STUMBLING TOWARD ZION

Posted on March 9, 2020 by Eddie

The one-sided emphasis on celebration not only ignores the suffering, struggles and doubts of people within congregations, so increasing their distress by making them feel guilty that they are unable to join the party, but, even more seriously, it suppresses knowledge of the crisis threatening the very survival of our world...

Category: Observations

I love books; there is nothing quite like getting to grips with a new book, be it sci-fi, a murder mystery or a new volume on theology or missiology. However, I was more than a little excited when I discovered that my friend, David Smith had written a new book Stumbling Toward Zion: Recovering the Biblical Tradition of Lament in the Era of World Christianity. I've mentioned it before on this blog, but David has influenced my thinking about mission and my own role more than any other writer.

Anyway, I pre-ordered the book and it turned up today. I've not had time to do more than glance at it, but already it has got me thinking and eager to get to grips with it properly.

> *Readers should be warned that the following pages contain some radical criticisms of contemporary expressions of the Christian faith, and especially of what seems to me to be the triumpahislm and complacency of somuch public worship in the churches of Europe and North America. The one-sided emphasis on celebration not only ignores the suffering, struggles and doubts of people within congregations, so increasing their distress by making them feel guilty that they are unable to join the party, but, even more seriously, it suppresses knowledge of the crisis threatening the very survival of our world and so undermines the credibility of faith in the eyes of suffering people who are searching for genuine hope. I will argue in the following pages that there is a need for radical transformation in contemporary Christianity, especially in the Western world, amounting to a reconversion which could result in new depths of spirituality, a fresh understanding of the nature of the gospel and a new kind of counter-cultural praxis in a world controlled by false gods and moving toward apocalypse.*
>
> *p. xiv*

> *If Christianity in its former heartlands is to recover credibility it is imperative that it hars the cries of the members of the body of Christ across the Majoirty World, and responds to them in solidarity, growing militancy and in its own recover of the biblical tradition of the prayer of lament as a core part of its worship and spirituality.*
>
> *p. xv*