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FROM THE EDITOR

This issue of *Fides et Historia* is about intellectual boundaries and the vocation of the historian. Where should we draw the lines—and should we draw them sharply—between history and theology, history and heritage, history and memory, scholarship and citizenship, conscious perspective and un-thought prejudice? Or should we transgress these familiar modern boundaries and explore the postmodern and traditional frontiers and borderlands that span them? While significant as theoretical issues related to epistemology, disciplinary integrity, and cultural function, these questions also point to day-to-day matters of life and practice for us as historians, teachers, and citizens. Asking “Who are we?” and “What is it that we do?” as historians also implies asking “Who do we serve and how?”

With these kinds of issues at stake, Doug Sweeney’s presidential address reminds us that the academy, particularly the Conference on Faith and History (CFH), exists to serve people and nurture relationships as well as to accumulate knowledge and pursue truth. Barry Hankins’s article examines a conflict among influential evangelical thinkers over the relationship between the study of the past for its own sake and in the interest of contemporary debates in public life. Darren Walhof’s essay explores some of the frontiers noted above from the perspective of the history of political thought, using especially the hermeneutical philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer, whose work has been oddly neglected by both working historians and theorists of historiography. In addition to the writings of Gadamer, readers of *Fides* might find useful those of Paul Ricoeur. A lively introduction to Ricoeur’s thought is Richard Kearney, *On Paul Ricoeur* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004).

I hope that the “Pedagogy Forum” will become a regular feature of *Fides*. Glenn Sanders’s essay should read as a proposal for the kinds of issues and material that might be published in *Fides* in the future. Most of us are teachers as well as researchers and writers, and as a practical matter we transgress the boundaries of the discipline on a regular basis, as we try to motivate our students to study the past and see its relevance, and then deal with the sometimes unruly and unpredictable responses and questions that we get in the classroom. Members of the CFH, and other readers too, should view Glenn’s essay as a challenge and should submit papers and proposals to *Fides* for consideration. For those wondering what such papers might look like, *The Journal of Education and Christian Belief* (<http://www.jecb.org/>) and the *Magazine of History* (<http://www.oah.org/pubs/magazine/>) might provide some inspiration. The “Pedagogy Forum” is in the experimental stage, and we will see how much supply and demand there is out there. But the challenge is an inviting one, I hope, to provide practical ideas for the classroom and to help us better define what we are and for whom we are as historians and teachers.

In the “Issues Forum,” with a provocative essay by Don Yerxa and pointed responses by Ron Wells and Wilfred McClay, the authors discuss and debate the boundary between history and theology. The issue is less the legitimacy of modern historiography, per se, including that done from Christian perspectives, and more the value of doing something radically distinctive that might be called “theological history.”

Why have Christian historians not done more to pursue such a project? And, what might it look like? Similarly, my long review essay (of two books on the American Civil War and its cultural legacy in the South) pushes us to reconsider the boundaries of the discipline when it comes to moral reflection, our emotional responses to the past, and the place of historiography in public life. I first undertook to write this essay near the end of Ron Well's tenure as editor of *Fides*, and now have taken it as an opportunity to define some of the questions that I would like to see explored in *Fides* in the future. In that sense my essay also ought to be read as a challenge, to experiment with new ways of approaching the past and to explore how to integrate them with more ones more familiar to modern historiography. For further inspiration, readers might take a look at Alan Munslow and Robert A. Rosenstone, eds., *Experiments in Rethinking History* (New York: Routledge, 2004), a collection of essays originally published in the new journal, *Rethinking History: The Journal of Theory and Practice*. They also might enjoy reading Beverly Southgate, *What is History For?* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

Should Christian historians and others who want to rethink the boundaries of modern historiography pursue distinctive forms of scholarship within the academy and in the classroom? If so, how? Or should we pursue "scholarship" in distinct places and in different institutional contexts? If so, where and how? And for whom? There is no necessary reason, it seems to me, for historians to stop doing scholarship "for its own sake," even if such purity is not possible, strictly speaking. There are good reasons not to have an immediate, conscious purpose for studying something, other than study itself; and, conversations that take place primarily among scholars are valuable ones. But there are equally good reasons for historians to do more than this, and to transgress the familiar intellectual, professional, and institutional boundaries of our time.

William Katerberg