

Missions in Contexts of Violence

By Keith E. Eitel, editor

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By Keith E. Eitel. *Evangelical Missiological Society series Number 15, 415 pages; ISBN 978-0-87808-389-3*

The book consists of nineteen chapters divided over four main themes:

- **General Reflections:** This section includes two chapters, one comparing the journeys of Jesus, Constantine and Muhammad, the other discussing the role of Christian Mission in “Glocal” violence. “Glocal” is defined as “the encapsulation of the dual macro-micro feature of a situation” (23). Muslim-Christian relations are used as an example of this phenomenon.
- **Biblical and Theological Foundations:** This section discusses the biblical context of violence, the role of missions, and the fact that persecution and martyrdom forces the missional world to establish a “theology of persecution”. This theme ends with a challenging chapter about Kitamori Kazo’s “Pain of God Theology”. Kitamori argued that in making forgiveness available for the sinner, “God acted in an ‘ungodlike’ and improper way” because divine love is not a smooth and easy love, it is “love for the enemy” (98).
- **Lifestyles, Strategies and Practices:** This section discusses life attitudes while living in a hostile environment, member care issues, and the use of “violent words.”

Kees van der Wilden



Kees van der Wilden serves WEA-MC as associate director. He is the Managing Editor for Connections. Together with David Ruiz he co-ordinates the National Mission Movement (NMM) network of WEA-MC.

- Finally, Geographical or Thematic Specific Studies gives a historical overview of missions in contexts of violence as well as case studies in Southern Sudan, Eastern Europe, Rwanda, the Middle East, and inter-ethnic violence.

Keith Eitel is a Dean at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. The book’s twenty-three authors come from different cultural backgrounds. We note that of the thirteen authors of the first three themes, eight are based in the USA, three of them without long-term mission experience.

The role of the USA and Muslim-Christian relations play a major role in this book. However, we may question whether the USA is the best partner to be involved in Muslim-Christian dialogue. Isn’t the fact that the USA is seen as a “Christian nation”, while at the same time being the forerunner in military endeavours against or in Muslim countries, a hindrance in an appropriate dialogue? We will have to give more thought to the mission efforts of Christianity towards the Dar al Islam, bearing in mind that “evangelism and witness to Jesus Christ is one distinctively Christian way of dealing with violence and suffering connected with Muslim-Christian relationships” (21/22)

An interesting discussion was around the response of Christians towards persecution—flight, avoidance or engagement. From a member care point of view though, it was rather discouraging to read that there are “times that flight becomes an ungodly act”. (70) Is such a statement not putting our limitations upon God’s judgement?

All in all, this was a valuable book and we recommend it to our readers worldwide. <<