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## **Stewardship: A Biblical Model for the Formation of Christian Scholars**

*THIS ARTICLE EXPLORES theological dimensions of the academic vocation, taking its cue from the research undertaken by the Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate, which envisions the scholar as a steward of an academic discipline. We contend, however, that the Christian scholar's sense of stewardship extends beyond one's academic discipline to encompass the Christian faith as well. Both the creation account in Genesis and the parable of the entrusted money in the Gospels illuminate three vital aspects of Christian scholarship: generation, conservation, and transformation. The article culminates in a discussion of formation or transformation of doctoral students preparing for the academy, with practical examples to illustrate.*

**Keywords:** doctoral education, stewardship as biblical metaphor, Genesis 1–2, Luke 19:11–27, Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate, Christian scholarship

What does it mean to be a “Christian scholar”? Does the phrase simply denote a Christian who also happens to be a scholar, or perhaps a scholar who is coincidentally a Christian? Should the expression be reserved for one whose research is related to Christianity? Or can we use the adjective “Christian” to describe any scholar whose life reflects a set of virtues or habits commonly associated with the Christian faith? We suggest in this essay that a Christian scholar can be fruitfully imagined as a steward, one who holds in trust and cares for the property of another. Since such a person furthermore possesses dual allegiances to both the academy and the church, he or she is a steward not only of his or her academic discipline but also of the Christian faith. Two biblical texts—the creation account

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in Genesis and the parable of the entrusted money in the Gospels—will inform our understanding of this metaphor and suggest ways to think about how such a Christian scholar might be formed.

While our particular focus is on doctoral students and aspiring faculty members, we are joining several ongoing scholarly conversations on stewardship, Christian higher education, and the changing contexts in the academy. First, we attend to the discussion concerning the biblical metaphor of stewardship and its implications for various aspects of Christian life. Our investigation of biblical texts is informed by a number of scholars who have both formulated and critiqued a biblical theology of stewardship (Hall, 1986, 1990; Bauckham, 2000, 2010). We moreover share a common concern with writers such as Amy Sherman (2011), whose recent book encourages a broad Christian audience to pursue “faithful vocational stewardship” by reflecting various aspects of God’s own work (pp. 102–104). Second, our focus on the formation of Christian doctoral students reflects a growing scholarly interest in the vocation of the teacher-scholar from the perspective of the Christian tradition. This trend is reflected, for example, in several recent scholarly efforts: to rediscover for the teaching professions an ethic based upon the moral category of serving the needs of others (Wineberg, 2008); to offer a biblical and Reformed alternative to the concept of the integration of faith and learning (Glanzer, 2008); and to provide a vision of the *ethos* and virtues of academy and church as mutually nourishing each other in the life of the Christian scholar (Huelin, 2010). Finally, we listen to another conversation within the field of higher education that focuses upon the changing landscape of academe and the ways doctoral students and professors are adapting to it (Rice, 1986, 1996; Austin, 2002). This final conversation, along with our own experiences working with graduate students in a Christian university, provides the immediate catalyst for our essay.

The scholarly foundation for these reflections is the recent research undertaken by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching on the state and future of doctoral education in America. In 2001 the Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate (CID) was formed in order to conduct a five-year study of the diverse paths to the PhD as practiced in the fields of chemistry, education, English, history, mathematics, and neuroscience. This work has resulted in two timely and thought-provoking publications, *Envisioning the Future of Doctoral Education: Preparing*

*Stewards of the Discipline* (2006) and *The Formation of Scholars: Rethinking Doctoral Education for the Twenty-First Century* (2008), in which the authors seek to draw attention to the problems and promises of American doctoral education. Three main themes have risen to the fore in the CID's research: scholarly integration, intellectual community, and stewardship.

The concept of scholarly integration calls for a more comprehensive understanding of academic work that goes beyond the traditional view of scholarship as discovery of new knowledge but also includes integration, application, and teaching (Boyer, 1990; Walker, Golde, Jones, Bueschel, & Hutchings, 2008, p. 9). The CID is one of a chorus of voices encouraging universities to appreciate more fully the interconnectedness of teaching and scholarship at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Intellectual community refers to the multifarious cultures within which future PhDs achieve the goals before them (Walker et al., 2008, p. 10). It is this "hidden curriculum" that shapes and defines the way doctoral students understand and feel about the careers toward which they are heading. Significantly, the CID recognizes that intellectual community may be the area where the goals of scholarly integration can be most successfully accomplished at the graduate level. While these two themes are integral to their work, the heart of the CID research is expressed in the idea of stewardship. As Chris M. Golde, director of research for the CID, has written:

We propose that the purpose of doctoral education, taken broadly, is to educate and prepare those to whom we can entrust the vigor, quality, and integrity of the field. This person is a scholar first and foremost, in the fullest sense of the term—someone who will creatively generate new knowledge, critically conserve valuable ideas, and responsibly transform those understandings through writing, teaching, and application. We call such a person a "steward of the discipline." The idea of stewardship is at the heart of The Carnegie Foundation's work on doctoral education. (Golde & Walker, 2006, p. 5)

Three convictions are central to the CID's understanding of stewardship. First, stewards must possess a set of knowledge and skills that provide the expertise necessary for accomplishing their research as well as a set of principles that provide the moral compass academic work requires (Walker et al., 2008, p. 12). Second, stewards are responsible for more

than merely their own work and intellectual output. They have a vested interest in the field as a whole and thus are custodians of an entire discipline rather than managers of a single career; once they are established, they are concerned with forming the next generation of stewards (Golde & Walker, 2006, p. 13). Third, stewards are engaged in three integrally related tasks: generation, conservation, and transformation. The function of generation points to the role scholars perform best: furthering their field through original and important research. This role signifies that the scholar is able to ask significant questions, develop viable strategies for investigating these questions, conduct sound investigations, analyze and evaluate the ensuing results, and communicate the results in order to advance the field. Conservation implies the understanding that new ideas are not created *ex nihilo* but evolve out of previous knowledge and content areas. It means understanding the traditional, fundamental ideas of the discipline and recognizing the prior groundwork that laid the foundations for current scholarship, while successfully judging which ideas are worth keeping and which are best discarded. Conservation also includes understanding the relationship between one's particular area of expertise within the field and the discipline as a whole, as well as understanding how one's research contributes to the larger intellectual landscape beyond one's discipline. Transformation carries this thinking further. It refers to the importance of representing and communicating ideas effectively to diverse groups, including those outside of the academy, and to the need for stewards to be effective teachers in the fullest and broadest sense (Walker et al., 2008, p. 12).

If, as scholars, we are stewards of our academic disciplines, we are also stewards of much more besides. We may find ourselves stewards of bank accounts, trust funds, our children's educations. For those scholars who identify ourselves as Christians, we are moreover stewards of a two-thousand-year-old tradition handed down to us through the church and entrusted to us for future generations. Our stewardship of the Christian faith is prior to and more important than any of the other things entrusted to our care. It is the compass by which we orient and order all our other commitments. In what follows, we endeavor first of all to place the stewardship of our academic disciplines within the context of this larger vocation. To that end, we will form our understanding of stewardship by exploring the way this metaphor is used within the Bible. Two passages

will provide the basis of our discussion: the creation account in Genesis, and the parable of the entrusted money in the Gospels.<sup>1</sup>

### **Stewardship in the Bible: The Contours of a Metaphor**

The following discussion will require disciplined imagination since the Bible does not straightforwardly address the formation of the Christian scholar. Nevertheless, the biblical idea of stewardship reflected in the following passages suggests several fruitful ways for Christian scholars to think about stewarding both our academic disciplines and the Christian faith. The creation account in Genesis 1–2 encourages us to regard the scholarly vocation as part of the general human vocation to steward God’s creation. Jesus’s parable of the entrusted money challenges us to consider the cost of our allegiance to Jesus Christ within an academic context.

#### ***Stewardship in Genesis 1–2***

The first two chapters of Genesis present us with two complementary theological and narrative accounts of the creation of the earth. The first of these presents God as having created the earth in six days, culminating in a day of rest. God’s pleasure in the creation is marked by the refrain “And God saw that it was good.” A superlative—“it was very good”—conveys God’s satisfaction with the sum total of creation. The sixth day is also notable for God having created humankind:

Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

So God created humankind in his image,  
in the image of God he created them;  
male and female he created them.

God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” (Gen. 1:26–28 NRSV)

Humankind is thus distinguished from the rest of creation by its having been created in the image and likeness of God. But how should we understand what is meant by the *imago Dei*? The underdetermined nature of the text has led to a plethora of interpretive possibilities; the following discussion leans upon the Kuyperian tradition that the divine image implies a creative corule, or royal stewardship, of God's creation. This reading finds support within the consensus among biblical scholars that the passage should be read in light of ancient Near Eastern royal ideology (von Rad, 1972, pp. 59–60; Sarna, 1989, p. 12; Middleton, 2005, p. 121; Arnold, 2009, pp. 44–45). In the first five days of creation, God builds a cosmic temple from which he rules (Middleton, 2005, pp. 81–88; Beale, 2008, pp. 129–132). On the sixth day, God delegates to humankind the role of ruling over what he has made. Humankind stands in relation to the created order as the ancient Near Eastern monarch stood in relation to his subjects.

The *imago Dei* thus arguably denotes the ruling function of humankind over creation, an interpretation that dates back to early church fathers such as Gregory of Nyssa (1886–1889, pp. 390–391). The need for human dominion over creation implies that creation is unruly and hence must be subdued, or ordered. Even as God subdued and ordered chaos in the act of creation, so humankind is continually to subdue and bring order to creation.<sup>2</sup> Adam's naming of the animals in Genesis 2:18–20 is further evidence of the need to bring order to creation as a constitutive aspect of the task given to humankind. Although this task can perhaps be seen as integrally connected to caring for the animals, it may well have been designed for Adam's own benefit. In order to properly exercise dominion, Adam first had to gain the love, admiration, and respect for creation that God possessed intrinsically ("God saw that it was good"). These sentiments are reinforced in the act of naming; humans naturally give names to those things that are dear to us, whether children, pets, or beasts of burden.

As noted above, God's creative activity in Genesis 1 may be seen as building a cosmic temple from which God reigns. Significantly, the building of temples and other monumental structures was commonly understood to be a function of ruling in the ancient Near East (Ahlström, 2000, pp. 591–592). When God delegates dominion over creation to humankind, it is clear that human rule should imitate divine rule. As God has created a cosmic temple (the earth and the cosmos), so human beings

must preserve that temple. Within the Reformed (especially Kuyperian) theological tradition, the divine mandate to rule in Genesis 1:26–28 is interpreted as a command to create human culture, which mirrors and continues the God-given order and shape of the created world. God’s creation is not static, but rather is to be transformed by human creativity (Goheen & Bartholomew, 2008, p. 41).

If the imprint of the divine image enjoins humankind to reflect God’s creativity through the creation of culture, it does not follow that we possess the wisdom or power to do so unassisted. This vocation requires the guidance and empowerment of God’s Spirit. J. Richard Middleton’s (2005) reading of Genesis 1 arrives at the same conclusion:

The associations between Spirit, wisdom, and power are thus quite clear and suggest that human rule and subduing of the earth in Genesis 1 involves an element of artful discernment in the service of the (cultural) shaping and transformation of the world, in imitation of God’s wise acts of ordering and crafting what was originally formless into a habitable cosmic structure. (p. 88)

That is to say that humankind needs divine wisdom and inspiration to fulfill the divine mandate. It is also to say that as we go about this task, we must imitate God’s own care for creation. Thus Calvin DeWitt (2000) contends that as God cares for humans, so humans care for creation (pp. 65–66). This care for the creation entrusted to us is captured by the model of stewardship.

Although we speak here of dominion as stewardship, this is a relatively recent understanding (in terms of the past two millennia of biblical interpretation) of the divine mandate in Genesis 1:26–28. Early church fathers interpreted dominion to mean that the non-human-created order existed to satisfy human ends (Chrysostom, trans. 1986, Vol. 74, pp. 134–135; Gregory of Nyssa, trans. 1886–1889, pp. 390–391). A similar interpretation can be found within seventeenth-century Baconian philosophy; in fact, the interpretation of dominion as stewardship first arose in response to this flawed understanding of humankind’s relationship to nature (Bauckham, 2000, p. 101). Creation exists for God’s glory, not merely for human benefit. Indeed, it is precisely a persistent misreading of Genesis 1:26–28 that has earned Christians a share of the blame for the present ecological crisis (White, 1967). Once again, however, Christians

are realizing that stewardship, not exploitation, is the essence of the divine mandate to humankind.<sup>3</sup>

What are the implications of this biblical exploration for our understanding of the task of stewardship? First, the task of ruling over creation mirrors God's creative activity. As God brings order to chaos, so humans bring order to creation through the creation of culture. Second, God's creation is entrusted to our care, not our exploitation. We do not stand over creation; rather, the creation of which we are a part is bigger than us. Moreover, the earth is the shared home of all earthly beings. Thus, in our care of creation, we are guided not by the question "What yields the greatest benefit for humankind?" Rather, we must ask, "What honors the Creator, who loves all that he has created?" Being created in the *imago Dei* is, at least in part, an obligation to steward God's creation, of which we are a part. These insights have much to contribute to our conversation about forming doctoral students and stewarding the academy. We will explore these ideas further after we examine another biblical passage.

### ***Stewardship in the Parable of the Entrusted Money*** ***(Luke 19:11–27; Matt. 25:14–30)***

We continue our exploration of the metaphor of stewardship by considering a well-known parable told by Jesus concerning a man who entrusts money to his servants to trade with while he is away on a trip. The relevance of this parable to the topic at hand is evidenced by the fact that the authors of *The Formation of Scholars* cite it approvingly as an illustration of the essence of stewardship: "Here the emphasis is on investing, risk taking, and putting talents (whether coins or abilities) to work, not on hoarding and saving. A steward of the discipline or interdiscipline considers the applications, uses, and purposes of the field and favors wise and responsible applications" (Walker et al., 2008, p. 11). These functions—investing, risking, and working—complement the notion of stewardship found in Genesis, namely, the humble conservation of a gift held in trust. Moreover, the parable suggests that the attitude of the servants toward their master is as important as what they do with the money entrusted to them.

How we understand the concept of stewardship envisioned in the parable depends greatly upon what we believe the master's intentions to be. Although it is often supposed that he entrusts money to his servants for the sole purpose of acquiring a profit (Kilgallen, 2008, p. 159), we



contend with other scholars that his primary motive is to test the loyalty of his servants within a scenario in which such loyalty comes at a price (Bailey, 2008, pp. 397–409; Kistemaker, 2002, p. 218). In contrast to the version in Matthew, the story in Luke is placed in a context that accentuates excitement and speculation over the royal dimension of Jesus's identity and ministry. Luke places the parable on Jesus's lips immediately prior to his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, in order to correct the widespread misconception that the kingdom of God was to appear imminently (Luke 19:11). In the Lukan version of the parable, a nobleman gathers ten of his servants prior to traveling to a distant land to receive kingship and then to return.<sup>4</sup> This detail likely has in view the requirement within the Roman Empire for client kings to have their rule legitimated by Rome.<sup>5</sup> The nobleman entrusts a modest sum of one *mina* to each of his servants, the equivalent of a hundred days' wages for a laborer. He instructs them, "Do business *en hō* [lit. "in which"] I am coming back" (Luke 19:13). The prepositional phrase *en hō* is frequently taken as a marker for time: "until." Taken this way, the master is simply indicating that his servants will have a limited amount of time in which to invest the money.<sup>6</sup> The implied message, therefore, is "Get busy making a profit." The context, however, suggests that a more literal rendering may be intended: they are to do business, "in which," or "in a situation in which" the master returns (Bailey, 2008, p. 400). This situation is one of political instability, as the next verse makes clear: certain of the nobleman's citizens hate him, and send a delegation to protest his bid for kingship (Luke 19:14).

On the surface, the soon-to-be-king's actions are puzzling. Why should he entrust his servants with such modest sums in his absence if his main objective, as many scholars presume, is to accumulate even greater wealth (Lambrecht, 1981, p. 174)? On this point, Matthew's recounting would seem to be more convincing: here, the master gives his servants a grand total of eight talents, the equivalent of 120 years of a laborer's wage. Kenneth Bailey (2008) suggests that our difficulty reading the Lukan parable stems from our presumption of the master's motive. His chief concern is not to generate profit but rather to test his servants' faithfulness. The nobleman's absence would no doubt have created a political vacuum; the machinations of his determined political enemies confirm this. In this climate of instability, the nobleman must determine which of his servants will remain loyal. Thus he commands them to do business with his resources,

and hence in his name, “in a situation in which” he will return. That is, they are to represent the nobleman courageously during his absence in full confidence that he will return. The master wants to know who will risk their reputation, their well-being, and possibly even their lives by associating themselves with his name (pp. 397–409).

The servants who actively traded with their money are not commended for returning a profit per se; rather, their profit is merely evidence of their courage and loyalty. Conversely, the third servant is not chastised for failing to make money, but for his cowardice and disloyalty. Although the master’s relationship with his servants is strictly speaking *fiduciary*, as the Latin root of this term (*fides*: trust, faith) suggests, he is keenly interested in whether through this opportunity they will prove trustworthy and faithful (Capon, 2002, p. 422). The image of the steward emerging from this parable is of a person who courageously invests the resources with which he has been entrusted. Such investment entails risk, although perhaps not the sort of risk we might imagine at first glance. If we believe the master to be motivated by desire for profit, then the risk involves the loss of the capital. If, however, we believe the master desires loyalty, the fate of the capital is immaterial. The real risk is to the servants’ status within society: if the nobleman’s bid for power fails, his loyal servants will soon become pariahs within whatever new power structure emerges. In short, the servants risk themselves.

To return to the question of the capital, it is nevertheless interesting to note that the first two servants enjoy astronomical returns on their investments of 1,000 percent and 500 percent respectively. Does the parable suggest that the servants have their cake *and* eat it as well? Perhaps, although the fantastic rate of return is more likely intended to draw our attention to the fact that, from start to finish, this story is about grace. Just as the servants received the gift of the *mina*, so the increase of the *mina* is likewise a gift.<sup>7</sup> The attitude and resulting actions of the failed steward are also instructive. He is clearly fearful of something, but what? If we take his words at face value, he fears the master’s retribution upon him if he loses the money.<sup>8</sup> His fear of the master, which results in a poor estimation of the master’s character, leads him to a course of action that actually betray the master’s confidence in him. If, however, we suspect that his response to the master is a mere excuse, then we must conclude that he is fearful of the master’s enemies. Regardless, his failure makes clear that stewardship

cannot be undertaken in a climate of fear. The picture of the courageous and loyal steward in this parable thus complements the image gleaned from Genesis. In both texts, the steward is mindful of the fact that he is entrusted with resources that belong to another. Whereas in Genesis the emphasis is laid on *conserving* the gift of creation, here the steward must courageously demonstrate loyalty to his master by *investing* his resources.

## **Stewards within Academe**

How can these biblical texts touching upon the nature of stewardship help us think about our vocation as Christian scholars vis-à-vis our academic disciplines and the Christian faith? More specifically, how might Christian faculty members consider the metaphor of stewardship in their work of preparing the next generation (doctoral students) for academic life? We begin by recalling the three components of stewardship suggested by the authors of *The Formation of Scholars*: generation, conservation, and transformation. In what follows, we aim to take further the CID's concepts, specifically focusing upon the ways Christian scholars might think differently about doctoral education.

### ***Generation***

To begin with, the very fact that humankind has been entrusted with the care of creation validates the scholarship of discovery, the generative component of stewardship. We can only properly care for that which we understand. Humankind is entrusted with the care of creation, but that creation belongs to God, not us. Acknowledging this can inspire the Christian scholar's discovery while bringing a profound sense of humility to the scholar's work. Our vocation as stewards also suggests that there are, or ought to be, limits to our attempt to discover the natural world. Our desire to understand must in turn be guided by a concomitant desire to care. Humankind's failure to properly steward the natural environment reflects both a lack of understanding and a lack of caring. Genesis 1–2 not only legitimates the discovery and care of the natural world but furthermore implies that humankind, with the aid of divine inspiration, is charged with shaping the created world through our cultural endeavors, not least of which is our scholarship. In short, the biblical witness suggests that our scholarship is both part of the divine mandate and in need of divine inspiration in order to succeed.

The parable of the entrusted money likewise has something to say about generation: it challenges us to invest our intellectual capital as a way to generate more resources. It is worth noting that in the parable, the servants invest resources that belong to another. Whatever benefits are gained from this investment do not accrue to the servant's account, but rather to the master's. The obedient and loyal servant is entrusted not with greater wealth but with further responsibility, that is, further resources to invest in the service of the master. Although the parable envisions astonishingly high short-term gains, the overall outlook of its investment strategy has in view the long-term development of the servant's capacity for responsibly caring for what he generates. Likewise, Christian scholars working with doctoral students are responsible for modeling and mentoring toward this idea of entrustment. This loving care for one's discipline is in grateful response to the gift of knowledge with which the servant-scholar is entrusted.

### *Conservation*

Being a steward implies that we have been given something and entrusted with its care. Thus, the divine mandate in Genesis 1:26–28 speaks to the conserving aspect of stewardship. As there is a “given-ness” to creation, so there is a given quality both to our academic disciplines and to the Christian faith. We do not create out of whole cloth, but rather preserve, repair, correct, and add to a beautiful yet unfinished tapestry. Our care and humility in this task betrays an awareness that we are handling something much bigger than ourselves. We are not Prometheus, stealing fire from the gods, mastering knowledge and tradition for our own gain. We are stewards, ourselves part of the creation that we are tasked with understanding and preserving. The image of Prometheus, once popular as a metaphor for human mastery of the natural world through science and technology (McGrath, 2000, pp. 88–89), is more akin to the perversion of the human vocation on display in Genesis 3. The aspirations of Prometheus, as well as the disobedience of Adam and Eve, offer a cautionary tale to scholars who seek to master their disciplines rather than steward them.

In principle, everything cannot be mastered. Not only is it folly to think otherwise, but it is dangerous. To do so is to think of ourselves as other than we are: as masters of what we possess by right, rather than stewards of what we are graciously entrusted. The Christian scholar must resist the impulse, prevalent within academe, to be “ordered by and to

novelty, ownership, and domination, above all else” (Griffiths, 2006, p. 78). Scholarship must rather be undertaken in an attitude of humility, in recognition of our finitude. As Alistair McGrath (2000) concludes, if we want to regain Eden, we must recognize our “creatureliness” (p. 89). Certainly we are not the first to suggest that scholarship ought to be undertaken in an attitude of humility, nor do we suggest that one must be a Christian in order to do so. Nevertheless, intellectual virtues such as humility, justice, and charity must be sustained within a community that has a deep-rooted commitment to such virtues (Schwehn, 1993, pp. 47–57; Smith, 2011, pp. 43–60). For example, the church’s embrace of humility receives inspiration from, among many sources, humankind’s divinely bestowed vocation to steward God’s creation. At its best, therefore, the church in its various and scattered iterations (including church-related colleges and universities) can provide the sort of community that fosters the virtues essential to scholarship. Stewards entrusted to care for the knowledge and resources of the disciplines must lovingly and humbly discern what should be preserved and what must be left behind or transformed. As they partner with doctoral students, faculty can model and teach the conserving function of the steward’s work.

### *Transformation*

The preceding discussion of the generative and conserving aspects of Christian scholarship is directed toward any and all scholars who view their scholarly vocation as in some sense encompassed by their larger vocation as corulers with God of creation. Our concluding reflection on the transformative dimension of Christian scholarship is especially relevant when thinking about preparing Christian doctoral students for their work in the academy. As these biblical passages encourage us to think about the transformative aspect of our scholarship, we may consider two related themes highlighted in the CID’s research: integration and scholarly community. Doctoral education must attend not only to the interrelation between teaching and research but also to the “hidden agenda” emerging from the scholarly community, which shapes the careers of young scholars. Reflection on these two themes leads us to a goal, a method by which to achieve it, and some practical examples illustrating how this task might be undertaken.

First, the goal: we should encourage Christian doctoral students to

think through the implications of both their scholarship and teaching using the resources of the Christian tradition. This goal is inspired by the understanding of stewardship emerging from Genesis 1–2. If our stewardship of creation encompasses our scholarly vocation, it is incumbent upon us to think how our scholarship and teaching might truly glorify the Creator. Believing that God’s intention is ultimately to transform creation, we do well to ask ourselves how we can transform our disciplines in a way that anticipates this ultimate transformation. What will this look like, practically speaking, for the formation of doctoral students? This question brings us to the method.

We can best encourage Christian doctoral students to think about the theological implications of their research by shaping the scholarly community to that end. For us, this method is inspired not so much from reflection upon the biblical texts as from the CID’s research and from our own experiences in doctoral education. First, students and faculty must enter that community together. Graduate faculty may find themselves ill-equipped to reflect on their own scholarship and teaching in relationship to Christian traditions. In our experience, interested faculty are learning to practice this at the same time they are attempting to lead doctoral students. Currently, institutions hiring new faculty are frequently looking for interdisciplinary scholars; doctoral programs are consequently responding in a variety of ways—encouraging doctoral students to pursue interdisciplinary research and teaching opportunities being chief among them. Christian doctoral programs could surely foster such interdisciplinarity within the scholarly community in a way that encourages serious theological reflection.

Efforts to develop such intellectual community are already in existence. At Baylor University, for example, an interdisciplinary group of doctoral students gathers monthly for discussion of key texts concerned with the relationship between Christian faith and academic life. Led by seasoned faculty members, the conversations and fellowship over a meal work to form an intellectual community, one that strives to understand knowledge as a gift, scholarship as a calling, and teaching as transformation. Named after a scholar who modeled this life, the Conyers Scholars program suggests the potential of such a community to effect transformation among young Christian scholars. This is reflected in the following comment offered by one of the program participants:

During my time as a Conyers Scholar, my understanding of the relationship between Christian faith and the life of the mind has evolved significantly. . . . Over the past two years, I have given much more specific attention to the particular motivations, attitudes, and practices that characterize the work of a faithful intellectual. . . . As a scholar-teacher in the humanities, I expect that the theoretical grounding provided by the Christian intellectual tradition may serve to inform my attitudes and practices in my intellectual pursuits within the context of the university community. The Conyers Scholars program has provided a place of discussion that has prepared me to walk the path from the theory of to the practice of Christian scholarship that is both faithful to the tradition of Christian humanism and intellectually rigorous enough to engage and rejuvenate the modern academy.

The Lilly Fellows Program in Humanities and the Arts at Valparaiso University also exemplifies this commitment to form Christian scholars, as evidenced in its stated purpose, to “nurture intellectual and spiritual virtues in young scholars at the graduate and post-doctoral level as they prepare for teaching careers in church-related institutions” (<http://www.lillyfellows.org>). For over two decades, its Postdoctoral Teaching Fellowship Program has engaged junior faculty members with questions of church-related higher education through both mentoring relationships and a weekly colloquium. Its recently established Graduate Fellows Program aims to generate this same sort of intellectual community among doctoral students.

Christian doctoral students in institutions not amenable to such a proposal would doubtless face challenges to finding such a community. Even within an institution favorable to the idea, the marshaling of resources and thoughtful attention to theological issues requires no small effort. Nevertheless, if we as scholars hope to see our disciplines transformed in a way that is consonant with our stewardship of creation, we cannot expect such change to occur without intentionality and investment.

While programs such as the Conyers Scholars and Lilly Fellows constitute an “add-on” program for students and faculty wishing to participate, the CID is anxious to point out that transforming doctoral education cannot be accomplished simply by adding more activities and training

to an already lengthy path to the degree. Rather, it makes better sense to reenvision and then to change what we are already doing (Walker et al., 2008). Baylor has made a start at a campus-wide activity, but transformation will require thoughtful integration of these conversations in already-existing activities and programs.

The attempt to transform the academy requires effort and intentionality. The parable of the entrusted money encourages us to reflect upon the potential costs and rewards of seeking to transform our disciplines in a way that anticipates God's ultimate transformation of creation. In our view, the master entrusts his servants with money not in order to reap a profit but rather to gauge his servants' faithfulness. Will they remain loyal to him when his rule is in doubt, and when such loyalty might well jeopardize their future livelihood? The parable thus poses a question to us: will we steward both our academic disciplines and the Christian faith in such a way that demonstrates our loyalty to the resurrected Lord? What might it look like to demonstrate loyalty to Christ by "investing" in the Christian tradition with which we have been entrusted? Like the servants called to risk their futures by representing their lord in a climate of uncertainty and hostility, scholars who demonstrate loyalty to the Lord within academe may find such loyalty costly. No doubt we will experience pressure to carefully wrap up the faith entrusted to us until the Lord returns, or at least until after we have received tenure. We must weigh this prudent course of action against the sort of courageous loyalty that will earn us the commendation, "Well done, good and trustworthy [servant]; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master" (Matt. 25:21 NRSV).

## Notes

1. Our treatment of the biblical material aims to be exemplary rather than definitive or exhaustive. We focus on these two passages because they portray a vision of stewardship that is germane to our own context within academe. While we have chosen not to discuss it here, the provocative parable of the dishonest steward (Luke 16:1–13) would doubtless elicit many fruitful questions as well.
2. The ongoing nature of stewardship is perhaps reflected in the specific command to be fruitful and multiply. Why should such a command be necessary, given that reproduction is what all life does naturally? The command here



perhaps emphasizes the fact that dominion over creation is an ever-growing task. As creation procreates, so must humankind in order to care for it. As the diversity and complexity of creation increases, so does the challenge of stewarding it.

3. See the discussion in Bauckham (2000, pp. 101–105). Bauckham insists, however, that the concept of stewardship must be qualified by an understanding that we exist as part of creation rather than above it.
4. The nobleman's trip to receive kingship is widely interpreted as a symbolic foreshadowing of Jesus's impending death, resurrection, ascension, and parousia: Jesus will shortly ascend to the Father, be granted kingly power, and return (Carter & Heil, 1998; Talbert, 2002, p. 208; Snodgrass, 2008, pp. 537–539).
5. Such was done successfully by Herod the Great in 40 BCE. His son, Archelaus, made a similar trip in 4 BCE but was opposed by a Judean delegation. Augustus made him ethnarch until such a time as he proved himself worthy of the title of king, which he never did. See Plummer (1901, p. 438).
6. Fitzmyer (1981) points out, however, that *en hō* is elsewhere unattested in the sense of “until” (Vol. 2, p. 1235).
7. Bailey (2008) notes that the first servant's response (“Master, your mina has made ten more!”) attributes the increase to the master's initial gift (p. 403).
8. Rohrbaugh (1993) believes the third servant to be the true hero of the parable for refusing on principle to collude with the master's elitist and exploitive desire for unjust profit (pp. 32–39). See, however, the perceptive critique of Rohrbaugh by Wohlgenut (1997).

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