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## Editors' Notes

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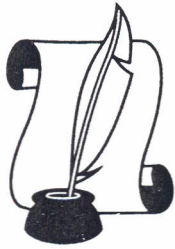


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## Editors' Notes

### Stuart and D'Esta Love

*The editors thank Mark Love who served as the guest editor for this issue on Romans and Ministry so that we could lead Pepperdine students in an educational program in Florence, Italy, this past summer.*

The reader's journey through Romans is one of breathtaking theological vistas. Filling the horizon are the majestic cliffs of the righteousness of God framing a landscape adorned with grace and faith. The cliffs, formed over time, tell the story of ages and epochs. Embedded in the strata of rock are the stories of Adam, Abraham, Moses, David, and Jesus, all showing forth the righteousness of God. Who could blame the textual traveler for being overwhelmed by the theological tableau of Romans?

When we think of Romans we often think of it as a theological treatise. Conversely, we seldom think of it as a place to go to learn about ministry. To glean Pauline perspectives on ministry we often thumb well past Romans to the Pastoral Epistles where we can read of elders, deacons, entrusted deposits, and the work of the evangelist. Can we find similar descriptions for ministry in Romans amid the elaborate discussions on topics like justification and the role of the law?

JAMES THOMPSON'S excellent reader's resource guide near the end of this issue demonstrates a new willingness on the part of scholars to read Romans less as a theological treatise and more as a pastoral letter intended to address the real concerns of a real congregation. Seen this way, the final chapters (12-16) are not merely a rambling digression tacked on to the lengthy theological section of Romans (1-11). Quite to the contrary, the theological section serves the interests of ministry. Every foray into salvation history and every conceptual excursion through topics like sin and grace lead relentlessly to the pastoral exclamation of 15:7, "Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God."

Indeed, Romans is a rich place to go to learn Pauline perspectives on ministry. In Romans we learn Paul's perspectives on human transformation, authentic community, and how to hold a church together divided over matters of opinion. Beyond Paul's advice concerning specific ministry issues, we see him model in Romans the vital link between theology and ministry. It is precisely this relationship that LEAVEN is interested in exploring.

For Paul, ministry is always an outgrowth of theology. Conversely, theology is always contextual, drawing its creative impetus from the real life issues facing God's people. While we might be able to draw a line between indicative and imperative in

the development of Paul's arguments, we cannot draw a similar line between theory and practice. Paul would make no distinction between things theoretical and practical. All practice is theological and all theology is practical.

I think this issue of **LEAVEN** will make this mutual relationship abundantly clear. We begin with four articles that were presented at the **LEAVEN** Symposium on ministry at the Pepperdine lectures this past May. **ROLLIN RAMSARAN** lays an old Restoration maxim alongside Paul's thought in Romans 14-15 to explore the relationship between liberty, charity, and unity. **KELLY DEATHERAGE** speaks out of her congregation's experience as they try to live in the implications of Paul's exhortation, "Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you for the glory of God." **IRA JOLIVET** explores the relationship between the work of the Spirit and the renewing of the mind in 12:1-2 as the key to the transformation of sinners. This in turn holds out the promise for redemptive community. **KATIE TURNER** takes the notion of transformation resident in Paul's understanding of grace and tells us of real lives forever changed in her small group ministry. We add to these four articles a presentation **DAVID MATSON** made at the **LEAVEN** luncheon at the Pepperdine lectures. David takes us back to Romans 12 to look at the important issue of discerning the will of God when confronted with making decisions.

We also include two sermons from the Pepperdine lectures dealing with difficult texts that we thought deserved a continued hearing. **KELLY CARTER** tackles the tough issues related to Paul's understanding of the influences of flesh and Spirit in Romans 7-8 in a very thorough and thoughtful way. **DAVID FLEER** leads us whimsically and powerfully through Romans 11 to consider the mystery of God's election. You may squirm as you journey with David through the story of Churches of Christ, but you will end in doxology, "O the depths of riches and wisdom and knowledge of God."

In addition to Thompson's excellent survey of books and articles on Romans, you will find two articles on the Holy Spirit and the beginning of a new church in Tucson, Arizona, by **DOUG HURLEY** and **DAN RHODES**. The issue closes with three book reviews. May these words be leaven in your churches.

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