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Editors' Notes

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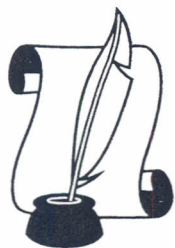


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Editors' Notes

Stuart and D'Esta Love

G. S. Duncan once wrote, "Of all Paul's letters to churches, Philippians is the most intimately personal. It glows with courage and affectionate concern for his converts. Facing misrepresentation, persecution, and possible martyrdom, he repeatedly proclaims his Christian confidence, and sounds the call to 'rejoice.'"¹

What an appropriate way to introduce this issue of *Leaven*. Of all of Paul's writings, truly this one is a letter—not a gospel, a collection of proverbs and maxims, an apocalypse, an oration, a manual of discipline, nor a polemic. It is a personal letter in which Paul's personal presence with the Philippians is underscored from beginning to end. As Fred Craddock states, "Nowhere in Paul's letters, with the exception of Philemon, is the relationship between writer and readers asked to carry so much of the freight."² Possibly in every line, certainly in every chapter, Paul's strong relationship with a church he loves is accentuated. Accordingly, not only is the Christian life presented two times (Phil 1:27–2:16 and 3:1–4:9), but a careful reading detects worship language—confessions, hymns, doxologies, eulogies, prayers, and benedictions. As he writes, Paul is at worship. And as the Philippians hear the letter read in their midst, they, too, are at worship. Both writer and readers are in the presence of God. And that is the way this letter has remained through the centuries for Christians and churches. Whether we read it privately or among the saints, we read it with reverence and awe as we are made aware of a church's strengths, weaknesses, problems, and circumstances. In the end, we also exclaim, "Truly, Lord, this is a personal letter for us today."

Since this issue is an outgrowth of the 1997 Pepperdine Lectures, we open with articles presented at the *Leaven* Symposium. Two of our symposium writers, **SHELLEY G. NEILSON** and **DIANE COPE**, are new to *Leaven* readers, but you will soon warm to their messages. Diane's article, "Clothed with Joy," helps us explore the personal meaning of rejoicing in the Lord in the midst of suffering. "When we are faced with tragedies and loss," Diane writes, "we can allow God's peace and joy to filter through our lives. . . ." Shelley instructs us that Paul nurtured personal relationships very carefully as he founded, shaped, and formed the Philippians as a community of faith. **CHARLES R. GRESHAM** (do you remember his article, in our last issue, on the influence of Walter Scott?) explores Paul's historic ministry and relationship to the Philippians. Charles also targets the theme of relationships as it pertains to our missionary efforts, intercessory prayer, perceptions of the times, and especially our friendship to God and his people. **DEAN SMITH** kindly but firmly (that's the heart of a pastor) reminds us of the destructive effects that murmuring, complaining, and arguing can have on the unity of a Christian church. These are practical articles packed with theological insights.

ROBERT F. HULL JR., new to our readers, blends exegetical and theological insights with rich sermonic suggestions in a “meditative reading” of Paul’s story in Philippians 3:2–11. In the end, Bob intersects four stories: Jesus’, Paul’s, the Philippians’, and his own. And we believe there is a fifth story—our story. **RONALD L. TYLER** explores the meaning of the “mind of Christ” in Philippians 2:5–11. His article, an exegesis of the passage, draws us into the depth of this great hymn for Christian living. **KEN BERRY**, also new to our readers in this issue, provides us with, we believe, the best reading guide to Philippians currently available. Ken’s effort is worth the entire issue (a justified editorial exaggeration).

Other article authors include **VIRGIL FRY**, **KELLY CARTER**, and **CRAIG BROWN**. Virgil describes how Christians can respond to others in helpful, supportive ways as they encounter different types of situational crises. Kelly copes with some of the ambiguities of church leadership. Craig tells a tale about our priorities and the Gospel.

Finally, four book reviews close the issue. The first, by **THOMAS H. OLBRICHT**, is of Richard T. Hughes’s *Reviving the Ancient Faith: The Story of Churches of Christ in America*. It is equivalent to a full-length article, and rightfully so, since this history of our story is so significant. **CARL F. FLYNN**, **GREG DAUM**, and **ELEANOR DANIEL** review writings by Edward Fudge, Abraham Malherbe, and John W. Westerhoff.

At this point we normally close our thoughts—but not in this issue. At our last Editorial Board meeting, significant decisions were made that further unite our efforts for churches of the Restoration Heritage. Three new members have been added to our Editorial Board: **LEONARD G. WYMORE**, **CHARLES E. COOK**, and Dr. **DAVID L. MATSON**. All three of these godly men previously have served on our Advisory Board. Leonard is fondly known as “Mr. North American Christian Convention.” Your editors have thrilled with the opportunity of knowing Leonard and his wife, Thelma. No one has worked harder to introduce *Leaven* to Christian churches than Leonard. Charles recently spoke at our *Leaven* luncheon at the Pepperdine Lectures. His stature among ministers and scholars in Christian churches has the richness of many years of service and Christian maturity. David is not new to our read-

ers, since he served as the guest editor of our last issue, *Luke-Acts*. We owe the opening of the door for greater cooperation to David. All three of these men share the substantive ministerial vision of *Leaven*. In addition, three new members have been added to our Advisory Board: **C. ROBERT WETZEL**, **CHARLES H. GRESHAM**, and **KEN GREEN**. Dr. Wetzel is president of Emmanuel School of Religion in Johnson City, Tennessee. Dr. Gresham is professor emeritus of Kentucky Christian College, Grayson, Kentucky. Dr. Green is the pulpit minister for the Metro Church of Christ, Dallas, Texas. A decision also was made to alternate our annual board meetings between two locations: Pepperdine University and Emmanuel School of Religion. Accordingly, we announce our next Editorial Board meeting for November 15, 1997, to be held at Emmanuel School of Religion just after the fall lectures (November 11–14). This year’s lectures will be on the Mission of the Church, by Dr. Charles Taber. You are invited to attend both the board meeting and the lectures. But that is not all. We are happy to announce that Dr. **ELEANOR DANIEL**, Academic Dean at Emmanuel, has consented to join Markus McDowell as book review co-editor. Finally, three new issues have been commissioned for 1999, to be guest edited by **HENRY WEBB** (*Historiography in the Restoration Movement*), **CHARLES TABER** (*The Mission of the Church*), and **ELEANOR DANIEL** (*Adult Education in the Church*). Please pray for our efforts to demonstrate the unity of Christ among his people.

Our final issue of 1997 is titled *The Mind of Christ*, and will have articles authored by **GARY SELBY**, **MARK HENDERSON**, **JOHN YORK**, **RICK ATCHLEY**, **MARY ELLEN LANTZER PEREIRA**, **IRA JOLIVET**, and others. We are sorry that our issue on Christian Ethics has been delayed.

D’ESTA AND STUART LOVE

Notes

¹G. S. Duncan, “Philippians, Letter to the,” in *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick (New York, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 3:788.

²Fred B. Craddock, *Philippians*, Interpretation (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985), 6.