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Dillman and Birch's "C(H)AOS Theory: Reflections of Chief Academic Officers in Theological Education" (Book Review)

Joshua M. Avery
God's Bible School and College

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**C(H)AOS Theory: Reflections of Chief Academic
Officers in Theological Education,**

edited by Kathleen D. Billman and Bruch C. Birch. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans,
2011. 411 pp. \$38.00. ISBN 9780802866875

*Reviewed by Joshua M. Avery, Director of Library Services,
God's Bible School and College, Cincinnati, OH*

Students of educational leadership, especially in higher education, will find no shortage of scholarship about general academic leadership and management, yet very little has been written about the role of academic officers in theological education. Into this gap step Kathleen D. Billman and Bruch C. Birch with *C(H)AOS Theory: Reflections of Chief Academic Officers in Theological Education*. This collection of thirty-two essays covers a host of topics including mission and vision, governance and faculty development, budget, and assessment and accreditation. The essays come from thirty-five academic leaders across an impressive variety of evangelical, mainline Protestant, Roman Catholic, and non-denominational institutions in the United States and Canada.

The genesis of the collection was as a handbook for Chief Academic Officers and, despite this original vision being altered, the final text maintains a useful balance of theory and praxis. The focus of the collection is on the skills and abilities requisite to success as a Chief Academic Officer in an Association of Theological Schools (ATS) institution, yet there is much here that other campus leaders will find practicable. The chapters are grouped into three major sections (Reading Institutional Context, Nurturing Commitments, and Developing Competencies) with a conclusion by Daniel Aleshire, the current ATS executive director. Librarians (especially those who aspire to success in Christian colleges and universities) will enjoy Jana Childers' essay on exegeting institutional context, while any busy professional will be enriched by Bruce C. Birch's meditation on personal, professional, and spiritual development.

The study and practice of leadership in higher education, especially theological, is all the richer for this volume. Highly recommended for all college and university collections.