

EDITORIAL

This issue of the *Southwestern Journal of Theology* is dedicated to the integral relationship between our thoughts about God and our worship of God. The following essays explore important aspects of the biblical basis for that relationship as well as historical and contemporary discussions regarding theology and worship.

Franklin Segler, who taught for 21 years at Southwestern Seminary after more than a decade in the pastorate,¹ argued dogmatically and with passion that we must recognize the necessary connection between worship and theology. Segler's position was, in short, "Christian worship is God-centered."² To worship properly first means knowing God through his Word and then responding to the grace wrought by his Spirit. That God's personal revelation in Christ requires a heartfelt response was deemed axiomatic:

The basis of Christian worship is not utilitarian but theological. Worship depends upon revelation, and Christian worship depends upon the revelation of God in Christ Jesus. Worship is therefore a revelation and a response. It springs from the divine initiative in redemption. By faith man responds to grace as he finds it in a face-to-face encounter with God.³

Likewise, William J. Reynolds affirmed the link between theology and worship was inextricable. "Widely recognized as the foremost Southern Baptist leader of and writer on hymnody,"⁴ this Southwestern distinguished alumnus⁵ led the committee for the *Baptist Hymnal* to make sure every

¹Segler was one of the 25 faculty singled out for recognition by James Leo Garrett Jr. C.W. Brister, "Franklin Morgan Segler," in James Leo Garrett Jr., ed., *The Legacy of Southwestern: Writings that Shaped a Tradition* (North Richland Hills, TX: Smithfield Press, 2002), 171-82.

²Franklin M. Segler, *Christian Worship: Its Theology and Practice* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1967), 58.

³Segler, *Christian Worship*, 57-58.

⁴David W. Music, "William Jensen Reynolds," in *The Legacy of Southwestern*, 311.

⁵Robert A. Baker, *Tell the Generations Following: A History of Southwestern Baptist Theological*

hymn text was “critically examined for theological accuracy and doctrinal soundness” as well as for “musical experience.”⁶ The recipient of many awards and accolades, Reynolds served on Southwestern Seminary’s music faculty from 1980 to 1998 and “provided the foundation on which all subsequent studies of Baptist hymnody and church music” would be based.⁷

As this issue demonstrates, the current faculty in the School of Church Music and Worship, the School of Theology, and Texas Baptist College are building on that solid Southwestern foundation. Joshua Williams, associate professor of Old Testament and director of the seminary’s research doctoral studies program, analyzes the worship practices of Israel in 1 and 2 Chronicles. He demonstrates how David and other righteous kings both kept the Mosaic Law and introduced new elements without contradicting that standard. His reflections upon divine holiness, liturgical precedent, and innovation should prompt further contemporary reflection.

The next two essays review important persons and events regarding worship and theology from the early church. Research professor of theology D. Jeffrey Bingham rehearses the responses of Ignatius of Antioch and Irenaeus of Lyons to heresies which roiled the early church and attempted to lead the people of God astray. One of Bingham’s many helpful reflections on their work, though shocking, must compel us toward embracing theological orthodoxy. “Error in Christological doctrine breeds failure in humanitarian care; heresy yields hatred.” In the next essay, assistant professor of humanities Coleman Ford offers a helpful review of the efforts of Ambrose of Milan to sustain Nicene orthodoxy. Ford argues that the heresiarch Arius, who diminished the Son in his relationship with the Father, and the Arians were able to further their heresy through the use of song. Athanasius evaluated the problem and Ambrose borrowed the same strategy to combat Arianism and exalt Jesus Christ. Ford’s work should prompt more pastors and theologians to help further orthodoxy through crafting helpful hymns, songs, and other helpful artistic forms.

In the next three essays, faculty from the School of Church Music and Worship demonstrate both their stellar theological acumen and excellent musical capabilities. The dean of the school, Joseph R. Crider, re-visions the congregational gathering by offering three keys for the transformation of our worship. Marcus Brown, assistant professor of church music and

Seminary 1908-1983 (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1983), 513.

⁶William J. Reynolds, “Introduction,” *Baptist Hymnal* (Nashville, TN: Convention Press, 1975), viii.

⁷Music, “Reynolds,” 317.

worship, calls for worship leaders to carefully examine the link between the “law of faith” (*lex credendi*) and the “law of prayer” (*lex orandi*). Finally, associate professor of music theory Nathan P. Burggraff provides insightful analysis on how our worship has been changed in ways that inhibit congregational singing. Burggraff argues that simply evaluating the type of music we use can have an impact on participation. All three essays should be consulted both by worship leaders and other theologians.

We conclude the introduction to this important issue of the seminary’s academic journal with some encouraging words about worship from Southwestern Seminary’s lodestar for systematic theological reflection:

Worship needs to glorify the triune God, to awaken worshipers to the presence and leadership of God, to enliven and apply the biblical story, to equip worshipers for their mission and service in the world, and to quicken the anticipation of the last things.⁸

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⁸James Leo Garrett Jr., *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Evangelical*, vol. 2, 2nd ed. (North Richland Hills, TX: BIBAL Press, 2001), 657.