

Richard Hughes Gibson  
and James Edward Beitler III  
Foreword by Anne Ruggles Gere  
Afterword by Alan Jacobs

Q & A

ivp  
Academic

Cultivating Virtue  
Through Our  
Words

# Charitable Writing

## Charitable Writing

*Cultivating Virtue through Our Words*

December 15, 2020 | \$22, 232 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-5483-7

**Richard Hughes Gibson** (PhD, University of Virginia) is associate professor of English at Wheaton College. He is the author of *Forgiveness in Victorian Literature: Grammar, Narrative, and Community*. With designer Jeremy Botts, he codirects Manibus Press, an occasional publisher of artists' books.

## Discipleship Through Academic Writing

**What led to your interest in academic writing as a formational practice and now sharing about it?**

**Gibson and Beitler:** *Charitable Writing* began with a professional crisis.

After a few years of teaching at a Christian liberal arts college, we had an unsettling realization: we had been teaching the craft of writing in *almost the same way* that we had previously done at state universities. In fact, we were still using the same textbooks, dispensing the same handouts, and assigning the same exercises. Our writing classrooms were largely indistinguishable from those in the academy at-large. All of this, we recognized, was a problem. But as we pondered these issues, we had a second difficult realization. We had never given much thought to our own writing practices. Did they reflect our Christian commitments? We had the worrying sense that we were, to use an unflattering biblical reference, "blind guides" (Mt 15:14). Our classrooms didn't just need work: we did too.

Our experience, we've come to learn, is by no means a unique one. Though writing is taught in some form at every Christian college and high school, there are very few resources to help students practice academic writing in light of their faith commitments. Writing textbooks abound, but books that teach students to practice academic writing as an act of discipleship are rare.

**What is your main thesis in *Charitable Writing*?**

**Gibson and Beitler:** *Charitable Writing* argues that our spiritual commitments can and should provide bearings for our writing, including argumentative genres practiced in academic settings. The book examines how Christians might conceive of and, in turn, practice writing in light of our religious commitments. How do we imagine our work as writers? How do we relate to our fellow writers and our readers? How do we handle the writing of others? How do we respond to those with whom we disagree? Can we argue with them lovingly? How do we connect the time we spend writing to our spiritual lives? As this list of questions suggests, we take a step back from the traditional subjects of writing textbooks like organization and voice in order to reflect on how our Christian commitments can enter into and grow out of our writing lives. The grammar of the schoolbook—while important!—is not our direct concern; we inquire, instead, into how we might write according to the grammar of faith.



Karin DeHaven, academic publicist  
800.843.4587 ext. 4096 or [kdehaven@ivpress.com](mailto:kdehaven@ivpress.com)

ivp

[ivpress.com/media](http://ivpress.com/media)

Richard Hughes Gibson  
and James Edward Beitler III  
Foreword by Anne Ruggles Gere  
Afterword by Alan Jacobs

Q & A

ivp  
Academic

Cultivating Virtue  
Through Our  
Words

## **Charitable Writing**

*Cultivating Virtue through Our Words*

December 15, 2020 | \$22, 232 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-5483-7

# Charitable Writing

**James Edward Beitler III** (PhD, University of Michigan) is associate professor of English at Wheaton College, where he is the director of First-Year Writing and also coordinates the Writing Fellows Program. He is the author of *Seasoned Speech: Rhetoric in the Life of the Church* and *Remaking Transitional Justice in the United States: The Rhetorical Authorization of the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission*.

### What do you hope your book contributes to teaching and learning about writing?

#### Gibson and Beitler:

1. *Charitable Writing* draws on authors and artists throughout the church's history to reveal how we might embrace writing as an act of discipleship.
2. *Charitable Writing* teaches writers how to listen humbly, argue lovingly, and keep the time of writing hopefully. These spiritual threshold concepts, as we refer to them, present writing as an occasion to grow in virtue.
3. *Charitable Writing* is written with writing teachers in mind. The book engages key concepts from the field of writing studies (e.g., threshold concepts, discourse communities, arguments, and writing processes), is consistent with the WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition, and complements many widely used writing guides.

### How does *Charitable Writing* relate to your work as scholars and teachers?

*Charitable Writing* is dedicated to our students. Ultimately, the book is about their trajectories as writers and people of faith: we hope that they come to see the writing they do in school (and, indeed, throughout their lives) as opportunities to grow in the love of God.

The book continues our attempts to bring the Christian faith to bear on our discipline. We hope that the book engages and enlivens conversations about faith in writing studies.



---

Karin DeHaven, academic publicist  
800.843.4587 ext. 4096 or [kdehaven@ivpress.com](mailto:kdehaven@ivpress.com)

ivp

[ivpress.com/media](http://ivpress.com/media)