

The Ten Pillars 2030

A Christian M(Th)22P0

A Christian worldview, then, must be derived from the Scriptures at some foundational level; and though it can be questioned and analyzed, it ought to reflect the most comprehensive ways possible of looking at the world. Like eyeglasses, which allow us to see everything else more

We say above that the biblical narrative, what we are describing as a Christian worldview, is plot-shaped, and by that we mean that creation is good was very good (Genesis 1:31) but, as in all stories, the original setting soon endured conflict and rebellion. What is traditionally known as the Fall a moral rebellion by the humans provoked expulsion from the garden for the man and the woman, a curse of decay and mortality placed upon them and the entire creation (Genesis 3; Romans 8:18-25), and the inability of humans to fulfill their divinely mandated mission.

It is precisely here that many views of the scriptural story are truncated. It is popularly said that the story of the Bible is something like the fall

God; sin spoiled that relationship, but Jesus has come to forgive and restore that relationship so

Such a truncated view narrows relationship with him, often neglects the mission of God for human beings that is, to extend the frontiers of his rule to all the earth and largely omits much of the rest of the story of Scripture (except as background stories that generate good examples for moral living and a few typological anticipations of the coming of Christ), especially the middle. As with all stories, the middle is crucial for developing the strategies that move toward plot resolution, including the full drama and power of the climax. These strategies in turn are critical for shedding light both backward and forward and thus enabling a better understanding of both the initial tension and the climax.

In the remainder of the opening narrative, things go from bad to worse the murder of brother by brother, the Flood, and the Tower of Babel (Genesis 3-11). The appearance of Abraham, however, in Genesis 12 marks a new and major subplot in the macro narrative of Scripture. The promises made to Abraham serve as the template of God for restoring the whole world. This plan of restoration involves not only a reversal of the Fall and the forgiveness of sin, but a return to the mandate given to human beings in Genesis 1.

The covenants with Abraham (see Genesis 12-18) thus anticipate the reversal of failure and initiate the divine plan of rescue: to bless and restore all the nations through the seed

and offspring of Abraham ultimately Israel and Jesus the Messiah (cf. Galatians 3:15-16, 23-29). These storied goals, developed with surprising plot twists in the narrative of Scripture, involve the shocking death of the Messiah, his vindication, enthronement, and the coming of

Spirit as the Spirit of Christ to his people, his renewed temple. The promises to bless and restore the world will be fulfilled with the return of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the restoration (new creation) of heaven and earth (Romans 8:21-22; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Philippians 3:20-21). These climactic events initiate the renewed circumstances within which

A foreshortened view lacks the full, storied basis for stating that Jesus is himself the fulfillment (1 Corinthians 1:20), the presence of Yahweh as king, the one who overcomes Satan and restores the temple/garden, the initiator of the new creation, and the one who as the image of God accomplishes in his submission his mission. It is this long-awaited new covenant restoration that also recommissions forgiven human beings to resume their

A narrative description of a Christian worldview as grounded in the story of the Bible therefore incorporates both the content of belief about God, the world, human brokenness, social structures, nations and societies, human psychology, gender, marriage, families, the goodness of life, and the empowerment of agents in a still broken world, and the hope of restoration in this age and in the one to come and the divinely given mandate for human beings with respect to their work. The Christian university, as an act of discipleship and as a reflection of the mission of the church in the world, participates in precisely that mandate.

Although in our brokenness we never fully understand it or accomplish it, such a worldview tells us, especially since the inauguration of the restoration of all things in Christ, what to believe and how to live. It similarly gives content and purpose to the character and mission of a Christian university.

Ten Core Convictions of HCU

Houston Christian University has a history of affirming these particular ways of thinking and living, which we hereby describe as Ten Pillars. These convictions are an essential part of the traditional beliefs and commitments of the University. They are set forth here to bring to mind the ten physical pillars that are now iconic on our campus and thus represent the

Pillar One. God, the Creator of a Good and Knowable World. The world was created and is sustained by God the Father and through Jesus Christ his Son. It reflects his presence and power and is good, orderly, and can be known.

of the mind is not the cultivation of thinking and reflection in isolation. Those valuable disciplines of deep work and thought flourish in community and are intended to engender synthesis, communication, apprenticed learning, and constructive, purposeful behavior aimed at fulfilling God's mission for the world. Work therefore is a divinely mandated expression of what it means to be truly human. It is an expression of vocation, and whether compensated or voluntary, it is an act of worship, stewardship, and obedience.

Pillar Seven. Life, Humanness

divisions we are now experiencing, though no doubt exacerbated by the recent election cycle, have a longer history, going back many crisis overnight, and it will not be repaired with a series of court decisions or legislative maneuvers.

All of us, in our families, work environments, professional associations, voluntary societies, and political organizations, must consider and reflect upon the roots of these chaotic days and look for deeper sources of renewal whereby some modicum of peace and unity can be achieved. We must undertake painstaking and patient efforts at considering the things that truly matter. Political structures, parties, and leaders have great influence, but unity and renewal will not happen through new laws, suppression, censorship, or political mandate; nor do we require or want superficially contrived methods of uniformity. Rather, we need at a minimum good faith discussions of honest differences within contexts of mutual respect and freedom. These are long-term projects.

We are not utopians. These problems are deeply embedded within the human situation, individually and socially; but we also believe that universities, though they too have contributed to our social ills, can provide (as can the family, houses of worship, and other voluntary societies) a context for approaching these age-old problems of human brokenness. Universities by their very nature and historical disposition are well situated to undertake this kind of long-term work by recommitting themselves as models and laboratories of freedom, thus reflecting the human capacity to tolerate vigorous differences. American universities must preserve and in some cases restore their historic practices of protecting and exercising the freedoms of conscience and speech. These historic behaviors and commitments can begin to renew the role of education, including university education, in our culture. Honoring these values will engender and in some cases restore public respect for the university and its mission. The university must, by conversation, reflection, research, writing, and teaching, exemplify those unifying commitments that can draw us together into a just and tolerant society, modeling what it means to be truly human.

Houston Christian University endeavors to be just such a university founded and framed by the convictions of these Ten Pillars, animated and sustained by our central confession that Jesus Christ is Lord. we will be a place of stable shelter where wisdom may flourish even as the winds blow and the nations rage.

¹ Some phrases and themes
University, amended August 2016, <https://hbu.edu/about>