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Editors' Notes

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Editors' Notes

D'Esta Love, Stuart Love

We believe the fourth gospel, even though it may not address actual congregational settings, does set forth metaphors, themes and an obligational norm (love) which relate the biblical message to contemporary church ministry. We also believe that, although ministry in all four of the gospels is predicated on the ministry of Jesus, it is expressed and emphasized differently by each writer. In Matthew, Mark and Luke there are usually three ministry activities attributed to Jesus—preaching, serving and healing. In John the vocabulary and thought patterns for these activities are significantly modified. For example, the terms “gospel” and “preaching” are nearly absent from John’s vocabulary. Instead, emphasis is given to “testimony” and “witness.” Further, Matthew, Mark and Luke (as for most of the New Testament) focus upon “service” as ministry. The Gospel of John speaks of “slaves,” “servants,” and “service” with some regularity, but to our knowledge in only three instances, 12:26; 13:17 and 15:15, does the language seem to relate to ministry. Similar observations can be made of the third activity, healing. Jesus’ ministry in Matthew, Mark and Luke is characterized by frequent healings and/or exorcisms, vital demonstrations of the power of God’s kingdom over Satan. In John, the vocabulary for “healing” and the “kingdom” is used infrequently. Only four miracles are healings, a small number in comparison to the synoptic record. Even more noticeable is the absence of exorcisms in John, a prevalent activity in the synoptics (Mark 3:15). In John, Jesus is accused of having a demon, but never is there an exorcism. In fact, the miracles of Jesus are not described as miracles but as his “works” (5:36) and/or “signs” (2:11, 23), which have the force of testimony and are given for the purpose of producing faith. Miracles in John, D. Moody Smith (*Biblical Basis for Ministry*, 1981) states, “have the express function of raising the question of who Jesus is and suggesting an answer.”

Our point is that even though certain ministry vocabulary and thought patterns found in Matthew, Mark and Luke are missing and/or modified in John, a rich message of ministry remains. Testimony leads people to choose life or judgment. Service is stressed through the love commandment (13:34, 35; 15:12-13, 17) and the footwashing scene (13:1-11, 12-20). The works of Jesus are integral to his ministry. Further, our point is that it is appropriate to dedicate an issue of *Leaven* to this topic. Contemporary churches need to recapture John’s message, and we are grateful that the 1995 Pepperdine Lectures, “Eternal Truth from an Upper Room,” were devoted to this theme.

One of the new and exciting features of the Pepperdine Lectures was the introduction of a symposium on ministry based on the Gospel of John. Stuart organized and chaired the symposium. Four persons engaged in ministry, Karen Hood, Larry James, Billie Silvey and Eddie Sharp served as resources for conversation, but in a very special way. First, they wrote articles that you can read in this issue. From these articles they made presentations which became the basis for interaction with each other and the audience. It was as if all who attended were sitting at table and conversing about vital themes for ministry out of John. As you can imagine, the symposium was a lively and enthusiastic exchange. Men and women from various backgrounds freely participated and assimilated the topics into the practical arenas of their own ministries and spiritual journeys. Eddie Sharp commented that this might be a useful format for gender participation and inclusion in our churches. We are hopeful, even expectant, that the symposium sponsored by *Leaven* will become an ongoing feature of the lectures. We are

grateful to Jerry Rushford.

Karen Hood explores the topic of women and ministry in John. Her refreshing central idea is that all of the women, but especially Mary of Bethany, demonstrate what ministry is—"fruit born out of a love relationship with the Savior that is continually nourished by being with him." Larry James—as only Larry can—writes on the pastoral theme "feed my sheep," applying this rich metaphor to "our urban reality of America on the threshold of the twenty-first century . . ." Larry's faithfulness to allow John to shape our understanding of pastoral ministry as we consider such a ministry in the variagated human challenges of a contemporary inner city (Dallas) is a profitable example of bridging the ancient text to our world. In her article, Billie Silvey opens three forms of witness, witness by revelation, witness by incarnation and witness by call. Her examples from the Gospel, John the Baptist, the Samaritan woman, and the man born blind trigger reminders of acquaintances in Billie's life—Michio Nagai, Willa Myers and Wynema McPherron—persons in the flesh who demonstrate a contemporary application of testimony and witness. Finally, Eddie Sharp writes about the theme of the incarnation of Jesus. Eddie's central idea has profound and comprehensive implications. "In the incarnation of Jesus, Christ gives the church direction for ministry that takes it toward the world and into the lives of people." He draws four lessons of the incarnation for the church at the end of the twentieth century. Each lesson is human and practical. All of our symposium writers lead us to the realization that the heart of ministry in John is clothed with the presence of God manifest in the flesh and empowered by the Spirit. As Jesus was sent by the Father so we are called and sent into the world.

In addition to those who participated in the symposium, a number of men and women such as John Allen Chalk, Gregg Hood, John O. York, D'Esta Love, Milton Jones, Jeffrey Peterson, Tim Kelley, Randall Chesnutt, Barry Sanford and Mark Love prepared their lectures and classes in written form. Unfortunately, due to the limitations of space and the need for variety, not all of them are included in this issue. Such an abundant overflowing of goodness will be carried forward into the last two issues of Volume Three.

Beyond this issue's theme we offer an enriching variety of other materials. Barry Sanford writes on the problem of patternism. This is a must reading for those struggling with the topic of hermeneutics.

Mike Casey opens a promised feature, historical studies of our heritage, with a sketch of Annie C. Tuggle, a key female leader for the black Churches of Christ. Casey's feature will continue in future issues. Ron Tyler provides another reading resource comparable to the fine piece he supplied in the issue on **Galatians**. James Freie writes of the impact of a passage from 2 Corinthians on his personal ministry. Tim Kelley writes about four approaches to preaching. Book reviews are supplied by Kathey Pulley, Constance Fulmer and Mark Manassee.

Finally, let us mention some sundry thoughts. We are sorry that Jack Reese's current workload will make it impossible for him to serve as our feature editor on ministry. Jack remains our ally in Abilene, for which we are grateful! We wish him well as he removes a few commitments for the sake of his family and personal life. At least fifty new subscribers were added to **Leaven** at the Pepperdine Lectures. The luncheon was well attended. We constantly had to replenish our table with copies of the **Galatians** issue. John Paul Marks has consented to work on an issue (down the way) dealing with the theme of the atonement. Besides our next issue on **The Lord's Supper**, future issues include **Children and the Church, Ministry and the Psalms, The Sacramental Character of Preaching, Favorite Text for Ministry, Women and Ministry, Christian Ethics and Christian Ministry, Poetry and Parable in Christian Ministry and The Atonement**.

Our next issue on the Lord's Supper should be mailed in late August or early September. It includes articles by Gary Holloway, John Mark Hicks, John McRay, Rob McRay, Dave Matson, Elmer Prout, Philip Slate, Royce Clark and Craig Churchill. It encompasses such topics as "The Lord's Supper in the Restoration Movement," "Covenant and the Supper," "Early House Churches and the Lord's Supper," "Remembrance and Participation," "Breaking of Bread," "Proclaiming the Lord's Death Until He Comes," "The Lord's Day and the Lord's Supper," "The Suffering Servant and the Lord's Supper," and "A Reading Resource Guide on the Lord's Supper." Does not this sound like an exciting issue?!

Letters have gone out to renew your subscription if you have not already done so. Join us, again, in a year of spiritual growth. We need your support and your prayers! Speak a good word for **Leaven** to someone who needs to subscribe.