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## Editors' Notes

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## Editors' Notes

D'ESTA LOVE AND STUART LOVE

In 1999 we published an issue of *Leaven* devoted to the theme of missions, guest edited by Charles R. Taber, Professor Emeritus of World Mission and Evangelism at Emmanuel School of Religion in Johnson City, Tennessee. It has been eight years since we have given attention to such a vital theme, and we are pleased to revisit the topic of missions under the able leadership of guest editor Sonny Guild. Sonny has devoted a lifetime of work to the mission of Christ in the world. An experienced missionary who spent more than a decade in Kenya, Africa, he is now the Director of the Halbert Institute for Missions at Abilene Christian University in Abilene, Texas. There, he serves the cause of Christ most effectively as a resource to those preparing for missions and to those who are laboring in the field. A contributor to previous issues of *Leaven*, we are most grateful to Sonny for this issue on missions.

We have one more issue scheduled for this year, which will feature the 2007 Pepperdine Lectures, based on the book of Jeremiah; Paul Watson will serve as guest editor. Next year we are looking forward to issues on "Old Creation/New Creation," edited by Tim Willis; "Your Sons and Your Daughters Shall Prophecy," edited by D'Esta Love; and "Human Sexuality," edited by Jack Holland. We will close the year with an issue devoted to the theme of the 2008 Pepperdine Lectures.

STUART AND D'ESTA LOVE

The task of missions is always a divine and human endeavor. As such, the potential for both fulfilling and frustrating heavenly passions is always present. Nevertheless, we are God's fellow workers. This issue of *Leaven* seeks to negotiate the waters of this divine/human mix. **Chris DeWalt** begins with a timely theological piece. In his article he helps us see that the Holy Spirit drives the mission and, as such, forces disciples to grapple with and accept diversity. Missions forces us out of our self-made, cultural descriptions of what church ought to be.

Churches of Christ are awakening to the needs of our North American world. Church planting is again in our vocabulary and vision. Three new church planting organizations have emerged. **Kent Smith** of Abilene Christian University's Missionary Residency for North America (MRNA) program, **Gailyn Van Rheenen** of *Mission Alive*, and **Stan Granberg** of *Kairos* help us understand the needs and challenges of our mission field at home. If our own world is to be reached we, like the first disciples, must become convicted of our responsibility to proclaim the kingdom and, also, to accept diverse expressions of the kingdom. **Malissa Endsley**, church planter in New York City, gives us an inside view of what church is like for those who would never find their way into our traditional churches.

The realities of our world challenge our ability to care for the missionaries we send into foreign missions. Missionaries are identified too closely with American culture. The world has turned more hostile. Since we must send, we must also be more aggressive in our care of those we send. **Dottie Schulz**, herself a missionary in the Netherlands for many years, gives us a framework for understanding the essentials of mis-

sionary care. Theory is best understood when fleshed out. **Andy Johnson** and his wife Melissa, missionaries to Burkina Faso, West Africa, went with a team to an isolated spot in the world where they became recipients of such care. He and I share a description of the care we willingly gave and they gratefully received. Andy, with the team's approval, makes himself vulnerable to help us understand the need for care.

Missions work is filled with routine and also with surprises. **Mike Schrage** shares with us an amazing surprise often found in far-away places: unity. In biblical times the mission church, the church of the Gentiles, helped the Jewish church understand her own salvation by grace. Since missions gives fresh expression to the gospel, fresh or forgotten truths often surprise us. Mike, from the Christian Church, found himself working with missionaries from Churches of Christ. Their partnership should spur us all toward the unity we claim to seek.

Since 9/11 our world has changed. We have become acutely aware of parts of the world we have ignored and now fear. The world of Islam can no longer be disregarded. **Dan McVey**, veteran missionary to Ghana, helps us understand one of our greatest challenges. Even in the midst of the threats of radical elements of Islam, opportunities are present. Do we have the courage and commitment to re-think how the kingdom is to be lived out in Islamic societies? Dan McVey has also contributed a book review on Christine Mahhouhi's book, *Waging Peace on Islam*. As a complement, **Everett Huffard** reviewed *Journeys of the Muslim Nation and the Christian Church* by David Shenk.

Every discipline has its heroes, even missions. Wendell and Betty Broom, missionaries to the world and retired from Abilene Christian University, stand tall in the world of missions and missions training. Wendell, a colorful character beloved by so many, shares his musings about the past, present and the future of missions in an interview with **Chris Flanders**. Enjoy these articles, but not too much: may they encourage you but also unsettle you enough to make you want to embrace the mission of God in fresh ways.

A Taizé worship service, "Seeking God's Peace," written by **D'Esta Love**, concludes the issue on a contemplative note.

SONNY GUILD

