

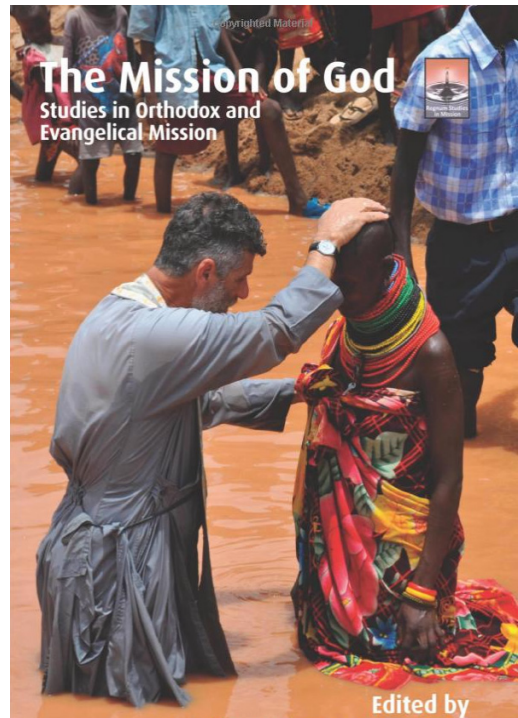
**Max Oxbrow and Tim Grass, eds., *The Mission of God. Studies in Orthodox and Evangelical Mission*, Regnum Studies in Mission (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2015), 258 pp.**

Mission has always been an important topic both for the Ecumenical dialogue and the Churches. Therefore, nowadays, the researches dedicated to it are intensively investigated and discussed in different contexts. An interesting and recent book from this area can also be considered the one entitled: *The Mission of God. Studies in Orthodox and Evangelical Mission*, edited by Max Oxbrow and Tim Grass, that brings together 22 studies in missiology signed by specialised people from different scientific areas.

The two editors, namely Rev. Canon Max Oxbrow, who is the international director of Faith2Share and Facilitator of the Lausanne-Orthodox Initiative, and Rev. Tim Grass, important writer and theologian with a Baptist background, are helped by other 22 theologians from different confessional and geographical spaces, and they are analysing different aspects of mission and its understanding in Orthodox and Evangelical contexts.

In the introductory part (p. 1-6), after speaking about the way how the evolution of society have shifted the understanding of mission and its relevance for nowadays, the editors point an interesting fact about the importance of knowing the other in the ecumenical dialogue, showing that:

“Many doctrinal, liturgical and ethical issues divide us, and may continue to do so until our Lord returns, but increasingly a significant number of Orthodox and Evangelical Christians have become convinced that the centrality and urgency of the mission of God can and must transcend these divisions and bring us together in a common bond of love for God, each other in his world. The Lausanne-Orthodox Initiative (LOI) is one of this kind of expression of this research for reconciliation through the transforming power of the Gospel” (p. 2).



After presenting the institutional background of the investigation and the reasons of the aforementioned initiative (p. 7-12), the editors split the content in four big sections: "Mission" (p. 15-95), "Evangelism" (p. 99-172), "Spiritual transformation" (p. 175-212) and "Authority" (p. 215-238). These are the keywords of the whole investigation. Although, at a first glance, the book looks, because of this segmentation, limited in an artificial way, a serious reading shows the richness of it.

Therefore, the authors are investigating different segments of the topic that circumscribes the section from different points of view. Some of them come to it from a biblical perspective (like: Ramez Attalach, who sees the mission from the perspective of conversion of Peter and Cornelius (p. 15-16), Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Yulios (pp. 17-19), or Femi Adeleye, who speaks about the relationship between mission and neighbourhood (p. 20-23). Others, like father Ioan Sauca, director of the Ecumenical Institute from Bossey and Deputy General-Secretary of World Council of Churches (pp. 51-67) or Cecil M. Robeck Junior (pp. 68-84), come into debate from a theological perspective, while theologians like Luke A. Veronis, tries to speak about the challenges of mission starting from a case study from places like Albania (p. 85-89) or Egypt (p. 90-95).

Without falling prey to a didactic attitude, the authors also define terms like Evangelism, spiritual transformation or authority emphasizing their understanding in different traditions and cultural spaces, the relationship between them and the potential keys of dialogue. They speak there about the evolution of their meaning in the ecumenical space and also about the challenges in its deepening. They point there, as Father Ioan Sauca says in the conclusions of his study, the fact that:

"In the past, the theological perspectives on ecclesiology, soteriology and mission of Orthodox and Evangelicals seemed to be irreconcilable, today they are signs of reconciliation and common perspectives. The differences between Oriental and Western approaches to theology in general still remain an issue, and at times signs of misunderstanding and difference of discourse can be seen" (p. 67).

Despite of that, each dialogue attempt and meeting make the theologians, belonging to different confessions and spaces, more conscious of their common points, like the Trinitarian base of mission, as Bishop Anastasios Yanoulatos underlines it (p. 24-25), but also of aspects like the ecclesiastical background (p. 25-26), or the communitarian one, synthetized in the words "Liturgy after liturgy" as well as their theological meaning developed by father Ion Bria. This can constitute the beginning of a fruitful way together being a trustworthy witness of a heritage and of a set of specifically Christian values.

Written in an interesting way and bringing together important theologians from the Orthodox and Evangelical space in a debate dedicated to the mission and its outcomes and their contemporary value, the book entitled: *The Mission of God. Studies in Orthodox and Evangelical Mission*, published under the coordination of Max Oxbrow and Tim Grass is both an useful tool in the ecumenical dialogue and a handbook that help the reader to understand the mission from an inter-confessional point of view and to see its potential development in tomorrow's society.

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