

EDITOR'S PERSPECTIVE

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When I had the idea of creating special topics as a means to further provide service to the members of the Christian Business Faculty Association, a subject that impacts everyone quickly came to mind — *gender*. Whether we are older or younger, male or female, conservative or liberal, married or single, the impact of gender on organizations affects us all. From the beginning we were created to serve God and serve one another for the greater good. Despite the common source of wisdom we all share, gender continues to create tensions and divisions among us. There appear to be as many opinions on women and their place, function, role and voice outside of the home, as there are women on the planet. Further, these opinions are shaped by our own unique experiences, education, relationships and culture. As such, we tend to perpetuate our values when engaging with and educating others. One could argue that the varied positions on the matter will likely last through the end of earth's time, at which point humankind will finally grasp God's truth.

The call for papers on this special topics edition was extended to the membership of Christian Business Faculty Association, and I wrongly assumed that there would be *some* homogeneity in the types of papers and responses to the topic of gender. (This is an additional example of varied understanding on the issue.) It was surprising to see such varied perspectives developed within each submission — all coming from the same member organization! The divergent thoughts on the topic provided confirmation for a research agenda I continue to explore: the varied theological positions within Christian organizations and the ensuing impact of personal theological beliefs in the way such individuals engage with students and the resulting impact on those students. This is poignant for each person, especially for faculty who teach at Christian organizations, serving both male and female students. We are expected to engage our students in the integration of faith and learning, and to do so requires that we reveal our values and theological viewpoints to them both within and

outside of the classroom setting. As we do so, our personal beliefs and values concerning gender and the roles men and women play influence the way in which we teach and mentor our students.

Rebecca Havens opens and closes our dialogue by bringing current relevance to the topic. The opening article, "Womenomics," provides context and rationale for the conversation, highlighting the industrial and economic trends in which gender is a key factor. The global state of women and our individual responsibilities are addressed in the final article, "Left Behind by Globalization: Why Christians Care About Educating Women." Such critical attention to the importance of educational opportunities for over half the world's population becomes quickly evident through her statistics and discourse. Her research as a Pew scholar on the topic of women is woven into her narrative, shaping the conversation in a way that is relevant to all of us: as individuals, as a community and in response to the global condition of women internationally. Havens underscores the economic realities faced by women who fill important roles in the economy without concomitant pay and status. This, then, emplores us to respond to the inequity.

Richard Chewning brings the spirit of tradition in this theologically based article "God the Father: The Author of Gender Differentiation, Gender Purpose, and Gender Beauty — Men and Women in the Realm of Employment." His approach, thoughtful and provoking, provides a voice shared by many. In sharp contrast to Havens, Chewning uses a specific theological approach to the topic, and substantiates his perspective in a way that causes the reader to contemplate their own theology. Brian Porter's review of Chewning's article presents a contrasting position and helps to illustrate the varied perspectives of gender in society. And, as due, Chewning responds to Porter's review succinctly.

One of the great treasures of the *Journal of Biblical Integration in Business* is the frequent insertion of a living

example of how biblical truths integrate into the lives of business people. Regina Sanchez and Yvonne Smith demonstrate the living out of one's faith in business ventures as they reveal Hildegard's testimony in "Entrepreneurship and Faith: What a 12th-Century Nun has to say to 21st-Century Entrepreneurs." Sanchez and Smith bring relevance to the topic by highlighting specific aspects of this holy woman, specifically in the entrepreneurial ventures and leadership role that ensued as a result of her keen wisdom.

The book reviews were chosen carefully to provide additional perspectives on gender. Understanding gender in light of biblical truths is key to developing a position on the subject, and *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy*, edited by Ronald W. Pierce, Rebecca Merrill Groothuis and Gordon D. Fee, is one book that provides such an opportunity. Charles Williams' review brings a layperson's understanding to the theologians' scholarly work. Further, he clearly links

the applicability of the book to business and business professors. Pierce's response to the review clarifies some items within Williams' review and provides context for material in the book as only a theologian can do.

We end with Amanda Flint's review of the classic treatise, *Gender and Grace*, by Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen. In Flint's review, she outstandingly provides acclaim for the book noting a personal reflection on gender in relation to home and work.

The variety of viewpoints in this issue demonstrates how challenging faith integration is for all of us who teach in faith-based institutions. As long as our worldviews reflect such diversity, it is important for us when we engage to sincerely appreciate one another's perspectives as we discuss faith integration. We need not agree with each other, but we must listen to one another and respect each person's right to reach his or her own conclusions through thoughtful biblical study.