Interface Theology



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Editorial

This latest edition of *Interface Theology*, in 2020 (the first volume for its sixth year of production) sees a number of significant changes. For a number of years an international group of Dominican scholars were working towards establishing a journal, *Sapentia et Sciencia*. The journal never saw the light of day for a number of reasons. Thus in 2020 it was decided to incorporate it within *Interface Theology*. One result of this is an extended Editorial Board and International Reference Group. At the same time, there have been some additional members of the Editorial Board from within Australia. Welcome and thank you to all those who have recently become part of the new expanded Board.

In 2020 *Interface Theology* also enters into an association with a German theological journal *Wort und Antwort*. In each *Interface Theology* journal an article will be translated into English from an edition of *Wort and Antwort*. The first article is by Gerhard Hotze from an edition in 2017. Thank you to the editors of *Wort und Antwort* for this collaboration.

Another new initiative in 2020 is that in each edition of *Interface Theology* there will be an autobiographical piece. This section will be one where writers from a wide range of theological backgrounds will outline their journey in theology; major influences, places of study and work and changes that have occurred along the way. In this edition, there is a piece by the Lutheran biblical scholar, Norman Habel.

Finally, from time to time in future editions there will be a new section entitled 'Pastoral Reflections'. Therefore, in this edition there is a piece by Australian born Jesuit, Michael Kelly, who has spent many years in media work in Australia and in Asia.

On behalf of ATF Theology, thank you to all who have contributed to this volume with their articles and to those who have joined the expanded Editorial Board and to the International Reference Group. The journal continues to be produced in print and ePub and PDF and is also available through various online platforms.

Hilary Regan
Managing Editor

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God as Host and Guest in the Torah; Providing Role Models for Israel

Mark O'Brien, OP

Abstract: A number of studies have reflected on the theme of hospitality in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament and the New Testament, and its application in metaphorical form to portray God as host and humanity as guest. I would argue that an important feature of the host-guest relationship as presented in the Torah has tended to be overlooked. It involves a reversal of the customary roles in which God plays host to the human being as guest. The reversal first occurs in Genesis 18:1-15, the visit of the 'three men' to Abraham and Sarah. It is further developed in the intriguing and somewhat elusive episode that follows in Genesis 19, and its implications as a role model for Israel are made explicit in the account of the Sinai covenant in Exodus 19–24. This article explores the meaning of these texts and their function within the larger context of the Torah/Pentateuch.

Introduction

A number of recent studies have analyzed the Bible's portrayal of God as host and human beings as guest.[1] As one might expect, the texts

1. *Cf* Judith E McKinlay, *Gendering Wisdom the Host: Biblical Invitations to Eat and Drink*, edited by J Cheryl Exum (JSOTSup 216, Gender, Culture, Theory 4; Sheffield: JSOT, 1996); Robert C Stallman, *Divine Hospitality in the Pentateuch: a Metaphorical Perspective on God* (Westminster Theological Seminary, 1999); Douglas H Knight, *The Eschatological Economy: Time and The Hospitality of God* (Grand Rapids, Mich; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2006); chapters 4 and 5 in Amos Yong, *Hospitality and the Other. Pentecost, Christian Practice, and the Neighbor* (Faith Meets Faith Series; Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008); Georg Newlands and Allen Smith, *The Hospitable God. The Transformation Dream* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010); Brendan Byrne SJ, *The Hospitality of God. A Reading of Luke's Gospel* (Strathfield, NSW: St Paul's Press, 2015).