THE WEST IS NOT THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH

Posted on April 23, 2015 by Eddie

Some reflections on the shift of the centre of gravity of the church and a suggestion as to what our problem is and how we might deal with it.

Category: Church: World

There is an interesting article in Relevant Magazine which says that America is Not the Future of the Church. Here are a couple of quotes:

> *...Â a crucial, little fact that all of us Americans, religious or not, have often had a long habit of forgetting is that we are not the most important people in the worldâ€"and weâ€™re definitely not the center or pacesetter of the global church. So while the statistics about the American church are troubling, American Christianity is far from the only thing going.*
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> ***Weâ€™re probably not the future of the church.*** *Just recently I was talking with my house church about how the tide seems to have turned on the question of women in ministry, while the argument over gay marriage in the church is far from done. But for most of the church worldwide, these issues arenâ€™t even on the table: Without wishing to overgeneralize, the growing church of the Global South tends to be deeply traditional on socio-moral issues. These Christians usually donâ€™t fit neatly into our categories of â€œliberalâ€ and â€œconservative,â€ and it is unwise to predict theological trends as if they do.*

Regular readers of Kouyanet will notice that there isn't anything that we've not covered a number of times in this article. However, there were a few reasons to draw it to your attention.

- Relevant magazine has a bigger readership than Kouyanet, and perhaps a few people will read something there, that they wouldn't read here. That's frustrating for me, but if it helpsÂ people get to grips with the reality of the world church, then I'm happy.
- I like the way the article is written, especially the stress on learning from the world church. You might like to read my piece on Reading the Bible with the Global Church, if you want more on this.

However, the main reason that I wanted to point you to this article actually lies in one of the comments. Someone called WillisVida writes:

> *The US church is still very important. The US (still) has the largest body of Christians in the world, we are rich and influential. America may be less influential than we were 50 years ago but we remain incredibly critical to the world and have big and broad influence.*

With all due respect to WillisVida, I believe that this sort of attitude is exactly why the church in the US and the rest of the West is in decline.

Yes, we are rich - but we aren't the first Christians to say this...

> *14Â â€œWrite this letter to the angel of the church in Laodicea. This is the message from the one who is the Amenâ€"the faithful and true witness, the beginning of Godâ€™s new*

> *creation:*
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> *15Â â€œI know all the things you do, that you are neither hot nor cold. I wish that you were one or the other! 16Â But since you are like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth!17Â You say, â€˜I am rich. I have everything I want. I donâ€™t need a thing!â€™ And you donâ€™t realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. 18Â So I advise you to buy gold from meâ€”gold that has been purified by fire. Then you will be rich. Also buy white garments from me so you will not be shamed by your nakedness, and ointment for your eyes so you will be able to see.19Â I correct and discipline everyone I love. So be diligent and turn from your indifference.*
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> *20Â â€œLook! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends. 21Â Those who are victorious will sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat with my Father on his throne.*
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> *22Â â€œAnyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches.â€*

The invitation to change is there, but first we have to realise our spiritual poverty.