FRIENDS NOT BOSSES

Posted on February 6, 2014 by Eddie

The Global Church does not need experts because they canâ€™t do stuff. But they do need their brothers and sisters.
Categories: Church: World, Observations

Finding Our Place. What exactly is the place of the Western Church in world mission today? In this final (probably) post inspired by the recent Global Connections Conference, I'd like to briefly explore this issue. As I've done in earlier posts, I'll refer back to some of my tweets from the conference.

https://twitter.com/kouya/status/428466919482859520

This is such a simple, but very powerful quote. The church of the South needs the church from the West, but it doesn't need to be bossed around. We cannot and must not assume that Westerners will automatically be in charge of any missionary or church endeavour that they are involved in. Ray Porter of OMF captured this wonderfully in a quote from Indonesia which I tweeted.

> *The Global Church does not need experts because they canâ€™t do stuff. But they do need their brothers and sisters.*

The other side of this equation is that churches in the North and West need to get away from the idea that they are always the ones giving. We send money and missionaries and the rest of the world receives them. The world has changed:

> *The UK Church needs to learn to receive, but we do have something to give. Partnership is a two-way thing. Velloso-Ewell*

Perhaps the first thing we need to do is to rebalance our impression of the church in the rest of the world. Over and over again, I have heard it said that the church in Africa is a mile wide and an inch deep. Well, it is true that there is a lot of nominalism in some parts of Africa and that the prosperity Gospel causes huge problems, but I have met many, many African Christians is far more than an inch deep. In the face of conflict, hunger and suffering they demonstrate a life of faith that puts most believers in the West to shame. Anyway, what gives the materialism-wracked churches of Europe and America the right to call anybody's faith "an inch deep"? Pots? Kettles?

Christians in the UK have a great deal to learn from Christians in other parts of the world andÂ *vice-versa*. We need each other; partnership is a mutual activity and so is leadership. You can't assume that you will be in charge or that your agenda will be the most important one, just because you come from the West or you have provided the funds for a project.

> *The great paradigm of mission is that if we need to be prepared to become slaves and submit to suffering and death @Bourdanne*

Or in the words of the master:

> *Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,*

> *and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all... (Mark 10:43,44 NIV)*

If you are interested in more information on this theme, you could try this post in which includes a very cutting quote about one type of mission outreach and a link to a lecture I delivered with a series of responses from around the world. Go on. You know you want to!