

The Open Bible

At the center of Geneva's official seal is an open Bible, open so that anyone can read it. To insure that its students read the Bible, Geneva requires its students to take Bible courses. Since Geneva has an open enrollment policy, some students read the Bible for the first time at Geneva. Others learn to read their Bibles better.

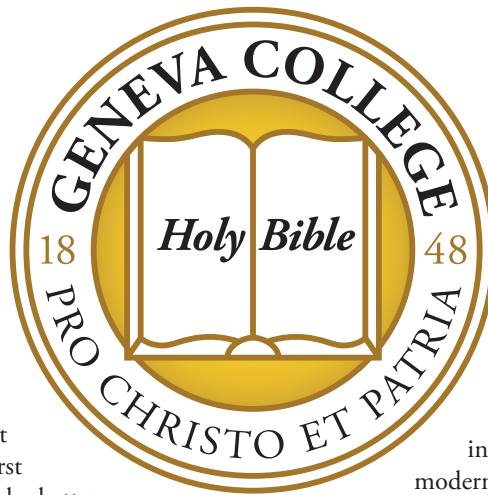
The Bible is an alien voice to students shaped by modern and late modern thought. Its world is different than ours and speaks in its own voice. The most important thing in Geneva's Bible classes is learning actual Bible content: its stories, its prophecies, its wisdom, its doctrines, and its telling about Jesus.

Modernity rules out the miraculous from the start, so it cannot take the Bible as it is. It has to try and get behind the "myth" to find what really happened. At best, modernity looks for universal truths, like nuggets of gold that can be mined from the ancient texts. Modernity, like Narcissus, thus always ends up seeing itself in the Bible. Geneva does not read the Bible as moderns do.

Late modernity with its hermeneutic of suspicion rules out truth from the beginning. It looks for power relationships, at how the strong use religion and ideas to advance their own selfish interests. It can let the Bible speak for itself the same way an ancient polytheist could allow another nation its own gods. Late modernity cannot accept the Bible's claim of one true Savior. That announcement it has to oppose as oppressive and coercive.

The open Bible means that Geneva believes that God in His Word can reveal the thoughts of man no matter how modern he may be. God's Word, so foreign to our world, can nonetheless reveal God to those who read. So Geneva says to its students, "Take up and read." What they will read is God's plan for all nations bound up in the history of one small nation. The Bible is about the origins of Israel, the successes and ultimate failure of Israel, its wisdom, and Jesus the Jew who personally fulfills Israel's calling to bring life and light to the nations. Geneva is always announcing Good News: that Jesus the Son of David and God come in the flesh died for His people according to the Scriptures and rose again to be proclaimed the world's universal king.

The open Bible has a second meaning for Geneva. Not only does its iron-age Mediterranean world reveal God to its readers and lead them to Jesus the Christ. It also provides the lenses to correct the astigmatism and near-sightedness with which we were born, which modernity and late modernity exacerbate. The Bible, for example, rejects all national or religious chauvinism. It freely admits that metalworking, music, and domesticated animals are the achievements of Cain's line; that Philistine iron technology was superior to Israelite technology; and that Moses benefited



from learning all the wisdom of Egypt. Thus the Bible itself leads Geneva to embrace the Liberal Arts and certain professional fields.

Here is our challenge! The Liberal Arts and certain professional fields today are generally infused with the spirit of modernity or late modernity. It is not easy to work in these fields as scholars and teachers to take every thought captive for Christ. Sometimes in "integrating" psychology and the Bible, Freud's inventions replace the Bible's anthropology; or in contemporary or historical economic analysis, Marx's materialism wins out over the Bible. The challenge of thinking with, rather than against, the Bible requires work, prayer, cooperation and mutual criticism, which only love and humility make possible. "Do everything in love (I Corinthians 16:14)."

The Word of God is not bound. The Bible is open at Geneva. Jerusalem judges and rules Athens and Rome: that is Geneva's conviction.

Pro Christo et Patria

College mottos encapsulate founding commitments: Montreat College - *Esse Quam Videri* ("To Be, Rather than Seem" - Classical); Loyola - *Ad Maioram Dei Gloriam* ("For the Greater Glory of God" - Christian); Ohio State University - *Disciplina in Civitatum* ("Education for Citizenship" - Democratic); University of Pennsylvania - *Leges Sine Moribus Vanae* ("Laws without Morals are Useless" - Early Enlightenment). Mottos often include words like Truth, Virtue, God, Light, Freedom, and Excellence. Bible verses are common: "In thy light shall we see light (Psalm 36:9)" - Columbia University.

Few mottos include Christ: two that do are Furman College's *Christo et Doctrinae* ("For Christ and Learning") and Wheaton College's *Christo et Regno Ejus* ("For Christ and His Kingdom"). Few mention country, as in *Pro Deo et Patria* ("For God and Country") at Loras College. One names a state - *Pro Ecclesia, Pro Texana* ("For Church, for Texas")! That would be Baylor University in Waco, Texas. Geneva's motto includes both Christ and country, *Pro Christo et Patria* - "For Christ and Country." "Christ" and "country" both put Geneva outside the mainstream of higher education today, and it is hard to know which part of the motto is more offensive to the new American elite.

American schools today claim to educate citizens of the world. For example, my wife's Quaker Boarding School, Westtown School, aims to be known "as a generator of ethical global leadership and multicultural understanding." Schools aspire to graduate students ready for a multicultural world, and children learn more about Islam and Buddhism in public schools than they do about

Christianity. Colleges too often assume knowledge of Western civilization and American history that simply is not there, and require courses on the non-Western world more than on our own civilization. Geneva is different. In line with the “Patria” in its motto, core courses include Bible and humanities, courses highlighting the civilization of our own country, the United States of America, with roots in Israel, Greece, and Rome, its trunk in Christendom, and its now partly severed branches in the nation states of Europe and the empire of America. Geneva’s motto including “et Patria” means that Geneva believes that we owe understanding, loyalty, and love to the Patria where we live and die.

But “Patria” is the second part of our motto. Before country comes Christ. When Christ and country conflict, Geneva will choose Christ. If that priority means disregarding federal law to aid escaped slaves on the Underground Railroad, then Geneva will help the escaped slave. If that priority means that we file lawsuit against the federal government over its health care law, then Geneva will file the lawsuit. To loyally love Christ, Geneva is committed to defying country if necessary. And the first goal of Faculty instruction is not the glory of country, but the glory of Christ. So they aim to form students who will embrace justice, service, and love wherever they live and work, even if they work for an unrighteous corporation or corrupt government; to form students who start businesses to provide jobs and goods for others; to form students who are prepared to leave home and country at the call of Christ, and yes, to form students who will be loyal and generous -- including to Geneva!

Our motto means something more than loyalty to country, loyalty to Christ, **and** Christ over country. Our motto is “For Christ and Country.” Geneva longs for the day when the country will freely and sincerely serve Christ, who is King of kings and Lord of lords. The advent of the printing press allowed many more people than ever before to own Bibles and other books. Radio meant another jump in communication power. The Internet allows Geneva Faculty potentially to teach every subject, whether professional or liberal arts, according to Jesus’ Word in the Bible as the final standard of beauty, truth, and right, directly in people’s homes around the world. Economic necessities, both College and student, may initially provoke putting courses on-line, but opportunity should make Geneva embrace the chance to multiply its educational influence many-fold to the glory of Christ. English is the world language of our day, so Geneva can promote its teaching promoting Christ and Country worldwide.

When Handel’s Hallelujah Chorus is sung, we want our whole country to stand, showing respect to its Lord. When we recite “one nation under God,” we want all to understand and confess that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one Creator God over all, who loves His People from eternity, justifying them by the life, death, and resurrection of His incarnate Son, and renewing them in His image by His Spirit. The motto “Pro Christo et Patria” breathes the spirit of this petition: “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, in heaven as in earth.”

