



## The Office of Faith Integration

“Faith Integration is informed reflection on and discovery of Christian faith within the academic disciplines, professional programs, and lived practice, resulting in the articulation of Christian perspectives on truth and life in order to advance the work of God in the world.

—Newest Senate approved definition

### Faith Integration EER Questions Summary

What is the Impact of University Faith Integration Efforts on Faculty and Student Learning?

Specific Research Questions:

1. How effectively does Azusa Pacific University Faith Integration efforts equip faculty to integrate faith and learning into their faculty roles?
2. How effectively do faculty integrate faith and learning into their academic work?
3. How effectively do academic programs prepare students to integrate their faith into their academic learning?
4. How effectively do co-curricular programs equip students to integrate their faith into their daily living?

At the beginning of the last school year Azusa Pacific University established a new team of Faculty Faith Integration Fellows. The Fellows replaced the Faculty Faith Integration Mentors. This team of Fellows consists of the Faith Integration Evaluation Fellow, Dr. David Woodruff, the two Faith Integration Development Fellows, Dr. Paul Kaak, and Dr. Steve Wilkens, the Senior Faith Integration Fellow, Dr. Marsha Fowler, and the Director of the Office of Faith Integration, Dr. Ben Nworie. The Fellows have been working enthusiastically and effectively in a collaborative partnership in offering the APU faculty strategic and helpful ways to approach and implement Faith Integration.

At the beginning of this school year the Office of Faith Integration became part of the University’s newest Academic Center called: The Center for

Teaching, Learning, and Assessment. The Executive Director of the Center is Stephanie Juillerat, Ph.D. The new Center is in suite 620 in the Duke Academic Complex. The new Office of Faith Integration location, also on the second floor in Duke, is Duke 622. Our new Administrative Assistant is Connie Jean Johnson. She came to us highly recommended, with vigor, excitement, and with significant relevant background experience. She replaces Erica Thompson our former Administrative Assistant who moved on with our blessing.

Here is what has not changed. The “Foundations” faculty Faith Integration Seminar Series is still required of all new faculty to attend. The seminars have been reworked to provide more relevant readings. Session #2 of the “Foundations” Seminar Series Titled: Faith Integration and the Use of Scripture will be held on Oct. 19th & 20th. It is helpful to bear in mind that

Faith Integration is not synonymous with Scriptural devotions. However, the Bible is a very important component in Faith Integration. For example, the Bible has influenced the English culture and scholarship more than any other book. Therefore, great care must be given to interpreting content from the Bible and applying it to persons and groups today. The right interpretation of Scripture usually entails a simple three step approach which involves a) Interpretation or what the Scripture says, b) Inspection or what the Scripture means, and then c) Implication or application or how to apply the Scripture. While the original meaning of a passage or its interpretation is usually one, a passage may have more than one application.

Ben Nworie, Ph.D., M.Div., LPC  
Professor, Director, Office of Faith Integration

## Do I Need to be a Theologian? —Steve Wilkens, Faith Integration Fellow

“Do I need to be a theologian?” This is a question that comes up a lot in discussions about what tools are needed for faith integration, and usually people hope the answer is “no.”

I usually have two quick answers to this question. First, why would any Christian be reluctant to know more about the logic (logos) of God (theos), which is, after all, what theology means. Second, anyone who makes statements about God or, for that matter, has reasons for not including God in their statements, is already a theologian.

I will grant that these are “gotcha” sorts of answers, which doesn’t necessarily mean they

are incorrect responses. However, in our professionalized context, we generally assume that “being a theologian” means possession of a body of knowledge that roughly approximates that of a Ph.D. in the field. That’s not a bad thing, but it’s not what we are talking about here.

Christian scholarship is a ministry within the context of God’s work. That makes it a theological activity. Thus, when we sign our Statement of Faith (a theological document) affirming God as Creator, we are charged with helping others recognize God’s creational intent within the slice of creation our discipline studies. When we confess the universality of sin, our disciplines provide insight into the forms sinfulness assumes and the multitude of

ways that it hinders the goodness God desires for us. In expressing our confidence in God’s redemptive work, we recognize education as a means of tooling up for partnership in Kingdom work.

Do Christian scholars need to be theologians? Of course. What is the alternative? If we are not theologians, scholars with minds oriented toward God’s enduring activity in the world, we fail to discern, and help others discern, the ultimate purpose of learning. Only when we view our teaching and research through the lens of God’s creative and redemptive activities do we offer our students an education big enough to be described as Christian higher education.

## Book Review: Scripture and the Authority of God: How to Read the Bible Today by N.T. Wright. Reviewed by Paul Kaak, Faith Integration Faculty Development Fellow

As a Biblical scholar, N.T. Wright is committed to staying aware of the prevailing worldview directing scholarly inquiry. In this book, Wright looks at how scholars through history have thought about the Bible, assesses what they think it says and is, and offers his own proposal.

He makes clear that the Christian story has authority “in a delegated or mediated sense from that which God himself possesses...” (p.23). The Bible offers a teleologically moving narrative, not merely “a repository of true doctrine”, or a list of rules, or a sourcebook for devotional reflection.

Wright explains that the New Testament authors’ understood themselves as participants in a new era of the history of God’s kingdom. This allowed them to detect where there they shared continuity with the Old Testament story and where there was discontinuity. “Like Jesus’s parables themselves,” Wright explains, “the emerging early Christian writings both reaffirmed and redefined existing perceptions of what the important questions really were and what the true answers might be” (p.58). The story of Scripture would remain as their guide “in discerning the relationship be-

tween cultural context and the path of new, renewed humanity” (p.59).

Following are some connections to faith integration:

1. The overall story is more important than the details, but the details are important for revealing the depth and richness of the story as a whole. Allow the story to inform your work in your discipline. This is not a suggestion to scour the Bible for elusive proof-texts that somehow link your faith and your field. It is a call to read with an awareness of the Bible’s (for example) pervasive economic concern and to seek to understand economics (or psychology, or...) from within the Bible’s eschatological perspective.

2. Make use of scholarly resources focused on Biblical history and culture. “Biblical scholarship is a great gift of God to the church, aiding it in its tasks of going ever deeper into the meaning of scripture and so being refreshed and energized for the tasks to which we are called in and for the world” (pp.134-135).

3. Allow the postmodern challenge to “deconstruction” to occasionally re-

mind you to stay willing to stay willing to study the Bible afresh, perceiving God’s voice in this day.

4. In working with the idea of the Bible-as-literal, remember this means “in the sense that the first writers intended.” This may mean that a portion of scripture should be understood metaphorically if that is what the author meant. To interpret a metaphor literally – as if the metaphor was the reality – is to violate the duty of interpreting what an author meant according to the literary genre being used.

Finally, Wright encourages the concept of improvisation (as used in music and theater) as a metaphor for applying the scriptures. (It is here where faculty at APU can shine!) He explains that working within the parameters of scripture as our authority “all Christian [scholars]...are free to improvise their own variations designed to take the music forward. No Christian [scholar]...is free to play out of tune” (p. 127).

— If you would like an extended version of this review, email Connie Johnson @ [conniejohnson@apu.edu](mailto:conniejohnson@apu.edu) and ask for the “Extended Wright Book Review”.

## Upcoming Seminar

### Session #2 "Faith Integration and the Use of Scripture"

Wednesday, Oct. 19th 11:30-12:30 Ronald Building Room 109 ( East Campus) or  
Thursday, Oct. 20th 2:30-3:30WCAM Room 170 (West Campus)

### Session #3 "Faith Integration and the Role of Reason"

Tuesday, Nov. 15th 11:30-12:30 Anderson Lecture Hall, Duke 520 (West Campus) or  
Wednesday, Nov. 16th 11:30-12:30 Ronald Board Room (East Campus)

For RSVP or more information please contact:

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