

Redford, SB. *Missiological Hermeneutics: Biblical Interpretation for the Global Church*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012. 363 pages. Paperback. ISBN: 13:978-1-60899-402-1.

Redford's book is an exploration of how the Bible and mission inform missiologists and missionaries in hermeneutical practice. The author gives shape to the nature of missiological hermeneutics by examining the Bible, cultural values, historical struggles and experiences of people who are engaged in the mission of God. The book is structured into six chapters. Chapter one examines how others have defined missiological hermeneutics. Chapter two examines missiological hermeneutics in the Bible itself. Chapter three is a critique of Western hermeneutics from a missiological perspective. In chapter four, the discussion moves in a more practical direction. The focus is on polygamy and how Western missionaries brought cultural presuppositions regarding marriage into Africa. Redford's argument is that it is Western cultural baggage that firstly, prevents polygamous marriage among African Christians, and secondly, forces African converts who were in polygamous marriages before conversion, to divorce, which in his thinking, is a far greater sin than polygamy. In chapter five, Redford deals with the role of missionary experience in relation to biblical interpretation and in chapter six, he emphasizes the importance of a cross-cultural ministry experience in understanding the Bible correctly.

The initial chapters of the book show the link between Abraham and the modern missionary and the importance of the promise of God to Abraham. Redford asserts that the promise which God made to Abraham was missiologically shaped. The author seeks to understand the extent to which the promise to Abraham was understood and transmitted properly. He probes the idea that it may not be just modern day missiologists and Christians who missed God's plan for the nations but that the central biblical figures in the Bible, namely, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph (the patriarchs) may have often-times missed it as well. The idea declares Redford, is for people to put aside their own miss-conceived theological and missiological baggage and understand God's missiological concerns. Redford asserts that missiological praxis and the guidance of the Holy Spirit is what is needed to shape our understanding of the way in which God works in the world. The new missiological hermeneutic which he proposes incorporates the illumination of the Holy Spirit through communal and individual spirituality with a culturally appropriate contextualization of the text. Redford uses this method to engage with polygamy and 'conversations with followers of Islam'. The book not

only represents a call for the constant shaping and re-shaping of interpretative lenses and cultural assumptions but is also a call to be mindful of the transformative work of the Holy Spirit in everyday living. The idea that the world belongs to God and any missiological activity in the world is God's mission in the world is an over-arching concept throughout the book. The crux of the matter for Redford is that the missiological hermeneutic of God's promise to the nations is transmitted to us through the Bible and THE Holy Spirit. Christians must give this appropriate attention and allow it to direct their involvement in God's mission in God's world.

The author's use of the terms 'missiological' and 'missional' are confusing. These appear to mean one and the same thing and are merely used interchangeably for effect. If the two words do indeed vary in meaning, I have failed to understand the difference from the reading and re-reading of this book. Furthermore, Redford seems to imply that correct biblical interpretation can only be achieved by multicultural Christians. Ironically, it is precisely this polarization that he seeks to discard among missiologists and biblical scholars. While the book does not adequately bring a missiological hermeneutic to bear on biblical theological reflection, the ideas put forward around issues of mission, *missio Dei* and a mission theology are enlightening and interesting. The book is a must read for missiologists and those interested in God's work in God's world (*missio Dei*).

Reviewer: Linda Naicker is a lecturer at Theological Education by Extension College and can be contacted at linda@tee.co.za.