

The advantage of the online database provided by INTF is that detailed information and sometimes even images or transcriptions, are provided for each manuscript, in addition to the bibliography. To compete with this online tool by printed media will probably become impossible in the near future. However, as long as differences in their bibliographical data appear, one or the other tool remains valuable.

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Flemming, Dean. *Why Mission? Reframing New Testament Theology*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2015. 173 pp. Softcover, US\$29.99.

Flemming's book, *Why Mission?*, is part of the Reframing New Testament Theology series edited by Joel B. Green. The series seeks to address the question, "What does it mean to engage the New Testament from within the church and for the church?" (xi). For Flemming, this broad question is focused on "What is God's mission for communities of faith?"

In chapter one, "Reading from the Back: Mission in Matthew," Flemming argues that Matthew's witness to the *missio Dei* must be understood in light of the organic unity between the story of Israel and the story of Jesus: "What God has done in Jesus of Nazareth is the climax of Israel's story and the fulfillment of Israel's Scriptures" (3). Jesus' renewal and restoration of Israel can be seen in his comprehensive kingdom mission where he teaches, preaches, heals, and confronts expressions of evil at every turn.

Since the post-resurrection commission of Jesus (Matt 28:16–20) is the climax of the first gospel, one must read Matthew "from the back." The Great Commission recapitulates and gathers together the primary theological themes of the gospel; it shaped how Matthew's Jewish Christian community read and understood the gospel; and it helps contemporary Christians "to grasp how Matthew's Gospel . . . equips God's people to participate in the *missio Dei*" (12).

In chapter two, "A Mission of Divine Embrace: Luke and Acts," Flemming maintains that Luke's purpose in writing Luke-Acts is to depict God's redemptive project for the entire world: Luke-Acts is "a narrative of God's saving mission, which is unfolded in Israel's Scriptures, the life and mission of Jesus, and the Spirit propelled Christian community" (24). God's saving mission is all-embracing, boundary-breaking, and Spirit-empowered.

The narrative of Luke-Acts should be understood as an instrument of the divine mission, inviting present-day missional communities to actualize the mission to bring the fullness of salvation to all nations in their own concrete settings. The mission of Jesus to proclaim good news to the poor, and release to the captives and oppressed, is our calling as well. And the church's Spirit-empowered witness—revealed in the speeches to Jewish and Gentile audiences and in unified loving community—also become models for the contemporary church to emulate.

In chapter three, "Sent into the World: Mission in John," Flemming claims the Fourth Gospel may well offer "the most developed theological

understanding of mission” among the gospels (53). The Triune God’s cosmic purpose for the entire creation (John 1:1–18) is fulfilled in the eternal Word, his only Son, Jesus, who actualizes God’s mission through his incarnation, manifesting “an embodied presence of the loving, seeking God” (55). The mission is publicly revealed by Jesus’ words and deeds; his words are focused not on the kingdom of God but upon himself and the life he came to offer; his deeds are miraculous signs that “reveal God’s glory and lead people to put their faith in Jesus” (56). Divine love is the motive and character of God’s mission; this love reaches across numerous boundaries and is preeminently expressed upon the cross—an act of self-giving love that provides a portrait of what “loving to the end” involves. The Spirit imparts life to all who believe; bears witness to Jesus; empowers his followers for witness; and convicts, and exposes the sin of the world.

In chapter four, “Living out the Story: Mission in Philippians,” Flemming examines Philippians as a “case study for reading Paul’s letters through missional eyes” (73). He considers the letter as a product of, witness to, and instrument of God’s mission. Philippians can be contextualized to equip contemporary Christian communities to participate in God’s mission. The epistle entreats the church to embody God’s mission as united, holy, and loving communities; to proclaim and live out the gospel of Jesus Christ; and to critically engage our cultures, celebrating “what is true and beautiful in our cultures,” yet not embracing their values uncritically (88). In short, under the guidance of the Spirit, the community must “reenact the self-giving story of Christ” (88).

In chapter five, “Mission for Misfits: A Missional Reading of 1 Peter,” Flemming notes the letter depicts the identity of Christians as aliens and strangers in a hostile world (1 Pet 2:11). In such an unfriendly world, Christian communities witness to God’s mission by participating in the grand story of God’s reconciling work in Christ on behalf of humanity and the world; the story, which includes the story of Israel, “sweeps from creation to the consummation of all things” (90) and is utilized by Peter to inscribe and encourage the church to be caught up in this divine drama of salvation.

Peter draws on Israel’s identity-shaping experience as a “holy priesthood” and a “holy nation” to encourage the church to be a distinctive, God-reflecting community that displays “the self-giving love of Christ” (98); the church is called to engage the world for the sake of others, mediating the blessings of the abundant, transformed life of God’s salvation.

In chapter six, “The Triumph of the *Missio Dei*: Mission in Revelation,” Flemming argues that Revelation is interpreted more faithfully when it is not culled for missionary texts (e.g., Rev 5:9; 7:9; 14:6), but approached with an understanding that the *entire book* is a mission text. This apocalyptic book narrates the climax of “the sweeping story of God’s purpose to redeem and form a missional people and to restore all things” (110). This grand story consists of several interrelated stories—creation/new creation, redemption, judgment, and God’s people.

The Apocalypse of John is intended to be a community-shaping text, inspiring Christian communities not to accommodate to the dominant Roman culture, but to give ultimate allegiance to the Lamb of God and offer the sovereign God faithful worship and witness. Revelation reimages the world for believers, offering them a vision that contrasts sharply the deceptive imperial worldview of Rome over against the vision of God's restoration of the world.

In the Epilogue, Flemming addresses three issues. First, he gives a brief overview of the distinctive missional notes of the New Testament writings he examined. Second, he sketches a number of missional themes that run through the New Testament's testimony to God's mission and its call for Christian communities to embrace God's mission. Third, he appeals for Christian communities to read Scripture faithfully, actively participating in God's mission by contextualizing the missional intent of the New Testament for their own unique circumstances.

Flemming's interpretations of God's mission are exegetically informed and clearly written; they offer the reader accessible reflections of seven representative New Testament writings on the *missio Dei*. Aside from desiring Flemming to have engaged the Gospel of Mark, thereby giving the reader missional readings of the four canonical Gospels, I have one criticism: instead of sketching sixteen common missional themes of the New Testament in the Epilogue (132–134), it would have been helpful had Flemming wrestled with the divergent voices and offered a proposal for coherence among the various witnesses. Is there a theme(s) which comprehensively captures God's mission in the New Testament? Or, is there a unity of missional perspective within the diverse voices of the New Testament? Nonetheless, the book admirably fulfills its purpose for the Reframing New Testament Theology series stated at the outset: "intended for people interested in studying the New Testament and the nature of the Christian message and the Christian life, for classrooms, group interaction, and personal study, these volumes invite readers into a conversation with New Testament theology" (xi).

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Hafemann, Scott J. *Paul's Message and Ministry in Covenant Perspective: Selected Essays*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2015. 226 pp. Softcover, US\$22.40.

Paul's Message and Ministry in Covenant Perspective by Scott J. Hafemann, reader in New Testament at St. Mary's College, School of Divinity, at the University of St. Andrews (Scotland), highlights the new covenant as the hermeneutical key to understanding Paul's thought and work. His helpful brief review of dominant nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholarly interpretations of Paul (ch. 1) sets the context for his own thesis that Paul's message and ministry cannot be rightly understood apart from his conviction that he was the apostle of "the new covenant of the new creation" which was inaugurated by the "substitutionary atonement of Christ's death on the cross" (61, 18). The evidence Paul advanced for his conviction, according to