

Thomas, Norman E., ed. *Classic Texts in Mission and World Christianity*. Orbis Books: Maryknoll, NY, 1995. 346 pp. \$24.95.

Before his untimely death in 1992, David J. Bosch, one of the most prominent missiologists of our time, published *Transforming Mission*, his *summa missiologica* that has become a standard text in the field of missiology. Designed to be a companion volume to Bosch's monumental work, *Classic Texts in Mission and World Christianity* brings together excerpts of 180 documents in the history of mission theology from early Christianity to the present. It actually turns out to be a significant sourcebook for missiology, church history, and theology.

The texts are arranged in two main sections. Part One, focused on historical paradigms of mission, contains 39 selections arranged in four chapters on the Early and Eastern Church, the Middle Ages and Roman Catholic models, the Protestant Reformation, and mission in the wake of the Enlightenment. Part Two, which relates to contemporary paradigms of mission, contains 131 selections arranged in 14 chapters paralleling the "elements" of the contemporary emerging ecumenical mission paradigm suggested by Bosch.

Norman Thomas is professor of World Christianity at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. He served as a missionary in Africa and is a well-known mission researcher and the book review editor for *Missiology*. His expertise is evident in the quality and accuracy of his one- to two-page introductions to the chapters in which the theme of each is developed and placed in context, and in the selections and chronological arrangements of the texts. In addition, Thomas also introduces each selection with a short paragraph describing the context and thrust of the excerpt, often giving an informative biographical sketch of the author. Since many texts are multiple excerpts from larger documents, the introductions are especially helpful to facilitate understanding. The selection of texts reveals a magisterial grasp of the missiological literature; however there seems to be a bent which favors ecumenical and liberationist thinkers. Thomas also provides cross-references to *Transforming Mission*, a feature which is very useful for those interested in following Bosch's argument. Indexes of scripture references, subjects, and names, as well as footnotes after each chapter, further enhance the value and usefulness of this book.

In contrast to Bosch, who devoted approximately one-third of his work to the mission of the Apostolic Church, another third to the four *historical* paradigms of mission, and a last third to the discussion of possible elements of a contemporary missionary paradigm, Thomas skips the Apostolic Church, deals with the four historical paradigms, and then devotes 75% of the book to contemporary models of mission. He presents each of Bosch's suggested "elements" of a contemporary paradigm as a paradigm in its own right. In this Thomas goes beyond Bosch, who was possibly the first to apply paradigm thinking to missiology. While Bosch endeavored to demonstrate an emerging consensus within the diverse perspectives and elements of the contemporary discussion on mission, Thomas seems to underline the diversity of perspectives.

Another distinction of this volume is Thomas's noteworthy addition of some 50 pieces from Asia, Africa, and Latin America, including 18 female authors. These selections add a liberationist flavor and a challenging freshness to the symphony

of voices and extend the missiological dialogue beyond *Transforming Mission's* mostly Western and male partners. Evangelical readers will also notice that while Catholic voices (especially of the latter part of the century) and ecumenical leaders and texts are well represented, evangelical contributions such as the text of the Lausanne Covenant or the work of the continuation committees, although mentioned in some introductions, are not included. The Wheaton Declaration is cited but important evangelical voices such as those of Ralph Winter and John Stott are not mentioned. Thomas may have felt that evangelical landmark documents are readily available in Scherer and Beavan's 2-volume *New Directions in Missions and Evangelization* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1992, 1994). Evangelical authors with wider ecumenical influence such as Roland Allen, John Mott, Orlando Costas, Charles Kraft, and Donald McGavran have been included. Texts representing some African independent church leaders are cited, but there is little from the charismatic and Pentecostal wings of the church. This selective touch shows that Thomas has not only been a capable editor but an interpreter of the history and theology of mission with his own perspective.

Despite these criticisms *Classic Texts* should be seen as an outstanding contribution and important reference work in any library of mission. It will be useful in the classroom as a companion volume to *Transforming Mission* or as a sourcebook in its own right for a variety of courses in different theological disciplines. It should also prove of enormous value to denominational leaders and directors of mission agencies as they struggle with the issues of the church in mission.

In short, no serious student of mission can afford to ignore this valuable volume which brings together texts not easily located in any other work.

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Witherington, Ben. *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1995. xx + 492 pp. \$34.99.

Dr. Witherington, noted for *Women in the Earliest Churches*, *Jesus the Sage*, and *Jesus, Paul, and the End of the World*, offers a unique and invaluable commentary on the Corinthian correspondence. This work brings together insights from rhetorical, social-scientific, and cultural-anthropological criticism under one cover with the fruits of the more traditional disciplines. As such, this book is a welcome resource for pastors and students who need to become acquainted with the fruits of these burgeoning disciplines—particularly with regard to the Corinthian letters, which have received so much attention in this regard from scholars such as E. A. Judge, W. A. Meeks, G. Theissen, M. M. Mitchell, and S. K. Stowers. The specialist will also appreciate Witherington's lively interaction with these and other scholars (especially his critique of Wire and Castelli).

While recent commentaries on 1 and 2 Corinthians have not ignored the importance of social-scientific and rhetorical criticism, Witherington thrusts these disciplines to the fore, providing the reader with a thorough grounding in the