

INTRODUCTION TO THE 13TH ISSUE OF THE *JBIB*

Dr. Sharon Johnson, Editor
Charleston Southern University

Writing and publishing as Christian scholars is a process fraught with at least two tensions:

1. There is the tension of EXPOSURE - every time we place our writing in the hands of others we expose ourselves to critique and mistakes. Because we are all very human, and struggle at this mysterious art of putting ideas into written words, we find ourselves embarrassed at the misspelled word, the unclear phrase, or the incompletely expressed idea. Those who view our writing can often see through the weaknesses in our arguments that we ourselves are blind to (after all we knew what we meant to say).
2. There is also the tension of EGO - who are we to think that our ideas are SO valuable that others ought to pay attention to them? If my article is accepted, to whose glory does it redound - my vitae-charged career, or Christ's grace? IS writing an act of curiosity, or arrogance? As long as I have an idea, and share it with my students, should I really care whether it is published anywhere?

I think these tensions keep many Christian teachers from venturing into the writing arena. After all, professors are hardly known as risk takers - why chance the exposure and battle with the ego? Better to fly lower and safer than to risk embarrassment and Icharian hubris.

Perhaps I can offer some insights that would

make my fellow colleagues consider a venture into the world of writing and publishing.

First, you probably have some very unique perspectives that need to be shared. Never assume that your ideas are ordinary or common. Your ideas are the result of a unique combination of experience, education, interests and personality. Your insights are special and, if I may be so bold, extraordinary because God has designed only one of you - NO ONE has ever been like you, nor will be like you. You are a once-in-time supernatural creation "fearfully and wonderfully made." The business/fair world seen through your eyes, filtered through your mind, can help others see something in new and fresh ways. This probably already occurs on a daily basis with your instruction of students - I am encouraging you to cast your voice and perspective to a broader audience - let all of us be your students.

Secondly, you will grow through exposure- and others will grow with you. Exposure of our ideas in written form can be embarrassing. Because we are all imperfect, and our grasp of all things is partial, we are apt to say something that will be called into question. It has been my experience that we cannot grow by avoiding risks - in business we teach that risk and return are positively related. The review process employed by all CBFA publications is designed to encourage and enrich - to be positive rather than punitive. All the editors and reviewers engaged in the process seek to help everyone develop their ideas and find the very best structure to express those ideas. Speaking as one who has traveled the editing path many times (and along the way

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having had my fair share of acceptances AND rejections), I have always grown through the oversight process. The price was a bit of ego (or maybe a lot of ego!) and a willingness to submit to the instruction offered by peer reviewers. The gain was a great deal of growth personally and professionally. Early in my doctoral work (yes ... before electricity and when dinosaurs roamed the face of the earth...) I learned this truth - the primary qualification to earn a doctoral degree was perseverance. The tenacity to stay with an idea long enough to develop it into a publishable form. Our growth as “scholars” demands a long obedience in the same direction.

Thirdly, not nearly as much has been written as needs to be written. I have many books on my office shelves related to the connection between business and the Christian faith (and actually books on the connection between business and non-Christian faiths). I have read through many manuscripts sent to the *JBIB* and reviewed papers for annual CBFA meetings. From my perspective much more needs to be written and published than has been written and published. Let me offer a cursory list of ideas that need to be developed:

- What would a Christian perspective on financial risk suggest? Should Christians invest conservatively or boldly?
- How should Christian Higher Education be structured differently than secular higher education? Should we advocate tenure at CHE institutions? Should CHE faculty and staff accept lower salaries in order to keep tuition for students low?

Should CHE administrators require scholarly publication by their faculty? Should CHE faculty ever consider unionizing?

- In what ways would a Christian perspective confirm or challenge long established organizational behavior models? Would we expect the models would be modified by Christian perspectives - or thrown out entirely?

My thanks to all the authors in this issue of the *JBIB* - and their courage to grow through the review process. As you engage their ideas, be both enriched and encouraged. Be enriched by their in-depth and creative exploration of the intersection of faith and business. And, be encouraged to step out on your own journey of scholarship, partnering with the Christian Business Faculty Association to make a difference in the way all of us understand our marketplace focused faith.