BOOKS I HAVE READ: TRADUIRE LE TESTAMENT DE DIEU

Posted on October 27, 2015 by Eddie

This is a good book and one that I would recommend to anyone who speaks French and who is interested in mission and particularly in the relationships between mission agencies and churches in Africa.
Category: Reviews

The title is a give away; this book is in French!

Traduire le testament de Dieu is a small format paperback, with 150 pages plus a few extra pages of references. It is published by the excellent Wide-Margin books, but doesn't yet appear on their website.

For those who don't read French, the title is Translating God's Covenant and the subtitle; an appeal for the promotion and translation of the Bible and the development of African languages. The book pretty much does what it says on the cover. Effectively, the book is the story of the translation of the Bible in Togo and the development of Wycliffe Togo, told through the eyes of one of the principle actors in the story, Napo Poidi. However, it would be a mistake to view this as simply another translator biography; this book is much more than that.

Throughout the book, the narrative viewpoint changes from a pan-African perspective to a close in look at events in one language context.Â This can be dizzying at times; but it illustrates the point that the local decisions and the international events feed off and influence on another. At the heart of the book lies the question of the place of African nationals in the face of a large, Western missionary operation. This is a story which is often told from the perspective of the missionary (I do a fair bit of that on Kouyanet), but the voice of the national Christians is much more rarely heard. This is wrong!

This is a good book and one that I would recommend to anyone who speaks French and who is interested in mission and particularly in the relationships between mission agencies and churches in Africa. Those who have leadership roles in mission agencies in Francophone Africa (you know who you are) must read it.

Just one caution, the book is written in an orotund style that might appear strange to anglophone readers accustomed to a more direct use of language. However, those who have lived and worked in Francophone Africa will recognise it and appreciate it for its own beauty.

I should point out that the author, Napo Poidi has been a friend of mine for almost thirty years and that I was provided with a copy of the book by the publishers. However, these facts have not influenced the content of this brief review.Â