

# A Dialogue

## Editor's Introduction

*The editor asked the authors of the following articles ("Relativistic Synthesis: Thwarting the Mind of Christ" by Dr. Richard C. Chewning and "Let's Quit Thinking About Integration for a While" by Dr. Steve Vander Veen) to respond to each other's articles. With differing approaches, each had considered the validation of Christian truth in the context of business.*

The pursuit of Christianity by academics in business is a journey fraught with promise and peril.

The promise is that the concepts and ultimately the conduct of business might not be seen as "looking only on the surface of things" (2 Corinthians 10:7), but rather that student and practitioner alike might "take captive every [business] thought and make it obedient to Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5). The promise is that we might be catalysts in building a distinctively Christian worldview concerning the perceptions and practices that drive business.

The perils in our biblical integration enterprise are really of two types. The first is that we will fall prey to abstractionism, whereby Christianity becomes a "phenomenon" to be examined and explained, but not experienced. The peril of abstractionism is that we would forget that Christianity in the workplace must be incarnated in our lives, not just intellectualized

in our words.

The second peril is that we will fall prey to existentialism, whereby Christianity becomes an event to be emotionalized and experienced, but not examined. The peril of existentialism is that we would forget that Christianity in the workplace must be framed within a faith grounded in our desire to be those "who correctly handle the Word of Truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

The papers and responses that follow come from two thoughtful and committed Christians. The authors' papers were produced independently, and neither knew of the other's work until I contacted them about the fortunate convergence of their contrasting approaches to the theme of the ultimate validation of Christian truth in the context of business.

I approached Richard and Steve with the proposal to print not only their articles but also their responses to each other's work. Both generously agreed and took the additional time and

effort to submit the responses you see following each other's article. I found their original articles and their subsequent responses to be delightfully engaging and provocative.

What intrigued me is that both authors are equally committed to the substantive expression of Christianity as truth. But each views the foundation and validation of that truth from a significantly different perspective.

The *Journal of Biblical Integration in Business* is the black-and-white expression of one of the primary goals of the

Christian Business Faculty Association: to provide a forum for open, serious dialogue among diverse Christian faculty regarding their unique understandings of the faith/business connection.

Take this section of the present volume as an invitation to continue the dialogue. Differences of perspectives enrich our understanding and empower our life witness. Dr. Vander Veen and Dr. Chewning have, in God's timing and provision, offered you and me the challenge to be both hearers *and* doers of God's eternally living Word.