THE NEW FACES OF CHRISTIANITY

Posted on December 20, 2006 by Eddie

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Philip Jenkins book the New Faces of Christianity is well worth a read if you can get hold of a copy. Subtitled, Believing the Bible in the Global South this book has a lot to say about the relevance of the Bible to the Church in the South. The later chapters are taken up with an examitation of issues such as riches and poverty, the role of women and sickness and health; demonstrating how a Southern audience would see very different things in the biblical narrative to a rich Western one. There is much to ponder on here. However, the section that really interested me was the introductory few chapters which look at the big picture about the role of the Bible. Jenkins writes (p.29)

> *Throughout the history of Christianity, Bible translators have had to make judgement calls about the order in which particular books will be presented in a new language, and in a few cases whether certain books should be attempted at all... the decision to present books in a certain order must have consequences for the kind of Christianity that will be built on those foundations.*

As I have mentioned in other posts, the decisions about which parts of the Bible should be translated in minority languages are often made on pragmatic or financial grounds. However, as Jenkins points out, there are profound theological and missiological consequences which spring from the decision to translate or not translate certain books. It is vitally important that the decisions about which books of the Bible are to be translated into a language are informed by a theological understanding as well as by weighing up the amount of money and the people resources available.

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