

# BEYOND INTEGRATION

## Re-Narrating Christian Scholarship in Postmodernity

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### Introduction: The Project of “the Christian College”

One of the most interesting aspects of the CCCU network of Christian colleges over the past decade or so has been the increased and almost ubiquitous conviction that a “Christian” college is not just an institution that provides daily worship and a sanctified atmosphere in the dorms. Rather, it seems to be a settled conviction that the Christian-ness of the institution should inform the educational and academic project that is the central task of a college. What makes the college “Christian” is not (just) the chapel, but the curriculum. And in particular, a Christian curriculum is one informed by a Christian “worldview.” Thus we have seen an explosion of literature on worldviews and the “integration” of faith and learning across the disciplines.

I want to register some reservations with the “integration” project—not in the name of rejecting the project of “Christian scholarship,” but rather in the name of a more radical understanding of Christian scholarship.<sup>1</sup> I want to invite us to consider the shape of Christian scholarship beyond “integration” and after “worldview.” As part of this project, I will suggest that postmodernism—and specifically the postmodern

critique of Enlightenment models of rationality (and hence the received standards of “scholarship” and “theory”)—is an important catalyst for developing a more radical vision of Christian scholarship, one that I’ll describe as “*unapologetics*.” To do this, I first want to articulate a critique of “worldview”-talk and “integration”-talk as they have been adopted (and adapted) in discussions of Christian scholarship and Christian higher education. Second, I want to show how philosophical reflection can serve the project of Christian scholarship by discerning the problems with the *status quo*. In particular, I will argue that the postmodern critique of Enlightenment rationality—and the “thinking-thing-ism” that attends it—should push us to stop talking about worldviews and instead focus on what Charles Taylor describes as “the social imaginary.” The same should also push us to stop talking about “integration” and instead develop a more radical model of Christian scholarship I’ll describe as *unapologetics*. Then, in the final section, I will suggest that a focus on the Christian social imaginary should re-invigorate a role for Scripture and worship in the project of Christian scholarship and Christian higher education.

## I. The Trouble with “Worldview,” or the Ghosts of Descartes and Kant in Christian Higher Education

### A. “Thinking-thing-ism” and the Distortion of “Worldview”

Many Christian colleges and universities—particularly in the Protestant tradition—have taken on board a picture of the human person that owes more to modernity and the Enlightenment than it does to the holistic, biblical vision of human persons.<sup>2</sup> In particular, Christian education has absorbed a philosophical anthropology that sees human persons as primarily thinking things. The result has been an understanding of education largely in terms of *information* rather than *formation*; more specifically, the end of Christian education has been seen to be the dissemination and communication of Christian *ideas* rather than the formation of a peculiar people. This can be seen most acutely, I think, in how visions of Christian education have been articulated in terms of a Christian “worldview.”

Over the past couple of decades, the growth of Christian colleges and universities has been attended by expanded discussions of their

mission as “the integration of faith and learning.” It is then commonly claimed that students at Christian colleges and universities will learn a “Christian worldview”; or they will learn what everyone else learns but “from a Christian perspective” or a “Christian point of view.” Christian scholarship is taken to be scholarship informed by a Christian worldview, or scholarship that offers a “Christian perspective” on X, Y, or Z. Increasingly in these conversations, however, “a Christian worldview” is identified primarily as a set of doctrines or a system of beliefs—the sorts of statements and propositional claims that can be bullet-pointed on a PowerPoint presentation. Consider, for instance, Francis Beckwith’s definition of “worldview” in a recent collection:

What we mean is that the Christian faith is a philosophical tapestry of interdependent ideas, principles and metaphysical claims that are derived from the Hebrew-Christian Scriptures as well as the creeds, theologies, communities, ethical norms and institutions that have flourished under the authority of these writings. These beliefs are not mere utterances of private religious devotion but are propositions whose proponents claim accurately instruct us on the nature of the universe, human persons, our relationship with God, human communities and the moral life.<sup>3</sup>

This is echoed in more popular usage of the notion of “worldview” that advocates “thinking ‘worldview-ishly’” and the importance of “worldview-thinking” by putting the Christian “belief-system” at the center of our cognition because “how a person *thinks* significantly influences his [*sic*] actions.”<sup>4</sup> Kenneth Samples, like others, sees worldviews primarily as *theoretical* systems, though they often remain implicit and unarticulated. But even when implicit he construes them as still primarily cognitive. Thus, when he discusses the major components of a worldview, he suggests each worldview includes a metaphysics, an epistemology, an axiology, and more. A worldview is a set of implicit *ideas*. I’m going to suggest that this is a category mistake that indicates a reductionistic, rationalistic, dualistic anthropology (or model of the human person).

Such construals of “worldview” belie an understanding of Christian faith that is dualistic and thus reductionistic: it reduces Christian faith

primarily to a set of "ideas," "principles," "claims," and "propositions" which are "known" and "believed." The goal of all this is "correct" thinking. This makes it sound as if we are essentially the sorts of things that Descartes described us to be: thinkers with ideas. But what if that is actually only a small slice of who we are? And what if, in fact, that's not even the most important part? There's also more going on in such notions of a Christian worldview: we are not only reduced to primarily thinking things, we are also seen as things whose bodies are non-essential (and rather regrettable) containers for our "minds"—as if we were really just brains-on-a-stick. This is why such construals of a Christian "worldview" are also dualistic: they tend to assume a distinction between our "souls" and our "bodies," and then tend to ignore our embodiment (or wish it weren't there). But what if our bodies are essential to our identities? Weren't we created *as* embodied creatures? What if the core of our identity is "located" more in the body than the mind?

It is this sort of rendition of "worldview" that has been adopted as an orienting concept by Christian colleges and universities from a range of Christian traditions and theological sensibilities. However, at just the time when "worldview" has come to enjoy a wide consensus among such institutions, it seems that the concept has been subject to widespread distortion and misappropriation. In particular, earlier articulations of "worldview" emerged largely from the Reformed tradition that traced a line to Abraham Kuyper who, in his famous Stone Lectures at Princeton, advocated the distinctives of Calvinism as a "world- and life-view."<sup>5</sup> But within this Reformed articulation, the notion of "worldview" referred to pre-rational, pre-cognitive lived-commitments that were more "existential" than cognitive.<sup>6</sup> In fact, the Reformational notion of "worldview" was actually meant to counter a dualistic rationalism that wanted to reduce Christian faith to a set of intellectual claims and propositions—exactly what is now being purveyed under the banner of "worldview!"<sup>7</sup> But given that most recently the term "worldview" has been co-opted to name just such a rationalist, individualist, abstract, dis-embodied, "talking-head" kind of Christianity, I would like to call for (at least) a temporary moratorium on the use of "worldview" as a way of articulating the end (goal) of Christian education or the task of Christian scholarship. In fact, I

would like to suggest a general moratorium on the sloppy shorthand of “worldview” talk because it has reduced Christian faith to a system of beliefs and propositions—and it does so because it has assumed a stunted picture of human persons as primarily thinking things.

In contrast, drawing on a philosophical anthropology that sees humans as primarily *desiring* creatures and *liturgical* animals, I want to suggest that “the Christian worldview” is not a system of propositions recorded in “statements of faith”; rather, Christian faith is primarily a narrative that is embedded and embodied in the practices of Christian worship.<sup>8</sup> Being a disciple of Jesus is not primarily a matter of getting the right ideas and doctrines and beliefs into your head in order to guarantee proper “behavior”; rather, it’s a matter of being the kind of person who *loves* rightly—who loves God and neighbor and is oriented to the world by the primacy of that love. We are made to be such people by our immersion in the material practices of Christian worship—through affective impact over time of sights and smell in water and wine. The liturgy is a pedagogy that trains us as disciples precisely by putting our bodies through a regimen for repeated practices that get hold of our heart and “aim” our love toward the kingdom of God. Before we articulate a “worldview,” we worship. Before we put into words the lineaments of an ontology or an epistemology, we pray for God’s healing and illumination. Before we theorize the nature of God, we sing his praises. Before we express moral principles, we receive forgiveness. Before we codify the doctrine of Christ’s two natures, we receive the body of Christ in the Eucharist. Before we think, we pray. That’s the kind of animals we are, first and foremost: loving, desiring, affective, liturgical animals who, for the most part, don’t inhabit the world as thinkers or cognitive machines. My contention is that, given the sort of animals we are, we pray *before* we believe, we worship *before* we “know”—and that should make a difference for how we conceive the project of Christian scholarship and Christian education.

### *B. “Integration,” Secularity, and the Challenge of Syncretism*

If “worldview”-talk tends to assume a lingering modernist anthropology, I think “integration”-talk tends to assume a lingering, modernist epistemology that prizes “objectivity.” The “integration” project is often beset

by an internal tension that threatens implosion: on the one hand, the integration project rejects the “secularist” orthodoxy of the academy and seeks to develop distinctively *Christian* scholarship; on the other hand, the project assumes a certain “givenness” in the supposed “objectivity” of the sciences. But it is just this myth of objectivity that underwrites the scruples of secularity.<sup>10</sup> The result, I would suggest, is a kind of Christian scholarship that is actually a mode of syncretism.

Consider a familiar passage of Scripture, one from Colossians often quoted to me by well-meaning pastors and brothers and sisters in Christ concerned about my faith as a philosopher: “*See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ*” (Col. 2:8). One of the primary challenges in Colossae was a kind of syncretism: a notion that one could simply add Christ to existing structures and commitments. One could describe this as a sanctification strategy: one takes existing cultural products and then sanctifies or “redeems” them by “adding” Jesus (a formula readily illustrated in CCM music where one simply adopts the current paradigms of pop music and then interjects lyrics that ramp up the JPMs, “Jesuses-per-minute”). Unfortunately, all too often talk of “integrating” faith and learning tends to adopt a similar Colossian strategy. Such syncretism, I think, is one of the fundamental temptations of Christian scholarship (and the arts, too): to suppose that we can take up existing theoretical frameworks and “sanctify” them in some way by mere *addition*. Such a strategy produces several less-than-integral modes of Christian scholarship and comes in several forms:

1. The first is what I would call *moralizing* Christian scholarship. In this model what distinguishes *Christian* scholarship is not our theoretical commitments *per se*, but rather the way we practice our discipline. Christian scholars will be honest, virtuous, and concerned with justice, etc. Here the Christian scholars end up being the ones doing “ethics” in their field. But even then, the “ethics” articulated seems to be little touched by the particularities of Christian

commitments. Instead it traffics in more generic (supposedly “universal”) categories and concepts.<sup>11</sup>

2. The second is what we might describe as *topical* Christian scholarship. Here we employ the standard or “accepted” theoretical frameworks of our field (what Kuhn would call the paradigms of “normal science”), but because we’re Christians, we turn these tools toward “religious topics.” So Christian historians work on the history of religion in America (rather than, say, the history of Marxism in China), or Christian philosophers work on the existence of God and the problem of evil (rather than the ontology of categories or something less “religious”), or Christian directors produce and direct religious-themed plays, or Christian engineers work on “mission” development. In all of these cases, the Christian scholars adopt the same theoretical frameworks and paradigms of supposedly “objective” reason without much question. They just use these tools on different (“religious”) projects.
3. A third kind of Christian scholarship that I would suggest is problematic is what I would call *theistic* scholarship. (One of my colleagues at Calvin likes to talk about “methodological theism.”) Now, this might seem like hair-splitting, but let me put this as starkly as possible, in terms we might describe as Pascalian: I do not believe that “theistic” scholarship is *Christian*.<sup>12</sup> If theism is merely committed to something like a belief in the existence of God—even if in a very classical sense—that is not, in my book, Christianity. And thus what one gets in the name of “theistic” scholarship are broad appeals to values or “natural law” or “the image of God” or creation or justice. But it fails to speak of the cross, the resurrection, or the coming kingdom. The God of theism, to paraphrase Pascal, is not the God of Abraham or the Father of Jesus Christ. How “Christian” could our vision of Christian scholarship be if the cross and the church never show up?

I think these models (moral, topical, theistic) are newer versions of the Colossian problem; in other words, they are not sufficiently *radical*. By that I mean that these models of Christian scholarship do not interrogate the very paradigms that govern the shape of theory and scholarship in the academy. They don't question the *roots* (*radix*) from which these paradigms grow—the pre-scientific and pre-theoretical assumptions that govern the paradigms of “normal science” in the various disciplines. Instead, they simply assume the objectivity of the disciplines as disclosing “the way things are,” and then seek somehow to connect Christian themes or interests with the regnant paradigms in the field. These models of “integration” are really just models of *correlation*: they cede the “truth” of a particular sphere (say, economics or linguistics or psychology) to the disclosures of a purportedly neutral, objective “science”—and then seek to correlate Christian themes and interests with the field as defined by “secular” science.<sup>13</sup>

When I say that correlationist models of Christian scholarship are insufficiently *radical*, I'm invoking a metaphor of *roots* (Latin: *radix*). If we try to tease this out with the metaphor, we could say that correlationist models of Christian scholarship (“integration” models) are *grafting* projects: they seek to graft Christian concerns, interests, and topics onto the plant of scholarship that grows from the roots of regnant paradigms in the field. They're trying to add Christian branches to the tree of the academy. This is because correlationism takes the existing roots as *givens* within a particular discipline—as if there's only one plant, only one root. And this is precisely the story that many of the disciplines would have us believe: there's only one “normal science,” loaded with a “constellation of beliefs” (Kuhn) and assumptions about the nature of the world, the nature of knowledge, and so forth. Anything that is going to count as “scholarship” has to be grafted onto this one root. According to this model, Christian scholarship will be a matter of grafting branches onto the existing tree. Or, in terms of the Colossian problem, Christian scholarship is a matter of *addition*. (We'll return to this metaphor below.)

To use slightly different categories, we could say that such correlationist models of “integration” fail to call into question a foundationalist account of Reason of the sort bequeathed to us by the Enlightenment:

the notion of a capital-R Reason as universal, objective, neutral, and secular, and thus untainted by the particularities of bias, prejudice, or presuppositions.<sup>14</sup> On this account, to be “rational” is to overcome the “immaturity” of belief and tradition and to emerge into the public sphere of impartial reasoned discourse and cold, hard “facts.”<sup>15</sup> This is the vision of rationality that, for the most part, is inscribed in us by our graduate school formation. The price of admission to the halls of the academy is the requirement that one leave one’s tradition and presuppositions at the door.<sup>16</sup> This is why there is an intimate and inextricable link between foundationalism and secularism. Foundationalist accounts of rationality are trenchantly anti-pluralist: there is only one “right” way to know, only one mode of Reason—a mode that eschews the influence of tradition, faith, or other “influences.” The space of rational discourse—whether the academy or the “public”—is thus taken to be fundamentally monolithic. For all the talk of pluralism and multiculturalism, the secularist project of the academy is remarkably Babelian in its desire to impose “one tongue” upon all who would speak otherwise.

And yet at the same time we have a strong sense that our faith matters to our scholarship. Indeed, we’re all here because we teach at Christian colleges that see faith as integral to the academic project. And yet we can’t quite shake this vision of “rationality.” The result is the sort of correlationist projects I’ve sketched so far, which try somehow to “supplement” the existing paradigms by “adding” Christian faith in various ways.

## II. Postmodernism and a Project for “Radical” Christian Scholarship

### *A. Beyond Integration: Postmodernism and a Biblical Vision of “Knowledge”*

Now, why should that be a problem? Wouldn’t the alternative be to give up on the academic project and retreat into some kind of fundamentalist enclave—eschewing reason and retreating into a fortress of faith? Or giving up on the whole notion of “Christian” scholarship?

I want to suggest that there is a third way here—which is not middle of the road. In order to sketch this, let me try to unpack what I think is

wrong with the “correlationist” models above (and perhaps talk of “integration” in general). The correlationist or integration project operates on the basis of a model of Reason and rationality which I think is well lost and rightly criticized. The notion of an objective, neutral, unbiased “secular” reason has been roundly criticized over the past century—from Kuyper to Derrida (with Heidegger, Gadamer, Foucault, and MacIntyre in between). In sum, I think the correlationist project has failed to appreciate the postmodern critique of Enlightenment accounts of “rationality.” It has bought the story that the dominant “root” is the only root in town. Or, to put this more starkly, the correlationist vision of “integration” is a thoroughly *modern* project and, as such, is a passenger on a sinking ship.

But why should Christians have any truck with postmodernism? Shouldn't our commitment to the task of “integration” lead us to stand up in defense of modernity and rationality against the wily criticisms of postmodernism? Shouldn't Christian scholars above all be committed to defending “objective reason” against the fiery darts of postmodernists?

No. In short, no. I have argued extensively elsewhere<sup>17</sup> that Christian scholars should find an *ally*, not an enemy, in the postmodern critique of Enlightenment rationality. Not because Christians should be “hip,” “with it,” and *avant garde*, but because the postmodern critique of “objective” reason actually echoes the *biblical* critique of supposedly autonomous rationality.<sup>18</sup> In particular, there are three themes of the “postmodern” or “postliberal” critique of secular reason which resonate with the biblical narrative:

1. *Finitude*: Heidegger and his heirs emphasized that as finite creatures we ineluctably “see” the world on the basis of presuppositions and perspectives that are a feature of our being located in time and space. We can never have the sort of disembodied, universal, objective “God’s-eye-view” promised to us by the Enlightenment (something feminist scholars have also pointed out). In the same way, Scripture emphasizes that we are created as temporal, embodied, finite creatures—and that’s a *good* thing (Gen. 1:31). So the conditions of finitude—which are the conditions of

creaturehood—are affirmed as something good, not a curse.<sup>19</sup>

2. *Tradition*: One of the key features of our finitude and embodiment is our ineluctable relationality. We are created as social animals and, as such, we inherit from others ways of being in the world. This “handing down” of possibilities and perspectives is what Gadamer and MacIntyre emphasize in their account of tradition, and it resonates with both biblical and ecclesiastical tradition.<sup>20</sup>
3. *Noetic effects of sin*: The biblical picture rejects the notion of a universal “objective” reason primarily because it emphasizes that sin affects not just our “moral” behavior but also our epistemic capacities (Rom. 1:18-31; 1 Cor. 2:1-5). This is often described as the “noetic effects of sin” which indicates the way in which sin affects our perception and interpretation of phenomena. The correlate is, for instance, Paul’s emphasis on the illumination that is required in order for one to “see rightly.” By emphasizing the role and effect of these “background conditions,” the Scriptures exhibit an “epistemology” that has no room for Enlightenment confidence in “objective” rationality.<sup>21</sup>

The point I want to emphasize here is that there is a resonance between the postmodern critique of foundationalism or “objective” reason and the biblical account of the situatedness and conditioning of our “knowledge.” I’m not saying that Christians should be postmodern for the sake of being postmodern; rather, I’m suggesting that Christian scholars find in postmodernism a catalyst for retrieving a more radical—and perhaps more biblical—account of rationality.

If we follow through on this postmodern/biblical account of reason and knowledge, then I think we are in a place to sketch a more radical account of Christian scholarship—scholarship which works from *roots* (theoretical commitments) which are integrally Christian.<sup>22</sup> But what this requires is a rejection of the secularism of the academy, along with its undergirding foundationalism. Christian scholars, in other words, should be decidedly on the side of pluralism.<sup>23</sup> To return to our

botanical metaphor, Christian scholars should refuse to buy the story that there is only one root in town. In short, we should reject the secularist story that tells us that the academy (or a particular discipline) has only one plant, and therefore only one root. The postmodern critique of foundationalism shows us that the academy is a *garden*—a collection of different roots, a space of multiple (and competing) paradigms. Integral, unapologetic scholarship can flourish only insofar as we reject the monolithic and hegemonic secularism of foundationalist accounts of Reason, and instead appreciate that the academy—and scholarship—is a contested, *pluralist* space. Thus Christian scholarship, like Yahweh in Genesis 11, should be on the side of pluralism.<sup>24</sup> Let many flowers bloom!<sup>25</sup>

The postmodern critique of foundationalism articulates the way in which *every* scholar is a *confessional* scholar. What counts as evidence, what counts as rational, what counts as knowledge are all tethered to pre-theoretical assumptions, stories, traditions, and beliefs that govern theory. All scholarship is theory-laden and all theory is faith-laden. And while I am describing this critique of foundationalism as “postmodern,” one can find this model already sketched by Abraham Kuyper over a century ago (which is why Malcolm Bull once called Kuyper the “first postmodern”); this vision was extended by Herman Dooyeweerd and found a slightly different articulation in the work of Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff. But I don’t think this is just the property of the “Reformed” tradition. I think it is—or ought to be—a properly ecumenical and catholic vision. As such, I prefer to describe it as an “Augustinian” model.

Once we reject the monolithic construal of scholarship bequeathed to us by foundationalism and secularism, there are, I think, two ways to take up a more radical kind of Christian scholarship: one is still not radical enough, but moves in that direction.

1. The first is what I would describe as *apologetic* Christian scholarship. This mode wants to reason from explicitly Christian premises, but first attempts to earn a hearing for those commitments according to the standards of normal science in the field. In other words, apologetic Christian

scholarship (strategically, but perhaps not principally) concedes the criteria for theoretical validity to the status quo in the field and then attempts to justify Christian commitments within the rules of that game—to show that Christian claims are “rational” according to the standards of normal science. This then purchases the “right” to theorize and work from specifically Christian premises. However, the results are often minimal, and will tend to look like what I described earlier as “theistic” scholarship. But this is at least more radical than correlationist projects because it seeks to begin intentionally from “thick” Christian presuppositions.

2. The kind of scholarship that I try to advocate and practice is what we could call *unapologetic* Christian scholarship—or “unapologetics,” for short. This is postfoundationalist insofar as it recognizes that what counts as “evidence” or “criteria for justification” within a given discipline is relative to a paradigm of normal science which is itself undergirded by (religious) commitments. The “rudiments of the world” (Col. 2:8) are *religious* in nature. This is “unapologetic” in the sense that (a) it does not apologize for its specifically Christian foundations and (b) it does not spend its time trying to convince the field of the justification of these commitments by the rules of normal science (because, ultimately, [i] all scholars work from *some* such commitments, and [ii] neutral agreement is not possible). Rather than apologetics, the Christian scholar engages in a kind of “unapologetics.”

I think that such an unapologetic notion of Christian scholarship has several features and an important implication: unapologetics begins, unabashedly, from *revelation*—or, as Plantinga puts it, from “what we know as Christians.”<sup>26</sup> We see the world *as* creation, or human beings *as* created in the image of God, or take a notion of sin seriously *only because* we see the world through the lens of God’s revelation in Christ and Scripture. The reality of sin, for instance, is not something that is

“objectively” there to be seen without seeing the world *through* the lens of God’s revelation. Our acceptance of revelation is rooted in faith, and thus unapologetic Christian scholarship begins from the specificity of *Christian* faith (having recognized that all scholarship is grounded in *some* faith, so the playing field should be leveled). This is why Christian scholarship cannot be beholden to any kind of “realism” or “objectivity” in the classical sense. Instead, I would advocate what I describe as a *confessional realism*.

Unapologetics, then, refers to a vision of Christian scholarship which begins unapologetically from the “thick” presuppositions of Christian faith—precisely because we recognize that all scholarship begins from some faith. Unapologetics might also be described as “confessional theory.” This stems not from a retreat from the academy into “religious” enclaves, but rather from a trenchant critique of “secular” reason which unveils that, in fact, everyone is a confessional theorist. And so why shouldn’t we be able to begin from the thick particularity of a distinctly Christian vision of the world?<sup>27</sup>

### *B. After Worldview: The Christian Social Imaginary*

The broader “integration” project rightly contests the lingering secularist orthodoxy within the academy.<sup>28</sup> That particular piece of the project I want to affirm. The problem is, as we have seen, that many particular versions of integration often continue with a sort of functional affirmation of objectivity in the disciplines, thus giving rise to a sort of syncretism or correlationism. But there is an additional problem with this model, one that attends “worldview”-talk. My concern is that worldview-talk—particularly in its recently distorted form, but also perhaps even at its best moments—still retains a picture of the human person that situates the center of gravity of human identity in the cognitive regions of the mind rather than the affective regions of the gut/heart/body. While it rejects thinking-thing-ism, it is prone to fall prey to believing-thing-ism where “beliefs” are still treated as quasi-ideas, “propositions” that require assent. In short, it still retains an emphasis on that narrow mode of cognition we might call “ratiocination,” and often remains blind to the significance of the affective and bodily core of who we are. The result is a narrow, reductionistic understanding of the human person that fails to

appreciate the primarily affective, non-intellectual way that we negotiate being-in-the-world.

I want to suggest that postmodern philosophical developments rightly shift the center of gravity of the human person from the cognitive to the affective, from mind to "heart." As a way of working out the implications of this for Christian scholarship, I suggest that we might consider a (temporary) moratorium on the notion of "worldview" and instead consider adopting Charles Taylor's notion of "the social imaginary."<sup>29</sup> Taylor is also convinced that understanding culture requires us to give up our fixation on ideas and "theory" and instead focus on the "understanding" that is embedded in practices. He emphasizes that all societies and communities are animated by a social imaginary, but this does not mean that all are oriented by a "theory." The social imaginary, he says, is "much broader and deeper than the intellectual schemes people may entertain when they *think* about social reality in a disengaged mode."<sup>30</sup> Taylor intuits that what we "think about"—even what we "believe"—is just the tip of the iceberg and cannot fully or even adequately account for how and why we make our way in the world. There's something else and something more rumbling beneath the cognitive that drives much of our action and behavior. Taylor describes this as an "imaginary" in order to refer to "the way ordinary people 'imagine' their social surroundings" which is "not expressed in theoretical terms, but is carried in images, stories, and legends." To call this an "imaginary" is already to shift the center of gravity from the cognitive region of ideas to the more affective region that is "closer" to the body, as it were—since the imagination runs off the fuel of the body. So "imaginary" already hints at a more embodied sense of how we are oriented in the world. The imaginary is more a kind of non-cognitive "understanding" than a cognitive "knowledge" or set of beliefs. In fact, Taylor invokes Martin Heidegger's distinction between "knowledge" (*Wissen*), which is objective and propositional, and "understanding" (*Verstehen*), which is an "inarticulate understanding of our whole situation" that constitutes the "background" of our knowledge (*Wissen*).<sup>31</sup> This "understanding" is more on the order of know-how than propositional knowledge, more on the order of the *imagination* than intellect. To describe this in terms of the imagination (an "imaginary") is meant to signal that our most basic

way of intending and constituting the world is visceral and tactile—it runs off the fuel of “images” provided by the senses.

So when Taylor emphasizes the fundamental and necessary function of the “social *imaginary*” as a non-cognitive director of our actions and our entire comportment to the world, I think it is important to hear in that an emphasis on the imagination as an affective “faculty” that constitutes the world for us on a level that is bodily. It is a way of “intending” the world meaningfully—giving it “significance”—but in a way that is not cognitive or propositional. In common parlance we might describe it as a kind of intuition that, as Taylor observes, eludes propositional articulation: “it can never be adequately expressed in the form of explicit doctrines.”<sup>32</sup> Instead, as something functioning on the order of the imagination rather than the intellect, a social imaginary is “often not expressed in theoretical terms, but is carried in images, stories, and legends.”<sup>33</sup> A social imaginary is not how we *think* about the world, but how we *imagine* the world before we ever think about it; hence the social imaginary is made up of the stuff that fuels the imagination—stories, myths, pictures, narratives.<sup>34</sup>

This shifting of our center of gravity from the cognitive to the affective—which is the whole point of describing this as an “imaginary”—finds its completion in the role of bodily practices in this picture. Taylor emphasizes a dynamic relationship between such understanding and practice: “If the understanding makes the practice possible, it is also true that it is the practice that largely carries the understanding.”<sup>35</sup> Or, to put it otherwise, the understanding is “implicit in practice.”<sup>36</sup> This “understanding” is still distinct from, and irreducible to, “theoretical” or propositional knowledge. And I can—and most often *do*—function with an understanding without ever needing a “theory.” Here he suggests a helpful analogy: the understanding implicit in practice is akin to knowing how to get around your neighborhood or town. This is a kind of know-how that is embedded in your adaptive unconscious. Often, if we’ve grown up in an area for years, we’ve never looked at a map of the area. Rather, we have an understanding of our environment and surroundings that has been built up from our absorption in it: we’ve been biking and walking these streets for years. We could get home from the ball diamond without even thinking about it. In fact, if we’re

a long-time resident and have never lived anywhere else, and a stranger stops us on the sidewalk and asks us how to get to Baldwin Street, we might actually be stumped because we've never really even paid attention to street signs. We know *how* to get from our house to the arena, our friend's house, and the corner store—but we “know” this in a way that doesn't translate well into giving directions to someone looking at a map. Map-knowledge of the town is very different from the sort of know-how that has been inscribed in us by years of walking home from school. Taylor is emphasizing that a social imaginary is an “understanding” of the world that functions on the same level as our home-town know-how, whereas a “theory” or “doctrine” is a kind of “knowledge” that is more akin to a map. And for most of us, most of the time, we make our way in the world without recourse to maps. And such “know-how” or understanding, Taylor emphasizes, cannot be “adequately expressed” in a map. There is a certain amount of slippage in that move. The two (understanding and knowledge) are not wholly incommensurate; what's “understood” in the practice can be somewhat articulated in theory or doctrine. However, there will always be something lost in translation. Furthermore, Taylor emphasizes the *priority of practices*. As he succinctly puts it, “Humans operated with a social imaginary well before they ever got into the business of theorizing about themselves.”<sup>37</sup> The “social imaginary” is an affective, pre-intellectual “understanding” of the world. It is described as an “imaginary” (rather than a “theory”) because it is fueled by the stuff of the imagination rather than the intellect: it is made up of, and embedded in, stories, narratives, myths, and icons. These visions capture our hearts and imaginations by “lining” our imagination, as it were—providing us with frameworks of “meaning” by which we make sense of our world and our calling in it. An irreducible understanding of the world resides in our intuitive, precognitive grasp of these stories.

Now, what does this have to do with a Christian worldview? I want to suggest that instead of thinking about “worldview” as a distinctly Christian “knowledge,” we should talk about a Christian “social imaginary” that constitutes a distinctly Christian “understanding” of the world that is implicit in the practices of Christian worship. Discipleship and formation is less about erecting an edifice of Christian “knowledge” than it is a matter of developing a Christian know-how that intuitively

“understands” the world in the light of the fullness of the gospel. And insofar as an understanding is implicit in practice, the practices of Christian worship are crucial—the *sine qua non*—for developing a distinctly Christian understanding of the world. The practices of Christian worship are the analogue of biking around the neighborhood, absorbing an understanding of our environment that is precognitive and becomes inscribed in our adaptive unconscious. If we map this onto Taylor’s account we can see some important implications: first, if humans operate with a social imaginary well before they get into the business of cognitive “theorizing,” then by analogy we could say that humans were religious well before they ever developed a theoretical theology, and for most “ordinary people” religious devotion is rarely a matter of theory.<sup>38</sup> Rather, there is an understanding of the world that is carried in and implicit in the practices of religious worship and devotion. These rituals form the imagination of a people who thus construe their world as a particular kind of environment based on the formation implicit in such practices. In just this sense Christianity is a unique social imaginary that “inhabits” and emerges from the matrix of preaching and prayer. The rhythms and rituals of Christian worship are not the “expression of” a Christian worldview, but are themselves an “understanding” implicit in practice—an understanding that cannot be had *apart from* the practices. It’s not that we start with beliefs and doctrine and then come up with worship practices that properly “express” these (cognitive) beliefs; rather, we begin with worship and the beliefs bubble up from there. “Doctrines” are the cognitive, theoretical articulation of what we “understand” when we pray.

Second, the “understanding” implicit in practice cannot be simply identified with the sorts of ideas, beliefs, or doctrines that tend to be the currency of contemporary “worldview”-talk. The understanding—which is primary—can never be distilled into doctrines, ideas, or formulas without remainder. As Taylor emphasized, there is a kind of irreducible genius that resides in the practices—in the same way that the “understanding” that is embedded in the paintings in the Sistine Chapel are not just “substitutes” for a treatise on Pauline theology, or vice versa.<sup>39</sup> While aspects of the social imaginary can be articulated and expressed—and even helpfully refined and reflected upon—in

cognitive, propositional terms, this can never function as a substitute for participating in the practices which themselves “carry” an understanding that eludes articulation in cognitive categories. The distillation of the Christian worldview in terms of “creation-Fall-redemption-and-consummation” can never adequately grasp what is *understood* when we participate in communion and eat the Body of Christ, broken for the renewal of a broken world. And such an understanding is the condition of possibility for any later “knowledge.” Christian scholarship requires not (just) the mastery of Christian ideas and theories, nor even an understanding of a Christian “worldview,” but first and fundamentally the re-shaping of the social imaginary.

### III. Liturgy, Learning, and a Vision for Ecclesial Scholarship

Radical Christian scholarship will be scholarship that begins unapologetically from a Christian “understanding” of the world.<sup>40</sup> This means that one of the crucial issues for the project of Christian scholarship is discerning *how* this “understanding” is formed. Once again, I think our philosophical anthropology is important here. While scholars are the sorts of strange creatures who spend a good deal of their day engaged in cognitive, theoretical modes of engaging the world, this does not mean that scholars are “thinking things” as if they were some sort of exception to the affective anthropology I’ve sketched above. Scholars are fundamentally *affective* animals, too.<sup>41</sup> That means the theoretical work of scholarship is oriented by pre-theoretical understanding, by the shape of our social imaginary. So integral Christian scholarship needs to be nourished by a Christian social imaginary. How is a Christian social imaginary formed? I want to suggest two primary, related modes of formation: through indwelling of the narrative of Scripture and through the formative practices of Christian worship.

#### *A. The Conversion of the Imagination: Re-Narrating Christian Scholarship*

If radical, unapologetic Christian scholarship begins from “what we know as Christians”—from the particularity of the “understanding” embedded in Christian worship—then we need to think further about

the relationship between Christian scholarship and the Bible. Here I think we have serious work to do, and Christian scholars seem reticent to visit the issue because it feels like a certain lapse into biblicism. For many of us, we became engaged in the cultural work of scholarship precisely because we had overcome the dualisms of "Bible-only" accounts that disparaged "the world." And so I recognize that a call to Christian scholars to take the Bible seriously can be an occasion for folks to get a tad nervous.

But consider the project: If we are working with an understanding of Christian scholarship that makes *revelation* central, then mustn't we grapple with Scripture as a primary site of God's revelation? And yet, it is somewhat embarrassing to note the degree of biblical illiteracy among "Christian scholars" and the lack of sophistication we have when dealing with biblical text (if we ever do!). To pick on my own discipline, Christian philosophers often indicate the importance of revelation for Christian theorizing, and sometimes refer to Scripture, but too often it is in the mode of "proof-texting," drawing on a less-than-sufficient acquaintance with the Bible that tends to de-contextualize Scripture, wresting passages from their canonical and historical context and reducing them to propositions for logical operations. I've come to feel that this is deeply insufficient.<sup>42</sup>

I don't mean to suggest that every Christian scholar should also be a biblical scholar (though I would consider it a happy coincidence were we to find a few folks who embodied both of these gifts!). Nor do I mean to grant a license to Christian scholars from every discipline to freelance as amateur biblical scholars. Rather, I'm suggesting that if revelation is to be central to Christian theorizing, then we ought to draw on that well of revelation with the best possible pail. When our philosophical investigations bring us into conversation with, say, the social sciences, we try to draw on the best scholarship in the field; the same should be the case when we engage the Scriptures (particularly in my model of confessional theory, where Christian scholarship must draw on revelation).

To that end, I think there is a dire need for professional development opportunities that provide venues for Christian scholars to become acquainted with the best work in biblical studies and biblical theology (a

field that is undergoing upheaval in some very interesting, confessional directions).<sup>43</sup> And I think a more robust engagement with Scripture could also open up interesting, productive research agendas. We have seen this happen when the disciplines have engaged theology (e.g., philosophers picking up on Calvin's notion of the *sensus divinitatis* gave birth to "Reformed epistemology," and in psychology we are beginning to see models that explicitly engage Trinitarian theology); in the same way, engagement with biblical studies (and more specifically, the *theological* interpretation of Scripture) could provide a fund for theory that we could not imagine otherwise.<sup>44</sup>

Let me put the point this way: the vision of "unapologetic" Christian scholarship that I have sketched appreciates that all scholarship (even scholarship which pretends to be "secular") is nourished and governed by a "worldview"—a constellation of beliefs and commitments that shape how one sees the world. Appreciating this nonfoundationalist situation (a leveling of the playing field, we might say), unapologetics then envisions a kind of Christian scholarship that draws on the thickness and specificity of a distinctly Christian worldview.<sup>45</sup> Now, if a "thick" Christian worldview is to inform scholarship (if we are going to begin from "what we know as Christians" [Plantinga]), then we need to engage the riches of Scripture and the unfolding of the biblical narrative. Our engagements with Scripture—like all modes of reading—is always already *interpretation* under the conditions of "background" and horizons of expectation.<sup>46</sup> We always approach Scripture with an *interpretive stance* (Bockmuehl). So the question is: which interpretive stance is appropriate for understanding Scripture in a way that can inform Christian scholarship? While I don't have space to unpack this in detail here, I would argue that we ought to engage Scripture *canonically* and/or *theologically*—taking the Bible as the church's book, the script of a worshipping community.<sup>47</sup> The insights Scripture will yield will not be discrete "gems" (read: prooftexts) to be mined from the raw material of the text; rather they will be tropes disclosed in the context of the narrative—which requires that we are not only familiar with the plot, but immersed in the plot, seeing ourselves in the story. So I think that it is important for Christian scholars to engage Scripture with at least two interests in mind:

- (1) Insofar as Christian scholarship entails the articulation of *theory*, then the “thickness” of the biblical understanding of the world should inform the Christian worldview that informs theory formation. Theory formation always involves some element of *normativity*, and those norms come from pre-theoretical sources (viz., worldviews).<sup>48</sup> So, for instance, theories in psychology and sociology will assume some normative picture of what human persons are and what constitutes human flourishing. Those norms are not yielded “scientifically”; rather, they are pre-scientific and are the norms that *orient* science. A distinctly Christian psychology or sociology would articulate norms of human flourishing that are primarily informed by Christian revelation (even though one might also then try to “translate” them into a more general form for broader academic dialogue). For projects of theory formation, Scriptural engagement can be a source of *content*, pointing us to resources that “fill in” the Christian worldview (or theology).
- (2) However, there is also a second, and broader, way in which Scriptural engagement is important for Christian scholarship. To be a Christian scholar is to see and understand the world through the lens of the Christian social imaginary. As such, this requires forming *habits of seeing*, habits of being attuned and attentive to the world in a way that reflects Christian concern. How does that happen? Well, one of the primary ways this happens is through “eating the Word” (Eugene Peterson). Or, as Richard Hays puts it, learning to read Scripture well is a means for the “conversion of the imagination.”<sup>49</sup> He is particularly interested in encouraging contemporary readers to follow the example of Paul’s reading of Israel’s Scripture: “if we do follow his example, the church’s imagination will be converted to see both Scripture and the world in a radically new way.”<sup>50</sup> This “conversion of the imagination” by reading Scripture happens primarily, I would contend, when Scripture is encountered *liturgically* (communally in worship). However, it can also happen through

intentional *study*. So even if Scripture never makes a showing in the specific content of our scholarship, we should nevertheless be a people—and a community of scholars—whose imaginations are habituated to seeing the world through the imaginative plot and categories of Scripture.

This points to a second and final implication of “unapologetics” that I would like to note—an implication that points to a crucial overlap between our tasks as scholars and our tasks as teachers.

### *B. The Liturgical Imagination: (Re)Forming Christian Scholars*

My vision of unapologetics or confessional theory has a second trajectory of implication. If our thinking at its root is to be governed and shaped by the “thick” elements of Christian confession, then we need to consider just how we can be equipped for this task. In order to *practice* such an unapologetics, we need to be *formed by* this revelation and learn to see the world *through* that lens. In Hays’ terms, our imaginations must undergo conversion—again and again! To have our imagination shaped by the narrative of Scripture is to be narrated *by* the story, to absorb this revelation into our identity. And the primary site for the absorption of revelation is the worship of the church (contrary to individualistic pictures of the lone Christian in her closet with her Bible, mining it for propositions). It is worship (in the full-orbed sense of Word and sacrament) which transforms or renews the mind—granting us what Linda Zagzebski describes as “virtues of the mind.” In this way, the foolish darkening of our hearts (Rom. 1:21ff.) is undone and we begin to see the world *as* creation.

Therefore, I would argue that worship, liturgy, and the church are absolutely central to radical Christian scholarship—and to the Christian scholar. Our work as Christian scholars needs to be oriented by an imagination that is infused with the story of God’s work in the world. Participation in the liturgical life of the church is necessary for the sanctification that makes Christian scholarship possible, because it is in the affectivity of the liturgy that our imagination is fueled and shaped by the gospel.<sup>51</sup> As Augustine emphasized in *On True Religion*, the mind needs healing in order to see well.

At this point, some Christian scholars get a bit skittish; they worry that such a proposal sounds like a retreat back to pietism where "Christian scholars" are just scholars who go to church, or that what makes a college Christian is the chapel. But what I'm advocating is a post-critical, post-pietistic recovery of the central role of worship and the church for the task of Christian scholarship. "Pietism" fails to advocate unapologetics precisely because it fails to discern an integral, theoretical connection between the chapel and the classroom. In the pietistic (correlationist) model, the chapel sanctifies the classroom and laboratory *by addition*. It (unwittingly) concedes the space of the classroom and the laboratory to the standards of "normal science." But we have roundly criticized such correlationist models.

Ironically, those Christian scholars who resist my suggested centrality of worship and church for the task of Christian scholarship tend to reflect an over-correction which mirrors a similar distorted picture of the task of Christian scholarship. If pietistic correlationism thinks it's the chapel that makes the college Christian, in a strange way, those opposed to pietism almost seem to think the chapel *compromises* the task of "integral" Christian scholarship. ("Students would be better off spending time hunkered down in the library!," I've heard colleagues say.) But this actually perpetuates the dualism of the pietistic or correlationist model: it doesn't think worship, liturgy, or the church really touches the work of Christian scholarship and Christian learning. Both of these models assume a dualistic philosophical anthropology which sees the mind or intellect as the "site" for Christian scholarship and Christian learning, and sees worship and liturgy as dealing with the affections (the "heart"). But the unapologetics I am sketching refuses such dualisms. In league with Augustine and Jonathan Edwards, it emphasizes that we are primarily *affective* animals—that the work of the intellect is embedded in the ether of the imagination, which is itself intimately tethered to the body and thus bodily rhythms and rituals. Christian scholarship and Christian teaching, then, are not *primarily* about *ideas*; they are concerned with the formation of the *imagination*, and that happens largely (but not only) through affective means. In particular, it happens through the affective media of symbol, sign, and story—just the sort of world one finds in the practices of liturgy and worship.

On this point, let me register one further protest against formulas for “integrating” faith and learning, *viz.*, the generic character of “faith” in these discussions.<sup>52</sup> To put this otherwise, I have concerns about what we mean by a *Christian* college. What is “Christianity” without the church? What if instead of shaping *Christian* colleges and *Christian* scholarship, we think about *ecclesial* colleges and *ecclesial* scholarship?<sup>53</sup> I want to argue that this “faith” needs to be specified, and such specification happens not primarily in the articulation of propositions or the distillation of Christian “ideas,” but in the liturgy and worship life of the church. Thus, instead of retaining the notion of “worldview” (which feels a bit heady and cognitive), we might appropriate Charles Taylor’s notion of a “social imaginary”—which emphasizes both the central role of imagination, as well as the embedding of a social imaginary in practices. Before a social imaginary is articulated as ideas, it is *lived* as a constellation of practices. This means that the task of Christian scholarship requires the formation of the imagination, which requires that we be immersed in the practices which form our “imaginary.” That happens primarily in the embodied, affective, communal liturgical practices of the church—some of which are also staged on a daily basis within our academic communities. Thus unapologetics, while rejecting the correlationist and pietist notion that the chapel “sanctifies” the classroom and laboratory, actually recovers a more integral and fundamental role for worship and liturgy as the condition of possibility for Christian scholarship.

## Chapter 1 Notes

1. Since this chapter began its life as a talk at Indiana Wesleyan University, a number of elements of the argument have been refined and expanded in James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009).

2. Cf. Calvin Seerveld, "A Tin Can Theory of the Human Person," in *In the Fields of the Lord: A Calvin Seerveld Reader*, ed. Craig Bartholomew (Toronto: Tuppence, 2000).

3. Francis Beckwith, "Introduction," in *To Everyone an Answer: A Case for the Christian Worldview*, eds. Francis Beckwith, William Lane Craig, and J. P. Moreland (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 14.

4. Kenneth Richard Samples, *A World of Difference: Putting Christian Truth-Claims to the Worldview Test* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007), 15. For other popular accounts along these rationalist lines, see The Truth Project from Focus on the Family or Brannon Howse's "Worldview Weekend." I would also point out the ineluctable politics of such worldview talk. For Beckwith, Samples, Charles Colson, and others, the adoption of "worldview-talk" has been linked to a political project of "transforming" America (or "taking America back for God"). This is seen starkly in Samples' opening vignette that highlights the "worldview" difference between "American President George W. Bush [a 'devout evangelical Christian'] and Muslim extremist Osama bin Laden" (Samples, 12-13). In other words, the rationalist hijacking of worldview talk is coincident with the enlistment of worldview talk in the culture wars. Cf. also J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), who emphasize the importance of understanding "the Christian worldview" precisely in order to secure its cultural dominance: "The average Christian does not realize that there is an intellectual struggle going on in the universities. . . . Enlightenment naturalism and postmodern anti-realism are arrayed in an unholy alliance against a broadly theistic and specifically Christian worldview." [Up for a Crusade, anyone?] Thus they admonish: "Christians cannot afford to be indifferent to the outcome of this struggle. . . . If the Christian worldview can be restored to a place of prominence and respect at the university, it will have a leavening effect throughout society. If we change the university, we change our culture through those who shape culture" (1-2). Christian philosophers are now arrayed "like Gideon's army" on this battlefield (3-4). (It might also be noted that their book was funded in part by the Discovery Institute [8].)

5. Abraham Kuyper famously articulated Calvinism as a "world- and life-view" in his 1898 Stone Lectures at Princeton University. See Kuyper, *Calvinism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1943).

6. For articulations within this tradition, see Albert Wolters, *Creation Regained*; James H. Olthuis, "On Worldviews," in *Stained Glass*; Brian J. Walsh and J. Richard Middleton, *The Transforming Vision*; Cornelius Plantinga, *Engaging God's World*. For my affirmation of this richer understanding of worldview, and a clarification of my critique, see James K. A. Smith, "Worldview, Sphere Sovereignty, and *Desiring the Kingdom*: A Guide for (Perplexed) Reformed Folk," *Pro Rege* 39.4 (June 2011): 15-24.

7. However, I would note that even those Reformational articulations of worldview that have sensed a problem with the "thinking thing" cognitivism of the tradition have still tended to let "knowledge" retain the center of gravity—thus talking about

“knowing” other-wise. See, e.g., John Kok, ed., *Ways of Knowing: In Concert* (Sioux Center, IA: Dordt Press, 2005) and James H. Olthuis, ed., *Knowing Other-wise: Philosophy at the Threshold of Spirituality* (Bronx, NY: Fordham University Press, 1997). The centrality and privilege of *knowledge* is a hard habit to break. Below I will engage Martin Heidegger’s and Charles Taylor’s notion of “understanding” (*Verstehen*) as a way to de-center this privilege on knowing. However, even this clearly has limits since “understanding” is still within the semantic range of things we associate with knowing (i.e., “understanding” still sounds like the sort of thing that “thinking things” do). Perhaps when I articulate this in terms of *imagination* we’ll be on to a real alternative.

8. For an expansion on this point, see Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, chapters 4-5.

9. Cf. Samples’ and Barna’s specific claims on this point. Critiquing this sort of picture (whether liberal or conservative), Stanley Hauerwas comments: “Such a strategy assumes that what makes a Christian is holding certain beliefs that help us better understand the human condition, to make sense of our experience. Of course no one denies that those beliefs may have behavioral implications, but the assumption is that the beliefs must be in place in order for the behavior to be authentic” (Hauerwas, *After Christendom? How the Church Is to Behave if Freedom, Justice, and a Christian Nation Are Bad Ideas* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1999], 95). In addition to working with a flawed anthropology that prioritizes “cerebral” belief over embodied action, Hauerwas also notes the individualism of such a picture: “When Christianity is understood fundamentally as a belief system necessary for people to give meaning to their lives, we cannot but continue to reinforce the assumption that salvation is for the individual. It is one of the ironies of our time that many of those who are identified with urging Christians to engage in politics in the name of their Christian beliefs hold what are fundamentally individualistic [and cognitivist, I would add] accounts of Christian salvation. They assume that Christianity entails social engagement, but salvation was still identified with the individual coming to a better self-understanding through the world view offered by Christianity” (96). It is a further irony that folk like Samples, Colson, et. al., who adopt such a “worldview” orientation to underwrite the politics of culture war are, in fact, mimicking an essentially *liberal* strategy that Hauerwas critiques in Niebuhr [180n.5].

10. See James K. A. Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy: Mapping a Post-Secular Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), ch. 5.

11. For a critique of such projects for a “universal” or “generic” ethics or “morality,” see John Milbank, “Can Morality be Christian?,” in *The Word Made Strange* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997) and Stanley Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), where he emphasizes that there is no “generic” ethic; every ethic is qualified by a narrative and a tradition. For discussion of these points, see Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy*, 240-243.

12. I take exception to Alvin Plantinga’s equation of the two when he speaks of “Christianity or Christian theism” (as in his Stob Lectures, “The Twin Pillars of Christian Scholarship,” in *Seeking Understanding: The Stob Lectures, 1986-1998* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001], 125; or “Advice to Christian Philosophers”) and then in a slightly different version at Notre Dame speaks of “Christianity or Christian theism, or Judeo-Christian theism.” I prefer when he speaks of “positive Christian science” (*The Stob Lectures*, 139).

13. For further discussion of “correlationist” approaches, see Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy*, 35-37 and 148-153.

14. As just one example of this sort of claim to “presuppositionlessness,” I recently ran into Freud’s “History of the Psychoanalytic Movement” in which he emphasizes that he didn’t read Nietzsche “with the conscious motive of not wishing to be hindered in the work out of my psychoanalytic impressions by any preconceived ideas” (in *The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud*, ed. A. A. Brill [New York: The Modern Library, 1938], 939). He later claims that he “was subject to no influences” (943).

15. See Kant, “What Is Enlightenment?”

16. Akin to Rawls’ “original position.”

17. See especially James K. A. Smith, *Who’s Afraid of Postmodernism? Taking Derrida, Lyotard, and Foucault to Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006).

18. Thus Bruce Ellis Benson compares the postmodern critique with prophetic critique in *Graven Ideologies: Nietzsche, Derrida, and Marion on Idolatry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002).

19. I have developed this in much more detail in James K. A. Smith, *The Fall of Interpretation: Philosophical Foundations for a Creational Hermeneutic*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012).

20. For more on tradition, see *ibid.*, ch. 5.

21. See also Bruce Ellis Benson, “Paul and the Knowledge that Puffs Up: A Taste for Idolatry,” *Journal of Philosophy and Scripture* 2.2 (Spring 2005), <http://philosophyandscripture.org/Issue2-2/Benson/benson.html>.

22. The theme of being “rooted” is important in the context of Colossians. See, for example, Colossians 2:7. This organic metaphor in Colossians is usually coupled with an architectural metaphor of “foundations” on which we are “established” and “built up.”

23. For a discussion of the point, see George Marsden, *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

24. For a non-Christian critique of secularism and *apologia* for genuine pluralism (a pluralism which also makes room for faith commitments), see William Connolly, *Why I Am Not a Secularist* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), and more recently, William Connolly, *Pluralism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).

25. This will also require that we give up any “Constantinian” vision of Christian scholarship as somehow part of a project to “take over” the academy and “bring it to [Christian] Reason.” I fear that the expanding interest of evangelical scholars in “natural law” is an indicator of just such hegemonic, anti-pluralist projects. I hope to unpack this concern in more detail elsewhere.

26. See Plantinga, *Stob Lectures*, 135, 143, 144, 160. He also speaks of “the deliverances of faith” (159).

27. Cf. Marsden, *Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*, Afterword. For further discussion of this point, see Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy*, 73-74 and ch. 5.

28. This is nicely outlined and summarized in Todd C. Ream and Perry L. Glanzer, *Christian Faith and Scholarship: An Exploration of Contemporary Developments*, ASHE Higher Education Report 33.2 (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007).

29. Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 23-30, now expanded in Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 171-176. For this concept, Taylor acknowledges his debt to Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991).

30. Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 23, emphasis added.

31. *Ibid.*, 25, drawing particularly on Hubert Dreyfus’s reading of Heidegger in *Being-in-the-World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991). For the relevant discussion in

Heidegger, see *Being and Time*, §31. Heidegger's articulation grows out of a critique of Husserl's "cognitivism"—a charge echoed by Dreyfus. For a defense of Husserl in this regard, see Christian Lotz, "Cognitivism and Practical Intentionality: A Critique of Dreyfus's Critique of Husserl," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 47 (2007): 153-166. Taylor finds analogous notions of "understanding" in Wittgenstein and Polanyi.

32. Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 25.

33. *Ibid.*, 23.

34. Here there is an important resonance between Taylor's account and Christian Smith's claim that human beings are "narrative" animals. "For all our science, rationality, and technology," Smith observes, "we moderns are no less the makers, tellers, and believers of narrative construals of existence, history, and purpose than were our forebears at any other time in human history. But more than that, we not only continue to be animals who makes stories but also animals who are *made by* our stories" (*Moral, Believing Animals*, 64). Thus Smith is also contesting cognitivist accounts of the human person. This gets tethered to embodied practice in his discussion of the "liturgies" that make up moral orders (16).

35. Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 25.

36. *Ibid.*, 26. We might quibble with Taylor here a bit. While he wants to emphasize that the relationship between "imaginary" (understanding) and practice is "not one-sided" (25), there does seem to be some ambiguity in his account. At times he speaks as if the understanding "makes possible" common practices (23), as if practices "express" a pre-existent understanding. However, at other times Taylor emphasizes that it is the practices that "carry" the understanding (25). While I think he is right to honor the dynamic, dialectical relation between the two, I think it particularly important to emphasize the latter. If there is a priority in this chicken-or-the-egg-like question, I would think the practices precede the understanding. As he later emphasizes, "Ideas [and so, *mutatis mutandis*, understanding] always come in history wrapped up in certain practices" (33).

37. *Ibid.*, 26.

38. Taylor's model can account for a dynamic that needs to be recognized here, *viz.*, that "theory" sometimes "trickles down" and "infiltrates" the social imaginary (24). In fact, he thinks this is exactly what happened in modernity: the "ideas" of Grotius and Locke gradually "infiltrate and transform" our social imaginary, producing what will become the unique understanding embedded in the *modern* social imaginary (28-29). [Heidegger has a similar account of how theory can become "sedimented" into our understanding, BT, §62.] I would suggest something similar happens in the case of Christian worship: the "fruit" of theological reflection (e.g., the Nicene Creed) trickles down and infiltrates the Christian social imaginary such that this now becomes absorbed as a kind of non-cognitive "understanding." I suggested something like this in *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy*, 178-179.

39. This analogy is suggested in Gordon Graham's discussion of the irreducibility of artistic "truth" in Gordon Graham, *Philosophy of the Arts*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Routledge, 2000), 46-51. Art's "understanding" should not be reduced to the sense of "assent to propositions," in which case art would be only one medium of many alternatives which can communicate propositional truth. Graham emphasizes that art cannot be "paraphrased" (51), nor can it be simply "exchanged" with other media for the same purpose. In the same way, theories and practices are not simply convertible; one can't drop the practice once one "gets" the theory.

40. This assumes the “postmodern” critique which levels the playing field by pointing out that *all* scholars begin with *some* (pre-scientific, pre-rational, faith-like) “understanding” of the world.

41. Christian Smith makes the same point when he emphasizes that social scientists are not exempt from being narrative animals: “Sociologists not only make stories but are animals who are made by their stories. . . . No one, not even the statistics-laden sociologist, escapes the moral, believing, narrative-constituted condition of the human animal” (*Moral, Believing Animals* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2003], 87). In the same vein, “all human persons, no matter how well educated, how scientific, how knowledgeable, are, at bottom, *believers*” (54).

42. I think this situation ultimately indicates the failure of our churches to form us by the narrative of Scripture.

43. For an excellent primer on the theological interpretation of Scripture, see J. Todd Billings, *The Word of God for the People of God: An Entryway to the Theological Interpretation of Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010).

44. Cf. Walter Brueggemann’s suggestion regarding the productive possibilities of engaging Scripture to think about the task of education in Walter Brueggemann, *The Creative Word: Canon as a Model for Biblical Education* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 2-3.

45. Because I want Christian scholarship to draw on the “thick” resources of the Christian faith, I am somewhat hesitant just to describe this as a “worldview,” since worldview-talk tends to settle for a very thin, diluted account of the faith (e.g., creation-fall-redemption) and fails to draw on the specificity of the riches of the Christian story. Thus, in *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy* I talk about Christian scholarship being oriented and governed by “theology,” or more specifically, what I call theology<sub>1</sub>. See *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy*, 166-179.

46. See Smith, *The Fall of Interpretation*, ch. 6.

47. Again, see Billings, *Word of God for the People of God*, for an argument about the ecclesial and liturgical “home” of Scripture.

48. Cf. Christian Smith, *Moral, Believing Animals*.

49. Richard B. Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel’s Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), viii.

50. *Ibid.* He goes on to point out that this is as old as Origen: “As a Christian interpreter living in a pagan world, Origen was able to see clearly that Gentile converts to the faith needed to have their minds re-made, and that instruction in how to read Scripture was at the heart of Paul’s pastoral practice: Gentiles needed to be initiated into reading practices that enabled them to receive Israel’s Scripture as their own.”

51. Not just some “principles” of creation or justice, but the thick specificities of God in Christ reconciling the world to himself.

52. I have voiced a similar concern about the generic character of evangelical Christian faith in my “Between the University and the Church: The Precarious (and Promising) Site of Campus Ministry,” *Anastasis* 1.2 (2002): 3-4.

53. Cf. Wright and Budde, *Conflicting Allegiances: The Church-Based University in a Liberal Democratic Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2004).

## BEYOND INTEGRATION?

Inter/Disciplinary Possibilities for the Future of Christian Higher Education



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