Editorial

There is a song nearly every Indian remembers learning in school, translated from English into their mother tongue. It is the song that became the anthem of two resistance movements in the 60s and 70s—the fight for civil rights in America and the struggle against apartheid in South Africa: "We Shall Overcome." Soulful yet stirring, it intercalates the grief of a lament with the defiance of a war cry.

"We Shall Overcome" speaks to all those in this sorry world crushed under the weight of their despair—those in war zones, those who, for whatever reason, have migrated and are far from home, those terminally ill and lying in hospital beds, any and all of us readers.

The song has a long and layered history before it was first sung in the form so familiar to us, which was during the labour strike against American Tobacco, in Charleston, South Carolina (1945–1946). Significantly, and fitting the occasion, the lyrics underwent a small but key edit. The song "I Will Overcome" broke out from personal into public space in thunderous solidarity: "We Shall Overcome." We. The Bible has applause-worthy examples of those who overcame, assuring me that I am not alone.

This issue features examples of biblical women who overcame. **Sarah Fisher** works through David's genealogy to show how women—David's sisters, daughters, nieces, and granddaughters—seem to have borne the brunt of the trauma across generations of intra-family violence. **Heather Preston** lays out pictorial evidence to show how Christian iconography eventually and tragically fell in line with Greco-Roman representations in art of the woman as valued largely in her affiliation to a male. However, she also points to a model of female church leadership evidenced by pre-Constantine Christian art that we could work towards.

Belinda Tan revisits the story of Tamar, Judah's daughter-in-law, to show the high-risk route she takes in order to secure her future. In doing so, she wins the approval of the ancestor of the tribe of Judah, but it takes an edge-of-the-seat *dénouement*. **Havilah Dharamraj** looks at the character Jael who gives Israel a definitive victory over a seemingly invincible oppressor by hammering a tent peg through the sleeping enemy commander's head. She does it knowing full well that it could go horribly wrong for herself and her family.

Martin Luther King Jr. used "We Shall Overcome" in a public address he made on 31 March 1968, just four days before his death. His confidence was this: "We shall overcome because the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends towards justice."[1] **Misty Hedrick** and **Craig Keener** open up the many ironies in the book of Esther that prove exactly that. Indeed, in Czechoslovakia's non-violent Velvet Revolution of 1989, hundreds of thousands of protesters sang the song in English and Czech with a particular emphasis on the opening words of the last line: "I do believe (that we shall overcome some day)." I pray that the overcomers whom this issue features kindle hope.

As I conclude my service with *Priscilla Papers*, I welcome Caylie Chatoney as the new editor. Under her leadership, I am confident that this journal will continue to serve the cause of mutuality between women and men.

Together, side by side, in God's world.

Havilah Dharamraj
Editor

Notes

1. https://wordsmusicandstories.wordpress.com/2019/11/25/we-shall-overcome-by-martin-luther-king-jr/.

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