



# Southwestern

JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY



Theology Applied



## EDITORIAL

The articles found in this issue of the *Southwestern Journal of Theology* are built around the theme of “Theology Applied.” I am sure that some who are starting to read these pages are wondering what this theme means and, furthermore, why we would select such a theme for an academic journal. Please allow me to offer a thought or two related to these and similar questions.

This publication is referred to as a *theological* journal. This particular theological journal is produced by the faculty of The Southwestern Baptist *Theological* Seminary. Obviously, theology is an important aspect of this journal and an important part of the life and work of the seminary. We believe, however, that theology is much more than an academic subject to be studied. It certainly is that, but it is so much more.

Let’s begin with the meaning of the word *theology*. At its most basic level, theology is thinking about God. Jaroslav Pelikan, the great historical theologian, took this one step further when he said that theology is what the church has believed, taught, and confessed based upon the Word of God. We can say that theology involves developing a mind and heart for God’s Word, God’s world, and God’s work, leading to a godly way of life. Many theologians suggest that theology begins with faith seeking understanding. My friend Kevin J. Vanhoozer amplifies this idea when he suggests that the first step in starting to apply theology involves faith speaking understanding.

Far too often in the minds of Christians, theology is something merely contained in a book. It is thought that its place is confined to the study or the classroom. The Christian life and Christian service, so it is thought, take place in another sphere, a different sphere. For some, there is not even a dotted-line connection between theology and the life of the Christian. Our goal in this issue is to begin to correct that false notion and point believers in a different and more coherent direction.

At an introductory level, the contributors to this issue seek to make connections between theology and the church; between theology and the church's worship, proclamation, teaching, and witness; between theology, wisdom, and whole life discipleship; as well as between theology and work. One more piece involves exploring how theology enables believers to live in the world and to engage the public square. There is certainly more that can be said about the doing of theology in and for these various spheres of our life and service. We do not in any way claim that this issue offers an exhaustive look at this theme, but we hope it will help pastors and students, and many other followers of Christ as well, to move away from the disconnect between theology and the application of theology that sadly exists in far too many places.

"Theology Applied" calls for us to be hearers of God's Word, students of God's Word, followers of God's Word, as well as doers and practitioners of God's Word. The contributors to this issue have provided a harmonious chorus to help us begin to connect the dots between thinking about God and our worship of and service to God. In doing so, we recognize that theology is not an individualistic cerebral experience. We contend that theology matters to the church. Moreover, theology serves as the foundation for the life of the church and for the Christian witness to and for the world.

In this issue, Malcolm B. Yarnell III, research professor of systematic theology at Southwestern Seminary, begins the conversation by helping us understand how the Southwestern tradition has addressed the relationship between theology and the church. We are given a look at a theology of the church and an understanding of theology for the church through the eyes of George W. Truett, former pastor at First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas, who also served as a member of the Southwestern Board of Trustees from 1908-1944. One of the hallmarks of the Southwestern tradition for more than a century has been its emphasis on doing theology in service to the church.

Other Southwestern faculty members participating in this issue include David L. Allen and Matt Queen, along with Joseph R. and Amy L. Crider. David Allen serves as distinguished professor of preaching while holding the George W. Truett Chair of Ministry, and Professor Queen holds the L. R. Scarborough Chair of Evangelism. Together, they help us see the connection between theology and

witness with articles on a theology of preaching and a theology of evangelism. Amy Crider has recently been appointed to the faculty in the Terry School of Educational Ministries while Joe Crider serves as the dean of the School of Church Music and Worship. The Criders provide us with an illuminating look at a theology of teaching, connecting theology not only to witness but also to wisdom.

D. Jeffrey Mooney and Greg Cochran, two faculty members at California Baptist University, have contributed two thoughtful pieces to this issue. Mooney offers a biblical theology of worship while Cochran's article enables us to think about theology and work. Scott B. Key, who was recently appointed as the academic vice president at the C. S. Lewis Study Center in Northfield, Massachusetts, reflects on the good, the true, and the beautiful, giving us a holistic look at the relationship between theology and whole life discipleship.

Andrew T. Walker, director of the Carl F. H. Henry Institute at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, joins with Casey Hough of Luther Rice Seminary to show us the relationship between theology and the world, guiding us toward a framework for thinking about theology and the public square. There is much more that can be said about our theme, but these eight articles have given us a wonderful starting point to expand our thinking regarding the importance of the relationship of theology to life and to the life of the church.

Our book review section features a look at some outstanding new titles, including the new work by Professor R. Allen Lott, who serves in the School of Church Music and Worship at Southwestern. Reviews include a window into the initial volume in the new *Theology for the People of God* series as well as significant new publications in the areas of biblical studies, theology, missions, church history, and biography. The Book Notes section gives additional guidance to books that connect with the "theology applied" theme.

Let me once again offer thanks to the members of the editorial team. I am genuinely grateful for the work of Andrew Streett, Katie McCoy, James A. Smith Sr., Sarah Spring, and Alex Sibley, as well as Wang Yong Lee, who serves in a graduate assistant role. We express our appreciation for the good work of the design team led by Adam Covington.

We pray that this issue will help our readers see the importance of theology and its application for all aspects of the Christian life,

both individually and corporately. We believe that theology faithfully serves the church and, in multiple ways, enables the church to serve and to speak to our society, the culture, and the world.

*Soli Deo Gloria*

David S. Dockery

