



UVC Biblical Worldview Curriculum

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, not only in our educational philosophy, but also for each discipline of study. Education is not made Christian by merely adding a course in Bible, reading Christian text, or by beginning a class in prayer. If the course content or teaching method is humanistic, Christian supplements will do little to change the orientation. A Christian curriculum must derive its fundamental principles from the inspired Word of God and work these out in a self-conscious manner. A Christian curriculum provides parents and students and staff with these principles as well as the content and skills which enable them to develop a biblical worldview in each subject. The following is an overview of such a curriculum.

Biblical Studies

Foundational to the Christian curriculum is the study of the Bible. Every UVC staff member must be mastered by the Word of God before they can properly teach students to be mastered by the Word of God. The goal of Christian education is for students to master the Word of God in order to gain the ability to evaluate the writings and purposes of men from a biblical perspective. Bible study focuses the student's attention on the inspired text of the Bible as they are taught to understand it correctly. Its purpose is not the mere study of religion, nor even historical studies of Bible characters, but to arrive at a unified understanding of the biblical system of truth. It is this system of truth that provides the fundamental principles of a Christian worldview which must be applied to every area of life and thought in order to make biblically sound decisions.

To properly learn each subject, the student must not only be able to read, but he must also have the standard by which to judge what he reads. Therefore, the very first book a child should be taught is the Bible. The Bible is the mind of God revealed to man. From it we learn about the creation, the fall into sin, and God's gracious plan of redemption. It is this knowledge which provides the key to right thinking and enables the student to correctly interpret all he learns in the light of God's truth.

Culture, Art, and Technology

The arts and technology are gifts given to men by God. When an artist paints a picture, or a musician composes a song, or an architect designs a building, or an engineer designs a machine, each is using his God-given talent. Every gift should be used to reflect the wisdom of its Giver and imitate the beauty and usefulness of His creative work. The humanistic worldview sees culture, art, and technology as existing only for self-expression, human enjoyment, and selfish vanity. The non-Christian uses culture as a way to revolt against God and glorify himself. He thinks that he can create out of nothing something totally original. When man creates, he is not creating something absolutely new, but merely discovering a potentiality which has existed from the beginning. Its proper use becomes a blessing from God for the benefit of men, while its misuse becomes a curse for the destruction of men.

Because the arts and technology create works that express thought and emotion, they exert a moral influence on one's behavior. The arts and technology can be powerful forms of religious fellowship; religious because thoughts, emotions, and actions are always moral, and fellowship because of the sharing between artist and audience. For the Christian, this imposes a serious responsibility. It means that we are not to enjoy a specific type of art and technology that promotes thoughts, emotions, and behavior that is contrary to the Word of God. The Scripture

says, “What fellowship has light with darkness?” (2 Corinthians 6:14). Instead, students should be taught to enjoy art and develop technology that reflects the glory of God’s creation and ministers to others. The student is to develop his talents in harmony with God’s truth and law. Furthermore, the Christian should use both the arts and technology, either directly or indirectly, to promote the Gospel of Jesus Christ and thereby promote a biblical understanding of God’s imperative to make disciples of all nations. In so doing, the student will learn how to employ his skills to advance the kingdom of God on earth for God’s honor and glory.

Economics

God is the possessor of the earth, the source of all wealth. He owns it, and gives it to whomever He wills. He also ordained laws to govern human economics. God has given men the right to own private property, the right to choose an occupation, the right to make a profit, and the right to decide how earnings should be spent. Yet because God owns all things, the student should be taught to exercise these rights as God’s steward.

According to Scripture, it is not the duty of civil government to regulate the economy except as it regards the enforcement of God’s law against stealing. God’s law affirms the right of private property and profit from labor. To exercise these God-given rights, Scripture provides guidelines for an economic system that glorifies God and shows charity toward the needs of others. Such an economic system is based upon hard work, competition, and the risks of the marketplace. These factors compel sellers to use their skills and economic resources more carefully, which produces a higher quality of goods and services at very reasonable prices. The proper role of civil government is to serve as a referee, praising good and punishing evil in the marketplace according to God’s law.

Wealth is not just a result of economic shrewdness. Economic prosperity is possible only by God’s blessing upon the lawful use of labor and profit. Productive harmony in the marketplace is possible only through the grace of God which inspires men to obey His law in their hearts and minds. To the extent that men understand and obey God’s law in the economic realm, that is, when Christianity has a significant bearing on economic life, men will respect each other’s property, refuse to steal from or cheat one another, abide by contracts, and, when in charge of a corporation or elected to public office, they will not use their power to amass wealth for their own selfish ends.

Geography

For man to rule over the earth as God has commanded, he must have a practical knowledge of geography. The study of geography must begin with the Bible. Here God reveals that the earth consists of separate but interrelated parts which form a unified whole. During the worldwide flood in the days of Noah, the surface and appearance of the earth were greatly changed. With this important knowledge, the student can properly study the great continents and oceans, their particular characteristics, their many natural resources, the variety of climates and weather patterns, and God’s ingenious ecological balance over all of it.

We also learn in Scripture of the origin of the nations, how God scattered mankind at the Tower of Babel by confusing man’s language, and thus, laying the foundation for the gathering of the nations through the nation of Israel and ultimately through Jesus Christ. The student is then able to properly study the geographical circumstances of the various nations, both ancient and modern. He studies their locations, their natural resources, physical environments, and general

climates as planned by God. He learns how these geographical traits affect the nations' economies, their position in world trade, their military defense capabilities, and their independence of, or dependence upon, other nations. The study of geography plays an important role for Christian students as they learn about the worldwide advance of the kingdom of God, and how they may help promote Christian missions to fulfill God's plan to reach every nation and language group in their own unique geographical context with the gospel message.

Government

The study of government (political science) and politics must be grounded in the Word of God. In studying civil law and government, we need God's infallible standard in order to distinguish justice from injustice. Because civil government enacts laws, it is concerned with deciding right and wrong. Right and wrong, however, have to do with morality, and ultimate morality is found in religion -God. This means that civil government by its very nature is a religious/divine institution.

The Old Testament reveals God's system of law for civil government. At Mount Sinai, through the prophet Moses, God gave to Israel an entire system of civil law and government. In the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, we see a complete system of law with due process, a federal system of government with three branches, and a separation of powers with a system of checks and balances.

The student who learns this system has the proper criterion by which to analyze human governments of the past and present as to their structure, laws, and policies. This knowledge will provide the student with understanding necessary for intelligent Christian living in light of his right to vote, and stimulate him to promote a responsible government regulated by God's law.

Health and Physical Education

The purpose of health and physical education is to care for our bodies to the glory of God. A healthy body enables one to serve God diligently and perform the duties He commands. Therefore, principles of proper diet, exercise, and rest should be taught for maintaining good health to the glory of God.

Physical education also helps prepare students for responsible leadership and effective work. Students should be taught to play and labor for God's glory, not our own. Due to sin, people are naturally inclined toward laziness. Consequently, physical exercise and sports, when combined with sanctification, can play an important part in developing self-discipline. Through competition, students are taught the importance of playing by the rules, accepting direction from those in authority, using skills in harmony with others, and being gracious in victory as well as in defeat.

History

The Bible clearly reveals that God is the Lord of history. He governs all nations and peoples by means of His providence. He acts indirectly and directly in history through blessings and judgments upon the earth (Deuteronomy 28). The prophecies recorded in Scripture, many of which have been fulfilled, demonstrate that history has not only been planned by God but proceeds according to His purpose. For this reason, all history—ancient, medieval, and modern—must be seen as the sovereign rule of God over the affairs of men. All men and nations are accountable to Him. The lessons of history warn students that God's curse on unfaithfulness

and His blessing on faithfulness will surely come to pass.

A proper understanding of history is founded upon the key events of creation, man's fall into sin, God's scattering of the nations, and His plan to gather the nations through the forming of the nation of Israel and its ultimate promised Messiah, Jesus Christ through His work on the cross. Creation sets the stage for history. With Adam's sin history becomes a conflict between the children of light and the children of darkness. Because God's plan is to sum up all things in Christ (Ephesians 1:10), history has one purpose. Consequently its meaning and interpretation must be understood in terms of Christ. History is more than a chronicle of names, dates, places, and events. History is the study of the moral or covenantal relationship between God and man in time. It centers on the redemptive work of Christ and how He is building His church. All earlier events must look forward to the cross. All later events must be viewed as the hand of God directing history toward the final victory of the risen Christ at the end of the age. And in this context, UVC students should be equipped to spread the good news throughout the world. The study of history focuses on the unfolding of world history with a special emphasis on the shaping of Europe and America by God's providence and the efforts of Christians as they applied God's Word to their nation and culture. Students should be equipped to study the vain attempts of apostate men to build the kingdom of man. Those who have attempted to destroy Christ and His Kingdom in order to reestablish pagan ideas in the civil, ecclesiastical, and academic disciplines will have their lives and works evaluated by the Bible. This comparison gives insight to us as we work by God's grace in our day to restore God's Law-Word to our lives, families, nation, and culture in obedience to Genesis 1:26-28 as modified by Matthew 28:19-20. God's people must diligently work and "occupy," as they advance His kingdom on earth through the gospel for His honor and glory.

Language and Literature

In the beginning, God spoke and it came to pass. The three persons of the Trinity have spoken to each other eternally. When God created man in His own image, He gave him the gift of language. The Bible tells us that after the Great Flood, the whole earth used the same language. Men desired unity apart from God, however, when they built the Tower of Babel. Seeing this, God confused their one language by changing it into many languages and scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth. Language thus originated with God, and is to be learned for reaching those with the gospel in the language God has determined for each of them, all for His glory. Men in their sin misuse and corrupt this gift and learn language primarily for financial gain. To discern the proper use of language learning, we need to study God's ultimate plan to reach the world through the languages He has created in Genesis chapter 10. It is only from the Bible that we come to know the true motivation for learning language.

Reading and writing are foundational skills each child must learn. Without reading, they cannot study the Bible for themselves. These skills are also basic to learning all other subjects in the light of God's Word. They must be taught to read, write, speak, study, and think in terms of the Word that makes language and life meaningful. They must develop the linguistic abilities that God has given them to glorify Himself. The teaching of phonics, therefore, is very important. Language skills are not neutral, but must be oriented toward reading, writing, and speaking the truth in love.

Because language is thought expressed, and thoughts are never neutral, all literature has a religious/divine point of view. When reading any kind of literature, the question should therefore

be asked: Is the author Christian or non-Christian? If non-Christian, from what religious point of view is he writing? Most importantly, how does the author's message compare with what the Bible teaches? Students must learn to read and evaluate all human literature from the perspective of Scriptural truth.

While it is important to help acquaint students with the great literature that has helped shape Western civilization, the study of such great books must be subject to the greatest book—the Bible. After learning the Bible properly, the student will be equipped to judge the words of human authors by the Word of truth. The student should learn to prize not only great classics, but distinguish Christian classics from the classics of unbelief. The great classics of the Christian heritage will inspire and challenge both teacher and student to follow Christ more completely.

Mathematics

As Trinity, God is the reason there is both unity and diversity in creation. This is the basis for unity and differentiation in mathematics. The Bible teaches us that the Creator is a God of order (1 Corinthians 14:33). As we study the created universe we are impressed with its mathematical order. Creation is governed by mathematical laws which reflect the character of the One who made it. Many of the laws of creation are described in terms of mathematics. When presented with the marvelous precision in nature and physics, the student should be led to marvel at God's mathematical ingenuity. Mathematical principles never vary; formulas and equations always exhibit flawless consistency. Consequently, as a tool for studying God's creative handiwork, mathematics helps discover God's creation laws and patterns.

It is impossible for us to understand creation without God's gift of mathematics, for we would not have the means of measuring His world. Mathematics is a tool to help men rule over the earth under God. All callings in life demand planning, calculating, and evaluating in order to carry out God-given responsibilities. Mathematics plays an important role, whether it be in business, medicine, engineering, art, science, etc. The Christian student should thus master this wonderful gift to advance Christ's kingdom on earth.

Science

Science is the study of God's creation. The facts of creation can be understood properly only by looking at them through the lens of Scripture (Hebrews 11:3). By studying science as God's creation the student learns to see God's awesome power, the beauty of His handiwork and design reflected in every creature. Because creation was brought into existence by God's wisdom, and man was created as a part of it, he is called to understand and subdue it for His glory. In Eden God assigned man his task of ruling over the animals and plants and keeping the earth. Under God's authority he is to cultivate, care for, and develop each aspect of the world for God's glory. Adam pursued scientific education when he learned to cultivate the soil, plant and dress the trees and vegetation, study the animals, and give each a special name that described them.

To rule over the earth as God commanded, the student must similarly acquire an organized and systematic scientific knowledge. By studying both God's physical laws and His creatures, students will learn to apply this knowledge in accordance with His holy will. As they grow in their knowledge and appreciation of each new discovery about God's world, they should acknowledge that God is the One who made it and learn to subdue and care for creation in the right way. To do this, the study of science must be subject to the Word of God. Creation must never be seen as something independent of its Creator, about which men can study without

reference to Him. The belief of an Intelligent Designer avoids the fundamental trap of the evolutionary worldview and “science falsely so called” (1 Timothy 6:20).

Society

Biblical sociology (social studies) begins with God, who exists in an eternal relationship between the persons of the Trinity. Because the Bible stresses God’s unity and plurality as equally ultimate, we find that it does not place the human individual or the corporate society above each other. Thus Christianity has the only solution to the problems of humanism as it careens between individualism and collectivism.

In His infinite wisdom, God instituted the fundamental social relationship—the family—at creation. From this basic institution, all other social orders have developed according to His providence. He ordained the state, the church, and the family. Each social sphere is directly responsible to God and each has rights that must function within the sphere of authority given to it by Him. These coordinate rights and responsibilities have been clearly marked out in His Word.

The Bible also provides social facts which should be taught. For example, the social structures of the Old Testament covenant community of Israel demonstrate God’s purpose for each society, and contrast them with pagan society. A biblical presentation of the social order is needed to address effectively the current corruption of society. Biblical law provides the tools for analyzing the various social structures of different nations and peoples.

Conclusion

Having analyzed God’s original order and the perversion of that order by apostate man, staff and the student should be led to see God’s provision for an alternate society. What sin has distorted in the social order established by God, He restores by His grace. Students should be instructed in how Christ and his redemption not only restore the relationship between God and man but, as a result, the social relationships between men, women, children, UVC staff, races, and nations. The Christian family and the Christian community—the church—should be presented as the alternate society in the midst of chaos.