

INTRODUCTION: GLOBAL THEOLOGY CONFERENCE EDITION

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Greetings and welcome to *Didache: Faithful Teaching* 13:2 (January 2014) an edition that also serves as the volume for the upcoming Global Theology Conference for the Church of the Nazarene, March 23-26, 2014, in Johannesburg, South Africa. Conference participants will gather around the theme: *Critical Issues in Ecclesiology*. This conference has been four years in the making including the first call for papers in Volume 10:1 (Summer 2010), with supplemental resources in that edition that shaped the initial vision of the conference.

Since that call we have met with several challenges (fiscal and global) as regional scholars worked to propose papers, finish manuscripts, and undergo review. Over forty-five papers were submitted at the regional and global level, with twenty-two selected for the preliminary reading prior to the conference gathering (the remainder will be published this coming summer as supplemental resources). This edition marks the largest of its kind in papers and translations, and reflects a truly global contribution from the six regions that constitute the Church of the Nazarene.

The conference follows the following four-question format that will guide the collective reflection of scholars during the meeting:

1. *Where are we?* An informed awareness of our current diverse cultural, geographical, political and practical contexts will be important as the conference wrestles with the questions of unity and diversity in the Body of Christ
2. *How did we get to where we are?* An awareness of the historical influences that shape our current denominational beliefs and practices will provide the context for our discussion
- 3a. & 3b. *Who will guide us to where we need to go?* Actually two sections addressing a renewed understanding of who we are as part of the people of God, emerging from the intersection of both

biblical models & metaphors, alongside
theological treatises & reflections

on the life of the people of God, and reflective Christian practice. These four sections (context, history, Bible and theology) provide the resources for the final question.

4. *How are we to get there?* The answer to this question will emerge in discussions from the conference. A final session will attempt to draw our discussions together but we do recognize that much of the work answering this question entails regional exploration as well as a global theological response.

The papers in this edition serve the first three questions within this format of four domains. Overall we hope the writings stimulate conversation among the participants, both in their regional gatherings and in our global interactions. To help participants in framing their discussions at the conference, readers will find four synthetic essays, one for each section., crafted by senior scholars within these disciplines. These essays not only summarize key themes but also provide preliminary discussion questions for small group encounters at the conference. Overall the Global Theology Committee sees those conversations as the primary “content” of the conference for the future, though we are deeply appreciative of everyone who contributed this edition and others who will add additional information in the Didache 14:1 this summer

We trust our readers will appreciate the amount of information provided around the theme of ecclesiology in the last four years. Hopefully the articles below will stimulate future reflection and engagement. Just a reminder, the journal also publishes articles along the themes of culture and education as well. Beginning next edition you will see those efforts as well. My thanks to Tammy Condon and the staff of the Asia Pacific Region for insuring the quality of the website and this edition of the journal.

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