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Editors' Intro

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Editor's Introduction

The idea for this issue on theology and ministry arose in connection with the 1996 conference "Theology in Service of the Church," held at David Lipscomb University. The purpose of this conference was to explore ways in which Christian scholars could serve the church with their theological scholarship. We asked seven scholars to present papers on the traditional theological topics (God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, Church, Humanity, and Eschatology) with the aim of assessing the state of the church's current understanding and proposing ways to deepen the church's knowledge and faith in each area. We allowed extensive time for discussion among the one hundred people present. In this issue we widen the discussion to include readers of *Leaven*. We offer this issue to the church in hope that it will deepen our faith and encourage us to greater service.

The issue begins with **RON HIGHFIELD**'s introduction to the idea of theology. Theology, according to Highfield, is a vital and unavoidable work of the church designed to test the church's teaching for its conformity to God's word. **JOHN MARK HICKS** urges us to live in praise before the living God, who, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, created the world, sustains it by his word, and providentially leads it to its final goal. **ALLAN MCNICOL** reminds us that scripture speaks of Christ in corporate terms, as the "Savior of the Body," and not in the individualistic terms of our modern culture. **JAMES THOMPSON** leads us on a tour of the New Testament witness about the Spirit, with a summary of the major teachings. Thompson affirms that the Spirit is the power that creates the church and leads it into every good work. **GARY HOLLOWAY** reminds us of the centrality of the doctrine of the church to the nineteenth-century Restoration movement and recommends ways in which that same concern for the church can be lived out today. **RON HIGHFIELD** surveys three nineteenth-century Restoration leaders' views of the nature of humanity, focusing especially on the sin of humanity. Then he points out some areas where the church needs to do further study. **LYNN MITCHELL** points us to the future with his article on eschatology. Mitchell shows that eschatology is more than the doctrine of "last things."

PAUL CASNER's bibliographic essay surveys the resources currently available for studying theology with ministry in mind. **TOM OLBRICHT**'s Restoration biography introduces the theology of Robert Milligan and shows the vast learning and unexpectedly expansive thought of one of our second-generation leaders. **CARL FLYNN** reviews Craig M. Gay's book *The Way of the (Modern) World: Or, Why It's Tempting to Live As if God Doesn't Exist*. And finally, **JOHN CASTELEIN** reviews Kevin J. Vanhoozer's *Is There a Meaning in This Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge*.

RONALD CURTIS HIGHFIELD

