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Editors' Notes

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Editors' Notes

D'ESTA LOVE AND STUART LOVE

We are pleased to open Volume 12 of *Leaven* with an issue on the canon of scripture. Mark Matson serves as guest editor. Mark is the dean of Milligan College, Milligan College, Tennessee, and is a member of the Leaven editorial board. He has advanced the cause of Leaven in a variety of ways, urging readers to subscribe, making valuable suggestions at our board meetings for the improvement of the journal, writing articles, and now, as our guest editor to open the twelfth year of publication. Below, Mark introduces the issue and our writers.

In addition to the articles dealing with the canon, there is a liturgical reading by **Lee Magness**, an article on renewal in children's ministry by **Wendy Wray Ogren**, and a variety of book reviews—including some on the topic of preaching that we did not have room to publish in our last issue. The final group of preaching reviews will appear in our next issue, which will be edited by **Jim Street**. We are grateful for an increased emphasis on book reviews, which strengthens the quality of *Leaven*.

Following Mark's introduction, you will find remarks from **Paul Watson** in tribute to **Bobbie Lee Holley**, a great Christian woman, writer, and minister of Christ who won "the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil 3:14).

The Stone-Campbell movement has always held scripture in a special esteem. Such catchphrases as "where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent," and "Bible things with Bible words" captures this particular emphasis that has pervaded our movement. But often, this emphasis has shown little interest in the nature and scope of the collection of documents that make up the scriptures that we study and follow.

The canon of scripture, that is the collection and limitation of available documents into one unified body of scripture, presents its own theological, hermeneutical and homiletical challenges and benefits. The actual collection of documents into a Bible involved a process of selection: some documents that were used in the early church were included, others excluded.

What does such a process of collection mean for us in our interpretation of scripture? How should we approach individual books within the canon? Should we be reading books in light of other books, or do they stand alone as individual texts? These are the questions that we are posing in this volume of *Leaven*.

Certainly, the history of the creation of the Bible is important in the consideration of the canon of Scripture. **J. David Miller** in "The Story of the Christian Canon" offers a short history of the development of the Old Testament, Apocrypha, and New Testament segments of our Bible together with some useful examination of how various segments of the church have viewed parts of the Bible. A more nuanced examination of the variety of such collections, especially considering the place of the Apocrypha in various bibles, is offered by **R. Christopher Heard** in "The Scope of the Old Testament Canon."

Two articles turn to examine how to use the Bible, given its internal diversity as a collection of documents. My own contribution, "The Four Gospels in Canonical Perspective," argues that the inclusion of four distinct gospels in our canon is theologically important: it says something about the way the early church


understood the gospel and allowed for diversity of presentation. We are challenged, then, to resist collapsing the gospels into one unified story but rather should consider the variations in the story—even the tensions between the various gospels—as theologically important and worthy of careful study.

William “Chip” Kooi then explores the difficulty we have of listening to the entire canon rather than selecting favorite texts within that canon in “Canon Within and Without the Canon.” He argues for the use of the lectionary as a means of resisting the creation of a canon within a canon. **Tim Sensing**, in “The Wholly Bible,” applies this emphasis more specifically to the task of preaching and offers suggestions to preachers about how to honor the Bible from the pulpit by appropriating the entire Bible for the congregations.

Two specific attempts at interpreting the Bible from a canonical perspective complete this collection. **John R. Jackson** examines ways in which the Old Testament text “talks to itself” within the structure of the canon. In “Abigail or Asherah: Competing Canonical Readings of Malachi 2:10-16,” Jackson specifically explores ways of reading Malachi when considered in light of Hosea. **Christopher Hutson** then explores one of the rare uses of the word “canon” in the Bible, specifically in Paul’s letter to the Galatians. In “The Cross as Canon: Galatians 6:16,” Hutson offers a hermeneutical tool of our interpretation of scripture drawn from Paul’s own use: does it conform to the “canon” of the cross of Jesus?

This collection of essays focuses attention on the entire canon of scripture as a framing and interpreting tool. A unifying thread that runs through all these essays is the belief that the entire scripture should be read and studied and that consideration of the framework of the canon of scripture offers a control on misreading and error.

MARK MATSON
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IN MEMORIAM:
BOBBIE LEE HOLLEY, 1927-2003

Bobbie Lee Holley passed away on Thursday, December 4, 2003, in Durham, North Carolina. She had served as book review editor of *Mission Journal*—the predecessor of *Leaven*—from 1977 to 1982 and as general editor from 1982 to 1988.

Having grown up in difficult circumstances herself, Bobbie Lee had an active, life-long compassion for the disadvantaged—the poor, the mentally or emotionally ill, those with substance abuse problems, those dying of AIDS. She also opposed discrimination in every form, for she strongly believed that “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28).

On the basis of that conviction, Bobbie Lee made her own fresh, thorough study of all the passages of scripture that concerned women, focusing particularly on Jesus’ relationships with women, thus making her one of the first in our fellowship to address the issue of the role of women in worship and church leadership.

The editorial board of *Leaven* salutes this remarkable Christian woman and extends its condolences to her husband, Ed, and to her entire family.