
Letter from the Editor

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It is often said that a picture is worth 1,000 words. Believing the words “at a minimum” should be inserted in there, I arranged for a professional photographer to come to a business communications class a few years ago for the purpose of taking a group picture as well as headshots that each student could subsequently use for their online profiles. For two weeks preceding the shoot, I harped about the importance of being on time on that day and being dressed to portray the image they wanted to convey to the world.

My arrangements with the photographer were for him to take a class picture in our classroom first—one without me and then one with me. After those images were snapped, class would start and carry on as normal while one student at a time would go to the makeshift studio set up down the hall for their individual shots. This way, I reasoned, we could still cover all the content we needed to for the day and no one would miss more than three or four minutes of the discussion.

As you have likely surmised by now, not everything went according to plan. One student showed up to class having forgotten that today was “picture day.” Without saying a word to anyone, he left the room as if to go to the bathroom and then went home to change clothes before coming back to have his picture taken just as the photographer was putting the backdrops and lights away. Having no idea that the individual was doing any of this, we lost five minutes of class time at the beginning of the hour waiting on him and then went ahead with the group shots and picked class up from there.

About one week later, the photographer dropped off a DVD with all the images including the two group shots. Here is the one without me:



And here is the one with me:



My jaw dropped as I looked at both images.

If you compare them, the reason why will become recognizable. In reality, all that happened was the first picture was taken while I stood out of the frame, then I stepped into it and the other one was snapped approximately thirty seconds later. In the final pictures, though, the student with the beard has leapt from one side of the room to the other. How?

He was able to move about in the image because, in reality, he was never there at all. This is the individual who missed being present for the group shots to go change clothes. Unbeknownst to me, the photographer had taken some full body images of him separately when he took the profile shots and was now manipulating the space to place him in empty spots. While it is likely that you cannot tell it without knowing the students, it is apparent to me that many of their dimensions have been manipulated ever so slightly to create those empty spots making it possible to add this student in. This “free transforming” makes the image look fake to me, yet may not be obvious to the casual observer.

At first, I was livid. This was not what I wanted, asked for, or agreed to pay for.

After that emotion wore off, the one that replaced it was fascination. I am fascinated by the fact that we can so easily manipulate what was real in the moment to make a new reality that never was. Very few people not in the pictures will pick up on the fact that they were altered, and I am certain that five years after being taken, none of the students in them will remember that they were not captured in the form in which they now appear. The altered reality will have become, for all practical purposes, reality.

That scares me.

It scares me that these photographs are a metaphor for something much larger. It scares me that we can look at modifications of a source and accept it in place of the source. It scares me that we allow and accept this. It scares me that we see examples of this all the time and are often too unaware to question it.

The *Christian Business Academy Review* has such a small readership that it is not on a lot of radars. Nevertheless, in our small corner of the world, we will continue to make every effort to keep focusing on what is true. In a world full of manipulated bits and bytes, we strive to be as steadfast as possible, and I am thankful for each and every one of the authors and reviewers who made this issue possible. I hope you will appreciate what they share as much as I do, and I hope that in your pursuit of Christian, academic truth you will choose to share your own ideas, thoughts, and learnings with readers of future issues.