

Leadership and the Curriculum

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I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:1-2, NKJV).

The definition of a leader is basic: *A leader knows where he is going*. Since a leader knows where he is going, then he leads people toward the same goal. A Biblical model of leadership is the shepherd. Sheep follow the voice of the shepherd because the shepherd knows where he is going (cf. Psalm 23; John 10:1-30). In order to know where you are going, you must know who you are and where you came from. Without adequate answers three foundational questions—(1) Who am I? (2) Where did I come from? (3) Where am I going?—you will not be a leader; you will, in contrast, be led by someone who has answers to these questions.

It is only the Biblical Christian who can know the true answers to these basic questions. He knows who he is—created in the image of God, where he came from — from the design and purpose of God, and where he is going—toward an ever-increasing glory reality (the inescapable weight of the sheer Godness of God) revealed in the face of Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 3:18). The Apostle Paul in Colossians 2:8 warns us about being “taken prisoner” by philosophy, *indeed* empty deceit. Not philosophy per se (meaning “love of wisdom” and the Biblical Christian certainly loves wisdom incarnate in the person the Jesus Christ—cf. Proverbs 8 with Colossians 2:3), but the philosophy which is *empty deceit*. The presuppositional starting point of the philosophy of empty deceit is man and his naturalistically based traditions. In contrast, Biblical Christian philosophy starts with the God in Christ — the personal, eternal, and triune Creator of all that is. World view analysis must distinguish between these two starting points *because every point of view is a view from a point*.

As Biblical Christian educators, we must bring this analysis to bear in our curriculum development and implementation. If what we teach does not start with the Scriptural revelation of the triune God, then what we teach will bear the marks of being “held prisoner” by another standard that finds its starting point in man. Paul warns us to “beware.” When we seek to develop curriculum, what standards do we follow? Do we seek to honor the name of God or do we seek to honor the name of man? To be blunt, honoring the name of man in education means to follow the standards set by man (this includes state sanctioned standards — which change on a regular basis according to the shifts in the secular educational winds).

As the late Dr. Glenn R. Martin (1935-2004), professor of Political Science at Indiana Wesleyan University, was fond of saying, “We will either be leaders or we shall be led, influential or influenced.” Who is leading whom in setting curriculum standards? There was a time in history (the Middle Ages—albeit not a perfect time in every respect) when the “world” looked to the “church” for standards in education, art, music, architecture; i.e., culture. In American history, the Puritans set such standards, although we should not absolutize them. Harvard historian Perry Miller (1905-1963), an agnostic, was a world renowned expert on the Puritan mind. He came to the conclusion that most historians cannot understand the Puritan mind *because they cannot stand the Puritan pace*. What Miller meant was that the Puritan mind was too rigorous and too enterprising for the naturalistic and rationalistic historian to understand.

In the 20th century, the “church” has too often tended to look to the “world” for standards. The standards of the “world” are based upon the desire of the naturalistic man—lust of the eyes, lust of the eyes, and boastful pride of life (I John 2:17). These standards are fleeting (passing away); only the will and standards of God abide forever. There is one group of Christians who, in the 20th century, did set the standard — the Wycliffe Bible Translators, because of their diligent and vigorous research, have set the standard for linguistics. I challenge every Biblical Christian educator to envision the day (and work diligently toward it) when a full-orbed Biblical Christian curriculum will set a “second to none” superior standard of scholarship (where the fear of God in Christ is the starting point and the teleological goal of every subject).

How shall this be accomplished? How then shall we be leaders in curriculum development? We must first recognize that the Faith has been given to us in Scripture. In Scripture, God has given us propositional truth that answers the big questions, questions concerning the origin, nature, and purpose of the totality of all things (not exhaustively, but truly). God communicates to us via the written word, the Bible, and the Incarnated Word (John 1:1-14) and it is the written word that gives us true propositions about the Living, Incarnated Word. The nature of the Biblical witness *presupposes that man can know on the basis of revelation*.

Christ is revealed in Scripture as the mediator of redemption and creation. The totality and the interconnectedness of all things (Colossians 1:15-18) find their source, their ground of truth, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Because of these truth propositions, Biblical Christians have always been on the forefront of literacy and education. Man must know how to read, write, and cipher in order to live responsibly in the universe made, sustained, and redeemed by God in Christ.

Since man knows truly on the basis of Biblical revelation, Biblical Christian educators therefore have three objectives by which Biblical Christian scholarship can become “second to none.” First, the thesis: Biblical Christian educators must know what they believe and why they believe it. They must know the Bible as a *living* world view; a dynamical system (not just abstract principles) that speaks truth to the totality of life. For example, the Bible is not a textbook of science, but it is a *sourcebook* of science by providing starting points for its proper understanding and application in the doctrine of creation. Second, the antithesis: Biblical Christian educators must know all other worldviews and systems fully and fairly; i.e., we need to know what we do not believe and why. Third, and here is where the crucible of leadership is tested, Biblical Christian educators must *reinterpret* the totality of life on the basis of Biblical Christian starting points.

As one who spent a lifetime reinterpreting history and political science from God as the starting point, Dr. Glenn R. Martin once said, “Reinterpretation is hard work, but a required work of the Biblical Christian scholar.” I challenge you as Biblical Christian educators to raise the standard of living scholarship, a standard of understanding the truth about the totality of all things *combined with* living for God in Christ, so that in the generations to come, the Faith might be obeyed among all nations (Romans 1:5). Does this task seem impossible? Yes, it is for those who base life on naturalistic standards. However, the Biblical Christian affirms a supernatural God who can do the impossible. Let us pray as Augustine (354-430) prayed, “God, command what You will and give what you command” (*Confessions*, X, xxix, 40).