

## **The Vocation of the Christian Scholar: A Caribbean Biblical Studies Perspective**

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How does the Bible help us understand the meaning of our Christian life—including our work in higher education—as service to God and neighbor? This is a huge topic, which cannot be adequately addressed in a short presentation. Instead, I will draw selectively on forty years of teaching biblical studies, in which I have focused on contextualization of the Bible’s worldview in diverse ecclesial and academic contexts in the three countries in which I have lived.

As a Jamaican national, I will reflect on the biblical themes that first impacted me as a young student in Kingston, Jamaica (and how they addressed serious problems in Caribbean culture). These themes, which are foundational to a biblical worldview, are 1) God’s creation of humanity to be his image on earth (*imago Dei*) and 2) the coming of God’s kingdom, proclaimed by Jesus and culminating in a new heaven and a new earth. These themes (rightly understood, in their biblical context) have continued to resonate and empower my scholarship, teaching, and mentoring as I immigrated to Canada for advanced studies and then to the USA for a faculty position. As global cultural change has accelerated, I discerned that these biblical themes (enriched through my study and writing on Scripture) were able to address new contextual issues that have come to the fore.

This presentation will raise questions of how this biblical worldview will impact our lives today. What are some of the implications of the call to image God for the identity of Christian scholars and professors in diverse parts of the world? How might the coming of God’s kingdom, which centers in Jesus and culminates in the new heaven and new earth, empower us in our vocation in Christian higher education?

Keywords: Biblical Worldview; Image of God; Kingdom of God; New Heaven and New Earth