BODY LANGUAGE: LAUSANNE 3

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Category: Observations

There are crowds everywhere here. At coffee break and meal times there are people everywhere. If Â you start to chat to a friend, there will be people passing on either side of you and sometimes between you - there are LOTS of people. Sometimes, when you are chatting to someone, you notice that they are scanning the name tags of the people wandering past - they are talking to you, but looking for someone else (presumably more important) to talk to.

Body language communicates a lot, often more than is communicated by the actual words that people use. Â As we get to the half way point in the conference, I'd like to reflect a little on the body language of the conference itself.

One thing stands out very quickly. This is a group of people from almost two hundred countries, speaking lots and lots of languages, but all of the presentations on the stage are in English. There is the odd word, phrase or song in other languages, but English dominates.

I understand the problems of time management and theÂ difficultiesÂ involved in organising interpretation for speakers on the stage. Nevertheless, I think that it would be well worth having people on stage speaking in a multiplicity of languages. Yes, it would be a logistic nightmare, but it would be a very powerful statement.

The words we are using at the conference talk about an international gathering and the world church, but the body language reinforces old stereotypes of Western (anglophone) dominance.

That being said, most of the content from the stage has been absolutely excellent and would be well worth listening to in any language.

My friends Rob, Krish and Chris are all blogging through the conference and Â give a good flavour of what is being said combined with some good analysis. Tall Skinny Kiwi is also blogging regularly with his usual good humour. He has also produced a list of all the people who are blogging here.