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## *From the Editor*

As is the tradition of *The Asbury Journal*, this issue is devoted to papers presented at the 2019-2020 Advanced Research Programs Interdisciplinary Colloquium, held Friday October 11, 2019 at Asbury Theological Seminary. The theme for this colloquium, “Gospel and Culture: A Biblical Theology of Culture and Socio-Anthropological Perspectives on the Bible and Culture” becomes the theme for this issue of the *Journal*. Understanding how we read and interpret scripture in the light of various cultural contexts is vital, both to the work of missiologists and for biblical scholars. Scripture was written in one context, has been translated and interpreted into numerous other cultural contexts over time, and now must be presented in such a way as to make sense in new and challenging cultural contexts of our own day and age. These articles seek to meet these types of challenges.

Esther D. Jadhav starts this issue examining the cultural context of Christian higher education and how it seeks to expand its theological understanding of the growing cultural concern for diversity. Her interpretation of this issue is seen through the lens of Wesleyan theology as well as her work at Asbury University in Wilmore, Kentucky. Shawn P. Behan adds to this discussion by examining how a holistic way of doing exegesis will include serious reflections on both scripture and culture. He approaches this argument through the lens of the work of Bishop J. E. Lesslie Newbigin, who was a master at applying scripture to cultural context within the world of missiology. Abbie F. Mantor explores the text of Job 3 through a lens of modern psychological trauma studies, as a way to better understand Job’s spiritual state and condition. Dain Alexander Smith completes the colloquium papers through examining how Paul in the book of Romans sought to interpret the Gospel message through the lens of the writings in the Old Testament book of Isaiah, especially in terms of his eschatological vision for peace. Much can be gained in understanding the interplay between the Bible and culture by looking at scripture through a cultural lens in Biblical Studies and by looking at culture through a scriptural lens in Missiology and Intercultural Studies. The two fields need

more interaction to further a more holistic understanding of the role both play in the work of the kingdom of God.

In addition to the papers from the colloquium, Kelly J. Godoy de Danielson presents an examination of the Old Testament characters of Rahab and Ruth through the lens of an immigrant Latina. Presented in both English and Spanish, this article seeks to examine how the Old Testament allowed for women outside the people of God to become insiders through oaths of allegiance to God and acts of lovingkindness. This presents a model for seeing how immigrants themselves can see their lives through God's eyes as opposed to the often-derogatory eyes of those born within a specific culture. Finally, the From the Archives essay celebrates the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Ichthus music festival in Wilmore, Kentucky. From 1970 to 2012 it served as a real-life example of seeking to apply scripture to the needs and concerns of contemporary youth culture in the United States. The influence and power of this move of the Holy Spirit continues to this day in the lives of those who worked the festival as well as those who came to listen to the music.

The intersection of scripture and culture, when done well, results in transformed lives. These lives in turn can lead to a transformed culture. The overarching problem is that culture is never static- it constantly changes with every generation, and the application of scripture in one form may only last for a generation. It is a constant struggle in ministry to keep applying scripture to new concerns and new issues for each generation. The Student Volunteer Movement in 1888 adopted as its slogan, "the evangelization of the world in this generation." This was an ambitious aim, but it is also almost impossible, because each generation must adapt scripture to fit the culture of each emerging generation in an ongoing cycle. Several Christian writers have adapted Ronald Regan's quote from his 1967 inaugural address as governor to the Christian faith. Regan noted that freedom was "never more than one generation away from extinction." Of course, claiming that Christianity is never more than one generation away from extinction ignores the revival power of the Holy Spirit, but the idea that culture and scripture must come together in new ways each generation is important for the ongoing mission of the Church. If we neglect this truth, we do so at our peril.



Robert Danielson Ph.D.