

Embracing Our Calling to the Academy

Even though God created the mind and repeatedly commands us in Scripture to seek knowledge as well as wisdom, tragically the Church has often viewed education as an enemy instead of as a crucial part of God's work in the world. Scholarship is a holy calling. Scholarship has played a critical role in the development and expansion of the world Christian movement over the centuries. Today national leaders are being trained in universities and our future pastors and denominational leaders are being trained in seminaries and Bible colleges. So it is critical that as Christian educators we do our work with hearts aflame with worship, minds guided by Christ's lordship, hands ready to serve, all in our effort to glorify God through our teaching and scholarship.

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I. Is our work in the academy significant?

A. Lives are transformed in classrooms.

1. If we want human life to be shaped by Jesus Christ, then we must engage higher education.
2. Reformation or revolution. Historically, universities have been centers of change—for good or for ill.
3. "Responsible Christians face two tasks--that of saving the soul and that of saving the mind." Charles Malik

B. Ideas have consequences.

II. Is our work in the academy ministry?

A. God created the mind and commands us to love him with our mind.

- B. God commanded us to seek knowledge and wisdom.
- C. Christ is Lord over the academy and all disciplines. Kuyper.
- D. Our research and scholarship have eternal value. (Isaiah 60:11; 61:6; 66:12)
- E. We work in the academy for the glory of God.
- F. God has ordained that scholars play a strategic role in His work.
 - 1. Old Testament.
 - 2. New Testament: Paul.
 - a. Romans 1:14
 - b. Acts 19:8-10
 - c. Acts 17:16-34
 - 3. The history of the Christian movement demonstrates that scholarship is a significant and strategic ministry.

III. If our work is significant and if our work is ministry, then how do we serve Christ faithfully in the academy?

- A. We maintain our walk with God as a priority.
- B. We teach with excellence.
- C. We teach with a Christ-centered, biblically-grounded worldview.

- D. We engage with the key apologetical issues today.
- E. We help other believers develop a Christian worldview.
- F. We tell others about Jesus.

Conclusion

Suggested Readings:

- Lawson, Michael S. *The Professor's Puzzle: Teaching in Christian Academics*. Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2015.
- Malik, Charles. *The Two Tasks*. Westchester, Illinois: Crossways Books, 1980.
- Marsden, George. *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Noll, Mark A. *Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011.
- Plantinga, Cornelius. *Engaging God's World—A Christian Vision of Faith, Learning, and Living*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.
- Romanowski, Michael H., and Teri McCarthy. *Teaching in a Distant Classroom : Crossing Borders for Global Transformation*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2009.
- Stott, John. *Your Mind Matters: The Place of the Mind in the Christian Life*.