

# Missionalia

## Southern African Journal of Missiology

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<sup>1</sup> In this issue, for some articles, the original reference style has been retained.

## Editorial

### Mission History

This issue features a range of missiological discourse. We begin with a history lesson. Philippe Denis offers an account of the closure of the legendary Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa. Denis interviews several participants who shed light on the human story of Fedsem. The dream that initiated Fedsem was noble albeit short-lived. The disappointing inability of the denominational partners to enter into a credible partnership is a pertinent lesson for all ecumenical endeavours. Our hopes for a revitalization of the ecumenical spirit in mission and theological education must never die with Fedsem.

Our next contributor Jan Jongeneel surveys Hendrik Kramer's 1938 *The Christian Message in a non-Christian world* (CM) and its relevance to Africa. Since we are approaching the centennial of the 1910 World Missionary Conference and will engage in contemplation and evaluation of the mission enterprise over the last one hundred years Jongeneel's description and analysis of the African people, places and concerns in CM is a valuable resource.

### Let justice roll

The 2009 SAMS congress titled "Planet in Peril" dealt with the environmental degradation of the earth as a mission priority. Ernst Conradie's presentation explored the global environmental crisis and its impact on poorer nations. He advocates for the community of all living beings and laments the consumerist lifestyle of the elite as well as the lower middle-class. For Conradie the impact of the environmental crisis on African communities is a distinct issue of justice.

Christof Sauer outlines the deliberations of the World Evangelical Alliance General Assembly and Mission Commission Consultation in 2008. The significant themes that emerged were advocacy for persecuted Christians and readiness to suffer for Christ. It is regrettable that religious persecution persists and has taken on new more sinister forms in the 21st century. The freedom to account for our hope can never be undervalued since many people of faith do not walk in that freedom.

Koos Vorster explores the ever pertinent theme of forgiveness and impunity with specific reference to human rights violations. Voster examines the exemption from punishment that was afforded to several apartheid era human rights violators who acted inhumanly on alleged political grounds. He argues that impunity obstructs justice and hinders

reconciliation, and considers the merits of restorative justice over retributive justice.

Finally in our section on issues of justice, the incidence of rape and gender violence is a tragic South African reality, and as such, warrants urgent missiological consideration. It is against the backdrop of rape as a national scourge that I have chosen to publish what could be considered a highly controversial and contentious exploration. Gender specialist Sarojini Nadar presents us with a feminist missiological approach to the crisis of gender violence. She uses the much publicized Jacob Zuma rape trial as a case study to reflect on issues of culture, religion and gender justice. As editor of *Missionalia*, I fully acknowledge the court's decision with regards to the aforementioned trial. I also acknowledge the academic freedom to explore significant issues in our society. For every thesis there is an antithesis and so, I encourage scholarly responses to this article.

### **The celebration of sex as a mission strategy?**

Instead of the shameful, sinful images of sex and sexuality that are generally perpetuated within Christianity, Christo Lombaard offers us an alternative celebratory view of sex. He opposes the separation of what it means to be human into body and soul, and calls for integration and wholeness in our spirituality and theology of human beings. Lombaard's alternative presents us with a sensible and distinctive missionary strategy required now more than ever, given the continued diminishing and discarded voice of the Church with regards to sex in the public domain.

*Happy reading, research and reflections.*

*Genevieve Lerina James*