

**Christianity in the Academy:**

**Teaching at the Intersection of Faith and Learning by Harry Lee Poe.**

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**Reviewed by Johan D.Tangelder.**

In the West higher education was begun by the church with the aim to deepen one's faith, knowledge of God, and of God's creation. But with the emergence of post-modernity the university no longer holds to the ideas of universal knowledge and universal norms. In their place the university champions relativism and fragmentation. Dr. Harry Lee Poe, and Charles Colson, Professor of Faith and Culture at Union University and program director of the C.S. Lewis Foundation's Summer Institutes, notes that "while the academy lacks a unifying theory of knowledge, it also lacks a basis for character." His book reveals the disarray into which the enterprise of higher education has fallen since it lost its Christian heritage.

Although the classroom has the most strategic centre of influence in the world, many Christian academics are silent about their faith as they have been trained that faith and reason are either irreconcilable or irrelevant to each other. But Poe argues that every academic discipline is susceptible to the domination of a philosophical perspective. In fact, in the classroom all too often pagan professors demolish the faith of Christian students. Poe notes that faith does not stand opposed to knowledge and scholarship. However, it may stand in conflict with some philosophical interpretations of the nature of knowledge and reality. Everyone has a fundamental presupposition about the nature of the universe. It is therefore important to relate what one believes and what one teaches. Poe believes that we must engage the academy. To aid Christian academics he suggests a way about thinking of one's discipline from a faith perspective. For example, computer science depends on numbers and logic to reflect a reliable degree of order to the universe. This idea of order, which proceeds from the doctrine of creation, assumed that the universe is a rational place where reliable and logical calculations can be made.

Poe's work is a good introduction to the modern history and current state of Christian higher education in America. It will greatly benefit Christians engaged in the teaching profession.