

Scott W. Sunquist. *Explorations in Asian Christianity: History, Theology, and Mission*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017. 318 pages. \$25.25 ISBN 978-0830851003.

Scott Sunquist's contribution to Asian Christian studies has been exemplary. This is the fifth book in the missiological engagement series. In 2001 he edited *A Dictionary of Asian Christianity* and presented a comprehensive resource on Christianity in Asia. In the *Dictionary* he gathered native as well as guest scholars from around the world, and especially Asian countries, to make a history indeed. In his current volume, *Explorations in Asian Christianity* he gathers his own writings on various themes dominant in Asian Christian history, theology and mission. This book is a witness to his love for Christian studies in Asia, passion for encouraging Asian scholarship, and commitment for building up the resources on Christian reflections in and from Asia.

Creatively placing his work and the journey of exploration within the communities of scholar colleagues, scholarly guilds, and students, Sunquist engages deeply with some of the most vital themes in Asian Christianity. His thesis and purpose is to better understand Asian Christianity from a variety of perspectives and encourage thinking about its unique features. This book brings his fifteen outstanding chapters, collected from presentations and publications at various forums, are compiled in four parts.

Part I provides an engaging survey of the emergence, development, and decline of early and ancient Christianity in Asia. In addition to the early history, the story of ecumenism as well as evangelicalism found special space in two full chapters. In its four chapters, Part 1 answers the question how Asian Christianity has shaped and been shaped by World Christianity.

Part II, under the mega theme of history, builds on the concept of *Mission Dei*, explores the historical developments during 1910-2010, and undertakes theological reflections in relation to world Christianity from historiographical and ecclesiastical perspectives. The entire section looks at Asian Christianity as a movement with increased sensitivity to cultural matters. This is in sharp contrast from earlier views of Christian history as the story of church growth and institutions. Another key highlight is Sunquist's emphasis on exploring the cruciform nature of Christianity in doing history.

Part III is entitled "Missiology." The key issues engaged in this Part focus on Christianity in Korea and China. An additional theme, mission and migration also finds a prominent space in the reflection. Much in the form of strong case studies, these chapters explore the role of missionaries and mission theorists and their impacts on contextual Christianities in the nations in question. The theology of migration builds on the history and status of the phenomenon of global migration and reflects on its significance for missions in our times.

Part IV bring the missiological exchange between the USA and Asia on the specific theme of education. Here, the missionary contributions to Asian Christianity of Julia B. Mateer (1837-1898) in China and Samuel A. Moffett (1864-1939) in Korea have been briefly analyzed. Sunquist also uses the powerful story of W. Don McClure (1906-1977), missionary among the Ethiopians and Somalians, as a bridge between colonial/postcolonial divide for the comparison on Asian issues. The significance of American theological education in relation to mission, with special reference to the contributions of Henry W. Luce and William R. Harper and the secularization of Christian higher education is a fascinating account. Sunquist finally talks in

brief about history, development and contemporary concerns in Asian theological education. He underlines that theological education was contextual, faced with discipline problems, and led by teachers who were holy men or spiritual masters. He suggests that theological seminaries in Asia should root themselves in Asian traditions rather than of the West. While this is not a new advice and Sunquist does encourage a healthy partnership, Western dominance in Asian Christian education, even secular education, remains inevitable.

With its rich variety of perspectives, approaches and advices, *Explorations in Asian Christian* comes as an excellent tool for missiological reflection on Asian Christianity. Although focused on Asia, the book does not ignore the global points of contact in its larger narrative. It in fact highlights American and African samples for comparisons and reflections. This is a highly engaging book, original and inspiring. Sunquist is careful, bold, and optimistic. I give five stars.

Shivraj K. Mahendra