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For Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion



## **Facing the Facts: Sometimes You Need New Equipment**

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I imagine that once upon a time, a child joyfully ran along the beach in this sandal - picking up shells, building sculptures in the sand, playing in the waves. But, after a season at sea, this sandal would be difficult to walk in - it's nearly broken in half, now the home of sea life, and no longer part of a pair. Plus, the child who wore it last summer has likely outgrown it. A new season calls for new equipment.

Deans are called to help theological institutions, and the people within them, realize these same sorts of things. The shoes we've been wearing (perhaps our curricula, organizational structures, recruiting processes, systems of student support, and faculty cultures) don't always serve us well in a new season. Moving beyond unneeded parts of the past - first naming and then letting go of old ways and sacred cows - can be difficult, however, and so deans also need to care well for faculty, staff, students, and ourselves amid times of significant change.

It's OK to swap out equipment, and sometimes it's the best option. We still need shoes to get us where we are going, shoes that will provide cushion and support and protection and make the journey easier, but it's likely time for a new pair of sandals. New equipment may take time to break in, but we can trust that it will serve us well in this new season and allow us to explore and build and play in response to the divine invitation to equip God's people to serve as they have been called

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