

1-1-2012

Editors' Notes

Stuart Love
slope@pepperdine.edu

D'Esta Love
dlove@pepperdine.edu

Cliff Barbarick
cab11c@acu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/leaven>

Recommended Citation

Love, Stuart; Love, D'Esta; and Barbarick, Cliff (2012) "Editors' Notes," *Leaven*: Vol. 20: Iss. 3, Article 2.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/leaven/vol20/iss3/2>

This Editor's Notes is brought to you for free and open access by the Religion at Pepperdine Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Leaven by an authorized editor of Pepperdine Digital Commons. For more information, please contact bailey.berry@pepperdine.edu.



Editors' Notes

D'ESTA LOVE AND STUART LOVE

In the words that follow, Cliff Barbarick introduces our third issue of *Leaven* for 2012, on 1 Peter. Dr. Barbarick has contributed articles to *Leaven* before, but this is his first effort to serve as a guest editor. For this task, he is well qualified for at least two reasons: (1) he did his doctoral dissertation on 1 Peter at Baylor University; and (2) he has a great love for the pastoral communication of the New Testament for Christians today. His affection for 1 Peter will become self-evident as you read his comments that follow. Our final issue of the year will be on Romans 5–8, the theme of the 2012 Pepperdine Bible Lectures. Our opening issue for 2013 will be on the topic of missions and the guest editor will be Dan Rodriguez. Don't forget to check us out online. All of our past issues have now been digitized and are available at <http://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/leaven/>.

Guest Editor's Introduction

CLIFF BARBARICK

I'd like to thank D'Esta and Stuart Love for inviting me to edit a *Leaven* issue dedicated to 1 Peter, a short but full letter that offers a timeless testament to the heart of the Christian faith. Martin Luther offered high praise for 1 Peter, ranking it (along with the Gospel of John and Paul's letters) as among the "best and noblest" books in the New Testament. These books, Luther contends, "teach everything you need to know for your salvation, even if you were never to see or hear any other book or hear any other teaching." "Every Christian would do well," he recommends, "to read them first and most often, and, by daily perusal, make them as familiar as his daily bread."¹ As someone who recently completed a dissertation on 1 Peter, a task that required the letter be as familiar as my daily bread, I must concur with Luther's evaluation of this document's worth. The theology and Christology and ecclesiology of 1 Peter offer much to those who seek to know God, imitate his son and live together as a holy nation purified and born anew through God's enduring word.

Not only is 1 Peter timeless, however; it is timely. As the West becomes incrementally and increasingly "post-Christian," communities of Christians feel their social position slipping. In some places Christians, who once might have identified themselves with the majority culture, find themselves increasingly marginalized, maligned, or mocked because of their faith. More and more, we find it easier to identify with 1 Peter's audience, whom the author addresses as "aliens and exiles" (2.11). Because of their adherence to Jesus, they felt like foreigners in their homeland. And like those addressees, we find ourselves struggling with the question: how do we conduct ourselves in a host society that disdainfully pushes us outside? As we grapple with such difficult questions, we do well to return again to 1 Peter, to study it carefully, to draw wisdom from

1. These quotes come from Luther's "Preface to the New Testament," reprinted in *Martin Luther: Selections from his Writings*, ed. John Dillenberger (New York: Doubleday, 1962), 18–19.

its instructions to “sojourners,” and to draw encouragement from its promise: even if we suffer “for a little while,” we do so under the protection of God’s power, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. In this we find living, indomitable hope.

DOUG HOLM, a long-time missionary and a current staff member with Cru (Campus Crusade for Christ), opens the issue with a perennial question—how should Christians engage with those around them? He carefully sets 1 Peter in its original context and, thereby, highlights the missional purpose inherent in the author’s repeated exhortation to “do good.” Next, **SHANE ALEXANDER**, minister at the Northcrest Church of Christ in Mexia, Texas, draws on his experience as a minister of a small church to offer reflections on what 1 Peter might have to say to those who feel rejected.

The next four pieces originated from a session at the 2011 Christian Scholars’ Conference hosted by Pepperdine University. The session gathered four presenters to focus on 1 Peter 2.1–3, in which Peter exhorts his audience, “Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation.” **KAREN JOBES**, a professor at Wheaton College who recently published a commentary on 1 Peter, ably addresses some of the key exegetical issues in these verses. She carves out an alternative understanding of the metaphor of the “spiritual milk” in 2.2, emphasizing the call to moral transformation inherent in the image. Rather than simply assuming the “milk of the word” should be equated with scripture (and therefore “craving the milk” equated with the study of scripture), she asserts that the milk “corresponds to what nourishes new life in the reality that the believer enters through new birth.” Her careful work on this verse needs to influence future interpretations of the passage, and therefore we are fortunate to have her voice included in this issue.

Next, **KELLY LIEBENGOD**, a professor of Biblical Studies at LeTourneau University, outlines the rudimentary narrative behind 1 Peter’s pastoral strategy and anchors it in the larger narrative of the life of Israel. He argues that Peter seeks to re-orient the audience’s desires so that they might crave, above all other competing enticements, the milk that nourishes them into salvation. He finds fruitful dialogue with Augustine, whose concern with the proper orientation of the affections echoes 1 Peter’s.

I offer my own contribution to the discussion of 1 Peter 2.1–3 by connecting the “spiritual milk” to the pattern of Christ. In 1 Peter, I argue, the author repeatedly presents the pattern of Christ to his audience so that it might nourish them through their present trials and into their future salvation. With this in mind, I suggest ways that contemporary Christian communities might also focus their attention on the pattern of Christ and thereby be nourished. **KEN DURHAM**, experienced preacher and professor at Lipscomb University, concludes this section of the issue by responding to the three proposals and offering reflections drawn from his keen homiletical sense and critical engagement with popular American culture.

Three concluding pieces round out the issue. **CHESSLEY CAVITT**, a recent graduate of the Graduate School of Theology at Abilene Christian University, offers a thorough review of resources for those interested in further studying 1 Peter. **CHRISTOPHER CHESNUTT** recalls a stirring and chilling account from Elie Wiesel and offers a communion meditation that addresses the call to follow in the footsteps of a Messiah who silently suffered injustice, and, thereby, conquered the abusive powers of oppression. Finally, **LEE MAGNESS** concludes the issue with a moving liturgical reading that “reflects the contributions of women amidst God’s covenant people.” Twenty female voices from the narratives of God’s people flood us in the too-often forgotten memory: God has worked through a variety of female figures at crucial points in his relationship with his people. Magness’s liturgical reading powerfully recalls these voices for the church.

I close with a blessing for the *Leaven* readers drawn from the language of 1 Peter: May the God who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light empower you with the strength he supplies so that you might conduct yourselves honorably, continuing faithfully to proclaim his mighty acts and do good in the midst of suffering.

