

BOOKS

OPENING THE AMERICAN MIND: THE INTEGRATION OF BIBLICAL TRUTH IN THE CURRICULUM OF THE UNIVERSITY

W. David Beck, editor

Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1991. Paper, 231 pages, \$12.95.

Playing on the title of Allan Bloom's best-selling *The Closing of the American Mind*, which asserted that the crisis in American education centers on ignorance of the great classics, Beck and company suggest that the *Opening of the American Mind* can be accomplished by putting the greatest of all classics—the Bible—at the center of the pedagogical stage.

The book correctly argues that all truth is God's truth, and that truth in its fullest sense can be achieved only by combining and integrating the knowledge gained from both special revelation (the Bible) and general revelation (science, history, etc.).

"This book," writes Norman L. Geisler in the foreword, "is an attempt by the faculty of Liberty University to set forth a model for accomplishing the reopening of the American mind to absolute truth, absolute values, and the Bible as God's revelation" (p. 8).

Beck is the dean of graduate studies at Liberty, and his 11 authors are subject-matter specialists at the same institution in Lynchburg, Virginia.

Beyond the customary introductory material, including an essay on designing a Christian university, *Opening the American Mind* contains chapters on biblical studies, philosophy, literature, the arts, the social sciences, history, economics, the natural sciences, mathematics, health and sports, and education. The chapters on the role of biblical studies and philosophy set the framework for the treatment of the other subject-matter areas. At the heart of the argument is the idea that biblical studies and a Christian philosophy serve as the basis for everything that is done in the subject areas.

Several of the authors, I am glad to note, point out that the biblical-studies area is likewise informed by the other subject-matter areas. That is, integration and knowledge flow both ways between general and special revelation, even though special revelation, *correctly understood*, sets the basic parameters for knowing.

Nearly all the authors state that their positions and arguments rest on the acceptance of the infallibility, inerrancy, and verbal inspiration of the Bible.

OPENING T • H • E AMERICAN MIND

*The Integration of Biblical Truth
in the Curriculum of the University*



Edited by W. DAVID BECK
Foreword by Norman L. Geisler

This reviewer, however, found no compelling reason for that assertion, since the book's arguments generally hold even if one adheres to a less rigid view of special revelation. Most readers will discover several presuppositions with which they disagree, but even those need not detract from the main line of argument if the reader understands how and why he or she disagrees.

In my opinion, the greatest weakness of the book is the lack of a clearly defined target audience. I am not sure if the volume is aimed at university students or faculty. Given the fact that several sections of each essay cover general background material for the subject-matter field that would already be known to faculty, the book is more adequate as an introduction on the integration of faith and learning for students than for their teachers. Subject-matter integration could have been covered and demonstrated in greater depth if the chapters had a narrower focus.

Opening the American Mind raises many significant issues that must be faced by Christian colleges and universities. As such, it is a useful addition to the rapidly growing literature on the integration of biblical truth into the curriculum.—George R. Knight.

Dr. George R. Knight is Professor of Church History at the SDA Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

RECLAIMING A MISSION: NEW DIRECTIONS FOR THE CHURCH-RELATED COLLEGE

Arthur J. De Jong.

Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990. Paper, 169 pages, \$12.95.

Arthur J. De Jong, president of Whitworth College, a Christian liberal-arts school in Spokane, Washington, challenges church-related colleges in *Reclaiming a Mission* to assert their distinctive Christian agenda in the marketplace of higher education. While the book is directed to the mainline Protestant denominations and their affiliated colleges in the United States, most of the issues are just as pertinent for Adventist education, not only in America but also around the world.

De Jong divides his book into three parts. Part I describes in broad strokes what has happened since World War II in American society (following such commentators as Robert L. Heilbroner), the mainline Protestant denominations (based largely on the analysis of Martin Marty), and American higher education (where the "values-free" approach of large public universities has usurped the "wholistic-development" approach of small colleges). It concludes with a critical analysis of the public university, the church-related college, and the relationship between the mainline Protestant denominations and American higher education, asking what kind of prophetic voice the church can have when it is held captive within an alien world view.

Part II prescribes a new *raison d'être* for the church-related college by pointing it to basic Christian tenets and toward the "post-modern science paradigm" (as opposed to the Cartesian-Newtonian paradigm of "classical science"), and by asking church-related colleges to develop a new relationship with our pluralistic society, one that takes a much more consciously Christian stance.

Having diagnosed the status quo and put forth a new direction and identity for church-related colleges, in Part III De Jong suggests ways in which these schools can build their programs according to the principles he has recommended. He suggests, for instance, that rather than being "value free," faculty members should be "value laden." Integration of faith and learning is emphasized with the suggestion that students should observe how faith gives direction and meaning to learning and how



Reclaiming a Mission

NEW DIRECTION FOR THE
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learning enriches and enlarges faith. De Jong advocates that colleges pay considerably more attention to all aspects of student growth—intellectual, social, spiritual, even physical—saying that the organization of the colleges must reflect this focus on the total person. Volunteer service should be one of the outcomes.

Finally, De Jong argues that both the college and contemporary American society will benefit in the future from those church-related colleges that pursue a unique identity and mission with purposefulness and integrity.

This book could profitably be used in Adventist higher education for study and discussion, serving as a catalyst for our own educational leaders to seek out, describe, and extend the implications it sets forth that relate to our own mission in the church and the world.—Lawrence T. Geraty.

Dr. Lawrence T. Geraty is President of Atlantic Union College, South Lancaster, Massachusetts.

PHILOSOPHY AND EDUCATION: AN INTRODUCTION IN CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

George R. Knight

2nd ed. Berrien Springs, Mich.:

Andrews University Press, 1989. Paper, 272 pages, \$14.95.

ISSUES AND ALTERNATIVES IN EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

George R. Knight

Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1989. Paper, 168 pages, \$10.95.

Teaching and education are powerful instruments in shaping lives and society. Any serious reflection on the theory and practice of education leads to ques-

tions about reality, human nature, knowledge, skills, and values. Thus philosophy is born.

As concerned teachers, students, and parents ask questions about teaching and education, they want to know where they are going, how to get there, and why they should go there. These questions suggest a need for goals. These goals reflect values, and values reflect the nature of truth and reality. This brings us back to the most basic questions about philosophical issues and educational purposes.

Linkages between philosophical issues and educational practice are axiomatic. Therefore, philosophical issues of reality, truth, and value lead directly to educational issues concerning students, teachers, curriculum, method, and social functions of schools.

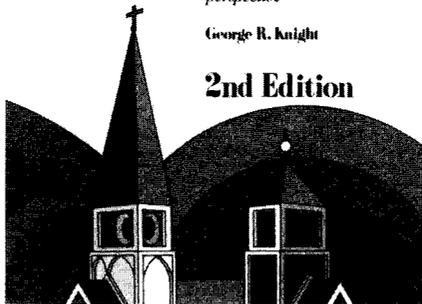
In *Philosophy and Education: An Introduction in Christian Perspective*, George Knight addresses these issues in the context of Christian education. This book is a must for anyone who is concerned about fundamental educational issues from a Chris-

PHILOSOPHY & Education

An introduction
in Christian
perspective

George R. Knight

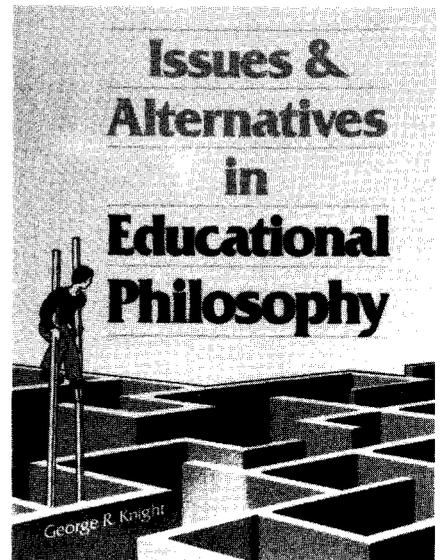
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tian perspective.

Knight's presentation is brief, comprehensive, well organized, and integrated. The book is divided into three parts. Part I considers the nature of philosophy and education and the important relationships between them. In Part II, Knight provides a brief survey of selected traditional and modern philosophies and suggests connections and complications of each for education. He then examines the major theories of education that have emerged during the 20th century and suggests how philosophy has interacted with these various theories and their attendant educational practices.

In general, the material in Parts I and II is not new. Yet Knight organizes and presents it in a unique, unified, and understandable format with a vital Christian focus. The value and role of philosophy and the connections between theory and practice become evident. The need for meaningful descrip-



tions of education and for prescriptions for educational practice become clear and plausible.

Knight follows through in Part III with an excellent and practical example of "how to" within a Christian perspective. He argues that it is absolutely essential for educators to build a personal philosophy of education. But he cautions against using an eclectic approach. Rather, the Christian educator must build a personal philosophy that is grounded in biblical perspectives of reality, truth, and value. Only thus will they be able to find the appropriate means to address educational issues relating to students, teachers, curriculum, method, and social function of the Christian school.

This book is highly recommended for all Christian educators at every level. It is suitable for undergraduate philosophy of Christian education classes. And it will be of value for graduate students who require a brief yet comprehensive review of the topic. Its wide adoption has validated Knight's approach to a very important subject.

Issues and Alternatives is essentially the same as *Philosophy and Education* in content and format but approximately 40 percent smaller. While the generic Christian material is retained, the specific evangelical focus has been deleted so that it meets the needs of a wider educational community. A new and very practical Part III has been added. In it, Knight outlines the necessity of building a personal philosophy of education. Educators in the public school setting will find this of real value. Its brevity, breadth of coverage, and clarity of presentation fill the need for a brief and practical survey text about educational philosophy.—Ralph M. Coupland.

Ralph M. Coupland teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in philosophy of education, curriculum, teacher education, and psychology at Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington.