

## Book Reviews

**Tim Noble. *Mission from the Perspective of the Other: Drawing Together on Holy Ground.***

Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2018. Pp. ix + 207.

History of mission always has something to tell us and we should listen to it. In this sense, nowadays missiologists must continue their reflection about what mission is and how it should further be done. With this attitude, Tim Noble, an Associate Professor of Missiology at the Protestant Theological Faculty of Charles University in Prague, succeeded in presenting an important work on mission in his *Mission from the perspective of the other: Drawing together on holy ground*, published by Pickwick Publications, 2018. Overall, this work can be considered a landmark in the field of missiology. And in the following lines, I will explain why.

Noble's book is structured in two important parts, dedicated to *the other* and to *the missionary*. In accordance with the title, the centrality of mission from the perspective of our author should be *the other*. In general, mission involves three subjects, namely God, the one sent and the one encountered. Without commentary, God is above all and we are called to work within *missio Dei*. But, consciously or not, the other is somehow neglected in the act of mission, because of the superiority of the missionary and of the missionary's perception regarding what mission means.

Through this first part of the book, Tim Noble recovers the role of the other in the missionary encounter. First, he makes an important exegesis of the Old and New Testament stories where the resident alien or the stranger is present. He uses words as *ger* from Hebrew, *proselutos* and *paroikos* from Greek, and *advena* or *peregrinus* from Latin, to demonstrate the importance in God's plan for *the other*. The biblical models of how the encounter with the resident alien happened can teach us to improve our interaction with those for whom we are on mission. Further, after these biblical insights, Noble summarizes how different writers tried to deal with the challenge posed by the other. For example, the encounter with the other is presented in the work of Emmanuel Levinas as an ethical encounter. Also, missiologists like David Bosch or Stephen Bevans, Noble tries to convince us, take into account the other in their reflection on mission. Before introducing us to the second part of the work, Noble examines from a philosophical perspective the givenness of the other, appealing to the reflections of French thinker Jean-Luc Marion. Summarizing, through reflection on Scripture, missiology and philosophy, Tim Noble shows the importance of the other for any Christian mission.

In the second part of the book, our author, after he agreed with us that the other is both a challenge and a gift, examines from this perspective three figures of missionaries, with different backgrounds and practices: Saint Ignatius of Loyola, a Roman Catholic; William Carey, a Baptist; and Saint Innocent Veniaminov, a Russian Orthodox. Even though they lived in different periods of time and they came from different Churches and traditions, all of them had something in common, namely, *the love for the other who is a child of God, created in God's image and likeness*.

First, pages are dedicated to Saint Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556), the founder of the Society of Jesus. After some biographical information about the early life of Ignatius, Noble presents the heart of Ignatius's spiritual experience and vision, namely, love together with

service. The following pages are about the first missionary of the Baptist Missionary Society in England, William Carey (1761–1834), who can be considered one of the founding fathers of the modern missionary movement. In contrast to Saint Ignatius, Carey travelled to India, where he pursued his missionary activity. In order to preach the Gospel to the others, Ignatius tried to learn the languages of the people among whom he lived. In doing this, Noble sees that the missionary is at the service of the other. There is an impetuous need to respond to the needs of the other. The last pages are dedicated to Bishop Innocent Veniaminov, a Saint of the Orthodox Church, involved in the Russian Orthodox Mission in Alaska. Like Ignatius of Loyola, Innocent understood mission as an attitude of love toward the other. Much more, the missionary is in certain conditions the stranger, the other, who must be accepted and followed in his mission.

In conclusion, I do believe that this work will improve the quality of understanding regarding how we should do mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, looking back to the old practices and productivity of those who came before. In this sense, the select bibliography stands as a proof. As Tim Noble showed us throughout his book, we should never forget that we are called to be missionary Christians and we must recognize the other as a gift of love from God. Both of us, the missionary and the one encountered, have the vocation to become disciples of Christ our Lord and to fulfil the mission of God.

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