

Didache 24:1 Introduction

Dean G. Blevins. Editor

Welcome *Didache: Faithful Teaching* Volume 24, number 1. This edition includes new articles addressing both the future of preaching and the current state of the Church of the Nazarene in the United States as well as additional responses to our recent Global Theology Conference. Finally, we close this “introduction” by introducing you to our two new editors, Dr. Tammy Carter and Dr. John Nielson.

The edition opens with a look forward by also looking back to the creativity engendered in John Wesley and its potential guide for how we engage new mediated forms of communication for the sake of Christian witness. Dr. David Swisher serves a Senior Learning eXperience Designer & LMS Technology Integration Specialist at Indiana Wesleyan University with over 30 years of ministry experience. He is a multimedia developer who is actively involved with incorporating virtual reality, metaverse learning, and generative AI in online courses, and he teaches graphic design, ministry, and data visualization classes. Swisher has been an active member of the Wesleyan Theological Society since 2001.

Dr. Ron Benefiel provides us with an interesting analysis of the changes in the USA/Canada Church of the Nazarene, particularly in dialog with the Southwest field in the same global region. Dr. Benefiel serves as director of the Point Loma Nazarene University Center for Pastoral Leadership and a long time representative of ANSR, the Association of Nazarene Social Researchers. Benefiel’s work provides both statistical analysis and commentary by triangulating the research with movements across the USA. This form of contextual analysis reflects the kind of reporting that can occur beyond mere numbers and blog interpretations. Hopefully it models a thoughtful engagement that can occur in many regions seeking to understand change in any denomination.

We include additional responses from around the world as additional contributions to our Global Theology Conference, “In the Power of the Spirit” (Luke 4:14), held in April 2024. The journal published the original plenary papers in [Volume 22, number 1](#) (November 2022) to allow for each global region to review written responses, select by region the best responses for the conference and offer those writings translated for conference attendees and for the rest of our reading community. In addition, we published selected responses in Volume 23:2 that resourced our panel discussions at the conference as well as a formal introduction written by Dr. Klaus Arnold, Director of Global Education and Clergy Development, and from Dr. Jeren Rowell, President of Nazarene Theological Seminary.

Unfortunately, we can only offer these additional responses in their original language. However, the journal regularly publishes works in their original language to serve a global readership. We trust you will find these equally interesting. The one translated resource we do include serves as resource for those considering intercultural dialog. Dr. Ron Benefiel’s review of Eric Law’s book *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb*, offers insight into both power dynamics during intercultural exchange and method of engagement, mutual invitation, that guides small group engagement as in the case of the Global Theology Conference. I believe the approach can make a major difference in future conferences. So, translations of the document will hopefully guide us all in the future.

Finally, I would like to close this introduction by giving greetings to our two new editors for *Didache: Faithful Teaching*. This edition opens our 24th year of publication. I gave an accounting of the experience of guiding the journal in [Volume 23:1](#) so now I take the privilege of introducing our new leadership team.

Rev. Dr. Tammy R. Carter currently serves Global Education and Clergy Development (GECD) for the Church of the Nazarene as Administrative Director of Global Education. In her current role, she guides collaborative teams in the innovation, development, and delivery of such projects as Wesleyan-Holiness Digital Library, GENCsis, and GNEC conferences, as well as consultations and Quality and Missional Reviews engaging 50 Nazarene higher education institutions delivering education in more than 120 world areas to nearly 50,000 students annually.

Prior to joining the GECD team, Dr. Carter served as executive director of Bresee Institute for Metro-Ministries and Bresee Compassionate Ministries and planted and pastored multiethnic congregations in California, Illinois, and Missouri. Dr. Carter taught classes in leadership, missions, and urban ministry at Nazarene Theological Seminary, MidAmerica Nazarene University, and Vennard College. She also served as Dean of Women at Vennard College.

Dr. Carter attended Northwest Nazarene University, where she received a BA in Philosophy and Religion. She received a Master of Divinity with an emphasis in Urban Ministry from Nazarene Theological Seminary and was ordained as an Elder. Dr. Carter received a PhD from Capella University in Education, specializing in Leadership for Higher Education. Her dissertation was: *Educating Transformational Leaders for the Urban Context: A Study of Formal, Nonformal, and Informal Educational Experiences in the Effective Training of Urban Ministers*.

Rev. Dr. John W. Nielson currently serves at Eastern Nazarene College in the Religion and Culture Program as Associate Professor of Practical Theology and Music Director for ENC Music. Prior to joining the faculty of Eastern Nazarene College, Dr. Nielson served as the Lead Pastor of the Melwood Church of the Nazarene in Upper Marlboro, Maryland (on the Mid-Atlantic District) for 24 years. Prior to this assignment, he served for five years as the Worship Pastor at St. Paul's Church of the Nazarene in Kansas City, MO.

Dr. Nielson attended Eastern Nazarene College where he received a BA in religion in 1989. He received a Masters of Divinity from Nazarene Theological Seminary in 1993 and was ordained as an Elder that same year. He then received the Doctor of Ministry degree from Nazarene Theological Seminary in 2013 where his dissertation was entitled, *Developing Practices of Corporate Lament for the Local Parish*. He and his wife Amy have three daughters, Bethany (and a son-in-law, Ben), Kathryn (and a son-in-law, David) and Jenna.

I have known John and Tammy for many years. I know they will provide exceptional guidance as the journal moves forward. I will probably “hang around” for a year as a consultant (and to field requests that might inadvertently come to me in the interim). However, I have absolute confidence in their leadership and the support they will receive from Dr. Klaus Arnold, Director of Global Education and Clergy Director and the IBOE committee, chaired by Dr. Jeren Rowell. During the Global Theology Conference, I did receive a moment of gracious recognition alongside the new editors and Dr. Arnold, a moment I remain grateful for the encounter. Still, my

gratitude rests with the more than 700 authors and reviewers who have contributed to this journal. They deserve our recognition and support, as well as the many more who will contribute into the future. The legacy of any journal rests with the voices who, by grace, contribute to its ongoing story. Thanks be to God.

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