

C-A-N Paper

Important to ask how we can make an apologetic question impact within our academic fields?
(within field of knowledge you have been called to labour in)

This presupposes a more basic question - the one I want to address:

What does it mean for an academic to bring their work fully under the Lordship of Christ?

I want to begin by raising the challenge - and then go on briefly to point to a way forward

A. The Challenge is what I call 'The Pietist hangover'

Referring here to historical movement that occurred in Europe late 17th century
- the religious wars had just decimated this continent and the original Reformation movement had ground to a halt in terms of its development and influence

- in its place a kind of new Reformation took place - highly scholastic in character

The Pietist movement was a reaction to this - a call for the renewal of the church along a different path - had a number of elements to it
- one was the strong emphasis on being practical

The early pietists ascertained correctly that the 'thinking class' of the church (the intellectuals) had given insufficient attention to the dynamics of the Christian life - especially to the issue of spiritual experience

The cornerstone of the life of faith is not in the mind - it is in the devotional
- the healthy life of faith must promote and practice devotional activity

In a reaction to the highly intellectual character of the scholastics they took their project to an extreme by concluding that reason weakens experience

Over time this led to an undermining of the intellectual dimension of the life of the Christian
The application of reason to the Christian life had an increasingly reduced capacity

Now, this focus on spiritual experience - and the application to the practical and devotional created what I call 'The Divided Reality Model'
- this is the dualism Christians tend to operate within

Spiritual (soul)	Material (body)
Sacred (Church)	Secular (world)
Redemption (salvation)	Creation (all the rest)

Within the Divided Reality Model the priority is weighted to the left column - this included what the mind of the Christian was applied to
Swung application of thinking Permission to issues like mission, soteriology (the doctrines pertaining to salvation) and to ecclesiology

- the preoccupation tended to be theological - to the exclusion of the philosophical - this is seen as worldly

So, this led to a certain neglect of the mind amongst evangelical Christian intellectuals
- no longer given to areas like economics, the markets, the social sciences, business, psychology, the arts, education, politics, agriculture, history

Interesting to trace the rapid of the Pietists - see how deep their impact went
- rippled across Europe - over to North America - most influential movement since 16th century Reformation - continues to reach into evangelical church in the 21st century - still the dominant force

Continues to control how Christians view their priorities - this includes Christians whose calling is weighted towards the use of the mind and intellect

I believe it accounts for the slightly anti-intellectual character of so much of evangelicalism - gentle resistance to serious engagement right across the fields of knowledge
- if you veer out of the left column into the right - often viewed with suspicion - at best treated with a mild sympathy - I guess someone needs to engage such things - but of course the real business of the kingdom is over here

In a number of ways the consequences of the Divided Reality Model has been catastrophic

At its worst it has diminished how we view Christ's Lordship
- pretty firmly in the left column - rather than honouring Him as Lord of all creation

It has also diminished our view of truth

We apply the truth claims of the Bible to smaller and smaller segments of life and reality
This is true for those who have a high view of Scripture - that it functions as an Archimedean point, an authoritative revelation from the Creator who has viewpoint outside of creation - sees it all at a glance - and has knowledge of it in fullest sense of the word knowledge
- and yet we apply these knowledge and truth claims in a very limited manner
- the Christian bits are true - and have not much to say to the rest of creation

At its worst evangelicals have been led into trap of dividing belief and knowledge
- belief is something that belongs in the left column - this is where faith functions
- knowledge is something that belongs in the right column - this is where reason functions
- as if they could somehow be divided
- this is one of the great Satanic conspiracies in modern period - to divide faith and knowledge

So, this is the challenge in terms of how the academic brings their minds under Christ's full lordship
- overcoming the very limited scope of the Pietist influence

We ought to appreciate that there is significant psychological attraction to this model - perhaps especially for academics

As the fields of knowledge have dramatically increased in the post Enlightenment era - and alongside this as the hostility to Christianity has grown, it has been an arrangement of convenience to leave academic pursuits on one side of the divide (right column) - with little attempt to seriously integrate our subject area with fullness of Biblical Truth

- it's simply the easiest option to not make a serious attempt to fully integrate Christianity with our field of knowledge
- so we live in this dualism - make left column the most important in terms of where our commitment to Christ is lived out
- can end up as an appalling form of compromise - to worldliness

This is the default position almost uniformly amongst evangelicals

- often pay lip service to Lordship of Christ over all of life - but the priorities continue to be defined by the pietist hangover

This even feeds into apologetics - not a serious attempt to show how Christianity is true and how this works in all the fields of knowledge

Hard to overstate the challenge of the Pietist hangover

It is my observation with university students that the higher you go in terms of academic credibility the more you encounter this mindset - as a way of dealing with the challenge

- it is in the Russell group where I encounter the most rigid adherence to the Divided Reality Model
- some of the most ingrained when it comes to application of Christianity to all of life

B. A suggestion in terms of a Way Forward

We need a biblical framework that covers all of reality - a knowledge basis that leaves nothing untouched

- another way of saying that we need to operate out of a *comprehensive Biblical Philosophy*
- one that is rooted IN the authority of Scripture - functioning UNDER the authority of Scripture

Now, those of you whose field is removed from philosophy might feel the dice is loaded against you - some kind of conspiracy - a way philosophy - gradually shrinking in influence - to make its comeback

I use the word comprehensive because we require something that transcends all the fields of knowledge

- calling for Biblical framework that extends beyond theological categories
- in post Reformational period we have tended to read the Bible primarily for its theological insights

Must see that the bible provides the foundations for a comprehensive world and life view

- every 'ultimate concern' is addressed by the Bible - all the meanings embedded in reality
- the WHY of understanding, what it means to be human (who am I?), what it's all for?, how should we live? (the ethical concern), why it's gone wrong and what can be done about it?

These ultimate concerns flow out of the core questions rooted in reason of the heart

- the ones that a child asks before the age of five

Is at foundation of every civilisation - rests on account to the core questions of the heart

In order to make it a little sharper the way forward requires the recovery of a truly Reformational perspective

So much of the Reformed movement in this country is a form of Pietism - soteriology dominates

I am advocating a Kyperian Reformational version - my mentor Francis Schaeffer wonderful example of someone working in this tradition - engaging all the fields of knowledge

In terms of philosophical foundations it often feels like we must choose between the Anglo-American approach - and the Continental
- some merit and value in both

However, the Anglo-American tends to be highly analytic - in danger of becoming a new form of scholasticism

Continental - too skeptical about truth - lacking confidence in authority of the Bible

The Kyperian (Dutch tradition) offers a third way

Provides strong basis within which the Christian Academic can work
- integrates all the fields of knowledge

The Academy is so fragmented - lost unity that holds knowledge together
- a desperate need for an integration point

Christian academics - standing under authority of the Bible have a TRUTH claim that is able to hold it all together
- this is what a comprehensive biblical understanding of truth enables

It is only this vision that will provide foundation for good apologetic endeavour within the academy