

The Essential Propositions of Christian Education according to:

JOHN HENRY CARDINAL NEWMAN (1801-90)

. . . that all branches of knowledge [including theology], are, at least implicitly, the subject-matter of its teaching.

. . . that these branches are not isolated and independent one of another, but form together a whole or system.

. . . that they [the branches of knowledge] run into each other, and complete each other, and that, in proportion to our view of them as a whole, is the exactness and trustworthiness of the knowledge which they separately convey.

. . . that the process of imparting knowledge to the intellect in this philosophical way is its true culture [paideia—the idea of a university!].

. . . that such culture is a good in itself.

. . . that the knowledge which is both its instrument and result is called Liberal Knowledge.

. . . that such culture, together with the knowledge which effects it, may fitly be sought for its own sake.

. . . that it is, however, in addition of great secular utility, as constituting the best and highest formation of the intellect for social and political life.

. . . and lastly, that considered in a religious aspect, it concurs with Christianity a certain way and then diverges from it; and consequently proves in the event, sometimes its serviceable ally, sometimes, from its very resemblance to it, an insidious and dangerous foe.

—John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*, Discourse 9, p. 148-149.

More themes . . .

. . . that a college/university is Christian if it grants theology full rights in the curriculum and if theology receives full respect in all faculties. 55 But since the rational/empirical/scientific spirit emerged out of the Enlightenment, theology had been pushed aside: "It is the fashion . . . to erect so-called universities, without making any provision in them at all for theological chairs." Furthermore, scholars in the other departments of the university simply ignored theology and carried on their specialized labors as if nothing could be said to them from the science of theology.

. . . that the purpose of a Christian university is to teach universal knowledge or else it is not a university. A university is not a technical institute nor a theological seminary. If a university omits theology, then it is not a university. "Is it then logically consistent in a seat of learning to call itself a university and to exclude theology from the number of its studies?" Helmut Thielicke speaks of the complete university also, one that does not necessarily teach all disciplines but one that is open to all truth, including the theological.

. . . that a Christian university should not only not exclude theology by dictum but it should also not exclude it in a more insidious fashion, by classification (sacred studies vs. secular studies

where secular studies dominate the educational landscape) and by sentiment (it is just a human emotion, subjective choice or sentiment). Religion is just one aspect of the universe and the university and this thereby rids God of His rights and powers.

. . . that when a Christian college/university segregates theology, here are the results: "Go away," says the researcher to the theologian. "Pure research is one thing and belief in God is another. We ought not to be foolish and attempt to mix them. I am not a theologian; you are not a scientist. So please do not disturb me, and let us each go our own way." By this attitude the researcher is affirming that theology is only for those who are interested in theology; it is not meant for the university classroom; rather, theology is for the parish priest and the catechism class."

. . . that the Christian college/university recognize that knowledge is one, unified system. If so, then no significant section of that system can be omitted without doing violence to knowledge. To banish theology from the university is to mutilate truth. The quest for knowledge has as its object the entire universe, the whole range of existence (universal knowledge). If God exists, He has implicated Himself in the universe and should be the object of the quest for knowledge. If we omit God in our quest, we do not have total knowledge and we may not have any knowledge at all! Only as we contemplate God along with our other sciences can we truly contemplate the totality of the universe and become responsible to universal knowledge. IF MAN IGNORES GOD AND GOD'S ACTION IN THE UNIVERSE AND YET ATTEMPTES TO GIVE A UNIFIED INTERPRETATION OF THIS UNIVERSE, THIS UNIVERSE WILL BE DEFICIENT, PARTIAL, AND DEFECTIVE.

. . . that the Christian college/university recognize that theology is not parochial. That is, it is not RCC, Orthodox, Protestant pursued with vested interests. Theology has been one of the greatest subjects of human culture (Homer, Hesiod, Plato, Aristotle, Bacon, Locke, Newton, Butler, etc). Theology has been there since the days of the Academy and the Lyceum. The university can become myopic if it overlooks the role and history of theology in the course of higher education, ancient and modern.

. . . that the Christian college/university recognize theology (knowledge of God) will exert a formative influence on every academic discipline. Theology is a precondition of knowledge and to blot it out unravels the web of university education and a right understanding of the disciplines. Every science needs the insights of theology or else they will stumble into error.

. . . that the Christian college/university be devoted to producing the Christian gentleman and gentlewoman.

. . . that the Christian college and university is Christian when it is guided by the church. There must exist a positive relationship between itself and the Church, else education be surrendered to the state and the infidels. There must be freedom necessary for scholarship and yet permit the supervision of the Church. Since truth is arrived at corporately, the church and the college can cooperate in a mutual endeavor (*vis a vis* the error of individualism). The Church is necessary for the integrity of the university since it steadies the university in the performance of its office. The guidance of the Church pervades the life of the university. The Church is to correct the bad, the erroneous, the mistaken in university education and is to inspire her scholars and students to greater academic excellence.

. . . that the Christian college/university is to prepare for life in the world. It should not give a protected education from science or literature. The student must learn how to swim in troubled waters only in troubled waters and the university must trouble the waters. If the university shields the student from all the ungodly and atheistic influences, it will not accomplish its goal since the student will meet such influences the first day he leaves the university. The university must be tough and rough as it can, yet in Christian hands.