BOOKS I HAVE READ: AN INVITATION TO WORLD MISSIONS

Posted on September 30, 2014 by Eddie

Invitation to World Missions (Invitation to Theological Studies) is not cheap and even the Kindle edition will set you back a couple of limbs. However, anyone who considers themselves a missiologist or student of mission will need to interact with it at some point. If you can't afford your own copy, start badgering your librarian today!
Category: Observations

I have been quoting fromÂ Invitation to World Missions (Invitation to Theological Studies)Â by Timothy Tennent for a few weeks now. This shows two things; firstly its an excellent book with lots of good quotes, secondly, it's long and took me a good while to finish.

If this wasn't the year in whichÂ Mike Goheen's excellentÂ Introducing Christian Mission Today: Scripture, History and IssuesÂ was published, Tennent's work would easily be the must read mission book of 2014. As it stands, it's one of two books that anyone interested in the field must read. Yes, MUST, it's that good.

Like Goheen, Tennent basis his view of mission on theÂ *missio Dei.Â* The book breaks down into four parts, each of which is split into two sections, one theological and one more practical

The introduction gives an overview of the world mission situation today and then sets out a broad Trinitarian theology of mission.

Part two is entitled: God the Father: The Providential source and Goal of theÂ *Missio DeiÂ* and divides into twoÂ sections, the first of whichÂ gives an overall missional perspective on the Bible, while the second looks at a theology of culture and religion.

Part three is: God The Son: The Redemptive Embodiment of theÂ *Missio Dei.* The first section looks at mission history as the embodiment of the incarnation and the second section at cross-cultural communication as a reflection of the incarnation.

Part four is :God the Holy Spirit: The Empowering Presence of TheÂ *Missio DeiÂ* which has two sections; Empowering the Church t Embody the Presence of the Future and Missionaries as agents of Suffering and Heralds of the New Creation.

The book closes with a conclusion entitled: the Church as the Reflection of the Trinity in the World.

This book has a number of strong points. The Trinitarian framework provides a convenient way to address issues and makes the book flow pretty well. It is very comprehensive, touching on just about every aspect of current mission theory and practice.

Perhaps the greatest strength of the book is the way that the theme ofÂ *missio Dei* runs through the whole argument, informing almost all aspects of the book and providing a cogent framework for addressing and criticising a number of current trends in mission work (see this quote, for example). However, there is one section in which Tennent seems to lose the courage of his convictions and does not follow through with his argument. In chapter 12 which addresses Access and Reproducibility in Missions Strategy, Tennent seems to step away from theÂ *missio Dei* framework in favour of a modern metrics and business strategy driven approach. From my point of view, this is a significant weakness in what is generally an excellent book.

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