

Editorial

Jocelyn Bryan
St John's College, Durham
j.m.bryan@durham.ac.uk

Welcome to the first issue of *Theology and Ministry: An Online Journal*, whose aim is to contribute to the growing academic research at the interdisciplinary interface of theology, ministerial practice and reflection. It offers a forum for innovative and creative work in the field, making it available rapidly and inexpensively to a world-wide readership. In particular, it encourages excellent work from new authors as well as from more established writers.

The journal also seeks to provide a means of publishing some of the outstanding work written as part of the academic programmes within St John's College, Durham University. St John's MA programme in Theology and Ministry and the Doctor in Theology and Ministry programme, which it shares with the Durham University Department of Theology and Religion, have become well established over the past ten years and have often produced work of publishable quality, which can be of service to the wider community of both academics and practitioners in theology and ministry. Our first volume reflects this environment, with the majority of papers being written by those who have been part of these programmes.

Allison Fenton, in her article 'A Response to Postnatal Depression', reflects on the experience of Postnatal depression and motherhood, asking whether the practice of 'Churching' or an alternative liturgy might have pastoral significance for women in their transition to motherhood. Benjamin Carter, in 'Old Wine in New Skins', argues that tradition – in this case the Anglican choral tradition – can play an important role in the Church's mission. Mission is also the focus of Katharine Green's article, 'The Importance of Place'. She makes use of the pastoral cycle to examine the use of our church buildings and how they might revitalise the life of the Church.

Ruth Lackenby, in 'Learning from the Learning Impaired How to Experience God', has written a moving and unusual piece exploring a very different aspect of ministry, in which she argues that we can learn much about the experience of God from those with learning difficulties. She uses a *Just So Story* by Rudyard Kipling as an integral part of her reflection and draws on her own experience of teaching children with learning difficulties. This is a challenging and creative piece of practical theology, which explores the ways an inclusive community may develop spiritually.

Andrew Stobart's article, 'Towards a Model of Christian Hope', works directly at the interface between psychology and theology. He demonstrates how a psychological model of hope in dialogue with a theology of hope can lead to significant insights for ministry. Our final two pieces explore another interface, between the Bible and practical theology. Peter Phillips and Richard Briggs introduce the idea of 'The Bible as Augmented Reality' and suggest how this offers a contemporary image for the use of the Bible both in the Church and world today. And Ali Dorey, Ian Duffield, and Julie Upton bring us a thoroughly engaged (and engaging) piece on the relevance and potential use of lament, bridging from the Psalms to modern-day deprived housing estates. We are especially keen to encourage contributions such as this in future issues.

The articles found in this first volume indicate the aims of this journal. They comprise a diverse set of studies which all in their particular way contribute to the interdisciplinary interface of theology, ministerial practice and reflection. We warmly welcome comparable submissions for future issues, and book reviews of important works in the area. Two reviews are included in this issue, showing the kinds of engagement with published works that we are keen to encourage for future issues. Full details regarding how to contribute may be found elsewhere on our website.

This is an exciting period in practical theology, and it is our hope that this new and innovative journal will serve to make a significant contribution to the life of the Church and its ministry.¹

www.theologyandministry.org

¹ As editors, we would like in particular to thank Katharine Green for her work in setting up our website, and for establishing our style guide, guidelines, and the format in which our articles appear. Although her other publishing commitments mean that she will not be able to continue in her work for *Theology and Ministry*, this first issue would not have been possible without her.