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The Education That Leads to Freedom

By Darrow Miller

Recently I was reminded of a missing ingredient in the contemporary discussion of the health and development of nations. I speak of the concept of a *unified field of knowledge* that accurately encompasses the universe in all of its created reality.

A few weeks ago, our friend, Dr. Christian Overman of Worldview Matters sent me his paper, "The Missing Curriculum of God-Centered Work."ⁱ It introduced me to the Puritan concept of *Technologia*. I was surprised that despite years of study and reflection on the subject of *Life*Work and Biblical Theology of Vocation I had never come across the Puritan's concept of Technologia.

For many, the word "Puritan" evokes a modern caricature; "Puritanical" has become a disparaging term for the suppression of life's pleasures. This is unfortunate as it creates a barrier for the modern mind to take the Puritans seriously. The Puritans sought to consciously live within moral boundaries, yet in that framework they fully enjoyed life. For example, Puritans regarded alcoholic beverages as a good gift of God to be used in moderation for both health and pleasure. Christianity Today observes:

Though Christian objections to alcohol and tobacco may be called 'Puritanical' by some, these stances are actually of much more recent vintage. In fact, the Puritans drank beer. The Mayflower log book from 1620 records that one of the reasons that ship stopped at Plymouth, rather than searching for a more hospitable spot further south, was 'our victuals being much spent, especially our beere."

Why have I digressed concerning the Puritans? Because our modern understanding of them is a barrier to a whole generation of people not being able to see that it was the Puritans that provided us with the mental framework that created the most free and prosperous society the world has ever known.

The foundation for the Puritan concept of Technologia was actually laid by a Czech, the Moravian Educational Reformer, John Amos Comenius (1592-1670). Comenius was known as



the *Father of Modern Education*, of the stature of Horace Mann and John Dewey. But it was Comenius who, operating from a Biblical worldview, laid the foundations for an educational system that built a nation while Mann and Dewey, operating from deistic and atheistic worldviews, deformed the educational framework ultimately leading to the demise of our freedom and

an unraveling of our economy.

Comenius wrote the *Didactica Magna* – The Whole Art of Teaching, in which he introduced the concept of the *pansophic principle*: "everything must be taught to everyone." Comenius articulated Biblical concepts of the *unified field of knowledge* (everything must be taught) and *universal education* (to everyone).

But it was his A Reformation of Schooles in which Comenius cast the vision for Technologia.

And Praised be thou, O Lord, forever, which dost likewise give us thy works and word for a pattern, whereby to erect this Pansophy, or temple of Wisdom: that as thy word and works are true and lively representations of thee: so this, which we are about, may prove a true, and lively image of thy word and works.

Comenius is saying that "we [humans] are about" the business of erecting a "temple of Wisdom," i.e. creating culture to the glory of God. He is saying that, through His Primary Creation (His works and His Word) God has revealed himself as the Primary Creator. In studying the Creation and the Book, we may become wise. From God's word and work, human beings are to discover God's nature and the nature of reality - *VERITAS*. We are then to be about mimicking God by building our cultures (the "secondary worlds") to reflect God and his primary world. As we do so, we glorify God and fill the earth with His glory. Education is the instrument of this end.

The Puritan Vision can be expressed thus: VERITAS - The Pursuit of Truth → ENCYCLOPEDIA - The Circle of Knowledge → EUPRAXIA - The Practice of Right Living.

VERITAS - The Puritan Pursuit of Truth

The Puritans, preserving the line of faithful and orthodox Christians, have always had a passion for Truth. This pattern was established in the story of the Bereans who asked if what the Apostle Paul was saying was true (Acts 17:11). And how would they know? They searched the scriptures.

There are two sources of Truth: God's work and his word. Psalm 148 reminds us that all creation communicates about God's existence and his nature. Paul reiterates, in Romans 1:20, that all human beings can know that God exists and something about his nature through the things that he has made.

Reformers Martin Luther and John Calvin spoke of two books: God's Word - the Special Revelation comprised of scripture, and His Works - the General Revelation of Creation.

Three other reformers--Campenella, Comenius, and Alsted--spoke of three books:

- The book of revelation Special Revelation The Bible
- The book of nature General Revelation Science (a la Aristotle)
- The book of the mind Reason or Logic Philosophy (a la Plato)

Truth is found at the intersection of the books of Scripture, nature, and reason. Comenius writes of the tripartite revelation for truth: "the only true, genuine and plain way of Philosophy is to fetch all things from sense, reason and Scripture." Puritan Historian Dr. David Scott says that "Comenius went on to say that the end of scholarly endeavor is not to merely add to the wood pile of human knowledge, but to grow a living tree that from its roots to its boughs and fruit reflects the image of the words and works of its divine Creator."ⁱⁱⁱ (For more on this subject see Dr. Scott's excellent paper "A Vision of Veritas: What Christian Scholarship Can Learn from the Puritan's "Technology" for Integrating Truth ."^{iv})

William Ames (1576-1633), the French Huguenot Educational Reformer, wrote of the three books,

Thus, let us not become the slaves of anyone, but performing military service under the banner of freetruth, let us freely and courageously follow the truth Testing all things, retainingthat which is good, let Plato be a friend, let Aristotle be a friend, but even more let



When, eight years after landing in New England, the Puritan fathers established Harvard College (now Harvard University) to educate pastors and civic leaders, they enshrined VERITAS with the three books in the college's shield.

Harvard's first mission statement was explicitly Christ centered:

truth (veritas) be a friend.

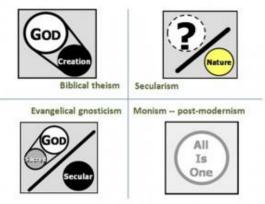
Let every student be plainly instructed, and earnestly pressed to consider well, the main end of his life and studies is, to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life, John 17.3 and therefore to lay Christ in the bottom, as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and learning.

Christ is the focus of all of life and vocation. It was this that laid the groundwork for their Christian culture and self government.

Sadly, the Western world today is no longer founded on a Biblical worldview. And only the Biblical Worldview provides a foundation for free, just, prosperous, and compassionate nations. The four dominating worldviews today are Biblical Theism, Secularism, Evangelical Gnosticism, and Monism.

In a Biblical worldview, all truth is God's truth! There is One God and one reality – created and fulfilling His design. Truth is comprehensive and integrative, a unified field of knowledge. Truth is integrated; no dichotomy exists between the sacred and the secular.

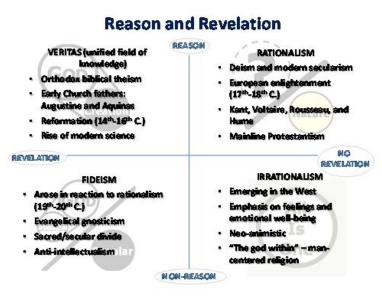
With the rise of the Enlightenment in Europe and Darwinian science in the West, the Biblical worldview



was abandoned for that of Secularism or Atheism. As the West became increasingly secularized, the general population, as well as many Christians, denied their roots in the Biblical worldview. Living in fear of Atheism, and wishing to avoid engaging with Atheism in the playing field of ideas, Christians adopted the ancient Greek Dualistic worldview as their own. This allowed a separation of the spiritual from the secular, and faith from reason, what could be called Evangelical Gnosticism. As the spiritually dead Atheistic Materialist worldview dies in the West, people are looking for a new paradigm that allows for the "spirit." Because the Sacred/Secular dichotomy of the modern Western Church does not offer a comprehensive framework to answer life's basic questions, Western culture is drifting into Neo-Paganism or postmodern Animism.

These worldviews see the relationship between reason and revelation in fundamentally different ways.

Revelation and Reason - Biblical theism acknowledges that reason and revelation from God's Word lie at the heart of Veritas. There is a unified field of knowledge that all people should come to understand. Truth is objective. Veritas is what brings freedom and economic prosperity to nations. This is the framework of orthodox Christianity. It was held by the early church, the early church fathers (Augustine and Aquinas), the Reformers (14th-16th centuries) and their Puritan successors. This led to the rise of modern science and the founding of the United States.



Reason without Revelation - Biblical theism gave way to Rationalism – reason without revelation. This was the paradigm of both Deistic Enlightenment (17th-18th century) and Modern Atheism (19th-20th century), the belief that all knowledge begins and ends with man. It was promoted by Kant, Voltaire, Rousseau, and Hume and provided the framework for the French Revolution. Darwin's theory of evolution made life without the Creator seem plausible. Reason without

revelation became the framework. Truth, morals, and beauty became relative. Mainline Protestantism was born by the adaptation of Christianity to this framework.

Revelation without Reason - As the influence of Rationalism spread and segments of the church adopted it, the majority of church leaders reacted. These wanted to remain faithful to the orthodox teaching of the church and identified themselves as Fundamentalists. But instead of defending the Biblical worldview that establishes orthodoxy, they abandoned Christianity's foundations to opt instead for the sacred-secular dichotomy of the ancient Greeks. As mentioned above, this movement may be called Evangelical Gnosticism (which began at end of the 19th century and remains today). Most Christians today regard the spiritual realm as the only thing of importance. All things secular are deemed "worldly," of inferior value to things sacred, as opposed to the biblical view which recognizes that spiritual and secular are different yet equally important. This was a move to Fideism – revelation without reason. Its fruit included anti-intellectualism and eventually an abandonment of the culture. Without VERITAS, the church became orthodox in name only.

Neither Reason nor Revelation - As we enter the 21st century, the soullessness of Rationalism is causing people to reevaluate their lives. As mainline denominations mimic the world and Evangelical Gnosticism abandons culture, a vacuum waits to be filled. The West is now turning to Irrationalism – denying both revelation and reason – for solace. Rooted in animistic worship of creation, this Neo-Paganism does not look for Truth, believing there is no such thing, but instead seeks personal well being and feeling good. God is conceived as one undivided spirit. The search is for the "god within you."

Orthodox Christianity is born from seeking Truth through God's works and His word. It has rejected the malformed:

- Fideism revelation without reason
- Rationalism reason without revelation
- Irrationalism neither revelation nor reason

The Puritans, inheritors of Christian orthodoxy, were what Dr. Leland Ryken called secular saints. They pursued Truth – VERITAS, and understood it to be comprehensive and integrative, with no separation of nature from grace, nor science from technology. They reasoned from the moral and metaphysical grand narrative of scripture.

Their technologia is not to be confused with the modern concept of technology – applied science, or technique, which separates the technical from the moral. Technology and technique deal strictly with, "Can we do it?" They raise no moral question such as, "Ought we do it?"

The word Technologia is derived from techno – "skill" or "art," and logia – "the study of." It means "the study of the theory of the integration of all the arts and science." In their usage, technologia was a Latin transliteration of a word … an applied system of relating all knowledge and its proper use in life. They provided us with our outlook on all Creation and the inner life of the spirit.

To say it a little differently, technologia is the organizing principle for a virtuous life, a life of purpose (connecting life to the advancement of the kingdom of God).

For self-governing citizens who would build a free, just, compassionate, and prosperous society ... the concept of technologia is imperative.

ENCYCLOPEDIA: Whole Education for a Whole Life

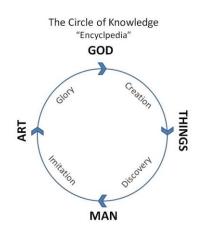
The rise of Atheism brought the death of absolute truth and morality in the West. Without an infinite and transcendent reference point, individuals became the center of the universe. Moral and metaphysical relativism form the framework for one's life and work.

This relativism manifested itself in various ways. In the realm of education, it led to specialization as the norm. Knowledge was siloed and students learned "more and more about less and less." This has led in turn to the fragmentation of life and societies.

Contrast this unhappy trajectory with the Puritan Technologia.^v This philosophy of education included not only the pursuit of *Veritas* but also posited an integrated and comprehensive understanding of knowledge, based on the reality of God's transcendence (His existence outside the universe). This second part of Technologia is the concept of *Encyclopedia - The Circle of Knowledge*. In his *Vision of Veritas*, David Scott writes: "... technologia was the skill of

harmonizing all of these resulting academic disciplines in a circle of knowledge, called "encyclopedia."*vi*

The term "encyclopedia" was first used in the 1530s to mean "course of instruction." Its literal definition is "training in a circle," i.e. the "circle" of arts and sciences. It is derived from two Greek words—*enkyklios* "circular" and *paideia* "education, child-rearing." This usage of encyclopedia has been seen as the essentials of a "liberal education."



William Ames (1576-1633), the Puritan theologian and educational reformer, wrote about the Technologia circle of knowledge: "The comprehension of **all those arts by which things** *emanate from* **the Ens Primum [First Being] and** *return again to* **him is called Encyclopedia**, whose first link of the circular chain is logic and the last theology."

The circle is bound by creation, discovery, imitation, and glory. The framework begins

with God, the Primary Creator. His creation is the primary Creation – reality.

Man, made *imago Dei*, has the ability to discover the Creator and the created order. He *discovers* through the three books: Scripture - revelation of Truth from God's word, reason, and nature. From these human beings learn about God - the Primary Creator and the primary Creation.

Then man *imitates* what he has discovered. He manifests what he has learned about God and creation through his own imagination and creative activity. In this work, man functions as a cocreator with God building from the foundations and principles He has established. Man's (secondary) creation? Culture. David Scott summarizes: "Through scholarship, humankind discovers God's design and forms this knowledge into an imitation of God's design in the disciplines of the arts and sciences."

As the secondary creator, man reveals the Primary Creator and His Creation. As man creates culture, God is *glorified* and the earth is filled with the knowledge of God. This circle of creation, discovery, imitation, and glory is the circle of knowledge. (As we shall see, the Puritans were interested not only in knowing; they understood the invisible bond between knowing and doing. Their term for this correlation between knowing and doing was *Eupraxia*.)

In John's Revelation (22:13) Christ states: "**I am the Alpha and the Omega**, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End." The Apostle Paul declares the supremacy of Christ in Colossians 1:16-18:

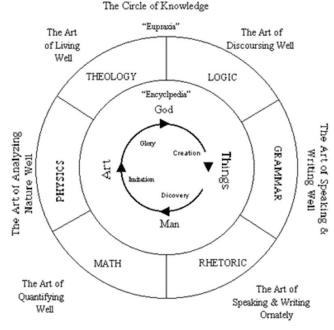
For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that **in everything he might have the supremacy.**

Christ is the center and end of encyclopedia. He created the *ontological origins* of all things, and everything will consummate in the *eschatological ends* when Christ returns and the godly fruits of man's secondary creation will glorify God.

Ames, the educational reformer, writes of the Six Arts that correspond to the circle of knowledge:

- Logic: The Art of Discoursing Well
- Grammar: The Art of Speaking and Writing Well
- Rhetoric: The Art of Speaking and Writing Ornately
- Math: The Art of Qualifying Well
- Physics: The Art of Analyzing Nature Well
- **Theology**: The Art of Living Well

In the Puritan vision, the Six Arts and the circle of knowledge were the foundation for all education and were purposed to prepare people for life and work. *Vocation is not separated from theological reflection, but founded on it.* God is on a mission and has called us to join Him. Two mandates describe our mission: the Cultural Commission (Genesis 1:26-28) given at creation, and the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) given at Christ's coronation. These provided a unified field of knowledge, the integrative principle for all education.



Technologia is a wholistic curriculum that related work to the context of worldview and first principles articulated in the scriptures. Its systematic, well-defined, and comprehensive framework helped each person *glorify God, and enjoy him forever*. It created the framework for each person to understand and pursue their own unique, God-given calling. Technologia became the moral and metaphysical "map in the mind."

EUPRAXIA: Education for Skills is Not Enough

The goal of the Puritan vision for education was the practice of *right living*.

Noah Webster (1758-1843), the father of American scholarship and education, was in the line of the Puritans and their radical Pilgrim cousins. He was a descendent of Governor William Bradford of Plymouth Colony and America's first historian. Webster's textbooks and his dictionary, Blue-Backed Speller, laid the foundation for cultivating a biblical worldview in the new nation. His 1828 Dictionary captures the language of liberty and the constitution. More than that, he preserved the biblical meanings of words as they were used in the world's first Christian constitutional republic. As a New Englander, his legacy is rooted in the Pilgrims.

Christ and the Bible were at the center of the Puritan vision for education. Accordingly, Webster makes the same connection: "Education is useless without the Bible."

America's worldview of Biblical Theism, per Webster and the Puritans, shifted to the Deism of the French Revolution (1792- 1802) partly through the influence of Horace Mann (1796-1859). This trajectory was continued by the influence of Charles Darwin (1809-1882) whose theory of evolution (1859) justified an atheist worldview, the framework that powerfully shaped modern secular education.

Horace Mann, the secularists' "Father of American Education," saw the public school as the "great equalizer," to bring "social harmony" to the community and nation. Mann separated knowledge from virtue. The Puritan vision of Eupraxia was jettisoned.

Compare that with one of the authors of the First Humanist Manifest (1933), John Dewey (1859-1952). Dewey's vision for American education was acquiring technical skills for a consumer society. He was a secularist whose goal was to remove from the public schools all references to God. People only have value as they can contribute to the common good. Dewey moved the goal post from a body of knowledge to practical skills.

Thus was the robust, practical Puritan vision of Technologia reduced to knowing things and gaining skills to participate in the global consumer economy.



Dr. Leland Ryken, Professor of English at Wheaton College, writes in his book *Worldly Saints:*

The Puritans were par excellence the people who saw God in everyday events. They wrote diaries in which they traced God's grace in their daily lives. They confidently expected to find God in "the milk-house, the stable, the barn, and the like, where God [visits] the soul."

God is the God of the ordinary as well as the extraordinary. His hand is equally evident in a field of flowers and in the grandeur of the billions of galaxies that make up the universe. For the Puritans, every act of life and work was sacred. It was the application of the *circle of knowledge* in everyday life, including one's vocation, that distinguished the Puritan approach to culture and nation building.

The forefathers of the Puritans, the European Reformers, wanted to reform all of life, as captured by their Latin motto *Reformatio Vitae*. To accomplish this they needed a comprehensive framework, what became known as Technologia.

The Reformers, as the Bible posits, saw the church as the primary agent for the transformation of society. Thus, not only the purpose, but also the structure of the church was to bring reformation to society. To disciple the culture they needed to teach *the cities* and the nations to obey all that Christ commands (Matt. 28:18-20).

Our dear friend Dr. Elizabeth Youmans, educator par excellence, writes:

Pastors were the key influencers of this era. They were the educators in the communities. They taught young boys during the week and their sermons, which often lasted several hours on Sundays, taught the adults. In the colonial era, pastors' sermons were passed through the congregation and fathers would dissect the sermon at night around the fire with his wife and children. He would re-teach the principles contained in them and help his children learn how to reason with truth and apply it to their own lives. The sermons of this era was the library of the general public. They were used mightily by God to educate several generations, who are now said to be the most literate of any generation in history. The Bible for the Calvinists was their primer of education and their political textbook.

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John Calvin, the French pastor and Reformer in Geneva, believed that the church had the primary teaching role for the entire society. The church was to help shape the conscience of the nation. They followed a threefold strategy: preaching the gospel to individuals, teaching the city, and expecting application by both individuals and society. Here we find the root of Christian internal self-government based on *Veritas* and the circle of knowledge.

Discipleship was not limited, as it often is today, to spiritual exercises – teaching believers to pray, read the Word, worship, fellowship, and evangelize. These are essential, but not sufficient for reforming a society.

Disorder in the individual or family life leads to disorder and poverty in society. A society cannot move out of poverty until minds and hearts of individuals and families are in order. Individuals were expected to take responsibility to govern their own lives and their families. Part of this self-governance related to work, thus the *Protestant Ethic-*-Work, Save, Give—that led to the economic transformation of those nations touched by the Reformation.

The Reformers in Geneva understood that the church has a teaching role in society. It is to fill the city and the earth "with the knowledge of God." Calvin and his fellow Reformers studied the scriptures to see how they applied to all areas of life. The church became the educator of the city. New converts were taught the <u>implications</u> of their new faith in all areas of life. The church has the task to contribute to the building of the city or the nation from the foundations of a Biblical worldview, and Biblical principles, to bring a moral and metaphysical vision to the nation. Pastors and civic leaders came from all over Europe to see the Geneva "laboratory" – a city experimenting with applying Biblical patterns to all of life.

It was Jesus who confronted the darkness of this world with the words: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" John 8:12. Then Christ pivots to proclaim to his followers:

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Matthew 5: 14-16

The reformers in Geneva took the words of Christ seriously. Geneva became known as "The Protestant Rome" and "The City Set on a Hill."

Geneva became a light for Europe and for what would later become the United States. The light spread from John Calvin's (1509-1564) Geneva to John Knox's (1514-1572) Scotland, to Puritan England (1660s) and finally to Puritan "New England" (1620-1680). The First Great Awakening (1734-1750) of Jonathan Edwards led to the founding of the new nation – the United States of America.



The concept of Geneva's City on the Hill came to America through the wealthy English Puritan lawyer, John Winthrop (1587/8 -1649). Winthrop was the "CEO" of the venture capital corporation Massachusetts Bay Colony (a business enterprise) and twelve-term governor of Boston. While on the ship Arabella, on his way to the new world, Winthrop preached the sermon "A Model of Charity."

For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us. So that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause him to withdraw his present help from us, we shall be a story and a by-word through the world. We shall open the mouths of enemies to speak evil of the ways of God.

David Scott wrote that Winthrop's sermon represented "a Christian model of commerce built on the radical precept of divine love. The entire text of the sermon is about business ethics, about the importance of the gospel changing the way we view how we actually live at the office."

He continues:

The Christian piety of Puritanism pervaded society to a large degree because Integrationists extended the development of their Christian mind to include its practical applications to the working occupations. A great tragedy of the current meta-physical void in the Christian worldview is the loss of this Christian understanding of work and vocation.

Today, because of this vacuum, instead of discipling our nations, the nation disciples the church. Because the church has lost the Puritan vision for education, she lacks the theological foundation for nation discipling. The modern process looks something like this: The church tries to speak relevantly to the culture and thus often adopts the language of the culture. Then she makes accommodation to the culture and ultimately is held captive by the culture.

For the church to disciple the nation, she must be rooted and grounded in Truth and the circle of knowledge. The language of scripture should be the language of discourse; theological language is to shape the mind and speech. The church, rather than accommodating culture, needs to call the nation to kingdom culture – truth, beauty, and goodness.

Noah Webster, the founder of early American education, was America's first lexicographer. Webster watched the rise of atheism in Europe, and the French revolution which sought to establish a society free <u>from</u> religion as opposed to the American concept, freedom <u>of</u> religion. He understood that a nation would be shaped by her words and that whoever defines the terms would define the nation. He understood the need for the new nation to have a dictionary based on a Biblical worldview and principle. Such a lexical reference would be a powerful influence to form or reform government, education, the arts, science, and family. So he labored from 1808, when he came to Christ, until 1828 to define the words that would build a nation specifically grounded in Biblical worldview and principle. Those today who want to learn from the Puritan vision, and/or to reform their nation around a Biblical worldview, would do well to make friends with *Webster's 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language*.

The church is to be the force for emancipating the city and the nation to live in freedom in the marketplace and the public square.

David Scott explains the importance of *Eupraxia* as applied in the market place, the arena of vocation:

Vocation functions spiritually as a kind of performance art - a participation in God's ongoing mission for creation. The human being as an artisan can follow in the footsteps of the Divine Artist. Through this circular pattern of the created order, humanity can fulfill its cultural mandate (Gen. 1:26-28) and return glory back to God.

Our good friend Dr. Christian Overman summarizes the importance of the Puritan Vision of Technologia:

Work, at its core, is an act of governance. Governance over wood, metal, cows, cotton, and carrots. Governance over sound waves, electrical currents, and wind. Governance over computer keyboards, fiber optics, and digital images. Governance over people. Governance over things. Governance over ideas.

For more on this see Dr. Overman's excellent article The Missing Curriculum of God Centered Work.^{vii}

At one time, education in the United States was rooted in Technologia. Consider Harvard's motto: *Cristo et Ecclesiae* - For Christ and the Church. Or the motto of Yale: *Urim* and *Thummim* – Light and Truth.

To restore America—to build godly nations—we need to return to the Puritans' comprehensive and Christ-centered concept of Technologia.

My thanks to Dr. Christian Overman for his introduction to the concept of Technologia, and to Gary Brumbelow, Scott Allen, and Dr. Elizabeth Youmans for their input to strengthen this article.

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ⁱ http://www.christianity.com/homeschool/11634044/

ⁱⁱ http://www.christianitytoday.com/ch/asktheexpert/jul12.html

iii David Scott, A Vision of Veritas, pg. 14/24

^{iv}http://www.leaderu.com/aip/docs/scott.html

^v http://darrowmillerandfriends.com/2012/06/21/technologia-the-most-powerful-concept-of-education-you-never-heard-of/

^{vi} http://www.leaderu.com/aip/docs/scott.html

vii http://www.crosswalk.com/family/homeschool/the-missing-curriculum-of-god-centered-work-11634044.html