



The Kindness of God

David W Smith

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David Smith surveys the modern missionary movement, examines critical issues concerning the gospel and culture, reflects on mission in the context of violence and suffering, and explores the 'translation' of the gospel for today's globalized world.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul makes striking use of the phrase 'the kindness of God' (11:22). The apostle to the Gentiles warns non-Jewish believers in the imperial city of Rome to beware of arrogance, counselling them to 'be afraid' that the kind of spiritual pride which led to the downfall of biblical Israel will also be their undoing. In the deeply troubled times in which we live, this text speaks powerfully to Christians throughout the world, summoning a global church to prioritize what really matters and to discover its unity in the service of the Christ whose life and death revealed in human form precisely the 'kindness of God'.

Taking his starting point from Lesslie Newbigin's analysis of the contemporary historical and cultural context, David Smith explores issues in, and challenges to, the practice of Christian mission and witness today. He surveys the modern movement, starting with the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910; examines critical issues concerning the gospel and culture; reflects on mission in the context of violence and suffering; and explores the 'translation' of the gospel for a globalized world. He also examines how Scripture was used to justify the political and economic expansion of European power at the dawn of the modern world, and argues that mission today demands both a new hermeneutic and a revised theology of mission, within which Paul's letter to the Romans will play a significant role.

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