

Special Section

The Search for Balance

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In 1994, we launched the effort to create a new journal dedicated to investigating the intersection of business practice and philosophy and biblical perspectives. During the last decade, *The Journal of Biblical Integration in Business* has grown and matured. It is a good time to look back and ask what we have learned and how we have changed.

The Notions of Balance

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (10th ed., Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 1996, c1993) offers a variety of definitions of the concept of balance:

- An instrument for weighing as a beam that is supported freely in the center and has two pans of equal weight suspended from its ends
- A means of judging or deciding
- A counterbalancing weight, force, or influence

- To bring into harmony or proportion

I would like to think that *The Journal of Biblical Integration in Business* has sought to maintain a balance in its tone and articles. We have sought to honor both scholarship and Scripture, to articulate conceptual ideas and ideals, and to emphasize concrete applications. We have sought to honor a broad spectrum of Christian faith traditions and have invited rejoinders to articles where that balance was not explicitly handled well enough in the articles themselves.

The center point of all our efforts has been the intersection of two great roads on which Christian Business Faculty Association members journey: the path of business practice and perspectives and the path of biblical insight and instruction. The Bible can be seen as offering an additional means for informing the decisions we make in business — perhaps

even offering a counterbalancing force of grace and gentleness to the competitiveness and self-centeredness so often found in the pursuit of business.

Then, too, the pursuit of biblical fidelity is neither monolithic nor uniform. There are legitimate differences among Christians as to what the Bible means and how it is to be applied. Such differences challenge us to seek to examine our own presuppositions and concepts in ways that might allow us to harmonize apparently paradoxical views as we weigh the pros and cons of various arguments we observe.

The review that follows traces out some of the themes and tensions that have characterized the development of *The Journal of Biblical Integration in Business* over the last decade.

The Initial Challenge

The original editor's lead article was titled "Of Journeys, Jungles, and Journals." It sought to articulate some of the fundamental presuppositions on which *The Journal of Biblical Integration in Business* would be built:

Biblical integration in business is an attempt to capture in spoken and written words the results of

*a Spirit-directed life journey. It is both a professional pursuit and a personal passion. We want to communicate **ideas** effectively as professionals, but we desire also to communicate the **intimacy** we have in our growing relationship with Christ and with His Word. Biblical integration seeks to create common ground where reason and revelation meet, where we connect business principles and biblical precepts.*

Biblical integration is neither obvious nor easy. The challenge is to "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15, NIV). That work is a labor that is at once both scholarly and spiritual. How to engage in that labor with proper attention to both business truth and biblical truth is a unique challenge for several reasons.

*First, **there is no single accepted definition of biblical integration in business.** We all understand it to be the joining together of something, but the joining together of what? Does biblical integration in business require citation of specific biblical passages, or is it better done by referring to more general biblical principles? Is biblical integration*

in business more effective if it is deductive (“Here is a business practice — what does the Bible say about it?”) or inductive (“Here is a Bible passage — what does it tell us about how business should be practiced?”)? Who might be best at accomplishing biblical integration in business: those trained in theology that may have little background in business, or those trained in business but who may have little background in theology? Is the proper aim of biblical integration in business to influence business philosophy or business practice?

Second, there is little formal training available in biblical integration in business. *There are efforts in some Christian colleges to provide some internal workshops, and the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities does sponsor integration workshops (I recently attended such a workshop at George Fox College and had a wonderful time). But, insofar as I know, most of us who majored at the master’s/doctoral level in business or economics received no formal training at the college level about the process of integration. We have learned to integrate by watching some others do it (perhaps) and then working at it ourselves.*

Third, there have been few avenues for sharing with others the results of our integration work. *The CBFA meetings have provided a forum for sharing papers and perspectives. There also is an association of Christian economists. Some Christian colleges have a tenure requirement that faculty must produce an integration paper discussing the linkages between their academic specialties and their Christian beliefs. But, largely, there have been few channels through which Christians teaching in business could put their work “on the table” for others to read and respond to.*

So, the process of biblical integration in business is a difficult, sometimes lonely journey where we forge rather than discover trails through the jungle. (It is good that God’s Word is sharper than a two-edged sword!) The JBIB seeks to become a friend to jungle journey-men and journey-women!

The fundamental values that are reflected in the journal are:

Integration. *This journal is a forum for a hybrid kind of discussion. We are looking for explorations of the connections between business and the Bible. We are not focused on either*

theological debates or debates about business affairs. We are seeking commentaries exploring the ways that business-Bible links are compatible and/or conflicting. The articles in this first issue seek to explore the way business concerns and biblical concepts both touch and “tussle” with each other.

Imagination. *This journal is a forum for a creative kind of discussion. We have not prejudged the way integration “ought” to occur. We seek a forum for discussion, not a formula. Each article in this issue is unique in theme and development.*

Integrity. *This journal is a forum for a biblically-faithful kind of discussion. The authors have great freedom in application of biblical material. However, the review and editing process for each manuscript has included an expectation that biblical material will be used with full appreciation for proper contextual interpretation. We (the reviewers and editor) have worked with the authors where we felt that the biblical text cited did not support the point being made or was being used in ways that were not consistent with the context of the biblical passage.*

Since that initial issue of just 35 pages of text, *The Journal of Biblical Integration in Business* has continued to forge new roads as we have partnered together to develop and sustain a blind, peer-reviewed journal that upholds the values of both excellent scholarship and biblical fidelity.

Growing Maturity in Pursuit of Biblical Integration

In the second (1996) issue, we proposed a simple model that might capture some of the most important dynamics of biblical integration. (See Table 1 on following page.)

In that article, we noted:

Biblical integration is both a delightfully imaginative and a demanding intensive process. Those who would engage in the integration devote their efforts to both imagining how a biblical passage, precept, or parable might be applied to specific business issues and contexts and developing those connections in written form. Moving from an idea to its concrete expression in writing, we must carefully select words, construct paragraphs, develop arguments, and document sources. If we are seeking to have that writing accepted in some published form, then we must

Table 1

Model for Biblical Integration

Biblical Sources	Business Issues		Business Insights
Parables			
Processes (how decisions were made, leadership exercised, etc.)	➤ Apply	➤ Develop	Perspectives (ways of seeing)
Proverbs/passages	Prospects		Principles (ways of believing)
Profiles (the character, development, choices and impact of biblical personalities)	Problems Perplexities		Preferences (ways of choosing)
Precepts (a collection of verses pointing toward a core biblical observation, conclusion, or principle)	◀ Enrich	◀ Clarify	Practices (ways of acting)

spend time working with editors and reviewers who may struggle with our writing or even disagree with our conclusions. Writing is a challenging, time-consuming process. Its rewards are great, but it carries a substantial cost.

Biblical integration deepens our appreciation of Scripture as it develops our business insight. Two very great things happen when we ask, “How does this scriptural perspective or principle apply to the workplace?” First, our understanding of business, as viewed from God’s perspective, is enriched and sharpened — we

begin to question both the ends and means of business in fresh ways. Secondly, our understanding of Scripture is enriched and deepened as we begin to encounter people and events in the Bible in terms of the circumstances and choices they faced — we begin to view Scripture as the story of real people facing real problems and prospects, often in marketplace situations.

Dual Passions: Teaching and Scholarship

The 1997 issue of *The Journal of Biblical Integration* in

Business initiated the first of many “Dialogue” sections where we invited authors and review board members to exchange different perspectives on important issues. While the dialogues have always maintained a spirit of gentleness and respect, they nonetheless accentuated the differences we hold as Christian Business Faculty Association members and demonstrated that discussion of such differences could strengthen all sides to the conversation. In the editor’s article, we cited the work of George Marsden, captured in his book *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997). His challenge was set out clearly:

The proposal set forth in this volume ... is that mainstream American higher education should be more open to explicit discussion of the relationship of religious faith to learning. Scholars who have religious faith should be reflecting on the intellectual implications of that faith and bringing those reflections into the mainstream of intellectual life. ... I am advocating the opening of the academic mainstream to scholarship that relates one’s belief in God to

what else one thinks about (pp. 4-5).

Marsden used the term “faith-informed scholarship” (p. 6). He suggested that making our faith “an explicit” in our scholarship would have profound effects:

Serious religious beliefs help shape not only our overt ways of valuing things, but also our priorities. What do we see as important to study? What is it about the subject that makes it interesting? What are the questions we ask that will organize our interpretations of this topic? What theories do we entertain as relevant to our interpretations? What theories do we rule out? (p. 63).

In our reflections about Marsden’s work, we spoke about the connection between scholarship and teaching:

So, I am ready to ... live at ease with my self-perception as a Christian scholar. For some, particularly at schools like mine where teaching and scholarship are seen by some as uneasy relatives living in the same house, the term “Christian scholar” seems

either pretentious or dangerous. Because of the reputation of “research universities” as academic enclaves where teaching is disdained and narrow secularized publication is celebrated, claims to be a scholar can be seen as a self-aggrandizing claim to superiority and the right to special treatment (like lighter class loads). And, because many teachers at “teaching” colleges have never published at all (for any number of reasons), they find the term “scholarship” to be a call away from the important role of teacher to which they have dedicated their lives, often at great personal and professional costs.

I believe that Christian colleges are increasingly drawing faculty with a new attitude toward their roles. These teachers, trained in doctoral programs emphasizing research, are arriving with expectations that they will continue their development as scholars who teach. They want to be involved in the process of both developing and delivering ideas. They want to spend time both on researching-

publishing and teaching. While they appreciate the time tensions involved, they do not see any inherent conflict between their roles as scholars and teachers. Rather, they see these as not only complimentary but necessary. Scholarship offers the excitement of original exploration and peer-level discussion essential to providing students with not only information but also a sense of excitement for the learning process.

Continued Growth

The 1998 issue of *The Journal of Biblical Integration in Business* was a landmark issue for several reasons. First, the issue was the longest issue we had ever published (140 pages of text). By this time we no longer had to worry (much) about whether the flow of manuscripts would allow us to publish a substantial volume of work. Also, the review board had more than 21 members, offering broader and deeper manuscript analysis and recommendations — and deepening the pool of writers for rejoinder pieces for special dialogue sections. The 1998 issue had four different dialogues.

The increased conversation evident in this issue was an important advance I noted in my comments in the editor’s article. We focused attention on the difference between debate and dialogue in framing the intention of *The Journal of Biblical Integration in Business*:

A debate is an effort to convince another that their position is weaker than yours and to convert them to your perspective. The key tool in debate is argumentation. A dialogue, in contrast, is an effort to comprehend another’s position and to communicate to them your perspective. The key tool in dialogue is articulation. The ultimate difference is that in a debate, there is a view that one party wins and one party loses because the ultimate aim is self-centered victory; in a

dialogue, both parties are winners because the aim is interpersonal vision. The following table contrasts the two very different processes. (See Table 2 below.)

As a Christian academic, I am committed to the Truth. I do not believe that everything is simply a matter of opinion. I believe that God clearly communicates His Truth in His Word and does so without either error or ambiguity. And, yet, I know that while God’s Word is inerrant, my understanding of God’s Word may be in error. God is omniscient, but I am not; therefore, my understanding of God’s Word is partial and subject to all the frailties of my own weak and sinful nature. So, while I seek always to offer an adequate articulation of what I believe and why, I need to listen to the

Table 2
Differences of Debate and Dialogue

Debate	Dialogue
convince and convert	comprehend and communicate
argumentation	articulation
win-lose	win-win
self-centered victory	shared vision

voices of my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ as we all seek to integrate more clearly the TRUTH of Scripture with the issues of business and economics.

I am left, then, living with what I believe is a God-intentioned tension. There is TRUTH; yet my perspective about what this TRUTH means and (especially so) how this TRUTH applies to business and economics issues at any given time in my faith journey may differ from my friends on their journeys. We all “see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known” (I Cor. 13:12-13, NIV). It is within the tension that faith grows — faith that as we each struggle to present our own views and also wrestle with the differing views of our other brothers and sisters in Christ, that we are all being led by “He, the Spirit of truth, [and] He will guide you [us] into all the truth” (John 16:13, NAS). The JBIB is dedicated to encouraging communication with the certain belief that we in Christ are partners rather than protagonists and that our differences should be occasion

for active dialogue rather than acrimonious debate.

1999 — A Pre-Millennial Review

Published in the fall before Y2K and the entry of a new millennium, this issue of *The JBIB* took a decidedly future-oriented flavor as we examined marketing in the new millennium, the Christian business school in the 21st century, and student cultures on Christian college campuses. It was the largest publication ever (228 pages of text), with the greatest number of contributors and the largest review board (32 members). In some ways, the 1999 issue was a “coming of age” issue. In this issue, we spoke of the promises the future would hold for the Christian Business Faculty Association:

Christian business education stands at the threshold of a new century. By any measure, the past has been a rousing success. Thousands of students have been prepared intellectually and spiritually to assume their place as Christ-honoring employees. They have made a significant impact in the workplace for the cause of Christ. They have been salt and light in a workplace

increasingly oppressed by the effects of individual sin and collective greed. They have brought the witness of both the quality of their work and the grace of their words.

The present is equally compelling. Christian faculty are bringing a renewed commitment to faith and life integration. The Christian Business Faculty Association and its The Journal of Biblical Integration in Business have fostered an increased interest in developing a community of faith-centered scholars who bring to their teaching and publishing a distinctive Christian workplace perspective.

And, the future holds great promise for technologies and approaches that will extend both the impact and outreach of Christian business educators. This is especially so for those who have developed clear and compelling goals, have realistic assumptions about what can and cannot be done, and whose strategies produce distinctive Christ-centered competencies.

would not be the last and would usher in an interest that would ultimately result in the special Fall 2005 *The Journal of Biblical Integration in Business: Business Cases with a Christian Worldview* being published independently from the Fall 2005 *JBIB*.

In this issue, we raised a singularly important issue in the editor's article:

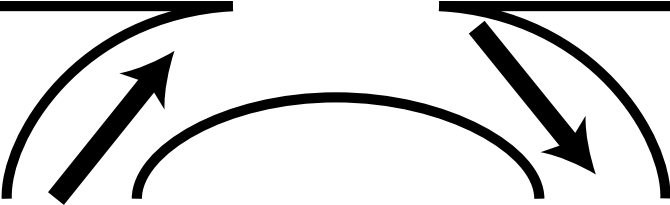
What does it mean to be a Christian professor? My answer to this question is not merely academic, nor entirely personal. It will energize my efforts and order my priorities. It will influence the balance I seek between teaching and researching, between school and home and church. Beyond my personal take on things, my definition will have an impact on the way I define my role(s) in my department. It will influence my views toward appropriate course loads, the kinds of projects I may be willing to engage in with colleagues, and my perspective on service to my university in terms of task forces and committees.

2000 — A Case for Change

In the Fall 2000 issue, we published our first case study. It

In response to the challenge of this question, we proposed a model of the Christian scholar-teacher:

Stream of discussion and debate about
philosophical, practical, and pedagogical issues



Role as contributor to and
critiquer of the stream
vis-à-vis my peers

Role as interpreter and
director of the stream
to my students

We then related this to a particular field of study — strategic management:

I teach management courses with a special focus on strategic planning. The “field” of strategic management is really a moving, turbulent stream of discussion and debate carried out in journals, meetings, the popular press, Internet sites, professional consulting, and many other arenas. The discussion and debate focuses on matters of vision and values reflected in various models and theories (what I’ve termed the “philosophical”

issues), matters of improvement of actual business practices, and matters dealing with pedagogical concerns related to the processes of teaching and learning.

My roles relative to this stream are as teacher and scholar. As a teacher, my role is to interpret the discussion and debate going on in my field of strategic management and to direct part of the stream to my students. That direction is accomplished through the way my course is structured, the textbook and other resources I make available to my students, the

course assignments, and any technology-mediated resources I use in class (computer simulations, threaded discussions/chat rooms, etc.) An important part of my teacher role is to interpret ideas from the stream in order to make them more accessible to my students.

As a scholar, I have the opportunity is to participate in the actual stream of discussion and debate in my field. One way to do this is to be an active researcher and publisher, investigating either new ideas or investigating possible variants and extensions of existing ideas. This can be done in various contexts (journals, professional meetings) and at various levels (Class “A” journals, regional meetings). This role dimension places me as a contributing participant in the stream, adding my investigation and ideas to build the “body of knowledge” in my field.

2001 — An Eclectic Emphasis

As the number and variety of writers submitting manuscripts to *The Journal of Biblical Integration in Business* increased, the topics of each issue expanded. The Fall

2001 issue focused on proper hermeneutics in applying Scripture to business, the changing nature of business students, international business opportunities, socialization in organizations, approaches to biblical integration in the classroom, a case study (our second), and several “Best Practices” pieces (these would continue to be published over the next several years and would become part of the impetus for creating a better forum for such work in the *Christian Business Academy Review* to be published in the spring of 2006).

The focus of the editor’s article was on teaching, in keeping with the pedagogical emphasis of the 2001 issue of *The JBIB*. The article highlighted three important truths about teaching:

1. Students are very unique in their approaches to learning — therefore, we professors should consider providing adequate variety in our course and assignment design and delivery to allow for different learning styles and previous work/academic experiences. All professors can seek creative ways to provide students some options about how they display their mastery of the material in

class. Our obligation goes beyond mere delivery of knowledge. Our challenge is to continuously seek creative ways to both reach and teach our students.

2. Teachers are competing for the interest and time of students. While we believe that what we teach is really inherently important and that our assignments are truly sacrificially valuable, our students make their own judgments about these matters. Part of our role as a professor is to “market” our course to students. I do not mean that we have to “discount” our courses to “cater” to students. I mean that we must face the reality that we have to compete with all the other things that pull at our students’ attention and actions. As professors we need to make sure that we find ways to clearly, compellingly, and continuously communicate to our students why our course matters and why the assignments we are asking them to do are both reasonable (in light of course objectives) and reachable (in light of their abilities). Each term is another chance to offer enough value to get students to “buy into” our courses.

3. Some of the most significant impact we have on students is unplanned and uncharted. Students sometimes tell us at the end of my course that they “learned more than their grade shows.” There have been times when we really hoped that was so, given the grade they earned! More seriously, we know students become able to articulate new understandings and perspectives about a broad number of matters that will never be reflected in the specific grades they earn in our courses. They learn, among other things, that some people have to study harder than others to get the same grade, that sometimes our best efforts fall short of success, that in the long run it matters as much who you are becoming as a person than what you know as a student, that submitting to authority is frequently a challenge, that some teachers are more interesting than others, that life is very complicated, and that scientific “truth” is more ephemeral than many people commonly believe. These are wonderful lessons — but lessons learned in ways that will only ultimately be measured by a life well grown

and well lived rather than the score on an exam or a paper.

2002 — A Pause in Growth

For reasons not entirely clear even now, the Fall 2002 issue was the shortest issue we had published in some time. The flow of manuscripts was much smaller than usual throughout the period of the issue's development. Significantly, though, this issue featured an article "commissioned" by a non-Christian Business Faculty Association member — Chip Weiant, president of the American Center for Civic Character based in Columbus, Ohio. His article was featured in a section focusing on Christians in a non-Christian arena.

The notion of shaping the character and conduct of our students, which several articles in this issue emphasized, led to a discussion of teaching as intrusion versus teaching as invitation:

After 26-plus years of teaching, I have learned two fundamental truths: 1) Students learn only what they want to learn — so we only have an impact on those students who invite us to have an impact, and 2) if a teacher waits for a student to invite them to help them learn before

taking any action, the invitation will never come.

Put another way, teaching balances the acts of invitation and intrusion. What this really means is that teaching and learning are two highly related but independent domains. Students control learning, while teachers control teaching. We cannot make students learn — they have to invite us into their minds and hearts and listen to what we say and do what we ask them to do. And, students cannot tell us how to teach — it is our responsibility to determine what needs to be said and done. However, both students and teachers can enter into an agreement for awhile — they can agree to listen to us and apply what they hear, and we can agree to listen to them and help them work through the challenging process of learning.

We then articulated four observations about the intersection of invitation and intrusion:

*1) Effective teaching intrusions are **intentional**. We need to be very calculated in our course design and delivery to ensure that the course holds*

together well (clear objectives, carefully chosen assignments, and communicated performance standards). We need to be absolutely clear about what we are doing and why we are doing it from the first to the last day of class.

2) Effective teaching intrusions are **intense**.

I believe one of the most significant threats to quality education is the tendency that some teachers have of demanding too little from students. Demanding a lot of students means demanding a lot of ourselves. It takes time and tenacity to grade and to hold to high standards of grading, to insist on attendance in class, and to intervene when student actions or attitudes are unacceptable. Intense teachers will face continued pressure from students to lighten up, lower the standards — in short, to accept from themselves and others “pretty good” work. We need to be resolutely committed to high standards: insisting that students “do it right,” the first time, every time.

3) Effective teaching intrusions are **individualized**. Learning is a personal process

— one person engages one situation and draws conclusions about the meaning and significance of that encounter. As teachers, we may find it easier to challenge a class of 30 than we do to challenge a single student in that class. And yet, ultimately, our “class” doesn’t learn — Bob and Jane and Jim and Brenda learn. So, the challenge we face in approaching our course is how to design teaching intrusions that will confront Bob and Jane ... Doing so means that we must know something about Bob and Jane and that we must develop ways of instruction that at some level are individualized. One of the most effective ways we have found to meet the demand for individual intimacy is to provide students with choices in the kinds and timings of assignments. This allows them to help us individualize what they do and when they do it.

4) Effective teaching intrusions are **intimate**. “Dr. Johnson, I know you are busy, but do you have time to meet with me?” There have been times in my career when I would have responded to this question in some irritation,

*communicating something like, “Well, not really, but if you **must** talk I can fit you in between 3 and 3:15 pm.” On my best days, I understand the request for what it is: an invitation to move into the life of a student for a precious moment. These moments of intimacy are fragile, beautiful opportunities, for a student has chosen to take the “risk” of lowering the barriers and becoming vulnerable. Teachers that are too busy for such moments are just too busy.*

2003 — Connections and Distinctions

This issue presented some of the most intellectually challenging work ever presented in *The Journal of Biblical Integration in Business*. Articles focused on complexity theory, the wisdom of God, strategic management, and a series of Best Practice pieces ranging from marketing to accounting.

The editor’s article focused attention on the connection between teaching and learning and how thinking about these two great processes blends in our classrooms:

1) If we understand that our goal as educators is to teach students to learn, then

we will place as great an emphasis on understanding our students as we do on understanding our subject matter. Learning is a complex amalgam of attitude, aptitude, and action. While we can generalize about its components, its totality is reflected and refined uniquely in each learner. So, while we teach a class collectively through lectures and discussions, our ultimate goal must be to reach each student individually. One-on-one encounters with students in our office may motivate greater learning than our best in-class lectures — and must be seen as welcome opportunities to inform and inspire rather than unwelcome interruptions in our own personal schedules.

2) If we understand that effective teachers must also be engaged learners, then our own professional development becomes essential rather than optional. Our reading, researching, and reporting (through publishing and presentations) become less acts of personal career advancement and more involvement in service to students.

3) *If we understand that all learning is in reality a process of self-teaching, then we must focus as great attention on teaching students **how** to think as we do on teaching them **what** to think. As teachers, we are challenged to translate the content of our course into the context of hands-on experiences for our students. It is ultimately more important to learn to fish than to catch a fish. Providing a student with food for thought today is good — helping them to learn to grow, harvest, and process that food for themselves is a more challenging but greater goal.*

4) *If we understand the distinction between teaching and learning, we will better appreciate the importance and limitations of our roles as professors. While we cannot cause someone to learn, we can provide a climate that encourages and rewards them to do so. While we cannot force someone to read, we can provide a climate that challenges them to apply and communicate what they have read.*

2004 — Challenges and Discussions

The 2004 issue of *The Journal of Biblical Integration in Business* returned to a more robust size and also offered dialogues and articles that reflected the growing arena of Christian scholarship reflected in *The JBIB*. Dialogues focused on strategic management, entrepreneurship, middle management and careers, ethical issues related to financial management, and the use of narrative as a teaching pedagogy.

The editor's article in this issue focused on the work of Ken Bain in *What the Best College Teachers Do* (Harvard University Press, 2004). The hallmarks of truly effective teaching were captured in a quote from that book:

Many outstanding teachers think of their courses as ways to help students learn to reason well and to join a conversation that flourishes among people who do. ... Arnold Arons, a physicist at the University of Washington ... argues that [this] critical thinking entails, at minimum, a series of ... reasoning abilities and habits of thought:

1. *Consciously raising questions*
2. *Being clearly and explicitly aware of gaps in available information*
3. *Discriminating between observation and inference, between established fact and subsequent conjecture*
4. *Recognizing that words are symbols for ideas and not the ideas themselves (thus being sensitive to multiple definitions and the power of words to influence the way we think about ideas)*
5. *Probing for assumptions*
6. *Drawing inferences from data, observations, or other evidence and recognizing when firm inferences cannot be made*
7. *Employing both inductive and deductive reasoning*
8. *Developing self-consciousness concerning one's own thinking and reasoning processes*

A Decade of Discussion

As we enter the years ahead, *The Journal of Biblical Integration in Business* will continue to grow, reflecting the growth in Christian scholarship that has been at the heart of the Christian Business Faculty Association story. In some ways *The JBIB* has mirrored

that growth, and in some ways *The JBIB* has helped power that growth.

As editor I wish I could tell you that our growth has been some part of a grand strategy — and, in some ways this would be true because we have intentioned the championing of Bible-centered thought about business and economics from a largely, but not exclusively, evangelical perspective. It is also true that we have consistently applied a set of core expectations regarding all manuscripts:

- **The manuscript must be scholarly in design, depth and tone.** While this does not have to mean arcane language and inordinately complex conceptualization (*The JBIB* editor is committed to a journal that is broadly accessible to all CBFA members), it does mean that manuscripts must be deep and significant. *The JBIB* does not publish devotional pieces or even short “notes.” *The JBIB* editor and reviewers are looking for manuscripts of philosophical and/or empirical substance. This tends to result in articles that are longer rather than shorter,

articles that reflect a robust review of both biblical and discipline-specific literature, and articles that are challenging both intellectually and spiritually.

- **The manuscript must be related to scriptural presuppositions, passages, and perspectives directly and distinctly.** *The JBIB* does not publish generalized discussions about faith, nor does it publish manuscripts where biblical perspectives are only a minor part of the manuscript.
- **The manuscript must reflect a deep and current understanding of the stream of literature in one's discipline.** Many requests for manuscript revisions and almost all manuscript rejections occur because of the weaknesses of manuscripts regarding the breadth and depth of the discipline-specific core of the papers.
- **The manuscript must handle Scripture with a careful regard for context** regarding the specific language of passages under study and proper appreciation of the positioning of passages within the whole council of Scripture.
- **The manuscript must avoid stridency and simplicity in its treatment of its topic.** In particular, *The JBIB* editor and reviewers are sensitive to unsupported assertions, excessively denomination-related advocacy, and the creation of “straw man” arguments that caricaturize rather than explain opposing viewpoints. While the editor and reviewers do understand that faith matters will (indeed must) ultimately be matters of deep passion and that our faith journeys often occur within a denominational tradition, the journal expects that authors will allow the force of evidence and logic to make their points and that their discussion will fairly represent alternative ideas.
- ***The JBIB* is denominationally neutral** and intentionally reflects the broad contours of the diverse faith traditions of CBFA members.
- ***The JBIB* does not favor empirical over philosophical manuscripts.** The Christian scholarship in business is still at a relatively young stage and there is much “work” that needs to be done to both develop and empirically test distinctly Christian conceptual frameworks.

- ***The JBIB* does not favor any particular perspective either scripturally or regarding disciplines.**

Neither the editor nor the reviewers have a “particular” take or perspective on such matters, and *The JBIB* does not seek to advance a specific faith-based nor discipline-rooted perspective.

- ***The JBIB* does not avoid controversy.** At this relatively early stage of Christian scholarship, it is very natural for there to be contrasting and conflicting perspectives on issues of importance. The journal seeks to provide a forum for reasoned discussion of such issues, especially through its “dialogue” feature that seeks to publish reviewer-generated responses alongside the articles it publishes.

In other ways *The JBIB*’s development has been organic — a result of the interplay between authors and reviewers (with a little help from the editor). The result is that *The JBIB* really does reflect the broad interests of the Christian Business Faculty Association.

To God Be the Glory

Finally, but significantly central to what we do, we must

acknowledge the work of the Holy Spirit in our efforts. I believe with all the conviction that I have that God has chosen to use the natural process of academic journal development to achieve a supernatural impact — creating an arena where committed Christian scholars can openly explore the Bible-business connection without apology and without masking their faith premises, presuppositions, and perspectives.

The JBIB journey has been a great adventure. We have, since 1995, begun the first steps of working our way through the jungle. We have learned that doing so as a team is better than going alone, that many questions have non-obvious answers, that our differences can challenge and grow us rather than divide us, and that Christians can work and walk in the academy with creativity and conscious commitment to their faith.

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