BOOKS I HAVE READ: MISSION MATTERS - LOVE SAYS GO

Posted on April 27, 2015 by Eddie

An enthusiastic short review of an excellent book. You really should buy it.
Category: Reviews

Mission work appeals to activists - people who want to do things. Missionary biographies are full of stories of adventure and of lives devoted to Christ, but they rarely have much by way of theology or reflection on the nature of Christian witness.

You might argue that this is as it should be; why waste time thinking about things? We should just get on and spread the message of the gospel to a needy world. But what is the message of the gospel? The news that Jesus came to bring us eternal life is hardly likely to be enthusiastically received by a Buddhist who already believes he is going to live forever and desperately wants to get off the cycle of reincarnation.

OK, this is a simple example, but it serves to illustrate a point. Mission is a theological task and we can't sell it short by reducing it to an activity devoid of a theological and historical background. The problem is that most introductory books about mission do exactly that.

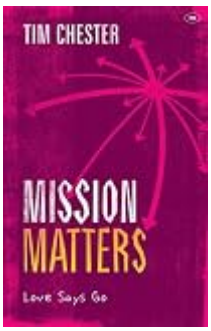
A good introduction to mission needs to include sections on the following:

- Mission as a reflection of the nature and actions of the Triune God.
- A history of God's mission as it is worked out through Scripture.
- A section on mission practice including something on the proclamation-service debate and ideally a something on the relationship between the church and mission.
- Lastly, something about the personal challenge involved in mission work.

All of this needs to be done in short, accessible chapters. There are plenty of books which pick up one or more of these themes in a more or less approachable manner. However, I have despaired of finding an easy to read, comprehensive guide to mission that I could pass on to non-specialists and to people who are considering life in mission work.

Eureka!

Tim Chesters' new bookÂ Mission MattersÂ fits the bill perfectly. It covers the four bullet points that I believe need to be coveredÂ and it does so in an informative fashion with a regular sprinkling of inspiring stories. Make no mistake, this is the best, basic introduction to mission work out there and it deserves to be widely read.



Mission agency recruitment departments and church missionary committees should immediately invest in multiple copies to give to people they are in contact with.

I should note that the nice people at IVP sent me a pre-release copy of this book so that I could write a note for the cover. This means that I didn't actually pay for it - however, this has not influenced my

review. This is a brilliant book.

If other publishers want to send me books to write about I'm more than willing to be honest about anything I receive!