THE FUTURE IS CROSS CULTURAL

Posted on March 15, 2021 by Eddie

If the church in the UK is to have a significant future, it will be as a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic body. We can either get on board with that, or we can be consigned to a slow and ignominious slide into irrelevancy.
Category: Observations

I'd like to draw your attention to an excellent article by Dr. Harvey Kwiyani in the Missio Africanus Journal entitled There is No Future Without Cross-Cultural Ministry. The article is relatively short and won't take more than a few minutes to read. However, I reckon that every church leader in the UK should read it. Without Exception!

We live in an age where diaspora churches are growing and thriving in the UK, while - all too often - white British churches are struggling. The very fact that we can talk about churches in these terms is an indication that something is broken. It is a fundamental part of the Christian faith that there is neither Jew nor Greek, nor should there be a distinction between Brits and Nigerians. We will all worship the Lamb together, so we'd better get used to it here on the earth.

The church in the UK is diverse and multi-ethnic, but, sadly, it is all too often segregated along ethnic lines.

> *The migration of many non-Western Christians to Western cities is in keeping with the migratory nature of Christianity while, at the same time, it challenges us to imagine Christian fellowship in a racialised world. The subject of multicultural Christianity is new to most of us. Our theologies, missiologies, and ecclesiologies are yet to catch up with the reality of the culturally diverse world that surrounds us. Religion and race are still two concepts that are yet to be fully negotiated within Christianity. Race relations within Christian communities is a broken area right now, and it will become even more contentious as numbers of non-white Christians increase and as the distance between Christians of different parts of the world diminishes as we go deeper into the twenty-first century that is a century of migration.Â*

Harvey suggests three issues that need to be addressed; here are the headlines.

> *This Christian segregation is not just a social or cultural problem. It is also a theological problem that reflects our understanding of God. We need to develop theological tools that look at faith, race and mission in healthy ways that encourage cross-racial missional partnerships.*

> *We need to be intentional about developing new models of cross-cultural leadership. Leaders on both sides of the conversation need to model these cross-cultural partnerships*

> *for their followers.Â*

> *We need to commit to learning from and about one another. Of course, that means creating spaces where race and justice can be talked about without shame, guilt, or condemnation. The more we learn about one another, the better our chances of successfully partnering for mission.Â*

My suspicion is that any church leaders who do read this will wonder why I'm highlighting it. There is nothing here that should be radical or new. But the thing is, we are not doing it! We talk about this stuff, but nothing changes.

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