Editorial

This issue of the *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* focuses on the plight of the marginalized in society. God’s people have from the very beginning been instructed and required to offer care and compassion to the widows, orphans, strangers, and disenfranchised. Jesus also highlighted the fact that these were the people he had come to serve when he said, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the Lord’s favor has come” (Luke 4:18, 19 NLT).

There are all types of marginalized people in our world—tribal people are often thought of as barbaric, uneducated, and sub-human. Children are taken advantage of by their parents and those who should protect them. The Roma people (Gypsies) have lived at the margins of society for hundreds of years. Indigenous peoples have had their land snatched from them, been decimated by the diseases of the encroaching colonists, and had their language and culture labeled as primitive and backward.

Groups that are discriminated against exist in all societies of the world, and it seems that it takes very little for one group to look down on another group. Marginalization can occur because of group affiliation, ethnicity, skin color, the level of one’s education, economic status, religion, and a host of other trivial matters. Regardless of why marginalization occurs God’s people are called to remember that every person is made in the image of God and thus has incredible worth and value.

Christian mission and Christian compassion ministries are very active and involved in working among the “least of these.” It is always gratifying to see the response by Christians to tragedy and crises as they mobilize to send aid and assistance to those in desperate need.

This *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* features several articles dealing with Adventist responses to marginalized people. I have great respect and admiration for those working among the marginalized for they often work for years unappreciated and unobserved even by most of their fellow church members. But, Jesus knows and has promised that “when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me” (Matt 25:40 NLT).

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