

Ott, Craig, ed. *The Mission of the Church: Five Views in Conversation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016. 181 pp.

Ott's new book is a welcome addition to missional church literature. The book includes an introductory chapter by Ott, in which he provides a brief explanation of recent mission history. In it, he demonstrates how concepts about mission, especially the church's role in mission, have morphed over time. To bring clarity amid the multiple approaches to mission, Ott has gathered five authors, each representing a different Christian tradition and each with a different approach to mission. The authors are:

- Stephen B. Bevans, a Roman Catholic who advocates for a prophetic dialogue approach to mission.
- Darrell L. Guder, a Reformed missiologist calls for a multicultural and translational approach to mission.
- Ruth Padilla DeBorst, a Latin American missiologist who describes an integral transformation approach to mission.
- Edward Rommen, an Eastern Orthodox who explains a sacramental vision approach to mission.
- Edward Stetzer, an Evangelical who propounds an Evangelical Kingdom Community approach to mission.

Ott's book accomplishes the rare feat of being accessible to both novices and experts in missiology. Novices will find short, but well-developed essays that introduce the broad strokes of the different missiological perspectives. These, coupled with the response essays, will give them a quick way to get their bearings in relation to the missional church. Experts will be familiar with the ideas described in the essays, but will find having those ideas in immediate dialogue with one another stimulating. What would otherwise take much time and effort in synthesizing large bodies of literature is condensed into this single volume and given as a springboard for readers "to arrive at clearer convictions regarding God's missionary purposes for the church" (xxxix).

If pressed for a criticism, it would simply be that readers remember that while the authors all hail from different backgrounds, they also are all missiologists. Thus, they have a deep commonality at the outset. While each represents his or her tradition well, each also has a disposition toward recognizing mission as the primary purpose of the church. As such, those looking for fireworks over theological disagreements among Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant contributors will need to look elsewhere. These authors are picked with the intention that they will, in large measure, appreciate one another's work.

This potential shortcoming is also one of the book's joys, though. The ability to capture nuances of different vocabulary and emphases among the authors as well as to be encouraged by broad agreement, is a gift. It encourages us to believe that the glass is half-full, or even perhaps a bit more than half, in relation to Christian mission.