

Institute for Christian Teaching
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**THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS
FOR THE CONCEPTS OF THE INTEGRATION
OF FAITH AND LEARNING**

by

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Introduction

Integration of faith and learning is the intended to relate two important concepts, on one hand, faith based in the Scriptures and on the other learning that includes the subject matter and the way this learning process is developed. Since this integration includes faith, it requires a biblical foundation for this type of integration. In other words, it is in the Scriptures that we may grasp metaphysical and epistemological foundations for this type of integration.

Through the history of western thought, especially during the Middle Ages to the Reformation period there was a clear distinction between theology and philosophy. The Scriptures were considered subject matter to be understood by reason through the philosophical principles found in natural theology. In other words, the methodology for the theological sciences came from philosophical presuppositions called the onto-theo-logos process of reasoning reality. It is interesting to note that although for many years this was the sequence in theology; it is possible to grasp an alternative view in which the movement could be from a theo-onto-logos study reality.

It was Fernando Canale who criticized the traditional theological reason. Indeed, he proposed a new structure of reason that includes metaphysics, ontological and epistemological frameworks of reality. He made a criticism of theological reason, a onto-theo-logical structure, at its two fundamental levels. The ontological framework, object's side, and the epistemological framework, subject's side, both related to each other in a coherence that is provided by the Theos as ground for the system of reason.¹ He took two philosophers, Thomas Aquinas and Rudolf

¹ Fernando Luis Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason: Time and Timelessness as Primordial Presuppositions* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1983), 154.)

Bultmann, to demonstrate the onto-theo-logical structure of reality used by philosophical structure to perceive reality and theology.¹ The synthesis of his study points out a phenomenological analysis of reason's behavior in theology that shows that Christian Theology as a whole has been constituted on the ground provided by the timeless Parmenidean primordial presupposition, suggesting that Catholicism and conservative Protestantism have followed the Aristotelian–Thomistic interpretation of reason structure.²

Finally, he proposed a new paradigm based on the theo-onto-logical structure of reason in the Scriptures and reached the possibility of a criticism of theological reason. He mentioned that the analysis of the Biblical context shows that biblical rationality does address itself to foundational ontology as it explicitly puts being into words. According to him, it is possible to speak of two different philosophical traditions—on one hand the Parmenidean traditions, and on the other Mosaic-biblical tradition.³ In other words, the methodology proposed by the author of this paper is that the epistemological movement for the foundation should be based first on the Scripture without regards to reason and historical elements.

In this sense, the theological foundations for the concept of integration should begin with the proper understanding of the process of revelation-inspiration. God reveals Himself and at the same time reveals propositional information through a supernatural process. Thus, in the first step of building up the justification for this integration, the author recognizes the Scripture as the Word of the Lord written by inspiration and interpreted through the principles found in the Bible itself.

In another perspective, nature offers a vision of a created reality and of a Designer God, but it is not possible to grasp this fully without special revelation.

¹ Ibid., 206-207.

² Ibid., 282,283

³ Ibid., 393

Therefore, it is possible to assemble a model or paradigm from nature having the Scriptures as a source. In other words, man does not formulate doctrine starting from a rational thought and then move to the Scriptures, but Scriptures mold the intellectual capacity to understand reality. If the Scriptures are the standard for meaning then the sciences and history are conformed to the theology found in the Scriptures instead of Scripture to the Sciences and history. It is important to note that God's revelation is not irrational, for God himself is the source of all reason. It is possible to grasp God's design through His work in creation. Some theologians have concluded that it is possible to develop a natural theology that shows God's existence as a designer. In doing so they intended to construct a frame of reference or paradigm in which biblical revelation could be studied. Beginning with biblical presuppositions and using the theo-onto-logos, methodological movement shows that it is through the Scriptures that man can understand nature in its true meaning and not the other way around. The natural world is not sufficient as a revelation of God; neither can the natural world itself be understood apart from God's special revelation.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this paper is to examine the biblical and theological foundations for the concept of integration of faith and learning. It will attempt to construct the fundamental presuppositions that fashion a frame of reference in which the integration may occur and in this way suggests a paradigm to be used by teachers and educators.

Importance of Study

If teachers are responsible for this type of integration, then it is necessary to have a theology that justifies what they are doing. First, there is a need for identity in educational institutions in which the whole spectrum of ideas and actions may focus in our Christian philosophy and values. If Adventists have a philosophical alternative for Christian education, this should be unique. And the concept of integration is indispensable for this purpose.

Second, if this integration exists, then it should be related to the mission of the church since education is not isolated from church mission but it is fully integrated in it as a means of edification and preservation. Thus, we need something that helps us to connect with the church and our educational institutions.

Third, it is necessary to have a universal paradigm found in the Scriptures that may be implemented through different cultures and situations. This study concentrates on the first point, that is, the concept of the integrating of faith and learning.

Methodology

The development of this topic focuses on the framework that includes the metaphysical, epistemological and axiological structure of reality, as it is perceived through special revelation. In this sense, this study follows the metaphysical presuppositions that include the idea of God, creation, the great Controversy, and anthropology. The epistemology dimensions include general and special revelation and the meaning of wisdom to conclude with the axiological framework that includes transformational ethics and the process of integration of faith and learning. The framework of this study has been established to provide a foundational biblical and theological structure for the concept of integration of faith and learning.

God

There is need of integration because God exists. The first and most important concept that should constitute a primordial presupposition for the integration of faith and learning is the concept of the existence of a personal God. It is the Scriptures that teach about a personal God as He was revealed to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen 12:1,4,7; 15:1,7; 17,1; 18:1). The first verses of the Scriptures shows that the biblical writers were not interested in demonstrating His existence, but presupposed His existence through His acts in history (Exo 6:2-3). Although there is no scientific demonstration of His existence, man can from a rational or philosophical viewpoint find evidence of His existence through rational means. The danger in developing

concepts of God by rational philosophy, and existential concepts is that one may accept information that does not adequately represent God and that may in fact produce a false image of Him. However, Christians know God because He has revealed Himself, which is one of the most important works of the Lord.

The idea of God as a person did not diminish the idea that indeed He is a Spirit (John 4:24). He is also manifested as a living God (Hab 1:12; Josh 3:10-11; Deut 5:26; 1 Sam 17:26,36; 2 King 19:4,16). God as a person requires reverence and worship because He glorifies and vindicates Himself (1 Chro 29:11; Isa 2:19-22). It is to Him that Israel gave glory and honor.

He originated a special people by calling Abraham and continued His plan to vindicate His character throughout the nations. He promised Abraham that he would inherit the land of Canaan. Four hundred years later God remembered His covenant with Abraham and then He glorified Himself, acting with justice, that is, destroying the enemies of His people and saving His chosen people from the hands of the Egyptians.

Another important aspect of His character is the covenant that He makes with His people and the faithfulness in accomplishing it even for a people characterized by rebellion people (Exo 32:9-14; 32:31-33; Psalm 78:32-39; Jer 31:31-34). God was faithful in the fulfilling of His covenant with His people (Hos 11:1). When method used by God to judge His people in the covenant is analyzed, it is possible to discern His name used in the New Testament as God the Father (Isa 64:8; Matt 6:9).

His love goes beyond human understanding (Deut 9:4,5). For this reason, Moses by inspiration declares, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might" (Deut 6:4). Thus, this is the first point for integration, that is, to present God as a personal and merciful God that cares for the people of His covenant.

God is also very interested in the needy. "For the needy shall not always be forgotten, and the hope of the poor shall not perish for ever" (Psalm 9:18; 40:17; 4:1;

72:4). Therefore, when the process of integration is presented, this is the first element to be included; that God exists and He is a personal God that cares for this chosen. Therefore, every time that the Christian teacher integrates faith and learning with the idea of a personal God, he/she is to his/her class as instrument in the hands of the Lord.

Creation

A full observation of reality shows the intervention of a Creator God. The first statement of the Scriptures places a deep significance on creation. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1). It was also the theological orientation of the New Testament. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything was made" (John 1:1-3; cf. Col 1:16).

The most important elements of biblical creation history consist of a creation out of nothing or the use of non pre-existing (*ex-nihilo*) materials (Psalm 33:6; Heb 11:3). The entirety of reality "heaven and earth" and the universe has come into being through His act (Eph 3:9; Col 1:16; Rev 4:11). Second, it was God who brought reality into being as the work of the Triune God (Psalm 96:5; Isa 37:16; 44:24; Jer 10:11-12).

All creation, including man and woman, were created to glorify His name (Psalm 8:3,4). Even the inanimate creation glorifies Him. "The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork" (Psalm 19:1).

The creation work of God was made in six literal days of 24-hour period (Gen 1:5,8,13,19,23,31; cf. Lev 23:32; Deut 16:16). God established the Sabbath as the expression of celebration to commemorate a literal week of creation (Exo 20:8-11). As a result, the original act of creation is considered unique. This act puts creation as the foundation of true worship. The concept of integration of faith and learning recognizes the idea of a personal God that created all reality.

The Great Controversy

Integration is needed because from a biblical perspective, there is a great controversy between good and evil in the universe in which man is participating. A Christian professor that looks at nature soon discovers that something is wrong. There is evidence of decay and change produced by the consequences of sin and evil. Therefore, there is a primordial presupposition in understanding nature and man that indeed there is a disorder produced by sin. From the intellectual perspective, it is also important to know that there are contradictory efforts being made to fight against the Christian principles and there are certain philosophical trends that try to diminish the belief in a personal and living God who redeems and restores.

This is that the apostle Paul tried to explain to the church at Ephesus when he presented the moral standards of the church. They had to change the old life of futility in their minds to a renewed life in Christ. "You did not so learn Christ! -- assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus. Put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph 4:20-24). This renewed life and restoration presupposed a great controversy between good and evil, between Christ and Satan (Rev 12-14).

Thus, in dealing with the integration of faith and learning in all levels and dimensions, it is necessary to be aware of the fact that something greater is happening in this world. Paul in the last part of his letter to the Ephesians showed the two levels of reality when he suggested that "we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of the present darkness, against the spiritual host of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph 6:12). Thus, after the comprehension of these realities that include earth and heaven and the evidence of this confrontation (Eph 6:13-18), Paul gives instructions for the battle that indeed shows the metaphysical realm of the earth and

heaven under conflict. In this controversy, God is recognized as a Supreme God, governor of the world and universe. As Christian educators it is important to approach to this integration with the full understanding that there is indeed a great controversy in action and that man is involved in it (Job 1:6-11). Not only should Christian educators be aware of the conflict but it is necessary to participate in it with God.

Therefore, there is a system in metaphysics that may be developed and at the same time may give a unique understanding of reality as such. Thus, when Paul wrote about earth and heaven, it is possible from the Scriptures itself, to find the primordial presupposition of reality since the Bible was written in human language and in a coherent way; furthermore, it is possible to grasp the system. Of course, it is evident that the Bible is not a technical book of philosophy, but there are philosophical statements, in it. Thus, if the Bible contains first definitions, categorized as philosophical statements, then it is necessary to develop them from the Bible itself. The movement for this development is always in that direction: Scriptures, philosophy and the subject matter. There is no need to create a system from the Bible, because it is already there. Therefore, the fact that there is a great controversy is a metaphysical reality. It needs further development, that is, this reality should be developed in ontological and epistemological studies.

In dealing with metaphysics, we are dealing with the whole system, which includes grasping the whole and ascertaining their parts as related organically. The reality is that in this controversy God acts in history. Therefore, this reality happens in history because God acts in history. God is trying to accomplish the promises to His covenant people. The apostle John has shown this big picture in the book of revelation portraying this great controversy (Rev 12-14). As Christian teachers, we have a philosophy of history that provides the basic for understanding reality. Therefore, the whole interpretation of the Bible is viewed as a system of historical philosophy (see Dan 2,7,8,10). Teachers introducing subject matter should integrate

it with the understanding of the metaphysical implications of the historical great controversy.

The Sanctuary

Integration is needed because Christian teachers and students are participants in the acts of God in the sanctuary. First, the knowledge of it came through the symbols portrayed by the instructions given by the Lord to Moses and second, by the reality of the ministry of Jesus Christ in the authentic heavenly sanctuary. Therefore, there is another important teaching that shows two levels of reality in which God and man acts, that is the sanctuary in the reality of the level of natural and the supernatural dimensions. It was God who decided on this. "And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst" (Exo 25:8). From this initial system it is possible to develop through the Old and New Testaments the idea of a sanctuary that was focused in His acts to save man and His ministry of intercession in favor of man. It is important to note that it is the sanctuary that allows man to observe God working in salvation history. In other words, God in heaven and on earth is able to work in history showing His immanent and transcendent attributes for salvation.

The sanctuary is also organically connected with other basic concepts in the plan of salvation such as the idea of the covenant, the kingdom of God, forgiveness, and judgment. In the sense, the doctrine of the sanctuary also becomes the center for God's great acts in history, first at Mount Sinai and then on the Cross. There was a historical change due to man's sin, it was a new situation that has eternal meaning. Moreover, God is still acting through the intercessory ministry in the sanctuary. It is important to note that the center of meaning was moved to heaven so that it could be conveyed to the whole universe. It is, therefore, the sanctuary that provides the structure for this historical connection.

As Christian teachers with our understanding of the Scriptures, we need to look at the doctrine of the sanctuary as a fundamental paradigm of reality. The cross

really happened in history and it has consistent meaning through history in past, present and future. It is God acting and man reacting and thereby giving meaning.

This theological foundation assists teachers in the integration of faith and learning in a sense that despite the subject matter each student has eternal value. This was the most important task of the priest during the time of Israel. "You are to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the clean and unclean; and you are to teach the people of Israel all the statutes which the Lord has spoken to them by Moses" (Lev 10:10,11). Therefore, in this integration, teachers need to understand that God acts in history and through the ministry of the sanctuary as the primordial metaphysical presupposition in the process of the integration of faith and learning.

Anthropology

Integration is needed because man has been created in the image of God as a result of the unique act of creation. The Scriptures teach that it happened. "Then the Lord God formed man of the dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (Gen 2:7). It is important to note that the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, do not recognize the idea of a dichotomy or a dualist view of man. Man is presented as a living being, a complete human being that includes its physical, social, spiritual and intellectual dimensions but not in a divided way. Every man is a whole reality in which a diversity of elements are interchanged. For this reason the apostle Paul states, "May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess 5:23).

Moreover, note the expression in Psalm 8. "Yet Thou has made him little less than God, and dost crown him with glory and honor. Thou hast given him dominion over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put all things under his feet" (Psalm 8:5-6). It is the Lord that gave man and woman the honor and dignity. This creative act represents the highest value and dignity for all humankind and at the same time

infers respect and freedom of choice on each person. Therefore, in the process of integration teachers should consider students as persons of high value.

The book of Genesis also points out that man was created in the image of God, that is, with the capacity to reason and communicate spiritually with His Creator (Gen 1:26). In this sense, teachers should promote the development of the capacity to reason, creativity and individuality to honor and glorify God.

From another perspective, man was created in society. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27). Notice that God created both man and woman according to His image indicating the principle of relationship inherent in social life. Teachers should recognize the need for social interaction and at the same time understand that this image is not complete if there is not a moral and social interaction between man and woman in its proper time and maturity. As it was clearly stated by Moses, "therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh" (Gen 2:24). Man has been created following a pattern, according to the image of God who interrelates with other persons of the deity. Thus, human marriage and family should be considered as important elements for the concept of integration.¹

But man and woman suffered the separation produced by sin and as a result were separated from God (Gen 3:1-7) and received the consequences of their sin (Gen 3:8-17). God then accomplished the plan of salvation with the intention of

¹ In our society there are single persons who are united to a family system.

restoring the damaged image of God so that mankind may again become again His true sons and daughters. As it is stated throughout the Scriptures, God's plan includes salvation in Jesus Christ (Rom 5:6-9).

Why is the doctrine of man so important for the concept of integration? Because, Christian teachers, according to the Scriptures, are agents responsible for the reconciliation between man and God, that is, the students and his Creator. "Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor 5:17, 18). Therefore, the plan of salvation includes the process of restoration in Christ. As the apostle Paul points out "put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in through righteousness and holiness" (Eph 4:22-24). Teachers in their classrooms are to promote this type of restoration. This is why integration is so vital to the Adventist educational system.

Thus, Christian teachers are dealing not only with how they may integrate subject matter, but also how they may become vehicles so that our Lord may begin the restoration process. Integration that perceives man as a creature of God who needs reconciliation, salvation and restoration, is fulfilling the purpose of the plan provided by God.

God's Revelation

Integration is needed because there is source of Knowledge that comes from an explicit revelation of God. There has been historical debate regarding whether God has spoken. The Scriptures show that indeed God reveals Himself in words and deeds. Although man has limitations, God communicates information, revealing things that are necessary and indispensable for salvation and restoration. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, say the Lord. For as

the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa 55:8,9; cf. Rom 11:33).

It is obvious that nature shows evidence of God as Creator, Designer and Sustainer. "The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork" (Psalm 19:1). But due to sin, man is limited in his perception of the full understanding of God's creation and restoration. Man may search for knowledge and truths that he may discover in cosmos but he needs special revelation from God to understand the genuine meaning of things (Rom 1:18-23). For this reason, Psalm 19 indicates in verse 7 the need to understand God through special revelation. "The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple" (Psalm 19:7). It is the Torah, the teachings of the Lord, that are perfect and revive the soul. Thus, there are two sources for the attainment of knowledge, one through a general revelation in nature and the other through a special revelation in supernatural act of God. The Lord gave His special revelation so that man can know his origin, His will, His commandments and man's final destiny. Thus, we can only know God in the measure that He has revealed Himself to us.

Is there evidence that indeed God reveals truths about Himself besides inferences that man may grasp through reason by observation of nature? The Scriptures explain that God reveals Himself and reveals truths according to His will. For example, when God appeared to Samuel it is stated that, "the Lord revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the Lord" (1 Sam 3:21). Indeed, Daniel told that "He reveals deep and mysterious things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him" (Dan 2:22). As Moses declared, "the secret things belongs to the Lord our God; the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deut 29:29). In the New Testament, the apostle Paul declares, "For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal

1:11,12). Therefore, God reveals in a supernatural way so that the prophets and apostles may know things that in their own capacity would be impossible to grasp. Thus, we conclude that indeed God reveals Himself in words and deeds, therefore, it is the Word of the Lord. As the apostle Paul stated, "and we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers" (1 Thess 2:13).

This word revealed has been transmitted by the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Exo 17:14; Jer 30:2; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20-21). It is important to note that despite human imperfection and an imperfect language, God used men to transmit the truth according to His will. This dynamic encounter with transmission of information shows the combination of God and man in the process of revelation and inspiration. God is the author and the prophet and the apostles were the writers. It is possible to use as analogy the incarnation of Jesus Christ who had both divine and human nature, being Christ the climax of the revelation of God (Heb 1:1-3). The process of revelation and inspiration has the same pattern. It is God revealing truth and it is man putting it in a written form to be taught and obeyed. The process of revelation suggests to the Christian teacher the need to exercise the integration in a more dynamic way--to approach students with the source of all knowledge and wisdom. Therefore, this is the knowledge that comes from God. When Christians approach nature and the sciences, it is important to know that in order to get meaning and purpose it is necessary to see reality through the light of the special revelation, then man and nature in all its dimension will find true meaning in life.

Teachers that approach students claiming the integration in mind, show that there are fundamental truths that have originated in the mind of God given by the process of revelation-inspiration so that "the man of God may be completed, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:17).

Wisdom

Man needs not only understanding or knowledge of truths, it is also necessary to develop wisdom as it is manifested by the Lord and His revelation. It is God who "gives wisdom to the wise" (Dan 2:21). "For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding" (Prov 2:6). Indeed, according to Paul God is described as "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:3). It was the prayer of the apostle when he wrote "I did not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him" (Eph 1:16,17). It is clearly stated that "the fear of the Lord is beginning of wisdom, a good understanding have all those who practice it"(Psalm 111:10; Micah 6:9). "This also comes from the Lord of host; he is wonderful in counselor, and excellent in wisdom" (Isa 28:29). The key thought for obtaining wisdom is found in Psalm 19:7, "the law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple" (Psalm 19:7). It is the content of the Torah that gives the wisdom to those people of God's covenant that lead to salvation. "And how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim 3:15).

With the influence of God himself and His teachings in the Scriptures, wisdom may become a life style of His chosen people. In this sense the apostle Paul mentioned, "look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise" (Eph 5:15). As a result, "the mind of the wise make his speech judicious, and adds persuasiveness to his lips" (Prov 16:23).

The person that has wisdom behaves in a humble in spirit (Prov 11:2; 13:10; Jer 9:23), showing through a life style his/her wise heart (Prov 10:1; 13:1). As Jesus mentioned, yet wisdom is justified by her deeds" (Matt 11:19). Finally, from the developmental life of Jesus Christ, it is possible to grasp that wisdom can mature with age. "And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52). If this is accomplish throughout the life span, then "happy is the

man who finds wisdom, and the man who gets understanding" (Prov 3:13). The process of integration includes the concept of wisdom in the real life of the student in his/her formative years.

Transformational Ethics

There is a need to integrate faith and learning because there are principles and values that should permeate the whole life of all students and faculty. To accomplish this transformational ethic it is necessary to put to death selfishness and pride. The root of sin is in the center of life itself as shown in the life of the first adversary (Isa 14:12-14; Eze 28:13-19). The solution to this problem in man is the death of the selfishness and the renewed life in Christ. "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2:20).

Ethical principles and values are fundamental elements in Christian education. These principles are found in the Word of the Lord as the expression of His character and will. How is God's character? The book of Exodus gives a good example when Moses asked for God's glory. "I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you my name the Lord; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy" (Exo 33:18; cf. Jer 31:13).

The ethical principles are found in the teachings of the Lord and in His commandments (Exo 20:1-17) and in the full explanation of its meaning given by Christ in the Sermon of the Mount (Matt 5-7). These teachings are not only to be understood but incorporated in the life of the students, according to the teaching of the apostle Paul, to live a life in the spirit (Rom 7-8) walking in the fruit of it (Gal 5:22). This work implies more than teaching, it includes the process of modeling and being examples through a genuine Christian life style.

In synthesis, all these theological truths suggest to us the basic presuppositions that make a philosophical paradigm for observing reality and justifies why this integration of faith and learning is so indispensable. These theological foundations as they were presented include metaphysical, epistemological and axiological frames of reference that constitute the basis for this integration. With this paradigm in mind, the integration does not only focus on the integration of the subject matter in the mind of students but also how faith may be integrated in the life as a whole.

Faith and Learning

What is faith? There is a trend to focus faith in a cognitive dimension or doctrine as knowledge that needs to be understood rather than a personal experience with the Lord. However, from a biblical perspective faith is a fundamental element in a reaction relationship with the Lord. The locus classicus is found in the life of Abraham. God promised to Abram "to your descendants, I will give the land" (Gen 12:7). When God talked to Abram the second time, Abram still did not have a descendant although he trusted in the Lord and His promise. "And he brought him outside and said, look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them". Then, he said to him "so shall your descendants be" (Gen 15:5). Two important dimensions are found in this dialogue with God. First, there was a personal encounter with Abram. God personally declares, "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great" (Gen 15:1). The dialogue between God and Abram implies an existential dimension. Notice that at the same time, there is a reaction, demonstrating Abram's faith in the Lord. "And he believed the Lord; and he reckoned it to him as righteousness" (Gen 15:6). In this second dimension, Abram believed the information declared previously by the Lord. In other words, the faith of Abram was based in the Word of the Lord as the cognitive element and in the personal encounter with Him. From this example, it can be inferred that faith has

two inseparable dimensions, that is, existential and cognitive elements that cannot be separated.

It is important to note that the author of Hebrews emphasizes this viewpoint when he declares, "and without faith it is impossible to please him. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him" (Heb 11:6). There is also the same salvific experience when He healed the woman with the issue of blood. "And he said to her, Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease" (Mark 5:34).

This view of faith has a tremendous implication for the concept of the integration of faith and learning. The Christian teacher, under the context of this theological paradigm, will relate students not only with doctrinal truths, but fundamentally with a Person, with God Himself. Therefore, integration in this context will focus not only on the intellectual truths but on the personal dimensions.

Additionally, when teachers approach learning it is so important to consider the biblical understanding of the phenomenon. From a biblical perspective, God is recognized as the supreme Teacher. "Teach me thy ways, O Lord; and led me on a level path because of my enemies" (Psalm 27:11; cf. 86:11; 119:12; 143:10). Adding to this the idea that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov 1:7), it is possible to get the whole picture of learning from a biblical perspective. To learn and understand means more than an intellectual exercise, it has to do with the whole life. Therefore, to understand implies the reasoning and the whole dimensions of life that comprise knowing, being and doing, and at the same time recognize that learning has ethical implications. For example, the prophet Isaiah declares, "learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow" (Isa 1:17). Notice that learning is not only an intellectual task or the exercise of an abstract thought; it involves the whole life through action. The most important example is found in the life of Jesus when He declares "and learn from me" (Matt 11:29) focusing in a process of modeling as a way of learning. This was the

distinctive learning experience of Jesus. His teachings were not only an intellectual exercise but they required the involvement of the whole life.

In another example He taught, "the scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, so practice and observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do; for they preach, but do not practice" (Matt 23:2, 3). Therefore it is inferred that the Scriptures teach about learning including the intellect and at the same time the whole life with ethical implications showing that the process of teaching and learning involves the whole person.

The theological foundations are fundamental to the concept of the integration of faith and learning. It implies that this process goes beyond the subject matter, because it includes the whole dimensions of the life style of the students, that is, it includes, the mind, action, feeling, and emotions, as well as faith on a personal and intellectual dimensions. Although the subject matter could be different the principle of integration remains the same, because we as Christian teachers are dealing with students who are in the process of redemption and restoration.

Conclusion

This paper has shown why it is so important to develop, in all academic levels, the concept of the integration of faith and learning. The basic primordial presuppositions based on the Scriptures show a biblical paradigm that constitutes the biblical and theological foundation for this notion. The two elements of the integration faith and learning or faith and reason have a framework that comprises metaphysical, epistemological and axiological presuppositions found in the Scriptures. Therefore, the theological foundation for this concept includes:

1. The reality of a personal God.
2. The origin of the universe and the whole reality as created by God.
3. The appearance of sin that caused change in nature and man.
4. The reality of an intercessory ministry of Jesus Christ in the heavenly sanctuary.

5. The acknowledgment that man has the image of God in an indivisible unit.
6. God reveals Himself and information about salvation and the final destiny of man.
7. The search for wisdom found in God and His word.

Therefore, the biblical and theological foundation for this concept suggests the basis for working out this integration as a fundamental task of the teaching and learning experience of the whole academic life.