BEYOND EMPIRE

Posted on March 24, 2010 by Eddie

Category: Reviews

It's a strange new world, where newly released books have their own Facebook fan groups. But Jonathan Ingleby's Beyond Empire: Postcolonialism & Mission in a Global Context deserves to have a fan or two.

Make no mistake about it, this is a disturbing and challenging book to read. If you are British or American you will undoubtedly be decidedly uncomfortable at points: but you should read it.

Those of us from the West tend to forget, or at least ignore, our colonial history. It happened in the past, let's forget it and move on. For the colonised, however, the scars run deep and they can't easily move on. Not only that, for many the experience of colonialism is still an everyday experience. Political empires may be a thing of the past, but Western companies and governments still wield enormous soft power all around the world. For the Christian this is of concern, because the spread of the Gospel has been intertwined with the growth of empires (political and economic) for the last hundred and fifty years.

Jonathan takes a good hard look at these issues; analysing them from Biblical, missional and post-colonial perspectives. His take on the world situation and the state of mission is challenging, but he points us to the greater hope of the coming Kingdom and the restoration and reconciliation that will come in Christ.Â I've already given two longish quotes from the book (here and here) and at some point, I'd like to blog my way through it chapter by chapter. In the meantime, can I simply say that if you are involved in cross-cultural mission work you should read this book. Go on, buy it.