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Sircar's "Paul's theology of mission to the nations in Romans" (book review)

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Book Reviews



Sircar, S. S. (2017). *Paul's theology of mission to the nations in Romans*. New Delhi, India: Christian World Imprints. 214 pp. \$35.00. ISBN 9789351481386

Dr. Subhro Sekhar Sircar (PhD, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) serves as associate professor of New Testament at Serampore College in West Bengal, India. His work, *Paul's Theology of Mission to the Nations in Romans*, offers an in-depth scholarly analysis of the purpose of Paul's composition of his letter to the church at Rome, an oft-debated and discussed topic in biblical scholarship. While Sircar concedes that the missionary purpose of Paul's letter is not a new proposition, his work closely examines the theology underscoring this missionary purpose. Sircar's purpose is multi-faceted. He proposes to defend that Paul's purpose for writing Romans is missional, that is to preach the Gospel to all the nations. He offers to support this claim by examining Paul's theology proper, highlighting the missional character and activity of God. This theology greatly influences Paul's missionary work. Sircar also seeks to apply his findings to the present mission situation of the church. The structure of the book follows these proposed aims. Following the introduction, the second chapter establishes Paul's missionary purpose through an examination of the structural form of the letter with particular attention given to the epistle's introduction and conclusion. The third chapter focuses on Paul's understanding of God's missional character and activity, which are foundational to his missionary purpose. The fourth chapter focuses on the nature of Paul's missionary efforts, namely the proclamation of the Gospel to the world. The final chapter summarizes the author's arguments and offers thoughts on the relevance of the findings to contemporary missions work. The author succeeds in achieving the majority of his goals. The book thoroughly and critically presents the missionary purpose of Romans, founded upon a missional understanding of God's identity. However, the practical implications for the church are lacking, with only two pages dedicated to addressing the topic. As a revision of his dissertation, Sircar's work is thoroughly researched and well-documented.

Sircar's book is recommended for libraries serving students in biblical studies programs in order to offer another voice in the scholarly conversation on the purpose of Romans, but it is not an essential purchase. The lack of availability through traditional library jobbers (even Amazon) may present a challenge to acquisition for some. Although the title is readily available from the publisher's website, this also may present challenges as the publisher is international.

Reviewer

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