

The book reminded me that good leaders are self-aware, know their context, and invite disagreement, neither being too authoritarian nor too hesitant to share convictions. Brubaker notes, “Healthy leaders communicate their own preferences; they also invite other congregational members to share theirs” (87). Healthy groups realize they can disagree and still move forward, are transparent about where power is held, and seek to distribute power as widely as possible.

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Timothy C. Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-first Century*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel. 2010. pp. 559. \$38.99.

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142 *Invitation to World Missions* is the latest work from Timothy Tennent, who was recently appointed president at Asbury Theological Seminary. Tennent’s other books—helpfully referred to at times in the present work—include *Christianity at the Religious Roundtable* (2002) and *Theology in the Context of World Christianity* (2007). The author’s aim in this new book is to lay out a coherent theology of mission framed by the *missio Dei* (mission of God). That is, the mission of the church on earth and the activities of missionaries (missions) find their meaning and direction in the collective work of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in mission. Thus, Tennent argues, “*Mission* is far more about God and *who* He is than about *us* and *what we do*” (55).

On one hand, Tennent’s book is an introduction to missiology and includes chapters on theology, history, culture, and the current status of global Christianity. On the other hand, it is a book on Trinitarian theology of mission from beginning to end. In fact, his distinguishing claim is that most introductory mission texts include a biblical foundations of mission section that is fragmented from the other noted aspects of missiology (9). While his approach is indeed fresh and innovative, Tennent is not the only voice calling for renewed theological reflection for mission. In *The Mission of God* (2006), Chris Wright argues for a missional hermeneutic to frame our reading of Scripture. In his forthcoming *The Mission of God’s People* (2010), Wright lays out a theology of mission specifically for the church. Also, Tennent joins Craig Ott and Stephen Strauss in authoring *Encountering Theology of Mission* (2010), a newly released book that proposes a more up-to-date theology of mission. While Tennent’s *Invitation to World Missions* is not the only recent work concerned with theology of mission, his emphasis on a Trinitarian missiology

is rather unique. Nevertheless, he interacts with and builds upon the works of Lesslie Newbigin (66–68) and Kwame Bediako (69–73) to make his case.

In Part One, Tennent discusses seven megatrends in missions and global Christianity, a context that should prompt the church to pause and reconsider its perspective on mission (chapter 1). After reviewing scholarship on theology of mission (chapter 2), Tennent lays out his Trinitarian missiology in which the Father initiates mission and acts as sender, the Son is the embodiment of the *missio Dei*, and the Holy Spirit is the continual empowering presence in mission (chapter 3). In Part Two, Tennent unpacks further the Father's initiating work in mission as revealed in the Scriptures (chapters 4–5) and how the Father's rule relates to culture and to other religions (chapters 6–7). In this section, he also introduces his New Creation motif—the present and future kingdom realities of God's ways being known by the redeemed. In Part Three, the author offers an interpretation of missions history based on the Son's redemptive work (chapters 8–10). In light of the Incarnation, Tennent discusses the translatable nature of the gospel and Scriptures, the personal access to people groups, and how holistic mission is an expression of the Incarnation (chapters 11–13). In Part Four, he unpacks his Holy Spirit theology for mission by reflecting on the Book of Acts, while discussing the ongoing mission of the church, as well as the role of the suffering church (chapters 14–16). In his conclusion (485–506), he summarizes the main portions of the book in light of the overall thesis, enabling the reader to see the overarching argument once again.

143

What are the strengths of Tennent's work? First, the general Trinitarian theological framework for understanding missiology—including missions history, culture, practices, and issues—is quite refreshing. Indeed, through his compelling interaction with the Trinity in Scripture, Tennent reminds the reader that God (or the Godhead) is a missionary God. The Father initiates mission, the Son accomplishes it, and the Holy Spirit is the empowering presence. These realities ought to bring renewed perspective and humility for cultural anthropologists, mission strategists, and organizational leaders.

Second, and related to the first, Tennent has helpfully reminded us of the vital role of the Holy Spirit in mission (92–101, 409–431). Throughout history, reflection on the person, work, and theology of the Holy Spirit has often been unnecessarily delayed. As discussions on the relationship between pneumatology and mission have also been neglected, Tennent's work here is especially important. In addition to working exegetically through the Book of Acts, Tennent reminds the reader of the Holy Spirit's important work in mission by appealing to the theology of Pentecostal scholars as well as the experiences of Pentecostal Christians in the

Majority World Church. As an evangelical from the United Methodist tradition, Tennent seems especially positioned to help evangelical non-Pentecostals appreciate the role of the Holy Spirit in mission.

Third, Tennent's discussion of the New Creation motif is also quite refreshing. Challenging the western paradigm of salvation in which an individual is merely justified (i.e., "I got saved"), Tennent reminds the reader of the eschatological implications of Trinitarian mission. That is, individuals are redeemed and brought into community of fellowship with other believers (the church) who will enjoy relationship with the Godhead for eternity in the fulfillment of the New Creation (159–90). Interacting with Piper's famous statement, "missions exists because worship does not," Tennent adds the nuance that "missions exists because the New Creation has not yet been consummated" (493).

144 A final strength of the book is that Tennent acknowledges the role of the Majority World Church throughout his work. His fourth and fifth megatrends of chapter one (33–42) relate to the growth of the church in the non-western world. However, more than simply recognizing this part of the global church, Tennent consistently interacts with the work of Majority World theologians and missiologists (Bediako, Escobar, Mbiti, Tienou among others) in finding support for his arguments. In fact, at the end of the work, one of his criteria for evaluating missions practice (i.e., insider movements in the Muslim world) is to invite the input of Majority World Church leaders (504–506). Indeed, Tennent's humble posture in this work serves as an inspiring model to every western missiologist.

What are the limitations of the book? First, the historical section (chapters 8–10) represents a rather awkward shift in the flow of the book. From the title, preface, and first seven chapters, it seems that this was to be primarily a book on theology of mission. However, in chapter eight, Tennent abruptly transitions into what appears to be a customary history of missions section of an introductory missions text. Though he organizes these chapters as the outcome of the Son's work in accomplishing salvation, this shift from theology to history still feels awkward. Also, as an historian, I am a bit leery of an overly theological reading of history. Perhaps, the historical section could have been more strategically included in another volume.

Second, in his chapter on culture and the New Creation (171–90), the author could have discussed more thoroughly the impact of the Fall on culture—the resulting sinful aspects that exist within culture. While he does acknowledge the effect of sin on culture (171), he spends much more space outlining the outcomes of the New Creation on culture—realities that are largely future (186–90). The Lausanne Covenant states, "The gospel . . . evaluates all cultures according to its

own criteria of truth and righteousness, and insists on moral absolutes in every culture” (paragraph 10). In light of these “between the times” shortcomings of culture, a model for engaging, confronting, and calling culture to be transformed to the Lordship of Christ is lacking in Tennent’s discussion.

A final limitation of the work is in Tennent’s incomplete treatment of the prescriptive or descriptive nature of the Book of Acts (414–31). While this very large question is clearly posed and is apparently set up as a discussion (414–15), Tennent seems to address the question by narrating the story of global Pentecostalism. That is, he answers the prescriptive/descriptive question by offering more descriptions!

To sum up, the strengths of Tennent’s work far outweigh any weaknesses. It is a well-written, theologically robust invitation to consider mission in light of the missionary heart and ways of the Triune God. While it should be refreshing to missiologists, this book will also be stimulating to students as they train to be practitioners and theologians of mission. Specifically, I could envision using it for courses in Introduction to Missions and Theology of Mission.

145

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Joseph H. Hellerman. *When the Church Was a Family: Recapturing Jesus’ Vision for Authentic Christian Community*. Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2009. pp. 234. \$19.99.

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Joseph Hellerman serves on a pastoral staff and teaches New Testament at Biola University and Talbot School of Theology in La Mirada, California. He holds both a Th.M. and a Ph.D. Hellerman thoughtfully advocates the idea of church as community, indeed as family, noting that the latter is the key concept for Jesus, Paul, and other New Testament writers when speaking of the church.

Neatly packaged into nine chapters with an introduction and a conclusion, Hellerman is well organized, well reasoned, and enlightening. He fascinates as he educates, and there is a nice blend between current stories and illustrations, drawing from both the Bible and church history. There are also brief indices of names, subjects, and Scriptures.

Hellerman is a gifted writer. The reading is at once serious, current, captivating, concise, and enjoyable. There are multitudes of pithy, quotable lines. Hellerman believes the evangelical church in America is smitten by a crisis of radical individualism. In the introduction he says, “There is, in fact, no better way to come to grips with the spiritual and relational poverty of American