Editor's Notes

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Editors’ Notes

D’ESTA LOVE AND STUART LOVE

Although every baptismal experience is unique to the individual being baptized, there is a communal aspect to it: the very act of baptism itself is communal in nature, literally involving more than one person (it is not possible to baptize one’s self!) and signifying the recipient’s immersion into the church family, the body of Christ. The focus of this issue of Leaven originates from the Pepperdine University Bible Lectures of 2014, which examined the theological theme of community (fellowship/joint participation) of the church in terms of baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

We begin with articles written for the Leaven Symposium. Not to be outdone by his father, Mark Love tells of his baptism in the frigid waters of the Yamhill River in Oregon. In that experience Love sees how his baptism is in line with the baptism of Christ. David Lemley explores in his practical theology of baptism the possible dangers in our time of “the loss of our primary act of corporate worship explicitly affirming our identity and mission as God’s baptized people.” Turning to the Lord’s Supper, Naomi Walters asks how the Lord’s Supper in Churches of Christ might be different if we considered biblical texts beyond the Last Supper as instructive for practice. And, finally, Paul Blowers broadens our focus in a well-documented, well-written paper concerning the Eucharist’s role in establishing and sustaining Christian communal identity functioning as a covenant renewal for the body of Christ.

Beyond the Symposium, Kindalee Pfremmer De Long in a class setting affirms that her ideas of baptism in Acts have changed—that is, baptism, even though mentioned often in Acts, is only one aspect of a much
bigger story. **John Mark Hicks** helps us to see that the three ordinances of baptism, the Lord’s Supper and the assembly of the church are sacramental: they are divine acts of grace through which God encounters believers to transform them into the divine image by the presence of Jesus in the power of the Spirit.

Two thought-provoking sermons come next. **Jarrod Robinson** sensitively explores the topic of baptism through the lens of Galatians 3.26 and the question of gender in our churches today. **Amy Bost Henegar** opens our vision to the story of Naaman, familiar to many of us. She reflects on how Elisha teaches the mighty leader the much-needed virtue of humility by having him bathe seven times in the Jordan River.

Finally we close the issue with another wonderful liturgical reading by **Lee Magness** on baptism and the Lord’s Supper entitled “Wet Footprints.”

Looking forward to the upcoming year, we will open 2015 with an issue on the *Thessalonian Correspondence* guest-edited by Jeff Miller of Milligan College. As this year draws to an end, we wish you a blessed holiday season and ask that you continue to keep *Leaven* in your prayers.