



Newsletter, January 2023

Thomas F. Torrance Theological Fellowship



Myk Habets President

Happy New Year from the executive of the Thomas F. Torrance Theological Fellowship. We trust your Christmas was an enjoyable time with family and friends and you are looking forward to what the new year has to bring as we seek to witness to the love of God in Christ.

I am reminded of a sermon Torrance delivered on January 5, 1941, entitled "Matthew 18:3: Conversion vs Resolution," in which he said, "Christmas represents God's new beginning, and New Year represents ours!" What a delightful turn of phrase. He went on to remind his congregation of the distinction between New Year's resolutions and conversion by saying:

"The importance of the resolution lies in the fact that *we* make it. The resolution is the product of our own effort and determination. Now that is at the same time the difficult thing about it. It is just because we make these that *we* can unmake or break them. Here is the great difficulty of all men: you *are* now the person you always *have* been. You cannot run away from yourself; you cannot escape from your character; you cannot just cut the knot and say you are going to begin over again. You simply cannot do that! And you cannot do that, because after all you *are* the man you have always been. ... And so it is not a resolution that can ever bring us a new beginning, for the resolutions are products of our past lives, and it is they which we want rid of; the past with all its failure, and stain—and only God can do that. In fact He came into the world in Jesus Christ in order to do that. If New Year follows upon Christmas season, it has this to say to us: that the only way to begin over again is on the basis of the birth of Christ, He and He alone must make us what He became in order that we might become what He is. 'Except a man be born again, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.' ... In spite of all these facts which I have been marshalling against the possibility of reform and new resolution, it is possible for a man to make a new beginning, and a new start. But that is a *work of God*. 'Behold,' He says, 'I make all things new.'"

Can you, like me, just 'hear' Torrance preaching that sermon! It is a good reminder as we start a new year.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you all of a few things.

First, although the Fellowship is free and we do not require an annual subscription, we do encourage people to donate to the Fellowship. I would encourage you to see this donation as a way to support our mission, develop the incredibly useful website, provide a modest gift for annual speakers, and pay for the costs associated with running the annual meeting. Making a donation is easy and you can do it online here: <https://tftorrance.org/donate>. Perhaps you could donate to the Fellowship at the same time each year that you renew your other annual subscriptions to societies and sports clubs.

Second, in November we had the annual Torrance lecture online and you can view that here: <https://tftorrance.org/2022-thm-1>. Tom McCall spoke to the topic of "God stakes his own being: Torrance and McCormack on God and evil after Barth," and a good time of discussion followed. On Thursday, January 19th, at 1 pm Pacific, Marty Folsom is hosting Tom McCall and Thomas Noble online for a further discussion of this interesting topic and you can participate in that Zoom discussion [here](#). This is part of the weekly Torrance Zoom Reading Group Discussions hosted by Marty Folsom. You can see previous discussions here: <https://tftorrance.org/readingGroup>.

Third, we are in the process of finalising plans for the Thomas F. Torrance Theological Fellowship Annual Meeting to be held as part of the AAR in San Antonio, Texas, November 17, 2023. Please stay tuned for an exciting announcement about this session. It will be good to meet people again, in person (God willing), after several years of COVID interrupted plans. Let us pray this will be a safe and stimulating time for all who attend.

Here in New Zealand, we are in the midst of summer and are enjoying a holiday season for several weeks. I know many in the States will have started their Spring Semester, and others will be back at work. Wherever you find yourself and whatever you are doing, may you know the grace of the Son, the love of the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. We look forward to connecting further online and in person throughout the year.

With God's richest blessings,

Dr Myk Habets

President, Thomas F. Torrance Theological Fellowship

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McCall Keynote

Reading Group

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"Theological Anthropology"

New issue now available!

Volume editors Myk Habets and Geordie Ziegler.

Participatio

Journal of the T. F. Torrance Theological Fellowship

Other contributors include David W. Torrance, Hakbong Kim, Daniel J. Cameron, Marty Folsom, Gary W. Deddo, and Paul Louis Metzger.

Volume 9 (2021): Theological Anthropology



PHOTOGRAPH: CREATION OF ADAM, MOSAIC FROM THE MONREALE CATHEDRAL, SICILY, 12TH CENTURY. Inscription: "Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostrum et inspiravit in faciem eius spiraculo vitae" ("Let us make man in our own image and likeness; and he breathed into him the breath of life").

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Participatio is an annual peer-reviewed online journal of the Thomas F. Torrance Theological Fellowship, edited by Todd Speidell.

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Supplemental Vol. 6 for 2022.
Volume editor: Todd Speidell.

Vol. 10 for 2022. "The Holy Spirit and Christian Experience."
Volume editor: Jerome Van Kuiken.

Vol. 11 for 2023. "Papers from the Pandemic."
Volume editors: Kerry Magruder and Brent Purkapple.

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"T. F. Torrance's Theological Influences."
Volume editors: Todd Speidell and Jason Radcliff.

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