



The Flourishing Teacher

Vocational Renewal for a Sacred Profession

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Christina Bieber Lake (PhD, Emory University) is the Clyde S. Kilby Professor of English at Wheaton College. She is the author of *Beyond the Story: American Literary Fiction and the Limits of Materialism*, *Prophets of the Posthuman: American Literature, Biotechnology, and the Ethics of Personhood*, and *The Incarnational Art of Flannery O'Connor*.

Inspiration for Teachers to Avoid Burnout

What led to your interest in writing a book on life-giving teaching?

Christina Bieber Lake: In my more than twenty years of teaching experience, I've mentored many younger faculty members, teaching them the strategies and approaches I've learned over the years. One day it occurred to me that it was time to write a book that could do this same kind of work. Most teachers are overworked and underpaid—what they need is inspiration to keep going and some strategies to make it easier.

What is your main thesis in *The Flourishing Teacher*?

Christina: Teaching is a sacred profession—a truly high calling. But it is also very hard work. As the years begin to pile on, fatigue can set in, and the need for encouragement is great. This book provides targeted, month-to-month inspiration, encouragement, and strategies for how to stay focused and not to burn out. I've collected the strategies that I've effectively employed in over twenty years of experience to not let teaching control my life, but to be renewed in Christ and be able to have something to give to the many generations of students who will enter my classroom. It is also organized around specific strategies that I've learned, presented in a list of "things I've learned the hard way" so that someone who just wants to read those parts of the book can do so easily.

What do you hope your book offers to teachers?

Christina:

1. Collects and presents effective teaching strategies, including classroom community building
2. Encourages the need for adequate self-care centered on sabbath keeping
3. Provides workable organization strategies so that teachers can spend less time prepping and more time doing what inspires them to teach



Karin DeHaven, academic publicist
800.843.4587 ext. 4096 or kdehaven@ivpress.com