

BIBLICAL INTEGRATION

a framework and process for biblical higher education

OVERVIEW

- What do we mean by “biblical integration”?
- A three-part framework
- Biblical integration in biblical higher education curricula

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY BIBLICAL INTEGRATION: TWO PRIMARY SENSES

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- Integrating the Bible into other disciplines
 - Justifying, discounting, or complementing disciplinary insights through biblical teaching
 - Allowing specific biblical teachings to shape or make room for disciplinary theories
- Integrating the disciplines with one another in a manner consistent with the Bible's teachings
 - The history of science and theological convictions about the world
 - God's order offers consistency, but not without anomaly
 - Christian theology and the recognition of limits

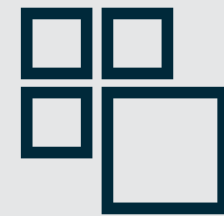


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A THREE-PART FRAMEWORK



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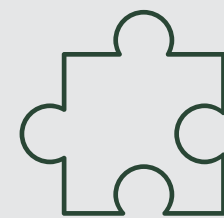
Re-Ordering Loves

Biblically integrated curricula move from disordered to properly ordered loves.



Nesting

Recognizing smaller units and bigger units in curricular design.

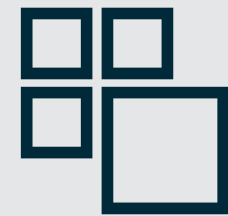


Framing the Disciplines

All academic disciplines make contributions within limits.



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Approaching Curricula

- Integrating disciplines is possible because of God's order.
- Bible college curricula has the potential to help students rightly order loves.

What Is the Proper Order?

- God as the most relevant actor and factor in any situation.
- Building the body of Christ for the sake of the world.

Knowing Beyond the Propositional

- Vervaeke's four ways of knowing*
- Perspectival knowing and the ordering of loves*



Four Ways of Knowing

- Propositional- A bicycle is a mode of transportation.
- Procedural know how to ride a bicycle.
- ParticipatoryI know how it feels to have my legs burning while riding a bycle up a hill and how the wind feels blowing in my face while going down that hill.
- PerspectivalI need a mode of transportations, so the bycicle is relevant to me.



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Four Ways of Knowing and Bible College Curricula

- Propositional- “Student A” knows that the Bible is the final authority for life and faith.
- Procedural “Student A” knows how to read the Bible but doesn’t have a strong methodological approach to bringing the Bible to bear on topics to which the Bible does not speak specifically.
- Participatory “Student A” experiences the social/pragmatic benefits of affirming (if not passively accepting) certain political decisions.
- Perspective For “Student A,” the Bible becomes less relevant in certain circumstances leading “Student A” to adopt positions and practices that will hinder their personal spiritual growth and diminish the Church.**

WHEN THE BIBLE BECOMES LESS RELEVANT

71 % of those classified as Christian Nationalism adherents self-identify as evangelical or born-again

48 % of Americans with Evangelical Beliefs identified the economy (26%) and maintaining national security (22%) as the most important issues in deciding how to cast your vote

37 % of U. S. Evangelical respondents agreed that "Gender identity is a matter of choice."

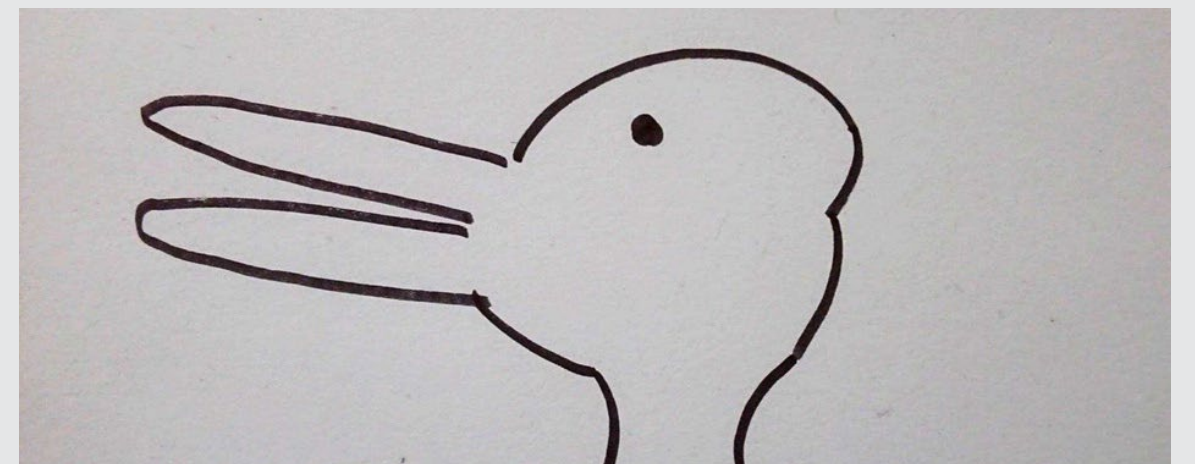
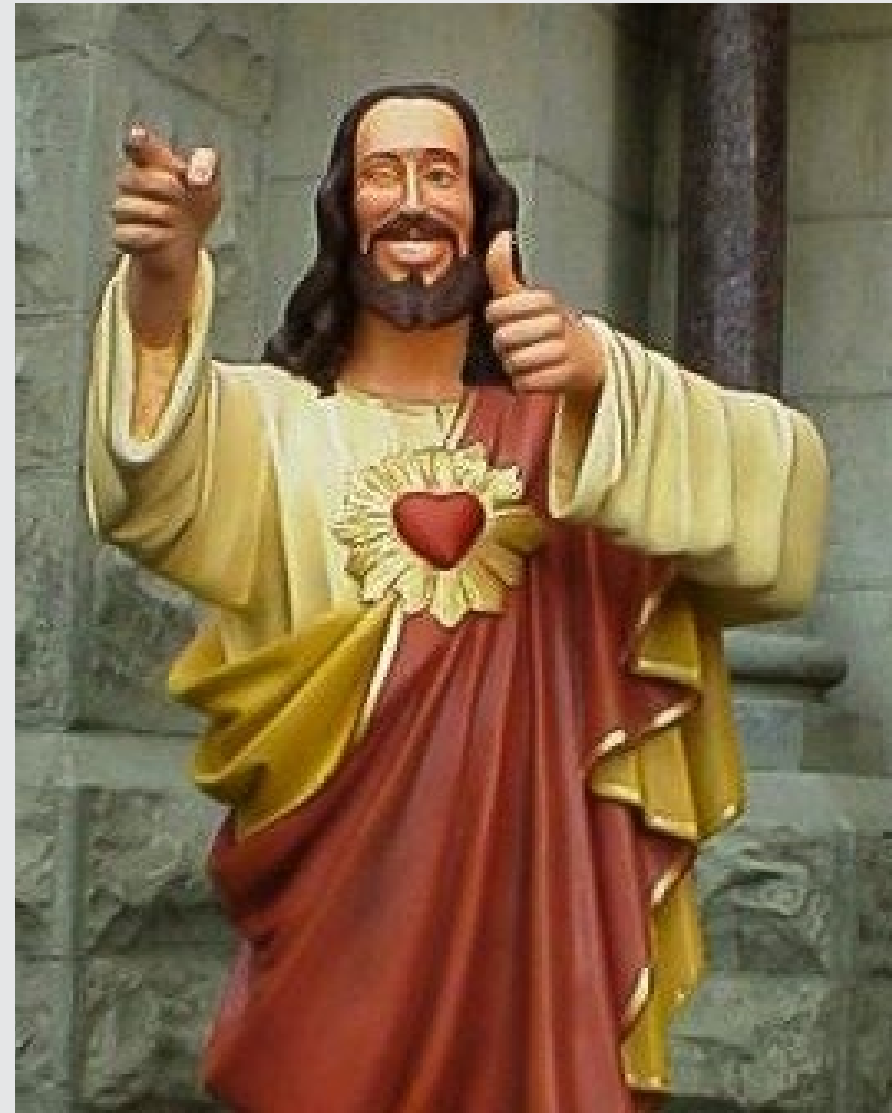


WHEN THE BIBLE BECOMES LESS RELEVANT

56 % of U. S. Evangelical respondents agreed that "God accepts the worship of all religions, including Christianity, Judaism, and Islam."

43 % of U.S. Evangelicals agreed that "Jesus was a great teacher, but he was not God."

38 % of U.S. Evangelicals agreed that "Religious belief is a matter of personal opinion; it is not about objective truth."





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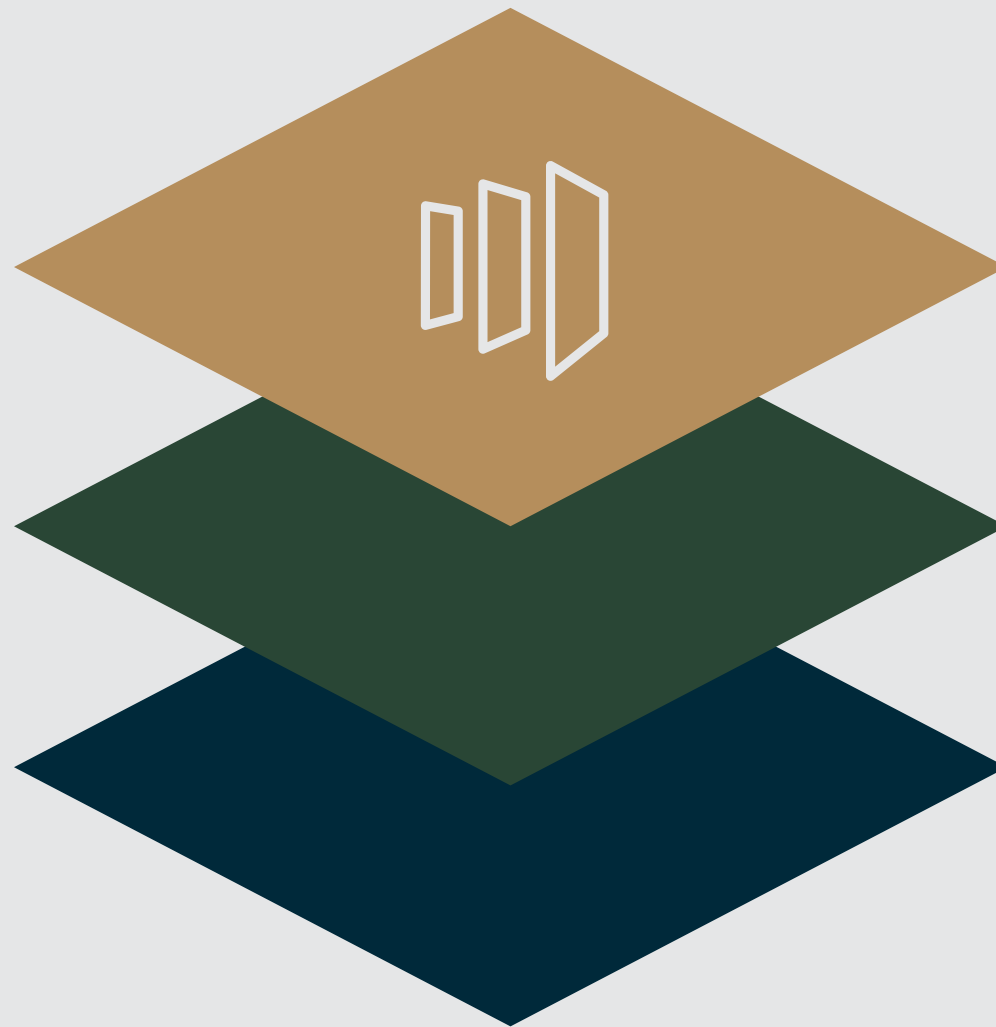
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NESTING

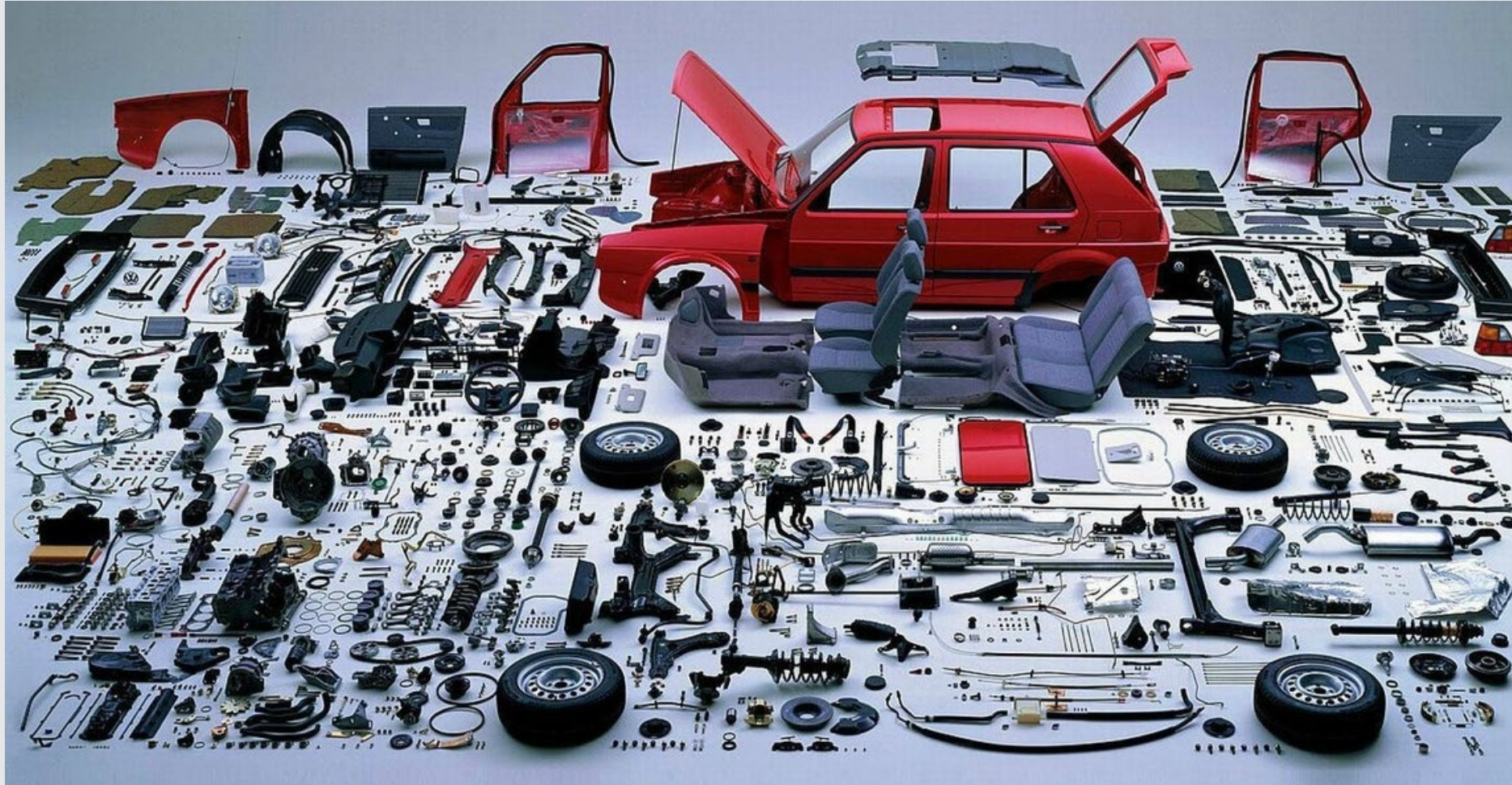
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The Concept of Nesting

- Gibson's An Ecological Approach to Visual Perception
- Small units in bigger units
- Variations in descriptions tied to "the level of environment you choose to describe"
- Disciplines as descriptions of "smaller units" within God's order within a given time horizon

Theological Convictions

- God's order is the biggest unit
- We can expect consistency, but not without anomalies arising due to disorder
- There are observations we can make about the world that are supplemental to what we find in the Bible
- Reality is observed or revealed from a limited point of view*



What We Are Trying to Avoid

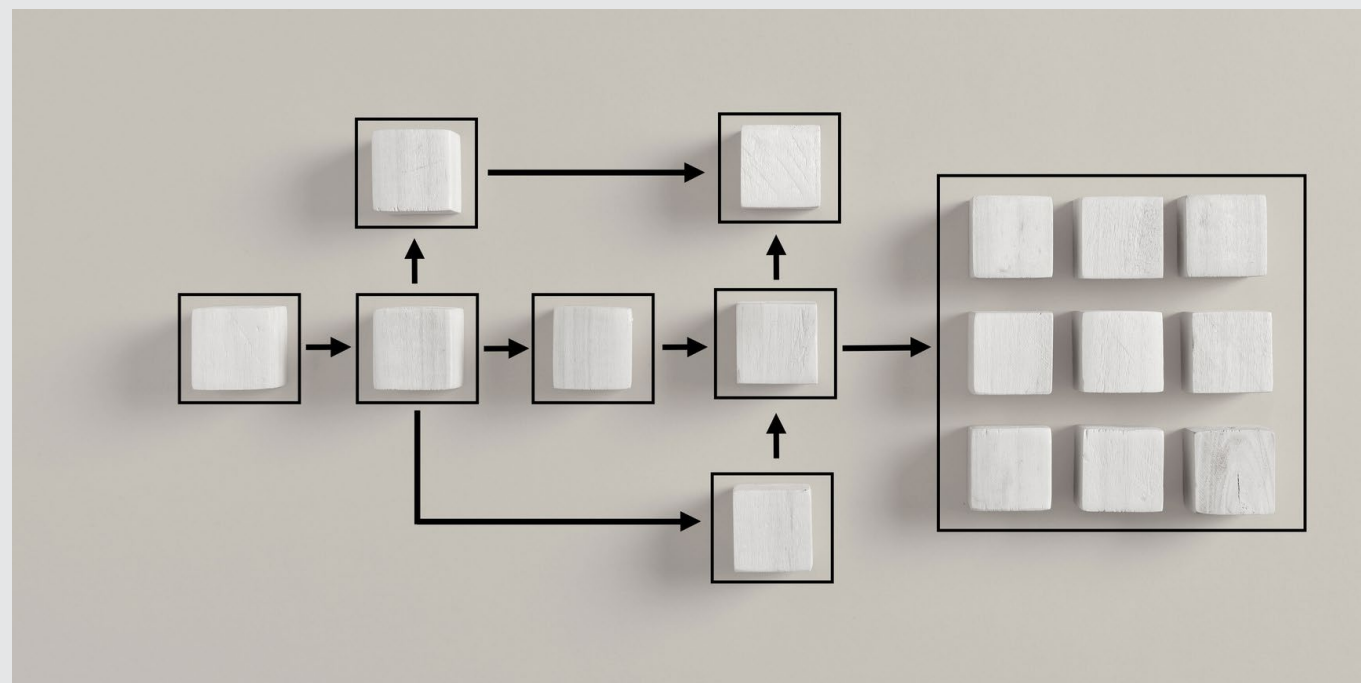
- Well-organized parts without a clear path to “assembly”
- Leading students along disorienting paths to openings that gesture toward God’s order





What We Are Aiming For

- Parts, schematics, and opportunities for guided assembly
- Experience in bridging “structural gaps” between disciplines
- Orienting approaches that can be applied across multiple problem sets all of which lead toward “nesting” all things in God’s order.





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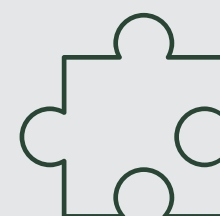
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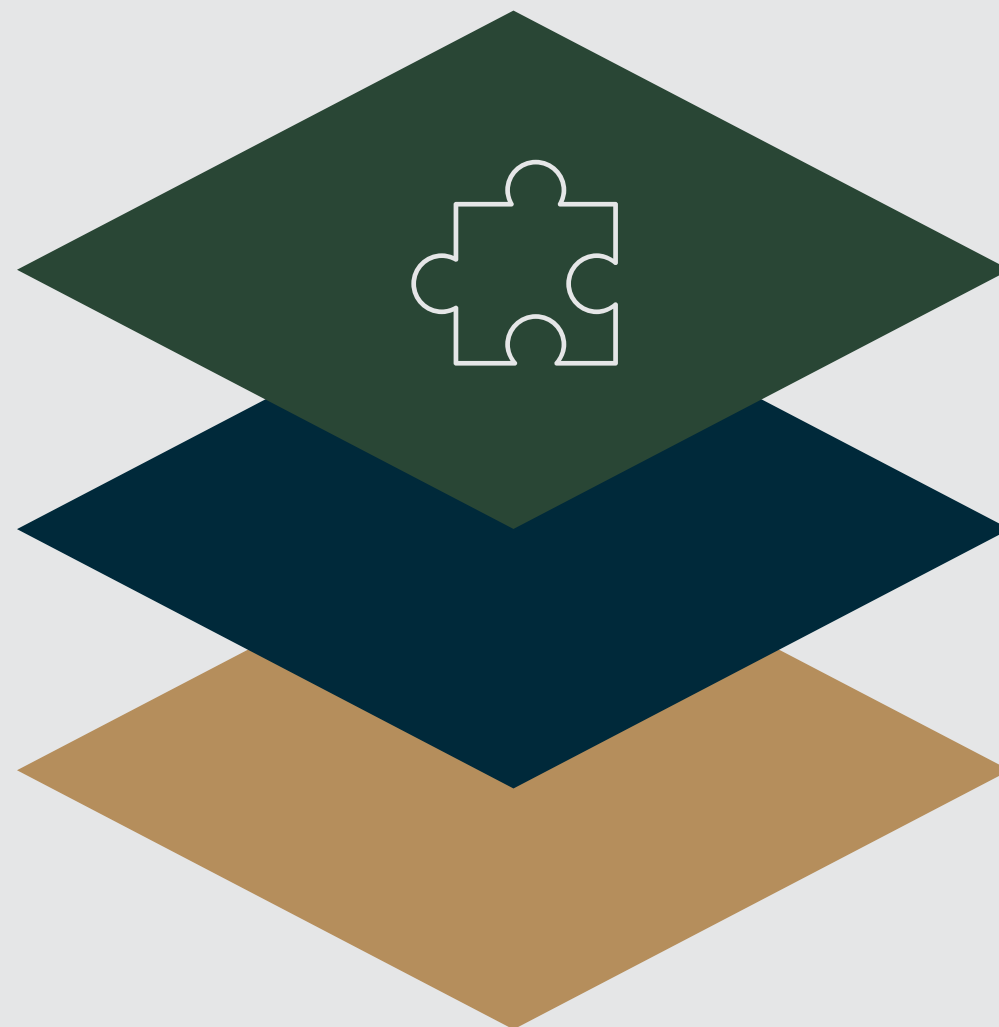
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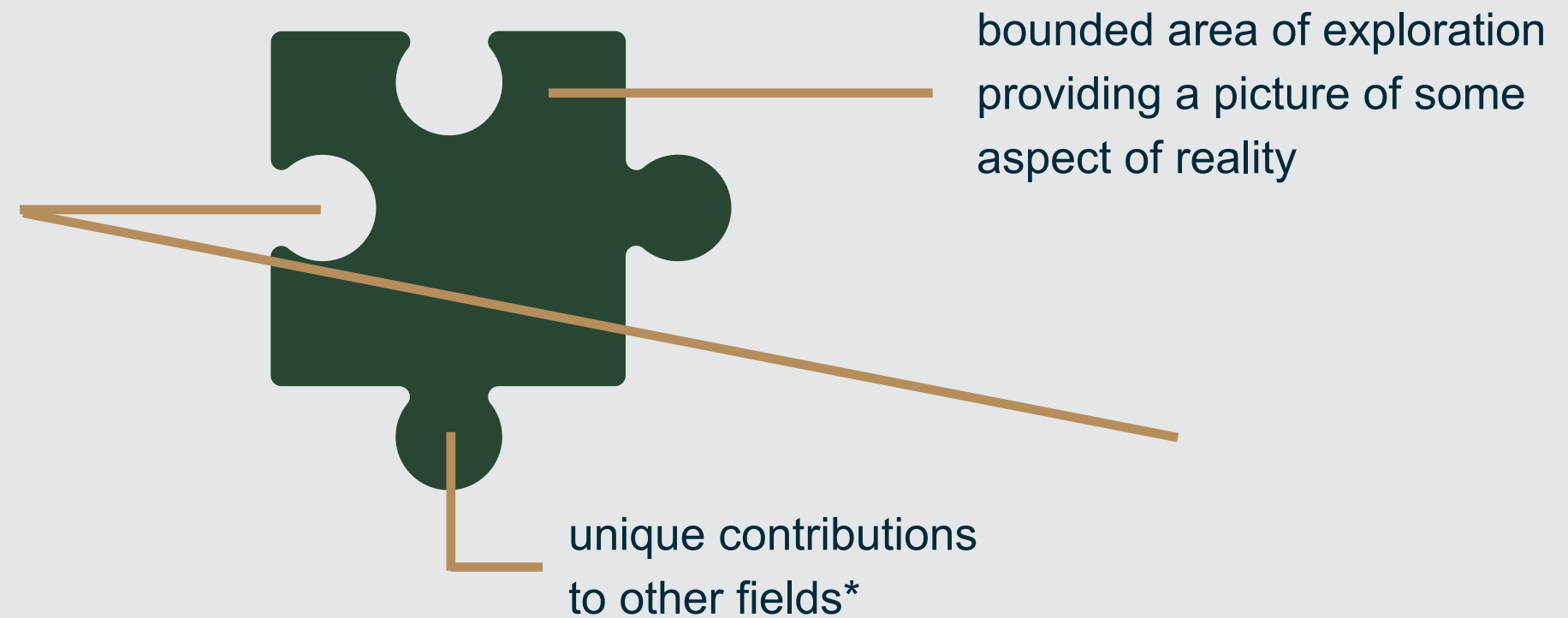
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IDENTIFYING CONTRIBUTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The academic disciplines are better together.

unique limitations of
the field of study*



*Sites of potential integration

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BIBLICAL INTEGRATION: A PROCESS



BIBLICAL INTEGRATION: OPTIONS

- Full curricular revision
- Add a “framing course” that sets the tone for the rest of the curriculum
- Reorienting instruction
 - Making the limits of a discipline explicit
 - Situating a discipline in relation to others and to an understanding of God’s order
- Adding integrative assignments early in the curriculum
 - Take a lesson from Jesus in Matthew 6 (e.g., Don’t give, pray, or fast like that...give pray and fast like this)
 - Use of case studies/complex scenarios (e.g., Economic thought and Malachi 3)
 - Don’t just go for the obvious connections (e.g., Genesis 14, Christians, and politics; God and Sociology in the Cain and Abel narrative)
- If you really want it...don’t settle

BIBLICAL INTEGRATION AND LENCIONI’S FOUR OBSESSIONS: A SIMPLIFIED PROCESS



BIBLICAL INTEGRATION AND LENCIONI'S FOUR OBSESSIONS: SOME QUESTIONS



Is there sufficient institutional will at the leadership level to stay the course toward biblical integration?

Can the leadership team agree on: (1) the problem they are trying to solve and (2) the solution they need to implement to address the problem?

Has the leadership team formed their opinions with input from institutional constituencies?

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Who counts as part of your organization?

Who plants the flag in the sand regarding biblical integration at our institution?

Who works operationalizes the project?

How do we know if the project worked? How do we define success?

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What are we prepared to do to ensure alignment with the vision?

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QUESTIONS



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