

EDITOR'S PERSPECTIVE: WHEN SCRIPTURE AND CULTURE CLASH

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When Scripture and culture clash, which wins? The relative authority of the Bible versus cultural norms is a fundamental issue for the *Journal of Biblical Integration in Business (JBIB)* (e.g. Fields & Bekker, 2011; Johnson, 1996). It is a question that every author and reader of this journal must answer, continuously (II Cor. 10:5).

For example, this question is being debated right now in the CCCU (Derrick, 2015), where some members believe that the Biblical view of Christian marriage (Gen. 2:18; Eph. 5:22-33; Rev. 19:6-9) should be the standard, and other members feel that the cultural, and now legal, view of marriage should be the standard. When Scripture and culture clash, which wins? The CCCU colleges and universities are, today, making significant decisions based on how each answers that question. Hold them in prayer.

With this issue, the *JBIB* celebrates its 20th anniversary of publication (1995-2015). For twenty years, through changes in editors and changes in culture, the presupposition behind the journal has been that the Bible wins. The *JBIB* is not the *Journal of Faith Integration in Business* [emphasis added]. While the ideas of culture and faith¹ may change, the Bible does not.² At the *JBIB* the Bible is assumed to be the foundation of the presuppositions, which inform the worldview (Chewning, 1998; Franz, 2014), from which *JBIB* authors base theory and prescriptions for action. There may be variations in worldviews and theories, but the key is that the basic foundation is the Judaic/Christian scriptures (Chewning, 1995; Johnson, 1995).

Why is it so important to emphasize this? It is important because, as the previous discussion suggests, business scholars base their thinking on presuppositions. To quote the authors in the *JBIB* issue you are holding: "Ideas (what we think, perceive, and believe) are the cornerstone for activity (what we do; how we behave)" (Brown, 2015: 87). "The basic step to correctly diagnose a situation," says Salgado (2015: 24), "involves

conformation to reality." His presupposition is that the Bible is Reality and that cultural realities should be measured against it.

JBIB authors understand the principle of presuppositions and worldview; it is stated or implied in almost every article. For example, again quoting from this issue, "A manager's Christian worldview will influence the accommodation of employee's disability in the workplace" (Wilkerson & Gerdes, 2015: 11). Or, "...it is appropriate to consider the morality of shock advertising through the lens of a Christian worldview. For most Christians, such an analysis would involve some degree of scriptural exegesis" (Hagenbuch, 2015: 54).

When did the *JBIB* authors become so aware of worldview? In an important article in this issue, Jim Dupree reviews the development of Biblical integration during the 20 years of the *JBIB* (Dupree, 2015). He found that an important principle during the first five years of the journal was that "worldview and presuppositions matter." This principle appears to have become part of the DNA of the CBFA (S. Chewning, 2015; Dupree, 2015; Johnson, 2015) and has since permeated the association's culture.³

As a result, there is a consensus in the CBFA that, when discussing ideas, it is important to state presuppositions. I would venture to say that there are few groups of business academics who understand this to the depth that CBFA members do. This is a key strength of the Association.

So, when Scripture and culture clash which wins? First, what presuppositions are there about the authority of the Scripture? We must answer this question when we write, when we teach, and when we live.

For twenty years, the *JBIB* has advocated the presupposition that Biblical integration, and not "faith" integration, is what this journal is about. Editors may change, but the worldview of the journal does not. In the box below are the Integration standards as drawn up by incoming

editor, Michael Cafferky; they are taken directly from the new Reviewer Guidelines.

- **Biblical Integration.**
- Is biblical integration central to the purpose of the paper or is it an add-on, after-thought?
- Does the author base the integration directly in the Bible not only in “faith language”?
- Is the biblical integration “denominationally neutral” in the sense that particular denominational viewpoints are not insisted upon?
- Does the author base integration on “the whole council of God” (both Old Testament and New Testament) and the broad theological messages of the Bible rather than on proof texts?
- Is the context of the biblical passages the author uses handled appropriately?
- If there are opposing points of view to the central issues addressed by the paper, does the paper address these?

In the next twenty years, this question will continue to be important. The relative authority of the Scripture and culture has not yet been debated within the CBFA, but either the debate will occur voluntarily or it will be forced upon us. As Cafferky notes in this issue, “It is not likely that this concern will go away until a carefully crafted description of faith integration process or theory has been developed which includes a definitive statement regarding the use of Scripture” (Cafferky, 2015: 41). Be ready.

The Bible Stands
Haldor Lillenas, 1917
Public domain

The Bible stands like a rock undaunted
’Mid the raging storms of time;
Its pages burn with the truth eternal,
And they glow with a light sublime.

Refrain:
The Bible stands though the hills may tumble,
It will firmly stand when the earth shall crumble;
I will plant my feet on its firm foundation,
For the Bible stands.

The Bible stands like a mountain tow’ring
Far above the works of men;
Its truth by none ever was refuted,
And destroy it they never can.

The Bible stands and it will forever,
When the world has passed away;
By inspiration it has been given,
All its precepts I will obey.

The Bible stands every test we give it,
For its Author is divine;
By grace alone I expect to live it,
And to prove and to make it mine.

ENDNOTES

¹ “Faith” is a pliable word. Which faith? Faith in what? “The demons also believe [have faith],” says James, “and tremble” (2:19).

² For an excellent article on this topic see Lynn & Wallace, 2001.

³ Do not miss the special section on the history and impact of the *JBIB*. There are personal reflections from the founding editor, Sharon Johnson; from the incoming editor, Michael Cafferky; and from the *CBAR* editor, Kevin Brown. Shirley Chewing gives her unique perspective on the founding of the *JBIB*. In addition, Kent Saunders, Director of Publications and founding editor of the *CBAR*, has written a brief history of the CBFA journals. Finally, in an impressive contribution, Jim Dupree, a long time CBFA member and author, summarizes twenty years of integration history in the *JBIB*.

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