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WHAT IS CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION FOR?  
AN ASSESSMENT OF TELEOLOGICAL  
PRIORITIES AT SELECTED LIBERAL  
ARTS INSTITUTIONS

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A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Education

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by  
Alexander Gabriel Sosler  
December 2018

**APPROVAL SHEET**

WHAT IS CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION FOR?  
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## PREFACE

My life, like all lives really, started and is sustained by grace. I have no merit that is worthy of love, but my life is filled with it. As I grow older, these moments of grace come more frequently—moments when time seems to slow and my soul feels overwhelmed to the point of tears for the goodness and steadfast love of God. I want to be worthy of the gifts I have been given. Unfortunately, there is no way I can do that. The gifts have been far too lovely. This life is a graced existence.

To Mom and Dad: You brought me forth in the gift of life. You raised me and supported me even while I rebelled and resented. You paid for much more than you ever should have. Your continuing love is a model of how I hope to love my own.

To my mentors: I am not worthy to be surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses. Matt Koons, who first encouraged me toward doctoral studies, I stand on your shoulders. Jim Hibschan, whose ordinary, consistent, (grand)fatherly love is unmatched. Coach, I am the man I am today (for better or worse!), because of your impact on my life. Pastor Drew, I would have quit ministry if it were not for you and First Baptist Church of Aurora. Thompsons, you modeled a faithful family in a time when I needed to see it. Guthries, when you love, you give. To my doctoral supervisor, Dr. John David Trentham, there were many times I felt like a complete idiot and out of my league when your encouragement helped me persevere. Thank you.

To the Hebbards: You taught me what it means to value my sense of place, to offer hospitality, to care for the poor wherever they are found, and to see Christ in the other. You also made this paper substantially better by your helpful critique and comments.

To my friends: You are too many to count or name, but your consistent love over my life has kept me sane and whole in numerous moments and in abundant ways. You are a constant source of refreshment and joy.

To Milwood Baptist Church: There is no perfect church, but you are as close as I will see this side of the eschaton. I have taken much encouragement and nourishment from you; I hope to give to you a small taste of all you've given me. Nathan, your wise leadership, and more importantly your friendship, will stay with me for the rest of my life.

To Mariela and Auden, our children: You are living reminders of grace—undeserved gifts. The joy of being your dad is unlike any earthly pleasure.

To Lauren, my wife: I am sure you often feel last, but in this case, I had to save the best for last. You likely did not know all the ways that I did not deserve your love when you first married me. You are likely much more aware now. Yet, despite knowing my deepest flaws, you still love. You are what my heart longs for. There is no one else I would rather spend my life with. You are a gift. “And excellent wife, who can find . . . ?”

All of you are gifts from God. I am thankful. This brings a happiness I do not deserve. It is grace.

Alex Sosler

Austin, Texas

December 2018

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Some seek knowledge for  
The sake of knowledge:  
That is curiosity;  
Others seek knowledge so that  
They themselves may be known:  
That is vanity;  
But there are still others  
Who seek knowledge in  
Order to serve and edifying others:  
And that is charity.  
—Bernard of Clairvaux, *Selected Works*

Like a pilgrim who sets out on a journey to find home, this research project set out on a quest to find the “home” of Christian education; that is, to uncover and discover the purpose(s) of educational pursuits. There is a destination for the pilgrim: he assumes an ultimate *telos* at which he will arrive. Along the way, he applies means to achieve his desired end. But without understanding the destination, the methods can disorientate and confuse. A wrong destination leads to a wrong application.

In the same way, every pedagogy aims at a certain destination and assumes a subsequent anthropology.<sup>1</sup> As early as Aristotle, philosophers understood that an understanding of purpose leads to subsequent understanding of nature.<sup>2</sup> Aristotle defined the goal of human life as *eudamonia*. Popularly, this Greek word is translated as “human

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<sup>1</sup> Jerome Bruner writes, “Any choice of pedagogical practice implies a conception of the learner and may, in time, be adopted by him or her as the appropriate way of thinking about the learning process. For a choice of pedagogy inevitable communicates a conception of the learning process and the learner.” Jerome Bruner, *The Culture of Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 63.

<sup>2</sup> The whole task of Nicomachean Ethics was to answer the question, “What is the ultimate purpose of human existence?” *Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2011).

flourishing” or “happiness.” It captures the idea of a plant that bears fruit in the proper way at the proper time. So, how is it that a person “bears fruit” or fulfills his or her ultimate purpose? In essence, human flourishing searches for the life worth living. In light of this search, what is an education worth having? The task of education is the task of forming students for the purpose of their existence.<sup>3</sup>

Prerequisite to a study of purpose, one needs to understand the ontology of human beings. Thus, chapter 2 investigates the historical and philosophical goals of education. Chapter 3 narrows in and defines the methodology of the study. Chapter 4 begins the empirical section of the study. I report the data gathered from various institutions, and in the closing chapter (5) the findings are interpreted and applied.

### **Introduction of the Research Problem**

T. S. Eliot frames the complicated task of researching purpose in education when he writes,

But the moment we ask about the purpose of anything, we may be involving ourselves in asking about the purpose of everything. If we define education, we are led to ask, “What is man?”; and if we define the purpose of education, we are committed to the questions “What is Man for?” Every definition of the purpose of education, therefore, implies some concealed, or rather implicit, philosophy or theology. In choosing one definition rather than another, we are attracted to the one because it fits in better without answer to the question “What is man for?”<sup>4</sup>

Assessing the teleological ends of anything proves a formidable charge. One needs to consider nature, goodness, and purpose.

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<sup>3</sup> These are big, foundational questions. David Dockery writes on their value: “It goes beneath momentary methods, tools, and fads to keep an organization focused on its most basic identity and objective.” David Dockery, *Renewing Minds: Serving Church and Society through Christian Higher Education* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2007), 11. This is a less popular view of education, because it requires hard work and answering complex questions. It is what has created simplified measurements and simplified goals in the current educational system. Answering these complex, dynamic questions is hard to measure. How does one measure capacity and growth in human flourishing? It is not impossible to measure, but performance on a test is much easier.

<sup>4</sup> T. S. Eliot, *To Criticize a Critic* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1965), 76.

The connection between all these concepts is rooted in early Greek philosophy. Aristotle opens *Nicomachean Ethics* with the following words: “Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action as well as choice, is held to aim at some good. Hence people have nobly declared that the good is that at which all things aim.”<sup>5</sup> In education no less than personhood, the educator aims at something—whether that something is conscious or unconscious.<sup>6</sup> Even the inanimate plant witnesses to this fact. In *The New Atlantis Report*, Stephen L. Talbott writes,

Even the “growth behaviors” of plants and the “chemical behaviors” of individual cells in our bodies are in some sense intelligent and purposive, wisely directed toward need-fulfilling ends. Purposive—or teleological (end-directed)—activity is no merely adventitious feature of living creatures. Being “endowed with a purpose of project,” wrote biochemist Jacques Monod, is ‘essential to the very definition of living beings.’ And according to Theodosius Dobzhansky, a geneticist and leading architect of the past century’s dominant evolutionary theory, “It would make no sense to talk of the purpose of adaptation of stars, mountains, or the laws of physics,” but “adaptedness of living beings is too obvious to be overlooked. . . . Living beings have an internal, or natural, teleology.”

Every living thing has a purpose. It appears that even the natural world testifies to purposeful creation. The question then becomes how does one discover if he or she is aiming at a good goal? To find the answer of the “good,” one needs to investigate the purpose for which man is made.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1.

<sup>6</sup> Stephen L. Talbott, “Evolution and the Purposes of Life,” *The New Atlantis* 51 (Winter 2017): 63-91. If this is true of “non-cognitive” living creatures, then how much more for rational humanity.

<sup>7</sup> In Greek, the translated words are *arete* for virtue, *telos* for end, *teleios* for wholeness, and *eudaimonia* for flourishing. Aristotle uses the example of a flower. One needs to understand the *telos* of a flower to understand the nature of a flower—particularly what makes a good (*arete*) flower. A flower is not a hammer (to be used to hammer nails) or food (to be enjoyed). The *eudaimonia* for the flower is one of bearing fruit and beauty. How one evaluates a flower is related to its flourishing. An *arete* flower is one that flourishes or blooms (*eudaimonia*). MacIntyre, developing on Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, comments, “We define both ‘watch’ and ‘farmer’ in terms of the purpose of function which a watch or a farmer are characteristically expected to serve.” Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1984), 58. Jonathan Pennington also includes helpful commentary on these words and biblical equivalents in *The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017).

Regarding the university life, toward what is the university aiming? How would an institution define a “good” graduate? What is the “good life”<sup>8</sup> for which they are educating? These foundational questions entail a myriad of educational, institutional, and curricular implications. The purpose guides the direction of a student’s formation. Without a sufficient end, it is impossible to form a coherent vision of the good life.

Educator Perry Glanzer writes,

Rules or definitions of virtue can only be effectively established when communities conceptualize a specific human and communal end derived from a particular identity and narrative. Based on this conception of human flourishing, communities then seek to establish certain rules and embody, prioritize, and exemplify particular virtues.<sup>9</sup>

The answer of *telos* provides coherent grounds for epistemology, ethics, and pedagogy. How a person views the self and how a person views the world will have direct relation to how someone lives in that world. “To put it in somewhat different terms,” Parker Palmer writes, “our epistemology is quietly transformed into our ethic. The images of self and world that are found at the heart of our knowledge will also be found in the values by which we live our lives.”<sup>10</sup> Palmer urges the reader to consider the ethical implications of philosophy and knowledge.

Furthermore, one’s pedagogy is formed by the answer to the foundational questions previously discussed. Psychologist Jerome Bruner affirms,

Any choice of pedagogical practice implies a conception of the learner and may, in time, be adopted by him or her as the appropriate way of thinking about the learning process. For a choice of pedagogy inevitably communicates a conception of the

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<sup>8</sup> In Aristotelian terms, the question becomes, “How does education form us for *eudaimonia*?” Older English translations render this word as “happiness” but as studied by John Cooper, “flourishing” is likely a better translation as it refers to “the fulfillment of the natural capacities of the human species,”—not a subjective mental state for a brief period. See John Cooper, *Reason and Human Good in Aristotle* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 89n1.

<sup>9</sup> Perry L. Glanzer, Todd Ream, and Nathan Alleman, *Restoring the Soul of the University: Unifying Christian Higher Education in a Fragmented Age* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2017), 155.

<sup>10</sup> Parker Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known: A Spirituality of Education* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 21.

learning process and learner. Pedagogy is never innocent. It is a medium that carries its own message.<sup>11</sup>

This fact is central to the argument that follows: pedagogy is never innocent. It is always loaded with meaning and answers to foundational questions of nature, purpose, and flourishing. My hope was to explicitly identify these issues in educational philosophy.

It is at this point where the modern college often fails students: it has lost its unifying answer to the foundational questions of meaning, purpose, goodness, and flourishing. Even in 1942, Mortimer Adler chastised the University of Chicago's faculty at a conference in New York claiming "[they represented] perfectly the disunity and chaos of modern culture"<sup>12</sup> as they rejected a unified curriculum proposed by then president Robert Maynard Hutchins. By doing so, they rejected the claim that "education and ethics more broadly must presume a rational and unchanging human nature and shared beliefs about the nature of reality."<sup>13</sup> In response, Sidney Hook, who was a staunch defender of John Dewey, wrote,

To speak of the nature of man is already a sign that a selective interest is present. What is designated by the term "man" may have many natures depending upon the context and purpose of inquiry. Even if the nature of man is defined in terms of what differentiates him from other animals, we can choose any one of a number of diverse traits that will satisfy the formal conditions of the definition.<sup>14</sup>

Hook argues there is no unifying, coherent meaning to human personhood. Therefore, there is no clear comprehension of human development, much less grounds for curriculum. By and large, the state of the university inherits this philosophy today.

However, for the Christian, there is a clear ground of human nature, and thus, clear grounds for pedagogy and curriculum. The modern college often confuses human

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<sup>11</sup> Bruner, *The Culture of Education*, 63.

<sup>12</sup> Mortimer J. Adler, "God and the Professors," in *Science, Philosophy, and Religion: A Symposium* (New York: Kraus Reprint, 1971), 138.

<sup>13</sup> Chad Wellmon, "Whatever Happened to General Education?" *The Hedgehog Review* 19, no. 1 (Spring 2017), accessed September 20, 2016, [http://www.iasc-culture.org/THR/THR\\_article\\_2017\\_Spring\\_Wellmon.php](http://www.iasc-culture.org/THR/THR_article_2017_Spring_Wellmon.php).

<sup>14</sup> Sidney Hook, *Education for Modern Man* (New York: Dial Press, 1946), 26.

nature and makes it an abstraction, and therefore unknowable. Like much of modern society, human nature is fragmented. It is no surprise that colleges and courses of study lack a unifying whole and remain confused. Without a clear understanding of human nature, and thus aim of human living, morality becomes vacuous. Alasdair MacIntyre points to the consequence of a fragmented worldview in *After Virtue*:

I have suggested so far that unless there is a *telos* which transcends the limited goods of practices by constituting the good of a whole human life, the good of a human life conceived as a unity, it will both be the case that a certain subversive arbitrariness will invade the moral life and that we shall be unable to specify the context of certain virtues adequately. These two considerations are reinforced by the tradition which cannot be specified at all except with reference to the wholeness of a human life—the virtue of integrity or constancy. “Purity of heart,” said Kierkegaard, “is to will one thing.” This notion of singleness of purpose in a whole life can have no application unless that of a whole life does.<sup>15</sup>

In Christian and public college alike, the various academic disciplines, administrators, and student life officers have different answers to the foundational questions. There is no unity or singleness of purpose to the university, so there is no clear destination to which a student is directed. Or maybe more accurately, there are various competing visions of the good life, and the student never develops a coherent vision of life at all. Thus, there is a noticeable absence of teaching around virtue and flourishing.

John Inazu recognizes the lack of purpose in the university as a fundamental problem in modern institutions of higher learning:

The fundamental question of purpose—the point of an institutions existence—is one that plagues so much of higher education today. The absence of coherent institutional purpose is not always a bad thing, but it often reflects a deeper lack of commitment to something greater than the sum of the parts. That kind of ambiguity frequently elevates individual pursuits over any sense of a common good. Absent a shared purpose, the people with the loudest voices and the most money usually determine the shape of an institution.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 203.

<sup>16</sup> John Inazu, “Princeton Seminary, Presbyterian Pastors, and Purpose,” *The Hedgehog Review*, March 2017, accessed April 4, 2017, <http://iasc-culture.org/THR/channels/THR/2017/03/princeton-seminary-presbyterian-pastors-and-purpose/>.

Often, rather than a robust understanding of the good, true, and beautiful, the university is shaped by outrage (“loudest voice”) or financial benefits (“most money”). These conclusions are also shared by Clark Kerr. He laments the loss of a common, singular soul of the university and elects to call it a “multiversity.” He laments the fragmentation and conflict inherent in most universities that are often “partially at war with itself.”<sup>17</sup> He asserts,

A community, like the medieval communities of masters and students, should have common interests; in the multiversity, they are quite varied, even conflicting. A community should have a soul, a single animating principle; the multiversity has several—some of them quite good, although there is much debate on which souls really deserve salvation.<sup>18</sup>

Though there are no clear answers, it is worth noting a consistent theme: education needs to wrestle with concepts like identity, human nature, meaning, and purpose, but the modern college does not have the resources for such conversation. The Christian conscience can fill the modern gap. Christianity presents meaningful answers to foundational questions and does have the resources to speak prophetically in today’s university culture. In an address to the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, David Brooks affirms,

You [Christian colleges and universities] have what everyone else is desperate to have: a way of talking about and educating the human person in a way that integrates faith, emotion, and intellect. You have a recipe to nurture human beings who have a devoted heart, a courageous mind, and purposeful soul. Almost no other set of institutions in America society has that, and everyone wants it.<sup>19</sup>

In what follows, the research proposes how Christians can do what Brooks suggests Christian institutions ought to do. Without a clear and comprehensive understanding of personhood and a truly good life, educational attempts will remain fragmented and futile.

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<sup>17</sup> Clark Kerr, *The Uses of the University*, 5th ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 7.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>19</sup> David Brooks, “The Cultural Value of Christian Higher Education” *CCCU Magazine* 1, no. 1 (Spring 2016), accessed April 4, 2017, <https://www.cccu.org/magazine/cultural-value-christian-higher-education/>.

The Christian college has the resources to address a fragmented and disenfranchised culture. In a world divided, Christianity provides a needed remedy to appreciate diversity for the sake of unity.

### **Current Status of the Research Problem**

If educational strategies depend upon the *telos*, then what does human flourishing look like?<sup>20</sup> Charles Taylor observes, “Every person, and every society, lives with or by some conceptions(s) of what human flourishing is: What constitutes a fulfilled life? What makes life really worth living? What would we most admire people for?”<sup>21</sup> If that is true for societies, it is also true for colleges and universities. The question of *telos* is an important one for educators, for “the ends of education . . . can . . . be correctly developed only in reference to the final end of human beings and the ordering of the curriculum has to be an ordering to that final end.”<sup>22</sup> These are not theoretical questions; they have practical implications.

Different educators and philosophers provide a plethora of answers. Andrew Delbanco summarizes the three most common goals of universities: (1) prepare students for a job;<sup>23</sup> (2) develop leaders and good citizens to lead in the world, or (3) contribute to a student’s lifelong pursuit of happiness.<sup>24</sup> Neil Postman argues that higher education should supply the resources and narratives to answer life’s fundamental questions: “A

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<sup>20</sup> Some (like Stanley Fish as previously mentioned) would reject this question altogether. Along these lines, education is a transfer of information in which the teacher is trained—moral formation has no part in the classroom. As argued in chap. 1, this position is not compelling.

<sup>21</sup> Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Boston: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 16.

<sup>22</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, *God, Philosophy, and Universities: A Selective History of the Catholic Philosophical Tradition* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009), 95.

<sup>23</sup> Later, this goal is explained further under the *homo economicus* section of this thesis.

<sup>24</sup> Andrew Delbanco, *College: What It Was, Is and Should Be* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012).

story that constructs ideals, prescribes rules of conduct, provides a source of authority, and, above all, gives a sense of continuity and purpose.”<sup>25</sup> Anthony Kronman laments that there often is not a clear answer to the question at all and seeks to restore the “spirit” of mankind through secular humanism.<sup>26</sup>

John David Trentham is one researcher who looks at the student side of the equation following the protocol of William Perry.<sup>27</sup> Universities can have various stated goals, but how is a student actually formed in the college years? Trentham’s study investigates the ways pre-ministry undergraduate students epistemically mature through the college career and proposes a multi-perspectival taxonomy of epistemological priorities and competencies as a paradigm for knowing and learning in Christian higher education.<sup>28</sup> Following Trentham, several subsequent studies have examined the development from a student point of view in secular universities,<sup>29</sup> Bible colleges,<sup>30</sup> confessional liberal arts colleges,<sup>31</sup> and non-confessional liberal arts colleges.<sup>32</sup> Further

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<sup>25</sup> Neil Postman, *The End of Education: Redefining the Value of School* (New York: Knopf, 1995), 5-6.

<sup>26</sup> See Anthony Kronman, *Education’s End: Why Our Colleges and Universities Have Given Up on the Meaning of Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008).

<sup>27</sup> William G. Perry, *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the Colleges Years: A Scheme* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970).

<sup>28</sup> John David Trentham, “Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Graduates: A Cross-Institutional Application of the Perry Scheme” (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012).

<sup>29</sup> Christopher Lynn Sanchez, “Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates Attending Secular Universities” (Ed.D. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015).

<sup>30</sup> Gregory Brock Long, “Evaluating the Epistemological Development of Pre-Ministry Undergraduates at Bible Colleges according to the Perry Scheme” (Ed.D. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014).

<sup>31</sup> Bruce Richard Cannon, “Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates Attending Confessional Liberal Arts Colleges and Universities” (Ed.D. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015).

<sup>32</sup> Warren Dale Leatherman, “Comparing Epistemological Development among Pre-Ministry Undergraduates Attending Confessional versus Non-Confessional Liberal Arts Colleges” (Ed.D. thesis, The

studies have focused on pre-college contexts,<sup>33</sup> seminarian men,<sup>34</sup> and seminarian women.<sup>35</sup>

This current study investigates the perspective of the Christian university. In short, what are undergraduate institutions aiming at in the first place? What do they hope for their students to achieve or grow into by attending their university, and how do they plan to stimulate more intellectual and ethical development? The shift in study moves from a student emphasis to the administration and faculty focus. In this regard, Perry Glanzer and Todd Ream are a research team who have investigated institutional commitments to identities and moral education.<sup>36</sup> Their findings are significant, but this study sets out on a slightly different path. Where their study was oriented to discover ends in moral education, this study seeks to include both written documents and interviews to discover ends in education as a whole. In essence, this study seeks out to develop Glanzer's and Ream's document analysis and pair it with interviews at each institution like the research following Trentham.

### **Philosophical-Educational Foundations**

A good foundation entails a correct understanding of truth, knowing, and education. It is necessary for the theological understandings of these concepts to be made explicit in order to evaluate the proper purpose of education.

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Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017).

<sup>33</sup> Justin Robert Mullins, "Exploring the Impact of Secondary Educational Contexts on College Student Formation and Development" (Ed.D. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018).

<sup>34</sup> Jonathon Derek Stuckert, "Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians" (Ed.D. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016).

<sup>35</sup> Jennifer Jeannean Kintner, "Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminary Women" (Ed.D thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018).

<sup>36</sup> See Perry Glanzer and Todd Ream, "Educating Different Types of Citizens: Identity, Tradition, and Moral Education," *Journal of College and Character* 9, no. 4 (2008): 1-14.

## Truth Is Personal Yet Objective

Growing in knowledge is experiential.<sup>37</sup> To know is to act with skill. It is not something humans can master as if mankind could exhaustively attain objective truth. Therefore, truth must be trusted, not mastered.<sup>38</sup> What is true is trustworthy. Even science, the most “objective” of all studies, is based on trust. Michael Polanyi comments,

Science will appear then as a vast system of beliefs, deeply rooted in our history and cultivated today by a specially organized part of our society (i.e., scientists). We shall see that science is not established by the acceptance of a formula, but is part of our mental life, shared out for cultivation among many thousands of specialized scientists throughout the world, and shared receptively, at second hand, by many millions.<sup>39</sup>

It is not a matter of whether if trust exists, but of what is trustworthy and why.<sup>40</sup>

However, the presence of trust does not mean that truth is wholly subjective. One of the disturbing developments on the modern university campus comes in the form of truth claims. With the prevailing relativism, there are as many truths as there are to one’s endlessly diverse selves. The individual is the arbitrator of truth. Therefore, as Molly Oshatz argues, every debate becomes personal.<sup>41</sup> Disagreement turns into an attempt to dominate and submit to someone else’s reality. With the modern culture in

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<sup>37</sup> There is danger in truth’s being only personal or only objective. John Frame has a helpful critique of both rationalism and irrationalism: “Rationalism gives us a perfect knowledge—of nothing. Irrationalism leaves us ignorant—of everything.” John Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1987), 61. By saying “truth is personal,” I do not mean it is irrational and wholly subjective. At the same time, “truth is objective” is not to claim exhaustive knowledge and the individual human mind is not the ultimate criterion of truth. Truth exists and it can be trusted, even without exhaustive comprehension.

<sup>38</sup> Dru Johnson, *Scripture’s Knowing: A Companion to Biblical Epistemology* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2015), 9.

<sup>39</sup> Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 163. It is worth noting that this is not a blind trust. Johnson includes six categories on which one bases his or her trust: community, authority, authentication, ritual, recognition, and discernment. Johnson, *Scripture’s Knowing*, 90-97.

<sup>40</sup> For more on truth as personal, see Johnson, *Scripture’s Knowing*; Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*; Esther Meek, *Loving to Know: Covenant Epistemology* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011); and Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known*, chap. 4.

<sup>41</sup> Molly Oshatz, “College without Truth,” *First Things*, May 2016, 16.

mind, it is important to reassert the objectivity of truth. Before truth is personal, it exists outside of the knower. Only then can one discuss and disagree about truth's content without personal offense. Truth must be personal, but not right away. The danger, Oshatz continues, is that "if the only truth for me is my own personal truth arising from my identity and circumstances, then any and all disagreement about *what is* is by definition personal."<sup>42</sup> In conclusion, truth exists outside of oneself, but it also needs to be personally desired and claimed. Truth requires trustworthiness.

### **Knowing Is Transformational and Gradual**

Since truth is personal, a personal encounter with the truth is transformational.<sup>43</sup> Only in the existence of a relationship can knowing result. On this theme, Martin Buber contributes the "I-You" terminology. Personal interaction is necessary for knowledge to exist; truth can never be abstracted. Esther Meek summarizes,

In the I-You relation, I and You are present to one another in a way that puts all else in the background. Rather than "experiencing" the You, I behold it, encounter it, confront it, commune with it. In that encounter, I and You are present to one another in an enduring present.<sup>44</sup>

Knowing is an encounter. Truth, then, is found in multiple encounters that form trust. These "I-You" encounters change the seeker, which means they are transformational.

Knowing and understanding function with more dynamism than digesting and regurgitating facts. David Dockery writes, "A focus on the mastery of content, though primary, is not enough. We believe that character and competency development are equally

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<sup>42</sup> Oshatz, "College without Truth," 16.

<sup>43</sup> In Jesus, truth is personified. It does not exist in some ethereal sense, but in a person. Jesus is referred to as the *logos* in John 1—the Word made flesh, reason incarnate. He refers to Himself as "the way, the truth, and the life" in John 14:6.

<sup>44</sup> Meek, *Loving to Know*, 250.

important.”<sup>45</sup> Character and competency involve more than knowing: it is a sort of know-how—which the Bible calls wisdom.<sup>46</sup> Knowing results in a commitment to act in accordance with truth. Any knowing encounter transforms the knower, because knowing entails a commitment to act with accordance with truth. Applied knowledge is the essence of biblical wisdom. Therefore, wisdom is relational. It involves activity and not a passive transfer of information. Esther Meek writes that this dynamism shapes teacher practices: “We must, in our teaching, not see ourselves as passing on information, but rather intentionally, artfully, transformatively replicating ourselves to catalyze transformation in the student and their ongoing knowing for *shalom*.”<sup>47</sup> The classroom, then, involves more than the master of the information at the front of the room disseminating his objective mastery of the teacher. Instead, with this relational and transformational view of truth, the classroom is a “community of mentors.”<sup>48</sup> Each individual is shaping the experience and formation of the group and has a valuable contribution.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Dockery, *Renewing Minds*, 75.

<sup>46</sup> See Jas 3:13-17 as an example of this skill in godly living.

<sup>47</sup> Meek, *Loving to Know*, 136.

<sup>48</sup> This phrase is borrowed from David Dark. He writes, But—I really wanted to get this right—I’m not one who presumes I’m bringing illumination, assistance, or even education to our classroom situation. Instead, I think of my evenings of reading and writing in prison as an opportunity to enter into a community of mentors, a group of people from whom I have much to learn, individuals who are each a library of wisdom, experience, and insight who, if I’m attentive, will transform me in my own desire to live toward God’s righteousness. I need them, though I hadn’t thought to put it this way, if I’m to have any hope of doing that. (David Dark, “The Context of Love Is the World: Liturgies of Incarceration,” *Comment Magazine*, March 3, 2014, accessed March 3, 2016, <https://www.cardus.ca/comment/article/the-context-of-love-is-the-world-liturgies-of-incarceration/>)

<sup>49</sup> For more information on transformative knowing, see Meek, *Loving to Know*, chap. 5; Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (New York: Scribner, 1958); James Loder, *The Transforming Moment* (Colorado Springs: Helmers & Howard, 1989).

## Education Is Formative and Moral

If truth is personally transformative, then education is about forming the life, not just informing the mind. In the words of James K. A. Smith, “Christian education is Christian worship with the goal of the formation of radical disciples who desire the kingdom of God.”<sup>50</sup> There is no non-formative education.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, all education is moral. It is asking and answering, what is good, true, and beautiful? Both the ends and the means matter for such questions and answers. Mankind essentially exists as moral beings.<sup>52</sup> N. T. Wright explains in *After You Believe* that a main outcome of salvation is Christian character.<sup>53</sup> If Christianity is for moral formation, then education ought to assist in that task. It is a re-learning of how to be human and what matters.

Education is not a mere matter of understanding; it is an act of love. Love can never be neutral. Even the task of understanding is a performance of love. Education includes a self-giving, responsibility-taking, love.<sup>54</sup> Far from being a transfer of information, education is about desiring the right things in the right ways. The task of education is not amoral as some may argue.<sup>55</sup> Rather, morality infuses every educational effort. On this note, Stanley Hauerwas writes,

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<sup>50</sup> James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 19.

<sup>51</sup> It is worth noting in the current cultural climate that secularity does not equal neutrality. Rather, public, “secular” education is moral, pointing to a certain vision of the good life.

<sup>52</sup> See Christian Smith, *Moral, Believing Animals: Human Personhood and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

<sup>53</sup> N. T. Wright, *After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters* (New York: HarperOne, 2010).

<sup>54</sup> In the words of Abraham Joshua Heschel, “It is impossible to find Truth without being in love.” Abraham Joshua Heschel, *A Passion for the Truth* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1973), 45.

<sup>55</sup> One such proponent is Stanley Fish, in *Save the World on Your Own Time* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). Gilbert Meilaender offers a friendly review in which he says that the educator can pass on information and skills to analyze with the hope that the student will love and desire to grow. In essence, he wants education to be moral, but disagrees that the educator should support any direction. See

Any knowledge worth having cannot help but shape who we are and accordingly our understanding of the world. Thus I use the description, “moral formation,” rather than education, because I think all education, whether acknowledged or not, is moral formation.<sup>56</sup>

Education is a framing of the “good life”—what Aristotle would call *eudaimonia*. What does it look like for humanity to flourish? The task of education morally forms students according to the answer to that question.<sup>57</sup>

### **Anthropological Foundations**

In the words of James K. A. Smith, “Behind every pedagogy is a philosophical anthropology, a model or picture of the human person.”<sup>58</sup> The question which beckons, then, is, do educational philosophies have a correct anthropology? Unfortunately, many educational approaches are riddled with misconceptions of human nature and personhood. The biblical picture of anthropology provides insights into how an educator can approach the means to *eudaimonia*. The question of nature can provide powerful correctives and establish healthy patterns in educational pursuits. Likewise, misguided anthropology can hinder and disorientate the path to flourishing.

The question of nature is fundamental to the task of education for, as the “old adage” goes, *actio sequitur esse*, “action follows essence.” Jonathan Pennington acknowledges, “What we do is morally the fruit of who we are. This is the genius of the virtue-ethics understanding, or to put it in Greco-Roman terms, philosophy.”<sup>59</sup> Next, this

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Gilbert Meilaender, “Education & Soulcraft,” *First Things*, November 1, 2008, accessed April 4, 2017, <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2008/11/004-education-soulcraft>.

<sup>56</sup> Stanley Hauerwas, *The State of the University: Academic Knowledges and the Knowledge of God* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), 46.

<sup>57</sup> For more information on the inherent morality of education, see Palmer, *To Know As We Are Known*, chap. 2; Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*; and Hauerwas, *The State of the University*.

<sup>58</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 40.

<sup>59</sup> Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing*, 32.

section turns to the biblical understanding of the nature of man, because Christian educators ought to care about seeing students flourish in action.

## Embodied Soul

Wendell Berry cautions that the “dualism of body and soul is the most destructive disease that afflicts us.”<sup>60</sup> Scripture testifies to both an “inner” and “outer” aspect to human life. There is a plethora of formative influences on the heart, but only one determinative essence: what the Bible calls the heart or soul.<sup>61</sup> This is the “inner person.” The “outer person” is often referred to as the “body” (2 Cor 4.16; Matt 10.28; Gen 2.21-23; 1 Cor 6.16-20). However, there is an essential unity to the inner person and outer person.<sup>62</sup> They are distinct, though they are not separate. Robert Gundry defends,

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<sup>60</sup> Wendell Berry, “Christianity and the Survival of Creation,” in *Sex, Economy, Freedom and Community: Eight Essays* (New York: Pantheon, 1993), 105.

<sup>61</sup> *Heart or soul* can be used interchangeably in the Bible and historically by biblical thinkers, writers, and pastors. One such example is the Puritan classic by Thomas Brooks, *Precious Remedies against Satan Devices* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2008). This thesis uses these terms interchangeably. Walter Eichrodt provides statistics on how often the term *heart* (Gr. *kardia*) is used in the Bible. He observes that *kardia* occurs over 900 times in the Septuagint and is especially prominent in the Psalms (135x), Sirach (85x), Proverbs (75x), and most of the Prophets. In the New Testament, it occurs over 150 times, especially in Luke, Acts, Romans, and Matthew (16x). See Walter Eichrodt, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975-1985), 2:623, 2:625. *Kardia* overlaps with reasoning and mental faculties and emotions. One could say that *kardia* is more expansive than reasoning and emotion, though often includes both. For how the heart relates to Christian psychology, see Robert C. Roberts, “Situationism and the New Testament Psychology of the Heart,” in *The Bible and the University*, ed. David Lyle Jeffrey and C. Stephen Evans (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 139-59.

<sup>62</sup> Merleau-Ponty is a thinker who is introduced later, but he accounts for the “hybridity” of humanity and suspension between “angelhood and animality”—as mind and body. James K. A. Smith summarizes Merleau-Ponty’s anthropology:

He is trying to describe our comportment to the world as neither intellectualism nor merely a reflexive biological response to stimuli. Our being-in-the-world is between instinct and intellect. Such an account of embodied perception pushes back against Cartesian “thinking-thing”-ism that would reduce us to minds merely carried by vehicles of our bodies as well as a reductionistic animalism that would reduce all of our action and perception to mere biological response to stimuli. I don’t just abstractly think my way through the world, but neither am I a passive victim of impressions, bounced around by instinctual reflexes. . . . So what we need, Merleau-Ponty argues, is a model of the human person that does not fall prey to dichotomies of mind or body but rather does justice to our “betweenness” and its peculiar preconscious knowledge. (James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works* [Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2013], 43-44)

“The soul has a body and the body has a soul and a man as a whole is both, a psychophysical unity—but a unity, not a monad . . . not atomic indivisibility.<sup>63</sup> In other words, the body and soul can be separated conceptually to be discussed, but the person exists as one in reality or formation. Figure 1 provides a picture of this model.<sup>64</sup>

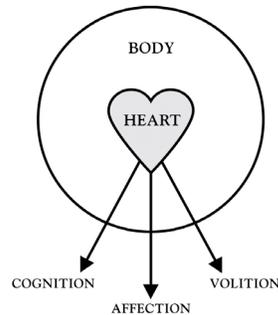


Figure 1. Understanding the influences of the human heart

On the inner man, Tim Keller writes, “Our heart is the center of our personality, the seat of our fundamental commitments, the control center of the whole person. What is in the heart determines what we think, do, and feel—since mind, will, and emotions are all rooted there.”<sup>65</sup> As illustrative in figure 1, from the heart flow all sorts of thoughts, affections, and choices.<sup>66</sup> It is the moral center of a “human being as creature-before-

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<sup>63</sup> Robert Gundry, *Soma in Biblical Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 121-22. See figure 1.

<sup>64</sup> Michael Emler, “Understanding the Influences on the Human Heart,” *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 20, no. 2 (Winter 2002): 48.

<sup>65</sup> Tim Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 58.

<sup>66</sup> Hearts think and reason (Prov 23:7; Mark 2:8). Hearts feel and emote (Lev 19:7; Ps 4:7; Ps 13:2). Hearts act (Eccl 10:2).

Creator.”<sup>67</sup> In its biblical usage, the heart refers to “human life in all its totality”<sup>68</sup>—not the American, western way of thinking it as the emotional center.

The centrality of the soul, or heart, does not mean there is no other formative influence. The heart is determinative. However, a body, family, and society influence what someone values, believes, and desires. In the words of Carl Henry, “No evangelicalism which undermines man’s totality ignores the totality of man’s condition dares respond in the name of Christianity.”<sup>69</sup> In the same vein, no education that ignores man’s totality dares call itself a Christian education. Figure 2 accounts for the centrality of the heart, while not neglecting other formative powers.<sup>70</sup>

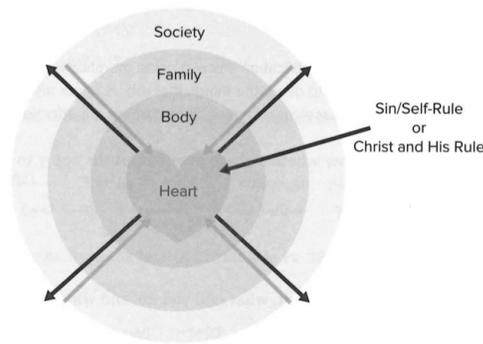


Figure 2. The active heart

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<sup>67</sup> See Jeremy Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life: Connecting Christ to Human Experience* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2016). Cf. Deut 6:5; Josh 22:5; 1 Sam 13:14; 1 Sam 16:7; 1 Chron 28:9; Ps 14:1; Prov 4:23; Prov 27:19; Jer 24:7; Matt 5:8; Matt 6:21.

<sup>68</sup> Eichrodt, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, 2:624.

<sup>69</sup> Carl Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 2003), 83.

<sup>70</sup> John Henderson, *Equipped to Counsel: A Training Program in Biblical Counseling, Leader Notebook* (Mustang, OK: Association of Biblical Counselors, 2008).

**Bodies.** The first call of the “dominion” mandate of Genesis 1 is one’s own body.<sup>71</sup> Things like diet, exercise, and sleep have formative influences on how someone thinks, responds, and chooses. Bill Smith writes, “The first plot of ground for which God has given us stewardship is his little garden that is our body. It is His body and caring or it properly is part of our dominion mandate.”<sup>72</sup> The body God has given each person is not an evil container of a pure soul. Bodies matter. Humans do not exist as ethereal souls. Hearts are primary though not self-existent. A person exists in a place that they can touch, feel, and experience in a body. Genetic makeup or skin pigment can alter how a person processes reality. This is one reason why diversity is important in education. By another’s embodied existence, they provide alternative perspectives, especially those of minority cultures and colors.

Embodiment emphasizes that people see from somewhere. In a nowhere culture like the present, it is important for Christian educators to draw out the embedded nature and “somewhere-ness” of a student—whether that be a small farming community or an elite prep school. These dynamics matter, because bodies matter, and a knower knows from a location and perspective. The location brings with it biases good and bad—but nevertheless existing.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Willie James Jennings argues that bodies should be more connected to one’s place than skin tone. He points to white imperialism as shifting identity from a sense of place and embodiment to scales of whiteness. In effect, the European world disconnected people from place where there was once an intimate connection. This divide continues today. See Willie James Jennings, *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 40.

<sup>72</sup> Bill Smith, “Cultivating the Body,” *Theopolis Institute*, November 25, 2015, accessed December 26, 2017, <https://theopolisinstitute.com/cultivating-the-body/>.

<sup>73</sup> Most writing by Wendell Berry elucidates the embodied nature of seeing from somewhere. Jack Baker and Jeffrey Bilbro recently came out with a work that summarizes the thought of Wendell Berry and the implications for higher education in *Wendell Berry and Higher Education: Cultivating Virtues of Place* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2017).

**Society.** Family is the most basic institution in a society. A family’s influence on one’s identity, story, and purpose is self-evident in various ways. Everything as basic as how to spend money and on what to more complex issues like one’s religion are often identifiable through familial values.

If influential formation happens on the familial level, then it also happens on the societal level.<sup>74</sup> Societies are more than linguistic systems. Craig Dykstra explains, “They are patterned processes of social interaction. They act on individuals, and they call forth action from them. . . . They influence what persons pay attention to, what they notice when they do, and what they make of what they see.”<sup>75</sup> Families guide in this direction, but families are formed within cultures. America was formed on the presupposition that the society will form citizens in a direction that leads to liberty. The republic aimed to form or reform the moral character of citizens and to strengthen their attachment to the common good of the whole. The structure of American society and public life geared itself to form virtuous citizens.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, colleges and universities were founded to assist in this objective.

A society shapes how one imagines the metanarrative in which he or she finds themselves. This story helps a person make sense of life. Alasdair MacIntyre writes, “The story of my life is always embedded in the story of those communities from which I derive my identity. . . . What I am, therefore, is what I inherit, a specific past that is present to

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<sup>74</sup> Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman define society’s influence as the “primary socialization of the home world.” See Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Anchor Books, 1966).

<sup>75</sup> Craig Dykstra, *Growing in the Life of Faith: Education and Christian Practices* (Louisville: Geneva, 1999), 133-34.

<sup>76</sup> On this dynamic, see Michael Sandel, *Democracy’s Discontent: America in Search of a Public Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), especially the chapter entitled “Economics and Virtue in the Early Republic.”

some degree in my present.”<sup>77</sup> The metanarrative grounds the “why” of moral living. Culture provides the mechanisms of accountability for those who live within them.

David Brooks calls this societal dimension of formation a “moral ecology.” He defines it as

a set of norms, assumptions, beliefs, and habits of behavior and an institutionalized set of moral demands that emerge organically. Our moral ecology encourages us to be a certain sort of person. . . . The moral ecology of a given moment is never unanimous; there are always rebels, critics, and outsiders. But each moral climate is a collective response to the problems of the moment and it shapes the people who live in it.<sup>78</sup>

A society has a strong pull on members of culture to influence what they find good, true, and beautiful. Colleges have sub-societies of their own. The student on campus is found within a certain moral ecology, so university teachers and staff need to consider what kind of moral ecology to which the student is invited.

**Imagination and plausibility.** The societal formation has a direct impact on how one imagines the world. Richard Sibbes was an early Puritan who defined *imagination*.<sup>79</sup> He wrote that imagination was “a power of the soul” that is “bordering between our senses and our understanding.” The office of imagination “is to minister matter to our understanding to work upon.”<sup>80</sup> Imagination is the disposition with which one approaches the world.<sup>81</sup> It provides an interpretive framework of reality. In many

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<sup>77</sup> MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 221.

<sup>78</sup> David Brooks, *The Road to Character* (New York: Random House, 2016), 261.

<sup>79</sup> Tim Keller writes on imagination in “Puritan Resources for Biblical Counseling,” *The Journal of Pastoral Practice* 9, no. 3 (1988): 11-44. The Puritans offer a lot of resources on the impact of imagination. For the late Puritan Jonathan Edwards, *what* one knows depends on *how* one knows. This sense of imagination (the “how” of knowing) was central to his epistemology. For a discussion of this topic, see Harold Simonson, *Jonathan Edwards: Theologian of the Heart* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1974), 69-82.

<sup>80</sup> Richard Sibbes, “The Soul’s Conflict with Itself, and Victory over Itself by Faith,” in *Works of Richard Sibbes*, ed. Alexander Balloch Grosart (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2001), 1:178-80.

<sup>81</sup> For more on the social formation of imagination, see Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 23-30.

ways, imagination frames the metanarrative. Perception is not a passive process by which someone neutrally sees the world. Experience, family, and society train a person to see a certain way.

One's imagination is affected by the cultural norms and habits of a place.<sup>82</sup> A child growing up in poverty will function from a different set of assumptions about the world than someone born into wealth. Pierre explains, "These different assumptions are given, not voluntarily constructed."<sup>83</sup> In other words, assumptions are unconscious.

Imagination establishes what sociologists call "plausibility structures." Peter Leithart defines plausibility structures as "social arrangements that provide support beliefs in a context of moral and epistemological relativity . . . 'plausibility structure' highlights the fact that our beliefs about the world take shape and are sustained within certain social and cultural contexts."<sup>84</sup> Society is a formative influence on how a person approaches and feels their way into the world. However, a biblical worldview includes an enchanted existence. At any moment, the descent of God redefines natural plausibility structures regardless of how habits may have formed the imagination. In the Christian worldview, grace is the descent of God to man, not the ascent of man to God. The gospel captures the imagination.<sup>85</sup> It provides a picture of something better, a greater end, existence, and purpose, and then invites listeners into habits that lead to life and joy. Plausibility structures and societal or family influences can become naught in a moment.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> In commenting on the work of Wendell Berry, Baker and Bilbro write, "Well-stocked memories enables us to not merely access information but to embody wisdom and allow it to form our lives." Baker and Bilbro, *Wendell Berry and Higher Education*, 100,

<sup>83</sup> Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart*, 90.

<sup>84</sup> Peter Leithart, "Hope Beyond Frustration," *Comment Magazine*, March 13, 2014, accessed July 24, 2018 <https://www.cardus.ca/comment/article/4169/hope-beyond-frustration/>.

<sup>85</sup> By *imagination*, I do not mean fictional. So much of Jesus' presence resulted in amazement by the disciples and crowds.

<sup>86</sup> For classroom settings and the language used about learning affecting imagination, see the masterful book edited by David Smith and Susan Felch, *Christian Teaching and Imagination* (Grand Rapids:

## Conclusion

With all these formative influences recognized and affirmed, as Pierre writes, “The dynamic heart is always a captive, response-able, and therefore responsible.”<sup>87</sup> External issues hold powerful enticement but not dictatorship. Scripture constantly points to the heart as the morally responsible agent. One cannot place blame on the body, the family, or society which “made” them a certain way. These institutions can certainly hold sway over a person and guide their intuitions in a certain direction, but they do not bind someone to a definitive path. The heart has individual responsibility. David Brooks is most helpful on this point:

We can choose the narrative we tell about our lives. We’re born into cultures, nations, and languages that we didn’t choose. We’re born with certain brain chemicals and genetic predispositions that we can’t control. We’re sometimes thrust into social conditions that we detest. But among all the things we don’t control, we do have some control over our stories. We do have a conscious say in selecting the narrative we will use to organize perceptions.<sup>88</sup>

Reflection allows a person to re-embodiment the ordinary. It allows a pause, to recognize the story one finds himself in and to change. It can also increase passion for the habits in which one regularly participates.<sup>89</sup>

What does all this mean for the university? As previously stated, an educator cannot rightly discuss the purpose of education without a prior understanding of human personhood and identity. What influences student formation is just as important as the cognitive content presented in the classroom. Education is about the whole person—not

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William B. Eerdmans, 2016). In it, a collection of writers reflect on classroom language and practices focused on pilgrimage, gardening, and building to reimagine the task of education.

<sup>87</sup> Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart*, 90.

<sup>88</sup> David Brooks, *The Social Animal: The Hidden Sources of Love, Character, and Achievement* (New York: Random House, 2011), 291.

<sup>89</sup> One popular example of this reflection is Tish Harrison Warren, *Liturgy of the Ordinary: Sacred Practices in Everyday Life* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2016). Warren causes the reader to reflect on the habits of a day to see how God forms and meets a person in the ordinary. One can go through the habits and can form without conscious reflection, but pausing to consciously reflect, one can re-embodiment what it means to be human, what the good life is, and how one’s habits affect life.

merely mental formation or heart influence. So often, Christianity, and perhaps especially Christian education, reduces itself to learning a different doctrine or better belief or changing mental assent. Rather, Christianity and Christian education is an invitation to an alternative way of life. Everything from the habits of student life activities to classroom practices powerfully influence students.

### **Research Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study was to identify and assess the teleological priorities articulated and practiced by Christian liberal arts colleges as represented in the Christian College Consortium with regard to student formation. A teleological priority can be defined based on a view of the human person and the goal of human flourishing—*homo cogito* (thinking) and the good life of examination, *homo economicus* (practical/material) and the good life of production, *homo motus* (feelings) and the good life of comfort, *homo liturgicus* (habits) and the good life of kingdom living, and *homo amator* (soul/heart) and the good life of loving God and neighbor. These categories are not mutually exclusive, but they represent various priorities of colleges and universities.

### **Research Questions**

1. What categories emerge from the literature as defining a comprehensive spectrum of teleological aims in Christian liberal arts colleges?
2. How may current Christian liberal arts colleges be identified according to the emergent teleological typologies?
  - a. To what extent do the curriculum and publications at Christian liberal arts colleges reflect and/or emphasize one or more distinct teleological priorities with respect to student development and formation?
  - b. How can these institutional alignments be allocated within the developed typology?
3. How do institutional representatives articulate various teleological priorities of student formation?

## Definitions

*Homo cogito.* The nature of man is thinking and formative power of lies in rational, autonomous cognition. Thinking is what matters.<sup>90</sup>

*Homo economicus.* The nature of man is material and formative power lies in exploiting pragmatic ends. Doing and application is what matters.<sup>91</sup>

*Homo motus.* The nature of man is feeling, and formative power lies in expressive individualism. Feelings are what matter.<sup>92</sup>

*Homo liturgicus.* The nature of man is embodied and practiced, and formative power lies in reframing regular habits. Practices are what matter.<sup>93</sup>

*Homo amator.* The nature of man is lover, and formative power lies in directing love toward the proper ends and in proper order through ways both conscious and unconscious. Charity is what matters.<sup>94</sup>

*Christian higher education.* *Christian higher education* is (1) a collective body of institutions that respectively exist and proceed on the basis of a Christian confessional

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<sup>90</sup> This philosophy follows the thinking of Rene Descartes and his famous “cogito, ergo sum.” See Rene Descartes, *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. Donald Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1999).

<sup>91</sup> *Homo economicus* is attributed to John Stuart Mill and his political economy, which argues that man is most fundamentally selfish and acts to what will bring the greatest reward for the least cost. For an in depth study on the concept and etymology, see Joseph Persky, “The Ethology of *Homo Economicus*,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 9, no. 2 (1995): 221-31. The philosophy also shares a strong correlation with the utilitarian individualism described by Robert Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley: University of California, 1985).

<sup>92</sup> Based on the Latin word choice, *motus* means “feeling.” Based on the most recent age of university culture of protection, humans are argued to be essentially emotional creatures. For the sake of this study, this teleological priorities follow the example of expressive individualism developed in Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart*. Also closely related to this view is the philosophy of existentialism. See George Knight, *Philosophy and Education: An Introduction in Christian Perspective* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1980), 75-87.

<sup>93</sup> See Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 40.

<sup>94</sup> For the sake of this study and with its basis in the philosophical anthropology of Augustine, this view of personhood and flourishing is rooted in love. In Latin, *amator* means “love.” See Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of Saint Augustine*, trans. L.E. M. Lynch (London: Lowe and Brydone Printers, 1960). Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 46-47, also provides a foundation for this type of person.

identity, (2) for the purpose of promoting and facilitating student learning and formation according to a Christian worldview framework, (3) by the means and culture of one or more prescriptive postsecondary degree-based curricula.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> John David Trentham provides this definition in a forthcoming article: “Christian Higher Education in Focus,” *Journal of Christianity and Higher Education* 1, no.1.

CHAPTER 2  
PRECEDENT LITERATURE

The university is not only, and maybe not even primarily about knowledge. It is . . . after our imagination, our heart, our desire. It wants to make us into certain kinds of people who desire a certain telos, who are primed to pursue a vision of the good life.”  
James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 169

In the children’s movie *The Little Prince*, an unnamed Little Girl has a controlling mother who plans her calendar down to the millisecond. The mother desires the best for her Little Girl: full “success” in the work force. Of course, this is achieved by efficiency, skill, and hard-work—a true self-made woman. This all seems to be going swimmingly until a propeller flies through the side of the Little Girl’s house. The culprit is an odd, eccentric, grandfatherly neighbor. It turns out that this neighbor was an aviator and lived a life of adventure. They develop a friendship that sets the Little Girl on a trajectory to re-imagine the world, to sense the wonder of life, and to value human connection over academic or professional achievement.

The movie is an adaption of a novel by Antoine de Saint-Exupery. It is a magnificent portrayal of the secular age.<sup>1</sup> The progressive adult world aspires to repress the ancient, child-like world of wonder and enchantment. The secular story conveys a competing story of success at all costs with no time for leisure or play. Flourishing can be attained in this world. It must be. There is no higher power or reality other than empirical evidence. Optimism masks despair. The modern ethos effectively disenchant the world. What is important, as the movie depicts, is to “be essential.” Again, *The Little Prince*, provides a vivid image: an ambitious businessman owns all the stars to uses them for

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<sup>1</sup> In the term *secular* I adopt Charles Taylor’s definition: the temporal realm of the earthly. Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Boston: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 3-4.

energy.<sup>2</sup> The rationale? He thought of it first. The stars have no purpose or beauty or wonder or importance; they are only to be used. This is what Charles Taylor labeled “immanentization.”<sup>3</sup>

This research proposes that the Christian university or college should function like the grandfatherly neighbor and not like the ambitious business man. In a world and a college setting that functions within “the immanent frame,” Christian institutions ought to point toward transcendence and enchantment. They should signal a bigger, greater story that makes sense of beauty, wonder, and the unseen. Perhaps “mastery” should not be the university’s highest goal. As the fox says to the Little Prince during the film: “Here is my secret. It is very simple: It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.” The task for Christian institutions are these essential aspects.

This chapter proposes an original synthesis of teleological aims based on the historical trends and trajectories. The bulk of this chapter provides a philosophical history on the purpose of college education and the subsequent views of human personhood: the age of faith, the age of reason, the age of industrialization, the age of feeling, and a Christian corrective emphasizing liturgy. Each age emphasizes a particular view of personhood and a particular view of flourishing. The chapter concludes with an argument for an Augustinian anthropology and purpose. Opposed to the previous models of personhood and flourishing, Augustine and his successors posit that human beings exist fundamentally as lovers with the heart or soul as central to biblical anthropology and

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<sup>2</sup> Augustine’s distinction between the curious soul and the studious soul may provide a helpful framework. In Augustinian thought, the studious soul falls in love with a subject, because knowing some of the subject, wonder leads a person to know more—like the old man and little girl. In contrast, the curious soul, like the businessman, hates the unknown because he cannot control it. Such a person does not want to participate in knowing; they want to control and manipulate what they know. See Paul Griffith, *Intellectual Appetite: A Theological Grammar* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 19.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Taylor uses the term *immanentization* in *A Secular Age*. defines *immanentization* as “the process whereby meaning, significance, and ‘fullness’ are sought within an enclosed, self-sufficient, naturalistic universe without any reference to transcendence. A kind of ‘enclosure.’” James K. A. Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2015), 141.

epistemology, and the flourishing life is the double-love of God and neighbor in God. This is the understanding of what a soul does, what a soul is, and for what the soul is made.

### **Historical and Philosophical Development**

To understand the place of the Christian college today, it is imperative to understand the historical development of colleges in general and Christian colleges in particular. As discussed in chapter 1, humanity does not exist in a vacuum. Tradition matters. Robert Bellah contends, “Even in the debate about future, our cultural tradition, in its several strands, is still very much present, and our conversation would probably be more to the point if we were aware of that fact.”<sup>4</sup> In other words, to understand the present and plan for the future, one must understand the past. This section explores the formative influences that living traditions have on today’s college campuses. In other words, the study investigates how educators have answered the questions of nature of man, features of the good life, and how students arrive there.

The following section provides a short history of American higher education. It is a narrative of American culture’s influence on the college campus and the shaping ideas emerging from the college campus that affects culture. As with all of history, multiple influential philosophies overlap, carry over, and re-emerge in each succeeding period. What follows does not aim to be a comprehensive history; rather, it draws attention to a summary of major influential ideas and a few people that came to define each time period with a corresponding view of human personhood. It is a painting of history with broad strokes, as the saying goes.

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<sup>4</sup> Robert N. Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 27. On the importance of tradition, MacIntyre adds, “A living tradition then is an historically extended, socially embodied argument, and an argument precisely in part about the goods which constitute that tradition. See Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame, IN: U of Notre Dame, 1984), 207.

Distinguished professor Robert George of Princeton, contends for three “ages” of history: the age of faith, the age of reason, and the age of feeling.<sup>5</sup> All of these ages formed culture, and the culture forms the university, and the university forms culture. There is no straight line. At the risk of oversimplifying huge swaths of complex human history, I find these distinctions helpful with some modification. This thesis adds the “age of industrialization” between the age of reason and the age of feeling to account for the influence of the Industrial Revolution.<sup>6</sup> The age of faith can be constituted as the medieval time period; the age of reason as the Enlightenment time period; the age of industrialization as the Industrial Revolution, and the age of feeling as the post-modern time period.<sup>7</sup> The section closes by investigating one recent Christian corrective that focuses on the formative power of habit and practices.

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<sup>5</sup> Robert George, “The Examined Life” (lecture at American Institute, Washington, DC, November 30, 2016), accessed December 2, 2016, <http://www.aei.org/events/the-examined-life-robert-george-and-cornel-west-on-the-purpose-of-liberal-arts-education/>.

<sup>6</sup> This closely resembles David Smith’s recap on the past hundred years of language education: First, the last hundred years of scholarly inquiry into language learning have offered us a string of reductive ways of seeing learners. We find in the early part of the century visions of learners as essentially logic circuits exercising their rational capacities on grammatical puzzles [*Age of Reason*]. A little later, learners are complex biological machines responding with programmable behaviors to stimuli from the environment [*Age of Industrialization*]. The mind-body dichotomy gives rise to rebellions in the name of the learner as autonomous center of self-esteem whose positive feelings are the key to authentic learning [*Age of Feeling*]. More recently we have added the learner as a social agent, who needs to negotiate meanings and services in a predictable range of social and cultural settings, and the learner as a cluster of identity traces—gender, race, social class—that together take shape as a site of struggle within the circulation of power. Each of these shifts has taught us things, and certainly none are irrelevant—our statistics student in the story with which I started does indeed need rational abilities, effective habits and motor skills, emotional stability, and some social skills in order to succeed, and he has clearly been deeply affected by an abuse of power. I suggest, however, that even taken together they do not provide what from a Christian perspective might amount to an adequate account of what happened, or of what a person is. (David Smith, “On Viewing Learners as Spiritual Beings: Implications for Language Educators,” *CELEA News* 1, no. 1 [February 2009]: 6-7) I agree with Smith: each age can teach students certain aspects of personhood, but they are not sufficient accounts of human personhood.

<sup>7</sup> There is a temptation to add the “Technological Age” to account for the emphasis of technology, automation, and the increasing push of online education. However, because it is so new and for the sake of brevity, I will resist.

Each stage represents a corresponding view of personhood; that is, what essential ingredient defines humanity and how a person learns?<sup>8</sup> This section follows the premise of James K. A. Smith, as mentioned in chapter 1, who asserts that “behind every pedagogy is a philosophical anthropology, a model or picture of the human person.”<sup>9</sup> In the age of faith, there was a comprehensive view of the soul created by God and changed by faith in God; in the age of reason, a person is *homo cogito*—a thinking-thing; in the age of industrialization, a person is *homo economicus*—a pragmatic-thing; in the age of feeling, a person is *homo motus*—an emotional-thing; and in the recent Christian contribution, a person is *homo liturgicus*—a liturgical animal. This chapter values the contributions of past time periods but ultimately argues that humanity is *homo amator*—souls who love.

### **Age of Faith: Souls in Formation**

Charles Taylor provides three foundations to what he calls the medieval imaginary. Drawing from the previous section on society’s influence found in chapter 1, Taylor is describing a culture’s plausibility structure. He includes three features: the natural world functioned semiotically, that is, as a sign that pointed beyond itself; earthly kingdoms were pictures and had grounding only within an understanding of a heavenly kingdom; and people lived in an “enchanted” world where the world was open to the divine.<sup>10</sup> Those with religious, enchanted worldviews founded the institutions of higher education in America.

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<sup>8</sup> The primary role of personhood builds on the observation from Charles Taylor: “Our identity is what allows us to define what is important to us and what is not.” Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 30.

<sup>9</sup> James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 40.

<sup>10</sup> Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 25.

Most every early American college was founded by religious communities. These communities provided the “long, deep, rich, historical tradition attentive to ultimacy,” and therefore had “the capacity to provide denser resources required for the formation of character and vision.”<sup>11</sup> They held a largely Christian vision of personhood, character, and education. William Rigenberger provides an overview of the religious founding of early American colleges:

At Harvard the original goal of higher learning was “to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life (John 17.3), and therefore to lay Christ in the bottom as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and learning.” Yale in early 1700’s stated as its primary goal that “every student shall consider the main end of his study to wit to know God in Jesus Christ and answerably to lead a Godly, sober life.” Similarly, President Samuel Johnson of Columba, in a 1754 advertisement, declared that the primary purpose of his college was “to teach and engage the children to know God in Jesus Christ and to love and serve him in all sobriety, godliness, righteousness of life with a perfect heart and willing mind; and to train them up in all virtuous habits and useful knowledge.”<sup>12</sup>

As should be clear, these institutions exercised faith as fundamental to their founding and purpose, and most every early college had ecclesial ties.

Central to this vision and history is that humans are souls created by God and given meaning and purpose. Moreover, God has gifted this special creation of mankind with rational ability to comprehend his revelation. God was the unifying principle that made education coherent. Knowledge could be known through nature and special revelation because God revealed himself to humanity. One could call this *objectivism by faith*. In the medieval period, central to formulating an educational philosophy was the regular battle to integrate theology and natural philosophy.

During the age of faith, two foundational educational practitioners can serve as bookmarks for this time: Hugh of St. Victor and John Henry Newman.<sup>13</sup> In *Restoring the*

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<sup>11</sup> Craig Dykstra, *Growing in the Life of Faith: Education and Christian Practices* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 133.

<sup>12</sup> William Rigenberger, *The Christian College: A History of Protestant Higher Education in America* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 38.

<sup>13</sup> Of course, this is not to say there are no other influential figures; this section covers pre-

*Soul of the University*, Perry Glanzer, Nathan Alleman, and Todd Ream provide the image of a building or castle in discussing education during this time. Whereas they argue that Christ ought to be the foundation of the castle, Hugh of St. Victor places theology in one room in the castle (though elevated), while Newman places theology as the roof of the castle.

First, Hugh of St. Victor served the school at St. Victor from 1120 to 1141. He saw the nature of education as a formative task. Drawing on the biblical tradition preceding him, the goal of education was to reconnect with the image of God that has been marred by the fall. He writes,

This, then is what the arts are concerned with, this is what they intend, namely, to restore within us the divine likeness, a likeness which to us is a form but to God is his nature. The more we are conformed to the divine nature, the more do we possess Wisdom, for then there begins to shine forth in us what has forever existed in the divine Idea or Pattern, coming and going in us but standing changeless in God.<sup>14</sup>

Of note in Hugh's writing is his consistency with the Platonic philosophy of Ideal Forms—only a Christian version with God as the Perfect Form in whose image students are to conform. Christ exemplifies the divine pattern and the divine image to which the soul must be restored. Hugh provides a unity of purpose, meaning, and structure to define his philosophy. He is not content to merely pass on knowledge or skills, but to pursue wisdom—and wisdom is found in the eternal Godhead. Through “the contemplation of truth and the practice of virtue,” humanity can be restored to its divine image. For Hugh of St. Victor, theology held a high status as separate discipline, but he divorced it from other subjects. Glanzer, Alleman, and Ream conclude, “Hugh's organization of the curriculum created an easier road to compartmentalization.”<sup>15</sup> This divide from other

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Reformation to post-Reformation. Books could be written for singular years during this time period. But by laying out an earlier thinker and a later thinker, I hope to lay out a coherent (though limited) vision of education in the age of faith.

<sup>14</sup> Hugh of St. Victor, *The Didascalion of Hugh of Saint Victor: A Medieval Guide to the Arts*, trans. Jerome Taylor (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 61.

<sup>15</sup> Perry Glanzer, Nathan Alleman, and Todd Ream, *Restoring the Soul of the University*:

subjects bears consequences as history progresses and as confidence in human reason grows.

The other character is John Henry Newman, who writes much later but who is oriented around an ancient imaginary. *The Idea of a University*, which is Newman's most well-known and lasting contribution to Christian higher education, was first published in 1852. His work is a response to the following "age of reason" with a robust defense of liberal education.<sup>16</sup> Thus, there is some overlap in periods with Newman's work being a reformation work of liberal education in a time of a specialized, cognitive emphasis. For Newman, liberal education entailed knowledge as an end in itself, because knowledge is knit together by God.<sup>17</sup> He argues that education is the

only enlargement of mind which is the power of viewing many things at once as a whole, of referring them severally to their true place in the universal system, or understanding their perspective values, and determining their mutual dependence. Thus is that form of Universal Knowledge set up in the individual intellect, and constitutes its perfection.<sup>18</sup>

Divorcing the study of theology from an institution is denouncing that which makes an education sufficiently whole. In his own words, it is to "impair the completeness and to

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*Unifying Christian Higher Education in a Fragmented Age* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2017), 3.

<sup>16</sup> John Henry Newman defines liberal education as "a habit of mind" that "is formed which lasts through life, of which the attributes are, freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation, and wisdom; or in what a former Discourse I have ventured to call a philosophical habit. . . . This is the main purpose of a University in its treatment to its students." John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 58.

<sup>17</sup> Newman takes a rather cognitive framework to understanding knowledge. He defines truth as "facts and their relations, which . . . predicates in logic. Knowledge is the apprehension of these facts." Newman, *The Idea of a University*, 33.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 25. Here, Newman falls prey to contemporaries who emphasize the power of the intellect. He will say the end of education is "the cultivation of the intellect" and as the universities' mission, "it contemplates neither moral impression nor mechanical production; it professes to exercise the mind neither in art nor in duty; its function is intellectual culture; here it may leave its scholars, and it has done its work when it has done as much as this. It educates the intellect to reason well in all matters, to reach out towards truth, and to grasp it." *Ibid.*, 69. Newman borders on the age of reason, but he still sees the necessary function of theology in the university, which is why I include him in the age of faith.

invalidate the truthworthiness of all that is actually taught in them.”<sup>19</sup> On the one hand, theology did not have to be taught in every subject. On the other hand, theology is the element that holds all other subjects together. Stanley Hauerwas concludes, “Newman helps us see that our theological task is to help various disciplines of the university to explore their limits, possibilities, and connections to other subjects.”<sup>20</sup> He held a generous view of knowledge from various sources. He criticized the sort of education that would shelter students from secular learning under the guise of corruption. These masters of human thought, after all, are able to educate students, no matter how corrupt. Students were to be thrust into the world of learning, because that is their platform after graduation. Essentially, a Christian university should prepare people for life in the world.<sup>21</sup>

In Newman, one sees theology elevated to the pinnacle of the curriculum to be taken during senior year. It was the capstone course. Before one can attain the wisdom of theology, one must be trained to think in natural philosophy and general revelation. It was a time where the unity and purpose of the university could be assumed; however, as the secular age dawned, these assumptions waned. As aforementioned, theology was seen as the upper room or roof of education. However, when the upper room is removed, it does not remain vacant; rather, some subject will fill it. In the next section, natural revelation comes to be seen as sufficient, and theology is relegated to a different sphere of knowledge.

**Critique.** As wonderful as both Hugh of St. Victor and Newman were, they are still susceptible to critique. Besides the shortcomings already mentioned, it is important to note that whatever someone admires about medieval Christendom, it is important to

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<sup>19</sup> Newman, *The Idea of a University*, 52.

<sup>20</sup> Stanley Hauerwas, *The State of the University: Academic Knowledges and the Knowledge of God* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), 29.

<sup>21</sup> See Newman, *The Idea of a University*, 119.

remember that, as Lumber Zuidervaart states, “Medieval wonder at God’s mysteries” occurred in “a world where illiteracy, poverty, disease, and human servitude ran rampant.”<sup>22</sup> In Newman’s words, education was limited to “gentlemen” to the exclusion of much of society, including women and minorities. Moreover, heretics were burned at the stake, superstition ran rampant, and many populations experienced oppression. Modernization did great good to diagnose and treat disease, expand transportation, and advance technology.

Furthermore, Newman’s idea of a university encouraged teaching at the expense of new knowledge, according to Hauerwas.<sup>23</sup> As one critic of Newman observes, “Although modern subjectivism seems to move us away from trust and reverence toward which sustains and renews all creation, nevertheless it also powerfully awakens us to the creative potential that God has given to even the most ordinary of human beings.”<sup>24</sup> Electricity, farming efficiencies, and airplane travel all came with the modernization of society. God does call his followers to faithfully pass on and transmit the faith; but his call is also to extend his kingdom reign “as the waters cover the sea” (Hab 2:14). Innovation and creativity were sparked in modern advancement. All was not bliss in the medieval period.

As time went on, the Christian college sought to “regain” theology from secular study. To return to the image of a castle, Abraham Kuyper proves most poignant:

If we consoled ourselves with the thought that we may without danger leave secular science in the hands of our opponents if we only succeed at saving theology, our wills be the tactics of the ostrich. To confine yourself to the saving of your upper room when the rest of the house is on fire is foolish indeed.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Lumber Zuidervaart, *Religion, Truth, and Social Transformation: Essays in Reformational Philosophy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2016), 234.

<sup>23</sup> Hauerwas, *The State of the University*, 23n26.

<sup>24</sup> Zuidervaart, *Religion, Truth, and Social Transformation*, 235.

<sup>25</sup> Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism: Six Lectures Delivered at Princeton University* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 184-85.

Faith, in Kuyper's conception, must infuse the whole of academic study.

### **Age of Reason: *Homo Cogito* The Hyper-Examined Life**

In many ways, the story of the university in America is one of segmentation and fragmentation. Instead of a united vision for the nature of man and the ends to which he has been made, there exists a growing specialization in institutions of learning. The Enlightenment and the Darwinian revolution frames the college ethos as existing within a materialistic, naturalistic explanation for all things.<sup>26</sup> Instead of humans as soul, humans are construed as purely mechanical minds.<sup>27</sup> There is no higher power and no spiritual nature inherent in man. Rather, there is brain chemistry, consciousness, and autonomous reason. Whereas faith precedes belief in the earlier stage, in the age of reason, "proof" precedes belief.

Chad Wellmon documents the rising tide of empiricism during the age of reason. He writes, "The story of how science came to be a cultural, institution-dependent form of knowledge is inextricable from the story of the research university."<sup>28</sup> As the research university was birthed in Germany, it will be pertinent to discover what the German university founders thought and practiced. A university student and disciple of Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Friedrich Zimietzki offered a vision of university life in 1810, at the University of Berlin. He beckoned his fellow students to be a "scientific community" and

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<sup>26</sup> For the influence of the Darwinian Revolution and the effects on worldview, see Paul Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 141-211.

<sup>27</sup> See Edwards Reed, *From Soul to Mind: the Emergence of Psychology, from Erasmus Darwin to William James* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998)

<sup>28</sup> Chad Wellmon, *Organizing Enlightenment: Information Overload and the Invention of the Modern Research University* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016), 20. He continues, "For German intellectuals around 1800, the question soon became how to institutionalize science so as to guarantee its sustainability and continuity not only as a realm of material objects but as a coherent set of practices, habits, virtues, and values that defined the scientific community." *Ibid.*, 44.

to be trained in the “habits” and “morals” of science.<sup>29</sup> Whereas the medieval university organized the moral formation of students,<sup>30</sup> the new model of the university sought to form students around science with its own set of intrinsic morals and purposes. Wellmon, tracking the development of Wilhelm von Humboldt, is worth quoting at length:

In his attempts to establish a university in Berlin, however, Humboldt . . . had already offered a resolution to the tension between the production of ever more technical knowledge and the formation of an ethical character. Following his idealist and romantic contemporaries, he extolled the specialized, technical scholar as a model of modern virtue. He combined science [*Wissenschaft*] with formation [*Bildung*]. The disciplinary self-character edited by rigor, attention to detail, devotion to method, a commitment to collaboration, an openness to exchange, a critical disposition, and, above all, a love of science—constituted a new ethical paradigm in an age of excess and proliferation. And perhaps most importantly, the disciplinary self embodied a new form of epistemic authority.<sup>31</sup>

Other German scholars utter the same sentiment. Carl Christian Schmid wrote,

The singular purpose of life at a university was to form the mind to science. Even in academic lectures, the primary purpose is to present the spirit and essence of science in its totality, to enliven the idea of science, and to awaken the scientific sense, a purpose to which the transmission of particular facts, as a mere means and subsidiary ends, must be subordinate.<sup>32</sup>

Thus, science, with its own purpose and meaning, became an objective standard including its own set of ethics and virtues.<sup>33</sup> The new task of the university was to connect science

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<sup>29</sup> Friedrich Zimietzki, quoted in Wellmon, *Organizing Enlightenment*, 20. Johann Echenburg gave a name for the university’s scientific culture: *wissenschaftskunde*. This became the organizing principle of the scientific endeavor. See Wellmon, *Organizing Enlightenment*, 92.

<sup>30</sup> In German, the term for this is *bildung*, translated as “self-formation,” “cultivation,” or “education” (from *bild*—imago and *bilden*—form). One notices the age of faith’s foundation of formation and the image of God. Inherent in its meaning is the moral formation. For Wilhelm von Humboldt, the person most associated with *Bildung*, it was a process always related to the external world. *Bildung* was impossible by oneself. It always related to the world and to the formation by nature, authority structures, and persons external to oneself. Thus, formation was social in nature. For how moral formation became a scientific achievement, see Wellmon, *Organizing Enlightenment*, 216-17.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 244.

<sup>32</sup> Wilhelm von Humboldt, quoted in *ibid.*, 100.

<sup>33</sup> Wellmon elaborates on the influence Humboldt had on the German university: A scientific formation introduced students to science not only as a set of propositions or bibliographic material but as a calling to which they could devote their every waking moment. It endowed their scholarly pursuits with the promises of total transformation and participation in a community that

to the formation of students. The ideal and perfect form was not the world of Plato and certainly not the world of the divine; science emerged as the perfect image that beckoned students.

A main philosophical influencer during the Enlightenment was Rene Descartes. However, as most philosophy is an elaboration and interpretation of that which comes before it, so too was Descartes. “Thinking-thingism,” though elaborated and emphasized by Descartes, began much earlier, particularly in Greco-Roman philosophy.

The tradition of classical education is rooted in Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.<sup>34</sup> In Plato’s understanding, the soul and the body are divided, and the soul is divided into three parts: the lowest part is the appetite, which seeks physical necessity and pleasure; the next higher is the spirited, which includes self, rights, dignity, anger; and the highest is reason. Aristotle also divided the soul into three parts: the vegetative, which humans share with plants, the sensitive, which humans share with animals, and the rational, which makes mankind unique. In *Phaedrus*, Plato uses the analogy of a charioteer to illustrate how the soul functions.<sup>35</sup> The charioteer has two horses, representing appetite and passion. The appetites are the rational appetites that engage when one is offended or slighted for some reason; the passions are irrational appetites focused on bodily comfort or indulgence. The charioteer’s task is to tame the lower passions as he drives toward truth and toward enlightenment. With this understanding, the good life is pictured by the philosopher-king of ancient Greco-Roman culture. The one who reasons his way to truth is worthy of respect and authority. Correspondingly, the life of the mind was the highest form of human life.

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provided meaning, purpose, and clear authority structures. (Wellmon, *Organizing Enlightenment*, 217)

<sup>34</sup> I struggled with where to place these influential philosophers. In one sense, they are the classical, pre-modern philosophers. In another sense, they could be placed in the reasoning category as they emphasize the primary formative ideal as rational. And yet in a third sense, Aristotle taught that formational ideals of habits for moral virtue. Nevertheless, I placed them in this section, though they could be included in every other section as well.

<sup>35</sup> Plato, *The Phaedrus of Plato*, trans. W. H. Thompson (New York: Arno Press, 1973), 246a-254e.

However, Plato still valued the spiritual soul as higher than the body.

Knowledge was possible, because of a higher ideal that could be known in the world of forms which could connect him with the medieval period. Descartes, on the other hand, emphasized the physical mind of the body as supreme. There was nothing beyond one's own thinking, which places Descartes as defining the spirit of a new age. All is material.

Descartes arrived at his conclusions through fear, anxiety, and crisis. He was on a quest to truth—a task with which colleges and universities will resonate. The question he sought to answer was, “How can humans know anything with certainty?” Even a statement such as, “I am writing at my desk” was riddled with doubt, because he could be dreaming or imagining. Perhaps Descartes eternally existed in self-deception. Jamie Smith observes how Descartes attempts to answer his dilemma: “Trying to tackle this angst head-on, Descartes retreats in isolation in a room for several days, simply in order to *think* his way through the problem.”<sup>36</sup> The idea that emerged from Descartes' wrestle with doubt was doubt itself. The only reliable thing is doubt: “An activity of mind, a thought process.”<sup>37</sup> Hence the famous deduction of Descartes, “I think, therefore I am.”<sup>38</sup> As such, the mind is the central element of humankind. Persons are beings who think. Autonomous reason determined certainty. Descartes strict rationalism resulted in secular humanism. The only authority over a student is his mind and the boundless self. What surfaces from Descartes doubt is a hermeneutic of suspicion:<sup>39</sup> the student should doubt

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<sup>36</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 41.

<sup>37</sup> John Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2015), 179.

<sup>38</sup> *Cogito, ergo sum*. Jonathan Leeman comments on the effects of this statement: “With this famous turn to the subject, the individual became the adjudicator of all reality. Yahweh was dismissed. No longer was the individual to rely on the church, the parent, the king, or the teacher to dictate true or false, right and wrong; the individual was to judge reality for himself.” Jonathan Leeman, *The Church and the Surprising Offense of God's Love: Reintroducing the Doctrines of Church Membership and Discipline* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 65.

<sup>39</sup> This phrase comes from Paul Ricoeur's critique of Freud in *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970), 27, but its roots, as seen here, are

all things, have a critical disposition, and only appeal to reason for truth.<sup>40</sup>

Immanuel Kant was another influential thinker who contributed to this time period and the university.<sup>41</sup> In describing Enlightenment, he writes,

Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's own understanding without the guidance of another. This immaturity is self-imposed if its cause lies not in lack of understanding but in indecision and lack of courage to use one's own mind without another's guidance. The motto of enlightenment is therefore: *sapere aude!* Have the courage to use your own understanding!<sup>42</sup>

This charge became a rallying cry for the age of reason: dare to know, or dare to think for yourself. Moreover, it is immaturity that keeps a student from understanding. The only thing to do is progress and grow up and leave behind the authorities of one's past. This principle makes the individual their own scientific, religious, and ethical authority. Autonomous reason materializes as supreme guiding influence on the quest for truth. Kant identifies reason as playing a salvific role by rescuing humanity from ignorance. There are no authorities or external sources, so science became "the activity of self-production and imparting of purpose onto an individual life."<sup>43</sup> Whereas the earlier age established objectivism by faith, one could call this objectivism by reason.<sup>44</sup>

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further back in history.

<sup>40</sup> For more critique on Rene Descartes in particular, see Antonio Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain* (New York: Penguin, 2005).

<sup>41</sup> Kant is another figure in an overlap between time periods. He argues that speculative reason is limited and only complete in practical use, so he could lean toward *homo economicus*. However, with his main principle of thinking for oneself, I chose to place him in the age of reason.

<sup>42</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Kant's Political Writings*, 2nd ed., ed. Hans Reiss (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 54.

<sup>43</sup> Wellmon, *Organizing Enlightenment*, 216.

<sup>44</sup> Parker Palmer describes this objectivism: Objectivism begins by assuming a sharp distinction between the knower and the objects to be known. These objects exist "out there," apart from and independent of the knower. They wait, passive and inert, for us to know them. We, the knowers, are the "active agents." We move into the field of objects equipped with tools that allow us to grasp them. Then we attempt to observe and dissect the objects by means of empirical measurement and logical analysis. At every step we are guided by procedural rules (e.g. The scientific method) guaranteeing that our knowledge will be objective—that is, that it

What resulted was the “elephantitus of reason”<sup>45</sup> of the university, which gave rise to the secular university that sought to educate minds. No longer did higher education view its task to form human persons; after all, the image of God did not exist since the divine could not be rationally proven. There is no God-given gifts or understandings or knowledge or purpose; instead, there is a mind made for autonomous reasoning. Where the medieval system sought “freedom for,” the enlightenment university sought “freedom from.”<sup>46</sup>

During the age of reason, the university moves theology as the capstone course to moral philosophy. Eventually, the capstone course is reduced to general ethics. The realm of knowledge comes to reject theological claims, and morality becomes groundless without a grand narrative to hold understandings of good and bad.<sup>47</sup> In this intellectual environment, ethics emerges as a way to consider and understand right and wrong. There is no longer clear right or wrong, but a general discussion of how those in history or in a business field make moral decisions. Moreover, as Wellmon explains, the “cultivation of scientific insight remained central” and “the purpose of secondary education was to enable the student to learn for himself. Both of these culminated in the university, whose

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will reflect the nature of the objects in question rather than the knower’s whims. In order to assure the objectivity of what we know, we must report what we have discovered and how we discovered it so that others can confirm our findings. Truth, by this view, consists of propositions or reports that conform to the canons of evidence and reason, reports that can be reproduced by other knowers operating by the same rules. (Parker Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known: A Spirituality of Education* [San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983], 27)

<sup>45</sup> This phrase referring to “scientism” is attributed to Irving Kristol by David Brooks in *The Social Animal*, 226.

<sup>46</sup> Perry Glanzer and Todd Ream, *The Idea of a Christian College: A Reexamination for Today’s University* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2013), 112.

<sup>47</sup> Newman, *The Idea of the University*, 24, recognizes this divide in his own time. Religion begins to be relegated to the sphere of feeling or sentiment: “Faith was an acceptance of revealed doctrines, not an act of the intellect, but a feeling, an emotion, an affection, an appetency.” Thus, theology, and religious knowledge, is further forgotten or denied in the university. Religion was a subjective sentiment, taste, or preference; nothing was objective in doctrine, therefore, it had no place in higher education.

purpose was to form a young scientist who could relate to this teacher as colleague.”<sup>48</sup> In conclusion, Wellmon argues, “If classical conceptions of science sought to harmonize the individual with the cosmos, the research university sought to harmonize the individual with science as a distinct social sphere, a community dedicated to science. It sought to form scientists.”<sup>49</sup> In many ways, science became the religion of the day.<sup>50</sup> Through rational autonomy and a hermeneutic of suspicion, scientism became the good life.

Newman rightly predicted that if theology was taken out of the curriculum, a vacancy would not remain; rather, something else would fill its place. In the age of reason, science takes the upper room of higher education, while theology is relegated to the basement or dismissed altogether. Perhaps the University of Virginia provides an adept picture of this development: instead of the chapel as the center of the college campus, founder Thomas Jefferson places the library in this prominent position.

**Critique.** To critique reason seems like a shift to pre-modern, medieval faith. Perhaps more concerning is evangelicals’ anti-intellectualism. For many, evangelicals need more reason—not less.<sup>51</sup> As has been observed and stated, the anti-intellectual critique of

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<sup>48</sup> Wellmon, *Organizing Enlightenment*, 226.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>50</sup> In fact, Jon Roberts and James Turner argue as much when they write, Just as important, in lauding the kind of cool, clear-eyed detachment that science seemed to require, partisans of scientific culture may well have undermined belief in the value of the kind of impassioned commitment that was fundamental to religious faith. Insofar as there has been an institutional locus for the ‘religion of science’ since 1870, that locus has been higher education. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, colleges and universities became identified as institutions imbued with the faith that the only knowledge really worth having is obtainable through rational, “scientific” inquiry. If this now seems obvious to us, it is a measure of how completely higher education and the culture to which it has ministered have been captivated by that faith. (Jon Roberts and James Turner, *The Sacred and the Secular University* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000], 71)

<sup>51</sup> See especially Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1994); J. P. Moreland, *Love Your God with All Your Mind: The Role of Reason in the Life of the Soul* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1997); Harry Blamires, *The Christian Mind: How Should a Christian Think?* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant, 1963); and Os Guinness, *Fit Bodies, Fat Minds: Why Evangelicals Don’t Think and What to Do about It* (Grand Rapids: Hourglass, 1994).

evangelicals is correct; by and large, they have an embarrassingly low concern for the intellectual life.<sup>52</sup> For example, the president of Southern Seminary, Albert Mohler, reports the research of a recent Barna study:

Fewer than half of all adults can name the four gospels. Many Christians cannot identify more than two or three of the disciples. According to data from the Barna Research Group, 60 percent of Americans can't name even five of the Ten Commandments. "No wonder people break the Ten Commandments all the time. They don't know what they are," said George Barna, president of the firm. The bottom line? "Increasingly, America is biblically illiterate."

Multiple surveys reveal the problem in stark terms. According to 82 percent of Americans, "God helps those who help themselves," is a Bible verse. Those identified as born-again Christians did better—by one percent. A majority of adults think the Bible teaches that the most important purpose in life is taking care of one's family.

Some of the statistics are enough to perplex even those aware of the problem. A Barna poll indicated that at least 12 percent of adults believe that Joan of Arc was Noah's wife. Another survey of graduating high school seniors revealed that over 50 percent thought that Sodom and Gomorrah were husband and wife. A considerable number of respondents to one poll indicated that the Sermon on the Mount was preached by Billy Graham. We are in big trouble.<sup>53</sup>

Thus Mohler concludes, "We will not believe more than we know, and we will not live higher than our beliefs."<sup>54</sup> If anything, it seems Christians need a renewal of intellectual activity—not a retreat.

In a more liberal Christianity, the power of positive thinking reigns supreme. Norman Vincent Peale appeals to William James, who wrote, "The greatest discovery of our generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind' As you think, so shall you be."<sup>55</sup> Here, and in the modern church of Joel Osteen, all that

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<sup>52</sup> So Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, 3, opens, "The scandal of the evangelical mind is that there is not much of an evangelical mind."

<sup>53</sup> Albert Mohler, "The Scandal of Biblical Illiteracy: It's Our Problem," *AlbertMohler.com*, October 14, 2005, accessed October 21, 2017, <https://albertmohler.com/2016/01/20/the-scandal-of-biblical-illiteracy-its-our-problem-4/>.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Norman Vincent Peale, *The Power of Positive Thinking* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015), 233.

limits people is their thought life. Change their thoughts; change their lives. Even conservative Christians locate the power of change in the thought life. J. P. Moreland explains, “The mind is the soul’s primary vehicle for making contact with God, and it plays a fundamental role in the process of human maturation and change, including spiritual transformation.”<sup>56</sup> Christianity has both strands of anti-intellectualism as seen in Barna’s statistics, but it also has unreflective acceptance of pure intellectualism.

However, in biblical anthropology and epistemology, more information is not the foundational means of transformation. Change is much more complex and much more holistic. As James K.A. Smith has illustrated, sanctification does not happen by information transfer.<sup>57</sup> Charles Taylor describes Descartes as offering a monological consciousness. Both the body and the other are left out of this kind of thinking.<sup>58</sup> Descartes’ tradition limits and reduces human knowing and education. It seems that the more thoughtful evangelical tradition has been uncritically smitten with these Enlightenment values and tradition. Jonathan Edwards calls attention to what students truly need: “Our people do not so much to have their heads stored as to have their hearts touched.”<sup>59</sup> In other words, what people need is not more information but “the expulsive power of a superior affection.”<sup>60</sup> A new love is the key to change and to growth.

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<sup>56</sup> Moreland, *Love Your God with all Your Mind*, 67.

<sup>57</sup> James K. A. Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2016), 4. Earlier, Kierkegaard connects this type of philosophy with Socrates as he describes “Ignorance is sin.” See Soren Kierkegaard, *Sickness unto Death: A Christian Psychological Exposition of Edification and Awakening by Anti-Climacus*, trans. Alastair Hannay (New York: Penguin Classic, 1989), 87-96.

<sup>58</sup> Charles Taylor, “To Follow a Rule,” in *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives*, ed. Craig Calhoun, Edward LiPuma, and Moishe Postone (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 45-50.

<sup>59</sup> Jonathan Edwards, *Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New England* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2005), 117.

<sup>60</sup> Thomas Chalmers, “The Expulsive Power of a Superior Affection,” in *The Complete Works of Thomas Chalmers* (Philadelphia: Towar, Hogan & Thompson, 1833), 387.

As far back as Augustine, some recognized the inherent pride of scientism. For many, the acquisition of more information results in a more noble status. Rather than pride in more information, Augustine suggests that the student should ask a different set of questions. Instead of delighting and boasting over the unlearned, budding scholars should seek to ask why true things are true or why unchangeable laws are unchangeable. He concludes that the end of education should be to “relate all these things to the praise and love of God, realizing that it is from him that all things have their existence. Such people may seem learned, but are in no way wise.”<sup>61</sup> In this charge, Augustine locates a determinate means to science. Whereas the German research university desired for the end of knowledge to be for knowledge’s sake, Augustine connected knowledge to the love of God.

The same pride can be attributed to a hermeneutic of suspicion. This theory of interpretation separates truth from the source material and from authority. Gerald Bruns comments,

Call this Cartesian hermeneutics, or the allegory of suspicion, in which the text comes under the control of the reader as disengaged rational subject, unresponsive to its own self-certitude. . . . The motive of Cartesian hermeneutics is to preserve alienation as a condition of freedom from the text.<sup>62</sup>

The locus of authority lies within the reader himself. Knowledge is not a gift; it is man’s internal state. The author is no longer a person; rather, the text is a material, abstract subject. The reader is not bound by love of the person and concern for truth but by technical methods and abstraction of meaning. Strict humanism raised a basic question as to the ends of reading, study, and education: should students be concerned primarily with getting the text objectively right, or using it, as Augustine might have put it, for “obtaining

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<sup>61</sup> Augustine, *On Christian Teaching*, trans. R. P. H. Green (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 63.

<sup>62</sup> Gerald Bruns, *Hermeneutics Ancient and Modern* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 149.

what you love.”<sup>63</sup> Education, whether reading or listening, is a social task. The autonomous reasoner is a myth. As much as “thinking for oneself” is promoted, Alan Jacobs points out its impossibility.<sup>64</sup> Thinking is always a response or reaction to someone else’s thought or idea.

Moreover, one of the main tenets of the Enlightenment is the loss of wonder. Everything becomes explainable. Therefore, the task of the university is to discover what is measurable in the most efficient manner. This misappropriation has been devastating the purpose of the university, because most things worth knowing are neither measurable or efficient. This pursuit stifles both humanity and imagination.<sup>65</sup> Blaise Pascal observes, “Reason never wholly overcomes imagination, while the contrary is quite common.”<sup>66</sup> In other words, how one approaches and imagines the world is pre-cognitive and powerfully influences a person before he consciously considers an issue. To quote Pascal again, “The heart has its reasons of which reason knows nothing.”<sup>67</sup> Higher learning in the age of reason limits personhood and its complexity.

A main shortcoming in the scientism of the university is the belief that the university is a mere transmitter of knowledge. However, as Wellmon recognizes, the

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<sup>63</sup> Augustine, *On Christian Teaching*, 26. All knowledge should be oriented around the double-love to God and neighbor. This is not to say that right answer does not matter; indeed, the right answer should fuel one’s love for God. Augustine uses the illustration of a journey: the destination is to love God. If one takes a wrong path, but ends up loving God, then maybe he should not take that path again, but the destination is the desirable one. Far worse to be logically sound and hate one’s brother. As Francis Schaeffer said, “Biblical orthodoxy without compassion is surely the ugliest thing in the world.” Francis A. Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There*, in *The Francis A. Schaeffer Trilogy: The Three Essential Books in One Volume* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1990), 34.

<sup>64</sup> Alan Jacobs, *How to Think: A Survival Guide for a World at Odds* (New York: Currency, 2017), 35ff.

<sup>65</sup> I grew up in a school district and a time that emphasized STEM education. I was trained to think of imagination as something that is elementary and childish, and reason is the supreme value. I still struggle to read fiction, as it is a “waste of time.” If it is not facts then it is immature and childish.

<sup>66</sup> Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, trans. A. J. Krailsheimer (New York: Penguin, 1995), 44.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 423.

university legitimizes and authorizes knowledge.<sup>68</sup> The mind, and the university, is loaded with a dogma of its own that it attempts to pass on faithfully to the next generation. In the age of reason, the dogma was scientism and objectivism. The autonomous self is not as impartial as many may insist.

**Age of Industrialization:  
*Homo Economicus* The  
Prosperous Life**

During the twentieth century, specialization and fragmented knowledge governed academic institutions in the United States. Rooted in the ideal “pure scientist,” the university emphasized science for science’s sake, and resulted in an “increasingly specialization of knowledge shared with the movement toward practicality.”<sup>69</sup> “Disciplinary specialization” became the ideal type and a “shorthand toward fragmented, disciplinary knowledge.”<sup>70</sup> Instead of seeing the curriculum as a whole and coherent system, the curriculum becomes divided into specialized focuses on job skill and training.<sup>71</sup> Laurence Veysey provides an account for the development in the American

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<sup>68</sup> Wellmon, *Organizing Enlightenment*, 12.

<sup>69</sup> Hauerwas, *The State of the University*, 16.

<sup>70</sup> Jon Roberts and James Turner track two universities during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that advocate for this type of specialization to the exclusion of a scholar who possessed a range of knowledge and saw them as integrated. A professor at North Carolina wanted a committee to show that classical art and archeology “ought to be in the hands of a specialist.” Furthermore, a professor at the University of Michigan wanted a graduate student that he should “strive for an independent scholarly grasp of one or two delimited topics; imparting a ‘general education’ was ‘not the proper function of a university professor.” Roberts and Turner, *The Sacred and Secular University*, 88. Pierre Hadot adds to this same theme: Furthermore, the university tends to make the philosophy professor a civil servant whose job, to a large extent, consists in training other civil servants. The goal is not longer, as it was in antiquity, to train people for careers as human beings, but to train them for careers as clerks or professors—that is to say, as specialists, theoreticians, and retainers of specific items of more or less esoteric knowledge. Such knowledge, however, no longer involves the whole of life, as ancient philosophy demanded. (Pierre Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy?*, trans. Michael Chase [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002], 260)

<sup>71</sup> The impact this philosophy has on morality cannot be overstated. Rather than arguing from the whole to parts, as in Aristotle and the pre-modern period, from the age of reason and moving into the

universities between 1865-1910.<sup>72</sup> He observes that after the civil war nearly every change in the university resides “in the direction of concessions to the utilitarian type of demand for reform.”<sup>73</sup> Commenting on this development, Stanley Hauerwas responds, “Students were to be educated for ‘real life,’ which meant they were to be made citizens of a democratic nation by being trained in the university with the skills befitting their vocational ambition.”<sup>74</sup> The academic endeavor shifted from forming souls to training employees to be productive citizens.<sup>75</sup> With the loss of meaning and purpose, what matters most is what works, and particularly, what pays. Instead of forming the “pure scientist,” research universities produced human capital for the modern society.<sup>76</sup> John Dewey is a prime example of an educator who emphasized the naturalistic assumptions in the age of reason and added a pragmatic orientation.

In an age past, the university provided stories, language, and curriculum that emphasized the “eulogy virtues,” as David Brooks refers to them. These are the kind of things people say about someone who dies. However, with the increasing modernization

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age of industry, scholars would argue from parts to the whole. Aristotle aimed at the goal, and from the goal to derive the parts. In this time, academia sought to form the whole from disconnected parts.

<sup>72</sup> John Wilson notices this same phenomenon: “In short, the map of American higher education was redrawn no less dramatically between 1870 and 1930 than was subsequently reconfigured between 1945-1995.” John Wilson, introduction to Roberts and Turner, *The Sacred and The Secular University*, 6. One of the distinguishing marks at the end of the nineteenth century was the creation of academies directed toward training professionals to undertake particular activities.

<sup>73</sup> Laurence Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University, 1865-1910* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 60.

<sup>74</sup> Hauerwas, *The State of the University*, 16.

<sup>75</sup> Marsden concurs, “The bottom line was that the new universities were designed to serve an emerging industrial technological society. The professionalization of the universities was part of the much larger process of differentiation and specialization necessary for industrial and commercial advance.” George Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Non-Belief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 155.

<sup>76</sup> For more on the move from science to labor, see Chad Wellmon, “The Limits of Critique” (lecture at Christ Church College at Oxford, “Virtue and the University,” May 2016), accessed June 10, 2016, <https://chadwellmon.com/2017/06/02/virtue-the-university-and-the-limits-of-critique/>.

of higher education, the university limits itself to the “resumé virtues”: those skills that make a person marketable.<sup>77</sup> Today, students have no resources to value or discuss ultimate meaning or purpose because their whole educational formation is aimed at landing the right job and attaining a lucrative paycheck.<sup>78</sup> A recent study conducted by Perry Glanzer, Jonathan Hill, and Jessica Robinson proves this point. The research group included 229 young emerging adults (18-23) and a majority were either directionless toward their future goals or oriented around individual goals like happiness and material acquisitions.<sup>79</sup> They do not have the language or conceptual imagination to discuss such things.

The main philosophical influencers in the period are rooted in the age of reason,<sup>80</sup> but their conclusions come to fruition in this age of industrialization.<sup>81</sup>

Following the thought of Friedrich Nietzsche:

The education of German youth, however, proceeds from precisely this false and unfruitful conception of culture: its goal, viewed in its essence, is not at all the free

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<sup>77</sup> For the discussion of resumé and eulogy virtues, see David Brooks, *The Road to Character* (New York: Random House Trade, 2016).

<sup>78</sup> See Alexander Astin et al., “The American Freshman: Thirty Year Trends, 1966-1996,” Higher Education Research Institute Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, University of California, Los Angeles. February 1997. In the study, they research college freshmen to discover their values. In 1996, 80 percent said they were strongly motivated to develop a meaningful philosophy. In 1966, fewer than half desired this outcome. In 1966, 42 percent said that becoming rich was an important goal in life. In 1990, that number rose to 74 percent. In other words, once students desired education to provide a meaningful philosophy that provided meaning and purpose and conviction. By 1990, they desired money.

<sup>79</sup> Perry Glanzer, Jonathan Hill, and Jessica Robinson, “Emerging Adult’s Conception of Purpose and the Good Life: A Classification and Comparison,” *Youth & Society* (2015): 1-19.

<sup>80</sup> Among others, these include Immanuel Kant, Johann Fichte, Georg Wilhelm Freidrich Hegel, and Friedrich Schelling. These are among the earliest faculty at the University of Berlin: the foundation of the research university ideal. The research ideal quickly collapses into pragmatism.

<sup>81</sup> This can mainly be observed by the Enlightenment’s value of utility and practice. Thus, Wellmon observes how some valued the “utility message” of the Enlightenment: “Its singular focus on the technical and practical utility of knowledge. The survival of the university depended on the extent to which it could distinguish itself from the broader culture as the unique institution devoted to what Germans called *Wissenschaft*, or science as a practice.” Wellmon, *Organizing Enlightenment*, 5.

cultivated man but the scholar, the man of science, and indeed the most speedily employable man of science.<sup>82</sup>

In his understanding, human beings are made for praxis, action, and earning. Education, therefore, is for a career. Nietzsche argues,

As much knowledge and education as possible—leading to the greatest possible production and demand—leading to the greatest happiness: that’s the formula. Here we have utility as the goal and purpose of education, or more precisely gain: the highest possible income.<sup>83</sup>

Very clearly, he states the nature of man, the goal of education, and the truly happy life.

In Neil Postman’s book on education, he writes on economic utility: “The story tells us that we are first and foremost economic creatures and that our sense of worth and purpose is to be found in our capacity to secure material benefits.”<sup>84</sup> Often times, this metanarrative orients educational philosophy, even in the Christian college. It tells the student exactly what Nietzsche articulated: a person’s main and sole value is their economic utility.

The *telos* of economy leads directly to the essential nature of man, which, according to Karl Marx, is labor.<sup>85</sup> In such sentiment, the individual is connected further and further away from any externals, authorities, and giftedness. Rather, man is what he makes himself. Man operates on economic principle: get the most you can for the least amount. In *Habits of Heart*, Robert Bellah et al. define this attitude as “utilitarian individualism.”<sup>86</sup> Benjamin Franklin exemplified *homo economicus*. He lived the

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<sup>82</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, “On the Uses and Abuse of History for Life,” trans. Ian C. Johnston, UT Liberal Arts PDF. accessed September 8, 2018, <http://la.utexas.edu/users/hcleaver/330T/350kPEENietzscheAbuseTableAll.pdf>, 42.

<sup>83</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Anti-Education: on the Future of Our Educational Institutions*, ed. Paul Rietter and Chad Wellmon (New York: New York Review Books, 2016).

<sup>84</sup> Neil Postman, *The End of Education: Redefining the Value of School* (New York: Knopf), 4.

<sup>85</sup> Marx writes, “The whole of what is called world history is nothing but the creation of man by human labor, and the emergence of nature for man; he therefore has the evident and irrefutable proof of his self-creation, of his own origins.” Karl Marx, *Marx’s Concept of Man: Including ‘Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts’* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 139.

<sup>86</sup> Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 32-33.

American dream: he was born poor; he became successful through hard work; and he offered practical advice for virtues.<sup>87</sup> Not only was self-improvement possible, it could be divorced from the social context.<sup>88</sup> After all, as Franklin would contend, “God helps those who help themselves.” Personal ambition becomes the highest good to be pursued—not growth in character or intellectual development. In the age of industry, the shift is made from the soul (age of faith) to the mind (age of reason) to the self.<sup>89</sup>

With pragmatism and utilitarianism as the way of the university, it is no far jump to the consumerism that currently drives the college experience. Administrators explore what the consumers (students and parents) want.<sup>90</sup> They provide resources that will market the right demographic: from movie theaters to competitive sports to ski slopes. The student is not a soul to be formed but a consumer to be appeased.<sup>91</sup> The nature of the university is “corporate, not cultural.”<sup>92</sup> Therefore, the student, and perhaps more likely

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<sup>87</sup> These virtues are recorded in Ben Franklin, *Poor Richard's Almanac* (Mineola, NY: Dover Thrift, 1999).

<sup>88</sup> Bellah et al. comment on the influence it would have if many Americans did not think this way: “Or perhaps, since we would not conceive of life so much in terms of a race in which all the prizes go to the swiftest, we might begin to make moral sense of the fact that there are real cultural differences among us, that we do not all want the same thing, and that it is not a moral defect to find other things in life of interest besides consuming ambition.” Bellah et al., *Habits of Heart*, 289. Amen to that!

<sup>89</sup> Brooks, *The Road to Character*, 252, Brooks defines the economic self as “a vessel of human capital. It is a series of talents to be cultivated efficiently and prudently. The self is defined by its tasks and accomplishments. The self is about talent, not character.”

<sup>90</sup> Perry Glanzer and Todd Ream argue, “The university is now an integrated industry with service providers and customers.” Perry Glanzer and Todd Ream, *Christianity and Moral Identity in Higher Education* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 71.

<sup>91</sup> For an early critique of this pragmatism and the business structure of the university, see Thorstein Veblen, *The Higher Learning in America: A Memorandum on the Conduct of Our Universities by Business Men* (New York: Sagamore Press, 1957). He compares the business principles that inundated the university with the same authority and control the church used in the age of faith. Everything leaned toward the practical. Thus, he found out that the university can pick its god and choose its authority, but the “upper room” (to use Newman’s terminology) must always be filled.

<sup>92</sup> MacIntyre. *After Virtue*, 222.

the parents, wonder if they are getting enough “bang” for their “buck.” College tuition is the deposit toward a diploma and a paycheck that is owed—not earned.

**Critique.** *Homo economicus* easily turns a college education into the pursuit of the American dream: a mobile, middle class lifestyle and a satisfying career that pays well. The logic of capitalism defines human flourishing and happiness. Alasdair MacIntyre distinguishes between “external goods” and “internal goods.” The modern university often makes the external goods, the resume virtues, as the prime goods to be attained through life. However, as MacIntyre expounds, “As we have seen, cultivation of the virtues may and often does hinder the achievement of those external goods which are the mark of worldly success. The road to Philadelphia and the road to heaven may not coincide after all.”<sup>93</sup> In other words, the internal goods that ought to be primary will sometimes put a person at odds with career advancement or the next bigger paycheck. The virtues—that set of internal goods—make life meaningful. Even through a pragmatic lens, a bad man cannot make a good employee. The university often fosters people who want to do great things, but at the expense of being “great-souled” people.<sup>94</sup>

Relying on the tradition of John Henry Newman,<sup>95</sup> Roger Scruton provides a powerful reexamination of higher education:

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<sup>93</sup> MacIntyre. *After Virtue*, 198.

<sup>94</sup> Wendell Berry levels this same critique of the university:

Education is not primarily an industry, and its proper use is not to serve industries, either by job-training or by industry-subsidized research. Its proper use is to enable citizens to live lives that are economically, politically, socially, and culturally responsible. This cannot be done by gathering or “assessing” what we now call “information”—which is to say facts without context and therefore without priority. A proper education enables young people to put their lives in order, which means knowing what things are more important than other things; it means putting first things first. (Wendell Berry, “Thoughts in the Presence of Fear,” in *Dissent from the Homeland: Essays after September 11*, ed. Stanley Hauerwas and Frank Lentricchia [Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003], 41)

<sup>95</sup> Newman suggests this is no new phenomenon. He critiques this line of thinking in discourse VII in *The Idea of a University*. Quoting Locke, in Newman, *The Idea of a University*, 86, he says of this logic, “What other measure is there of dignity in intellectual labor but usefulness?”

Within college walls the adolescent is granted a vision of the ends of life; and he takes from the university one thing that the world does not provide, which is a conception of intrinsic value. And that is why the university is so important in an age of commerce and industry, when the utilitarian temptation besieges us on every side, and when we are in danger of making every purpose a material one—in other words, as Newman saw it, in danger of allowing the means to swallow the ends.<sup>96</sup>

One of the implications of the utilitarian temptation is that work loses its intrinsic value. With the loss of meaning in work, it becomes a mere means toward the ultimate ends’ advancement and ambition. The only standards of measurement left are income and consumption. However, labor is not solely a means to an end, or rather, labor has higher ends than financial compensation. Ultimately, as seen in the cultural mandate in Genesis 1.28, labor is a means to love God and love neighbor.

The charge some may have against a liberal arts education is its impracticality.<sup>97</sup> Often times, colleges students are asked of their major, “What are you going to do with it?” However, a formative education does not merely educate students to join the workforce with a particular set of life skills; it forms the student to flourish in all of life. Wealth, power, influence, and a good job are good things. Christians should want good people in the “halls of power.”<sup>98</sup> However, as already noted, they are terrible ends and aims in themselves. Moreover, a recent Canadian study, entitled “Post-Schooling Outcomes of University Graduates: A Tax Data Linkage Approach”<sup>99</sup> proves that those with a major in humanities compare just as well as other more “practical” majors after graduation. However, here is the two-edged sword: by appealing to this standard, one implicitly

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<sup>96</sup> Roger Scruton, “The End of the University,” *FirstThings*, April 2015, accessed May 3, 2015, <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2015/04/the-end-of-the-university>.

<sup>97</sup> For two recent arguments for the value of liberal education, see Randall Stross, *A Practical Education: Why Liberal Arts Majors Make Great Employees* (Stanford, CA: Redwood Press, 2017); and George Anders, *You Can Do Anything: The Surprising Power of a “Useless” Liberal Arts Education* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2017).

<sup>98</sup> D. Michael Lindsey, *Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>99</sup> Ross Finnie et al., “Post-Schooling Outcomes of University Graduates: A Tax Data Linkage Approach,” *Education Policy and Research Initiative*, University of Ottawa (February 2015): 4-30.

concedes that economic gain is the proper measure of educational value. One gives into the idea that instead of forming students in an ongoing cultural conversation, the university is prized as “a career factory.”<sup>100</sup> James Engels and Anthony Dangerfield are decisive in *Saving Higher Education in the Age of Money*:

The fastest-expanding and often strongest motivation in American higher education is now money. While other aims and functions certainly persist, they are increasingly eclipsed by this ultimate goal of wealth accumulation. Money, rather than a means, is becoming the chief end of higher education. With growing frequency, the ends are not cultural values or critical thinking, ethical convictions or intellectual skills. When these goals are pursued, it is often not because they offer multiple uses and relevance but because they might be converted to cash.<sup>101</sup>

In other words, the way one defines educational goals and objectives will have lasting and important implications on how he or she evaluates their education.

Lastly, the disciplinary specialization divides purposes into smaller and smaller portions. Rather than provide students with a grand vision of what it means to be human, what it means to flourish, and the purposeful formation of the curriculum, often the goal of education in the age of industry results in training students to pass a test or acquire a skill. If efficiency is the standard, then the teacher will aim at smaller and smaller purposes, because it is easier to manufacture and control.

**What about vocation?** Before moving to the next section, one may wonder how vocation fits into education. In the specialized university, vocation becomes equated with a career or job. In a real sense, colleges should prepare students for a career, but the word *vocation* has a much richer and more robust meaning than *merely* career.<sup>102</sup> A person is

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<sup>100</sup> I borrow this term from R. R Reno, “A Career Factory,” *First Things*, October 2016, 6.

<sup>101</sup> James Engels and Anthony Dangerfield, *Saving Higher Education in the Age of Money* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005), 2.

<sup>102</sup> Jonathan Haidt finds that people approach their work in one of three ways: a job, a career, or a calling. A job is a means to make money and enjoy hobbies or the weekend. A career is a pursuit of promotion and prestige. A calling, on the other hand, finds work intrinsically fulfilling as serving a greater good. See Jonathan Haidt, *The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 221.

called to many vocations. The tradition of *vocare* encompasses this broader vision: a calling from God to multiple spheres and identities.<sup>103</sup>

Christian colleges and universities have recently revitalized their efforts to understand and explore vocation due to the generous grants distributed by The Lily Endowment Inc. Beginning in 1999, the Lily foundation initiated “Programs for Theological Exploration of Vocation.” Drawing on the theological foundations of Christian colleges, the endowment posed three questions to institutions of higher education: how they might foster students’ exploration of the idea of vocation, support preclergy students, and strengthen student mentorship by faculty and staff. More than 400 colleges applied for the \$50,000 planning grant and the subsequent \$2 million implementation grants. The grant was received by 88 schools, and the Lily Foundation has awarded over \$218 million since the program’s inception.<sup>104</sup> The study overwhelmingly supports the idea that colleges who talk about meaning and purpose find great success and interest from students and faculty alike. As one indicator, those who had participated in purpose exploration during college expressed broader satisfaction with life after college than those who did not participate, a statistically significant result that held firm even after controlling for respondents’ gender, race, age, socioeconomic status, and attendance at religious services.<sup>105</sup> Tim Clydesdale concludes, “The takeaway lesson is that purpose exploration produces a pattern of examined living and positive engagement

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<sup>103</sup> Van Til writes,

In any event your college education is meant to prepare you for prime citizenship in the kingdom of God. For four years or so, such preparation is itself a big part of your vocation. Your calling is to prepare for further calling, and to do so in a Christian college community that cares as much about the kind of person you are becoming as what kind of job you will eventually get, and as much about *how* you will do your job as about *which* job you do. (Van Til, *Engaging God’s World*, 115)

<sup>104</sup> The findings of this massive and influential study can be found in Tim Clydesdale, *The Purposeful Graduate: Why Colleges Must Talk to Students about Vocation* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2015).

<sup>105</sup> Tim Clydesdale, *Calling on Purpose: The Conversation Every Campus Must Have with Students* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

with others, thereby increasing the odds that emerging adults will flourish after they graduate from college.”<sup>106</sup> With this statistical data, it would be foolish to disregard exploration of vocation.

The emphasis of the programs who instituted vocation exploration was much broader than the narrow vision of “career” or “job training.” Discovering and developing purpose provides satisfaction in multiple identities, situations, and changes. Glanzer points out the “Great Identities” that a student is called, including as a student; friend, neighbor, enemy; marriage and family; citizenship; race, class, gender; and steward of creation.<sup>107</sup> In these callings, the underlying purpose as a human continues whether or not a job or location or economy or trend changes. David Whitlock advocates that one think about the “why” and to understand the means by which a person fulfills his or her purpose: “Your profession is your platform. Your purpose is the reason why you have a platform.”<sup>108</sup> In other words, vocation is an extrinsic good. It is to be used to serve God but not an enjoyment in and of itself. When a profession becomes an end in itself, even as noble as a vocation may be, God is used for professional gain. Moreover, when that career changes or is threatened, distress and anxiety emerge. If Christians are to take vocation seriously, then the university will need a more robust understanding of identity and calling.

Nevertheless, it is important to think about vocation, particularly regarding one’s identity as an employee. Colleges and universities should talk about vocation; they should also talk about calling in other areas of life. Rather than asking, “What do I want from life,”

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<sup>106</sup> Tim Clydesdale, “Holy Grit!” *Liberal Education* 100, no. 1 (Winter 2014): 18.

<sup>107</sup> Perry Glanzer, “Moving beyond Value or Virtue Added: Transforming Colleges and Universities for Redemptive Moral Development,” *Christian Scholar’s Review* 39, no. 4 (2010): 379-400.

<sup>108</sup> David Whitlock, “Remembering Our Purpose in Christian Higher Education,” ERLC, September 6, 2016, accessed September 10, 2016, <https://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/remembering-our-purpose-in-christian-higher-education>.

Brooks suggests one ask, “What does life want from me?”<sup>109</sup> Students cannot control life, but they can control their responses to life. Moral formation, or character, is how one responds.

A vocation develops, in the popular words of Frederick Buechner, when “the place where our deep gladness meets the world’s deep need.”<sup>110</sup> It is not necessarily looking within but by looking without and seeing what life is asking.<sup>111</sup> In regard to one’s working life, Brooks provides four questions to turn a career into a vocation: “Why do you do what you do? Who can you serve? What am I pouring my love into? and Am I all in?” These questions can provide a starting point for colleges and universities to connect their foundational beliefs with a person’s working life. As they are deciding a calling God would have for them in these years, a valuable education will be able to frame and provide guidance for these questions.

A common question for college students is “What do you want to do?” A much better question is “Who do you want to be?” I want to advocate this personal, virtue-informed definition of vocation. It is in this way that people can experience, as Brooks suggests, “the joy of their values in deep harmony with their behavior.”<sup>112</sup> Educating for a vocation provides the value behind the behavior.

### **Age of Feeling: *Homo Motus* The Comfortable Life**

When faith and reason lose authority, feelings gain prominence. The age of feeling stems from the goals of education in the age of industry. If all a college cares about

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<sup>109</sup> Brooks, *The Road to Character*, 21.

<sup>110</sup> Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Seeker’s ABC* (San Francisco: Harper, 2004), 95.

<sup>111</sup> Brooks, *The Road to Character*, makes these concluding applications. He argues that a “good life” is not possible unless it is organized around a vocation. *Ibid.*, 234. While this oversteps into viewing vocation as an intrinsic good, he is right to suggest the importance of meaningful work.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

is making the consumer (student) happy, then teachers and administrators will do anything to appease said student, which usually means passing him or her despite effort or even attendance. Never mind that struggle was necessary in a historic education; what matters today is pleasure. Many college students have never had to experience much discomfort at all, especially not in school. Could anything be more antithetical to the prosperous life than pain?

Traditional societies go outside of themselves to find themselves and order their lives around what is there externally.<sup>113</sup> There are inherited norms, commitments, and communities. In today's society, in the age of feeling, people turn inward.<sup>114</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre recognized this prevalence in 1981, as he wrote, "Emotivism has become embodied in our culture."<sup>115</sup> "Feelings" have become the air the current culture breathes, whether one notices it or not. In *The Malaise of Modernity*, Charles Taylor describes that this identity is fragile, needs constant affirmation, and requires more recognition and support from popular opinion.<sup>116</sup> With a growing regularity, these exact descriptions can chronicle the ethos on today's college campus. Rather than a quest for the good life, what matters is creating one's own lifestyle.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> This is one of Charles Taylor's points in *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

<sup>114</sup> Bellah et. al. expound,  
The right act is simply the one that yields the agent the most exciting challenge or the most good feeling about himself. Now if selves are defined by their preferences, but those preferences are arbitrary, then each self constitutes its own moral universe, and there is finally no way to reconcile conflicting claims about what is good in itself. . . . All we can appeal to in relationships with others is their self-interest, likewise enlightened, or their intuitive sympathies. . . . In the absence of any objectifiable criteria of right and wrong, good or evil, the self and its feelings become our only moral guide. (Bellah et. al., *Habits of Heart*, 76)

<sup>115</sup> MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 22.

<sup>116</sup> Charles Taylor, *The Malaise of Modernity* (Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2003).

<sup>117</sup> See Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind: How Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 144.

In the age of industrialization, a typical person can be described as a utilitarian individualist. In the age of feeling, Bellah et al. describe the ideal person as an expressive individualist. James Davison Hunter recognizes that utility and expression are two sides of the same coin. In slightly different language, he writes, “Utilitarianism reflects the instrumental side and expressivism reflects the emotional side of a worldview whose moral center is the autonomous self and whose moral ends are personal well-being.”<sup>118</sup> In this culture, Walt Whitman exemplifies the spirit of the age. Rather than the cold, utilitarian ethos, what defines Whitman is “a life rich in experience, open to all kinds of people, luxuriating in the sensual as well as the intellectual, above all a life of strong feeling.”<sup>119</sup> This defined the successful, happy life. For *homo motus*, freedom lies in the ability to express oneself. Hunter concludes, “Despite its many guides, the constant feature of the psychological strategy, as we have seen, is an individualism oriented toward liberating the self through autonomous decision making and reforming the self through personal understanding.”<sup>120</sup> In many ways, this is a reaction against the objectivism of a previous age.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> James Davison Hunter, *The Death of Character: Moral Education in an Age without Good or Evil* (New York: Basic, 2000), 160.

<sup>119</sup> Bellah et al., *Habits of Heart*, 34.

<sup>120</sup> Hunter, *The Death of Character*, 151.

<sup>121</sup> Palmer argues that this “liberation” from objectivism turns into the same imprisonment: If my private perceptions are the measure of truth, if my truth cannot be challenged or enlarged by the perceptions of another, I have merely found one more way to objectify and hold the other at arm’s length, to avoid again the challenge of personal transformation. . . . You and your reality are only objects to be viewed, not relationships to be entered. (Palmer, *To Know As We Are Known*, 55) Palmer rightly asserts that the quest for truth is a communal task, and both objectivism and subjectivism alienates the self from the world. The mind or the self is supreme, and others should not influence one’s truth. However, not only is that impossible, but it is not advisable. Discovering truth is about encountering realities outside the self that correct and transcend. Palmer concludes, “Truth is neither ‘out there’ nor ‘in here’, but both. Truth is between us, in relationship, to be found in dialogue of knowers and knowns.” Ibid.

Educators came to most clearly adopt the *homo motus* paradigm during the 1960s.<sup>122</sup> During this time, psychologists shaped policy, educational program, and philosophy.<sup>123</sup> Though many psychologists trained under cognitive and rational philosophy, the application into pedagogy often translated into the affections and emotions. In short, *homo motus* functions on the logic of self-esteem. Bettie Youngs articulates the popular sentiment of the day:

The level of a student's self-esteem is central to school reform, change agency, foreign competition, and just making sure kids turn out as we know they should . . . self-esteem is central to what we make of our lives. . . .

It is intricately tied to what we will achieve in the course of a lifetime. Perhaps nothing affects one's health and energy quite so much as the health of our self-esteem. . . .

We must not underestimate the role of self-esteem and its contribution to student achievement and performance. . . . Positive self-esteem is essential for all youngsters if they are to develop in healthy ways.<sup>124</sup>

Essentially, self-esteem guides the pedagogical application. Hunter provides three descriptions of self-esteem: the importance of feelings as a guide to one's values, an emphasis on individual choice, and the centrality of self-regard to the student's moral maturation.<sup>125</sup>

This focus on emotional stability presents itself in the Christians tradition as well. In the mainline tradition, virtue and love became dependent on feeling. For example,

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<sup>122</sup> Taylor defines the age of feeling as "the age of authenticity," which corresponds to the 1960s: I mean the understanding of life which emerges with the Romantic expressivism of the late-eighteenth century, that each one of us has his/her own way of realizing our humanity, and that it is important to find and live out one's own, as against surrendering to conformity with a model imposed on us from outside, by society, or the previous generation, or religious or political authority. (Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 475)

<sup>123</sup> Hunter, *Death of Character*, 81-106, outlines the history and gives examples of expressivist strands moral education, sex education, parenting literature, and drug education with the goal of building self-esteem.

<sup>124</sup> Bettie B. Youngs, "Self-Esteem in the School," *NAASP Bulletin* (January 1993): 59, 59-60, 65-66.

<sup>125</sup> Hunter, *The Death of Character*, 86.

in the United Church of Christ, a pamphlet describes the beginning and center of the moral life as self-understanding and self-love (“self-understanding, self-worth, self-acceptance, self-image, or just feeling good about yourself”).<sup>126</sup> Emotions become the guide to truth and to reality in numerous ways. The self becomes the sacred.

With this philosophical foundation, the modern campus does not have the resources to discuss personal weakness; there are merely differences. The great men and women of the past needed to be hurt, offended, and suffer to overcome life’s challenges.<sup>127</sup> Pain builds character and strengthens a person’s weakness. In previous ages, education was transformative. In an age of feeling, the purpose of education is therapeutic. Perhaps more than any other stage, there are no longer standards or norms to instruct life or education. If someone can define their identity, they can also define the end of education for themselves. The only requirement is fulfillment and satisfaction. The ideals of education are internal to the self. They are “rooted in the rights (the desires, feelings, needs, and potentialities) of the autonomous individual. The self, in brief, is both the source of all moral sensibility and the final object of moral accountability.”<sup>128</sup> Connor Grubaugh explains the attending virtues of the modern campus: “The supreme virtue in this cult of the self is niceness, which is not the traditional Christian virtue of love or charity, but rather utter passivity

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<sup>126</sup> Herman C. Ahrens, *Feeling Good about Yourself: Helping Young People Build Self-Esteem* (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1983), 3.

<sup>127</sup> Many people go to college to be stretched and challenged. Judith Shulevitz contends they should. She writes,

Shield them from unfamiliar ideas and they’ll never learn the discipline of seeing the world as other people see it. They’ll be unprepared for the social and intellectual headwinds that will hit them as soon as they step off the campuses whose climates they have so carefully controlled. What will they do when they hear opinions they’ve learned to shrink from? If they want to change the world, how will they learn to persuade people to join them? (Judith Shulevitz, “In College and Hiding from Scary Ideas,” *New York Times*, March 21, 2015, accessed August 11, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/22/opinion/sunday/judith-shulevitz-hiding-from-scary-ideas.html>)

<sup>128</sup> Hunter, *The Death of Character*, 188.

and complete deference in the face of any appeal to a person's inner being."<sup>129</sup> The results of niceness on the university are disastrous.

**Critique.** Undeniably, emotions are powerful.<sup>130</sup> David Hume asserts, "Reason is, and ought only be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them."<sup>131</sup> In many ways, Hume is exactly right: emotions often dictate how humanity reasons.<sup>132</sup> They are the expression of desire. The critique is not to ignore feelings, but to place feelings in their proper place. Jonathan Edwards urges, "The right way, is not to reject all affections, nor to approve all; but to distinguish affections, approving some, and rejecting others; separating between the wheat and the chaff, the gold and the dross, the precious and the vile."<sup>133</sup> True religion consists in correct religious affections that influence the will of the soul.<sup>134</sup> Knowers need biases and emotional predispositions. Humans cannot carry a purely cognitive load. Alan Jacobs urges that "learning to feel as we should is enormously helpful for learning to think as we

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<sup>129</sup> Connor Grubaugh, "Campus Moralism: Old and New," *FirstThings*, accessed September 9, 2016, <https://www.firstthings.com/blogs/firstthoughts/2016/09/campus-moralism-old-and-new>.

<sup>130</sup> Antonio Damasio has proven this in his study on emotion in *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005). Without healthy emotional patterns, people make bad decisions.

<sup>131</sup> David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Charleston, SC: Createspace, 2016), 462.

<sup>132</sup> For a full treatment and studies proving this point, see Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion* (New York: Vintage Books, 2013).

<sup>133</sup> Jonathan Edwards, "The Nature of True Virtue," in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Henry Rogers and Edward Hickman (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005), 121.

<sup>134</sup> See Jonathan Edwards, "The Religious Affections," in Rogers and Hickman, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*.

should.”<sup>135</sup> The real is important, but it should not dictate the true. Truth must inform and reinterpret the real.<sup>136</sup>

The biggest issue that a *homo motus* understanding raises in the life of the university is that the examined life is disruptive to feeling good.<sup>137</sup> The university is meant to unsettle students.<sup>138</sup> Jonathan Haidt wrote a piercing article in the Atlantic entitled, “The Coddling of the American Mind.” In it, he asserts:

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<sup>135</sup> Jacobs, *How to Think*, 87. Jacobs also argues that this is why learning to think with the best people is so important. One habituates to the dispositions of those with whom he learns.

<sup>136</sup> This reality is one reason why worldview development and theological training is so important. When colleges or churches vacate this position, the paradigm becomes the real interpreting the truth. Therefore, students reject the faith because of an experience they had, rather than letting the truth of God reinterpret what is real to them.

<sup>137</sup> MacIntyre suggests that college requires students to be engaged in conflict and to interact with views they do not like:

The university [should become] a place of constrained disagreement, of imposed participation in conflict, in which a central responsibility of higher education would be to initiate students into conflict. In such a university those engaged in teaching and enquiry would have to play a double role. . . . The first of these would be to advance enquiry from within that particular point of view, preserving and transforming the initial agreements with those who share that point of view. . . . The second task would be to enter into controversy with other rival standpoints, doing so both in order to exhibit what is mistaken in that rival standpoint in the light of the understanding afforded by one’s own point of view and in order to test and retest the central theses advanced from ones’ own point of view against the strongest possible objections to them to be derived from one’s opponents. . . . [The reason for this is] to ensure that rival voices were not illegitimately suppressed, to sustain the university—not as an arena of neutral objectivity, as in the liberal university, since each of the contending standpoints would be advancing its own partisan account of the nature and function of objectivity—but as an arena of conflict in which the most fundamental type of moral and theological disagreement was accorded recognition. (Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition: Being Gifford Lectures Delivered in the University of Edinburgh in 1988* [Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2014], 230-31)

<sup>138</sup> Paul Griffiths of Duke Divinity School recently resigned over a disagreement with a dean in the school over diversity sensitivity training. In response, he wrote the following, which could be instructive to the intellectual climate of the university:

Harsh and direct disagreement places thought under pressure. That’s its point. Pressure can be intellectual productive: being forced to look closely at arguments against a beloved position helps those who hold it to burnish and buttress it as often as it moves them to abandon it. But pressure also causes pain and fear; and when those under pressure find these things difficult to bear, they’ll sometimes use any means possible to make the pressure and the pain go away. They feel unsafe, threatened, put upon, and so they react by deploying the soft violence of the law or the harder violence of the aggressive and speech-denying protest. Both moves are common enough in our elite universities now, as is their support by the powers that be. Tolerance for intellectual pain is less than it was. So is tolerance for argument. (Paul Griffiths, “To the University, with Love,” *Commonweal*

Emotional reasoning dominates many campus debates and discussions. A claim that someone's words are 'offensive' is not just an expression of one's own subjective feeling of offendedness. It is, rather, a public charge that the speaker has done something objectively wrong. It is a demand that the speaker apologize or be punished by some authority for committing an offense.<sup>139</sup>

In the modern university culture that Haidt so accurately describes, "I'm offended" becomes the unbeatable trump card. All reasonable, respectable discussion and dialogue comes to a halt. It is the unpardonable sin. As Carl Trueman expresses, "The truly educated person is now no longer the person who understands an opposing viewpoint even as he rejects it. For even to understand an alternative viewpoint is to collude in the oppression which such an option embodies."<sup>140</sup> This ruin not just education but listening in general. To draw on a C. S. Lewis' phrase of Aslan, the ideal classroom is not safe, but it is good.

Herein lies the main issue with self-dictating truth: a discussion of truth becomes a discussion of the self. When someone attacks this idea that I hold, they are attacking me.

Molly Oshatz observes,

If truth is something neutral that exists outside of all of us, then we can discuss it and disagree about its content without involving ourselves personally, at least not right away. But if the only turret for me is my own personal truth arising from my identity and circumstances, then any and all disagreement about *what is* is by definition personal.<sup>141</sup>

She artfully contends, "Thus the paradox of our educational culture: a relativism designed to promote tolerance and cooperation leads to suspicion and conflict."<sup>142</sup> Any attempt to persuade, no matter how patiently or kindly, is an attempt to dominate and proselytize.

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*Magazine*, May 18, 2017, accessed May 19, 2017, <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/university-love/>

<sup>139</sup> Jonathan Haidt and Greg Lukianoff, "The Coddling of the American Mind," *The Atlantic*, September 2015, accessed October 3, 2015, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/09/the-coddling-of-the-american-mind/399356/>.

<sup>140</sup> Carl Trueman, "In Praise of the Dying Art of Civil Disagreement," *FirstThings*, May 18, 2015, accessed August 11, 2018, <https://www.firstthings.com/blogs/firstthoughts/2015/05/in-praise-of-the-dying-art-of-civil-disagreement>.

<sup>141</sup> Molly Oshatz, "College without Truth," *FirstThings*, May 2016, 16.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

Difference of opinion becomes war. This way of imagining truth and education deconstructs the task of education. In a recent article titled “The Age of Outrage,” Jonathan Haidt describes the phenomenon:

Everything is about power. Every situation is to be analyzed in terms of the bad people acting to preserve their power and privilege over the good people. This is not an education. This is induction into a cult, a fundamentalist religion, a paranoid worldview that separates people from each other and sends them down the road to alienation, anxiety, and intellectual impotence.<sup>143</sup>

In many ways, the title of his article is fitting: the age of feeling quickly descends into an age of outrage.

### **Christian Corrective: *Homo Liturgicus* The Practicing Life**

In a world smitten with autonomous reason, a Christian corrective has arisen emphasizing the more liturgical or habitual formation, which account for the pre-cognitive formation of personhood.<sup>144</sup> Much formation happens before a person consciously considers his choices. Being is often inarticulate and unformulated. David Brooks affirms,

We are living in the middle of a revolution in consciousness. Over the past few years, geneticists, neuroscientists, psychologists, sociologists, economists, anthropologists, and others have made great strides in understanding the building blocks of human flourishing. And a core finding in their work is that we are not primarily the products of our conscious thinking. We are primarily products of thinking that happens below the level of awareness.”<sup>145</sup>

Brooks emphasizes the familial and societal formation that shapes the human heart.

Humanity is caught in a web of connectedness that it cannot untangle through reason alone.

Smith is one of the leading proponents on how habits and practices shape a

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<sup>143</sup> Jonathan Haidt, “The Age of Outrage,” Wriston Lecture for the Manhattan Institute, November 15, 2017, accessed October 1, 2017, <https://www.city-journal.org/html/age-outrage-15608.html>.

<sup>144</sup> Smith argues, “Liturgies aim our love to different ends precisely by training our hearts through our bodies.” Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 25. In this, he accounts for the formative influence around the heart. Humans do not exist as disembodied souls who reason through the world; rather, they are influenced through their bodies, habits, practices, because they are embodied.

<sup>145</sup> Brooks, *The Social Animal*, x.

person.<sup>146</sup> In Smith’s taxonomy, humans are *homo liturgicus*. He describes this concept in *Desiring the Kingdom*:

The focus of this chapter is the elucidation of a philosophical anthropology that recognizes that we are, ultimately, *liturgical animals*, because we are fundamentally desiring creatures . . . we are more concretely *homo liturgicus*; humans are those animals that are religious animals not because we are primarily believing animals but because we are liturgical animals—embodied, practicing creatures whose love/desire is aimed at something ultimate.<sup>147</sup>

Smith defines “liturgy” as “formative practices.”<sup>148</sup> Practices are social and always embedded within practices is a *telos*.<sup>149</sup> As MacIntyre explains, “There is an inextricable link between the *telos* to which we are being oriented and the practices that are shaping us in that direction.”<sup>150</sup> As such, humans are “intentional” beings. For example, he uses this fact as a critique of Descartes and rationalism. One can never purely think; they must think of something. In the same way, a person is always primed to be aimed at something. A target, or *telos*, shapes vision of life and what it means to live well. Smith writes, “A vision of the good life captures our hearts and imaginations not by providing a set of rules or ideas, but by painting a picture of what it looks like for us to flourish and live well.”<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> It is worth pointing out that Smith works in a university. As generally leaning more to the cognitive dimension, he has a rightful call to the habits and practices that the university should participate in to fully form students. I wonder if the church, whose main formation is the liturgy formation, would benefit from a more cognitive approach to understanding doctrine and worldview. In other words, the college campus has the intellect and is lacking in formative practices. The church has formative practices but could be lacking in robust reflection. While saying this, I think the answer is both, but perhaps each arena would do well to emphasize one aspect in the current culture.

<sup>147</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 40.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>149</sup> MacIntyre defines practice as any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended. (MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 187)

<sup>150</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 62

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

This picture pulls a person along to behave and desire and love in the world. As seen in figure 3, it is governed by a story of the kingdom.

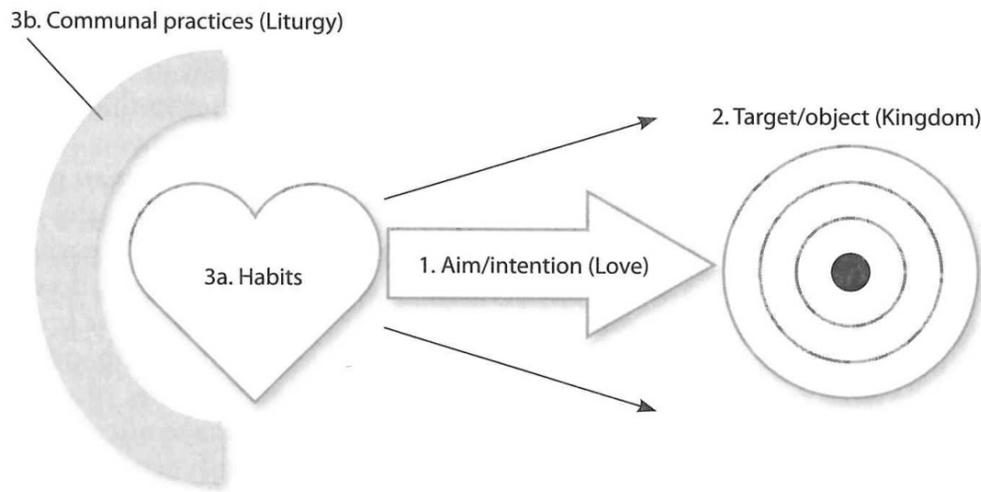


Figure 3. Smith's habitus of formation

The question Smith addresses next is how does one's love gets aimed.<sup>152</sup> My thinking has been helped and guided by the thoughts of Smith, and this paper adopts many of Smith's premises based on love, aim, and flourishing. As seen in figure 3, love is primed by habits, habits are the fulcrum that "turns" love, and "such practices fundamentally shape who you are."<sup>153</sup> Therefore, before a person's heart is primed toward the vision of the good, habits frame his worldview. In other words, what one does is more fundamental to what he thinks or what she loves. What someone does *does* something to them. Smith concludes, "Our habits incline us to act in certain ways without having to kick into a mode of reflection; for the most part, we are driven by an engine that purrs under the hood with little attention from us."<sup>154</sup> Smith draws heavily on the work of

<sup>152</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 48.

<sup>153</sup> Smith, *You Are What You Love*, 22.

<sup>154</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 56.

phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty and social theorist Pierre Bourdieu.<sup>155</sup>

Anthropology involves one's "feeling" and "perceiving through the world," which shapes cognitive thoughts even before consciousness kicks in. As such, while many modern educational strategies focus on "know-why," following Merleau-Ponty, perhaps the focus should be "know-how." The way a person navigates the world is less cognitive and more affective. He "feels" his way through the world, like driving home from work. Often, a person is not cognitively thinking of getting in the right lane or stopping at the intersection; there is a type of "know-how" or "attunement" to the world. While drawn by the kingdom vision, a person is functioning and navigating by their desire. Cognitive beliefs do not dictate action or character or virtue or knowledge; these things are, rather, a way of life where a person develops know-how through habitual action. One's habits change how one perceives the world and the goal to which one believes the world was made.

Knowledge and virtue through habitual formation goes as far back as Aristotle, and the theory recently emerged through the works of Alasdair MacIntyre and N. T. Wright. On virtue formation, Aristotle asserts that just as a builder becomes a good builder by building, or a flute player becomes a good flute player by playing the flute, "so too we become just by doing just actions, and temperate by doing more temperate actions . . . and in a word, states of character are formed out of corresponding acts."<sup>156</sup> Likewise, Wright defines virtue as the "power of right habits." He goes on to describe,

Virtue, in this strict sense, is what happens when someone has made a thousand small choices, requiring effort and concentration, to do something which is good and right but which doesn't "come naturally"—and then, on the thousand and first time, when it really matter, they that they do what's required "automatically."<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> See the first two chapters in James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2013).

<sup>156</sup> Aristotle, *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2011), 13.

<sup>157</sup> N. T. Wright, *After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters* (New York: HarperOne, 2010), 20.

As such, virtue is acquired, and Smith argues that character is acquired through practice. The purpose of habits and the means of formation are for kingdom living. It is what Wright calls the habits of “eschatological authenticity.”<sup>158</sup> Based on kingdom living in the future, colleges have the privilege to prepare for kingdom life now.

The implications of this on the university are numerous. By the habits and the cocurricular, institutions of higher learning can form and shape intuitions<sup>159</sup> and imagination from a biblical point of view. They can create an alternate moral ecology. Where students are immersed in Scripture and historical practices, their hearts can be drawn to what is righteous and what is not. Students come in to certain “jigs”<sup>160</sup> that prod them in certain directions. Everything from classroom practices to chapel services to the role of student athletics will guide students toward a vision of the good. It is not only beliefs that are transferred, but also the practices.

**Practices in the classroom.** Smith highlights a valuable insight to the educational task. How a teacher presents the content matters just as much as the content presented.<sup>161</sup> He takes seriously the embodiment and the role of societal influence on the student. The goal is the formation of a people who are “defined by a certain set of desires or passions which are themselves defined by a certain *telos*.”<sup>162</sup> Central to this task is, as Richard Hays adds, the “conversion of the imagination.”<sup>163</sup> The volume edited by David

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<sup>158</sup> Wright, *After You Believe*, 107.

<sup>159</sup> For the power of intuition, see Haidt, *The Righteous Mind*.

<sup>160</sup> This language of “jig” is borrowed from Matthew Crawford, *The World beyond Your Head: On Becoming an Individual in an Age of Distraction* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015).

<sup>161</sup> See Becca McBride, “Pedagogies for the Public Square,” *Comment Magazine*, March 19, 2015, accessed August 11, 2018, <https://www.cardus.ca/comment/article/4430/pedagogies-for-the-public-square/>.

<sup>162</sup> David Smith and James K. A. Smith, eds., *Teaching and Christian Practices: Reshaping Faith and Learning* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishers, 2011), 139.

<sup>163</sup> Richard B. Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel’s*

Smith and James K. A. Smith, entitled *Teaching and the Christian Practices*, is vital in this regard. The contributors seek out a way of teaching that is distinctively Christian and accounts for holistic, Christian human personhood in practice.

Practices, to borrow from Craig Dykstra, involve both moral goods and standards of excellence inherent in them.<sup>164</sup> The practices of the classroom can have this formative shape of the community of students. Practices can bring healing and hospitality and embody a Christian vision of education and formation. Passively accepting secular models of education—even things like the shape of the classroom, where the teacher stands, or how one begins class—can have a profound effect on the environment. Though no Christian content may be presented, the way a teacher engages in practice can be Christian or dehumanizing. Etienne Wenger suggests that practices give “meaning to the motions of the body and the working of brains.”<sup>165</sup> One needs to account for the practices in the classroom if he or she wishes to holistically form the student toward kingdom vision and love.

**Critique.** Jesus’ words (per usual) are instructive to rightly understand habits.

In Matthew 15, Jesus criticizes the Pharisees and diagnoses the true problem of virtue:

Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said,

“Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat.”

He answered them, “And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?”

For God commanded, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.'

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*Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2005), viii.

<sup>164</sup> See Dykstra, *Growing in the Life of Faith*, 69.

<sup>165</sup> Etienne Wenger, *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 51.

But you say, 'If anyone tells his father or his mother, "What you would have gained from me is given to God," he need not honor his father.' So for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God.

You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said:

"This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."

And he called the people to him and said to them, "Hear and understand: it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person." (Matt 15:1-11)

But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person.

For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.

These are what defile a person. (Matt 15:18-20a)

In the first seven verses, one sees the deformation of traditions. The Pharisees, the morally upright of the day, followed a different story and different set of virtues that made sense of the story of Israel. They honored the "traditions of their fathers," but the way they interpreted and lived out that tradition was contrary to the way of God. Herein lies the problem: one can practice the right things but fill the practice with anti-gospel meaning. Rote application and practices can produce virtuous individuals, but it can also produce moralistic hypocrites. The Pharisees did all the right things consistently, yet their hearts remained hardened. Practice without gospel-focused reflection leads to hypocrisy.

Right practice with wrong belief can also lead to syncretism. Even in robust liturgical traditions whose practices are aimed toward the kingdom of God, some within the institution have false and heretical views of God. As evidenced in places like Central America and Africa, "missionaries" would take over a land and then "force" or "coerce" conversion. What emerged was not a pure Christianity but a mixture of African animism and Christianity. In these places, practitioners are going through all the church habits but loading their belief with ancestral religion. If they are immersed in the formative practices, but their conception of God is of Mother Earth or their inherent humanity is really good with the need for a few tweaks, then no matter how rich the liturgy is, it is

defective.<sup>166</sup> As Alexander Schmemmann points out, “Liturgical piety has the strange power of ‘transposing’ texts or ceremonies, of attaching a meaning to them which is not their plain or original meaning.”<sup>167</sup> In the same way within the classroom, teachers, administrators, and student life coordinators need to assure the practices, along with the cognitive understanding of those practices, are rich and true.

The second thing to notice in Jesus’ words is the fundamental change agent of man. No matter how negative the practices are to which one engages, no matter how anti-gospel the society may be, the heart is still responsible. No one can blame genetic disposition or society’s influence for the decisions one makes, the words one says, or things one loves. At the end of the day, these avenues reveal what is truly in the heart. External things, which would include habits, do not defile. Other people or circumstances do not determine behavior. No one can ever blame the deformation of a “jig.” One should recognize and attempt to reform it; however, it cannot be blamed. Therefore, it is not fundamental to formation. In the same way that a person can go through all the liturgical practices and remain a pagan, so a hippie can regularly go to Costco and come out the same local-loving, organic, creation-conscious individual. Habits do not bind or coerce. If either example makes a regular practice of the counter habits, then it may be harder to maintain conviction; but one’s embodied heart is the responsible agent. Habits are occasions of revelation.

Habits, practices, and one’s response reveals the state of the heart. Therefore, the heart is the target of change—not the habits that one practices. Real change happens

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<sup>166</sup> One can see a history of this in global missions. In Africa and middle America, there were forced conversions, or at best unthoughtful conversions. Syncretistic religions now pervade places like Haiti: a little native religion mixed with a little gospel-focused Christianity. Practices, though a powerful influence, do not direct toward kingdom living, no matter how intentional. They can help in character formation, but they are not determinative. In the same way, the person who goes to the mall regularly does not turn into a self-seeking consumerist. Those habits may strongly lead them in that direction, but it does not *make* them so. The mall simply gives an occasion to go after what the heart truly wants.

<sup>167</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, trans. Ashleigh E. Moorehouse (Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2003), 97.

not when one asks, “what do we love?”—not “what are we practicing?” It is to ask the question, “What is ruling my heart right now that is influencing my behavior and emotion.” This is why Proverbs 4:23 warns believers to “keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.” This warning is not to negate the formative influence of practices and habits; rather, it is to put them in their proper place. The alcoholic ought to change practices; the student who stays up till four in the morning ought to change practice. But if it ends with habit change, then the heart is left alone. Like a balloon that is prodded in one end, the air will fill elsewhere, so the heart’s love will take another false love. I disagree with Smith’s premise that persons worship to understand.<sup>168</sup> One’s worship reveals what they understand.

The goal is to re-habituate life and practices with a renewed heart. Reflective practice can lead to changed hearts—which is the destination. The ability and habit of reflection can lead to meaningful change—a new heart that thinks and desires differently. Reflection is a way to allow what is in the heart to bubble up to the surface. In short, education is for repentance, and habits are only one manifestation of whole life change. The idea of *homo liturgicus* taken to philosophy’s logical end could be read as a form of cultural determinism. That is, if a college manages to change the habits of students, then they can change or determine the outcome. Readers ought to be cautious in reading Smith in the foregoing way. Moreover, I would contend with the claim that “what Christians think and believe grows out of what Christians *do*.”<sup>169</sup> As noted in a previous section, habits powerfully influence, but the heart is determinative.

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<sup>168</sup> See chap. 4, “From Worship to Worldview,” in Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 216. Serene Jones argues the opposite of Smith in *Practicing Theology*: In other words, it matters what I think I am doing (what I believe) when I engage in a practice because believing is what makes it a practice of faith as opposed to another kind of practice. In this regard, practices, if they are Christian, can never be evaluated in isolation from the “lived imaginative landscape” that constructs the practitioner’s intentions. Practice are thus dependent upon belief. (Serene Jones, “Graced Practices: Excellence and Freedom in the Christian Life,” in *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life*, ed. Miroslav Volf and Dorothy Bass [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2002], 76)

Plenty of things are beautiful and correct about Smith's description; namely, he is correct in his observation that "you are what you love"<sup>170</sup> and a person's formation being primed by their aim and the influence of habits. He rightly critiques the "thinking-thing"-ism that is so common in evangelical culture and culture at large. The rest of this chapter draws heavily on Smith's contributions, and I am deeply grateful for his contribution to scholarship. He recognizes that a student's development includes unconscious cues. However, when he swings the pendulum from mind toward habits, he swings too far as he defines humanity as *homo liturgicus*.<sup>171</sup> The position he provides is a helpful corrective, but what is helpful he seems to also make ultimate.

## Conclusion

While all these views have beneficial uses, none can hold the weight of a complete educational philosophy. In Aristotelian terms, these are instrumentally valuable, but as the previous theorists use them, they have been described with intrinsic value. Or in Augustinian terms, these are means or uses of love, but are not where ultimate enjoyment is found. Like in John Henry Newman's time, these formative ages can take on god-like structures and overstep their bounds when not in the right relation.<sup>172</sup> Whenever one of these views of personhood prevails, there will be angst and inquietude, for those categories are made to be used, not enjoyed.

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I align with Jones over Smith on this point.

<sup>170</sup> As is the title of his more popular book. See Smith, *You Are What You Love*.

<sup>171</sup> It is worth noting that Smith emphasizes habit but does not want Christians to discard reflection. Toward the end of *Imagining the Kingdom*, he writes that his work is "not meant to denigrate or neglect the role of reflection and intellectual analysis. I am not setting up a dichotomy: *either* practice *or* reflection. To the contrary, my hope is to foster intentional reflection *on* practice in order to encourage reflective immersion *in* practice." See Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 186.

<sup>172</sup> Newman observes that any science, or in this argument, any end of education, no matter how comprehensive "will largely fall into error, if it be constituted as the sole exponent of all things in heaven and earth, and that for the simple reason that it is encroaching on territory not its own, and that undertaking problems which it has no instruments to solve." Newman, *The Idea of a University*, 55.

Is there any hope for the modern college or university? Can the Christian contribute anything of meaning or purpose to the conversation? The next section answers these in the affirmative.

### **Ancient-Future Education**

The goal of the Christian college is not returning to some idealistic past; the past contains prevalent problems of its own.<sup>173</sup> However, the call is to progress without forgetting—to move forward toward a better implementation of past principles grounded in a fuller and deeper understanding of who humans are as created in God’s image toward the purpose for which they exist.<sup>174</sup> Humans are not thinkers first, nor workers, nor feelers, nor habits. First, humanity are those who worship, and all of one’s identity needs to be ordered around a first love. Drawing from the tradition of Smith, “It’s not what I think that shapes my life from the bottom up; it’s what I desire, what I love, that animates my passion.”<sup>175</sup> In other words, a person is a *homo amator*.

### **Nature and Goal: *Homo Amator***

People build a worldview around what they love.<sup>176</sup> In the age of reason, love of intellect reigns supreme. This age is marked by approval idolatry. Life only has meaning if one is smarter or more reasonable than others. The age of industrialization is

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<sup>173</sup> As a small sample size, African-Americans and women would not want a return to the past, nor should they.

<sup>174</sup> Another way to title this section is “reappropriating tradition.” Bellah et al. describes this as “finding sustenance in tradition and applying it actively and creatively to our present realities.” Bellah et al., *Habits of Heart*, 293. Using a holistic view of the person, Holmes suggests that universities are purposed with this task, as well—namely, “a critical appreciation of the past and a creative participation in the future.” He is also helpful in formulating personhood that is complex and multi-dimensional. He suggests that students are reflective, thinking beings, valuing beings, and responsible agents. See Arthur Holmes, *The Idea of a Christian College* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 29-33.

<sup>175</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 51.

<sup>176</sup> See Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking Fast and Slow* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015). His important study reveals that people most often reason from biases and dispositions on reflex.

characterized by a love of efficiency and maximum return on minimal investment. This stage has a power idolatry. Life only has meaning if one has more money, power, or influence over others. In the age of feeling, proponents and students love pleasure and ease. Modern universities often have comfort idolatries. Life only has meaning if a student or learner has a certain quality of life. In each age, the most foundational love is what primes one's identity. These previous categories are crucibles for one's love to be tested and formed. Love is a longing of the heart—the *kardia*.<sup>177</sup> No other template of the human person can provide what the heart craves. Each stages' love can never fully capture the other-giving passion of Jesus Christ.

Operating from an Augustinian anthropology, Smith argues that humans are “fundamentally and primordially lovers.”<sup>178</sup> He writes, “This Augustinian model of human persons resists the rationalism . . . by shifting the center of gravity of human identity, as it were, down from the heady regions of mind closer to the central regions of our bodies, in particular, our *kardia*—our gut or heart.”<sup>179</sup> In other words, Smith places the *kardia* in the determinative, primary position.<sup>180</sup> People are born lovers, and the highest love, as contended earlier, is to love God and neighbor.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Esther Meek connects love, longing, and knowing. She challenges reader to “pay attention, not to the factoids, but to the longing. Starts, not with what you know, but with what you long to know. Let longing shape what you think knowing is, and let it draw you into it.” Esther Meek, *Loving to Know: Covenant Epistemology* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011), 32.

<sup>178</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 41.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>180</sup> In Smith, there is some inconsistency, and this inconsistency makes him difficult to critique. In one sentence, he is spot on in understanding the proper place of *kardia* and subsequent loves. In the next, it seems he makes habits or liturgy determinative. For example, in the chapter entitled “*homo liturgicus*,” he has a section entitled, “‘I am what I love’: The Human Person as Lover.” See Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 46.

<sup>181</sup> In what follows, Augustine will be the model. Joseph Clair develops the connection between Ancient Rome, Augustine's educational path, and today's university ills. He argues that Augustine encountered the disconnection of moral formation from the intellectual training and Clair reads *Confessions*

Fundamental to the soul is the matter of worship and ultimate love. In every moment of every day, something rules the heart, and a person always lives for something. What rules the heart will then govern thoughts, desires, choices, and actions in given moments of life. Theologian Kevin Vanhoozer conceives, “Everything we say and do discloses the state of our soul.”<sup>182</sup> Timothy Lane and Paul Tripp describe the heart as the “steering wheel of every human being. Everything we do is shaped and controlled by what our hearts desire.”<sup>183</sup> In short, the heart is the responsible agent and the determinative actor.<sup>184</sup>

The testimony throughout Scripture gives witness to the centrality of the heart. Jesus said, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matt 6:21). The essence of Jesus’ words is that what a person loves most will dictate the rest of his life. Later, in Matthew 12:34-35, Jesus connects treasure and action: “The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.” In Luke 6:43-45, he gives the picture of a tree and fruit:

For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

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with an ear of self-lament in Augustine’s Roman education. See Joseph Clair, *On Education, Formation, Citizenship, and the Lost Purpose of Learning* (New York: Bloom Publishing, 2018).

<sup>182</sup> Kevin Vanhoozer, *Pictures at a Theological Exhibition: Scenes of the Church’s Worship, Witness, and Wisdom* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2016), 191.

<sup>183</sup> Paul Tripp and Timothy Lane, *How People Change* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2008), 14.

<sup>184</sup> Michael Emlet adds, “The material and immaterial element of our body are absolutely integrated, but it is critical to note that nowhere does scripture affirm clearly that the bodily aspect of personhood initiates morally. That initiation is the domain of the heart.” Moreover, “We must seek to differentiate between the pressures of the body and the response of the heart in order that we might counsel wisely.” See Michael Emlet, “Understanding the Influences on the Human Heart,” *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 20, no. 2 (Winter 2002): 48. What Emlet suggests for counseling, I argue for education.

The tree must come first; the fruit follows. Of note is the connection to *eudaimonia*: what resides in the heart will either result in flourishing or withering. Furthermore, in order to find wisdom, the heart needs to be protected. Proverbs 4:23 commands, “Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.” In short, the heart holds a central place in biblical anthropology—both literally and figuratively. It is the determinative performer. Thomas Cranmer was an influential Puritan pastor and theologian. According to his understanding of biblical anthropology, what the heart loves, the will chooses, and the mind justifies. The mind does not direct the will. The mind is captive to what the will wants, and the will itself is captive to what the heart wants.<sup>185</sup> The will is the agent of love.

John Calvin develops this thought in his discussion of the will, or *voluntas*. For Calvin, the *voluntas* functioned as the fulcrum by which knowledge turned. He calls the will “the affection of the intellect.”<sup>186</sup> Paul Helm explains Calvin’s understanding of the will as follows: “*Voluntas* has to do with the deep-seated ‘set’ of the will, its basic orientation, for Calvin its basic orientation either to the service of God or in rebellion against him.”<sup>187</sup> Therefore, for Calvin, the intellect does not direct the will in knowledge; rather, the will directs the intellect—and both are corrupt and distorted by sin. Though as natural gifts to man in creation, the soul—intellect and will—are no longer trustworthy. In the Fall, these gifts were not destroyed; however, they were gravely damaged.<sup>188</sup> The fall radically crippled the soundness of human reason; it has shackled the human will firmly to irrational impulses. The will no longer desires what is rational and good.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> See “Dr. Ashley Null on Thomas Cranmer,” *Anglican Church League, Sydney, Australia*, September 2001, accessed August 11, 2018, <http://acl.asn.au/resources/dr-ashley-null-on-thomas-cranmer/>.

<sup>186</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1983), 111.

<sup>187</sup> Paul Helm, *John Calvin’s Ideas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 160.

<sup>188</sup> Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 152-53.

<sup>189</sup> Timothy Paul Jones, “John Calvin and the Problem of Philosophical Apologetics,”

As a result, the *voluntas* is not free because it is oriented to serve the creature rather than the Creator. Humanity has free choice (*electio*), but they use their free choice in disordered ways.<sup>190</sup> In the fall, humanity loses the habit, ability, and pleasure to will well.<sup>191</sup> and deceit, their soul inwardly bound with the fetters of wickedness.<sup>192</sup>

Mankind lies under a condition where he perverts and distorts the truth. He can attain some comprehension and understanding of reality,<sup>193</sup> but he is unable to attain true knowledge because of false desires. Man can conceive and imagine righteousness; however, there are limitations in carrying it out.<sup>194</sup> In essence, the problem is not merely

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*Perspectives in Religious Studies* 23 (1996): 391.

<sup>190</sup>In Calvin's own words,

This liberty is compatible with our being depraved, the servants of sin, able to do nothing but sin. In this way, then, man is said to have free will, not because he has a free choice of good and evil, but because he acts voluntarily, and not by compulsion. This is perfectly true . . . that man is not forced to be a servant of sin, while he is, however a voluntary slave; his will being bound by the fetters of sin. (Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 162)

<sup>191</sup> Calvin writes, "Thus simply to will is the part of man, to will ill the part of corrupt nature, to will well the part of grace." *Ibid.*, 181.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>193</sup> Calvin is clear on this in his exposition of *sensus divinitatis*: there is a sense of the divine in every man and woman:

To manifest his perfections in the whole structure of the universe, and daily place himself in our view, that we cannot open our eyes without being compelled to behold him. His essence, indeed, is incomprehensible, utterly transcending human thought; but on each of his works his glory is engraven in characters so bright, so distinct, and so illustrious, that none, however dull and illiterate, can plead ignorance as their excuse . . . both the heavens and the earth present us with innumerable proofs, not only those more recondite proofs which astronomy, medicine, and all the natural sciences, are designed to illustrate, but proofs which force themselves on the notice of the most illiterate peasant . . . the same is true in regard to the human frame. (*Ibid.*, 16)

However, even with a sense or intellectual comprehension of the divine, it is not true knowledge without the will being captivated by it. In short, knowledge of God is universal, and so is corruption. For more on the *sensus divinitatis* and sin's effect, see Paul Helm, "John Calvin, the Sensus Divinitatis, and the Noetic Effects of Sin," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 43 (1998): 87-107. Also see Jones, "John Calvin and the Problem of Philosophical Apologetics," 387-403.

<sup>194</sup> Calvin is clear that though rational man can understand good, he has an inability to follow those good instincts. This is due to the defining characteristic of his sinful nature:

Here, however man does not, in accordance with the excellence of his immortal nature, rationally choose, and studiously pursue, what is truly for his good. He does not admit reason to his counsel, nor exert his intellect; but without reason, without counsel, follows the bent of his nature like the

cognitive; the problem is moral—which rests in the heart. Man cannot know God without loving Him. Therefore, no true knowledge exists of right particular facts if there is no love for the comprehensive truth. Without right knowing, there exists no true knowing. Worshipping God by knowing Him rightly is more than a mental transaction. Desire for worship and obedience, that is, true knowing, is wrapped up in the soul, or heart.

This evidence can all be distilled to one thing: “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?” (Jer 17:9). God can, and God does understand the heart. Indeed, the promise of the new covenant is to give mankind a new heart for only then can a person truly know and love God. Though souls are naturally inclined toward evil, the promise of the new covenant is a redemption of hearts. Two popular passages predicting this transformation are Jeremiah 31.31-34 and Ezekiel 36.25-27. God speaks through Ezekiel and promises, “And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh” (v. 26). Jeremiah prophesies, “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (v. 33). Through Christ, God changes the fundamental moral compass of the heart—not yet perfect, but radically renewed.

Augustine places the soul in a middle position between the lower loves—the things of bodily, material nature; and higher loves—the things of divine, eternal nature. On the one hand, the soul is neutral. It sits in an intermediate position and has the power of choice. On the other hand, the soul is not static. It always chooses and moves toward what it delights most. Augustine writes, “Delight is a kind of weight in the soul.”<sup>195</sup> When

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lower animals. . . . In fine, how much soever man may desire to obtain what is good, he does not follow it.” (Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 174)

<sup>195</sup> *Delectatio quippe pondus est animae. Delectatio ergo ordinat animam.* Augustine. *De Musica*, trans. R. C. Taliaferro, Fathers of the Church Series (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1947), 29. For the classical philosophers who contributed to Augustine’s understanding, see

the soul delights and loves what is immature and earthly, it pulls a person down like a weight. When one's love and desire grow toward mature and the correct ends, it pulls him up, like flames. Hence, Augustine's conception as "my love is my gravitational force" or more popularly translated, "my love is my weight." He adds, "Wherever I am carried, it is love that carries me."<sup>196</sup> In other words, humanity is pulled by a *telos* that we love. Everyone has this vision of true flourishing, which animates and captures the imagination.<sup>197</sup>

Since the soul is in motion like gravity being pulled by what one love most, it is constantly looking for rest.<sup>198</sup> The issue becomes where rest is found. One's loves are at rest when they are in the right order. Augustine defines the right order of love from Jesus' Great Commandment: first love to God and then love to one's neighbor in God.<sup>199</sup> On these commands, Augustine writes,

The aim of the command is love, a twofold love of God and of one's neighbor. But if you understand by this your whole persons—mind and body—and your whole

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Joseph Torchia, "Pondus Meum Amor Meus: The Weight-Metaphor in St. Augustine's Early Philosophy," *Augustinian Studies* 21 (1990): 163-76.

<sup>196</sup> *Pondus meum amor meus; eo feror, quocumque feror*. Augustine, *Confession*, ed. and trans. Carolyn Hammond, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 352.

<sup>197</sup> Smith explains this dynamic: "The good and the good life begin to seep into the fiber of our (everyday, noncognitive) being (i.e., our hearts) and thus govern and shape our decisions, actions, and habits. Thus we become certain kinds of people; we being to emulate, mimic, and mirror the particular vision that we desire." Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 51.

<sup>198</sup> A repeated theme in Augustine, as in the ancient philosophers, is happiness. He writes, "Everyone wants to be happy, but not everyone wants to live in a way by which one can be happy." Augustine, *On the Trinity*, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Edmund Hill (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2015), 32. Alternative visions of human flourishing are seeking happiness and rest; however, they do not have the means to get there.

<sup>199</sup> Augustine writes, "No sinner, *qua* sinner should be loved; every human being, *qua* human being, *should be loved on God's account*; and God should be loved for Himself. And if God is to be loved more than any human being, each person should love God more than he loves himself." Augustine, *On Christian Teaching*, 21. This he takes from Jesus' words in Matt 22.34-40. In his commentary on Augustinian education, Joseph Clair argues, "Getting the inward movement of liberal education—the inward ordering of mind and affection—is only possible as one moves upward and outward." Clair, *On Education, Formation, Citizenship, and the Lost Purpose of Learning*, 44.

neighbor—that is, his mind and body, for a person consists of mind and body—no class of things to be loved is missing from these two commandments.<sup>200</sup>

In other words, all of life and all one’s loves can be subsumed under these two commands—including education.

Whenever these twin commands are not heeded, restlessness ensues. Thus, his famous dictum, “Our souls are restless until they rest in You.”<sup>201</sup> One’s weight and love constantly shifts and adapts; thus, it is not at rest. A person’s weight carries him or her. However, when their love is rightly ordered, there is perfect harmony and rest, which is the flourishing, moral life—it is the purpose for which humanity was made. Happiness consists in loving God and loving one’s neighbor in God.

Augustine goes on to argue as much in *On Christian Teaching*:

But living a just and holy life requires one to be capable of an objective and impartial evaluation of things: to love things, that is to say, in the right order, so that you do not love what is not to be loved, or fail to love what is to be loved, or have a greater love for what should be loved less, or an equal love for things that should be loved less or more, or a lesser or greater love for things that should be loved equally.<sup>202</sup>

Immature education is loving the wrong things or loving the right things in the wrong order. Mature education, or as Augustinian puts it, “a just and holy life” exists when one can objectively and impartially evaluate things.<sup>203</sup> Virtue involves the presence of reason and reflection, but it is not defined by it.

Augustine repeats a similar definition of virtue in *City of God*:

If, however, the Creator should be truly loved, that is, if he himself should be loved and not something else in his stead which is not he, he cannot be loved in a bad way. For we must observe due order in loving even the love itself with which we love in

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<sup>200</sup> Augustine, *On Christian Teaching*, 20.

<sup>201</sup> *Quia fecisti nos ad te et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te.* Augustine, *Confessions*, 1.

<sup>202</sup> Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, 21.

<sup>203</sup> Augustine says, “This is true of everything created; though it is good, it can be loved in the right way or in the wrong way—in the right way, that is, when the proper order is kept, in the wrong way when that order is upset.” Augustine, *City of God against the Pagans*, ed. and trans. George E. McCracken, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), 636.

a good way what is worthy of love, if there is to be in us the virtue that enables us to live a good life. Hence, in my opinion, a short and true definition of virtue is “a due ordering of love.”<sup>204</sup>

Since persons exist as lovers, they love a variety of objects—some which are deserving of love, some are not. One can also love something worthy in an unworthy way. Work is a worthy love, but when work is loved more than family, disorder results. Some things are not to be loved at all—like drunkenness or sexual immorality. But the good life exists when love is “due” or properly ordered. This is the virtuous, happy, flourishing life.<sup>205</sup>

With this conception of virtue and the primacy of love, character is defined by what and how one loves. Augustine articulates, “For when there is a question as to whether a man is good, one does not ask what he believes, or what he hopes, but what he loves. For the man who loves aright no doubt believes and hopes aright.”<sup>206</sup> When a person loves in right order, his reasoning will follow; but he will reason according to what he loves most.<sup>207</sup> The supreme reward for a life well-lived is “that we may thoroughly enjoy Him

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<sup>204</sup> *Creator autem si veraciter ametur, hoc est si ipse, non aliud pro illo quod non est ipse, ametur, male amari non potest. Nam et amor ipse ordinate amandus est quo bene amatur quod amandum est, ut sit in nobis virtus qua vivitur bene. Unde mihi videtur quod definitio brevis et vera virtutis ordo est amoris; propter quod in sancto cantico canticorum. Ibid., 544.*

<sup>205</sup> Augustine also explains how love relates to the classic Greco-Roman virtues: I hold that virtue is nothing other than perfect love of God. Now, when it is said that virtue has a fourfold division, as I understand it, this is said according to the various movements of love. We may, therefore, define these virtues as follows: temperance is love preserving itself entire and incorrupt for God; courage is love readily bearing all things for the sake of God; justice is love serving only God, and therefore ruling well everything else that is subject to the human person; prudence is love discerning well between what helps it toward God and what hinders it. (Augustine, *On the Morals of the Catholic Church*, ed. Philip Schaff [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979], XV.25)

<sup>206</sup> Augustine, *The Enchiridion: On Faith, Hope, and Love*, trans. Albert C Outler, Christian Classics Ethereal Library, accessed on December 12, 2017, <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/augustine/enchiridion.i.html>.

<sup>207</sup> See Haidt, *The Righteous Mind*. Haidt argues that we reason from our intuition. Augustine argues much the same. Augustine says a person needs to “purge the soul” before finding the truth. Otherwise, a person will reason from false loves and a disordered heart. In contrast to strict rationalism, following the Augustinian logic, James Peters writes, “The purpose of rational inquiry in this context is not to determine a set of indubitable starting points from which to conduct one’s life, but to clarify first of all just what one really believes and then to test whether one’s fundamental beliefs can function coherently in the context of one’s beliefs as well as in one’s life.” James Peter, *The Logic of the Heart: Augustine, Pascal, and the Rationality of Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 82. This is a clear explanation of the popular Augustinian

and that all of us who enjoy Him may enjoy one another in him.”<sup>208</sup> This reward is only for those who love the eternal Being. In the same vein, Jonathan Edwards defines true religion consisting of these holy affections and love for God:

But it is doubtless true, and evident from holy scriptures, that the essence of all true religion lies in holy love; and that in this divine affection—and habitual disposition to it, that light which is the foundation t it, and those things which are its fruits—consist in the whole of religion.<sup>209</sup>

A proper Christian view of education takes into account this definition of virtue and the twin goals of loving God and neighbor.

N. T. Wright contributes to the flourishing theme as he defines “the aim of the Christian life in the present time—the goal which you are meant to be aiming at once you have come to faith, the goal which is within reach even in the present life, anticipating the final life to come—is the life of fully formed, fully flourishing Christian character.”<sup>210</sup>

Wright adds a few more distinctions to human flourishing,<sup>211</sup> but essentially, the good life, *eudaimonia*, is the life marked by love to God and love to neighbor in God.

If the good life is marked by love, then educational pursuits should be forming students for a life of love. Stanley Hauerwas affirms, “Christians should know what their universities are for. They are to shape people in the love of God.”<sup>212</sup> As such, students should be people of a certain character; namely, the double-love to God and neighbor. This

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maxim, “Faith seeking understanding” (*credo et intelligim*). Everyone starts with desire or longing and seeks to understand their first love.

<sup>208</sup> Augustine, *On Christian Teaching*, 25.

<sup>209</sup> Edwards, “The Religious Affections,” 240.

<sup>210</sup> Wright, *After You Believe*, 32.

<sup>211</sup> Namely faith and love. But Wright also states, “Human are called, in and through Jesus Christ, to become what they were always made to be. And what they were made for can be summarized in one single word: glory.” *Ibid.*, 89-96, 186-89. While I agree that humans in Christ are heading to glory, I want to more closely align “glory” as “love.” Love is what is so glorious about an eternal existence.

<sup>212</sup> Hauerwas, *The State of the University*, 91.

is the essential Christian description. To be “great souled,”<sup>213</sup> in the words of Aristotle, is to be “disciplined within, in one’s own breast.”<sup>214</sup> It is not something that can be achieved on a test or attained with a degree. For the Christian, a character of love is internally formed.<sup>215</sup> Fundamental to achievement or goal is a gracious ontology.

In the argument that follows, education is postulated as “artegenic”—that is, for the purpose of forming character or virtue.<sup>216</sup> Wright suggests three things to train and transform character: aim at the right goal; figure out the steps needed to get to that goal; and make those steps habitual, a matter of second nature.<sup>217</sup> However, those steps will depend on the nature of man. Whatever the essential nature of an object is, it will form along those lines.

What Jesus, Augustine, and Edwards propose at the purpose of the Christian life, Hugh of St. Victor defined as the purpose of the university. He writes, “Dear brothers, before all else, love God and then your neighbor, because these are the chief commandments given to us.”<sup>218</sup> A student aiming at a job or being a better person or

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<sup>213</sup> Aristotle, *Nichomachaen Ethics*, Book IV.

<sup>214</sup> Michel de Montaigne, “Of Experience,” *The Essays of Montaigne*, vol. 19, trans. Charles Cotton, ed. William Carew Hazilitt, Project Gutenberg, Ebook, 2006, accessed August 11, 2018, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/3600/3600-h/3600-h.htm#link2HCH0106>.

<sup>215</sup> Nicholas Wolterstorff would slightly disagree with this point. For him, the goal is peace—in Hebrew, *shalom* and *eirene* in Greek. He writes,

The goal of human existence is that man should dwell at peace in all his relationships: with God, with himself, with his fellows, with nature, a peace which is not merely the absence of hostility, though certainly it is that, but a peace which at its highest is enjoyment. To dwell in shalom is to enjoy living before God, to enjoy living in nature, to enjoy living with one’s fellows, to enjoy life with oneself. A condition of shalom is justice, and a component in justice is liberation from oppression. Never can there be shalom without justice. Yet shalom is more than justice. (Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Reason within the Bounds of Religion* [Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1976], 114)

While I agree with the main sentiment, as I argue later in chap. 5, love, or charity, is a more positive and encompassing goal than justice or *shalom*. Love entails *shalom*, but love is comprehensive and central.

<sup>216</sup> Jonathan Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017), 15.

<sup>217</sup> Wright, *After You Believe*, 29.

<sup>218</sup> Hugh of Saint Victor, *Explanation of the Rule of Saint Augustine*, trans. Don Aloysius Smith

growing in intellectual skill has false visions of the good life. As Brooks contends,

Only love impels action. We don't become better because we acquire new information. We become better because we acquire better loves. We don't become what we know. Education is a process of love formation. When you go to a school it should offer you new things to love.<sup>219</sup>

Love—not reasoning, not practice, not job skills—is the primary function of a Christian education. One may call this education for a Christian hedonist.<sup>220</sup>

It is one thing to believe these chief commandments. A student can notionally assent but remain unchanged by his or her direction. It is another thing to do these commandments. True knowledge requires practice. Peter Brown calls practice the “healing process by which love and knowledge are integrated.”<sup>221</sup> The university ought to be set up to help students practice what they are learning, so to truly know them.<sup>222</sup>

Since the heart is wrapped in a body, which is wrapped in a family, which is wrapped in society, colleges need to account for both the conscious influences on human heart, as well as the unconscious influences on the human heart. Colleges sometimes need to invite students into habits and character formation that they cannot fully understand at first. However, when they get involved in the practice, they will start asking these moral serious questions of “why.” The task of education, argues Hunter, “means teaching them the larger designs that could give form and focus to their individual aspirations, so that

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(n.p.: Revelation-Insight, 2008), 24, quoted in Glanzer and Ream, *The Idea of a Christian College*, 111.

<sup>219</sup> Brooks, *The Road to Character*, 211.

<sup>220</sup>This language borrows from John Piper, *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist*. (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2017). In educational philosophy, the college ought to direct students to their highest joy; namely, joy in God.

<sup>221</sup> Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 374.

<sup>222</sup> Smith argues this point on being a disciple of Jesus. He writes that it is not “a matter of getting the right ideas and doctrines and beliefs into your head in order to guarantee proper behavior; rather, it’s a matter of being the kind of person who *loves* rightly—who loves God and neighbor and is oriented to the world by the primacy of that love.” Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 32-33.

they come to understand not only how to be good but why.”<sup>223</sup> Wouter Sanderse argues that a person can “first acquire a taste for and commitment to the good life through habituation” and then they can understand “why” that commitment is worthwhile.” The why question is not asked by a moral skeptic, but by one who is already formed in a tradition and interested in living well. Life is intimately connected belief. Reason alone can make someone a hypocrite; practice alone can make a person groundless. Belief and behavioral habits need to be connected for a meaningful coherent life. It is important the university trains students to know “that” in a particular circumstance; far better if they also know the “why” of the values embodied in his practical decision.<sup>224</sup>

When colleges invite students into the practices, whether that be a chapel service or a classroom practice, they are inviting students into what Dykstra calls “the habitations of the spirit:”

The practices of the Christian faith turn out in the end not primarily to be practices, efforts. They turn out to be places in the contours of our personal and communal lives where a habitation of the Spirit is able to occur. And it is this that is the source of their power and meaning.<sup>225</sup>

Education is about a life the whole college is invited into to participate in the practices of God. Dykstra writes, “It is not an ethical or spiritual striving but rather participation in the educating work of God’s Spirit among us and within us. In this way, education in faith is itself a means of grace.”<sup>226</sup> Dykstra’s reframing of education shifts the focus from mastery, excellence, and striving to faithfulness, receptivity, and trust. In the end, “what do we have that we did not receive?” (1 Cor 4:7). In colleges, there is a privilege and invitation to steward an overarching story, practices that make sense within that narrative,

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<sup>223</sup> Hunter, *The Death of Character*, 227.

<sup>224</sup> See Wouter Sanderse, “Aristotelian Development,” *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 49, no. 3 (2014): 382-98.

<sup>225</sup> Dykstra, *Growing in the Life of Faith*, 64.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

and passing on grace. When students are invited into the practices, they learn that some forms of knowledge are not merely intellectual. Some forms of knowledge are received as gifts and require vulnerability.<sup>227</sup>

### Conclusion

Educators Perry Glanzer and Todd Ream provide a comprehensive purpose of the university that sums up much this chapter's research:

The purpose of the Christian university . . . is to draw a particular community into the stories, settings, virtues, teachers, and practices designed to form within us a life given over to the complicated love of God and neighbor. As a result, the Christian university is called to be a place that cultivates a different vision of the educated person who seeks complex forms of wisdom and imaginative inspiration about how we love.<sup>228</sup>

This summary contains several touchstones of the precedent literature: the university containing implicit stories and virtues; the university as a place of love; the university for moral formation and wisdom; and the good life as the double-love to God and neighbor. A full formation of Christian persons will involve more than a few hours on Sunday morning or a mandatory chapel service. It also will involve more than a few hours of classroom practices during the week. Christianity, and Christian higher education, is more than an intellectual belief system; it is a story students are invited into. This story requires strong, ecclesial centrality, but it also requires a university that models and practices full, embodied Christian community.

This chapter proposes that Christian institutions should have a coherent view of personhood and flourishing that others envy—the research will test reality. Do Christian institutions *actually* have a fully formed, integrated educational philosophy that holistically forms students?

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<sup>227</sup> I am indebted to Dykstra and his comments on Martha Nussbaum's essay, "Love's Knowledge," in *Growing in the Life of Faith*, 141-48.

<sup>228</sup> Perry Glanzer, *The Idea of a Christian College*, 141.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

This chapter describes the methods and procedures used for this research study, which explored the formative aspects of the schools represented in the Christian College Consortium. It includes explanations of the research questions, design overview, population, sample, delimitations, limitations of generalization, instrumentation, and procedures.

#### **Research Question Synopsis**

1. What categories emerge from the literature as defining a comprehensive spectrum of teleological aims in Christian liberal arts colleges?
2. How may current Christian liberal arts colleges be identified across teleological typologies?
  - a. To what extent do the curriculum and publications at Christian liberal arts colleges reflect and/or emphasize one or more distinct teleological priorities with respect to student development and formation?
  - b. How can these institutional alignments be allocated within the developed typology?
3. How do institutional representatives articulate various teleological priorities of student formation?

#### **Design Overview**

The first step in the research was to analyze the precedent literature and track the spectrum of teleological priorities in the research sample. With this step completed, the research was conducted with a two-phased explanatory sequential mixed methods study. The first phase developed a spectrum of typologies to chart institutional priorities regarding student formation. The research included a text-based study of institutional documents and publications. These texts were analyzed with particular attention given to mission statements. With the literature documented and assessed, the second phase

included an interview with an administrator who oversees student development and formation. The interview allowed the text-based data to be further interpreted by a member of the college. Priority was given to presidents and academic officers or provosts. This data was primarily collected through the implementation of a “semi-structured interview.” Steiner Kvale and Svend Brinkman define this term as “an interview with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena.”<sup>1</sup> The strength of gathering data using this protocol stems from the personal nature of the method. Answers could provide a perspective with depth and accuracy that would build of the first phase, as well as elicit meaning from their point of view. It included the personal touch of a conversation, which made the research findings more natural and less scientifically sterile.

Faculty and administrators were chosen from the schools represented in the CCC. Features of the interview included one-on-one interaction by telephone with a single leader. The purpose of this selection was to grasp the overall formation employed by each institution. Interviews were conducted at specific times scheduled by myself and each interviewee. Once agreed upon, the interview was recorded for transcription.

I gained access to the population sample through personal, campus ministry, and higher education personnel networks. The attributes for a qualifying participant included someone with a willingness to share, in a leadership position, and who regularly thinks of the formative aspects of education as a whole. This narrowed the search down to administrative or faculty leaders within the curricular and co-curricular domains. Preference was given to those in higher positions who are forced to think of mission and purposes of the institution as a whole.

Interviews were conducted by the customized instrumentation and with the assistance of personal consultation. The format of the interview consisted of pre-

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<sup>1</sup> Steiner Kvale and Svend Brinkman, *Interviews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2009), 3.

determined, open-ended questions, followed by more specific follow-up inquiry. These follow-up questions assisted the interviewees to further articulate their perspectives on formation, development, and the aims of education. I designed and performed my own content analysis procedures upon completion of all the interviews.

### **Population**

The population under investigation were Christian colleges and universities in the United States of America.

### **Sample**

To eliminate distracting variables, a purposive sampling was utilized. The sample size was limited to the sampled institutions of the Christian College Consortium (CCC). I enlisted 11 of 13 of these institutions, and those are the schools represented in the study. The CCC and subset afforded a stable research group. Founded in 1971, the CCC is a collection of thirteen Christian colleges and universities. It is an organization that serves to collaborate and encourage one another in their respective missions. These institutions represent over 25,000 undergraduate and 7,500 graduate students and employ nearly 3,000 faculty members.<sup>2</sup> The analysis of the documents and websites of each university informed the interviews for less dependence on one person or group. These factors allowed the sample size to provide a rich and deep exploration on the topic of the *telos* in regard education for some of the leading Christian institutions of higher education.

### **Delimitations**

1. The research was delimited to the specific colleges and universities included in the CCC.
2. The research was delimited to the documents produced and published by each college.
3. The research was delimited to those who are professing Christians.

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<sup>2</sup> This information can be found at Christian College Consortium, [www.ccconsortium.org](http://www.ccconsortium.org).

4. The research was delimited to those whose titled position put them in a place of leadership of academic or student life endeavors.

### **Limits of Generalization**

1. The research was to limited to the eleven participating schools of the CCC.
2. The research was limited to Christian liberal arts institutions, and therefore is not generalizable to public institutions, other private universities, or Bible colleges.
3. Since the research was limited to those in leadership positions, the findings of the research are not generalizable to regular teaching faculty or across departments.

### **Instrumentation**

#### **Dissertation Study Participation Agreement**

The first step was to confirm potential participants and qualification for inclusion in this research study. Willingness was affirmed via agreement sent by email, as well as a verbal agreement immediately before the interview occurred (see appendix 1).

#### **Interview Protocol**

With the help of Lesly Andres' *Designing and Doing Survey Research*,<sup>3</sup> I developed my own interview questions based on the research completed in chapter 2. The questions drew heavily on many existing questions asked in the literature (see appendix 2). The semi-structured interviews were organized according to the above instrumentation, which was developed by myself and my advisor, John David Trentham. The duration of each interview was approximately one hour. I recorded each interview followed by transcribing the recording. Research interviews consisted of pre-determined questions followed by more probing questions to elicit further response or clarity.

### **Procedures**

I implemented the research design through two phases. The first phase was to develop a typology of institutional alignment and review of the documents of each college.

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<sup>3</sup> Lesley Andrews, *Designing and Doing Survey Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2012).

Next, the research was condensed, organized, and plotted for phase 2. Phase 2 required contacting potential candidates and obtaining participation agreement; customizing interview protocol; conducting a pilot study; conducting and transcribing the research interviews; and evaluating the findings and draw conclusions.

### **Phase 1**

**Develop typology for institutional alignment.** The first step was to develop a way to organize and map institutional alignment with regard for teleological priorities. Based on the precedent literature, this was done by developing a typology of institutional types.

**Review institution literature.** Colleges publish many written documents and advertises to students based on what they find most important or compelling. A review of websites provided much information to that end. However, catalogues also included stated goals and understandings of education. Finally, the mission and vision statements of the university were especially relied upon to understand the *telos* of the college.

**Plot institutional alignment.** Following a text review, the information was plotted on the agreed upon chart based on significant information, words, and phrases.

### **Phase 2**

The second phase was the interviews with members of the administration, which is based on the interview protocol, but was also informed by phase 1 findings.

**Contact participants and obtain participation agreement.** After selecting individuals at each CCC member school, a contact e-mail was sent to solicit participation. Once agreed upon, a subsequent e-mail was sent including the participation agreement. This target population provided leadership in student formation.

**Customize the interview protocol.** John David Trentham and the ethics committee at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary reviewed the interview questions used to conduct this study. Upon approval, these questions were used in the interview process to assess the priorities of the individual Christian, liberal arts colleges.

**Conduct a pilot study.** A pilot study was completed with a small group of academic leaders in order to validate the interview protocol. This pre-study also sharpened my practice and methods.

**Conduct and transcribe the research interview.** Upon agreement of the participants, I scheduled a date and time for a phone interview. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. I employed the use of an audio recorder during the interview. Following the interview, I transcribed the questions and answers.

**Evaluate findings and draw conclusions.** Upon interview and transcription, I evaluated, compared, and drew conclusions from the data gathered. The findings were reviewed by analyzing the goal of formation with the perceived fundamental nature of the student to evaluate the teleological priorities of each institution. The unity of teleological formation was of particular interest.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

This study explored the goals and formation process at various Christian liberal arts colleges. This chapter reviews the findings in chapter 2 and reports the findings in a text-based study of institutional documents and in semi-structured interviews with a representative from each school in the sample size. As such, research question 1 will largely be a review, while research questions 2 and 3 will include a report and analysis of the data. The compilation of such data is as follows.

#### **Compilation Protocol**

The data for this research was collected from two conduits. First, the various publications from each institution were analyzed, including website and catalogue. An emphasis was given to mission statements at each institution. The second source of information came through personal interviews conducted by me with an institutional representative from each of the participating colleges in the CCC. The participation form and interview protocol for this study are included in appendices 2 and 3.

Data was collected and recorded via the software Evernote, including the audio recording of the interview. Each interview lasted between 35 and 60 minutes. Then, I transcribed the recording of each interview before formulating the findings presented here.

#### **Participation Form Data**

The data collected served primarily to confirm each participant's willingness and agreement to participate in this study. Based on the data collected, the participation form also provided gender and position. These two factors can be seen in tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Gender of representatives

Male	Female
7	4

Table 2. Position of representatives

President	Provost/VPAA	Dean <sup>1</sup>	Professor of Higher Education
2	6	2	1

### Research Question 1

1. What categories emerge from the literature as defining a comprehensive spectrum of teleological aims in Christian liberal arts colleges?

As demonstrated in chapter 2, the precedent literature provided four leanings in institutional alignment. Each age corresponds to a lens with which a college is formed and fashioned.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, each age implicitly suggests a subsequent anthropology, ailment, remedy, hermeneutic, and vision of the good life. In other words, as Parker Palmer explains, “The way we diagnose our student’s condition will determine the kind of remedy we offer.”<sup>3</sup>

In the age of faith, students were viewed as souls who were formed in respect to faith. The problem was sin, and the solution was God-inspired knowledge. Faith commitments drove the educational task as demonstrated by the capstone of theology. All other disciplines gave way to the “queen of the sciences.” There is much to commend in approaching education in a Bible-centric way, but the founders of American universities quickly abandoned this approach to the growing tide of secularism. Often, early education was sectarian, rigid, and restrictive.

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<sup>1</sup> One representative was dean of curriculum and advising.

<sup>2</sup> Parker Palmer develops slightly different categories in *The Courage to Teach* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1998), 90-94. He posits a therapeutic model of community (age of feeling), civic model of community (reason), and a marketing model of community (age of industrialization).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

This growing secularism and the influence of Charles Darwin and Rene Descartes gave birth to the age of reason. In this construct, human beings were viewed materially as “thinking-things” or as *homo cogito*: materialist minds. As is a popular diagnosis, Palmer suggests that the problem is that students are “brain dead” and the dominant treatment is to “drip data bits into our students veins, wheeling comatose from one information source to the next . . . until they have graduated—and paid their tuition in full.”<sup>4</sup> This view of personhood emphasized the cognitive content, the objective reality, and the scientific method. Moral formation became the formation that science produced. The good life was the scientific life. The ethos of the university that prevails at many places is one of suspicion and doubt. The goal is to test one’s reality, for as Plato suggests, “The unexamined life is not worth living.”<sup>5</sup> However, this philosophy has bled into a hyper-examined life where everything is critiqued, and nothing is owned. Often, truth exists out there somewhere, but it has no bearing on a student’s life. In biblical terms, one is “always learning but never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth” (2 Tim 3:7). There is much to appreciate in this time period, but as noted, this age morphed from a right value of reason to what David Brooks calls an “elephantitis of reason.”<sup>6</sup> Christian education has shown itself to be susceptible to the age of reason. In his influential book, Harry Blamires takes an Enlightenment outlook when he suggests, “The Christian mind is the prerequisite to Christian thinking. And Christian thinking is the prerequisite to Christian action.”<sup>7</sup> Blamires adopts a reduced image of personhood and flattened theory

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<sup>4</sup> Palmer, *The Courage to Teach*, 41-42.

<sup>5</sup> Plato, *Plato’s Apology of Socrates: An Interpretation with a New Translation*, trans. Thomas West (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979), 38a5-6.

<sup>6</sup> David Brooks, *The Social Animal: The Hidden Sources of Love, Character, and Achievement* (New York: Random House, 2011), 226.

<sup>7</sup> Harry Blamires, *The Christian Mind: How Should a Christian Think?* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant, 1963), 3.

of knowledge—as if more knowledge produced Christian virtue. However, thinking the correct factoids does not necessarily lead to a Christian way of being in the world.

The next stage was the age of Industrialization, which idolized the economic man, or the utilitarian individual, which was labeled as *homo economicus*. Personhood is reduced to employability; the problem is a non-thriving economy, and the solution is an education that produces job skills. Life is about labor, and the truly flourishing life is the prosperous life. In this instrumental view of education, there is no inherent value in learning; it is solely a means of getting a better job and being a more effective cog in the economy. Much of the attempts in an educational system that lean in this direction are oriented around job skills and market transferability. With this emphasis, colleges cater to employers who want marketable skills post-college, which are of a very specific, disciplinary type. There is no universal curriculum or collective knowledge to be baptized into—education is to build a better resume.

Finally, in the most modern age, schools have shifted to a view of personhood as expressive individuals, or what was referred to as *homo motus*. Here, feelings define humanity and remain supreme, and any attack on one’s understanding of truth is a violent crime. Thus, in the modern university system, physical attacks are justified because speech is an attack against one’s deepest held orthodoxy. The greatest fear and threat are hurt feelings, and the remedy is authenticity (be who you are) and justice. The good life is the comfortable life. Like in the age of faith, to attack orthodoxy can get someone in big trouble. Jonathan Haidt and others established the Heterodox Academy to combat such pervasive ideologies found in the modern university campus.<sup>8</sup>

In *The End of Education*, Neil Postman describes framing narratives that make sense of the world “gods.” He assumes humans are a “god-making species.”<sup>9</sup> In a similar

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<sup>8</sup> See Heterodox Academy, accessed August 4, 2018, <https://heterodoxacademy.org/>.

<sup>9</sup> Neil Postman, *The End of Education: Redefining the Value of School* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 7.

vein, each of the subsequent ages took a good narrative and made it ultimate; in a real sense, they made one aspect of the educational task a “god.” While each age added something unique and needed in the educational task, taken to the extreme they remain in error. Neither reason nor pragmatism nor existentialism can hold the full weight of an educational philosophy. I have argued, drawing on the contributions of James K. A. Smith, that humans are lovers and that the truly happy life, the flourishing life, is found in loving God and loving neighbor. The problem with students is disordered love, and to be truly human is to experience and orientate one’s love to the highest being. The solution is ordered love. This thoroughly Augustinian anthropology and teleology considers the former ages as means to enjoy and love God. Reason serves what one loves. A vocation can serve the kingdom of God. Feelings are important in one’s affection toward God. A proper education holistically forms students in all these ways but does so transformed by the redemptive love of Christ. Gratitude and charity, then, carry the Christian learner for the task of education.

Perhaps Wendell Berry says it best:

The thing being made in a university is humanity. . . . What universities . . . are *mandated* to make or to help to make is human beings in the fullest sense of those words—not just trained workers or knowledgeable citizens but responsible heirs of human culture. . . . Underlying the idea of a university—the bringing together, the combining into one, of all the disciplines—is the idea that good work and good citizenship are the inevitable by-products of the making of a good—that is, a fully developed—human being.<sup>10</sup>

A proper Christian college experience ought to be approached in a humanistic way. That is, it accounts for the reality of humanness and the underlying image of God in each subject. The reality of Christ is not the only truth there is, but it is the orienting truth with which the Christian interprets everything else.

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<sup>10</sup> Wendell Berry, *Home Economics* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1987), 77.

## Research Question 2

2. How may current Christian liberal arts colleges be identified across teleological typologies?
  - a. To what extent do the curriculum and publications at Christian liberal arts colleges reflect and/or emphasize one or more distinct teleological priorities with respect to student development and formation?
  - b. How can these institutional alignments be allocated within the developed typology?

Understanding the historical and philosophical ages of education is necessary to implement and report institutional mission. What follows is a figure to chart where the colleges align on the purpose of education.

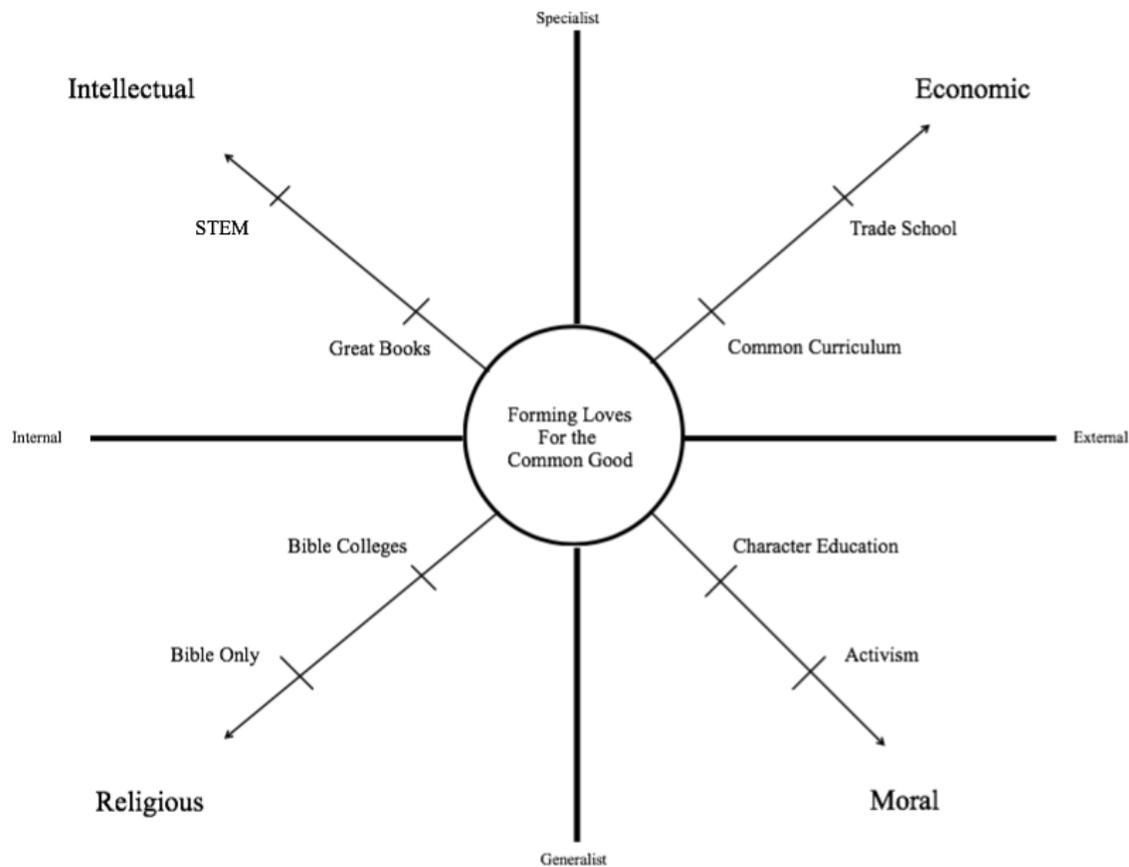


Figure 4. Sosler's measurement of holistic formation

Joseph Clair argues that a holistic, liberal arts education answers four questions: Who or what should I worship? What should I be? What should I know? and What should I

make?<sup>11</sup> Historically, colleges answered the spiritual and moral questions (“who or what should I worship” and “what should I make”), but the modern university has all but lost these fundamental questions. Today’s college majors on the economic and intellectual questions to the exclusion of the earlier two. In these questions, one can see a mirror of the ages discussed in the historical and philosophical section.

In the bottom left grid is the religious concerns of a college. By religious, it can take the form of Christianity or otherwise. It is dealing with ultimate questions. This spectrum corresponds to the age of faith, and the purpose the university serves is the church. The Bible college is one expression of the spiritual orientation. The Bible college movement was founded to supply churches with better educated laity and Sunday school teachers. At its worst manifestation, it is a rejection of all other types of knowledge but the Bible and morphs into a form of anti-intellectualism. This philosophy takes primary, “who or what should I worship” to the exclusion of the other necessary questions.

The top left grid tracks the intellectual concerns of a college, which corresponds to the age of reason. Drawing from the great books program and into the scientism of today, the purpose of the university is intellectual stimulation. Though great books and STEM degrees are usually at odds, both value the shared intellectual foundations of the culture. In this understanding, the university follows the cues of Greco-Roman education that forms students for the *polis* or for citizenship. At its best, the concern of the Great Books program is the common knowledge, language, and stories that shape civilization that an educated public should know. At its worst, the intellect grows and overpowers all other human faculties that leads to a strict empiricism that only values STEM degrees and research.<sup>12</sup> All other knowledge becomes frivolous. The spiritual and the intellectual are

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<sup>11</sup> Joseph Clair, *On Education, Formation, Citizenship, and the Lost Purpose of Learning* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 1-33.

<sup>12</sup> The US Department of Education has a webpage dedicated to the advancement of “science.” The first thing listed is a quote from Barack Obama: “[Science] is more than a school subject, or the periodic table, or the properties of waves. It is an approach to the world, a critical way to understand and

the more historically-rooted purposes of the university. They are forming the cognitive and affective domains of knowledge; thus, figure 4 labels this the more internal side of education.

In the top right, the question of “what will I make?” reigns supreme, which may be the most common theme on today’s college campus. This view instrumentalizes education: education is for a job. The common curriculum becomes fragmented pieces of knowledge with no holistic core holding them together. The main function of the college is to prepare a student for a job, particularly a high wage job. Thus, this model of college education differs only slightly from a trade school. College is for job training and serves the economy. This corresponds to the age of industrialization. In the extreme, take the mission statement of DeVry University:

The mission of DeVry University is to foster student learning through high-quality, career-oriented education integrating technology, science, business and the arts. The university delivers practitioner-oriented undergraduate and graduate programs onsite and online to meet the needs of a diverse and geographically dispersed student population.<sup>13</sup>

As seen, career-orientation and practice are the emphasis. The intellectual and economic concerns are on the more “objective” scale in the sense that they are both based on the German research universities.

Lastly, in the bottom right hand corner are the moral questions. “What should I be” corresponds to the age of feeling. Though the parallel is not quite as neat, the moral question entails both character education at its best and a “pure ideology” of social justice warriors at its worst. It can form people who are moral or who take their morality as the essence of their identity and seeks to silence anyone who disagrees. Both stem from moral concerns. In this understanding, the university serves the customer and tries not to offend

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explore and engage with the world, and then have the capacity to change that world. “Science, Technology, Engineering and Math: Education for Global Leadership,” accessed December 28, 2017. [www.ed.gov/stem](http://www.ed.gov/stem).

<sup>13</sup> “DeVry University, “Mission and Purpose,” accessed August 4, 2018, <https://www.devry.edu/academics/devry-mission.html>.

anyone. This sentiment can be seen in its extreme form in some progressive university departments. A good example of this theory taken to extremity is gender studies departments. Obviously, these institutions are outside of the study sample of Christian higher education, but the departments are indicative of when feelings and morality take over the educational task. Activism and social justice become part of mission statements in gender and women studies department. Having said that, in right relation, the spiritual and moral can be seen as the soul or spirit of the university—the underbelly that roots the more objective study.<sup>14</sup> In most of the precedent literature, research shows that these categories are lost on the modern university. This accounts for the more “subjective” or “personal” scale.

I have argued that these penultimate questions are necessary but insufficient. The crucial question the college must answer is, “What do I love?” In the tradition of Jesus and Augustine after him, I answered: God and neighbor. This response is not to the neglect of these other important questions and ages but seeks to root these questions in a more robust framework. Alan Jacobs proposes, “Our goal as adults is not to love all books alike, or as few as possible, but rather to love as widely and as well as our limited selves will allow.”<sup>15</sup> Each age refuses to be penultimate—they seek ultimate status, and one can see how each age takes a good thing and it eventually becomes divine status. This also means that the university serves the kingdom of God in seeking shalom. It is not in the narrow interest of political groups of citizenship, the scientism of intellectuals, or the benefit of solely the church. Rather, this understanding considers all these categories and

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<sup>14</sup> Literature including Alexander Astin et al., *Cultivating the Spirit: How College Can Enhance Students’ Inner Lives* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011); and George Marsden, *The Soul of the American University* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), highlight the loss of these concerns in the university.

<sup>15</sup> Alan Jacobs, *The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 135.

leads to a fuller education. Education should seek to prosper the church fundamentally, but also the city, the state, the self, and the economy.

In reporting the research, I charted different “cues” or buzz words to get a sense of where the institutions lean on the purpose, nature, and *telos* of the university. My intention in reporting institutional alignment along the spectrum is to see where an institution leans in regard to purpose. For example, a school’s literature and website advertising how much money a student can make upon graduation would be a mark in the economic section. If the school trains students to be “critical thinkers,” then this would be a mark in the intellectual spectrum. Neither of these marks are bad, but this can develop a sense of where a college leans toward their formative priorities with the hope that a college would holistically value every section.

### **Mission Statements**

The first item analyzed was mission statements, as mission statements are typically the official purpose and goals of a university. When analyzing, I developed “cue” words and placed them in a particular age or spectrum according to Sosler’s Measurement of Institutional Alignment. A few words were difficult to chart, such as *leadership* and *service*. Even more difficult, where should *servant leader* be assigned? I assigned *leadership* in the economic and *service* in the age of moral. For *servant leader*, each spectrum received one point. Another distressing term that was common was the *community/world* divide. Should universities serve the world or serve their community? That is a debate all its own. However, for the sake of this research, *world* was assigned into the economic category (with a desire for world market, global citizens) and *community* in the moral spectrum. A final difficulty was where to plot *kingdom*. *Kingdom* is a complex word with a complex history.<sup>16</sup> With such a rich and diverse meaning, it could be plotted

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<sup>16</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr investigates these complexities in *The Kingdom of God in America* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University, 1988).

in several different categories depending on the definition. However, for the sake of this research, I took *kingdom* references charitably and assumed they were referring to Christ’s reign over all of life and plotted it in the “holistic” category.

One further point to note was that I did not track identity or tradition. For example, I did not chart whether an institution described itself denominationally or referred to “students” or “men and women.” There is a surprising lack of identity formation complexity in these mission statements; that is, most refer to forming students in some sense and leave out roles of church member, spouse, parent, etc. However, identity markers are not the subject of the research at hand. As seen in table 3, there is a relatively even spread across the spectrum. Institutionally, there seems to be holism in the educational endeavor.

Table 3. Mission statement assessment

Religious	Intellectual	Economic	Moral	Holistic
20 <sup>17</sup>	22 <sup>18</sup>	16 <sup>19</sup>	19 <sup>20</sup>	11 <sup>21</sup>

### Website/Catalogue/Publications

The various other institutional publications tell a slightly different story. It is important to emphasize that the research suggests varying degrees of holism. It is not that

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<sup>17</sup> Words include Wesleyan-holiness tradition, spiritual vitality, the church, cause of Christ, Christ-centered, spiritually, faith commitments, based on biblical faith, serving the church, minister Christ’s redemptive love, Christian faithfulness, for Jesus Christ, Christian.

<sup>18</sup> Words include learning, academic, society, think with clarity, academically, intellectual maturity, academically challenging, scholar, truth, intellectual, lifelong learning, to think, thoughtful scholars, academy.

<sup>19</sup> Words include society, professionally, leadership roles, lead, labor, world, servant leaders, vocational, improve society.

<sup>20</sup> Words include service, engage culture, act with integrity, Christian character, lifestyle of service, diverse, community, emotional, live like Christians, grateful servants.

<sup>21</sup> Words include Christian liberal arts, liberating arts and sciences, wisdom, whole person, in all schools and in every discipline, development of whole and effective Christians.

these institutions lack holistic understandings of human being and the educational task, but within holism, there tends to be certain leanings of institutions.

I tracked this reporting differently than the mission statements. While the mission statement report was more quantitative, this section of text-based study is more qualitative—not least because it would take years to sort through every web page and every page of the institution’s catalogues. For this section, I looked at an institution’s core commitments, vision statements if provided, and explanation of their general education/core curriculum, etc., to get a sense of emphasis. Also included were highlights on the homepage of their website and how each college described student life and experience, etc. All of this evidence provided me a template to evaluate the goals and purposes of a given institution (see table 4).

Table 4. Alignment according to institutional documents

Religious and Moral	Intellect and Economic	Intellectual and Moral	Religious and Intellectual
Asbury	George Fox	Malone	Taylor
Greenville	Gordon	Westmont	Wheaton
	Houghton	Messiah	Trinity

Within these leanings, the research found five institutions that provided a robust, diverse, and whole educational purpose: Asbury, Wheaton, Greenville, Messiah, and Westmont. Again, this is not to say that other institutions did not emphasize holism, but these institutions referenced “educate the whole person,” as Wheaton College stresses.<sup>22</sup> In Westmont College’s mission statement, one can discern the multiple layers and cues of holistic education: “Westmont College is an undergraduate, residential, Christian, liberal arts community serving God’s kingdom by cultivating thoughtful scholars, grateful

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<sup>22</sup> Phillip Graham, “The Mission of Wheaton College,” accessed May 28, 2018, <https://www.wheaton.edu/about-wheaton/why-wheaton/mission/>.

servants and faithful leaders for global engagement with the academy, church and world.”<sup>23</sup> There is emphasis on Christian, church, mind, leaders, servants, world, and academy all wrapped in the holism of the liberal arts and God’s kingdom. Greenville’s mission page on their website has a video highlighting “education for love.”<sup>24</sup> These five institutions excelled at both centering the purpose of the institutional and referring to diverse aspects of personhood and development.

As previously mentioned, these institutions are all centered in the liberal arts tradition, which focuses on holistic learning and most have some documentation and rationale for a holistic education. However, within holistic education, these colleges seem to have a niche or emphasis, as reported in table 4. For example, Asbury, closely aligned with the Wesleyan tradition, tends to emphasize serving the church slightly more than other institutions. Greenville, with a preferential option for the poor (again in the Wesleyan tradition) focuses on character formation more than content mastery or job skill. No institution neglects or disregards any formational category, but they do lean or align in different ways.

### **Other Themes of Note**

A few other points emerged from the research that do not fit easily into what has already been mentioned.

**Lack of heart/soul/affections/love.** Perhaps most significantly, in thinking about anthropology and ontology, a founding biblical conviction is that humans exist as fundamentally hearts or souls. People are not only souls, but the heart is foundational and

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<sup>23</sup> Westmont College, “Mission,” accessed May 30, 2018, <https://www.westmont.edu/about/community-commitments/mission>.

<sup>24</sup> Greenville University, “Mission and Philosophy,” accessed May 28, 2018, [https://www.greenville.edu/about/mission\\_and\\_philosophy/](https://www.greenville.edu/about/mission_and_philosophy/).

responsible. However, in the mission statements and literature review, only four institutions mentioned heart/soul and only one institution mentioned the priority of love.

**The relation between academics and spiritual growth.** Another interesting aspect to notice is the connection between the mind and the spirit. Nine out of eleven mission statements mention some sort of relation between academics and spiritual development. The catalogue and websites consistently mentioned and fostered the connection made in the mission statements. For example, the mission of Asbury College is “to equip men and women, through a commitment to academic excellence and spiritual vitality, for a lifetime of learning, leading, and service.”<sup>25</sup> Gordon College “strives to graduate men and women distinguished by intellectual maturity and Christian character.”<sup>26</sup> What was unclear, and perhaps what cannot be adequately addressed in a catalogue or website, is if or how these two aspects of personhood relate. Are they two separate and twin goals each pursued on its own? Does academic maturity lead toward spiritual vitality? Does spiritual development ground and foster academic rigor? How an institution answers the relation between faith and learning is fundamental to how they go about the task of education. These terms were used frequently, and rightfully so, but I was left wanting on how to interpret these terms.

**Emphasis on residential “home.”** One of the unique things about the college experience is living among a mass of people within years of age of each other. It is a lifestyle enclave that presents mostly wonderful opportunities for formation and transformation. One of the consistent advertisements on college websites was the institution as “home” or where you are “known” or a “close-knit community.” Residence

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<sup>25</sup> Asbury University, “Vision,” accessed May 28, 2018, <https://www.asbury.edu/about/vision/>.

<sup>26</sup> Gordon College, “Mission,” accessed June 5, 2018, <https://www.gordon.edu/mission>.

life is those things and more. However, I wonder how helpful the idea of “home” is for collegiate life centered on education.

Alan Jacobs wrote about this on the popular blog “The American Conservative.” In a post titled, “Safe Homes and Public Individuality at Yale,” Jacobs comments on a recent controversy that erupted on Yale’s campus when students demanded the resignation of Dr. Christakis when she issued a letter stating she would not dictate what was culturally appropriate Halloween attire.<sup>27</sup> This can seem rather silly to an outsider, but as one student wrote, “She marginalized many students of color in what is supposed to be their home.”<sup>28</sup> Jacobs is worth quoting at length on this point:

But Silliman College is *not* “supposed to be their home.” It is a residential college in a university, a place where people from all over the world, from a wide range of social backgrounds, and with a wide range of interests and abilities, come to live together *temporarily*, for about 30 weeks a year, before moving on to their careers. It is an essentially public space, though with controls on ingress and egress to prevent chaos and foster friendship and fellowship. . . . Residential colleges have long been defended as transitional spaces between the world of home and a fully independent adult life, and it would be a great mistake to think of them as merely continuing the *ethos* of home. That would leave young people totally unprepared for that “adult life,” which I think we might, for the purposes of this discussion, define as that period of one’s existence during which there is no one to run to to demand control over other people’s Halloween costumes.<sup>29</sup>

It is a noble thing to create a sense of home, especially for those who will live away from their home for perhaps the first time in their life. Community is a necessary thing, and the Christian community ought to be at the forefront of a young person’s mind. However, college is not home. As Jacobs suggests, it is a transitional space—a space where much formation happens, where memories are made and life is lived—but a transition nonetheless.

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<sup>27</sup> Alan Jacobs, “Safe Homes and Public Individuality at Yale,” *The American Conservative*, November 9, 2015, accessed August 4, 2018, <https://www.theamericanconservative.com/jacobs/safe-homes-and-public-individuality-at-yale/>.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

## **Summary**

In conclusion, the text-based portion of the study found a generally holistic purpose in regards to the sample institutions as a whole. It seems that Christian liberal arts colleges are educating liberally when taken as a whole. However, when one narrows in on each institution, one finds certain institutional leanings in regards to mission and formation. There were three other themes discovered in the documental analysis: the lack of heart/soul/love in regards to ontology, a lack of clarity in the relationship between academics and spiritual formation, and an emphasis on college as “home.”

### **Research Question 3**

3. How do institutional leaders articulate various teleological priorities of student formation?

The final stage of the research was a qualitative look at how institutional representatives at each of the colleges answered the questions that have been explored thus far—that is to ask, how does a school’s leadership align or differ from what the institution says it values in the process of formation and education? To discover the answer, as stated in chapter 3, an interview was conducted with each of the eleven colleges over the course of two months. What emerged from the research was a disparate range of answers, all of which proved helpful as well as delightful conversation. The first two questions dealt with the purpose of the university, the ideal graduate that an institution forms, and then the next series of questions was on the plan to form students in that ideal direction and the obstacles that get in the way.

## **Purpose**

In both purpose and ideal student, there was a plethora of diverse answers, as seen in table 5. In this table, one will find a summary that gets to the heart of how each institutional representative articulated the purpose of their respective college.

Four institutions proved exceptional in regard to the holistic purpose of college education: George Fox, Messiah, Westmont, and Wheaton. These institutions provided

answers that were diverse in their goals but had a holism that holds the various goals together—that is, they mentioned various categories of formation and a whole student approach.

The research with representatives also revealed what was found in the text-based study: each institution has elements of wholeness in their educational approach with certain leanings. To say this is not to cast judgement as wrong or bad, but to highlight differences in the marketplace of Christian higher education.<sup>30</sup> For example, from the interviews, Gordon leaned toward the intellectual spectrum. When asked the purpose of the university, generally and then specific to their institution, the representative responded by saying, “To serve society . . . by developing an educated populace and to contribute to society by being productive economically independent people.” Specifically, at Gordon, the representative responded, “Same purpose but with more intentionality on reflecting on the Christian perspectives on doing that. So, it’s developing a Christian mind and approach to being a productive member of society, I suppose.” Seen here is both intellectual and economic emphasis, but the priority goes to the mind.

At another institution, like Greenville, the emphasis slightly shifts. The research already found that Greenville has a preferential option for the poor in following their Wesleyan heritage. This fact brings with it different priorities. Following the findings in the institutional documents, their emphasis in purpose was more toward the moral and character realm. In fact, the interview mentioned the precedence of educating students “for life in ways that extend beyond simply the marketplace and would incorporate what I call a vocational understanding or aspect.” The Greenville representative was not critical of the economic aspect (people need jobs) but positing the limitation of purely economic

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<sup>30</sup> I do not like to use economic terms with regard to the academy, but many view colleges in that way, and I cannot ignore that fact. Colleges do have to compete in the marketplace for niche or specialty, whether they want to or not.

considerations. Life, and especially Christian life, is much deeper and more complex than prosperity in career.

Table 5. Purpose of institution

Institution	Purpose
Asbury	Serving economy and society with life of piety and holiness
George Fox	Education of whole student
Gordon	Serve society with Christian mind
Greenville	Character and service
Houghton	Christ-centered academics
Malone	Service to church, community, world through dissemination of knowledge
Messiah	Prepare and form students intellectually, personally, ethically
Taylor	Cultivation of created potential
Trinity	Prepare for life by Christlikeness
Westmont	Development, preparation, pursuit of truth through reflection
Wheaton	Training, preparation, formation

## Ideal

It is no surprise that since there is difference in purpose, there is a resulting contrast in ideal. Table 6 summarizes some key findings without reporting the full answer. In most every case, there is a direct line between purpose and ideal. For example, Trinity’s purpose is to prepare for a life of Christlikeness, and their representative mentioned Luke 2:52 as the ideal: growth and maturity “in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.” At a college closely aligned with the seminary on campus, the priority of the Bible and Christ is evident. At a place like Taylor, the purpose of the college as given by the representative is the cultivation of a student’s created potential. The ideal student is one who has realized the created potential and is working to cultivate that gifting. At Malone, the purpose is to serve a plethora of sources through the dissemination of knowledge. The ideal student is one who takes that knowledge and has the characteristics to be meaningfully employed. Intellectual formation tied to economic employment can be clearly seen in the stage from the age of reason to the age of industry.

Table 6. Purpose versus ideal graduates of institution

Institution	Purpose	Ideal Graduate
Asbury	Serving economy and society with life of piety and holiness	Job market and relationships
George Fox	Education of whole student	Service minded and globally engaged
Gordon	Serve society with Christian mind	Intellectually mature, leadership
Greenville	Character and service	Life of service
Houghton	Christ-centered academics	Broad knowledge of world with discipline expertise
Malone	Service to church, community, world through dissemination of knowledge	Meaningfully employed
Messiah	Prepare and form students intellectually, personally, ethically	Growth, faithful presence
Taylor	Cultivation of created potential	Awareness of gifting
Trinity	Prepare for life by Christlikeness	Luke 2:52: holistic maturity
Westmont	Development, preparation, pursuit of truth through reflection	Diversity of ideals, moral imagination
Wheaton	Training, preparation, formation	Holistic learning, growth in wisdom, mature in character

### Formation

With the purpose of a college and the ideal student in mind—that is, with *telos* in mind—how do colleges go about forming students? A popular answer was, to no surprise, the curricular and co-curricular: what happens inside the classroom and what happens outside the classroom. Both elements prove formative to a student’s experience at college. However, within and outside the classroom, several themes emerge of particular note.

**Faculty.** In terms of classroom experiences that are formative on a student’s life, seven out of eleven colleges referenced a faculty member who cared and showed concern for students. For example, the representative from Messiah could be indicative of those seven schools:

Without a doubt, a professor of the class makes a difference. . . . It’s clear that a faculty member who creates space for real dialogue, for questions and discussions and is accessible and approachable makes a difference. So, I don’t think you can separate things that come from the pedagogy of professors generating interest in students and learning.

This statement reflects the recent findings in a study done by researchers at Purdue University and the Lumina Foundation. Gallup reports that the type of institution students attend matters less than what they experience there.<sup>31</sup> The study finds,

If graduates recalled having a professor who cared about them as a person, made them excited about learning, and encouraged them to pursue their dreams, their odds of being engaged at work more than doubled, as did their odds of thriving in all aspects of their well-being.<sup>32</sup>

Furthermore, the study goes on to report that if people are engaged at work, they are 4.6 times more likely to be thriving in all areas of well-being. In short, faculty matters not just for students thriving in college but for life after college, as well.

**Lack of church/chapel.** Residence life appeared foundational in the text-based portion of the research, and many representatives (eight out of eleven) mentioned the formative aspects of dorm life. From Houghton’s small, rural campus to Gordon’s northeast, urban-area feel, living together in the college years often proves a life-changing experience. Deep, intense community is a societal, cultural formation. Referring back to chapter 1, a foundational conviction of anthropology was that the heart is responsible, but the culture and society impacts the heart’s desire. Where one lives can provide great avenues of formation—and deformation.

The most significant findings are not what representatives said, but what they did not say. When asked, “What experiences outside of the classroom would students point to as most influential in their college career?,” only four schools mentioned chapel and no one mentioned church. In only one interview did someone mention church in the

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<sup>31</sup> Julie Ray and Stephanie Kafka, “Life in College Matters for Life After College,” May 6, 2014, accessed July 2, 2018, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/168848/life-college-matters-life-college.aspx>.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

entire interview,<sup>33</sup> and another interviewee lamented the loss of formational influence of the local church. The latter clearly articulated such a loss:

It does seem to me that since the mid to late 90s when I was a teenager and college student, that church plays less of a role now in influencing and shaping college students while they're away from home. And I see now with my students a lot of them that they never really find a home church while they're here. They just kind of bounce around, or you know, they'll find something but they're very much on the edges and on the periphery, which is always true for some percentage of the public. I do think that that has changed. And so, what is increasingly less influential I think would be the role of like a local church and that community as a college student. I think that has decreased over the years. I do think we have on campus done a better job with spiritual formation and really intentional systematic teaching of chapel and other things. So, they're getting, they're going to church on Sundays, and they're getting fed. But I do think like, I do see that it's just not influential. And I mourn when I think about that.

There may be a connection between the absence of a defined relationship between faith and learning and the loss of the local church's formation. I previously asked, "How does the local church and a college relate?" The research shows this question a prevalent issue. Is the university the academic and intellectual arm of the church? Is it a parallel institution? Is a college its own formational mechanism? Is it church for the undergraduate years—a four-year intermission and replacement? However one answers that question, it seems confusing to college students. It is no real wonder, then, that without a local church, many leave the church after college.

Whatever the case may be on why these numbers exist, and there are many,<sup>34</sup> it is clear that James K. A. Smith's critique of the university holds up: colleges seem not to be void of a consistent, well-planned liturgy. There is a lack of intentional liturgies of college life with the flourishing, ideal student in mind. A whole other thesis could be

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<sup>33</sup> The context was discussing a small campus and seeing their professors at church. The other times church is mentioned in interviews is how colleges serve the church or a student's experience at church previous to college. So, it seems that church is referenced as past and future with not much given to the local church's present formation.

<sup>34</sup> For example, representatives are likely thinking in the realm of institutional life rather than a student's life, so a lack of substantial answers could be due to this fact. However, it is telling that colleges seem *not* to be thinking about the local church.

written on this topic with proposals for change and modification, but it is a necessary element of formation that colleges ought not forsake or forget.

**Deformation.** With the purpose of the college and the ideal student in mind, the research reveals an emphasis on faculty in a student’s classroom experience and a plethora of student life activities outside of the classroom. One thing colleges lack is an intentional liturgical formation. The final question to investigate on matters of research question 3 is what obstacles colleges face in forming students in the ideal direction.

In terms of quantity, the interviewees replied that economic challenges were one of the hardest barriers to overcome: both for students and the institution. The rise of college tuition has been reported multiple times, and smaller, Christian, liberal arts colleges are not immune to such trends and the resulting struggle. This forces students to community colleges for their “general education” courses, and much of the formational influence of an intentional Christian curriculum is lost. Students having to work two jobs while in school results in less time to study and less time to experience residential life in Christian community or other formative aspects of college life.

The next most common answer from representatives was the influence of technology, with six institutions reporting its destructive power. Again, the deformative aspects of technology is no novel finding. Today’s culture is a distracted age. The warring influence of notifications, the urge to be up on the latest news, the sheer magnitude and deluge of information at a student’s finger tips: all of these impact a student’s learning. Education often becomes edutainment, because teachers are at war vying for attention. Self-help teacher books focus on “engaging” and “fun” material to make class “technologically savvy” and “interactive”—all as a desperate cry to make education something it is not—namely, entertainment. This is not to say that education should not be engaging or interactive or even fun, but education has a broader, deeper goal. Furthermore, it often plays into the very deformative aspects that an education ought to be correcting: students become distracted not with Netflix but with Prezi presentations.

Meaningful formation, whether that be reading or writing, requires deep attention. Additionally, any spiritual activity requires attention, whether that be prayer or listening to a sermon, or something as mundane as having a conversation. Pascal's indictment is as true today as it was nearly 400 years ago: "I have often said that the sole cause of man's unhappiness is that he does not know to stay quietly in his own room."<sup>35</sup> In fact, student life services often exacerbate this problem. Students come into college overscheduled and over-worked and over-entertained, and the college experience never teaches them to break that cycle. They never have to "stay quietly in his own room," that is, students never have to be bored. How is that for college recruiting?

However, distraction through a busy schedule or through a device leads to another leading cause of deformation: anxiety and mental health issues. Four schools mentioned the uptick of request for mental health services at their institution. Yet again, this is no new phenomenon to report. Many studies concur with the findings here: students are anxious and depressed. Douglas Groothuis suggests such connection between distraction and mental health:

The compulsive search for diversion is often an attempt to escape the wretchedness of life. We have great difficulty being quiet in our rooms, when the television or computer screen offers a riot of possible stimulation. Postmodern people are perpetually restless; they frequently seek solace in diversion instead of satisfaction in truth. As Pascal said, "Our nature consists in movement; absolute rest is death." The postmodern condition is one of oversaturation and over-stimulation, and this caters to our propensity to divert ourselves from pursuing higher realities.<sup>36</sup>

Mental health is as complex as people are; therefore, I do not mean to make judgements about why the current culture is more prone to mental illness. However, diversion may be one possibility of at least some mental illness. At the very least, Christian colleges who are pursuing those higher ideals and are committed to forming students in a flourishing direction ought to take into consideration both distraction and mental issues as they go

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<sup>35</sup> Blaise Pascal, *Pensees*, trans. A. J. Krailsheimer (New York: Penguin Books, 1995), 136.

<sup>36</sup> Douglas Groothuis, "Why Truth Matters Most: An Apologetic for Truth-Seeking in Postmodern Times," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 47, no. 3 (September 2004): 453.

about their task. In many ways, the college years are a leisurely time to investigate and commit to higher ideals to establish a life for life.

### **Summary**

The conversations with institutional representatives proved enlightening in understanding the goal to which universities are aiming, the process of formation, and the roadblocks encountered on the way. How a college defines its purpose will relate closely to the ideal student they are attempting to form. Many schools referenced the importance of both the curricular and co-curricular on forming a student in that direction with faculty members and dorm life being a big influence on a young person's life. A significant lack is the role of chapel and particular the local church on a student's formation. Perhaps the finding of a lack of clarity on academics and spiritual formation in the text-based portion has direct bearing on the lack of significant formation of a worshipping body on a student during the undergraduate years. Lastly, colleges and universities fight the uphill battle of financial restraints and technological distraction in forming students for the good life.

### **Conclusion**

The research findings are important in understanding the contemporary college, and most especially Christian colleges. The Christian campus today has been formed by the history that came before it. This fact gives certain leanings to institutions, while all have a centering hold aligning with their liberal arts identity. How an institution defines its purpose is often connected with their ideal student, which reflects in how they form students through both the curricular and co-curricular. Further, the research finds many hindrances in forming students in the ideal direction, whether that ideal be academic, moral, economic, or ecclesial.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS

This study explored the landscape of higher education in regard to teleology, as well as how Christian colleges view and form students. Much has been written on both subjects, the purpose of the university and Christian formation in college, however, this study sought to bring empirical evidence into the conversation—that is, how do colleges and representatives articulate goals of formation. If there truly is a “multiversity,” do colleges agree? From the analysis of the findings found in the previous chapter, this chapter seeks to extrapolate conclusions, including research implications, applications, limitations, and suggestions for further research.

#### **Research Purpose and Questions**

This study sought to investigate the various teleological priorities in various Christian liberal arts colleges and universities. This purpose used the following three research questions to investigate:

1. What categories emerge from the literature as defining a comprehensive spectrum of teleological aims in Christian liberal arts colleges?
2. How may current Christian liberal arts colleges be identified according to the emergent teleological typologies?
  - a. To what extent do the curriculum and publications at Christian liberal arts colleges reflect and/or emphasize one or more distinct teleological priorities with respect to student development and formation?
  - b. How can these institutional alignments be allocated within the developed typology?
3. How do institutional representatives articulate various teleological priorities of student formation?

## Research Implications

This section discusses the findings and resulting implications of this research following the three research questions. What follows is a summary from my evaluation of the research:

1. Christian colleges have given much thought to purpose and mission but less thought to ontology and anthropology.
2. Christian colleges have the resources to pursue wisdom in all of life, which means Christian character and belief should be pursued, not at the exclusion of knowledge and skill, but as the foundation for it.
3. Since God created all things, a holistic education of the world includes a passion for truth, beauty, and goodness.
4. The undergraduate years are a time to form Christian commitments.
5. The hiring of faculty is likely the most important decision a college makes.

### Research Implications Drawn from Research Data

In the precedent literature, I suggested that humanity exists fundamentally as lovers. The good life to which God is preparing his people is to love God supremely and to love their neighbor in God. This goal considers a holistic view of the person, human flourishing, and educational influence. The question that arises is, What does this look like in educational practice? The intent of the following list is suggestive rather than comprehensive.

**Christian colleges have given much thought to purpose and mission but less thought to ontology and anthropology.** In chapter 2, I made a lengthy argument that students should be foundationally viewed as lovers over and against popular narratives of intellect, or skill, or feelings. As seen from how colleges describe students, few view students as those who primarily love. This is lamentable, as Jonathan Pennington follows the Greco-Roman tradition when he posits, “*Actio sequitur esse*”—action follows

essence.<sup>1</sup> What one does is the fruit of who one is. If this idea is true, then how a college views its students is of utmost importance. The ontology is just as important as teleology. An institution can have the right goal but with a skewed view of personhood, its methods can be distorted. For example, forming students for a life of character is a noble pursuit, but if the view of a student is as a cognition, then a teacher will go about that goal by imparting true ethical facts, as if knowing true things or reasoning the right way results in doing the right thing. However, as was argued in chapter 2, if an institution views the student body as lovers, who love all sorts of different things but whose love is finally at rest in God, then the means the institution uses can be correctly applied to love's formation.

**Christian colleges have the resources to pursue wisdom in all of life, which means Christian character and belief should be pursued, not at the exclusion of knowledge and skill, but as the foundation for it.** Picking up on many of the themes previously discussed in the research, Bret J. Saunders explains what education is:

Education is different from job training. Education is for making you the kind of person who will pursue the true, the good, and beautiful regardless of how you “make a living” and how much you make. Education is the shaping of the imagination and the filling of the heart.<sup>2</sup>

This is a perfect summary of the second implication: education is creating a certain type of person—a wise person with character.

In an interview with *Relevant Magazine*, president of The King's College, Gregory Thornbury, speaks on the need for a robust liberal arts education: “But I think wisdom is the thing that's in shortest supply, not information or techniques. And that's

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<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017), 59.

<sup>2</sup> Bret J. Saunders, “The Worlds in a Grain of Sand,” *Touchstone Magazine*, January/February 2017, 19.

where most modern, kind of delivery-method type of education gets wrong.”<sup>3</sup> Students need to learn how to be human and to live life well. A recent study from Linked-In reports that a majority of Millennials in the workplace will change jobs four times in their first years of employment.<sup>4</sup> Some of this may stem from a generation terrified of commitment,<sup>5</sup> but another study suggests the new workplace will change careers (not jobs within the same field) eight times.<sup>6</sup> The technological age and increasing automation may only enhance this trend. Some argue that higher education needs to be made shorter, more geared toward job skills, because there will be a wave of continuing education or re-education with shifts in the job market.

However, another way forward is by going back to the ancient past. Perhaps more technical job training and skill acquisition is how culture arrived at its current moment. Perhaps students do not need more narrow skills but broader ones. Carol Quinn in the *Washington Times* suggests:

Today’s graduates need broadly transferable skills—how to communicate, build a team in a multicultural work environment, tackle an intractable problem, analyze complex data and make timely decisions with imperfect information. Similarly, graduates need the work ethic and resilience to learn new fields quickly, so that they can recognize and adjust to unpredictable shifts in our global economy and world. And to lead in a pluralistic, free society, they need deeply rooted humane instincts: compassion, intellectual curiosity, self-awareness, integrity and moral courage. These are not circumscribed technical skills. These are character attributes and habits of mind that will enable our nation’s children to think critically, communicate clearly,

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<sup>3</sup> Gregory Thornbury, “Educating for the Common Good,” *Relevant Magazine*, December 2016, accessed December 27, 2017, <https://relevantmagazine.com/relevant-u/education-common-good>.

<sup>4</sup> Guy Berger, “Will This Year’s College Grads Job-Hop More than Previous Grads?” *Linked-In*, April 12, 2016, accessed August 12, 2018, <https://blog.linkedin.com/2016/04/12/will-this-year-s-college-grads-job-hop-more-than-previous-grads>.

<sup>5</sup> Laura Stepp roots the inability to commit to the sexual culture. She argues that the growing trend of the “hook-up” culture with no commitment and spontaneous action affect one’s ability to commit to other relationships and institutions. Laura Sessions Stepp, *Unhooked: How Young Women Pursue Sex, Delay Love and Lose at Both* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2008).

<sup>6</sup> Noted in Tim Clydesdale, *The Purposeful Graduate Why Colleges Must Talk to Students about Vocation* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2015), 109.

and design ethical, sustainable solutions to societal challenges we cannot yet imagine.<sup>7</sup>

In other words, Quinn affirms what Thornbury said: graduates need wisdom, or applied knowledge. Wisdom is not merely knowledge, but practice. Students need the virtues.

In the shifting economy toward automation, Dov Siedman of the *Harvard Business Review* argues that graduates will need the virtues. He tracks the development from agrarian life and industrial life where employers looked for brawn. The locus of the economy was the farm and the factory. With the rise of the knowledge economy, the location of work shifted to office buildings and the valuable asset was the brain. Thus, he concludes, “No longer hired hands, they were hired heads.”<sup>8</sup> The next economy he foresees is the human economy<sup>9</sup> where employers will value for “hired hearts.”<sup>10</sup> He maintains, “They will still bring to their work essential traits that can’t be and won’t be programmed into software, like creativity, passion, character, and collaborative spirit—their humanity, in other words.”<sup>11</sup> Siedman insists that the current economy needs are men and women who are wise.

Furthermore, in a *New York Times* article, David Brooks recently reported on a community school for foster children in Italy, called “Cometa.”<sup>12</sup> The school picks up on

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<sup>7</sup> Carol Quinn, “Liberal Education in the Age of Trump,” *The Washington Post*, December 30, 2016, accessed December 27, 2017, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/grade-point/wp/2016/12/30/liberal-arts-education-in-the-age-of-trump/?utm\\_term=.f38051d5aded](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/grade-point/wp/2016/12/30/liberal-arts-education-in-the-age-of-trump/?utm_term=.f38051d5aded).

<sup>8</sup> Dov Siedman, “From the Knowledge Economy to the Human Economy,” *Harvard Business Review*, November 12 2014, accessed December 29, 2017, <https://hbr.org/2014/11/from-the-knowledge-economy-to-the-human-economy>.

<sup>9</sup> Harry Lewis is one who critiques the modern university for its failure to form humans. He suggests that many “have forgotten that the fundamental job of undergraduate education is to turn eighteen- and nineteen-year-olds into twenty-one and twenty-two-year olds, to help them grow up, to learn who they are, to search for a larger purpose for their lives, and to leave college as better human beings.” Harry Lewis, *Excellence without a Soul: How a Great University Forgot Education* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2006), xiv.

<sup>10</sup> An interesting word, indeed, as the scope of this paper has covered.

<sup>11</sup> Siedman, “From the Knowledge Economy to the Human Economy.”

<sup>12</sup> David Brooks, “The Loving Place for Children That Assumes Hospitality,” *New York Times*.

themes of personhood and humanity that Siedman emphasizes. The people of Cometa believe beauty educates. With this fundamental belief, they desire to show hospitality. While most machines are focused around completing physical tasks, Brooks explains,

No machine no machine will be able to create the feeling of a loving home. Whether they are being trained as waiters, carpenters, fabric designers or pastry chefs, students are taught to understand and create hospitable experiences. “Everything is a home,” said Mele. “Everything says, ‘Welcome to my home.’”<sup>13</sup>

This beautiful vision of education, even in the trades, can be cultivated in every educational campus, classroom, and task. Christians have an added emphasis to be hospitable:

“Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God” (Rom 15.7).

Intelligence is great. It is something everyone should seek. However, wisdom is far superior. One can be intelligent and a moral degenerate.<sup>14</sup> One can be wise with little formal education. Therefore, there ought to be a primacy in education on forming students for wisdom, which can be defined as applied knowledge, or virtue. Augustine connects love and wisdom when he posits that “prudence is love distinguishing with sagacity between what hinders and what helps it.”<sup>15</sup> If a society succeeds at intelligence but fails at wisdom, it has smart people with dangerous ideas.<sup>16</sup> For the Christian, there ought to be an integration between beautiful orthodoxy and wise orthopraxy.

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April 30, 2018, accessed April 30, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/30/opinion/loving-children-cometa-italy.html>.

<sup>13</sup> Brooks, “The Loving Place for Children.”

<sup>14</sup> See Roger Straughan’s chapter entitled “Why Act on Moral Judgments? (Or How to Reach Stage 6 and Remain a Bastard),” in *Lawrence Kohlberg: Consensus and Controversy*, ed. Sohan Modgil and Celia Modgil (London: Falmer, 1988). Nel Noddings also writes on the limits of intelligence and critical thinking: “It is obvious that one can seek the truth for evil purposes. . . . As we encourage students to become critical thinkers, we should also promote continual discussion on the uses to which critical thinking will be applied.” Nel Noddings, *Philosophy of Education* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2016), 96.

<sup>15</sup> Augustine, *On the Morals of the Catholic Church*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. Richard Stothert (Scotts Valley, CA: CreateSpace Independent, 2015), 32.

<sup>16</sup> As the twenty-first century, and particularly German history, attests to.

**Since God created all things, a holistic education of the world includes a passion for truth, beauty, and goodness.** As lovers aimed for God, Christians have a coherent story and understanding of the good, the true, and the beautiful.<sup>17</sup> Without a clear tradition, the university becomes subject to what sells as seen in the age of industrialization.<sup>18</sup> As humans are holistic, multi-dimensional though unified creations, so is wisdom. Truth, beauty, and goodness have their source in God; therefore, the educational process ought to find its ultimate root in God. Wisdom is not found in intelligence or power or routines. Wisdom is found in revelation.<sup>19</sup> Since human beings exist as holistic creatures, they need a holistic education—one that touches not only cognition, but also the affections.<sup>20</sup>

Esther Meek notices that the modern culture fragments this unified pursuit.<sup>21</sup> Historically, the educational discipline of science, art, and ethics corresponded with truth, beauty, and goodness, respectively. However, as was noted in the age of reason and the age of industrialization, there was a growing tendency to specialize. Rather than seeing these disciplines as a gift from God that is unified in Him, they battle with one another

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<sup>17</sup> The unity of these conceptions that have been taken for granted can no longer be assumed. Howard Gardner tracks the loss and renews a holistic conception in *Truth, Beauty, and Goodness Reframed: Educating for the Virtues in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Basic Books, 2011).

<sup>18</sup> See Stanley Hauerwas, *The State of the University Academic Knowledges and the Knowledge of God* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), 181.

<sup>19</sup> John Henry Newman notes liberal education's tendency toward power: Liberal Knowledge has a special tendency . . . to impress us with a mere philosophical theory of life and conduct, in the place of Revelation. . . . Truth has two attributes—beauty and power; and while Useful Knowledge is the possession of truth as powerful, Liberal Knowledge is the apprehension of it as beautiful. Pursue it, either as beauty or as power, to its furthest extent and its true limit, and you are led by either road to the Eternal and the Infinite. (John Henry Newman, *Idea of a University* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996], 111).

<sup>20</sup> Dave Krathwohl provides a helpful holism in his addition of the affectional domain to Bloom's learning taxonomy. See David Krathwohl, Bertram B. Masia, and Benjamin Samuel, *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Affective Domain* (New York: McKay, 1970).

<sup>21</sup> See Esther Meek, *Loving to Know: Covenant Epistemology* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011), 338.

for supreme emphasis in a university. Often, each discipline has its own metanarratives with accompanying virtues.

Universities, Christian or not, tend to specialize in truth. However, for the next generation of Christian witness in the West, Christians need colleges that will prepare them for the good and the beautiful. In a culture that denies truth, a full Christian witness and full Christian education encompasses the involvement of beauty and goodness.<sup>22</sup> People may not be persuaded rationally, but people of character that the church forms and the art the church produces will be a compelling witness to the world. Since humans are not just “brains on a stick,” students need formation that engages their heart. They need to be compelled and raptured by a vision of the good. They need to feel it in their bones more than consider it in their head. This is often done through story, which affects the imagination.

Roberts and Turner argue as much in *The Sacred and Secular University* by referencing John W. Nevin. They propose,

Art and literature might even teach moral and spiritual ideals more effectively than could sermons and exhortations. For ‘the beautiful,’ though having ‘the same substance with the true and the good,’ is differently achieved. The true and the good work straightforwardly on the intellect or the will. But the beautiful necessarily presents itself to the intuition, grasps the imagination; ‘the power of inspiration turns through the whole process by which the ideal brought to pass.’ ‘The most important thoughts of a person are not those of purpose and logical invention, but such as come upon him he knows not how.’<sup>23</sup>

The Christian college needs to recover this holistic emphasis on every subject for the glory of God. Without the unity of truth, beauty, or goodness, a student’s maturity will be stunted.

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<sup>22</sup> Rod Dreher, *The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2017), 117.

<sup>23</sup> Jon Roberts and James Turner, *The Sacred and Secular University: The Sacred and the Secular University* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 114.

### **The undergraduate years are a time to form Christian commitments.**

G. K. Chesterton writes, “The object of opening the mind, as of opening the mouth, is to shut it again on something solid.”<sup>24</sup> An openness is crucial for the undergraduate years.<sup>25</sup> However, as the critical mindset would have, the goal is not speculative openness forever— if that were even possible. The goal, as Chesterton suggests, is to shut it on something solid; in short, to commit. Especially in these years often marked with uncertainty, angst, and confusion, the undergraduate experience ought to prepare a student to be devoted to some core commitments.

The heart is the center of ultimate commitments. Ronald Nash writes, “It is the center of our valuing self.”<sup>26</sup> Humanity is not born free: people are born to worship and obey. As such, a liberal education is not meant to free a person to do whatever he or she wants.<sup>27</sup> Brooks defines maturity as the realization that “the things you chain yourself to

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<sup>24</sup> G. K. Chesterton, *The Autobiography of G. K. Chesterton* (New York: Shreed and Ward, 1936), 288-89.

<sup>25</sup> In William Perry’s popular study and scheme, commitment is the highest level of scholarship and maturity. Scholars are meant to guide students from a black and white relativism to commitment through nine stages of moral maturation. However, Perry’s scheme lacks a coherent system to evaluate competing commitments or what makes one commitment better than another. The Christian college can provide those resources, as mentioned. See William G. Perry, *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years: A Scheme* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), 149-97.

<sup>26</sup> Ronald Nash, *The Closing of the American Heart: What’s Really Wrong with America’s Schools* (Dallas: Probe, 1990), 14.

<sup>27</sup> David Dockery guides readers into understanding commitment and liberal education: The unity of knowledge, shaped by love, is informing and foundational for all scholarship, teaching, and learning. From this foundation come our commitment to faith and learning, to both knowledge and virtue, throughout the curriculum. These commitments shape our appreciation for the foundational role of the liberal arts in the Christian university. (David Dockery, *Renewing Minds: Serving Church and Society through Christian Higher Education* [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2007], 75) Chesterton is also decisive in describing modern culture:

Every one of the popular modern phrases and ideals is a dodge in order to shrink the problem of what is good. We are fond of talking about “liberty”; that, as we talk of it, is a dodge to avoid discussing what is good. We are fond of talking about “progress”; that is a dodge to avoid discussing what is good. We are fond of talking about “education”; that is a dodge to avoid discussing what is good. The modern man says, “Let us leave all these arbitrary standards and embrace liberty.” This is logically rendered, “Let us not decide what is good, but let it be considered good not to decide it.” He says, “Away with your old moral formulae; I am for progress.” This, logically stated, means, “Let us not settle what is good; but let us settle whether we are getting more of it.” He says, “Neither in religion

set you free.”<sup>28</sup> Jesus says, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:31).<sup>29</sup> As such, the university encourages a certain set of commitments—stated or unstated. It is not if a graduate chooses to obey or worship, it is a matter of if the graduate will choose rightly or wisely or virtuously toward the ultimate good. Character, after all, is essentially about commitment. It is “steadiness over time”<sup>30</sup> or “an ensemble of settled dispositions—of habitual feelings and desires.”<sup>31</sup> To know truth means to intimately interact with it and to follow it with one’s whole existence. Steve Garber’s question haunts fickle college students and college educators: “How does someone decide which cares and commitments will give shape to life . . . for life?”<sup>32</sup> Knowledge has implications for social responsibility.

Tim Keller claims that young adults have always asked at least four such big questions: “Who am I? (looking inward); What’s the point or meaning of things? (looking outward); Whom should I be with and love? (looking sideways); and in light of the first three answers, what should I do with my life? (looking forward).”<sup>33</sup> The secular university

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nor morality, my friend, lie the hopes of the race, but in education.” This clearly expressed, means, “We cannot decide what is good, but let us give it to our children.” G. K. Chesterton, *Heretics* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2007), 13.

<sup>28</sup> David Brooks, “The Ultimate Spoiler Alert,” Commencement Address at Dartmouth University, Hanover, New Hampshire, June 14, 2015, <https://news.dartmouth.edu/news/2015/06/david-brooks-commencement-address>.

<sup>29</sup> On this passage, Parker Palmer claims, “The idea of freedom is achieved through obedience to truth is also at the heart of liberal education, whose aim is to liberate us through knowledge.” Parker Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known: A Spirituality of Education* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 65.

<sup>30</sup> David Brooks, *The Road to Character* (New York: Random House Trade, 2016), 57.

<sup>31</sup> Anthony Kronman, *The Lost Lawyer: Failing Ideals of the Legal Profession* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 16.

<sup>32</sup> Steve Garber, *The Fabric of Faithfulness: Weaving Together Belief & Behavior during the University Years* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 33.

<sup>33</sup> Tim Keller and Michael Keller, “University Missions and Evangelism Today” in *Serving the Church, Reaching the World: Essays in Honour of Don Carson*, ed. Richard Cunningham (London: InterVarsity, 2017).

has no set of coherent, meaningful answers to these questions, and thus no purposeful commitments.<sup>34</sup> The Christian university, on the other hand, ought to deal directly with these questions, because Christianity provides these answers. The college student is searching for a worthy faith. If the college does not provide a coherent set of answers, then the student is left to their own unfettered devices. It seems equivalent to allowing a child to learn about sex from their ten-year-old friend rather than a wise guide who can instruct them on their path. Far from dictating truth or commitment, college educators can serve a role of providing meaningful feedback to these questions being asked.

Along the same line, Brooks spoke to Dartmouth College in a commencement address in 2015. In it, he encouraged the graduates in four commitments: (1) to spouse and to family,<sup>35</sup> (2) to a career and a vocation, (3) to faith or philosophy, and (4) to a community and a village.<sup>36</sup> Commitment, as defined by Brooks, is “falling in love with something and then building a structure and behavior for those moments when your love falters.”<sup>37</sup> Love is not emotionally driven or temporarily concerned; love is commitment. Brooks suggests that graduates should be formed in the answers to the questions that Keller

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<sup>34</sup> Michael Novak critiques the universities’ commitment to non-commitment when he writes, It may be that the American consensus has forced a “commitment to nothing”: upon our universities; we are a pluralist people, and it seems very difficult to discover a way to teach about those differences on ultimate questions that muses us so. The colleges “make a commitment to non-commitment” have a “faith in non-faith.” They demand perpetual re-examination and have nowhere to test. (Michael Novak, “God in the Colleges: The Dehumanization of the University,” in *The New Student Left*, ed. Mitchell Cohen and Dennis Hale [Boston: Beacon Press, 1967], 259)

Novak’s mention of “rest” at the end of the quote is intriguing in light of Augustine’s understanding always searching for rest. When our soul has the right commitments, there is rest. The Christian college, then, has a great privilege to point students and the world to where true rest is found.

<sup>35</sup> Clydesdale reports that those who participated in exploration programs in college that focused on vocation married at four times the rate of non-participants—a fairly striking statistic. These participants had spent time reflecting on their long-term commitments, so they were ready to make a variety of these commitments post-college—including marriage. Clydesdale, *The Purposeful Graduate*, 125.

<sup>36</sup> Again, the work of Wendell Berry can assist an educator in educating with a sense of place in mind.

<sup>37</sup> Brooks, “The Ultimate Spoiler Alert.”

says most college students are asking. Students are searching for meaning to these foundational questions, and higher education, by and at large, but Christian education in particular ought to be forming students toward these commitments.

Commitment, or belief, is an act of love. Connor Grubaugh writes, “Every action contains a sort of truth-claim, an expression about the fundamental nature of reality. Philosophy is less a cognitive activity than it is a way of life.”<sup>38</sup> One’s deepest convictions finally are not about reason but about love. These convictions can be called “control beliefs.”<sup>39</sup> These sets of beliefs help students orient their lives into a coherent whole.<sup>40</sup> A student can have deep beliefs but not be in the habit of cultivating the character to which those beliefs beckon. This leads to disintegration.<sup>41</sup> In the same way, habits without reflection or cognitive content lead to blind behaviorism. David Tracy affirms this sentiment in an essay entitled, “Can Virtue Be Taught? Education, Character and Soul.” He writes, “For all thought, I repeat, exists for the sake of action and commitment. It is true that mere action without thought is blind. It is equally true that all thought not ultimately directs to action, concern, commitment is empty.”<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Connor Grubaugh, “Campus Moralism: Old and New,” *First Things Magazine*, September 9, 2016, accessed October 15, 2016, <https://www.firstthings.com/blogs/firstthoughts/2016/09/campus-moralism-old-and-new>.

<sup>39</sup> Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Reason within the Bounds of Religion* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1976).

<sup>40</sup> This holism is something that the educational taxonomy recognizes in the affective domain. For integrated persons, every taxonomy must be connected. David Krawthwhol et al. write, “The person acts as he does because to do so is in itself satisfying to him. . . . There the person is described as responding with commitment: accepting a value into his system, organizing that system, and developing a value complex that guides his behavior.” Krawthwhol et al., *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, 32.

<sup>41</sup> As an example, the freshman who attended the church his whole life has this crisis of belief when he or she (usually) dismisses the habit of Sunday liturgy when he arrives on campus.

<sup>42</sup> David Tracy, “Can Virtue Be Taught? Education, Character and Soul,” in *Theological Perspectives in Christian Formation*, ed. Jeff Astley (Downers Grove, IL: Eerdmans, 1997), 387.

Commitment forms gritty people with a deep sense of purpose, meaning, and personhood. Hannah Arendt warns,

Without being bound to the fulfillment of our promises, we would never be able to keep our identities. We would be condemned to wander helplessly and without direction in the darkness of each person's lonely heart, caught in its contradictions and equivocalities.<sup>43</sup>

Emotional fragility and softness exist when there are no ultimate commitments or purposes beyond the self. In a *New York Times* article, Brooks explains,

If you really want people to be tough, make them idealistic for some cause, make them tender for some other person, make them committed to some worldview that puts today's temporary pain in the context of a larger hope. . . . People are really tough only after they have taken a leap of faith for some truth or mission or love.<sup>44</sup>

In other words, this world needs the type of people who are willing to be vulnerable and to be hurt, but with moral conviction and commitment to stay.

Peter Gentry shows that the basic meaning of holy—for humans and for God—is devotedness: “The basic meaning of the word is ‘consecrated’ or ‘devoted.’ In scripture is operates within the context of covenantal relationships and expresses commitment.”<sup>45</sup>

In a sense, then, education is also about holiness. Love, which manifests itself in deep commitments, results in devotedness. Devotedness is holiness. Therefore, the task to educate students in love is a task to train for holiness.

### **The hiring of faculty is likely the most important decision a college makes.**

As reported, many college representatives said that the faculty can make a classroom experience, and even a college experience, valuable and memorable. A foundation of the research is that education is relational: it is done best by people because one cannot abstract

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<sup>43</sup> Hannah Arendt, quoted in Gary Thomas, *The Sacred Marriage* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 11.

<sup>44</sup> David Brooks, “Making Modern Toughness,” *New York Times*, August 30, 2016, accessed September 15, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/30/opinion/making-modern-toughness.html>.

<sup>45</sup> Peter Gentry, “The Meaning of ‘Holy’ in the Old Testament,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 170 (2013): 400-417.

or impart facts like a computer. Humans are embodied. Therefore, good faculty and supporting staff are essential for a meaningful education. Mark Schwehn comments on the teacher in the academic vocation: “In short every teacher is teaching at least two things in every classroom: his or her subject and the manners of learning.”<sup>46</sup> Teaching is not just a matter of information transfer but of posture and disposition development.

Furthermore, faculty is not only important for a student’s intellectual or economic success—moral formation requires moral exemplars. James K. A. Smith writes, “We learn the virtues through imitation. More specifically, we learn to be virtuous by imitating exemplars of justice, compassion, kindness, and love.”<sup>47</sup> How a faculty member treats an elementary question, a hot topic, or a struggling student will be indicative in how students are trained to do the same. In the same way, there is a sense in which the passion and interest a scholar takes in his field can function like a kind of osmosis to his or her students. Luigi Giussani notes the importance of a role model when he suggests, “A responsible role model is such for an adolescent because he is the most conscious expression of tradition; he is the location of a hypothesis for a teenager.”<sup>48</sup> Drawing on what chapter 2 developed, tradition is necessary and undeniable in formation; in the same way, an exemplar who models that tradition becomes a grounding force in a college student’s life. The question that the New Testament consistently beckons is, “Who should I listen to?” The answer is given: those with virtue. Dru Johnson adds, “Knowing is a process by which we trust authorities and embody their directions in order to know.”<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Mark Schwehn, *Exiles from Eden: Religion and the Academic Vocation in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 34.

<sup>47</sup> James K. A. Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2016), 158.

<sup>48</sup> Luigi Giussani, *The Risk of Education: Discovering Our Ultimate Destiny* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 2001), 64.

<sup>49</sup> Dru Johnson, *Scripture’s Knowing: A Companion to Biblical Epistemology* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2015), 32

This fact is no surprise because as embodied human beings, formation and education happen in the context of relationship. Teaching is inherently incarnational. Traditionally, colleges have understood the influence faculty have on students.

Commenting on the Ancient Roman society, Stanley Bonner says,

But the important point was that the elders merited these attentions not only in view of their position or experience, but by reason of their own conduct; serious in outlook, dignified in manner, and sensitive to any breach in decorum, they were conscious of the importance of their personal example.<sup>50</sup>

More recently, *en loco parentis* prevailed in colleges. There is much to critique in the historical practices of *en loco parentis*; however, there is no denying the importance of authority. In today's individualistic, anti-authoritarian age, loving, virtuous authority is a needed element, most especially with 18-22-year-olds. Culture often views authority as oppressive and domineering; in the quest for truth, leadership suppresses truth and creativity. However, as the research shows, faculty members in places of authority are actually the best thing in the quest for truth and wholeness. They can open up possibilities and areas of exploration.

In many ways, a good faculty member can be a master or apprentice for the life of *eudaimonia*. Both Augustine and Steve Garber propose the significance of mentoring.

Augustine is worth quoting at length on the role of teacher:

What I would like to know is whether you possess and can accurately impart to others anything supremely important and wholesome. It's ridiculous if, after you've learned a lot of unnecessary things in order to prepare people to listen to you tell them what is indispensable, you yourself don't possess it; and if, while you are busy learning how to get their attention, you refuse to learn what to teach them when you've gained it. But if you say that you already know, and answer that it's Christian doctrine (I know that you prefer this to everything else and entrust your hope of eternal salvation to this alone), you don't need to be familiar with the dialogues of Cicero and a collection of the beggarly and divided opinions of other people to win an audience. *Attract them by your way of life if you want them to receive such a teaching from you.*<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Stanley F. Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome: From the Elder Cato to the Younger Pliny* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1977), 7.

<sup>51</sup> John Leinenweber, *The Letters of Saint Augustine* (Liguori, MO: Triumph Books, 1992), 99,

On this passage, Garber adds an understanding of what learning is all about: “Teachers opening their lives to students, allowing an apprenticeship in what is *supremely important*.”<sup>52</sup>

### **Research Applications**

Three proposed applications of the research flow from the implications. First, most practically, some curricular and co-curricular efforts can be made to further unify institutional mission and formation. Second, I propose an alternative on how Christians should view the formation of students as lovers for the common good, under the title “A Hermeneutic of Charity.” Third, since students are often deformed in distraction, education should give particular attention to attention by viewing academia as a craft.

### **Curricular and Co-Curricular Reform**

When asked how their respective colleges go about forming students in an ideal direction, many responded with the curricular and co-curricular—that is, what goes on inside the classroom and what goes on outside. Most offered a symmetrical understanding: what goes on inside the classroom is just as important as what goes on outside. However, some understood a competition of sorts: as the student life department competes for time and attention and in some cases takes away attention from classroom activity to focus on something else. In this section I introduce a few modest proposals for both the curricular and co-curricular at Christian colleges. Much of what follows is a sort of “best practices” from the research.

**Curricular.** As Chad Wellmon reminds, “A curriculum is not just a formal list of requirements but instead an assertion of values, purpose, and commitment.”<sup>53</sup> As such,  

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emphasis added.

<sup>52</sup> Garber, *The Fabric of Faithfulness*, 151.

<sup>53</sup> Chad Wellmon, “Whatever Happened to General Education,” *Hedgehog Review* 19, no. 1

the choice of curriculum is not a choice of different topics to learn, but a moral conviction to pursue. Neil Postman writes that general education, specifically, gives a student a “sense of coherence in their studies, a sense of purpose, meaning and interconnectedness in what they learn.”<sup>54</sup> Therefore, Christians ought to do serious thinking and consideration of their general education. Christians have a moral, social, and intellectual center, and his name is Jesus.

First, many of the best and intentional colleges offer a foundations class (something like a faith and learning seminar) and a capstone course (something like a faith and life seminar). In chapter 2, the literature proposed that in the age of faith, there was a capstone course in theology as the “queen of the sciences.” The capstone course eventually took a secular drift to moral philosophy<sup>55</sup> and then to ethics before finally being discarded all together. As Jesus Christ is the beginning and end of all things, and in specifically in education, He is the foundation and end of all learning, it is wise for Christian colleges to offer a bookend of Christian interpretation. Allowing for a first-year class and a last-year class perpetuates a continual Lordship of Christ throughout all of learning and all of life. Having all students take these classes during the same time period allows for solidarity and communal shaping, as well.

Wheaton College is one institution that has both foundation and capstone, but they were the only institution to include a mid-college career touchstone as well. Their whole curriculum has recently been adapted with extensive explanation and intention.

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(Spring 2017), accessed September 20, 2017, [https://iasc-culture.org/THR/THR\\_article\\_2017\\_Spring\\_Wellmon.php](https://iasc-culture.org/THR/THR_article_2017_Spring_Wellmon.php).

<sup>54</sup> Neil Postman, *The End of Education: Redefining the Value of School* (New York: Vintage, 1996), 91.

<sup>55</sup> After reading Christian Smith, *Lost in Transition: The Darkside of Emerging Adulthood* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), and seeing the complete lack of moral vocabulary and judgement among emerging adults, perhaps a little moral philosophy in college would not be a bad thing. (see chap. 1 of the book). A much better thing would be to include sections on ethics throughout the college career and then connecting ethics with the good life in a senior seminar.

They call their core curriculum a “flexible core.” There are shared and combined experiences, as well as choice for students as they progress in their college career. In the first year, students are introduced to the liberal arts and faith and learning and Christian education that values character and virtue and questions pertaining to the good life. The advanced seminar taken in mid-career includes subject integration and is multi-disciplinary.<sup>56</sup> It is set up as more discussion-based and includes more academic writing that effectively integrates faith. Their capstone course is within each student’s major, and the class provides a look backward at their college career and connects college with character formation. Then, the class has opportunities to project their learning forward into life and vocation beyond the college campus.

One other thing to consider regarding the curriculum is introducing the big questions of life during the first year. This introduction can provide students the framework to pursue these questions during the college career. Proposed class titles could be something along the lines of, “Who are We? Identity and Purpose,” or “What Are We Here for? Purpose and the Good Life,” or even, “Where are We? Developing a Sense of Place and Locality in a Global World.” Classes such as these could never provide definitive answers, but they may provide students with the framework to pursue these issues and questions throughout their college career. Further, many colleges have an Introduction to Old Testament or Survey of the New Testament, but if colleges are not just about facts but about the cultivation of imagination, then perhaps a Biblical Theology course would

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<sup>56</sup> Alexander Astin, Helen Astin, and Jennifer Lindholm write, Exposure to *interdisciplinary courses*, which usually address complex topics such as global sustainability or urban renewal from the perspective of two or more disciplines, enhances all three of the students’ intellectual/academic outcomes: grades, educational aspirations, and intellectual self-esteem. As other researchers have also determined, interdisciplinary courses have the power to engage students intellectually, to expand their thinking, and to motivate them academically (Field, Lee, and Field, 1994). (Alexander Astin, Helen Astin, and Jennifer Lindholm, *Cultivating the Spirit: How College Can Enhance Students’ Inner Lives* [San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011], 61, emphasis original)

As Christians view the unity of knowledge in God and the holistic value of education, they ought to think hard about the value and implantation of interdisciplinary studies in their colleges.

be better, which could provide the narrative structure of the Bible. This course change would be a shift from students who know facts about the Bible to students who are storied and caught up in the Bible's narrative. One other class to consider in the core curriculum or general education to account for the global world in which colleges reside is a Social Injustice course that focuses on minorities and those in the margins. Christians have the most impetus to engage in such difficult learning, as the Greenville's representative emphasized Wesley's "preferential option of the poor." Jesus calls Christians to know and love the least of these, for in knowing and loving them, Christian know and love Jesus Himself (Matt 25.45). A class which engages understanding the poor, disenfranchised, and neglected can also go a long way in teaching empathy, listening, debate on hard subjects, etc. All of these pursuits would be best distributed throughout the curriculum but can provide the foundation to pursue an education with questions like these in mind.

**Co-curricular.** The purpose of college is educational: to help students love God and neighbor through thinking, living, feeling, and willing in rightly ordered ways. Since humans exist as whole, embodied people, the task of education is not secluded into intellectual silos or classroom information. The whole college experience tells a story and shapes what one loves. The co-curricular, then, is just as important as the hours in the classroom. What I want to propose, with the assistance of the studies following the Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE) with generous support from the Lily Foundation, is how colleges can think intentionally about vocation and purpose in the college years. Furthermore, with the help of James K. A. Smith, I want to propose a liturgical audit at college campuses that will look different from institution to institution.

First, Tim Clydesdale has done extensive research of the netVUE initiatives. Much of his reporting can be found in *The Purposeful Graduate*. Clydesdale explains,

That purpose exploration produces a pattern of examined living, that regular participation in congregational worship reinforces that pattern and encourages positive engagement with others, and that purpose exploration combined with congregational involvement increase the odds that emerging adults will flourish after they graduate college.<sup>57</sup>

Clydesdale weaves two threads that this section will explore: purpose exploration and church involvement.

In the previous curriculum suggestions, the classes proposed go to the heart of purpose exploration. However, as Clydesdale found, colleges that only had students participate in academic classes had limiting results. These classes are necessary but not sufficient. He suggests two other proposals. The first is a learning community in a themed residence hall. As seen in the research findings, residence life can prove a formative time for an emerging adult. For institutions, this decision was up to the student to participate or not, thus adding a sense of ownership and buy-in. During the year, the students participate in floor and dorm themed discussions based on purpose, vocation, and calling. He suggests providing this residence life experience during the second year of school, as the first year of college life is often filled with angst and fueled by fitting in.<sup>58</sup> This fact is one reason I think the curriculum suggested can provide a stabilizing force during the first year, which frames the student to further investigate commitments and nurture the desire to do so in the second year. Regardless, residence life specifically oriented around purpose exploration can be a valuable way to shape and form students in ideal directions for Christian colleges.

The idea of residence hall, and even the curriculum previous, can be viewed as fairly large-scale changes for purpose exploration. The next finding from Clydesdale can be seen as smaller scale, and that is a purpose exploration retreat. A retreat can be a formative time to get out of routine and regularity and to allow God to work in the liminal spaces, which can decenter the self and provide reflection out of one's ordinary habits. Of

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<sup>57</sup> Clydesdale, *The Purposeful Graduate*, 124.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 194.

course, students will need avenues to process the retreat after they come back, or like a youth summer camp experience, the emotion will give way to the ordinary way of being in the world without convictions being made to commitments. The retreat, then, can be the beginning of asking hard questions of vocation—not the end.

The final theme that emerges from Clydesdale is church attendance. As found in chapter 4, a college's attention to church attendance is abysmal. While I would not propose making church attendance mandatory to attend a Christian college, Christian colleges ought to develop and foster relationships with local pastors, as churches function as ambassadorial outposts of the kingdom of heaven. Colleges ought to at least consider how what they are doing is affecting local congregations in the community, and whether students are engaged and growing in these churches. Drawing from the writing of James K. A. Smith, it would be wise for schools to conduct a liturgical audit. Smith gives college administrators and faculty a few questions to consider:

What are some of the most significant habits and practices that really shape your actions and attitude?

What does your time look like? What practices are you regularly immersed in each week?

What do you think are the most important ritual forces in your life? And if you were honest with yourself, are these positive (forming you into the kind of person who embodies the kingdom of God) or negative (forming you into someone whose values and desires are antithetical to that kingdom, oriented toward another kingdom)?

What are some of the most potent practices in our culture?

What are the rhythms/patterns/habits of your life that shape you for the Kingdom of God?<sup>59</sup>

A college needs to seriously consider these questions. Specifically, as it pertains to church, if local churches are playing less of an influence on college students, is their institution functionally replacing the church, or are they assisting local churches and subsequently the future generations of congregants? Students will be malformed as

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<sup>59</sup> These questions are derived from James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 84.

Christians if they neglect weekly attendance in their local congregations, much less the daily paths of discipleship with others, particularly those not like them. For example, is the chapel experience a replacement for the church, or does it come alongside and assist and add texture and depth to the local church attendees? Are student life activities so busy that students are not engaged in discipleship or service in their local church? Each institution must ask themselves these questions pertaining to local church attendance, even as they think about overall liturgical formation. A liturgical audit on a college campus can reveal how students are being formed and what they are being taught to value. Asking students these questions can also be a rich resource for answers.

### **A Hermeneutic of Charity**

If love is a better typology of education, then a different formative pattern is needed. The discussion in chapter 2 was oriented around the purpose of humanity and the nature of man; namely, the supreme purpose of mankind is to love God and love one's neighbor in God. It bears repeating that God made man and woman as fundamentally lovers, and what one loves shapes one's vision of the good life. Society and family formation affect what someone loves without it society being determinative—that is, I deny social reconstructionism. At any point, God can speak into the societal formation, or the family, or directly to the heart to turn and change what someone loves. The heart is primary because it is the source of decision, thinking, and willing, but the heart is embodied. They are distinct but not separate. This vision pulls men and women along to heavenly, virtuous desires, or, this vision functions like a weight that drowns men and women into vice. Figure 5 illustrates these points—to the left (lovers) and to the right (love God and neighbor).<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Essentially, this figure is a summary of the first two chapters of N. T. Wright, *After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters* (New York: HarperOne, 2010). This is a helpful diagram to diagnosis limiting or false models of human development and virtue, as well. Those from a more Kierkegaardian understanding focus on the rules. This can also be seen in *homo cogito*. One arrives at the right conclusions of right morality by following certain rules and thinking through a certain logic. As such,

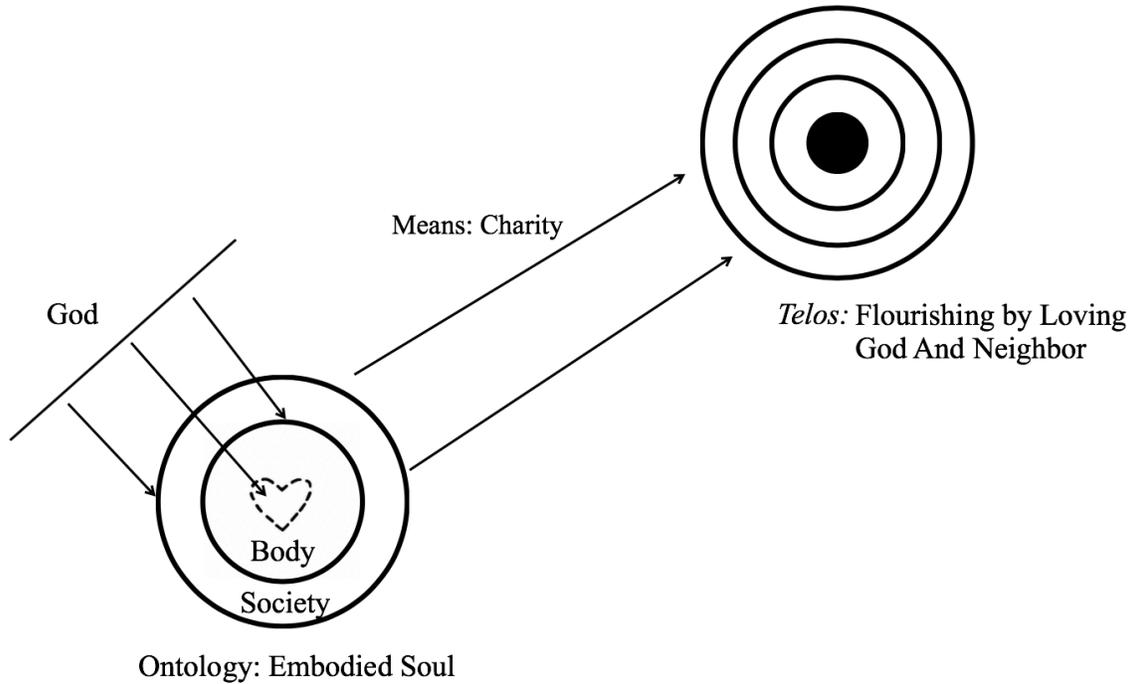


Figure 5. Sosler's formation paradigm

In what follows, it is my hope to provide an alternative though compatible vision of how love is shaped. The Christian college is tasked to develop and teach a hermeneutic of charity that trains students in love. Since humans are fundamentally lovers, the means of knowing is through a hermeneutic of charity with the goal of love.

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it is objectivist and fears punishment. Focusing on being a good person or being a “pure scientist” are false focuses. On the other hand, some in the MacIntyre tradition and emotivist tradition focus on the heart as actor. These thinkers tend to be more subjectivist and value “authenticity.” It is about finding the true self and being true to who one essentially is. However, the authentic heart is evil. It needs the habits and the rules and the virtues to direct the heart’s longing. What figure 5 shows, following the logic of Jamie Smith, is that one’s heart is captivated by a goal or target. Character comes neither from a focus on rules or a focus on authenticity, but from a focus on the right goal. Wright, *After You Believe*, 7, defines character as in between authenticity and rules. James Davison Hunter also explains the basic elements of character. He describes moral formation as including moral discipline, moral attachment, and moral autonomy. There is some overlap between the discipline—means; attachment—goal; and autonomy—actor/heart. Moral discipline is the ability to say no and to sacrifice—the element Kierkegaard draws out of the moral tradition. Moral attachment draws on the opposite side of moral discipline; character is not only about saying no but a commitment to the ideal that attracts a person. Lastly, character needs moral autonomy to freely choose and commit to the good. This idea draws on the MacIntyre tradition that suggests an actor ought to be pleased in doing the good and not constrained or compelled. See James Davison Hunter, *The Death of Character: Moral Education in an Age without Good or Evil* (New York: Basic, 2000), 16.

Love is the defining mark of humanity; love is how humans know and love is what mankind is made for. In other words, love is both the nature, the goal, and the means of education.

As previously mentioned, the classic structure of virtue as suggested by N. T. Wright involves three steps: glimpse the goal, work out the path toward it, and develop the habits needed to practice if one is going to tread that path.<sup>61</sup> With the first step established, this section turns to understand the path toward the goal. Christian education is not merely what one learns or how one learns, it is also important to shape how one approaches the learning task. A student should approach learning with a hermeneutic of charity.

Augustine wrote, “Knowledge is valuable only when charity informs it.”<sup>62</sup> The Christian metanarrative has a particular set of attendant virtues—namely, that of love. It is important to define *charity*. Alan Jacobs notes that charity’s popular meaning moved from “Christian love” to “benevolence to the poor” during the seventeenth century with roots in the Middle Ages.<sup>63</sup> Charity, then, turns into a social ethic in hand-outs to the poor rather than a local expression of compassion to whoever is in front of you. Charity increasingly becomes an institutional kindness and a free gift that one could otherwise withhold. The other extreme is linking charity to justice. Jacobs writes, “The tiny personal claims of love seem, many of us think, to carry little weight when compared to the sovereign demands of justice.”<sup>64</sup> Some may wonder the use of loving their neighbor

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<sup>61</sup> Wright, *After You Believe*, 170.

<sup>62</sup> Augustine, *City of God against the Pagans*, ed. and trans. George E. McCracken, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), 366.

<sup>63</sup> See Alan Jacobs, *A Theology of Reading: The Hermeneutics of Love* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001), 129.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* At the junction of justice is where I depart from the otherwise very helpful Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Educating for Shalom: Essays on Christian Higher Education* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 2004). Justice across the world is what Wolterstorff argues for; it is a social contract and duty. More than justice, I want to argue for charity, which is a higher goal than justice. Whereas *charity* historically referred

when people are dying of starvation across the globe. In many ways, charity became conflated with this idea of justice. Historian Gertrude Himmelfarb writes,

The old kind of charity left it to each individual to alleviate, according to his means, the suffering he saw about him. The new kind . . . was less instinctive, more rational and systematic. It made of charity a matter of social action rather than the exercise of a private virtue, and it transformed it from a moral obligation to a legal right.<sup>65</sup>

This history is provided to distinguish that the charity I refer to is the older sense of charity: a moral obligation to love one's neighbor (which is whoever is in front of you). For the college campus, this means the teacher lecturing in front of you, the student beside you who does not understand the new concept, the author of the book you are reading, etc. There is a personal, moral obligation to exert charity. In the words of Cornel West, "Love is what justice looks like in public."<sup>66</sup>

Fundamentally, knowing is about truth and about relationship. Parker Palmer explains truth's etymology:

The English word "truth" comes from a Germanic root that also gives rise to our word "troth," as in the ancient vow "I pledge thee my troth." With this word one person enters a covenant with another, a pledge to engage in a mutually accountable

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to the love Christians should show to strangers, *justice*, in the Aristotelian scheme, is an individual virtue rather than an institutional concern. Wolterstorff's writing seems to error on the side of a collective virtue. Right relationships are marked by love in the collective scheme of shalom as right relationship with everything else. Earlier, Jonathan Edwards argued this same thing: "For the kingdom of God is nothing other than the proper ordering of all our activities within the framework of obedient love of God and compassionate love for neighbors. . . . The Scriptures represent true religious as being summarily comprehended in love, the chief of the affections, the foundation of all others." Jonathan Edwards, "The Religious Affections," in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Henry Rogers and Edward Hickman (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005), 240. On the centrality of love in the thought and writing of Jonathan Edwards, see Ronald Story, *Jonathan Edwards and the Gospel of Love* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012). In this work, Story quotes Edwards in a sermon as he says, "As Heaven is a world of love, so the way to Heaven is the way of love. This will prepare you for Heaven, and make you ready for an inheritance with the saints in that land of light and love. And if ever you arrive at Heaven, faith and love must be the wings that carry you there." Edwards, "The Religious Affections," 121. Love, not justice, carries the believer to Heaven; and thus, love carries the educational task, as well.

<sup>65</sup> Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* (New York: Knopf, 1983), 148-49.

<sup>66</sup> Cornel West, *Brother West: Living and Loving Out Loud, A Memoir* (New York: SmileyBooks, 2010), 232.

and transforming relationship, a relationship forged of trust and faith in the face of unknowable risks.<sup>67</sup>

To know is a relational engagement. It is a communal task of care; as such, charity ought to be the foundation. Since knowledge and education are more than about rational knowing, Jacobs argues that true belonging is about

a fellowship of people who are not so much like-minded as like-hearted. . . . For there can be more genuine fellowship among those who share the same disposition than among those who share the same beliefs, especially if that is toward kindness and generosity.<sup>68</sup>

This argument compels the student to be around generous, charitable interpreters even at the expense of agreeing with one another. Education is a social process; therefore, it is a matter of being around the proper society; namely, one oriented toward charity.

Palmer argues that love is the foundation of knowledge:

Knowledge originates in compassion, or love. . . . The goal of a knowledge arising from love is the reunification and reconstruction of broken selves and worlds. . . . The mind motivated by compassion reaches out to know as the heart reaches out to love. Here, the act of knowing is an act of love, the act of entering and embracing the reality of the other, or allowing the other to enter and embrace our own.<sup>69</sup>

In a loving relationship with truth, the whole task of education and learning is wrapped in care. Care should carry the knower and seeker. As Meek argues, “To care is to move toward the unknown.”<sup>70</sup> This is a beautiful picture of education. One should desire to know more, because they care—about the subject, about the author, about the teacher, about his future relationships. Desire is the package that carries the knower to the unknown. Meek explains, “Longing calls for the other to give; love actively gives oneself for the sake of the other.”<sup>71</sup> In other words, education is pulled by longing and directed by love.

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<sup>67</sup> Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known*, 31.

<sup>68</sup> Alan Jacobs, *How to Think: A Survival Guide for a World at Odds* (New York: Currency, 2017), 62, 69.

<sup>69</sup> Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known*, 7.

<sup>70</sup> Meek, *Loving to Know*, 32.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 428.

A hermeneutic of charity is far superior to a hermeneutic of suspicion, which is the dominant paradigm of American higher education in the twenty-first century,<sup>72</sup> for “love, not indifference, invites the real. . . . Love presumes that the real is lovely or loveable or worth loving. . . . What this is arguing is that love is what enables us to see things as they are and as they are meant to be.”<sup>73</sup> Palmer, quoting two influential sources, takes it a step further: “In the words of Abraham Joshua Heschel . . . ‘It is impossible to find Truth without being in love.’ In the words of St. Gregory, ‘Love itself is knowledge; the more one loves the more one knows.’”<sup>74</sup> Not only is a hermeneutic of charity better than any prevailing model; it is the only means of truly knowing.<sup>75</sup> If one reads or listens only with ears to refute, then there is actually no listening taking place. Without listening, there is no thinking. In the words of Jacobs, “To enter refutation mode is to say, in effect, that you’ve actually done all the thinking you need to do, that no further information or

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<sup>72</sup> R.R. Reno is helpful in describing the limits of “critical thinking”:

Once the work of deconstruction is done, there’s little left to motivate us to move toward something better. The intellectual life is based on the desire to know. Critical thinking may clear away falsehoods. It may disabuse us of our convenient parochialisms. But it does not satisfy our intellectual affections. In fact, if given undue priority, critical thinking can cause those affections to wither. We become experts in debunking, but at the risk of becoming intellectual spinsters unable or unwilling to allow ourselves to be enflamed by the possibilities of larger truths—truths to be affirmed, not critiqued, in a consummation of our desire to know. (R. R. Reno, “The Loving Intellect,” *First Things Magazine*, March 2016, 46)

Jacobs also points out that when people want to promote “critical thinking” they really want students to think critically about “what they’ve learned at home or in church, not about what they learn from us.” Jacobs, *How to Think*. 37.

<sup>73</sup> Meek, *Loving to Know*, 435.

<sup>74</sup> Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known*, 57.

<sup>75</sup> Robin Sloan argues, “To make an argument strong, you have to make your opponent’s argument stronger. You need sharp thinking and compelling language, but you also need close attention and deep empathy. I don’t mean to be woo-woo about it, but truly, you need love. The overall sensibility is closer to caregiving than to punditry.” Robin Sloan, “The Steel Man of #GamerGate,” *Medium*, The Message, September 5, 2014, accessed August 30, 2018, <https://medium.com/message/the-steel-man-of-gamergate-7019d86dd5f5>.

reflection is required.”<sup>76</sup> To be charitable learners, a student must learn how to listen—and to listen is to think.

A picture is developing of the inherently dangerous task of learning to love. It potentially threatens what one holds most dear. Rainer Maria Rilke comments,

It is also good to love: because love is difficult. For one human being to love another human being: that is perhaps the most difficult task that has been entrusted to us, the ultimate task, the final test and proof, the work for which all other work is merely preparation. That is why young people, who are beginners in everything, are not yet capable of love: it is something they must learn. With their whole being, with all their forces, gathered around their solitary, anxious, upward-beating heart, they must learn to love.<sup>77</sup>

Love exposes the soul, the mind, and the self. It is vulnerable and intimate. The fear becomes the stage of the university and the attendant virtues. When “success,” “excellence,” and “mastery” are the standards of the day, there is no value or appreciation for love, vulnerability, or intimacy.

Lest one assume love is boundless and self-defined, the college campus ought to have rules or guidelines that encourage and direct love. The problem with the human heart is that it has a propensity toward wickedness, sin, and deceit. Humans tend to be

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<sup>76</sup> Jacobs, *How to Think*, 18. John Stuart Mill is especially helpful on this subject: He who knows only his own side of the case, knows little of that. His reasons may be good, and no one may have been able to refute them. But if he is equally unable to refute the reasons on the opposite side; if he does not so much as know what they are, he has no ground for preferring either opinion. . . . Nor is it enough that he should hear the arguments of adversaries from his own teachers, presented as they state them, and accompanied by what they offer as refutations. This is not the way to do justice to the arguments, or bring them into real contact with his own mind. He must be able to hear them from persons who actually believe them; who defend them in earnest, and do their very utmost for them. He must know them in their most plausible and persuasive form; he must feel the whole force of the difficulty which the true view of the subject has to encounter and dispose of, else he will never really possess himself of the portion of truth which meets and removes that difficulty. Ninety-nine in a hundred of what are called educated men are in this condition, even of those who can argue fluently for their opinions. Their conclusion may be true, but it might be false for anything they know: they have never thrown themselves into the mental position of those who think differently from them, and considered what such persons may have to say; and consequently they do not, in any proper sense of the word, know the doctrine which they themselves profess. (John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* [London: John W. Parker and Son, 1859], 67-68)

<sup>77</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters to a Young Poet* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 87.

self-justifying and self-righteous. Great tragedies occur in the name of love. John Stott explains, “Love need law to guide it. It is rather naïve to claim that love has no need of any direction outside itself. . . . Love is not infallible. Indeed, it is sometimes blind. So God has given us commandments to chart the pathways of love.”<sup>78</sup> Rules, routine, and duty serve as guidelines that direct hearts; they function as a type of guardrail for love. Rather than a list of moral commands, Christians are called to the law of love (Gal 5:1-6, 13-18; Rom 13.10).

If there is a question of what it means to love, the apostle Paul provides a template in 1 Corinthians 13. This list of love is often referred to in the line of moral tradition, but the argument here is that the love list should be included in the intellectual virtues.<sup>79</sup> Charity informs how one knows; it is a posture the Christian takes in learning. First Corinthians 13:4-13 reveals if a person is loving or not.

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.

For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

A biblical text as rich as this requires its own book to fully appreciate; however, it is worth describing a few examples of how this hermeneutic of charity can work in practice. First, love is patient. The educational task to know requires patience, which is

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<sup>78</sup> John Stott, *Christ the Controversialist: A Study in Some Essentials of Evangelical Religion* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991), 161.

<sup>79</sup> In all honesty, the division between moral virtues and intellectual virtues is rather limiting and confusing. Personal morality affects scholarship and scholarship affects morality. They could be divided to talk about different aspects of human life, but they are monolithic.

one reason efficiency and results so skew the academic endeavor; it is not born in love, and it is almost impossible to know. Love takes effort and effort requires patience. To understand an argument, to spend time listening to an opposing view one finds abhorrent, or to read a complicated book require patience. When a student tries as hard as she can but cannot seem to comprehend a concept, both teacher and student need to learn patience. When a classmate wants to rush to judgments and conclusions without hearing opposing views, he needs patience. Especially in a modern, tweetable culture, colleges need to form patient students. If humility was a Christian priority, how might that translate into the learning task? Perhaps academic achievement and performance would not be of utmost importance.

In popular usage, love is constantly affirming, and it is impossible to love someone or something and disagree with them. However, this is the emotivist view of love—not the biblical concept. According to 1 Corinthians 13, love “does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.” In the intellectual virtues, love does “not rejoice at wrong-knowing.” Love, though not critical, is discerning. Cornelius Van Til suggests, “Discernment is a feature of wisdom, which is the main goal of higher education.”<sup>80</sup> Paul prays for the Philippians that “your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment” (Phil 1:9). He also instructs the Roman church: “Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good” (Rom 12:9). Critical thinking, then, is a great evaluative skill but a poor understanding skill. Knowing requires a critical element but a loving stance. To seek to understand is the goal of love—to arrive at truth. In the quest for “objective truth” the secular agenda distances the learner from the subject and therefore distances understanding.<sup>81</sup> If love is the foundation of knowledge, then it starts

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<sup>80</sup> Cornelius Van Til, *Engaging God’s World: A Christian Vision of Faith, Learning, and Living* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2002), 100. He writes, “Well-instructed Christians try not to offend the Holy Spirit by scorning truth in non-Christian authors over whom the Spirit has been brooding, but this does not mean that Christians can afford to read these authors uncritically.” *Ibid.*, x.

<sup>81</sup> One can readily see this distance in recent political debates. There is no concession; no

with compassion and empathy for a person—whether he is the author, she is a classmate, or they are a research group. Love seeks true reality but is discerning enough to confess when a judgment is wrong.<sup>82</sup> Mark Schwehn puts it like this: “Humility . . . does not mean uncritical acceptance: it means, in practical terms, the *presumption* of wisdom and authority *in the author*.”<sup>83</sup> Charitable thinking is a humble task after truth—not afraid of what he or she will find and also not afraid to call out error. The student can seek after truth and find it in the oddest of places.

The apostle Paul closes his list on love by concluding with faith, hope, and love. In essence, this sums up the educational task. Augustine is helpful in connecting these concepts:

If faith falters, love itself decays. For if someone lapses in his faith, he inevitably lapses in his love as well, since he cannot love what he does not believe to be true. If on the other hand he both believe and loves, then by good conduct and by following the rules of good behavior he gives himself reason to hope that he will attain what he loves. . . . But faith will be replaced by the sight of visible reality, and hope by the real happiness which we shall attain, whereas love will actually increase when these things pass away.<sup>84</sup>

Faith can be seen as the nature of the task of education: knowing truth, which includes the reasonable components of knowledge. As Augustine suggests, a knower must know something and believe it to love it. Hope can be seen as the means of love that draws humanity to character and habits and rightly ordered loves. Finally, love is the college’s happiness. It is always more passionately desired when obtained, and the task of the

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empathy or understanding for a position; no sharpening of their own position by listening to another. Rather, there is yelling and angry disagreement. It is more entertaining that way. Though it can sell tickets, it is no way to carry a classroom.

<sup>82</sup> For more on what a humble disagreement can look like in practice, see John Inazu, *Confident Pluralism Surviving and Thriving through Deep Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

<sup>83</sup> Schwehn, *Exiles from Eden*, 48, emphasis original.

<sup>84</sup> Augustine, *On Christian Teaching*, trans. R. P. H. Green (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 28.

college is to attain more of the love of God. Love is the eternal thing to be increasingly enjoyed.

These things remain, but the greatest is love.

### **Cultivating Attention: Education as Craft**

The research revealed the malformity that is social media, technology, and smart phones.<sup>85</sup> The contemporary air one breathes is distraction at one's finger tips. As universities dedicated to education, which requires meaningful attention, Christian institutions need to cultivate environments where the right attention can happen. Cal Newport observes, "Our brains instead construct our worldview based on *what we pay attention to*. . . . As Gallagher summarizes: 'Who you are, what you think, feel, and do, what you love—is the sum of what you focus on.'"<sup>86</sup> This emphasis on attention is something that Smith's liturgical feature misses: habits are powerful not only because of practice and repetition, but because it captivates and trains one's attention. Smith is right to insist that it is reductionistic to view humans as brains: a most powerful force of formation is not information or understanding—it is attention.

Historically, the liberal arts were heralded as a training ground of what to pay attention to. In David Foster Wallace's famous commencement speech at Kenyon College, he perceives that most people, including himself, pay attention to themselves to the exclusion of everyone else. This attentiveness to self is most people's default setting, hard-wired into one's brain. He continues to the purpose of a liberal arts education: not learning what to think but "learning how to exercise some control over how and what you

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<sup>85</sup> For one such book length investigation into how technology is re-wiring modern persons brains, see Nicholas Carr, *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011).

<sup>86</sup> Cal Newport, *Deep Work: Rules for Focused Success in a Distracted World* (New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2016), 77, emphasis original.

think. It means being conscious and aware enough to choose what you pay attention to and to choose how you construct meaning from experience.”<sup>87</sup> He gives the example of going to the supermarket in a routine, frustrating way after a long day at work. There at the long check-out line with other inconsiderate people or on the drive home when the Hummer cuts him off, there is a choice of interpretation and awareness. At that moment, the person can choose to think charitably about the situation or person or check-out clerk or frame their existence around themselves. He argues that the liberal arts have “almost nothing to do with knowledge, and everything to do with simple awareness.”<sup>88</sup> This charitable attention is the goal of a Christian liberal arts education.

To pay attention is to act charitably in learning. To not pay attention is to not care, and therefore to not love. Before (and much different) Wallace, Jonathan Edwards concurs, “Selfishness is a principle which does, as it were, confine a man’s heart to himself. Love enlarges it and extends it to others. A man’s self is, as it were, extended and enlarged by love.”<sup>89</sup> The same can be said about subjects and interests: it may not be natural attraction, but love pulls out of oneself and disposes the student toward attention beyond immediate appreciation or enjoyment. Love leads the student outside of oneself to be attentive to another. Love takes the student to something alien, and education happens when attention to something outside of oneself is rewarded.

In the same vein, Simone Weil draws out the implication of attention to tough or unenjoyable subjects. Wrestling with a difficult subject, or even a subject one is prone to dislike, is a means of forming attention. She explains, “The key to a Christian conception

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<sup>87</sup> David Foster Wallace, “This Is Water,” Commencement Address at Kenyon College, accessed August 11, 2018, <https://web.ics.purdue.edu/~drkelly/DFWKenyonAddress2005.pdf>.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Jonathan Edwards, *Charity and Its Fruits*, ed. Kyle Strobel (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 171.

of studies is the realization that prayer consists of attention.”<sup>90</sup> Here, Weil points out that the key and purpose of study is attention. Study on lower subjects prime the knower for higher attention and contemplation. She uses the example of geometry: even if someone wrestles for an hour and does not arrive at the correct conclusion, that person is formed in their attention necessary in seeking God. Perhaps educational institutions are too quick to give easy, pat answers and are uncomfortable with struggle with the unfortunate outcome that diminishes a student’s ability to pay attention to God in the post-college years.

One of the best ways to practice loving attention is through craft. Craft is about cultivating attention in communal formation to make commitments. Matthew Crawford is one other author who recommends education as a sort of craft. In *The World Beyond Your Head*, he uses the example of a pipe organ.<sup>91</sup> To be a master craftsman of a pipe organ requires one to be initiated in the craft, which requires attention, concentration, and perception. It is insufficient to merely know the history or function; it requires a critical engagement with the design and method of the past combined with an orientation with the future. To be a master craftsman, one must be initiated in the tradition to carry it forward, and this initiation can only be done by someone within the trade who trains an apprentice to be a conversation partner. Thus, craftsmanship involves a deep dive into a particular emphasis but also a working knowledge of how their piece fits into the bigger picture. It is specialized within a generalized framework. It seems modern education has lost the skill of learning and living well, so schools often settle for a counterfeit. Education has become accustomed to cheap and easy and has lost the craft of sustaining education through the generations. Often, the best teachers can muster is to equip students for a test a few months out. The thought of this students’ grandkids and the formation happening currently is too much to bear.

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<sup>90</sup> Simone Weil, *Waiting on God* (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2009), 57.

<sup>91</sup> Matthew Crawford, *The World beyond Your Head: On Becoming an Individual in an Age of Distraction* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015).

To summarize, Jacobs may be most helpful. He argues, “Attentiveness is an ethical as well as an intellectual matter; it’s about treating our neighbors as they deserve as much as its about getting the right facts into our heads.”<sup>92</sup> Thus, a hermeneutic of charity *requires* attention.

### **Research Limitations**

In addition to the limits of generalization addressed in chapter 3, the findings presented in this thesis should be measured in lieu of these limitations:

1. As this study focused on Christian liberal arts institutions, the data is not transferable to Bible colleges, catholic schools, or secular universities. As the liberal arts’ purpose to be holistic and general, these institutions value complete intellectual development. Thus, these institutions are more “centered” than extreme.
2. The study is limited to what documents and representatives say. Their answers are as valuable as their words are valuable, but it does not track how institutions actually function. Perhaps a further study would be to see where money goes or how the board describes their mission, or how students describe their formation would be more accurate.
3. The study is limited in who the representatives of an institution were. Many were from the more academic side of the college, so their answers reflect a more intellectual bent, whereas student life may emphasize other formative aspects.
4. The conclusions reached in this research study were warranted primarily based on the content analysis procedures I performed. My own subjectivity may have influenced the reported findings of this study. Additional research could expose the nature and extent of this influence if it existed.

### **Further Research**

There are a plethora of ways this research can be continued and expanded.

What follows is a suggested list:

1. A study to compare these findings on purpose with how a student life representative view and apply purpose and formation.
2. A study to compare these findings on purpose with how a faculty member views and applies purpose and formation.

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<sup>92</sup> Alan Jacobs, “How to Read a Book,” in *Liberal Arts for the Christian Life*, ed. Jeffrey Davis and Philip Ryken (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 127.

3. A study to assess how a student's view of their own formation changes throughout their college career (freshman to senior).
4. A subsequent study could be developed to explore how Bible colleges view and apply formation and purpose.
5. A subsequent study could be developed to explore how secular universities view formation and purpose.
6. A subsequent study could be developed to explore how Catholic universities view and apply formation and purpose.
7. A study may be designed to compare secular and religious purpose and formation during the college years.
8. A study to assess the impact of personal relationship between faculty and students on student formation.
9. A study to assess the impact of personal relationship between student life staff and students on student formation.
10. A study may be designed to analyze the impact of local church attendance among students.
11. A study may be designed to investigate the influence of chapel on a student's spiritual formation.
12. A study to investigate how churches consider, equip, and train students during the college years.
13. A study to assess the impact of technology and distraction during the college years.

### **Conclusion**

Rightly understood, the Christian academic endeavor shapes itself around the twin goals of rightly loving God and loving one's neighbor in God. The goal is not to know the right things (*homo cogito*), have the right jobs (*homo economicus*), or feel the right way (*homo motus*) to unreflectively do the right things (*homo liturgicus*); the goal is to love the right things in the right way. Therefore, the whole tone and tenor of the educational process should be built with this understanding. The teacher, then, primarily exists as an (imperfect) example and model of one who loves the right things in the right direction.<sup>93</sup> The student, through imitation, habits, reflection, practice, and dialogue, is

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<sup>93</sup> Wordsworth's words in the poem "The Prelude" are fitting: "What we have loved, // others will love, and we will teach them how." William Wordsworth, "The Prelude," Global Language Resources,

learning *what* and *how* to love God first and love his neighbor in God through the whole curricular and cocurricular development. The goal is to awaken students to a new vision of being human and of being a Christian: a vision of something one wants or wants to become.

A student does not have to enjoy every subject. If a person is led to appreciate the insights and appreciate those who do love the subject, then one can grow in love for God and love for neighbor.<sup>94</sup> Statistics are a good example for me—I have no interest in dealing with numbers at a deep level of intricacy. However, I can see the orientation and direction to which the subject can lead and point. I can see how it can be used for the glory of God. I can see how some men and women are equipped to learn and serve God with these mathematical gifts. In short, I can be oriented to love God and love neighbor through understanding and appreciating the value a certain subject has, all the while disliking the subject itself. Love compels the knower to the unknown.

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2001, accessed August 4, 2018, <http://triggs.djvu.org/djvu-editions.com/WORDSWORTH/PRELUDE1850/Prelude1850.pdf>, 225. Thus, the role of mentor is of utmost importance for college professors and administrators.

<sup>94</sup>Another example of how love affects a discipline comes from John Fea in *Why Study History*: The study of the past offers endless opportunities to exercise loving embrace to our fellow humans, even if they have lived in a different era and are no longer alive. It is easy to manipulate the voices from the past to serve our own purposes in the present, and out of love we must not do this. This kind of presentism makes for bad history, and when looked at theologically, this kind of manipulation is also a failure to love a failure to enter into the worlds of those who have gone before us with a spirit of compassion, selfishness, and empathy. People in the past cannot defend themselves. They are at the mercy of the historian. This, of course, gives the practitioner of history a great deal of power. But Christian historians will do their best to meet the people in the past as Jesus encountered the people he met during his earthly ministry. They must relinquish power and avoid the temptation to use the powerless those in the past who are at the mercy of us, the interpreters to serve selfish ends, whether they be religious, political, or cultural. The exercise of this hermeneutic of love means that we will read historical texts for the purpose of learning how to love people who are not like us, perhaps even people who, if we were living at the same time, may have been our enemies. It forces us to love others even a nineteenth-century slaveholder or Hitler when they seem to be unlovable. Failure to respect the people in the past is ultimately a failure of love. It is a failure to recognize the common bond that we share with humanity. (John Fea, "History as Love," *Way of Improvement*, February 14, 2017, accessed on February 14, 2017, <https://thewayofimprovement.com/2017/02/14/history-as-love/>).

This conclusion suggests that one's goal will captivate and drive one's love. No one has to be taught to love themselves. Ultimate loves will shape the means to get to the destination. For the Christian educator, there is a hermeneutic of charity. The task of learning in higher education is seeking the truth in love. The task of the teacher is to speak the truth in love and foster classrooms that seek the truth in love. The goal of the college is to form students who pursue truth and flourishing by loving rightly.

“Only beautiful things lead us out to join the world beyond our heads,” so writes philosopher Matthew Crawford.<sup>95</sup> The Christian knows who the beautiful is; namely, God. God leads a person out of their head or theological ideas into the world of lived reality. God calls a person out in beauty to love his neighbor, which includes practical ways like giving someone a meal and intellectual ways like being charitable while reading. The Christian college's task is to show students beautiful Jesus, who can take students beyond their own experience into a life of mission for the common good—to be faithfully present in a small, agrarian town or a booming metropolis—whatever their particular vocations may be. May the Lord sustain those schools who remain faithful to do just that.

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<sup>95</sup> Crawford, *The World Beyond Your Head*, 294.

## APPENDIX 1

### THESIS STUDY PARTICIPATION FORM

#### **Agreement to Participate**

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to explore the teleological priorities of Christian liberal arts colleges.<sup>1</sup> This research is being conducted by Alex Sosler for purposes of thesis research. In this research, upon agreeing to participate, you will be asked to participate in a personal interview by telephone. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

By your completion of this form and the subsequent personal interview, and by checking the appropriate box below and entering the requested information, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

I agree to participate  
 I do not agree to participate

Name:  
E-mail:  
Date:

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<sup>1</sup>The version of this form completed by participants was an electronic document with fillable fields.

APPENDIX 2  
SOSLER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. What is the university for?<sup>1</sup>
  - a) What reasons would you offer for why a student should attend your university?
2. How would you describe an ideal graduate from your institution?<sup>2</sup>
3. How does your institution plan to go about forming students in that direction?
4. What are hinders a student or what obstacles need to be overcome in forming a student in that direction?
5. What kind of classes do you think students would say are the most influential in their college career?<sup>3</sup>
  - b) Do you have any classes in the core curriculum that deal with moral meaning and the deepest human questions?<sup>4</sup>
6. What experiences outside the classroom do you think many students would point to as most influential in their college career?
  - c) Is there any interaction between student life directors and faculty or academic officers?

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<sup>1</sup> Stanley Hauerwas, *The State of the University: Academic Knowledges and the Knowledge of God* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007). As discussed in the precedent literature, discerning the *telos* of education can determine the essential visions of essence and good.

<sup>2</sup> Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Educating for Shalom: Essays on Christian Higher Education* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 2004), 9.

<sup>3</sup> According to Frederick Rudolph, the core curriculum or general education curriculum communicates what is most important to an institution. See Frederick Rudolph, *Curriculum: A History of the American Undergraduate Course of Study since 1636* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1977).

<sup>4</sup> Steve Garber provides evidence of this shortage in *The Fabric of Faithfulness: Weaving Together Belief & Behavior during the University Years* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 82. This is also a central emphasis based on the research of Tim Clydesdale and the Lily Endowment initiative to exploring purpose learning in undergraduate Christian colleges.

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## ABSTRACT

### WHAT IS CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION FOR? AN ASSESSMENT OF TELEOLOGICAL PRIORITIES AT SELECTED LIBERAL ARTS INSTITUTIONS

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The intent of this study was to investigate the teleological priorities of Christian higher education. As a sample size, the study drew from the Christian College Consortium that features leading liberal arts institutions.

From a review of the literature, four historical epochs emerged with different defining features: the age of faith, the age of reason, the age of industrialization, and the age of feeling. Each age exhibits different priorities and different anthropologies, and they all impact the landscape of the current higher education field. In many ways, the university has become a multiversity. However, as the study argues, the Christian worldview has the resources to reunify the task of education by pursuing a better goal while not neglecting the tradition from which the university was founded. Drawing from the contribution of James K .A. Smith and his liturgical emphasis, this better goal is to love God and to love neighbor by including all epochs, while recognizing that human beings exist primarily as lovers—not thinkers, not producers, and not feelings. What one loves will shape the pursuit of truth. The precedent literature led to the development of a scale to place different priorities that were considered in the next section of the research.

The resultant study led to a two-phased qualitative study. The first step was to complete a text-based analysis of the documents of each representative college with a special emphasis given to mission statements. The study also considered website and

catalogue information. With the text-based portion information, the study then placed where institutions seemed to lean on the scale aforementioned. Following this phase, the final phase was a semi-structured interview with a representative from each of the participating institutions in the Christian College Consortium. This phase was to elicit further detail on priorities, as well as to compare and contrast the text data with the interview data.

This study pushes the conversation forward in the philosophy, goals, and understanding of students in the context of Christian higher education. Furthermore, evaluation of the research led to significant application to the value of faculty, curricular and co-curricular reform, and the means of learning pursued with Christian love.

**KEYWORDS:** moral development, spiritual formation, virtue ethics, cognitive development, theological anthropology, Augustine, James K.A. Smith, habits, love, heart, college, undergraduate, liberal arts, wisdom, commitment, attention, distraction, faculty, teaching, learning, education, charity, heremeneutics.

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