

## Editor's Preface

Last year, our journal theme centred upon the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation. Following such a major anniversary, there are continuing subjects being discussed after-the-fact and also a whole host of publications continuing to be produced. Consequently, readers will notice that though this present volume is not a themed volume on the Reformation, there are still many submissions which clearly relate to this subject. For example, the opening submission, “The Editor’s Rambles: How Numbers Can Change Over Time”, is a very short yet hopefully provocative article about the solas and was written to stimulate our mathematical minds, theologically speaking. There are four major Reformation-related articles and also book reviews clearly related to the Reformation anniversary. The four articles will undoubtedly help to advance our understanding of the Reformation in Germany, England, Scotland, and Hungary. For example, Manfred Kohl invites us to study Luther through a unique lens, namely Luther’s last will and testament. We have placed these four articles together – one each by Kohl, Haykin, Stewart, and Szöke – under academic articles.

A second theme which emerges this year in our journal is Christian worship. The opening sermon by John Koning, “Communion Chaos”, is worship-centred as is the fine article by Tyler Van Halteren entitled, “Worship: Poetry and Renewal”. Both deserve to be read and discussed. We have placed the Koning sermon and Van Halteren article back-to-back. Three of the book reviews also expand on the theme of worship: one by Tyler Stitt on Cherry’s new book, *The Music Architect*; another on the new English publication of Bucer’s *Ground and Reason* (a valuable work not only about the Lord’s Supper but also about worship principles and practices in general); and, a review on the helpful new resource *The Pastor’s Book*, which chiefly deals with liturgy and worship leadership. It is hoped that this second theme, worship, will receive much consideration from our readers.

Other submissions include a look at John Frame, a prolific contemporary theologian, as Cameron Fraser examines Frame’s memoir, *Theology of My Life*. Thorsten Prill has provided a helpful article about contextualisation in mission work with a discussion on cross-cultural stumbling blocks. John Koning’s submission “Confessions from a Pastor’s Desk” is an article that can benefit all pastors, elders and students for the ministry. In fact, this article would be good to read and discuss in a seminary class or at a ministers’ fraternal or workshop. Finally, in 2016 we began a discussion on the issue of offices in the church with Douglas Gebbie’s article that year on “Two or Three

Office: A Slash at the Gordian Knot”. This year the discussion continues with Murray Smith of Australia making his contribution to the debate with his article, “Shepherds and Servants: the two offices Christ appointed in his Church”. No doubt these two articles will lead to a third article (maybe even more) in this irenic writing spree – all in keeping with a primary journal objective – to generate and encourage discussion on matters of the faith.

You will notice again a large number of book reviews – diverse and wide-ranging – well beyond what I have already highlighted. New Bible commentaries receive attention. New works related to philosophy are reviewed – something we have not highlighted a great deal in the past. However, these works are unique, and we felt that they should be reviewed for our readers. Some of the latest publications in church history have also been reviewed. Practical theology receives very good attention with reviews of many of the latest books related to pastoral leadership, preaching, worship, and missions. Those who teach in many of the above fields will no doubt want to carefully sift through these reviews.

This year we have also included something a little different. We wanted readers to learn about Wayne Grudem’s new book on Christian ethics, so we sought and received permission to include an excerpt from this forthcoming publication. We are pleased to offer readers the opportunity to evaluate this work – in many ways Grudem’s *magnum opus* on the subject. Lecturers in ethics and others will want to watch for this new book – due out later this year.

In North America in particular there has been much discussion about *The Benedict Option*. We have included Hart’s lengthy review of this book. Hart helps us to evaluate the contemporary discussion and to be informed about this current and popular publication and the ensuing debate.

I am sure that pastors and theological educators will want to read Karl Peterson’s review of *The Mentoring Church*. Mentoring is such a vital role in discipleship. Also, note Steve Curtis’ book, reviewed under Book Briefs, which theological educators and mission minded-ministries should read.

Once again, I want to say thank you to each contributor. We appreciate your writing and pray God’s blessing on each reader as together we take up many subjects of the Christian faith. We have changed our format a little with this volume: first, our logo has been updated; second, all article writers have been given the opportunity to include their email address. Blessings as you read, discuss and perhaps even write in response to this volume.

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