

Models of Faith and Learning
In Higher Education

I. Two-Realm, Two-Spheres View: The *Separation* of Faith and Learning

— Faith is of lesser importance in learning and is an extra-curricular matter.

Learning: Reason Evidence Science Facts Objective	Faith: Revelation Bible Spirituality Values Subjective
--	---

Reasons for the two realm, two spheres view and the separation of faith and learning:

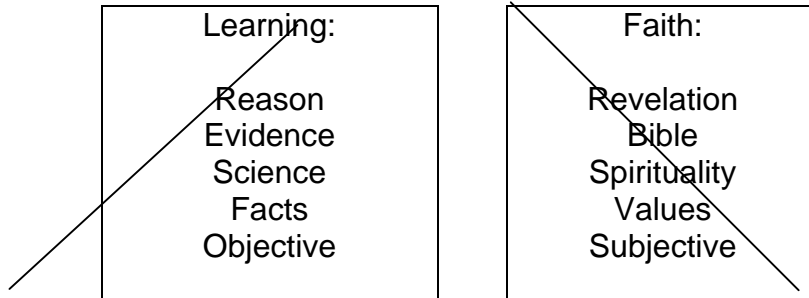
1. Because of modern epistemology and the fact/value dichotomy: only those ideas that can be established scientifically, rationally, evidentially, and objectively are knowable and true. Hence, the truths of scientific knowledge and the “truths” of religious faith are qualitatively different and must be insulated and separated from one another. A university ought only be concerned with the communication of scientifically established truth; everything else is just mere personal opinion and unsubstantiated.

2. Christian faculty just don't really know how to integrate faith and learning and so keep them in separate compartments: faith along side learning.
3. It is just too difficult to integrate faith and learning in certain disciplines, especially grammar, logic, math, accounting, chemistry, etc.
4. Some understand the idea of integrating faith and learning to be a devotional before class rather than a robust intellectual enterprise.

Examples of the two realm, two spheres view: Baylor, historically, but not anymore; TCU? SMU? Church related institutions; in reality, many Christian colleges and universities because of reasons 2-4.

II. The Full Secularization Model: The *Elimination* of Faith from Learning

— Faith is of no importance to learning.



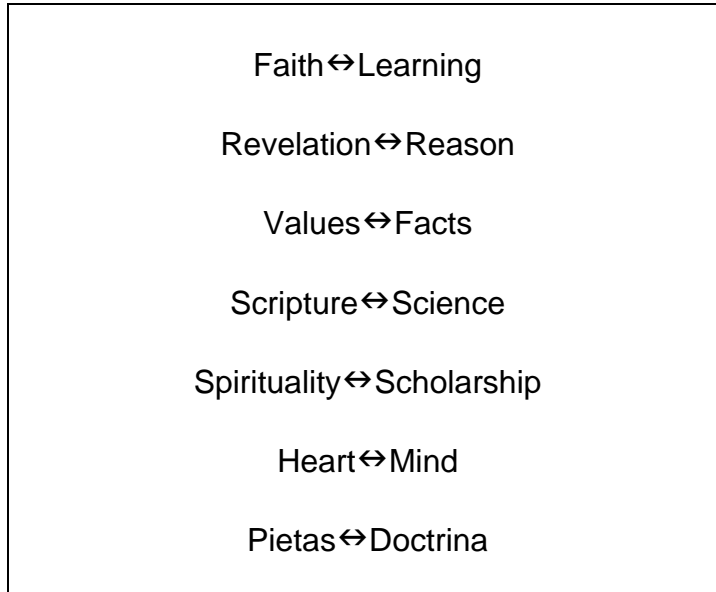
Reasons for the full secularization model

1. See reason #1 above under the two-realm, two-spheres model (the epistemological reason)
2. Separation of church and state issues (the legal reason)
3. Whose faith will be integrated into the university environment? Christian faith? Buddhist faith? Hindu faith? Islamic faith? Wiccan faith? Etc. The problem of the “Snickers University.” (the pluralistic reason)
4. The goal of higher education is not to shape character and impart values; rather, its purpose is to provide people with marketable knowledge and skills through technical specialization and expertise. The purpose of college is economic, not moral (the utilitarian reason).

Examples of the full secularization model: All public and state universities, and some private, non-Christian universities like Rice.

III. The Distinctively Christian College Model: The *Integration* of Faith and Learning

— The importance of both faith and learning in higher education



Reasons for the Distinctively Christian College Model:

1. This model is based on a holistic epistemology which recognizes that ways of knowing are always related to an underlying set of beliefs and values, and that no learning is purely objective and value-free. The question isn't whether or not faith is integrated with learning. Faith is always integrated with learning. Rather the real question is *which* faith is integrated with learning.

It also asserts that Christian faith, rooted and grounded in God and his Word, is true, and that all knowledge and understanding begins on the basis of being rightly related to Him and His truth about all things (Prov. 1: 7).

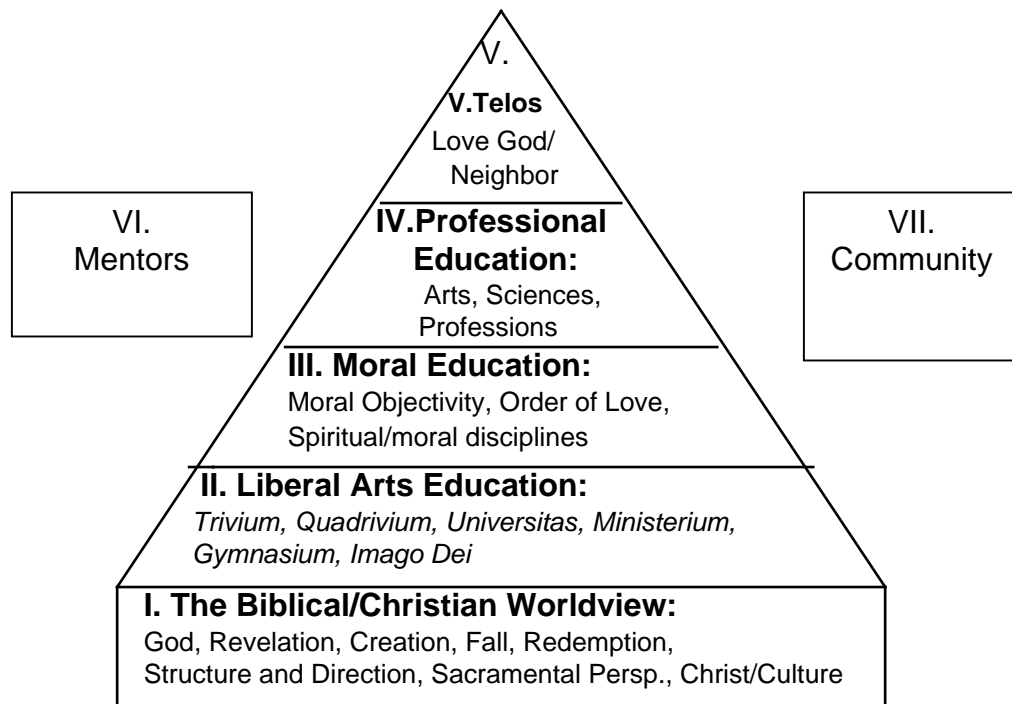
2. Committed faculty at Christian colleges and universities must learn that integration of faith and learning is more than a pietistic activity, and seek to become proficient in bring the essentials of the Christian faith to bear in a rigorously academic way, even in disciplines where that task is especially challenging.

3. Separation of church and state and the problem of pluralism is of no consequence to a private Christian institution which is free to be distinctively religious in our democratic context with certain rights guaranteed by the US Constitution.

4. This model of Christian higher education asserts that the academic experience ought to emphasize liberal education and the formation of mind and character as the central goal, and preparing students for their livelihoods in this larger context.

Examples of the Christian College Model: DBU, Wheaton, Calvin, Gordon, Seattle-Pacific, Biola, etc.

Here is a diagram of the Christian College Model:



The first essential component is the development of a comprehensive, wholistic biblical worldview as a foundational enterprise. The second concerns the pursuit of a classic, liberal arts education. The third focuses on the importance of moral education. The fourth highlights professional education. The fifth points to the *telos* or final purpose education as a whole. The indispensable reinforcements of these educational essentials are twofold. The first is the cultivation of a significant relationship between a student as an apprentice with a mentor, faculty or otherwise. The second encourages the active involvement of

students in a like-minded community of believers that provides crucial spiritual and intellectual support as well as an outlet for service.