

## Editorial

Contributions of this volume are spread across three missiology focus areas, namely: 1) mission practice and history (with four articles written by G Duncan, EN Dube, EE Keet & E Baron and K Boamah & N P Mensah); 2) patterns of mission theology (with three articles written by KJ Pali, LJ Modise and TD Mashau) and 3) sustainable communities and earth healing, specifically from African Pentecostals (with six articles written by E Awudi and SE Yormesor; D Andrew; N Mudau; K Resane; L Tsara and LM Mudimeli and T Shingange). MS Kgatle served as the special guest editor for the articles on Pentecostalism and Sustainable Development in Africa which emanated from the Southern African Society of Pentecostal Studies conference which took place at the University of South Africa, Pretoria, 27 – 28 February 2024.

### Mission practice and history

In his article entitled “The World Council of Churches Programme to Combat Racism. A South African response to changes in global mission policy”, Duncan (Graham Duncan - UNISA), employed a qualitative literature method to analyse the origin, process, and outcome of this heavily contested programme through a case study of the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa (PCSA), spearheaded by its Ecumenical Relations Committee (ERC), which came to radically different conclusions from the majority of the church membership regarding the nature, purpose, and function of the church. He found that conservative white church members largely eschewed the notion of church involvement in politics, particularly issues relating to violence, which would threaten the status quo which was upheld by violence. Dube’s article is a phenomenological study reflecting on Church uniforms in United Baptist Church of Zimbabwe as signs of piety. It employs the theological approach to assess the relevance of church uniforms. It recommends that inside piety should be more of the focal point in African Christian churches, not church uniforms that only adorn the outside. Keet & Baron’s article discusses the concept of fatherhood in relation morality of young people in Dwarstrivier. The focus of their article is to answer the question: How does the members of the churches in Dwarstrivier Valley conceptualise and articulate the fatherhood concept? They report on the understanding of the fatherhood concept, and how the participants in the study would reflect and understand the fatherhood concept for the purpose of addressing moral decline of young people. The last contribution in the focus area of mission practice and history is the article entitled: “They don’t build no schools anymore, all they build is prison, prison’. An Examination of the Reception of the Church of Pentecost’s (CoP) Involvement in Prison Reformation in Ghana” written by Boamah

& Mensah. Adopting a historical lens, they trace the roots of prison ministry from early Christianity through the African missionary endeavours of the 15th century. Further, through a mixed method approach, they construct the motivation of the Church of Pentecost's initiative to establish camp prisons as Inmate Skill Acquisition and Reformation Centres (ISARC) in Ghana. Finally, they identify through interviews decongestion, biblical mandate, and reformation as the main push factors for the CoP in this initiative. The findings illuminate the positive impact of the CoP's prison reform initiative while highlighting the need for sustained efforts, intentional support, and comprehensive reintegration programmes to ensure long-term success and societal benefits.

### **Patterns of mission theology**

In his article entitled the "Role of active citizenship amid increasing societal challenges in South Africa: A theological reflection on the looting of businesses in South Africa", Pali's research interrogates the question: What kind of impact does the looting of businesses that occurred in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng in July 2021 have on the active citizenship of South African society? His findings suggest that Parliament must enhance its civic education programmes, learners and educators at school must be trained about active citizenship, and pastors must preach about active citizenship in their sermons. This is the kind of practice which will facilitate the internalisation and embodying of the values and ordinances of the constitution about active and responsible citizenship. Modise, in his article: "Responsible Citizens Within Social Contract Within the Representative Democracy: Mission and Political Theology Perspective", demonstrates that once congregants are equipped and informed about the social contract, they will participate effectively within the social contract as voters and active actors in the governance of the country in general and local government in particular. Finally, in the article entitled; "Taking up a sword". A missiological reflection of violence in Gaza in the light of a missional reading of Luke 22:47-53 and global sustainability", Mashau proposes a missional ecclesiology and ecclesial praxis, which defines a missional church as an agent of transformative encounters interfacing with and mediating the shalom of God in the face of global wars and woundedness. And that the missional reading of Luke 22:47-53 calls for a ceasefire in favour of love, peace, forgiveness, reconciliation, and solidarity with humanity irrespective of their religious affiliation.

### **Sustainable communities and earth healing**

Awudi and Yormesor in their article: "Pentecostal Eco-Mission Maturing Tensions Between Economic Benefits and Promotion of Environmental Stewardship in the Illegal Mining Sector in Ghana" highlight the complex relationship between the

church and illegal artisanal mining activities. The article posits that the church faces a dilemma in its ecological mission due to the benefits it receives from the illegal artisanal mining sector. They contend that this situation raises important questions about the church's role in promoting environmental stewardship and ethical practices in these communities. On the other hand, Andrew in his article: "War on Waste. The contributions of Pentecostal eco-theology in creating inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable communities" explores the contribution that Pentecostal eco-theology can make to create inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable communities. He uses comparative literature analysis and follows a multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary approach, covering the fields of Environmental Studies, Development Studies, and Theology to find the root causes of such harmful behaviour and actions and to develop environmental stewardship through the tenets of a Pentecostal eco-theology. Mudau, in his article: "The Role of Social Entrepreneurship in Sustainable Pentecostal Theology: A Missional Perspective" investigates the Pentecostal theology of sustainable development, analyses its impact on societal change and the role of social entrepreneurship in sustainable Pentecostal theology within the mission framework. He uses a qualitative methodology, combining desktop data collection methods with document analysis of scholarly literature that explores the influence of social entrepreneurship on sustainable Pentecostal theology from a missional standpoint. He argues, Pentecostals have a distinctive advantage in making valuable contributions to sustainable development initiatives because they focus on spiritual abilities like healing, prophecy, and discernment, which individuals actively pursue inside the church. Resane reflects on Pentecostal missional ecclesiology based on Acts 2:42-47 which contributes towards sustainable development in communities. He interrogates four aspects of Sustainable Development Goals, namely, a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity to demonstrate the Pentecostal missional role in community sustainable development. He concludes with an appeal to Pentecostals to return to missional ecclesiology of Acts 2 towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals. Tsara and Mudimeli reflect on the work of Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA) church founded by the late Archbishop Ezekiel Guti in their article entitled: "Pentecostalism and Social Transformation in Southern Africa: A Missiological Approach". Their research is framed within the concept of *Missio Dei* and adopts a comprehensive research methodology. It gathers data from a wide range of published sources, including academic papers, books, and official church documents. The study concludes by affirming that the church, guided by the vision of its founder, promotes holistic personal development through social transformation and sustainable development, aligning with the United Nations Vision 2030's goal of ending poverty. Finally, Shingange in his article: "African Pentecostal mission

of liberation and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: An intersectional-Decolonial perspective” uses the intersectionality-decolonial theory as a lens to explore the African Pentecostal mission as a liberation considering the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 of the 2030 Agenda. A secondary research approach was used to investigate this phenomenon to contribute to the body of knowledge that addresses African Pentecostal mission praxis in the light of liberation, decoloniality, and SDGs within African Pentecostal praxis and experience. The study found, amongst other things, that gender inequalities and discrimination continue to be barriers to the African Pentecostal mission of liberation that responds to sustainable development issues. It further argued that the narrative is entrenched in the missionary-colonial project that serves as a barrier to achieving the 2030 Agenda within these spaces. Therefore, a call was made for the narrative’s problematisation by applying decoloniality and transforming the status quo within African Pentecostal mission activities.

Finally, we express our gratitude to all colleagues who served as blind peer reviewers for this volume. We are also grateful for the ongoing administrative support from Mrs Coleman.

*Editors (Prof L Mangayi and Prof MS Kgatle)*