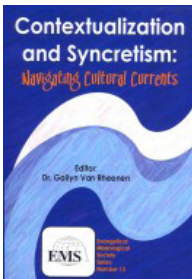


on the field, and ways to discover and use your gifts on the trip. The book presents excellent case studies and stories that make its content relevant and easy to understand and relate to.

The book is divided into eight chapters, with each chapter beginning with a real-life story called a missionary moment to set the context for the subject and to also stimulate discussion. At the close of each chapter an activity is given that is designed to help short-termers imagine what it would be like for them to be missionaries.

How to get ready for short-term missions is intended mostly for people engaging in short-term mission trips, nevertheless it would benefit any career missionary serving in a cross-cultural context, especially those whose responsibilities relate to receiving and coordinating short-term missionaries.

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Van Rheezen, Gailyn, ed. 2006. *Contextualization and syncretism: Navigating cultural currents* (EMS Series, Number 13). Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library. 343 pages. Paperback. \$14.99.

The challenge of contextualizing the presentation of the

gospel so it can be understood and accepted while struggling against syncretism which dilutes the gospel through accommodating non-Christian thought and practice produces constant tension in evangelical missions. Dr. Van Rheezen has compiled this book from presentations and articles by evangelical missiologists who grapple with the two sides of this tension both theoretically and through case studies of actual mission practices. The book's purpose is to strengthen Evangelical missions by encouraging those involved with the mission of the church to ask "to what degree" are the current practices of contextualization actually "syncretistic." The editor's belief is that the post-modern church will, if it is not exceedingly careful, tend toward a culture-accommodating contextualization that will produce syncretism.

The first two sections of the book are composed of articles that deal with theoretical and theological issues of contextualization and syncretism. Van Rheezen begins with a discussion of these issues through definitions and examples of syncretism among God's people, both in ancient Israel and in the modern church. He suggests that syncretism is the natural tendency in all eras of the church as it tries to exist in the cultures of its time. Possibly the most relevant article in this section for today's missionaries is the one by David Hesselgrave,

where he lists five ways that syncretism can be “induced” by missionaries.

The remaining nine articles are case studies of contextualization pointing out syncretism within mission and the church that include the animism within the church in Manila and in Latin America, reactions to contextualized practices in the Messianic Jewish movement, and the insider movements in Islam. Legalism within the Baptist Church in Romania is also discussed as syncretism.

The articles were chosen because they share the Evangelical concerns of Van Rheenen and are written to impress the reader that “syncretism is like an odorless, tasteless gas . . . which is seeping into our atmosphere” (John Orme). Those involved in Adventist mission would share many of their concerns. As the article by Ron Stansell points out, the prophetic picture of the church in the book of Revelation is the conflict between true worship and culturally acceptable worship.

The one area dealt with by more than one author is mission to Muslims. Only Hesselgrave refers to C5 strategies in his discussion of missionary induced syncretism, and he seems to question this type of contextualization. Woodberry, on the other hand, observes that there seems to be truly saved believers in Jesus in these insider movements. The book closes with an article concern-

ing bridges to Islam that is open to contextualized methods of mission (use of Qu’ran, etc.), but sees a need to go further in discipleship than C5 advocates do. The author (Gareth Cockrill), a Biblical Studies professor, outlines a biblical process of discipleship for Muslim Background Believers from the book of Hebrews that is quite thought provoking.

This collection of articles does not deal specifically with methods of mission that are being discussed within the Adventist Church. Even the Islamic comments (pro and con) do not apply directly to Adventist mission strategies since A5 and C5 are quite different. However, the theology and mission theories being discussed and the case studies reviewed include much that is helpful to anyone involved with cross-cultural mission. I found the book very interesting, even the parts I might not agree with! Even those who might find some authors (and the editor himself) more cautious of contextualization than themselves will find this collection very helpful in understanding this careful position; and they may find the needed balance in their own wrestling with the contextualization-syncretism tension.

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