

Editor's Introduction: Advancing the Conversation on Faith and the Academic Professional

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The *Journal of Faith in the Academic Profession* seeks to be a space for higher education instructors to have ongoing dialogue about the ways that our faith contributes to, enhances, illuminates, and challenges the work of professors at Christian universities. While faith integration (FI) is often applied to the classroom (an important aspect of FI), this journal advances scholarship into other workspaces for higher education faculty, such as scholarship, service, student advising, program development, and more. How can faith integration be measured? What are students' responses to the integration of faith in their courses? Should we even call the task "faith integration"? How does our discipline view humankind, creation, and our creator? What tensions and alignments exist between those views and a biblical view?

Smith (2018) calls for more research on how our faith compels us to teach differently than secular institutions do - or how it causes us to do the same things that secular institutions do, but for a different purpose. To what extent do we make those purposes explicit to our students? When? Where? How?

Whether working in a research-intensive institution or a teacher-centered institution, Christian faculty have a responsibility to engage in research around faith and its application to their work. Pao and Pao (2018) explicate this argument well, tracing the historical development of research in the American university context, through arguments about the role of Christian higher education. It is through this research that we can more fully understand the creation God has given us and the roles we play within creation. This is also an important way of developing the students who attend our institutions.

Because there are so many unanswered questions about faith and learning, the JFAP editorial board invites scholarly articles that examine the often "hidden" theological concepts of our disciplines in relationship to our faith. We invite scholars to submit **theoretical articles** that respond to current literature, original **research articles** that test those theories, and **practical articles** that show how these concepts have been put into practice. Additionally, we invite **book reviews** of the latest materials that further the conversation on FI.

The *Journal of Faith in the Academic Profession* invites you to engage in research and reflective essays that test and explore whether current definition of faith integration adequately capture the scope of work needed in higher education institution. In this issue, Kenneth Nehrbass and Andrew Cress challenge us to re-examine the process of faith integration. David Toledo offers a reflection on the role of Christian institutions in relationship to the Great Commission as a way of conceptualizing the work of faith integration. As readers wrestle with these reflections on faith integration, Jenifer Nalbandian offers encouragement to faculty to engage well with the process by overcoming common fears regarding faith integration.

Additionally, the editorial team invites studies on specific ways to engage students with our content, our teaching, and our faith. In this issue, Jeffrey Pittman, Rebecca Frawley, and LaTrelle Jackson share biblical supports for the use of service learning in the classroom, while David Crum argues that his discipline, history, is an apologetic tool.

Readers will also find an important investigation into the work-life balance and psychological well-being of faculty at a Christian university by Richard Ardito, Scott Dunbar, Thomas Frederick, Joe Putulowski, and Heather Chester. This is an oft-missed aspect of faith integration: how does our faith impact the way we live and function as faculty members?

Through research on our lives, our faith, and our work as academic professionals, faculty will find answers to pressing questions and encouragement to do the good work. We encourage you to join this important conversation through your own contributions as readers, authors, reviewers, and academic professional committed to faith-based education.

References

- Smith, D. I. (2018). *On Christian teaching: Practicing faith in the classroom*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.
- Pao, D. W., & Pao, C. L. (2018). The importance of research for teaching and learning. In D.S.Dockery & C.W. Morgan (Eds.), *Christian higher education: Faith, teaching, and learning in the evangelical tradition* (pp.187-204). Crossway.