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Editor's Notes

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Editors' Notes

D'Esta Love and Stuart Love

The Stone-Campbell Dialogue exists as an effort to achieve unity among churches of the Stone-Campbell Heritage. A national team is made up of approximately twenty individuals, consisting of three teams of six to seven members representing the three streams of the Restoration Heritage/Stone-Campbell Movement. These streams are the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Churches of Christ, and Christian Churches/Churches of Christ. The members of the Dialogue commit to meet each year in a given city for the sake of unity. The goals of each meeting are to bring healing, foster understanding, develop relationships, and build trust through worship and through charitable and frank dialogue. At their annual meetings, the national Stone-Campbell Dialogue team invites Restoration churches to join with them in worship, fellowship, and discussion around a topic of engagement for the dialogue. D'Esta became a member of the team representing Churches of Christ in 2010. The articles that appear in this issue of *Leaven* represent presentations made at various national meetings during the time of her involvement.

Each meeting begins with the celebration of a Great Communion service on Sunday, with presentations and dialogue on the theme of the meeting the following day. At the communion service brothers and sisters in Christ from various Stone-Campbell churches come together for worship and to gather in the spirit of unity at the Lord's table as the people of God. The 2015 meeting was in Abilene, Texas. The First Christian Church of Abilene (Disciples) hosted the communion service and the fellowship meal that followed. This issue opens with two presentations made on that occasion that provide an overview of the work of the Stone-Campbell Dialogue.

In "How It All Began," **NEWELL WILLIAMS** provides a historical perspective as he traces the first seven years of the Dialogue's formation and work, including the beginning of the treasured and meaningful tradition of the Great Communion. **DOUG FOSTER** picks up the historical thread and outlines the common faith shared by each stream of the movement as he describes "What We've Done and What We Dream for the Future." He ties those dreams to Christ's prayer for unity in John 17. Doug's article is followed by two excerpts from a document created by the national team as a resource for churches interested in the work of unity within their various communities. "A Confession of Sin" and "An Affirmation of Faith" provide the groundwork of unity and are available on the team website.¹ In 2009 the Dialogue provided resources for a national celebration of the 200th anniversary of Alexander Campbell's 1809 Declaration and Address. Churches all over the country hosted Great Communion services in 2009, using these resources as a guide. We've included an order of worship from the October 4th service at the University Church of Christ in Malibu, California, and within it is a reading of the 1809 Campbell address.

The focus of the 2011 meeting in Albuquerque was on the Holy Spirit and unity. In his discussion of that theme, **JOHN MARK HICKS** sets forth the theological root of unity, which he describes as a participation in the divine life. **ANDY MANGUM** responds to John Mark's article, relating to the Holy Spirit and unity through his experience as a Disciples minister. At the Dallas meeting in 2012 the National Dialogue team invited young local ministers to join them in a spiritual retreat led by Dr. Jackie Halstead of Nashville, Tennessee. Prompted by questions and observations made by participants, **MARK TAYLOR** reflects on the retreat in "What's the Point of Pursuing Unity?" and his insights bring a focus to the value of the Dialogue in the midst of skepticism.

The theme of the 2013 Indianapolis meeting was *Healing and Soul Care*. Three sermons on the healing power of the Lord's Supper were presented at the Great Communion service, and two are included here. In

1. Stone-Campbell Dialogue webpage, accessed April 21, 2015, <http://ccu.disciples.org/StoneCampbellDialogue/tabid/1295/Default.aspx>.

his sermon “Personal Integration as Eucharistic Homecoming,” **KENT ELLETT** speaks poignantly about the power of healing within his own family history; he recalls a story of the reconciliation of fathers and grandfathers at the family table and shares how this experience has informed his reflection on the power of the Lord’s Supper to bring personal healing. **DIANE SPLETH** then focuses on “The Healing Power of the Lord’s Supper in the Church.” While presiding at the table, she observes a woman weeping during the Supper, and when inquiring after the meaning of the woman’s tears, Diane discovers an insightful and inspiring perspective.

KENT SMITH provides the rationale for the theme of the 2014 Abilene meeting in his article “It Doesn’t Look Like Church to Me!” Three young ministers provide in-depth illumination on Kent’s presentation as they describe their various “new church” ministries. In “It Doesn’t Feel Like Church to Me,” house-church minister **LAURA CALLARMAN** shares about her work in Abilene. **JOEL BROWN** then introduces us to the work of “Galileo Church, a Disciples of Christ Experiment in Next Church,” which ministers to individuals on the fringes. Lastly, **JARED LOONEY** expounds in “Driven by Mission: Global City Mission Initiative” on how he and his team minister in ethnic and refugee communities in New York City. We conclude the issue with a “Prayer of Unity,” which **CLAIRE DAVIDSON FREDERICK** led at the 2014 Great Communion Service in Abilene, Texas.

The final issues of *Leaven* for 2015 are *Cruciform Living* and *FaithWorks* (the theme for the 2015 Pepperdine Bible Lectures.) Issues are being developed for 2016 by David Lemley, Mark Love, and Lee Camp. Again, the final issue for that year will be based on the theme of the Pepperdine Bible Lectures. The 2016 volume of *Leaven* will mark its twenty-fourth year! As a reminder, *Leaven* is now available online and you can access the past twenty-two years of our issues at <http://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/leaven/>. Continue to pray for *Leaven*.

