

THE INTEGRATION OF
FAITH, LEARNING AND LIVING

BY WILLIAM M. GREATHOUSE

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND - COLOSSIANS 1:15-25

I APPRECIATE THE INVITATION TO SPEAK TO YOU THIS EVENING IN THE OPENING SESSION OF THIS HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT CONFERENCE ON FAITH, LEARNING AND LIVING.

WHEN I FIRST RECEIVED THE INVITATION I WAS PLEASED THAT I WOULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY OF SPEAKING TO AN ISSUE WHICH FOR MANY YEARS HAS CONCERNED ME--THE DANGER OF A BIFURCATION BETWEEN OUR NAZARENE FAITH AND COMMITMENT TO CHRIST AS SAVIOR AND LORD AND THE PROFESSIONAL METHODOLOGIES WE EMPLOY IN TEACHING THE VARIOUS ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES OF THE CURRICULUM, PARTICULARLY THE NATURAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES.

THIS CONCERN THAT WE INTEGRATE OUR FAITH AND LEARNING IN A THOROUGHGOING CHRISTIAN WORLD VIEW I STILL BELIEVE TO BE FOUNDATIONAL TO ALL WE TEACH AND DO ON A NAZARENE CAMPUS. BUT INCREASINGLY I HAVE COME TO SEE THAT THE THREAT TO OUR EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE MAY BE EVEN MORE SUBTLE AND PERVASIVE THAN TO THE DISINTEGRATION OF OUR CHRISTIAN WORLD VIEW; IT IS OUR CHRISTIAN VALUE SYSTEM WHICH IS NOW UNDER A VICIOUS ATTACK AND WHICH MUST BE MORE COMPLETELY INTEGRATED WITH BOTH OUR PERSONAL LIFE-STYLE AND OUR EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE.

AS I BEGAN TO CONTEMPLATE THE IMPLICATIONS OF ALL THIS, I FELT CONSIDERABLE TREPIDATION.

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I TAKE IT THAT THIS BROADER AND MORE CHALLENGING TASK OF MAKING OUR SCHOOLS TRULY CHRISTIAN EXPLAINS WHY THIS GATHERING HAS BEEN RENAMED A CONFERENCE ON FAITH, LEARNING AND LIVING. GOD'S SELF-DISCLOSURE IN CHRIST DEMANDS NOT ONLY A CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY AND WORLD VIEW BUT ALSO A CHRISTIAN LIFE-STYLE CONSISTENT WITH THIS SELF-REVELATION. IT IS FOR THIS REASON I CHOSE AS MY SCRIPTURE THE READING FROM PAUL'S LETTER TO THE COLOSSIANS.

THE APOSTLE SAW THESE ISSUES WITH ASTOUNDING CLARITY. THE INCIPIENT GNOSTICISM HE ADDRESSED IN THIS EPISTLE CONSTITUTED A THREAT TO BOTH A CHRISTIAN WORLD VIEW AND A CHRISTIAN LIFE-STYLE. THE COLOSSIAN HERETICS REJECTED THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF CREATION, SUBSTITUTING FOR IT A VIEW OF GOD AS A WORLD PROCESS. CONSEQUENTLY THERE WAS NO PLACE IN THEIR SYSTEM FOR A DOCTRINE OF GOD'S INCARNATION IN JESUS CHRIST OR FOR A CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF MAN; SO AS A RESULT THEY ADVOCATED A VIEW OF LIFE WHICH DENIED THE POSSIBILITY OF GOD'S TRANSFORMING GRACE IN CHRIST. WORLD VIEW AND LIFE-STYLE ARE INEXTRICABLY INTERRELATED.

PAUL'S ANSWER TO THE COLOSSIAN HERETICS WAS CHRIST. IN CHRIST, HE ARGUES, "ALL THINGS COHERE." THE COSMOS IS NOT THE EMANATION OF AN IMPERSONAL OR TRANSPERSONAL GOD; IT IS THE CREATION OF THE TRANSCENDENT, PERSONAL, LIVING GOD WHO WAS TRULY INCARNATE IN JESUS OF NAZARETH. IN THIS MAN JESUS, BY HIS DEATH IN A PHYSICAL BODY, GOD HAS RECONCILED ALL THINGS TO HIMSELF, BEGINNING WITH US SINNERS WHO HAVE BEEN REDEEMED BY HIS GRACE AND ULTIMATELY ENCOMPASSING THE UNIFICATION OF

THE COSMOS ITSELF! THE EVIDENCE THAT THIS PROCESS IS AT WORK IN US IS THAT WE HAVE DIED WITH CHRIST TO SIN AND WITH HIM HAVE BEEN RAISED TO A NEW LIFE WHICH IN ITS TOTALITY IS BEING SANCTIFIED, THAT IS, TRANSFORMED INTO THE VERY LIKENESS OF CHRIST. "CHRIST IS ALL, AND IN ALL" (COLOSSIANS 3:11).

NOW I SUBMIT THAT THIS IS THE MEANING OF CHRISTIAN HOLINESS: WHOLENESS, INTEGRITY OF THOUGHT AND LIFE. IN CHRIST COHERE BOTH OUR WORLD VIEW AND OUR LIFE-STYLE. EVERYTHING IS OF ONE PIECE IF WE ARE REALLY CHRISTIAN. IN CHRIST ARE "HID ALL THE TREASURES OF WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE. . . . AS THEREFORE YOU RECEIVED CHRIST JESUS THE LORD, SO LIVE IN HIM, ROOTED AND BUILT UP IN HIM AND ESTABLISHED IN THE FAITH. . . . SEE TO IT THAT NO ONE MAKES A PREY OF YOU BY PHILOSOPHY AND EMPTY DECEIT, ACCORDING TO HUMAN TRADITION, . . . AND NOT ACCORDING TO CHRIST. FOR IN HIM THE WHOLE FULNESS OF DEITY DWELLS BODILY, AND YOU HAVE COME TO FULNESS OF LIFE IN HIM . . ." (COLOSSIANS 2:3, 6, 7, 8, 9, RSV.)

"PUT TO DEATH," THEREFORE, PAUL URGES, "WHAT IS EARTHLY IN YOU: . . . SEEING THAT YOU HAVE PUT OFF THE OLD [SELF] WITH ITS PRACTICES AND HAVE PUT ON THE NEW [SELF], WHICH IS BEING RENEWED IN KNOWLEDGE AFTER THE IMAGE OF ITS CREATOR. HERE . . . CHRIST IS ALL, AND IN ALL. PUT ON THEN, AS GOD'S CHOSEN ONES, . . . COMPASSION, KINDNESS, LOWLINESS, MEEKNESS, AND PATIENCE . . . AND ABOVE ALL THESE PUT ON LOVE, WHICH BINDS EVERYTHING TOGETHER IN PERFECT HARMONY" (3:5, 9-10, 11, 12, 14, RSV).

HERE, I SUBMIT, IS OUR MANDATE TO INTEGRATE FAITH, LEARNING AND LIVING. IT IS EVIDENT ALSO THAT THIS INTEGRATION IS NOT

SOMETHING THAT CAN BE DONE HERE THIS WEEK IN THIS CONFERENCE. INTEGRATION IS AN IDEAL TOWARD WHICH WE MUST EVER STRIVE. IT IS A PROCESS THAT WE HAVE REASON TO HOPE MANY BE OPENED UP IN FRESH WAYS TO YOUR UNDERSTANDING DURING THESE DAYS, AND SPURRED ON. BUT IF IT IS TO BE REALIZED IN ANY MEANINGFUL WAY IN THE ONGOING LIFE OF OUR INSTITUTIONS IT MUST BE RECOGNIZED AND ACCEPTED AS AN ONGOING PROCESS CALLING FOR BOTH INTELLECTUAL INTEGRITY AND MORAL COURAGE. NOT TO ACCEPT THIS CHALLENGE IS TO SETTLE FOR SOMETHING LESS THAN CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION.

TONIGHT I WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK, FIRST, TO THE MATTER OF INTEGRATING FAITH AND LEARNING IN A CHRISTIAN WORLD VIEW; AND, SECONDLY, FACE THE CHALLENGE THAT WITH THIS WORLD VIEW WE INTEGRATE OUR LIFE-STYLE, BOTH INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL.

I

WHEN I WAS COMPLETING A PHASE OF MY GRADUATE STUDY IN THE SCHOOL OF RELIGION OF VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY I WAS ASKED THIS QUESTION ON AN EXAMINATION: "HOW HAS YOUR FAITH BEEN AFFECTED BY YOUR STUDY HERE AT THE UNIVERSITY?" MY ANSWER RAN IN THIS VEIN: "WHEN I WAS SIXTEEN I ENCOUNTERED GOD IN CHRIST, AND MY ENTIRE EXISTENCE WAS TRANSFORMED. IN THAT ENCOUNTER I DISCOVERED ULTIMATE REALITY. CHRIST BECAME FOR ME NOT ONLY THE SOURCE OF NEW LIFE BUT ALSO THE TOUCHSTONE OF TRUTH. EVERYTHING I HAVE STUDIED HERE WHICH I HAVE PERCEIVED AS CONSISTENT WITH GOD'S DISCLOSURE TO ME IN CHRIST I HAVE APPROPRIATED TO MY FAITH, AND ANYTHING I HAVE FELT TO BE INCOMPATIBLE WITH 'THE TRUTH AS IT IS IN JESUS' I HAVE REJECTED AS UNWORTHY OF MY FAITH."

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS PRESUPPOSITIONLESS THINKING. PURE OBJECTIVITY IS AN ILLUSION. EVERY PERSON HAS A VANTAGE POINT FROM WHICH HE VIEWS LIFE AND THE WORLD--A BIAS, IF YOU PLEASE. ALL WE SEE AND UNDERSTAND IS EITHER ILLUMINATED OR RESTRICTED BY OUR CHOSEN PERSPECTIVE.

ANOTHER WAY OF SAYING THIS IS, EVERY PERSON HAS A FAITH. THAT FAITH IS "DEEPER DOWN AND FARTHER BACK" THAN REASON; AND--EVEN THOUGH ONE MAY NOT ACKNOWLEDGE IT--THAT FAITH IS THE ACTUAL DETERMINANT OF HIS PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE AND REALITY. THIS IS JUST AS TRUE OF THE NATURALISTIC PHILOSOPHER WHO HOLDS THAT "NATURE IS THE WHOLE SHOW" (TO USE C. S. LEWIS' WORDS) AS OF THE CHRISTIAN THEOLOGIAN WHO BEGINS WITH GOD--AS TRUE OF THE SOPHISTICATED HUMANIST AS OF THE SIMPLE BELIEVER WHO HAS FOUND HIS TRUE HUMANITY IN CHRIST.

THE QUESTION IS, HOW ADEQUATE ARE MY PRESUPPOSITIONS TO DEAL WITH THE WHOLE OF REALITY AND EXPERIENCE? CAN THEY ACCOUNT FOR THE MEANING OF MEANING? DO THEY PERMIT A DOCTRINE OF TRUTH? ARE THEY ADEQUATE FOR MORAL VALUES AND RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE? CAN THEY ILLUMINATE A VIEW OF THE UNIVERSE THAT TAKES INTO ACCOUNT ALL KNOWN DATA OF SCIENCE AND LIFE?

MY FORMER PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY, THE LATE DR. EDWARD T. RUMSDELL, STATES THE CASE FOR THE CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE:

THE THOUGHTFUL CHRISTIAN DOES NOT, AND CANNOT, THINK OF HIS FAITH AS IRRATIONAL. HE IS CERTAIN THAT THE REVELATION OF GOD IN CHRIST IS THE KEY TO HIS OWN HUMANITY AND TO THE WORLD IN WHICH HE LIVES.

HE WILL ACKNOWLEDGE THAT HIS APPROPRIATION OF THE DIVINE WORD IS DEEPLY PERSONAL; YET ITS REASONABLENESS IS EXACTLY ITS OBJECTIVITY--IT ILLUMINATES HIS TOTAL EXPERIENCE AND IS AVAILABLE TO ALL MEN.

CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION MUST PROCEED FROM AND BE CARRIED OUT, DOWN TO ITS FINEST DETAILS IN CURRICULUM AND PROGRAM AND CAMPUS LIFE, UNDER THE CONTROLLING INFLUENCE OF THE CENTRAL AFFIRMATION OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH, THAT IN CHRIST ARE "HID ALL THE TREASURES OF WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE." THE ILLUMINATING FOCUS OF THE ENTIRE ENTERPRISE IS GOD'S OWN REDEPTIVE AND ILLUMINATING SELF-DISCLOSURE IN CHRIST. THE CHALLENGING AND DEMANDING TASK OF NAZARENE HIGHER EDUCATION IS TO BRING THE WHOLE OF THOUGHT AND LIFE INTO INTEGRATION IN "THE TRUTH AS IT IS IN JESUS."

IN A CHRISTIAN CRITIQUE OF THE UNIVERSITY DR. CHARLES MALIK PUTS MY THESIS IN THIS WAY:

IF JESUS CHRIST IS, AS HE HIMSELF SAYS AND AS THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVES, "THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE;" IF HE IS, AS SAINT JOHN AFFIRMS AND AS THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVES, THE ETERNAL LOGOS; IF IN CHRIST, AS SAINT PAUL AFFIRMS AND AS THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVES, "DWELLETH ALL THE FULNESS OF THE GODHEAD BODILY" AND IN HIM "ARE HID ALL THE TREASURES OF WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE;" AND IF JESUS CHRIST IS, AS THE AUTHOR OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS DECLARES AND AS CHRISTIANS BELIEVE, "THE BRIGHTNESS OF HIS

GLORY, AND THE EXPRESS IMAGE OF HIS PERSON;" THEN ALL TRUTH, GOVERNED, AS IT MUST NEEDS BE, BY THE ETERNAL LOGOS, IS SACRED, AND NO TRUTH, WHATEVER BE ITS CONTENT OR ORDER, FALLS OUTSIDE HIS PROVINCE. THE ONLY QUESTION IS TO GUARD AGAINST THE CONFUSION OF THE ORDER OF TRUTH, NAMELY, THE DISORDER AND FALSEHOOD WHICH RESULT FROM MAKING THE SECONDARY PRIMARY AND THE PRIMARY SECONDARY, THE ORIGINAL DERIVATIVE AND THE DERIVATIVE ORIGINAL. . . .

A CHRISTIAN CAN ONLY BLESS AND REJOICE IN ALL TRUTH, PROVIDED EACH TRUTH IS PUT IN ITS RIGHTFUL PLACE . . . AND PROVIDED NO ATTESTED TRUTH OR FACT OR BEING IS ARBITRARILY DENIED ITS RIGHTFUL PLACE IN THE SCHEME OF THINGS (P.34).

DR. MALIK THEN GOES ON TO SAY, "THE QUESTION OF ORDERING AND INTEGRATING THE SCIENCES SO AS TO DETERMINE EXACTLY WHAT KIND OF ARTICULATED WHOLE THEY CONSTITUTE DOES NOT FALL WITHIN THE PROVINCE OF ANY SCIENCE. THIS IS THE TASK OF PHILOSOPHY, AND TO THE EXTENT PHILOSOPHY RAISES THE ULTIMATE ISSUES OF LIFE AND DEATH AND DESTINY AND SUFFERING AND REBELLION, AND THEREFORE THE QUESTION OF GOD, THEOLOGY MUST HAVE A SAY IN THIS ORDERING AND ARTICULATING. THE OVERVIEW OF THE WHOLE IS A THEOLOGICAL ACT. THE EXACT CHARACTER OF THIS ACT IS TO BE INDEPENDENTLY ASCERTAINED. AUTHENTIC THEOLOGY IS GROUNDED, NOT ONLY THEORETICALLY, BUT PERSONALLY, EXISTENTIALLY, IN THE DELIVERIES OF REVELATION AND THE TEACHINGS OF THE CHURCH; AND THE CENTRAL FIGURE HERE IS JESUS CHRIST OF NAZARETH" (P. 40).

TRADITIONALLY, THE AREA OF CONFLICT HAS BEEN BETWEEN THE NATURAL SCIENCES AND RELIGION. AND THIS CONFLICT IS BY NO MEANS OVER. PLEASE INDULGE ME TO QUOTE DR. MALIK ONCE MORE: "THE ULTIMATE, BASIC PRESUPPOSITION OF PRESENT-DAY SCIENCE IS THAT THE UNIVERSE IS SELF-CREATIVE. MATTER IS ALWAYS THERE TO BEGIN WITH AND LIFE SOMEHOW 'EVOLVED' FROM MATTER. AS TO MIND, THIS TOO IS WHOLLY DETERMINED BY LIFE AND MATTER AND SOMEHOW 'EVOLVED' FROM THEM. THE PROCESSES AND PHENOMENA OF MIND, LIFE AND MATTER ARE WHOLLY SELF-ENCLOSED, SELF-SUFFICIENT AND SELF-EXPLANATORY" (IBID, P. 56).

OBSERVE, HOWEVER, THAT MALIK SEES THIS AS A BASIC "PRE-SUPPOSITION." IT IS ONLY A HUNCH. THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION IS, IS SUCH A PRESUPPOSITION THAT NATURE IS THE WHOLE OF REALITY ADEQUATE TO DEAL WITH THE TOTAL RANGE OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE? CAN NATURALISM ACCOUNT FOR THE MEANING OF MEANING? DOES IT PERMIT A DOCTRINE OF TRUTH? IS IT ABLE TO ACCOUNT FOR MORAL VALUES AND RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE? CAN A NATURALISTIC PHILOSOPHY TAKE INTO ACCOUNT ALL KNOWN DATA OF SCIENCE AND LIFE?

DR. NELS F. S. FERRÉ TELLS OF A PROMINENT SCIENTIST WHO IN AN ADDRESS BEFORE EXPERTS IN MANY RELEVANT FIELDS DECLARED THAT THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN DIVINE REVELATION SWALLOW ONE MIRACLE, THAT OF GOD THE CREATOR, AND THEN HAVE AN INTELLIGIBLE UNIVERSE, WHILE THE NATURALISTS HAVE TO SWALLOW MIRACLES, IF THEY ARE HONEST, GULP BY GULP, AND CHOKE ON EVERY ONE OF THEM! (THE CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF GOD, P. 131).

HAVING SAID THIS, THE QUESTION IS NOT AS SIMPLE AS THE ADVOCATES OF SO-CALLED CREATIONISM SEEM TO THINK. THE ANSWER

TO NATURALISTIC EVOLUTION IS NOT "BIBLE SCIENCE," FOR THE BIBLE IS NOT A BOOK OF SCIENCE; IT IS A BOOK OF FAITH.

A CHRISTIAN HANDLING OF THESE QUESTIONS CALLS FOR A RECOGNITION OF THE LIMITATIONS OF THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD ON THE PART OF THE SCIENTIST AND FOR A PROPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE BIBLE ON THE PART OF THE THEOLOGIAN. MUCH CAN BE SAID FOR EMIL BRUNNER'S STATEMENT THAT CREATION IS THE INVISIBLE BACKGROUND OF THE PROCESS SCIENTISTS GENERALLY CALL EVOLUTION, WHILE "EVOLUTION" IS THE VISIBLE FOREGROUND OF CREATION. FAITH ALONE CAN GRASP THE CREATIVITY OF GOD; SCIENCE ALONE CAN GRASP THE VISIBLE ASPECTS OF THE WORLD (THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF CREATION AND REDEMPTION, P. 46); SO WHILE WE CONFIDENTLY CONFESS, "I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER, ALMIGHTY, MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH," WE FREELY GRANT TO THE SCIENTIST THE INVESTIGATION AND DESCRIPTION (WHICH IS CONSTANTLY CHANGING) OF HOW THE PROCESS OF CREATION TOOK PLACE.

THIS, IN MY JUDGMENT, SHOULD BE OUR NAZARENE APPROACH TO THE PRESENT DEBATE ON CREATION VERSUS EVOLUTION. WHILE NOT THE WHOLE ISSUE BETWEEN FAITH AND LEARNING, THIS IS A CONTEMPORARY QUESTION WE MUST FACE WITH OUR STUDENTS. OF COURSE, THE MOST DIFFICULT AND SENSITIVE AREA INVOLVES HOW WE INTERPRET THE OPENING CHAPTERS OF GENESIS. WE DO ACCEPT THE PLENARY INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE, INCLUDING THE FIRST ELEVEN CHAPTERS OF GENESIS. WE MUST NEVER RAISE A QUESTION ABOUT THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE IN OUR CLASSES; BUT WE MUST REVERENTLY POINT OUT THAT GENESIS IS A BOOK OF FAITH TO BE INTERPRETED IN THE LIGHT OF ITS PURPOSE.

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I MIGHT SUGGEST THAT DR. H. ORTON WILEY'S TREATMENT OF THESE ISSUES IN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY, VOL. I, REMAINS FOR US A HELPFUL GUIDE IN UNDERSTANDING NOT ONLY THE CREATION ACCOUNT BUT ALSO THE NATURE OF BIBLICAL REVELATION AND INSPIRATION. (THIS POINTS UP THE FACT THAT ALL NAZARENE PROFESSORS NEED A GROUNDING IN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY!)

I MUST HASTEN TO SAY, HOWEVER, THAT WHILE THE NATURAL SCIENCES REMAIN A CHALLENGE FOR OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH IN GOD THE CREATOR, INCREASINGLY THE BATTLEGROUND IS BEING EXTENDED TO THE SOCIAL SCIENCES--PSYCHOLOGY, SOCIOLOGY, ANTHROPOLOGY. HERE THE BURNING QUESTION IS THE ANCIENT QUERY, "WHAT IS MAN?"

HERE AGAIN, OUR BASIC PRESUPPOSITIONS DETERMINE OUR ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION. IF THE UNIVERSE IS SELF-CONTAINED AND SELF-EXPLANATORY, MAN IS SIMPLY AN EPIPHENOMENON TO BE UNDERSTOOD MECHANISTICALLY AS A PART OF NATURE. BUT IF GOD IS INDEED CREATOR, MAN'S FREEDOM IS REAL, AND THE CHRISTIAN AFFIRMATION THAT WE WERE CREATED IN THE DIVINE IMAGE GIVES DIGNITY, MEANING AND PURPOSE TO OUR LIVES.

SO, IF OUR BASIC PRESUPPOSITION IS ADEQUATE--THAT THE GOD WHO HAS REVEALED HIMSELF IN JESUS CHRIST IS THE CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE AND MAN--CERTAIN THINGS FOLLOW:

FAITH IS REASONABLE.

TRUTH IS KNOWABLE.

RIGHTEOUSNESS IS POSSIBLE.

GOODNESS IS NO EPIPHENOMENON BUT PARTAKES OF REALITY ITSELF.

HUMAN PERSONALITY, FASHIONED TO IMAGE GOD, IS OF
INTRINSIC VALUE.

HOLINESS AS INTEGRITY, PURITY, WHOLENESS, LOVE--IS
THE PERFECTION AND FULFILLMENT OF ALL THOUGHT
AND LIFE.

NO NATURALISTIC OR POSITIVISTIC STANCE CAN GIVE PHILOSOPHY
ENOUGH ELBOW ROOM TO ACCOUNT FOR THAT WHICH IS MOST COMPELLINGLY
AND EXISTENTIALLY CERTAIN. BUT A THEOLOGY WHICH FLOWS FROM
FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST DOES!

II

I SHALL NOW ATTEMPT TO ADDRESS THE MORE DIFFICULT MATTER
OF INTEGRATING FAITH AND LIFE.

THEOLOGICALLY, THE ISSUE IS NOT DIFFICULT TO FORMULATE.
IN CHRIST WHO IS NOT ONLY THE TRUTH BUT ALSO THE WAY AND THE
LIFE, OUR EXISTENCE HAS BEEN RECREATED AND WE ARE NOW IN THE
PROCESS OF BEING TRANSFORMED AFTER HIS LIKENESS. IN HIM WE
HAVE AN AUTHENTIC EXISTENCE WHICH IS BOTH A FORETASTE AND GUARAN-
TEE OF THE FINAL GLORY WHICH IS YET TO BE REVEALED WHEN HE
SHALL RETURN TO CONSUMMATE ALL THINGS. IN CHRIST THE FUTURE
IS HERE!

"BUT WE HAVE THIS TREASURE IN EARTHEN VESSELS"--IN BODIES
AND PSYCHES THAT HAVE NOT YET BEEN REDEEMED FROM THE RESIDUAL
EFFECTS OF THE FALL. SPIRITUALLY, WE EXIST IN GOD'S NEW ORDER
OF THE SPIRIT; TEMPORALLY, WE CONTINUE TO EXIST IN THE OLD
ORDER OF SIN, SUFFERING AND DEATH. SPIRITUALLY, WE ENJOY A FORE-
TASTE OF HEAVEN; TEMPORALLY, WE ARE VERY MUCH IN "THIS PRESENT

WORLD" WHICH WOULD SHAPE OUR THOUGHTS, IDEALS, VALUES AFTER ITS OWN PATTERN. SO PAUL ADMONISHES THOSE OF US WHO HAVE TASTED THE MERCIES OF GOD: "DON'T LET THE WORLD AROUND YOU SQUEEZE YOU INTO ITS OWN MOLD, BUT LET GOD REMOLD YOUR MINDS FROM WITHIN" (ROMANS 12:2, PHILLIPS).

THAT THERE IS A GRAVE DANGER OF BIFURCATING FAITH AND LEARNING IS PATENT TO ANY SENSITIVE CHRISTIAN THINKER. I FEAR WE ARE NOT ALWAYS AS ALERT TO THE THREATENED HIATUS BETWEEN OUR FAITH AND OUR PRACTICE. "THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US"-- WITH ITS PREOCCUPATION AND DRIVE TOWARD WEALTH, POWER, PRESTIGE, SUCCESS! AS ANTHONY COMPOLO OBSERVES, "MANY CONTEMPORARY REVIVALIST MEETINGS HAVE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF AMWAY CONVENTIONS. THIS IS NOT SURPRISING SINCE THE PRINCIPLES OF SCRIPTURE HAVE BEEN TRANSFORMED INTO THE CRITERIA OF SUCCESS PRESCRIBED BY AMWAY SALESPERSONS. ALL IN ALL CHRISTIANITY HAS BECOME A THEODICY OF GOOD FORTUNE FOR ALL TOO MANY IN THIS SECOND HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. . . . SERVANTHOOD, POWERLESSNESS, AND SACRIFICE ARE NOT PROMINENT CONCEPTS IN THE MIND-SET OF CONTEMPORARY EVANGELICALS. THEY KNOW THE WORDS, BUT THEY DO NOT KNOW HOW TO SET THEM TO MUSIC. . . ."

A FEW YEARS AGO A BRIGHT YOUNG SEMINARIAN, NOW IN THE PASTORATE, SHARED WITH ME HIS VOCATIONAL GOAL: TO BE A GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT SOME DAY! AFTER ALL, THE GENERAL SUPERINTENDENCY IS "THE HIGHEST ELECTIVE OFFICE IN THE CHURCH" (AS I HEAR SO FREQUENTLY). TO SET ONE'S SIGHTS ON ECCLESIASTICAL "SUCCESS" SEEMED PERFECTLY REASONABLE TO THIS YOUNG MAN WHO HAD A COLLEGE COMMUNICATIONS MAJOR.

IF THIS IS A TEMPTATION TO PROFESSIONAL MINISTERS AND CHRISTIAN WORKERS, HOW MUCH MORE MUST IT BE TO OUR YOUTH GOING INTO THE OTHER PROFESSIONS AND ESPECIALLY INTO BUSINESS?

I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO RESPOND INTELLIGENTLY TO THE ALLEGATION I HEARD RECENTLY THAT THIS PROBLEM IS MOST PRONOUNCED IN OUR BUSINESS DEPARTMENTS. HAVE WE SUCCUMBED--LET ME SAY AGAIN, I DO NOT KNOW--BUT I ASK, HAVE WE UNCONSCIOUSLY SUCCUMBED TO THE WORLD'S STANDARDS OF PRESTIGE, WEALTH, SUCCESS AND POWER? IT MAY BE WE CANNOT SPEAK CONVINCINGLY TODAY OF POVERTY OR SACRIFICE; OUR SITUATION AND ENVIRONMENT ARE TOO AMBIGUOUS IN THIS REGARD, AND IT IS TOO DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN OUR POSITION IN OUR BOURGEOIS MILIEU. BUT WE CAN REMIND OURSELVES AND OUR STUDENTS OF THE TERRIBLY CORRUPTING INFLUENCE OF POWER, AND IN PLATO'S WORDS NEVER FORGET THAT "ONLY THOSE WHO DO NOT DESIRE POWER ARE FIT TO HOLD IT."

ABOVE ALL, LET US REMEMBER THE WORDS OF ONE GREATER THAN PLATO WHO SAID, "HE WHO WOULD BE THE GREATEST AMONG YOU MUST BE THE SERVANT OF ALL."

THANK GOD, THERE DOES SEEM TO BE A TRUE REBIRTH OF SERVANTHOOD ON OUR CAMPUSES, A FRESH UNDERSTANDING OF AND COMMITMENT TO THE HOLISTIC NATURE OF THE GOSPEL, WITNESS THE HUNDREDS OF OUR YOUTH WHO ARE BEING CHALLENGED BY INNER CITY MINISTRIES. A SPIRIT OF CHRISTLIKE LOVE REMINISCENT OF EARLY METHODISM AND THE YOUNG HOLINESS MOVEMENT IS BEING REBORN IN OUR MIDST. AND AT LEAST ONE DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT TOLD ME THE MOST STRIKING THING HE NOTICED IN INTERVIEWING SEMINARIANS THESE DAYS IS THEIR SPIRIT OF SERVANTHOOD.

WE MAY BE DOING BETTER THAN WE THINK!

IN CONCLUSION

WHEN ARE FAITH, LEARNING AND LIVING TRULY INTEGRATED IN THE SETTING OF A NAZARENE HIGHER EDUCATION?

1. WHEN ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS ARE COMMITTED CHRISTIANS, MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN SAVED FROM SIN'S DOMINION AND MADE PERFECT IN LOVE BY THE SANCTIFYING PRESENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND WHO UNDERSTAND AND EMBRACE THE FULL IMPLICATIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN VALUE SYSTEM.

2. FAITH, LEARNING AND LIVING ARE INTEGRATED WHEN PERSONALITY IS CENTRAL AND NOT THE IMPERSONAL PROCESS OF LEARNING. A TRULY CHRISTIAN COLLEGE OFFERS A PERSON-CENTERED EDUCATION AND TEACHES THAT IN CHRIST WE REALIZE OUR TRUE HUMANNESS.

3. FAITH, LEARNING AND LIVING ARE INTEGRATED WHEN ALL TEACHING IS DONE FROM THE FULLEST CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE. THERE MAY BE NO SUCH THING AS "CHRISTIAN MATHEMATICS" OR "CHRISTIAN CHEMISTRY," BUT JUST AS THE THEOLOGIAN AND PHILOSOPHER, THE TEACHER IN EVERY DISCIPLINE MUST BE PERSUADED THAT THE LIMITED PERSPECTIVES OF THE SEVERAL DISCIPLINES MUST BE UNDERSTOOD IN THE LIGHT OF THE FULLNESS OF TRUTH WHICH IS IN CHRIST. THAT IS, CHRIST IS THE CLUE TO ULTIMATE REALITY--WHAT WE FIND IN HIM IS NOT ONLY THE MOST HIGH BUT ALSO THE MOST REAL.

4. FAITH, LEARNING AND LIVING ARE INTEGRATED WHEN THERE IS AN ATTITUDE OF REVERENCE AND HUMILITY IN THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE AND TRUTH. "THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF KNOWLEDGE." A SPIRIT OF ARROGANCE, IMPIETY AND UNBELIEF

IS A CONTRADICTION OF THE CHRISTIAN SPIRIT OF LEARNING, WHICH IS BASED ON THE FAITH THAT ALL DISCOVERY IMPLIES PRIOR DIVINE REVELATION. MOREOVER, WHERE SIN NO LONGER BINDS, DISRUPTS AND DISSIPATES, LEARNING SHOULD BE ENHANCED.

5. FAITH, LEARNING AND LIVING ARE INTEGRATED WHEN THERE IS AN ATMOSPHERE OF WORSHIP PERVADING THE COLLEGE. PRAYER IS THE HANDMAIDEN OF INQUIRY, FOR THE SPIRIT IS THE GUIDE INTO ALL TRUTH. IN A CHRISTIAN COLLEGE ADORATION IS UNITED WITH STUDY; EVANGELISM IS SUFFUSED INTO THE ENDEAVOR TO BRING HUMAN PERSONALITY INTO AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE FULLNESS OF LIFE AND TRUTH. CHAPEL SERVICES, PRAYER IN CLASSES, EVANGELISTIC MEETINGS, MISSIONARY SERVICES--THESE AND MANY OTHER SPECIFICALLY SPIRITUAL SERVICES MUST ALWAYS ACCOMPANY THE LEARNING ENTERPRISE OF A GENUINELY CHRISTIAN COLLEGE.

6. FAITH, LEARNING AND LIVING ARE INTEGRATED WHEN THE TOTAL ENTERPRISE IS CHURCH-RELATED IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS: (A) AS A TECHNICAL EXTENSION OF THE CHURCH, GOING BEYOND THE RANGE OF THE CONGREGATIONAL MINISTRY AND PREPARING ALL VOCATIONS FOR A MORE EFFECTIVE CHRISTIAN WITNESS AND SERVANTHOOD, BUT GIVING SPECIAL EMPHASIS TO THE TRAINING OF MINISTERS AND MISSIONARIES; (B) AS INITIATING AND CARRYING ON A DIALOGUE WITH THE CHURCH DESIGNED TO HELP THE CHURCH UNDERSTAND AND CLARIFY ITS MESSAGE AS WELL AS PERFECT ITS METHODS OF WITNESS; (C) AND AS CONDUCTING BOTH OF THESE ROLES IN SINCERE AND INTELLIGENT LOYALTY TO THE CHURCH--ITS THEOLOGY, ITS STANDARDS AND PRACTICES, ITS MISSION.

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7. FINALLY, FAITH, LEARNING AND LIVING ARE INTEGRATED WHEN OUR GRADUATES TRULY BECOME THE "SEED OF THE KINGDOM," EMBODYING THE WORDS OF JESUS, "UNLESS A GRAIN OF WHEAT FALLS INTO THE EARTH AND DIES, IT REMAINS ALONE; BUT IF IT DIES, IT BEARS MUCH FRUIT" (JOHN 12:24).

JÜRGEN MOLTSMANN RELATES AN OLD JEWISH STORY WHICH TELLS HOW A WISE RABBI WAS TOLD THAT THE SON OF MAN HAD ALREADY COME. HE DID NOT ANSWER, BUT OPENED HIS WINDOW AND LOOKED OUT INTO THE WORLD, TURNED AROUND AND SHOOK HIS HEAD. IF THE SON OF MAN HAD COME, THE WORLD WOULD LOOK DIFFERENT, AND IN PARTICULAR MORE HUMAN. "FOR JUDAISM, AS FOR MORALISTIC HUMANISM," MOLTSMANN OBSERVES, "THERE ARE NO ENCLAVES OF REDEMPTION IN AN OTHERWISE UNREDEEMED WORLD. BUT IT IS VITAL TO THE LIFE OF CHRISTIANITY THAT HIDDENLY IN THE FORM OF THE CRUCIFIED LORD THE KINGDOM OF THE SON OF MAN HAS ALREADY DAWNED, AND ONE CAN LIVE DIFFERENTLY ON THE BASIS OF MAN'S NEW POSSIBILITIES. . . . THE DISTINCTIVE ELEMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN POSSIBILITY OF HOPE RESTS IN THE FACT THAT IT IS BORN OF THE MEMORY OF THE RAISING UP OF THE CRUCIFIED SON OF MAN. HOPE, WHICH IS BORN OF THE MEMORY OF THE CRUCIFIED LORD, THEREFORE LEADS TO HOPE WHERE THERE IS NOTHING TO HOPE FOR. IT SEES THE FUTURE OF MAN NOT IN PROGRESS, BUT IN SACRIFICE."

TO GRADUATE KNOWLEDGEABLE AND SKILLED YOUNG PERSONS WHO EMBODY THE FULLNESS OF CHRISTIAN FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE--THIS IS THE TASK OF NAZARENE HIGHER EDUCATION.