

Christians in Higher Education: Living Worthy of the Calling

Every profession possesses its own particular dangers and offers its own specific opportunities for service. Those of us who are living and working in the Academy are faced with a specific set of challenges. In this workshop we will take a step back and look at the ideals and dreams the Academy offers. What is the University at its best, what is it at its worst, and do we really have to sell our soul to succeed? And what about our role in the body of Christ and in the grand project of world missions? Whether you are active in the Sciences or the Arts & Humanities, you are welcome to join in.

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1. The ideal academy

a. Pursuit of truth

i. in creation

ii. in human behaviour and thinking

iii. in God's revelation

b. Carried out unselfishly

c. Without fear of society, colleagues, or church.

2. The actual academy
 - a. Pursuit of knowledge
 - i. in 'creation'
 - ii. in human behaviour and thinking
 - b. Carried out as a career option
 - c. Driven by the availability of limited resources
 - d. Measured by esteem and competitive in nature.
3. In short, even the academy is populated by sinful people.
4. Christian calling within the academy is to be:
 - a. 'Ethical people' (integer, caring)

- b. Driven people (instinctive allegiance to higher ideals)
 - c. Wiser people (acknowledging that we are all sinful)
 - d. Astute people (seeing methodological reductionism for what it is, *viz.*, reductionism)
 - e. People with a bigger narrative (creation, fall, cross and resurrection, restoration).
5. Calling of Christian academics within the church is to be:
- a. People who celebrate - but not idolize – thinking
 - b. People who help 'to destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ' (2 Cor 10:5)
 - c. People who can change nappies.
6. Challenges
- a. Professional hazard (I): intellectualism (in church life, reading the Bible)

- b. Professional hazard (II): compartmentalization (lack of integration, living different narratives in parallel lives)

- c. Finding a place where we can be corrected

- d. Other