

MANAGING EDITOR'S NOTE

It is with great pleasure (not to mention a measure of pride perhaps inappropriate to a theology journal) that I announce publication of the second issue of *Bible and the Contemporary World*, from the programme of the same name in St Mary's College at the University of St Andrews.

Although the journal is new, the programme is not. Since 2003, the programme has connected biblical and theological studies with other disciplines in the arts, humanities and social sciences, and has graduated over 100 students. Current students or recent graduates hail from England, Scotland, Ireland, Northern Ireland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Ghana, Slovakia, Italy, France, and elsewhere. Some of them are ministers, some teachers, physicians and nurses, business executives, and NGO workers, and even the occasional lawyer.

The selections for this issue reflect this diversity in interests. It starts with Andreas Klasen's detailed practical theology analysis, drawing on the "theology in four voices" methodology, of the monastic Rules of St. Francis at work as a leadership system in a modern monastic setting, the Franciscan Sisters of Jesus' Sacred Heart convent in southwestern Germany. Next is an important ecclesial study by Victoria John-Wawa about how the concept of church in the Book of Revelation can help modern Christians revitalize the church's ties to its ancient heritage. Following Dr. John-Wawa's paper is a mediation by David Baker on the ability of language to both bear witness to the nature of God and to reflect the reality of the triune God as a linguistic community, offering the premise that "an expanded understanding of language has the potential to enlarge the very ground upon which knowing God occurs."

These authors mirror the diversity of the program. Andreas is a professor of international business at Offenburg (Germany) University of Applied Sciences. Victoria has had careers in both broadcasting and education, and holds, in addition to her MLitt, a PhD in Literature and Moral Education. David has published nine thematic historical novels, one children's book, and two books of spiritual reflections, several of which are available in Russian, Ukrainian and/or German language translations. The papers these three have contributed, as different as they are in many ways, share certain fundamental qualities: written by people that take Christianity seriously, they testify in different ways to the continued vitality of the Gospel and ancient Christian tradition in the church and in the world today.

In this issue, we also initiate two new features. First, the journal will from time to time review published works by graduates of the programme. Our initial item is a review by Dr. William Hyland, Lecturer in Church History at St. Mary's College, of Father Morkos Fakhry's recent book *The Book of Revelation and the Church of Alexandria*. Father Morkos is a 2018 graduate of the programme, and his book examines how the last book of the New Testament finds expression in the liturgy and traditions of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria.

Also, in this issue is a report by Whitney Boswell, a 2014 graduate, on her continued work regarding the interactions among Christianity in the United States, as reflected in the traditions of both historically white and historically black churches, racial attitudes in America generally, and politics (especially presidential). Whitney is one of five "Honorary Research Assistants" that enjoy the support of the University past graduation, as they continue their study of how culture shapes and has been shaped by Christian belief, practice and theology. The activities of HRAs include the conduct of research either independently, or, where appropriate, as a member of a team, in biblical studies and theology, in relation to other disciplines in the arts, humanities and social sciences, towards the pursuit of defined projects relevant to the mission of the Bible and the Contemporary World programme. Future issues will have similar reports from other HRAs.

Today the Church observes Ash Wednesday, the start of the season of Lent. The church teaches us that this is a time for self-examination, and for reading and meditating on Scripture. It will be obvious to you that all the authors in this issue made those Lenten values a way of life as they approached their topics. I hope that something in this issue touches you also.

Daniel Rentfro Jr.
Managing Editor
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