

# BIBLICAL HIGHER EDUCATION JOURNAL

Volume XVI  
Spring 2021



Biblical • Transformational • Experiential • Missional



*The Association for*  
**Biblical Higher Education**



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# BIBLICAL HIGHER EDUCATION JOURNAL

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**Volume XVI**  
**Spring • 2021**

# ***Biblical Higher Education Journal***

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# Table of Contents

## Articles

*The Interpretive Key: Is Critical Theory a Worldview? .....11*

Rob Lindemann

*Biblical Integration: A Completed Study of Business ..... 31*

*Students at Emmaus Bible College with a Suggested Model  
for Future Integration Efforts*

Kim S. Parcher

## Book Reviews

*Christian Higher Education: Faith, Teaching, ..... 53*

*and Learning in the Evangelical Tradition*

David S. Dockery and Christopher W. Morgan, eds.

Reviewed by James Riley Estep, Jr.

*The Learning Cycle: Insights for Faithful ..... 59*

*Neuroscience and the Teaching from Social Sciences*

*to Follow Jesus in Digital Babylon*

Duane H. Elmer and Muriel L. Elmer

Reviewed by John Jaeger

*Acts: An Exegetical Commentary ..... 63*

Craig S. Keener

Reviewed by Nishanth Thomas

*Ecologies of Faith in a Digital Age: ..... 67*

*Spiritual Growth through Online Education*

Stephen D. Lowe and Mary E. Lowe

Reviewed by Curtis D. McClane

*Teaching Across Cultures: Contextualizing Education ..... 73*

*for Global Mission*

James E. Plueddemann

Reviewed by Linda F. Whitmer

## Editorial

In this sixteenth issue, the *Biblical Higher Education Journal* continues its mission of promoting informed reflection and scholarly research on the practice of biblical ministry formation and professional leadership education. Biblical higher education fills a distinctive and important niche in the broader field of higher education by providing students the opportunity to integrate Christian faith and biblical teaching into their professional and ministerial preparation. This journal supports the mission of biblical higher education by providing a venue for publication of related research and a forum for thought and dialogue regarding the issues, trends, opportunities, and challenges facing biblical higher education.

This sixteenth volume includes contributions from seven authors who work at diverse institutions connected with the Association of Biblical Higher Education. This volume consists of two articles and five book reviews.

The first article is contributed by Rob Lindemann, Chief Academic Officer of Vanguard University. He provides a philosophical and theological analysis of critical theory and argues that it functions as a worldview for its proponents. The second article is by Kim Parcher, Chairman of the Business Department at Emmaus Bible College. It follows up on a previous article published in this journal that focused on biblical integration with business students. The author presents a model for other institutions that seek to promote biblical integration into professional programs.

The five book reviews in this volume touch on a variety of important topics related to biblical higher education. The authors summarize the contents of the books and advise readers on their potential usefulness.

I want to thank the members of the editorial board who provide helpful feedback to authors so that their final products can inform, inspire, and challenge the reader. I also want to thank the Book Review Editor, Aaron Profitt, Vice President for Academic Affairs at God's Bible School and College, for his faithful assistance in preparing the book reviews for publication. And thanks again to Carol Dibble, Director of Communications and Events at ABHE, for producing a clear, attractive final document.

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## **Editorial Policy**

The articles in the *Biblical Higher Education Journal* reflect the opinions of the authors and reviewers and do not necessarily represent those of the Editor or the Publisher.

# ARTICLES

- *The Interpretive Key: Is Critical Theory a Worldview?*  
Rob Lindemann
- *Biblical Integration: A Completed Study of Business Students at Emmaus Bible College with a Suggested Model for Future Integration Efforts*  
Kim S. Parcher



# The Interpretive Key: Is Critical Theory a Worldview?

**Rob Lindemann**

## *Abstract*

*Critical social theories have for decades shaped the work of philosophers, sociologists, and liberation theologians who envision a radical transformation of society. In recent years, this analytical and interpretive method has reached the mainstream culture causing many to question if it constitutes a full-fledged worldview that will change western society. Christian educators, writers, and podcasters have taken up this topic to raise awareness of its wide-ranging influence and examine its compatibility with Christianity. This article traces the development of critical social theory and compares its function to that of a worldview. Because worldview formation is a key goal for biblical higher education, the background and conclusion presented offer Christian educators a reference point for dealing with the influence of critical social theories.*

**T**he hearing ear and the seeing eye, the Lord has made them both (Proverbs 20:12).

During the summer of 2020, a dramatic rise in civil unrest and protests occurred across North America and throughout the world incited by the death of a black man named George Floyd while in police custody in Minneapolis, MN. But the racial tensions had been building up due to a string of similar incidents over the previous years. In addition, academics in various disciplines, politicians, and decentralized advocacy groups like *Black Lives*

*Matter* had been promoting an ideology rooted in philosophical and sociological concepts that were slowly taking root in the broader culture. Suddenly, terms like systemic racism, intersectionality, implicit bias, microaggressions, whiteness, decolonization, and anti-racism took center stage in discourses surrounding issues of justice, oppression, and a vision for the future of Western society.

Such concerns involve the shaping of social consciousness, the questioning of hidden assumptions, and advancing progressive values through new critical methods aimed at transforming society and individual worldviews (Bronner, 2017; Schlitz, Vieten & Miller, 2010). Much scrutiny has fallen on the subversive interpretive method known as critical theory in recent years due to its recurring cluster of themes in many academic disciplines and social contexts. The purpose of this article is to provide a concise overview of critical theory and examine the assertion that it is now functioning as a worldview.

## **The Formation and Goal of Critical Theory**

Educators have long been familiar with the ideas of critical pedagogy made famous through Paulo Freire's seminal works, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) and *The Politics of Education* (1985). Freire's ideas influenced people throughout education but also those working in community development, healthcare, social work, and many other fields. But applying a critical lens to social issues began long before Freire's publications. In fact, Ricoeur (1970) traces the developments of this lens to three key intellectual figures of the late 19th and early 20th centuries he called the "masters of suspicion": Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Sigmund Freud. These figures, each in his own way, sought to unmask and demystify

the real from the apparent within economic, sociocultural, and psychoanalytic contexts including the analysis of religion.

Critical theory can be difficult to define with descriptions ranging from the benign to the militant. The term is often capitalized to distinguish philosophies linked to the Frankfurt School from modern theories that are in some way “critical” (Bohman, 2019). Jacobs (2020) correctly links it to literary theory and cultural analysis as a broad-based academic discipline “based on the conviction that the ways we think about our humanistic subjects are not self-evidently correct and require investigation, reflection, and in some cases correction” (para. 6). In a similar gentle tone, Northwestern University describes their Critical Theory Cluster of programs as teaching students “how to reflect on the premises, concepts and categories used in different disciplines” (n.d., para. 1). Although they explain that critical theory is involved wherever “methods and concepts are not simply taken for granted but subjected to a critical reflection in a systematic and rigorous fashion” (n.d., para. 1), this could also be a definition of critical thinking.

A more strident depiction comes from Audre Lorde (2007), an established poet and Black lesbian feminist, in her 1984 essay “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House.” Her thesis is that people cannot solve problems of oppression using the same tools that created a system of oppression. The startling metaphor of slavery is meant to expose dominant systems as brutally unfair and in need of dismantling through tools from outside that system. The image is an allusion to Hegel’s master-slave dialectic (Heidegger, 1984), which heavily influenced subsequent philosophers like Marx and members of the Frankfurt School. Lorde relied on radical

language and tenets of critical social inquiry, thus demonstrating its more revolutionary nature in the hands of some proponents.

Critical theory as we know it today can be traced to Marx's original critiques of the economy and society. The context of the time is crucial because Marx attempted to speak to the economic inequalities brought on by the capitalist mode of production throughout industrialized Europe during the 19th century. Marx posited the existence of a social binary between the oppressed and their oppressors (i.e., the proletariat and bourgeoisie) locked in a class struggle due to the ills of capitalism. He proposed a socialist revolution resulting in a communist society where class antagonisms are replaced by an association in which "the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all" (Marx & Engels, 1848, para. 74).

Such critiques later rang hollow in societies where the middle class grew prosperous through globalization and, thus, unlikely to view themselves as economically oppressed. Hence, Hungarian György Lukács and Italian Antonio Gramsci as well as German Karl Korsch began to develop theories that explored the cultural and ideological sides of power and domination aimed at awakening people to how various forms of social oppression (i.e., dominant vs. weak classes) affected their lives. The resulting themes became known as Western Marxism and provided the framework for what later became the Institute for Social Research, a think tank founded at the University of Frankfurt also known as the Frankfurt School of critical theorists. Noted members included Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Erich Fromm, Walter Benjamin, Jürgen Habermas, and Herbert Marcuse. This is considered the intellectual lineage of Critical Theory.

Members of the Frankfurt School went on to link theories of social criticism with Freudian psychoanalysis to explain how essential human needs and identity are suppressed by social and structural forces. Thus, alienation and reification became core ideas associated with critical theory. Bronner (2011) explains that the former examines the psychological effects of exploitation while the latter explores how people are treated instrumentally or as “things.” A major goal was to awaken a *critical consciousness* because people were thought to be unaware of these processes. At the Frankfurt School, oppression was “not just a social evil but more and more a psychological manipulation” (Klapwijk, 2010, p. 20). Scholars like Jürgen Habermas began to evolve Critical Theory beyond German idealism into something closer to American pragmatism while retaining Marx’s concern for social base and superstructure though expanding the concept beyond economic contexts.

Herbert Marcuse coined the term *repressive tolerance* to assert that for genuine progress to occur certain freedoms or tolerances must be limited. While acknowledging that freedom of thought and expression were necessary preconditions for finding the path to self-determination, he also suggested that “this tolerance cannot be indiscriminate and equal with respect to the contents of expression, neither in word nor in deed; it cannot protect false words and wrong deeds which demonstrate that they contradict and counteract the possibilities of liberation” (Marcuse, 1969, para. 11).

Friere later applied this generation of ideas to the context of education. An archived website for *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* features an introduction to the book with this call to critical consciousness:

The educated are more likely to decide to take upon themselves the struggle to change the structures of society that until now have served to oppress them. This radical self-awareness, however, is not only the task of the workers, but of persons in all countries, including those who in our advanced technological society have been or are being programmed into conformity and thus are essentially part of “the culture of silence.” (n.d., para. 4)

Marx held that philosophy’s purpose was not just to interpret the world but to change it. Beginning with the work of Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud, and followed by work of the Frankfurt School, critical theory has evolved into various forms providing not just a lens through which to critique society but also a way to walk within it to bring about social change. To do so requires a view that all social relationships are inherently political, which means introducing the idea that “everything has political elements: that is, nothing is neutral, everything involves struggle over power, resources and affirming identities” (Baines, 2007, p. 51). Campbell and Baikie (2012) remind their reader that venturing down this path of knowledge will cause them to become familiar with the phrase “the personal is political.”

Today, approaches to critical theory are sprawling and diverse with numerous subtheories. Sim and Loon (2001) have mapped out its development in a taxonomy that spans six time periods and three major disciplines: economics, philosophy, and science (pp. 24-25). It is helpful to understand critical theory as an accordion term, meaning that it that it can be used in a narrow, compressed way or an expanded and broad way (Bohman, 2019). It is also common

for academia to refer to its intellectual and hermeneutical tradition as *critical social theory* with contemporary expressions including critical race theory, queer theory, liberation theology, women's and gender studies, fat studies, etc. These subtheories are sometimes put under the banner of *critical social justice* in more popular contexts. Pluckrose says these efforts are “colloquially referred to as *wokeism* to indicate an awareness of the oppressive power structures of white supremacy, patriarchy, imperialism, cisnormativity, fatphobia, etc. that the majority of us are sleepwalking through” (2020, para. 3). What these hold in common is an analysis of how society works within the multifaceted dynamics of power and oppression.

In sum, these theories attempt to “understand and explain the causes of structural domination and inequality in order to facilitate human emancipation” (Levinson et al., 2016, p. 2). Mason believes that any set of ideas would fit within critical theory if the following characteristics are present: (a) group-wide inequalities, hierarchical social stratification, and social ills that operate with the consent of both dominant and subordinate groups, (b) that these “pathologies” have developed through historical processes of social creation and change, and (c) that remedies require critique of the whole transformative action to dismantle the dominant systems and ideas (2019, February 6, para. 27). Sensory and DiAngelo explain it this way: “Thus, to engage in a study of society from a critical perspective, one must move beyond common sense–based opinions and begin to grapple with all the layers that these various, complex, and sometimes divergent traditions offer” (2015, p. 27). University departments dedicated to advancing this tradition seek to attract a new generation of students whose ideological and political interests involve art, activism, and academic work.

## The Function of a Worldview

Most definitions acknowledge worldviews as involving a propositional dimension that directs local and global interpretations. For example, Park (2007) defines a worldview as a “largely unconscious but generally coherent set of presuppositions and beliefs that every person has that shape how we make sense of the world and everything in it. This in turn influences such things as how we see ourselves as individuals, how we interpret our role in society, how we deal with social issues, and what we regard as truth.” The impression is that worldviews involve some rational evaluation and contain influence from established systems of knowledge. But something different happens when established theories evolve and trickle down into everyday culture. Wilkens and Sanford point out that it is “not the worldviews that begin as theories or intellectual systems that mold the lives and beliefs of most people. Instead, the most powerful influences come from worldviews that emerge from culture” (2009, p. 12). The authors claim that a lived worldview is more likely to be adopted through cultural contact than a rational evaluation of competing theories. By the time a theory moves from its intellectual origins to street-level manifestations, it has become embedded in the culture. These worldviews are hidden in plain sight and absorbed through cultural interaction with little intellectual evaluation. Moreover, in a politically charged atmosphere prone to social unrest, these ideas can pass on like a social contagion (Teo & Loosemore, 2009). As a result, it is important to acknowledge that academics no longer have control over critical social theories once these have become popularized in the culture.

This underscores the argument posited by Christian apologist Neil Shenvi and his collaborator Pat Sawyer. They point out



that critical theory has moved beyond the localized intentions of philosophers and sociologists to something that “functions not just as a tool, but as a worldview. It offers us a comprehensive narrative for understanding all of reality” (Shenvi & Sawyer, 2019, para. 26). They differentiate this perspective by suggesting a new term: *contemporary critical theory* (2020, September 30). The authors are especially concerned with how its core tenets are influencing a theological drift among Christian leaders amid an impassioned climate of social justice. While there are clear biblical precepts for church leaders and educators to be actively involved in matters of justice and the plight of the poor and oppressed, the drift is evident when “their presuppositions become more and more governed by critical theory and less and less by the Bible” (Shenvi & Sawyer, 2020, March 11). Proponents who hold these presuppositions are said to be embracing Progressive Christianity and liberation theology (Gasaway, 2014; King, 2012). This interpretive key transforms the most basic tenets of Christian faith. For example, consider this official statement from Union Seminary on the nature of Scripture:

While divinely inspired, we deny the Bible is inerrant or infallible. It was written by men over centuries and thus reflects both God’s truth and human sin & prejudice. We affirm that biblical scholarship and critical theory help us discern which messages are God’s. (Union Seminary, 2018)

Scheibe (2020) says that many young, disaffected evangelicals are embracing liberation theology and its hermeneutical method even to the point of regarding orthodox Christian morality as immoral and the traditional Church as something oppressive. In critical theory, he says, they find the moral imperative of liberation rather than the fall of man as the interpretive rule. When viewed

through this hermeneutical lens, the Bible becomes a source of truth for diagnosing and changing the social ills in our contemporary world, especially those perpetuated by the Church.

As apologists, Shenvi and Sawyer's writings attempt to streamline and delineate the recurring tenets of contemporary critical theory as rooted in the representative writings and then compare these to similar themes in historic Christianity. The authors demonstrate how key presuppositions conflict with the metanarrative of Scripture as understood throughout Church history and in the evangelical tradition in particular. Shenvi and Sawyer summarize it this way: "If the story arc of Christianity is from creation, to fall, to redemption, to restoration, the arc of contemporary critical theory is from oppression, to activism, to equity" (Shenvi & Sawyer, 2020, p. 12). One story has its object as God's activity to save humankind; the other, according Horkheimer, is "human beings as producers of their own historical form of life" (1993, p. 21).

Worldviews do unfold in a story-like manner through the processes of socialization and aging (Baumann, 2011; Wilkens & Sanford, 2009; Schlitz, Vieten, & Amorok, 2008). Sire (2020) popularized the idea of worldviews as a heart-orientation expressed as a story, thus expanding the notion from its limited propositional roots (Cole, 2008; Barna 2005). Evaluating critical theory solely as a propositional system belies this narrative because the history of oppression is hardly neat and tidy. This is another reason why academics do not have control over critical theory because while we may be able to distill lofty concepts from it, it does not come packaged that way. Indeed, these "spring from the messy process that we will call 'our story'" (Wilkens & Sanford, 2009, p. 18). Therefore, critical social theorists who resist the notion of critical theory functioning as

a worldview do so because they see it as a local theory rather than total, which means it is present and experienced firsthand in their immediate surroundings (e.g., racism, discrimination, homophobia, ageism, oppression, etc.), not just something a person has heard about or received indirectly. But according to the authors mentioned above, local theory still shapes a person's worldview.

Stories figure prominently in discourses on critical theory often through invoking the signature phrase “lived experience.” Yosso (2005) explains that Critical Race Theory, for example, considers experiential knowledge a central tenet because marginalized groups have had experiences that offer more salient knowledge for identifying oppressive systems and practices in society. The theory posits that dominant groups are blinded to such power dynamics by their socialization (DiAngelo, 2019). Therefore, giving voice to the stories of marginalized groups while also limiting the viewpoints of dominant groups affords greater knowledge of the truth.

Wilkins and Sanford (2009) maintain that a person's identity is intertwined with their convictional beliefs about the nature of reality as they experience it (i.e., local theory). These beliefs radiate outward to shape our ethics and, consequently, our actions. Wilkins and Sanford articulate the connections from lived experience to theory to activism:

This is the part of our stories that is most evident to those around us, and it is certainly how most people start to learn what we think of ourselves, what ethical principles we embrace, and what convictions govern our lives. In short, our behaviors are the stage on which we play out our stories. (2009, p. 21)

Campbell and Baikie (2012) explain the function of a worldview within critical social work, calling it a way of being and a mental model of reality. For the authors, this lens is not a tool a person applies to one situation and not to another. Instead, it is what helps a social worker explain, understand, and make meaning in every situation. The antithetical approach results in mainstream social work whereby “issues are often depoliticized by defining them as individual shortcomings, medical or psychiatric diagnoses, criminal activities or other forms of deviance, and/or by using existing bureaucratic understandings of social problems and their solutions” (Baines, 2007, p. 5). In sum, critical and mainstream theories are informed by fundamentally different ontological, epistemological, and political assumptions. All these play important roles in shaping and living out a worldview.

## Expressions of Critical Theory

Critical theory manifests in diverse ways, taking up many causes and complex class identities to address what Mason (2020) calls “social pathologies.” Rufo (2020) offers a helpful picture of three ways critical theory is expressed. Although his immediate context is Critical Race Theory, each is observed in other subtheories as well. The first expression is within the *academic and political class*. Both academics and politicians are attempting to bring social change that aligns with their political ideologies, which are committed to progressivism through advancing human liberation, autonomy, and equity. The second expression is through the field of human resource *diversity and inclusion training programs*. Rufo points out that these programs have become a multi-billion-dollar industry serving schools, corporations, and government agencies. Consultants are hired to train people in reducing bias, prejudice, and discrimination

in hopes of producing a more just and equitable environment. This expression is noted for its reliance on material from popular authors within critical social theory who address racism, intersectionality, ableism, sexual orientation, and gender identity (e.g., Kendi, 2019; Collins, 2019; DiAngelo, 2018; Miller, 2012). The third expression is street-level *activism, demonstrations, and protests*. This context uses similar terminology found in the previous two expressions, plus it provides a platform for the crucial tenet of lived experience through storytelling, group solidarity, and demands for progressive action. Therefore, the shared presuppositions are clear despite the differing expressions.

Smith (2019) makes an important observation about the disposition of critical theory saying it is essentially a negative exercise being “intentionally destructive and only accidentally constructive” (p. 454). Some Frankfurt School members, notably Adorno and Horkheimer, expressed profound doubt over the effectiveness of their efforts (Craib, 2015). Their pessimism seems aimed at society’s unwillingness to accept this interpretive lens and change their lifestyles. Marcuse captures the sentiment:

The critical theory of society possesses no concepts which could bridge the gap between the present and its future; holding no promise and showing no success, it remains negative. Thus, it wants to remain loyal to those who, without hope, have given and give their life to the Great Refusal. (1991, p. 261)

Today, similar negativity is heard through Kendi (2019) and DiAngelo (2018) who both express doubt that efforts to curb racism will ever yield much success throughout society. In fact, DiAngelo

(2019, January 4) acknowledges her hope in Gladwell's (2006) tipping point theory where just 30% of the population needs to buy in to these ideas for culture to change.

## Conclusion

The streamlined tenets of contemporary critical theory presented by Shenvi and Sawyer (2020) along with their assertion that it functions as a worldview has brought considerable attention and criticism especially by those with ties to faith-based liberation traditions. For example, both Levinson (2019) and Mason (2019) have addressed Shenvi and Sawyer's work as caricatures carrying "minor grains of truth, but they also simplify and obscure" (Levinson, 2019, para. 6). Levinson even makes a minor point that evangelicals tend to arrogate their own tradition and overlook or discard other Christian traditions when making claims of theological drift. Shenvi and Sawyer acknowledge their perspective comes from the evangelical tradition, but it is important to note that the precepts of Christian faith they refer to have been around Church history much longer than progressive or liberation traditions.

Perhaps Shenvi and Sawyer's tenets are problematic summarizations to those in the academic class, but they do simplify the complex nature and often inflated language of critical social theorists. One common belief among these writers is that critical theory is a tool for literary and cultural analysis; it is not meant to be a worldview. In fact, few have attempted to elaborate on the worldview associated with the tradition of critical theory.

Worldviews rarely come to us in a pure form. In fact, most people's lives and intellectual positions reflect a composite of

these influences and presuppositions (Wilkens & Sanford, 2009). The early lineage of Critical Theory and its succeeding generations of critical social theorists appear solidly within the postmodern philosophical tradition and promote a variation of the Western Marxist worldview. This is further supported by worldview elements such as progressivism and humanism that promote reconstructionist and liberationist solutions to social problems. For its proponents, critical social theory is a tool that advances these solutions within a worldview that has similarities to the Progressive Era of the late 19th to early 20th century and the New Left movements of the late 1950s and 1960s.

The point by Wilkens and Sanford (2009) is crucial: the worldviews that mold the lives and beliefs of most people emerge from culture. So, have critical social theories evolved beyond formal intellectual systems to now being embedded or hidden in the culture? It is reasonable to suggest this is the case and that these theories are now being lived out by vast numbers of people. In sum, critical theory is still an interpretive and analytical tool used to advance the worldviews that function at its core: Western Marxism, humanism, progressivism, and liberationism. This is what we can hear and see whether critical theory is used within a well-developed intellectual system or a cultural mythos flying under the radar of deliberate appraisal.



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# Biblical Integration: A Completed Study of Business Students at Emmaus Bible College with a Suggested Model for Future Integration Efforts

**Kim S. Parcher**

## *Abstract*

*The following study presents results from a follow-up study on biblical integration at Emmaus Bible College with Business program students carried out each spring from 2017 to 2019. The focus was on measuring the effects of exercises designed to support biblical integration in my business classes following an initial effort captured in a pilot study (spring 2016). The emphasis, similar to the pilot study, was to measure students' grasp of service, character, knowledge, and behavior across the spectrum of class designations (freshmen through seniors) to see whether seniors better evidence the above categories than freshmen as a result of changes I made in my business class instruction. Results are presented and the article concludes with the presentation of a model for future efforts in biblical integration at our Christian institutions.*

**B**

iblical integration is a topic of keen interest in biblical higher education, yet relatively little practical measurement of current efforts seems to have been undertaken. Reviewing content from ABHE's journals uncovers only two articles: one by Dennis Fledderjohann (2017) that looked at analyzing faith and learning concerning students' attitudes about alcohol consumption, and my own pilot study that measured the integration of the Bible

into our Business curriculum at Emmaus Bible College (Parcher, 2017). Interestingly, Ralph Enlow (2017) notes in an ABHE blog that everyone talks about the integration of faith and learning, but few Christian colleges are substantively developing faculty who can accomplish building bridges between biblical knowledge and other disciplines. We still operate as separate departments on the same campus. This cognitive dissonance is challenging to our collective mission as institutions of Christian higher learning and challenging to our students.

My own experience finds it is not easy to bridge content between the Bible and Business departments. Like Ralph Enlow, I have wondered if the reasons for this would include somewhat obvious explanations that may be true for many programs: potential lack of in-depth Bible knowledge by professors in our professional programs, a lack of interest or knowledge in biblical integration, the scarcity of practical application within our theological degrees, and from my own work, the limitations of statistical analysis. I have M.Div. and Ph.D. degrees, yet I have struggled with understanding how to measure the application and expression of biblical knowledge within the confines of our discipline.

My struggle began when God did not open up a ministry directly after graduation from seminary and I found myself in the world of business unprepared to integrate the faith that I had spent so much time studying into the professional world I had now entered. Throughout my years in industry, a saying we heard many times in seminary (“God will apply this in your lives as you move out into the world”) came back to me leaving me feeling perplexed. I want to change this for our students today. No student should ever leave our colleges hoping somehow God will make clear how they are to

bridge the gap between theological truth and practical living. Our professional departments cannot do this alone. We must find ways to work together as departments to bridge the gap between Bible knowledge and practical application in our professional lives.

This struggle led to my pilot study which presented a questionnaire designed to measure the extent to which Bible knowledge teaching at Emmaus Bible College has been able to bring changes in business students' lives in four areas: knowledge, behavior, character, and service. The questionnaire was developed in conjunction with a leadership questionnaire presented by Biblical Eldership Resources (2016). The rationale for my questionnaire aligns with a similar rationale at ABHE, defining and measuring the effect the Bible has had on students' lives. This purpose was integral to Biblical Eldership Resources (2016)—to offer a tool to judge qualifications for spiritual leadership in the church as evidenced by a changed life as a result of Bible exposure and study.

This current study continued my original pilot study over the following three years with two important changes. First, the construct (or category) "Humility" with its attendant questions was dropped due to lower statistical measures in the pilot study. This should be intuitive because students would struggle to measure their own humility without internal bias. Second, students were asked to rate themselves and then separately rate another student using an identical but uncompleted second form to see if rater bias was present.

Following are the study design, results, interpretation of those results, and conclusion with presentation of examples that could be used to build a model for biblical integration at the program level.

While I used the same statistical analysis tools in this study as in my pilot study (IBM® SPSS® Statistics, IBM® SPSS® AMOS and Excel), my focus in this article is on the results in order to better understand how biblical integration may work through curriculum development changes I had made since conducting the pilot study.

By the time of the original study, my class exercises had already generally mirrored a number of the suggestions made in Appendix B of the pilot study, which focused on Bloom's taxonomy (Huitt, 2011). During the summer of 2018, I completed ABHE's LIFE course on faculty development. This course significantly influenced changes in my class assignments and objectives. As a result, I have been redesigning my courses to include the use of affective and skills-based learning goals as well as work at specific alignment between topics in theology and business in classes and biblical integration exercises.

## **Study Design**

All business students at Emmaus completed the questionnaire once per year during a day set aside each spring for assessment activities. See Appendix A for the questionnaire. Four control variables were measured: class (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior), number of years at Emmaus, age, and whether they were evaluating themselves or another student. The key control variable would be "Class" as I am interested in whether freshmen would answer the questions differently than seniors who have had up to four years of exposure to Bible classes and relevant activities. The questionnaire included multiple questions per category, which makes statistical evaluations more difficult. Please see Parcher (2017) for a more complete explanation of the development of the questionnaire



and the statistical measures used to evaluate the results.

## Study Results

### *Reliability*

Cronbach's alpha on the complete questionnaire was .887, and on standardized items, it was .896, both of which are very good. Reliability is critical as it looks at the accuracy of or amount of error that exists in the questionnaire (Parcher, 2014, p. 32). The questions are expected to return answers that reflect the information sought.

### *Means and Standard Deviations*

		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Pilot	Service	180	3	7	6.1167	0.88611
	Humility	180	1	7	5.2389	1.48874
	Character	180	2	7	5.6667	1.27284
	Behavior	180	1	7	5.8	1.22543
	Knowledge	180	3	7	5.9111	1.09488
		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Self	Service	154	1	7	5.9737	1.0489
	Character	154	1	7	5.5614	1.0916
	Behavior	154	2	7	5.7895	1.2174
	Knowledge	154	1	7	5.9079	1.0639
		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Other	Service	154	1	7	6.0919	1.0632
	Character	154	1	7	6.1111	1.0344
	Behavior	154	2	7	6.0620	1.0245
	Knowledge	154	2	7	6.0684	1.0272

Means and standard deviations were again calculated for individual categories, each of which consisted of multiple questions. The data were evaluated as collected and entered into Excel with each respondent entered into a row and each question placed into a column. These were then evaluated by category grouping (Service, Character, Behavior, and Knowledge). The results are presented directly above. Note that slightly broader ranges in the current study were seen (minimum to maximum) but with generally comparable deltas for means and standard deviations. There were no significant changes in this study compared to the pilot study. Means for students evaluating themselves were marginally less than when evaluating another student but with slightly more variability. These are not statistically significant differences.

### *Correlations*

My goal in this study was to see if any relationship exists between the answers provided in the questionnaire and student class (do we help students mature in the application of Bible knowledge during their time with us?) or if any of the other control variables could be correlated to specific categories. Statistical analysis by categories is not possible in IBM® SPSS® without injecting a large number of degrees of freedom (variability) into the calculations. This reduces the threshold for significance. As noted by Kerr, Hall, and Kozub (2002), and confirmed by Parcher (2014), these lower thresholds are not reliable, and significance is not established, despite what IBM® SPSS® Statistics calculate. In this study, I did not find any relationships with significance between control variables or categories other than what could be expected by deduction: Class is positively correlative to Age and Years Studied. Of importance,

I found that no relationship exists between Class and any of the standard categories (Knowledge, Service, Character, and Behavior).

IBM® SPSS® AMOS can be used to significantly reduce variability present in the data analysis by potentially creating a more efficient model of the data. It is useful in evaluating both correlation and prediction (regression). Since I wanted to see if the class a student was in could be predicted by the answers he or she gave, both correlation and regression were evaluated in AMOS even though regression is normally not reviewed if correlation is not present. AMOS did construct an efficient model with attendant analyses of variance that confirmed neither could students' answers predict which class they were in nor could the class they were in be used to predict their answers. I present these results in Appendix B.

## **Interpretation of Study Results**

First, the answers in any of the categories could not predict the class that a student was in. And when the categories were reversed in IBM® SPSS® AMOS, the class of a student could not be used to predict the answers given. Thus, I did not find any relationships between answers of business students and the class they were in. And it did not matter whether students were evaluating themselves or other students.

This was disappointing as I was hoping to find some evidence of the impact of the specific exercises and measures in my business classes as a result of my ABHE LIFE course instruction and biblical integration efforts. I had also worked significantly to begin building bridges between my own theological and business degrees.

Philip Dearborn, as president of ABHE following Ralph Enlow's retirement, has retained Ralph's interest in biblical Integration. In reflecting on the disappointing results with Dr. Dearborn (personal conversation), we discussed several reasons. First, statistical analysis exhibits defined limitations. Sometimes it is difficult to adequately capture the import of all the variables that could influence our studies. Second, biblical integration cannot be a single department initiative. If the Business and the Bible departments do not work together on curriculum enhancements, even if those changes are only in my curriculum, the impact will be limited. It is this observation that I will return to below as the impetus for suggesting a new model for biblical integration that I have already been experimenting with on an individual class basis with good success.

Our Vice President of Academic Affairs likewise has a keen interest in efforts to bridge department content. In a personal conversation, we also focused on the challenges of crossing content between departments and that potentially a new study measuring individual student results, comparing their answers as freshmen and then again as seniors, might be more profitable. Since we do have students enter our program sometimes in the middle of the program, this is a good observation as time is required to see the impact of changes. All these play a role in the disappointing results.

Second, two final, additional observations are important. First, not enough time had elapsed between initializing changes in my curriculum and then measuring the results of those changes. In an effort to limit the length of the study due to the smaller enrollment numbers in our program, I had hoped that enough time had elapsed to observe measurable results. It had not. Second, measuring the effects of knowledge growth is far harder than measuring knowledge

growth itself. As the apostle Paul himself even noted in Romans 7, sometimes we do the things that we do not want to do despite our relationship with Christ, who we might add is the perfect teacher. Inner change as a result of the impact of his work within us can be slow and sporadic.

Following are two examples of individual class efforts to integrate biblical knowledge based on subject or knowledge bridges between the Bible and the Business departments that could be used as a model for diverse program development in the area of biblical integration. Both examples form a critical part of our business department's overall program assessment tools. They are measured yearly and integrated into our online assessment platform to help fulfil both a Learning Goal ("Develop a philosophy of business that incorporates a biblical worldview") and Program Level Student Learning Outcome ("Demonstrate an ability to integrate biblical concepts with business knowledge and practice"). They form a bookend approach to assessment for our program. The first is embedded in a freshman class, and the second is embedded in a junior/senior-level class.

### **Examples Modeling Biblical Integration**

The first example is from our introductory course in the Business program: Global Business. Students are forming their first impressions of our program and our college in this class. Thus, it is important to introduce them to the uniqueness of a biblical perspective on the material we cover compared to the constraints I was under when teaching this subject at a secular college. The assignment requires students to read through the business class descriptions in our Academic Catalog in conjunction with Proverbs

10-24 and find ten verses that apply to any of their classes in their degree with a short explanation. Our first-year students are still working their way through the beginning of hermeneutics and general Bible knowledge, so I make it clear to the class that I am not worried about their misinterpreting a verse. They will get better in future classes as instruction in this grows. My main goal is to have students develop both knowledge-base and affective connections between their subjects and God's Word, which actually has more to say to us today about topics as diverse as financial accountability, ethics, leadership, and even economics than what they might realize.

It is often a favorite class assignment with students! Most students score quite highly, which also helps their overall class grade, as many students are not yet used to tests at the collegiate level (some struggle a bit) and are still beginning to develop relationships with each other and their professors. Most importantly, this exercise helps students begin to connect with their program emotionally which is critical to long-term success for our program. Students are excited to realize the Bible has a lot to say to us about what they will study in greater detail later in their program and that this is not something they could obtain at a secular institution.

The second example is from an upper-level course in management and leadership. It forms one of two summation assessments now that most students have completed much of their program with us. The assignment is to evaluate the leadership style of King Saul in a five-page paper from any of three important passages: I Samuel 13, I Samuel 15, or I Samuel 28. They must follow a prescribed outline that guides them to think about the differences between spiritual and secular leadership principles. King Saul, despite the spiritual nature of his position as the first earthly king in God's theocratic kingdom

over the nation of Israel, resorted to secular leadership principles throughout his reign. The results were disastrous for both him and the nation.

This assignment comes from my own struggles a number of years ago to understand why spiritual leaders sometimes make baffling mistakes. I was working through these passages at that moment in my own personal studies. It was one of those light-bulb moments that was deeply embedded in my memory. My goal is to have our students relive that light-bulb moment where they realize that not all leaders in spiritual positions make Spirit-filled, Spirit-driven decisions. Sometimes they use secular leadership principles to try to obtain a spiritual outcome. They do not work. Students need to leave our college with a firm distinction in their minds of the disastrous results of using secular leadership principles in a church or ministry setting.

This is another assignment that students are highly engaged in and excited to complete. As part of my preparation for students, I take them through each passage from my sermons on this topic. I have found that giving students the answers does not predetermine what they share in their papers because it takes them time to digest the principles involved at this level. Each share according to their own level of understanding.

As a second form of preparation for students, the Bible professor who handles his department's spiritual leadership class (Church Leadership) visits our class for one session to share his perspective on the challenges of being a spiritual leader as I share in his class the differences between secular and spiritual leadership principles.

Cross-sharing across disciplines has been quite helpful for students to see different perspectives, even when the topic is the same.

## **Conclusion**

It is my hope that this article will serve as further impetus to support Enlow's call for additional work in biblical integration and further our efforts to diversify our teaching strategies and methodologies. Our students need our efforts. I will never forget my freshman class's response to my inquiry about how to improve my Global Business class a few years ago. Their answer took me completely by surprise: "More Bible!" This class focuses on a professional subject. We are required to cover information parallel to that presented in secular colleges. So, I took that as a challenge, a good challenge, to find ways to integrate our faith into the knowledge aspects of our lives. And then that grew into finding ways to integrate this living faith into our serving of others and our behaviors and character as well. I have not been disappointed.

These two examples are only part of my efforts to integrate the structure of our faith into a professional program. Other efforts involve similar types of assignments that also focus on building faith-grounded character traits such as integrity, honesty, fairness, and compassion through relevant exercises. Students often respond in ways never imagined, such as using a blog responding exercise to evangelize their unsaved friends and families.

Imagine if these beginnings could enable departments to cross-train their faculty with their Bible departments to better integrate the faith that our students come to us to develop within the professional careers they envision. The result will be a generation of students



who do not wait until they graduate to integrate their faith into their careers but begin with our setting the pattern for growth over their lifetimes.



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## Appendix A

Preliminary questions. Please answer appropriately:

\_\_\_\_\_ Are you a 1) Freshman, 2) Sophomore, 3) Junior or 4) Senior?

\_\_\_\_\_ What is your age?

\_\_\_\_\_ For how many years of your undergraduate degree have you studied at Emmaus? (No matter what your classification (Freshman, etc.), place a 1 if this is your first year as the year is almost complete, a 2 if this is your second year at Emmaus, 3 if this is your third year and 4 if this is your fourth.)

[NOTE: Two identical questionnaires were used, one with “SELF” on the top of the questionnaire and one with “OTHER”. A “1” was assigned to completed forms a student filled out on themselves and a “2” was assigned to students who filled out the questionnaire on a friend.]

**Response scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree; 4 = neither agree nor disagree; 5 = somewhat agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree**

### Service

\_\_\_\_\_ I look for ways to spiritually care for other students outside of assigned responsibilities.

\_\_\_\_\_ I show enthusiasm for serving in the church or at school.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am the kind of person who helps out readily when asked.

\_\_\_\_\_ I willingly take on responsibility when asked to do so.

\_\_\_\_\_ Others have expressed appreciation for my service.

\_\_\_\_\_ I see service as the core of leadership.

### Character

\_\_\_\_\_ I have negative traits that others have mentioned to me.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am open to accept constructive criticism.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have a regular prayer life.

\_\_\_\_\_ I acknowledge the value of other people's example in my life.

\_\_\_\_\_ Others look to me as an example of Christian faith and maturity.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have an ability to disciple others.

### Behavior

- \_\_\_\_\_ My social life a good testimony before others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I regularly devote time to plan out my schedule.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am willing to meet new students that I do not know.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am able to forgive others who have wronged me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have surrendered my will to Jesus Christ.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I ask for advice when making decisions.

### Knowledge

- \_\_\_\_\_ I enjoy reading and studying the Word of God.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I share the Word of God freely in my interactions with people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I enjoy participating in small group Bible studies.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have a good grasp of a wide variety of Biblical doctrines.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I apply Biblical teaching to difficult and trying circumstances that I face.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have learned to trust in God's promises and see them fulfilled.

Observations/Comments:

## Appendix B

IBM® SPSS® Statistics (2013) Correlations on Stacked Data

		Class	Age	YS	SO	Knowledge	Service	Character	Behavior
Class	Pearson Correlation	1	.517**	.864**	.001	.086**	.084*	.066*	.016
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.965	.009	.011	.045	.635
	N	924	924	924	924	924	924	924	924
Age	Pearson Correlation	.517**	1	.477**	-.036	.068*	.014	.009	-.060
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.269	.038	.679	.792	.067
	N	924	924	924	924	924	924	924	924
YS	Pearson Correlation	.864**	.477**	1	.044	.105**	.107**	.116**	.038
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.181	.001	.001	.000	.244
	N	924	924	924	924	924	924	924	924
SO	Pearson Correlation	.001	-.036	.044	1	.077*	.056	-.056	.120**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.965	.269	.181		.020	.090	.087	.000
	N	924	924	924	924	924	924	924	924
Knowledge	Pearson Correlation	.086**	.068*	.105**	.077*	1	.319**	.138**	.297**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	.038	.001	.020		.000	.000	.000
	N	924	924	924	924	924	924	924	924
Service	Pearson Correlation	.084*	.014	.107**	.056	.319**	1	.244**	.210**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	.679	.001	.090	.000		.000	.000
	N	924	924	924	924	924	924	924	924
Character	Pearson Correlation	.066*	.009	.116**	-.056	.138**	.244**	1	.125**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.045	.792	.000	.087	.000	.000		.000
	N	924	924	924	924	924	924	924	924
Behavior	Pearson Correlation	.016	-.060	.038	.120**	.297**	.210**	.125**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.635	.067	.244	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	924	924	924	924	924	924	924	924

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) as calculated by SPSS.

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) as calculated by SPSS.

Because IBM® SPSS® (2013)'s calculated significance for low figures is not accurate, the only correlations of any significance are between control variables. The first is between Class (Freshman, Sophomore, Junior and Senior) and YS (years studied) and the second is between Class and Age. But these should be observable correlations; as students move through an undergraduate program, they age and their class changes. Of focused interest was the determination whether a relationship exists between class and the four constructs. No significant relationship was found to exist in the above data table.

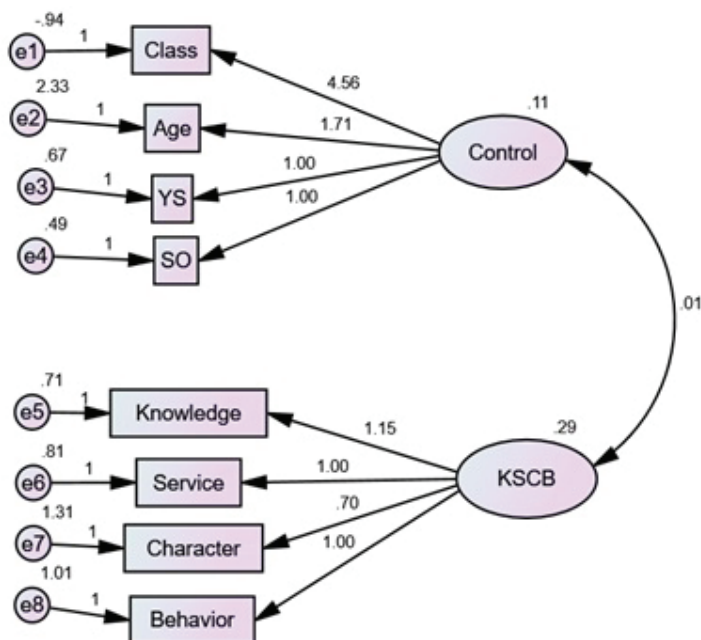
Following are results of exercises performed in IBM® SPSS® AMOS to verify the most efficient model to reduce the number of degrees of freedom as much as possible. Models were built using data as entered (for spread and stacked data models) into singular columns. First, a comparison was run between spread and stacked data arrangements using all control variables. The results were:

Test Number	Deg of Free	$\chi^2$	p level	RMSEA	CFI	GFI	AGFI	Description
1 - Default Model	344	920.07	0.000	0.105	0.652	xxxxx	xxxxx	Spread - Covariance - all variables
1 - Default Model	21	1135.80	0.000	0.240	0.402	0.801	0.658	Stacked - Covariance - all variables

Chi-square estimates fit of the model to degrees of freedom, with numbers closer to one showing the best fit. Notice that the stacked model significantly reduced the degrees of freedom, but that the data did not fit the model as built. Because these two models used all of the control variables and seeing that the interest of this researcher was focused on measuring the effect that class may have had on the answers, the stacked model was reconstructed using only class as a control variable. The most efficient model results are represented directly below:

Test Number	Deg of Free	$\chi^2$	p level	RMSEA	CFI	GFI	AGFI	Description
3 - Default Model	5	17.862	0.003	0.053	0.952	0.992	0.977	Stacked - Covariance Class only

Chi-square now represents an acceptable level of fit. RMSEA, CFI, GFI and AGFI are all measurements of fit of the model to the data. The closer to 1 that the answers are indicates a better model fit (Parcher, 2014). These are nearly perfect. Thus, the stacked data model when reconstructed to reduce the number of degrees of freedom and focused on class alone represents the most efficient model. A representation of the most efficient model in IBM® SPSS® AMOS is shown directly below for illustrative purposes:



## Regressions

Because correlation is not predictive, regression with attendant ANOVAs were performed between class and the four constructs in IBM® SPSS® Statistics (2013) using the stacked data model. Normally, regressions would only be carried out if correlations showed correlative value. But to verify that answers in the four constructs could not be predictive of the student's class, a regression was performed. The following ANOVA (analysis of variance) is symbolic of additional regressions performed with each construct and class individually. The results for the regression between multiple constructs and class are:

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	16.184	4	4.046	3.08	.016 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	1207.232	919	1.314		
Total	1223.416	923			

a. Dependent Variable: Class

b. Predictors: (Constant), Behavior, Character, Service, Knowledge

Notice that the sum of the squares is quite low and the residual makes up most of the equation indicating that the answers students gave were not predictive of which class the students belonged. IBM® SPSS® AMOS can perform regressions by reorienting (flipping) structural equation models. Results were parallel to that shown above.





# BOOK REVIEWS

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

David S. Dockery and Christopher W. Morgan, eds.

Reviewed by James Riley Estep, Jr.

- ***The Learning Cycle: Insights for Faithful Neuroscience and the Teaching from Social Sciences to Follow Jesus in Digital Babylon***

Duane H. Elmer and Muriel L. Elmer

Reviewed by John Jaeger

- ***Acts: An Exegetical Commentary***

Craig S. Keener

Reviewed by Nishanth Thomas

- ***Ecologies of Faith in a Digital Age: Spiritual Growth through Online Education***

Stephen D. Lowe and Mary E. Lowe

Reviewed by Curtis D. McClane

- ***Teaching Across Cultures: Contextualizing Education for Global Mission***

James E. Plueddemann

Reviewed by Linda F. Whitmer

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

David S. Dockery and Christopher W. Morgan, eds.

Crossway

Wheaton, IL, 2018

*Reviewed by James Riley Estep, Jr.*

Vice President of Academics

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**C**hristian *Higher Education* perhaps represents the finest collection of essays capturing the foundations, academic institutional issues, and practical implications of Christian colleges and universities. Dockery and Morgan serve as contributing editors to the volume and are indeed no strangers to the academy, having served both in the higher education classroom and in administration. Morgan is a dean at California Baptist University and has published numerous books on biblical and theological matters. Perhaps better known is the work of Dockery, who served on the faculty and administration of several institutions and as president of Union University (Tennessee) and Trinity International University (Illinois).

Dockery has an established publishing record in the area of Christian higher education. To better assess the value of *Christian Higher Education*, we need to examine it in light of his previous works on similar subjects. Perhaps his first serious venture into casting a distinctly Christian view for higher education was *Shaping*

*a Christian Worldview: The Foundation of Christian Higher Education* (Broadman & Holman Academic) in 2002. In this work, he opened with a statement of philosophical foundations that was then applied to a variety of disciplines that comprise the curriculum of Christian higher education, ending with a brief articulation of how Union University endeavors to embody these principles.

Dockery's 2007 *Renewing Minds: Serving Church and Society through Christian Higher Education* (Broadman & Holman) explained the theological and philosophical foundations that make education Christian. In it, the framework for envisioning higher education from a Christian worldview was explored with particular focus given to Christian scholarship, instruction, and institutions.

In 2012 Dockery released an edited volume, *Faith and Learning: A Handbook for Christian Higher Education* (Broadman & Holman). It offers the reader a review of the Christian foundations for higher education with perspective given to the main academic disciplines comprising the curriculum. Perhaps expanding on this single volume was his 2012 series *Reclaiming the Christian Intellectual Tradition* to which Dockery offered the opening volume, *The Great Tradition of Christian Thinking* (Crossway). The series echoes topics already addressed in two of the previous volumes but with new authors and more thorough treatments of the subject matter.

This brings us to *Christian Higher Education*, Dockery's most recent foray into articulating a comprehensive vision for institutions like those in the ABHE and other Christian higher education associations. Dockery and Morgan's volume parses twenty-seven contributor essays into three sections, very similar to the contents of Dockery's previous works. The unifying theme of these sections is

reflected in the book's subtitle, *Faith, Teaching, and Learning in the Evangelical Tradition*.

Part 1 focuses on the evangelical theological tradition and its implications for Christian higher education. It presents a systematic theology for Christian higher education composed of six chapters with the first written by Dockery. This section bears significant similarity to the opening parts of his other books. Morgan provides the opening essay for Part 2, "The Christian Worldview for Faith, Teaching, and Learning in the Evangelical Tradition." This chapter introduces the next eleven chapters. These chapters itemize matters of "faith, teaching, and learning" not only in various academic disciplines (chapters 11-18) but also in regard to the relationship of faith to teaching, learning, and research (chapters 8-10). However, this part likewise parallels similar chapters from *Shaping a Christian Worldview, Faith and Learning*, as well as the *Reclaiming the Christian Intellectual Tradition* series. The third and final part comprises nine chapters centering on the "application and implication" of faith, teaching, and learning "for the Campus, the Church, the Marketplace, and the World." This section serves as an apologetic for the voice of Christian higher education within the landscape of academia. This too is a familiar section for those who have read Dockery's previous works with a conclusion regarding the influence of Christian higher education beyond its campus.

One could readily surmise from my previous comments that *Christian Higher Education* is simply a remake of or an update to Dockery's previous works on higher education. However, this would be inaccurate. If anything, this book could well be Dockery's *magnum opus* on Christian higher education and Morgan's formal introduction into this field of scholarship (he has widely published

but not on this subject). *Christian Higher Education* has three notable distinctives from Dockery's previous works.

First, while it may follow a familiar, almost predictable, pattern present throughout Dockery's major works, it is far more *comprehensive* than anything previously produced by him (or Morgan) and contains some material that is more thorough in its content. It is as deep as it is wide in its scope and sequence of contents. While some chapters may be slightly repetitive of previous volumes (e.g., the academic discipline of history is addressed in several of the books), the treatment here is by far the most detailed and connects back to the theological foundations of education that is Christian. Regardless, the sheer volume and scope of *Christian Higher Education* attests to its comprehensiveness.

Second, it engages faith-learning integration not only in higher education but specifically in the act of teaching. Dockery and Morgan bring Christian higher education out of the proverbial clouds and into the classroom, focusing on how it is a crucible for not only instruction in content but instruction with a particular perspective. Yes, previous works provided the reader with Christian perspectives on a variety of academic disciplines, but this volume is more consistent with its treatment of the disciplines and adds a pedagogical element to it as well, this becoming a major theme for this work.

Finally, *Christian Higher Education* provides a harmonious, practical approach to higher education that is Christian. The book's outline is a representation of Dockery's thought process when conceptualizing higher education within an evangelical Christian worldview, flowing from ideals to disciplines to influence. One is left with a firmer conviction that institutions of higher education

articulating an intentionally and overtly Christian worldview are part of fulfilling God's purpose in the church and world.

For ABHE administrators and faculty who need a resource to assist them to articulate a clear academic vision, prepare an apologetic for general education to inquisitive parents, explain the necessity of biblical and theological studies, or just to more thoroughly grasp the witness their campus has in the community—Dockery and Morgan's book is that resource. Additionally, as institutions onboard new faculty, regardless of their fields of study, having them read the chapters specific to their disciplines will help to orient and infuse Christian worldview into their teaching and self-perspectives. Likewise, specific chapters could be used in developmental meetings of faculty, fields, departments, and in some instances the faculty as a whole. Although the overall cost of the book may be financially prohibitive for some institutions to provide to every faculty member, having several copies in the library or faculty resource room would be a worthwhile investment for any Christian institution and faculty.

If the book has a gap from an ABHE perspective, it would be that it does not offer significant focus on theological education and ministry preparation. However, Christian universities as a whole have a mission far broader than theological education, hence this gap should be expected. Regardless, Christian Higher Education should find its way onto your bookshelf.



# The Learning Cycle: Insights for Faithful Teaching from Neuroscience and the Social Sciences

Duane H. Elmer and Muriel L. Elmer

Intervarsity Press


Downers Grove, IL, 2020

*Reviewed by John Jaeger*

Reference Librarian

Johnson University

Knoxville, TN

hen reading the title of this book, *The Learning Cycle*, one might well ask if another work on this topic is needed. Other scholars have proposed learning cycle models, and much has been written in this area, but this new book utilizes insights from neuroscience and social sciences to present a somewhat different and innovative approach. The Elmers present a learning cycle that, along with using the elements mentioned above, is written from a Christian perspective and draws significantly from biblical ideas. Also, the authors, Duane H. Elmer and Muriel L. Elmer, have fifty years of teaching, both in the United States and other countries, in faith-based higher educational settings. Their experience in cross-cultural education, where they have learned to communicate effectively with people in a variety of cultural settings, is particularly significant. The learning cycle that they present can be used effectively not only in the United States but also in international contexts.

The authors write, in large part, for professors, deans, and administrators in religious and theological institutions of higher

education. However, they also see their target audience as including pastors, Sunday school teachers, small group leaders, and parents. They believe Christian educators in nearly all settings can use this learning cycle to teach more effectively and help learners to retain the information and utilize it effectively.

Elmer and Elmer's learning cycle is in some ways a response to other models where the cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements are seen as developing somewhat independently of each other. In contrast, their learning cycle presents these elements as interrelated and integrated. They view education in a holistic manner where development in these areas is also connected to character and spiritual development. Their approach is transformation where the students are engaged in a somewhat comprehensive way. This learning cycle therefore views education in the classroom setting as supplemented by education outside the classroom. In this way, students are prepared to deal with real life issues and become lifelong learners. This educational framework seeks to develop and shape students to be the people that God desires for them to be.

Their learning cycle comprises five levels. The first level is recall, and it addresses learning to retain information, so it emphasizes the cognitive area of learning. All five levels build on learning through recall, so this is presented as the foundation for learning in general. The second level is recall with appreciation, and it focuses on the affective or emotional area of learning. This level involves students' coming to value the things they learn, and this enhances their motivation. The third level, recall with speculation, focuses on learning through questioning and engagement. Here experiential learning is involved. The fourth level is recall with practice, with the goal of students' beginning to change behavior. Transformational,



holistic learning is a major emphasis. The fifth level is recall with habit, and here the behavior changes become habits through regular practice. Transformational learning at this stage integrates all the elements from previous levels with the development of integrity and character.

At each level, the authors draw upon research from neuroscience through analysis of learning through the use of functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). Participants have sensors placed on different parts of their heads, and researchers can examine how the brain responds when learning takes place. One discovery is that the brain remains active in learning for approximately eighteen minutes, and after that the brain is less active in learning for a period of up to ten minutes. So, this insight suggests that teachers might present an interactive lecture for eighteen minutes and afterward have a learning exercise. Research from educational psychology and learning theories also is included in the learning cycle levels.


The authors have devoted two chapters to each level except for one, so the book is rich with information. The chapters also emphasize how the levels can be utilized in a practical way, so it can function as a kind of handbook or guide. Interestingly, although much research is included in this book, it is written in a clear and readable way. The authors include stories and examples from their educational experiences, and this makes the book engaging and interesting.

Little has been written on learning cycles from a Christian perspective, so this research-based book makes a positive contribution to the field of education. It also is a practical tool for those involved in teaching in a variety of settings.

# Acts: An Exegetical Commentary

Craig S. Keener  
Baker Academic  
Grand Rapids, MI, 2012-2015

*Reviewed by Nishanth Thomas*  
Associate Professor of Biblical Studies  
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raig Keener, the author of this commentary, is a prominent New Testament scholar and is a past president (2020) of the Evangelical Theological Society. Keener is currently the F.M. and Ada Thompson Professor of Biblical Studies at Asbury Seminary. His expertise centers on New Testament background, Acts, the historical Jesus, miracles, the Gospels, and ethnic/racial reconciliation. He also has served as the editor of the *Bulletin for Biblical Research*. He is well known for his work on Bible background, and he completed his Ph.D. work in New Testament and Christian Origins at Duke University. In addition to over 150 articles published, he has authored over thirty books with over a million copies sold and has won thirteen national and international awards.

His commentary on Acts is undoubtedly best classified as his magnum opus. This four-volume commentary that took several years to complete is possibly one of the most comprehensive and methodically documented commentaries to date. It is a must-have resource for professors, pastors, and Bible students. Keener offers in this commentary series “a socio-historical, exegetical, and

theological reading of Acts” in conjunction with verse-by-verse commentary. Additionally, he addresses modern scholarship and brings in both primary and secondary source materials.

Volume 1 includes the introduction and covers chapters 1:1–2:47; Volume 2 covers chapters 3:1–14:28; Volume 3 covers chapters 15:1–23:35; and Volume 4 covers chapters 24:1–28:31. The entire commentary is broken into the following sections: Introduction; Part 1: The First Outpouring of the Spirit (1:1–2:47); Part 2: Apostolic Leadership in Jerusalem (3:1–5:42); Part 3: The Hellenist Expansion (6:1–9:31); Part 4: Peter’s Ministry beyond Jerusalem (9:32–12:24); Part 5: Paul’s Diaspora Missions (12:25–19:41); and Part 6: To Rome via Jerusalem (20:1–28:31). It must be noted that the previously listed parts do not align perfectly with volume boundaries. This means Volume 3 continues Part 5, which began in Volume 2, and Volume 4 continues Part 6, which began in Volume 3. Note that the first and second volumes appear together in the digital Logos edition, even though they are separate print editions.

The first book or volume has an introduction section that unpacks the reason for and focus of the commentary. Keener states that this commentary has both an academic and socio-historical emphasis. Then he proceeds to set the limitations of this commentary. Keener proposes a new kind of genre for the Book of Acts, namely “Acts as a Work of Ancient Historiography,” followed by expounding on the rationale and implications of this genre. He then addresses critical issues like date, author, key ideas in Luke to Acts, the purpose of the book, audience, speeches in Acts, and Acts and Paul, concluding with the unity and structure of Acts.

Several nuanced chapters are present, beginning with the chapter unpacking the unique genre of Acts. Keener also provides a comprehensive and balanced analysis of the signs in Acts, titled *Signs and Historiography*. He thoughtfully challenges Western concepts of anti-supernaturalism while offering a more biblical and majority world perspective of this issue. Another fascinating chapter is Keener's analysis on Luke's perspective on women and gender. It would be challenging to offer any further analysis of this commentary within the space limitations for a book review. However, it is sufficient to say that this commentary is comprehensive, exceptional, nuanced, detailed, methodical, and critically examines all dimensions in Acts. The strength of this commentary is also its biggest weakness. Being a comprehensive commentary, it is lengthy in nature (four volumes) and costly (the four volumes can cost anywhere between \$200 to \$260).

Praise for these four volumes comes from a wide range of prominent theologians, including Richard Bauckham, professor emeritus of New Testament studies, University of St. Andrews; James D. G. Dunn, Emeritus Lightfoot Professor of Divinity, University of Durham; Darrell L. Bock, senior research professor of New Testament studies, Dallas Theological Seminary; Gregory E. Sterling, Lillian Claus Professor of New Testament, Yale Divinity School; David E. Aune, Walter Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins, emeritus, University of Notre Dame; and John J. Pilch, Odyssey Program, Johns Hopkins University (Faithlife Corporation, 2020).

Logos provided a review copy of this commentary set to the author, and so the author is briefly unpacking some of the nuanced benefits of purchasing this commentary set in Logos. Some

unique features associated with using this product through Logos include detailed tagging of this book, making it easier to perform complex searches to discover other interrelated resources. This means that Bible passages are linked to English-translation and original-language texts, while theological concepts are linked to dictionaries, encyclopedias, and several other resources (depending on the user's Logos library). Additionally, using this commentary with Logos permits users to copy and paste text with citations (using the preselected citation style), a feature that is extremely useful for academic writing. Moreover, readers can do a Bible word study, highlight text, make notes, see media options, and share text online, among other options. Logos also permits readers to ask the author questions with an assurance that the author or Faithlife staff will respond. Additionally, users can view this commentary across multiple devices (phones, tablets, and computers) using the Logos app, Logos Web app, or Logos software.

Additionally, this set can be purchased in print at several bookstores including Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Christian Book. E-books are available through Kindle, Nook, Google Books, and other e-book publishers. It is also available through Bible software companies like Accordance, Logos, and Olive Tree Bible Software. This four-volume commentary is a must-have for theological libraries. Pastors, New Testament professors, and theology students could also tremendously benefit from having access to this outstanding commentary set in order to study and teach the book of Acts.



# Ecologies of Faith in a Digital Age: Spiritual Growth through Online Education

Stephen D. Lowe and Mary E. Lowe  
InterVarsity Press Academic  
Downers Grove, IL, 2018

*Reviewed by Curtis D. McClane*  
CSSO, Executive Team; Professor of Leadership Studies  
Omega Graduate School  
Dayton, TN

**H**aving taught online courses now for over a decade, I found this volume helpful in grappling with the spiritual dimensions of online theological education. I can remember my first fledgling opportunities back in the late 1990s when we used fax as a quasi-online delivery system for students off campus. But I have always wrestled with both the advantages and disadvantages of online education. I became acutely aware of the disadvantages and shortcomings of the digital delivery world when I made a comment to my entire group of participants in an online Bible course, “I wish for this assignment we could all gather round a large table at Starbucks, with coffee cup in hand, and have a roundtable discussion on these significant and vital issues to your faith and theological development.” Since then, I have been looking for such a volume as this!

The most difficult task is how to determine if a faith community and spiritual formation are even possible for online education. What makes this difficult is that in the strictest theological terms, the idea

of “incarnation” is absent in the online environment. This volume is an attempt to figure out how both community and formation can occur without incarnation. At the outset, the knee-jerk reply could be, “Since incarnation is absent, then nothing significant can occur. After all, what happens to theology if we deny the incarnation of Jesus?” Is it possible that the digital age has ushered in for the believing community a new type of Docetism?

The apostle Paul recognized that, even though he wrote letters to the churches, his own presence was needed. Not even Paul would claim that his pen, scroll, and trusted amanuensis would be all that these communities of faith needed. In the Corinthian correspondence, he responded to several questions that are indicated by his rhetorical device, “Now concerning....” But he also knew that his presence was needed for apostolic authority to be palpably felt and his caring leadership to be connected incarnationally.

Lowe and Lowe are too dismissive of the critics at this point. They pronounce: “Critics have charged that online experiences are disembodied and thus incapable of forming community and facilitating spiritual growth.” I do not know of anyone who seriously argues “incapability”; rather, the argument surrounds the limits of what online experiences are truly capable of.

The authors provide a serious contribution in the area of “technagogy” to address these concerns. They have chosen the wide-embracing metaphor of “ecology” to characterize such a delivery system. As would be expected with this choice, Part 1 is a biblical theology of ecology. Beginning with God’s ecology in the Garden of Eden, this motif is traced through Scripture, ending with the power of the parables to communicate such a concept.

Part 2 covers spiritual formation through digital ecologies. There is a certain connectedness that has the potential to create a virtual reality contributing to spiritual growth. Part 3 seeks to demonstrate ecological connections to Christ and community. Core to Pauline theology regarding such connections is the demonstration of the syn (“with”) preposition in the Philippian letter that the authors elucidate. The authors also portray the New Testament’s emphasis on “one another” community, which is demonstrated by reciprocal caring behaviors.

These “one another” exhortations are creatively demonstrated by the human hand in Figure 4 (p. 185) as having six distinct dimensions: the four fingers are labeled as “moral,” “social,” “emotional,” and “intellectual”; the thumb is labeled as “physical”; and the palm is labeled as “spiritual.” This book especially attempts to demonstrate that the thumb (physical) can transpire in online education through digital ecologies (various venues and modes of technology).

I think that the greatest weakness of the book is its strength! The authors labor so intensely and strive so valiantly to demonstrate that spiritual growth can occur through online education and delivery that not enough time is spent wrestling with what is missing. This lacuna is somewhat admitted in the attempt to demonstrate that social capital and reciprocal interactions are possible. It may be that no one disagrees, and this is a very important section of the book.

I was left wishing for a final chapter that dealt very specifically and openly with the following three questions. (1) Since personal presence and incarnation are absent, can we identify specifically what is lost? Being digitally interconnected is not the same thing



as being relationally connected. The former does not guarantee the latter. (2) This being the case, what is the difference between the two types of connection? (3) Are the recognized dimensions of virtual community amenable to spiritual formation and community faith?

I wish the authors had accessed more of the literature on the exciting, empirically based research regarding virtual community. The “pioneer” of the digital world in terms of framing virtual community, Rheingold, is utilized here for his famous quotation: “People in virtual communities do just about everything people do in real life, but we leave our bodies behind.” His pioneering work provides a theoretical framework for forming and maintaining virtual community. In spite of this reference, the authors needed to utilize Rheingold’s work more substantively as they developed their framework for understanding ecology and the dynamics of virtual community. Many other resources are available to flesh out the notion of virtual community and understanding the dynamics that create and maintain such community. See the sources listed at the end of this review.

The book ends with the authors providing eight clear propositions “which comprise the framing structure of our ecologies of faith concept.” A sixteen-page bibliography follows, demonstrating the significant and in-depth research which provides the foundation for the thesis of this work.

In conclusion, allow me to say that this book is a must read for every professor who teaches online. The theological foundation is solid, the social dynamics are clearly demonstrated, and the reader is left with the high optimism of the authors that spiritual growth and faith community can indeed occur through the media that the

digital age offers. This ecology of faith offers great potential for the future of online theological education.

### **Additional resources on virtual community**

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# Teaching Across Cultures: Contextualizing Education for Global Mission

James E. Plueddemann  
IVP Academic  
Downers Grove, IL, 2018

*Reviewed by Linda F. Whitmer*  
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Johnson University  
Knoxville, TN

**I**n *Teaching Across Cultures: Contextualizing Education for Global Mission*, James E. Plueddemann, former professor of Missions for Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and a SIM missionary in Nigeria, significantly challenges the assumption that education can be approached in the same manner throughout the world. Drawing upon his depth of experience in today's world and his vast understanding of transformative learning theory, Plueddemann encourages readers to view the practice of teaching as more than just an effort to transfer facts.

Working with Kliebard's (1975) education metaphors of production, growth, and travel, Plueddemann presents his own metaphor to add to the list. He adds pilgrimage to explore the educational journey of the teacher and student together in which the effective teacher intentionally and purposefully encourages bridges between content and the culture of the learner along the journey's path. The major strength of Plueddemann's book is its stress on the importance of the context in which both teaching and learning occur. Using relevant personal examples and illustrations, he

brings the reader along on a pilgrimage of cross-cultural awareness in education, making this book vital for anyone in cross-cultural ministry.

Building on this metaphor of pilgrimage, the author develops imagery in the form of a rail fence with top and bottom rails anchored between fence posts. This allows for making quick decisions in accomplishing the teaching task. The bottom rail represents the learner's experience with all its cultural context, while the top rail represents subject matter to be taught (including Scripture and the academic disciplines). The teacher's responsibility is to assist in the building of vertical "fence post" connections between subject matter and the real-life experiences of the learner. The main focus is for the learner to incorporate top-rail content with bottom-rail application, connecting faith and works. This element of culturally relevant integration is often missing in education systems around the world, particularly in cross-cultural and diverse settings.

Plueddemann utilizes anthropologist Edward T. Hall's concept of low-context/high-context along with Geert Hofstede's concept of power distance to further illustrate communication processes. Low-context cultures focus on words as the primary means of communication, while high-context cultures live in close communities where nonverbal forms of communication are preferred. Plueddemann suggests awareness of one's own culture is vital for success in teaching. In high-context cultures, people tend to communicate beyond actual words and cultural values vary widely. Additionally, tolerance for ambiguity as opposed to the avoidance of uncertainty and desiring predictability highly impacts the ability to incorporate the subject matter into the learner's reality and practice.

This book accomplishes its task by masterfully including both theory and practice, as well as stories from around the world, taking the reader on a journey of discovery into the world of cross-cultural teaching. Each chapter concludes with a reflective story that highlights the importance of understanding those who are culturally different, whether that be through culture, gender, age, or other separation. In these reflective stories, the author skillfully challenges readers to think through their presuppositions and assumptions about what good education is. He also offers in the stories a toolkit of valuable principles and examples from his own life and work in a surprising willingness to be vulnerable and open with the reader.

Plueddemann's book is highly successful in making a valuable contribution to the education and preparation of experienced and new educators alike. This book could easily serve as an excellent resource or textbook for an introductory college course on teaching or preaching across cultures or for a congregation considering cross-cultural engagements. Professors who teach in diverse classrooms, public school teachers, pastors, and so many more will benefit from embracing the principles found here. By presenting the conceptual framework of education across cultural boundaries in both theory and practice, this book helps readers see themselves in successful engagement with those with cultural differences, whether that be across the globe or around the corner.

