Book Review

Jonas Kurlberg and Peter M. Phillips, eds., *Missio Dei in a Digital Age*

Reviewed by Melody Li

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The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has further multiplied the worldwide reliance on digital technology. This book is a timely collection of essays concerned with the impact of a digital age on missions, and it gathers the voices of experts and practitioners from academic institutions, churches, and mission organizations. The contributors to this book provide remarkable perspectives on current missiology and digitality, missional practice in a digital world, and digital technology in mission within social and political spheres. Readers from both evangelical and academic backgrounds will encounter new explorations of the theory and practice of missions in the digital age.

The contributors postulate novel prescriptions for how to continue the Great Commission in a drastically different world. Katherine Schmidt, in Chapter 2, considers digital media as a culture instead of a tool or instrument in the modern world. Jonny Baker calls for greater practical imagination for mission in a digital age in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, Rey Lemuel Crizaldo suggests constructing contextual theology through the possibilities of digitality.

The second section of essays favor appropriate missional practices in today's digital age. Steve Hollinghurst argues in Chapter 5 that digital media changes both the method and audience involved in communication, and he suggests that digital missiology is required for missions in digital times. In Chapter 6, Christian Grund Sørensen focuses more on a technological perspective and advocates the creation of supplementary digital information strategies so that the Church is not limited to the market's most popular search engines. Erkki Sutinen and Anthony Cooper emphasize in Chapter 7 the importance of a design process that can get all local church members involved in the *missio Dei*. In Chapter 8, John Drane and Olive Fleming Drane call for Christians' life-impacting engagement instead of an anesthetic subsistence in a digital age. Maggi Dawn's essay in Chapter 9 puts forward that digitally engaging in worship requires imagination, contextualization, and appropriateness. In Chapter 10, Frida Mannerfelt points out that preaching in a digital age resonates with the oral communication of the Early Church.

The last two chapters offer social-political analyses. Tim Davy, in Chapter 11, stresses the darker side of the digital sphere and the needed awareness of its negative impacts on vulnerable children. In Chapter 12, Alexander Chow discusses the complexity of current Chinese public theology, which tries to keep a certain level of privacy while seeking to publicize the message of the gospel.

In contrast to a negative and gloomy attitude towards digital technology applications, these experts and practitioners tend to reflect on the rapid changes in technology and the apparent possibilities they bring to *missio Dei*. Above all, this collection of essays emphasizes the priority of the Christian faith that God is sovereign to continue his Great Commission, even through this digital age. Not only will Christian IT professionals and Christian academics find these studies and

arguments beneficial in their respective fields, but pastoral staff, missionaries, and lay members of the Church will all find that the contents of these essays can contribute to a healthy community and fruitful evangelism.