

## Foreword by Steven C. Hawthorne

This book is welcome at this juncture of mission history. It has become obvious that the world is changing. The tectonic plates of political alliance and culture affinity have been colliding, setting off tsunamis of migration and marketing, so that every city is now a globalized soup of different ethnicities and economies. Instead of being dissolved into a homogenized, internet sameness, the ethnic compression has brought an unprecedented yearning for identity—for a kind of collective respect—among the scattered peoples. Perhaps we shouldn't say that this yearning is unprecedented. Ever since the uniculture of Babel, we have sought to "make a name for ourselves" (Genesis 11:4).

In this cauldron of competing identities, we are now seeing God's people becoming the long promised fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant, a people of blessing amidst all peoples, with a God-granted name (Genesis 12:2–3). This is God's answer to Babel. Like never before in history, we are seeing God's people sent and positioned to bring blessing. To serve this purpose, we must have wisdom in His ways. This book—about honor and shame in Scripture and culture—will help form that needed wisdom. Here is why we need this book:

- **To see new movements flourish.** Almost all of the remaining unreached peoples—those lacking a Christ-following movement—have sturdy family bonds that make it seem impossible for individuals to follow Christ without bringing great disgrace on themselves and their families. Missionaries who work alongside of such incipient movements must be conversant with the struggle to sustain family honor.
- **To endure persecution.** More people suffer for the name of Christ than at any other time, and it is increasing. Many who have endured well speak of identifying with Christ in His suffering, and of finding joy in anticipating honor with Christ. To find the resources to remain vulnerable and to embrace a fellowship in Christ's sufferings, our eyes must be open to God's ways of reversing shame and rewarding faithfulness in suffering with lasting glory.
- **To sustain fruitful partnerships.** The global church is learning to walk and work together. Of course, understanding honor-shame dynamics can help anyone to mind one's manners and avoid embarrassing cultural blunders. But we must do more than avoid embarrassment. Our best partnerships flourish where there is steady willingness to serve with honor, creating an environment of reciprocal respect that is deepened with celebration.
- **To contextualize the gospel message.** Don't underestimate the significance of articulating the great story that is culminated by Christ and for Christ. It is a story of God reversing the shame of the nations to bring us near to Him in celebratory honor. The

hermeneutic of honor reversing shame with Christ may do more than give you new lenses to read the Bible. It could well trigger your imagination to find fresh ways to present the message so that it is retold easily and effectively.

- **To mobilize in hope.** The world may be as evangelized as it will ever get if we attempt to complete the remaining task with a motivation built around the fleeting feelings of compassion. Mercy can strike a match, but we need emissaries from many lands who are ablaze with the inexhaustible fuel of jealousy for God's glory.

The reason this book has value in so many different ways is that Werner identifies the core of the drama that impels all things: God's great honor reverses deep shame. This story will and must culminate in God's reception—with honor—of the beatified worship of every people. This global glory is God's love accomplished. This is certainly the story of *His* glory. And yet it is also the story of *our* glory in and with Christ. The fulfillment of all things is Christ exalted and loved amidst the nations, the hope of *their* glory (Colossians 1:27). Only an announcement of the fulfillment of the all-encompassing drama of God's love can be called the gospel.

Werner may be audacious to title this book as *The Global Gospel*, but he is not wrong to do so.

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