



Philosophy of Education

Why have a Doulos Philosophy of Education?

"The greater the church's action in the world, the deeper the theological and spiritual wisdom needed to undergird it."

-Mark Labberton¹

"...since wisdom is the application of knowledge, you cannot be practically wise without being theoretically informed."

-J.P. Moreland²

"Educating and equipping servant leaders through Christian discipleship and expeditionary learning to impact the Dominican Republic." A mission like ours requires powerful and consistent action in the world, taken in partnership with families and the local church.ⁱ But the greater our action in the world, the deeper our "theological and spiritual WISDOM"ⁱⁱ needs to be in order to give it a sturdy foundation.

If we do not have this foundation, we will most likely face two problems: 1) we may crumble under the weight of seeking to transform very entrenched patterns of sin and corruption, because they are too big for us to tackle by ourselves, or 2) we will transform things, but in the process of doing so will lead people astray, because we were focused on some "kingdom" of our own creation, not on God's kingdom.

We need a solid, biblical foundation from which we spring into transformative action in the world. This implies a balance between contemplation and action, between 1) spending time in God's presence collectively and individually to have our hearts shaped into Christlikeness by the Spirit, and 2) together working out with "fear and trembling" what God has worked into us.ⁱⁱⁱ Contemplation and action reinforce one another, and both are formative externally (i.e., outside Doulos walls) and internally (i.e., within the Doulos community).

We cannot love and serve God if we do not first know Him.^{iv} We cannot give what we do not have, and we cannot teach what we do not know. We need both extensive personal, relational, experiential knowledge *of* God and tremendous amounts of knowledge *about* Him and His relation to us and the world, so that we can give ourselves a holistic foundation from which we can be "practically wise," powerfully applying our holistic knowledge of God and of His creation within the actual situations and circumstances we face each day.

Ultimately, God Himself is our foundation, and it is upon His revelation to us that we must rely as we think and act in the world. This Doulos Philosophy of Education is intended to condense many of the truths and principles that God has given us through His revelation in order to lay a strong foundation from which Doulos administrators, teachers, students and families can powerfully think and act in the world under the guidance of our triune God.

[Christian Discipleship]

What does it mean to be a disciple?

The word disciple comes from the Latin word *discipulus*, which means 'learner.' The word *discipulus* was the Latin translation of the Greek word *mathētēs*, which also means 'learner' or 'student.'

So a disciple is a learner, a student.

We affirm that *everyone* is a disciple. We are all observing others, learning from them how to view reality, how to think and live. Most likely we are disciples of many different people, even if we don't want to admit it. Between parents and teachers, friends and acquaintances, musicians and movie stars, authors and artists, we have all been molded and shaped in the depths of our being by the ideas, words, actions and life-habits modeled by other people.^v

But the question is: *Whom should we follow? Whom should we seek to be shaped by?*

We follow Jesus, our Lord and Savior.

In the Sermon on the Mount, "Jesus expounds the reality of *discipleship lived in the presence and power of the kingdom of God but within the everyday world.*"^{vi} This is what we long for, both for our staff and our students:

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP that grows mature followers of Christ who trust in the presence and power of God's kingdom in every aspect of day-to-day life.

Education is Discipleship

"We often speak of people not living up to their faith. But the cases in which we say this are not really cases of people behaving otherwise than they believe. They are cases in which genuine beliefs are made obvious by what people do. We always live up to our beliefs--or down to them, as the case may be. Nothing else is possible. It is the nature of belief." -Dallas Willard^{vii}

"Beliefs are the rails upon which our lives run. We almost always act according to what we really believe. It doesn't matter much what we say we believe or what we want others to think we believe. When the rubber meets the road, we act out our actual beliefs most of the time." -J.P. Moreland^{viii}

As administrators and teachers, we are always discipling our students. The direction in which we are discipling them will depend upon our own discipleship, whether to Jesus or somebody else. Since we cannot forever pretend to be something we are not, if our primary allegiance is not to Jesus but to some other person, group, or ideology that will be what we disciple our students into through both what is taught by us and “caught” from us. Only as disciples of Jesus will we be able to guide others into discipleship under Jesus.

Therefore, we have to be very careful to examine our lives before the Lord, to confess when our actual thoughts and actions do not conform to our professed beliefs, and to repent, turning away from our discipleship to anyone or anything besides Jesus, and once again coming under His yoke.^{ix} This will involve us working together under the Spirit’s guidance to have our beliefs transformed, through Biblical study, prayer, thoughtful conversations, intentional community with other Christians, and other corporate and individual spiritual disciplines.^x

We want to be, and we teach our students to be, disciples of Jesus, and therefore disciples of the one true God.

[Creator and Creation]

Creator and Creation

We serve a triune God: “there is one God who eternally exists as three distinct Persons--the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”^{xi} The Son, Jesus Christ, is the “Word” through whom and for whom all things--both visible and invisible--were created.^{xii} In Jesus “all things hold together,”^{xiii} and He “upholds the universe by the word of His power.”^{xiv}

God’s Written Word

God has revealed Himself to us through Scripture, through His creation, and in Jesus Christ. It is through Scripture that we gain an appropriate understanding of God’s creation. The Bible is God’s true, trustworthy, authoritative, written revelation for mankind and definitively shapes for us how we conceive of God, how we conceive of the creation around us and how we make ethical and moral judgements related to God and His creation.^{xv}

There is no “Neutral”

Therefore, while there is a very important place given to the direct study of Scripture in Bible classes at Doulos, these do not simply add Bible study to a “neutral” curriculum. Our curriculum cannot be seen as neutral, because we affirm that the knowledge of God is foundational to all other knowledge, and consequently, Scripture must provide us with the worldview upon which we base our philosophy for every discipline taught, as well as school brainstorming, decision-making, policy formulation, and school operations.^{xvi}

Since God's creation is sustained by Jesus, as we study any aspect of that creation^{xvii} there are no "neutral" facts or academic disciplines that offer us disconnected, unaligned knowledge apart from Him in whom it all holds together. God is independent, and every other thing that exists is dependent upon Him.^{xviii} Therefore whichever aspect of God's creation we are studying--whether it be history, science, philosophy, mathematics, or culinary arts--was created through and for Jesus and is held together by Him.

Biblical Integration

Our focus on BIBLICAL INTEGRATION flows out of this truth that there is no "neutral," because all things hold together in Christ. It might help us to clarify a bit by calling it "Biblical *Worldview* Integration," because it really refers to a way of seeing and thinking about the world through God's eyes as we grow in knowledge of Him through our relationship with Jesus Christ, our study of and meditation on His word, and our interaction with His creation.

In practice, Biblical Integration means that our staff and students are growing in their desire and ability to think and live from a Christian worldview as they are carrying out administrative responsibilities and learning about academic subjects. This makes Biblical Integration a form of discipleship, since it's learning how to think and live in a Christ-honoring way in the areas we focus on every day. For example, if a science teacher helps a student think about science in a God-glorifying way, and that influences the student to become a doctor who approaches his medical practice from a Christian worldview, then that science teacher was practicing discipleship--teaching the student how to observe all that Jesus commanded *within his daily work*.

If we are learning about the world and are not seeing God revealed, or if we are not finding ways to commune with Him and worship Him through the knowledge we are gaining, or if we have mentally separated the "natural" and "supernatural" into neat, non-overlapping compartments, we must question whether we are committed to some other worldview or faith commitment that prevents us from seeing the fullness of the Word's power as He sustains the whole of His creation.

Before we can help our students to see God's glory revealed through His creation in the subjects we are studying together, so that they can be disciples of Jesus in their study of history, science, literature, music or any other subject, we ourselves have to unlearn the ways in which we have come to see all these subjects as purely neutral or secular and learn how to think and teach the subjects from a Christian perspective. J.P. Moreland puts it this way:

"A Christian school is not a place where academic subjects are taught the same way that a secular school teaches them, the only difference being that the Christian school adds a set of Bible classes, chapel, and a behavioral code. No, the Christian school is deeply committed to teaching its subjects from a distinctively Christian point of view."^{xix}

Albert E. Greene adds the following:

“One can teach the so-called facts of algebra or chemistry or literature without even being a Christian. But one cannot teach a biblical vision of creation without having an increasingly intimate touch with God Himself in our own understanding of the creation.... The Christian teacher not only must have a good grasp of the ‘facts’ of her subject; she must also be growing in her fellowship with God in and through that subject. This is a challenge that can be met only through prayer, meditation, Bible reading, other helpful reading, and fellowship with others who are struggling with the same challenge. We cannot teach students to love God in and through the creation unless we have learned to do it ourselves.

“...The teacher...needs to be gripped by God’s Word [that is, the living Word, Jesus Christ] in the creation before trying to communicate to students the possibility of coming to know and serve God even in and through the seemingly secular subjects. That discovery will prove to be, more than anything else could, the key to effective teaching in a Christian school.”^{xx}

Created in His Image

It is through Scripture that we learn that God created humans *in His image*. As beings created in the image of our God,^{xxi} who has existed eternally as one divine essence in three distinct persons (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), we are made for unity that “images” the unity within the Trinity. We are not to be independent persons who make all of our decisions based on our own thoughts, wishes and desires, but we are RELATIONAL by nature, created to be a part of a body, a community, of interdependent people who are in turn individually and collectively dependent upon God in everything.

Mixed-economic Student Body

Because we are all made in the image of God, we affirm that every human being is of “inestimable worth, and deserves to be treated with love and respect.”^{xxii} It is based on this truth that we base our MIXED-ECONOMIC STUDENT BODY. We live in a country with a vast gulf between the wealthy and the poor, which often leads to the children of wealthy families receiving the highest quality education, while the children of the poor are left with no choice besides local public education. This situation reinforces the socioeconomic divide, and all but ensures that future leaders will come from the wealthy class. At Doulos, however, we believe that servant leaders come from different economic backgrounds, so we intentionally limit the number of full-tuition students, aiming for half of our enrollment to be for families who could not otherwise afford private education. Students coming from these families can apply and qualify for need-based scholarships. The result is a school in which students from diverse economic backgrounds form relationships

and learn alongside one another what it means to be Christian disciples who are servant leaders.

Our Intended Role in Creation: The Cultural Mandate

It is also through Scripture that we learn that God gave mankind dominion over His good creation, along with the responsibility to care for and protect it.^{xxiii} In ruling over God's creation, we are not to dominate the earth to the point of exploitation just to achieve our own ends; we are also not to simply leave the world as it is, idolizing the purely "natural" over the work of humankind. In the Christian view, people were created by God in His image to rule over His creation, working with God to exercise His dominion over the earth, and lifting His creation back to Him in praise as we develop it under His lordship. We are to be a community of stewards of the earth, developing it wisely while caring for it, so that it is treasured as much as it should be as the creation of our Lord.^{xxiv}

Outdoor Education

It is precisely this desire to treasure God's creation and teach others to do so that drives us to plan OUTDOOR EDUCATION. If our staff and students are not out spending extended time in the mountains, in the forests, by the rivers, and on the beaches in addition to the time spent studying God's creation through the subjects they encounter on campus, they will not develop a holistic understanding of and love for the earth. We want to cultivate this knowledge of and love for the wonders of God's creation--especially the multifaceted tropical beauty with which God has blessed the Dominican Republic--so that our staff and students can faithfully fulfill the Cultural Mandate: blessing and developing both the culture and the land of the DR while protecting them (and the earth as a whole) from overdevelopment and exploitation.

Creation: Sharpening Questions

Therefore, since 1) the creation is sustained by the living Word, Jesus Christ, and 2) God reveals Himself to us both through the Scriptures and His creation, when we are brainstorming, making decisions, creating policies, choosing curriculum or planning our learning expeditions, units and lessons, we should always be asking ourselves the following questions:

How can we explore the truth that this area of God's creation was originally created good?

What was God's original plan and purpose for the area of His creation upon which we are currently focusing?^{xxv}

[Fall]

Sin and Its Consequences

We sinned against God, and we have fallen.^{xxvi} Our sin has caused our separation from God^{xxvii} as well as broken and sin-scarred relationships with our fellow human

beings, and the consequences of our sin reverberate through the creation,^{xxviii} leaving us at odds with the creation we were created to develop and protect.

Because of our sin, our relationship with God is broken beyond anything we can restore on our own. Lacking union with God and cursed by sin, we cannot flourish as we were created to, and our relationships with other people are marred by pride, selfishness, hatred, apathy, lust and greed. Not being able to live in full and loving communion with God and others, we are not able to fulfill the Cultural Mandate for which we were created, and we either dominate and overdevelop the earth for some self-centered gain, or we ignore the Cultural Mandate and forego developing the earth, either seeking to “take care of” it by just leaving it as it is or idolizing the earth in its natural state. Either way, we are not fulfilling the original vocation that God gave us in Genesis.

It is because of the Fall of mankind and the resulting sinful state of separation from God that “we reject the idea of the innate goodness of human beings,”^{xxix} and we reject the possibility of creating a perfect society or bringing holistic healing to the world through any sort of human-imagined ideal. No created thing can save us.

Education Cannot Save Us

We proclaim the goodness of education as a gift from God, but education alone cannot save us from the effects of our sin. This is important to remember in a time when so many people live as if education is the road to individual fulfillment and solving the world’s problems. Sin, not lack of education, is the world’s biggest problem. Education has been affected by our sin, and until we are in right relationship with God, it will be a struggle to educate students in a God-honoring manner.

We need a Savior to redeem us and restore our relationship with God, our relationships with other people, and our relationship with creation, including how we approach education.

Fall: Sharpening Questions

Therefore, in every aspect of our work and in every study of any subject, we will encounter the effects of sin—on our relationship with God, on our relationships with other people, on our ability to fulfill the Cultural Mandate, and on the creation itself.

We must courageously and honestly encounter these painful truths, always asking,

“How has human disobedience and sin distorted God’s purpose?”^{xxx}

“How have humans deviated from God’s original intentions?”^{xxxi}

How has this distortion and deviation affected people’s ability to live as God intended in this area?

How has this distortion and deviation affected God’s creation?

[Redemption]

The Kingdom of God is At Hand

God's Son, Jesus Christ, both initiated and preached the good news of the already-but-not-yet kingdom of God--"God's saving and redemptive reign on the earth"^{xxxii}--through which God redeems human beings from their slavery to sin and death and redeems the creation from the effects of humanity's sin. Jesus offers us redemption through the cross, and believers are saved and transferred to His kingdom,^{xxxiii} where we are made new. As "new creations"^{xxxiv} we can be "transformed by the renewing of our minds,"^{xxxv} so that "our entire outlook on life is re-centered on God and re-built on His revealed truth."^{xxxvi}

Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus renews our minds and re-centers us on our triune God and His truth so that we can mature into people who can actually live out the Greatest Commandments:

"And he said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.'"

(Matthew 22:37-40 ESV)

And the Great Commission:

"And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'"

(Matthew 28:18-20 ESV)

Through the Great Commandments and the Great Commission, Jesus invites us to be a part of His redemptive work, through which He transfers people into "the kingdom of His beloved Son."^{xxxvii} As an educational institution, our part is to work alongside families and the local church in order to teach our students "to observe all that [Jesus] commanded." We want to cultivate lives planned around (and schedules arranged around) discipleship to Jesus Christ,^{xxxviii} both in our staff and students, because as a Christian school we must seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness.^{xxxix}

First Things First

We must keep the main thing the main thing. We must keep first things first. Although we are an academic institution, our primary educational goal must forever be discipleship to Jesus Christ, and that allegiance to and learning from our Lord and Savior must shape the way in which we go about every educational endeavor.

No educational goal should ever become our first priority; no educational goal can redeem and restore us. Educational goals should take their proper place as part of an overall life of discipleship to Jesus Christ. We will be tempted to drift towards prioritizing educational goals or other present needs over our relationship with Jesus Christ. Therefore, we must always bring them before Jesus to be redeemed and restored into the fullness of what they can be when built on His foundation.^{xi}

We therefore see formal education as just one important part of such a life of discipleship under Jesus Christ, so we view COLLEGE PREP as *Calling Prep*, meaning that we seek to cultivate an understanding in our students that college is not an end goal but a means or a tool to help them glorify God by growing into the vocation that fits the gifts He has given them.^{xli}

As a school, we pursue excellence in education because our God is excellent in all His ways, and we want to bring glory and honor to Him. Pursuing academic excellence is a way to worship Him by using the gifts He has given us to create beautiful work that we lift back to Him in praise. It is using our God-given intellectual faculties to both learn and communicate truths that we have learned about God and His creation. It is allowing God's truth, beauty and goodness that we encounter in what we learn to shape our character, so that we are transformed into people who are more like Jesus Christ, people through whom Jesus can work His redemption into the world. Academic excellence is growing into the Christ-centered maturity and wholeness that we were created for.

That said, academic excellence is not perfectionism or an inordinate focus on student performance. Academic excellence is not good grades or the mastery of "neutral" facts and concepts in order to be successful or self-centeredly sharpening our intelligence and ability to communicate knowledge. High student achievement is not an end in itself, because basing worth on performance is a sure path to never-ending insecurity:

"Those whose security and identity are dependent on performance can never be sure whether they have performed well enough and therefore must always work to do better, to be more attractive or successful. Thus emptiness and fear always accompany the pursuit of security through our own performance and success."^{xlii}

College Prep (i.e., "Calling Prep"), high achievement, and academic excellence are all pieces within the much larger puzzle of discipleship to Jesus Christ, and should be treated as dependent upon Christ, never allowed to steal our primary allegiance from Him. Therefore, instead of encouraging our students to build their identity on the shifting sands of performance and achievement, we seek to cultivate an identity built on the rock Himself, our Lord Jesus Christ.^{xliii}

First Servant *Followership*, Then Servant Leadership

As we seek first the kingdom of God and learn how to do what Jesus commanded, as we plan our lives around our discipleship to Him, we observe that Jesus taught His disciples that they should not “lord” their authority over one another like the Gentiles do, but that those who wished to be “great among you must be your servant (*diakonos*), and whoever would be first among you must be your bondservant (*doulos*), even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”^{xliv} In being part of Christ’s body^{xlv} as He works the redemption of the kingdom of God into the world, we must serve as our Lord serves, not “lord” over others as is routine in the “domain of darkness”.^{xlvi} This is the foundation for our emphasis on SERVANT LEADERSHIP, in which staff and students are encouraged to lead in ways that glorify God and lovingly serve others, because Jesus Christ first loved and served us.

One key thing to remember here is that we must be *servant followers* before being servant leaders. Unless we are *douloi* (“bondservants”) of Jesus Christ, we will not be transformed into people who truly can serve as Jesus serves. Unless we are following Jesus, having our hearts^{xlvii} shaped by Him and learning to do everything he commanded,^{xlviii} we will not be able to teach others to do the same. As we first become servant followers of Jesus through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, He will make sure that we are equipped to become, and to help others become, servant leaders.

In our servant leadership, we hope to use our power and authority to love God with everything we are and everything we have, and to do what is truly *best* for those under our leadership. To help us maintain our focus, we reflect on our servant leadership using the following visual:

God
before
People
before
Policy and Program

In any service we undertake, God must come first. He must be our first consideration. When we are considering how to best serve those under our leadership, we should be willing to carefully listen to their ideas, opinions and perspectives, but our final decision must be based on God. This means that we have to be in relationship with Him, always growing in our knowledge of Him, both experiential and intellectual, and we have to be immersed in a life of prayer, through which we learn how to listen to the Spirit’s guidance and are shaped into people who can carry out God’s will.

Also, any policy or program being brainstormed, planned or implemented must be God-glorifying primarily, and secondarily meant to serve and love people by doing what is best for them. We cannot place policies and programs above people simply because they are efficient or effective. We always have to value God first, and value people second as those created in His image, and any policy or program must fall into line behind our primary obligations to love God and neighbor.

Redemption: Sharpening Questions

With this view of redemption in mind, in any administrative or educational task that's before us, we must ask:

What in the surrounding culture (including our school culture) and creation needs to be celebrated and glorified, and what needs to be protested and redeemed?^{xlix}

"How can we, through Christ's work of redemption, [partially] restore...the love, righteousness, and justice that God intended for the world?"ⁱ

How can we mature into servant leaders who can lead in a way that fosters the growth of this redemption and restoration in our own vocations, in the lives of our students, in our community, and in our country?

And with specific regard to our overall curriculum and other instructional planning, as well as off-campus or extracurricular activities, we must ask:

"How can the curriculum [and/or expedition, unit, or lesson plans] lead students into a deeper understanding of, experience in, and commitment to a Christian way of life?"ⁱⁱ

How can the curriculum and other instructional planning encourage and foster Christ-centered servant leadership in the lives of our students?

[Restoration. Fulfillment. Glorification.]

We Are Redeemed To Something

We are not only redeemed *from* sin and death, but we are also redeemed *to* something. Christ's redemption justifies us before God,^{lii} transferring us to His already-but-not-yet kingdom, placing us back in right relationship with Him. Through the Spirit's power, as disciples of Christ we can once again mature into people who can live in right relationship with one another. As we are restored in our relationship with God and others, we can begin fulfill our God-given Cultural Mandate: growing as a community of wise stewards of the earth who work with God to creatively develop the earth while caring for it. This is what we're redeemed *to*.^{liii}

There's an already-but-not-yet theme to this restoration. Jesus reigns, and we are *now* being restored in Him by the Spirit to the eternal life God created us to have as a unified community from the beginning. This restoration enables us to live in right relationship with God and the people around us, to work with God to help others be likewise restored, and to grow into the Cultural Mandate--in all these ways we get to be a part of the restorative work God is doing in the world. However, neither we nor the creation will experience full restoration until Jesus returns to judge humankind, bringing the dawn of a new heavens and a new earth through the consummation of His redemptive, restorative work.^{liv}

Both the current evidence of God's restorative, sanctifying work in our lives (individually and corporately) and the confident expectation of the future fulfillment of God's promises to save His people should fill us with hope, a hope that will be made complete when we experience the glorification of our bodies in the resurrection, when "the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God."^{iv} It is for this glorification that our current restoration and our collective stewardship under God is preparing us.

While we affirm, as above, that humans are fallen and sinful and therefore cannot trust in any sort of innate human goodness or hope for a man-made "heaven on earth," the already-but-not-yet theme of God's restoration can foster in us PERSEVERANCE and COURAGE as we work alongside Christ as He grows His kingdom. Although we are being restored, we know that full restoration and fulfillment of God's promises will not happen until the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. And yet we still see current evidence of Christ's ongoing redemptive work in His bride, the Church.

Therefore, when faced with inter-staff conflict, lack of student maturity, or any of the myriad difficulties inevitable in education, we should not be surprised or have false hope of current perfection--the kingdom of the heavens is "not yet." However, we should still move forward with confidence, equipping and educating ourselves and our students through Christian discipleship, knowing that God is growing His kingdom right now as He sees fit--the kingdom of the heavens is "already." God's already-but-not-yet fulfillment of His promises gives us both the realism to combat false utopian ideals and the power and hope to move forward in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds.

And as we go out into the community and interact with the surrounding culture, we can live boldly as salt and light^{lvi} even in the face of the overwhelming brokenness of a world steeped in sin, because we are being renewed as citizens^{lvii} of God's unshakable kingdom,^{lviii} and we can trust that God can restore both people and His creation even when we cannot do so on our own strength. And even more than that, we can have an even deeper, more solid hope because we anticipate the future "putting of everything to rights,"^{lix} meaning that we can persevere in overcoming evil with good^{lx} now, trusting that we do not have to fix everything, because God will one day fulfill His promises, restoring redeemed mankind and His creation to the original glory intended for them.

Restoration. Fulfillment. Glorification: Sharpening Questions

In every level of school brainstorming, decision-making, planning or putting into action, we need to always ask ourselves the following question:

How can we cultivate in both staff and students a deep intellectual and experiential understanding of the already-but-not-yet nature of God's restoration of both redeemed humankind and redeemed creation?

How can this understanding of God's already-but-not-yet restoration help us to realistically assess the state of the world around us, without faulty hope placed in human nature or human ideals?

How can this understanding of God's already-but-not-yet restoration help us to live with hope, courage and perseverance even in the face of sin and evil, disaster and destruction, trials and hardships, perversion and corruption?^{lxix}

[A Redemptive and Restorative Revolution]

A Christ-Centered Revolution

We encourage our staff and students to be REVOLUTIONARY.

Most revolutions involve people (often violently) overthrowing the current status quo in order to institute their group's preferred vision of societal flourishing. This is usually a vision centered either on some human-generated, utopian ideal or on the charismatic leadership of an individual or group.

At Doulos, however, we want to inspire a revolution of discipleship to Jesus Christ, a revolution of seeking first--and becoming citizens of--God's kingdom, a revolution in which God is rightfully honored and loved above all else, in which neighbors are loved with a God-centered, God-generated, self-sacrificing love, in which the creation is both developed and protected like a cherished treasure, in which leaders lead through love and service, always seeking what really is best for those under their influence and authority.

This revolution is not only distinct from human-centered utopian dreams, but also contrasts with simply following God's commands externally and superficially. In both the Sermon on the Mount^{lxxii} and the Parable of the Prodigal Son,^{lxxiii} Jesus gives His listeners a picture of what it could look like to follow God's law externally while completely missing the heart that God wants behind obedience. In the Sermon on the Mount, for example, Jesus implies that the externally self-righteous feel good about themselves because they haven't murdered anyone, but what God truly desires is that they not even harbor anger toward their brothers in their hearts. In the Parable of the Prodigal Son, the Older Brother had done everything His father wanted, but his attitude regarding the Younger Brother's return demonstrates that he--just like the Younger Brother--really wanted the father's things more than he wanted the father.

We want both staff and students to love the Father Himself more than the Father's things, to have redeemed and transformed hearts from which obedience springs because the Holy Spirit is at work cultivating the fruit of the Spirit there.^{lxxiv} It is for this reason that we need to pray constantly^{lxxv} and trust that the Holy Spirit will work in profound ways, guiding students to redemption and salvation in Jesus Christ. With a revolutionary mission like ours, we cannot go about our days the same way that many schools do, as if our educational goals could all be met through excellent training, working harder and smarter, and using the best available practices. These

are all important, but our goals include making Christian disciples and servant leaders, for which certain methods can only be valuable tools in the hands of people desperate for God to work in ways that extend beyond both the tools and our best efforts to use them. We have to realize that we are not saviors, but that we are simply a Christian institution that, in cooperation with parents and the local church, has been entrusted with the task of wisely guiding students into discipleship under our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is really God's revolution, and we are invited to be a part of it. If we ever seek revolution for revolution's sake or for the sake of some created thing, we will lose our way and the revolution will be bound to fail because of human sin and limitations; if we seek God first, He will allow us to be active participants in the growth of His kingdom.

ⁱ Families and the local church have the primary responsibility for discipling children. That said, we desire to strengthen and uphold both of those God-given areas of authority in any way we can. We as a school must cooperate with families while remaining steadfastly dedicated to our Biblical vision, and we need to encourage parents to be responsive to that Biblical vision without relinquishing their own primary responsibility to love and nurture their children. We also want to supplement the discipleship efforts of the local church with an education based on discipleship, in which all subjects are approached from a Christian perspective.

ⁱⁱ Labberton, "A Mighty River or a Slippery Slope," 23.

ⁱⁱⁱ Philippians 2:12-13. Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version (ESV), copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission.

^{iv} As Oswald Chambers said, "We slander God by our very eagerness to work for Him without knowing Him," from *My Utmost for His Highest* (Uhrichsville, Oh.: Barbour Publishing, Inc.) Oct. 3.

^v Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy* (San Francisco, Ca.: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998) 271-272.

^{vi} *ESV Study Bible* note on Matthew 5:1-7:29, contributed by Michael Wilkins. Emphasis added.

^{vii} Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 307.

^{viii} Moreland, *Love Your God With All Your Mind*, 73.

^{ix} Matthew 11:25-30

^x Here are some good resources for learning more about spiritual disciplines: Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines* (San Francisco, Ca.: HarperOne, 1999); Richard Foster, *The Celebration of Discipline* (San Francisco, Ca.: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998); Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs, Co.: NavPress, 2014); James Bryan Smith, *The Apprentice Series* (Downer's Grove, Il: IVP Books).

^{xi} Matt Perman, "What is the doctrine of the Trinity," at <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-is-the-doctrine-of-the-trinity>.

^{xii} John 1, Colossians 1:16

^{xiii} Colossians 1:17

^{xiv} Hebrews 1:3

^{xv} Clouser, "Three Watersheds of Biblical Interpretation," 7-18.

Article 1 of our Doulos Statement of Faith states our belief about the Scriptures:

"The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, being given by divine inspiration, are the Word of God, and the authoritative source in all matters of faith and life."

The phrase claiming that the Scriptures are “the authoritative source in all matters of faith and life” should not be taken to mean that the Bible is an encyclopedia that gives us all the knowledge we need to know about everything, from science to history to mathematics to ethics.

There are many questions in many areas of study on which the Bible is either silent (e.g., that living organisms have cells) or only addresses the subject indirectly (e.g., whether it is wrong to throw trash on the ground).

But what the Bible does give us is an understanding of the nature of God and of His creation, so that when we are studying anything within His creation, we have to think about whatever we’re studying in a way that accords with a Christian worldview that is built upon the understanding of reality that the Bible gives us.

Therefore, although the Bible is silent on the topic of animal cells, for example, when we teach about animal cells, we will teach about them as part of God’s creation, as part of His plan, not as purely natural phenomena that came about solely by natural processes. And although the Bible does not directly tell us what to do with the garbage we produce, when we discuss the ethical and moral dilemmas that surround trash, we will discuss them from a Biblical perspective of God-given stewardship of the creation.

^{xvi} Lowell Hagan, *Second Sight: Renewing the Vision of Bellevue Christian School for the New Century* (Bellevue, Wa.: Bellevue Christian School, 2003) 99.

^{xvii} God’s *creation* includes things that are visible (governments, rocks, historical documents, animals, etc.) and things that are invisible (ethics and morality, emotions, ideas, theories, etc.).

^{xviii} Roy Clouser, “Three Watersheds of Biblical Interpretation,” 14.

^{xix} J.P. Moreland, “The Integration of Worldview and Vocation,” p. 20, at <http://www.jpmoreland.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/ACSI-Integration-of-Worldview-and-Vocation.pdf>.

^{xx} Albert E. Greene, *Reclaiming the Future of Christian Education: A Transforming Vision* (Colorado Springs, Co.: Purposeful Design Publications, 1998) 161, 163.

^{xxi} Genesis 1:26-28

^{xxii} Hagan, *Second Sight*, 101.

^{xxiii} Genesis 1:26-31, Genesis 2:15. This is sometimes called the “Cultural Mandate” or the “Creation Mandate”. See Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth* (Wheaton, Il.: Crossway Books, 2005) 47-51 and Harro Van Brummelen, “Understanding Curriculum Design” in James Braley, et al, *Foundations of Christian School Education* (Colorado Springs, Co.: Purposeful Design Publications, 2003) 188-189.

^{xxiv} Hagan, *Second Sight*, 24-26.

^{xxv} Van Brummelen, “Understanding Curriculum Design,” *Foundations of Christian School Education*, 189.

^{xxvi} Genesis 3, Romans 1-3

^{xxvii} Genesis 3, Romans 3:23

^{xxviii} Romans 8:18-25

^{xxix} Van Brummelen, “Understanding Curriculum Design,” *Foundations of Christian School Education*, 190.

^{xxx} *Ibid.*, 189.

^{xxxi} *Ibid.*, 189.

^{xxxii} Thomas Schreiner, “The Now and the Not Yet,” at http://www.theopedia.com/Thomas_Schreiner. Emphasis added.

^{xxxiii} Colossians 1:13

^{xxxiv} *Ibid.*

^{xxxv} Romans 12:1-2

^{xxxvi} Pearcey, *Total Truth*, 46.

xxxvii Colossians 1:13

xxxviii James Bryan Smith, *The Good and Beautiful Life* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2009) 214.

xxxix Matthew 6:33

xi We are not at all trying to juxtapose educational goals with discipleship. What we are trying to do is to put educational goals in their proper place—which is part of an overall life of discipleship to Jesus Christ—because if educational goals are not placed under Christ's lordship, then they are probably just idols that steal our allegiance from Him.

We think it actually weakens educational goals if we put them first or inordinately emphasize them, because they don't have a strong enough foundation to hold themselves up. If we build educational goals on the foundation of Christ, though, then we're setting ourselves up for a truly flourishing education that is stronger in the end, eternally speaking. To use one example, seeing college as vocational preparation gives academic excellence a place in God's much larger Story, instead of trying to put in on a pedestal where it doesn't belong.

xii J.P. Moreland, "The Integration of Worldview and Vocation," p. 20. Moreland writes, "...the Christian school is preparing students for Christian vocations, not jobs."

xiii Donovan Graham, *Teaching Redemptively* (Colorado Springs, Co.: Purposeful Design Publications, 2009) 96.

xiii Matthew 7:24-27

xiv Matthew 20:20-28. Greek translations from the textual footnotes on Matthew 20:26-27 in the *ESV Study Bible*.

xiv 1 Corinthians 12

xvi Colossians 1:13

xvii We must always remember that, Biblically speaking, the heart is the deepest center of our thoughts, emotions, and will.

xviii Matthew 28:16-20

xix This insight comes from Curtis Powell, Doulos Discovery School's current Student Life Coordinator (2014-2015 school year).

i V Van Brummelen, "Understanding Curriculum Design," *Foundations of Christian School Education*, 189-190.

ii Van Brummelen, "Understanding Curriculum Design," *Foundations of Christian School Education*, 190.

iii Romans 5:6-11

iii Pearcey, *Total Truth*, 47.

iv 2 Peter 3:13, Isaiah 65:17, Isaiah 66:22, Rev. 21:1

iv Romans 8:21

vi Matthew 5:13-16

vii Philippians 3:20-21

viii Hebrews 12:28

lix Various lectures by N.T. Wright, posted on the Veritas Forum (www.veritas.org) and YouTube.

ix Romans 12:21

xi Questions inspired by Van Brummelen, "Understanding Curriculum Design," *Foundations of Christian School Education*, 190.

xii Matthew 5-7

xiii Luke 15:1-2; 11-32

xiv Galatians 5:22-23

xv 1 Thessalonians 5:17