

DIDACHE: FAITHFUL TEACHING 20:1 INTRODUCTION

Dean G. Blevins, Editor

Greetings and Welcome to *Didache: Faithful Teaching* a publication dedicated to exploring theology, culture, and pedagogy in the Wesleyan Tradition. The edition marks our 20th year of publication in a time of challenge and ongoing theological imagination and response. This edition represents our commitment to ongoing global publications, representing publications from three global regions and across a range of disciplinary traditions. It also includes the announcement of a new journal in Africa that readers... and writers... may be interested in joining.

The journal begins with an article that serves as a continuation from our last edition and the Eurasia Region Theology Conference. We begin in biblical studies with Samuel Hildebrandt, Lecturer at NTC Manchester, who revisits the concept of “exile” in both Jeremiah and 1 Peter to explore identity, pastoral care, and human responses to God’s “good plans” in exile. Our readers will discover a very quick turn from scriptural inquiry to social analysis in our next offering. Reuben L. Lillie and Dr. Charles L. Perabeau, both from Olivet Nazarene University, provide an intriguing treatise on the creation and nature of Nazarene district organization. Lillie and Perabeau explore the unlikely beginnings of many districts and their odd placement in light of urban centers. While explicitly focused on the USA Nazarene setting, the article serves a needed contribution to the nature of polity within the denomination, and many of the implicit assumptions that may spill over to global decision making. While ecclesiology has long served as a topic of theological investigation in this journal, the actual organizational assumptions that influence a lot of leadership decisions often remains overlooked. Hopefully Lillie and Perabeau’s recommendations open the door for a fresh consideration of the organizational dynamics that often underlie more lofty views of the church.

The journal then takes another turn, this time addressing a contemporary problem affecting the globe, the COVID-19 pandemic. The recent coronavirus crisis continues to challenge the church in both its creativity and faithfulness. Thanks to the prompting of Andrew Pottinger’s article, I decided to reach out to a number of scholars and ministers (one and the same) for reasoned essays addressing the pandemic. Each academically oriented essay serves as a measured response to the pandemic. Originally, I thought I might arrange them thematically but chose instead to publish merely in the order they arrived during a very busy time for so many ministers. However, readers will note points of continuity among these authors as well as divergence. So, one will discover varying responses from the use of technology in worship and discipleship, to contextuality and people on the margins of society, to faithful sacramental practice and ecclesial adaptation. I do appreciate those colleagues who had the time to contribute while understanding that a number of people I also approached just did not have the time to add their voices... perhaps in the future we can reprise this exercise.

Finally, the journal closes with a book review by Dr. Russell Frazier addressing Johan Tredoux’s book, *Mildred Bangs Wynkoop: Her Life and Her Thought*. Frazier’s contribution does serve two purposes. First, it reminds our readers that we do publish book reviews as part of the journal. Second, Dr. Frazier’s presence affords us the opportunity to announce a new journal to be offered online in Africa. Several Wesleyan institutions are pleased to announce a new

publishing venture. They are partnering together to publish a peer-reviewed, referred academic journal, entitled *Transform: A Journal of Biblical, Theological, and Practical Studies*. The collaborative effort will be given oversight by an editorial board composed of individuals representing various Wesleyan institutions throughout Africa, including the following:

- Nazarene Theological College, Republic of South Africa
- Nazarene Theological College of Central Africa, Lilongwe, Malawi
- School of Religion and Christian Ministry of Africa Nazarene University, Nairobi, Kenya
- West Africa Theological Seminary, Lagos, Nigeria
- Banyam Theological Seminary, Bambur, Karim Lambido Taraba State, Nigeria
- Kenya Highlands University, Kericho, Kenya
- Wesleyan College of Liberia, Monrovia, Liberia

Transform will provide a peer-reviewed journal published online
<https://ojs.anu.ac.ke/index.php/soj>

Scholars and students are invited to log into *Transform*'s website and register as a member. One can enter a photo, identify one's email address, provide a bio or CV, and provide any other important information. *Transform* welcomes students and scholars to submit journal articles and book reviews for publication in the journal. In past history *Didache: Faithful Teaching* chose to collaborate with a number of Nazarene publications that serve regional efforts, we hope that we will be able to form a helpful partnership with *Transform* as it emerges as a key resource for the future. By the way, faculty can also recommend student papers to *Didache* as well.

We again thank Ernalyn 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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