

Editorial

Welcome to the Spring 2010 issue of the *Midwestern Baptist Journal*, the academic journal of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Missouri. The theme articles of the present issue feature N. T. Wright and his view of the doctrine of Justification. The first two articles represent the text of the Sizemore Lectures, delivered at Midwestern on 3-4 November 2009 by Dr. Mark Seifrid, Ernest and Mildred Hogan Professor of New Testament at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky. These lectures represent some of Dr. Seifrid's most recent contributions to the ongoing debate between himself and Bishop N. T. Wright on the issue of Justification, a debate many of our readers will have undoubtedly followed in recent books and scholarly articles. Dr. Seifrid is well known as a defender of what has come to be called the "Lutheran" reading of Paul, and has been keenly critical of certain features of Wright's "Fresh Perspective" on that apostle's teaching. Following Professor Seifrid's contributions we include a moderating article by Dr. Rustin Umstattd, Professor of Theology at Midwestern, who gives his own take on the debate between Seifrid and Wright. Finally, rounding out the theme section of our issue, Dr. Radu Gheorghita, Professor of Biblical Studies at Midwestern, provides a personal reflection upon his own encounters with the works of N.T. Wright, whom he has come to appreciate as "an 'exclamation point' theologian, who has had an epoch-making impact in New Testament studies."

In addition to our theme contributions, we also include a number of articles addressing other important issues.

In the first place, Midwestern doctoral candidate, Joshua Lee Mann, has contributed an article in which he argues for the presence of Chiasmus in Acts 2:2-4, and reflects upon its possible interpretive significance. Josh also served as the editorial assistant on the present issue of the journal, and the editor wishes to express his gratitude for Josh's invaluable aid at every stage of production.

Next Dr. Fred Sanders, whose book, *The Deep Things of God: How the Trinity Changes Everything* is forthcoming in August from Crossway Publishers, contributes an article in which he

declares that it is time for theologians to express “the doctrine of the Trinity with unprecedented clarity as a biblical doctrine, or, to speak more precisely, as a doctrine that is in the Bible.” Dr. Sanders is Professor of Theology at Biola’s Torrey Honors Institute.

From there we move into the realm of Christian ethics as Dr. Jerry A. Johnson, Professor of Ethics and Theology at Midwestern and Dean of Midwestern Seminary, leads us in an exploration of the significant implications of the incarnation of Jesus for establishing the full personhood of the unborn.

After that comes an article exploring the roots of the oft-repeated myth crediting the Emperor Constantine with the formation of our New Testament Canon. This article is from the keyboard of the editor, as also is the final piece in this issue, on the Pelican as a symbol of the sacrificial suffering of Christ in art.

The final contribution to be mentioned is of special interest. Grant H. Palmer spent his career as a teacher within the LDS Church Educational System. In 2005, however, Palmer was disciplined after writing a book, entitled *An Insider’s View of Mormon Origins*, that called into question Mormonism’s claims about its founder, the Prophet Joseph Smith, while at the same time calling upon his church to place greater emphasis on Jesus Christ. Palmer’s personal background as a trusted LDS leader and teacher led to this book’s being particularly impactful. He was three-times director of LDS Institutes in California and Utah, and an instructor at the LDS Church college of New Zealand. He also served as an LDS seminary instructor in Utah. Palmer is not a Southern Baptist, indeed he still considers himself a Mormon. Even so, we will find it informative to look over his shoulder as he challenges a teaching central to Mormon belief and epistemology, namely the idea that the best, perhaps even the only, way to be sure that the Book of Mormon is true or that Joseph Smith really was a prophet of God is to pray to get a confirmatory testimony, or “burning Bosom.” Every Christian who has had any sort of extended interactions with Mormons will appreciate the importance of Palmer’s discussion.

A final word of thanks goes to Cheri Smith for her help with proofreading and formatting.