

Benjamin T. Conner. *Disabling Mission, Enabling Witness: Exploring Missiology Through the Lens of Disability Studies*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic, 2018. 184 pages. \$24.00 ISBN 978-0830851027.

At least one billion people, or 15% of the world's population, experience some type of disability, and disability prevalence is higher for developing nations. About one out of five people have a disability in the U.S., Census Bureau Reports. People with disabilities can be viewed as the biggest multicultural minority in the US. However, people with disabilities can be found in each ethno-linguistic society and geographic area of the world. Such represent a tremendous missional opportunity, even in those nations considered highly evangelized. Nevertheless, the strategies to understand and engage people with disabilities in a culturally diverse setting remain embarrassingly meager.

*Disabling Mission, Enabling Witness's* sub-title gives a compelling blueprint of the substance of the book, *Exploring Missiology Through the Lens of Disability Studies*. Benjamin Conner here calls attention to what it means for the church to minister the people with disabilities. This ground-breaking book will change the manner in which we consider the *missio Dei* (Mission of God) in a universe of varying disabilities.

In recent decades churches have accommodated disabled people in various ways (1 Corinthians 12:2). Through access ramps and lifts and communication through signing, impaired people are welcomed in to love. Be that as it may, would they say they are really inclusive into the church's mission? Have the able-bodied come to perceive and value the potential contributions of people with disabilities in the ministry and witness of the church?

Benjamin Conner starts another discussion between disability studies and Christian theology and missiology, envisioning a church that completely fuses people with disabilities into its mission. In this vision, people with disabilities are a piece of the church's witness, and the gathering epitomizes a hearty hermeneutic of the gospel (p. 7). How might we shape another vision of the whole body of Christ partaking in the witness of the church? How might it look on the off chance that we "disabled" Christian theology, discipleship, and theological education?

This book is presented into two sections. The principal sets the phase by presenting, first, disability studies and after that presenting mission studies, furnishing each in setting with the other. The second part centers on empowering witness, demonstrating that disabilities give a lot to the church's witness. Conner points to the gifts that the Deaf community has to offer the whole church, "enhanced communication, embodiment, different and more relational ways of arranging space, visual-kinetic ways of communicating the gospel" (p. 101).

Additionally, Conner points to a way to understand *Imago Dei* (Image of God) in total witness of the church. People with intellectual disabilities expose the limitations of our words for conveying truth. They remind the church that truth is "not as a product of the mind" but "a 'visit' and a 'dwelling' of an eschatological reality entering history to open it up as a communion - event." The goal of our iconic evangelism is, ultimately, communion with those whom we are bearing witness—and that communion is in Christ (p. 130).

Conner draws on bits of knowledge from different sources, from Deaf Culture to Eastern Orthodox iconography, to display a convincing case that people with disabilities have significantly more to offer the church than most Christians realize. This book is a great tool to not just for people interested in disability theology but for all pastors and church leaders. I profoundly prescribe this book.

Book Review

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