

AUGUST 2006—*Serving God Through Study*

Why should a disciple of Jesus Christ seek to be educated about such matters as history, worldview, cultural analysis, and apologetics? Isn't this sort of study just intellectualism that has little to do with the real business of living for God in the here and now of today's world? These are questions one hears from time to time among believers.

C.S. Lewis offers some helpful perspective on both of these questions:

If all the world were Christian it might not matter if all the world were uneducated. But, as it is, a cultural life will exist outside the Church whether it exists inside or not. To be ignorant and simple now—not to be able to meet the enemies on their own ground—would be to throw down our weapons, and to betray our uneducated brethren who have, under God, no defence but us against the intellectual attacks of the heathen. Good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason, because bad philosophy needs to be answered. The cool intellect must work not only against the cool intellect on the other side, but against the muddy heathen mysticisms which deny intellect altogether. Most of all, perhaps, we need intimate knowledge of the past. Not that the past has any magic about it, but because we cannot study the future, and yet need something to set against the present, to remind us that the basic assumptions have been quite different in different periods and that much of what seems certain to the uneducated is merely temporary fashion.¹

While the study of history, worldview, cultural analysis, and apologetics *can* be an intellectual hobby far removed from the issues of daily life, it need not be so. And it will not be so if we approach it in humility as a service to God and our neighbor. Those who have the interest and ability to engage with these subjects are able to offer the fruit of their efforts to help others in the body of Christ who lack the interest, education, or bent of mind to do such study. They also enhance their ability to present God's truth in a credible, helpful way to thoughtful, questioning people who are searching for him.

Such help is sorely needed in the postmodern climate of our day. May God grant that those who are able and willing will rise to the occasion and consecrate their minds and hearts to serving him and their neighbor through understanding, articulating, defending, and living their faith in Christ in public and personal life.

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect....

1 PETER 3.15 (NIV)

¹ C.S. Lewis, "Learning in War-Time," *The Weight of Glory* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2001), p. 58.