

# Recommended: *The Outrageous Idea of the Missional Professor*

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By Mikel Del Rosario

## The Outrageous Idea of the Missional Professor

In this installment of **my series featuring resources on Faith, Work and Economics**, I recommend [\*The Outrageous Idea of the Missional Professor\*](#) by Paul M. Gould.

In this book, Paul Gould shares the idea that God wants to use Christian professors *as professors* to reach colleagues, administrators and students in colleges and universities, transform society and meet the world's needs. He demonstrates that God's mission to redeem and restore a fallen world includes disciples who teach in the most influential institutions in society. As many believers struggle to live missionally in their academic professions, Gould challenges his readers with a clear vision and practical examples through the stories of contemporary role models. Although his primary audience is Christian professors on secular campuses, those teaching on Christian campuses will find this book helpful in their broader interactions with the academy.

## 3 Key Points from the Book

Here are just three ideas I enjoyed reading about in *The Outrageous Idea of the Missional Professor*.

### God calls Christian professors to serve Him *as professors*

Gould this idea seems outrageous because many Christian professors have unconsciously accepted the sacred-secular divide, missing the connection between their academic work and their discipleship to Jesus. Rather than desiring self-aggrandizement, Christian professors must see their field through a Christian worldview, be equipped in philosophy and theology and live faithfully for Christ in the academy. In order to unleash these disciples for the advancement of God's kingdom, the church must affirm the calling of Christian professors *as professors*—individuals who shape the lives and thoughts of future leaders, apply their expertise to the world's needs, pointing colleagues, administrators and students to Christ.

### God calls Christian professors to be a certain kind of people

More than just preaching a gospel of transformation, God calls Christian professors to show some evidence of what transformation looks like. Gould says, “We need to integrate all that we are and do as Christians with all that we are and do as university professors. The gospel is not just something to believe, it is also something to obey,” and “we are after an all-of-life view of discipleship unto Christ, where Christ is Lord of work and play, the sacred and the secular, of faith and scholarship (25).” Indeed, our primary identity must be a follower of Christ. Being

Christlike in character should be the *telos* of our lives as Christians and scholars. Gould offers a commitment we can remind ourselves with every day: “I will live or Christ, come what may as a professor. I will find my identity and hope in Christ and point others to Christ through my teaching, relating, and research for the glory of God and the sake of the lost (51).”

### **God calls Christian professors to put Christ first**

In a chapter called “The Christian Scholar and the Mind,” he encouraged professors to cultivate the life of the mind and be “intellectually virtuous.” As we enter into conversations in our disciples, which are often dominated by naturalism and postmodernism, we must put Jesus first: “Faithfulness to Christ in the academy requires the virtue of intellectual courage...there is incredible pressure to sacrifice our Christian integrity in order to maintain academic respectability” (59). He also reminds us to intentionally put Jesus first in our work, rather than be driven by self-aggrandizement or the pursuit of academic accolades: “Let’s tenaciously pursue Christ and our research projects for his glory rather than our own” (62).

### **Conclusion**

The university is a major center of cultural influence. Gould’s work challenges Christian professors and those seeking to work in the academy to see how living a missional life can have a major impact on their students, colleagues and even the world.

### **Read the Book**

[Gould, Paul M. \*The Outrageous Idea of the Missional Professor\*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2014.](#)