SOFT DISCIPLESHIP

Posted on February 7, 2014 by Eddie

How will the Western Church, trapped in its secularism and modernity and subservience to toleration respond to changes in the world? Martin Lee.
Categories: Church: UK, Church: World

> *Another challenge for us here in the UK is the belief and practice of the growing churches of the Global South. Many Global South Christians are more conservative in terms of both beliefs and moral teaching than many of the mainstream churches of the West. Many preach deep personal faith and communal orthodoxy, mysticism, and puritanism, appealing to scriptural authority. Just look at the gay issue in the Anglican Communion.*
>
> *Many have said that the church in the global south is â€œone mile wide and an inch deepâ€ . However that is not my experience. Prayer is often more everyday than in the western church. Dependency on God, rather than wealth. generosity and hospitality, rather than selfish individualism â€“ the list is endless.*
>
> *In my previous position, I often spent times in places like the Philippines. One of my best friends is Nathan Mejica. He looks on me as a mentor, but for me his faithfulness, prayer life, dependence on God is just something that I aspire to have just a little more of. At one time some of his family turned on him and tried tom oust him. His quiet acceptance of what happened, warmth to those who wronged him and prayer for the best to come out of the situation, have remained with me since. I am sure that we all know people like that â€“ he has been my mentor and inspiration.*
>
> *Yes some preach messages that, to many westerners, appear simplistic, hyper-charismatic and apocalyptic. However we all know that life is not split into departments like it is for us westerners. Healing, exorcism and dream or visions are all fundamental parts of religious sensibility. Of course there are excesses that many struggle with such as the prosperity gospel, but actually wouldnâ€™t it be great to capture some more of their excitement of knowing Christ.*
> *For me, there is a huge contrast with the marked spiritual poverty of many churches in the West. Some have said to me that they find the western Church â€œone inch wide and not even an inch deepâ€ . Too harsh? Maybe but maybe we need to reflect more on that.*
>
> *I came back from the Cape Town Lausanne Congress with an enormous sense that the UK church would benefit from more commitment to prayer and a discovery of a deep spirituality. Talking to a friend from Kenya last week, he is just about to move to a new black majority church in Ashford, mainly Central African. He wondered if even he could cope with the expectations for prayer and fasting that are a normal part of church life of that congregation.*
>
> *HOW WILL THE WESTERN CHURCH, TRAPPED IN ITS SECULARISM AND MODERNITY AND SUBSERVIENCE TO TOLERATION, RESPOND TO THIS SHIFT? DO WE WANT TO LISTEN AND LEARN?*

I did say that yesterday's blog post would be the last from the Global Connections Conference, but

then I decided to quote this whole section from Martin Lee's opening address. You can download this as a pdf and listen to the other talks on the GC website.

I promise that this is probably the last thing I'll write about the conference.