Integrating Knowledge with Faith:
Understanding and Applying Paul's Philosophy of Christian Education

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Introduction

The following article explores the theme of theological education from both the theoretical and the practical point of view. Most would agree that Christian education is a complex topic. This is because the diversity within the Christian tradition makes it difficult to lay claim to any one particular "Christian" philosophy of education.[1] Generally speaking, a philosophy of education describes the underlying presuppositions and pedagogical approaches that a person or institution will take in accomplishing their specific role as an educator. It is a set of values that will give focus to what the instructor, institution or even church regards as non-negotiable, philosophical, theo-ethical, and didactic principles by which that entity functions in their respective teaching institution. The instructor's philosophy of education develops out of one's personal worldview that is usually held below the level of consciousness and rises to the surface during one's teaching and mentoring times.[2]

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[1] Cf. M. Peterson, *With all Your Mind: A Christian Philosophy of Education* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2002), 10.

[2] Cf. Albert E. Green, *Reclaiming the Future of Christian Education* (Colorado Springs: Association of Christian Schools International, 1998), 30.

Most agree that the instructor's philosophy of education should be congruent with the overall mission and vision of the college if the educational objectives of the school are to be maintained. Of course, as just mentioned, each Christian college or university has its own distinct mission and philosophy of education. Presently, a number of Christian colleges are experiencing a crisis of religious and moral identity. In a recent article, Robert Benne notes that Christian colleges and universities are experiencing a clash over faith and learning.[3] He writes, "Though Protestant traditions founded many of the great research universities in this country (that is, the United States), they have since lost any meaningful connection to them."[4] Benne notes that in seeking to become "topflight" research institutions, some Christian colleges hire faculty that are primarily research and publication driven. This model of Christian education tends to emphasize academic scholarship and epistemology. The research driven school selects faculty who are making significant advances in biblical scholarship and are on the cutting edge of technology. Nevertheless, there are drawbacks to this model of education. The large class sizes tend to make learning impersonal and detached. The undergraduate's access to the "topflight" scholar is usually limited, and in some instances personal relationships and spiritual development take a back seat to the rigors of academic study. Moreover, an overemphasis on research and publication tends to bring about a competitiveness that challenges the cooperative culture of an undergraduate teaching faculty.[5]

Since the time of Christ, there have been thousands of Christian educators who have passed on the oral traditions of our faith. Though many carried our traditions down through the centuries, I would argue that the apostle Paul stands out as the greatest Christian educator, missionary, scholar, pastor, and philosopher. For example, by sending his epistles to various churches, Paul became the very first Christian "distance educator." In those letters, one can discern the Apostle's well defined worldview and philosophy of Christian education. Moreover, the main objective of all of these letters is theological teaching and practical ethical instruction. However, what was Paul's philosophy of Christian education, and how did the Apostle blend knowledge with faith? Here it will be argued that Paul did not see a conflict between epistemology or knowledge and biblical faith. In fact, Paul's view on

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[3] Robert Benne, "Crisis of Identity," *Christian Century* 121, no. 2 (2007): 22-26.
[4] Benne, "Crisis of Identity," 26.
[5] Benne, "Crisis of Identity," 23.

Christian higher education is one that uniquely integrated the pursuit of knowledge, biblical faith, spirituality, and personal relationships.

The pedagogical principles employed by the apostle throughout his ministry are worthy of imitation today. Paul himself lived in an ever-changing, technologically advanced society. Thus, Paul's teaching style and methods had to take into account the changing world in which he lived. Even today, students of art, architecture, literature, government, law, medicine, and religion look back on first century Graeco-Roman society and culture with a sense of awe and respect for what was accomplished.

Taking our cue from Paul's view of Christian education, it will be argued that the overall objective of the teacher or institution is to help students formulate a well-balanced and integrated worldview which endeavors to perceive theology, technology, art, music, politics, industry, literature, culture, and the sciences from a theistic and Christological point of view with the ultimate goal of personal and spiritual transformation.[6] This overall objective is achieved when professors and lay teachers integrate theory with practice and develop – within the framework of the student's God-given personality, potential, and abilities – individuals who are articulate, knowledgeable, and reflect the image and glory of Christ.[7] Moreover, through their interaction with the faculty, administration, and staff, students should be challenged to take up the important and difficult task of engaging the world through cultural transformation.[8]

I will defend and support the above position by looking at two main elements related to Christian education. We will begin our discussion by exploring worldviews and philosophical presuppositions. Christian colleges and universities encourage their students to learn and seek the truth. However, what is knowledge and how is knowledge acquired?

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[6] Cf. Abraham Kuyper, who suggested in his work *Sacred Theology* that "all of these areas of culture need to be captured for Christ as Lord." For Kuyper, Calvinism and Christianity was a worldview or life perspective in which God must be credited for all the knowledge known by humanity. Kuyper argued that Calvinism was a world-transforming faith that impacted politics, religion, philosophy, art, and the sciences. See Peter Heslam, *Creating a Christian Worldview: Abraham Kuyper's Lectures on Calvinism*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

[7] In short, Christian educators should show college students how to live a life which is worthy of God in whatever vocation they find themselves. Cf. 1 Thess. 2:12.

[8] These same educational goals should be present in the local church setting as well.

More importantly, how important is a worldview and how is human knowledge related to the Christian notions of truth, belief, and justification? The study of epistemology may provide us with some guidance on this issue.[9] In this first section, I will also explore specific scriptural foundations that support my epistemological presuppositions on Christian education. Specifically, I argue that the apostle Paul provides us with an excellent model for constructing a philosophy of Christian education, one that integrates knowledge with biblical faith. I build my argument upon the apostle's words in Philippians 4:8-9. In many ways, the first portion of this paper is foundational and theoretical.

The second portion of this paper deals with the practical application of the scripturally based theory of Christian education. I have titled this section *Pedagogical Practices*. If the goal of Christian education is the integration of knowledge with faith, the end result *must* be personal and spiritual transformation (ⵔⵎ⧫ⵚⵔ◻ⵝ◻⬚⬧). Nevertheless, how should educators integrate principles from the ancient biblical text with modern teaching practices to produce change? Moreover, how should professors help students develop a biblical worldview in the face of post-modernity where truth, knowledge, and ethics are relative and meaningless?

Many would agree that students come to college for a variety of reasons. Visionary students come with passion and drive with a view to gaining skills for a future vocation. Relationally minded students come because they long to be accepted by their peers and to be a part of a larger community. Others come to escape a bad home environment and search for answers to life's important questions. Many, however, come because they want to grow in their knowledge of the truth, learn skills for a future job, mature, and *change*.

Ideally, as students move through their college years, they should be working through the process of transformation, progressively taking on the perfection of Jesus Christ through the Spirit's operation and personal volition. But transformation is not an automatic process and sadly, some never do change. Students should want to become servants of Christ who will engage the world. But again, you cannot make a person love, serve and obey Christ. Service must flow from personal volition.

The reason that personal transformation in education is so difficult is because the culture of the world in which the student lives (and their

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[9] Epistemology, or the theory of knowledge, is a branch of philosophy that studies the correlation between knowledge and belief.

personal nature) desires to mold and shape them after the pattern of "this age" (Rom 12:2). Moreover, in Christian colleges, students approach learning and knowledge acquisition through a variety of religious, theological, ethical, and philosophical worldviews that can cause some confusion over which worldview is the biblical or Scriptural one. Thus, a battle rages on the college campus for both the hearts and minds of young people. In this final section, I describe my program for academic instruction on the college campus that makes every attempt to be both theoretical and practical. Specifically, it endeavours to be a model of education that is personal, pastoral, relational, academically rigorous, scholarly, and most importantly, transformative. Let us now look at some underlying philosophical presuppositions related to education.

1.0 Philosophical Presuppositions

1.1 What Is A Worldview?

A worldview is an all encompassing framework or basic set of convictions about life that determines a person's actions. When a person's worldview is organized into a systematic and logical fashion and conveyed through stated values, ideas, theoretical concepts, ideals, and conduct; the result is a "philosophy."[10] James Sire similarly suggests that a worldview is:

> A commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and having our being.[11]

It is important that we briefly discuss various philosophical views which have influenced those teaching in today's colleges and universities. Currently, many professors hold either to the worldview of modernism or postmodernism. Let's quickly trace the contours of both.

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[10] The wider the discrepancy between a personal philosophy and worldview, the more lacking someone will be in personal integrity. Cf. Toews, "Distinctives of a Christian school: why a Christian school?" *Didaskalia* 14, no. 1 (2002): 55.

[11] James Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 4th ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 17.

1.2 The Worldview of Modernism

This epistemology or view of knowledge was founded on empirical data and self-acclaimed as scientific rationalism. According to this philosophy, science, research, and empirical, quantifiable data provide the criteria for truth. Modernism opposes the authority of biblical revelation because the scriptures are not rationally and empirically quantifiable. Instead, modernism asserts that man is the center of the cosmos. Thus, there are no absolute and external criteria for determining aesthetics, truth, ethics, and morality. In short, the worldview of modernism is based upon the philosophical presupposition that materialism is that which counts. Only matter exists and human ethical behavior is based on relativism with no quantifiable value system. Persons must determine their own criteria for what is good. Modernism is characterized by the cultural values of materialism, atheism, and relativism.

1.3 Discerning the Worldviews of Pragmatism and Existentialism

The worldviews of pragmatism and existentialism developed out of modernism in the late twentieth century. Gangel and Benson note that pragmatism suggests a view of life which is "non-epistemological, irrationalistic, (*sic*) a humanistic philosophy of crisis, in which uprooted modern man seeks to find certainty in his own existence, which he has elevated to an idol."[12] According to the pragmatic worldview, a person can find truth via experience and existential choice. Autonomy and authority are based on individual preference. According to this worldview, truth is not absolute and the person is left to their own individual perceptions. Though pragmatism's aim was to set persons free, the individual who holds this worldview is entangled by his or her personal experience. In this worldview, tolerance (a relativistic epistemology) is given great value. Thus, nothing is absolutely right or wrong. Empirical data is neutral and culture should embrace the value of pluralism. All philosophies, religions, and ethical models are appropriate. Existentialism is a form of pragmatism and is the philosophical foundation for postmodernism. Because any criteria for absolute truth has been swept away, personal experience rises to become the guide for cognitive, ethical, moral and aesthetic choices. Taken to the extreme, postmodernism rejects all worldviews which claim exclusive truth. For many who hold this worldview, the Christian

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[12] Kenneth O. Gangel & Warren S. Benson, *Christian Education: It's History and Philosophy* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 315.

religion should be questioned because it claims exclusive truth. Nevertheless, the worldview of existentialism and post-modernity can be a source of dialogue for Christian and non-Christian scholars. Due to its emphasis on spiritual encounter and personal experience, Christian scholars should reflect on how existentialism approaches the topic of truth revealed through sense perception and revelation.

The Intricacies of Epistemology

1.4.1 Defining Epistemology

Epistemology or the theory of knowledge is a division of philosophy that examines the nature and scope of knowledge and belief. Scholars in this field examine the nature of knowledge and discern how it relates to similar notions such as truth, belief, and justification. It also deals with how knowledge is acquired. In short, epistemology primarily addresses the following questions: How is knowledge defined, what do people really know and believe, what is truth, how is knowledge related to justification and how is knowledge learned or acquired? Let us briefly touch on some of these points.

1.4.2 Understanding the Two Kinds of Knowledge

Epistemologists make a distinction between two kinds of knowledge: propositional and practical. Epistemologists (and many systematic theologians) are usually concerned with the former that focuses on knowing factual information. The ethicist (and practical theologian) on the other hand is concerned with the practical application of knowledge. This debate over theoretical and practical knowledge extends all the way back to the Classical Greek period. Plato generally differentiates between Ⲭ□⊡■≈♦⊬eⲅ (the more practical wisdom) and ♦□Ⲭ⋊⊡⊘ (purely intellectual knowledge).[13] Plato argues that *phronesis* is the "right state of the intellect from which all moral qualities derive."[14] In his *Eudemian Ethics,* Aristotle similarly remarks that *phronesis* is supreme moral virtue.[15] Aristotle also asserts that right ethical behavior requires

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[13] Cf. Bertram, "Ⲭ□≈⊡■," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, trans. ed. G.W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 9:220.

[14] Plato, *Legat*. 1.631-32, Loeb Classical Library (LCL), trans. F. H. Colson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929-1962).

[15] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*. 1218b.34 (LCL), trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962).

phronesis or practical wisdom. This practical wisdom is defined as, "a reasoned and true state of capacity to act with regard to human good."[16] These examples show that *phronesis,* along with other cardinal virtues, was integral to moral philosophy.[17] It is important to recognize that scripture (and Paul in particular) integrates these two kinds of knowledge.[18] Doctrine or propositional theology is the foundation for ethical directives. Most importantly, the inspired Word provides us with a rational understanding of the world which can lead us to an all-encompassing theory of knowledge.

1.4.3 The Important Correlation Between Knowledge and Faith

When a young believer says that they "have faith" or "believe" in Christ, what they often mean is that their belief is based on some pragmatic outcome. In other words, what they mean is that they predict that this belief will someday prove useful to them because it will save them from the "fiery abyss on the day of the Lord." Many young Christians cannot really articulate why having faith in Christ is true because they have never been provided with criteria for discerning truth claims from erroneous ones. In contrast, the writers of scripture continually urge believers to base their knowledge and belief in the divinity of Christ on many criteria (factual and historical data, prophetic fulfillment, revelation, eye witness accounts, etc). As we will see in a moment, Paul provides us with an excellent model of integrating epistemology with faith in Philippians 4:8-9.

Taking a cue from Calvin and the other reformers, an educator might explain to their students that personal faith is not a heroic act of the will to believe but an obedient willing made possible by the working of the Spirit of God within us. Faith concerns the submission as well as the illumination of reason and knowledge. Faith is taking up the cross and following Christ, not embarking on a pilgrimage without

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[16] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics,* 1140b 20. LCL.

[17] In summary, one could argue that the Greek term ⚹▢⌇⌸▪ and its cognates in the earliest phases and down through the Classical period meant broadly "mind," "thinking," "understanding." However, in Plato and Aristotle, both *phronesis* and *phroneo* frequently have the fuller sense of "discernment," "judicious insight" or "practical wisdom." For a fuller discussion of this issue, cf. Lee S. Bond, "Renewing the Mind: The Role of Cognition Language in Pauline Theology and Ethics" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, Scotland, 2005), 36-38.

[18] The text of scripture likewise asserts that knowledge comes through spiritual revelation as well.

a destination. Faith is not a mindless search for God but a firm commitment to the will of God informed by a knowledge and understanding of the Word of God. The theologian Donald Bloesch notes that faith is certain because it takes us out of ourselves, out of our despair and anguish, into a relationship to the living Christ that cannot be severed by the powers of sin, death and the devil. Faith is advancing toward a future that is assured to us by the promises of Jesus Christ in Holy Scripture. [19]

There are significant implications for adopting this position on knowledge and faith in the college classroom. For example, my own position gives priority to faith over understanding and human reasoning. But this does not mean that faith is viewed as an irrational leap. Rather it is a commitment involving reason as well as will. Secondly, faith is an awakening to the significance of what God in Christ has done for us, an awakening that eventuates in a commitment of the whole person to the living Christ. Therefore, this commitment entails reason and the seeking of knowledge. It also involves the will and personal emotions, but it is basically an act of the will. Christian educators should believe against the presumption of the student's ability to reason without the aid of the Spirit, but not against the structure of that student's reason. As believers, we commit ourselves to that which is beyond the limits of human reason but not beyond the compass of reason itself (which I consider to be the divine *logos*). Hence, once we have faith, we seek deeper insight and knowledge into what we believe.

To sum up, Christian educators should affirm both faith seeking understanding or knowledge (*fides quaerens intellectum*) and an intellect seeking direction from faith (*intellectus quaerens fidem*).[20] Faith is not mere opinion but a "steady and certain knowledge" (as Calvin says). However, this knowledge concerns realities beyond the compass of human reason.

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[19] Donald G Bloesch, *A Theology of Word & Spirit: Authority & Method in Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 58.

[20] Cf. Peter Stuhlmacher, who speaks of a "listening intellect … open to the Christian tradition and the possibility of address through the biblical *kerygma*." In *Historical Criticism and Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Toward a Hermeneutics of Consent*, trans. Roy A. Harrisville (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 89-90.

1.4.4 Understanding Epistemology and Truth

According to the ancient Greeks, for something to count as knowledge, it must actually be true. This idea has serious implications for the study of religion. An individual may believe his or her religion to be true with all their heart. However, they may be misguided in their belief. Within this world, there are hundreds of religions and worldviews, some claiming exclusive truth. Which one is right, and what is the criteria for determining the truthfulness of each worldview? The Christian tradition has received its fair share of criticism because the writers of scripture claim to have insider knowledge on the topic of exclusive truth. The apostle Paul urges his students to seek and meditate upon the truths of scripture. As we will see in a moment, equipping students with the ability to discern truth from error is a key element in the transformative process.

1.4.5 Knowledge as Justified True Belief

Since the time of Plato, philosophers have debated over the theory of what knowledge is. According to tradition, Socrates believed that knowledge was true belief that had been justified (*dikaios*) or accounted for. In other words, knowledge had been given meaning or defined in some way. Accordingly, in order to know that a given proposition is true, one must not only believe the relevant position, but one must also have justifiable reasons for doing so.
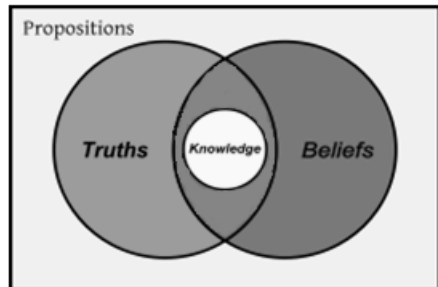
The diagram above shows the Classical view of epistemology. According to Plato, knowledge is a subset of that which is both true and believed. Let us now see how epistemology relates to Christian education.

1.5 Integrating Knowledge with Biblical Faith: Towards a Pauline Model of Christian Education

Thus far, we have been discussing philosophical propositions and in particular the philosophy of epistemology. Epistemology asks the questions what is knowledge and what is truth? Moreover, how can knowledge be justified and how is it related to personal faith? These questions are very important for Christian educators, and I believe that

Paul addresses these specific issues in Philippians 4:8-9. In the following section, I will attempt to draw out Paul's understanding of Christian education from what he says in this particular passage.

1.5.1 Introduction

The apostle Paul had a formative influence in shaping the early church's educational philosophy. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul provides us with an excellent model for constructing a well-balanced philosophy of Christian education; one that integrates knowledge with biblical faith. The particular passage in question is Philippians 4:8-9. We will begin by looking at the importance of civic conduct as a key theme within the letter and then move to a brief discussion of how Paul integrates epistemology and biblical faith in Phil 4:8-9.

1.5.2 Civic Conduct and Philippians 1:27

Philippians 4:8-9 has been the source of debate for quite some time, because in it Paul employs terms of Hellenistic moral philosophy. Scholars have argued over how these terms relate to Paul's Christian theology and ethics. Space does not permit me to go into the various positions. I will say, however, that the terms need to be understood in light of the broader scope and overall purposes of the letter. Paul wants the believers in Philippi to live as responsible and upright Roman citizens in relationships of mutual love, respect and service with one another in their respective families, church community, and society. Aesthetics, devotion to the Roman Commonwealth, and the pursuit of the common good and virtue were all part of being an upright citizen in a Roman colony.

Despite their present circumstances, the Philippians are urged by Paul to conduct (*politeúomai*) their lives in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ (1:27).[21] In this passage, theology (gospel of Christ) and Hellenistic ethics (*politeúesthe*) are brought together. The ethical behavior of the community is to be in accordance with the theological truths contained within the gospel.[22] In this exhortation, we see the

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[21] Πολιτεύομαι carries with it three main senses: (1) to be a citizen, or to have one's citizenship/home (2) to administrate a corporate body, rule as of a head of state, or as a head of church officials. (3) to conduct one's life, live, lead one's life. Cf. W. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature,* 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 846.

[22] Peter Oakes, in *Philippians: From People to Letter,* SNTSMS 110 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 85, is certainly correct when

influence of Roman culture and values on Paul's ethics. The cognate noun *políteuma* appears as well in 3:20. In short, Paul's exhortation in 4.8 must be understood in light of the apostle's Christian theology and the ideals of Roman citizenship. Paul's primary purpose in writing the letter to the Philippians was to encourage the community to engage in the practice of theological and ethical reflection. [23] By thinking in a renewed, Christ-like way about a variety of subjects, the community would act as responsible Roman citizens in accordance with the standards of the gospel, overcome their differences, and endure suffering. Let us now move to see how Paul integrates knowledge with biblical faith in Philippians 4:8-9.

1.5.3 Examining the Criteria for Ethical and Aesthetic Discernment

As the apostle brings his letter to a close, he urges the Philippians to let their minds continually dwell on those qualities which are themselves true, noble, right, beautiful and beneficial to others. The passage is connected to Paul's view of knowledge and education by way of his use of cognition terminology. In this single sentence, Paul employs terms that were known in popular Stoic philosophy. The apostle enumerates six positive ethical qualities and then summarizes them, describing comprehensively the characteristics that they are to reflect carefully upon in order to shape their knowledge and conduct.[24] Philippians 4:8 reads:

> In addition, my brothers, all that is true, noble, just, pure, lovely, and admirable—yes, whatever is morally excellent, whatever is praiseworthy—let your thoughts continually dwell on these things.

Paul describes each virtue separately and thus gives each one special attention. This can be seen by the six-fold use of the Greek word *hōsa.* Moreover, this introductory relative pronoun (of quality), imparts as

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he notes, "The primary issue in 1:27–30 seems not to be the definition of the nature of the Gospel but a call to live in accordance with the Gospel."

[23] The verb of cognition ✗□□■Ⅲ⅄⌐▨■ (to think, to have an attitude) has been linked with all of the various themes of the letter. For example, ✗□□■Ⅲ⅄⌐▨■ is tied to the theme of partnership and finances in 1:5-8 and 4:2-10. It is connected to the theme of suffering in 2:5-11 and 3:15. Furthermore, it is also connected to the central rhetorical point of 1.27-30 and it is clearly tied to the theme of unity (2:1-4; 4:2, 10).

[24] Cf. Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 503.

Michael says "a stately impressiveness"[25] to the verse and shows that when it comes to the pursuit of knowledge and theo-ethical reflection, nothing is to be left out from what is "true, noble, just, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent or praiseworthy".

Nevertheless, Philippians 4:8 continues to be a source of debate among scholars because of the specific words that Paul employs. For example, two of the eight characteristics are found only here in the New Testament (□□□♦✗)(●≈⌧ and ≋◆▭✗≈○⌧). The first deals with aesthetics. ▷□□♦✗)(●≈⌧*er*, in a passive sense, can mean what is pleasing, acceptable, and lovely of persons.[26] However, the term can also refer to the thing or object which causes pleasure.[27] One important Greek virtue appears nowhere else in the Pauline letters (⌧Ⅱ□≋♦≈⌧) and relates to moral or civic virtue.[28] In Classical Greek, it was a comprehensive term for excellence of any kind, with reference to things, animals, people, and gods. However, in Hellenistic moral philosophy, and especially among the Stoics, virtue was important and denoted the supreme good of man. Note as well the term for respect (♦≋○■⌧⊞□) which is only found in the pastorals. Moreover, the term for right (*dikaios*) has a very different meaning elsewhere in Paul's letters. This is all to suggest that Paul was not employing common Christian vocabulary.

This passage has serious implications for our view of Christian education. Paul is saying that the Philippians are to let their minds continually dwell on whatever knowledge is true, noble, just, beautiful or worthy of praise, that is, on all that is positive and wholesome within the surrounding culture and that which does not conflict with their Christian faith from a theistic point of view. This interpretation has to some extent has been held by several commentators. [29]

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[25] J. H. Michael, *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians* MNTC (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1928), 202.

[26] Cf. Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 336.

[27] Cf. Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of 2d ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 1:299.

[28] From Homer onwards, virtue (*aretē*) denotes consummate "excellence" or "merit" within a social context. It's frequently found with the term *dikaiosúne*. Virtue is a popular subject in Stoic thought relating to morality and ethics within the commonwealth.

[29] Cf. J. B. Lightfoot, in *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians* (London: Macmillan, 1900), 162, who suggests that Paul was anxious not to omit any good ground for his ethical appeal to the Philippians. "Whatever value may

Of course, space does not permit us to explore each of the moral virtues in detail. At a later date, it would be important to see how Hellenistic culture defined that which was beautiful, true, right, noble, morally excellent and so forth. In so doing, we would be able to see how the earliest Christians integrated their theistic faith with the positive and wholesome ideals of Roman culture. ***The purpose of this short discussion, however, was to show that epistemology or an appreciation for knowledge was something that Paul highly valued***. In the span of one verse, Paul's has touched on key epistemological issues such as reason,[30] truth, rightness, belief, aesthetics and axiology. Let us now move on to see how the apostle integrates his passion for knowledge with his faith.

1.5.4 Developing Faith through Personal Example and Experience

In 4:9, Paul encourages the Philippians to learn from what he has taught them and to live in a manner that is consistent with his Christ-like example. The apostle describes four key characteristics that had been central to his method of teaching and instruction. Of course, Paul knows that the Philippians had already adopted these qualities for themselves. Nevertheless, he urges them once again to put all that he has taught them into practice continually. The Philippians are gaining knowledge about the faith through Paul's personal example. If they model their lives after his, they can be confident that the God of peace will be with them. Let us briefly reflect on this passage.

In a somewhat rhetorical fashion, Paul employs four figures of speech to show how these Christians should think and act when approaching faith and learning. Verse 9 is clearly connected to the preceding through the definite relative pronoun ἃ, which picks up the ταῦτα of verse 8.[31] The passage may be translated,

> Continue to put into practice these things which you learned and received from me, the things that you heard about me and saw in me. As a result the God of peace will be with you.

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reside in your old heathen conception of virtue, whatever consideration is due to the praise of men", ponder on these things. See also, Michael, *Philippians,* 202; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 501.

[30] The word ●□Ϋ₀Ж⌂Ж⌘□○☺Ж which I have translated "think about," carries with it the idea of thinking about something in a detailed and logical manner – "to reason about, to ponder, reasoning."

[31] The ἃ καί should not be interpreted in an adversative sense. So, O'Brien, *Philippians*, 508-9.

In this passage, Paul appeals to his own teaching and example by means of a fourfold *kai*, joined with four verbs in the aorist indicative. He finishes with the imperatival expression "do these things"! This final imperative correlates well with the preceding exhortation "think about these things" in verse 8. In the span of two verses, Paul has integrated knowledge with his living faith. He is urging the readers to think and to live in a manner consistent with his example (cf. Phil 3:17). The precise relation between the four verbs in verse 9 is debatable. Following O'Brien, I think that the verbs should be grouped in pairs. The first pair refer to the overall content and manner of Paul's teaching, while the second concern his example.[32] With respect to the first two verbs (ἐμάθετε … παρελάβετε), it is important to note that Paul is not referring simply to an intellectual process of learning and receiving knowledge. Together, the terms imply an internal and personal acceptance of Christ as Lord. Müller notes that the terms convey the idea of a rejection of the old way of thinking and conduct and the beginning of a new life of discipleship in him. The point I am trying to make is that in the early church, learning occurred on many cognitive levels and in many different social contexts.

The verb παρελάβετε, which is translated "you received", was often used in a semi-technical sense. It carries with it the meaning of receiving something delivered by tradition. Throughout his letters, Paul regularly reminded believers of the traditions that he handed down to them. The content of these traditions (παραδόσεις) appear to have been comprised of three main elements: (a) the gospel story, which includes the death and resurrection of Christ and the expressed confession of faith (cf. 1 Cor. 15:1–5; 1 Thess. 2:13); (b) the Jesus tradition (1 Cor. 11:23–26; 7:10, 11; 9:14); and (c) ethical directives (Rom 12:1; 1 Cor. 11:2; 1 Thess. 4:1; 2 Thess. 3:6). It is probable then that Paul has all three categories in view here. I believe that the term has important implications for Christian educators today. No matter the academic discipline, if someone is a Christian educator, they need to be passing on the traditions of the faith. As J. C. Beker suggests, *paralambano* is multi-dimensional and refers to "the *believing* acceptance of the gospel tradition."[33] It is more than simply receiving a body of information and has to do with both the horizontal and vertical dimensions of the spiritual life.

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[32] Cf. O'Brien, *Philippians*, 508.

[33] J. Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 123.

Paul then moves on to discuss his own example. [34] Given the overall rhetorical nature of the passage and the symmetry of the Greek verbs, it seems best to take the Greek terms "hearing" and "seeing" together. [35] The two verbs speak about Paul's character as a teacher and pastor. (The two verbs appear together as well in Philippians 1:30.)

Throughout the letter, Paul talks about his Christ-like character. The Philippians had heard about these same things through the many informal conversations that Paul had with them while he visited the church in Philippi. They also heard about his present circumstances through Timothy and Epaphroditus (2:19-29) and the attitude Paul took in the face of severe trials and adversity. The point being that as their teacher, Paul shared and experienced life with his students. He let them into his world. He informed them about his ministry and about his trials. He was also keenly interested in their lives, and he wanted them to follow his example. This view is supported by the phrase "what you have seen in me". In addition to all the things that they had heard about Paul, the readers also saw in him a Christ-like example to follow. As a Christian educator and scholar, there was no contradiction between the words Paul preached and wrote and the life he lived. Sadly, this is not always true for Christian scholars and pastors today. Paul was not simply interested in theology for theology's sake. He was not simply interested in scholarship. He not only taught the Philippians and passed on to them the authoritative and apostolic traditions, but he also demonstrated to them the right sort of model to imitate both in attitude and deed (cf. Phil 3:17 and 1 Cor. 11:1). As Paul taught them and related to them, he was demonstrating before their very eyes what it meant to live life through the paradigm of a Christian worldview. It should also be pointed out that the placing of ἐν ἐμοί towards the end of the clause adds rhetorical effect and indicates in an emphatic way that all the things that the Philippians have learned, received, heard, and seen were also embodied in the apostle.[36] Finally, as their teacher and mentor, Paul continued to urge his students to put into practice all that they had learned from him. The present imperative *prassete* indicates

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[34] Some have suggested that ἠκούσατε is a reference to Paul's preaching. Cf. J.B. Caird, *Paul's Letters From Prison: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, in the Revised Standard Version* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 152 and J. Gnilka, *Der Philipperbrief,* HTKNT 10.3 (Freiburg: Herder, 1968), 222.

[35] This view is supported by many. Cf. O'Brien, *Philippians,* 509; Michael, *Philippians*, 206-207; Michaelis, *Der Philipperbrief*, 69.

[36] Cf. J. Gnilka, *Philipperbrief*, 223; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 509.

that a continuous action is in view. The Philippians "must keep putting into practice" the things Paul had shown them by teaching and example. Paul's words are a fitting conclusion to one of the most important passages in the NT, because a fair number of students in today's Christian colleges complete their degrees and leave their faith in the classroom. Part of the blame for this result rests on the shoulders of the teachers and the other part with the students.

1.5.5 Summary

In the above section, I have explored a few philosophical presuppositions related to education. I noted that the philosophies of modernism, pragmatism, and postmodernism all fall short of what I would consider to be congruent with the biblical worldview. On the other hand, epistemology, with its emphasis on the pursuit of knowledge and truth, is promising. In the right context, this age old Greek philosophical framework can provide us with the basic structure for a biblical model of Christian education that integrates the exploration of knowledge with personal, biblically-based faith. I have also attempted to demonstrate that in Philippians 4:8-9, Paul has integrated the two spheres of knowledge and faith and urges believers to do likewise. As a teacher, Paul wanted to help his students formulate a well-balanced and integrated worldview which endeavored to perceive theology, technology, art, music, politics, industry, literature, culture, and the sciences from a theistic and Christological point of view with the ultimate goal of personal and spiritual transformation. In essence, Paul is saying that the Philippians are to let their minds continually dwell on whatever is true, noble, just, beautiful or worthy of praise, that is, on all that is positive and wholesome within the surrounding culture and that which does not conflict with their Christian faith from a theistic point of view.

Nevertheless, how should Christian educators integrate principles from the ancient biblical text with modern teaching practices to produce change? Moreover, how should professors help students develop a biblical worldview in the face of modernism, pragmatism, and postmodernity where truth, knowledge, and ethics are relative and meaningless? I think it is significant that Paul concludes his discussion of how knowledge and faith relate with the present imperative "do these things"! Therefore, the next section is an explanation of how I have attempted integrate knowledge with faith in the college classroom. I will limit my discussion to specific *pedagogical practices* that I found helpful in producing change.

Part 2: Pedagogical Practices

2.1 Introduction

I have already stated that at the end of the day, the final result of all Christian education should be the development of a biblical perspective and personal transformation. Most students go to a Christian college because they want to grow in their knowledge and spirituality. They also want to learn a vocation and develop lifelong friendships. Though they might never verbalize it, they also want to change. But change can be difficult. Moreover, if change does occur, it may not stick after college. Why is this so? Recent studies suggest that both the divorce rate and promiscuous sexual activity among young evangelical Christians is no different than the general population in the United States.[37] One could suggest that one of the main reasons why Christian graduates fall back into old, familiar patterns of thinking and behaving is because they failed to learn how to integrate their knowledge with their faith. Professors and scholars tend to emphasize the academic pursuit of Philippians 4:8 and leave the practicalities of implementing 4:9 to someone else like the pastor or the parent. But the goal of all Christian educators should be the integration of knowledge with personal faith.[38] Let me explain how I practically endeavour to integrate a theistic worldview into the classroom. I have condensed this section to six key pedagogical elements.

2.2 Adherence to the School's Mission and Purpose

It is vitally important that professors be in agreement with the overall mission, vision, objectives, and educational outcomes of the college that will employ them. Likewise, the professor should also give assent to the theological position of the school. I appreciate and embrace the overall mission and vision of the school that I teach at. Erskine (which is a Christian liberal arts college) is connected with the

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[37] Cf. M. Johnson, "Divorce Rate no Lower Among Born-Again Christians," *Christian Century* 121, no. 20 (2004): 17-20; "Premarital Sex and the Risk of Divorce," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 53 (1991): 845-855; R. M. Christenson, "How to Put Premarital Sex on Hold: A Primer For Parents," *Christianity Today* 26 (1982):16-19. See also the older studies: J. R. Kahn, "Premarital Sex Relations: The Problem and Its Implications," *Pastoral Theology* 7 (1956): 46-53; "The New Morality and Premarital Sex," *Christianity Today* 9 (1965): 21-23.

[38] For example, in the work of science and the arts, integrating faith and learning means openly interpreting ones efforts to find the answer to the problem or design to a project as a Christian calling and faith building event.

Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. It is a school committed to the virtues of integrity, moral excellence and the pursuit of faith. These are three of the core values found in Philippians 4:8-9, the passage upon which my philosophy of Christian education is built. The college administrators firmly believe that the integration of a well-balanced Christian perspective should be at the core of all curriculums (cf. 2 Cor. 10:5).

2. 3 A Balanced Approach to Academic Instruction, Faith, and Learning

During class time, I try to implement a balanced approach to academic instruction, faith development, and learning.[39] When it comes to theological education, there are a number of models to choose from.[40] Studies have shown that students have varying cognitive styles of learning depending on whether or not they are left-brain or right-brain dominant.[41] In other words, students learn and process information in different ways. Some students have a keen ability to think in complex, abstract, or theoretical terms, while others are more concrete and experiential in their approach to learning. The point being teachers must be attentive to student learning styles. If professors want to truly communicate the truth, they must teach more creatively and effectively. I take these varied learning styles into account when structuring class time.[42] My style is balanced in that there are times when I am both student and material focused. Let me briefly illustrate this point. Depending on the nature and time-frame of the class, I will usually begin with a short lecture period where I briefly review material from the previous class, then introduce new concepts and ideas in a logical, sequential fashion. In order to gauge how much the student has understood the various points, I move to a question and answer time

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[39] In view of what Paul teaches in Phil 4:8, I think that Christians should examine the teaching and educational models of secular theorists for elements of truth may be found among their writings. See for example, J.D. Foster and G.T. Moran "Piaget and Parables: The Convergence of Secular and Scriptural Views of Learning," *Journal of Psychology & Theology* 13 (1985): 97-103.

[40] Cf. G.W. Boyce, "Towards the Integration of Information Processing and Experiential Learning: Teaching-Learning Styles in Theological Education," *Education in Ministry* (1978): 24-27; J. St. Clair Hull, "An Evaluation of the 'Learning Styles' Approach to Christian Education," *Christian Education Journal* 5, no. 2 (2001): 61-67.

[41] H.W. Stone, "Left Brain, Right Brain," *Theology Today* 40 (1983): 292-301.

[42] Cf. A. Kolodny, "Colleges must recognize students' cognitive styles and cultural backgrounds," *Chronicle of Higher Education* 37 (1991):44-45.

where I ask the students to rephrase and encapsulate what I have been talking about. After I am confident that most have understood what we have been exploring, I will move on to another section. If the class period is several hours long, I will divide the students into smaller groups. Each is required to read, explore, and analyze different dimensions of the next section of material. After a sufficient amount of time has passed, I will ask a representative from each group to report their findings. I also ask them how the material might impact their personal faith and relationship with God. While many think that the traditional lecture format of information dissemination is best, I have found that students learn and retain more when the class period is structured around their specific learning styles.

Personal transformation in the academic setting occurs when professors show students how to integrate their Christian faith with what they are learning in a creative and innovative way. Christian faith complements and informs all academic learning and knowledge. As a teacher, my goal is to prepare students to become creative, critical thinkers and learners and excellent communicators in a variety of contexts, and for this reason I employ a multitude of learning formats during class.

Teachers must keep in mind that learning greatly influences a person's philosophical worldview. Moreover, learning impacts a person's perception of themselves. Thus, teachers must strive towards faith based teaching and learning which will enhance the student's personal development and transformation. The integration of faith and learning should occur on many levels and in many different contexts. During class, students must be shown how faith influences their perception and knowledge of "the facts." This interplay between faith, reason, and learning can and should occur outside of class as well. The chapel platform and extracurricular activities are a vital part of the Christian training and learning program. Classroom instruction supports and reinforces this training. I see myself as the catalyst for the students' learning and acquisition of knowledge. To sum up, as students learn how to integrate faith with learning, their Christian mindset is developed and enhanced.

2 .4 Learning That Blends Technology with Theology

Though many college professors may want to deny it, the digital revolution has literally transformed the face of the college campus and the way students learn. The internet has likewise changed the way students view learning and knowledge. There are now "smart"

classrooms which are wired to the school's computer network. Advising often occurs via e-mail, while digital libraries worth thousands of dollars in print form cost only a few hundred dollars. A person is no longer limited to the traditional class schedule or to the school's location, because information is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year wherever students might find themselves. There are many implications of technology for theological education, the most important one being the impact which technology has on students. Presently there is a large age gap between students and professors, and this age gap influences the way the two groups see and use technology. W. J. Hook notes that most current faculty, librarians, and administrators were educated and socialized into research, leadership, and teaching prior to the digital age.[43] Students on the other hand have grown up with LimeWire, iTunes, and Google. E. Foley similarly notes that the technological contexts of students and faculty are often very different.[44] Thus, "there are enduring consequences for theological education of the digital age, some of which are positive, though not all."[45] For example, it is true that sometimes a classroom presentation using PowerPoint turns out to be nothing more than a dull, high-tech slide show. Thus, the technology is not being used to its greatest advantage. Moreover, while the internet is a great source for information, students can struggle with discerning between good and bad sources. When they are asked to do research on a topic, students may pick the first few books which appear on the Google search engine. Students must be trained how to critically evaluate the internet and other electronic sources.

I use technology to enhance the effectiveness of the student's learning and my instruction. So for example, during class I will use PowerPoint and audio/video clips which have been integrated into QuickTime Media Productions.[46] I usually begin class with a short two to three minute video or piece of music that is directly related to the lecture material and one which the students can relate to. For example,

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[43] W.J. Hook "Implications of a Digital Age for Theological Education," *Theological Education* 41, no. 1 (2005): 61.

[44] E. Foley "Theological Reflection, Theology and Technology: When Baby Boomer Theologians Teach Generations X & Y", *Theological Education* 41 no. 1 (2005): 46.

[45] Hook, "Implications," 59.

[46] For further ideas, see T.S. Raymond's review of, "Higher Education in the Digital Age: Technology Issues and Strategies for American Colleges and Universities," *Journal of College Student Development* 47, no. 3 (2006): 361-63.

when I was teaching my Introduction to the New Testament class on the Love Commandment in Paul, I played the students the song "Where is the Love" from the R&B group Black Eyed Peas. Of course, this is not a Christian group. Nevertheless, the song speaks about the lack of love in our culture, and it falls under the general guidelines of Philippians 4:8. Playing the song produced immediate dialogue about our cultural values and the obsession with materialism. The students were able to see that even non-believers are looking for truth but never finding it.

As a way of broadening the cultural horizons of my students, I will often integrate material from other disciplines into my lectures. So for example, when I am teaching on Genesis 1, I make sure to talk about science, evolutionary theories, and physics and show them slides from the Hubble Space Telescope. I am also passionate about art, history, and archaeology, so I will often include slides depicting a biblical scene or military battle. When it comes to exploring scripture, I will often employ Logos Bible Software into my discussions. So for example, when I was teaching Acts, a student asked me about the meaning and structure of a chapter 1. I was able to open up the Bible program and show them the structure in both Greek and English. The students have no knowledge of Greek, but I was able to translate and explain the intricacies of the language to them. When another student asked me about John Calvin's perspective on Romans 8, I was able to go directly to his commentary, and we studied it as a class. The point being that as I teach, I am showing the students how to discern and critically evaluate the digital sources.[47]

2.5 Academically Rigorous *and* Engaging

Professors must require much of their students. Yet, they must also show that they care for their students and want them to succeed. As a teacher, I want to impart to my students practical research, writing, oral, and critical thinking skills which they will be able to use after graduation. I encourage them to strive for excellence in their work and personal moral lives. During class, I want them to engage with me and their fellow peers. Lectures, class assignments, and presentations should incorporate the most up-to-date scholarship. While there is a place for testing, it must be both challenging, yet fair.

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[47] For an expanding discussion of this issue, see C. J. Viktora, "Not just one more good idea: A reflection on the integration of digital technology in theological education," *Theological Education* 41, no. 1 (2005): 33-34.

2.6. Community-Centred Learning

Personal development and transformation occur in the academic setting when both the students and the professor see classroom time as a *community* building event. I see the classroom as a place of mutual learning. It is an environment that facilitates relationship building and communication. Both the teacher and student contribute to the establishment of community. The teacher helps to build community by being a role model who is Christ-like, friendly, transparent, approachable, and kind (cf. Phil. 4:9). The professor must use his knowledge and learning appropriately. He or she must use it to engage the students, build rapport, and draw them into the learning experience. I endeavor to create a friendly atmosphere in which each student is known personally and has a voice. This type of environment engages students to take an active role in the course and encourages activities that focus on learning and dialogue. I believe that it is crucial to link the content of class material with practical application. Moreover, students should be able to pursue their own interests to a certain extent so that they can put forth their own voice in their writing. My pedagogical framework is one that promotes student responsibility and engagement in intellectual and analytical tasks; it also shows respect for the ideas and interests of students. In short, as community builds, students feel free to share their thoughts and opinions openly. Class time should be divided into teacher instruction, questioning, discussion, and debate periods. Finally, teachers should strive to know the names and basic biographical data of all their students. Using someone's name in class helps to build rapport and is music to one's ears! Of course, this educational model works best in small classroom type settings.

2.7 Teachers Must Be Focused on Discipleship and Mentoring

Transformation occurs within the academic setting when professors take an active part in mentoring and developing their students. The instructor is in a position to deal with the social, spiritual, and academic dimensions of their students. As such, they must be willing to spend time advising and mentoring them. I have found that engaging and dialoguing with young people before and after class often enhances the classroom instruction time.

Conclusion

This paper explores the relationship between knowledge and faith within the academic setting. It was suggested that Paul's philosophy of education was one that integrated the pursuit of knowledge with faith.

In support of this view, we examined the apostle's statement in Philippians 4:8-9. In the first section of this paper, we looked at various theories of knowledge as well as the biblical text. This theoretical section was followed by a practical pedagogical section. This scripturally based pedagogical model does produce excellent results; student evaluations reflect the success of this philosophy of education. Students felt that such classes were academically rigorous and challenging and met their expectations. More importantly, because the teaching style was altered to fit the learner, the students felt someone cared about them as individuals and sought to build community within the classroom.

To sum up, the philosophy of education discussed above is thoroughly grounded in the Scriptures. Through the educational process in which information is understood, relationships formed, and community built, students acquire new ideas and skills and a renewed perspective about themselves, God's word, and how it relates to their life, faith, and learning. Through this learning process, the student becomes an approved servant of God, properly handling the word of truth (cf. 2 Tim. 2:15). As educators, Christian professors should strive to be catalysts for the student's spiritual, moral, and intellectual transformation**.** Additionally, through their instruction and personal example, they should endeavor to impart to each student Christian character development, communicative skills, and subject matter in harmony with God's truth.