

INTRODUCTION

Dean G. Blevins, Editor

Welcome to the final edition of our twenty second year of publication. We close out with an interesting array of writings to encourage our reflection while we await the responses to the Global Theology Papers published in our last edition. This edition includes a range of voices from women who are both leaders and mothers, a vision of creativity, ecclesial life during covid, preaching, and the power of technology in distance education. Quite a range of perspectives.

The edition opens with one of the most interesting treatments the journal has offered in recent years. I admit I was motivated to create this conversation by a simple social media inquiry by one of our writers, Jeni Hall, a dedicated pastor anticipating her first child. The responses on how one navigates motherhood and leadership reminded me of other conversations in the past and particularly the work of Bonnie Miller McLemore in her earlier text *Also a Mother: Work and Family as Theological Dilemma* (Abingdon, 1994) and illustrated by Dr. Kara Lyons-Pardue's introduction to *Following Jesus: Prophet Priest and King* (Foundry Publishers, 2018, p. 11). The social media thread confirmed how the embodied lives of mothers provide a rich theological resource for our understanding of calling and leadership. So, with the help of friends, like Dr. Tammy Carter, I invited several women to write on motherhood and leadership. Of course, not everyone had time to write. However, the commitments I did receive proved promising.

While one document, the range of responses offer an amazing accounting. Recognizing the inadequacy of my own experience to edit these offerings, Dr. Jenny Matheny, Director of the Wynkoop Center for Women and Leadership, <https://www.nts.edu/wynkoop/> agreed to edit the essays. I appreciate Dr. Matheny taking time from her own busy teaching and writing career in First Testament studies to provide this guidance. As part of her introduction, Dr. Matheny writes:

For these contributors, the journey of motherhood has been unexpected (for some) and transformative (for all). It has become ground ('*adamah*') where they see God in new ways, trust God in creative spaces, and formulate theology through the lens of motherhood.

You will note that all the women come from USA/Canada. The choice proves intentional to attempt to correlate these unique experiences within a given geographic and cultural context, not to privilege those women alone. My hope would be to see similar reflections coming from other global regions. Our assumed backdrop of pastors as men, and fathers, often predominate our conversations. Yet the experiences of women need to be heard, read, and appreciated. All men are "born of women," so our attention to motherhood and leadership merely serves as a reminder that our lives remain inextricably tied to this experience.

The edition then turns to a different voice of women in leadership. We find ourselves fortunate to publish the installation address of Dr. Sarah Coleson-Derk, the new Dean of the Faculty at Nazarene Theological Seminary. Dr. Coleson-Derk invites us to rethink the crucial role of curiosity in service to theological education and ministry. Dr. Coleson-Derk's address precedes two other writings addressing the life of the church and the ministry task of preaching. Dr. Rich Houseal, director of Nazarene Research, graciously provides an accounting of the Church of the

Nazarene during the COVID pandemic. The synopsis provides a helpful snapshot of the church's response, struggle, and resiliency during this difficult period. In the face of the challenges, Jorge Baños, Regional Education Coordinator for MesoAmerica, reminds our readership of the task of preaching the Gospel, one that draw from the very methods of Jesus to teach and transform lives.

The edition then closes with three articles dedicated to distance education and the possibilities these educational delivery systems offer educational providers. Dr. LaMetrius T. Daniels, Dean of Online Learning and Support Services at Trevecca Nazarene University, opens the discussion by reflecting on the power of online learning, and the lack of preparation during the COVID pandemic by many colleges and universities. Daniels surveys the changes happening in higher education and asks:

How will Christian institutions answer the call to provide an online learning experience that provides a holistic approach as digital transformation evolves in our society? We must acknowledge some hard truths, recognize the value of change, and evaluate our educational practices.

Daniels then unpacks strategies in online education that offers a way forward. Andrés Esteban Fernández then carries the conversation forward primarily from the perspective of the rapid growth in video conferencing in preparing ministers across MesoAmerica and South America. Fernández recounts past successes, but also anticipates a future that may move from video conferencing to engagement in the metaverse. If the challenges facing education, and the promise of future technology, invite schools to rethink their approach, the final monograph by Dr. Stephen Porter provides a thoughtful way forward. Dr. Porter's writing reflects a distillation of his DMin dissertation designed to guide institutions to ask the key questions needed before adopting new technology in support of educational efforts. Porter offers both educational insight, and theological reflection, before providing key diagnostic questions to help any institution move forward. Moving from challenge, to promise, to deliberative discernment, offers schools a pathway into the future of technologically informed higher education.

As always, we offer a reminder that the journal remains open for student publications as well as general submissions sent to the editor. Faculty members may recommend a student paper, and, after editorial review, the journal may accept the paper with the faculty member serving as the primary reviewer of record. We again thank the staff of the Asia Pacific Region, who diligently contribute for formatting and maintaining of our website, and Dr. Tammy Carter 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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