

Salvific Intentionality in 1 Corinthians: How Paul Cultivates the Missional Imagination of the Corinthian Community



By Scott Goode

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In Scott Goode's fascinating study, the reader embarks upon a journey into the heart of 1 Corinthians, probing the layers of Paul's intentions and the lived reality of the Corinthian community. This is a work that, at its core, endeavours to explore the enigmatic "great omission" in the Pauline letters: the seeming lack of a direct missionary mandate. Goode masterfully employs a blend of literary and socio-historical methodologies, astutely using social identity theory to unveil the hidden nuances of the text.

There's a sense in which this is more than mere exegesis; it's an excavation, unearthing the complex socio-religious terrain of ancient Corinth, enabling us to hear the missional heartbeat alongside the first-century recipients of Paul's letter. By navigating the epistle, Goode introduces us to the horizontal salvific language, teasing out the missionary undertones that are intricately woven into the fabric of the text. His study isn't insular or confined; it is a dialogue with an external context, a recognition that the Scriptures were not born in a vacuum but in an ancient metropolis's bustling streets, homes, and synagogues.

The chapters devoted to specific key texts in 1 Corinthians (5:1–13; 7:10–16; 8:1–11:1; and 14:20–25, to name a few) display an admirable depth of scholarship. Pastors will undoubtedly benefit from Goode's detailed expositions, which skillfully bridge the divide between the 1st-century world and contemporary pastoral challenges. There's an underlying current throughout the work that resonates with the practicalities of ministry, from church discipline to the contours of Christian ethical formation.

One of the most potent aspects of Goode's work is his emphasis on the porous boundaries of the early Pauline communities. His vision of a church where boundaries are fluid, and gatherings are as much about the outsider as the insider, holds a mirror up to our modern ecclesial practices. The concluding chapter, in particular, offers

a vision for the contemporary church in a post-Christendom era. The ancient streets of Corinth, with its myriad cultures and religious expressions, look startlingly familiar to our modern urban contexts. By placing Paul's writings within this milieu, Goode invites us to re-imagine the church's mission in today's pluralistic society.

Indeed, Goode's dialogue with the seminal works of Leslie Newbigin adds a further layer of depth to his thesis, connecting the early church's socio-ethical expressions to our modern ecclesial mission commitments. His vision for a church in constant engagement with its surrounding culture, which doesn't retreat but instead engages, is a timely reminder in our age of increasing secularization.

In sum, *Salvific Intentionality in 1 Corinthians* is an invaluable contribution to the realm of Pauline and missional studies. It is a text rich in scholarship and practical insights, with a narrative pulse that is deeply engaging. Scott Goode's exploration is a must-read for anyone looking to delve into the world of 1 Corinthians and draw out its implications for the church today.