

Can Christian Faith Sustain the Life of the Mind? ^[1]

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Citation:

Hughes, Richard. "Can Christian Faith Sustain the Life of the Mind?," *The Southern Baptist Educator* LXIII, no. 1 (Fall 1998): 3-8.

Abstract:

Richard Hughes proposes that Christian faith and the life of the mind need not simply co-exist in Christian institutions of higher education. Instead, church-related institutions should "use the faith commitments of their religious traditions as the foundation for academic growth and maturity." He describes how this principle works out in the four different faith traditions of the Reformed, Mennonite, Roman Catholic and Lutheran communities. According to Hughes, Reformed traditions sustain the life of the mind by "integrating faith and learning around a distinctly Christian worldview." This wholistic perspective gives students a well defined point of view. But it does so at the risk of triumphalism and distortion. The Mennonite tradition inspires humility, dissent and respect for cultural diversity, all of which encourage the life of the mind. But it can also inspire narrowness and sectarian exclusivity. The Catholic tradition is at home with human reason, the natural world and secular human culture. But on occasion this familiarity can erode the life of the mind if it replaces sincere inquiry, the search for truth and the potential to break through particularity. Finally, Lutheran teachings encourage the life of the mind by bringing the Christian point of view into dialogue with the secular world. Lutherans, however, run the risk of collapsing the tensions between these dialogue partners and promoting a form of absolutism in favor of the Kingdom of God or a brand of relativism that accepts the secular world. (LT)

Authors:

[Richard T. Hughes](#) ^[3]

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