

Preface

ONE CERTAINLY CANNOT COMPLAIN that the evangelical community, broadly construed, is unreflective about higher education; indeed, there is something of a cottage industry outlining the rise, collapse, and nature of Christian higher education. Many other texts explore the vocation of the Christian scholar and teacher and the value and limits of teaching a Christian worldview. And recent years have seen the emergence of books tracing alternative models of Christian higher education rooted in a variety of denominational traditions and practices.

While these previous volumes have served admirably in the maturation of evangelicals concerning Christian higher education, for which we owe their authors an enormous debt, the conversation on Christian higher education (1) tends to retain an inadequate theological anthropology and metaphysics of the person, (2) tends to overlook or ignore a phenomenological account of concrete human persons in favor of abstractions about worldview, (3) suffers from an inadequate epistemology which forgets the real effects of sin and grace on the intellect, and (4) struggles to fully incorporate intellectual pursuits and moral formation into an overarching *telos* for the university. This book intends to ameliorate those problems.

These shortcomings can be resolved by returning again to Augustine, or at least Augustine in conversation with Aquinas, Martin Heidegger, the overlooked Jesuit thinker Bernard Lonergan, and the important contemporary Charles Taylor. For these thinkers, an examination of the concrete human subject reveals that persons are, first and foremost, lovers. The Western tradition is full of attempts to consider humans as intellects first, forgetting that knowledge is made possible and intelligible by desire, by the moral and intentional horizons of the phenomenological subject. An account of the human as lover not only solves the issues identified above but also provides a normative vision for Christian higher education by revealing an authentic order to love—loves, made authentic by grace, allow the intellectually, morally, and religiously converted person to attain an integral unity. Properly understanding the integral relation between love and the fullness of human life overcomes the split between intel-

lectual and moral formation, allowing transformed subjects—authentic lovers—to live, seek, and work towards the values of a certain kind of cosmopolitanism. Christian universities exist to make cosmopolitans, properly understood, namely, those persons capable of living authentically. In other words, this text gives a full-orbed account of *human flourishing*, rooted in a phenomenological account of the human, as basis for the mission of the university.

An introduction summarizes contemporary discourse on Christian higher education and outlines its oversights before turning in Part One to notions of intellectual conversion and the authentic order of love. Augustine very famously struggles in the *Confessions* to overcome his difficulties with God and evil. Assuming that God, as all reality, must be material, he simply cannot believe in God, and he undergoes a shocking intellectual conversion whereby he understands why reality need not be material. In *De Trinitate*, especially the sections on the psychological analogy, Augustine explains how the inner word is formed from memory by the workings of love, something Aquinas develops. Augustine and Aquinas provide an integral vision of human knowledge and action whereby properly ordered love precedes intellect and results in ordered action, knowledge, and life. This theological anthropology, fleshed out in conversation with Plato, Heidegger, Taylor, and Lonergan, provides an understanding of the subject grounded in the concrete and dynamic nature of human knowing and loving, and therefore also offers a phenomenologically grounded notion of the human self toward which education ought to be oriented.

Part Two continues with an exploration of the need for what Augustinians of a certain bent call moral and religious conversion whereby God's love so alters our phenomenological and moral horizons as to remake our subjectivity. Of course to understand this we'll need first to provide an account of the noetic effects of sin, i.e., how sin impairs reason through the disordering of love. Augustine's account of concupiscence and pride, seen in *Confessions* and *On Free Will* and taken up by Aquinas in the *Summa*, grounds an explanation of how different aspects of disordered desire distort us. If the first part gives something analogous to nature/creation, Part Two gives something like fall and redemption, but in a particular mode, namely that of the phenomenology of sin and grace for the human subject. For it is the grace of God's love that ultimately es-

tablishes the rectitude of our desiring, and as rightly ordered lovers we are motivated and enabled to pursue authentic relations to value and truth.

Part Three explains how a remaking of the order of love in intellectual, moral, and religious conversion provides a normative, but non-abstract, vision of human development and authenticity, especially in the domain of value ethics, and provides the heuristic of educating for cosmopolis. The text concludes with suggested principles for the conversation on higher education. The Christian university is uniquely positioned to fulfill the vocation of “university”—the flourishing of the human spirit—if it understands and integrates the right ordering of love with moral and intellectual excellence.

This book is intended for a serious and educated readership, but not for specialists. All those interested in Christian higher education, the liberal arts, formation, philosophy, contemporary political theory, ethics, and theology would find something of interest without needing to have previously read the thinkers discussed. Certainly this is not a book only for those in the university, for concerned as we are with education this is not a text with concrete proposals for university life. No curricula or programs or initiatives are suggested, and we provide no classroom suggestions or even a philosophy of education. Instead we provide an answer to who and what we are as humans and a critically grounded account of what it means for human persons to flourish as persons and the consequences of sin and grace in our flourishing. As such, the text can be read as dealing with a foundational project rather than application, although we’re quite confident of the consequences for application. But one could read the text with or without an eye to education; in any event, we are looking to the first principles, for the anthropology, without fail, will shape the pedagogy.

* * *

No text is written alone, and we acknowledge the support and assistance of many, including our colleagues at Eastern University, Lincoln Christian University, the Templeton Honors College, and the Agora Institute, especially those helpful interlocutors spurring thought forward: Drew Alexander, Phil Cary, Austin Detwiler, Jeff Dill, James Estep, Joe Gordon, Kelly Hanlon, Clay Ham, Ryan Hemmer, Sarah Moon, Amy Richards, Justin Schwartz, Christopher Simpson, Seth Thomas, Neal Windham,

Jonathan Yonan, and the members of the LCU Writer's Club. Many thanks for the assistance of the staff at Pickwick publications, especially our editor, Charlie Collier. Finally, we owe much gratitude to supportive families: Amy, Grace, Mather, Clara, and Emma Snell, and Violeta and Anna Cone.

SAMPLE