GOSPEL HARMONY

Posted on January 27, 2008 by Eddie

Category: Theology

For a Bible translator, harmonization of the Gospels involves a painstaking process of making sure that when the Gospel writers say the same thing the same way, the translated text does the same thing. Conversely, when the writers say the same thing in different ways the translation should reflect this too. Given the flexibility and creativity of language, this is a harder process than it sounds.

Tom Wright in his book The Cross and the Colliery has another take on harmony when reading the Gospels. He suggests that when we read the Gospels we need to think of them as a tune in four part harmony.

- The tune is the story of Jesus itself.
- "... the bass part - the musical line which grounds the whole thing and keeps it firm - is the Old Testament."
- "... the tenor... the part that tells you if the chord is major or minor, happy or sad, is the story of our own world or our own community."
- The harmony isn't complete without the last part, "your private story, your bit of the song".

I find this simple illustration very helpful. You can't fully understand the story of Jesus without the Old Testament and if we read the stories of Jesus without reflecting on the stories of our communities or our own lives, we are missing a lot of the point.

What do you think?