The Integration of Faith and Learning in the Christian School

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Leadership Colloquium, EDU 7990

Seattle Pacific University

Summer 2004

Colloquium Paper

Abstract

The integration of faith and learning is essential to religious schools. Though

there are practical differences in how faith is integrated, fundamental differences exist in

how schools conceive and articulate such integration. Beginning with a review of the

historical, political, and philosophical roots of the religious school movement in America,

this study examined the beliefs of religious schools about the integration of faith and

learning, and how those beliefs work out in the school program. Examples included

Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, and various Protestant schools in the United States and

Europe. Several integration models were presented. Finally, a model of integration based

on the work of the 20th century theologian, apologist, and educator Cornelius Van Til was

presented.

The Integration of Faith and Learning in the Religious School

Introduction

A distinctive of private religious schooling is the opportunity to integrate faith and learning in the school curriculum, or rather (according to some theological/philosophical constructs) it is to recognize how faith is already an integral part of all learning. There is much historical evidence that religious families are motivated to have their children taught in a manner consistent with the faith of their forebears. Were it not for the religious component, faith-based schools might look just like many private non-sectarian[1] schools. The integration of faith and learning is an essential ingredient that makes religious schools what they are. One might point to evidence of faith influencing education, for example which texts are adopted, criterion for hiring, faith professions of faculty members, and religious exercises during the school day. Though these may be specific manifestations or methods of faith-based learning, they do not say enough about how the school conceives or understands such integration.

In the articulation of their philosophy of education there are variations as to how different schools view the relationship of faith and learning. In practice the differences may be even more pronounced. It is easy and common for a religious school to state that all aspects of the school program are conducted on the foundation of and infused with a particular faith or religious worldview. It is quite another thing to articulate a clear and cogent understanding of what that actually means.

I propose to study how religious schools understand the integration of faith and learning. I will explore some of the underlying beliefs about this relationship in general,

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[1] The terms "sectarian" and "sect" are used throughout this paper to describe any religiously affiliated organization, whether denominational or non-denominational, and are not meant to imply the narrower (often negative) connotation of membership in an extreme or heretical "cult or sect."

and how those beliefs work out specifically in the religious school. I will begin with a literature review of religious schools, using examples from Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, and various Protestant schools in the United States and Europe. Several faith and learning integration models will be examined. Finally, I will propose a model of integration based on the work of the 20th century theologian, apologist, and educator Cornelius Van Til. Van Til, a Dutch immigrant, advocated a philosophy of Christian education based on the Dutch Calvinist model. (White, 1979; Westminster Theological Seminary, 1987; Frame, 1976; Maffett & Dye, 1985)

<div align="center">The History and Necessity of Religious Schools</div>

The partnership between faith and learning is an old one. In the ancient Near East some texts served legal purposes, others were of historic significance, while many texts were educational and were designed to pass on the myths and legends of the culture to the next generation. Moses taught the Israelites the story of יהוה[2] and instructed the people that the law of God was to be memorized, discussed, and impressed on their children. (See Deuteronomy 6:1-9) Among the Chaldeans, the Babylonian *Epic of Creation* was recited annually on the fourth day of the New Year's festival. (Thomas, 1958) In answering the question "And what shall be their education?" Plato argues in his *Republic* that only literature that presents truthful images of the gods shall be allowed. Of the offending texts he says, "Neither shall we allow teachers to make use of them in the instruction of the young" (Plato, n.d., p. 287).

In the United States, this association between religion and education has often been of a reciprocal nature. The State founded schools with religious ends in mind, and religious citizens were in turn perpetuated through the schools. Massachusetts' *Old*

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[2] Yahweh or Jehovah

Deluder Satan Law of 1647 started with these words, "It being one chief project of that old deluder Satan to keep men from the knowledge of the Scriptures" (Massachusetts' Old Deluder Satan Law, 1647/2001, p. 8). Students who learned to read could study the scriptures and thus find salvation. In addition, those young readers would follow courses of study unabashedly informed by religion. The *New England Primer* included this entry for the letter *W*: "Whales in the Sea, God's voice Obey" (The New England Primer, 1727/2001, p. 15). Not great poetry perhaps, but it carries a clear message that whatever was to be learned about the creation would be referenced back to the Creator.

In most ages and societies there has been acknowledgement of a vital bond between faith and learning, between religion and education. In the United States, however, the relationship has been at times ambiguous and often hostile. This has created a point of tension for people of faith in the context of public education. Nevertheless, faith-based education has always taken place in some form in American schools, sometimes actually within the public schools, but in addition, always in alternative (parallel) religious school systems.

Early educational movements in America had roots in the faith life of the community. From the stated intention to convert native peoples and baptize slaves, to passing laws designed to counter the deceptions of Satan through publicly funded schools, to publishing texts complete with catechisms, the evidence points to schooling that was quite comfortable with its religious heritage and association. "Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and means of education shall forever be encouraged," said the Northwest

Ordinance as Americans moved west of the Ohio River (United States Congress, 1787/2001, p. 46; Urban & Wagoner, 2004, pp. 77-78).

Yet a tension apparently existed on the one hand, between the interpretation and application of the *Constitution of the United States* that sought to protect against the establishment of a State Church, and on the other hand the actual practice of the founders of the Common School who seemed comfortable with the establishment of publicly funded schools that were infused with religion.

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof…." said the first amendment to the Constitution ratified in 1791, yet in 1848, Horace Mann was defending the Common School from the charge that it was "irreligious," "anti-Christian," or "un-Christian" (Mann, 1848/2001, p. 58).

The defense that Horace Mann presented is informative as we explore integration within the religious curriculum. Mann's (1848/2001) defense is summarized as follows: Those who want a religious society may achieve that through either governmental control or individual and parental control. The United States alone in all of Christendom prefers to accomplish this goal through individual freedoms. (Mann, 1848/2001)

The Common School by definition is for all children, for the common good, but not for religious establishment. The establishment of religion would violate the consciences of those who hold contrary doctrines. Yet the Bible, which is the text of the Christian religion, was used in the Common School. It was on this basis that Mann maintained the schools were not anti-Christian, or irreligious. (Mann, 1848/2001)

Countering the opposition he felt from rival parochial and sectarian schools he described the place of scripture in the Common School curriculum. Then he attempted to balance the religious content with assurances that a particular sect would not proselytize the children. He believed that a person educated in the Common School would be enabled to be his own judge and choose his own religious obligations. Even as Mann defended his schools against the charge of being irreligious and anti-Christian, he claimed they were not sectarian to the degree that the student would be indoctrinated under compulsion, or pressured to join this or that denomination. Fraser (1999) called this "lowest-common-denominator Christianity" (p. 6). Perhaps Mann thought he could impart a healthy dose of religion, without being sectarian and without violating the *Constitution*. Was Mann sensitive to the perspectives of the Jews, Muslims, and Mormons; all whom he had referenced as examples? He did not seem to recognize that his school system would seem sectarian and indoctrinating to these groups. (Fraser, 2001; Urban & Wagoner, 2004)

Perhaps Mann was also aware that in New York, in 1840, Catholics had petitioned for a share of the Common School fund. Perhaps similar movements were afoot in Massachusetts, where Mann served on the Board of Education. In New York City, the Roman Catholics clearly saw the nature of the publicly funded school system. It was not "irreligious" as some charged concerning the Massachusetts schools, but neither was it so neutral or benign as Mann would have them believe. The public schools of New York were Protestant in nature, so to one of Catholic faith that meant un-Catholic, if not anti-Catholic. New York City Public Schools are described as a "Protestant monopoly." If the schools could prove that they were non-sectarian, then the Catholics maintained the

schools favored infidelity. The system was either Protestant and thus anti-Catholic, or it was non-sectarian and thus excluded all Christians including Catholics; either way Catholics parents were not happy that their children were not receiving the religious education they wanted for them. (Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, 1884/2001)

Ironically, Catholics could have used Mann's own argument in his *Twelfth Annual Report to the Massachusetts Board of Education* (Mann, 1848/2001):

If a man is taxed to support a school, where religious doctrines are inculcated which he believes to be false, and which he believes God condemns; then he is excluded from the school by Divine law, at the same time that he is compelled to support it by human law. This is a double wrong. It is politically wrong, because, if such a man educates his children at all, he must educate them elsewhere, and thus pay two taxes, while some of his neighbors pay less than their due proportion of one; and it is religiously wrong, because he is constrained, by human power, to promote what he believes the Divine Power forbids. The principle involved in such a course is pregnant with tyrannical consequences. (p. 58)

One wonders that Mann, who dedicated his life to the establishment of the Common School, did not see the implications of his words.

The Catholics of New York believed that there was no such thing as a non-sectarian faith. For them, if the religion being taught was not Catholic, it would clearly mold the minds of their young in a manner contrary to their Catholic principles. They discerned that the "non-sectarian faith" being taught was of Protestant flavor. Yet they in their turn believed and thus proposed that if they could share in a portion of the Common School fund "the public may then be assured that the money will not be applied to the

support of the Catholic religion" (Mann, 1848/2001, p. 74). As an aside, this statement on the part of the Catholics of 1848, suggests one model for the integration of faith and learning, one where the curriculum may be divided between religiously neutral or secular material on the one hand and religious subjects on the other.

In 1884, forty-four years after the Roman Catholic petition in New York City, Catholics in Baltimore were advised to establish their own schools for Catholic education. Bishop John Carroll proclaimed to the faithful, (1) "That near every church a parish school, where one does not yet exist, is to be built," and (2) "That all Catholic parents should be bound to send their children to the parish school" (Hughes, 1840/2001, p. 145).

In 1965, the second Vatican Council confirmed the position that the Catholic Church would not delegate the task of education to the public schools. After the family ("…the family is the first school…") the *Declaration on Christian Education* (Pope Paul VI, 1965) says:

> Finally, in a special way, the duty of educating belongs to the Church, not merely because she must be recognized as a human society capable of educating, but especially because she has the responsibility of announcing the way of salvation to all men, of communicating the life of Christ to those who believe, and, in her unfailing solicitude, of assisting men to be able to come to the fullness of life. (p. 3)

The *Declaration* goes on to claim "Parents who have the primary and inalienable right and duty to educate their children must enjoy true liberty in their *choice* of schools" (Pope Paul VI, 1965, p. 4). Thus more than a century after Catholics petitioned for a

share in the Common School fund they continued to advocate for schools where faith would be integrated with learning. Although they are an excellent example, Catholics were not alone in the pursuit of faith-based schools.

While Irish Catholics were immigrating to the United States, (by 1847 there were 37,000 in Boston alone), (Johnston, n.d.) and Horace Mann was preparing his last report to the Board of Education of Massachusetts defending the Common Schools from the charge of being irreligious, Dutch immigrants (known as seceders) were leaving the Netherlands in protest over "neutral" state-controlled schools. Like the Catholics, the Dutch Calvinists sought doctrinally pure schools that taught a worldview consistent with their families and church. Thus, the Dutch founded schools throughout the United States. Though initially these transplanted Calvinist day schools were parochial, being governed by the Christian Reformed Church, and until 1890, conducted exclusively in the Dutch language, by 1892 with twelve to fourteen school already established, the denominational Synod adopted a resolution that spun off the schools from Church control and established direct parent-controlled school boards. (Oppewal, 1963) Unlike their Catholic counterparts, Dutch Calvinist educators rejected the impulse toward government funding. Following the thinking of men like Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck the Dutch accepted the authority of the "state to protect and guarantee the development of social institutions" (Jaarsma, 1935, p. 183), but rejected the "segregation of home and school resulting from government regulation in education" (Jaarsma, 1935, p. 187). Bavinck also criticized governments that "subordinate all rights of individuals and groups to the state" (Jaarsma, 1935, p. 183). Thus, the Dutch who left the Netherlands to avoid government-

controlled schools were not about to partner-up in the education of their children with the government in their new land.

In addition to the Calvinists and Catholics, we could trace several immigrant groups from Germany and surrounding countries, many of which desired to establish their own faith-based schools as an expression of their religious liberty. Restricting our attention to the waves of immigrants who arrived around Horace Mann's time we find Jewish immigrants, Amish/Mennonite immigrants, and German Lutheran immigrants. (Kurzweil, 1980; Hartman, n.d.; Chao, Spencer, & Suave, n.d., Sherwin Miller Museum, n.d.)

Not surprisingly, we find schools organized by all these groups and so there exist Amish, Mennonite schools, Calvinist schools, Catholic schools, Jewish schools, and Lutheran schools. Horace Mann reported that he felt considerable pressure from proponents of these schools as he sought to establish his Common Schools. Historians from Valparaiso University related the struggle for ownership of the schools in Michigan and Indiana when Roman Catholics, Missouri Synod Lutherans, Dutch Calvinists, and Seventh-day Adventists formed an unlikely alliance against forces that wanted to make public school attendance mandatory. (Strietelmeier, 1959; Baepler, 2000)

Mann reports opposition "by a few persons in our own State, and by no inconsiderable numbers in some of the other states of the Union; —and that a rival system of 'Parochial' or 'Sectarian Schools,' is now urged upon the public by a numerous, a powerful, and a well-organized body of men" (Mann, 1848/2001, p. 57).

As the United States of America and its schools grew numerically, in maturity, and in diversity it became clear that even the dose of religion that Mann permitted would

not be allowed. Though some of Mann's critics thought that religion was lacking, the opinion of the courts was that the religious content in the curriculum violated the establishment clause of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

Ultimately Mann's critics were proved right in regard to the place of religion in the public schools. If they wanted the schools to provide religious training in the pattern of their particular sect they would need to establish private religious schools with a curriculum that met their needs. Private religious schools were established before and after Horace Mann's time and have flourished.

Today, the U. S. Census Bureau tracks enrollment in private schools affiliated with more than 18 religious associations (see Appendix A). In addition, faith-based schools are associated with more than 28 denominations and religious sects (see Appendix B). Locally, the Washington Federation of Independent Schools (WFIS) serves schools affiliated with these religious organizations: Catholic dioceses; Christian Schools International; The Association of Christian Schools International; Lutheran Schools; and Seventh Day Adventist Schools. Religious school systems are here to stay.

The Integration of Faith and Learning

The question of how faith and learning intersect is not resolved simply by entering the private sector. Religious schools still wrestle with what integration means and how it works out in practice. Several studies illustrate how religious schools address this issue.

One study that examined the place of religion in the Christian school was reported by De Wolff, Miedema, and De Ruyter (2002). De Wolff et al. studied literature related to Christian schools in the United States, The Netherlands, and Germany. They described

a number of classifications for the Christian School. Some literature attempted to provide a definition that could be generalized to all Christian schools, others focused on defining one particular school. Likewise, some schools found their identity in a single, namely, religious characteristic, while others recognized educational, pedagogical, and organizational characteristics that were related in one degree or another to their religious identity. This led to a discussion of the place the religious dimension in the Christian schools. Some saw the Christian school in purely religious terms with the aim of the school being "the formation and deepening of Christian beliefs, values and attitudes" (De Wolff et al., 2002, p. 244). Others discussed whether the task of the Christian school was to teach *about* the Christian religion or whether the task was to teach *into* the Christian religion. Teaching *into* the religion had more of an evangelical connotation. However, they maintained that induction into Christianity was not the ultimate aim of the school. (De Wolff et al., 2002, p. 244) Following a discussion of whether the Christian school is more abstract and universal or more concrete and contextual, and whether its character is more static or dynamic, the authors addressed the practical implications of the various definitions. Specifically, they discussed the Christian school's religious nature in relationship to its pedagogy, curriculum, and organization. Regarding curriculum and instruction in the Christian school, the authors reported, "Religious education should permeate the entire curriculum. Where appropriate and possible, religious and moral beliefs and values should be considered in each subject" (De Wolff et al., 2002, p. 243). Finally, De Wolff et al. conclude, "The plea that the Christian commitment must play a part in all educational and pedagogical practices in the school presupposes the view that a

worldview does exert an influence in all educational and pedagogical practices" (De Wolff et al., 2002, p. 246).

In a second study, Walford (2002) examined Evangelical Christian schools and Muslim schools in England and The Netherlands. In both countries these groups used surprisingly similar language to describe their faith as a "revealed way of life, where revelation is not only contained within the revealed scripture (i.e., the Bible and the Qur'an respectively), but also in the "Book of Creation", that is, in every aspect of the created order as interpreted through the lens of the revealed scripture" (Walford, 2002, pp. 405, 409). It was on this basis that each group sought to establish schools in which every subject would be permeated by religious values. Walford (2002) reported mixed results:

> Various schools take different views about how aspects of religious belief should be taught and how Christian and Muslim belief should be related to the wider curriculum of the school. While some of the schools have attempted to integrate, for example, evangelical Christianity throughout the whole curriculum, others have been content to have the religious teaching as a separate component of the curriculum. (p. 404)

Similar to the motivation of those who sought religious schooling in America during the early days of the Common School, Evangelical and Muslim families in England and the Netherlands "wished their children to experience a greater continuity of teaching between the school and the home and the church or mosque" (Walford, 2002, p. 404). Their perspective was that "the nature of religious faith is that it is not an 'add-on' to the rest of life, but something that has an influence on the way that the whole life is

lived" (Walford, 2002, p.404). Thus the questions were asked, "What makes a Christian school Christian? Or "What makes a Muslim school Muslim?" (Walford, 2002, p. 405)

Both the Muslim schools and the Christian schools believed that there were no 'secular' subjects within their respective worldviews. In the Walford (2002) study the idea of integration was expressed ideally as faith permeating the entire curriculum; every aspect of study should be infused by their respective religious worldviews. (Walford, 2002, p. 405)

Some Muslims believed that "a Muslim school is not one in which "Islam" is taught as a discrete subject called "religious education", but rather one in which the whole of education is seen within a faith-centered integrated system" (Walford, 2002, p. 406). Though Muslims in both England and The Netherlands desired an integrated curriculum, the reality was somewhat different. Shortages of fully trained Muslim teachers, lack of specifically Muslim materials, schools that were still new and underdeveloped, lack of funding, and other factors were cited as reasons that the schools were less than fully integrated. Efforts varied depending on the situation, but some schools reported little integration of Islam into the whole curriculum (Walford, 2002, p. 407).

Evangelical Christian schools echoed the same sentiments, however greater availability of trained Christian teachers, more published curriculum materials, a longer history, and a clearer articulation of a Christian philosophy of education, seemed to account for more consistency in putting the ideal into practice. (Walford, 2002)

Examples of Religious Schools

The De Wolff (2002) and Walford (2002) studies illustrate that religious schools struggle with the idea of integration. A survey of select religious schools in the United States provided additional examples of various approaches to integration. How the curriculum is divided (i.e., general studies and religious studies), and who teaches in the school (i.e., lay teachers or religious teachers) may illustrate whether a school integrates faith in learning or keeps religion separate in practical terms. The following survey of Catholic, Judaic, Hutterite, Lutheran, Evangelical Christian, and Dutch Calvinist schools is based in part on this author's own experience and interviews.

In Catholic schools, for example, the course of study is general in nature, with additional classes for the preparation in the catechism for first communion, and participation in worship and sacraments. As we saw illustrated earlier with the proposal of the Catholic schools to keep religious studies separate from secular studies that would be supported by public funds, the Catholic Church had adopted a dual (sacred/secular) view of the school curriculum.

Catholic schools hire both religious teachers (who are nuns, priests, or monks) and lay teachers. Instructors in the earliest Catholic schools would have been teachers from religious orders. Over time lay teachers were added, by necessity, due to the shortage of religious teachers. By the time of the II Vatican Council, lay teachers were common if not more numerous than religious teachers. Today, lay and religious teachers may be assigned to teach any subject, whether general studies or religious. Yet in spite of this equity in teacher selection, the faith is not infused in the teaching of the general studies. One recalls Catholics in 1848 offering to not use Common School funds in the support of the religious curriculum. The implication was that the general curriculum

could be taught in a religiously neutral manner, and in that way religion would not be supported by public funds.

In another example, one Judaic school (e.g., Seattle Hebrew Academy) divided its course of study between general studies (60% of the school week), and religious studies (40% of the school week). General studies include math, science, social studies, and language arts, and Judaic studies include Torah, Prophets, Talmud and Hebrew language. Judaic schools distinguish between religious teachers (who are Rabbis) and lay teachers. Rabbis alone are hired to teach Judaic studies, and while lay teachers may be hired to teach the general studies. The Judaic school provided the cleanest example of a line drawn between general studies and religious studies.

The children of Hutterites, a separatist group related to the Anabaptists of Germany (One may compare the Mennonites and Amish, who are also of the Anabaptist tradition), attend school in a one-room schoolhouse, which follows a general course of study. In their school system, the Hutterites, who are a strict people in regard to their religious practice, see no conflict having a non-religious teacher instruct their children in the general studies. Religious education takes place in the home and in Sunday school.

Colonies of Hutterian Brethren do not have ordained clergy per se. The Hutterites prefer more democratic church leadership in contrast to the hierarchical/Episcopal church government common in many protestant churches. Ministers are not self-ordained (meaning they do not choose to pursue a career in the ministry), but are selected by casting lots. The elders of the colony provide pastoral and religious leadership in the community and parents provide religious teaching for their families. However, in regard to schooling, the colony will hire a lay, state certified teacher, who, though a person with

a Christian commitment, is not a Hutterite, to conduct the school and teach a general curriculum. One recalls Catholics and others not being content to have their children taught by those who might teach a variance in Christian doctrine. It was a surprise to find Hutterites, who were otherwise separatists, permitting an outsider to educate their children. The Hutterites view the general curriculum to be religiously neutral.

The Lutheran school curriculum is comprised of a general course of study with religious components added. Courses in the Bible are listed among the requirements. In the seventh and eighth grades students are given special catechetical instruction. The various Lutheran denominations do have ordained clergy, but most teachers in the Lutheran schools are lay teachers. The pastor of the sponsoring church may teach classes from time to time to provide religious instruction, and will be the exclusive teacher of the seventh and eighth graders catechism class. Clergy are often used for the purpose of teaching religious content.

Many Evangelical Christian schools adopt curriculum from Christian publishers in their effort to integrate faith and learning. Publishers like Bob Jones University Press, Abeka Books, Accelerated Christian Education and the Association of Christian Schools International publish "Christian" curriculum in all subjects for non-denominational schools. There is a strong moralistic and nationalistic flavor to these texts. Bible curriculum often includes studies of church and Biblical history, Bible survey courses, and Christian character studies. (Givens, 1996)

The distinction between clergy and lay does not apply to teaching staff in most Evangelical schools. Although an ordained minister may teach at the K-12 level, that is the exception rather than the rule. Protestants will often speak about the priesthood of all

believers, a concept derived from I Peter 2:9[3], in order to express the sacred calling of all believers, and the value of their work. Rather than using religious staff many evangelical Christian schools will use Christian publishers as their faith and learning integrator.

Schools in the Reformed tradition will base their program on the theological constructs of John Calvin, Abraham Kuyper and other Dutch Calvinist theorists. One of the hallmarks of Reformed thinking is the idea that all truth is God's truth. (Gaebelein, 1968) Thus in Dutch Calvinist schools the goal is that there would be no dichotomy between religious knowledge and secular knowledge. Academic subjects include Reading, Language Arts, Modern Language, Science, Social Studies, Music, Art, Physical Education, and various Bible courses. The curriculum would call for all subjects to be taught with academic integrity, including Bible, but that all subjects would be revelatory of the Creator, including those subjects typically labeled in this paper as general studies. (Gaebelein, 1968) In his inaugural address at the opening of the Free University of Amsterdam, which he founded in 1880, Abraham Kuyper set the tone for the Dutch Calvinist tradition, "There is not an inch in the entire domain of our human life of which Christ, who is sovereign of all, does not proclaim 'Mine!'" (Bratt, 1998, p. 488). In this simple but powerful assertion Kuyper summarizes his worldview and the religious presupposition of the Dutch Calvinist schools.

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[3] But you are a chosen people, a royal **priesthood**, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Table 1

Models of Integration Found in Religious Schools

Model	General Studies:	Religious Studies:
1	Religiously-Neutral Subjects	Religiously-Biased Subjects
Model 2	General Studies in a Christian Ethical and Moral Context Academics are Religiously Neutral Behavior is Influenced by Religiously-Based Ethics and Morals	
Model 3	General Studies plus Religious Elements Added General Studies with Christian Texts, Prayer, Observance of Religious Holidays, Chapel, Religious Themes and Units	
Model 4	All Studies Taught from a Religious World-View Beliefs Influence and Impact Practice	

Defining Integration

One of the primary focuses of integration of the school curriculum in general is the idea of reversing the trend to treat subjects in isolation from each other and allowing students and teachers to make important and significant connections (Ellis, 2001, p. 167).

The movement to integrate the curriculum is supported by cognitive theories that students learn best when they encounter ideas connected to one another. Integration moves beyond the traditional curriculum in which subjects are artificially separated from one another, and instead students are challenged to create meaning in the real world where things are richly inter-connected. This approach is supported by a constructivist

theory of meaning-making as well as cognitive brain theory that maintains that the brain seeks patterns (Ellis, 2001, pp. 177-178).

Integrative studies have roots in the work of Tyler who suggested that integration was one of the processes for organizing learning experiences. (Tyler, 1949, p. 85) Piaget's cognitive processes of assimilation, accommodation and equilibrium were foundational to Tyler's work. Tyler referred to horizontal relationships of curriculum experiences that would allow experiences to be unified in relation to other elements of the curriculum. (Tyler, 1949, P. 85) His goal was that individual subjects should not be isolated from the rest of the subjects in a school. He described the student as developing an increasingly unified view. Indeed, Piaget's processes are only possible as students are permitted to make connections, accommodate new data, reconcile apparent contradictions, build and test theories, and arrive at a place of intellectual integrity (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998, p. 110). This author noted that integration and integrity share a common root. Both words carry the idea of being complete and undivided.

Fogarty (1991) described ten different models for integrating the curriculum. Through these models, which require increasing depth of understanding and synthesis (compare with critical thinking taxonomies such as Bloom's and Quellmalz), the goal is for students to make important associations within a single discipline, across disciplines, within a learner and between learners. Though the integration of faith and learning is not Fogarty's aim, this survey of models is suggestive of ways that religious educators may think about the infusion of faith in the curriculum.

Table 2

Fogarty's Models for How to Integrate the Curriculum

Within Single Disciplines	Across Several Disciplines	Within & Across Learners
The Fragmented Model	The Sequenced Model	The Immersed Model
The Connected Model	The Shared Model	The Networked Model
The Nested Model	The Webbed Model	
	The Threaded Model	
	The Integrated Model	

The first three models (fragmented, connected, and nested) feature exploration within discrete and separate disciplines. These models each focus on ways of viewing single subject areas, but not connecting the individual disciplines. With these models different subjects remain fragmented. Exploration across disciplines is experienced through the next five models with increasing depth of connections (sequenced, shared, webbed, threaded, and integrated models). Beginning with the sequenced model there is the attempt to make connections across subject areas. With the Integrated Model, Fogarty has in mind a cross-disciplinary approach that makes connections between math, science, language arts, and social studies. The immersed and networked models describe integration of the curriculum within learners themselves and across networks of learners. These two models are more about what goes on inside and between learners and not so much about curriculum connections.

The idea of integration in general is an important though not conclusive step toward understanding the integration of faith and learning in a Christian school. The

integrated curriculum allows learners to see how knowledge is interconnected, associated and interrelated. For the believer however, there is a need for more than just making connections between the various disciplines, there is the desire to connect practice with beliefs and values.

The teacher in a faith-based school system may be intrigued by claims that integrated knowledge is more useful than fragmented knowledge and that students learn better in such an environment (Ormrod, 1999, p. 261). Though it is noted that more evidence is needed to support these claims (Ellis, 2001, p. 175), this author will accept as given the benefits of an integrated approach based on the constructs presented above. However, the goal of the integration of faith and learning is not necessarily cognitive or academic benefit. In addition, though we can appreciate the desire to not impose an artificial separation on the various disciplines, the person of faith may be more motivated to find the unifying factor in his or her worldview.

Though the teacher in a religious school may or may not be concerned with a more progressive model of education where the curriculum is composed of integrated units of study, there will be interest in the idea of integration as it applies to faith and learning. If the religious curriculum is treated as just one more subject that is to be taught, one doubts that integration is taking place. It is not surprising that in many Christian schools where there is an inclination toward a more traditional curriculum where academic subjects are already taught in isolation, that the faith remains isolated and academic subjects are viewed as neutral in regard to religious beliefs. The idea of neutrality suggests that academic subjects may be unbiased in regard to religious beliefs

and values. If that were the case then treating faith in isolation from academic studies might be appropriate.

Banks' (Perry-Sheldon, 1994; Banks, 1994) model for the integration of the curriculum in connection with multi-cultural education presents a model that moves us from thinking about making connections between disciplines to recognition that attitudes, values, and beliefs are also an integral part of the curriculum. The idea of applying a multicultural model of integration to the issue of faith and learning is quite appropriate. Religion, after all, is an aspect of culture. In addition, Fraser (1999) discusses multi-cultural education in connection with religion and public education. Fraser (1999) adds religion to the multicultural agenda (p. 5). Using Banks' model of integration for multi-cultural education, our goal would be to go beyond simply connecting math with language arts, and science with social studies, but rather to introduce the idea that all subjects may be taught from the perspective of certain cultural values, beliefs, and attitudes.

Banks suggests four approaches to integrating the curriculum. The Contributions Approach is that in which the "regular" curriculum is enhanced with observations of special events. In the multi-cultural curriculum this would mean celebration of cultural holidays, for example, Black History Month. Applying this model to the religious school, the observations might include religious holidays, such as Christmas, Easter, or Hanukah. All these "contributions" remain outside and separate from the regular curriculum. This, Banks maintains, still represents a fragmented curriculum. The next level for Banks is the Additive Approach where a book, a unit, or even a course on multiculturalism is taught. The religious school counterpart to this approach is the addition of religious elements in

the course of study, for example, the memorization of scripture, performance of Christian music for the choir, a course in the Bible, a unit on creationism in the science curriculum or attendance at a weekly chapel. According to Banks this still represents a fragmented curriculum. There is little or no penetration or fusion into the traditional curriculum and connections are not being made, at least not intentionally. (Perry-Sheldon, 1994; Banks, 1994) Commenting on the integration of faith in a Muslim school in The Netherlands, the Chairperson of one school critiqued the Additive Approach in this way, "Religion is not caught through one lesson a week, but permeates all the school's activities" (Walford, 2002, p. 408). This approach is familiar in the Christian school where the curriculum is no different from that taught in the public school. Essentially, the Christian school formula employs public school curriculum plus prayer, or plus chapel and Bible reading.

Banks' third level involves the Transformation Approach in which cultural perspectives are recognized throughout the curriculum. Here, Banks says, the structure of the curriculum changes. Within every subject students are challenged to understand concepts, events, and people from diverse cultural perspectives. (Perry-Sheldon, 1994; Banks, 1994) Students are taught to ask, "Whose perspective does this represent?" Or, "What is my perspective on this issue? Or how does a belief system influence a point of view?" (Bellevue Christian School, 2003) (See Appendix C) Students are challenged to think critically. A parallel approach in the Christian school would have students examining what worldviews, belief systems, or values that are operating in theirs and others lives, in the literature they read, the theories that are studied, and in the words and actions of persons in current events and history.

Finally, Banks introduced the Decision-Making or Social Action Approach in which social issues are explored and opportunity is given for students to take action of their own. Though the Transformation Approach is important in determining what students believe, the Decision-making or Social Action Approach moves one's values from theory into practice, from intellectual ascent to changed behavior and choices influenced by values.

Table 3

Banks' Four Levels of Multi-Cultural Integration

Level 1	Contributions Approach
Level 2	Additive Approach
Level 3	Transformation Approach
Level 4	Decision-Making or Social Action Approach

Neutrality in Education

Integration is related to the idea of neutrality in the curriculum. Walford raised the issue of neutrality, questioning whether or not individual disciplines, science for example, might be taught apart from the faith. Van Brummelen answers, "Education is always religious in the sense that it cannot but lead forth according to our faith commitments and ideals" (Van Brummelen, 1988, p. 5). One team of Christian educators in England contended that a Christian Science curriculum ought to be taught in such a way as to integrate science into the story of Creation, Fall, and Redemption. (Walford, 2002, p.

411) This is a common construct among Dutch Calvinist educators. (Jaarsma, 1935;

Jaarsma, 1953; Maffett & Dye, 1985; Oppewal, 1985; Wolters, 1985)

The idea of neutrality in education is important because if some subjects are

religiously neutral then you have a framework where school subjects may fall into an a-

religious/religiously-neutral category or a religious/religiously-biased category. The

effort to integrate the curriculum is an attempt to move away from this dichotomy and

toward a framework that finds either natural connections or unity. An integrated

curriculum emphasizes the "interdependence of various areas of knowledge and attempts

to transcend traditional boundaries" (Walford, 2002, p. 414). Many consider the idea of

neutrality and the separation between the spiritual and the rational to have been founded

in the Enlightenment. Modern man divided knowledge into two categories: objective,

scientifically based facts and subjective, faith-based beliefs. This dualism has deep roots

in the history of philosophy but is often attributed to Immanuel Kant's who, in his

attempt to maintain human dignity and the freedom of the will in regard to moral

questions, described the noumenal (the real world in itself) and phenomenal (the world

that we experience through our senses) categories. The effect was that scientific

knowledge was viewed as testable, provable, and rational, while spiritual knowledge was

not open to scientific verification and thus could not be proven, it could only remain in

the realm of personal and subjective. (Greene, 1998)

Greene (1998) described the fragmented curriculum in spiritual terms: "Dualism

is present when we divide life into two parts, one of which is lived to the glory of God,

the other in service of something created" (Greene, 1998, p. 144). And further he

explains, "The problem with dualism is that it splits our lives into two parts. In our

spiritual life, we acknowledge and serve Christ. In our ordinary life, we… follow our own reasoning power" (Greene, 1998, p. 145). Cornelius Van Til and others of the Calvinist tradition articulated a philosophy of education that is transformative, to use Banks' category again. (Perry-Sheldon, 1994; Banks, 1994)

<div align="center">An Integrated Worldview</div>

Living out an integrated model in the classroom depends largely on the degree to which an educator recognizes (believes) that faith and learning are related, and further is able to articulate a cogent and cohesive integrated worldview. Cornelius Van Til, in the tradition of Kuyper and other Dutch Calvinists, presents such a framework within which the question of the integration of faith and learning may be discussed and understood. Initially, Van Til's theory of knowledge addressed the issue of neutrality. (White, 1979, Frame, 1976; Maffett & Dye, 1985)

Van Til's Epistemology

Van Til's theory of knowledge flows from his understanding of man, his concept of antithesis (that is, a theistic worldview versus an anti-theistic worldview) and his presuppositional apologetics (that is, that one must assume the existence of a self-sufficient God). Van Til (1990b) defines his theistic epistemology:

> Education is implication into God's interpretation. To think God's thoughts after him, to dedicate the universe to its Maker, and to be the vice-regent of the Ruler of all things: this is man's task. Man is prophet, priest and king. It is this view of education that is involved in and demanded by the idea of creation (p. 44).

For the Christian schoolteacher the implication of Van Til's ideas is that faith needs to be integrated with learning throughout the curriculum. Religious education is not

compartmentalized apart from the remaining subjects in a sacred/secular dichotomy. All learning points to God. No fact is neutral with regard to its religious content. That is, there is not a fact that does not point to the One whose Word created it and sustains it. When Van Til talks about the place of religious instruction in the school curriculum he says, "To be conscious of these distinctions does not mean that we must spend much more time on the direct teaching of religion than on teaching other matters. If we teach religion indirectly, everywhere and always, we may need less time to teach religion directly" (Van Til, 1990a, p. 4).

Bruner's Tenets

Complementing Van Til's approach, Bruner (1996) presents an interesting framework through which the idea of neutrality may be understood. He suggests that it is the interaction between the cultural context and the mind of the learner that influences the making of meaning. (Bruner, 1996)

Bruner's *perspectival tenet* relates to meaning making. Bruner seems to agree with Van Til that there are no un-interpreted facts. Van Til's way of expressing this is to say, "There are no 'brute facts' i.e., facts un-interpreted by God as well as by man" (Van Til, 1941/1955b). According to Van Til all facts are interpreted, first by God, then by man. Bruner does not go that far. His interest is in the interaction between the mind and culture. He says, "The meaning of any fact, or encounter is relative to the perspective or frame of reference in terms of which it is construed" (Bruner, 1996, p.13). According to Bruner meaning is not universal and may change, nor is it objective. "Nothing is culture free" (Bruner, 1996, p. 14). For Van Til one aspect of the cultural context or frame of reference is the beliefs that inform one's meaning making. "Looking at the world through

the "spectacles" of God's Word, we are able to understand the world and our place in it from God's perspective" Van Til, 1979, p. 117).

"The perspectival tenet highlights the interpretive, meaning-making side of human thought, while at the same time, recognizing the inherent risks of discord that may result from cultivating this deeply human side of mental life" (Bruner, 1996, p.15). The religious school accepts the "risk," as Bruner puts it, of sponsoring a certain version of the world.

In addition, according to Bruner, meaning making is constrained by the nature of human mental functioning, and the limits of symbolic systems. He calls this the *constraints tenet*. The constraints tenet further modifies the perspectival tenet. An example he gives of the constraints tenet is our experience of the limits of time and space. Regardless how Kant and others may suggest that time and space are mental constructs; we nevertheless experience these limits every moment. Human language is another form of constraint that we experience in our meaning making. Language has limits and these limits confine what we can express and where we can go in our understanding.

Religious educators would agree with Bruner that man is subject to these constraints in his understanding of the universe. A Christian educator might say that human understanding, or meaning making, is limited additionally by our human finiteness and our fallenness or sinfulness as a race. Regarding our finiteness, the creature will never understand the universe as the Creator understands His creation. We are limited as created beings. Though we are God's image bearers, yet we are not omnipotent, omniscient, or omnipresent. In addition, those who recognize a historic fall into sin would add that imperfection to the constraints we experience as a race. Though

finite man could never have ultimate understanding, fallen man is certain to have impaired and corrupted understanding. At creation, man's understanding was merely limited, at the fall his understanding was twisted.

Wolters (1985), in discussing the impact of sin on the creation, describes how structurally the creation is unified. All creation, he says, came into being by the Word of God; all creation is revelatory of the Creator; all creation was created good. There are not two 'stories' as per Aquinas, or two kinds of knowledge as per Kant, or the sacred/secular distinction as per Protestant Evangelicals. However, in terms of directionality all of creation is distorted by the fall. (Wolters, 1985)

Faith and Reason

After considering Van Til's theory of knowledge, we look at his ideas regarding the relationship of faith and reason. Van Til places belief prior to reason, and in this way he says, true reason is established. Van Til echoed the words of Anselm of Canterbury, "Nor do I seek to understand so that I can believe, but rather I believe so that I can understand. For I believe this too, that 'unless I believe I shall not understand.' (Isaiah 7:9)" *"Credo ut intelligam - I believe in order that I may understand,"* is the ancient maxim that Van Til echoes. He presupposes the supernatural revelation of God's Word as providing the only basis for the entire educational enterprise. "Human beings," he says, "must presuppose the self-attesting triune God in all their thinking. Faith in God precedes understanding everything else" (Van Til, 1955c).

Van Til's Antithesis

In Van Til's worldview there is an antithesis in the way a theist and an *anti-theist*[4] understand the world. From his perspective a person is either a believer in the God of the bible or an unbeliever. Thus the perception of each person, he says, is colored by his or her beliefs. (Van Til, 1955c, 1990a, n.d.)

Van Til's worldview starts with the self-attesting God of scripture and listens dependently to His Word in creation and scripture. According to Van Til, for the believer, "everything is dark unless the current of God's revelation is turned on" (Van Til, 1990a, p. 4). Van Til claims, "we cannot even see any facts without this light" (Van Til, 1990a, p. 4). "Not a single fact can really be known and therefore be taught unless placed under the light of revelation of God" (Van Til, 1990a, p. 4).

He explains further what he means by this startling and dramatic statement that not a single fact can really be known. There are some apparent similarities between the perception of the believer and unbeliever. For example, for both "two times two equals four," would be a true statement. Both come to the same answer. However, if you go deeper there are differences in how this fact is understood. He explains that for the theist the fact "two time two equals four" is an expression of the will and nature of God. In other words, the thing that makes this simple fact true is the creative Word of God. For the unbeliever "two times two equals four" is a "brute" fact, which the unbeliever regards as being neutral and independent from any concept of God. This is an ultimate difference. "In one sense, we could… say that all men have the facts, since all live in God's created order and all move in the general revelation of God" (Van Til, 1990a, p. 16). But Van Til

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[4] Van Til does not use the terms atheist or agnostic, since he wants no suggestion of neutrality.

goes on the make the bold statement that "no 'fact' is seen as it really is unless it is seen in its correct relationship to God" (Van Til, 1990a, p.16).

Presuppositionalism

Van Til's (n.d.) position is that he must take God as his starting point. He explains why this approach is essential to his metaphysics and epistemology:

> Now, in fact, I feel that the whole of history and civilization would be unintelligible to me if it were not for my belief in God. So true is this that I propose to argue that unless God is back of everything, you cannot find meaning in anything. I cannot even argue for belief in Him, without already having taken Him for granted. And similarly I contend that you cannot argue against belief in Him unless you also first take Him for granted. Arguing about God's existence, I hold, is like arguing about air. You may affirm that air exists, and I that it does not. But as we debate the point, we are both breathing air all the time. Or to use another illustration, God is like the emplacement on which must stand the very guns that are supposed to shoot Him out of existence (p. 3).

It is a person's presuppositions that determine the types of questions one asks and the types of answers one perceives. Presuppositions determine what a fact means to a person. Van Til described one's presuppositions as colored glasses cemented to one's eyes (Van Til, 1976, p. 77; Blake, 1992, Maffett & Dye, 1985) that color everything that is seen. Elsewhere he says, "Looking at the world through the 'spectacles' of God's Word, we are able to understand the world and our place in it from God's perspective" (Van Til, 1979, p. 117). For Van Til, the starting point, in education as in theology, was always the self-attesting God of scripture. (Van Til, 1976)

For Van Til, this presuppositional starting point makes all the difference in the world. The theistic worldview begins with temporal creation. Says Van Til (1990b):

> Our aim is to show that Christian education is based upon the notion of creation, that this notion of creation in turn is an inseparable part of the whole theistic philosophy of life, and that this philosophy of life is the most reasonable for man to take because all others reduce experience to something void of significance. (p. 46)

Van Til (1990b) continues:

> Theism says that man is subject to the categories of space and time while God is not. Every variety of anti-theism says that space and time, if they are real, exist for God, if God is real, in the same way that they exist for man. (p. 47)

"Creation," according to Van Til, "implies that God's thought alone is original and absolute, while human thought is derivative and finite" (Van Til, 1990b, p. 47). The significance of the creation for Van Til is to affirm that God is not part of the creation, but creator of the entire universe and transcendent in being and knowledge. (Blake, 1992; Maffett & Dye, 1985)

Conclusion

Religious schools in the United States and in the world are here to stay. There is much historical evidence that religious families are motivated to have their children taught in a manner consistent with the faith of their forebears. Similar to the debate that raged regarding the place of religion in the Common School, religious schools are still trying to understand the place faith in learning and how to effectively integrate the two.

A review of the literature and of the practices of religious schools shows that some schools have followed the lead of modernity and have kept religion separate from so-called secular general studies. Other schools allow religion to set the standard for moral and ethical behavior, but otherwise the curriculum is unaffected. Some integration models (for example, Banks' Contributions Approach and Additive Approach) bring religious elements into the program but the curriculum still remains fragmented. (Perry-Sheldon, 1994; Banks, 1994)

Only when we recognize that a person's faith is active in academics, as it is in all of life, and that there is no religious neutrality when it comes to the curriculum, can we transform the curriculum, and provide the opportunity to have faith inform our understanding and decision making. The idea of integration involves making connections. Educational innovators encourage the integration of the curriculum in general for improved learning, but the integration of faith and learning involves the recognition that our beliefs and presuppositions impact what and how we teach.

Van Brummelen (1988) expresses the connection between faith and learning: "Your worldview—your basic beliefs, assumptions, values, priorities, and biases—under girds how you view curriculum and curriculum planning" (Van Brummelen, 1988, p. 86). "A Christian approach to curriculum thus views the world as a place where God, through the power of His Spirit, calls His children to be faithful in doing the truth… It uses the curriculum to show that all creation proclaims its Creator" (Van Brummelen, 1988, p. 96).

For the educator in the Christian school Cornelius Jaarsma (1953) summarizes our underlying "beliefs, assumptions, values, priorities, and biases" (Van Brummelen, 1988, p. 86) this way:

1. Education is distinctively Christian when the authority of Christ and the realization of His authority in the lives of men is the justification of all educational activity.

2. The curriculum concept for Christian education is best expressed in terms of citizenship. But it is the citizenship that bows before the authority of Christ from the heart. It is citizenship in the kingdom of God. (pp. 241-242)

Appendix A

Religious School Associations

From the National Center for Educational Statistics, U. S. Department of Education

Accelerated Christian Education (ACE)

American Association of Christian Schools (AACS)

Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI)

Association of Christian Teachers and Schools (ACTS)

Christian Schools International (CSI)

Council of Islamic Schools in North America (CISNA)

Evangelical Lutheran Education Association (ELEA)

Friends Council on Education (FCE)

General Conference of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church (GCSDAC)

Islamic School League of America (ISLA)

Jesuit Secondary Education Association (JSEA)

National Association of Episcopal Schools (NAES)

National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA)

National Christian School Association (NCSA)

National Society of Hebrew Day Schools (NSHDS)

Oral Roberts University Educational Fellowship (ORUEF)

Solomon Schechter Day Schools (SSDS)

Southern Baptist Association of Christian Schools (SBACS)

Other religious school associations

Appendix B

School Religious Orientations or Affiliations

From the National Center for Educational Statistics, U. S. Department of Education

Roman Catholic

African Methodist Episcopal

Amish

Assembly of God

Baptist

Brethren

Calvinist

Christian (no specific denomination)

Church of Christ

Church of God

Church of God in Christ

Disciples of Christ

Episcopal

Friends

Greek Orthodox

Islamic

Jewish

Latter Day Saints

Lutheran—Missouri Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

(formerly AELC, ALC, or LCA)

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Other Lutheran

Mennonite

Methodist

Pentecostal

Presbyterian

Seventh-Day Adventist

Other

Appendix C

Essential Questions for Learning to Think Through Life

From Bellevue Christian School

Habits of the Heart: How is Jesus Christ at the center of my life and learning?

Worldview: How do my beliefs shape my view of life and the world?

Wholeness: How does what I learn help me see the wholeness of the creation and

the glory of the creator?

Worship: How does what I learn lead me to know and respond to God?

Habits of the Mind: How do I think clearly and critically?

Evidence: How do I know this information is reliable?

Perspective: Whose perspective does this represent?

Point of View: How does a belief system influence a point of view?

Connections: How does one aspect of learning connect with other aspects?

Supposition: How might things have been otherwise?

Relevance: Why is this important?

Communication: How do I receive and express ideas, truth and love?

Ethics and Stewardship: How do I practice what I have learned in a way that cares for

others and the rest of creation?

Giftedness: How do I develop and use the gifts God has given me?

Community: How do I learn, live and serve with others?

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