

GUEST EDITORIAL

It is a distinct honor to be requested by *JETS* editor, Dr. Andreas Köstenberger, to prepare an editorial for this issue of the *Journal*. As one of the two surviving original founders of the Evangelical Theological Society, I take great pleasure in doing this and in attempting to recast in my memory some of the significant events and developments in its course.

JETS is fifty years old! For a theological magazine to achieve a record of fifty years of continuous circulation is really quite an event. Fifty years ago there were probably not ten religious quarterlies in the United States that could make such a claim. Our oldest biblical quarterly, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, has reached 165 years, but it did survive three drastic changes of editorship and places of publication (Andover Theological Seminary, 40 years; Oberlin Theological Seminary, 38 years; Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary, 14 years; Dallas Theological Seminary, 73 years).

And the great series associated with Princeton Theological Seminary as a citadel of conservative thinking has seen a multitude of changes of titles and editors while retaining over more than 100 years its basic commitment to the supreme authority of Scripture. Founded in 1825 by Charles Hodge as the *Biblical Repertory*, it quickly added the name *Princeton Review* (1829) and was published under the editorship or influence of Charles Hodge until 1871. A successor, the *Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review*, lasted only 6 years. The *Princeton Review* and *New Princeton Review*, designed as general quarterlies of humanities, represented a drastic change of purpose and lasted only 11 years. The true succession came through the *Presbyterian Review* (1880–1889), but a dual editorship was seen as unworkable, and the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* resumed to the full Charles Hodge's stance (1890–1902), continued in the *Princeton Theological Review* (1903–1929), whose tradition is carried out in the *Westminster Theological Journal* (1938–present).

By contrast, *JETS* has benefited from a remarkable straight line of development, being notably consistent in its advocacy from the beginning to the present day of the inerrancy of Scripture as the Word of God. At the same time there has been a significant growth in the size, quality, and circulation of the *Journal*, which has undoubtedly been favored by the excellence of its editors and God's great blessing on our Society.

From its very start in 1949 the Evangelical Theological Society expressed its purpose as “providing a medium for oral exchange and written expression of thought and research” among evangelical scholars. The oral exchange has been regularly promoted in the meetings of the Society and of its regional branches. The written expression is encouraged in every issue of the *Journal* and in arrangements for the publication of some books and monographs by the members. The first two editors, Dr. Burton L. Goddard and John F.

Walvoord, promoted the publishing of three books. After 1958, at least 10 more were added, 16 when counting six volumes in the series *Evangelical Studies*.

The major written contribution is undoubtedly the publication of the papers and studies of the ETS members. From 1953–1956 fifty papers presented in these four years were mimeographed and distributed to the members of the Society. A quarterly journal was started in 1958, under the editorship of Neil J. Winegarden with the title *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society*. In 1969 the name was changed to *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*.

In 1958 the size of this periodical was 32 pages of rather fine print, that is, 128 pages for the year. As the ETS grew, so did the number of papers at the annual meeting and the number of offerings for the *Bulletin* and later the *Journal*. This past year of jubilee the *Journal* had golden backed issues totaling some 900 pages with readily legible type for the articles and finer type for the book reviews. The 50 years, properly bound, do occupy some 5 feet of shelving in the library!

The editors for these years were Neil J. Winegarden (1958–1961), John Luchies (1962), Samuel J. Schultz (1963–1975), Ronald Youngblood (1976–1998), and Andreas J. Köstenberger (since 1999). The task that they performed is monumental. We owe it to them to have raised the standards of the *Journal*, both of its contents and of its presentation as well as its size. This has been a tremendous asset for the Society, its growth, and its influence. The benefits have been truly incalculable.

As the *Journal* enters its next half-century of publication, it does so on the solid foundation of its doctrinal commitment to the inerrancy of Scripture and fifty years of publishing excellence. Not only its editors past and present, but also a steller cast of contributors since the inception of our Society are to be commended for advancing the cause of evangelical scholarship to the glory of God in Christ and for making *JETS* one of the finest biblical and theological journals in the world today. *Ad multos annos!*

ROGER NICOLE