Agapic Dianoia as a Model
of Christian Intellectual Life

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There is a long and well-established discussion among Christian scholars about the nature of Christian intellectual life. Periodically, one angle taken is to consider the relationship of Christian intellectual life to love. That this angle is raised is not surprising—love is, after all, at the heart of Christian faith;[1] and of all the world's belief-systems and ways-of-life, it is Christianity that most promotes love. What may be surprising, though, is that love is not considered more frequently in its relation to intellectual life. Christian scholarship conventionally connects intellectual life to the theme of *faith*—as in the ancient task of 'faith seeking understanding'. Yet, as Rodney Sawatsky points out, Christian scholarship needs to involve not only faith but also love and hope: 'We might then speak about the integration of love and learning and of hope and learning'. Sawatsky then commends the view of Parker J. Palmer, that 'love is the origin of knowledge'.[2] In effect, the Christian who does not think about their subject-matter explicitly through the lens of God's love is not thinking *Christianly* about their subject. This article undertakes, then, a task too-rarely undertaken in Christian thought—exploring the relationship between love and intellectual life.

We may begin with some historical background. From Christianity's earliest times there has been much focus on the place of reason within the Christian life. There is, for instance, the classic contrast between Tertullian (that 'Athens' [philosophy] has nothing to do with 'Jerusalem' [faith]) and Origen (with his blend of Christian faith and Neoplatonist philosophy); or the later contrast between Dominicans (with Aquinas' high view of post-Fall rationality), Franciscans (Scotus and Ockham, with their more limited assessment of humanity's inherent rational capacities), and Calvinists (with John Calvin's low view of post-Fall rationality).[3]

With the emergence of the Scientific Revolution in the 17th and 18th centuries, along with the emergence of the social sciences in the 19th and 20th centuries, Christian faith itself faced increasing challenge, even attack, yet faithful Christian intellectual life expanded to examine questions of how faith relates to these various emerging fields of knowledge. Thus arise figures such as John Henry Newman (*The Idea of a University*, 1852) and Herman Dooyeweerd (*A New Critique of Theoretical Thought,* 1935-36), seeking to explore implications of faith for these ever-broadening fields. In recent decades this enterprise—let us call it 'the disciplinary application of Christian faith'—has continued to expand. Typical of this genre are three books I have on my desk at this moment—*Christ Across the Disciplines*,[4] *Mathematics Through the Eyes of Faith*,[5] and *Christian Perspectives on Legal Thought*.[6]

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[1] Three reasons why love is at the core of Christian faith are: that God's Trinitarian essence is love; that God's love for humanity is why God became incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth (John 3:16); and, as Paul said, these three remain—faith, hope, and love, but the greatest of these is love (1 Cor.13:13).

[2] Rodney Sawatsky, 'The Virtue of Scholarly Hope', in Douglas Jacobsen and Rhonda Hustedt Jacobsen, eds., *Scholarship and Christian Faith: Enlarging the Conversation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[3] Tertullian (Carthage, Tunisia; d.220 CE); Origen (Alexandria, Egypt; d.253 CE); Thomas Aquinas (Italian, d.1274 CE); Duns Scotus (England, Cologne, d.1308); William of Ockham (England, Bavaria, d.1347); John Calvin (France, Switzerland, d.1564).

[4] Roger Lundin, ed., *Christ Across the Disciplines* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013).

Underlying these sorts of works are particular principles, expressed in various ways. In Newman's words, '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?'[7] Or, as John Webster put it, 'For the regenerate intellect there are no secular studies, because there is nothing that is not to be traced to God as its principle'.[8] Or, to cite Abraham Kuyper's famous dictum, 'There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, Mine!'[9]

Yet efforts at the disciplinary application of Christian faith occur within a larger sphere, which we could call 'Christian intellectual life', for this larger sphere includes not only the development of core Christian belief (biblical and systematic theology) and subsequent intellectual developments ('the disciplinary application of Christian faith'), but also the *collective practices* of intellectual life, whether in the Church or in academic societies and professional associations. Sometimes the latter are specifically Christian; to pick some random examples, the Society of Christian Philosophers, the Christian Sociological Association, the Society for Christian Psychology, the Society of Christian Engineers, and the Christian Medical and Dental Association. It is this larger package of the Christian intellectual life *in toto*—the realm of ideas along with the collective practices and affiliations—to which *agapic dianoia* is applicable. We will explore this first by examining *dianoia*, then examining *agape*-love, then bringing the two together.

Dianoia

Christian intellectual life can be grounded in two often-overlooked texts from the New Testament. The first is Jesus' command, found in all three Synoptic Gospels, 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 in Deut.6:5. That is, the concatenation of these four Greek words serves to convey the original Hebrew intention—'Love God with every aspect of your being'. For our purposes, though, the important point is this: that when the Gospel writers translate the Hebrew *nephesh* in Deut.6:5, they use *dianoia* rather than *noesis.* In classical Greek *noesis* is the capacity for knowledge by intuition or immediate apprehension, in contrast to *dianoia,* which is the capacity for analytical thinking or rationally-acquired knowledge. 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.

The second text, which in effect deepens the first, is Paul's comment in Philippians 4:8, 'Whatever is true, honorable, just, pure, commendable, pleasing, excellent, or worthy of praise, *tauta logizesthe*'. Most English Bibles translate *tauta logizesthe* as 'think about these things', but a more accurate translation would be 'think *deeply* about these things'. That is, Paul directs Christ-followers to think deeply, profoundly, extensively about *any matter whatsoever* that is true, honorable, just, pure, commendable, pleasing, excellent, or worthy of praise. These two texts, to love God with *dianoia,* and to think deeply, are both given to us in the imperative—in effect commanding intellectual endeavor within the life of Christian discipleship.

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[5] James Bradley & Russell Howell, *Mathematics Through the Eyes of Faith* (New York: HarperOne, 2011). This is one of several volumes in the 'Through the Eyes of Faith' Series , by the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities.

[6] Michael W. McConnell, Robert F. Cochran, Jr., and Angela C. Carmella, eds., *Christian Perspectives on Legal Thought* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001).

[7] 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.

[8] John Webster, On the Theology of the Intellectual Life', in Lundin, *Christ Across the Disciplines*, 115.

[9] From Kuyper's inaugural address at the dedication of the Free University, Amsterdam. Found in *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader*, ed. James D. Bratt (Eerdmans, 1998), 488.

Agape-Love

It is easy to think of love as an intellectually light-weight concept, as if we just intuitively know what love is. In which case there's not much point in analyzing love in any depth—when it comes to love, just do it! Indeed, this assumption (that love is a light-weight subject) is illustrated by how little attention it has received in philosophy over recent centuries, especially in the English-speaking philosophical world.[10] Yet this assumption has come at great cost, for we fail to understand a crucial element of human wellness if we fail to plumb the depths of what love is really about. So our understanding of the relationship of love to intellectual life requires that we spend time getting a deeper grasp on what love is about.

First, we need to ask what is even meant by 'love', for the word has a spectrum of meanings which need to be disambiguated. At one end of this spectrum is love as *desire*—'I love chocolate', or 'I love sex'. Here love means a desire for a particular object, which places the benefit in desire-love on *self*-benefit. In the middle of the spectrum is *attachment*-love—'I love my country', or 'I love my children'; that is, I feel deeply attached to, say, my country or my children. The emphasis here is on *mutual* benefit—because of this feeling of deep attachment, I will sacrifice myself to benefit my country or my children, yet it is also a relationship of return, for I also receive some form of benefit in return. Then, at the other end of the spectrum, is *altruistic* love, whereby I sacrifice something of myself for the benefit of another or others, without expectation of any benefit in return. Note how altruism-love, which is solely for *other*-benefit, and desire-love, which is solely for *self*-benefit, are exact opposites! So when we speak of love in any context, it is critical to specify the type of love meant, otherwise confusion and wrong implications are inevitable.

For purposes of Christian intellectual life, our concern is specifically with what the New Testament means by love. There were a number of Greek words for love available to the New Testament writers, but their foundational choice was *agape*. What then is meant by *agape*-love? We learn what constitutes *agape*-love through the life and teaching of Jesus, whereby Jesus gave himself self-sacrificially for the blessing of God and the blessing of others. In the latter case, his self-giving was usually for strangers (like the ten lepers or the Samaritan woman) as well as for enemies, with no expectation of benefit in return. In effect, the life and teaching of Jesus allows us to distill the following definition of *agape*-love, which differentiates *agape*-love from all other loves: *self-giving actions and relationships for the blessing of God and for the blessing of others, especially those who are vulnerable, oppressed, strangers, and enemies.*[11]

In effect, *agape*-love amounts to a more specific form of altruism-love—more specific in terms of the source, the goal, and the recipients. In terms of its source, *agape*-love ultimately derives from God, through God's own *Trinitarian essence* as *agape*-love, as well as through God's *design and creation* of the physics and chemistry of the universe to produce *agape*-capable beings.[12] In terms of recipients, *agape*-love is directed to friends, family, strangers, and enemies. But *agape*-love extends beyond to God's creation and, especially, to God as the creator and redeemer of all.

What, then, is the goal or objective of *agape*-love? *Agape*-love first seeks to bless God and others through *reconciliation*. Humanity's greatest problem is alienation—from God, from others, from creation, and from self. The foundational form of *agape*-love is that which seeks to overcome or heal alienation, beginning with our alienation from God, then extending to all other forms of human alienation. The process of reconciliation includes naming the truth of a particular alienated or unreconciled situation (at both individual and group

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[10] There are recent exceptions worth noting, such as: Irving Singer's various works (see *Philosophy of Love: A Partial Summing Up* [Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2011]); Harry G. Fankfurt, *The Reasons of Love* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2006); Martha Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature* (NY: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992). Continental European philosophy has tended to give love more attention than Anglo-American philosophy. Of course, much has also been published on love in the field of psychology.

[11] For a more comprehensive account of this definition of *agape*-love, see Chapters 4 and 5 of Barrigar, *Freedom All the Way Up*.

[12] See Christian J. Barrigar, 'God's *Agape*/Probability Design for the Universe', in *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* (Sept., 2018):161-175.

levels), extending forgiveness (foregoing the desire for revenge), then taking steps to restoration of a reconciled, reintegrated condition or relationship. In effect, *agape*-love is first about re-establishing and maintaining relationships of reconciliation at all levels of human existence—individual or group (on any scale), near or far. But then it is also about blessing and benefitting others, in their needs and in their joys, just for the blessing and benefit itself, regardless of whether related to reconciliation.

Furthermore, *agape*-love means that we direct these efforts not just to those who are close to us (our in-group), but even to strangers (out-groupers) as well as our enemies (those who seek to diminish us or destroy us). In effect, unlike desire-love or attachment-love, *agape*-love is not based on feelings about the other. Rather, *agape*-love is dependent on valuation—some basis external to my feelings on which I value the other as worthy of my self-sacrificial action to bless them. For *agape*-love, this valuation is based on recognising the other (or others) as a child of God, of equal status to me in the eyes of God, even if they are socio-economically 'higher' or 'lower' than me, or a stranger to me, or even my enemy.

I suggest there are two routes to reconciliation. One route is through *justice,* at two levels*.* The first level, which I call a 'first-order' account of justice, is justice as described by scripture, namely, *care for, protection of, and advocacy for, those who are vulnerable or oppressed*. The classical biblical examples of vulnerable peoples are the poor, widows, orphans, and 'aliens' (refugees)—though of course these are hardly the only vulnerable sorts of peoples in need of care, protection, and advocacy. Reconciliation in such cases begins with first-order justice—the reversal of their vulnerable conditions through sacrificial care, protection, advocacy, and even friendship. Then there is what I call a 'second-order' account of justice—that is, a philosophically-grounded account of justice, namely, *giving others their due by virtue of some sort of normative social relationships* (whether legal, conventional, familial, whatever). Either way, one route to reconciliation is justice, which always involves some degree of self-sacrifice.

The other route to reconciliation is *gifting.* These are those actions or items we give one another beyond justice, beyond our obligations or what we owe to another. The purpose of gifting can be multifold—for instance, to signal a particular relational interest, or to strengthen an existing relational bond, or, most altruistically, simply to bring the other benefit or joy without expectation of benefit in return. Gifting can build towards reconciliation by the other recognising the relational-healing intention and self-sacrificial effort behind the act of giving. Of course, the gift then has to be accepted, perhaps even reciprocated, for the reconciliation process to succeed as fully as possible. As with justice, gifting always involves some degree of self-sacrifice.

Crucially*, agape*-love, whether through justice or through gifting, always involves *cost*, precisely because self-giving always involves self-sacrifice of some sort, such as one's time, money, status, or physical safety. Moreover, in the act or gesture of giving we risk rejection, for the other might chose to reject our self-giving gesture. In effect, an attempt at reconciliation may be rejected, a gift might be rejected, an effort at achieving justice for another might fail. Consequently, *agape*-love always involves the risk of pain when the objective is not achieved, or the effort is rejected. The risk, the cost and pain, may just be within a single individual, or it may be felt by a whole group. Clearly, where the risk has not succeeded, and pain has resulted, the need for reconciliation remains.

We will connect all this to our intellectual life shortly; for now, however, there are some further elements that need to be added to our understanding of *agape*-love, specifically truth, freedom, and individuality. Our account of the Christian intellectual life requires patient attention to these three further themes; then we will be in a place to address the nature of *agapic dianoia* as a model of Christian intellectual life.

Truth, Freedom, and Constraints

A constituent element *of agape*-love is truth. A Christian account of truth begins with John's record of Jesus' words, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life'. Truth is usually considered a property of propositions (linguistic or mathematical), so to identify truth as a property of a person will seem odd, even misconceived, to many. The common denominator, however, is reliability or trustworthiness. Part of the relational love inherent in the

Trinity is complete trustworthiness between the persons of the Trinity, and consequently that God's character is trustworthy. From this, God's act of creation through the *Logos* has resulted in a trustworthy or reliable creation, with sufficient regularities, laws, and probabilities that the world and the universe can be *known*, including by both observation and reliable (probabilistic) predictions.[13]

An *agape*-based account of truth holds that 'All truth is God's truth', wherever it may come from, while also recognising humanity's epistemological limitations (through our cognitive, moral, and spiritual limitations). Consequently, within current epistemological debates *agape*-love supports a broadly 'critical realist' account of knowledge, thereby accepting perspectivalism while refuting relativist or nihilist foundations to truth.[14]

The reliability of creation also includes the reliability of communication, in particular the ability of *language* to be a reliable, trustworthy, and thus truth-bearing means of communication. To say, 'I love you', 'Smoking increases your chances of developing lung cancer', or '$E=MC^2$' is to utter propositions which are true—that is, reliable or trustworthy within their relevant context, to a relevant level of precision. Equally reliable and truth-bearing are figurative, poetic, and narrative forms of speech.[15]

Another fundamental aspect of *agapic* communication is *listening*. The person who imposes, consciously or unconsciously, one's own assumptions on another, and dominates a relationship verbally, as if from a position of superior knowledge or social status, is unable to hear the actual concerns and desires of the other(s). As James 1:19 reminds us, rather than being quick to speak (or quick to make assumptions), *agape*-love takes time *to listen* to the other, to their story, and to their hopes, joys, needs, concerns, and fears. This is a critical element in avoiding the far-too-common problem of responding to the needs of others in ways that may be well-motivated yet which misunderstands the other's actual needs and desires, thereby causing more harm than good to the other.[16]

The wider context in which *agape*-love occurs is the *freedom* which God has given us as humanity, within which we exercise *agape*-love. Here we may identify two contrasting forms of freedom—*autonomous* freedom and *agapic* freedom. Since the so-called Enlightenment, the fundamental social value in Western society has been autonomous freedom. The term 'autonomy' comes to us through Jean-Jacques Rousseau (d.1778) and Emmanuel Kant (d.1804), though the general idea was around well before them. At its heart, autonomy is the idea of personal self-rule or self-governance. From the perspective of autonomy, 'The highest form of activity

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[13] This Christian understanding of God (that God, as seen through the second person of the Trinity, the *Logos*, is both rational and knowable, and so likewise Creation, though not itself divine, reflects these divine properties (of being rational and knowable), and so itself is knowable and subject to reason, and further that detailed knowledge of Creation gives glory to its Creator) was an important contributing component to the rise of the Scientific Revolution in the 16th and 17th centuries. For fuller accounts of the theological underpinnings to the Scientific Revolution, see the writings of Stanley Jaki, John Hedley Brooke, and Peter Harrison.

[14] 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 valid 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 particular claim; I am simply using it to illustrate the point.) Moreover, there is an important distinction between local relativism and foundational relativism. An *agape*-love account of truth has no problem with local relativism (to say 'My car is big enough' is relative to the purpose for which one wants to use the car); rather, it is relativism as a foundational account of truth which *agape*-love refutes.

[15] Some people view figurative language as an inferior truth-bearer to literal language, but this fails to understand that figurative language is just as truth-bearing as literal language; figurative language conveys truth in a different linguistic mode than literal language, thereby enabling different aspects of a truth to be perceived. In effect, discerning literal and figurative intentions is an important linguistic skill, as seen in Mt.16 where Jesus criticises his disciples for taking his words literally (with regard to the yeast of the Pharisees), when he intended his words to be understood figuratively.

[16] For an example of this, see Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert, *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor…and Yourself* (Chicago: Moody, 2014).

of which human beings are capable, both collectively and individually, is free, self-determining activity'.[17] John Locke (d.1704) saw such self-rule as a matter of individual freedom from coercion or interference, thus producing freedom for liberty or opportunity, though with the constraint that we allow similar freedom to others. In Locke we see the perpetual two-sides of freedom—freedom from and freedom for. John Stuart Mill (d.1873) refined the 'freedom for' aspect as freedom for choice, to choose one's preferences, from which the notion of 'preferences' would enter economic discourse. Philosopher John Rist contends that, thanks to Mill, choice, and derivatively rights, 'is seen as the Supreme Good'—choice becomes 'the identifying mark and essential functioning of modernity'.[18]

In contrast to autonomous freedom stands *agapic* freedom, and our entry into *agapic* freedom is through the life and ministry of Emmanuel, God-with-us in Jesus the Nazarene. Jesus' overarching vision was for 'the kingdom of God', within which freedom served an important supporting role. We see this particularly in the Nazareth synagogue, at the launch-event for his public ministry, when Jesus read out Isaiah 61 from the temple scroll:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me

to preach good news to the poor;

he has sent me to proclaim to prisoners—freedom,

to proclaim to the blind—recovery of sight;

to send forth the oppressed—in freedom;

to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. (Luke 4:18-19)[19]

Freedom from unjust imprisonment; freedom from physical disability; freedom from oppression. In effect, when Jesus launched his ministry 'freedom from' was at the centre of what his ministry would be about. Yet these were only made possible by Jesus' vision of 'freedom for'—freedom for *agape*-love of God and of others, along with freedom for being part of God's global movement for *agape*-love. This then is the foundation of *agapic* freedom—the life of self-emptying, self-constraining, and self-giving for God, family, friends, and neighbors; the latter (neighbors) includes people we are naturally inclined to disvalue, but whom God values just as much as everyone else, including vulnerables, oppresseds, strangers, and enemies, near and far. From this perspective, the flourishing and well-lived life begins not with autonomous freedom but rather with *agapic* freedom.

The inherent fear of Autonomists (proponents of autonomous freedom) will be that *agapic* freedom gives insufficient space for individuality—that the needs, desires, interests, and self-expressions of the individual will be erased in *agape's* overwhelming sense of self-emptying and self-giving to others. But God has not created us to be *agape*-robots, nor does God intend *agapic* freedom as an ascetic extremism that denies or erases the individual's interests and preferences. Rather, *agape*-love affirms-yet-reshapes the *imago*-individuality of each person—that is, their selfhood, interests, talents, hopes, and self-expression as these reflect being created in God's image. In effect, *agapic* freedom is not simply a space like autonomous freedom in which the elements of our individuality are unconditionally affirmed; rather, *agapic* freedom is that form of life in which we seek to shape our *imago*-individuality through a life of *agape*-love towards God and others. Consequently, the life of *agapic* freedom must be consciously chosen.

This process (of *agapic* freedom shaping our *imago*-individuality) involves recognising the critical importance of *freeing constraints*—that we as humanity flourish when we do not get all our preferred choices, but constrain ours desires and actions for the well-being of ourselves and others. *Agapic* freedom says that just because some action feels good in the moment does not necessarily mean it is beneficial, either individually or

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[17] Jeff Noonan, *Materialist Ethics and Life-Value* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012), 184.

[18] John Rist, *Real Ethics: Rethinking the Foundations of Modernity* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 188.

[19] This translation by Kenneth Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes* (Downer's Grove, IL: IVP, 2008), Chapter 12. See Bailey for a very insightful discussion of how Jesus actually changes the wording of Isaiah 61 as he read it out. (These changes focused on eliminating the celebration of revenge on one's enemies in Isaiah 61.)

collectively; all actions need to be examined for their potential harm. Autonomous freedom tends to affirm, uncritically, the desires of the more anciently evolved, instinctual parts of our brains, whereas *agapic* freedom recognises that we have a responsibility to exercise the more recently-evolved parts of our brains—the pre-frontal cortex, as the conscious 'executive control centre' of our brains—to look for potential harms to ourselves or others, and to exercise self-control to avoid such harms. Such constraints actually free us for greater flourishing, even if they go against Western culture's default valuation of autonomous freedom.

So there is a dynamic between *imago*-individuality, on the one hand, and a life committed to self-giving *agape*-love towards God and others, on the other. This dynamic cannot, however, be defined by some sort of *agape*-algorithm, as if we can provide a numerical plus/minus rating on how well we are achieving an overall balance between our individuality and our *agape*-love. Indeed, balance is not even the right metaphor here. Rather, God's call to *agapic* freedom invites us into a life-long journey of continuously learning to shape and re-shape our *imago*-based selfhood and individuality through self-emptying and self-giving love, as well as through receiving *agape*-love back. As moral theologian Oliver O'Donovan has put it, God's creation and love 'is not about absorption of individuality into a unique transcendent self-consciousness; it is about the full realization of individuality in a commonness of sharing and reciprocation'.[20]

Agapic Dianoia

We are now able to bring *agape*-love and *dianoia* together to propose *agapic dianoia* as a model for Christian intellectual life—to think deeply using our sharpest rational, analytical capacities within our *agapic* freedom for God's *agapic* purposes. 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'.[21]

Agapic dianoia includes the freedom to explore and learn as much truth as we can about God's creation—our world and the universe, from subatomic to cosmological scales—within the freeing constraints of God's *agape-telos* for us. The scope of such exploration includes learning as much as we can about ourselves as humanity, in all our 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 within God's Creation. 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 (planet), 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.

In effect, perspectivalism—plurality of knowledge-producing methods and tools—is an essential epistemological principle, simply because we *Homo sapiens* possess significant epistemological limitations (cognitive, moral, and spiritual). These methods and tools are both conceptual (such as analogy and logic) and cultural, 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, research centres, community groups). In each case we are exercising our God-intended freedom to use our *imago*-capabilities to learn about God's

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[20] Oliver O'Donovan, *Resurrection and Moral Order*, Second Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 231.
[21] Alister McGrath, *The Passionate Intellect* (Downer's Grove, IL: IVP, 2010), 12.

wondrous Creation, including ourselves as humanity. 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.

Here we come to the earlier-mentioned theme of the dynamic between our *imago*-individuality 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, or literature, or any other field; 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.[23] This means engaging our intellectual endeavors through the modes of *agape*-love—of reconciliation through justice and gifting.

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. An example of this may be seen in the mission statement of the Christian Engineering Society:

> Christian Engineers are engineers who are also Christians (as described by the Apostle's Creed), people who are committed followers of Jesus Christ. Our faith helps inform the choices we make as engineers, particularly questions related to purpose and priorities. We find God's calling in our lives in all its aspects, personal and professional. We are interested in applying Biblical principles such as justice and stewardship to our professional lives and to the design of technology. God's special concern for the poor and disadvantaged touches our hearts so that we look for opportunities to use our skills as engineers in ways that build God's Kingdom. However, Christian engineering is not just about technology for the poor. We see all technological development as part of our stewardship and unfolding of the creation, a powerful tool that we must take care to use appropriately.[22]

Another example can be seen in collaborative research projects. One such example is the volume I mentioned earlier in this essay, *Christian Perspectives on Legal Thought*. In the Foreword, Harold J. Berman, late professor of law at Emory and Harvard, comments 'This volume brings together for the first time a wide variety of Roman Catholic and Protestant perspectives presented by almost thirty avowedly Christian law teachers, some of whom have not previously acknowledged Christian influences on their scholarship'.[23] Berman later comments that, 'from a Christian perspective, the purpose of…property law, criminal law, family law, tort law, and other branches of law is to create conditions in which the sacrificial love of God and of neighbor, the kind of love personified in Jesus Christ, can take root in society and grow'.[24]

From the perspective of secularized Western societies, Berman's comment here seem a stretch—since each branch of law serves the complex legal needs of contemporary secular societies it is simply anachronistic of Berman to propose such an explicitly Christian interpretation of each branch. As well, from the perspective of societies dominated by other worldviews (say Buddhism or Daoism in some Asian countries), a parallel critique of Berman's Christian perspective on law arises for their contexts. And yet Berman's *agapic*-centric perspective is an example of the radical, anachronistic-seeming call of Christ's *agape*-love to infuse and transform every aspect of human existence, including law in all its sub-branches.

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, knowledge not only provides truth, but also 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 others, by using all these modes

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[22] See http://www.christianengineering.org/home/about.

[23] Berman, 'Foreword', in McConnell, *et al*, eds., *Christian Perspectives on Legal Thought*, xii.

[24] Berman, 'Foreword', in McConnell, *et al*, eds., *Christian Perspectives on Legal Thought*, xiii.

of knowledge-production to know and serve others. Further still, such knowledge contributes to our ability to make existential meaning—to find value and purpose, identity and hope, for our lives.

Freedoms 'for' within *agapic dianoia*

Humanity pursues its intellectual endeavors for all sorts of reasons. One reason is simply for the feeling of reward. The brain's reward circuits seem to interlace with the brain's knowledge-acquisition circuits, so many people find much joy and awe in the process of seeking and acquiring knowledge about whatever particular subjects interest them. Another reason people pursue intellectual endeavors is for a vocation—for the joy of acquiring knowledge can, in the right circumstances, provide a long and fruitful career. A further reason is for acquiring power within particular contexts—as the old adage goes, knowledge is power. *Agapic dioanoia* is not inherently opposed to any of these, but re-shapes them, whether mildly or dramatically, within its own freedoms 'for' of reconciliation, justice, and gifting.

This brings us again to the theme of *imago*-individuality. As indicated earlier, the inherent fear of Autonomists will be that *agapic* freedom gives insufficient space for individuality. But this would be to misinterpret the role of *agape*-love, which is not to eliminate individuality. Rather, *agape*-love affirms-yet-reshapes the *imago*-individuality of each person's selfhood, interests, talents, hopes, and self-expression. That is, *agapic* freedom is not simply a space, like autonomous freedom, in which all elements of our individuality are unconditionally affirmed; rather, *agapic* freedom is that form of life in which we seek to shape our *imago*-individuality through a life of *agape*-love towards God and others. Consequently, the life of *agapic* freedom must be consciously chosen.

For instance, within the scope of reconciliation, *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.[25]

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 society today 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?' To answer this, 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

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[25] David Lyle Jeffrey, *People of the Book: Christian Identity and Literary Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 381.

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.[26]

The gift of healing, such as through the imaginative creation of literature and music, is just one of countless possible approaches to intellectual life within *agapic* freedom.

Freedom, Structure, and Creativity

The 'freedoms for' of *agapic dianoia*, like all endeavors within *agapic* freedom, includes the presence of freeing constraints—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'.[27] 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''.[28] As 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'.[29] 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.[30]

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

What then of the structure of knowledge itself within *agapic dianoia?* 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 formal sciences (mathematics, statistics, logic), the natural sciences, the human sciences, the humanities, and the professions. Each of these exists with its own objects of investigation,

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[26] Jeremy S. Begbie, *Resounding Truth: Christian Wisdom in the World of Music* (Grand Rapids, IL: Baker, 2007), 262.

[27] 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.

[28] Jeremy S. Begbie, *Voicing Creation's Praise: Towards a Theology of the Arts* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1981), 128-29; after the ellipsis, 129.

[29] Begbie, *Voicing Creation's Praise*, 211.

[30] Os Guinness, *The Dust of Death* (Downer's Grove, IL: IVP, 1973), 377.

their own methodologies, and, as Jerome Kagan reminds us, their own cultures.[31] 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, the traditional top-level categorization of knowledge gives rise to the following slight but significant re-categorization: Theology (knowledge of God and, subsequently, general epistemology); the formal sciences; the creation sciences (scientific knowledge of Creation, including physics, chemistry, evolutionary biology); the human sciences; the humanities; and the professions.[32]

Character and Holiness

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

> 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.[33]

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'.[34]

Let me move to another sort of example of the interplay of Christian faith and intellectual life. I have earlier mentioned that the task of *agapic dianoia* includes attending to freeing constraints—so we need to examine what these freeing constraints look like. To pick just one of many possibilities, we may identify 'constraint on our pride'—otherwise known as the virtue 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 important biblical example of *agapic* self-emptying and self-giving for the benefit of others.

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[31] 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).

[32] 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 and account 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, *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.

[33] 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.

[34] Sire, *Habits of the Mind,* 77.

Humility is the particular 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.[35]

Intellectual humility also means recognising the limits of reason, and so a holistic understanding of our cognitive capacities 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. 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, which was promoted by the 'Enlightenment' of the 17th and 18th centuries and by rationalists today. In short, intellectual humility recognises the limits that exist to reason, without going too far the other way either, of 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.

Thinking Deeply: Two Examples

We have earlier commented that *agapic* dianoia results in 'thinking deeply'. This essay on *agapic* intellectual life is itself, of course, an attempt at thinking deeply. But I will illustrate thinking deeply from a Christian perspective with two further 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,

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[35] 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).

insofar as human beings are rational, sufficient to explain all of human social existence'.[36] 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.[37]

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 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 Christian 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'.[38] 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…'.[39] 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.

Conclusion: The Scope of *Agapic Dianoia*

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, biology and structures 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

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[36] 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.

[37] Mark I. Lichbach, *Is Rational Choice Theory All of Social Science?* (Ann Arbor, MI: Univ. of Michigan Press, 2003

[38] This article has since been expanded into James Laidlaw, *The Subject of Virtue: An Anthropology of Ethics and Freedom* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2014).

[39] Didier Fassin, 'The Ethical Turn in Anthropology: Promises and Uncertainties', in *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 2014, 4 (1): 432.

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.[40]

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.

What, then, does it mean to frame one's intellectual life, one's *logizesthe* and *dianoia* practices, through the lens of love? Let us recall the key elements of *agape*-love: *self-sacrifice for the blessing of God and of others.* In the case of the latter, *blessing (benefiting) not just family and friends but also vulnerables, oppresseds, strangers, and enemies, through reconciliation, justice, or gifting, undergirded by listening, risk, cost, truth, and self-constraint.*

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 the importance of collaboration, teams, and networks to the process of investigation and creativity, what do *agapic teams and networks* look like?
- Similarly, how is *agapic culture* formed within any discipline or profession at large?
- Given potentially misleading or 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?

This whole package constitutes the task of *agapic dianoia*—the passionate intellect applied through lives of Christ-following *agapic* freedom. If applied to all our intellectual endeavors, this will indeed have radical implications—and so at times will bring Christians into conflict with reigning paradigms within any particular field or discipline. Regardless, Christians are called to agapically bless those around them—both those who support and those who oppose the radical *agapic* values and practices that Christians seek to bring to the world.

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[40] R.R. Reno, 'The Loving Intellect', *First Things* (March 2016): 46.