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## Letter from the Editor: Why Teach?

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## Why Teach?

by Ardith Baker, Editor

To enlighten ... to challenge ... to mentor ... to encourage ... to prepare ... to share experiences and expertise ... to convey knowledge ... to witness ... to provide opportunities for learning ....

Why do *you* teach? Recently, I took time to reassess and sincerely examine why I teach. I searched my soul and pondered why God had put me in this position. In doing so, I looked around at my colleagues and took a moment to observe them in action. What I witnessed was amazing and renewed my spirit. I saw compassion that went above and beyond normal care and concern as faculty reached out to help and genuinely get to know their students. I saw worry etched in the faces of my colleagues as they contemplated ways to ensure that every student reached his or her full potential. I saw dedication as professors worked through the nights and weekends grading papers and preparing lectures. I saw sacrifice as many of my colleagues gave up professional careers and large salaries just for the opportunity to touch lives in a meaningful way. I saw faculty who were willing to try new teaching methods in order to help their students learn. I saw professors promote their students above themselves by providing opportunities for their students to research, present, and publish papers. But most importantly, I saw dedicated and willing service to God. As Christian faculty in higher education, we are called by God to serve Him in this teaching capacity. When discouraged, overworked, overwhelmed, and worn out, we simply need to take a deep breath, look around, and observe our colleagues at their very best. We are a peculiar people set apart by God to serve Him by serving His students. What an amazing opportunity! By serving our Lord and Savior in this way, we will be blessed. That is why I teach—to serve and honor God.

Now that I know that I am right where God wants me to be, my next question is: How can I be the best possible teacher? This is a lifelong endeavor for any educator as teaching methods, technology, and even students change. It often requires trial and error to find the most effective ways to teach. Additionally, what works for one class, one subject area, one teacher, might not work for another. Even the best caring, compassionate, worried, and overworked faculty cannot be effective teachers without contemplating what teaching methods will help their students learn best. That is what teaching and learning is all about. In addition, as professional educators, we are called not only to be teachers but also scholars. When we research our teaching techniques and methods, objectively studying them and the resulting learning process, and ultimately documenting our findings, then we are engaging in the scholarship of teaching and learning. This is the process that we present here in the second issue of the *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning for Christians in Higher Education (SoTL-CHEd)*.

In this issue of *SoTL-CHEd*, you will find encouragement and resources to help you. For example, in his enlightening editorial, Dr. Dominic Halsmer shares his views of [spiritual engineering](#) and how we as Christian educators can and should express the spiritual side of our field of study. Dr. Jeffrey Barbeau presents a review of the book [I'm the Teacher, You're the Student: A Semester in the University Classroom](#), which addresses the teaching excellence that we all strive to attain. Further encouragement can be obtained from the review by Dr. Timothy Norton of the book [Balancing Acts: The](#)

*Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Academic Careers*, which provides insight into how four faculty members managed to balance teaching, scholarship, and career (something many of us are trying to do today). The humorous side of teaching is presented in the book *Teacher Man: A Memoir*, which is reviewed by Dr. Calvin Roso. Finally, inspiration may be found in the original works of Kenneth Jones, Jr., (*Teaching Ethical Use of Product-Specific Incentives to Marketing Students in a Christian Higher-Education Environment*) and Drs. Kenneth Preston and Dorothy Radin (*Dealing with Dual Anxieties*).

Yes, there will be times when as educators you will be discouraged. But if you simply take time to look around, you will discover that there are many resources available to help and encourage you. In addition, if you look deep inside yourself, you will uncover that ultimate and sufficient reason why you teach—God—and then you *will* be encouraged.

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