those who serve in Christian higher education by inviting them afresh to understand and fulfill their mission as the theologically informed, Christ-centered, worldview-transforming academic arm of the church.”

J. Randall O’Brien, President, Carson-Newman University

“This wonderful collection of essays, edited by David Dockery and Chris Morgan, is a superb exploration of both the theological roots and implications of Christian higher education within the evangelical tradition. Unusual in breadth and scope, it provides helpful insight for the new adventurer as well as the serious and seasoned scholar. A gift indeed at such a time as this!”

Stan D. Gaede, President, Christian College Consortium; Scholar in Residence, Gordon College

“Higher education across the world is at a tipping point. After years of celebrated glory and praise, institutions of higher education have been besieged over the past ten years or more by unrelenting criticisms ranging from the cost of attendance to the cost of operation. Paramount among these criticisms and striking at the very heart and soul of higher education is the question of its purpose and utility. Nowhere are these disparagements more unsettling than to those of us in Christian higher education. What is needed is a fresh understanding of the purpose of higher education and the role and place of Christian higher education. In this book, David Dockery and Christopher Morgan have gathered a remarkable cadre of evangelical scholars to reflect on the issues posed by the current turmoil. Is the Christian university to be differentiated from secular universities merely on the basis of the ‘personal piety’ of the faculty and students? Or is it on the activism spawned by nuanced theological speculations? This work presents a unified and renewed understanding of the Christian university based on a grounded reading of church history and evangelical thought. There is much here for the reader to ponder.”

J. Michael Hardin, Provost, Samford University

“In *Christian Higher Education*, David Dockery and Chris Morgan present essential qualities for Christian institutions. This book will become required reading for boards of trustees, cabinets, academic departments, and faculty retreats. The volume is laid out with a clear recap of why maintaining a biblical foundation is crucial for any Christ-centered academic institution. In establishing a strong desire to create an environment where biblical teachings flow through the rest of the college atmosphere apart from classes and chapel, institutions shape well-rounded and holistic education. Next, the contributors detail the particular beauty of the humanities, arts, and STEM fields. They conclude with a thorough and convincing description of why it is necessary to be adaptable today in the fast-changing landscape of higher education without losing the fundamentals. No book of this type would be complete without an inspiring chapter on the importance of diversity and inclusion as a kingdom imperative. The book ends noting that spiritual formation—a primary focus for any Christian institution—can be a form of discipleship and that leadership development is inseparable from discipleship. I could not agree more wholeheartedly.”

Shirley V. Hoogstra, President, Council for Christian Colleges and Universities

“In this important new work, David Dockery and Chris Morgan lay out a powerful vision for Christian higher education. As one who has recently cast my lot into this world, I was encouraged and challenged to learn from this helpful array of voices. Few realize all that is involved in higher education, and walking through the historical, biblical, and theological implications is both instructive and inspirational. I highly recommend this volume for higher ed starters (like me) and long-term veterans seeking to be faithful in the work of Christian higher education.”

Ed Stetzer, Billy Graham Distinguished Chair of Church, Mission, and Evangelism, Wheaton College

“With an array of insightful thinkers and penetrating essays, *Christian Higher Education* draws together some of the best minds at the vanguard of faith and higher education. I highly commend this readable book to anyone who cares about the life of the mind and the life of faith. It represents a timely and much-needed voice in these challenging days.”

D. Michael Lindsay, President, Gordon College

“In *Christian Higher Education*, David Dockery and Chris Morgan seek to restate for the postmodern and multicultural world of the twenty-first century the classic theological and historical foundations of the enterprise of Christian higher education. Drawing on the disciplinary expertise and practical experience of over twenty fellow scholars and teachers, this collection of essays explores the implications of the Scriptures, the creeds, and the church’s mission for the vocation of the evangelical teacher-scholar in the classroom, as well as within the academy, the church, and the world. Given the study questions and suggested readings at the end of each chapter, the balance of the theoretical background and practical application, and those core elements that apply to all evangelicals regardless of culture, gender, class, or ethnicity, this volume provides a valuable introduction for a class of new faculty or board members entering the world of evangelical higher education.”

Shirley A. Mullen, President, Houghton College

“I am pleased to recommend David Dockery and Christopher Morgan’s excellent *Christian Higher Education*. This comprehensive collection of essays on evangelical education across the disciplines deserves a place on every Christian educator’s bookshelf.”

Thomas S. Kidd, Distinguished Professor of History, Baylor University

“In Christian higher education, we err if we seek to find our path forward without reference to the rich church tradition and the evangelical legacy. It is also a truism that the work of Christian higher education demands unrelenting attention. We all know that there are many ‘Christian higher ed corpses,’ schools that were originally Christian but then slipped away. These stand to warn us against complacency lest we too lose our institutions to the romantic ideas prevalent in our contemporary, post-Christian culture. I thank David Dockery and Chris Morgan for this book that urges us to form Christian minds and lives in such a way that our students will think, live, and serve Christianly throughout their lives. The various writers have dealt with this quintessential subject with great dexterity and exemplary scholarship. I salute the contributors and commend this book heartily to all involved in the work of Christian higher education.”

John Senyonyi, Vice Chancellor, Uganda Christian University

“Drawing on some of the best minds within the community of Christian higher education, David Dockery and Chris Morgan have assembled a volume that will be of tremendous help to faculty, administrators, trustees, and those who simply want to develop a broader, deeper understanding of our sector of university life. I’m inspired, challenged, and grateful for the scholarship reflected by the contributors to this work.”

Andrew Westmoreland, President, Samford University

CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

Faith, Teaching, and Learning in the Evangelical Tradition

Edited by David S. Dockery and
Christopher W. Morgan

Christian Higher Education: Faith, Teaching, and Learning in the Evangelical Tradition

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Published by Crossway

1300 Crescent Street
Wheaton, Illinois 60187

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Cover design: Tyler Deeb, Misc. Goods Co.

First printing 2018

Printed in the United States of America

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Hardcover ISBN: 978-1-4335-5653-1

ePub ISBN: 978-1-4335-5656-2

PDF ISBN: 978-1-4335-5654-8

Mobipocket ISBN: 978-1-4335-5655-5

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Dockery, David S., editor. | Morgan, Christopher W., 1971– editor.

Title: Christian higher education : faith, teaching, and learning in the evangelical tradition / edited by David S. Dockery and Christopher W. Morgan.

Description: Wheaton, Illinois : Crossway, [2018] | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2017038397 (print) | LCCN 2017041286 (ebook) | ISBN 9781433556548 (pdf) | ISBN 9781433556555 (mobi) | ISBN 9781433556562 (epub) | ISBN 9781433556531 (hc)

Subjects: LCSH: Education (Christian theology) | Evangelicalism. | Christian universities and colleges. |

Theological seminaries. | Education, Higher. | Postsecondary education.

Classification: LCC BT738.17 (ebook) | LCC BT738.17 .C485 2018 (print) | DDC 378/.071—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2017038397>

Crossway is a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

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To our
teachers and students
who have taught us much
about faith, teaching, and learning

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PREFACE

Christian Higher Education: Faith, Teaching, and Learning in the Evangelical Tradition provides a multiauthored, symphonic, and theologically shaped vision for the distinctive work of Christian higher education. More than two dozen scholars and practitioners have joined with us to put together this volume, which we trust will be both informative and helpful for administrators, board members, donors, church leaders, faculty, staff, students, and parents. We believe the book offers guidance for those who are new to Christian higher education as well as for those who are seeking to understand better how Christian educators think about teaching, learning, scholarship, and service and about how the whole academic program relates to the church, culture, and society. Each chapter has been written by a person with considerable experience in his or her particular field. At times, we have allowed some tensions between the authors and disciplines to stand, which we trust will help readers get a glimpse of academic and student life among the various faculty and staff members who serve institutions in the evangelical tradition.

The idea for the book began with a conversation on the campus of Trinity International University, where a number of the contributors serve. The initiative for moving forward with the project came from several of the authors but particularly Karen Wrobbel, Don Hedges, Laurie Matthias, Paul Bialek, Chrystal Ho Pao, and Brad Gundlach. The volume, however, includes representatives from about a dozen different institutions, which we believe strengthens and enhances the book.

We are grateful to our friends and family members who have provided prayer support and encouragement along the way. We want to thank Justin Taylor, Jill Carter, and David Barshinger, as well as their colleagues at Crossway, for supporting this project. We also express appreciation to Lisa Weathers for her valuable assistance. In addition,

we are thankful for the labors of Elliott Pinegar and Maigen Turner. We offer this work with the prayer that it might be used to extend important conversations regarding the meaning and mission of Christian higher education. Our hope is that the volume will be edifying for our readers while providing a beneficial resource for campuses in this country and around the world. Ultimately, we pray that the project will serve campuses and churches well, that it will be used to advance the gospel, and that our great and majestic God will be honored and glorified through our efforts.

Soli Deo Gloria

David S. Dockery and Christopher W. Morgan

PART 1

The Theological Shape of Christian Higher Education in the Evangelical Tradition

CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

An Introduction

David S. Dockery

Challenge and change characterize the world of Christian higher education in the early decades of the twenty-first century.¹ Faculty and staff live with a new global awareness; students have never known a world without advancing technology, terrorism, and intercultural appreciation. A look around the globe points to a shift among the nations that will influence the world for decades to come. Anyone interested in the future of

1. This introductory chapter reflects aspects of previous publications, which are used herein with permission of the publishers: David S. Dockery and Timothy George, *The Great Tradition of Christian Thinking: A Student's Guide*, Reclaiming the Christian Intellectual Tradition (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012); Dockery, ed., *Faith and Learning: A Handbook for Christian Higher Education* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2012); Dockery, *Renewing Minds: Serving Church and Society through Christian Higher Education* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2007); Dockery, *Southern Baptist Consensus and Renewal* (Nashville: B&H, 2008); Dockery and Trevin Wax, gen. eds., *CSB Worldview Study Bible* (Nashville: B&H, 2018); Dockery and Gregory A. Thornbury, eds. *Shaping a Christian Worldview: The Foundation of Christian Higher Education* (Nashville: Broadman, 2002); Dockery, "Toward a Future for Christian Higher Education: Learning from the Past, Looking to the Future," *Christian Higher Education* 15, nos. 1–2 (2016): 115–20 (<https://www.tandfonline.com>); Dockery, "Christian Higher Education in a Changing Cultural Landscape: Tradition as a Source for Renewal," *Faith and the Academy* 1, no. 2 (2017): 27–30; Dockery, "The Thoughtful Christian," Christ on Campus Initiative, ed. D. A. Carson and Scott M. Manetsch, accessed November 17, 2017, www.christoncampuscci.org/the-thoughtful-Christian.

Christian higher education will want to keep an eye on cultural and global trends, for our work never takes place in a vacuum, and this observation does not begin to address the changes in higher education itself in terms of focus, funding, philosophy, methodology, and delivery systems.

This volume on Christian higher education seeks to focus on matters of faith, teaching, and learning in the evangelical tradition as they pertain to today and the future. Christian higher education involves a distinctive way of thinking about teaching, learning, scholarship, subject matter, student life, administration, and governance that is grounded in the orthodox Christian faith. Our vision for Christian higher education is not just about an inward, subjective, and pious Christianity, as important as that is. Christian educators recognize that the Christian faith is more than a moral faith of warmhearted devotional practices, for the Christian faith influences not only how we act but also what we believe, how we think, how we teach, how we learn, how we write, how we lead, how we govern, and how we treat one another.² While this chapter serves as an introduction to the meaning and history of Christian higher education, the remaining chapters enable us to better understand how our theological commitments influence our approach to teaching, learning, scholarship, and Christian practice.³

It is our hope that a more full-orbed understanding of a theologically shaped vision for Christian higher education will help us to engage the culture and to prepare a generation of leaders who can effectively serve both church and society. Our approach begins with an understanding of the self-revealing God who has created humans in his image. We believe that students created in the image of God are designed to discover truth and that the exploration of truth is possible because the universe, as created by the Trinitarian God, is intelligible.

These beliefs are held together by our understanding that the unity of knowledge is grounded in Jesus Christ, in whom all things hold together (Col. 1:17). The Christian faith then provides the lens to see the world, recognizing that faith seeks to understand every dimension of life under the lordship of Jesus Christ. We now turn our attention to a brief survey of a Christian approach to education through the years, a model that

2. See Dockery, *Renewing Minds*, 1–46.

3. See David S. Dockery, “Blending Baptist with Orthodox in the Christian University,” *The Future of Baptist Higher Education*, ed. Donald S. Schmeltekopf and Dianna M. Vitanza (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006), 83–100.

today we would refer to as Christian higher education, looking to the past to find guidance for today and tomorrow.

Christian Education through the Years

Beginning in the second century, important learning centers arose in Alexandria and Antioch as well as in Constantinople. These centers focused on catechetical and apologetic instruction for Christian converts. Alexandria's approach helps us to understand the shape of education in the early church as exemplified in one of the first great Christian scholars, Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150–ca. 215).

Clement of Alexandria: The Teacher

Clement became the leader of the school of Alexandria in 190, a position he held until after the turn of the century, when persecution forced him out of Egypt into Cappadocia.⁴ His principal literary works produced during this time were a trilogy: *Exhortations*, *Tutor*, and *Miscellanies*. The three works follow a pattern in which, according to Clement, the divine Logos first of all converts us (which is the focus of the *Tutor*) and finally instructs us (which is the focus of his rather unsystematic work titled *Miscellanies*).⁵

For the most part, Clement's reflections are philosophical, ethical, and even political. His works are grounded in the divine Logos, the Word of God who was incarnate in Jesus Christ. Just as Clement looked to the past in drawing from Moses, Israel's great leader, from Plato, the great philosopher, and from Philo, the Jewish philosopher who preceded him in Alexandria, so we today can look to Clement as a source and guide for the challenges of our day. Clement, without compromising the need to analyze and refute aspects of the pagan culture around him, became a master of the philosophical currents of his day.⁶ Clement, who reflected significant insight into Plato and Aristotle, developed an ambitious and complex philosophical model that mapped out all the sciences and their specialties under the broad headings of the theoretical, physical, and natural sciences.

4. See Dockery, *Renewing Minds*, 73–94; David S. Dockery, *Biblical Interpretation Then and Now: Contemporary Hermeneutics in the Light of the Early Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1992), 82–86; also, R. C. Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria: A Study of Christian Platonism and Gnosticism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971).

5. See Clement of Alexandria, *Paidagogos*; *Protrepticus*; *Stromateis*, in *Fathers of the Second Century*, vol. 2 of *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, Philip Schaff, and Henry Wace (1885; repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994).

6. See Charles Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1886).

Clement serves as an instructive guide for us in our context because of his wide range of learning, his love for philosophy and literature, his cultivation of an intellectually serious Christian faith, and his engagement and interaction with trends and issues of his day. Clement's overarching concern was to develop a view of the world and of life from the vantage point of wisdom in which he understood and interacted with the various strands of contemporary thought and culture. Clement's impact, as a pioneer of serious Christian thinking, cannot be underestimated. Even though his writing was at times unsystematic, he nevertheless presented a coherent and consistent explication of the importance of Christian thinking and ethics for the challenges of his day.⁷

Clement's work also delved into wide-ranging issues such as economics, business, the management of wealth, concern for the poor, and a variety of social issues. Prior to the time of the Renaissance, he could be characterized as a renaissance person, a singular source for liberal arts thinking. Ultimately, however, Clement was a teacher, taking seriously his calling as an educator. His favorite designation was "tutor" (*paidagogos*), also the title of his middle work.

His appreciation for art and music provided an opportunity for him to interact with the arts of the third century. Clement's writings pointed to Christ as most noble minstrel while observing that men and women are the harp and lyre. Clement's work contrasted the beauty of Christianity with the hopelessness of pagan poetry and philosophy. Ultimately, Clement pointed to the source of all life in God by maintaining that men and women are born for God. Full or ultimate truth, Clement claimed, is found in Christ alone.⁸ Clement prepared the way for the educational advancements in the thought of Augustine.

Augustine and Aquinas

Augustine, the father of the Christian intellectual tradition, located the source of knowledge within the person, based on his understanding that truth was a gift of God's grace granted through faith. This knowledge, or potential knowledge, is developed by education that actively works in

7. See Oliver O'Donovan and Joan Lockwood O'Donovan, eds., *From Irenaeus to Grotius: A Sourcebook in Christian Political Thought, 100–1625* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 30–39; Eric F. Osborn, *The Philosophy of Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975); James L. Kugel and Rowan A. Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 156–99.

8. See Paul Avis, ed., *The History of Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 25–30.

and through reason, memory, and will. Education takes place by engaging the Christian tradition, the wisdom of the ages that enabled the development of the liberal arts tradition.⁹ Augustine encouraged personal discovery and active engagement of students in the disciplines of study. For Augustine, the love of learning reflects our desire for God, and the love of wisdom exemplifies loving God with our minds in fulfillment of the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:37–39).

Eight centuries later, Thomas Aquinas emphasized sense experience as the primary source of knowledge. While Augustine's approach to education was influenced by Plato, Aquinas was partial to Aristotle. For Aquinas, reason reflects on the data of the senses, for nothing is ever in the mind that is not first in the senses. Reason enables understanding and discernment, informing the will and giving guidance for life. Aquinas favored a teacher-centered, didactic approach to education.¹⁰

During the medieval period, Christian education flourished in the monastery. The monastic educational model emphasized a life of study, prayer, meditation, and work. The curriculum was largely built around the study of Holy Scripture, particularly the Psalms, and the rule of faith as articulated in the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed. Reading, writing, grammar, and music were also included, forming the trajectory for the trivium (grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric) and the quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy). The trivium and quadrivium, the core of the liberal arts curriculum, were significant for shaping the cathedral school and the medieval university. Philosophy, physics, ethics, and ultimately theology, the queen of the sciences, completed the expectations for students in the medieval universities.¹¹

From Pre-Reformation to Post-Reformation

The contribution of Desiderius Erasmus to education can be characterized as the work of an innovative pioneer moving beyond tradition and supplying impetus for Reformation and post-Reformation studies. His

9. See Mark W. Roche, *The Intellectual Appeal of Catholicism and the Idea of a Catholic University* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003); John Mark Reynolds, *When Athens Met Jerusalem: An Introduction to Classical and Christian Thought* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009).

10. See Joseph Wawrykow, "Thomas Aquinas," in *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 842–43.

11. See Edward Farley, *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983); David H. Kelsey, *To Understand God Truly: What's Theological about a Theological School* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992).

brilliance paved the way for the direction of Christian education for the decades that followed. A prince among the Renaissance humanists, Erasmus was at the same time a conceptual and reforming theologian. A scholarly biblical critic and pious moralist, Erasmus offered multiple contributions to education worthy of appreciation. He was the premier Renaissance scholar of his day, with an emphasis on the original sources and the study of ancient texts.

Erasmus made an important break with the medieval scholastic approach to theology and the study of Scripture but not in a reactionary manner. The break came about through a combination of Christian commitment, Renaissance scholarship, and the implementation of John Colet's educational model. The genius and ability of Erasmus as biblical scholar and moral theologian served as a model for Martin Luther, Philipp Melanchthon, John Calvin, and other Reformers.¹²

Luther and Melanchthon shaped education in Germany in the sixteenth century with their emphasis on the priesthood of all believers, which not only encouraged Bible reading for all but also stressed literacy and education for all. Melanchthon, more than Luther, shaped educational theory as a leader at Wittenberg University. As the curriculum organizer and systematizer of theology, Melanchthon was known as the *Praeceptor Germaniae* ("Teacher of Germany"). His work brought about significant changes in the German educational system.

Post-Reformation educational models led to the rise of the modern university at the University of Halle (1694). Halle began as an educational center focused on serious study coupled with warmhearted piety, in reaction to the rationalistic scholasticism that characterized some aspects of the post-Reformation period. Soon, however, the educational agenda was dominated by Enlightenment priorities.¹³ Higher education for the past three hundred years has lived with the tensions of post-Enlightenment philosophies such as rationalism, empiricism, existentialism, phenomenology, Marxism, and recent radical feminist epistemologies. For these reasons, among others, Christian higher education

12. See David S. Dockery, "The Foundation of Reformation Hermeneutics: A Fresh Look at Erasmus," in *Evangelical Hermeneutics*, ed. Michael Bauman and David Hall (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1995); Elmer L. Towns and Benjamin K. Forrest, eds., *A Legacy of Religious Educators: Historical and Theological Introductions* (Lynchburg, VA: Liberty University Press, 2016).

13. See David S. Dockery, "New Testament Interpretation: A Historical Survey," in *New Testament Criticism and Interpretation*, ed. David Alan Black and David S. Dockery (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), 41–72.

needs to reclaim and advance the Christian intellectual tradition. The University of Halle provided the first example, of many that followed, where piety alone was unable in and of itself to sustain the essence of Christian higher education and the great tradition of Christian thinking.

Building on the Best of the Christian Tradition

As we have seen from our brief survey, our efforts to advance authentic Christian higher education are greatly shaped by those who have gone before us. These influences and influencers have not only shaped us but also reflect who we are. We recognize significant variety in our heritage, but we must not think that there is unlimited variety without boundaries or without a core. As Nathan Finn expounds so clearly in his chapter in this volume, we need to recognize that there is a core and there is a center to which we must hold. Coupled with the contributions found in the chapter by John Woodbridge, Finn's insights lead us to acknowledge that there are nonnegotiables to our faith. Building on these recognitions, it is important for us to clarify our confessional commitments and to reappropriate the best of our evangelical heritage,¹⁴ and this requires us to know something about that heritage, which Brad Gundlach has so capably introduced in this volume.

The richness of the Christian tradition can provide guidance for the complex challenges facing Christian higher education at this time. We believe not only that an appeal to tradition¹⁵ is timely but also that it meets an important need because the secular culture in which we find ourselves is at best indifferent to the Christian faith and because the Christian world—at least in its more popular forms—tends to be confused about beliefs, heritage, and the tradition associated with the Christian faith.

The world in which we live, with its emphasis on diversity and plurality, may well be a creative setting for us to see what Thomas Oden refers to as a “paleo-orthodoxy” for the twenty-first century.¹⁶ Here we ground our unity not only in the biblical confession that “Jesus is Lord” but also in the great confessional tradition flowing from the early church councils. The so-called postmodern world could indeed become a rich

14. See David S. Dockery, “Evangelicalism: Past, Present, and Future,” *Trinity Journal*, n.s., 36, no. 1 (2015): 3–21.

15. See G. R. Evans, “Tradition,” in Fitzgerald, *Augustine through the Ages*, 842–43.

16. See Thomas C. Oden, *The Rebirth of Orthodoxy: Signs of New Life in Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2003), 33–40.

context for recovering a classical view of the Christian tradition.¹⁷ The current educational emphasis on the interrelationship of all things allows us to speak intelligently of the Christian message historically and globally. Such historical confessions, though neither infallible nor completely sufficient for all contemporary challenges, can provide wisdom and guidance when seeking to balance the mandates for right Christian thinking, right Christian believing, and right Christian living.

At the heart of this calling is the need to prepare a generation of Christians to think Christianly, to engage the academy and the culture, to serve society, and to renew the connection with the church and its mission. To do so, the breadth and the depth of the Christian tradition will need to be reclaimed, renewed, revitalized, and revived for the good of Christian higher education.¹⁸

Confessional Foundations

Reconnecting with the great confessional tradition of the church will help us to avoid fundamentalist reductionism on the one hand and liberal revisionism on the other. Fundamentalist reductionism fails to understand that there are priorities or differences in the Christian faith. Fundamentalism often fails to distinguish between saying no to an inadequate confession of the deity of Christ and saying no to the wrong kind of movie. It fails to prioritize doctrines in a way consistent with the emphases of Scripture. Liberal revisionism, on the other hand, in its attempt to translate the Christian faith to connect with the culture, has often wound up revising the Christian faith instead of translating it.¹⁹ To borrow words from the apostle Paul, we are then left with “no gospel at all” (Gal. 1:7 NIV). So we learn from the apostle Paul, who was willing to address opponents coming from different directions in Galatia and Colossae, calling the churches back to the truth of the Christian faith.

As we reflect further on these important matters, let us take a brief look at the key commitments found in the Creed of Nicaea, a confes-

17. See David S. Dockery, *The Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Engagement* (Wheaton, IL: BridgePoint, 1995), 11–18.

18. See David S. Dockery, series editor, *Reclaiming the Christian Intellectual Tradition*, projected 15 vols. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012–); D. H. Williams, *Evangelicals and Tradition: The Formative Influence of the Early Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005); Stephen R. Holmes, *Listening to the Past: The Place of Tradition in Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002).

19. See Alister E. McGrath, *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995).

sional statement shared by all Christian traditions.²⁰ The Creed of Nicaea (325) was drafted to refute the claim that Jesus was the highest creation of God and thus different in essence from the Father. What we often refer to today as the Nicene Creed was most likely approved not at Nicaea in 325 but at Constantinople in 381. While articulating the importance of the unity of the Holy Trinity, it insisted that Christ was begotten from the Father before all time, declaring that Christ is of the same essence as the Father.²¹

When we contend today that Christian higher education must be distinctively Christ-centered education, we are in effect confessing that Jesus Christ, who was eternally the second person of the Trinity, sharing all the divine attributes, became fully human.²² Thus, to think of Christ-centeredness only in terms of personal piety or activism resulting from following some aspects of the teachings of Jesus, while important, will be inadequate.

A healthy future for Christian higher education must return to the past with the full affirmation that when we point to Jesus, we see the whole man Jesus and say that he is God. This is the great mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16). It is necessary that Christ should be both God and man. Only as a man could he be the Redeemer for humanity; only as a sinless man could he fittingly die for others; only as God could his life, ministry, and redeeming death have infinite value and satisfy the demands of God so as to deliver others from death.

Any attempt to envision a faithful Christian higher education for the days ahead that is not tightly tethered to the great confessional tradition will most likely result in an educational model without a compass. The only way to counter the secular assumptions²³ that shape so many sectors of higher education today is to confess that the exalted Christ, who spoke the world into being by his powerful word, is the providential Sustainer of all life (Col. 1:15–17; Heb. 1:2).

20. See J. I. Packer and Thomas C. Oden, *One Faith: The Evangelical Consensus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004).

21. See Timothy George, ed., *Evangelicals and the Nicene Faith: Reclaiming the Apostolic Witness* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011).

22. See Donald G. Bloesch, *Jesus Christ: Savior and Lord*, Christian Foundations (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997).

23. See Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007); James K. A. Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014).

As we seek to bring the Christian faith to bear on the teaching and learning process in the work of distinctive Christ-centered higher education,²⁴ our strategy must involve bringing these truths about Jesus Christ to bear on the great ideas of history as well as on the cultural and educational issues of our day.²⁵ In doing so, our aim will be to adjust the cultural assumptions of our post-Christian context in light of God's eternal truth. We, therefore, want to call for the work of higher education in the days ahead to take place through the lenses of the Nicene tradition that recognizes not only the Holy Trinity but also the transcendent, creating, sustaining, and self-disclosing Trinitarian God who has made humans in his image.

A Connection to the Churches

A renewed vision for Christian higher education must not only connect with the best of the Christian intellectual tradition and our confessional heritage but must also seek a purposeful connection with evangelical congregations. Evangelical colleges and universities are decidedly not churches, but they remain connected with the churches. James Burtchae in his massive study *The Dying of the Light* surveyed dozens of institutions across various traditions, focusing on nineteenth- and twentieth-century examples.²⁶ His important work has revealed how many institutions from various traditions have seen the light of the Christian faith die out on their campuses. Burtchae may well have been wrong about some of the particulars in his research, but his big-picture thesis holds consistently across the traditions and the decades. The moment an institution began to lose its connection with the churches is the day the light started to disappear on the campus. Evangelical institutions, while not churches, are an extension of the churches, the academic arm of the kingdom of God.

High-quality teaching and scholarship will be recognized in the academy, and these educational efforts can be done without neglecting our connection with the church. In his 1990 statement *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Pope John Paul II, the leader of the Roman Catholic Church in the latter

24. See Duane Litfin, *Conceiving the Christian College* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 64–84.

25. See Mark A. Noll, *Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 23–42.

26. See James Tunstead Burtchae, *The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from Their Christian Churches* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998); John J. Piderit, "The University at the Heart of the Church," *First Things* 94 (June/July 1999): 22–25.

part of the twentieth century, called for Catholic universities to reconnect with the heart of the church. While some may think that John Paul II is an unusual model for evangelicals, I believe that we can learn from our Roman Catholic friends and seek to connect evangelical institutions with the heart of the church. Our dream calls for Christian colleges and universities to be not only Christ centered but also church connected. In doing so, we also want to be connected with the great confessional tradition through the years, including the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Chalcedonian Definition (451), and the evangelical confessional heritage. While none of these confessional statements are infallible, all are informative and helpful guides for us. Historical awareness will help us avoid confusing what is merely a momentary expression from that which has enduring importance for the sake of the churches. Tom Cornman explores this topic further in his fine chapter.

Academic Freedom, Church Connectedness, and Our Confessional Commitments

Let us emphasize that in essentials of the Christian faith there is no place for compromise. Faith and trust are primary issues, and we stand firm in those areas. Sometimes we confuse primary issues and secondary issues. In secondary issues, and third- and fourth-level issues, we need mostly love and grace as we learn to disagree agreeably. We want to learn to love one another in spite of differences and to learn from those with whom we differ.

We fail the church and the work of Christian higher education when we fail to distinguish essential matters from nonessential ones. In essentials, faith and truth are primary, and we may not appeal to love or grace as an excuse to deny any essential aspect of Christian teaching.²⁷ When we center the work of evangelical higher education on the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, we build on the ultimate foundation. We need also to connect with the great Christian intellectual tradition of the church, which can provide insight into who we are and guidance for our future.

The challenge for us is to preserve and pass on the Christian tradition while encouraging honest intellectual inquiry. We need to encourage

27. See the discussion of theological essentials in R. Albert Mohler Jr., "Has Theology a Future in the Southern Baptist Convention? Toward a Renewed Theological Framework," in *Beyond the Impasse? Scripture, Interpretation, and Theology in Baptist Life*, ed. Robison B. James and David S. Dockery (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 91–117.

intellectual curiosity and find ways to pass on the Christian intellectual tradition while promoting serious intellectual engagement in the areas of teaching, research, and scholarship. There is no place for anti-intellectualism on evangelical campuses. Evangelical education is called to be academically rigorous, grounded in the confessional tradition, seeking to understand the great ideas of history, and engaging with today's issues. Evangelical higher education has been called to reflect on and think about how to advance these commitments and to engage the challenging issues of the twenty-first century.²⁸

Therefore, we recognize the place of academic freedom within a confessional context.²⁹ We recognize that exploration across the disciplines is to be encouraged, but some things may not be advocated within confessional commitments that bind us together as educational communities. We want to encourage genuine exploration and serious research while recognizing that free inquiry, untethered from tradition or from the church, often results in the unbelieving skepticism that characterizes so much of higher education today. The directionless state that can be seen as we look across much of higher education is often found among many former church-related institutions that have become disconnected from the churches and their heritage. We need a renewed vision for evangelical higher education that will help us develop unifying principles for Christian thinking, founded on the tenet that all truth has its source in God, our Creator and Redeemer.³⁰

As we do so, we will likely struggle with many issues because there are numerous matters that remain ambiguous, matters for which we still see through a glass darkly. Some questions will have to remain unanswered as we continue to struggle and wrestle together. Yet we envision a distinctive approach to higher education, different from the large majority of higher education institutions in the United States.

A Distinctive Vision for Evangelical Higher Education

The essays found in this volume are a part of the project that seeks to connect teaching, learning, and scholarship with evangelical theological commitments, doing so with the hope that we might, in Burtchaell's

28. Dockery, *Renewing Minds*, 78–90.

29. See Anthony J. Dickema, *Academic Freedom and Christian Scholarship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000).

30. See Dockery, "Blending Baptist with Orthodox in the Christian University."

words, keep the light burning at evangelical colleges and universities. To envision anything less would fall short of our calling as Christian scholars, teachers, and learners. We must not be naïve to the challenges that will be encountered along the way. Unfortunately, some in the churches will be satisfied with a minimal commitment to warmhearted piety that encourages campus Bible studies, kind relationships, and occasional mission trips. Certainly, we want to encourage and applaud such things but not as an encompassing vision for Christian higher education. Some of these things can be carried out on public university campuses among parachurch organizations. We want to see these things take place, but more importantly, we want to see evangelical institutions that are primarily concerned with Christian thinking and thinking Christianly, learning to think carefully, creatively, and critically, seeking to engage the academy and the culture. And as we do so, we need to be aware that some in both the academy and the culture will question the legitimacy of this project.

Evangelical higher education does not exist primarily to survive. Whether or not evangelical colleges and universities prosper is of less importance than their commitments to the distinctive mission of these institutions. We thus dream of evangelical campuses that are faithful to the lordship of Jesus Christ, that exemplify the Great Commandment, that seek justice and mercy and love, that demonstrate responsible freedom, that prioritize worship and service as central to all pursuits in life.³¹ Evangelical institutions must seek to build grace-filled communities that emphasize love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control³² as the virtues needed to create a caring Christian context where undergraduate and graduate education grounded in the conviction that all truth has its source in God can be offered. In sum, we hope to provide quality Christ-centered education that promotes excellence and character development in service to church and society.

A Focus on Students

We must constantly remind ourselves that we do what we do as Christian educators for the sake of the students. All activities, efforts, and

31. Dockery, *Renewing Minds*, 1–22.

32. See David S. Dockery, “Fruit of the Spirit,” in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 316–19.

programs, as we learn from the chapters by Felix Theonugraha and Taylor Worley in this volume, exist to serve the long-term interests of students in the spirit of Christian servanthood. The staff, faculty, and administration of evangelical institutions must seek to model servant leadership with the hope of developing a generation of students who themselves will be servant leaders.

We want to encourage student concentration in at least one field of learning, which will include students mastering the ability to express and articulate their own thoughts clearly while learning to appreciate, respect, understand, and evaluate the thoughts of others, resulting in the lifelong habit of learning that will prepare students for careers as well as for graduate and professional studies. Our goal is to prepare students for living a Christian life in contemporary society, to enable them to be kingdom citizens in our twenty-first-century world.

Student-life teams must seek to guide students in the development of priorities and practices that will contribute to their overall well-being and effectiveness intellectually, emotionally, physically, socially, and spiritually. Faculty have as their aim to stimulate students to think about issues of truth, values, and worldview, along with the questions of how subject matter bears on people's lives, so that they are equipped for God-called vocation and service. Simultaneously, in our rapidly changing world we will need to continue exploring new educational delivery systems, given the economic challenges and the developing understandings of technology in the times in which we live.

Community and Christian Scholarship

We recognize that a commitment to rigorous and quality academics is best demonstrated by God-called evangelical faculty. Research should be encouraged in all fields, as David and Chrystal Ho Pao exemplify in their lives and as they write about in this volume. Still, classroom teaching, as capably noted by Donald Guthrie and Laurie Matthias in their essays in our shared project, must be prioritized and emphasized. Faculty in all disciplines, including librarians, should be encouraged to explore how the truth of the Christian faith bears on all disciplines, as our contributors in the middle section of this book seek to show. We want to affirm the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:37–39) as the guiding principle of Christian higher education as we seek to love God with our minds. This

means that Christian higher-education institutions in the evangelical tradition cannot be content to display their Christian commitments merely with chapel services and required Bible classes. We desire to see students move toward a mature reflection of what the Christian faith means for every field of study. In doing so, we can help develop a grace-filled, convictional community of learning.

These commitments point to the constitutive belief that the world proceeded from a Creator by intelligent design and in that sense is a unified framework. We recognize that the affirmation of God as Creator is as important for a Christian worldview as the tenet of God as Redeemer. In so doing, we want to explore the implication of serious Christian thinking for all learning and living for a view of history, for international and intercultural competencies (as ably described by Peter Cha in his chapter), for stewardship of the environment, for technology, for sexuality and marriage, for the arts, for recreation, for concern for the persecuted church, for issues of religious freedom in this country and abroad, and for the global church around the world, as we learn from Bruce Ashford's concluding chapter in this work.

All faculty members at evangelical institutions have the privilege and responsibility to pass on the Christian intellectual tradition as it informs and impacts all the various disciplines. We believe such a responsibility to teach, inform, and communicate these traditions is possible because all human beings, everywhere and at all times, are made in the image of God,³³ as carefully articulated by John Kilner in his informative chapter. We believe this universality of humankind makes possible both teaching and learning.

Because we can think, relate, and communicate in understandable ways, since we are created in the image of God, we can creatively teach, learn, explore, and carry on research. We want to maintain that there is a complementary, and even necessary, place for teaching and scholarship. An evangelical institution, in common with other institutions of higher learning, must surely subordinate all other endeavors to the improvement of the mind in pursuit of truth. Yet a focus on the mind and the mastery of content, though primary, is not enough. We believe that character and faith development, in addition to guidance in professional

33. See John F. Kilner, *Dignity and Destiny: Humanity in the Image of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015); Richard Lints, *Identity and Idolatry: The Image of God and Its Inversion*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 36 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015).

competencies, are equally important. Furthermore, we maintain that the pursuit of truth is best undertaken within a community of learning that includes colleagues of the present and voices from the past, the communion of saints, which also attends to the moral, spiritual, physical, and social development of its students following the pattern of Jesus, who himself increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and humankind (Luke 2:52).

One of the things for which we dream as we envision faithful Christian academic communities involves the promoting of genuine Christian community and unity on our campuses. Just prior to his crucifixion, Jesus prayed for unity for his followers (John 17:21). The prayer was not only for Jesus's immediate followers but also for Christians through the ages, which means his prayer still has application for us in our context. His prayer for believers today reflects the words of John 17, a prayer for unity and a prayer for truth, which brings a unique holiness and a holy uniqueness to Christ-centered academic communities.

In John 17:21–26, we read that Jesus prayed that his followers would experience and manifest a spiritual unity that exemplifies the oneness of the Father and the Son. In spite of our many differences, we belong to the same Lord and thus to each other. Yet far too often we are characterized by controversy, infighting, fragmentation, selfishness, and disunity.

We look not only to John 17 and Ephesians 4:1–6 but also to the Nicene tradition. Let us once again point to a future of Christian higher education characterized by oneness, holiness, universality, and apostolicity.³⁴ We call for a universality that crosses all geographical, economic, racial, and ethnic lines. We appeal for a oneness that is founded on the person and work of Jesus Christ and the common salvation we share in him.

One of the things that authenticates the message of the gospel and our shared and collaborative work in Christian higher education is the way Christians love each other and live and serve together in harmony. It is this witness that our Lord wants and expects from us in the world

34. See David S. Dockery, "Denominationalism: Historical Developments, Contemporary Challenges, and Global Opportunities," in *Why We Belong: Evangelical Unity and Denominational Diversity*, ed. Anthony L. Chute, Christopher W. Morgan, and Robert A. Peterson (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 209–32; Francis A. Sullivan, *The Church We Believe In: One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic* (New York: Paulist, 1988); Richard D. Phillips, Philip G. Ryken, and Mark Dever, *The Church: One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2004).

so that the world may believe that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

Conclusion

As we envision a blessed future for the shared work of Christian higher education, we are in no way naïve to the multifaceted challenges and multilevel changes all around us: economic, technological, denominational, educational, and cultural. Our focus in this chapter and in this volume, however, is not on addressing all these issues. Rather, the contributors to this work have collaborated in an effort to focus on the central and foundational commitments needed to envision and sustain a faithful future for Christian higher education.

The challenges facing Christian colleges and universities cannot be neutralized simply by adding newer facilities, better campus-ministry opportunities, and improved student-life programs, as important as these things may be. Our twenty-first-century context must once again recognize the importance of serious Christian thinking and confessional orthodoxy as both necessary and appropriate for the well-being of Christian academic communities. We offer the Christian intellectual tradition to twenty-first-century Christ followers as a guide to truth, to that which is imaginatively compelling, emotionally engaging, aesthetically enhancing, and personally liberating.

We believe that the Christian faith, informed by scriptural interpretation, theology, philosophy, and history, has bearing on every subject and academic discipline. While at times the Christian's research in any field might follow similar paths and methods as the secularists, doxology at both the beginning and ending of one's teaching and research marks the works of believers from that of secularists. As George Marsden has observed, we recognize that some might consider our proposal "outrageous."³⁵

The pursuit of the greater glory of God remains rooted in a Christian worldview in which God can be encountered in the search for truth in every discipline.³⁶ The application of the great Christian tradition will encourage members of Christian college and university communities to

35. See George M. Marsden, *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

36. See Dockery and Thornbury, *Shaping a Christian Worldview*.

see their teaching, research, study, student formation, administrative service, and trustee guidance within the framework of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In these contexts, faithful Christian scholars will see their teaching and their scholarship as contributing to the unity of knowledge. Faculty, staff, and students will work together to enhance a love for learning that encourages a life of worship and service. The great tradition of Christian thinking helps all of us better see the relationship between the Christian faith and the role of reason, while encouraging Christ followers to seek truth and engage the culture,³⁷ with a view toward strengthening the church and extending the kingdom of God.

The contributors to this volume are committed to a vision for Christian higher education that is unapologetically Christian and rigorously academic. It involves developing resources for serious Christian thinking and scholarship in all disciplines, not just theology, biblical studies, and philosophy. We believe the time is right to reconsider afresh this vision because of the challenges and disorder across the academic spectrum. The reality of the fallen world in which we live is magnified for us in day-to-day life through broken families, sexual confusion, conflicts between nations, and the racial and ethnic prejudice we observe all around us.

This vision helps us understand that there is a place for music and the arts because God is the God of creation and beauty. We recognize that the social sciences can make observations to strengthen society, families, and religious structures by recognizing the presence of the image of God in all men and women. Those who study economics can help address problems facing communities and society at large, as well as expand our awareness of how wealth is produced and good stewardship calls for it to be used. Political-philosophy scholars can strategize about ways to address issues of government, public policy, war, justice, and peace. Ethical challenges in business, education, and healthcare can be illuminated by reflection on the great tradition. The chapters by Greg Forster, Micah Watson, and Tim Smith amplify these themes.

Exploring every discipline from a confessional perspective—which affirms that “we believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth”—will both shape and sharpen our focus. The more we emphasize

37. See Philip W. Eaton, *Engaging the Culture, Changing the World: The Christian University in a Post-Christian World* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011).

the pattern of Christian truth,³⁸ the more important will its role become for teaching, learning, research, and scholarship. This proposal is rooted in the conviction that God, the source of all truth, has revealed himself fully in Jesus Christ (John 1:14, 18), and it is in our belief in the union of the divine and human in Jesus Christ that the unity of truth will ultimately be seen. What is needed is a renewed understanding and appreciation of the depth and breadth of the Christian intellectual tradition, with its commitments to the church's historic confession of the Trinitarian God, and a recognition of the world and all subject matter as fully understandable only in relation to this Trinitarian God.³⁹ While our approach to higher education values and prioritizes the life of the mind, it is also a holistic call for the engagement of head, heart, and hands.

It is our hope that the ideals and commitments called for in this chapter and expressed throughout this volume will not be culturally confined, for we believe that these are things that cannot be easily expunged without great peril to ourselves personally and to Christian institutions of higher education corporately, both in the present and in the future. In the midst of a confused culture and the postmodern ethos of our day, we need commitments that are firm but loving, clear but gracious, encouraging the people of God to be ready to respond to the numerous issues and challenges that will come our way, without getting drawn into every intramural squabble in the church or in the culture.⁴⁰

New opportunities for partnership and collaboration need to pull us out of our insularity—particularly where we can serve together in social action, cultural engagement, religious freedom, and other matters involving the public square. We need to trust God to bring a fresh wind of his Spirit, to renew our confessional convictions, to strengthen our commitments to distinctively Christ-centered education, and to revitalize our connections with and service to the churches.

Let us pray that we can relate to one another in love and humility, bringing new life to our shared efforts in Christian higher education. We pray not only for renewed confessional convictions but also for a

38. See H. E. W. Turner, *The Pattern of Christian Truth: A Study in the Relations between Orthodoxy and Heresy in the Early Church* (1954; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2004); also see Timothy George, "The Pattern of Christian Truth," *First Things* 154 (June/July 2005): 21–25.

39. See Kevin J. Vanhoozer and Daniel J. Treier, *Theology and the Mirror of Scripture: A Mere Evangelical Account*, Studies in Christian Doctrine and Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015).

40. See Dockery, *Southern Baptist Consensus and Renewal*, 206–18.

genuine orthopraxy that can be seen before a watching world,⁴¹ a world particularly in the Western Hemisphere that seemingly stands on the verge of giving up on the Christian faith. We trust that our collaborative efforts to advance distinctive Christian higher education in the days to come will bring forth fruit, will strengthen partnerships, alliances, and networks, and will extend the kingdom of God.

We invite our readers to join with us in asking God to renew our shared commitments to academic excellence in our teaching, our learning, our research, our scholarship, and our service, as well as in our personal discipleship and churchmanship. We gladly join hands together with those who desire to walk with us on this journey, seeking the good of all concerned as we serve together for the glory of our great God.

Questions for Further Reflection

1. How will thinking carefully and Christianly about the relationship of faith, teaching, and learning influence the way you think about Christian colleges and universities?
2. How do you think an attempt to reclaim the best of the confessional heritage and the Christian intellectual tradition might affect the way you understand Christian higher education?
3. How might the truth of the incarnation of Jesus Christ inform your understanding of authentic Christian higher education?
4. How does the Christian intellectual tradition shape and inform one's understanding of the integration of faith and learning?

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KNOWING AND LOVING GOD

Toward a Theology of Christian Higher Education

Nathan A. Finn

At one time, almost all higher education could be considered Christian higher education.¹ Historians have ably chronicled, and sometimes lamented, the secularization of higher education in the West, and particularly in the United States.² Many formerly church-related universities have abandoned their foundational faith commitments in the pursuit of academic prestige and cultural respectability. Some are now among the most lauded institutions in the USA. Many current church-related schools maintain historic ties with their sponsoring bodies, but the faith and practice of those Christian traditions have little meaningful impact on the ethos of the universities. Some of these nominally Christian universities

1. I'm grateful to my Union University colleagues Dub Oliver and Ben Mitchell for their insightful comments on an earlier draft of this essay.

2. George M. Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); James Tunstead Burtchaell, *The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from Their Christian Churches* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998).

nurture ambitions to be the next Princeton or Vanderbilt, academically prestigious schools that have mostly “outgrown” their Christian heritage.

As universities have drifted from their faith commitment, they have simultaneously rejected (or at least downplayed) a vision of higher education driven by Christian theology. In renouncing or shelving theology, former and nominally Christian universities have lost their institutional “soul,” replacing it with nontheological alternatives such as their unique institutional traditions, a semi- or nonreligious commitment to the liberal arts or to research, or simply the (understandable) desire to be as large and influential as resources will allow.³ Stanley Hauerwas laments that this loss of theological vision means that fewer one-time and alleged Christian institutions will leave behind “ruins”—future material evidence of a vibrant Christian academic culture that glorified God and whose influence endured for generation after generation.⁴

In this chapter, I look at the role that the Bible and the Christian intellectual tradition should play in helping to develop (or redevelop) a theology of Christian higher education.⁵ I write from the vantage point of an evangelical theologian who serves as an academic administrator in a church-related, comprehensive liberal arts university. I’m firmly convinced that a robust theology should inform every aspect of the life of a Christian university, from the classroom to the chapel to the ball field to the fraternity house to the faculty meeting. A commitment to Christian orthodoxy in the evangelical tradition animates faithful universities, reanimates institutions that have experienced spiritual “mission drift,” and contributes to a vision of holistic human flourishing that simply cannot be replicated in secular or post-Christian schools.

Defining *Theology*

When people hear the term *theology*, they often think immediately of either the academic discipline of theology or the deeper sort of preaching

3. See Perry L. Glanzer, Nathan F. Alleman, and Todd C. Ream, *Restoring the Soul of the University: Unifying Christian Higher Education in a Fragmented Age* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017).

4. Stanley Hauerwas, *The State of the University: Academic Knowledges and the Knowledge of God* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), 33–44.

5. This is a broader question than simply the place of formal biblical, theological, and ministry studies in a university, though the latter might well constitute one aspect of addressing the former. See George Guthrie’s chapter in this volume, as well as Gregory Alan Thornbury, “Biblical and Theological Studies in the Christian University,” in *Faith and Learning: A Handbook for Christian Higher Education*, ed. David S. Dockery (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2012), 125–41.

one might hear from a pastor. In this vein, Millard Erickson defines theology as “that discipline which strives to give a coherent statement of the doctrines of the Christian faith, based primarily on the Scriptures, placed in the context of culture in general, worded in a contemporary idiom, and related to issues of life.”⁶ This sort of technical definition is appropriate for those studying Christian doctrine in an academic setting. But theology is for *all* Christians, the overwhelming majority of whom will never be trained pastors or theology professors. Also, technical definitions like Erickson’s could unintentionally divorce belief from behavior, two ideas that are closely connected in the Scriptures.

I don’t reject the validity of such technical definitions; indeed, I use them in my own classes on Christian doctrine and the history of Christian theology. But in this chapter, I have in mind a more foundational understanding of theology that underlies the sort of theological work undertaken by professional scholars and ordained clergy. Etymologically, the word *theology* literally means “the knowledge of God” (Gk. *theos*, “God”; *logos*, “knowledge”). Theology is different from all other areas of inquiry. As Abraham Kuyper notes of theology,

In all other sciences man observes and thoughtfully investigates the object, and subjects it to himself, but in theology the object is active; it does not stand open, but gives itself to be seen; does not allow itself to be investigated, but reveals itself; and employs man as instrument only to cause the knowledge of its Being to radiate.⁷

For our purposes, theology is *thinking rightly about God and his world for the sake of living rightly before God in his world*. The goal of theology is not simply to learn true information about God, valuable as that is. Theology is about knowing God, loving God, and living out that loving knowledge of God in this world that he so loves (John 3:16).⁸ Theology is an expression of the Great Commandment, forming us into better lovers of God and lovers of others (Matt. 22:34–40). Theology is also an expression of Christian discipleship. As Keith Johnson argues,

6. Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1998), 23.

7. Abraham Kuyper, “The Biblical Criticism of the Present Day,” trans. J. Hendrik de Vries, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 61, no. 243 (1904): 411.

8. I recommend that the first two books every theologian should read are J. I. Packer’s *Knowing God*, 20th anniversary ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993); and James K. A. Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2016).

“The traditional goal of Christian theology is to develop a better understanding of God so that we can think and speak rightly about God within the context of a life governed by our faith in Christ and our discipleship to him in community with other Christians.”⁹ I would suggest that one of those communities where we learn to love rightly and live out some of the faith and discipleship implications of our theology is the Christian college or university.

The rest of this essay offers a brief account of some of the theological emphases that should animate Christian higher education in the evangelical tradition. My intention is not to offer a fully developed theology of Christian higher education, though such a work is needed.¹⁰ Nor am I offering a summary of basic evangelical theology, since many fine examples already exist.¹¹ Rather, I’m offering a brief evangelical theology of Scripture, drawing on select resources from the Christian intellectual tradition, and making application to how evangelicals should approach the task of Christian higher education. My suggestions are preliminary rather than exhaustive. The goal is to encourage further reflection rather than to offer any sort of definitive statement.

Scripture: Our Magisterial Authority

Evangelical Protestants have traditionally affirmed that Scripture alone is our ultimate authority for faith and practice.¹² The Bible is thus our *magisterial* authority for theology; it is the first and most important authority to which we appeal to determine sound doctrine. This view has commonly been summarized with the Reformation slogan *sola Scriptura* (“Scripture alone”). Two key New Testament texts address the contours of an evangelical doctrine of Scripture:

9. Keith L. Johnson, *Theology as Discipleship* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015), 34.

10. For constructive theological proposals directed at higher education in general, see Peter C. Hodgson, *God’s Wisdom: Toward a Theology of Education* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999); Gavin D’Costa, *Theology in the Public Square: Church, Academy, and Nation* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005); Mike Higton, *A Theology of Higher Education* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). There is a critical need for an evangelical work of this nature that is focused on Christian higher education.

11. One of the best is J. I. Packer and Thomas C. Oden, *One Faith: The Evangelical Consensus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004).

12. For a robust evangelical bibliography, see John Woodbridge’s chapter in this volume. For helpful book-length evangelical introductions to the doctrine of Scripture, see David S. Dockery, *Christian Scripture: An Evangelical Perspective on Inspiration, Authority, and Interpretation* (Nashville: Broadman, 1995); D. A. Carson, *Collected Writings on Scripture*, compiled by Andrew David Naselli (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010).

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Tim. 3:16–17)

And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Pet. 1:19–21)

God himself has inspired (“breathed out”) the Scriptures, even though men wrote the various books of the Bible. The Holy Spirit led men to write God's words and not just their own opinions. Because these human words are also God's words, they are fully authoritative in all matters to which they speak. As Wayne Grudem notes, “The authority of Scripture means that all the words of Scripture are God's word in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God.”¹³

The confessions and catechisms of the Reformation are replete with appeals to and summaries of the ultimate authority of the Bible. Most evangelical confessions of faith devote their first article to the doctrine of Scripture. It is also common (though not universal) for evangelical theologians to articulate their understanding of Scripture in the early chapters of their published systematic theologies before appealing to that authority in developing the various doctrinal *loci* such as creation, humanity, redemption, or the church. The very placement of Scripture in these theological treatises suggests that biblical authority is foundational to all our subsequent theological work. Though evangelicals debate the best understanding of any number of theological topics, all agree that a given doctrine must be biblical, or else it is not correct.

Christian colleges and universities should be *radically* biblical in their orientation. I'm not using this term in its most common contemporary understanding that someone or something is extreme or even fringe.

13. Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 73.

Rather, I'm highlighting the older usage of that term, when *radical* spoke to the root (Lat., *radix*), or the foundation, or the basic principle. Scripture should be the root from which the Christian university emerges, the foundation on which it is built, the basic principle that animates its very life. The values that drive the university's mission and strategic plan should be biblical. Scripture should be the ultimate authority in every academic discipline. This is not a call for what has been called a "narrow biblicentrism" but is rather a commitment to "renewed primary engagement with the actual foundation of Western intellectual culture."¹⁴

In a Christian university, a key aspect of faculty development should be helping professors learn to interrogate the presuppositions of their disciplines biblically, something most were never taught to do in secular graduate schools. Foundational courses in the core curriculum should help students to think biblically and cultivate wisdom and virtues that arise from the Scriptures. Disciplinary courses within each major should intentionally speak to what it means to bring that particular discipline or profession into conformity with Scripture. As Craig Bartholomew argues, "Scripture is our foundational text and infallible authority, and without falling prey to biblicism or dualism, we ought, I think, to find exegesis popping up all over the place in the Christian university."¹⁵

Tradition: Our Ministerial Authority

Tradition constitutes a second key source for Christian doctrine. Unlike Roman Catholics, Protestants do not argue that Scripture and tradition are equally authoritative sources of theology. Scripture is our supreme authority, but tradition is an important secondary source of theology in that it helps us to understand the Scriptures. In this way, tradition is our *ministerial* authority for theology because it serves our interpretation and application of the Bible.

When evangelicals appeal to tradition, they are typically referring to what is commonly called the Christian intellectual tradition, or the great tradition.¹⁶ The Christian intellectual tradition is the broadly shared

14. David Lyle Jeffrey, "Introduction," in *The Bible and the University*, ed. David Lyle Jeffrey and C. Stephen Evans, Scripture and Hermeneutics Series 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 9.

15. Craig G. Bartholomew, *Contours of the Kuyperian Tradition: A Systematic Introduction* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017), 307–8.

16. See David S. Dockery and Timothy George, *The Great Tradition of Christian Thinking: A Student's Guide*, Reclaiming the Christian Intellectual Tradition (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012);

consensus of Christian thinking as it has developed from the second century to our present era. It is rooted in the rule of faith that summarized the grand biblical narrative in the earliest centuries of Christian history, it builds on the ecumenical creedal consensus of the Patristic era, it has been reflected on by key theologians throughout church history, and it represents what C. S. Lewis memorably referred to as “mere” Christianity.¹⁷ The great tradition also serves as the basic theological and moral foundation for the three broad divisions within Christianity (Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant), more nuanced denominational traditions (e.g., Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist), and transdenominational renewal movements (e.g., evangelicalism, the charismatic movement). The great tradition is an important secondary source in theology because it affirms, clarifies, and reinforces our ultimate authority, the Scriptures.

The Christian intellectual tradition offers a treasure trove of resources that contribute to a theology of Christian higher education. For the sake of space, I will draw on insights from three resources as examples, two ancient and one modern. The Nicene Creed (381) and the Chalcedonian Definition (451) together provide an ecumenical summary of the Christian faith affirmed by nearly all Christians in nearly all places. They are *catholic* documents in the truest sense because they belong to the entire body of Christ, including evangelicals. The Lausanne Covenant (1974) was drafted by a diverse group of evangelicals from many nations who convened under the guidance of evangelist Billy Graham to strategize about global gospel advance. The Lausanne Covenant highlights themes that point to the importance of *gospel* and *mission* in evangelical theology.¹⁸

The Ancient Catholic Consensus

Between the time of the New Testament and AD 500, Christian theologians wrestled with the best way to articulate what the church believed

Thomas C. Oden, *The Rebirth of Orthodoxy: Signs of New Life in Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2002).

17. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (1944; repr., New York: HarperCollins, 2001).

18. Since most evangelical colleges and universities are church related, I’m assuming that the unique convictions and emphases of sponsoring denominations are another important resource from the Christian intellectual tradition, though I do not address denominational emphases in this chapter. For two recent examples, see Roger Ward and David P. Gushee, eds., *The Scholarly Vocation and the Baptist Academy: Essays on the Future of Baptist Higher Education* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2008); Christian Smith, *Building Catholic Higher Education: Unofficial Reflections from the University of Notre Dame*, with John C. Cavadini (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015).

about the God whom it claimed to worship.¹⁹ Heretics offered idiosyncratic readings of the New Testament that were inconsistent with the church's rule of faith. Arius argued that the Son of God was divine in some sense but was also a created being who did not possess the same eternality as the Father. Apollinaris suggested that Jesus of Nazareth was the God-man but that his human soul had been replaced with the eternal Logos. Nestorians claimed that Jesus was a merely human fetus who also became divine at birth, and the followers of Eutyches limited the extent of Jesus's humanity. Christianity had only recently been legalized, in 313, under the leadership of Emperor Constantine. Now, in the church's moment of cultural ascendancy, theological infighting and regional rivalries between imperial cities and their bishops threatened to divide the church.

In response to these challenges, a series of imperial councils were held in the fourth and fifth centuries. Under the leadership of bishops and with the blessing of emperors, the church refined its understanding of God as triune and Jesus as fully divine and fully human. The Nicene Creed, also called the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, was adopted at the Council of Nicaea in 325 and revised and expanded at the Council of Constantinople in 381. In between, the church endured more than a half century of controversy between Trinitarian and non-Trinitarian theologians. The Nicene Creed is intended to summarize "the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3), with emphasis on the nature of God and his saving work.

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.

Who, for us men [and] for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, accord-

19. For an overview of this period, see John Behr, *The Way to Nicaea*, Formation of Christian Doctrine 1 (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001); Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, Formation of Christian Doctrine 2 (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004); Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

ing to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father [and the Son]²⁰; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe [in] one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.²¹

According to the Nicene Creed, the one true God is the Creator of all things seen and unseen. This eternal God exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each of whom is fully God yet is also distinct from the other two persons. This triune God is worthy of human worship. God's saving plan centered on the Son, who became incarnate, was born of a virgin, was crucified and buried, and rose from the dead—all on behalf of sinful humanity. The Son now reigns at the Father's right hand, though he will one day return to judge all people, usher in his eternal kingdom, and complete God's saving work. For now, believers are part of the one church, into which we are baptized, though we await the final resurrection of the dead and the final consummation of God's eternal kingdom.

In arguing that the one God is a Trinity of persons, the Nicene Creed was restating in confessional form what was hinted at in the Old Testament (especially in Gen. 1:1–2, 26; 3:22; 11:7) and subsequently made more explicit in various New Testament passages (Matt. 28:19–20; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Pet. 1:2; Jude 20–21). As Fred Sanders argues, the theologians who drafted the ancient creeds were “foregrounding” truths about God that had always been present:

In the passage from implicit awareness of God's triunity and an inarticulate expression of salvation, to explicit confession of faith

20. The so-called *filioque* clause (Lat., “and the son”) was added to the Nicene Creed in the West at the Council of Toledo in 589. It remains a source of tension between Roman Catholics and Protestants, who affirm the addition, and Eastern Orthodox, who reject it. See A. Edward Siecienski, *The Filioque: History of a Doctrinal Controversy*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

21. The Nicene Creed, Christian Classics and Ethereal Library, accessed May 17, 2017, <https://www.ccel.org/creeds/nicene.creed.html>.

in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Christian theology came of age epistemologically. Having always known the Trinity, Christian thinkers now knew that they knew the Trinity.²²

The Chalcedonian Definition was adopted at the Council of Chalcedon in 451, following a quarter century of debates about the relationship between Jesus's divine and human natures. The statement is not intended as a creed but rather offers an authoritative commentary on the Jesus confessed in the Nicene Creed:

Therefore, following the holy fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man, consisting also of a reasonable soul and body; of one substance with the Father as regards his Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards his manhood; like us in all respects, apart from sin; as regards his Godhead, begotten of the Father before the ages, but yet as regards his manhood begotten, for us men and for our salvation, of Mary the Virgin, the God-bearer; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, recognized in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence, not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ; even as the prophets from earliest times spoke of him, and our Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us, and the creed of the fathers has handed down to us.²³

According to the Chalcedonian Definition, Jesus is fully God and fully man. He is one person but possesses both human and divine natures, the two of which remain separate from the other. In his divine nature, he shares in common with the Father and the Spirit all that it means to be God. In his human nature, he shares all that it means to be human with the rest of humanity. The God-man Jesus Christ is the incarnation of the

22. Fred Sanders, *The Deep Things of God: How the Trinity Changes Everything* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 46.

23. The Definition of Chalcedon, Center for Reformed Theology and Apologetics, accessed May 17, 2017, <http://www.reformed.org/documents/chalcedon.html>.

eternal Son of God, which reflects the witness of Scripture, the rule of faith, and the Nicene Creed. The Chalcedonian Definition summarizes in technical theological language a wealth of material articulated in the New Testament about the full deity and humanity of Jesus Christ, most notably in the four great Christological passages (John 1:1–18; Phil. 2:5–11; Col. 1:15–20; Heb. 1:1–4). As Steve Wellum argues, “Chalcedon is not the final word on Christology, yet it provides the church with the basic guardrails within which we theologize about the incarnation.”²⁴

Taken together, the Nicene Creed and Chalcedonian Definition represent the consensus of the faith (*sensus fidei*) that is affirmed by Christians across the Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant traditions. Christian higher education, including evangelical colleges and universities, should be rooted in the catholicity of basic Christian orthodoxy as confessed in these statements. If universities are to be distinctively Christian, then all teaching and research will be undertaken for the glory of the triune God of all creation. Simply put, evangelical institutions must remain resolutely *orthodox* in their theology, a posture that is increasingly difficult in our era of postmodern epistemology, oft-militant secularism, and moral relativism and revisionism.

Our academic life together in Christian universities is lived under the lordship of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God who brings salvation through his perfect life, sacrificial death, victorious resurrection, and ongoing intercession.²⁵ Christian higher education should be incarnational, involving real lives intersecting for the sake of formative education that fosters love of God and neighbor in every sphere of life. This does not absolutely necessitate face-to-face traditional education, but it does require creative thinking about how to foster incarnational emphases when innovative delivery systems are employed. The same incarnational principle holds true of all public worship in chapel, student discipleship (including academic advising and career counseling), and mission opportunities, each of which is rightly characteristic of evangelical schools.

24. Stephen J. Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 257.

25. For two thoughtful reflections by evangelical scholars on how Trinitarian and Christological orthodoxy should inform evangelical scholarship and teaching in particular, see Bradley G. Green, *The Gospel and the Mind: Recovering and Shaping the Intellectual Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010); Mark A. Noll, *Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011).

In an effort to anchor evangelical educational institutions in the great tradition, we should consider adopting the Nicene Creed and similar ecumenical statements, such as the Apostles' Creed, as guiding documents in our colleges and universities. However, these statements should not be treated as infallible or even fully sufficient statements that exhaustively address Christian faith and practice. For example, the creeds do not address revisionist views of gender and sexuality, the sanctity of human life, or contemporary threats to the religious liberty of Christian institutions. For this reason, evangelical institutions should also consider adopting ecumenical statements such as the Manhattan Declaration (2009), a manifesto that drew together Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox Christians to address the three aforementioned issues.²⁶ Evangelicals might also consider supplementing their participation in denominational higher education consortiums and even panevangelical alliances such as the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities to link arms with other church-based institutions that affirm the creedal consensus *and* moral theology represented in the Christian intellectual tradition.

Evangelical colleges and universities should also adopt robust confessional statements that are rooted in the consensus of the great tradition. For many schools, this might be a denominational confession, while other institutions will draft their own doctrinal standards. Either way, we must remember that our Christian identity is prior to our evangelical (or denominational) identity, and the latter should always be understood as a variation of the former. Evangelicalism is healthiest when it is a Bible-centered, gospel-driven renewal movement within the church catholic.²⁷ Faculty development efforts should include programs for helping professors think about what it means to bring their teaching and research under the lordship of Christ and to consider how the “stories” of their respective disciplines fit into the story confessed in the great tradition of the ancient ecumenical creeds, along with the more particular theological emphases reflected in their denominational or institutional confessions.

26. See the Manhattan Declaration, drafted by Robert George, Timothy George, and Charles Colson, November 20, 2009, http://www.manhattandecclaration.org/man_dec_resources/Manhattan_Declaration_full_text.pdf.

27. For two proposals about how evangelicals can embrace a “retrieval theology” rooted in catholicity, both identified with specific denominational traditions, see Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain, *Reformed Catholicity: The Promise of Retrieval for Theology and Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015); R. Lucas Stamps and Matthew Y. Emerson, “Evangelical Baptist Catholicity: A Manifesto,” Center for Baptist Renewal, accessed May 17, 2017, <http://www.centerforbaptistrenewal.com/evangelical-baptist-catholicity-a-manifesto/>.

The Lausanne Covenant

Evangelicals are a people characterized not so much by a particular theological system as by an emphasis on certain distinctives that can be found across denominational traditions and ethnic divisions. These evangelical distinctives are rooted in the catholic consensus of the early church, were refined during the Reformation and post-Reformation period, and were given particular expression during the age of Enlightenment and Awakening, during the so-called long eighteenth century (ca. 1689 to 1815). The emphasis on heart religion found among the English Puritans and the Continental Pietists became a part of the evangelical DNA, even as that DNA owned and sometimes revised the confessional identity and spiritual emphases of the denominational traditions that emerged from the seventeenth century onward.²⁸

Historian David Bebbington has offered the most influential summary of evangelical distinctives with his “quadrilateral” of biblicism, conversionism, crucicentrism (cross-centeredness), and activism (especially evangelism and mission).²⁹ While Bebbington’s goal is historical description, theologians have often provided more prescriptive accounts of evangelical theological distinctives.³⁰ Panevangelical confessional statements by groups such as the Evangelical Alliance in the UK and the National Association of Evangelicals in the USA also highlight baseline evangelical theological commitments, while more narrow statements such as the foundational documents of the Gospel Coalition or the statement of faith adopted by the Society of Evangelical Arminians address the convictions of smaller subsets of evangelicals.

For the purposes of this chapter, I have chosen to focus on the Lausanne Covenant of 1974 for two reasons. First, though a committee led by British theologian John Stott drafted the Lausanne Covenant, it was subsequently adopted as a panevangelical statement that reaches beyond the English-speaking world. This is important since the bulk of the evangelical growth of the past century has been in the Global South

28. See Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield, and the Wesleys*, *A History of Evangelicalism: People, Movements, and Ideas in the English-Speaking World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003).

29. David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1989), 1–19.

30. E.g., see the contributions of Albert Mohler and Kevin Baader in *Four Views on the Spectrum of Evangelicalism*, ed. Andrew David Naselli and Collin Hansen (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), as well as Michael F. Bird’s recent theology textbook *Evangelical Theology: A Biblical and Systematic Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013).

and since Christian higher education is increasingly a priority among non-Western evangelicals.³¹ Second, because of its provenance at a global evangelical missions conference, the Lausanne Covenant intentionally weds together a high view of Scripture, a robust understanding of the saving work of Christ, and a commitment to mission. The statement thus expounds core evangelical theological distinctives in a more fulsome way than is often evident in other panevangelical confessional documents. In what follows, I draw on select statements from some of the Lausanne Covenant articles.

Theological Substance of Lausanne

The Lausanne Covenant begins with a brief introduction. The assembly's purpose for gathering is global evangelism. They confess, "We believe the Gospel is God's good news for the whole world, and we are determined by his grace to obey Christ's commission to proclaim it to all mankind and to make disciples of every nation."³² This is a reference to the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18–20:

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Next, the Lausanne Covenant addresses the doctrine of God, who "has been calling out from the world a people for himself, and sending his people back into the world to be his servants and his witnesses, for the extension of his kingdom, the building up of Christ's body, and the glory of his name." We are Christians because of God's eternal mission, and as his people, we are subsequently sent out as a part of that mission as his agents of redemption (John 20:21). This theme has continued to be developed in evangelical missional theology, which itself has built on earlier emphases on the mission of God (*missio Dei*) among mainline

31. See Joel Carpenter, Perry L. Glanzer, and Nicholas S. Lantinga, eds., *Christian Higher Education: A Global Reconnaissance* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014).

32. The Lausanne Covenant, Lausanne Movement, August 1, 1974, accessed May 19, 2017, <https://www.lausanne.org/content/covenant/lausanne-covenant>. All subsequent citations of the document come from this digital edition. See also John Stott, *The Lausanne Covenant: An Exposition and Commentary*, Lausanne Occasional Papers 3 (Lausanne, Switzerland: Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 1975), accessed May 19, 2017, <https://www.lausanne.org/content/lop/lop-3>.

missiologists.³³ Lesslie Newbigin's writings have proved especially influential in shaping evangelical missional thought.³⁴

Scripture is confessed to be God's infallible written Word, addressed to all people, for the purpose of bringing men and women to salvation. The Holy Spirit "illuminates the minds of God's people in every culture to perceive its truth freshly through their own eyes and thus discloses to the whole Church ever more of the many-colored wisdom of God." The Bible is for the whole church, in every place and in every age. The Lausanne Covenant also speaks to "the uniqueness and universality of Jesus Christ." This article is worth quoting in its entirety:

We affirm that there is only one Savior and only one gospel, although there is a wide diversity of evangelistic approaches. We recognize that everyone has some knowledge of God through his general revelation in nature. But we deny that this can save, for people suppress the truth by their unrighteousness. We also reject as derogatory to Christ and the gospel every kind of syncretism and dialogue, which implies that Christ speaks equally through all religions and ideologies. Jesus Christ, being himself the only God-man, who gave himself as the only ransom for sinners, is the only mediator between God and people. There is no other name by which we must be saved. All men and women are perishing because of sin, but God loves everyone, not wishing that any should perish but that all should repent. Yet those who reject Christ repudiate the joy of salvation and condemn themselves to eternal separation from God. To proclaim Jesus as "the Savior of the world" is not to affirm that all people are either automatically or ultimately saved, still less to affirm that all religions offer salvation in Christ. Rather it is to proclaim God's love for a world of sinners and to invite everyone to respond to him as Savior and Lord in the wholehearted personal commitment of repentance

33. E.g., see Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006); Wright, *The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010); Bruce Ashford, ed., *Theology and Practice of Mission: God, the Church, and the Nations* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2011); Michael W. Goheen, *A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011); Ross Hastings, *Missional God, Missional Church: Hope for Re-evangelizing the West* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012).

34. See especially Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988); Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989); Newbigin, *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995); Paul Weston, ed., *Lesslie Newbigin: Missionary Theologian: A Reader* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006).

and faith. Jesus Christ has been exalted above every other name; we long for the day when every knee shall bow to him and every tongue shall confess him Lord.

This is a robust evangelical statement of the exclusivity of Jesus Christ, the efficacy of his saving work on behalf of sinners, the necessity of personal conversion through repentance and faith, and the importance of global evangelism among all peoples.

Building on these foundational evangelical themes, the bulk of the Lausanne Covenant focuses on key mission themes such as evangelism, Christian social responsibility, the place of cultural engagement and Christian education in mission, spiritual warfare, and persecution and religious freedom. The final two articles address the empowering of the Holy Spirit for mission and the second coming of Jesus Christ. Of particular interest for our purposes is that the covenant considers both evangelism and faith-motivated works of justice, mercy, and reconciliation to be crucial to Christian mission. This was hotly debated at the Lausanne meeting. Billy Graham preferred a more narrow emphasis on evangelism, while John Stott, influenced by non-Anglo missiologists, preferred a more holistic view of mission wherein evangelism and social activism were each seen as Christian responsibilities that reinforced each other. Stott's vision carried the day.³⁵ He expounded his holistic vision of mission in *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (1975), another work that has significantly influenced evangelical missional theology.³⁶

The Lausanne Movement has continued to influence global evangelical theology and missiology, producing two additional statements, the Manila Manifesto (1989) and the Cape Town Commitment (2011).³⁷ Lausanne's legacy is significant. Evangelicalism has become a global movement. Mission is a panevangelical commitment that arises from evangelical views of God, Christ, salvation, and Scripture. While evan-

35. See Alister Chapman, *Godly Ambition: John Stott and the Evangelical Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 137–43.

36. InterVarsity Press has recently published an updated version of the book that has been supplemented and expanded by missional theologian and Stott protégé Christopher Wright. See John Stott and Christopher J. H. Wright, *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, updated and expanded ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2015).

37. These documents are also available at the Lausanne Movement website, both accessed May 27, 2017. See the Manila Manifesto, July 20, 1989, <https://www.lausanne.org/content/manifesto/the-manila-manifesto>; the Cape Town Commitment, January 25, 2011, <https://www.lausanne.org/content/ctc/ctccommitment>.

gelism is central to mission, mission is more comprehensive than evangelism. Mission is “the whole gospel for the whole person, not a ‘spiritual’ gospel for the soul or a ‘social’ gospel for the body. It is in the whole world, not just in certain parts of the world labeled ‘mission field.’”³⁸

Lausanne and Christian Higher Education

The sort of holistic, evangelical vision of mission found in the Lausanne Covenant and subsequent documents has much to contribute to a theology of Christian higher education.³⁹ Christian colleges and universities are among the fruit of God’s mission as redeemed men and women establish institutions for the purpose of offering a Christ-centered education. Christian higher education is a uniquely academic form of Christian discipleship that builds on and extends the formation that happens in local congregations, directing its application into many of the disciplines and professions to which believers are called. As such, our schools are part of the mission of the triune God to redeem the lost and restore the created order to its original and ultimate intention to glorify him.

Our institutions should be missional institutions in the truest sense of that term. We are not simply inducting students into a discipline or training them for a career—we are forming them for mission. Our classrooms, student organizations, lecture series, chapel services, missions and service opportunities, partnerships with local congregations and parachurch ministries—everything we do in Christian higher education—should be about helping our students become “disciple-making disciples” within their present and future vocations as they take ownership of the Great Commission. Professors and administrators need to be intentional in developing strategies for helping students to engage in evangelism and discipleship in every discipline and profession. Schools also need to develop innovative strategies and strategic partnerships for providing Christian higher education in the majority world. The relative ease of global travel, online learning platforms, and communication tools such as Skype and FaceTime open up all sorts of opportunities for Christian educators to connect with students and colleagues across the globe. In the same way that mission has become “from everywhere to

38. Michael W. Goheen, *Introducing Christian Mission Today: Scripture, History, and Issues* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 27.

39. For more substantive reflections on this theme, see Bruce Ashford’s chapter in this volume.

everywhere,” so Christian higher education as one strategic form of mission should do the same.⁴⁰

We need to think of ways to promote a Christian vision of human flourishing in every sphere and help students see this as a more God-honoring motivation than the idolatrous accumulation of wealth, power, or influence that tempt even evangelical students (and their professors). Our schools should orient their respective service agendas toward providing students, faculty, and staff with hands-on opportunities to promote a Christ-centered vision of justice, mercy, and reconciliation. We also need to promote these values within our campus cultures through policies related to employment, conflict resolution, professional development, and so forth. Perhaps our most important and most difficult responsibility at this moment is to make sacrificial decisions to keep the cost of Christian higher education competitive and focus our fundraising strategies on scholarships to make our form of academic discipleship accessible to students from low-income homes, minority groups, and underrepresented populations. As Craig Bartholomew writes, “One thing should be clear about Christian education: it cannot be allowed to be a middle-class entity but should have a preferential option for the poor, not least when most of the poor are Christian.”⁴¹

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to draw on Scripture and three resources from the Christian intellectual tradition in service of an evangelical theology of Christian higher education. So much more could be said about the role of Scripture in this project, in addition to the serious, faithful exegesis and interpretation of Scripture that ought to guide a theology of Christian higher education (and all theology). In terms of the great tradition, so many other subtraditions should be engaged: Augustinianism, Thomism, Reformed and Lutheran Orthodoxy, Free Church traditions, and Kuyperianism, along with oft-untapped voices from the Christian East and emerging voices from the Global South. Theology is a “servant” that nourishes the “soul” of the Christ-centered university.⁴² Hopefully,

40. See Michael Nazir-Ali, *From Everywhere to Everywhere: A World View of Christian Witness* (London: Collins, 1991).

41. Bartholomew, *Contours of the Kuyperian Tradition*, 305.

42. Glanzer, Alleman, and Ream, *Restoring the Soul of the University*, 227. Glenn Marsch's chapter in this book, chap. 12, is devoted to how theology can inform the sciences.

this chapter will encourage evangelical theologians to apply their skills to crafting constructive, orthodox, and practical theologies of Christian higher education.

Questions for Further Reflection

1. Theology includes rightly thinking, living, and loving to the glory of God. How might this understanding of theology intersect with traditional higher education emphases on teaching, research, and service?
2. In what ways does theology function as the “soul” of Christian higher education?
3. How can theology be incorporated into faculty development so that professors are formed theologically within their respective disciplines and professions?
4. How can theology be incorporated into the core curriculum of Christian colleges and universities so that all students are formed theologically early in their education?
5. How can theology be incorporated into disciplinary courses so that students are taught to think rightly about God and live rightly before God within the context of their majors and minors?
6. What additional theological insights can be mined from the Christian intellectual tradition and applied to Christian higher education?

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