Keeping *the* Concept

Christian Higher Education and the Integration of Faith, Living and Learning

Spring Arbor University is a community of learners distinguished by our lifelong involvement in the study and application of the liberal arts, total commitment to Jesus Christ as the perspective for learning, and critical participation in the contemporary world.

Featuring the writings of
faculty and administrators of Spring Arbor University

In *Keeping the Concept*, the faculty and administration of Spring Arbor University communicate how the mission of the University impacts and informs the integration of faith and learning within the Christian liberal arts.

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Keeping *the* Concept

The Concept Series
Volume II

Keeping *the* Concept

Christian Higher Education and the Integration of Faith, Living and Learning

Featuring
the writings of
faculty and administrators of
Spring Arbor University

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"For by him all things were created...and in him all things hold together" – Colossians 1:16-17

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated
to the memory and legacy of
Dr. Harold Darling
and to the generations of
Spring Arbor University faculty
who have and are faithfully
Keeping the Concept

CONTENTS

Spring Arbor University Concept

Spring Arbor University is a community of learners distinguished by our lifelong involvement in the study and application of the liberal arts, total commitment to Jesus Christ as the perspective for learning and critical participation in the contemporary world.

PREFACE

The development of Spring Arbor University's mission and philosophy dates back to the original writing and thinking of the founder, E.P. Hart. However, it came into special focus when, under the guidance and direction of then-president David L. McKenna, the decision was made to expand Spring Arbor Junior College into a fully accredited, baccalaureate degree granting liberal arts college.

In order to more clearly define the mission of the institution in its new role and maximize the impact of this important transition, McKenna called together a host of scholars and crafted the Spring Arbor University Concept in 1961. These scholars included individuals like Harold Darling, Charles Williams, Eric Johnson, Ralph Carey, Charles Carey, Lucy Maddox, Esther Maddox, Eldon Whiteman, Les Gibbs and Beth MacDonald. And while the Concept is a mission statement unique to Spring Arbor University, it is also perhaps the most articulate and succinct philosophy of Christian higher education in the Wesleyan tradition. Consider that over 40 years

have transpired since its original unveiling, and yet it still "shapes a curriculum… and develops a climate for learning."

The central focus of our first book, *A Concept to Keep*, was the philosophy of Christian higher education as articulated in McKenna's four-part monograph series from 1961, titled *Concept for the Christian College*. Our goal was to set McKenna's philosophy of Christian higher education within the wider-context of the Wesleyan tradition, specifically Wesley's Quadrilateral and the Free Methodist heritage of Christian education. To that end, we featured the writings of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism; Benjamin T. Roberts, the founder of Free Methodism; and Edward P. Hart, the founder of Spring Arbor University. The concluding chapter, written by current president Gayle D. Beebe, communicates the way in which this trajectory is being carried out today. Each selection contributes to the overall understanding of "truth," as well as the purposes for providing a Christian education within our particular evangelical tradition. *A Concept to Keep* demonstrated the relevance of the Christian liberal arts, the vitality of our Christian faith, and the call to critical engagement in every age.

It is our sincere desire that in this companion volume, we will demonstrate to the reader just how the Concept continues to be the guiding light in defining the educational and spiritual initiatives of the school, and how, across the curriculum of this complex University, we are still *Keeping the Concept*.

Gayle D. Beebe
Jon S. Kulaga
Betty Overton-Adkins

Spring Arbor, Michigan
July 19, 2004

INTRODUCTION

In *A Concept to Keep*, the case was made for the way in which the University mission statement, known as the Concept, helps to guide the curriculum and develop a climate for learning at the University. The purpose of this second work in our multi-volume series on the Spring Arbor University Concept is to demonstrate the way in which knowledge is ordered, taught and understood across the broad expanse of our curriculum. In other words, the first volume was a recommitment to our historical Wesleyan heritage and the values of the Concept. This second work is our demonstration of how we are keeping that commitment. It is also a wonderful opportunity to showcase Spring Arbor University faculty.

In this volume, we want to amplify the original case by demonstrating the broad implications of the Concept and the way in which our education process helps our graduates form the "plausibility structures" they need to critically engage the world. The term "plausibility structure" is an important conceptualization. Coming from

the natural sciences and gaining wide currency during the 1960s, it essentially means the way in which we make sense of the world. It is our thought structure. It is how we know what we claim to know about the world, our life and our life in the world.

In addition to building our plausibility structure, we also want to demonstrate how our curriculum is based on the philosophical, practical and productive arts. This is the main organizing structure of this work. Each of these terms indicates a distinct school of thought. By "philosophical arts," we mean the tradition of education dating back to Plato that emphasizes learning for learning's sake alone. In defining the "philosophical arts," Plato outlines his belief that the highest goal of the human, and thus the highest goal of education, is to engage in philosophical thought.

By "practical arts," we mean the tradition of education dating back to the Sophists, but gaining broad acceptance during the time of Cicero (106–43 BC/E). Cicero teaches that the primary goal of education is to learn how to communicate effectively in order to apply this knowledge in the service of civic life. In every case this education did not deny the active and necessary role of the

liberal arts. It simply said learning must go beyond mere acquisition of knowledge; it must go to the very heart and needs of one's society.

Finally, by "productive arts," we mean the unique turn that was taken in the Christian liberal arts when individuals like Hugh of St. Victor (1090–1141 AD/CE) and others came to place a primary emphasis on how the knowledge we acquire must be used to join with God in the co-creation of life on earth. Hugh is one of the earliest and best to tie human endeavor to a theological perspective based on education. His early views continue to shape and influence the thrust of a Christian liberal arts education today.

This volume serves two primary goals. First, it is a brief apologetic for the Christian worldview and the relevance of the Christian liberal arts in today's postmodern context. Second, it is a demonstration of how the students, faculty and administration of Spring Arbor University integrate this worldview into a unique mission, and how we live out the implications of learning together in community, as we discover new ways of *Keeping the Concept*.

Every human needs a road map for the mind's journey on the road to wisdom and truth; an outline to guide this learning throughout one's lifetime.

–Mortimer Adler

The Concept and the Philosophical, Practical and Productive Arts

Gayle D. Beebe, Ph.D.

At its heart, the mission of every academic institution is to educate its students. But what do we mean when we say a student is "educated". The answers are as varied as they are complex. Yet, this has not always been the case.

Years ago, when our finest institutions were first being formed, a general consensus assumed that a fully educated student had a grounding in the liberal arts, an able understanding of ethics and politics, a noble awareness of God and the capacity to enter an apprenticeship leading to a vocation. But over time, this general consensus has collapsed.[1]

Today, many colleges and universities simply offer a whole array of curriculum options with no unifying ideal and no discernible philosophy of what constitutes an educated person. As a result, many past centers of greatness no longer focus on producing great and educated citizens. Instead, the focus has shifted to the mastery of techniques leading to a career with little or no concern for the moral, religious and emotional development necessary to function as free and responsible citizens.

Clearly, this development is unfortunate. Many of the signposts that mark the demise of modern education have been deliberately rejected at Spring Arbor University. With concerted effort we have created a curriculum that cultivates knowledge of the liberal arts, prepares a person for professional service in the world, lays a strong

moral foundation, and deepens our love and knowledge of God.

In order to understand how this occurs, it is important to consider three distinct elements that undergird the educational philosophy of Spring Arbor University. First, the mission statement of the University, embodied and articulated by the Concept, lays the foundation for all we do.

Second, it is necessary to provide a general review of how learning has been ordered in the past in order to understand the way in which we should order it today. In this fashion, we want to demonstrate the way each age has responded to the tensions of its time with necessary educational initiatives. This will also help to amplify the discretion we should exercise as we make these decisions today.

And finally, we want to identify the basic building blocks of a Christian worldview and offer several implications for the future as we continue to innovate and build a robust curriculum anchored to a broad integration of the philosophical, practical and productive arts. Of particular interest in this final section will be the desire to demonstrate the way in which we lay a moral and spiritual foundation in order to cultivate the mind, heart and spirit of Christ in our students.

The Articulation of the Concept

At the rise of our transition to a four-year institution, David McKenna penned the Spring Arbor University Concept and the four-part series of monographs featured in Volume 1.[2]

The first plank of the Concept, "a community of learners," calls for the formation of a comprehensive community. Since the 17th and 18th centuries, the rise of the Enlightenment Project has elevated the individual over the community. With Descartes' famous maxim, "I think, therefore I am," the human individual vanquished all responsibilities in the unbridled pursuit of personal freedom.

But many of the resulting consequences have been simply disastrous. For the Christian it is not, "I think, therefore I am," but rather, "we are, therefore I am." We exist not simply as individuals, but as members of families, citizens of towns, and active members of communities.

Communities form around shared understandings. Communities provide the context for understanding human life. A community embodies a particular way of seeing the world and reflects the way in which specific experiences are understood based on the interpretation provided by a community. In this fashion we want to

maintain an educational community at Spring Arbor University that is student-focused, teaching-oriented and Concept-driven.

The second plank of the Concept goes to the heart of our mission as a university. By anchoring our mission to the "lifelong involvement in the study and application of the liberal arts," we connect with a 2,500 year history dating back to Socrates, Plato and Aristotle.

In the ancient world, the liberal arts were meant to provide a graduated curriculum that mirrored human development. One began by mastering the verbal arts of grammar, logic and rhetoric. After mastering the verbal arts, one could then turn to mastering the mathematical arts of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music. Following the acquisition of mathematical skill, one could then consider the right nature of ethics, the proper role of politics, and how to subjugate our unruly passions. Finally, after the mind had been trained and the passions guided, one could turn to a proper study of God.

The third plank of the Concept, "total commitment to Jesus Christ as the perspective for learning," focuses on the centrality of our commitment to Christ for proper learning. The single most significant decision we make in life is

the decision to give our life fully and completely to God, and to be conformed to the teachings and life of Jesus as presented in the Gospels. Yet, this simple and profound decision is not the end of our intellectual and spiritual search, but the beginning. Our deepest conviction as Christians is that to follow Jesus is right, and to embrace His life and teaching is the only sure way to find the meaning and significance we all seek.

To become a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ requires that we learn to understand life in a new way. Learning is the process of overcoming distortion and seeing reality accurately. It is the completing process of our life with God. For the Christian, our commitment to Christ allows us to focus our attention on learning the way in which every area of knowledge reveals God's will for the world.

The fourth and final plank of the Concept, "critical participation in the contemporary world," is the goal of our curriculum and requires that we learn to exegete a culture properly in order to develop the aptitudes and abilities we need to interface with the global community. In a landmark study, *Communities of Discourse,* Robert Wuthnow identified eight primary spheres that shape every society and culture:[3]

1. Social conditions
2. Economic conditions
3. Political systems and ideologies
4. Religious systems and ideologies
5. Attitudes and definitions of deviance
6. Cultural and intellectual productivity
7. Military—their role and responsibility
8. Legal and judicial institutions

In each case, Wuthnow illustrates the way in which a culture functions and how we can understand the dynamic interplay of its many parts. By integrating these different spheres into a meaningful whole, we gain insight into why countries and civilizations differ so dramatically throughout history. As societies migrated in increasing numbers to the cities of Europe and then America, urbanization, immigration and industrialization played an increasingly interactive role in producing the social and cultural changes that remain to this day. By assisting our students in their understanding of these elements, we are able to prepare our students to be critical participants in the contemporary world.[4]

The Ordering of Learning in the Past and Its Influence Today

Now we come to a consideration of the ordering of learning in the past. This is an important amplification of the second plank of the Concept. There are two significant reasons for this amplification. First, when we look back across time we recognize that philosophers and educators in each age have wrestled with the question of what it means to be educated. They have frequently settled this question by differentiating what is timeless from what is time-bound. That is to say, every age must answer the timeless problem of how to prepare the next generation for meaningful life in the world. Yet, each age answers this question in a way that meets the context and needs of their specific time.

Alfred North Whitehead once observed that all Western philosophy is simply footnotes to Plato and Aristotle. Whether or not this is always true is still open to debate, but clearly their influence lingers on in the educational theories that have come down across the ages.

Beginning with Plato in the 4th century BC/E, learning was structured for the elite of society. In antiquity, Plato established an educational model reflective of his belief in a

philosophy of human development. The human mind cannot learn everything at once. Thus, subjects to be studied must be arranged in the order in which they should be learned. In his classic, *The Republic,* Plato outlines the path to follow if one is to acquire wisdom and truth.[5] In successive stages, Plato argues that early childhood and youth should be devoted to athletic endeavor and music in order to give strength to the body and to give aid to the mind in the cultivation of the senses, memory and imagination. Then one is to learn the proper use of language by acquiring skill in successive orders of definition, analysis, reasoning and argument.

In the final three stages, one's mind turns away from the world of the senses and toward the intelligible world of innate ideas. First, mathematical thought and the realm of ratios and proportions teaches one how to think about realities that are real, but are not discernible to the senses. Then, the next stage corresponds to a period of maturing when one has acquired enough experience in life to be of use in making policies and governing society. Here, the leaders of the state reflect on the necessary policies for directing human affairs. The final stage is learning how to think properly about the highest good.

Although Plato has cast an enormous and long shadow across world history, his scheme never makes allowance for a robust engagement of life as we live it. This limitation made ample room for his prize pupil, Aristotle, to make a compelling contribution of his own. Aristotle organizes knowledge, in some respects, similar to Plato (especially the emphasis on reserving certain types of learning for specific stages of one's life), but introduces several important modifications and original insights as well.

For example, Aristotle emphasizes the importance of life as we live and know it. The physical realm is important, not only because this is the nature of our existence, but also because it is the ground for our learning. The physical mediates the spiritual; the temporal mediates the eternal.[6] Thus, for Aristotle, learning begins in the physical world with observations of nature, ascends through grammatical and logical training to learn and speak correctly, and eventually concludes with the celestial world of motion and the eternal realm of the soul and the unmoved mover.

In each case, Aristotle uses a lower level of learning as a building block for a higher level of learning. The physical and biological studies give

rise to the mathematical studies where numbers exist as objects of thought, but have no physical manifestations. Finally, the physical realm and the mathematical realm provide the necessary building blocks to think about metaphysics. In all of this, Aristotle ably articulates the distinction between philosophical knowledge (to be studied for its own sake) and practical knowledge (to be studied for the sake of action to be prescribed or regulated).

Subsequent to Aristotle, most philosophy of education has simply amplified specific parts of Plato's and Aristotle's original work. Corresponding to the rise of the Christian era, contributions by Cicero and the Roman Stoics amplified the three key elements and stages of human learning. For Cicero, logic, physics and ethics follow in a natural order.[7] By "logic," Cicero means to study the principles and laws of human thought. By "physics," Cicero means to study the principles and laws of nature. By "ethics," Cicero means to study the principles and rules of human conduct. In each case, the latter builds on the former: ethics builds on physics, while physics and ethics build on logic. Accordingly, the Stoics believed a human's ability to learn these subjects followed the same developmental order. To disrupt this order was to disorder the mind and inhibit the

ability of the human to make sense of life and their responsibilities within it. Thus, in becoming an educated person, one learns how to think properly about all subjects of life and how to fulfill one's destiny.

Simultaneously with the rise of Cicero and the Roman Stoics, the new church emerged and along with it came the whole array of Christian thinkers. Chief among them and of enormous influence in Western Civilization is Clement of Alexandria (150–215 AD/CE) and Augustine of Hippo (354–430 AD/CE).

Beginning with Clement of Alexandria, Christians considered the role and value of the liberal arts to be central in cultivating one's understanding of God and their relationship to Him. The goal of the liberal arts in the Early Church was never study just for knowledge itself, but always as a means to something else. In this way, one's mind was trained in particular subjects in order to transfer this intellectual training to addressing the great questions of life.[8]

In the case of St. Augustine, he both borrows from and makes original contributions to the Platonic tradition. Like those before him, Augustine argues that learning is developmental and follows natural and prescribed stages. The first

stage, is grammar. One must learn the fundamental elements of language in order to learn and communicate. Next comes logic. One must learn the proper way to think using language. And last is rhetoric and the completion of the *trivium*. In this final stage, one learns how to combine grammar and logic in a fashion that leads to right and proper communication.[9]

Learning, however, does not stop with proper communication. One must learn what is proper to communicate. The *quadrivium* contains the four elements of mathematical reasoning that build on the *trivium* and help the mind ascend to philosophical thought. By combining the study of grammar, logic and rhetoric with the study of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music, one completes the proper training for considering all elements of earthly learning.

But Augustine, like Clement before him, does not finish his discussion with human thought. The goal of all learning is to discern how to think properly of God, and then to learn how to comprehend and communicate the wisdom and knowledge of God as revealed in sacred scripture.

Later, in the 11th and early 12th century, Hugh of St. Victor amplified this understanding by showing the way in which an individual can

work out their relationship with God by combining a high view of the liberal arts with productive labor.

In the *Didascalican,* Hugh argues that the technological improvement of life on earth is part of our restoration from the fall.[10] For Hugh, technology and commerce help restore us to our proper relationship to God and creation by improving our earthly life so we can move closer to our original condition in paradise. In this fashion, Hugh expands the original Greek and Early Church notion of the liberal arts beyond the "philosophical arts" of Plato and the "practical arts" of Cicero by adding the "productive arts."

In the "productive arts," one learns the key skills that are necessary for fabric making, armaments, commerce, agriculture, hunting, medicine, theatrics and architecture, and mirror God's creative activity because they show the industrious intelligence of the human person.

Furthermore, the "productive arts" help lead us to God since they require a training and discipline that focuses our mind and controls our passions. They help us learn to love God because they require enough self-discipline to master the skills we need so we can make a creative contribution to God's will for our world.

Subsequent to Clement, Augustine and Hugh of St. Victor, hundreds of thinkers would continue to make amplifications and original contributions to these key thinkers. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274 AD/CE) would build one of the greatest theological systems in the history of Christianity and show the way in which reason lays the foundation of knowledge that is completed by faith.[11] Roger Bacon (1214–1292 AD/CE), a friend and colleague of Aquinas at the University of Paris, stressed an educational system that begins with grammar, rhetoric and logic, then proceeds through music, astronomy, geometry and arithmetic. After completing the traditional liberal arts, he then moves into the natural sciences of experimental science, medicine, agriculture, alchemy, geography and optics, and finally finishes with a study of metaphysics and morals.[12]

Many others would follow, including Francis Bacon (1561–1626 AD/CE),[13] John Locke (1632–1704 AD/CE),[14] John Henry Newman (1801–1890 AD/CE),[15] John Dewey (1859–1952 AD/CE),[16] and William James (1842–1910 AD/CE).[17] Each would offer their own unique contribution to the theory of education. Their contributions would in some cases amplify, in some cases modify, and in some cases radically alter the directions of

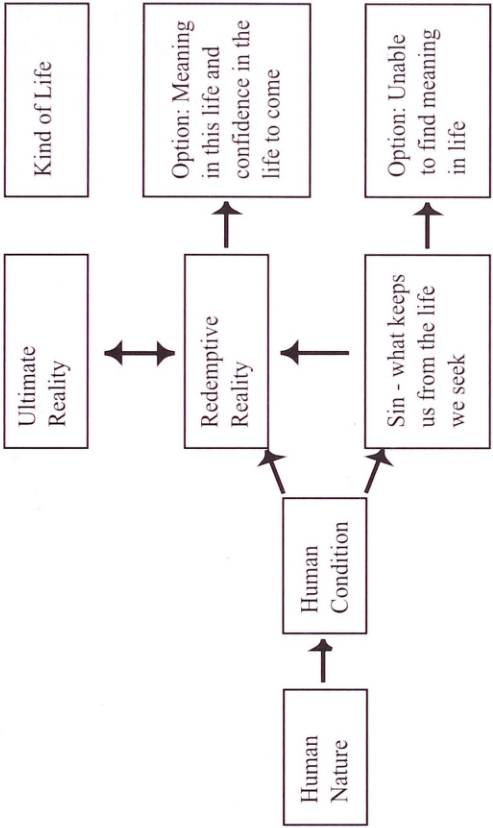
educational philosophy in Western Civilization. Nevertheless, in every case they continued a tradition that influences our own situation today.

We cannot ignore the long and winding tradition of education in the West. It is our heritage and we cannot divorce ourselves from its principles. Still, there remains a great vacuum around the loss of God as a relevant part of the education of a civilized person. Thus, the unique mission of Spring Arbor University is to teach our students how to think within the great tradition of Western Civilization and to learn how to think properly about God.

The Implications for Building a Christian Worldview

This also illustrates the significance of making a time-bound contribution to our students by helping them cultivate the necessary elements of a Christian worldview. What we mean by the creation of a worldview is the identification of the working assumptions that build our structure of meaning, our plausibility structure. Every worldview consists of several key elements laid out as follows:

Building a Christian Worldview



How do we understand each element? "Human Nature" is simply the quest to understand the working assumptions every worldview has about the make-up of humans. In the distinctly Christian worldview, the working assumption is that humans are made in the image of God, but fallen. This is the basic way the Bible describes why humans are so great, and at the same time, why humans are so wretched and vulnerable to temptation and sin.

"Human Condition" is the basic challenge or challenges humans face in life as they pursue their life with God. For the Christian, the basic human condition is one of boredom and anxiety as a result of being cut off from God.

"Sin" represents all the temptation in life that takes us away from the life we seek. Augustine once observed that all sin is simply filling up the God-shaped vacuum of our souls with everything other than God.

"Redemptive Reality" illustrates the way in which a person (or group) who has gone astray from the life they seek is put back on course. For the Christian, this is central and is represented by the person and work of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, every major worldview has an understanding that humans go astray from the life they seek. Thus,

every worldview has some understanding of the way in which humans get back on track. The question in evaluating every worldview is whether or not it gives the best explanation of how and why this occurs.

"Ultimate Reality" is essentially a description of what we believe to be the metaphysical ground of reality. For the Christian, this is God. In the case of every major worldview, there is a working assumption that fills this box and demonstrates the way in which the reality humans experience on earth is ordered and understood.

Finally, "Kind of Life" simply states the destiny of human existence. For those who believe God is real, then the destiny of human life is not only a worthwhile vocation in this life, but also an eternal destiny in the life to come. All of this is meant to illustrate briefly a conceptual scheme for building a worldview.

The Implications for Today

How do these historical and philosophical perspectives on learning relate to the Spring Arbor University Concept? And why, then, do we believe a curriculum guided by the Spring Arbor University Concept is so necessary today? In the

mid-1990s, a book titled, *The De-Moralization of Society: From Victorian Virtues to Modern Values,* was published.[18] In this book a contrast was drawn between our understanding of modern values and the long, rich tradition of the classical and Christian virtues. Of particularly startling significance is the observation that when "values" replaced "virtues" as the guiding ideals of our country, we lost all ability to make moral judgments.

Values, as we now understand that word, do not have to be virtues. They can be beliefs, opinions, attitudes, feelings or even preferences. Values, then, become morally equal and morally neutral. But this is not the case with virtues. Virtues are fixed and certain, not in the sense of governing actual behavior of all people all the time, but as standards against which behavior can and should be judged. And when conduct falls short of these standards, it is deemed to be bad, wrong or immoral—not merely misguided, undesirable or inappropriate.

Thus, virtue is the cultivation of a disposition to life. It is an expression of wisdom and common sense. It is not only knowing what is right, but also it is doing what is right. At the heart of our consciousness as Christians is the belief that we

exist in part to embody noble ideals. And that the embodying of these noble ideals is not only our destiny as individuals, but our calling by God.

From the earliest days, the Christian liberal arts tradition has prepared students for mastery of both human learning and knowledge of God. From our beginning, Spring Arbor University has maintained a robust commitment to building a curriculum that provides the best training for the mind, while helping our students gain the capacities they need to answer the great questions of life and make a meaningful contribution through their vocation. As you move through this volume, it is our hope that it will renew within you a great love for learning and a deep passion for Jesus Christ.

Endnotes

[1] Cherry, C. (1995). *Hurrying toward Zion: Universities, divinity schools, and American Protestantism*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. (This publication chronicles the significant court decisions of 1963 that removed the faith-oriented study of religion from public universities. This book also demonstrates the way in which a "…non-confessional examination of religious phenomena" became the norm for the public discussion of reason and religion.)

[2] Beebe, G.D. & Kulaga, J.S. (Eds.). (2003). *A concept to keep.* Spring Arbor, MI: Spring Arbor University Press. (The Spring Arbor University Concept reads: "Spring Arbor University is a community of learners, distinguished by our lifelong involvement in the study and application of the liberal arts, total commitment to Jesus Christ as the perspective for learning, and critical participation in the contemporary world.")

[3] Wuthnow, R. (1989). *Communities of discourse.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (For a more elaborate treatment of this issue see Vol. 1, *A Concept to keep.)*

[4] Beebe, G.D. & Kulaga, J.S., *ibid.*

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Born in Oregon of Quaker parents, Gayle D. Beebe first gained recognition as an all-state football and baseball player. As a student, however, he experienced an "intellectual awakening" that heightened his pursuit of academic excellence, steering him on the path toward Christian higher education. Pastor, professor, administrator, author and lifelong student, Beebe states that when he first read the Spring Arbor University Concept, it "perfectly expressed that to which I want to devote my professional life"—the life of study and the life of devotion to Jesus Christ. Beebe is the 27th president of Spring Arbor University.

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Spring Arbor, 2000-

Belief in [Christ] and loyalty to his cause involve men in the double movement, from the world to God, and from God to the world. Christians living with Christ are... forever being challenged to abandon all things for the sake of God, and forever being sent back into the world to teach and practice all the things that have been commanded them.

–H. Richard Niebuhr

The Concept and the Christian Student

Jon S. Kulaga, M.A.

In the 17th century a shift occurred—or perhaps more accurately a separation. It didn't happen overnight, but it happened. In the centuries preceding the 17th century, the biblical and humanist thinkers took for granted that theology and science were threads belonging to the same tapestry. And while there was tension between the two, many of the great thinkers were also Christian believers, and saw no reason to believe that a mental barrier existed between theology and physics, or between the study of God and the stars He created. However, throughout 17th century

Europe, the Bible had to justify itself more and more at the bar of reason, and what started as a shift, grew into a separation. In 21st century America, many of our institutions of higher learning have replaced the concept of "revealed truth" for the more enlightened concept of "observed truth." It is the replacement of a worldview shaped by the Bible, with a worldview shaped by the assumptions and beliefs of secular rational humanism.[1] The result is a dualistic approach to learning—the separation of heart knowledge from head knowledge, wisdom from information, calling from career, faith from learning, and God from His creation.[2]

This loss of the Christian worldview from most of our country's colleges and universities has resulted in the creation of a curriculum in which faith is not only disconnected from virtually every academic discipline, but also is actually seen as being incongruent with serious scholarship, research and teaching.[3] Today, the situation has emerged where the concepts of revealed truth and objective truth are dismissed as irrelevant, and the belief in relative truth reigns supreme impacting all spheres of higher learning.

Truth Separated from Reality

The implications of this separated curriculum have not been lost on the students on whom it is being practiced. Today, we see a generation of young people who are no longer capable of articulating a biblical worldview. The average college student, even those who come from evangelical Christian homes and churches, hold to many distorted beliefs about God, truth and reality.[4] In his recent research project, *Third Millennium Teens*, researcher George Barna states that over 75 percent of today's churched youth believe that God created the universe, Jesus was a real person and that he was born of a virgin. However, within that same group, over 50 percent also believe that Christians and Buddhists pray to the same God, that Jesus did not rise from the dead, and that it doesn't matter what religious faith one associates with because all the major religions basically believe the same thing.[5] To today's postmodern generation, God is whatever a person believes him, or her, to be.

Today's culture of religious relativity has taught our children to "pick and choose" what works best for them. But what happens when what they pick and choose is a fatal combination of truth and error? And what happens when what passes

for "truth" is whatever the student subjectively and personally determines to work best? For the 21st century postmodern student, any system or statement of belief that claims to be objectively true, as Christianity does, is judged to be either arrogant at the one end or utterly naïve at the other. With belief in moral absolutes that inform decisions of right and wrong on the decline, "right" is being redefined as "what works for me right now." This is "reality" for thousands of students on university campuses across the United States.

And yet, the mature Christian knows that trying to fashion a philosophy of life founded on subjective and personally determined beliefs and concepts of reality, leaves God outside of the equation and the person outside of God's design. Therefore, the need to impact the belief system of today's college student remains paramount.[6]

Community: The Context for Reunification

T.S. Eliot, in *Christianity and Culture*, claimed "no religion can survive the judgment of history unless the best minds of its time have collaborated in its construction…the purpose of Christian education is to teach people to think in Christian categories."[7] This is the calling of every Christian student and the primary mission of a truly

Christian university. The task of being a student is to answer the call to the vocation of studentship. Going to the desk as an altar, the Christian student studies with his whole heart and a single mind because God has called him to that vocation.[8] Therefore, the first business of the student within the academic community is to study and think, thereby bringing glory to his Creator with his intellect. It follows then, that the first business of the Christian university is to assist the student toward thinking in Christian ways.

At Spring Arbor University, the first step in assisting our students to think in "Christian categories" is to invite them into a community of learners that holds to what historic Christianity has believed to be true. For the student, learning to think within a community that believes in objective revealed truth begins the process of cultivating a coherent faith and an accurate concept of reality. Through genuine personal interaction with Christian faculty, the students within the University community develop a set of lenses to view the world that do not require "adjusting" when addressing the critical issues of the day.[9] Yet, it should be noted that within this Christian community, learning relationships are not only one way. For while the mentoring of students by the

faculty is vital to the learning and thinking process, Christian community provides more than role models. It also provides for a fellowship of equals.

In his book, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life,* author Robert Bellah writes about the urgent need individuals have for making meaningful commitments with other persons. He states, "We find ourselves not independently of other people…but through them…we discover who we are face-to-face and side-by-side with others in work, love and learning."[10] The values and beliefs a person chooses to act upon is influenced to a far greater degree by the persons around them, than by what the person reads or claims to believe.[11] Secular theorists on human development have also discovered the positive power of community. The leading cognitive-structural theorists who look at college student development assert that a key component to a student's successful development is the delicate balance involving challenge and support.[12,13,14] With too much challenge, faith is abandoned—as can be sadly documented on the majority of the campuses across America. With too much support, faith becomes dull, inactive and disconnected from personal experience. The balance between challenge and support needs to

be developed, and this can only be worked out within the context of community.

Jesus: Truth United with Reality

Belonging to a community that believes in objective, revealed truth is meaningless if it remains disconnected from the student's personal experience. What is needed is a concept of truth that is simultaneously objective in its authority (origin), but experiential (personal) in its reality.

This was precisely the need faced by the followers of John Wesley over 250 years ago. In 18th century England, there was no lack of instruction and writing on the objective truth and reality of God and Scripture. The Bible was available in the common language, as were the teachings of Augustine, Aquinas, Luther and Arminius. The problem was that the Church of England had disconnected truth from the personal experience of the average citizen. It was simultaneously viewed as both reverent, and irrelevant. Likewise, there was no lack of "original thinking" among the general population when it came to religious matters. This was the Age of Enlightenment and belief and confidence in human ability, reason and scientific discovery were on the rise. The problem was that this new form of

knowledge was totally disconnected from Scripture, doctrine and 17 centuries of church history.[15]

Into this cultural malaise stepped John Wesley. In response to the problem described above, Wesley developed a system of discerning truth that was rooted in the objective reality of Scripture and ecclesiastical tradition, and sensitive to subjective personal experience and intellectual reasoning. This fourfold approach for discerning truth has become known as the "Wesleyan Quadrilateral."[16]

At Spring Arbor University, the heritage of Wesley's Quadrilateral lives on as we face the challenge of preparing the 21st century Christian college student to impact the culture. And one of the greatest challenges facing the Christian student is the challenge to think, or as Dallas Willard asserts "to think straight."[17] So whether it's Eliot's charge to "think in Christian categories" or Willard's charge to "think straight," the combined force and impact of Scripture, tradition, experience and reason, serve to assist today's Christian student in training their mind to dwell intelligently upon God and love Him passionately.

This is, in part, what is meant at Spring Arbor University by "total commitment to Jesus Christ

as the perspective for learning." Just as Wesley sought to unite the objective realities of Scripture and tradition with the subjective realities of experience and reason, we find in the person and work of Jesus Christ the perfect unity of truth and reality. For in the person of Jesus Christ, we have one who is "full of grace and truth." We find one who not only knows the truth, but *is* the Truth. Thus, armed with the Spirit of Truth and Wesley's approach to discerning truth, the Christian student at Spring Arbor University approaches their academic disciplines with confidence, knowing that with each discovery of truth made, there is also a discovering of God.

The Integration of Faith and Learning

This context for learning, which combines a biblical-based community of learners and a balanced approach to truth, both revealed and discovered, allows the student to enter into a specific discipline of study seeking the integration of faith and learning. Where in other educational contexts the two remain fragmented entities, the Christian student learns to unite genuine intellectual scholarship with authentic Christian piety, developing within the young scholar the qualities of vocational competence and Christ-

centered character. Both are essential, yet neither is sufficient. While the Christian university—like any other institution of higher learning—subordinates all other endeavors to the improvement of the mind in pursuit of truth, it also recognizes that truth, rightly understood, is not solely a cognitive commodity. It carries within it varying degrees of moral, spiritual and social significance.[18]

This integration of faith and learning has been demonstrated in virtually every academic discipline down through the ages—from Galileo to Louis Pasteur, and from Sir Isaac Newton to Blaise Pascal. C.S. Lewis encouraged young Christians to study philosophy, if only because bad philosophy would certainly exist, and therefore, needed to be answered. It was also articulated by Robert Andrews Millikan, winner of the Nobel Prize for physics in 1923, the first scientist to isolate and measure the electron. In his work, *Science and Life* (1924), he writes:

> "...the scientific and the religious sides of life often come into contact and mutually support each other. Science without religion obviously may become a curse, rather than a blessing

> to mankind…on the other hand, history has shown that religion without science breeds dogmatism, bigotry and persecution."

Expounding further on the proper role of science, Millikan concludes:

> "No more sublime conception of God has ever been presented to the mind of man than that which is furnished by science when it represents Him as revealing Himself through countless ages… Science, then, not only teaches that God is good, but it furnishes man with the most powerful of motives—to fit in with the scheme of goodness which God has provided."[19]

The belief in God as Creator provides the student with a place to stand in evaluating the culture and their chosen academic discipline. There is no doubt that with God in the picture, the Christian student will become a dissenter from many theories taken for granted in current academia. It will make them critical, in the appropriate sense of the word, of viewpoints that

emphasize human freedom and creativity as supreme values divorced from any sense of limitation or obligation to community, created order and ultimately to God.[20] The effectual integration of faith and learning places God at the center of reality, rather than the individual, and gives to the Christian student a different set of lenses with which to view the world. This ability to see things from a different perspective is an opportunity for Christians in every field. It is also an obligation, and should be treated as such. Students who take the intellectual dimension of their faith seriously will discover they can be responsible and creative participants at the highest levels of their chosen vocational calling.

Critical Participation: The End Result

As we consider the last plank of the Spring Arbor University Concept, "critical participation in the contemporary world," it is appropriate to return to the theme of separation—and the end result of Christian higher education: the Christian graduate.

What distinguishes a Christian education from the secular? What distinguishes the Christian graduate from the graduate with no spiritual moorings or direction? Should we expect more from the Christian student than just "learning to

think in Christian categories?" Is there more to learning than thinking, more to thinking than studying?

As Christians, we are commanded to love God with all our hearts, minds, soul and strength (Deuteronomy 6:4-6; Matthew 22:36-40; Luke 10:27). This full-orbed love for God requires devotion at every level of the person—emotionally, intellectually, volitionally and physically. The Christian student is not just called to "know" something, but to "be" something, and to "do" something. We will then find that thinking with the mind of Christ will result in loving with the heart of Christ and acting as the hands of Christ. With a mind renewed, emotions purified, a conscience cleared and a will surrendered, the Christian student is prepared to enter the world as a critical participant applying the Great Commandment to every facet of daily life.[21]

Again, John Wesley provides the model, for though he was first and foremost a preacher, no sooner would he begin a work in a community than he began to consider ways to help the disinherited and disenfranchised. He set up schools for children of the poor, and shops where their mothers could card and spin cotton to sell in order to provide an income. He set up the first free

medical dispensary in England. And when doctors were unavailable to work the dispensary, Wesley studied medicine and published a medical textbook in order to help the poor seek an appropriate cure. While teaching his flock to use their money wisely, in 1746 he established one of the first philanthropic loan funds in order to assist those in need of temporary assistance. He fought the sale of alcohol and tobacco, and encouraged the work of William Wilberforce in abolishing the slave trade. His primary mission was to help everyone he could find their way to heaven. But no man kept his feet more firmly planted upon the solid earth and showed greater wisdom in dealing with the everyday, practical problems of his contemporary society, than did John Wesley.[22]

Today, the need is no different. We need Christians who are competent professionals in their field. But we need more than that. We also need competent Christian professionals who know how to care for their neighbor (Luke 10:27) and contend for the Truth. We need what former Spring Arbor University professor Bob Briner referred to as "roaring lambs." Christians who do not "run from the culture but rush into it; believers who are not content to hang around the fringes of our culture, but work to be right smack dab in the

middle of it."[23] Or what H. Richard Niebuhr called a "transformer of culture." One who is not antagonistically opposed to culture or passively conformed to it; rather, one who believes redemption cannot be limited to individuals, but must extend to the totality of human culture. Recognizing the fallen aspects within our culture, the transformer of culture does not give up on it as a lost cause.[24]

Conclusion

For the Christian student, higher education is not merely the means to a higher paying job, a higher standard of living, and a higher mortgage payment. It is a means by which to gain strategic entrance and involvement in the overall moral and cultural discourse of our nation. It is part of the process of becoming a critical participant in contemporary society and answering the call to be salt; the kind of salt that is on the cutting edge and in the fray.

The entire object of our Concept-driven education at Spring Arbor University is to develop Christian leaders who will penetrate every area of society with Christ's command to be salt firmly in mind. It is our task to train each successive generation of business, education, medicine,

media, science and church leaders who not only do the right things, but also enjoy them; who not only find a calling, but also love being called and know the Caller; who are not merely learned, but also love learning; who are not merely just, but also hunger and thirst for justice.

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In the final analysis, the curriculum is nothing less than the statement a college makes about what, out of the totality of...constantly growing knowledge and experience, is considered useful, appropriate, or relevant to the lives of educated men and women at a certain point of time.

–Clark Kerr

The Concept and the Curriculum

Betty Overton-Adkins, Ph.D.

What does it mean to "keep" the Concept in the academic programs at Spring Arbor University? Basically, it means allowing the Concept to shape and inform the academic curriculum and serve as the fulcrum that keeps the University anchored as a Christian, liberal arts institution. For more than 40 years, the Concept has played this anchoring function for the University's curriculum.

The Idea and Purpose of Curriculum

Those of us in education embed a lot of ideas in the word "curriculum." We say a university's curriculum or the curriculum of a particular major, and we mean the organized body of instructional and experiential content we offer students. "Curriculum is the ultimate statement of what higher education values," Judith Eaton, president of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, reminds us.[1] Educator Benjamin Bloom defines curriculum as the stating, structuring, and ordering of instructional goals and objectives.[2] An institution's curriculum comprises the purpose, design, conduct, and evaluation of the total educational experience and is influenced by both internal institutional vision and external expectations.[3] In classical and medieval universities, curriculum was well defined and structured. As mentioned in an earlier chapter, the subjects of the *quadrivium* curriculum (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music) were to follow and build on the *trivium* curriculum (logic, grammar and rhetoric). Transported to a European and then an American context, educational leaders, such as John Henry Newman, reinforced the ideals of a curriculum that focused on classical liberal learning, and others like John Dewey and Henry

James repositioned within this liberal arts framework the notion of the utilitarian purposes of education, for citizenship and social responsibility. In contemporary society, this utilitarian emphasis has been widely focused on preparation for specific jobs or career roles. Curriculum, in the modern sense, has become a multi-tiered vehicle to organize instruction around the educational purposes an institution sees itself serving.

> Curricula exist at different levels, ranging from the single course to the educational program of the department or discipline to the college or university. The organization of curriculum is defined by educational philosophy, the structure and content of the knowledge imparted, and the instructional context and climate. Effective curricula have coherence and explicit definition of aims and standards of attainment. They accomplish their aims through sequence and structure of learning experiences to facilitate student learning and development.[4]

The job of arriving at a curriculum that creates and conveys coherent messages and learning outcomes across institutional, departmental and discipline goals is a complex undertaking. But, this coherence is essential for attaining institutional effectiveness and mission, and it comes about through attention to both content and structure. When effectively achieved, the result is curriculum that is the face of mission, manifesting in tangible ways the congruence between stated institutional purposes and the instruction students receive.

At Spring Arbor University, we have learned that the starting point of effective curriculum is a unifying philosophy or worldview. In this case, as a Christian institution, ours is a boldly Christian worldview. And the beliefs and values that underlie this way of seeing and knowing the world cause us to ask: "Education to what purpose; competence to what end?"[5] For us, the answer is clear, especially as stated by Free Methodist founder B.T. Roberts.

> Literature, mathematics, in short every branch of human knowledge can be used to advantage the work of winning souls to God. The Gospel has always

> been the friend of learning and they who would labor with success to diffuse its blessings, must avail themselves of their opportunities to acquire useful knowledge… But as all rivers run into the sea, from which unseen they came, so should all knowledge lead the soul back to God, its Author.[6]

Among Christian colleges like Spring Arbor University, education is oriented toward preparation for a calling and not just a career. The idea of integrating faith and learning, or faith into curriculum, is not about blazing new territory. Indeed, this model of education was the historic sire of many great universities. But many of these institutions chose, at some point, to separate faith and learning—to expel from the halls of the academy a focus on the sacred as less worthy of academic pursuit than the secular. Our role as one of the new breed of Christian colleges is to re-image, re-invigorate and re-integrate these two within our curriculum, all with the hope of avoiding what Walker Percy refers to as "getting all A's, but flunking life."[7]

The Concept Across the Curriculum

How do we at Spring Arbor University create a curriculum that conveys a Christian worldview and opens students to their calling? The Spring Arbor University Concept is our beginning. It calls on the faculty to embed within curriculum the essential questions about who we are (community of learners); it prescribes the content of study (the liberal arts), the purpose for study (to gain the perspective of Jesus through knowing his creation) and the outcomes of our learning (critical participation in the contemporary world). The embedding of these foundational ideas is not reserved for only some areas; it is interwoven throughout the curriculum. Beginning with the University's general education and core courses and extending into all of its majors and minors, the Concept influences both the content and structure of the teaching-learning process, on campus and in our external sites.

In a very real sense at Spring Arbor University, the Concept *is* the curriculum. It is essentially what we teach and what we hope students will model as lifelong learners when they leave our program. Certainly, our goals include providing knowledge useful in the marketplace. Our intent is to produce strong teachers, social

workers, business managers, accountants, communication experts, chemists, nurses, artists and others. The employment rates of our graduates and their success in various careers tell us we do a good job of delivering discipline content and academic skills. The ideas of the Concept as curriculum do not free us from the responsibility of being a strong academic institution. Indeed, they require us to provide the essential knowledge base from which "lifelong involvement," "study and application," and "critical participation" can become real. Just as important as preparing students for careers, we invite them to learn why living together in community is important; why their use of the well-established educational foundation of the liberal arts to be lifelong learners gives them power as Christians; and how to examine their life experiences and the world around them through the eyes of Christ, and thereby, how to be lovingly, yet critically, in the world—but not of it. These are ideas and values that flow from the Concept and become manifest in the shape and content of instruction.

How is this achieved? Three basic principles underlie the influence of the Concept and its infusion across the curriculum: 1) it belongs to the entire community; 2) it is teachable by all

faculty; and 3) it is structurally infused into the curriculum.

Belongs to the Entire Community

The Spring Arbor University Concept was the product of community vision. It was no administrative manifesto. While institutional leaders, like David McKenna, Harold Darling and others, were responsible for writing the words on paper, there was—and still is—a sense of collective community ownership for creating an inspired vision for the institution.

The Concept mirrors many of the themes in the Wesleyan tradition. Learning is understood as an enduring commitment to acquire those habits of mind and spirit that produce lives of holiness and integrity. Additionally, the Concept's generic roots are in the historic legacy of the institution, "…a school devoted to the promotion of earnest Christianity and sound, solid learning."[8] We acknowledge that our contemporary aspirations remain close to the founding purposes. Therefore, since its adoption, there has been strong buy-in for the Concept by a continuing line of administrators, faculty, staff and students. And the Concept has aged well, undergoing only minor word-smithing through the years. It has proven to

be a strong statement of what it means to be a Christian university, attracting faculty who see their roles as more than jobs, but as mission and ministry. The faculty believes in this mission. They understand that a large part of its achievement will be through what they do, and they understand their responsibility for transmitting the Concept to each new generation of students. Since faculty are primarily responsible for instruction, it is through the development and implementation of the curriculum that their mission influence takes place.

But it is not just the faculty who "own" the Concept. Our students do, too. From the moment students begin the process of inquiry about Spring Arbor University, they (and their parents for our traditional students) begin to hear about the Concept. On campus, students talk about "living the Concept." Our nontraditional students also get a fairly heavy dose of the Concept. Therefore, it is not surprising that not only faculty, but also our students, expect that this centering idea will find its way into the classroom, the study group, the dormitory and the soccer field. Curriculum coherence, as mentioned earlier, is about just such integration.

Teachable Across All Disciplines

As appropriate for a liberal arts institution, the Concept is about ideas. The four planks of the Concept (community, liberal arts education, Christ as the perspective for learning and critical participation) transcend disciplinary boundaries. The Concept establishes a kind of "trans-disciplinary" lens through which all faculty look at the curriculum.

This trans-disciplinary approach is achievable because faculty in any discipline can teach the Concept. The biologist, sociologist and the graphic artist know what it means to build community, and they work with students to understand our unique learning environment and what it offers. In all subject fields—communication, speech, psychology, philosophy and religion, social work and other areas—we create intentional learning communities that prepare students for social interactions and application of knowledge within the larger society. And establishing the liberal arts as the underpinning of learning is as much the responsibility of the professional programs, such business and education, as it is to programs in literature and the arts. Dialogue, debate, close reading of text, research, writing, artistic

performances, group discussions, all of our instructional methodologies provide the tools for the "critical" framework students need for their participation as Christians in a postmodern, secular world. This does not require discrete disciplinary knowledge. It requires faculty grounded in a Christian worldview and in each plank of the Concept.

All faculty are expected to integrate the teaching of writing, critical thinking, logic, speech, appreciation of the arts, computational reasoning and spiritual development into their instruction. Similarly, they are all called to embed Concept thinking. It is not an "add on." It is an essential part of what makes us who we are. There are no territorial or disciplinary boundaries for the Concept. There is only a shared commitment to keeping everything we teach tied to the Concept.

Infused into the Curriculum

Three basic design approaches influence the majority of American curriculum models: 1) There are certain skills that all students should develop; 2) Students should study a variety of disciplines to acquire a broad general education; and 3) Students should study one area in depth. The division of the Spring Arbor University curriculum

into general education and disciplinary majors incorporates these principles. Like the classical curriculum, there is sequencing within this model that assists students in developing foundational knowledge before they move on to more depth and complexity within a major.

As noted earlier, all faculty integrate the planks of the Concept throughout all aspects of the curriculum, and using a sequenced structure, curriculum maintains a Concept focus. Under the aegis of the Christian Perspective on the Liberal Arts (CPLA) faculty committee, the University provides five classes that are essentially Concept-emersion courses:

CORE 100 – Discovery in the Liberal Arts Through a Community of Learners
CORE 200 – Involvement in the Christian Faith: Issues and Cultures
CORE 274 and 275 – Critical Participation in the Contemporary World Outside One's Own Culture
CORE 300 – Discovering The Christian Faith: Its Practices Through Jesus Christ as the Perspective for Learning

CORE 400 – The Christian in the Contemporary World

The course catalog notes that these courses were established "to strive toward fulfilling the goals of the Spring Arbor University Concept…."[9] They are required of all students. Ideally, each year students have at least one of these courses where they concentrate on integrating the knowledge they have through the lens of the Concept. The courses are "core" to the process and structure of the Spring Arbor University curriculum. Known initially as the "moral issues curriculum," these core courses involve readings, speakers, cultural immersions, travel and experiential activities that often go beyond the particular class and permeate the entire campus. Other curricular structures that reinforce teaching the Concept include: Focus, an annual lecture series addressing different aspects of the liberal arts; monthly Community of Learners discussions; the monthly Natural Science Seminars; and an array of speakers. These curriculum "extenders" assist faculty in enriching classroom instruction and implanting Concept ideas across all aspects of academic instruction.

This chapter asserts the premise that the Concept *is* the curriculum. But the proof of this is

an examination of the specific application of this assertion, or the Concept in action. Later chapters in this book illustrate just how we turn assertions into concrete instruction. The Concept is made real within the context of our ways of teaching and our conveying meaningful ways of knowing to students. More than a mere mission statement, the Concept sets Spring Arbor University apart from other Christian institutions that also integrate faith and learning. It presents faith as a dynamic development process enriched through liberal learning, and then through active and critical response to the needs of the society. Through faithful adherence to the goals of Christian higher education, our mission, and excellence in all our educational programs, each generation of Spring Arbor University students will find that we are keeping the Concept across the curriculum.

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PART ONE:

The Philosophical Arts

Some knowledge of the sciences also, is, to say the least, equally expedient [as history]. Nay, may we not say, that the knowledge of one, (whether art or science) although now quite unfashionable, is even necessary next, and in order to, the knowledge of the Scripture itself?

–John Wesley

The Concept and the Arts and Sciences

Garnet (Smith) Hauger, Ph.D.

John Wesley was clear about the value of a liberal arts education for the clergy. B.T. Roberts extended that advice to all Christian workers when he said, "Literature, mathematics, in short every branch of human knowledge can be used to advantage in the work of winning souls to God."[1] E.P. Hart, the founder of the seminary at Spring Arbor, believed in the value of a liberal education in fitting students for worthwhile lives and in saving them from lives of uselessness.[2]

In his book *The Idea of a Christian College,* Art Holmes noted that because the individual has an eternal destiny, the education that individual pursues

is important since it contributes to that destiny. In short, "Christian liberal arts education has an eternity in view."[3] David McKenna, the author of the Concept, made one of the most powerful statements about the purpose of a Christian liberal arts college:

> In the final analysis, the Person and Work of Jesus Christ also provide the basis for defining an evangelical Christian college. It is a *college* because its primary interest is given to a process of involvement in—and appreciation for—the life of learning. It is a *Christian college* because the prerequisite for purposeful involvement in the life of learning is commitment to the redemptive power of Jesus Christ. It is an *evangelical Christian college* because its end and purpose is to accomplish sanctified participation in the affairs of life through the Christian vocation and social responsibility.[4]

The Concept and General Education

It has been over 40 years since the formation of the Spring Arbor University Concept, and in the intervening decades there has been much conversation

about the meaning of the Concept and how to translate it, both formally and informally, into a meaningful curriculum. The original general education curriculum growing out of the Concept consisted of a set of eight courses, two courses from each of the four academic divisions. These courses had interesting titles such as God and Man (religion), Freedom and Order (social science), Structure and System (natural science), and Image and Idea (humanities).

The advantage of this curriculum was that it placed the primary focus for the integration of faith, living and learning on a small set of required courses. The design of these courses was a grand experiment in implementing the Spring Arbor University Concept in creative and exciting ways, and helped to guarantee integration of faith, living and learning in a uniform way for all students semester after semester.

The "one-size-fits-all" approach to general education did not meet the needs of some—maybe most—students, which was a disadvantage of this curriculum. It did not take advantage of students' previous educational backgrounds nor did it necessarily help them advance their knowledge in ways that contributed to achievement of their career goals. It had the added disadvantage of making transferring into or out of the institution difficult.

In the early 1970s a week-long faculty workshop led to a less uniform general education curriculum, one that allowed students course options in each of the four academic divisions. Each division formed a list of general education courses from which students could choose. This version of the general education curriculum was more consistent with what has been called a "cafeteria approach."

This approach required the creation of additional courses to meet the needs of a student body more diverse in educational backgrounds and career destinations. Indeed, many disciplines specified to their majors the general education courses necessary to complement their major program and support their career plans.

While this was clearly an advantage from the student viewpoint, it created its own set of problems. It led to course proliferation since several new courses had to be added to the curriculum to meet the needs of students with different educational backgrounds and career goals. It also led to problems with student advising. Even though students were encouraged to take general education courses to fill holes in their previous educational backgrounds—or to take a more advanced course in an area where they already had relatively strong backgrounds—they often chose

courses which represented a repeat of material they had learned in high school.

A more serious disadvantage relates to managing how the Spring Arbor University Concept was embedded in each general education course. Over the years, the general education program has grown from eight uniform courses developed specifically to guarantee integration of faith, living and learning to one that offers multiple options in eight categories (called liberal arts requirements), three courses—one in writing, one in speech, and one in physical fitness (called basic institutional requirements), and five courses in the CORE program.

Today, the number of courses listed as options in the eight categories for the liberal arts requirements is 45, not counting options students have for taking more advanced courses in place of listed courses.[5]

Integration of Faith, Living and Learning

It has been difficult to oversee the integration of faith, living and learning in this version of the general education program. Nonetheless, under the direction of the Christian Perspective in the Liberal Arts (CPLA) committee, multiple efforts have been made to keep this as a primary focus. In May 2000 the faculty approved eight objectives that every general education course must meet in order to integrate the Concept.

1. Encounter the Christian faith, understanding and applying concepts of a Christian worldview.
2. Develop an ability to think creatively and critically, demonstrating both cognitive and affective learning, as well as logical thinking patterns.
3. Demonstrate proficiency in writing that includes effective use of the printed word to express ideas, competency in research writing, and other critical forms appropriate to the discipline.
4. Demonstrate effective verbal communication skills including public speaking, listening and interpersonal communication.
5. Demonstrate skill in effective decision making, including quantitative and qualitative approaches to ethical, social and personal concerns.
6. Learn basic skills, methods and resources that are essential to the discipline involved.
7. Confront significant disciplinary "issues" that enable a student to intelligently discuss concerns of contemporary life.
8. Understand the "connectedness" between particular disciplines.

Some of these objectives connect directly to particular planks of the Concept. For example, objectives 2-6 represent basic intellectual skills and knowledge that form the basis of a liberal arts education. These objectives relate most directly to "lifelong involvement in the study and application of the liberal arts." Objective 1 concerns "total commitment to Jesus Christ as the perspective for learning" and objectives 7 and 8 deal with "critical participation in the contemporary world."

It is appropriate that five of these eight objectives deal with the study and application of the liberal arts. The University is first and foremost a liberal arts college and as such, it must make acquisition of basic and powerful intellectual skills and knowledge a high priority. No less important are the two primary ideas contained in the first objective—encountering the Christian faith and understanding and applying concepts of a Christian worldview. This is at the heart of our "commitment to Jesus Christ as the perspective for learning." Finally, the two objectives related to "critical participation in the contemporary world" make it clear that it is our knowledge of the various academic disciplines and issues related to that disciplinary knowledge that fits us for work in the Kingdom of God.

The multi-year effort to form and refine these objectives laid the foundation for a review of our general education program. One of the first acts of that review was to assess the alignment of the current general education program with the eight objectives. So in the 2001-02 academic year, the CPLA committee authorized the dean of the School of Arts and Sciences to conduct that assessment.

A rubric was developed for each of the eight objectives and the extent to which each course met each objective was then assessed according to this rubric. The rubric specified a 1 (minimally met), 2 (satisfactorily met) or 3 (outstandingly met), and each general education course received one of these scores for each of the eight objectives.

Objective 1 is especially inspiring and possesses an informed and deep effort to apply the Concept to the Universitiy's general education curriculum. To help achieve that, the University offers these courses:

> **BIO 281** – Environmental Science: The Christian faith is encountered during the first class session when a biblical basis for environmental stewardship is described. Applications of Christian principles are applied to various topics like world hunger, population and

endangered species. Also examined is the work of Christian environmental missions projects where part of their ministry is to improve the environment.

PSY 100 – Introduction to Psychology: A larger percentage of the subject matter here is directly relevant to the Christian faith. By using *Psychology in Christian Perspective,* weekly discussion sections are used to cover topics like cognitive development and its relationship to spiritual growth, Christian versus non-Christian psychotherapy, and mental illness and sin.

ART 205 – Photography: One of the major assignments is to take a "Christian photograph." The students are intentionally given little direction and are expected to wrestle with how to define the terms. The critique after the photographs have been submitted helps students better understand whether "Christian" is a noun or an adjective and how to better integrate a Christian viewpoint into their artistic work.

> **ENG 112** – Literature Discovery and Analysis: A Christian worldview is used as the benchmark for literary analysis of texts read and is directly encountered in the writings of Augustine, Dante, Chaucer and Milton. Students are encouraged to conduct a comparison between classical heroes and biblical heroes for the required contrast/compare paper.

These descriptions make it clear that our faculty take seriously efforts to make our general education programs directly relevant to integration of faith, living and learning. We take seriously our charge to connect knowledge of each discipline to a Christian worldview with an emphasis on using that knowledge to make a difference in the world.

The CORE Program

The second recent effort to help guarantee that the Spring Arbor University Concept remains foundational to our curriculum is the current work in reviewing and revising the CORE program. In December 2003, the Academic Senate approved name changes to these five courses:

CORE 100 – Discovery in the Liberal Arts Through a Community of Learners

CORE 200 – Involvement in the Christian Faith: Issues and Cultures

CORE 274 and 275 – Critical Participation in the Contemporary World Outside One's Own Culture

CORE 300 – Discovering The Christian Faith: Its Practices Through Jesus Christ as the Perspective for Learning

CORE 400 – The Christian in the Contemporary World

One does not have to look very long at the titles of these courses to realize that the Concept is the foundation of this course sequence. Indeed, that was the single most important resource for designing these courses in the first place many years ago; it was also the resource for this most recent attempt to review and revise them.

In the fall of 2003, task forces for each of the five courses were formed under the leadership of Mary

Darling, professor of communication and director of the CPLA committee. Each task force considered the relationship of these courses to the Spring Arbor University Concept and made first steps to modify and strengthen them, and make more obvious that relationship. In particular, new course descriptions were written and "Concept relevant" objectives were written for each course. The rest of the 2003-04 school year was used to transform those lofty objectives into a curriculum that we hope will impress upon our students and others the importance of the Spring Arbor University Concept and how it can be implemented into a workable curriculum to make a difference in the lives of our students.

Conclusion

The major focus of this chapter has been the relationship of a liberal arts education to the Spring Arbor University Concept—for understanding and application of basic intellectual skills and knowledge, for viewing that knowledge from the perspective of a Christian worldview, and for using that knowledge in meaningful service for the Kingdom of God. Over the last 40 years of Spring Arbor University history, this imperative has been fueled by the Concept and is the foundation of the general education program. Faculty members continue to look for ways to translate the

Concept into a curriculum that educates people for meaningful service to Christ and His kingdom.

Endnotes

[1] Roberts, B.T. (2003). *A concept of education*. In Gayle D. Beebe & Jon S. Kulaga (Eds.), *A concept to keep*. Spring Arbor, MI: Spring Arbor University Press.

[2] Hart, E.P. *Reminiscences of early Free Methodism*. In Gayle D. Beebe & Jon S. Kulaga (Eds.), *A concept to keep*. Spring Arbor, MI: Spring Arbor University Press.

[3] Holmes, A. F. (1975). *The idea of a Christian college* (p. 45). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

[4] McKenna, D.L. (2003). *A concept of Christian higher education*. In Gayle D. Beebe & Jon S. Kulaga (Eds.), *A concept to keep*. Spring Arbor, MI: Spring Arbor University Press.

[5] Spring Arbor University. (2002). *2002-04 undergraduate catalog*.

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In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

–John 1:1

. . . And though the last lights
off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink
eastward, springs—
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast
and with ah! bright wings.

–Gerard Manley Hopkins

The Concept and Grammar

Kimberly Moore-Jumonville, Ph.D.

Grammar is essential to the liberal arts because language provides the means of thought and expression.[1] Moreover, the disciplined analysis of a language schools the mind in disciplined habits of thought. In *Lost Tools of Learning* we are reminded that studying syntax—the relationships among words—teaches students "what language [is], how it [is] put together," and the rules by which it works.[2] Observing the rules of grammar and other subjects teaches the linear pattern of thought fundamental to rational discourse. If, according to St. Augustine, we must

find the right order of our loves in the *ordre amoris*, it is because constant ordering is necessary—we tend to place temporal loves above eternal ones, which brings disorder into our lives. And if we must find the "right order of our loves," then we must also discover the *order of our words,* to effectively communicate those loves. In other words, grammar helps students achieve right relationship to God by providing the words and language of faith, as well as the disciplined habits of mind to wield that language.

A Community of Learners

Interestingly enough, the Spring Arbor University Concept posits a "grammar of education." It consists of *words* that *order* our academic endeavor. Note that the Concept is not merely a solitary idea. The Concept is an argument, an assertion of truth, a statement of belief that establishes the University as a community of learners; it simultaneously provides that community the words and language of faith, and challenges it to serve as critics of the culture. Not only do words function to order the planks of the Concept, but also they affirm the possibility of belief in a culture for which words have faltered under the weight of disbelief. The study of the

English language and literature at Spring Arbor University provides an antidote to the chaos of a culture where words have almost ceased to matter.

Written in 1948, George Orwell's *1984* is prophetic in its depiction of the collapse of linguistic meaning in the modern world. Orwell suggests a totalitarian government, rendering its citizens helpless to resist its propaganda. Its tool: delimit the people's vocabulary and thereby deny them their own thought. In the first chapter, Winston Smith struggles to compose even a sentence in his forbidden diary, and he hesitates, frozen by fear of certain discovery.

> He dipped the pen in the ink and then faltered for just a second. A tremor had gone through his bowels. To mark the paper was the decisive act… It was curious that he seemed not merely to have lost the power of expressing himself, but even to have forgotten what it was that he had originally intended to say.[3]

Winston's inability to put his thoughts into words implies the connection between words and thought: it is impossible to think without words.

Orwell's novel depicts a government rising to power as the dominant voice in the consciousness of its citizens through a steady program that strips words of their meanings. Characters find themselves unable to describe their experience in words; instead, words rising from their own consciousness are suppressed in favor of the political party's minimal vocabulary, until, finally, no words remain to make meaning of their experience. In this chaos of deteriorating words, Winston shrivels into an empty shell. In the end, all he can think is that he loves Big Brother. Thus, Orwell's novel warns readers that a culture without words is a culture without meaning. By removing the people's language, the party effectively removed people from any meaning, except that which is officially sanctioned.

Postmodern Christians face a similar assault on language: during the 20th century, our word-centered culture has transmogrified itself into an image-oriented culture. In the process, we have lost facility with words and with it the logic required by the grammar of language. If it is true, as Jacques Ellul observes, that human knowledge comes to us not primarily through image but through the word, then an image-oriented culture

stands to lose access to fundamental aspects of its identity.[4]

Neil Postman forcibly argues a similar point when he contends that Americans are learning to "adore technologies that undo our abilities to think."[5] Indeed, according to Postman, in a media-centered culture images replace reliance on the written word. But images don't require linear thought to connect them; they demand no connection.

In contrast, literacy matters because words establish meaning that demands to be understood; they contain content. Words require rational activity and intellectual readiness, something Walter Ong calls "the analytic management of knowledge."[6] In other words:

> To engage the written word means to follow a line of thought, which requires considerable powers of classifying, inference-making and reasoning. It means to uncover lies, confusions, and overgeneralizations, to detect abuses of logic and common sense. It also means to weigh ideas, to compare and contrast assertions, to connect one generalization to another.[7]

Without words, we lose habits of mind that demand the highest rational activity such as logic and precision, but also the expectation that life should mean something, that our lives should count for something, that meaning is possible. Without language, we are reduced to chaos that collapses into despair. Furthermore, commitment to linguistic coherence carries significant theological implications. George Steiner argues "that any coherent understanding of what language is and how language performs, that any coherent account of the capacity of human speech to communicate meaning and feeling, is, in the final analysis, underwritten by the assumption of God's presence."[8]

Steiner recognizes that making meaning of our experience depends on the assurance that God stands behind our use of words. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the word of God has been associated with the Christ as the *logos*. As God made flesh, Christ is understood to be the *logos*, the intermediary between God and humans. It is this metaphysical and sacramental reality transcending language that Orwell's political party denies. The party functions as its own god and therefore manipulates the language of its citizens at will with the result that its people have no

access to the meaning behind words. Without the ability to assign meaning to their experience in the form of words they think for themselves, the party workers are mere robots.

The Perspective for Learning

Christians resist this loss of the Word and the concomitant loss of meaning because in the Judeo-Christian tradition, Jesus Christ is associated with the power of language. Traditionally in the West, language explains to us our experience and we trust its power of explanation because language is grounded in Jesus as the *logos*. The Gospel of John begins, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God." God could have created through music, a grand orchestra leader, or through manipulation of raw materials, a magnificent artist. But when scripture depicts the creative activity of God, it chooses the metaphor of language. The Word was with God in the beginning, and God spoke, and the result was the creation of beings. The Spring Arbor University Concept intentionally takes this assertion as a starting point; it affirms Christ as *the* perspective for learning. Similarly, the study of English at the

University is grounded in one of the earliest Christian creedal statements, the Nicene Creed:

> We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through Him all things were made.

Because Jesus was not a created being, because he was with God before anything was made, and because through him all things were made, He is the ground of all things and therefore of all language; as the *logos,* he makes the universe comprehensible. As beings made in God's image, we share that power to make the universe comprehensible.

Consider Adam, created from dust by the word. His first task in the garden was to exercise dominion over the physical creation by naming the animals. This use of language by the created being imposes order on the unknown; it renders the unknown comprehensible. God's invitation to impose order with words is an invitation to be creative with language! Students of English not

only express creativity, a reflection of God's first attribute ("In the beginning God created"), but also they learn to "name" their experience, thereby assigning meaning to the chaotic disorder of experience. This capacity to create order with language is important on an individual level as we see with Adam and Eve. It is also powerful at the communal level, as evidenced in the Tower of Babel.

The Genesis account of the Tower of Babel emphasizes the role words play in maintaining the social order. The whole earth of the Genesis 11 story "had one language and the same words" (Genesis 11:1). But God dissolves the order provided by a shared discourse when he confuses their common language into many languages. Chaos ensues. Certainly this is grave sin to win such dire punishment. The people of Babel build the tower to make a name for themselves, a prideful sin that stands the ordering power of language on its head, for if language orders experience when it is submitted to God's order, then commandeering language to assert one's power denies God's sovereignty—it distorts the power of language or turns it upside down.

Critical Participation

Conversely, when Spring Arbor University students learn to wield words and shape patterns of experience into meaning verbally and stylistically in written form, they are recognizing the verbal order God intends. Their words *submit* to Christ the Word who was "in the beginning" with God and "through whom all things were made." Through Christ, then, the word of God expressed in the Incarnation, they practice creative expression, they learn to name experience and learn, as Augustine puts it, the order of [their] loves.

Critical participation in the affairs of the world is also an ordering of one's loves that begins as an affair of language, because to love God's order is to begin with truth and with the words that transmit truth. Students of the Concept critically examine cultural expressions, dialogically exchanging ideas and opinions with the people around them so as to reverse the collapse in verbal communication threatened by an image-oriented culture. Their use of language is not a wielding or commandeering, but a submission. Their goal is service; their motive is love.

This refusal to employ language as a means to power is the Christian response to a culture threatened by verbal collapse, by dissolution of linear thought and with it the demise of the social order. Rather than promote the self, then, the right use of language submits to God's sovereignty and moves on to make meaning that takes seriously the demand to be understood. It counters lack of linear thought in favor of "rational activity" and "intellectual readiness."[9]

Community of Learners

Postmodern culture may threaten the possibility of linear thought and with it the coherent social order. But the Concept points us in the direction of hope. Like the dry bones in Ezekiel's valley, we long for our words to be enfleshed as a sign of God's presence and power in the 21st century. With Ezekiel, the Spring Arbor University community of learners overhears God's prophecy:

> I will cause breath to enter you and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in

> you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord. (Ezekiel 37:5-6)

We look to God for the enlivening power of the spirit to infuse our words with life and meaning.

Endnotes

[1] A generation or so ago, the word "grammar" might have struck fear into the minds of many, conjuring images of declension charts, sentence diagrams or punishing teachers. Today, students seem to take the tone of the Holy Roman Emperor who insisted, "I am the Roman King, and am above grammar." But in the liberal arts tradition, grammar refers to more than mere correct expression.

[2] Sayers, D.L. (1947). The lost tools of learning, presentation at Oxford University.

[3] Orwell, G. (1949). *1984*. (1961 ed.). New York: Signet.

[4] Charles, D. (March 1999). The new verbal order. Presentation given at the Conference on Christianity and Literature. Taylor University.

[5] Postman, N. (1985). *Amusing ourselves to death.* New York: Penguin.

[6] Postman, N., *ibid.*

[7] Postman, N., *ibid.*

[8] Steiner, G. (1989). *Real presences*. Chicago: U Chicago.

[9] Postman, N., *ibid.*

In her teaching, Kimberly Moore-Jumonville emphasizes the significance of worldview, the power of the word and Christian scholarship in the postmodern literary world. An expert in 19th century British literature. Moore-Jumonville is chair of the English department at Spring Arbor University.

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Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.

–Ephesians 4:7, 12-15 (NIV)

The Concept and Rhetoric

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The Gospel of John begins, "In the beginning was the Word." And for communication scholars, that seems like a good place to begin. This is the *logos*, the expression of an idea. According to the Apostle John, the *logos* was worked out through the incarnation and is the root and life of our faith. God is expressing himself, communicating his character and his plan, revealing his glory. He does this effectively and relentlessly, as the God who speaks to us, listens to us and even argues with us.

The creation story in Genesis begins with the Word, too. God spoke our world into existence and illuminated it. "Let there be light," He says. And so "by faith we understand the world itself was framed by the Word of God" (Hebrews 11:3). At Spring Arbor University we begin our understanding of communication with this simple idea: God is a communicating God, and we are made in His image, as communicating beings. We, too, have this power to create a world. We are bearers of His image and stewards of His power.

That's the way it is, and has been. From the beginning.

A Community of Learners

So how do we use this power of revelation and creation? What do we make with it and of it? Perhaps the first and most important thing we make is relationships. We are known by the things we say and the way we say them, even as we know God by what he says and does. Both verbally and nonverbally, we are constantly saying to those around us, "This is who I am. Know me."

We tell God who we are and call it prayer. We tell each other and call it conversation. We tell ourselves and call it thought or paranoia. We seek and manage connections, creating a world of

friends or foes. And then we live in that world, calling it a community.

Spring Arbor University is a community of learners, but without communication, no such community exists. The two words share the same root, from the Latin *communis*. When we have things in common, we have community. When we discover the things we have in common, we have communication. As Quentin Schultze notes, "When we communicate, we create, maintain and change shared ways of life. Communication enables us to cultivate education, engineering, business, the media and every other aspect of human culture."[1]

A Liberal Arts Discipline

The study of how we create and maintain these shared ways of life is both ancient and relevant. Genesis tells the story of the first man, fully capable of speech, naming the animals and blaming his choices on his wife—and on God himself. Job, arguably the oldest book in the Bible, relates a series of conversations between God and the Father of Lies, and between a man and his erstwhile friends, and between this same man and his God.

The story of Babel is the story of language and recognizes its power: "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them" (Genesis 11:6). The wisdom literature of Scripture is replete with observations and advice about the responsible use of this power: keep your promises (Ecclesiastes 5:5), tell the truth (Psalm 15:2), and, sometimes, keep your mouth shut (Ecclesiastes 5:2).

According to Aristotle, we harness this power and persuade each other through logical, ethical and emotional proofs. He defined rhetoric as "an ability, in each particular case, to see the available means of persuasion," and 2,300 years later his analysis of those means is still the basis of most college texts on public speaking. Although his own mentor, Plato, focused on private discourse (dialectic), Aristotle tried to recover public rhetoric from the abuses of the Sophists and laid out a framework for audience analysis, a framework that Aristotle scholar and translator George Kennedy calls "the earliest systematic discussion of human psychology."[2]

Later, St. Augustine continued to focus on the effective and ethical aspects of communication. In a sense Augustine recovered rhetoric for the

church, arguing that truth was not enough. Message and method were both important. Eventually Christian scholars constructed a model for a liberal arts education, which began with the *trivium* of grammar, dialectic and rhetoric.[3]

This approach dominated the study of communication in Western colleges and universities until two world wars in the 20th century caused scholars to consider the implications of the mass media, particularly as they related to the study of propaganda. In 1963 Wilbur Schramm, director of the Stanford Institute for Communication Research, published *The Science of Human Communication*, identifying the four "founding fathers" of modern communication research as political scientist Harold Lasswell, social psychologist Kurt Lewin, sociologist Paul Lazarsfeld, and experimental psychologist Carl Hovland.[4]

By 1960 most speech departments, still influenced by classical tradition, but attempting to accommodate an emerging social science paradigm, had become departments of communication. Research continues along both lines, in a sometimes uneasy peace, providing a theoretical and practical understanding of basic contexts: interpersonal, public, mass media and

intercultural communication. Em Griffin's popular introductory text on communication theory calls these two frameworks scientific and interpretive, and the interaction between these approaches in some ways strengthens the discipline.[5] Each provides its own map of reality, although of course a map is not the same thing as the reality it represents.

A Christian Perspective

Helping students make sense of these maps is the task of any communication department, and the task at first seems daunting. Students are most interested in the more practical aspects of communication, such as how to get a date or a job. And they live in a postmodern culture where the arts and the academy challenge every way of knowing and every claim of truth, often to the point of despair.

But in a Christian university the idea of truth and the search for it have yet to be abandoned. What we offer is wisdom in a biblical sense, which has both theoretical and practical implications. John Peck and Charles Strohmer define biblical wisdom as "the way you see life and how you act in it according to the way you see it."[6] Proverbs 8, for example, personifies biblical wisdom as "the

craftsman at His [God's] side…rejoicing always in His [God's] presence." We are craftsmen, applying biblical principles to real problems. Faith without works, as the Apostle James notes, is dead.

This active faith causes the Apostle Paul, a rabbi trained in Old Testament traditions, to reject the Greek ideal of abstract truth and argument. Peck and Strohmer put it this way: "Greek wisdom set so high a value on the beauty of literary form, logical analysis, and sophisticated vocabulary that these qualities alone became the authenticators of truth. If it was skilled rhetoric it was true. Here was an idolatry of mind and speech that produced a style of communication that lost interest in truth for its own sake."

In 1 Corinthians 1 and 2, Paul goes to some length to contrast God's wisdom with the world's wisdom, which in this case was most decidedly Greek. God's wisdom, he argues, is wiser than man's wisdom and appears foolish (1:25). But he is not calling here for a message rooted in emotion or intuition, but for a grounded and applied wisdom rooted in the Gospel itself. As he puts it, "We do speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that

has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began" (2:6-8).

Because we have different ways of seeing the world, Christians proclaim and do things differently. Certainly hidden and conflicting assumptions cause communication to break down (the Gospel appears as foolishness). But it doesn't end there, as postmodernism might suggest. Our wisdom affects our heads, our hearts and our hands, leading to a constructive and hopeful engagement with our neighbors. For while we recognize that communication doesn't always work well, we believe it does work. It is limited and flawed. It has gaps and slippage and ambivalence. As Christians would say, it is *fallen*. But it reveals as well as conceals, and it creates closeness as well as distance. It is a fire and a poison, but it can also be a fig tree and a fountain (James 3).

This constructive and hopeful engagement depends on two truths, and they suggest something about the perspective unique of Christian higher education. First, as Christ taught, communication comes from the inside out. He says, "The things that come out of the mouth come from the heart" (Matthew 15:18). Even his argument against swearing is not so much that we shouldn't, as that

we shouldn't have to: "But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil" (Matthew 5:8).

This focus on character is consistent in all biblical teaching about communication, and is stated clearly in Ephesians 4:15: "Speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ." For Christian communicators, motives matter. It's not just what we say, or how we say it. Ultimately it's not even about *why* we say it. It's about who we *are*. We speak the truth in love. This is the mark of effective, mature communication—an integrity uniting message with motive to create meaning.

Actually, credibility is the focus of much communication study, from Aristotle to Hovland, from both the interpretive and scientific paradigms. Deception has been defined and measured by Burgoon and many others. But in all of this, results are the primary focus. And the results that are measured are largely changes in thinking, not changes in behavior. But Christian scholars are interested in how we persuade people, and why we persuade people and what we persuade them to do. We want to know about methods and messenger, about motives and

message. Communication should be authentic, proceeding from the inside out.

The second perspective we offer is that it should also be responsible. We are not only interested in what we meant to say, but in what others understood. We are concerned about the whole process, from motive to effect. And we have some ideas about what that effect should be.

Critical Participation

So what is this responsibility, and what is its outcome? The writer of Ecclesiastes offers one conclusion: "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13, KJV). Note how this collector and organizer of wisdom literature connects what we believe with what we do. But despite his apparent protestations, there is purpose to everything under the sun. He suggests several times "there is nothing better" than understanding the work God gives us—and doing it with gratitude and joy.

He also offers a glimpse into his own approach for constructing a message still studied for both its elegance and advice. He says he "pondered and searched out and set in order many proverbs [and] searched to find just the right

words, and what he wrote was upright and true. The words of the wise are like goads, their collected sayings like firmly embedded nails" (Ecclesiastes 12:9-11). As communication scholars and practitioners this is the power we have, and the work to which we are called: researching and creating messages that sound right and are right (upright and true), messages that persuade (goad) and reinforce (nails) Godly wisdom.

Schultze has explored this work in *Communicating for Life*. The subtitle, *Christian Stewardship in Community and Media*, reminds us of the creative power we share with God, and our responsibility for it. He suggests we are co-creators of culture, specifically charged to foster communities of *shalom*, an ancient Hebrew word suggesting the presence of God in everyday relationships.[7] It is more than peace. It is a world in harmony with God's purpose and design, a world where "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Psalm 85:10).

Does this stewardship suggest anything about the hopeful and constructive engagement the Spring Arbor University Concept calls critical participation in the contemporary world? Can it help us watch a movie or give a better speech?

Can it help us build stronger marriages and families? Or reach across cultural barriers with understanding and patience?

Certainly. But it also allows us to do more. It allows us, like Christ, to cloth the Word in flesh, as imitators of Him. In the beginning was the Word. But then, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:13-14). Grace and truth. Motive and message.

That's the way it has been, and should be. From the beginning.

Endnotes

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Teaching, from the point of view of a Christian spirituality, means the commitment to provide the fearless space where questions can be responded to, not by prefabricated answers, but by an articulate encouragement to enter into them seriously and personally.

–Henri Nouwen

The Concept and Philosophy

Charles R. Campbell, Ph.D.

In *Escape From Reason*, Francis Schaffer says that he doesn't like to study the history of philosophy because each philosopher destroys the thought of his predecessor only to be destroyed, in turn, by the philosophers to come. Many philosophers and educators would respectfully and specifically disagree and say that this paradoxical, dialectical structure of the history of philosophy is precisely its beauty and power. The discipline of philosophy covers a wide variety of sub-disciplines, such as metaphysics, ethics, critical

thinking, logic, philosophy of religion, epistemology and aesthetics. Study of the history of philosophy provides the overview, the flowchart for this spectacular history of ideas.

Knowledge of philosophy and an understanding of the corresponding history of ideas are useful tools for our attempts to both understand and spread the Gospel of Christ. The Spring Arbor University Concept drives us toward: a Christian community of people who desire to learn; scholarship that embraces the breadth of the liberal arts; Christ as the perspective for learning; and a desire to take the Gospel to our homes, jobs, cities, states, nations and "to the uttermost parts of the world." Personal knowledge of and interest in both ideas and thinking will help us fulfill the Spring Arbor University Concept.

To begin the task of examining philosophy and its relation to the Spring Arbor University Concept one needs to look carefully at the make-up of the traditional liberal arts. Based on patterns of study instigated in the great schools of Plato, Aristotle and Pythagoras, the writers of the Middle Ages codified academic learning into something called the Seven Liberal Arts. These liberal arts were divided further into the *trivium* (the three roads) and the *quadrivium* (the four roads). The

trivium consisted of grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic (philosophy). The *quadrivium* was made up of arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy (cosmology).

Since the subject for this particular chapter is philosophy, an examination of how these seven types of knowledge relate to dialectic-philosophy, which covers logic, critical thinking and historical philosophical thinking is appropriate. These seven liberal arts are:

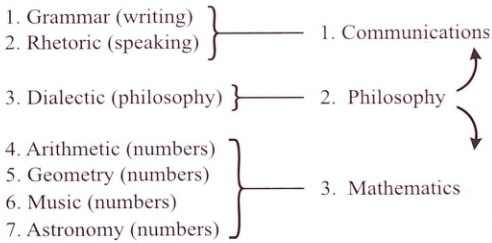
1. Grammar
2. Rhetoric
3. Dialectic
4. Arithmetic
5. Geometry
6. Music
7. Astronomy

With a careful sorting-out process, it is apparent that there are really only three liberal arts. First of all, we would roll grammar (writing) and rhetoric (speaking) into one and call it communication. Second, we look at the subjects of the quadrivium and roll all four together into one. Arithmetic (numbers), geometry (numbers in space), music (numbers in tone and time), and astronomy

(numbers in space and time) can simply be called mathematics. This would be number three in the list of liberal arts.

Number two on the list of liberal arts is dialectic. Dialectic makes a good mid-point on the list because logic, critical thinking, and philosophical thinking play a major roll in both communication and mathematics in all of its forms. Indeed, in the Middle Ages, philosophy was often seen as the common ground, as the one foundation point that gave nourishment to all of the other liberal arts. Our diagram would now look like this:

THE LIBERAL ARTS



Dorothy Sayers discusses the medieval use of the liberal arts in education in a work titled, *The Lost Tools of Learning*.[1]

> Is not the great defect of our education today…that although we often succeed in teaching our pupils "subjects," we fail lamentably on the whole in teaching them how to think: they learn everything, except the art of learning. It is as though we had taught a child, mechanically and by rule of thumb, to play "The Harmonious Blacksmith" upon the piano, but had never taught him the scale or how to read music.

Sayers comments that the reason our students don't know "the art of learning" is that we teachers teach them subjects rather than the tools of learning. Students must be taught both the tools of learning and dialectic because dialectic-philosophy supplies the skills of using the tools, the thinking processes involved, the use of arguments and the detection of fallacies. Sayers argues that without the basic tools of the liberal arts, and the thinking, logic and understanding of

history that comes with philosophy, our students are helpless in the real world of the marketplace.

> For we let our young men and women go out unarmed, in a day when armor was never so necessary. By teaching them all to read, we have left them at the mercy of the printed word. By the invention of the film and the radio, we have made certain that no aversion to reading shall secure them from the incessant battery of words, words, words. They do not know what the words mean; they do not know how to ward them off or blunt their edge or fling them back; they are a prey to words in their emotions instead of being the masters of them in their intellects.

It isn't just the Middle Ages that show the centrality of philosophy to the liberal arts and all of learning. The discipline of philosophy with its many sub-disciplines (philosophy of religion, philosophy of art, philosophy of science, etc.) provides the critical voice to any academic study. Philosophy brings the logic, reflection, history, and

testing to all of our human endeavors. Since medieval times, we have given the title "Ph.D. – Doctor of Philosophy" to the highest academic degree. We say: "Doctor of Philosophy in Music, Doctor of Philosophy in History, Doctor of Philosophy in Chemistry," and the like. What does that mean? It means that, as a scholar, you have done the historical study, thinking, criticism, reflection and creating necessary to form a new piece of academic understanding in your discipline. The philosophical process is, of necessity, central to the academic process.

Community of Learners

For many years Greek philosophers like Anaxorous and Democritus were interested in scientific-sounding questions like: "What is the world made of?" or "What is the source of power in the world?" Socrates changed all of that and set the direction of Western philosophy forever. Socrates wandered the streets of Athens and talked to people about who they were. He asked what was valuable, what was beautiful, and what was good. He asked questions, so many questions that the Athenians killed him to shut him up. However, by the time of Socrates' death, philosophy had become not, "What is the world…?" but, "Who

are you?" The Socratic "know thyself" became the starting point of Western philosophy and sensibility.

If "know thyself" is the starting point to Western philosophy then the teachings of Plato and Aristotle are the forming, organizational, and structuring parts of Western philosophy. Plato and Aristotle and their two great academic communities are the very foundation of Western cultural values. Their schools are responsible for creating the very philosophical tools that we have discussed earlier in this chapter.

"Spring Arbor University is a community of learners…," so starts the short statement which we know as the "Spring Arbor University Concept." A community of learners is the first ideal, the first plank of this document that purports to describe a Christian liberal arts university. Those great academic communities created by Plato and Aristotle and Pythagoras were something new and revolutionary. The Sophists of their day traveled around as itinerant teachers. They sold knowledge as a useful commodity. They could teach you how to speak, how to argue and how to keep your books. They were here today and gone tomorrow. The great teaching communities, first created by Plato, were a place of communal learning. They

consisted of an intellectual unity including religion, knowledge, ethics, aesthetics and politics. They were intellectual communities that had place and permanence.

Plato's Academy was an archetype of a community of learners with different interests, different prior knowledge. It was a community of learners with a bright, articulate leader and students who also had their say. Paul Friedlander, in his classic study, *Plato, An Introduction* describes Plato's academic community as building on the heritage of Socrates. "The Academy," Friedlander says, "is the birth of philosophy in conversation between teacher and disciple, as both of them, engaged in a common quest, ascend, through the path of dialectics, to the *Ideas* and to what is beyond."[2]

As in the great schools of Plato, Aristotle and Pythagoras, the Spring Arbor University Concept proclaims that academic communities build on a shared quest for knowledge and they create a unified structure of academic values and intellectual standards. The Socratic part of our shared quest, the philosophical part with its questioning, comparing and critiquing roles, helps to keep the community of learners honest, open and well-balanced in their common quest.

The fact that the specific "community of learners" at Spring Arbor University takes Christianity as its founding ideal should make for an even stronger sense of unity. The shared quest of being the best teacher, researcher and writer possible, while being part of the body of Christian believers, should enable and enrich the greater academic community. Finally, the fact that our Christian "community of learners" is formed of many individuals in different disciplines, with different degrees, with different expertise and interests, should bring unity of purpose and action within diversity and individuality.

Lifelong Involvement in the Study and Application of the Liberal Arts

There are several traditional reasons for using the liberal arts as a learning structure. First of all, the liberal arts represent breadth—breadth of interests, breadth of scholarship and breadth of academic mastery. There is, in fact, a great difference between a liberal arts school, technical school, business school, and so forth. In theory and practice, the liberal arts graduates will seem to be more broadly prepared and have a wider range of interests and life skills. In the workplace, liberal arts graduates should be more responsive

to a broader spectrum of problems than graduates from specialized programs.

The second reason for valuing a liberal arts curriculum within the Spring Arbor University Concept is that the liberal arts structure is an academic unity built out of diversity. Our present-day reincarnation of the liberal arts is more than communication, philosophy and mathematics. We now include such subjects as art, psychology, religion and history within our curriculum. We gain academic breadth through diversity. We demand that the student become more than a technician, more than a narrow specialist. Furthermore, we assume that the various subjects within the liberal arts curriculum should learn from each other. Philosophers should be able to write; English teachers should do math; mathematicians should understand music. These are the outcomes of academic unity within academic diversity; these are the goals of a liberal arts "community of learners."

The third major advantage of a liberal arts approach to learning is that the liberal arts are the human arts. In the tradition of Socrates—who turned philosophy from "What is the world?" to "Who are you?"—the liberal arts are about becoming more human. We often call art, music

and communication "the humanities." In reality, all of the liberal arts are about the humanities. In all of these subjects the emphasis is on knowing the subject, the content and the skills within the context of who you are. In this kind of learning structure, the student is taught—not just technical knowledge and skills—but also knowledge and skills on a base of inner wisdom, ethics, integrity and a wealth of other subjects.

It is often assumed by philosophers that the discipline of philosophy is the supreme example of the liberal arts. Philosophy, like the liberal arts, demands that knowledge be broad, that it be dialogical, that it be critical and that it be human ("Know thyself"). Socrates believed that education consisted in the simple but profound process of asking questions. Plato wrote all of his philosophical ideas in the form of plays and dialogues. It is in the spirit of asking questions and the dialectical-dialogical process of argument that philosophy continues to fulfill the purpose of liberal arts education. The Spring Arbor University Concept assumes that Christian academics can best be realized within the diversity, the questions and the dialogue which is the liberal arts.

Jesus Christ as the Perspective for Learning

Philosophy prides itself in being its own boss, in asking critical questions without limits. Obviously, from our worldview, our concept of "Jesus Christ as the perspective for learning," philosophical criticism and thinking without limits must be changed. The Christian philosopher will still be critical, still be Socratic, but the ultimate focus is not some kind of purely logical, unbiased knowledge (if there ever was such a thing), but knowledge from a biblical perspective, from a Christ perspective.

One need not give up one's brain, background, life history and interests to become a Christian. Rather, we are accepted into Christ's church, that great invisible body of believers along with our abilities, interests and training. Christ's holy church needs singers, truck drivers, teachers and ball players. It also needs Christian rationalists, Christian empiricists, Christian pragmatists, Christian existentialists and the like.

In one respect, some might say that "Jesus Christ as the perspective for learning" is a limiting factor—that we are limited by our body of beliefs, limited by biblical injunction and by biblical ethical principles. However, for the Christian philosopher, the feeling is one of liberation rather

than limitation. Since all truth is God's truth, Christian thinkers are free to roam the world looking for problems to solve and knowledge to gain. It is our joy to know the names of the birds and the ways of the animals; to be amazed by the history of human cultures; and to struggle to understand and solve the emotional and physical problems of our fellow human beings. The Spring Arbor University Concept insists on Christ as the perspective for learning and "Christ as the perspective for learning" explodes our horizons and sends us to the ends of the earth.

Participation in the Contemporary World

In an article titled, "Dogma and the Universe," C.S. Lewis says, "If the world in which we found ourselves were not vast and strange enough to give us Pascal's terror, what poor creatures we should be… If it were small enough to be cozy, it would not be big enough to be sublime."[3]

Certainly the world "out there" is vast enough to bring terror and big enough to be sublime. Given the Christian perspective, a philosopher, a thoughtful Christian, would want to go to the "uttermost parts of the world" for several reasons. In the first place we must go "out

there." For most Christian philosophers, living a solitary existence in a cave or on a mountain top just won't do. We must interact with the "contemporary world" spoken of in the fourth plank of the Spring Arbor University Concept. The contemporary world surrounding us is actually the testing-ground for our life and faith. We can: live in community, study the liberal arts, and have Christ as a perspective for learning; but critical participation in the contemporary world is where we find out if we have our "act together."

This world allows the Christian philosopher to study real problems, critique actual ideas and solve emotional, painful, dirty human dilemmas. Our world has need of committed Christian thinkers who will breathe its air, drink its water, and wear its coat. Christian thoughtfulness is needed in all facets of the world. It is needed in commerce, in politics, in health providers, in art museums, in movies and in churches.

Conclusion

The philosopher must realize that to study the flowchart of ideas is to stand on the shoulders of many, many important thinkers.

From Plato, a passion in the service of the Ideal.

From Aristotle, the certainty of logic and wonder of science.

From Thomas Aquinas, the arguments for God.

From Descartes, an argument for self *(Cogito ergo sum)*.

From Locke, an emphasis on learning through experience.

From Hume, skepticism about almost everything.

From Kant, a new look at reason and experience.

From Pascal, wonder, terror and Christian faith.

From Hegal, the dialectic of history.

From Marx, dialectic and revolution.

From Kierkegaard, dialectic in the service of Christ.

From Sartre, secular existential man.

From Russell, the quest for a perfect language.

From Wittgenstein, two new language philosophies.

From James, the insistence that truth is "what works."

The Christian philosopher today must be acquainted with a variety of historical giants. The philosopher must also be plugged into a broader history—a liberal arts history—by knowing the lessons of culture, politics, economics, religion, literature and the arts in our vast and complicated world. The Christian philosopher surrounds all of this broad history of ideas with the mystery, joy and energizing power of Jesus Christ. The Spring Arbor University Concept insists that philosophy (and art, music, history, business, etc.) operate within a community of learners, within a diverse group of scholars, thoroughly devoted to Christ and eager to be tested in the contemporary world.

Endnotes

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Professor by vocation and writer by avocation, Charles Campbell has pastored nine churches for the Wesleyan and United Methodist denominations over the years. He has taught several CORE classes and has also served as associate dean of academic affairs. He enjoys writing poetry, short stories, children's stories, research papers, newspaper columns and textbooks. Campbell is professor of philosophy at Spring Arbor University.

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PART TWO:

The Practical Arts

This is the very reason why you were brought to Narnia [from earth], that by knowing me here for a little, you may know me better there.

–C.S. Lewis

The Concept and Biblical Studies

Robert Q. Bailey, Ed.D.
Charles Dillman, Ph.D.

When the Rev. Edward P. Hart and the citizens of Spring Arbor raised monies for the purchase of a school, they could never have envisioned the long range impact that would have. While never intending it to be a Bible school to train persons for ministry, the preamble to the Articles of Association contained Concept-like ideas: "Believing that 'Religion, Morality and Knowledge are essential to good government and the real happiness of human kind,'...

[they]…conceived of the school as 'an institution of learning wherein young persons may be…instructed in the various branches of learning which tend to fit and qualify them to properly discharge in the future the multifarious duties of good citizenship.'"[1] With that foundational thinking, it is not surprising in the mid-1960s to see the infant 4-year institution articulate the all-encompassing statement known as the "Spring Arbor University Concept."

The University's founding fathers believed strongly that "earnest Christianity was founded upon knowledge and truth, not ignorance and superstition. They believed the basic truths of Christianity to be divinely revealed in the Bible and in the Person of Jesus Christ. And their confidence in this foundation was so complete that they had no fear of human learning when approached from a biblical, Christian perspective."[2]

While the original purposes were educating children of church families in the immediate area, the focal movement from children to youth continued and Spring Arbor Seminary ventured into postsecondary studies. The perspective of the Christian faith and its study has always been a critical component in "general education" for the

entire student body; as the postsecondary program developed, the "professional studies" curriculum in religion and Bible helped equip persons for ministry, not only in the supporting denomination but also the evangelical church in general. The centrality of the Christian faith perspective at Spring Arbor University has put instruction in religion and Bible in a pivotal position.

As the formation of Spring Arbor University became a reality, it is the 1963 catalog that made the first statement of institutional purpose known as "the Concept." The goal remains as it has been since the beginning: to continue to provide academically authentic education that is reliably Christian. The Concept clearly defines the Christian integration tasks for all faculty and staff. Yet, it is to the department of philosophy and religion that the task of formal education in issues of Christian faith is committed. So the task of applying the Concept to the faculty, program and practices of this department remains the challenge.

Community of Learners

The first issue of implication addressed by the Concept is that "Spring Arbor University is a community of learners." Community speaks of interrelatedness, connectedness and the

commonalities that unite a group. As the increased demand for professionalism makes major inroads on each educational institution and would turn every department into its own empire, it is the vision of "community" that fosters an integration of thought regarding task and mission and keeps the entire University growing and functioning as a single unit.

The integrating core of the Spring Arbor University community must be a co-joining of Christian faith and the educative process. Academics and the development of a worldview from a christian perspective is completely different from academics and the development of a worldview from its secular counterpart. The issues of any worldview must address the nature of creation, the nature and purpose of the human and the nature of ultimate reality.

For the Christian, these issues are resolved by belief in an ultimate being who is knowable and seeks to be known, who has created all that exists and, in sovereignty, administers this creation. One who is the purpose for living and the goal toward which human life is directed, who explains both human nature and the human dilemma and who reveals a unique plan and direction for humankind. While the ultimate goal

of the Christian believer is to recreate Christ-likeness in their own lives, the human responsibility toward that "ultimate being" as well as to the "created world" and the "inhabitants of the world" becomes the key motive for life. This response to truth is essential and unequivocal.[3]

The "community" image is tied directly to the common identity shared by the faculty and staff who make up the entity we refer to as a "Christian university." Linked to this common identity must also be the commonly shared task of "teaching" (in its broadest sense). While teaching is the common task, it is inextricably linked to the person who is teaching. "Teaching, like any truly human activity, emerges from one's inwardness, for better or worse. Good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher."[4]

In the area of religion and biblical studies, both the contribution of personnel to the total campus community as well as involvement in the total campus program are essential. Both "the people" and "the involvement" are pivotal components. If "Christian" is the critical adjective for "education," then those persons whose primary task is to teach, must clarify and interpret the

content of faith for the institution's response to be complete.

"The Christian character of the college is attested not by what goes on at the fringes and not even by the existence of scholarly courses in biblical studies...[but] by the morale and conviction of the major teaching of the institution."[5] Individualism may be necessary for a free and creative society, but community is essential to remind us of our interdependence and to create a clear-cut, shared identity for ourselves.

Lifelong Involvement in the Study and Application of the Liberal Arts

The liberal arts present the "materials in which the basic pattern of reality manifests itself"[6] and the context in which learning can be integrated. It is the liberal arts where all of academia converge and where cross-fertilization is at its maximum. It is here that the development of ideas converges with the fine arts, were social scientists examine not only causal but effectual issues, and where faith has an opportunity to demonstrate the all-encompassing-nature of its perspective. But Mark Noll has insisted that one of the major sins of the evangelical movement has been the neglect of the biblical application of "a

sober analysis of nature, human society and the arts."[7] Whether it is an issue of defensive avoidance or unintentional neglect, a disconnected world is screaming for a coherent explanation that gives meaning to all of life.

In the tension between tasks of spiritual formation and liberal arts integration, we must acknowledge that "education (i.e., teaching in all its forms) is the primary task of higher education."[8] Ernest Boyer has expanded that function, explaining a four-fold task of the professoriate as: the scholarship of discovery; the scholarship of integration; the scholarship of application; and the scholarship of teaching.[9] Thus, a well-rounded task of "education" becomes the challenge of the faculty. So, in the concept of Boyer, the excitement of teaching involves research into the unexplored worlds of questions, seeks to establish connectedness between the truths about those worlds, searches for applications to issues that develop as those worlds evolve and communicates all of it in such a way as to engender meaning for human existence.

Thus, a departmental goal is to produce a well-informed and well-integrated thinker: someone who understands the biblical-theological issues, but also can "connect" these issues to the

many "realities" of life as seen in the sciences, the humanities and the arts. Dyrness asserted, "Faith is not a box, but a window."[10] It must open vistas of integration and application that relate to every domain of life.

One critical assumption at this point is that no believer should ever fear the knowledge of truth; ignorance is not the means of attaining maturity. Thus the biblical-theological classroom must be the *agora* for the discussion of ideas; their examination in light of a Christian worldview—weighing, sifting, sorting, integrating and applying. In such an environment the faculty must not be threatened by student questions, nor the student overwhelmed by the investigative search. The quest is always for integrated Christian truth. Thus, the story of humanity in history, the development of ideas, expression of the arts, the scientific method and modern social problems all cry for integration into a "whole" world. While other academic departments focus on the task of integrating "Christian" into their discipline, this department is challenged to integrate the other academic "disciplines" into their subject matter. Adequacy for this challenge demands that religion faculty become masters of Renaissance thinking

who are in touch with many academic domains and are at heart inter-disciplinarians.

Commitment to Christ as the Perspective for Learning

We affirm that the Judeo-Christian tradition has elevated for humankind a unique life perspective. In the words of Thomas Cahill, it is the elevation of life from the cyclical patterns typical in ancient Middle-Eastern thought (as the cycle of rain/dry to explain the unchangeable routine of life) to the unique image that "life is a journey" and we are but strangers in this world involved in a lifelong quest of which the center is God himself.[11] This is a dynamic and continuing quest, fed and nurtured by the revelation of God and completed only in death.

The department of philosophy and religion begins with some critical assumptions at this point. Foremost is the perspective that the Christian Scriptures present a unique wholeness of worldview truth that supercedes and surpasses all other views and commends itself to us for acceptance and a pattern to be modeled in human lives. The biblical text must be the focus of attention, the intended message of the writer our

immediate quest, and the human re-creation of Christ-likeness our ultimate goal.

Therefore, the Bible has become the primary source of study in biblical literature rather than theories about the Bible. While supplemental texts are used as "leveling devices" to bring all students to a common starting point and to introduce information critical to understanding the text, the text itself is center stage in our classrooms. The structural approach to the text is to be preferred over a variety of critical approaches, historical reconstructions or a theological study of the development of religious experiences. So the use of historical-cultural studies, lexical-syntactical studies and the theological development of ideas within the biblical text is the approach used.[12]

Affirming the strength of the Wesleyan tradition, Spring Arbor University also affirms the strong role of the Wesleyan Quadrilateral as a paradigm for a Christian pedagogical approach. As articulated by Donald Thorsen, the quadrilateral clarifies and attempts to balance the vital sources of scripture, tradition, reason and experience as a model for creating/doing Christian theology.[13] The 2,000-year tradition of the "Christian story" offers countless insights, while logic and reason provide

tools of study; Christian experience becomes the trial and error means to practical learning.

In all of these affirmations, a Christian "servant" disposition is implied as essential for both the senior learner (usually the faculty) and the junior learner (usually the student) in the process. It becomes the attitude toward scripture, toward truth in general, toward oneself and toward others as the learning process moves forward. It is the "kneeling, humility and meekness" that marks genuine learners. Farley suggested a similar stance when alluding to Martin Luther's description of the activity of theology as *oratio, meditio* and *tentatio* (praying, meditating and testing).[14]

Within the curriculum, these concepts have manifested themselves over time. The typical "survey" courses of Old and New Testament proved too extensive for adequate assimilation within a single term. So the surveys of the testaments were subdivided into two courses, each of which allowed a greater depth of study per course (with each student required to take one each in Old and New Testament). Courses in Christian thinking and spiritual formation rely jointly on biblical studies, the writings of the saints of all time, as well as logic and reason (i.e., the

quadrilateral influence).

With the diversity of today's student body, faculty must assume a very wide range of biblical/ Christian faith experiences that students bring to the classrooms. While there are still many students from the traditional evangelical Christian homes, there are also growing numbers of students with minimal background knowledge of the Bible and very diverse religious perspectives. With the advent of off-campus programming, this divergence became even more evident. Thus, faculty can assume very little commonality among their students and must be prepared for surprises of academic deficiencies as well as the excitement of watching the uninitiated wrestle with issues of truth.

Participation in the Contemporary World

If this departmental faculty of Spring Arbor University is part of a genuinely unique community involved in a common stance and task, and if the department of philosophy and religion at the University firmly believes that their Christian message is both life-changing and life-challenging, and if the department is actively advocating the integration of all learning, then the conclusion is that we must become critical

participants in the contemporary world, or in the words of Bob Briner, "roaring lambs."[15]

In addressing the faculty at Wheaton College, Nicholas Wolterstorff has suggested that the current task of the Christian college is to "move from the appropriation of a stream of culture and address society directly. They must equip Christians to hear and respond to the cries of a suffering world. In the past they have cultivated piety and learned to appreciate the arts and sciences, they must now cultivate peace and care of the earth."[16]

Thus "critical participation" includes both the image of a "roaring lamb" (excellence and involvement in the secular routines of life) and the image of a "quiet lion" (the perspective of the Christian activist who is pursuing peace, justice and reformation among the "overlooked, oppressed and avoided" of society). "Critical participation" must involve both the challenge of a Christian to outlive, outwork, and outproduce their secular counterpart and be a strong contributor and leader in the outreaching arm of Christian ministry to the needy.

So what? How does that impact the curriculum of a university?

First, no curriculum is simply an end in itself

or for the purposes of self-propagation; such an image says that curriculum (in its broadest sense) forms the purpose for all that is done. A vision of involvement in the contemporary world must motivate and activate both faculty and student. Even spiritual formation is not an end in itself, but a means to a larger end. This assumes that faculty must have vision to be transmitted—the type of vision that is "caught from a burning heart." Classes must be designed to empower students with vision; skills and content can be added easily when there is a foundation of vision. Such a vision is basic both in teaching and in learning. Both senior learners and junior learners become role models for vision-living.

Secondly, the broad scopes and callings to fulfill such a vision are limited only to the creativity of our God. The options of ministry are countless and each "learner" offers the option for a new variation. Each student's call and vision for his/her own ministry must be appraised, clarified, encouraged and enabled through both curricular and extra-curricular means. Not only must general curriculum have a dynamic to it that adjusts to needs, but also classroom procedures per course must have that same flexibility. Extra-curricular activities must serve the same goal.

The Christian community has been very eager to climb aboard the bandwagon for the "traditional" ministries, but students must begin to think outside of the traditional ministry in order to embrace the creative forms of the untried. It is difficult to realize that the most limiting factor may be our own imagination and vision. This must be a call for students and faculty alike to be creative, adventurous and take risks for the building of the eternal kingdom.

Thirdly, relevance in ministry is essential in a rapidly changing world. No one can anticipate the nature of "ministry" in 10-20 years. The message will continue, but both circumstances and methods may go far beyond anything we can now conceive. Students must understand both the subject and objects of ministry, the differences between methods and message of ministry and how to adapt to a world that is "becoming." Skills of adaptation to a changing world are far more important than specific methods that are the current "fads" of theological doing. Retooling of current ministry personnel is an overlooked task that must be addressed.

Fourth, to enhance the relevance of ministry, we must bring the student face-to-face with real ministry. This means that the faculty must have a

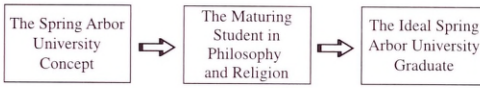
vital and growing knowledge of ministry from personal experience. Resources used in the classroom must be current, functional and productive. The student must be confronted with "outside work experiences" whether as part of a class requirement, a required internship/practicum or a voluntary experience of the student. The most effective "ministry experience" needs to exemplify positive leadership, a growing situation, an appropriate fit with the student-learner and an opportunity for dialog during the process. Programs of structured internships, as well as community opportunities for service, are essential for the molding of a ministering mentality.

The challenging task of "ministerial education" must infuse vision and excitement, must openly and fairly confront significant issues, involve learning from both research and experience and construct a Christian hermeneutic that develops an integrated theology for ministering to real-life issues.

Conclusion

The Spring Arbor University Concept is designed as a tool to aid in building a specific student outcome. Many years ago, the faculty developed an "outcomes" statement labeled "The

Ideal Spring Arbor University Graduate." Although it has been "tweaked" over the years, the essence of the statement has continued. Thus, if the individual departments are doing an effective job, the result should be the "Ideal Graduate" (See Appendix). So when this (or any department) functions properly, issues of the ideal graduate should be evident.



Through the process we call a "college education" the department of philosophy and religion attempts to fulfill the four planks of the Concept in such a way that results in the "ideal" graduate ready to face the demands and needs of the contemporary world. Without closing our eyes to present trends, and without closing our ears to the wisdom of the past, the commitment is not merely to be where the action is, but also being there with good preparation, perceptive insight, significant problem solving skills and good news.

Endnotes

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As former registrar, dean for academic administration and vice president for academic affairs, Robert Bailey has experienced much in over 20 years with the University. A professor of religion, Bailey is chair of the department of philosophy and religion at Spring Arbor University.

A.B., Greenville College
B.D., Th.M., Asbury Theological Seminary
Ed.D., Western Michigan University
Spring Arbor, 1983-

A former pastor in Ohio, Charles Dillman recently retired after serving as professor of religion and biblical studies for 30 years at Spring Arbor University.

B.A., Otterbein College
B.Div., Trinity Lutheran Theological Seminary
Th.M., Columbia Theological Seminary
Ph.D., University of Edinburgh, Scotland
Spring Arbor, 1974-2004

The intellectual act through which the divine is revealed is mathematics.

–Nicolas of Cusa

The Concept and Mathematics

Garnet (Smith) Hauger, Ph.D.

Some may wonder how mathematics could possibly relate to the Spring Arbor University Concept. The Concept speaks of "total commitment to Jesus Christ as the perspective for learning." But mathematics is often seen as an exact science, one that exists and is practiced without regard to a particular religious viewpoint. How could being a Christian possibly relate to being a mathematician? How could being a mathematician inform one's life as a Christian?

The Concept also calls for "critical

participation in the contemporary world." This image often seems contradictory to the one too often portrayed of the socially awkward and slightly geeky mathematician. It may be more obvious that mathematics connects to "lifelong involvement in the study and application of the liberal arts," but even then, many who consider themselves liberally educated often confess (or even brag about) their ignorance of mathematics.

However to discuss mathematics in the context of the various planks of the Spring Arbor University Concept, is to make the case that mathematics is not only a legitimate part of a liberal arts education, but that it also has something to do with "Jesus Christ as the perspective for learning" and "critical participation in the contemporary world." It is to assert that the teaching of mathematics is best done within the construct of a community of scholars.

Lifelong Involvement in the Study and Appliction of the Liberal Arts

Historically, the liberal arts consisted of the *trivium* (the verbal arts) and the *quadrivium* (the mathematical arts). The *quadrivium*, as the name implies, consists of four aspects of mathematical study:

Arithmetic - the mathematics of number/ quantity
Geometry - the mathematics of shape
Music - the mathematics of sound
Astronomy - the mathematics of space

The clear message here is that mathematics has been part of the liberal arts from the very first attempts to define and categorize the various areas of knowledge.

Over the centuries music and astronomy have become fields of study in their own right and other areas of mathematics have been added to arithmetic and geometry. Some of those areas are ones college students have typically had some experience with—algebra, trigonometry, calculus, probability and statistics. Some newer areas have been added because they represent concepts that are particularly helpful in the study of specific academic disciplines like business and computer science and specialized areas of engineering. These newer areas include graph and tree theory, functional and complex analysis, topology, and projective and differential geometry.

How does this picture of the various branches of mathematics relate to a "lifelong involvement in the study and application of the

liberal arts"? The answer may be found in the historical development of mathematics. Mathematics and its several branches developed over centuries as a result of two seemingly opposing forces: interaction with and attempts to understand and describe the physical universe, and a desire to place mathematics on a sound logical foundation.

Both of these forces were at work in the ancient world. For example, Aristotle and Archimedes and others made great strides in describing the movements of planets and their relationships to one another and to the earth. That is one reason astronomy was considered a branch of mathematics; it came to be understood within the context of mathematical ideas like ratios of lengths and angles, rates involving distance and time, and relative measurements of area and volume. This was an early attempt to use mathematical ideas to understand the movements of the stars and their relative positions.

At around the same time, the Pythagoreans were trying to place mathematics as a logical system on a sound footing. The invention of the deductive method led to a flurry of intellectual activity that resulted in theorems and proofs of particular statements within the context of a

specific set of axioms and postulates, and defined and undefined terms. This unique contribution revolutionized the thought world and underlies all of mathematics.[2]

What do these two forces have to do with "lifelong involvement in the study and application of the liberal arts"? Two points need to be made here. One is that much of mathematics was developed for the expressed purpose of understanding and describing the physical and natural world. From the 15th to 19th centuries, it was Christian mathematicians who dominated this effort. Newton, Kepler and others developed powerful mathematics to describe the physical universe and as they did so, they praised the God who created that universe. They were not bashful about declaring that their efforts as scholars were driven by their desire to worship their creator in a more informed way.

The second point is that the development of axiomatic and deductive systems led many to an understanding of truth in a new way, an understanding that made truth more rational in the sense that it could be reasoned out, accompanied by logical thinking, justified by laws of logic. And it was not just mathematicians who were using this new method of reasoning. Other areas of

knowledge were taking advantage of this new way of thinking about truth. For example, great strides were made in the development of government, citizenship and the modern state. It is not too much of an exaggeration to claim that the Apostle Paul showed clearly his training in deductive reasoning by the arguments he made in some of his letters to the early church.

The primary message about mathematics is this: A study of mathematics can help one understand the universe and hopefully better appreciate the God who created it. It can also help one develop reasoned ways of thinking and talking about one's faith, ways that take advantage of deductive methods of reasoning. That is what "lifelong involvement in the study and application of the liberal arts" might look like when thinking about mathematics.

Total Commitment to Jesus Christ as the Perspective for Learning

The two themes discussed in the previous section not only relate to "lifelong involvement in the study and application of the liberal arts" but also they come into play when we think about "total commitment to Jesus Christ as the perspective for learning." If mathematics is seen

as an exact science that yields answers that do not differ from one person to the next, that have nothing to do with an individual's religious point of view, then it is hard to make the case that mathematics and Christianity can be connected. But if mathematics is seen as adding to the store of knowledge about our world and our place in it, then it leaves the door wide open for consideration of the great questions of the Christian faith.

When mathematicians and scientists first presented evidence—based on sound mathematics and science—that the earth is not the center of the universe, that the earth revolves around the sun and not vice versa, and that the earth is but one of many planets in the universe, the church was not initially very happy. This new knowledge put the church's teachings about the centrality of our planet and our place in the universe in jeopardy. But as other mathematical and scientific evidence made it clear that these new theories about the universe and our physical place in it were in fact true, the church came to realize that its understanding of the place of earth and its inhabitants was not based on the teachings of Christ. So these advances in knowledge based on mathematics and science gave the Christian world an opportunity to correct its understanding of the

Christian worldview so that it was more in keeping with the scriptures.

A quote from Kepler makes the integrative aspect of mathematics and a Christian worldview clearer:

> I thank thee, O Lord, that thou has permitted me to look at the beauty in thy work of creation; I exult in the works of thy hands. I have completed the work to which I felt called; I have earned interest from the talent thou hast given me. I have proclaimed the glory of thy works to the people who will read these demonstrations, to the extent that the limitations of my spirit would allow.[3]

This is but one example of the integrative possibilities between mathematics and a Christian worldview. Here is another that was alluded to in the previous section. When one learns the purpose and power of the deductive method of reasoning, then one looks at all of life differently. In particular one looks at Christianity differently. It is not difficult to exam Christianity within the context of deductive ways of thinking. Are there not basic

tenets of the faith (axioms and postulates)? Are there not specific terms and ideas, like faith and grace, that have special and often undefined meanings (defined and undefined terms)? Are there not both statements of belief and behavior that come logically out of these basic tenets (theorems and proofs)? It is not too much of a stretch to say that those who have studied mathematics and other academic disciplines that emphasize deductive reasoning have an understanding of a Christian worldview that is both wider and deeper.

It is clear, then, that mathematics both informs and is informed by a Christian worldview. Both are enriched by a knowledge of the other, and together they present a view of the world that is more complete.

Participation in the Contemporary World

Even from the few brief examples given above, it should be clear that mathematics has made great contributions to our understanding of the physical universe. That has been true especially for the study of the physical universe via astronomy and physics.

In more recent centuries, mathematics has contributed to an understanding of the natural and

social worlds. For example, mathematics has become an extremely useful tool in studying biological systems, describing the affects of an unchecked population on the availability of resources, and contributing to the making of policy related to preserving an ecological balance. In the social world, mathematics—especially the branch of statistics—has helped to reveal patterns and relationships that contribute both to understanding situations and designing interventions where that understanding has identified a problem.

This role that mathematics has played in history and continues to play today is a major avenue for "critical participation in the contemporary world." Although not all of mathematics finds its way into areas of application to the further understanding of the universe, the God who created it, and our place in redeeming it, mathematics clearly has played over the centuries—and continues to play—an important role in developing that understanding. Without mathematics, much of what we know about the physical, natural and social worlds would not exist.

Does the study of mathematics for its own sake have any immediate or future application in the "real" world? There are ongoing arguments about this in the field of mathematics today—

especially when it comes to receiving funding for mathematical research. Basic research—that branch of research that aims to add to our knowledge without regard to promises about the applicability of that research—has been a foundational piece for the work of knowledge development.

Historically, this is the area of knowledge development that has made ideas and concepts available for future generations. Some of this knowledge has been useful for solving problems not known or in existence when the knowledge was developed. Some of this knowledge has added to our understanding of how the world works so that we can think differently about our world. And some of this knowledge has raised new problems or made possible new applications of knowledge that were unforeseen or that the world has not welcomed.

Another type of research is what is sometimes called applied research, which is research directly related to the solution of some problem. Companies and private enterprises typically want to fund research that is going to lead to the development of some product or service that will yield a financial payback. But even this type of research can be controversial. So a question

that has to be addressed is this: "What is the role of research, basic or otherwise, in the Christian's understanding of what it means to be a critical participant in the contemporary world?"

There is disagreement among scholars, funding agencies, and national governments about whether or not scholars should be pursuing some areas of basic and applied research. There is fear, often justified, that new knowledge will be used in ways not consistent with the values and beliefs of those who developed that knowledge. How does a Christian scholar deal with this?

A very simplistic answer to this question may be helpful. And that answer is this: No area of life is protected from struggle with foundational questions or misunderstandings or misappropriation of one's work. Indeed, scholars—and particularly Christian scholars—are called to fight for what is right in every area of our life and scholarly research is no different. No matter what we contribute in life to the advancement of knowledge, there will be those who use our work for their own gains. That is one of the dangers of creative work. But where would we be, both as scholars and as Christians, if we shrank from doing this creative work? Where would the world be? Where would the work of

the Kingdom be?

As in every endeavor in life, we struggle "against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."[4] Though mathematicians may worry about misuse of our scholarly efforts, and rightly we should be vigilant in that area, as in all areas of our lives, we cannot simply use the possibility of misappropriation of the knowledge we develop as an excuse for not doing it. Instead, we work for the right and fight against the wrong. In that respect, scholarly work is no different from all other areas of our lives as Christians.

Mathematics has been a fertile ground for producing knowledge that has advanced our understanding of our world. It holds the promise for doing the same in the future. Christian scholars have the responsibility to continue their work of producing knowledge in their chosen field. They also have the added burden of influencing, as much as possible, the use of that knowledge so that it honors our Lord and accomplishes Kingdom work.

A Community of Learners

The historical development of mathematics makes it clear that the creation of knowledge is not done in isolation, but is done in conversation

with others in the field. Letters exchanged among mathematicians in the 17th and 18th centuries make it clear that these scholars bounced ideas off one another and that they leaned on the advice of others working in the same field.

It is sometimes noted that mathematicians working independently of each other have developed the same piece of mathematics; calculus is often used as an example of this. It may be true that the two main developers of calculus as an organized set of ideas and methodologies were not in direct contact with each other. However, many of those working on calculus-type problems were regularly publishing their results and having frequent conversations with others working on similar problems. It seemed, therefore, inevitable that someone (in this case, two "someones") would collect all of those results under one organizational scheme.

The example of calculus, as well as the development of non-Euclidean geometries during the same time period, shows that it is very much the case that mathematicians communicate with each other quite regularly about the problems they are working on and give advice to each other about methodology and fruitful paths.[5] This shows quite clearly the role of community in advancing both

knowledge and bringing younger scholars along, as well as holding less-worthy ideas in check. And it is consistent with what has come to be a fairly well accepted fact of educational theory: people learn more when they work together than when they work in isolation.

Similarly, our knowledge of what it means to be redeemed and how that knowledge can provide the framework for our understanding of the role of our academic discipline in understanding and appreciating God's world is much deeper and wider when it is developed in conversation with others, both those more knowledgeable than ourselves and those developing an initial understanding of these things.

Finally, the efforts to apply mathematical knowledge to a fallen world in an effort to reconcile it to Christ is better done in concert with others who believe, as many mathematicians do, that faith in Christ and a deep knowledge of the liberal arts form the basis for rewarding and worthwhile work in the Kingdom of God. The role of the Body of Christ in both sustaining individual Christians and evangelizing the world is a major theme of the New Testament. It seems clear, then, that our efforts are more fruitful when we live and

work in community.

Conclusion

The two major strands in the development of mathematical knowledge—development of mathematics to understand phenomena in our world and the use of deductive systems to explore possible mathematical worlds—form the basis of understanding mathematics in terms of a "lifelong involvement in the study and application of the liberal arts."

Similarly, the use of mathematics to examine the universe God created, to understand and worship that God, and the use of the deductive method of reasoning to think more deeply about our Christian faith provide powerful connections between mathematics and "total commitment to Jesus Christ as the perspective for learning."

Finally, the work of mathematics contributes to Kingdom work by advancing knowledge of the world and providing an avenue of fruitful solution to some of the world's problems. This makes for an integrative connection between mathematics and "critical participation in the contemporary world."

Endnotes

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[3] Davis, P.J. & Hersh, R., *ibid.*

[4] Ephesians 6:12 NIV

[5] Greenberg, M.J., *ibid.*

Hauger, see page 94.

Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

–1 Corinthians 10:31

The Concept and Music

Bruce Brown, Ph.D.

At Spring Arbor University music is heard, practiced, performed and studied in many different ways. Music majors and minors study intensively, of course, but students from many different majors and minors take private lessons and participate in bands, choirs, and orchestras to develop their God-given skills. Extra-curricular groups like the Gospel Choir and Chapel Band provide even more opportunities for involvement and worship through music. Many general education courses also incorporate musical concepts and experiences,

recognizing that they offer special insights about human life and culture.

Many colleges, especially Christian schools, can say the same thing, of course. Young people who have been fortunate enough to grow up in a nurturing, Christian family are often deeply involved in music. Their parents tend to be people who value music, and musically-gifted children are often encouraged to sing and play in church from a very early age. In many cases they have also taken years of private lessons and have been actively involved in music programs in their schools.

There is a unique genius to the Concept, though, that provides a dynamic, insightful and creative focus for music at Spring Arbor University, just as it provides clarity and direction in so many other ways on the campus. The Concept is an invaluable yardstick for measuring the truest value and importance of our musical activities, and it provides an unfailing guide for keeping things in their proper perspective. It calls musicians to be part of an active community, sharing with others in the quest to improve and perform well. It challenges us to continue learning and growing – to become lifelong learners. It reminds us to form our deepest values as musicians by making Jesus

Christ the perspective for learning. And finally, the Concept challenges us to make the most of our musical skills as critical participants in our contemporary world.

In 1994 the music department adopted the following mission statement:

> The Spring Arbor University Music Department believes that music, as both a science and an art, is a gift from God, used to express all of the various human emotions, moods, values, and thoughts which He has given us. We therefore believe in the sacredness of all music-making (in composition, performance, and teaching), whether the music is sacred or secular, or whether it is classical, jazz, or contemporary. Because of this "sacredness," whatever music is written or performed at Spring Arbor University should honor God through a striving for excellence, genuineness of expression, and a broader understanding of God's purpose and presence in our lives.[1]

These words are a challenge to all of us—students and faculty alike—and they speak eloquently about the ways that musicians at the University strive to reflect commitment to the shared set of beliefs expressed in the Concept.

Community

It is difficult to imagine music making apart from the notion of community. By its very nature, music involves shared participation and mutual support. The language in the mission statement above speaks of "us" rather than "I." Musicians must work together, not only cooperatively, but also intimately, to be successful.

In his book, *Music Through the Eyes of Faith,* Harold Best points out that "great art and great music do not come about just by amassing detail. Instead, true artistry is more a matter of exquisite timing and spacing among all of the parts: how to make something, how much of it to make, and when to change or stop."[2] Best is referring primarily to the composition of melodies, yet the principle applies equally well to the cooperation required for musical performance. All members of a group must be sensitive to each other and encourage one another. Even a solo performer is lost without a sympathetic audience with which

to communicate. Music at Spring Arbor University is at its best when it celebrates community.

All aspects of music education at Spring Arbor University are based on a reverence for a special form of community that exists in the great traditions of music, extending back to the masters of classical music, to spiritual leaders like John Wesley, Charles Wesley and Martin Luther, and to the ancient Greeks and Hebrews. It is always tempting to dismiss or disregard the past, but insightful understanding of the great traditions of music makes current-day musical experience richer and more rewarding both for listeners and for performers.

In his book, *Poetics of Music,* the composer Igor Stravinsky makes a powerful point about the importance and nature of tradition:

> Tradition is entirely different from habit, even from an excellent habit, for habit is by definition an unconscious acquisition and tends to become mechanical, whereas tradition results from a conscious and deliberate acceptance. A real tradition is not a relic of a past irretrievably gone; it is a living force that animates and informs

> the present. Far from implying a repetition of what has been, tradition presupposes the reality of what endures. It appears as an heirloom, a heritage that one receives on condition of making it bear fruit before passing it on to one's descendents.[3]

This idea of making a tradition bear fruit before passing it on to one's descendents is especially appropriate today as churches struggle to balance the dynamism and excitement of contemporary Christian music with the worship practices that have been handed down from our ancestors. Musical styles that are energizing and exciting for youth may have little appeal for an older generation, and clearly the opposite is also true.

It is critical that the Christian leaders of tomorrow understand the meaning and value of the traditions of the church, just as it is essential for them to realize the exciting possibilities and potential to be found in newer styles of music making and worship. They also need to always be mindful that regardless of the style of music and ritual, the authenticity of the worship experience is vital.

The Univerisity's new worship arts major seeks especially to develop just this kind of perspective, and students in all majors are encouraged to understand the musical tastes of our time in the perspective of biblical and classical values.

Lifelong study and application

Essential for musicians, good musical performance demands intensive, persistent study and significant effort. And the Concept encourages us to stay the course. As in other artistic fields, it is always tempting to settle for a "feel-good" standard of competency. But 1 Corinthians 10:31 exhorts us to do everything to the glory of God. This calls for a much higher standard, a full commitment to excellence.

Insisting that whatever music is written or performed at Spring Arbor University should honor God through a striving for excellence, genuineness of expression, and a broader understanding of God's purpose and presence in our lives, takes this concept even further. As Christian musicians, we are called to honor God not only by striving to do our best, but also by being genuine in our expression, and by seeking to understand how our effort can reflect God's

purpose and His incarnation more deeply. A lifetime is certainly not long enough to complete such an ambitious goal!

One of the most appealing aspects of music is that people can take great enjoyment from participation in musical groups regardless of age or skill level. Choirs, bands, orchestras and vocal ensembles in churches and communities offer very meaningful opportunities for participation and provide an environment that encourages people to continue to grow and improve as musicians. Spring Arbor University students are able to participate in music ensembles or take private lessons regardless of their major and skill level. The Concept reminds us of the value of providing this form of experience, helping students begin a joyous journey of learning and participation that can last a lifetime, and helping them cultivate the habit of continual growth and learning.

It is also important to teach students in other majors to have interest in being a lifelong learner when it comes to music. There is great value in being curious about where a certain piece of music was written and what life was like at that time and place. This kind of insight almost always makes a piece of music more enjoyable to hear. In the same way, understanding what is expressed in a certain

work greatly enhances our ability to experience its richness and depth to the fullest extent possible. It takes hard work to gain the knowledge and insight that can lead to better experiences, but the reward is well worth the effort.

Commitment to Christ

Total commitment to Jesus Christ as the perspective for learning provides the essential element of meaning that makes the hard work and countless hours of music study so important. If music, as both a science and an art, is a gift from God, used to express all of the various human emotions, moods, values, and thoughts which He has given us, then serious study in music requires a healthy examination of what it means to have faith and express it through the arts.

Education informed by Christian commitment is uniquely poised to deliver meaningful insight into the myriad ways composers and performers of all ages have expressed their faith through their music, and how Christian musicians can continue to do so in our postmodern world. The Concept helps to keep this perspective fresh in our minds.

On his personal Web site, the brilliant classical guitarist Christopher Parkening relates

the moving tale of his conversion to Christianity, and describes the miraculous transforming effect that coming to faith had on his life and career. At the age of 30, he found that his life as a professional musician – a life that many would envy –seemed empty and pointless. As his sense of futility continued and deepened, he finally quit performing altogether and bought a ranch where he could pursue his other passion, fly fishing.

Then something dramatic happened. He became a Christian!

Not long after that, he read about the deep faith of J.S. Bach, who said, "The aim and final reason…of all music…should be none else but the glory of God and the recreation of the mind."[4] Parkening suddenly found a renewed desire to play stirring in his own heart.

> I thought, "If Bach could use his great ability for that purpose, that would be the least I could do with whatever ability or talent the Lord had given me." It became evident that the Lord wanted me to return to playing the guitar again, but this time with a different purpose—to honor and glorify my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.[5]

Parkening's story poignantly illustrates the fact that music-making and faith are often inextricably linked, and attempting to understand them apart from each other is at best difficult, and at worst grossly misleading.

Critical Participation

If, as Christians, we believe in the sacredness of all music-making (in composition, performance, and teaching), whether the music is sacred, secular, classical, jazz or contemporary, then a Christian music student is in a very special position for critical participation in the contemporary world.

John F. Kennedy made an important observation that illustrates why this dimension is so important in Christian higher education. He said, "The life of the arts, far from being an interruption, a distraction, in the life of a nation, is close to the center of a nation's purpose, and a test of the quality of a nation's civilization."[6] The media is saturated these days with music and imagery that appeals to the lowest common denominators in human experience. If America continues to lavish time, attention and money on these kinds of musical expression, history may well be justified in judging our culture very harshly, indeed.

Is it going too far to say that all music-making can be sacred? In his insightful book, *Art and the Bible,* Francis Schaeffer asserts: "Let me say firmly that there is no such thing as a godly or ungodly style."[7] Harold Best agrees: "There is nothing un- or anti-Christian about any kind of music. By the same token, there is no such thing as Christian music … all good music should be offered to a Creator for whom a thousand tongues will never suffice."[8] But Schaeffer also insists "…we must distinguish carefully between style and message."[9]

The essential point here is that all musical styles can glorify God, but meanings associated with music—in lyrics or visual images, for example—can run the gamut from the sublime to the horrific. In our culture today, music and other arts have been perverted into a vehicle for many destructive and offensive kinds of messages. The Concept calls for Spring Arbor University scholars to be discriminating as consumers of music and to resist corrosive messages that are presented in glossy artistic packages. It also encourages those who perform music to be salt and light in a world where all too many musical messages are negative and destructive.

In 1951-52 another great composer, Aaron Copland, delivered a series of lectures at Harvard University. His thoughts were later published in *Music and Imagination*. As Copland neared the end of his narrative, he expressed his belief that good music must always come from deeply felt beliefs: "What, after all, do I put down when I put down notes? I put down a reflection of emotional states: feelings, perceptions, imaginings, intuitions…art…gives meaning to *la condition humaine*. If it gives meaning it necessarily has purpose. I would even add that it has moral purpose."[10]

When all is said and done, he says, this purpose has to be positive in nature: "Negative emotions cannot produce art; positive emotions bespeak an emotion about something. I cannot imagine an art work without implied convictions; and that is true also for music, the most abstract of the arts."[11]

The Spring Arbor University Concept provides an inspiring model for equipping Christians to use their musical talents to spread the message of hope and transformation to a world that is desperately in need of "good news."

Endnotes

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[8] Best, H., *ibid.*

[9] Schaeffer, F.A., *ibid.*

[10] Copland, A. (1952). *Music and imagination* (p. 111). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

[11] Copland, A., *ibid.*

An active composer, Jonathan Bruce Brown serves as composer in residence with the Jackson Symphony Orchestra. His modern, yet lyrical, compositional style has made him a frequent recipient of commissions for new works. He received the 1991 Sears-Roebuck Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence and Campus Leadership, and Faculty Merit Awards in 1988 and 1995. Brown is a professor of music and chair of the music department at Spring Arbor University.

B.A., Central Michigan University
M.M., University of Hawaii
D.M.A., University of North Texas
Spring Arbor, 1984-

The arts may not specifically give the altar call, but the Bible makes it very plain that God has given them a true function in his service.

–Frank Gaebelein

The Concept and Art

Roger Varland, M.A.

Like all of the disciplines having their "Concept connections" explored, art brings to the table its own unique set of issues and questions. Here at Spring Arbor University, the art agenda has been part of the curricula for a relatively short time, becoming a major only in the 1970s, a decade after the move from junior to 4-year college. Today the program is a significant presence on campus being the fifth largest undergraduate program.

Community of Learners

The first plank of the Concept, "a community of learners," intersects the study of art at two major points, the first being the classroom or studio setting. While Spring Arbor University's program is loosely modeled after an academy framework, the interaction between instructor and student is a delicate balance between expert-apprentice and co-creator. Both models assume that the one has something to give to the other, but the expert-apprentice option leans toward a belief that there is one way to mastery. While producing finely skilled craftsmen, this model can end up stifling creativity and personal expression. On the other end, the co-creator model sometimes elevates self-expression at the expense of aesthetic excellence.

Somewhere in the middle, this notion of a community of learners can flourish. While it is obvious that the student artist can learn from the master, true creative independence can only be nourished in dialogue that is willing to see each other as partners in the aesthetic adventure. This push-pull, give-and-take can only exist in a "community" of learners, not an army of learners, a team of learners, or even a family of learners.

More specifically, the push-pull learning environment happens when a sense of equality

exists between teachers and students. Though the teacher is respected as having more knowledge, the vision and creative instincts of the student are to be honored and encouraged, hopefully allowing the two to learn from each other. In short, community is fostered more by dialogue than by directive.

Beyond the arena of the department, the broader realm of the campus is the second community where learners are to engage one another. In an ideal world, all disciplines respect one another and strive to build an institution that reflects the sum of all knowledge. In reality however, respect, even interest for other areas of knowledge often goes wanting. As faculty trained in tightly focused disciplines, the natural tendency is to see our realm as the center of the universe and the starting point for all knowledge. Hence the first step in building community is a struggle over boundaries and domains. Though art does not have a lock on the visual world, it is one where those trained can offer yet another perspective on the questions of the day.

One of the best contributions from artists can be nurturing the visual climate on campus. One common avenue is through an energized gallery program that showcases not just work from

students, but also works from the outside that encourages new ways of seeing and promotes discussion among a variety of campus groups. Other connections to the campus include contribution of visual thought to the campus conversation through guest lecturing and presentation.

Liberal Arts

Art's inclusion in the liberal arts will not be challenged by many, but it is worth examining its role within the arena of disciplines. For openers, the Concept speaks of the serious study of the liberal arts. In art, the serious can at times create angst among students who perceive the purpose of an art major is making things, not thinking about them. The challenge is to move them from merely doing to thoughtful reflection and analysis, the heart of a liberal education. (Agreed, we ultimately want our students to "do", but only in a thoughtful and informed manner. The world already has enough doing without thinking.)

Looking further at place and role, art is similar to and yet different from the other humanities in the manner in which it is studied. Spring Arbor University is similar to most schools in that not all the humanities are taught with similar

pedagogies. Art is taught with an emphasis on creating original work, supplemented with examples from others and a few courses in art history. Music and theater, at least in most situations, are focused mainly on the performance of works created by others, flavored with an occasional touch of personal interpretation. Literature, unless one is in a creative writing track, is primarily the study and analysis of work by others.

These different approaches force us to ask what we are trying to learn by studying the humanities. In its classic definition, the humanities teach us about what it means to be human, that is, our creative and expressive capacities. Hence, we have established a tradition of studying what generations have considered to be the best efforts of human kind. The organizing idea has been that the path to the future is paved with the stones of the past. In art, the emphasis has been on learning how to create and express one's own ideas rather than focus on the analysis of others. Now to be sure, the efforts of art students are certainly influenced by the work of others, but not nearly as much time is spent studying the works of others as is across the hall in literature.

In short, it is important that liberally educated students not only study what others have created, but also explore the creative process in some form. Art is a natural place for that to happen, but it can take place in the other humanities as well. In the same breath, here within the art department, a continual clarification of what we are trying to teach via the liberal arts, then more specifically in the humanities, and finally in the visual arts, only serves to make us better educators.

A second reason for studying art as part of a liberal education is that it lays the initial foundation for visual literacy. The study of art, whether through one's own work or the work of others, forces "critical seeing" or should we say thoughtful observation. The skills necessary to read and operate within today's visually saturated culture can be taught and honed through the study of art.

Jesus Christ as the Perspective

As with all of life, our faith should be our starting point when moving out into the world of learning in search of truth. Though fraught with potholes and barriers, we can travel with confidence knowing that all truth is God's truth. This being the case, we can confidently ask the

hard questions, not only in some disciplines, but in all, art included.

One of the first questions to deal with is, "Why create?" Not to sound simplistic, but because we can. Being created in the image of God has left us with the stamp of the original creation, the *imago dei*. The original Creator, the one who created the universe including the intricacies of our own planet, set us apart from the rest of the living creatures by giving us the ability to create and ponder. If there is one characteristic of God that permeates Genesis 1, it is that He is a "maker." Hence, humans have used their creative abilities in a variety of ways across the centuries, some of which have been honed into "disciplines" which we now call the humanities.

Within the evangelical tradition, two other issues have evolved to shape current practices, those being the making of graven images and the notion of utilitarianism. The first draws its focus from Exodus 20 where God tells his people not to make and worship any images. This has led, at various points in church history, to the banning of all decoration in churches and a subtle general distrust of visual representation.[1] Over the years, this has carried over into seeing art as something peripheral within certain segments of the church.

The key to unraveling this misunderstanding is realizing that it is the worship of images that is the problem, not the creation.[2] Again, referring to Exodus, in one chapter God is dictating the decoration of the temple, but in the next, the creation has become the object rather than the means and the dance around the golden calf has begun.

Another paradigm that needs to be re-worked is the difference between worship and appreciation. The aesthetic experience is a blood relative of worship, but the nuances of the two are often confused and lead to some irrational conclusions concerning the role of art. Music has at times had to navigate the same forest, but has experienced greater acceptance from being seen as more integral to the spiritual life.

The second issue is utilitarianism, the notion that art is not important because it does not directly serve the purpose of spreading the Gospel in the way that music or drama can be used. Though proclaiming the Good News is high on life's agenda, there are other dimensions to our existence. "The arts may not specifically give the altar call, but the Bible makes it very plain that God has given them a true function in his service. They can bring glory to God whenever and

wherever they are truly and faithfully practiced and thoughtfully enjoyed. For there's a sense in which all art is a celebration of him."[3]

Critical Participation in the Contemporary World

Connecting art with the final plank of the Concept is the pinnacle if one chooses to see the other planks adding up to this final product. While it is true that we wish to teach and model critical participation during a student's time with us, it is more accurately a description of where we wish to see students headed in their years after Spring Arbor University. In the broad sense, we would wish for all our students to be visually literate as mentioned above, but with only one two-hour required course in the visual arts, many graduate with only a basic exposure to the skills and ideas. Arguing from a blatantly biased point of view, in light of this century's increasing visual diet, it is imperative that students learn how to be critical rather than passive participants. This may not mean more art courses per se, but it does mean more topics and questions related to the visual world in all classes. The realms of film, television, and print immediately come to mind, but there is plenty of room for discerning Christian minds to go further

into all corners of the visual world as creators, consumers, and critics.

Within the department, our majors get a full dose of these skills and the questions of participation become much more focused as they choose career paths. We have a strong tradition of training teachers for the public schools, an arena where the teaching of art may actually be joined with a parallel agenda of administering love and compassion. Others head for graduate school to study graphic design. As we train this group, as well as those in teacher education, our emphasis is that life needs to remain an integrated whole, not a dual track existence with spiritual life on one side and career in the world on the other. The Good News is not only told to others with direct words, but modeled through relationships and creative endeavors. Leading a Bible study at the office is only a small part of living out a life that brings a Christian worldview to bear on the daily issues that shape our society, culture, and world. Charlie Peacock writes about life and art as telling a story, whether we try or not. "This is what a follower of Jesus is. This is what he is about. This is what he believes. This is what he thinks is important…a Christian is a living explanation."[4]

A related challenge is that the arts have not always been seen as having as much validity as say medicine or preaching when it comes to choosing a life of service. Unfortunately, this disengagement has left the church without much of a voice when it comes to proclaiming truth in the gallery, museum, or any of the other arenas where the public encounters the visual arts. In that much of the world is having a conversation without us, it seems that one of the mission fields of the future is in fact the world of the arts.

At the same time, the breezes of postmodernism have been blowing through galleries for long enough to create an opportunity for dialogue. With modernism's claim to truth being exchanged for the pluralistic environment of many "truths," the Christian perspective has access to the table as the culture's interest in spiritual matters continues to grow. The down side to all this opportunity, is that defining what is truly good is even more difficult in a world that has no more use for measuring sticks, whether qualitatively or morally. However, we can offer an ultimate standard of goodness in the character of God, the one who declared from the beginning, "It is good."[5]

To close, our students need to be aware of and trained in the power of the visual, being wise and bold enough to not only provide answers but also to help others work through the hard questions. What are the intersections of art and theology in our culture and how do we make sense of them? What is good? What is meaning? Do images cloud, confuse or clarify? It is only through a deeper understanding of visual aesthetics that we will be able to be critical participants in our contemporary world.

Endnotes

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From resident director to faculty member, Roger Varland has experienced much in his 23 years at Spring Arbor University. He exhibits his photography around the country and has taught both in China and Kenya. Varland, who teaches courses in photography, art history, American history and CORE courses, is associate professor of history and art at Spring Arbor University.

B.S., Taylor University
M.A., Western Michigan University
M.F.A. candidate, Eastern Michigan University
Spring Arbor, 1985-

Humanity is charged with the tending of creation, in the full knowledge that this creation is the cherished possession of God... Stewardship, to put it simply, is recognizing our limitations as God's creatures, and more specifically our obligations to tend and care for God's good creation.

–Alister E. McGrath

The Concept and the Natural Sciences

David A. Johnson, Ph.D.

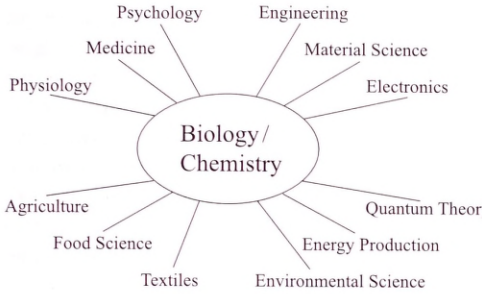
What is a liberal arts education and why does the Concept include study and application of the liberal arts? We have traditionally equated a liberal arts education to a broad, general education that ranges across the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities and religion. A liberal arts education, however, means far more than just a curriculum or course of study. A true liberal arts education does something to the learner; it develops a humanity and implements the highest calling of Christianity. Arthur Holmes reminds

us that we are at least rational, historical and valuing beings and a Christian liberal arts education is one that develops these capacities.[1]

The faculty of Spring Arbor University has described the goals of a liberal arts education in the Spring Arbor University's Ideal Graduate statement (see Appendix). They include the ability to communicate effectively, think and make sound judgments, an understanding and appreciation of the past and creative participation in the future. The curriculum and co-curricular experiences required for graduation from Spring Arbor University are designed to encourage growth in all these areas.

How does the study of science contribute to a liberal arts education? Why should a student of the arts, literature, philosophy, religion, business, education or social science study the sciences of biology and chemistry? At least five reasons can be given.

First, biology and chemistry are uniquely tied to many of the areas that directly affect our lives. Below is a diagram that shows how biology and chemistry connect to many areas or experiences we encounter on a daily basis. Because of this wide ranging interaction with everyday living, study of biology and chemistry reminds us of the far reaching effects of these disciplines.



The development of science has led to an explosion of scientific knowledge never experienced before in human history. When combined with mechanical ability and skill, it has led to innumerable applications to practical problems or technology. These applications have completely transformed the world but have produced a mixed legacy, creating tools that heal but also destroy, that enhance life but also threaten it with annihilation.

Second, modern science, including modern biology and modern chemistry, influences society and culture in profound ways and in so doing raises ethical questions that only society as a whole can answer. For example, scientists have successfully cloned copies of adult animals. The potential impacts of cloning

humans, which is currently being attempted, are huge. Persons could parent genetic copies of themselves. The genetic copy would resemble the parent as one twin resembles its sibling. Is this a process society should allow or prohibit? Only society as a whole can decide this. If we as a society are to make intelligent discussions we must have a basic understanding of the scientific principles involved.

Third, decisions involving scientific principles are often made by persons who are nonscientists. Persons who participate in political decision-making processes and the persons electing them are generally not trained in the sciences; yet, politicians make decisions concerning science policies, science funding, environmental regulations, and regulation of nuclear weapons and energy. Unsound scientific policy can potentially be imposed on an uninformed public. For example, a clear understanding of the role of nuclear medicine in diagnosing cancer and the need for research nuclear reactors to provide the appropriate isotopes would be most helpful in dealing with support for converting research nuclear reactors using highly enriched uranium fuels to lower enriched uranium fuels. Highly enriched uranium fuels can be converted to weapons of mass destruction whereas low enriched uranium fuels can not be used for nuclear weapons. If we are interested in making the planet a decent place

to live in the future, we need to understand the scientific issues that our society faces and make intelligent decisions that will be beneficial for our children and grandchildren.

Fourth, science is a fundamental way to understand the world around us and enables us to obtain knowledge not attainable by other methodologies. New scientific knowledge serves to deepen and enrich our lives in many ways. For the uninformed the world is a two-dimensional, shallow place, and for the informed a deeper, richer and more complex place.[2]

A fifth reason for studying biology and chemistry is to understand the thinking processes scientists use to determine scientific knowledge. Scientists use certain key terms to describe the way they conduct their work. Scientific knowledge, which includes biology and chemistry, is understood to be testable, reproducible, explanatory, predictable and tentative.

Scientists often begin their studies by making observations of natural phenomena and making a hypothesis or a tentative explanation or prediction. Many times the hypothesis is simply an educated guess but must be testable. The next step involves testing the hypothesis through carefully controlled experiments in which observations and measurements are made.

All data must be verifiable or reproduced by other scientists carrying out similar experiments. Results of experimentation are then analyzed to identify patterns in brief statements usually called scientific laws. The ultimate goal of scientific endeavor is to develop theories or explanations for the phenomena studied. Theories are important for they allow scientists to predict scientific behavior in other similar cases and frequently serve as a framework for organizing scientific knowledge. Contrary to some popular notions, scientific knowledge is not absolute, for no hypothesis or theory can ever be proven completely true, it can only be disproven. Thus scientific knowledge is always growing, changing and tentative. Scientists are continuously abandoning or modifying old concepts when new research tools provide new data and better concepts.[3]

In the study of the sciences one not only has a better understanding of the process by which scientific knowledge is obtained, but also how experimental data is analyzed. Critical thinking plays an important role in determining how good or valuable scientific data is. Thus, some data is more valid or believable than other data. Associated with any scientific work is an analysis of the relative value of the work. This is frequently given in statistical terms as the average and the standard deviation.

A study of the biological and chemical sciences helps students develop and use the tools of critical analysis. Such study will enhance student skills in problem solving and in the interpretation of the relative value or certainty of scientific knowledge.

The study of the sciences clearly helps students develop skills and qualities associated with a liberal arts education and contributes to the qualities required for effective leadership and citizenship.

Community of Learners

An important plank of the Spring Arbor University Concept is the call for a community of learners. President Gayle D. Beebe describes the learning community in the following manner.

> To accomplish this purpose, the educational community at Spring Arbor University, built on the Concept, and seeking to embody it, strives to cultivate a student-focused, teaching-oriented, Concept-driven community. By design the faculty and staff are closely involved in the lives of our students. Additionally, our programs are designed not only to prepare one for a meaningful career, but also to

> provide a learning community that shapes one's spiritual, moral and intellectual life.[4]

One of the unique characteristics of scientific knowledge and discoveries is that the larger scientific community plays a significant role. Scientific knowledge is almost always discovered in collaboration with many scientists. Ideas and results are shared and tested through professional meetings and peer review publications. Because of the involvement of peer review groups, scientific knowledge is subjected to critical analysis. The effect of community collaboration makes for the highest integrity and believability of scientific methodology and thought.

Interesting applications of this collaborative action in science at Spring Arbor University are the concepts of study groups, cooperative lab experiments, and collaboration with faculty in undergraduate research projects. Students working with knowledgeable and well-trained faculty are taught by example and they strive to match the academic strides of their mentors. This sense of community by collaboration with other students and senior scholars is a major academic strength of the University and accomplishes or fulfills the ideal of a learning community.

Lifelong Learning and Commitment to Jesus Christ

The Spring Arbor University Concept also calls for our learning to be lifelong and from the perspective of total commitment to Jesus Christ. What is the relevance of our commitment to Jesus Christ with respect to the study of the liberal arts, and to the study of the sciences and to lifelong learning?

The apostle Paul reminds us in I Timothy 4:1-5 that everything in existence is created by God and consequently has tremendous value. In the first chapter of Genesis the word "good" is applied six times to the various parts of creation and "very good" is used in reference to the complete creation. God thus declares in the first chapter of Genesis that all creation, each part and the total, is of value to him. Paul simply adds that since the created world is of great value to God, it should be valued by humans and especially by those who profess the name of Christ.

Biology is the science of living things, whereas chemistry is the science dealing with the composition of substances and the changes that occur when they react with each other. When one studies biology or chemistry he or she is studying that which God has created and given humans the responsibility to manage and take care of. Both of these fields are dynamic and ever changing. One sees the creativity of God in

examining the living things He has created as well as observing changes that occur in substances. God's handiwork is clearly evident to those studying biology and chemistry.

Arthur Holmes, in *The Idea of a Christian College,* suggests three aspects of humanity that are essential to a Christian worldview.[1] Humans are first rational beings requiring intellectual development. Aristotle declared that all men by nature desire to know. Since we are by nature inquisitive, a Christian liberal arts education should ignite this native inquisitiveness. Our God-given intellectual curiosity should be encouraged to explore the depths of human knowledge. If God also is rational and we attempt to think God's thoughts after him, the rational life has tremendous significance for believers.

Critical Participation

Humans are also historical beings with a past, present and future. A critical knowledge of the past enables us to understand the present and to creatively participate in the future. Since we have been created in the image of God by our creative activity, we image the creativity of God. Christian liberal arts education contributes to the development of persons into free agents who creatively and critically participate in history. As Christians involved in the serious study

and application of the liberal arts, our study and application of the liberal arts is a sacred trust given to us by our Creator.

Humans are not only rational and historical beings but are also valuing beings. We routinely make value judgments and act on those judgments. A Christian worldview unifies our thinking, as well as provides direction or orientation, so we look at life as a whole. If a person values truth, he or she practices truthfulness. Persons who value peace and justice express these values in the arts, the sciences, the politics, the social institutions and the very history they create. In the terminology of the Spring Arbor University Concept they are critical participants in the contemporary world.

What is the relevance of the Christian worldview with respect to scientific endeavors? Does the fact that we have been redeemed through faith in Jesus Christ require that we approach science in a different manner than unbelievers? It is my personal conviction that the answers to these questions can be derived from the conscientious application of the biblical doctrine of stewardship.

Christian stewardship is the response of the believer to God's great love in creating, redeeming and sustaining him or her. It is, simply put, the management of the believer's redeemed life and

possessions by the power of the Holy Spirit and under the direction of Scripture. The primary purpose of Christian stewardship is to bring glory to God and benefit to humankind.

The basis for Christian stewardship lies in the fact that the universe and all that is in it, ultimately belongs to God alone. Psalm 24:1 clearly states, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof, the world, and those that dwell in it."

Christians, however, are owned by God in a very special way. They are His by redemption as well as by creation. I Corinthians 6:19-20 states:

> Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own, you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Consequently, if we acknowledge Him as Lord of all, we are recognizing His ownership of us, and of all things.

The Word also teaches very clearly that God's Creation has been entrusted to humankind. In Genesis 1:28, God said, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish

of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

God's Word clearly teaches that Christians are accountable personally for stewardship of that which has been entrusted to them. Christ emphasizes this in Luke 19:12-27. And Romans 14:12 is particularly clear at this point: "So each of us shall give account of himself to God." This accountability extends into every area of life including politics, work, community life, family life, recreational and leisure behavior and more. It is not limited to activities generally associated with the church.

As Christians we understand our role the clearest when we see ourselves as caretakers of that which God has allowed to rest in our hands for a short period of time. It is this awareness and acceptance of the role of caretaker or steward, in the name of God, over God's world that helps form the basis for responsible Christian living in a period of rapid changes in science and technology.

Critical participation in the contemporary world is a natural response to the call to Christian stewardship. With so many issues arising in the sciences, how does one approach those that are more crucial to the individual Christian? The following learning sequence has been helpful to the writer.

1. Clearly identify the issues involved.
2. Carefully analyze the issues involved.
3. Establish the role of a Christian worldview in the analysis of the issues.
4. Integrate the analysis with a Christian worldview.

What areas arising from modern science could profitably be addressed from a Christian perspective? The possibilities are enormous. Here are some:

1. Environmental issues: global warming, nuclear wastes, water, soil and air pollution.
2. Energy resource and production issues: natural energy resources, new energy resources, alternate energy sources, efficient uses of energy.
3. Food science and agriculture: food sources for Third World countries, more efficient food crops.
4. Textiles: newer types of polymers.
5. Material science: more and better materials for everyday use, more efficient and useful materials for medical and health use.

6. Medical purposes: should we do everything science can potentially enable us to do? e.g. reproduction processes, euthanasia.

The study of biological and chemical sciences enable one to better understand and appreciate our natural world. In addition, the study of these sciences from a Christian perspective enables one to also understand the Christian's responsibility to manage and care for the natural world. A helpful scheme for integrating scientific issues and a Christian worldview is presented, along with a number of contemporary scientific issues that will require careful consideration by thoughtful Christians who desire to be critically engaged citizens within our society.

Endnotes

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As former director of the Christian Perspective in the Liberal Arts program, David Johnson played a significant role in shaping the student experience at Spring Arbor University. He has had extensive experience as a consultant and evaluator in higher education. He received his doctorate in the area of physical chemistry and has had post-doctoral experience in inorganic chemistry, electrochemistry and solid-state chemistry. After 39 years of service, Johnson recently retired as professor and chair of biology and chemistry at Spring Arbor University.

A.B., Greenville College
Ph.D., Louisiana State University
Spring Arbor, 1965-2004

I bind unto myself today
the power of God to hold and lead,
his eye to watch, his might to stay,
his ear to hearken to my need;
the wisdom of my God to teach,
his hand to guide, his shield to ward;
the word of God to give me speech,
his heavenly host to be my guard.

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

I bind unto myself the Name,
the strong Name of the Trinity,
by invocation of the same,
the Three in One, and One in Three.
Of whom all nature hath creation,
eternal Father, Spirit, Word:
praise to the Lord of my salvation,
salvation is of Christ the Lord.

–Patrick of Ireland

The Concept and Physics and Astronomy

Frederick D. Trexler, Ph.D.

The image of warfare between Christianity and science at universities ignores the roots of modern science. In the development of classical physics, it was more often a debate among Christians over the best way to understand God's role in the world. Christian higher education in

physics, earth science and astronomy should provide the opportunity for young people to expand their knowledge base and ask hard questions about their purpose in life. As a community of learners studying and applying the liberal arts, faculty need to provide the kind of guidance and support that leads them to put their trust in God as they are developing their own set of values. The Christian university will differ from the secular university by offering a balanced presentation of the issues, integrating faith and learning.

Scientific thinking, with its emphasis on experiment and mathematical formulation, is not a natural result of a civilization coming of age. It was invented in Christianized Western Europe during the Middle Ages.[1] Science historians have discovered that a Christian worldview provided an intellectual environment that led to the development of the scientific method. While other cultures, such as the people of Chinese and Arabic descent, had developed technology, the source for scientific thinking was a set of assumptions about the world that had been growing for centuries in Christianized Europe. The "lawfulness of nature" came from the Christian belief that God created the world. Hinduism teaches that material objects

of this world are illusions. Genesis 1 teaches that earth, dry land, seas, sun, moon, stars, animals, and humans are all created with a real existence. Since God pronounced them good, nature is of great value and worthy of study. As the late S. Hugh Paine, scientist and Bible scholar, has written, "God has chosen to reveal himself through His works. Rather than being an intrusion, exploration and study of God's works is man's obligation. The reality of this truth cannot be urged too strongly!"[2]

Physics, which is an empirical science, could not have developed among a people who believed that the material world was evil (Greeks) or inhabited by spirits (pantheists or animists) who would cause capricious results. In contrast, our Creator God reveals himself as trustworthy and dependable so his creation is likewise dependable (Psalm 111:7-8). Physics experiments done one day may be repeated the next with the same result.

A number of great physicists were Christians. Men like Kepler (1571-1630), Newton (1642-1727) and Pascal (1623-1662) pursued their work in science for the glory of God and the benefit of humankind. Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543) searched for a better cosmology than Aristotle and Ptolemy. He knew the universe was "wrought for

us by a supremely good and orderly creator." His sun-centered solar system would "uphold the regularity, uniformity, and symmetry that befittith the work of God."[3]

Johannes Kepler felt called by God to work as an astronomer. His scientific notebook often contained praises and prayers to God like this spontaneous expression: "I give you thanks, Creator and God, that you have given me this joy in thy creation, and I rejoice in the works of your hands. See I have now completed the work to which I was called. In it I have used all the talents you have lent to my spirit."[4]

Jesus Christ as the Perspective

It is in the spirit of these great Christians in science that faculty try to show students how the laws of physics are a testimony of the faithfulness of God. They look for ways to relate physics to spiritual life. The late Donald Gray Barnhouse, Philadelphia pastor and evangelical Christian scholar, said that we should look for sermons in the snow. Seeing the first snow of the winter always reminds us of God's promise that though our sins are red, they can be made as white as snow (Isaiah 1:8). There is cleansing in the blood of Jesus; we can be made new and clean (1 John 1:7).

Another example of how we have been challenged to see sermons in physics and earth science relates to Einstein's theory of special relativity, which says that space and time are relative so there is no absolute reference frame. Our culture has adopted the theory so well that it has made morality relative. However, we need to take this theory as a whole. God has not left himself without a witness, for there is an "absolute" in the theory of relativity—the speed of light. Every observer will measure the speed of light in a vacuum as 299,792,458 m/s. In morality there is a parallel absolute base, and that is the standard of God's spoken commands in the Bible. Through them, our Creator provides an absolute standard for living, teaching us to live holy lives in a crooked and perverse generation (2 Peter 3:11).

A paradigm of our lifetime struggles is found in our classroom study of relativity, using space-time diagrams to plot the path of a particle from the past into the future. The world-line shows us how the particle moves in time and in space. Seeing the whole line on our diagram helps us to understand how God can look at our lives and see the end from the beginning. He views the world-line of our lives, looking forward and backward in time. Does this not give more meaning to the

name that He revealed to Moses? He is the "I AM" (Exodus 3:14) and the God who is "from everlasting to everlasting" (Psalm 90:2). We can trust our lives to God who sees the future.

Serving as a counterpart to the scientific model of God's dependability is the way electrons, by their very nature, can represent the dual nature of Jesus as the God-Man (Luke 1:35). In cathode rays and in scattering experiments, the electron behaves as a charged particle with mass and momentum. However, electron beams can be diffracted by graphite crystals and metal foils, showing the wave nature of those "particles." We accept the dual nature of the electron. Should we find it difficult to accept both the divine and the human natures of Jesus, the One who made all electrons?

God's creation further reveals through the study of astronomy and geology that the heavy elements making up the rocks and our bodies must have come from the dust of exploded stars. Evidence comes from the observation that nuclear fusion in young stars only produces helium from hydrogen. The small amounts of light elements from lithium through carbon could not account for 92 varieties of elements identified on Earth. One model for formation of elements necessary

for life is nuclear fusion in a supernova explosion at the end of life for an old massive star with an iron core.[5] Out of the death of a star came the elements for the birth of a solar system and life on Earth. Death and resurrection in astronomy reminds us that from the death of Jesus on the cross came our life as Christians now and in eternity. (Galations 2:20)

The cited examples are some of the "sermons" from physics, earth science and astronomy that faculty share with students to inspire them to look for God's imprint in the science laboratory of the created world. Commitment to Jesus Christ as the perspective for learning enables us to appreciate the mechanisms (physics) God used to make intelligent life possible on Earth. A Christian worldview thus developed gives us insights necessary to help solve critical problems of the contemporary world.

Critical Participation

Critical participation in the world of physics for faculty has involved membership in the American Physical Society (APS), presenting new teaching ideas at the American Association of Physics Teachers conference, taking students twice a year to professional meetings of the New York

and Ohio Sections of the APS, and serving for several years on the APS executive committee. Students who prepare to teach secondary school physics help to provide scientifically-trained Christians in answer to a critical need for teachers. Further, as student future engineers learn to apply physics and mathematics to create new devices and processes, they help to bring Christian integrity and problem-solving skills to business and industry for the benefit of society.

Science and Community

In the same way, the Christian university must function as a community trusting one another to complete tasks with integrity. Laboratory experiences require teamwork to make measurements. A "community of learners" experiment involves measuring the wavelength of eight colors of light in the helium spectrum. One student looks through a diffraction grating and guides another to mark the image position on paper fastened to the blackboard. The class takes turns sighting and marking until all the lines are recorded. A tape measure is used to find distances from the central helium tube, and these are converted to angles and then to wavelengths using mathematical formulas. Finally, an energy level

diagram for helium is constructed. The correct result depends on everyone cooperating to make honest measurements and calculations.

Direct measurement using our own senses is one "way of knowing" in science. In physics we use meter sticks, calipers, stop watches and optical diffraction gratings. In astronomy we use our eyes and two telescopes. Students say, "I like how the labs are combined with class time. It makes the class lectures more interesting and easier to follow when we know we will have some time to spend outside." In geology we use the rock hammer and hand lens. More sophisticated experiments require indirect measurements using instruments that give us data which we have to interpret. For example, voltmeters, oscilloscopes, orbiting gamma-ray telescopes, and seismographs require mathematical models and theories to make sense of the data. We find ourselves having to trust the experimentation and interpretation of other scientists, for we cannot repeat all their work for ourselves.

One particular physics discovery that reinforced a Christian worldview was the detection of cosmic microwave background radiation by Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson at Bell Labs in 1965. Their measurements agreed with theoretical

predictions of the remnants of energy from the creation of the universe. Recent measurements by astronomers have confirmed and refined the theory that the universe had a beginning.[6] From Colossians 1:16 we understand that all things were created by Jesus Christ. Since the Bible does not tell us when the beginning of the universe was, we are free to trust these findings.

As we apply the Spring Arbor University Concept to physics, earth science and astronomy as part of the liberal arts, with Jesus Christ as the perspective for our learning, we need not fear that our faith will be shaken by the findings of honest science. The world that God has made will not contradict the Word that he has spoken. At Spring Arbor University, classroom study helps us understand and interpret both science and the Bible in a new light, an intellectual pursuit that will equip us as Christians for lifelong critical participation in the contemporary world.

Endnotes

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[4] Pearcey, N.R. & Thaxton, C.B., *ibid.* (p. 23).

[5] Comins, N. & Kaufmann, W. (2003). *Discovering the universe* (p. 333). (6th ed.) New York: Freeman.

[6] Comins, N. & Kaufmann, W., *ibid.* (p. 431).

A graduate of Houghton College and Pennsylvania State University, Frederick D. Trexler has devoted his life to Christian higher education. He is a member of the American Scientific Affiliation, the American Association of Physics Teachers, Sigma Xi, the American Physical Society and the executive committee of the Ohio Section of the APS. After 29 years of teaching physics and earth science at Houghton College, Trexler became professor of physics at Spring Arbor University.

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PART THREE:

The Productive Arts

I believe that knowing, teaching and learning are grounded in sacred soil and that renewing my vocation as a teacher requires cultivating a sense of the sacred.

–Parker Palmer

The Concept and Teacher Education

David Hamilton, Ph.D.
Jon S. Kulaga, M.A.

Unlike the role of a surgeon or stockbroker, the classroom teacher's role is primarily a social act. While one can easily imagine a surgeon performing his or her function without attending to the social or emotional needs of the patient, the same cannot be said of the classroom teacher. To be effective, classroom teachers must focus not only on the cognitive, but also on the social and emotional needs of students, and by its very nature, teaching forces the teacher to "focus on the

axiological issues of right and wrong, good and bad."[1]

Because this is so, the teacher's worldview makes all the difference in the classroom. Is there a God? Did He create this world? Did He create humankind in His image, making them both spiritual, as well as material, beings? Are the concepts of morality, right/wrong, good/bad, based on objective transcendent standards?

In answering these questions, the question may be legitimately asked: "Why have a teacher education program in the first place?" In answering this foundational question, one can argue that education is one of the most central functions of humanity's existence. In all creation, it is unique to humankind, and therefore, is a reflection of the divine nature within us. The process of theorizing, processing, analyzing and reasoning are intellectual activities that not only reflect on the glory of God, but also serve to pass on the intellectual activity of one generation to the next. For the Christian, the educational process is elevated to another level as individuals acquire the knowledge, skills and dispositions to make a meaningful contribution to the purpose and mission of God's work on earth. Who better to help the next generation acquire these skills and

traits than Christian teachers? With approximately 90% of all school-aged children receiving their education from the public school system, which in the main is explicitly neutral to Christian principles and at times adversarial, where better for the Christian to be a critical participant? Where better to make an impact for the Kingdom of God? As a result, perhaps the best answer to the question of "Why have a teacher education program at Spring Arbor University?" is in fact, "Why not?"[2]

Embedded in the Concept are the spiritual and philosophical underpinnings of the University's purpose for its teacher education program. The teacher education program is to be implemented within the context of a community of senior learners (faculty) and junior learners (students); it is to include a wide range of educational topics guided by the liberal arts perspective; it is to be thoroughly Christian in its orientation and implementation; and it is to launch its graduates into the world as critical participants.

And yet, as these philosophical ideas and principles seek application within the classroom and school, there exists a tension. The argument frames itself in different terms at different times. Should our views emanate from an idealist perspective, like Kant and Rousseau? Or should

it tend more toward that of the realist or pragmatist, such as Hutchins or Dewey? For the idealist, the idea is all that really matters: the idea of "tree" is more real than the actual tree. For realists, on the other hand, only matter matters. It is difficult to separate the world of ideas and the world of their physical representation. However, the pragmatist would add, "Who cares about whether the tree falling in the forest is real or not?" The pragmatist would be more concerned with what could be constructed out of the tree that fell.

Such a metaphysical conflict is as ancient as the divide between the idealist Plato and his most famous pupil, the realist, Aristotle. Through much of the Middle Ages, the philosophy of Plato survived as it "piggy-backed" ecclesiastical tradition and beliefs, whereas the teachings of Aristotle were largely lost and mostly banned.[3] It was the scholastic St. Thomas Aquinas who insisted on the need to marry the realism of Aristotle with the Christian faith. Aquinas' marriage of faith and reason continued with the European Renaissance and Luther's elevation of divine revelation. As a result, European thought underwent a dramatic change, and was never quite again the same.

However, the most radical shift in modern thought came several centuries later at the dawning of the Age of Enlightenment. The German philosopher Immanuel Kant was the first to identify the nature of the human as an autonomous self. His famous *Sapere Audi* (dare to know) inspired philosophers like Jean-Jacques Rousseau.[4] Rousseau's assertion that man is born good represented a radical departure from the basic premise being asserted in the *New England Primer* a century before that taught "In Adam's fall we sinned all." And it was Rousseau's latter day disciples, which included John Dewey, who would forever change the discourse concerning how teachers should teach, and how learners should learn.

As the 19th century dawned the majority of children receiving a formal education were being sent to private seminaries and academies that tended to cater to specific philosophies of education within a preferred theological framework. However, on the horizon there was a public school system rising, which attempted to avoid the sectarian interests of the private seminaries, by establishing a common philosophy that was agreeable to all, while still providing instruction in core moral values. For many decades

extending well into the 20th century, textbooks used in the public schools, like the *McGuffy Readers,* carefully blended moral, spiritual, and intellectual values with content knowledge.

Yet as the 19th century closed, the challenges to the long standing assertion that the study of such subjects as History and Latin were primarily for the purpose of the discipline and furniture of the mind, began to take hold. Dewey had countered that education is not preparation for life, it *is* life and the curriculum needed to begin at the point of a child's needs and interests.[5] His later adherence to secular humanism and a more intellectual gospel has not added to his currency among most Christian educators.[6] Yet, Dewey's influence cannot be ignored, and while it is clear that Christians in the field of education may rightfully reject Dewey's secular humanist principles, his contribution of child-centered pedagogy and creative curricular strategies are positive contributions that should not be easily tossed aside.

David McKenna, one of the authors of the Concept, illustrates perhaps best the healthy tension that often accompanies such an eclectic approach to a Christian worldview of pedagogy. At the convocation commemorating the 125th anniversary of Spring Arbor University, McKenna

likened such a tension to a game of tetherball. He contended that the deeper the pole that holds the rope is driven, the longer the rope attached to the central pole can be. The School of Education is deeply driven into the rock bed of "Jesus Christ as the perspective for learning" while at the same time allowing for a broad range of inquiry.

This broad range of inquiry allows the Christian educator to explore the role and contribution of both the secular and the sacred in the life of education, with the understanding that all truth is God's truth. So the Christian classroom teacher can affirm both Immanuel Kant when he states that we should treat persons "always as an end and never as a means," and Christ's command to "love our neighbor as ourselves." Likewise, the Christian classroom teacher is free to affirm Piaget's secular constructivist approach to learning *because* it is consistent with what is known about the God given ability of the brain to seek patterns, variety, challenge and structure. Again, the Christian classroom teacher can celebrate the contribution of the "kindergarten idea," by German mathematician Friedrich Froebel, *because* it flowed from his love of the logic of God's natural order and creation. It is the Christian classroom teacher that is able to examine the foundational

documents of the American educational system, such as *The Northwest Ordinance of 1787*, and give thanks that the founding fathers considered the preservation of democracy to be dependent upon people who are educated in "religion, morality and knowledge."

And yet, 300 years after the emergence of the Age of Enlightenment, it is ironic that today we find that many American institutions, (i.e., media, higher education, etc.) have determined that a Christian view of the world, humankind and morality is divisive and offensive. As a result, two major questions arise for the Christian university training teachers to serve in America's public school system. First, what worldview should guide the preparation of teachers to effectively practice their pedagogical craft? Second, what role can a Christian teacher play in today's public schools?

Jesus Christ as the perspective for learning

The School of Education at Spring Arbor University has set forth its answer to those questions within its seminal documents, *The Statement of Purpose* and *The Effective Teaching Model Framework*.

The *Statement of Purpose* reads,

> Teacher education is a major professional function of the university and one in which the principles of service to humankind, as expressed in the Christian ethic, have primary influence. The Teacher Education Program is designed to prepare teachers for the public and private schools through a curriculum that encompasses a broad foundation in Christian liberal arts education, specialization in a particular field or fields of knowledge, and a comprehensive professional education sequence.

Here, as in other documents, a Christian worldview is held up as the primary lens through which those being trained, and those doing the training, must view the practice and the profession of teaching. This commitment to Jesus Christ as the perspective for learning is exhibited in a number of ways throughout the School of Education. The primary way in which this commitment is exemplified is the way in which

Christ is studied and held up as the model Master Teacher. Many of the education-based classes examine the methods and strategies of Jesus to gain biblical perspective and insight into the teaching profession from a Christian perspective. For example, Jesus taught using lecture, stories, parables, analogies and "hands on" learning opportunities. He taught persons from all socio-economic levels, ethnic backgrounds, genders, as well as in large and small group settings. In required courses such as *Foundations of American Education* and *The Diverse Learner* the biblical, moral and legal obligation to teach those who are less fortunate or different from the dominant cultural norm is explored and discussed. Issues of grace, mercy and redemption are evident in the discussions surrounding the impact of inclusion and mainstreaming, as well as the scriptural basis for developing Individualized Education Plans (IEP) in our growing Special Education (SED) program.

In his monograph titled *Curriculum for Commitment*, McKenna elaborates on the learning process as being one where the "warm personal commitment of senior learners (faculty) will be the most effective means of guidance and direction for junior learners (students)."[7] This concept of

mentoring is best illustrated in the School of Education during the third year of the student's educational experience in our site-based program. In this program, a master teacher on the School of Education faculty takes a group of students to local schools where each student is assigned to a certified teacher and participates in real life teaching experiences. During the course of this 6-10 week experience, students are coached, advised, encouraged, corrected and guided as to the most effective instructional strategies and pedagogical practices. If areas of weakness or challenge are identified, the faculty member meets with the student in one-on-one sessions where individual growth plans are developed. This experience occurs the year before the student is placed in the required semester-long student teaching experience, where the mentoring process is again repeated.

The School of Education's commitment to the Concept is further expressed in *The Effective Teaching Model Framework* (Illustration TE-1). The School of Education has visually represented its conceptual framework with six integrated ellipses. Contained within each ellipse are six domains for effective teaching.

The Effective Teaching Model Framework

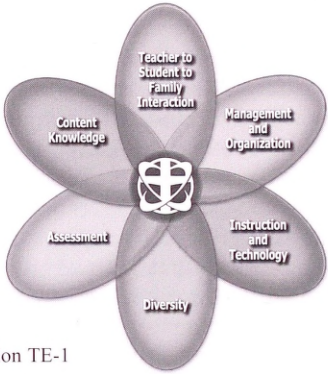

Illustration TE-1

It should also be noted that the Spring Arbor University icon, representing the Concept, is placed at the center of the framework model, through which all the domains intersect. This is an intentional means by which to visually demonstrate the importance and impact the Concept has on the School of Education, its practices and its programs.

Critical Participation

The second question is in some ways much harder to answer than the first. For it is one thing

to say a Christian worldview is the worldview that will guide the instruction and learning within the University's programs. But to determine what role each Christian teacher will play within their particular professional setting once they leave the program is more ambiguous. James Swartz holds that Christian teachers can fulfill one of three possible roles as they "struggle to fulfill their calling." These roles are agent of enculturation, advocate-evangelist and Golden Rule truth-seeker. While the application of these roles ranges from the more controversial advocate-evangelist to the less abrasive truth-seeker, each is a sincere attempt to treat religious questions and concerns as a normal and healthy part of public human life.[8] Yet, there are those who would suggest that with so many restrictions being placed on today's public school teacher, a Christian teacher cannot be effective in the public school setting. However, the School of Education at Spring Arbor University sees a place for each of these roles, as the many examples of our alumni involved as critical participants in the public school classrooms around the country can attest.

The teachers trained at Spring Arbor University might find themselves seeking to reconcile a Christian worldview consistent with

the precepts of the Concept, with pedagogical practices and methods which have as their philosophical base, tenets that are no friends of grace. For example, it might appear that pedagogically Spring Arbor University lines up with the teachings of the Perennialists (Great Books curriculum) such as Hutchins of the University of Chicago or with the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead who holds that "the best education is to be found in gaining the utmost information from the simplest apparatus in [and] the only avenue toward knowledge is by discipline in the acquirement of ordered fact."[9] To be certain such assertions are consistent with the Concept's "serious study of the liberal arts."

However, Dewey would counter that "since the curriculum is always getting loaded down with purely inherited traditional matters and with subjects that represent mainly the energy of some influential persons, it requires constant inspection, criticism and revision to make sure it is accomplishing its purpose." Then there is the probability that it represents the values of adults rather than those of children or of those pupils a generation ago. There is a certain *vrasemblance* (strong connection) with such a statement and the philosophy of the School of Education as to what

school children should know and how they should learn it, The Spring Arbor University School of Education is firmly committed to the foundational premise that learning must be constructed in the mind of the learner, that learning is based on prior experiences, and that a learner is a person who develops new knowledge through active participation.

There are many Christian scholars who want to dismantle the constructivist assertion that truth by nature is relativistic. Instead, they insist on the existence of objective truth. Stephan Davis, a professor of philosophy at Claremont McKenna College, spoke to this issue in a recent volume of the *Christian Scholar's Review:*

> Obviously, no Christian can buy into any such relativistic worldview; we believe that Jesus Christ is the truth. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life."

However, Davis also calls for a spirit of openness and tolerance to opposing points of view by stating, "...tolerance need not be based on relativism... There is objective truth... But tolerance of opposing views can be an insisted-on

value even for those who think there is objective truth and that they have it. This, in fact, would be the Christian position."[10]

Conclusion

Compared to other academic programs within the University, the field of teacher education is highly susceptible to the influence of outside professional, state and federal regulatory standards. Currently, the School of Education at Spring Arbor University must meet the standards and objectives of the North Central Association, the Michigan Department of Education, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education and the benchmarks of the federal "No Child Left Behind" education initiative, to name a few. In addition, there is also the increasing public demand for greater educational accountability and fiscal responsibility being placed on all institutions of higher education. As a result, the Christian university faces the added and unique threat of remaining true to its sacred calling, while preparing its graduates to serve in a society that has become increasingly more secular and relativistic in its worldview.

However, through careful and intentional alignment with the Concept, the School of

Education at Spring Arbor University is able to respond to these external constituencies with confidence, that being thoroughly Christian in our faculty hiring policy and teacher education training is the marrow of our identity. The Concept is our distinct articulation of who we are and what we do, in a society that longs for virtue and character in its teachers, but has severed its relationship with the Giver of those qualities. As a result, it is with equal confidence that we prepare the next generation of teachers thoroughly trained in their academic discipline, equipped with the most effective pedagogical practices, and strategically launched as critical participants into every conceivable educational setting in the world, in service to humanity and to the glory of God.

Endnotes

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A public school teacher in New York for 20 years, David Hamilton was recently named president of the Michigan Association of Colleges of Teacher Education. Since 1988, Hamilton has lead the teacher education program as dean of the School of Education. He is also a professor of education at Spring Arbor University.

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Kulaga, see page 60.

Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

–1 Peter 5: 2-4

"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'"

–Mark 12:29-30

The Concept and Business

Richard C. Wallace, Ph.D.

How does approaching business from a Christian worldview cause us to think and teach differently? How does a "total commitment to Jesus Christ as the perspective for learning" impact our thought and teaching? In this chapter we explore how the School of Business and Management is addressing these questions through its mission statement, which reads:

> The Spring Arbor University School of Business and Management equips

> people to serve as outstanding leaders and managers operating from a foundation of faith in Jesus Christ. We provide our employees opportunity to work and grow in a supportive environment, while we financially sustain and grow our own operations and contribute to the mission of the University.

We begin by examining the relationship between the broader Christian worldview and the general study of business and management.

A Christian worldview provides critical elements to the study of business and management which are otherwise missing. Specifically, a Christian worldview provides meaning. What is the purpose of business? Nobel Prize winning economist Milton Freidman puts it succinctly, The "social responsibility" or purpose "of business is to make a profit."[1] We would rephrase Freidman's proposition to say: The requirement of business is to make a profit.

The recent landscape of the history of American businesses is strewn with wrecks of major corporations such as Enron and Anderson Accounting, which bear witness to the fact that

myopic focus on profits often leads corporate executives into illegal activities. A Christian worldview offers a clear answer to the question of, "What are the purposes and the proper means of conducting business?" It recognizes ethics as God's law, not in man's law; not in short range best interest, but in eternal consequences. This is in stark contrast to the admitted befuddlement of even some of the most respected business educators. The dean and faculty members of the Harvard Business School openly wonder whether ethics can be taught in their book, *Can Ethics Be Taught?*[2]

What does a Christian worldview have to say about business and management? From a Christian worldview, business and management is not in a separate, sovereign realm all to its own, but is one part of God's kingdom. Humankind's chief end is to love and glorify God. His major assignment is to love his neighbor (Mark 12:28-34). Thus, the greater meaning of business is not just to make a profit, but also to show love to humanity and to God. These simple, yet profound commandments provide both motivation for, and constraints on, the way Christians conduct business.

How do we teach differently? Unlike our colleagues at Harvard who are still wondering whether business ethics can be taught, we know that they can and should be taught from the best ethical perspective—which is a Christian worldview. Thus, we teach not from a posture of inquisitiveness, but from a posture of resolution. We don't wonder whether ethics can be taught, but recognize teaching ethics as a central part of our responsibility. Furthermore, we focus not just on what the ethics are, but why and how our students can lead ethical lives in their business and management pursuits. Our teaching methods go beyond simply telling the students what they should do; we try to model for students what that looks like when it is done properly. We realize and grapple with the reality that knowing right from wrong is often the easier part; the harder part being not succumbing to temptation for the passing pleasures and benefits of wrong conduct. In short, we start from a different point and head in a different direction in our thinking and teaching because of the Christian worldview to which we subscribe.

What is the relationship between the Concept and a Christian worldview? How do they interact,

inform and shape each other? Let's consider the planks sequentially.

The School of Business and Management is guided by the two key biblical passages cited at the opening of this chapter. 1 Peter 5:2-4 emphasizes our responsibility to care for one another, while Mark 12:29-30 emphasizes loving our neighbors as ourselves. In an academic setting we logically express this love by joining in community to learn. That God wants us to learn is clearly spelled out in Genesis when He grants us dominion over life on earth.

The connection between the liberal arts and our Christian worldview is less obvious, although clearly biblical. In an important sense Christ came to set us free, and in so doing we are faced with the issue of how to live as free beings. This is the issue faced by the liberal arts: How do we live as liberated beings?

Any authentic reading of the Gospel of Jesus Christ would conclude that we are to devote the totality of self to the love of God and his creatures (Mark 12:29-30). Hence, this is the only perspective from which we can legitimately operate.

Repeatedly, a Christian worldview calls us to go into the world and engage it. We see this in the Genesis mandate to have dominion over all

creatures in the world (Genesis 1:26) and in the Matthew call to spread the good news throughout the world (Matthew 28:19-20).

The Concept and Teaching

The Spring Arbor University Concept adds great value to the discipline of business. Business without a purpose beyond profit would soon reduce to hedonism and eventually corruption. If the discipline of business were not so central to everyday life, this would not be so significant. The Concept and a Christian worldview inform the arts, and art without a Christian worldview would be sorely compromised. But society—though diminished—may muddle on. Because business occupies so much of our lives, deficiencies here have profound implications for us all.

Experts debate whether business, and particularly free enterprise, is morally good, bad or neutral. From a Christian worldview, we raise a parallel question: Is business a mission field, a support system for missions, or is it mission? Dennis Bakke, argues persuasively that business is mission.[3] This resonates with the Concept that calls us to critical participation in the contemporary world.

Faculty continue to teach each other. At the School of Business and Management each faculty member monitors a different business publication ranging from the *Harvard Business Review* to *Forbes Magazine*. Once a month, they "teach the other faculty" the most important thing they learned from the publication.

Faculty continue to learn. We heavily involve guest speakers as part of the community from whom we learn. Thus students encounter great business thinkers like John Beckett, author of *Loving Monday*, in our unique Solutions Seminar, a special course in which students are challenged to actively emulate highly successful Christian business figures like Beckett and Bakke.[4]

Faculty continue to grow through the influence of monthly *SamePage* meetings, during which the dean and each faculty member review their purposes, goals, progress and plans.

As a team, the faculty participate in Strategic Steps Sessions to help them continue to learn. These sessions held off campus at organizations we esteem, provide inspiration and an opportunity to reflect on our purpose, our progress and our plans.

We emphasize learning over teaching. Ultimately, we hold that the measure of education

is not the brilliance of the faculty, but the growth of the students. Where we once measured ourselves by student evaluations of faculty, we have now shifted to students' assessment of how much they learned.

As the classical liberal arts sought to equip people to serve as free citizens, so we seek to go beyond the mastering of concepts to the equipping of the whole person: heart, soul, body and mind.

The teachings of Jesus Christ are the foundation of our ethics course, and the theme and spirit that runs through all our curriculum, faculty and staff. It is our deepest purpose. We aim for our students' success in this world and the next.

We encourage our faculty to help develop a Christian perspecitive and their faith in various ways. Recently, we devoted a day-long workshop wherein faculty shared the ways they seek to weave the perspective through their courses. Techniques include intentional modeling, praying with and for students, assigning Scripture where appropriate, raising questions like "what does the Bible say about right and wrong?" and having students reflect on a question like "What do the 10 Commandments tell us about being good accountants?"

Since we tend to discover what we inspect rather than what we expect, we actually measure students' incoming faith and compare it to their exiting faith. We also ask students to tell us at the end of each course whether the experience was a faith-strengthening one. Faculty receive course evaluations that let them know whether the students in that course found it to encourage their faith.

This is a hallmark of the School of Business and Management. We try to bridge the gap between the academic campus and the world of work. In our courses we rely heavily on outside experts as guest speakers who help students learn about the contemporary world beyond the campus.

We have an uncommon commitment to helping students discern and live out their calling. We encourage our students to think of their careers as having already begun, rather than think of them as something that starts after college or graduate school.

We stress meaningful work experiences through practica and projects. At the undergraduate level, students critically participate in the contemporary world in their practica—guided work experiences in off-campus work settings. At the graduate level, each MBA student completes

a living case study—a deliberate intervention in the life of an actual business aimed toward measurably improving its management

We also engage in inter-collegiate experiences like *Students in Free Enterprise*. This national organization encourages students to work on community projects, and it sponsors competitions between groups from various schools that recognize excellence and allow students to gauge their success compared with students from other schools.

The Concept and Learning

The "community of learners" plank raises and answers the question, "How should we learn?" Universities have often used a model that could be characterized as "geniuses" teaching "apprentices." A noted scholar lectures to an auditorium filled with students. While we sometimes employ this model at Spring Arbor University, we are often honoring our students as "teachers" and letting them recognize their faculty as fellow "learners." Interestingly, in the business literature we are finding that some of the richest studies are those conducted by communities of learners. The research of Jim Collins reported in *Built to Last* (1994) and *Good to Great (2001)*

involved years of study by teams (or communities) of 16 "learners."[5,6] Similarly, the Buckingham and Coffman work *First Break All the Rules* (1998), draws on an even larger research team of learners who studied 80,000 managers from over 400 different organizations.[7]

So we see evidence that people learn better in communities, and we also see evidence that when whole communities learn together, as apparently happens in highly successful organizations, the likelihood of surviving and thriving rises.

Is there a world beyond the world of work? A narrow technical view of business would focus on the "bottom line" (profitability) and the shortest path to it. However the Concept raises the question, "What might a student need to know beyond business skills?" Some of this is contextual—the University emphasizes learning by visiting another culture. These crosscultural experiences open students' eyes to the possibility of finding solutions to problems that are different from those in our society. The liberal arts augment and enrich the education of the business student by raising big questions: What is the meaning of life? How do we know things? What can we learn from history and other cultures? While not all the

answers to these questions have a direct bearing on business success, they do sharpen the student's reasoning and equip the student with ideas and facts that may prove beneficial in future pursuits.

Can Ethics Be Taught? asks the title of a major work from the Harvard Business School.[8] While Harvard wonders, we teach ethics from the one sure foundation. At Spring Arbor University we explicitly raise the simple, yet profound, questions of why and how we can do right and avoid wrong. Here, our explicit commitment to Jesus Christ as the perspective for learning proves both an anchor and a guiding star not available in a world charmed by relativism. The principles of the Concept both raise and answer some of the biggest questions that are often avoided or left without satisfactory answers in secular business programs.

Conclusion

What is the purpose of business and how can we help? What is critical and how should we participate? At Spring Arbor University we hold that business and faith are not separate realms, and that business can be a principle stage upon which to enact one's faith.

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A graduate of Yale University, Richard Cheever Wallace has served the business school since 1989. He helped introduce and develop two unique courses that harmonize with the Concept: *Great Leadership Practices*, which draws ethical guidance for leadership from the teaching of the Bible and the lives of Christian businesspeople; and *The Living Case Study*, which involves students in critical participation in the contemporary world. Wallace is dean of the School of Business and Management and professor of sociology and management.

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Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.

–Arthur C. Clarke

The Concept and Technology

David Hopper, Ph.D.

The noted historian Holland Thompson coined the term "Age of Invention" to describe the crescendo in industrial activity from the middle of the 18th century to the turn of the 20th.[1] Individuals born at the end of the Civil War might have lived to see such "new-fangled" devices as the phonograph, electric lighting, radio, telephones, the automobile, teaching machines, the airplane, jets, rockets, early television and the atomic bomb.

The 1950s and 1960s saw space flight, satellite communications, Xerography, air travel for the masses and educational television. The last three decades have

witnessed an even more amazing explosion in technology. Developments in electronics, biotechnology, materials engineering, and nanotechnology have far outpaced the public's ability to comprehend both the science and the ramifications of such far-reaching capabilities

The Second Great Upheaval

The information revolution we now inhabit represents the second great upheaval in world order to be brought on by science, engineering and technology. The first, of course, was the Industrial Revolution, between 1760 and approximately 1830 in Great Britain. Spurred by inventions such as the cotton gin and steam engine, the period saw the advent of the factory system.[2] Historical debate continues concerning the societal benefits of the Industrial Revolution. A massive shift away from a rural agricultural society, the growth of cities, crowded and unsanitary living conditions, desperate pollution, and social ills such as child labor are well documented.[3] Growing out of and interpreting this environment, capitalist and socialist thinkers laid the foundation for the grand social and economic debates of the 19th and 20th centuries. It is perhaps historic irony then, that the resulting affluence for the few eventually facilitated the growth of higher education for the many.

Similarly, the deplorable by-products of the revolution helped drive the creation of Christian educational institutions.

As world-shaking as the Industrial Revolution proved to be, future historians may argue that the social, environmental, educational and economic changes brought about by the current revolution in information technology far outweigh those of that first great upheaval. In a few short decades, information technologies have facilitated the creation of a new phenomenon: the global economy. Electronic communication technologies have liberated corporations from national boundaries, facilitating the movement of capital and the globalization of labor markets. As a result, worldwide living standards are slowly rising, but at wildly different rates.

Meanwhile, two new forces have entered the higher education market. First, Internet and video communication technologies have empowered rapid growth in distance education. On an economic level, this freedom from location means a type of competition never before experienced by educational institutions. Second, technology-driven, "for-profit" colleges and universities have successfully carved a new niche, effectively repositioning education as just another commodity.

The Concept in a Technological Age

So what of the Christian liberal arts university? How does Spring Arbor University address this rapidly changing landscape? Where are the timeless truths in a world of wild flux? Moreover, how do we, as members of the academy, effectively prepare our students and ourselves to impact such a swiftly moving target?

We believe, of course, that the most profound answers in a changing world are still to be found in a changeless God. The world we occupy is the same world Jesus Christ died to save and rose to redeem. It is in this world that we are called to live, learn, trust and touch. The Spring Arbor University Concept provides an excellent framework for grappling with the far-reaching impact of technology upon the mission of Christian higher education in a revolutionary age. Specifically, the four planks of the Concept address the deepest and most pressing issues surrounding this second upheaval.

The Concept and Community

What becomes of a "community of learners" when the very meaning of the term changes? Standard definitions offer some variation of community as "a unified body of individuals... the people with common interests living in a particular area."[4] Recalling the

cloistered universities of England, there is still a great attraction in living together, breaking bread together and learning together, ideally in semi-seclusion from the bustle of society. Such has been the history of many American institutions that profess to be in the business of Christian higher education. How challenging then, to see the rise of communication technologies that appear to redefine the traditional understanding of community, or even work to destroy it.

The advent of the Internet has created a now-common phenomenon: the virtual community. Like the classic definitions, this flavor of community is bound together by some common purpose or interest. Unlike traditional arrangements, however, the new community's bonds tend to be less three-dimensional, limited only to a small handful of concerns. When physical proximity is no longer a central principle, the rest of life is no longer a shared experience, at least not in its immediacy, depth and variety. The business of the curricular is no longer enhanced and informed by the co-curricular.

Rather than building lasting community in a deep sense, virtual communities are often bound by the narrow shared interest of the moment. As a result, the freedom of instant communication makes it possible to be a citizen of multiple communities, either in rapid succession or simultaneously. The natural

outcome can be likened to a recent reframing of promiscuity, a so-called "sequential monogamy." Commitment to and level of contribution within a given community of interest are based solely upon immediate return on investment. In such a view of the world, our very interactions with and investments in the lives of other human beings are simply another consumer decision.

The Concept, however, calls us into real community. It is a community of immediate shared interest, to be sure. Beyond the short span of a student experience, however, it is a community of shared purpose for the future. Illuminated by the other three planks of the Concept, we live in a community that looks ahead to a lifetime of impact in the world and ultimately, to a day when our community is perfected for eternity.

Are we then to reject the power of technology to enhance and strengthen this present community of learners? Must the application of technology be all or nothing? Because Jesus calls us into deep community and appoints us as stewards of good gifts, we seek to apply all the positives that new information and communication technologies have to offer, trusting that God will "grant the wisdom to know the difference."

How do we live responsibly as citizens of such a community of learners, especially when many of the

capabilities afforded by the technology empower us to live irresponsibly or selfishly, with little fear of discovery or any call to accountability? It could easily be argued that certain technologies (e.g., radar detectors in automobiles) have been created specifically to empower the user to disregard or circumvent laws that have been instituted for the health, safety or other benefit of the community.

Nowhere is this challenge more visible than in the illegal sharing of copyrighted music, motion pictures and other media via the Internet. Statistics from the Recording Industry Association of America claim that the illegal copying and sharing of audio recording represent an annual loss to the industry in excess of $4.1 billion.[5] A study by the Pew Internet and American Life Project found that:

> ...about 22% of Internet users say they have downloaded music—and a substantial majority of them do not believe they are stealing. Most express scant concern whether the music they are downloading is protected by copyright. More than three-quarters of all music downloaders (78%) say that what they're doing isn't stealing. Sixty-one percent of music downloaders say they don't care if

> the music they capture online is copyrighted, and just 31% say that is a concern for them.[6]

What are we to make of such statistics? How are we to respond to this rising tide of disregard for the physical, intellectual and creative property rights of others?

A second, and perhaps more damaging, threat to local community is the new ways in which information technologies facilitate the devaluation and exploitation of persons, both as individuals and as classes. The vast resources of the Internet contain heaping measures of both good and evil, elevation and debasement. Every inclination of the fallen human heart is on display, including pornography of all stripes, racist and hate-filled diatribes, recipes for constructing weapons of mass destruction, assistance in creating evermore damaging computer viruses, and creative methods for committing credit card fraud and other types of identity theft.

How can a collection of learners harness the power of new technologies to enhance community, rather than detract? The Spring Arbor University Concept leads us to echo Joseph's words after suffering at the hands of his brothers, "You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good" (Genesis 50:20).

Rather than shunning advanced communication capabilities, we must embrace them, seeking to build up individuals and the community.

Technology and Scholarship

The central mission of an educational institution is learning. Serious study implies a desire to go beyond the simple passing of tests; it speaks of a level of intellectual curiosity that drives the learner forward. It is clear from our membership in the community of learners, however, that this act of study is not simply referring to the "junior scholars." All are called to be serious students.

The advent of information technology has led to breathtaking innovations in teaching, learning, research, and the creation of new knowledge. Expansive bibliographic databases and automated catalogs have streamlined library searches. Online full-text collections of journals, monographs and other holdings have extended scholarly access beyond previous barriers of distance, time and economic means. Multimedia archives have provided easy and inexpensive access to a world of non-print resources such as motion pictures, video and audio recordings, photographs, illustrations, images of works of art, historic artifacts and dozens of other categories. Word processors, spreadsheets, statistical analysis tools,

presentation systems and collaboration tools have empowered learners as they research, create and disseminate new knowledge. It is truly a great time to be a scholar!

As always, however, these powerful new capabilities promise great potential for misuse and abuse. Does a technology environment built around the societal concept of instant gratification pose a threat to intellectual vigor? Shallow research, casual "lifting" of the ideas of others and blatant plagiarism are the easy road when a five-second Google™ search yields thousands of possible sources. In a recent cybercast lecture from the Library of Congress, noted engineer, inventor and thinker Brewster Kahle proposed the very real possibility of archiving the sum of all human knowledge and making it available via the Internet. His vision would extend beyond printed material of all sorts to film, video, artwork, music and any other medium.[7] Of course, academic librarians will tell you that many of today's incoming freshmen assume this to be the case already, causing them to question why they should look further than an online search engine when researching for a paper. Projecting current trends forward, it is safe to assume that Kahle's vision will come to pass and to realize that such new capabilities will challenge our traditional attitudes toward

information, our techniques for search and retrieval, and the very nature of librarianship and scholarship.

Serious scholarship in a technology empowered world calls for learners to develop new strengths in information literacy. Defined as "the ability to know when there is a need for information, to be able to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively use that information for the issue or problem at hand," information literacy implies an intentional movement from simple data retrieval to higher levels of information, knowledge and wisdom.[8] Serious scholars are called to be discriminating handlers of information (1 Timothy 4:10). This is especially crucial in a fallen world where selectivity and "spin" are the tools of agenda-driven communication.

Technology and the Lordship of Christ

Many have found the popular slogan "What would Jesus do?" to provide ready answers to everyday decisions. What then of technology? Would Jesus use a PC or a Mac™? Would Jesus surf the Internet, buy from Amazon, bid on eBay®, or book a fishing trip online? How can the relationship we have with God in Christ inform and guide our relationship with technology?

First, in spite of the increasing comfort and fascination it affords, this world of technological

wonders *still* is not our home (Colossians 3:2). Our learning is driven by our allegiance to and reliance upon the grace and eternal lordship of Jesus. He calls us to excellence in scholarship, research, and teaching, so we seek to be careful stewards of the resources afforded by information technology. Enhanced by these wonderful new tools, we give our scholarship back to Him as an act of worship.

Central to the mission of Spring Arbor University is the ongoing spiritual development of students, faculty, and staff. How do we go about the business of spiritual formation in an information age? How do we seek God's truth in a glut of ideas? What happens to quiet contemplation and deep consideration in a postmodern avalanche of multimedia input? How do we build a spiritual discipline and worldview that looks beyond "what's next" to "what matters?" How do we utilize the good gifts of technology in learning, worship, service, evangelism and discipleship? In short, how do we love, obey, and follow Jesus in this present age?

Technology and the Contemporary World

The Concept calls for a community of learners who do not remain cloistered. It demands that we move out, working to impact the contemporary culture. The challenge is the same faced by each new

generation: how to be "salt and light" in *this* day. It is impossible, then, to even speak of contemporary relevance if we neglect the pervasive role of technology in all aspects of popular culture. Electronic media have largely replaced newspapers and magazines as the primary source of news for most of the American population. For that matter, the print media industry is in the midst of its own technology revolution. Advanced communication and automation technologies, together with a concentration of mixed media ownership, have transformed the traditional "newspaper business" into a global convergence of news, entertainment, and marketing. The Spring Arbor University Concept implies a deep responsibility to equip students for a life of impact upon these very power structures and the direction of this new media synergy.

In a technology-empowered society, information is the new currency. We speak now of a "digital divide" separating individuals and groups by the degree of their access to information technology. Not surprisingly, the divide closely parallels familiar lines of race, class and culture. Futurists disagree as to whether this differential in access is simply a transitional phase or a more profound inequality. In either case, the Concept calls us to engage in just

these sorts of issues, seeking to do justice in a fallen world.

Conclusion

Rapid developments in information technology are transforming business, finance, government, medicine, education, popular culture, personal communication and almost every other aspect of life.

> While most believe that the university will survive the digital age… it is reasonable to suspect that a technology that is expanding our ability to create, transfer, and apply knowledge by factors of 100 to 1,000 every decade will have a profound impact on both the mission and the function of the university.[9]

This new "second upheaval" is well underway and worldwide in scope, yet the future course and ramifications of the revolution are still unpredictable. The Spring Arbor University Concept stands as an anchor in just such a time of shifting seas. It provides a framework as we use the tools of technology to build community, engage in scholarship, faithfully follow Jesus in our day, and touch the culture as Christ's hands and feet.

Endnotes

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As former vice president of information technology, David Hopper has rediscovered his true passion: teaching. His current research interests include the use of online tools to support community building and spiritual development in hybrid learning environments. Hopper teaches graduate and undergraduate students in face-to-face, online and hybrid modalities. He is assistant professor of education at Spring Arbor University.

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There is no such thing as a neutral educational process, especially not in the social sciences. It either functions to teach conformity to or freedom from the world. As we seek to integrate the social sciences and the Christian worldview, to better grasp the sum and substance of the human social experience, we must remind ourselves of the need to recommit daily to God's truth.

–Antonio A. Chiareli

The Concept and the Social Sciences

Terry Darling, Ed.D.

To explain how integration takes place in the social sciences is a daunting task for several reasons. First, different social scientists have differing ideas about what aspects of our Christian faith we should be integrating. Are we integrating our disciplines with the Bible? With Christian theology? With specific church doctrine? With our own faith experience?

An additional complication is that the area of "social science" is so broad and encompassing. It is defined as the branch of science that studies society and the relationships of individuals within

a society that results in a huge conglomerate of disciplines. At Spring Arbor University this includes the areas of psychology, sociology, social work, political science and history. Scholars in this area often have disagreements over which topics to study and the methods used to study them. These differences of opinion occur not only *among* disciplines that are covered under the umbrella of "social sciences" but also often even *within* disciplines.

Because of these barriers, speaking for all social scientists is impossible. Therefore, following are examples of how some different departments under the social science umbrella attempt to integrate the Spring Arbor University Concept within their disciplines.

Community of Learners

Developing and nurturing a community of learners should be the ideal of any college or university department. It is important that we make the classroom a hospitable environment where students are invited in to learn.[1] Bringing together those with common goals of learning more about our world—and our place in—it is an ideal that all who teach in the social sciences at the University affirm.

Talking about and making connections with other disciplines helps to nurture this sense of community. For example, the course in physiological psychology is team-taught by a member of the psychology department and a member of the biology department because of the clear overlap between these two fields. The course in religion and the behavioral sciences is team taught by a sociologist and psychologist as they attempt to study religion through the lenses of sociology and psychology. This course is also cross-listed in psychology, sociology and religion so students from all of these academic areas are in the class. Our course in marriage and family is team-taught by a social worker and communications professor with a background in marriage counseling. These team-teaching efforts help students to see that even though we often make arbitrary dividing lines between various academic subjects, God's world is not divided so neatly.

Another way we nurture this learning community is to conduct collaborative research with other departments. For example, recently three researchers from Spring Arbor University went to the world's largest twins convention. One member of this research team was from the

psychology department, one was from the communication department and one was from the religion department. The three colleagues asked different research questions and used different research methods (both quantitative and qualitative) to try to learn more about the differences in religious development of identical versus fraternal twins, but all worked together to better understand one aspect of God's creation.

Lifelong Study of the Liberal Arts

In a world of rapid change and an explosion of information, it simplifies learning to compartmentalize it. To help students fight this tendency and see the importance of lifelong learning, we try to model that behavior as professors through our continuing study and integrative research. Our passion for lifelong learning within our discipline and outside of it can help to light a flame within our students. Every year we have students in the social sciences conduct honors research in close collaboration with a senior scholar in one of our departments. These collaborative efforts enable students to learn some of the skills of research, and discover that many times answering one research question

results in dozens of other questions that should also be asked, embarking them on a lifelong task.

Even more fundamental to developing lifelong learners are our efforts to relate the social science content to students' individual lives. Helping students to see that the information they are being asked to learn is not merely an unrelated jumble of facts and figures is one of our challenges. In the fields of psychology and sociology, many courses are easily related to student experiences. For example, in our abnormal psychology course students write a paper as if they have a family member who has been diagnosed with a particular mental disorder and has been prescribed a particular treatment. The student's job is to research as much as possible about that particular disorder, determine the best treatment for it and make a recommendation. This type of application assignment closely mirrors what some (or even many) of our students will do during their lifetime as they interact with people who may struggle with various psychological conditions. Making a real-world application helps students realize that their classroom study is not simply an exercise in abstraction, but will be relevant to the rest of their lives.

Relating the social sciences to "lifelong involvement in the study and application of the liberal arts" also involves helping students to have a balanced perspective regarding their academic discipline. There is a certain degree of arrogance and self-importance that can creep into scholarship in the social sciences that results in a phenomenon called "nothing-buttery."[2] For example, a secularized psychological view of prayer may involve seeing prayer as *nothing but* an effort to meet one's psychological need for feelings of safety and security in a frightening world. A secularized sociological perspective of prayer might explain the purpose of public prayer to be a powerful method of group control.

This reductionistic approach sometimes taken by secular scholars may lead some to conclude that the social sciences have no usefulness for Christians. The attitude that we are trying to cultivate in our students, however, is that the social sciences offer a limited but useful perspective in helping us to understand human behavior.[3] It is reckless to reduce religious behavior to psychological or sociological principles, but also it is dangerous to assume that these disciplines have no value in helping us understand the complexity of human behavior.

One useful model that we give to our students to help them understand the various disciplines and their ability to explain various phenomena is the "levels of explanation" perspective.[4] Physics and chemistry, for example, look at some of the most basic of nature's building blocks while theology and philosophy enjoin a far more integrative level of analysis. Social science areas like sociology, psychology and political science inhabit levels that are in between the extremes of physics and theology.

Positing explanations at one level does not negate levels of explanation at another. For example, using the aforementioned example of prayer, from a psychological perspective it is quite likely that prayer does help to reduce an individual's anxiety. It is also likely that public forms of prayer can serve as a form of group control. Identifying these factors, however, should never be the end of the story. The supernatural dimension of whether, during prayer, we are actually communing with our Creator cannot be evaluated using the methods of inquiry used by social scientists. Social scientists who conclude that the only reason we pray is to serve some psychological or sociological function are falling into the "nothing buttery" trap.

Another useful analogy is of a lens. As people age, they deal with some peculiar changes in their visual acuity. They may have several different pairs of glasses for different functions (e.g., driving, reading, etc.). Looking through one particular lens is useful and appropriate for certain tasks. That lens can be spectacularly unhelpful for different kinds of tasks. The way in which this relates to the social sciences is important to note. Psychologists, for example, can often identify the psychological functions that are met through religious behavior with the research tools available to them. Their "lens" may work quite well for identifying this phenomena. The lens is useless, however, for answering questions like: Does God exist and can we communicate with God?[5] Helping students to recognize how these various disciplines differ in scope provides students with a framework for organizing their learning as they seriously involve themselves in the study of the liberal arts.

Integration involves seeing that the various social science areas each only offer one "lens" or level of analysis. The goals of a Christian social scientist should be to identify truth. This will involve recognizing how our "lens" affects our "science," and knowing that even though we may use scientific tools of inquiry and analysis, we are

still a "soft" science. We cannot isolate and measure variables with the same precision as, say, a chemist when we are studying most aspects of human behavior. This recognition of our "softness" helps us to maintain humility as social scientists.

Total Commitment to Jesus Christ

The various religious activities that occur on our campus provide numerous opportunities for students to grow in love for God and others, the two greatest commandments. One way that we in the social sciences attempt to assist in this process is to help students learn how to love Jesus with their mind. Because all truth is God's truth, our students need not be afraid to learn more about God's creation through the social sciences. In the sociology department we teach a course titled Spirituality, Faith and Justice in which students juxtapose biblical teaching with issues of social injustice. By relating Jesus' principles of justice, righteousness and love to the wide array of social issues confronting humanity around the world, we help students to see how their faith interacts with their topics of study. Several years ago the psychology department created a course called Integration of Psychology and Christianity. This course helps students to develop their own sense

of how to fully join their faith with their study of human behavior and their profession. In this course students observe two professors who may at times come to different conclusions as to how to integrate their faith with their discipline, yet they attempt to do so in a God-honoring way. This helps to reinforce the point that there is not always only one way to faithfully integrate God's Word with God's world.

As part of this course students are required to develop a theoretical framework for their integration efforts. We discuss how to use "Jesus Christ as the perspective for learning" and how this can be translated into actual integration efforts. One way that we attempt to accomplish this is to actually study some of the different ways in which Jesus interacted with people. Although always operating out of love, how Jesus dealt with people depended on the situation. He could be directive and confrontational. Notable examples of this were when He spoke harshly to the Pharisees or drove the money-changers out of the temple. At other times, He demonstrated listening, mediating and forgiving in His encounters with others.[6] Understanding that Jesus had a varied approach can help future professionals in the people-helping professions recognize the importance of using

Jesus' approach as a model for their professional style.

Students are also given areas where there appear to be contradictions between biblical passages and psychological research. For example, "spare the rod and spoil the child"[7] is contrasted with some studies that have identified how children who are physically punished are more likely to have poorer grades and have less satisfying relationships with their parents.[8] To adequately do this kind of integrative task, students must develop the ability to recognize the limitations of various social science research methods, as well as use hermeneutic principles in their interpretation of biblical passages.

Critical Participation

Integration is not just a cognitive activity. It is the "integration of Word and world in the mind of the Christian into a unified perspective and approach to all life."[9]

It is for this reason that students in the social sciences are at the very least strongly encouraged (and often required) to involve themselves in the life of the community beyond Spring Arbor University. The Psychology Club regularly identifies community needs and responds to them

(e.g., visiting area nursing homes, food drives for the needy, etc.). This type of involvement helps prepare students to be critical participants in the world by expanding their ideas of possible vocations. Recently a sociology professor and a psychology professor took several students to Chicago. All of these students had indicated an interest in using their psychology major to work with needy people in large urban areas. We visited several agencies, most of them faith-based, to find out how our students could best prepare for this kind of work. Students came back with a better understanding of how they can integrate what they have learned about psychology with a possible vocation.

Several majors in the social sciences also require a practicum or internship experience. Students majoring in sociology, social work, and psychology are placed in various locations for these practical experiences, including in the past year students working with homeless adolescents in San Diego, street kids in Niagara Falls, various youth camps, the Olive Branch Mission in Chicago, Catholic charities, Hospice and many other settings that involve critical participation in the world.

Even more heartening is that several students continue these types of activities after graduation. For example, one recent psychology graduate had a one-year missionary assignment in Oakland, California After witnessing the many needs in that area, she has chosen to stay there and continue to minister to the people in that community. In addition, a group of sociology majors moved to the inner city of Jackson, Michigan, after graduation and integrated themselves into the fabric of that troubled community.

Integrating the Concept with the social sciences is a lifelong endeavor. This effort should not be, as Carter says, a trivialized hobby such as building model airplanes.[10] It should be faith-informed scholarship that involves our earnest and whole-hearted attempts to view the findings of social scientists in light of the truth of scripture.[11]

As we continue to humbly seek a greater understanding of God's world—and as students keep us grounded in this task through their energy and earnestness—we remember the following challenge:

> "An ideal, a dream, an impossible task"some would say upon hearing about the Spring Arbor University

Concept. An ideal? Of course, for we shall never reach it in its entirety. A dream? Definitely, but a dream that can take, and indeed is taking, on form and substance. An impossible task? Perhaps, but we are reminded that nothing is impossible with God. Working together as a faculty, drawing upon the wisdom that comes from above, we can become effective integrators and fulfill to a significant extent our purposes as an evangelical Christian liberal arts college.[12]

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A graduate of Spring Arbor University, Darling holds a doctorate in counseling psychology and is currently chair of the psychology department at Spring Arbor University. He also serves as the men's tennis coach. Darling grew up in Spring Arbor as the son of professor Harold Darling, one of the original authors of the Spring Arbor University Concept.

B.A., Spring Arbor University
M.A., Oakland University
Ed.D., Western Michigan University
Spring Arbor, 1980-

It is never too late to be what you might have been.

–George Elliot

But grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever! Amen

–2 Peter 3:18 (NIV)

If you are measuring seat time, you are measuring the wrong end.

–Anonymous

The Concept and Nontraditional Programs

John Nemecek, Ph.D.

When the Spring Arbor University Concept was developed in 1964, the focus of the institution was on the traditional college student. As the University grew, the fleshing out of the Concept in practice became an integral part of new programs and fields of study. By 1985, when the nontraditional programs were being developed, the University was applying the Concept with intentionality in the development of these new programs. The nontraditional programs were designed

for nontraditional adult students with the Concept clearly in view.

Since the development of these programs, the average adult learner has become slightly younger (37 is the average age for the undergraduate students). Students have also become more informed and demanding consumers and "shoppers" (comparing programs from various institutions before committing to a course of study). Over the same 20 year period, Spring Arbor University cemented its reputation as a national leader of exceptional academic credibility in programs designed for the adult learner by remaining Concept-driven in the development and presentation of its degree programs.

Dr. George Kline was a national pioneer in developing the programs that would eventually become the School of Adult Studies at the University. And would also become part of nontraditional programs at 21 other Christian institutions across the nation. Now retired from Spring Arbor University, Dr. Kline recalls the development of those first programs: "The Concept was instrumental in our design and implementation. Although what we were doing was new and innovative, we wanted it to be Spring Arbor University through and through." Natalie Gianetti, dean for the School of Adult Studies, notes the mission statement for the School of Adult Studies mirrors the

Concept in its application to adult learners in nontraditional programs:

> The mission of the School of Adult Studies is to provide the adult learner with a quality, liberal arts education within the framework of a Christian perspective and supported by a diverse and service-oriented environment in order to positively impact lives and the community.

A Community of Learners

At both the graduate and undergraduate levels, programs within the School of Adult Studies are "lock-step cohort" programs. "Lock-step cohort" means that the same group of students meet together and take all of the core courses together in a sequential way for the duration of the program. The values inherent in this approach help develop a meaningful community of learners because of the enhanced levels of self-disclosure and dialogue that take place in a group where students are familiar with each other and experience a shared commitment. Research has demonstrated the value of cohort groups in nurturing critical reflection, enhancing knowledge construction, and enabling students to value life experiences, all which aid in helping students become lifelong

learners.[1,2,3,4,5] These cohort groups also function as study groups and support groups in what can sometimes be a difficult re-entry into academia, especially when the "student" usually works full-time and often seeks to manage family responsibilities that can include their children as well as their parents.[6,7,8] These communities of learners, thus, become encouraging havens for personal, spiritual and intellectual growth.

One of the ways many of the cohort groups nurture the relationships within their group is by eating together before or even during class. Students often take turns bringing in the evening meal for the class. This "breaking of bread" is a cherished Christian value that definitely helps promote community. In the Lord's Prayer we even pray give "us" (community) our daily bread. These companions in learning literally experience the Latin roots for the word "companion" *com* (with) and *panis* (bread)—as they, in community, meet (and eat) together. Eating together nurtures this community of learners in more ways than calories as it builds relationships and promotes meaningful dialogue among friends and colleagues.

Even students taking online classes place a premium on the value of learning in community. Most classes have a bulletin board type of weekly discussion that has been shown to transcend most typical

classroom discussions.[9] The opportunity to reflect and edit before responding to others in the cyber-learning community tends to enrich the discussion significantly as does the freedom of expression that comes from participating from the coziness of a student's own environment through their computer.

Nurturing community sometimes takes work. The intentional commitment to the value of community in our lock-step cohort groups means that faculty need to bring special group dynamic skills to the classroom. Recently a faculty member from the School of Adult Studies presented *The Care and Feeding of Lock-Step Cohort Groups* at the annual meeting of the Christian Adult Higher Education Association.[10] It was a very popular session as participants sought to discover how to nurture Christian values while dealing with the occasional issues that arise in building community. With its status as both a pioneer and a national leader in this approach to education, people wanted to know about and learn from Spring Arbor University.

This learning community promotes an environment for meaningful change. Here is one student's reflection at the end of her program:

> I am very thankful for the loving support of all my classmates and professors for

> without them, I could not have experienced a life change. I have changed in many ways over the last year. I am more trusting and loving, more forgiving and less judgmental. I take the time to enjoy life and to read the Bible every day…Thank you, Spring Arbor!

Lifelong Involvement in the Study and Application of the Liberal Arts

In many ways adult students at Spring Arbor University have already demonstrated a "lifelong involvement in the study and application of the liberal arts." These students bring a breadth of experience—from all dimensions of the liberal arts—when they step into the classroom, and they are ready and willing to enrich the classroom by sharing these experiences. Some students are even able to receive liberal arts credits by demonstrating college-level learning from these life experiences. But these are not the only ways that a liberal arts emphasis permeates the programs in the School of Adult Studies.

The study and application of the liberal arts is an intentionally integral part of the programs within the School of Adult Studies. Undergraduate students are required to meet the liberal arts balance that is prescribed for them in the Spring Arbor University

general education requirements. If students do not come to the University demonstrating this liberal arts breadth, they fulfill these requirements while completing the courses in their major. Even within the various majors, the liberal arts are brought into the core curriculum to illustrate and support the student's chosen field of study. This integration occurs both within the courses related to the major and also through four courses that are common to each of the nontraditional undergraduate programs. These four courses provide a liberal arts self-discovery in psychology, liberal arts self-expression in a course that emphasizes critical thinking and writing, liberal arts spiritual awakening and rediscovery in Biblical Perspectives, and a liberal arts ethical and philosophical framework in the values course. This transformational impact of the liberal arts is illustrated well in former Secretary of Education William Bennett's memorializing the work of art historian and educator Whitney Stoddard: "There we came—philistines, cynics, the bored, the restless—and Whit Stoddard put out the lights and civilized us."[11]

At the graduate level, students are challenged with a liberal arts perspective from both classical and contemporary authors. While the focus is on professional mastery in the student's chosen field of study, this mastery also includes a breadth of learning that uses liberal arts perspectives to reinforce the

subject matter. Mastery occurs through historical case studies, sociological research and classical readings that bring a rich and expanded perspective to the subject matter. The University's School of Adult Studies seeks to honor the historical hallmarks of a liberal arts education by nurturing a discriminating sympathy and a capacity for appreciation accompanied by healthy critical thinking.[12] While professional in their commitment to academic excellence and depth, the programs in the School of Adult Studies value and uphold the liberal arts plank of the Concept.

Total Commitment to Jesus Christ as the Perspective for Learning

Students entering a degree program in the School of Adult Studies come from a variety of faith levels. Typically about one-third of the students have a very active and vibrant faith, one-third are nominal in their expression of faith, and one-third have little or no faith background. Regardless of their faith background, students coming into a degree program within the School of Adult Studies are made aware that Spring Arbor University and its programs have Jesus Christ at the center.

Students are quickly exposed to a Christo-centric perspective on education through both the

curriculum and the faculty. In nurturing the idea of a Christian university, faculty are sought and placed in the classroom who are transparently Christian as well as enthusiastic and careful scholars.[13] Additionally, many are practitioners in their field of expertise. The curriculum unabashedly presents a holistic Christian worldview. In the undergraduate degree programs, students are challenged in their very first course to include a careful examination of their faith development as part of the overall development that defines their adult maturation and individuation processes. Consistently, courses will reflect a Christian perspective on the content. This process is aided and enhanced by faculty that possess and openly share clear Christian perspectives. Compared to the first students in 1983, today's adults come to Spring Arbor University with a greater desire for the Christian emphasis that has become one hallmark of Spring Arbor University programs.

Does this Christian emphasis have an impact? In the report from their most recent accreditation visit, the North Central Association noted the reasons students select one of the programs in the School of Adult Studies revolve primarily around convenience and an adult-learning focus. They went on to say that one of the things students appreciated the most about Spring Arbor University by the time they graduate is

the Christian worldview that permeated their educational experience. Students are consistently led to a first-time or renewed faith commitment that has lasting impact both personally and professionally. It is not unusual for a student to make a career shift based on their encounter with Jesus Christ as the perspective for learning. Here are some actual student comments from exit interviews:

- "This experience has changed me. God found a crack in my exterior and changed me."
- "Despite the many, many Bible studies and Sunday School classes I have taken as an adult, I was never brought to the depth of understanding that I received [at Spring Arbor University]."
- "The program has given me strength to forgive myself and allowed me courage to go back to God. I truly believe that God led me to your program."

In the School of Adult Studies, Jesus Christ is the perspective for learning, and it shows.

Participation in the Contemporary World

In many ways adult students enter Spring Arbor University as critical participants in their contemporary world. They come as parents, working professionals, entrepreneurs, and active community and church leaders. Unlike the traditional-aged students, they are able to put their new learning into practice quickly, often the next day. When they next meet in the classroom, the crucible of the real world has often helped validate the text and classroom learning. The students have taken their new-found learning and participated in the contemporary world.

An even more intentionally focused effort at enabling students to be critical participants in their world comes through the research projects, internships, and practicum that are part of the undergraduate and graduate programs. Under careful faculty guidance, students are given the opportunity to use their new-found skills and knowledge in practical ways that benefit both the students and their placement or work setting. Increasingly, adult students are seeking career services to help them transition to positions or careers that make full use of their education. With these kinds of opportunities students are able to provide meaningful, direct contributions to their employers in the midst of their courses of study. Rather than waiting for the completion of their degrees,

students become critical participants in their contemporary world in the midst of their educational endeavors.

The value-added dimension of a curriculum driven by the Spring Arbor University Concept is that the students are challenged to become *critical* participants in their world, not in a criticizing sense but in the critiquing that comes from a self-examined life that has heard the demands of faith. Through well-structured programs, students are challenged to integrate biblical values into their daily living. Values of justice, compassion and servant-leadership begin to be fleshed out in real living in the real world. Through assignments that actually involve the workplace and studies that articulate an active Christian worldview, students discover that learning—especially higher education at a Christian institution—has very real and practical implications, even demands, on one's life. For the adult learner these insights are quickly tested in the workplace and found to be real.

This opportunity for real-life application of learning is just one of the many ways that students in the School of Adult Studies validate the continuing intrinsic core value that is placed in the Spring Arbor University Concept. The students in this classroom community become lifelong learners in the liberal arts tradition. They see Jesus Christ as the perspective for

learning, and they take what they learn into their worlds to make a difference that makes Spring Arbor University proud. In the School of Adult Studies, the Spring Arbor University Concept is alive and well.

Endnotes

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A speaker at national conferences on adult education, John Nemecek also speaks about online learning and integrating faith and learning. Author of several journal articles, he has contributed to a graduate text on adult learning. Nemecek is assistant dean for the School of Adult Studies at Spring Arbor University.

B.A., Roberts Wesleyan College
M.Div., Northern Baptist Theological Seminary
Ph.D., La Salle University
Spring Arbor, 1990-

My child, if you accept my words
and store up my commands within you,
turning your ear to wisdom
and applying your heart to understanding...
then you will understand the fear of the LORD
and find the knowledge of God.
For the LORD gives wisdom,
and from his mouth come knowledge and
understanding...
Then you will understand what is right and just
and fair—every good path.

–Proverbs 2:1-9 (selected)

CONCLUSION

The Concept and Integration

Gayle D. Beebe, Ph.D.
Jon S. Kulaga, M.A.
Betty Overton-Adkins, Ph.D.

In our opening chapter we discussed the necessity of building a "plausibility structure."[1] That is, we discussed the way in which humans inevitably work to place their individual thoughts and experiences of life into a meaningful whole. The chapters that followed represented various specialized areas of knowledge within the framework of the philosophical, practical and

productive arts. To conclude this volume we must now consider the way in which all areas of specialized knowledge are integrated into a comprehensive framework of meaning and understanding. Of particular help with this integration is the work of Austin Farrar, a prominent British philosopher and theologian from the 20th century.

In his work, *Interpretation and Belief,* Farrar identifies four essential categories of life and thought that must be integrated in one's pursuit of ultimate truth.[2] The first category is what Farrar refers to as the special sciences, or the physical sciences. Here, artificial boundaries are introduced in order to study a particular aspect of life or thought. For example, Farrar notes that physics or chemistry can only be studied when artificial boundaries are introduced that limit our pursuit of knowledge to basic physical dynamics or essential chemical processes. Viewed through the lens of a specialized area of study, our pursuit of understanding in a specific field brackets out or excludes questions that deal with human need or ethical value.

Likewise, in the second category, human need and ethical value are not considered. Here, the human is the central focus of study, but only

in the areas where one can quantify, objectify or study human nature and human response without reference to any ethical or religious values that normally guide the human. Psychological studies or sociological analyses or economic decision-making are only a few of the many examples Farrar notes where the human is studied without direct reference to ethical choices or religious convictions.

But in categories three and four, Farrar notes that human value and ethical decision-making become the central topic of study. Category three raises the ethical questions about the knowledge gained in categories one and two and forces us to consider whether what we have learned should be complemented or condemned. It asks us to make judgments on life as we encounter and live it.

Category four is the unique category of religious truth. It deals specifically with the human before God. Here, Farrar writes,

> …unless we sometimes see God as truth, and evasion of him as credulity, at other times the proved facts of the special sciences as truth, and the outrunning of them as credulity—unless this is so, we are not confronted

> with the specifically religious problem of truth.[3]

In this succinct observation, Farrar offers a key insight that can provide guidance for the unique mission of Spring Arbor University.

At Spring Arbor University, we want our students not only to understand a specific area of inquiry, but also to embrace the full range of human knowledge. We want our students to have a general foundation in all knowledge so they can be lifelong learners. But we also want our students to have a specific knowledge that leads to a successful career. Ultimately, we want our students to understand and embrace the full range of God's activity in history so they can pursue a knowledge and experience of God that will sustain them throughout their life.

How, then, do these concerns and Farrar's emphasis relate to the educational mission of Spring Arbor University? As mentioned earlier, the foundation for our entire mission is the Concept. In turn, the foundation of the Concept and the guiding principles that undergird our curriculum is the Wesleyan Quadrilateral. The interplay of the Concept and the Quadrilateral forms a dynamic, integrative system that is the

foundation for how we know what we claim to know as humans. Although focused primarily on how we gain knowledge of God, its basic structure is instructive for all learning.

First, the Quadrilateral begins and ends with what we can know from Scripture. It lays foundational emphasis on the repository of Christian faith distilled in God's Holy Word. Here, we embrace a three-fold reading of Scripture where we read Scripture literally, in context and in conversation with itself. This, in turn, establishes the principles of hermeneutics that guide all interpretation. Every text is read both as a bearer of meaning within a context and also as a bearer of meaning between contexts. Scripture is the first place we learn this, but it is not the only place, and the instruction we receive is tremendously helpful as we move into all arenas of human thought. In essence, every context both distills meaning and conveys meaning.

Second, the Quadrilateral places a key emphasis on how we enter into conversation with those who have embraced the faith before us. Here, we see the legacy of the great saints of the church who have embraced our life with God and spoken of it in a way that remains instructive for us today.

Third, the Quadrilateral demonstrates the role of human reason and logic as a guide in all understanding. Here, the philosophical, practical and productive arts all interrelate in the pursuit of human understanding.

And finally, the Quadrilateral works to place our individual, discrete experiences of life and of God into a meaningful whole. Here, we come to understand both the role of our individual and corporate experiences of God, and also the role of our individual and corporate experiences of life. We come to recognize the way in which the whole expanse of our co-curricular program gains its full-bodied expression. From athletic and intramural teams, to ministry and mission teams, the corporate community provides both the context for the individual experiences and the critical reflection on these experiences so an individual can gain new insight and understanding.

The combination of the Concept and the Quadrilateral shape the community of learning at Spring Arbor University. This community of learning, moreover, provides the context within which senior learners (faculty) and junior learners (students) can continue a dynamic interactive process that builds community and discovers all truth as God's truth. That is to say, the community

of learners at Spring Arbor University plays an indispensable role in shaping how we can know what we claim to know about God, about human learning and about all aspects of our daily life.

Throughout this text we have considered a full array of human subjects and demonstrated the way in which the Concept guides our study in each specific area of human learning. By integrating all specific areas of learning with the Concept and doing so within the context of the University community, an individual gains understanding of how his or her contingent experiences of learning are contextualized within a coherent framework of meaning and understanding.

As we look to the future, we do so with the knowledge and hope that the vital role of Spring Arbor University within the broader framework of the church and higher education will remain vibrant as each new generation of leaders and scholars is invited to strengthen our mission by *Keeping the Concept.*

Endnotes

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[3] *Ibid.,* pp. 5-6.

Beebe, see page 40.

Kulaga, see page 60.

Overton-Adkins, see page 77.

APPENDIX

The Ideal Spring Arbor University Graduate

The faculty has defined the ideal Spring Arbor University graduate as one who embodies the Spring Arbor University Concept. Thus, the goal of the Spring Arbor University experience is the development of a person who:

- Is prepared to be a continuing student, capable of self-education. In a world of exponentially expanding knowledge, the student must be able to sort out relevant knowledge, make wise judgments, and think divergently, critically and productively.

- Has adequately prepared in one or more disciplines to undertake further graduate training, or to fill another productive and rewarding role in our contemporary world.

- Has developed an understanding of heritage, discovered the crux of contemporary social and moral issues, acquired tools of researching, and improved skills of communication.

- Has gone through the process of self-confrontation. As a result of this confrontation, the graduate will understand more fully their personal motivations, aspirations, capabilities and goals in life.

- Has learned the value of physical fitness as a part of total fitness, and accepts personal responsibility for developing and maintaining optimal health and wellness.

- Has encountered the Christian faith, grasped a portion of its demands for our day, and discovered the perspective that life in Christ can give to all learning, vocation and life itself. In this encounter, the graduate will have formed a meaningful relationship with Jesus Christ and fellow human beings.

- Is a person of compassion who cherishes community among all people and expresses compassion by critically participating in the world. The student is sensitive to need, responsive to opportunity and wise in participation.

- Is a well-integrated person who is prepared to live a life pleasing to the Creator, enriching to others and self-rewarding.

Dr. Gayle D. Beebe

Born in Oregon of Quaker parents, Gayle D. Beebe first gained recognition as an all-state football and baseball player. As a student, however, he experienced an "intellectual awakening" that heightened his pursuit for academic excellence, steering him on the path toward Christian higher education. Pastor, professor, administrator, author and lifelong student, Beebe states that when he first read the Spring Arbor University Concept, it "perfectly expressed that to which I want to devote my professional life"—the life of study and the life of devotion to Jesus Christ. Beebe is the 27th president of Spring Arbor University.

Jon S. Kulaga

An ordained elder in the Free Methodist Church, Jon S. Kulaga has spent most of his professional career in Christian higher education. He has worked in both private and state universities, serving in such areas as student affairs, advancement and marketing. He served as one of the general editors for *A Concept to Keep*. Kulaga is an assistant professor of education at Spring Arbor University.

Dr. Betty Overton - Adkins

A native of Jacksonville, Florida, Betty Overton-Adkins, has been an educator for most of her life. She started her career as a public school teacher and has worked at both public and private colleges and universities as a faculty member, department chair and graduate dean. Prior to joining Spring Arbor University, she served for 10 years as director of higher education programs for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. She is the vice president for academic affairs at Spring Arbor University.

Design by Butch Dashner, Spring Arbor, Michigan

University mission statements all share a common element. They are the unique reflection of a particular institution's vision, values and strategic goals. Ideally, everything in the university emanates from, and relates back to, the mission of the institution. Nowhere is this more true than at Spring Arbor University. Our mission, commonly referred to as "The Concept," was conceived over 40 years ago, and was intended to "shape a curriculum, build a campus and develop a climate for learning".

In this sequel to *A Concept to Keep*, a brief apologetic for a Christian worldview and the relevance of the Christian liberal arts in today's postmodern context is articulated. In addition, it is also a demonstration of how the students, faculty and administration at Spring Arbor University live out the implications of being together in community, as together we discover new ways of *Keeping the Concept*.

SPRING ARBOR
UNIVERSITY