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## Editors' Notes

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## Editors' Notes

D'ESTA LOVE AND STUART LOVE

We come to our closing issue for 2012. As usual, it is based on the theme of the Pepperdine University Bible Lectures, which this year featured a significant portion of Paul's letter to the church at Rome, chapters 5–8. This issue marks the close of Dr. Jerry Rushford's leadership of the Pepperdine University Bible Lectures. We commend Dr. Rushford for his outstanding work over the years, and we thank him for his encouragement to include the *Leaven* Symposium as a regular feature of the lectureship's class offerings. Many competent writers have contributed to the symposium and their writing efforts have been included in *Leaven*. We are happy to note that the *Leaven* Symposium will continue under the capable direction of the new director, Dr. Mike Cope.

Before we introduce the writers for this issue, let us say a few words about Romans 5–8. Romans chapter 5 begins a section on the new life in Christ that proceeds from righteousness by faith (“The one who is made righteous by faith will *live*” [1:17]). In contrast to the alienation described in 1.18–3.20 (“since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” [3.23]), justification by faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ transfers believers into a relationship of peace and reconciliation with God, the foundational basis for the theme of sanctification emphasized in chapters 5–8. Sanctification (Greek *hagiasmos*, “holiness”) is the ethical alteration that results from the saving grace of God after we as sinners (5.8) and enemies (5.10) have been reconciled and granted righteousness *for* sanctification (1.19). Adam's willful disobedience is overcome only by Christ's willful obedience on the cross. Accordingly, Paul argues through chapters 6–7 that justification does not produce immorality but sanctification. Grace must not be misinterpreted. We do not sin more so that grace can abound. *By no means!* Justification by faith seeks to eliminate sin, not promote it (6.1–14). Neither does grace cancel moral obligation. No, Paul replies, sanctification is a slave to righteousness (6.15–23). The same is true concerning law. Sin and law bear *fruit for death* (7.5). Believers, Paul affirms, are being discharged from law so that they may enjoy *new life in the Spirit* (7.6). However, justification by faith does not equate the law with sin (7.7–13). The law is “holy and just and good” (7.12), but the law causes sin to be known (3.20; 5.13) and even incites sin (7.5). Our relationship to God is not grounded in law, but in grace (6.14). The abiding purpose of law is as a norm for behavior pleasing to God (12.1–2), made possible by the indwelling Spirit of God (8.4). Ultimately, then, the Spirit is God's advocate in the process of sanctification (8.1–17). Put in other words, the Spirit is God's gracious will to act on behalf of believers according to the purpose of Jesus, God's son (8.11). As the believer longs for sanctification, so too the whole created order awaits redemption from bondage. In both personal and cosmic struggles, God intervenes to sustain and redeem (8.18–30). Paul concludes with a crescendo of rhetorical questions and assurances that summarize not only chapters 5–8 but the entire first half of the letter (8.31–39). In nine verses, sixteen references are made to God or Christ to emphasize divine faithfulness. Without hesitation Paul declares that no dangers—physical (8.35), spiritual, or cosmic (8.38–39)—can separate believers from God's love in Christ Jesus.

Now, let us turn to our writers. We begin with a sermon by AARON METCALF who talks about three powers—death, sin and the gift (5.12–25). The greatest of these is the gift because it contains a powerful story of life, grace, redemption, justification, obedience and light. It is the gift of Jesus Christ. We follow the sermon with the symposium articles by JOHN YORK, LINDA KING, RONALD COX and HEATHER HOLLAND. YORK asks what portrait of God we bring to the text (5.12–21). For approximately 500 years we have worked with a law-court metaphor in which God is Judge. This leads to a penal substitutionary view of atonement—“[he] paid a debt that I could never pay.” Pauline scholars more and more see the human predicament as a relational

alienation from God. Accordingly, justification by faith leads to a relational change with God. **KING** (Romans 6) affirms that for Paul, conversion to Christ is not just a deliverance from bondage to sin; it is a change of masters. Because of our contemporary overwhelming opposition to slavery and commitment to freedom, we need to see Paul's meaning of slavery in a new light. With unusual eschatological discernment, **COX** explores Paul's stunningly inspiring affirmation that nothing "will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (9.39). Finally, **HOLLAND** fervently affirms that when the people of God sing the song of redemption together, faith is made visible and hope is performed (5.1–5). **RON HIGHFIELD** examines an oft quoted but often misunderstood passage (Romans 8.28) and brings us to a place of full assurance that no trial or hardship "can deter God from bringing us to the glory God promises." Accordingly, we live in hope and confidence because we can affirm that *God works all things for good*.

In a presentation made at the Lipscomb University Preaching Workshop, **KEN DURHAM** explores the future of preaching in light of changing models of the church and calls the preacher back to the great themes of Genesis 1 and 2. **CHRISTOPHER CHESNUTT** contributes a sermon based on the book of Jonah, helping us see the "wideness of God's mercy." Next, a review of Stanley Hauerwas' *Working Words: On Learning to Speak Christian*, submitted by **JENNY MCGILL**, one of *Leaven's* online readers. Finally, **LEE MAGNESS** concludes the issue with a moving liturgical reading based on Romans 5–8.

A look to the future includes issues in 2013 on missions (edited by Daniel Rodriguez), Exodus (edited by Danny Mathews), and the environment (edited by Chris Doran). We plan to open 2014 with an issue on gender inclusion among Christian churches (edited by Jeff Miller of Milligan College). Continue to pray for *Leaven*, and be sure to check us out online at <http://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/leaven/>.

