

Urga, Abeneazer G., Jessica A. Udall, and Edward L. Smither, eds. *Reading 1 Peter Missiologically: The Missionary Motive, Message, and Methods of 1 Peter*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey, 2024. Pp. 264. Paperback \$23.99, ebook \$13.99.

The present book is a result of the desire to read 1 Peter missiologically. The book is part of a series on reading missiologically biblical books published by William Carey Publishing House. The idea of reading missiologically, as the editors stress, stems from the challenges of doing mission in the present, diverse cultural and ideological world. While academia has explored biblical books merely in relation to their literary composition, transmission of the text, dry exegeses, and doctrinal concepts, this series aims to read the latter through the lens of mission, as being the primary objective for which biblical books were written. Reading missiologically means presenting the gospel in a culturally sensitive way, with a focus on practical application. The contributors to the articles in this volume come from different parts of the world, bringing various perspectives on the book and enriching its discussion of mission. The authors also come from different fields (biblical scholars and missiologists) who delve into 1 Peter to unravel Peter's message to contemporary Christianity. Based on these varying perspectives alone, this book is worth reading.

The book is divided into three parts. The first explores the "Missionary Motive of 1 Peter." It starts with the article, "Salvation of the nations: The vision of God's mission in 1 Peter 1:10–12," by Bowman, who demonstrates that salvation is the motivating element that enables believers to endure hardship and suffering (p. 6). Believers, including Gentiles, look back on OT prophecies, particularly about the Messiah, and find confidence in their fulfillments, which strengthens their faith as they engage in mission. He states that 1 Pet 1:10–11 entails four essential elements: salvation, time, and the person of Christ and His Spirit, who indicated through OT prophets, Christ's suffering and His glorification.

Gift Mtukwa's article, "Like Father, Like Son: Holiness and Missio Dei in 1 Peter," using "a comparative analysis of Shona proverbs on imitation," explores 1 Peter's discussion of holiness and mission. He avers that "holiness for Peter is at the core of the mission of God. There cannot be missio Dei without holiness" (p. 12). Believers imitate their Father's holiness, in that their holy lifestyle "reveal[s] the character of the Holy God and acts [as] an enticement for other people to believe" (p. 14). He then connects such holiness and witness to the mission in Africa and Africans in the diaspora.

Jacob Chengwei Feng's article, "Mission by God's Living Stones: Watchman Nee's Missional Exegesis of 1 Pet 2:5–11," argues that God's ways in engaging in mission are a "coordinated spiritual house," pointing to the corporate involvement of all believers. Feng basically studies Nee's missional approaches. Nee viewed the church as "missional in nature." For Nee, he states, "Exegesis is not merely an academic endeavor but is dynamically oriented toward mission" (p. 22).

Boubakar Sanou's article, "Embodying God's Mission in an Unfriendly World," aims to examine "believers' new identity as the people of God and their new task as witnesses to the gospel" (p. 26). Sanou sees 1 Pet 2:9–10 as referring to the identity of believers and that the latter, though predominantly Gentile, are to think of "themselves as the Israel of God" (p. 26). As such, they are to proclaim God's excellencies and offer spiritual sacrifices. Sanou presents three contemporary implications: "a call to discipleship" (2:21–25), "a call to contextualized Christian witness," and "a call to engage in missional living."

Yimenu Adimass Belay's article, "The Role of the Spirit in Mission in 1 Peter," focuses on the Spirit-enabled mission in 1 Peter. He argues that three texts in 1 Peter discuss the work of the Spirit. The first is 1 Pet 1:2. The Spirit sanctifies believers and helps them "to be a missional community" by setting them apart (p. 34). The second is 1 Pet 1:11–12. The text shows the Spirit as "indicating, testifying, revealing, and bringing the good news through the messengers" (p. 35). The third is 1 Pet 3:18–19. The Spirit's role is manifested in Christ's resurrection and preaching to the spirits in prison. The fourth is 1 Pet 4:14. The Spirit empowers those who endure sufferings for Christ (p. 36).

Grand LeMarquand examines "Eschatology and Mission in 1 Peter." Concerning eschatology, he argues that this theme is expressed in terms such as hope, glory, Jesus's revelation, judgment, the day of visitation, resurrection, and salvation, among others. He argues that the letter points out that the "End time" has come, yet it lies in the future. On the mission, he posits, the mission in 1 Peter is theocentric rather than anthropocentric and involves the church, proclaiming Christ both "by word and deed" (p. 41).

Markus T. Klausli explores, "Salvation and Judgment as Missionary Message in 1 Peter." Salvation was demonstrated through Christ's death for sinners. Klausli asserts that believers receive three benefits: "They are rescued from future judgment," "they participate in Christ's glory" after their rescuing, and they are eternally vindicated since they endured suffering for Christ Jesus.

The second part of the book discusses the message of 1 Peter. Sarah

Lunsford's article, "The Missiological Message of Hope in 1 Peter," argues that hope in 1 Peter is grounded in the OT. Peter applies to believers the epithets of Israel, and thus, they become a covenantal people. This covenant was manifested in Christ Jesus, in whom they are born a new, and have hope of their future inheritance.

Rudolf K. Gaisie's article, "Mission to the Dead and the Resurrection of Jesus: 1 Peter 3:18–22 and Ancestral Christology in Africa," discusses the state of the dead. Gaisie uses 'ancestral Christology for the Akan context' to analyze 1 Pet 3:18–22. He argues from the OT that "those who die continue to exist in another realm" (p. 61). Using this model, he also sees Christ as an ancestor, for He died in the flesh and was resurrected in the Spirit (p. 61); and since He lived a sinless life, He is superior to these ancestors.

Furthermore, the third part discusses the "Missionary Methods of 1 Peter." Tricia Stephens's article, "Missional Hospitality: Responding to Physical and Spiritual Alienation," highlights that hospitality was a central element in the Greco-Roman world. Citizens were expected to extend hospitality to strangers, receive and feed them. For private hospitality, reciprocity was expected of the stranger invited in. Stephens then argues that 1 Peter challenges this practice, exhorting its readers to be hospitable without grumbling (p. 68). As such, modern Christians should embody this hospitality, being both the guest and the host. As hosts, they are to "reflect God's generosity," and as guests, show "humility and openness" (p. 70).

Edward L. Smither, in his article "Suffering in Mission," examines the "suffering" that arises when engaging in mission. He argues that Peter writes from his experience. He suffered and was persecuted because of Christ. Believers, in 1 Peter, suffer "because of their diaspora experience" (p. 76), and the nature of suffering is "trials, accusations, and insults" (p. 76). Smither provides a contemporary application to the global church, suggesting that Christians should witness Christ with "a gentle and humble answer," loving one another, and speak up for their religious freedom (p. 81).

Jessica A. Udall explores "Ethical Living as a Proto-Evangelion." Peter relies on the OT to exhort his readers to live a holy life. Udall states that not only does Peter quote the OT, but he also adapts his message to his own audience (p. 83). He presents holiness, honor, and hope as the elements that the unbelievers witness, and forsake their wrong preconceived ideas about Christians. He also mentions hypocrisy as a harmful attitude that can ruin the mission.

Will Brooks's article, "Evangelism in 1 Peter," examines how 1 Peter discusses the verbal proclamation of the gospel. Brooks analyzes 1 Pet 2:9b and 3:15. Concerning 1 Pet 2:9n, he argues that the verb *exangellō* entails the idea

of ‘proclamation,’ that is “the believing community was expected to use their words—not just their good deeds—to communicate [the gospel] with others” (p. 87). On 1 Pet 3:15, Brooks understands the command “be prepared to make a defense” as pointing to the preparation in both content and reason of their faith. Brooks states that Christians are to be prepared to defend their beliefs with gentleness and respect, and have knowledge about the local cultures.

Sigurd Gridheim’s article, “Missional Implications of Christ’s Proclamation to the Spirits,” studies 1 Pet 3:18–32. Gridheim argues that the terms “flesh” and “spirit” refer to Christ’s state before and after the resurrection. He died in the flesh and was resurrected in a spiritual body (p. 94). He asserts that Christ’s proclamation is not an evangelistic effort to the spirits, but rather “his victory and of the ultimate defeat of the disobedient spirits” (p. 95).

Sofia Papaspyrou’s article, “The Pilgrimage Motif in 1 Peter and Its Implications for Evangelism,” centers its discussion on 1 Peter 2:11. She explores the terms *paroikos* and *parepidēmos*. She notes that these terms have both literal and metaphorical meanings. Believers were aliens and strangers socially, but were called to engage in God’s mission by keeping their identity. It is unlikely, however, that Christians in the first century were literally pilgrimaging. This would imply that they were leaving their homes for an actual destination for religious purposes. Being an alien and a stranger may refer to a metaphorical sense of Christian experience instead. Papaspyrou also discusses the idea of pilgrimage, tourism, and mission. She argues that Christians should be pilgrims in their alienation in the present world, engaging in God’s mission, but also appreciating the culture of the people they invite to join them in this pilgrimage.

The present book offers helpful insights into understanding the message of 1 Peter. Articles discussed in it present various perspectives on 1 Peter’s theology and different methodologies for unpacking 1 Peter’s message. However, certain elements need consideration. For instance, Belay argues that Christ descended and preached to the spirits in prison. Instead, the context suggests that Christ proclaimed (*ἐκήρυξεν*) his victory to the spirits in prison rather but didn’t *preach* the gospel of salvation to them. The participle *πορευθεῖς* in 1 Pet 3:19 can be understood as referring to the ascension of Christ, as portrayed by *πορευθεῖς* in 1 Pet 3:22. Additionally, it is unclear how Klausli connects 1 Pet 5:20 to 2:12 in the context of eschatological realization for unbelievers (p. 49). Is 2:12 an eschatological text, that is, pertains to the future? Based on 2:12, he argues that unbelievers “will be forced to glorify God” (p. 49). The context of the text suggests that they glorify God out of their conviction of Christian’s holy ethics. Further,

Gaisie takes “go to live with your ancestors” (Gen 15:15) as a literal transition to living in another world (p. 61). Gaisie should also consider other texts, the book of Ecclesiastes 9:5, for example, on the state of the dead. Udall mentions that believers in 1 Peter are called not to demand their rights. But he asserts that Christians should speak up for their freedom. Should this be a prescriptive rule of thumb that Christians in every age should embrace when facing harsh treatment and injustice? Despite the weaknesses mentioned above, this book is an invaluable work that can help Christians to understand 1 Peter’s message adequately.

The present book is instructive and easy to read. It is beneficial to both clergy and laity. It is a good tool for a contextualized mission from 1 Peter’s perspective.

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