
Scott Sunquist serves as Dean of the School of Intercultural Studies at Fuller Theological Seminary, and coauthor of the multivolume work, History of the World Christian Movement. The publisher has presented this book as a textbook for introductory courses in missions. I am not sure that it will be widely used in those courses, at least in conservative seminaries and Bible colleges. Typically, a textbook for introduction to missions courses includes these broad divisions: Biblical/theological basis for missions, history of missions, philosophy/strategy of missions, and applied missiology. Sundquist deals extensively with the theological basis of missions and the history of missions, especially the post-enlightenment history. He does not deal much with strategy or with applied missiology. This leads me suggest that the book would serve better as a textbook for courses on the theology of missions, rather than introduction to missions.

Having labeled it a book on the theology of missions does not detract from its value. Clearly, Sunquist sees missions through theological lenses because the book is permeated with theology. He appropriately emphasizes the Trinitarian character of missions, and he stresses the role of suffering in the expansion of God’s kingdom. This is revealed in the book’s subtitle: Participation in Suffering and Glory. His emphasis on theology leads him to denigrate the importance of the social sciences in missions. In this he distances himself from most evangelical missiologists. He also emphasizes ecumenical missions, and this is understandable. He is a Presbyterian, who formerly taught at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. Again, his appreciation of the Ecumenical Movement will not endear him to conservatives. Positively, his concluding section on issues deals with several popular topics in contemporary missiology: urban missions, global partnership, and spirituality. Another positive element in the book is his appreciation for and understanding of the World Christian Movement. This book will help seminary students understand the global church more fulsomely.

In short, this book could serve well as a textbook on the theology of missions; however, it would not serve well as a stand-alone textbook for an introduction to missions course.

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