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Editors' Notes

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Editors' Notes

D'ESTA LOVE AND STUART LOVE

This issue of *Leaven* is an outgrowth of the 2002 Pepperdine University Bible Lectures devoted to a study of 2 Corinthians. Since your editors were in Germany last year, we asked Dr. Paul Watson, one of the members of *Leaven's* editorial board, to guide the formation of this issue. Dr. Watson has done a superb job in selecting participants for the *Leaven* Symposium, working with Dr. Carl Holladay who taught the theme class at the lectures, and selecting one of the significant theme sermons delivered by Harold Shark. It is through the faithful service of persons like Dr. Watson that *Leaven* is able to carry forward its task to engage in theological reflection for ministry. What follows is an introduction written by Dr. Watson.

If any one of the sixty-six writings in the biblical canon could be called a "handbook for ministry," 2 Corinthians is that writing. Yet it is not a handbook or textbook in the traditional sense. Instead, it is an impassioned defense by the apostle Paul of his own ministry in particular and a plea for faithful proclamation of the gospel in general. Implicit in that defense and plea are rich illustrations and relevant exhortations for ministers today—not only pulpit preachers, but all who seek to serve in the name and spirit of the Christ:

"Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God. We have done so not according to worldly wisdom but according to God's grace." (1:12)

"You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts." (2:3-4)

"Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart." (4:1)

"But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us." (4:7)

Dr. Carl Holladay, professor of New Testament at Candler School of Theology, begins our issue on 2 Corinthians with an introduction to the letter and a helpful bibliography of recent literature on it. Four articles focus specifically on relevant ministry passages in 2 Corinthians. Dr. Bruce Shields, professor of New Testament and worship at Emmanuel School of Religion, shows how the imagery of a Roman triumphal procession and the aroma of sacrifice in 2 Cor 2:14-17 lead to "a radical concept of ministry" that

“emphasizes the weakness of the preacher and the corresponding power of God.” Carol Gafford, minister of youth education at the Western Hills Church of Christ in Temple, Texas, explores 2 Cor 3:1-6 and asks “Are we letters of recommendation?” in our ministries today. John Jackson, Ph.D. candidate in Old Testament at Duke University and deacon for the Cole Mill Road Church of Christ, brings out the eschatological dimension of ministry in his exploration of 2 Cor 4:13-5:10. Kindalee Pfemmer DeLong, Ph.D. candidate in New Testament at Notre Dame, reflects on 2 Cor 6:11-13; 7:2-4 and “ministry from the heart.” In an adaptation of his Pepperdine lecture, Harold Shank, minister of the Highland Street Church of Christ in Memphis, Tennessee, helps us understand what it means to see the glory of God unveiled and to be “transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory” (2 Cor 3:18).

Rounding out this issue are a liturgical reading by Dr. Lee Magness, professor of New Testament at Milligan College, Milligan College, Tennessee and an article on the challenge of cultural diversity and race by Dr. Ira Jolivet Jr. professor of New Testament at Pepperdine University, Malibu, California.

As we contemplate the riches of 2 Corinthians, may we hear the apostolic benediction with which Paul closes his letter as a blessing meant for us and our ministries as well: “May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (2 Cor 13:14).

PAUL WATSON

Your editors close with two news items. First, Dr. Lee Magness has consented to provide liturgical pieces in future issues. We believe you will benefit greatly by reading and using his creative worship contributions. Finally, this is the first issue in which Tammy Ditmore has done our copy editing. We are grateful for her work and expertise in fulfilling this important role. Continue to pray for *Leaven*.

