

Book Review

Ryan Shaw, *Rethinking Global Mobilization: Calling the Church to Her Core Identity*

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Shaw, Ryan (2022). *Rethinking Global Mobilization*. SCM Press, London, 288 pp., £25.00, ISBN: 9780334059110.

Mission mobilization is at a crossroad these days. Words like “missions” and “missionaries” are destined more often to offend than carry positive connotations. For many people, missions is something we have done in the past—and often not too well. So why does Shaw write another book on mission mobilization?

Shaw, himself a mission mobiliser for the past 20 years, senses a recent change in the fundamental expression of Christianity, resulting in shifts in global mission and mobilization. He believes that God is birthing a focused global mission mobilization movement in which a globalized church is positioned to reach a globalized world through globalized mission mobilization producing globalized cross-cultural mission: big words that imply a major challenge to rethink and re-engage in God’s mission.

Rethinking Global Mobilization is divided into four main parts. The book first lays foundations of mission mobilization by providing a biblical background of the Great Commission. Mobilization is then explained through the Spirit’s four-point strategy and a historical analysis of mission, mobilization, and revival.

Shaw tackles the question of where we need to rethink global mobilization through challenging mission leaders not to have too limited of a view of where and how God is at work. Instead, discernment is needed for where God is leading us today instead of simply continuing where God has mightily moved before. Most of us are not into change, therefore we need God to push us forward in understanding and strategizing what we should mobilize the Church to do.

In the first two parts of his book, Shaw explains his understanding of theology for missions mobilization and provides a biblical background to the Great Commission, asserting that the primary goal for the Church is to fulfill the Great Commission. The third part of the book, which makes for a condensed and interesting read, covers the past 2000 years of mission movements, employing Kenneth Latourette’s 500-/1000-/500-year periodization. There is a strong emphasis on the past 500 years, tackling critical trends and principles within Ralph Winter’s three eras of Protestant mission history.

In the fourth part Shaw describes strategies the global Church should use to mobilize and equip disciples and ministries. His core plea is to think and act globally, such that all Christians spread the Kingdom—which Shaw refers to as the strategic scattering of believers.

Shaw concludes his book with raising the question, “Where are we now—a new era?” Have we indeed entered a new kind of mission mobilization? History will show us if we have. We certainly cannot leave things as they are, because that would mean a total decline of Christians in many places from where once the Gospel was spread. Shaw is convinced that the global Church is

at a point where we will experience a “great catch” across nations and people groups. But for this to happen, a global approach is needed.

Shaw acknowledges that little of the book’s content is brand new. However, the way in which he brings that content together to formulate a strategic framework for global mobilization might in fact be new. Judge for yourself. You might find *Rethinking Global Mobilization* thought-provoking, helpful, and indeed strategic for mobilizing “message bearers,” as Shaw calls missionaries, to share the Good News globally.