MULTICULTURAL KINGDOM: A FEW THOUGHTS

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Category: Observations

I've just started reading Multicultural Kingdom: Ethnic Diversity, Mission and the Church by Harvey Kwyani. I'll write a fuller review sometime next week, but I just wanted to make a few comments at this point.

The first is to note that for my money, Harvey is the most important writer about the church scene currently working in the UK. By putting the issues of race, mission and the growth of the diaspora churches at the centre of his work, he is focussing on the most potent factor in British church life today - despite it being pushed to the margins in many discussions.

I also think that we are unaware of how unusual our (generally) mono-cultural, mono-lingual church services are. In most places in the world, Christians meet in mixed language groups. Harvey comments on his mother's reaction to church life in the UK.

> *She could not understand that in the West, generally speaking, black Christians worship with fellow black Christians; white Christians worship with fellow white Christians; the same goes for Latin American and Asian Christians.*

If the first generation Kouya church could work out how to sing in four or five different languages and to translate the sermon (and the notices) into two or three; big city churches in the UK can surely more accurately represent the communities around them.

The last point that I'd highlight is that we need to catch up with the massive changes in the world church and the relative importance and prominence of Christians from different places to the growth of Christianity.

> *Her research of 2018, exploring church planting and church growth in Glasgow, found that over 75 per cent of new churches started in the city between 2000 and 2015 are African.*

> *Thus, in London today, people of African descent â€“ who form only 14 per cent of the cityâ€™s population â€“ make up over 60 per cent of church attendance in the city.*

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> *the typical image of a Christian is no longer a white middle-class college-educated European man living in Brussels, London, Paris or Rome, but rather a less affluent non-European woman, living in the slums of Lagos or Nairobi or a village in rural Brazil or Thailand.*

On that theme, I find the following quote absolutely fascinating. We may think of Christianity as being a "white" religion, but the rising generation in British cities thinks very differently.

> *a group of white British teenagers in Manchester explained to me that, as far as they could tell, it was not possible for white people to be Christians. Many of them were detached by two or three generations from Christianity and therefore had no close Christian friends. All the Christians they knew in their schools were people of other races.*