progress as well as regress. More importantly, it would comprise a fuller rendering of other faiths and their missionary impulses. Such an approach in the reading of history would also imply a different periodization than the one here offered.

Fourth, a mass conversion to an acceptance of religious pluralism is underway among adherents of all religions. Some observers see this acceptance of pluralism as a major factor in the disinterest in traditional Christian mission and the decline of institutional Christianity in the West. Yes, there is a tension between the unique saving power of God in Jesus Christ and the validity of other religions, between the proclamation of the gospel and dialogue with people of other faiths. Recognizing this, David Bosch inspired the World Council of Churches at its San Antonio conference to write, “. . . we appreciate this tension, and do not attempt to resolve it.” Bevans and Schroeder, on the other hand, have tried to resolve this tension by adopting Mark Heim’s theology of religions. Heim contends that all the world’s faiths are valid as mediators of their religious ends. Christianity’s uniqueness lies in the fact that it is the only one whose end is salvation. Heim’s is theology with helpful clarity. But have the authors solved the problem of the theology of religions, which Gerald Anderson calls “the epitome of mission theology”? It is up to the reader to answer. In any case, they have tried to close what Bosch had left open.

Lastly, the discipline of missiology is touched by the authors in only two paragraphs (pp. 274–75). Given this limited treatment, it appears that the authors, who had been asked to write an “introduction to missiology,” ended up publishing a “theology of mission.” In their hands, then, missiology has been absorbed into theology. One must ask, then, do they fulfill what they set out to do?

A REVIEW FROM NORTH AMERICA

By Paul V. Kollman, CSC

Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today represents a landmark in mission studies. Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder do three valuable things at once in this impressive work. First, they review the history of Christianity from a missiological perspective. Second, they present a thorough summary of current missiological thinking. Third, they defend their own preferred theology of mission for today. These three achievements make their volume both an indispensible work in missiology and an important contribution to the history of Christianity and systematic theology.
Bevans and Schroeder expertly negotiate the tensions at work in such a comprehensive text. Their location as professors at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, that most international of US Catholic theological institutions, has given the co-authors a broad perspective on contemporary Catholicism and its diversity. Though they write self-consciously as Catholics, simultaneously they are ecumenical in the best and deepest sense, consistently connecting ideas among traditions, careful not to homogenize or overlook divergences but nonetheless illustrating the shared emphases across the Christian spectrum. They also mix historical and constructive theological goals. Besides portraying past and present theologies and practices of mission, they are not afraid to exceed this descriptive work in order to judge historical mistakes and prescribe how mission ought to proceed now.

At first glance the book begins curiously, with a chapter on the Acts of the Apostles, its only specific address of biblical materials. The reading of Acts proves valuable, however, for the authors interpret the book's evolving narrative in a missiological spirit, thereby demonstrating an axiom that drives their work: “to the extent that the Jesus community responds to the Spirit’s call to continue Jesus’ mission in new and perhaps unthinkable ways, it becomes the church” (30). This pivotal move made and the church’s essential missionary nature established by recourse to Acts’ boundary-expanding structure, they then proceed in chapter two to describe the book’s theme, which appears in the title: Christian theologies of mission are best thought of as the church-in-mission generating answers to six fundamental questions or constants developed in diverse circumstances or contexts.

In order to further elaborate the ways these six constants — Christology, ecclesiology, eschatology, salvation, anthropology, and an approach to culture — have manifested themselves differently in Christian history they use the overlapping typologies of theology identified by Dorothy Sölle and Justo González. These typologies help them identify analogous theologies of mission that have guided the church-in-mission. Thus when theology has been founded on law, as in González’s type A (resembling Sölle’s conservative or orthodox theology), then mission has meant saving souls and establishing the church. When theology is liberal, as Sölle says, or aimed at the pursuit of truth in González’s type B, then mission represents the discovery of truth. Finally, mission becomes work for liberation in what Sölle labels radical or liberationist theologies and González calls type C theologies focused on God’s acting in history and the church’s pastoral role.

Part one establishes a matrix that permeates the rest of the book. Bevans and Schroeder refer to the González typology especially to show how the con-