

highly developed individualism as it is known in Western societies fails to take due account of the intricate play with the emotional setting of the story and the references to cultural paradigms that determine the characters' reactions to a dilemma or crisis" (209f.). Außerdem kommt noch erschwerend hinzu, dass – auch wenn die so genannte nichtwestliche Literatur tatsächlich nicht westlich ist – diese dennoch nicht zwangsläufig eine Einheit bildet.

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Jenkins, Philip: *The New Faces of Christianity. Believing the Bible in the Global South.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. 264 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-536851-2. Price: £ 10.99

The main thesis of Jenkins' "The New Faces of Christianity" is that Christianity is definitely moving southward. He explains this thesis in detail by using other theses: that a comparative view teaches us about the nature of Christianity; that looking on Christianity as a global phenomenon, the most vibrant centers of Christian growth are today in that part of the world called the global South, i.e., in Africa, Asia, and Latin America; that soon Africa will be home to the world's largest Christian population; that the increasing numerical strength of Christianity in the South is accompanied by a decisive move toward a literal reading of the Bible and a conservative (fundamentalist) stance in ethics; that paradoxically the global South at the same time finds in the Bible ideas that are socially liberating, especially with respect to women's rights. As the center of gravity of the Christian world moves ever southward and the conservative traditions prevailing in the global South matter ever more, the gulf and the differences – in theological and social doctrine and in moral practice – between new and old Christianities (primitive Christianity) grows ever wider. Just as Christianity worldwide is booming, "Western" Christianity is stagnating, and the old Eastern Christianity is even facing terminal crisis. This view of contemporary Christianity moving South has also been developed by Jenkins in other successful books: "The Next Christendom. The Coming of Global Christianity" (Oxford 2002; 2007), "God's Continent. Christianity, Islam, and Europe's Religious Crisis" (Oxford 2007; 2009), and recently in "The Lost History of Christianity. The Thousand-Year Golden Age of the Church in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia – and How It Died" (New York 2008).

The first chapter, "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?," asks which trends – the liberalizing or conservative – are going to win. Jenkins' answer is firmly in favor of the new Christianity. The conservative tinge and themes present in the religious thought and interpretation of the Bible by African and Asian Christians include a greater respect for the authority of the Bible, especially in matters of morality, and willingness to accept the Bible as a text directly inspired by God. In the reading of the Bible not just as a compendium of historical facts but as a relevant instruction for daily conduct, the global South Christians show, moreover, a special interest in such supernatural elements of scripture as miracles, visions, and healing, have a belief

in the continuing power of prophecy, and above all, have a deep veneration for the Old Testament which is considered as authoritative as the New Testament.

Competing with rival claims to faith with Muslims, traditional religionists in Africa, and the great Asian religions (Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism), global South Christians – unlike Euro-American Christians – do not live in "an age of doubt". On the contrary, the growth of Southern churches is combined with a fundamentalist shift in theology and interpretation of the Bible. But the word fundamentalism, Jenkins warns, does not necessarily have the Western meaning of obstinacy in the face of scientific facts or a tendency toward repression, especially directed against women or the sexually unorthodox. It simply means a strict belief in the divine inspiration and inerrancy of the entire biblical text. Practically, the global South churches produce as vast a spectrum of diverse theologies and interpretations as do the United States and Europe. The growing and everwidening diversity of Christian denominations, churches, and sects as well of ways of "reading different books" and emphasizing different portions of the Bible makes the concept of Christianity itself problematic. The presence of global South Christianity gives rise to the possibility of a gulf or even a schism between two types of Christianity: the North (susceptible to materialism and scientism) and South (compromising with animism, witchcraft, healing, dreams, prophecy, belief in the power of ancestors). It also raises naturally important questions (addressed by Jenkins later) about the normativity of "Western" forms of Christianity and what can/should be regarded as standard Christianity.

The second chapter, "Power in the Book," demonstrates how the newer churches see the Bible as a dependable and comprehensive source of divine inspiration and asks anew why they are so conservative in their approach to biblical authority. The popular view of the Bible in Africa approaches, according to Jenkins, the Islamic view of the Koran as a book "composed by God in eternity for all eternity, then revealed to mortals in time, through divine inspiration." One explanation of this very high respect for biblical authority is that the Bible arrived in nations already familiar with the idea of sacred writing and religious authority, and which otherwise had a profound veneration for written, inspired texts. Hence the Bible effectively took the place of older holy writ (as in case of neo-Confucian literalism). In most African and Asian Christian communities, the Bible is a relatively new book, and they are still in the initial phases of "a love affair" with the scripture. Moreover, the agricultural world portrayed in the Old and New Testament is very much like the world of the global South, marked by famine and plague, poverty and exile. No wonder that the Bible speaks to the global South with a vividness and authenticity simply unavailable to most believers in the industrialized North. Throughout the global South, believers read the Bible with fresh eyes and come away with new and sometimes startling interpretations. At the same time they remain selective in their approach to particular biblical passages, which raises the question about the standards they use to decide which verses carry special weight, or

might be more or less authoritative than others. While the liberal North claims the right to assess the value of particular texts based on historical criticism, the conservative South stresses the role of the communities that use the texts of the Bible. But is it possible that the newer churches read the Bible with an authenticity and immediacy, and that Old Christendom has to give priority to Southern voices?

Chapter 3, “Old and New,” illustrates how cultural affinities with the biblical world and parallels between their own societies and those of the Hebrew Old Testament have led African and Asian Christians to a deep affection for the Old Testament (Genesis, Exodus, and Isaiah are probably the most cited books) as a living source of authority. This relevance of the Old Testament is reinforced by the presence of living pagan traditions. Not only does the Bible as a whole carry special authority as a divinely inspired text, but this respect is paid to larger portions of the text than would be customary for many Northern world Christians. In their selection of Bible readings – seeing religion as communal rather than individual – the African and Asian churches show an acute awareness of the political implications of the Bible. Naturally, this raises questions about the relationship between the Old and New Covenants that Western Christians thought they had settled long ago, especially since some African Christians readily claim direct continuities from Judaism, treating the universal message proclaimed by Christianity as a distortion of the original Jewish-centered message. What is more, sometimes African traditional religion(s) is/are seen as Africa’s Old Testament and no contradiction is found between biblical and African wisdom, since both are based on human experience and inspired by God Himself.

Chapter 4, “Poor and Rich,” develops the consequences of the fact that an average Christian in the global South is a poor person by the standards of the White world of North America and Western Europe. It is no wonder that attitudes toward the Bible are determined by the social and political status of African and Asian Christians who are often minorities and socially marginal groups (of low caste or of no caste at all), in countries dominated by other religions or secular ideologies. For many of them the Bible is contemporary and congenial because the world it describes is marked by the same pressing social problems, such as famine and plague, poverty and exile, clientelism and corruption (the innocent sufferings of Job). One of the biblical themes often cited in Southern churches is that of debt and debt forgiveness, thus making debt a central symbol of sin, with God as the ultimate creditor. The prevalence of hunger and natural disaster explains the popularity in Christian Africa and Asia of the Book of Ruth, a tale of a society devastated by famine, in which women survive by depending on each other and on trusted kin.

Also issues of identity and coexistence become critical as Christians in the global South are ever more likely to live alongside members of other major religions. This brings up the issue of condemning paganism and major world religions with their ancient scriptures. If Christians

reject those religions as diabolical, they are opting for an absolute secession from the society they live in. Otherwise it is difficult to admit that God was not in Africa and Asia before the missionaries brought the gospel (today this would mean “consigning to hell two thirds of the world’s population”). There are modern Christian thinkers who stress commonalities with the mainstream world religions and see Christianity as one voice among many. As one of them states, an absolute theory of Christianity does not work in Asia. Also, memories of imperialism raise doubts about the idea of converting any peoples to one’s own superior point of view and simultaneously discrediting other religions. Does conversion really mean abandoning one’s old faith as false?

Global South Christianity has also another face: that of the gospel of prosperity, when “prosperity preachers” throughout the Bible promise wealth and rewards to come in this life. This kind of materialism attributed to the scriptures troubles many African and Asian leaders and their North American counterparts. Yet the matters, says Jenkins, are not quite so simple. Before dismissing the health-and-wealth tradition as pure materialism, one has to take into consideration the wider context of extreme poverty in a world in which it seems impossible to survive without miracles. What is more, faith and prayer are not absolutely separated from material realities, as churches frequently incorporate prayers for well-being into their services and liturgies. Furthermore, some megachurches focus primarily on piety rather than prosperity, and most prosperity preachers intend to integrate their teaching into conventional Christian and specifically evangelical frameworks. An ordinary African or Asian believer is not too far from the mindset of the biblical worlds he reads about in which there is a strong presumption that God will reward his faithful, in this world as well as the next. Moreover, many African believers make no distinction between the spiritual and the physical.

Chapter 5, “Good and Evil,” focuses on the question of deliverance, in the charismatic sense, and liberation, in the view of social activists. Both activities are seen in much of the global South as two forms of deliverance from every kind of evil. This coping with the problem of evil and sickness makes much of the global South Christianity today a healing religion *par excellence*, with a strong belief in the objective existence of evil whose power can span generations (the idea of ancestral guilt), and (commonly) with a willingness to accept the reality of demons and the diabolical in the shape of human beings. Remembering the recent presence of Christianity in these regions, we can see in the ready attribution of evil to powerful spiritual forces the continuing influence of pagan and animist beliefs. In its emphasis on the healing of body and mind, seeing both as forms of deliverance, Christians are following biblical examples as well as reflecting attitudes toward healing in their own traditional societies, in which it is seen in a supernatural and ritual context. Not uncommonly, witchcraft is still the most effective way of controlling and, ideally, subduing others. Broadly defined, healing – which is so central to the New Testament message – also allows believers to trust in the supremacy of

the church and in the decisive victory of Christ on the day of the Last Judgment.

Chapter 6, "Persecution and Vindication," discusses the polarization between Christianity and the secular order. The New Testament portrays persecution as a likely consequence of Christian belief, but martyrdom is quite a real prospect for much of the new Christianity and a continuing reality for many African and Asian churches. Confronted with injustice, Christians can turn to many biblical texts. Liberation theology in 1960s' Latin America, which later inspired activism in southern Africa and influenced other movements across the Third World (e.g., Dalit theology in the 1980s), was a kind of reaction against unjust social and political regimes characterized by oppression and corruption. As Marxism crumbled globally, and the combined forces of globalization and economic liberalism reduced worldwide poverty, utopian forms of liberation theology seemed increasingly obsolete. At the same time the loss of faith in the possibility of change through state socialism enhanced the influence of churches and the prestige of Christian leaders ("states fail, churches flourish!"). Frustration with the secular state also explains Southern churches' conservative attitudes in moral matters. While liberal Western Christianity accepts the evolving standards of morality in progressive societies as an independent source of authority, protestant church leaders in Africa and Asia strongly resist change in traditional church teachings (as in the case of gender and sexuality) under the pressure of liberal standards of decency.

Chapter 7, "Women and Men," brings up the question of Christianity transforming women's role and aspirations. The newer churches in Africa and Asia have arisen in societies with conservative notions of gender roles, especially within marriage. Traditional proverbial wisdom condemned women who sought equality with husbands, but the Bible was often also used to reinforce traditional values. Moreover, in the struggle against paganism the African woman has lost the power she had traditionally as a religious leader, e.g., prophet, medium, seer, diviner, medicine person, and priestess. On the whole, however, Christianity had a liberating effect for women, whose role decisively enhanced emphasis on faithful monogamous marriage. The rise of Christianity has also effected dramatic changes in gender attitudes, and the AIDS crisis has called forth widespread Christian activism, but also raised questions about the Catholic reluctance to approve condom use, and the idealistic stress of many churches on abstinence and constant chastity. The Bible has a liberating potential for traditional societies in matters of family, personal relationships, and protection of widows. The injustice faced by Christian women, Jenkins notes, is all the more glaring, since the Islamic law gives widows more adequate legal protection.

Chapter 8, "North and South," in general considers important matters arising from the impact of the Bible on the global South. Is it the case that the Bible speaks to global South churches in ways it cannot with modern Europeans or North Americans? Does it tackle themes and trends in Christianity that the older churches have

forgotten? And the critical question: what is the authentic religious Christian content, and what is Christianity's cultural baggage? In short, what is Christianity, and what is merely Western?

Operating within a conceptual framework closely congruent with the early or medieval forms of the faith, members of new Christian communities approach the Bible with different expectations and assumptions arising from their own cultures and experiences, and ask different questions. For many Christians outside the West it is not obvious that religion should be an individual and private matter; that church and state should be separate; that secular values should predominate in some spheres of life; or that scriptures should be evaluated according to the canons of historical scholarship. In contrast, what Westerners customarily think of as Christianity is, often, a specific manifestation of Christian faith that operates in the post-Enlightenment West. Jenkins notes many similarities between the lived Christianity of Africa and Asia and Islam, and states that the often emphasized differences between Christianity and Islam are not so strong when one compares Islam with the older forms of Middle Eastern Christianity (Ramadan as the old Syrian Lent). According to him, the new Christianity is closer to Islam than to the Christianity of the advanced West.

Once again Jenkins addresses the problem of the future of Christianity and of a possible schism between old and new Christianities, as the new churches adhere to the authentic scripture and old churches incline more and more to liberalism, sexual hedonism, and moral relativism. Christians of the South are following in the footsteps of the earliest believers, while Euro-Americans compromise with liberalism and secular scholarship. The practical consequences are well-known: large congregations in Africa and Asia and empty churches in post-Christian Europe. Nevertheless, African and Asian churches also have their problems. As the saying goes: Southern Christianity "is a mile wide and an inch deep." Another schism that broadly follows the North-South division is also imminent: the conflicts between the liberals and conservatives in the global South churches. Rather than suggesting the decline of Christianity in the global North, Jenkins appeals for the consideration of the spiritual dimension of the global South churches and especially for a rethinking of the role of the Old Testament as the root without which the New Testament and the whole Christian tradition make no sense whatsoever.

Briefly Jenkins then considers the familiar secularization thesis which equates religion (Christianity) and underdevelopment. Religion belongs to the world of the poor and uneducated, and with economic growth and maturation the thesis goes, is destined to disappear. The kind of Bible-based Christianity in Asia and Africa works well because of its premodern or prescientific settings, but it will in turn find itself displaced by economic development. Still, the growth of Christianity over the past century gives a powerful testimony to its flexibility and endurance, its power to adapt to very different social and political circumstances, and also the capacity of the Bible to serve as a fundamental religious text. It is not at all

certain, as the classic theories of secularization hold, that the European process of secularization will befall African and Asian churches when those societies, too, experience Western-style development, when GNP per capita reaches a certain level, when modern hospitals fulfill the need for healing, when people feel confident in the stability of their society. The United States, where Christian churches continue to grow and flourish in the world's most advanced economy, is an example that things can go the other way. There is a sound evidence that the Christianity of the global North is neither as exhausted nor as compromised as its critics argue. Still, the secularization issue should make us think carefully about the cultural contexts of different forms of Christianity or the extent to which certain features of Christian thought might actually arise from certain stages of social development.

Jenkins concludes the chapter with remarks on religion's "authenticity." Fidelity to the biblical worldview does not necessarily mean that some varieties of Christianity in other societies are less Christian. Christian history, beginning with the first 150 years after the time of Jesus, is also full of very diverse patterns of belief and worship. Christianity has always been a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. We live in Western cultures profoundly shaped by Christianity and Christian values, which have been the result of violent religious and cultural debates over the centuries. This process is grounded in biblical texts, even if they have much of their power for us. And – almost as a theologian – Jenkins warns against the danger in trying to understand the Bible by human standards and expectations, and not recognizing its fundamental difference from the experience of its readers.

Even if the structure of "The New Faces of Christianity" is not excessively sophisticated, its theses and argumentation are complicated. The many topics, questions, and answers related to the phenomenon of global South Christianity (mainly in Africa) and additionally the comparison with the beliefs of industrialized North and Euro-Americans Christians, as well as with Islam, makes the book a challenge to anyone meeting these issues for the first time. Even if Jenkins' theses are not new (he presented them in earlier publications), the extent of this courageous synthesis of what he calls generally and conventionally global South Christianity is. He uses many other general notions (theoretical constructs) such as the Christian world, Euro-American Christians, global Christianity, global North Christians, modern African and Asian Christians, the Northern world, old and new Christianities, Old Testament thought, post-Enlightenment West, primal religions of Africa, "religious thought world," Third-World theologians, traditional world, traditional African religions, and so on. Each of these key notions – as we know – acquires its meaning from some appropriate theory. Otherwise Jenkins rightly uses the term global South because many African and Asian societies have a good deal in common, especially in the relative novelty of the faith and its recent emergence from non-Christian backgrounds. The understanding of the proposed synthesis – despite the necessary simplifications (signaled by the author himself) – is made easier by erudite footnotes

(201–238) and a rich bibliography, very helpful for anyone who wants to deepen his knowledge of the discussed phenomena. The book has also two appendices (Psalm 19 and the Epistle of James), a list of abbreviations, a scripture index, and a general index.

The report applies mostly to Protestant and Anglican Churches, less to the Roman-Catholic Church. Jenkins' main interest is Africa and Asia, while Latin America is touched on only in passing. He asks important questions about the contemporary face and the future of Christianity, showing its cultural, doctrinal, theological, and devotional diversity worldwide. What are, for instance, the consequences of the fact that by the middle of the twenty-first century the majority of Christians will be living in the global South? Possessing an impressive knowledge in the domains of sociology, politics, theology, and philosophy, Jenkins illustrates with a sure touch the more conservative attitudes of the African and Asian Churches, and the liberalizing trends of many North American and European Christian Churches, as well as the deep divisions in Christianity over the issues of gender, sexual morality, homosexuality, and most of all, in the ways of reading and understanding the Bible. At times his comments go just beyond a description of global South Christianity, when he assesses the occurring processes and even opts for a specific understanding of Christianity faithful to the original (primitive) reading of the Bible. Jenkins' book is a "must" for everyone interested in the transformations of the contemporary world of religions.

Andrzej Bronk

Johnson, Leslie Main, and Eugene S. Hunt (eds.): *Landscape Ethnoecology. Concepts of Biotic and Physical Space*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2010. 319 pp. ISBN 978-1-84545-613-9. (Studies in Environmental Anthropology and Ethnobiology, 14) Price: \$ 100.00

This edited collection gives an important and thought-provoking overview of recent debates and work united under the rubric of cultural landscape research. The eleven substantive case studies, taken primarily from indigenous societies across North and South America, each provide a strong argument for questioning or better specifying definitions on the meaning of place for various societies. The editors (although not so much each of the authors) argue that the concept of an *ecotope* or a *folk* or *cultural ecotope* provides the best focus for cross-cultural landscape research. Their *ecotope* is defined, after Tansley, as the "smallest unit of a landscape" (2) and the *folk ecotope* as a "place kind" (2) recognised by members of various cultural groups. This theme of trying to identify the way that different peoples classify or name significant units of the landscape unites the volume. This volume is blessed with a particularly thorough bibliography, which will make it an invaluable resource for students of landscape – although the wide-ranging qualities of the debates between each chapter will make the volume a little disorienting for students.

The collection is framed by a short introduction and conclusion by the co-editors. Two chapters (Hunn and