

## PREFACE

**L**OVE, SAYS THE apostle Paul, “does not rejoice over injustice, but rejoices in the truth” (1 Cor 13:6; my translation). Regrettably, rejoicing in the truth does not seem to come naturally to human beings in our present state. It might come naturally, were we not so thoroughly entangled in deceit and self-deception as to have become enemies of the truth rather than its friends. For us to become capable of welcoming truth, actively seeking it and rejoicing in it, requires a deep change. To undergo that change is to receive a life-transforming gift.

Like Paul and his contemporaries, generations of Christians have understood a new capacity for and disposition toward truth as something that belongs to the renewed human identity that is fashioned when “God’s love has been poured into our hearts though the Holy Spirit that has been given to us” (Rom 5:5 NRSV). Of course, those same generations of Christians, up to and including our own, have given ample evidence that this renewal is at best fitful and incomplete, and that, generally speaking, the perfect love that casts out fear (1 John 4:18) does not yet govern our individual or corporate lives. Consequently, we remain conflicted about the truth; we have issues with it.

The theological explorations undertaken here all deal in one way or another with the liberating promise and the perplexing problem of truth in Christian life and witness, and

with the ways that Christian theology and theological education in their various modes struggle both to seek the truth and to foster the aptitude to honor it. Several of these chapters were composed for specific occasions. Some are concerned to explicate insights and resources from the Wesleyan heritage or to address matters that have arisen more immediately in the United Methodist version of that tradition. Others have broader contexts and issues in view. My hope is that all of them might be of use to readers from a variety of Christian traditions and theological standpoints. Some of the chapters have been slightly revised for this collection, mainly in the interest of consistency in style.

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