

of gematria is safer, because it is only one of many factors that the text provides to identify the Beast, and when put together, they form an irrefutable whole. The conjectured symbolic value of 666 may seem significant, but it can hardly be used to confirm with certainty the identification of the Beast, which is the implicit purpose of the giving of the number.

LaRondelle gives considerable evidence of a broad familiarity with the current literature on the book of Revelation. Sometimes, however, he seems a little too quick to cite it for support. I seriously question whether he would really agree fully with the sentiments quoted from, for example, Richard Bauckham on p. 230, Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza on p. 383, and George R. Beasley-Murray on p. 384.

The book could use some careful editing or proofreading as well. There are many spelling and other mechanical errors and inconsistencies throughout the book that cheapen it. These should be corrected in the likely prospect of another printing.

Despite certain minor weaknesses, this is a book that should be required reading for every serious course on the book of Revelation, and every serious student of Revelation should have a dog-eared copy in his or her library.

Edwin Reynolds

Mosher, Steve. *God's Power, Jesus' Faith, and World Mission: A Study in Romans*.
Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1996. 360 pp.

Steve Mosher holds a Ph.D. degree in New Testament and has served as a missionary in the Philippines for eight years. In this book he combines his academic and missionary backgrounds well. His missionary spirit has been revealed in his use of simple English for those who read it only as a second language. This was a boon for me.

In this thematic commentary Mosher tries to show how Paul developed three themes in Romans: God's power, Jesus' faith, and world mission. He divides the Epistle to the Romans into thirty-four passages, approximately ten to fifteen verses each. This facilitates sermon making and other forms of sharing. Mosher finds 1:16-17 to be the source for the basic thematic message that he wants to develop. He believes that he had an illumination from God in seeing the three themes he found in 1:16-17 (16). He also believes that they are clues to the broad interpretation of the letter to the Romans.

Mosher's theological starting point can be seen in his emphasis that Paul meant the "faith of Jesus" rather than "faith in Jesus." Paul's teaching, Mosher observes, is full of the new faith that Jesus introduced. Rom 3:21-31 is discussed under the title "God's Righteous Power, Jesus' Faith, and World Mission." Perhaps it is the only passage besides 1:16-17 where the reader can clearly see these three themes coming together. "Christ's faith, not our faith in Christ, plays the pivotal role. As a

result, God's powerful grace is making righteous both Jews and Gentiles who share Jesus' faith." (88)

The primary problem Paul describes is the power of sin, not the guilt of sin. So the redemption in Jesus Christ is not primarily forgiveness. Above all, God's redemption and grace mean deliverance from slavery to sin and liberation from the power of sin. . . . God's greatest gift is not a righteous status, but a righteous life. (89)

Mosher does not offer any discussion of various possible interpretations. He usually presents the best interpretation according to his own exegetical judgment, although its reasons are not often given. The most interesting parts of this volume are the frequent discussions of practical applications of the issues in Romans. He shares insights from many missionaries who, like Paul, are practical persons.

It appears that his criticism of many centuries of organized missionary endeavors is rather like a criticism of civilization. Any missionary endeavor is severely criticized that has safeguarded the benefits of the rich, has been politically oriented, or has produced nominal Christians. Mosher believes that any missionary motivation based on a feeling of cultural superiority has failed to be a true mission.

He believes that when Paul wrote Romans, he wanted the Roman Christians to share his vision for world mission and his emphasis on God's ruling power in history. Paul's mission included his concern for all, whether in Jerusalem, in Rome, or in Spain. The commentary is more practical than exegetical, more concerned with missiology than with biblical theology, and full of poignant critiques of historical and current mission endeavors from the viewpoint of the powerless. This stimulates repentance.

The church at Rome, as Mosher understands rightly, was a house church, a setting in which the gospel could be more effective in many ways. His suggestions and his own practice along this line are refreshing at this time of the megachurch syndrome. House churches can be inexpensive, more effective, and more active.

It is regrettable that Mosher overemphasizes the discontinuity between the OT and NT when he criticizes the Western powers for misapplying the literal teaching of the OT. We cannot isolate Mosher from his Baptist background. A misuse of Scripture does not justify its rejection. Rather, it is important to discover the continuity in the spirit of the entire Scriptures and correct our abuses accordingly.

No text of Romans is given. No new translation is given except for his theme verses. Detailed endnotes are provided. Footnotes could have been more reader friendly, for it is, after all, a commentary, and people are interested in certain exegetical points on which he is building his missiological edifice. His bibliography has more items on missiological interest than on exegetical ones. Had an index been provided, it would also have been more user friendly. Otherwise, Mosher's work is an excellent example of how one can create a bridge between biblical scholarship and practical theology, especially missiology.