

ISSUE 3.2: THE EPISTLE OF JAMES IN CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN MISSION

The Editors

The Epistle of James, often overlooked in missiological discussions, provides crucial insights into the practical application of Christian faith. This issue presents four scholarly articles that explore the themes of wholeness, love, ethical living, and holiness in James and their significance for contemporary Christian missions. Each article offers a unique perspective that collectively highlights the relevance of James's teachings for today's Christian communities, especially in socio-political and economic contexts.

Youdit Tariku Feyessa's article examines the theme of wholeness in James and its implications for Christian mission in Ethiopia. Feyessa asserts that concepts like "completeness," "perfection," "integration," and "maturity" are central to James's message. This theme resonates with the holistic ministry advocated by Qes Gudina Tumsa, emphasizing the need to address socio-political, cultural, and economic issues. By embodying integrity and divine perfection, Ethiopian Christians can navigate current challenges while fulfilling their mission in a way that aligns with James's vision of a complete Christian life.

Phyllis D. Johnson explores "Love Your Neighbor" as a key missionary method within James. She critiques superficial readings that overlook the missional theology inherent in the text. By focusing on the Royal Law—"You shall love your neighbor as yourself"—Johnson highlights the ethical principles that underpin James's teachings. Rooted in the Hebrew concept of "ahavah," this love signifies deep affection, loyalty, and commitment. For Johnson, the directive to love one's neighbor is not just a moral obligation but a dynamic call to empathy and social engagement, essential for the church's mission and ethical conduct.

Melesse Woldetsadik examines Jacobite exhortation as a missiological method in James, emphasizing the relationship between faith, obedience, and ethical living. He discusses the relevance of two major missionary models—Incarnational and Representational Missiology—in light of James's teachings. Woldetsadik argues that James encourages believers to demonstrate their faith through practical ethical conduct, highlighting the significance of speech ethics and social responsibility. This embodies the message of Christ in daily life, reflecting God's love and justice in tangible ways.

Abyot S. Gashute addresses the theme of holiness and its connection to God's mission in the Epistle of James, underlining the necessity of faith in practical ethical terms. Gashute contends that authentic Christian faith must manifest in ethical living, aligning with God's mission. He discusses the dual aspects of holiness—separation from worldly values and the display of holy character—as crucial to mission work. By living out faith through love and justice, Christians can fulfill their missional vocation and engage in cultural transformation.

Together, these articles offer a comprehensive exploration of the Epistle of James, emphasizing its enduring relevance for contemporary Christian missions. They advocate for the integration of faith with practical ethical living, love, and holiness, providing valuable insights for believers aiming to embody their faith in today's complex world.