

Gilliland, Dean S., ed. *The Word Among Us: Contextualizing Theology for Mission Today*. Dallas: Word Publishing, 1989. vii + 344pp. Paperback, \$15.99.

The Word Among Us was written by the thirteen members of the faculty of the School of World Mission of Fuller Theological Seminary and deals with the challenge of contextualizing the gospel in order that every people group may hear God's message in their own cultural setting. In his introduction Gilliland states that "the conviction behind this volume is that contextualization, biblically-based and Holy Spirit-led, is a requirement for evangelical missions today."

Part 1 deals with the more theoretical aspects of contextualization; it begins with a listing of six reasons why the church should contextualize its message for each cultural group. The next three chapters argue that the principles of contextualization are biblical and are modeled in both the Old and New Testaments. In chap. 5 Paul Hiebert shows the complexity of the contextualization process and warns of the danger of compromising the Christian message. Charles Kraft follows with a chapter on the importance of contextualizing the communication process so that the forms and methods employed may be understood and appreciated by the people in the target culture.

Part 2 looks at the practice of contextualization in Bible translation (R. Daniel), in communication (Vigo Sogaard), in leadership (J. Robert Clinton), in relief and development work (Edgar Elliston), in America's multiethnic mosaic (C. Peter Wagner), in reaction to nominality (Eddie Gibbs) and in Chinese (Tah Che-Bin) and Muslim (J. Dudley Woodberry) evangelism. The book concludes with an appendix listing seven contemporary models of contextualization, each with its differing strengths and weaknesses.

The faculty at the School of World Mission are to be applauded for their willingness to grapple with difficult issues involved in the contextualization. Some of the strengths of this book include the references to the contextualization process in Scriptures (36, 130); examples of how the western church has selectively contextualized the biblical message for its own cultural setting, but has been reluctant to allow that same freedom for the new churches in the rest of the world (232); and a strong case for presenting the gospel through the use of culturally-relevant forms rather than through slavish imitation of practices in the western church (130, 131).

Contextualization is always a dangerous undertaking, for one struggles to maintain the balance between a firm grounding in biblical principles and a desire to present a message that is culturally relevant and understandable. In this area the writers give warning after warning, pointing out the danger of not taking the whole of Scripture into consideration (Glasser, 46), of not realizing that each culture must be

judged by the gospel (Charles Van Engen, 76), of allowing the culture to capture the message (Kraft, 131) and of considering the work of contextualization as finished, when in reality it is an ongoing process for each generation and for different cultural groups (Hubert, 118).

Perhaps the most troubling aspect of the book is that, whereas Glasser talks of the "non-negotiables" (33), Hubert of the "absolutes of God" (109), Wagner of the "supracultural principles of Christianity" (231), and Gilliland of the "core" of Christianity, very little is said as to how one determines what is included in these supracultural principles. Wagner does list the following: "truth, justice, love, sin, the existence of God, faith, forgiveness, prayer, honesty, marriage, the historicity of Jesus" (231). However, little help is offered in ascertaining the guiding principles to follow in determining what constitutes a supracultural, nonnegotiable, biblical principle.

Anyone interested in the ongoing dialogue in the area of contextualization will want to read this book. The authors do not claim that this is the final word, but rather the beginning of the long and difficult process of making Christ known in the cultural contexts of all peoples.

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Gritz, Sharon Hodgkin. *Paul, Women Teachers, and the Mother Goddess at Ephesus: A Study of 1 Timothy 2:9-15 in Light of The Religious and Cultural Milieu of The First Century*. London and New York: University Press of America, 1991. xii + 186 pp. Paperback, \$18.75; Library bound, \$37.50.

Gritz's dissertation published in paperback edition is an excellent contribution to the ongoing discussion on the significance, both then and now, of the apostle Paul's statements about women. Her six chapters form concentric circles, which gradually narrow down to a study of the text.

The two chapters of Part One, "The Historical Study of 1 Timothy 2:9-15," deal with "The Cultural Context of Ephesus" and "The Religious Context of Ephesus." The first chapter covers the city itself and the status and role of both Gentile and Jewish women in it. In the second chapter, Gritz analyzes the mystery religions and the Artemis cult in Ephesus.

Part Two consists of an "Interpretative Study of 1 Timothy 2:9-15" in its OT and NT contexts, dealing in the former with "Woman in Genesis 1-3," and in the latter with women in relation to domestic and societal contexts, Israel's cultic law, and Israel's worship. In chapter 4, entitled "The New Testament Context," the author discusses women in relation to Jesus' ministry and teaching, to Paul in his various mentions and, briefly, to "Women in the General Epistles." Chapter 5 examines the context of the