HYPHENATED THEOLOGY

Posted on July 19, 2013 by Eddie

Categories: Church: World, Theology

> *I believe in a global theological accountability. We are all shaped by our contexts, personal and communal concerns, anxieties, questions and capabilities. This shapes how we read the Bible, how we develop theologies, what tools of interpretation we utilise, which metaphors we use and what topics we cover.*
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> *This is not relativism, not a denial of universal and absolute truths, but the humility of knowing that God and his truths are often beyond our man-made creations and perceptions. That is why we need the experiences of the global and historical Church, with all of its shades and colours, to be with us if we are to advance his Kingdom and ignore pitfalls of our own bubbles. Church history is full of episodes where a particular country and the Church in it gets carried away with its own social and political constructs, all along thinking that 'God wills it'.*
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> *Thus, as I try to develop a theology for todayâ€™s Middle East, I need Christians from Latin America, East Asia and North America as well as Europe to keep me accountable; to challenge me where I need to be self-critical and to learn from my experiences. Simply put, without such a theological accountability, we are vulnerable to confusing our own constructs, culture and nationalism with the truths of God.This, however, is not happening and, where particularly Western Evangelical Christians are concerned, is truly far from this ideal.*
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> *Allow me to give two symptomatic examples of this. The first is the sloppy phrase of 'contextual theology' used for the writings of non-Western Christians. Works of African, Asian, Latin American and Middle Eastern theologians are designated as â€˜contextualâ€™ whereas works of British or American theologians are marked as â€˜theologyâ€™, as if they were not also products of their context, as if they do theology outside of parameters of a language, culture and preferred methodologies of interpretation and application. This grants Western theology a supra-contextual status and relegates non-Western theology to an inferior, semi-theology status. Obviously, such a classification is not empirical, but merely a sad reflection of how Western Christians see themselves in relation to the rest of the world...*

A Middle-Eastern theologian writing under a pseudonym in the latest edition of Catalyst from BMS World Mission.