

No room for smugness

By Marina Bang

"There is good religion and bad religion," said Denise Ackermann, "good public policy and bad public policy and there is no room for smugness in either religious communities or the government." Ackermann shared thoughts on living out our faith in an alienating world. She said we need to acknowledge our common humanity. We need to examine how history demonstrates that political intentions inevitably fall short of actions, and be perennially displeased and vigilant. "We must be vigilant, a vigilance that starts with self. We must be informed agents of faith bringing about relief to the groaning of creation. The challenge facing South Africans now," she said "is to discover what it means to affirm our humanity in a pluralistic society. I believe we need an ethic of relationship based on respect for our common humanity and mutual interdependence. I don't expect this to come from politicians. The problems of our difference that separate us have a potential for good. Our differences are God-given and they challenge us to the core of our humanity. We must profoundly and practically look into the 'other' and see our own humanity reflected there."