

## DIDACHE 13:1 INTRODUCTION

Dean G. Blevins, Senior Editor

Greetings and welcome to our thirteenth edition of *Didache: Faithful Teaching*. This summer volume includes articles that represent our diverse interest in Wesleyan theology, education, and culture that serves a global setting. The edition incorporates official denominational reports, personal yet theologically grounded research on worship and mission, observations around Hispanic culture and ministry, the advance of massive, online, courses in education, a Trinitarian view of justice, and the thought of John Wesley. This range of research and reflection mark the differing themes and ideas that potentially shape Wesleyan higher education today.

We open with a statement commissioned by the Board of General Superintendents for the Church of the Nazarene, one that began about four years ago in response to proposed changes in the denomination's Articles of Faith at their General Assembly. Rather than enact the proposed changes, the Superintendents ask a group of scholars, pastors, and educators to discuss the merits of change (to more conservative statements on scripture and the atonement); and also recommend action by this summer's General Assembly. While academic journals do not normally publish these types of reports, the range of scholarship, and the potential impact of subsequent actions, seemed to warrant our publication. Often theological education hinges on responding to larger global concerns like our understanding of the sources of revelation and authority, as well as our position on the efficacy of salvation for people. While couched in denominational polity language, the core of the report should prove interesting for those in a Wesleyan setting. My thanks to General Secretary David Wilson for allowing publication as well as to Dr. Tom King and Dr. Tom Noble who invested a lot in the final edition of this report.

Our next two articles represent the work of younger scholars on the nature of theology and ministry. Dirk Ellis treatment of congregational life and liturgical time provides an interesting journey into the life of congregations; all the while offering a theological argument for the role of liturgy in the sanctification of time. Eric Vail's personal reflection on the use of the language of "missional" and "holiness" opens the door for our contemplation of the purposes of God in creation, through redemption, and ultimately in God's eschatological consummation. Vail reintroduces us to our holiness heritage as an ecclesial role, and provides reflections on its implications for ministry. Both writings reflect not only personal academic rigor but also pastoral heart, a necessary combination for many involved in clergy education.

The next article is actually a chapter by Debora Berhó, Associate Professor of Spanish at George Fox University, from her book *Protestant Hispanic Churches of Oregon* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock 2012). I met Dr. Berhó at the Wesleyan Theological Society meeting in 2012; during our meeting she shared a deep passion for theological education at a global level. She and her husband volunteer regularly as adjunct faculty in South America. Since she has published previously in *Didache*, we were pleased to reprint this chapter. Berhó explores Hispanic congregations in a North American context. While not exclusive to a Wesleyan paradigm, Dr. Berhó provides valuable insights into the culture of Hispanic churches. My thanks to Wipf and Stock publishers for allowing our republication (a process we have done in the past).

ENC Provost, Dr. Tim Wooster's article moves us from the avenues of culture to the margins of technology. Dr. Wooster's treatment provides readers with a written account of his presentation

to the International Higher Education Council June 2013, on the presence of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) that now populate higher education in the United States. Dr. Wooster's presentation shaped an interesting conversation on the future of online education that proves important to all of us involved in global education.

The final two writings return us to theology. Jonathan Platter, a student at Nazarene Theological Seminary, offers an excellent treatise on Trinitarian theology and social Justice. Platter's writing received the Tom Nees Social Justice Award and warranted our attention as a quality engagement within a Wesleyan theological paradigm. The journal closes with a comprehensive review of a series of edited volumes by Thomas Oden addressing John Wesley's teachings. Tom Noble provides a careful review of these resources in Wesleyan theology for scholars contemplating their usage.

Speaking of reviews, people submitting to *Didache: Faithful Teaching* should know that all research submissions undergo a blind review prior to acceptance and publication. Out of policy I do not publish the names of the reviewers but do thank all those scholars willing to donate their time to the journal, which exists both for and by those who engage this publication. A reminder to faculty that *Didache: Faithful Teaching* publishes student work (faculty members serve as primary reviewers and endorsers of these efforts) so feel free to contact me about publishing student efforts as a means of launching new scholarship for the sake of Wesleyan Higher Education. Our submission guidelines are at the website and we encourage global faculty to submit resources either through our global editors or directly to the journal. Our next edition will include a number of preliminary resources that shapes a global theology conference on ecclesiology; however, other presentations are encouraged.

A reminder that we now have a "twitter" feed @DidacheFT used primarily to highlight new innovations in education and academic administration, areas where the journal maintains a deep interest but lacks the same level of publications. I encourage our readership to circulate the journal to other educators within and beyond their institutions. I also want to extend my thanks to Dana Porter and Tammy Condon in shepherding the journal's website. Blessings to all.

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