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Reviewing *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Teaching*

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The Outrageous Idea of Christian Teaching. By Perry L. Glanzer, & Nathan F. Alleman. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019. 272 pp. ISBN 13: 978-0-19-005648-3 (HARDCOVER) $34

Many Christian colleges and universities are familiar with the faith and learning dialog: an effort to integrate faith into all academic domains. Much has been written on how faculty can integrate their faith in differing disciplines, including many notable works. However, one could easily conclude that teaching often serves as the hallmark for Christian colleges and universities. What do faith and learning look like when applied to teaching? While there may be some aspects of faith that can be easily woven into pedagogical and classroom management, few works speak explicitly on what teaching in higher education may look like through a faith and learning lens. In *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Teaching,* Perry Glanzer and Nathan Allerman provide a notable work addressing this. These authors pose two questions: (1) how does being a Christian change one's teaching? and (2) how should being a Christian change one's teaching? This work provides an excellent framework for any believer in Jesus Christ aiming to integrate their faith into their teaching. While their work addresses college-level teaching, the ideas that Glanzer and Allerman generate could be used in a variety of teaching contexts where individuals strive to integrate their faith into their practice.

Many in Christian higher education are familiar with George Marsden's work, which has a similar title: *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*. While these two works have much in common, the primary difference lies in focus: Marsden focuses upon scholarship, while Glanzer and Allerman focus on teaching. Both works look at how Christians can be distinct in these domains, and both fervently argue that faith can—and should—drive one's scholarly endeavors (Marsden) and how one teaches (Glanzer and Allerman).

Glanzer and Allerman use survey data collected among faculty at institutions of the Council of Christians Colleges and Universities (CCCU). However, unlike other reports, the data are not only used to tell readers what things are currently like, but the authors also do

a fantastic job of using qualitative and quantitative survey data and transforming it into an incredibly rich narrative, while providing tools to empower instructors to grow in developing a faithful pedagogy. Glanzer and Allerman do this throughout the book's eight chapters.

The first chapter, "The Fear of Teachers' Religious Identity: The Historical Origins," addresses the origins of the tensions between the identity of an educator and the identity of a believer in Jesus Christ. The authors intriguingly note that these tensions have only arisen in the last 150 years. Prior to this, it was common for these two to co-exist because "the Judeo-Christian metanarrative formed the heart of the Western world's intellectual story" (p. 17). There were many components that assisted in developing these tensions, including the role that higher education has played in national identity, the mythical ideology of a "common teacher" (free from bias, devoid of bigotry), and the development of the professional focal point. The authors provide an amazing picture of how all of these impact the identity of an educator in the 21st century, developing the challenge of merging religious and professional identity in the 21st century.

The next three chapters explore how being a Christian impacts the teacher. The authors note that little work has been done in this area. Subsequently, chapter 2, "How Christianity Animates a Teacher's Background Beliefs," discusses the results of a survey in which over 2,300 professors at 49 CCCU institutions were assessed on how they incorporate their identity into their teaching. The data from this survey are enriching and intriguing and show the multitude of ways in which faculty practice faith integration in the classroom, including roles in influencing course objectives, developing foundations or metanarratives for a course, and teaching methods. This chapter supplies an excellent summary of the survey, which anyone interested in the intersection of faith and teaching should read.

The second chapter also includes a "boxed out" narrative. This narrative enriches Glanzer and Allerman's survey data by providing a picture of what faith integration can look like. This is the beginning of several "boxed out" narratives the authors use to show that just as God created individuals uniquely, so there are unique ways in which people integrate their faith into their teaching.

Chapters 3 and 4 explore the connections that CCCU faculty make between their identity and their actions in the classroom. Chapter 3, "How Christian Teachers Transform Course Aims and Curricula," addresses how teachers work with course aims and curriculum to integrate their faith into the classroom. The authors summarize the means through which this was done as "spiritual addition" and "transformation." Spiritual addition faculty, as the name implies, "understand their Christian identity primarily as inspiring the addition of certain objectives, content, and methods to their classroom" (p. 62). Spiritual addition, Glanzer and Allerman suggest, tends to be more common in classes where goals and objectives are set by outside entities, such as an accreditation entity. In these contexts, course aims and curriculum objectives cannot necessarily be altered, but spiritual addition is a means through which faith can be integrated into the curriculum without necessarily altering aims or objectives.

Transformation sets "forth ends that reconceptualized the entire educational process as something sacred or related to God" (p. 63). In these contexts, faculty often integrate by altering overall course goals and objectives. They often see that every aspect of a topic should be shaped by Christian theology and ethics. Glanzer and Allerman note that both methods are notable efforts to integrate faith.

Chapter 4, "Thinking and Acting Christianly in the Classroom," provides an intriguing discussion of how faith integration impacts pedagogy. In this chapter, some of the data is shared from the survey where respondents mentioned particular ways they practice faith integration with differing pedagogies. The authors list several ways that CCCU faculty have utilized differing pedagogies to manifest their faith (p. 86), followed by a list of class activities and a brief connection faculty have made between a particular activity and their faith (p. 87). These lists, while brief, provide several concrete examples of what faith integration can look like. These could help any faculty members aiming to integrate their faith into their teaching.

Individuals teaching in Christian higher education are typically not simply "Christian"; they often have denominational heritages that impact many aspects of their faith. In chapter 5, "Is There Really Baptist, Catholic, or Quaker Teaching? The Unique Contributions

of Particular Theological Traditions," Glanzer and Allerman use their survey data to look at the contributions that differing denominations have made to the practice of teaching. They also acknowledge the tensions that individuals from one Christian tradition may have in a university from a differing tradition. From the survey they develop four themes impacting how denominational backgrounds impact faith integration: (1) specific ways of thinking about God and the Christian metanarrative, (2) sources of God's wisdom/knowledge, (3) ends of teaching, and (4) ethics. Each section provides an enriching explanation of the data providing insight regarding how teachers can weave their faith into their pedagogy.

Faith integration is a unique component of many religious institutions. It is seen as an ideal way through which faithful believers in Jesus Christ can follow Christ through their vocation. While there are challenges to practicing faith integration in a religious institution, is it possible to do it in a pluralistic university? Chapter 6, "Christian Teaching in the Pluralistic University," and chapter 7, "Identity-Informed Teaching in the Pluralistic University: Important Virtues and Practices," address this question. In a time when there are many perspectives influencing teaching in a pluralistic university (feminism, environmentalism, Marxism, etc.), a Christian perspective has the potential to play a similar role. In arguing this, Glanzer and Allerman are readily aware of the various ways many people in academia regard Christianity. However, the authors maintain that a Christian perspective often aligns with curriculum, pedagogy, and the overall purposes of a pluralistic academy. While it still needs much development, they suggest that faith integration has potential in the context of a pluralistic university.

Glanzer and Allerman close their book with the chapter "In Praise of Diverse Teaching Contexts." They fervently argue that "higher education—and identity-informed teaching in particular—benefits from the diversity of post-secondary institutions in the United States. Furthermore, we think that considerations of social justice require sustaining and incentivizing a just pluralistic system of higher education" (p. 174). The authors argue that diversity, including

faith-based teaching, plays a critical role in sustaining higher education and empowering it to develop to meet the needs of 21st century learners.

Numerous works have been published regarding faith and learning, but few have aimed to ask, "how can faith be integrated into college teaching?" Glanzer and Allerman ask this question and provide a notable work in response. Any institution that advocates for faith and learning but lacks this work is missing Glanzer and Allerman's insight into what faith integration looks like in the classroom—where the rubber meets the road. Both Glanzer's and Allerman's research and the narrative utilized to present it make their work an outstanding addition to any who aim to be faithful in their teaching.

REFERENCES

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