BOOKS I HAVE READ - EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN MISSIONS: AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

Posted on June 25, 2015 by Eddie

Categories: Africa, Mission

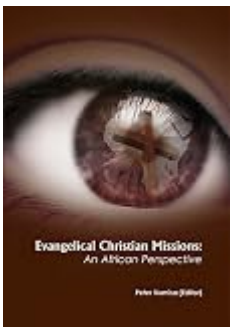
> *AÂ church in Ibadan, Nigeria is currently supporting over 250 missionaries. This church devotes to Missions 10% of all the offerings and tithes collected. In addition, every department, cell group, activity group in the church has a missionary field or project for which it is responsible. This church conducts regular mission awareness programs to maintain the focus of the members on missions.*

I'm really not sure whether to recommend people to readÂ Evangelical Christian Missions: An African PerspectiveÂ or not. There are a number of fascinating quotes and statistics that makeÂ you sit up and take notice, but too much of the book is of interest only to the specialist - but the specialist in what?

The publishers blurb on Amazon says:

> *What makes the African Missions Movement unique? How will the African Church respond to the call of global mission? What are the challenges facing the growing number of missionaries and missions senders in Africa? Explore these issues and many more in this one-of-a-kind resource â€“ JUST RELEASED FOR THE FIRST TIME FOR GLOBAL DIGITAL DISTRIBUTION.*
>
> *This book will help those involved in African missions to:*
>
> - *Dispel the myth that Christianity is a foreign religion imported to the African continent by the white man.*
> - *Develop a solid Biblical rationale to engage with the task of missions.*
> - *Change from seeing yourself as either a target of missions to becoming the practitioner of missions.*
> - *Understand how to mobilise your church for missions.*
> - *Develop effective methods of raising support for your mission programs.*
> - *Rethink your position and strategies on child evangelism.*
> - *Understand the important role women play in missions.*
> - *Know and understand the real mandate of Christian NGOs.*
> - *Understand the importance of research and prayer when your church engages in missions.*

It should be clear that much of this material is not specific to the African context. However, I believe that it is important that a comprehensive overview of mission practice has been produced from an African context. In this regard, I would place the significance of this book alongside TheÂ Africa Bible Commentary. However, this book is sadly not of the same quality as the Commentary.



The book starts off very well, and the earlier chapters dealing with the history of Christianity in Africa are excellent. However, I have a number of problems with the book, some serious, some less so:

- The quality of the writing is a problem. Though the subject matter is not particularly complex or difficult; reading this book is sheer hard work. This is not helped by the transition to Kindle being patchy. As is often the case with books transferred to ebook format, there are random spellings, strange word breaks and some odd English.
- Much of the material is not specific to Africa and has been covered better elsewhere.
- Sometimes the book makes generalisations about Africa as a whole, which can't really be sustained, while other authors seem to be unaware of things that are happening in other parts of the continent.
- Unfortunately, the book rarely offers any new insights into mission or mission thinking. The voices are African, but, all too often, they are expressing European and North-American thinking on mission. This is reflected in the paucity of African authors referred to in the otherwise extensive bibliographies.
- Sometimes, the missiology is just plain bad: I'm sorry; learning French, English, Portuguese and Arabic are not the key to evangelising Africa!

These are major reservations. The book is aimed at inspiring and equipping Africans to get involved in world mission, but I'm not sure that I could recommend using it for this. There are books from Europe and Latin America which are more suitable, despite the cultural distance. I also recall a Nigerian book on mobilising the church for mission which was shorter, more inspiring and more informative than this one - sadly, I can't recall who wrote it and it isn't on Amazon.

However, scholars of the African church and mission as a world phenomenon will need to read this. Despite my disappointment with various aspects of the book, it is still an important contribution to mission literature.

I was asked to read and review this book and I am grateful that my attention was drawn to it. However, my review is unaffected by the fact that it was written in response to a request.