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Editor's Notes

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Editors' Notes

D'Esta Love and Stuart Love

This issue marks a milestone for *Leaven*. It is the last issue for your current editors, marking a labor of love for approximately twenty-five years. Every issue has generated its own delights and its challenges. We owe an enormous debt of gratitude to our editorial board, numerous guest editors and writers. We think, for example of **LEE MAGNESS**, who faithfully provided liturgical readings for almost all of our issues, not only enriching *Leaven* by his trained creativity but, in so doing, uniting us to many sisters and brothers among Christian Churches and Disciples of Christ. Or we think of five members of our editorial board who so graciously have contributed articles for this issue—**LEONARD ALLEN**, **MARK LOVE**, **DAVID MATSON**, and **PAUL AND KAY WATSON**. Mark Love is the founding editor of the journal, and we are thankful that he and **JOHN BARTON** now serve as the journal's new editors. More will be said about key persons who have marked our journey over time. But first, allow us to say a few words about those writing in this issue.

First, we open with a piece by **MARK LOVE** as we honor his service as the journal's original general editor, member of the editorial board, issue editor, and author. Using Isaiah 52–53, Mark describes how in the New Testament, and especially in Luke–Acts, early Christians regarded God's ministry more as a surprising announcement than a theory of atonement because the gospel itself possesses uncommon and unforeseen social consequences and concrete embodiments in human life. Next, we honor the **WATSONS, KAY AND PAUL**, who write a most appropriate piece on the meaning of leaven literally and literarily. After all, this is the name of the journal and some have wondered if *Leaven* has had a corrupting or a penetratingly quiet and positive influence in its purpose and historical practice. The Watsons conclude that the latter definition fits, much to the relief of your editors! Throughout the years their faithfulness to the journal's purpose has been unwavering and without them we would not have accepted the task of editing.

We follow with an article by **DAVID L. MATSON** who did more than any single individual to link our efforts with members of Christian Churches and Disciples of Christ. Matson introduced us to church leaders, especially at Milligan College and Emmanuel Christian Seminary. A Pepperdine University graduate with an MA in New Testament, Matson then went on to Baylor University to gain his PhD in New Testament. He is a dear friend, former student, editorial board member, issue editor, and writer for the journal. His article is filled with personal, warm, practical wisdom about the journey in becoming and dedicating one's life to Christian scholarship. Next, we include a sermon by **LEONARD ALLEN**, who was one of our earliest board members as well. Through NT images of oil and water and mud he reflects upon the incarnational nature of Christian faith and how “very ordinary things can become sacraments of God’s love and grace.”

One of the ways *Leaven* was sustained through the years was through the help of **DARRYL TIPPENS** as provost at Pepperdine University. With his unwavering support we gained financial assistance. He also approved a library online service (Pepperdine Digital Commons) that makes *Leaven* available worldwide. As a result, approximately a half million articles have been downloaded by readers across borders and barriers we could never have breached. Darryl writes on a subject dear to his heart, singing in the worship of the church. Our prayer and wish is that many preachers, worship leaders, elders, and church leaders read this apt piece and incorporate its insights for the worship ministry of singing.

We then include articles by two stalwart scholars who have supported our efforts through the years, **RICHARD HUGHES** and **JEFF MILLER**. Hughes's piece was previously published and is now printed in *Leaven* by his permission as the author. It is a timely exploration into the contemporary theme of race relations among churches and the larger American culture. As an accomplished historian, Hughes serves as a prophet to the

contemporary American church. Miller also treats a topic dear to your editors as he explores the use of gender-specific pronouns in Bible translations of selected NT writings. Read this article for all its worth. The task of gender inclusion in the church has only begun!

Finally, as has been a practice of *Leaven*, we introduce two new *Leaven* authors, **SPENCER BOGLE** and **LAUREN CALVIN COOKE**. Recent PhD systematic theologian Bogle explores, as his article title suggests, the topic of the economy of the cross through a study of economics and the cross of Christ. He forges a furrow into a much-needed but largely unplowed field among our churches. Cooke, a recent MDiv graduate of Princeton seminary, takes us into the gender world of the Old Testament, to a woman named Michal, and uncovers her contribution to the lives of courageous women--a biblical profile of daring audacity in the face of patriarchal power. Beautifully written, we doubt that you will ever see Michal in the same way that you did before.

In addition to those mentioned above, we also acknowledge Pepperdine University for its administrative support and for recognizing *Leaven* as an official publication of the Religion Division. Many have been involved in the production and publication of *Leaven* and we are grateful to John Free and David Gibony, who printed each issue and maintained a high quality publication at prices we could afford. Also, we have had the necessary and vital support of copy editors and office managers through the years. Our most recent copy editor is Sandra Low, and Christopher Retts serves as our office and subscription manager. We thank them for their good work.

As we have reflected on the past twenty-five volumes of *Leaven*, it has been inspiring to read the names of all those who have contributed articles. It was especially moving and meaningful to note the names of those who have written for us and/or served as editorial board members who are now deceased. We thought you would appreciate the roll call of these beloved individuals: Bill Love, Wayne Dockery, Mike Casey, Bill Humble, Prentice Meador, Dan Anders, June Breninger, Fred Barton, Charles Siburt, Leonard Wymore, Charles Cook, and Leroy Garrett. It has also been gratifying to note the many issues that have addressed a variety of challenging and timely topics such as women in ministry, race and reconciliation, nationalism and the church, peace and justice, human sexuality, theology and science, International Churches of Christ, gender inclusion in our churches, and manifestations of war and violence. It has also been the intent of the editorial board and the general editors for *Leaven* to reflect in its topics and choice of authors, as well as the makeup of the editorial board, the diversity of our churches in terms of race and gender. We have remained faithful to that commitment and are indebted to our guest editors who worked with us in making this diversity possible.

Finally, it has been our privilege to put on a *Leaven* symposium each year at the Pepperdine Bible Lectures, which will continue under the leadership of the new editors. It has been a joy to host men and women from Churches of Christ, Christian Churches, and Disciples of Christ who have prepared and presented excellent, challenging articles at the symposium for lectureship audiences through the years. The highlight of this effort was our great honor to introduce Walter Brueggemann one year, who simply entered into dialogue with the audience on questions concerning ministry. As we hand the journal over to the capable leadership of Mark Love and John Barton, we do so with gratitude for the rich experience of having served as the general editors of *Leaven*, and we look forward to a new era for *Leaven* of providing thoughtful resources for Christian ministry for churches of the Restoration Heritage.

