

# Agapic Freedom and Christian Intellectual Life

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*I would love to sit with Christ and ask him what he thinks of the music of Adele, the films of Terrence Malick, or the art of Tracey Emin.*

Jeremy Begbie

*Whatever is true, honorable, just, pure, commendable, pleasing, excellent, or worthy of praise, think deeply about these things.*

Paul of Tarsus

[In Chapter 1, I used the life and teaching of Jesus to define *agape*-love as ‘self-giving to bless God and bless others, especially those who are vulnerable, as well as strangers and enemies’. Blessing others always involves self-giving, and thus self-sacrifice. There are numerous ways to bless others, of which just a partial list includes patience, forgiveness, kindness, generosity, hospitality, justice, peace-making, and gift-giving, among many others. These can be thought of as ‘fruit of the spirit’; these can also be thought of as the many hues of God’s pure *agape*-love when refracted through the prism of human relationships. In Chapter 6 I spoke of the contrast between modernity’s concept of freedom as autonomous freedom, and God’s concept of freedom as *agapic* freedom. Then I argued that human flourishing arises from *agapic* freedom, not autonomous freedom. The following selection from Chapter 7 proposes a model of flourishing intellectual life within *agapic* freedom, a model I call *agapic dianoia*.]

## ***Agapic dianoia: intellectual life within agapic freedom***

Within Christian tradition there have been both intellectual and anti-intellectual traditions. Paul’s call, cited at the top of this chapter, to ‘think deeply’ about anything that is ‘true, honorable, just, pure, commendable, pleasing, excellent, or worthy of praise,’ inherently promotes intellectual life. In all three Synoptic Gospels (Mathew, Mark, and Luke), Jesus commands his followers to ‘Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.’ The ‘heart, soul, mind, strength’ combination in Greek is a dynamic, rather than an exact, translation of the original Hebrew (Deut. 6:5), recognising that the original Hebrew meant, in effect, ‘Love God with every aspect of your being.’ For our purposes here, the important point is that the Gospels use *dianoia* rather than *noesis* in translating the Hebrew *nepshesh*. In classical Greek *dianoia* is the capacity for analytical thinking or rationally-acquired knowledge, in contrast to *noesis*, which is the capacity for knowledge by intuition or immediate apprehension. In other words, one of the ways we are to love God, according to the Gospels, is with *dianoia*—with our capacity for rational, analytical thought. These two texts,

to love God with *dianoia*, with our rational capacities, and to *logizesthe*, to think deeply, give significant place to intellectual endeavor in the life of discipleship. Moreover, these texts also place our intellectual efforts and practices squarely within the context of *agape*-love.

From this we may propose *agapic dianoia* as a model for Christian intellectual life—to think deeply, using our sharpest rational capacities, within *agapic* freedom—within an *agapic* worldview and *agapic* purpose. To add some intensity here, we may cite the title of Alister McGrath’s book *The Passionate Intellect*—a phrase McGrath uses to describe the Christian mind, ‘the intellectual capaciousness of the Christian faith and its ability to bring about a new and deeply satisfying vision of reality.’<sup>1</sup>

*Agapic* freedom includes freedom to learn as much as we can about ourselves as humanity, doing so within the freeing constraints of God’s *agape-telos* for us. These efforts to learn about ourselves include recognising humanity’s bio-psycho-social complexity, and so developing analytical tools and methodologies by which to understand this complexity. The development of human-related disciplines, ranging from biochemistry to neuroscience, psychology to sociology, anthropology to economics, history to literature, philosophy to art, as well as disciplines yet to be developed, all contribute to expanding how we understand ourselves as that species within God’s Creation known as *agape*-capable-beings-on-Earth. Of course, even within these larger fields countless sub-disciplines, with their respective methodologies and investigative cultures, have been developed, disciplines that include conflicting methodologies, deeply misguided methodologies, and methodologies that have provided significant advances in knowledge. Furthermore, understanding ourselves as fully as possible also includes discovering our sense of identity—who we are within the story of the universe, within the story of our particular bio-niche, within the story of our socio-cultural origins, within our familial story, and within the story of our own individuality. The tools in this task of identity-discovery include the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, and theology. The Theist will contend that the unity underlying these diverse methodologies lies in the teleological-physical reality to which these methodologies point, and in their ultimate origin and interpretation in God.

Pursuing intellectual life within *agapic* freedom creates a dynamic between our individual intellectual interests and God’s call to infuse our individuality with *agape*-love. That is, one’s own intellectual interests may lie in, say, chemistry, or economics, or history; the call then is to understand one’s interests within the light of *agape*-love. Here I will slightly modify the well-known words of C.S. Lewis: I believe in God’s *agape*-love as I believe that the Sun has risen not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.<sup>23</sup> This means engaging our intellectual endeavors through the modes and hues of *agape*-love. Moreover, this also means, ideally, engaging in these endeavours within a community of *agapically*-committed fellow knowledge-seekers—an ideal that constitutes *agapic* intellectual culture. Unfortunately, communities of *agapic* knowledge-seekers are rare, so Theists will most usually seek to be of *agapic* influence in their non-*agapic* knowledge-seeking communities—for instance, in a university research lab, or in a community writer’s group. Regardless of where we encounter our discoveries and learnings, when our neural abilities are functioning properly this knowledge moves us to wonder, awe, and praise of the Creator of the objects of our new knowledge. Such knowledge also helps connect us more deeply to each other, by using all these modes of knowledge-production to know and serve others. Further still, such knowledge, as *agapic dianoia*, contributes to our ability to make existential meaning—to find value and purpose, identity and hope, for our lives; but we will say more about this in the next chapter.

We naturally ask how this capacity for ‘thinking deeply’ and for knowledge has come about. To recall our earlier comments in Chapter 3, on an *agape*/probability view it is to be expected that *agape*-capable beings would develop neural capabilities to understand, to some significant extent, the world around them, because the sorts of neural capabilities needed for knowing God and knowing others in relationships of *agape*-love are also able to produce other forms of knowledge. Thus, as *agape*-capable brains emerge through evolution from proto-*agape*-capable brains, they gain ever-greater complexity, with ever-greater cognitive capacities, eventually capable of developing tools that are able to produce increasingly-sophisticated knowledge of Creation. At the same time, however, we *Homo sapiens* still possess significant epistemological limitations,

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<sup>1</sup> Alister McGrath, *The Passionate Intellect* (Downer’s Grove, IL: IVP, 2010), 12.

both cognitive and spiritual; consequently, perspectivalism—plurality of knowledge-producing methods and tools—is an essential epistemological principle.<sup>2</sup> These tools are both conceptual (such as analogy and logic) and cultural, the latter including mathematical tools (such as calculus and statistics), technical tools (such as microscopes, telescopes, and accelerators), human-investigation tools (quantitative and qualitative social science methods along with the humanities), and institutional tools (such as universities and research centres). In each case we are exercising our God-intended freedom to use our *imago*-capabilities to learn about God's wondrous Creation, including ourselves as humanity. That is, our ability to produce knowledge and 'deep ideas' is the product of human brains simply using their God-given evolutionary abilities.

*Agapic dianoia* contends that the process of intellectual endeavor includes an interplay of structure, creative freedom, character, and ethics. In terms of structure and freedom, Rookmaker comments, 'God did not give specific laws concerning the arts, nor for any other cultural element. These things belong to human "possibilities": God created them, and created and structured humanity in such a way as to discover these possibilities, and gave humanity the freedom and the task to realise and fulfill them.'<sup>3</sup> The danger, for Rookmaker, is humanity taking God's place and thereby seeing law (or 'freeing constraints') as negative, even in the arts. 'Separated from the Lawgiver, law becomes a deadly tyrant. The norm, the law intended to lead to life...can become a harsh demand, whereby man in the end is dehumanised into a thing "under the law".'<sup>4</sup> As Jeremy Begbie puts it, in terms of arts and culture, 'if we regard the orderliness of creation chiefly as a gift, it will not be seen as a cramping constraint, a straitjacket to which we yield grudgingly, but rather as a framework provided and sustained by the covenant love of God, as something that is given to stimulate rather than restrict authentic creativity.'<sup>5</sup> This includes intellectual creativity.

There is much interesting neuroscience and psychological work these days exploring the nature of creativity, ranging from the roles of imaginative play, to lucid dreaming, to team-interaction, to developing one's own creativity—not to mention figuring out the evolutionary origins of human creativity. For a brief description of creativity, Os Guinness makes the following helpful observation:

Arthur Koestler has suggested there are three types of human creativity. The first is the scientific discovery or the 'AHA!' reaction; the second is artistic creativity of the 'AH!' reaction; and the third is comic inventiveness or the 'HA! HA!' reaction. Basic to each of these is the fact that human creativity is not [like God's creativity] *ex nihilo* but the discovery of the connection between things. Each proceeds by combining truths unrelated till then, or by seeing an analogy where no one had seen it before....It is the release of this 'new' truth which unleashes a new freedom that cracks the stale forms.<sup>6</sup>

Of course, it is not just the arts but intellectual endeavour in any field that can seek to get past 'stale forms'.

In addition to structure, freedom, and creativity, the *agapic* intellectual life also involves character and morality. Michael Jones comments,

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<sup>2</sup> Sometimes perspectivalism is confused with relativism, though they are not the same. Perspectivalism simply means that there exist different perspectives on a matter, each with their own insights to offer. That there are four Gospels to describe the life of Jesus is an example of perspectivalism. Relativism, on the other hand, means that the truth or value of some belief or claim is considered relative to some standard. For instance, to claim that one of the Gospels is more important or valuable than the others would be an example of relativism—the value of the other three Gospels is relativized to that supposedly-superior Gospel. (Not that anyone makes this claim; I am simply using it to illustrate the point.)

<sup>3</sup> Hans Rookmaker, *Modern Art and the Death of a Culture* (London: IVP, 1970), 235; cited by Jeremy Begbie, *Voicing Creation's Praise: Towards a Theology of the Arts* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 129.

<sup>4</sup> Begbie, *Voicing Creation's Praise*, 129.

<sup>5</sup> Begbie, *Voicing Creation's Praise*, 211.

<sup>6</sup> Os Guinness, *The Dust of Death* (Downer's Grove, IL: IVP, 1973), 377.

Far from being two mutually exclusive compartments hermetically sealed off from each other, the intellectual life turns out to be a function of the moral life of the thinker. Apprehension of the truth can only take place when the clamoring of the passions [self-centred desire] has died down. The mind is like a window. It is transparent only when clean....We can only know what our moral lives allow us to know.<sup>7</sup>

This statement is both descriptive and prescriptive: descriptive in its implication that it is humanly unavoidable that one's moral character shapes, even governs, one's intellectual efforts; prescriptive, in its implication that moral formation is integral to any intellectual endeavor. James Sire makes a similar point from a different angle, by pointing out that all intellectuals are in love with ideas, but not all intellectuals are in love with the truth. Sire contends that, in contrast, the Christian intellectual has two passions—for truth and for holiness. 'A passion for holiness is a passion for God to remake us...A passion for holiness will therefore result in a passion not only to know the truth but to do the truth.'<sup>8</sup>

What, then, does the structure of knowledge look like within *agapic dianoia*? We can start with the state of knowledge within intellectual culture today. Over the past couple centuries, humanity's range of knowledge has grown so quickly, and become so extensive, that we have come to classify it all by large-scale categories—the mathematical and statistical sciences, the natural sciences, the human (or behavioural, or social) sciences, the humanities, and the professions. Each of these exists with their own objects of investigation, their own methodologies, and, as Jerome Kagan reminds us, their own cultures.<sup>9</sup> Then within each of these large-scale categories there exist countless disciplines and sub-disciplines, with the lines between them not always clear—in fact, often fruitfully unclear, for we have learned how important is the cross-disciplinary fertilization of ideas for producing new knowledge, as well as for the emergence of new investigative disciplines.

From an *agapic* perspective, this top-level categorization of knowledge should be slightly modified. We have earlier noted God's gift of natural freedom begins with an inherent invitation *to know God*—through Creation, through incarnation, through other people, and through God's own actions in history and in our lives. At the same time, this natural freedom also contains two other inherent divine invitations—*to know ourselves* and *to know Creation*. There is here, though, some circularity: to slightly revise John Calvin's famous assertion, to know God we need first to know ourselves, yet, to know ourselves we need to know God and God's Creation. Such circularity is, however, endemic to humanity's production of knowledge in general, so it is only by entering the circle somewhere that we can actually begin the process of discovery, learning, and knowledge-production. Indeed, this circularity has been so fruitful that, to keep it all straight, we have had to categorize the various fields of knowledge that have emerged in recent centuries. Doing so through a Theistic rather than Materialist worldview gives rise to the following slight but significant re-categorization of the macro-scale fields of knowledge: Theology (knowledge of God and general epistemology); Creation sciences (scientific knowledge of Creation, including mathematics, statistics, physics, chemistry, evolutionary biology); the human sciences; the humanities; and the professions.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> E. Michael Jones, *Degenerate Moderns: Modernity as Rationalized Sexual Misbehavior* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1993), 258; cited by James W. Sire, *Habits of the Mind: Intellectual Life as a Christian Calling* (Downer's Grove, IL: IVP, 2000), 92.

<sup>8</sup> Sire, *Habits of the Mind*, 77.

<sup>9</sup> Jerome Kagan, *The Three Cultures: Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, and the Humanities in the 21st Century—Revisiting C.P. Snow* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009).

<sup>10</sup> By 'theology' I include not only the task of understanding God through traditional rational means (such as through textual exegesis, traditions of Theistic thought, and philosophy), but also epistemology more generally, within a general 'doctrine of knowledge.' So theology as knowledge of God will also include an account of non-rational modes of knowledge of God, such as through our neural predisposition to seek transcendence and especially through personal encounter with God. Materialists will object to my move of including 'general epistemology' within 'theology'; however, an illustration of why epistemology belongs within theology is provided by agape-love itself, for, on an *agapic* interpretation of God's telos for the universe (such as in the a/p account),

Despite the helpfulness of organizing knowledge into such spheres and disciplines, there is no such thing as a neutral or objective position in these efforts, for the removal of subjectivity, and thus the achievement of either neutrality or objectivity, is humanly impossible. Consequently, we have to choose the ‘macro perspective’ through which we will approach these efforts. We see this in the words of John Henry Newman, in his classic work *The Idea of a University* (1852): ‘Admit a God, and you introduce among the subjects of your knowledge a fact encompassing, closing in upon—absorbing—every other fact conceivable. How can we investigate any part of any order of knowledge, and stop short of that which enters into every order? All true principles run over with it, all phenomena converge to it.’<sup>11</sup>

It is not only the existence of God, but the full scope of Christian thought, that impacts our intellectual efforts in the various disciplines. I will illustrate this with a couple examples, beginning with a personal story. When I was first exposed to game theory, several decades ago in my undergraduate economics classes, I had significant doubts about what I was being taught. Back in the day, game theory was hubristic—its proponents often wrote as if it should be considered the definitive method by which to study human nature. Yet this didn’t sit right with me, for a couple of its assumptions seemed dubious to me. Like classical economics generally, game theory (back then) was based on the assumption of the purely rational actor. It seemed to me, however, that this assumed a too-simplistic, and too-deterministic, view of human nature, for Christian anthropology views humanity far more complexly than this. One need only be familiar with Paul’s well-known self-observation, that ‘I do not do the good I want to do, but rather I keep doing the evil I do not want to do’ (Rom.7:19), or with Augustine’s *Confessions*, to recognise the complexities and ambiguities of human nature—that the underlying motives, feelings, and influences in human nature are too complex, too mixed and ambiguous, to agree to such a monolithic anthropology as ‘the purely rational actor,’ let alone that one theory, be it behaviourism, game theory, or whatever, will be *the* social science lens by which to understand humanity.

These intuitions of mine as a young undergraduate, arising from my Christian anthropology, have since been borne out by developments in the social sciences. In recent years some game theorists have begun to gain a more comprehensive perspective on human nature. For instance, in *The Bounds of Reason*, Herbert Gintis ‘refutes one of the guiding prejudices of contemporary game theory, [namely,] the notion that game theory is, insofar as human beings are rational, sufficient to explain all of human social existence.’<sup>12</sup> Consequently, Gintis proposes a unification of all the behavioral sciences by way of five ‘analytical tools’ as a common methodological basis for all the behavioral disciplines, with game theory as just one of these five. A parallel example is provided by Mark Lichbach, who seeks to non-reductively integrate what he sees as the three dominant modes of social science—rational choice theory (including game theory), cultural/interpretive theory, and structural/institutional theory.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to these macro-level correctives to game theory’s reductionism, an internal corrective has arisen through a recent development called ‘behavioural game theory,’ part of a wider development known as ‘behavioral economics,’ which seeks to take into account a more complex view of human nature than simply as rational actors. This more complex view includes the ways people actually make choices, including the influence of such non-rational factors as emotions, cultural values, and the innate desire for others to be treated fairly. Moreover, game theory simply breaks down in the face of genuine altruism. Once we see game

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agape-love becomes the foundational epistemological concept. For another classification of knowledge within a Theistic worldview, see Nancey Murphy and George Ellis, *On the Moral Nature of the Universe* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), Chapter Nine.

<sup>11</sup> John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*, ed. Frank M. Turner (New Haven, CN: Yale Univ. Press, 1966), cited by Sire, *Habits of the Mind*, 219.

<sup>12</sup> Herbert Gintis, *The Bounds of Reason: Game Theory and the Unification of the Behavioral Sciences*, revised ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2009), xiii. I do not mean to fully commend Gintis’ proposal, helpful as it is: Gintis is still committed to the rational actor model as the definitive social science lens, and does not believe that genuine altruism exists.

<sup>13</sup> Mark I. Lichbach, *Is Rational Choice Theory All of Social Science?* (Ann Arbor, MI: Univ. of Michigan Press, 2003)

theory for what it is, namely as an important but hardly exhaustive method for investigating human nature, then its interests and methods can prove fruitful without pushing aside other valuable resources from within the humanities and human sciences. The larger point here, however, is that my Theism, with its accompanying anthropology, intuitively pointed me in these critical directions well before they became mainstream scholarly positions.

Another example will reinforce the point. In the field of anthropology, the last decade has seen the emergence of a prominent new sub-field known as the anthropology of ethics—or, as it is often called, ‘the ethical turn in anthropology,’ launched by James Laidlaw’s landmark article ‘For an anthropology of ethics and freedom.’<sup>21xxx</sup> This has produced worthwhile explorations of the ethnography of morality in various cultural contexts, yet here is how one commentator describes this development: ‘This understanding of ethics as virtue and freedom, as proposed by Laidlaw and—with a certain variety of words and concepts—by several others, has opened up an important field of research...’<sup>22</sup> In response, the Christian will not only appreciate this development, but see significant irony in it as well, knowing that for the last 2000 years Christian thinkers have recognised that ethics involves both virtue and freedom, beginning with the New Testament, then on through the Early Church (especially the Cappadocian Fathers), through Aquinas, and on to various figures in our own era, ranging from Barth to Hauerwas. Had anthropologists been less dismissive of the intellectual value of Theism than generally they have been, such a development may well have come sooner to anthropology.

Now to shift gears a bit. I have earlier mentioned that the task of *agapic dianoia* includes attending to freeing constraints—so what might these freeing constraints look like? To pick just one of many possibilities, we may identify ‘constraint on our pride’—otherwise known as the *agape*-hue of humility. Intellectual endeavors undertaken within autonomous freedom run the same risk as all autonomous culture-production, namely producing self-glorifying culture—in this case self-glorifying intellectual culture. In academic and intellectual circles, humility is hardly considered a career-advancing quality. Humility is, though, an example of self-emptying and self-giving for the benefit of others. Humility is the attitude of emptying oneself of one’s desire for claiming more credit than reflects the actual extent of one’s contribution—or emptying oneself of the desire for recognition of even the actual extent of one’s contribution. That is, humility loves others *as justice* by giving them the credit they are due; humility loves others *as gift* by giving them more recognition than the actual extent of their contribution (for instance, to give praise and encouragement in the midst of a very difficult situation in which the other’s contribution was made). The beneficiaries of this humility then feel valued, appreciated, and encouraged to continue, or even enhance, their efforts, perhaps in ever-more creative ways.<sup>14</sup>

Intellectual humility also means recognising the limits of reason, and so a holistic understanding of ‘the brains God gave us’ means recognising both our powers of reason and the limits to these powers. The beauty of science is how much knowledge it produces; the hubris of science is the frequent failure of some of its Materialist proponents to recognise its limits (which we earlier discussed back in Chapter 2). Furthermore, neuroscience now shows us how deeply our reasoning processes are entangled with our emotional processes, quite contrary to the excessive confidence in ‘pure reason,’ supposedly without influence from emotions, that was promoted by the ‘Enlightenment’ of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and by rationalists today. In short, intellectual humility recognises the limits that exist to reason, without going too far the other way either, giving inadequate place to our rational capacities. *Agapic dianoia* values the ‘passionate intellect,’ which recognises both the remarkable abilities and the significant limitations of our intellectual capacities.

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<sup>14</sup> An interesting example of the significance of humility, from another sphere of life, is given by Jim Collins in his book *From Good to Great*. Collins studied corporations that qualify as ‘good’ and others that qualify as ‘great’ (according to a set of measurable criteria). Collins was specifically looking for the qualities of leadership that move a company from good to great (to ‘Level 5 leadership’, as he calls it), and found that the qualitative difference between leaders in good companies and leaders in great companies was ‘humility with professionalism.’ Collins discusses a range of reasons why humility has such a significant impact. See Jim Collins, *From Good to Great* (New York: HarperBusiness, 2001).

Our point here has been to consider briefly just a single example of a freeing constraint in our intellectual endeavors, in this case the freeing constraint of humility. Freeing constraints are ‘freedoms from’, but ‘freedoms from’ exist in order to enable ‘freedoms for’. These ‘freedoms for’ are the many hues of *agape*-love and human flourishing. For instance, *agapic* freedom is hopeful of healing and redemption; thus, while *agapic* freedom will produce culture that acknowledges and describes humanity’s experiences of darkness, dystopianism, and nihilistic feelings, yet *agapic* freedom will ultimately provide healing and hope. Literature professor David Jeffrey gives an example for the field of literature:

The swordplay of words has wounded us everywhere, everywhere divides us asunder...In Christian literary tradition, wherever it is found faithful to the revelation to which it is witness, the word of healing is infinitely to be preferred to its more clamorous alternative [in contemporary literary theory]...[T]he Christian literary tradition bears gratefully this confession to those ‘outside’: the pen is mightier than the sword, not because in the end it cuts more deeply (which it can), but because in the long run it has been used best by men and women of faithfulness and loving probity as an instrument of healing (which it still can be). For any theory—or practice—which would remain faithful to this witness, a preference for healing over wounding is the responsible sign.<sup>8</sup>

Jeremy Begbie makes a similar observation about the role of music. Music can of course bring much pleasure into people’s lives, yet, like any human endeavor, it can be harmful too. One need just think, for instance, of misogynistic lyrics in some popular music in recent times, or the hypersexualization of our society through music. Even in the 1930s Theodor Adorno was complaining that music had been swamped by ‘the culture industry.’ Yet music can also bring healing and hope, so Begbie asks, ‘What does it mean to be agents of healing and hope in music?’<sup>9</sup> Begbie explores ‘cross-shaped hope’ for ‘exhausted humanity’ through music:

God’s most concentrated encounter with us has been through an act of non-coercive love. This is the way the world is healed. Most of us, when we are victims of sin, send the sin back out again; we strike back or pass it on to someone else. God takes the violence of our sin into his own self. It does not get recycled. That is the kind of love that distinguishes those called to be healing agents in the world, in music no less than anywhere else.<sup>10</sup>

Healing through the imaginative creation of literature and music is just one of countless possible approaches to intellectual life within *agapic* freedom.

*Agapic* intellectual life begins with love of God, from which arises freedom to discover the beauty and marvel of God’s Creation—the physics, chemistry, and biology of Creation and the story of their emergence. It also includes the freedom as humanity to discover as much about ourselves as possible, the tools for this task being the human sciences and humanities—but doing so within the freeing constraints of *agapic* freedom. This is well-illustrated by Russell Reno, who comments on our intellectual culture today:

We need to break out of our me-centred existence if we’re to have an intellectual life. We need to feel love’s urgency, the pressing need to embrace still greater, still deeper truths. It is for this reason that love, not critique, should be the deepest pedagogical principle for any teacher who wants to encourage the intellectual life....We need a pedagogy of love, one that romances students and awakens in them the desire to know more about [for instance] Shakespeare...The intellectual life [needs to be] based on the romance of truths discovered, not errors critiqued. The intellectual life [does need] critical discipline. There’s an important place for sober reason and the pedagogy of critique. But they cannot serve as the foundation for the intellectual life. Love plays that role. We are living amid a crisis of the intellectual life. In what used to be called humanistic study, critique now dominates...[O]ur

culture as a whole adopts an ironic tone, a defence mechanism we may regret but is entirely understandable in an intellectual environment of unmasking and critique...[W]e don't encourage pedagogies of love. And perhaps we don't make love the basis of the intellectual life because we don't promote a civilization of love, instead casting our lot with a utility-focused, me-centred, therapeutic culture organized around the needs of the self....We need to recover the spirit of love if we're to renew the life of the mind.<sup>24</sup>

In effect, Reno captures the spirit of *agapic dianoia* by calling for *agapic* intellectual culture. Our freedom for such intellectual culture is God-given in part for the sheer enjoyment of discovering God's glorious Creation, and for the joy of exercising our creative capabilities; but it is given especially for the enterprise of loving God and loving others with 'all our heart, soul, mind, and strength—including with our capacities for reason. Consequently, within all disciplines and professions *agapic dianoia* will ask the following sorts of questions:

- Given limited resources, which potential investigative or creative projects should be *agapically prioritized*?
- Given potentially harmful methods of investigation or creativity, what do *agapic methods* of investigation or creativity look like?
- How are research findings or cultural products to be *agapically interpreted*?
- How should such findings or products be *agapically applied* in practice?
- How is *agapic culture* formed within any discipline or profession?
- Are truth-claims *agapically justifiable*?

This whole package constitutes the task of *agapic dianoia*—the passionate intellect applied through lives of *agapic* freedom.