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## Let the Nations be Glad: The Supremacy of God in Missions (Book Review)

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takes account of the developments in the Roman Catholic Church since the Second Vatican Council.

A particularly helpful section deals with the relational challenges of missions. Tallman describes the missionary as living in the field of tension caused by relationships to the missionary sending agency, the sending church and the receiving church.

In a final chapter Tallman discusses the strategic challenges to missions. Among these are the declining value of the dollar on the worldwide market, the increased giving to missions in America, and the increasing availability of missionary candidates. But Tallman also frankly discusses antagonism toward missions.

The value of Tallman's text is enhanced by his inclusion of an excellent glossary of missionary terminology. His charts and graphs are new, different and extremely helpful. Although this text may be most valuable for the undergraduate student, the paucity of books in this field renders it also useful as a graduate-level text.

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*Let the Nations Be Glad: The Supremacy of God in Missions.* By John Piper. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993, 240 pp., n.p. paper.

Piper weds pastoral and preaching passion with a good comprehension of mission and missiology. Obviously he has studied the issues in contemporary missiology and placed them under the penetrating brightness of God's glory. The result is not only stimulating missiological writing but also theological literature that stretches the mind and stirs the heart.

The book opens with a chapter headed "The Supremacy of God in Missions Through Worship," the gist of which is captured in the statement: "Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man" (p. 11). By the end of this chapter Piper concludes: "God is pursuing with omnipotent passion a worldwide purpose of gathering joyful worshipers for himself from every tribe and tongue and people and nation" (p. 40).

A parallel chapter is "The Supremacy of God in Missions Through Prayer." Prayer is defined as "a wartime walkie-talkie for the mission of the church" (p. 41). We err when we convert this "wartime walkie-talkie" into a "domestic intercom." Piper warns that the frontline preaching of the evangel dare never be replaced by prayer, though prayer releases the power of the gospel (p. 63).

In a rather unusual chapter Piper discusses "The Supremacy of God in Missions Through Suffering." Its focus is the commitment to a wartime lifestyle, which sacrifices not for the purpose of asceticism but for the cause of the gospel.

The second half of the book describes the message of missions. First, Piper asserts the supremacy of Christ as the focus of all saving faith. He particularly attacks the rising tide of annihilationism in evangelicalism. He asserts that annihilationism cuts the nerve ending of evangelism and missions (p. 119). This is crucial material. It commands the attention of evangelicals both inside and outside missions.

In asserting the primacy of preaching the gospel, Piper cites Cornelius (Acts 10) as an illustration. Cornelius was seeking God in an unusual way, being drawn to the Lord. But Cornelius was not saved until the preaching of the gospel by Peter (p. 146).

In summary of his chapter on the primacy of preaching Christ, Piper concludes: "The question we have been trying to answer in this section is whether some people are quickened by the Holy Spirit and saved by grace through faith in a merciful Creator even though they never hear of Jesus in this life. Are there devout people in religions other than Christianity who humbly rely on the grace of God whom they know only through nature or non-Christian religious experience?" (p. 163). Piper's conclusion is a resounding "No." People are saved only by faith in Christ in response to the gospel as preached to them. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

The concluding section bears the title "The Supremacy of God among 'All the Nations.'" In this section he discusses the unreached peoples movement unleashed by Lausanne 1974. Through careful exegesis of the *panta ta ethnē* passage in Matt 28:19–20, Piper concludes that all peoples must be reached in every generation.

This volume is worthy of consideration by serious students of missions. It is an excellent text for a general course in missions on the seminary level. (The inclusion of proper indices increases its suitability as a text.) The combination of serious exegesis and missiology enhances its value. Furthermore the book ties missions to the glory of God, which is the greatest contribution of Piper's work.

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*The Death Penalty Debate.* By H. Wayne House and John Howard Yoder. Dallas: Word, 1991, 225 pp., n.p.

The legitimacy of the death penalty is an issue on which Christians can in good faith disagree. This volume's dialogue format gives House and Yoder an opportunity to state their position and respond to the other's criticisms. Both are openly respectful, though they have little positive to say about the other's position. This is entirely understandable, given their respective hermeneutical starting points.

House advocates the legitimacy of the death penalty today, based deontologically on a Biblically defined idea of justice. He carefully traces the strands of the various opposing schools and is equally careful to distinguish his own views from those of theologians such as G. Bahnsen and R. J. Rushdoony. Since for House the believer is not to take Israel's theocratic laws as modern legal exemplars, the case for the death penalty rests squarely on the universal covenant made with Noah as a representative of the entire human race (Gen 9:6). Thus House attempts to chart a *via media* between theologians and those who see little of value in the OT for modern Christians.

By basing his case deontologically, House avoids many of the common criticisms brought by opponents of the death penalty, such as the thorny issue of the penalty's deterrence. He does mention, however, the important point that the United States has never implemented the death penalty consistently enough for any empirical verification of deterrence (p. 86). Indeed, when there are fifty or so executions in the same year that 16,000 homicides occur, it can hardly be a surprise that there is no clear evidence for large-scale deterrence.

Yoder's Biblical presuppositions are far different from those of House. Yoder goes to great lengths to distance the world of OT Israel from modern society. Over and over again he paints the Hebrew culture and society as primitive, enmeshed in primitive tribal mores (p. 113). Thus House is substantially correct when he charges Yo-