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## Faith and Learning and Libraries: The Library's Role in Academia's Faith and Learning Conversation

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## Faith and Learning and Libraries: The Library's Role in Academia's Faith and Learning Conversation

### Erratum

This file provides an updated bibliography of faith and learning resources. <http://tinyurl.com/yyqngw9e>

# Faith and Learning and Libraries:

## The Library's Role in Academia's Faith and Learning Conversation

### I. Introduction

Bill was a Christian and struggling, but he did not know why. After a few months of wrestling with a variety of issues, Bill realized that because he spent much of his time at a job, he had few, if any, opportunities to express his faith. Bill, like many Christians, was familiar with the idea that one of the roles Christians play in the "secular" world is to win converts. Bill agreed with this wholeheartedly and did not want to dismiss the importance of it, but he continued to ask himself, "Isn't there more?" What does it mean to be a Christian at his workplace? What makes Bill different from his non-Christian colleagues? Bill recognized that his non-Christian colleagues were honest with their clients, they were not stealing money from their work place, they were nice people and easy to get along with, yet they were not believers.

A few months later, Bill got another job at a Christian agency but soon realized that he was struggling with the same issue. "What does it mean to be a Christian worker? Was it simply enough to work at a Christian institute?" Bill was convinced that there was more to it. Bill gained insight when he read *Faith and Learning on the Edge* by David Claerbaut. Three concepts from this book particularly resonated with him.

1) All truth is God's truth. Bill was familiar with this phrase, but never considered what it really meant. The truths established in all disciplines are God's truths, whether management, business, arts, or music. Bill began to realize that this simple phrase has deep implications.

2) Claerbaut's book provides a simple and distinct picture of what faith looks like when applied to a discipline. Bill had never seen this before and he began to wonder what faith would look like when applied to his scenario.

3) Claerbaut provides a method through which Bill could come to an understanding of what a discipline of knowledge looks like through the eyes of faith. Bill had never considered the deep division in his culture between religion and everything else. With acknowledgment of this division, he began to see his job through a lens of faith.

The situation Bill faced is common. The sacred/secular divide permeates American culture and many Christians grapple with these same questions. The framework that Claerbaut speaks about is what Christian higher education refers to as the integration of faith and learning and it intends to address scenarios just like Bill's. The faith and learning dialog exists because:

...it is now simply assumed that every field of knowledge or practice is perfectly complete without any reference to God as real and relevant, and all the more so without any knowledge of God and his activities. It may be logically possible that this assumption is true. But is it true, and is there reason to think that it is true? Could there be knowledge on that point, knowledge that could be taught as such before the objectively critical mind? (Willard, 2009, p.123)

Because of the above assumption, faith and learning is a major topic of conversation among Christian universities. Many scholars consider it a pivotal point in Christian scholarship (Hughes, 2005, pp. 70-95), arguing that it is what makes Christian higher education Christian (Holmes, 1987, p. 6). Much of academia agrees with the assumption about knowledge (Dockery, 2008c, p. xiii) exhibited in Willard's quote, making the faith and learning dialog challenging, and even more necessary in Christian academia.

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### ABSTRACT

The integration of "faith and learning" is a distinctive concept in Christian higher education. While not a particularly new idea it is playing an increasingly more important role in Christian colleges and universities curricula. In spite of this growing importance, in many respects, it remains an ambiguous term. This article discusses our process in defining "faith and learning integration" and our methodology for gathering appropriate resources to support the ongoing conversations and practice on our campuses.

*Faculty at any institution set the context for the educational experience through curriculum decisions, classroom ethos, course content, and their interactions, assignments and expectations of students. George Fox University is no exception.*

George Fox University in Newberg, Oregon, takes the faith and learning conversation seriously. In response, the library initiated a project based on faculty need regarding the integration of faith and learning. This project serves as an example of a library's role in supporting the conversation of faith and learning as well as illustrates two librarian's roles in supporting that dialog.

## II. Context

George Fox University is a small, Christian liberal-arts university located approximately 20 miles south of Portland, Oregon. George Fox University has approximately 3500 students with 60% in the traditional, residential undergraduate program and 40% in the five graduate programs of Business, Counseling, PsyD, Education, and Ministry as well as the Adult Degree Completion Program. Although George Fox University is associated with the Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends, only 4% of the students self-identify as Friends. The plurality of the student population is non-denominational Christian; those who identify with a denomination are largely mainline protestant or evangelical. Undergraduate students are required to sign a lifestyle statement but do not have to self-identify as Christians, although most do. Chapel for undergraduates is required. Graduate students are not required to sign a lifestyle statement or self-identify as Christians with the exception of PsyD students. Seminary students have a different process but a like requirement. All faculty and staff must sign both the lifestyle statement as well as a statement of faith (George Fox University, 2010).

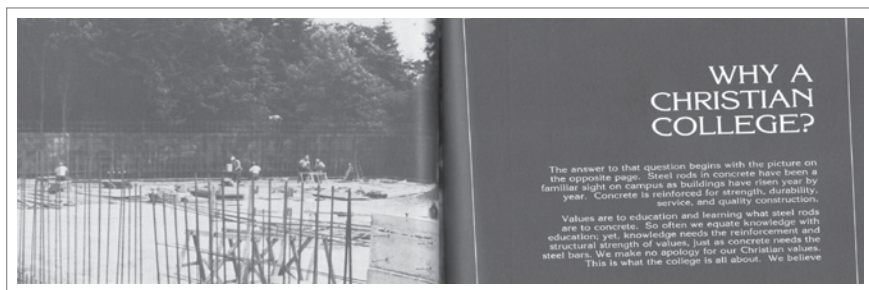
Faith and learning as part of a Christian education has always been an important tenant at George Fox University. Articulated in various ways throughout George Fox's history as a college and now as a university, the concept is core to its mission.

This image from the 1980-1982 Catalog suggests the relationship between faith and learning as the relationship between values and knowledge. The image equates the rebar with the values that support and give form to the knowledge. Thus, faith informs and gives shape to knowledge. A current vision statement of the university articulates that same idea:

"As a university, we seek to advance knowledge by engaging in and supporting scholarship. Working from Christian premises, we attempt to better understand God and God's creation. Doing so helps us to teach and serve others more effectively" (George Fox University, 2011, "About Our Christian University," para. 5).

This statement indicates that faculty will begin their scholarship with a Christian worldview. This worldview will inform not only their scholarship but also their teaching and service. The most important way in which the process of faith and learning is accomplished at George Fox University is through the faculty.

Faculty at any institution set the context for the educational experience through curriculum decisions, classroom ethos, course content, and their interactions, assignments and expectations of students. George Fox University is no exception. Therefore, the tenure/promotion process requires faculty members to write an essay describing how they integrate faith into their teaching and their scholarship. Many professors, having been trained in secular universities, are familiar with the sacred/secular divide. They arrive at George Fox University eager to share their faith and teach within a Christian university yet have had little or no training on how to integrate their faith into their pedagogy. Newly hired faculty are required to attend a "New Faculty Class." Here



George Fox University 1980-1982 Catalog

they often express a desire to locate resources about the integration of faith and learning that address the topic generally and their discipline specifically. The library recognized that an annotated list of current monographs, readily available within the George Fox University collection, would be a useful and welcome resource.

### III. Initial Source Exploration

An initial review of resources held in the George Fox University collection revealed one of the original Christian College Consortium (CCC) bibliographies published in 1983. (Andrews University, 1983) The CCC started in 1971 with the expressed purpose of reconstructing Christian higher education. Part of that process was the educational emphasis on the integration of faith and learning. The CCC later launched the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCCU). This bibliography was indeed a historical look at the topic dividing monographs and articles by discipline in a three-ring binder on neatly mimeographed pages.

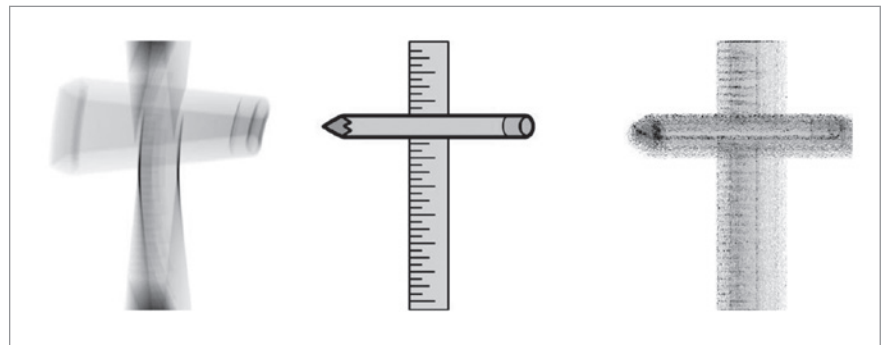
A cursory search for the concept of “faith and learning” in WorldCat revealed a number of additional bibliographies including Kenneth Hermann’s bibliography produced in 1985 (Hermann, 1985) and David Dockery’s seminal bibliography in 1998 (Dockery, 1998). Dockery has since updated that bibliography in 2007 (Dockery, 2007) and again in 2008 (Dockery, 2008). The initial WorldCat search also indentified important authors involved in the conversation including: Marsden, Holmes, Hughes, Wolterstorff, Poe, Plantinga, Harris, Noll, Joldersma, Badley, and Hasker.

A hallmark of CCCC schools is the promotion of faith and learning as a distinctive of the education process. A quick perusal of the websites of a number of these schools indicated they were linking to the 2007 Dockery bibliography as were Azusa Pacific University and the Canadian Mennonite University. A number of other CCCC schools listed Dockery’s title, *Renewing Minds: Serving Church and Society through Christian Higher*

*Education*, in which the 2008 bibliography resides, as a resource. Dockery’s bibliography unfortunately lists few titles published within the last ten years.

Resources published within the last ten years needed to be identified. The George Fox library partnered with the Corban library at this point to identify those resources and construct a bibliography that would be useful to faculty at both campuses. The librarians working on the project read several individual works in addition to the afore mentioned initial overview: *Teaching as an Act of Faith*, edited by Migliazzo, *Christian Worldview* and the *Academic Disciplines* edited by Downey and Porter, and *Faith and Learning on the Edge* by Claerbaut. These collections of essays, relating pedagogy appropriate for integrating faith and learning within each discipline, reinforced the pivotal role faculty play in creating the internal space in which integration happens within the student. However, it also became clear that in order to proceed with the selection of material, a clear definition of the concept of faith and learning was required.

### IV. Overview/Definition of Faith and Learning



In order to define the concept of faith and learning, it was necessary to understand its history as a concept. It began as a concept more than one hundred years ago with German roots. (Heslam, 1998) While the idea behind the concept is straightforward, the specifics of it were rather fuzzy. The concept later developed into a very clear and concise definition and then morphed back into a fuzzy concept. Four key individuals in the



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perspective.*

faith and learning conversation demonstrate this movement from fuzzy to defined and then back to fuzzy: Abraham Kuyper, Arthur Holmes, and Douglas and Rhonda Jacobsen.

Abraham Kuyper (1837–1920) Dutch politician, journalist, statesman, and theologian gave a series of lectures at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1898. His most notable work originated from these lectures in which Kuyper argued what many people openly admit today; everyone has a lens, a worldview or “life-system” through which they see things (Kuyper, 1899). The idea that Christian truth undergirds all of knowledge is one of the key underlying elements supporting faith and learning. While Kuyper was likely not the first individual to suggest this (Heslam, 1998, p. 96), his comments and works were, and in many cases still are, the most respected and articulate. Kuyper described what needed to happen, but he did not break it down further to how it might happen or how it should look.

A second key player in the faith and learning dialog is Arthur Holmes, a prior faculty member at Wheaton College. In 1975, he published a critical work in the faith and learning dialog, *The Idea of a Christian College*. In this book, he took Kuyper’s ideas and gave them flesh. Holmes posits that there are four different applications of Kuyper’s ideas: an attitudinal approach, an ethical approach, a foundational approach, and a worldview approach.

The attitudinal approach can be applied in disciplines where the content appears to be fairly neutral (i.e. math, computer science, performing arts). In this context, according to Holmes, one displays faith with a positive attitude and a commitment to the discipline. The positive attitude and commitment are reflective of one’s understanding that “... learning is related to the power and wisdom of God” (Holmes 1987, p. 47). Holmes’ ethical approach argues that a Christian can apply their faith to a discipline when it comes to ethical choices. This application explores the intrinsic relationship between the facts of a discipline and the values of love and justice

expressed in Christianity (Holmes, 1987, p. 50). The foundational approach takes one additional step by looking at the philosophical foundations that undergird a discipline. This approach then attempts to support or analyze those foundations from a biblical and theological perspective (Holmes, 1987, p. 53). While all three of these are appropriate ways to implement Kuyper’s concept, Holmes felt that each of these was just a part of the whole. Holmes’ final approach is what he felt was the ideal way to go about integrating faith and learning. He called it the worldview approach (Holmes, 1987, p. 57).

Holmes’ worldview approach has four elements.

- 1) A worldview approach is holistic. “It sees things not just as parts but as a whole. It is a systematic understanding and appraisal of life, and none of the academic disciplines is exempted from contact with it.” (Holmes, 1987, p. 58)
- 2) A worldview approach is investigative. “It explores that creative and redemptive impact of the Christian revelation on every dimension of thought and life, and it remains open-ended because the task is so vast that to complete it would require the omniscience of God” (Holmes, 1987, p. 59). Faith and learning is a process by which one comes to know God’s truth.
- 3) A worldview approach is “pluralistic”. Holmes implied that by looking at a discipline through a worldview approach, many different results will appear.
- 4) Lastly, a worldview approach is both one of perspective and confession. It begins with a confession of faith, and from that foundation a perspective is established (Holmes, 1987, p. 59). It argues that our understandings or biases will be informed by this confession including how we study and understand a particular discipline. With that understanding comes recognition that a bias or perspective is formed – a Christian perspective.

Holmes' clear definition of faith and learning is not without criticism. Some accept it openly; others argue that it is too exclusive. As the conversation has continued, Douglas and Rhonda Jacobsen at Messiah College published, *Scholarship and Christian Faith: Enlarging the Conversation*, in 2004. They argue that Kuyper's model, and therefore Holmes more restrictive model built from Kuyper's works, "certainly does not define the manner in which all Christian scholars ought to approach their work" (Jacobsen & Jacobsen, 2004, p. 16). The question then needs to be asked, what does? The essays edited by Jacobsen and Jacobsen lean toward a very open-ended definition. In other words, Jacobsen and Jacobsen, although not explicitly stating it, imply that any effort made to bring an element of faith into the classroom is "faith and learning" (Jacobsen & Jacobsen, 2004, p. 46).

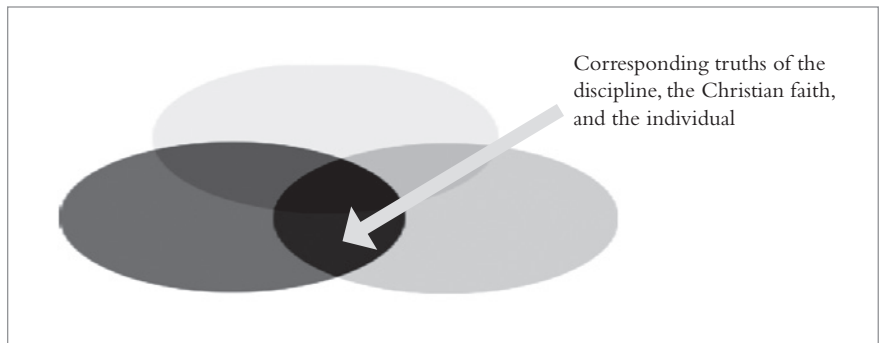
At first glance, it would appear that the conversation about faith and learning has come full circle: from Kuyper's fuzzy concept expressed more than one hundred years ago, to Holmes' articulation of explicit elements of the concept, and then back to Jacobsen's and Jacobsen's open-ended fuzziness. However, intermingled in this timeline are a number of other scholars contributing their voices to the conversation including: Perry Glanzer at Baylor University, Clarence Joldersma at Calvin College, Ken Badley at George Fox University, and Elizabeth Sites at Liberty University (Glanzer, 2008; Joldersma, 1996; Badley, 1994; & Sites, 2009). Each of these scholars presents faith and learning in a unique way, giving it a distinct definition. In spite of their distinctiveness, the definitions provided lean towards Kuyper's and Holmes' concept and do not blatantly disagree. The historical understanding of the concept was an important step toward finding a suitable definition of faith and learning for the selection of monographs for George Fox University and Corban University.

## V. Definition of Integration

A standard definition of integration is incorporating parts into a whole. However, the integration expressed in the reviewed definitions of faith and learning was a melding rather than an interlocking. Intentional overlap of a discipline with the Christian faith enables one to understand what that discipline looks like from a Christian perspective. If "all truth is God's truth," as Augustine said, then the truths of the Christian faith and the truths of the discipline should inform one another as in a meld rather than interlocked in parallel positions (see diagrams below).



Interlocking



Melding

## VI. Selected Definition of Faith and Learning

Clarence Joldersma provided helpful language for the project (Joldersma, 1996). Joldersma argued that faith is both the doctrine of belief as well as the life of the individual as impacted by the doctrine. Likewise, he said that learning referred to both a body of knowledge and a process of learning. Therefore, according to

Joldersma, the integration of faith and learning has four possible definitions:

- integrating a life of faith with a process of learning
- integrating a life of faith with a body of knowledge
- integrating a body of doctrine with a process of learning
- integrating a body of doctrine with a body of knowledge

One cannot deny the interconnectedness of knowledge and learning, and doctrine and life. However, if there is not a firm integration of doctrine and knowledge then faith and learning are without context, and thus lose their place in the educational arena. The educational arena has a tremendous impact on the intellectual culture of America. Changes begin to happen at the macro level when one makes an effort to integrate faith into the intellectual and educational arena. The mind is a powerful entity in today's culture and in Christianity. Osborne's commentary on Romans 12:2 states

"It is clear that the mind is where spiritual growth occurs, and in the mind decisions are made that determine one's spiritual direction and destiny. Paul's focus is inner, spiritual transformation, and the locus is in the thinking process." (Osborne, 2003, pp. 321-22).

The fourth element of Joldersma's definition, the integration of a body of doctrine with a body of knowledge, emphasized this focus. Therefore, the guiding definition for selecting books for inclusion in the bibliography was books that displayed the integration of doctrine with knowledge.

## VII. Re-Cap/Bibliography Selection Process

The selection process began with a cursory scan and location of faith and learning bibliographies. It continued with the identification of important voices that

contributed and continue to contribute to the faith and learning dialogue. This also included locating lists of resources used at other CCCU schools. Secondly, an overview of the faith and learning dialogue was undertaken with additional attention paid to the concept of integration. From this overview, a representative definition was chosen. Next, catalog searches in the George Fox catalog as well as consortia catalogs were undertaken using identified subject headings, keyword and author searches. Religious academic publishers' websites were searched by subject, topic, and discipline. Schools with designated faith and learning collections like Seattle Pacific University and Nyack University were searched as well for appropriate titles.

To further facilitate the process, five guiding questions were established which proved useful in maintaining focus on the element of Joldersma's definition during the process of selection. The five questions are as follows with appropriate examples from individual disciplines.

- Has the discipline matured enough for the foundational theories to be critiqued?
- Did the book criticize a theory within the discipline (the body of knowledge) from a Christian worldview?
- Did the book reframe or rebuild a theory held by the discipline to be within a Christian framework?
- Did the book look at trends within the culture affecting the discipline from a Christian worldview?
- Did the book build or build from a biblical foundation for the discipline?
- *Has the discipline matured enough for the foundational theories to be critiqued?*

Computer science is a young discipline with its foundations in math and applications in technology. Books written about this subject from a Christian perspective were just beginning to ask questions about the foundational theories related to ethics



within the discipline. Therefore, most of the identified books were related to the ethics of the discipline when viewed from a Christian perspective.

- ***Did the book criticize a theory within the discipline (the body of knowledge) from a Christian worldview?***

Richard Perkins critiques the sociological theory that reality is socially constructed in his title, *Looking Both Ways*. Perkins provides a diligent and reflective discourse between the core assumptions of sociology and Christianity without any intellectual flinching over the true dilemmas.

- ***Did the book reframe or rebuild a theory held by the discipline to be within a Christian framework?***

George W. Knight builds an educational philosophy based on critiques of secular educational philosophy and theory in, *Philosophy & Education: An introduction in Christian Perspective*.

- ***Did the book look at trends within the culture affecting the discipline from a Christian worldview?***

A number of the books in the dramatic and performing arts took this approach. The title, *Reel Spirituality: Theology and Film in Dialogue*, looks at the theological dimensions of contemporary film.

- ***Did the book build or build from a biblical foundation for the discipline?***

The title, *Called to Care: A Christian Worldview of Nursing*, does just that. It constructs the biblical foundation for the practice of nursing.

### VIII. Observations

This project of creating a current bibliography began with the idea that it would only contain books. The initial goal was five books per discipline published within the last ten years. Finding five current books for all disciplines

that matched the focus seemed like a large enough task with which to begin. It was thought also that a faculty member who needed a place to begin would do well with a book about the subject in their discipline. In addition, the depth of a book seemed more suitable to the integration of a body of knowledge and a body of doctrine. However, as faculty members have requested assistance, they continually request articles as well as books pointing to an additional area for future selection.

In the process of reviewing and selecting titles, several trends were observed in the faith and learning dialogue. Some disciplines have a rich body of literature on the integration of faith and learning and others do not. It appeared that the older disciplines, like business and education, have had time for a longer conversation and therefore have a more developed dialogue than those that are relatively new. In addition, disciplines that began within a religious framework, like nursing, have been talking about integration all along, and are therefore more developed. However, applied disciplines, like engineering and computer science, are more removed from their body of theoretical knowledge and they do not appear to be as aware of the faith and learning dialog except in the areas of ethics. It was noted with interest that these observations mirrored those made by William Hasker (1992) almost 20 years ago.

### IX. Conclusion

George Fox University continues to be committed to the concept of the integration of faith and learning as a distinctive of its curriculum. With this project, the library has committed to support the faith and learning conversation by creating a bibliography of resources for faculty and purchasing resources currently not held within the collection. The library has further committed to assist individual faculty with the location of appropriate resources for their faith and learning essays associated with tenure and promotion. The librarians who initiated this

*It appeared that the older disciplines, like business and education, have had time for a longer conversation and therefore have a more developed dialogue than those that are relatively new.*

project have committed to publicize this resource when appropriate at both institutions as well as maintain the resource with current material. It is currently available at: [http://www.georgefox.edu/offices/murdock/FaithLearningBib/index\\_FaithLearning.html](http://www.georgefox.edu/offices/murdock/FaithLearningBib/index_FaithLearning.html) and <http://www.corban.edu/library/services/resources.html>. †

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