

T. F. Torrance Theological Fellowship
President's Letter:
April, 2018

Dear Members,

The Lord is risen! He is risen indeed!

I write on Easter morning. We have just been to church here in Menlo Park, California, in the middle of Silicon Valley, and these ancient words sounded out again in a full church, celebrating the resurrection. Two days ago, our son-in-law took us around the Facebook building where he works, assuring us that despite the recent difficulties, thousands more are subscribing every day to engage with their friends in this new form of community. But marvelous as the modern miracle of the internet is, it belongs to our world of 'not yet'. As we participate this Easter in the community of Christ, we *already* participate in the kingdom which is yet to be revealed. As he is risen, so we too shall rise.

Paul Molnar has recently drawn attention to the way in which resurrection and atonement are connected in the theology of T. F. Torrance. We usually think of the way in which atonement is the fruit of the cross. But in the *T & T Clark Companion to the Atonement* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017, 57-76), Paul Molnar has a whole chapter on 'Resurrection and Atonement in the Theology of T. F. Torrance.' For Torrance, he writes, 'one could never just focus on the cross because it was the crucified Jesus who rose from the dead and is as such our atonement who is now active as the ascended and coming Lord' (60). This means that, since justification has to be viewed in the light of the resurrection, it cannot be merely a forensic matter. The resurrection means that it includes our regeneration or renewal. Secondly, it means that reconciliation is complete and irreversible in 'the living and everlasting union of God and man in Christ' (65). And thirdly, the resurrection of the Lord secures the coming redemption of the whole person, including our bodily existence, in the new creation.

Participatio volume 7 now available

In view of the significance of the resurrection of the Lord for the redemption of creation, it is fitting that vol. 7 of *Participatio*, now published on the website, is devoted to "Science, Epistemology, and Natural Theology." Alongside the feature article by Alister McGrath, and response by Greg Cootsana, there are contributions by Rodney Holder, Travis Stevick, Alexander Irving, and others. Check it out here: <http://www.tftorrance.org/journal-v7.php> Our thanks to Todd Speidell and the editorial team for producing another fine issue of *Participatio*.

Jeremy Begbie at Fimbush and Denver

Given the positive implications of the resurrection of the Lord for the redemption of creation, it is also fitting that Jeremy Begbie is to be our speaker this year at our meeting in November. Indeed before then, he is the speaker at Robert Walker's T. F. Torrance Retreat at the Fimbush Centre in the Scottish Highlands from 13th to 15th June. His topic there is 'The Place of Music in a Robust Theology'. Gary Deddo will also be speaking on 'Creation and Incarnation' and Rev. David Torrance will be there.

Our annual meeting of the T. F. Torrance Theological Fellowship at AAR-SBL in Denver we anticipate will take place on Friday afternoon, November 16th, at 1 pm. Final notification will be made in May. We first will have a half-hour business meeting for all members, which will also include updates and late breaking news regarding the fellowship and all its developments. After the business portion of the meeting we will have an hour or a little more presentation by our annual guest lecturer, Dr. Jeremy Begbie, on the general topic of T. F. Torrance, Epistemology, and the Arts. This will be followed by a question and response time with Jeremy until our session ends at 4 pm. We are very much looking forward to a stimulating and challenging presentation. We hope many of you will be able to join us there.

In case you don't know Dr. Begbie, he is the Thomas A. Langford Research Professor in Theology of the Duke Divinity School, Duke University. Jeremy holds the Ph.D. in theology from the University of Aberdeen and as a professionally trained musician he has diplomas from the Royal College of Music. He is an honorary fellow of the Royal School of Church Music and is ordained in the Church of England. He teaches systematic theology and specializes in the interface between theology and the arts. His particular research interests are in the interplay between music and theology. Jeremy has authored several books including *Voicing Creation's Praise: Towards a Theology of the Arts* (T & T Clark); *Theology, Music and Time* (CUP), and *Resounding Truth: Christian Wisdom in the World of Music* (Baker/SPCK), which won the *Christianity Today* 2008 Book Award in the Theology/Ethics Category. Most recently, he has published *Music, Modernity, and God* (OUP). His complete CV can be viewed at <https://divinity.duke.edu/faculty/jeremy-begbie>.

New Website

A completely new Fellowship website will launch later this year. It is being developed with the aims of promoting *Participatio* and the annual meeting and creating an academic hub to facilitate research. The new website will feature Sources and Studies bibliographies; a list of recent publications; a new Member Directory; features to support member interaction; and outreach aids to quickly orient new researchers to existing scholarship and resources. Please take 5 minutes to go to the current Fellowship home page and use the Member Profile link there to fill out and submit your profile information. This will ensure that your information will be current when the new Member Directory launches. On the Fellowship home page, you will also find a link to a Publication form. Please use that Publication form to submit your own Torrance-related publications for inclusion in the Studies bibliography. Work on the bibliography of Torrance Sources continues, as every source is being directly verified to ensure that the bibliography will be as accurate and comprehensive as possible. A preliminary version was made available for download, in several proprietary formats, from the Fellowship website last November. However, both bibliographies will be openly accessible later this year, embedded within the new academic website. For more information on what is to come, see the Bibliographies home page (<http://www.tftorrance.org/bib.php>) and the essay on how the bibliographies will serve scholars as a research tool (<http://www.tftorrance.org/bibTool.php>). The website/bibliography team is comprised of Gary Deddo, Kerry Magruder and Brent Purkapple; send inquiries to them at webmaster@tftorrance.org.

Words from Luther

Finally, looking forward to Jeremy Begbie's lectures, perhaps no one united preaching, theology and hymnody more than Martin Luther. So may these words from the great Reformer go with you through the Easter season:

Christ lag in Todesbanden,
für unsre Sünd' gegeben,
der ist wieder erstanden
und hat uns bracht das Leben.
Des wir sollen fröhlich sein,
Gott loben und dankbar sein
und singen: Halleluja!
Halleluja!

Thomas A. Noble
President, Thomas F. Torrance Theological Fellowship