

# EDITORIAL

*The First Apology*, Justin Martyr's response to the Roman accusations made against Christians, was a remarkable statement in apologetics; however, Justin Martyr's statement also serves sociological purposes as well. As Webber (2008) observed,

Christians in the Roman world found themselves in a cultural setting of moral decadence, philosophical relativism and religious pluralism. However, they narrated the world in a *new* way. They did not accommodate the faith to culture but set forth the faith in a countercultural way. In a world that had no set beliefs they proclaimed, 'We believe.' In a world that had no ethic, they proclaimed, 'We behave.' In a world where there was no belonging, they declared, 'We belong' (p. 51).

Many sociological problems Christian sociologists identify are within one or more of the three areas mentioned, namely matters of *belief*, *behavior*, and *belonging*. In this edition, each article touches on an aspect of the triad. Robert Daniels of Bethel College examines the nature of social boundaries from a Biblical perspective, and reveals some thought-provoking issues in social interaction. Lindsey Johnson, a doctoral student at the University of North Texas, explores the contact hypothesis in relation to short-term mission trips. In a timely study, Scott Monsma of Northwestern College investigates the nature of changing attitudes in the United States regarding marriage and gender. Three book reviews round off this edition of *The Journal for the Sociological Integration of Religion and Society*.

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General Editor

## WORKS CITED

Webber, R.E. (2008). *Who gets to narrate the world?* Downer's Grove, IL: IVP.