

## Editorial: acknowledging our past

### Who do you say we are?

In July 1822, Andrew Murray Sr, from Scotland, arrived in South Africa to serve as a minister in the DRC congregation of Graaff-Reinet, and in 1825 he married the young Maria Susanna Stegmann. It is noteworthy that, whereas Andrew Murray Sr came to the Cape 200 years ago, the family of the materfamilias, Maria Susanna Stegmann, can be traced back to Paul Roux, who was one of the Huguenot Refugees, driven from France by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes – thus retracing the family roots on the mother’s side to their arrival in the Cape in 1688, 334 years ago!

Andrew and Maria raised 16 children, of whom eleven reached adulthood (see Concise Genealogy, Appendix 1 in die printed edition).<sup>1</sup> Five sons became Dutch Reformed ministers, and four of the daughters wedded Christian pastors. One son focused on farming, and the unmarried daughter, Helen, became an educator of note. Thus, it is almost inevitable that the Murray family, who had an inborn interest, fascination, and so often inclination towards mission work, would have a considerable theological influence in Southern Africa. Perhaps less known is the Murray family’s noteworthy broader societal impact in education, literature, medicine, business, law, music, and sport.

On the occasion of the bicentennial commemoration, the Murray Family Association decided to call to mind this legacy as part of the 200-year festivities, with the hope that it can inspire a new generation of theologians and Christians to continue participation in God’s mission. For them, the questions pertaining to *who we are* and *what we are called to do*, particularly in this part of the world, need to be addressed anew. With this in mind, it was decided to call upon others to address the question: *Who do you say we are?*

This special 2022-edition of the *Stellenbosch Theological Journal* is devoted entirely to aspects related to this general theme. The guest editors solicited

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1 Refer to Appendix 1 in the printed edition: *Three generations of Murrays: Concise Genealogy and Pictography*. Compiled by Andrew Kok and Isabel Murray, Stellenbosch: DRC Archives (2022).

academic articles from a diverse array of authors in South Africa and abroad on any of the themes listed below, or anything that they as potential contributors wanted to propose, as long as it was generally relatable to the theological and socio-cultural legacy of the Murray family in Southern Africa. Suggested topics included the family's influence on the theological history of South Africa, Christian Mission, (Christian) education, politics concerning religion, matters of race and ethnicity, matters of gender (e.g., women's education, ministry, mission) and business. These contributions have led to this compilation of 12 articles, touching on some of these and additional, often surprising, aspects of the Murray legacy. Given the current South African interest in spirituality as an academic subject as well as a "commodity" to be reckoned with in all dimensions of life, it is not surprising that the larger percentage of the articles focus on the internationally acclaimed author and mystic, Andrew Murray Jr. As it did during his lifetime, his writings, strong opinions, and astounding scope of interests still inspire people to ask penetrating questions about God, themselves, family, church, mission, education and society.

Still, we need to address why, after 200 years, is it in any way of interest to retrace the legacy of the Murrays? Moreover, linked to this question, why – during previous commemorations – could it be proclaimed of this family, "The Family who changed South Africa"? From the viewpoint of an archival researcher, one possible answer comes to mind: for almost a decade, the basis on which this family interacted with one another and those around them was founded in the principles of reverence and respect, and the central belief that one's purpose in life was to serve God. This grounding value or "operational principle" was promoted in their personal letters, in their sermons, and visible in the manifold minutes/reports of their interactions during the multitudinous meetings in the field of theology, education, medicine, business, social action (*welwillendheidswerk*), the debate society or the sports field. This was a given, and whenever one of their manifold "cousins" failed to live according to this value, the "elders" were there to correct their ways. The wisdom and, to a large extent, the patronising position of honour given to the "elders" could be (and should be) questioned. However, in the analysis of the Murray's "power to influence", it stood out as a key factor in their framework of enabling their young and, make no mistake, in this respect, they made little distinction between their

daughters and their sons. Both were given to believe that they were here to make a godly difference in the world and that what they needed was to be rooted in God, to surrender to his will, the absolute belief that whatever is to be done should be trained for and done in the “possibility” of God’s power and for the betterment of others and this world. In fact, Andrew Murray Jr, in his book *The Children for Christ*, invites all parents to raise their children for God according to “the four great central thoughts of God with regard to the family”.<sup>2</sup>

*God*, as its creator, its Redeemer, its Sanctifier, its Covenant God; *Faith* as the one condition for bringing parent and child into relation with God, and making both partakers of its covenant – promise and blessing; *Parental faithfulness* in life and training as the path in which the blessing apprehended by faith is appropriated and brought down upon the home and the child; *the Children*, God’s property, to be trained for His glory and service. [Emphasis in the original]

Many generations of Murrays were (and still are) inspired by the words of the elder Murray (Andrew Sr) as made available to all in his letters. This gem sharing the family’s first years in South Africa, *Unto Children’s Children*,<sup>3</sup> penned by the eldest daughter Maria Murray (later Neethling), describes the Graaff-Reinet home as a household of reverence:<sup>4</sup>

We revered God and God’s day and God’s Word. The wife revered her husband; the children revered their parents; and the servants revered their master and mistress. The children were trained in the ways of the Lord. They were taught to render obedience in such a way that they never seemed to know it.

This sentiment was to be echoed in the copious writings of his second son, Dr Andrew Murray, the widely acknowledged author. Throughout his long life and stream of publications, Murray emphasised that it is Christ in us who is working: “God’s work must be done in God’s way, and in God’s

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2 Andrew Murray: *The Children for Christ. Thoughts for Christian Parents on the consecration of the Home Life*. (London: James Nisbet & Co Limited. 1905:432-434).

3 M.N. [Maria Neethling]: *Unto Children’s Children*. (London: TH Hopkins & Son. For private circulation only. 1909).

4 Maria Neethling (MN): *Unto Children’s Children*. 1909:16.

power. It is spiritual work, to be done by spiritual men, in the power of the Spirit”.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, there is no real “failure” but rather opportunities to learn to submit one’s all – also one’s powerlessness – into the hands of the omnipotent God for who nothing is “impossible”.

In the DRC Archives, there are hundreds of letters<sup>6</sup> written to (and responded to by) the younger Andrew – from tens of family members, friends, students, statesmen, soldiers, medical people, evangelists, mission supporters, publishers, business people, and musicians – seeking his sage wisdom.<sup>7</sup> Running through his communication are these “family golden rules” of the value of each person, revering one another, and total surrender to God in order to partake in doing the impossible – here reflected in extracts from a sermon of Andrew, titled “Impossible with men, possible with God”:<sup>8</sup>

“And he said, the things which are impossible with men are possible with God” (Luke 18:27).

Every tree must grow on the root from which it springs. An oak tree three hundred years old grows all the time on the one root from which it had its beginning. Christianity had its beginning in the omnipotence of God. In every soul, Christianity must have its continuance in that omnipotence. All the possibilities of the higher Christian life have their origin in a new understanding of Christ’s power to work all God’s will in us. [...] // [ ...].

Your Christian life is to be a continuous proof that God works impossibilities. *Your Christian life is to be a series of impossibilities*

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- 5 Andrew Murray: *Working for God*. (London: James Nisbet and Co Limited. 1901:1-2).
  - 6 Andrew Murray Sr and Andrew Murray Jr Private Collections, DRC Archives, Stellenbosch. The DRC Private Collection comprises of information on a large number of other Murray descendants – and a fairly substantial collection of books published by them.
  - 7 For instance, in an August 1901 letter to his nephew, Rev AF Louw – the young pastor to the Anglo-Boer War prisoners of war on St Helena – Andrew encourages him to write a forward to a special edition of Mrs Goy’s translated book *Alone in Africa* to be published for the Boer prisoners (Murray, I. 2022:39).
  - 8 Andrew Murray: *Sermon* “Impossible with men, possible with God”. Undated. Retrieved online on 3 January 2022 at [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/murray\\_andrew/surrender/surrender05.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/murray_andrew/surrender/surrender05.cfm).

*made possible and actual by God's almighty power.* That is what the Christian needs. He has an almighty God that he worships, and he must learn to understand that he does not need a little of God's power. But, he needs – with reverence be it said – the whole of God's omnipotence to keep him right, and to live like a Christian. [...] // [...] [Cursive added by author].

And so I trust that the word spoken about love may have brought many to see that we must have an inflowing of love in quite a new way. Our heart must be filled from above – from the Fountain of everlasting love – if it is going to overflow all day. Then it will be just as natural for us to love our fellow-men as it is natural for the lamb to be gentle and the wolf to be cruel. When I am brought to such a state that the more a man hates and speaks evil of me – the more unlikable and unlovable a man is – the more I will love him. When I am brought to such a state that the more obstacles, hatred, and ingratitude surround me, the more the power of love can triumph in me. Until I am brought to see these, I am not saying: “It is impossible with men.” But if you have been led to say: “This message has spoken to me about a love utterly beyond my power. It is absolutely impossible” – then we can come to God and say: “It is possible with You.”

In a publication of this nature, it is not possible to provide an in-depth analysis of “how” this could happen; however, it is hoped that these words will provide the reader with some context of what we (by lack of a more appropriate term) will refer to as the “Murray legacy”. This collection of articles should be read against these core Murray family values. Although only a few articles authored by Murray descendants are included, this reflection on their elders may have something relevant for today's relationships, challenges, mission, and hope for the future.

## **A spectrum of opinions**

In the interest of clarity, the articles have been arranged according to general themes, commencing with the contribution of the first two generations of the Murray family in mission – especially medical mission, war, and the

formation of Afrikaner nationalism. The larger body of articles highlights various aspects of Andrew Murray Jr's influence on the spiritual formation of generations of South Africans in the fields of education, church, mission, parenting, family relationships, societal aspects such as "welfare work", the formation of organisations and societies, and "lived spirituality" or spiritual practices. Interesting viewpoints regarding his influence on spatial development and, indirectly, architecture and entrepreneurial thinking are voiced. Lastly, several articles draw the most significant lines between Murray's spirituality and the Andrew Murray Centre for Christian Spirituality in Murray's heartland, Wellington – which, according to the authors, is fast becoming a new spiritual home to young generations of Christians.

Retief Müller, in his article, called *A Precarious Hybridity: war, mission, nationalism, anti-nationalism and the Murray family of South Africa*, describes the Murray family's positioning regarding the formation of Afrikaner national identity. He explores the influence of the traumatic experiences during the South African War (1899-1902) on their close identification with the Afrikaner people among whom they ministered. He also looks at the influence of their involvement in missionary activities in Nyasaland on their pragmatic, accommodationist approach that did not align with the development of Afrikaner nationalism as the 20th century proceeded.

Lizelle Smit draws attention to the reality that a disproportionate number of books and articles have been published by or about male DRC missionaries in Nyasaland, scholars have neglected women's stories. She, therefore, sets out to discuss the significant contributions made by one influential woman, Pauline Pretorius, born Murray, who worked as a Dutch Reformed Church mission doctor in Nyasaland from 1928 to 1976. The article (titled *Medical work and Nyasaland missionaries: reflecting on the life of Pauline Pretorius née Murray*) discusses the significant contributions made by Dr Pauline Murray to improve the overall healthcare practices amongst women and children in Nyasaland and her efforts to train local midwives in Mlanda, Nyasaland, from 1928 to 1941. Many descendants of Andrew Murray Sr worked as (medical) DRC missionaries in Nyasaland, and although the article focuses on the life and work of one of his descendants, mention

is made of the notable contributions made to the field of medicine by the extended Murray family.

Gideon van der Watt traces the *Murray family's footprints during the founding years of the Dutch Reformed Church Free State and the Reformed Church in Zambia*, including the Louw and Hofmeyr branches in the founding years of the Dutch Reformed Church Free State and the Reformed Church in Zambia. He discusses characteristics of Andrew Murray Jr's ministry, which contributes to, amongst others, an understanding of the Celtic and Réveil roots of the Murray influence. He provides striking historical detail of the stories of the missionary movements, which was characterised by an emphasis on a sense of calling, prayer, holy living, and the building of evangelical-ecumenical ties. He also asks questions about the relationship between these stories and colonialism.

Martin Pauw's article also emphasises Murray's focus on prayer and personal devotion, but he also stresses the broader significance of the multifaceted role Andrew Murray Jr played. His article, *The role and influence of Andrew Murray Jr in missions within the Dutch Reformed Church and in wider context*, highlights Murray's leading role in promoting missionary awareness and involvement within the church. This included his role in the establishment of societies such as the Women's Mission Society and the Ministers' Mission Union, developing missionary training facilities for women and men, maintaining an ecumenical openness, initiatives in extending missions into various other parts of Africa and, added to all this, his extensive literary contribution.

In his article called, *Nurturing a missional spirituality: any lessons to learn from the ministry of Andrew Murray Jr (1828-1917)?*, Willie van der Merwe explores possible links between the current missional movement in the Dutch Reformed Church and the spirituality of Andrew Murray Jr. Under the leadership of Murray, the congregation of Wellington made an impact on missionary work and social development. His spirituality, with its emphasis on, firstly, a personal, intimate love relationship with the Triune God and, secondly, living with a vocation and becoming involved in the needs of the world, Willie van der Merwe suggests, might be seen as an early form of missional spirituality.

Attie van Niekerk compares two approaches to missionary work in his article, *Andrew Murray's "Missionary Problem": addressing the gap between the spiritual and the everyday lives of church members*. The first approach emphasises the church's low level of spiritual life as the main missionary problem. To solve this problem, the revival of a strong spiritual life is paramount. This is the approach Andrew Murray Jr follows in his book, *The Key to the Missionary Problem*, about 120 years ago. The second approach emphasises the gap between the spiritual and the everyday lives of church members as the pertinent unfinished tasks of missionary work. Van Niekerk refers to the work of the Nova Institute of the last 26 years as an example of this approach.

Montagu Murray explores a novel perspective on Andrew Murray Jr in the article *Andrew Murray Jr as entrepreneur*. Instead of building on the view that Andrew was a mystic who gained his energy to contribute to the practical challenges of everyday life in the spiritual realm, he argues that Murray's role in the modernisation of Christian mission and education in South Africa can be attributed to an entrepreneurial character. Andrew's family history, personality, and exposure to various influences during his early life shaped him to approach his ministry entrepreneurially. These influences include elements from various strands in the Protestant tradition, including Lutheranism, Calvinism, pietism, Methodism, and the inner-worldly asceticism of English puritanism, as famously described by Max Weber.

According to Johan van der Merwe, one of the lesser-known facts is the important role that Andrew Murray Jr played in founding one of South Africa's top schools – Grey College in Bloemfontein. Van der Merwe, therefore, describes in his article, *Yesterday, today, and tomorrow: Grey College in Bloemfontein as living legacy of Andrew Murray as educationalist*, how Andrew Murray contributed to the founding of Grey College and how he became the first rector. He explores how the roots of education in South Africa go back to the Reformation and how that influenced Murray while he was educated in Scotland and the Netherlands. He argues that Murray's collaboration as Dutch Reformed minister with Sir George Grey, governor of the Cape Colony, made the founding of Grey College possible – an example of how cooperation between church and state can serve the purpose of education.

Instead of linking directly to the life and work of Andrew Murray and his contemporaries, Lisel Joubert and Isabelle Murray reflect on a fitting methodology that can be used in writing a history of the spirituality that inspired the work of Andrew Murray Jr. They argue in their article, *Rooted in Christ. Rooted in Wellington. Reflections on the Contextual Character of Spirituality*, that the reflection on methodology in retrieving a specific tradition is crucial if the Andrew Murray Centre for Christian Spirituality sees itself as a place from where more critical research on the legacy of Andrew Murray will be initiated in the future. Therefore, the inauguration of this Centre can be seen as the start of revisiting – or retrieving – a tradition that was an integral part of the South African religious and educational landscape for a long time.

Erik de Jongh, a Jesuit scholar, writes his article, *A love affair in the Dutch Reformed Church: a reflection*, from his experience during a time of study at the Andrew Murray Centre for Spirituality [AMCS] in Wellington. The AMCS has been developed over the last five years as a community of silence, solitude and prayer, and a place of learning and formation, based on the vision to develop a spirituality built on the work and life of Andrew Murray Jr. The article looks into the development of this (Reformed) school of spirituality from the perspective of spirituality, understood as an academic discipline. The connection between Andrew Murray and Bernard of Clairvaux with regards to devotion to God as well as a focus on the material needs of the community is explored.

Looking into Andrew Murray Jr's letters to his children on how and what to read, Lisel Joubert asks about his discipline of the "spiritual reading" of the Bible. In her article, *Andrew Murray Jr and the practice of Spiritual Reading*, she puts what we know about Murray's Bible reading into dialogue with other reading traditions throughout history. She also compares it to the crisis of reading in society today: in a time of mass media and the abundance of unfiltered words, information is objectified as truths, and Scripture becomes the object of study. However, through the practice of spiritual reading and meditation, words penetrate the soul's deepest recesses and bring transformation.

Elna Mouton presents an imaginary discussion on Clairvaux's stoep between herself and Andrew Murray Jr. This is where Murray wrote

many of his books. Her article, *In “conversation” with Andrew Murray Jr on Johannine Spirituality: God’s presence in Christ’s absence in the Fourth Gospel*, is about Murray’s mysticism. She asks Murray about the implications of his thoughts on the mutual indwelling of God and the disciples, believers’ unification in Christ and Jesus’ invitation to his followers to “remain” or “dwell” in him. Murray speaks about the relation between the warmth that we experience in belonging to God’s household, on the one hand, and the home that we provide for alienated, grieving, despairing, displaced, and “homeless” people, on the other.

### **The academic value of a project like this**

Any project that begins its life as a commemoration, especially if it had been commissioned as such by those doing the commemorating, runs the risk of telling a partial story. It should be expected that much of what is described in the following pages will bear the stamp of celebration. This project has, after all, been initiated as a celebration of a family’s history, as indicated above. One would hope that the informed reader engaging with the articles to follow would do so with full cognisance of the origin and nature of this project. With that note of caution in mind, here follow a few words of how this could be read and what it could mean within the context of South African and world history.

The Murray family, and several other families that celebrate their arrival in Southern Africa during the early 19th century, could not be understood without a basic recognition that their arrival occurred within the context of an expanding British empire. Andrew Murray and several other Scots Presbyterians recruited at the behest of Lord Charles Somerset to serve in the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa received their invitations thanks to an imperial policy of (at least in part) anglicisation. Somerset and other colonial administrators hoped to achieve greater hegemony in the face of a rather unruly local population in these parts. In many respects Andrew Murray Sr and other Scottish recruits serving in the DRC aided these imperial goals rather well.

However, acknowledging the imperially connected roots of the Murray family in Africa does not suggest that academic scholars could consequently

dismiss them and other families like them as agents dyed in the imperial wool. Indeed, much of what subsequently occurred, as many of the following articles will illustrate, occurred in opposition to and protest of imperial and colonial designs in Africa. For this reason, a focus on a family like this enables not only the door for the telling of gripping historical narratives but also has the potential to complexify views of the past that are so often typecast within more stereotypical historical frameworks, often occurring in binary terms, for example, colonist-colonised, black-white, men-women. Indeed, within colonial society itself, there were layers of nuance, and this is where the actual value of any micro-histories, such as what follows in these pages, comes into play. Therefore, it might be hoped that this type of project would inspire similar ventures into the histories of other notable families within this timeframe.

Another aspect of more general interest in connection with the Murrays could be when they are considered from the perspective of diaspora and migration studies. The Murrays and other Scots migrating to South Africa during the 19th century were part of a broader trend known as the Scottish diaspora. However, even beyond the initial move of Andrew Murray Sr from Scotland to South Africa, it might be said, as several of the articles in the following pages illustrate, that the Murray family remained in many ways a migrating/travelling family. This characteristic is particularly exemplified by the missionary vocation adopted by so many Murrays as they moved deep into various parts of Africa to live out their callings. It might be interesting to see future studies focusing especially on the physical mobility of the Murrays and other families of similar class and origin, particularly within the context of the Scottish diaspora.

Speaking of mission, this is perhaps the most apparent area within which the Murrays are relatable to broader movements and trends. The 19th century was the heyday of the worldwide Protestant missionary movement. Several of the following articles address the theme of mission directly or indirectly. The history of the Protestant missionary movement is an area of vigorous academic research. Much of this has focused on British and American missionary enterprises and also to an extent on those from the mission societies rooted in continental Europe. Fewer studies have focused on missionary enterprises emerging from the colonial territories themselves. In this context, the Murrays, who were at the centre of the

DRC missionary enterprise, could still be further considered and perhaps best investigated in connection with other colonially rooted missionary initiatives within the same period.

These are then just a couple of ideas to indicate some examples of where this type of project might connect to the broader interests of academics, particularly within the context of historical studies. Undoubtedly, students and academics drawn to some of the individual aspects addressed by the various articles will find a plethora of themes that will be relatable to a wide range of disciplines.

The editorial team hopes that this rich collection will become a starting point for further research by students and scholars from diverse contexts.

**Retief Müller**

**Isabel Murray**

**Montagu Murray**

**Pieter van der Walt**

**February, 2022.**

*Stellenbosch Theological Journal* is proud to present in this supplementum twelve peer-reviewed articles engaging the theological and socio-cultural legacy of the Murray family in Southern Africa (1822-2022). We appreciate the initiative taken in the light of the bicentennial commemorations, including the invitation resulting in the academic engagement displayed in the essays included in this volume. A special word of thanks to Retief Müller, Isabel Murray, Montagu Murray and Pieter van der Walt for their role as guest editors, and for their very helpful and insightful editorial. Current and future scholars and others interested in the remarkable Murray family history will surely find these articles of great value.

**Robert Vosloo**

**(General Editor: STJ)**