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Editorial

It is indeed a great honour to contribute this edition of *Missionalia* to Emeritus Professor Nico Adam Botha. This edition shows that Botha has indeed made significant contributions on two levels in the field of Missiology. He is able, through his academic corpus to challenge the prevalent notions of justice. He has been able to work constructively, and creatively, but also contextually with the concept, that has placed the notion of justice between the streets of Tshwane, the corridors of the powerful, the lips of the wise, and the holy places of the ‘self-righteous’. He is able, to address and confront all stakeholders and collaborators of injustice and hold them accountable for their roles in unjust practices in South Africa. The work of Gundani continues in such a pattern to address conceptually the tradition of ‘just war’ and illustrates how three wars in Zimbabwe fall short of the ‘moral’ bar to which the ‘just war’ tradition aspires. Gundani argues that the three wars were geared to, and indeed succeeded in, serving parochial and sectarian interests of those behind the war at the expense of the lofty ideals espoused by the ‘just war’ tradition. Baron also uses the work of Botha to contribute on a conceptual and theoretical level to the issue of corruption through a critical analysis on the media; its biases and its ideology that did not do justice through confronting certain individuals for corrupt acts while not addressing the historical, structural, and corporate causes of corruption.

Moreover, the edition also demonstrates that Nico Botha has indeed given shape and form to the concretisation of justice in the South African landscape. Since his doctoral dissertation on the world mission conferences, his engagement with issues of ‘black’ oppression, racism, and economic injustice – his academic corpus has become crucial to consult for academic inquiry, but also for concrete measures that is needed to rectify past injustices in the South African context and beyond its geographical borders. The authors in this edition expresses his work to be relevant for issues of corruption, poverty, the land debate in South Africa, economic injustice as well as environmental concerns. Makofane focuses on the moratorium debate in the 1970s. He argues that certain aspects of the moratorium debate (in the 1970s) illustrated by the African Initiated Churches warrant attention in relation to Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa/Central Diocese. Van Schalkwyk focuses on the issues of land injustice through studying the Amadiba people of Xolobeni. She argues that the network of living relationships between community, ecology and land as understood by the Amadiba people of Xolobeni may be recognised as an integral part of the wider context in which public and ecumenical oiko-theology needs to be practised, during a challenging time in South African society. Kgatle’s contribution also addresses issues of poverty, captivity, oppression

and bondage as an issue that continues to be unresolved in the current democratic South Africa. Klaasen and Solomons also focus on the poor, especially how mission as narrative find its way in the contributions of Botha, and which they believe is one of the unique ways in which Nico Botha was able to open a greater field of possible reflection and research.

Kritzinger, one of the long-standing colleagues of Nico Botha focuses in his contribution in this edition on one of the circles of the clergy that on a theological level challenged the status quo of apartheid South Africa. His paper analyses the Theological Declaration of the Belydende Kring (1979) in view of the South African context at the time. After sketching the credibility crisis facing black ministers of the Dutch Reformed 'family' of churches in the late 1970s, it outlines the vision of the Belydende Kring and the threefold purpose of its Declaration: an apologia to its critics, an exercise in contextual theologising, and an engagement with the 'fathers' of the Reformed tradition. Through regular engagements, meetings and academic contributions the Belydende Kring (BK) was able to demystify the theological justification of apartheid. This indeed in a creative manner provide a window into the 'activism' of Botha and his activities outside of the 'academic' spheres. He struggled with the marginalised and the oppressed in South Africa, and participated actively in the marches and protests for emancipation and dismantlement of apartheid in South Africa. These authors' contributions celebrate his academic corpus and his activism and his involvement in the margins of society which befits a missionary.

Guest Editor

Dr. E. Baron