NEW HORIZONS IN 21ST CENTURY EVANGELICALISM

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Category: Observations

Regent College in British Columbia recently hosted a panel discussion entitled The Southern Cross: Navigating New Horizons in 21st Century Global Evangelicalism. The three panelists were Dr. Alex Chow, Bishop Dr. Zac Niringiye, and Dr. Ruth Padilla DeBorst. The discussion is 90 minutes long, but it is essential listening to anyone who is interested in the future of evangelicalism. We Brits cannot afford to act as though what is happening in the rest of the world does not matter to us. I'd suggest that this is particularly important for anyone who wonders how and why Evangelicals in other parts of the world think differently to their Western counterparts.

https://youtu.be/zU5UrExPhQM

I realise that some people won't take the time to watch the video (even though they should), so here are a few of my notes from the session.

The term evangelical is not a useful one globally. It is not used in some contexts and when it does it generally doesn't mean the same thing as it does in the West. Often it is used by people as of way of linking themselves to powerful actors in the west.

Missionaries brought education etc. but the most "Christian" countries in Africa are also the most corrupt. We need real gospel impact.

Talking about a shift in the centre of gravity of Christianity does not help Africans to place themselves in the global church.

In Europe and N. America, Asians, Africans and Latins are filling the pews, but not the pulpits.

Migration from Latin America is not de-Christianising the American church, but de-Europeanising it.

The majority world church needs to develop its own language to express gospel truth. "I long for the day when we will not be studying systematic theology".

The west needs to sit down together with the rest of the world, not in a place of power or "mission".