

1-1-1999

Editors' Notes

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Recommended Citation

Love, Stuart; Love, D'Esta; and Daniel, Eleanor A. (1999) "Editors' Notes," *Leaven*: Vol. 7: Iss. 2, Article 2. Available at: <https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/leaven/vol7/iss2/2>

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Editors' Notes

Stuart and D'Esta Love

Jesus was primarily a teacher of adults. This is so even though children were important to Jesus as a teacher (Matt 18:1–3; 19:13–15). For example, when Jesus ascended the mountain and sat down to teach (Matt 5:1–2), his auditors—the disciples and the crowds—were mostly adults. Teachings on murder, adultery, divorce, oaths, retaliation, and the love of enemies are adult topics. When Jesus journeyed throughout Galilee teaching in “their synagogues” (Matt 4:23), the persons in his audiences were for the most part adults. Jesus trained adult disciples as scribes for the kingdom of heaven (Matt 13:52). The commission to those adult teachers was to “make disciples of all nations, baptizing them . . . and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you” (Matt 28:19–20).

Were not evangelism and edification in the early church directed primarily to adults? Often we hear of the faith and/or conversion of household leaders—and their families. Such was the case in the story of the healing of the official’s son: “So he himself believed, along with his whole household” (John 4:53). Such was the case with Cornelius: “He was a devout man who feared God with all his household” (Acts 10:2; see Acts 11:14). Such was the case with Lydia: “. . . she and her household were baptized” (Acts 16:15). Such was the case with the jailer, who was told: “Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household” (Acts 16:31). And such was the case with Crispus, the synagogue official who “became a believer in the Lord, together with all his household” (Acts 18:8).

We live in a vastly different social world, a world that accents the importance of children and youth. Service to Christ in our time must take this into account—seriously. Paul would never have entertained the notion of “youth ministers.” There were no youth cultures in Jerusalem, Antioch, or Corinth. But there are youth cultures in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles. Nevertheless, is not the religious nurture of adults critically important for the spiritual vitality of a congregation’s fellowship and mission? Is it possible that the need for quality adult nurture cries out for ministerial attention? Is it possible that the tail wags the dog in some (if not many) of our religious education programs? Is the need for adult nurture important because we have come to believe that Sunday school is for kids?

A major goal of this issue of *Leaven* is to call attention to the importance of adult nurture in the church. A central theme is stated by our guest editor, Eleanor Daniel: “Although some form of adult education has usually been present in the church, no well-defined philosophy has permeated the planning and practice of adult classes.” Accordingly, we commend this issue to all those who direct, teach, and care for the spiritual strengthening of adults in our churches.

Let us introduce Dr. Daniel. As co-editor of *Leaven's* book review section, Eleanor Daniel is not new to our readers. She was educated at Lincoln Christian College and Seminary in Illinois (B.A., M.A.), and at the University of Illinois (M.Ed., Ph.D.). Dr. Daniel's professional career includes service to churches in Tuscola, Illinois; Buchanan, Minnesota; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; and Lincoln, Illinois, as well as service to Christ in Christian education at Midwest Christian College (Oklahoma City) and Lincoln Christian College. She served at Cincinnati Bible College and Seminary for thirteen years, the last four of those as dean of the seminary. In 1994, she moved to Emmanuel School of Religion (Johnson City, Tennessee), where she is currently dean and professor of Christian education. Her interest in Christian mission has taken her to Europe on a yearly basis since 1990. Dr. Daniel has written extensively in journals and books. Her contributions to *Leaven* began in 1997. We are blessed immeasurably to have Eleanor Daniel as guest editor of this issue on adult nurture in the church. She represents another step forward as we work together in our service to God in Christ.

Finally, let us devote a few words to the continued progress of *Leaven*. Sadly, we begin with the announcement that Dan Anders, minister of the gospel for many years among Churches of Christ and a member of our advisory board, passed away. Probably no single couple did more to introduce *Leaven* to first-time readers than Dan and Judy Anders. Dan wrote for the journal, believed in its purpose, and worked for its success. We are grateful that Judy Anders has consented to remain a member of our advisory board.

Our closing issues for 1999 are *Restoration Themes*, edited by Henry Webb, and *Ministry Themes from the Psalms*, edited by Stuart and D'Esta Love. The year 2000 will open with *Preaching and Teaching the Book of Revelation*, edited by David Matson. David Fleer has submitted articles on the theme *Preaching and Teaching the Wisdom Literature of the Bible*. Ron Highfield is finishing an issue entitled *Theology and Ministry*.

Continue to pray for *Leaven*. Gift subscriptions are a wonderful means of introducing *Leaven* to a wider audience.

D'ESTA AND STUART LOVE