BOOKS I HAVE READ: INTRODUCING CHRISTIAN MISSION TODAY

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Category: Reviews

If I were to ask which is the most important book on mission today, I suspect that most people would answer eitherÂ Transforming MissionÂ by David Bosch orÂ The mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand NarrativeÂ by Chris Wright. Don't get me wrong, these books are both excellent. If you want an overview of how mission thinking has changed over 2,000 years, you can't do better than Bosch, though his twenty year-old predictions about the future direction of mission are understandably a little more shaky. Likewise, if you want an unpacking of the way that mission runs through the Bible, a biblical hermeneutic, then Wright is your man.

However, if you are looking for a full orbed introduction to mission which is thoughtful, contemporary and practical, thenÂ Introducing Christian Mission Today: Scripture, History and IssuesÂ by Mike Goheen is the place to which you must turn. There is simply nothing quite so comprehensive or thoughtful on the market at the moment. It's the book I've been waiting for, for a long time.

Goheen draws liberally on Bosch, Chris Wright (and his namesake, Tom), Lesslie Newbiggin, Bavink, Harvey Conn and others in his text. This is a great way to get into these other, more specialised, writers. Though very much in the reformed-evangelical camp, Goheen is generous and graceful in his approach to other Christian traditions, and willing to learn from a wide variety of sources. The breadth of material covered is illustrated from the chapter headings.

Part One: Biblical and Theological Reflections on Mission

1. Scripture as a narrative record of God's mission.
2. Theology of Mission and Missional Theology

Part Two: Historical and Contemporary Reflection on Mission

3. Historical Paradigms of Mission.
4. An Emerging Ecumenical Paradigm of Mission
5. A Survey of The Global Church

Part Three: Current Issues in Mission Today

6. Holistic mission: Witness in word and deed.
7. Faithful Contextualisation: Church, Gospel and Culture(s)
8. Toward a Missiology of Western Culture
9. A Missionary Encounter with World Religions
10. Urban Mission: The New Frontier
11. Missions: A Witness to the Gospel Where There Is None.

This book is aimed at an introductory undergraduate level, but it is accessible and easy to read and certainly should not be reserved for academics.

Let me be blunt. If you are studying for Christian ministry in any form and this book is not on your

reading list, you should ask your professors why not! (OK, it only came out in June this year, so it might take a while to catch up). If you are involved in leading missionary work within a local congregation, then you need to read this. If you are a mission agency leader or board member and this isn't on your 'to read list', you are failing in your responsibilities. It's that good.

I am no prophet, but this deserves to be the 'go to' book for evangelical mission studies for many years to come. Don't wait for the paperback, buy it now!
I will undoubtedly be quoting from Introducing Christian Mission Today for weeks to come.