THE BIBLE AND SPEED

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Category: Controversies

This is the third in my series answering the question of why we translate the Bible for people who are in physical need.Â Often people will comment something along these lines:

> *I can see the value of Bible translation, but I want to give my money to something that has an immediate impact.*

There are two issues here, one of which I will deal with in the next post in this series. For the moment, I would just like to deal with the issue of speed. When people give their money, they want to see an immediate impact - the faster the better.

I have blogged on this issue a number of times already and I don't have much to add to earlier posts, but let me make one new (to me at least) point, which is...

One lesson that is very clear from the Scriptures is that God is not in a hurry! The Old Testament story took hundreds of years to mature before Jesus came to the earth. Likewise, a number of the parables point to a long slow growth of the Kingdom of God, not an instant imposition of God's rule. We might be in a hurry to get things done, but God doesn't seem to be.

As I said, I've covered this issue already a number of times: here are a couple of quotes from earlier posts.

> *Speed is a value in Western culture: a very high value. Because of this, it is hard for us to realise that speed per se is not a Gospel value. In Bible translation terms, the Gospel value is to see communities and individuals bringing their lives into alignment with Godâ€™s claims on them as they get to grips with the message of Scripture. All things being equal, it is good to get the Bible to people as quickly as possible â€“ but speed must never be allowed to compromise the Gospel impact of the missional work of translation.*
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> *From Is Faster Always Better?*

> *Within the missionary world, a lot of people talk about how Bible translation takes too long and isnâ€™t best bang for your buck. Well, if speed is what you want, thatâ€™s true. Itâ€™s not fast. I do love that it gives great value to the indigenous culture and to the Word of God, and that this way when the missionaries leave, the local church can preach and teach from their own language. I love that it requires years of investment into a culture, years in which translators (at least the ones I knew) also started community development and agricultural and health programs.*
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> *From Slowly Does It*

It is certainly true that supporting Bible translation generally does not bring quick results - but speed is not everything in the Kingdom. Far from it!