

## DIDACHE: FAITHFUL TEACHING 18:2 INTRODUCTION

Dean G. Blevins, Editor

Greetings and Welcome to *Didache: Faithful Teaching*. This edition marks the culmination of eighteen years of publication exploring theology, culture, and pedagogy in the Wesleyan Tradition. The edition blends research presentations, student submissions, library holdings, and reflective essays. One prominent theme that surfaces across the writings entails the nature of living the Christian life in a complex, challenging, world. Whether approaching this challenge as a seminary student, committed minister, missionary, or layperson, our task of engaging with faithfulness and credibility remains a key challenge.

This edition opens with a public address given by Dr. Josh Sweeden as his inauguration address as Dean of the Faculty at Nazarene Theological Seminary, Kansas City. Sweeden's address navigates the complex contextual challenges of our era while calling for seminaries to foster an imagination that "helps the church be the church." Sweeden's address moves through an admonition of the church as God's creation (not our making) and the role of theological education to participate within God's imagination with confidence based on our Wesleyan heritage. This invitation could easily be the invitation to discipleship at every level of theological education including the church. But what would that discipleship look like that takes Dr. Sweeden's mandate as a larger task for us all? The remaining essays provide some clues.

One response to Sweeden's call to seminaries (and by extension all faithful teaching) emerges through a series of research lenses beginning with scripture, particularly Dorothea Gschwandtner's treatise of key discipleship themes in the gospel of Mark. Ms. Gschwanter's paper comes as a student submission from Nazarene Theological College in Manchester under Dr. Kent Brower's recommendation. Gschwandtner masterfully documents her thesis as discipleship on the way to the cross. Building a comparison between the twelve disciples and other female followers in Mark, Ms. Gschwanter argues the way in which Mark tells his story, he shapes the identity of the new holiness community as cruciform and inclusive, and demands a response from us today.

Two historical treatises follow Gschwanter's work. Drawing primarily from the work of John Wesley, Dr. Edgardo Rosado argues (in both Spanish and English) that for Wesley, the perfect expression of religion was centered on establishing a Christian praxis that embodied the presence and the love of Jesus as the irrefutable way of transforming society. This praxis, for Wesley, included not only personal transformation but an ongoing engagement and care for those marginalized in our society. Dr. Mark Mann's historical treatise of the twelve-step movement, known as Alcoholics Anonymous, provides a case study of how such a holistic transformational discipleship might manifest itself. Mann asserts that AA maintains roots in the nineteenth century holiness movement and marks an important development of holiness theology and praxis distinct from the churches of the Wesleyan-holiness movement. Yet Mann asserts that where many of these differences lie, the 12-step movement has much to offer to the Wesleyan-holiness movement today.

Following these two historical engagements the journal returns to a contemporary, and global, perspective from missionary Gina Pottenger, a submission provided courtesy a referral by Stéphane Tibi, the Eurasia Regional Education Coordinator. Pottenger argues we have lost the art and understanding of what it means to be people of peace and agents of reconciliation in a polarized world. In response she builds an essay that argues "before we rush to engage in advocacy, justice and mercy in our societies, we may first need to learn how to do so with critical thinking, tolerance, humility, a listening heart that can recognize and embrace diversity of approaches and solutions, and the ability to speak the truth in love." Pottenger then fleshes out those terms for the sake of a comprehensive vision for holistic missional discipleship.

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This edition then closes with two representative writings residing in our libraries. Many of our readers may already be aware of the Wesleyan Holiness Digital Library or WHDL <https://www.whdl.org/> This resource, under the guidance of the International Board of Education, continues to be a primary global resource for clergy preparation with the majority of its readership resting beyond USA/Canada borders.

What readers may not know is that the WHDL is now developing a series of institutional repositories with independent colleges, universities and seminaries. These repositories allow independent institutions to use the resources of WHDL, including its multilingual search engine, to store and display individual collections of scholarship and early historical projects. Two such schools, seminaries, provided resources for this edition. The first submission comes from the Asia Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary in Manila Philippines and includes a prior publication in *The Mediator*, the schools own journal. Several of our schools have published independent journals reflecting regional theological contributions, often not fully known or received globally. Now repositories like APNTS provide such an ability. The article, by Dr. Jason Valeriano Hallig, actually explores the positive impact of the Reformation and calls for a retrieval—celebrating and communicating the spirit of *semper reformanda secundum verbum Dei* (always reforming according to the Word of God). The author believes that the Reformation in and through sola Scriptura redefines what it truly means for the Church of Christ to be one, holy, apostolic, and catholic Church as Christ prayed for in John 17. You can find out more about the repository at the following website <https://apnts.whdl.org/collections/apnts-collections> Our thanks to librarian Noreen del Rosario for providing this resource.

In addition, Nazarene Theological Seminary, Kansas City, also includes a diverse set of resources in its institutional repository, including Wynkoop Center for Women in Ministry, a center designed to promote women called to ordained ministry. The center, in partial fulfillment of its mission, provides Bible studies to educate and raise awareness concerning God’s creative and redemptive intention regarding gender relations. The target audience is small groups of teenagers and adults in local church and campus ministries. The Wynkoop Center has created four Bible study units.

- The Creation Mandate unit considers the first three chapters of Genesis and the relationship between men and women before and after the fall.
- The Old Testament Women in Public Leadership unit profiles prominent women, including Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, and Esther.
- The New Testament Women in Public Leadership unit profiles associates of Jesus and Paul, including Anna, Lydia, and Priscilla.
- The Difficult Passages in the New Testament unit considers the most controversial passages concerning women in ministry, including passages in 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, 1 Timothy, and 1 Peter.

For the purpose of this edition, the journal includes the fourth publication in this series. Our thanks to librarian Debbie Bradshaw at NTS for providing this resource. You can find their repository online at <https://nts.whdl.org/collections/nts-collections>

As always, please note the journal publishes articles along the themes of theology, culture, and education within a Wesleyan heritage. Guidelines for submissions are available at the website. Professors may also submit outstanding student papers (with student permission) if they will agree to serve as the reviewer. This edition provides an excellent example of this approach.

We again thank Ernalyng Longcop Fausto, with the staff of the Asia Pacific Region, who works diligently in the formatting and maintenance of our website, and Dr. Tammy Condon who works tirelessly

promoting *Didache: Faithful Teaching*, as she does in the development of the Wesleyan Holiness Digital Library (WHDL) <https://www.whdl.org/>.

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Nazarene Theological Seminary Installation Address – Dean of the Faculty: Josh Sweeden, PhD.

Following Jesus to the Cross: Mark's Story of Discipleship and the Identity of the New Holiness Community: Dorothea B. Gschwandtner, Nazarene Theological College, Manchester, UK

Hacia un Cristinismo de Encarnación: la Expresión Perfecta de la Religión: Edgardo Rosado, PhD, Nazarene Bible College

Towards an Incarnational Christianity: The Perfect Expression of Religion: Edgardo Rosado, PhD, Nazarene Bible College

The Holiness Movement in the Church Basement: How the 12-Step Movement Can Constructively Inform Wesleyan-Holiness Spirituality: Mark Mann, Point Loma Nazarene University

Need for Peace and Understanding: How to live out Holiness in Public and Private Discourse a Personal Essay: Gina Pottenger. Missionary.

#### Institutional Repository Submissions

Sola Scriptura—Reformation's Ecclesial Legacy: Hermeneutical Freedom and Interpretive Diversity toward a Reformed Catholicity of the Church: Jason Valeriano Hallig, Ph.D., Institutional Repository of Asia Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary. <https://apnts.whdl.org/collections/apnts-collections>

Difficult Passages in the New Testament: Kaza Fraley, Stefanie & Mark Hendrickson, and Wayne McCown. Institutional Repository of Nazarene Theological Seminary, Kansas City. <https://nts.whdl.org/collections/nts-collections>