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Editors' Notes

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Editors' Notes

D'ESTA LOVE AND STUART LOVE

For some time, we have wanted to develop an issue of *Leaven* on the book of Isaiah. Admittedly, this is a task far greater than what could be accomplished in one small issue. However, as noted below by our guest editor, **John T. Willis**, the Abilene Christian University lectureship for 2004 was devoted to Isaiah. Lectures and classes by several accomplished Old Testament teachers and scholars were done with such quality that we decided this was the time and setting out of which we could share important insights from this great writing.

But who should serve as the guest editor? For a number of reasons, this was not a difficult decision. John T. Willis has established a lasting record and reputation in his teaching and writing on the Old Testament. From his early years of work on the book of Micah, Professor Willis has contributed greatly over time to the field of Old Testament scholarship—including a commentary on the book of Isaiah. Beyond his scholarship, John Willis has faithfully taught at Abilene Christian University and served as an elder for the Highland Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas. He is truly a scholar and a churchman—a winning combination, we believed, to edit this issue. Therefore, we were delighted when he accepted the assignment. What follows are his thoughts about the writers and articles in this issue.

However, before passing the baton, let us remind our readers that future issues include “Nationalism and the American Church” edited by **Lee Camp**, “Favorite Texts of Ministry” edited by **D’Esta Love** and **Lynn Anderson**, “The Gospel of John” edited by **Stuart and D’Esta Love**, “Ephesians” edited by **David G. Holmes**, and “The Future of the Stone-Campbell Heritage” edited by **David Fleer**. In addition, we have some unpublished pieces growing out of our recent issue on “Spirituality,” and we hope to publish these in the near future.

Continue to pray for *Leaven*.

The Abilene Christian University lectureship in February 2004, organized and orchestrated by Mark Love of the ACU faculty, focused on the book of Isaiah. Water symbolism plays a major role in the message of Isaiah, so appropriately the title of the lectureship was “Come to the waters,” a phrase borrowed from Isaiah 55:1.

Much of the material in the present issue of *Leaven* is a rewriting of lectures or classes presented in the 2004 lectureship. The reader will benefit from thinking of this issue as consisting of three divisions.

Division one contains two introductory articles. **Jennifer Green** emphasizes that—because most of the book of Isaiah is poetic—reading and interpreting the book as poetry unlocks spiritual insights in its message that can come in no other way. **Steve Weathers** discusses and illustrates the powerful impact metaphor-

ical language in the book of Isaiah has on its hearers and readers, not primarily to instruct in God's ways but to transform hearts and motivate godly thoughts, words, and actions in the people of God.

Division two includes five selected parts of lectures and classes on different sections and chapters of Isaiah. **Tim Willis** stresses the change that took place in Isaiah the prophet at the time of his call, recorded in Isaiah 6, which enhanced and enriched the power of his message to fellow Judeans. **Jerry Taylor** exposes objects of trust that repeatedly attract God's people but cannot sustain them in critical times as Yahweh can. I examine three major metaphors for God in Isaiah and seek to demonstrate their relevance for understanding and serving God in contemporary society. **Mark Hamilton** identifies and elaborates on three themes in Isaiah 56-66 that various prophetic authors of these chapters used to comfort and encourage and admonish the Jewish postexilic community. **Stuart Love** proclaims God's great concern for the poor and marginalized and widow and orphan and distressed in the Old Testament prophets, with particular emphasis on Isaiah 58.

Division three contains two articles dealing with broader issues involving Isaiah. **Glenn Pemberton** reasons that the way to understand Matthew's use of various Old Testament texts is not to prove the identity of Jesus as the messiah but to explain his identity. This approach avoids faulty presuppositions that people bring to the text that "prophecy" is a long-term predictive event and that the word "fulfilled" in Matthew and elsewhere in the New Testament means a one-to-one literal completion of something predicted. **Mark Hamilton** briefly identifies and discusses recent works on the book of Isaiah, emphasizing the trend to find unity in the book—not in the old sense of belief in a single author, which the data hardly support, but in the sense that the final editors of the book in the late post-exilic period worked in a tradition and shaped the book as a whole into something readable and comparatively coherent.

JOHN T. WILLIS

