AN (UPDATED) OVERVIEW OF MISSIOLOGY

Posted on June 16, 2014 by Eddie

Union Theology have posted an updated overview of missiology on their website. It is well worth a read. If western missionaries still approach mission from the perspective that their way of doing things is the right way or the best way they risk being guilty of a kind of ecclesiastical colonialism. One of Boschâ€™s main emphasises is that mission will be practiced in partnership. In essence, mission can no longer be thought of as â€œfrom the West to the restâ€ but rather as being â€œfrom everywhere to everywhereâ€ .
Category: Mission

A few weeks ago, I mentioned that I had been perusing the excellent Union Theology websiteÂ and commented that I was disappointed with an article on missiology which I had found there.

Well, the great news is that David Miller has updated his article and the issues I questioned in the original have been addressed. I've got no hesitation in recommending people to go and read the new version. It gives a background to the field which will interest anyone who is involved in Christian mission as a practitioner or supporter.

I had two main reservations about the original article. Firstly, its treatment ofÂ *missio Dei*, didn't really reflect the way most people would see the issue today. In the newer version, this section of the paper has been updated and is much more representative of how the issue is viewed today.

> *The concept of missio dei, the mission of God, is one of the key concepts in contemporary missiology. It signifies a shift away from seeing mission as something, which the church does, to seeing mission as something which God does, indeed as something which God, by his nature, is. Just as the Father sends the Son, and as Father and Son together send the Spirit, so Father, Son and Spirit send the church into the world, as an instrument of God's sending and saving love. This results in seeing mission as more than just making converts and planting churches, but rather as an expression of God's love and purpose for the world. There is a lot of strength in this concept, but it presents difficulties for evangelicals in the way that more radical theologians and practitioners have interpreted it.*

My other concern was that the issue of the growth of the world church was not given the prominence that it requires in an article of this nature. This, too, has been addressed and the theme of the growing world church runs through the paper.

One of my questions about the original paper was that I couldn't work out when it was written as there was no date on the website. In a fast moving field such as missiology, this is a bit of a problem. In fact the paper was written in the early 1990s and did a great job of reflecting the situation in missiology at the time. Sadly, the updated version is not dated eitherÂ which may become a problem in years to come.

However, the bottom line is that this is a great paper, but my list of mission books is a better place to start than theirs!