

Educating for Shalom: Essays on Christian Higher Education

by Nicholas Wolterstorff

[collection created and edited by Clarence Joldersma and Gloria Strunks] - Eerdmans, 2004

Compiled by John Mulholland

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[Purpose and mission of Christian higher education]

[1] Rethinking Christian Higher Education

- p.3

Intro

Historical Background p.3

Social Context: Public Piety, Commonality, Accommodation p.4

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“First, we shall have to work out a pedagogy appropriate to the Christian college....

“Second, we must work out a curriculum appropriate to the Christian college....

“Third, we must work out a community structure appropriate to the Christian college....

“Fourth, ... we must work at making the content of what we teach responsive to the Christian gospel...

“Fifth, we must think seriously about the place and role of worship within that community which is the Christian college.

“And last, we must work out the rationale for the education we offer, asking what such learning has to do with life....

[2] Teaching for Shalom: On the Goal of Christian Collegiate Education p.10

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“... None of these models responds adequately to the *wounds* of humanity – in particular, the moral wounds; none gives adequate answer to our cries and tears....

“Let me say immediately that this is not a call to abolish the teaching of the humanities, or of the natural and social sciences, or of professional education..... It is a call for a more comprehensive model

Curricular Implications of Shalom	p.24
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“... So we can and should discuss among each other effective and sensitive ways of teaching for justice. We can and should discuss among each other effective ways of opening up our students to the wounds of the world. We can and should discuss among each other effective and sensitive ways of handling controversies that will arise when we teach for justice.

But the God whom believers acknowledge in their lives and celebrate in their worship asks that we teach for justice-in-shalom. For that God is the God revealed in Jesus Christ, the Prince of Shalom.

The graduate who prays and struggles for the incursion of justice and shalom into our glorious but fallen world, celebrating its presence and mourning its absence – that it is the graduate the Christian college must seek to produce.”

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Twin Dangers: Evolution and Higher Criticism - p.27

Stages of Response: Evangelism and Culture - p.28

“Stage I” – “... They sought to inoculate and quarantine their students against the cultural developments of the day...”

“Stage II” – “... integration of faith and learning practicing scholarship in Christian perspective ,...

Next Stage: Reforming Society - p.31

“Stage III” – “... I do not have a blueprint...”

“... The social world in which we find ourselves is desperately in need of re-formation. Our ears cannot be stopped, our eyes cannot be closed.... For you and I represent the body of Christ. We are his feet and hands in the world, his heart his mind, his voice, his eyes, his ears. We are the bearers of his word of comfort, heralds of the coming of his kingdom of peace [Shalom].

“We are more than heralds. We are also agents. We do the work of him who in turn did the work of his Father. We heal and we liberate. We struggle for shalom in all dimensions of human existence, realizing indeed that our efforts will not bring about the kingdom in all its fullness, but knowing also that the kingdom will not come about without our efforts....

Educational Implications - p.33

“... I do have a dim picture in my mind’s eye ...

“Such a college will, I believe, be much more international in its concerns and consciousness We do indeed live today in what McLuhan called a global village....

“Second, such a college will have to explore new ways of packaging the learning it presents to its students....

“Third, such a college will have to be far more concerned than ever before with building bridges from theory to practice....

“... The anxiety and defensiveness of evangelicals have begun to quiet down. As they do, I think I witness stirring of an awareness that the church is vastly larger than evangelical ever admitted. Perhaps, then, Stage III will prove to be not only the stage of the Christian in society but the stage of the Christian *in the church* in society.....”

[The Nature of Christian scholarship and “learning” (see German wissenschaft)]

[4] The Integration of Faith and Learning – the Very Idea *[re: psychology]* - p.36

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Compatibalism and Harmonization - p.47

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An Alternative Psychological Model of the Human Person - p.53

“... one of the points where I and a good many other Christians feel the tension between Christianity and contemporary psychology most acutely. Christianity teaches that we are responsible agents before God. It teaches that this is intrinsic to our very status as human persons. We are made of dust, but at the same time we ... are graced by God with responsibilities. We are given an office, a mandate, with respect to the world, with respect to each other, and with respect to God. This is definitive of our uniqueness amidst our fellow earthlings....

Determination Rejected

Dimensions of Responsibility

Reid's Idea of Belief Dispositions

Being Biblical Faithful

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[The Social Context for Education – points toward justice and Shalom]

[7] *The World for Which We Educate [*world systems theory & exploitation*] - p.87**

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Models of education - p.87

1. "... *Christian service model*"

2. "... *Christian humanist model*...."

3. "... *Christian academic-discipline model*"

4. "... *Christian vocation model*"

5. "... *wounds of humanity* ..." model

6. "... *shalom* ..." model

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“... One of the greatest challenges for us today in the Reformed tradition of Christianity is to recover the sacramental consciousness that was so deep in Calvin’s thought Part of the recovery must involved recovering that bold and haunting theme in Calvin, that as we wind our way through the world and come across injustice, we meet a wounded God. Beneath and behind the injustice of this world are the tears of God. We live in the presence of suffering Love. Were this teaching deeply fixed in our minds and hearts, says Calvin, that to perpetrate injustice is to wound God, we would be much more reluctant than we are to inflict injuries on our fellow human beings, or even to tolerate injuries inflicted.

“How do we teach our students to see the wounds of God behind the world’s injustices?
I do not know.....”

[11] **Autobiography: the Story of 2 Decades of Thinking about Christian Higher - p.155

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[Back to Christian idea of scholarship and “learning” – 2 essays here, NOT 3]

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[Christian academics in the context of society]

[14] Particularist Perspectives: Bias or Access?

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[17] Should the Work of Our Hands Have Standing in the Christian College? - p.264

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[Wolterstorff's outward looking thought & restlessness – ecumenical, historical, multicultural]

[19] Call to Boldness: a Response to *Fides et Ratio*

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[Wolterstorff looks back over his work]

[20] **Afterword [“...3 burrs under my saddle...” – N Wolterstorff] - p.295

- 1. “... a struggle to identify and articulate a comprehensive goal for Christian collegiate education [and] ... the attempt to unravel the full implications of that goal.....” p.295
 - o Starting with a Christian humanist understanding from college
 - o Next an academic discipline understanding from Harvard PhD training to “do philosophy and be a philosopher” p.296
 - o Finally a social justice/ Shalom understanding, prompted by attendance at a conference in apartheid South Africa in 1976 and a conference with hurting Christian Palestinians in Chicago in 1978
- 2. “... how does one teach for justice? That is, how does one not just teach *about* justice but teach one’s students to pursue justice and to struggle against injustice?” p.297
- 3. “... My [Calvin College] teachers had set before me a vision of Christian learning - not apologetic learning, but learning that emerges from faith seeking understanding But how to explain such an understanding of learning in 20th century America so that it did not seem bad learning, biased learning? “ p.297
- NW offers brief historical and personal notes providing context for his work
 - o Wolterstorff remarks that his work developed just as “... fundamental changes began occurring with that self-understanding of the academy. It is my conviction that the changes I and my generation have lived through are as radical as any that the academy in the West has undergone.” p. 298
 - o After commenting that all of the papers here were written in response to requests to speak and thus not part of a systematic treatise, Wolterstorff writes, “So this is not a comprehensive discourse on Christian collegiate education. It is no more than the record of one person’s wrestling with the issues that arose as he attempted to understand and defend the project of Christian learning in which he was engaged – and to deal with the issues that confronted him in such a way that he had no choice but to answer the call.” p.299