

Vol 47 (3) Editorial

Questions pertaining churches being in mission or maintenance mode; paternalism, dependency or partnership in mission and indigenous leadership of missionary churches are perennial missiological considerations. Other missiological considerations like discussing Bible text and current interpretation, African Independent Churches' theologies in South Africa as well as missionary perceptions and colonial images of indigenous communities are worthy of ongoing missiological reflections in our context. These considerations, cutting across various missiological interests such as intercultural communication, interreligious dynamics, patterns of mission practice as well as mission theology and history, are revisited afresh in this issue of Volume 47.

On the question whether churches should be in mission or maintenance mode, Duncan in his case study of the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa (1923-1999) contend that there was, at least during the first ten years of its existence, an unwritten maintenance approach which militated against their missionary purpose. Now foreign missionaries remained in declining numbers, the black membership took an increasingly responsible role on the governance and witness of the denomination as an agent of mission in South Africa.

Paternalism, dependency or partnership question has always been a complex mission issue between mother vs daughter churches. Young Moo Kim, in his case study of the Reformed Churches in South Africa, specifically in the Klerksdorp, Orkney, Stilfontein and Hartbeesfontein area, found out that the Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika remains paternalistic and dependent, and needs a new strategy for missions to overcome these tendencies. He therefore suggests the relationship of biblical partnerships, as new strategy in the Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika to overcome tendencies of paternalism and dependency in the missionary situation.

In honour of Nico Botha, Christo Lombaard discusses a Bible text i.e. Genesis 22 and current interpretation. This model of dialogical engagement is used here to enlarge the understanding, through an artwork in the Louvre, the interpretation possibilities of one of the most disturbing Bible passages, Genesis 22. Because of this engagement he highlights that a

non-standard re-interpretation, perhaps a re-imagination, of one of the most disturbing texts from the Old Testament could be offered.

Victor Molobi, in relation to African Independent Churches in South Africa, assert that their theologies are merely being observed from their traditional attitudes and churching behaviour. Regardless of the many misconceptions and wide variation embedded in their praxes, they are compelled to work on a strategy to develop their theology to public spaces. The founding leaders and visions form the core of their theologies. Their biblical faith learns from their founders' leadership and visions. They are Africans who want to teach themselves the Christian ways anchored in their traditional heritages.

Olehile. A. Buffel, in his article, discusses whether indigenous leadership is offering leadership that is qualitatively different from that of white missionaries who were also regarded as modern-day Pharaohs and who were incapable of liberating and transforming the church and society. He unfortunately found that indigenous leadership is emulating the behaviours and tendencies of those who were seen as modern-day Pharaohs and subsequently the church is not able to be true to its nature and mission work.

On missionary perceptions and colonial images of indigenous communities, Mvenene analyses the history of the arrival and activities of the missionaries, east and west of the Nciba (Kei) River, in the nineteenth century. He also examines the role of the missionaries in shaping the relations among the traditional leaders and the colonial governors. Through his research he discovers that missionaries' interest to evangelize Africans was coupled with their desire to engage in trading relations with amaXhosa and to advance Christianity, missionaries saw the amaXhosa's reverence for their culture as a stumbling block to conversion.

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Prof C L Mangayi

Editor

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