Introduction: Practices, Faith, and Pedagogy

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Over the past twenty years we have witnessed a ferment of reflection on Christian higher education, Christian scholarship, and the "integration of faith and learning." There were multiple catalysts for such a conversation. On the one hand, though Christians (both Protestant and Catholic) had a long legacy of building colleges and universities, the recent history of these institutions was largely one of decline: from intentionally religious institutions to institutions with a basically secular ethos where Christian faith mattered little, if at all.[1] On the other hand, for a long time the constellation of Christian colleges and universities that continue to exist (and grow) in the United States often operated with a dualistic conception of the relationship between faith and learning — which is just to say that they had little sense of any integral relationship between the two. Instead, what made a college "Christian" was the presence of a chapel, the prescription of certain mores in the dorms, and a blanket of prayer over the whole project. On this model, the classroom, laboratory, and scholarship were still considered "neutral." Furthermore, Christianity in the United States has long exemplified a pervasive American anti-intellectualism, intensified in evan-

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1. There are both Protestant and Catholic versions of this story. On the Protestant side, see George Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). For a history of American Catholic universities' slide toward secularization, see James Tunstead Burtchaell, *The Dying of the Light* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1998). See also Christian Smith, "Secularizing American Higher Education: The Case of Early American Sociology," in *The Secular Revolution: Power, Interests, and Conflict in the Secularization of American Public Life*, ed. Christian Smith (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), pp. 97-158.

Teaching and Christian Practices

Reshaping Faith and Learning

Edited by

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gelical spirituality, which required a special apologetic to justify the work of scholarship and the value of higher education.

It was into this milieu of challenges that several important books spoke. Mark Noll's *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* challenged the latent anti-intellectualism and lingering dualism that plagued evangelical higher education, calling for a more integral understanding of the relationship between Christian faith and scholarship.[2] While Noll's analysis was something of a jeremiad, he also constructively called for a robust vision of explicitly Christian scholarship, echoing (and tipping his hat to) Abraham Kuyper as a source and model. In a similar vein, George Marsden — building on his historical analysis in *The Soul of the American University* — pushed back on the latent orthodoxy of the secular academy by pointing out the "confessional" starting points of any and all scholarship, opening room at the table for explicitly Christian scholarship and encouraging "explicit discussion of the relationship of religious faith to learning."[3]

This emerging paradigm, which stressed the "integration" of faith and learning, called into question the very idea of "secular" or "neutral" learning, emphasized a faith-inspired affirmation of intellectual pursuits, and refused to settle for models that positioned faith and learning as merely complementary or parallel. The classroom was as "holy" as the chapel; the laboratory was an arena for faith as much as the sanctuary; all of life was to be considered "from a Christian perspective." And while this (largely Reformed) conversation about "the integration of faith and learning" also generated critique,[4] even the alternatives continued to be concerned about the perspectival role of faith in informing scholarship.

But a funny thing happened on the way to the Christian university: the central task of *teaching* almost completely dropped off the scholarly radar. While the conversation was commonly billed as a consideration of "the integration of faith and *learning*," the focus tended to be the role of faith in research and scholarship. In other words, the debate seemed to forget that Christian higher education has two main concerns. Of course, on

the one hand, Christian colleges and universities rightly serve as centers for the scholarly varieties of Christian engagement with the life of the mind, the issues of the day, and the needs of the world. Under the banner of "integrating faith and learning" (or some alternative nomenclature), Christian faculty engage in research, advocacy, and service rooted in Christian intellectual perspectives. But on the other hand, Christian colleges and universities tend for the most part to be primarily teaching institutions, concerned with educating those students who choose a Christian education. To judge by the mission statements typical of Christian institutions of higher education, this is generally felt to involve more than the transmission of information — the spiritual and moral as well as the intellectual formation of students is in some sense at stake.

While both of these two broad endeavors absorb the best energies of faculty on Christian campuses, it seems fair to observe that our commitment to Christian scholarship has been significantly more articulate than our commitment to Christian pedagogy. Complex and continuing debates about the dynamics of worldviews, presuppositions, perspectives, science and religion, and various "isms" have made space for the emergence of nuanced understandings of the relationship of faith to scholarly work. However, only a tiny percentage of the scholarly writing that emerges from Christian higher education is devoted to the development of equally nuanced accounts of how teaching and learning are supposed to work in a Christian setting.[5]

Even conversations that bill themselves as concerned with pedagogy exhibit two problematic tendencies. A significant portion of these conversations focuses on the question of *content* — which Christian ideas and perspectives will be taught — implying that Christian teaching simply means teaching that contains or propounds Christian ideas and perspectives. It is common to find that even when the announced focus is teaching and learning, the emphasis is ultimately on epistemology or theology, and the discussion remains distanced from what happens in classrooms. While

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2. Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1994).

3. George Marsden, *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 3.

4. See most notably Douglas Jacobsen and Rhonda Hustedt Jacobsen, eds., *Scholarship and Christian Faith: Enlarging the Conversation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

5. An ongoing survey conducted by the Kuyers Institute for Christian Teaching and Learning of about 11,000 articles published in the past four decades in Christian scholarly journals has identified less than 500 articles that deal with teaching and learning as opposed to disciplinary concepts and theories. It is also interesting to note that some of the disciplines that have had a somewhat less obvious relationship to the "integration of faith and learning" discussion in terms of Christian scholarship have devoted relatively more attention to pedagogy, while disciplines central to the faith and learning debate (notably philosophy and history) have produced virtually no Christian scholarly writing on pedagogy.

the choice of individual examples may have a degree of arbitrariness, consider, for instance, Mark Noll's essay titled "Teaching History as a Christian." Noll opens with questions about how a Christian view of persons might affect history pedagogy, but after a few paragraphs his essay is dominated by a discussion of how a Christian epistemology views the knowability of historical facts. Harry Huebner's essay on the kind of learning needed for a Christian university — "Learning Made Strange: Can a University Be Christian?" — similarly sets out to address the shallowness of "Christian pedagogy" but spends most of its energies discussing theological and philosophical frameworks before closing with some very apt but rather general reflections on theological content and teacherly virtues. Both of these are interesting essays in their own right; if one is concerned specifically with pedagogical questions, however, their reach is limited.[6] This is not an uncommon state of affairs. It seems remarkably difficult for Christian scholars to focus on the classroom for very long, or perhaps it would be more fitting to say that it seems hard for them to get the classroom into focus. Theological and epistemological frameworks abound, but it is distressingly rare for the resulting pedagogical advice to get beyond broad exhortations to, say, try team teaching, or model humility, or use self-disclosing stories. Such pedagogical suggestions are not wrong, but rarely achieve any significant degree of texture that might allow us, for instance, to begin to see the differences between more and less helpful instantiations of them.

Another subset of published work about Christian teaching focuses more on the personal character or inner self of the teacher — perhaps in terms of the individual modeling of virtues or a spirituality of teaching.[7] Christian teaching here means teaching in which a certain character is displayed or a certain kind of "heart" or ethos sustains the process. This, too, is clearly an important train of thought — Christian education does indeed need more than the fruits of Christian inquiry and should be suffused with a Christian spirit. But it turns out on closer examination that a

great deal of the available writing in either of these two veins has remarkably little to say about the concrete practices of teaching and learning and the rich texture of embodied pedagogical encounters. Christian scholarship has by and large (with, of course, some helpful exceptions) mirrored the commonly lamented lack in the wider academy of a substantial "scholarship of teaching and learning."[8]

In short, when talk is of "the integration of faith and learning," it seems that "learning" has most often meant primarily the kind of learning that makes faculty learned, rather than learning understood as the pedagogical experiences of students. When conversations about pedagogy do occur among Christian faculty, it is all too common to find them uncritically reflecting tired dichotomies (such as lecturing versus group work) or currently fashionable slogans (such as brain-based or student-centered learning) rather than being informed by explicitly Christian reflection. As a result, the typical pedagogical practices of the modern university often remain largely unrevised as the default medium within which attempts to think, speak, and educate Christianly are conducted. This book aims to signal a game-change in these conversations. Building on a generation of contributions on the integration of faith and learning, we aim to focus more explicitly on *learning*, and specifically on the practices involved in teaching and learning. In other words, we hope to broaden the conversation from a focus on scholarship to include more explicit concern with pedagogy. In order to do so in an explicitly Christian frame, the essays that follow propose that we take a closer look at the possible relationship between historic Christian practices and the practices that characterize courses and classrooms. Such an undertaking opens up potential for articulating more fully what might be Christian about pedagogy in ways that push beyond the spirituality of the individual teacher or the status of the ideas communicated. Such a shift also gives needed

6. See Noll's essay in *Religion, Scholarship, and Higher Education: Perspectives, Models, and Future Prospects*, ed. Andrea Sterk (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), pp. 161-71; this volume seeks to offer a state-of-the-art overview of faith and higher education discussions. See Huebner's essay in *God, Truth, and Witness: Engaging Stanley Hauerwas*, ed. L. Gregory Jones, Reinhard Hütter, and C. Rosalee Velloso Ewell (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2005), pp. 280-308.

7. See, for example, Parker J. Palmer, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998).

8. On the wider discussion of the scholarship of teaching and learning, see Ernest L. Boyer, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* (Princeton, N.J.: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1990); and Mary Taylor Huber and Pat Hutchings, *The Advancement of Learning: Building the Teaching Commons* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005). For examples of recent Christian efforts to address teaching and learning, see, for instance, *Teaching as an Act of Faith: Theory and Practice in Church-Related Higher Education*, ed. Anthony C. Migliazzo (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002); Chris Anderson, *Teaching as Believing: Faith in the University* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2004); and Perry L. Glanzer and Todd C. Ream, *Christianity and Moral Identity in Higher Education* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

weight to the ways in which we are formed by the practices in which we participate, and not merely by the ideas we exchange. We suggest that Christian practices offer a kind of pedagogical wisdom that could reshape and redirect our classroom choices and strategies in surprising yet fruitful ways.

The ideas explored in this volume are at times countercultural, but they do not stand in eccentric isolation; that is, we don't think our intuitions are idiosyncratic. Rather, the project draws together the wisdom to be gleaned from three substantial and important scholarly discussions, three streams of contemporary thought that we will outline further in the remainder of this introduction:

- first, a body of literature in philosophy and sociology that has explored the formative nature of social practices;
- second, discussions among educators and philosophers of education regarding how concepts of practice developed in philosophy and sociology can be used to characterize what happens in teaching and learning;
- and third, a specifically theological literature that connects this recent concern with social practices back to the Christian church's more ancient commitment to formation through practices and disciplines that embody the Christian way of being in the world — practices such as prayer, hospitality, testimony, community, and Sabbath-keeping.

These scholarly conversations represent, among other things, a move away from the notion that rational deliberation on ideas is the primary shaper of the self, and toward a more contextual and embodied understanding of how what we do with and among others shapes who we become.[9] Our concern here is to take these existing discussions — concerning the nature of social practices, of education as a set of practices, and of the role of practices in Christian formation — and explore how they might offer a matrix for re-imagining Christian teaching and learning. We will therefore offer here a little more exposition of these background ideas to provide a

9. As Paul Griffiths puts it in his chapter in this volume, "Offering an account of what one does as a learned or would-be learned person is much less formative of and intimate with the modes of knowing one performs than are the practices into which one is catechized as a neophyte of a particular form of learning." See p. 111n.9 below.

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frame for understanding the particular projects represented in the chapters that follow.

Learning as Formation: Virtues, Habits, and Practices

Much of the current discussion about the role of "practices" in formation owes a debt to Alasdair MacIntyre's now-classic work *After Virtue*, in which he introduces an oft-cited definition of "practice."[10] But before attending to his definition, we should first contextualize it in his larger project.[11] Diagnosing the demise of the Enlightenment project (and decrying its aims), MacIntyre notes that what doomed the Enlightenment project from the start was its loss of the concept of *telos* (the end of a goal-oriented process).[12] Emphasizing the autonomy of individuals to determine their own ends, and thus rejecting any specified *telos* as an imposition on libertarian freedom, the Enlightenment project underestimated the significance of moral *formation*. Instead, its picture of the moral agent assumed a kind of natural, untutored rationality that would simply "choose" what was right because it was rational. In short, by rejecting the notion of a shared human *telos* and extolling individual rationality, the Enlightenment project had to reject any notion of *virtue* — for virtue language makes sense only where one recognizes the formative role of communities of practice that *create* ethical agents.[13] Enlightenment models of ethical action are allegedly born; virtuous actors are always and only *made*.

So, as MacIntyre argues, there can be talk of virtue only where there is a teleology in place, for virtues are those habits and dispositions that incline one toward the *telos* specified as "the good." Thus MacIntyre also emphasizes that what counts as a virtue is always relative to the *specification* of

10. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 3rd ed. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007).

11. For helpful accounts, see Brad J. Kallenberg, "The Master Argument of MacIntyre's *After Virtue*," in *Virtues and Practices in the Christian Tradition*, ed. Nancey Murphy, Brad J. Kallenberg, and Mark Thiessen Nation (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), pp. 7-29; and Jonathan R. Wilson, *Living Faithfully in a Fragmented World: Lessons for the Church from MacIntyre's* After Virtue (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1997).

12. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, pp. 195, 203.

13. It should be noted that Charles Taylor offers a similar diagnosis and critique of the Enlightenment model on this point. See Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2004), pp. 79-80.

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"the good," and such specifications of the good are communicated to us through the narratives of particular traditions.[14]

Such habits and dispositions are not "natural" in the sense of being inborn capacities or abilities; rather, they are "second nature": acquired dispositions and inclinations that are absorbed over time by participating in the routines and rituals of a tradition, as well as by imitating the models upheld as "exemplars" by the tradition. On this account, a moral "education" is not just a matter of getting the right information about my duties, obligations, and responsibilities; rather, moral education becomes a matter of *formation* — the inscription of good habits (virtue) as the construction of character. And such moral formation happens by means of practice. Thus it is that MacIntyre offers his (rather inelegant but influential) definition of a "practice":

> By a "practice" I am going to mean any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended.[15]

We should note several of features of this definition of a practice:

- First, a practice is social, communal, and inherited: it is a complex of routines and rituals that is handed down from others.
- Second, not all routines and rituals are "practices" in this sense. MacIntyre draws the distinction by emphasizing that a full-blooded "practice" has "internal goods." These are goals or aims that can be achieved *only* by engaging in the practice. "External" goods can be achieved in any number of ways. For example, chess is a practice with internal goods which are specific to the game (analytic skill, strategic

imagination, competitive intensity). To really play chess — to be a *practitioner* of the practice — is to seek these internal goods. Now, I might also play chess to become rich and famous; but such goods are "external" to the practice — they could be achieved by any number of strategies.[16] If I merely "instrumentalize" a practice for some other, external end, then I'm not really a practitioner.
- Third, every practice has relevant standards of excellence, determined (but also debated) by the community and tradition that nourishes the practice. Thus "to enter into a practice is to accept the authority of those standards," for the good internal to the practice "can only be achieved by subordinating ourselves within the practice in our relationship to other practitioners."[17]

The upshot of MacIntyre's notion of practice is directly concerned with the nature of education. While his primary concern is the shape of *moral* education, he raises the broader point that any education worthy of the name has to be formative, and that formation happens only through practices which inscribe a *habitus* — an orientation and inclination toward the world, aimed at a specific *telos*.[18]

While MacIntyre's sense of practice has a deeply Aristotelian pedigree, one finds an overlapping sense of practice and formation in the social theory of Pierre Bourdieu, who also invokes the notion of *habitus* to make sense of the formative power of cultural practices. For Bourdieu, this is a matter of honoring the significance of our non- or pre-rational comportment to the world. Contesting both empiricism and intellectualism — that is, both materialist determinisms and overestimations of rational deliberation — Bourdieu is fighting on two fronts, insisting, "contrary to positivist materialism, that the objects of knowledge are

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14. MacIntyre means to emphasize the storied character of moral traditions with his use of the term *narrative*. As he later puts it, "I can only answer the question, 'What am I to do?' if I can answer the prior question 'Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?'" (*After Virtue*, p. 216). MacIntyre emphasizes that virtue is, strictly speaking, "relative": that is, what counts as virtue is relative to what a tradition's narrative extols as the *telos* of human flourishing. This is why Homer, Aristotle, Paul, and Jane Austen can all be "virtue theorists" and yet have such significantly different catalogues of virtues. See *After Virtue*, pp. 181-87.

15. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 187.

16. This is why MacIntyre will claim that "throwing a football" is *not* a practice, whereas the "the game of football is"; or "bricklaying is not a practice," whereas "architecture is" (MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 187). The idea is that bricklaying could never be an end in itself; it would also be subordinate to some grander aim (e.g., building a cathedral). This distinction is germane to the discussion below regarding whether teaching can be a practice.

17. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 191.

18. Indeed, the claim is that any education is formative in this sense, even if it doesn't own up to the formative power of pedagogy. In short, the question isn't *whether* education forms virtue but rather *which* virtues are being inscribed (and to which *telos* such an education is oriented). For an excellent analysis, see Perry L. Glanzer and Todd C. Ream, *Christianity and Moral Identity in Higher Education* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

constructed, not passively recorded, and, contrary to intellectualist idealism, that the principle of this construction is the system of structured, structuring dispositions, the *habitus*, which is constituted in practice and is always oriented towards practical functions."[19] On this model, *habitus* is an orientation to and understanding of the world that is absorbed and shaped at the level of practice. Bourdieu is thus interested in "the conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence" that "produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them."[20] Learned and acquired through practice, *habitus* is "embodied history, internalized as a second nature"; it functions as "accumulated capital," and "is a spontaneity without consciousness or will, opposed as much to the mechanical necessity of things without history in mechanistic theories as it is to the reflexive freedom of subjects 'without inertia' in rationalist theories."[21] What this generates is a "practical sense" — a kind of know-how that is either unconscious or preconscious but nonetheless intentional and oriented to some end or *telos*.[22]

Bourdieu wants us to recognize that practice has its own "logic"; to rephrase Pascal, practice has a logic of which logic knows nothing. Or as Bourdieu himself puts it, "Practice has a logic which is not that of the logician."[23] What we're interested in culling from Bourdieu is not only his emphasis on the formative role of practices and "rites," but also his sense that "practice" has its own logic. It seems to us that this is a fruitful, suggestive lens for considering the irreducible wisdom embedded in pedagogical practices — not, it should be noted, just because of the content that they transmit but also because of the "logic" that inheres in the practice.

Educational Reflections on Practices

Given the lasting influence of MacIntyre's careful discussion of the criteria that enable a human activity to be identified as a "practice," it is perhaps not surprising that one of the traces of his work in educational discussions is a debate concerning whether teaching is, in the MacIntyrean sense, a practice. MacIntyre himself, somewhat to the consternation of philosophers of education seeking to work with his ideas, offered the view that teaching is not a practice, on the grounds that teaching lacks its own internal good to serve as its *telos*, but instead serves a variety of goods derived from the particular ideas and practices being taught.[24] Others, notably Joseph Dunne, have disagreed, with philosophers of education tending to find MacIntyre's view of teaching somewhat reductive.[25]

Interesting as this debate is, for our present purposes in this volume it is somewhat beside the point, since our focus is not on the status of the act of teaching per se, but rather on what Christian practices can contribute to how teaching and learning are carried out and experienced (more on this below). Once the focus shifts from defining and demarcating practices to the various ways that patterns of Christian practice might inform the practices of the classroom, another influential line of educational discussion becomes relevant and helpful, one rising from the work of Etienne Wenger.[26]

19. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 52.

20. Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, p. 53.

21. Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, p. 56.

22. "Practical sense is a quasi-bodily involvement in the world which presupposes no representation either of the body or of the world, still less of their relationship. It is an immanence in the world through which the world imposes its imminence, things to be done or said, which directly govern speech and action. It orients 'choices' which, though not deliberate, are no less systematic. . . ." An example is "a 'feel for the game.'" See Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, p. 66.

23. Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, p. 86.

24. Alasdair MacIntyre and Joseph Dunne, "Alasdair MacIntyre on Education: In Dialogue with Joseph Dunne," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 36 (2002): 1-19.

25. See Joseph Dunne, "What's the Good of Education?" in *The RoutledgeFalmer Reader in Philosophy of Education*, ed. Wilfred Carr (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 145-60; "Arguing for Teaching as a Practice: A Reply to Alasdair MacIntyre," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 37 (2003): 353-69. Apropos of this debate, see also David Carr, "Rival Conceptions of Practice in Education and Teaching," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 37 (2003): 253-66; Pádraig Hogan, "Teaching and Learning as a Way of Life," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 37 (2003): 207-23; and Nell Noddings, "Is Teaching a Practice?" *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 37 (2003): 241-51.

26. Of course, Bourdieu's work has also been extensively drawn upon in educational research; for the present project, however, his influence was in most cases mediated through Wenger's work, and so we focus on Wenger's contribution to educational discussions of practices here. For a helpful comparison of MacIntyre and Wenger on practices in relation

Wenger is an educational theorist who has written extensively about how "communities of practice" function, an interest that grew out of earlier work on the nature of the learning that takes place in the context of apprenticeship.[27] He defines practice as action "in a historical and social context that gives structure and meaning to what we do" — or, more catchily, as "a shared history of learning that requires some catching up for joining."[28] Groups of people who engage in shared patterns of practice in concrete settings (offices, classrooms, sports fields, etc.) become "communities of practice." People come together on a regular basis and do things together in certain ways in pursuit of certain shared goals, and in doing so, they become a community that is defined and held together by shared practices (rather than, for example, family ties or affectionate attachments).

Wenger sees several basic processes constantly interacting to shape communities of practice. Certain forms of *participation* are available to different members of the community. By this he means the kinds of actions, interactions, and relationships that are available for a given member of the group.[29] For example, in one kind of group I might be able to speak my mind spontaneously and freely, while in another group, speech might be more controlled or even ritualized. In one setting someone asks a question, and I shout out an answer; in another I raise a hand or decide not to speak at all. When I am in the first group, I get to hold the floor and speak as an expert; when I transition to the second group, I get to make the coffee. There may be various forms of participation that are plausible to me in a given group at a given moment. At the same time, there is an accompanying process of *reification*, as ideas at work in the group get turned into things (objects, gestures, sounds) that endure from one session to another.

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to education, see Terence McLaughlin, "Teaching as a Practice and a Community of Practice: The Limits of Commonality and the Demands of Diversity," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 37 (2003): 339-52.

27. Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); *Understanding Practice: Perspectives on Activity and Context*, ed. Seth Chaiklin and Jean Lave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

28. Etienne Wenger, *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 47, 102.

29. Clearly, a wide range of actions is possible in the abstract in any setting (it is always in principle open to a student in class to, say, leap onto the teacher's desk and begin singing); various social constraints, however, including shared imagination (see below), keep a smaller range of behaviors actually available, with variation among participants as to what is available. The issue isn't compulsion, but rather social possibility.

You can't kick an idea — but you can (and might occasionally want to) kick a computer that was installed in the classroom because of someone's conviction that technology helps learning. Reifications in classrooms would include, for example, chairs, desks, textbooks, grades, syllabi, tests, gestures, and so on. Ideas, assumptions, and goals have become reified parts of the shared physical environment, and consequently constrain future actions.

Participation and reification constantly interact as members of the community negotiate the meaning of their actions with one another. If my classroom consists of a large number of chairs fixed in straight rows all facing in the same direction, then certain kinds of participation, such as listening to a lecture and writing notes, become easier. Other kinds, such as group discussion, become more difficult. If the classroom has chairs arranged in circles around larger tables, then the opposite is true. Similarly, some ways of awarding grades (judgments reified as letter-objects) will encourage individually competitive forms of participation; others will encourage cooperation. Some ways of grading will encourage conformity; others, originality. As these choices become reified into stable institutional structures, they may work for or against the intentions of individual instructors or learners the next time around, guiding their choices, whether with or against the grain of their prior preferences. Reification and participation are always at work together, in harmony or in tension.

As they work together and negotiate the meaning of their actions over time, members of a community become aligned to one another and develop a *repertoire* — a set of behaviors having particular meaning for this group. Certain words take on special shades of meaning that are opaque to outsiders. Certain gestures become immediately recognizable. Instructions given explicitly at the beginning of the semester may not need to be repeated later, for everyone in the group comes to know their expected moves. By the end of a semester in which Friday is homework day, if I forget to tell my students to turn in their homework on a Friday, most of them walk forward at the end of class and do it anyway — it has become part of the repertoire, the set of behaviors and meanings shared by this group. Repertoire (like *habitus*) is a way of naming the patterns inscribed in the way we do things together, and helps to define the boundaries that form between the different communities of practice of which any given individual is a part.

Wenger emphasizes that these patterns of practice are informed by a shared *imagination*, a sense of what the community of practice is about,

what goods it is pursuing and why. Here *imagination* does not mean "fantasy" or "creativity" (see further the final chapter of this volume); it refers to the ways in which we construe our shared tasks. Sharing this imagination is one way of belonging to the community. Not sharing it is one way of not fitting in. If a group of students imagines that they are fulfilling a boring but necessary task to complete a program requirement, while the professor imagines that the group is engaged in a passionate pursuit of truth, frustrations will emerge. Over time, imagination becomes embodied in repertoire, and repertoire at the same time shapes imagination. Shared imagination is manifest as much in what we do as in what we say.

There is considerably more detail in Wenger's account, but this brief summary will suffice to indicate its relevance. A community of practice, Wenger says, is shaped out of certain forms of participation, an ongoing process of reification that turns intentions into stable objects, the growth of a shared repertoire of meanings and behaviors, and the development of a shared imagination concerning what the group is really aiming for. An account such as Wenger's has value for discussions of Christian practices and Christian learning because it provides a systematic framework for exploring how vision becomes embodied in particular educational behaviors and how learning arises from those behaviors, opening space to examine the relationship of faith not just to ideas, but to pedagogical practices.

Theological Reflections on Practices

The constellation of the MacIntyrean themes of practice, virtue, and formation has also made a significant impact on a generation of discussions in theology, particularly in the area of practical theology concerned with Christian education. In the same way that we want to push back on reducing Christian education to the dissemination of Christian ideas, voices such as Craig Dykstra and Dorothy Bass have contested the reduction of Christian faith to intellectual assent to a set of propositions. This involves a shift from considering Christianity as an intellectual system to (re)emphasizes the church as a community of practice. Thus, as Dykstra summarizes it, "the life of Christian faith is the practice of many practices."[30] Or as Brad Kallenberg summarizes, "Christianity cannot be explained or un-

derstood without reference to a distinctive cluster of practices. In order to participate in the tradition called Christianity one must necessarily participate in these practices."[31]

Dykstra's account appreciates MacIntyre's claims regarding the formative power of practices (and this is just returning MacIntyre's model to its originating soil). "The primary point about practices," he emphasizes, "is no longer that they are something we do. Instead, they become arenas in which something is done to us, in us, and through us that we could not of ourselves do, that is beyond what we do."[32] Practices, then, are not just "things we do"; they do something *to* us. Dykstra appropriates the MacIntyrean definition of practice in order to highlight this formative aspect of Christian practices. So, on the one hand, Christian practices are like other practices (like chess and football): they are social, complex, teleological, informed by tradition and narrative, and so on. They fit MacIntyre's definition of "a practice." On the other hand, they're also *more* than that. Thus, while Dykstra often "naturalizes" Christian practices, as it were, in order to help us appreciate their almost mundane formative power, he also emphasizes what is unique or peculiar about Christian practices: they are nothing less than "habitations of the Spirit."[33] One might say that the formative power of Christian practices is never less than natural, but it is also more than natural.

When viewed through this MacIntyrean lens, we begin to appreciate that Christian practices would have implications beyond the confines of "spirituality." If practices form our very comportment to the world and inscribe in us a *habitus* that primes and shapes our action, then Christian practices will do nothing less than configure how we see and act in the world.

But what do we mean by "Christian practices"? What would be included under such a rubric? On one level, the term might refer quite specifically to *worship* practices — the liturgical rites and routines that mark the church.[34] But on another level, the term can refer to a wider set of practices somewhat synonymous with "spiritual disciplines" (and this

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30. Craig Dykstra, *Growing in the Life of Faith: Education and Christian Practices*, 2nd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), p. 67.

31. Kallenberg, "The Master Argument of MacIntyre's *After Virtue*," p. 22.

32. Dykstra, *Growing in the Life of Faith*, p. 56.

33. Dykstra, *Growing in the Life of Faith*, p. 63. This is combined with an appreciation for their physicality (p. 71).

34. This seems to be the operative focus behind an important book along these lines: *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Ethics*, ed. Stanley Hauerwas and Samuel Wells (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006). The "practices" considered are generally restricted to those practices that constitute aspects of Christian worship.

wider definition can obviously include the narrower set of Christian worship practices). In this book, our authors generally follow Dykstra and Bass in recognizing a wider set of Christian practices that includes not only baptism and the Eucharist but also hospitality, Sabbath-keeping, testimony, simplicity, and many more.[35] Thus we tend to function with Bass and Dykstra's more generous definition of Christian practices as "things Christian people do together over time in response to and in the light of God's active presence for the life of the world."[36]

While this discussion of Christian practices has been appropriated for thinking about "Christian education" more narrowly (that is, faith formation in the church and in the context of theological education), it has been largely untapped as a resource for thinking about pedagogy in the context of Christian colleges and universities. While there is all sorts of room for discussion regarding how to conceive the relationship between Christian educational institutions and the church more specifically, we are convinced of two things that invite us to see the connection between the two more intimately: On the one hand, we are convinced that Christian education must be *formative* in just the sense that MacIntyre emphasizes. If Christian higher education is going to take seriously its responsibility for education in *virtue*, then it also needs to attend to matters of practice and formation.[37] On the other hand, we are convinced that implicit in the in-

herited practices of the Christian tradition is a kind of pedagogical wisdom on which we can draw for Christian teaching more broadly.

Christian Practices and Christian Learning

Drawing from these philosophical, educational, and theological inquiries into the nature and importance of practices, our goal in the present volume is to extend their insights in ways that speak to the Christian classroom. We propose that various elements of these discussions can help to frame an account of what a Christian pedagogy could look like *in practice*, beyond a focus on whether Christian ideas are being conveyed or Christian character is being individually modeled.

We noted above that the essays in this book are not primarily concerned with the status of teaching per se as a practice, but rather with the various ways that the work on Christian practices just described might inform classrooms across the disciplines. This focus suggests somewhat differently framed questions. It invites exploration of the possible relationships between particular Christian practices and the learning setting. It soon becomes evident that there is more than one possible relationship between Christian practices and educational practices. Questions worth exploring include these:

- When can or should a particular Christian practice become a direct part of what is taught, a straightforward ingredient in the educational experience, whether in order to enhance the achievement of existing learning goals or in order to expand outcomes to include broader kinds of formation? For example, how would learning processes and outcomes be changed if learners were asked to try *lectio divina* as part of their learning how to engage with great literary works, or if they were asked to fast before a discussion on poverty in an ethics course?[38]
- Are there particular Christian practices that can sustain the enterprise of teaching and learning by forming dispositions that both

35. While there is a conversation to be had regarding the relation (and perhaps priority) between specifically liturgical practices and extra-liturgical Christian practices, we won't distract ourselves with that point here. This project is officially agnostic on the point and has room to absorb models that might prioritize liturgical practices as well as those that do not. Craig Dykstra and Dorothy Bass give a certain priority to liturgical practices as the "consommé" to the "broth" of wider Christian practices ("Times of Yearning, Practices of Faith," in *Practicing Our Faith*, ed. Dorothy C. Bass [San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997], p. 9), whereas Miroslav Volf seems ambivalent about according any priority to specifically liturgical practices (see Volf, "Theology for a Way of Life," in *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life*, ed. Miroslav Volf and Dorothy C. Bass [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2002], pp. 245-63). This stems from Volf's attendant (though contestable) claim that, *de jure*, beliefs "ground" practices (pp. 258-61). For an alternative account of the relation between beliefs and practices, see James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), pp. 133-39.

36. Dykstra and Bass, "Times of Yearning, Practices of Faith," p. 5.

37. This is the central argument of Glanzer and Ream in *Christianity and Moral Identity in Higher Education*. Christian colleges also broadcast claims about "virtue" formation. See, for example, the "Core Virtues" included as part of the Core Curriculum at Calvin College (discussed in an appendix to Cornelius Plantinga's *Engaging God's World: A Reformed Vision of Faith, Learning, and Living* [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2002], pp. 225-41).

38. K. Jo-Ann Badley and Ken Badley, "Slow Reading: Reading along *Lectio* Lines," *Journal of Education and Christian Belief* 15, no. 1 (2011): 29-42. Bradford S. Hadaway, "Preparing the Way for Justice: Strategic Dispositional Formation through the Spiritual Disciplines," in *Spirituality, Justice, and Pedagogy*, ed. David I. Smith, John Shortt, and John Sullivan (Nottingham: The Stapleford Centre, 2006), pp. 143-65.

contribute to successful learning and give it a particular cast? If, for example, a certain degree of humility is a precondition of genuine learning (as Mark Schwehn has argued),[39] inclining the learner to be willing to surrender his or her own quick judgments in favor of a presumption of wisdom in the authors of the material studied, then are there particular Christian practices that can help shape or sustain this form of humility?

- Since Christian practices are themselves, at least in part, pedagogical devices to help form the self in particular directions, then are there ways in which they can function as models for, analogies to, or guiding metaphors for educational practices — framing pedagogy by offering a kind of hermeneutical clue to a normative shape for daily educational life? How, for instance, would foreign and second-language learning look different if it were patterned on the practice of hospitality to strangers rather than on the practices more typically associated with tourism or international business?[40]

- Are there present patterns of educational practice that are in tension with the kinds of formation implicitly aimed at by Christian practices, such that we need to consider restructuring teaching and learning lest their rhythms be in competition with Christian formation? Could, for instance, our investment in individual ownership and rapid consumption of knowledge be at odds with the attentiveness and receptivity needed to read Scripture well, or might our focus on individual autonomy create tension with the goal of growth in humility?[41]

- What difference might it make to Christian students' experience and construal of learning if their learning were framed by Christian practices? Can an overt focus on particular Christian practices reframe the imaginations of students and teachers in ways that undermine a utilitarian relationship to learning and enable the making of new connections between previously unconnected ideas? Can an involvement in learning experiences built around Christian practices provide some degree of counter-formation to the secular cultural liturgies that otherwise shape our lives and perceptions?[42]

- In what ways should Christian teaching and learning be "nested" within specific practices of Christian worship? Is there a way that worship in the church, chapel, and elsewhere constitutes a necessary context for Christian education in classrooms, laboratories, and libraries? In what way is the college, as an educational institution, dependent upon the church?[43]

The examples referenced in this brief sketch of possibilities indicate that some work has already been done in this vein. We hope that the essays presented here can provide a more concentrated, sustained, and cohesive indication of the potential of a focus on Christian practices for broadening our understanding of how faith and learning intersect in classrooms, and for remedying the comparative lack of focus on teaching and learning among Christian scholars to date.

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39. Mark R. Schwehn, *Exiles from Eden: Religion and the Academic Vocation in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

40. See David I. Smith and Barbara Carvill, *The Gift of the Stranger: Faith, Hospitality, and Foreign Language Learning* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2000); David I. Smith, *Learning from the Stranger: Christian Faith and Cultural Diversity* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2009).

41. Paul Griffiths argues the former in *The Vice of Curiosity: An Essay on Intellectual Appetite* (Winnipeg: CMU Press, 2006); Susan Mendus argues the latter in her article "Tolerance and Recognition: Education in a Multicultural Society," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 29, no. 2 (2005): 191-202. The tension could, of course, run in either direction here — it may be that the practices of particular Christian communities undermine learning. For instance, socialization into certain proof-texting strategies as a part of the communal practice of biblical interpretation may make it more difficult for certain students to succeed in writing or speaking tasks framed by other norms of discourse. See, for example, Chris Anderson, "The Description of an Embarrassment: When Students Write about Religion," *ADE Bulletin* 94 (1989): 12-15; and Elizabeth Platt, "'Uh uh no hapana': Intersubjectivity, Meaning, and