

theologically and philosophically reasoned parts of his work. By reminding the reader how the person of Jesus is key to understanding God, Coppedge opens the way for a Trinitarian theism that avoids the pitfalls of open theism, process theology, deism, pantheism, fatalism, and chance, as well as some of the rigid and rather impersonal perspectives of classical theism.

While most would not expect a book on the doctrine of the Trinity to do so, *The God Who Is Triune* will surprise readers who may have only tolerated the Trinity as a mere statement of faith and may cause them to actually embrace Trinitarianism. Coppedge's exposition of the entire doctrine of God based on a Trinitarian starting point is helpful. One finds an understanding of providence and freedom that entails inviting human persons to enter into genuine relations with God and each other in true freedom. I highly recommend this book as a great resource for both pastors and scholars. The implications of this study for contemporary moral life are incredible.

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Okoye, James Chukwuma. *Israel and the Nations: A Mission Theology of the Old Testament*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2006. xx + 180 pp. Paper, \$28.00.

In *Israel and the Nations I*, James Chukwuma Okoye proposes a hermeneutic for studying mission in the OT. In the Foreword of the book, Okoye cites Carolyn Osiek, who concisely summarizes the problem: "What is the role of the Old Testament in Christianity? Is it only to prove the superiority of the Christian revelation, or to justify political claims without regard to contemporary suffering?" (xi).

The author assumes that readers come either with a mission background or a biblical background, but not both (xiv). He also claims that, by preserving the organic links between the Testaments without reducing one to the other, his book guards the integrity of the OT as the Word of God, although, writing from the Roman Catholic tradition, he recognizes as authoritative texts that are not included in the Jewish canon. He also employs the Documentary Hypothesis of the origin of the biblical text.

The author believes that Israel was not a missionary nation at the beginning, but became so later on. For him, the covenant between God and Israel was particularistic. Only when Israel opened up her covenant to include the Gentiles, did Israel become clearly missionary oriented. Until then only Israel was elected by God and election stands in tension with mission. Okoye insists that "such a focus is to be read not in isolation but in relation to internal transformations of the tradition that indicate that Israel's election had a missionary intention" (3). However, he is ready to accept Norman Gottwald's theory that Israel was formed in Canaan from oppressed peasants under the influence of the Moses group that came from Egypt simply because under such a scenario "election would be intimately connected with mission." He concludes that in the OT "the theme of mission shows itself to be the necessary accompaniment of that of election" (4).

Since “the Bible contains different models of mission operative in different faith communities at different times” (10), Okoye introduces his contribution to OT mission theology under four faces of mission: the universality of salvation and righteousness before YHWH, the “community-in-mission,” the centripetal mission, and the centrifugal mission.

Okoye finds the first face of mission in Gen 1–11, which explains why all the peoples of the earth need blessing as a result of curses on the soil, on the serpent, on Cain, and on Canaan. Although the author recognizes that the story could continue thus far only by God’s grace and forbearance, he believes that Abraham became the embodiment of this grace. Commenting on the reflexive and passive meanings of Abraham as the blessing for the nations (Gen 12:1-3), the author suggests that universalistic editorial input changed the text, for “earliest Israel did not yet understand the blessing of Abraham in a missionary and universalistic sense” (48).

Okoye argues that God never intended that Israel become an ethnic entity, separated from the Gentiles, but a spiritual one based on faith. He concludes that “the embers of mission would not glow in Israel until Israel rediscovered the primacy of righteousness of God, who freely calls all humanity to Godself” (54).

The second face of mission, the “community-in-mission,” assumes that all laws are considered part of the covenant between God and Israel or at least embedded within its context. Israel has to become a sacral worshipping covenant community, a model of a just society in the Promised Land. Israel’s covenant calls not only for separation from other nations, but aggregation to YHWH. As a “kingdom of priests,” Israel is a community-in-mission, serving others “by bringing them closer to God,” and serving God by “mediating God’s revelation and decrees to the community” (62). The implication is that the goal of election is mission, not salvation. The main duty of a priest, which is the doxology, becomes missiological. However, election proves to be no guarantee against divine retribution. When Israel manifested injustice and unrighteousness, and forgot its community-in-mission role, leading nonbelievers to disrespect God, it became God’s enemy.

The author believes that from the time of the exile God changed strategies in his relationship with people. Personal responsibility replaces corporate retribution, while divine surgery to replace peoples’ hearts precedes true repentance. Because there is no mention of the repossession of the land (Jer 31:31-34), all nations may discover themselves in the promise. The focus is solely on God’s character. Mission becomes the totality of God’s work—a work in which God’s people simply share.

The third face of mission, centripetal, is seen in the Psalms, which indicate that true worship leads to true society. God’s kingdom encompasses all nations, with Israel the medium through which the nations come to praise him. “God’s glory can be fully realized only when the families of nations share fully together in the worship of Yahweh and in life with Yahweh” (108).

Isaiah 2:2-5 is the classical text for centripetal mission in the OT. It is “the earliest expression of a belief in the eschatological glorification of Mount

Zion,” although Okoye believes it belongs to the (post-)exilic period (110). Mount Zion becomes the center of attraction, with a moral and spiritual focus rather than a geographical one. The nations come to the mountain by their own volition, attracted by the Torah revealed there. This Torah offers peace and fulfillment, and responds to the deepest human need.

The last face of mission, centrifugal, is found in Isa 56:1-8, the earliest mention of Gentiles religiously converting to YHWH based on an inclusive covenant. As a result, Egypt, Israel, and Assyria stand as blessings for the rest of the nations. Israel reaches its goal only when the blessing to bless is shared. This remnant of nations is defined not in national or ethnic terms, but in confessional language. Okoye also sees the centrifugal aspect of mission in Isa 66:19, in the sending of Jonah, and in the activity of the Jewish Diaspora in Egypt.

Finally, Okoye proposes that we read mission in the OT from a diversity of angles and allow for at least the four faces of mission. Although the author works with historical-critical presuppositions, *Israel and the Nations* represents an attempt to read the OT from an ecumenical and postmodern perspective. This makes integration of the four themes difficult, each floating on its own. However, the book provides interesting insights and angles, thereby making it an attractive reading. I recommend the book for seminary students who previously studied mission theology in the OT and for professors of mission.

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CRISTIAN DUMITRESCU

Osiek, Carolyn, and Margaret Y. MacDonald, with Janet H. Tulloch. *A Woman's Place: House Churches in Earliest Christianity*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006. 345 pp. Paper, \$21.00.

In *A Woman's Place*, Carolyn Osiek and Margaret Y. MacDonald combine their considerable knowledge of women and families in early Christianity and the Greco-Roman world to produce a fascinating work that pushes the boundaries of our consideration of women in early Christianity into new areas. Moving beyond more general important works such as *Women in Christian Origins* (Ross Shepard Kraemer and Mary Rose D'Angelo) and *Women and Christianity* (Mary T. Malone), *A Woman's Place* uses the growing insights of classicists about women and families in the Greco-Roman world to delve into the specific area of women in house churches in the earliest years of the church.

The authors refuse to assume earlier stereotypes such as the complete relegation of Greco-Roman women to a position of little influence who were hidden away in the private sphere of the home. Neither do they presume early Christianity's opposition to, or participation in, the treatment of women by the world. Instead, they produce a nuanced study that allows the primary documents to speak for themselves in conversation with the plethora of recent work on these subjects. In general, they deal carefully with the extensive gaps in historical data, creating hypotheses about what was likely the case, while pointing out the limited level of certainty available. Two aspects of