THE CENTRE OF THE WORLD

Posted on June 25, 2012 by Eddie

Category: Church: World

I don't know if you noticed, but England lost a football match last night. Despite being thoroughly outclassed by Italy for ninety minutes, England managed to hold on for extra-time, before bowing to the inevitable and losing the penalty shoot out. Deja-vu all over again!

Every couple of years there is an upsurge in national optimism as England go into aÂ tournament, followed by a brief period of mourning when we don't go on to win. The thing is, England are not actually very good at football. The Premier League is perhaps the strongest league in the world and English clubs regularly do well in European competitions. However, many of the Premier League's star players and managers are not actually English, so our national team has aÂ relativelyÂ small pool of talent to draw on - and it shows!

Despite our history of not doing very well in international football, there is still an expectation that England should do well - after all, this is football's homeland.

And what about the Church? For years, centuries even, Western Europe was the centre of the Christian faith. The United Kingdom was a great missionary sending nation - we took Christianity to the world. But, just like with football, those pesky foreigners have taken Christianity and seem to be doing it better than we do. The Church around the world is growing and developing like never before, while in the traditional homelands, it is struggling. The next generation of world Christian leaders will not be from Europe or the US, but from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Last night's match may provide a much needed dose of reality for English football; we need to abandon our dreams of grandeur and start to learn from the way other nations have moved ahead of us. The Church in Britain needs to do something similar; we need to start learning from the Church around the world.