

Shivraj K. Mahendra. *Lived Missiology: The Legacy of Ernest and Phebe Ward*. London, Kentucky: Fishers for Christ, 2023. 385 pages. \$45.00. ISBN-13: 979-8533836746

Winner of Bishop Leslie R. Marston Book Prize of 2022, *Lived Missiology* by Shivraj K. Mahendra is a significant work that sheds light on the legacy of two great Free Methodist missionaries, Ernest Ward and Phebe Ward, their lives, contributions, and ministries in Central India. Mahendra's study and observations are enriching; the fact that the author's own spiritual and cultural origins can be traced back to the very place where these two missionaries brought the Gospel message 140 years ago makes the work even more significant.

"All Christians are not called to preach or be foreign missionaries, but they are to be light in the world wherever they are," says Ernest Ward. This was the driving spirit of these missionaries. They were often the first people to do ministry in different religious and interreligious settings. They ministered among several religious communities including Hindus, Muslims, Parsees, and Tribal people. Ernest and Phebe paid close attention to the beliefs of the native people in an effort to gain a better understanding of them. They ministered to Muslims in a variety of settings, engaged in conversation with Muslim believers, and saw evidence of evangelistic fruits among the Muslim population.

The book is more than a missionary biography; it is a historical and missiological exploration into the life and missionary endeavours of the Wards. The author has provided an excellent overview of Ernest and Phebe Ward's lives, missionary works, thoughts, and legacy based on their letters, missionary reports and narratives, and other writings. The forewords and acknowledgments demonstrate the enormous amount of admiration and support that the author received from people in different parts of the world in the completion of this research. The book is structured into six distinct sections which facilitates the reader's understanding and comprehension of the content provided. Each chapter ends with a concise review followed by a reflection which ensures that the reader capture the essence of the subject matter presented.

In the introduction of the book, the author explains the context, scope, and objectives of this historical investigation. The second chapter provides an overview of the lives of Ernest and Phebe Ward. A biographical study of the life of a missionary is a sacred thing to do, and it is done here in great detail. The author rightly says that "occasionally these saints are found among the regular people who answer God's missionary call." This chapter has some catchy titles, like "Conversion and Spiritual Life," "The Call to Mission," and "The Legacy of the Wards."

The third chapter examines Ernest and Phebe Ward's work in the mission field. This chapter is a detailed historical account of the missionaries' efforts to spread the gospel. The letters that were provided, as well as the baptism reports and statements, are further evidence of the successful missionary work that they carried out. The fourth chapter describes the humanitarian services and activities that the Wards carried out as part of their mission work. Some of the main highlights of this chapter include reaching out to those who were suffering from famine, relationships with Pentecostal Bands, building homes for orphans, educational works, and medical services.

The fifth chapter is an exploration of the Wards' religious encounter—interreligious contacts—with non-Christian religions. The author portrays a genuine picture of their attitudes, openness to other faiths, and answers to various theological concerns and themes from other religions, especially their interactions with Tribal religions. The sixth chapter, which is titled "Christian Holiness," has the purpose of drawing attention to the most important theological focus in both the life and work of the Wards. Both Ernest and Phebe Ward's writings and sermons demonstrate a particular emphasis on the sanctity of their Christian faith which they imparted to the people of Central India.

The history of Christianity in general, the history of the Free Methodist Church in particular, would greatly benefit from the work of Mahendra. This historical and biographical investigation into the lives and ministries of Ernest and Phebe Ward is a remarkable contribution to the study of missionary endeavours in colonial central India during the 19th and 20th centuries. Finally, perhaps more importantly, the author has brought to light the legacy of the unsung missionaries who dedicated their lives to serving the people of India.

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