LESSONS FOR THE CHURCH FROM STEVE JOBS: DISTRACTION

Posted on October 24, 2011 by Eddie

Category: Church: World

JR Woodward has just started writing a series of posts about Steve Jobs and mission, which I'm sure will make great reading. His opening post in the series includes this rather interesting statement:

> *Steve Jobs has undoubtedly touched all of our lives in some way, whether you have downloaded a song on iTunes, watched an animated movie produced by Pixar â€“ like Toy Story, bought an iPhone, used an iPad, or (as I am doing),Â typed up a blog entry on your Macbook Pro.Â (Okay, I probably have way too many Apple devices.)Â As the former managing editor of Time Magazine and chairman of CNN, Isaacson has said, Steve Jobs â€œrevolutionized personal computers, animated movies, music, phones tablet computing, and digital publishing. You might even add a seventh, retail stores, which Jobs did not quite revolutionize but did reimagine.â€*

I'm sure that he has hit the nail on the head as far as the readership of his blog is concerned. However, most people in the world will never, ever have done any of the things that are mentioned here, nor will they. As I said in an earlier post:

> *The majority of the worldâ€™s population are far too busy making a living and putting food on the table to afford the high-end consumer goods that Apple produces. Those who can afford mobile phones or computers will generally go for cheaper, less-fashionable brands. Viewed from the perspective of the whole world, Apple design and produce wonderful, expensive toys for rich people.*

Steve Jobs made significant changes to the lives of some people in the rich parts of the world, but most human beings just got on with their lives in the same way as they always did. So much of what counts for important, novel or ground breaking in our part of the world is actually irrelevant to most people with whom we share the planet.

Sadly, the same is true of much of what passes for Church activity in the rich West. Our theological arguments, our exciting new forms of ministry and our big conferences and get-togethers create a great deal of energy and enthusiasm, but what impact do they have on the wider world?

The majority of the world's population will never own an iPhone and the majority of the world's Christians live in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The problem is, we let our enthusiasm for our shiny new gadgets (be they iPads or multi-media ministries) distract us from the amazing things that are happening in the big wide world and we end up believing that the world revolves around our technology.

Steve Jobs and Apple have done an amazing job of manufacturing and selling equipment and making us believe that they are much more important than they really are. In the same way, I fear that much Christian activity in the West makes us feel that we are at the centre of things, when

increasingly we live at the margin.