

A Personal Philosophy of A Christian University Education

Elements essential to the educational theory and practice of a Christian university in my opinion may be largely subsumed under an experience (or experiences) that encourages the acquisition of knowledge for the purpose of appreciating ultimate (and temporal) realities and in turn committing oneself to that which is good, true, and ultimately worthwhile. Most fundamentally such an education is that which affects the person in terms of who he or she is. Second to this, such an education should enable one to understand and cope with his or her world better. Thus the cultivation of attitudes and not merely the gathering of facts and development of ideas is crucial for a truly Christian education. In such a context the Scriptures must be related to all of life, and all of life must finally be viewed in light of the Divine Revelation under the direction of the Holy Spirit. For this reason I believe it is vital to see sister academic disciplines as complementing and not competing with the study of Biblical truth. I believe that all study falling within the university spectrum should be pursued, as objectively and critically as possible, as well as understandingly, with the expectation of holding conclusions tentatively when fully satisfying answers are not readily forthcoming. Part of the learning experience must be encouragement to question and reflect in order that convictions that have stood the test of tough thinking might accrue to the student. Of course the level of study in a given subject and the maturity of the student will condition the implementation of such educative technique. The student should be encouraged to welcome truth and to integrate it with his own developing Christian worldview. Thus opportunities to express himself or herself are important (in writing and in community with others) toward gaining insight and also toward learning to appreciate what others have to say.

Having committed myself to the belief that in the Scriptures God has revealed what is essential for faith and life, my own scholarly discipline entails using all appropriate tools in order to gain an appreciation and knowledge of the Bible and of the way in which it has come to us. This necessitates academic study, but because the Biblical message is also the basis for my life and faith, it means welcoming that message in a personal way. Accordingly, I seek to engage in study with both a critical mind and a prayerful spirit, trusting the Spirit to lead me to personal appropriation of truth. I am aware that my endeavor is not merely for myself, but also for one who is a steward of religious truth. I do not always find it easy to be aware of my own biases, but I find that when I am willing to question them, the result is greater understanding! Because the literature comprising our Bible has come to us out of life as lived long ago in differing cultures, I feel it is important to understand the historical and literary background out of which these documents came. As we come to understand the Bible on its own terms, we are in a position to appreciate more fully its message. The great challenge is then to interpret the ancient Word in a way that does justice both to the meaning intended for the original audience and the reapplied meaning for contemporary life and culture. I believe that all truth is God's truth and we need not fear it. In fact as those embracing the virtues of honesty and integrity, it is imperative that we welcome truth wherever it is to be found, though it must first pass through the sieve of careful, patient, and critical evaluation.

Charles L. Holman
Professor
School of Divinity
Regent University