

Editorial

This is a special bumper edition of Missionalia! We are excited to close this year on such a high note and also opening up possibilities for the future. It is indeed the season of Advent, a season of pregnant waiting for the celebration of the nativity of Jesus of Nazareth. Advent is a reminder of events that happened at a key juncture in history and focus our attention on analogies with our own time.

Today, the world is also changing at a rapid pace. One key feature of this transformation is what Gerrie Snyman calls, “the decolonial turn”. The question is how we are to respond to, or better read the signs of our times. This is not only relevant for the Southern African context, but for scholarship from the Global South at large. Hence, we are excited to be able to partner with and learn from colleagues in Brazil as we reflect on this response. But more about that later.

When we look at our first section in this edition, Snyman’s leading article proposes a particular “hermeneutic” and presents a key agenda for reflection. Drawing from our own wells, Maarman Tshela (also a Biblical scholar) reflects on the work of Justin S. Ukpong for this conversation. In turn, and in line with our commitment to the Global South, Paul Davies and Johannes Reimer present insights from the work of José Míguez Bonino, the Argentinean Methodist theologian. These insights have implications on different levels of our discourse. The articles of John Klaasen, Nelus Niemandt, Thias Kgatla and Rev Magwira, Kirk Franklin and Nelus Niemandt, Jeremy Wyngaard and Olehile Buffel, relates these in various ways to the contemporary challenges and discourses. The current ecumenical fraternity, but also the witness of churches would be stimulated from these contributions.

Klaasen and Niemandt continue the South African exploration of the ecumenical movement in general and the important recent Missiological text from the World Council of Churches, *Together Towards Life*, in particular – this, together with a focus on the recent Encyclical by the Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, was the focus of the 2015 Southern African Missiological Society meeting and will remain important for years to come.

Then in a second section, we publish a number of articles which emanate from an international research project between scholars from South Africa and Brazil, sponsored mainly by the Brazilian National Research Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq). These articles were first presented as draft papers at various working conferences in Sao Leopoldo, Brazil, Stellenbosch, Pietermaritzburg and Pretoria, South Africa. It was thoroughly critiqued and rewritten on many occasions. Finally, it was published in Brazil in 2014 in Portuguese, under the title, *Theologia Pública no Brasil em na Africa do Sul: Cidadania, Interculturalidade e HIV/Aids* (2014). The editors are Felipe Buttelli, Clint Le Bruyns and Rudolf von Sinner.

Subsequently these contributions were peer-reviewed for a South African English readership and with the support of these editors, we are now able to publish this important work here in *Missionalia*. Touching on the relevant themes of citizenship, interculturality and HIV/AIDS, these articles make a key contribution for a time such as this. It relates to the question how theology, in all its modes, is to remain a public force towards hope, healing, and human dignity. We thank the colleagues for the opportunity to make this scholarship available to stimulate and challenge our readership, but also for doing such a sterling work in the editing and preparation of these articles for publication. Whilst the style of these articles is slightly different from our in-house style, we were satisfied that it complies with all the conventions which guide our work.

Indeed, it is with excitement that we present to you this special edition, as well as with the tinge of hope that this season brings.

Prof RW (Reggie) Nel and Rev GJ (Cobus) van Wyngaard