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Editors' Notes

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Editors' Notes

D'Esta Love and Stuart Love

The Song of Moses (Exod 15) recalls themes related to the Lord who is the divine warrior in his triumph over the Egyptians at the sea (vv. 1-12). The hymn closes with Israel's future in mind.

“You brought them in and planted them on the mountain of your possession,
the place, O Lord, that you made your abode,
the sanctuary, O Lord, that your hands have established.
The Lord will reign forever and ever” (15.17-18).

This sacred and memorable hymn underscores both the dominion and attendance of the Lord in Israel's life. His power is especially evident in the exodus from Egypt and his presence is underscored in the words we have cited that one day God would plant Israel in Canaan, the land of his divine sovereignty.

The hymn, accordingly, serves as a bridge for two central narrative events, the first being the liberation of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage (chapters 1–15) and the second being the Lord's covenant-forging revelation to Israel at Mount Sinai (chapters 19–24). The laws and instructions that follow the Sinai event complete the writing. Much more is involved but these few words signal the importance of the book of Exodus in the life of Israel and of the Church.

Therefore, in the opinion of your editors, a *Leaven* issue on the book of Exodus is long overdue. And so we commissioned Danny Mathews to serve as the guest editor. Dr. Mathews is well qualified for this task. His devotion to the church and scripture is long-standing. His scholarly training in Old Testament studies at Union Theological Seminary (Virginia) underscores this truth as well. We at Pepperdine University and the University Church of Christ are blessed to have Dr. Mathews as a teacher and scholar at the University and as a member, along with his wife and children, of our worshipping community. We are confident that you will appreciate his careful eye in conceiving the scope of his task and the writers he has chosen. As a result, we believe that you will be blessed.

Before Dr. Mathews introduces the issue, let us say a few words about the future of *Leaven* for the remainder of 2013 and our progress for 2014. We will close 2013 with issues on the environment and the Pepperdine University Lectures on the book of Revelation. In 2014 we have issues underway on gender inclusion among Christian churches and spiritual formation. Continue to pray for *Leaven*.

Guest Editor's Introduction

Danny Mathews

With varied material such as narrative, song, law, genealogy and building reports plus a stunning array of topics such as the nature, identity and mission of God; sin and forgiveness; the vocation and polity of God's people; ethics; justice and worship, the book of Exodus is perhaps the most diverse and foundational book in the canon. This issue of *Leaven* seeks to expose some of the rich topics of Exodus especially for those engaged in the vocation of Christian ministry.

The lead essay by **JOHN MARK HICKS** shows how the major themes of Exodus (crossing of the sea, covenant meal with God and God's indwelling in Israel's midst) are relived sacramentally in the basic

features of Christian worship: baptism, Eucharist, and assembly. These acts in worship today provide a profound means for the Church to join in the sacramental journey of Israel. Based on an examination of the self-declaration of God's name to Moses and throughout the plague account, **TIM WILLIS** demonstrates how the events of the Exodus reveal who God really is. The name God reveals to Moses points to "the existence, holiness, unfathomable nature, and omnipotence of God."

Noting the rich and enduring typological interpretations of the major events of Exodus within the Bible and church traditions (especially in hymnody), this issue features a sermon by **KEITH STANGLIN** that is based on a typological interpretation of the crossing of the Sea. In a theological reflection of the third commandment, **MAC SANDLIN** reflects how the gift of God's name "like Promethean fire, ennobles and empowers Israel to bless the world."

In an examination of the wilderness episodes in Exodus 15.22-18.27, **PAUL WATSON** shows how the wilderness was a place both for God's providential blessing and for Israel's testing. Watson then traces these two themes through the rest of the Old and New Testaments, concluding with brief reflections on our individual and collective experience of the "wilderness" today. Although relatively few direct quotations from the book of Exodus can be found in the New Testament, **MARK MATSON** shows how the book of Exodus played a central role in the Gospels though use of indirect allusions and "echoes" of the book to emphasize Jesus' unique relationship with God. **CHRIS HEARD** provides a detailed comparison of the "Song of the Sea" in Exodus 15.1b-18 with the song "When You Believe" in the adaptation of Exodus in the animated film *The Prince of Egypt*. His essay raises a caution against assuming uncritically that film adaptations are always faithful in conveying both the content and theological essence of the biblical text.

The essays by **CHARLES RIX** and **LUKE TALLON** remind us that a study of Exodus will remain incomplete unless attention is given to the tabernacle section that occupies about one third of the book! **CHARLES RIX** demonstrates how the "topsy-turvy story" of the Golden Calf in Exodus 32 overturns elements in the surrounding tabernacle account in Exodus 25-31 and 35-40. Viewing this account via Mikhail Bakhtin's literary theory of carnival allows for a fresh understanding of the narrative as a social response during a time of communal trauma and forces the reader to engage the multiplicity of perspectives in the text. **LUKE TALLON** shows how this neglected tabernacle section actually serves as the climax of Exodus (as well as Genesis!) and then discusses a number of important implications for Christian theology and practice.

Finally, this issue features a liturgical reading by **LEE MAGNESS** and a helpful resource guide for further study by **MARK HAMILTON** as well as reviews of two recent books on Exodus by **DAVID SKELTON** and **MORGAN PHILPOTT**.

The final word in Exodus is "journey" with the assurance of God's presence and guidance in the midst of the community always on the move. It is our hope and prayer that these essays, as varied as they are in method and content, will provide much food for thought and reflection during our intellectual and spiritual journey.

