

## DIDACHE 12:1 INTRODUCTION

Dean G. Blevins, Senior Editor

Greetings and welcome to this edition of *Didache: Faithful Teaching*, a journal dedicated to exploring the intersections of Wesleyan theology, education, and culture in a global setting. This edition begins twelve years of online publication. We are fortunate to have an excellent blend of senior faculty publications alongside grounded student research. The edition definitely reflects a theological nature, with strong global overtones around themes of moral theology and justice. As in the last edition, I am definitely indebted to our new global editorial team, in particular to Deirdre Brower Latz who also deserves our congratulations as the new Principal of Nazarene Theological College, Manchester. Alongside Deirdre's encouragement, I have to also express appreciation to both Dwight Swanson and Roger Hahn who agreed (and encouraged) our publications of recent efforts by students and colleagues at both NTC Manchester and Nazarene Theological Seminary. In addition I owe a debt to Dr. Edwin Robinson who contacted me about the good work of a current colleague at Northwest Nazarene University, Dr. Dan Lawrence. Collectively these friends of the journal (whom I am privileged to count as personal friends) provided the type of needed input and suggestions that historically have maintained the flow of quality articles we experience through *Didache: Faithful Teaching*

The edition begins with four new research-oriented publications. The first, by Andrew Brower Latz, introduces some of the readership to the theological vision of Andrew Shanks, an important Anglican theologian that probably receives less notice in Wesleyan circles. As Andrew points out in the introduction of his article,

Three of the most important Anglican theologians alive today are Hegelians: Rowan Williams, John Milbank and Andrew Shanks. Within political theology, Milbank tends to receive most of the attention as far as believing and/or institutional Christianity goes, but I think Shanks and Williams offer good but under explored alternatives, with Shanks the least well known of the three.

Fortunately Andrew provides a welcomed introduction to those interested.

The next research article sparked recent conversation in several settings addressing clergy education. Dr. Jeren Rowell's research on clergy attrition and the role of the district superintendent (derived from his doctoral research project at Olivet Nazarene University) provides an intriguing introduction to a known problem in many ministry settings. The work also serves to raise ecclesial as well as therapeutic concerns for future ministry practice.

The next two articles, and following series of symposium presentations, reflect a definite acknowledgement of the quality of work being done with Africa in mind. As a global journal I am always deeply appreciative of research oriented in global regions beyond Western contexts (North America and Europe in particular). The submission by David Wesley, represents a "bridge article" addressing collaborative efforts between congregations in the United States and churches in Swaziland, Africa. David is gracious enough to give us a glimpse of his most recent research in global partnerships; particularly a new, powerful, model David defines as "Collective Impact" that well may shift missional efforts in the future. The final independent research article comes from Greg Crofford, providing an intriguing theological and sociological exploration of

Christology in relation to power and spiritual conflict in sub-Saharan Africa. These four articles collectively elicit different reflections on the nature of Christology, mission, ministry, and cultural practice.

David's and Greg's articles set the stage for four more submissions by African students and scholars who recently participated in a theology symposium at NTC Manchester. I asked Dr. Swanson to provide an introduction for the journal which he graciously submitted:

January in Manchester may seem to be a strange place and time for a symposium on African theology. But, this is a month that brings together NTC postgraduate students from around the world, both for MA modules and research seminars. This year we were aware that a fair number of these students would be coming from Africa, so we felt this would be a good opportunity to provide a forum for African students to talk together about doing theology in the African setting. Africa is a vast continent, and it is not easy even within Africa to get people together in such a manner. So, since they were together already, we wanted to make good use of the time.

It proved to be both a stimulating and an enjoyable day.

Four Manchester students, coming from Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, and Swaziland, presented from their research. Students were also present from South Africa, Zimbabwe and Nigeria, besides the assortment of Europeans and North Americans who came to listen. There were people present from NTC's partner institutions, the University of Manchester and Cliff College.

Africa, of course, is a vast continent, with a diversity of life and culture which Europe can barely imagine. Thus, one cannot speak of 'African theology' as if it were a single subject, and no attempt was made to suggest a common theme for the day. The papers published here give just a glimpse of the breadth of subject matter that is being addressed by today's African theologians.

Two impressions linger with this Westerner who was allowed to listen in on the discussions. Firstly, while there were criticisms of the Western Church, these were marked by a gentle graciousness. Indeed, they were offered as part of the narrative of their own stories, and with a willingness to remain in positive conversation with the rest of the world. Secondly, there was no idealisation of the African in contrast to the Western church. There was self-examination as well. Stronger than either of these, nevertheless, is the evidence of a strong and vibrant church and a generation of theologians ready to engage both each other and the wider Christian world to address urgent issues facing the Church in the 21st Century.

I think you will find the four articles stimulating and reflective of a range of issues and interest at work within African theological reflection. One item you will note is that the articles address a range of theological issues including social concerns.

Recognizing there is no separation between theology and ethics (probably better characterized by the term moral theology), social responsibility remains a key pedagogical concern within the

journal. To highlight the need for strong theological engagement with issues like social justice, the journal also presents the student papers from Nazarene Theological Seminary. The presenters are recipients of the Tom Nees Social Justice Award at NTS. Tom Nees is widely recognized as the one who led the way in renewing the Church of the Nazarene's understanding of its call to minister to and among those in need through the development of the Community of Hope in Washington D.C. Dr. Nees later served as Director of Mission Strategy for the Church of the Nazarene in the United States and Canada and as adjunct faculty for NTS, teaching urban ministry courses. The journal published previous award winners (volumes 10:1 and 8:1) and we appreciate Dean of the Faculty, Dr. Roger Hahn, for releasing these papers for subsequent publication. Two papers were generated by 2011 co-recipients Joseph Goodwin and Cassandra Lara, while Jonathan Sutter's submission received the 2012 award.

The edition closes with a welcomed essay by Dr. Dan Lawrence, Associate Professor of Physics, Chair, Dept. of Physics and Engineering at Northwest Nazarene University. Dan's open letter reflects a much needed engagement between faith and science for the sake of education within the Wesleyan tradition. I appreciate Dan's honesty and openness for his students and for the church. As issues go, the issue of faith and science has probably seen as many losses as gains in the general church among conservative Wesleyans. As an educator currently engaged in unpacking the implications of neuroscience for formation as well as education, and as a theologian with friends who wrestle to relate their scientific vocation with their faith, I appreciate the need to continue the conversation. The essay, which may fit more into an "insights into educational practice" framework than a research article framework, stands a reminder to all educators of our task, and particularly our journey to engage God's good creation. My appreciation goes to Dr. Lawrence for his candor and also Ed Robinson for his recommendation.

As always, the journal encourages submissions based on our three themes of education, theology and culture within the Wesleyan tradition. You may submit directly to the journal (see submission guidelines) or contact one of our global editorial team listed below for additional information.

- Deirdre Brower Latz, Principal at Nazarene Theological College, Manchester
- Tammy Condon, Program Coordinator for Strategic Projects International Board of Education Church of the Nazarene
- Ruth I. Cordova, Professor of Theology and Special Projects Coordinator at Nazarene Theological Seminary, Guatemala,
- Antonie Holleman, Academic Dean at European Nazarene College (EuNC).
- Porter King, serving for Nazarene Educators Worldwide (NEW)

Faculty, remember that we do have special guidelines for exceptional student publications as well. Please enjoy the reading.

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Andrew Shanks' Hegelian Christology: Andrew Brower Latz, University of Durham and Nazarene Theological College, Manchester.

Ministerial Attrition: When Clergy Call it Quits, the Relationship of Superintendents and Pastors: Jeren L. Rowell, Ed.D. District Superintendent, Kansas City District

Collective Impact: David Wesley, Nazarene Theological Seminary.

Christus Victor: A Wesleyan Appraisal of Sub-Saharan Power Christology: James Gregory Crofford, Ph.D. Director, Institut Théologique Nazaréen, Africa Region, Church of the Nazarene

**NTC Manchester: African Theological Symposium (with thanks to Dr. Dwight Swanson):**

Faith-Based Diplomacy, A Window of Opportunity for the Development of an African Political Theology: Richard M. Benda; Ph.D. Candidate, University of Manchester

African Worldview and Christian Pneumatology: Divergences and Convergences: Lord Elorm-Donkor

Aspects of Ubuntu for Biblical Studies: Musa Kuene, St. Helen's Church of the Nazarene

African Thoughts on Land in an Age of Ecological Crisis: Joseph Kiso Masika

**Nazarene Theological Seminary Tom Nees Social Justice Award Recipients 2011 & 2012 (with thanks to Dr. Roger Hahn):**

Social Justice: A Manifesto of the *Missio Dei*: Joseph M. Goodwin, Nazarene Theological Seminary

Following God's Call: Seeing the Neglected and Oppressed: Cassandra Lara, Nazarene Theological Seminary

Personal Holiness as the Source of Christian Social Justice: A Case Study of Holiness and Hospitality in the Life of Abba Macarius the Egyptian: Jonathan Sutter, Nazarene Theological Seminary

**Closing Faculty Reflection:**

An Open Letter to Graduating Science (and Non-science) Students at Nazarene Colleges and Universities: Dan Lawrence, Northwest Nazarene University