

A Word from Editor

Volume 7 marks the second time that a volume of *Theologica Wratislaviensia* is dedicated to the legacy of a single individual. Volume 5 was a no-brainer; Dietrich Bonhoeffer's works have been the subject of popular interest and scholarly research in Poland since a translation of his selected texts (*Wybór pism*, SIW Znak, ed. Anna Morawska) first appeared in 1970. The choice of Jonathan Edwards for this volume is not so obvious. Although Jonathan Edwards is widely regarded as America's leading theologian and philosopher, to date little scholarly research on Edwards has been done in Poland, due in part to the lack of Polish translations of his major works, along with the scarcity of secondary source material available in the holdings of Polish university libraries.

Yet despite the lack of resources and resulting research, Polish interest in Edwards is surprisingly high. When Kenneth Minkema, Director of the Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University (JEC-Yale), first contacted the Evangelical School of Theology in Wrocław (EWST) about opening a center in Poland to promote research into Edwards' life and work, we learned from him and his colleague Adriaan Neele that Poland regularly ranks second in the world in monthly hits on the JEC-Yale website.

Since the establishment at EWST of the Jonathan Edwards Center-Poland (JEC-Poland) in 2009, our goal has been to promote interdisciplinary research and discussion of Edwards' legacy. In addition to the acquisition of primary and secondary materials placed in the Jonathan Edwards' collection in the EWST library, JEC-Poland undertook the translation into Polish of the *Jonathan Edwards Reader* (Yale University Press, 1995, Smith, Stout and Minkema, eds.), scheduled for publication by EWST in Spring, 2014. The International Jonathan Edwards Conference, organized by EWST in June 2011, gathered scholars from four continents

and eight countries, representing 15 universities and 6 international Jonathan Edwards Centers. We feel confident that Volume 7 of *Theologica*, which grew in part out of the papers presented at the 2011 conference, will help stimulate new and increased interest in Edwards by scholars, church leaders and laypersons alike, both in Poland and abroad.

The articles we offer here to our readers are organized into three groups, reflecting the highly interdisciplinary nature of Edwardsian research. The first section, "Edwards, History and Theology in Context", contains five texts, beginning with Gerald McDermott's keynote address from the 2011 conference. McDermott argues that Edwards provides a unique basis for dialogue between Catholics and Protestants, between Eastern and Western Christianity, between charismatics and non-charismatics, as well as between liberals and conservatives. Rather than speaking of Jonathan Edwards as "America's theologian", McDermott concludes that, "it may be appropriate [...] to begin thinking of him as a global theologian for twenty-first-century Christianity." The remaining articles in this group reflect this forward-looking trajectory. Philip Fisk and Adriaan Neele first show how Edwards, living in 18th century Colonial America, creatively drew on and adapted the views of major European 17th century theologians from the Reformed and Puritan traditions. Next, Jan Stievermann brings us closer to the 21st century by illustrating the possibilities of using Edwards' thought, or more specifically its changing national and international reception, as an interpretive lens for studying the "diverse traditions and trajectories" of American Protestantism. Stievermann's perspective as a historian will be of particular interest to students and scholars working in the area of American studies. Finally, Willem van Vlastuin truly goes "where no Edwards' scholar has gone before", drawing on theology, philosophy and neuroscience in an interdisciplinary exploration of determinism and free will.

Section two, "Edwards and the Word", is headed by another McDermott paper, presented in 2011 at Jagiellonian University in Kraków (Institute of English Studies, Department of the History of English and American Literature). "Theology in the Hand of a Literary Artist: Jonathan Edwards as Preacher", which discusses the setting of Edwards' sermons, the stages of his preaching career, his goals as a preacher and his "incomparable use of imagery", is followed by three papers by young Central European scholars, all of which explore in more depth various aspects of Edwards' use of the spoken and written word. Wojciech Kowalewski's article, written primarily for Polish readers who are new to Edwards' work, analyzes selected sermons by Edwards, with a focus on his impact as a revivalist

and missionary preacher. In “Rhetorical Hermeneutics of Edwards’ Sermonic Imagery”, Michal Choiński employs cognitive poetics for the analysis of Jonathan Edwards’ sermons. Anna Svetlikova closes this section with “Jonathan Edwards’ Typology of Language”, suggesting that the promise and the pitfalls of Edwards’ understanding and use of typology “highlight issues which resonate with certain concerns of postmodern critical theory.”

The final group of five papers appears under the theme of “Edwards and Religious Experience”, a topic that is introduced by another McDermott article, “Affections and the Human Person”. Ken Minkema picks the theme up from there, discussing Edwards’ critique of members of his own congregation as well as the larger revival movement of his day, “who dwelt on ‘talk of experiences’ rather than on practice or behavior.” The final McDermott paper, delivered as a public lecture during the interdenominational service organized by EWST at the Pentecostal Church (Antioch Fellowship), which closed the 2011 Conference in Wrocław, presents the *reliable and unreliable signs of true spirituality*, as described by Edwards in *Religious Affections*. The final two papers share an element of critique. Rhys Bezzant re-examines the oft-repeated stereotype that Edwards the pastor was more adept as a preacher than a mentor, arguing that while that may indeed be the case, nevertheless his sermons and letters show he was genuinely committed to mentoring the next generation. Joel Burnell concludes this volume by comparing Edwards’ view of “true religion” and Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s proposal for “non-religious Christianity”, suggesting that a more in-depth study of their respective approaches will discover more similarities than differences.

It is with pleasure then that we present Volume 7 of *Theologica Wratislaviensia* to our readers. It contains articles of interest to those familiar with Edwards and to those who are new to his work, to scholars and pastors, to teachers and students—regardless of whether their chosen discipline or area of expertise is English philology or philosophy, rhetoric or religion, literature or history, American studies or theology. As the participants in the 2011 International Conference in Wrocław experienced firsthand, Jonathan Edwards offers much to interest, attract and enrich us all.

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Editor's note: Three of Gerald McDermott's papers are adaptations of parts of three chapters in Michael J. McClymond and Gerald R. McDermott, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). Used by permission.