

BOOK REVIEW

Research as Worship in the Company of God

Audéoud, M. (2023). *Research as worship in the company of God*. Christian Scholars Formation Series (Volume 2). Wipf & Stock Publishers. 104 pages.

Even with all the books out there on dissertation research, Martine Audéoud believes another one is necessary. What can she offer that has not already been written by renowned scholars in this crowded field?

After teaching research methodology for a few years in Christian institutions—formerly the Christian Missionary Alliance University of Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, and presently Bakke Graduate University, France—a question arose: “What are the specificities of teaching and doing research in a Christian institution?” (p. 13). This book seeks to answer that question.

As the title suggests—*Research as Worship in the Company of God*—“research is worship” (p. 19). Audéoud wants the dissertation researcher to begin with God, continue with God, and celebrate the conclusion with God. This is her unique contribution. Written for a multidisciplinary Christian student audience, Audéoud offers dissertation researchers a much different perspective: Put God first in research. This, she claims, is worship!

How does she add the spiritual component? Audéoud does so through multiple creative ways. First, numerous insightful questions drive the content of each chapter. A quick skim of the contents confirms this (47 questions), as will each chapter. For Audéoud, informative research is based on informative questions. But there is more.

Audéoud has an aversion to pedagogical prisons. To help students escape them, particularly those representing “traditional cultures” where they “don’t view life in categories or boxes” (p. 19), she offers a much more holistic, integrative approach that includes the incorporation of spirituality and spiritual relationships. To aid such students, Audéoud’s love for visuals (p. 59) helps her think and write in creative ways that will connect with a growing majority of concrete-relational researchers. This includes Westerners due to social media. For example, “literature review” becomes “dialogue with literature” (p. 53). Note the relational emphasis.

Metaphors dominate the book, particularly from the Hebrew Bible. Audéoud gives extensive time to the tabernacle, highlighting multiple connections to the total research process. For example: 1) as symbolic of Christ’s spotless purity, fine linen instructs researchers to “write with integrity” (p. 49)—no plagiarism; 2) the intricate artwork associated with the tabernacle provides researchers license for creative worship beyond “written words,” e.g., colorful maps, audio recordings, web pages, videos; 3) when a priest entered God’s holy place for the first time, it was no doubt overwhelming, not unlike being “overwhelmed by all the data and elements” (p. 72) when one initiates research. Throughout the book, she relies strongly on concrete metaphors to provide the backdrop for the entire research process. This helps avoid “drifting into theoretical or abstract discussions, because in many cultures, ideas may be more strongly anchored by metaphors, images, and pictures” (pp. 13-14).

While not without periodic suggestions for the research process, Audéoud follows the typical “problem, literature, methodology, result, and discussion” (p. 10) outline. She does this purposely to allow teachers to utilize their favorite research textbooks. She simply desires to *add* a missed spiritual component that allows the researcher to glorify God throughout the *entire* process.

After asking “Why Another Research Guide” (Introduction), Audéoud offers seven chapters with no divisions. These include (note the emphasis on questions): “Research as Worship?,” “What is the Problem?,” “On What Foundations Will You Build Your Research?,” “What is your Research Approach?,” “Gathering and Analyzing Data,” “Getting Ready for the Final Offering!,” and “In God’s Presence.” Throughout the chapters, “Yield” signs appear, offering readers opportunities for reflection. Eighteen figures and eight tables pepper the pages of this short book of ninety-nine pages. Three pages of references conclude the book. Expect a fast, yet serious read.

Some readers may feel she slices and dices too much on the tabernacle metaphors. I am not one of them. Recall the “literature review.” Rather than “dialogue with literature” (p. 53), I prefer “dialogue with authors.” With the strong emphasis on questions throughout the book, I would have

liked the inclusion of the research question that drives the “Statement of the Problem” (p. 85).

Whether Audéoud is cognizant of it or not, she has tapped into orality, which emphasizes relationships, participatory voice, holism, integration, concreteness, imagination, emotions, and art. That is why this book will resonate not just with traditional cultures, but with all cultures impacted by social media. Audéoud is correct—another book on research is not only needed but necessary. You will enjoy this short, essential read that will increase God’s glory.

Reviewer Information

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