

EDITOR'S PERSPECTIVE: Saturating Minds & Hearts with Scripture

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THIS JOURNAL AND THE FAITH INTEGRATION PROCESS

Think about the title of this publication: *The Journal of Biblical Integration in Business*. At the heart of this title is the phrase biblical integration. It is this phrase that I want to share some of my thinking regarding the purpose of the *Journal*.

The *Journal*, and its parent organization the *Christian Business Faculty Association*, has been in the business of encouraging business scholars to think carefully and deeply about the claims of Scripture on the lives of business practitioners. Even after a few decades of study and scholarly dialogue on the issues, some big questions still remain.

Our work is a work consistent with the restoration of the image of God. It is a creative work. It is difficult work. Our work, the work of the scholar and the work of the business professional, is a work of education (not mere schooling), if we broaden the idea of education to include the transformed life of a person in community. Thus, the worksites of the scholar, and business practitioner alike, are as much "cathedrals" as the places where the work of official religious leaders. And, if this is true, then a publication like the *Journal* also is "sacred space" where between the covers of even just one issue, we encourage each other, either explicitly or implicitly, to think about how we can be changed in our thinking and in our action.

Integration of faith and learning is a form of *shared leadership* whereby the scholars, students and business practitioners participate together in the process to enhance learning. Thus, the scholar who contributes to a forum such as this *Journal* as an author, is performing a sacred work entered into with others in the learning community and with individuals and groups in the broader community of business practice.

When we speak of integrating faith and learning we are speaking of a spiritual process, empowered by God's grace, that results in something happening to the

person in a community in terms of developing faithfulness. Part of that process involves an intellectual pursuit. Biblical faith does not do away with the need to ask questions and think carefully. On the contrary, biblical faith may spark the faithful follower of God to ask questions. The *Journal* is one place where such questions can be explored in a community of scholars. The authors who have contributed to this issue of the *Journal*, as well as the scores of authors who have gone before us, are contributing to the question of what it means to be faithful. I hope you, the reader, will consider this as you read their contributions.

ON SATURATING MINDS AND HEARTS WITH SCRIPTURE

Another dimension of the *Journal's* unique contribution is that the authors who are published here seek to add to Bible knowledge among readers. "Biblical ignorance is the bane (killer) of integration." (Chewning & Haak, 2002, pp. 67) Without a biblical foundation, how is it possible for the biblical integration process to advance? Articles in this issue and in past issues (searchable online at <http://cbfa-jbib.org/index.php/jbib>) have contributed a positive solution to the problem of biblical illiteracy. For scholars who have recently entered the academy to work as instructors, this is a valuable resource.

If faith comes by hearing the Word of God, isn't it possible that the study of business can present opportunities to hear the Word and thereby experience faithfulness for the marketplace? Should the problem of correcting biblical illiteracy be given to religious workers and Bible scholars? Framed in more direct in terms of the work of Christian scholars in higher education, on what basis should the Christian business classroom abdicate its role (some would say responsibility) in teaching the biblical foundations for business and in so doing provide others with a solid foundation for responding to contemporary culture? This *Journal* has, over the years, attempted to offer discussions of biblical foundations.

Saturating the heart with Scripture is particularly relevant to work in the world of business as shown in these passages from one of the most famous portions of Scripture, Psalm 119:

- *Business is where our feet walk*: “Your word is a lamp to my feet...” (Ps 119:105).
- *Business requires wisdom*: “Your testimonies also are my... counselors” (Ps 119:24).
- *Business results in cash flow*: “The law...is better to me than thousands of gold...” (Ps 119:72).
- *Business is a competitive environment that requires wisdom*: “Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies...” (Ps 119:98).
- *Business requires understanding*: “From your precepts I get understanding...” (Ps 119:104).

The more we connect Scripture with business practice,

- the more we will think biblically when we are in the marketplace.
- the more alive our conscience will be to do the right thing and the stronger our defense against doing the wrong thing.
- the stronger our individual and communal moral imaginations will become.

With this perspective in mind consider the contributions of authors to thinking biblically about business in just this issue of the *Journal*.

ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE

The full Scripture record, and the grand theme of Redemption, is often ignored in the conversations about servant leadership. The paper written by Joe Bucci and Paul Lewis provides an important correction for this trend. I appreciate that their paper acknowledges the several times when key people in the Bible are called servants *of God*. There is no higher office to which a person can aspire than to be a servant of the King of the Universe. This dimension is often ignored in the conversations about servant leadership. These giants of faith played a key role in the bigger story of redemption.

One of the distinctive contributions that the *Journal* makes to scholarly dialogue about business issues is the biblical perspective. Sometimes we find experi-

ences in contemporary business life that help us understand the Scripture. Other times we find in Scripture concepts and ideas that help us understand business. Mark Bell’s article on groupthink in the first century adds to the faith-integration tradition of the *Journal*.

Three articles in this issue fit into the broad area of finance and economics. Kent Saunders helps us think through the difference between investing and gambling. The other two papers encourage us to think about the Scripture perspective on care for the poor. Jozell Brister, James Litton, Monty Lynn and Kyle Tippen have thought deeply about charitable giving as one approach to care for the poor. But care for the poor leads us quickly to consider public policy issues as well. The debate over public policy on entitlement spending has continued for decades (and will likely continue). In this *Journal*’s “Dialogue” section Lawrence Belcher has contributed a paper which looks at the public policy of aid to the poor through the lens of reformed theology. Clive Beed and Feler Bose have responded to the paper.

In addition to book reviews by David G. Duby, Tim Ewest, Stephanie Sheehan and Kirk Jackson, this issue of the *Journal* presents an annotated bibliography by Greg Morrison which is intended to encourage and inform business scholars regarding some of the biblical studies and standard reference works that Bible scholars use to better understand the Bible.

REFERENCE

- Chewning, R. D. & Haak, D. (2002). Integration reinforced through apologetics: Two case illustrations. *Journal of Biblical Integration in Business* 8(1), 53-68.

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Articles