THE MISSION OF GOD'S PEOPLE

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Categories: Mission, Reviews

Stephen Neill, the author of one of my favourite books,Â A History of Christian Missions, once wrote; "if everything is mission then nothing is mission". In his latest work, The Mission of Gods PeopleÂ (Biblical Theology for Life), Chris Wright takes the opposite stance:

> *That is why I also dislike the old knock-down line that sought to ring-fence the word "mission" for specifically cross-cultural sending of missionaries for evangelism. "If everything is mission, then nothing is mission." It would seem more biblical to say "if everything is mission... everything is mission." Clearly, not everything is cross-cultural evangelistic mission, but everything a Christian and a Christian church is, says and does should be missional in its conscious participation in the mission of God in God's world. (p. 26)*

This one short quote gives you an idea of the breadth of Wright's thesis. The subtitle is "A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission" and in less than 300 hundred highly readable pages, he sets out a broad picture of the church's purpose on the planet.

> *In this book, I am asking the "so what?" question on behalf of those of us whom this God of the Bible has called into saving and covenant relationship with himself - the church, the people of God from Abraham to the population of the city of God in Revelation. Who are we and what are we here for? If the Bible renders to us the grand mission of God through all generations of history, what does it tell us about the mission of God's people in each generation including our own? What is our mission?*

In some ways, this book is a follow up to The mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative, seeking to answer some of the implicit questions posed by the earlier work. However, and this will be a relief to those who have never managed to plough through the *magnum opus*, The Mission of Gods People stands on it's own as a complete work.

It is printed as a large format paperback with plenty of white space and some excellent block quotes interspersed here and there. This, combined with an engaging writing style make it a relatively easy read. People who are new to Wright's work may be surprised at the way in which he uses the Old Testament so extensively in a book on mission - but readers of this blog will know that this is something that I passionately believe in.

Over the next few days, I'll be pulling out some quotes from the book (which is eminently quotable), but in the meantime, here is a chapter listing to give you an idea of where the book goes:

1. Who are we and what are we here for?
2. People who know the story they are part of
3. People who care for creation
4. People who are a blessing to the nations

5. People who walk in God's way
6. People who are redeemed for redemptive living
7. People who represent God to the World
8. People who attract others to God
9. People who know the one living God and saviour
10. People who bear witness to the Living God
11. People who proclaim the Gospel of Christ
12. People who send and are sent
13. People who live and work in the public square
14. People who praise and pray
15. The journey so far and the journey ahead.

The title says that this is a book about mission, and Chris Wright is an eminent missiologist, but in the final analysis, I reckon that this is actually a book about discipleship, which given the stress of Matthew 28 makes perfect sense.

I really can't recommend this too highly. Please go out and buy it (using the links on this page, for preference), read it, make notes in the margin and do yourself, your church and the world some good. This is a superb book.