WHITHER CHRISTIAN BLOGGING?

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Category: Observations

At first sight, blogging seems easy. You set up a blog and then write down a few random thoughts along with a few links and Bob's your mother's brother. Actually, it isn't as easy as all that; coming out with regular thought provoking posts is actually very hard work. For the most part, the best I can hope to do is to point people to interesting stuff I've read elsewhere. I rarely have the time or the energy to do any creative, thought through blogging. What is worse, when I do come to write something new and stimulating - ready to set the blogging world agog with admiration - I generally find that what I've written is actually just a rehash of a piece that I wrote in 2006. Only the first version was better!

Mouse and Gary have lately been bemoaning the decline of Christian blogging (or perhaps not). I don't know that I would say that Christian blogging is in decline. If you want Christian news such as why the process for appointing a Bishop is chaotic (or why it isn't) then Mouse (I'm not giving him a fourth link in as many lines) does a superb job of keeping you up to date. Likewise there are good blogs about life in a vicarage, more Biblical Studies blogs than you can shake a stick at and rampaging herds of missionary blogs. These are the sorts of blogs that most people want to read, and Christian blogging is in pretty rude health.

However, if like me, you are really interested in reflective practice in Christian mission, especially in cross cultural situations and even more especially involving Bible translation, the cupboard is pretty bare these days. I think that this is because serious reflective thinking is actually very hard work. Many of the blogs that I used to turn to, and which influenced me greatly four or five years ago have vanished, while others have evolved into more traditional family blogs or missionary story blogs. The Lausanne Global Conversation has turned out to be a good place to find interesting reflective practice, but the site is too heavy and complex ever to really take the place of single author or group blogs (there may be another blog post in this).

Of course, there may well be many good blogs out there that I am missing, I do have a life and I can't possibly read everything posted on WordPress or Blogger. But I am finding it more and more difficult to come across stuff that sets my missional imagination alight and causes me to think things that I wouldn't have thought on my own.

One blog that I have come across lately that does cause me to think is Jamie the VWM (very worst missionary). The profundity and occasional profanity of this blog sets it apart from anything I've seen elsewhere. This isn't heavyweight, academic theology by any standards, but it is real, soul-searching theology of the best sort. Try this for size:

> ***My friends ask me if I have doubts.***
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> *They ask if I ever doubt the existence of God. Or sometimes they ask if I wonder whether weâ€™ve misinterpreted His calling on our lives. But what theyâ€™re really asking is if I worry that weâ€™ve left our stable income and fancy retirement plan and hip little house in the*

> *suburbs, complete with 42 inch flat screen and Turkish travertine floors, and uprooted our children to drag our sorry butts to Central America, all to serve a God that maybe doesnâ€™t exist, or doesnâ€™t care, or, perhaps, just doesnâ€™t want us here.*
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> ***When I'm being honest, I say yes.***

Challenging stuff - and I know many missionaries who think similar thoughts, but I know very few who are willing to think them in front of the whole world. Anyway, if you know of any other good reflective-practice mission blogs (especially if they are about Bible translation) let me know, please.